



LUZERNE COUNTY

2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

2025 LVHN Community Health Needs Assessment – Luzerne 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 Luzerne 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.

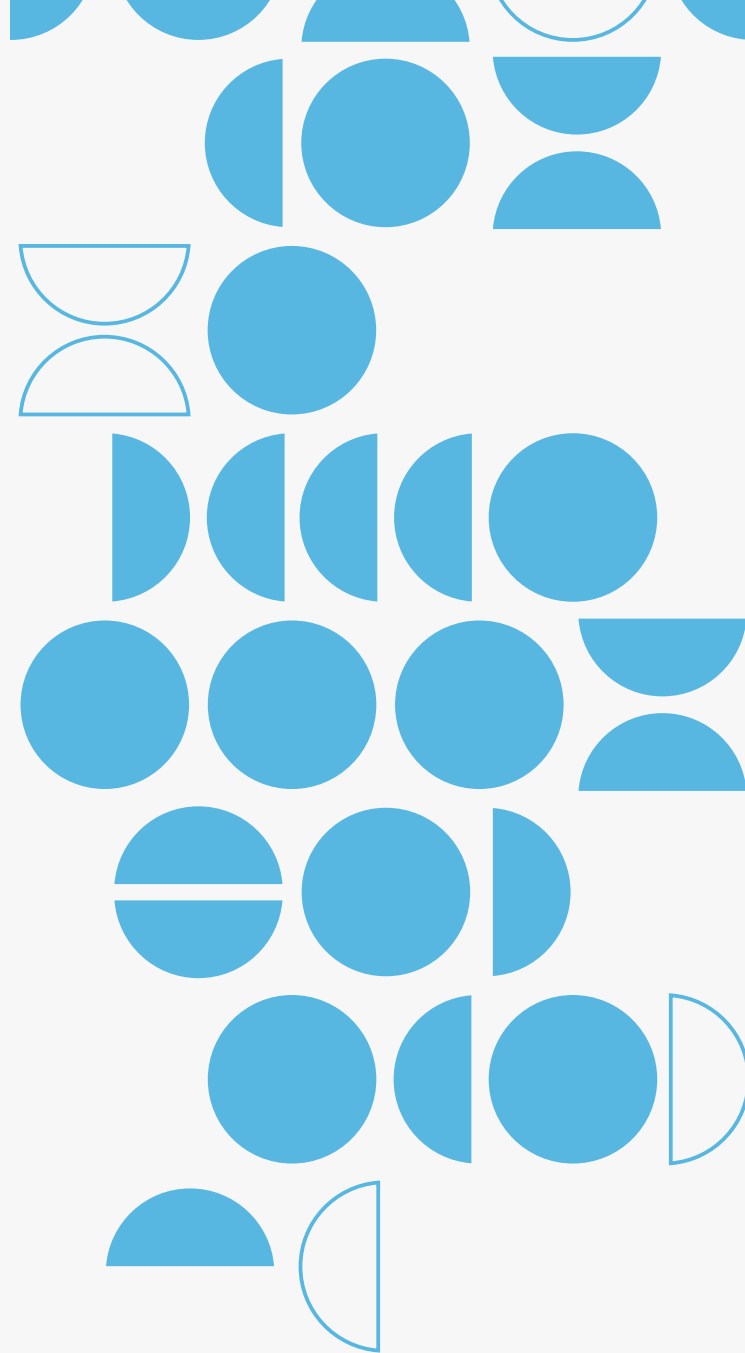
Access to quality health care is only one of the factors that contribute to the health of a population. Other factors such as health behaviors, the physical environment and socioeconomic factors are actually more powerful predictors of health, illness and health care utilization over time. For this reason,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

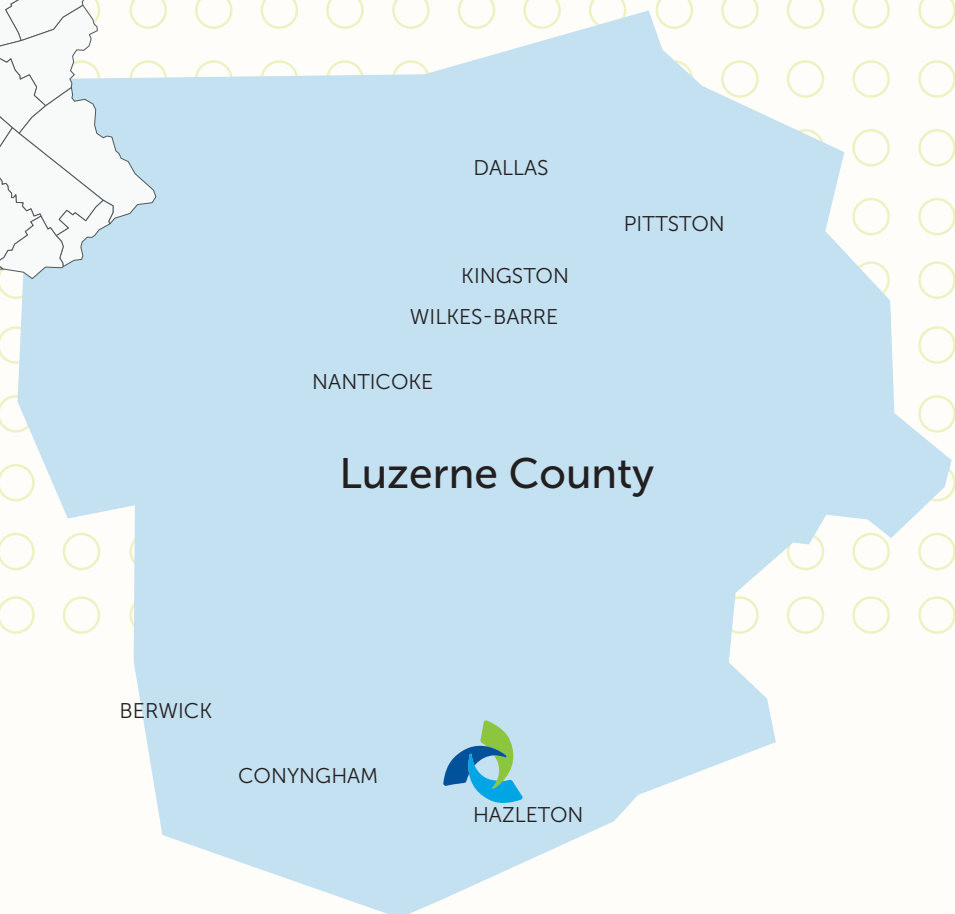
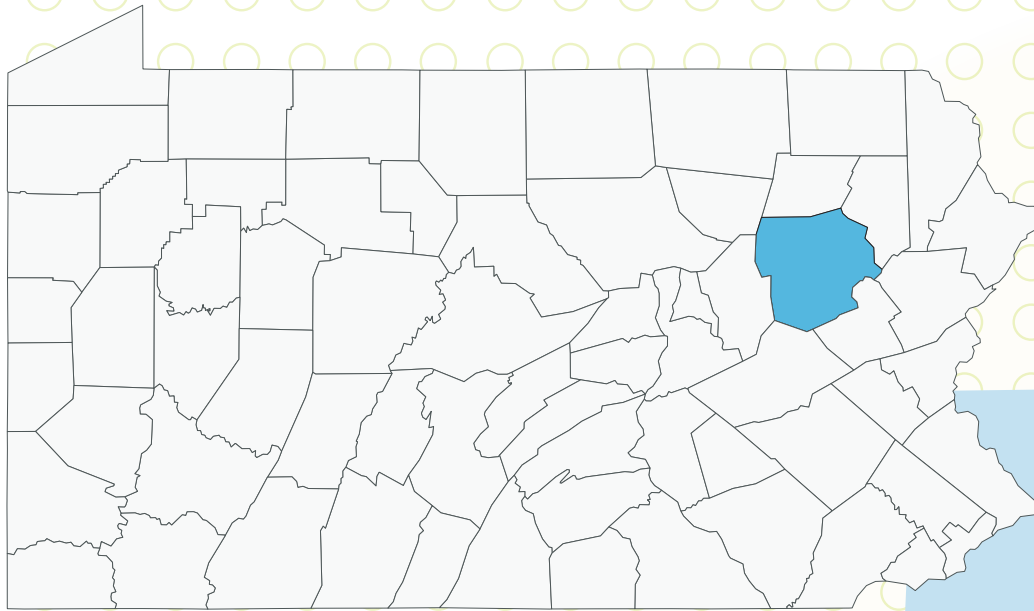




Contents

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY	6
OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY	6
COMMUNITY HEALTH RANKINGS	7
LVHN SERVICES IN THE COUNTY	8
DEMOGRAPHICS	9
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS	14
HEALTH BEHAVIORS	18
HEALTH OUTCOMES	20
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	23

Luzerne 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 Luzerne County and the Hazleton area 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.

Luzerne County	
Community Meetings	Key Stakeholders
Hazleton Integration Project	Leadership from the United Way
Maple Manor Elementary School PTA	Administration from the Hazleton Area School District
LVHN Symposium	Leadership from Hazleton Integration Project
LVHN Fireplace Lounge	Pastor from a Faith-based Community
Two Zoom meetings with nonprofit service providers	

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY

Luzerne County is 889.88 squares miles in Pennsylvania with the city of Hazleton making up 6 square miles of the county. 22% of the population in Luzerne County live in a rural area.

Urban and Rural Population					
	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban Population %	Rural Population	Rural Population %
Hazleton city	29,963	29,871	99.7%	92	0.3%
Luzerne County	325,594	253,239	77.8%	72,355	22.2%
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, Luzerne 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).

Luzerne County Health Outcomes 2025

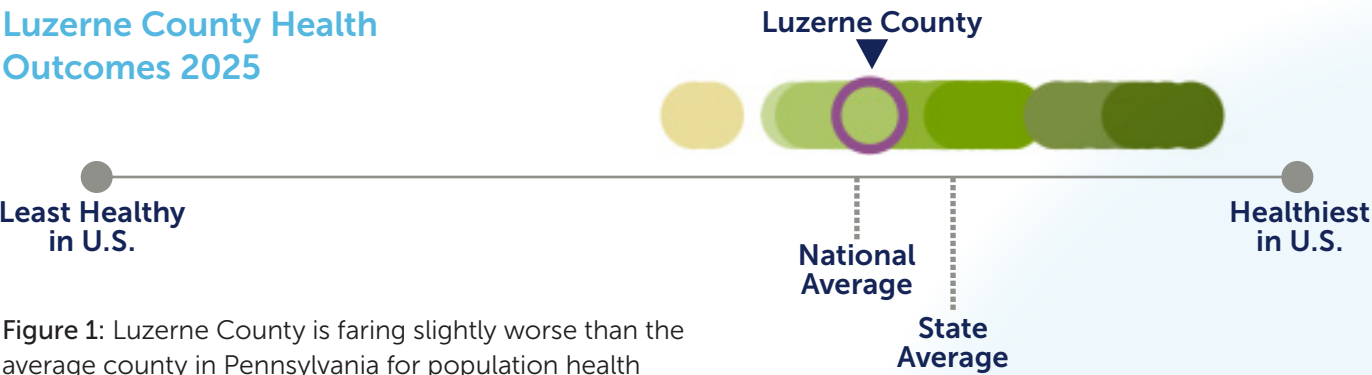


Figure 1: Luzerne County is faring slightly worse than the average county in Pennsylvania for population health and well-being, and about the same as the average county in the nation.

Luzerne County Community Conditions 2025

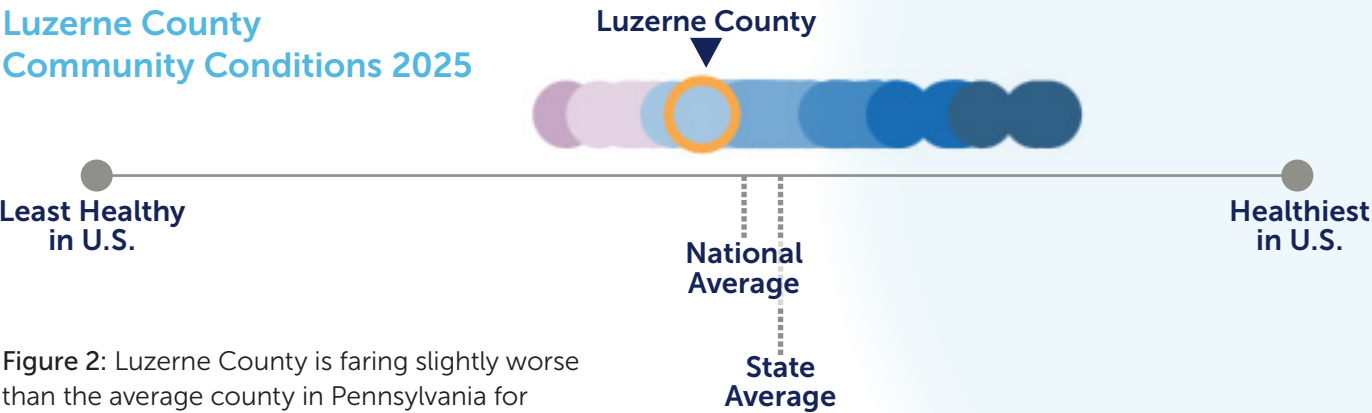


Figure 2: Luzerne County is faring slightly worse than the average county in Pennsylvania for community conditions, and slightly worse than the average county in the nation.

LVHN SERVICES IN THE COUNTY

The hospital in Hazleton was established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to care for the region's coal miners in 1891. From 1996 to 2014, the hospital was part of the Greater Hazleton Health Alliance. The hospital joined LVHN in January 2014 and marked a major step forward in lowering health care costs and improving quality in the Hazleton area.

FEATURED SERVICES INCLUDE:

- 24/7 Emergency care, including a Level IV trauma center, primary stroke center and chest pain center
- General Surgery
- Orthopedics and Sport Medicine
- Cancer Care
- Family Birth and Newborn Center
- Sleep Disorders Center
- Inpatient Rehabilitation
- Health and Wellness Center
- Diagnostic Care Center
- Pharmacy



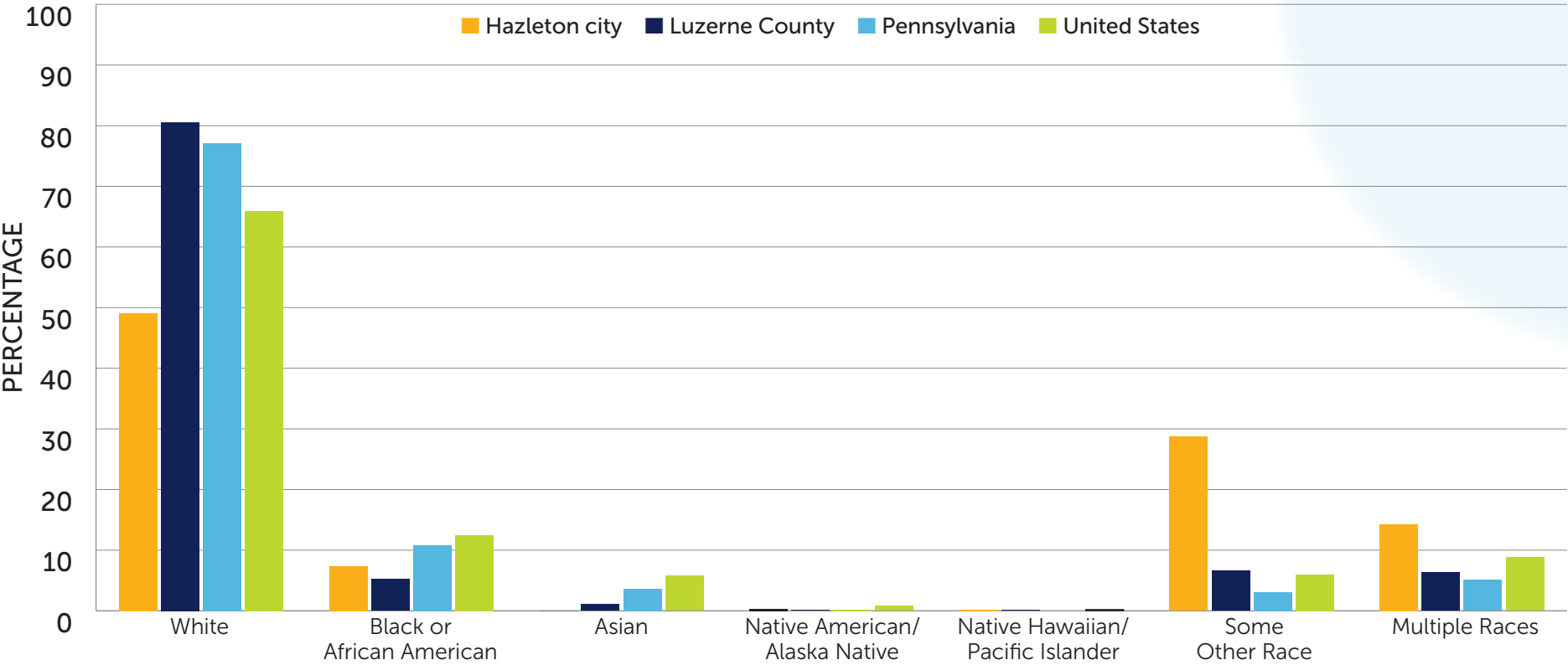
LVH-Hazleton

DEMOGRAPHICS

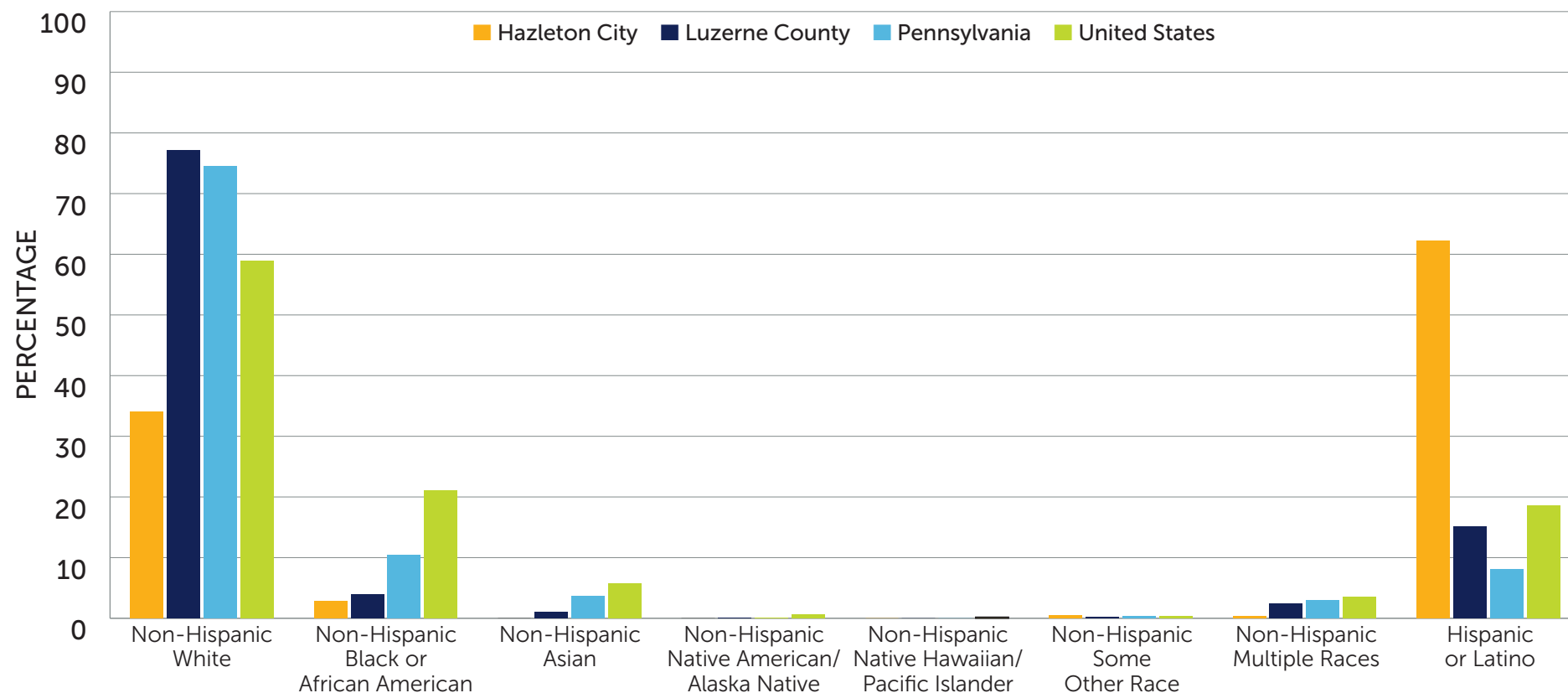
325,396 people live in Luzerne County, of which 29,671 live in the city of Hazleton. The population of the county increased by 1.5% between the 2010 and 2020 census. During the same period, the population of the city of Hazleton increased by 18.3%.

The population in the county is primarily white (81%) followed by Hispanic or Latino (15%) and Black (5%). In Hazleton, 62% of people are Hispanic or Latino, 24% are white, and 7% are Black.

TOTAL POPULATION BY RACE, PERCENT



TOTAL POPULATION BY COMBINED RACE AND ETHNICITY, PERCENT



About 20% of the total population in Luzerne County are under age 18, and another 20% are age 65 or older. The population in Hazleton has a greater percentage of young people, with 24% of the population being under age 18 and 16% being over age 65.

	Under 18		18-64		65+	
Hazleton city	7,233	24%	23,210	60%	4,632	16%
Luzerne County	53,306	20%	243,776	60%	64,551	20%
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%

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

About 6% of the population in Luzerne County has limited English proficiency, but that percentage increases to 30% within Hazleton.

Population With Limited English Proficiency

	Population Age 5+	Population Age 5+ With Limited English Proficiency	Population Age 5+ With Limited English Proficiency %
Hazleton city	27,842	8,463	30.4%
Luzerne County	308,327	18,924	6.1%
Pennsylvania	12,300,637	558,725	4.5%
United States	312,092,668	25,704,846	8.2%

Population With Limited English Proficiency by Ethnicity

	Hispanic or Latino		Not Hispanic or Latino	
Hazleton city	8,255	48.9%	208	1.9%
Luzerne County	16,734	38.5%	2,190	0.8%
Pennsylvania	254,983	26.7%	303,742	2.7%
United States	15,809,414	27.8%	9,895,432	3.9%



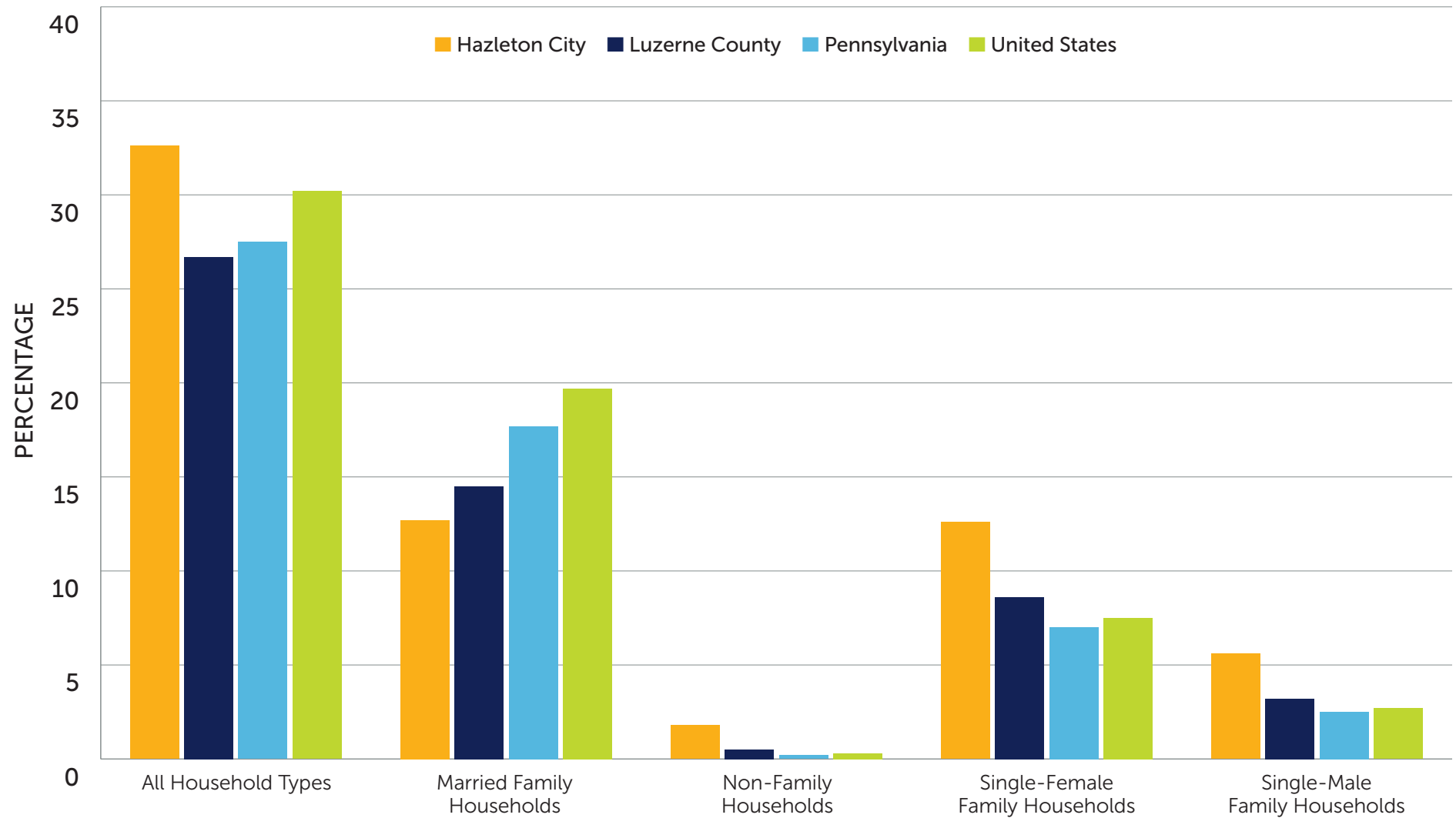
Community members who participated in community conversation and interviews raised an ongoing concern about language and cultural barriers in Hazleton. They noted that language barriers are a key barrier to navigating the health care system, which is complex even for English speakers. In addition to impacting access to care, language barriers also negatively influence quality of care when clinicians and patients have trouble communicating.

There is a lack of translation services, and participants acknowledged a cultural gap about understanding the importance of health insurance. Language barriers also limit effective education and outreach, and are a barrier to employment.



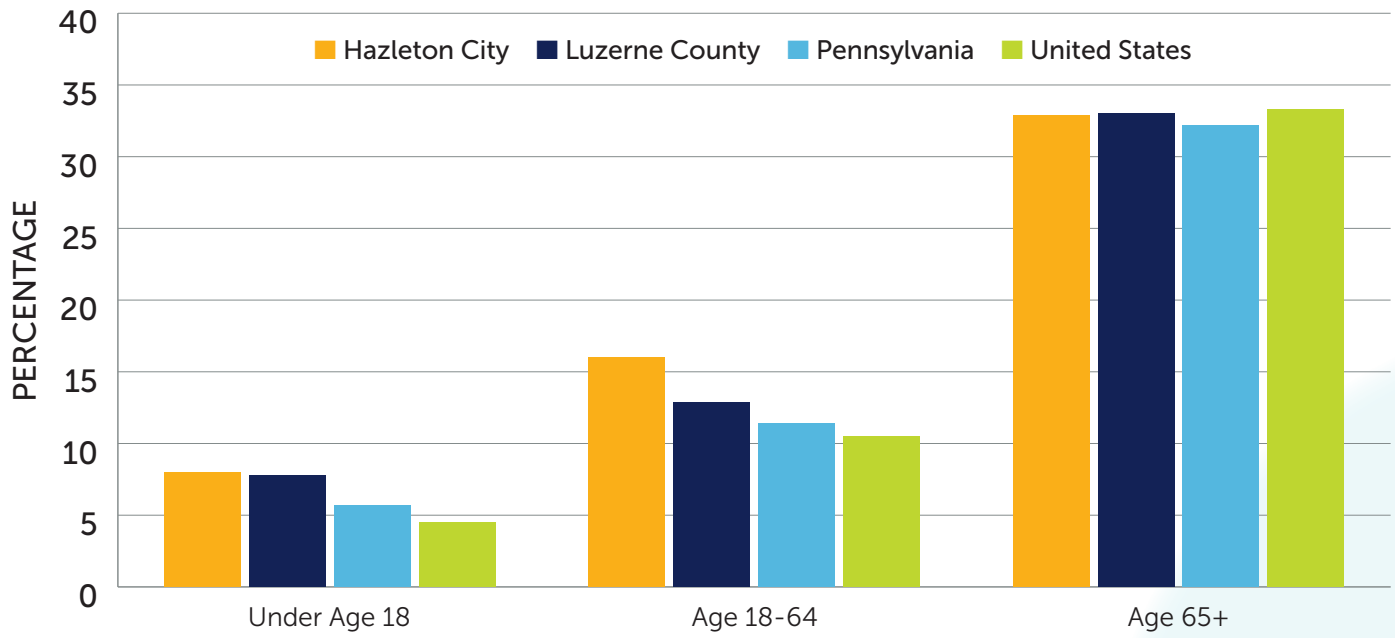
There are a total of 132,608 households in Luzerne County, 11,333 of which are in Hazleton. In the county, there are 26,141 single-parent households, and in the city there are 3,113 single-parent households.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN BY COMPOSITION



16% of the population in Luzerne County have a disability, and 17% of those in Hazleton have a disability. This is higher than the state percentage of 14%. 7% of the population in the county are veterans, versus only 4% in the city.

POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY AGE GROUP



16%
of the population in
Luzerne County have a disability

17%
of the population in
Hazleton have a disability

Veteran Population			
	Total Population Age 18+	Total Veterans	Veterans, Percent of Adult Population
Hazleton city	22,438	928	4.1%
Luzerne County	259,890	19,168	7.4%
Pennsylvania	10,315,765	680,824	6.6%
United States	256,649,167	17,038,807	6.6%



Those who participated in interviews and community conversation expressed concern about a range of social and economic disadvantages and acknowledged a need for assistance with mitigating social factors that impact health for many people. Many in the county struggle to meet basic needs. Poor housing conditions, low wages and limited job opportunities all create challenges. People struggle to be able to afford housing, healthy food and health insurance, and prices continue to rise. Middle-class individuals and families fall into gaps since they do not qualify for assistance programs. Social and economic disadvantages disproportionately impact Latino individuals and families in Hazleton. Low levels of education, literacy and health literacy also contribute to disadvantages.

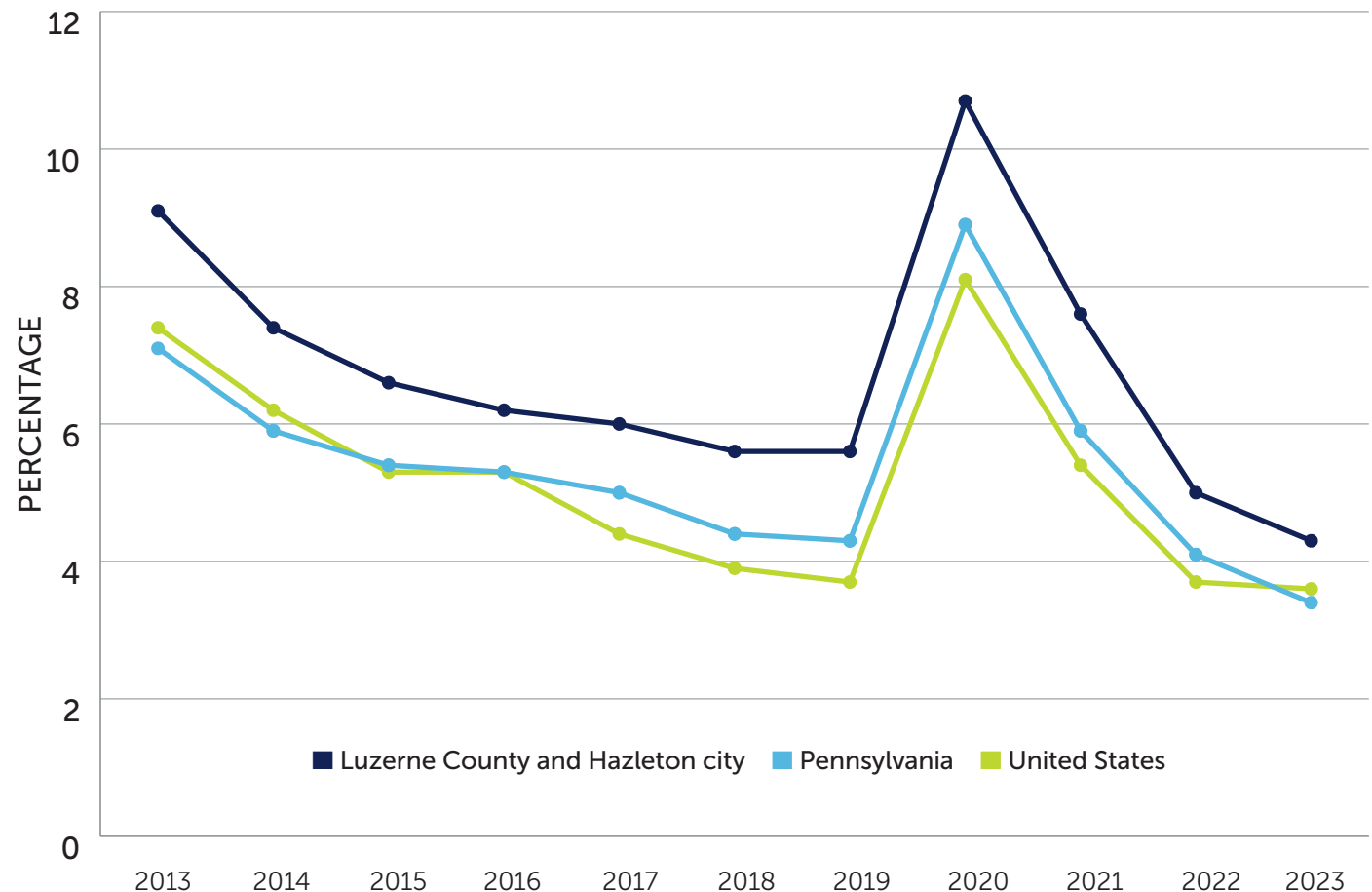
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

ECONOMIC STRESSORS

While the median household income in Pennsylvania is \$73,170, it is only \$60,836 in Luzerne County and \$39,362 in Hazleton. Poverty rates are high in the region. 15% of the population of Luzerne County live in poverty, as does 26% of the population in Hazleton. Children fare worse, with 25% of children in Luzerne County living in poverty as well as 37% of the children in Hazleton.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Although unemployment rates have returned to pre-pandemic levels, they remain high in Hazleton and Luzerne when compared to state and U.S. levels.



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

25% percent of the population in Luzerne County over age 25 have a bachelor’s degree or higher, which is less than the state and national percentage (33%). This percentage drops to 11% in Hazleton. In addition, 10% of the total population in Luzerne County and 28% of the population in Hazleton do not have a high school degree. The graduation rate for Luzerne County is 81%, which is on par with state and U.S. rates, and is 75% in Hazleton.

Overall Education Attainment						
	Associate’s Degree	Bachelor’s Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	High School Only	No High School Diploma	Some College
Hazleton city	8.8%	7.2%	4.0%	36.8%	28.2%	15.0%
Luzerne County	10.7%	15.1%	9.4%	37.8%	9.5%	17.4%
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%

25%

of the population over age 25 in Luzerne County have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

11%

of the population over age 25 in Hazleton have a bachelor’s degree or higher.





Many children in Hazleton and Luzerne County are entering kindergarten without pre-K experience. This leads to delays in basic academic skills. Children not enrolled in preschool are also missing out on early health screenings and interventions. Some parents see pre-K environments as impersonal compared to home-based day cares, and they may not be aware of the benefits of pre-K programs.

UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC BENEFITS

19% of the population in Luzerne County receive SNAP benefits (i.e., food stamps), which is higher than the state percentage (14%).

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Of the population age 3-4, only 10.8% in Hazleton and 36% in the county 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 %
Hazleton city	714	77	10.8%
Luzerne County	7,398	2,644	36.0%
Pennsylvania	287,622	127,154	44.2%
United States	7,958,841	3,631,021	45.6%



POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO HEALTH DUE TO HOUSING INSTABILITY

26% of the population in Luzerne County live in cost-burdened households, meaning they are spending more than 30% of their household income on housing. In Hazleton, over 40% of residents spend 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 at both the county and city levels.

Cost-Burdened Households						
	Households			Renter-Occupied Households		
	Total	Cost-Burdened	Cost-Burdened%	Total	Cost-Burdened	Cost-Burdened%
Hazleton city	11,333	4,606	40.6%	6,070	3,240	53.4%
Luzerne County	132,608	34,877	26.3%	43,342	17,472	40.3%
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 Luzerne County, 6% of the population does not have health insurance, which increases to 14% in Hazleton. Uninsurance rates differ by age group, with the rates of those age 18-64 in Luzerne comparing unfavorably with state and U.S. rates.

Uninsured Population by Age Group						
	Under Age 18		Age 18-64		Age 65+	
Hazleton city	527	6.8%	3,527	20.4%	114	2.6%
Luzerne County	2,659	3.8%	15,940	8.5%	251	0.4%
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%



Focus group participants and key stakeholders in Luzerne 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 wait lists for affordable housing, and housing instability is a barrier to health. Homelessness is an issue, and people use the emergency department for shelter.



County residents reported that behaviors of people in Luzerne County, along with some conditions present in the physical environment in Luzerne, 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 BEHAVIORS

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MOMS AND BABIES

The teen birth rate in Luzerne County and in Hazleton is 20 per 1,000 females age 15-19. This is higher than the state rate of 13 per 1,000 and the U.S. rate of 17 per 1,000. There are significant differences in this rate when broken down by race and ethnicity. For non-Hispanic white teens, the rate is 12 per 1,000 females age 15-19, which increases to 28 per 1,000 among teens who are Black, and 42 per 1,000 among teens who are Hispanic. Low birth weight occurs in 8% of infants across the board in Hazleton, Luzerne, Pennsylvania, and the U.S. When broken down by race and ethnicity, the percentage increases to 12% for infants who are Black.

Teen Birth Rate (Females Age 15-19)		
	Population	Teen Births, Rate per 1,000
Hazleton city	7,924	19.5
Luzerne County	66,329	19.5
Pennsylvania	2,796,351	13.2
United States	76,648,322	16.6

NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES OF THE OLDER POPULATION IN THE COUNTY

Of those age 65 and over, 33% in both the county and the city have a disability. In both Luzerne County and Hazleton, 70% of Medicare patients have high blood pressure while 37% of eligible Medicare beneficiaries in both the county and the city had mammograms, which is lower than the state average of 39%.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

In Luzerne County, 17% 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

23% of adults self-reported no active leisure time in Luzerne County.

SMOKING

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



23%

of adults in Luzerne County
self-reported no active leisure time.

18%

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

511

cancer incidence rate within
both Luzerne County and
the city of Hazleton for every

100,000

total in the population.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

CANCER INCIDENCE

Within both Luzerne County and the city of Hazleton, there is a cancer incidence rate of 511 for every 100,000 total in the population, which is higher than the state (467) and U.S. rates (442). The table 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)
Hazleton city	Breast	226	127.3
	Lung	31	70.7
	Prostate	25	121.8
	Colon and Rectum	18	43.8
	Cervical	-	-
Luzerne 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 Luzerne County and the city of Hazleton, 11% of adults age 20 and older have diabetes.

Diabetes (Adult Population Age 20+)			
	Population	Diagnosed Diabetes	Diagnosed Diabetes, Age-Adjusted, %
Hazleton city	21,376	2,886	11.3%
Luzerne County	252,119	35,036	11.3%
Pennsylvania	9,950,438	978,647	8.3%
United States	232,706,003	23,263,962	8.9%

LUNG DISEASE

59 people per 100,000 people in the county and in the city die of lung disease compared to a state rate of 53 per 100,000 people and a U.S. rate of 47 per 100,000 people.

SUICIDES

Within Luzerne County, there were a total of 308 deaths due to suicide between 2018 and 2022. In Hazleton, there were 28 deaths during that time period. For both the county and the city, this represents an age-adjusted death rate of 19 per every 100,000 total population. The rate is higher among males (34 per 100,000) than females (7 per 100,000) in Luzerne County.

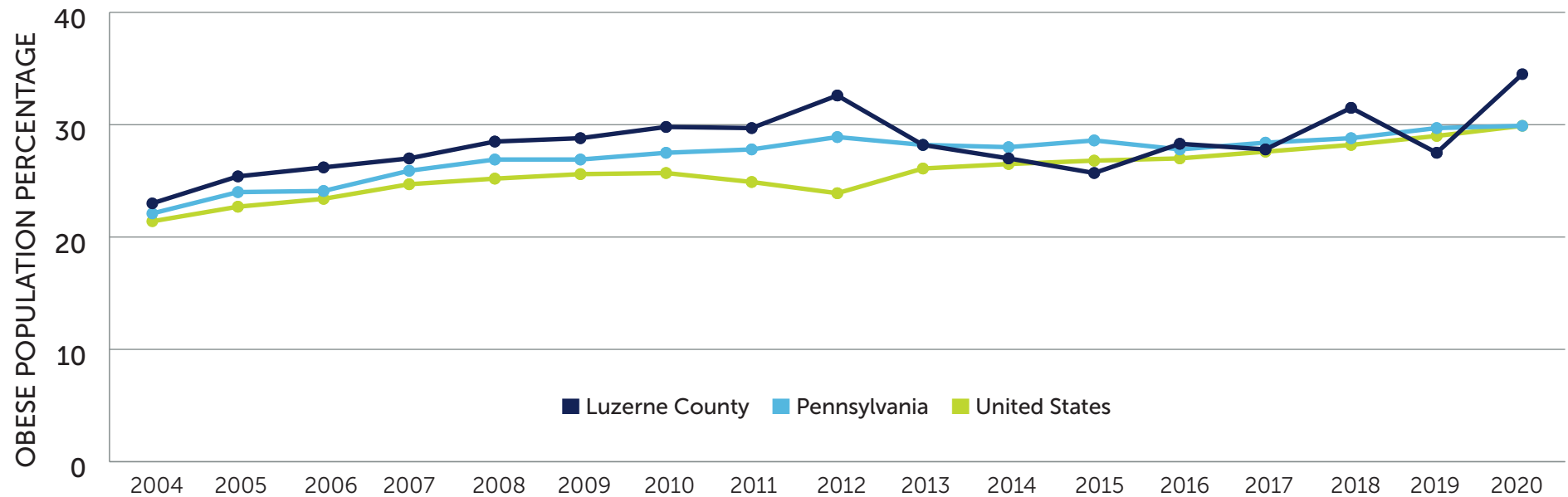
Suicide Mortality by Gender (Per 100,000 Population)		
	Male	Female
Luzerne County	32	6.6
Pennsylvania	23.8	5.8
United States	23.2	6



In Luzerne County, there are high rates of youth suicide, and these are occurring across cultures and ethnicities. Addiction, gang violence and gun violence are all factors that contribute to depression and despair. Seniors can be isolated and are also at risk for suicide. The ripple effects of these suicides impact the mental health of family and community members, leading to further need for mental health services.

OBESITY BY YEAR

35% of the adult population of Luzerne County and of Hazleton are obese, compared with 30% in the state.



HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MEN

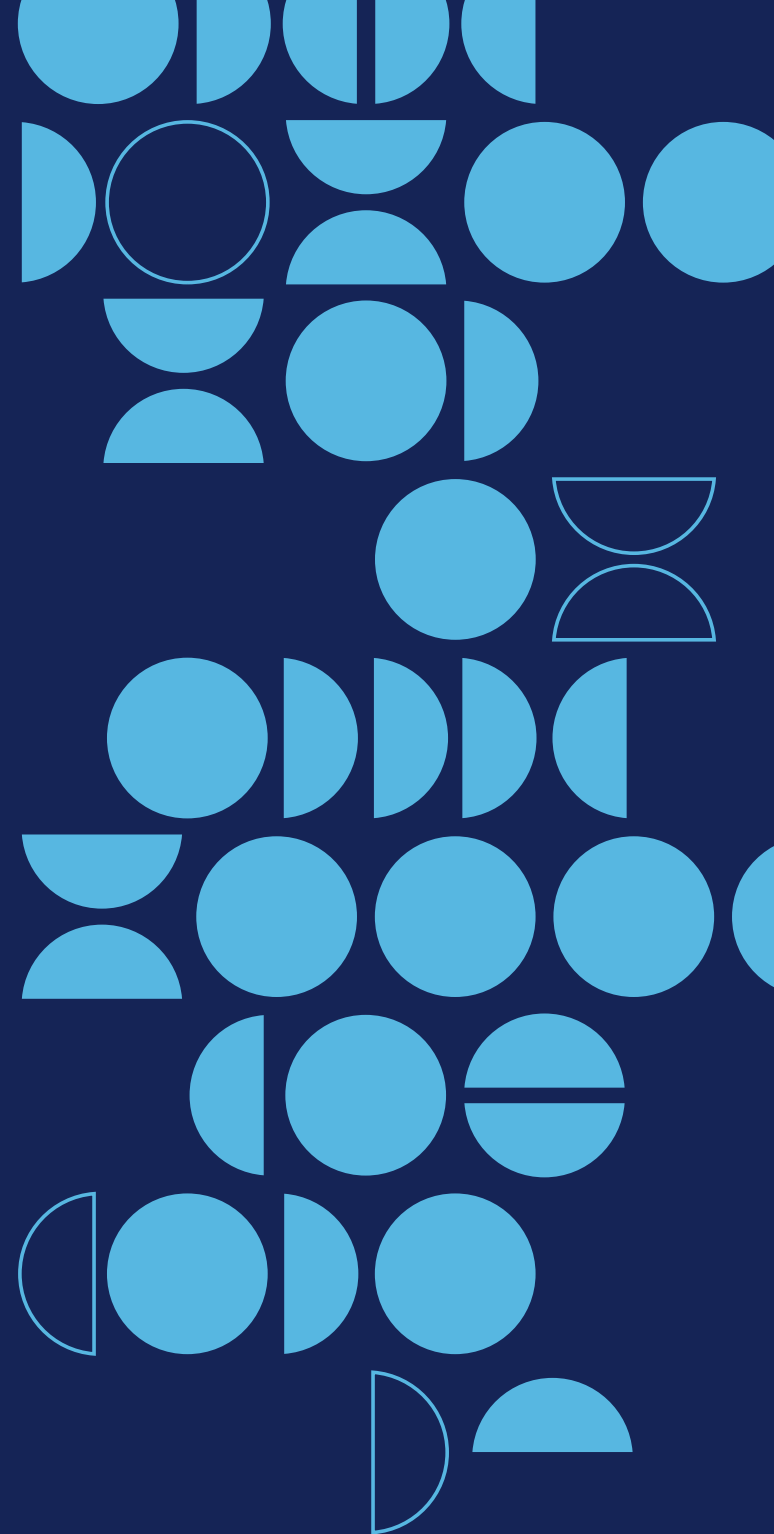
Men in the county have higher prevalence rates of heart disease than females (184 per 100,000 vs. 155 per 100,000). In addition, men have higher mortality rates than females due to cancer (227 per 100,000 vs. 254 per 100,000), unintentional injuries (118 per 100,000 vs. 64 per 100,000) and motor vehicles deaths (15 per 100,000 vs. 6 per 100,000) in Luzerne County.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

LVHN's 2025 CHNA for Hazleton, located in Luzerne County, used a combination of secondary data and direct community input to assess regional health needs. The process included analysis of state and national statistics as well as interviews and focus groups with community leaders, nonprofit providers, schools and faith organizations. This method ensured that health indicators were understood in the context of residents' real-life challenges.

Key concerns identified in Hazleton include significant economic hardship, with household income well below state averages and a child poverty rate of 37% in the city. Language barriers were named as one of the most pressing issues, limiting access to care and lowering the quality of care for Hazleton's majority Latino population. Families reported difficulty navigating the health care system, affording health insurance and accessing housing. Mental health needs are severe and growing, particularly among youth and seniors. High suicide rates, substance use disorders and violence-related trauma were reported across ethnicities and age groups. Poor housing conditions, high obesity (35%), low education attainment and limited access to early childhood programs further contribute to long-term health risks. Preschool enrollment is critically low, and many children are entering kindergarten unprepared. Disparities in chronic disease—such as diabetes, lung disease and cancer—were also significant, particularly among men. Community members described an overstressed system in which rising needs are not being met by current services. Overall, the report underscores the urgency of improving social determinants of health, particularly in underserved populations within the city of Hazleton.

Overall, the report underscores the urgency of improving social drivers of health, particularly in underserved populations within the city of Hazleton. 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