

# Alomere Health Community Health Needs Assessment

An assessment of the health and wellness of Alomere Health service area conducted by Alomere Health and community partners to better understand the needs and assets of the community we serve and to identify priority health needs.



**ALOMERE**  
HEALTH

*It's better here.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alomere Health conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years to evaluate the current health status of our community. The assessment uses available public health data and community input to identify needs and guide community benefit activities. Alomere Health's service area includes the five counties served by Horizon Public Health (HPH): Pope, Douglas, Stevens, Grant, and Traverse. Horizon Public Health is a fully integrated local public health organization serving residents and communities in these counties. Over the past few years, multiple Alomere Health staff members have participated in HPH's Community Partnership Team and leadership meetings to review and discuss information during the Community Health Assessment (CHA) process and the priorities selected. Horizon Public Health completed its comprehensive CHA, which included statistics and information specific to each county.

During the hospital's CHNA process, Alomere Health formed a team of staff and community leaders with knowledge of the population's needs and resources. The team included the population health manager, Senior Leadership Team, discharge planners/social service designees, and marketing staff who participated in Horizon Public Health's CHA.

In preparation for the CHNA meeting, team members reviewed summary pages from Horizon Public Health's CHA. The five counties served by HPH remain largely homogenous, so the summary pages apply to all. Team members also had access to the complete CHA online for more details. Additionally, Horizon Public

Health's Community Partnership Team identified community health needs in the CHA and ranked them based on community impact, potential for change, economic feasibility, and available resources.

After discussion and sharing additional information, the CHNA team agreed to adopt Horizon Public Health's CHA for the hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment. The team also agreed with the top 10 identified health concerns for

Alomere Health's service area and concurred with HPH's health priorities. The top three priorities for our community are **Access to Care, Chronic Disease/Obesity, and Developing Community Resilience.**

Horizon Public Health has created its Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for 2023–2027. Alomere Health staff serve on the Community Leadership Team and other teams leading initiatives for these three priority areas.

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## OVERVIEW

### Alomere Health

The mission of Alomere Health is: ***Our passion and purpose is to strengthen and nurture the health and well-being of our family, friends, neighbors, and communities through every season of life.***

Alomere Health is an independent, non-profit, locally governed, and nationally recognized health system serving the community of Alexandria, Minnesota, and the surrounding central Minnesota region through a network of providers, services, locations, and solutions, including:

- A 127-bed regional hospital with a Level III trauma center, a comprehensive inpatient and outpatient medical facility, and a state-of-the-art surgical center featuring the largest rural robotic surgery program serving the central Minnesota region.
- Multi-specialty clinical practices with more than 80 expert physicians and specialized healthcare providers across 28 medical fields.

At Alomere Health, we are passionate about being a high-quality regional hospital that is an integral part of the communities we serve. We are committed to serving you well and exceeding expectations of what healthcare can be. Our mission, vision, and values guide everything we do to meet the needs of those who rely on us.

To learn more about Alomere Health, please visit [www.alomerehealth.com](http://www.alomerehealth.com).

## METHODOLOGY

### Organize

Alomere Health staff members tasked with leading the hospital's CHNA have participated in Horizon Public Health's Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plans for many years. Horizon Public Health completed its Community Needs Assessment (CNA), which includes Alomere Health's service area. As a result, Alomere Health did not need to duplicate the process of gathering and analyzing data for the hospital's CHNA.

### Gather and Analyze Data

Horizon Public Health is a fully integrated local public health organization serving residents and communities in Pope, Douglas, Stevens, Grant, and Traverse Counties. Their recent CHA included a comprehensive evaluation of demographics, health status, needs, and statistics, with detailed data for each county and a comparative analysis. The counties are generally similar in demographics and health concerns.

In partnership, Alomere Health's CHNA team reviewed and discussed public health's Community Health Assessment.

This process was designed to:

- Incorporate existing public data to assess health needs, disparities, assets, and forces of change in our community without duplicating resources.
- Collaborate with Horizon Public Health (HPH) on its CHA findings and identification of the top priority health needs for Alomere Health's service area.

Horizon Public Health utilized a variety of information and data sources and gathered community input to analyze health issues. The data sources included:

- U.S. Census Bureau
- CDC and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Data
- County Health Rankings
- American Society for Microbiology
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Department of Health Electronic Records
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Minnesota Hospital Discharge Data
- Minnesota Pharmacy Prescriptions Monitoring Program
- Minnesota State Demographic Center
- Minnesota Compass
- Minnesota Student Survey
- Substance Use in Minnesota, SUMN.org
- Data gathered from local focus groups, community dialogues, visioning, and community events

HPH directly engaged hundreds of stakeholders representing a broad spectrum of organizations and community members in Alomere Health's service area. These conversations included individuals and organizations representing those living in poverty, experiencing adverse

physical and mental health impacts, minorities, and those medically underserved and uninsured. (Page 99 of Horizon Public Health's CHA lists all members of their Community Partnership Team.)

One tool Horizon Public Health used was a community health survey to better understand how the environment in which people live, work, play, and age shapes their overall health.

The survey was available in English and Spanish, and participants could complete it online or request a paper copy by phone.

Through these initiatives, HPH gathered input on community perceptions, resources, individual and group needs, and ideas for improving the health of the population and healthcare services.

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The population of Alomere Health's service area has remained stable and is largely homogenous. From the 2010 census to the U.S. Census estimate as of July 1, 2021, there has been minimal change in population size and demographics. Future projections indicate a nearly steady population over the next twenty years.

### Age

The shifting demographic causes uncertainty regarding Alomere health service area's ability to attract working-age adults, preserve its vitality, and maintain a thriving economy. This trend will impact the community's workforce, healthcare, long-term care housing, and supportive services.

### Veterans

West Central Minnesota has a higher veteran population compared to urban communities.

### Race

In Minnesota, people of color (those who identify as any race other than White) make up 16% of the total population.

### Education and Residence

As Horizon Public Health noted, opportunities and one's health are strongly connected. Income and homeownership can directly impact health and well-being on many levels. Additionally, education is an important predictor of lifelong health.

### Income and Poverty

Income influences where we live, the stability of our living arrangements, the condition of our homes, the schools we attend, the types of recreation we enjoy, and the foods we eat. Poverty reduces opportunities in education, employment, and living conditions, increasing the risk of chronic diseases, which can lead to even lower income.

Many residents in Alomere Health's service area live in lower-income households. At least 29% of students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches, an income-based program. 8% of children in the service area live below the poverty level (compared to 10% statewide), and 7% of adults aged 65 and older live in poverty, which is consistent with the state average. The overall poverty rate in the service area is 7%, compared to 9% statewide.

According to public health data, people with higher levels of education are more likely to be healthier and live longer, which is why Healthy People 2030 emphasizes providing high-

quality educational opportunities for children and adolescents. The stress of living in poverty can affect children's brain development, making it harder for them to succeed in school.

### Transportation

The Horizon Public Health Survey and numerous community conversations identified a lack of public transportation services across the entire HPH service area as a major concern. In terms of health equity, individuals without transportation are more likely to delay or forgo necessary appointments, preventive care, and health maintenance activities.

Beyond healthcare access, lack of transportation affects rural residents' well-being by limiting access to food, social support, employment, education, recreation, and community services. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to isolation without reliable transportation, which can increase morbidity and mortality risks.

### Childcare

Childcare is critical for the workforce, particularly for parents of young children. Licensed childcare also plays an essential role in providing age-appropriate development for children. Unfortunately, Greater Minnesota has experienced a significant net loss of childcare compared to urban areas. There is a substantial shortfall in available spaces to accommodate families, and the situation continues to worsen. Without adequate and affordable childcare options, parents face financial and social barriers. Gaps exist in access, supply, demand, and reimbursement for childcare in Pope County and surrounding areas.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH MEASURES

Public health defines health as physical well-being, while wellness refers to an overall balance of physical, social, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, environmental, and occupational well-being. Before and during the CHNA meeting, the team reviewed and discussed several documents, including summaries of eight key sections from Horizon Public Health's CHA (Appendix B). Each summary included key data points and trends, community strengths, insights from the data, and considerations for action. These sections are:

- Demographics and Community Characteristics (page 6)
- Factors Influencing Health (page 13)
- Health and Wellness (page 27)
- Maternal and Child Health (page 32)
- Community Health Behaviors (page 38)
- Mental Health (page 50)
- Environmental Health Factors (page 54)

The full CHA is available for download at [CHA-Final-2022-4.pdf](#) and team members accessed it for additional details about residents in Alomere Health's service area.

HPH referenced many statistics in its CHA, and the leading physical and mental health concerns remain consistent with previous assessments. According to the SHIP 2020 Community Health Survey, the following percentages of individuals aged 18+ in Alomere Health's service area reported chronic conditions:

- Overweight or Obese: 72%
- High Blood Pressure/Hypertension or Pre-hypertension: 37%
- High Cholesterol or Triglycerides: 29%
- Depression: 18%
- Diabetes or Pre-Diabetes: 13%
- Asthma: 7%
- COPD: 4%

The percentage of adults with high blood pressure is higher than the statewide average of 24%, and diabetes rates exceed the state average of 9%. Heart disease is the leading cause of death, followed by cancer, in all five counties served by HPH. Statewide, cancer is the leading cause of death, followed by heart disease.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Individuals shared information about current initiatives in Alomere Health's service area during the CHNA meeting. These resources are listed in HPH's Resource Lists on pages 96–98 of the CHA.

Additionally, a Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) Coordinator provided updates on recent efforts in the service area and adjacent counties, as well as SHIP's 2022–2025 work plan.

Alomere Health staff also shared resources and initiatives underway that align with HPH and SHIP priorities. These include efforts focused on health equity, access to care, chronic disease management, and expanding available services. Alomere Health healthcare staff have resources to support top health conditions, including substance

abuse, pain management, and obesity.

## HEALTH ISSUES IDENTIFIED AND PRIORITIZED

After discussion, the CHNA team agreed to adopt Horizon Public Health's CHA for the hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment. The CHA process ranked health concerns based on community impact, potential for change, economic feasibility, and available resources.

### The Top 10 Health Concerns are:

- Mental Health and Mental Illness
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Child Care
- Poverty
- Health Care Access, Quality, and Literacy
- Overweight and Obesity
- Drug Use and Abuse
- Transportation
- Physical Inactivity
- Housing and Renting

Alomere Health's CHNA team concurred with the top health priorities identified in HPH's CHA. The three priorities for our service area are **Access to Care**, **Chronic Disease/Obesity**, and **Developing Community Resilience**.

## CHNA SUMMARY

This assessment confirms the need for a wide range of programs and services offered by a comprehensive health

system. Many important issues and topics that influence the health of our communities were identified through Alomere Health's Community Health Needs Assessment and Horizon Public Health's CHA. Each issue impacts a segment of the population; however, not every concern can be addressed at once. As a result, Horizon Public Health will develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to address the top three priorities. The CHIP will also identify local and statewide resources for each of the top 10 health concerns.

In addition, Alomere Health will continue to support and participate in Horizon Public Health and community organizations' health initiatives.

All parties recognize the significant need to address behavioral health, substance abuse, and the opioid crisis. Therefore, Alomere Health and Horizon Public Health envision coordinated efforts to improve behavioral health, substance abuse, and opioid screening and interventions, enhance children's health services, and provide appropriate referrals and support to improve access to primary care and address chronic conditions.

Furthermore, the hospital and clinics are uniquely positioned to identify and address the community's health needs, especially concerning acute, diagnostic, emergency, and specialty services. Several committees monitor, identify, and take action when Alomere Health can positively impact community health and patient care through programs and additional resources.

Alomere Health will continue to address local health needs and health equity through charity care, support of Medicare and Medicaid programs, and

discounts for uninsured self-pay patients. Alomere Health also assists with transportation costs when patients lack transportation for appointments or a ride home after discharge.

Additionally, as more emphasis is placed on reducing healthcare costs, keeping people well, improving chronic illness management, and meeting the needs of an aging population, Alomere Health is strengthening local and regional partnerships and collaborations to fulfill these expectations.

As a non-profit health system, Alomere Health's mission is to provide the highest quality care to the communities we serve. The CHNA and implementation plan illustrate the importance of collaboration between Alomere Health, public health, and community partners. The service area will be best served by combining efforts and resources to address these needs and create meaningful change.

## NEXT STEPS

- The Alomere Health Board of Directors will review and approve the CHNA in December.
- This document will be shared with community stakeholders involved in the CHNA and posted publicly on the hospital's website.
- A CHNA Implementation Plan for the priority health needs will be adopted and shared with CHNA meeting attendees for review. It will include goals, objectives, strategies, and measurements.
- The Implementation Plan will be presented to the Alomere Health Board of Directors for approval in December 2025.
- The Alomere Health Board of Directors will delegate the

CHNA Committee to monitor progress.

- Once approved, this document will be publicly available on the hospital's website.
- The Senior Leadership Team will review the CHNA and adopt the implementation plan as directed by the Board.
- The CEO and Senior Leadership Team will lead the CHNA Implementation Plan over the next three years.
- The CHNA facilitator will oversee ongoing evaluation, measurement, and progress reporting.
- Updates on the CHNA Implementation Plan will be reported at least twice a year to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Alomere Health will secure commitment from community partners and identify roles, responsibilities, and funding resources needed to implement action plans.

## APPENDIX A

### Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Implementation Strategy Report

#### Goals and Updates for Alomere Health Implementation Strategy

#### Priority 1. Decrease the incidence of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and increase resiliency among Alomere Health service area residents.

Strategy 1: Increase awareness and education in the healthcare community.

Strategy 2: Collaborate with HPH and community partners to support policies, programs, and initiatives that increase resiliency



- Horizon Public Health researched ACE-based health initiatives and established a workgroup in the service area to collaborate with the local Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) workgroup. These groups are key in educating, identifying, and addressing ACEs from a prevention approach and expanding community understanding of their impact.
- The ECI and Family Collaborative continue to work with parents and lead ACE initiatives in the service area.
- Many partner organizations could not allocate additional resources toward this strategy but continued supporting community members with increased needs during the pandemic.

**Priority 2. Prevent and decrease drug misuse and abuse in Alomere Health service area by youth and adults.**

Strategy 1: Support Horizon Public Health's county-level coalition to champion efforts to prevent and reduce drug misuse and abuse.

- Following Horizon Public Health's CHA and Alomere Health's CHNA, this will remain a high priority in new improvement plans for both organizations. The upcoming opioid settlement for each county will support this initiative.

Strategy 2: Participate in and/or support current and new Horizon Public Health or community initiatives to decrease drug misuse and abuse in Alomere Health service area.

- Alomere Health providers continue to review alcohol, smoking, vaping, and drug use at each Child and Teen

Checkup using the standard MN CTC form, discussing and referring as needed.

- An Opioid Task Force representing all five counties focuses on opioid education, prevention, mental well-being, and resiliency.
- This priority area is supported by work from the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, Drug-Free Communities, and ClearWay Minnesota prevention grants awarded to Horizon Public Health.

Strategy 3: Implement evidence-based programs when feasible and continue current actions.

- Alomere Health medical staff participate in the ECHO program.
- Implemented new procedures to identify potential addiction risks before prescribing opioids to patients.
- Adopted and implemented an Opioid Reduction/Tapering program for patients, including patient education and multiple strategies for pain management without medication.

Refer to Horizon Public Health's Community Needs Assessment for Alomere Health service area data that measures the impact of these strategies.

MK/lv/12-3-2025  
MK-2025/Alomere Health - Community Health Needs Assessment - 12-3-2025

## APPENDIX B

### Key Pages from 2022 Community Health Assessment - Horizon Public Health



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## HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH DEMOGRAPHICS & COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

### Key Data Points & Trends

- The population over the past decade across the region has increased at a slower rate than the state of Minnesota (3% compared to 7%).
- Over the next three decades, population growth is expected to increase at the highest rate in Douglas County (+13%) and decrease in the lowest rate in Traverse County (-45%).
- Residents ages 65 and over will continue to become a larger share of the population, growing to nearly 30% of the total population by 2030.
- Four counties (Douglas, Grant, Pope, and Traverse) have a higher percentage of Veteran residents than the state average (6%).
- While not as culturally diverse as the state, the region is home to a growing Hispanic population, particularly in Stevens County.

### Strengths of the Community

- Strong sense of community.
- Reduced costs of living (compared to urban areas). Easy access to outdoor recreation.
- Easy access to outdoor recreation.
- Resiliency when faced with community challenges.

### Insights from the Data

- With the growing aging population, the region may need to find creative, local strategies to address related

infrastructure needs in long-term care, transportation, and workforce.

- Improving broadband access and transportation options will become increasingly important to ensure all residents have access to services and supports.
- Ongoing training of public health and health care staff, as well as collaboration with community organizations, will help the region better understand and address the unique health needs of seniors, veterans, the Hispanic population, and their families.

### Considerations for Action

- The impact the workforce shortage has on our community.
- The cost of living is increasing at a fast rate.
- Fluctuation of population changes and aging populations across the region.

## HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH FACTORS INFLUENCING HEALTH

### Key Data Points & Trends

- Home values across the region are increasing more quickly than income. Rent is increasing and incomes are not keeping up in Grant and Stevens counties.
- Many residents live in lower-income households; at least 26% and up to 46% of students in school qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch, an income-based program.
- A smaller percentage of households (78%-80%) have access to broadband internet than in all areas of rural Minnesota (82%).

- Between 2015 and 2020, West Central Minnesota licensed child care spots decreased by almost 600.
- The percentage of residents receiving a routine physical check-up decreased from 74% in 2013 to 67% in 2020.
- Residents delayed medical care because of cost, COVID-19 concerns, and/or because they didn't feel their issue was serious enough to require care.

### Strengths of the Community

- Community partners' local passion and perspective contributes to community cohesion and resiliency.
- Telehealth services were extended access across the geographic region.

### Insights from the Data

- Telehealth and other online resources support health for many residents.
- Douglas, Pope, and Traverse counties lack dependable broadband internet access.
- Housing insecurity may increase in some areas if rent and housing values continue to outpace increases in income.
- Reductions in child care options present challenges for working parents and may require creative strategies.
- While some delays in health care were the result of COVID-19 precautions, shortages of health care providers, dentists, and mental health professionals also create barriers to accessing health care services.



### Considerations for Action

- Increase access for mental health services, specifically for youth and those with ACEs.
- Lack of child care access is negatively impacting; employment, income, and community vitality.
- Increase in alcohol use and abuse.

## HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Key Data Points & Trends

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death, followed by cancer. Statewide, cancer is the leading cause of death, followed by heart disease.
- The percentage of adults with high blood pressure is higher in each county than the statewide average, while diabetes rates are higher than the state average in all but Stevens County.
- At least half of women have received mammogram screenings for breast cancer, similar to statewide rates.
- 2019 adult influenza vaccination rates varied widely by county, from 15% in Traverse County to 60% in Douglas County.

### Strengths of the Community

- Mammogram screenings are higher than the state average for most of the region.
- Childhood immunization rates are high across the region.
- Youth dental check-ups rates went up in 2016 to 2019.

### Insights from the Data

- With heart disease as the leading cause of death and high blood pressure rates higher than the statewide average, a combination of strategies could be considered to encourage heart health.
- Breast cancer rates are 2-3 times higher than lung cancer rates, highlighting the importance of regular mammograms and breast cancer screening.
- Influenza-related hospitalizations and deaths have been lower in recent years, potentially due to COVID-19 mitigation practices. As these practices ease, outreach and education may be needed to increase influenza vaccination rates to prevent unnecessary illness, particularly in Pope and Traverse counties.

### Considerations for Action

- Rising obesity trends, including heart health ramifications.
- Increasing depression rates and the need for mental health self-care education.

## HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

### Key Data Points & Trends

- The rate of teenage pregnancies is lower than the statewide rate.
- Expecting mothers are more likely to receive prenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy (83%-90%) than those statewide average (79%).
- Early childhood screening rates decreased in 2018-19 and 2019-20 while statewide rates remained steady.

- Between 2015 and 2019, the rate of child maltreatment reports due to neglect, sexual abuse, and mental injury increased in all counties, like statewide rates.
- Immunization rates for children and adolescents are higher than statewide rates. Minnesota Department of Health reported an overall decrease in vaccination rates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Strengths of the Community

- Child and adolescent vaccination rates are higher than the state average.
- Prenatal care in the 1st trimester is higher than the state average.

### Insights from the Data

- While students have similar physical activity and eating behaviors as peers statewide, they could be encouraged to establish healthy behaviors that carry into adulthood.
- Increased reports of child maltreatment signal a need to complete a deeper dive into local data.
- Additional strategies may be needed to increase immunization and early childhood screening rates, particularly if some families delayed care due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Considerations for Action

- Rising obesity rates among all ages, as well as an increase of heart related diseases.
- High rates of maltreatment reports and the impact on families and children.

## HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNITY HEALTH BEHAVIORS

### Key Data Points & Trends

- Adult obesity rates are higher than the state overall (40%, compared with 31%).
- 29% of adults responding to the 2020 SHIP survey reported exercising 5+ days each week. The cost of gym memberships and other programs was described as “a big problem” and a barrier to physical activity for 15% of residents.
- Among students, physical activity tends to decrease with age, particularly among females.
- In 2019, approximately 10% of residents experienced food insecurity, i.e. they did not have access to or the ability to afford healthy food.
- A greater percentage of residents report using alcohol and binge drinking as compared to the state percentage.
- Over one-quarter of 9th and 11th grade students living in Traverse (28%) and Stevens (33%) counties report using alcohol in the past 30 days, a higher percentage than in other counties in the region.

### Strengths of the Community

- The Opioid Taskforce has mobilized a network of community providers to address the impact opioids have had among the community.
- Youth tobacco policy changes reduced youth purchase.

### Insights from the Data

- Increasing opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods can help youth establish healthy behaviors and reduce obesity rates

among adults in the region.

- Adult alcohol use/abuse and admissions to treatment has increased across the region.
- Results from the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey and other local data should be used to determine whether the 2019 increase in student-reported alcohol use is part of an ongoing trend.
- Tobacco use has increased in adults across the region. Strategies may be necessary to determine the cause of the increase and availability of cessation resources.
- How has the impact of COVID-19 affected access to food across the region?

### Considerations for Action

- Youth screen time and its connection to obesity trends.
- Increase in adult tobacco use, while youth-use has decreased (except for e-cigarettes).
- Increase in adult alcohol use and abuse.

## HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH MENTAL HEALTH

### Key Data Points & Trends

- Over one-third of residents (36%-46%) reported experiencing poor mental health one or more days in the past month with 14-23% of adults having experienced depression or anxiety like national data.
- Among adults, 11-20% have experienced a delay in care for a mental health concern.
- Minnesota Student Survey data showed notable changes in self-reported mental health between 2016 and 2019, including divergent trends that

require additional exploration. There are some counties where self-reported feelings of depression were lower in 2019 than in 2016, but where suicidal ideation increased.

- Preventable deaths due to suicide in Minnesota have remained relatively stable since 2016; drug overdoses continued to increase during that timeframe, taking the lives of over 1,000 Minnesota residents in 2020.

### Strengths of the Community

- Increased awareness of the importance of good mental health and positive well-being.
- Stigma reduction around accessing mental health care.

### Insights from the Data

- Mental health is a critical component of overall health, but may not be discussed as openly as physical health. Our region may consider ways to expand the opportunity to talk about mental health at all ages and stages.
- Multiple strategies may be needed to ensure individuals experiencing a mental health challenge can connect with others easily for support and treatment.

- Local data may help our region better understand the degree to which drug overdoses contribute to premature deaths.

### Considerations for Action

- The impact(s) of delayed mental health care.
- The emotional well-being of youth.
- Does the increase in mental health awareness cause increased in the data related to mental health?

## **HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FACTORS**

### **Key Data Points & Trends**

- Although few children have tested positive for elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs), many of the homes in the region (47%-66%) were built before 1980 and may have lead-based paint (restrictions were put in place in 1978).
- Data show average statewide temperatures have increased 3 degrees since data first reported in 1895, impacting the growing season and snow cover.
- Air quality has improved across the state and in the region, a trend expected to continue.

### **Strengths of the Community**

- Grant dollars and community funding to support programs and education related to environmental health.

### **Insights from the Data**

- Radon is prevalent public health educational efforts need to remain strong on testing. There is a need for affordable treatment measures for positive radon test results that require mitigation.
- Climate change will impact agriculture, economies, and the environment. Ongoing education can help assess impact and prepare for changes.
- Additional environmental health indicators are limited; local stakeholders may have additional insights into air and water quality and other environmental indicators to aid regional prioritization.

### **Considerations for Action**

- The need to collect and monitor data regarding environmental changes and trends.
- Further education to community about the resources already available.

## **HORIZON PUBLIC HEALTH COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

### **Key Data Points & Trends**

- COVID-19 was confirmed in March 2020. As of March 2022, there have been 18,834 confirmed cases and 170 COVID-19 related deaths in the region as reported by the Minnesota Department of Health.
- Minnesota lost approximately 300,000 jobs in the early stages of the pandemic due to shutdowns and changes in service delivery, and is on track to return to pre-pandemic job levels in 2022.
- Across multiple health professions, job vacancies have increased since pre-pandemic levels in Minnesota. Mental health and substance abuse counseling vacancies have increased from 8% in 2019 to 26% in 2021.
- Although graduation rates did not decline during the pandemic, there was a decrease in reading proficient among young learners (3rd grade) in the state and across the region.
- Mental Health has had an impact in the prevalence of anxiety and depression.

### **Strengths of the Community**

- Outdoor recreation and activities resources are thriving because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- COVID-19 vaccination rates for the region follow a similar trend when compared to the state rates.
- High school graduation rates did not decline.

### **Insights from the Data**

- Additional information is needed to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic led to delays in care, including missed preventive care visits and delays in seeking mental health or substance abuse services.
- Multiple strategies are needed to address rural workforce shortage gaps potentially exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- COVID-19 continues to have an impact on mental health.

### **Considerations for Action**

- The effect the pandemic has had on youth.
- How will the projected decrease in rural health workforce impact our communities?
- A need to increase mental health resources.
- Relationship between pandemic and maltreatment.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN PRIORITIES 2023-2027**

### **Top 10 Health Concerns:**

- Mental Health and Mental Illness
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Child Care
- Poverty

- Health Care Access, Quality, and Literacy
- Overweight and Obesity
- Drug Use and Abuse
- Transportation
- Physical Inactivity
- Housing and Renting

**Access to Care:** Dental, Mental and Physical

**Chronic Disease:** Obesity

**Resilience:** ACEs, Social Connectedness, and Substance Use

## APPENDIX C

### Alomere Health Community Health Needs Assessment Team:

- Carl Vaagenes, Chief Executive Officer
- Margaret Kalina, RN, Chief Nursing Officer
- Nate Meyer, Chief Financial Officer
- Celeste Gardner, Vice President of Human Resources
- Mike Doyle, Vice President of Orthopedic Services, Heartland Orthopedic Specialists
- Dane Mitteness, Chief Medical Officer, Alomere Health
- Paul Kietzmann, Chief Medical Officer, Ambulatory
- Eddie Reif, Community Relations & Development Director
- Tracy Rounds, Transformation and Performance Director
- Lexi Deters, RN, Population Health Manager
- Chelsea Woller, Discharge Planner/Social Services Lead.
- Amy Reinke, Community Strategist and CHA Lead, Horizon Public Health
- Angie Hasbrouck, Health Educator, Horizon Public Health
- Horizon Public Health's Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) Coordinator