

# Access to Health Care in Florence County

## Florence County Health Department | 2017 Report

According to the Federal government's long-term health plan *Healthy People 2020*, access to comprehensive, quality health care services is important for the achievement of health equity and for increasing the quality of life for everyone. This report will address the availability of care as well as barriers to care for our population.

The collaborative process to assess the health care services for planning purposes include: clinical preventive services, emergency services, urgent care, occupational medicine, ambulatory care (primary and specialty), and dental treatment (Public Health Accreditation Board 7.1.1).

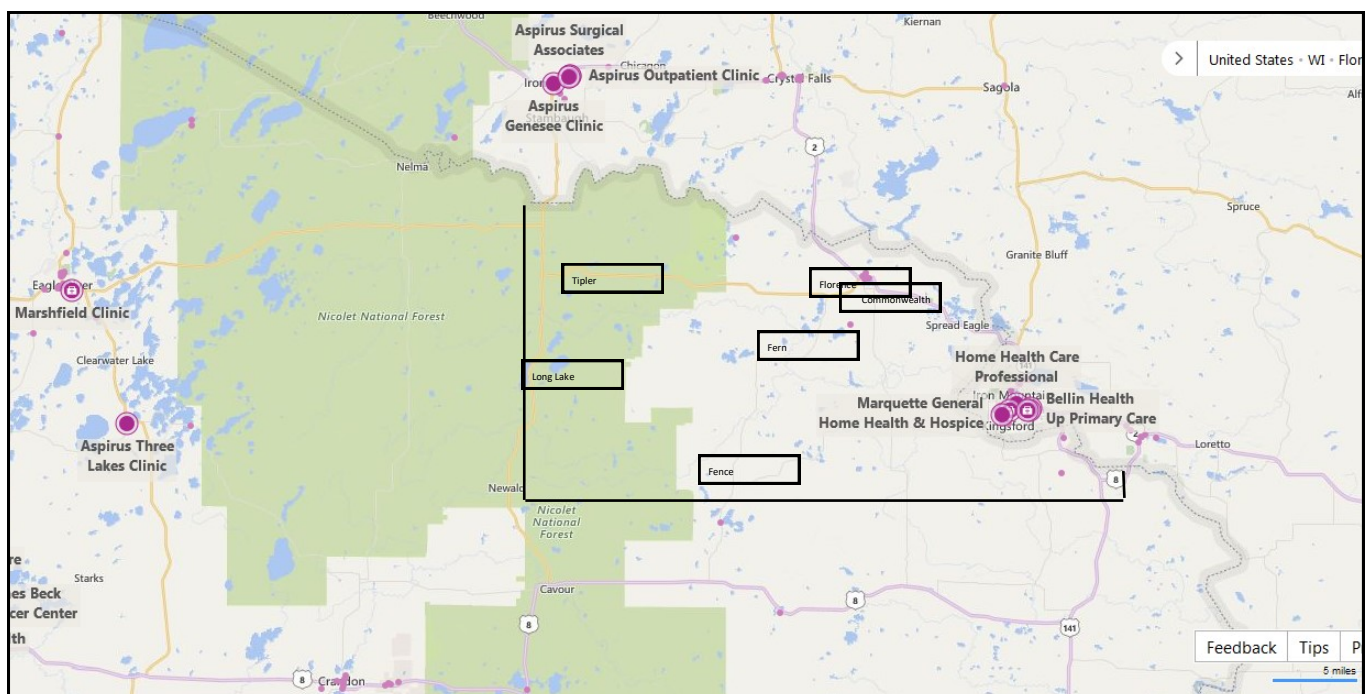
## How was this report developed?

An Access to Care Coalition was formed in fall of 2014. Members include representatives of the Florence County Health Department (FCHD), Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Florence County Human Services, Florence School District and the Florence Medical Clinic. The report is a result of discussions and contributions from these coalition participants. Tools used include the County Health Rankings and map analysis.

## Where can Florence County residents go for clinical preventative services, emergency services, urgent care, occupational medicine and ambulatory care?

Florence County covers 488 square miles and has a population of 4023 living in eight townships. On the northeastern side of the county, near the border of Iron Mountain, Michigan, are the towns of Florence, Commonwealth, Fern, Homestead and Aurora. In the western part of the county near the border of Iron River, MI are Long Lake and Tipler. In the south is Fence.

There are no hospitals, mental health care facilities, dentists or specialists in Florence County. There are several health care networks with hospitals and other services across the border in Iron Mountain, Michigan. Dickinson County Healthcare System, Marquette Medical Center, and Bellin Health are all providers in Iron Mountain. The Oscar G. Johnson Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital is available to veterans and is also located in Iron Mountain. Providers in Iron Mountain are 5 to 10 miles away from Florence County residents living in the Town of Aurora and Homestead.



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### TOWN OF FLORENCE, COMMONWEALTH, FERN:

- **Clinical Preventative Services:** Florence Medical Center has one medical doctor and one physician assistant.
- **Emergency Services:** Florence Volunteer Emergency Medical Service/Rescue Squad covers Florence, Commonwealth, Fern and Spread Eagle.
- **Urgent Care:** None
- **Occupational Medicine:** None
- **Ambulatory Care:** Florence Medical Center provides limited services including physical therapy, laboratory and radiological services and before school walk-in services.
- **Dental Treatment:** None

*\*Residents in the eastern part of the county may be closer to Dickinson County Healthcare Systems, Bellin Health, Marquette Medical System, and the Oscar G. Johnson Veteran's Hospital in Iron Mountain, Michigan.*

### TOWN OF HOMESTEAD AND AURORA:

- **Clinical Preventative Services:** None
- **Emergency Services:** Aurora Volunteer Emergency Medical Service/Rescue Squad covers Aurora and Homestead.
- **Urgent Care:** None
- **Occupational Medicine:** None
- **Ambulatory Care:** None
- **Dental Treatment:** None

*\*For residents of Homestead and Aurora, the nearest providers are generally located in Iron Mountain, Michigan as listed above.*

### TOWN OF LONG LAKE AND TIPLER:

- **Clinical Preventative Services:** None
- **Emergency Services:** Long Lake Volunteer Emergency Medical Service/Rescue Squad covers Long Lake. Tipler Volunteer Emergency Medical Service/Rescue Squad covers Tipler.
- **Urgent Care:** None
- **Occupational Medicine:** None
- **Ambulatory Care:** None
- **Dental Treatment:** None

*\*Residents in the western part of the county are closer to Northstar Health Systems in Iron River, Michigan.*

### TOWN OF FENCE:

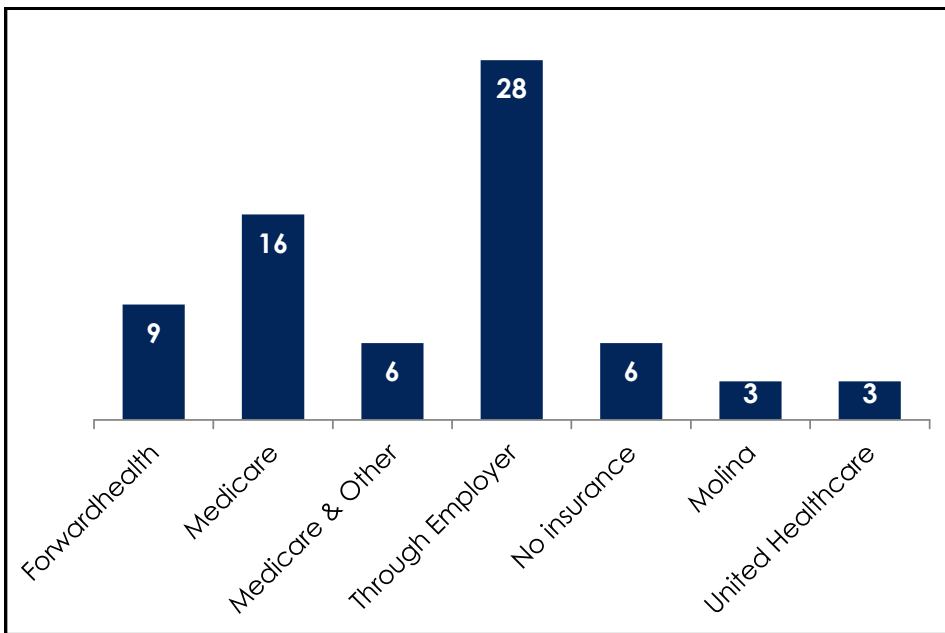
- **Clinical Preventative Services:** None
- **Emergency Services:** Fence Volunteer Emergency Medical Service/Rescue Squad covers Fence.
- **Urgent Care:** None
- **Occupational Medicine:** None
- **Ambulatory Care:** None
- **Dental Treatment:** None

*\*For residents of Fence, the nearest provider is Ministry Health in Laona, Wisconsin.*

# What barriers prevent Florence County residents from getting needed health care?

Florence County Health Department conducted both Focus Groups and Community Survey's in 2016 at multiple locations throughout the community including: Chapin Heights Apartments, Terrace Apartments, ADRC Meal Sites, Florence Flu Clinics, and local grocery stores. There were seventy-four survey participants. The following results were compiled and evaluated by the Florence County Access to Health Care Coalition.

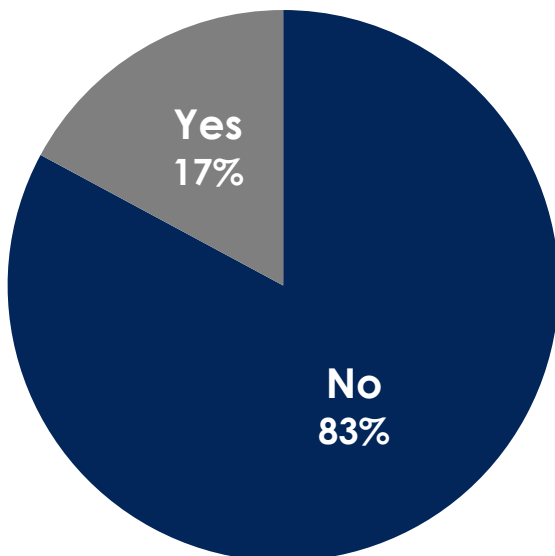
## Survey Question: Who is your insurance provider?



## Survey Question: What is covered by your insurance?

- Medical, Dental & Vision - 22
- Medical & Dental - 4
- Medical & Vision - 9
- Medical only - 24
- No insurance - 4
- Not sure - 5

## Survey Question: In the past 12 months, have you ever needed to see a doctor but did not?



### If yes, what was the reason?

The most cited reason with seven responses was that it was **too expensive** or insurance plan had a high deductible. Other reasons given were:

- No transportation
- Don't like doctors
- More than one visit required

# Access to Health Care Barriers/Causative Factors

## Too Expensive/Uninsured or Underinsured

Assessing responses from surveys and focus groups, when responding to the question “In the past 12 months, have you ever needed to see a doctor but did not?”, the most cited answer was that care was not affordable. Respondents listed high deductibles, high co-pays and no prescription coverage as main concerns.

## Lack of Transportation

### Non-urgent Care

Rural areas create geographical barriers for community members; especially those with low income. As evidenced by the map on the first page, many of our residents in outlying areas need to travel 20 miles or more to obtain healthcare. This can be a hardship for families who don't have access to a reliable vehicle or are challenged by high fuel prices. Florence County does not have public transportation infrastructure, which contributes to lack of access in getting non-emergency care. Medical Transportation Management (MTM) is available to reimburse for medical appointments, but may not be fully utilized due to lack of awareness. In addition, residents who qualify by age or disability, may use transportation provided through an ADRC bus for medical related appointments in Florence County or Iron Mountain, Michigan providers.

However, due to lack of EMS volunteers, more calls are being sent to Beacon Ambulance which translates into longer response times. Sheriff's Department dispatchers are able to send out the nearest squad in response to a 911 call. Agreements with neighboring counties and Michigan-based Beacon Ambulance can be called upon to provide emergency care and transport to the nearest hospital.

**Dental Care** is available in surrounding counties for insured or cash only patients. The nearest Medicaid Dental provider is located over one hour away in Lakewood, Rhinelander, or Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin.

**Mental Health Care** can be obtained through the Marinette County ADAPT clinic, or various private practices most are located in Iron Mountain, Michigan.

## Summary

In conclusion, Florence County has a collaborative system to assess the availability of health care services to the population. Through the Access to Health Care Coalition and other stakeholders, data is shared to identify and address populations which may be un-served or under-served. Barriers to health care services applicable to the community such as geographic (lack of transportation), health care system capacity (lack of dental, vision and mental health providers) and financial (lack of health insurance) are also identified. Sharing the availability of health care and barriers to care evidences work to identify possible gaps that exist for planning to assist populations in receiving needed services. When barriers are identified, strategies may be developed and implemented to address them and improve access to health care services. (Public Health Accreditation Board 7.2)