

2023 Washtenaw County Community Health Assessment Executive Summary



Washtenaw County
Health Department
healthy together

Table of Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction & Purpose.....	4
Data Collection & Analysis.....	6
Prioritized Health Needs	9
Conclusion.....	13

Foreword

To our Washtenaw County community,

On behalf of the Washtenaw County Health Department, it is a pleasure to share our 2023 Community Health Assessment.

The Community Health Assessment (CHA) is an important part of the Health Department's community health improvement process. The CHA helps us learn about our community's health needs so we can work to address them together with our partners through activities and programs. In addition to providing a roadmap for our future Health Department activities, we hope this assessment is also useful for community groups and residents working to improve health in Washtenaw County.

The CHA pulls together existing health data and perspectives from community members and partners. Community input was collected through surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and windshield tours (assessments of physical spaces throughout the county). All of this helps us better understand the factors that make it easier or more difficult for our community members to live their healthiest lives.

Our mission at the Health Department is to assure, in partnership with the community, the necessary conditions for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Community voices, engagement, and collaboration are critical to the success of our entire community health improvement process. Thank you to our community members and partners who generously shared their time and input for this assessment. Your thoughtful contributions will help to shape the foundation of our work for the next five years.

We look forward to using our CHA to identify actions that will improve health for everyone in Washtenaw County!

Sincerely,

Jimena Loveluck, MSW

Health Officer, Washtenaw County Health Department

Introduction & Purpose

The Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) is pleased to present the 2023 Washtenaw County Community Health Assessment (CHA). This assessment is conducted every five years. The CHA is a process that uses quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze health data within our community. Health data include information on risk factors, quality of life, social determinants of health, health inequities, mortality, morbidity, and community assets.

This executive summary provides an overview of the process and methods used to obtain and analyze primary and secondary data to identify the significant health needs in Washtenaw County. Special attention has been given to the needs of higher risk and underserved populations, unmet health needs or gaps in services, and input from the community. Findings from the CHA will be used to identify and develop strategies to improve health in Washtenaw. For more information about the CHA please visit [Washtenaw :: Community Health Assessment \(healthforallwashtenaw.org\)](https://healthforallwashtenaw.org).

Acknowledgments

The development of the 2023 CHA was a collective effort that would not have been possible without the help of community-serving organizations and community members who share our commitment to improving health and quality of life. As an organization, we work to bring a health equity perspective into everything we do. This means focusing our efforts where we know they are most needed and sustaining engagement with our community members that are most impacted. The 2023 CHA is a prime example of the value [these community partnerships](#) bring to local public health work in Washtenaw County.

Thank you to every community member and organization that contributed to this CHA and our community health improvement work more broadly. We are grateful to you all for sharing your expertise and experiences with us.

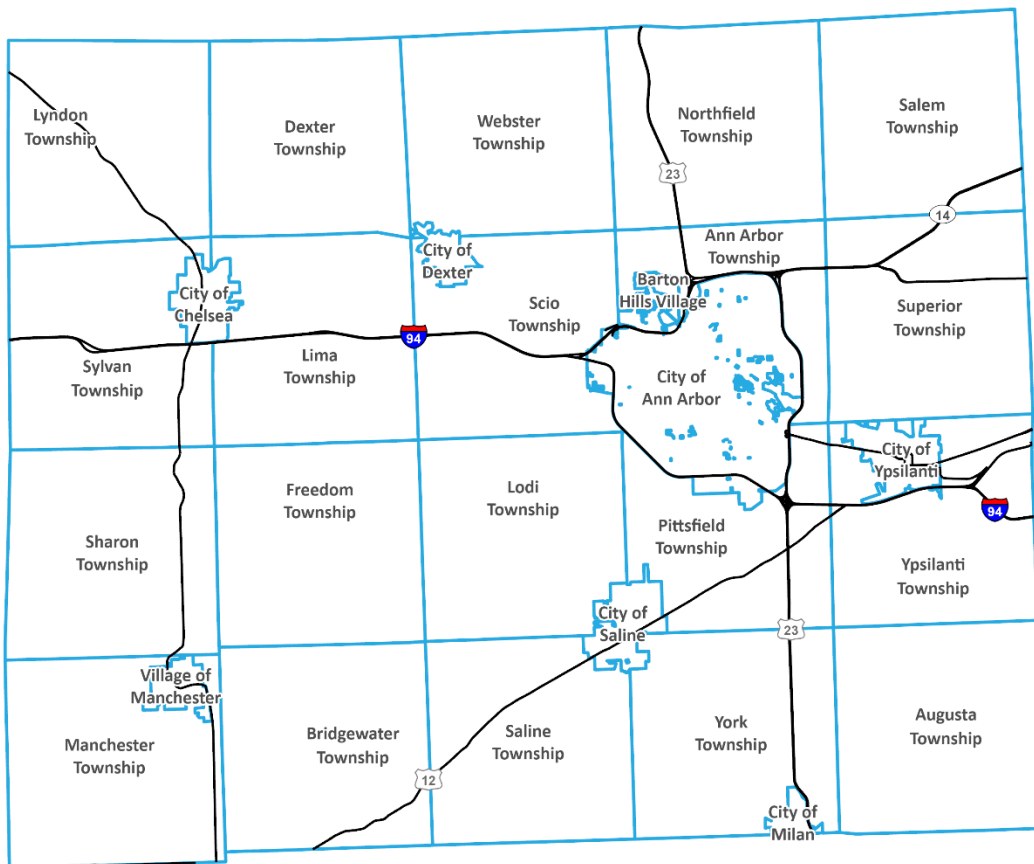
Special thanks to:

- Community Voices for Health Equity team members who participated in windshield tours and/or collaborated on prioritization meetings: Charles Peterson, Charo Ledon, Najma Treadwell, Alisha Spencer, Marta Larson, and Linda Lupi.
- Community members who helped organize and co-facilitate focus groups, and/or led windshield tours: Trische Duckworth, Gail Wolkoff, Charo Ledon, and Roxanne Frazier.
- WCHD Community Health Workers, Alex Thomas and Ailen Velazquez, and members of the Healthy Neighborhoods Team.
- Community, faith-based and grassroots organizations who partnered with WCHD to support survey data collection: Community Family Life Center, Survivors Speak, Buenos Vecinos, Pull Over Prevention of Southeast Michigan, Packard Health, Jewish Family Services, and Corner Health Center.
- And all community members and partners who shared their wisdom, insight, and perspectives in focus groups and key informant interviews.

Description of Washtenaw County

Washtenaw County is located in southeast Michigan, covering an area of 720 square miles. The largest cities are Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. The county also contains several smaller cities/villages, such as Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline, and Whitmore Lake. Outside of these city areas, much of the county is rural. Washtenaw County is home to two large universities: the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. To see the full demographics of Washtenaw County please view this page on the Health for All website:

<https://www.healthforallwashtenaw.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=demographics>





Data Collection & Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. Whenever feasible, we cross-referenced our local findings with regional, state, and national data sources. An overview of the collected data, coupled with the key insights derived from our analysis, facilitated the identification of significant health needs specific to Washtenaw County. For more information about data collection methods and analysis please visit

<https://www.healthforallwashtenaw.org/tiles/index/display?alias=Methodology>

Data Methodology & Findings

Data	Description	Analysis
 <p>Data Scoring</p>	<p>Data was collected from 29 secondary data sources (see full source list in Appendices Section). 150 demographic, social, economic, and health indicators were available for Washtenaw County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each indicator was given a score at the county level, then compared to the Michigan and U.S. values. • Indicators were rolled up into health and quality of life topic areas, then ranked. • See the Appendices Section for the full data scoring report and ranking
 <p>Community Survey</p>	<p>The Washtenaw County Community Health Survey consisted of 20 health and well-being questions. Survey marketing and outreach efforts included email invitations, social media posts, a press release, handouts/flyers, and coordination of in-person paper survey distribution events in collaboration with community-based organizations. The survey was available in English and Spanish. 993 residents of Washtenaw County completed the survey.</p>	<p>The top 3 health issues and social and economic issues of greatest concern identified by Survey Respondents are listed below. For a complete list of community health survey findings see Washtenaw :: Community Health Assessment :: Community Survey (healthforallwashtenaw.org) Top health issues of greatest concern identified by Survey Respondents were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent/teen health • Mental Health/Behavioral Health • Substance use (opioid use, stimulant use, etc.) and access to treatment

Key Informants



Ten (10) key informant interviews were conducted in March 2023. Individuals who participated in the interviews included formerly incarcerated/returning citizens and their families, older adults and low-income individuals in the Whitmore Lake area, refugees, people in the education sector, people providing equity-focused community organizing/advocacy services to vulnerable populations, people serving the Latinx community, Manchester community members, people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, and youth and homeless youth.

Top social and economic issues of greatest concern identified by Survey Respondents were:

- Access to affordable healthy food
- Access to affordable, high-quality health care/medical services
- Access to affordable housing

Some key themes from these interviews are listed below. For a complete list see [Overarching Interview Summary \(healthforallwashtenaw.org\)](https://healthforallwashtenaw.org):

- Health Care Access & Quality
- Mental Health
- Social Determinants of Health (economy, education, food access/nutrition, transportation)
- COVID-19



Focus Groups

Four (4) focus groups were conducted in March 2023. Focus groups aimed to understand the different health experiences for the Latinx community, youth, and for older adult African American women.

Some key themes from the focus groups are listed below. For a complete list see [Overarching Focus Group Summary \(healthforallwashtenaw.org\)](https://healthforallwashtenaw.org)

- Access to healthy food, mental health, financial stability, health care access & navigation, affordable housing, and racism.
-

Windshield Tours



Three (3) windshield tours were conducted. These tours consisted of driving or walking through the following neighborhoods: (1) Superior Township, MacArthur Blvd, (2) Ypsilanti Downtown, Southside, and (3) Ypsilanti Township. Health department staff were accompanied on each windshield tour by a community member that acted as a tour guide and was able to provide additional context on neighborhood history, things in the neighborhood that make it easier to be healthy, and things that act as barriers to health.

Some key themes from the windshield tours are listed below. For a complete list see [Overarching Windshield Tour Summary \(healthforallwashtenaw.org\)](https://healthforallwashtenaw.org)

- Walkable locations are often central community assets, including parks, Hope Clinic, places of worship, and community gardens.
- Lack of health & social service providers in some areas
- Noted variation in accessibility: (1) some neighborhoods are more walkable than others (2) limitations of public transportation.
- Multiple empty lots i.e. former schools/closed parks that highlight a loss of previous assets.
- Newer community resources, like community gardens, that offer solutions to filling gaps left when other resources, like grocery stores, were lost.

Prioritized Health Topics

In November 2023, the Washtenaw County Health Department hosted a State of Our Health event convening community members and partners. Following a presentation of findings from the CHA, attendees participated in a prioritization scoring activity to select the three priority health needs that the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) would focus on. WCHD also conducted smaller group sessions with additional community members who participated in the same prioritization scoring activity.

WCHD then reviewed results from the scoring activities and identified three priority areas for the 2024 CHIP. For more information about the significant health topics please visit www.healthforallwashtenaw.org.



Mental Health

Mental health was the top reported health concern for Community Survey respondents: 68% of respondents ranked it as a top health issue.

In 2022, **37.6%** of Washtenaw 9th and 11th graders reported feeling sad or hopeless every day for the past two weeks.

Source: Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth

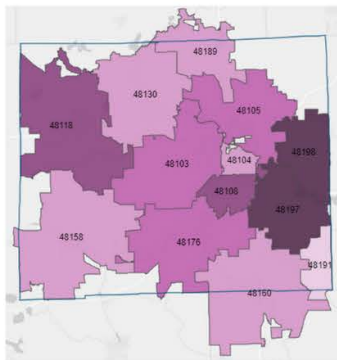
In 2022, **19%** of the Washtenaw Medicare population was treated for depression. This is higher than the Michigan (18%) and US (16%) values.

Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

"I would like to have access to more psychologists, because I have wanted to see one for a long time: therapists, psychologists, and nothing. You must wait three or four months for an appointment, and they don't speak Spanish, only English."
- Latinx Focus Group participant

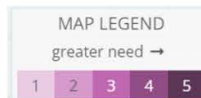
Themes from Interviews and Focus Groups

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Language barriers
- Negative, lasting impact of COVID-19 and social isolation on mental health
- Long wait times/lists to schedule appointment or become patient with mental health professional, need for more service providers
- Support needed outside of appointments with providers
- Youth mental health
- Violence prevention/safety



Mental Health Index

This Mental Health Index is a measure of socioeconomic and health factors correlated with self-reported poor mental health. 48198 (Ypsilanti) is the highest need zip code.



The Mental Health Index is calculated by Conduent Healthy Communities Institute using data from Claritas, 2023; American Community Survey, 2017-2021; and CDC PLACES Project, 2020.



Health Care Access and Navigation

Health care access and navigation was the top reported concern for Community Survey respondents: **79%** of Community Survey respondents ranked it as a top issue.

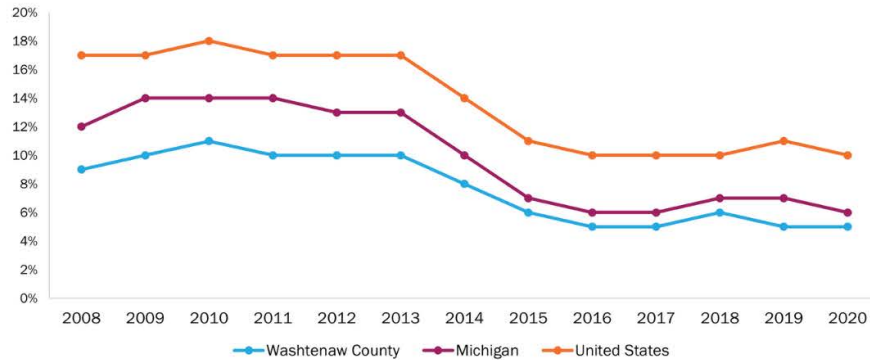
Themes from Interviews and Focus Groups

- Affordability
- Language/cultural barriers
- Need for flexible appointment times
- Racism
- Transportation
- Difficult to schedule timely appointment
- Lack of awareness of available resources
- Challenges accessing available resources

"You know, something that, that may seem simple to most people, is major to a lot of people, you know, like, being able to go see a doctor, get your teeth clean, being able to go get some glasses."

- Interview participant

Percent of population uninsured in Washtenaw County, Michigan, and the US County Health Rankings, 2008-2020



Access to health insurance has improved locally over the past 10 years, but accessing actual care is still challenging for many.

"I don't think [people] use [healthcare services] until they get sick, somebody in the family gets sick. Sometimes it's too late."

- Interview participant



Access to Healthy Food

52% of Community Survey respondents ranked access to affordable, healthy food as a top issue of concern.

Themes from Interviews and Focus Groups

- Access to healthy food options (youth)
- Challenges in maintaining traditional healthy diet (Latinx community)
- Lack of nutrition knowledge
- Local food deserts

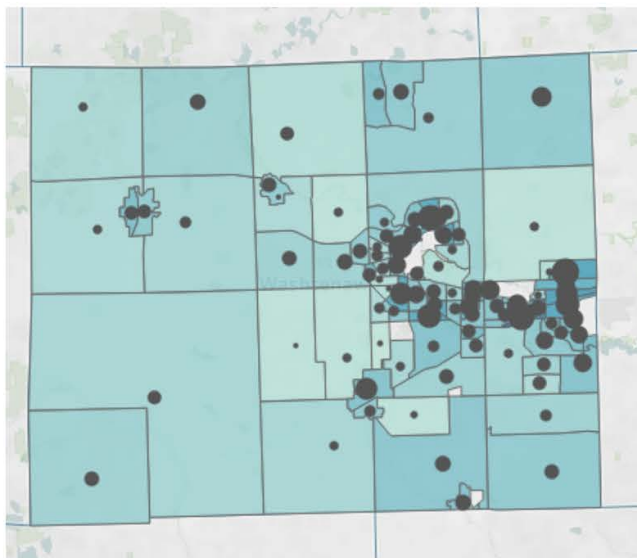
1 in 10

Washtenaw County residents experienced food insecurity at some point during 2022.

Source: Feeding America

"There's no pharmacy in our town anymore. And we do have sort of a grocery store now. But it's more of like a specialty market...the last thing I heard is they still don't take the EBT card. So that means folks who are using EBT card, have only the dollar store to buy food."

- Interview participant



2022 Food Insecurity (by Census Tract)

Key

Percent Food Insecure
1.0% 30.0%

Number Food Insecure
• 40
• 200
• 400
• 600
• 800
• 1,000



Conclusion



The Washtenaw County Health Department has established clear priorities based on the results of this Community Health Assessment and input from community partners to improve health for all community members. Strategies to address these priorities will be developed in the Washtenaw County Health Department's 2024 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Over the next five years, the Health Department will work together with community partners to implement strategies outlined in the CHIP.

To view additional data about the CHA, please visit [Washtenaw :: Community Health Assessment \(healthforallwashtenaw.org\)](https://healthforallwashtenaw.org)