

**Northwest Region:** Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Wexford

**Assessment Event Date:** April 27, 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: Mental health & Substance Misuse, Provider Shortage, Telehealth, Broadband Access, Affordable Housing, Misinformation & Mistrust causing divisiveness, Diversity & Inclusivity, Rurality**

Topic Area	Top Forces of Change	Threats & Opportunities
Government Leadership & Budgets/Spending Priorities	Regional & State Level Approach	Threats: Diversity of oversight leading to competing priorities; perception of lack of transparency; difficulty thinking/cooperating regionally (“regionally” doesn’t have a specific definition); each of these jurisdictions are designed for a reason, but cause threats because of competing priorities.  Opportunities: What is the best way to determine what “regional” means?; problem and opportunity; more conversations across leadership categories and policy/decision makers; could each governing body convene in a room and make these decisions together?
	Government’s diversity of priorities	Threats: Infrastructure will be a longstanding issue for all communities (Little Traverse Wheelway collapse discussion); priorities: are trails a “nice to have?”; how to prioritize water infrastructure?; tax increases, significant pushback; high rates of elderly people in communities that may not have a long-term perspective; changing demographics create changing perceptions for the need for infrastructure: transit and trails vs. parking structures  Opportunities: Storytelling about limitations/risks (safe routes to school) learning opportunities for community members; changing infrastructure for the better in the long term: green infrastructure, community design, multi-use buildings, etc.; infrastructure needs change based on changing demographics: bandwidth for remote workers; look at the reality of areas served that are not currently served (FCC maps)
	Community awareness & involvement in decision-making	Threats: Lack of community awareness and involvement in terms of perception of transparency and ways to be involved in decision making.  Opportunities: Build coalitions to create awareness; build public will around issues that matter in communities.
Sufficient Healthcare Workforce	Retirement & Burnout	Threats: Loss of experience; takes longer for new staff to get trained  Opportunities: Develop a new culture; create more diverse staff; Increased opportunities for leadership
	Affordable Housing	Threats: Harder to attract talent to the area; requires longer commutes to employment:

	Mental Health & Providers	<p>Opportunities: Create new housing types</p>
Access to Health Services	Insurance Dictates Access to Healthcare	<p>Threats: Insurance causes health inequities – not equal access for all</p> <p>Opportunities: Affordable Care Act increased access to healthcare; universal health care; telehealth and insurance coverage for those services</p>
	Workforce Shortages and Staffing	<p>Threats: Severe shortage of mental health providers; shortage of specialty providers; cost of education and student loan debt; affordable housing; student loan forgiveness is difficult; denial of science; mixed messaging regarding best health practices</p> <p>Opportunities: Programs through community colleges for training and certification; student loan forgiveness</p>
	Funding for Health Services in Rural Areas	<p>Threats: Mental health -CMH; funding for Medical care services in rural communities; grant funding is sometimes not sustainable</p> <p>Opportunities: Grant funding is available</p>
Population Demographics	Aging Population & Unbalanced Age Distribution	<p>Threats: Isolation from not having a balanced age distribution; challenges retaining and attracting young families (jobs w/ livable wage, childcare opportunities, limited activities, and social isolation); we need younger folks to be available to provide services and support for aging population; without a balanced age demographic our aging population may not have access to those supports; missing the benefits of intergenerational connections</p> <p>Opportunities: Opportunity to engage young families to address barriers that are detracting young families from living here (affordable housing, livable wage, more activities)</p>
	Retain and Attract a Diverse Population	<p>Threats: Won't have access to the benefits of a diverse and thriving population; predominance of seasonality in our economy; increase in chronic disease; limited affordable housing; constrained access to livable wages; limited access to health care, etc.)</p> <p>Opportunities: Create conditions that allow for year-round residency; recruit and retain specialists and increase the number of providers willing to access all types of health care insurance policies – move the needle from treating disease to preventing diseases</p>
	Shifting Racial/Ethnic Demographics	<p>Threats: Our current community conditions are likely not welcoming or safe for a more diverse population; systemic racism impacts mental health/health of POC in our region</p> <p>Opportunities: Our communities would benefit from living in a diverse, thriving, safe, and inclusive community; opportunity for youth voice and marginalized groups to help create policies and programs that define the future culture of our community</p>
Economic Environment	Affordable Housing	<p>Threats: Homelessness-living on the streets; Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement because parents working two jobs and can't be home or homeless students at school or how many time move in a year (coach surfing); general ability to thrive—constant worry affects relationships, work, stressed make poor food choices (lesser cost of fast food); housing is typically far away from town and individual's need transportation to get to work; definition of what is affordable &lt;30% of income; no viable market for people who have means and it's gobbled up by people who don't really need affordable housing; nowhere to use housing choice vouchers; may not get subsidy you need because of restrictive policies for tribal, state services (Some tribal services are open to all)</p> <p>Opportunities: Collaborating with Tribes to pool housing funds, Philanthropy—tap into funds available</p>
	Livable Wage	<p>Threats: People move out of the area away from their families because they can't afford housing; businesses don't pay livable wage and then complain about the unemployment system; systems of supports are lacking for people who are not employable for a wide range of reasons (children, people with disabilities and older adults) and need to find a way to support them and livable wage would help; lack of structure for inter-connected needs for housing, food, transportation.</p>

Access to Social Services	<p>Mental Health &amp; Substance Misuse</p> <p>Affordable Housing</p> <p>Broadband &amp; skills to navigate virtual platforms</p>	<p>Threats: Increased preventable death rates; public safety concerns; generational trauma/ACES</p> <p>Opportunities: Telemedicine; education/prevention; stop the silos of physical health/mental health; stop the stigma of mental health concerns/treatment</p> <p>Threats:</p> <p>Opportunities:</p> <p>Threats:</p> <p>Opportunities:</p>
Social Context	<p>Access to assistance (UIA, Food, paying utility bills)</p> <p>Broadband</p> <p>Social Justice, Equity &amp; Inclusion</p>	<p>Threats: Accessing assistance can be challenging to navigate; SER will increase due to shut offs being allowed and benefits are slowing down</p> <p>Opportunities: Will see increase demand when extra assistance stops; it's going to make inadequacy apparent and make government address increase in social problems.</p> <p>Threats: Lack of access for school &amp; work; remote services like doctor's appointments, therapy, virtual schooling; supplying documents for services; ordering food</p> <p>Opportunities: Bills have been introduced to increase access to broadband; options to make this more available for individual who have the technology.</p> <p>Threats: Inequity, conflict, untrust</p> <p>Opportunities: Current culture brings all these issues up to the surface and can start system change; seeing recognition of inequity and efforts to reduce gaps in access.</p>
Impacts Related to COVID-19	<p>Ruralness, connectivity, transportation, technology, education</p> <p>Mistrust</p> <p>Mental health</p>	<p>Threats: Lack of access without accessibility to services; communication breakdown; at-risk populations are missed with care, services, programming, food – basic needs</p> <p>Opportunities: Long-awaited realization of these issues; potential funding to close the gap on ruralness through better internet accessibility; expansion of telemedicine; new model for system delivery-Community Connections</p> <p>Threats: More community spread of covid; more hospitalizations &amp; deaths; Breakdown of relationships – family and friends</p> <p>Opportunities: Restore relationships; reframe how you communicate about covid; find community champions, could be the voice</p> <p>Threats: Suicide rates increase; irrational behavior amplified; child abuse with increased family stress; social isolation is a threat to individual health &amp; well-being</p> <p>Opportunities: Telehealth increase; social media connections (zoom meetings, facetime); programs to ease anxieties about covid even after vaccination</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 Area Transportation Authority  
Beards Brewery, Fermenta: A Women's Craft Collective  
Benzie Aquatic Center  
Benzie Human Services Collaborative  
Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department  
Cadillac Family Physicians  
Catholic Human Services, SOR Program  
CHS/Live Well Kalkaska Substance Free Coalition  
Disability Network Northwest Michigan  
Disability Network Northwest Michigan Consumer  
District Health Department #10  
East Jordan Family Health Center  
Friendship Centers of Emmet County  
Grand Traverse Community Collaborative  
Grand Traverse County Drug Free Coalition  
Grand Traverse County Health Department  
Grand Traverse County Women Infant & Child  
Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities  
Grow Benzie  
Health Department of Northwest Michigan  
Kalkaska Commission on Aging

Kalkaska County Community Collaborative  
Leelanau County Family Coordinating Council  
Manistee County Human Services Collaborative Body  
Manna Food Project  
McLaren Northern Michigan  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services  
(MDHHS)  
Miigwech Inc- tribal non-profit  
Michigan State University Extension  
Munson Healthcare  
Munson Medical Center  
Northern Family Intervention Services  
Northern Michigan Regional Entity  
Northwest Michigan Health Services, INC  
PHSACF  
Project Unity for Life  
Recovery Houses (2)  
Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District  
Up North Prevention, for Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and  
Leelanau counties