

# Specialty Care Needs Assessment

## What / Why / How

In 2019, after a presentation around state-wide unmet specialty care access needs, several members of the Access to Specialty Care Interest Group noted that an Aurora-specific needs assessment was necessary. Existing data and reports characterizing specialty care needs in Aurora were collated and a Specialty Care Access Survey was created and distributed to a comprehensive list of clinics and providers serving Medicaid and uninsured Aurora residents.

### Existing Data:

- CU Specialty Clinic Waitlist Data 2021
- Department of Healthcare Policy and Financing Regional Accountable Entity Specialty Care Survey 2019
- Colorado Safety Net Collaborative Specialty Care Survey 2019

### Survey Part 1 (Required)

- Top 5 unmet specialty care needs
- Least problematic /easiest to access specialty care areas
- Top 3 areas most expensive diagnostic tests /procedures for uninsured patients

### Survey Part 2 (Optional)

- Barriers and Solutions – open ended questions
- Rank list of barriers and solutions using a standardized survey (Timble et al. 2020)

### Respondents

- 54 respondents, 15 clinics represented
- 59% respondents from Aurora Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- Roles: 55% primary care providers, 45% other team members
- 67% responded to both Parts 1 and 2

{ All specialty areas are an issue; given a chance to rank top 5 unmet needs, every specialty was mentioned at least once by Medicaid patients }

## Combined **Medicaid & Uninsured** Priorities

- Neurology
- Rheumatology
- Psychiatry
- Urology
- Endocrinology
- Orthopedics (non-op/op)
- Pain Management
- Substance Abuse
- Cardiology\*

## Additional priority unmet needs for **uninsured patients**

- Gastro-enterology
- Oncology
- General Surgery

## Top 3 unmet needs for expensive tests/ diagnostic procedures for **uninsured patients**

- Endoscopy/ Colonoscopy
- Cardiac Testing\*
- MRI/CT Scans

What's working better? Three least problematic specialties / lowest three needs for both **Medicaid** and **uninsured**:

- Obstetrics
- Cardiology\*
- Ophthalmology

*\*The survey results identified Cardiology in both sections, resulting in a need for further study.*

## Takeaways

- The system does not function successfully for patients
- There are not enough specialists serving Medicaid and/or uninsured individuals
- Lack of transparency in the system about capacity limitations is a primary barrier
- Cost and lack of cost data is a significant barrier for uninsured populations

## Recommendations / Call to Action

- Create a transparent network map for Aurora
- Create a collective list of available Medicaid / uninsured network providers with clear policies and capacity (Suggestion: dedicated staff for network building and maintenance)

Scan QR Code to go to the AHA Access to Specialty Care Webpage for more info.



**Aurora Health Alliance (AHA)** is a community alliance of healthcare organizations, public agencies, providers, civic and business leaders, and residents committed to creating a healthcare system in Aurora that meets the needs of all its residents.

AHA has been working since 2010 with the mission to achieve equitable access and promote a healthier Aurora for everyone. AHA envisions a community where all residents have an opportunity to achieve optimal health. To learn more, visit our website at [www.aurorahealthalliance.org](http://www.aurorahealthalliance.org).

