Washtenaw County Health Department

Overarching Interview Summary

This is a summary of the main themes from the CHA key informant interviews conducted during March 2023.

Brief Summary of Each Interview

Interview 1: This interview was conducted with an individual who serves people who were formerly incarcerated, as well as families. There were several important health issues discussed, including limited financial resources and lack of affordable, available, and stable housing. Limited access to care, specifically access to dental care, mental health services, and vision services was also an important theme in this interview. Important forces of change mentioned included small budgets for mental health services, lack of nutrition knowledge, and income limitations for lower-income families. An additional force of change mentioned was the institutional exploitation of vulnerable populations, such as incarcerated and homeless populations. Specifically, the interviewee cited experimental drug trials conducted with people who were incarcerated and how these events had long-lasting effects on those participants. Community strengths mentioned included communication, community organizing/gathering, and abundant human resources. Solutions discussed to solve the aforementioned problems included increasing internet accessibility, providing more health education and literacy materials in plain language, ensuring equitable resource, service, and education opportunities, and providing support and services to help vulnerable populations (incarcerated and homeless) with mental health.

Interview 2: This interview was conducted with an individual who primarily serves seniors and low-income individuals in the Whitmore Lake area. Key themes from this interview included the strength of community willingness to help each other out, the need for more affordable childcare options, and the need for better mental health resources and support, especially regarding mental health crisis response. Other key themes included needing better access to care, especially having a local health clinic, and better services for seniors regarding transportation accessibility, financial aid, and access to care. Ways to improve the health of the community mentioned were changes in policy in funding allocation, advocating for assistance/action from local government, having a community social support network, increasing access to resources, and receiving affordable care.

Interview 3: This interview was conducted with an individual who provides services to returning citizens/the formerly incarcerated. Key themes that emerged were the need for collaboration/collective action amongst county organizations, the challenge of connecting our county's abundant resources with those who need them most, and the importance of building trusting relationships with community members. One of the strengths that was mentioned repeatedly was the sense of community and willingness of community members to help each other out within the Ypsilanti area. Important community issues that emerged included access to up to date and accurate information, mental health, domestic violence, substance use, and lack of employment opportunities.

Interview 4: This interview was conducted with an individual who provides services and support to refugees. Key themes that emerged were the need for financial support to alleviate the impact of inflation, government financial and resource support for local organizations, and culturally appropriate services including foster care housing for refugee children. Another barrier to health that was mentioned was the lack of communication, collaboration, and strong relationships between

governments, community members, judges, law enforcement, and community organizations. Despite many people being unable to foster refugee children due to various barriers in that process, a community strength included the abundance of volunteers willing to do so. Additional community strengths included language appropriate communication among community members about resources, services, and COVID-19 recommendations, and community cooperation with COVID-19 recommendations to keep their community safe.

Interview 5: This interview was conducted with an individual who works in the educational system to provide academic enrichment and who participates in advocacy programs focusing on academic and career pathways for people of all ages. A community strength that was mentioned was the number of resources available in the community, particularly in the county overall. Other identified strengths include having a close-knit community, having a strong academic community with our local colleges and universities, and good quality local hospital systems. However, another key theme was the challenge of connecting the right resources to the right people, and the disparities surrounding the utilization of health services and educational resources. Another main theme was that public K-12 schools lack funding and need to be able to retain local talent (i.e. teachers); moreover, it was conveyed that teachers to whom students can relate (Black teachers, male teachers) and who would represent more diversity in the K-12 setting are needed and important. Other major themes included economic impact of changes in local businesses, the disconnectedness of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and other cities in the county from each other as opposed to coming together as a single county, and the importance of awareness of resources and information.

Interview 6: This interview was conducted with an individual who provides equity-focused community organizing and advocacy services to vulnerable populations. Key themes that emerged were the importance of community driven solutions, the impact of racism within healthcare systems on access to care, and the challenge of getting the right resources to the right people. The strength of community resilience, especially amongst impoverished community members, was mentioned repeatedly. Important community issues that emerged included access to care, chronic disease management, STI/HIV screening, food access, and a need for better school programming around health.

Interview 7: This interview was conducted with an individual who is involved in a community group that serves the Latinx community. Main themes that emerged included access to affordable housing, transportation, and service accessibility due to language barriers. Other key themes included topics such as cultural lifestyle differences, the importance of mental health, and the desire for more health education and outreach, physical activity, and youth activities.

Interview 8: This interview was conducted with two individuals who serve the Manchester community. Key themes included access issues resulting from being in a rural part of the county, such as lack of healthcare and fresh groceries. Community partnerships and local government engagement were identified as helpful in addressing these access barriers. Community strengths included local organizations that provide assistance in various areas.

Interview 9: This interview was conducted with an individual who works with people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Main themes included the need for alternative mental health crisis interventions that did not involve law enforcement officials and the need for improved access to housing and temporary shelters. Other important community issues that emerged were mental health, substance use, and the impact of the carceral and legal system on individual and family lives.

Interview 10: This interview was conducted with an individual who provides services and support to youth, including shelter and support services for homeless youth. Community strengths mentioned included the availability of a variety of physical and mental health resources in Ypsilanti. A key theme that emerged was the disconnectedness and disparities between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, as well as between University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. Some of these disparities were economic disparities, disparities in the way resources are received, and life expectancy disparities, all impacting mental health and community trust in existing resources. Additionally, the need to retain graduating university students via local employment was noted for Ypsilanti and Eastern Michigan University.

Thematic Highlights by Question

Question 1: Can you tell me a little about yourself, organizations/groups you are connected with, and work you do in the community?

- Interview participants shared that they are part of organizations/groups who work closely the following groups: returning citizens/formerly incarcerated; African Americans; older adults; the Whitmore Lake area; Arab-Americans; refugees; grassroots organizations; community activist groups; the Manchester area; the Ypsilanti area; Latinx community members; youth; and people experiencing homelessness.

Question 2: What are some examples of strengths and resources that exist in your community?

- Key themes included access to care, resources and services, and social capital and community identity.
- Access to care resources included hearing and vision screenings, insurance for the immigrant community through the Washtenaw Health Plan, local health clinics such as Corner Health providing physical and mental health services, Hope Clinic providing services for those who are low-income, Packard Health, and the Washtenaw County Health Department, local hospitals, and local civic service organizations.
- Resources and services that exist in the community include those provided through faith-based organizations, local businesses, and the Washtenaw County Health Department. Other strengths include immigration and legal services, the willingness of people to become foster parents, having services for seniors, physical activity outlets through walking trails and parks, and Five Healthy Town's wellness initiatives.
- Strengths mentioned regarding social capital and community identity included the resilience of the community regardless of the circumstances, being able to preserve cultures, feeling connected to the community, having a community support network, and having a sense of community as a source of peer support and trust, especially in light of COVID-19's impact on society.

Question 3: What are some of the most important health issue(s) that must be addressed to improve health in your community?

- Key themes included access to care, food access, affordable housing, mental health, and resources and services.
- Specific access to care issues included the need for more affordable and higher quality care and services, better services for seniors, more locations, increased accessibility by providing interpreters, and getting the right resources to the right people. Other important health issues that were brought up related to access to care included healthcare system racism, the

lack of medical clinics including primary care providers, limited pharmacies, and vision services.

- Specific health topics that emerged as themes included chronic disease management, STI/HIV screening and treatment, the need for dental care, and need for more health education.

Question 4: How can these strengths and resources be used to help improve people's health?

- Key themes were collaboration, community engagement, mental health, and social capital and community identity.
- Collaboration can increase people's access to health resources, provide an opportunity for social networking, and provide services such as youth programming and career readiness.
- Community engagement could produce community driven solutions, provide support to vulnerable populations, involve faith-based institutions, provide services such as nutrition education and accessible activities and sports for youth, and be affordable and inclusive of historically marginalized communities.
- Mental health could be improved by efforts to increase advocacy and decrease stigma. Improved crisis response that avoids police involvement was mentioned multiple times as an example of how to shift away from punitive resolutions for those experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Social capital, community identity, and people's sense of belonging could be strengthened by organizing community events, providing community gathering spaces, and providing opportunities to participate in community and humanitarian aid efforts.

Question 5: What larger forces of change (i.e., things outside of your control) are happening in the community that are contributing to the health issue(s) discussed earlier?

- Key themes were access to care, COVID-19, the economy, government, housing, and mental health.
- Specific items mentioned related to access to care included the closure of local clinics and pharmacies, accessibility for immigrant communities, and racism in the healthcare system.
- COVID-19 impacted the community by leading to inflation, job loss, long-term health effects, mental fatigue, and increased hostility.
- Economic forces of change included barriers to employment such as drug testing, loss of major local employers, being unaware of or needing assistance being connected to employment opportunities.
- Forces of change concerning the government involved the impact of budget decisions in both the short- and long-term, barriers to becoming a foster parent and a flawed foster care system, barriers of overly complex rules and regulations for community organizations, and unfair enforcement of rules.
- Housing-related forces of change included the lack of affordable housing and emergency housing shelters, poor housing quality, employment loss and COVID-19 leading to increased evictions and housing insecurity, and capitalism.
- Mental health topics brought up had to do with mental health needs in the homeless population as well the incarcerated population, an increased population in need in general, the impact of isolation due to COVID-19, and mental health stigma.

Question 6: How do these forces of change impact your community, particularly those who experience oppression?

- Key themes included forces of change increasing disparities, worsening the economy, highlighting needs in the education system, and increasing violence.
- Some of the disparities brought up included racial disparities, geographical disparities comparing Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor, and income disparities.
- The economic impact mentioned was in regard to the loss of employment opportunities and the need for opportunities for those without higher education such as through certificate and trade programs, as well as the negative impact of local businesses such as marijuana dispensaries and liquor stores.
- Regarding education, participants mentioned the need for school staff to be representative of and also be connected to the community, the need for competitive pay, and the need for increased funding and resources.
- Additionally, forces of change such as lack of housing, lack of employment and financial strain, stress and mental health, and media influence have led to increased mass shootings and suicides, increased domestic violence, and increased violence in general.

Question 7: What solutions would you have to address barriers to health?*
Includes responses from original questions used only for first three interviews: "What barriers keep people in your community from being healthy?" and "What solutions would you have to address some of the barriers that would benefit all groups, particularly those who are most impacted?"

- Key themes included access to care, including improving access to mental health care. Specific to mental health care, participants mentioned addressing barriers to this care such as having more language resources and more culturally aware and diverse mental health care providers, having the proper workforce and skillsets available to handle mental health crises response, creating alternate mental health responses that do not involve law enforcement, and reducing barriers to accessing transportation, especially as a means to improve access to health care.
- Providing the right resources to the right people by increasing accessibility, particularly with increased internet access and more language options.
- Building trusting relationships and increasing collaboration across the county, engaging and empowering the community, and working towards equity by reducing disparities and geographic division.
- Other key themes included increasing financial support to local resources or services and properly allocating financial resources, increasing local employment opportunities, and increasing awareness of information and available services.
- Additional themes included substance use, decreasing housing access barriers, and providing affordable childcare options.

Question 8: Who or what institutions have the power to create, enforce, implement, and change these barriers to health?

- Key organizations included healthcare systems, neighboring counties, advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, the business community, schools (k-12 and universities), local and broader government, law enforcement, and various local grassroots organizations.
- Key themes of what kind of actions these organizations could take include expanding access to care and services, collaborating with others, even across counties, engaging the community to produce community-driven solutions, meeting people where they are at, and having a county-wide perspective to notice local disparities and advance equity.

- Other key themes mentioned were the barrier of the lack of local employment opportunities, the importance of having a stable local economy and its impact on education, employment, and crime incidence, how universities could aid the community by providing financial support for community development and improving graduate retention especially in Ypsilanti, and the need for increased access to affordable housing.

Question 9: Are there ways that you want the Washtenaw County Health Department to work with your community to remove barriers and improve health?

- A key theme was collaborating with the community. Examples of community collaboration included producing community driven solutions, having healthcare providers and community organizations collaborate, having various community organizations collaborate or create partnerships to offer expanded services, and building trusting relationships with the community.
- Health education and information sharing was another key theme. Specific examples mentioned were providing health education workshops particularly regarding nutrition as well as management of chronic diseases, having cultural awareness when providing these services, providing accessible and accurate information, especially regarding mental health, and increasing general awareness of local data.
- Other themes included increasing access to affordable care and conducting program evaluations to assess areas for improvement.
- Specific desired resources and services that were brought up were community programming for stress reduction, physical activity-related, and youth and senior programming, as well as having pop-up healthcare clinics in the community and distributing health resources.

Question 10: Are there any other ways we can improve the health of our community that we have not already talked about today?

- Key themes were access to affordable care, having increased accessibility of services through Spanish-speaking staff, and the importance of engaging the community and incorporating their voice.
- Other themes mentioned were the need for health education, government policy changes and advocacy, the importance of having a social support network in the community, and the impact of the carceral and legal system on individuals, families, and society and changes needed to these systems.
- Themes around desired services included using a community health worker model, having more physical activity services, having more services available to seniors, and making sure the right people have access to information and services they need.

Detailed Thematic Summary by Question

Question 1: Can you tell me a little about yourself, organizations/groups you are connected with, and work you do in the community?	
Access to Care	- Connection to services
Advocacy	- Academic enrichment - Community organizing

	• Community partners • Youth services
Collaboration	• COVID-19 response - vaccinations • Financial resource distribution • Inter-city collaboration • Law enforcement • Liaison for resources & information • Faith based organizations (local churches) • Resources for families • Safety services • Schools • Washtenaw County Health Department • Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Community Engagement/Outreach	• Local school districts • Resource promotion • Youth
COVID-19	• Resource distribution (cleaning supplies, diapers, financial aid)
Disparities/Equity	• Equity-focused services
Economy	• Workforce/skill development
Education	• Schools and career readiness
Financial Aid	• Income tax assistance • Rent and utility assistance
Food Access	• Food drive • Food pantry • Grocery distribution • Pet food pantry

Law Enforcement/ Legal System	• Legal assistance
	   o Resources for families
	      ▪ Family unification (Visa aid)
	      ▪ Latinx community

Housing/Homelessness	• Alternative intervention strategy/reduced police involvement • Crime reduction • Food & essential resources • Hospitality • Social determinants of health • Warming center
Mental Health	• Community services (National Alliance on Mental Illness - NAMI)

Relationships/Trust	• Building trusted relationships with vulnerable populations

Resources/Services	• Access to care (Corner Health, Ozone House, Waitlist Case Management)
	• Education (English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, Parkridge, Ypsilanti public libraries, Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti public schools)
	• Equity-focused (Community Voices, My Brother's Keeper)
	• Local government (Board of Trustees)
	• Manchester Community Resource Center
	• Program expansion
	    ○ Adding future housing services
	    ○ Adding future transportation services
	    ○ New community center
	• Religious services and education (Islamic Association of Ypsilanti)
	• Safety (Community Violence Intervention Team)
	• Senior services
	    ○ Health
	    ○ Transportation
	• Services for Latinx population (Mexiquenses en Michigan)
	• Services for returning citizens/formerly incarcerated (Community Move, Supreme Felons)
	• Social work
	• Technology education services
	    ○ Immigrants
	    ○ Seniors
	• Youth programs for physical activity

Right Resources to the Right People	• Coordination • Financial resources • Medical resources • Legal resources (in context of immigration)
Safety/Violence	• Crime intervention (Community Crime Intervention Team)
Social Capital/ Community Identity	• Community support network • Peer support for returning citizens/previously incarcerated

Question 2: What are some examples of strengths and resources that exist in your community?

Access to Care	- Hearing & vision screenings/resources - Insurance - Immigrant community - Washtenaw Health Plan - Local civic service organizations (Lions Club) - Local health clinics - Accessible to Latinx community - Corner Health physical & mental health services - Hope Clinic low-income services - Packard Health - Washtenaw County Health Department - Local hospitals
Collaboration	- COVID-19 response – following guidelines - Faith based organizations - Local government - School districts - Service based organizations/non-profits - Washtenaw County Health Department
Community Engagement/Outreach	- Community voice - Community-driven vs. Community-minded resources - Direct aid responses - Gathering the community together - Health equity - Mutual aid - Social media/word of mouth
COVID-19	- COVID-19 prevention practices - COVID-19 prevention supplies (masks) - Food and essential resource distribution
Economy	Community employment services
Education	- Early childhood development centers - Local colleges & universities
Financial Aid	Financial resources like local grants
Food Access	- Free food truck - Grassroots resources - Local health clinics (Hope Clinic)

Government	• Local government
	  o Communication
	  o Passion for change

Information/Data	• Community resources (e.g., free local newspaper)
	• Credible information
	  o Avoid escalation of issues (due to misinformation)
	  o Increases awareness of health information

Law Enforcement/ Legal System	• Community trust with law enforcement
Mental Health	• Local organizations providing resources (Community Mental Health, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Washtenaw County Health Department)
Relationships/Trust	• Credible information • Gratitude • Relationship building • Reliability

Resources/Services	• Faith based organizations
	• Foster care parents
	• Immigration & legal services (Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights - WICIR)
	• Inclusive events
	• Local businesses
	• Physical Activity
	  o Five Healthy Towns
	  o Walking trails and parks
	  o Wellness coalitions
	• Services for seniors
	• Washtenaw County Health Department

Right Resources to the Right People	• Abundance of resources
	  o Resource awareness
	  o Resource connection

Safety/Violence	• Community violence prevention resources

Social Capital/
Community Identity
	• Community connection
	• Community support network (mutual aid)
	• Cultural preservation
	• Resilience
	  o Impoverished populations
	• Sense of community
	  o Accountability

	o COVID-19 impact
	o Peer support
	o Reliability/trust
Transportation	• Transportation assistance provided by local organizations

Question 3: What are some of the most important health issue(s) that must be addressed to improve health in your community?

Access to Care	
	• Affordable services
	• Better services for seniors
	• Chronic disease management
	o Autoimmune disease
	o Diabetes
	o Health education
	o High cholesterol
	o Hypertension
	• Dental care
	• Getting the right resources to the right people
	• Healthcare system racism
	• Lack of medical clinics
	• Lack of pharmacies
	• Lack of primary care providers
	• Lack of vision services
	• Language barrier, interpreters needed
	• Location
	o Desire for more Michigan Medicine presence in Ypsilanti
	• Need for health education, specifically amongst African American men
	• Quality of care
	• STI/HIV screening and treatment
	• Stigma

Accessibility	
	• Access to resources
	• Affordability (in context of inflation)
	• Community gathering space
	• Internet access
	• Lack of culturally appropriate services
	o Language appropriate materials

Collaboration	
	• Support needed from other organizations

COVID-19	
	• Access to up to date/accurate information
	• Access to test kits and vaccines
	• Community distrust

Disparities/Equity	• Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti disparity
	○ Access to care
	○ Desired UM connection to Ypsilanti
	○ Mental health impact of economic disparity
	○ Education system (K-12) disparity
	• Utilization of health services impacted by education disparity

Education	• Bullying
	• Poor quality
	• School system impact on family dynamics

Financial Aid	• Financial support needed to improve access to resources

Food Access	• Affordability
	○ No EBT access
	○ Impact of low-income budget/income instability
	• Impact of housing instability
	• Nutrition/healthy food
	○ Challenge to accommodate different cultural approaches to food
	○ Feeling of lack of control over food
	○ Impact of family life and work/life balance
	• Nutrition education needed

Housing/Homelessness	• Access to housing
	○ Affordability
	○ Impact on families
	○ Impact on medication compliance
	○ Lack of temporary shelters
	○ Homeless population
	• Flawed "Housing First" model
	○ Health issues exacerbations
	○ Need for connection and community
	○ Need for holistic care

Information/Data	• Desire for health education
	• Desire for local data

Mental Health	- Access to care - Counseling services - Increased need for services - Alternate response options - Crisis response education - Distrust - Distrust of CMH - Distrust of local government agencies - Fear of police involvement - Need for trusted responders - Improved crisis response - Need for improved "street response" - Social isolation - Stigma - Society's fear of individuals exhibiting mental health symptoms
Relationships/Trust	Building trusting relationships with education/career readiness providers
Resources/Services	- Access to hygiene and cleaning supplies - Accessible youth activities/sports - Accessible to youth from variety of cultural backgrounds and family dynamics - Disparity of activities in Ann Arbor vs Ypsilanti - Inclusive of Latinx community - Transportation - Youth empowerment - Affordable caretaker respite - Affordable childcare - Lack of culturally appropriate services - Foster care for children of refugees - Refugee services/support
Safety/Violence	- Bullying - Schools - Social media - Domestic violence - Youth support - Crime reduction - De-escalation techniques - Safe activities/sports

Social Capital/ Community Identity	- Low social-economic status - Non-walkable city/county - Insufficient physical activity - Overly reliant on motorized vehicles - Work/life balance - Need for cultural shift - Work is coming before health
Substance Use	- Accidental overdose amongst seniors - Need for improved approach to recovery - Safe use sites
Transportation	- Access to care - Access to health services that are farther away - Access to medications - Seniors - Affordability - Barriers to driving - Ability to own a car - Driver's license

Question 4: How can these strengths and resources be used to help improve people's health?	
Access to Care	• Ability to see doctor when you need to • Access to information o Language barrier • Improved quality of care
Collaboration	• Health resources • Career readiness • Local organizations • Reach larger audiences • Social networking • Youth impact and programming
Community Engagement/ Outreach	• Accessible youth activities/sports • Affordability • Community-driven solutions • Community support of vulnerable populations • Faith based institutions • Grassroots efforts • Inclusive of Latinx community • Meeting people where they are at • Nutrition education

COVID-19	• Resource distribution
	    o Essential supplies
	    o Test kits

Disparities/Equity	• Narrowing gaps/disparities
Financial Aid	• Direct assistances on rent and other bills • Funding for existing programs • Funding for peer-led grassroots programs
Food Access	• Affordability • Food pantries
Government	• Local government support and funding

Information/Data	• Improved access to information
	○ Faith based institutions
	○ Subject matter experts (example: doctors in the community)
	○ Washtenaw County Health Department website

Mental Health	• Advocacy
	• Avoid police involvement
	• Cultural shift of accountability instead of punishment
	• Improved/alternate crisis response
	• Reduce stigma
	○ Address fear of involuntary hospitalizations
	○ Reduce fear of people with mental health conditions

Right Resources to the Right People	• Improved access to resources
	• Improved/increased community engagement and outreach efforts
	• Variety of resource locations
	• Youth services

Social Capital/ Community Identity	• Community events
	• Community gathering space
	• Desire for community building
	• Opportunities to participate in humanitarian aid efforts
	• Sense of belonging
	• Support of/from the community

Substance Use	• Evolution of recovery models
	• Free Narcan access
	• Reducing stigma

Access to Care	
	• Closure of local clinic
	• Local clinics in Ypsilanti are accessible to Latinx/immigrant community
	• Healthcare system racism and microaggressions
	• Loss of local pharmacy

Community Engagement/ Outreach	
	• Health education
	o Limited nutrition knowledge
	• Lack of community engagement by local hospitals

COVID-19	
	• Controversy and hostility
	• Guideline non-compliance
	• Inflation
	• Job/income loss
	• Long-term health effects
	• Pandemic fatigue

Disparities/Equity	
	• County disconnectedness
	• Mental health disparities
	• Resources disparities
	o COVID-19
	o Ypsilanti

Economy	
	• Barriers to employment (example: drug tests)
	• Employment services
	o Awareness/connection to employment opportunities
	o Education and skill development
	o Loss/relocation of services (Michigan Works)
	• Income limitations
	• Impact of inflation
	• Loss of major employers (auto industry)

Education	
	• Impact of lack of good education on local economy
	• Lack of funding for public school system (K-12)

Environmental Health	• Climate change o Severe storms and power outages

Financial Aid	• Lack of health resources
	   o Feeling of being stretched thin
	   o Limited government financial aid

Food Access	• Income limitation • Loss of local grocery store

Government	• Impact of budget decisions
	   o Lasting impact of state level mental health budget cuts under Gov. Engler
	• Flawed foster care system
	   o Too complicated to sign up as foster parent
	• Overly complex rules/regulation barrier to organization being able to help community
	• Resistance to helping community
	• Unfair/inconsistent enforcement of rules

Housing/Homelessnes s	• Capitalism
	• COVID-19 Impact
	   o Evictions
	   o Housing security
	• Employment loss
	• Housing quality
	• Immigration policy barriers
	• Lack of affordable housing
	   o Impact on mental health
	   o Income limitations
	   o Increased rent/exploitation
	   o Increased stress
	• Lack of emergency housing shelters
	   o Inaccurate perception of need
	   o Local shelter closed
	   o Low capacity

Law Enforcement/ Legal System	• Institutional exploitation of vulnerable populations
	   o Drug trials on incarcerated population
	   o Institutional influence of corporations (example: Pfizer)
	   o Intersection of homeless and incarcerated populations

Mental Health	• Homeless population needs • Impact of COVID-19 isolation • Incarcerated population needs

	• Increased awareness of mental health conditions
	• Increased population in need
	• Over diagnosing (self-diagnosis implied)
	• Stigma
Resources/Services	• Lack of community events/activities
	• Lack of warming centers
	• Loss of local volunteers/service groups
Social Capital/ Community Identity	• Loss of community connectedness
	• Loss of local social events
Substance Use	• Increased use
Transportation	• Limited access impact on employment opportunities

Question 6: How do these forces of change impact your community, particularly those who experience oppression?	

Access to Care	- Defers care
	   o Racism within healthcare system
	   o Feeling respected

Accessibility	- Lack of internet/technology access
COVID-19	- Community resources o COVID-19 prevention (e.g. vaccines) - Isolation

Disparities/Equity	- Decreased life expectancy
	   o Due to:
	      ▪ Oppression
	      ▪ Racism/racial disparities
	      ▪ Worse living conditions
	   o Decreased life expectancy in Ypsilanti compared to Ann Arbor
	- Geographical disparities in treatment of groups
	   o Ypsilanti compared to Ann Arbor
	      ▪ Black communities – treated worse in Ann Arbor
	      ▪ LGBTQ communities – treated worse in Ypsilanti
	- Increased marginalization
	   o Income inequities
	   o Lack of empathy towards marginalized people
	- Poverty
	   o Income inequity – greater negative impact on those with less financial security

Economy	- Employment
	   o Loss of opportunities
	   o Need for opportunities for those without higher education
	   o Need encouragement of skill development/job training (certificate and trade programs)
	   o Youth
	- Impact of local businesses
	   o Profiteering (marijuana dispensaries, liquor stores)
	      ▪ High number of these establishments
	      ▪ Not giving back to the community

Education	- Public schools
	   o Lack of connection to community in staff
	   o Lack of community representation in staff
	      ▪ Race and gender
	   o Lack of funding/resources

	▪ Loss of ability to be competitive
	o Lack of sustainability (of resources/people/talent)
	▪ High staff turnover
	o Need for increased/competitive pay
	o Youth empowerment necessary
Food Access	• Community resources
	o Existing resource: Free food truck
	• Lack of information and services
	o Home delivery
Government	• Government
	o Enforcements (violation letters)
	o Prejudice
Housing/Homelessness	• Increased stress
	o Housing access
	• Poverty
	o Housing access
Law Enforcement/ Legal System	• Carceral/legal system
	• Long-term impact
	• Community resources
	• Financial burden (cost of lawyers to defend)
Mental Health	• Access to mental health services and treatment
	o Not receiving treatment leads to undetected, worsening mental health state and outcomes
	o Racism in mental health care
	o Racism's impact on mental health
Safety/Violence	• Crime/violence impact
	o Mental health
	o Increased mass shootings
	o Increased suicides
	• Increased domestic violence
	o COVID impact on job loss/recovery
	o Financial strain (utilities, food)
	o Lack of employment
	o Housing
	o Stress
	• Media influence
	o Increased violence
Social Capital/ Community Identity	• Empathy
	o Sense of community
	• Loss of community events
	o Loss in social connection

Substance Use	• Youth

Transportation	• Accessibility • Lack of personal transportation • Low-income as accessibility barrier • Mental health stigma affecting use of transportation • Seniors

Question 7: What solutions would you have to address barriers to health?*
Includes responses from original questions used only for first three interviews: "What barriers keep people in your community from being healthy?" and "What solutions would you have to address some of the barriers that would benefit all groups, particularly those who are most impacted?"

Access to Care	• Income and age disparities • Language barrier • Local services • Right resources to the right people • Spanish language resources/interpreters

Accessibility	• Accessibility of resources o Due to limited internet access

Advocacy	• Communication
	   o Between government and community members
	• Support
	   o Accurate information

Collaboration	• Building trusting relationships
	• County-wide collaboration
	   o Municipalities
	   o Nonprofits
	   o Organizations
	   o Youth shelters
	• Institutional collaboration
	   o Equity focus
	   o Local universities/colleges
	• Partnerships
	• Resources
	   o Funding
	   o Increasing access by increasing social cohesion
	   o Partnerships

Community Engagement/Outreach	• Community engagement
	   o Community-driven solutions
	   o Community voice

	o Equity focus
	o Meeting people where they are at
	o Tailored approach

Disparities/Equity	• Community unity
	    o Geographic silos
	• Documentation
	    o Immigrant community
	• Equity
	    o Accessibility/equal opportunity
	• Lack of access to resources to certain communities during COVID-19 pandemic (early in pandemic)
	• Structural division
	    o University of Michigan vs Eastern Michigan University
	    o Ypsilanti vs. Ann Arbor

Economy	• Employment opportunities
	    o Local businesses
	    o Skill development
	• Local employment opportunities/support
	    o Post-graduation retention in Ypsilanti
	    o University of Michigan vs Eastern Michigan University
	• Support
	    o Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti
	    o Loss of knowledge/talent

Education	• Barrier: Education o Disparities (examples: low-income, single mothers, and children)

Financial Aid	• Financial resources
	• Financial support
	    o Collaboration (local businesses and government)
	• Resource allocation
	    o Financial support

Government	• Build relationships
	    o Government, judges, law enforcement, and community organizations
	• Communication
	    o Government, judges, law enforcement, and community organizations
	• Community outreach
	    o Broken link between governments, organizations, and community

Housing/Homelessness	• Documentation o Housing • Emergency housing shelter

	o Variety of locations

Information/Data	• Communication
	   o Health literacy
	   o Plain language
	• Community advocacy
	   o Oppressed communities
	   o Support
	• Lack of awareness of up to date/accurate information during COVID-19 pandemic (to present implied)

Law Enforcement/
Legal System
	• Documentation
	   o Access to state ID/driver's license
	• Law enforcement alternatives
	   o From fear-based response to empathy
	   o Poverty
	   o Racism
	   o Shift from punitive resolutions

Mental Health	• Access to care
	   o Mental health
	   o Mental health barriers:
	      ▪ Language
	      ▪ Need for culturally aware or diverse mental health providers
	      ▪ Need for Spanish-speaking therapists
	• Crisis response
	• Resources, access
	• Skill development
	• Support

Relationships/Trust	• Building trust • Communication o Between community members
Resources/Services	• Acknowledgment of social determinants of health • Affordable childcare

Right Resources to the Right People	• Advocacy
	   o Right resources to the right people
	• Community knowledge/awareness
	   o About services available in the community
	• Health Department communication
	   o Health and service promotion

Social Capital/ Community Identity	• Community identity o Empowerment
Substance Use	• Safer use sites

Transportation	- Access to care - Transportation (WAVE bus) - Accessibility - Affordability - Driver's license/documentation - Independence - Partnerships - WAVE bus

Accessibility	• Access to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes
	    o Convenient class time/format
	    o Right resources to right people
	• Accessible services
	    o Variety of locations
	• Expanding access
	    o Barrier to receiving aid
	    o Improved accessibility (location)
	    o Meeting people where they are
	• Healthcare systems
	    o Variety of locations

Advocacy	• Advocacy groups o Community empowerment
Collaboration	• Collective action • Community engagement • Cross-county collaboration • Expanding access o Service collaboration

Community Engagement/Outreach	• Community engagement
	    o Community-driven solutions
	    o Community voice
	    o Supreme Felon members
	• Faith-based organizations (local churches)
	    o Community engagement
	• Healthcare systems
	    o Community outreach on the ground
	    o Health education
	• Meeting people where they are at
	    o Community work on the ground

Disparities/Equity	• County-wide perspective o Local disparities: Ypsilanti vs. Ann Arbor

Economy	• (Barrier:) Lack of local employment
	    o Generational impact, long-term effects
	• Business community
	    o Collaboration
	    o Community improvement
	    o Community investment
	    o Economic impact
	    o Strategic planning
	    o Supportive government
	• Outside investor
	    o Local employment opportunities

- Stable local economy
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Lower crime rates

Education	- Schools - Community engagement - Employment opportunities - Universities (University of Michigan & Eastern Michigan University) - City development - Financial resources - Giving back to the community - Young adults - Universities and municipalities - Education - Financial resources for community development (from Eastern Michigan University and University of Michigan to Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor) - Graduate retention - Local employment - Ypsilanti vs. Ann Arbor
Financial Aid	- Barriers to receiving funding - County - Financial support - Financial resources - Community organizations - Restrictions/red tape - Financial support/resources - Local grassroots orgs - Prevent duplication of efforts - Funding allocation - Resource allocation - Funding to those directly aiding people
Government	- Government - Consistent communication - Law enforcement - Local government - Childcare - Community collaboration - County commissioner - Engagement - Food & general supplies - Mental health - Points of contact - Political voices - Public access/community involvement - Recreational spaces

	o Resource allocation/program development
	o Transparency/communication
	o Transportation
	• Local townships
	      o Equitable internet access
	• State and federal government
	      o Driver's license

Housing/Homelessnes s	• Affordability • Availability • Awareness • Instability • Policy

Information/Data	• Media
	      o Misinformation
	• Noninvasive data collection
	      o Barrier to receiving aid

Law Enforcement/ Legal System	• Law enforcement o Presence

Relationships/Trust	• Local organizations
	      o Trusted agents
	• Relationship building
	      o Collaboration to create change
	      o Community voice

Resources/Services	• Community center
	      o Clinic
	      o Event space
	      o Food pantry
	      o Increased access (longer hours)
	      o Job training
	      o Mental and physical health
	      o Recreational spaces
	      o Youth

Question 9: Are there ways that you want the Washtenaw County Health Department to work with your community to remove barriers and improve health?

Access to Care	• Affordability • Vaccine clinics

Collaboration	• Communication
	• Community input
	• Community liaisons
	• Community support
	• Community voice
	• Equity focus
	• Healthcare providers and organizations with each other
	• Healthy Neighborhoods Team
	• Organizational support and collaboration
	    ◦ Examples: Whitmore Lake health equity leadership team, Ozone House, other community organizations
	• Partnerships
	    ◦ Continuity of care
	    ◦ Offering one-stop access to resources
	    ◦ To help fill in gaps from existing programs
	• Physical, mental, and emotional support
	• Youth

Community Engagement/Outreach	• Acknowledging systemic racism
	• Collaboration
	• Community driven solutions
	• Cultural awareness
	• Health education
	    ◦ Chronic disease management (diabetes)
	    ◦ Workshops
	• Individual case management
	• Involvement of health department leadership
	• Networking and recruiting with community members
	• Nutrition
	• Spanish language
	• Health department presence and availability in community
	• Health department-community relationship

Government	• Local government ◦ Political influence

Information/Data	• Accessible/accurate information
	    ◦ Plain language
	    ◦ Up to date information
	    ◦ Validate health issues
	• Awareness of local data

| | • Education/awareness |
| | • Program evaluation/improvement |

Mental Health	• Accessible/accurate information
	o Mental health
	• Advocate for program space
	o To talk about mental health

Relationships/Trust	• Building trusting relationships
	o Community engagement
	o Community support network
	o Meeting people where they are at
	o More accessible events (hybrid/virtual and in-person)
	• Community empowerment
	o Building trusting relationships
	• Trust building
	o Fear of regulatory action

Resources/Services	• Community programming
	o Free physical activity classes
	o Stress reduction
	o Youth
	• Health resources and distribution
	o Affordability
	o COVID-19/flu vaccination clinics
	o Essential medical supplies
	o COVID-19 resources
	• Health/Social services
	o Screenings
	o Seniors
	o WIC
	• Pop-up healthcare clinics
	o Basic healthcare (vitals)
	o Variety of locations
	• Programs for seniors
	o Education
	o Fitness
	• Sustainable programs

Question 10: Are there any other ways we can improve the health of our community that we have not already talked about today?

Access to Care	• Affordability of care
Accessibility	• Language o Spanish-speaking staff
Collaboration	• Community training • Cross-county collaboration o Physical activity • Health organizations (example: American Heart Association) • Information distribution

Community Engagement/Outreach	• Appreciation of Washtenaw County Health Department work
	    o Availability of accurate information
	• Awareness
	    o Health issues
	• Community appreciation
	• Community empowerment
	    o Community voice
	• Nutrition
	• Variety of community-oriented services
	    o Community engagement

Disparities/Equity	• Equity o For people that may benefit but are overlooked
Education	• Youth o Proactive school programming (example: nutrition)

Government	• Local government
	    o Advocacy
	• Policy
	    o Foster care
	    o Funding allocation

Information/Data	• Awareness
	    o Services
	    o Support
	• Youth
	    o Awareness/accurate information
	    o Information distribution to families

Law Enforcement/ Legal System	• Carceral/legal system
	    o Employment barrier
	    o Impact on family health
	    o Lack of support to family of incarcerated person

	o Law enforcement, court system, probation o Physical, mental, holistic health impact o Reliable, affordable childcare barrier o Transportation barrier
Mental Health	• Mental health topic needs more attention

Resources/Services	• Access to resources
	• Appreciation: Health resources
	• Community Health Worker (CHW) model
	    o Convenient service location
	    o Health education
	• Physical activity
	    o Collaboration: YMCA
	• Senior services
	    o Financial support
	• Sustained support
	    o Through COVID-19 pandemic into the future

Right Resources to the Right People	• Information • Liaisons • Services

Social Capital/ Community Identity	• Community network support
	    o Community members
	    o Community organizations
	    o Health Department
	    o Social support network

Notable Quotes

- ...you'd be like, "man, what happened to that guy?" That's because all them guys was caught up in experimental drugs they were doing at Upjohn and Parke-Davis. You homeless and you in prison, you don't got nobody looking out for you and you're already mentally...[unwell] anyway and then they sent you in there under a crime that...in any other time, they would have deemed you crazy....but now you're sane enough to go to prison.

- One of the biggest strengths in this community is if there's somebody in need, and if I put the word out or somebody else puts the word out, they come together, like you would not believe. You know, somebody's having a problem...I will usually be overwhelmed by the response.

- COVID has had a major impact...in so many ways, because...we've got people in the community who...take it very seriously and try very hard to stay healthy and not spread it to others. And then I've got the other whole group that thinks it's a hoax.

- But as the result of the pandemic...the food prices going up, rents going up. I get a lot of calls from people about...I can't pay my bills, I'm afraid I'm gonna get kicked out because I can't keep up with my rent. And, you know, if I pay for my rent, I can't buy food for me and my kids...not that I didn't get that before but it's much more prevalent now.

- I would like to see them help more with... transportation barriers,...child care...I hear from families a lot about that issue. And...also,...helping to meet especially currently the, the needs people have in terms of food and...cleaning products.

- ...the aftermath of [the pandemic], people can't afford what they need.

- And some of those, and most of those have no idea about the richness of Washtenaw County, the many resources that's actually available in this county...

- I say that in terms of organizations and groups should be more in collaboration, then distance, I think there's a plague out here with, with some, a minimum amount of individuals that feel that they may have the answer. And quite frankly, there's no individual group that could have the complete solution to the ills of our community.

- I would hope to collaborate... by allowing our members who are products and byproducts of this community to actually get [information] to those who most need it... because going to a person's neighborhood doesn't mean you're going to be allowed in their home.

- ... as a small community... with this small resources of the community members donating and trying to help other community members, we can only do so much.

- ...we could set up a program to help these refugees [children], place them in [foster] homes that they are comfortable with. That speaks their language that knows about their culture and their background. Other than just placing them in a home that has no idea on the way that these kids are or what they're comfortable with...

- I see a little resistance from the township for instance and from the US government to where they're not extending their hands or trying to help out the... communities. Instead, I see that they're making it harder for [community organizations] to do their job and provide for the community members.

- ...those of us who have had some type of formal education...may utilize the health services and education in our community. But those who don't, I don't think they use them until they get sick, somebody in the family gets sick, sometimes it's too late.

- ...when you lose those resources, you can't compete with other schools for your talent. So you lose your best teachers...A lot of times, these teachers then come in and do one or two years. So you have experience in an urban area for a couple of years, you can go from Ypsi Community Schools, where you're making x amount of dollars to somewhere else, ... even next door to Ann Arbor, where you can...increase your pay. But if we were able to maintain and keep some of our talent here... people come in here and work and then go somewhere else. That way, you're not connected to the community. And that's important as well to be connected to the community.

- ...strong academic community helps for a strong economy...You have to have a strong academic institution to support the growth of those folks who may be in poverty or living in oppressed communities, you have to have some type of outlet or some somebody who can encourage you and inspire you to change. And for young people. That's usually through school.

- ...how do [academic institutions/colleges and universities] work together to do stuff that improves Washtenaw County in general, but because the biggest need is in Ypsilanti, you have to have a focus on Ypsilanti because that's the area you really want to try to help if you want to improve your county as a whole.

- How do we get the people who we're most trying to provide support to, educate, advocate for? How do we get them to value what it is? That's right in their neighborhood?

- So now here we have a whole population of people...that know what they need. That's why I say start with them. First. They know what they need. But they nobody ever asked them. So they just build resilience in their place of poverty. And we've got to start to pull people from that place.

- ...there are resources in the community. Community minded resources, not community driven...community minded is you got people that really care about the community, and they get positions and they make decisions for the community based on what they think the community needs. But when you are community driven, everything starts and ends with the community....So let's [put] community first community voice over any other voice.

- ...I was in extreme pain. So I asked the nurse I said, Ma'am, can you please just let me lay down on a cot?....[the nurse said] Oh, no, I'm so sorry. White male comes in....They went and they let him lay down.

- It's just work, work, work [in the United States] and when someone starts to feel bad, instead of being able to care for their health and have more physical activity, instead of having better nutrition schedule, they can't because of the kind of job they have.

- ...I don't know if since Covid, there's a bit more stress in the families...because many families were removed from their homes or had to leave their homes because they couldn't cover the rent. They had to go live with family members. So, I think that increased stress, and changed self-esteem. Many things changed...that change in families increased intrafamilial violence a lot. Not being able to have your own space provoked stress and fights within families, that

discomfort. Not having work – some people didn't get their jobs back right away and all of that brings problems in the family. The lack of economic resources is always a big problem in families.

- Language is a barrier for us because it could be that in the clinic they speak Spanish, but in the hospital, they don't speak Spanish you may not have an interpreter on hand. So, how do I get others to understand me? Now, if the person looks and has help for mental health, many people don't like to have those kinds of therapies with an interpreter. So, also, in that aspect of mental health, we need a lot more therapists.

- Well, it could be being more accessible, not just saying, "Here I am, come to me." As an institution, as an organization, I can say, "I'll go where people are."

- There were several services groups...Many clubs have folded because they don't have enough volunteers. People have aged out and just weren't able to do everything anymore so the community has lost some of those types of groups that did help support other community members.

- I think the mental health issues is probably the top health issue for everybody. Mental health issue stems around more of the social isolation piece...kind of like imploding right because you're stuck at home. You don't and you may be able to call somebody, but it may not come to you right away, like, "Oh, I could just call that person" but instead you're just at home thinking like, "I'm just by myself now."

- But I think that is like one of the positive things that like has come out of covid is has kind of pushed us to get to know our neighbors a little bit. You know, we haven't said seen so and so, so let's check on them.

- I hesitate to use the term "affordable housing" because what is affordable and how affordable is often defined is like just not even realistic...Like, how do you have well prepared healthy food if you don't have access to a kitchen? How do you keep your medications at the temperature they're supposed to be if you don't have access to a refrigeration?

- ... the ability to have somebody to respond to mental health crises is super important... in a way that is disconnected from agencies that people don't trust... If people don't trust them, they won't call them. And so you need to have more than one option for people.

- And I also think creating alternatives for people to, connecting with, with the police or with law, you know, law enforcement with any system that is like coercive... You know, it's ultimately shifting that culture. A step in that might be, here's somebody who you call that isn't the police that isn't coming in here in a punitive way, but in a conflict resolution way.

- Who has the financial means to support the local grassroots organizations that are already doing this work? Because I think the only way to make actual change is through relationships, and so we need to a) like, come out of our offices to build those relationships....genuine relationships...

- In the young people's lives, I think just giving them more outlets, more things to do, more things to experience and just look forward to because it's hard to keep the kid from jumping off a ledge if they don't think there's anything worth staying up for.