



2026 McLAREN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

**COMMUNITY HEALTH
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGY**

BACKGROUND

Every three years, hospitals, health departments, and community partners across Northern Michigan come together in a powerful collaboration to assess the health and well-being of our residents and communities. Through the MiThrive Community Health Needs Assessment, this 31-county partnership examines the social, economic, environmental, and behavioral factors that shape health outcomes and identifies the most pressing strategic issues facing our region.

MiThrive analyzed health indicators, surveyed residents, and gathered insights from healthcare providers and dozens of community organizations

We know that health extends far beyond the absence of disease. Education, income, housing stability, access to healthcare, mental health services, environmental quality, substance use, and individual choices all shape the well-being of those who live, work, and play in our communities. These complex, interconnected issues cannot be solved by any single entity. By working together with our community partners, we can better understand these challenges and develop effective strategies to address them.

This implementation strategy outlines McLaren Northern Michigan's response to the priority health needs identified in the 2024-2026 Community Health Needs Assessment. It builds upon the successful initiatives of our previous community health improvement efforts while addressing emerging needs and evolving community priorities. Through focused action, we will work alongside our partners to create healthier, more equitable communities throughout our eight-county service area.

Learn more about MiThrive: <https://northernmichiganchir.org>

See the 2024-2026 MiThrive Community Health Needs Assessment for McLaren Northern Michigan to learn how strategic issues were identified and priorities determined: <https://www.mclaren.org/Uploads/Public/Documents/CHNA/2025/2025-MNM-Community-Health-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

REGIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The McLaren Northern Michigan priority identification and implementation plan was developed based on key findings in the Community Health Needs Assessment.

1. Access to Health Care
2. Mental Health
3. Economic Security

The hospital developed an implementation plan including community health improvement goals and strategies to address the identified priority areas. The hospital is pursuing these internally as well as working with community organizations to achieve the greatest community impact on our actions.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. Access to Health Care

Goal: Increase access to health care services for all.

Strategies:

- Provide same-day access to primary care services through McLaren Medical Group providers.
- Provide remote care through an internet-based service, including telehealth
- Partner with McLaren Medical Group and independent primary care providers to ensure adequate succession planning for providers transitioning into retirement
- Offer evening and weekend access to diagnostic testing, such as imaging services.
- Continue to work on decreasing wait times for appointments for all services.
- Continue to recruit and retain top-quality providers in all primary care and specialty areas.
- Support recruitment and retention by enhancing opportunities for employee well-being.
- In Support of access, promote resident retention, specifically targeted at primary care providers interested in establishing a practice in the service area.
- Collaborate with the Michigan Health and Hospital Association to advance best practices addressing social determinants of health to reduce barriers to accessing health care.

As part of a fully integrated, statewide health care system with a mission to be the best value in health care as defined by quality outcomes and cost. McLaren is participating in, and will continue to explore initiatives designed to improve hospital safety, quality, and experience, including:

- Various payor performance metrics.
- Utilization of the McLaren Health Care Safety Dashboard, monitoring key performance indicators.

2. Mental Health

Goal: Improve mental health by ensuring access to appropriate, quality services and support.

Strategies:

- Continue operating at the Justin A. Borra Behavioral Health Center on the Cheboygan Campus of McLaren Northern Michigan to serve adult behavioral health inpatients
- Collaborate with the Northwest Michigan Community Health Innovation Region's Behavioral Health Initiative

- Support care coordination and follow-up for patients transitioning from inpatient behavioral health to community-based services
- Continuously educate and train primary care and emergency department providers on mental health and substance use screening, intervention, and treatment.
- Expedite access to inpatient psychiatric care through the McLaren Behavioral Health Intake Service.
- Support organizations providing mental health services.
- Participate in mental health awareness efforts through community organizations.
- Identify and collaborate on advocacy opportunities to increase access to behavioral health.
- Continue using telehealth as an option for behavioral health services within the hospital.
- Support expedited access to inpatient behavioral health services by funding a Community Mental Health worker position in the Emergency Department to assist with care coordination and timely inpatient placement.

3. Economic Security

Goal: Support economic stability in our communities, recognizing that economic security is the foundation to health and well-being

Strategies:

- Continue participation on housing boards and coalitions to be a voice for our community.
- Continue screening for food insecurity, housing instability, transportation barriers, and other social determinants of health.
- Serve as an economic anchor employer providing competitive wages and benefits.
- Partner with educational institutions to create healthcare career pipelines.
- Provide scholarships and loan repayment assistance for healthcare careers.
- Continue supporting employee well-being to improve recruitment and retention
- Source goods and services locally, when possible, to support the regional economy.
- Connect patients with no medical home to a primary care provider to support economic and health stability.
- Deliver education programs to the community to promote wellness.
- Collaborate with regional partners on community campaigns and events to reduce obesity and improve physical activity.
- Continue to offer free and/or low-cost health screenings.
- Continue to participate in health fairs and expos, providing free information and education on reducing health risks.
- Inform patients and the community on how to access health care information and credible resources, including patient portal access and internet access.
- Contribute information on the services and health and wellness offerings we provide to the 211-information database.

- Offer provider-led presentations on the prevention of chronic disease throughout the community.
- Continue offering support groups and education for those with chronic disease.
- Advocate for policies, rules, and regulations that reduce health risks for the public.

The implementation plan will be monitored by hospital leadership in collaboration with community partners to track outcomes of success and areas for improvement. The plan and program metrics will be monitored and updated annually. The hospital reserves the right to amend this implementation strategy as circumstances warrant. For example, certain needs may become more pronounced and require enhancements. During the three-year period, other organizations in the community may decide to address certain needs, indicating that the Hospital then should refocus on its limited resources to best serve the community.