

Community Health Improvement Plan Mineral County 2023



Mineral County Healthy Communities Coalition
Mineral County Health Department
Mineral Community Hospital

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Acknowledgements

A special thanks to the following organizations for their help with funding the project, building the Community Health Assessment (CHA) survey instrument, preparing the survey mailer to send out, providing feedback and guidance, analyzing data, reviewing the final CHA report, and discussing ways we can support the health of Mineral County residents through targeted approaches to addressing health topics of concern through the creation of our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

- Mineral County Healthy Communities Coalition (HCC)
- Mineral County Health Department (MCHD)
- Mineral Community Hospital (MCH)
- Mineral County Prevention Specialist
- Montana Public Health Systems Improvement Office (PHSIO)

Overview

Mineral Community Hospital Mission

Our mission is to be here when you need us.

Health Department Mission

Our mission is to provide sustainable services promoting optimal health in Mineral County.

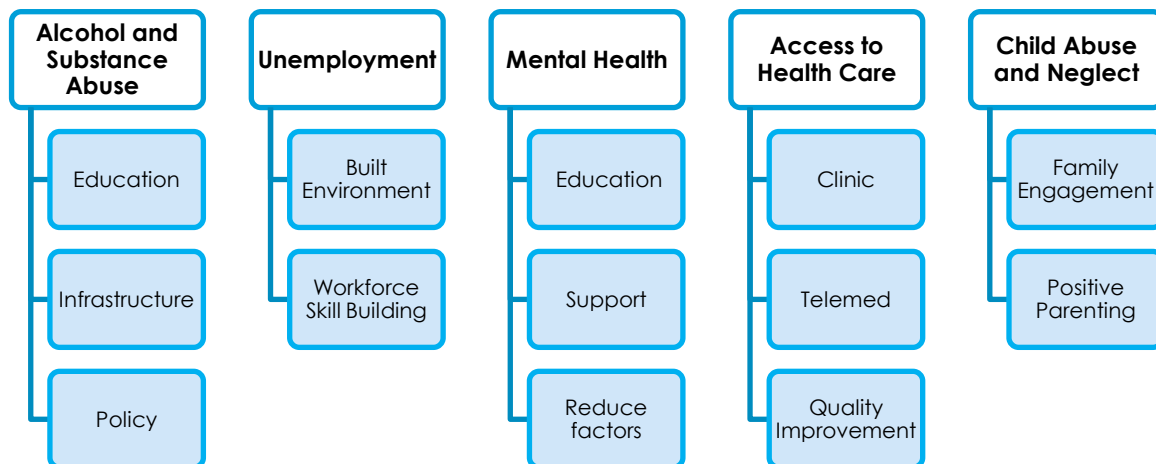
Mineral Community Hospital Vision

We will be a leader in customer service, foster a culture of continuous quality improvement, and explore opportunities focused on bringing healthcare to a greater number of community members.

Vision for a Healthy Community

A thriving community where people want to live.

Priorities



Methodology

A mixed methods approach was utilized to survey the population in Mineral County. A survey instrument collecting both qualitative and quantitative data was created in conjunction with partners and programs from the Mineral County Health Department, Mineral Community Hospital, and Healthy Communities Coalition. A survey was printed and mailed to all households and post office boxes within Mineral County for a total of 2965 letters. The letter mailed out contained instructions for completing either the paper form, or instructions to fill out the survey online through a link to Jotform. Participants were instructed to fill out one survey per household. A \$20 Amazon gift card was given to the first 100 respondents. Respondents were required to be at least 18 years of age.

The survey instrument was designed to capture perceptions about health care, wellness and prevention, community, health topics, and demographics. A total of 404 surveys were completed, 313 paper and 91 through Jotform, for a 15% response rate. Approximately 200 of the surveys were returned as “undeliverable”.

Analysis

The quantitative responses of the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, which summarize the data set.

The qualitative responses were analyzed using content analysis which is a popular approach to qualitative data analysis. Content analysis is used to identify the patterns that emerge from text, by grouping content into words, concepts, and themes. Content analysis is useful to quantify the relationship between all of the grouped content.

Results

The Community Health Assessment asked about priority health topics differently than on previous surveys by asking about children and adult areas of concern separately. The following are the results:

Children

Alcohol/substance abuse
Child abuse and neglect
Mental/behavioral health
Bullying

Adults

Alcohol/substance abuse
Chronic health issues
Mental/behavioral health
Accidental injury

These health issues are prioritized in this document- the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Task forces were assembled based on areas of expertise and interest, then goals and objectives were created as a guide to implement the CHIP by 2026 in Mineral County.

Priority Areas

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

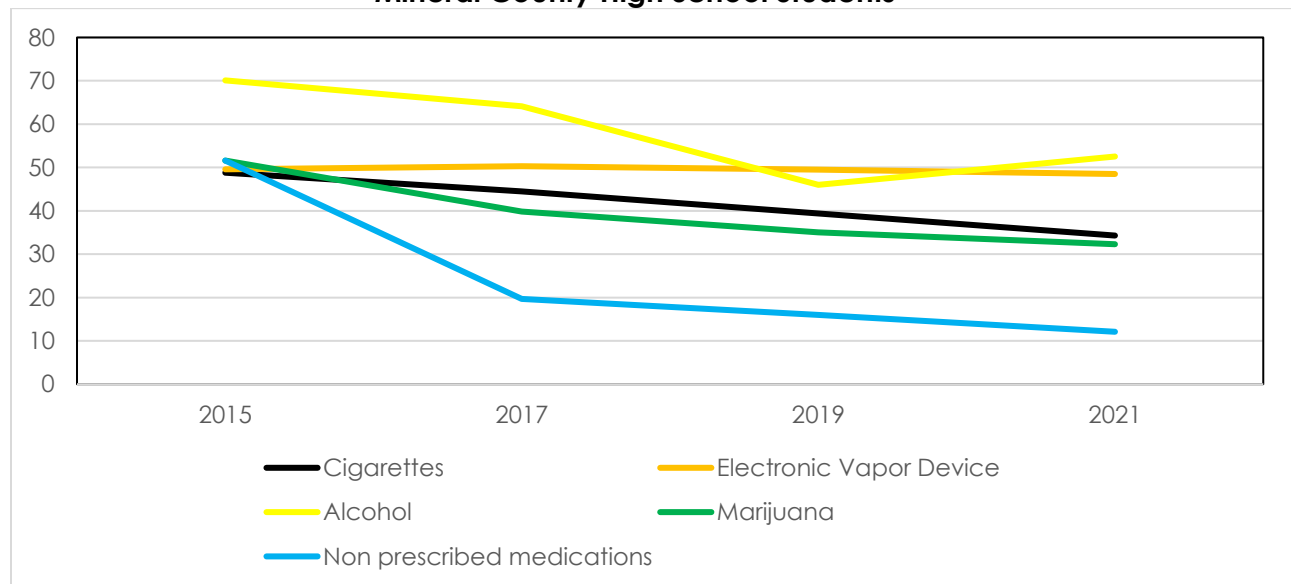
#1 Health Issue Identified for both Children and Adults

Substance abuse, including alcohol and illicit, legal, and prescribed drugs, is an extremely important topic to address as it affects every member of our county- from individuals to families, neighbors and communities; the effects can be felt throughout the county. These sentiments are reflected within findings from the CHA. Roughly a quarter of the participants identified alcohol and substance abuse as the most serious health concern in both children (21%) and adults (25%). Health outcomes related to substance abuse include an increased risk for motor vehicle crashes, domestic violence, crime, child abuse and neglect, and suicide. Substance abuse can cause loss of lives if not prevented, left untreated, or mismanaged.

Children

Mineral County high school students rank equivalent or higher on many of the substance and alcohol use indicators on the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey¹ (YRBS) than their statewide peers. The data shows that addressing substance abuse among our youth is imperative.

Table 1- YRBS Reported Lifetime Use of Substances from Mineral County High School Students



Adults

Substance abuse in the state as a whole ranks among the top concerns in most Montana communities. Locally, the Substance Use Prevention Committee is at work to develop local strategies to address substance abuse and substance use disorders. Statewide, a strategic plan

has been developed to address substance use disorders called the *Montana Substance Use Disorder Task Force Strategic Plan*². The plan defines statewide strategies through 2023. The introduction to this strategic plan states, “More than 100 people die every year from drug overdose in Montana and more than 15,000 emergency department visits annually are attributable to substance use. The impacts of substance use span every generation and cut across socioeconomic lines, from children in our foster care system, to adults in our correctional facilities, to seniors prescribed opioids for chronic pain.”

- Montana experienced 213 highway traffic deaths in 2020, of which 42% included alcohol-impaired driving³. Eighty-nine percent of the total deaths occurred in rural areas.
- Montana saw an increase in drug seizures related to cocaine/crack, other drugs, and unknown drugs, and a decrease in seizures involving heroin/opioids, marijuana/hashish, and methamphetamine/stimulant from 2021 to 2022⁴.
- Mineral County saw an increase in seizures of methamphetamine/stimulants from 2021 to 2022⁴.
- An estimated 79,000 Montanans age 12+ have a substance use disorder, and 92% of Montanans with a substance use disorder are not receiving treatment⁵.

Goals

- Support Mineral County Sheriff’s Office with hiring a Student Resource Officer to work in Mineral County Schools.
- Shift cultural norms to identify with positive messages surrounding the statistics of our county residents.
- Form support networks for community members and partnerships with organizations and agencies/systems throughout the county.
- Referral process for those using tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs.
- Present CHIP goals and updates to the county commissioners.
- Increase identification of substance and alcohol use/abuse with services our community members utilize.

Strategies

- ❖ Launch positive message campaign to address shifting cultural norms around substance abuse.
- ❖ Foster support networks through development of peer to peer programs with teens and adolescents in schools.
- ❖ Strengthen partnerships among county officials and organizations to unify efforts in reducing substance abuse by linking systems together.
- ❖ Work with hospital and both clinics in Mineral County to review and revise any patient intake screeners that can help identify alcohol and substance abuse and utilize a unified referral system.

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Annual Media Campaign: Substance Use Prevention

- Use positive messaging across social media platforms and in newsletter highlighting campaign efforts once per calendar year.
 - Ex. “Most Mineral County residents don’t use drugs, Most Mineral County students don’t use ecigs/vape, Most Mineral County.. etc.”
- ❖ Publish 3 ads per year in the Mineral Independent with positive message campaigns. By June 2026, 10 ads will be published with the county paper.
- ❖ Host 1 event per year (2023-2026) for communities within Mineral County focusing on healthy coping skills.
 - Pre/post-test surveys on skills gained
- ❖ Share Crisis Resource Guide with partners and community and document reach by posting on social media at least 3 times per year and distributing to local businesses and partners annually beginning in Fall 2023.
- ❖ Present the CHIP and updates quarterly to the Commissioners in their general meeting and to the Board of Health for a total of 4 times per year beginning in September 2023.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Resources

- ❖ Janet Smith- Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program
- ❖ Jackie Allard- Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program
- ❖ Anna Schrek- Mineral County Prevention Specialist
- ❖ Stephanie Quick- Frontier Counseling
- ❖ Charlee Thompson- Choices for Change Counseling
- ❖ High School Counselors
- ❖ DUI task force
- ❖ Healthy Communities Coalition
- ❖ Substance Use Prevention Committee

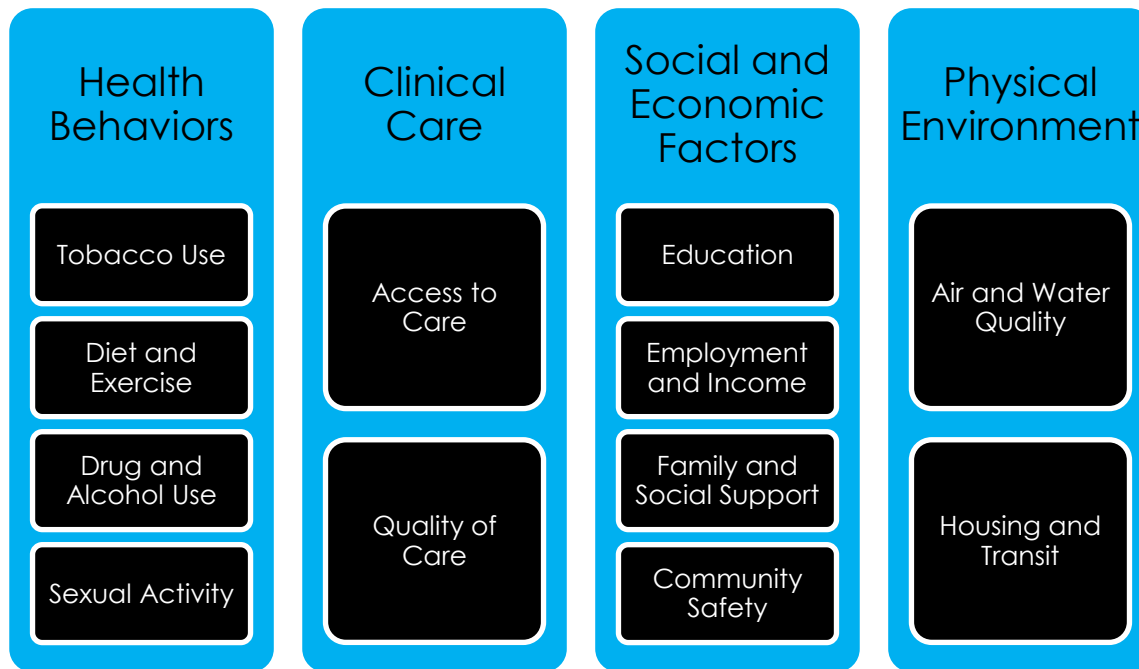
Chronic Health Issues

#2 Health Issue Identified for Adults

Chronic diseases are common and preventable. It is estimated that 62% of Montana adults are living with a chronic disease, and nearly two out of five have more than two chronic diseases⁶. There are three primary behaviors (smoking, lack of exercise, and poor diet) that lead to the four most prevalent chronic diseases (cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease), which account for half of the deaths in Montana each year⁷.

According to County Rankings, Mineral County is in the lowest quartiles for both health outcomes and health factors⁸, meaning less favorable outcomes for community members. Health outcomes are indicated by length of life and quality of life (self-reported health status and percent of low birth weight newborns). Health factors represent community conditions that we

can change to improve health and opportunity, such as access to quality education, living wage jobs, quality clinical care, nutritious foods, green spaces, and secure and affordable housing.



Goals

- Review findings from the Community Health Assessment that narrow in on the factors above to determine areas where partners can improve outcomes.

Strategies

- ❖ Conduct a survey for community members to elaborate on areas where chronic health issues can be improved upon: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ By Fall 2024, complete a study with community members including one focus group in each area of the county (Alberton, Superior, and St. Regis) to find out more about the factors affecting chronic health issues in Mineral County residents.
- ❖ Update the 2023 CHIP to include goals, strategies, and measurable objectives to address chronic health issues by December 31, 2024.

Chronic Health Resources

- ❖ Mineral County Health Department

- ❖ Area 6 Aging
- ❖ Mineral Community Hospital
- ❖ Senior Centers in Mineral County
- ❖ Libraries

Child Abuse and Neglect

#2 Health Issue Identified for Children



Child abuse and neglect encompasses a multitude of events and experiences that shape a child's life trajectory. Failing to address the issues related to child abuse and neglect can tax other systems such as the schools, mental health, and the courts. A recent trauma screening (not considered generalizable due to numbers) indicated

that 1/3 of the children who took the screener had indicated a significant amount of traumatic experiences and responses. It is likely a higher occurrence than indicated by the screener among our children.

Goals

- Create a trauma-informed community.
- Secondary/vicarious trauma training opportunities.
- Trauma training for school officials and staff.
- Public health campaign on positive parenting.
- Offer family engagement events throughout the year.
- Offer education to students in the schools about healthy relationships.

Strategies

- ❖ Work with each school to provide training to students, staff, and parents about positive parenting and resiliency.
- ❖ Plan and implement a public health campaign regarding child abuse and reporting for all community members. Give steps to reporting, and when/where to report. Should be three types of media- billboard, pamphlet, commercial, handout, etc.).

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Develop a strategy to build a “village” of connected parents.
- ❖ Develop strategies to increase home visiting capabilities to include a visit(s) for all school families by 2026.

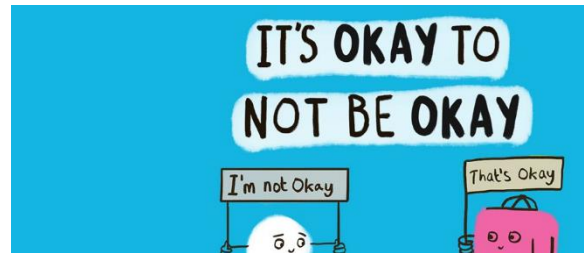
Child Abuse and Neglect Resources

- ❖ Mary Furlong- Healthy Relationships, MCSART (MT Child Sexual Assault Team)
- ❖ School Counselors
- ❖ Zero to Five
- ❖ CPS
- ❖ Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program
- ❖ CSCT school-based mental health

Mental and Behavioral Health

#3 Health Issue Identified for both Children and Adults

The number of children across the nation struggling with mental health is increasing, according to the CDC. More children are being diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and serious emotional disturbances than ever before. This impedes family and school life, and the ability to learn and develop into



socially and emotionally integrated adults. While we recognize this increase among our children, we also see it across the lifespan of our community members. We live in a frontier county that prides itself on rugged individualism. It has been recognized that reducing stigma for those seeking mental health services is one approach that could improve mental health outcomes. Montana currently has the highest suicide rates in the nation. According to the document “Suicide in Montana: Facts, Figures, and Formulas for Prevention”, there are a multitude of coinciding factors that may lead to our high rates. These factors include the following for the state of Montana:

- Vitamin D deficiency
 - increases depression
- High concentration of veterans/middle aged men, American Indians
 - three groups with highest suicide rates
- Altitude; spike in suicides across the world above 2500 ft.
 - in MT the average suicide occurs around 3500 ft.

- Alcohol as a coping strategy
 - alcohol in blood at time of death in Montana is 2x the national average
- Social isolation
 - Isolation from peers or having social relationships that are troubled
 - MT has 6.7 people per square mile; the US has 88.7 people per square mile
- Access to lethal means
 - 65% of suicides in MT are by firearms
 - 90% of firearm deaths in MT are suicides
- Socioeconomic status
 - 1/5 MT kids live more than 100% below the poverty level
- Lack of behavioral health services
 - Specializations in mental health services aren't in each of the Mineral communities, mostly due to lack of population to support such services
- Stigma
 - Depression is felt by many as a weakness, and those who are depressed often feel like they are a burden to those around them. It is difficult to ask for help when you feel like a burden.
- Social disorganization
 - Society lacks the regulatory constraints necessary to control the behavior of its members

Approximately 90% of those who complete suicide have some form of mental illness, with the most frequent diagnosis being major depression and the second being alcoholism.

Goals

- Reduce stigma associated with seeking mental health services.
- Increase access to mental health services for our youth and adults.
- Create a village of support to decrease social isolation felt by our community members.

Strategies

- ❖ Increase public awareness and reduce stigma associated with mental health issues and/or suicidal ideation.
- ❖ Implement a public education campaign/ media campaign that includes harm reduction, reducing mental health stigma, and increasing awareness of risks and protective factors for mental health.
- ❖ Increase access to mental health professionals in schools for youth with mental health needs.

- ❖ Telemed in Mineral Community Hospital Emergency Room for patients experiencing mental distress and/or crisis.
- ❖ Support parents through family engagement efforts to increase healthy coping skills among those raising our next generations.

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Reduce the percent of children in middle school who are considering committing suicide from 18% (2019 Youth Risk and Behavior Survey/ Mineral County) to 10% by 2026.
- ❖ Reduce the percent of children in high school who are considering committing suicide from 27% (2019 Youth Risk and Behavior Survey/ Mineral County) to 19% by 2026.

Mental Health Resources

- ❖ School based mental health
- ❖ Choices for Change Counseling
- ❖ Mineral Community Hospital and Clinic
- ❖ Partnership Health Center
- ❖ Local Advisory Council

Bullying

#4 Health Issue Identified for Children

Barriers to



Goals

-

Strategies



Measurable Objectives



Bullying Resources



- ❖ Jack Lincoln Memorial Clinic, St. Regis
- ❖ Pioneer Council Travel
- ❖ Mineral County Health Department
- ❖ Partnership Health Center

Accidental Injury

#4 Health Issue Identified for Adults

Goals

Strategies

- ❖ Train health department and hospital staff on fall prevention for community members.
- ❖ .

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Conduct three community trainings (one each in Alberton, Superior, and St. Regis) by May 2025 at senior centers using the Stepping On training guidelines to prevent falls.

Accidental Injury Resources



Alignment

The Mineral County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) aligns with many of the Montana State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) Priorities.

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