



## NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

# 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

# 2025 LVHN Community Health Needs Assessment – Northampton 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 Northampton 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.

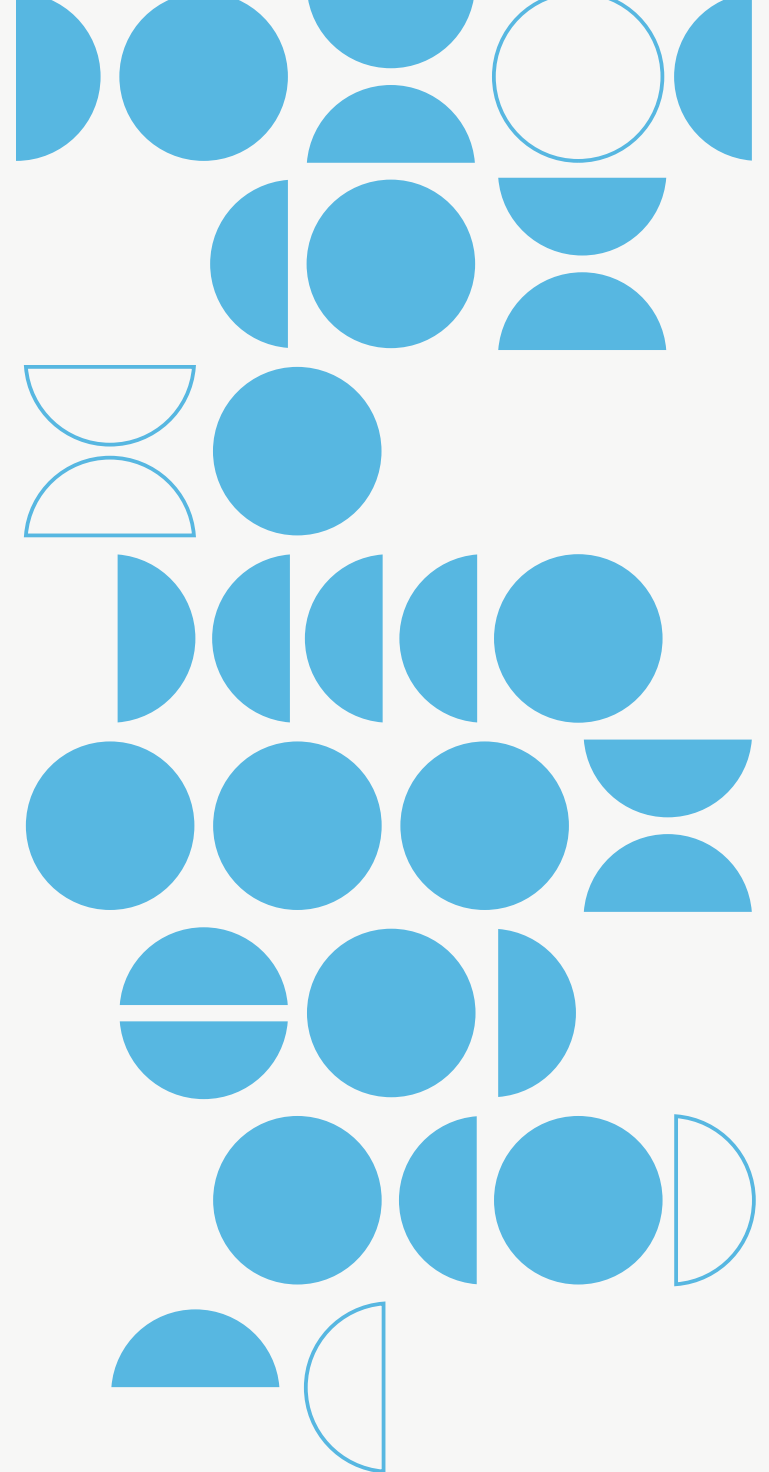
Access to quality health care is only one of the factors that contributes to the health of a population. Other factors such as health behaviors, the physical environment and socioeconomic factors are actually more powerful predictors of health, illness and health care utilization over time. For this 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 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 Community Health Implementation Plan will be shared soon after the CHNA report is released.

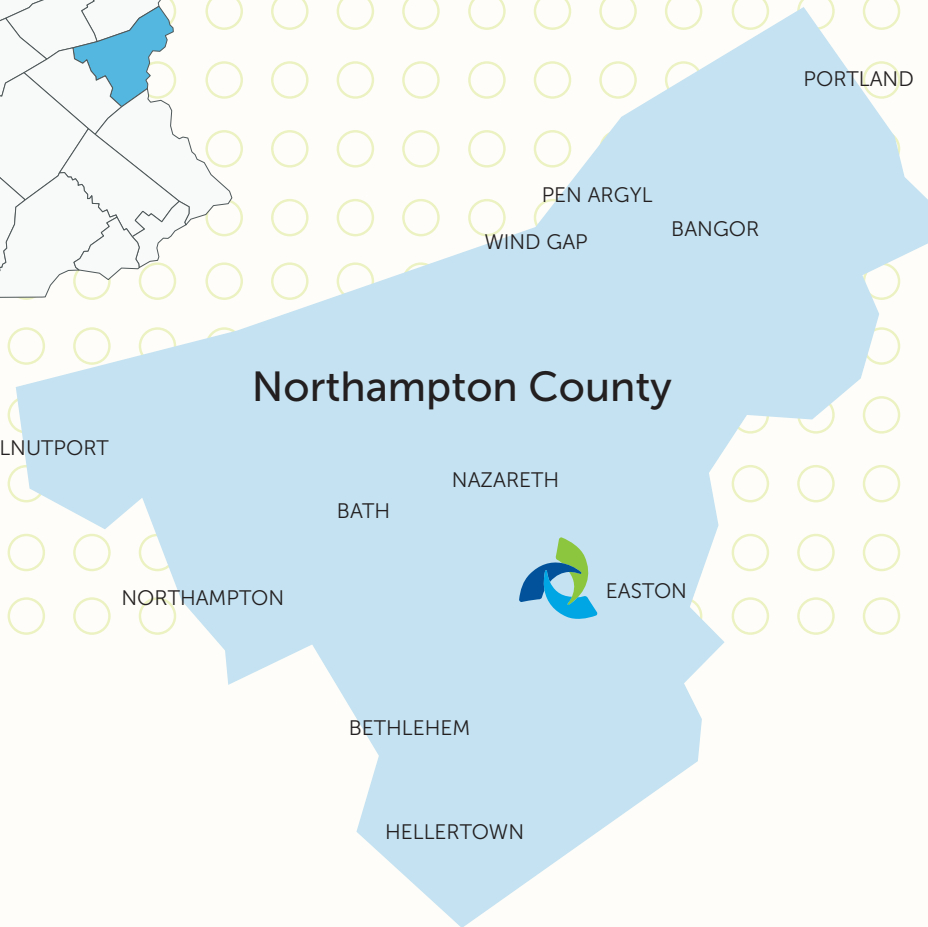
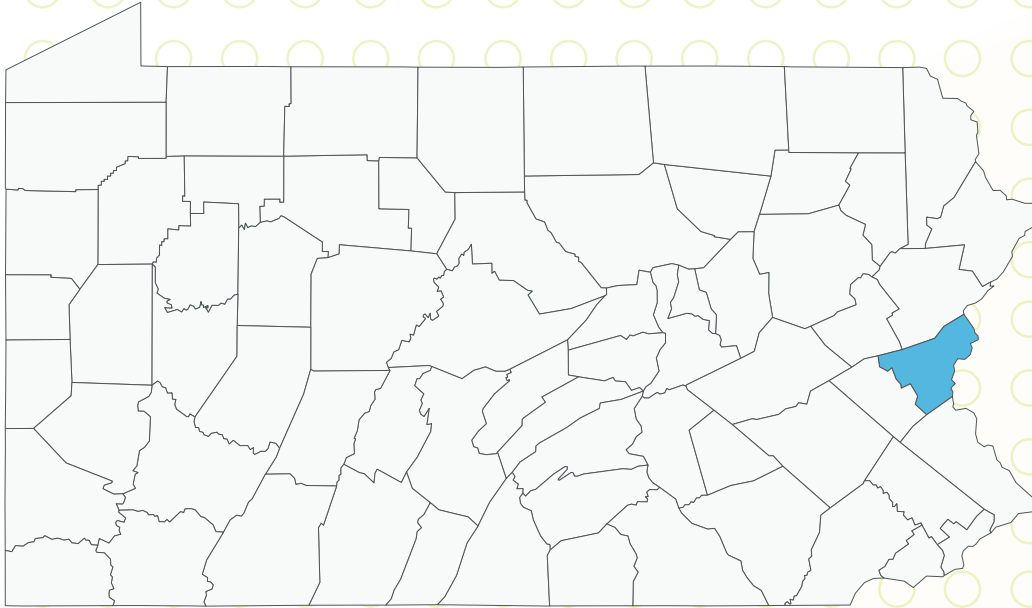




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# Northampton County



*\*\*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 Northampton 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.

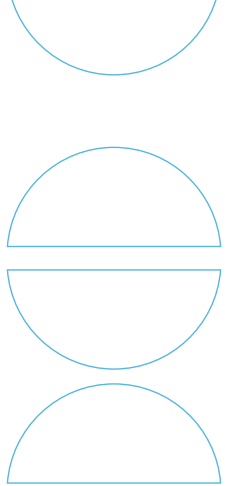
Northampton County	
Community Meetings	Key Stakeholders
Virtual meeting with Northampton Community College	Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Paxinosa Elementary School	Senior Community Planner, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Slate Belt Chamber of Commerce	Director, Bethlehem Health Bureau
	Executive Director, Greater Easton Development Partnership
Lehighon Senior Center	Assistant Superintendent, Bethlehem Area School District
	Director of Crisis Intervention, Northampton County
Demographic summary: N=64. Gender = 60% Female, 40% Male. Race = 40% White, 35% Black/African American, 25% Multiracial. Ethnicity = 32% non-Hispanic, 68% Hispanic. Age range = 25 to 79. Average age = 58.	

## OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY

Northampton County is a total area of 377 square miles in Pennsylvania. About 17% of the county is rural.

Urban and Rural Population					
	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban Population %	Rural Population	Rural Population %
Northampton County	312,951	260,194	83.1%	52,757	16.9%
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%





## LVHN Services in the County

On a sunny Saturday, April 23, 1961, the Rev. Dr. Charles M. Cooper, President of the Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, stepped to a podium erected on a terrace next to what is now Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Muhlenberg and formally dedicated the first unit to be opened at the new Muhlenberg Medical Center, known as the Hospital for the Chronically Ill. It was the culmination of a movement that began in March 1955 and involved the tireless efforts of countless people, including those from more than 100 Lutheran churches throughout the greater Lehigh Valley area. The 192-bed facility on Schoenersville Road, just west of the Lehigh-Northampton county line, would become the fifth hospital in the two-county area along with Allentown Hospital and Sacred Heart Hospital in Allentown, Easton Hospital in Easton, and St. Luke’s Hospital in Fountain Hill.

LVH-Muhlenberg highlighted services:

- Behavioral Health Science Center
- Breast Health Services
- Emergency Room
- Family Birth and Newborn Center
- Cancer Center
- Hemophilia Treatment Center
- Wound Healing Center



LVH-Hecktown Oaks opened in June 2021 and was the first newly constructed hospital in the LVH system in over 50 years. The campus on Hecktown Road just off Route 33 includes a 201,000-square-foot hospital, 35,000-square-foot Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, 60,000-square-foot health center and an emergency room (ER) caring for adults and children, including an area dedicated just for children. The Hecktown Oaks location features:

- Twenty Emergency Room bays
- Behavioral health capabilities directly in the Emergency Room
- Diagnostic Care Center
- Four state-of-the-art surgical suites
- Inpatient unit with 20 private rooms
- Cancer services through Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute
- Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute cardiology and cardiac diagnostics
- Breast Health Services
- Joint and spine center
- Outpatient rehab
- Family medicine

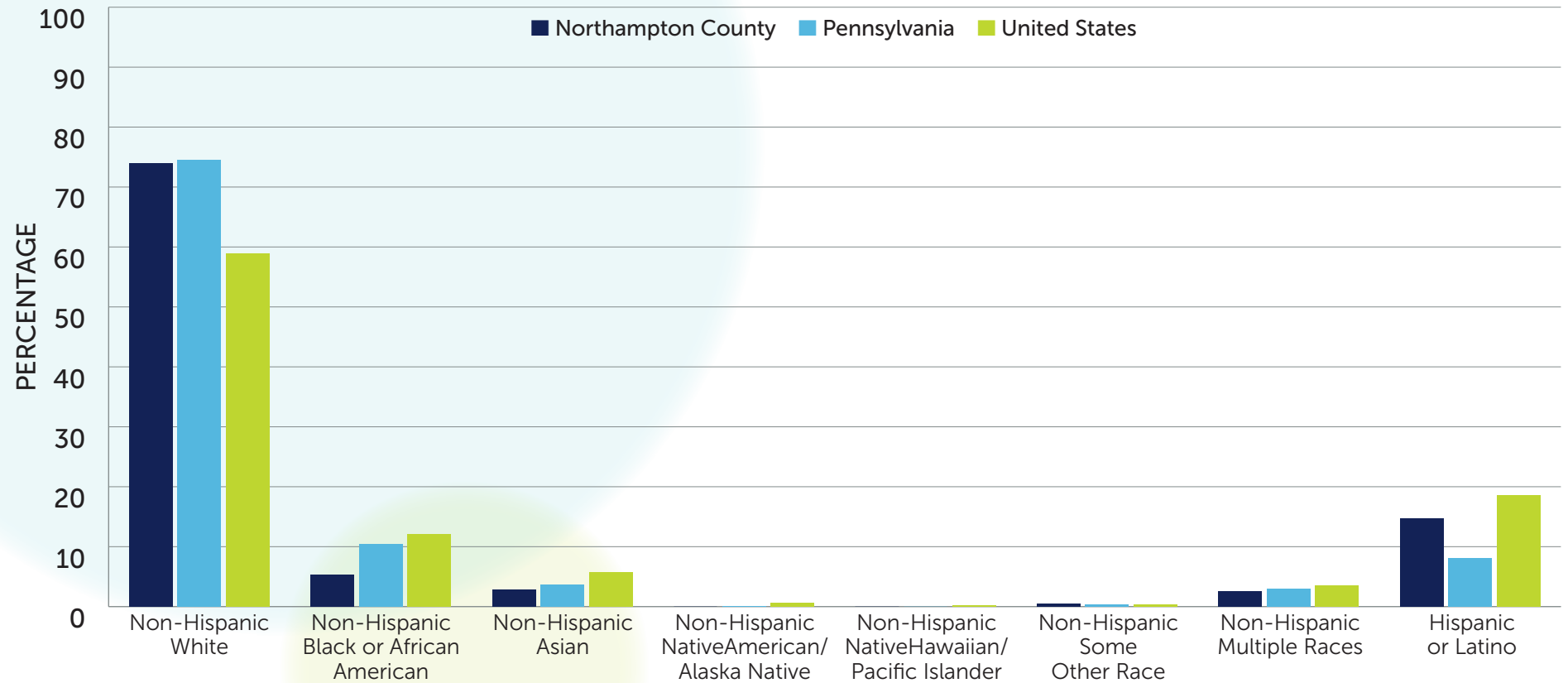


LVH-Hecktown Oaks

## DEMOGRAPHICS

314,299 people live in Northampton County. The population increased by 5% (15,216 people) between the 2010 and 2020 Census. The residents in the county are primarily white (74%) followed by Latino (15%) and Black (5%).

### TOTAL POPULATION BY COMBINED RACE AND ETHNICITY

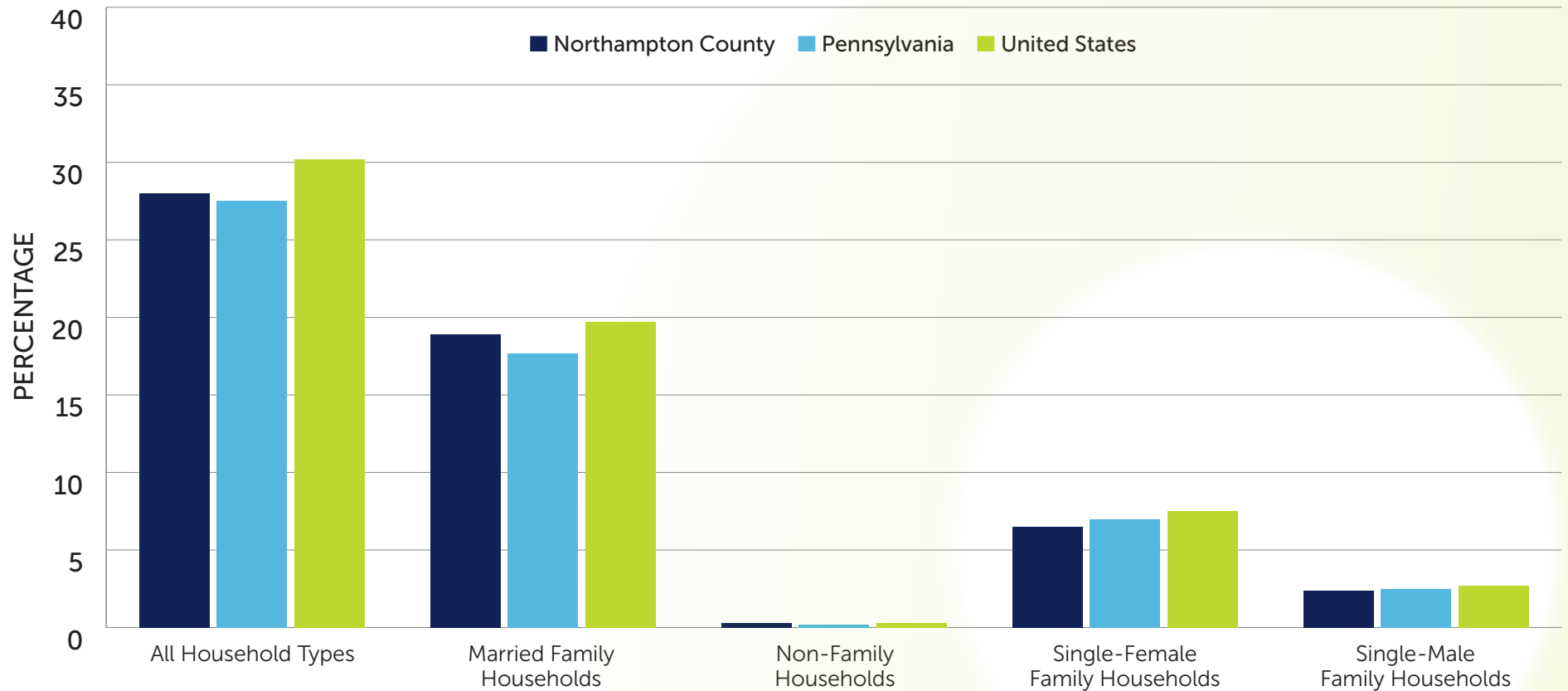


Almost 20% of the population are age 65 or older, and 20% are under age 18.

	Under 18		18-64		65+	
<b>Northampton</b>	61,392	20%	191,486	60%	61,421	20%
<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%

There are a total of 120,384 households in Northampton County. 13% of all households in Northampton County are single-female family households.

## HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN BY COMPOSITION

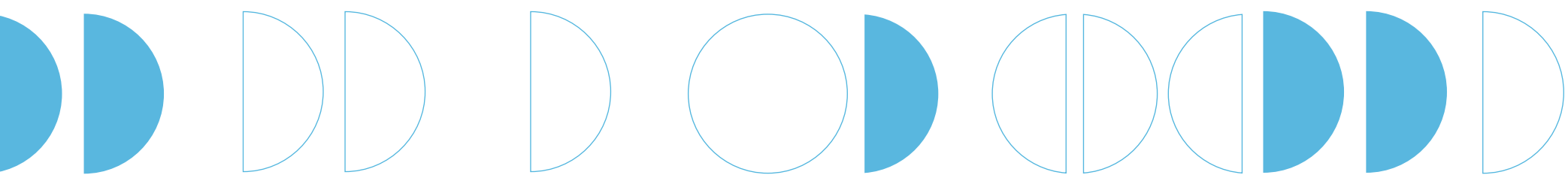
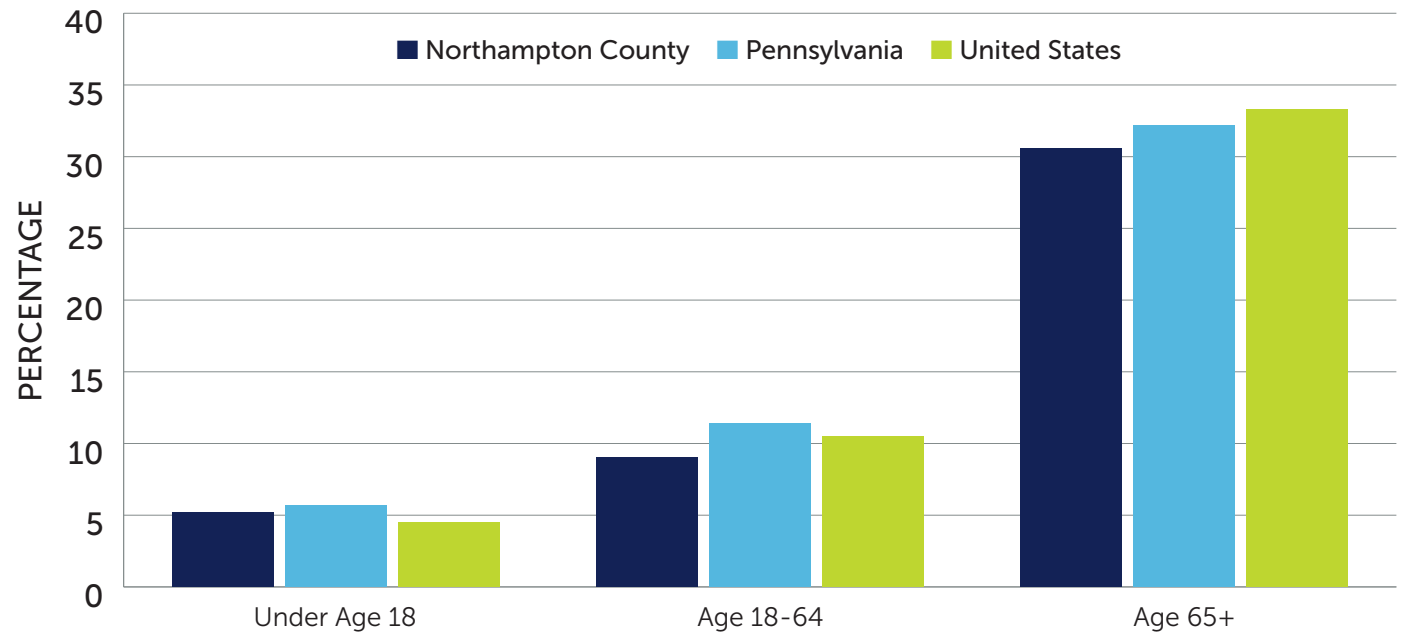




Participants in the Northampton County community conversations and key stakeholder interviews expressed concern about older individuals in the county. They are disproportionately challenged by the rising costs of living, particularly housing. They may also lack the transportation or technical skills needed to get to appointments and navigate their health care. Additionally, seniors need opportunities to be active and engaged in community life.

7% of the population in Northampton County are veterans, and they are primarily males age 65 and older. 12% of the population have a disability.

### POPULATION WITH ANY DISABILITY BY AGE GROUP



## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

### ECONOMIC STRESS

9% of the total population in Northampton County are living in poverty. About 13% of children in Northampton County live in poverty; 22% of the Latino children living in Northampton County are living in poverty compared to 10% of the non-Hispanic or non-Latino children in the county.

### CHILDREN BELOW 100% FPL BY ETHNICITY

	Hispanic or Latino	Hispanic or Latino, %	Not Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino
<b>Northampton County</b>	61,392	21.9%	4,729	10.3%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	109,372	31.3%	313,870	13.8%
<b>United States</b>	4,231,686	22.9%	7,770,665	14.5%

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The graduation rate in Northampton County is 86%. When broken down by race and ethnicity, 94% of the non-Hispanic white population graduate from high school compared to 84% of Black or African American population, and 83% of the Hispanic population.

Overall Education Attainment						
	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	High School Only	No High School Diploma	Some College
<b>Northampton County</b>	9.7%	20.1%	12.7%	33.1%	8.1%	16.3%
<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%



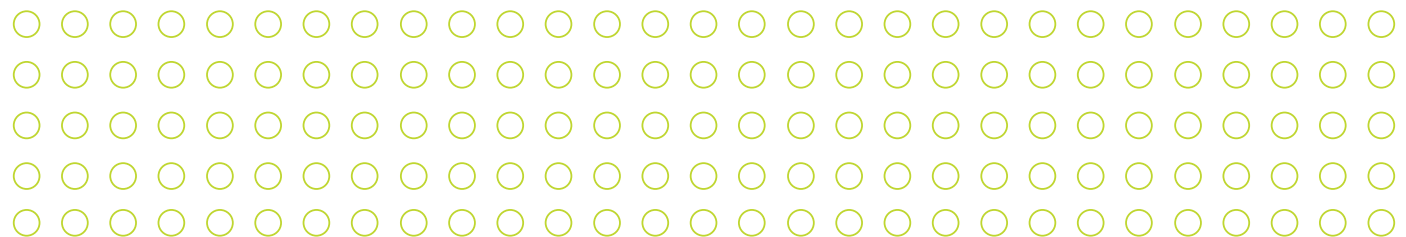
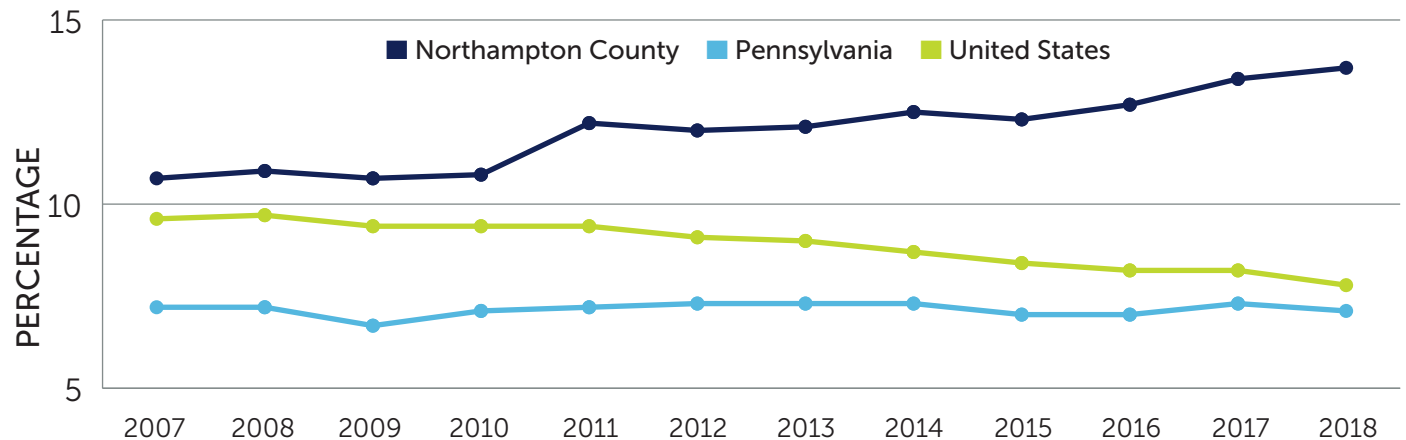
The impact of housing on health was the most frequently mentioned concern among Northampton County community members who participated in community conversations and interviews. Shelters are not always available for people who need them. Even with vouchers, housing may not be available. Older housing stock can be unhealthy. Costs have skyrocketed, impacting families and individuals at all income levels.

## POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO HEALTH DUE TO HOUSING INSTABILITY

29% of the population in Northampton 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>Northampton County</b>	120,384	34,703	28.8%	35,006	16,912	48.3%
<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%

## ESTIMATED EVICTION FILING RATE BY YEAR TREND



# HEALTH BEHAVIORS

## NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MOMS AND BABIES

The teen birth rate in Northampton County is 9 per 1,000 females age 15-19. Similar to other categories, important differences can be seen when breaking down this rate by race and ethnicity. The teen birth rate in Northampton County is 5 per 1,000 female population age 15-19 among white teenagers, 13 per 1,000 among Black teenagers, and 23 per 1,000 among Hispanic or Latino teenagers.

This percentage of infants born at a low birth weight also varies by race and ethnicity. Overall, about 8% of infants are born at low birth weight in Northampton County. Broken down by race and ethnicity, 7% of infants who are white are born at a low birth weight, 13% of infants who are Black, and 9% of infants who are Latino.

Teen Birth Rate by Race/Ethnicity (per 1,000 Female Population Age 15-19)							
	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic Asian	Non-Hispanic American Indian/ Alaska Native	Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Non-Hispanic Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino
Northampton County	4.8	13.4	-	-	-	15.5	23.2
Pennsylvania	8.2	23.7	2.1	6.7	19.5	21.8	33.4
United States	11.3	24.9	2.5	28.1	23.9	16.8	25.4

## ALCOHOL USE

In Northampton County, 19% of adults self-report excessive drinking in the last 30 days.

## SMOKING

5% of adults in Northampton County are smokers.

## PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

In Northampton County, 17% of adults self-report no active leisure time.



Access to care was a frequently mentioned concern among the Northampton County stakeholders who participated in our interviews and community conversations. The costs of insurance premiums and co-pays prevent people from trying to access needed care. Caregivers are burdened trying to care for loved ones. The health care system is difficult to manage, especially among those with less education or language barriers. Those who lack transportation are at a particular disadvantage.

## HEALTH OUTCOMES

### CANCER INCIDENCE

Within Northampton County, there is a cancer incidence rate of 512 for every 100,000 total in the population, which is higher than the state (467 per 100,000) and U.S. rates (442 per 100,000).

Incidence Rates of Top Five Most Commonly Diagnosed Cancers			
	Type of Cancer	New Cases (Annual Average)	Incidence Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Northampton County	Breast	282	135.7
	Lung	259	58.9
	Prostate	266	125.8
	Colon and Rectum	158	38.1
	Cervical	11	6.3
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

## ASTHMA

The percentage of adults with asthma in Northampton County is 10%.

## DIABETES

Within Northampton County, 21,124 of adults age 20 and older have diabetes. This represents 9% of the total population.

Diabetes (Adult Population by Age 20+)			
	Population	Diagnosed Diabetes	Diagnosed Diabetes, Age-Adjusted, %
Northampton County	243,027	26,976	9.3%
Pennsylvania	9,950,438	978,647	8.3%
United States	232,706,003	23,263,962	8.9%

69%

of Medicare beneficiaries in the county have high blood pressure.

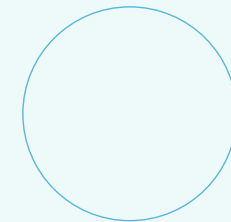
## HEALTH NEEDS OF OLDER INDIVIDUALS IN THE COMMUNITY

20% of the population are age 65 or older. 31% of those age 65 and older have a disability. Of the 40,005 Medicare beneficiaries in the county, 69% have high blood pressure.

## SUICIDES

Within Northampton County, there were a total of 233 deaths due to suicide between 2018 and 2022. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 15 per every 100,000 total population. The rate is higher among males (25 per 100,000) than females (9 per 100,000).

Suicide Mortality			
	Total Population 2018-2022 Average	Five Year Deaths 2018-2022 Total	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Population)
Northampton County	309,628	233	15.1
Pennsylvania	12,865,673	9,444	14.7
United States	330,014,476	239,493	14.5





The participants of community conversations and key stakeholder interviews in Northampton County raised a concern about obesity. Obesity rates continue to rise among children and teens, and those in poorer communities have higher rates of obesity. Healthy food is expensive, and working families may struggle to have time to prepare food at home.

## HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR MEN

A greater number of males (120 per 100,000) die from coronary heart disease than females (83 per 100,000). In addition, men have higher mortality rates than females due to unintentional injuries (96 per 100,000 vs. 54 per 100,000) and motor vehicles deaths (11 per 100,000 vs. 5 per 100,000) in Northampton County.

## OBESITY

27% of the adult population in the county are obese (with BMI >30).

Obesity by Gender				
	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
<b>Northampton County</b>	32,760	27.3%	33,289	27.2%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	1,462,280	29.8%	1,520,780	30.1%
<b>United States</b>	34,208,595	29.8%	35,960,164	30.5%

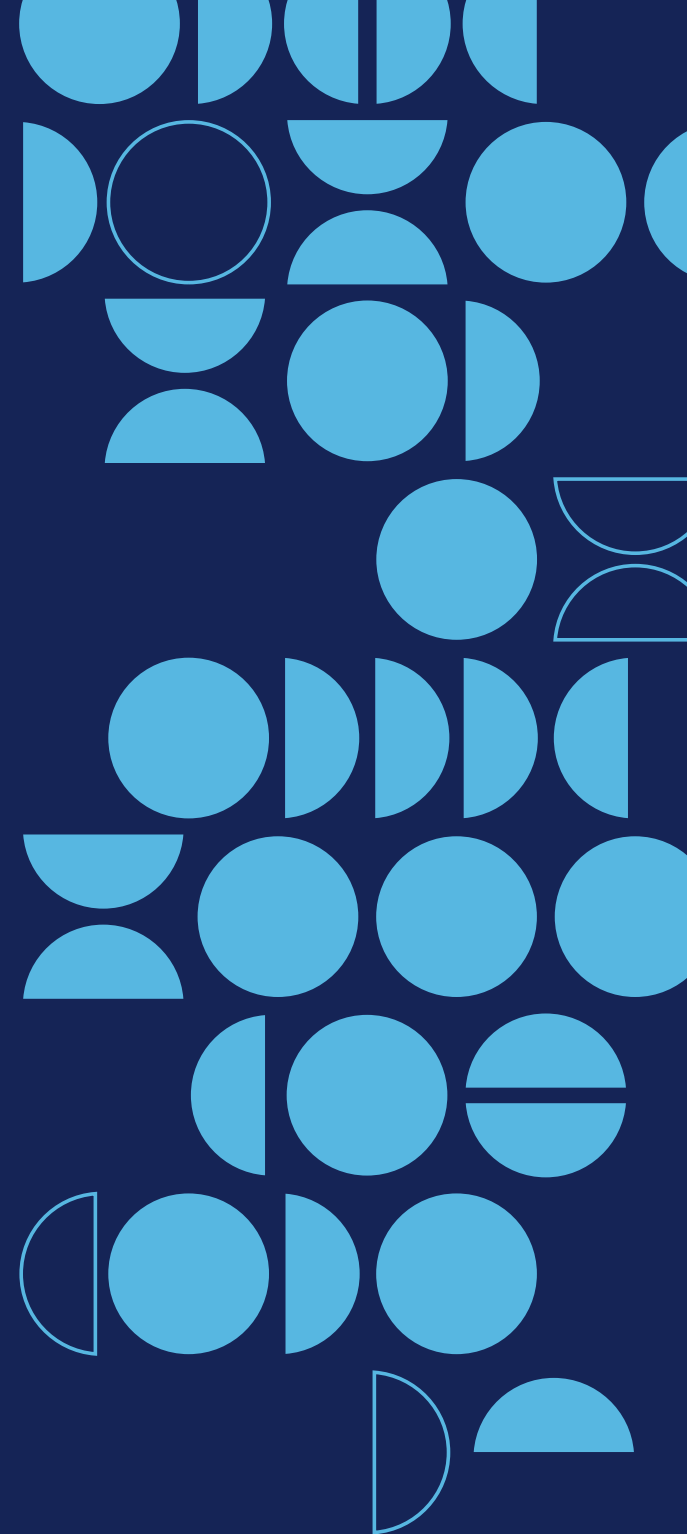


## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Northampton County's 2025 CHNA used both statistical and qualitative methods to assess health needs. Key stakeholders and community members raised major concerns about access to care—particularly due to cost, transportation and system navigation. Seniors struggle with housing costs, transportation and isolation. Latino residents face high poverty and educational disparities: 22% of Latino children live in poverty and only 83% graduate from high school, compared to 94% of non-Hispanic whites.

Housing was a dominant concern. Nearly 29% of households are cost-burdened, and even with vouchers, housing remains inaccessible. Teen birth and low birth weight rates are higher among Black and Hispanic populations. Chronic illnesses, including asthma, diabetes and obesity (27%), affect many. Suicides and coronary heart disease are leading causes of death among men. While services have expanded, gaps remain in behavioral health, housing and support for aging residents. Community voices highlighted a need for equitable investment across income levels and racial/ethnic groups.

Overall, the report underscores the urgency of improving social drivers of health, particularly among the growing Latino population and older residents. 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 prioritized areas of focus in our Community Health Implementation Plan, which will be released soon.





part of  Jefferson Health