



## For Immediate Release

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### **Access to Care, Behavioral Health, and Chronic Diseases Identified as Top Health Issues**

**Sioux Falls, South Dakota:** Local health partners announced today the ABCs of top health concerns facing the community—Access to Care, Behavioral Health, and Chronic Diseases.

The Sioux Falls Health Department, Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, Avera Heart Hospital, and Sanford USD Medical Center presented findings from a collaborative Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), a process that assists community leaders in understanding the health status of the area.

Related to the priority health issues, the report findings stated:

- *Access*—Health care costs are a concern among residents (64 percent cite cost as a health care barrier).
- *Behavioral Health*—More than one-third of residents say they have been diagnosed with depression.
- *Chronic Disease*—More than two-thirds of adults (68 percent) are overweight or obese, and nearly half of Sioux Falls adults are classified as having high blood pressure.

“Through a great partnership with our local health systems and other community organizations, we are learning more about what impacts health in Sioux Falls,” said Jill Franken, Public Health Director for the City of Sioux Falls. “Our health behaviors and our environment, right down to our zip code, can predict how healthy we will be as individuals and as a community.”

When looking at zip codes within the city limits, Franken said, there is a 14-year range in life-expectancy rates among different neighborhoods.

“We are all impacted by the conditions in which we live, work, and age,” Franken explained. “These conditions are referred to as ‘social determinants of health.’ Where we live impacts our access to healthy food, housing, job opportunities, and schools, as well as places to be physically active and to build social connections. And ultimately, all of that impacts our health.”

The health systems are required to complete CHNA assessments every three years, according to David Flicek, President and CEO of Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center.

“On the national level, the expectation for hospitals to play an active role in the overall health of their communities has become an even higher priority,” said Flicek. “As health care providers, we are committed to providing the highest quality of care for our patients.”

Dr. Michael Wilde, Vice President Medical Officer, Sanford Sioux Falls, agrees on the benefit of this collaborative process.

“We see great value in coming together with Avera and with the Sioux Falls Health Department, through its Live Well Sioux Falls initiative, to learn more about our community and to work together to improve the health and well-being of our residents,” said Wilde.

The assessment included several data-gathering components, beginning with a resident survey, followed by focus groups and a series of discussions with representatives from work sites, health care, education, government, and other community organizations. In addition to representing their organizations, many of the participants also represented the interests of medically underserved, low-income, and minority populations.

Other notable findings included in the CHNA report include:

- Sioux Falls still ranks near the bottom in the nation for fruit and vegetable consumption. Less than 15 percent are getting enough fruits and vegetables.
- More than half of adults are physically active fewer than three days per week.
- Among residents responding to the CHNA survey, 38 percent say they binge drink. National data on binge drinking shows an increase from 2016 to 2019.
- The South Dakota opioid overdose mortality rate is 6 deaths per 100,000 population. The Minnehaha County rate is 7.5 deaths per 100,000 population (national rate is 14.1 deaths per 100,000 population).
- The number of adults who smoke in the Sioux Falls MSA has decreased from 16.7 percent to 15.5 percent.

The CHNA partners also identified priority activities to pursue collaboratively across all community sectors:

- Development of the triage center.
- Assist with community awareness campaign around behavioral health.
- Pursue policy, system, and environmental changes to maintain or increase percentage of people living at a healthy body weight.
- Address social determinants of health and actively support the *One Sioux Falls* framework that includes accessible housing, engaging people, health and safety, and workforce development.

A copy of this report and related resources, as well as information about implementation of strategies, will be available at [www.livewellsiouxfalls.org](http://www.livewellsiouxfalls.org), [www.avera.org](http://www.avera.org), and [www.sanfordhealth.org](http://www.sanfordhealth.org).

“This was a thorough and worthwhile process,” said Franken. “We are truly grateful for the many community members who worked together on collecting this data, and we look forward to working with them to develop effective and appropriate strategies to create a healthier place to live, work, learn, and play.”

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