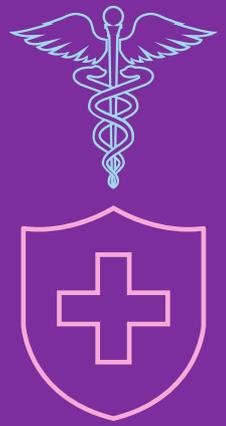


# WELL-WOMAN PROVIDERS' TOOLKIT



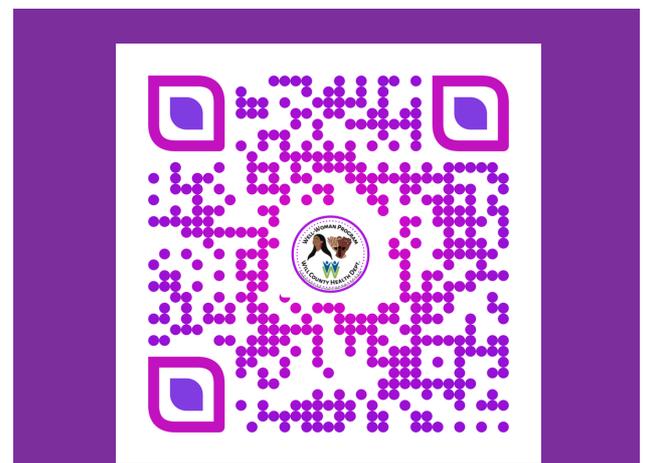
Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Addressing the Barriers

This toolkit is designed to help women's health care providers implement evidence-based practices when communicating about the importance of well-women visits. It can also help you plan, implement, and evaluate your own practice's approach to help eliminate the documented barriers women report in prioritizing an annual preventative well-care appointment.

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[Access the WCHD Well-Woman Program Webpage](#)

# IDENTIFYING THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PREVENTATIVE CARE



Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Top Barriers to Care for Women City MATCH 13

**Lack of Childcare and/or Childcare Friendly Providers' Offices**

Many women frequently report being unable to take their children to their appointments due to a lack of child-friendly clinics and/or being unable to obtain childcare to attend their health care appointments.

**Lack of Reliable and Safe Transportation To and From Appointments**

Women report long distances to providers, as well as no available parking, unreliable and unsafe public transportation when traveling with small children (i.e., no room for car seats, strollers), and unreliable and not woman-friendly transportation services (i.e., van services).

**Insurance Coverage for Well-Woman Services**

Women face barriers in obtaining any or low-cost insurance. Women avoid seeking health care because they are afraid they cannot afford it or fear going into debt. Women are also hesitant that the quality of care depends greatly on type of insurance.

**Patients' Fear and Mistrust**

Barriers with providers stem from lack of trust or comfort; women often feel they are not heard and that providers ignore their concerns. Women also express fear of being judged or stigmatized.

**Culturally Competent Care**

Women report being discriminated against due to race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, type of insurance, disability, and sexual orientation/gender. Also, Non-English speaking women face the lack of translational services and materials available in languages other than English which make it difficult or undesirable for them to seek care.

# BARRIER: LACK OF CHILDCARE AND/OR CHILDCARE FRIENDLY PROVIDERS' OFFICES



Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Defining the Barrier

One of the most significant barriers to women seeking health care, especially preventative care, is childcare. Women who are primary or sole caretakers of their kids struggle to find the time outside of work and taking care of their children and family. Additionally, many lack the resources to afford childcare or the ability to find affordable childcare, especially during times when doctors are available. These factors result in women putting off care and preventative visits.

## Response to the Barrier

- Child friendly services in providers' waiting areas and/or provision of a childcare center
- Increasing availability of office appointments outside of traditional hours; for example, more evening or weekend appointment hours

## Suggestions

- Creating a child friendly space in the healthcare setting with supervision for women to be able to bring their children to appointments if needed
- Having specific days in the week or weekends with appointments outside of 9AM-5PM work hours to allow flexibility for women to schedule appointments that work with their childcare, job, and other responsibilities
- Make sure to discuss childcare as a part of the Well-Woman visit as this contributes to a mother's health



# BARRIER: LACK OF RELIABLE AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM APPOINTMENTS



Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Defining the Barrier

Many women, especially those who live in low income households and areas, lack reliable and safe transportation to make their health care appointments. Some do not own a car or are unable to find someone to take them. Some cannot afford other modes of transportation like rideshare services or safe public transportation. This makes it significantly harder for these women to seek out preventative care visits, and keep them, because of uncertainty on how they can travel to and from an appointment.

## Response to the Barrier

- Providing reliable transportation options and route schedules to help women get to their appointments

## Resources to Share

- RTA Regional Transit Authority System Map:  
<https://www.rtachicago.org/sites/default/files/documents/planyourtrip/RTA-System-Map.pdf> - downloadable map
- Pace Bus Regional Transit System Map & Downloadable Maps:  
<https://www.pacebus.com/regional-transit-system-map>
- Free fare is provided to: Children under age 7 (up to 2 children per fare-paying adult) - women should be informed to check with providers' offices when bringing children to appointments

**PACE Suburban bus vouchers in limited supply are now available through Will County Health Department (Increasing Well-Woman Visits Grant funding) for providers to distribute to patients for Well-Woman visits**



**Visit our website for more information on the bus voucher initiative and how to receive vouchers for your office or organization to distribute**



# BARRIER: INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR WELL-WOMAN SERVICES



Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Defining the Barrier

Many women are not insured, or are underinsured, and therefore are less likely to seek out preventative care and tend to put off health care in general. Women face barriers in obtaining low-cost, or any, health insurance (e.g., issues with co-payments, deductibles, premiums, etc.) for a variety of reasons. Women avoid seeking health care because they fear they may not be able to afford the associated costs or could go into debt paying for medical bills. Women may be concerned that the quality of care depends greatly on which type of insurance they carry.

## Response to the Barrier

- Education of providers and patients of the women's preventative care services covered under the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid
- Expanding accepted insurances at practices
- Ensuring high quality of care and treatment of all patients regardless of the type of insurance that they hold

## What Patients Need to Know

### Preventative Care Under Marketplace Plans (Healthcare.gov)

All Marketplace health plans, and many other plans, must cover the following list of preventive services for women without charging a copayment or coinsurance (for in-network providers). This is true even if the patient has not yet met their yearly deductible.



In December 2021, HRSA approved a new guideline on obesity prevention for midlife women and updates to five existing preventive services guidelines: Well-Woman Preventive Visits, Breastfeeding Services and Supplies, Counseling for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Screening for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection, and Contraception.

### Medicaid Coverage (Illinois Medicaid)

Illinois Medicaid covers annual exams, family planning counseling, all FDA-approved contraceptives, including long-acting reversible contraceptives (i.e. IUD and implant) and permanent forms of birth control (i.e. tubal ligation or vasectomy). The Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program offers free mammograms, breast exams, pelvic exams and Pap smear tests to eligible women.



# BARRIER: INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR WELL-WOMAN SERVICES (CONT.)



## Will County Health Department Well-Woman Program

### Certified Application Counselors (CACs)

The Will County Community Health Center offers excellent services from Certified Application Counselors (CACs). This is a great resource to refer women to, helping them find affordable insurance based on their needs. Assistance is also available in Spanish.

**ABE** APPLICATION FOR BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY  
**MEDICAID/SNAP**  
TARIETA MEDICA/LINK  
**ABE HOTLINE 1-800-843-6154**  
www.ABE.Illinois.gov

Apply online  
or  
Call Hotline

**HealthCare.gov**  
**MARKETPLACE**  
Hotline 1-800-318-2596  
www.healthcare.gov

#### Certified Application Counselors

Available by phone at the Will County Community Health Center to assist applying for health coverage through Medicaid and the Marketplace.

#### Services Provided:

- Assistance with applying for Medicaid (including ALL KIDS, and Mom's & Babies) SNAP, or Cash Assistance.
- Assistance with applying for Marketplace coverage during Open Enrollment Periods and during Special Enrollment Periods for those who qualify.
- Medically Presumed Eligibility (MPE's) for qualified pregnant women.
- Assistance with appeals, redetermination, and choosing a health plan.

**Will County Community Health Center**  
1106 Neal Avenue, Joliet, IL 60433

**Call for phone appointment: 815-774-6090**



## Women's Preventive Services Initiative (WPSI): 2022 Recommendations for Well-Woman Care



[English Version](#)



[Spanish Version](#)

# BARRIER: PATIENTS' FEAR AND MISTRUST



Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Defining the Barrier

Fear and mistrust from women seeking health care can stem from personal experiences, traumas, discrimination, and history of mistreatment (especially in minority and underserved communities). According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), barriers with providers stem from lack of trust or comfort; women feel they are not heard and that providers are not addressing their concerns. The structure of appointments (e.g., getting an appointment, actual time spent with provider) often cause women to delay or defer seeking health care services (ACOG, 2021).

## Response to the Barrier

- It is important for providers to understand the factors that contribute to fear and mistrust among women, and take these factors into consideration when treating patients. Take the time to get to know your patient outside of just their basic health information - this includes traumas, hesitations they have about health care, their cultural background and how that contributes to their health, etc.
- Make the patient feel comfortable by assuring them that you will work with them throughout the health care process. Ensure them they are not alone and their health is your first priority, regardless of their background, identity, or the insurance that they have
- Be a good listener with your patients and take concerns seriously when they tell you about their health
- Structure appointments to include time for this kind of conversation, or actively engage with them in these conversations as you are conducting their health checkup
- Encourage them to see you at least once a year for disease prevention
- Encourage them to reach out when they have a concern and be as accessible as you can

# BARRIER: PATIENTS' FEAR AND MISTRUST (CONT.)



Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Additional Recommendations

Address the 4 C's of Trauma Informed Care: Calm, Contain, Care, & Cope



**Table 1.** Four C's—Skills in Trauma-Informed Care

Calm	Pay attention to how you are feeling while caring for the patient. Breathe and calm yourself to help model and promote calmness for the patient and care for yourself.
Contain	Ask the level of detail of trauma history that will allow patient to maintain emotional and physical safety, respect the time frame of your interaction, and will allow you to offer patients further treatment.
Care	Remember to emphasize, for patient and yourself, good self-care and compassion.
Cope	Remember to emphasize, for patient and yourself, coping skills to build upon strength, resiliency, and hope.

Modified from Kimberg L, Wheeler M. Trauma and trauma-informed care. In: Gerber MR, editor. Trauma-informed healthcare approaches: a guide for primary care. Cham, Switzerland: Springer; 2019. p. 25–56.

Physical Environment 	Social and Emotional Environment 
✓ Keep parking lots, common areas, bathrooms, and entrances/exits well lit	✓ Train all clinical and non-clinical staff to effectively communicate with patients
✓ Decorate with warm colors and artwork and create spaces for staff to relax	✓ Encourage frontline staff, including front desk staff and security guards to greet patients in a warm and welcoming manner
✓ Ensure security guards are readily available in settings where necessary, and consider stationing them at building entrances and exits to monitor the flow of traffic in and out of the building	✓ Understand how an individual's culture affects how they perceive trauma, safety, and privacy
✓ Keep noise levels in waiting rooms low	✓ Send medical forms that require patients to provide sensitive information ahead of time
✓ Use positive and welcoming language on waiting room signage	✓ Ask patients whether they are comfortable with having the door shut during exams or meetings
✓ Ensure people are not allowed to loiter or congregate outside entrances/exits	✓ Keep consistent schedules and offer sufficient notice and preparation when changes are necessary

### Learn More

This fact sheet is a product of *Advancing Trauma-Informed Care*, a national initiative focused on better understanding how trauma-informed approaches can be practically implemented across the health care sector, made possible by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and led by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS). For more information, visit CHCS' [Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center](https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org) at [TraumainformedCare.chcs.org](https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org).

# BARRIER: PATIENTS' FEAR AND MISTRUST (CONT.)



Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Additional Recommendations (cont.)

Look for and screen for signs and symptoms of trauma

	Signs and Symptoms of Trauma
•	Agitation
•	Irritability, emotional swings
•	Anxiety, depression, fear
•	Outbursts of anger
•	Easily startled by noise or touch
•	Sudden sweating and/or heart palpitations
•	Flashbacks—re-experiencing the trauma
•	Difficulty concentrating
•	Difficulty trusting
•	Self-blame, guilt or shame
•	Feeling disconnected or numb



Caring for Patients Who Have Experienced Trauma | ACOG



## Mental Health and Safety Screening for Patients

Patients should be screened for mental health issues, substance use, and safety concerns as a part of the Well-Woman visit

### Recommendations on what to do during routine well woman visits:

1

Screen for and treat depressive symptoms

2

Screen for unhealthy alcohol use and provide guidance

3

Screen for IPV, firearm possession and human trafficking and offer resources



# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES IN WILL COUNTY



## Will County Health Department Well-Woman Program

**SILVER  
OAKS**  
Behavioral Hospital

### Silver Oaks Behavioral Hospital

1004 Pawlak Pkwy, New Lenox, IL 60451

Phone: (844) 580-5000 (Inpatient and Outpatient Services)

[www.silveroaksbehavioralhospital.com](http://www.silveroaksbehavioralhospital.com)



### Will County Community Health Center Behavioral Health Outpatient Services

1106 Neal Avenue Joliet, IL 60433

Phone: (815) 727-8670

[willcountyhealth.org/behavioral-health-chc](http://willcountyhealth.org/behavioral-health-chc)



### Ascension Saint Joseph-Behavioral Health Hospital

333 Madison St, Joliet, IL 60435

Phone: (815) 725-7133 (Inpatient and Outpatient Services)

[healthcare.ascension.org/locations/illinois/ilchi/joliet-ascension-saint-joseph-behavioral-health](http://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/illinois/ilchi/joliet-ascension-saint-joseph-behavioral-health)

**Healthy Driven**

Linden Oaks  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
A part of Edward-Elmhurst Healthcare

### Edward Elmhurst Health Linden Oaks Behavioral Health Linden Oaks Behavioral Health Outpatient Plainfield

24600 West 127th Street

Plainfield, IL 60585

Phone: (630) 305-5027

[eehealth.org](http://eehealth.org)



### Trinity Services Inc. Residential Services, Intensive Outpatient Services, Counseling, and Job Services

301 Veterans Parkway, New Lenox, IL 60451

Phone: (815) 485-6197 (Main Office)

[trinityservices.org](http://trinityservices.org)



### NAMI Will/Grundy

417 Taylor St., Joliet Il. 60435

Phone: (English) (815) 409-7917, (Spanish) (815) 600-9406

[namiwillgrundy.org](http://namiwillgrundy.org)

# BARRIER: CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE



## Will County Health Department Well-Woman Program

### Defining the Barrier

Cultural competency is one of the cornerstones of effective medical care. Women of color tend to face more barriers to care, face discrimination and racism, and are more likely to not receive comprehensive care with consideration of their background, culture, and the specific needs and differences associated with their identity. Some women also face a language barrier, which may prevent them from seeking out health care. Women of color often report not being taken seriously by doctors when being provided care and being easily dismissed when they bring up concerns. This leads to further mistrust and could potentially put the patient at risk of conditions that could have been prevented. These interactions lead to delay in care, poor health outcomes, and even death.



### Implicit Bias

Implicit biases have long had a significant effect on women's health. Implicit attitudes are thoughts and feelings that often exist outside of conscious awareness, and are sometimes difficult to consciously identify, acknowledge, and control. These attitudes are often unconsciously and automatically activated and can significantly impact behavior towards patients. The biases of providers have been identified as one of many factors that contribute to health disparities (Hall et al., 2015). Racial disparities are very prevalent in women's health care and exist because implicit bias affects providers' perceptions and decisions, which lead to inequalities in access, patient-provider interactions, treatment decisions, and health outcomes. Many providers also struggle to acknowledge the impact of personal implicit bias on how they care for their patients. Additionally, the actions of providers due to implicit bias and their interactions with patients are highly associated with racial disparities in women's experiences of trauma during the birthing process (Suluja and Bryant, 2021). Women of color are more likely to experience mistreatment and implicit bias from providers because of their race, ethnicity, cultural background, and/or language.

# BARRIER: CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE (CONT.)

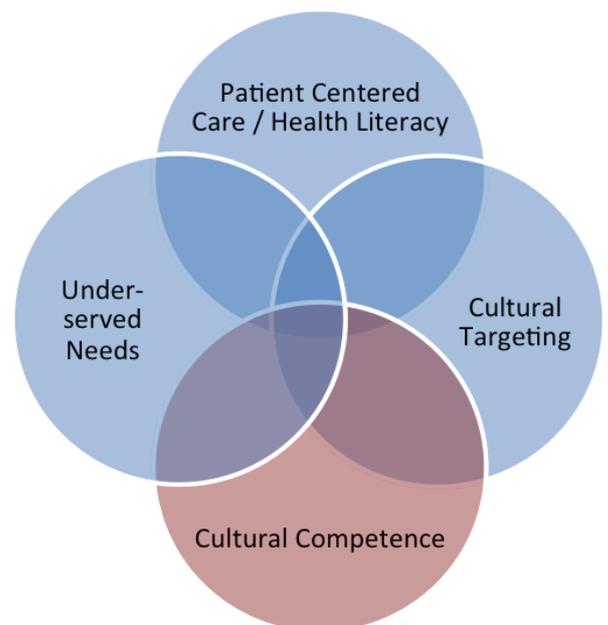


Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Response to the Barrier

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists makes the following recommendations for obstetrician–gynecologists, and other health care providers, to improve patient-centered care and decrease inequities in reproductive health care:

- Inquire about and document social and structural determinants of health that may influence a patient’s health and use of health care such as access to stable housing, access to food and safe drinking water, utility needs, safety in the home and community, immigration status, and employment conditions
- Maximize referrals to social services to help improve patients’ abilities to fulfill these needs
- Provide access to interpreter services for all patient interactions when patient language is not the clinician’s language
- Acknowledge that race, institutionalized racism, and other forms of discrimination serve as social determinants of health
- Recognize that stereotyping patients based on presumed cultural beliefs can negatively affect patient interactions, especially when patients’ behaviors are attributed solely to individual choices without recognizing the role of social and structural factors
- Advocate for policy changes that promote safe and healthy living environments



<https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/products/cultural-competence/research-protocol>



# BARRIER: CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE (CONT.)

Will County Health Department  
Well-Woman Program

## Suggested Readings

[HHS.gov: Think Cultural Health](#)  
[The Guide to Providing Effective Communication and Language Assistance Services](#)

[Implicit Racial/Ethnic Bias Among Health Care Professionals and Its Influence on Health Care Outcomes: A Systematic Review](#)

[How Implicit Bias Contributes to Racial Disparities in Maternal Morbidity and Mortality in the United States](#)



## Addressing a Language Barrier

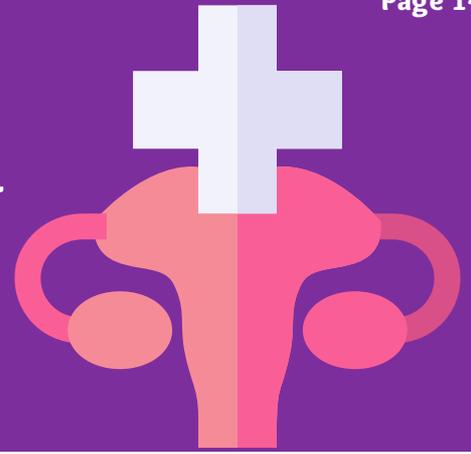


**Table 1. Tips for Using a Medical Interpreter**

- Identify patients who may need an interpreter
- Allow extra time for the interview
- Meet with the interpreter before the interview to give some background, build rapport, and set goals
- Document the name of the interpreter in the progress note
- Realize that most patients understand some English, so do not make comments you do not want them to understand
- Seat the interpreter next to or slightly behind the patient
- Speak directly to the patient, not the interpreter
- Use first-person statements (“I” statements); avoid saying “he said” or “tell her”
- Speak in short sentences or short thought groups
- Ask only one question at a time
- Allow appropriate time for the interpreter to finish the statement
- Prioritize and limit the key points to three or fewer
- Do not use idioms, acronyms, jargon, or humor
- Insist on sentence-by-sentence interpretation to avoid tangential conversations
- Allow 10-minute breaks for every hour of interpretation
- Use the “teach back” or “show me” technique to ensure patient comprehension
- Have a post-session discussion with the interpreter to get further details and make corrections, if necessary

Cultural Competency: What is the key to culturally competent care: Reducing bias or cultural tailoring? - PubMed (nih.gov)

# WCHD WELL-WOMAN PROGRAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION



**Will County Health Department**  
[willcountyhealth.org](http://willcountyhealth.org)

**Will County Community Health Center**  
[willcountyhealth.org/chc](http://willcountyhealth.org/chc)

**Will County Health Department**  
**Well-Woman Program Webpage**  
[willcountyhealth.org/well-woman](http://willcountyhealth.org/well-woman)



**¿Quiere leer esto en español?**

[willcountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Well-Woman-Providers-Toolkit-SPANISH-WillCountyHealthDept.-2023.pdf](http://willcountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Well-Woman-Providers-Toolkit-SPANISH-WillCountyHealthDept.-2023.pdf)



**Will County Health Department**  
**815-727-8480**  
**501 Ella Ave.**  
**Joliet, IL 60433**

**Community Health Center**  
**815-727-8670**  
**1106 Neal Ave.**  
**Joliet, IL 60433**

**Email: [Info@willcountyhealth.org](mailto:Info@willcountyhealth.org)**



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