



COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2022-2025



Vanderburgh County Health Department



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HEALTH OFFICER VISION

Community members,

The Vanderburgh County Health Department is pleased to present the Vanderburgh County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 2022-2025. A community's CHIP is developed collaboratively by a partnership of community members, organizations, agencies and the local health department. A CHIP is a long-term, systematic effort to address health problems in a community based on results from the community health needs assessment (CHNA). The plan recommends priorities for action and is used by health and other governmental, educational, and social service agencies and organizations to implement policies and programs that promote health.



The 2022-2025 Vanderburgh County Community Health Improvement Plan reflects the understanding that the quality of the community we live, work, and play is important to achieving good health. That is why we have developed the goals of the CHIP to optimize the health and well-being of the community. Analysis of health, social and economic data as well as direct input from the community led to the identification of the top threats to community health and the selection of priorities that will address these threats. It includes evidence-based strategies that are measurable and appropriate for influencing policies, systems, and environments to bring change to the county. It is designed to provide clear direction based on community and statewide goals. The plan is intended to bring the community together around a limited number of issues with the greatest opportunity for health improvement through collective efforts.

As Health Officer of the Vanderburgh County Health Department, I support improvements in health-related infrastructure systems that contribute to population health. By developing partnerships with stakeholders in the health and non-health sectors, the health department links individuals to services and resources that improve population health.

The context of people's lives determines their health. Health is more than health care, this plan also looks at the social determinants that impact health outcomes in our community, including education, income and living conditions. By addressing our greatest health challenges including the underlying causes of health inequities and focusing on neighborhoods at highest risk, we can help ensure that every resident has the resources and opportunity for a healthier life. Individuals are unlikely to be able to directly control many of the social determinants of health; therefore, it is a community that must address these determinants.

My vision is to advance personal health services, advance access to care, improve environmental measures and health education to improve the health of our community, reduce smoking rates, provide more opportunities for exercise and access to healthy foods, and improve health literacy for all. By joining forces, I am optimistic on improvement of the overall community's mental and behavioral health as we address addiction concerns and access to mental health professionals.

THE PRIORITIES

The Priorities

Vanderburgh County conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), which utilized surveys, community input, focus groups, and discussions with a prioritization committee to determine health issues to be addressed. This resulted in three community health priorities selected including, behavioral health, exercise, weight and nutrition, and maternal child health. These priorities are intended to align community efforts through funding and resource allocation and to create common targets for improvement. While these three priorities do not represent all issues facing the residents of Vanderburgh County, the priorities intended to represent the focus of the health improvement work to be conducted for the next four years (2022-2025). The following outlines the priorities and supporting data. The infographics help tell the story of the priorities including prevalence/incidence of the condition, unequal burdens (health disparities), risk factors, access to care, and the level to which the health issue causes death.

- **Behavioral Health**

Behavioral health encompasses both mental health and substance misuse. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. This can affect how a person thinks, feels, and acts. Mental health can also determine how a person handles stress, relates to others, and makes choices. If a person experiences mental health issues over the course of life, thinking, mood, and behavior can be affected. Biological factors, life experiences, and family history can all contribute to mental health problems.¹ Substance misuse refers to harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances such as alcohol and illicit drugs. The use of these products can lead to dependence syndrome, which is a cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological issues that develop after repeated substance use. This can include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulty controlling use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drug use than to other activities, and increased tolerance.²

- **Exercise, Weight, and Nutrition**

Healthy lifestyle focuses on activities and habits that encourage the development of total physical, mental, and spiritual fitness, which reduces the risk of major illness. Healthy activities and habits include regular exercise; a balanced, nutritious diet; adequate sleep and relaxation; etc.³ Food insecurity is a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. This can be a temporary situation or last a long time. Some causes of food insecurity include poverty, unemployment or low income; lack of affordable housing; chronic health conditions or lack of access to healthcare; or systemic racism and racial discrimination.⁴

- **Maternal Child Health**

Maternal and child health (MCH) has programs which focus on health issues concerning women, children, and families. MCH programs can focus on access to recommended prenatal and well-child care, infant and maternal mortality prevention, maternal and child mental health, newborn screening, child immunizations, child nutrition, and services for children with special health care needs.⁵

INPUT

Methods

The purpose of the CHIP is to describe how Vanderburgh County Health Department and the community will work together to improve the health of our population. The plan is more comprehensive than the roles and responsibilities of the health department alone, and the plan's development included participation of a broad set of stakeholders and partners.

Input for CHIP goals, objectives, and metrics were obtained from community partners, governing entities/policy influences, and Vanderburgh County residents. Information collected from the CHNA was used to choose and implement goals and strategies most appropriate to address the focus areas. The purpose of creating measurable metrics is to assess and evaluate the community efforts to address major health issues. This assures that the implementation of the CHIP is appropriate and effective. The community is encouraged to use the CHIP to prioritize existing activities, set new priorities, and to integrate the CHIP into community organizations' strategic plans.

Community Partner Recommendations

12 individuals from five organizations participated in discussion sessions to identify the priorities and key focus issues. Findings from the provider/stakeholder surveys and focus groups are outlined below.

- Ascension St. Vincent – Evansville
- Deaconess Health System
- Vanderburgh County Health Department
- United Way of Southwestern Indiana
- Welborn Baptist Foundation
- Southwestern Behavioral Health

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

Behavioral health includes issues specific to mental health and substance/drug/alcohol use or misuse, and tobacco use or vaping. Considerations specific to the prioritization of behavioral health included (a) access issues specific to behavioral health services, including provider shortages (e.g. psychiatrists, licensed clinical social workers) and access to address children's mental health needs, (b) youth mental health and substance use, (c) family programming around mental health and substance misuse, (d) building community awareness/understanding around mental health-reducing stigma (current implementation of Mental Health First Aid was identified as a successful strategy, and (f) continue improvements on tobacco use.

The results indicated behavioral health (mental health and substance/drug use or misuse) was the highest ranked health issue in the county.

EXERCISE, WEIGHT, AND NUTRITION:

Exercise, weight, and nutrition relate to issues of food insecurity and promoting healthy lifestyles. Considerations specific to the prioritization of exercise, weight, and nutrition included (a) continue

improvements on children’s weight, and (b) healthy food access – continuing momentum of existing programs (e.g., businesses addressing food deserts [healthy food priority areas]).

The results indicated food access/availability as well as obesity has gotten worse since 2018 and inadequate resources were being devoted to addressing the issue.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH:

Maternal child health relates to issues faced by women, children, and families. Considerations specific to the prioritization of maternal child health included (a) continued efforts to address infant mortality (further developing the Pre to 3 and similar programs) and (b) prenatal care/maternal health (e.g., smoking during pregnancy, etc.).

The results indicated it was perceived that infant mortality was getting worse in our county since 2018, and reported inadequate resources devoted to infant mortality in our county as an issue. The most common barrier was accurate knowledge/information of the issue. Two primary areas of concern were noted, the smoking rate among pregnant mothers and the high infant mortality rate among Black children.

Governing Entity/Policy Influencer Recommendations

The Vanderburgh County Health Department facilitated discussion with the Board of Health to gain input and recommendations for the CHIP. The notes and individuals present for the discussion are listed below.

Participants:

- Sandee E. Strader-McMillen
 - a. Board of Health Chair
- Mark Wohlford DDS, PhD
 - a. Board of Health Vice Chair
- Fred Mulfinger
 - a. Board of Health member
- Michelle R. Galen MD
 - a. Board of Health member
- Maria Del Rio Hoover MD
 - a. Board of Health member

Discussion Notes:

- Behavioral Health interventions
 - Riley Children's Hospital collaboration
 - Riley Children's Hospital is doing a pilot program to address children behavioral health in Evansville
 - Collaborate with Riley Children's Hospital on implementation
 - Consider a component related to the CDC's emphasis to reduce social isolation/loneliness related to COVID-19 pandemic

- Exercise, Weight, and Nutrition interventions
 - ECHO is working to provide lifestyle medical appointments next year with a physician
 - Focus on lifestyle factors such as exercise and nutrition to improve health

- Maternal Child Health interventions
 - Development of a Community Action Team (CAT)
 - CAT Planning Group including ECHO, Deaconess, St. Vincent, and VCHD to collaborate on development of CAT
 - Recommendations from FIMR meetings shared with CAT Planning Group
 - Consider program to address obesity in pregnancy

- Other suggestions
 - Leverage funding from the Governor's Public Health Commission to expand services in the CHNA priority areas

Vanderburgh County Resident Recommendations

The Vanderburgh County Health Department administered a survey to Vanderburgh County residents to obtain additional data to support the health focus areas to better understand barriers individuals face regarding behavioral health, exercise, weight, and nutrition, and maternal child health. The information gathered from these surveys will be utilized to develop appropriate interventions and objectives for the CHIP.

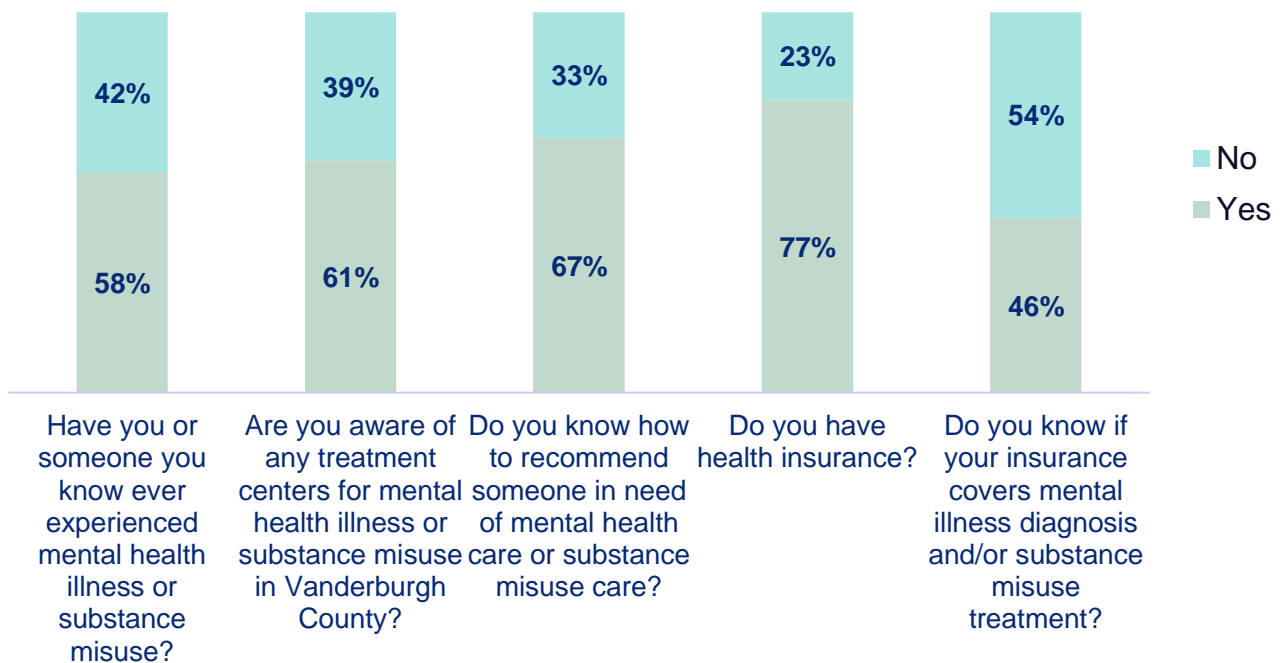
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

There were 69 Vanderburgh County residents surveyed regarding behavioral health. The demographics for the participants and survey results are outlined below.

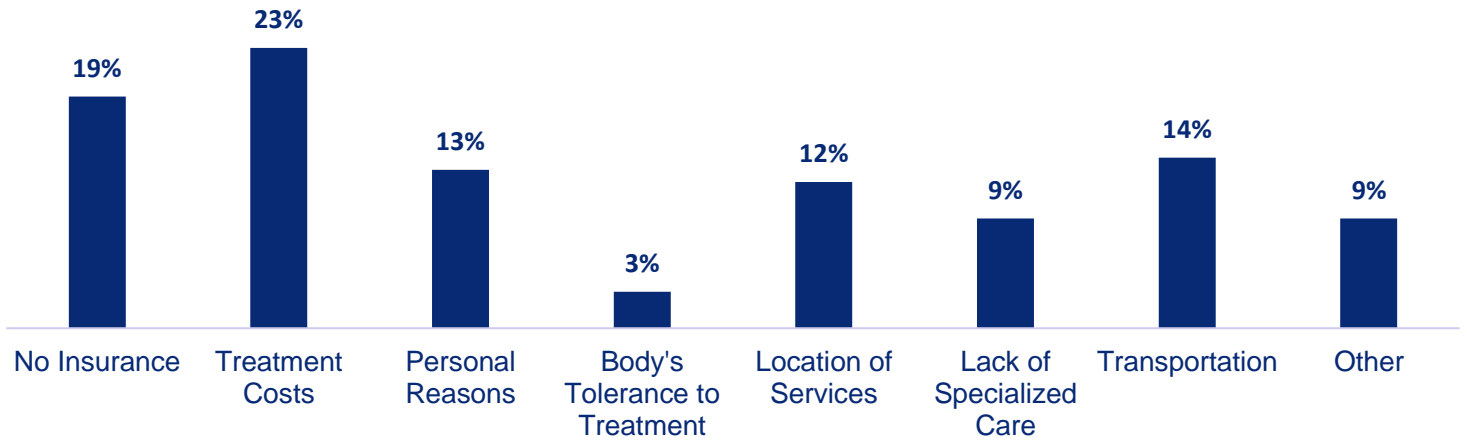
Age	Number	Race	Number	Sex	Number
<18	2	White	44	Female	61
18-34	50	Black	10	Male	8
35-54	13	Hispanic	26	Other	0
55+	4	Other	15		

Language Spoken	Percent of Vanderburgh County Residents
English	95.79%
Spanish	1.77%
Asian and Pacific Island Languages	1.22%
Other Indo-European Languages	0.99%
Other Languages	0.24%

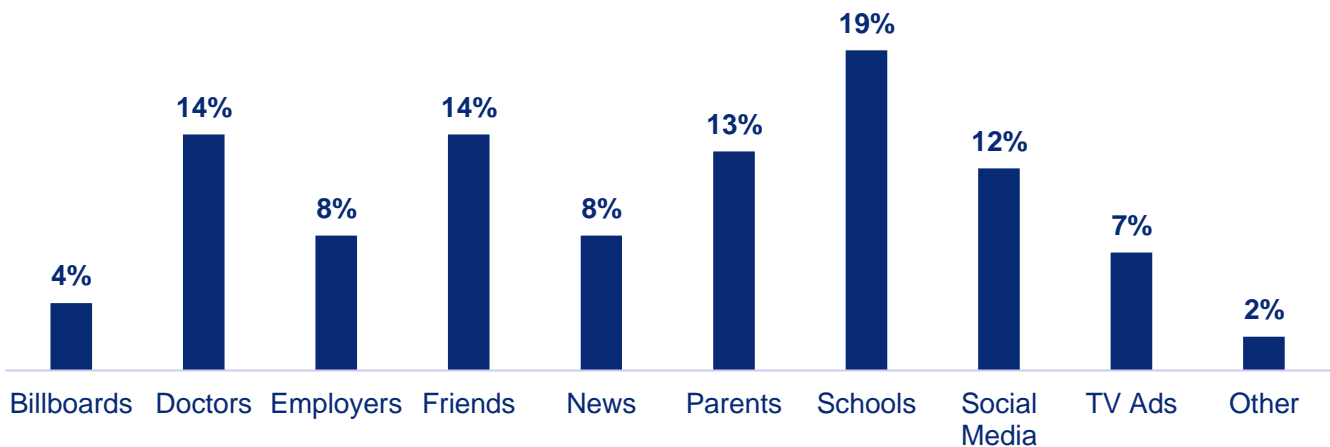
Community Survey Results



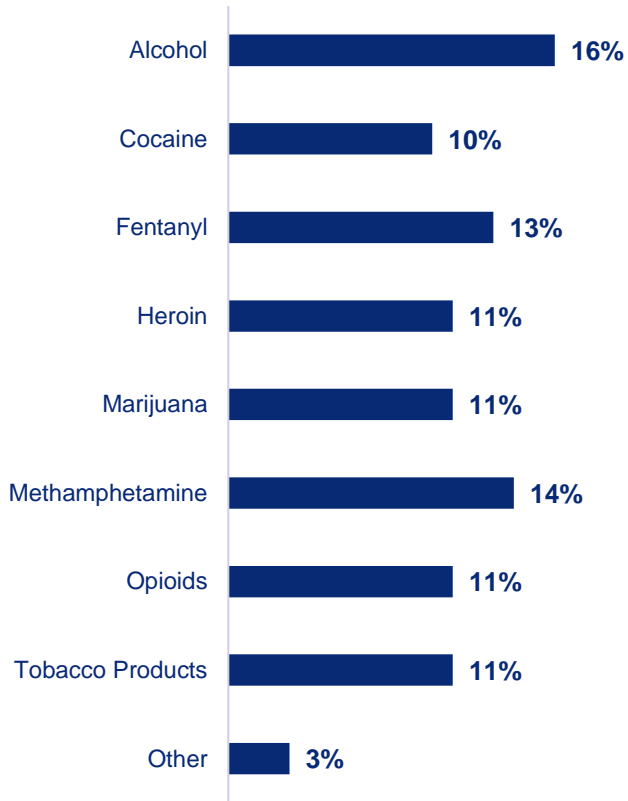
What are Possible Barriers to Receiving Treatment for Mental Health Illness and/or Substance Misuse?



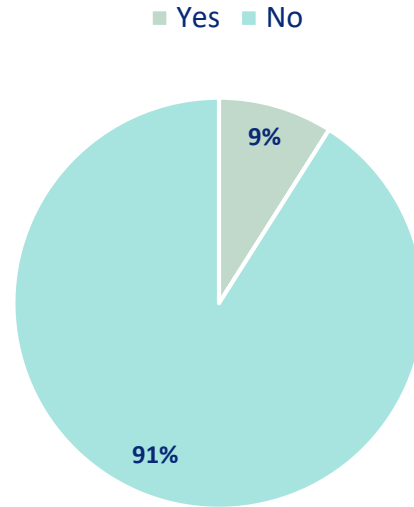
Where Did You Learn About Mental Health Illness and/or Substance Misuse and Treatment?



In Your Community, Which Substances Do You Feel are a Concern?



Does discussing these topics (mental health illness and substance misuse) make you uncomfortable?



EXERCISE, WEIGHT, AND NUTRITION:

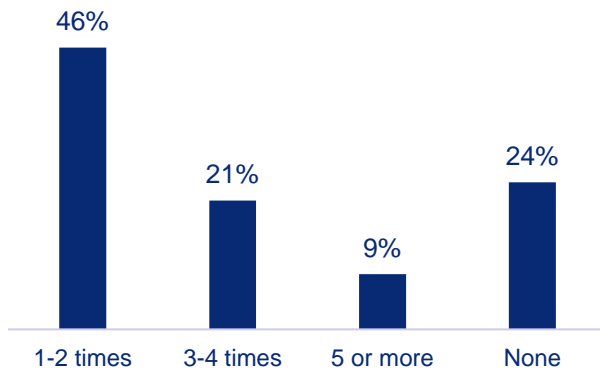
There were 63 Vanderburgh County residents surveyed regarding exercise, weight, and nutrition. The demographic for the participants and survey results are outlined below.

Age	Number
<18	5
18-34	45
35-54	12
55+	1

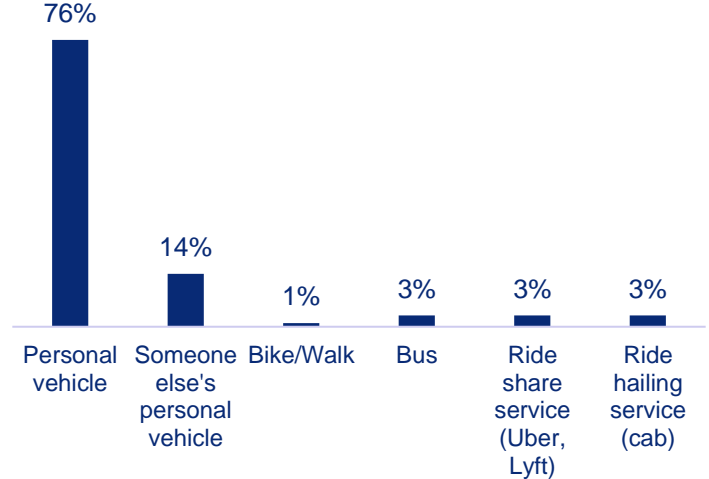
Race	Number
White	39
Black	8
Hispanic	26
Other	16

Sex	Number
Female	54
Male	8
Other	1

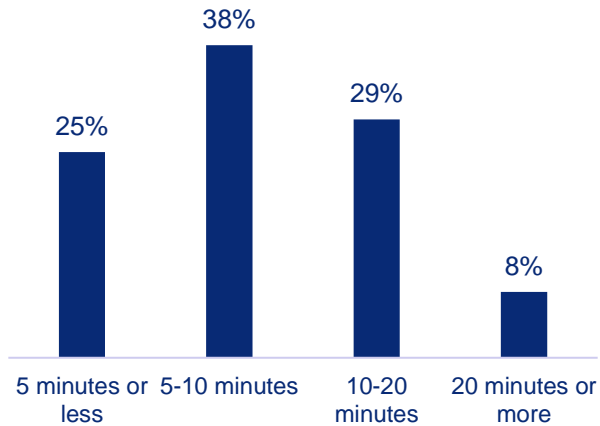
How Many Times Do You Exercise Per Week?



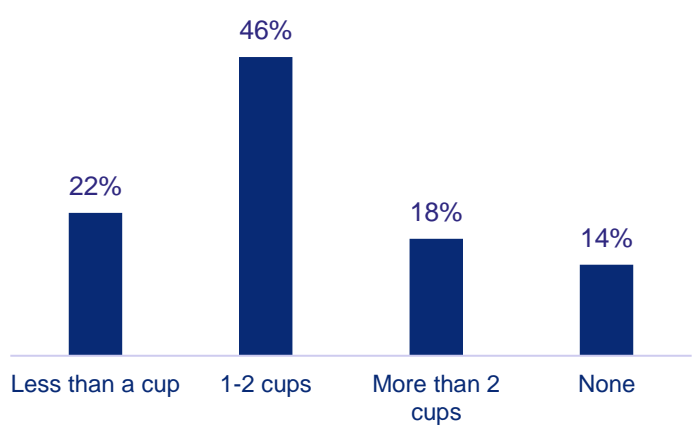
What Method of Transportation Do You Use to Get Groceries?



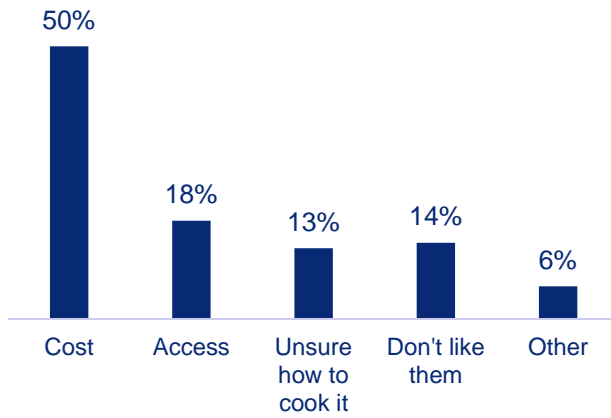
How Far Do You Have to Travel for Groceries?



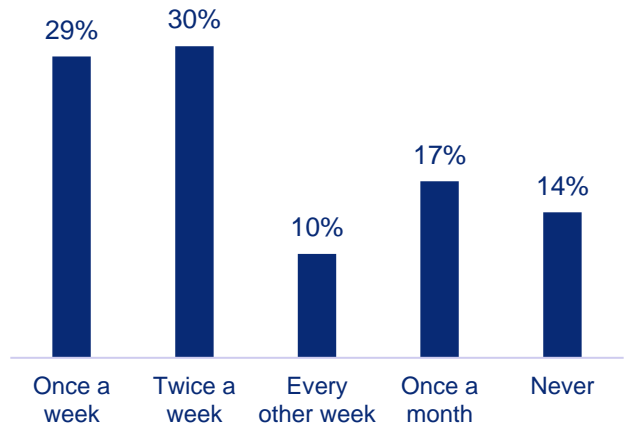
How Many Cups of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Do You Have a Day?



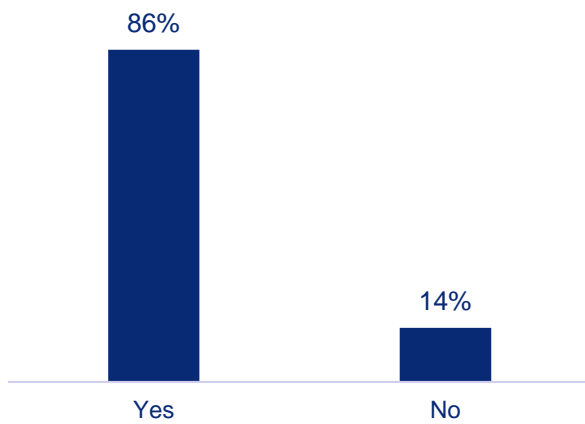
What is Keeping You from Eating Fruits and Vegetables?



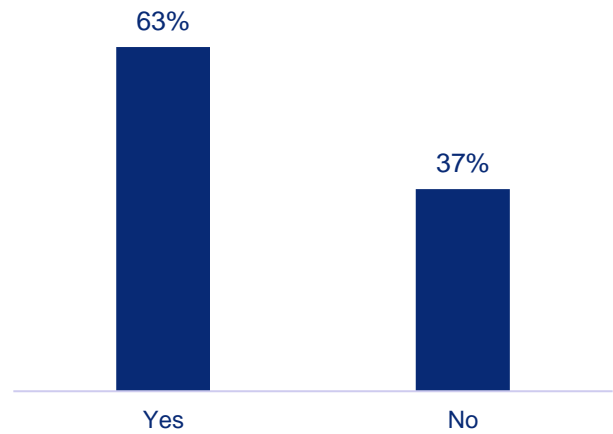
How Often Do You Eat Fast Food?



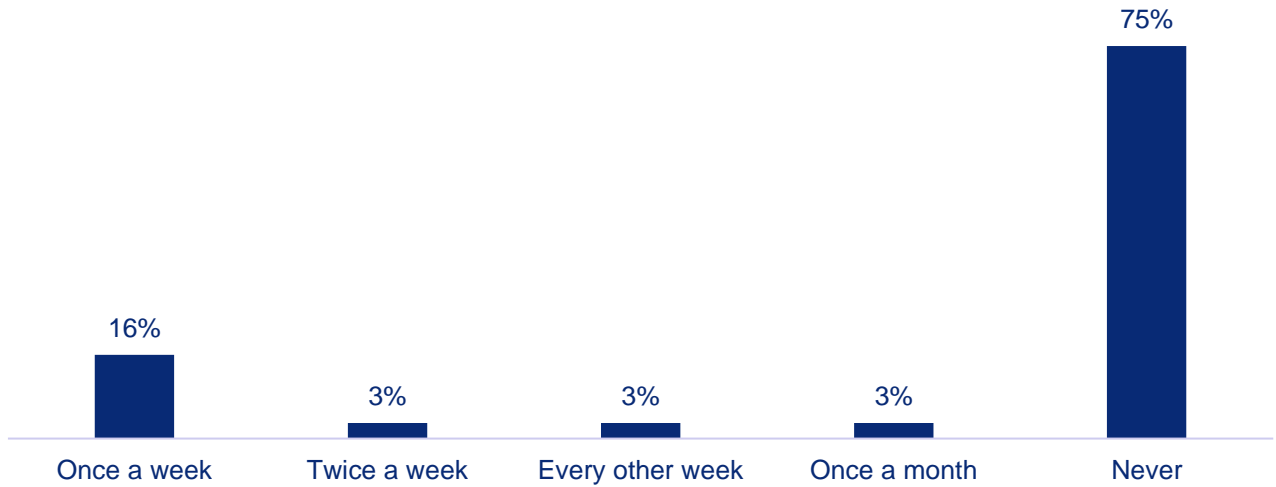
Do You Think Fresh Produce is Expensive to Buy?



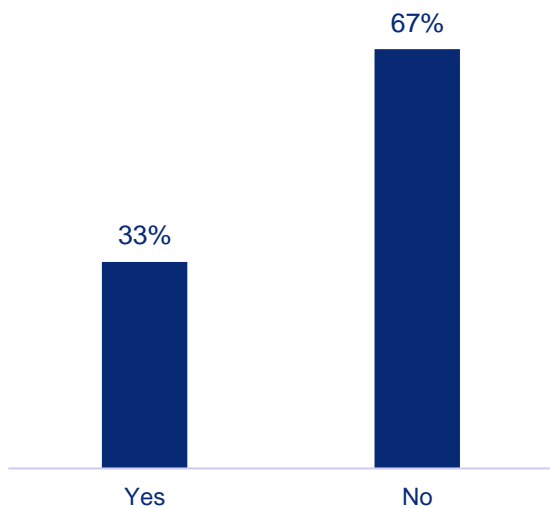
Do You Receive Any Assistance to Purchase Groceries?



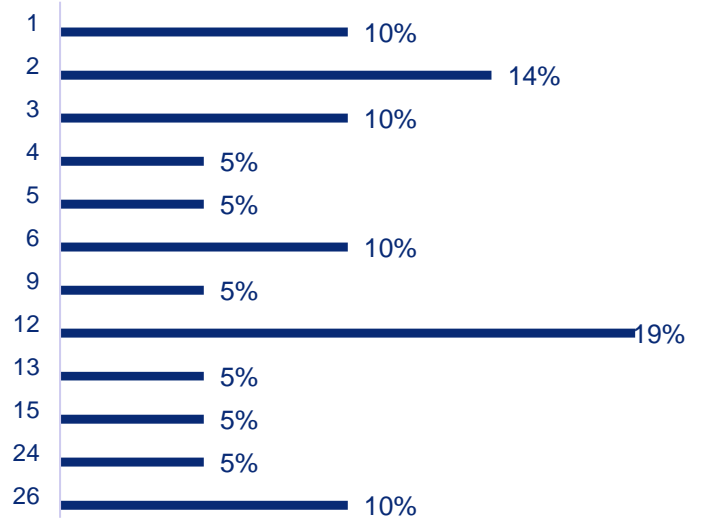
How Often Do You Access the Tri-State Food Bank?



In the Past 12 Months Have You Ever Worried Your Food Would Run Out Before You Had Money to Buy More?



Out of 52 Weeks, How Many Weeks in a Year Does This (Ran Out of Food Before You Had Money to Buy More) Happen?

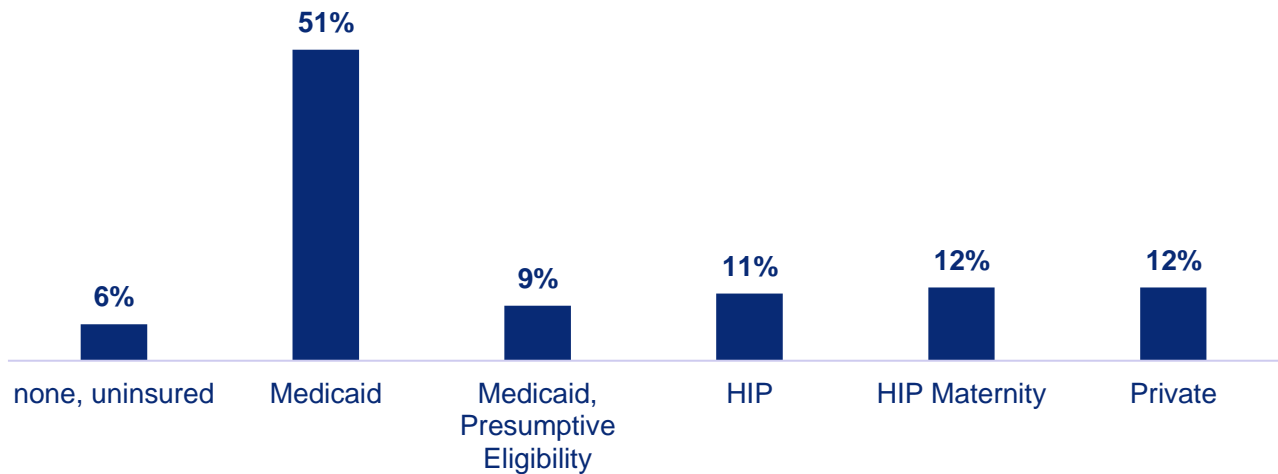


MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH:

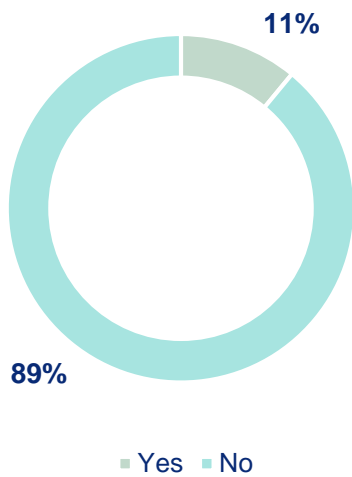
There were 75 Vanderburgh County residents surveyed regarding maternal child health. The demographics for the participants and survey results are outlined below.

Age	Number	Race	Number	Sex	Number
<18	2	White	46	Female	68
18-34	53	Black	10	Male	4
35-54	18	Hispanic	28	Other	3
55+	2	Other	19		

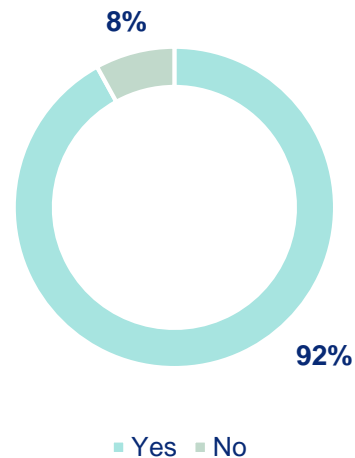
What Kind of Insurance Did You Have During Your Pregnancy?



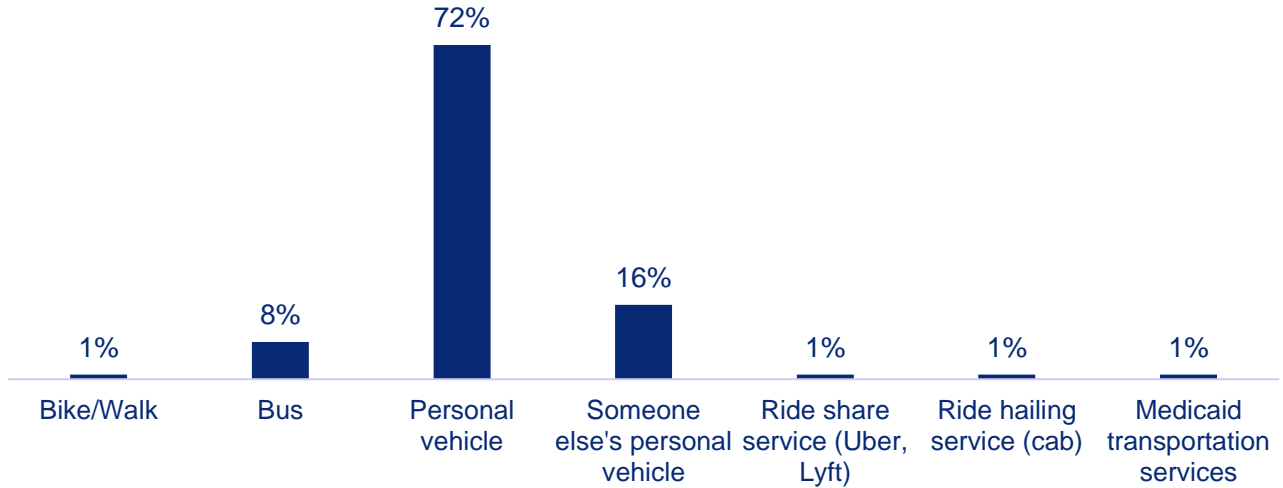
Did You Have Trouble Finding an OBGYN that Took Your Insurance?



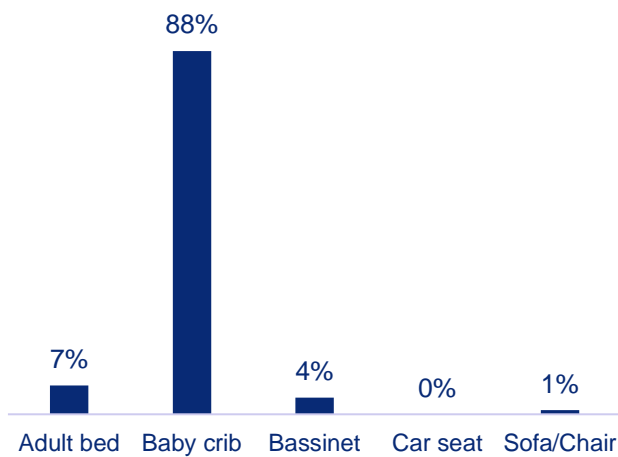
Did You Feel Like You Received Quality Care During Your Last Pregnancy?



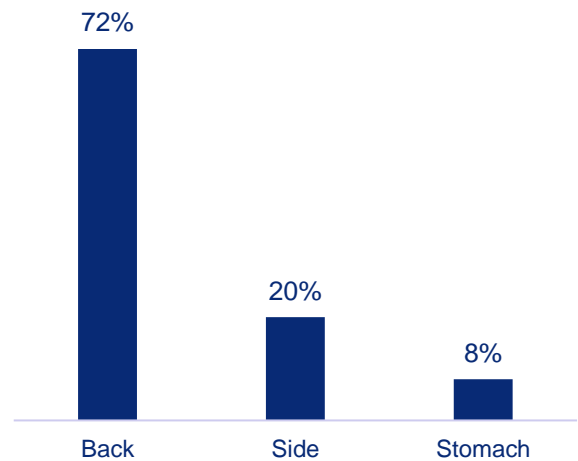
How Did You Get to Your Prenatal Care Appointments?



Where Did You Place Your Last Infant to Sleep?



How Did You Place Your Last Infant to Sleep?



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN

GOAL 1	ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
Update Mental Health Mapping Resource Tool	Ensure current mental health providers and facilities are listed	Deaconess Health System, Ascension St. Vincent-Evansville	Jan-2023	Dec-2023	In progress
	Create resource tool for the addition of substance use providers and facilities	Deaconess Health System, Ascension St. Vincent-Evansville	Jan-2023	Dec-2023	Not started
Increase awareness of available behavioral health resources in the community	Provide Mental Health Mapping Resource Tool on health entities websites	Deaconess Health System, Ascension St. Vincent-Evansville, ECHO, Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare, Vanderburgh County Health Department	July-2024	Nov-2024	Not started
	Create social media campaigns to promote available behavioral health resources in the community	Deaconess Health System, Ascension St. Vincent-Evansville, ECHO, Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare	Oct-2024	Nov-2024	Not started
	Crisis Care Center within United Caring Shelters will increase access to crisis care rather than incarcerating individuals	United Caring Shelters	July-2023	Dec-2025	Not started
GOAL 2	ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
Ensure behavioral health treatment and assistance is available to the community	Provide multidisciplinary assessment with OT, PT, Speech, Audiology, Psychology, and Psychiatry for those 17 and under who are presenting with suspected, or confirmed, intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities as well as mental health challenges	Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare, Youth First, Easterseals	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Implement a Crisis Stabilization Unit for those needing on site crisis intervention and a mental health professional to assist and help develop a plan for next steps for treatment	Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Provide a 20 bed co-ed transitional living program for those in mental health or addiction crisis that need assistance for longer than overnight	Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare	Jan-2025	On-going	In progress
	Collaborate with Riley Children's Hospital on pilot program to address behavioral health in children	Vanderburgh County Health Department, St. Vincent	Jan-2024	On-going	Not started

EXERCISE, WEIGHT, AND NUTRITION PLAN

GOAL 1	ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
Increase the number of Vanderburgh County residents utilizing resources to obtain healthy food options	Ensure awareness of City of Evansville Commission on Food Security, which coordinates community resources for food pantries, soup kitchens, and community food share space	Feed Evansville, YMCA, Purdue Extension, Urban Seeds, Tri-State Food Bank, Evansville Christian Life Center	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Ensure the Neighborhood Food Market is placed in healthy food priority areas	Junior League of Evansville, Tri-State Food Bank	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Improve transportation system by proposing/launching Micro-transit pilot program policy to provide Vanderburgh County residents better access to transportation	Welborn Baptist Foundation, Metropolitan Evansville Transit System	Aug-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Improve year-round access to nutritionally rich, locally grown produce, for residents in and around food insecure areas through the updated Local Foods Local Places plan	Healthy Communities Partnership	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
GOAL 2	ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
Increase access to free educational programs for the community	Provide free educational programs for the reduction of type 2 diabetes	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Provide free healthy cooking classes to children and young adults	Bedford Collab, YMCA	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Deliver SuperFood Heroes program, in both English and Spanish, to educate elementary children on the nutritious value of vegetables and provide taste test opportunities	Welborn Baptist Foundation, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
Improve availability of healthy lifestyle choices in the community	Submit grant applications for continued development of Evansville trails network	Evansville Trails Coalition	Pending	On-going	Ongoing
	Promote Upgrade Bike Share for active transportation and recreation	Evansville Trails Coalition	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Provide Lifestyle Medical Appointments with a physician	ECHO	Jan-2024	On-going	In progress

MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH PLAN

GOAL 1	ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
Increase access to care by providing services to individuals outside of the office	Provide Pre to 3 home visitation program to families to provide education and support	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Place Vanderburgh County Health Department Mobile Clinic in at-risk zip codes to ensure child immunizations are received	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Care Mobile will provide OBGYN services in at-risk zip codes to ensure prenatal and postnatal care is received	Ronald McDonald Foundation	Jul-2024	On-going	Ongoing
GOAL 2	ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS
Reduce racial disparities in infant mortality and risk factors associated with infant mortality	Facilitate a fetal/infant mortality review (FIMR) to identify trends and develop policy recommendations for care and interventions addressing risk factors for infant death	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jul-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Promote programming to address risk factors for infant mortality to minority populations	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jul-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Monitor Medicaid disparities in order to expand quality access to care	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jan-2023	On-going	Ongoing
	Research programming and provide education to address obesity in pregnancy	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jan-2024	Aug-2024	Not started
Decrease Vanderburgh County minority infant mortality rates from 2023 to 2024	Obtain baseline infant mortality rate in Vanderburgh County for 2021	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jan-2023	Jan-2023	Complete
	Obtain infant mortality rate in Vanderburgh County for 2024 after implementation of interventions	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Mar-2025	April-2025	Not started
Develop a Community Action Team to address fetal/infant mortality	CAT Planning Group collaborate to develop CAT	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Jul-2023	Dec-2023	In Progress
	FIMR Coordinator will send FIMR recommendations from meeting to CAT Coordinator	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Aug-2023	On-going	In Progress

NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS:

As noted above, there are a number of interventions to tackle the three health priorities in the 2022-2025 CHIP. In order to achieve these interventions, the responsible party next to each intervention is responsible for coordinating a meeting to discuss tasks for accomplishment. Each group will develop and implement work plans to address the identified health priority.

DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT:

The Vanderburgh County Health Department is acting as the data collection center and will be developing CHIP reports and maintaining progress. Each responsible party will be tasked with reporting progress and measurements to the Vanderburgh County Health Department annually. A CHIP report with progress updates will be developed annually and distributed to all stakeholders.

RESOURCES/ASSETS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

Deaconess, Ascension St. Vincent – Evansville, Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare, ECHO Healthcare, Vanderburgh County Health Department, Brentwood Springs, Evansville State Hospital, Evansville Psychiatric Children’s Center, Mental Health America Vanderburgh County, Youth First, Lampion Center, Evansville Central Library, Community Patient Safety Coalition, Vanderburgh County Medical Society, CAPE: Minority Health Coalition, USI, Southwest Indiana AHEC, Ivy Tech Community College, EVSC, IU School of Medicine, Crisis Intervention Teams (law enforcement), Evansville Catholic Schools, Easterseals.

EXERCISE, WEIGHT, AND NUTRITION:

Vanderburgh County Health Department, Deaconess, Ascension St. Vincent – Evansville, Welborn Baptist Foundation, EVSC, Urban Seeds, Junior League of Evansville, Purdue Extension – Vanderburgh County, USI, Evansville Trails Coalition, Bedford Collab, Feed Evansville, Tri-State Food Bank, Talent 2025, Healthy Communities Partnership.

MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH:

Deaconess, Ascension St. Vincent – Evansville, ECHO Healthcare, Vanderburgh County Health Department, Black Nurses of Evansville, Little Lambs, Safe Kids Coalition, Evansville Christian Life Center, WIC, Southwestern Indiana Perinatal Advisory Board, USI, UE, Talent 2025, Ronald McDonald Foundation, Tri-Cap, FIMR/Child Fatality Review.

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Date	Authority	Update
April 2023	Vanderburgh County Health Department	Document created
July 2023	Vanderburgh County Health Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New goal added to develop CAT to address fetal/infant mortality • Languages spoken in jurisdiction added • Action step added to collaborate with Riley Children’s Hospital on behavioral health • Action step added to provide lifestyle medical appointments