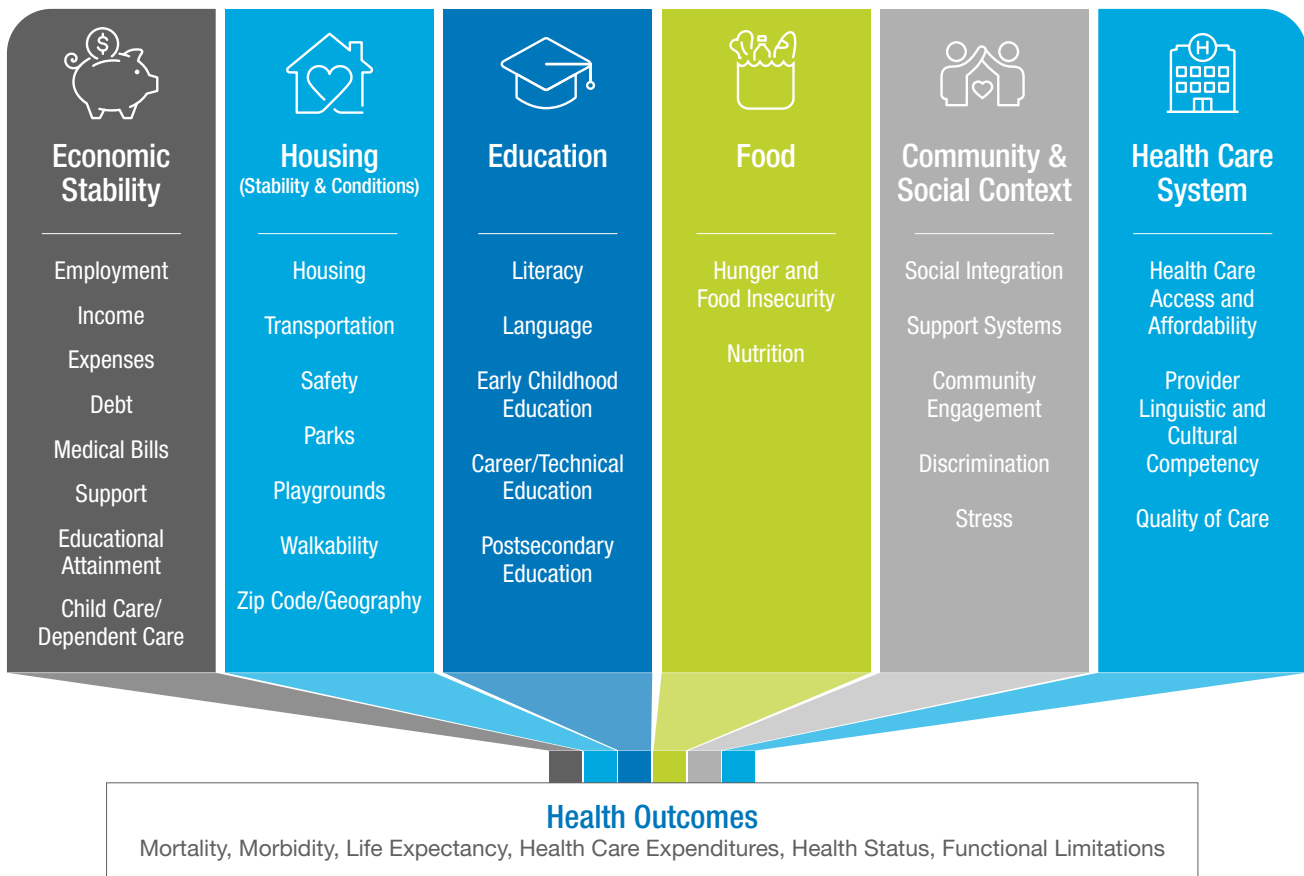




Elmore Community Health Needs Assessment Executive Summary

St. Luke's Elmore 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) provides a comprehensive evaluation of residents' most important health needs in Elmore County, including the towns of Mountain Home and Glens Ferry. Identifying and addressing these needs is essential to improving population health, enhancing patient care and lowering health care costs. Our 2023 assessment was completed in collaboration with several community partners, as a first of its kind in Idaho. Our approach utilized a social determinants of health framework to determine the top priorities of our service area.



Source: Braveman, P.A., Kumanyika, S., Fielding, J, et al. (2011). Health disparities and health equity: the issue is justice. American Journal of Public Health.

We rank and score these health needs by analyzing a broad range of data, including:

- Interviews, focus groups and survey responses from community members, ensuring we had representation from medically under-resourced, low-income and minority populations.
- National, state and local health indicators collected from governmental and other authoritative sources.
- Input from community leaders.

Prioritized Community Health Needs in Elmore County

The 2023 CHNA helps us better understand the most current, significant health challenges facing our community. In collaboration with community partners, St. Luke's will deploy resources to meet the following long-term community health objectives:

- Address high-priority health needs with a focus on prevention.
- Expand access to appropriate St. Luke's and community-based services.
- Coordinate and integrate clinical patient care and community health strategies.
- Advance health equity by addressing social determinants of health and reducing health disparities.

The following health needs were prioritized as the top health needs for our service area:

Safe, Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Housing instability can impact an individual's health and ability to access or afford health care, as well as impacts educational attainment for children and youth. Low vacancy rates can result in housing shortages and rising housing costs. A vacancy rate of 4% or less is dangerously low; our service area falls in this range.

Meanwhile, dwindling housing supply can drive up home prices, especially in areas experiencing as much growth as our service area. Rising housing costs make it difficult for residents to meet other expenses and to live near jobs and services.

Behavioral Health, Including Mental Health and Well-Being, and Substance Misuse

Access to affordable mental health care and substance misuse treatment is a struggle for many residents within our service area, including youth. In addition, the area has a noted mental health provider shortage.

Community members identified behavioral health as a top priority—and mental health and substance misuse as topics of serious concern. Residents across Idaho and the region report high rates of poor mental health.

Survey respondents expressed serious concern regarding the communities' response to overall mental health issues, ability to seek treatments, mental health in specific populations such as veterans and youth, and suicide. There is also serious concern around youth mental health, given a shortage of area providers. Community members also report high concern for individuals' ability to seek treatment for substance misuse, specifically methamphetamine, and stigma associated with receiving treatment. A focus on community-based initiatives that prevent negative mental health outcomes and promote positive experiences would be valuable for communities such as ours, where provider shortages are a noticeable barrier.

Access to Affordable Health Care, Including Oral and Vision Health

Community members reported several difficulties accessing health care: long waitlists, trouble scheduling urgent appointments, and particularly in rural areas, difficulty obtaining and getting to specialty care. In addition, our service area is experiencing a primary care provider shortage. These hurdles are even more challenging for people relying on Medicaid or Medicare. Difficulty accessing health care can lead people to neglect their health—especially preventative health—resulting in more negative outcomes and higher medical costs in the future.

Many residents in our service area do not have adequate access to oral health care. Barriers preventing or limiting an individual's ability to access health care services can lead to increased poor health outcomes and impact overall health equity, where everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.

Next Steps

Visit stlukesonline.org to view the complete St. Luke's Elmore CHNA, which provides an in-depth look at our community's health and how we can make improvements. St. Luke's will collaborate with the individuals, leaders and organizations in our community to develop and execute plans to address the significant community health needs identified in the assessment.