

Each Critical Access Hospital must conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) once every three years, as mandated by law. Local public health units seeking to gain/maintain accreditation conduct an assessment every five years. CHNAs completed by Center for Rural Health (CRH) include secondary data review, community focus groups, key informant interviews, and a community survey. This fact sheet presents key community strengths and opportunities from the, CHI St. Alexius Health Williston Medical Center (WMC) service area 2021 CHNA.

The WMC service area is comprised of Williams County. The population is approximately 35,350. With regard to demographics, Williams County's population from 2010 to 2019 increased by 13.3 percent. The average number of residents younger than age 18 (29.4%) for Williams County comes in 5.8 percentage points higher than the North Dakota average (23.6%). The median household income in Williams County (\$87,161) is much higher than the state average for North Dakota (\$64,894).

### Community Strengths

The top three assets, identified in the community survey included that people are friendly, helpful and supportive; along with the local events and festivities being a positive, and that it has an active faith community.

### Health Outcomes and Factors

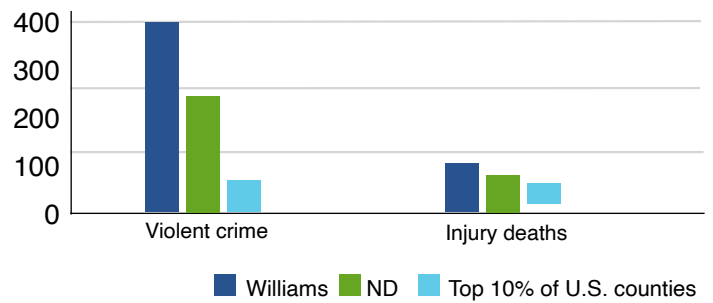
In review of secondary data, 15% of Williams County reported poor or fair health. This service area had a greater percentage of residents reporting excessive drinking, physical inactivity, adult smoking, and obesity than the top 10% of U.S. counties. See Table 1 for more data.

**Table 1. Health Factors by % of Population, 2021**

|                                  | Williams | ND  | Top 10% U.S. |
|----------------------------------|----------|-----|--------------|
| Uninsured                        | 8%       | 8%  | 6%           |
| Excessive drinking               | 25%      | 24% | 15%          |
| Access to exercise opportunities | 79%      | 74% | 91%          |
| Physical inactivity              | 24%      | 23% | 19%          |
| Adult obesity                    | 38%      | 34% | 34%          |
| Adult smokers                    | 20%      | 20% | 16%          |

Rates of violent crime and injury deaths were higher in Williams County, compared to the North Dakota average and the Top 10% of the U.S. counties. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Cases per 100,000 Population, 2021**



In 2019, data shows victims of child abuse and neglect requiring services (rate per 1,000 children age 0-17), were much higher in Williams County (24.26) than the rest of the state of North Dakota (9.98). See Table 2 for more information on children's health factors.

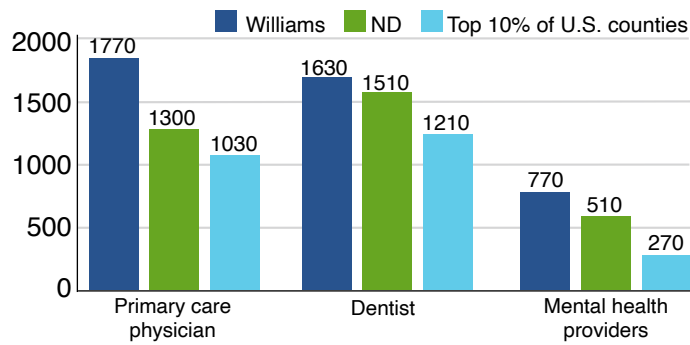
**Table 2. Children's Health Factors by % of Population**

|  | Williams | ND    |
|--|----------|-------|
| Children food insecurity (2019)  | 7.1%     | 9.6%  |
| Victims of child abuse and neglect requiring services (rate per 1,000 children ages 0-17) (2019) | 24.26    | 9.98  |
| Medicaid recipients (2019)   | 21.3%    | 26.0% |
| Children enrolled in Healthy Steps (2019)  | 1.1%     | 1.7%  |
| Receiving SNAP (2019)  | 11.0%    | 17.0% |

### Healthcare Access

Based on the provider to population ratio, Williams County has more residents per primary care physician, dentist, and mental health provider than the state's average and the Top 10% of U.S. counties. See Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Provider to Population Ratios, 2021**



In a survey conducted by CRH, residents identified up to three primary community concerns. The top two concerns were drug use and abuse in adults (46%) and not enough affordable housing in the area (43%). Depression and anxiety in youth, long-term/nursing home care options, along with drug use and abuse in youth, made the top five. See Table 3.

**Table 3. Community Concerns, 2021**

| Community Concerns                       | %   |
|--|-----|
| Drug use and abuse – adults              | 46% |
| Not enough affordable housing            | 43% |
| Depression/anxiety among - youth         | 41% |
| Long-term/nursing home care options      | 41% |
| Drug use and abuse – youth               | 40% |
| Alcohol use and abuse—adult              | 40% |
| Ability to retain primary care providers | 39% |
| Availability of specialists              | 38% |

**In September 2021, a community focus group identified their top concerns as:**

1. Availability of mental health services
2. Having enough child daycare services
3. Not enough affordable housing
4. Depression/anxiety

**In the survey, community members also identified perceived barriers (up to three), specifically related to accessing local healthcare. The top five barriers were:**

1. Not able to get appointment/limited hours (44%)
2. Not enough specialists (43%)
3. Not enough providers (33%)
4. Not enough evening or weekend hours (30%)
5. Not able to see same provider over time (26%)

Individuals also indicated which specific healthcare services, if any, they felt should be added locally. The most often cited was mental health services.

**Steps Undertaken Since 2019 CHNA**

WMC has taken steps to address all four of the top concerns identified in the 2019 assessment. To help with the ability to get appointments for patients and health services within 48 hours, WMC implemented “Need Care Now?” appointments. Patients can call the primary care clinic in the morning and be seen by a provider that same day. They are also providing extra hours; WMC’s clinic and outpatient lab extended its hours to 7:00 am - 5:30 pm and added Saturdays. An after-hours patient line has helped, as patients can speak to a nurse with medical questions. Retaining primary care providers has been addressed by hiring 14 new physicians since 2019 and the implementation of contracting physicians in the emergency department and anesthesiologists in the anesthesia department. The need for additional child daycare services is still in process, as some of the problems encountered were very expensive.

**Implementation Strategies**

Hospitals and local public health units prepare implementation strategies as a blueprint for meeting needs identified in a CHNA. Access the complete and community-specific CHNA Reports and Implementation Strategies at [ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/community-health-needs-assessment/reports](http://ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/community-health-needs-assessment/reports).

**Full Report**

Nissen, K. & Long, H., CHI St. Alexius Health Williston Medical Center Service Area: Community Health Needs Assessment, 2021.

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**For More Information**

Visit the website, [ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/community-health-needs-assessment](http://ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/community-health-needs-assessment) or contact:

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