

Executive Summary

Purpose The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) is conducted every three years to help nonprofit hospitals understand community health needs. This public document represents collaborative work between community stakeholders and local hospitals to identify health needs and align resources for improved health outcomes.

Process Tillamook County collaborated with community partners to create an accessible report for the entire community. Input was gathered from focus groups and key informants, including local health officials, community-based organizations, medical providers, and members of medically underserved, low-income, and minority populations.

Data Collection The assessment combined primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from focus groups and key informant interviews conducted between May 2024 and July 2024. Eight significant health needs focusing on social determinants of health were identified through in-depth analysis.

Prioritization The CHNA Steering Committee prioritized needs based on severity, prevalence, alignment around common goals, feasibility of potential interventions, and opportunities to maximize available resources over three years.

High Priority Health Needs

- Access to health care
- Community Infrastructure
- Housing
- Mental Health

Biggest Gaps in Service and Barriers to Care

Workforce Shortages Three clinics recently closed primarily due to inability to recruit physicians. High provider turnover rates affect service continuity, and rural providers must be comfortable practicing without urban resources readily available.

Specialty Care Gaps No memory care facilities exist in the county. Mental health services are very limited and decreasing over time. No psychiatrists are available in Oregon for the area. Treatment centers for conditions like psychosis require traveling to Lincoln City or Portland.

Transportation Barriers Only 13.81% of the population lives within a half mile of public transit, compared to 56.25% statewide. The transportation district struggles with driver shortages and has lost routes. Twenty-seven percent of survey respondents did not receive needed care, with one in four citing transportation-related barriers including clinic location, difficulty getting to clinics, and inconvenient hours.

Insurance and Affordability Lack of insurance is a major problem. For those with insurance, high deductibles and copays make care difficult to afford. The health care system is difficult to navigate even for educated and experienced individuals.

Cultural and Language Access Lack of culturally relevant services and providers. Many facilities lack Spanish-speaking staff and fail to use appropriate language lines or certified interpreters, relying instead on informal translation.

Health Literacy Some community members were raised without health care access and don't understand basic preventive care concepts like annual physicals, instead relying on emergency departments for care.

The Unique Needs of the Community

Rural and Coastal Geography Tillamook County is located on the Oregon coast with 75 miles of coastline, four bays, and nine rivers. The geographic spread makes accessing health care challenging, with only 13.81% of the population living within a half mile of public transit compared to 56.25% statewide. Rural providers must be comfortable practicing without the resources available in urban centers.

Housing Cost Burden and Workforce Recruitment Residents spend 62.97% of their income on housing and transportation alone, far exceeding typical affordability standards. High housing costs and limited supply significantly hinder the ability to recruit and retain health care providers. Nearly half of renter households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of income on housing. Low housing inventory causes the loss of excellent nursing candidates who cannot find housing.

Short-Term Rentals Impact Approximately 1,200 short-term rentals owned by corporations have removed homes from the market that could serve as workforce housing or affordable housing, exacerbating housing shortages for both residents and health care workers.

Digital Divide More than one in 10 households (11.01%) have slow or no internet access. Many areas lack cell service, and 5.82% of households don't own any type of computer. This limits access to telehealth services and health information, particularly important given the geographic challenges.

Educational Attainment Only 35.04% of the population holds an Associate's degree or higher, compared to 45.08% statewide. The high school graduation rate is 79.6%.

Student Homelessness An unnumbered population of high school students are homeless, couch surfing, living in cars, or living in the woods.

Strengths of the Community

Collaborative Partnerships Strong collaboration exists between Adventist Health Tillamook, local public health officials, community-based organizations, medical providers, and members of underserved populations. A diverse CHNA Steering Committee with representatives from over 15 organizations worked together to identify and address community needs.

Health Care Infrastructure Five Federally Qualified Health Centers serve the area, providing a rate of 15.97 FQHCs per 100,000 population, which exceeds the state average. Adventist Health Tillamook operates a 25-bed critical access medical center, the largest hospital-based ambulance service in Oregon with four stations, and six rural health medical offices across the region. Over 500 associates and health care providers serve the community with specialties including family medicine, behavioral health, orthopedics, and more.

Recent Accomplishments Over the past three years, the community implemented health literacy campaigns in partnership with the Tillamook County Wellness Access to Care Committee. Assessments were conducted around cultural and linguistic access to health care and workforce development. Enhanced understanding of basic health information, cancer prevention, chronic disease prevention, and established pathways for accessing appropriate care.

Natural Environment and Recreation The community features 75 miles of coastline, four bays, nine rivers, pristine state parks, and beautiful geography. Endless opportunities exist for outdoor activities including wind-swept shoreline, soaring sand dunes, and bustling harbors that support physical activity and well-being.

Community Engagement and Identity Strong small-town rural character with unifying events including the Tillamook County Fair, parades, and rodeos. Home to the Tillamook Creamery Visitor Center and plentiful dairy farms that contribute to community identity and economy. The community demonstrates optimism about finding opportunities to improve health and well-being despite challenges.

Home Ownership 74.57% of the population owns their home, exceeding the state average of 63.37%, providing some housing stability.

Priorities and Goals

2025 High Priority Health Needs The hospital identified four high priority health needs based on severity, prevalence, alignment around common goals, feasibility of potential interventions, and opportunities to maximize available resources over a three-year period: Access to Health Care, Community Infrastructure, Housing, and Mental Health.

Next Steps: Community Health Implementation Strategy The hospital will complete a Community Health Implementation Strategy (CHIS) to strategically implement programs using evidence-informed solutions. Together with Tillamook County, local public health officials, community-based organizations, medical providers, students, parents, and members of underserved, low-income and minority populations, the hospital will develop a three-year strategic plan to address the prioritized needs.

Past Three Years Accomplishments (2022-2025) Over the past three years, Adventist Health Tillamook focused on access to health care, financial stability, and housing.

Access to Health Care Initiatives Conducted assessments around cultural and linguistic access to health care and workforce development. Implemented a health literacy campaign in partnership with the Tillamook County Wellness Access to Health Care Committee to boost awareness and understanding for improved health outcomes. Enhanced understanding of basic health information, cancer and other chronic disease prevention, and established pathways for when and how to access the best type of health care to improve overall well-being.

Collaborative Approach The hospital emphasizes that community transformation lies in the hands of the community itself. It is calling for more collaboration to create intentional strategies that improve health needs for all. The hospital monitors and evaluates progress through annual updates and the CHIS, working in collaboration with community partners to implement goals, actions, solutions, and programs to address each high priority need.