

Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital

2026-2028 Community Health Implementation Plan



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Your Feedback Makes Us Better

We welcome your comments, ideas and questions about this report, and all Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Implementation Plan documents at Northwestern Medicine.

Please share your feedback by calling Northwestern Medicine Community Health at 312.926.2301 (TTY: 711) or by emailing communityhealth@nm.org. Please include your name, organization (if applicable), and any questions or feedback you have about the report content.

Public availability

This report and all Northwestern Medicine Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Implementation Plan documents are public information. You can access them at nm.org/about-us/nm-community-impact/reports. You can also request reports at no cost by calling Northwestern Medicine Community Health at 312.926.2301 (TTY: 711) or by emailing communityhealth@nm.org.



Introduction

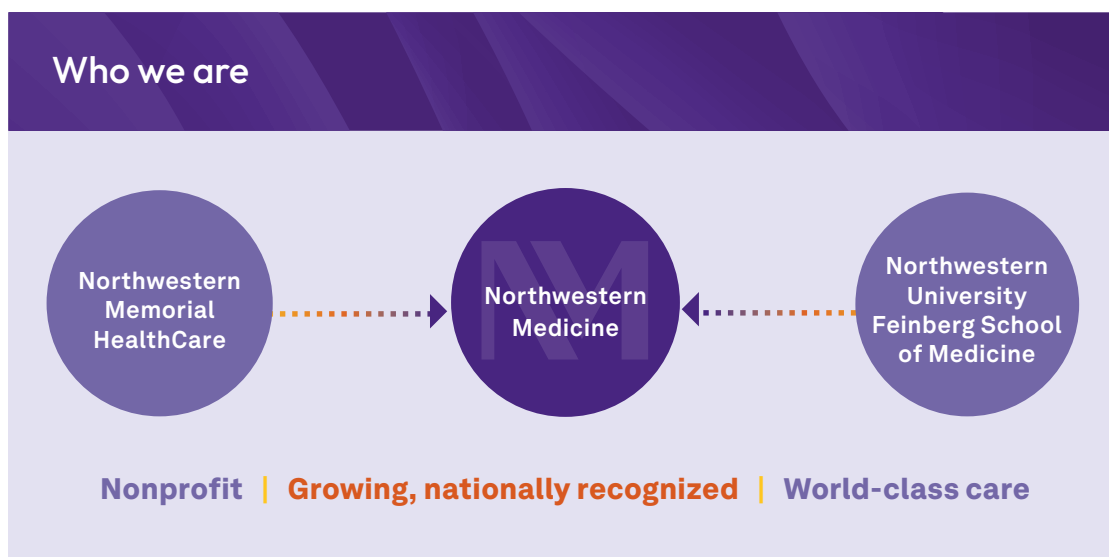
Northwestern Medicine is committed to:

- › Providing quality medical care regardless of a patient's ability to pay
- › Transforming medical care through clinical innovation, breakthrough research and academic excellence
- › Improving the health of the communities we serve

We are a nonprofit, integrated academic health system committed to serving a broad community. We provide world-class care at 11 hospitals and more than 200 diagnostic and ambulatory locations in communities throughout Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.

Our hospitals are pillars in their respective communities and lead efforts to positively impact the health of the populations they serve. From collaborating with community organizations to serving as a major economic driver, Northwestern Medicine helps make communities stronger.

Northwestern Medicine is a strategic partnership between Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.



About Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital

Palos Hospital has a rich history of caring for our community



406 beds

757 physicians

>63,700 emergency department visits

>21,400 inpatient admissions



Acute care



**Located in
Palos Heights,
Illinois**

**Primary, specialty
and emergency care**

Data reflects fiscal year 2024.

Community Benefits Plan

Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital are guided by a Community Benefits Plan. The Community Benefits Plan includes comprehensive financial assistance and presumptive eligibility policies, as well as vast research, education and other community benefit activities. This Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) is aligned and coordinated with the Community Benefits Plan. Together, these strategies help to improve the health of the communities we serve.

About the Community Health Implementation Plan

In alignment with our mission and in accordance with the requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital works with community organizations every three years to complete a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that identifies the significant health needs of residents of the community it serves.

This CHIP is a companion document to the Palos Hospital 2025 CHNA, which can be accessed at nm.org/about-us/nm-community-impact/reports. The goal of the CHIP is to use CHNA data to guide initiatives that improve the health of our community



In this report, we summarize the significant health needs identified in the 2025 CHNA. We identify which of these needs we will prioritize over the next three years and explain why we will not address other significant health needs identified in the 2025 CHNA.

In addition, for each priority health need, we will explain:

- › Actions or strategies planned to address each need
- › Anticipated impact of those strategies
- › Resources we intend to commit to those strategies
- › Planned collaborations between Palos Hospital and other organizations to address the need

We rely on help from our community

Palos Hospital values input from local community members and uses their insights during development of the CHIP. One way we gather feedback is through our Community Engagement Council.

The Community Engagement Council is a diverse group of representatives from community-based organizations and Northwestern Medicine staff. Council members are people who have expertise in a broad range of areas and have demonstrated a strong, ongoing commitment to improving the health of the communities we serve. Council members were invited to participate based on their role within their respective organizations and their commitment to improving the health of the community.



Community Served by Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital

Main Entrance



The Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital Community Service Area (CSA) covers 26 ZIP codes in Cook and Will counties in Illinois.

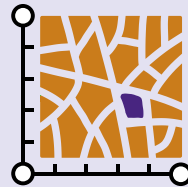
Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital CSA Cities and ZIP Codes			
City	ZIP Code	City	ZIP Code
Alsip	60803	Midlothian	60445
Bridgeview	60455	Mokena	60448
Burbank	60459	New Lenox	60451
Chicago	60655	Oak Forest	60452
Chicago Ridge	60415	Oak Lawn	60453
Crestwood	60418	Orland Park	60462
Evergreen Park	60805	Orland Park	60467
Frankfort	60423	Palos Heights	60463
Hickory Hills	60457	Palos Hills	60465
Homer Glen	60491	Palos Park	60464
Justice	60458	Tinley Park	60477
Lemont	60439	Tinley Park	60487
Lockport	60441	Worth	60482

How the Community Service Area is defined

Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital Community Service Area



**Cook and
Will counties, Illinois**



299 square miles



625,423 residents



Predominantly suburban

The Palos Hospital CSA was determined by:

- › Geographic area served by the hospital
- › Main functions of the hospital
- › Areas that have been historically under-resourced
- › Areas where we are currently working on addressing priority health needs, including work with community organizations

The defined CSA considers populations that are:

- › Medically underserved
- › Low income
- › Historically underrepresented, minority populations

Our CSA definition does not consider how much patients or their insurers pay for care or whether patients are eligible for financial assistance through Northwestern Medicine.



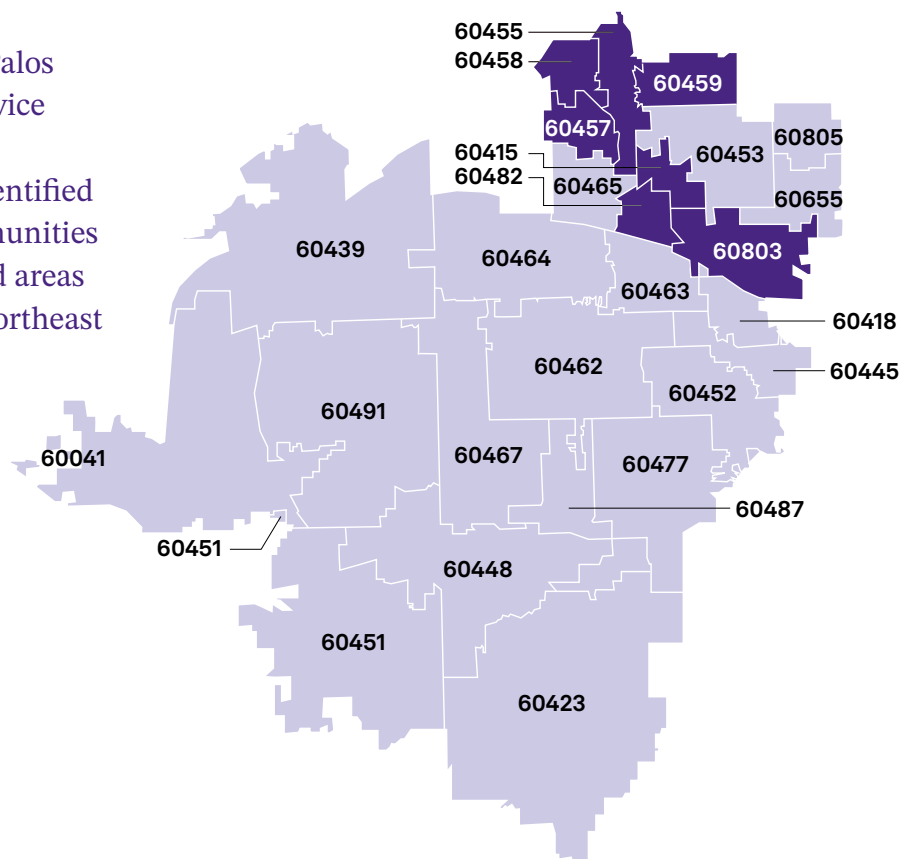
Identifying communities with economic hardship

Once the CSA has been defined, Northwestern Medicine uses the Socioeconomic Resource Index (SERI) to identify areas experiencing economic hardship. Under-resourced areas are identified based on multiple indicators, including:

- › Unemployment (for individuals older than 16 years)
- › Education (those older than 25 years without a high school diploma)
- › Per capita income level
- › Crowded housing (more than one person per room)
- › Dependents (younger than 18 years or older than 64 years)
- › Poverty (income below 200% of the federal poverty level)

The strategies identified in this report focus on these under-resourced areas in an effort to address health disparities within the CSA.

Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital Community Service Area. Locations in dark purple have been identified as under-resourced communities by SERI. Under-resourced areas are concentrated in the northeast corner of the CSA.

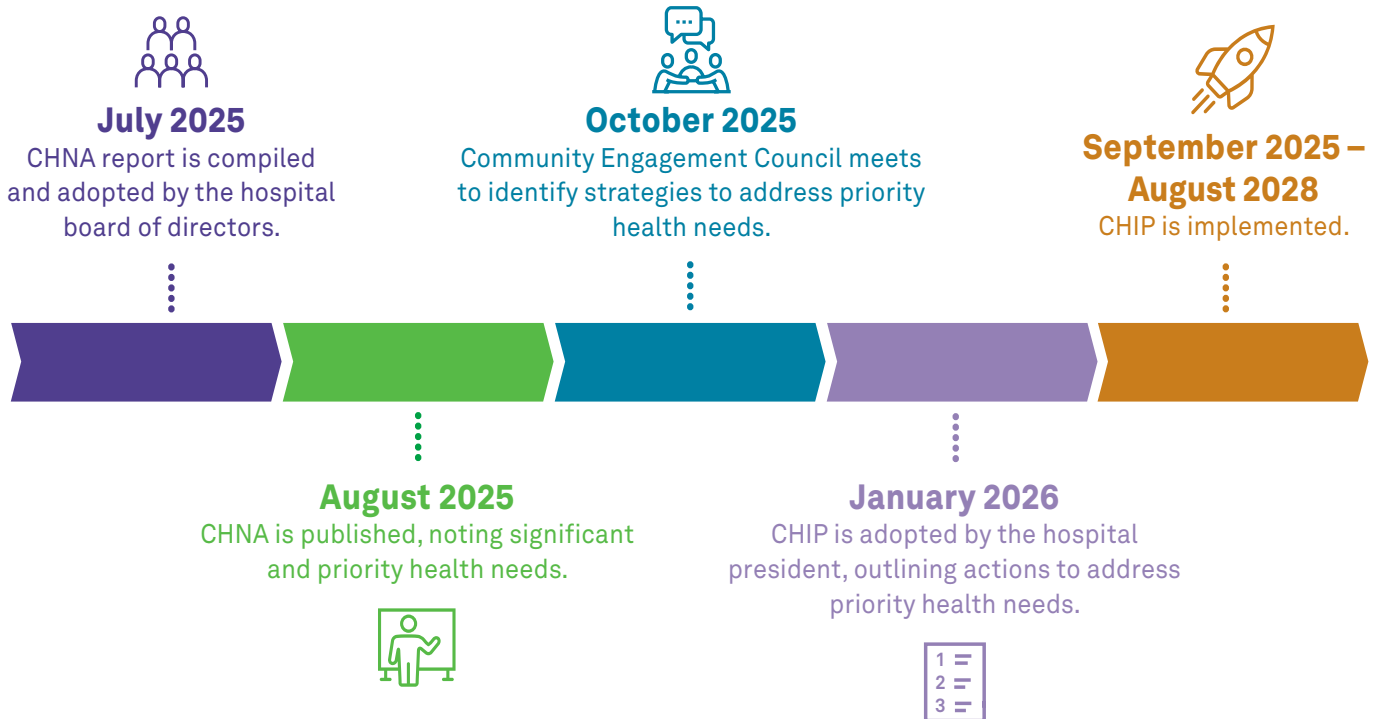


A man and a woman are working together to shovel mulch from a truck into a wheelbarrow. They are standing under a blue canopy. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants, and is using a shovel to load the wheelbarrow. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark jacket and glasses, and is also using a shovel. They are both smiling. In the background, there is a brick building and some trees.

Community Health Implementation Plan Overview



CHIP Timeline



CHIP Development Process

CHNA: Identify significant health needs

Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital collaborated with Metopio to create the 2025 CHNA. Together, we completed a comprehensive analysis of the data collected. Analysis included getting input from people in targeted under-resourced populations.



Prioritization: Select priority health needs

Once the CHNA data analysis was complete, we convened the Community Engagement Council to help identify the highest priority health needs.



To help us prioritize, council members reviewed guiding principles and CHNA data findings, and participated in robust conversations regarding community health needs for the CSA.

Strategy development: Identify actions to address priority health needs

Following the prioritization process, we had conversations with community organizations and internal teams to identify potential strategies. We then worked with the Community Engagement Council to identify actions, resources, anticipated impacts and planned collaborations to address selected priority health needs over the next three years. In developing these strategies, we were mindful of our own strengths and those of other organizations in our CSA.



This work is the basis for the CHIP.

Adoption: Three-year plan

This CHIP was adopted in January 2026 by the hospital president and will be active until August 31, 2028, in alignment with our fiscal year calendar.



Implementation: Implement strategies to address priority health needs

As we work to address priority health needs over the three-year CHIP span, the report will be reviewed and updated as needed to ensure it remains viable and to maximize our impact. We will regularly share our efforts with reporting agencies and our community.





Significant Health Needs for Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital

The following significant health needs were identified through the Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital 2025 CHNA. Of these, three (highlighted in orange) were selected as priority health needs.

Among the significant health needs not identified as priority health needs, many are being addressed through the ongoing, comprehensive services and programs at Palos Hospital in collaboration with our community allies, and across Northwestern Medicine.

Health Need Identified in 2025 CHNA	Our Response
► Access to health care	This need has been identified as a priority health need. See pages 18-20 for our plan to address it.
► Behavioral health	This need has been identified as a priority health need. See pages 21-24 for our plan to address it.
► Cancer	This need has been identified as a priority health need. See pages 25-27 for our plan to address it.
Cardiovascular disease	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
Diabetes	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
Food access	This need is better addressed by community organizations specializing in this field.
Housing instability	This need is better addressed by community organizations specializing in this field.
Obesity	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
Substance use disorder	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.

► Indicates priority health need



Priority Health Needs for Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital

The following were identified as the priority health needs to be addressed by Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital over the next three years.



Our commitment to removing barriers to better health

Northwestern Medicine remains deeply committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their highest level of health. We are focused on addressing the factors that contribute to gaps in health outcomes by improving access, enhancing coordination with community resources and delivering care that is respectful of and responsive to every person's needs. This focus is integrated in every strategy we have for addressing the priority health needs of our community.

Community Health Implementation Plan



Priority Health Need: Access to Health Care

Goal: Increase access to comprehensive, high-quality healthcare services.

Access to health care was discussed at length in most focus groups and key interviews, specifically the challenges involving access to clinicians and insurance. In addition, many focus group and key interview participants spoke about the growing need for clinicians representing a wide variety of cultures — those who speak the language of their patients but also have cultural awareness.

We heard you

“My brother had a very good job when he was working. When he lost that job, he lost his health insurance.” — Focus group participant²

“Twenty-five percent of the population that walks in through my door doesn’t have a primary care physician.” — Focus group participant²

Expert observation

“I feel that so many of our patients in the community have logistical challenges in getting to appointments. Telehealth and home visits are essential needs in giving proper care to the community.”

Justin Weiner, DO

Pulmonology, Northwestern Medicine

Survey respondents indicated access to the following are among the top challenges in their community²:



**Affordable
medical
providers**



**Health care for
older adults**



**Affordable
medication**



**Affordable
health insurance**

Action 1: Reduce barriers

Address clinical and social drivers of health for medically underserved patients via community partnerships.

Anticipated impact

- Optimized collaborations with community organizations to enhance health status

Collaborations

- Community organizations
- Northwestern Medicine Regional Medical Group
- Clinical organizations

Resources

- Funding
- Staff time
- Educational materials

Action 2: Health education and prevention

Address access to community-based screenings, health education and care navigation in medically underserved patient populations.

Anticipated impact

- Optimized collaborations with community organizations to enhance health education programs

Collaborations

- Community organizations
- Hospital team members
- Northwestern Medicine Regional Medical Group team members

Resources

- Staff time
- Educational materials



Priority Health Need: **Behavioral Health**

Goal: Improve access to and increase use of services that address behavioral health.

Behavioral health is an urgent need in our community. Focus group and key interview participants spoke at length about the need for more resources to address behavioral health issues, such as improved access to behavioral health professionals and increased insurance coverage for behavioral health treatments.

We heard you

“Mental health, of course, is always an area where there’s still a stigma. Thankfully, it’s easing over the years.”

Key interview participant²

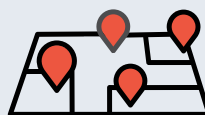
Survey respondents indicated they had difficulty accessing behavioral health services because²:



They could not afford the cost

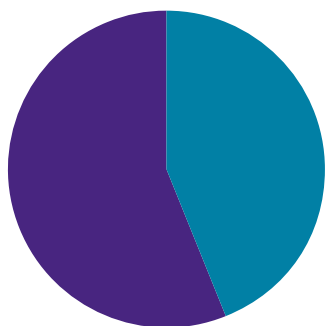


They were put on a waitlist for an appointment

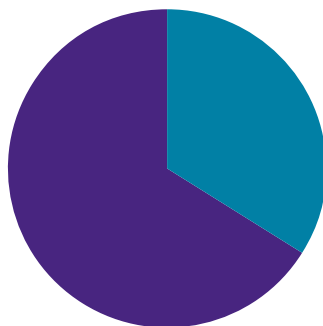


They didn’t know where to get services

Of survey respondents²



44.0%
say adult
behavioral
health is a
top concern



34.0%
say adolescent
behavioral
health is a
top concern

Action 1: Health education and prevention

Support and grow collaboration with community organizations to increase resources available to address behavioral health needs.

Anticipated impact

- Increased number of individuals receiving behavioral health care
- Increased collaboration with community organizations
- Increased access to behavioral health services

Collaborations

- Community organizations

Resources

- Staff time
- Educational materials
- Public support and advocacy

Action 2: Grants and donations

Fund community organizations that provide behavioral health and substance use disorder education, programs and services to populations that historically have had limited access to these resources.

Anticipated impact

- Increased funding to organizations that provide behavioral health and/or substance use disorder outreach, education, support and/or treatment

Collaborations

- Community organizations

Resources

- Funding

Action 3: Reduce barriers

Address access to behavioral health care close to home.

Anticipated impact

- Increased patient beds dedicated to behavioral health

Collaborations

- Internal hospital collaborations

Resources

- Staff time
- Facilities



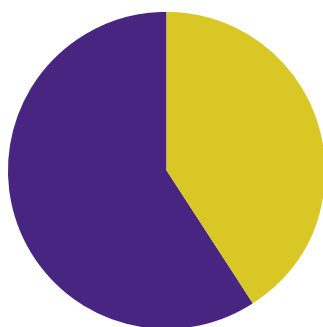


Priority Health Need: Cancer

Goal: Improve access to services that help reduce the risk of cancer and improve overall health of individuals impacted by cancer.

Cancer affects many individuals and families from all walks of life, and it emerged as a top community concern through this assessment process. Analyzing and reporting diagnosis rates, mortality rates and screening rates can influence local health policies, enhance public awareness of programs and help target interventions.

Of survey respondents²



41.0%
identified cancer as
an important health-
related challenge in
their community

Cancer diagnosis rates (per 100,000 residents)¹

	CSA	Illinois
All invasive cancers	608.4	573.2
Colorectal cancer	49.6	46.3
Invasive breast cancer (females)	174.6	161.5
Lung cancer	75.6	72.6
Prostate cancer (males)	163.2	144.9
Other cancers	177.2	169.4

Action 1: Health education and prevention

Deliver educational programs focused on lifestyle changes to reduce the risk of cancer.

Anticipated impact

- Increased awareness regarding lifestyle factors impacting cancer risk

Collaborations

- Community organizations
- Northwestern Medicine Cancer Resources

Resources

- Staff time
- Educational materials

Action 2: Reduce barriers

Explore feasibility of offering cancer screenings in collaboration with external organizations.

Anticipated impact

- Increased access to screenings

Collaborations

- Northwestern Medicine Oncology
- Cook County Health Department
- Community organizations

Resources

- Staff time
-

Action 3: Reduce barriers

Address Northwestern Medicine cancer services available in Orland Park, Illinois.

Anticipated impact

- Enhanced cancer care available in the community

Collaborations

- Internal hospital collaborations

Resources

- Staff time
-

Action 4: Health education and prevention

Expand programs supporting individuals undergoing cancer treatment, cancer survivors and loved ones.

Anticipated impact

- Improved physical and emotional health for those impacted by cancer

Collaborations

- Northwestern Medicine Living Well Cancer Resources

Resources

- Staff time
- Facilities

Community Health Implementation Plan Adoption

The adoption of this plan was authorized through a board resolution at the July 29, 2025, meeting of the Palos Community Hospital Board of Directors.

The Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital 2026 - 2028 Community Health Implementation Plan was adopted by the hospital president by January 15, 2026.

Appendix:

References

1. Illinois Department of Public Health. (2017–2021). *Illinois state cancer registry*. Illinois Department of Public Health. Accessed through Metopio.
2. Community input represents information and beliefs obtained from CHNA focus groups and from individuals representing the broad interests of the community, including people who are uninsured, have low incomes and belong to certain minority groups.



Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital

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TTY for those who are deaf or hard of hearing: 711

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