

Hospital examines transportation effects on health

VIRGINIA MASON MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON STATE



“The Road Traffic Fatalities Exposure Rate and Housing and Transportation Affordability indicators were great additions to the data we highlight in our report.”

— Elissa Fay Southward,
Community Health Supervisor,
Virginia Mason Memorial

Kids at Memorial’s spring health and fitness event have fun while learning healthy habits. Photo Courtesy Yakima Memorial Hospital

VIRGINIA MASON MEMORIAL SERVES THREE COUNTIES AND 14 RURAL COMMUNITIES in central Washington with a population of approximately 247,000. The hospital’s service area includes Yakima County, which is home to more than 75,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers as well as the Yakama Nation Reservation. The average household income in Yakima County is 25 percent less than the state’s average.

The Transportation and Health Tool is an online resource that provides state and metropolitan area transportation professionals with easy access to data and strategies to improve public health through transportation planning and policy. The tool was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Transportation, in partnership with the American Public Health Association.

THT APPLICATION

- Use THT indicator data to help develop the hospital’s 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment

THT INDICATORS USED

- Housing and Transportation Affordability
- Road Traffic Fatalities Exposure Rate
- Commute Mode Share

EXPLORE THE THT:

www.transportation.gov/transportation-health-tool

Memorial hospital completed its 2016 [community health needs assessment](#) (CHNA), which uses key metrics to compare Yakima County to the rest of Washington State. For the first time in its CHNA process, Memorial is examining how transportation and the built environment affect the health of its patients. Memorial used the *Housing and Transportation Affordability* indicator from the Transportation and Health Tool to support the Social and Economic Determinants of Health section of its CHNA. Social determinants of health, defined as “conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks”¹, can influence health more than clinical care. Community conditions, such as housing and transportation affordability contribute to health disparities and are important to consider in a CHNA. Memorial also used the THT *Road Traffic Fatalities Exposure Rate* and *Commute Mode Share* indicators in the Physical Environments section. These indicators will help pinpoint opportunities for community health improvements in Yakima County.

In addition to health data, Memorial obtained community input on top health priorities for its CHNA. Feedback was received from over 60 organizations including state, local, and tribal health departments; health care providers; community-based organizations and groups representing members of underserved, low-income, and minority populations; and churches, schools, and businesses.

Memorial considers patient diversity in its everyday work and strategic planning. The CHNA identified health equity as one of the top priority areas. Health equity will be a main focus of Memorial’s implementation plan, to be released in February 2017. As evidenced by the many partners involved with the CHNA, Memorial recognizes the value of multi-sector collaboration to advance health equity.

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¹ 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment. Virginia Mason Memorial. <https://www.yakimamemorial.org/pdf/about/community-hna-2016.pdf>