



MONROE COUNTY

2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

2025 LVHN Community Health Needs Assessment – Monroe 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 Monroe 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.

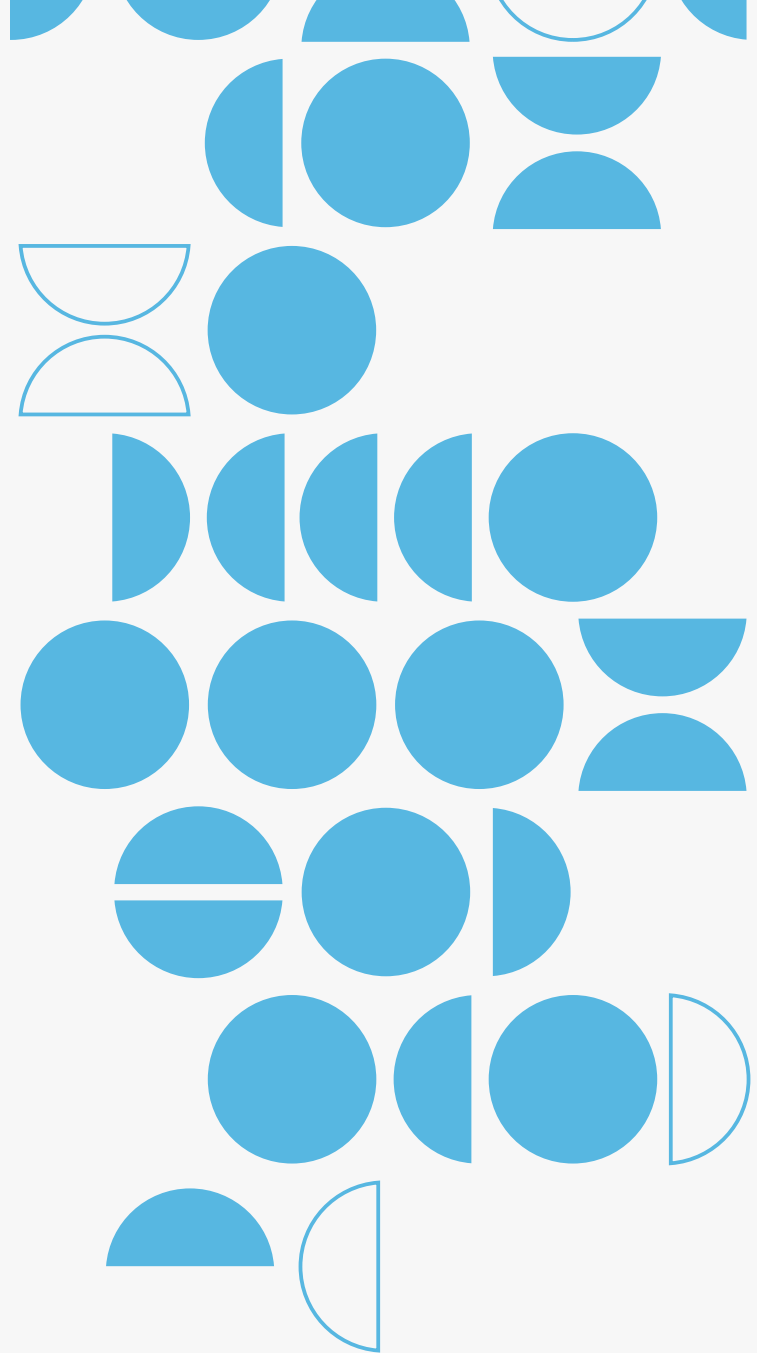
Access to quality health care is only one of the factors that contributes to the health of a population. Other factors such as health behaviors, the physical environment, and socioeconomic factors are actually more powerful predictors of health, illness and health care utilization over time. For this reason, the social drivers of health are a focus on this needs assessment report, and 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 that 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.

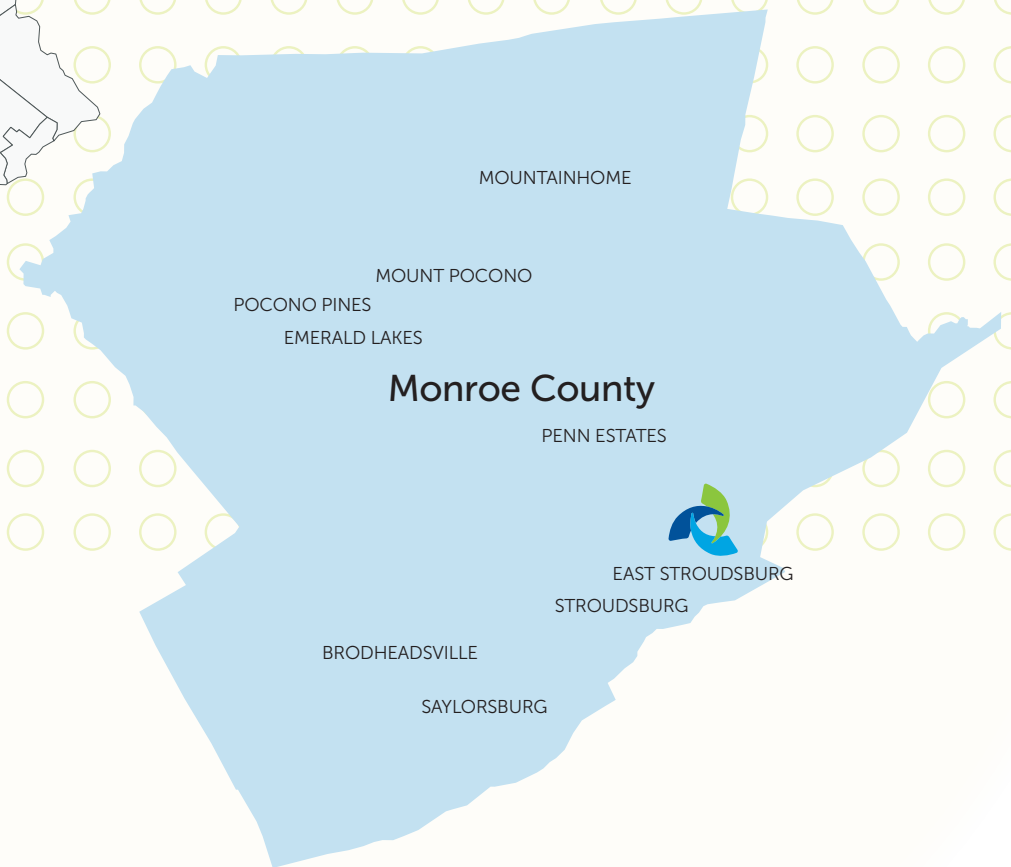
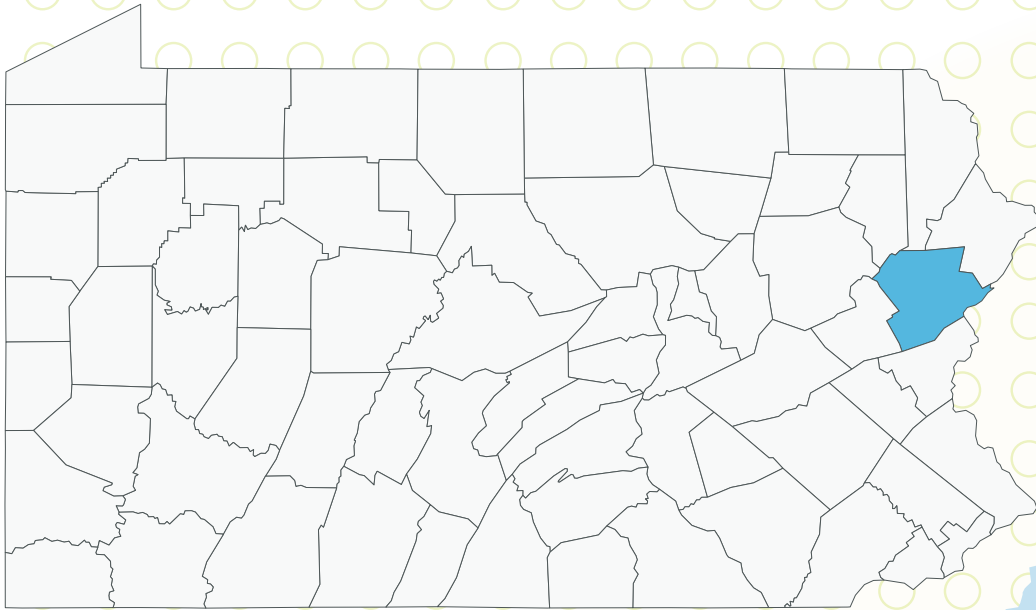




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Monroe County



***SparkMap through CARES at the University of Missouri (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 Monroe 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.

Monroe County	
Community Meetings	Key Stakeholders
Salvation Army of East Stroudsburg soup kitchen	CEO, Pocono Mountains United Way
Virtual meeting with Pocono Service for Families and Children	Board Member, Stroudsburg Area School District
Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church food pantry	Grants Manager, Monroe County Fiscal Affairs Office
Pocono Family YMCA, older adults	Executive Director, Monroe County Meals on Wheels
Pocono Family YMCA, general adults	Operations Director, PVEN Food Pantry
	Executive Director, Carbon/Monroe/Pike Drug and Alcohol Commission

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY

Monroe County is 608.4 square miles within the state of Pennsylvania. Over half of the county is rural (57%).

Urban and Rural Population					
	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban Population %	Rural Population	Rural Population %
Monroe County	168,327	72,784	43.2%	95,543	56.8%
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, Monroe 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 2) and health factors, e.g., social and economic factors, health behaviors (Figure 1).

Monroe County Health Factors 2024

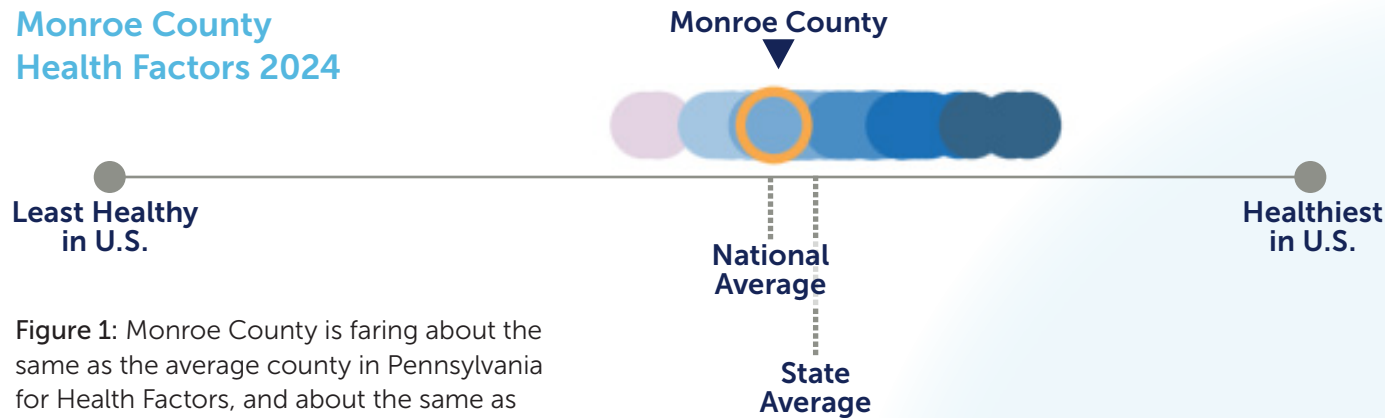


Figure 1: Monroe County is faring about the same as the average county in Pennsylvania for Health Factors, and about the same as the average county in the nation.

Monroe County Health Outcomes 2024

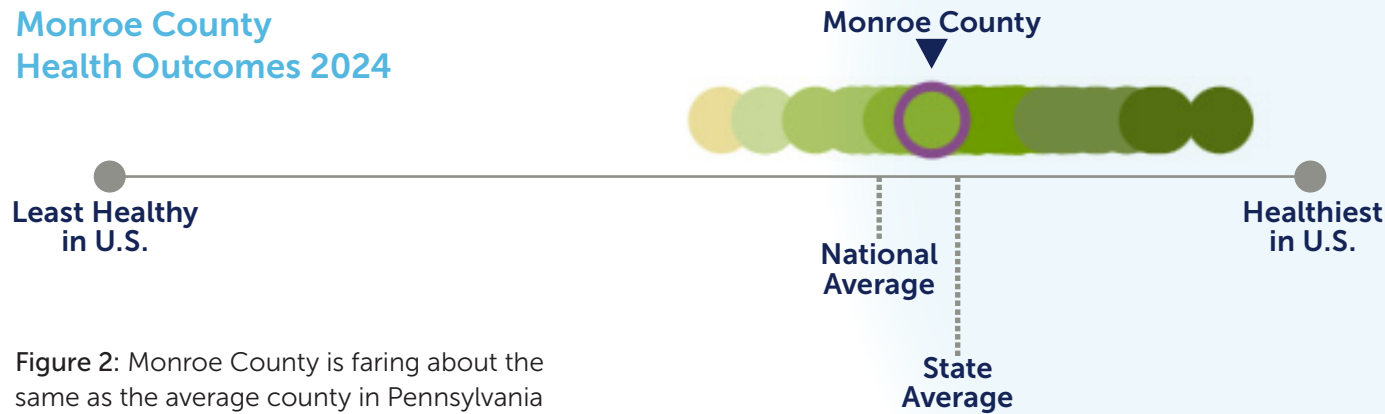
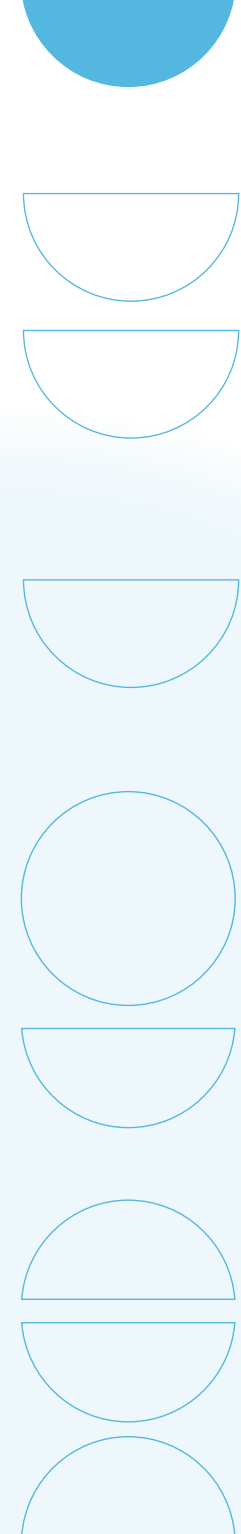


Figure 2: Monroe County is faring about the same as the average county in Pennsylvania Health Outcomes, and slightly better than the average county in the nation.



LVHN SERVICES IN THE COUNTY

Lehigh Valley Hospital–Pocono, formerly Pocono Medical Center, became part of Lehigh Valley Health Network in 2017. It is a comprehensive medical facility offering a wide range of health care services. As Monroe County’s only hospital with an on-site open-heart surgery program, it provides 24/7 cardiac care, including treatment for high-risk heart attacks. The hospital also features a Level III Trauma Center, accredited by the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation, and a Level IV neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). In addition to emergency and critical care, LVH–Pocono offers services in cancer care through the Dale and Frances Hughes Cancer Center, orthopedic care in collaboration with the Lehigh Valley Orthopedic Institute, and advanced surgical options, including robotic-assisted procedures. The Family Birth and Newborn Center provides comprehensive maternity care, and the hospital is recognized for its commitment to patient safety and quality care.

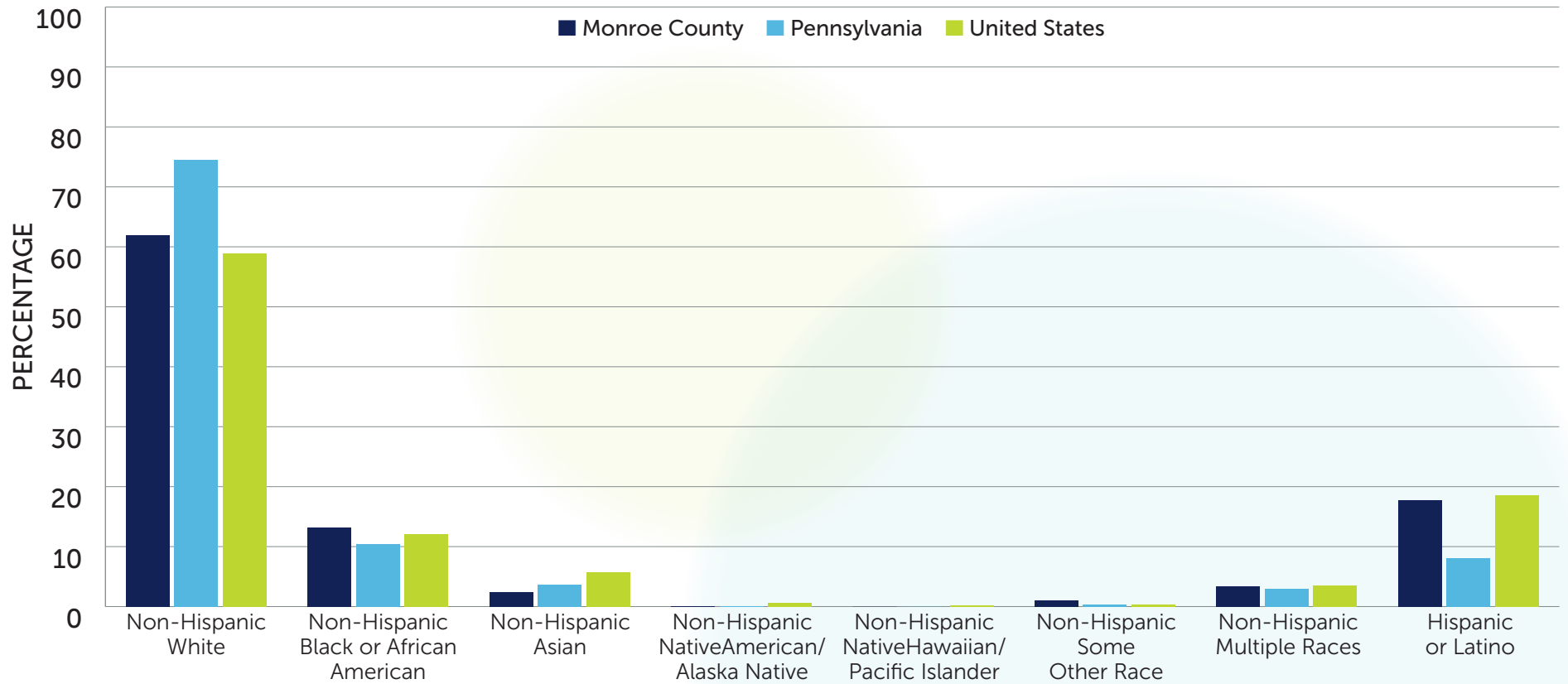


LVH–Pocono

DEMOGRAPHICS

168,128 people live in Monroe County. The population decreased by 1,511 people between the 2010 and 2020 Census. Residents of the county are primarily white (69%), followed by Hispanic (18%) and Black (15%).

TOTAL POPULATION BY COMBINED RACE AND ETHNICITY, PERCENT

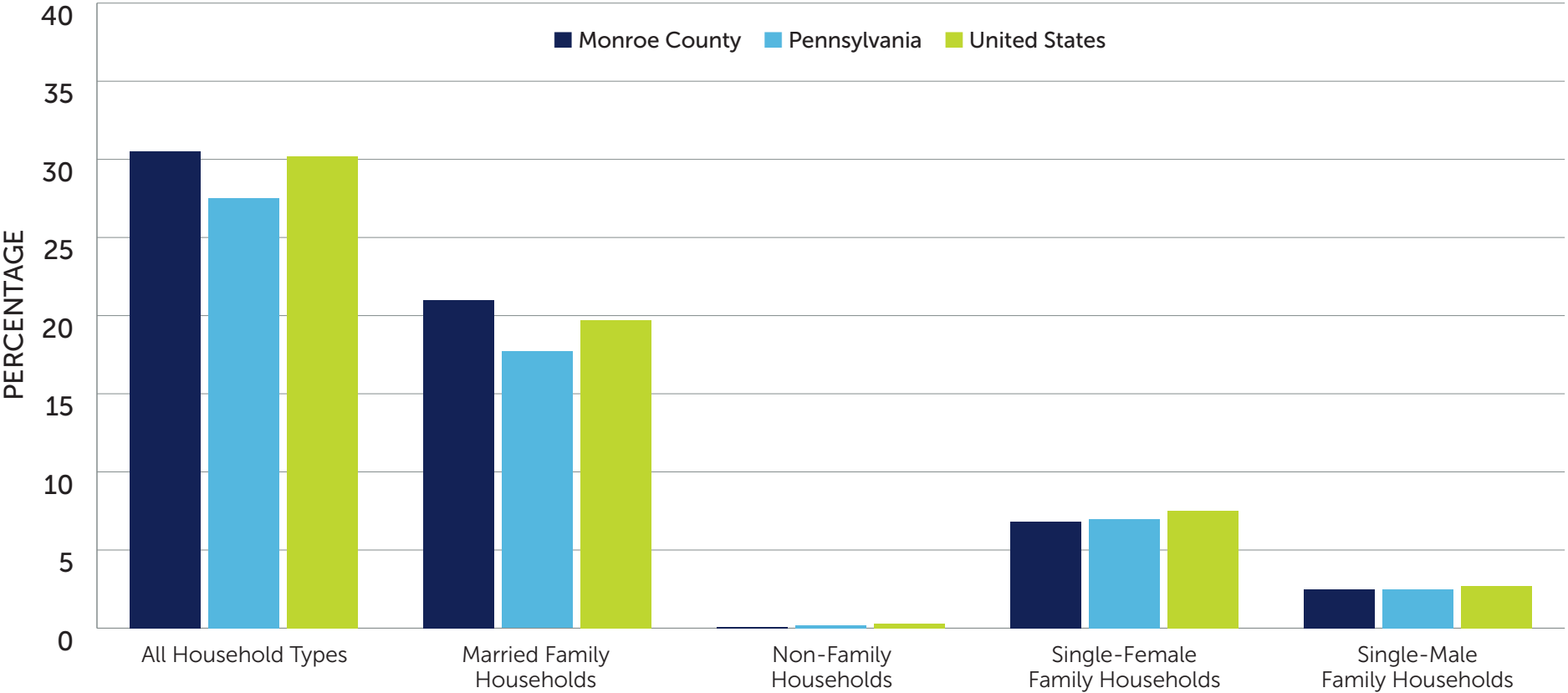


About 19% of the total population in Monroe County are under age 18, and 18% are age 65 or older. About 30% of the Hispanic population in Monroe County are under age 18.

	Under 18		18-64		65+	
Monroe	32,686	19%	104,722	62%	30,720	18%
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%

There are a total of 59,113 households in Monroe County. 24% of children in Monroe County live in single parent households.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN BY COMPOSITION

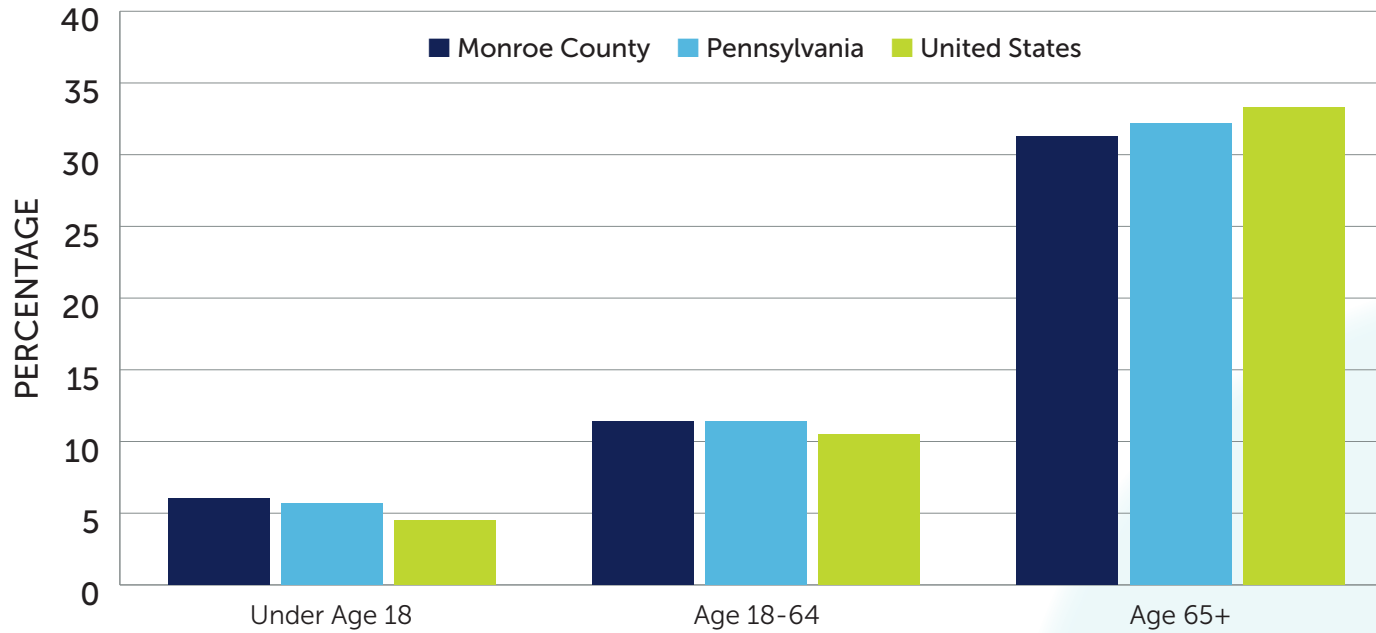


14% of the population in Monroe County have a disability, which is similar to the rate in the state; 8% of the population in Monroe County are veterans, and they are primarily male and age 65 and older.

14%

of the population in
Monroe County have a disability

POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY AGE GROUP



Veteran Population			
	Total Population Age 18+	Total Veterans	Veterans, Percent of Adult Population
Monroe County	135,403	10,531	7.8%
Pennsylvania	10,315,765	680,824	6.6%
United States	256,649,167	17,038,807	6.6%



Limited affordable housing has contributed to high rates of rent burden in the area. This is compounded by the increasing cost of utilities, food, clothing and other items. Particularly impacted are individuals and families who fall into the ALICE category – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed.

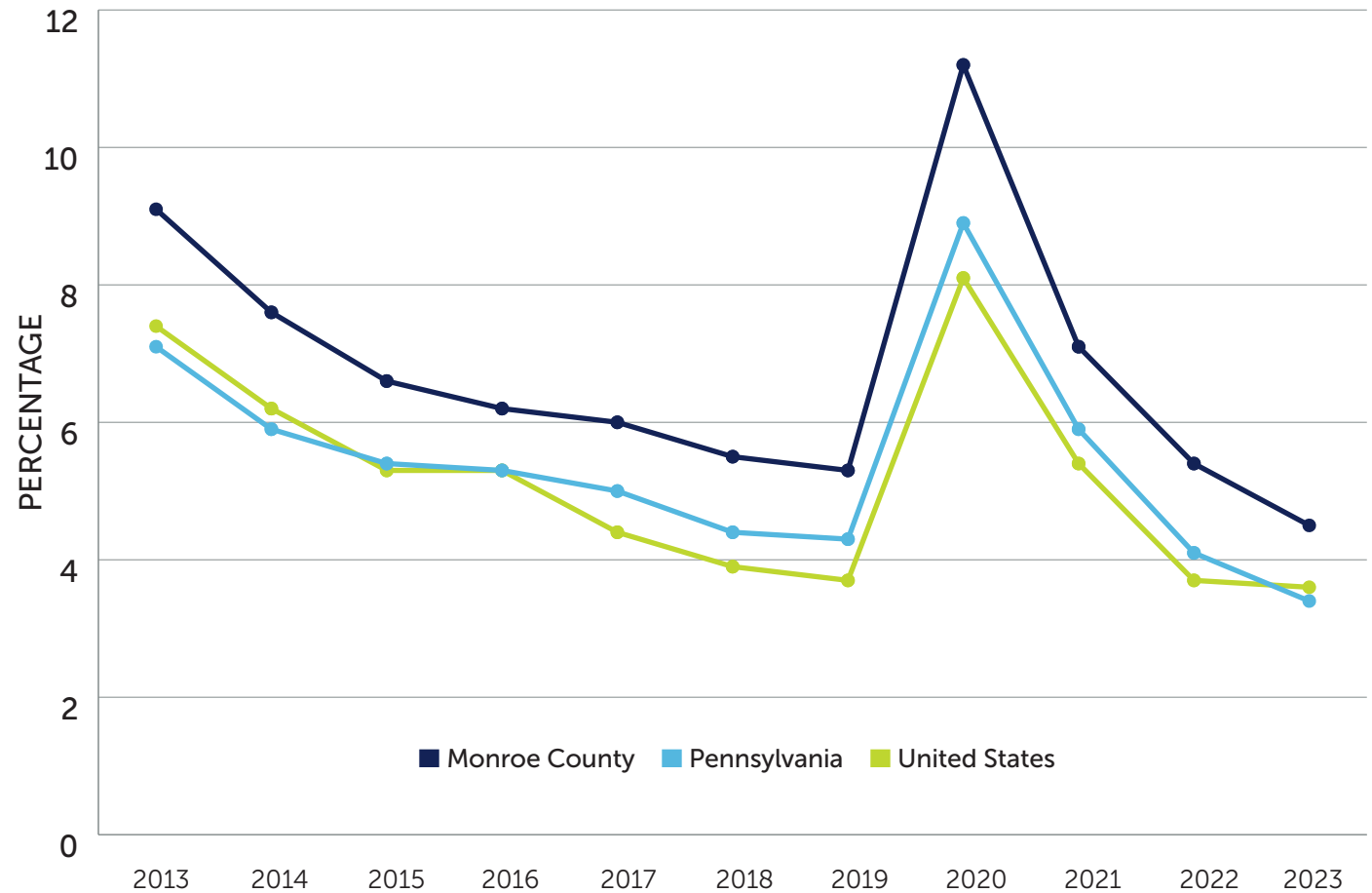
Multigenerational housing can be stressful. Well-paying jobs are hard to find, as is child care. Transportation options are limited, leading to social isolation. Insurance coverage may be lacking or inadequate.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

ECONOMIC STRESS

The median household income in Monroe County is \$80,666, which is more than the state median household income of \$73,170. 15% of children living in Monroe County are living in poverty, as are 11% of the total population.

AVERAGE ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

16% of the population over age 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is less than the state and national percentage (34%). 10% of the total population in Monroe County do not have a high school degree. The graduation rate for Monroe County is 93%, which is higher than the state rate of 81%.

Overall Education Attainment						
	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	High School Only	No High School Diploma	Some College
Monroe County	9.0%	16.0%	10.5%	35.3%	10.1%	19.0%
Pennsylvania	8.8%	20.2%	13.6%	33.5%	8.3%	15.6%
United States	8.7%	20.9%	13.4%	26.4%	10.9%	19.7%

UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC BENEFITS

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

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

In Monroe County, 26% of the population age 3-4 are enrolled in preschool, which is less than the state percentage (44%).

Preschool Enrollment (Age 3-4)			
	Population Age 3-4	Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School	Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School %
Monroe County	3,664	967	26.4%
Pennsylvania	287,622	127,154	44.2%
United States	7,958,841	3,631,021	45.6%



There is a stigma associated with using Medical Assistance, so people who use it may avoid seeking care. People have lost their COVID-era coverage. People who fall into a gap are ineligible for skills training programs. Jobs that provide a meaningful living wage are hard to find, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and stress. Some people who may be eligible for SNAP will not apply due to mistrust of the system.



Community members shared that access to care is most difficult for those from rural areas. Although more health care sites have been added in the county, limited transportation remains a barrier to accessing care at those sites. Wait lists, particularly for specialty care, are an additional barrier. Among people with lower incomes, their main use of the medical system may be limited to use of the emergency department. Finding providers who accept Medicaid is also a challenge.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO HEALTH DUE TO HOUSING INSTABILITY

30% of the population in Monroe 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%
Monroe County	59,113	17,990	30.4%	12,589	6,355	50.5%
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 Monroe County, approximately 6.5% of the total population do not have insurance, which is slightly higher than the state percent (5.6%). The table below shows the breakdown by age among those without insurance.

Uninsured Population by Age Group						
	Under Age 18		Age 18-64		Age 65+	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Monroe County	2,088	5.9%	8,804	8.7%	36	0.1%
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%	431,629	0.8%

HEALTH BEHAVIORS

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MOMS AND BABIES

The teen birth rate in Monroe County is 8 per 1,000 females age 15-19. When the rate is broken down by race and ethnicity, there are disparities identified with 5.6 white teens per 1,000 giving birth compared to 10 per 1,000 among Black teens and 13 per 1,000 among Hispanic teens. 9% of infants in Monroe County are born with low birth weight, which is comparable to the state rate, but again this indicator differs across race and ethnicity groups (8% in white and Hispanic populations, and 15% among infants who are Black).

Teen Birth Rate (Females Age 15-19)		
	Population	Teen Births, Rate per 1,000
Monroe County	42,345	8.1
Pennsylvania	2,796,351	13.2
United States	76,648,322	16.6

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES OF THE OLDER POPULATION IN THE COUNTY

40% of female Medicare beneficiaries had a mammogram in 2022 in Monroe County, which is in line with the state rate of 39%. Among those age 65 and older in the county, 14% have a disability. 68% of Medicare patients have high blood pressure, and 27% have diabetes.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

In Monroe County, 16% 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%).

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

20% of adults self-reported no active leisure time in Monroe County.

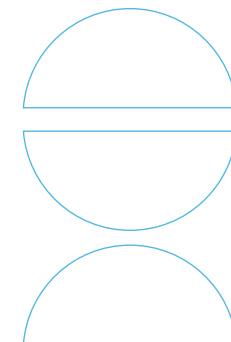


Many students in the local school districts in Monroe County are in need of mental health services. The schools are only able to provide limited assistance. There is a lack of step-down mental health services to refer people to when they are discharged from the emergency department. Along with schools, the workforce is also impacted by people having untreated mental health conditions. Stigma continues to be a concern, especially among older individuals.

OVERALL HEALTH

In Monroe County, about 20% of adults self-report that they are generally in poor or fair health.

Population With Poor or Fair Health (Adults Age 18+)			
	Total Population	Poor or Fair Health Age-Adjusted	Poor or Fair Health (Crude)
Monroe County	167,198	18.1%	19.7%
Pennsylvania	12,972,008	17.6%	18.7%
United States	333,287,557	17.0%	17.9%



486
cancer incidence rate within
Monroe County for every
100,000
total in the population.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

CANCER INCIDENCE

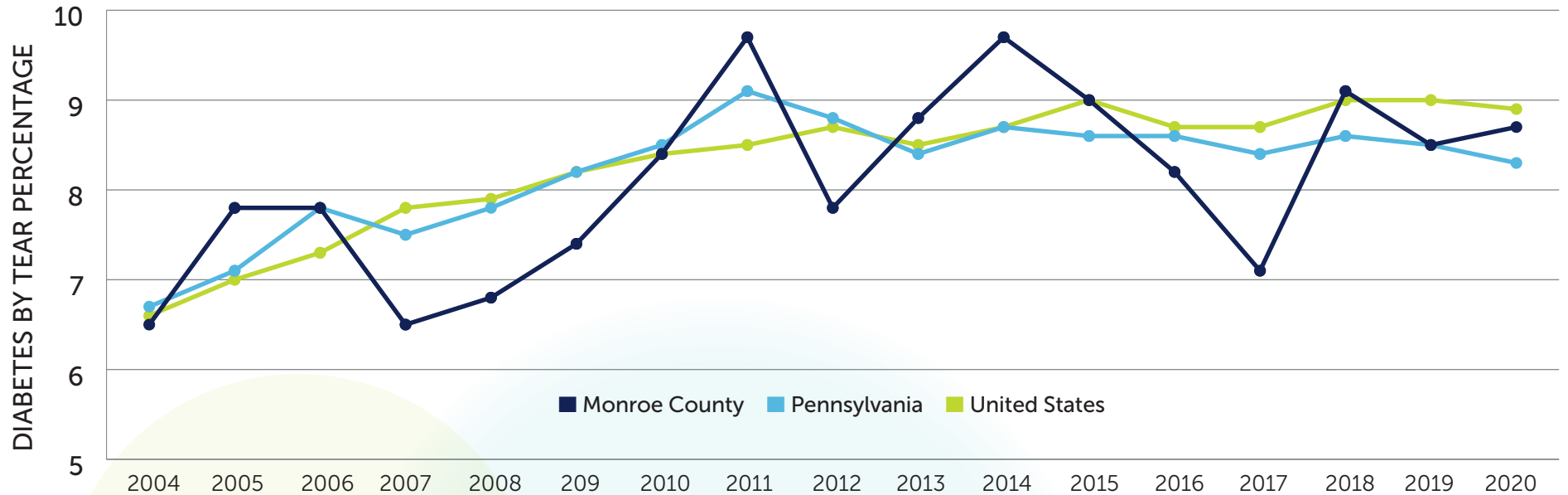
Within Monroe County, there is a cancer incidence rate of 486 for every 100,000 total in the population, which is higher than the state (467) and U.S. rates (442). The table to below shows the five most commonly diagnosed cancers in the county.

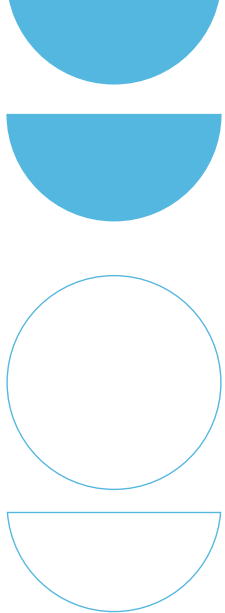
Incidence Rates of Top Five Most Commonly Diagnosed Cancers			
	Type of Cancer	New Cases (Annual Average)	Incidence Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Monroe County	Breast	147	125.8
	Lung	149	63.2
	Prostate	134	108.1
	Colon and Rectum	92	41.2
	Cervical	8	8.7
Pennsylvania	Breast	11,241	130.6
	Lung	10,742	59.5
	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

HIGH RATE OF DIABETES AMONG ADULTS

Within Monroe County, 9% of adults age 20 and older have diabetes.

DIABETES (ADULT POPULATION BY AGE 20+) BY YEAR





162
men out of
100,000
in Monroe County
have heart disease

SUICIDES

Within Monroe County, there were a total of 135 deaths due to suicide between 2018 and 2022. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 16 per every 100,000 total population. The suicide rate for males in the county (27/100,000) is much greater than the rate for females (6/100,000).

Suicide Mortality			
	Total Population 2018-2022 Average	Five Year Deaths 2018-2022 Total	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Monroe County	169,281	135	16.3
Pennsylvania	12,865,673	9,444	14.7
United States	330,014,476	239,493	14.5



HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MEN

Men have higher mortality rates than females due to heart disease (162 per 100,000 vs. 90 per 100,000), cancer (232 per 100,000 vs. 189 per 100,000), unintentional injuries (99 per 100,000 vs. 46 per 100,000), and motor vehicles deaths (14 per 100,000 vs. 8 per 100,000) in Monroe County.

OBESITY

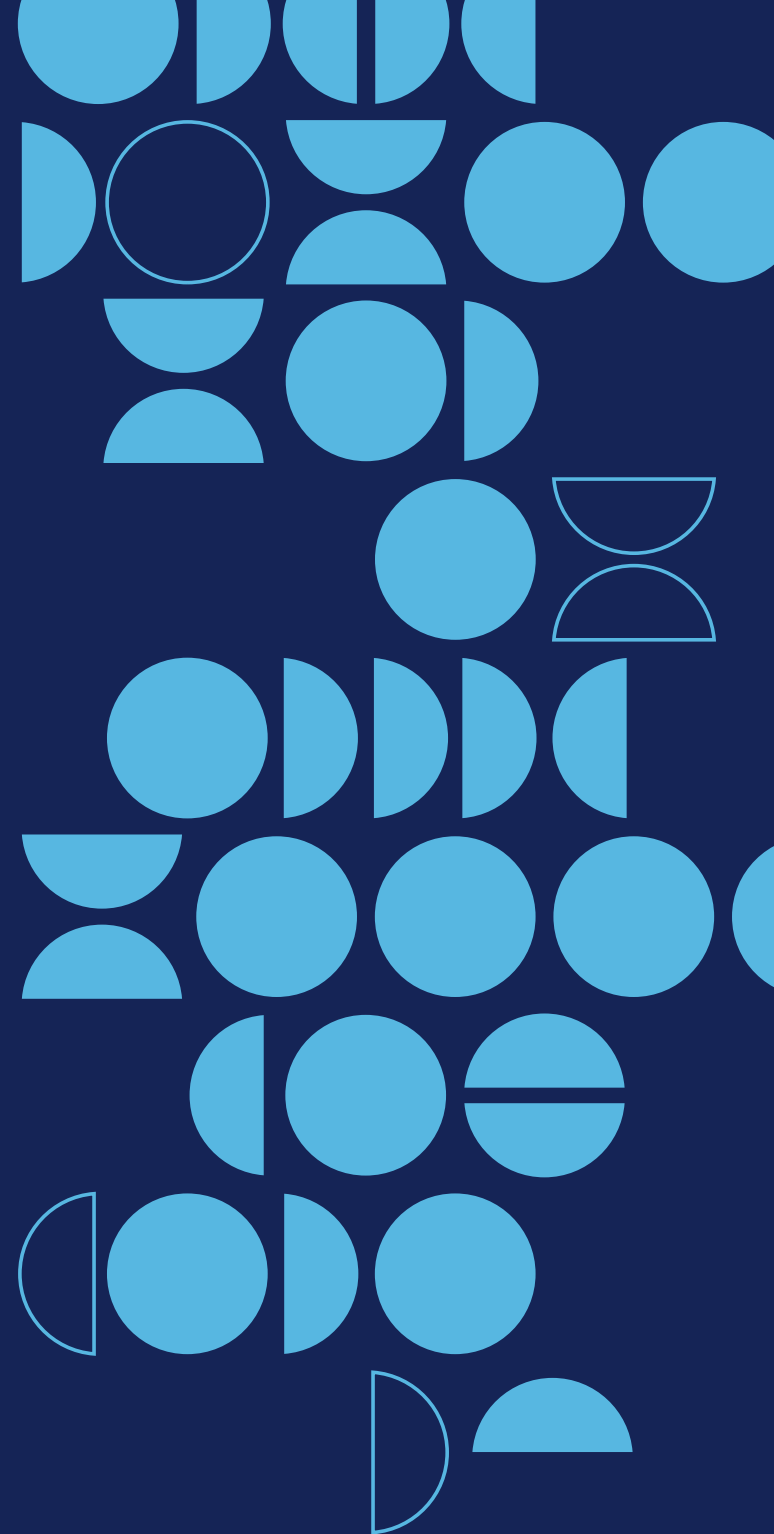
In Monroe County, 26% of the adult population are obese, compared with 30% in the state.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

LVHN's 2025 CHNA for Monroe County was conducted using a mixed-methods approach. Publicly available quantitative data from sources like the CDC and Census Bureau were analyzed alongside qualitative data gathered through stakeholder interviews and community conversations. Participants were asked to validate and prioritize needs and identify issues not captured in the data. This process ensures both statistical trends and lived experiences shape the final report.

Residents of Monroe County expressed significant concern about the high burden of chronic disease, including diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease—conditions worsened by limited access to care and transportation. Mental health care is critically under-resourced across age groups, affecting schools, employers and social services. Housing instability is another major issue, as residents face rising costs, poor housing quality and long waits for subsidized housing. Food insecurity and challenges in meeting basic needs, especially among seniors and low-income families, are common. Educational disparities are also apparent, with preschool enrollment and bachelor's degree attainment lower than state averages. The community also identified substance use, suicide and obesity as ongoing concerns, with men experiencing higher rates of preventable illness and death. Disparities based on income, geography and race/ethnicity were emphasized, particularly for rural and minority populations. Monroe County's aging population, which comprises 18% of residents, is especially vulnerable to isolation and chronic illness.

These combined social, behavioral and environmental challenges highlight the need for cross-sector collaboration and long-term investment in community well-being. 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