

2025-2027 Community Health Implementation Plan



Bellin Health Oconto Hospital

Approved by the Bellin Health System Board of Directors on 9/11/24



Emplify Health and the Bellin Region

For well over a century, [Bellin Health](#), headquartered in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and [Gundersen Health System](#), headquartered in La Crosse, Wisconsin, have served their patients and communities with caring, expertise and a second-to-none focus on quality that make them their regions' premier health systems. In late 2022, they came together in a merger of equals, providing access to more resources and a broader network of services for the patients and communities they serve. In April 2024, Bellin and Gundersen Health System announced it is becoming [Emplify Health](#), a new name and brand to advance its commitment to patients and community. Both founded by community physicians, Bellin's and Gundersen's respective roots run deep.

History of Bellin

Bellin was founded in 1907 by Dr. Julius Bellin and is a community-owned, not-for-profit health system that has grown from a 15-bed house to a regional healthcare leader with a footprint that extends throughout Northeast Wisconsin and into the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, serving a market of nearly 650,000 people.

Its flagship campus in Green Bay, Wis. is home to Bellin Hospital, a 244-bed general medical and surgical hospital that routinely has received state and national awards for safety and quality of care. Just down the road, the 80-bed Bellin Psychiatric Center provides top-quality inpatient, outpatient and addiction treatment services for individuals from across the region.

And 30 minutes to the north, Bellin Health Oconto Hospital, a 10-bed critical access hospital, offers care close to home for patients outside the Green Bay metro area. Bellin is the area's leader in cardiac, orthopedics, sports medicine, digestive health, mental health and primary care medicine.

History of Gundersen

Dr. Adolf Gundersen began his practice on Pearl Street in downtown La Crosse in 1891. Lutheran Hospital opened in 1902, and Dr. Gundersen was the first medical director. In 1930, Dr. Gundersen and his sons, who were also physicians, moved their clinic to a new clinic adjacent to the hospital.

The Gundersen physicians had a lot of influence on Lutheran Hospital, putting their mark on the medical staff structure, the medical record keeping, and the importance of research, to name a few. In 1995 Gundersen Clinic and Lutheran Hospital – La Crosse formed Gundersen Lutheran, Inc., and in 2013 they changed the name to Gundersen Health System. Along with being a regional and national leader for integrated care and population health, Gundersen is also the first U.S. health system to achieve energy independence (October 2014).



Vision of Bellin and Gundersen

Bellin and Gundersen’s Vision is that, leading with love, the health system courageously commits to a future of healthy people and thriving communities. This commitment starts with the health system’s youngest patients and is underscored by efforts including the 2022 opening of Wisconsin’s first Family Integrated Neonatal Infant Care Unit (NICU) at Bellin Hospital, one of just a handful in the nation that offers an innovative “couplet care” model that allows mom and baby to start together and stay together after birth.

Bellin’s 29 primary care physician clinics further this vision, which also is bolstered by 88 Bellin Region on-site employer clinics that improve overall health and wellness while reducing healthcare costs for businesses. In the Gundersen Region, Bellin and Gundersen’s Vision is exemplified by more than 9,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 clinicians, serving 22 counties in western Wisconsin, southeastern Minnesota, and northeast Iowa.

Gundersen’s seven hospitals and 65 clinics see more than one million patient visits every year. Gundersen’s region includes a large multi-specialty group medical practice, teaching hospital, regional community clinics and hospitals, behavioral health services, vision centers, pharmacies and air and ground ambulances.

Commitment to the Community

All Bellin and Gundersen locations seek to provide patients and their loved ones care in the communities they know from people they trust. Bellin and Gundersen offer an unparalleled commitment to the community.

Bellin Community Partnerships

Bellin's longtime status as the official healthcare provider of the Green Bay Packers was enhanced with the 2017 opening of the Bellin Health Tiletown Sports Medicine & Orthopedics clinic in the Tiletown District just west of Lambeau Field. The Packers-Bellin partnership also includes the handicap-accessible Bellin Health gate at Lambeau, the Tiletown Wellness Race Series, and such initiatives as the Jordy Nelson men's health campaign, an annual training camp bike safety event and an array of charity events and initiatives held throughout the year.

Bellin also hosts one of the nation's largest 10K events, the Bellin Run, which brings walkers and runners of all ages and fitness levels to the streets of Green Bay in the spirit of health, wellness and community fun. The event, which draws more than 8,000 people a year, recently added a 5K offering and will celebrate its 49th anniversary in 2025.

Gundersen Community Partnerships

Gundersen's community involvement runs deep and wide, too. It is the only provider of inpatient mental health care in the La Crosse area, meeting the top need identified in the COMPASS Now needs assessment with holistic inpatient and outpatient mental health care. Gundersen has found success pairing identified patient needs and concerns – especially substance use, financial stability and safe, affordable housing – with community resources. Dedicated team members offer comfort and guide patients who seek support.

Gundersen also has positive, productive relationships with local school districts for student mentoring programs; local and regional elected officials and municipal staff for economic development and revitalization efforts; and community organizations large and small that receive funding through Gundersen's Community Contributions program.

Gundersen and the Gundersen Medical Foundation also host the annual Steppin' Out in Pink breast cancer research walk. This event draws about 4,000 participants and raises about \$300,000 every year for local breast cancer research.

Coming Together: New Name and New Brand as Emplify Health

From the beginning, Bellin and Gundersen knew they were stronger together — and their new name and brand, Emplify Health, only serves to underscore and advance that idea. As trusted, steady members of communities throughout Wisconsin, Northeast Iowa, Southeast Minnesota and Upper Michigan, they are building on robust legacies with an eye toward the future.

Drawn from “empathy,” defined as “feeling aware of another's emotions” and “amplify,” which means “increase,” Emplify is a new word created to reflect a united goal of increasing access, creating a culture of empathy and enhancing population health outcomes for the patients and communities Bellin and Gundersen serves. By unifying under one brand, the health system is aligning its teams and resources to provide the best possible care and experience for its patients and communities.

The full migration to Emplify Health is expected to take several years and is being thoughtfully carried out while honoring Bellin and Gundersen's legacy names and histories.

2025-2027 Community Health Implementation Plan

In 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA or the ACA) was passed. As part of this health care reform bill, not-for-profit hospitals are required to complete a Community Needs Assessment and a Community Health Implementation Plan that addresses the identified needs. Evidence of meeting these requirements is to be provided on a hospital's annual tax Form 990, Schedule H. The following document outlines Emplify Health- Bellin Health Oconto Hospital's Community Health Implementation Plan for 2025-2027.

The Oconto County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for 2023-2026 was completed by Healthy Oconto County, a collaborative steering committee composed of diverse community partners. All partners of this committee are dedicated to identifying health priorities to ensure that programs and resources are effectively targeting emerging local needs. The Oconto County CHNA and other related documents are posted [HERE](#). Documents will be available to the public through the Bellin Health libraries.

For questions or comments please contact Julie Bieber, VP Bellin Oconto Hospital and Clinics. Email brenda.rehberg@bellin.org

The table below lists the community health needs identified as priorities by the Healthy Oconto County collaborative, the top identified priorities in the remaining counties of the region, and the Emplify Health Population Health Priorities.

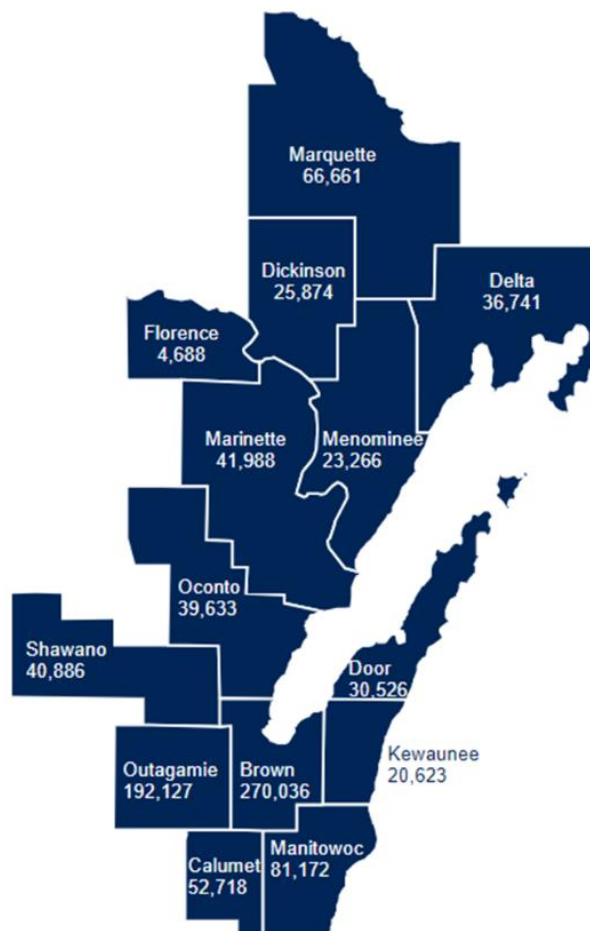
Healthy Oconto County Priorities 2023-2026	Remaining County Health Indicator Priorities of the Bellin Region	Population Health/Community Health Score Priorities
Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) Transportation	Mental Health Physical Activity and Nutrition Substance Misuse Housing and Homelessness Access to Healthcare Insurance Access and Cost Youth Vaping	Bright Beginnings % Healthy Birthweight Substance Free %Tobacco Free Optimal Weight % Healthy Weight Good Mental Health % with Good Mental Health
		Access to Healthy Food % with Food Security



Our implementation plan, including goals, tactics, resources, partners, and outcome measures, addresses the top priority needs identified from the Oconto County Community Health Needs Assessment. Study methods for the report included primary, secondary, qualitative, and quantitative data. A Community Health Survey collected primary data from Oconto County residents and provides an overview of how the community ranks health and social determinants of health (SDOH) priorities that impact their everyday lives.

Key Informant interviews collected qualitative data from subject-matter experts in the community. Secondary data was collected from local, state, and national health sources to supplement the primary data, allowing a comparison with other counties, as well as state and national benchmarks.

Details on the data collection process, community survey, and prioritization can be found within the Oconto Community Health Assessment document. Additional Emplify Health System population health priorities and goals are included when aligned with an Oconto Community Priority. The service region for Emplify Health-Bellin Health Region is noted in the map of Wisconsin and Michigan below.



Approval & Dissemination

The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment for Oconto County and the Bellin Health Oconto Hospital Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) were presented to the Bellin Health System Board of Directors and approved on 9/11/24. Progress is underway to implement the plan.

Identified Priority: Mental Health

Healthy Oconto County Goal: Promote optimal health and wellbeing for Oconto County by increasing connections, awareness, and access to resources. The following measures for Oconto County will stabilize or improve: Poor or Fair Health: 13%, Poor Physical Health Days 3.3, and Poor Mental Health Days 4.8 as indicated by [County Health Rankings and Roadmaps for Oconto County](#).

Emplify Health-Bellin Region Goal: Slow the rate of decline in healthy mental health in the Bellin Region population to 74.5% reported in 2027

Tactic	Resource (program)	Partnerships	Measure of Impact
Build Connections around Mental Wellbeing through community events, partnerships, volunteerism and positive health behaviors	Annual Men’s Event Bellin Oconto Fitness HER/HIM program Bellin Oconto Kids Triathlon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bellin Health - Bellin Oconto Fitness - HSHS St. Clare - Northlakes Community Clinic - Catholic Diocese of Green Bay - CESA 8 - NEWCAP, Inc. - Oconto County Dept. of Health and Human Services - Oconto County Sheriff’s Dept. - Oconto County Veteran’s Affairs - UW Extension, Marinette and Oconto Counties - Oconto County Schools - Tri-County United Way - Unity Recovery Services - Foundations Health and Wholeness - Homegrown Fitness 	<p>2 new programs to support Mental Health are established by 2027</p> <p>Expand existing 2024 programming participation by 20%.</p> <p>Increase the number of active community partnerships that engage in this work by 25% Baseline: 17; Goal 21</p>

<p>Create Awareness of the importance of mental health and reduce stigma around mental health challenges.</p>	<p>Stigma Reduction Campaigns</p> <p>National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)</p> <p>Oconto County Annual Men's event</p> <p>Bellin Health Kids Triathlon</p> <p>Bellin Oconto Fitness</p> <p>HER/HIM program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primal Eats - Bellin Health Kids Triathlon - Oconto MS & HS - Oconto & Marinette County Public Health - BPC - Other Community-Based Organizations 	<p>By 2027 Oconto and Marinette Counties will jointly develop and establish a local NAMI chapter.</p> <p>25% average increase in Kids Triathlon participation annually</p> <p>By 2026, a HER/HIM program will be established in each Oconto County school district</p>
<p>Increase Resources available to support community members to prevent and cope with mental health challenges.</p>	<p>Bellin Health</p> <p>Northlakes Community</p> <p>NAMI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tri-County United Way - 211/988/911 - Oconto County Law Enforcement - HSHS St. Clare 	<p>By 2027, an SDOH resource referral tracking system will be in place.</p>

Identified Priority: Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

Healthy Oconto County Goal: Reduce Alcohol Impaired driving deaths: baseline 35% (County Health Rankings data 2017-2021)

Emplify Health-Bellin Region Goal: Increase the percent of the Bellin Region population that is smoke-free to 85.8 % reported in 2027.

Tactic	Resource (program)	Partnerships	Measure of Impact
Community member's knowledge, attitudes, and skills reflect engagement in reducing and eliminating the stigma and harm associated with substance use.	Alliance for Wisconsin Youth/SUPST training Alcohol Compliance Checks County Alcohol Ordinances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CBO's - Oconto County Schools - Local Law Enforcement - Oconto County Substance Use Alliance for Change 	Increase number of trainings completed year over year.
Develop and promote referral for wellness coaching process for patients who use nicotine products	Population Health Clinicians Pharmacy Primary Care Business & Community Health Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WI & MI Quit Lines - School districts - Public Health Department - UW-Extension - CBO's - Employers - Green Bay Packers 	Increase % of Smoke Free individuals in Oconto County. Baseline- 83.4%; Source: www.cdc.gov/places Tobacco/Vape cessation program in place by 2026.
Drug Take Back Events	Bellin Health Oconto Hospital HSHS St. Clare Oconto County Sherriff's Dept. Pharmacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy Oconto County - Northlakes Community Health Center 	Increase amount in weight of unused prescription medication collected and disposed at drug take-back events. 2024 baseline: 198 lbs.
Additional tactics determined by Emplify Health Design and Implementation Teams		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Emplify Health Partners - CBO's 	Plan developed by 2025. Measures added based on plan.

Identified Priority: Transportation

Healthy Oconto County Goal: 95% of Oconto County patients with indicators of transportation barriers/risk who want assistance receive referral to a community resource.

Tactic	Resource (program)	Partnerships	Measure of Impact
Address gaps in community infrastructure through partnerships	Healthy Oconto County Oconto County Commission on Aging 211 FindHelp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oconto County Law Enforcement - 211 - Community Volunteers - Bellin Health Primary Care - Bellin Health Oconto Hospital - Employers - Schools - Northlakes Community Health Center 	<p>Establish sub-committee to work on financial infrastructure and sustainability by Q2 2025.</p> <p>By 2027 a SDOH resource referral tracking system will be in place.</p>
Work on bridging the gap of transportation in Oconto County by exploring new services, options and opportunities (Carepool; Uber Health; etc.)	Tri-County United Way NEWCAP, Inc. ADRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Volunteers - Faith-based organizations 	Partner with 1 new transportation service to establish as a resource in Oconto County by 2027.
<p>Policy advocacy and expansion</p> <p>Provide data, personal stories, and potential solutions to help officials understand the importance of investing in rural transportation infrastructure.</p> <p>Examine local ordinances pertaining to starting a rideshare program.</p>	TEDCOR Tri-County United Way External Affairs Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marinette County Public Health - Healthy Oconto County Steering Team 	Educate at least 1 elected official about rural transportation issues.

Monitoring Long Term Outcomes

An implementation plan developed in response to the community health needs assessment outlines specific goals and tactics to be taken in the next three years, 2025-2027. This improvement plan aligns with the Emplify Health Community Health Score. The Community Health Score was created to identify key metrics and monitor progress of our organization’s population health strategies which are the foundation of a primary Vision, “Leading with love, we courageously commit to a future of healthy people and thriving communities.” Common threads connect the community health needs assessment to the Community Health Score. Embedded within each metric are detailed goals, with many mirroring those of the improvement plan.

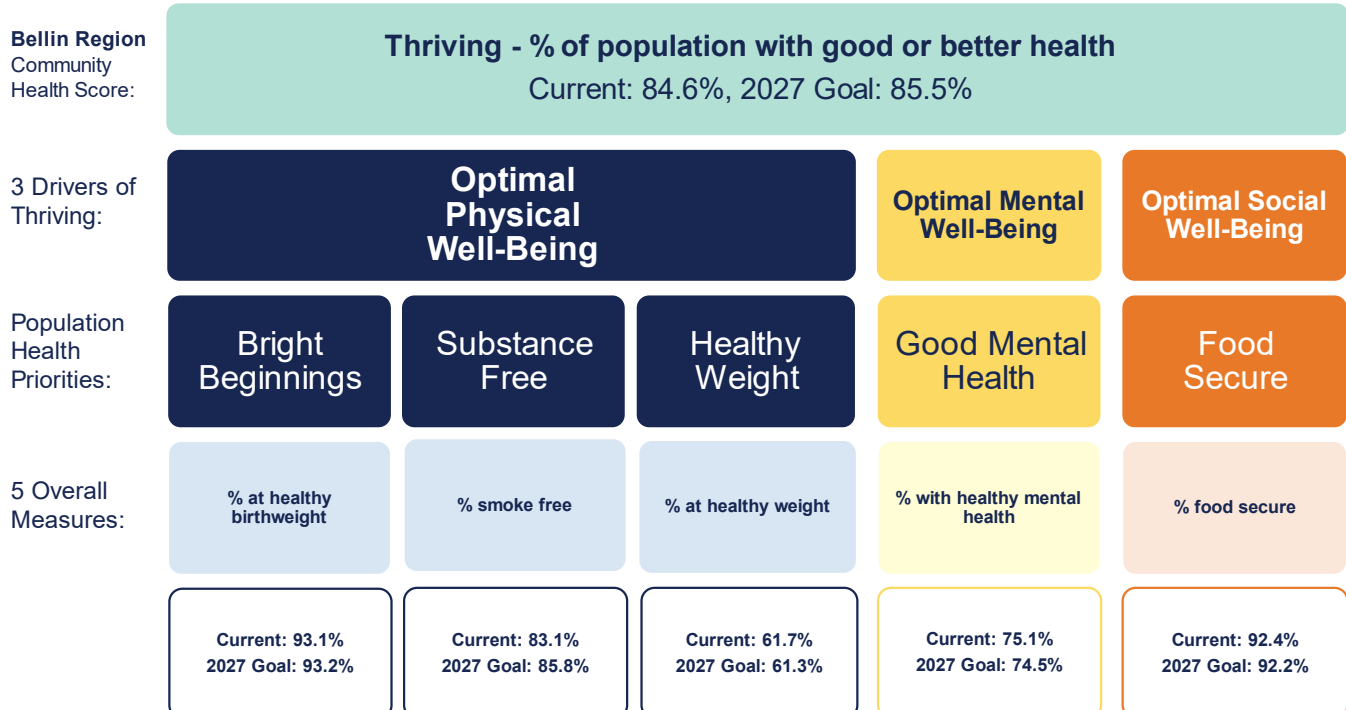
Community Health Score

Our Vision Statement: “Leading with love, we courageously commit to a future of healthy people and thriving communities,” is core to Emplify Health’s Community Health Score and reflects Thriving Communities. It is a population-level measure of health-related quality of life that is self-reported by adults living in the communities within our service area, gathered and reported by the Center for Disease Control. This measure is reflective of our vision statement.

We have defined a thriving community as one where all people of all generations can achieve optimal physical, mental, and social well-being and can grow, belong, and flourish throughout their lives.

The Thriving question is: “Would you say that in general your health is: excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?” Emplify Health established a 5-year goal to improve the overall percent of adults living in our communities, patients, and our employees that have “good or better” overall health.

Emplify Health will achieve this goal by working to achieve optimal physical, mental, and social well-being. Within these there are five identified bodies of work: better beginnings (healthy pregnancy & healthy children), substance free, optimal weight, good mental health and access to healthy food.



Community Health Score Metric Definitions

Thriving Health - % of adults who reported their health status as good, very good, or excellent health.

Healthy Birthweight - % of live births were at or above a healthy birthweight.

Smoke-free - % of adults who were smoke-free

Healthy Weight - % of adults who reported a BMI of 30 or less.

Good Mental Health - % of adults who reported never being told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that they had depressive disorder.

Food Secure - % of the population who report adequate access to food.

