

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



BACKGROUND

In partnership with The Social Consult, the YMCA of Metro Chicago completed a community assessment of four communities in Lake County, IL: Waukegan, Mundelein, Round Lake, and Great Lakes. The goal of the project is to understand how community members feel about COVID-19, and how their feelings impact their choices. Members of the Community Health Equity Network (CHEN) co-lead the project, coming up with the questions we asked and the ways we asked them. Funding for this project was made possible by the Office of Disease Control, through the Illinois Department of Public Health.

METHODS

Information for the community assessment was collected in November and December 2022. We used the following methods to understand how community members feel and act:

- Public data from sources like the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Census
- 29 interviews with community members
- 30 sets of responses to poll/access questions (yes/no questions about access to COVID-19 resources)

Note: Surveys were intentionally not used based on feedback from CHEN members.

RESULTS

COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Rates

- Waukegan, Mundelein, Round Lake, and Great Lakes have lower COVID-19 vaccination rates than the general region. These communities have also experienced higher rates of COVID-19 throughout the pandemic.

Access

- One-third of people who answered questions about access said they do not have access to at-home testing kits.
- Almost all people who reported problems accessing COVID-19 resources were from Waukegan.
- Doctors were considered to be the most trusted source of COVID-19 information.

Thoughts, Feelings and Perceptions

- COVID-19 created economic challenges for many community members. Some faced job loss, reduced wages, and general economic uncertainty.
- Community members continue to feel the negative social and emotional impacts of COVID-19 in their every day lives.

Other Key Health Conditions

- Community members listed mental health, obesity, and diabetes as the other major health issues in their community.



The full report can be accessed at ymcachicago.org/covid19support or by scanning the QR code. Questions about the YMCA Community Assessment? Contact Kelsey Barnick at kbarnick@ymcachicago.org.

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a list of key recommendations based on the information we reviewed in the community assessment. The complete list of recommendations can be found in the full report.

TO INCREASE COVID-19 VACCINATION CONFIDENCE AND UPTAKE:

Testing

- Distribute at-home tests in targeted North zip codes, with specific focus on Waukegan.
- Increase access to testing in the western part of Mundelein and southern part of Round Lake.

Communication

- Create an open space for conversation between vaccinated and unvaccinated community members.
- Communicate to non-English speaking populations in Region 9 target communities. Focus on Spanish and Slavic speaking communities and the Waukegan community in particular.
- Figure out how to get accurate vaccination and testing data from Great Lakes.

Vaccination

- Encourage people getting their boosters to bring not fully vaccinated friends and family with them.
- Do outreach at unemployment and cash benefit offices to reach unvaccinated community members.
- Increase vaccination for white and 18-49 year old populations in all target communities. This will help close the biggest vaccination gaps.
- In Waukegan, focus on vaccination efforts for the Black population. They face an elevated death rate in Lake County and low vaccination rates.
- In Mundelein, focus on vaccination interventions for Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and female populations.

TO ADDRESS OTHER HEALTH CONDITIONS:

- Find ways to understand how COVID-19 has affected mental health. Come up with strategies to help affected community members.
- Work with health care partners, funders, and CHEN to come up with ways to target diabetes and obesity.
- Find ways to understand the impact of COVID-19 on youth social and emotional health. Come up with strategies to support youth and families.



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