

Saratoga Meeting Summary

What Is Working Well in Saratoga

- Local hospital, ED, and urgent care providers.
- Mobile or visiting specialists, e.g., PT, dermatologists and podiatrists.
- Wellness fairs for access to affordable lab work.

What Is Not Working Well in Saratoga

- **High cost of healthcare;** uninsured and underinsured avoid care until conditions become emergencies.
- **Workforce:**
 - Retention. Turnover prevents patients from building long-term, trusting relationships and ensuring continuity of care.
 - Low wages - difficult to attract talent.
 - Competition with contractors/travelers – tax-free housing stipends
 - Licensing/scope of practice too restrictive
- **Access to care:**
 - Non-emergency transportation to and from care
 - Prescription drug access, especially in winter. Mail order is not viable due to slow and irregular USPS service.
 - Lack of pediatrics, women's health.
 - Lack of behavioral health.
 - Long-term care concerns - lack of memory care/dementia units, home health often unwilling to travel.
 - Emergency Medical Services (EMS): declining volunteerism and financial challenges.
- **Technology problems:**
 - Poor internet bandwidth
 - Lack of devices, and low tech literacy limit the effectiveness of telehealth.
- **Preventative health** - focus on managing chronic diseases rather than preventing them. Unhealthy school lunches. Lack of community-wide social workers.

What Saratoga Needs

- **Improved Services:**
 - A mobile care unit that could bring primary care, pharmacy services, and physical therapy directly to rural communities.
 - Expanded OB/GYN services, potentially by training primary care physicians or better utilizing midwives.
 - More support for EMS to address recruitment, training, and funding issues, including exploring community paramedicine.
- **Workforce Development:**
 - Incentives such as scholarships and loan repayment programs to recruit and retain a stable healthcare workforce.

- Investment in local nursing and provider training programs at community colleges to "grow our own" healthcare professionals.
- Increased public health staff, including community-wide social workers and certified case management nurses to assist with education and resource navigation.
- **Diet and exercise:**
 - Health fairs, hypertension clinics, and community-wide education on diet and exercise.
 - Encourage people to get outside through non-profit sponsored events like the Alzheimers walk.
 - Improvements to the school lunch program.