

# ARIZONA CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS: COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS 2025

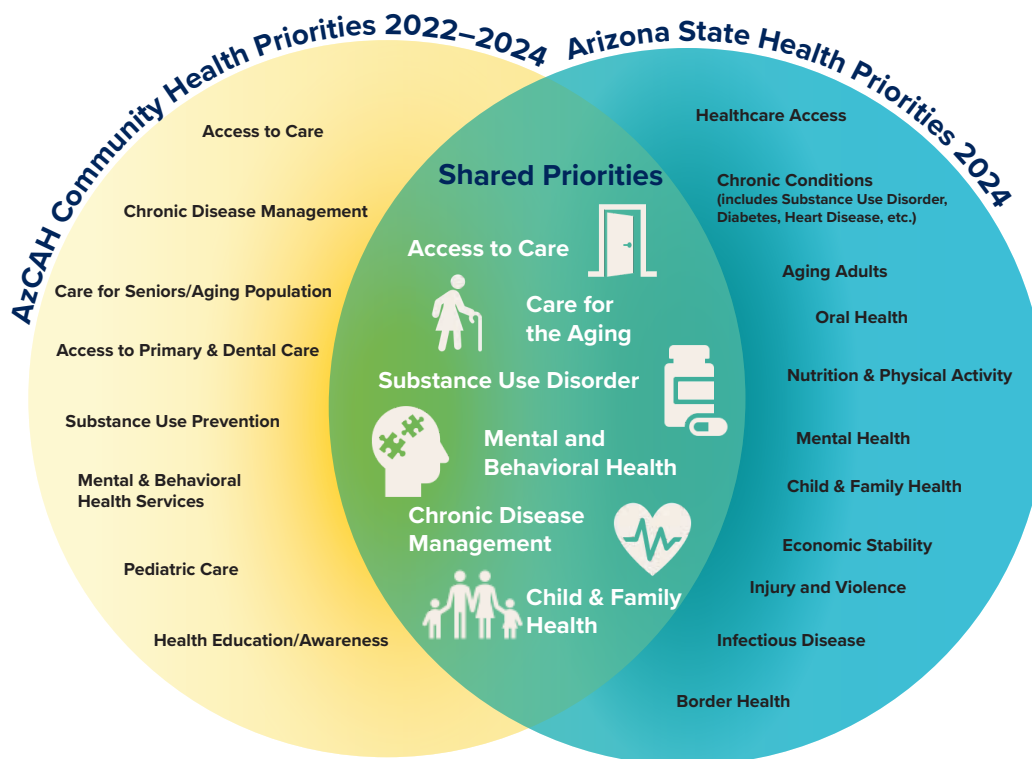
## OVERVIEW

This Arizona Center for Rural Health (AzCRH) brief summarizes the Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) of 11 of Arizona’s 17 federally designated Critical Access Hospitals (AzCAHs) and compares it to the statewide Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) assessment. Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), all 501(c)(3) hospitals must demonstrate they provide a community benefit and complete a CHNA every three years. CAHs then describe community health needs in their service area and select three to five to prioritize in their implementation plan. Each CAH is required to collect input from individuals in the community, public health experts, residents, representatives, and leaders of low-income and minority populations. The AzCAH CHNAs shared seven health priorities with the ADHS Statewide Health Needs Assessment: 1) healthcare access, 2) care for the aging population, 3) chronic disease management, 4) child and family health, 5) primary and dental care, 6) mental and behavioral health services, and 7) substance use disorder. These priorities reflect a comprehensive approach to rural health, grounded in both the immediate needs of AzCAH communities and long-term strategies for improved community health.

## HEALTH PRIORITIES IN ARIZONA –

The ADHS Statewide Health Needs Assessment updated the 2024 Arizona Health Improvement Plan (AzHIP).

**Figure 1. Overlap of State of Arizona with Arizona Critical Access Hospital CHNA Priorities.**



## CHNA DATA COLLECTION

This AzCRH brief uses data collected from publicly available AzCAH CHNA reports to better understand the shared health priorities between AzCAHs and with the State of Arizona needs assessment. The state Medicaid program, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), groups the CAHs into three regions. Because hyperlinks can become outdated, AzCRH maintains copies of current CHNAs and can provide them on request. The AzCRH Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (AzFlex) program completes the CHNA review every two years.

**Figure 2. Location and Names of Arizona’s Critical Access Hospitals by Region.**

### Participating AzCAHs include:

#### North

- Banner Page Hospital
- Sage Memorial Hospital
- White Mountain Regional Medical Center
- Wickenburg Community Hospital

#### Central

- Banner Payson Medical Center
- Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center

#### South

- Benson Hospital
- Copper Queen Community Hospital
- La Paz Regional Hospital
- Mt Graham Regional Medical Center
- Northern Cochise Community Hospital



Note: There are six of Arizona’s 17 CAHs not included: two Indian Health Service AzCAHs (Hopi Health Care Center, Parker Indian Medical Center) and two Tribal (P.L. 638) AzCAHs (Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital and San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation). They are not required to complete CHNAs under the PPACA requirement. One AzCAH (Carondelet Holy Cross Hospital) does not have non-profit status and is not required to complete a CHNA under PPACA. An additional AzCAH (Little Colorado Medical Center) is not included because their CHNA report is not published online. The online links to the AzCAH CHNAs are in the References.

**Exploring AzCAH Health Priorities** AzCAHs share a set of common health priorities that reflect both the specific needs of their rural communities and broader statewide trends. Across Northern, Central, and Southern Arizona, improving Access to Care stands out as a universal goal. Hospitals consistently recognize the need to make healthcare services more available and affordable, particularly in areas facing significant provider shortages and transportation barriers. This emphasis on access is rooted in the reality that many Arizona residents, especially in rural regions, struggle to find primary care and specialty services close to home.

**Chronic Disease Management** is another prominent theme. Hospitals are focusing on the prevention and control of conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and cancer. These chronic illnesses are leading causes of hospitalizations and emergency visits in Arizona. AzCAHs respond by developing programs that promote preventive care and ongoing disease management.

**Behavioral and Mental Health** includes **Substance Use Disorders**, have also emerged as top priorities. Many hospitals are working to expand mental health resources and substance use treatment, recognizing the growing prevalence of these challenges. The need for comprehensive behavioral health services is repeated across all regions, underlining its importance to community well-being.

AzCAHs are also attentive to the needs of their populations. There is a strong focus on providing **Care for Aging Adults**, supporting women's and **Children's Health**, and ensuring the safety and well-being of these groups. Hospitals are increasingly addressing health factors, such as economic security, food access, and housing, recognizing that they are critical to improving overall health outcomes.

Access to **Primary and Dental care** is frequently mentioned, especially in rural communities where such services are limited. Preventive dental care and pediatric services are seen as essential components of a healthy community, and hospitals are working to bridge these gaps.

Finally, **Health Education and Community Awareness** are recurring priorities. Many hospitals are investing in initiatives to raise awareness about available health services, encourage preventive care, and promote healthy lifestyle choices. By empowering residents with information and resources, AzCAHs aim to foster greater self-management of health and more effective use of local healthcare systems.



**Table 1. AzCAH-identified CHNA priorities by region:**

Northern AzCAH Priorities	
<b>Banner Page Hospital (2022) Page, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to care</li> <li>• Chronic disease management</li> <li>• Behavioral health</li> </ul>	<b>White Mountain Regional Medical Center (2024) Springerville, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental/Behavioral Health</li> <li>• Alcohol/Drugs</li> <li>• Women’s Health</li> <li>• Smoking/Tobacco/Vaping</li> <li>• Heart Disease</li> </ul>
<b>Sage Memorial Hospital (2023) Ganado, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetic care and prevention</li> <li>• Behavioral health services</li> <li>• Dental care</li> <li>• Pediatric care</li> <li>• Specialty care</li> </ul>	<b>Wickenburg Community Hospital (2022) Wickenburg, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-identified health status</li> <li>• Improve access to healthcare</li> <li>• Community awareness about health services</li> </ul>
Central AzCAH Priorities	
<b>Banner Payson Medical Center (2022) Payson, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to care</li> <li>• Chronic disease management</li> <li>• Behavioral health</li> </ul>	<b>Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center (2024) Globe, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic Disease - obesity, heart disease, diabetes, cancer</li> <li>• Behavioral/Mental Health</li> <li>• Substance/Drug/Opioid/Alcohol Abuse</li> </ul>
Southern AzCAH Priorities	
<b>Benson Hospital (2024) Benson, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to care</li> <li>• Care for the aging population</li> <li>• Behavioral health</li> <li>• Primary care and dental services</li> </ul>	<b>Copper Queen Community Hospital (2023) Bisbee, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to good healthcare</li> <li>• Availability of good jobs</li> <li>• Access to affordable and healthy food</li> </ul>
<b>La Paz Regional Hospital (2023) Parker, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic security</li> <li>• Coordinated service networks</li> <li>• Safety and well-being of vulnerable populations</li> <li>• Volunteerism</li> <li>• Improve and expand health care services and access to services</li> </ul>	<b>Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center (2023) Safford, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Substance use /abuse</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Obesity/weight management</li> <li>• Nutrition</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Cochise Community Hospital (2024) Wilcox, AZ</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to care</li> <li>• Care for the aging population</li> <li>• Behavioral health</li> <li>• Primary care and dental services</li> </ul>	

**Acting on AzCAH Health Priorities** -In addition to conducting the CHNA, AzCAHs develop and implement a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) that guides actions on CHNA priorities. Table 2. lists shared strategies and links to resources to help implement strategies. The AzCRH Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program helps answer questions and provides information, contact Brianna Rooney, DrPH at [bcrooney@arizona.edu](mailto:bcrooney@arizona.edu)

**Table 2. AzCAH Priorities, Strategies and Resources.**

Shared Priority	Shared Strategies	Suggested Resources
Healthcare Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop reminder notices for patient wellness and routine check-ups, mammograms, vaccinations, and colonoscopies.</li> <li>• Develop and disperse brochures for available services and chronic disease management.</li> <li>• Assist patients to enroll in Arizona’s Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and connect them with resources when they are in the hospital.</li> <li>• Increase accessibility to healthcare through transportation and highway infrastructure.</li> <li>• Coordinate communication among providers and the public.</li> <li>• Implement and monitor centralized scheduling and prior authorization processes for improvement opportunities to reduce the incidence of conflicting schedules or schedule changes due to prior authorization issues.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive plan to coordinate care between primary care physicians and specialists.</li> <li>• Participate in or expand the federal 340B drug pricing program</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Health insurance enrollment outreach and support</a> <a href="#">AzCRH Health Insurance Assistance</a> <a href="#">Health literacy interventions</a> <a href="#">Transition to Practice Program</a> <a href="#">Rural transportation services</a> <a href="#">340B Drug Pricing Program</a>
Care for Aging Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program and become an Age Friendly Health System.</li> <li>• Use a person-centered approach in care and services.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a strategy to improve the operations of existing primary care services.</li> <li>• Increase staff awareness of available resources and create a resource list for distribution to aging patients.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Arizona Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Resources</a> <a href="#">Age Friendly Health System</a> <a href="#">Thoughtful Life Conversations</a> <a href="#">Arizona’s Area Agencies on Aging</a> <a href="#">Government Programs for the Elderly in Rural America</a>
Chronic Disease Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities to educate residents on preventive services relevant to community needs (printed media, electronic messaging software and social media).</li> <li>• Promote and educate residents on healthy living activities.</li> <li>• Employ a registered clinical dietician to oversee nutrition and diabetes services (i.e. nutrition counseling, diabetes education, and support group meetings).</li> </ul>	<a href="#">2025 Diabetes Action Plan and Report</a> <a href="#">Chronic Disease Self-Management Program</a> <a href="#">Chronic Diseases in Rural America</a>



Shared Priority	Shared Strategies	Suggested Resources
Family and Child Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement community health programs or community-directed healthcare interventions.</li> <li>Utilize Community Health Workers to act as liaisons between families and healthcare providers.</li> <li>Collaborate with schools to provide school-based healthcare services.xx</li> <li>Develop clear policies and procedures for pediatric care.</li> <li>Participate in the AzFlex Obstetrics Simulations training.</li> <li>Enroll in the Arizona Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM).</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Arizona Pediatric Psychiatry Access Line</a>  <a href="#">Arizona AIM Collaborative</a>
Primary Care and Dental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate dental and primary care by establishing referral partnerships between dental clinics and primary care providers or even co-locate dental hygienists within primary care teams to provide screenings, varnish applications, and patient education during medical visits.</li> <li>Train primary care providers to conduct basic oral health assessments and refer patients for dental care can increase early detection and intervention.</li> <li>Conduct a Provider Needs Assessment and develop a Medical Staff Development Plan.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Promising Practices to Improve Oral Health</a>  <a href="#">Recruitment and Retention for Rural Health Facilities</a>  <a href="#">3RNET Job Search Portal</a>
Mental and Behavioral Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and test a process for integrating behavioral health screening and referrals for emergency departments or other healthcare providers.</li> <li>Employ a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner or similar role in rural and family medicine clinics to diagnose and prescribe mental health medications.</li> <li>Expand capacity for increased psychotherapy and counseling utilizing professionals with a working understanding of tribal communities and culture.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Mobile health for mental health</a>  <a href="#">Mental Health First Aid training</a>  <a href="#">Arizona crisis hotlines</a>  <a href="#">Social connectedness</a>  <a href="#">Wellbeing Collaborative of Health Professionals</a>
Substance Use Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide education and best practices to assist in decreasing opioid misuse and abuse.</li> <li>Partner with behavioral health providers and first responders to fight opioid misuse.</li> <li>Partner with school districts to educate middle school students in dangers of drug use.</li> <li>Direct delivery of Narcan kits to the emergency department.</li> <li>Disseminate Arizona Opioid Prescribing Guidelines.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Naloxone trainings</a>  <a href="#">Overdose Data to Action program resources</a>  <a href="#">Opioid Prescribing Guidelines</a>

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