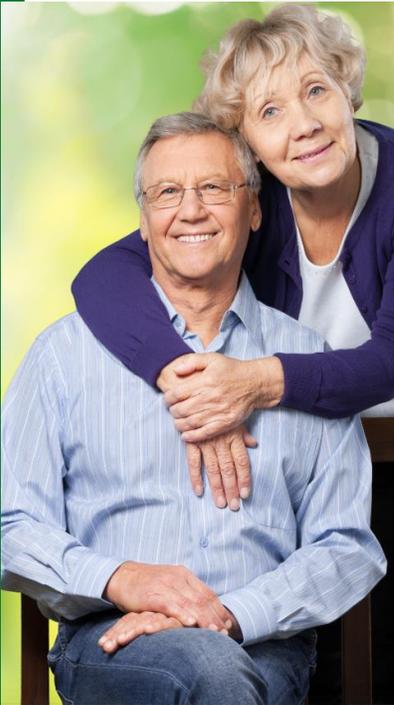


# Community Health Implementation Strategy



**2022-2025**

**ASPIRUS WAUSAU HOSPITAL & CLINICS**  
333 Pine Ridge Blvd  
Wausau, WI 54401

## Acknowledgements

Aspirus Wausau Hospital is grateful for the collaborative efforts of all agencies in the development of this community health implementation strategy. We are excited to share this report with the community. We anticipate leading some local efforts as well as being a strong supporter of other efforts. By collaborating on our community efforts, it strengthens opportunities to improve health across the entire central region of Wisconsin. These health priorities are complex, and we understand it will take us all working together to address these issues effectively. We look forward to continued collaboration to create a healthier Marathon County for all.

Respectfully,

Jeff Wicklander  
President, Central Region  
Aspirus Wausau Hospital

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## Aspirus Health and Aspirus Wausau Hospital Profile

### Aspirus Health

Aspirus is a non-profit, community-directed health system based in Wausau, Wisconsin. Its 11,000 employees are focused on improving the health and well-being of people throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Aspirus serves communities through four hospitals in Upper Michigan and 13 hospitals in Wisconsin, 75 clinics, home health and hospice care, pharmacies, critical care and air-medical transport, medical goods, nursing homes and a broad network of physicians. Aspirus has been recognized by IBM Watson Health as a Top 15 Health System for four consecutive years in its annual studies identifying the top-performing health systems in the country.

### Aspirus Wausau Hospital

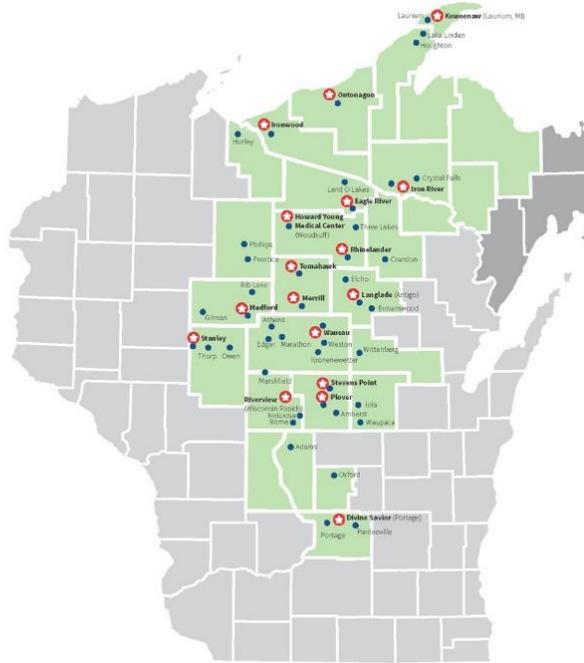
Aspirus Wausau Hospital is the flagship of the Aspirus system that serves patients in 14 counties across northern and central Wisconsin, as well as the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It is licensed for 325 beds and staffed by 350 physicians in 35 specialties.

Aspirus Wausau Hospital provides primary, secondary, and tertiary care services as a regional referral center. Specialty referral service emphasis exists in cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery, orthopedics, and cancer. The hospital has an average daily inpatient census of 160 with approximately 15,000 admissions per year. Outpatient visits exceed 50,000 and there are also more than 24,000 annual emergency department visits.

Best known for its world-class cardiovascular program, Aspirus Wausau Hospital also provides leading edge cancer, trauma, women's health, and spine and neurological care. The hospital is continually recognized nationally for the level of care it provides. Aspirus Wausau Hospital has earned high quality ratings or awards from prominent quality agencies such as HealthGrades, Thomson Reuters, Truven Health, Becker's Hospital Review, Mission: Lifeline® and U.S. News & World Report.



Service Area  
Hospitals & Clinics



**Key**

-  Aspirus Hospitals
-  Aspirus Clinics

MAPS-074C\_ASPIRUS HOSPITALS & CLINICS\_10/2021

### Final Prioritized Needs

Over the next three years, Aspirus Wausau will formally address the following issues through its community health needs assessment and corresponding implementation strategy:

- Substance Use
- Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Mental Health

### Needs Not Selected

The four needs that were not prioritized by the hospital are:

- Childcare
- Housing
- Water Quality
- Workforce Development

Childcare – Although Aspirus will not be leading this initiative, Aspirus is committed to being a community partner at the table in discussions on how to make childcare more affordable and accessible for all.

Housing – Aspirus will not be leading this initiative, but is a partner at the table in finding solutions to affordable, safe housing for the community.

Water Quality – Aspirus is committed to doing its part to be good stewards of resources. Through internal sustainability efforts, Aspirus will be a partner in this work.

Workforce Development – Although this is not identified as a top health priority, Aspirus continues to provide internships, mentorship programs, scholarships, and pipeline resource to build a strong workforce.

### About the Implementation Strategy

For Aspirus, the community health needs assessment (CHNA) and the corresponding implementation strategy (IS) is one way to live our mission – to heal people, promote health and strengthen communities – and reach our vision – being a catalyst for creating healthy, thriving communities.

### Definition / Purpose of a CHNA and Implementation Strategy

A CHNA is “a systematic process involving the community to identify and analyze community health needs and assets in order to prioritize, plan and act upon unmet community needs.”<sup>1</sup> The value of the CHNA lies not only in the findings but also in the process itself, which is a powerful avenue for collaboration and potential impact. An implementation strategy is “the hospital’s plan for addressing community health needs, including health needs prioritized in the CHNA and through other means”.<sup>2</sup>

### Compliance

The completion of a needs assessment – and a corresponding implementation strategy – is a requirement for both hospitals and health departments. For non-profit hospitals, the requirement originated with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). The IRS Code, Section 501(r)(3) outlines the specific requirements, including having the final, approved report posted on a public website. Additionally, CHNA and Implementation Strategy activities are annually reported to the IRS.

In Wisconsin, local health departments are required by Wisconsin State Statute 251.05 to complete a community health assessment and create a plan every five years. The statute indicates specific criteria must be met as part of the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Health Association of the United States, <https://www.chausa.org>

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Health Association of the United States, *A Guide for Planning & Reporting Community Benefit*

## General Approach to Implementation

For its community health improvement efforts, Aspirus Health is using the following approaches:

- *Results-based accountability.* Aspirus Health is applying the results-based accountability (RBA)<sup>3</sup> framework to its implementation plans. RBA focuses on both population-level accountability as well as program-level accountability. The descriptions below are outlined in the RBA framework.
- *Continuum of care.* Aspirus Health is approaching complex community health issues from multiple levels, as outlined by the Institute of Medicine (IOM):<sup>4</sup>
  - Upstream prevention (also known as promotion): Strategies that are designed to “create environments and conditions that support behavioral health and the ability of individuals to withstand challenges. Promotion strategies also reinforce the entire continuum of behavioral health services.”<sup>5</sup> Examples of upstream conditions include housing, community safety, education/learning, a living wage/income and more.
  - Prevention: Strategies that are designed to “prevent or reduce the risk of developing a behavioral health problem...”<sup>6</sup>
  - Treatment: Strategies that are designed for individuals “diagnosed with a substance use or other behavioral health disorder.”<sup>7</sup>

A description of the plans to address mental health and substance use, prefaced by data and community input gathered in the assessment, are on the next pages. The plans:

- Are described at a general level; plans with more specificity will be created annually.
- Reflect intended efforts; circumstances may affect the completion of the efforts.
- May be modified over the course of time.
- Include program evaluation measures in the “performance indicators” section of the table.

<sup>3</sup> Clear Impact, <https://clearimpact.com/results-based-accountability/>

<sup>4</sup> Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies Fact Sheet, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/samhsa-behavioral-health-continuum-of-care-overview-9232019/download>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

**Substance Use**

**Why is it Important?**

An estimated 22 million people per year in the U.S. have drug and alcohol problems. Ninety-five percent of them are unaware of their problem.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 88,000 deaths annually in the U.S. are attributed to excessive drinking (2006-2010).<sup>2</sup> Drug and alcohol use can also lead to costly physical, mental and public health problems such as teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other STDs.<sup>1</sup> Interactions between prescription medications and alcohol can contribute to falls, which can result in injuries and death.<sup>3</sup> COVID-19 has increased substance use in the US related to social isolation, loss of routines and norms, income related stress, anxiety and fear of the virus and loss of loved ones.<sup>4</sup>

Sources: (1) Healthy People 2020; (2) Center of Disease Control and Prevention; (3) Wisconsin Alcohol Policy Project; (4) Czeisler ME, Lane RI, Petrosky E, et al. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, June 24–30, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1049–1057. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6932a1>

**Disparities and Equity**

- Binge drinking is more common among individuals who are (any of the following): male, age 18-34, white or have an annual household income of more than \$50K.<sup>5</sup>

Sources: (5) Fact Sheet: Health Disparities in Binge Drinking (Findings from the CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report – United States, 2011)

**Communities Perceptions & Challenges**

- Alcohol continues to be the number one substance of abuse in Marathon County.
- 30% of LIFE Survey respondents binge drank (consumed 5 or more drinks on one occasion) in the past 30 days.
- Only 65% of Marathon County high school students said their parents felt it was wrong or very wrong for them to drink alcohol.
- Illegal drug use in Marathon County has increased significantly, with more overdose deaths and drug arrests than ever before
- Illegal drug use was the top concern for Marathon County residents

**Data Highlights**

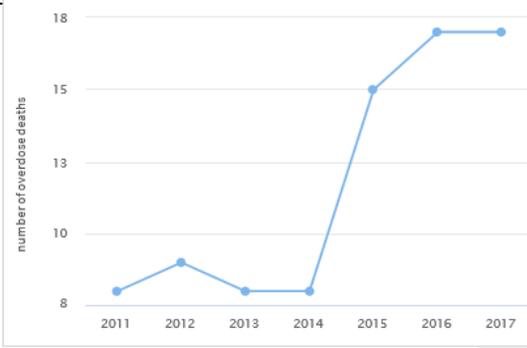
**Teens Who Drank Alcohol Before Age 13 (High School)**



**Adults who Binge Drink**



**Drug Overdose Deaths**



### Substance Use

Aspirus Wausau plans to address substance use through the strategies below.

Program Accountability		Population Accountability	
Strategies	Performance Measures	Indicators	Results
<b>Upstream Prevention (Promotion)</b>			
<b>Prevention</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medication drop boxes and related education (e.g., after visit summary)</li> <li>Sharps disposal</li> <li>Health literacy on prescriptions</li> <li>Positive youth efforts (e.g., Botvin Lifeskills Training)</li> <li>Alcohol screening in primary care</li> <li>Advocacy, education, and policy efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of trainings</li> <li># of training participants</li> <li># of pounds of medication collected</li> <li>Health literacy training evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teens who smoked cigarettes in the past 30-days (high school)</li> <li>Teens who used marijuana in the past 30-days (high school)</li> <li>Teens who drank alcohol in the past 30-days (high school)</li> <li>Adults who binge drink</li> <li>Adults who smoke</li> </ul>	Marathon County residents of all ages and abilities are free from the physical, emotional, and social impacts of substance misuse.
<b>Treatment</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medication-assisted treatment (MAT)</li> <li>Peer support for addiction recovery</li> <li>Tele-mental health</li> <li>Support groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of patients</li> <li># of patients utilizing peer support services</li> <li># of patients connected to recovery resources</li> </ul>		

Collaborative Partners	Aspirus Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NAMI</li> <li>Nicotine Prevention Alliance of Central WI</li> <li>AOD Partnership</li> <li>County services (e.g., health department, social services, etc.)</li> <li>Local school districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding – particularly for Three Bridges Recovery (peer recovery support), Botvin Lifeskills Training in the schools, AOD Partnership (education)</li> <li>Staff time – coalition participation, event planning and promotion, resource identification</li> <li>Printing services (in-kind) – community-facing health-focused materials</li> <li>Space (pending COVID-19 restrictions) – hosting support groups and meetings</li> <li>Clinical services and related infrastructure – providing medication-assisted treatment and referrals to peer support and other recovery services</li> </ul>

**Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging**

**Why is it Important**

Social inclusion is important for a person’s dignity, security and opportunity to lead a better life. It is important to support individuals to feel connected and valued within society and address any form of social exclusion people are experiencing every day. Research shows participating in society and having people you can rely on are key determinants of health and wellbeing, as well as one of the most powerful predictors of positive outcomes following exposure to trauma.

Social inclusion is also inextricably linked to economic participation. Without opportunities to work, study and access training, it leaves people facing entrenched poverty.

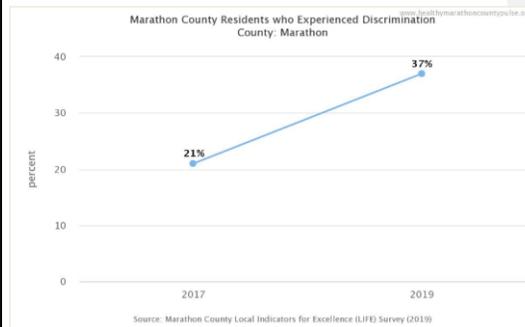
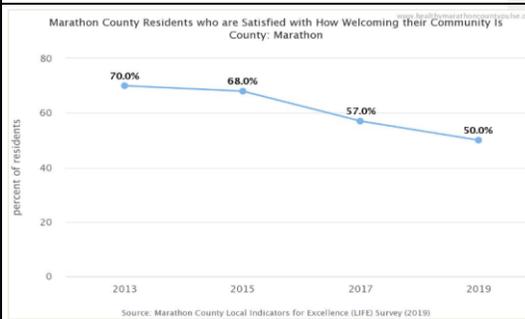
Sources: <https://www.sacredheartmission.org/news/the-importance-of-social-inclusion/>

**Disparities and Equity**

- Discrimination is a fairly common experience; 31% of U.S. adults report at least 1 major discriminatory occurrence in their lifetime, and 63% report experiencing discrimination everyday. Experiencing discrimination may be related to health behaviors that have clear associations with particular disease outcomes, such as smoking or alcohol abuse. It may also be related to not participating in health-promoting behaviors, such as cancer screening, diabetes management, and condom use.

Sources: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/health-disparities-overview.aspx>  
<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/discrimination>

**Data Highlights**



**Community Perceptions & Challenges**

-Satisfaction with how welcoming the community is has fallen more than 20 percentage points since 2013

-In 2019, more than one-third of LIFE Survey respondents reported one or more experiences of discrimination; this is a 7% increase since 2017

-Marathon County residents have a higher rate of social associations (13.9 per 100,000) than other counties in Wisconsin (11.6 per 100,000) or the U.S. (9.3 per 100,000). (Social associations include business, labor, religious, civic and other organizations. Individuals with strong social networks are more likely to practice healthy behaviors.)

**Commented [SB1]:** This is actually highlighted in the final CHNA report.... I think I highlighted it when I was reviewing it and it ended up not being removed. I struggled with "perform healthy behaviors" (the reason I highlighted it.

### Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

Aspirus Wausau Hospital plans to address diversity, inclusion and belonging through the strategies below.

Program Accountability		Population Accountability	
Strategies	Performance Measures	Indicators	Results
<b>Upstream Prevention (Promotion)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anti-racism efforts (e.g., staff training, community advocacy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of participants</li> <li>Program/effort-specific measures</li> </ul>		
<b>Prevention</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support of community wide initiatives that promote connection and diversity</li> <li>Community education events and trainings</li> <li>Continued support of Rise Up Central Wisconsin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of participants</li> <li>Pre and post surveys (MCW-CW)</li> <li>Program/effort-specific measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The percentage of LIFE survey respondents who are satisfied with how welcoming their community is.</li> <li>The percentage of LIFE survey respondents who indicate they have experienced discrimination on one or more occasions.</li> </ul>	All residents in Marathon County have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.
<b>Treatment</b>			

Collaborative Partners	Aspirus Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mosaic</li> <li>United Way of Marathon County</li> <li>Rise Up Central Wisconsin</li> <li>Healthy Marathon County Alliance</li> <li>Marathon County Health Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding – particularly for community education, coalition support</li> <li>Staff time – coalition participation, event planning and promotion, resource identification</li> <li>Printing services (in-kind) – community-facing health-focused materials</li> <li>Space (pending COVID-19 restrictions) – hosting support groups and meetings</li> <li>Clinical services and related infrastructure – providing medication-assisted treatment and referrals to peer support and other recovery services</li> <li>Social Responsibility Committee</li> </ul>

## Mental Health

### Why is it Important?

Approximately 20 percent of the population experiences a mental health problem during any given year.<sup>1</sup> Mental health issues are associated with increased rates of risk factors such as smoking, physical inactivity, obesity and substance abuse. As a result, these physical health problems can lead to chronic disease, injury and disability.<sup>2</sup> Economic challenges (e.g., unemployment, poverty) are associated with poor mental health.<sup>3</sup> During the COVID pandemic, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation have increased and access to mental health providers and treatment has been limited.<sup>4</sup>

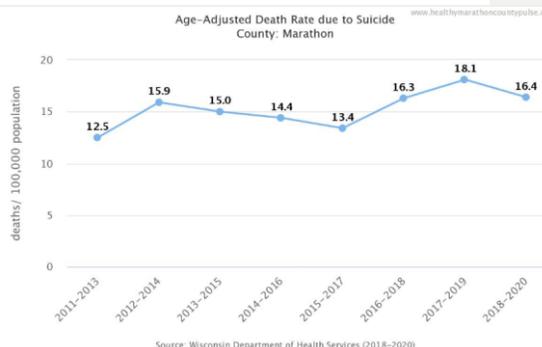
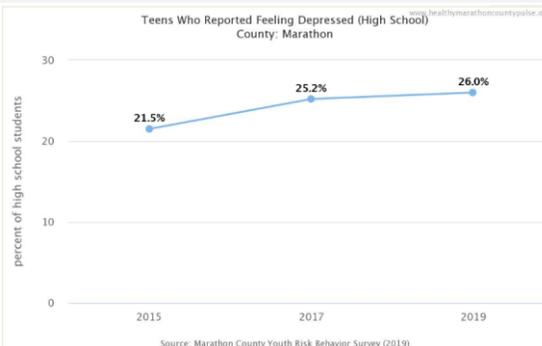
Sources: (1) National Institute for Mental Health; (2) Healthiest Wisconsin 2020; Healthy People 2020; (3) Macintyre, A., Ferris, D., Gonçalves, B. et al. What has economics got to do with it? The impact of socioeconomic factors on mental health and the case for collective action. *Palgrave Commun* 4, 10(2018). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-018-0063-2> (4) Czeisler ME, Lane RI, Petrosky E, et al. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, June 24–30, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1049–1057. DOI:<http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6932a1>

### Disparities and Equity

- Individuals with less than a high school education are more than twice as likely to have frequent mental distress compared to individuals with a college degree.<sup>5</sup>
- Women have a 70% higher rate of depression compared to men.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals who are multiracial or American Indian / Alaskan Native are three times as likely, and White individuals were 2.5 times as likely, to experience depression compared to individuals who are Asian/Pacific Islander. However, the rate of depression in individuals who are Asian/Pacific Islanders is increasing at a faster rate than other groups.<sup>5</sup>
- Poor family relationships can increase the likelihood of depression. Some individuals are at higher risk of poor family relationships – individuals who identify as LGBTQ, persons with disabilities and their caretakers, and individuals who suffered from child abuse and neglect.<sup>6</sup>

Sources: (5) 2021 America's Health Rankings, Executive Summary. [https://assets.americashealthrankings.org/app/uploads/2021\\_ahr\\_health-disparities-report\\_executive\\_brief\\_final.pdf](https://assets.americashealthrankings.org/app/uploads/2021_ahr_health-disparities-report_executive_brief_final.pdf) (6) Shim, Ruth S; Ye, Jiali; Baltrus, Peter; Fry-Johnson, Yvonne; Daniels, Elvan; Rust, George. Racial/Ethnic Disparities, Social Support, and Depression: Examining a Social Determinant of Mental Health. *Ethn Dis*. 2012 Winter; 22(1): 15-20. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4039297/>

### Data Highlights



### Community Perceptions & Challenges

- Mental health is among the top concerns reported by Marathon County teens in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- In Marathon County, 1 in 3 teenagers reported having poor mental health and 1 in 4 reported feeling depressed.
- Marathon County has been experiencing an increase of reported poor mental health days

## Mental Health

Aspirus Wausau plans to address mental health through the strategies below.

Program Accountability		Population Accountability		
Strategies	Performance Measures	Indicators	Results	
<b>Upstream Prevention (Promotion)</b>				
<b>Prevention</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family / parenting support (e.g., Nurse Family Partnership Program)</li> <li>Strengthening referral pathways</li> <li>Mental health and suicide prevention trainings (e.g., Question, Persuade, Refer, MH First Aid)</li> <li>Crisis hotline (988) promotion</li> <li>Positive youth efforts (e.g., Raise Your Voice, mental health education and awareness activities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of trainings</li> <li># of training participants</li> <li>Training evaluation results</li> <li># of schools with resiliency curriculum</li> <li># of students affected</li> <li>Pre- and post-curriculum measures</li> <li># of brochures distributed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of high school students who felt so sad or hopeless ever day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey.</li> <li>The average number of days that adults reported their mental health was not good in the past 30 days.</li> </ul>	All Marathon County residents meet their highest potential of mental health	
<b>Treatment</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen referral pathways</li> <li>Tele-mental health</li> <li>Support groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of patients</li> <li># of patients who achieve self-determined goals</li> </ul>			

Collaborative Partners	Aspirus Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy Marathon County</li> <li>Advancing Behavioral Health Wisconsin</li> <li>Marathon County Mental Health Consortium</li> <li>County services (e.g., jail, health department, social services, etc.)</li> <li>Local school districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding – particularly for mental health trainings, Raise Your Voice clubs, Mental Health Consortium</li> <li>Staff time – coalition participation, event planning and promotion, resource identification</li> <li>Printing services (in-kind) – community-facing health-focused materials</li> <li>Space (pending COVID-19 restrictions) – hosting support groups and meetings</li> <li>Clinical services and related infrastructure – providing direct mental health care, FindHelp</li> </ul>

### Social and Economic Needs

Research shows that social and economic factors are significant ‘upstream’ contributors to poor mental health and substance use issues (as well as many other health issues). Aspirus Wausau is committed to recognizing and addressing these ‘root causes’ as part of its overall community health improvement efforts. A number of strategies/approaches are being implemented within the hospital and clinics as well as with other community partners (e.g., Marathon County Health Department).

- Connecting patients with food and other basic needs resources (through FindHelp.org)
- Food security

Program Accountability	
Strategies	Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting patients with needed resources (FindHelp.org)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of searches</li> <li>• # of referrals</li> <li>• # of closed loop referrals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit and vegetable prescription program (FVRx)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of vouchers given to patients</li> <li>• % of vouchers redeemed at the farmers markets</li> </ul>

As appropriate, Aspirus Wausau Hospital staff also will be participating in coalitions and community-level efforts to address other social and economic issues (e.g., housing, water quality).

### Approval by the Hospital Board

The implementation strategy report was reviewed and approved by the Aspirus Wausau Board of Directors on October 19, 2022.

### Conclusion

Thank you to all the community members who provided thoughts, input and constructive feedback throughout the process. Aspirus Wausau Hospital will continue to work with its partners to address the health issues important to the community.

