



Understanding the

# Health & Wellness

Needs of the St. Paul Community

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Reported by Fairview Health Services | August 2021

**Fairview**



# Introduction

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For generations, we've witnessed the community health indicators for those living in and around St. Paul's most racially diverse neighborhoods decline. Progress toward health equity will require healthcare, community and policy makers to rethink how, together, **we can create health, remove barriers to healthcare and dismantle the systemic barriers that impede wellness**, especially among communities of color.

Fairview Health Services is committed to improving the health of St. Paul, as a provider of healthcare and an anchor in the St. Paul community. **We are committed to moving forward, toward equity** through innovation and collaboration and by acknowledging the history and decisions that have created the disparities that are present today.

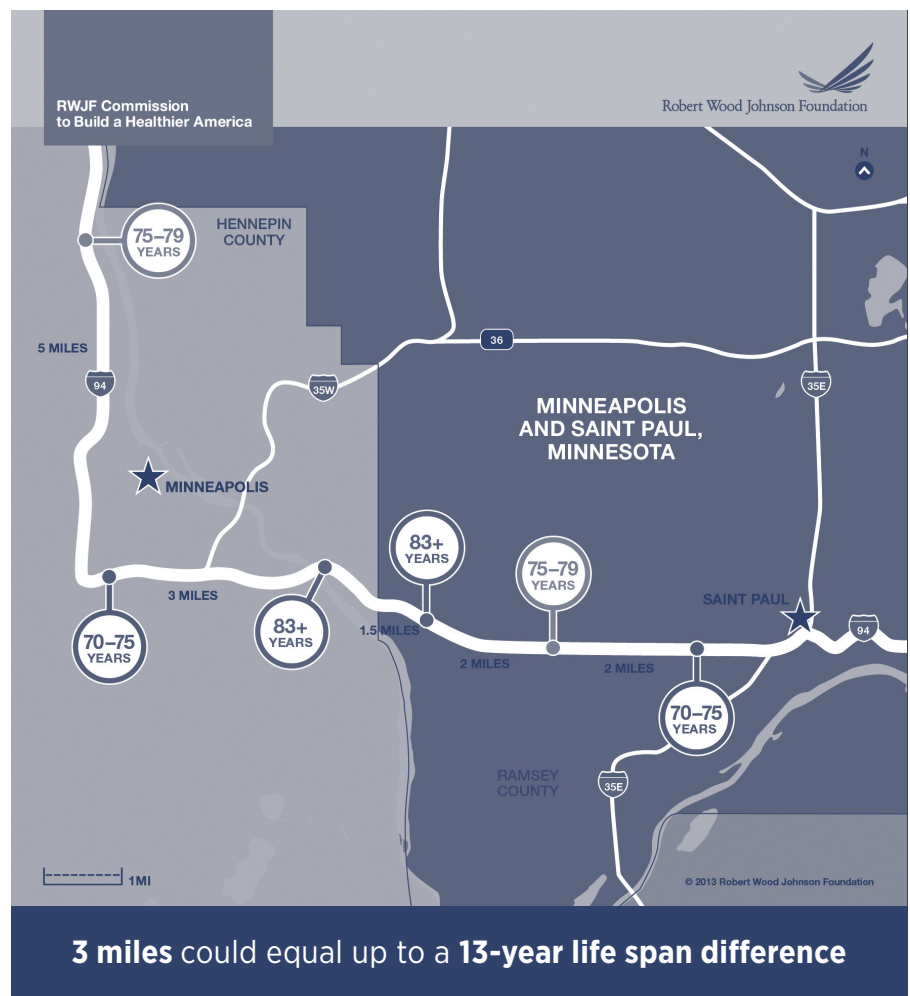
The following report summarizes **survey data collected from St. Paul residents, Fairview**

**employees in the East Metro, former and current Fairview patients** who live in and around downtown St. Paul, and **nonprofits** serving the St. Paul and East Metro community. The purpose of the survey was to **understand gaps in health and wellness services**, as well as barriers people face in achieving holistic wellness in St. Paul. These insights are important in building a new model for health and wellness services in downtown St. Paul, leveraging Fairview's role as a healthcare system as well as an employer, purchaser and investor in the community. The data should also be heeded by community leaders, policy leaders and businesses who, along with health systems, see the impacts of a community's lack of health and wellness every day.

We welcome questions, discussion and ideas in considering these insights from the St. Paul community. **Innovation, progress and impact will be achieved together, by our community, for our community.**

# Social determinants of health are driving unequal health outcomes in St. Paul

Only 20% of a person's health is determined by the time they spend inside the walls of a hospital or clinic. The other 80% of health is influenced by things like education, job status, family and social support, income and safety (socioeconomic factors); the stability and safety of one's physical surroundings (physical environment); as well as diet and exercise, substance use and sexual activity (health behaviors). These factors are considered "Social Determinants of Health."



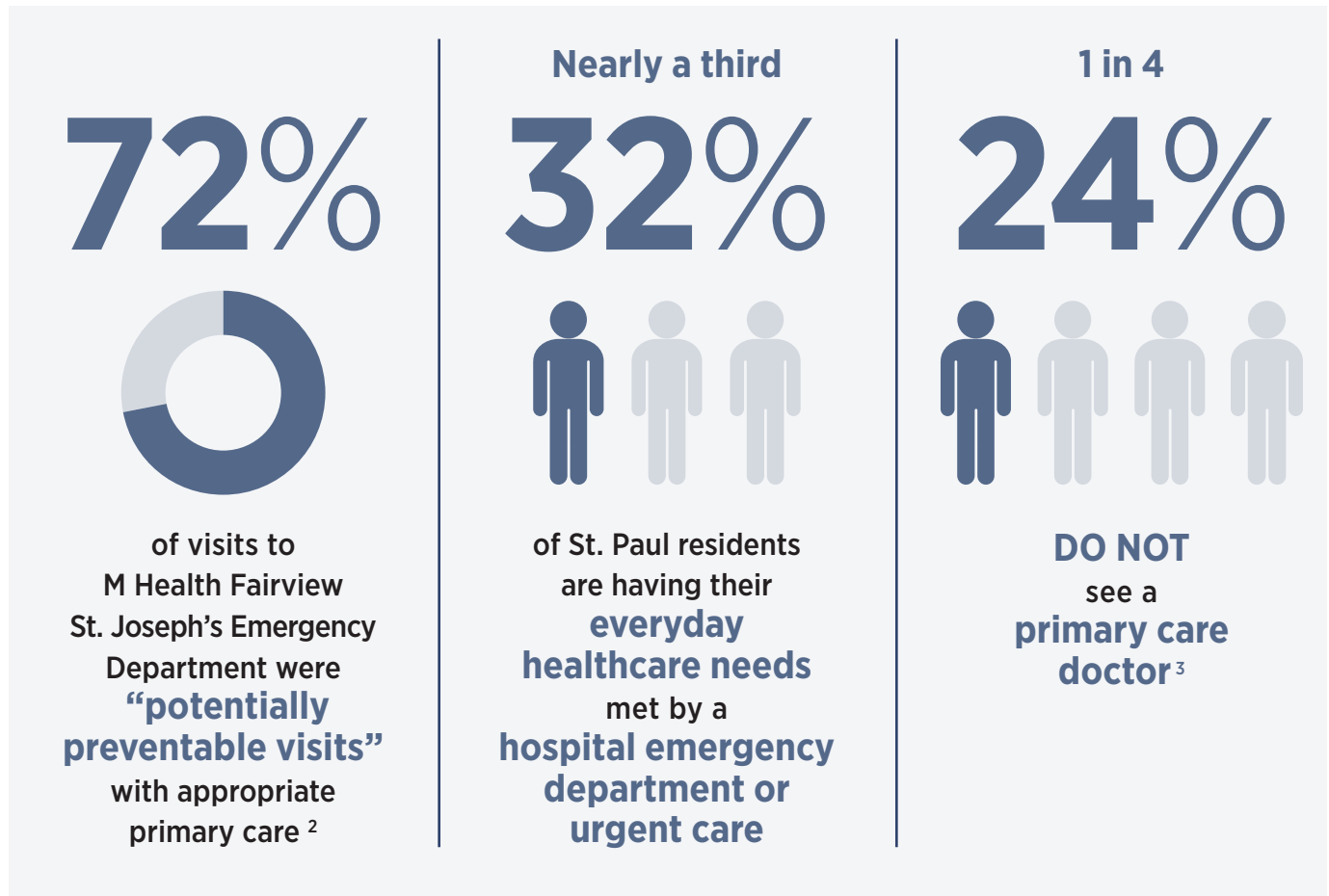
## UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

"Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) are economic and social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources and can influence individual and group differences in health status. SDoH contribute to: poor health outcomes, lack of access to adequate care, increased chronic stress, preventable diseases, and obesity rates. Structural differences in opportunities to be healthy result in health inequities."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Health Equity Data Analysis Final Report, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health, 2017

# These inequities are on display in the way people access healthcare

In too many cases, often due to a variety of barriers, people delay seeking care or managing their health until it reaches the point of a serious and costly health event or emergency. Seeking care in an urgent care or emergency department comes at a higher cost to patients, and isn't the right place to address underlying health challenges, prevent future health emergencies or create better health.



<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Hospital Association

<sup>3</sup> Fairview Health Services Community Health and Wellness Survey

# Our commitment to health equity

Fairview Health Services, together with our partners the University of Minnesota and University of Minnesota Physicians, share a responsibility to positively impact health and well-being in the communities of which we are a part. We understand our unique role in society as one of Minnesota's largest employers and believe deeply in our long-standing commitment to work toward better health, inside and outside our organizations. We do so by serving the people of Minnesota, caring for our patients, and investing in the people and partnerships that make us stronger.



## HOPE COMMISSION

In 2020, M Health Fairview embarked on a multi-year transformational effort to drive more equitable outcomes and inclusive environments and experiences for our patients, employees and communities. Our mission is to become the top choice for all patients, healthcare providers, employees, students and faculty who wish to provide and receive the highest quality of healthcare and who also value health equity and diversity, equity and inclusion.



## FAIRVIEW COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT

Through years of partnership, Fairview has moved from transactional to transformational community engagement. Today, we bring the commitment and resources of our organization to the community without a predetermined solution, but rather a desire to build trust, listen intently and collaboratively respond to existing needs and opportunities.



## ANCHOR MISSION

Fairview is an anchor institution in the Twin Cities, and broader Minnesota community, and Minnesota's only member of the Healthcare Anchor Network. Our success relies on the strength, diversity and opportunity that lies within the communities we serve. We are committed to intentionally applying our long-term, place-based economic power and human capital, in partnership with our community, to mutually benefit the long-term well-being of both.

# Mandate for change

In 2019, we undertook an extensive series of conversations with more than 300 patients, providers and community stakeholders to better understand how Fairview, as a provider of healthcare and an anchor in the St. Paul and East Metro community, could help address issues of access, cross-cultural dynamics and the Social Determinants of Health.

These conversations indicated a strong desire for more infrastructure, resources and community systems to support people holistically.

## WHAT WE HEARD

“There’s just a need for more **education and knowledge**.... If families are healthier, our community is healthier.”

“We don’t have people dedicated specifically to **helping people navigate the system** but that’s one gap in care I wish we could bridge.”

“We need to **build awareness** about what mental health is. People don’t even know what to ask for, or that they might need help.”

“But I think most people, yeah, they count themselves out because they don’t have insurance, or they won’t be able to pay. They don’t know how to **find the right resources**.”

## Improving the health of St. Paul

In 2020, based on community input, we decided to repurpose St. Joseph’s Hospital into a space that intentionally focuses on promoting health and the many factors that create health and holistic well-being.

In doing so, we have undergone an extensive discovery process, to understand all possible uses of the space, based on existing facilities and location. St. Joseph’s campus offers:

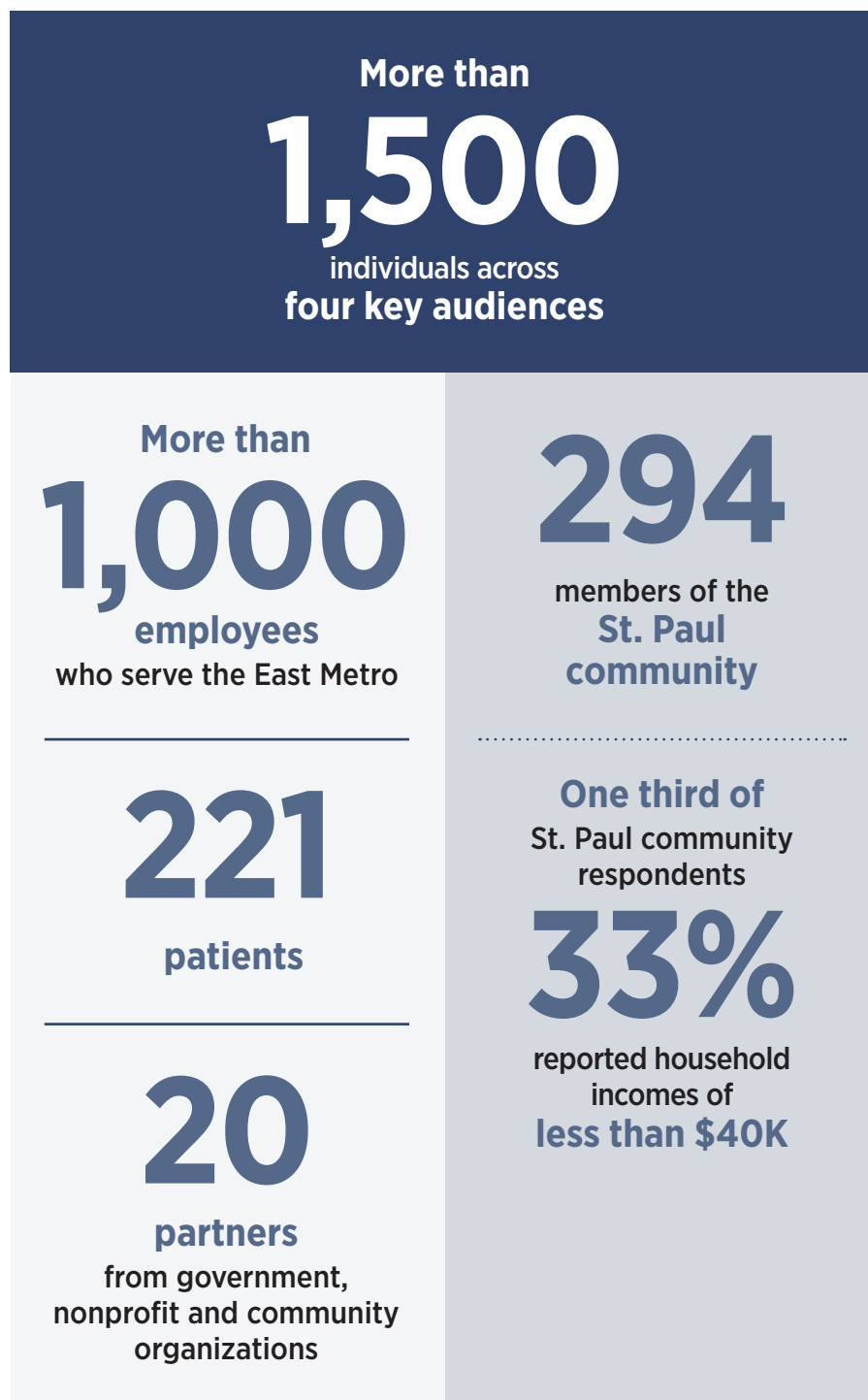
- 40,000 square feet of exam, procedure and care spaces
- Education and gathering space
- Pedestrian and transit access
- Convenient parking
- Commercial kitchen and food prep facilities



# Survey methodology

The St. Paul Community Survey was conducted by KRC Research, a third-party research firm, and fielded between June 8 and July 7, 2021. The survey was fielded online and by phone with 294 residents living in the zip codes in and surrounding downtown St. Paul. The survey was offered in five languages: English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali and Karen, the most common languages spoken by our East Metro patients. Survey data was weighted to mirror the Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey on key demographic variables, including gender, age and educational attainment.

Surveys of Fairview employees, patients and community partners were fielded by Fairview Health Services online between June 9 and June 23, 2021.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Fairview employees working in St. Paul and the East Metro were invited to participate in the survey. Patients who participated in the survey had previously opted in to respond to opinion research surveys from Fairview. Community partners who participated in the survey work for government, nonprofit, or community-oriented organizations that serve St. Paul and are members of the East Side Health and Well-being Collaborative.



## Key findings

Our research helped us gain insight into community needs in St. Paul and the East Metro. Specifically, we sought to understand:

- How can a centralized hub of health and wellness services promote prevention and address the negative impacts of Social Determinants of Health?
- Who will benefit most from a centralized hub of health and wellness resources?
- How can we create a space that eliminates barriers to wellness and promotes health equity?

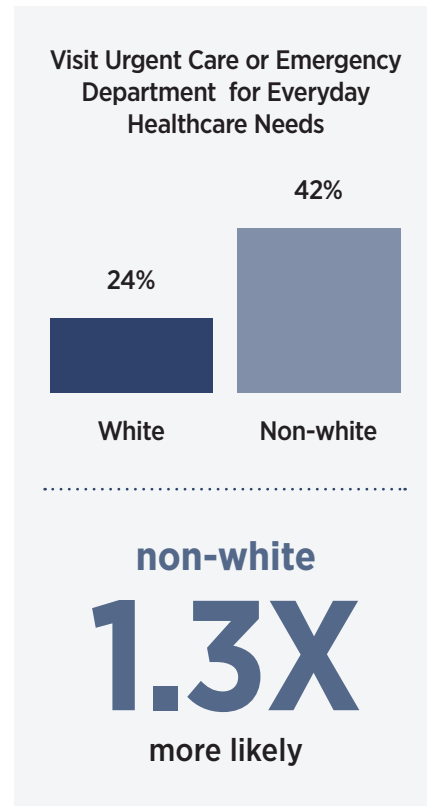
**To St. Paul residents, wellness means many things. Importantly, many view wellness as an active, ongoing endeavor to improve their whole health or achieve balance.**





## Nearly a third of community members said they go to an urgent care or emergency department to seek their everyday healthcare needs, and this number is even higher among non-white people.

- People who say they face a barrier to staying healthy are significantly more likely to visit an ER or urgent care to meet their everyday health needs (47%) compared to those who do not face a barrier (20%).
- 32% of people said they have their everyday healthcare needs met in an urgent care or an ER; people identifying as non-white (including Black, Asian, Latino or another race) were 1.3 times as likely (42%) to seek their everyday healthcare needs in an urgent care or ER compared to people who identified as white (24%).
- People who say they face a barrier to accessing the care they need when they are sick or have a medical need are significantly more likely to visit an urgent care clinic or emergency department for their healthcare.
- Of the people who said they visit a primary care or family doctor for their everyday healthcare needs, 15% said they access that care from a community, low-cost or public health clinic. People identifying as non-white were more than twice as likely (23%) to seek care at a community, low-cost or public health clinic compared to people who identified as white (11%).



## More than half of community members said they face barriers in getting care when they are sick or have a medical need.

- 54% percent of survey respondents said they face barriers to getting healthcare when they are sick or have a medical need. The most common barriers relate to a lack of knowledge or understanding about how and where to get the right care (37%), closely followed by concerns over costs and the logistics of receiving their care (36%).

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • I <b>don't know where to go</b> or who to go to                                | • I <b>don't have someone to watch my kids</b> while I see the doctor         |
| • I am <b>not sure the doctor will really help me</b> or answer all my questions | • I <b>don't have the technology needed</b> for virtual or video appointments |
| • I am <b>not sure I will be able to afford it</b>                               | • There <b>aren't choices or options</b> in my area                           |
| • I <b>don't have transportation</b> to appointments                             |   |

- Non-white respondents are more likely to say they face a barrier to getting care they need when they are sick or have a medical need (61%) compared to white respondents (50%).
- 64% of 18- to 35-year-olds say they face a barrier in getting the care they need when they are sick or have a health need.
- Women are more likely to say they face a barrier to getting care when they are sick or have a medical need.

## WOMEN COMPARED TO MEN

**4.3X**

“I worry the doctor  
will judge me”

**6X**

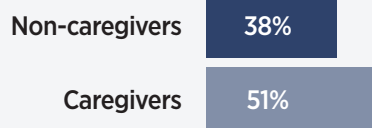
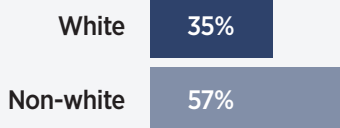
“I don’t have transportation  
to appointments”

**4.3X**

“I am not sure the doctor  
will really help me or answer  
all my questions”

## Even when not managing an illness or medical event, people are challenged to maintain their health.

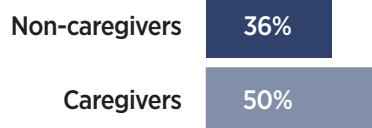
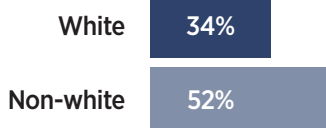
- Non-white people and those who identify as caregivers are significantly more likely to say they face a barrier to staying healthy compared to white people or people who are not caregivers.



## There is a demand among the community for more health and wellness services.

- Affordable healthcare centers that anyone can go to no matter financial or health insurance status; counseling, therapy, mental health and addiction treatment services; and affordable healthy and nutritious food options were the top-ranking options when respondents were asked to select what services the community needed more of.

## Desire for more counseling, therapy and other mental health and addiction treatment services is significantly higher among non-white people.



# Implications: Moving forward

This feedback from the community, as well as our patients, employees and community partners is vital in solidifying the path forward for the health and wellness hub. These insights have the following implications:

## 1. Strengthened our resolve that a centralized hub of health and wellness can have a positive impact as a reimagined space.

- Half of people (50%) agree that existing healthcare services in downtown do not meet the health needs of surrounding communities, especially for low-income people, communities of color and refugees.
- 61% of people are more aware of the unmet health needs in their community than they were before COVID-19.
- A majority of people familiar with plans to repurpose St. Joseph's campus believe it is a positive development for the community.

## 2. Affirmed that the community wants and will use these services, but we must remove barriers.

- People are likely to use services like affordable healthcare centers (59%); affordable vocational education and training opportunities (51%); counseling, therapy, mental health and addiction treatment services (57%); affordable healthy or nutritious food options (63%); and options for pharmacy needs and filling prescriptions (60%) if they were located in a single location in downtown St. Paul.
- 71% of people agree that factors such as education, access to safe and affordable housing, racial inequality, and employment have just as much impact on health in their community as care in a hospital or clinic.
- A majority of people agree that access to preventative care like regular doctor visits and upstream mental health services like counseling and therapy are as important to maintaining their health as access to a hospital or acute mental health or addiction care programs.

# 65%

of people surveyed agree that repositioning the St. Joseph's campus as a hub for affordable and accessible health and wellness services will improve the health of low-income people and communities of color in St. Paul.

# 77%

say they would be likely to use at least one of these services

Non-white:  
83%

Men:  
83%

18 to 35-year-olds:  
84%

Caregivers:  
89%

<sup>5</sup>Showing percentages for 5-7 on a 7-point scale.



### 3. Informed where we can work with community leaders and partners to meet unmet needs.

“We need **more places** for people to go to for **treatment and healthcare**. Most people don’t even go to the doctor because they either know they’re in a bad situation or have money problems.”

“**Easily accessible nutrition and healthcare**. My community would benefit from **therapy services** as well as **addiction services**.”

“Access to **affordable healthy foods** which need to be delivered or available for pickup in safe areas.”

“I have what I need, but I **worry about people less fortunate than me**.”

“**Education** as to why we need to be healthy.”

“More **services for mental health** which can help people to get out of stress and anxiety.”

“**Buena planificación y ejecución** para la salud pública.”

“**Affordable exercise** programs, affordable medical **massage** and **chiropractor**.”

“**Reliable transportation** to appointments and **shorter wait times**.”

“More affordable **fast healthy food** options.”

“**Dental services with short wait times to schedule an appointment**. It takes forever to get into local dentists these days.”

“More **healthy food** and affordable **vocational training programs**.”

## WE ARE MORE COMMITTED THAN EVER TO MAKING THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS HUB IN DOWNTOWN ST. PAUL...

- A place **focused on prevention...**
- A place where people can **improve their health** and all **aspects of wellness...**
- A place where **health disparities** and the **social determinants of health are addressed head on**, at their root causes...
- A place **shaped by those in the community with the greatest need.**

Our priority is to start by addressing the needs identified in the areas of primary care, mental health services and food and nutrition, but our vision extends further. With partners in the community, we hope to create a robust slate of programming and services in a central, easy to access location that helps community members make meaningful progress toward their wellness goals.

