



Community Health Profile

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

Many people who can't access health insurance through an employer are not able to afford the cost of health insurance available through the Affordable Care Act, resulting in an increase in uninsured residents.

The healthcare workforce has experienced a recovery since the COVID-19 pandemic, but shortages remain, particularly in nursing and long-term 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

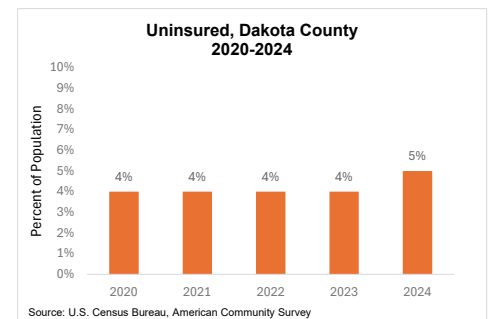
- There are three hospitals in Dakota County (Fairview Ridges, Northfield Hospital, and Regina Medical Center*). Fairview Ridges and Northfield Hospital have a total of 187 beds. There were 12,839 acute inpatient admissions and 84,854 emergency room registrations at these hospitals in 2024.

**Starting in 2022, United Hospital and Regina Hospital merged into a single hospital entity. For this reason, these counts do not include Regina Medical Center.*

- There are 33 primary care clinics in Dakota County. In 2025, there were an estimated 360 practicing primary care physicians.
- In 2025, an estimated 110 dentists were professionally active in Dakota County.

Health insurance coverage

- In 2024, an estimated five percent of Dakota County residents were uninsured. This is slightly higher than 2022 (four percent) and similar to the state (five percent).
- 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 2024, 103,463 Dakota County residents were ever eligible for a Medical Assistance program.
- In 2024, the payments through Minnesota Health Care Programs (Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare) for care for Dakota County residents totaled \$1.4 billion, an increase from \$1.2 billion in 2023.

Access to medical care

- Nineteen percent of Dakota County adults aged 25 and older who needed medical care delayed or did not get needed medical care in the previous 12 months in 2023, a decrease from 21 percent in 2014.
- Among those who delayed care, 37.5 percent said it was due to cost or lack of insurance, 38 percent because they could not find a provider or get an appointment, and 27 percent said they had work, family or other duties.
- MHealth Fairview Ridges Hospital and Northfield Hospital provided \$7.8 million in uncompensated care in 2024, a 48 percent increase from 2023.

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Long term care

- Licensed facilities in the county include 10 supervised living facilities with a total of 104 beds; 218 assisted living facilities, including 53 that provide dementia care; and nine nursing homes with 857 beds (Data current as of 1/7/2026).
- From 2020 to 2024, the population receiving long-term services and support increased by 18 percent. In 2024, 9,149 Dakota County residents were receiving long-term services and supports – 8,691 in the home and 472 in institutions.



Emergency Medical Services

- In 2025, the Dakota Communications Center handled 294,368 calls – 169,244 were 911 calls.

Dental Care

- Dakota County children ages 3-18 enrolled in Medical Assistance who had a preventive dental visit in 2024 included 35 percent of children ages 3-5, 43 percent of children ages 6-9, 41 percent of children ages 10-14, and 31 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 2020-2024, there were 53 adverse events in Dakota County Hospitals. 22 events caused serious injury or disability and two caused death.
 - In 2024, 2 of 3* Dakota County hospitals received a 3-star or higher rating for patient experience, one received a 4-star overall rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.
- *Starting in 2022, United Hospital and Regina Hospital merged into a single hospital entity. For this reason, these data do not include Regina Medical Center.*
- From 2021-2025, 89 substantiated complaints posted against 42 Dakota County long-term care facilities and home health providers were resolved.

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For more information:

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

The Dakota County Public Health Department is accredited by the national Public Health Accreditation Board.

For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, email public.health@co.dakota.mn.us or call 952.891.7500.

