



2019

Community Health Needs Assessment

For Kittson Memorial Hospital

d/b/a Kittson Healthcare

(formerly Kittson Memorial Healthcare Center)

Mission Statement:

Caring for family and friends, Kittson Healthcare provides and cooperates with others to ensure area residents have access to services necessary to maintain their health and well-being.



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---------|
| Introduction..... | Page 2 |
| Kittson Healthcare’s Overview | Page 2 |
| Methods..... | Page 3 |
| Quantitative Data..... | Page 4 |
| Qualitative Data..... | Page 4 |
| Community Profile..... | Page 4 |
| Obesity/Overweight..... | Page 4 |
| Tobacco Use..... | Page 8 |
| Mental Health..... | Page 10 |
| Suicide..... | Page 11 |
| Progress from Kittson Healthcare’s 2016 CHNA And Implementation Plan..... | Page 11 |
| Focus Group Opinions..... | Page 12 |
| Facility Priorities..... | Page 13 |
| Evaluation of Impact..... | Page 13 |
| Resources..... | Page 14 |
| EvaluationGroup, LLC, Adult Behavior Survey, Kittson County Report, April 2018, Executive Summary..... | Page15 |
| Geographic Location of Kittson County, Minnesota | |



Introduction:

According to Section 501(r)(3)(A) hospital organizations are required to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) every three years and to adopt an implementation strategy to meet the community health needs as identified through the CHNA process.

In 2013, a combination of four hospitals cooperated with five local public health agencies to perform the CHNA. The northwest corner of Minnesota is unique in that three of the five public health agencies that make up Quin County Community Health Services are located in hospitals. This was a unique and unprecedented collaboration in the state of Minnesota. As a group we hired EvaluationGroup, LLC out of Warren, MN to gather the data for each of our counties. Each hospital went on to write their own summary of the data and the Implementation Strategy. Public Health was also tasked to complete their CHNA and Implementation plan as well. In our small, very rural county, it made sense to do this plan in conjunction with public health, as we would have similar goals and strategies.

In 2016, a review of our most current data and our 2013 Implementation Strategy was performed with summaries of what we had accomplished from 2013 – 2016. We re-established our Implementation Strategies for the next 3-year period.

In 2019, Kittson Healthcare finds itself under new administration, with a new name and a new logo. Dr. Garth Kruger of EvaluationGroup, LLC, again compiled county wide demographic and health statistical data to give us an understanding on the progress we have made and alert us to health issues and service that we need to provide to our community. This data has been very important as we identify health priorities for Kittson County.

Kittson Healthcare: Overview

Kittson Healthcare is a non-profit, non-affiliated, locally owned and operated 501(c)3 organization that has been serving area residents since 1922. Kittson Healthcare is a federally designated Critical Access Hospital, a state-designated Sole Community Hospital and an Essential Community Provider. Kittson Healthcare has been the only hospital in Kittson County since January 1995. We are considered a Frontier County with a population density of less than six persons per square mile. Kittson Healthcare's primary service area includes all of Kittson County and a small portion of northwest Marshall County and the northeastern border of North Dakota. The total service population of Kittson County is estimated to be 4248 as of July 1, 2018. This is an almost 12% reduction in population in 8 years.

Kittson Healthcare operates a 15-bed licensed hospital offering inpatient, swing bed, observation beds and respite services. The facility provides 24-hour emergency care, endoscopy services, a moderately complex laboratory, x-ray and mobile diagnostic scanning (MRI, ultrasound and mammography), as well as a new state-of-the-art 64 slice CT on site. Kittson Healthcare provides cardiac rehabilitation services and has a contract with our regional hospital, Altru, for physical/occupational/speech services on an outpatient basis. Kittson Healthcare also operates an attached 60-bed nursing home, a home health/public health agency that also



provides school nursing services, an ambulance service, an assisted living facility and two federally designated Rural Health Clinics in Karlstad and Hallock.

Kittson County is characterized by a predominately agricultural-based economy. Kittson Healthcare is the county's largest employer with over 200 full- and part-time staff with an annual gross payroll of over seven million dollars.

Demographically 24.4% of Kittson County's population is over the age of 65 compared to 15.9% in the state of Minnesota. 9.4% of the population live in poverty, which is just under the state's percentage of 9.5%. The median household income estimated for 2017 was \$52,304. 97.2% of the population is white with 2.2% of the population Hispanic or Latino. The majority of admission to the hospital are Medicare patients. The closest tertiary hospital is located in Grand Forks, ND, which is 75 miles from Hallock. The nearest full service tertiary hospital is located 150 miles away in Fargo, North Dakota. There are two similarly sized hospitals within 40 minutes of Hallock. However, travel to any of these locations during our long winter months can be challenging, especially for our elderly population.

Kittson County's two major causes of death heart disease and cancer. Having a viable hospital and variety of primary care services available to the residents of this "frontier" county is essential in preventing, treating and stabilizing patients.

The federal law that requires hospital emergency departments to medically screen every patient who seeks emergency care and to stabilize or transfer those with medical emergencies, regardless of health insurance status or ability to pay, governs Kittson Healthcare. We have an established Community Care program to assist individuals with paying their accounts for services that they have received at our facility. Business office staff will work with these individuals to complete forms and explain the program.

We feel that health is a collective responsibility that cannot be achieved by healthcare providers and public health professionals alone. It takes the partnership of key stakeholders and the community to identify the priority health needs for our county and service area.

Methods:

The community health needs assessment for 2019 began with a Quality of Life questionnaire that was mailed out to various city leaders, senior centers, school personnel, public health and home health staff, healthcare providers, hospital board members, county employees, social services staff, business owners, and young families in our county. The results of the Quality of Life Questionnaire showed that the majority of those who returned the survey felt that they have a very positive quality of life in Kittson County. However, they also expressed the following concerns:

"More mental health services"

"More funding for home health services."

"More practitioners/doctors"



A community meeting was held to go over the results of the Quality of Life Questionnaires as well as all the quantitative and statistical data that we have available. This meeting brought together healthcare workers, hospital board members, members of the public, home health staff, long-term care staff, acute care staff, clinical services, school superintendents and a representative of the senior center.

Quantitative:

A wide arrange of available statistical data was used to identify our health priorities in our assessment of our service area. Data sources included:

- Kittson County Census Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Data USA
- Quality of Life Survey
- 2017 Kittson County Adult Behavior Survey from EvaluationGroup, LLC
- 2016 Minnesota Student Survey
- A chart on the Social Determinants of Health
- Minnesota County Tables, 2017

Input from this meeting and these surveys were used to shape and guide data and helped us determine the health priorities that we want to focus on for our community and residents from 2019 – 2022.

Qualitative:

Qualitative input was gathered through the community meeting held in August 2019 at Kittson Healthcare. Input was also summarized from comments made by community individuals through the Quality of Life Survey. The group also reviewed the Executive Summary and recommendations of data, specific to Kittson County, compiled by Dr. Garth Kruger of EvaluationGroup, LLC.

During the community meeting, the group went through all the data sources used in the community health needs assessment. The group discussed needs that they see in their own service area. The group discussed what they felt were the primary health needs and priorities that they saw for the county and their specific area of service.

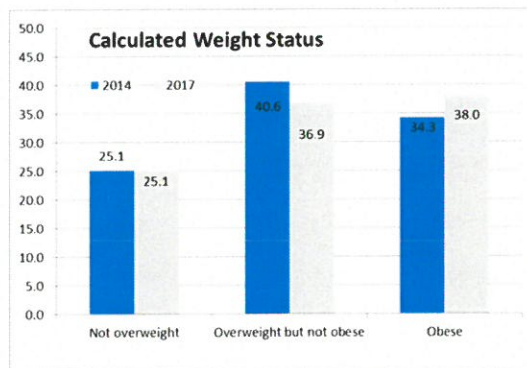
Community Profile:

Obesity/Overweight:

Kittson County anchors the northwest corner of the state of Minnesota, bordering on North Dakota and Canada. It is the fourth smallest county in the state with a projected 2018 population of 4248. Kittson County meets the federal definition of a “frontier county” with less than six people per square mile. Kittson County’s actual population is four people per square mile.

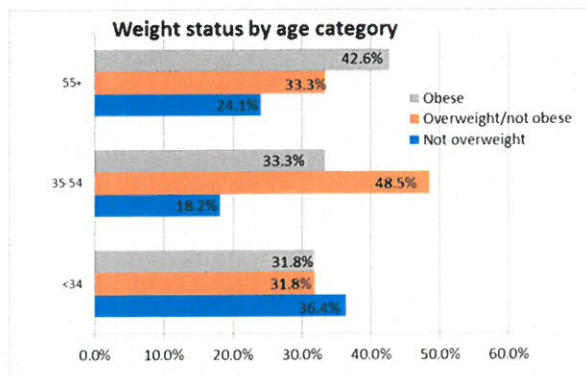
The data from EvaluationGroup, LLC showed us that 74.9% of all individuals residing in Kittson County are considered either overweight (40.6%) or obese (34.3%) (Figure 1). This is a slightly higher percentage of individuals obese and fewer overweight than in the 2014 data. These statistics are much higher than the state average of 64.5% (36.7% overweight; 27.8% obese). Survey respondents were asked to report their height and weight. From those data, a Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated.¹

Figure 1:



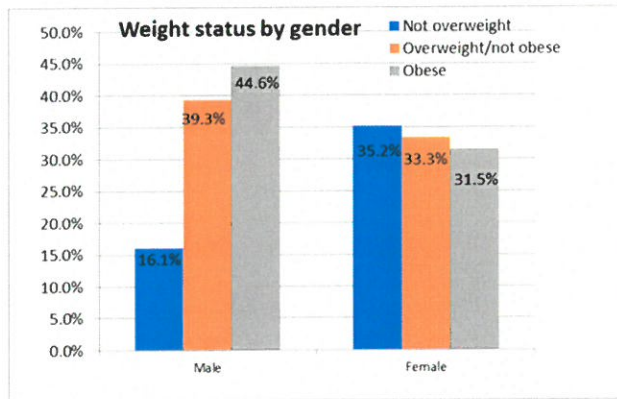
The percentage of individuals who are overweight or obese increases with age as shown in Figure 2. The data suggests that significant gains in changing population weight could be, in part, due to our working with mid-career age individuals.

Figure 2:



Males tend to be the heaviest while females weigh the least (13% more obese than females). (Figure 3). Survey respondents were asked to report their height and weight. From those data, a Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated.¹

Figure 3:



Participants were asked, “During the past 30 days, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activity or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?” Thirty-six percent of survey respondents in 2017 indicated “no” whereas in 2014 only 32% said no. The state average on this measure is approximately 18%.^{1,2} (Figure 4)

Figure 4:



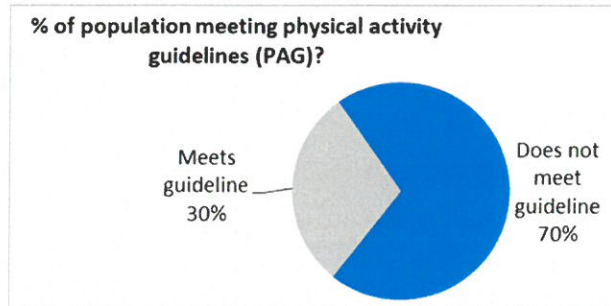
Attainment of Physical Activity Guidelines (PAG) were assessed. This was achieved through a series of questions examining the extent of moderate physical activity (30 minutes/day for /5+ days) and vigorous physical activity (20 minutes a day for 3+ days).³ (Figure 5)

¹ <https://stateofobesity.org/physical-inactivity/>

² https://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpao_dtm/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DNPAO_DTM.ExploreByLocation&rdRequestForwarding=Form

³ Moderate exercises are defined as those that “cause only light sweating and a small increase in breathing or heart rate, and vigorous are those that “cause heavy sweating and a large increase in breathing or heart rate. To learn more see <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/summary.aspx>

Figure 5:

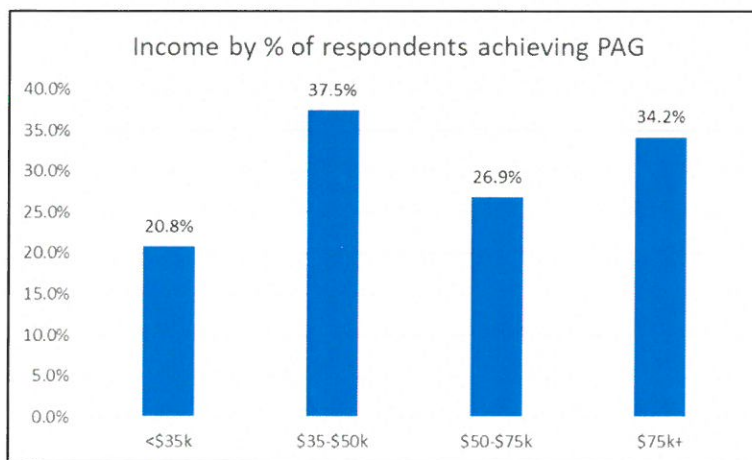


Of the 70% who did not get the recommended levels of physical activity, 71% cited weather, while 61% cited time as their biggest barrier. Other stated factors: poor maintenance of sidewalks or walking paths, fear of falling, injury or disability, traffic, no sidewalks or walking paths, long term illness.

Across Kittson County, only an estimated 30% of individuals are getting their recommended levels of physical activity. This is far lower than the average rate of 55% of all Minnesotans. No noteworthy distinctions were found between education of respondents and PAG achievement. However, males tended to meet PAG more than females (34% vs. 26%), and 45.5% of those aged 34 or less achieved PAG compared to 25% of individuals aged 35+. Income also appeared to influence PAG achievement (See Figure 6).

In sum, the attainment of PAG in Kittson County had little relationship to education level, but younger individuals age 34 or less and males tended to achieve PAG more often.

Figure 6:

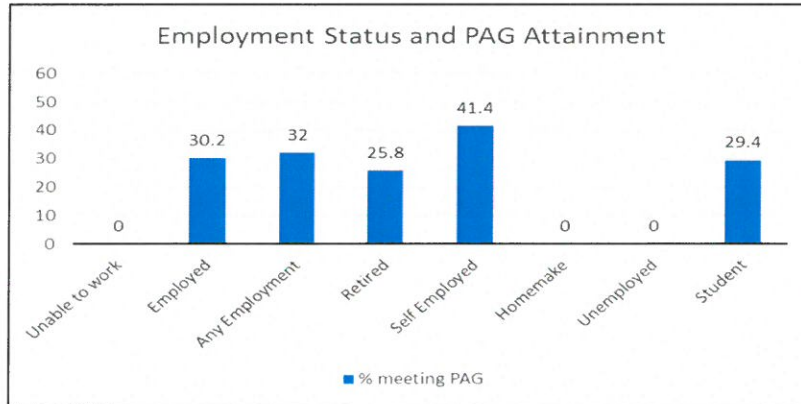


The Minnesota average PAG is around 55%. While the chart if Figure 7 shows that Kittson County’s PAG attainment is around 30% on average.

Workplace wellness initiatives are popular efforts, and as the data in Figure 7 suggest they are focused on a population that is lower in their attainment of Physical Activity Guidelines relative to other demographic groups

(e.g. students, unemployed, homemakers). We need to continue to focus resources on areas that develop and encourage physical activity across working adult populations in workplace settings.

Figure 7:



Tobacco Use:

Approximately 8.6% of all adults in Kittson County are smokers. This is .6% higher than the 8% found three years previously. Across the region, tobacco use rates have decreased substantially and it suggests that significant positive impacts may be the result of numerous prevention efforts. Because of low frequency counts in each cell, it was difficult to determine demographic characteristics of smokers in Kittson County. The available data suggest that similar to other surrounding counties, current smokers are split equally across genders but differ significantly by income and education. Individuals with less than \$34,000 annual household income have nearly three times the rate of smoking compared to households earning \$75k+ (5% vs. 15%). In addition, very few individuals with 4-year degrees smoke compared to all other educational demographic groups, which smoked at double or triple the rate.

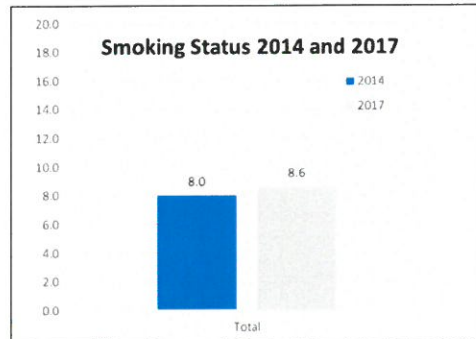
In the five-county region, 37% of current smokers indicated that during the past 12 months they had stopped smoking for one day or longer because they were trying to quit. This is down from 45.7% of smokers from 2014. It is unclear why this might be the case.

Table 1

| | Quin CHB Region | Marshall County | Kittson County | Pennington County | Red Lake County | Roseau County | MN State |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| Current smokers 2014 | 14.9 | 11.6 | 8.0 | 13.5 | 15.5 | 20.7 | 14.1 |
| Current smokers 2017 | 9.4 | 9.6 | 8.6 | 8.2 | 9.5 | 10.5 | 14.1* |
| Net increase/decrease | -5.5 | -2.0 | +6 | -5.3 | -6.5 | -10.2 | -- |

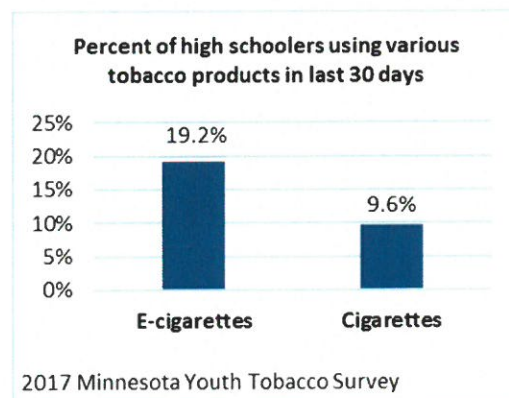
Results also found that 9% of adults are smokeless tobacco users, most of whom are males. E-cigarette use is even lower at somewhere around 1% or less. Statewide surveys estimate adult e-cigarette use in Minnesota at 6%⁴. Northwest Minnesota estimates range from 2-6% from the 2014 MN Adult Tobacco Survey.⁵

Figure 7:



While the data for use of e-cigarette use is 2 years old, the school districts in our county have noticed a significant increase in the use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices. At our community partners meeting, two of the three superintendents attended and feel that nearly 100% of their students are either vaping regularly or have tried vaping. While we do not currently have accurate data to back up their suspicions, there is growing concern at the Minnesota Department of Health and across the nation on the rapidly increasing amounts of vaping being done by our youth. The superintendents feel that the students do not understand what they are inhaling into the bodies when they vape. Because there is can be no smoke with vaping, it is hard to detect the use of vaping devices in the school. Figure 8 shows 2017 tobacco product data for the state of Minnesota.

Figure 8:



⁴ <http://www.health.state.mn.us/ecigarettes>

*data for 2017 not yet available.

⁵ http://www.mntobacco.nonprofitoffice.com/vertical/Sites/%7B988CF811-1678-459A-A9CE-34BD4C0D8B40%7D/uploads/MATS_2014_Technical_Report_Final_2015-01-21.pdf

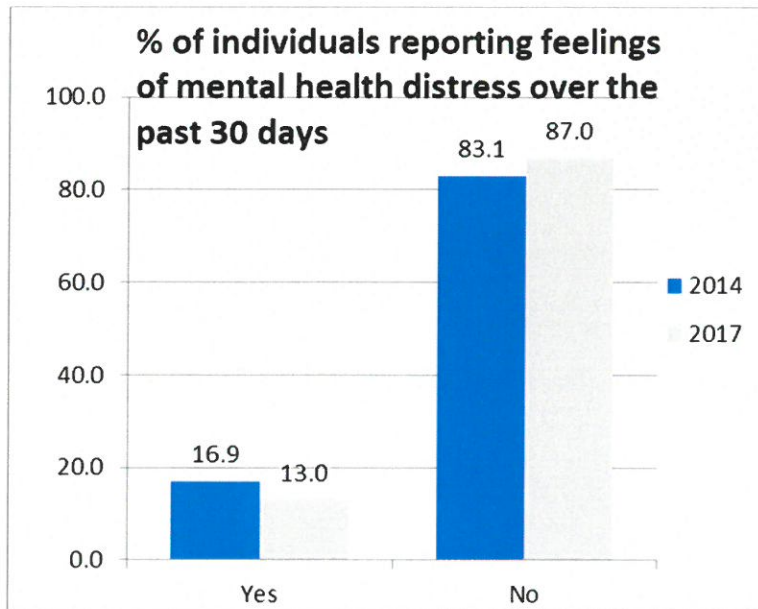
The most recent county data comes from the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, where students were asked about their use of e-cigarettes in the last 30 days. 2% of 8th grade students stated they had used; 9% of 9th grade students and 17% of 11th grade students had used e-cigarettes or hookah in the past 30 days.

Mental Health:

- Approximately 6.7% of individuals living in Kittson County self-report having Fair or Poor general mental health at the time of the survey.
- **26% have been told at some point in their lives by a healthcare professional that they have a mental health concern.**
- 12% have delayed getting mental health treatment when it was needed.
 - Of this group, the delay occurred for a variety of reasons, including perceived lack of severity (39%), cost (26.4%), fear of getting treatment (9.5%), ‘did not know where to go’ (4.5%), and ‘other’, which was a full 25%.

Nearly 13% of respondents expressed feelings of hopelessness, anxiety or loss of interest in things they used to enjoy over the past 30 days.

Figure 9



The medical practitioners and clinic staff describe long waits to refer residents into mental health services. They also cite barriers of transportation and mileage to get to mental health services. Mental Health centers are 60-75 miles from our community and serve very large populations. These challenges increase with our winter weather and poor driving conditions.



While Kittson Healthcare has arranged for some mental health counseling services from one of our regional providers, Northwest Mental Health Center of Crookston, there can still be a 2-3 month wait for an appointment. We need to provide more mental health services closer to home for our adults and youth.

Increasing mental health services is also part of Kittson Healthcare's Strategic Plan that was completed by administration, managers and board members in October 2017.

Suicide:

Farming is the main industry in Kittson County. Farming is stressful. So many factors to this occupation are outside of the farmer's control, i.e. market prices, increasing expenses, expensive equipment and maintenance and weather. Farmers traditionally have higher suicide rates than most other occupations. People working in farming, fishing and forestry were 3.4 times more likely than other American workers to die by suicide on the job, according to a 2016 study by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Suicide statistics for Kittson County from the Minnesota Department of Health show Kittson County recording a suicide each year from 2013 – 2017. For a county of 4300 people, that feels like a higher percentage. Out of the 87 counties in Minnesota over the same period, Kittson County has had more suicides than Cook, Grant, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Red Lake, Stevens, Swift and Traverse Counties.

Suicides are preventable, mental illness is treatable and recovery is possible.

According to the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, when asked, "Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by feeling down, depressed or hopeless?" 18% of 8th grade students said between more than half the days and nearly every day. 24% of 9th grade students had the same response, while 15% of 11th grade students were feeling down, depressed or hopeless.

When students were asked about self-inflicted injury, suicidal thoughts and suicidal behaviors the students answered as follows:

Have you ever seriously considered attempting suicide? 15% of 8th and 9th grade students said they had during the last year. 9% of 11th grade students stated they had during the last year. While 10% of 8th grade students, 15% of 9th grade students and 13% of 11th grade students admitted that they had considered suicide over a year ago.

When asked if they had actually ever attempted suicide, 3% of 9th grade students stated that they had more than a year ago, while 2% of 11th grade students said that they had attempted during the last year and 2% had attempted more than a year ago.

Progress on the 2016 Community Needs Assessment Implementation Plan and Strategies:

Kittson Healthcare is a 15-bed critical access hospital located in the far northwest corner of Minnesota. The county borders Canada and North Dakota. The community of Kittson County strongly desires the maintenance of this facility with their expressed desire for the continuation of the emergency room, clinical services, acute



care and pharmacy services. In August 2019, Kittson Healthcare opened a pharmacy next to the medical clinic and will continue to offer pharmacy services to the residents of this service area upon the retirement of our lone pharmacist in the county after nearly 60 years of service.

The city of Hallock lost its lone dentist in 2017 and while dental services have not been secured for the city of Hallock, there continues to be dental services provided by two dentists in Karlstad, Minnesota, 30 miles from Hallock and located in the southeast corner of Kittson County.

In promoting healthy behaviors and lifestyles, two of our public health nurses have been trained in the CDC's evidence-based curriculum, "I Can Prevent Diabetes". The first yearlong course is just being completed. These classes will continue to be offered to area citizens.

We will continue to educate and address smoking and tobacco use in our area as well as disseminate and educate our patients on heart disease and cancer.

In the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, when the students were asked about their seat belt use, 60% of 11th grade students said they used their seatbelts always, while 32% of 9th grade students said they used their seatbelts always. This is a marked improvement from the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey for Kittson County, 28% of 12 and 9th grade students said that they wore they always wore a seatbelt.

Focus Group Opinions

Upon review of all of the quantitative and qualitative data available to Kittson County, the focus group developed the top 10 health care issues and concerns.

The top 10 issues identified were:

- Transportation and access to healthcare services
- Mental health services
- Vaping/tobacco use
- Obesity
- Continued access to healthcare services in the "community" of Kittson County
- Increase specialty services in our clinics
- Elder Care and services needed to "age in place"
- Opioid Abuse
- Social Media education to students and parents (bullying, trafficking)
- Containment of healthcare costs

Upon review of the 10 top issues identified, Kittson Healthcare will the following priority areas to work on over the next 3 years.



Priority 1: Mental Health Services

Goal: Increase Mental Health Services to our service area to include both adults and youth services.

Goal: Increase PHQ-9 assessments on both adults and youth in our medical clinics to help identify mental health concerns.

Timeframe: Fall/Spring, 2019-2020 and ongoing

Priority 2: Suicide Prevention and Education

Goal: Provide suicide education and support to our providers, frontline nursing staff and to our community.

Timeframe: Fall/Spring of 2019-2020

Priority 3: Vaping and Tobacco Use

Goal: Provide education and support to schools' staff and students (including parents and community) regarding the dangers and long-term effects of vaping and tobacco use.

Goal: Provide smoking cessation support through our medical clinics in Hallock and Karlstad

Timeframe: Fall/Spring, 2019-2020 and ongoing

Priority 4: Obesity

Goal: Promote healthy lifestyles through public education.

Goal: Collaborate with the schools to encourage healthy life styles in our youth.

Goal: Collaborate with workplaces to encourage and educate employees about the benefits of healthy behaviors and lifestyles.

Timeframe: Fall/Spring, 2019-2020 and ongoing

Public input is always welcome. Those wishing to provide feedback or offer opinions on this assessment and our Implementation strategies are welcome to contact Kittson Healthcare.

Evaluation of Impact

Kittson Healthcare will continually monitor the statistical reports for Kittson County as they become available so that we can evaluate the impact of our Implementation Plan and the benefits to the community that we serve. Progress and improvement of statistical information can be a very slow process as is the changing of human behavior. To determine the impact of our Implementation Plans, we will monitor use of mental health services that we plan to add and seek information from school staff regarding the amount of vaping they are seeing with their students.

Changing statistics of obesity will be more challenging as adults that are overweight or obese often pass down their patterns of eating and physical activity to their children. This will take collaboration between the schools, the worksites in the county and Kittson Healthcare.



Resources:

Kittson Healthcare's Strategic Plan, 2017

Minnesota Student Survey, Kittson County, September 2016

U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Kittson County

Quality of Life Survey Data, Kittson County

Minnesota Department of Health, Suicide in Minnesota, 1999-2017



EvaluationGroup, LLC

**Quin Community
Health Services**

**2017
NORTHWEST REGION
ADULT HEALTH BEHAVIOR SURVEY SUMMARY**

Kittson County Report

April
2018

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Executive Summary

- Weight** 73.8% of all individuals residing in Kittson County are considered either overweight (33.2%) or obese (40.6%).
- 74.9% of all individuals residing in Kittson County are considered either overweight (40.6%) or obese (34.3%) this is much higher than the state average of 64.5% (36.7% overweight; 27.8%, obese).
 - The percentage of individuals who are overweight or obese increases with age
 - Males are more obese than females.
- Physical Activity** Across Kittson County only an estimated 30% of individuals are getting their recommended levels of physical activity, far lower than the state rate of 55%.
- Males tended to meet Physical Activity Guidelines more than females (34% vs. 26%)
 - 45.5% of those age less than 34 achieved PAG compared to 25% age 35+.
 - Lack of time is cited by 61% of respondents as the second largest barrier to getting more exercise after adverse weather (71%) and lack of public facilities available when they want to use them (30%).
- Fruit/Veg** Two-thirds of the population in Kittson County consume adequate amounts of nutritious food.
- The problem may be in consuming too many calories, not a lack of nutritious food.
 - Both fruits and vegetables are consumed at generally similar rates with vegetables having a slight edge.
- Tobacco** Approximately 8.6% of all adults in Kittson County are smokers.
- This is 0.6% higher than 8% found three years previously but is still the lowest rate in the Quin CHB region.
 - Because of low frequency counts in each cell, it was difficult to determine demographic characteristics of smokers in Kittson County.
 - Individuals with less than \$34,000 annual household income have nearly three times the rate of smoking compared to households earning \$75k+ (5% vs. 15%).
 - In addition, very few individuals with 4-year degrees smoke compared to all other educational demographic groups, which smoked at double or triple the rate.
- Alcohol** The percentages of individuals that report drinking at least once/past 30 days was 68.5%, with males drinking at a slightly higher rate (74% vs 64% female).
- 76% of individuals < 55 y/o reported drinking versus 61% for all other age groups.
 - 92% of individuals from higher income households (>\$75k) reported drinking over the past 30 days compared to 54% of those earning \$34k or less.

Mental Health

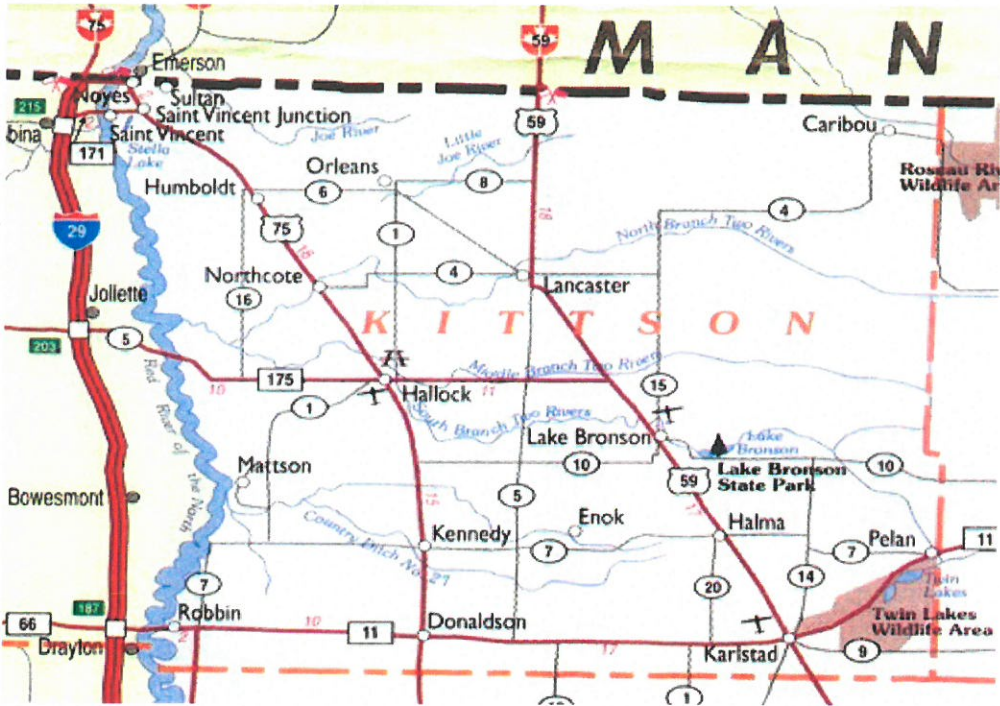
26% of respondents had been told by a healthcare professional that they had a mental health concern at some point in their lives.

- Over the past 30 days, 13% of respondents expressed feelings of hopelessness, anxiety or loss of interest in things they used to enjoy.

Recommendations

- Health planners should continue to focus resources on areas that develop and encourage physical activity across working adult populations.
- Prevention efforts need to help people find time in their day to get some physical activity.
 - Assist in structuring environments to enhance physical activity.
- Track binge drinking as in the 2013 survey.

Kittson County, Minnesota, Geographic Location



County location in the state of Minnesota:

