

North Central Region: Mason, Oceana, Lake, Newaygo, Mecosta, Osceola, Isabella, Clare, Gladwin, and Arenac counties

Assessment Event Date: April 20th, 2021 via Zoom

Forces of Change Assessment:

The Forces of Change Assessment aims to answer two questions:

- What is occurring or might occur that affects the health and wellbeing of our community?
- What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?

Forces of change are trends, factors, and events *outside of our control* that may influence the health of our community or the system of organizations supporting the community, both in the recent past and the foreseeable future.

- **TRENDS** are patterns over time, such as migration in and out of a community or a growing disillusionment with government.
- **FACTORS** are discrete elements, such as a community’s large ethnic population, an urban setting, or a jurisdiction’s proximity to a major waterway.
- **EVENTS** are one-time occurrences, such as a natural disaster or the passage of new legislation.

Threats posed to the health and wellbeing of our community

Opportunities created for the health and wellbeing of our community

Most Powerful Forces: Broadband, Mental Health & Substance Misuse, Affordable Housing, Provider Shortage, Telehealth, Rurality, Diversity & Inclusion, Misinformation & Mistrust, ALICE population

Topic Area	Top Forces of Change	Threats & Opportunities
Government Leadership	Trust in Government	Threats: Pervasive polarization hinders improvements, misinformation is spread, and integrity is lost in leaders therefore people don’t follow guidance; no middle ground equals no progress
	Inability to flex	Threats: Rural communities are left out on all levels – including financial & programmatic; flexible, unique problem solving is taken away; people are unable to improve their situations when there are multiple layers of policy/bureaucracy; one size does not fit all; government policy interferes with multi-sector systems level work -ie HIPAA, FERPA are barriers to cross-sector collaboration Opportunities: Boots on the ground/ hands-on approach can be opportunity to target interventions locally; local leaders know their population and what they need so ability to flex funding or policy could lead to improvements; cross-sector alignment of priorities and work will eliminate duplication, streamline efforts and result in increased services
	Diversity & Inclusion	Threats: When everyone in leadership looks the same then there is no representation of age, gender, race, experience & socioeconomic status; lack of diversity limits progress of new ideas and we lose the voice of unique communities/culture/history Opportunities: More voices at the table expands opportunities for the underserved communities and those with limited power to influence change; improved quality of life & health for those at greatest risk; resident voice would provide real solutions to barriers the rest of us don’t see
Government Budgets/Spending Priorities	Political Agendas & Influences	Threats: Lack of funding; changes in policies; reduction in affordable services; changes in leadership at the national and state level; term limits for legislators—barriers to engagement and need for education; some are not interested in pursuing our goals and needs Opportunities: Grant opportunities like Healthy Heart or Fit for You; changes in policies; restructuring platforms like when MDHHS merged Community Mental Health; changes in leadership at the national and state level
	Demographics of the Region: rural nature, aging population, low income,	Threats: Lack of funding; lack of services; resource reduction; education on health and well-being; preparing for wave of older population and their increased needs for housing and in-home help; smaller voice for new policies

	COVID-19 Pandemic	<p>Opportunities: Collaboration of community partners; innovative programs like Ever Promise Plus (2-year degree)</p> <p>Threats: Lack of funding and financial strain; priority overall-everything else goes by the wayside; patients are reluctant to visit doctor's offices</p> <p>Opportunities: Planning for the future (if similar event, preparations are more current); relief to working families (day care)</p>
Sufficient Healthcare Workforce	<p>Broadband & Telehealth</p> <p>Attracting Healthcare Professionals in Rural Areas</p> <p>Severe Shortage of Mental Healthcare Providers</p>	<p>Threats: Limits access to healthcare; limits the ability to work from home; limits the ability to participate in online schooling; financial strain of cost of broadband</p> <p>Opportunities: Create the possibility of being able to work from home; provides opportunity to increase access to healthcare; allows some students to participate in school virtually; increased opportunities for communication</p> <p>Threats: Creates access issues; people may have to travel great distances to access healthcare</p> <p>Opportunities: People may want to move to Northern Michigan vs Homegrown talent - keep our residents from moving out of the area; grants available to train local residents; Mi LEAP program funding available; Dept. of Labor and Economic Opportunity trainings available</p> <p>Threats: People have to travel to access mental healthcare; not a lot of private providers for people that don't qualify for CMH; increase in suicides and overall decline in mental health; increase in substance use disorders; shortage of inpatient beds; people with mental illness end up in the jail system; privatization of mental health system</p> <p>Opportunities: Grant from the State to expand services; jail diversion grant – training for law enforcement; tuition assistance and student loan forgiveness opportunities</p>
Access to Health Services	<p>Rurality</p> <p>COVID-19 impact on substance use & poverty</p> <p>Provider Access & Affordability of Care</p>	<p>Threats: Continues to widen access gap; difficulty with transportation; difficulty with broadband; increased need for telehealth</p> <p>Opportunities: More discussion on policy related to broadband; services needed region-wide – opportunity for continued partnership and investment</p> <p>Threats: Misinformation creating division; restrictions have widened gap for those who need it the most</p> <p>Opportunities: Engaging conversations surrounding improvement in language, inclusion, equity</p> <p>Threats: Poor health outcomes due to limited preventive care; increased difficulty with transportation; insurances changing – difficulty of high deductible plans; difficulty in recruiting providers to rural areas</p> <p>Opportunities: Some providers may want to move to more rural areas due to COVID; need to develop more "Grow Your Own" programs (foster local talent); opportunity for more discussion surrounding reimbursement</p>
Economic Environment	<p>Broadband access</p> <p>Political Administration Changes</p> <p>Behavioral Health Issues on Employment</p>	<p>Threats: Lack of access to resources; DHHS different online apps; lack of information, when and where would you get it other than online; telehealth increase; unreliable broadband can limit access to telehealth opportunities; expensive, unreliable, unavailable</p> <p>Opportunities: If available – faster access to information; access to patients, access to support resources, Businesses would be able to expand, would be on the map more for attraction projects</p> <p>Threats: Racial issues – safety of various communities; uncertainty within people; mistrust of official information – ex: COVID vaccine and information from the political divide; access to affordable health care; current administration focus; mistrust, financial support, racial tensions, affordable health care, access to broadband, current administration priorities</p> <p>Opportunities: Government funding – the amount of dollars coming to local municipalities could lead to lasting impactful changes if used wisely; current administration focus</p> <p>Threats: Mental Health and substance use disorder impacts employee's ability to get to work and cost of healthcare to employees; utilization cost can go up for employees and employers, Negative impact on labor force participation rate; low unemployment and talent retention; MH and SUD barriers; unintended consequences of unemployment benefits; student well-being; long term impacts</p>

		<p>Opportunities: Easier to talk about Behavioral Health – not as “taboo” to talk about it; increase focus on employees’ mental health as well as if they are physically sick; easier to find self-care resources and mental health diagnosis information online; additional funding for schools (31N funding) for increase school counseling</p>
Access to Social Services	<p>Insufficient # of Providers</p> <p>Affordable housing</p> <p>Technology Gap</p>	<p>Threats: People continue to fall behind with their health</p> <p>Opportunities: Remote providers</p> <p>Threats: Affects your overall wellbeing</p> <p>Opportunities: Building trades</p> <p>Threats: Security concerns with personal information</p> <p>Opportunities: Mitigate loss of traditional media</p>
Social Context	<p>Broadband</p> <p>ALICE* population</p>	<p>Threats: Many seniors and others lack the education and capability to utilize technology resources; language barriers for non-English speaking population; geographic size and space- rural areas</p> <p>Opportunities: Opportunities for collaboration with community organizations and resources</p> <p>Threats: Often fall through the cracks because they aren’t eligible for many social services but have need for social services; employment challenges because people can make more money off public benefits; cost of daycare continues to be an issue</p> <p>Opportunities: Emerging and ongoing advocacy efforts for the needs of this population; opportunities for policy change at the state level; informing workplaces to be ALICE friendly with workplace policy; benefits to case management</p>
Impacts Related to COVID-19	<p>Distrust in Science and Public Health & Political Rhetoric</p> <p>Economic impact</p> <p>Family Hardship and the impact on low-income individuals and families.</p>	<p>Threats: Johnson and Johnson pause – caused shift in mistrust, anti-vaxxers, social media – rapid miscommunication; lack of understanding of evidence-based science; spikes in covid-19 cases</p> <p>Opportunities: Power of local leaders to spread evidence-based information; benefit of consistent messaging, strengthened communication across community partners</p> <p>Threats: Fear of going back to work (especially in healthcare); disproportionate impact on low-income communities; businesses having to close; Capitalism vs individual health; trying to find employees: Stimulus checks (factor) – unintended consequences; internet access isn’t in all places</p> <p>Opportunities: Encouraged use of less expensive health services; telehealth services, virtual mental health services; encouraged businesses to expand services; encouraged grocery stores to provide home deliveries, curbside services, Stimulus checks were helpful</p> <p>Threats: Lack of childcare, continuing issue for those looking for work; women exiting the workforce – lack of childcare and support; hardship on families (especially with school aged children); youth isolation; financial impact</p> <p>Opportunities: Encouraged new and/or more social connections</p>

*ALICE refers to the **population in our communities that are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**. The ALICE population represents those among us who are working, but due to childcare costs, transportation challenges, high cost of living and so much more are living paycheck to paycheck.

Thank you to the many community residents and organizations that participated in the Forces of Change Assessment.

Your contributions are important to our work:

Many community residents

Bay-Arenac ISD and Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance

Cadillac Family Physicians

CBD Store of Michigan

Central Michigan District Health Department

Central Michigan Recovery and Education Network -

Ferris State University

City of Big Rapids

City of Fremont

City of Ludington

Community Mental Health for Central Michigan

District Health Department #10

Eightcap

Family Health Care

Food Bank of Eastern Michigan

Fremont Area Community Foundation

Gratiot-Isabella RESD

Habitat for Humanity of Mason County

Harmonized Healing Counseling Services, Inc.

Hope Network

Inspire Counseling and Consulting

Isabella Citizens for Health

Mason County District Library

Meceola Human Trafficking Task Force, Our Brother's

Keeper and GFWC Big Rapids

Mecosta-Osceola ISD

Mercy Health - Health Project

Mi Works, FIP

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
(MDHHS)

Michigan State University College of Human
Medicine/SNP-AL Project

Mid Michigan Big Brothers Big Sisters

Mid Michigan Community Action

MidMichigan Health

MSU Extension Health & Nutrition Institute

NEMCSA Head Start

Newaygo County Commission on Aging

Newaygo County Community Collaborative

Northern Michigan Regional Entity

Spectrum Health

Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial

Spectrum Health Healthier Communities

Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital

Staircase Youth Services

Sterling Area Health Center

Ten16 Recovery Network

The Red Project

The Right Place

United Way

United Way of Gratiot and Isabella Counties

United Way of the Lakeshore - Newaygo County

Community Committee

Wellspring Adult Day Services

West Michigan CMH

West Shore Educational Service District/Spectrum Health

Ludington Hospital

WISE