

# Access and Quality of Health Care



Ability to access health care is affected by insurance coverage, cost, language and cultural barriers, availability of providers, and transportation. People who are not able to access health care are at increased risk for serious medical problems, premature mortality and poor health outcomes. Inability to access health care often results in receiving medical treatment later in the course of illness and in more costly settings, which increases the financial burden on the health care system.

## Key facts about Access and Quality of Health Care

Unemployment rates are declining and more people are acquiring health insurance coverage through the Affordable Care Act. Less than half of children on Medical Assistance receive annual preventive dental care. Elderly and disabled residents often do not access the services that are available to help them stay in their homes. There are limited low-cost services for medical, dental, and mental health available in the county or within a reasonable distance for residents.

**Community Health Profiles**

*Dakota*  
COUNTY

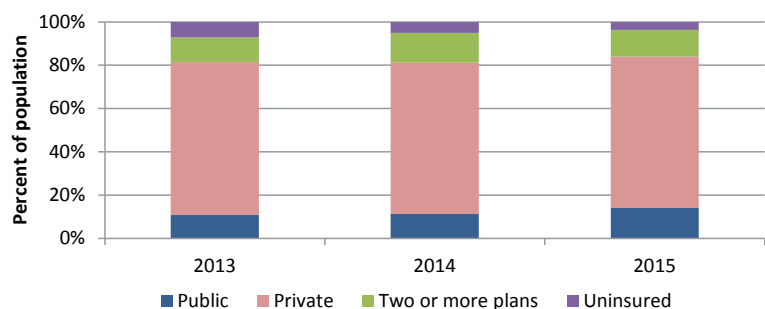
## Dakota County health system

- There are three hospitals in Dakota County (Fairview Ridges, Regina Medical Center, Northfield Hospital), with a total of 244 beds. There were 14,498 acute inpatient admissions and 76,893 emergency room registrations in 2014.
- There are 36 primary care clinics in Dakota County. In 2014, there were an estimated 290 practicing primary care physicians.
- In 2015, an estimated 259 dentists were professionally active in Dakota County.

## Health insurance coverage

- In 2015, an estimated four percent of Dakota County residents were uninsured, slightly below the state (4.5 percent). This was a decrease from seven percent in 2010.

**Health Insurance by Type of Insurance  
Dakota County, 2013-2015**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

- It is difficult to measure the number of state and county residents who are underinsured, but given the increase in high-deductible plans, use of health savings accounts and limited benefit plans, it is likely that an increasing percentage of people are underinsured.
- The Affordable Care Act that was implemented in 2014 has had a major impact on health insurance coverage in Minnesota. In the first six months of 2014, the number of uninsured Minnesotans dropped by 41 percent.

## Minnesota Health Care Programs

- In 2015, 84,850 Dakota County residents were ever eligible for one of the state's publicly-funded health care programs (Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare).
- In 2015, the payments through Minnesota Health Care Programs for care for Dakota County residents totaled \$640.5 million, an increase from \$602.2 million in 2014.

## Access to medical care

- Twenty-one percent of Dakota County adults ages 25 and older delayed or did not get needed medical care in the previous 12 months (2014). Among those who delayed care, 76 percent said it was due to cost or lack of insurance.
- In 2014, three percent of Dakota County adults aged 25 and older did not have a usual place they go for medical care.
- Dakota County hospitals provided \$16.1 million in uncompensated care in 2014, an eight percent decrease from 2013.

## Long term care

- Licensed facilities in the county include 19 supervised living facilities with a total of 170 beds; 115 housing facilities with services, including 63 that provide assisted living; and 10 nursing homes with 951 beds.
- In 2015, the average long-term care spending per person in Dakota County was: \$21,408 for people over 65 and \$29,284 for people with a disability.

## Emergency Medical Services

- In 2015, the Dakota Communications Center handled 291,000 - 911 calls for police and more than 22,000 calls for fire and EMS.

## Dental care

- Dakota County children ages 3-18 enrolled in Medical Assistance who had a preventive dental visit in 2014 included 39 percent of children ages 3-5, 50 percent of children ages 6-14, and 39 percent of adolescents ages 15-18.
- Many dentists in the county have waiting lists for new Medical Assistance patients.

## Quality of care and patient safety

- From 2011-2015, there were 33 adverse events in Dakota County hospitals. One death resulted and 22 events caused serious disability.
- In 2014, 71-82 percent of patients gave their Dakota County hospital one of the top two ratings – similar to the state.
- From 2013-2015, there were three substantiated complaints posted against three Dakota County long-term care facilities and home health providers.



## About this Community Health Profile

For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, contact: Melanie Countryman, Epidemiologist ([melanie.countryman@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:melanie.countryman@co.dakota.mn.us) or 651-554-6131)

## For more information:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Minnesota Department of Health [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)
- Minnesota Community Measurement [www.mncm.org](http://www.mncm.org)
- Minnesota Department of Human Services <http://www.mn.gov/dhs/>
- Kaiser Family Foundation [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)



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