

# COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT



**AHN FORBES**

**Report**

2021





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# Mission

To create a remarkable health experience, freeing people to be their best.

# Vision

A world where everyone embraces health.

# Values

## *People matter*

Every person contributes to our success. We strive for an inclusive culture, regarding people as professionals, and respecting individual differences while focusing on the collective whole.

## *Stewardship*

Working to improve the health of the communities we serve and wisely managing the assets that have been entrusted to our care.

## *Trust*

Earning trust by delivering on our commitments and leading by example.

## *Integrity*

Committing to the highest standards encompassing every aspect of our behavior including high moral character, respect, honesty, and personal responsibility.

## *Customer-focused collaboration*

Because no one person has all the answers, we actively seek to collaborate with each other to achieve the right outcomes for our customers.

## *Courage*

Empowering each other to act in a principled manner and to take appropriate risks to do what is right to fulfill our mission.

## *Innovation*

Committing to continuous learning and exploring new, better, and creative ways to achieve our vision.

## *Excellence*

Being accountable for consistently exceeding the expectations of those we serve.



# Introduction

## *About Allegheny Health Network (AHN)*

The hospitals of Allegheny Health Network, as they have for decades, provide exceptional health care to help people live healthy lives and continue to extend their reach, offering a broad spectrum of care and services.

The tradition continues by using the latest medical innovations to treat patients. Gaining knowledge through research to constantly improve how to prevent, diagnose, and treat illness, AHN staffs each hospital with experienced, expert, and compassionate physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals dedicated to medicine, people, and healing.

AHN is committed to giving patients the proper care, at the right place, at the right time. Physicians from various specialties work as a team to coordinate patients' care from start to finish. AHN explores every possible option for treatment. AHN has established medical facilities in communities throughout the region, so patients have convenient access to care. Also, AHN works around patients' schedules to help maintain their quality of life while receiving treatment and therapy.

AHN can extend its reach to more people as a health network by offering a broad spectrum of care and services. AHN has 14 hospitals and more than 200 primary- and specialty-care practices. AHN has approximately 2,400 physicians in every clinical specialty, 21,000 providers, and 2,000 volunteers. AHN provides world-class medicine to patients in their communities, across the country, and around the world.

AHN's physicians continually explore and develop new treatments that allow us to bring medical discoveries from the laboratory directly to patients. These breakthroughs help save lives and give patients access to the latest treatments for disease and medical conditions. Allegheny Health Network is also committed to educating and training the next generation of doctors by serving as the clinical campus for both Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University and Drexel University College of Medicine.

Allegheny Health Network is an integrated health care system that serves patients from across a four-state region that includes Pennsylvania and portions of New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. AHN has more than 80 medical, surgical, and radiation oncology physician practices; one of the state's most extensive bone marrow transplant and cellular therapy programs; and the nation's largest – and western Pennsylvania's only – radiation oncology network accredited by both the American Society for Radiation Oncology and American College of Radiology. Allegheny Health Network's cancer program has more than 200 clinical trials offered throughout its network of hospitals and clinics.

AHN has received accolades from numerous organizations, including Thomson Reuters, AARP, Healthgrades, and Consumer Reports. These accolades recognize AHN's dedication to excellence and strengthen its ability to tackle diseases so we may find a cure for tomorrow.



## About AHN Forbes

Since 1978, Forbes Hospital has been providing quality care for the communities of eastern Allegheny and Westmoreland counties. As the area has grown, so has Forbes. A 349-bed facility with 15,000 inpatient admissions, 12,000 surgeries, and nearly 50,000 emergency department visits annually, we bring an advanced level of care to all patients.

Forbes Hospital is the only full-service hospital in the eastern Pittsburgh suburbs, providing comprehensive services and specialists so patients can get the care they need right in their own community. We are a national leader in cancer, cardiovascular, neuroscience, transplant surgery, and orthopedic care.

AHN Forbes believes that patients experience the best possible care when they are able to have all of their needs met in one place – in their own communities. The hospital provides a complete array of surgical, medical, rehabilitative, and emergency care. In addition, Forbes Hospital offers a complete spectrum of specialty services such as cardiology, orthopedics, neurosurgery, oncology, stroke care, endocrinology, behavioral health, and obstetrics.

Forbes Hospital has provided exceptional health care services to Monroeville and the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh for more than 40 years. We are committed to excellence, innovation, and personalized care.

For more information about AHN Forbes, please click [here](#).



## AHN Forbes Recognition:

### Award-Winning Medical Care

- American Heart and American Stroke Association's Gold Plus status for both "Get with The Guidelines<sup>®</sup>" heart failure and stroke programs.
- CORE (Center for Organ Recovery & Education) Donate Life Platinum Award.
- The Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit won a three-year, bronze-level Beacon Award for Excellence by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.
- Blue Distinction Center+ designation for efficiency in delivering high-quality care and better overall outcomes for cardiac care and knee and hip replacement.
- Forbes Hospital is rated among the Top 10% of hospitals in the Nation for Patient Safety in Neurological Care.
- Forbes Hospital receives Leapfrog Spring 2020 "A" grade in patient safety.





# Frequently Asked Questions

## ***WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CHNA)?***

A community health needs assessment is an effective method of identifying the unmet health care needs of a population and making changes to meet these needs.

## ***WHY WAS A CHNA PERFORMED?***

Through comprehensive data and analysis, community health needs assessments identify key health needs and issues locally. Not-for-profit hospitals or charitable-status organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code are required to provide benefits to the community that they serve.

Not-for-profit hospitals must conduct a CHNA and adopt an implementation strategy at least once every three years to meet the identified community health needs. CHNAs identify areas of concern within the community related to the current health status of the region. The identification of the region's health needs provides AHN Forbes and its community organizations with a framework to improve the health of its residents.

## ***HOW WAS DATA FOR THE CHNA REPORT COLLECTED?***

A working group was formed in summer 2021 to complete the CHNA and its initiatives. The information collected is a snapshot of the health of residents in the service area of AHN Forbes, encompassing socioeconomic information, health statistics, demographics, and mental health issues, etc. The group worked passionately and tirelessly to be the voice of the residents served.





# Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Requirements

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), which went into effect on March 23, 2010, requires tax-exempt hospitals to conduct community health needs assessments (CHNA) and implementation strategy plans to improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the communities served by the hospitals. These strategies created by hospitals and institutions consist of programs, activities, and plans specifically targeted toward community populations. The execution of the implementation strategy plan is designed to increase and track the impact of each hospital's efforts.

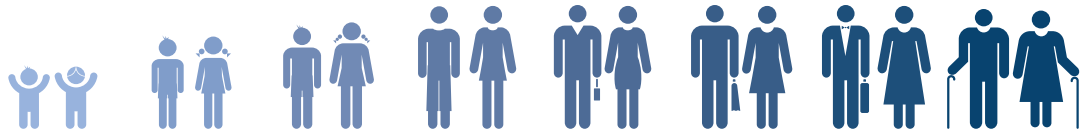
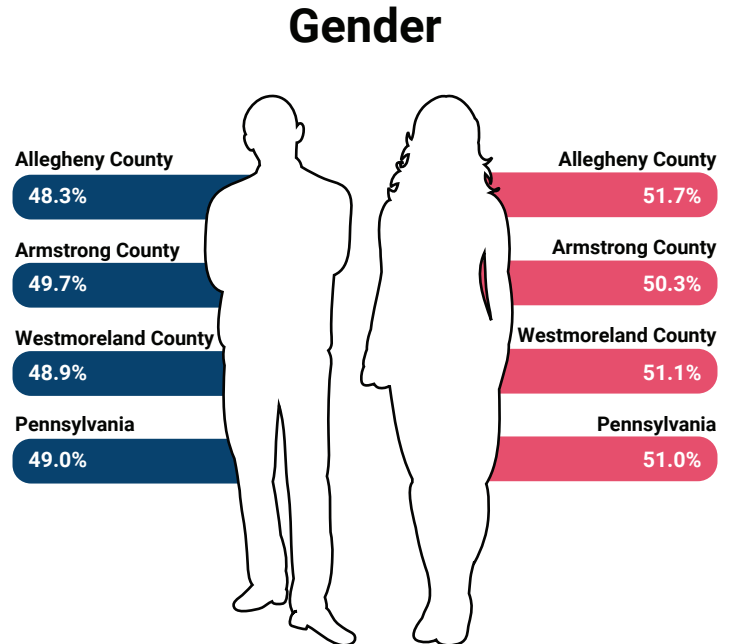
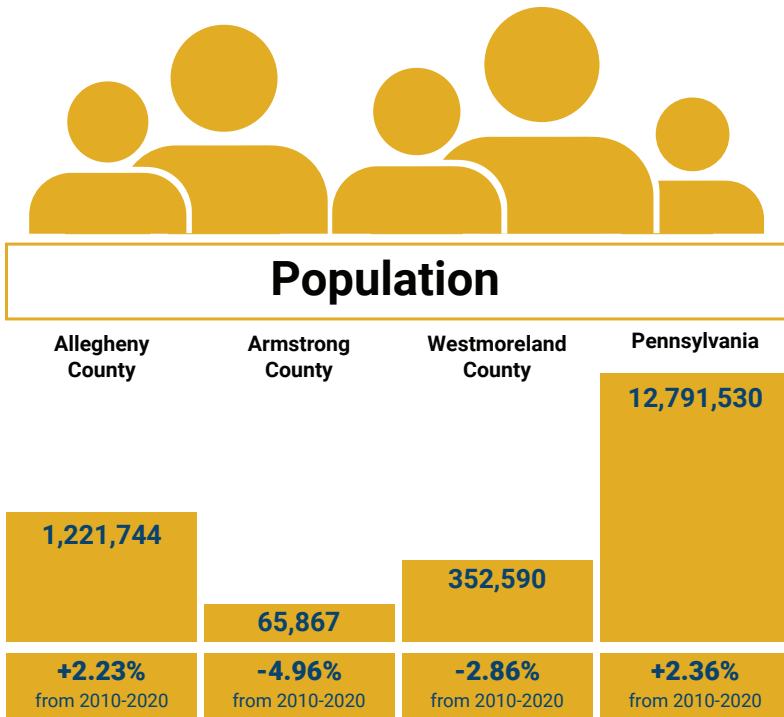
The requirements imposed by the IRS for tax-exempt hospitals and health systems must include the following:

- Conduct a CHNA every three years.
- Adopt an implementation strategy to meet the community health needs identified through the assessment.
- Report how the strategy addresses the needs identified in the CHNA and a description of needs that are not being addressed with the reasons why.

The Department of the Treasury and the IRS require a CHNA to include:

1. A separate written report for each hospital (state license designation).
2. Description of the community served by the hospital and how that community is defined.
3. Description of the process and methods used to conduct the CHNA.
4. Information gaps that may impact the ability to assess needs.
5. Identification of any collaborating partners.
6. Identification and qualifications of any third parties assisting with CHNA.
7. Description of how input from the community was used.
8. Prioritized description of all community health needs identified through the CHNA.
9. Description of existing health care facilities within the community available to meet the needs identified.
10. A description of the needs identified that the hospital intends to address, the reasons those needs were selected, and how the hospital will address the selected needs.

## Community Profile



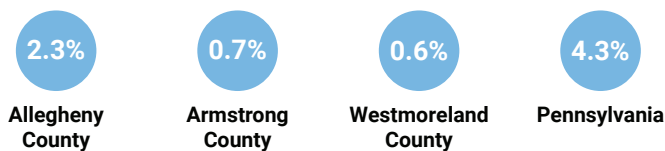
Age	0-4	5-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Median
Allegheny County	5.3%	13.6%	8.9%	15.3%	11.6%	12.4%	14.5%	18.5%	40.8
Armstrong County	4.9%	14.4%	7.0%	10.6%	11.1%	14.1%	16.3%	21.6%	46.6
Westmoreland County	4.5%	13.9%	7.7%	10.5%	10.9%	14.1%	16.3%	22.1%	47.0
Pennsylvania	5.5%	15.3%	9.2%	13.1%	11.7%	13.2%	14.1%	17.8%	40.8



### Limited English Proficiency

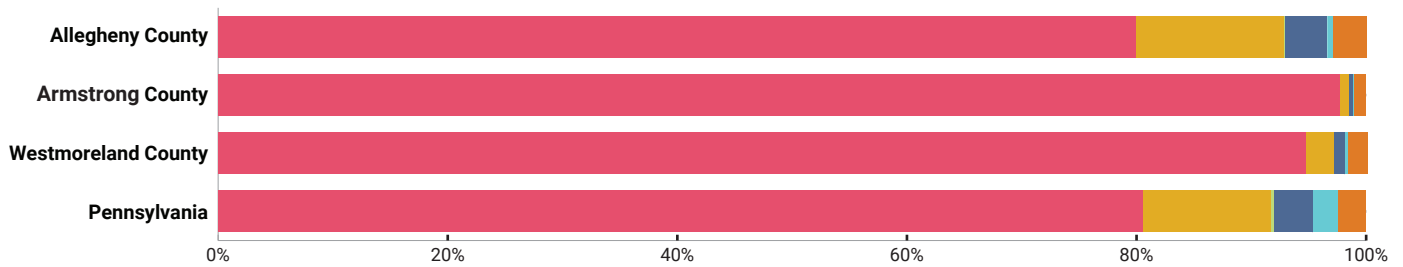


### Uninsured Population





## Race



	White	Black	Native American or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Multiple Race
Allegheny County	79.9%	12.9%	0.1%	3.7%	0.0%	0.5%	2.9%
Armstrong County	97.7%	0.8%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	1.1%
Westmoreland County	94.7%	2.4%	0.1%	0.9%	0.0%	0.3%	1.7%
Pennsylvania	80.5%	11.2%	0.2%	3.4%	0.0%	2.2%	2.5%

## Education

### Allegheny County



### Armstrong County



### Westmoreland County



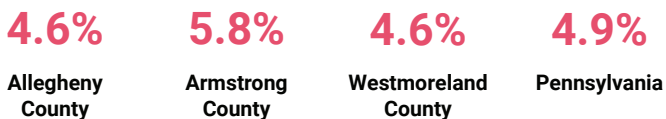
### Pennsylvania



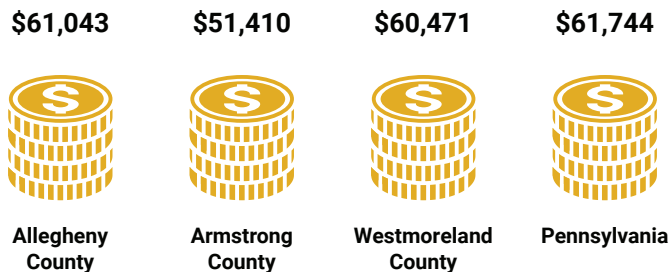
■ No High School Diploma  
 ■ High School  
 ■ Some College  
 ■ Associates  
 ■ Bachelors  
 ■ Graduate or Professional Degree



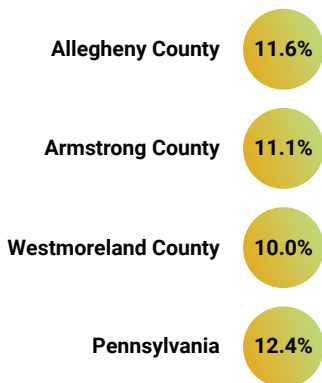
### Unemployment Rate



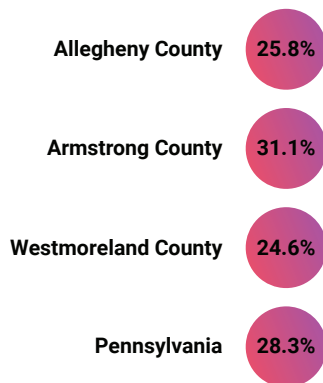
### Median Household Income



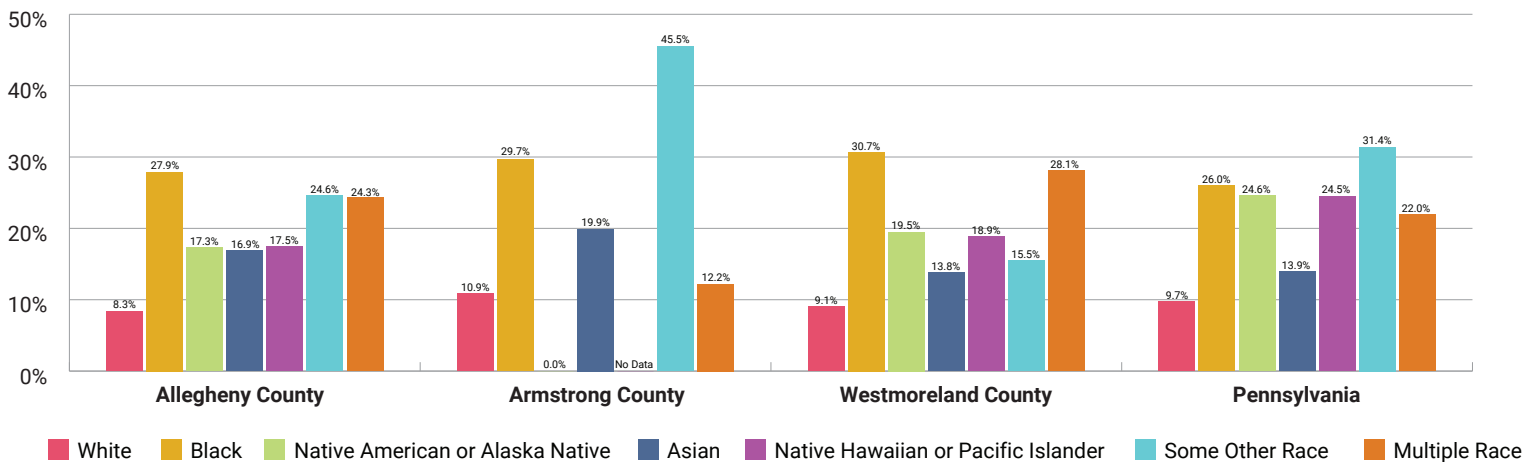
### Population Below 100% FPL



### Population Below 200% FPL



### Population in Poverty by Race Alone





# Executive Summary

## *Project Overview*

Allegheny Health Network (AHN) executed a CHNA process that included collecting primary and secondary data. A formation of a working group consisting of members from AHN's Community Affairs oversaw the CHNA along with the project consultant, Tripp Umbach.<sup>1</sup> Representatives from each AHN hospital facility and representatives from departments within AHN formed a steering committee that provided high-level feedback and input on primary and secondary data collected. Organizations and community stakeholders within the primary service area were engaged in identifying the needs of the community. Community organizations, government agencies, educational systems, and health and human services entities were engaged throughout the CHNA. The comprehensive primary data collection phase resulted in contributions from a multitude of regional community stakeholders from organizations.

Input from the community was sought through a customized multi-language community survey, stakeholder interviews, and a provider survey. Community input was aligned with secondary data and presented to the CHNA Steering Committee as a framework for assessing current community needs, identifying new/emerging health issues, and advancing health improvement efforts to address identified needs.

Although the multi-language community survey was broadly deployed, the non-English responses were relatively low. However, many of the community agencies that provide health and human services to those specific populations and have knowledge of their health needs participated in the survey process.

The CHNA primary data collection consisted of several components. In total, 59 community stakeholder interviews were conducted with individuals who represented a) broad interests of the community, b) populations of need, or c) persons with specialized knowledge in public health. Feedback from 2,201 online surveys was collected from AHN providers and 866 surveys from the community.

An internal planning meeting was held with the AHN Steering Committee to discuss and finalize the CHNA needs for 2021 based on primary and secondary data results. AHN Forbes recognized its needs from the previous assessment and will build upon those issues. Based on collective information from the previous implementation strategy plan along with the needs identified in the current cycle, AHN Forbes will reinforce and create new strategies to bridge the gap and address the needs of the underserved in their service area.



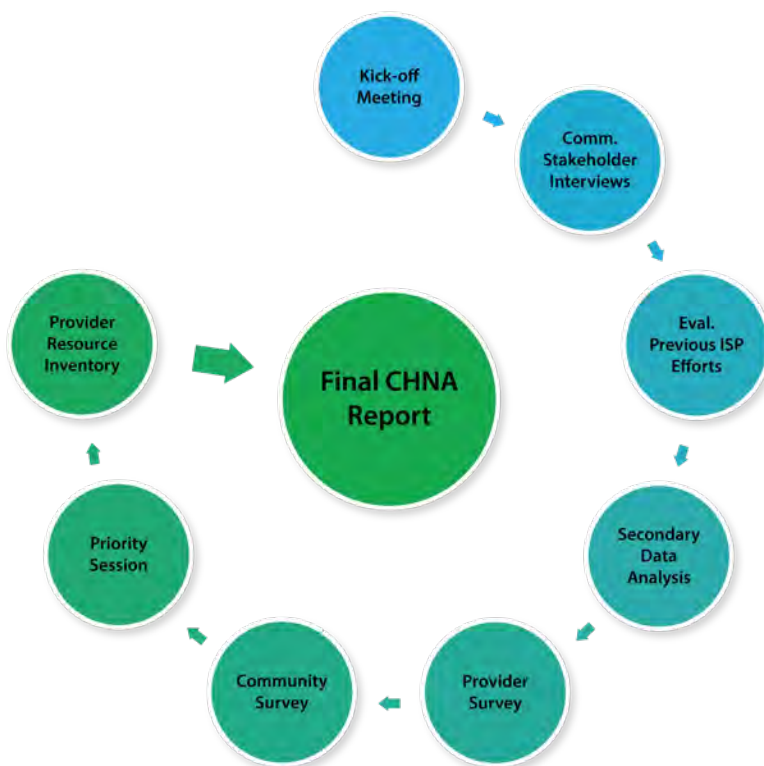
A resource inventory was generated to highlight available programs, services, organizations, and agencies within each of the priority needs in the service area. A significant component of the CHNA was compiling a regional profile (secondary data analysis). The regional profile was composed utilizing local, state, and federal figures providing valuable information on a wide array of health, clinical, and social issues. Tripp Umbach, along with the working group and steering group, examined and discussed different socioeconomic aspects, health outcomes, and health factors that affect residents' behaviors, specifically the influential factors that impact the health of residents.

The CHNA determined the health status of the community with direct initiatives and planning strategies. Without a doubt, the CHNA connected new partners and solidified relationships with local and regional agencies with the overall goal to improve the health outcomes of residents in the region.

AHN Forbes is dedicated to providing exceptional care to residents in its communities. AHN Forbes offers a full spectrum of comprehensive health services, programs, and resources to support the community served and to meet/advance identified community health needs. AHN Forbes' patient-centered approach to care means a greater focus on coordinated health and wellness services and being accountable and responsive to patients.

The overall CHNA involved multiple steps that are depicted in the flow chart below. The first step of the process included a kick-off meeting. The meeting allowed the group to discuss visions and strategies and create a shared vision for the CHNA. The session delineated the scope of the project and mechanisms for sharing resources and skills necessary to achieve AHN Forbes' goals and objectives to improve the health of the community.

Figure 1: Overall CHNA Process Flow Chart<sup>2</sup>





# 2021 Allegheny Health Network Prioritized Findings

## *AHN Forbes*

The CHNA results, upon review of extensive primary and secondary research, input from community members and stakeholders, and an evaluation of identified key regional priorities, illustrate the continued need for focuses on Social Determinants of Health (SDOH),<sup>3</sup> Behavioral Health, Chronic Disease, and Health Equity. Each key need area had subareas of concentration.

The prioritized needs were selected through the efforts of the CHNA Steering Committee and identified during the previous CHNA cycle. Opportunities to advance those efforts and make a more significant impact are evident. Specific strategies for addressing the needs will be delineated in the implementation strategy plan.





The chart below illustrates the 2021 current CHNA needs of each Allegheny Health Network hospital facility, particularly for AHN Forbes. The 2021 needs were based on data collected for the assessment and included how AHN Forbes will build upon its past and current areas of concern.

Table 1: 2021 Prioritized Needs

2021 Prioritized Findings														
Allegheny Health Network (AHN)	Social Determinants of Health				Behavioral Health			Chronic Disease				Health Equity		
	Transportation	Workforce Development	Cost of Care	Access to care*	Food Insecurity, Diet, and Nutrition	Substance Use Disorder	Mental Health Services	Postpartum Depression	Diabetes	Heart Disease	Cancer	COPD	Obesity	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
Allegheny General Hospital	X	X			X	X			X	X	X			X
Allegheny Valley Hospital	X					X	X		X	X				X
Canonsburg Hospital	X			X		X			X	X				X
<b>Forbes Hospital</b>	X					X	X		X	X		X		X
Grove City Medical Center				X			X		X	X			X	X
Jefferson Hospital	X	X	X		X	X					X		X	X
Saint Vincent Hospital	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
West Penn Hospital		X			X			X	X		X		X	X
Westfield Memorial Hospital						X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Wexford Hospital					X	X	X	X		X				X
Brentwood Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										
Harmar Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										
Hempfield Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										
McCandless Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										

\* Access to care includes primary care, specialty care, and access to general services.

\*\*Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion includes LGBTQ+ and cultural competency.



## A) Social Determinants of Health

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) defines social determinants of health as the economic and social conditions that influence individual and group differences in health status. These economic and social conditions under which people and groups live may increase or decrease the risk of health conditions or diseases among individuals and populations.

Social and economic factors contribute 40% to our health, health behaviors 30%, genetics 10%, the physical environment 10% and clinical care 10%, according to the Center for Health and Learning (CHL), an outgrowth of an initiative by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Adolescent and School Health. According to the CDC, poverty limits access to healthy foods and safe neighborhoods, while higher educational attainment is a predictor of better health. Differences in health and health outcomes are striking in communities with poor social determinants of health such as unstable housing, low-income levels, unsafe neighborhoods, or substandard education. Addressing SDOH is paramount to creating a healthier community.

Various domains categorize SDOH; Figure 2 displays five domains as categorized by Healthy People 2030. Data links determinants and domains to health status, such as the correlation of one's ZIP code resulting in drastically different health statuses for patients with the same/similar health conditions. SDOH domains are also contributors to health disparities and inequities across the nation. The literature stresses the need for multi-sector organizations to collaborate to address social determinants and make positive impacts on overall patient health. In addition, targeting specific populations with specialized interventions is imperative to providing equitable health care.

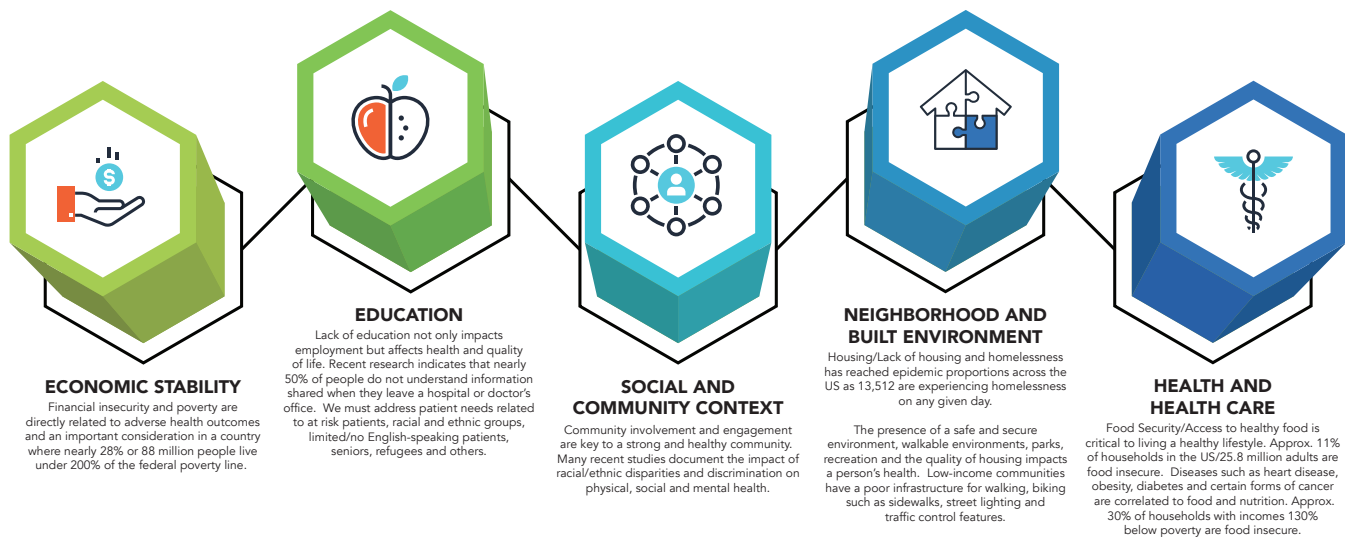




For health equity, these conditions support health and include adequate income, secure employment, good working conditions, quality education, safe neighborhoods, and housing, food security, the presence of social support networks, health care services, and freedom from racism and other forms of discrimination.

AHN Forbes will identify and address critical SDOH such as transportation, behavioral health (substance use and mental health service), chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD), and health equity (diversity, equity, and inclusion).<sup>4</sup>

Figure 2: Understanding SDOH ([Healthy People 2030](#)).



Source: Healthy People 2030

As an example, the lack of access and availability of personal and public transportation impacts not only access to health care but affects employment, reduces access to affordable healthy food, and many other important drivers of health and wellness. AHN Forbes works closely with its community partners and groups to identify and address social determinants of health and to drive proactive strategies that address health disparities, bridge the gaps in the provision of essential care, and improve health outcomes among disparate groups and populations. Addressing SDOH is paramount to creating a healthier community.



## Transportation

Access to health care services has a significant impact on health, including improved overall physical, social, and mental health status, prevention of disease and disability, and better quality of life. Transportation affects residents in rural and urban communities.

Having adequate transportation is often a barrier to accessing services and can significantly affect the quality of people's lives. The lack of vehicle access, cost, long distances, and lengthy times to reach needed services impact travel for residents.

- 3.6 million people in the United States do not obtain medical care due to transportation issues.<sup>5</sup>
- Missed appointments cost the U.S. health care system more than \$150 billion a year. They disrupt the continuity of the provision of health care services, add to the dissatisfaction of patients due to delays in getting new appointments, and hinder the detection and treatment of diseases.<sup>6</sup>
- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality reported that 10% of Allegheny County workers take public transportation. A smaller percentage of residents in Armstrong (0.7%) and Westmoreland (1.2%) counties takes public transportation.
- Primary data from the provider survey indicated that limited available services (23.6%) and cost of services (21.0%) contribute to transportation issues in the community.
- The survey also found that 50.8% of providers reported that distance/transportation to health care facilities is a 4/5 rating on a rating scale of 1-5, where 1 equals less of a concern and 5 equals more of a concern.
- Community stakeholders reported that the most significant barrier to not receiving care is a lack of transportation.
- Community stakeholders reported that the lack of available/lack of transportation are barriers to improving health and quality of life.

Transportation challenges affect urban and rural communities. Overall, older, less educated, female, minority, or low-income individuals – or those with a combination of these characteristics – are greatly impacted by transportation barriers. The vulnerable populations are more susceptible to transportation barriers due to social isolation, comorbidities, and a greater need for frequent clinician visits.





## B) Behavioral Health

### *Substance Use Disorder*

Falling under the umbrella of behavioral health, substance use and mental health impact the lives of families and individuals throughout the United States. The percentage of residents diagnosed with behavioral health problems has grown exponentially. Along with the growth, the need for mental health services and substance use programs has not diminished. Genetics and socioeconomic factors play vital roles in individuals diagnosed with a mental health problem, and frequently, societal factors increase the likelihood of one engaging in unhealthy life choices such as alcohol and drug use. According to the American Hospital Association, behavioral health disorders affect nearly one in five Americans and have community-wide impacts. Hospitals and health systems provide essential behavioral health care services to millions of Americans every day.<sup>7</sup>

Although progress has been made in lowering rates of substance use in the United States, the use of behavior-altering substances continues to take a major toll on the health of individuals, families, and communities nationwide.

- Allegheny County has the highest number of facilities that provide mental health services at 48, followed by Fayette (10), Armstrong, (4), and Westmoreland (16).
- The CDC in 2019 estimated 14.0% (34.1 million) of U.S. adults smoke cigarettes.
- The provider survey reported that behavioral health was the top persistent health problem in the community. The mentally ill were reported as being the most vulnerable population in the community.
- The survey found that 82.7% of respondents cited mental health and 60.2% identified suicide prevention as a 4/5 rating on a rating scale of 1-5, where 1 equals less of a concern and 5 equals more of a concern.
- The top responses from the provider survey showed that access to behavioral health services, mental health services, and substance use support would have the greatest impact on the quality of life for residents in the community.
- Community stakeholders cited drug/alcohol and behavioral/mental health as top health problems in their communities. They also reported substance use as being the top high-risk behavior and having access to behavioral health services as the top choice to improve the quality of life for residents.
- The community survey also found that drug/alcohol use (47.2%) was a top health problem in the community and that access to drug/alcohol and mental health services is needed to improve residents' quality of life and health.

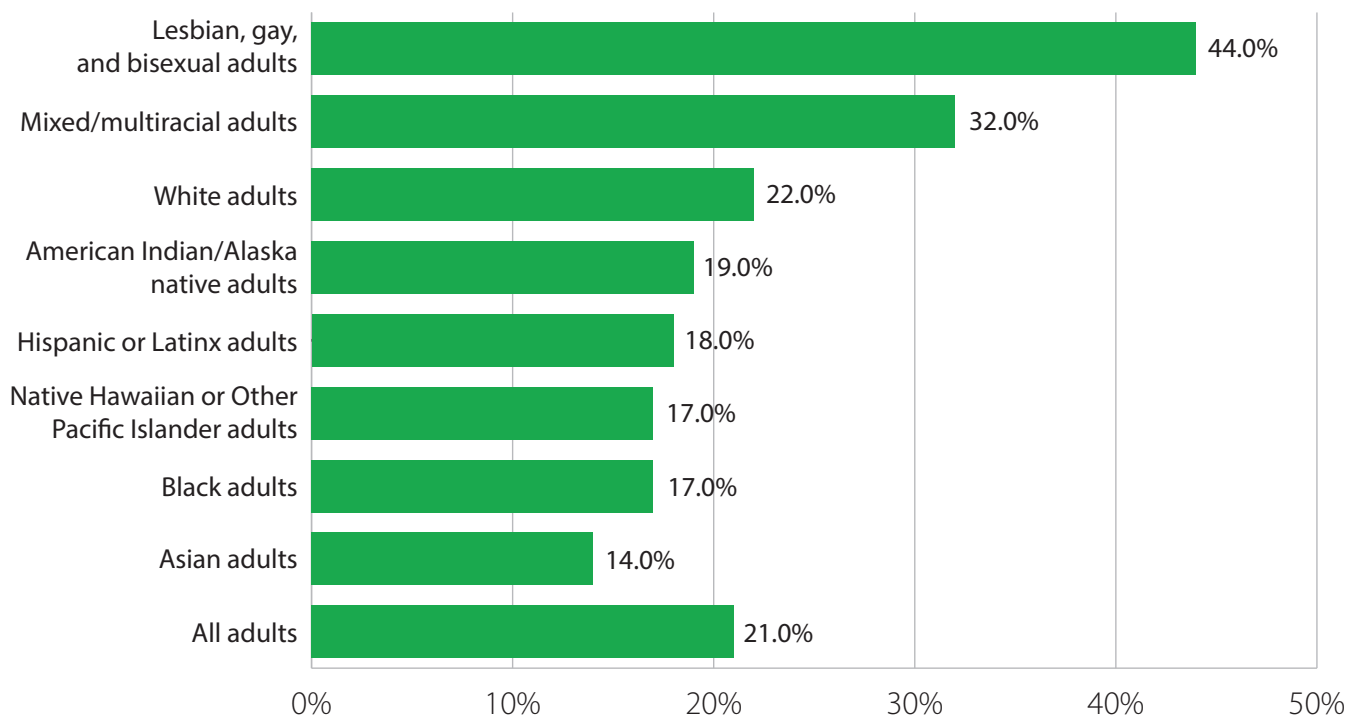


## Mental Health Services

The prevalence of mental illness in American is vast and continues to grow yearly. According to the National Alliance on Mental Health, one in five U.S. adults experiences a mental illness, one in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness, and 17% of youth (6-17 years old) experience a mental health disorder.<sup>8</sup>

The figure below reports U.S. adults who have experienced any mental illness within the past 12-months, broken out by population.<sup>9</sup> The figure shows that more than one-third of American adults who are lesbian, gay, and bisexual have a mental illness followed by individuals who are mixed/multiracial (32.0%).

Figure 3: 12-Month Prevalence of Any Mental Illness



Source: National Alliance on Mental Health

While COVID-19 has intensified and heightened mental health conditions, barriers to receiving mental health services has been problematic for years. One central issue is the availability of mental health professionals.

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps in 2021 reveals that Allegheny County (349.0 per 100,000 population) has a higher number of mental health providers when compared to Armstrong (111.0) and Westmoreland (165.0) counties. The availability of mental health providers allows one to have access to care and services and enables those suffering from the disease appropriate care and treatment when sought. While individuals face mental health challenges and struggle, people who seek regular treatment can improve their symptoms and live a better, prosperous, and a higher quality of life.



## C) Chronic Disease

Chronic diseases are a significant cause of disability and death in Pennsylvania and the United States. The seven leading causes of death are heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease (CLRD), unintentional injury, Alzheimer's disease, and diabetes. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, chronic disease accounts for about 70.0% of all deaths annually in Pennsylvania. With Pennsylvania's aging population and the advances in health care enabling people to live longer, the cost associated with chronic disease will increase significantly if no changes are made. Clinical preventive services, such as routine disease screening and scheduled immunizations, are key to reducing the effects of chronic disease and reducing death. Preventive services both prevent and detect illnesses and diseases in their earlier, more treatable stages, significantly reducing the risk of illness, disability, early death, and medical care costs.

### *Diabetes*

- The American Diabetes Association reported that approximately 1.4 million people in Pennsylvania have diabetes. An additional 325,000 are still undetected. Estimates show that one of every three children born in the United States will be directly affected by diabetes.
- According to the CDC, in 2017, Armstrong County (12.5%) reported a high number of adults who have diabetes when compared to those in Allegheny (7.8%) and Westmoreland (9.0%) counties.
- For deaths from diabetes per 100,000 population in 2015-2019, the Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 18.4 in Allegheny County, 24.3 in Armstrong, and 19.3 in Westmoreland, compared with 20.7 in the state.<sup>10</sup>

### *Heart Disease*

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States.<sup>11</sup>
- For deaths from heart disease per 100,000 population in 2015-2019, the Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 186.5 in Allegheny, 175.5 in Armstrong, and 177.8 in Westmoreland, compared with 175.3 in the state.

### *Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)*

- Affecting men and women, COPD is a long-term lung disease that makes breathing difficult. Often preventable and treatable, COPD is the third-leading cause of disease-related death in the United States.<sup>12</sup>
- For hospitalization rates for COPD per 100,000 population, the Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 125.8 in Allegheny, 133.1 in Armstrong, and 143.4 in Westmoreland, compared with 136.9 in the state.



## D) Health Equity

### *Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*

In recent years, health systems, public and private agencies, and community-based organizations have increasingly focused on the concept of “health equity.” Health equity is described as “both the absence of systematic obstacles and the creation of opportunities for all to be healthy.” The American Medical Association ([AMA](#)) Center for Health Equity imagines health equity as “providing health care that values people equally and treats them equitably and a nation in which all people live in thriving communities where resources work well; systems are equitable and create no harm nor exacerbate existing harms; where everyone has the power, conditions, resources, and opportunities to achieve optimal health.”

Significant effort is required to provide equitable and culturally/linguistically appropriate care to a variety of racial and ethnic communities, each with its own cultural traits, health beliefs, and barriers to health care access. Improving health equity extends well beyond the walls of the hospital, reaches deep into the community sectors, and involves both local and state governments where health policies and protocols are developed.

Achieving health equity requires the health system to cast a broad lens across a plethora of health services, medical programs and topics, diverse and disenfranchised people and populations. It is further noted that health equity is impacted by a variety of factors that impact health called social determinants such as affordable, safe, and stable housing; safe places to live, work and play; physical activity and exercise; economic security and financial resources; ending discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or other factors; access to affordable and healthy food; livelihood security and employment opportunity; educational opportunities; English language proficiency; and access to safe and affordable transportation.

Health equity must be the focus, at all levels of the organization, and embedded into our practices, processes, actions, and outcomes. AHN Forbes places a strategic focus on health equity through understanding and addressing the social determinants of low-income, under/unemployed, minority, and vulnerable populations. Health systems can enhance the quality of care their organizations provide, improve operations and reduce health disparities among their patients by guiding efforts to improve health equity.

Therefore, interventions to improve health equity and reduce health disparities must be systematic as an organization gains greater understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures and enhances the organization’s ability to serve all patients effectively and efficiently. Health equity is realized when all people have the opportunity to be as healthy as possible and no one is limited in achieving good health because of their social and economic status.



Health equity objectives are designed to end past infrastructures and workplace cultures that treat people inequitably based on demographic factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, and other factors. Health inequities are rooted in historical and current policies and systems that may favor one group over others. These historical and structural inequities take their toll on health and the quality of life through economic, cultural, political, social, and physical factors. Health is deeply connected and rooted to where people live, work, learn, and play.

Recognition is increasing across the health care environment. Improving health and achieving health equity demands a broad, multi-pronged approach and requires community engagement and addressing economic, social, and environmental factors that influence health. For example, prejudice and discrimination can lead to delays in medical diagnosis and treatment. The New England Journal of Medicine published a study reporting that women were seven times more likely than men to be misdiagnosed and discharged in the middle of having a heart attack due to the medical concepts of most diseases being based on understandings of male physiology and women having different heart attack symptoms than men.<sup>13</sup>

Health inequities unveil startling contrasts in health among different people. The Pennsylvania Department of Health reported vast disparities among its residents.

Publication data from 2018 reveal Black residents had significantly higher age-adjusted cancer incidence rates than whites in these areas:<sup>14</sup>

- Prostate
- Lung and bronchus
- Kidney and renal pelvis
- Pancreas
- Liver and intrahepatic bile duct
- Myeloma
- Stomach

**Blacks:** The age-adjusted incidence rate among Black Pennsylvania residents for liver/intrahepatic bile duct cancer (17.2 per 100,000 population) was more than two times that of white residents (7.8 per 100,000 population) in 2015. Myeloma also had an incidence rate of more than two times higher among Black residents (13.5) than white residents (6.3 per 100,000 population).

**Asians and Pacific Islanders:** In 2015, the age-adjusted incidence rate among Asians/Pacific Islanders for stomach cancer (9.7 per 100,000 population) and cancer of the liver/intrahepatic bile duct (13.9 per 100,000 population) was almost two times the rate among whites (5.7 and 7.8, per 100,000 population, respectively).

**Hispanics:** In 2015, Hispanics had a significantly higher age-adjusted incidence rate than whites for liver/intrahepatic bile duct cancer. Specifically, the Hispanic liver/intrahepatic bile duct cancer rate (13.9 per 100,000 population) was almost two times that of whites (7.8 per 100,000 population).



Publication data from 2018 reveal the following discharge rates were significantly higher among Black residents compared to whites:<sup>15</sup>

- Asthma (various age groups)
- Non-fatal spinal cord injuries
- Heart failure (ages 65-74)
- Heart failure (ages 75-84)

The following discharge rates were significantly higher among Hispanic residents compared to whites:<sup>16</sup>

- Asthma (various age groups)
- Heart failure (ages 65-74)
- Heart failure (ages 75-84)

**Blacks:** During 2014, hospital discharge rates per 10,000 for young childhood asthma (under 5) were several times higher among Black residents than white residents, 72.4 versus 13.8. In addition, hospital discharge rates for asthma among Black residents were at least two times higher than white residents in all other age groups. Another major disparity occurred for hospital discharge rates of heart failure among the ages 65-74. The rate was two times higher among Black residents (16.6) than white residents (7.4).

**Hispanics:** Like Black residents, in 2014, Hispanic residents had elevated hospital discharge rates for asthma compared to white residents. Specifically, the hospital discharge rate per 10,000 for asthma among Hispanic residents under five years of age (38.2) was about three times higher than white residents under 5 (13.8). The hospital discharge rate for asthma among Hispanic residents ages 5 to 64 was more than two times the rate for whites.

COVID-19-related reductions in life expectancy disproportionately affected people of color. People living in rural areas have a lower quality of health care and less access to services in urban and suburban areas.

Improving health equity engages all community sectors and partners to promote health equity and sustainability through job creation and economic development, transportation access and mobility, access to foods and nutrition, physically active and safe neighborhoods, and improved educational status. Most importantly, to improve access to equitable health care, health equity must be the focus as an organization at all levels and embedded into our practices, processes, actions, and outcomes.

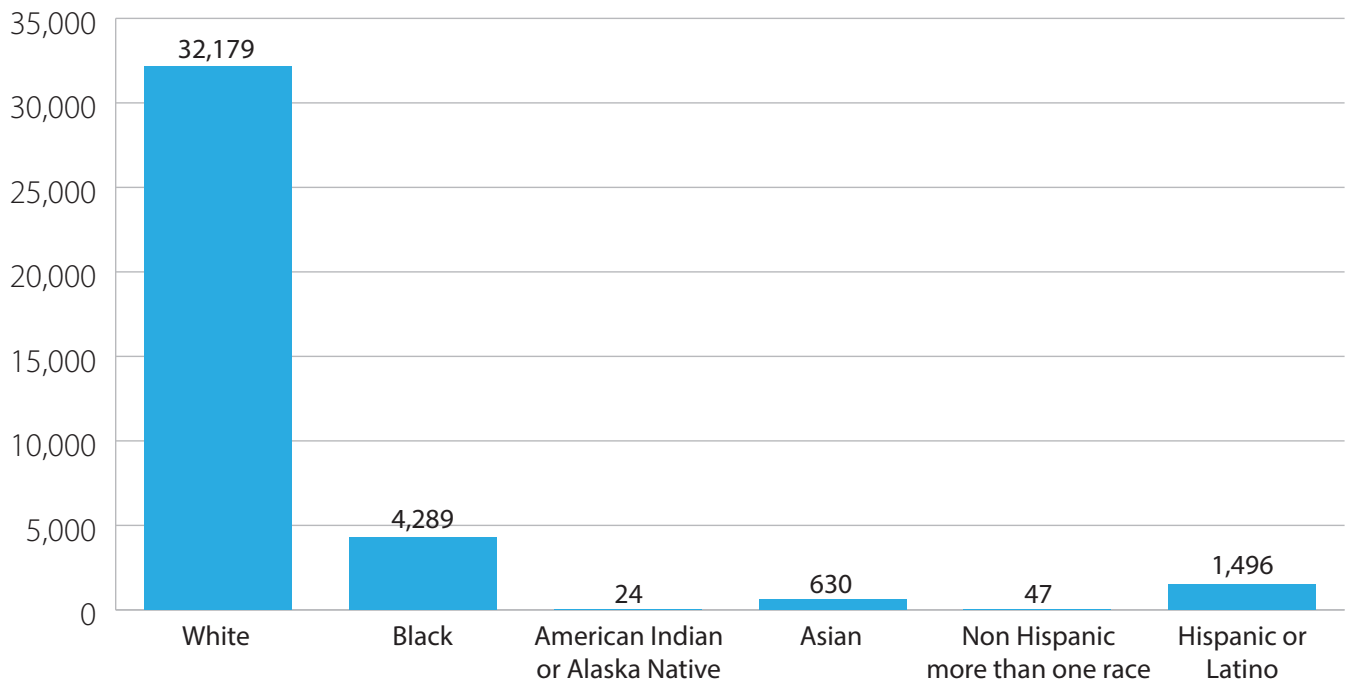


## Impact of COVID-19 on Health Equity

The effects of COVID-19 have been far-reaching and long-lasting. [The Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) reported that essential employees (those in health care, food services, and transportation) — were much more likely to die than other workers. Hispanics were nearly two times as likely to contract the disease as Whites. Blacks were hospitalized at three times the rate of Whites and American Indian/Alaska Natives have lost loved ones at more than double the rate of Whites.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of COVID-19 deaths is disproportionately higher among Blacks when compared to American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Non-Hispanic more than one race, and Hispanic or Latino. The graph reports the number of COVID-19 deaths for each race and Hispanic group.

Figure 4: Pennsylvania COVID-19 Death by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2020-2022  
(updated as of January 2022)



Source: [Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention 2020](#)

Race and ethnicity are also markers for other underlying conditions that affect health, including socioeconomic status, access to health care, and exposure to the virus related to occupation. Health and social inequities placed individuals from different racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of death from COVID-19 ([CDC](#)).

There are multiple factors that continue to contribute to poor health outcomes social and health inequalities in marginalized communities. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing inequalities with many people suffering from chronic illnesses and other conditions that increase their risk of severe illness. Underserved communities continue to feel the brunt and the lack of investment in addressing barriers to health and productive lives in marginalized communities leads to many other health and social consequences.

It has been reported that independent drivers of disease inequalities and a multi-sectorial approach are needed to reduce the impact of COVID-19 and other health issues among marginalized, disenfranchised, vulnerable, and underserved communities.

Figure 5: COVID-19 is a Health Equity Issue: Key Drivers of Disease Inequities



### **DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES**

Policies impacting healthcare, education, finance, criminal justice, and other formative systems which should serve to protect communities can lead to stress as well as act as barriers towards proper healthcare.



### **LIMITED ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

Barriers towards health insurance, childcare, sick leave, paid leave, or access to PPE, make some demographics more prone to COVID-19 inequities.



### **HISTORY OF RACISM & SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION**

Systemic racism and other forms of social discrimination have contributed to discriminatory policies, limited investment in community well-being, lack of access to quality healthcare, and a poor sense of trust between communities and health and social systems.



### **POVERTY**

Living in poverty, health is one of many priorities.



### **MISTRUST**

Insufficient community engagement, combined with misinformation or a lack of consistent information as well as a history of discrimination, causes many marginalized communities to lack trust towards health and social services.



### **LOW HEALTH LITERACY & MISINFORMATION**

People from ethnically and racially diverse communities didn't have the opportunity to develop skills to identify credible news sources, which has been shown to correlate with low health statuses.



### **CHRONIC STRESS**

Stress can impact physical health, inducing conditions such as heart disease or high blood pressure, which could lead to COVID-19 complications.



### **OVERCROWDED LIVING CONDITIONS**

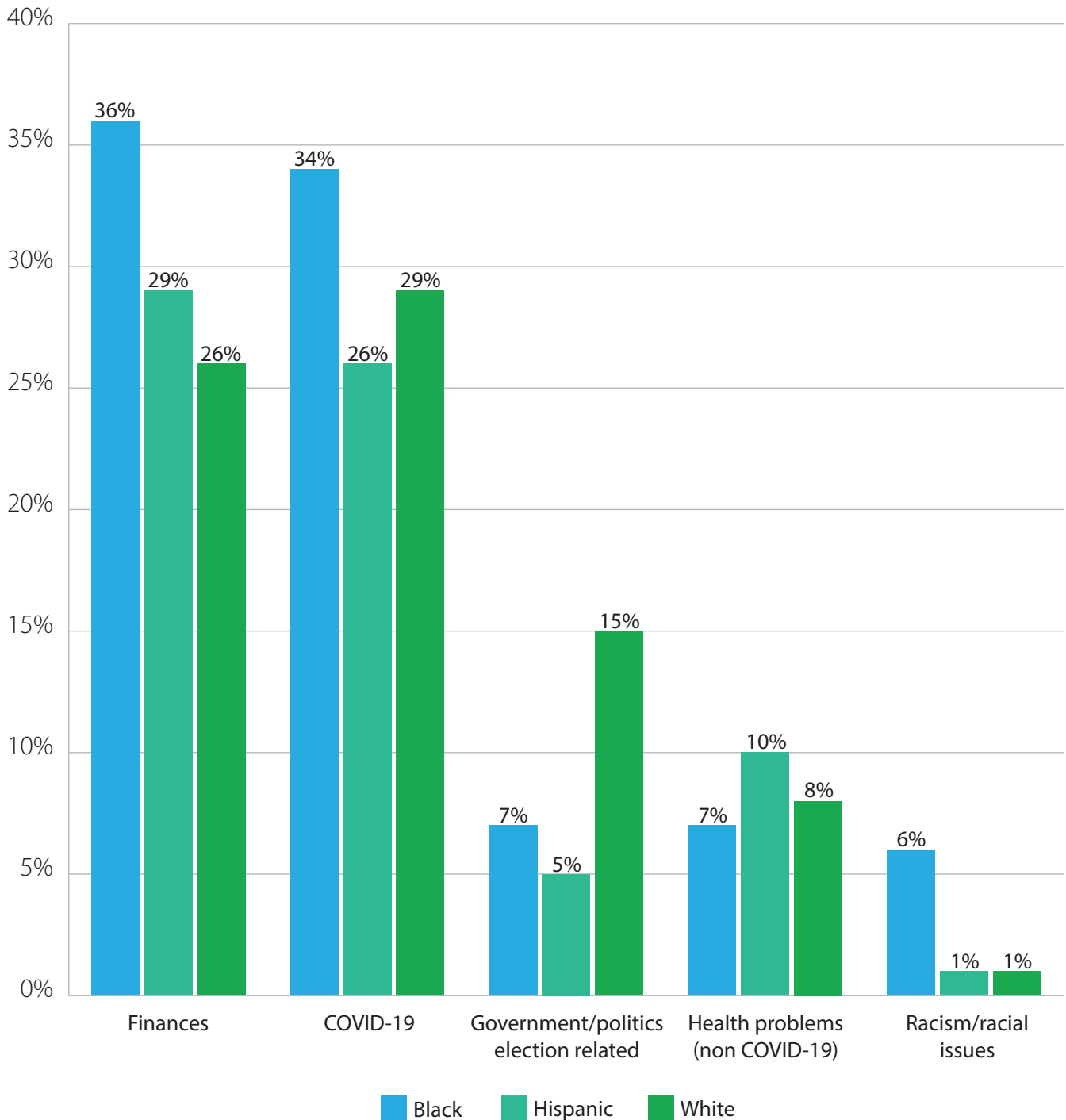
Many groups live in overcrowded conditions such as multi-generational homes or nursing homes, prisons, homeless shelters, or other kinds of group "homes." This can make it difficult to social distance and increase the risk for COVID-19. Factors such as unemployment can lead to homelessness, and therefore increased vulnerability to COVID-19.

Source: [The Health Equality Initiative 2020](#)



Figure 6 depicts the largest concerns families face broken down by race. More than one-third of Black adults cite financial issues and a similar share (34%) cite concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These are also the top two concerns mentioned by White and Hispanic adults, though Black adults are 10 percentage points more likely than White adults to name financial challenges among their top concerns (36% vs. 26%). Notably, six percent of Black adults cite issues related to racism as being among their top concerns.

Figure 6: Biggest Concerns Facing Individuals & Families 2020  
(Open Ended)



Source: [The Health Equality Initiative 2020](#)



# Conclusion

AHN Forbes places a strong emphasis on providing exceptional care, ensuring access to equitable health care services, and programs for its surrounding communities. Its efforts to address challenges and complexities of care in serving vulnerable populations such as the homeless, elderly, unemployed/underemployed, ethnic, low-income and diverse populations are recognized at community, state, and national levels.

AHN Forbes aspires to improve health, well-being, and health equity for all and understands that “health is more than the absence of disease.” Health is based not only on geographic factors- where people were born, live, work and play- but also on economic, cultural, educational, and social factors. By addressing barriers and identifying social and economic factors called social determinants of health that hinder access to equitable health care, AHN Forbes aims to heighten overall community health status and to improve quality of life for the diverse communities they serve. The health system may provide a plethora of recognized physicians, best practice services, noteworthy programs and services but if residents lack transportation and insurance, access to care can be difficult. There is a direct correlation between the ease of accessing health care and the overall health of a community.

As this next CHNA cycle evolves, AHN Forbes will engage and collaborate with community partners on the development of the 2022-2025 CHNA Implementation Strategy Plan (ISP). The implementation strategy planning process will align with both the strategic direction of the hospital and the AHN system level. Delineated implementation plan strategies will build on past goals and accomplishments, continue efforts to improve access to equitable health care, and measure the progress and the impact of services provided to targeted and vulnerable populations. AHN Forbes’ implementation strategies will advance the following priority areas:

- Social Determinants of Health
- Behavioral Health
- Chronic Disease
- Health Equity

AHN Forbes has addressed many obstacles and accomplished a measurable impact on the community, however, there are still many community health issues that need to be addressed to achieve health equity and anticipated health outcomes. With a focus on the top priorities mentioned above, major and meaningful health concerns for the AHN Forbes communities will be resolved.



# Defined Community

A community is defined as the geographic area from where a significant number of the patients utilizing hospital services reside. While the CHNA considers other types of health care providers, the hospital is the single largest provider of acute-care services. For this reason, the utilization of hospital services provides the most precise definition of the community.

The defined community (or primary service area, or PSA) of AHN Forbes encompasses 45 ZIP codes located in Allegheny, Armstrong, and Westmoreland counties. Map 1 shows AHN Forbes' defined community.

Map 1: 2021 CHNA Study Area/Counties

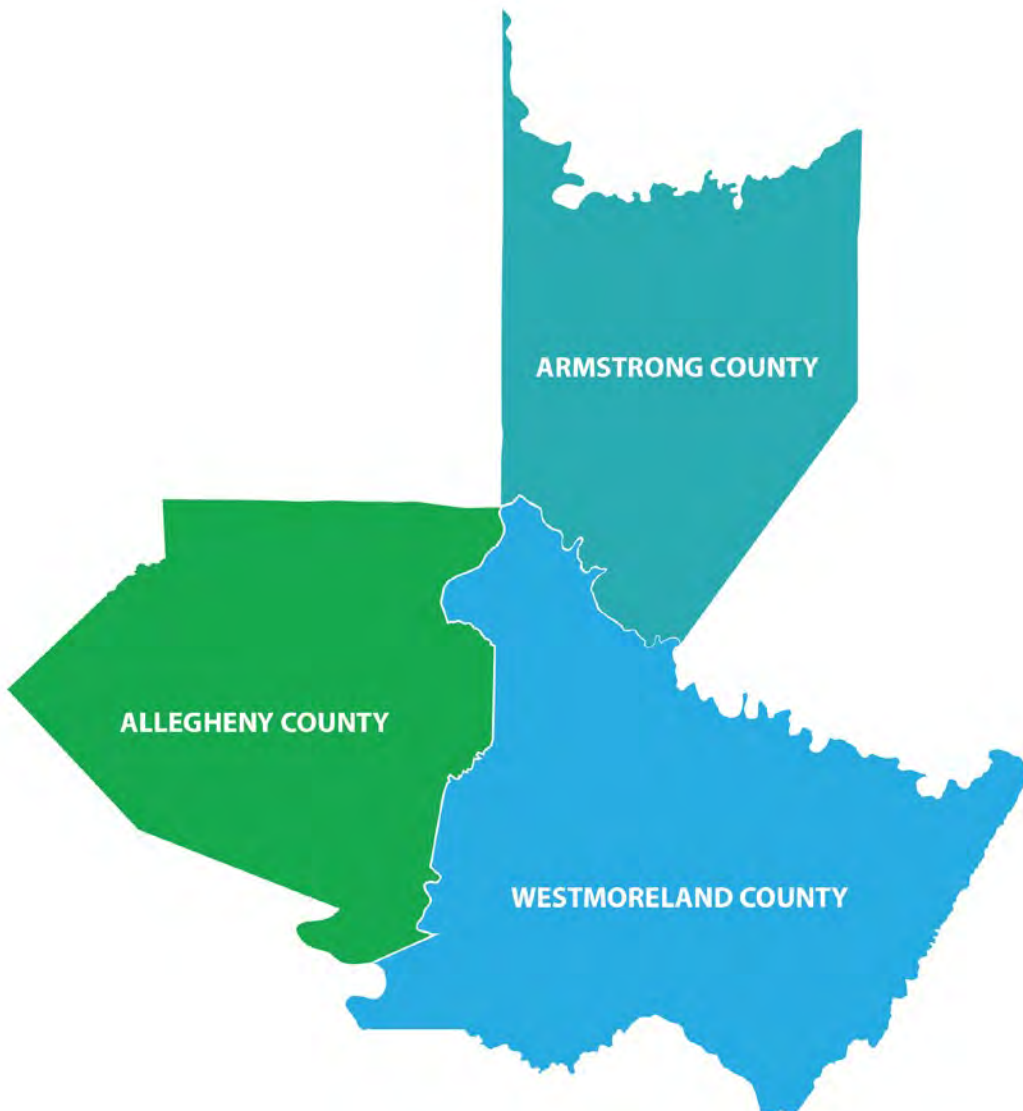


Table 3: Primary Service Area ZIP Codes

ZIPS	Town	County
15035	East McKeesport	Allegheny
15104	Braddock	Allegheny
15110	Duquesne	Allegheny
15112	East Pittsburgh	Allegheny
15120	Homestead	Allegheny
15131	McKeesport	Allegheny
15132	McKeesport	Allegheny
15133	McKeesport	Allegheny
15135	McKeesport	Allegheny
15137	North Versailles	Allegheny
15129	Oakmont	Allegheny
15140	Pitcairn	Allegheny
15145	Turtle Creek	Allegheny
15146	Monroeville	Allegheny
15147	Verona	Allegheny
15148	Wilmerding	Allegheny
15218	Pittsburgh	Allegheny
15221	Pittsburgh	Allegheny
15235	Pittsburgh	Allegheny
15239	Pittsburgh	Allegheny
15613	Apollo	Armstrong
15068	New Kensington	Westmoreland
15085	Trafford	Westmoreland
15601	Greensburg	Westmoreland
15611	Adamsburg	Westmoreland
15615	Ardara	Westmoreland
15617	Arona	Westmoreland
15618	Avonmore	Westmoreland
15623	Claridge	Westmoreland
15626	Delmont	Westmoreland
15632	Export	Westmoreland
15634	Grapeville	Westmoreland
15636	Harrison City	Westmoreland
15637	Herminie	Westmoreland
15642	Irwin	Westmoreland

ZIPS	Town	County
15644	Jeannette	Westmoreland
15647	Larimer	Westmoreland
15663	Madison	Westmoreland
15665	Manor	Westmoreland
15668	Murrysville	Westmoreland
15672	New Stanton	Westmoreland
15675	Penn	Westmoreland
15678	Rillton	Westmoreland
15684	Slickville	Westmoreland
15692	Westmoreland City	Westmoreland

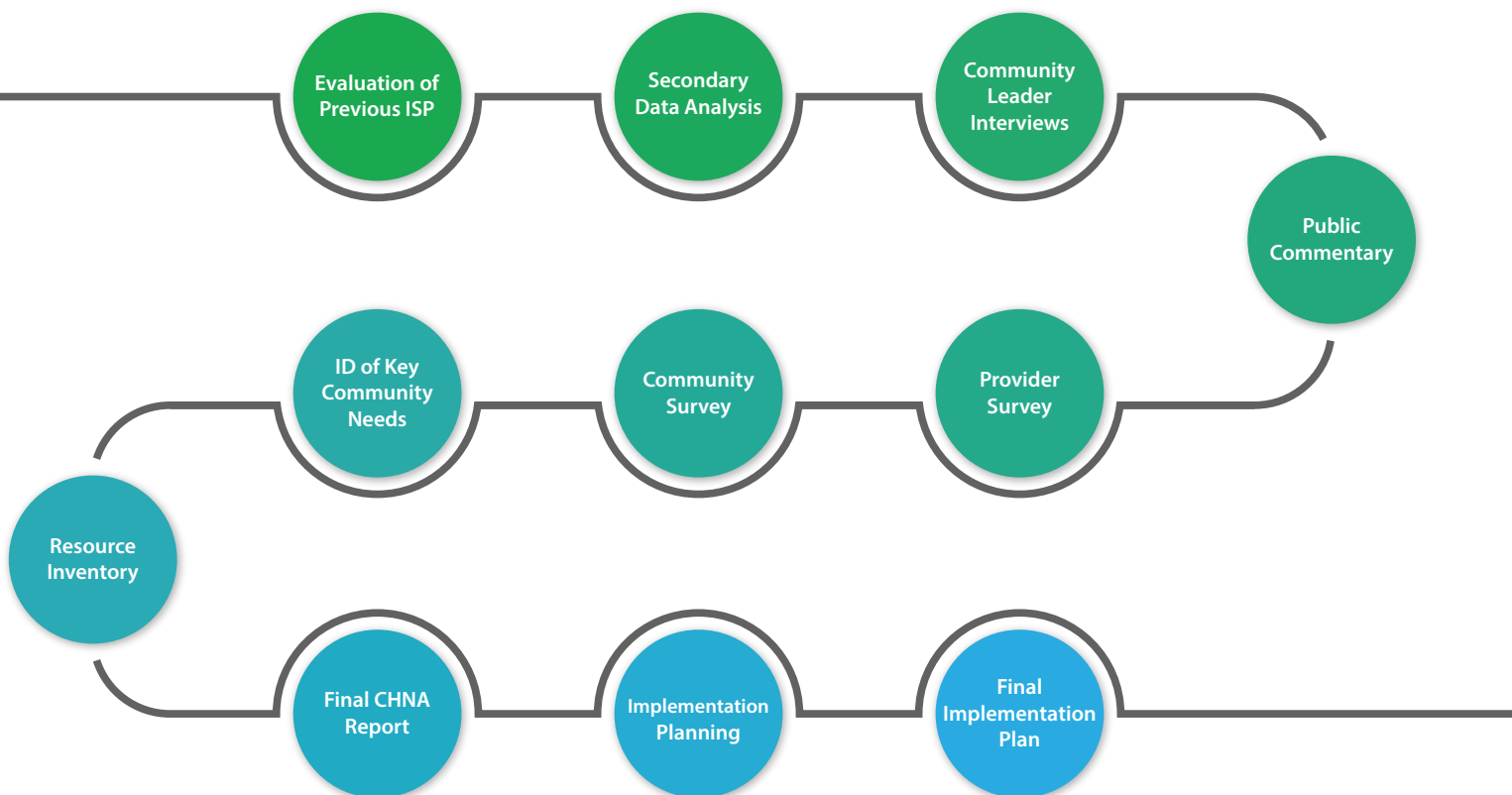


# Methodology

Tripp Umbach, a planning and research firm specializing in health care, education, government, and corporate clients to improve communities' economic, social, and physical wellbeing, was contracted by Allegheny Health Network to conduct the system's 2021 CHNA. The CHNA report complies with the Internal Revenue Service's guidelines for charitable 501(c)(3) tax-exempt hospitals and includes input from individuals representing the broad interests of the communities served by Allegheny Health Network, including those with direct knowledge of the needs of the medically underserved, disenfranchised populations, and populations suffering from chronic diseases.

The CHNA process began in late June 2021, and it is positioned to conclude in the early spring of 2022 with a final implementation strategy planning report. While multiple steps make up the overall CHNA process, Tripp Umbach will continue to work closely with the CHNA working group members to collect, analyze, and identify the results to complete AHN Forbes' assessment. The data collected and the information being composed will allow further group engagement of internal and external stakeholders to inform the CHNA needs and deliverables.

Figure 7: Data Collection Roadmap



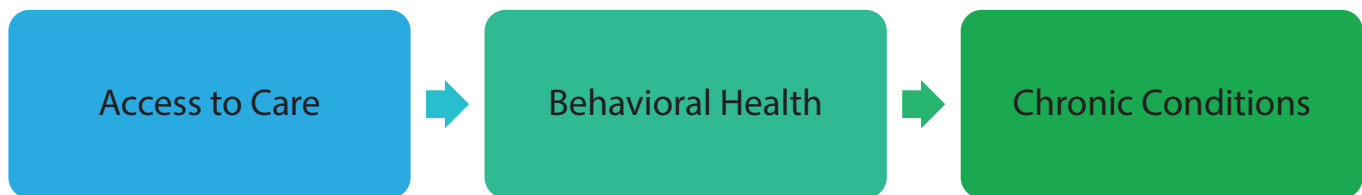


## Community Health Needs Assessment Data Collection

AHN Forbes, along with Tripp Umbach, participated in a 39-person steering group consisting of system-level leadership and hospital personnel who have direct patient care/contact and are instrumental in their community. The steering group members have a vast knowledge of the needs of underserved and disenfranchised populations, specifically those with chronic diseases, behavioral health issues, and socioeconomic challenges. To fulfill IRS requirements related to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), AHN Forbes' methodology employed both qualitative and quantitative data.

## Evaluation of 2018 Implementation Strategy Plan

The flow chart identified the health needs of AHN Forbes in 2018. AHN Forbes concentrated efforts and plans to address the health needs identified in the previous assessment.



AHN Forbes worked over the last three years to address, develop, and implement strategies to tackle the CHNA issues and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies in meeting goals and providing strategies to improve the health in the community.

AHN Forbes tackled problem statements and strategies and developed ways to address its success. AHN Forbes modified some of its goals to better achieve the identified needs from the 2018 CHNA. The self-assessment has indicators to denote improving and tracking each goal and strategy within the three years and beyond. Specific metric information/measurable indicators can be obtained from AHN Community Affairs.

It is important to note, due to the impact of COVID-19 and staffing changes, several programs, initiatives, and strategies were not pursued as priorities shifted from the 2019 implementation cycle. The implementation planning phase in 2022 will continue to identify and complete plans to address the needs of the community that were identified in the 2021 CHNA.



## Health Priority: Access to Care

**Goal 1:** To transform transportation services for Forbes Hospital patients and families.

**Impact:** Increased transportation services for patients; increased awareness of transportation services; and improved bus access to the Forbes campus.

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
Improve access to transportation services for patients and families.	Assess current transportation services.	X	X	X	Reduced missed appointments due to inability to access transportation services. Reduced ED admissions due to inability to access transportation services for medical appointments.
	Collaborate with pre-hospital care services to utilize a centralized coordination center.	X	X	X	
	Educate primary care physicians on transportation services.	X	X	X	
	Educate patients on transportation services.	X	X	X	
	Conduct screening for SDOH to determine transportation needs.	X			
	Enhance the Heritage Bus Line to create a new bus stop at the AHN Forbes Outpatient Center.	X			
	Work with Port Authority (PAT) and local municipality to establish a bus stop on the Forbes campus.	X	X	X	



**Goal 2:** To increase the number of providers that are able to effectively, competently, and compassionately care for transgender, non-binary, and LGBTQ+ patients.

**Impact:** Increased knowledge on cultural competence and improved care delivery for members of the LGBTQ population.

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
Train staff on basic cultural competency module.	Establish guidelines for implementation, using the Healthcare Equality Index as a metric.	X	X	X	Pre- and post-training assessments. Use Healthcare Equality Index.
	Share model with other AHN hospitals.	X	X	X	
Modify care delivery model to be more affirming and welcoming to LGBTQ patients.	Evaluate and modify policies and procedures, using established best practices and patient advocacy.	X	X		Use Healthcare Equality Index.



## Health Priority: Behavioral Health

**Goal 1:** Improve awareness of mental health conditions and treatment options.

**Impact:** Increased number of patients that attend education sessions, increased awareness of available resources to support recovery; increased number of Behavioral Health Consultants in practices; improved PHQ-9 score and increased access to adolescent mental health services.

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
Provide education about mental health issues and treatment options.	Sponsor Mental Health First Aid train-the-trainer and community MHFA trainings to the public.	X	X		Number of events. Number of participants.
Collaborate with Behavioral	Identify patients who might need behavioral health support.	X	X	X	Number of patients referred to inpatient or outpatient facilities.
Health Consultants (BHC) into primary care practices.	Administer the PHQ-2 at every primary care visit and PHQ-9 for patients who screen positive on the PHQ-2.	X		X	
	Offer consultation and treatment with the practice's BHC.	X	X	X	
	Collaborate with Psychiatric and Behavioral Health Institute to	X		X	
Develop and implement outpatient child and adolescent mental health services.	develop strategies and funding to implement outpatient facility.		X	X	Number of children referred to outpatient services.



**Goal 2:** Increase knowledge and access to substance use disorder programs and services.

**Impact:** Increased awareness of treatment for overdose complications and increased services for overdose cases.

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
To increase access to services in the ED for post-overdose management.	Develop ED pathway for initiation of Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) and warm hand-off program.	X	X	X	Number of trainings for hospital staff. Number of patients screened for eligibility for MAT.
	Educate ED providers on substance use disorder MAT as an effective treatment for post-overdose management.	X	X	X	
	Provide warm hand-off to MAT treatment services.		X	X	

### Health Priority: Chronic Conditions

**Goal 1:** To improve quality outcomes associated with diabetes.

**Impact:** Increased number of RN Navigators; decreased A1C levels in the managed population; improved outcomes for diabetes measures; and improved quality of life for diabetic patients.

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
Develop chronic disease specialty center in Forbes Hospital.	Embed RN Navigators at Forbes Hospital.	X			Increased number of RN Navigators. A1C levels among target population.
	Develop diabetes transition of care models.	X	X		
	Develop inpatient care pathways.	X			Number of children referred to outpatient services.
	Educate PCPs and patients on diabetes management.				
	Promote lifestyle change interventions and intensive case management to reduce risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease in high-risk individuals.				



## Goal 1 (contd.)

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
Develop partnership with Primary Care Redesign.	Receive quarterly data summary of practice and region performance on diabetes measures.	X	X	X	Performance on diabetes measures.
	Provide workflow redesign support for diabetes QI efforts initiative.	X	X	X	

**Goal 2:** Improve quality outcomes associated with heart disease.

**Impact:** Increased number of RN Navigators and increased utilization of a chronic disease care model.

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
Develop chronic disease specialty center at Forbes Hospital.	Embed RN Navigators at Forbes Hospital.	X			Number of RN Navigators embedded throughout the hospital. Development of chronic disease care model.
	Develop transition of care models.	X			
	Develop inpatient care pathways.	X			
	Educate PCPs and patients on heart disease management.	X	X	X	
	Educate patients.	X	X	X	



**Goal 3:** Transform pulmonary care for Forbes Hospital patients.

**Impact:** Increased number of RN Navigators; increased utilization of a chronic disease care model.

Strategies	Action Steps	2019	2020	2021	Metrics per year
Develop chronic disease specialty center at Forbes.	Embed RN Navigators Forbes Hospital.	X	X		Number of RN Navigators embedded throughout the hospital. Development of chronic disease care model.
	Develop transition of care models.	X			
	Develop inpatient care pathways.	X			
	Educate PCPs and patients on COPD and Centers for Care.	X	X	X	
	Educate patients.	X	X	X	



## Secondary Data Analysis

Secondary data sources at the local, state, and national levels included disparity data, public health priorities related to disease prevalence, socioeconomic factors, health outcomes, and health determinants to create a regional community health data profile based on the location and service areas of Allegheny Health Network. Secondary data was gathered primarily through Community Commons, a publicly available dashboard of multiple health indicators drawn from several national data sources that allowed for the review of past developments and changes related to demographics, health, social, and economic factors. Additional data sources include County Health Rankings, Community Needs Index, and U.S. Census Bureau. The data is also peer-reviewed and substantiated, providing a deep level of validity as a source.

The robust community profile generated a greater understanding of regional issues, mainly identifying regional and local health and socioeconomic issues.

The secondary quantitative data collection process included:

- American Community Survey
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps
- Dartmouth College Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice
- FBI – Uniform Crime Reports
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)
- Pennsylvania Department of Health – State Cancer Profiles
- Pennsylvania Department of Health and Vital Statistics
- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Labor




## Community Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the CHNA phase, telephone interviews were completed with community stakeholders to understand the changing environment. The interviews offered stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback on the needs of the region they serve and other information relevant to the study. Overall, 59 community stakeholder interviews were conducted for AHN in July-October 2021. Community stakeholders targeted for interviews encompassed a wide variety of professional backgrounds, including:

1. Businesses
2. County and state government representatives
3. Economic development
4. Education
5. Faith-based communities
6. Foundations/philanthropic
7. Health care representatives
8. Law enforcement
9. Non-profits
10. Representatives of underserved populations
11. Social service representatives

Within the interview and discussion process, overall health needs, themes, and concerns were presented. Within each of the overarching themes, additional topics fell under each category. Below are the overall key findings from the interviews identified throughout the discussions.

## Community Stakeholder Interviews Common Themes



### Community Problems

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**Top 3 Persistent Health Problems:**


1. Behavioral health (65.1%)
2. Access to foods (39.7%)
3. Un/Underemployment (39.7%)

**Offer Community to Address Persistent Chronic Diseases**

1. Community Health Workers (46.0%)
2. Population Specific Interventions (15.9%)

**Top 3 High Risk Behaviors**

1. Substance abuse (81.0%)
2. Poor eating/unhealthy eating habits (61.9%)
3. Lack of exercise/inadequate physical activity (49.2%)



### Community

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**Top 3 Barriers to Improving health/quality of life**


1. Economic disparities/poverty (58.7%)
2. Difficulties navigating health care system (55.6%)
3. High cost of health care/medications (54.0%)

**Top 3 Would Improve Quality of Life**

1. Access to health foods (57.1%)
2. Mental health services (appointments, bilingual providers) (57.1%)
3. Access to behavioral health services (52.4%)

**Transportation Issues**

1. Limited available transportation services (80.7%)
2. Location of bus stops is inconvenient (51.6%)
3. Lack of education around available resources (40.3%)



### Information

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**Top 3 Vulnerable Populations**

1. Children/youth (66.1%)
2. Older adults (66.1%)
3. Low-income (58.1%)

**Solutions to Help Vulnerable Populations**

1. Care coordinators (79.4%)
2. Flexible medical appts. (63.5%)
3. Addressing SDOH (57.1%)



Nine interviews were conducted with community stakeholders who represented AHN Forbes' community. The qualitative data collected are the perceptions and opinions from community stakeholders as part of the CHNA process. The information provides insight and adds great depth to the qualitative data. Community stakeholders interviewed represented the following organizations:

1. Allegheny County Health Department
2. Allegheny Township
3. Heritage Community Initiatives
4. Monroeville Foundation
5. Municipality of Monroeville
6. Penn State University
7. Temple David
8. The Building Block of Natrona
9. The Lord's Church of Pittsburgh

### *Public Commentary*

Tripp Umbach solicited comments related to the 2018 CHNA and Implementation Strategy Plan (ISP) as part of the assessment. Feedback was obtained from community stakeholders identified by the working group. Observations allowed community representatives to react to the methods, findings, and subsequent actions taken due to the 2018 CHNA and implementation planning process. Stakeholders were posed questions developed by Tripp Umbach. Collectively, feedback was gathered from 59 community stakeholders from July to October 2021. The public comments below are a summary of stakeholders' input regarding the former documents.

- When asked whether the assessment "included input from community members or organizations," 54.9% reported that it did.
- In the survey reviewed, 41.2% reported that the report did not exclude community members or organizations that should have been involved.
- In response to the question, 43.1% of respondents agreed when asked, "Were the implementation strategies directly related to the need identified in the CHNA?"



According to community stakeholders, the CHNA and the ISP benefited them and their community in the following manner (in no specific order):

- It created greater community awareness, greater relationship building, and highlighted partnerships.
- Addressed concerns and ways to improve concerns.
- We use part of the report to develop programs and use it for funding. The report shows what is going on in our community and tracks the progress of our county and its residents.
- CHNAs provoke one to think about the many never-ending needs of the community. We must become more innovative for the community's future. Example: Multi-Cultural Male Mentoring Programs will be an ongoing need that will ultimately lessen gangs, gun violence, and substance use/suicide/homicide statistics.
- The presence of AHN has increased significantly. Took the findings into practice and increased/enhanced status in communities.
- It resulted in better services and providers.
- Implementation was around community wellbeing, and health systems participated financially to bring blue zones project – good effort.
- Hospitals are implementing parts of the plan, and we can see results as there are good motives and intentions.
- Not sure how to evaluate program effectiveness due to COVID-19.
- Knowing that the feedback that we provided solidifies some of these choices to prioritize. Making ways to solve serious issues.
- I would like the opportunity for follow-up/further involvement in the process.
- Better understanding allows for the development of extended partnerships/relationships in the impact areas.
- You are allowing the community to listen to concerns. The effort to improve the life of residents and let them know we care.
- Increased awareness of social determinants of health (SDOH) and broader attention to behavioral health.
- Responses from community members gave specific issues. The implementing agency had some space to plan programs to meet particular needs.
- We need more focus on SDOH.
- I would ideally like to have more community engagement in the process.
- It was understood that there are many challenges and being proactive leads to greater quality of life and overall health.
- Recognized actual issues and focus on SDOH and not just relaying it to insurance coverage.
- Improved the health care services that were allocated to the residents.
- We saw the outcome of the work produced as well as the opportunity to educate people. Saw continued support for food accessibility in the community.



Additional feedback community stakeholders believed was not covered (in no particular order):

- Once CHNA/implementation plans are completed, bring back interviewees to review/discuss results.
- Allowing agencies like this to think outside the box and think like a client.
- Helping communities understand what it means and the overall impact.
- Focus on changing regional demographics. There is a growing Asian population along with residents moving out of the city. There are also challenges regarding services to transportation.
- Outreach to as many community organizations as possible to provide additional input.





## Provider Survey

A provider survey was implemented to collect data from providers from the hospital's service areas and region to identify the community's needs and vulnerable populations and those partners/organizations that will be instrumental in addressing prioritized needs. Providers internal and external to Allegheny Health Network received a survey link. In total, 26,616 providers received a survey link; 2,201 surveys were returned/submitted.

A survey instrument was developed and used to obtain vital information through the lens of local providers. Collecting data through the provider survey will allow more appropriate care to populations most in need. The provider audience is also essential to gauge how patients and residents have adjusted their health needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and how providers assisted them.

The provider survey was active in July-August 2021. Below are common themes providers reported in their community.

## Provider Survey Common Themes

 <b>Community</b>	 <b>Economics</b>	 <b>Health</b>	 <b>Populations</b>
<p><b>Best Things</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care</li> <li>• Restaurants/food</li> <li>• Shopping</li> </ul> <p><b>Quality of Life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family-friendly environment</li> <li>• Affordable living</li> <li>• Safe Place to live</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational/sports</li> <li>• Events &amp; festivals</li> <li>• Activities family/youth</li> </ul> <p><b>Hospital</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do address needs diverse/at-risk populations</li> <li>• Provide access to everyone</li> </ul>	<p><b>Barriers to Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordability</li> <li>• No insurance</li> <li>• Lack of health care</li> </ul> <p><b>Contributors to Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited services</li> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• Community education around resources</li> </ul>	<p><b>Persistent Health Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral health</li> <li>• Lack of exercise</li> <li>• Aging problems</li> </ul> <p><b>Overall Health Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral health</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• High-health care costs</li> <li>• Obesity</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact on Quality of Life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to behavioral health</li> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Health care access</li> </ul>	<p><b>Offer to Maintain Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention and education</li> <li>• Population specific interventions</li> </ul> <p><b>Vulnerable Populations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentally ill</li> <li>• Low-income</li> <li>• Uninsured/underinsured</li> </ul> <p><b>Solutions to Help Vulnerable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care coordination</li> <li>• Flexible medical appointments</li> <li>• Provide transportation</li> </ul> <p><b>Barriers Preventing Health Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack evening/weekend hours</li> <li>• Affordability</li> <li>• Inability to get appointments</li> </ul>






## Community Survey

A community survey was employed to collect input from populations within Allegheny Health Network’s service area to identify health risk factors and health needs in the community. Working with leadership from Community Affairs, the community survey was promoted on social media platforms, hospital websites, relationships with community-based organizations, and clinics. An email was sent from Tripp Umbach to community residents requesting survey participation. A \$250 gift card was provided as an incentive for community residents to encourage participation.

Collecting surveys from community residents whose primary language was not English was an essential driver of the initiative. The community survey was available in English, Spanish, Nepalese, Chinese, and Arabic. An email was sent to more than 43,000 residents in the AHN service area for engagement. A total of 857 English surveys and nine non-English surveys were collected for analysis.

Survey data was collected from Survey Monkey from mid-August 2021 to early October 2021. In total, 866 surveys were used to assure statistical accuracy. A response rate of 1.98% was achieved. Below are common themes from community residents.

### Community Survey Common Themes

 <b>Community</b>	 <b>Community</b>	 <b>Information</b>
<p><b><u>Top 3 Health Problems in Community English Speakers</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aging problems</li> <li>2. Drug/alcohol</li> <li>3. Behavioral/mental health</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Non-English Speakers</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access to healthy foods</li> <li>2. Dental health</li> <li>3. Lack of exercise</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Top 3 Factors that Contribute to Healthy Community (English &amp; Non-English Speakers)</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low crime/safe neighborhoods</li> <li>2. Easy access to health care</li> <li>3. Good schools</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Needed to Improve Quality of Life and Health English Speakers</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Affordable health care services</li> <li>2. Access to drug/alcohol and mental health services</li> <li>3. Elder care</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Non-English Speakers</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access to drug/alcohol and mental health services</li> <li>2. Better/more recreational facilities</li> <li>3. Dental care access</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Top Place Go for Health Care (English &amp; Non-English Speakers)</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physician offices</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Health Screenings Needed to Stay Healthy English Speakers</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blood pressure</li> <li>2. Cholesterol</li> <li>3. Well check-ups</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Non-English Speakers</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dental screenings</li> <li>2. Well check-ups</li> <li>3. Cholesterol</li> </ol>

# Community Survey Common Themes



## Information

### Top 3 Behaviors People Need more Information About:

#### English Speakers

1. Chronic disease prevention/mgmt.
2. Substance abuse prevention
3. Care for family members w/special needs/disabilities

#### Non-English Speakers

1. Chronic disease prevention/management
2. Eating well/nutrition
3. Exercising/fitness



## Personal Health

### Describe One's Overall Health

#### English Speakers

1. Excellent/very good – 35.2%

#### Non-English Speakers

1. Excellent/very good – 66.7%

### Top 3 Health Personal Challenges

#### English Speakers

1. Joint, muscle, and back pain
2. Overweight/obesity
3. High blood pressure

#### Non-English Speakers

1. Arthritis
2. Joint, muscle, and back pain
3. High blood pressure



## Personal Health

### Preventative Procedure in past 12 months:

#### English Speakers

1. Blood pressure
2. Physical exam
3. Flu shot

#### Non-English Speakers

1. Blood pressure
2. Flu shot
3. Cholesterol screenings



## COVID-19

### Received COVID-19 Vaccination

#### English Speakers

- Yes- 84.9%

#### Non-English Speakers

- Yes - 100.0%

### Top 3 Areas Impacted by COVID-19

#### English Speakers

1. Social
2. Emotional
3. Quality of life

#### Non-English Speakers

1. Emotional
2. Fear of sickness
3. Social



## Identification of Key Community Needs

The AHN CHNA Steering Committee, composed of interdisciplinary representatives from each of the hospitals as well as service leaders, reviewed primary data and secondary data sources to identify community needs and trends. Building on the needs identified in the previous cycle and the accomplishments of the previous implementation strategies, the community needs were assessed to identify continued gaps in services, changes in population health status, and areas in need of further effort and support. Those discussions served as a basis for prioritizing the 2021 community needs and the deployment of resources and community assets to meet those needs.

## Resource Inventory

An inventory of programs and services available in the region was developed by Tripp Umbach. This inventory highlights available programs and services within all the counties that fall under each of the priority need areas.

The inventory identifies the range of organizations and agencies in the community that serve the various target populations within each of the priority needs. It provides program descriptions and collects information about the potential for coordinating community activities and creating linkages among agencies.

## Data Limitations

Data collected for the 2021 CHNA has limitations in information. Primary data obtained through interviews and surveys are also limited in representing the hospital's service area as information was collected through convenience sampling. Secondary data is not specific to the hospital's primary service area; however, the report provides an opportunity to gauge and envision issues within a large geographic region.





# Steering Committee Members

AHN Steering Committee	
AHN Allegheny General	Alex Matthews
AHN Allegheny Valley	Kimberly Giovanelli
AHN Canonsburg	Keith Zimmer
AHN Forbes	Krista Bragg
AHN Forbes	Kelly Wooddell
AHN Grove City	Dr. David Tupponce
AHN Jefferson	Erin Joyce
AHN Saint Vincent	Henry Ward
AHN West Penn	Robin Nitkulinec
AHN Westfield	Karen Surkala
AHN Westfield	Rodney Buchanan
AHN Wexford	Laurin Scanlon
AHN Neighborhood Hospitals	Julie FERENCE
AHN Allegheny Clinic	Margaret Palumbo
AHN Cardiovascular Institute	Peggy McGowan
AHN Center for Inclusion Health	Kristin Lazzara
AHN Community Affairs	Nina Ferraro
AHN Community Affairs	Kannu Sahni
AHN Community Affairs	Amie Signorella
AHN Community Affairs	Nina Sexton
AHN Corporate Communications	Julie Emanuel
AHN Corporate Taxes	Jeff Manners
AHN Corporate Taxes	Bernard Azinon
AHN Development	Allie Quick
AHN Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)	Dr. Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew
AHN Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)	Veronica Villalobos
AHN Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)	Mark Jones
AHN Institute Planning	Michele Steigerwald
AHN Marketing	Manfred Woodall
AHN Marketing	Kelly Dennin
AHN Marketing	Jesse Miller
AHN Medicine Institute	Dr. Paul Lebovitz
AHN Nursing	Claire Zangerle
AHN Oncology	Crystal Ross
AHN Prehospital Services	Jonah Thompson
AHN Prehospital Services	Robert Twaddle
AHN Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)	Amanda Mihalko
AHN Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)	Mary Ann Matreselva
AHN Women & Children's Institute	Joan Washburn



## Additional Information

With the conclusion of the CHNA, AHN and AHN Forbes will begin the implementation planning phase to identify and leverage AHN's collective strengths and resources to best address the communities' health needs.

For additional information about the CHNA and its specific findings, please contact Community Affairs at Highmark Health and Allegheny Health Network at [communityaffairs@ahn.org](mailto:communityaffairs@ahn.org).





# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Allegheny Health Network contracted with Tripp Umbach, a private health care consulting firm, to complete a community health needs assessment. Tripp Umbach has worked with more than 400 communities in all 50 states. In fact, more than one in five Americans lives in a community where our firm has worked.

<sup>2</sup> For additional information on the primary and secondary data collected as part of the CHNA, please refer to the methodology section of the report.

<sup>3</sup> In 2018, access to care was the overarching community need. In 2021, after internal review and discussions, SDOH replaced access to care as the focus. Understanding SDOH helps identify the many underlying factors and issues that serve as barriers to accessing care. Addressing the conditions of one's environment, such as where people work, play, and live, can dramatically affect the quality of life for many residents.

<sup>4</sup> AHN Forbes' primary service area encompasses Allegheny, Armstrong, and Westmoreland counties. Secondary data was supplied related to identified counties.

<sup>5</sup> American Hospital Association: [www.aha.org/ahahret-guides/2017-11-15-social-determinants-health-series-transportation-and-role-hospitals](http://www.aha.org/ahahret-guides/2017-11-15-social-determinants-health-series-transportation-and-role-hospitals)

<sup>6</sup> Journal of Family Medicine and Disease Prevention: <https://clinmedjournals.org/articles/jfmdp/journal-of-family-medicine-and-disease-prevention-jfmdp-4-090.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> American Hospital Association: [www.aha.org/advocacy/access-and-health-coverage/access-behavioral-health](http://www.aha.org/advocacy/access-and-health-coverage/access-behavioral-health)

<sup>8</sup> National Alliance on Mental Health: [www.nami.org/mhstats](http://www.nami.org/mhstats)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Health: [www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/VitalStatistics/CountyHealthProfiles/Documents/current/index.aspx#county-maps](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/VitalStatistics/CountyHealthProfiles/Documents/current/index.aspx#county-maps)

<sup>11</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm)

<sup>12</sup> American Lung Association: [www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/copd](http://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/copd)

<sup>13</sup> The New England journal of Medicine: [www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM200008243430809](http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM200008243430809)

<sup>14</sup> The Pennsylvania Department of Health: [www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/MinorityHealthStatistics/Documents/Minority\\_Cancer\\_Incidence\\_2015.pdf](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/MinorityHealthStatistics/Documents/Minority_Cancer_Incidence_2015.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> The Pennsylvania Department of Health: [www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/MinorityHealthStatistics/Documents/Minority\\_Hosp\\_for\\_Select\\_Conditions\\_2014.pdf](http://www.health.pa.gov/topics/HealthStatistics/MinorityHealthStatistics/Documents/Minority_Hosp_for_Select_Conditions_2014.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



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