Health Care

Health Care Issue I (HI)
Health care: A healthy workforce is important to future regional success. Healthy workers are more productive and lead to lower health care costs for workers and employers. Health care services must be accessible and sustainable for all residents.

Health Care Issue I Goal
Health care: The number of primary care physicians and nurse practitioners per 1,000 people in the region increases slightly from 1.6/1000 (current trend) to 1.8/1000. The number increases because we invest in our local health care services to serve the growing elderly population and attract new residents to the region.

Recommendation 1

Active living: Encourage a more active lifestyle by developing and promoting safe walking and biking options in the region; like Safe Routes to School. Develop and promote more trails/path connections between/within communities using white lines, sidewalks and signage.

Action Step A
Map trails: Map and identify gaps in the region's existing and planned trails and paths.

Action Step B
Building standards: Make building standards and permitting more uniform and more stringent to achieve all aspects of new housing and rehabilitation goals.

Collaboration: Work with local organizations to connect gaps in the region's trails and paths.

Action Step C
Funding: Identify funding and resources to build needed trails and paths within region.

Recommendation 2

Access to affordable health care: improve availability and access to affordable health care services throughout the region.

Action Step A
Mobile clinics: Explore the feasibility of mobile clinics where permanent clinics are not feasible

Action Step B
Use emerging technologies: Identify the emerging systems like Health Partner's VirtuWell that allows online access to health care providers.

Action Step C
Care for vulnerable populations: Research, understand, educate on the availability of health care services for early childhood development, senior health and Senior Living, the vulnerable, the mentally challenged and the mentally/behaviorally ill.

Action Step D

Map services: Compile and map existing and planned health care services within the region, including clinics, service providers, home health care, meals on wheels and others

Action Step E

Identify gaps: Identify gaps in the region's health care services, programs, affordability, and geographic location.

Action Step F

Collaboration: Work with local health care organizations to come to consensus on how to fill gaps in services in each area of the region.

Action Step G

Affordable Care Act: Research, understand, and educate the public on how the Affordable Care Act will impact and/or improve health and health care in rural Minnesota.

Recommendation 3

Public health: **Respond to public health issues specific to the region, including smoking, farm safety, hazardous materials, and environmental health concerns. Nutrition is a key factor that directly impacts healthy living.**

Action Step A

Collaborative study and solutions: Pursue collaborative participation in rural health studies with organization like the Institute of Rural Health on issues like diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular health, etc. Find more effective ways of identifying, tracking, and addressing trends (positive or negative)

Action Step B

Education: Use various media, schools, work places, and public policy to create and promote positive community health norms and affirm positive health choices (food choices, active life style). Continue to educate on activities that diminish health (food choices, smoking, etc.).

Action Step C

Identify and remediate risks: Use data to identify significant risks to public health. Keep Hazard Mitigation Plans current and submit applications annually for remediation of risks.

Action Step D

Best practices: Research models used by others to address the region's specific public health concerns. Select the best practices that apply to our local situation.

Action Step E

Collaboration: Gain support for mitigating the identified health risks from those best suited to take action.