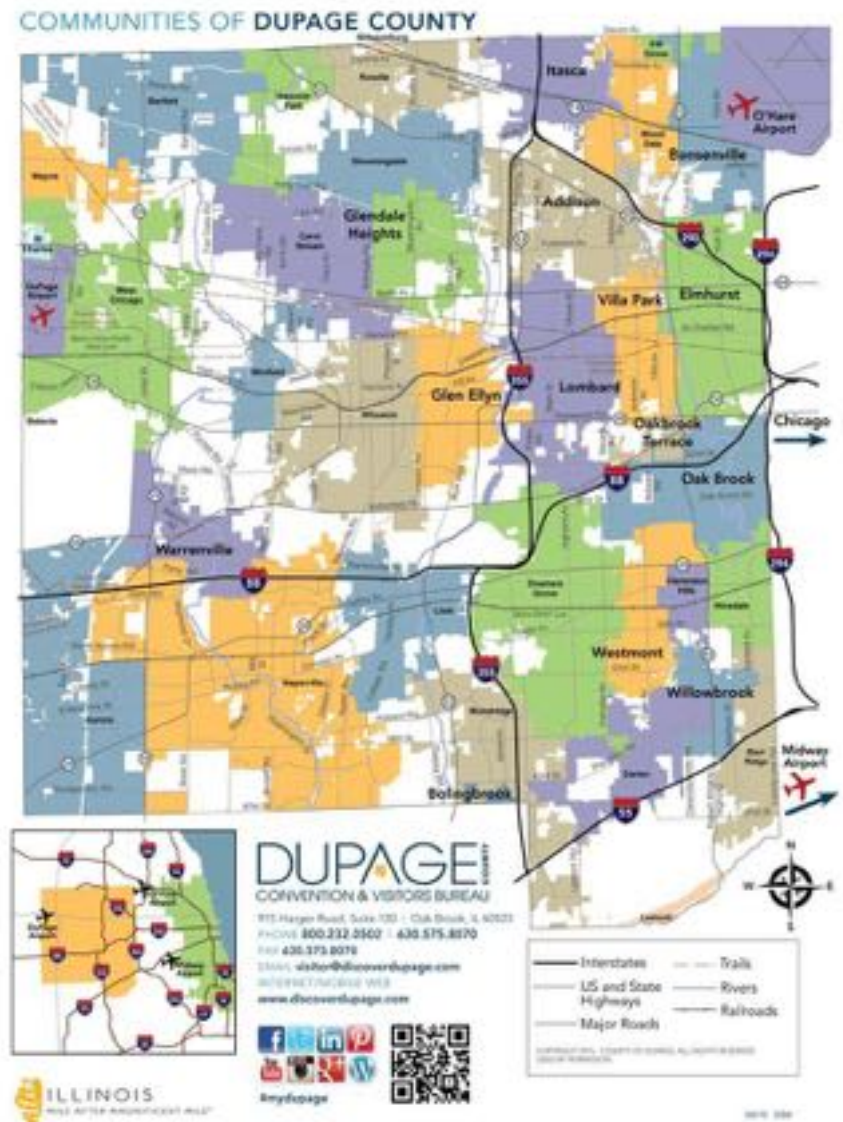




DuPage County in the Western Chicago suburbs faces several challenges in combating the substance use and mental health challenges in our area. We conducted a community needs assessment to identify our existing resources, identify service gaps, and assess the region's readiness to support a Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC) council.

We took a look at the current gaps, and performed a SWOT analysis to determine the strength of services as well as the county's recovery culture. We have also created an in-depth Resource Guide and Asset Map that contains a multitude of recovery



resources along a dozen or more sectors, with the aim of making resource navigation easy for DuPage residents. By identifying our strengths and gaps, we hope to foster further community collaboration in building out a more seamless system of care for our residents.

The information gathered from the community on Substance Use and Mental Health challenges was determined through the employment of a needs assessment survey disseminated to the community.

The areas that we chose to focus our questions on were related to previous gaps and concerns raised by community members in previous assessments and focus groups, feedback from the Council on perceived areas of need, and areas that are on our Strategic Plan: addressing the Fentanyl Crisis, residents who are unhoused or at risk of being unhoused, residents who are uninsured or underinsured, specific MAT services that have attached stigmas, safe syringe programs, prevention education in area schools and general feedback on areas that we may have overlooked. Additionally, we collected some demographic data that gives us a snapshot of who is seeking out services and why.

Some of the key findings from assessment:

- People felt as though there have been positive changes in the perception of substance use and mental health challenges and stigmas, but still room for further improvement.
- The efforts of IDHS SUPR, DuPage ROSC, and Federal efforts in addressing the opioid/fentanyl crisis have been successful in responding to the Fentanyl crisis.
- Folks felt as though DuPage County suffers from being a desert with regards to needs specifically for inpatient treatment, transitional housing for SUD, MHC, and emergency or temporary housing for the unhoused.
- Residents have empathy for people with substance use and mental health challenges, and the unhoused.

- People felt that some of the more polarizing harm reduction efforts such as MAT (methadone specifically, not merely buprenorphine/Suboxone[®]) and needle-exchange programs are effective methods and in need of expanded efforts.
- Our justice-involved folks in recovery felt ambivalence about the ability of the court system to treat substance use challenges.
- Folks described some of the main barriers to recovery services include transportation to and from services, lack of insurance or not enough insurance.
- Respondents seemed mostly unsure of whether or not current prevention education programs in area schools have been effective in curbing substance use among students

We also included an open-ended question for folks to submit any particular gaps that weren't asked about, or gaps they themselves may have struggled with:

- Transitional housing and sober living; frequency of vacancies at the available options.
- Treatment options for uninsured.
- Public transportation.
- Lack of providers that accept Medicare and Medicaid.
- Lack of distinct inpatient/residential/sober living options for SUD/MHC within DuPage County.
- MHC inpatient/residential treatment options do not have as many options as for SUD, if at all.
- Not an immediate distinguishable place in the public consciousness about knowledge of *where* to go for treatment, in the same way as knowing to go to which hospital; awareness of distinct options.
- Childcare while in treatment.
- Lack of programs that will take people who are unhoused and single, unlike as with parents with children.
- Communication barriers if English is not their first language.

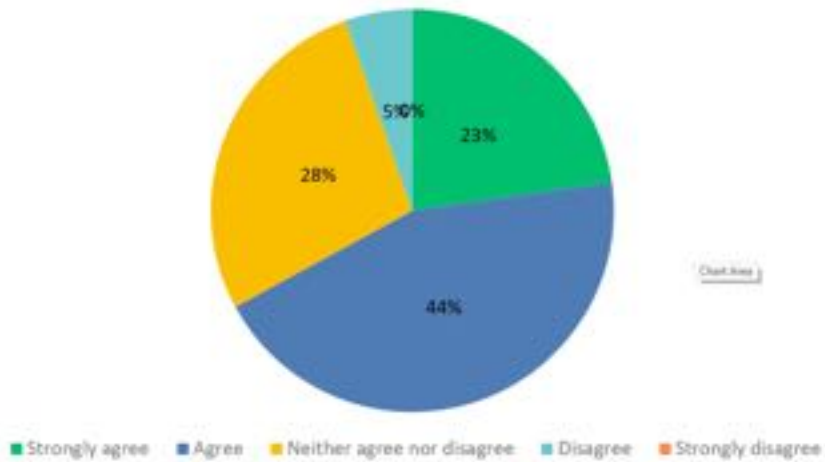
Based on the information gathered, DuPage ROSC was able to make some recommendations on how to fill current gaps and meet the demand for more equitable recovery services for all in our county:

- Continued advocacy for sober, supportive housing at various levels: campaigns, education/presentations for community partners, grassroots activism targeted at a city/township level.
- Creation and oversight of scholarship/voucher program that will provide medical transportation via rideshare apps like Uber Health.
- Increase the knowledge base of DuPage residents on the amount of SUD/MH services available via educations, collaborative resource events, and the expansion of ROSC projects like the Resource Guide and Map.
 - Advocacy for reliable, inexpensive childcare for parents needed treatment, or more treatment centers and sober living options that can accommodate children.
- ROSC will expand our Spanish-language access for referrals to service, but all organizations working on the recovery continuum should have alternatives to English whenever possible. This includes looking beyond only Spanish as primary language, as DuPage is home to several different groups speaking other languages (Polish, Russian, etc).
- Promotion of all pathways of Medication Assisted Recovery, including Methadone.
- Follow-up key informant interviews for the following sectors in 2025: gathering qualitative data from community members who do not have an attachment to recovery, SUD/MH, etc.

Breakdown of respondents:

Q1: Do you feel that the public programs responding to the fentanyl crisis have had a beneficial impact on the crisis?

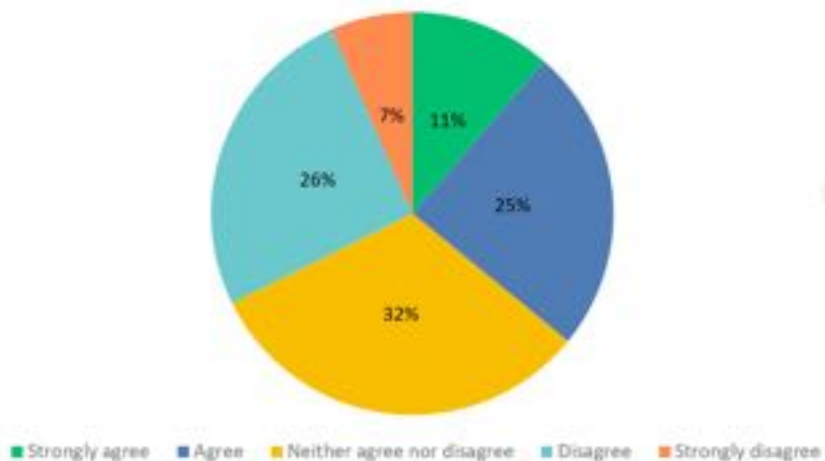
Answered: 167 Skipped: 0



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Q2: I feel that current prevention education programs in schools are effective at reducing rates of substance abuse.

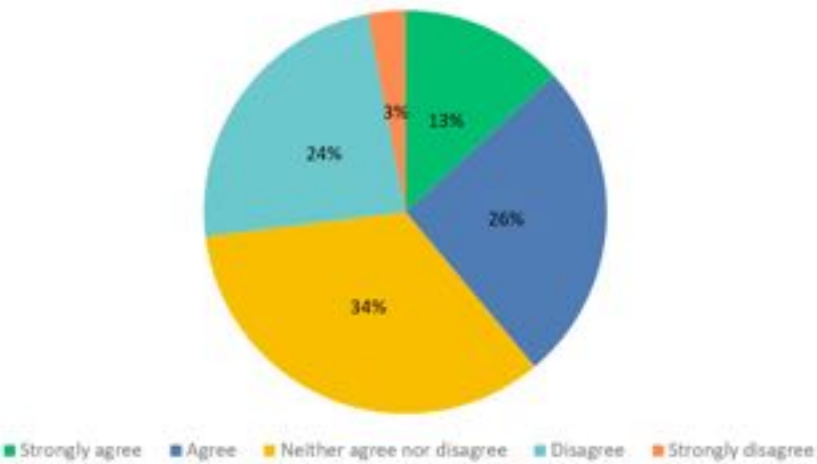
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Q3: I feel that the stigmas surrounding substance abuse in DuPage County are as strong as they were three years ago.

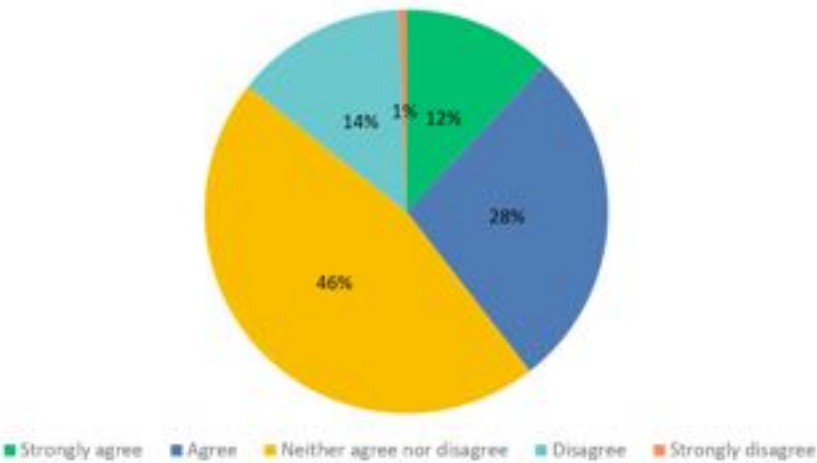
Answered: 167 Skipped: 0



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Q4: I feel that most of the unhoused people in DuPage County have a substance abuse challenge.

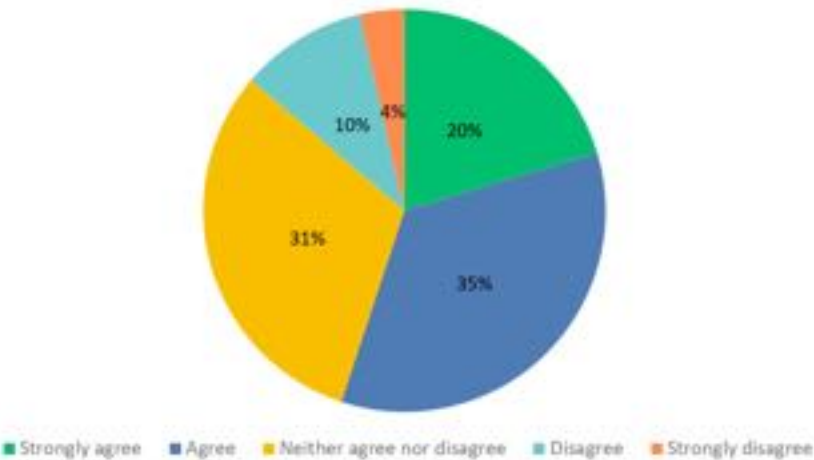
Answered: 167 Skipped: 0



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Q5: Do you think Methadone is a helpful medication for those living with opioid use challenges?

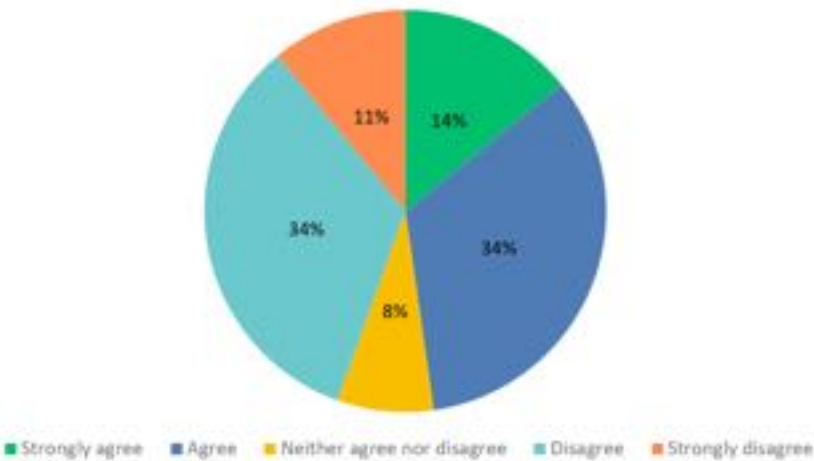
Answered: 167 Skipped: 0



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Q6: I know where to go for substance use treatment services if I do not have health insurance.

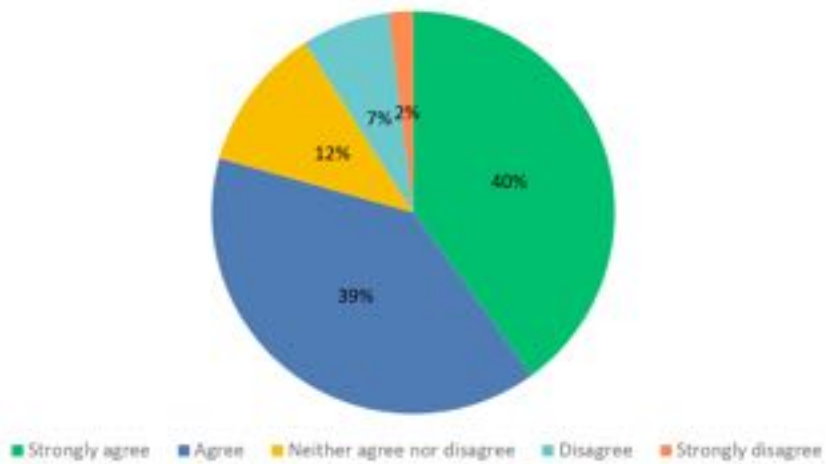
Answered: 155 Skipped: 12



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Q7: Needle exchanges, or syringe distribution programs, are an effective form of harm reduction.

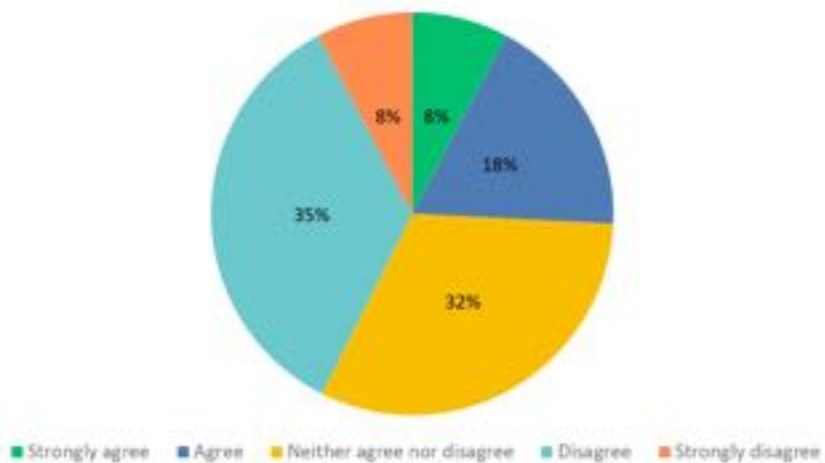
Answered: 155 Skipped: 12



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Q8: I feel that DuPage County offers enough culturally-competent substance abuse treatment services.

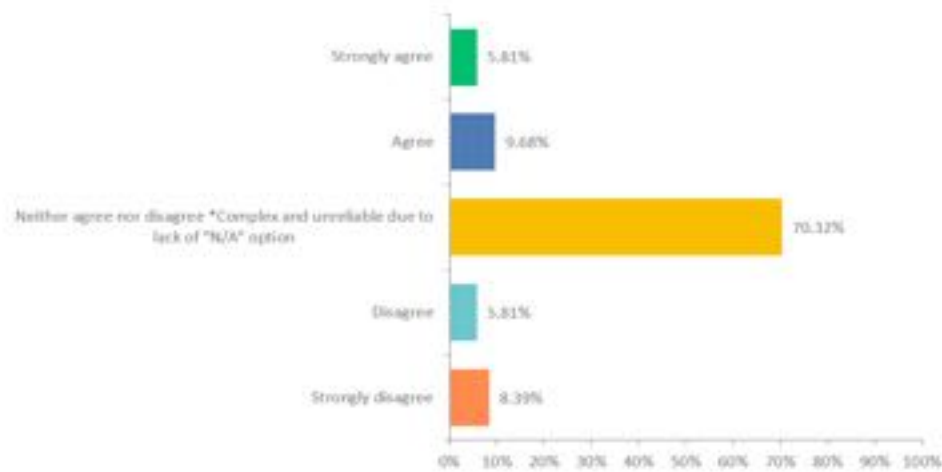
Answered: 155 Skipped: 12



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

Q9: If you currently are, or formerly were, involved in the criminal court system (probation, parole, court supervision, incarceration, etc.), do you feel you were offered enough treatment options to address your substance abuse challenges?

Answered: 155 Skipped: 12

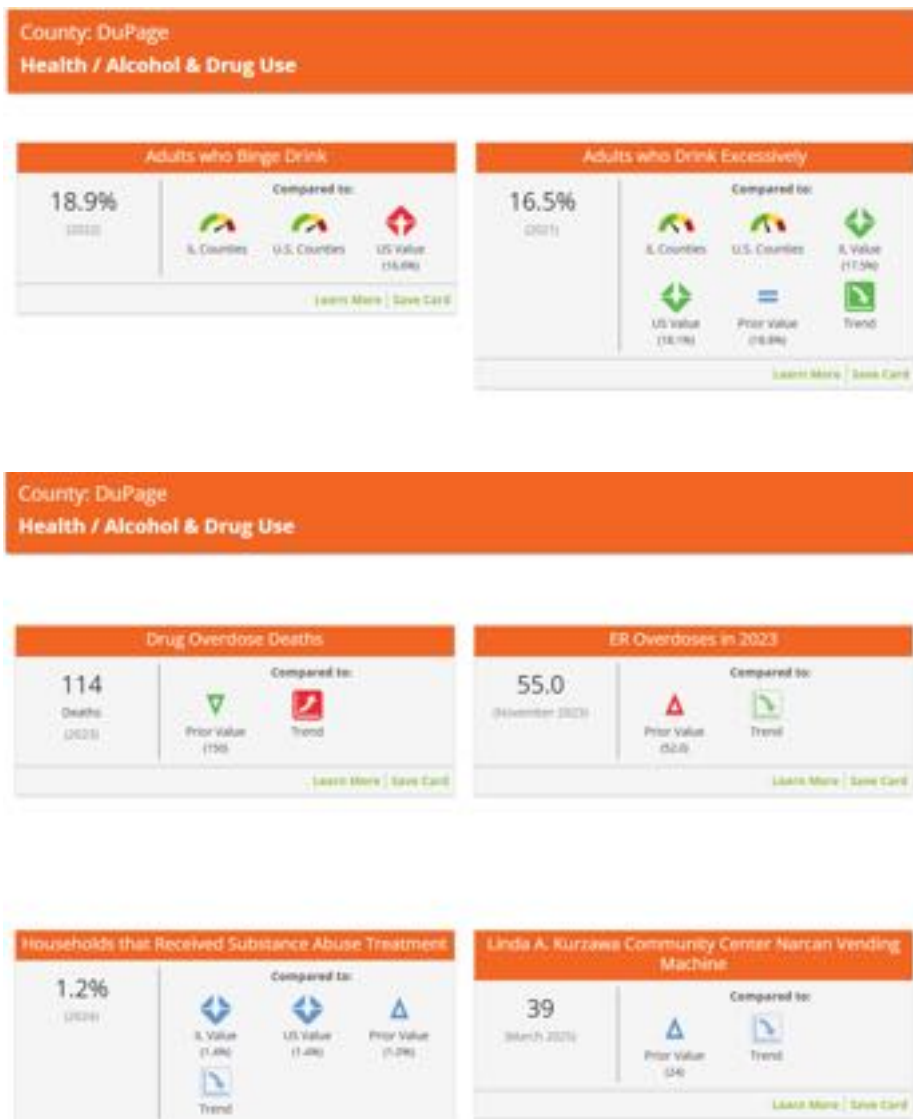


For the open ended question about gaps/barriers we may have missed, we created a wordcloud of the most submitted answers:

Q20 In your own words, what are the major challenges facing people seeking recovery in DuPage County?



Additionally, we looked at some of the data from the [Impact DuPage](#) dashboard, which is a multisector partnership working to create a shared understanding of community needs, priorities, and disparities, then using that knowledge to propel actions that improve the well-being of the DuPage County community. Some of the information that we collected and used to help form some recommendations, but also helps give a snapshot:



Health / Health Care Access & Quality



County: DuPage Health / Health Care Access & Quality



County: DuPage
Health / Medications & Prescriptions

Health / Mental Health & Mental Disorders

Adults Ever Diagnosed with Depression

16.3%
(2022)

Compared to:



IL Counties



U.S. Counties



US Value
(20.7%)

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Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to Suicide

10.3

Deaths per 100,000
population
(2018-2020)

Compared to:



U.S. Counties



IL Value
(13.8)



US Value
(13.8)



Prior Value
(9.8)



Trend



HP 2030 Target
(12.8)

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Depression: Medicare Population

16.0%
(2023)

Compared to:



IL Counties



U.S. Counties



IL Value
(15.0%)



US Value
(17.0%)



Prior Value
(15.0%)

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Frequent Mental Distress

11.2%

(2019)

Compared to:



IL Counties



U.S. Counties



IL Value
(12.7%)



US Value
(14.0%)



Prior Value
(11.0%)

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County: DuPage
Health / Mental Health & Mental Disorders

Households that Received Mental Healthcare Services

9.1%
(2024)

Compared to:



IL Value
(9.3%)



US Value
(9.1%)



Prior Value
(8.6%)



Trend

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Mental Health Provider Rate

419

Providers per 100,000
population
(2023)

Compared to:



IL Counties



U.S. Counties



IL Value
(315)



Prior Value
(381)



Trend

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Poor Mental Health: 14+ Days

12.8%
(2022)

Compared to:



IL Counties



U.S. Counties



US Value
(15.8%)

[Learn More](#) | [Save Card](#)

Poor Mental Health: Average Number of Days

3.9

Days
(2021)

Compared to:



IL Counties



U.S. Counties



IL Value
(4.2)



US Value
(4.8)



Prior Value
(3.1)

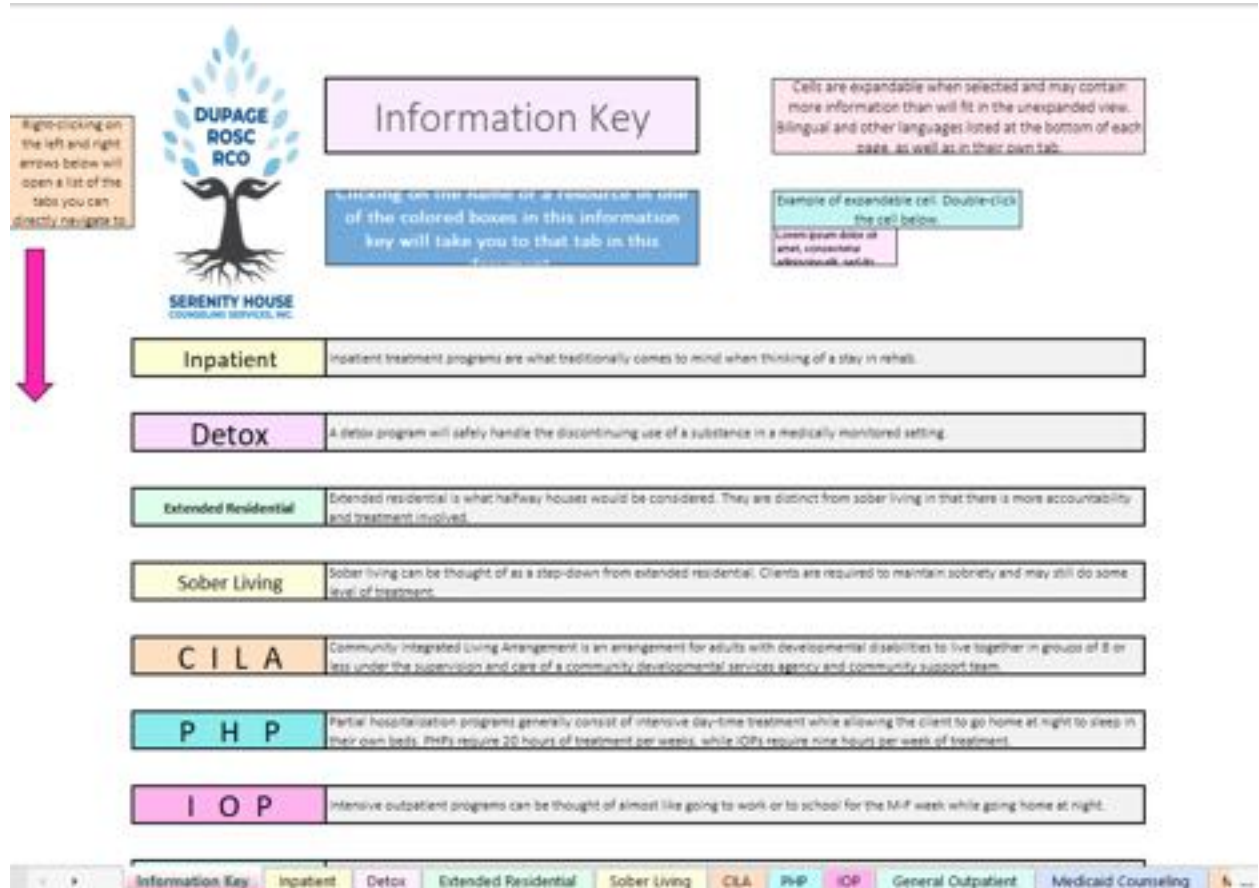


Trend

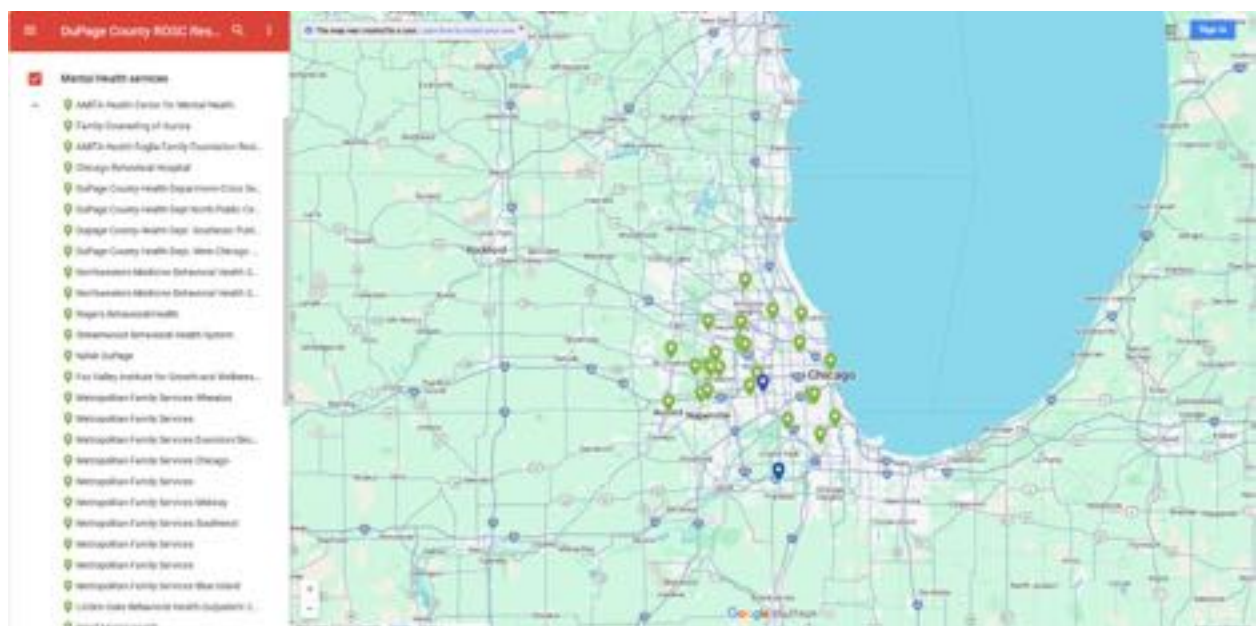
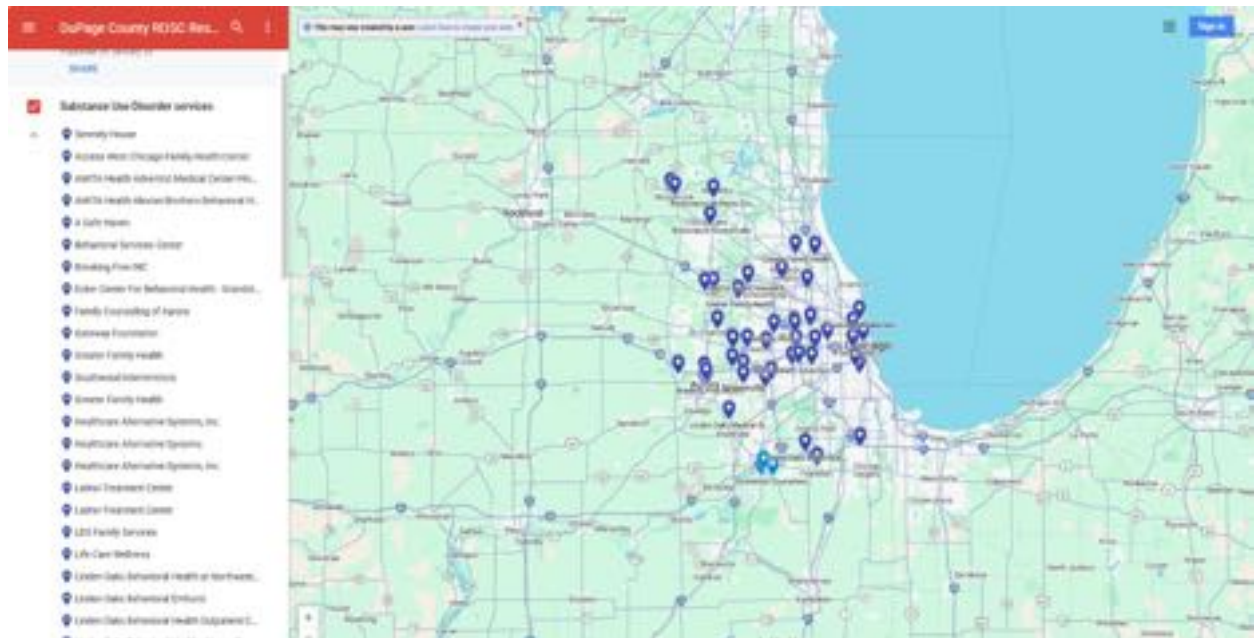
Resources and Strengths

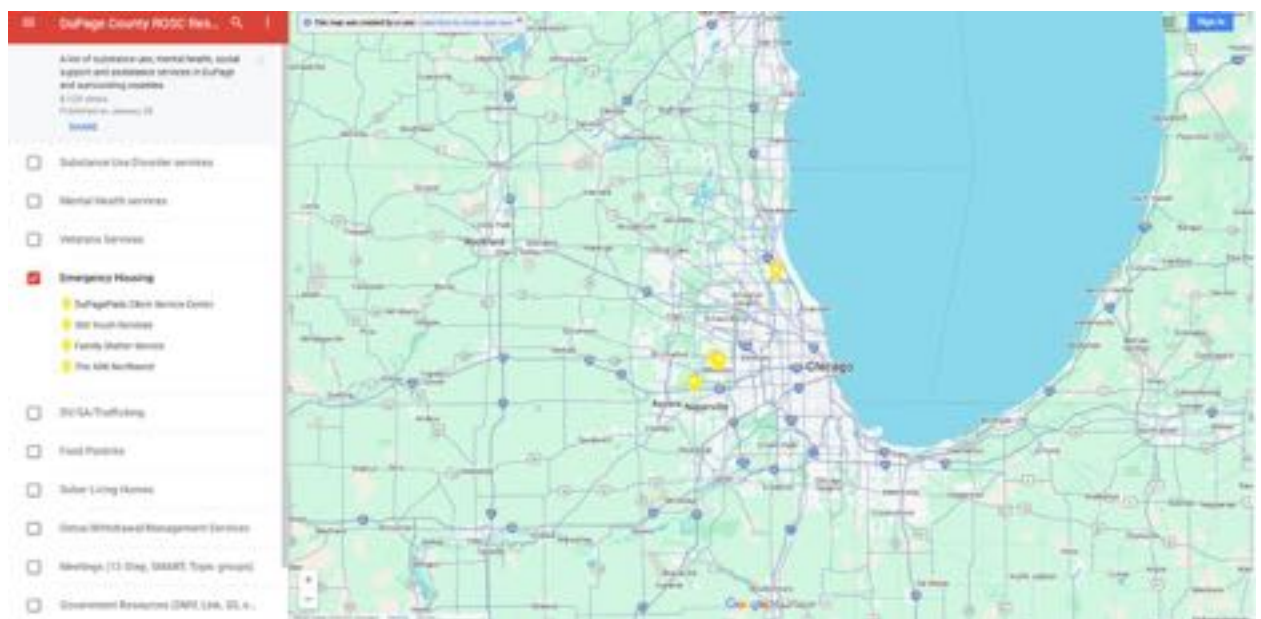
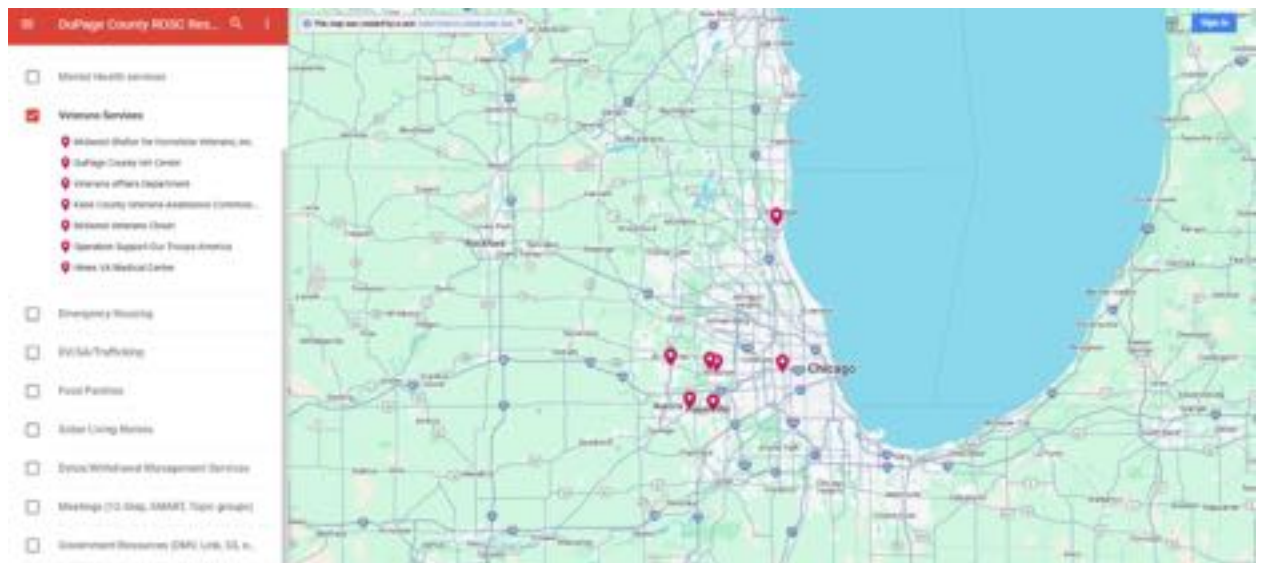
DuPage ROSC has been building out a massive and comprehensive Resource Guide that not only covers DuPage County, but most of Northern Illinois. The ROSC Resource Guide is constantly being updated with new entries across several important sectors. The guide is available to download on the Governor's State website here: <https://www.govst.edu/Recovery-Support/Northern-IL-ROSC/DCR-ROSC-Council/>

We have the guide broken down by sector, which you can see here:



Additionally, we have turned this guide into a physical map of Northern Illinois, and is searchable by sector, keyword, etc. So if you come across a resident who's a 50 y/o male with Aetna insurance suffering from anxiety, you can search by those terms and find what you're looking for. [The map is available to the public here](#) and here are some examples of what sectors are available:





SWOT Analysis

DuPage ROSC also conducted a SWOT Analysis of the program, which also contains insights on DuPage County's readiness for recovery as a whole. We gathered information from assessments, surveys, focus groups, conversations with key informants, and break-out groups at various DuPage ROSC Council meetings:



Readiness to Support ROSC Council

DuPage ROSC has been fortunate enough to earn the support of a number of large organizations, programs, and coalitions across the area over the past three years, including:

- DuPage and Kane County Health Departments
- DuPage and Kane County Corrections/Problem Solving Courts/Probation
- Harm Reduction: Live 4 Lali, DuPage Narcan Program, Hope For Healing, Chicago Recovery Alliance
- Hospitals: Central DuPage, Elmhurst, Endeavor hospitals/health systems
- Treatment Centers: Abraxas, SHARE Program, Existential Counseling, Gateway Foundation, Linden Oaks Behavioral Health, Recovery Centers of America, Rosecrance
- Sober supportive housing: Serenity House, Oxford House, Positive Intentions, Evergreen Sober Living, Way Back Inn, Guildhaus
- Medication Assisted Recovery: Stonybrook Center, Symetria, Greater Family Heath, DuPage Health Department, Healthcare Alternative Systems
- DV/Emergency shelter: Mutual Ground, Family Shelter Services, YWCA Metro Chicago, Reclaim 13, Safe Passage
- Gambling/cross addiction: Ecker Center, Stepping Stones, Wolf Pack Therapy

- Social Services/Food pantries: People's Resource Center, The Outreach House, St Vincent DePaul, West Suburban Community Pantry, Catholic Charities, Northeast DuPage Youth and Family Services
- Schools: College of DuPage, Elgin Community College, North Central College, Elmhurst University
- First responders: Glendale Heights PD, Wheaton PD, Downers Grove PD, Naperville PD, Addison PD, Elmhurst University and College of DuPage Safety Officers
- Local libraries: Villa Park, Wheaton, Glen Ellyn, Itasca, Addison
- Recovery programs: 12-step, SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery
- Places of worship: First Congregational Church of Downers Grove, The Center Church, Eternal Buzz, College Church of Wheaton
- Coalitions: DuPage Council on Strengthening The System, HOPE Opioid Task Force, Kane County Opioid Task Force, Southwest Coalition, DuPage Behavioral Health Collaborative, Offices of Fatality Review in DuPage and Kane Counties, DuPage Treatment Alternatives For Safe Communities, Illinois Recovery Support Specialists Committee

Additionally, DuPage ROSC has received funding from the Strategic Prevention Framework grants through the DuPage Health Department, and the BASE grant through the DuPage Narcan Program. We have also sought funding through various harm reduction grants, and have a partnership in place for the next two years to provide harm

reduction services as an outreach arm of the DuPage Health Department. We feel this is a good sign that there could be some sustainability options for the future.

One of the biggest supporters has been local schools like College of DuPage, Elgin Community College, and Elmhurst University, all three of which attend ROSC meetings, events, trainings, and they also suggest Human Services students attend ROSC meetings to get “plugged in” to the recovery community. This is where we’ve been able to identify some of the next leaders in the community, and who we need to carry the ROSC into the future.

If you look at our SWOT Analysis, you can also see that the areas of need/gaps are things that the ROSC is currently working on, or have as a priority in the coming years: need for sober supportive housing, bi-lingual services/help, stigmas attached to substance use and mental health challenges, stigmas attached to harm reduction, barriers for the uninsured/underinsured, etc. We feel that DuPage ROSC has been working tirelessly to fill those gaps as they arise through our programs and existing community collaborations.

One of our biggest strengths has been resource navigation: through the creation of our ROSC Resource Guide, Asset Map, and our DuPage ROSC Referral Hub, we’ve hopefully taken steps to make sure entry to services is more equitable and easier to navigate for first-timers. The ROSC Referral Hub on WhatsApp has been incredibly popular with not only our council but folks seeking services in general—we hope to have 200 members by the end of FY26, and to-date the Hub has been able to facilitate hundreds of fast and easy referrals, with warm handoffs to real people.

Additionally, there is a continued push to make sure that harm reduction materials are readily available for DuPage County residents,

and not just Narcan, but different testing strips, safe using kits, syringe-exchange, etc. We have a dozen partner sites hosting our ROSC Narcan Access Point boxes throughout DuPage, and there's currently a waiting list of sites that have requested boxes. We feel we can continue to meet that need, and expand overall harm reduction services to fill those specific gaps.

We could not have accomplished any of our goals without the buy-in and engagement from our many community partners, and we hope that spirit of collaboration continues into the coming years.