



SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

2025 LVHN Community Health Needs Assessment – Schuylkill County

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 Schuylkill 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.

Some of the topics we will present as potential areas for discussion may not seem to be directly related to health at first glance. The life and health of an individual is influenced by conditions within the community – by the quality of relationships with others, experiences in schools and neighborhoods, and available supports from community organizations. 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

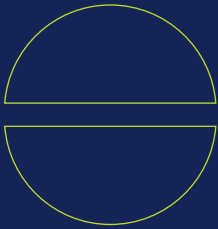
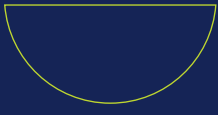
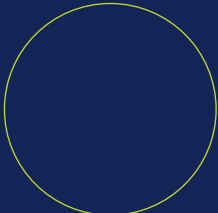
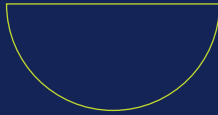
This report includes secondary data from publicly available state and national sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and the Census Bureau, and provides information about the social and environmental factors such as employment, education and air quality; individual behaviors like smoking or healthy eating; and the quality and availability of health care in the area. This data is used to identify the top health and social needs in our community and is then validated through community meetings and interviews with residents. 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 Lehigh Valley Health Network 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 Implementation Plan will be shared soon after the CHNA Report is released.



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

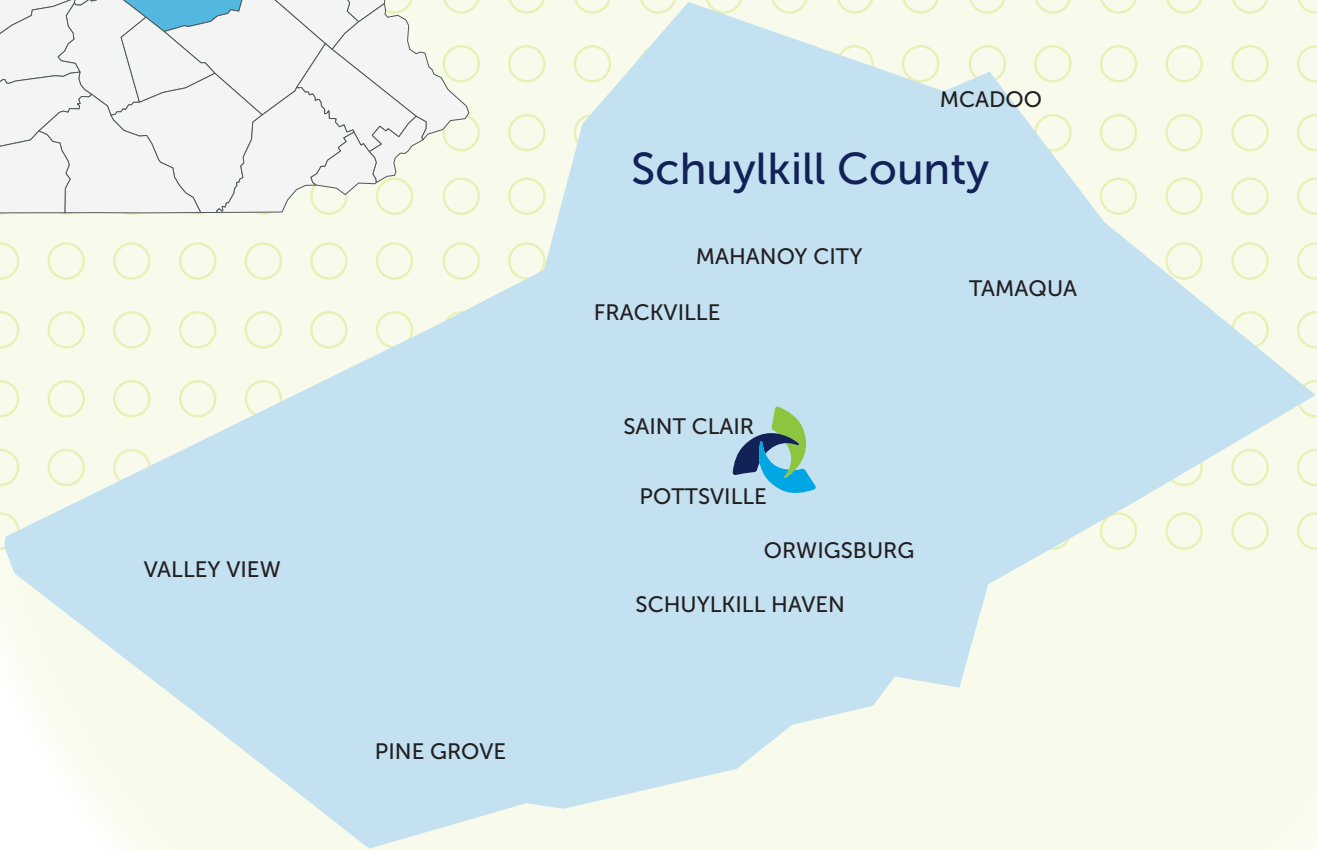
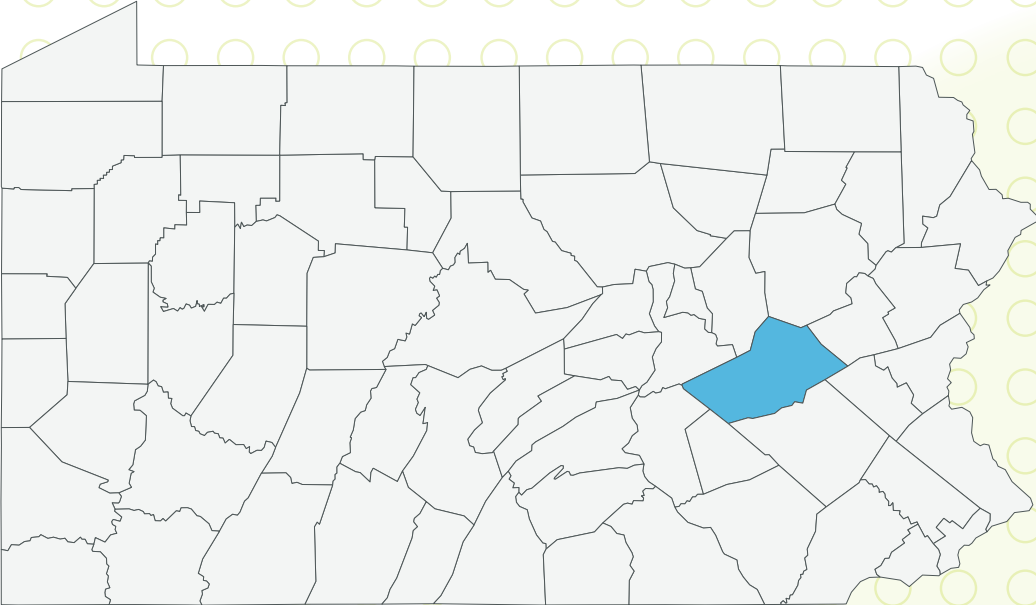




Contents

- QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY 6
- OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY 6
- LVHN SERVICES IN THE COUNTY 8
- DEMOGRAPHICS 10
- SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS 12
- HEALTH BEHAVIORS 15
- HEALTH OUTCOMES 16
- SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 19

Schuylkill County



***Data throughout the report is provided courtesy of County Health Rankings: countyhealthrankings.org/.*

Qualitative Data Collection Summary

As a part of our [Community Health Needs Assessment process](#), key stakeholder interviews and community conversations were conducted throughout Schuylkill 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.

Schuylkill County	
Community Meetings	Key Stakeholders
Washington Fire Company Community Ambulance Association, Ashland	Executive Director, Diakon (Senior Services)
Pottsville Free Public Library, Pottsville	County Commissioner, Schuylkill County
Open Doors Project, Pine Grove	Executive Director, Schuylkill Community Action
Schuylkill Haven Recreation Center, Schuylkill Haven	Executive Director, Schuylkill Area Community Foundation
Zoom meeting with residents from throughout the county	Director, Schuylkill Technology Center
Demographic summary N=15; Gender = 60% Female, 40% Male; Race = 93% White, 7% Multiracial; Ethnicity = 100% Non-Hispanic; Employment = 73% Employed, 20% Self-employed, 7% Retired; Age range = 22 to 73; Average age = 50.	

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY

Schuylkill County is a 778.6-square-mile county within Pennsylvania. Nearly half (47%) of the population of Schuylkill County lives in rural areas of the county.

Urban and Rural Population					
	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban Population %	Rural Population	Rural Population %
Schuylkill County	143,049	75,723	52.9%	67,326	47.1%
Pennsylvania	13,002,700	9,941,070	76.5%	3,061,630	23.6%
United States	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, Schuylkill 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, (Figure 1) and health factors, e.g., social and economic factors, health behaviors (Figure 2).

Schuylkill County Population Health and Well-being 2025

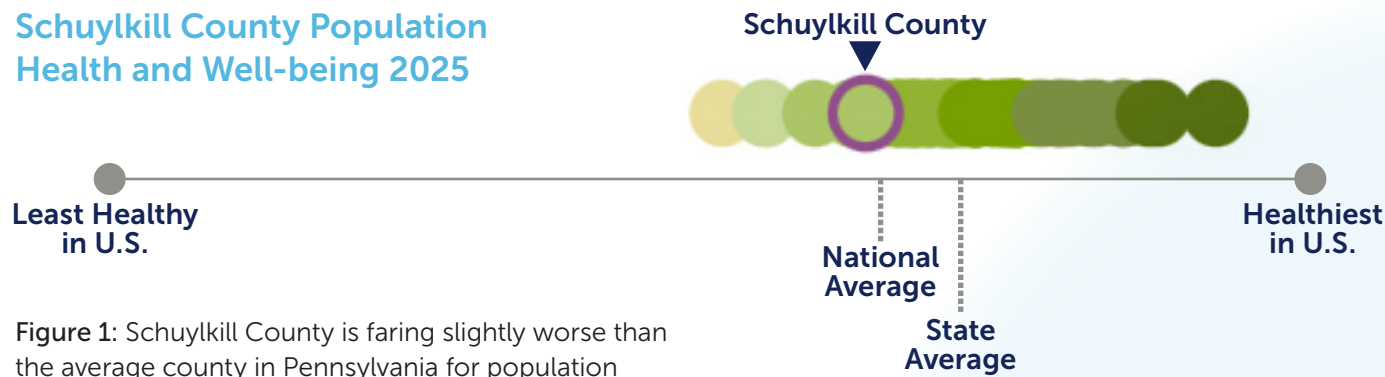


Figure 1: Schuylkill County is faring slightly worse than the average county in Pennsylvania for population health and well-being, and about the same as the average county in the nation.

Schuylkill County Community Conditions 2025

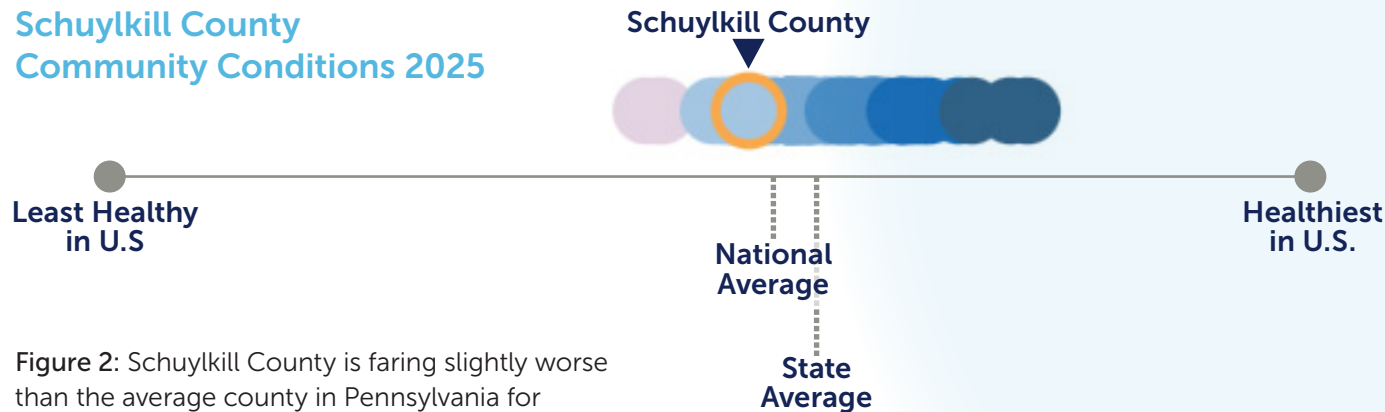


Figure 2: Schuylkill County is faring slightly worse than the average county in Pennsylvania for community conditions, and slightly worse than the average county in the nation.

LVHN SERVICES IN THE COUNTY

Lehigh Valley Hospital–Schuylkill joined Lehigh Valley Health Network on Sept. 16, 2016. Prior to the acquisition, the hospital was part of a two-hospital entity known as Schuylkill Health System, which included Schuylkill Medical Center East Norwegian Street and Schuylkill Medical Center South Jackson Street, and related medical facilities and practices. Upon becoming part of LVHN, Schuylkill Health fully integrated its two hospitals under a single license for two hospital campuses. The E. Norwegian St. campus is home to the more traditional hospital inpatient and outpatient services such as emergency room, medical-surgical, maternity, operating suites, cancer center, acute rehabilitation, laboratory and many others. The S. Jackson St. facility is home to three inpatient

behavioral health units, geriatric, adult and adolescent, as well as an advanced wound center and hospital-based school of nursing. Since LVHN began providing services in the region, the residents of Schuylkill County have benefited from new and expanded services, new clinicians in the market, and upgraded and improved facilities that offer expanded access to care. The LVH Joseph F. McCloskey School of Nursing is located in Pottsville and has a long history in the area. The school is the primary educator of registered nurses for Schuylkill and the surrounding counties. Since 2019, the Schuylkill region has also been home to the Walter and Irene Baran Schuylkill Family Medicine Residency Program, which accepts up to four residents per year.



LVH–Schuylkill S. Jackson Street



LVH-Schuykill E. Norwegian Street

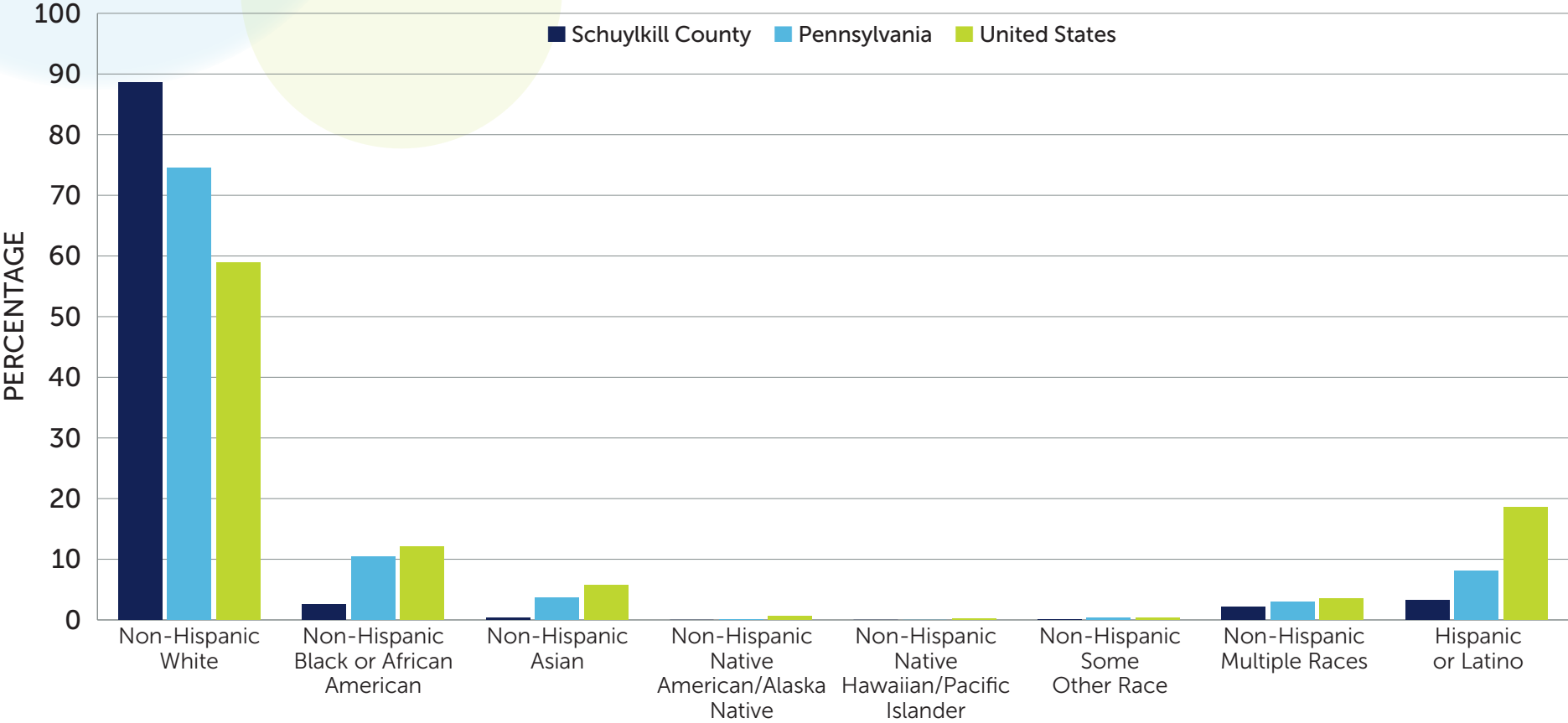


Joseph F. McCloskey School of Nursing

DEMOGRAPHICS

143,201 people live in Schuylkill County. The population decreased by just over 5,000 people between the 2010 and 2020 Census. Residents of the county are primarily white (91%), with 6% of the population being Latino and 3% Black.

TOTAL POPULATION BY COMBINED RACE AND ETHNICITY, PERCENT



About 20% of the total population are under the age of 18, and 21% are age 65 or older.

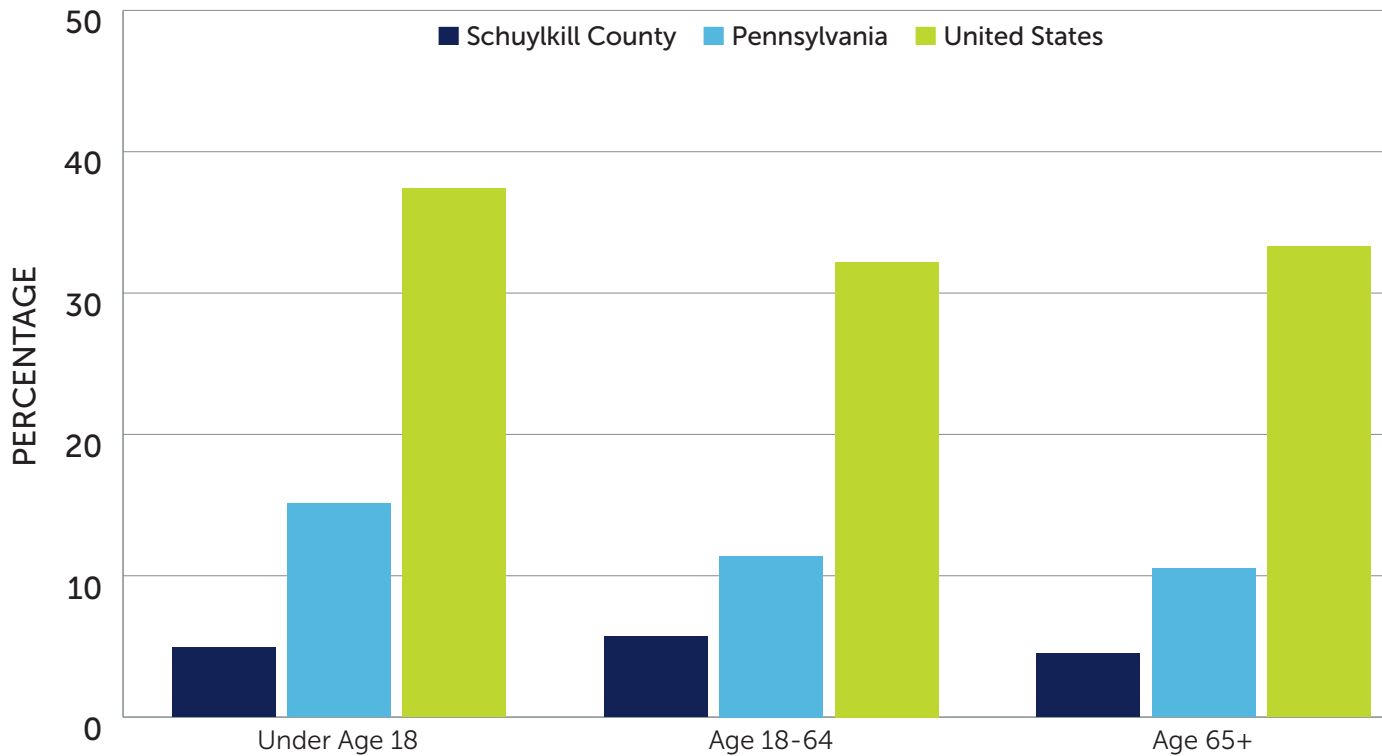
	Under 18		18-64		65+	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Schuylkill County	28,326	20%	85,297	60%	29,587	21%
Pennsylvania	2,664,562	21%	7,890,241	61%	2,434,405	19%
United States	73,213,705	22%	203,146,240	61%	54,737,648	17%

18% of the population in Schuylkill County has a disability, which is higher than the state percentage of 14%. 8% of the population in Schuylkill County are veterans, and they are primarily male and age 65 and older.

56,987
households in
Schuylkill County.

28%
Schuylkill County
children living in
single parent households.

POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY AGE GROUP, PERCENT





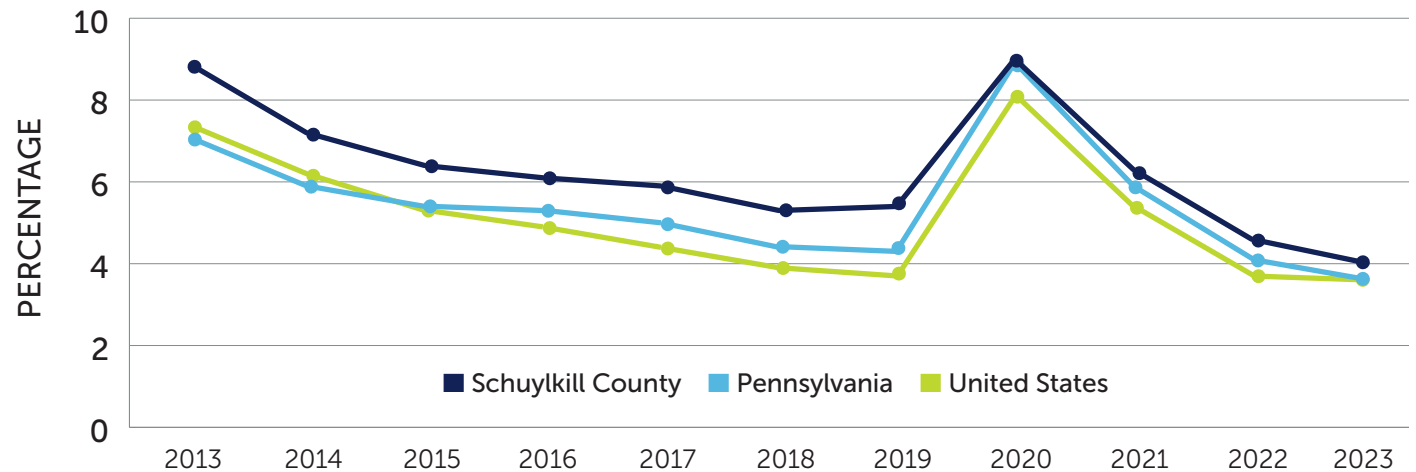
Participants in community conversations and key stakeholder interviews reported there is a growing divide between the resources available and the need in Schuylkill County. This impacts many areas of life. Food insecurity and the need to purchase cheaper, shelf-stable food influence health outcomes. There is also generational poverty in Schuylkill County, and a number of residents have low levels of education and literacy.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

ECONOMIC STRESSORS

A large portion of the population in Schuylkill County is experiencing social and economic disadvantages. The median household income in Schuylkill County is \$63,574, which is less than the state median household income of \$73,170. 17% of children living in Schuylkill County are living in poverty, and 12% of the total population in line with state and national averages.

AVERAGE ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

18% of the population over age 25 has a bachelor's degree or higher, which is less than the state and national percentage (33%). 10% of the total population in Schuylkill County does not have a high school degree. The graduation rate for Schuylkill County is 86.5%, which has remained fairly constant over time between the 2012-2013 school year and the 2020-2021 school year.

Bachelor's Degree or Higher Attained			
	Total Population	Population Age 25+	Population Age 25+ %
Schuylkill County	104,176	19,294	18.5%
Pennsylvania	9,128,083	3,081,318	33.8%
United States	223,600,992	77,751,347	34.3%

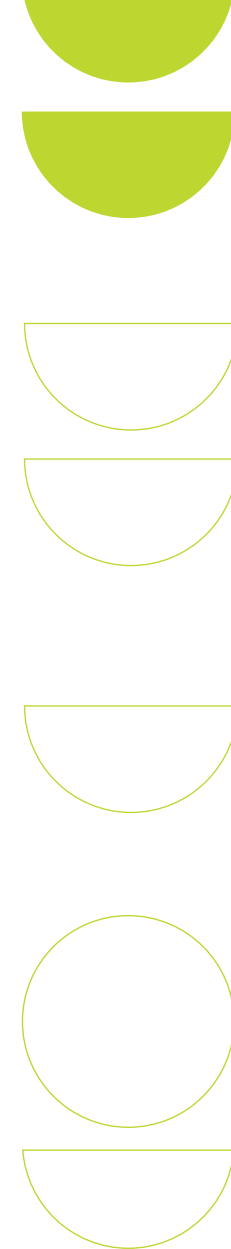
UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC BENEFITS

16% of the population in Schuylkill County receive SNAP benefits (i.e., food stamps), which is higher than the state percentage (14%).

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Only 32% of the population ages 3-4 are enrolled in preschool, below the PA and the US percentages. Preschool is not mandatory or universal in the state of Pennsylvania.

Preschool Enrollment (Age 3-4)			
	Population Age 3-4	Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School	Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School %
Schuylkill County	2,756	887	32.2%
Pennsylvania	287,622	127,154	44.2%
United States	7,958,841	3,631,021	45.6%





Focus group participants and key stakeholders in Schuylkill County pointed out that the county has an old housing stock, and much of it is in poor condition. Affordability is a key barrier for both renters and buyers. There is stigma associated with using housing assistance, and landlords do not accept vouchers held by individuals with lower incomes. There are waitlists for affordable housing, and housing instability is a barrier to health. Homelessness is an issue, and people use the emergency department for shelter.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO HEALTH DUE TO HOUSING INSTABILITY

22% of the population in Schuylkill 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 %
Schuylkill County	56,987	12,593	22.1%	13,373	4,822	36.1%
Pennsylvania	5,193,727	1,405,567	27.1%	1,600,237	701,129	43.8%
United States	125,736,353	38,363,931	30.5%	44,238,593	20,547,938	46.5%

INSURANCE STATUS

In Schuylkill County, about 6% of residents do not have insurance. The table below shows the breakdown by age for those without insurance.

Uninsured Population by Age Group						
	Under Age 18		Age 18-64		Age 65+	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Schuylkill County	1,759	5.8%	6,435	8.2%	58	0.2%
Pennsylvania	133,716	4.7%	574,834	7.6%	10,782	0.5%
United States	4,155,345	5.3%	23,728,118	12.2%	421,629	0.8%

HEALTH BEHAVIORS

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MOMS AND BABIES

The teen birth rate in Schuylkill County is 19.3 per 1,000 females age 15-19. 9% of infants in Schuylkill are born with low birth weight (compared to 8% across the state).



Drug addiction and overdoses are both problems that need to be addressed. Barriers to treatment include stigma, lack of local providers, lack of transportation, cost, and child care. There were particular concerns expressed about overdoses in men and LGBTQ+ community members. There is a “drinking culture” in Schuylkill County with a lot of availability of alcohol and no stigma against drinking.

Teen Birth Rate (Females Age 15-19)

	Population	Teen Births, Rate per 1,000
Schuylkill County	25,966	19.3
Pennsylvania	2,796,351	13.2
United States	76,648,322	16.6

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES OF THE OLDER POPULATION IN THE COUNTY

35% of female Medicare beneficiaries had a mammogram in the past year in Schuylkill County, which is lower than the state rate of 37%. 37% of those age 65-and-over have a disability. 62% of Medicare patients have high blood pressure.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

22% of adults self-reported no active leisure time in Schuylkill County.

SMOKING

20% of adults in Schuylkill County are current or previous long-term smokers.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

In Schuylkill County, 18% of adults self-report excessive drinking in the last 30 days; the rate of death due to drug overdose is 43/100,000, which is higher than the state rate (28) and the national rate (27).

OVERALL HEALTH

22% of the adult population self-reports that they are in poor or fair health in general.

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

	Total Population	Poor or Fair Health Age-Adjusted	Poor or Fair Health (Crude)
Schuylkill County	143,104	20.2%	22.0%
Pennsylvania	12,972,008	17.6%	18.7%
United States	333,287,557	17.0%	17.9%



County residents reported that behaviors of people in Schuylkill County, along with some conditions present in the physical environment in Schuylkill, contribute to poor health outcomes for the population. People are not physically active, they are often isolated, and they engage in risky behaviors related to smoking, alcohol and drugs. Transportation issues limit access to health care. Multifamily living arrangements may cause stress. Poor health in the community impacts the workforce, creating a cycle between economic disadvantage and poor health outcomes.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

CANCER INCIDENCE

Within Schuylkill County, there is a cancer incidence rate of 527 for every 100,000 total in the population, which is higher than the state (467) and U.S. rates (442).

Incidence Rates of Top Five Most Commonly Diagnosed Cancers			
	Type of Cancer	New Cases (Annual Average)	Incidence Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Schuylkill County	Breast	120	116
	Lung	167	76.9
	Prostate	131	122.2
	Colon and Rectum	98	46.9
	Cervical	7	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 Schuylkill County, 10% of adults age 20 and older have diabetes.

Diabetes (Medicare Population)			
	FFS Beneficiaries	Diabetes Prevalence	Diabetes Adult Population, %
Schuylkill County	20,981	5,875	28.0%
Pennsylvania	1,273,736	318,434	25.0%
United States	30,900,366	8,034,095	26.0%

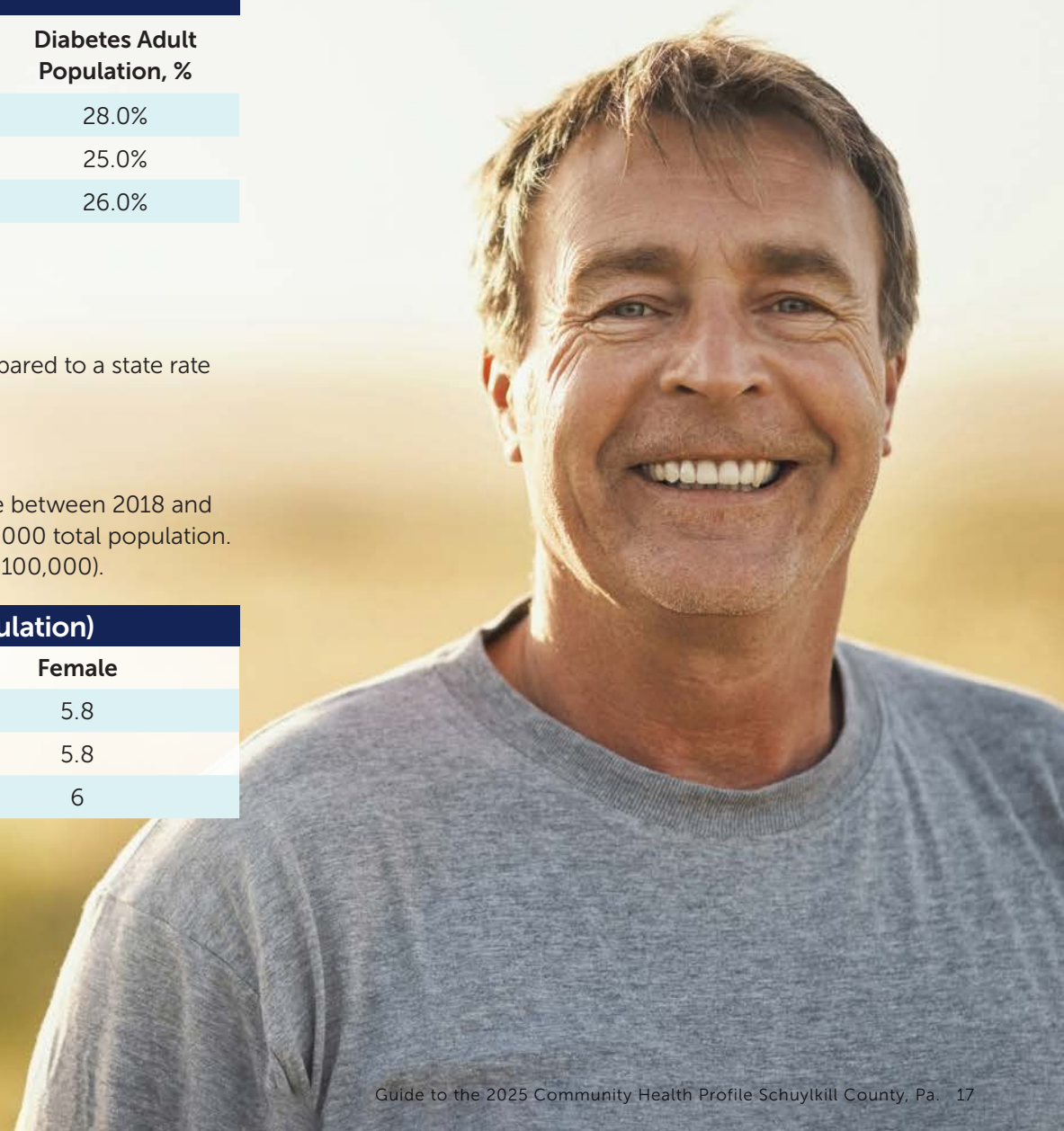
LUNG DISEASE

64 people per 100,000 people in the county die of lung disease compared to a state rate of 47 per 100,000 people.

SUICIDES

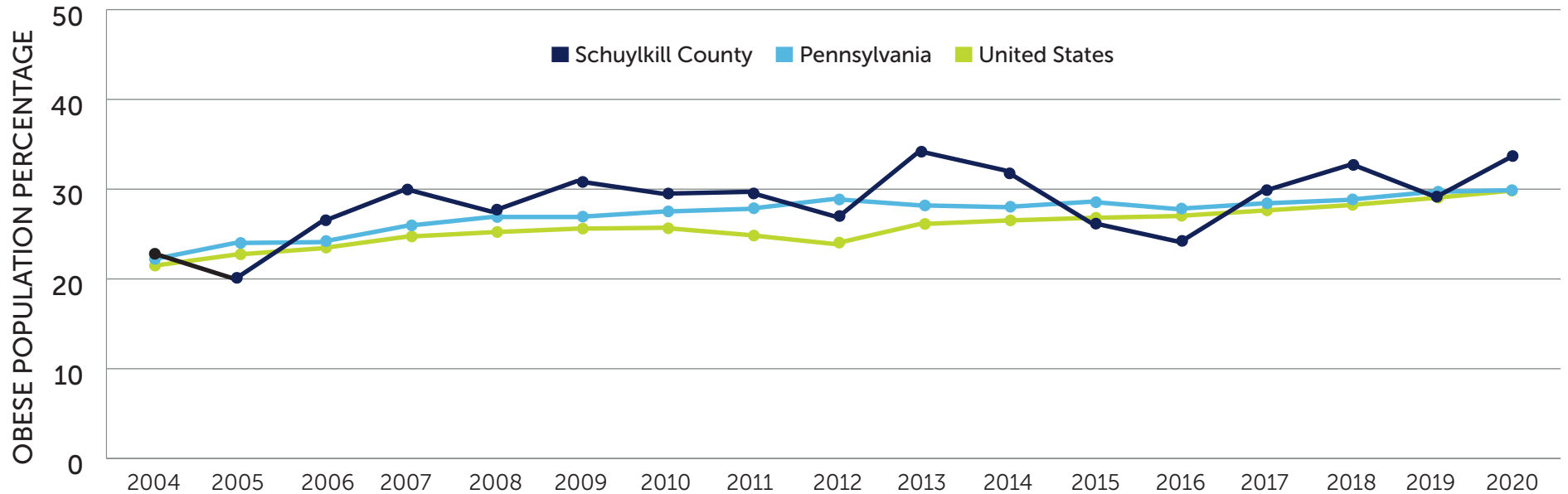
Within Schuylkill County, there are a total of 145 deaths due to suicide between 2018 and 2022. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 20 per every 100,000 total population. The rate is higher among males (34 per 100,000) than females (6 per 100,000).

Suicide Mortality by Gender (Per 100,000 Population)		
	Male	Female
Schuylkill County	34.2	5.8
Pennsylvania	23.8	5.8
United States	23.2	6



OBESITY BY YEAR

34% of the adult population in the county are obese, compared with 30% in the state.



316
men out of
100,000
in Schuylkill County
have heart disease

HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MEN

Men in the county have higher rates of mortality due to heart disease than females (316 per 100,000 vs. 238 per 100,000). In addition, men have higher mortality rates than females due to cancer (287 per 100,000 vs. 269 per 100,000), unintentional injuries (80 per 100,000 vs 45 per 100,000), and motor vehicles deaths (24 per 100,000 vs 8 per 100,000) in Schuylkill County.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Lehigh Valley Health Network's 2025 CHNA for Schuylkill County combined quantitative data with qualitative insights from community meetings and key stakeholders. Residents expressed deep concern about generational poverty, housing insecurity, substance use, and chronic health conditions. Economic challenges and health disparities are prevalent, especially among rural residents. Poor housing stock, a high rate of smoking and alcohol use, and limited access to care are linked to negative health outcomes.

Participants noted stigma around mental health and housing assistance, a lack of addiction treatment resources, and poor access to healthy food. Older adults face isolation, and 37% of those over 65 have a disability. Health outcomes reflect these challenges: lung disease and suicide rates exceed state averages, with suicide especially high among men (34 per 100,000). Cancer rates are among the highest in the region. Only 32% of 3–4-year-olds are enrolled in preschool, and fewer adults hold college degrees than the state average. These vital conditions contribute to cycles of disadvantage. Improving housing, mental health services, addiction support, and access to preventive care are key priorities for improving health in Schuylkill County.

Overall, the report underscores the urgency of improving social drivers of health, particularly among those who are most impacted by social and economic disadvantages and generational poverty in the county. The most pressing health concerns of the county highlight both more immediate, urgent needs (including negative health conditions), as well as the need for longer-term investments in the vital conditions. Such long-term investments 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