



Billings Clinic



2023

**Billings Clinic
Health Equity Report**

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What is Health Equity and Why Does It Matter?

Disparities related to differences in health equity can mean a lower quality of life for some people. Socioeconomic factors like income, race, education, occupation, sexual orientation and where a person lives can play a big role in a person's health, and every community and population can have its own unique circumstances. Helping to identify and address those factors, and by responding accordingly, can in turn help to enhance the health of people and communities by increasing health equity.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines health equity as every person having the opportunity to attain their full health potential and when no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances.

Simply put, health equity happens when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

Historically, efforts to improve health outcomes for disadvantaged groups have focused on equality or equal care, while more recent approaches target equity as a more favorable method of improving disparities. While equality attempts to equalize health care standards and calls for a flat standardization of care for all (equal access for all), health equity understands that different people and groups may be predisposed to various levels of inequality. Due to that inequality, these groups require varying levels or types of care that may differ from other groups to get similar results.

Billings Clinic is committed to improving access to care and quality in the communities we serve, and working toward health equity is one of the ways we can do that. Billings Clinic has a multifaceted approach to improving access to care and quality within our communities. This includes identifying disparities and trends within our own patient populations, collaborating with local health care organizations to improve community health, assisting with annual community health needs assessments and developing community plans with that information, providing financial assistance and other services to patients, growing and strengthening the local health care workforce and contributing to or managing programs designed to meet specific needs.



Demographic Profile of Billings Clinic Patients

The population within Billings and Wyoming are diversifying, and Billings Clinic has seen these demographic shifts within our patient populations. Billings Clinic saw approximately 178,000 unique patients across all our locations during the 2023 calendar year. In order to address health equity, it is critical to understand who our patients are. The following information provides a demographic overview of all patients seen in 2023 at all Billings Clinic locations in Montana and Wyoming. Tracking this information allows us to be aware of any shifting trends, and ensure we are meeting our communities' needs.



Race

Race is a categorization of people based on shared physical or social qualities into groups generally viewed as distinct within a given society. Patients have the ability to self-identify their race within our electronic health record. Billings Clinic utilized the race classifications that are used by the US Census, including American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or Africa American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White, or another race. At times patients either choose to not self-identify their race or we are unable to obtain their race.

	Not Indicated	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Other Race	Unknown	White
Emergency Room	0.6%	17.8%	0.4%	2.2%	0.2%	2.7%	1.5%	74.7%
Inpatient	0.9%	11.8%	0.4%	0.9%	0.2%	2.4%	2.5%	80.9%
Observation	0.5%	8.4%	0.5%	1.1%	0.2%	2.0%	1.4%	85.8%
Outpatient	0.3%	4.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	1.7%	1.4%	90.9%
Pre-admit	4.5%	9.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	80.6%
Regional Radiology	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	0.3%	5.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	1.8%	1.4%	90.2%

Data includes the following Billings Clinic locations: Billings Clinic Bozeman Pediatrics, Billings Clinic Bozeman Specialty Clinic, Billings Clinic Bozeman Surgery Center, Billings Clinic Cody, Billings Clinic DEMC Research, BILLINGS CLINIC DIALYSIS (DCI), BILLINGS CLINIC DIALYSIS (HOME), Billings Clinic Downtown, Billings Clinic Heights, Billings Clinic Hospital, Billings Clinic Miles City, Billings Clinic N27th St, Billings Clinic Outreach Services, Billings Clinic Surgery Center, Billings Clinic West, or Billings Clinic West Yellowstone.

Ethnicity

In addition to race, patients have the ability to self-identify their ethnicity within our electronic health record, in order to provide a more specific representation of their identity. Ethnicity describes the culture of people in a given geographic region, often distinguished from other groups of people based on their language, heritage, religion, and customs. Ethnicity is distinct from race. Billings Clinic allows for patients to self-identify Native American Tribal Affiliation within our Ethnicity section. Patients are able to identify as more than one ethnicity, or none, within the electronic medical record.

The following table provides the count for unique patients seen across all Billings Clinic locations that have self-identified with that particular ethnicity.

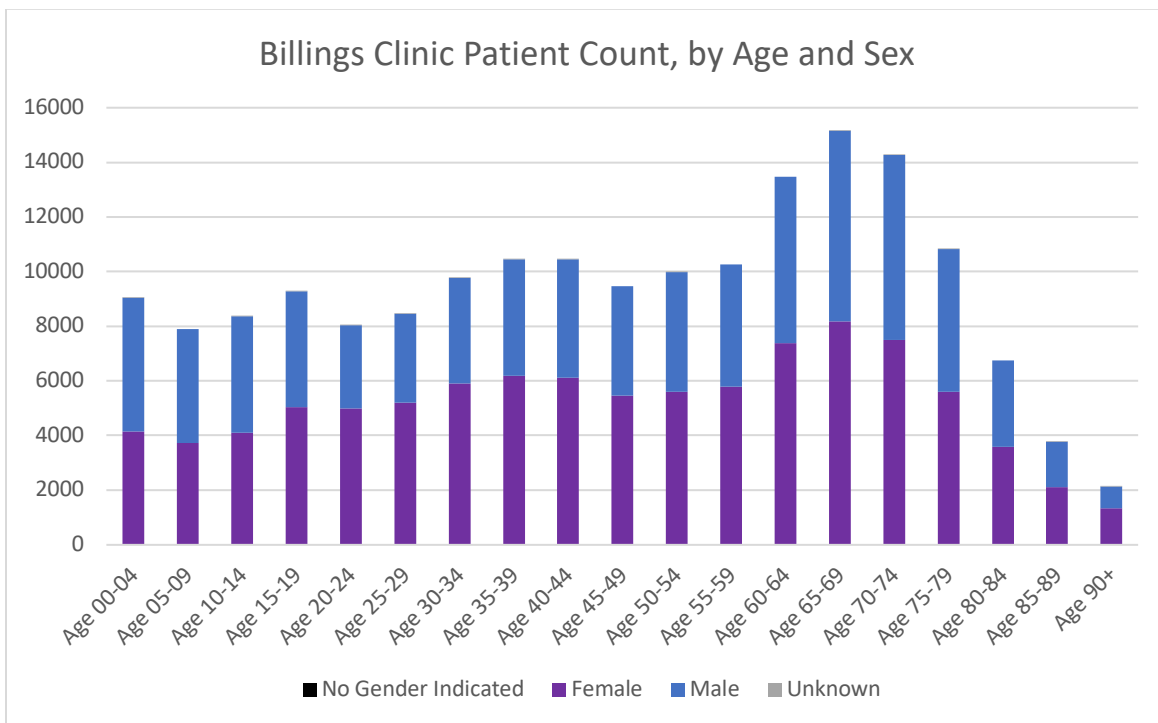


Ethnicity	Count	Ethnicity	Count
Asian Indian	56	Kootenai/Ksanka	67
Assiniboine/Nakoda, Nakona	546	Korean	41
Blackfeet/Niitsitapi (Pikuni)	198	Little Shell/Chippewa/Anishinaabe/Metis	18
Caucasian	19,462	Mexican	76
Chicano	16	Mexican American	157
Chinese	142	Northern Cheyenne/Tsistsistas	1,350
Chippewa (Ojibwe)/Anishinaabe	254	Norwegian	77
Crow/Apsáalooke	3,067	Not Hispanic or Latino	128,964
Cuban	14	Other	2,111
English	769	Patient Declined	3,344
Filipino	76	Plains Cree/Nehiyawak	8
German	661	Puerto Rican/Taino	14
Gros Ventre/A'aninin	273	Salish/Selish	28
Hispanic or Latino	4,781	Shoshone	56
Hutterite	7	Sioux/Lakota, Dakota, Nakota	615
Irish	104	Thai	15
Italian	45	Unknown	4,894
Japanese	81	Vietnamese	54



Age and Sex

Billings Clinic collects birthdate for patients, and this information has been used to determine age, shown in 5-year increments. This data is shown alongside patient sex. Please note: Billings Clinic collects patients Gender Identity separately from sex.



Language Translation Services

At Billings Clinic, we recognize the importance of treating each patient with respect and dignity, of recognizing individuality, of providing clear information and involving the patient in choices about their care and treatment. One way Billings Clinic does this is by providing language interpretive services for any patient, across all Billings Clinic locations, that English is not their primary language.



Language	Count of Language Usage	Percent of total Interpretive Services
SPANISH	2915	81%
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE	246	7%
KOREAN	93	3%
MANDARIN	66	2%
VIETNAMESE	61	2%
RUSSIAN	37	1%
UKRAINIAN	37	1%
BURMESE	24	1%
ROMANIAN	18	1%
THAI	15	>0%
CHIN HAKHA	14	>0%
ARABIC	13	>0%
PASHTO	10	>0%
TAGALOG	7	>0%
PORTUGUESE	6	>0%
GERMAN	4	>0%
CANTONESE	4	>0%
FRENCH	3	>0%
ITALIAN	2	>0%
LAOTIAN	2	>0%
PORTUGUESE BRAZILIAN	2	>0%
FINNISH	1	>0%
FARSI	1	>0%
JAPANESE	1	>0%
MONGOLIAN	1	>0%
POLISH	1	>0%
BENGALI	1	>0%
BULGARIAN	1	>0%



2023 Community Health Needs Assessment

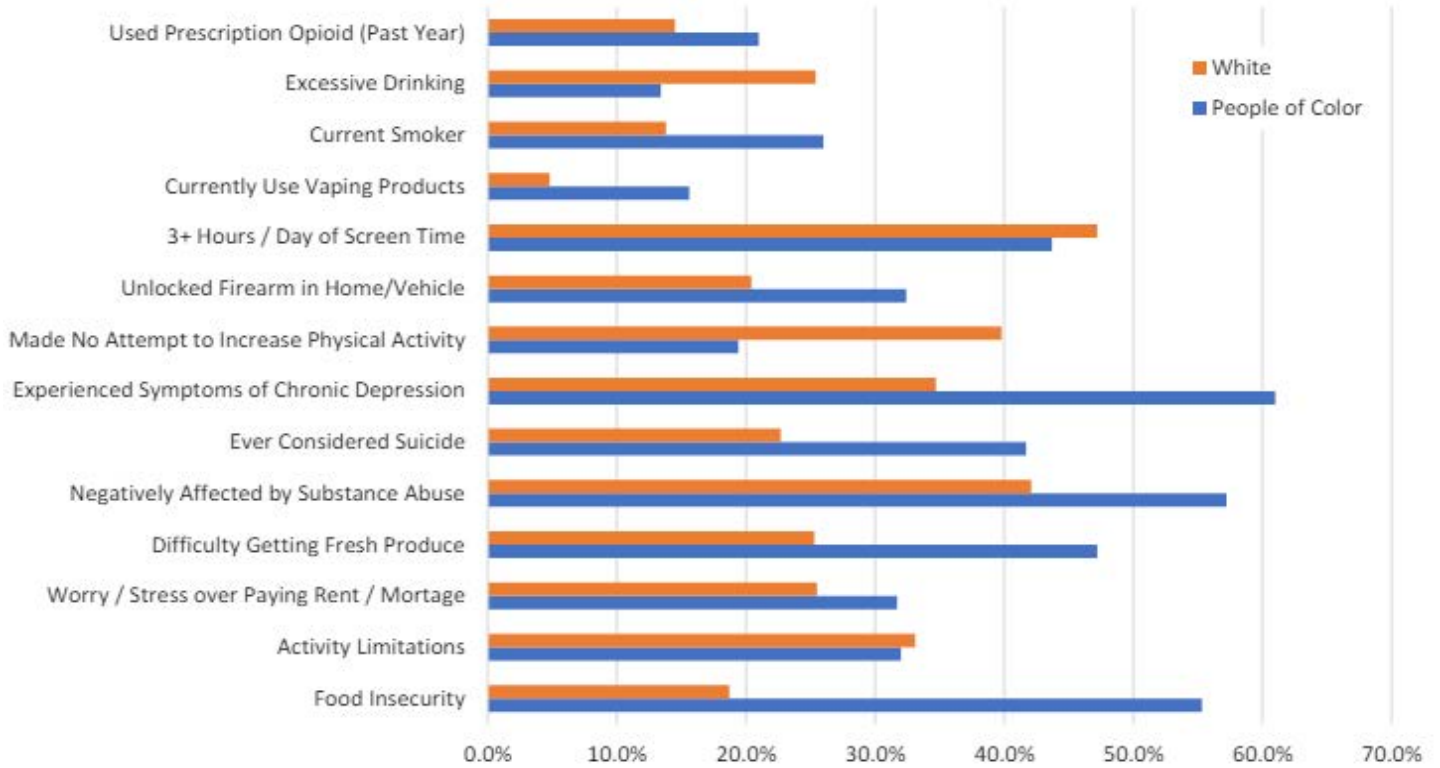
Since 1994, Billings Clinic has partnered RiverStone Health and Intermountain Health St. Vincent Regional Hospital (often called the Alliance) to identify and address the complex community health needs of Yellowstone County. So much of this work is based on our community's unique needs, which is why, since 2005, we have partnered every three years to create the Yellowstone County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The CHNA provides a comprehensive, data-driven look at our community's overall health and a detailed assessment of the county's health needs, behaviors, and issues. In turn, we use this vital information to identify the top local health priorities and find solutions to help improve the health of all Yellowstone County residents. To read the full 2023 Yellowstone County CHNA please visit <https://www.healthybydesignyellowstone.org/yellowstone-county-data/chna/>.

The 2023 CHNA identified mental health, substance abuse/misuse and safety, access to health care and physical activity, nutrition and weight as the highest community health priorities, based on broad community polling. This provides health care organizations like Billings Clinic and other community partners with a pulse check on the most important needs as identified by residents and key stakeholders, which in turn allows Billings Clinic to better address those needs.

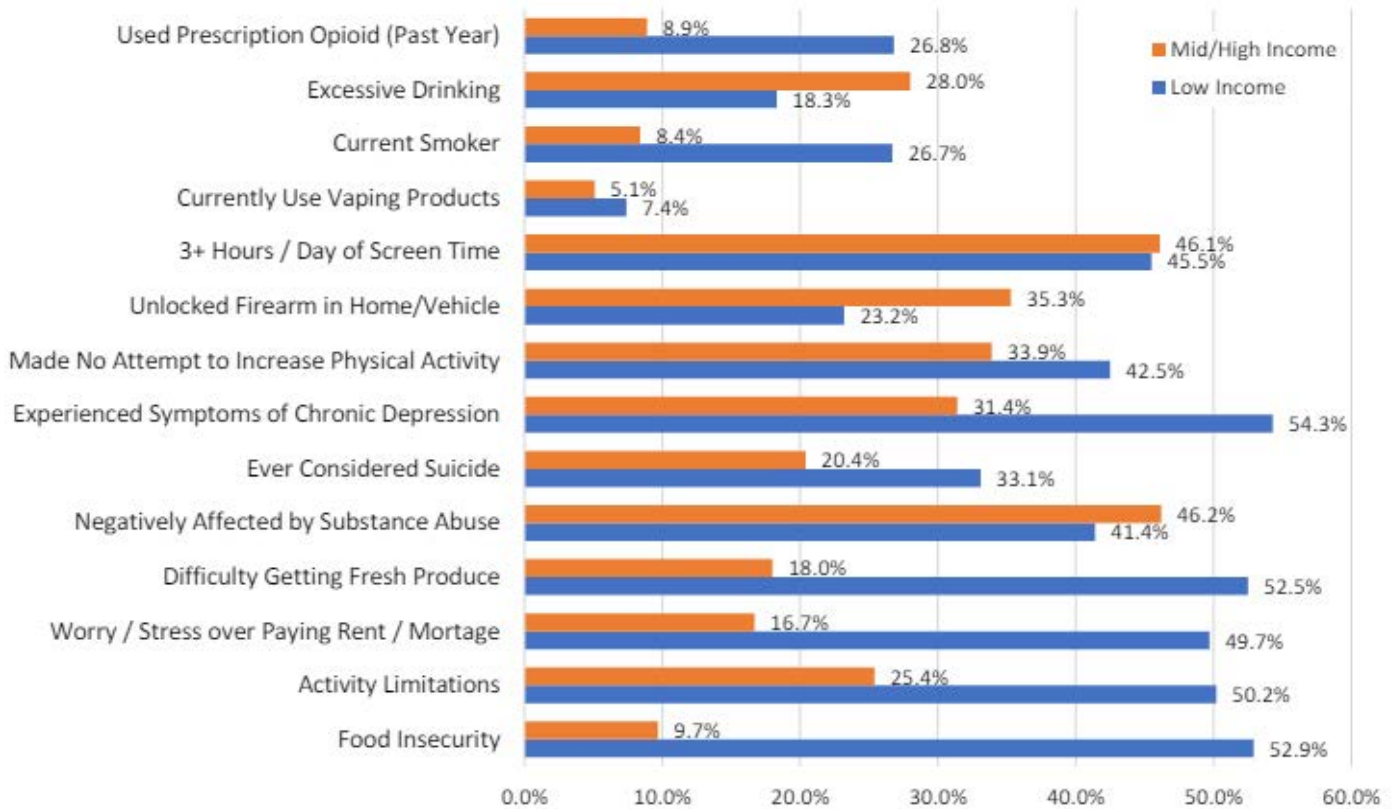
In addition to identifying broader health priorities, the CHNA also looks at health disparities and discrimination based on factors such as race, ethnicity, age and income. Many residents may experience worse health outcomes than the general population due to factors such as differences in income, education, and where they live. Additionally, discrimination, and lack of opportunities based on race, ethnicity, ability, age, gender, religion sexual orientation and other factors can worsen health outcomes. A few of the findings include:

- 19% of residents strongly agree that Yellowstone County is welcoming to all races and ethnicities.
- People of color are significantly more likely than the general population to report being treated with less courtesy or respect, as less intelligent, and as a potential danger; and receiving poorer service.

Disparities by Race & Ethnicity for Selected Yellowstone County Health Indicators (2023)



Disparities by Income for Selected Yellowstone County Health Indicators (2023)



Graphs courtesy of 2023 Yellowstone County CHNA. Source:

https://www.healthybydesignyellowstone.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Report_2023CHNA_ExecutiveSummary_Final_2023.01.03.pdf

Current Projects at Billings Clinic

Billings Clinic is committed to addressing health inequities within our communities and throughout the region we serve. We have done this work in a variety of ways, including direct outreach to vulnerable patient populations, education for clinical staff within the service region, and grant-based work to increase care opportunities for patients. Highlighted projects from 2023 include:

Outreach Clinics

Each year, more than 52 physicians in 22 specialties travel in excess of 260,000 miles to provide specialty care for residents of rural Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota. Rural populations disproportionately have poorer health outcomes, and outreach clinics allow access to care for rural communities, by removing the barriers of the need to travel to larger communities. To learn more about Billings Clinic Outreach Clinics, and for information on scheduling appointments, please visit: <https://www.billingsclinic.com/maps-locations/outreach-clinics/>.

Location	Outreach Specialty Services Provided
Big Timber, MT	Cardiology, Urology
Columbus, MT	Cardiology, Gastroenterology, General Surgery, OB/GYN, Orthopedics, Urology
Glasgow, MT	Cardiology, Dermatology, Nephrology, Oncology, Pulmonology, Urology
Glendive, MT	Cardiology, Dermatology, ENT, Oncology, Pulmonology, Urology
Great Falls, MT	Pediatric Urology, Pulmonology, Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility
Helena, MT	Gynecologic Oncology
Lewistown, MT	Dermatology, Oncology, Rheumatology, Urology
Livingston, MT	Cardiology, ENT, Occupational Health, Oncology, Pulmonary/ Sleep Study, Urology, Wound Care
Miles City, MT	Cardiology, Dermatology, ENT, Nephrology, Neurosurgery, Oncology, Orthopedics, Pediatric Cardiology, Pediatric Pulmonology, Rheumatology, Urology
Missoula, MT	Pediatric Pulmonology, Radiation Oncology, Rheumatology, Reproductive Medicine, Gynecological Oncology
Plentywood, MT	Cardiology
Poplar, MT	Nephrology
Red Lodge, MT	Cardiology, Dermatology, General Surgery, Orthopedics, Urology
Sidney, MT	Cardiology
Townsend, MT	OB/GYN, Cardiology, Pediatrics
Williston, ND	Gynecologic Oncology, Oncology, Pediatric Urology
Cody, WY	Cardiology, Cardiovascular Surgery, Dermatology, Nephrology, Neurosurgery, Oncology, Orthopedics, Pediatric Endocrinology, Pulmonary, Rheumatology, Urology
Lovell, WY	Cardiology, Dermatology, General Surgery, Oncology, Rheumatology
Powell, WY	General Surgery, Orthopedics, Rheumatology, Urology
Sheridan, WY	Cardiology, Nephrology, Radiation Oncology
Thermopolis, WY	Dermatology, Oncology
Worland, WY	ENT

Clinical Trials

A clinical study (or trial) is a carefully designed study that involves people who volunteer to receive investigational treatments under close supervision by a physician, an institutional review board to ensure patient safety and other research professionals. Pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies have developed these treatments. These companies have then selected physicians, also called investigators, who are qualified to conduct clinical trials. It is through these trials that investigational drugs may show their benefits. Current Clinical trials at Billings Clinic include trials focusing on Brain Cancer, Breast Cancer, Colon/Rectal Cancer, Leukemia, Lung Cancer, Lymphoma, and Ovarian Cancer. Additionally, Billings Clinic is actively working to create pathways for Critical Access Hospitals to participate in clinical trails, to remove the barriers of needing to travel to Billings, MT to participate in these research trials. For more information on Clinical Trials, please visit:

<https://www.billingsclinic.com/research/clinical-trials/>.

Telehealth/ Telemedicine

Telemedicine is a service that links medical specialists with patients and their health care practitioners in rural communities using two-way interactive video conferencing. Unlike television, no one else can “tune in” to the video consultation. All consultations are strictly confidential. Specialists perform face to face consultations and have the ability to examine, diagnose and plan care for patients. Telemedicine reduces the time, expense, and other barriers for patients who would otherwise need to travel for an out-of-town medical appointment.

Project ECHO

The ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) model™ is a medical education and care management collaborative that empowers clinicians in remote settings to deliver better care to more people locally. By putting local clinicians together with specialist teams at larger medical centers in weekly virtual clinics or teleECHO™ clinics. Project ECHO allows for the sharing of knowledge, expands treatment capacity, and offers peer support to otherwise regionally isolated clinicians.

MOMS Grant

According to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Montana has the 6th highest maternal mortality ratio in the nation. Racial and rural health disparities plague Montana’s health system with 52 of Montana’s 56 counties having at least one Medically Underserved Area (MEA) designation. The Montana Obstetrics & Maternal Support (MOMS) program was created to connect rural providers to obstetrical/gynecological, perinatal, mental health and substance abuse specialists to build competency and consistency across perinatal providers. To learn more about the MOMS Grant, please visit: <https://www.mtmoms.org/about/>.

Financial Assistance and Support

Billings Clinic provides high-quality primary, specialty, emergency and mental health care to our patients. Our model of health care delivery and commitment to our not-for-profit mission guides the following Patient Financial Assistance services:

- Providing patient financial counseling, payment plans, financing options and financial assistance for those in need early in their care.
- Offering financial assistance (charity care) to patients with incomes up to 400 percent of federal poverty level, with a sliding scale.
- Accepting patients covered by Medicaid, Medicare or Children’s Health Insurance Plan (CHIP), including Healthy Montana Kids.

- Helping patients apply for public assistance and health insurance programs, such as Medicaid, Medicare, Disability, Crime Victims, Veterans Administration or CHIP.

Asthma Quality Improvement Grant

This grant was designed to improve asthma care at Billings Clinic and establish protocols that would improve care for patients. The team brought in an asthma educator to educate the providers and nursing staff on asthma, in order to improve diagnosis and improve teaching for inhaler use. The team initiated the use of an asthma action plan in our medical record system. The team continues to work on this project to address a need within our patient population.

Next Steps

Billings Clinic remains committed to identifying and addressing health inequities our patients' experience. We continue to monitor our patients' social drivers of health and provide community resources as available and appropriate. Billings Clinic will continue to evaluate and utilize information collected in the 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment for the upcoming year, until the next Community Health Needs Assessment is conducted in 2026.

