

Community Health Improvement Plan

Mineral County 2019



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

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Acknowledgements

Name	Organization
Amy Lommen	Mineral County Health Department Community Health Specialist Alberton School Board Trustee
Carissa Kuhl	Alta Care St. Regis School
Joe Steele	St. Regis School Superintendent
Jennifer Donovan	Mineral County Health Department Director/School Nurse
April Quinlan	Mineral County Health Department Parents as Teachers Healthy Communities Coalition Co-coordinator
Laura Acker	Mineral County Health Department Parents as Teachers Alberton School Board Trustee
Barbara Jasper	Mineral County Health Department School Nurse/Tobacco
Monte Turner	Health Communities Coalition Member
Danika Kosola	Western Montana Mental Health Mineral County Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist
Charlee Thompson	Choices for Change Counseling St. Regis School Board Trustee
Rachele Gregory	Mineral County Child Protection Specialist
Alex Conrow	Mineral Community Hospital
Shirley Iwata	Local Advisory Committee

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Overview

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

Vision for a Healthy Community- A thriving community where people want to live.

Priorities-

Methodology

The Mineral County Health Department (MCHD), Mineral Community Hospital (MCH), Healthy Communities Coalition (HCC), and the Public Health Systems Improvement (PHSI) collaborated in the spring of 2019 to conduct a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER); in which the goal was to collect primary data for a community health assessment (CHA). Six teams of 2 people conducted 130 household interviews. The 130 households were a sample of the 2,446 total households in Mineral County. Data was compiled from the CASPER to identify the most perceived serious health issues. The data was then presented to the Mineral County Healthy Communities Coalition (HCC) and the decision to move forward with the five priority areas was made. Those five major areas of concern for the residents of the communities within Mineral County were:

- 1) Alcohol and Substance abuse
- 2) Unemployment
- 3) Mental Health
- 4) Access to Health Care
- 5) Child Abuse and Neglect

These five 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 2024 in Mineral County.



Connection

People want to feel connected to each other and their community, especially in their neighborhoods.

Priority Area- Alcohol and Substance Abuse

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. Eighty three percent of participating households identified alcohol and substance abuse as the most serious health concern. 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.

Mineral County high school students rank equivalent or higher on many of the substance and alcohol use indicators on the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) than their statewide peers. While there were substantial changes from the 2013 to the 2015 YRBS (sample size doubled from 2013-2015), 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

Goals

- Determine sustainability of 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.
- Build a community of hope.
- Form support networks for community members and partnerships with organizations and agencies/systems throughout the county.
- Develop county-wide policy regarding student substance abuse with school administrators, county attorney, and commissioners to determine policies surrounding substance abuse.
- Referral process for those using tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs.
- Explore feasibility of bringing back youth court.
- Present CHIP goals and updates to the county commissioners.
- Support existing programs for public health and alcohol use.

Strategies

- ❖ Develop a step by step guide for teachers, coaches, staff, and administration at schools to refer to regarding referrals on substance abuse.
- ❖ Develop a sustainability plan outlining costs and benefits/drawbacks associated with hiring an SRO with input from the Sheriff's Office, school board members, school administration, parents, school staff, and students.
- ❖ Launch positive message campaign to address shifting cultural norms surrounding substance abuse.
- ❖ Foster support networks through development of
 - Peer to peer programs with teens and adolescents in schools.
 - High School senior projects focusing on prevention.
- ❖ Strengthen partnerships among county officials and organizations to unify efforts in reducing substance abuse by linking systems together.

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Media Campaign: Three billboard ads will be posted by June 2025 with positive message campaigns.
 - “Most Mineral County residents don’t use drugs, Most Mineral County students don’t use ecigs/vape, Most Mineral County.. etc.”
- ❖ Publish 6 ads per year in the Mineral Independent with positive message campaign. By June 2025, 30 ads will be published with the county paper.
- ❖ Establish a teen court in Mineral County by 2025.
- ❖ Host 1 event per year (2020-2025) for communities within Mineral County focusing on healthy coping skills.
 - Pre/post test surveys on skills gained
- ❖ Conduct a Landscape assessment resulting in a formal report of all resources within Mineral County that can aid in substance abuse prevention.
 - Hold annual meetings with organizations
- ❖ Work with commissioners to better inform them of what the CHIP is, and how we collaboratively work towards increasing the health of the county through its guidance.
 - Use pre/post-test surveys to determine their level of knowledge on the CHIP

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Resources

- ❖ Barb Jasper- Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program
- ❖ Jackie Allard- Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program
- ❖ Danika Kosola- Mineral County Prevention Specialist
- ❖ Stephanie Quick- Partnership Health Center
- ❖ Charlee Thompson- Choices for Change Counseling
- ❖ High School Counselors and PE teachers
- ❖ DUI task force
- ❖ Healthy Communities Coalition
- ❖ Local Advisory Council

Priority Area- Unemployment

While unemployment isn’t a health issue by itself, it is a risk factor for chronic conditions. Job loss and unemployment have a tremendous impact on mental and physical health; those who are unemployed are more likely to develop high blood pressure and heart disease than their employed counterparts. The stress of unemployment often changes health behaviors: eating more, drinking more, exercising less, and an increase in stress related behaviors like smoking. Unemployment rates consistently remain double that of Montana unemployment rates. According to the MT Department of Labor and Industry, Mineral County experiences a much higher unemployment rate (10.5%) in comparison to MT (5.1% unadjusted) and the US (4.9%). Working towards increasing affordable housing, job opportunities, child care, and skills among our community will help with this area of interest.

Goals

- Work with town/planning councils to highlight Min. Co. as a tourist destination.
- Work on beautification to increase the pride among our residents.
- Improve infrastructure to make the towns more usable/enjoyable (sidewalks, parks, destinations, “best-of” directories).
- Improve skill-building opportunities.

Strategies

- ❖ Bring in a complete program that addresses all the issues associated with poverty, including unemployment.
- ❖ Meet with Mineral County Economic Development Council and County Commissioners on aggressively pursuing business relocation and development in Mineral County.

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Decrease unemployment rate from 8% in 2016 to 7.5% in 2019.
- ❖ Mineral County will have an assessment report conducted and written by October 2024 that outlines the housing crisis and makes recommendations on improving workforce housing in the county.
- ❖ 1/10th (or approximately 430) Mineral County residents will have completed a poverty training by October 2024.
- ❖ Complete a study assessing workforce housing needs (MCED) which will inform an implementation plan for addressing housing by Winter 2021.

Unemployment Resources

- ❖ Mineral County Economic Development (Emily Park)
- ❖ Missoula Resource Council

Priority Area- Mental Health



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.
- ❖ Explore “Communities That Care”- a program that promotes healthy youth development, improves youth outcomes, and reduces problem behaviors.
- ❖ 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

- ❖ Mineral Community Hospital Emergency Room will track the number of patients per year that have received telemed services (previously unavailable) to determine a baseline of reasons for accessing the service, and implementing patient satisfaction surveys. By 2024, MCH will have baseline data about their patients accessing this resource, and then four subsequent years of data for comparison.
- ❖ Implement a program for a parent liaison from the health department to visit all parents of children in preschool for the first 6 months to ensure healthy transitions into the educational system for parents and children by October 2024.
- ❖ Run one ad campaign (billboard and articles in print and social media) per year of the CHIP focusing on issues related to normalizing the access of mental health systems.
- ❖ 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 2023.
- ❖ 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 2023.

Mental Health Resources

- ❖ School based mental health
- ❖ Choices for Change Counseling

- ❖ Mineral Community Hospital and Clinic
- ❖ Partnership Health Center
- ❖ Local Advisory Council

Priority Area- Access to Health Care

Barriers to health care access include issues related to transportation, access to health insurance coverage, and workforce capacity of the health care system. Disparities in access to care can result in disproportionate burden of health care costs and negative outcomes that could have been prevented with access to insurance and primary care. Eighteen % of Mineral County residents are uninsured, and the county has a patient to primary care physician ratio of 1 to 1417, as compared with 205 to 100,000 in Montana. The patient to primary care physician has dramatically increased in the last year, due to efforts by Mineral Community Hospital and Clinic; which has greatly improved access to health care within the county.



Goals

- Determine barriers to accessing health care.
- Improve access to health care.
- Increase amount of those insured in the

county.

Strategies

- ❖ Conduct a needs assessment to determine what barriers exist for our residents in accessing health care in Mineral County.
- ❖ Provide health insurance clinics to assist residents with obtaining insurance.
- ❖ Conduct customer satisfaction surveys with patients in Mineral Community Hospital and Clinic to improve services for patients.
- ❖ Mineral Community Hospital and Clinic will be implementing core measures to ensure quality.

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Increase the number of insured from 88% to 92% in the county by December 2024.
- ❖ Produce a needs assessment outlining access to health care barriers and plan to address those specific issues by December 2022.
- ❖ Provide at least 1 clinic in Alberton, Superior, and St. Regis every year from 2020 - 2024 to assist with applying for health insurance.

Access to Health Care Resources

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

Priority Area- Child Abuse and Neglect



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.
- Develop parent leadership groups in each of the Mineral County communities that will address supported families.
- Public health campaign on positive parenting.
- Offer family engagement events throughout the year.
- Offer education to students in the schools about healthy relationships.

Strategies

- ❖ Offer Kognito training to all schools and providers in the county
- ❖ 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.).

- ❖ Address the issues from the Zero to Five data collection- lack of child care, stress, needing a village of support, book clubs for parents.

Measurable Objectives

- ❖ Develop parent leaders within each community by June 2020.
- ❖ Parenting book clubs in each community.
- ❖ Develop a strategy to build a “village” of connected parents.
- ❖ Develop strategies to increase home visiting capabilities to include a visit(s) for all kindergarten families for the first quarter of school in 2020.
- ❖ Increase the number of children screened through the Linking Systems of Care Project from 19 in 2019 to 50 in 2024.

Child Abuse and Neglect Resources

- ❖ Mary Furlong- Healthy Relationships, MCSART (MT Child Sexual Assault Team)
- ❖ School Counselors
- ❖ Zero to Five
- ❖ Linking Systems of Care Project at the University of Montana
- ❖ CPS
- ❖ Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program
- ❖ CSCT school-based mental health

Alignment

The Mineral County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) aligns with many of the Montana State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) Priorities. The first priority of the Mineral County CHIP, substance abuse, falls directly within the scope of the SHIP goal focusing on behavioral health, as well as the third county priority of Mental Health. The State health priorities can found in the document “Montana State Health Improvement Plan” (2019). Substance abuse is also one of the leading indicators in the CDC’s Healthy People 2020 topics.

Our residents identified unemployment as a health topic. Though not traditionally a health topic, one can view this through many lenses as a health priority for our residents. When we identify social determinants to health, we can see how unemployment falls easily within this scope. “Social determinants to health are also one of the CDC’s Healthy People 2020 leading health indicators. A range of personal, social, economic, and environmental factors contribute to individual and population health. For example, people with a quality education, stable employment, safe homes and neighborhoods, and access to preventive services tend to be healthier throughout their lives.¹ Conversely, poor health outcomes are often made worse by the interaction between individuals and their social and physical environment.” (CDC HP 2020, 2016)

Child abuse and neglect made the top five list of health issues among our community members. The Montana SHIP recognizes the importance of the health of mothers, children, and infants; the 4th priority of the Montana SHIP, and Priority 5 of the SHIP addresses Childhood Adverse Experiences. The CDC names one of the eleven leading indicators of health in their HP 2020 plan as injury and violence, and recognizes that child abuse and neglect fall under this important category.