

Proposed Areas of Focus: 2023
Milwaukee County Aging Advisory Council

Loneliness, Isolation, and Mental Health

Social isolation and loneliness significantly impacts older adults' health and well-being in terms of increasing rates of premature death, severity of illness, and dementia. Nationally, social isolation/loneliness affects an estimated quarter of the older adult (65+) population. (WI Institute for Healthy Aging)

The CDC report "The State of Mental Health and Aging in America" estimates that 20% of people 55+ have mental health concerns with depression being the most common. Quality of life issues as well as physical health consequences are the result. The report states, "depressive disorders are a widely under-recognized condition and often are untreated or undertreated among older adults."

Proposed Advisory Council strategy:

- Assess the incidence of loneliness, isolation, and mental health concerns among older adults in Milwaukee County, emphasizing racial differences.
 - Gain understanding of how current aging and mental health systems respond to these needs and identify barriers to resource utilization.
 - Develop recommendations for improvement in mental health service delivery that include metrics to assess impact of their implementation.
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Proposed Participants:

- Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services
- Milwaukee County APS/Elder Abuse – Dinah LaCaze
- Milwaukee County Dementia Care Specialist
- Representative of the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force
- Vital Voices for Mental Health
- Jewish Family Services – End of Life Counseling
- United Health Services / Granite Hills Hospital
- Milwaukee Health Department – Mental Health
- Wisconsin Taskforce on Isolation & Loneliness
- Mental Health Association of Wisconsin
- Peer Support Specialist
- Veteran's Administration – Behavioral Health

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Chronic Heart Disease Management

More than 1000 more Black adults than White adults die before age 60 each year in Milwaukee County due to racial health inequities. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for all adults, but it effects minority groups more than others. For example, 47% of Black adults have been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease, compared with 36% of white adults.

Minority groups also carry a heavier burden of heart disease risk factors. Hispanic women are more than twice as likely as white women to have diabetes. American Indians are three times more likely than whites to have diabetes.

Proposed Advisory Council strategy:

- Work with the Milwaukee Health Partnership to assess the prevalence of cardiovascular disease among people of color in Milwaukee County and collaborate on strategies to reduce racial disparities in disease prevalence;
- Develop strategies to improve participation in Evidence Based Health Promotion Programs that lower risk for cardiovascular disease offered through the AAA by persons of color in Milwaukee County;
- Develop recommendations to improve chronic disease prevention program delivery that include metrics to assess impact of their implementation.

Proposed Participants:

- Milwaukee County AAA Nutrition Program
- Milwaukee Health Care Partnership
- Milwaukee County AAA Wellness Program
- Milwaukee Health Services / 16th Street CHC (FOHC w program in cardiovascular health)
- American Heart Association
- Health Connections
- SHIP Counselor (Medicare Outreach)