RWJF Culture of Health Community Portrait

Rexburg, Idaho
ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Sentinel Communities Surveillance project, conducted by RTI International in collaboration with the RAND Corporation, is sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The project, which began in 2016, will monitor activities related to how a Culture of Health is developing in each of 30 diverse communities around the country for at least five years. This Community portrait follows from the initial Snapshot report for Rexburg, Idaho, and provides insights into drivers of a Culture of Health in the community. The report is not intended to comprehensively describe every action underway in Rexburg, but rather focuses on key insights, opportunities, and challenges as a community advances on its journey toward health and well-being for all residents.

The information in this report was obtained using several data collection methods, including key informant telephone interviews, an environmental scan of online and published community-specific materials, review of existing population surveillance and monitoring data, and collection of local data or resources provided by community contacts or interview respondents. Interviews were conducted with individuals representing organizations working in a variety of sectors (for example, health, business, education, faith-based, and environment) in the community. Sector mapping was used to systematically identify respondents in a range of sectors that would have insights about community health and well-being to ensure organizational diversity across the community. We also asked original interviewees to recommend individuals to speak with in an effort to supplement important organizations or perspectives not included in the original sample.

A total of 14 unique respondents were interviewed during spring and summer 2018 for this report. All interviews (lasting 30–75 minutes each) were conducted using semi-structured interview guides tailored to the unique context and activities taking place in each community and to the role of the respondent in the community. Interviewers used probes to ensure that they obtained input on specific items of interest (for example, facilitators and barriers to improved population health, well-being, and equity) and open-ended questions to ensure that they fully addressed and captured participants’ responses and perceptions about influences on health and well-being in their communities. Individuals who participated in a key informant interview are not identified by name or organization to protect confidentiality, but they are identified as a “respondent.” Information collected through environmental scans includes program and organizational information available on internet websites, publicly available documents, and media reports. Population surveillance and monitoring data were compiled from publicly available datasets, including the American Community Survey; Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; and other similar federal, state, and local data sources.

We will conduct ongoing surveillance and monitoring activities in these communities through 2020 and report updated information on their progress, challenges, and lessons learned in improving health and well-being for all residents.

Data collection and monitoring thus far has revealed common themes among otherwise distinct communities. The next phase of this project will be cross-community reports that will examine common themes across subgroups of the 30 communities (for example, rural communities, communities experiencing large demographic shifts, and communities leveraging local data for decision-making). These reports will also be posted on rwjf.org/cultureofhealth.
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Introduction

In the Snapshot report for Rexburg, Idaho, we describe a rural town that is known to its residents as “America’s family community.” There are a number of factors that contribute to its reputation for being a good place to raise a family, including a low crime rate, few establishments supporting alcohol consumption, and a strong spiritual and religious presence. Still, Rexburg is working to address widespread mental health issues among youth and young adults and other social issues through cross-sector partnerships and community outreach. In this report, we examine Rexburg’s efforts to improve population health and build a healthier and more equitable community using the Culture of Health Action Framework to interpret and organize key findings. The Framework prioritizes four broad Action Areas: 1) Making Health a Shared Value; 2) Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration to Improve Well-Being; 3) Creating Healthier, More Equitable Communities; and 4) Strengthening Integration of Health Services and Systems, within which activities and investments can advance population health, well-being, and equity in diverse community contexts. Using the Framework, we describe how stakeholders in Rexburg are working to build bridges across its local government, service providers, university, and the church in order to address the health and well-being of the population.
Located in the northeast corner of Idaho in the Upper Snake River Valley, Rexburg is just a few hours’ drive from two national parks across the Wyoming border, including Yellowstone National Park. Although Upper Snake River Valley is a fertile area where much of the region’s agriculture takes place, the rest of the area is mountainous, resulting in low population density. As the largest city in Madison County, Rexburg accounts for 69 percent of the county’s population. As of July 2017, the population of Rexburg was estimated to be 28,300, an approximate 11 percent increase since the 2010 Census. The population is overwhelmingly white (93%) and identifies almost exclusively as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church; 98%). The city of Rexburg was originally founded in 1883 by pioneers who had been sent by LDS church leaders from Salt Lake City. As such, the presence of the church in this city has been integral to its development and governance ever since. Hispanic people comprise the next largest racial/ethnic group in Rexburg at six percent, and their presence is associated with work in agriculture. Over many decades, Rexburg’s main industry has been agriculture, including farming and the production of Idaho potatoes.

The LDS church is a strong influencer on Rexburg’s demographic and economic landscape in a number of different ways over the last two decades. The Mormon community established an academy in Rexburg in the 1880s, which was later named Ricks College after their Salt Lake City leader in 1903. In 2001, Ricks College officially became Brigham Young University-Idaho (BYU-Idaho) and the arrival of more students led to the significant increase in the city’s population. There are approximately 19,000 students on campus each semester. Their presence may skew the city’s economic indicators because of their low incomes, and particularly because approximately one-quarter of students are married and likely raising children. Nearly 30 percent of households in Rexburg have an annual income of less than $15,000 and over 60 percent of families with young children have incomes below the poverty level. Furthermore, 64 percent of households are paying rent that is at least 35 percent of their household income. Among those in the labor force, there is a 6.8 percent unemployment rate. An unemployment survey conducted by the city with the university over the last few years indicated that about a quarter of the students would like to be employed. A respondent from the nonprofit services sector commented on how poverty and youth in Rexburg compares to the rest of the state and the United States. “Rexburg has a pretty high percentage of families that live below the poverty line … we’re roughly about three times the state percentage … We were voted, a community of our size, the youngest community in America.”

The teachings of the LDS church, and specifically the “law of health,” recommend abstaining from the use of alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and illegal drugs (or misuse of prescription drugs); therefore, health care providers do not perceive substance abuse to be a major problem in Rexburg. LDS members are taught to abstain from sexual relationships outside of marriage and as a result, sexually transmitted disease rates in the county are approximately nine times lower than the U.S. national average. Health and social services are still an important contributor to the health and well-being of Rexburg residents, and in particular the student body of BYU-Idaho. Students often have greater need for mental health and family support services due to their age, their student responsibilities, and for some, the pressure of supporting families financially or developing and managing spousal relationships.
at a young age. In fact, a community needs assessment for the Eastern Idaho Public Health District, which includes Rexburg, indicated that respondents thought that mental health was the most important health issue facing the community. The widespread religious influence can cause anxiety and depression for those who feel like they do not fit in with the teachings. This sentiment may be exacerbated by a lack of constructive opportunities for growth and participation outside of the religious community.

Not surprisingly, accompanying the strong ethos of family values and overwhelming religious presence, Rexburg, much like the rest of Idaho, is politically, socially, and fiscally conservative. The Idaho state legislature is Republican-controlled and male legislators outnumber women by a ratio of more than 2-to-1. Surveys across the state show that a majority of Idahoans are opposed to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Idaho did not implement the Medicaid expansion, although they do have health insurance exchanges. Many of these statewide political leanings are also at play in Rexburg.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO PROMOTE HEALTH, EQUITY, AND WELL-BEING

Rexburg is home to a set of health service provider organizations, the university, and government entities that regularly work together to maximize resources and to contribute to community well-being. Members of the business community work together with the local government to improve the economic landscape.

Health infrastructure covers health services for population’s needs. Hospitals, community health centers, and the local public health agency each have priority responsibilities within the health sector and work together mainly through referrals. Eastern Idaho Public Health District is one of seven independent public health districts in Idaho and Madison County is located in District 7. Health services include immunizations, family planning, and services through reproductive health clinics and sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinics. The Public Health District is responsible for conducting health and well-being education in order to support prevention, with a particular focus on infectious disease.

Many of the referrals that District 7 makes are to Grand Peaks Medical, a community health center able to see patients of any income level, including those who are uninsured. Most referrals are for family planning, reproductive health, and chronic disease screening or management. For more serious procedures or severe conditions, the primary service provider in Rexburg is Madison Memorial Hospital, which is a county-owned, not-for-profit, 69-bed hospital. Two of their biggest service areas are the use of their Family Maternity Center (which sees 1,500–1,600 births annually, a high rate given the county population size) and mental health services. In addition to leading the community needs assessment, one of the hospital’s main roles is to partner with other medical institutions to fill gaps in treatment areas. This is done through a specialty clinic (covering the areas of cardiology, urology, plastic surgery, etc.) and an affiliate agreement with the University of Utah for cancer treatment. Madison Memorial strives to serve everybody with the best care, regardless of their ability to pay. However, many patients who have purchased their insurance in the marketplace set up as part of the ACA are burdened by high deductibles. Thus, the hospital has not seen any real drop-in write-offs since the ACA began.

The LDS church and BYU-Idaho support community holistic health. LDS doctrine posits that in order for people to feel a spiritual connection, they need to be healthy and financially secure. There are supports in place from the LDS church to help families in financial crisis; a safety net is developed from tithing (donations of 10 percent of Mormon incomes) to the church. One respondent from the LDS church discussed in more detail how tithing funds are used and members’ commitments to donating: “... [donations are] an amazing boon to this community ... if there’s somebody struggling ... Let’s say they have a large medical bill that they can’t pay. Or their rent’s due and they can’t make their rent. Or they need groceries. We’re able to provide that for them. It’s a social safety net that is remarkable.” This intersection of donations, even from low-income families, plus a church-organized safety net, serves to create a unique economic landscape that actively involves the communities that are served by the church.

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LDS CHURCH RESPONDENT

In terms of supporting students’ physical health, BYU-Idaho has the Student Health Center, which provides primary care, pharmacy services, immunizations, radiology, and laboratory testing. The Student Wellness Center and the Counseling Center provide therapy and mental health support for individuals and couples.

Nonprofits and cross-sector partnerships provide mental health services. Given the focus on mental health, it is important to capture the role of various nonprofit organizations in supporting these services. Capacity to address mental health, domestic violence, and sexual assault are limited to a small number of providers who are in some cases mainly grant-funded. The Family Crisis Center, which handles domestic violence, sexual assault, and child advocacy in four counties in Southeast Idaho, is located in Rexburg. The Center runs a shelter for abuse victims and provides additional counseling services and legal/court advocacy. Centerpoint Counseling provides mental health and psychotherapy services to both privately and publicly insured individuals. Although not official partners, both BYU-Idaho and the LDS church refer individuals to this organization when they are at capacity or lack the appropriate service. The Madison Cares program partners with the Madison County school district (which includes Rexburg) to provide youth mental health programming and is 100 percent funded by the Substance Abuse Mental...
Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The first grant was received in 2009 and an extension grant was received in 2015. Because Madison Cares is embedded in the school district, most of its referrals come from schools, although some do come directly from the community itself, including from the small Hispanic, Spanish-speaking population.

Government departments, business sector focus on economic opportunity and livability. A small number of entities within local government are dedicated to economic development and making Rexburg a better place to live. One of the primary entities driving this effort is the city’s Economic Development Department, which works to attract smaller businesses to the city or tries to get medium- to large-sized businesses to open satellite offices in Rexburg, in order to bring higher paying jobs to the community. For local business coordination, the Department created a community partnership and coordination meeting that involves two major cities in Madison County, BYU-Idaho, two local school districts, Madison Memorial Hospital, and the Chamber of Commerce. The city works with an organization called the Regional Economic Development of Eastern Idaho group, which helps cities in the region match their strengths to the most suitable industries, and therefore reduces intra-regional competition for businesses.

The Urban Renewal Agency oversees and coordinates redevelopment efforts to improve the City of Rexburg, such as road expansion, street improvements, and public building renovation, which is paid for through tax increment financing. This agency has played a particularly important role in improving the walkability and bike-ability of the city through the expansion of sidewalks to key locations throughout Rexburg (e.g., Walmart).

The Chamber of Commerce is responsible for promoting, educating about, and advocating for local businesses, which are mainly retail shops and mom-and-pop businesses. Madison Economic Partners, Inc., which is a highly structured business coalition focused on entrepreneurship and the development of businesses specifically in the technology or web-based sectors, engages the City of Rexburg’s Economic Development Department. For example, it partners with the Research and Business Development Center to use shared space in the existing Rexburg City Hall as a business incubation center. The Research and Business Development Center is a nonprofit sponsored by BYU-Idaho that develops projects between businesses and student teams. Examples of projects include market analyses and software research.

Developing a Culture of Health

Rexburg is faced with a limited tax base and a small pool of resources to provide services. Yet, it must address the health and well-being of the large number of young adults that comprise the BYU-Idaho student body and are struggling with the stresses of school, family, and financial strain. Overall, the community has responded to its health challenges in several ways: improving economic well-being through increasing work opportunities and improving access to and quality of mental health services.

Government and business coalitions improve Rexburg’s economic well-being

Economic development continues to be a priority area of improvement for Rexburg. The city is working to attract more businesses and has had some recent success with the technology sector—in particular, the 2018 opening of a new facility by the software company NAVEX Global, the world’s largest provider of ethics compliance software solutions. To incentivize growth in this area, Madison Economic Partners has generated and maintained a number of initiatives, including the Rexburg Business Competition. This Competition awards cash prizes based on proposed business model ideas. It also provides the opportunity to talk with experts about how to develop their models into plans. One respondent from economic development discussed examples of companies that won these cash prizes: “We’ve given away around $100,000 so far. We’ve seen some fantastic companies get up and get started. Everything from carbon fiber manufacturing to 3D printers.” Recently, a partnership between the City of Rexburg and the Research and Business Development Center plans to put the winners of the competition into a 12- to 16-week incubator program for mentorship from the community business partners.

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Economic Development Sector Respondent

Rexburg has been actively promoting the value of its workforce, which includes 4,500 Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) students. Due to religion, Rexburg is marketing that their graduates have minimal issues related to absenteeism, theft, or substance use.

“Going out to Walmart ... it doesn’t have a sidewalk ... we’re going to put that in, as well as the long stretch all along 2nd East to get out to Walmart.”

Government Sector Respondent

For many of the government and business entities involved in economic development, connections have not yet been clearly drawn between economic well-being and livability or more general well-being. The only entities that make this specific connection are local government agencies, which make financial decisions for the city and oversee residents’ well-being. This is demonstrated through the following example about the city’s decisions to extend roads.
to a Walmart Superstore: “Going out to Walmart … it doesn’t have a sidewalk … We’re going to put that in, as well as the long stretch all along 2nd East to get out to Walmart. [A sidewalk around their property is] already put in, and so we’re going to go up and meet it.”

The government respondent also reflected on the prevailing attitudes in Rexburg toward spending public money. For instance, regarding the sidewalk construction, residents had perceived that expense as benefiting a private company rather than for the public good.

**FAITH, HEALTH, AND SOCIAL SERVICES INFLUENCE MENTAL HEALTH**

There is widespread consensus that mental health is a major issue in Rexburg, one that requires cross-sector partnerships to address. Rates of suicide in Rexburg are rising,10 and in response to this issue, Madison Memorial assembled a task force with representation from the university, law enforcement, mental health service providers, and the Behavioral Health Center at the Eastern Iowa Regional Medical Center (with whom Madison Memorial has an established partnership). Madison Memorial now has a telehealth connection to the Behavioral Health Center, allowing direct consultation and diagnosis with a psychiatrist and direct hospital admission for patients into Madison Memorial. BYU-Idaho continues to be an active partner for mental health services in addition to Madison Cares for community-based issues.

Another player in the mental health landscape is Madison Cares, which employs two licensed social workers who work on skills training, social skills development, and anger management with individuals from kindergarten to age 21. Madison Cares directly supports families, starting with expecting mothers until their children are entering school, using a curriculum-based program called Parents as Teachers. Madison Cares also runs campaigns and conducts public events in the community that help to increase awareness of mental health and social pressures experienced by youth. This awareness project works with Madison Memorial Hospital to address gaps in mental health services in Rexburg, as well as with Madison Memorial Rexburg Medical Clinic. Because Madison Cares is entirely grant funded, it searches for alternative future support. Madison Cares staff will eventually be trained in a model known as the National Wraparound Initiative, adopted by the state of Idaho as part of an overhaul of their children’s mental health program.

The state is working on developing a Medicaid billing code for the wraparound service for children so that Madison Cares can operate on more nongrant funding. Another alternative support being considered is paying for Madison Cares through a school levy by the school district, a measure which the superintendent has indicated he would propose and support.

In Rexburg, mental health and social problems are sensitive issues that require careful navigation. The rural nature of the area, the near universal presence of the church, and the often-described conservatism of the residents are factors to be selectively leveraged in the context of service provision. The number of service providers in the area is small and therefore, options are limited. Providers often partner with each other and with local agencies such as law enforcement or government, in order to maximize limited labor and financial resources. Sometimes the partnerships can face political or monetary challenges, as well a lack of education or awareness among partners of social problems in the community. Furthermore, the LDS church and BYU-Idaho are important partners to service providers in an official capacity and as community leaders (police chief, hospital administrator, etc.).

> “HE [THE BISHOP] HAD NO MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING AND … WHEN CONGREGATION MEMBERS WERE BEING REFERRED TO HIM BECAUSE THEY WERE HAVING ANXIETY, … HAVING SUICIDAL THOUGHTS, … CUTTING THEMSELVES, … THEY COULD BARELY GET TO CHURCH … HE HAD REALLY NEVER FELT SO UNPREPARED TO HANDLE A SITUATION THAN THAT.”

**NONPROFIT SERVICE SECTOR RESPONDENT**

There are challenges associated with working on community mental health in the context of the LDS church. Due to the emphasis on family and the self-reliance of the church, LDS members with mental health issues are routinely referred to their bishop for support. However, not all bishops are prepared to address mental health issues, which can be serious, including anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm. Conflicting approaches can surface when mental health providers provide counseling or treatment to individuals or families who were told by their bishop to pursue nonmedical strategies, such as prayer, reading scriptures, or living a more church-focused life. One respondent from the nonprofit service sector provided an anecdote about this situation when a bishop was the primary referral, “He [the bishop] had no mental health training and … when congregation members were being referred to him because they were having anxiety, they were having suicidal thoughts, they were cutting themselves, burning themselves, having so much anxiety that they could barely get to church … he had really never felt so unprepared to handle a situation than that.”

Other areas where health service goals can conflict with either church teachings or beliefs (religious or personal) include declining STD screenings due to fear of reprisals from the religious community (university students in particular) and vaccinations, such as the human papilloma virus or HPV vaccine. In the context of the HPV vaccine, despite ongoing community education, uptake has been low potentially due to the belief of community members that there is a low risk of infection.

**MAJOR EFFORTS TO HELP IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Since Rexburg is a small city with a well-defined set of actors who can influence health and well-being at the community level, collaborative efforts are often successful at bringing programming or activities to fruition. For example, Madison Memorial has focused on screening more of the Rexburg community, particularly in the areas of blood pressure, breast cancer, and mental health. There was a perception among some health providers that the residents of Rexburg were not fully aware of all
the health and well-being resources available in the city. For this reason, Madison Memorial Hospital, Madison Cares, and BYU-Idaho (along with other service partners) convene annually to hold a health fair that brings together health care and other service providers to showcase available services to the community. One respondent from the health care sector describes how these events can be key outreach opportunities, “… it was a marketing piece, but it was also an opportunity for people to see what services are here … And so we hold this big fair … we had 100 vendor booths, we had a couple people from Huntsman and University of Utah come with some inflatable blow-ups of a colon … that helped to educate our community on different areas of health.”

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Health Care Sector Respondent

A similar event known as the “community wellness weekend” increases awareness of mental health issues and is an opportunity for the community to connect to mental health providers.

Since BYU-Idaho is the city’s largest employer, their activities can affect many resident’s health and well-being. BYU-Idaho provides employee health insurance, 401(k), financial planning support, and $300 annually for participation in a monthly program aimed at improving physical fitness. Their employees are also required to commit to the LDS health law as part of their employment.

It is difficult to initiate community projects that seek to improve or expand infrastructure due to a limited tax base, and therefore, many organizations and even the city itself is reliant on federal and other grants for special projects. Rexburg was recently awarded a $250,000 community transformation grant from the Blue Cross Foundation that it has used to develop a community activity center for youth.

SUMMARY OF REXBURG’S EFFORTS TO BUILD A CULTURE OF HEALTH
Based on the Culture of Health Action Framework used to guide Sentinel Community data collection and monitoring in Rexburg, Idaho, evidence indicates that there is some progress being made in several areas to enhance residents’ health and well-being. For example, Rexburg has demonstrated a commitment to Making Health a Shared Value through its efforts to improve awareness about mental health and educate the community about prevention and health service providers. Furthermore, participation in the LDS church does provide a strong foundation of shared health values and community among its members, though those who are not active members of the church may not see their values or priorities reflected in the community. Through the city’s efforts to connect service providers at nonprofits, hospitals, and elsewhere to better support domestic violence/sexual assault victims and people experiencing mental health issues, Rexburg is making great strides to Foster Cross-Sector Collaboration to Improve Well-Being. Relatedly, Rexburg Economic Development Department and Madison Economic Partners are working to bring more work opportunities to Rexburg. This could improve economic equity for many, and in particular, students at BYU-Idaho—a key aspect of Building Healthier and More Equitable Communities. Madison Memorial has worked to Strengthen Integration of Health Services and Systems by broadening their partnerships to providers and hospitals outside of the city limits.

Emerging Community Themes

Rexburg cares about making the lives of its citizens better and is working at an organizational level to achieve this. The context of the LDS church’s health law is influential for helping many of Rexburg’s citizens maintain their physical and spiritual health. However, stakeholders around Rexburg are beginning to understand that mental health is a widespread problem in their community, particularly among youth, and this may be an opportunity to draw more people into solutions. Further, limitations in funding directed toward health and the influence of a dominant religion in the community can create some barriers to ensuring well-being for all, as in the case of mental health.
FACILITATORS TO A CULTURE OF HEALTH

Strong connections among organizations in the community. As noted above, many of the organizations have formalized connections with other organizations. An example is in the cross-sector task force that Madison Memorial Hospital established to address the behavioral health issues arising from BYU-Idaho’s student body.

Membership of many key actors across multiple collaborating sectors (e.g., law enforcement, mental health treatment, academic) in the LDS church. This shared background makes it easier for actors navigating a crisis (mental health or domestic violence) with an individual to know when to bring in LDS resources.

Spiritual and religious support across the community. LDS teachings themselves have a direct role in supporting health and well-being. While their health law contributes strongly to low rates of substance use and STDs, their practice of all church members and leadership supporting each other as a community spiritually, financially, and in some cases physically and mentally is critical to building a Culture of Health.

Close collaboration between the business community and local government. Despite a number of barriers to attracting new potential employers to the region, the collaborations between economic development entities and the local government are focused and consistent about goals and have achieved some progress on this front.

BARRIERS TO A CULTURE OF HEALTH

The lack of diversity by religion, race, and within leadership. Respondents noted that this lack of diversity may be a driver for some of the mental health issues experienced in this community. The strong presence of the LDS church in the community, the rules surrounding BYU-Idaho admission (which require students to have bishop sponsorship to attend), and that BYU-Idaho asks employees to also follow the Mormon law of health creates an institutionalized lack of diversity that is not likely to change soon. The question is, how does this lack of diversity affect Rexburg’s future prospects for health and well-being? Furthermore, for those who fall outside of the monolithic society by religiosity, gender norms, race, or mental health status, there are likely to be social and structural barriers to accessing needed services, essentially inequities for a small, but vulnerable part of the city’s population.

Rexburg’s lack of connections between the city’s financial decision-making and the improvement of health and well-being. The constraints of the tax base coupled with an overall conservative approach to spending makes Rexburg a place with limited amenities and community resources to support health and well-being. Funding for mental health is either covered through insurance or provided through federal grants. Respondents interviewed for this report did not describe engaging with philanthropy or other sources of funding.

Community’s high poverty rate, driven by the BYU-Idaho student body. The financial situation experienced by the students causes them stress and anxiety and is exacerbated by the lack of job opportunities both during their time as students and after graduation. However, many entities within Rexburg are working to improve job prospects for the community as a whole, with some progress thus far.

Lack of preparation and training of some LDS leaders in matters of mental health. In addition, not all LDS leaders are prepared to refer church members with mental health needs to services outside of the religious community. There are situations where church leaders recommend that church members with symptoms of depression pray more or read more doctrine, which may (n inadvertently) prevent members from seeking additional care.

What’s Next

Stakeholders across government health services, business, and academic sectors within Rexburg have identified poor mental health and economic development as key challenges to the city’s health and well-being. Domestic violence and sexual assault are also issues that may be less prevalent, but require more intensive and specialized training and may be a focus for the future. Partnerships across providers, the university, and the LDS church are critical for improving access to those with need for mental health services, but there are other social and structural factors that should be addressed that could result in a sharper improvement. Similarly, understanding how partnerships across law enforcement, service providers, hospitals and LDS are maintained will be an important part of continued analysis. More broadly, Rexburg service providers and the LDS church are thinking about how to reduce the stigma for people who may not fit in with Mormon teachings, as it continues to be a driver of stress and anxiety for some.

Future areas of focus may be the engagement of the Hispanic community (who mainly work in agriculture) on health and well-being opportunities. This community is still not well-integrated into the Rexburg community due to their jobs and to the fact that many are not members of the LDS church. Furthermore, it would be worth tracking data or outcomes that mental health providers, such as Madison Cares or the Family Crisis Center, use to demonstrate changes in attitudes toward mental health treatment.

In terms of economic development opportunities—Rexburg’s tax base (in particular for property), its rural nature, and comparatively few amenities—are something that the city will continue to grapple with in the near future as citizens’ employment prospects seem mainly to be outside the city. While partnerships across government, the university, and the church are ongoing, there is a need to uncover possible barriers in attracting more business and to weigh options to reducing those impediments.
References


