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.

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.

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 14,537 acute inpatient admissions and 86,618 emergency room registrations at these hospitals in 2017.
- There are 38 primary care clinics in Dakota County. In 2016, there were an estimated 275 practicing primary care physicians.
- In 2017, an estimated 283 dentists were professionally active in Dakota County.

Health insurance coverage
- In 2017, an estimated five percent of Dakota County residents were uninsured, similar to the state. This was a decrease from seven percent in 2013.
- 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.
Minnesota Health Care Programs

- In 2017, 89,638 Dakota County residents were ever eligible for one of the state’s publicly-funded health care programs (Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare).
- In 2017, the payments through Minnesota Health Care Programs for care for Dakota County residents totaled $681.7 million, an increase from $650.8 million in 2016.

Access to medical care

- Twenty-one percent of Dakota County adults ages 25 and older who needed medical care 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 $16.4 million in uncompensated care in 2017, a 16.5 percent increase from 2016.

Long term care

- Licensed facilities in the county include 18 supervised living facilities with a total of 174 beds; 122 housing facilities with services, including 76 that provide assisted living and 50 that provide dementia care; and 10 nursing homes with 921 beds.
- In 2017, the average long-term care spending per person in Dakota County was: $24,456 for people over 65 and $32,371 for people with a disability.

Emergency Medical Services

- In 2017, the Dakota Communications Center handled 300,203 - 911 calls for police and more than 24,845 calls for fire and EMS.

Dental Care

- Dakota County children ages 3-18 enrolled in Medical Assistance who had a preventive dental visit in 2015 included 37 percent of children ages 3-5, 46 percent of children ages 6-14, and 37 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 2013-2017, there were 32 adverse events in Dakota County hospitals. Two deaths resulted and 19 events caused serious injury or disability.
- In 2017, Dakota County hospitals all received a 4 or 5 overall star rating for patient experience.
- From 2014-2018, there were 43 substantiated complaints posted against 28 Dakota County long-term care facilities and home health providers.

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 [www.mn.gov/dhs/](http://www.mn.gov/dhs/)
- Kaiser Family Foundation [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)