

Community Health Needs Assessment

Mercy Hospital Fort Smith
Fiscal Year 2022





Our Mission

As the Sisters of Mercy before us, we bring to life the healing ministry of Jesus through our compassionate care and exceptional service.

Our Values

Dignity

Excellence

Justice

Service

Stewardship

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Impact Evaluation of Previous CHNA

The 2019 community health needs assessment identified three priority health areas:



A community health improvement plan was developed and implemented to address these significant needs. Mercy Fort Smith developed and implemented a variety of programs and initiatives to address the needs identified in the 2019 CHNA.



Impact Evaluation of Previous CHNA

Access to Care for Those at High Risk

Community Health Workers (CHWs) have been serving at Mercy since 2018, screening for needs related to social determinants of health and facilitating access to services. Mercy currently employs four CHWs. Our CHWs provided resources and assistance to 854 patients over the last three years. 281 patients successfully obtained Mercy Financial Assistance, and 67 patients were enrolled in Medicaid.

Donald W. Reynolds Cancer Support House provides cost-free, non-medical support programs and services to cancer patients and caregivers, and to provide educational programs to the community in support of early detection of cancer.

Good Samaritan Clinic provides low-cost healthcare regardless of ability to pay. Services provided are medical, optical, dental, and mental health counseling.

Mercy Primary Care Clinic - Hope Campus in collaboration with Hope Campus, a local non-profit organization, focuses on assisting the homeless to obtain medical care to the Fort Smith area.



Impact Evaluation of Previous CHNA

Behavioral Health

- ***Increase access to mental health care for uninsured and at-risk persons.*** Mercy Fort Smith collaborates with community partners to provide access to mental health services through comprehensive referral partnerships with:
 - Western Arkansas Counseling and Guidance Center**
 - Harbor House**
 - Rock House – Guidance Center**
- ***Baggot Street House*** is a collaborative program that provides training for prospective foster and adopting families. As well as providing safe, hospitable space for family visitation.
- ***Behavioral Health Strategic Plan.*** Mercy will be significantly expanding its virtual behavioral health offerings over the next several years.
- ***Sebastian County Opioid Taskforce*** is a committee formed of medical professionals, law enforcement, social worker and case management non-profit services, and the general public who are dedicated to reducing opioid addiction and preventing overdose deaths through programs in the community i.e. the annual **Drug Take Back Day**.



Impact Evaluation of Previous CHNA

Nutrition

- **Health Seminars** are hosted at community event with a focus on uninsured, at-risk patients, and community members who are seeking to become healthier adults through education. Classes will vary on topics that are relevant for target audience. There may be a hands-on component to some of the courses as well. The CHWs participated in the Senior Day at the Mercy Fitness Center providing health information to senior citizens..
- **The Cooking Matters program** embodies the key elements of both United Way of Fort Smith's and Mercy's mission and vision. The program focuses on the many of the most vulnerable in the community bringing needed education and awareness in the areas of proper nutrition, shopping on a limited budget, and food preparation.



Executive Summary

Mercy Hospital Fort Smith is a 336 acute-care hospital located in Fort Smith, Arkansas affiliated with Mercy, a large Catholic health systems. Mercy Hospital Fort Smith employs more than 1,885 co-workers (hospital) and 56 primary and specialty clinic locations (Sebastian County, AR): Chaffee Crossing, Cliff Drive, Free Ferry, Hope Campus, McAuley, Fianna Hills, Greenwood, Rogers Avenue Internal Medicine, Dallas Street and Towson Avenue. Mercy Clinic is a physician-governed group practice comprised of 203 board-certified and board-eligible primary caregivers serving the Fort Smith area.

Mercy Fort Smith includes a heart and vascular center, inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient surgery center, neonatal intensive care unit (Level 3A), orthopedic hospital, and emergency department. This provider partnership gives patient access to the best quality care in the country with access to an entire health care team and advances services, including the Breast Center & mobile mammography unit, and the Hembree Cancer Center. The mobile mammography unit reaches approximately 1,600 women a year by traveling throughout the 13-county region, geared towards the uninsured patients who are unable to afford the cost of a mammogram through "To Save a Life" program.

Mercy physicians have access to an electronic health record that is shared at Mercy facilities in four states, and patients may connect to their own health record and health teams anywhere they connect to the internet through MyMercy.

Also participating in this CHNA is CHRISTUS Dubuis Hospital of Fort Smith, a long-term acute care hospital housed at Mercy Hospital Fort Smith houses a long-term acute care hospital and operated by LHC Group of Lafayette, LA. Currently the hospital has 25 LTACH beds (<https://www.christushealth.org/-/media/about/2020--2022-svhs-community-health-needs-assessment.ashx>) . Mercy Hospital Fort Smith The population in Fort Smith is: 89,142.

Executive Summary (continued)

- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in 2021 gave Mercy Hospital Fort Smith a three-star rating. CMS re-evaluates hospitals annually using more than 100 measures divided into seven categories: mortality, safety of care, readmission, patient experience, effectiveness of care, timeliness of care and effective use of medical imaging.
- Mercy Hospital Fort Smith received their 12th consecutive grade “A” from The Leapfrog Group as part of its Hospital Safety Grades, which score hospitals on how safe they keep their patients from errors, injuries, accidents and infections. Mercy Hospital Fort Smith most recent received an A grade in fall 2021.
- Mercy Home Health in Fort Smith was named among the top 25 percent of home health agencies in the United States and received the annual HomeCare Elite Award of Excellence and for the second time is among the top 500 agencies in the country.
- Home to Arkansas’ first Ronald McDonald Family Room and a Ronald McDonald House. The Ronald McDonald Family room is 2,100-square-foot family room within the hospital gives families of young patients a place to go during the day and offers four sleeping rooms for parents who live more than 30 miles from the hospital. The new constructed Ronald McDonald House offers space for 11 families and includes laundry facilities, relation areas and a playground.
- Mercy Hospital Fort Smith was named a 2019 Top 100 Consumer Loyalty Award winner Consumer Choice Award Winner by the National Research Corp. It's the 13th year in a row to earn this honor. The award identifies hospitals that health care consumers have chosen as having the highest quality in the marketplace.

Executive Summary (continued)

Mercy Fort Smith's service area saw less than a 1% increase in population since 2019 with a significant increase in Hispanic community members. For the purpose of this CHNA, Sebastian County where Mercy Hospital Fort Smith resides. Overall, Sebastian County ranked 21st in county health rankings, making this one of many unhealthy regions in Arkansas. However, income and health disparities are apparent, poverty rates are high, especially among non-White residents, and uninsured rates are higher than state and national averages.

Mercy Fort Smith is committed to carrying out its mission to deliver compassionate care and exceptional service for all members of the communities it serves, with special attention to those who are marginalized, underserved, and most vulnerable. As part of this CHNA, Mercy convened a collaboration of area health care and non-profit partners to conduct a comprehensive community health survey. Available secondary health data was also obtained, and Fort Smith indicators were compared to those of Arkansas and the United States.

Executive Summary (continued)

Several identifiable needs emerged during the 2022 CHNA process, among those needs were a clear top three. We proposed the top three prioritized needs are:

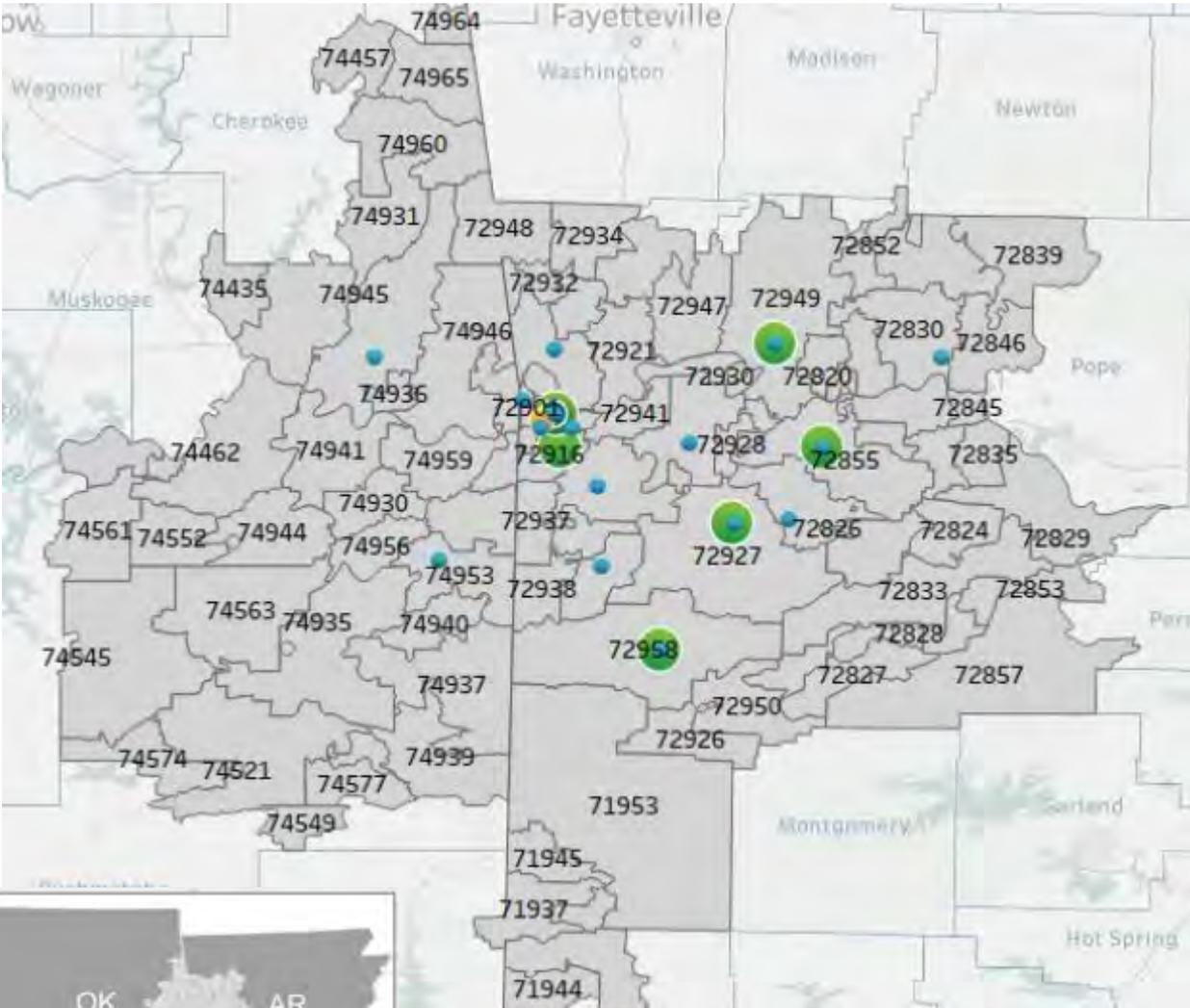
- Diabetes/Obesity
- Anxiety/Depress
- Smoking/Vaping

These prioritized needs will be the basis of Mercy Fort Smith three-year community health improvement plan (CHIP), which will guide the coordination and targeting of resources and the planning, implementation, and evaluation of new and existing programs and interventions. This community health needs assessment, along with the resulting community health improvement plan, will provide the framework for Mercy Fort Smith as it works in collaboration with community partners to advance the health and quality of life for the community members it serves.

Community Profile

Mercy Hospital Fort Smith

Mercy defines its community served as the River Valley area of central west Arkansas area and central eastern border counties of Oklahoma, which encompasses fourteen zip codes; both rural and urban settings. For the purpose of the CHNA, the report will focus on the city Fort Smith; housed within Sebastian county, where Mercy Fort Smith stands as the main acute care facility within the region drawing from each of the counties served.





Community Profile

Fort Smith, Arkansas (continued)

Fort Smith nestled in the river valley of Sebastian county, the hub of a diverse economy, a rich history and the second largest city in Arkansas. The U.S. Army established the Fort Smith military outpost in 1817 and to this day operates an active military presence, with the Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center, operated by the Arkansas National Guard. Home to the University of Arkansas Fort Smith (UAFS) since 1928, the university continues to provide unique and ever-expanding educational opportunities to its community. Fort Smith offers a water park as well as miles of scenic bike and walking trails and two baseball fields and a softball field.

Community Profile

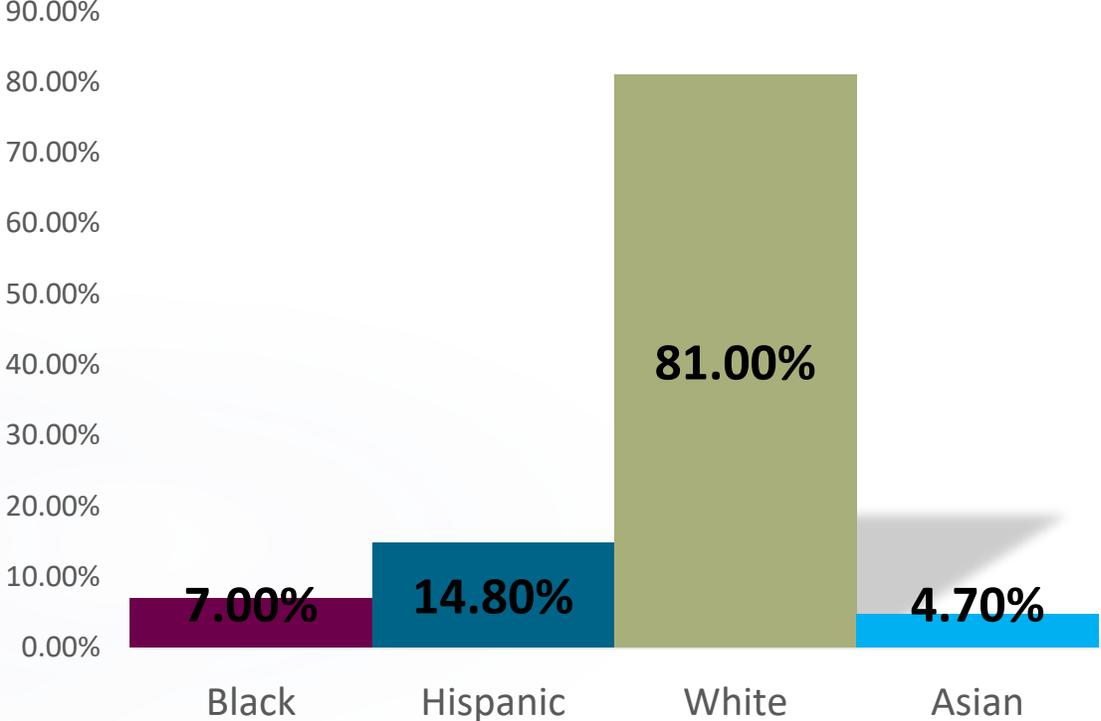
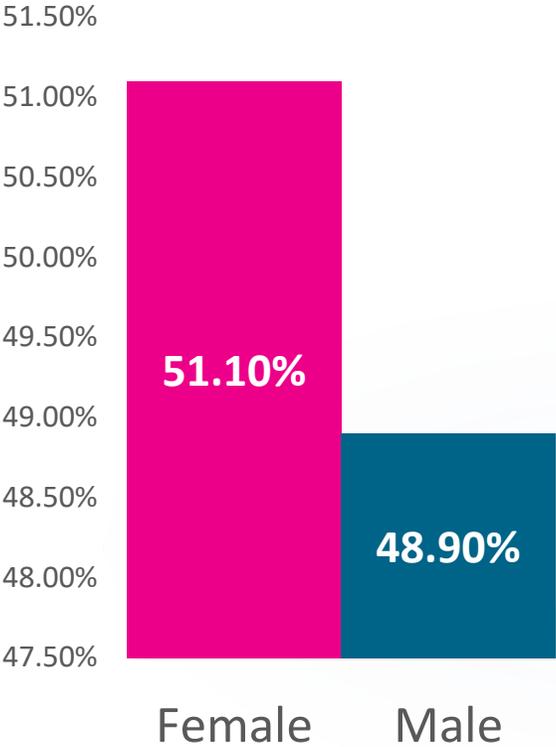
Demographics

Age and Racial Distribution	Sebastian County	Arkansas	U.S.
Population size (number of persons)	128,400	3,024,390	329,835,269
Age distribution			
Under 18 years	23.5%	22.7%	21.8%
18 to 44 years	32.8%	35.1%	36.1%
45-64 years	25.4%	24.5%	25.1%
65 years and over	18.3%	17.7%	16.9%
Race distribution			
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.4%	1%	1.3%
Asian	4.7%	1.7%	5.9%
African American/Black	7%	15.7%	13.4%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%
White	81%	79%	76.3%
Ethnicity distribution			
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	14.8%	7.8%	18.5%

Community Profile

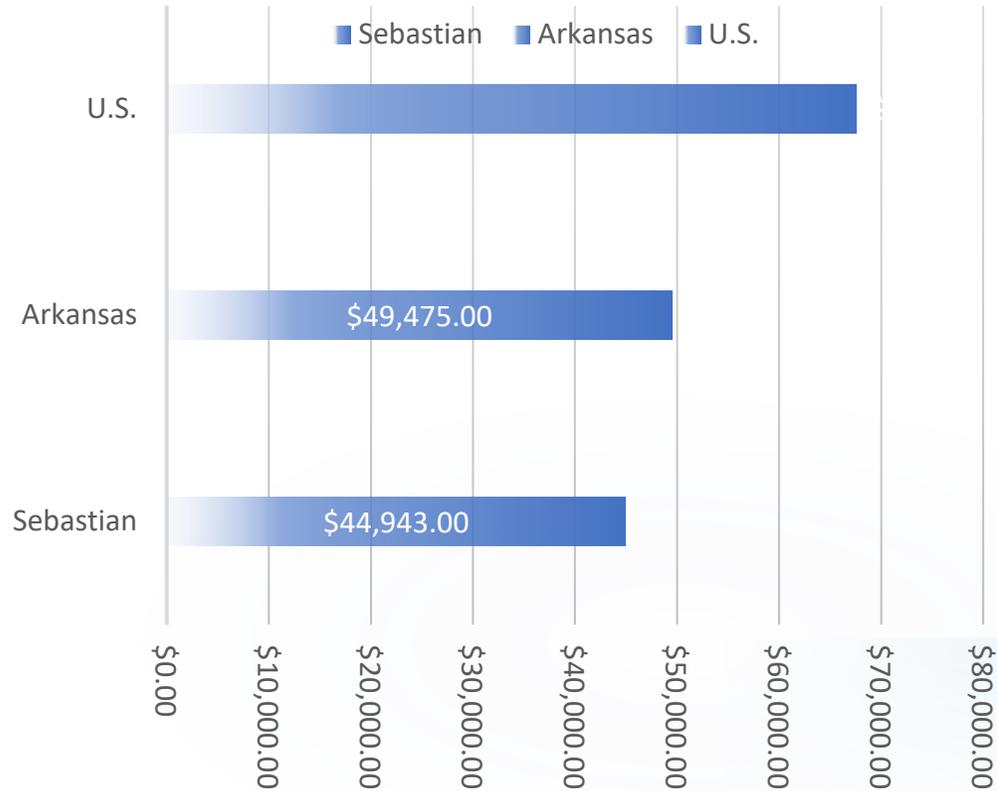
Demographics

Population: 128,400



Community Profile

Median Household Income

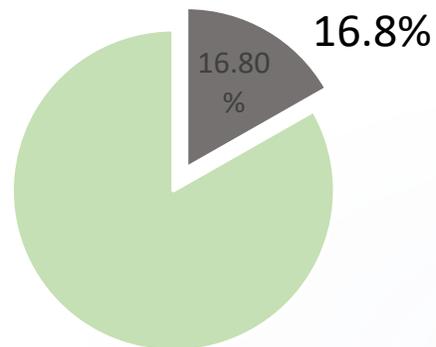


Community Profile

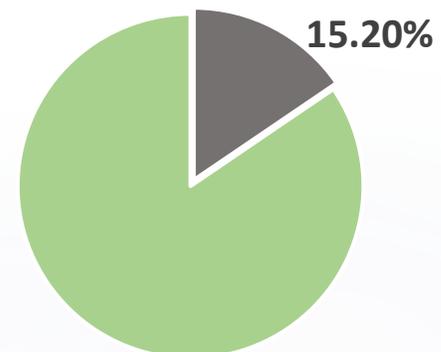
Poverty Statistics

Percent of population below 100% FPL

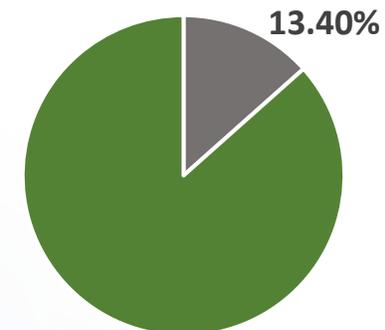
Sebastian



Arkansas



U.S.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2015-19, accessed via SparkMap, CARES University of Missouri Extension.

Community Profile

Education

Level	Sebastian County	Arkansas	U.S.
Less than High School	10.1%	13.3%	12%
High School Degree	29.6%	34%	27%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	30.2%	29.6%	28.9%
Bachelor's Degree	18.5%	14.8%	8.3%
Graduate/Professional Degree	11.6%	8.4%	12.4%



Community Profile

Insurance Coverage

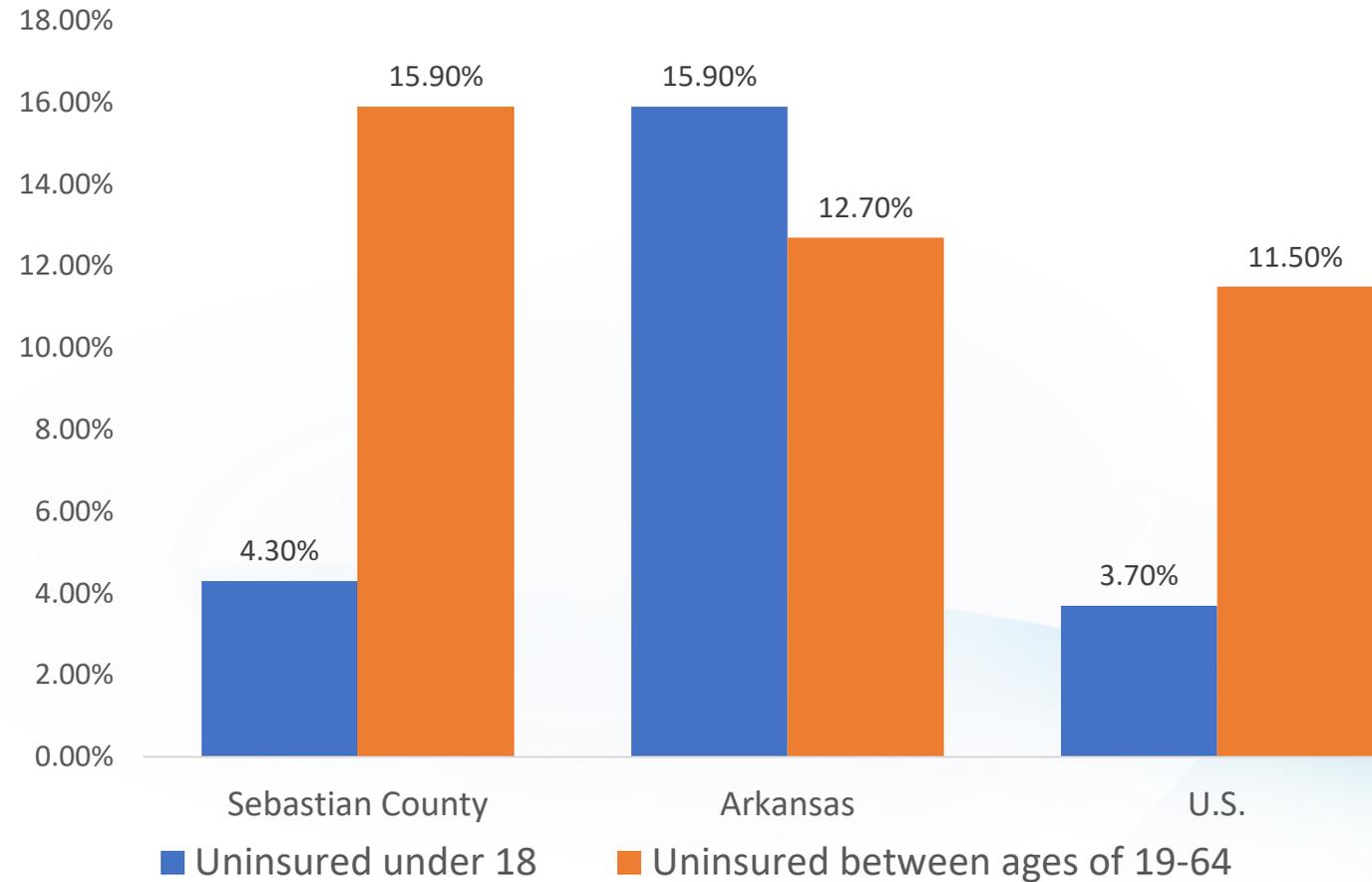
Medicare – 21.9%

Medicaid – 34.0%

Commercial – 30.7%

Uninsured Rates

- Person in Poverty – 16.8%
 - Under 18
 - 19-64 years old



Our Assessment Process

Overview and Community Input

In conducting its Community Health Needs Assessment, Mercy Fort Smith collected and analyzed a significant quantity of primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected, and community input was solicited, by means of the 2022 Fort Smith Community Health Survey, which was led by Mercy. Secondary data was collected and analyzed from publicly available data resources, listed below, and from internal Mercy data. FTSM indicators were compared to those of Arkansas and the United States.

The Fort Smith Steering Committee Board of Directors guided the CHNA process. The Community Health Committee is accountable for overseeing community health and benefit activities and ensuring these activities meet mission, compliance, and IRS guidelines. The committee meets monthly and includes members representing non-profit, government, academic, public health and business sectors within the community.

The thoughts and opinions of people within Mercy's service area of Sebastian County were central to the health needs assessment process. Input from people representing broad interests of the community was solicited through a robust survey process guided by a Mercy-led community coalition and by seeking input from the Community Health Committee of the Board and the Sebastian County Health Department.

Our Assessment Process

Overview and Community Input *(continued)*

- The Community Health & Access Department co-workers underwent the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process formulated by Mercy standards with adhering to IRS guidelines. This process included additional community partners such as: Hope Campus as well as other health systems/hospitals and community groups striving to improve the health of Sebastian County's residents.
- Co-workers in Mercy's Community Health & Access Department were the primary leads for the 2022 CHNA. These co-workers collected and reviewed data from a variety of sources, including: surveys, focus groups, published data, and hospital specific data. Surveys (online and printed) were sent to community partners and critical access hospitals for dissemination. The focus groups were conducted to hear the voice of marginalized community members as well as local leadership.
- The Community Health & Access Department evaluated this data alongside input gained from community members via coalitions and stakeholder meetings to:
 - Prioritize the community's identified health needs
 - Assess the community resources available to address those needs
 - Create a collaborative health improvement plan in partnership with community resources possessing the potential to alleviate the prioritized needs.

Our Assessment Process

Community Partners

Organizations participating in CHNA and serving on the Fort Smith Steering Committee of the Hospital Board:

- City of Fort Smith
- Sebastian County Health Department
- Sebastian County Opioid Taskforce
- Hope Campus
- 100 Families
- The Call
- Harbor House
- West Arkansas Guidance and Counseling Center
- Sebastian County Sheriff office
- United Way



Our Assessment Process

Resources

The following external sources of published data are examples of those utilized in the data collection process.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>
- Community Commons
Institute for People, Place and Possibility;
The Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems; and Community Initiatives
<https://www.communitycommons.org/>
- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps—2018
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The University of Wisconsin-Public Health Institute
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

Our Assessment Process

Resources *(continued)*

The following external sources of published data are examples of those utilized in the data collection process.

- HealthyPeople 2020, Leading Health Indicators
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
www.healthypeople.gov/2020/
- Arkansas Community Update—2018
Annual Community Update Mercy
<https://baggotstreet.mercy.net/sites/default/files/hubs/Central%20Region20FortSmith%20Arkansas.pdf>
- Mercy Arkansas Counties Data
United States Census Bureau
<https://www.census.gov/>

From Our Focus Group:

The jails are full, but it is the wrong place for mental health, 82 foster kids in the system because of parents with substance abuse

John Q. Smith

We have busy live, meal planning looks interesting, but do not know how to meal plan.

John Q. Smith

Our Assessment Process

Mercy Fort Smith Community Health Survey

Mercy convened a community coalition of various health care and social service organizations to conduct a comprehensive community health survey in 2022. The survey was developed to build on the 2019 Mercy Fort Smith Community Health Survey and to incorporate input and specific needs of the coalition partners. The final survey was made up of 45 questions focused on health issues and needs most important to the respondents, wellness, mental health, barriers to care, COVID-19 vaccination, childhood immunizations, and the Fort Smith COVID-19 response. The survey was translated into Spanish and Vietnamese by certified medical interpreters.

The Fort Smith Steering Committee hosted the survey on their website from February 2022 to May 2022 in the three languages. The Fort Smith Steering Committee promoted the survey on social media, and each partner organization distributed the survey electronically to their co-workers, patients, clients, and community members by email and through social media.

Our Assessment Process

Mercy Fort Smith Community Health Survey

Flyers and business cards with QR codes for the survey in each language were produced and distributed by coalition partners in the community and at community events. Surveys were also made available in paper format for participants who preferred to complete it manually or did not have computer access. Intentional efforts were made to include and oversample Hispanic and Vietnamese community members by attending community events, reaching participants at workplaces, using culturally specific social media outlets, and utilizing Hispanic Community Health Workers.

973 responses were included in the final analytic sample, 87% of responses were from Sebastian County, 4.5% of respondents were Native American, 2% were Asian, 3.4% were Black/African American, 82% were White, and 3% were Hispanic. Complete results of the Mercy Fort Smith Community Health Survey are included in Appendix A.



Our Assessment Process

Resources

The following external sources of published data were used as part of the collection of secondary data during the assessment process:

- Arkansas Department of Health Vital Statistics, 2019. <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/vital-statistics>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Overweight & Obesity Statistics, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/prevalence-maps.html#overall>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention United States Diabetes Surveillance System, 2019. <https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/diabetes/DiabetesAtlas.html>
- County Health Rankings, 2021. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>
- Feeding America – Hunger in America, 2019. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>
- Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map>

Our Assessment Process

Resources *(continued)*

The following external sources of published data were used as part of the collection of secondary data during the assessment process:

- Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sahie.html>
- SparkMap – Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES), University of Missouri, 2018-2020. <https://sparkmap.org/report/>
- U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Results. <https://www.census.gov/>
- UAMS Public Health in Arkansas' Communities, 2021. <http://www.uams.edu/phacs/index.html>

Prioritized Needs



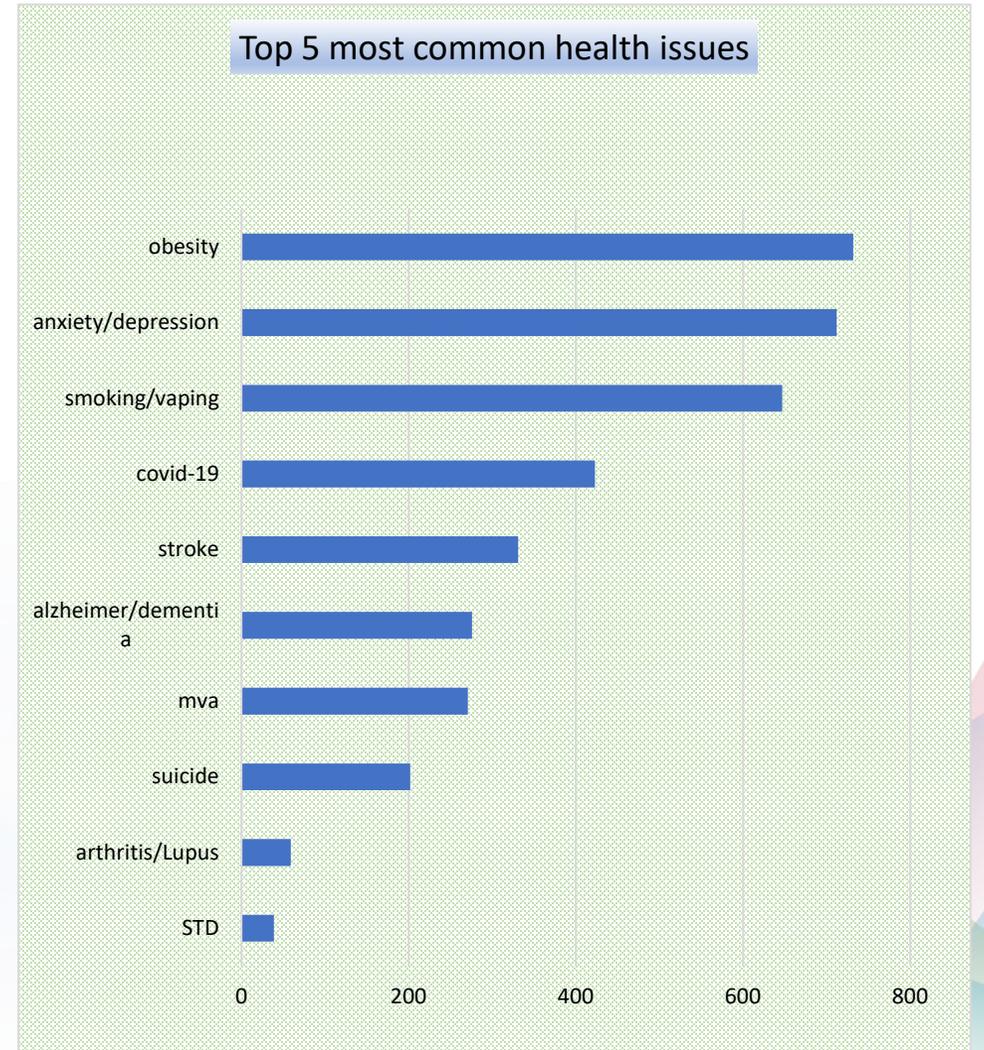
Obesity/Overweight



Behavioral Health



Smoking/Vaping



Prioritized Needs

Diabetes/Obesity



The community voice raised various times that nutrition remains extremely impactful. Both local surveys and focus groups put that poor eating habits was the top risk behavior seen in their community and healthy cooking classes being unavailable to help find solutions to these habits. The obesity and diabetes epidemic hitting the region has various causes, one of which is healthy eating and nutrition. The access to fast food and high-caloric/nutrient-poor options also contributes to the weight and chronic health condition prevalence in Fort Smith. As the information regarding meal planning has been an effective method for reducing poor eating habits, respondents requested meal planning/cooking classes.





Prioritized Needs



Behavioral Health

- Local focus groups, meetings and surveys along with national and state data highlight the need for behavioral health. There is an increasing number of youth and adults in the community that are experiencing anxiety problems, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse. The stakeholder focus group discussion highlighted access Mental Health services was lacking, which is supported by the designation of a Mental Health Provider Shortage area by the Health Resources & Services Administration. These community members also talked about how substance use remains the top social behavior impacting the Fort Smith region. While Sebastian County stands as number one in the state for prescribing rates, with 153 prescriptions per 100 persons as seen from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The substance abuse health crisis is magnified by the prevalence of foster care and high recidivism within the community.
- The effects of COVID-19 has been detrimental to the population, the Center for Disease Control & Prevention has seen an increase in the percentage of adults who reported symptoms of anxiety of and depression disorders during the pandemic.

Prioritized Needs

Smoking/Vaping

- Throughout the survey and focal groups, smoking/vaping has appeared to be a high concern as one of the top three health issues in the Fort Smith service area. Healthcare data has proven the connection between smoking/vaping and various preventable diseases. It has been established the contributing factor to stroke, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is smoking/vaping.
- While facilitating local community focus groups with our marginalized population we discovered that 72% of smokers were persons in poverty, uninsured, and often diagnosed at later stage of diseases due to lack of healthcare. The percentage of the U.S. population who smoke stands at 15.5% with Arkansas surpassing at 20% of the population smokes. The use of smokeless tobacco otherwise known as vaping has been on the rise among high schoolers across the nation. Research has shown that more White individuals are more likely to use smokeless tobacco products than other ethnicities.

Resources

Mercy Fort Smith collaborates with many local community agencies and organizations that have similar missions and personnel dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for individuals within the Mercy NWA region. Some of these partners include:

- American Diabetes Association Local Community Leadership Board
- American Heart Association
- Arkansas Chronic Disease Coordinating Council
- Arkansas Department of Health
- Arkansas Diabetes Advisory Council
- Sebastian County Health Department
- 100 Families
- Fort Smith Steering Committee
- City of Fort Smith

Resources *(continued)*

- Salvation Army
- Samaritan Community Center
- University of Arkansas
- Western Arkansas Guidance & Counseling



Your life is our life's work.