

Health Priority Area

Prevent Chronic Diseases

OVERVIEW

Chronic diseases typically develop in middle age after prolonged exposure to unhealthy lifestyle factors including tobacco use, physical inactivity, excessive alcohol use, and poor nutrition. Health behaviors, regular health visits and screenings are key to preventing chronic diseases.¹

In Madison County, chronic diseases (cancer, heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, stroke) account for four of the five leading causes of premature death (under 75 years). Lung cancer causes the majority of all cancer deaths.^{2,3}



CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Chronic conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and asthma can lead to chronic diseases. Madison County adults have high levels of asthma compared to New York State (NYS) (16% vs 10.1%).³

Education is important for managing of chronic conditions. Compared to 10.2% of NYS, only 2.6% of adults in Madison County with a chronic illness have taken a class to learn how to manage their condition.³

TOBACCO USE & VAPING

Tobacco use is recognized as the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.¹ In Madison County, 21% of adults are current smokers, compared to only 12.8% of NYS. The percent is higher among low-income adults (34.7%).³ The use of the vaping products (e-cigarettes) has also increased among county adults to 12% in 2021.⁶ While there is a downward trend in youth trying cigarettes, 43.3% of high school students in the county report trying vaping products.⁴

ROUTINE HEALTHCARE

Regular doctor visits and screenings can lower the risk for chronic conditions. About 89% of Madison County residents have a regular healthcare provider. The majority of county residents receive the recommended screenings for colorectal, breast, and cervical cancers (84.3%, 90.2%, 89.7% respectively).³

HEALTHY EATING & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Healthy eating and adequate physical activity lower the risk of developing a chronic condition and help to prevent early death.

Nearly 75% of Madison County residents live within reasonable distance to parks and recreational facilities. County residents of all ages (youth, adults, and older adults) report higher physical activity levels when compared to NYS residents.^{3,4}

Access to affordable, safe, and nutritious foods contribute to an individual's eating habits. About 90% of all Madison County residents report having access to a reliable source of food; yet only 67.3% of low-income adults report food security. This is slightly higher than low-income adults in NYS (55.8%).³ In terms of diet, more Madison County adults eat fruit and vegetables daily (76.1%) compared to NYS (71.9%).⁵ Nearly 34% of low-income residents drink at least one sugary beverage per day, which is slightly higher than NYS (31%).

Healthy eating and physical activity also play a role in an individual's weight. The percentage of adults who meet criteria for obesity (body mass index ≥ 30 kg/m²) in Madison County jumped from 28% in 2016 to 37.2% in 2018, and remains higher than NYS (27.9%). The percent of youth (0-17 years) who have a BMI higher than 30 has varied. In 2019, 20.3% of youth met these criteria.³

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In addition to ongoing efforts, the Community Health Improvement Plan process identified the following strategies to address Chronic Disease in Madison County (see page 2).

Work Plan: Goals & Interventions

GOAL #1:

Increase access, for people of all ages and abilities, to indoor and outdoor places for physical activity.

INTERVENTIONS

The **Madison County Rural Health Council (MCRHC)** will expand the Monday Mile Program in Madison County. The program is a fun way to achieve fitness goals by getting out to walk a mile. There are currently 14 outdoor and 3 indoor routes.

MCRHC will expand the Walk with a Doc series, which provides physical activity, outdoor time, social connection, and health education on various topics like chronic disease and mental health.

INTERVENTION

The **Madison County Department of Health (MCDOH)** will create a county-wide program to address healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco use. The approach will be modeled after the 3-4-50 Framework developed by the Oxford Health Alliance.

GOAL #2:

Reduce obesity and the risk of chronic diseases.

GOAL #3:

In the community setting, improve self-management skills for individuals with chronic diseases.

INTERVENTIONS

MCDOH has implemented a Healthy Homes Program for Madison County residents. The program provides free in-home assessments, education, supplies, and referrals to address home hazards.

MCDOH will relaunch the Healthy Workforce Initiative targeted at improving employee health, reducing work-related deaths and injuries, and increasing worker productivity. The initiative models the NIOSH Total Worker Health program.

The **MCRHC** will seek funding to expand their Mobility Management Program with the goal of improving quality of life among older adults in Madison County by connecting them to social support and healthcare services via transportation services.

INTERVENTION

MCRHC plans to host the first annual Breast Cancer Awareness and Screening Event in 2023. The event will partner with community organizations to raise awareness and offer onsite breast cancer screenings to community members.

GOAL #4:

Increase cancer screening rates.

REFERENCES

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