

# Community Health Needs Assessment & Implementation Plan



**2025-2028**

**ASPIRUS MEDFORD HOSPITAL & CLINICS**

135 S Gibson St.  
Medford, WI 54451

## Acknowledgements

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics extends our sincere gratitude to the Taylor and Price County Health Departments for their vital roles in collecting and analyzing community health data and facilitating community engagement meetings. Their leadership and expertise have been instrumental in shaping a meaningful, data-informed understanding of the health challenges and opportunities across our region.

Collaboration is at the heart of community health improvement, and by working together, we enhance our collective capacity to create lasting, positive change. We are especially thankful to the many community leaders and members who generously contributed their time and insights to help identify the most pressing health issues facing our residents. We also appreciate the hundreds of community members who participated in the 2024 community survey and joined in community conversations. Your voices and perspectives are the foundation of this important work.

We are fortunate to live and serve in communities where public health leaders, local organizations, and engaged citizens share a strong commitment to building a healthier future. This report reflects a snapshot in time for Taylor and Price Counties, but more importantly, it sets the stage for meaningful action.

Looking ahead, the 2025–2028 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) offers a strategic path forward. With continued collaboration and shared responsibility, we are confident that this plan will help generate momentum toward safer, healthier, and more vibrant communities.

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics is honored to walk alongside our community partners and residents on this journey, and we look forward to the work ahead—together striving for healthier, happier lives for all.

Respectfully,

Jason Troxell  
President  
Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics

Published in Collaboration with:  
Michelle Cahoon, Health Officer, Taylor County Health Department

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## Executive Summary

Throughout 2024 and early 2025, Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics conducted a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in collaboration with the Taylor and Price County Health Departments. This effort combined data collection, stakeholder input, and community engagement to guide our strategy for improving health outcomes over the next three years.

Key components of the assessment included:

- **Strong partnerships** with the Taylor and Price County Health Departments to ensure a coordinated, community-centered approach.
- **Robust data collection**, including:
  - Community input gathered through key informant interviews, a broad-based community survey, and focused stakeholder meetings.
  - Health status indicators sourced primarily from the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Youth Risk Behavior Surveys and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.
- **Comprehensive data review**, analyzed through criteria such as existing health disparities, community readiness, and current momentum for change.
- **A prioritization process** that considered all gathered information.
- **Selection of strategic priorities**, representing the issues Aspirus Medford will formally address through collaborative efforts from 2025 to 2028.
- **Development of an implementation plan** to launch targeted strategies aimed at creating a healthier, more resilient community.

Based on this assessment, Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics will focus on the following priority areas:

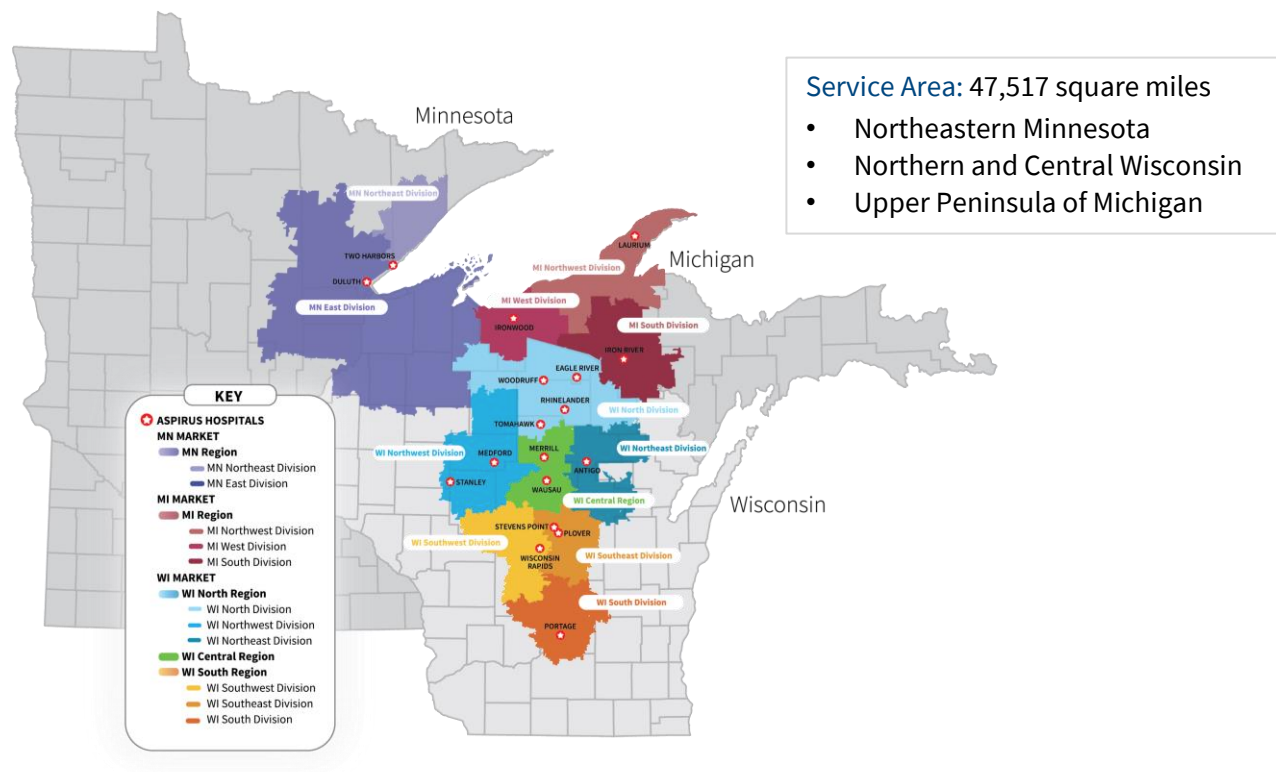
- **Mental Health & Suicide Prevention**
- **Alcohol & Other Drug Use (AODA) & Recovery Support**
- **Access and Affordability of Care**
- **Healthy Relationships, Connectedness, and Engagement**

Our strategies will target both upstream factors—such as social and economic conditions—and direct interventions, including improved access to care and evidence-based prevention programs. Through this plan, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting the health and well-being of all who live and work in Taylor and Price Counties.

## Aspirus Health and Aspirus Medford Hospital Profile

### Aspirus Health

Aspirus Health is a nonprofit, community-directed health system based in Wausau, Wisconsin, serving northeastern Minnesota, northern and central Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The health system operates 18 hospitals and 130 outpatient locations with nearly 14,000 team members, including 1,300 employed physicians and advanced practice clinicians. Learn more at [aspirus.org](https://aspirus.org).



### Aspirus Medford Hospital

Aspirus Medford Hospital and Clinics is committed to providing local access with high quality health care and has the opportunity to keep care local and strengthen access to primary and specialty care.

Among the services provided to residents of Taylor, Price and parts of Clark and Marathon counties include inpatient hospital care, a 24/7 emergency department, urgent care, surgical services, imaging, laboratory, pharmacy and outpatient therapies. Aspirus Therapy & Fitness is a medically based community fitness facility. Aspirus also offers various home care, hospice and senior living options in Medford and Phillips.

## About the Community Health Needs Assessment

For Aspirus, the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) 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. Conducting a CHNA is an opportunity to understand what health issues are important to community members. Community resources, partnerships and opportunities for improvement can also be identified, forming a foundation from which strategies can be implemented.

### Definition / Purpose of a CHNA

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. The momentum from the assessment can support cross-sector collaboration that: 1) leverages existing assets in the community creating the opportunity for broader impact, 2) avoids unnecessary duplication of programs or services thereby maximizing the uses of resources, and 3) increases the capacity of community members to engage in civil dialogue and collaborative problem solving to position the community to build on and sustain health improvement activities.

### Compliance

The completion of a needs assessment 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>



## Community Served and Demographics

### Our Community

Aspirus Medford's service area includes Taylor County, southern Price County, and parts of Clark and Marathon Counties. Aspirus Medford is the only hospital in Taylor County. Taylor County is a designated Health Professions Shortage Area (HPSA) for mental health, dental care and primary care.

For the purposes of our Community Health Needs Assessment, we have defined our "community" as Taylor County because most population-level data are available at the county level and the majority of community partners focus on the residents of Taylor County.

### Demographics

Taylor County is a rural county in central Wisconsin. It covers 975.1 square miles, with 20.4 people per square mile and an overall population of 20,058 people. The table below outlines some of the basic demographics and related descriptors of Taylor County's population compared to Wisconsin.

	Taylor County	Wisconsin
Population	19,913	5,893,718
Age <18	23.3%	21.0%
Age 65+	20.7%	19.2%
Median age	44.1	40.5
White alone	94.8%	80.4%
Black or African American alone	<1%	6.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	<1%	1.0%
Asian alone	<1%	3.0%
Two or more races	3.0%	6.1%
Hispanic or Latino	2.8%	7.6%
Language other than English spoken at home	4.9%	9.3%
High school graduate or higher	90.2%	93.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	16.7%	33.8%
Individuals who are veterans	7.7%	5.9%
Individuals with disabilities	12.5%	12.7%
Persons in poverty	9.3%	10.7%
Median household income	\$63,142	\$74,631
Percent without healthcare coverage	7.3%	4.9%
Percent using public insurance (Medicaid, Medicare, veterans' benefits, etc.)	37.1%	36.0%

Sources: WI: [American Community Survey table S2704](#), accessed on January 5, 2025.

WI: [Wisconsin - Census Bureau Profile](#) and corresponding tables accessed on January 5, 2025.

Taylor County: Accessed on January 6, 2025. Census Tables:

S1501 Educational Attainment

P8 Race and P9 Ethnicity

[Census Bureau Profiles Results](#) – with links to Wisconsin and Taylor County



Notably, compared to Wisconsin, Taylor County also has a:

- Higher median age
- Lower median household income
- Lower proportion of households where a language other than English is the primary language
- Lower percentage of people who have graduated high school

Demographics of a community helps with understanding changes in the population, economy, social and housing infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> Knowing who is part of the community and what their strengths and challenges are contributes to a stronger assessment and plan. See [Appendix A](#) for additional demographic information, including descriptions of individuals who might be more vulnerable to poor health.

## Process and Methods Used – Models and Frameworks

Aspirus' community health improvement approach is based on national research and models. This helps provide consistency and opportunities for alignment as we work across the health system and in our communities.

- For organizing data, Aspirus uses the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Model. The model accounts for clinical, social, economic, behavioral and environmental factors that impact health.
- Aspirus recognizes that the factors affecting health are complex. The Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII) model helps represent those forces, as well as opportunities to intervene.
- A third model helps describe the difference between health equality and health equity.
- Lastly, Aspirus uses the Action Cycle from the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps. The Action Cycle describes how to conduct a community health needs assessment as well as community health improvement initiatives.

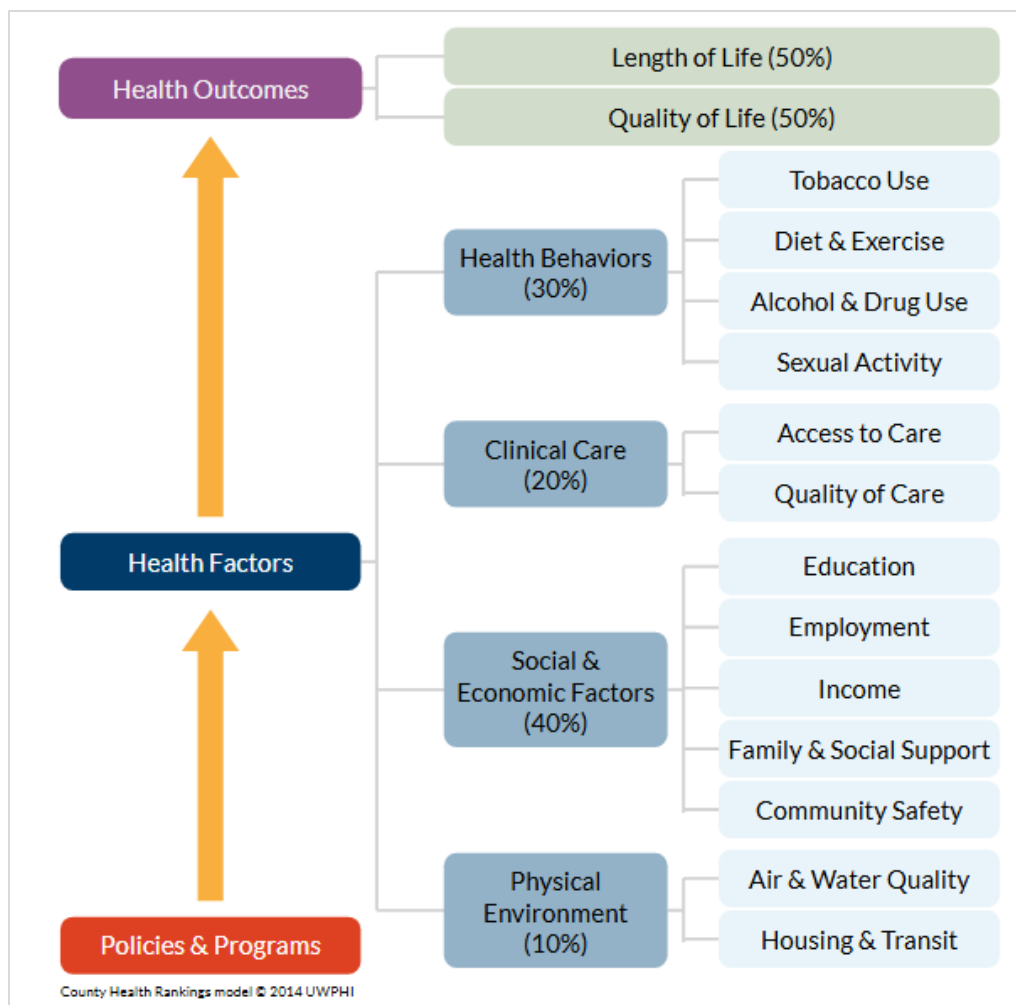
There are many other comparable models, which can be found in [Appendix B](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Dan Veroff, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, Organizational and Leadership Development. [What you can learn about your community from demographics](#).

## Understanding Data: County Health Rankings Model

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Determinants of Health model was developed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). The [Determinants of Health model](#) (below) has three components – health outcomes, health factors and policies and programs. The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) provides publicly available data within this framework for every county and state in the United States. For Aspirus Medford Hospital, the health status data and much of the community input are organized in this framework.

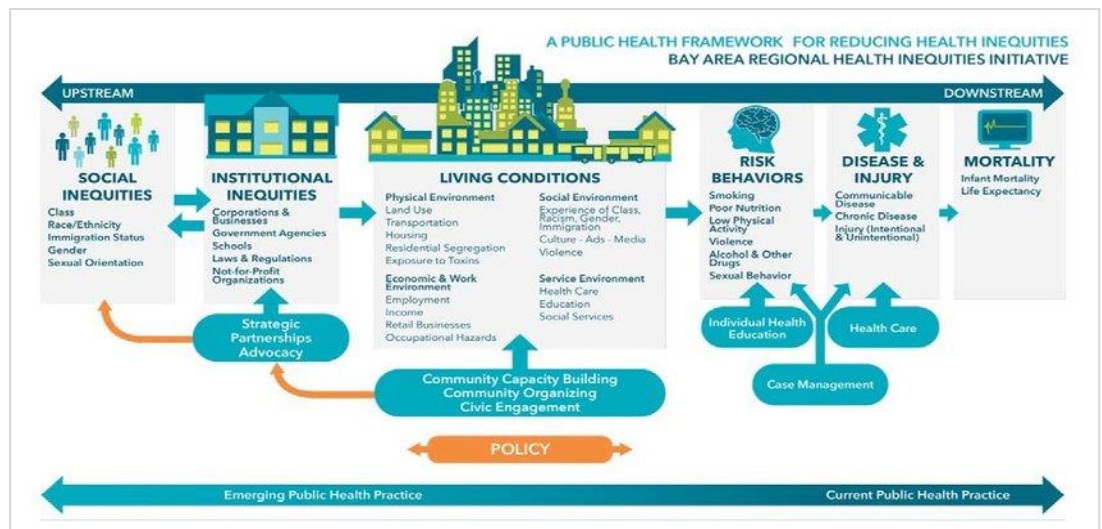


## Understanding Equity, Inequities and Complex Factors

As shown in the County Health Rankings Model above, there are many factors that affect health. Those factors are, in turn, affected by policies, systems and environmental factors. For example:

- Pricing and taxation on cigarettes impacts smoking levels.
- Zoning regulations impact how close or far a community is from a toxic waste dump.
- Stop signs, stop lights, school zones and roundabouts guide traffic patterns (and consequently the likelihood of accidents and injuries).

A model developed by the [Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative](#) (BARHII) shows how those factors intersect.



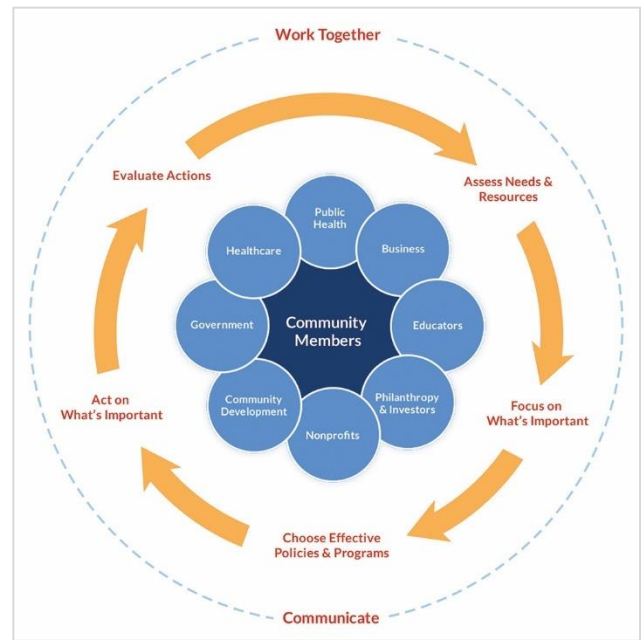
Another model helps explain the importance of recognizing that sometimes a one-size-fits-all solution does not work. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provided this [health equity 'bicycle' model](#). If a person wants to go on a bicycle ride with their friends and family, each person needs a different bicycle solution to enjoy the ride. This parallels the work in health equity. Knowing what solutions work best for which people helps focus the provision of the appropriate resources.

Because of complex factors and forces, and the importance of individuals and communities getting what they need to be healthy, Aspirus is focused on strategies that impact everyone positively as well as strategies that disproportionately affect those who are most vulnerable to disease or illness.

## Understanding the Process: Action Cycle

The Action Cycle (from the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps) outlines, at a very high level, the overall community health assessment and improvement process:

- Assessing needs and resources
- Focusing on what's important (i.e., prioritizing)
- Choosing effective policies and programs (i.e., planning)
- Acting on what's important (i.e., implementing)
- Evaluating actions
- Effectively communicating and collaborating with partners



<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/resources/take-action-cycle>

## Process and Methods Used – Applied

Aspirus Medford worked with community partners, gathered community input and compiled data to learn more about what is important to the community.

### Collaborators and / or Consultants

Aspirus Medford collaborated with the Taylor County Health Department to complete this work. No consultants or vendors were utilized.

### Community Input

More than 200 Taylor County residents shared their perspectives on key community health needs through an anonymous survey, with additional insights gathered from local stakeholders. Intentional outreach efforts ensured that the voices represented in this process included:

1. Individuals and organizations engaged in public health practice;
2. Medically underserved populations, those with low income, and minority groups within the hospital's service area; and
3. Representatives of the broader community who reflect the diverse interests and needs of Taylor County residents.

Over several months, a diverse group of community leaders—including representatives from government, healthcare, education, law enforcement, human services, policymaking, and other sectors—came together to examine the factors influencing community health. Facilitated by experts from Aspirus and the Taylor County Health Department, these sessions provided an opportunity to review available data, share perspectives, and identify areas of concern.

To guide the decision-making process, participants considered a set of prioritization criteria and engaged in a structured nominal group exercise, where each participant identified their top community health priorities. This collaborative effort helped define the most urgent needs and informed the development of targeted health strategies for Taylor County.

The following overarching themes emerged as shared priorities across stakeholder groups:

**Connection to the community.** Participants emphasized the need for stronger social connections and civic engagement. A lack of volunteerism and limited opportunities for inclusive community engagement were seen as barriers to maintaining a vibrant, thriving small-town environment. Strengthening community ties and creating welcoming, collaborative spaces were cited as essential to long-term health and resilience.

**Connection to resources.** While a range of services and supports exist, many residents remain unaware of available resources—or face barriers in accessing them. Participants noted a need for more effective communication, coordination, and collaboration among organizations to ensure that resources are used efficiently and equitably. Breaking down silos and promoting widespread information sharing will be critical to better supporting the community.

**Addressing underlying causes that impact health.** Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA), mental health challenges, and suicide prevention continue to be top concerns. Stakeholders stressed the importance of a comprehensive approach that includes awareness, prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support. Reducing stigma and increasing access to services will be essential to helping residents live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

**Connection to health care.** Access to timely, high-quality, and affordable healthcare remains a significant challenge. A limited number of providers, combined with ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties, can restrict access to care and impact outcomes. Addressing these barriers is vital to ensuring that all residents can receive the care they need close to home.

A summary of the results from the community survey can be found in [Appendix C](#). A summary of the results from community stakeholder input can be found in [Appendix D](#).

### **Input Received on the Last CHNA**

No known input on the previous CHNA was received.

### Health Status Data / Outside Data

In addition to gathering input directly from community members, Aspirus Medford and its partners also compiled outside data reflective of the overall population's health status. These 'health status data' are gathered by credible local, state and national governmental and non-governmental entities and published/shared.

Reflective of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) model, the data were grouped in the following categories:

- Health Outcomes – mortality and morbidity
- Social and Economic Factors
- Health Behaviors
- Clinical Care
- Physical Environment

For a detailed secondary data and sources packet, please contact: Amanda Lange, Community Health and Foundation at Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics via 715-748-7507 or by email at: [Amanda.lange@aspirus.org](mailto:Amanda.lange@aspirus.org).

The health department and hospital made some categorization modifications as the process evolved. Additional information about the health status data and corresponding sources can be found in [Appendix E](#).

## Community Needs and Prioritization Process

### *Data Compilation*

The prioritization of community health needs began with a comprehensive compilation and organization of data. Information from three key sources—community survey results, stakeholder input, and publicly available health status data—was synthesized into a unified data presentation. This approach allowed all relevant information related to specific health topics to be viewed collectively. For example, data on mental health included both community feedback from the survey and input, as well as quantitative health indicators such as prevalence and access to care. The presentation was structured both by health issue and by prioritization criteria to support informed discussion and decision-making.



### *Prioritization Process*

A series of virtual and in-person prioritization sessions were held in February and March 2025 with a wide range of community stakeholders, including leaders from healthcare, education, government, law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, and other sectors. During these sessions, participants reviewed the compiled data and rationale for each identified issue. At the conclusion of the discussions, attendees engaged in a nominal group exercise—individually selecting their top three health priorities based on the data, community impact, and alignment with shared values.

### *Community-Selected Priorities*

The final prioritization reflects a collective, community-driven evaluation of the most pressing health concerns in Taylor County. These priorities are closely aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Social Determinants of Health framework, recognizing that health is influenced not only by clinical care but also by the conditions in which people live, work, learn, and play.



Image Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/sdoh/index.html>

### *Hospital Prioritization*

Following the broader community stakeholder sessions, hospital leadership engaged in a structured prioritization process to review community feedback alongside local data and health indicators. This process involved evaluating community-identified needs using criteria such as urgency, alignment with hospital capabilities, potential for impact, and the presence of health disparities.

Through this lens, hospital administration identified four key health priorities to guide efforts over the next three years:

- **Mental Health & Suicide Prevention**
- **Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) & Recovery Support**
- **Access and Affordability of Care**
- **Healthy Relationships, Connectedness & Engagement**

In selecting these focus areas, the group emphasized the importance of addressing not just the symptoms but the underlying conditions that shape health outcomes. As such, all strategies moving forward will be developed with deliberate attention to the social determinants of health—including the scale and scope of each issue, equity gaps, economic stability, education, access to services, internal capacity, social connectedness, and community momentum.

This intentional, data-driven prioritization process ensures a comprehensive and equitable approach to improving the health of the communities we serve.

## **Final Prioritized Needs**

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

- Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
- Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse (AODA) & Recovery Support
- Access and Affordability of Care
- Healthy Relationships, Connectedness, and Engagement

## **Needs Not Selected**

Throughout the community health assessment process, several additional needs emerged as important concerns among residents and stakeholders. While Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics will not directly address these issues through its formal Implementation Strategy, we remain committed to supporting efforts that align with these priorities through community investments, partnerships, and advocacy.

The following issues were identified but not selected as formal strategic priorities:

- Transportation
- Resource Stewardship

#### *Transportation*

Transportation consistently emerged as a significant barrier, particularly in rural areas where access to healthcare, employment, and social services is often dependent on reliable transit. Community members frequently cited transportation challenges as a key obstacle to receiving timely and equitable care.

Although transportation falls outside the scope of our direct healthcare delivery mission, Aspirus Medford recognizes its critical role in overall health outcomes. We will continue to support and collaborate with local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other community stakeholders to explore creative, sustainable solutions. Our role will focus on convening conversations, advocating for resources, and participating in initiatives that seek to improve transportation access across the region.

#### *Resource Stewardship*

The theme of resource stewardship—ensuring the efficient and equitable use and access to local resources, services, and programs—was also highlighted during the assessment. While not selected as a stand-alone priority, this issue will be integrated into our broader strategy under the theme of Access & Affordability of Care. Specifically, Aspirus Medford will look for opportunities to enhance coordination among community partners, reduce duplication of services, and strengthen overall system efficiency.

A detailed overview of the selected health priorities—Mental Health & Suicide Prevention, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA), Access & Affordability of Care and Healthy Relationships, Connectedness, and Engagement—can be found on the following pages.

### **Healthcare Facilities and Community Resources**

A brief description of health care and other organizations available to address community needs is in [Appendix F](#).

## Mental Health & Suicide Prevention

### Why is it Important?

More than 1 in 5 adults in the United States (59.3 million people in 2022) has a mental illness.<sup>1</sup> Mental health and physical health are closely related, with a correlation between some physical chronic illnesses and poor mental health.<sup>2</sup> Some risk factors include lack of access to education, income, employment and housing; adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); social isolation; drug or alcohol use.<sup>2</sup> Untreated mental health issues can contribute to issues such as family conflicts, problems with drugs or alcohol, weakened immune system, some chronic diseases and more.<sup>3</sup>

Sources: (1) National Institute of Mental Health, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>. Accessed on 2/20/2025. (2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/mental-health/about/index.html>. Accessed on 2/20/2025. (3) Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968>. Accessed on 2/20/2025.

### Disparities and Inequities

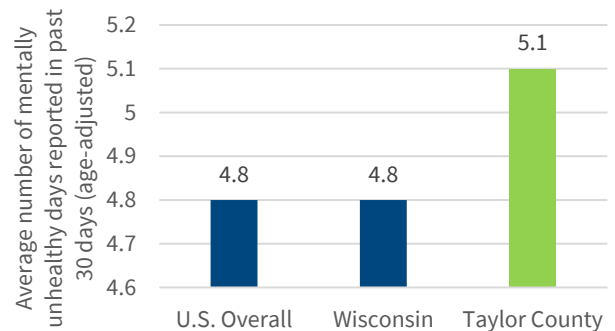
Disparities and inequities can show where interventions would be most beneficial.

- In the U.S., young adults (ages 18-25) have higher levels of any mental illness compared to adults 26-49 and over 50 years old.<sup>1</sup>
- Individuals in marginalized groups are more likely to have poor mental health.<sup>2</sup>
- Frequent mental distress is 2 or more times higher for individuals:<sup>3</sup>
  - with an annual household income of less than \$25K annually compared to those with an annual household income of \$75K or more.
  - with cognitive difficulty compared to those without a disability.
- The likelihood of depression decreases as education levels increase.<sup>4</sup>
- Depression is higher for women compared to men.<sup>4</sup>
- The suicide rate for men is four times the rate for women.<sup>5</sup>
- Over 50 percent of the students who identified in each of the following groups reported having anxiety: LGB; with disabilities; with food insecurity; with low grades; who are Hispanic; who have a multi-racial background.<sup>6</sup>

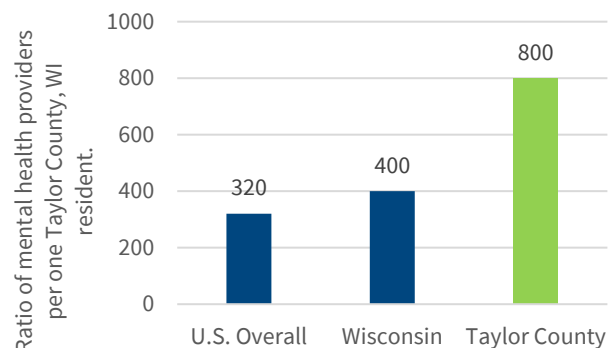
Sources: (1) National Institute of Mental Health, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>. Accessed on 2/20/2025. (2) Macintyre, A., Ferris, D., Gonçalves, B. et al. What has economics got to do with it? The impact of socioeconomic factors on mental health and the case for collective action. *Palgrave Commun* 4, 10(2018). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-018-0063-2>. (3) America's Health Rankings, [https://assets.america'shealthrankings.org/app/uploads/ahr\\_2023annual\\_executivebrief\\_final-web.pdf](https://assets.america'shealthrankings.org/app/uploads/ahr_2023annual_executivebrief_final-web.pdf). Accessed on 2/20/2025. (4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7224a1.htm>. Accessed on 2/21/2025. (5) National Institute of Mental Health, [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide#part\\_2557](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide#part_2557). Accessed on 2/21/2025. (6) Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey Summary Report (2021), [Summary Report: 2021 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#). Accessed on 2/21/2025.

### Data Highlights

#### Poor Mental Health Days



#### Mental Health Providers



#### Additional Data

According to the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

- 50% of teens reported anxiety – up from 37%
- 31% reported depression – up from 21%
- 23% reported self-harm – up from 14%
- 18% considered suicide in the past year – up from 11%
- 18% of those had a suicide plan

Sources: County Health Rankings, 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

### Community Perceptions & Challenges

- Mental health ranked among the top concerns among stakeholder input
- A shortage of providers and services was identified as a major barrier to access to care

**GOAL: Ensure residents' basic needs are met by addressing the key factors that influence their health.**

**Objective 1**

Improve access to mental health services and support systems.

- Increase availability of mental health resources
- Expand access to services for students through the CARES Model
- Reduce stigma surrounding mental health through education and community engagement

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1: Expand Clinical Services**

Aspirus Medford will continue to increase behavioral health service availability across all clinic locations.

**Strategy 2: Support School-Based Initiatives**

Aspirus Medford will maintain financial and programmatic support for:

- CARES (Counseling for All to Reach Emotional Success) Model;
- Raise Your Voice clubs across all school districts in the Aspirus Medford service area.

**Strategy 3: Community Collaboration & Stigma Reduction**

Partner with local coalitions and agencies to:

- Offer mental health education;
- Promote community engagement;
- Decrease stigma related to seeking help.

**Strategy 4: Develop Community Resources**

Support the creation and distribution of accessible mental health resources throughout the community.

**Strategy 5: Strengthen Cross – Sector Partnerships**

Continue collaboration with local schools, behavioral health providers, and the Taylor County Health Department regarding mental health.

**Strategy 6: Integrate Behavioral Health in Patient Care**

Implement the Behavioral Health module in EPIC to better support patient mental health within the electronic medical record system.

**Objective 2**

Reduce suicide attempts through prevention, education and access to resources.

**Strategies****Strategy 1: Strengthen Suicide Prevention Partnerships**

Continue collaboration with the Prevent Suicide Taylor County Coalition and the Price County Mental Health Coalition to deliver:

- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) trainings;
- Mental Health First Aid sessions focused on suicide prevention and early intervention.

**Strategy 2: Promote Community Engagement and Reduce Stigma**

Work with local coalitions and agencies to:

- Increase mental health awareness;
- Offer inclusive community programs;
- Reduce stigma around mental health and help-seeking.

**Strategy 3: Raise Awareness of Available Resources**

Enhance visibility and understanding of existing mental health resources, including:

- Promotion of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline;
- Local support services and counseling options.

In addition to these efforts, our organization continues to collaborate with the newly formed Prevent Suicide Taylor County coalition. Prevent Suicide Taylor County is a collaboration of county behavioral health service providers comprised of representation from local school districts, health care providers, parents, mental health specialists, government agencies and others. This group will specifically work to create awareness and address mental health issues in our community.

## Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse (AODA) & Recovery Support

### Why is it Important?

Alcohol and drug use are leading causes of preventable deaths.<sup>1</sup> Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death, with more than 480,000 deaths annually and a reduced life expectancy of 10 years.<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that 41,000 deaths due to secondhand smoke exposure occur annually.<sup>3</sup>

Alcohol is the most frequently used substance in the United States (ages 12+).<sup>1</sup> The number of alcohol-attributed deaths due to excessive alcohol use in the United States increased by 29% in the span of 5 years, from 138K in 2016-2017 to 178K in 2020-2021.<sup>1</sup> Short term risks and long-term impacts of excessive alcohol use include: violence (e.g., child maltreatment); unintentional injuries (e.g., falls); cancer; high blood pressure; long term memory problems and more.<sup>4</sup>

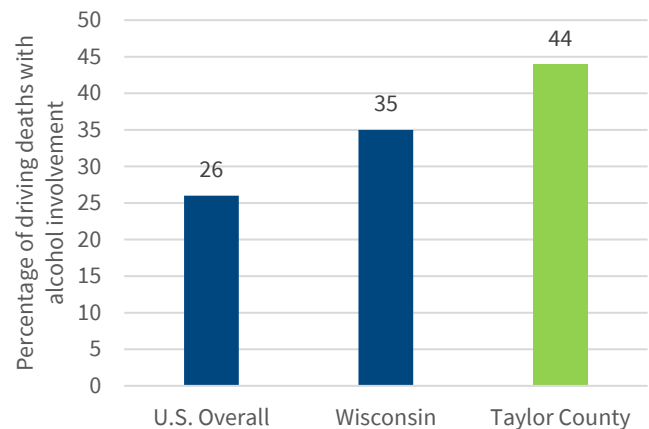
After a decade of increases in deaths due to drug overdoses (2011 to 2022), recent and preliminary data (for 2023 and 2024) show a leveling or decrease in overdose deaths in the United States. Drug dependence can result in a number of complications, including job loss, injuries, sexually transmitted infections, suicide, as well as family and social relationships.<sup>5</sup>

Substance misuse costs everyone. The estimated annual economic impact of alcohol misuse is \$249B and for illicit drug use, the cost is \$193B.<sup>6</sup> The estimated impact of smoking (healthcare spending and productivity) is \$600B (2018).<sup>7</sup>

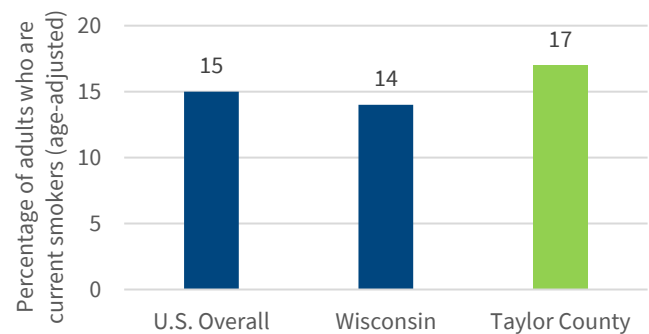
Sources: (1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/facts-stats/index.html>. Accessed on 2/23/2025 and then revisited on 3/23/2025; page not available on 3/23/2025. (2) Association of American Medical Colleges, <https://www.aamc.org/news/smoking-still-leading-cause-preventable-death-us-doctors-may-soon-have-new-tools-help-people-quit>. Accessed on 3/23/2025. (3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [https://archive.cdc.gov/www\\_cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/health\\_effects/tobacco\\_related\\_mortality/index.htm](https://archive.cdc.gov/www_cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/tobacco_related_mortality/index.htm). Accessed in February 2025 and then revisited on 3/23/2025. (4) Medical College of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Alcohol Policy Project, <https://www.mcw.edu/departments/comprehensive-injury-center/wi-alcohol-policy-project/understanding-the-problem>. Accessed on 3/23/2025. (5) Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/drug-addiction/symptoms-causes/syc-20365112>. Accessed on 3/23/2025. (6) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/addiction-and-substance-misuse/index.html>. Accessed on 3/23/2025. (7) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/data/cigarette-smoking-in-united-states.html>. Accessed on 3/23/2025.

### Data Highlights

#### Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths



#### Adult Smoking



#### Additional Data

Youth Substance Use Trends: According to the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

- 40% of teens reported consuming alcohol in the past 30 days, marking an 11% increase since 2019
- 18% of teens reported binge drinking within the last 30 days, up 13% from 2019
- 20% of teens reported using vaping products, up from 15% in 2019.
- 11% of teens reported using cigarettes, chew, cigars, or cigarillos, which is a 1% increase from 2019



Disparities and Inequities	Community Perceptions & Challenges
<p>Disparities and inequities can show where interventions would be most beneficial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022 and 2023, the highest drug overdose death rates were for individuals who are American Indian / Alaska Native and for individuals who are Black / African American.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Smoking is higher within a number of communities compared to their counterpart: rural; veterans; individuals with less than a high school diploma; individuals with blue collar or construction jobs; LGBT (compared to straight); communities.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Men and boys (compared to women and girls) accounted for approximately two-thirds of alcohol-attributable deaths (2020-2021).<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> <p>Sources: (1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db522.htm">https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db522.htm</a>. Accessed on 3/23/2025. (2) American Lung Association, <a href="https://www.lung.org/research/sotc/by-the-numbers/top-10-populations-affected">https://www.lung.org/research/sotc/by-the-numbers/top-10-populations-affected</a>. Accessed on 3/23/2025. (3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <a href="#">Alcohol and Public Health: Alcohol-Related Disease Impact</a>. Accessed on 3/23/2025.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community conversations identified substance use, specifically drugs and alcohol, as significant community concerns. Additionally, tobacco and vaping were highlighted as key issues affecting the community.</li> <li>• There is also a growing concern about the accessibility of recovery resources, with many community members expressing the need for more comprehensive support systems to address substance use and addiction.</li> </ul>

**GOAL: Prevent harmful substance use, alcohol misuse and tobacco/vaping use.**
**Objective 1**

Reduce alcohol consumption.

- Decrease current use and binge drinking of alcohol.

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1:** In collaboration with the Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners, educate community members and parents about the effects that alcohol has on the body, and the dangers of youth alcohol use.

**Strategy 2:** Continue to support the enhancement of youth skills regarding the avoidance of alcohol through continued programming via student leaders in “Taylor County Pure Performance”.

**Strategy 3:** Distribute alcohol density map and current alcohol burden data to City Council, County Board members, local businesses and manufacturing officials to increase accountability for providing alcohol to youth.

**Objective 2**

Decrease youth access to opiates and increase perception of harm related to opiates and other illegal drugs.

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1:** Increase the number of prescription drugs disposed of in Taylor County via permanent medication drop sites, take-back events, awareness, and collection efforts.

**Strategy 2:** Continued utilization of Chronic Opioid Use Monitoring reports by Aspirus Medford providers. These reports display information about patients who use opioids long term to identify patients who need preventive care or follow-up visits related to their diagnosis, condition, or related medication therapy.

**Strategy 3:** Continue community education and awareness opportunities like the HOPE Walk and opioid forums.

**Objective 3**

Decrease consumption of tobacco/vaping products among youth.

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1:** Collaborate with the Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners coalition to create tobacco/vaping campaigns to educate and create awareness and the effects that tobacco and vaping have on the body.

**Strategy 2:** In collaboration with the Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners and the Price County AODA Coalition, develop an electronic cigarette awareness campaign in all school districts.

## Access & Affordability of Care

### Why is it Important?

Access to affordable, quality health care is vital for maintaining physical, mental, and social well-being. While health insurance facilitates access to necessary services — including primary care, specialists, and emergency treatment — it does not guarantee care. Additional factors such as provider availability, affordability, and proximity significantly influence health outcomes.

As of 2023, approximately 4.9% of Wisconsin residents, or about 282,900 individuals, were uninsured, positioning the state among the top ten nationally for coverage rates. However, disparities persist: uninsured individuals are less likely to have a regular primary care provider and often forgo preventive services, dental care, chronic disease management, and behavioral health counseling. Consequently, they are more likely to receive diagnoses at advanced stages of illness, resulting in poorer health outcomes, diminished quality of life, and higher mortality rates.

Barriers to care extend beyond insurance status. Language differences, transportation challenges, and racial and ethnic disparities further hinder access to health services. For instance, in Wisconsin, 18.7% of Hispanic residents are uninsured, compared to 4.7% of White residents, highlighting significant inequities in coverage.

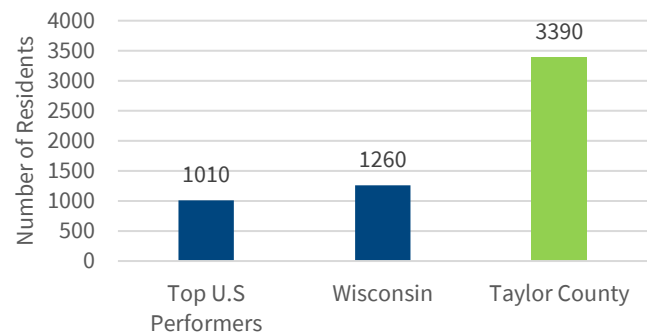
Access to reliable health information is equally crucial. Misinformation can lead to delayed care, poor health decisions, and increased health risks. Trusted sources such as the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local health departments provide accurate and up-to-date health information.

#### Sources:

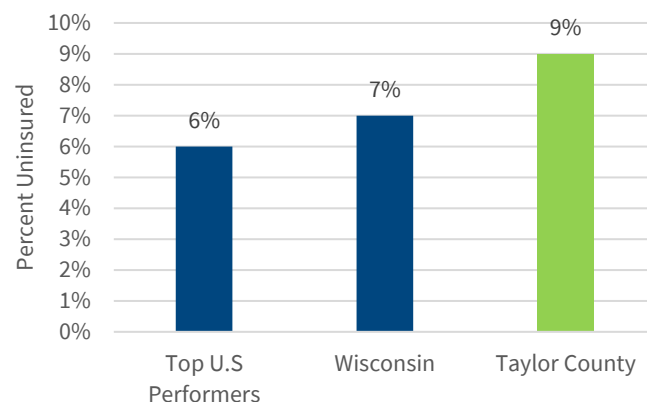
- County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/wisconsin/taylor?year=2023> accessed on January 5, 2025  
 - Association of Health Care Journalists. [https://healthjournalism.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Wisconsinfor-AHCJ2024.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://healthjournalism.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Wisconsinfor-AHCJ2024.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com) access on January 5, 2025.

### Data Highlights

Number of Residents per One Primary Care Provider



Percent Uninsured



Disparities and Inequities	Community Perceptions & Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taylor County spans over 60 miles north to south and 20 miles in other directions, creating significant geographic barriers to healthcare access—particularly for residents living outside of Medford.</li> <li>• Access challenges are further compounded by economic hardship. Many individuals struggle to afford prescriptions and non-emergency medical care, and limited income also affects their ability to pay for gas and transportation.</li> <li>• The rural nature of the community limits access to telehealth and other online services due to insufficient high-speed internet coverage in many areas.</li> <li>• Community members consistently express concern about the shortage of local healthcare providers. Recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals remain a persistent challenge for local systems.</li> </ul> <p>As a result, timely, affordable, and local healthcare remains difficult to access for many, with distance and transportation cited as key barriers.</p>	<p>During the community prioritization session, several key needs were identified to improve education access and resource coordination across Taylor County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved information sharing to ensure residents and organizations are aware of available resources.</li> <li>• The formation of a dedicated coalition or team with clearly defined goals to drive county-wide collaboration around community needs.</li> <li>• Stronger interagency collaboration among county organizations and service providers.</li> <li>• Greater promotion and visibility of educational programs and supportive services.</li> </ul> <p>Development of a centralized, easily accessible “One-Stop Shop” platform or hub to connect individuals with local resources and services.</p>

**GOAL: Residents can have their basic needs met by addressing factors that influence their health.**

**Objective 1**

Increase access to primary care services for all community members.

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1: Strengthen the Provider Workforce**

Prioritize the recruitment and retention of primary care providers at Aspirus Medford to ensure consistent and comprehensive care availability.

**Strategy 2: Enhance Patient-Provider Communication**

Promote and expand the use of *MyAspirus* to support efficient, secure, and timely communication between patients and healthcare providers.

**Strategy 3: Address Barriers to Access**

Identify and actively work to overcome key access challenges such as: transportation limitations, healthcare costs and provider shortages, and scheduling delays.

**Objective 2**

Increase access to same day health care services for timely, affordable care.

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1: Maintain and Promote Urgent Care Services**

Aspirus Medford will continue to offer Urgent Care to provide cost-effective, same-day care for patients with critical but non-emergent needs.

**Strategy 2: Maintain Same-Day Access in Primary Care**

Aspirus Medford will ensure same-day appointment availability in its primary care clinics and Urgent Care, improving access and reducing delays in care.

**Objective 3**

Increase health literacy and improve access to community health resources.

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1: Promote Access to Community Resources**

Aspirus Health will continue to support the FindHelp platform, allowing individuals to easily search for local resources directly from the Aspirus website.

**Strategy 2: Foster County-Wide Collaboration**

Establish a collaborative county team focused on clearly defined goals related to identifying and addressing priority community health needs.

**Strategy 3: Expand Community Education Initiatives**

Aspirus Medford will explore innovative approaches to community health education through:

- Health fairs and expos;
- Engagement sessions featuring expert presenters;
- Partnerships with schools, businesses and local organizations.

**Strategy 4: Strengthen Public Outreach and Communication**

Aspirus Medford will continue to inform and empower the public through:

- Free educational handouts distributed at community events
- Public service announcements (PSAs) via radio, newspaper and paid advertisements
- Social media campaigns to extend digital reach
- Public health forums, seminars and community sessions

We recognize that improving community health begins with both accessible care and empowered, informed individuals. Aspirus Medford is committed to reducing barriers to care and expanding educational opportunities that support healthier lives for all community members.

Current and planned community education efforts include:

- Raising awareness of the key health priorities identified in this report.
- Providing disease prevention education and practical tips for healthy living.
- Educating the community about the high level of care mid-level providers (such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants) can offer at clinics—even when a physician is not present.
- Emphasizing the importance of establishing and regularly seeing a primary care provider for long-term health and prevention.
- Highlighting the range of specialty care services available through Aspirus.
- Ensuring patients understand their right to change providers at any time, empowering them to make choices that best support their personal health and well-being.

Through these efforts, we aim to foster greater understanding of the healthcare system, promote early intervention and prevention, and ensure every individual feels confident in accessing the care they need.

## Healthy Relationships, Connectedness, and Engagement

### Why is it Important?

Meaningful relationships and regular social interaction significantly influence individual and community health. Strong social ties are linked to lower rates of anxiety, depression, and chronic illness, and are associated with higher life satisfaction and well-being.

In contrast, social isolation increases health risks. The U.S. Surgeon General's 2023 advisory states that lacking connection can raise the risk of premature death as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Nearly half of U.S. adults report feeling lonely, with young and older adults most affected.

Fostering social connectedness, civic engagement, and community involvement helps buffer life's challenges, reduce disparities, and build resilience. When people feel connected, they're more likely to access resources, support one another, and contribute to healthier environments.

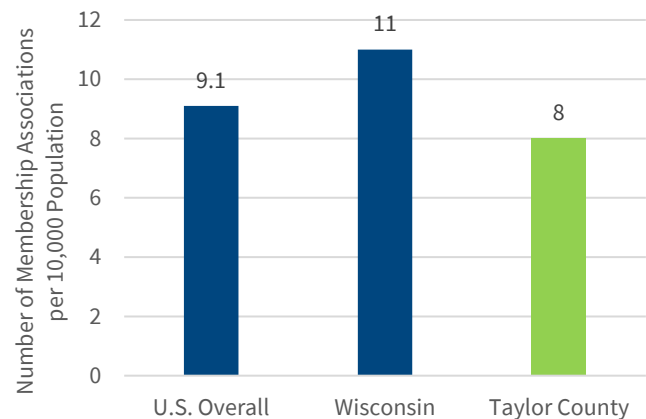
Volunteering is a powerful way to build social bonds and improve well-being. In 2021, over 60 million Americans volunteered, contributing 4.1 billion service hours. Volunteering reduces stress, boosts happiness, and connects individuals to purpose and community.

Promoting community engagement and volunteerism is a vital strategy for improving public health and creating more vibrant, inclusive communities.

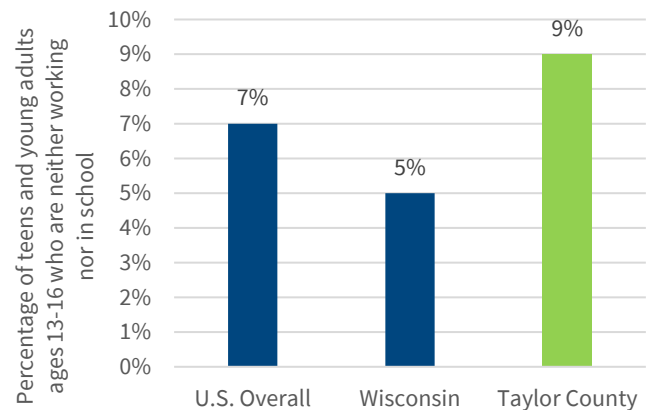
Sources: (1) U.S. Surgeon General Advisory (2023) – *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection* <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>  
 (2) AmeriCorps & U.S. Census Bureau (2023) – *Volunteering and Civic Life in America: 2021 Report* <https://www.americorps.gov/about/our-impact/volunteering-civic-life>  
 (3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – *Loneliness and Social Isolation Linked to Serious Health Conditions* <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/risk-factors/index.html#:~:text=Social%20isolation%20and%20loneliness%20can,Depression%20and%20anxiety>

### Data Highlights

#### Social Associations



#### Teen Connectedness





<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Disparities and Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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>1</sup></li> <li>- There are only 8.8 membership associations per 10,000 population in Taylor County compared to 11.5 of Wisconsinites.</li> </ul> <p><small>Sources: (1) 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. <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4039297/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4039297/</a>. (3) 2020 County Health Rankings.</small></p>	<p><i>Additional Information:</i></p> <p>Community stakeholders expressed concern about a perceived decline in civic engagement and social connection. Many noted that while opportunities for involvement exist, community members often lack the motivation, awareness, or sense of belonging that encourages participation.</p> <p>There is a shared desire to foster a stronger sense of community pride and engagement, one where individuals feel connected, supported, and inspired to contribute. Stakeholders envision a thriving community where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents are actively involved in local events, volunteerism, and civic life</li> <li>• People feel a sense of purpose, belonging, and identity within the community</li> <li>• Businesses are drawn to invest and remain because the community is vibrant, collaborative, and welcoming</li> </ul> <p><small>Sources: 2021 County Health Rankings, 2022 Youth Risk Behavior Survey</small></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community Perceptions &amp; Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community stakeholders voiced concern about a flourishing community as members don't appear to have a desire to be involved.</li> <li>• It is the wish of stakeholders to cultivate a community that people want to live in and businesses want to be in.</li> </ul>	

**GOAL: Foster meaningful connections to engage residents at every stage of life.****Objective 1**

Facilitate and promote volunteerism and civic engagement within the community.

**Strategies****Strategy 1: Health Education and Engagement**

Aspirus Medford will explore and implement innovative methods to educate the community on vital health topics. This will include hosting community engagement sessions, health fairs, and other events where programs are delivered by subject matter experts.

**Strategy 2: Community Resource Access**

Aspirus Health will enhance support for the FindHelp platform, allowing individuals to easily access and search community resources directly through the Aspirus website, ensuring timely and relevant assistance.

**Strategy 3: Supporting Volunteerism and Civic Engagement**

Aspirus Health will continue to champion and support community-driven initiatives that encourage volunteerism, strengthen community connectedness, and promote civic involvement in the community.

Many organizations in our region have innovative ideas, dedicated teams, and a strong desire to educate and empower the public to make healthier choices. However, limited financial resources often stand in the way of bringing these strategies to life.

To help overcome this barrier, Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics is committed to sustaining its Community Benefit Funding Program. This initiative provides funding opportunities for local agencies, organizations, and community members to support programs and projects that align with identified health needs and directly benefit the community.

Through this continued investment, we aim to strengthen community capacity, foster collaboration, and drive measurable progress toward a healthier, more equitable future for all.

## Social and Economic Needs and/or Equity

Research shows that social and economic factors (social drivers) are significant ‘upstream’ contributors to poor mental health and substance use issues (as well as many other health issues). In clinical settings, Aspirus hospitals are gathering social drivers of health data as a way to understand what matters most to patients and the community, and then to identify focused interventions and policy changes. Using aggregated patient-level social drivers data can assist in understanding the root causes of complex health issues to improve access to preventative and chronic care services. Linking patient level SDOH data and community level data can provide stronger clinical-community linkages to help connect healthcare providers, community organizations and public health agencies. This work demonstrates Aspirus’ commitment to ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to care.

Aspirus Medford is committed to recognizing and addressing health-related social needs as part of its overall community health improvement efforts. A number of related strategies/approaches are being implemented within the hospital and clinics as well as with other community partners (e.g., Taylor County Health Department).

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

As appropriate, Aspirus Medford staff also will be participating in coalitions and community-level efforts to address other health-related social needs (e.g., transportation, housing).

## Evaluation of Impact from the Previous CHNA Implementation Strategy

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics priority health issues from the previous CHNA included:

- Mental Health
- Substance Misuse (including Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping)
- Healthcare Quality & Access
- Community Engagement

A summary of the impact of efforts to address those needs is included in [Appendix G](#).

## Approval by the Hospital Board

The CHNA report was reviewed and approved by the Aspirus Medford’s Northwest Division Board of Directors on May 21, 2025.

## Conclusion

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

## Appendices

## Appendix A: Demographics and Related Descriptors

The table below outlines some of the demographic characteristics of Taylor County, Wisconsin.

	Taylor County	Wisconsin
Population	19,913	5,893,718
Age <18	23.3%	21.0%
Age 65+	20.7%	19.2%
Median age	44.1	40.5
White alone	94.8%	80.4%
Black or African American alone	<1%	6.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	<1%	1.0%
Asian alone	<1%	3.0%
Two or more races	3.0%	6.1%
Hispanic or Latino	2.8%	7.6%
Language other than English spoken at home	4.9%	9.3%
High school graduate or higher	90.2%	93.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	16.7%	33.8%
Individuals who are veterans	7.7%	5.9%
Individuals with disabilities	12.5%	12.7%
Persons in poverty	9.3%	10.7%
Median household income	\$63,142	\$74,631
Percent without healthcare coverage	7.3%	4.9%
Percent using public insurance (Medicaid, Medicare, veterans' benefits, etc.)	37.1%	36.0%

Sources:

WI: [American Community Survey table S2704](#), accessed on January 5, 2025.

WI: [Wisconsin - Census Bureau Profile](#) and corresponding tables accessed on January 5, 2025.

Taylor County: Accessed on January 6, 2025. Census Tables:

S1501 Educational Attainment

P8 Race and P9 Ethnicity

[Census Bureau Profiles Results](#) – with links to Wisconsin and Taylor County

## **Demographic Disparities**

### ***Plain People***

The term *Plain People* typically refers to members of traditional Anabaptist communities such as the Amish and Old Order Mennonites. These individuals often live in rural areas and follow cultural and religious practices that emphasize simplicity, modesty, and separation from many aspects of modern society. As a result, they may face unique challenges related to healthcare access, health education, and preventive care.

Plain communities may avoid or delay seeking medical attention, particularly from hospitals or specialists, due to beliefs about self-reliance, concerns about cost, or mistrust of certain medical interventions. In addition, transportation limitations, language barriers (particularly among German-speaking sects), and lack of engagement with health-related technologies (such as phones or the internet) can create further obstacles to care.

For these reasons, members of Plain communities are considered potentially vulnerable to poorer health outcomes and are recognized as a key population for outreach, trust-building, and culturally sensitive care in community health planning.

## Appendix B: Frameworks and Models of Factors that Impact Health and Health Equity

Aspirus strives to include research, evidence and best practices into its community health improvement work. This appendix includes some frameworks and models that show the intersection between health and a variety of factors.

### Model Type: Contributors to Health and Illness

Title / Name	Source
Social Ecological Model of Health	Wisconsin Department of Health Services <a href="https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03361.pdf">https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03361.pdf</a>
Mental Health and Well-Being: A Socio-Ecological Model	University of Minnesota <a href="https://mch.umn.edu/sem/">https://mch.umn.edu/sem/</a> and <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/14p1GfTVwbDU96TmkPr0zmP2IJENEIXsk/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/14p1GfTVwbDU96TmkPr0zmP2IJENEIXsk/view</a>
Social Drivers of Health	Midwest Kidney Network <a href="https://www.midwestkidneynetwork.org/equity-in-healthcare/social-drivers-of-health-sdoh">https://www.midwestkidneynetwork.org/equity-in-healthcare/social-drivers-of-health-sdoh</a>
Social Determinants of Health	Healthy People 2030 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <a href="https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health">https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health</a>
Social Determinants of Health	Beckers Hospital Review Becker's Hospital Review. (n.d.). <i>The importance of targeting social determinants of health for population health initiatives: 3 key takeaways</i> . Retrieved January 3, 2025, from <a href="https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/strategy/the-importance-of-targeting-social-determinants-of-health-for-population-health-initiatives-3-key-takeaways/">https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/strategy/the-importance-of-targeting-social-determinants-of-health-for-population-health-initiatives-3-key-takeaways/</a>
Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being	National Association of Community Health Centers and the Rippel Foundation <a href="https://www.nachc.org/resource/vital-conditions-for-health-and-well-being/">https://www.nachc.org/resource/vital-conditions-for-health-and-well-being/</a> and <a href="https://rippel.org/vital-conditions/">https://rippel.org/vital-conditions/</a>
Societal Factors that Influence Health: A Framework for Hospitals	American Hospital Association (2024) <a href="https://www.aha.org/societalfactors">https://www.aha.org/societalfactors</a> and <a href="https://www.aha.org/societalfactors/SocietalFactorsFramework_Fall2024.pdf">SocietalFactorsFramework_Fall2024.pdf</a>
Impact of Social Determinants of Health	American Hospital Association (2018) <a href="https://www.aha.org/landing-page/addressing-social-determinants-health-presentation">https://www.aha.org/landing-page/addressing-social-determinants-health-presentation</a>
Social Determinants and Social Needs: Moving Beyond Midstream	Brian Castrucci and John Auerbach in <a href="https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/meeting-individual-social-needs-falls-short-addressing-social-determinants-health">https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/meeting-individual-social-needs-falls-short-addressing-social-determinants-health</a>
Social Determinants and Social Needs	National Academies <a href="https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/25982/chapter/4#36">https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/25982/chapter/4#36</a>

### Model Type: Health Equity

Title / Name	Source
Equality and Equity (bicycles)	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation <a href="https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/infographics/visualizing-health-equity.html">https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/infographics/visualizing-health-equity.html</a>
Framework for Reducing Health Inequities	Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII) <a href="https://barhii.org/framework">https://barhii.org/framework</a>



**Model Type: Assessment, Planning and Implementation Process**

Title / Name	Source
Action Cycle	County Health Rankings and Roadmaps <a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/resources/take-action-cycle">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/resources/take-action-cycle</a>
Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP)	National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) <a href="https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/performance-improvement/community-health-assessment/mapp">https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/performance-improvement/community-health-assessment/mapp</a>
Community Health Assessment Toolkit	AHA Community Health Improvement [American Hospital Association (AHA) Community Health Improvement] <a href="https://www.healthycommunities.org/resources/community-health-assessment-toolkit">https://www.healthycommunities.org/resources/community-health-assessment-toolkit</a>

**Model Type: Other**

Title / Name	Source
Why Collect Standardized Data on Social Drivers of Health	National Association of Community Health Centers <a href="https://www.nachc.org/about-nachc/our-work/social-drivers-of-health/">https://www.nachc.org/about-nachc/our-work/social-drivers-of-health/</a>

## Appendix C: Community Input – Community Survey

As part of the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics, in collaboration with the Taylor County Health Department, conducted a community-wide survey to gather input on the health needs and priorities of residents across Taylor County. The survey aimed to ensure community voices were reflected in shaping future health initiatives.

### ***Distribution***

The survey was distributed through multiple channels to maximize reach and accessibility. It was made available both electronically and in paper form and was published in *The Shopper*, a free local publication delivered to every household in Taylor County. In addition, numerous partner organizations – including public libraries, Chambers of Commerce, the Taylor County Health Department, Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), school districts, and local community coalitions—supported distribution to help ensure broad community awareness and participation.

### ***Who Responded***

Approximately 250 individuals completed the survey. The demographic profile of respondents differed in several ways from the general population of Taylor County. Compared to county-wide demographics, survey participants were more likely to:

- Be female
- Identify as non-Hispanic or Latino
- Have attained education beyond high school
- Be married
- Own their home

While the feedback collected provides valuable insights, it is important to note that the respondent group is not fully representative of the county's overall population. This context should be considered when interpreting the survey results and identifying health priorities.

Demographic Measure	Taylor County	Survey Respondents
Sex	Male: 50.9% Female: 49.1%	Male: 17% Female: 80% Prefer not to say: 3%
Age Distribution	Under age 18: 23.3% 18-64: 56.0% 65+: 20.7%	Under age: 0% 18-64: 68% 65+: 32%
Ethnicity/Race	Hispanic or Latino: 2.8% Not Hispanic or Latino: 97.2%	White/Caucasian: 98% All Other: 2%
Highest Level of Education	High School Graduate or Higher: 90.2%  Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 16.7%	Less than High School: 1% High School/GED: 11% Some College: 20% Associate's Degree: 17% Bachelor's Degree: 31% Graduate/Professional Degree: 20%
Household Income	Median household income: \$63,142  Persons in Poverty: 9.3%	\$25,000 or less: 4% \$25,001 to \$74,999: 29% \$75,000 to \$99,999: 21% Over \$100,000: 35% Prefer not to say: 11%
Household Situation	Homeownership (percentage of occupied housing units that are owned by the occupier): 79.2%	Renter: 8% Owner with a mortgage: 55% Owner without a mortgage: 35% Living with others and helping to pay rent/mortgage: 2%

Citations below are for the "Taylor County" column data.

WI: [American Community Survey table S2704](#), accessed on January 5, 2025.

WI: [Wisconsin - Census Bureau Profile](#) and corresponding tables accessed on January 5, 2025.

Taylor County: Accessed on January 6, 2025. Census Tables:

S1501 Educational Attainment

P8 Race and P9 Ethnicity

[Census Bureau Profiles Results](#) – with links to Wisconsin and Taylor County

### Top Community Concerns

As part of the community survey, respondents were asked to rate a series of health and social issues based on their level of concern. Participants could select from a range of responses, including “Very Concerned,” “Somewhat Concerned,” or “Concerned” to “Not At All Concerned.”

The following results reflect the percentage of respondents who expressed **any level of concern**—combining those who answered “Concerned,” “Somewhat Concerned,” or “Very Concerned”—for each issue:

Top Community Concerns	
Abuse and misuse of alcohol	80.8%
Abuse and misuse of prescription drugs	84.5%
Acceptance of people who are different	74.8%
Access to reliable transportation	60.3%
Affordability of childcare	58.9%
Affordability of dental care	70.0%
Affordability of elder care	67.5%
Affordability of health care	88.1%
Affordability of mental health, alcohol or drug services/treatment	60.7%
Amount of quality time parents get to spend with their children	78.3%
Availability of affordable housing	81.3%
Availability of high-speed internet	71.2%
Availability of jobs that pay enough to meet basic household expenses	83.7%
Drinking and Driving	92.5%
E-cigarettes/vaping	87.7%
Family violence or abuse of adults and/or children	75.7%
Illegal drug use	90.1%
Lack of physical activity	82.1%

Meeting the needs of the growing aging population	82.8%
My personal safety in my home	29.5%
My safety when alone in my neighborhood after dark	44.0%
Texting and Driving	94.8%
Unhealthy eating	85.7%

These findings help highlight the issues that community members perceive as most pressing, and they provide a strong foundation for guiding health improvement strategies and future community investments.

Additional survey results and data is available here: [2025-2028 Taylor County Data Day](#).

## Appendix D: Community Input – Community Stakeholder Input

Community stakeholders were invited to attend an in-person prioritization meeting held February 5, 2025. Community stakeholders represented a wide variety of sectors. An abbreviated list of invitees is below.

Some agencies had multiple representatives. For the purposes of this list, each agency is included only once.

Agency/s	Sector
<b>ADRC of Taylor County</b>	Aging
<b>Aspirus Medford Hospital &amp; Clinics</b>	Health care
<b>City of Medford</b>	Local Government / Policymaker
<b>Fulcrum Foundation</b>	Philanthropy
<b>Gilman School District</b>	Schools
<b>Healthfirst – WIC*</b>	Health care
<b>Klinner Insurance</b>	Local Business
<b>Medford Area Public School District</b>	Schools
<b>Prevent Suicide Taylor County</b>	Community Agency / Coalition
<b>Rib Lake School District</b>	Schools
<b>Salvation Army*</b>	Community Agency
<b>Sandbox Childcare Center</b>	Childcare
<b>Taylor County Board</b>	Local Government / Policymaker
<b>Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners</b>	Community Agency / Coalition
<b>Taylor County Emergency Management</b>	Local Government / Emergency Management
<b>Taylor County Health Department*</b>	Local Government / Public Health
<b>Taylor County Housing Authority*</b>	Local Government / Housing
<b>Taylor County Human Services*</b>	Local Government / Services
<b>Taylor County Hybrid Treatment Court*</b>	Local Government
<b>Taylor County Sheriff's Department</b>	Local Government / Law Enforcement
<b>The R.E.C. Center</b>	Community Agency
<b>United Way of Taylor County</b>	Community Agency
<b>Village of Gilman</b>	Local Government
<b>Women, Infants and Children Program*</b>	Local Government / Public Health / Early Childhood

\* Agencies that represent individuals who are medically underserved, have low income, or are considered among the minority populations served by the hospital.

### *Prioritization Process*

During this session, participants reviewed the compiled data and rationale for each identified issue. At the conclusion of the discussions, attendees engaged in a nominal group exercise—individually selecting their top three health priorities based on the data, community impact, and alignment with shared values.

### *Community-Selected Priorities*

The final prioritization reflects a collective, community-driven evaluation of the most pressing health concerns in Taylor County. These priorities are closely aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Social Determinants of Health framework, recognizing that health is influenced not only by clinical care but also by the conditions in which people live, work, learn, and play.



Image Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/sdoh/index.html>

**Appendix E: Health Status Data and Sources (Outside Data)**

In addition to gathering direct input from community members, Aspirus Medford also analyzed secondary data to better understand the overall health status of the population. These health status indicators were sourced from credible local, state, and national governmental and non-governmental organizations and are publicly available through various published reports and databases.

Aligned with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) model, the data were categorized into the following key domains:

- Health Outcomes – including measures of mortality and morbidity
- Social and Economic Factors – such as education, income, and employment
- Health Behaviors – including tobacco use, physical activity, and nutrition
- Clinical Care – access to and quality of health care services
- Physical Environment – including housing, air, and water quality

For a copy of the complete secondary data and source packet, please contact:

Amanda Lange, Community Health and Foundation

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics

Phone: 715-748-7507

Email: [Amanda.Lange@aspirus.org](mailto:Amanda.Lange@aspirus.org)



## Appendix F: Healthcare Facilities and Community Resources

A subset of the healthcare and other resources in the community that can help address community health needs are in the table below. A more comprehensive set of resources can be found at [findhelp.org](https://aspiruscommunity-resources.findhelp.com/) or <https://aspiruscommunity-resources.findhelp.com/>, and then searching by zip code and program need/area.

### Education & Libraries

- Gilman Public Schools
- Medford Public Schools
- Rib Lake Public Schools
- Holy Rosary Catholic Schools
- Immanuel Lutheran Christian Day School
- Rural Virtual Academy (RVA)
- SOAR (Medford Schools)
- Northcentral Technical College – Medford Campus
- Extension Taylor County
- Taylor County Literacy Council
- Medford Public Library
- Jean M. Thomsen Memorial Library
- Rib Lake Public Library
- Westboro Public Library
- Gilman Public Library

### Childcare

- Kiddie Cove Daycare
- SandBox Child Care & Preschool
- Little Lamb Academy
- Head Start (Medford)
- Head Start (Dorchester)

### Employment & Transportation

- Job Center of Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Works (W2)
- Workforce Resource
- Medford Taxi/Brown Cab Service
- Comfort Carriers
- Commission on Aging Transportation Services
- PDQ Medical Transit
- Taylor County Veteran's Service
- Black River Industries, Inc.
- Division of Workforce Development/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

### Health & Wellness

- Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics
- Healthfirst
- Abiding Care
- Taylored Family Care Clinic
- Bone & Joint Clinic
- Borealis Wellness
- Aspirus Therapy & Fitness
- Sport & Spine Physical Therapy
- Hope Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc.
- Healthview Eye Center
- Eye Clinic of Wisconsin
- Medford Dental Clinic
- Marshfield Clinic Dental Center
- Gelhaus Dental Clinic
- First Impressions Pediatrics Dentistry & Orthodontics
- Northwoods Dentistry
- Dean R. Hussong, DDS
- Taylor County Human Services
- Taylor County Veterans Services
- Taylor County Treatment Court
- Taylor County Health Department
- Taylor County Commission on Aging
- Taylor County Victim Witness
- Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) – Northern Region

### Mental Health

- Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics
- Counseling Connections
- Courage to Change Recovery
- New Vision Wilderness Therapy

**Food & Nutrition**

- Taylor County WIC Program
- Medford Farmers' Market
- Medford School District Meals in a Backpack
- Ruby's Food Pantry
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church
- Second Chance Gift Pantry
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church
- Christ Community Church
- Senior Dining Sites

**Clothing, Housing & Disasters**

- Stepping Stones
- Beds for Christ
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace
- Cribs for Kids
- Diapers for Angels
- Goodwill Industries
- St. Vincent De Paul
- Taylor County Housing Authority
- WI Housing & Economic Authority
- Taylor County Energy Assistance
- Taylor County Supportive Housing
- Second Chance Thrift
- Circle of Faith Thrift Store
- Taylor County Emergency Management
- Salvation Army
- American Red Cross

**Volunteering**

- Taylor County Historical Society
- Taylor County Humane Society
- Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners
- United Way of Taylor County
- Taylor County Restorative Justice

**Things to Do**

- Timm's Hill Trail
- Ice Age Trail
- Taylor County Forests & Parks
- City of Medford
- Huey's Hideaway Children's Museum
- Village of Gilman
- Village of Rib Lake
- WI DNR Lakes Map
- Mondeaux Dam Recreational Area
- Chequamegon National Forest
- Forest Springs
- Perkinstown Winter Sports Area
- Whittlesey Lions Park
- Medford Chamber of Commerce
- Taylor County Tourism
- Borders Inn
- Sports Page Bowl & Grill
- Broadway Theater
- Simek Center
- Chequamegon Bird Club
- Tee High Golf Course
- Black River Golf Course
- Medford Curling Club

**Legal Services**

- Medford Police Department
- Rib Lake Police Department
- Gilman Police Department
- Taylor County Sheriff's Department
- Judicare
- Taylor County Crime Stoppers

**Support Groups**

- Adoptive Families Group
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Alzheimer's Support Group
- Resolve through Sharing
- Autism Support Group

## **Appendix G: Evaluation of Impact from the Previous CHNA Implementation Strategy**

The 2022 CHNA for Aspirus Medford and the Taylor County Health Department focused on the following areas:

- Mental Health
- Substance Misuse (including Alcohol, Vaping and tobacco)
- Healthcare Quality and Access
- Community Engagement

Throughout the implementation of strategies identified in the previous plan for these health focus areas, ongoing evaluations were completed to help measure the effectiveness of the previous initiatives. The following is a review of achievements for these initiatives.

### **MENTAL HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Goal: Increase access to mental health resources and improve the mental health of our community.**

#### **Expanding Access Through School-Based Services**

##### **Medford School District CARES Model**

Since its launch in October 2017, the CARES (Counseling for All to Reach Emotional Success) Model has transformed access to mental health services within the Medford Area Public School District. A collaborative effort between Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics, Medford Area Public School District, and Counseling Connection, this school-based counseling model has provided direct access to mental health professionals on-site.

Over time, CARES has grown into a comprehensive mental health initiative offering:

- Individual counseling
- Mental health literacy education
- Family and school staff engagement
- Cross-sector collaboration among community providers
- Evidence-based trainings (e.g., *Mental Health First Aid, Love and Logic*)
- DPI Mental Health Grant support
- CARES Weeks for educators and students
- Wellness programming for staff and families
- Parent education and compassion resiliency training

More than 500 students have received counseling services since the program's inception. Additionally, the Gilman, Phillips, and Rib Lake School Districts have adopted the CARES Model with continued funding support from Aspirus Medford.

**Community Education & Engagement****Guest Speaker: Gilbert Brown**

Former Green Bay Packer Gilbert Brown visited the Medford School District, delivering motivational talks focused on anti-bullying and community inspiration. Funded by the Aspirus Community Benefit program, this event brought together over 500 students, parents, educators, and community members, fostering connection and awareness around mental health and resilience.

**Annual CARES Conference**

Each year, more than 100 parents, professionals, and community members representing 20+ schools and organizations attend the CARES Conference. Co-hosted by Aspirus Medford and the Medford School District, the event features expert-led sessions on mental health, family dynamics, and youth development.

**Suicide Prevention & Awareness Walk**

In partnership with Prevent Suicide Taylor County, Aspirus Medford supports the county's annual Suicide Prevention and Awareness Walk. With more than 200 participants annually, the event provides education, local resources, and powerful personal stories from survivors and affected families, fostering healing and community support.

**Mental Health Access & Harm Reduction****Access to Behavioral Health Services**

Aspirus continues to provide comprehensive mental health services across all age groups through:

- Inpatient, outpatient, and aftercare programs
- 24/7 access to crisis services at Stress Centers
- Day treatment and counseling programs at Behavioral Health Centers
- Specialized support for substance misuse and dependency
- The multidisciplinary behavioral health team includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, nurses, expressive therapists, and more—ensuring personalized, compassionate care.

**Reducing Harm with Yondr Pouches**

Aspirus Medford funded the implementation of Yondr pouches at Medford Area Senior High and Middle Schools to reduce distractions and support student mental health. These pouches secure smartphones during the school day, promoting a healthier learning environment while addressing social media pressures, bullying, vaping, and in-school conflicts.

## Investing in Community Wellness

### The REC Center Support

Aspirus Medford Community Benefit program provided funding for The REC Center, a facility dedicated to offering a safe, inclusive space for personal growth and well-being. The center features:

- A youth center with supervised activities (in development)
- 24-hour fitness access
- Indoor walking track and pickleball courts
- Saunas, locker rooms, and showers
- Instructor-led classes including Zumba, Pound, and Total Body Circuit
- A wellness shake bar

The center is designed to create a welcoming community space beyond home and school, encouraging healthy routines and social connection.



**SUBSTANCE MISUSE ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Goal: Prevent harmful substance use, alcohol misuse and tobacco/vaping use.**

**Safe Medication Disposal****Public Medication Drop Box**

Since March 2021, the Aspirus Medford Retail Pharmacy has maintained a public medication drop box, promoting the safe and environmentally responsible disposal of expired or unused medications. This resource helps reduce the risk of medication misuse within the community. Each year, 300–500 pounds of medications are safely collected and disposed of.

**Strengthening Prescribing Practices****Diagnosis Requirement for Opioids**

Implemented in September 2019, all opioid prescriptions at Aspirus require an associated diagnosis. This policy enhances prescribing transparency and supports pharmacists in verifying the medical necessity of opioid use, further reinforcing efforts to combat the opioid crisis.

**Community Education & Engagement****Family-Focused Programming**

In collaboration with the Taylor County Health Department, Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners (TCDOP), and the Taylor County Literacy Council, Aspirus Medford supports educational and community-building events. One popular initiative, the Free Family Movie Days at the Broadway Theater, provides a safe, positive space for families to connect and engage in substance-free activities. These events, held monthly with 100+ participants, are financially supported by Aspirus Medford.

**Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)**

All Taylor County school districts continue to participate in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a vital tool used to assess student behaviors and attitudes around substance use. The data informs programming, evaluates intervention outcomes, and helps identify emerging community needs.

**Public Awareness Campaigns****Ongoing Substance Use Education**

Aspirus Medford regularly disseminates public awareness messaging about substance misuse, emerging trends (including vaping), and addiction recovery resources. These campaigns are led by trusted local medical professionals, reinforcing credibility and community trust.



**Sustained Community Investment****Support for Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners (TCDOP)**

Through its Community Benefit program, Aspirus Medford continues to invest in and support the mission of TCDOP. This coalition is dedicated to engaging local communities to:

- Educate and advocate for healthy decision-making
- Delay the onset of substance use among youth
- Implement evidence-based strategies to reduce lifetime consequences of substance misuse

Aspirus contributes both staff involvement and funding, helping drive sustainable impact in youth substance prevention efforts.

**HEALTHCARE ACCESS & QUALITY ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Goal:** *Increase access to high-quality, affordable health care services across Taylor County.*

**Timely Access to Care****Same-Day Primary Care Appointments**

Aspirus Medford Clinic offers Same-Day Care, allowing patients to schedule appointments for acute concerns within the same day. This service enhances timely access to care and reduces reliance on emergency departments for non-emergent needs.

**Urgent Care Services**

In October 2024, Aspirus Medford Hospital launched Urgent Care services, expanding treatment options for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. Urgent Care offers shorter wait times and lower out-of-pocket costs than Emergency Room visits. Since opening, over 4,000 patient visits have been recorded, demonstrating strong community demand.

**Enhanced Specialty Services****Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program**

In July 2023, Aspirus Medford Hospital became the seventh Aspirus facility to offer on-site SANE services. This program provides confidential, compassionate care and forensic examinations for patients who have experienced sexual assault or strangulation. The SANE team is composed of specially trained nurses who serve adolescents and adults, ensuring immediate and trauma-informed care.

**Expanded Wound Care Services**

Launched in October 2024, the Wound Care Program at Aspirus Medford Hospital and Clinic offers local access to expert care for chronic or complex wounds. Timely and appropriate treatment helps prevent serious complications such as cellulitis, sepsis, and hospitalization.



## Recognition for Quality and Safety

### 5-Diamond Patient Safety Program – Kidney Care

Aspirus Medford's Kidney Care program has been recognized with the prestigious 5-Diamond Patient Safety Award, demonstrating a strong commitment to the highest standards of patient safety and quality in dialysis care.

### Bronze Plus Quality Achievement Award – American Heart Association

In 2023, Aspirus Medford received the Bronze Plus Award from the American Heart Association for excellence in stroke and cardiovascular care. This award recognizes hospitals that consistently meet rigorous performance standards to improve patient outcomes.



### Aspirus MedEvac Enhancements

Aspirus continues to expand access to high-quality emergency care with the addition of a new, advanced helicopter to the Aspirus MedEvac service in 2022. This investment enhances critical care transport capabilities and ensures timely response and treatment for patients in rural and remote areas.

## Community-Based Health Support

### Support for Hearing Screenings

In 2022, the Aspirus Medford Community Benefit Program awarded funding to the Taylor County Health Department for the purchase of two audiometers, enabling expansion of the Taylor County Hearing Screening Program. Previously limited to youth in area school districts, the program now provides free screenings countywide at sites including senior meal sites, WIC clinics, child care centers, and more. Appointments are also available at the Health Department.

## Community Engagement & Events

### Taylor County Health & Safety Fair

Aspirus continues to actively participate in the annual Taylor County Health & Safety Fair, held in conjunction with National Night Out. Aspirus staff engage attendees with:

- Healthy snack options
- Fitness and wellness education
- Tours of Aspirus ambulances and the rescue helicopter



These efforts strengthen community relationships and promote awareness of health and safety services.

### **Ongoing Community Education**

Aspirus Medford provides year-round public health education through various platforms and outreach efforts:

- Free educational materials distributed at health fairs, expos, and community events
- Public service announcements via radio, local news, and paid media
- Social media campaigns focused on wellness, prevention, and local services
- Free forums and seminars on relevant health topics
- Participation in educational events such as the Taylor County Senior Health Fair, school career fairs, job shadows, and in-class presentations

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Goal:** *Increase social and community engagement.*

Aspirus Medford recognizes that building a healthier community extends beyond the walls of clinical care. Through a wide range of outreach programs, partnerships, and local events, Aspirus Medford supports the physical, emotional, and social well-being of individuals and families across Taylor County.

### **Community Education & Health Awareness**

Aspirus Medford offers ongoing educational opportunities that help community members better understand and manage their health:

- **Vein Health, Wound Care & Medication Education**  
Informational sessions provide guidance on managing common conditions and offer personalized support—such as Medication Mondays, where individuals can meet with a pharmacist to review their medications and ask questions.
- **Birthing Classes & Women’s Health**  
Prenatal and birthing classes prepare families for labor, delivery, and newborn care, while menopause education sessions support women navigating midlife changes.
- **Advanced Care Planning**  
Sessions provide individuals and families with the tools to create advance directives and plan for future health care decisions.

- **Fitness & Wellness Workshops**

Led by Aspirus Therapy & Fitness, these programs promote injury prevention, strength training, and overall wellness.

## Community Support & Events

Aspirus Medford supports and participates in a wide variety of community-based initiatives that foster belonging, volunteerism, and access to resources:

- **Diapers for Angels**

Aspirus Medford serves as an annual collection site for the Diapers for Angels Diaper Drive, helping ensure families in need have access to essential baby care items.

- **Taylor County Moving for a Cure**

Aspirus Medford supports this annual fundraiser to benefit cancer patients living in Taylor County, helping ease the burden of cancer-related expenses and promote hope and healing.



- **Family Night**

In collaboration with the Medford Area Public School District, Family Night offers community resources, fun activities, and connections to local programs in a welcoming, family-friendly environment.

- **Bowling Bonanza for Families**

Aspirus Medford helps sponsor this annual event, which raises funds to support the CARES Model of school-based mental health counseling for students.

- **Community Blood Drives**

Aspirus Medford regularly hosts blood drives to support local and regional blood supply needs and encourage community participation in life-saving donation efforts.

- **Cans for a Cause – Taylor County Fair**

Aspirus Medford proudly participates in the Cans for a Cause sculpture contest, promoting creativity, teamwork, and contributions to local food pantries.



- **Human Trafficking Awareness & Collaboration**

Aspirus Medford actively supports efforts to combat human trafficking, providing education and advocacy opportunities for health professionals and the broader community.

- **Community Benefit Funding for Engagement**

Through the Aspirus Medford Community Benefit Program, local events that encourage volunteerism, connection, and civic pride receive critical support—ensuring that efforts to build a more connected and resilient community continue to thrive.

### **What Did We Learn?**

While significant progress was made across each of the identified priority areas, our work is far from finished. We must continue to deepen our understanding of how these issues are interconnected and explore strategies that prevent or delay the onset of health concerns before they arise.

We recognize that while a high-quality clinical care system is essential for treating illness and restoring individuals to health, prevention remains the most powerful tool for creating lasting well-being. True health is not created solely in clinics or hospitals—it is shaped by our daily environments: in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities.

Health is fundamentally influenced by the conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play. These social determinants of health—including access to education, employment, safe housing, nutritious food, and supportive relationships—have a profound impact on our ability to live healthy lives.

During the 2022 assessment—and again in this current cycle—we adopted a more upstream approach, focusing not only on treatment but also on prevention and early intervention. We emphasized the importance of investing in social needs now to reduce reliance on reactive services in the future. By addressing root causes of poor health, we can more effectively support individuals and families across Taylor County and foster a healthier, more resilient community for all.



[aspirus.org](https://www.aspirus.org)

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