

# 2022 COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PERRY COUNTY, MISSOURI

*This executive summary is to serve as a quick reference of key indicators by data section and abbreviated additional sections only. It is not meant to be a replacement of the full Community Health Needs Assessment, a document that should be read in its entirety in order to conceptualize the full context behind all key takeaways listed in this brief.*

## INTRODUCTION

With a goal to improve the health of those living within Perry County, MO, the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment contains data from a variety of sources to identify key areas as either health-related strengths or gaps that need to be established as priorities moving forward within the community. The information contained in this Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) will be utilized by Perry County Health System and Perry County Health Department as a resource for planning service delivery, establishing new programs, and appropriating funds to meet community needs.

In 2021, Perry County Health System (PCHS) and Perry County Health Department (PCHD) decided a collaborative approach in the creation of the Community Health Needs Assessment for Perry County would best serve the community. By doing this, we are able to align our efforts, eliminate duplication, and address the community's needs with a unified, stronger strategy. All of this will bring a larger benefit to the community as we work together on addressing the top health needs for Perry County.

## METHODS

Perry County Health System (PCHS) and Perry County Health Department (PCHD) have collaborated with community partners and county residents to complete the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment. These efforts included focus groups with community partner organizations as well as surveys of residents, local physicians, and community partners. The procedure taken by Perry County Health System and Perry County Health Department in completing a meaningful community health needs assessment are discussed below. In addition to the above methods, data was collected and analyzed from a variety of sources to examine and compare rates and occurrences among populations at the Local, State, Regional, and National levels. After all data was collected, a review took place to identify and prioritize the top needs of the community.

The information contained in this Community Health Needs Assessment will be utilized by the Perry County Health Department as a resource for identifying and planning service delivery and program planning in addition to the creation of a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). In response to the results of this assessment, PCHS also created an implementation strategy plan to respond to the needs identified.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

- Perry County's population is stagnant compared to the State or Nation overall.
- Perry County's demographic breakdown by age and sex is very comparable to Missouri, with the largest population groups being 15-44 and 45-64 year olds.
- Perry County is not very racially or ethnically diverse, with only 2.5% of the population self-reporting as Hispanic or Latino and 2.7% of the population not belonging to a Caucasian demographic.
- Residents of Perry County are more likely to be married as compared to residents of Missouri or the U.S.
- The rate of individuals with disabilities in Perry County is similar to Missouri, but higher than the National rate.

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Perry County's population has a higher proportion of individuals with only a high school education as compared to Missouri and the U.S.
- Among those without a high school diploma or equivalent, females represent a larger proportion than males and blacks represented a larger portion than any other race.
- Residents of Perry County have consistently lower graduation rates than that of Missouri, with a gap that has increased in recent years.
- Perry County has a very low proportion of individuals with limited English proficiency.

## SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

- Perry County's unemployment rates have been relatively constant and below the State and National rates for the last 10 years.
- The median household income for Perry County is consistent with that of the State average.
- Perry County has a lower percentage of residents living under the Federal Poverty Level. Of those living under the Federal Poverty Level, African Americans represent a larger proportion in Perry County than they do at the State level.
- Depending on the size of a household, Perry County's average hourly wage could leave individuals below the Living Wage and the Fair Market Rent.
- Children enrolled in Free/Reduced Priced Lunch is similar in Perry County to the State.
- A lower proportion of individuals are enrolled in SNAP in Perry County as compared to the State and country.
- A slightly larger proportion of children are participating in the WIC program as compared to the State.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RISK FACTORS

- Perry County's outdoor air quality is historically worse than the rest of Missouri or the U.S. average, but is on the downward trend similar to the State and Nation overall.
- The average indoor radon concentration for homes in Perry County is almost 2.8 times higher than the National average. In addition, 20% of homes have detectable radon levels above what is recommended by the EPA.
- Perry County has lower rates of both housing units and renter-occupied units built prior to 1980, which typically have a higher risk for lead exposure, than Missouri.
- Perry County has lower rates of elevated blood lead levels in children 0-5 years of age compared to the State.
- Perry County's Food Index Environment score, a measure of access to healthy foods, is above that of the rest of Missouri.
- Perry County residents reported in a recent survey that they have access to reliable and safe means of exercise.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Perry County, similar to the State, has seen an increasing trend in violent crime since 2019, with the exception of robbery. Aggravated assault had the largest rate increase in Perry County with 2021 rates being seven times that of 2018.
- Perry County, generally, has property crime rates comparable to, or below, the State, with the exception of burglary and theft in 2019.
- Rates of theft have decreased in Perry County since 2019, while it has drastically increased across the State.
- County rates of juvenile crime between 2016 and 2020 showed a downward trend that was consistently lower than the State.
- Compared to the State, Perry County had a higher rate of incidents and victims of domestic violence in 2021.
- Victims of substantiated claims of child abuse/neglect have increased in recent years and rates remain higher in Perry County compared to the rest of Missouri.

## ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND SUBSTANCE USE

- The percentage of Perry County residents who reported either binge drinking or heavy drinking in the past 30 days is the same as the percentage of Missouri residents (19%).
- The prevalence rate for current smokers in Perry County (23%) is higher than Missouri (20%), but lower than the BRFSS Southeast Regional average (26%).
- In 2018, a survey of students in Grades 6-12 showed rates of substance use for Perry County youth was higher than the State for alcohol, e-cigarettes, marijuana, cigarettes or chew, and hookah use.

Perry County youth use rates were lower than the State for prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, inhalants, and synthetic drugs.

- The number of drug incidents in Perry County has increased over the past two years and is now higher than the State (8.48 incidents per 1,000 Perry County residents as compared to 5.69 incidents per 1,000 Missouri residents).

## **INJURY**

- Perry County's injury rates are higher than that of Missouri.
- The highest rate of injury is in the 15-24 year age group. When considering the 1-15 year age group, the 1-4 year olds have the highest rates overall.
- The largest percentage of injuries are attributed to falls, with those in the 65 and over age group being particularly vulnerable.

## **MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH INDICATORS**

- The rate of inadequate prenatal care is lower for Perry County than for the State. Perry County had a higher rate of women who initiated prenatal care within the first trimester compared to the State.
- Perry County has higher rates of smoking during pregnancy (15.84%) compared to the State (11.94%).
- Rate of preterm births in Perry County went from being below the State rate in 2017 to above the State rate in 2020. 2020 rates of preterm births were 12.38 per 100 live births for Perry County compared to the 10.98 per 100 live births for the State.
- The percentage of live births with low birth weight in Perry County is less than the State. Additionally, the percentage of live births within the county with low birth weights decreased from 7.14% in 2015-2016 to 5.54% in 2019-2020.
- Within the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, the rate of mothers in Perry County who never breastfed their infants was comparable to that of the Southeast Missouri Region, but was higher than the State.
- The Teen birth rates for Perry County rose from 2016 to 2019, while the State's decreased.
- Perry County has a lower rate of obesity pre-pregnancy, among WIC clients, as compared to the Southeast Missouri Region and the State.
- Perry County has higher rates of obesity in WIC child participants and lower rates of daily fruit and vegetable consumption as compared to the Region and the State. Perry County also has lower rates of physical activity (28.18) compared to the State (34.79) within the WIC child population.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

- The average number of poor mental health days reported by Perry County residents (5.0 days) was comparable to the number reported by Missouri residents (4.9 days).

- The largest age group served by a local mental health service provider are 12 to 17 year olds. The next two largest age groups served are those under 12 and those between 25 and 34 years of age.
- In a 2018 survey, a larger proportion of Perry County students in grades 6 through 12 have seriously considered suicide (19.2%) as compared to students of Missouri (14.1%). This survey also shows an increased percentage of students in the County who attempted suicide compared to students across the State.

## ORAL HEALTH

- In Perry County, 23.2% of Medicaid eligible children and teens aged 1-20 years old received preventive dental services.
- Only 4.7% of Medicaid eligible pregnant women in Perry County received preventive dental services.
- Within Perry County, 29.2% of adults over the age of 65 have had all of their permanent teeth extracted due to decay or disease. This number is only 13.4% across the US.

## INFECTIOUS, COMMUNICABLE, AND VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

- Perry County does not have high case counts for communicable diseases designated as notifiable by the CDC.
- Influenza rates are historically higher in Perry County compared to the State, although it is unknown if this increase is due to a decrease in vaccination within the community or other factors.
- Perry County has low rates of sexually transmitted diseases compared to the State.
- Perry County WIC participants have higher rates of children who are up-to-date on vaccinations compared to the rest of WIC participants in Missouri.

## CHRONIC DISEASE

- Perry County residents (20%) reported their health was fair or poor. This is larger than the State.
- 33% of County residents report no leisure time physical activity. The number of residents, 20 years of age and older, who are physically inactive has increased since 2017.
- Perry County has consistently higher percentages of residents who are considered obese (BMI > 30.0), compared to Missouri and the United States.
- The percent of adults with heart disease is greater in Perry County than the State or Nation.
- The percentage of adults with asthma or diabetes is lower in Perry County than the State.
- Perry County has a higher incidence of cancer than the State, with digestive system, respiratory system, and breast cancers making up almost 44% of the cancer burden seen within the county.

## LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

- Overall life expectancy at birth for a person in Perry County was 78.8 years in 2019. This is very similar to the State's average life expectancy of 77.4.
- Of Perry County's top 8 causes of death, Perry County had higher rates of death caused by heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, Alzheimer's, stroke, and kidney disease.
- Although Perry County had a slightly lower rate of death from cancer than the State in 2019, there are some types of cancer in which the County had higher rates than the State, such as colon cancer.
- The County consistently maintained a lower infant mortality rate than the State during all data periods examined (2006-2019). Perry County also had a lower infant mortality rate compared to the majority of counties in Southeast Missouri in 2019.

## HEALTH SYSTEM INDICATORS

- Perry County's population to provider ratio for primary care, mental health, and dental is higher than the state resulting in less providers compared to the population. Of these ratios, mental health has the biggest ratio gap, being 2.8 times higher than the State's. This is followed by primary care physicians (1.5 times higher) and dental providers (1.3 times higher). A recent community survey reinforced this gap with resident's reporting they did not have a mental health provider they could utilize while alternatively reporting they felt they had a primary care provider and dental health provider they could utilize.
- Although more Perry County households have a motor vehicle to access employment, health care, healthy food options, and physical activity opportunities compared to the State or the U.S. overall, local surveys show there may still be a need for more local transportation services.
- One of the primary obstacles of residents to telehealth services is internet connectivity, with large areas of the county classified as unserved areas for broadband by the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

## PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS

To identify top health priorities of Perry County residents, significant findings were reviewed from three major sources – community surveys and focus groups, evidence-based data tools with built in prioritization of community issues and areas of focus, and data collection from various evidence-based sources. Surveys and focus groups containing the perceived needs and priorities of local residents, physicians, and community partners were used to supplement, support, and reinforce potential priorities that were found through epidemiological and statistical methods.

## TOP PRIORITIES

**MENTAL HEALTH  
HEART DISEASE  
TOBACCO/SUBSTANCE USE**

### OTHER KEY ISSUES THAT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE AREAS OF FOCUS:

- Obesity
- High School graduation rates
- Access to affordable housing
- Environmental factors such as outdoor air quality and radon levels
- Increases in crime, particularly aggravated assault and child abuse and neglect
- Colon cancer
- Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia care

## ACCESS THE FULL COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The full Community Health Needs Assessment will be available at [pchmo.org](http://pchmo.org) in August.