Lake of the Woods County

**County Administration:**

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**County Agency Contacts:**

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County Demographics:

Lake of the Woods County is a fairly remote, sparsely populated county in comparison to the area of land it includes. There are approximately 4,000 people living in Lake of the Woods County and our population seems small in comparison to most other counties. However, the need for services is as great for the few we serve as it is for the bigger numbers in larger counties. It is sometimes difficult to put together a full range of comprehensive services, and the professionals and practitioners often are forced to wear many hats to provide the variety of services needed in the community.

A great deal of work has been done over the past 10 years to implement services and encourage providers to look to Lake of the Woods County for possible expansion of their services in hopes to best serve the residents of our county.

Although Lake of the Woods County’s distance from many of the services provided in larger communities sometimes limits us as to what services we can provide. We also have some distinct advantages due to being small and having fewer clients to serve. We can provide a more intimate system due to the lower caseload sizes and coordination of services is more easily accomplished. Often an individual plan can be developed for our consumers that are tailor made for them.

Lake of the Woods County is populated mostly with individuals that have a northern European heritage. The minority population from all other groups is less than 2%. Lake of the Woods County has taken every reasonable measure to assure cultural accessibility to services on an as needed basis (i.e. providing brochures and notices in alternative language formats, seeking input from culturally competent consultants, interpreters, etc.).

General County Service Delivery and Access Issues:

Some of the concerns that will need to be addressed in any proposal include:

- Lack of public transportation.
- Prevention and intervention services.
- Access to psychiatric and mental health services providers.
- Lack of providers in all areas of health service delivery.
- Meeting the needs for out-patient chemical dependency treatment.
- Client choice of providers.
- Timely non-emergency access to providers.
- Access to specialized medical services.
- Lack of volunteer drivers for out of town transportation to medical treatment – in part due to the required MA non-payment for non-load miles.
- Meeting the needs of the aging population.

Dental:

Lake of the Woods County currently has one dentist who accepts MA clients. It is often difficult to access services, especially for emergency services as the waiting list for appointments can be long. Residents must travel out of county from 40 to 300 miles to access services in neighboring counties or to the Smile Center in Deerwood. Children often travel to Duluth or Brainerd to have any special dental needs met. There is a shortage of providers, a lack of public transportation, and no specialists within the Lake of the Woods County borders.
Providers Typically Used:
- Baudette Dental – Baudette
- Northern Lights Family Dentistry - Warroad
- Dental Health Office – Roseau
- Lake Family Dental – Warroad
- Bemidji Dental Officer – Bemidji
- Smile Center - Deerwood

Chemical Dependency:
Lake of the Woods County employs two staff members who are qualified to do Rule 25 Assessments. They complete the assessment and recommend the appropriate course of treatment.

There was an out-patient chemical dependency treatment program available through Glenmore Recovery out of Crookston, MN until the end of 2012. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued due to cost issues, lack of staff, and the small number of active participants. Now Lake of the Woods County residents are forced to travel out of county for out-patient services. This often creates a burden for participants, as well as, family members. Once again transportation is a barrier to receiving services. Often the individual does not have a valid driver’s license and is dependent on family members or volunteer drivers to assist with transportation to and from services. There is also a lack of adequate services for individuals with dual diagnosis of mental illness and chemical dependency. The integration with primary care and mental and chemical health services is limited.

Chemical dependent treatment is also often times difficult to access – especially for individuals with dual diagnosis. Residents from Lake of the Woods are placed many miles away from their own support system, and it is difficult for family members to participate in treatment and care options.

There is also little to no aftercare available for individuals who have completed treatment programs and return to the community. There are a few AA groups that meet and we do have the distinct advantage of being involved with DUI/Drug Court for those offenders who are eligible to participate. Aftercare is essential for a successful treatment program and should be a priority for MCO(s) looking at submitting a proposal for Lake of the Woods County.

Providers Typically Used:
- Riverplace Counseling Center Outpatient Program, Bovie
- Rainy River Recovery – International Falls
- Upper Mississippi Mental Health Center, Bemidji
- Glenmore Recovery Outpatient Program – Roseau
- Glenmore Inpatient, Crookston
- Pineview Recovery Center Inpatient Program, Little Fork
- Northland Recovery Center Inpatient Program, Grand Rapids
- Northland Recovery Center Adolescent Unit, Grand Rapids
- Pine Manor, Nevis
- Prairie St. Johns, Fargo, ND
Mental Health – Adults:

Our local hospital, LakeWood Health Center, contracts with LifeCare Behavioral Health out of Roseau, MN to provide group and individual therapy, diagnostic assessments, and testing services four days a week. There is another independent psychologist, Eric Graham, who provides services to the community. Lake of the Woods County Social Services contracts with a Physicians’ Assistant, Mary McEnelly, trained in the provision of mental health services that provides medication education and medication management services to county residents. The area family physicians work in close conjunction with them to assist patients in obtaining mental health services. There is a local Crisis Team for both adults and children who provide 24 hour emergency services. We also contract with Sanford to provide community support and ARMHS services and have a mental health case manager to assist with case management and referral services.

Although Lake of the Woods County offers many features that have a positive effect on quality of life, we do have difficulty recruiting and maintaining medical and mental health professionals. We are always looking for creative and innovative ways to meet these needs. The largest barrier is insufficient program funding to meet client needs, particularly in areas of psychiatric services and transportation, but also lacking are employment opportunities and adequate, affordable housing. Early intervention and crisis team services are limited, as well as, preventive care and early assessments.

Providers Typically Used:
- LifeCare Behavioral Health Services – Baudette satellite office/Roseau
- Woodvale Psychological Services – Baudette
- Upper Mississippi Mental Health Center – Bemidji
- Blue Heron Counseling – International Falls
- Northland Counseling – International Falls
- Dr. Jeffrey Hardwig – International Falls
- LakeWood Health Center – Baudette
- Sanford Community Based Services – Baudette
- Rainy River Waivered Services – Baudette
- Occupational Development Center – Baudette
- Sanford – Thief River Falls
- Altru – Grand Forks
- Center for Psychiatric Care – Grand Forks
- The Women’s Center – Grand Rapids
- State Operated Services – Bemidji
- Stadter Center – Grand Forks
- Prairie St. John’s – Fargo
- Miller Dwan - Duluth

Mental Health – Children:

In general, Lake of the Woods County is lacking in children’s mental health services. There is a lack of psychiatric services for children and infant mental health, limited Children’s Therapeutic Services and Support (CTSS) type services, parenting services, preventative services, and medication management. The local physicians have been providing medication management for children. This has been a concern over the past year especially when we have had a shortage of doctors and a movement of locums in and out of the area that has not provided a very consistent process for managing needs. The providers available for children’s therapy are the same as those listed above for adult services; however, none of
them specialize in children’s therapy. Children must travel long distances, about 180 miles, for adequate evaluations and diagnostics.

There is one local provider for in-home family therapy – Lutheran Social Services. While they provide an excellent service, the one individual who services Lake of the Woods County is often times full and unable to take new clients and clients are put on a waiting list.

As stated above under Adult Mental Health, the major concerns and issues involve lack of providers, lack of transportation, and lack of specialists, however with the number of children involved in Lake of the Woods County it is difficult to justify building services locally with providers who could only serve children.

Providers Typically Used:
- LifeCare Behavioral Health Services – Baudette satellite office/Roseau
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- Upper Mississippi Mental Health Center – Bemidji
- Blue Heron Counseling – International Falls
- Northland Counseling – International Falls
- Dr. Jeffrey Hardwig – International Falls
- LakeWood Health Center – Baudette
- Sanford – Thief River Falls
- Interagency Early Intervention Committee
- BRIC – Bemidji
- Altru – Grand Forks
- Center for Psychiatric Care – Grand Forks
- Stadter Center – Grand Forks
- Prairie St. John’s – Fargo
- Miller Dwan - Duluth
- Pathfinder Children’s Treatment Center – Thief River Falls
- Northwest Minnesota Juvenile Center – Bemidji
- Evergreen – Bemidji
- PATH - Bemidji

Transportation:

Transportation is one of the largest barriers to accessing health care services in Lake of the Woods County. The State Funded Local Access Plan is used for transportation services for the county, however, volunteer drivers are difficult to recruit, and often times are unable to meet the needs of the community residents. The volunteer driver network is very limited. Social workers are often left to provide transportation for children because of these limitations. Access issues also include methods to reach persons without phones and supportive services in making/keeping appointments.

The local public transportation system is very limited in the services they can provide. They provide services mainly within the confines of the city limits of Baudette, so the only out-of-county transportation service available is through volunteer drivers. The hours of availability for the bus system are also limited to 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and typically there is just one bus in services at any given time. There are no taxi services available in Lake of the Woods County.

Providers Typically Used:
- Volunteer Drivers through the Access Plan
Special Programs:

Mental Health Local Advisory Council – The Lake of the Woods County Mental Health Local Advisory Council (LAC) was established, as legislatively mandated, in the fall of 2002 to address the community’s mental health service needs. The membership reflects a broad range of community interests, and includes consumers of mental health services, family members of individuals with mental illness, and representatives from Social Services, the school, Public Health, and area businesspersons. The council meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month to review, evaluate and make recommendations concerning the local mental health care system. Another key focus of the group is to promote community education, awareness and understanding of mental health, help in eradicating the stigma associated with mental illness, and inform the public on what mental health services are available in Lake of the Woods County, where they are located and how to access them.

Public Health:

Lake of the Woods County Public Health is a division of LakeWood Nursing Service and has a strong commitment in assuring that the health care needs of its residents are being met. There is also a commitment to continue to partner with Lake of the Woods County to expand and improve services to individuals and families in the home and community.

Populations typically served by Lake of the Woods County Public Health are:

- Families with newborns
- Young single parents
- All post-partum women
- Low income children under age five who are at nutritional risk
- Low income pregnant or breast feeding women
- Families with special needs children
- Children in need of immunizations and health screenings
- Families with multiple needs (i.e. frail elderly, disabled)
- Communities – including all hazard disaster preparedness

LakeWood Nursing Service provides the following in a client’s home, clinic, or other site in the community:

- Public Health Nurse prenatal care visits
- Family home visiting/newborn home visiting
- Child & Teen Checkup outreach
- Child & Teen Checkup screening/health promotion & education
- Communicable disease monitoring and follow-up
- Parenting education
- Care consultation
- Public Health nursing clinics
- Immunizations
- Environmental health/information & referral
- WIC services
- Policy development
• Information & Referral services
• Hazard Disaster Preparedness
• Environmental Health Assessments
• Provider education
• Long Term Care Consultations
• PCA Assessments

Public Health and Community Health Boards are accountable for developing and maintaining an integrated system of community health services under the Local Public Health Act.