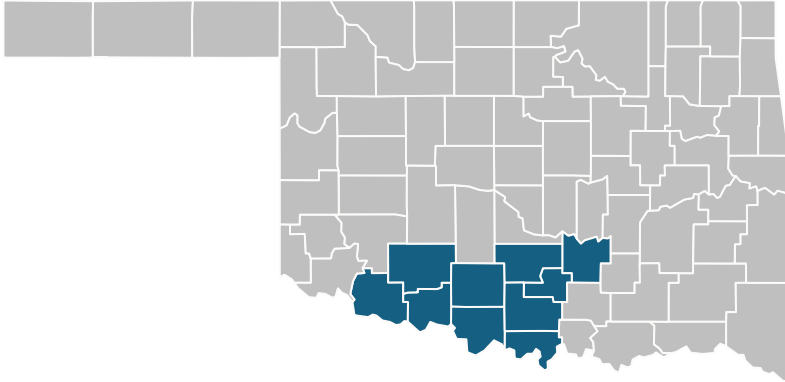


Regional Objectives Plan: South Central Oklahoma

Geographic coverage:



Counties include Carter, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Jefferson, Love, Murray, Pontotoc, Stephens, and Tillman.

Geographic coverage spans OSDH Districts 5 and 8.

Prioritized areas of need:

These prioritized areas of need were identified through available data and stakeholder input and reflect a focused set of priorities rather than every challenge present in these communities. While communities across the region face a wide range of needs, they also demonstrate significant strengths, and many areas could merit attention. Further needs are likely to emerge over time, and future planning will continue to evolve as new information and community input becomes available.

The first four needs below are present statewide across all Oklahoma regions and are listed alphabetically. The ordering does not reflect any ranking of priority or importance.

Need	Supporting Details
High prevalence and co-occurrence of obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, worsened by limited engagement with preventive care and chronic disease management	• OSDH Districts 5 and 8 have a high prevalence of obesity among adults (39.5 to 42.0%) relative to state (38.9%) and national (33.3%) prevalence (CDC, 2025). • Similarly, the South Central region has elevated rates of coronary heart disease (7.4 to 8.3%) relative to the national average of 6.3%, and hypertension (39.4 to 42.1%) relative to state and national averages (CDC, 2025). • The South Central region has elevated rates of diabetes (13.5 to 14.0%) relative to the national rate of 12.1% (CDC, 2025). • OSDH District 5 has the lowest rate of recent cholesterol screening in the state, with 82.9% of adults receiving screening relative to the state rate of 84.3% and national rate of 86.2% (CDC, 2025). • Elevated obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease rates are compounded by social risk factors in OSDH District 5, including an 18.4% poverty rate, 17.7% of adults in the district

	receiving food stamps in the past 12 months, and 21.3% of adults experiencing food insecurity in the past 12 months (ACS 5-Year, 2024; CDC, 2025).
High prevalence of mental health conditions and substance use disorder, with limited access to care and insufficient coordination across the continuum	• The South Central region carries significant substance-related harm, including a methamphetamine overdose death rate of 22.2 to 23.1 per 100,000 residents, relative to the Oklahoma benchmark of 18.5 (OSDH Drug Overdose Dashboard, 2024). • OSDH District 5 has the highest opioid overdose death rate in the rural districts (excluding Oklahoma City and Tulsa). This half of the region has an opioid overdose death rate of 15.6 per 100,000 residents, exceeding the Oklahoma benchmark of 13.8 per 100,000 residents (OSDH Drug Overdose Dashboard, 2024). • The region has limited access to behavioral health care, with only 7.7 to 10.3 buprenorphine providers per 100,000 residents, relative to the Oklahoma benchmark of 10.6 and the Oklahoma City/Tulsa benchmark of 14.3 (SAMHSA, 2025). • The region also demonstrates elevated rates of depression, with a prevalence of 24.8 to 25.4% among adults, relative to the national benchmark of 21.6% (CDC, 2025). • Stakeholder feedback reveals opportunities to improve access to behavioral health services, not just for the patient, but also for other family members, who would benefit from increased support.
Limited access to and utilization of comprehensive primary and preventive care, contributing to avoidable health outcomes	• In OSDH Districts 5 and 8, only 39.1 to 39.7% of Medicare fee-for-service enrollees received an annual flu vaccine, compared to 44.0% statewide and 48.0% nationally (UWPHI, 2025). • Routine dental visits are similarly low across OSDH Districts 5 and 8, with 53.4 to 54.5% of adults completing a dental visit in the past year, relative to 57.1% statewide and 61.7% nationally (CDC, 2025). • In the South Central region, 67.7 to 69.8% of women ages 50-74 received a mammogram in the past two years, relative to the Oklahoma benchmark of 70.4% (CDC, 2025). • The region also experiences limited access to primary care physicians, with 54.8 to 64.1 licensed primary care physicians per 100,000 residents, relative to the state benchmark of 71.4 and the Oklahoma City/Tulsa benchmark of 108.1 (Association of American Medical Colleges, 2023; OK Medical Board, 2026; OK State Board of Osteopathic Examiners, 2026). • Comments from stakeholders indicate that “patients shy away from seeing their primary care providers, due to the expense and travel distances,” thus limiting their access to primary and preventive care.
Limited access to women's health services across all life stages	• OSDH Districts 5 and 8 have 6.4 to 8.9 licensed OB/GYN physicians per 100,000 residents versus an Oklahoma benchmark of 11.3 and an Oklahoma City/Tulsa rate of 20.4 (Association of American Medical Colleges, 2023; OK Medical Board, 2026; OK State Board of Osteopathic Examiners, 2026).

	• Average travel for labor and delivery is 23 to 24 miles in OSDH Districts 5 and 8, versus an Oklahoma average of 14 miles (Oklahoma Inpatient Encounter Data, 2023-2024). Incremental travel distance can become detrimental to urgent/emergency deliveries as well as a barrier to pre- and post-natal care. • OSDH District 8 has the second highest rate of low birth weight among districts in the state, with 8.8% of births weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces (UWPHI, 2025). • Mammography screening rates in the past two years among women ages 50-74 are 69.8% in OSDH District 5 and 67.7% in OSDH District 8, versus 70.4% Oklahoma and 76.1% national (CDC, 2025).
Limited access to comprehensive and coordinated oncology and cancer care services	• Cancer affects 8.7% of adults in OSDH District 8, the second highest of any district, and exceeds the state average of 7.8% (CDC, 2025). • Licensed oncology physicians average 1.9 to 3.0 physicians per 100,000 residents across the South Central region, well below the Oklahoma and national benchmarks of 3.9 and 8.1, respectively (Association of American Medical Colleges, 2023; OK Medical Board, 2026; OK State Board of Osteopathic Examiners, 2026). • Only 58.4 to 59.5% of adults in OSDH Districts 5 and 8 have received a recent colorectal cancer screening, compared to the national average of 63.7%. Similarly, across South Central Oklahoma, <70% of women ages 50-74 have received a mammogram in the past two years, compared to the national average of 76.1% (CDC, 2025). • Across OSDH Districts 5 and 8, rural residents face compounded risk factors including smoking prevalence of 18.2 to 18.3% and obesity rates of 39.5 to 42.0%, all exceeding Oklahoma averages (CDC, 2025). • Additional social factors affect access to cancer care in OSDH Districts 5 and 8, including poverty rates of 16.9 to 18.4%, lack of reliable transportation among 9.7 to 10.7% of adults, and 12 to 16% of households lacking broadband connectivity (ACS 5-Year, 2024; CDC, 2025).

Disclosure:

This Regional Objectives Plan draws on data-driven findings from public sources (cited with each finding) and OSDH encounters data (2023-2024). To allow comparison across regions of different sizes, rates were calculated by dividing figures from the cited source by the relevant population data from the US Census Bureau (2024). These findings were supplemented by stakeholder input to validate findings, surface additional regional priorities, and capture insights not reflected in available data. All attendees of publicly accessible RRR Regional Virtual Kickoffs or County Cluster Kickoffs were invited to meet with their facilitator to discuss organizational challenges and share perspectives on regional needs. Virtual Kickoff sessions and materials were also recorded and posted publicly for broader accessibility. Facilitators combined data and community input, where possible, to ground the plan in both evidence and lived experience.

Organizations consulted while developing perspectives for this plan:

Note: Listing an organization reflects its participation in the input process and not its endorsement of the plan.

Arbuckle Memorial Hospital
Ardmore Behavioral Health Collaborative
Big Five Community Services
Carter County OSU Extension Office
Children's Advocacy Center of Oklahoma
Comanche County Health Department
Cotton County Health Coalition
CREOKS Behavioral Health
Duncan Regional Hospital
Good Shepherd Community Clinic, Inc.
Health Corps
Jefferson County Hospital
Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma
Lindsay Municipal Hospital
Memorial Health Systems
Mercy Ada
Mercy Ardmore
Mercy Healdton
Mercy Love County
Mercy Tishomingo
Murray County Emergency Management
OSDH, Carter County
Pathways to Healthy Living
Physician, MHS
Pontotoc County Health Board, East Central University
Region 3 RMRS Director
South Central Medical & Resource Center
Southern OK Development Association
Tishomingo Public Schools
Volunteers of America