






Executive Summary: OCFS Focus Group Findings

As part of the Title V Maternal Child Health (MCH) Block Grant, the South Dakota (SD) Office of Child and Family Service (OCFS) conducted a statewide needs assessment on the well-being and health service priorities of South Dakotans. The needs assessment occurs once every five years and is intended to assist OCFS in identifying the health priorities of SD women, children, and families. As part of this needs assessment, four focus groups were conducted with the following populations: Native American women, co-parenting adults, single parents, and youth. These participants were also recruited from certain geographic locations in the state. The information presented in the table below summarizes the key findings from these focus groups.

Priorities	Similarities & Differences Between Focus Group Sites
<p>Mental, Social, & Behavioral Health</p> 	<p>Sexual health, suicide, and tobacco and substance misuse emerged as the leading mental, social, and behavioral health concerns at all sites. Gaps in counseling services and underutilization of available services due to a lack of awareness and confidentiality were also noted by participants, particularly in rural areas, indicating the need for expanding mental health services and raising awareness of existing services. Although substance misuse problems varied by site, the use of methamphetamine and alcohol was reported at all four focus groups. All sites also observed the need for sexual health education enhancement in schools, with participants indicating that sexual violence was prevalent in their communities, especially among youth.</p>
<p>Physical Health</p> 	<p>Expanding emergency medical and preventative health care services in rural areas arose as the leading physical health need; however, the specific health service gaps varied by site. For example, local maternal and child healthcare, dentistry, and ophthalmology services were needs at some sites, while the lack of nursing homes and disability services were noted at others. Dialysis was noted as a major service need in one group, and the need for newer patient transport vehicles and drivers were mentioned in another. Free and low-cost local wellness centers and gyms to promote physical activity were also discussed as service gaps at all four sites.</p>
<p>Environmental Health</p> 	<p>There were no environmental health needs identified in two of the focus groups. In one group, participants expressed concerns about bacterial contamination in the local watershed. Other participants reported finding used syringes littering public areas frequented by children and teens and requested a sharps exchange program or sharps disposal container to assist with cleanup.</p>
<p>Education</p> 	<p>The primary education needs across sites were the expansion of after school programming and college preparation and bridge programs. The desire for more diverse extracurriculars and out-of-school programming were also common themes. Non-traditional education options to accommodate nontraditional work schedules were requested, and participants would like more courses and advanced degree options offered at the local community college. Among youth, the school's emphasis on grades was identified as a major source of stress.</p>
<p>Economic</p> 	<p>A common theme across sites was the need for state and federal economic assistance programs and policy reform, taking into consideration the unique challenges rural communities face. Affordable housing and jobs with better pay and benefits were also priorities. In addition, participants discussed the shortage of daycare options in their community as a significant barrier to employment.</p>