

Community Health Needs Assessment Cape May County New Jersey 2023-2025

Evaluating local health priorities and community wellbeing



Cooper
University Hospital
Cape Regional



Overview and Purpose

Overview of CHNA

The CHNA presents a detailed assessment of health needs in Cape May County to guide improvements.

Purpose and Compliance

The assessment complies with IRS rules and aims to publicly share findings for transparency and planning.

Data Sources and Collaboration

Uses local surveys, state health databases, and community input to identify health challenges and priorities.

Executive Summary

CHNA Overview

This CHNA presents a detailed overview of health status and challenges in Cape May County, NJ.

Based on the 2023 Cape May County Health Survey.

Completed in partnership with Lower Township High School's Biomedical Innovations Team.

Includes impact of the merger between Cape Regional Medical Center and Cooper University Health Care.

- Focus areas:
 - Key health concerns
 - Barriers to care
 - Demographic trends

Executive Summary

Key Findings

Key Findings

Top Health Concerns

Mental health

Aging-related conditions

Chronic diseases (heart disease, diabetes)

Contributing Factors

Harmful behaviors including substance abuse

Poor dietary habits

Barriers to Care

Lack of specialists

High costs

Limited awareness of services



Cape Regional and Cooper University Health Care Merger

Uniting resources to enhance
regional healthcare services



Cooper
University Hospital
Cape Regional

Cape Regional and Cooper Merger

In a landmark move to enhance healthcare delivery in Cape May County, Cape Regional Medical Center has merged with Cooper University Health Care. This strategic alliance brings together Cape Regional's deep-rooted community presence and Cooper's advanced medical expertise and resources.

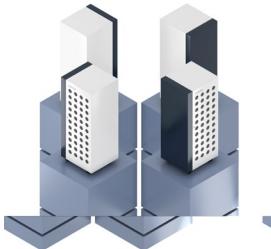
The merger is poised to transform the healthcare landscape of the region by integrating specialized services, expanding access to care, and fostering innovation in treatment and patient support. It reflects a shared commitment to improving health outcomes and addressing the complex needs of a diverse and aging population.

Benefits of the Merger

The merger offers numerous benefits to Cape May County residents, including access to Cooper's renowned specialists, cutting-edge technology, and comprehensive care programs. Patients will benefit from streamlined referrals, enhanced diagnostic capabilities, and coordinated care pathways that reduce delays and improve treatment outcomes.

Additionally, the partnership supports workforce development, bringing new training opportunities and career pathways for local healthcare professionals. It also strengthens emergency preparedness and public health initiatives through shared resources and expertise.

Strategic Alliance and Objectives



Merger Overview

Cape Regional and Cooper University merge to transform healthcare in Cape May County by combining strengths.



Enhanced Medical Expertise

The alliance leverages advanced medical expertise and community presence to improve specialized care access.



Improved Healthcare Delivery

Merger aims to coordinate services better, enhance infrastructure, and support patients and providers effectively.

Summary

The merger with Cooper University Health Care is expected to bring transformative benefits to the region, including expanded medical services, improved access to specialists, and enhanced community health initiatives. This partnership is poised to positively influence the healthcare landscape of Cape May County now and into the future.

SURVEY RESULTS OVERVIEW

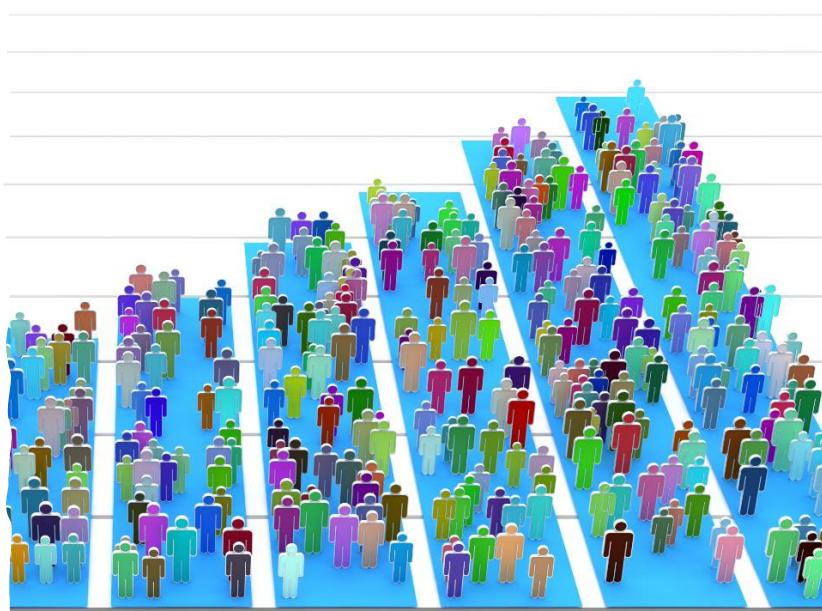
The data that follows summarizes the findings from the 2023-2024 Cape May County Health Survey conducted in partnership with the Lower Township High School Biomedical Innovations students in 2024–25. The survey aimed to identify key health concerns, demographic patterns, and barriers to healthcare within the community. In addition to local insights, the data incorporates relevant statistics from Cape May County and the state of New Jersey to provide broader context and comparison (Cape May County Department of Health, 2025; Lower Cape May Regional School District, 2024).

Community Profile



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Population and Age Distribution Summary



Year-Round and Seasonal Population

Cape May County's population rises from 95,000 year-round residents to over 800,000 during summer tourism season.

Median Age and Elderly Population

The median age is 51 years; 28% of residents are 65 or older, increasing demand for elder healthcare services.

Demographic Composition

The population is predominantly White at 89%, with females comprising 79% of survey respondents.

Healthcare Strategy Needs

Demographic trends highlight the need for tailored healthcare strategies addressing older adults and seasonal population changes.

USA & NJ vs. Cape May County

POPULATION CHANGE (2010-2022)

United States: +7.7%

New Jersey: +5.5%

Cape May County: -1.6%

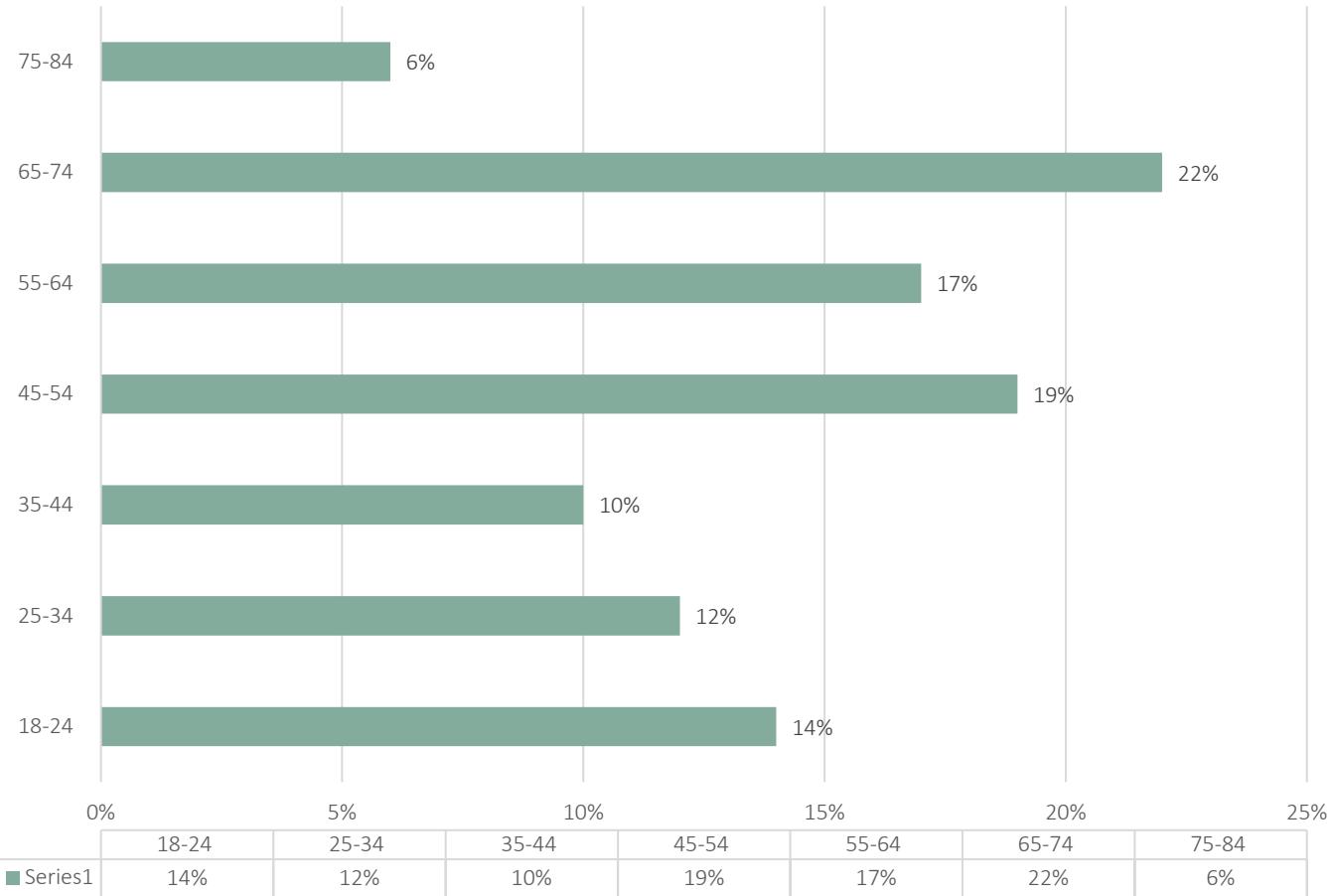
MEDIAN AGE (2023)

United States: 39.2 years

New Jersey: 40.4 years

Cape May County: 52.7 years

2024 SURVEY RESULTS FOR CAPE MAY COUNTY
AGE



Age

What is your ethnicity?

Non-
hispanic: 95%

Hispanic: 5%

RACE

Cape May County Racial and Ethnic Demographics

- White: 89%
- Black or African American: 3%
- Asian: 3%
- Mixed (White and Black): 0.84%
- Hispanic: 0.84%
- Mexican: 0.84%
- American Indian: 0.84%
- Alaska Native: 0.84%



How do you identify?

Female

79%

Male

21%

Marital Status

Married:
51.69%

Single:
33%

Divorced:
9%

Widowed:
5.08%

Separated:
.85%

Column I: What is your zipcode

- 08204 (24%)
- 08251 (18%)
- 08210 (17%)
- 08260 (14%)
- 08230 (6%)
- 08242 (5%)
- 08234 (3%)
- 08270 (2%)
- 08250 (.9%)
- 08246 (.9%)
- 08330 (.9%)
- 08109 (.9%)
- 08214 (3%)
- 08226 (.9%)
- 08223 (.9%)
- 08025 (.9%)
- 08244 (.9%)
- 08302 (.9%)
- 08202 (.9%)



House (87.39%)



Apartment/condo/duplex (7%)



Mobile home (3.36%)



Other (1.68%)

Housing



Employment Status

Employed for wages: 64.87%

Retired: 22.69%

Student: 13%

Seasonal workers: 2.52%

Self-employed: 2.52%

Other: 2.52%

Private/commercial
(59.32%)



Medicare (28%)



Medicaid (7.63%)



None (4.24%)



Health Insurance Status

Do you have
issues with
health
insurance?

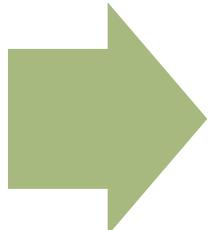
No (85%)

Difficulty paying
deductible (12%)

Under-insured (3%)

Demographics Summary

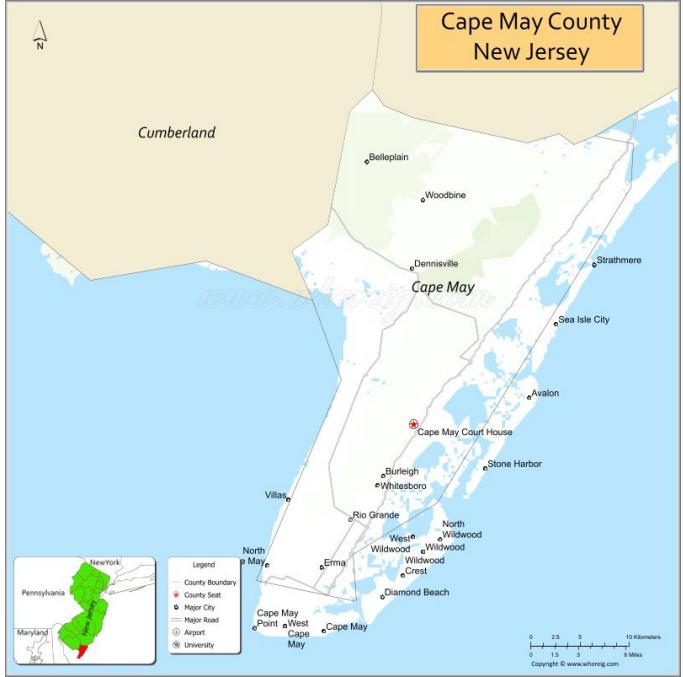
The majority of respondents (94.87%) have a high school diploma. Age distribution shows a significant portion aged 65-74 (22%) and 45-54 (19%). Females represented 79% of the respondents. Racial composition was predominantly White (89%), with small percentages of Asian, Black, and other groups.



Most respondents live in houses (87.39%) and have private/commercial health insurance (59.32%). Employment status is primarily wage-based (64.87%), followed by retirees (22.69%).

HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES IN THE COMMUNITY





Healthcare Challenges in Cape May County, NJ

The County being at the southernmost tip of New Jersey, is known for its picturesque beaches, vibrant tourism industry, and close-knit communities.

Key Facts:

- Year-round population: ~95,000
- Summer population surge: >800,000
- Older adults (65+): Over 28% of residents

Challenges:

- Increased demand for age-related healthcare services
- Strain on healthcare infrastructure during tourist season
- Need for consistent and comprehensive care delivery



What do you think are the three most important factors for “Healthy Community?

Access to healthcare: 55%

Healthy economy & good jobs: 49%

Low crime/safe neighborhood: 48%

Affordable housing: 41%

Healthy behaviors and lifestyles: 25%

Good place to raise children: 23%

Good schools: 22%

- Clean environment: 15%
- Strong family life: 12%
- Religious/spiritual values: 8%
- Parks & recreation: 8%
- Low adult death & disease rate: 6%
- Arts & cultural events: 4%
- Low level of child abuse: 4%
- Excellent race relations: 3%

What do you think are the three most important “health problems” in our community?

- Mental Health Problems: 65%
- Aging problems: 45%
- Heart Disease & stroke: 38%
- Cancers: 34%
- Diabetes: 22%
- High Blood Pressure: 19%
- Domestic violence: 13%
- Child abuse/neglect: 13%
- Respiratory problems: 11%
- Dental Problems: 9%
- Infectious Disease: 9%
- Motor vehicle crash injuries: 9%
- Substance Use disorder: 5%
- Firearm related injuries: 3%
- Sexual Assault/Rape: 3%
- Teen Pregnancy: 3%
- STD: 3%
- Lack of medical services: 2%
- Homelessness: 2%
- Infant death: .08%
- HIV/AIDs: .08%
- Homicides .08%

In the following list, what do you think are the most harmful behaviors in our community?

Alcohol Abuse: 24.4%

Drug Abuse: 23.8%

Being overweight: 13.1%

Poor eating habits: 9.6%

Tobacco Use: 6.6%

Not getting "shots": 6.3%

Lack of exercise: 5.5%

Racism: 3.3%

Dropping out of school: 2.5%

Not using birth control: 2.2%

Not wearing seatbelt/proper child seats: 1.4%

Homelessness: 0.3%

Poor education: 0.3%

Crime: 0.3%

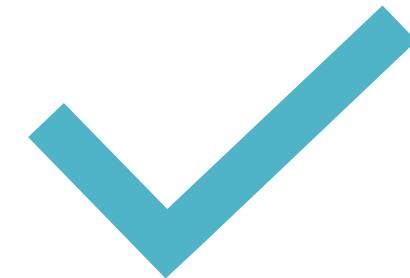
Lack of primary care: 0.3%

Auto Accidents: 0.3%

Within the last year, was there a time where you needed medical care but were not able to get it?



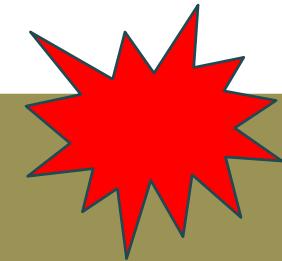
No (86%)



Yes (14%)

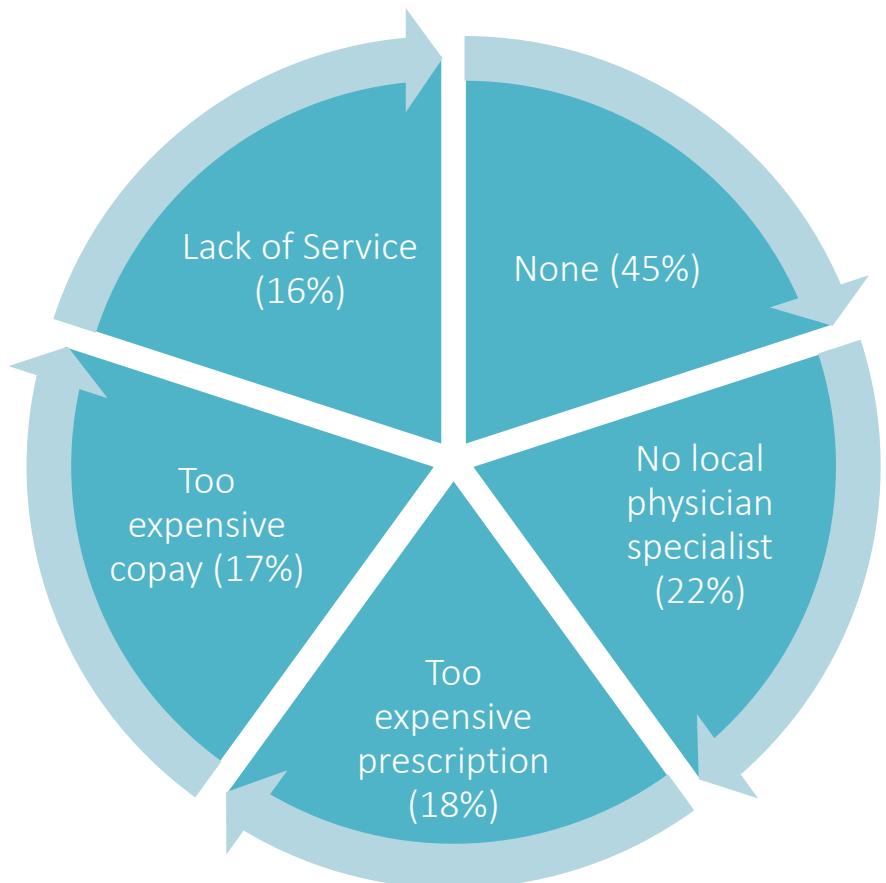
In the last year, was there a time where you needed prescription medication but were unable to get it?

No (88%)



Yes (14%)

Barriers to Healthcare

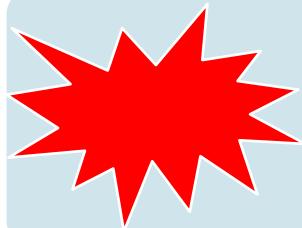


- Lack of public awareness (10%)
- No local primary physician (10%)
- Fear of diagnosis (8%)
- Lack of insurance (7%)
- Lack of transportation (4%)
- Communication issues (2%)
- Language barrier (1%)

In the last year, was there a time when you needed mental health counseling but could not get it.



No (85%)



Yes (15%)



Enhanced Access and Quality of Care

Improved Access to Specialists

Merger provides local access to renowned specialists, eliminating the need for long-distance travel for specialized care.

Streamlined Referrals and Care Coordination

Coordinated care pathways reduce treatment delays and improve patient outcomes through efficient referral systems.

Enhanced Diagnostic Capabilities

Advanced diagnostic technology enables quicker and more accurate assessments for timely medical interventions.

Comprehensive Care Programs

Holistic and continuous care programs address diverse medical needs, benefiting especially the aging population.



Summary of Health Care Challenges

Health Challenges in Cape May

Cape May County faces chronic diseases, behavioral health issues, and healthcare access barriers impacting residents.

Impact of Healthcare Merger

The merger aims to expand services, improve access, and provide coordinated care across the region.

Strategic Partnerships

Collaborations and community engagement are key to achieving better health outcomes in the county.



Cooper University Health Care's involvement is expected to have a lasting positive impact on the community. Its emphasis on patient-centered care, research, and innovation aligns with the county's goals of improving health equity and outcomes.



Looking ahead, Cooper's presence will continue to elevate the standard of care, foster community engagement, and support public health initiatives. This partnership marks a new era of healthcare excellence for Cape May County.

Positive Influence of Cooper University Health Care

Training, Career Development, and Emergency Preparedness

Workforce Development

The merger introduces new training and career pathways to retain healthcare talent in Cape May County.

Emergency Preparedness

Pooling resources improves coordinated responses to public health emergencies and crises.

Public Health Initiatives

Shared resources enhance outreach and health education programs benefiting the community.



Expansion of Medical Services in Cape May County



Due to the merger, Cape May County will see a significant expansion in medical services. New specialty clinics, telehealth options, and mobile health units have been introduced to reach underserved areas and improve access to care.



Enhanced screening programs, chronic disease management, and behavioral health services are now more widely available, addressing long-standing gaps in the local healthcare system. These developments are instrumental in promoting preventive care and reducing hospital admissions.

Methods and Data Sources

This CHNA integrates data from the 2024 Cape May County Health Survey conducted by Biomedical Innovations students, prior CHNA reports, and community partner input. Sources include survey responses, demographic analysis, and health service utilization data.



HEALTH CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES

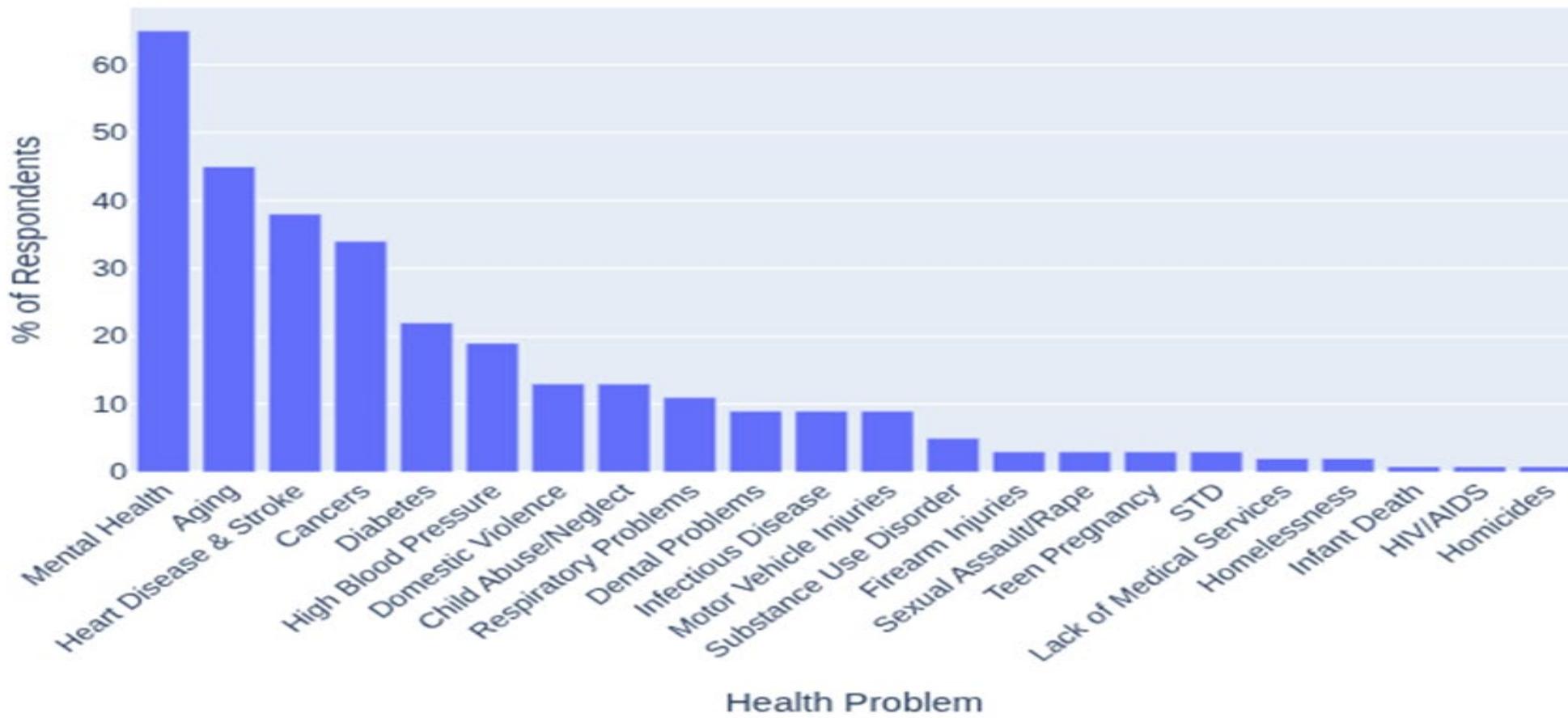
Prioritization of Health Needs

Based on survey results and community feedback, the following health needs were prioritized: mental health, aging-related conditions, chronic diseases (heart disease, diabetes), substance use, and access to healthcare.

Significant Health Needs

Mental health problems (65%) were identified as the most critical health issue, followed by aging-related concerns (45%) and heart disease & stroke (38%). Other significant issues include cancers, diabetes, high blood pressure, and various forms of abuse and chronic conditions.

Top Health Problems in Cape May County



Chronic diseases are leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the county

Cardiovascular
Disease

Diabetes/Obesity

Cancer

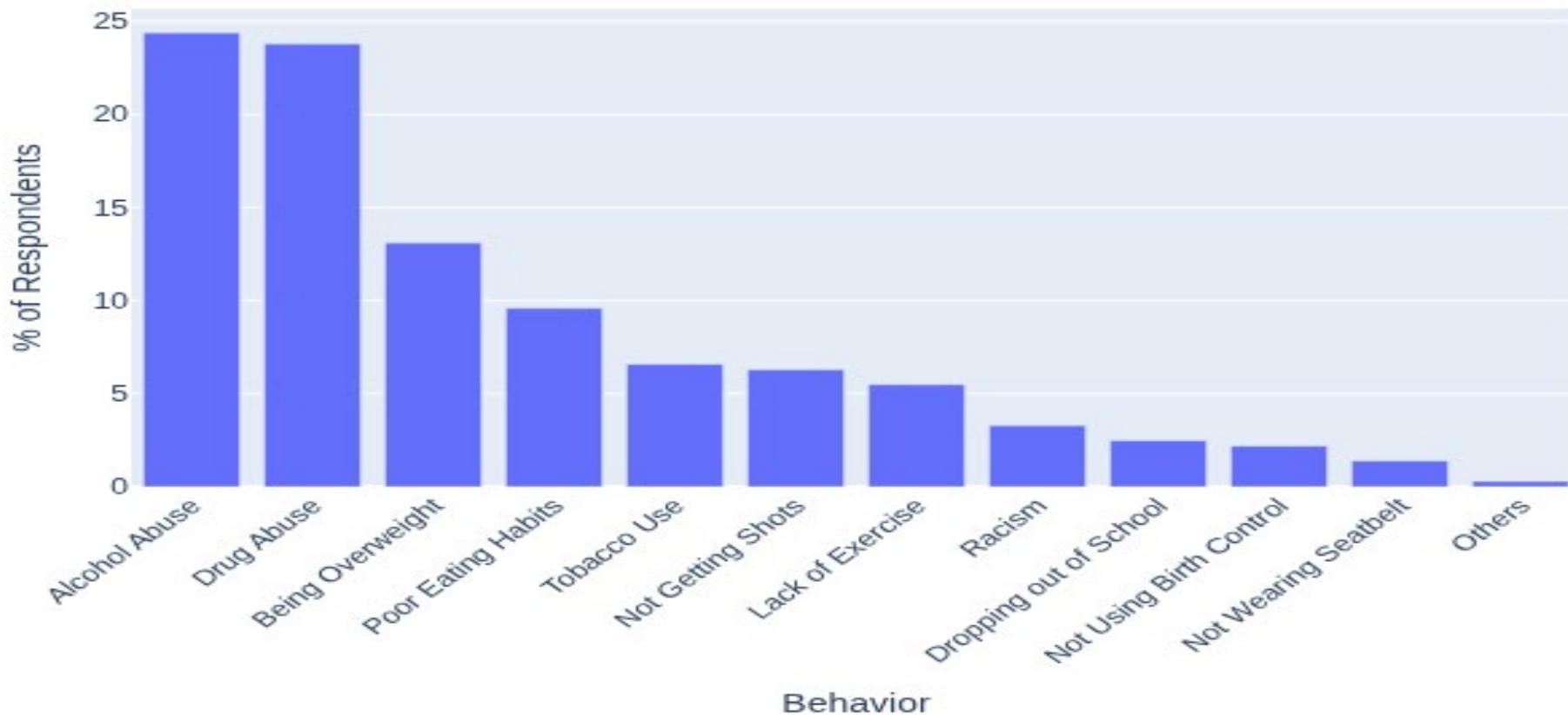
Top Health Concerns

Health Concern	Percentage of Respondents
Mental Health	65%
Aging-related Conditions	45%
Heart Disease & Stroke	38%
Cancer	30%
Diabetes	28%

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HARMFUL BEHAVIORS



Most Harmful Behaviors in Cape May County



Harmful Behaviors

Alcohol and drug abuse were perceived as the most harmful behaviors in the community, followed by issues related to weight, diet, and tobacco use.

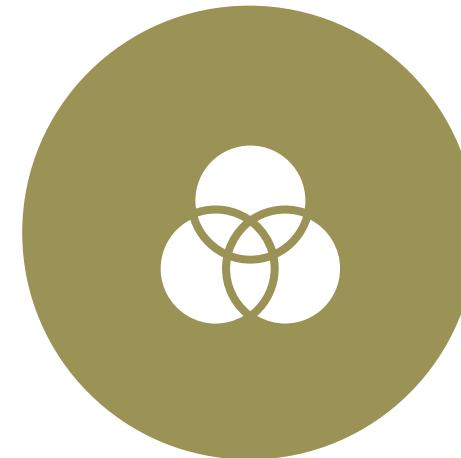
HARMFUL BEHAVIOR	PERCEIVED IMPACT
Alcohol/Drug Abuse	50%
Poor Diet/Obesity	30%
Tobacco Use	20%

Community Perceptions of Harmful Behaviors

In the last year, was there a time when you needed mental
health counseling but could not get it.



NO (85%)



YES (15%)



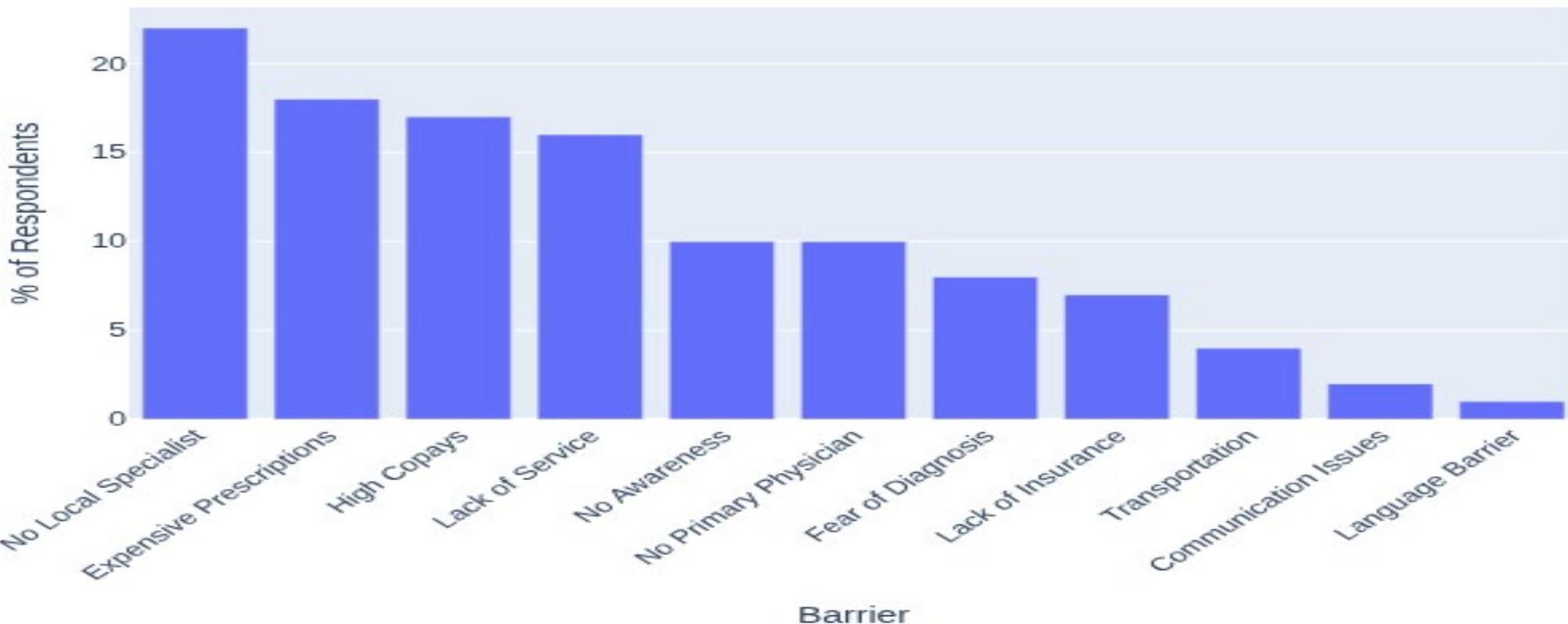
BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE ACCESS



Barriers to Healthcare

Respondents identified several barriers to accessing healthcare, including lack of local specialists, expensive prescriptions, and high copays. Others cited lack of service, public awareness, and transportation as significant challenges.

Barriers to Healthcare Access

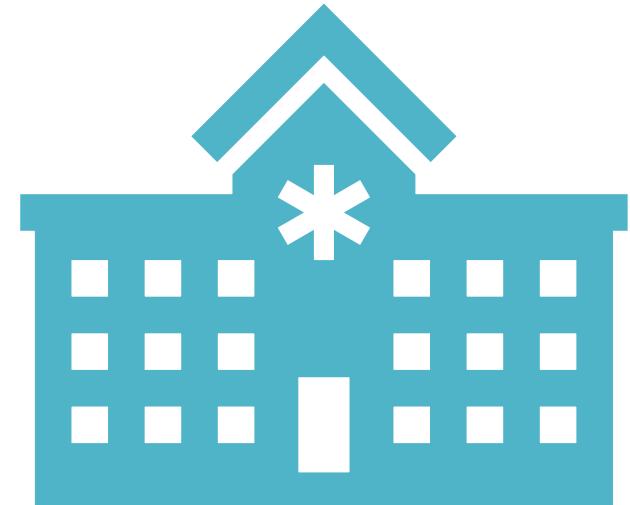


Identified Barriers

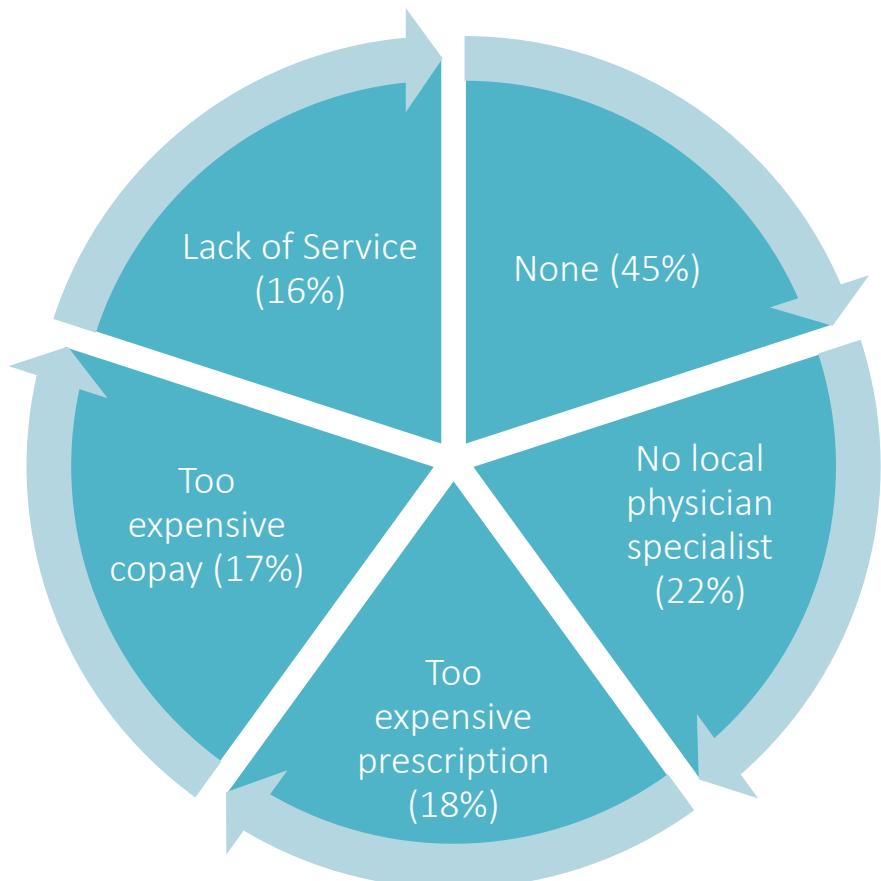
BARRIER	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Lack of Specialists	22%
Expensive Prescriptions	18%
High Copays	17%
Lack of Awareness	15%

Insurance Coverage

While Medicare covers 28% of residents, a notable portion still relies on Medicaid or remains uninsured. Ensuring comprehensive coverage and access to care for seniors is critical to maintaining their health and independence.



Barriers to Healthcare



- Lack of public awareness (10%)
- No local primary physician (10%)
- Fear of diagnosis (8%)
- Lack of insurance (7%)
- Lack of transportation (4%)
- Communication issues (2%)
- Language barrier (1%)



In the last year, was there a time where you needed prescription medication but were unable to get it?

No (88%)

Yes (14%)

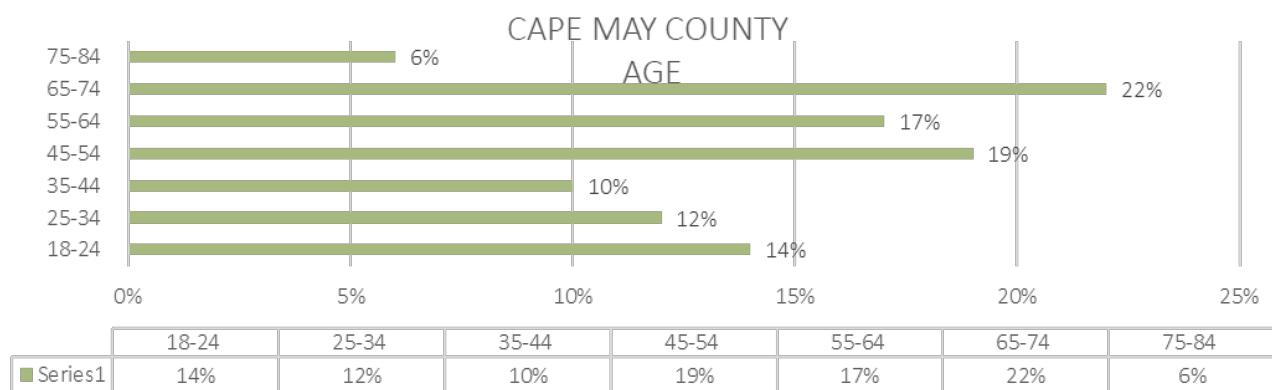


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Age Related Services

Cape May County has a significant senior population, with 22% aged 65–74 and another 17% aged 55–64. This demographic trend underscores the growing need for senior-focused healthcare, housing, and support services.





Patient & Community Quotes

“Delayed care and screenings increased severity and missed early diagnoses.”

“Transportation is a huge barrier. If you don’t have a car, you’re stuck.”

“We need better communication between hospitals and the community.”

“It’s hard to get an appointment unless you wait weeks. That’s not helpful when you’re sick now.”

“Acute behavioral health needs, limited resources.”

“After my heart attack, I didn’t know where to turn. Cape Regional’s cardiac rehab helped me rebuild my strength and confidence.”

01

Residents reported persistent challenges in accessing care, including:

02

Shortages of medical specialists

03

High out-of-pocket costs

04

Limited awareness of available services

Barriers to Care: Priorities

Key Findings Summary

01

Mental health emerged as the top concern, cited by 65% of residents.

02

Aging-related conditions such as mobility, isolation, and chronic illness were identified by 45%.

03

Heart disease and diabetes continue to impact quality of life and drive healthcare utilization.

04

Substance use, poor nutrition, and limited access to preventive care compound the county's overall health burden.

Closing Statement



Through collaboration, innovation, and accountability, we will address the identified needs with targeted strategies that promote equity, access, and measurable outcomes. Our work does not end here, it begins anew with every action we take to close gaps, uplift underserved populations, and build a healthier future for all.

We invite community members, organizations, and leaders to join us in this journey. Together, we can transform insight into impact.

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