

2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital





Foreword

Our Commitment to Removing Barriers to Better Health

We believe that exceptional care means recognizing the unique circumstances of every patient and team member. We strive to understand and remove obstacles that prevent people from receiving the care, support and opportunities that they need to thrive. This means listening more closely, tailoring our services, and making thoughtful decisions that reflect the realities people face — whether in accessing healthcare, advancing in their careers or simply being heard. Our commitment to being Better is rooted in doing what is right.

Better is a philosophy that drives everything we do at Northwestern Medicine. Just as we are driven to provide better care, better treatments and better patient experiences, we also are relentless in our pursuit of building better communities.

Your Feedback Makes Us Better

Northwestern Medicine is committed to building healthier communities. Your voice is important for helping us understand your lived experiences in your community.

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital encourages comments from the public regarding our Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process or findings. Please submit comments to communityhealth@nm.org, and include your name and organization, if applicable.

This report was adopted by the Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital Board of Directors on July 29, 2025, and made available to the public by August 31, 2025. It was created in accordance with federal IRS regulations (26 C.F.R. § 1.501(r)-3).

Three pillars of community work



Access to Care

We deliver world-class, culturally competent care regardless of ability to pay, race, age, gender, sexuality, or any other social factor, in the communities where our patients live and work.



Economic and Workforce Development

We invest in the communities we serve by employing individuals from a variety of backgrounds and providing innovative training, education and development initiatives that help drive economic growth for under-resourced communities.



Community Engagement

We collaborate with community organizations that provide access to nutritious food, shelter and other essentials, and we support initiatives that reduce violence, address trauma and build safer communities.

This Community Health Needs Assessment may be on a three-year cycle, but our community work happens every day, in every department. In short, this is who we are.

Two areas span our community pillars and touch every strategy we have for addressing the priority health needs of our communities.

Healthcare disparities

We elevate initiatives that:

- › Facilitate community engagement and cultivate new relationships
- › Address root causes of health in under-resourced communities
- › Empower communities through data, education and advocacy
- › Ensure Northwestern Medicine is a safe and welcoming environment for all patients



Coordination and connection to community resources

We elevate initiatives that:

- › Strengthen community-clinician relationships
- › Lead to better care and coordination
- › Connect patients with community resources

Every member of the Northwestern Medicine workforce is dedicated to our vision of a stronger, healthier and **better** life for those in the communities we are privileged to serve.

Table of Contents

- Introduction to the Community Health Needs Assessment**1 ▶
 - Acknowledgments 5 ▶
- Who We Are** 6 ▶
 - Get to know Northwestern Memorial HealthCare 7 ▶
 - About Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital 9 ▶
- Defining the Community Service Area**10 ▶
 - How the Community Service Area was determined11 ▶
 - About the Community Service Area12 ▶
 - Community Service Area map13 ▶
- Completing the Assessment**.....14 ▶
 - Primary data15 ▶
 - Secondary data17 ▶
- Key Findings**18 ▶
 - Who lives in the communities we serve19 ▶
 - Social drivers of health21 ▶
 - Health conditions41 ▶
 - Health behaviors61 ▶
 - Significant health needs 66 ▶

- Priority Health Needs** 67 ▶
 - Community Engagement Council 68 ▶
 - How we chose priority health needs 70 ▶
 - Identified priority health needs 72 ▶
- Development of a Plan to Address Priority Health Needs**..... 73 ▶
 - Existing resources 74 ▶
 - Northwestern Medicine roles..... 75 ▶
- Appendix A: Evaluation of Impact** 76 ▶
- Appendix B: Resources Available to Address Significant Health Needs** 85 ▶
- Appendix C: CHNA Timeline and Community Details** 87 ▶
- Appendix D: A Closer Look at Data** 89 ▶
- Appendix E: References** 92 ▶
- Appendix F: Disclaimers** 94 ▶

Introduction to the Community Health Needs Assessment

Since 2012, Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital has completed a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. This process helps us better understand who lives in the communities we serve as well as the biggest health issues they face.

Goals of our CHNA

The goals of the CHNA were to:

- › Learn about the health needs of residents within the hospital's Community Service Area
- › Identify which needs are most important to address
- › Identify resources available to address those needs



Northwestern Medicine is committed to improving the health of the communities we serve. The CHNA process helps us achieve this mission.

How we achieved our goals

For the 2025 CHNA, Lake Forest Hospital collaborated with Metopio to learn about the communities we serve and their health needs. Metopio is a software and service company grounded in the philosophy that communities are connected through places and people. Metopio uses data visualization to reveal valuable, interconnected factors that influence outcomes in various locations. We also collaborated with Advocate Health Care to collect community data.

Together with Metopio and Advocate Health Care, we gathered community input from a variety of sources, including surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews with persons who represent the broad interests of the community. After we collected and analyzed this information, we interpreted the findings to identify the most significant health needs affecting the communities we serve. Then, we worked with community representatives to help identify which needs were the most important for Northwestern Medicine to address over the next three years.

We identified health needs among people across all:

- › Socioeconomic groups
- › Races and ethnicities
- › Ages

While we assessed information across our entire service area, this report highlights health disparities and needs that disproportionately impact people in communities that have been historically under-resourced and have a higher percentage of people with barriers to health and wellness, such as a lack of medical insurance.

Priority health needs

Many health needs were identified through the CHNA process. To identify which needs to address, we considered which were most widespread, severe and persistent. Then we considered which needs would be best addressed through collaboration with community organizations. These needs are the priority health needs we will focus on over the next three years.

The priority health needs for Lake Forest Hospital in the 2025 CHNA are:

- › Access to health care
- › Behavioral health
- › Cardiovascular disease





Addressing identified priority health needs

Lake Forest Hospital will use the information and insight gained through this assessment to guide our work on improving the health of the communities we serve. We will develop an implementation plan to detail how we will address priority health needs in collaboration with healthcare, social service, public health and policy organizations where possible.

Drawing on our collective resources, together we can address the priority health needs of residents in our defined Community Service Area.

Acknowledgments

We rely on voices within the communities we serve to help us better understand the needs and issues that affect the health of their residents. This CHNA and the work that will come out of it would not have been possible without discussions with key community collaborators, organizations and residents. We are grateful to everyone who dedicated their time to share their insights with us.

We also gratefully acknowledge Metopio and Advocate Health Care for their collaboration and significant efforts in the completion of this CHNA.



Who We Are

Get to know Northwestern Memorial HealthCare

Who we are



Nonprofit | Growing, nationally recognized | World-class care

Who we serve



Rural



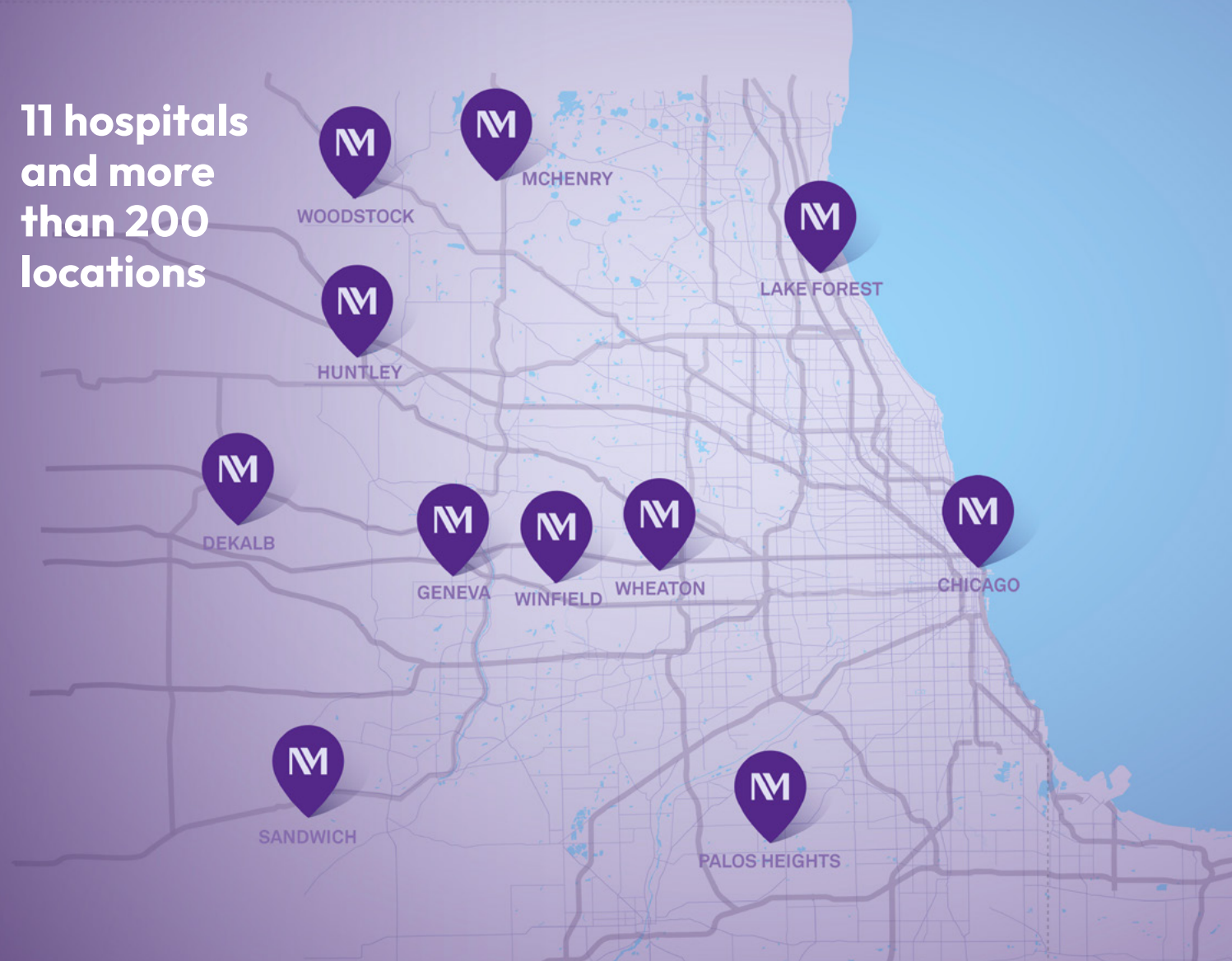
Suburban



Urban

People with a broad range of socioeconomic statuses and needs associated with social drivers of health

**11 hospitals
and more
than 200
locations**



About Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital

How we achieve our mission

As a pillar in the community, Lake Forest Hospital is uniquely positioned to lead efforts to positively impact community health.

- › We provide culturally informed care to meet the needs of those who live in our communities.
- › We maintain strong relationships with community organizations that share our vision of building stronger, healthier communities.
- › We are a major economic driver in the communities we serve.

We are...

- › Pushing boundaries in our research labs
- › Training the next generation of physicians and scientists
- › Pursuing excellence in patient care

Our mission

Provide quality medical care regardless of the patient's ability to pay

Transform medical care through clinical innovations, breakthrough research and academic excellence

Improve the health of the communities we serve

Lake Forest Hospital has a rich history of caring for our community



114 beds

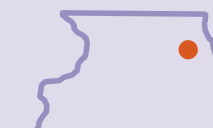
1,043 physicians

**>72,000 emergency
department visits**

**>11,500 inpatient
admissions**



Acute care



**Located in
Lake Forest,
Illinois**

**Services:
Primary, specialty
and emergency care**

Data reflects fiscal year 2024.

Defining the Community Service Area

How the Community Service Area was determined

Lake Forest Hospital defined the Community Service Area (CSA) used in this CHNA by considering:



Geographic area served by the hospital



Main functions of the hospital



Areas that have been historically under-resourced



Areas where we are currently working to address priority health needs, including work with community organizations

The defined CSA considers populations that are:

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

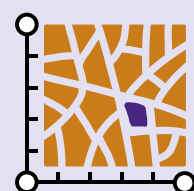
Our CSA definition does not consider how much patients or their insurers pay for care or whether patients are eligible for financial assistance through Northwestern Medicine.

About the Community Service Area

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital Community Service Area

Cook, Kane, Lake and McHenry counties in Illinois*

28
ZIP codes



478 square miles



737,195
residents



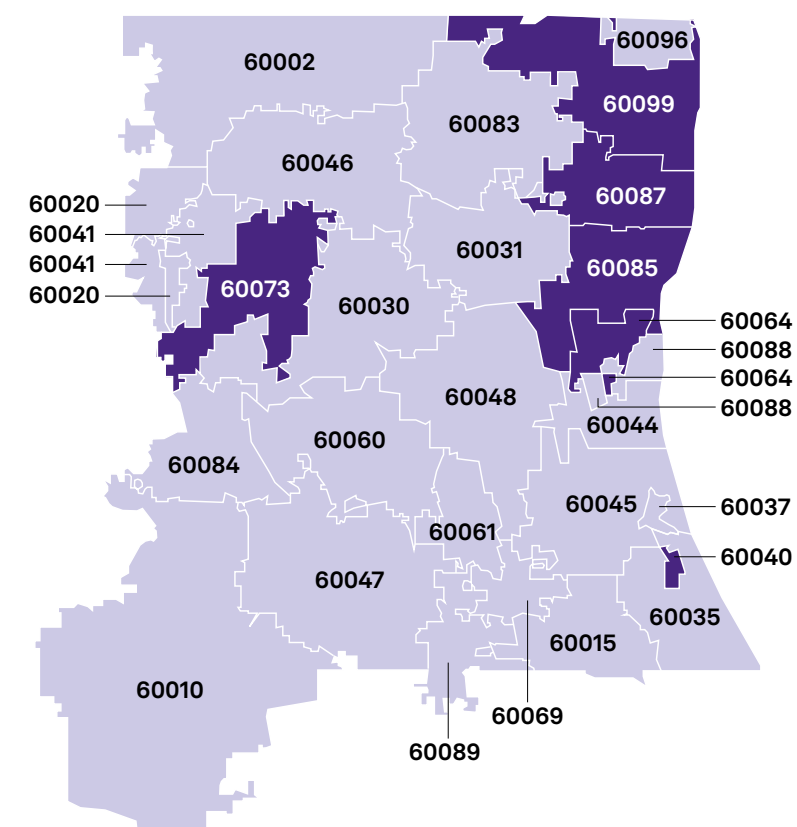
Predominantly
suburban

*The CSA mostly comprises Lake County ZIP codes, with only small parts of Cook, Kane and McHenry counties on the southern and western edges of the CSA.

Community Service Area map

After identifying the CSA, we use the Socioeconomic Resource Index (SERI) to pinpoint areas facing economic challenges. Under-resourced areas are determined using key 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)



Lake Forest Hospital Community Service Area. Locations in dark purple have been identified as under-resourced communities by SERI.

Under-resourced ZIP codes are mainly concentrated in the northeast corner of the CSA, except for 60073 on the western edge and 60040 in the southeastern area.

Completing the Assessment

Northwestern Medicine performed the CHNA from September 2024 through August 2025. We worked with Metopio and Advocate Health Care on data collection and analysis, and we intentionally built on previous CHNAs.

We conducted surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews with persons who represent the broad interests of the community. Community input is important for the CHNA because it provides real-time information about community health needs.

We also looked at data such as local health statistics. Taken together, the data allowed us to identify health trends and compare the health needs in the CSA to benchmarks at the city, county, state and national levels.

After we collected the data, it was analyzed and reviewed by community health experts. We then shared the findings with key community collaborators and Lake Forest Hospital employees, who helped identify priority health needs.

Primary data

Collaborating with Metopio and Advocate Health Care, we gathered information from a variety of sources, including community surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews with persons who represent the broad interests of the community.

This approach helped us gather first-hand information from people in the CSA. The surveys were available online or on paper in English, Spanish and other languages as requested.

Community surveys asked 48 questions about:

- › Demographic details of the community
- › Top health concerns and community issues
- › Access to community resources

Focus groups and key interviews helped us learn about:

- › Community strengths and resources available
- › Areas of need and opportunities for improvement
- › Solutions to identified health needs



Survey, focus group and key interview participants were recruited through hospital community collaborations. Participants consisted of people who are typically underrepresented in the assessment process, including people of color, immigrants, people in the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities and people with low incomes.



Collected
1,445
community surveys



Hosted
5
community focus groups
and two healthcare
focus groups



Interviewed
9
key community
members

Additional information on the survey, focus groups and key interviews can be found in Appendix D.

Secondary data

Secondary data was identified, compiled and analyzed.

The following key topics were chosen for analysis:

- › Social drivers of health
- › Health conditions
- › Health behaviors

Secondary data sources at a glance

- › Peer-reviewed literature, white papers and existing assessments
- › Local data compiled by community-based organizations and government agencies
- › Illinois Health and Hospital Association/COMPdata: Hospitalization and emergency department rates
- › State agencies:
 - Illinois State Board of Education
 - Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services
 - Illinois Department of Human Services
 - Illinois Department of Public Health
- › Federal sources:
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention PLACES project
 - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services data accessed through the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - Health Resources and Services Administration
 - Housing and Urban Development
 - U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture

Throughout this report, data is presented for the most recent years available for any given source. References are cited to indicate the data sources, which are described or linked in Appendix E.

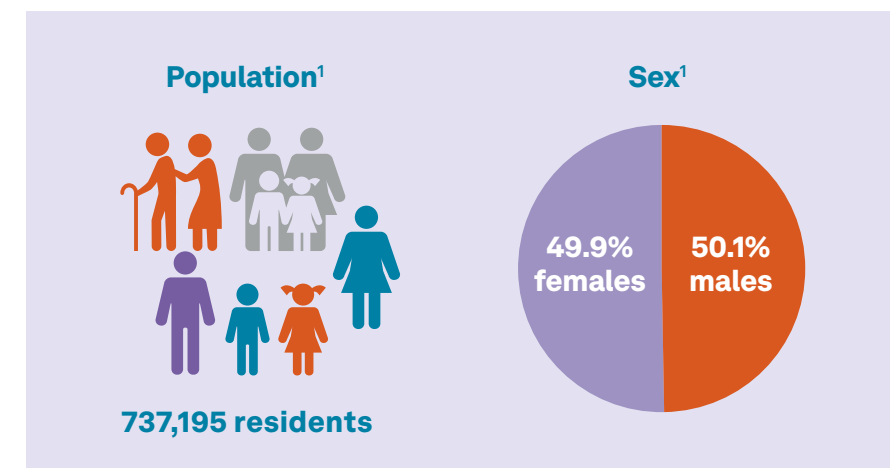


Key Findings

Who lives in the communities we serve

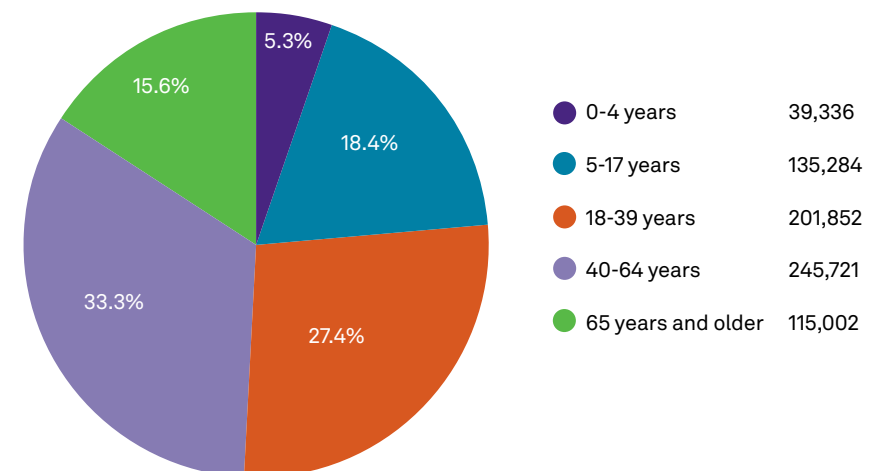
Demographics

Considering the demographic makeup of a community is crucial for shaping community health initiatives to improve health outcomes.



Accurate and complete data for people who are transgender, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming in the CSA is limited.

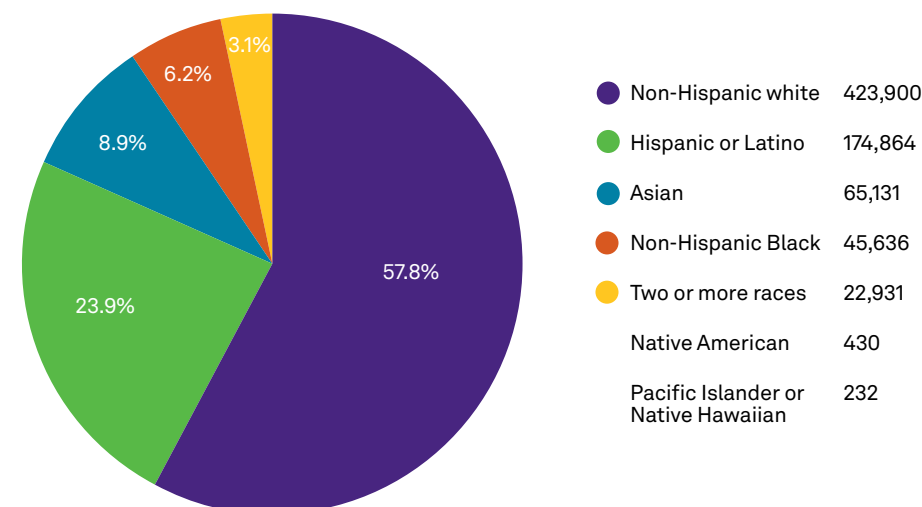
Population by age, 2019-2023



This information is important because different age groups have unique health needs that must be considered when planning a response to community needs.

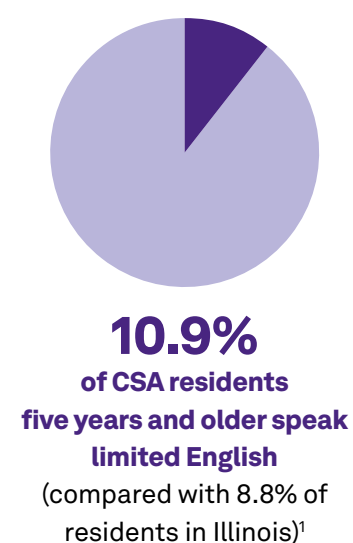
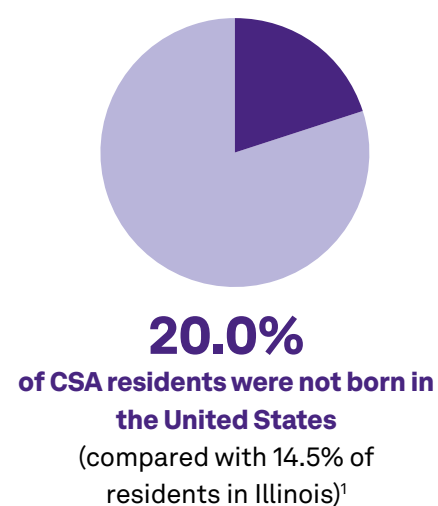
Race and ethnicity¹

- › The population in the CSA is primarily non-Hispanic white.
- › However, over the past several years, the non-Hispanic white population has steadily decreased.



Language

Language skills affect the ability to access, understand and act on health information.



Social drivers of health

Social drivers of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. SDOH also contribute to wide health disparities.²





Economic stability

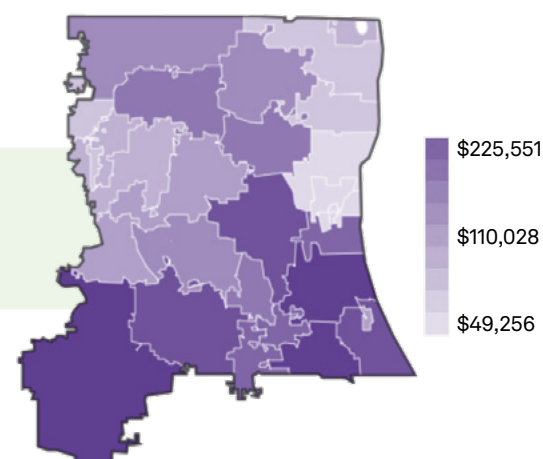
Poverty

Poverty is a challenge for many Americans. People experiencing poverty struggle to afford daily necessities such as healthy food and housing. When basic needs are not met, it's harder to maintain good health and prevent illness.⁶



Median household income 2019-2023

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: \$119,439 ± \$1,812



The median annual household income varies widely in the CSA. North Chicago reports a median household income of \$49,256 (ZIP code 60064), and Lake Forest reports a median household income of \$225,551 (ZIP code 60045).¹

Among survey respondents, **30.5%** report having struggled to pay bills (housing, food, etc.) in the last 12 months.²⁵

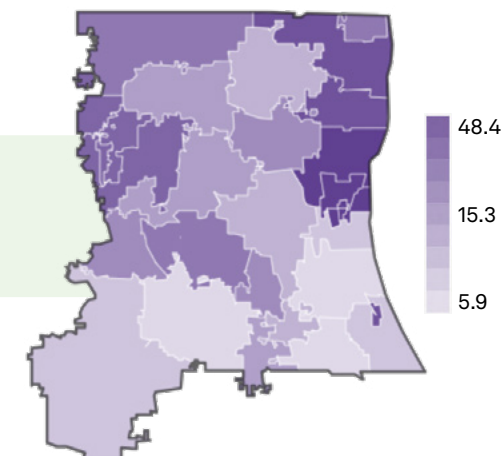
Incomes below 200% of federal poverty level

In the town of North Chicago, 48.3% of residents have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (both ZIP codes, 60064 and 60088). In the town of Waukegan, 38.0% and 33.0% of residents (in ZIP codes 60085 and 60087, respectively), have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level.¹



Below 200% of poverty level 2019-2023

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 19.2 ± 0.8% of residents



Highlights

In our community, a significant portion of the population faces economic barriers that limit their access to essential resources. Individuals experiencing poverty often have worse health outcomes and greater challenges accessing health care. This underscores the need for targeted interventions to address the effects of poverty on health outcomes in our community.

“

More and more households are having a hard time meeting their basic needs.”

Key interview participant

“

I’d like to see more economic opportunities for individuals living within Lake County, I mean, as long as our healthcare system is tied to employment. That’s how you get your insurance. I think that we’re going to see always people falling through the cracks.”

Focus group participant

Employment

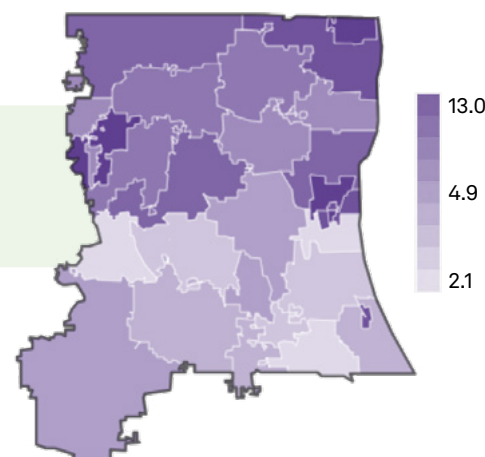
Employment plays a crucial role in health; stable jobs provide not only income but also benefits such as health insurance and access to a better quality of life.

Unemployment rate



Unemployment rate 2019-2023
Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 5.0 ± 0.3%

In the CSA, unemployment rates are highest in the communities of Winthrop Harbor (13.0% in ZIP code 60096) and North Chicago (9.9% in 60088 and 9.1% in 60064).¹



Highlights

Focus group and key interview participants spoke on the need for job opportunities close to housing options to make getting to and from work easier and eliminate transportation barriers.

Education access and quality

Education is a critical factor in determining health outcomes because it influences opportunities for employment, income and access to resources that promote well-being. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have better health, access to health care and healthier lifestyles.⁷

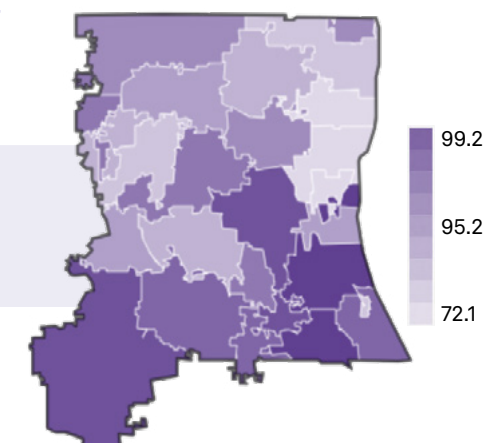
High school graduation rate



High school graduation rate 2019-2023
Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 90.7 ± 0.8% of residents

The overall high school graduation rate (percentage of residents 25 years or older with at least a high school degree, including GED) for the CSA is 90.7%. However, the communities of North Chicago and Waukegan report much lower rates.¹

- › North Chicago (60064): 72.1%
- › Waukegan (60085): 73.6%
- › Waukegan (60087): 77.2%



Highlights

In our community survey, access to good schools was ranked as an important community issue. Differences in educational attainment contribute to ongoing health disparities. Improving education access and quality is essential for fostering long-term health and well-being.

“

There are kids who come who are like 6th grade age, and they’ve got a kindergarten education at best, you know they don’t. They don’t have any education at all. So they’re sitting in a 6th grade classroom not even knowing letters. That’s mentally incapacitating and socially challenging.”

Key interview participant



Food access and security

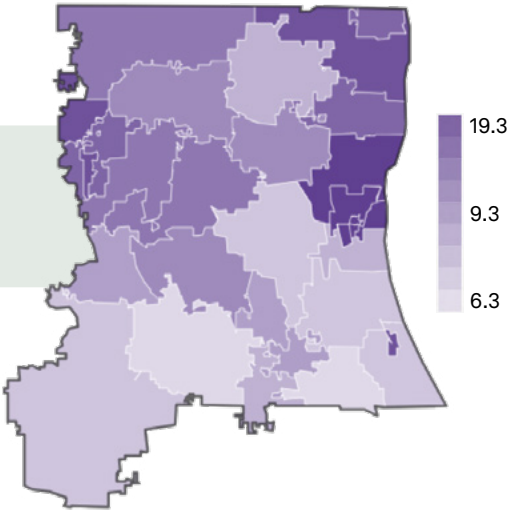
A healthy food environment allows people to easily access and afford nutritious foods near where they live. Without such access, individuals may have poor diets, increasing the risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes and certain cancers. In addition, a lack of food can affect learning and growth, and cause both physical and mental health problems.

Among survey respondents, **30.9%** indicated access to affordable food was an important issue in their community.²⁵

Food insecurity map

Food insecurity 2022
Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 10.2% of residents

The overall percentage of the population experiencing food insecurity in the Lake Forest Hospital CSA is 10.2%. However, the highest rates in the CSA are in North Chicago (19.3% in 60064 and 16.5% in 60088) and Waukegan (15.6% in 60085).¹⁰

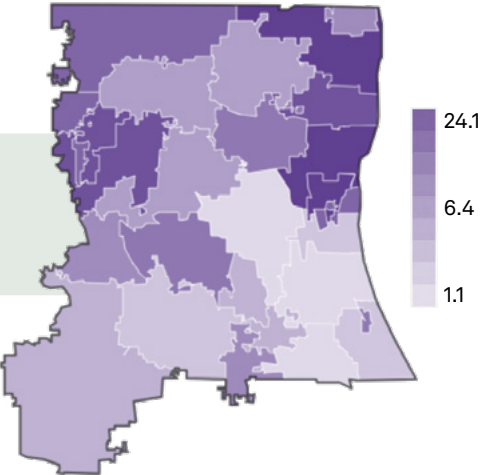


Food insecurity is limited or uncertain access to adequate food and may be caused or exacerbated by cost or distance to a grocery store.

Food stamps (SNAP) usage*

Food stamps (SNAP) 2019-2023
Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 8.9 ± 46.0% of households

The overall percentage of the population receiving SNAP benefits in the Lake Forest Hospital CSA is 8.9%. However, the highest rates in the CSA are in Zion (24.1% in 60099), North Chicago (23.7% in 60064) and Waukegan (19.8% in 60085).¹



Highlights

Food access is an important issue across the CSA. Focus group and key interview participants spoke at length on the challenges community members face when trying to secure food for their families. Ensuring food security can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases, particularly for vulnerable populations.

*SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp program, is a federal nutrition program that provides food-purchasing assistance for individuals with low or no income. SNAP benefits can be used to purchase foods at grocery stores, convenience stores and farmers markets. People without documented status are generally not eligible for federal assistance programs such as SNAP.

“

North Chicago is a grocery desert, you know. You don't get good food that way.”

Key interview participant

Healthcare access and quality

Access to health care is the ability to use health services when needed to achieve the best health outcomes.³ Healthcare access and quality can vary greatly between communities. Accessing appropriate and timely health care is impacted by:

- › Access to health insurance coverage
- › Access to health clinics or physicians
- › Access to linguistically and culturally appropriate services
- › Immigration status

Health insurance

Having health insurance is key to maintaining health and preventing and managing disease. According to Healthy People 2030, people without insurance are less likely to have a physician, and they may struggle to afford necessary healthcare services and medications.⁴



Among survey respondents, **29.1%** indicated access to affordable insurance was a top challenge in their community.²⁵

We looked at the uninsured rate in our community, which is the percentage of residents without health insurance at the time of the survey. The uninsured rate across the CSA for the full population is 6.7%, which is slightly lower than the Illinois rate of 7.0%. However, in the 18- to 39-year-old age group, the uninsured rate increases to 10.7% for the CSA.¹

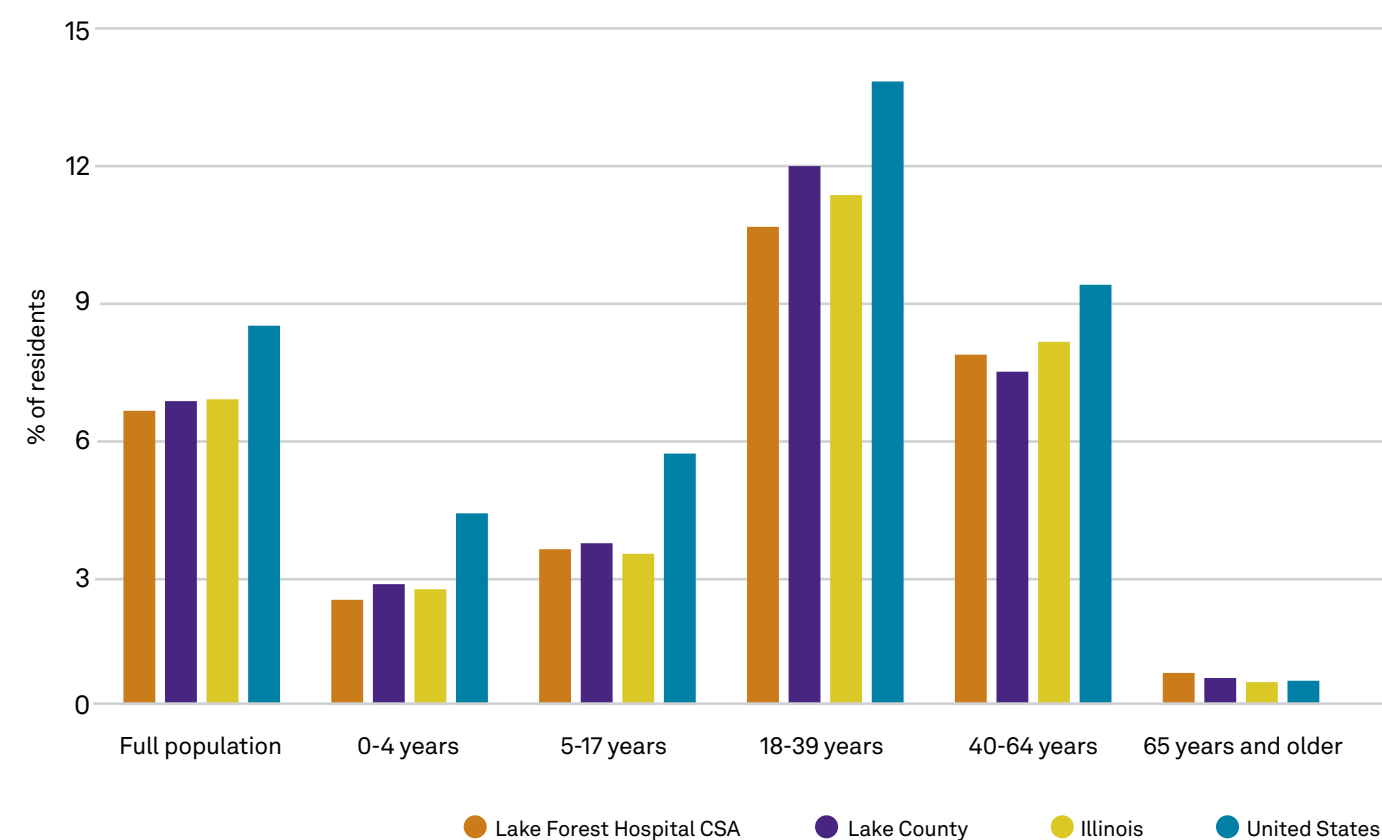
“

[The] complexities of navigating the health system or insurance are definitely huge challenges that impact basically any health condition.”

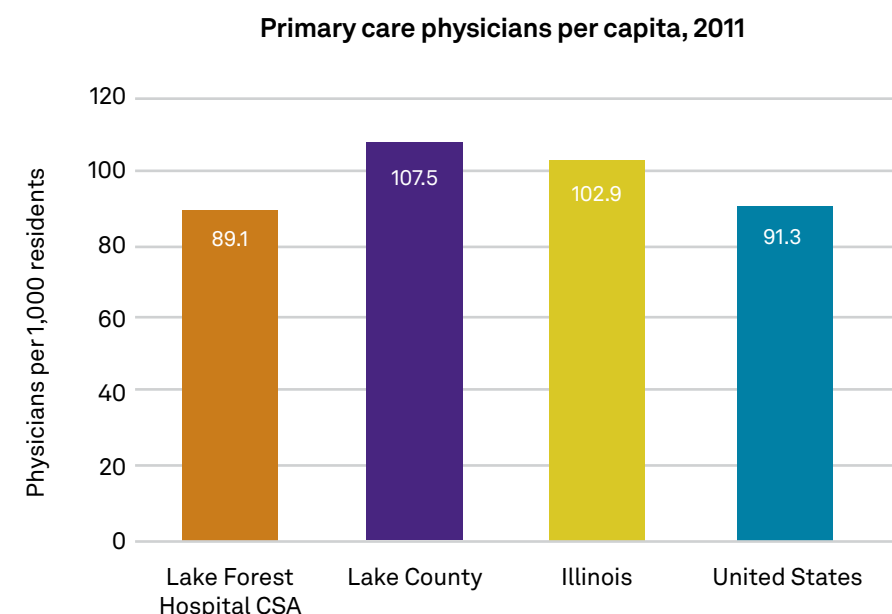
Key interview participant



Uninsured rate by age, 2019-2023



Health care professionals



Expert observation

“There is a clear need for more access to affordable primary care doctors in our community. We especially need more primary care doctors who accept Medicaid.”

Krithika Malhotra, PhD,
Psychology
Northwestern Medicine

While Lake County reports a rate of approximately 108.0 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents, the CSA reports a lower rate of 89.0. This is also lower than the state’s rate of 103.0 and the national rate of 91 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents. According to this data source, primary care physicians are those in general practice, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics.⁵

Among survey respondents, **51.0%** indicated access to affordable medical care professionals was a top challenge in their community.²⁵

Highlights

Access to health care was a topic that was discussed at length in most focus groups and key interviews. Many residents face barriers to getting the care they need, which can lead to worsening health outcomes and higher healthcare costs in the long run. Improving access to care is essential to promoting better health and preventing disease within the community.

“

Having a physician that’s your physician, your primary care physician, to help you with a lot of things; that’s not something that happens.”

Key interview participant



Housing instability

Safe and stable housing is essential for allowing individuals to thrive. Without it, individuals may face increased stress, poor health outcomes and limited access to necessary resources.¹¹

According to **39.3%** of survey respondents, access to affordable and safe housing is a top community issue. Additionally, when provided the statement

“

I am satisfied with the availability of affordable housing in this community,”

27.8% of survey respondents selected the “disagree” choice, and 14.5% selected the “strongly disagree” choice.²⁵

Housing cost burden

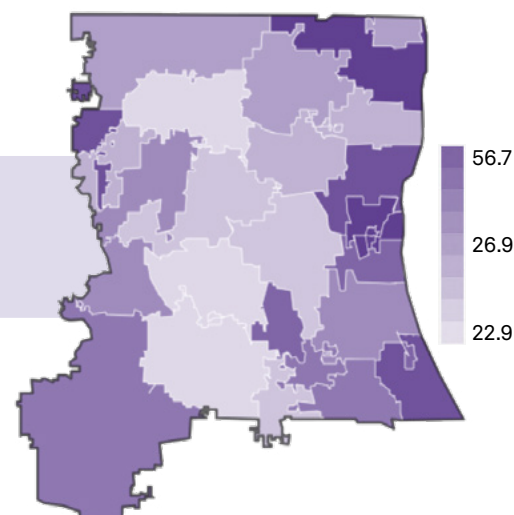
Households that spend more than 30% of income on housing are considered housing cost-burdened. This includes both renters and owners.



Housing cost burden 2019-2023

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 27.8 ± 0.8% of occupied housing units

The overall percentage of households considered housing cost-burdened in the Lake Forest Hospital CSA is 27.8%, which is slightly lower than the Illinois percentage of 29.2%. However, the percentage in North Chicago is 56.7% (in 60088).¹



Highlights

Stable housing is a fundamental need that influences nearly every aspect of life, from health to education. Focus group and key interview participants spoke at length about housing in our community, specifically about the increasing housing cost burden and lack of available, affordable housing options. Breaking this cycle will improve long-term outcomes for individuals and families in our community.

Neighborhood and built environment

A clean, healthy environment is essential for promoting well-being. The quality of our air, water and neighborhoods directly impacts physical and mental health.

Drinking water non-compliance

The weighted index of vulnerability to community drinking water non-compliance measures the severity of drinking water violations in community water systems. The values are weighted by population vulnerability and reported as percentiles nationally, where 0 represents the lowest exposure and 100 the highest exposure.

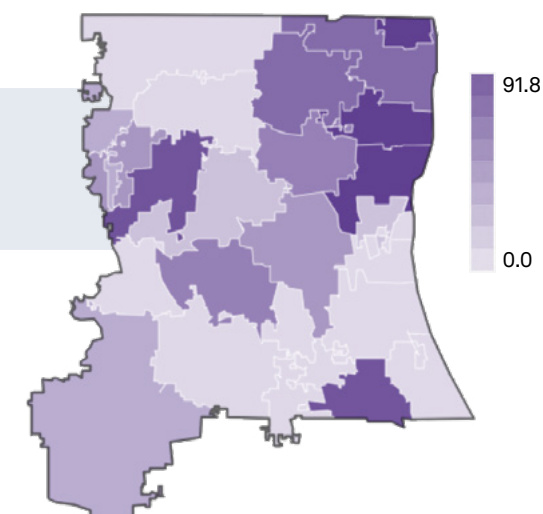
Focus group participants often expressed concerns about environmental health issues, such as air and water quality.



Drinking water non-compliance, Environment Justice Index 2023

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 20.7 percentile

The Lake Forest Hospital CSA has an overall percentile of 20.7. However, the highest values in the CSA are in Waukegan (91.8 in 60085 and 89.6 in 60087) and Winthrop Harbor (71.9 in 60096).⁸



“

There’s a shortage of quality, affordable housing.”

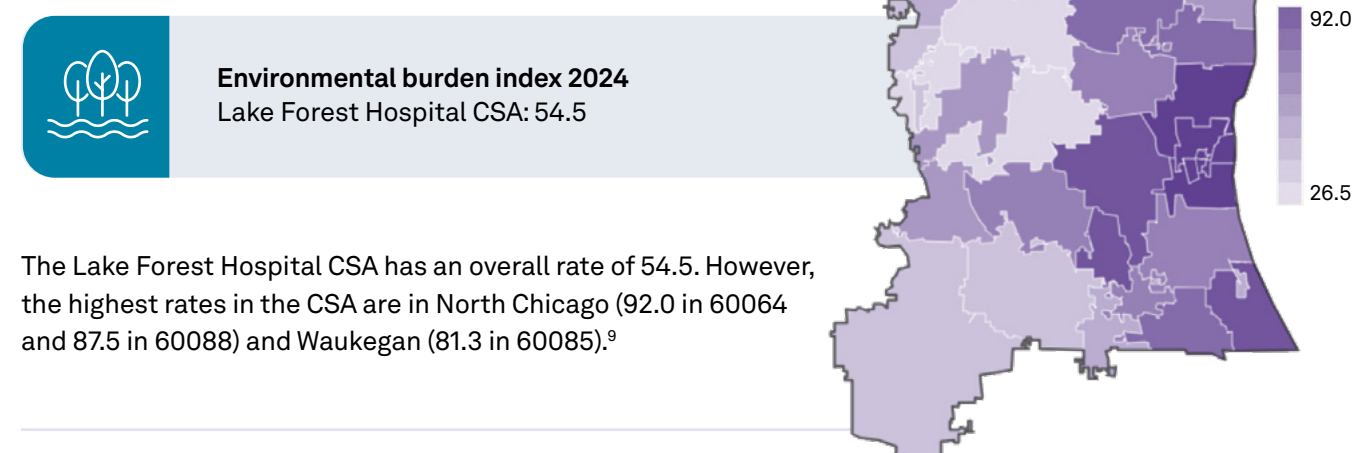
Key interview participant

“A lot of households in Lake County are rent burdened and on the verge of losing their housing or have lost it.”

Key interview participant

Environmental burden index

The environmental burden index is a composite index describing a place's exposure to harmful environmental factors relating to air quality, pollution and built environment. The index is a scale from 0 to 100 and higher values indicate a larger burden.



Highlights

Environmental considerations are important for public health. Localized areas within the CSA bear more environmental burden than the CSA as a whole, which was mentioned in a discussion with community leaders.



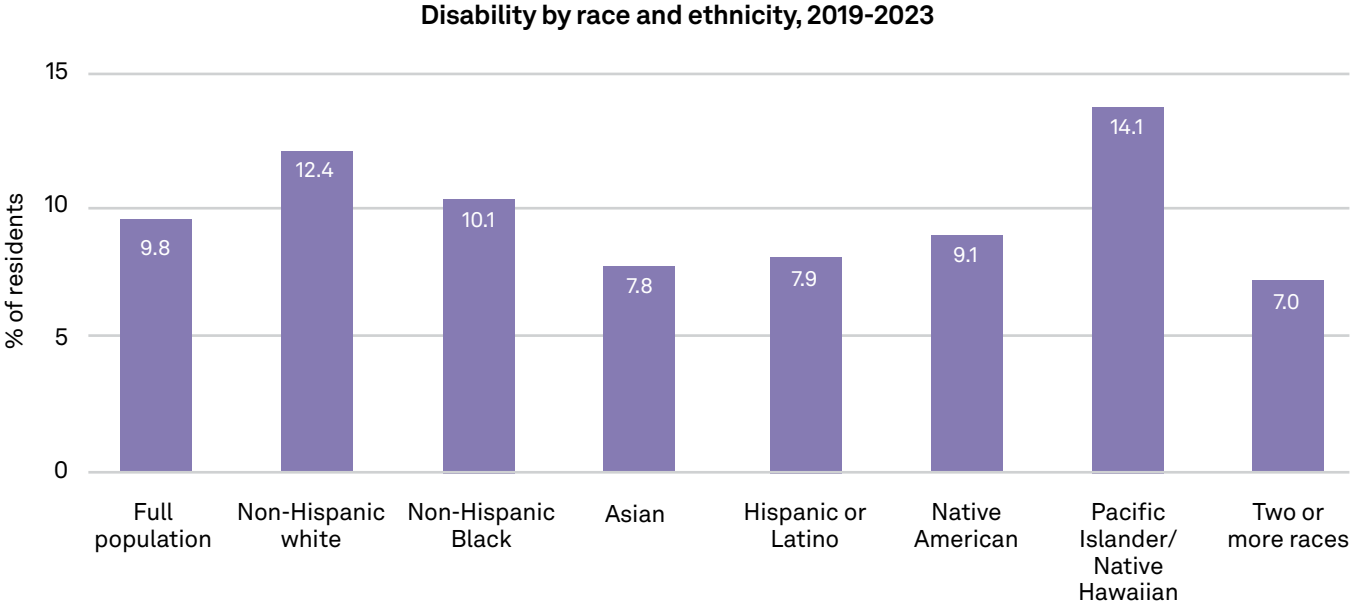
Social and community context

Northwestern Medicine is a community of caregivers who welcome, respect and serve all people without regard to age, race, color, national origin, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military or veteran status.

Disability cultural responsiveness

A physical or mental impairment is considered a disability when it limits how someone goes about their daily life: when it affects how they hear or walk, for example, or how they communicate, learn or work. The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) is the federal civil rights law that defines disability and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else.¹²

Northwestern Medicine provides reasonable accommodations to patients, companions and employees with disabilities when requested. These are provided at no cost to ensure good care, effective communication and compliance with disability rights laws (such as the ADA).



Disability prevalence varies significantly across different racial and ethnic groups in the Lake Forest Hospital CSA and in Lake County and compared with state and national averages. Addressing these disparities is crucial for enhancing accessibility and support services, ensuring equitable healthcare delivery and improving overall community well-being.¹

LGBTQ+ cultural responsiveness

Providing a safe, affirming environment is essential to welcome patients from the LGBTQ+ community. There is evidence that patients who are members of sexual minority groups and transgender or gender-nonconforming patients can have significant difficulty in accessing appropriate care, developing trust in the care team and receiving safe and effective health care throughout their lives.¹³



Among survey respondents, **4.7%** indicate a healthy community requires LGBTQ+-friendly healthcare services.²⁵

Healthcare disparities

Medically underserved communities often lack access to:

- › Healthy food
- › Transportation
- › Housing
- › Parks, playgrounds and other places to connect with community

Highlights

A common theme shared among focus group and key interview participants was the need for access to key resources for all community members.

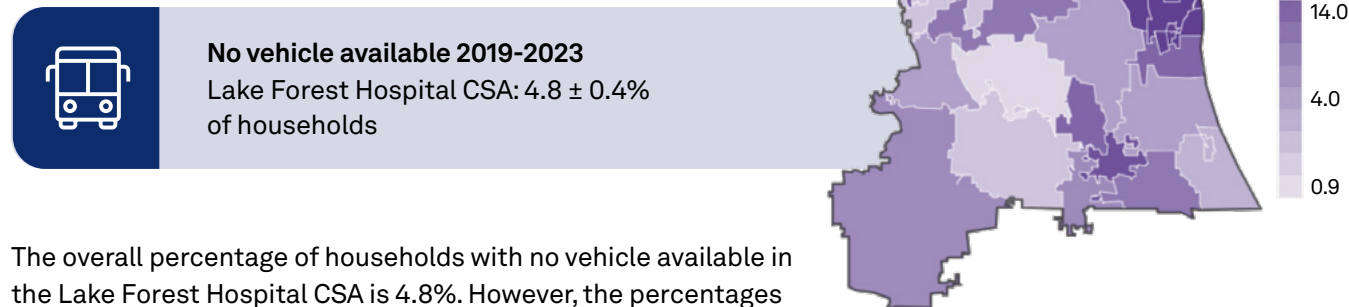


Transportation

Safe and reliable transportation is essential to accessing healthcare appointments, social services, work, school and grocery stores. A lack of transportation is associated with adverse health outcomes.

Among survey respondents, **25.1%** report access to transportation is an important issue in their community.²⁵

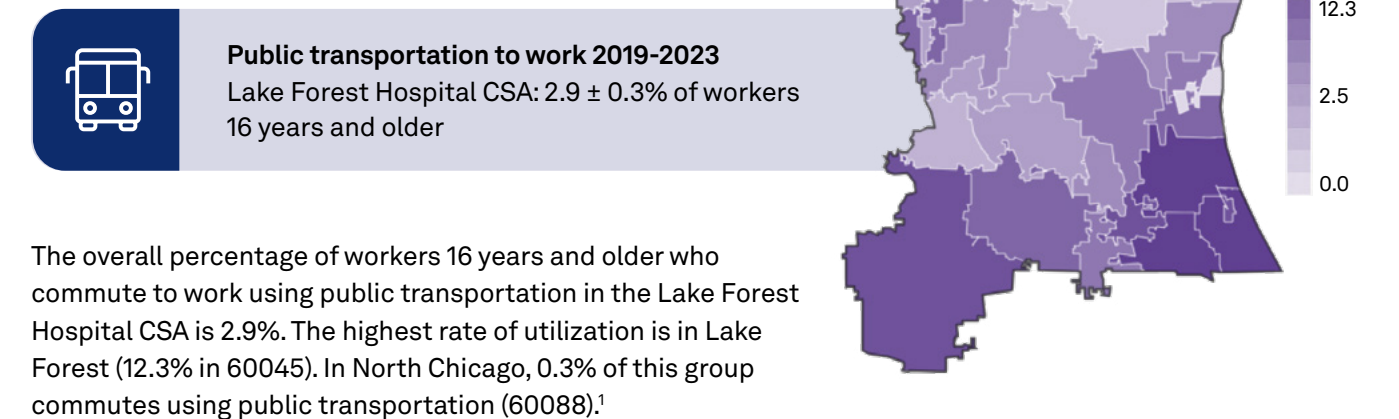
No vehicle available



Highlights

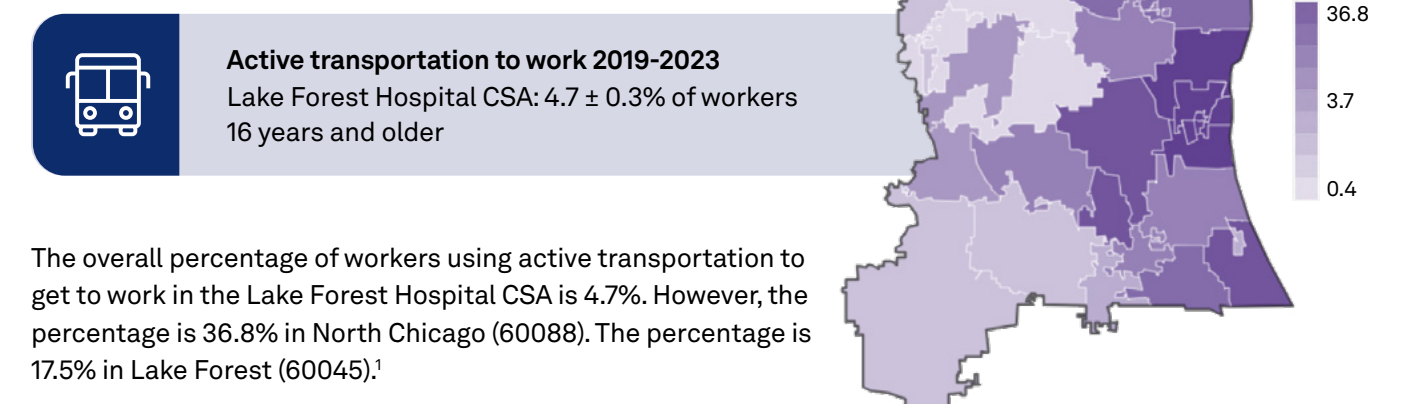
Residents struggle with limited public transportation options, which impacts their access to healthy food, gyms and parks for physical activity, and healthcare services. Focus group and key interview participants also note the lack of housing options close to large employers in the area, which would make walking to work easier for some individuals.

Public transportation to work



Active transportation to work

Active transportation to work is defined as workers 16 years and older who commute to work via walking, biking or taking public transportation.



“

Transportation is a huge issue for a lot of people in Lake County. If you don't have a car, it becomes almost impossible to do a lot of things.”

Focus group participant

Violence and community safety

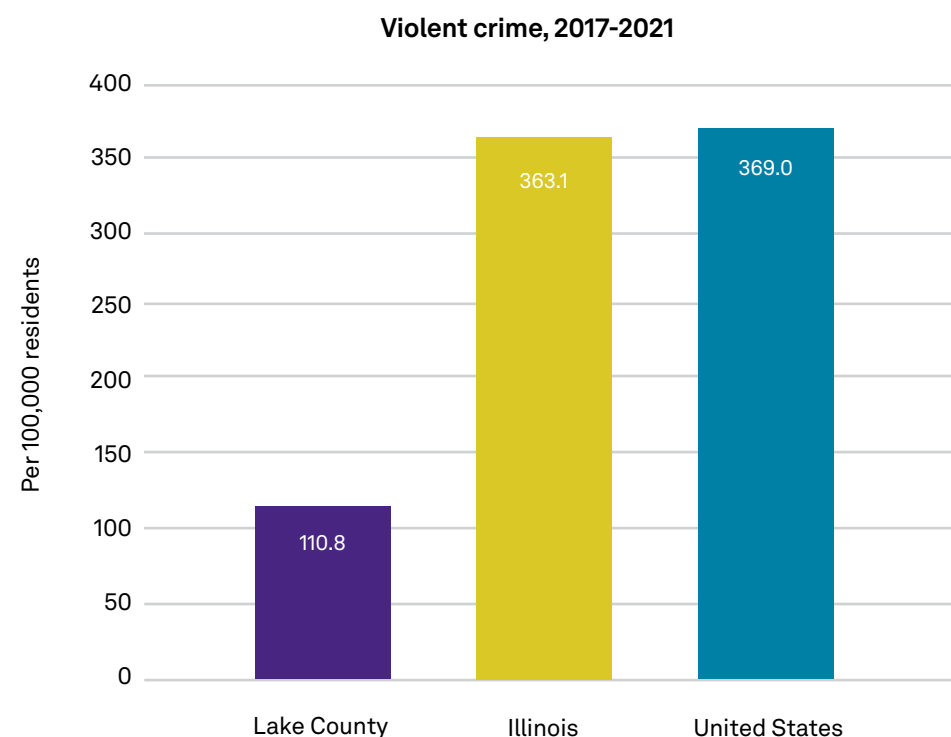
Any person can be affected by crime and violence either by experiencing it directly or indirectly, such as witnessing violence or property crimes in their community or hearing about crime and violence from other residents.¹⁴



Among survey respondents, **21.0%** indicated safety is an important issue in their community.²⁵

Violent crime

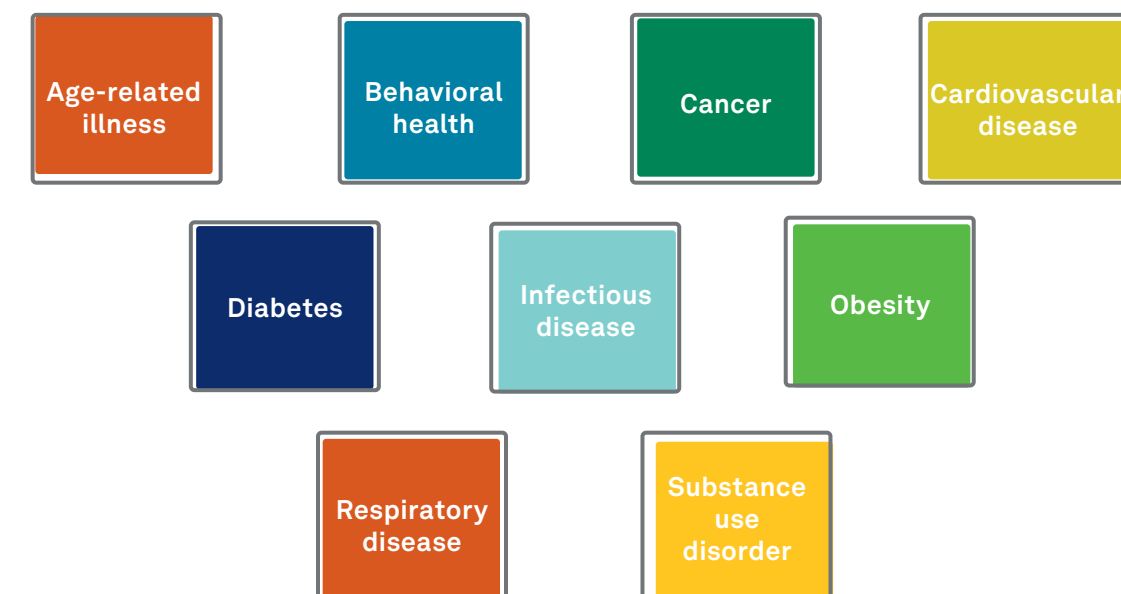
Crimes related to violence are reported as a yearly rate per 100,000 residents. Violent crimes include homicide, criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and aggravated battery.¹⁵



Highlights

Community safety was not frequently discussed in focus groups or key interviews. Additionally, secondary data shows that violence rates have remained lower than state and national rates for several years.

Health conditions



In our community survey, respondents were asked:

“On a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being Very Healthy and 1 being Very Unhealthy, how would you rate the overall health of your community?”

The average overall response was 3.7 on the 5-point scale. Moreover, 3.7 was the average response for all racial and ethnic categories.²⁵

Overall, estimates of disease burden in the CSA are similar or slightly lower than those reported for the state of Illinois.

Health condition ^{16,17}	Prevalence,% of adults	
	CSA	Illinois
Obesity	31.4	34.4
High blood pressure	28.8	29.1
Diabetes	11.4	10.4
Asthma	9.0	9.5

Life expectancy in the CSA

Life expectancy is an important way to measure the overall health of a community. It helps us understand how long people live now compared with how long people lived in the past and shows the effects of big changes like diseases or lack of resources in the community.

In the CSA, there is a 9.2-year gap between the community with the highest life expectancy (Old Mill Creek) and the lowest life expectancy (North Chicago).¹⁸

Overall life expectancy in the CSA:

80.4 years

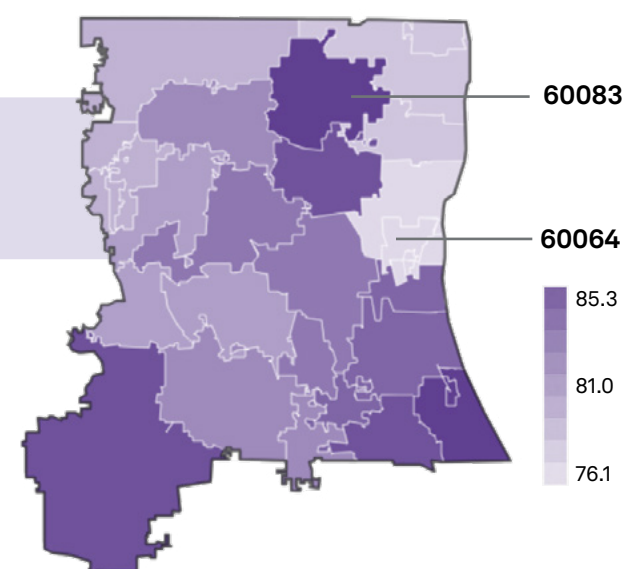
Lowest life expectancy: North Chicago (60064)

76.1 years

Highest life expectancy: Old Mill Creek (60083)

85.3 years

Life expectancy 2010-2015
Lake Forest Hospital CSA:
80.4 years ± 0.3 years



Age-related illness

In the survey of residents in the CSA, **20.9%** of respondents indicated age-related illness (specifically Alzheimer's disease and dementia) was an important health issue.²⁵ For the purposes of this report, age-related illness includes:

- › Alzheimer's disease and dementia
- › Arthritis
- › Vision difficulty
- › Hearing difficulty

Alzheimer's disease mortality:
annual deaths per 100,000 residents¹⁹

Lake County:

30.9

Illinois: 26.2



Arthritis^{16,17}

CSA:

23.8% of adults

Illinois: 23.0% of adults



Vision difficulty¹

CSA:

1.8% of adults

Illinois: 2.2% of adults



Hearing difficulty¹

CSA:

2.7% of adults

Illinois: 3.0% of adults



Highlights

Age-related illness was not a topic that came up in our survey findings or community conversations. However, secondary data shows the Alzheimer's disease mortality rate in Lake County is slightly higher than the state's rate.

Behavioral health

Behavioral health disorders are common and affect people of all demographics. They affect how we think, feel and act, and also influence how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. In our community, mental health challenges are a growing concern and addressing them is key to improving overall health.

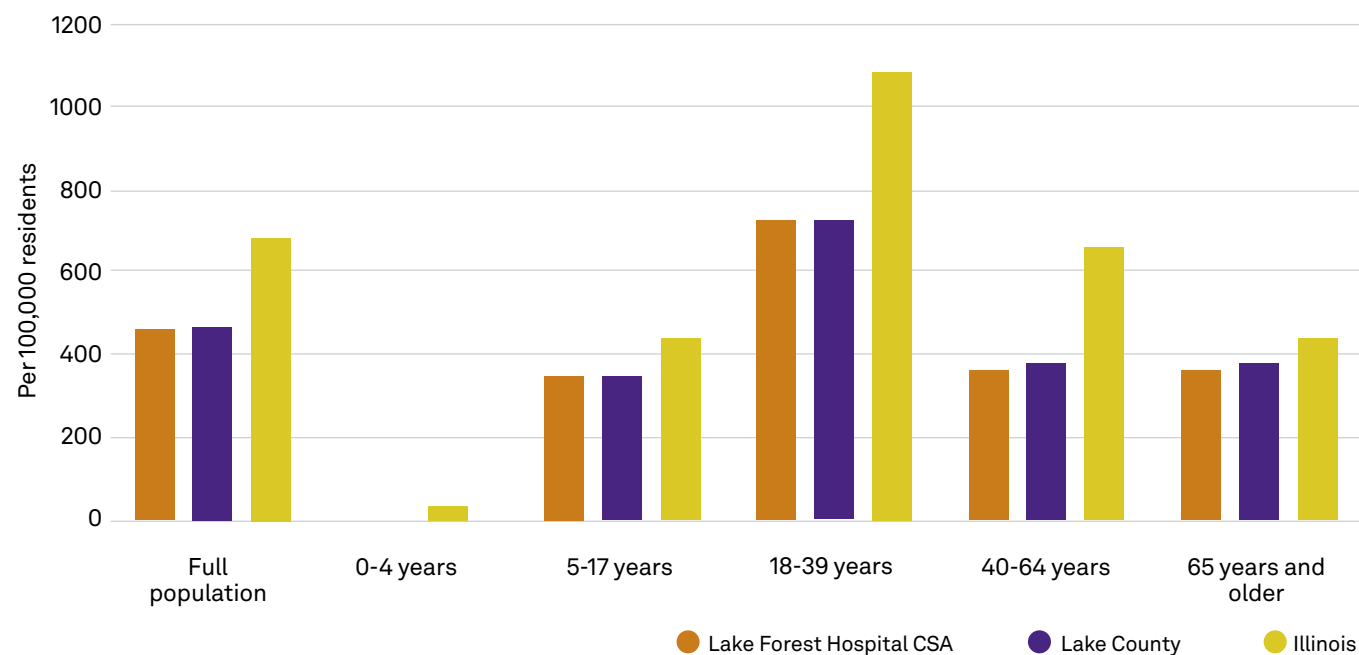
Among survey respondents, **51.3%** indicated adult mental health is a top health-related challenge within the community.²⁵

Additionally, **51.8%** of survey respondents indicated adolescent mental health is a top community health-related challenge.²⁵

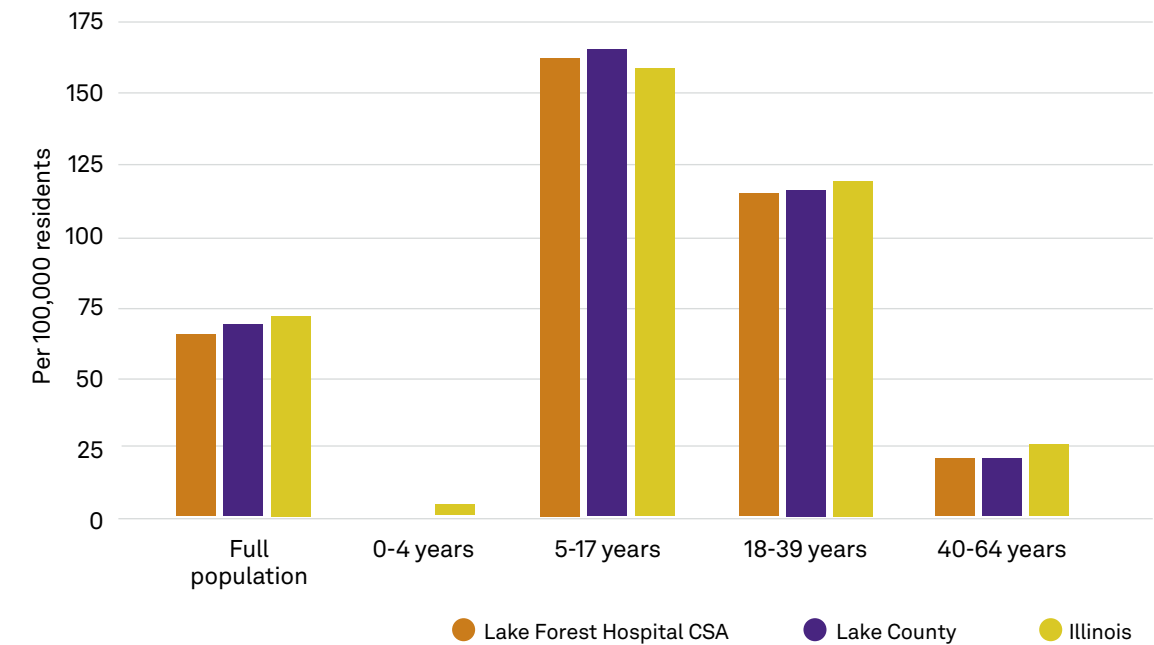
Also, **22.8%** of survey respondents reported at some point in the past 12 months they needed behavioral health care. Of those respondents, 24.5% did not receive behavioral health care, and the following are the top reasons: they were put on a waitlist, they didn't know where to get services and they could not afford the cost.²⁵

The behavioral health hospitalization rate for the full population in the CSA is 452.0 admissions per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the Illinois rate. However, the rate for the 18- to 39-year age group is significantly higher in all regions.²⁰

Behavioral health hospitalization rate by age, 2019-2023



Suicide and self-injury emergency department visit rate by age, 2019-2023



The suicide and self-injury emergency department visit rate for the full population in the CSA is 67.3 visits per 100,000 residents. The rates for the age groups 5-17 years and 18-39 years are significantly higher.²⁰

Highlights

Behavioral health care is one of the most urgent needs in our community. According to behavioral health experts in the community, accessing behavioral health care is a challenge that many individuals and families face, and resources are desperately needed to address a multitude of needs. Mental health affects all aspects of life, from physical health to relationships and overall quality of life. Action is needed to provide support and resources for those in need.

“

Our biggest need for the past couple of years has been mental health resources.”

Key interview participant



Cancer

Cancer affects many individuals and families from all walks of life. Analyzing and reporting diagnosis rates, mortality rates and screening rates can influence local health policies, enhance public awareness programs and help target interventions.

Among survey respondents, **38.1%** identified cancer as an important health-related challenge in their community.²⁵



Cancer diagnosis rates (per 100,000 residents)²¹

	CSA	Illinois
All invasive cancers	568.3	573.2
Invasive breast cancer (females)	171.5	161.5
Colorectal cancer	41.7	46.3
Lung cancer	58.0	72.6
Prostate cancer (males)	150.6	144.9
Other cancers	177.8	169.4

Expert observation

“The need for behavioral health services has consistently been on the rise and we continue to see difficulties with finding timely and/or affordable mental health services. Behavioral health services for adults and adolescents have remained a priority for our community, similar to previous years.”

Krithika Malhotra, PhD, Psychology
Northwestern Medicine

“

I also would like to see more campaigns addressed to decrease stigma.”

Focus group participant

“

Also just navigating the healthcare system as far as insurance goes. People not knowing what their insurance covers and what they have access to. So that is a very complex part of cancer screening, especially for things like lung cancer.”

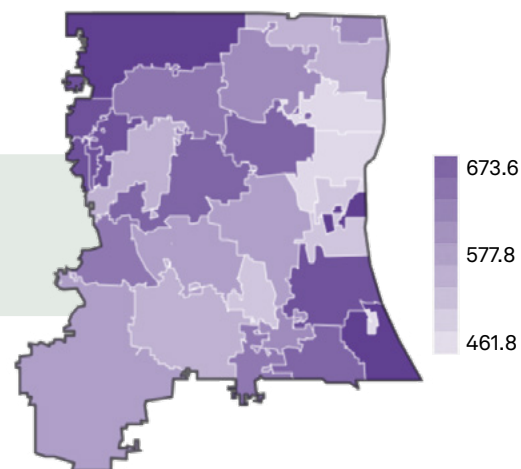
Key interview participant

Cancer diagnosis rate

Cancer diagnosis rate 2017-2021

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 568.3 ± 8.1 per 100,000 residents

The overall cancer diagnosis rate in the CSA is 568.3 diagnoses per 100,000 residents, but the rate also varies greatly across the CSA. Rates are highest in Highland Park (60035) at 673.6 diagnoses per 100,000 residents and in North Chicago (60088) at 672.7 diagnoses per 100,000 residents.²¹



Prevention and screening in the CSA vs. Illinois



75.0%

of females aged 50-74 years

had a mammography screening within past two years^{16,17}

Illinois: 73.0%

82.2%

of females aged 21-65 years

had a Pap smear within previous three years^{16,17}

Illinois: 81.0%

62.1%

of residents aged 50-75 years

had a colorectal cancer screening*:^{16,17}

Illinois: 55.4%

Highlights

In the CSA, cancer diagnosis rates greatly vary across communities. Data also indicates individuals in the CSA are participating in cancer screenings at higher rates than the Illinois rate.

*Full description of data: Percentage of resident adults aged 50-75 years who report having had (1) a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) within the past year, (2) a sigmoidoscopy within the past 5 years and a FOBT within the past 3 years, or (3) a colonoscopy within the past 10 years.

Cardiovascular disease

Heart disease and stroke can result in poor quality of life, disability and death. These diseases are common, and they can often be prevented by controlling risk factors like high blood pressure and high cholesterol through treatment.

According to **29.0%** of survey respondents, cardiovascular disease is one of the top health issues in their community.²⁵

Rates of high blood pressure^{16,17}

CSA: 28.8%

Illinois: 29.1%

Rates of high cholesterol^{16,17}

CSA: 30.8%

Illinois: 28.2%

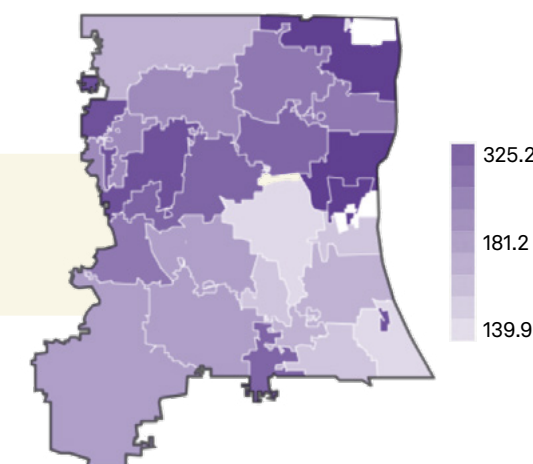


Stroke hospitalization

Stroke hospitalization rate 2019-2023

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 195.3 ± 4.6 per 100,000 residents

The stroke hospitalization rate in the CSA is 195.3 admissions per 100,000 residents, which is slightly lower than the Illinois rate of 209.5. However, several communities have much higher rates, such as 325.2 admissions per 100,000 residents in North Chicago (60064) and 273.5 admissions per 100,000 residents in Waukegan (60085).²⁰

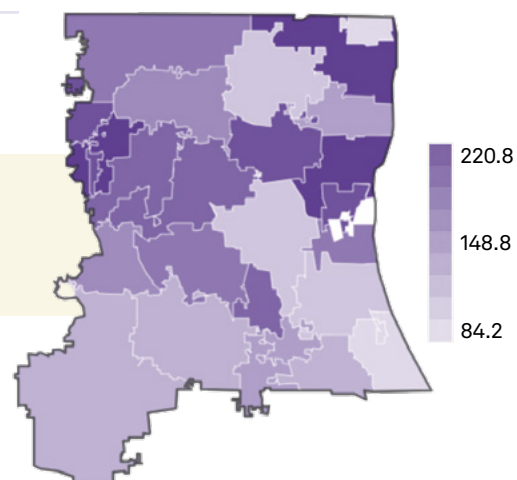


Heart attack hospitalization

Heart attack hospitalization rate 2019-2023

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 152.1 ± 4.0 per 100,000 residents

The heart attack hospitalization rate in the CSA is 152.1 admissions per 100,000 residents, which is slightly lower than the Illinois rate of 158.9. However, several communities within the CSA have higher rates, such as 220.8 admissions per 100,000 residents in Long Lake (60041) and 202.0 admissions per 100,000 residents in Zion (60099).²⁰



Heart disease mortality:
annual deaths per 100,000 residents¹⁹

Lake County: **147.8**

Illinois: 166.7

Stroke mortality:
annual deaths per 100,000 residents¹⁹

Lake County: **34.0**

Illinois: 40.8

“

It might have took me a long time to get them to even agree to work on, you know, controlling their diabetes or their high blood pressure.”

Focus group participant

Highlights

While rates across the CSA for heart attack hospitalization and stroke hospitalization are slightly lower than the state’s rate, specific communities within the CSA report significantly higher rates locally.



Diabetes

Diabetes presents a significant health challenge across the CSA. Tailored health interventions and community education programs can help manage and mitigate the impact of diabetes, aiming to enhance the overall well-being and health of these communities.

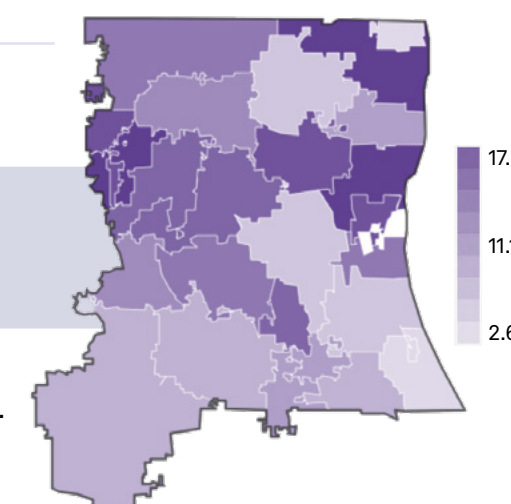
In the survey of CSA residents, **27.0%** listed diabetes as a top health issue in the community.²⁵

Diagnosed diabetes

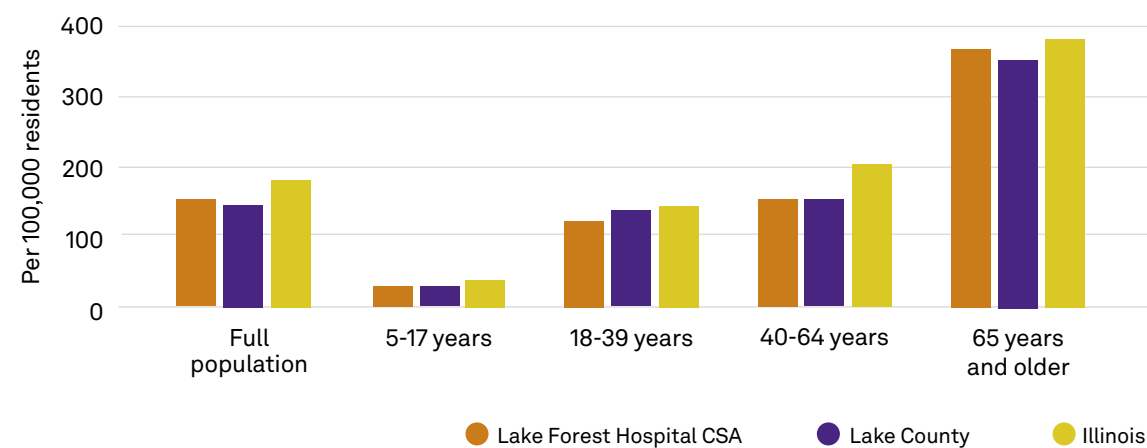
Diagnosed diabetes 2022

Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 11.4 ± 0.3% of adults

The overall rate for diagnosed diabetes in the CSA is 11.4% of adults. However, in the community of North Chicago (60064), the rate is significantly higher at 17.3%. Waukegan (60085 and 60087) and Zion (60099) also report higher rates of 14.8%, 14.2% and 14.2%, respectively.¹⁷



Diabetes hospitalization rate by age, 2019-2023



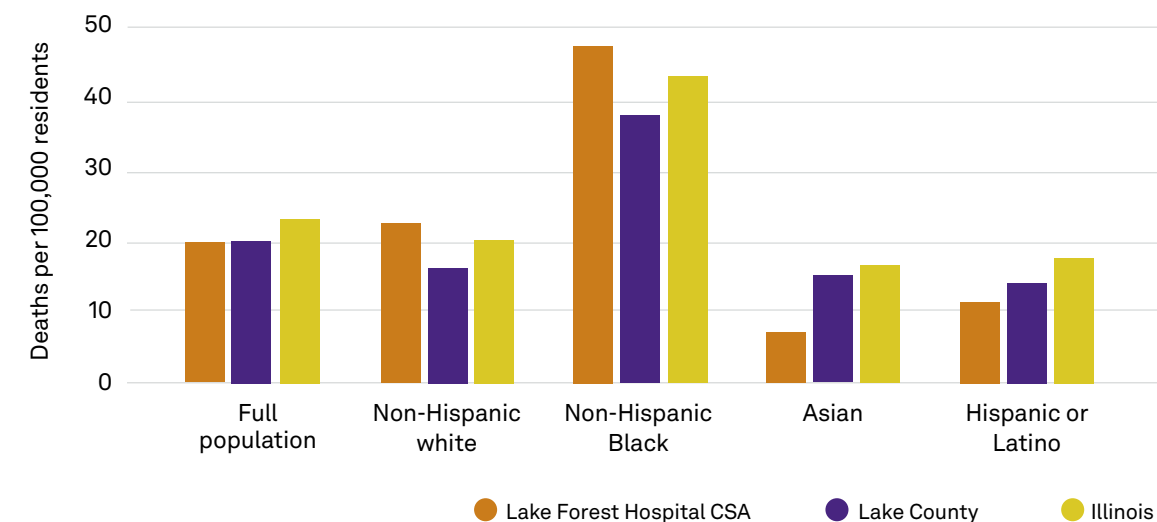
The annual rate of diabetes hospitalization (Type 1 and 2) for the full population in the CSA is 157.2 admissions per 100,000 residents, which is slightly lower than the state's rate. However, when stratified by age, the rate increases significantly for the age group 65 years and older.²⁰

“

It is essential to address systemic issues that contribute to the prevalence of obesity and diabetes, such as access to healthy food options and affordable health care.”

Focus group participant

Diabetes mortality by race and ethnicity, 2018-2022



The data reveals a concerning disparity in diabetes mortality rates across different racial and ethnic groups within Lake County and the broader United States. Non-Hispanic Black individuals face a significantly higher mortality rate at 47.6 deaths per 100,000 residents in Lake County, compared with 20.0 deaths per 100,000 residents in Lake County for the full population.¹⁹

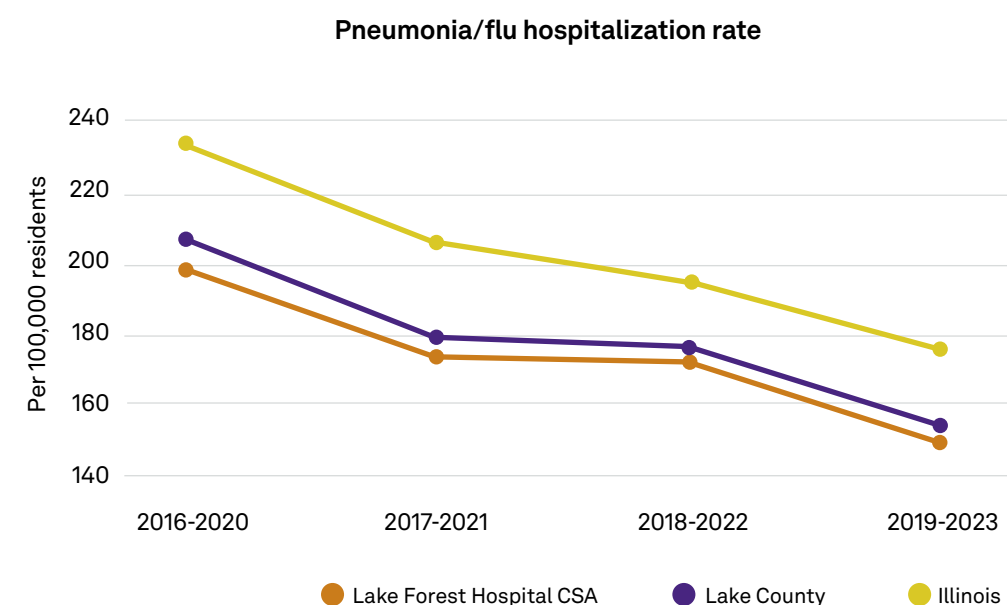
Highlights

Diabetes diagnosis rates vary widely across the CSA; however, the starker contrast exists in the diabetes mortality data. Targeted health interventions can aid in bringing down numbers in all diabetes indicators by providing education and resources to manage diabetes effectively.

Infectious disease

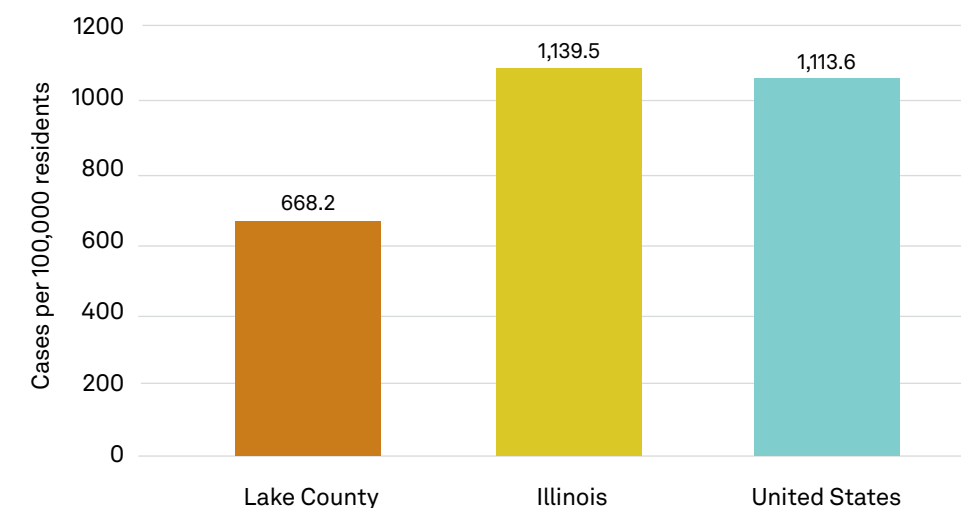
The infectious disease assessments include a review of rates of sexually transmitted infections and a combined statistic for pneumonia and influenza (flu).

Among survey respondents, **67.5%** say they received a flu vaccine in the past 12 months.²⁵



The annual pneumonia/flu hospitalization rate for the CSA is 150.6 hospital admissions per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the county and the state's rate. The rates have also been declining over the past several years.²⁰

Sexually transmitted infection incidence, 2022



The rate of sexually transmitted infection in the CSA is 668.2 infections per 100,000 residents, which is considerably lower than the state and national rates. This rate includes cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV/AIDS. More than half of the cases are from chlamydia.²²

Highlights

Even though only 67.0% of survey respondents report receiving the flu vaccine, the pneumonia/flu hospitalization rate is lower than the state's rate and has continued a downward trend over several years.

Obesity

Obesity can contribute to the development of health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Managing obesity has a positive impact on the overall health of the individual and the community as a whole. Obesity is defined by a number called the body mass index, which is calculated using weight and height. An individual has obesity when their body mass index is 30 or more.

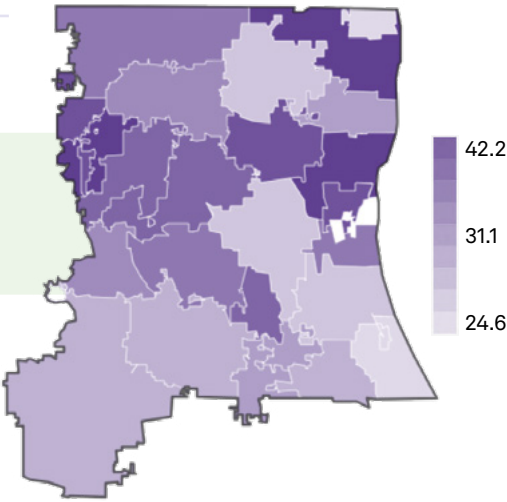
Among community input survey respondents, **27.0%** believe obesity to be a top health-related challenge within the community.²⁵

Obesity

Obesity 2022
Lake Forest Hospital CSA: 31.4 ± 1.0% of adults



The overall rate of obesity is 31.4% of adults in the CSA. Some communities report an even higher rate, including 42.2% for North Chicago (60064), 38.8% for Waukegan (60085) and 38.5% for Zion (60099).¹⁷



Highlights

Obesity is a common health concern in many communities, and this CSA sees the same concern. The prevalence of obesity in our communities necessitates targeted public health interventions and resources to mitigate associated risks like diabetes and heart disease, thereby improving overall community well-being.

“

Diabetes is often seen as a consequence of obesity.”

Focus group participant



Respiratory disease

Respiratory disease includes the conditions of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

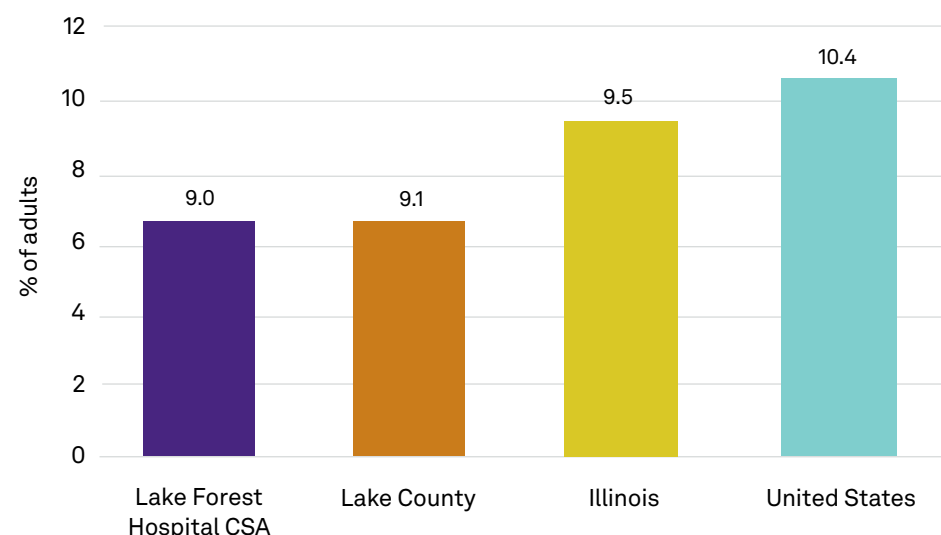
Among survey respondents, **6.3%** indicated lung diseases were a top community health challenge.²⁵

“

There’s a lot of obesity, asthma issues, diabetes, and not all the communities are that safe to go out.”

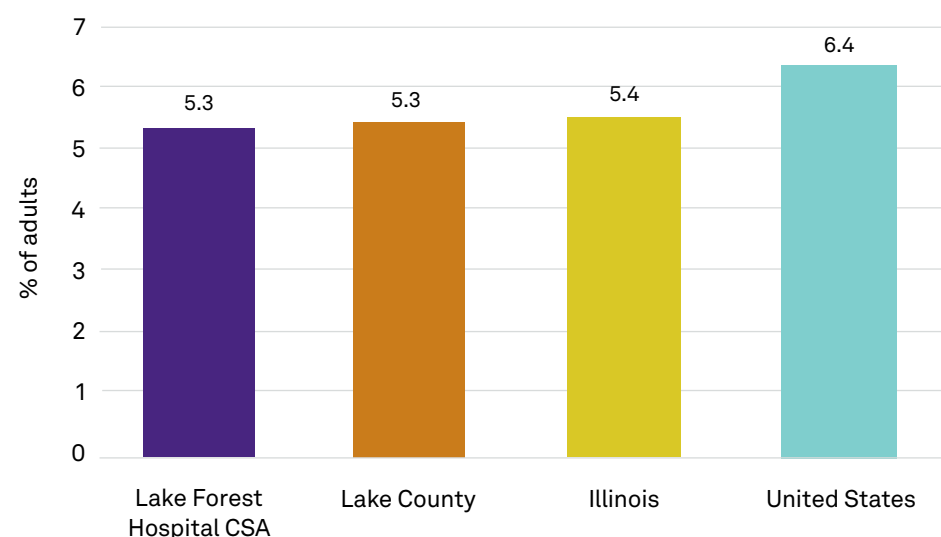
Key interview participant

Current asthma, 2022



In the CSA, 9.0% of adults report having an asthma diagnosis, which is slightly lower than other comparisons.¹⁷

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, 2022



In the CSA, 5.3% of adults report receiving a diagnosis of COPD, emphysema or chronic bronchitis, which is slightly lower than other comparisons.¹⁷

Highlights

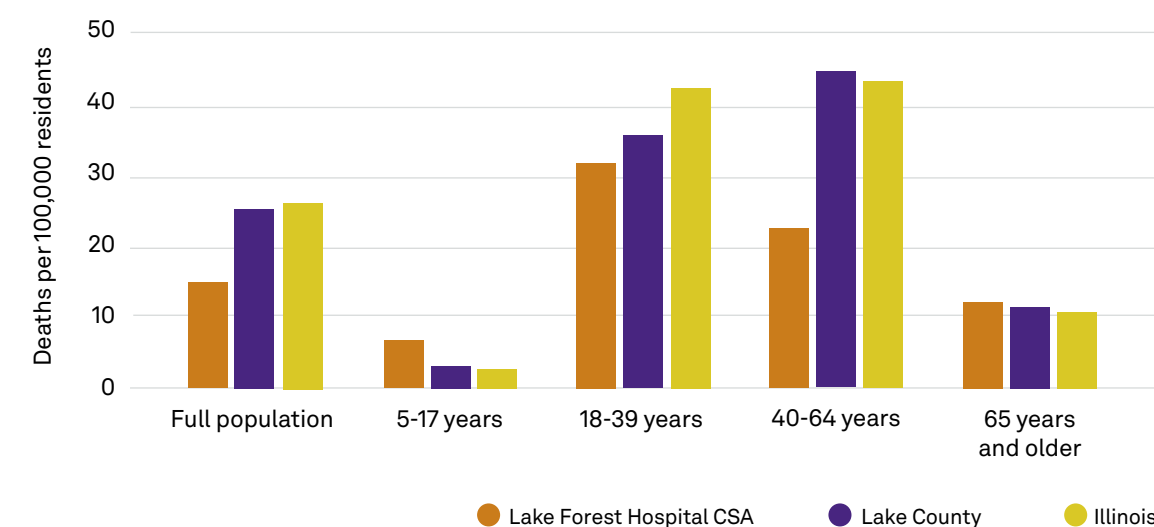
While rates of asthma and COPD in the CSA are relatively low, some community members raised concerns about higher instances of asthma in certain communities.

Substance use disorder

A substance use disorder is when someone cannot control their use of a substance, even though it causes harm and makes it hard to function in daily life.

According to **22.0%** of survey respondents, substance use disorder is a top health-related challenge in their community.²⁵

Drug overdose mortality by age, 2018-2022

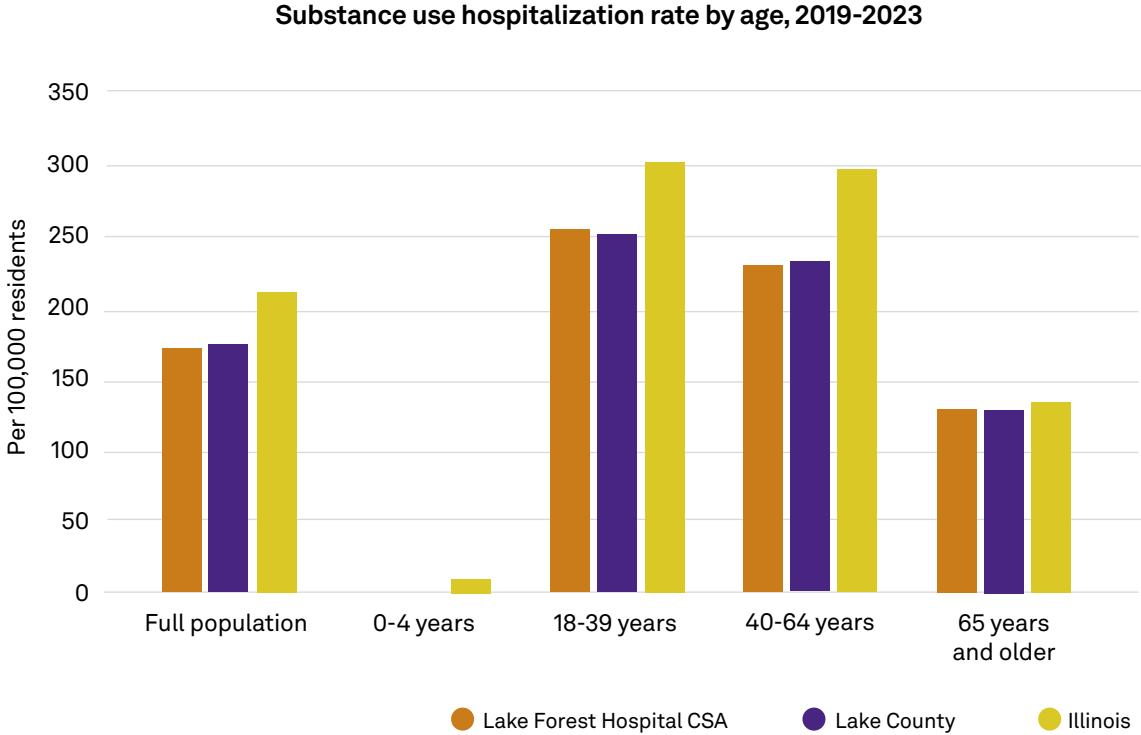


Lake County reports a drug overdose mortality rate of approximately 16.0 deaths per 100,000 people, which is lower than both the state and national rates. However, when stratified by age, the mortality rate for those aged 18-39 years in the CSA increases to 31.0 deaths per 100,000.¹⁹

“

A lot of people that come through our facility have substance use disorders, but a lot of times they're dual diagnosed, and once they take care of the substance use disorder, they're still left with the mental health issue.”

Focus group participant



The substance use hospitalization rate for the Lake Forest Hospital CSA and Lake County are both lower than the state’s rate across all age stratifications.²⁰

Highlights

Substance use disorder is an important topic in the CSA because it directly correlates with behavioral health concerns. While secondary data shows mortality rates for Lake County and hospitalization rates for the CSA are lower than the state’s rates in most instances, focus group and key interview participants say that substance use disorder often goes hand-in-hand with behavioral health concerns, and accessing treatment for substance use disorder is a top concern.

Expert observation

“With regards to substance use, we are seeing more emergency visits among non-Hispanic Black populations as compared to other racial and ethnic groups. It is important to understand and address these health disparities with targeted community level interventions.”

Krithika Malhotra, PhD,
Psychology
Northwestern Medicine



Health behaviors

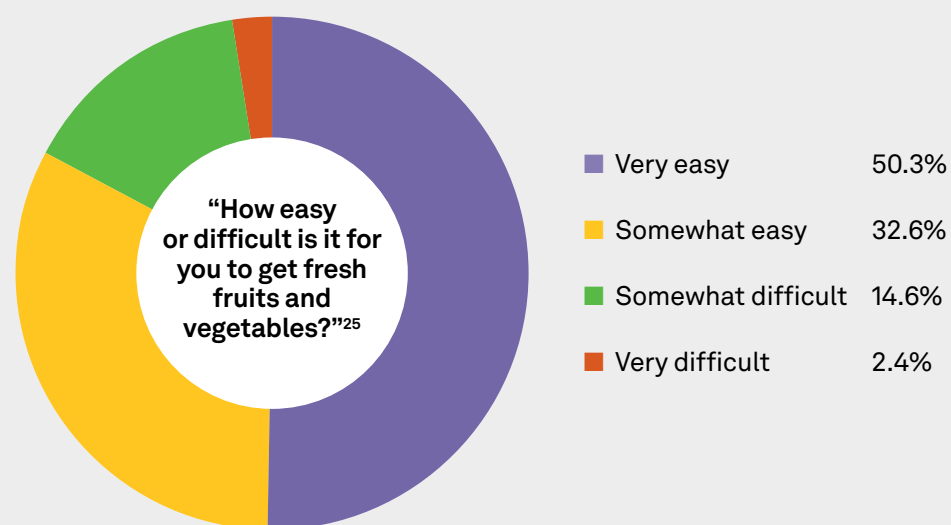
Research has shown that a person’s health is not solely defined by their socioeconomic status or available resources. In fact, a person’s health is greatly influenced by their health behaviors such as food choices, physical activity and substance use.²³

Nutrition

Access to affordable food was considered an important community issue by **30.9%** of survey respondents in the CSA.²⁵ Without access to affordable, healthy foods in safe and accessible locations, individuals cannot reasonably make good nutritional choices for themselves and their families.

When investing in healthy food options for a community, it is important to understand the history and culture of that community. Programs should make every effort to take a culturally competent approach to create sustainable change in nutrition access.

The community survey asked:



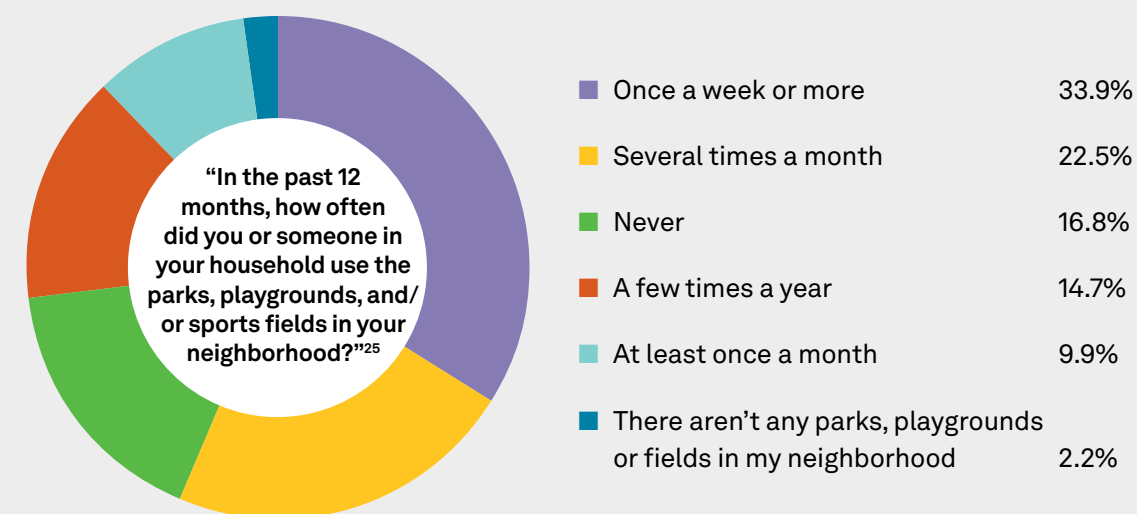
Physical activity

Regular physical activity can improve the health and quality of life of people of all ages. For people who are inactive, even small increases in physical activity are associated with health benefits.

Among survey respondents, **24.9%** reported not exercising at all.²⁵ Guidelines recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week.

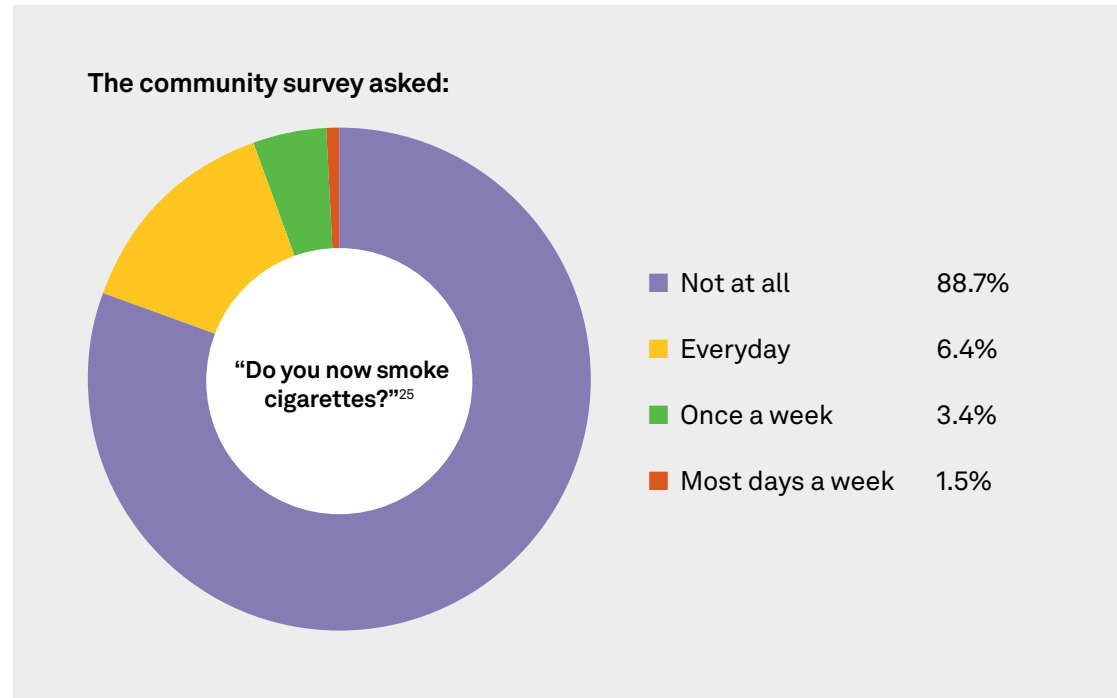
Personal, social, economic and environmental factors all play a role in physical activity levels among youth, adults and older adults. Understanding barriers to and facilitators of physical activity is important to ensure the effectiveness of interventions and other actions to improve levels of physical activity.

The community survey asked:

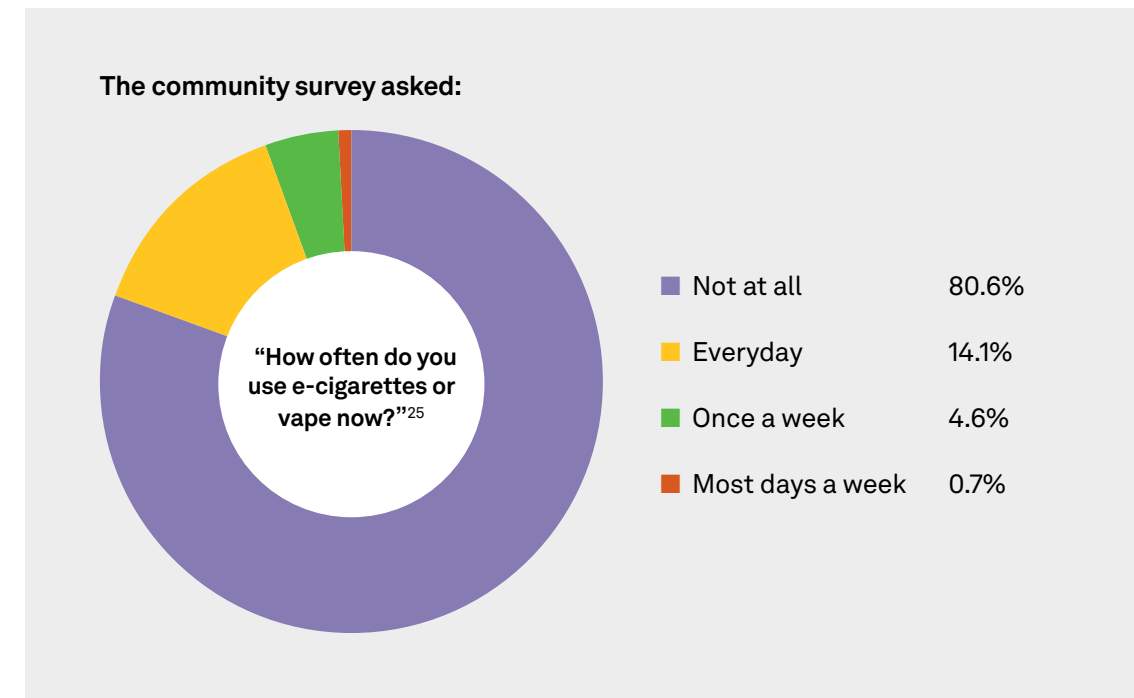


Tobacco and electronic cigarette use

Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body and increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, lung diseases and many types of cancer.²⁴



Cigarette smoking rates vary across different regions, with Lake Forest Hospital CSA having the lowest rate at 11.8%, while Illinois has the highest at 13.5%. Notably, Lake County, IL, has a rate of 13.1%, which is slightly lower than the state average¹⁶.





Significant health needs

Based on local data, benchmark data, the number of people affected and focus group input, we identified the following to be significant health needs within our CSA.

Our collaborators considered these needs when identifying which should be priority health needs for Northwestern Medicine to address.

- › Access to health care
- › Behavioral health
- › Cancer
- › Cardiovascular disease
- › Diabetes
- › Food access
- › Housing instability
- › Obesity
- › Substance use disorder

Priority Health Needs

Community Engagement Council

Once significant health needs are identified, it is important to engage individuals from a variety of backgrounds to share their insights. This helps ensure that data is being interpreted with the community voice at its core, and guides decisions about which needs should be a priority for Northwestern Medicine.

To that end, Lake Forest Hospital engaged with community members and organization representatives, along with Northwestern Medicine employees through their Community Engagement Council.

The Community Engagement Council includes representatives from across the CSA and employees of Northwestern Medicine. Council members are people who have demonstrated a strong, ongoing commitment to improving the health of the communities we serve. Their different backgrounds helped us consider a full range of perspectives when prioritizing identified health needs.

The following community organizations participate on our Community Engagement Council:

Beacon Place	Lake County Health Department
Brushwood Center	Legacy Re-entry Foundation
City of North Chicago	Mano a Mano Family Resource Center
Family First Center of Lake County	Northwestern Medicine
Grace Network	Roberti Community House
Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County	Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
Heart of the City	United Way of Lake County
Josselyn	Waukegan Township, Patricia A. Jones Center

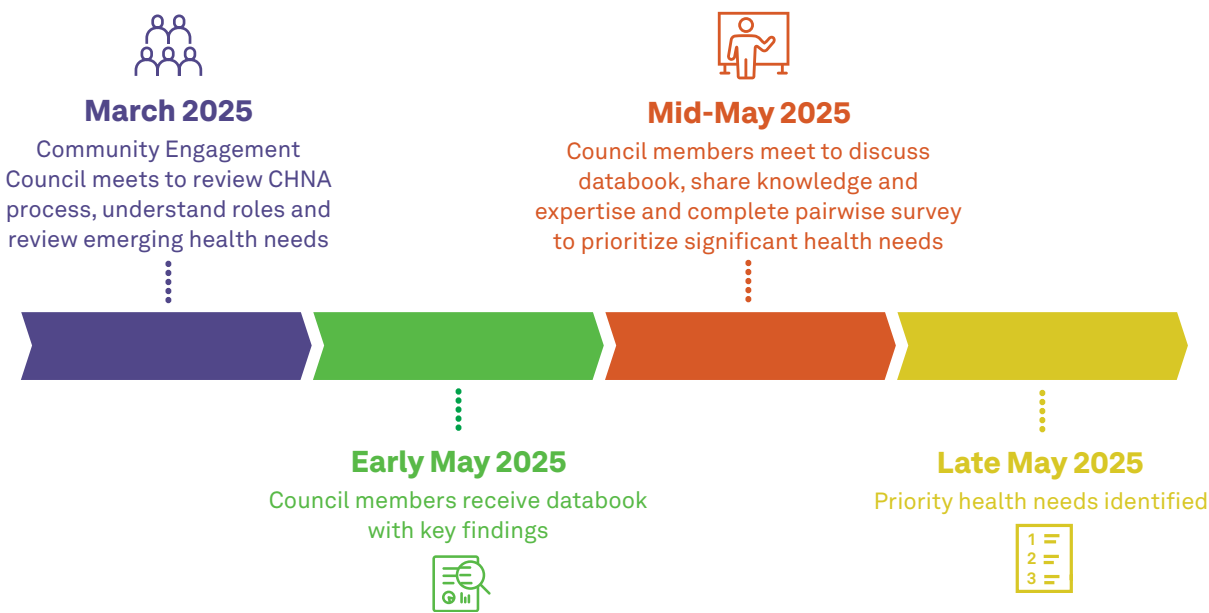
The following is a list of Northwestern Medicine departments represented and why they were chosen for inclusion.

Hospital department	Knowledge area
Community Affairs	Community relationships, data and hospital resources
Behavioral Health	Direct patient care
Care Coordination	Coordination of patient care
Executive Leadership and Operations	Hospital operations and decision making
Health Advocacy	Supports patient care
Medical Staff	Direct patient care
Patient Engagement	Coordination of patient care
Philanthropy	Community relationships
Quality	Supports patient care
Regional Medical Group	Direct patient care
Simulation Center	Supports patient care
Transitional Care Clinic – Primary Care	Direct patient care



How we chose priority health needs

Following completion of data analysis, leaders from Lake Forest Hospital convened our Community Engagement Council to review the findings.



The prioritization of health needs took place over a series of meetings with the Community Engagement Council.

- › The council convened in March 2025 to receive an overview of the CHNA process, including the data collection process within the defined CSA. In this meeting, council members received a preview of the emerging significant health needs identified through the data analysis.
- › In early May 2025, council members were given a databook that highlighted key findings.
- › In mid-May 2025, the Community Engagement Council convened again to review the data collected from the community and to prioritize health needs based on data as well as their own knowledge and expertise.
- › During this meeting, council members were encouraged to ask questions and offer additional data points based on their areas of expertise. This process was meant to ensure Lake Forest Hospital was interpreting the data based on the voice of the community.

- › Once the data was reviewed, council members participated in a pairwise survey through OpinionX. Through this process, participants were asked to consider multiple prioritization factors.
 - The survey assessed nine significant health needs.
 - Participants were given two needs at a time and asked to select which was the priority. After making their selection, participants were presented with the next pair and so on.
- › After prioritizing the list of top nine needs, the Community Engagement Council was able to view and compare their results. The idea behind this methodology is to put an emphasis on the community voice while also recognizing that hospital employees are able to provide perspective on what Lake Forest Hospital can feasibly accomplish over the next three years in this CHNA cycle.

Prioritization factors	Related questions
Consequences of inaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› What impact would inaction have on individuals and on population health?› Are there other organizations who will act to address the need?› Do the inputs needed to take action create challenges to act in other important areas, recognizing that Northwestern Medicine resources are limited?
Feasibility of influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› What capacity already exists to address the need? Can Northwestern Medicine action add value?› Is there already a foundation for collaboration? Is it local?› Could the role of Northwestern Medicine complement that of other collaborators?
Magnitude and disparity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› How many people in the community are impacted?› Are there disparities by race, income or location?› Where is the magnitude the greatest?
Severity and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› How does the need impact health and vitality (focusing on people most impacted by needs related to social drivers of health)?
Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Is there a pattern in the data?› Has the data gotten significantly worse or better over time?

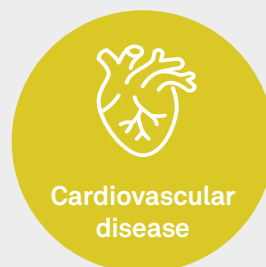
Identified priority health needs

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital has identified three priority health needs in the 2025 CHNA. In selecting priorities, we considered:

- › How big the need is in the community
- › The capacity and resources available to meet the need
- › The suitability of our own expertise to address the need

In particular, priority health needs were selected based on their ability to be addressed through a coordinated response from a range of healthcare and community resources.

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital 2025 Priority Health Needs



Development
of a Plan to
Address Priority
Health Needs



To address the priority health needs identified, Lake Forest Hospital will continue to work with the community to develop a comprehensive Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP). The CHIP will detail strategies to address each priority health need as well as anticipated impacts, resources and planned collaborations.*

Northwestern Medicine remains committed to providing culturally informed care that is responsive to the needs of the communities we serve. By creating a CHIP with community organizations, including health and social service organizations, we will develop community-based health initiatives designed to address the identified priority health needs.

This work is ultimately intended to **improve health, reduce health disparities and build healthier communities** in alignment with the Northwestern Medicine mission.

Existing resources

We recognize that a significant number of healthcare facilities and organizations within the CSA respond to health needs and support health improvement efforts. A list of resources potentially available to address priority health needs is included in Appendix B.

*The CHIP will also specify significant health needs identified through the CHNA that we did not prioritize, together with the reason that they will not be addressed.

Northwestern Medicine roles

To address the priority health needs, Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital can serve in a variety of roles.

Civic Leader

- › Partner/convener
- › Employer
- › Advocate
- › Funder



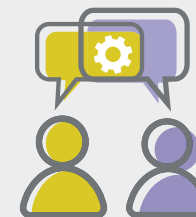
Researcher

- › Medical/biomedical research
- › Community-based evaluation
- › Outcomes data
- › Proof of concept



Educator

- › Training
- › Youth programs
- › Health promotion
- › Knowledge transfer



Carer

- › Financial assistance
- › Medicaid
- › Safety net collaborator



Appendix A

Evaluation of Impact

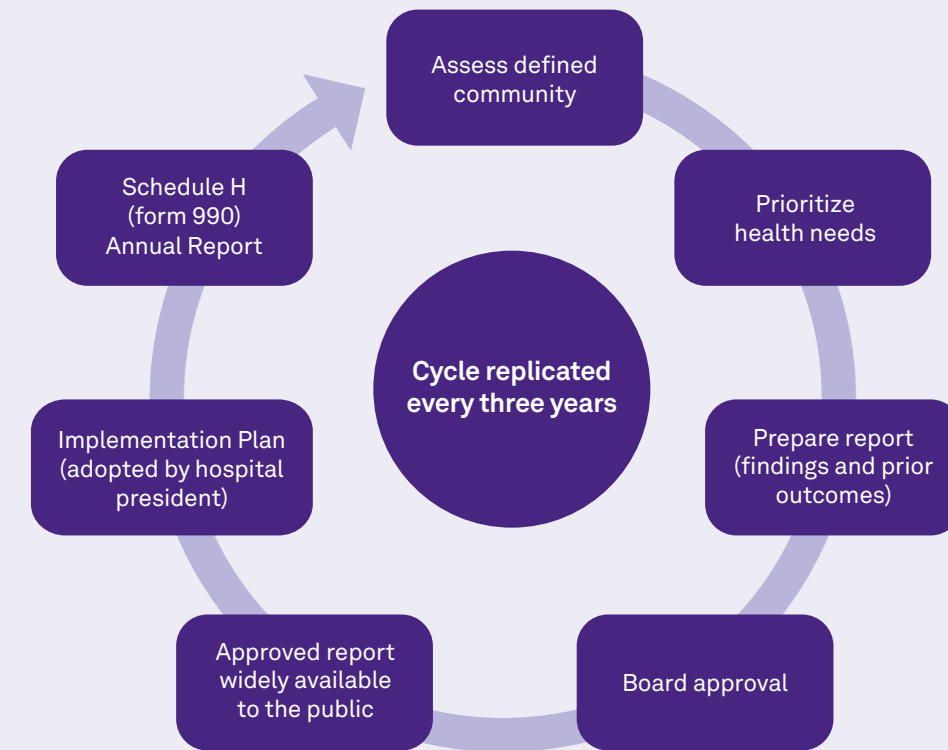
Actions taken to address Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital 2022 priority health needs

The last CHNA completed for Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital was in 2022. We worked with Professional Research Consultants, Inc. to determine significant health needs through a comprehensive assessment that included analysis of community voice, data and the potential health impact of a given issue.

Our community councils met to identify priority health needs for the CSA based on CHNA findings. In selecting priorities, Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital considered the following criteria:

- › Consequences of inaction
- › Feasibility of influencing
- › Magnitude of disparity
- › Severity and impact
- › Trend

The final step before beginning a new CHNA report is evaluating the impact of the strategies started as a result of the previous CHNA.



Through the 2022 CHNA process, Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital identified three priority health needs to be addressed through collaborative planning and coordinated action with organizations that impact health services in the community:

- 1 Behavioral health
- 2 Employment and youth development
- 3 Nutrition, physical activity and weight

The hospital and key community organizations collaborated to address the identified priority health needs. This Evaluation of Impact report summarizes the progress of community strategies outlined in the hospital's current CHIP. This evaluation shows change over time and indicates how well these strategies addressed the priority health needs of the community.

Priority health need 1: Behavioral health

Goal: Increase access to culturally and linguistically appropriate behavioral health services and resources in the Lake Forest Hospital CSA.

Strategy 1.1: Access: Improve access to behavioral health care services in Lake County by expanding capacity at Outpatient Behavioral Health Services and community-based organizations.

Through our collaboration with Josselyn, Lake Forest Hospital provided funding for operational capacity and continued to support the second behavioral health care coordinator. Both coordinators create an immediate connection with patients being discharged from Lake Forest Hospital (at both Grayslake and Lake Forest) and establishing care at Josselyn, including its new facility in Grayslake.

Impact of Strategy
Through August 2024, more than 611 patients were referred for assessment and care. In addition, Lake Forest Hospital provides grant funding to provide timely access and expand capacity for behavioral health services at Erie HealthReach Waukegan, a federally qualified health center serving more than 10,000 patients in Lake County.

Strategy 1.2: Education: Expand behavioral health preventive and educational resources in collaboration with community organizations.

Our Stress Management and Mindfulness program provides education on stress and its effect on health and teaches participants how to manage stress through exercise and lifestyle modification.

In addition to learning stress management and mindfulness, some participants completed goal-setting classes to set goals and monitor behavior change with weekly check-ins from a community facilitator. Participants also learned about the benefits of yoga, deep breathing and meditation exercise and their impact on their overall health. A Spanish-speaking social worker provided guidance on the importance of mental health care and provided self-help tips.

Impact of Strategy
As a result, a reduction in stigma related to behavioral health using a different approach to stress management was promoted. Also, through an established collaboration with Beacon Place in Waukegan, we offered more than 15 hours of programming for 30 adults and 150 children that focused on mindfulness and behavioral health.

Strategy 1.3: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Care: Identify and implement ways to improve cultural and linguistic appropriateness of programs.

With feedback from our community collaborators, we made changes to some of our education to make it more culturally appropriate for our audience. Changes were made to the content, recommendations and recipes that we were sharing. We included local grocery stores in meal planning and recipe brainstorming to promote healthier eating options. Every session in the community had an interpreter present, and an effort was made to always include Spanish-speaking staff. We continue to improve our efforts to add staff at community programming and incorporate changes based on feedback received from surveys. Our Champion Networks have evaluated programs, educational materials and recipes to provide feedback on cultural relevance.

Impact of Strategy
Community health educators listened to the feedback of community members and made programming more language inclusive; this was key in continuing to build trust. It allowed programming to continue and grow from the needs of our community collaborations. Using local grocery stores allowed us to deepen our roots in the neighborhoods and reach more people.

Priority health need 2: Employment and youth development

Goal: Expand access to employment opportunities at Northwestern Medicine and employment readiness programs in the Lake Forest Hospital CSA.

Strategy 2.1: Youth Employment: Strengthen and develop youth pipeline and youth career development programs to promote careers in health care for students in communities experiencing economic hardship as identified by SERI.

Lake Forest Hospital has a strong commitment to pipeline and youth development in surrounding communities through programs like the NM GCM Grosvenor Discovery Program, work study opportunities with local high schools, mentorships and career fairs.

The Discovery Program is a local effort to invite students to explore careers in health care. High school sophomores and juniors are exposed to a broad range of activities designed to encourage their interest. Topics vary by month, and program activities include tours, guest speakers, group discussion and hands-on projects. In addition, the program fosters character and professional development, cultivates life skills, provides community service and leadership experience, and offers mentorship and networking opportunities. Meetings are held once a month on Saturday mornings at Lake Forest Hospital and other locations. An effort is consistently made to recruit a diverse group of students, maintaining at least 60% of students from underserved ZIP codes.

Lake Forest Hospital attends career fairs annually with Gurnee Middle and High Schools, North Chicago High School, CLC Tech Campus, and recently, a career fair that included all Lake County middle schools.

Impact of Strategy

We have hosted more than 10 schools or youth organizations at our Simulation Center for experiential learning and a tour of our facilities.

In addition to the yearlong Discovery Program cohort, Lake Forest Hospital hosted 16 interns placed at the hospital, Grayslake and Glenview campuses in different operating units. The students had the chance to shadow more than 30 Lake Forest Hospital staff members and participated in Lunch and Learns with teams throughout Lake Forest Hospital, Grayslake, Glenview and the System Innovation Team.

Through our collaboration with the work-study program at North Chicago Community High School, we now have more than five students at a time on campus in different departments. Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep (in Waukegan) also has two year-round interns at Grayslake.

Strategy 2.2: Employment Readiness: Expand pathways to employment at Lake Forest Hospital for applicants who do not have a bachelor's degree.

Tailoring employment readiness programs and attending community fairs within our community service area helps create a workforce that meets local business demands, ensuring that residents find meaningful employment close to home. Recruiting students from local programs allows us to get them on the career ladder or within our youth pipeline to grow as professionals and explore meaningful careers. Employees are given an opportunity to participate in local career fairs where they may be alumni and can find motivation by reconnecting with youth interested in learning more about their careers.

Lake Forest Hospital recruiting and professional development staff attended career fairs at Mano a Mano Family Resource Center, College of Lake County and Lake Forest College to recruit members of the community into entry-level positions. In an effort to continue recruiting applicants who do not have a bachelor's degree, positions are being evaluated to determine if changes can be made to education requirements.

Impact of Strategy

Our Youth Programming team and volunteers attended nine career fairs at local high schools and Lake County Tech Campus and successfully recruited and retained individuals into entry-level positions. Five students were hired into entry-level or certificate-level positions and provided shadowing and mentoring opportunities to continue pursuing their education. Lake Forest Hospital worked with 17 pre-nursing students from Lake Forest College to provide an empathy enrichment program. Students spent eight weeks over the summer completing training that could be used toward their overall curriculum.

Strategy 2.3: Employment Readiness: Support community organizations focused on employment readiness.

By collaborating with local work-study programs at North Chicago Community High School and Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep, we fulfill the career readiness portion of high school students' education. Students receive hands-on experience in healthcare positions within our health system, allowing them to learn about a variety of careers instead of shadowing only one position. Students learn about other youth pipeline opportunities in Lake County and can take advantage of more resources by building their network.

Impact of Strategy

Five students from North Chicago participated in an internship, which allowed them to complete Senior Capstone presentations and receive feedback from Lake Forest Hospital leadership. One work-study student from North Chicago Community High School completed her time with us, moved on to the Discovery Program and internship, and even got connected to the Rosalind Franklin University INSPIRE mentoring, research and academic preparation program.

Priority health need 3: Nutrition, physical activity and weight

Goal: Increase culturally and linguistically appropriate education, awareness of programs and access to healthy food options in the Lake Forest Hospital CSA.

Strategy 3.1: Promote access to nutrition education and food (including fresh produce) in collaboration with community organizations.

We reviewed our recipes and educational materials with our audience in mind. Our community collaborators helped us edit the materials to make them more culturally appropriate. For writing new meal plans and recipe ideas, we invited local grocery stores to include their ideas on local resources.

Impact of Strategy

One participant stated, "My son learned so much from the classes provided over the summer, and it was helpful that the labels used were actual items we find in the mercado. He now prefers bread with seeds and vitamins instead of a plain white bread."

Another stated, "When we learned about packing lunches, it was nice to learn what else we can put in a torta besides just processed ham and cheese."

Strategy 3.2: Awareness: Support community efforts to promote physical fitness.

In collaboration with Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Health & Fitness Center and Beacon Place, we invited a local mothers group to campus for a quarterly group fitness class and health education. The group received exercise bands, heard about other household items they could use as weights, and learned activities they could do at home for exercise with their family. Each session was led by a Spanish-speaking personal trainer who understood their culture and language. Education included weightlifting and its benefits and the benefits of yoga on mental well-being.

Impact of Strategy

The mothers group members learned about exercises they could do at home where they felt safe and confident to share with their families. Working with our community programming nurses, the participants included these exercises in the SMART goals they wrote for weight loss and fitness.

Strategy 3.3: Education: Increase consistency of chronic disease prevention education between Northwestern Medicine and community organizations.

Our collaboration between community affairs and family medicine is continuing to grow. Family medicine residents work with organizations to learn what members of the community are looking for. Health education sessions were developed in collaboration with organization leaders on topics such as sleep health, influenza, vaccines, exercise and concussions.

Impact of Strategy

In fiscal year 2024, more than five needs assessments were completed for local organizations like Waukegan Township, Round Lake High School and Mano a Mano Family Resource Center. Lessons were disseminated on social media platforms with organizations like Mano a Mano Family Resource Center for a larger reach within communities.

Strategy 3.4: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Care: Identify and implement ways to improve cultural and linguistic appropriateness of nutrition, physical activity and weight programs.

Lake Forest Hospital continued to make progress in this strategy by improving access to care at Northwestern Medicine, meeting patients’ diverse needs and improving overall equity for patients, the community and workforce. Providing a space for staff to continue to grow and learn allows for more opportunity to serve the diverse community around us. Community outreach councils connect staff at Lake Forest and Grayslake with local community organizations in need of volunteers to support their missions.

Impact of Strategy

Lake Forest Hospital hosted six Equity Grand Rounds, averaging 400 participants, collaborated with newly established community outreach councils, and continued the equity key initiatives. Champion Networks community outreach committees leveraged personal experience to provide feedback and guidance to new initiatives and establish new collaborations.

Appendix B

Resources Available to Address Significant Health Needs

The following healthcare facilities and community organizations may be available to address significant health needs identified in this CHNA.

Category	Resource	Description	Link
Health care	Northwestern Medicine Grayslake Outpatient Center	Healthcare facility	nm.org/locations/grayslake-outpatient-center
	Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital	Hospital	nm.org/locations/lake-forest-hospital
	CYN Counseling Center	Mental health	cyngrayslake.org
Nonprofit, faith-based organizations	Mosaic House Ministries	Spiritual leadership	mosaichouseministries.org
Social service organizations	Legacy Reentry Foundation	Resource for formerly incarcerated individuals and others	legacyreentryfoundation.org
	A Safe Place	Domestic violence and human trafficking in Lake County	asafeplaceforhelp.org
	Community Action Partnership of Lake County	Support for individuals experiencing poverty	caplakecounty.org
	Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County	Healthcare accessibility	hfnlc.org
	Lake County Partners	Economic development	lakecountypartners.com
	LGBTQ+ Center Lake County	Resource for LGBTQ individuals and allies	lgbtqlc.com

Category	Resource	Description	Link
Social service organizations	Mano a Mano Family Resource Center	Resource for immigrant families navigating citizenship and U.S. health care	mamfrc.org
	Northern Illinois Food Bank	Food	solvehungertoday.org
	PADS Lake County	Housing	padslakecounty.org
	Job Center of Lake County	Employment assistance	lakecountyil.gov/4927/Job-Center-of-Lake-County
	United Way 211	Connection to essential and emergency resources	211.org
	YouthBuild Lake County	Youth employment organization	ybhc.org
Education	Beacon Place	After-school and summer programming, college readiness	beacon-place.org
	North Chicago Community High School	High school work study and career exploration program	ncchs.d187.org
	Brushwood Center	Promotes collaboration to improve health equity and access to nature	brushwoodcenter.org
	Elawa Farm	Provides programs to increase access to education and nutritious food	elawafarm.org
	North Chicago Community Partners	Programs for schools	northchicagocommunitypartners.org
	United Way Lake County	Programs for students	liveunitedlakecounty.org
	Erie HealthReach Waukegan	Medical and dental clinic	eriefamilyhealth.org/locations/waukegan
Behavioral health services	Josselyn	Mental health	josselyn.org
	Youth & Family Counseling	Mental health	counselingforall.org

Appendix C

CHNA Timeline and Community Details

Timeline for the Lake Forest Hospital CHNA

Phase	Description	Date
Assessment and analysis	Overall	September 2024 to March 2025
	Community input survey	September 2024 to December 2024
	Focus groups	February to March 2025
	Key interviews	February to March 2025
Prioritization	Overall	May 2025
	Community Engagement Council	May 29, 2025
Approval	Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital Board of Directors	July 29, 2025
Report made widely available to the public	Website	August 31, 2025
	Paper copy available at no charge on request	August 31, 2025
Public comment	Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital 2025 CHNA	August 31, 2025, through August 31, 2031
	Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital 2022 CHNA	August 31, 2022, through August 31, 2028

Community Details

CSA cities and ZIP codes

60002	Antioch	60044	Lake Bluff	60083	Old Mill Creek
60010	Barrington Hills	60045	Lake Forest	60073	Round Lake
60089	Buffalo Grove	60046	Lake Villa	60061	Vernon Hills
60015	Deerfield	60047	Long Grove	60084	Wauconda
60037	Fort Sheridan	60041	Long Lake	60085	Waukegan
60020	Fox Lake	60048	Libertyville	60087	Waukegan
60030	Grayslake	60069	Lincolnshire	60096	Winthrop Harbor
60031	Gurnee	60060	Mundelein	60099	Zion
60035	Highland Park	60064	North Chicago		
60040	Highwood	60088	North Chicago		

Appendix D

A Closer Look at Data

Community input survey

The survey was shared widely through social media, email blasts and in-person events in collaboration with community organizations. We collected 1,445 survey responses from people in the CSA. The following issues were selected as the most important health challenges in the community by 25.0% or more of the survey respondents:

- 1 Adolescent mental health (51.8%)
- 2 Adult mental health (51.3%)
- 3 Cancer (38.1%)
- 4 Heart disease (28.5%)
- 5 Obesity (27.3%)
- 6 Type 2 diabetes (26.9%)

The following factors that support improvements in health needs were selected by 25.0% or more of the survey respondents:

- 1 Access to health care and affordable medical care professionals (51.0%)
- 2 Affordable and safe housing (39.3%)
- 3 Eating healthy (34.2%)
- 4 Medication affordability (31.6%)
- 5 Access to affordable food (30.9%)
- 6 Access to care for older adults (30.7%)
- 7 Insurance access and affordability (29.1%)
- 8 Transportation (25.1%)

Community focus groups and key interviews

We facilitated six focus groups in the CSA and conducted nine in-depth interviews. Focus groups took place with priority populations, such as individuals living with mental illness, people of color, older adults, caregivers, teens and young adults, people from sexual minority groups, families with children, faith communities and adults with disabilities.

Most focus groups were 90 minutes long with an average of 10 participants. Groups were conducted virtually using the Zoom platform or in person. A trained facilitator moderated each session. Sessions were recorded, and recordings were stored securely on a server at Metopio.

Interviews with key community members lasted 30 minutes and were done with a trained interviewer. Sessions were held over the Zoom platform. Notes were captured in a Word document.

The following themes were identified during focus group sessions and key interviews for the CSA:

Access to health care

- › Better coordination of care needed for older adults
- › Cost of care and medications
- › Limited availability of appointment times
- › Linguistically and culturally competent care
- › Transportation needs for medical appointments and other common locations

Behavioral health and substance use disorder

- › Access to behavioral health care
- › Stigma around receiving behavioral health care
- › Substance use among youth

Community health

- › Cost of food, housing and other necessities
- › Limited public transportation and other affordable options
- › Long distances to nearest medical facilities and grocery stores
- › Social isolation among older adults

We would like to thank community members and the following community organizations that participated in focus groups and key interviews:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| › Affirm Leadership Christian Academy | › Legacy Re-entry Foundation |
| › American Cancer Society | › North Chicago School District 187 |
| › Beacon Place | › Pads Lake County |
| › Erie Family Health | › Roberti Community House |
| › Family First Center | › Round Lake Area Library |
| › Gorter Family Foundation | › Schreiber Philanthropy |
| › Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County | › United Way of Lake County |
| › Josselyn | › Village of Libertyville |
| › Lake County Community Foundation | › Youth & Family Counseling |
| › Lake County Workforce Development | › Youth Build Lake County |

Appendix E

References

1. U.S. Census Bureau. (2019–2023). *American community survey*. U.S. Department of Commerce. Accessed through Metopio.
2. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Social drivers of health. *Healthy People 2030*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>.
3. Millman, M. (1993). *Access to health care in America*. Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Monitoring Access to Personal Health Care Services. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK235882/
4. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Health care access and quality. *Healthy People 2030*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality
5. Area Health Resources & Services Administration. (2022). *Area health resource files*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed through Metopio.
6. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Economic stability. *Healthy People 2030*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/economic-stability
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, May 17). *Social determinants of health (SDOH)*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm
8. Environmental Protection Agency. (2024). *EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening*. Accessed through Metopio.
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *Environmental Justice Index*. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Accessed through Metopio.
10. Feeding America. (2022). *Map the meal gap*. Feeding America. Accessed through Metopio.
11. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Housing and Homes. *Healthy People 2030*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. odphp.health.gov
12. Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. (1990). ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm
13. Bass B, Nagy H. (2023). *Cultural competence in the care of LGBTQ patients*. StatPearls Publishing. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK563176/
14. Hartinger-Saunders, R. M., Rine, C. M., Nochajski, T., & Wieczorek, W. (2012). Neighborhood crime and perception of safety as predictors of victimization and offending among youth: A call for macro-level prevention and intervention models. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(9), 1966–1973.
15. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2023). *FBI crime data explorer*. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Accessed through Metopio.
16. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *Behavioral risk factor surveillance system*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed through Metopio.
17. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *PLACES*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed through Metopio.
18. National Center for Health Statistics. (2020). *U.S. small-area life expectancy estimates project – USALEEP*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed through Metopio.
19. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018–2022). *Vital Statistics System: mortality*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed through Metopio.
20. Illinois Health and Hospital Association. (2019–2023). *COMPdata informatics*. Illinois Health and Hospital Association. Calculated by Metopio.
21. Illinois Department of Public Health. (2017–2021). *Illinois state cancer registry*. Illinois Department of Public Health. Accessed through Metopio.
22. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention: Atlas Plus*. Accessed through Metopio.
23. Institute of Medicine (U.S.) Committee on Health and Behavior: Research, Practice, and Policy. (2001). *Health and behavior: the interplay of biological, behavioral, and societal influences*. National Academies Press (U.S.). ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK43732/
24. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Tobacco use. *Healthy People 2030*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/tobacco-use#cit1
25. Community input represents information and beliefs obtained from CHNA focus groups and from persons representing the broad interests of the community, including people who are uninsured, have low incomes and belong to certain minority groups.

Appendix F

Disclaimers

Information gaps

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital made efforts to comprehensively collect and analyze CHNA data to assess the health of the community. However, there are limitations to consider while reviewing the findings.

- › Data is presented for the most recent years available for any given source. Because of variations in data collection time frames across different sources, some datasets are not available for the same time spans.
- › Data availability ranges from census track to national geographies. The most relevant localized data is reported.
- › There are persistent gaps in data for certain community health issues, such as homelessness, behavioral health, crime, environmental health and education.

Northwestern Medicine is investigating strategies for addressing information gaps for future assessment and implementation processes.

Public dissemination

The 2025 CHNA report for Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital is available to the public at no charge.

Online: nm.org/about-us/nm-community-impact/reports

Phone: 312.926.2301 (TTY: 711)

Email: communityhealth@nm.org

In person: Please visit the main customer service desk at:
Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital
1000 North Westmoreland Road
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

Public comment

As of May 2025, Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital had not received comments from the public. Northwestern Medicine will continue to use its website as a tool to encourage public comments and ensure that these comments are considered in the development of future CHNAs.

Extensive input from the broader community was gathered through surveys and focus groups for this report. This input, in conjunction with any public comments received, was considered when identifying and prioritizing the significant health needs of the community.

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital welcomes comments from the public regarding the CHNA. Please submit comments to communityhealth@nm.org, and include your name, organization (if applicable) and any feedback you have regarding the CHNA process or findings.



Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital
1000 North Westmoreland Road
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045
847.234.5600

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

nm.org



For healthcare information at your fingertips,
download the MyNM® app today.

