



## CARBON COUNTY

# 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

# 2025 LVHN Community Health Needs Assessment – Carbon County



Look for this icon throughout the report, highlighting Community Conversation and Key Stakeholder Feedback.

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) is pleased to present its 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). As part of the Affordable Care Act, starting in 2013, all nonprofit hospitals and health care systems are required to do a CHNA every three years.

A CHNA is an assessment of health needs that reviews published data about the population of a defined service area, in this case the county. Based on the health needs identified in that data, the hospital must validate and prioritize the health needs of the county, using input from those who live and work in the community. Hospitals are then asked to develop an Implementation Plan, which includes activities to address needs that were prioritized in the Health Profile.

The CHNA examines factors that impact the health and wellness of the community. This CHNA report includes data and information about Carbon County and defines “community” as all residents living within the county. Within the communities LVHN serves, the CHNA reports place a greater emphasis on individuals who are experiencing health disparities or who are at risk for negative health outcomes as a result of social and environmental factors influencing their health. Improving the health of the most vulnerable members of a community has been shown to improve health outcomes for all in the community.

Access to quality health care is only one of the factors that contributes to the health of a population. Other factors such as health behaviors, the physical environment, and socioeconomic factors are actually more powerful predictors of health, illness and health care utilization over time. For this reason, the social drivers of health are a focus on this needs assessment report. LVHN has adopted the Well-Being Portfolio as the framework for our community health strategy. This holistic framework incorporates both services that address urgent needs (such as acute care for illness or injury and assistance with meeting basic needs for food and shelter) and long-term investment in assuring that all people have what they need to thrive. Along these lines, the Well-Being Portfolio outlines seven vital conditions

for health and well-being: basic needs for health and safety, lifelong learning, meaningful work and wealth, humane housing, a thriving natural world, reliable transportation, and belonging and civic muscle. As we have assessed the health needs of people in the county, we have been sure to consider the role of health care in addressing both urgent needs and the broader vital conditions that contribute to the health of individuals and families in the region.

In order to assess the health needs of a population, we look at both quantitative (numbers and statistics) as well as qualitative (interviews, community conversation) information. This report includes secondary quantitative data from publicly available state and national sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and the Census Bureau, and provides information about the social and environmental factors such as employment, education and air quality; individual behaviors like smoking or healthy eating; and the quality and availability of health care in the area. This data has all been compiled into a comprehensive data dashboard that includes a lot of in-depth information about each county in the region.

This data is used to identify the top health and social needs in the county and is then validated through community meetings and interviews with residents, where they are asked to select the three areas they feel are of greatest concern currently. They are also asked to add any health needs they see but that may not be easily identified in county-level, publicly available data. There are callout boxes incorporated throughout the report that highlight findings from the community meetings and interviews.

When taken together, this needs assessment serves as an important overview of the current state of health in our region and identifies potential areas of concern that LVHN can work to address in partnership with other sectors and organizations. This information will inform the development of the implementation plan that will guide LVHN's work over the next three years. The 2025 Community Health Implementation Plan will be shared soon after the CHNA report is released.

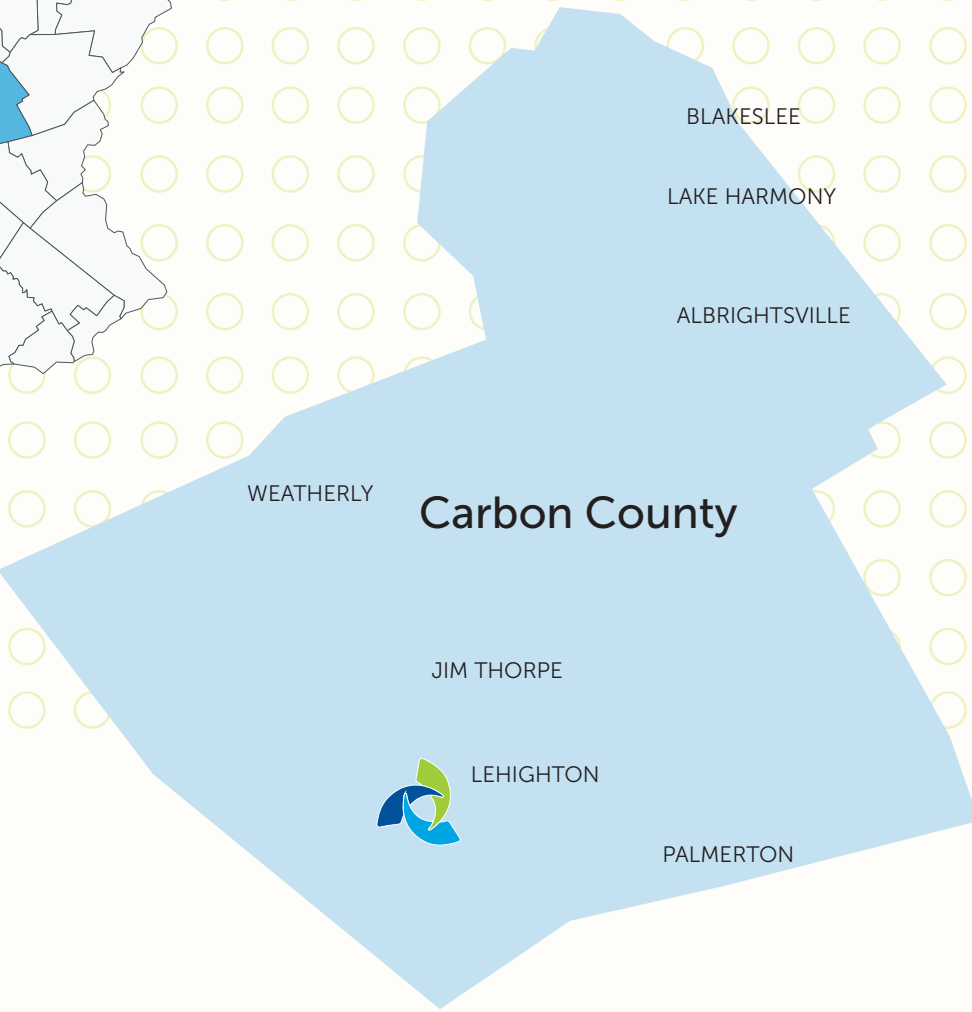
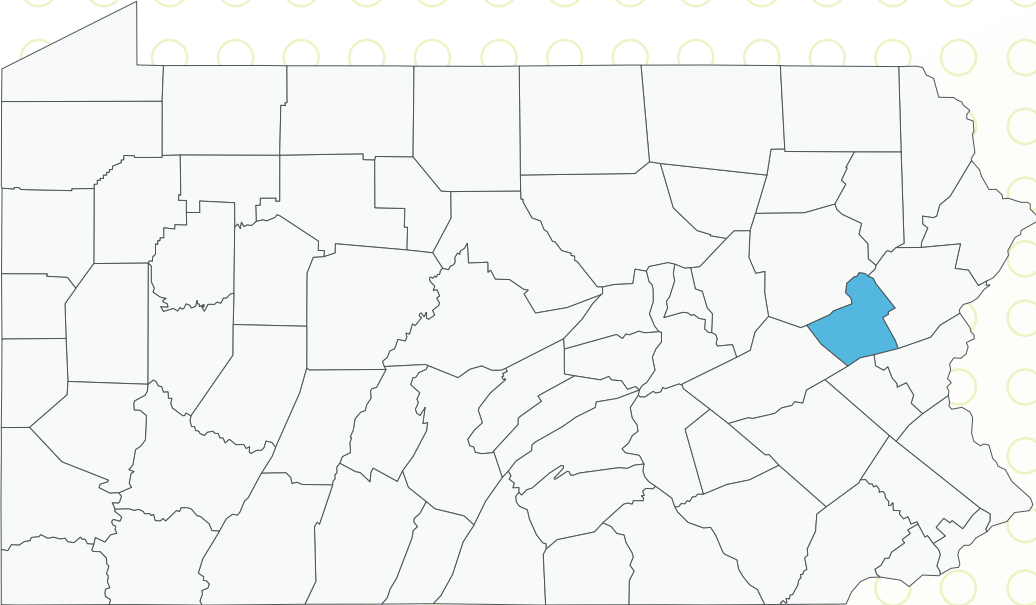




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# Carbon County



*\*\*SparkMap through CARES at the University of Missouri ([sparkmap.org/](http://sparkmap.org/)).*

# Qualitative Data Collection Summary

As a part of our [Community Health Needs Assessment process](#), key stakeholder interviews and community conversations were conducted throughout Carbon County to ensure the health system obtained input from a variety of populations, including public health experts and residents of the county. Below are the locations of the community conversations as well as the roles of those involved in the key stakeholder interviews. See our CHNA Overview document for additional details.

Carbon County	
Community Meetings	Key Stakeholders
Three general community meetings at Bethany Wesleyan Church, Palmerton	Assistant Director, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley
One virtual community meeting	Executive Director, Carbon County Community Foundation
Carbon/Monroe/Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services Employees	Coordinator, C/M/P Mental Health and Developmental Services Vice Chair, Jim Thorpe Rotary Club
Lehighton Senior Center	Administrator, Carbon County Area Agency on Aging

## OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY

Carbon County is a total area of 387 square miles in Pennsylvania. Approximately 60% of the county is rural.

Urban and Rural Population					
	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban Population %	Rural Population	Rural Population %
<b>Carbon County</b>	64,749	26,599	41.1%	38,150	58.9%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	13,002,700	9,941,070	76.5%	3,061,630	23.6%
<b>United States</b>	331,449,281	265,149,027	80.0%	66,300,254	20.0%

# COMMUNITY HEALTH RANKINGS

The **County Health Rankings** provide a health snapshot of how counties fare relative to other counties in the state. They also allow you to see how counties in a state fare on a national continuum of health. As can be seen in the graphic below, Carbon County is faring slightly worse than the average county in Pennsylvania in terms of health outcomes, i.e., quality of life and length of life, and health factors, e.g., social and economic factors, health behaviors.

## Carbon County Health Outcomes 2024

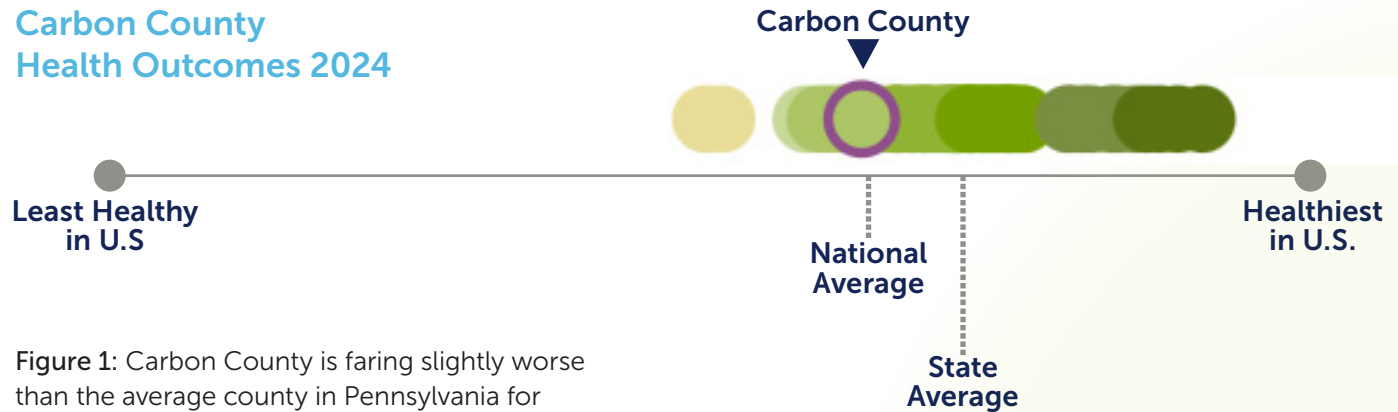


Figure 1: Carbon County is faring slightly worse than the average county in Pennsylvania for Health Outcomes, and about the same as the average county in the nation.

## Carbon County Health Factors 2024

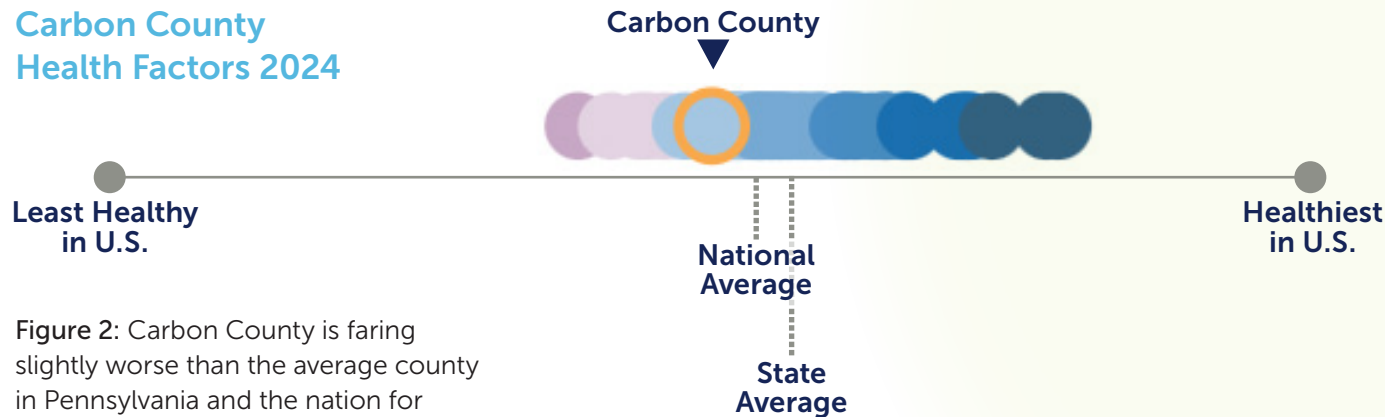
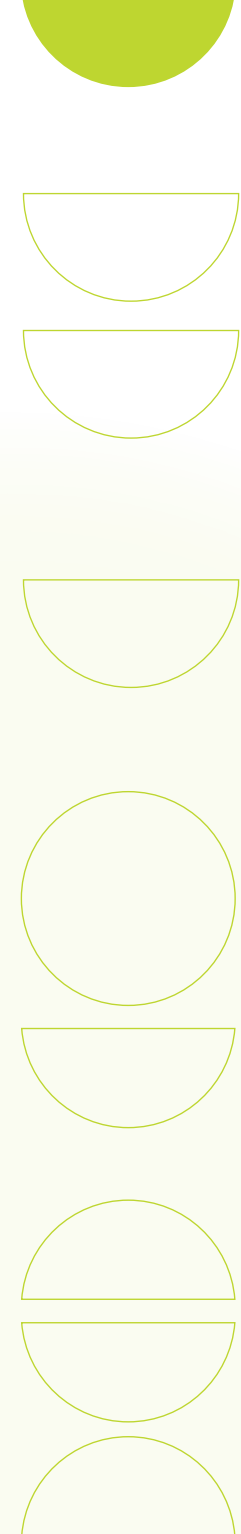
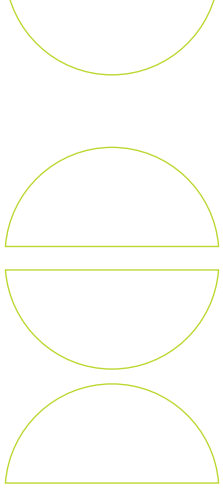


Figure 2: Carbon County is faring slightly worse than the average county in Pennsylvania and the nation for Health Factors.





# LVHN SERVICES IN THE COUNTY

Opened in June 2022, LVH–Carbon is a full-service hospital that comprises more than 100,000 square feet of clinical space and brings a breadth of LVHN care to the residents of Lehighton and Carbon County. Highlighted services at LVH–Carbon include:

- Comprehensive heart care
- State-of-the-art surgical care
- Leading-edge cancer care
- Emergency medicine
- Advanced imaging services
- Health center
- Dedicated orthopedics facilities

The campus grew in September 2023 with a new intensive care unit and expansion in the medical-surgical unit and the health center – including outpatient laboratory services and a cardiac rehabilitation center. Breast Health Services is now also available on the hospital campus. LVH–Carbon has welcomed many new physicians to the community in 2024, increasing access to a higher level of care in both primary care and clinical specialties.



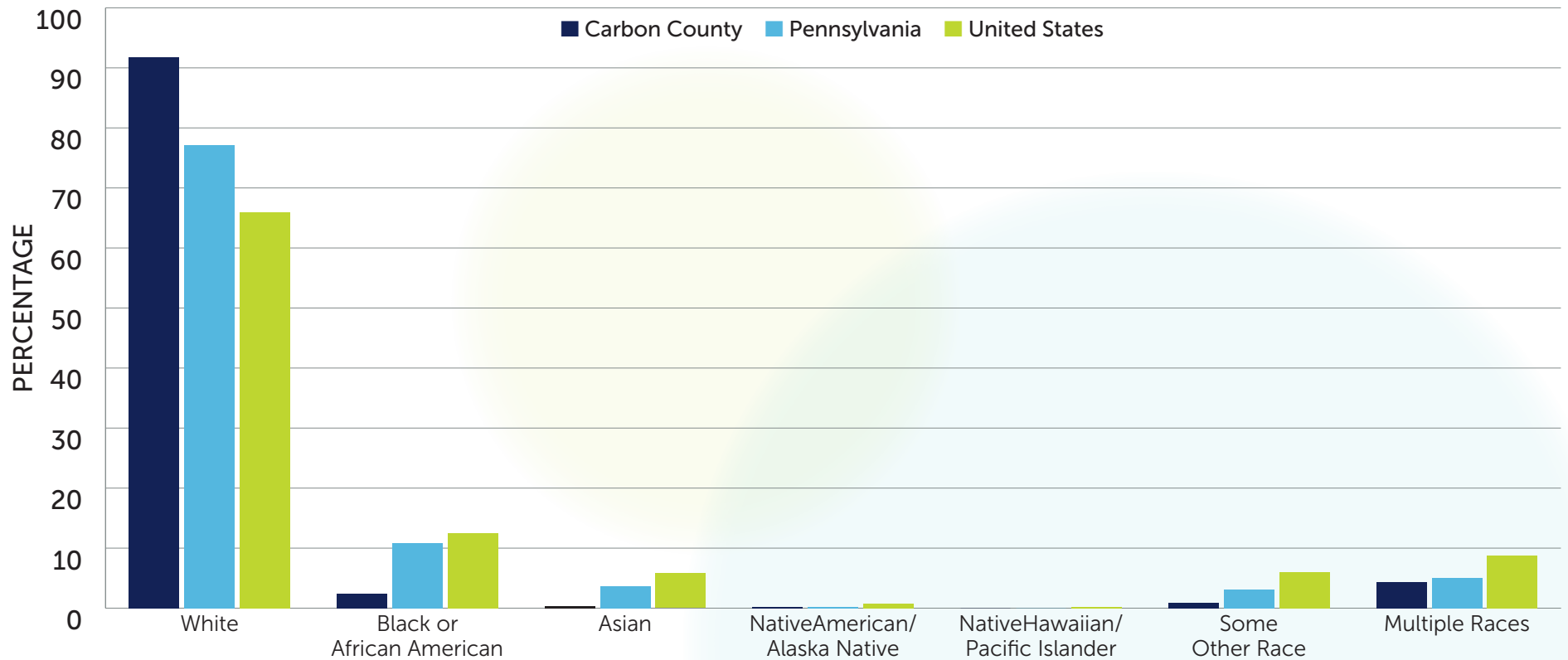
LVH–Carbon



## DEMOGRAPHICS

65,018 people live in Carbon County. The population decreased by 500 people between the 2010 and 2020 Census. Residents of the county are primarily white (92%); 6% of residents are Hispanic, and 2% are Black.

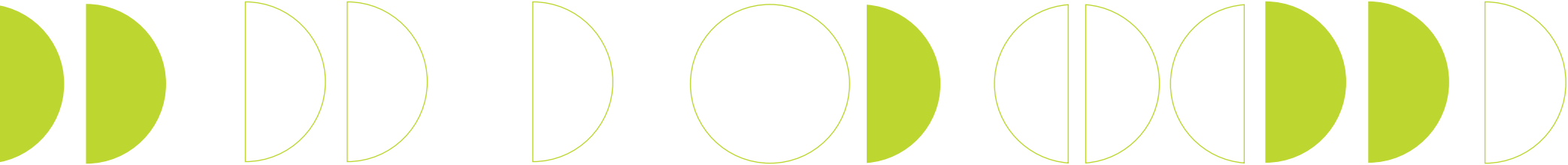
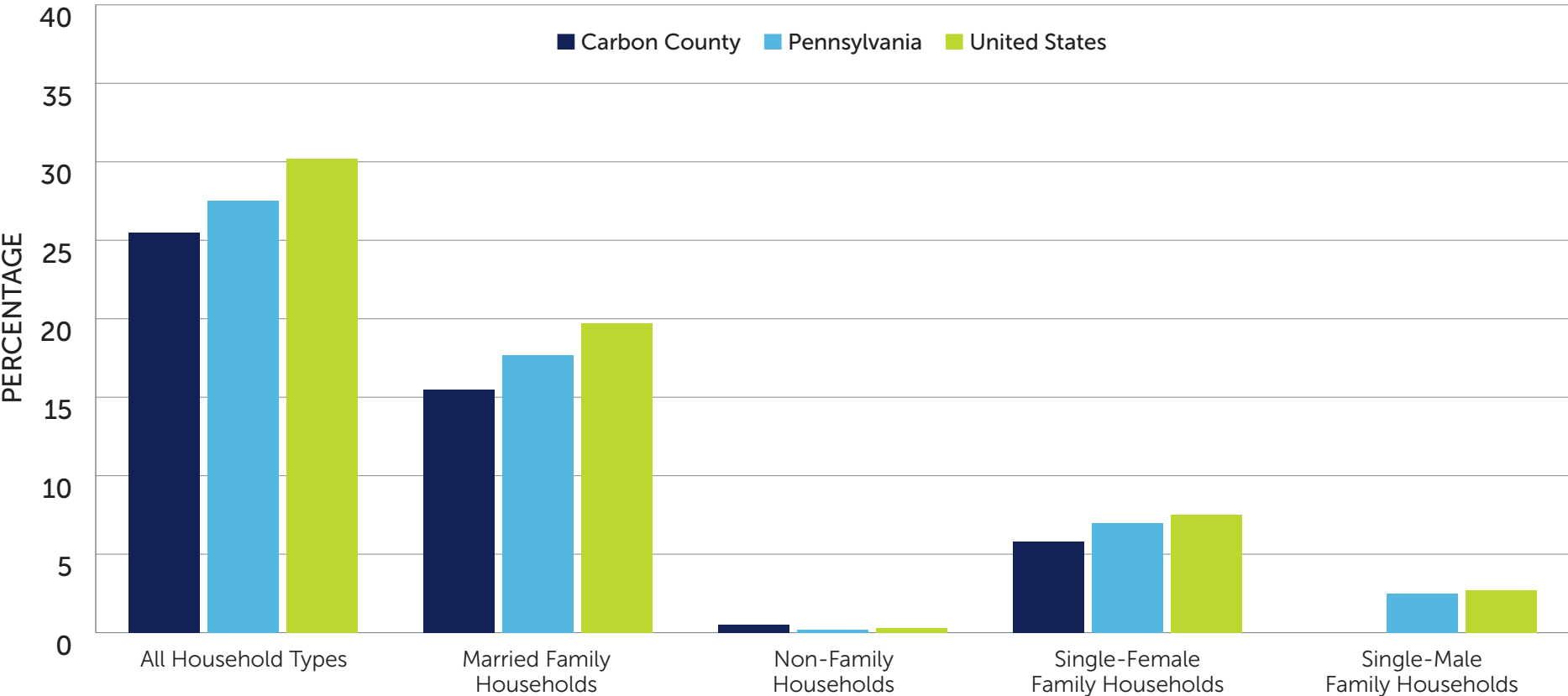
### TOTAL POPULATION BY RACE, PERCENT



About 19% of the total population are under age 18, and 22% are age 65 or older.

	Under 18		18-64		65+	
<b>Carbon</b>	12,359	19%	38,625	60%	14,034	22%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	2,664,562	21%	7,890,241	61%	2,434,405	19%
<b>United States</b>	73,213,705	22%	203,146,240	61%	54,737,648	17%

# HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN BY COMPOSITION

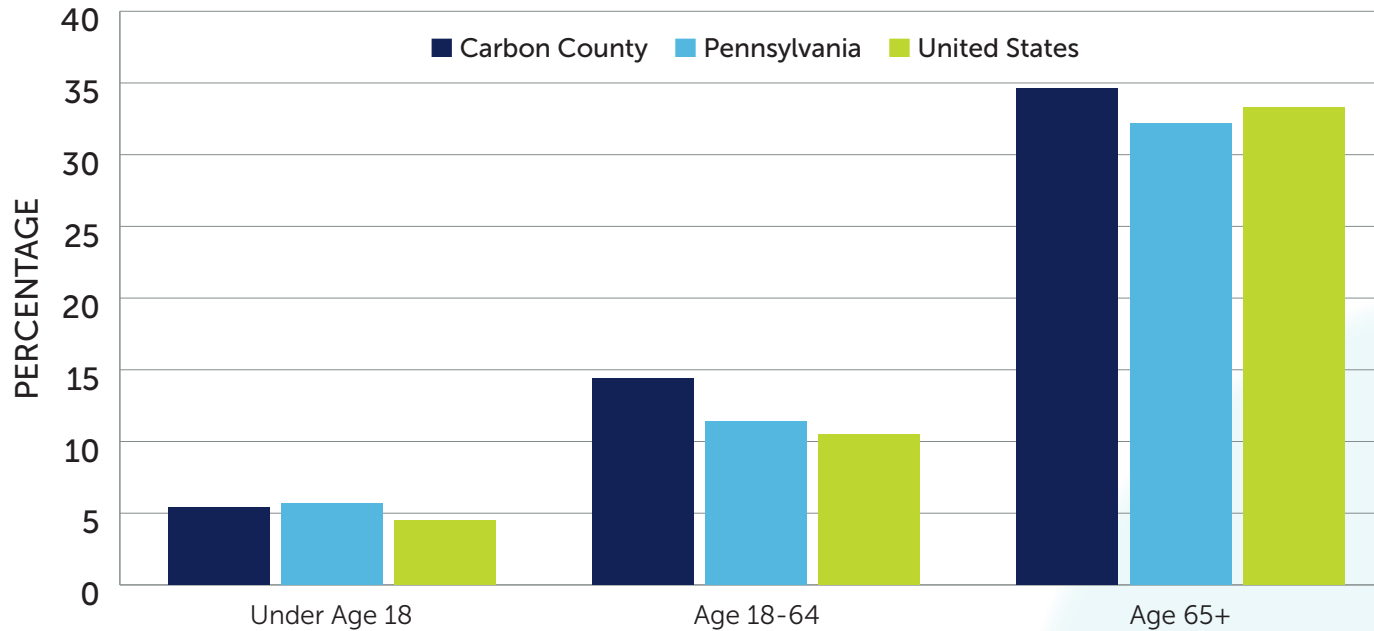


17% of the population in Carbon County have a disability. This is higher than the state percentage of 14%. 9% of the population in Carbon County are veterans, and they are primarily male age 65 and older.

9%

of the population in Carbon County are veterans

### POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY AGE GROUP



Veteran Population			
	Total Population Age 18+	Total Veterans	Veterans, Percent of Adult Population
Carbon County	52,637	4,457	8.5%
Pennsylvania	10,315,765	680,824	6.6%
United States	256,649,167	17,038,807	6.6%



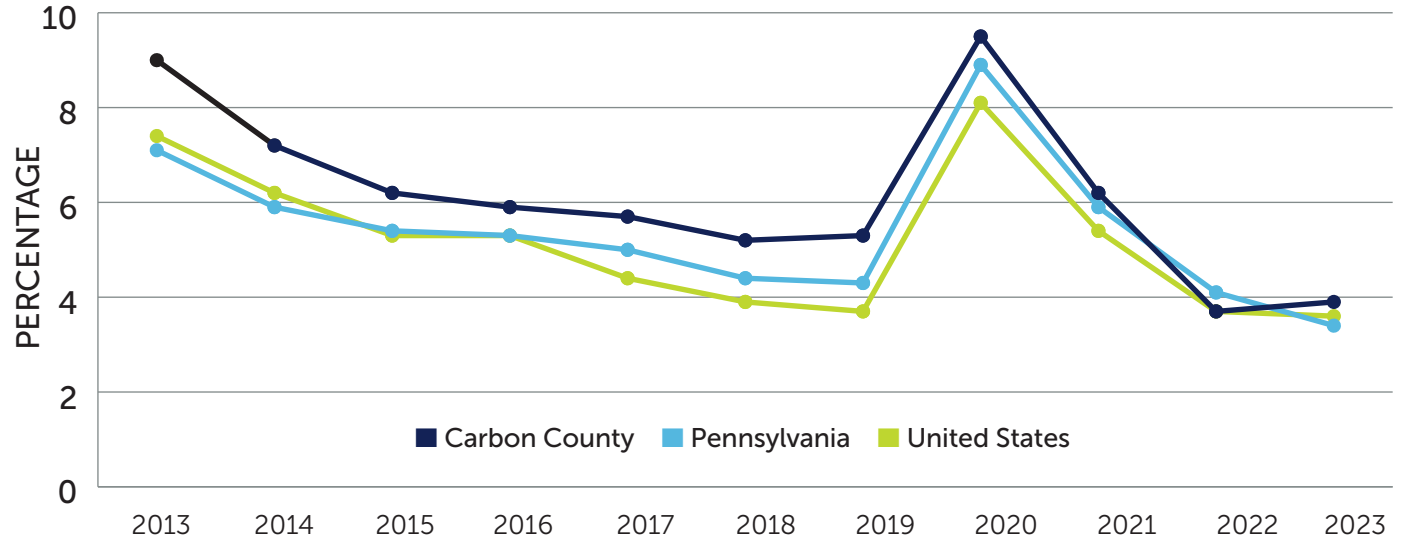
Community members who engaged in community conversations and key stakeholder interviews expressed concern about the lack of well-paying jobs in Carbon County. This leads people to seek work outside of the county and adds travel time to already burdened families. It also creates a transportation barrier to employment.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

### ECONOMIC STRESS

The median household income in Carbon County is \$64,538, which is less than the state median household income of \$73,170. 19% of children living in Carbon County are living in poverty, as are 12% of the total population.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



### INSURANCE STATUS

Lack of health insurance is another concern in Carbon County, particularly among those age 18-64. 5% of the population in Carbon County do not have health insurance, which increases to nearly 8% among those 18-64 (working age).

Uninsured Population by Age Group						
	Under Age 18		Age 18-64		Age 65+	
<b>Carbon County</b>	428	3.3%	2,956	7.8%	47	0.4%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	133,716	4.7%	574,834	7.6%	10,782	0.5%
<b>United States</b>	4,155,345	5.3%	23,728,118	12.2%	421,629	0.8%

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

18% of the population over age 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is less than the state and national percentage (33%). 10% of the total population in Carbon County do not have a high school degree. The graduation rate for Carbon County is 84%. Broken down by race and ethnicity, the graduation rate among white adolescents is 92% but drops to 77% among the Hispanic adolescent population and 67% among the Black adolescent population in Carbon County.



Lifelong learning is a vital condition for thriving and begins in the earliest years. Carbon County residents who spoke with us also expressed concern about young children not being in preschool. They feel that children are falling behind because they are not getting needed early intervention services. Children can wait many months to be seen or receive a diagnosis that could help them access the services needed. Parents are often not aware of available services. Additionally, many day care centers in the area closed during COVID.

### Overall Education Attainment

	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	High School Only	No High School Diploma	Some College
<b>Carbon County</b>	10.8%	12.5%	5.9%	44.1%	10.3%	16.5%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	8.8%	20.2%	13.6%	33.5%	8.3%	15.6%
<b>United States</b>	8.7%	20.9%	13.4%	26.4%	10.9%	19.7%

## PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Only 36% of the population age 3-4 are enrolled in preschool, below the state and the U.S. percentages. Preschool is not required or universally available in Pennsylvania.

### Preschool Enrollment (Age 3-4)

	Population Age 3-4	Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School	Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School %
<b>Carbon County</b>	1,119	402	35.9%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	287,622	127,154	44.2%
<b>United States</b>	7,958,841	3,631,021	45.6%

## UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC BENEFITS

13% of the population in Carbon County receive SNAP benefits (i.e., food stamps), which is lower than the state percentage (14%).



Community members commented that the cost of housing has skyrocketed in Carbon County, even for poor-quality homes. Waiting lists in the county are two to three years long. Being unstably housed, homeless or housing cost-burdened makes it difficult for people to attend to their basic needs for health and safety, including food, health care, mental health and medications.

## POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO HEALTH DUE TO HOUSING INSTABILITY

26% of the population in Carbon County live in cost-burdened households, meaning they are spending more than 30% of their household income on housing. Furthermore, those who are renting are more likely to be cost-burdened than those who are owners.

Cost-Burdened Households						
	Households			Renter-Occupied Households		
	Total	Cost-Burdened	Cost-Burdened%	Total	Cost-Burdened	Cost-Burdened%
<b>Carbon County</b>	26,662	6,980	26.2%	6,647	2,251	33.9%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	5,193,727	1,405,567	27.1%	1,600,237	701,129	43.8%
<b>United States</b>	125,736,353	38,363,931	30.5%	44,238,593	20,547,938	46.5%



## HEALTH BEHAVIORS

### NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MOMS AND BABIES

The teen birth rate in Carbon County is nearly 15 per 1,000 females age 15-19. This rate increases to 26 per 1,000 female teens among Hispanic teenagers. 8% of infants in Carbon County are born with low birth weight (which is comparable to the state rate). When looking at this percentage broken down by race and ethnicity, group differences can be seen. Similar to the overall county percent, 8% of non-Hispanic white infants are born at low birth weight, but this increases to 9.5% among infants who are Hispanic and 14% among infants who are Black.

# 18%

of adults in Carbon County are current or previous long-term smokers

#### Teen Birth Rate (Females Age 15-19)

	Population	Teen Births, Rate per 1,000
Carbon County	11,840	14.9
Pennsylvania	2,796,351	13.2
United States	76,648,322	16.6

### ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

In Carbon County, 17% of adults self-report excessive drinking in the last 30 days; the rate of death due to drug overdose is 43 per 100,000, which is higher than the state rate (28) and the national rate (27).

### PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

18% of adults self-reported no active leisure time in Carbon County.

### SMOKING

18% percent of adults in Carbon County are current or previous long-term smokers.

### OVERALL HEALTH

Nearly 1 in 5 Carbon County residents self-reported being in poor or fair health in 2022.

#### Population With Poor or Fair Health (Adults Age 18+)

	Total Population	Poor or Fair Health Age-Adjusted	Poor or Fair Health (Crude)
Carbon County	65,460	17.8%	19.9%
Pennsylvania	12,972,008	17.6%	18.7%
United States	333,287,557	17.0%	17.9%

# 479

cancer incidence rate within  
Carbon County for every

# 100,000

total in the population.

## HEALTH OUTCOMES

### CANCER INCIDENCE

Within Carbon County, there is a cancer incidence rate of 479 for every 100,000 total in the population, which is higher than the state (467) and national rates (442). The table provides the incidence rate for the five most commonly diagnosed cancers in the county.

Incidence Rates of Top Five Most Commonly Diagnosed Cancers			
	Type of Cancer	New Cases (Annual Average)	Incidence Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Carbon County	Breast	52	109.9
	Lung	66	63.2
	Prostate	53	99.8
	Colon and Rectum	38	42.5
	Cervical		8.7
Pennsylvania	Breast	11,241	130.6
	Lung	10,742	59.5
	Prostate	9,412	108.9
	Colon and Rectum	6,463	38.2
	Cervical	496	7.2
United States	Breast	249,750	127
	Lung	215,307	54
	Prostate	212,734	110.5
	Colon and Rectum	138,021	36.5
	Cervical	12,553	7.5

## DIABETES

Within Carbon County, 8% of adults age 20 and older have diabetes.



Community members are concerned about the number of people who commit suicide in Carbon County. This concern is echoed in their concerns about rural isolation, lack of transportation and the mental health of seniors. Specifically mentioned were suicides of those over age 80 and of veterans, particularly those who are older.

### Diabetes (Adult Population by Age 20+)

	Population	Diagnosed Diabetes	Diagnosed Diabetes, Age-Adjusted, %
<b>Carbon County</b>	51,727	5,121	7.8%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	9,950,438	978,647	8.3%
<b>United States</b>	232,706,003	23,263,962	8.9%

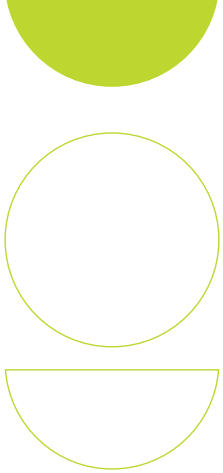
## SUICIDES

Within Carbon County, there are a total of 91 deaths due to suicide between 2018 and 2022. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 28 per every 100,000 total population. All suicides recorded for 2018-2022 were of males.

### Suicide Mortality

	Total Population 2018-2022 Average	Five Year Deaths 2018-2022 Total	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
<b>Carbon County</b>	64,672	91	28.1
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	12,865,673	9,444	14.7
<b>United States</b>	330,014,476	239,493	14.5



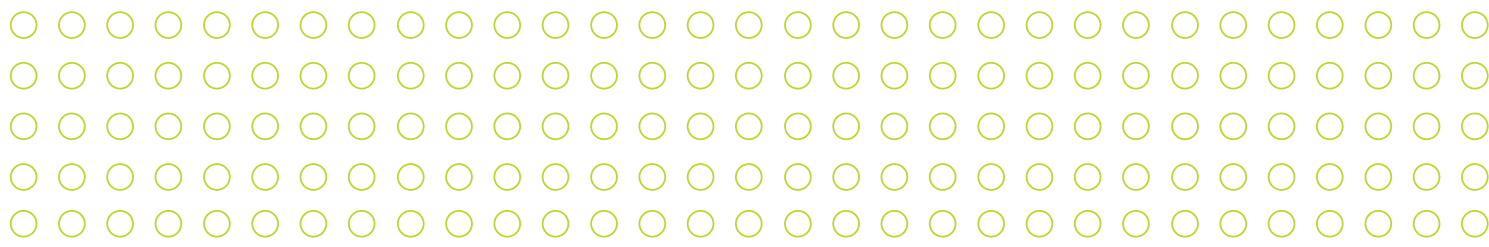
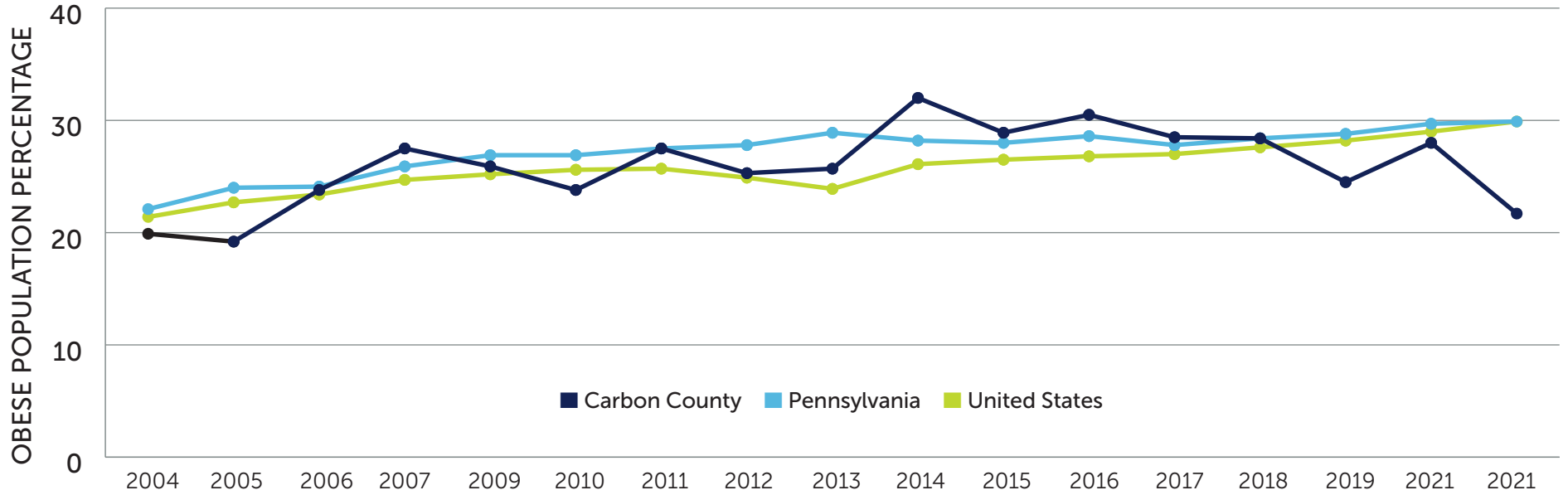


## HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MEN

Males in the county are much more likely than females to die from motor vehicle and other injuries. In 2022, the rate of motor vehicle crash mortality for males in Carbon County was 19 per 100,000 people compared to zero among females that year. The rate of unintentional injury mortality for males was 143 per 100,000, which was substantially higher than the rate for females (80 per 100,000). In addition, men are more likely to die from heart disease than women (134 per 100,000 vs. 111 per 100,000).

## OBESITY

In Carbon County, 22% of the adult population are obese, compared with 30% in the state.

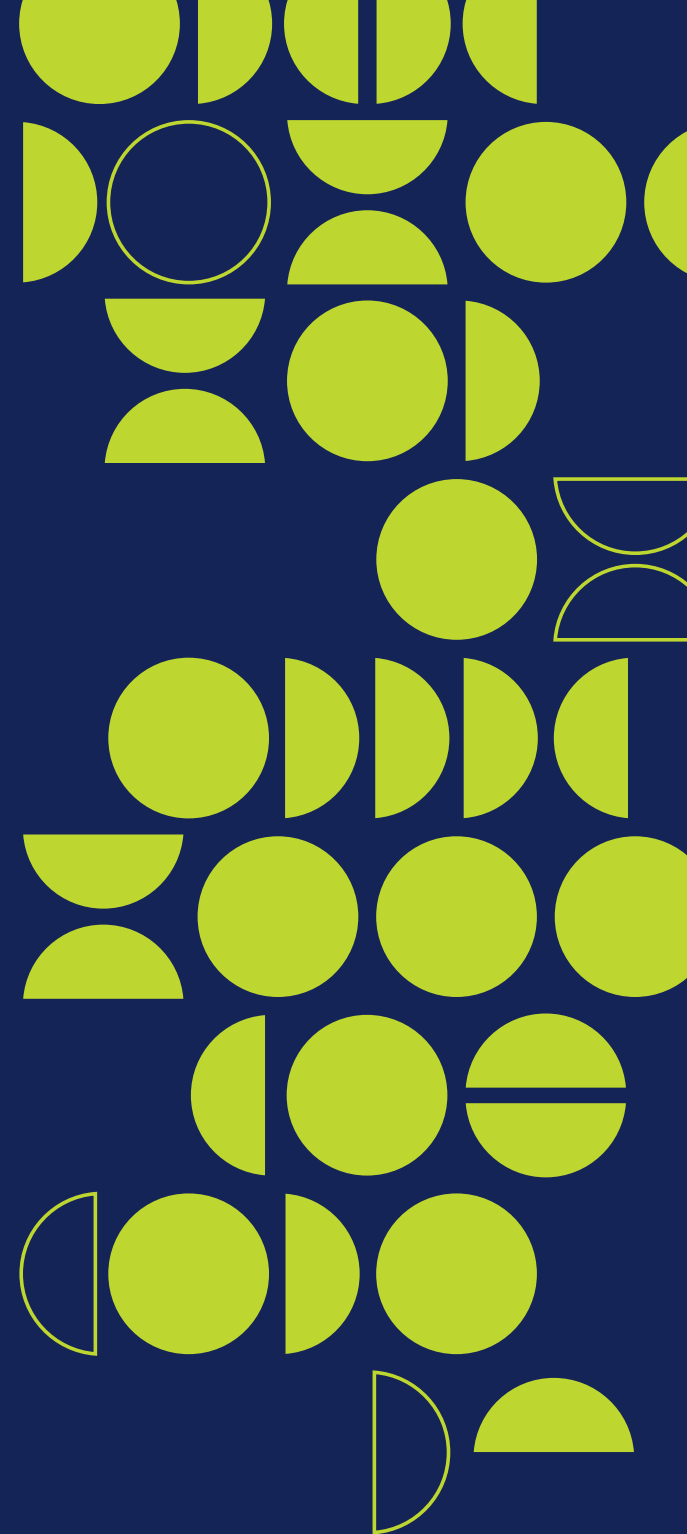


## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

For Carbon County, the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by LVHN utilized a comprehensive approach that combined public health data with qualitative insights from community members. Demographic and health statistics from national sources were reviewed, while local concerns were gathered through town hall meetings, virtual discussions and key stakeholder interviews with social service providers, senior centers, veterans' groups and nonprofit leaders.

Carbon County faces interrelated economic, social and health challenges. The population has declined slightly and is aging, with 22% of residents age 65 or older. Many participants noted a shortage of well-paying local jobs, which drives residents to commute long distances, increasing financial and emotional stress. Housing costs have escalated rapidly, even for low-quality housing, and long waiting lists for affordable options force many to choose between food, rent and medications. Mental health needs—especially for veterans, older adults and isolated individuals—are severe and often unmet. Health indicators also reflect concerns. Suicide rates are high (28 per 100,000), and men face elevated risks for cancer, lung disease and accidental injury. Substance use and obesity are also significant concerns. Education levels are lower than average, with only 18% of adults holding a bachelor's degree, and preschool enrollment is lagging. A lack of insurance for working-age adults limits preventive care access. Community members described an environment where basic needs go unmet, and health care access is uneven. These factors underscore the need for improved services and infrastructure, especially in housing, behavioral health and transportation.

These combined social, behavioral and environmental challenges highlight the need for cross-sector collaboration and long-term investment in community well-being. The most pressing health concerns of the county highlight more immediate, urgent needs, including negative health conditions, as well as the need for longer-term investments in the vital conditions that would provide greater opportunity for health for more people in the county. LVHN and Jefferson Health will continue to demonstrate their commitment to the health of the community and will identify our prioritized areas of focus in our Community Health Implementation Plan, which will be released soon.





part of  Jefferson Health