



COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

The La Crosse County Health Department completes a Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan every 5 years. The health assessment identifies the most pressing health concerns in La Crosse County by looking at data and listening to our residents. The improvement plan puts together action steps to address those health concerns.

La Crosse County residents and community partners participated in the assessment through key informant interviews, forums, and a community-wide survey. Community conversations shed light on health equity issues and framed the story that highlights the lived experience of our residents.

Over 300 residents shared their input about what health issues are the most important to address. The Health Department and community partners will focus our time and efforts on the top 3 health priorities for La Crosse County.

Top 3 Health Priorities for La Crosse County

Behavioral Health

Mental Health
Substance Use
Suicide

Healthy Environment

Safe Housing
Food
Physical Activity

Access to Care

Health Care
Mental Health Care
Dental Care
Substance Use Treatment



What affects our health?

Health equity is when everyone has a fair and just opportunity to achieve a healthy life. How someone experiences health can depend on different factors. These differences can and do lead to serious health outcomes. Factors that can change health equity in our communities:

- Education
- Access to healthy foods
- Access to physical activity
- Clean air and water
- Violence
- Racism
- Safe and affordable housing
- Safe neighborhoods
- Access to transportation
- Access to quality health care

The way a community is built can impact health on a large scale. How a community is built often influences health more than the choices or behaviors of individual people.

See the example below to understand more about how factors can change a person's living situation.

GETTING TO THE STORE

Family A on Main Street



- Owns a car
- 10 minutes to grocery store by car
- Grocery store has more options for fresh and affordable food
- Carry more food in car

Family B on Main Street




- Needs to use public transportation
- 45 minutes to grocery store by bus
- Convenience store is closer but has less affordable and fresh foods
- Can only carry some food on bus

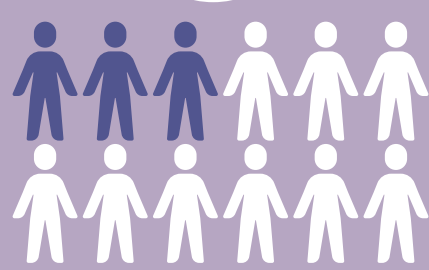
Where we live and how we get around can make it easier or harder to get healthy foods, medical care, and physical activity.

Behavioral Health: Substance Use


Substance Use in La Crosse County looks like...



over 1/4 of cancer deaths in La Crosse County are connected to tobacco use ²



26% of adults in La Crosse County drink excessively ¹



64.9 per 100,000 ER visits for opioid overdose ³

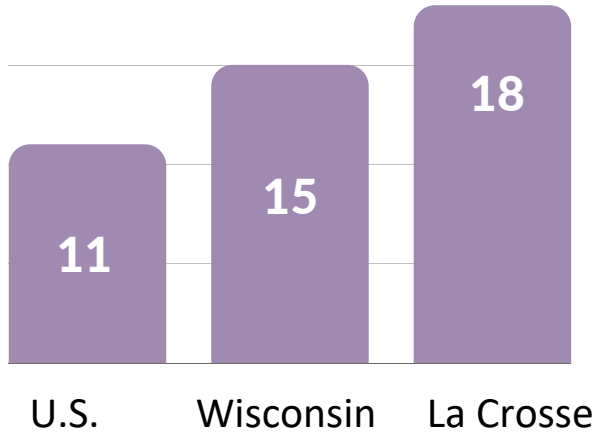
HEALTH EQUITY

Substance use can affect anyone. Mental health, community factors, and social connection with others can impact substance use and access to recovery services.



Suicide rates in La Crosse are higher compared to Wisconsin and the U.S. overall ⁴

All rates per 100,000 people



Factors that impact mental health can also impact substance use

MENTAL HEALTH IN LA CROSSE COUNTY

18.5% of adults & 20% of kids



have been diagnosed with a mental illness ⁵

AND



1/2 of adults

&

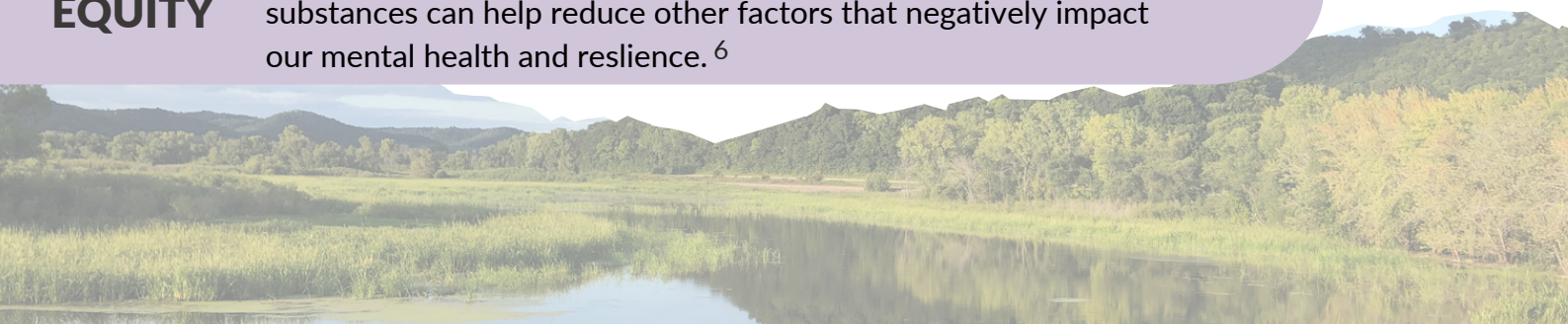


1/3 of kids

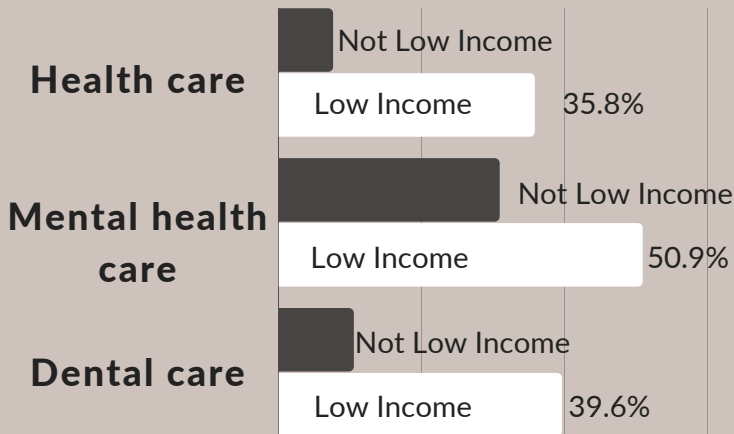
diagnosed with a mental illness are not accessing treatment. ⁵

HEALTH EQUITY

Other health, behavior, and environmental factors can impact mental health. Access to medical care, safe housing, and not using substances can help reduce other factors that negatively impact our mental health and resilience. ⁶



Residents report poor access to care:



La Crosse County residents with low-income report less access to general health, mental health, and dental health care services than those with higher income.⁷



Mental health, treatment for substance use, and dental health services have a treatment gap in La Crosse County.⁴



7 of every 10 adults with substance use disorders are unable to access treatment services.⁴



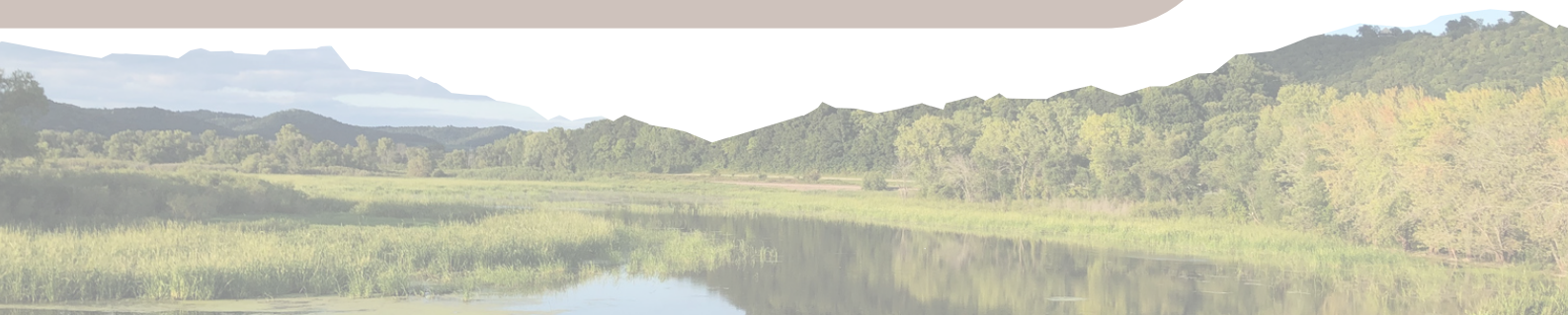
46% of adults living with low income have seen a dentist in the past year compared to 75% of all adults.⁹



15% of adults delayed dental care in the past year specifically due to cost.⁹

HEALTH EQUITY

Cost of services, mistrust in the health system, availability of care, and a lack of culturally diverse providers and staff in the health system impacts access to care in La Crosse County.⁶





11% of older adults & 19% of low income residents report low access to food. Older adult and low-income residents are less likely to have access to healthy foods.⁸

Almost 1/4 of La Crosse County residents report low or no physical activity. Connectivity from where people live to their jobs, healthcare, food, and other resources can increase physical activity and active transportation.⁴



12% of La Crosse County residents are impacted by severe housing cost burden. The constant strain on finances due to housing, can lead to food insecurity and other hardships that can last for years.⁷

HEALTH EQUITY

“When the majority of a paycheck goes toward the rent or mortgage, it makes it hard to afford doctor visits, healthy foods, utility bills, and reliable transportation to work or school. This can, in turn, lead to increased stress levels and emotional strain.”



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