

# **Community Health Needs Assessment Report**

## **Mille Lacs Health System Onamia, Minnesota**

**Published 9.8.2016**

### **Introduction**

Mille Lacs Health System (MLHS) is a not-for-profit, community owned organization. MLHS includes a 25-bed critical access hospital that has a level IV Trauma Center. Based in Onamia on the southern edge of Mille Lacs Lake in central Minnesota, MLHS serves many of the individuals living around the lake and in communities to the south.

Our mission is “to assist those residing and visiting the Mille Lacs area in achieving and maintaining optimal health.”

Our organizational values are:

- We hold a reverence for life.
- We strive to ensure access for all.
- We strive to serve all with compassion and hospitality.
- We believe in open, honest and direct communication at all levels.
- We believe collegiality, teamwork, and participation are necessary for excellence.

Our history began in April 1956, when the first patients were admitted to the Onamia Hospital. Mille Lacs Health System was created in 1990 when the area’s hospital, nursing home and clinic were merged. Between 1956 and today, we have expanded to include the hospital, four area clinics, a chiropractic and physical therapy clinic, a geriatric psychiatric unit, a long-term care facility, home care/hospice, and ambulance services. Our services include:

- Specialty care – audiology, cardiology, diabetes education, dietetics and nutrition, ENT, nephrology, neurology, obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN), ophthalmology, orthopedic medicine, podiatry, pre-natal education, psychiatry/psychology, sleep and respiratory therapy, and urology
- Surgery – inpatient, outpatient and specialty, including orthopedic, eye, EENT and OB/GYN procedures
- Ambulance and part-time paramedic services
- Behavioral health – adult and child psychiatric care, individual, marriage and family counseling, and tele-psychiatric care
- Chiropractic care
- Diabetes education
- Emergency care
- Eye care

- Home care and hospice
- In-patient geriatric psychiatric care – short-term care, long-term care, and memory care (Alzheimer’s unit)
- Laboratory
- Outpatient therapy
- Radiology and diagnostic imaging
- Rehabilitation – physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, cardiac rehab
- Respiratory therapy
- Sleep study center
- Urgent care

The hospital also provides swing bed services for patients who have recovered from an illness or injury but are not yet able to care for themselves at home. It’s designed to meet each patient’s need for continued rehabilitation and recovery in a hospital setting. Services include skilled nursing for IV or extended antibiotic infusions, wound care and post-surgery care, physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, nutritional support and counseling, insulin monitoring, and enteral feeding.

Despite rapid technological change and the economic stresses of today’s healthcare environment, Mille Lacs Health System remains strong. Numerous medical and surgical specialists have joined our healthcare team, providing diagnostic and support services that allow for a sophisticated level of diagnoses and treatment in a local setting.

Our mission and values also compel us to take a holistic approach to our patients’ healthcare needs; addressing their emotional, mental, and spiritual concerns as well as their physical needs. In addition to traditional services, we now provide access to a variety of counseling services as well as health education, wellness and rehabilitation.

Thanks to the hard work of many dedicated employees, directors and trustees—and strong support from area communities—healthcare in the Mille Lacs region has changed greatly since those first patients were admitted to the Onamia Hospital in 1956. We are proud to play such a significant role in improving the quality of life of the people and communities we serve. We are proud to be part of a community-driven, community-supported healthcare system. We look to the future with confidence.

Mille Lacs Health System is pleased to submit this Community Health Needs Assessment. We do so both as a matter of compliance with Section 501(r)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as mandated in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and as an obligation to those we serve. As an organization, we have taken this change in law as an opportunity to improve our community service and continuously focus on meeting the changing health care needs of our community.

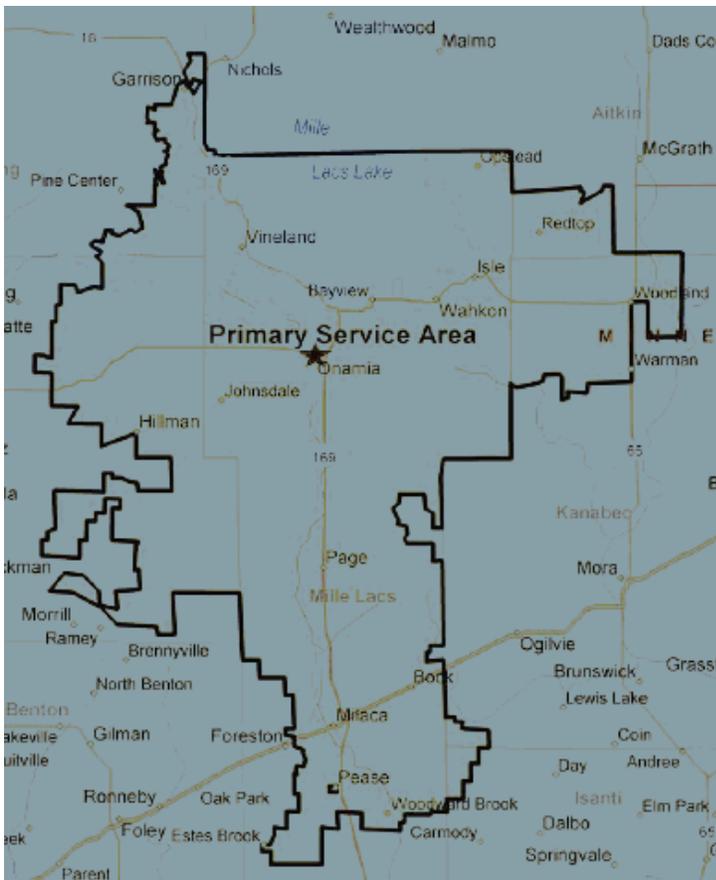
Consistent with the requirements of Section 501(r)(3) the Community Health Needs Assessment Report is organized as follows:

- Our Community
- Review of Previous Community Health Needs Assessments
- Community Health Needs Assessment Methodology
- Prioritized Significant Community Health Needs
- Health Resources

## Our Community

Mille Lacs Health System is located in the city of Onamia in Mille Lacs County, Minnesota. However, we have historically defined our “community” as a broader area, including the communities around the southern half of Mille Lacs Lake and the towns south of the lake down to Milaca. Based on inpatient and outpatient usage in recent years, our primary service area includes the following zip codes and towns:

- 56359 – Onamia
- 56342 – Isle
- 56386 – Wahkon
- 56338 – Hillman
- 56450 – Garrison
- 56353 – Milaca



Approximately 82% of our inpatient and outpatient usage is from individuals living within this primary service area. The additional 18% of our usage is from individuals living in the broader community as well as individuals vacationing near Mille Lacs Lake. Throughout this document, all references to our community refer to these six towns and their surrounding countryside.

One special aspect of our community is Mille Lacs Lake itself. According to the Lakes Area Tourism Council, *“the Mille Lacs Lake area is Minnesota’s unforgettable family vacation destination! This world-class walleye fishery showcases 132,516 acres in central Minnesota and offers the best fishing anywhere! Visit us during any season and discover our good nature from a golfing fairway, a snowmobile trail, a bike path, a lawn chair on a sandy beach or the porch of*

*a cozy resort cabin.”* Our community also includes the Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel. With 494 rooms, the Grand Casino Mille Lacs is one of the largest casino hotels in the state of

Minnesota. Such attractions mean that temporary visitors are extremely common, and we are a popular retirement location.

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau conducted the nation’s most recent census and published that data by county. Similarly, the Population Health Institute collects and reports health data and demographic data by county on an annual basis. U.S. census data is primarily from the 2010 census, with some figures being estimated based on that census and others being actual data from subsequent years. Population Health Institute data is as of August 2016.

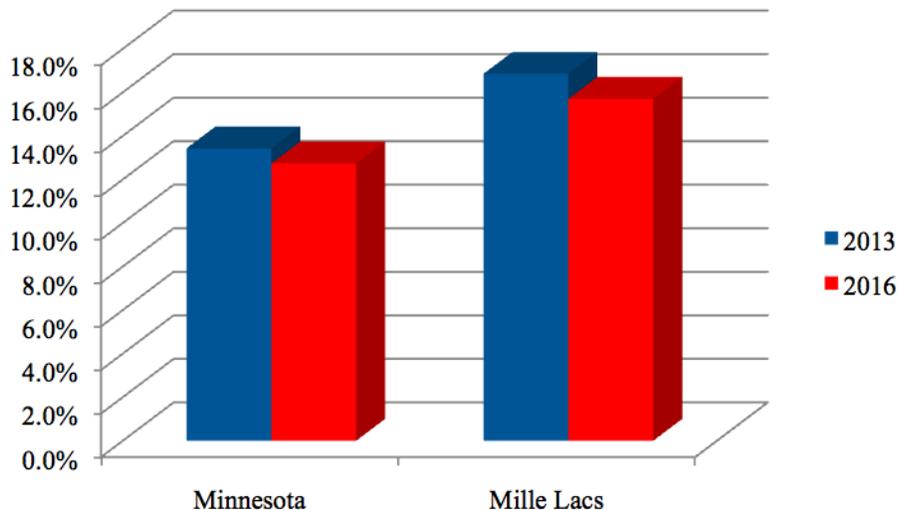
	<b>MN 2013</b>	<b>MN 2015</b>	<b>MN Change</b>		<b>Mille Lacs 2013</b>	<b>Mille Lacs 2015</b>	<b>Mille Lacs Change</b>
Population	5,344,861	5,457,173	2.1%		25,979	25,884	-0.4%
Age < 18	23.9%	23.5%	-1.7%		25.1%	24.3%	-3.1%
Age 65+	13.1%	14.3%	9.1%		16.4%	18.0%	9.6%
Female	50.3%	50.3%	0.0%		49.7%	50.0%	0.5%
Caucasian	82.8%	81.4%	-1.6%		90.3%	89.9%	-0.5%
African American	5.2%	5.7%	8.9%		0.4%	0.5%	25.6%
American Indian	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%		6.0%	6.0%	0.0%
Asian	4.2%	4.7%	12.1%		0.4%	0.5%	16.9%
Hispanic	4.9%	5.1%	3.6%		1.6%	1.8%	15.2%
Rural	26.7%	26.7%	0.0%		70.8%	70.8%	0.0%
Median Household Income	\$56,944	\$61,473	8.0%		\$43,155	\$48,434	12.2%
Per Capita Health Care Cost	\$7,646	\$7,828	2.4%		\$7,273	\$7,604	4.6%
Uninsured Adults	11.9%	11.0%	-7.8%		14.7%	13.4	-9.0%
Uninsured Children	6.7%	5.9%	-12.2%		8.6%	6.9%	-20.0%
Free Lunch-Eligible Children	28.5%	31.1%	9.1%		29.7%	32.5%	9.3%

Mille Lacs County is largely Caucasian, although we have a large Native American population living in and around the reservation of the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe Tribe. Throughout the community health needs assessment process, we carefully considered the special health needs of the Native American population. Both Minnesota and Mille Lacs County are becoming more racially diverse, although Mille Lacs County changed at a lower rate in recent year.

Both Minnesota and Mille Lacs County have experienced similar trends in our aging populations although the trends have been more pronounced in Mille Lacs County. In 2013, Mille Lacs County had a smaller percentage of youth and a larger percentage of elderly individuals than Minnesota as a whole. Between 2013 and 2016, both areas experienced a small decrease in the percentage of youth and a large increase in the percentage of elderly individuals, although the rates of change were greater in Mille Lacs County than for the state. The initial difference combined with the disparity in changes means the differences in the percentages of youth and elderly individuals are even more pronounced in 2016 than they were in 2013, emphasizing the aging nature of our community.

Our community is largely rural, with small towns surrounding Mille Lacs Lake and spread out south of the lake.

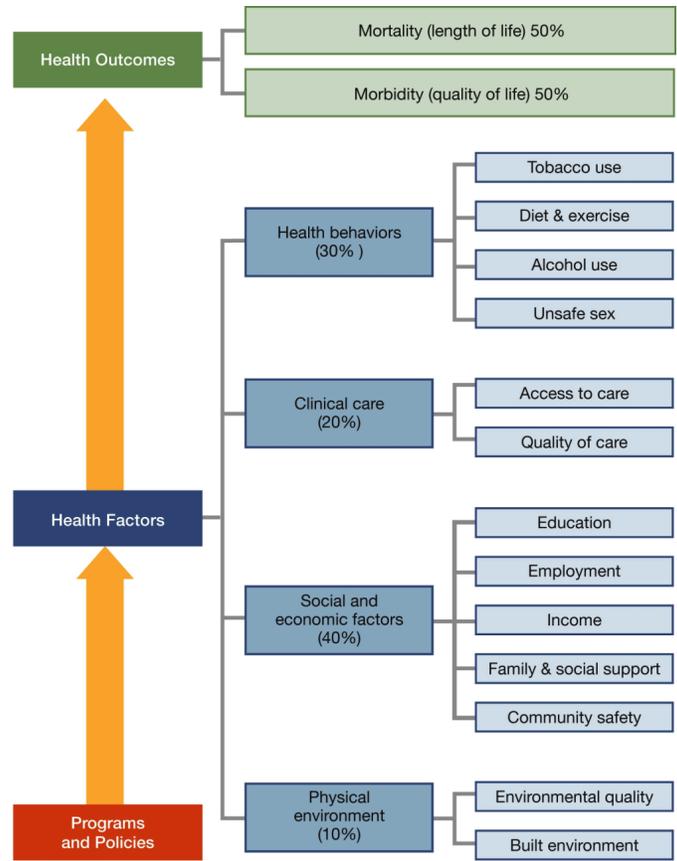
### Per Capita Healthcare Cost as a Percentage of Median Household Income



Several factors indicate the low-income nature of our community. First, our median household income is much lower than the state average. We believe this is primarily due to our high proportion of retired elderly individuals, the Native American population and our rural setting. Additional indicators of our struggling economy and low-income community are our above-average rates of uninsured adults, uninsured children, and children who are eligible for free lunch.

In both 2013 and 2016, Mille Lacs County had a median household income well below the state average, although the growth in median household income was significantly higher in Mille Lacs County than in the state. Mille Lacs County's per capita healthcare cost was slightly lower than the state average in both 2013 and 2016, although per capita healthcare costs rose more during that period. While Healthcare costs rose between 2013 and 2016, median household incomes rose by a greater percentage during the same period. This means that healthcare was relatively more affordable in Mille Lacs County and in Minnesota in 2016 than in 2013. Given the increase in the costs of healthcare in the United States, this is a positive trend for our state and our community.

The Population Health Institute ("PHI") publishes annual health data for every county in the United States. The data is aggregated into *health outcomes* and *health factors*. The PHI separates health outcomes into mortality (length of life) and morbidity (quality of life). Health factors are separated into four factors that largely influence the health outcomes: physical environment, society and economics, clinical care, and health behaviors.



Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

HEALTH FACTORS							
County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank
Aitkin	76	Fillmore	27	Martin	61	Rock	18
Anoka	39	Freeborn	72	McLeod	35	Roseau	48
Becker	73	Goodhue	37	Meeker	36	Scott	4
Beltrami	85	Grant	52	Mille Lacs	82	Sherburne	12
Benton	69	Hennepin	25	Morrison	74	Sibley	67
Big Stone	30	Houston	19	Mower	78	St. Louis	64
Blue Earth	43	Hubbard	71	Murray	28	Stearns	13
Brown	8	Isanti	38	Nicollet	5	Steele	33
Carlton	65	Itasca	77	Nobles	70	Stevens	22
Carver	2	Jackson	15	Norman	57	Swift	40
Cass	84	Kanabec	80	Olmsted	1	Todd	79
Chippewa	66	Kandiyohi	51	Otter Tail	31	Traverse	54
Chisago	32	Kittson	46	Pennington	26	Wabasha	7
Clay	14	Koochiching	81	Pine	83	Wadena	75
Clearwater	86	Lac qui Parle	34	Pipestone	50	Waseca	44
Cook	45	Lake	17	Polk	60	Washington	3
Cottonwood	47	Lake of the Woods	53	Pope	21	Watonwan	59
Crow Wing	62	Le Sueur	42	Ramsey	58	Wilkin	29
Dakota	6	Lincoln	16	Red Lake	68	Winona	41
Dodge	11	Lyon	24	Redwood	63	Wright	10
Douglas	9	Mahnomen	87	Renville	56	Yellow Medicine	23
Faribault	49	Marshall	55	Rice	20		

Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

HEALTH OUTCOMES							
County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank
Aitkin	72	Fillmore	9	Martin	49	Rock	36
Anoka	40	Freeborn	45	McLeod	12	Roseau	38
Becker	71	Goodhue	17	Meeker	28	Scott	3
Beltrami	86	Grant	52	Mille Lacs	77	Sherburne	18
Benton	57	Hennepin	44	Morrison	65	Sibley	31
Big Stone	33	Houston	5	Mower	53	St. Louis	76
Blue Earth	43	Hubbard	60	Murray	58	Stearns	25
Brown	24	Isanti	34	Nicollet	13	Steele	39
Carlton	61	Itasca	75	Nobles	42	Stevens	4
Carver	1	Jackson	80	Norman	83	Swift	27
Cass	85	Kanabec	56	Olmsted	8	Todd	50
Chippewa	70	Kandiyohi	32	Otter Tail	51	Traverse	37
Chisago	26	Kittson	30	Pennington	67	Wabasha	15
Clay	62	Koochiching	79	Pine	82	Wadena	74
Clearwater	84	Lac qui Parle	22	Pipestone	55	Waseca	19
Cook	78	Lake	81	Polk	69	Washington	2
Cottonwood	63	Lake of the Woods	7	Pope	68	Watonwan	23
Crow Wing	59	Le Sueur	21	Ramsey	66	Wilkin	10
Dakota	11	Lincoln	46	Red Lake	20	Winona	41
Dodge	14	Lyon	48	Redwood	64	Wright	6
Douglas	16	Mahnomen	87	Renville	73	Yellow Medicine	47
Faribault	54	Marshall	29	Rice	35		

Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

In 2013, Mille Lacs County’s health factors ranked 81<sup>st</sup> out of Minnesota’s 87 counties and the County’s health outcomes ranked 85<sup>th</sup>. By 2016, Mille Lacs County’s health factor ranking worsened to 82<sup>nd</sup> although its health outcomes improved to 77<sup>th</sup>. Because today’s health factors lead to tomorrow’s health outcomes, these rankings indicate that Mille Lacs County’s individuals are currently experiencing a relatively longer length of life and relatively better quality of life because of improvements to their health choices and conditions in the past. However, the trend of relatively poor health factors indicates that individuals should experience relatively shorter lives with lower quality of living in the future because of worse choices and conditions today.

### Mille Lacs County Health Rankings out of 87 Minnesota Counties

	2013	2016
Health Behaviors	50	84
Clinical Care	75	70
Social & Economic Factors	80	76
Physical Environment	10	61
<b>Overall Health Factors</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>
Length of Life	85	76
Quality of Life	54	72
<b>Overall Health Outcomes</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>77</b>

## **Review of Previous Community Health Needs Assessments**

Mille Lacs Health System conducted a community health needs assessment in 2013 and published the related report in September 2013. In that assessment, the following needs were identified:

1. Access to care
2. Obesity
3. Chronic diseases
4. Health education
5. Substance abuse
6. Health care for low-income individuals
7. Health care for Native Americans
8. Health care for the elderly
9. Health care for children

Based on the 2013 community health needs assessment, we expanded our clinic hours to Saturdays and improved our care for obese and diabetic patients following clinically accepted tests and protocols. We continue to assist the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe Tribe by sending family practice providers to the tribal clinic.

## **Community Health Needs Assessment Methodology**

Mille Lacs Health System's executives led the planning, conduct and reporting of the community health needs assessment. We contracted with CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, a professional services firm, to assist with the community health needs assessment process.

### *Interviews*

We gathered qualitative information and perspectives on community health needs through one-on-one and small group interviews with key community stakeholders. These interviews were conducted in May 2016. The primary goal of these interviews was to ascertain a range of perspectives on the community's health needs. We gathered information from the following specified groups within our community:

- People with special knowledge or expertise in public health
- Government health departments and other government agencies
- Leaders, representatives or members of medically underserved populations
- Leaders, representatives or members of low-income populations
- Leaders, representatives or members of minority populations.

The following agencies, organizations and businesses participated in the community health needs assessment process by contributing their perspectives, opinions and observations. We thank them for their past and continued assistance.

- Mille Lacs County Department of Community & Veteran Services
- Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe Tribe
- Onamia School District
- Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Department
- City of Onamia
- City of Milaca
- City of Isle
- City of Garrison
- Mille Lacs Health System
- Holy Cross Catholic Church

We believe each of these organizations is a qualified representative of the identified groups because the nature of their work brings them into contact with those groups on a regular basis. For many of the organizations listed, the nature of their mission and purpose *requires* them to consider the special needs of the groups identified.

#### *Community Forums*

In addition to the interviews listed above, we also conducted five community forums throughout our community to get broader input from the general public. The forums were held in May 2016, in the following locations.

- Onamia – 18 individuals
- Isle – 13 individuals
- Garrison – 9 individuals
- Hillman – 6 individuals
- Milaca – 12 individuals

In total, 58 individuals provided input through the community forums. We wish to thank them for their input and assistance.

#### *Quantitative Data*

The community health needs assessment included consideration and analysis of the following publicly available data:

- American Diabetes Association's The Cost of Diabetes
  - <http://www.diabetes.org/advocacy/news-events/cost-of-diabetes.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Know the Facts about Heart Disease
  - [http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/docs/consumered\\_heartdisease.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/docs/consumered_heartdisease.pdf)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Diabetes Latest
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/features/diabetesfactsheet/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Stats of the State of Minnesota
  - [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/MN\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/MN_2015.pdf)
- Foundation for a Drug-Free World
  - <http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/crystalmeth/the-deadly-effects-of-meth.htm>
- Health Resources and Services Administration Shortage Designation
  - <http://www.hrsa.gov/shortage/>

- Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe Tribe's Programs and Services
  - [http://archive.millelacsband.com/Page\\_HealthAndHumanServices.aspx](http://archive.millelacsband.com/Page_HealthAndHumanServices.aspx)
- Mille Lacs Community Health Board's Community Health Improvement Plan 2015-2020
  - [http://www.co.mille-lacs.mn.us/vertical/sites/%7BC9C389E6-53AB-4A89-94CA-D3EE1F5EB922%7D/uploads/Revised\\_CHIP\\_Dec\\_21015.pdf](http://www.co.mille-lacs.mn.us/vertical/sites/%7BC9C389E6-53AB-4A89-94CA-D3EE1F5EB922%7D/uploads/Revised_CHIP_Dec_21015.pdf)
- Mille Lacs County Department of Community & Veterans Services' Region 7E Mental Health Needs Assessment
  - [http://www.co.mille-lacs.mn.us/vertical/Sites/%7BC9C389E6-53AB-4A89-94CA-D3EE1F5EB922%7D/uploads/Region\\_7E\\_Summary\\_of\\_Findings-Mille\\_Lacs\(1\).pdf](http://www.co.mille-lacs.mn.us/vertical/Sites/%7BC9C389E6-53AB-4A89-94CA-D3EE1F5EB922%7D/uploads/Region_7E_Summary_of_Findings-Mille_Lacs(1).pdf)
- Minnesota Department of Health's Quick Facts – Diabetes in Minnesota
  - <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/healthimprovement/data/quick-facts/diabetes.html>
- Minnesota Department of Human Services' Substance Abuse in Minnesota
  - <http://www.sumn.org/data/location/show.aspx?loc=48>
- Minnesota Department of Human Services' Mille Lacs County 2015 Fact Sheet
  - <http://www.sumn.org/~media/298/MILLE%20LACS%20COUNTY%202015%20SUMN%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
- Population Health Institute's county health rankings
  - [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)
- U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census QuickFacts
  - <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/HSG650214/27,27095>

### *Information Gaps*

Mille Lacs Health System did not receive input directly from all members of the low-income, minority and medically underserved populations in our community, instead obtaining input from individuals and organizations that work with those individuals on a daily basis. Although we are unable to identify any specific information gaps, we recognize that members of those populations may have provided different information if they directly participated. Additionally, we recognize that other individuals who weren't invited to participate may have provided different input.

### *Request for Feedback*

Mille Lacs Health System was willing to consider written comments related to its 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment Report and Implementation Strategy, but received no such input. If any reader would like to provide input on this community health needs assessment, they can submit their comment(s), in writing, to the following address:

Attention: Chief Executive Officer  
 RE: Community Health Needs Assessment  
 Mille Lacs Health System  
 200 North Elm Street, P.O. Box A  
 Onamia, MN 56359

### *Determination of Significance*

While many needs were identified during the community health needs assessment process, this report focuses on those needs that were deemed *significant* by Mille Lacs Health System. A health need's significance was evaluated based on many factors. The factor given the most weight was the relative importance placed on the health need by the community participants as a whole. Other factors included potential preventative impact, the likely quantity of change, and impact on quality of life. The decision was made by Mille Lacs Health System's executives.

### *Prioritization of Significant Community Health Needs*

The significant community health needs were then prioritized by Mille Lacs Health System based on various factors including potential preventative impact, the likely quantity of change, impact on quality of life, proximity with other health needs, our mission, cost, and community satisfaction. The decision was also made by Mille Lacs Health System's executives.

## **Prioritized Significant Community Health Needs**

Through the community health needs assessment, Mille Lacs Health System identified the following significant community health needs and prioritized them in the given order:

1. Behavioral health
2. Chronic diseases
3. Obesity

The following is a discussion of these significant community health needs.

### *Behavioral Health*

The primary concern expressed by our community participants is behavioral health, which includes mental health, substance abuse, and access to care for these issues.

Mental health problems arise at almost every age in a variety of ways, including depression, anxiety, grief, psychosis, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, although dementia and Alzheimer's Disease tend to occur among elderly individuals. Based on publicly available data, our community members tend to suffer from mental health concerns at approximately the same rate as Minnesota as a whole. The rate of adults suffering from frequent mental distress in Minnesota is 8.4% while the rate is 8.8% in Mille Lacs County, meaning that almost one in ten adults in our community acknowledge feeling frequent mental distress.

While cognitive decline among elderly individuals is a major concern across the country, our community is fortunate to have some effective resources including the geriatric psychiatric unit at Mille Lacs Health System. However, community participants expressed a desire for even more access, in the form of additional beds and health care providers, especially for low-income individuals. Community participants were also concerned about the severely limited resources available to children. Effective care for children is impacted by multiple factors. First, the more affordable facilities in every community tend to operate at or near maximum capacity. Although there may be available space at some facilities, they tend to be more costly locations that low-

income individuals cannot access. The limited access to facilities means that many children have to wait days, weeks or months to obtain the care they need. Second, our nation tends to view mental health problems more harshly than other health problems, and fear of judgment can drive any person to try to hide or ignore their problem. This fear of public judgment can be even more severe when it's a parent evaluating the health of their child. Finally, related to the last issue, it can be extremely difficult for a parent to admit that their child may have a mental health problem.

The U.S. Department of Health identifies Mille Lacs County as a mental health professional shortage area. This designation is given to an area when the psychiatrist-to-population ratio is worse than 1:30,000 (there are more than 30,000 people per psychiatrist). This problem is not specific to our community or to Minnesota. The U.S. Department of Health estimates that our country should have approximately 2,800 additional psychiatrists to serve the national demand. However, obtaining consistent care for these issues is a greater concern in our community than in other areas. In a 2013 survey by the Mille Lacs County Department of Community & Veterans Services, transportation was identified as the top concern related to mental health. Our community has always had extremely limited mental health care services, partially because several larger communities have such services within a reasonable distance from our community's boundaries. One of the few available treatment centers, Riverwood, was closed several years ago, further limiting access.

Effective care for mental health issues tends to require multiple appointments for an extended period, which means the distance to those appointments can be a significant barrier for individuals with limited finances and/or time. This tends to be of most concern for low-income and rural individuals, the elderly and youth. For low-income individuals who have vehicles, the cost of gasoline and wear-and-tear on a vehicle can be a concern. Other low-income individuals may not have a vehicle. Our community doesn't have a public transportation system and other transportation methods are either extremely limited or expensive. Finally, some individuals, especially lower-income individuals, may not be able to repeatedly take time off of work to attend the mental health appointments, primarily because the individual is concerned that they could be fired or replaced if absent too often from work. Young and elderly community members tend to struggle more in obtaining effective care because they naturally rely on others for transportation to the care.

Substance abuse covers a broad range of health issues, including tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs and illicit drugs. Participants—including law enforcement officials, social service workers, and medical professionals—indicated that:

- Alcohol and marijuana are the most common
- Methamphetamines (“meth”) is the most dangerous
- Heroin is the rising trend
- Opiates are also a major concern

Community participants indicated that the greatest substance abuse occurs in the younger population—those in their 40s and younger, although substance abuse occurs across all ages and demographics. On a positive note, substance abuse by school children appears to be in decline in

our community, although we still have plenty of room for improvement. This also ignores the fact that substance abuse tends to be most severe in young adults rather than in school children.

**Substance Abuse by Mille Lacs County Students, All Grades**

	2004	2007	2010
Smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days	19%	17%	13%
Use of alcohol in the past 30 days	26%	28%	19%
Use of marijuana in the past 30 days	11%	11%	10%
Use of heroin in the past 12 months	-	2%	1%
Use of methamphetamine in the past 12 months	6%	3%	2%
Use of ecstasy in the past 12 months	3%	3%	3%
Use of crack/cocaine in the past 12 months	6%	5%	3%
Use of inhalants in the past 12 months	6%	4%	4%
Use of LSD/PCP/other psychedelics in the past 12 months	5%	5%	3%

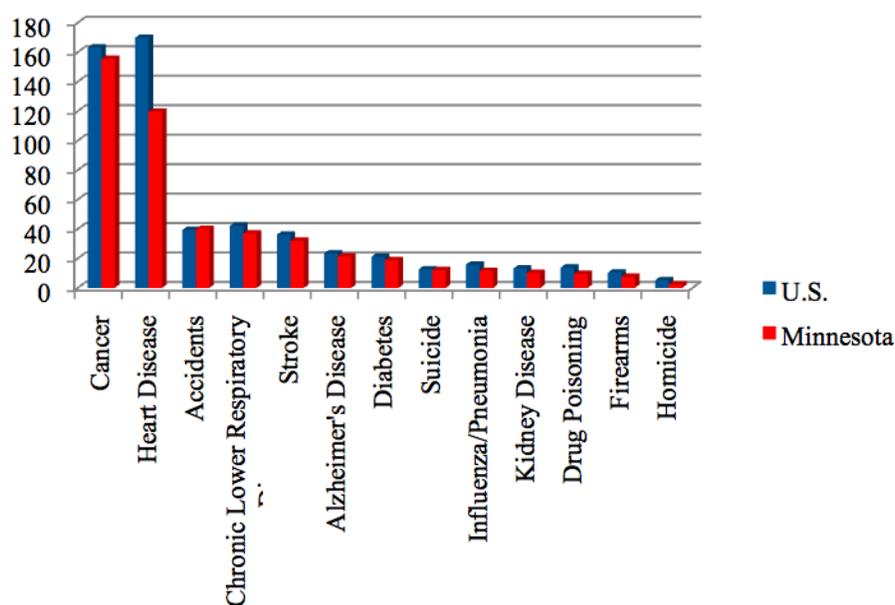
While heroin and meth use are significantly lower than tobacco, alcohol and marijuana, the consequences of their use is considered far more serious. Meth creates a false sense of well-being and energy, causing a person to push their body faster and further than it is meant to go. Because continued use of the drug decreases natural feelings of hunger, users can experience extreme weight loss. Short-term effects can also include increased heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature, disturbed sleep patterns, nausea, irritability, violent behavior, panic, psychosis, hallucinations, convulsions and seizures. In the long-term, meth use can result in increased heart rate and blood pressure, damaged blood vessels in the brain, strokes, an irregular heartbeat, cardiovascular collapse, and damage to the liver, kidney and lungs. Heroin can cause damage to various organs, including the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. It can also cause breathing problems, collapsed veins, and poses special problems related to the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C, and other diseases that can occur with sharing needles. The recent resurgence of opiate-related problems in the United States has increased emergency room visits, crime, homicides, high school drop-outs, and loss of employment. These trends were generally echoed by our community participants.

Finally, community members expressed concern that the substance abuse treatment facilities and addiction recovery services in our community may not be sufficient to meet the needs of our community members. This concern was expressed in our 2013 community health needs assessment and continues to be a concern today.

*Chronic Diseases*

Community members indicated concern over several chronic diseases including diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. These health needs were also identified by the Mille Lacs Community Health Board in its Community Health Improvement Plan 2015-2020.

**Causes of Death, 2013, Incidence per 100,000**



Based on the rates of death, Minnesota is one of the healthier states in the U.S. Of the 13 leading causes of death, Minnesota’s average was only higher than the national average for accidents.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women, accounting for more than 25% of all deaths. The term “heart disease” includes several types of heart conditions. The most common type is coronary artery disease, which can cause heart attacks. Other kinds of heart disease may involve the valves of the heart, or the heart may not pump well and cause heart failure. Although some heart conditions are genetic, the strongest drivers of heart disease are smoking, obesity, diet and exercise. Obesity is discussed further below. Minnesota is the healthiest state in the nation when looking at deaths due to heart disease. However, with 119.6 deaths per 100,000 people per year, our community members still face significant heart disease risk.

While diabetes currently kills far fewer individuals than heart disease, the national trends indicate that could change in the future. In 2012, 29.1 million Americans, or 9.3% of the population, had diabetes. Based on current trends, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) estimates that over a third of American adults could be diabetic by 2050. The rate was even worse for the elderly, at 25.9% of Americans age 65 and older. In 2012, it was estimated that an additional 86 million Americans age 20 and older, more than a third, had prediabetes, a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but are not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

The diabetes rate in Minnesota is slightly lower than the national rates, with 7.3% of Minnesota adults diagnosed as diabetic in 2013, although the rate increased to 7.8% in 2016. Unfortunately, the rate in Mille Lacs County is closer to the national average at 8.3% in 2013 and 9.4% in 2016.

Similar to obesity, people with diabetes are at an increased risk of serious health complications including vision loss, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, amputation, and premature death.

### *Obesity*

Obesity, resulting from both poor nutrition and lack of physical activity, is a major problem in Minnesota. This was identified as one of the significant community health needs in the 2013 assessment and the community is still concerned with the situation in 2016. In 2013, 26.1% of Minnesota adults and 26.7% of Mille Lacs County adults were obese. Between then and 2016, the rates have stayed fairly consistent for the state, increasing to 26.3% of Minnesota adults. However, the rate has increased much more in Mille Lacs County, from 26.7% to 33.1% of adults.

While obesity has various causes, diet and physical activity are generally the two leading indicators. In 2013, 18.6% of Minnesota adults and 23.8% of Mille Lacs County adults described themselves as physically inactive. Those rates increased in both geographic areas between 2013 and 2016, at which time 19.5% of Minnesota adults and 26.3% of Mille Lacs County adults described themselves as physically inactive. Although our community has some opportunities for physical activity, they are limited. The cities of Milaca and Onamia generally have more opportunities for physical activities, including fitness facilities and organized sports, than in the outlying rural communities. Occupational changes are also impacting our physical activity. Occupations are increasingly sedentary in nature, leading to less physical activity in the workplace. While various employers offer activities for employees, most employees opt out of participation.

Similarly, our community participants expressed concern over the limited access to healthy foods in the rural communities. Restaurants and in-the-box store-bought meals are increasingly popular meal choices in our community. With the exception of Milaca, the towns and communities in our area are small enough that they provide few alternatives for restaurant eating. For those restaurants that are available, the options for healthy meals are limited. Most communities have one grocery store or convenience store, meaning that most individuals cannot choose where to purchase their groceries and are subject to the foods provided by their grocery store. Because of size constraints at stores and limited demand, our stores tend to have a relatively small selection of healthy fruits, vegetables and meats. The city of Onamia has opened a farmer's market although its utilization by community members is limited.

Community members frequently expressed concern that we, as a community, are choosing a life of poor nutrition and physical inactivity, leading to an obese society. Where fitness centers are available, participants indicated that they tend to be most used by elderly individuals. Where recreational activities are offered, participation is low. Where healthy food is available, it is often bypassed in favor of less healthy choices. Community members feel that we, as a community, have adopted a culture of inactivity in all we do.

### *Health Care for Native Americans*

Our community includes the reservation of the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe Tribe of Native Americans. We recognize that Native Americans in general, and those who live within our

community, face special circumstances across all aspects of their lives, including health. The special health concerns include:

- Above-average rates of most diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and strokes
- A higher percentage of substance abuse including alcohol, tobacco, heroin and meth
- A high incidence of depression and environmental stress
- A greater incidence of child neglect
- High incidence of obesity, coinciding with limited nutrition and physical activity

Some of the problems described above may be attributed to genetic differences between Native Americans and other races. Other causes include what one Native American participant described as “historical trauma and intergenerational grief” related to the treatment of their people over hundreds of years. The high incidence of low-income individuals in the Tribe increases their health needs.

Our Native American community members recognize their health needs and attempt to be self-sufficient in this area. From its website:

“The Mille Lacs Band operates three clinic locations across the reservation to make high-quality health care available to Band members. The Band also offers public health services to Band communities, behavioral health services, family services such as child welfare and foster care services, and community support services to assist Elders and Band members in need.

“The Mille Lacs Band operates a state-of-the art diabetes program, which provides prevention education and care for Band members, who are 2.3 times more likely to have diabetes than the non-Indians. The team combines cutting-edge medical treatments with traditional remedies to address diabetes in a culturally relevant manner...

“Through the Gego Zaagaswaaken (‘Don’t Smoke’) program, the Mille Lacs Band educates Band members about the dangers of commercial tobacco use and provides them with resources to quit smoking.”

While we continue to work with our Native American partners in treating their health needs, we also recognize and applaud their efforts to treat their own needs.

### **Conclusion**

Mille Lacs Health System conducted this community health needs assessment to better understand our community and the individuals we serve. The hospital will develop a strategy to respond to the significant community health needs and will create an Implementation Strategy to formalize those responses. That Implementation Strategy will be approved by Mille Lacs Health System’s Board of Directors no later than February 15, 2017, and will be used by the organization as a guide for thoughtful, impactful decisions and actions in the coming years.

The following pages include a list of resources currently available in our community to address the significant community health needs discussed in this report. Despite our efforts, we recognize that this list may not be all-inclusive and welcome any information to add available resources and increase its usefulness. Such information can be sent to the address provided on page 10 of this report.

## **Health Resources**

The Mille Lacs County Department of Community & Veterans Services provides support to our community members in numerous ways, including community health, adult developmental disabilities, child and adult mental health, child and adult protection, chemical dependency, child support, child welfare, elderly services, financial assistance, foster care, special needs, and veterans services. For a complete list of their activities, we recommend contacting them.

- 525 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE, Milaca
- (320) 983-8208
- <http://www.co.mille-lacs.mn.us/cvs>

Members of the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe Tribe can also contact the Band's Department of Health and Human Services, which provides support to our Native American community members in various ways, including dental care, health care, behavioral health, community support, public health, and family services. For a complete list of their activities, we recommend contacting them at the Ne-Ia-Shing Clinic.

- 43500 Migizi Drive, Onamia
- (320) 532-4163
- <http://millelacsband.com/tribal-government-home/health-and-human-services/>

In addition to governmental support, the following health care facilities and related organizations are currently available within our community.

### *Hospitals*

The Mille Lacs Health System, located at 200 North Elm Street in Onamia, is the only hospital in our community. However, community members may also choose to use the following hospitals that are relatively close to our community:

- Fairview Northland Medical Center – 911 Northland Boulevard, Princeton
- St. Cloud Hospital – 1406 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue N, St. Cloud
- Essentia Health St. Joseph's Medical Center – 523 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Brainerd
- Riverwood Healthcare Center – 200 Bunker Hill Drive, Aitkin

### *Clinics and Specialty Practices*

- Mille Lacs Family Clinic – 200 N Elm Street, Onamia
- Mille Lacs Family Clinic – 375 W Isle Street, Isle
- Mille Lacs Family Clinic – 27378 State Highway 18, Garrison
- Mille Lacs Family Clinic – 26362 370<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Hillman
- MLHS Chiropractic and Physical Therapy of Milaca – 1000 5<sup>th</sup> Street SE, Milaca
- Riverwood Healthcare Center – 27278 State Highway 18, Garrison
- Fairview Northland Clinic – 150 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Milaca

- Natural Elements Health Center – 14094 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Milaca
- Pierz Community Medical Center – 200 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SE, Pierz
- Essentia Health Pierz Clinic – 221 Main Street N, Pierz
- Gateway Family Health Clinic – 206 Main Street E, McGrath

*Behavioral Health Facilities*

- Mille Lacs Health System – 200 North Elm Street, Onamia
- Lighthouse Child and Family Services, LLC – 160 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NW, Milaca

The Mille Lacs County Department of Community & Veterans Services maintains a list of behavioral health resources, although most of the facilities are outside of our community. That list is available online by clicking the “Mental Health Providers” link at the bottom of the Department’s adult mental health website, <http://www.co.mille-lacs.mn.us/amh>.