



ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Community Health Assessment

HSMP Steering Committee

November 4, 2020

# Methods

Reviewed existing data sources (nation, state and local) to examine indicators:

- Demographics
- Social and Physical Environment
- Health Behaviors and Outcomes
- Health Care Access and Resources

Over 600 participants engaged through MSMH CHNA survey, key informant interviews, focus groups, and a joint town hall with MSMH:

- 506 survey responses
- 15 key informant interviews
- 16 focus groups
- 1 town hall

# Community Profile

- Population of St. Mary's County
  - "St. Mary's county has many diverse regions. Regional differences ranging from really rural areas to more suburban areas and light urban areas."
  - "I don't think calling St. Mary's rural is really appropriate anymore. I would call us a small agricultural county with an abundance of technology. We are a mix."
  - "Multi-layered. There's definitely a lot of history here and deeply embedded traditions and connections that contribute a lot to the depth of the county. There's a wealth of newness also. We have people coming and going quite a bit maybe associated with the base and other mechanisms. There's innovation that's brought here and a desire to be cutting edge and forward thinking. All those layers combined really contribute to the wealth of opportunity and the richness of culture we have."

# Community Profile

- “From an education perspective there’s diversity. We have people with very specialized technical and years of formal education and those who have been educated through experience and life and they all have valuable roles to play in our community and valuable lessons to teach others in our community.”
- “The students enrolled in SMCPS.  $\frac{1}{3}$  of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch status. At the same time we have substantial presence of families with a substantial income (7500-85000) you definitely have the haves and have nots in pretty close proximity to each other.”

# Community Profile

Data on:

- Population Demographics
- Unemployment, Income, and Poverty
- Educational Attainment
- Housing and Homelessness

# MSMH Survey

## What are the health problems that affect people in your community the most?

Addiction/Substance Use	321
Chronic Pain & Arthritis	128
Cancer	191
Aging/Older Adult Issues (Alzheimer's, Dementia, Falls)	119
Diabetes/High Blood Sugar	259
High Blood Pressure	189
Heart Disease & Stroke	138
HIV/AIDS	1
Infant Death	0
Maternal Health/Reproductive Health	45
Lung Disease/Asthma/COPD	66
Social Isolation/Loneliness	63
Violence	41
Overweight/Obesity	260
Sexually Transmitted Infections	12
Preventable Injuries	8
Smoking/Vaping/Tobacco use	95
Mental Health (Depression/Suicide/PTSD/Trauma)	275
Other	10

## What are the most important issues that affect quality of life in your community?

Limited Availability/Access to Doctor's office	205
Limited Availability/Access to Health Insurance	129
Lack of Affordable Child Care	150
Child Abuse/Neglect	38
Domestic Violence	66
Lack of Emergency Preparedness/Response	37
Housing Problems/Homelessness	154
Lack of immunizations	11
Lack of Job Opportunities	87
Limited/Low literacy	31
Limited Access to Healthy Food	64
Hunger & Food Insecurity	68
Limited Places to Exercise	60
Addiction & Substance Abuse	268
Limited Youth Services (after school services/programs)	138
Limited Pedestrian & Bike Safety	59
Neighborhood Safety/Community Violence	74
Poverty	69
Racial/Ethnic Discrimination	253
Limited Access to Transportation	148
Limited Access to Education	20
Other	22

# MSMH Survey

**Which of the following social justice issues affect your community the most?**

Lack of/Limited Access to Health Care	209
Racial Inequality	185
Addiction	322
Immigration	26
Lack of/Limited Children's Rights	10
Poverty	179
Lack of/Limited Disability Rights	56
Marriage and LGBTQIA Inequality	41
Food Insecurity	103
Police Misconduct	35
Lack of Civic Engagement	68
Housing Inequality	127
Homelessness	171
None of the above	49
Other	16

**What are the most common reasons people in your community do not get health care when they need it?**

Cost- Too expensive/Can't pay	378
Had to Wait Too Long for an Appointment	284
No Insurance	229
No Doctor in my Community	98
Finding a Doctor Who Accepts My Insurance	188
Lack of/Limited Transportation	176
Cultural/Religious Beliefs	8
Lack of/Limited Child Care	64
Fear or mistrust of doctors	102
Language Barrier	27
Getting a Referral and/or Appointment with a Specialist	151
Afraid of Losing Job if Time Taken off from Work	121
Worried or Uncomfortable Telling a Healthcare Provider about my Health Problem	57
Other	18

# What do you see as the major health related problems in our county?

mental health	32
addiction/substance abuse	30
access to care (insurance, transportation, overutilization of ED)	28
chronic diseases (cancer, heart disease/hypertension, asthma, diabetes)	24
tobacco/vaping	17
violence	11
healthy eating	9
housing/homelessness	8
environment	8
covid/infectious disease	8
equity and racial discrimination	6
obesity	5
trauma	4
injury	4

active living	3
domestic violence	3
aging population/memory care	2
mentoring	2
health literacy	2
behavioral health	2
access to healthy food	2
crime	1
ACEs	1
health disparities	1
poverty	1
food safety	1
emergency response services	1
social isolation	1

# What makes it harder for you or those you serve to be healthy?

access to healthy food/food inequity	19	habit/change is hard	3
mental health	16	tobacco	1
access to care (transportation, language barrier, after hours appointments, insurance)	16	poverty	1
time/prioritization	10	behavioral health treatment	1
built environment (water, sewer, infrastructure, walkability)	8	provider recruitment	1
healthy eating	7	care for native population	1
covid	6	staying inside	1
money	6	health literacy	1
substance use	4	social media	1
homelessness/housing	4	no modeling/mentoring of healthy behaviors	1
active living	3	access to physical activities	1
safety	3	state assistance	1
no motivation	2	obesity	1
cost of healthcare	2	chronic disease	1
crime	3	lack of preventive care	1
awareness of resources	2	information confusion	1

# Do members of your community experience barriers in accessing health care services? What are those barriers?

insurance	18
transportation	16
awareness of resources	10
access to providers (pcp, mh, bh, etc.)	10
trust	6
provider recruitment	5
specialists	5
money	4
language barrier	3
access for immigrants	3
appointment availability	3
no clinic for teens	3
copays	2
navigating the system	2

education	2
after hours appointments	2
outreach	1
time commitment	1
stigma	1
office hours	1
after hours pharmacy	1
not accepting new patients	1
quality of care	1
limited resources	1
bad experience	1
high copays	1
location of services	1

# Key Themes

- Behavioral Health
- Chronic Disease Prevention & Wellness
- Environmental Health
- Violence, Injury, and Trauma
- COVID-19/Infectious Disease
- Access to Care

# Behavioral Health

- Top Issues Identified
  - Mental Health
    - Adolescent mental health mentioned specifically several times
  - Addiction/Substance Use
  - Stigma
  - Crisis Intervention
- “I feel like marijuana is the biggest drug problem. You can smell it coming out of the woods around campus.”
- “Drugs and alcohol addiction and mental health are hand in hand. That’s what we [sheriff’s office] deal with predominantly all day long - people in crisis.”
- “We continue to emphasize the importance of behavioral health to our whole population (bh, mh, and substance use prevention/control). You can’t emphasize enough the importance of bh to overall health.”
- “Opioid and drug and alcohol abuse we still face significant challenges with.”

# Behavioral Health

- 33.6% of high school students felt sad or hopeless almost every day for  $\geq 2$  weeks in a row (41.6% of female respondents); 20.8% of high school students seriously considered attempting suicide
- 6,173.1 - Rate (per 100,000) of Emergency Department Visits Related to Mental Health Conditions
- 17.3% - Current marijuana use (past 30 days) by high school students
- Alcohol
  - 18% of adults report binge or heavy drinking
  - 30% of high school students report currently drink alcohol (past 30 days)
- 63.4% of MSMH survey respondents identified addiction/substance use and 54.3% identified mental health as health problems that affect our community the most

# Chronic Diseases & Risk Factors

- Top issues identified:
  - Diabetes
  - High Blood Pressure
  - Heart Disease
  - Cancer
  - Lung Disease/Asthma/COPD
  - Obesity
  - Healthy Eating
  - Smoking/Vaping
- “When you look at the top causes of death and what are the financial strains on our workforce and community - chronic diseases. We are super focused on healthy eating/active living and prevention and control of tobacco products including vaping.”

# Chronic Diseases & Risk Factors

- 11.9% of residents have been told by a doctor that they have diabetes
- 299.5 - Rate (per 100,000) of Emergency Department Visits Related to Diabetes
- 4.7% of residents have been told by a doctor that they have angina or coronary heart disease
- 36% of adults considered obese
  - 25.4% of adults not considered overweight or obese
- 14% of high school students considered obese
- 38.2% of high school students currently smoked cigarettes or cigars or used smokeless tobacco or electronic vapor products
- 17.4% of adults are current smokers

# Environmental Health

- Natural Environment
  - Water
  - Air Quality
- Built Environment
  - Walkability
  - Housing
  - Access to Healthy Food
- “I think continuing to look at environmental health. We’re a water community and a community with agriculture and innovation. Pay attention to impact or air quality and water quality - all kinds of eh impacts on chronic disease.”
- “Housing is another health issue. There isn’t affordable housing for young people, those in transition, or lower income workers. It’s hard to live here. Housing is security and shelter”

# Environmental Health

- 12% of households have at least 1 of 4 housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities.
- “The rurality has held us back. They hold back from connecting to water/sewer/infrastructure improvements that limit health. People will have a great neighborhood but no sidewalks.”
- “Do not want to bike on the side of the road down here. We need more sidewalks and safe places to exercise.”
- 9.0 - Average daily density of fine particulate matter in micrograms per cubic meter
- “It’s hard for people to be healthy when there isn’t a grocery store in walking distance. If you shop at a 7-11 then you’re going to get unhealthy food or you’re going to get fast food.”

# Violence, Injury, and Trauma

- Top Issues Identified:
  - Injury (Intentional and Unintentional)
    - Suicide
  - Violence
    - Domestic violence
  - Trauma/ACEs
- “Violence and the trauma associated with violence. We’re just starting to understand ACEs and how that affects kids future behaviors and what they do and don't do.”

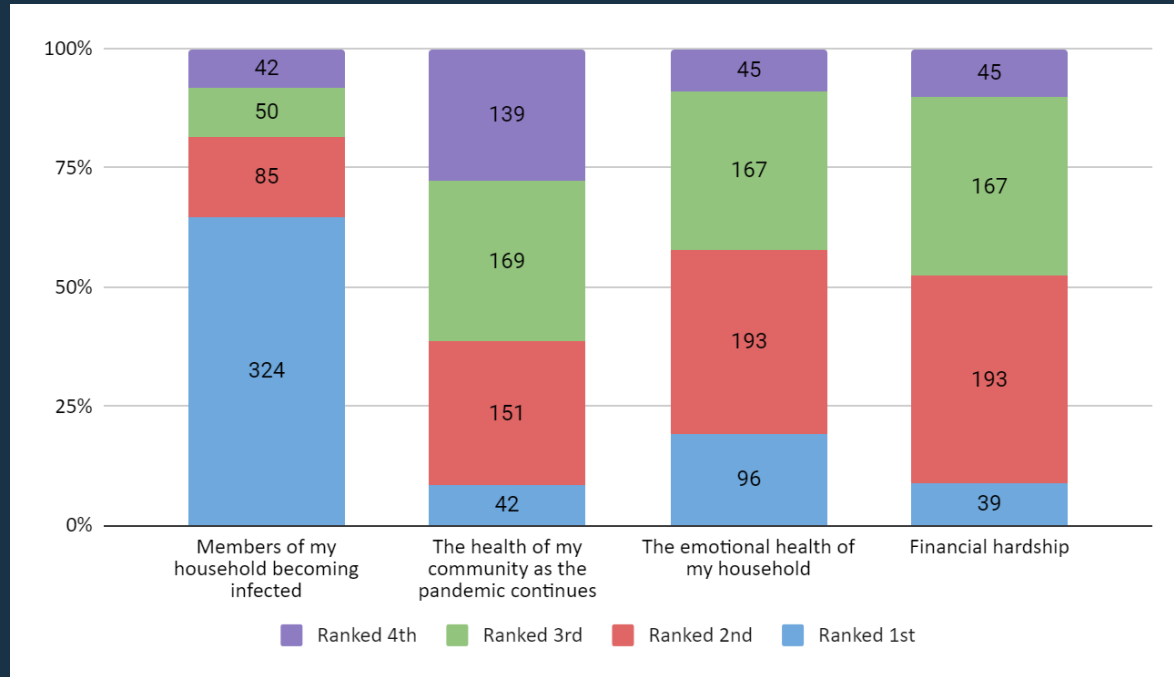
# Violence, Injury, and Trauma

- 221 - Number of reported violent crime offenses per 100,000 population
- 16.4% of high school students made a plan about how they would attempt suicide
- “I think as a community we have not adequately recognized violence, injury, and trauma. Those all together play a role in the health of our community. It affects so many other areas of wellbeing.”
- 768.6 - rate of domestic violence crimes

# COVID-19/Infectious Disease

- Key concerns identified:
  - COVID
    - Prevention
      - Masks
      - Consistent Messaging
      - Social Distancing
    - Schools
    - Isolation/Mental Health
    - Economic Impacts
    - Vaccine Distribution
  - Preparedness for future infectious disease outbreaks
- “Immediately covid is the major health concern.”

# When it comes to COVID-19 what are you most concerned about right now? (ranked)



# Access to Care

- Top Issues Identified:
  - Equity (racial/ethnic discrimination, language barriers, socio-economic disparities)
  - Transportation
  - Health Education/Literacy
  - Insurance
  - Having to Wait too Long for an Appointment
  - Cost
  - Access to Providers
    - Specialists
    - PCPs not taking new patients
    - Appointments outside of regular working hours

# Access to Care

- Insurance
  - 5.8% of population uninsured
  - Employer Based (60.4)
  - Medicare (15.8)
  - Medicaid (21.1)
- Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designation
  - Mental Health (countywide)
  - Primary Care (South St. Mary's)
- 4.6% of households have no vehicle, 24.6% have 1 vehicle available
- 74.7% of MSMH survey respondents identified the cost of healthcare as a most common reason people in St. Mary's do not get health care when they need it
- "It's so easy to just give up when you're trying to find medical care and you're calling office after office and they're saying they can't see you because they don't have the appointments available. I wonder how many people here get sicker than they need to be because they don't have access to appointments they need when they need them."
- "Transportation. We've improved, but we certainly haven't solved that."

# Recommendations

## Health Priorities:

- Behavioral Health
- Environmental Health
- Chronic Disease Prevention & Wellness
- Violence, Injury, and Trauma

## Other Items to Consider

- Access to Care
  - Can this be incorporated into each action team?
- COVID/Infectious Disease

# Timeline

- Report published for Public Comment Period: December 4th
  - Public Comment Period will last 2 weeks
- Final Report Published: Before Christmas
- [2021 Community Health Improvement Plan Timeline](#)