

# Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP)

## 2020-2023 Community Health Implementation Plan Resulting from the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment

Mercy Hospital of Devils Lake, d/b/a CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital

### I. Mission

CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital began delivering health care to residents of the Lake Region in 1895 when the Reverend Mother Genevieve Sheridan and the Sisters of Mercy started St. Vincent's Hospital in an old school building on 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Devils Lake. In June 1902 the cornerstone was laid by the Sisters for the first wing of a new hospital called Mercy Hospital at our present location on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. In September 1936 a second addition was constructed to increase bed capacity and improve the school of nursing facilities. The 1936 wing has not been in use since the early 2000's and is now abandoned. A third addition was added in 1957. In 1974 the original 1902 structure was replaced. In 1992 a new acute care wing was added.

In 1980 The Sisters of Mercy affiliated Mercy Hospital with the Catholic Health Corporation (CHC) of Omaha. In the late 1990's CHC combined with the Franciscan Health System of Ashton, Pennsylvania, Sisters of Charity Health Care System of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Health System to form Catholic Health Initiatives. On April 19, 2016 Mercy Hospital underwent a rebranding and governance restructure when CHI announced the formation of regional health care brand under the banner CHI St. Alexius Health. CHI St. Alexius Health is the largest health care delivery system in central and western North Dakota and is comprised of the following organizations: CHI St. Alexius Medical Center (a tertiary hospital in Bismarck) and critical access hospitals (CAHs) in Carrington, Dickinson, Devils Lake, Williston, Garrison and Turtle Lake.

Catholic Health Initiatives is a nonprofit, faith-based health system based in Englewood, Colorado that is a mission and ministry of the Catholic Church. CHI lives and expresses its mission each day by creating and nurturing healthy communities with a particular emphasis on care to the poor and vulnerable. On February 1, 2019 CHI merged with Dignity Health to form CommonSpirit Health, the nation's largest faith based health care system. CommonSpirit Health is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. It operates in 142 hospitals in 21 states.

The mission of CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital is to nurture the healing ministry of the Church, supported by education and research. Fidelity to the Gospel urges us to emphasize human dignity and social justice as we create healthier communities.

CHI's Vision is to live up to our name as one CHI

**Catholic:** Living our Mission and Core Values

**Health:** Improving the health of the people and communities we serve

**Initiatives:** Pioneering models and systems of care to enhance care delivery

The primary tax-exempt purpose of CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital is to provide inpatient, outpatient and ancillary healthcare services to residents of Ramsey and Benson Counties regardless of their ability to pay. In fiscal year 2019 (1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019), CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake provided \$2.635 million in charity care through its financial assistance and community benefit programs.

CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital is a 25 bed critical access hospital that provides a wide array of hospital based health services. This includes an emergency department with a level 5 trauma center as well as a variety of inpatient and outpatient ancillary services. Inpatient services include an intensive care unit, acute care unit, obstetrics unit, and swing bed unit. CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital is the only hospital in east central North Dakota that offers inpatient obstetrics services. Other services include a hospitalist service, inpatient pharmacy, respiratory therapy, general surgery, endoscopy, ophthalmology, podiatry, cardiac rehabilitation, pulmonary rehabilitation, stress testing, clinical laboratory, medical nutrition therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, x-ray, fluoroscopy, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ultrasound, and fluoroscopy services. We lease space in the hospital for a 6 chair dialysis unit that is run by Altru Health System. Also, we lease space to The Cancer Center of North Dakota for outpatient chemotherapy infusion services.

CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital is governed by a regional board of directors and has a local foundation board. We receive feedback on our services from a community based Patient Family Advisory Council and well as patient experience conducted by Press Ganey. The hospital is included in the official Catholic directory as a tax-exempt hospital. In 2016 and 2018 the hospital was recognized by the Chartis Center for Rural Health and iVantage Analytics as one of the Top 100 critical access hospitals in the United States. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) ranks the hospital as a four star hospital.

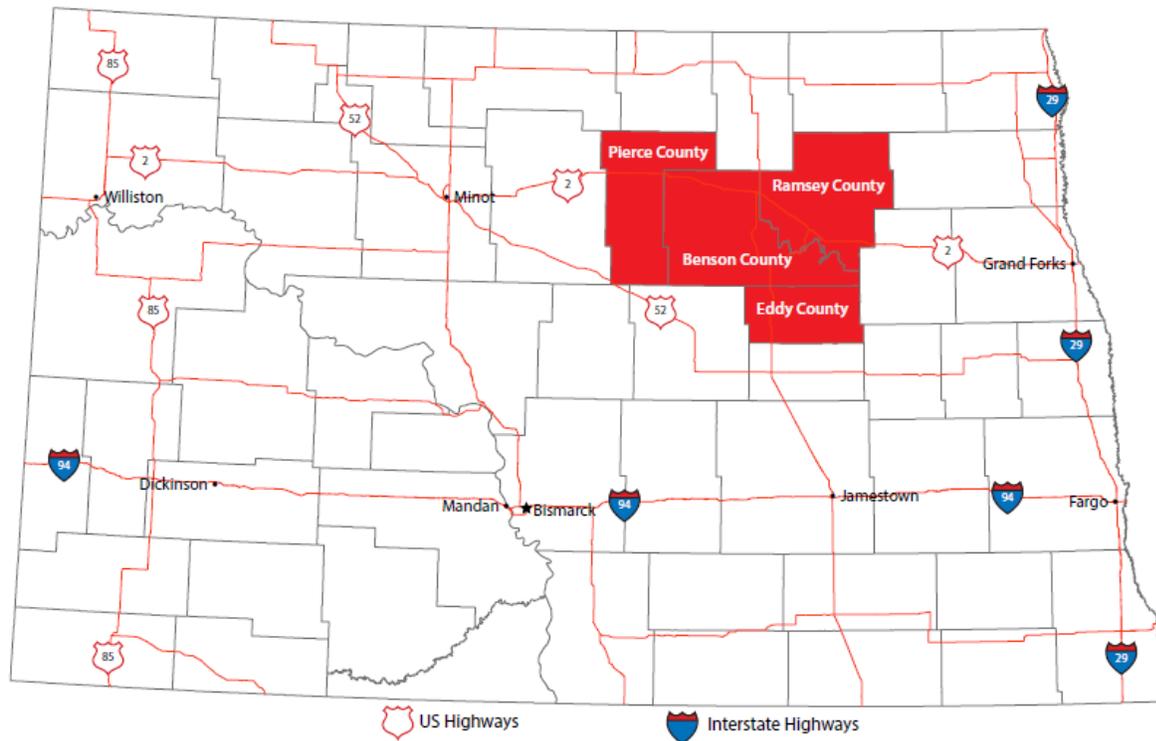
## **II. Community Served**

Counties served by CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital include Ramsey County and Benson County. Communities in our service area include Devils Lake, Camp Grafton, Edmore, Starkweather, Webster, Churchs Ferry, Penn, Ft. Totten, Wood Lake, St. Michael, Tokio, Warwick, Minnewaukan, Maddock, Leeds, and Oberon. Counties served by the Lake Region Health District Unit include Ramsey, Benson Counties, Eddy and Pierce Counties. Residents of

Eddy County are served by CHI St. Alexius Health Carrington Medical Center’s outpatient clinic in New Rockford. Residents of Pierce County are served by the Heart of America Medical Center located in Rugby. We also work closely with Towner County Medical Center in Cando, and Cavalier Memorial Hospital in Langdon to coordinate care for Ramsey and Benson County residents who live closer to those facilities. Many of their patients are referred to CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital for specialty services, in particular obstetrics services.

CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake is licensed by the State of North Dakota, registered with the Center for Medicare and Medicare Services (CMS) as a critical access hospital, and accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC). The hospital is located in a rural area of east central North Dakota known as the Lake Region. On September 1, 2018 the hospital purchased a two provider independent primary care medical clinic. Since the hospital has a very small portion of the primary care market, it is essential for us to partner with local clinics and other community agencies and entities to address the health care needs of the Lake Region community. There are two additional primary care clinics in Ramsey County. The largest is the Altru Clinic Devils Lake that is owned and operated by Altru Health System. The other clinic in Devils Lake is the Sunshine Clinic that is owned and operated by an independent physician. In Benson County, The Spirit Lake Tribal Clinic is operated by the Spirit Lake Nation on Ft. Totten. The other Benson County clinic is in Maddock and is owned and operated by the Heart of American Medical Center, based out of Rugby, ND. Our nearest major city, Grand Forks, is located one and a half hour drive to the east, where the closest higher level acute care hospital is located. CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake hospital has a rural health network agreement with Altru Health System which owns and operates this clinic

Figure 1: Lake Region of North Dakota (Ramsey, Benson, Eddy, and Pierce Counties)



1 Table 1 summarizes general demographic and geographic data about Ramsey and Benson counties.

<b>TABLE 1: Lake Region: INFORMATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS</b> (From US Census Bureau)			
	<b>Ramsey County</b>	<b>Benson County</b>	<b>North Dakota</b>
Population, 2018 est.	<b>11,481</b>	<b>6,962</b>	<b>760,077</b>
Population change, 2010-2018 est	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
Land area, square miles	<b>1,186.85</b>	<b>1,388.71</b>	<b>69,000.80</b>
People per square mile, 2018 est	<b>9.67</b>	<b>5.01</b>	<b>11.01</b>
White persons (not incl. Hispanic/Latino), 2018.	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>41.5%</b>	<b>87.0%</b>
Persons under 18 years, 2018 est.	<b>23.7 %</b>	<b>35.4 %</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
Persons 65 years or older, 2018 est.	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
Non-English spoken at home, 2016 est.	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
High school graduates, 2018 est	<b>91.3.0%</b>	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>92.3%</b>
Bachelor’s degree or higher, 2018 est.	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>28.9%</b>
Live below poverty line, 2019 est.	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>

While the overall population of North Dakota has seen double digit rapid growth in recent years, mostly due to the oil and gas boom in western North Dakota, the populations of Ramsey and Benson counties have seen smaller increases in population since 2010. Residents of Ramsey County are slightly older than the state average. Residents of Benson County are significantly younger than the state as a whole and are less likely to have completed a four-year degree, which can have income inequality and workforce implications. Benson County had significantly higher levels of people living below the poverty line than North Dakota overall.

### **III. Implementation Strategy Process**

The implementation planning involved professionals from both CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital, Lake Region Health District Unit, Altru Health System Devils Lake Clinic, Spirit Lake Nation Tribal Clinic, as well as community and elected leaders. We collaborated regularly by telephone conference, email, and had several face to face meetings. The process closely followed a model used during the last community health needs assessment cycle. CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital did not receive any written comments from the public on the previous community health needs assessment or implementation strategy. Our implementation plan was adopted in December 2016 by the CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital Board.

#### **IV. Prioritized List of Significant Health Needs Identified in CHNA**

CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital and the Lake Region District Health Unit engaged the University of North Dakota's Center for Rural Health to assist us in conducting a community health needs assessment for Ramsey, Benson, Pierce, and Eddy County. We would like to extend a special thank you to the following leaders for facilitating this process: Kylie Nissen Senior Project Coordinator and Julie Reiten Project Coordinator (Center for Rural Health, University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences), Allen McKay Administrator Lake Region Health District Unit and Shannon Lauinger, Executive Assistant to the President and Vice President for Patient Care Services, CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital.

The assessment sought input from area community members and health care professionals as well as analysis of community health-related data. To gather feedback from the community, residents of the Lake Region and surrounding area were provided the opportunity to participate in a survey. Approximately 279 residents from the aforementioned four county area took the survey of which 205 were from our two county service area. Ramsey County had 156 responses and Benson County had 49 responses. Communities within the Spirit Lake Nation accounted for only 8 of the responses, indicating that Spirit Lake Nation residents were under-represented in the survey. Additional information was collected through a focus group and key informant interviews with community leaders. Tribal members who attended the Spirit Lake Nation focus group meeting at Cankdeska Cikana Community College on Ft. Totten helped to supplement the low survey numbers from communities within the Spirit Lake Nation. The input from these residents represented the broad interests of our area communities. Together with secondary data gathered from a wide range of sources, the information gathered presents a snapshot of health needs and other concerns in the community that impact the social determinants of health.

The demographics of the Lake Region reflect the overall rural makeup of North Dakota. Residents in Ramsey County tend to be older than the state as a whole. Residents of Benson County tend to be younger than the state as a whole and are less likely to have completed a four-year degree. Data compiled by county health rankings show that as compared to North Dakota, Ramsey County is doing considerably worse on measures of health outcomes and health factors. Benson County is near the bottom of the state with regard to health outcomes and health factors. Ramsey County ranked, 44<sup>th</sup> of 49 North Dakota Counties on health outcomes and 27<sup>nd</sup> of 49 on health factors. As outlined below there is significant room for improvement in 14 of the 25 health factors. Benson County ranked 47<sup>th</sup> of 49 North Dakota Counties on health outcomes and 47<sup>th</sup> of 49 on health factors. As outlined below there is significant room for improvement in 20 of the 25 health factors that influence health.

Factors on which Ramsey County performed below the North Dakota average:

- Adult Obesity
- Food Environment Index
- Physical Inactivity
- Access to Exercise Opportunities
- Alcohol Impair Driving Deaths

- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Teen Birth Rate
- Preventable Hospital Stays
- Unemployment
- Income Inequality
- Children in Single Parent Households
- Injury Deaths
- Air Pollution – Particulate Matter
- Children in Poverty

Factors on which Benson County was performed poorly relative to the rest of the state include:

- Adult Smoking
- Food Environment Index
- Physical Inactivity
- Access to Exercise Opportunities
- Alcohol Impair Driving Deaths
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Teen Birth Rate
- Uninsured
- Dentists
- Mental Health Providers
- Preventable Hospital Stays
- Mammography Screening
- Unemployment
- Income Inequality
- Children in Single Parent Households
- Social Associations
- Injury Deaths
- Severe Housing Problems
- Air Pollution – Particulate Matter
- Children in Poverty

Of 76 potential community and health concerns listed in the survey, residents who took the survey chose seven needs as the most important:

- Youth alcohol use and abuse (including binge drinking)
- Adult alcohol use and abuse (including binge drinking)
- Adequate childcare services
- Adult drug use and abuse (including prescription drug abuse)
- Youth drug use and abuse (including prescription drug abuse)
- Jobs with livable wages
- Obesity/overweight

The survey also revealed that the biggest barriers to receiving health care as perceived by community members were:

- Not enough specialists
- Not enough evening or weekend primary care clinic hours
- No insurance or limited insurance
- Not enough doctors
- Care not affordable
- Inability to get primary care clinic appointments or limited appointment hours

When asked what the good aspects of the area were, respondents indicated that the top community assets were:

- Friendly, helpful, and supportive people
- Family-friendly; good place to raise kids
- Safe place to live, little/no crime
- People are involved in their community
- Close to work and activities
- Active faith community

Input from community leaders provided via key informant interviews and a focus group echoed many of the concerns raised by survey respondents. Thematic concerns emerging from these sessions were:

- Low number of jobs available/no qualified staff
- Medical health needs – adult and youth
- Need for additional services for the elderly
- Poverty
- Recruiting and retaining medical staff
- Substance abuse (alcohol and drugs)

Following careful consideration of the results and findings of this assessment, community group members determined that, in their estimation, the significant health needs or issues in the community are:

- Substance use and abuse – all ages
- Extra Hours for appointments, such as evenings and weekends
- Availability of Mental Health Services
- Having Enough Child Care Services

Our team selected substance use and abuse as our primary significant health need to be addressed. We combined extra hours for appointments and availability of mental health services into a second significant health need. A third need identified was the shortage low density Medical Specialties, in particular Surgical and Sonography Technicians. The shortage of child care services will not be addressed in this implementation plan. It is being addressed by other agencies in the community

**V. Significant Health Need to be Addressed**

<b>Need 1:</b>	<b>Substance Abuse and Use All Ages Focus on Teen Vaping and Marijuana Abuse Lead Agents Lake Region Health District Unit</b>
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spirit Lake Nation Primary Care Providers</li> <li>• CHI St. Alexius Health Clinic and Emergency Department Providers</li> <li>• Local Primary Care and Counseling Clinics (Sunshine, Lifewise Counseling etc)</li> <li>• Lake Region Health District Unit Staff and Tobacco Cessation Coordinator</li> </ul>
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a vaping abuse campaign plan by June 30, 2020</li> <li>• Establish a community based multi-disciplinary substance abuse prevention team by March 31, 2020</li> <li>• Conduct a minimum of three community education sessions per calendar year for providers, patients, and community partners on dangers associated with vaping and marijuana abuse</li> </ul>
Projected Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of North Dakota rural students using an electronic vapor product in the past 30 days by 10% from 19.7% to 17.73% or less as reported in the annual North Dakota High School Youth Behavioral Risk Survey</li> </ul>
Actual Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On going</li> </ul>

<b>Need 2:</b>	<b>Expand Hours for Appointments Focus on Primary Care, Mental Health, and Outpatient Dialysis Appointments Lead Agents Altru Health System, CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital and Spirit Lake Tribal Clinic</b>
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spirit Lake Nation Tribal Council and Clinic</li> <li>• CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Board of Directors</li> <li>• Altru Health System</li> </ul>
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altru Clinic Devils expanded access to primary and urgent care appointment by establishing an after hours and weekend walk-in clinic</li> <li>• CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital expands access to primary care clinic appointment by establishing or purchasing a primary care clinic</li> <li>• Spirit Lake Tribal Clinic to hire a psychiatrist</li> <li>• Collaborate with Altru and/or national outpatient dialysis vendors to reduce number of patients on outpatient dialysis waiting list by expanding number of community based outpatient dialysis chairs</li> </ul>

Projected Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community access to primary and urgent care appointments</li> <li>• Spirit Lake Tribal Clinic offers increased access to mental health appointments</li> <li>• Increase number of community based outpatient dialysis chairs from 6 to 12 by 1 January 2021</li> </ul>
Actual Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altru Clinic established an after hour and Saturday walk-in clinic in September 2019</li> <li>• CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake acquired a primary care clinic in September 2018</li> <li>• Spirit Lake Tribal Clinic hired a psychiatrist on 1 June 2019</li> </ul>

<b>Need 3</b>	<b>Shortage of Low Density Medical Specialties Surgical and Sonography Technicians CHI Health Devils Lake Hospital Lead Community Agent</b>
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forward Devils Lake Economic Development Commission</li> <li>• CHI St. Alexius Devils Lake Hospital</li> <li>• Altru Clinic Devils Lake</li> </ul>
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with Forward Devils Lake’s “20 by 20” workforce improvement program</li> <li>• Establish an ultrasound call agreement with Altru Health System</li> </ul>
Projected Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully staff hospital radiology and surgical departments to maintain 24/7/365 ultrasound coverage and surgical staff for two operating rooms</li> </ul>
Actual Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed an as needed as available ultrasound call agreement with Altru Health System in September 2018</li> </ul>

<b>Need 4:</b>	<b>Expansion and Renovation of Hospital Emergency Department Lead Agent CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital</b>
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital Foundation</li> <li>• CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital Board</li> </ul>
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete phase 1 fundraising for hospital Emergency Department Renovation/ Expansion project by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</li> </ul>
Projected Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete phase 1 fundraising for hospital Emergency Department Renovation/ Expansion project by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021</li> </ul>
Actual Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On going</li> </ul>

## **VI. Significant Needs Not Addressed**

Increased availability of child daycare services were not addressed as it is not the medical community's core mission. These needs are regularly addressed by local government entities such as the Spirit Lake Nation Tribal Council, The City of Devils Lake and the Forward Devils Lake Economic Development Corporation.

11/21/2019

*Date adopted by the CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital Board*

Link: Current CHNA Report

[https://www.chistalexiushealth.org/sites/default/files/assets/Devils%20Lake/communityassessment/CHNA%20Devils%20Lake%20Report%20and%20Implementation\\_2019.pdf](https://www.chistalexiushealth.org/sites/default/files/assets/Devils%20Lake/communityassessment/CHNA%20Devils%20Lake%20Report%20and%20Implementation_2019.pdf)