
2022 Polk County Community Health Assessment



Community Services Public Health Department
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1 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

Throughout 2022 the Polk County Health Department (PCHD), in collaboration with community partners, worked to conduct the 2023 Community Health Assessment (CHA). The CHA is designed to identify health concerns among residents relating to personal and community health. Additionally, data that is collected is used to identify the social factors that influence health outcomes in our community. Identifying, these health concerns and social barriers to health will guide us in supporting our vision of a safe and healthy community for all.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic the PCHD was limited in our ability to collaborate with community partners. Due to these limitations, PCHD was unable to meet our community partners' CHA deadlines. PCHD's CHA used a traditional leadership process (conducted independently). Although the PCHD CHA was conducted in a traditional leadership process, we could not have completed our data collection without the help of our community partners. Community partners assisted in distribution, collection and promotion of our survey data. Community partners are listed in full in the acknowledgements section below.

Methodology

The PCHD CHA was based on the County Health Ranking Model. In August of 2022, the PCHD team began the development of the CHA survey. Previous PCHD and partner CHAs were utilized to guide the development of the current CHA. Community partners distributed the survey throughout Polk County from September 2022 to November 2022. An online survey was created utilizing Microsoft Forms to electronically administer the survey. The survey was advertised via social media, flyers, and various community events and gatherings throughout Polk County. Data collection was concluded in December 2022 and data was analyzed to identify key findings, health priorities and next steps.

Key Findings

Health Priorities



Substance Abuse and Misuse includes the use of alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes, prescription drugs, opioids and other drugs in a manner that is harmful, or causes problems or distress, to a person's health and/or daily life.



Mental Health is the connection between mental illness, community stigma, social and community support, resiliency, and overall mental and emotional well-being.



Nutrition and Physical Activity means the ability to access nutrition, physical activity and supportive resources for families and communities.

Social Determinants of Health



Economic stability influences the ability to access both mental and physical healthcare, nutritious foods, and physical activity opportunities.



Health care and quality/access to care means having equal access to convenient, quality, and affordable care for all that is trauma informed and culturally responsive. This includes factors such as proximity to care, diversity training for staff, diverse backgrounds of providers, cost of care, insurance coverage, medical transportation, and care coordination within the health care system.



Education influences mental and physical health, economic stability, access to healthcare, substance abuse and misuse, and health equity.

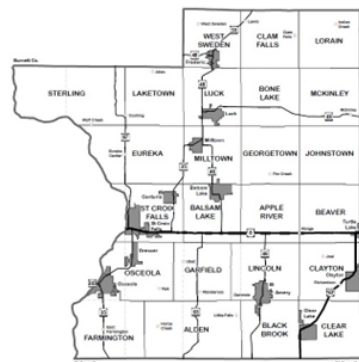
Next Steps

PCHD will collaborate with community partners more effectively in the future to address the needs of the community. Our first step to increasing collaboration efforts will be through the development of a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which is a companion to the CHA. Based on the data collected from the CHA, PCHD will be introducing the CHIP. A CHIP is a long-term strategic plan that serves as a guide for the community to distinguish the health priorities and coordinate with community partners and stakeholders to improve the health of the county.

Collaboration with community partners in development of the CHIP will serve as a foundation to expand leadership of future community assessments to promote and protect the health and well-being of all Polk County residents. The findings of both CHA and CHIP will be made widely available to the public on our website at polkcountywi.gov.

1.2 Demographic Profile

Polk County is a rural county located in the scenic west central region of Wisconsin approximately 50 miles northeast of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. The county is bordered by Burnett County to the north, Barron County to the East and St. Croix County to the south. Western Polk County borders the state of Minnesota [1]. Polk is considered a rural county with a land area of approximately 914 square miles and a population density of 49.2 persons per square mile compared to 105 persons per square mile statewide. It is comprised of 3 small cities (Amery, St. Croix Falls, and Osceola), 10 villages (Balsam Lake, Centuria, Clayton, Clear Lake, Dresser, Frederic, Luck, Milltown, Osceola, and Turtle Lake) and 24 townships. Polk County covers 914.3 square miles, making it the 17th largest county in Wisconsin by total land area.[2]



In 2021, the total population for Polk County was 45,431[3]. This was an increase of 2.9% in the last decade, which was a slower rate of growth than both U.S. and Wisconsin population growth at 7.3% and 3.6%, respectively. The majority of Polk County residents' ethnicity was White/Caucasian (94.9%), followed by Hispanic (1.9%), and American Indian (1.1%)[4]. Polk County's median household income was \$61,814. The median age in Polk County was 45.9 years, with 57.9% age 18-64. Roughly 22% of Polk County residents were 65 years of age and older. Most adults 25 years of age and over had completed a high school diploma or equivalent (94%), and 65% of adults ages 25-44 had completed at least some college. County demographics are provided in the table below.

Throughout Wisconsin, there are 72 counties. According to the County Health Rankings, Polk County is ranked number 39 out of 72. This ranking is based on the health outcomes and health factors within Polk County.

Table 1: 2020 Census data for Polk County Wisconsin[5]

POLK COUNTY KEY DEMOGRAPHICS AT A GLANCE	
Total Population	44,977
Median household income	\$67,878
Median Monthly mortgage cost	\$1,351 ± 30
Median Gross rent cost per month	\$770 ± 33
Median age in years	46.3
Children living in poverty	12.5%
Population Living in poverty	8.6%
Age 0-64 with no health insurance	3.15%
Disabled population – all ages	13.8%
Households with broadband internet subscriptions	83.0%

2 Methods

2.1 Importance of Community Health Assessments (CHA)

PCHD's mission is to partner with our community to promote and protect health and well-being. The Community Health Assessment is used to identify areas of health needs and obstacles that affect individual and community health. These assessments are often done through data collection that consists of surveys, questionnaires and in-person community forums. The information collected is used to guide health departments in decision making, planning, and program management to best meet the needs of the community.

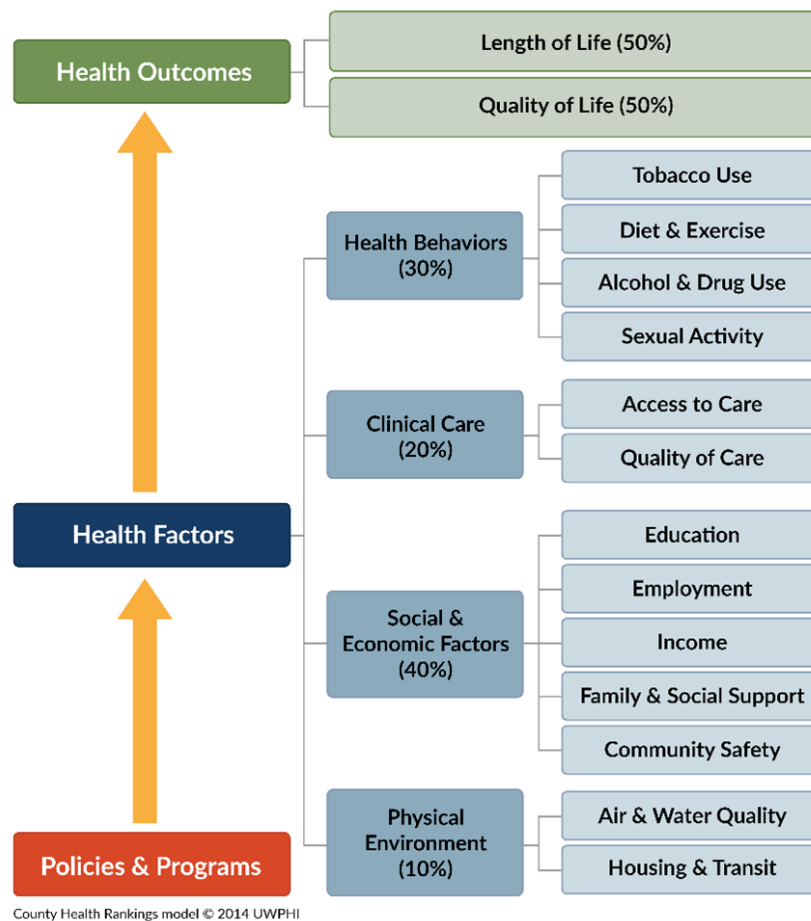


Figure 1: County Health Rankings Model

PCHD's CHA is based on the County Health Rankings Model[6]. This model was created by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (Figure 1)[6]. The model shows the many factors that influence the health of a whole community. These factors include health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment.

- Health behaviors: actions that individuals take which affect their health, such as exercise and diet.
- Clinical care: affordability of care, quality, and efficiency. These are crucial factors in promoting health long-term, as well as preventing, and detecting diseases earlier.
- Social and economic factors: income, employment, educational levels, community, and social supports are areas that add to how long and the quality of life we lead.
- Physical environment: the places where individuals live, work, learn, and play.

2.2 Timeline and Implementation

This section describes PCHD's process of gathering data and input to understand and prioritize the community needs. In August of 2022, the PCHD team began the development of the CHA survey. Previous PCHD and partner CHAs were used to guide the development of the current survey. Community partners were utilized to distribute the survey throughout Polk County from September 2022 to November 2022. From December 2022 to February 2023 the survey results were analyzed and the CHA was drafted. Health priorities were identified through this process.

Table 2 below outlines the timeline of the CHA.

Table 2: Outline of CHA creation timeline and following CHIP

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT TIMELINE	
August 2022	Health Department meets to plan CHA and timeline, Selection of survey questions
September - November 2022	Community Survey Distributed; Community Forums Held
December 2022 - February 2023	CHA Report Drafted, Health Priorities Identified
March 2023	Distribute CHA Report and begin CHIP Process

2.3 Gathering Data and Input

To thoroughly understand and describe the needs of Polk County PCHD identified complimentary publicly accessible data sources. These data sources included three other Polk County related surveys and their accompanying statistics. The [2022 St. Croix Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment \(CHNA\) and Implementation Strategies report](#)[7], [Amery Hospital and Clinics CHNA](#)[8], and [Polk County 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results report \(YRBS\)](#)[9] were used as secondary data sources to support our findings. Additionally, the [2020 U.S. Census Results](#) were used to obtain Polk County's demographic information. The CHNAs were used to better understand Polk County health

and hospital needs. These reports contain information from Polk County residents and surrounding jurisdictions. The results are assumed to be generically the same for Polk County residents. The YRBS was administered to Polk County middle and high school students, and the data will be referenced to understand how Polk County youth are affected by determinants of health.

PCHD's CHA is based on the [County Health Rankings Model](#) to help determine factors that affect our community health. Questions for the PCHD's CHA were created based on the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). SDOH are defined as the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, function, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Social Determinants of Health are categorized in five areas[10]:

- Economic stability
- Education access and quality
- Health care access and quality
- Neighborhood and built environment
- Social and community context

Polk County Community Services Division leadership provided feedback and approval of the CHA survey prior to distribution. After final approval CHA surveys were created for both paper and online distribution beginning September of 2022.

2.4 Community Distribution and Outreach

To gather as many responses as possible, PCHD worked with community partners to distribute the survey throughout Polk County from September 2022 to November 2022. In addition to the paper survey, an online survey was created utilizing Microsoft Forms to electronically administer the survey. Spanish language versions of the CHA were also made available in both paper and online formats. The survey was advertised via social media, flyers, and community events and gatherings throughout Polk County. Social media platforms such as Facebook were utilized and QR codes were placed in various businesses and facilities to better reach the population. The paper version of the survey was made available to the public in libraries and additional community spaces. Both paper and electronic versions were also available to residents at Polk County's annual mass vaccination clinics.

To achieve our vision of a safe and healthy community for all, PCHD made efforts to reach underserved populations. PCHD partnered with programs offered within Polk County, such as WIC, ADRC, Behavioral Health, Jail Health, and Birth to 3 to distribute the CHA to members of these populations. To achieve this goal, flyers were also placed in various entities such as laundromats, bars and restaurants, cafés, and food pantries. Data collection was concluded in December 2022. A total of 912 Polk County residents completed the survey. This is a 0.55% increase in number of responses from the 2019 community survey. In January of 2023, data was analyzed to identify key findings, health priorities and next steps.

2.5 Data Analysis

The survey data was analyzed using Microsoft Power BI. The collection of data was skewed by usual factors of data collection such as, self-selection bias, which can be defined as surveyors who chose to take the survey were more likely to respond due to other factors. The survey questions were not required which lead to some participants filling out only specific questions. This impacts the percentage of people who are reflected as responding to a question and lead to specific questions being removed from analysis in the CHA due to a small overall percentage of answers. All but 0.55% of the survey participants were older than 17 years old, with 44.52% of the responders being over 65 years old, and 92.64% of participants were White. This is a notably large number of older respondents as Polk County is only 21.9% of persons 65 years and older[5]. This can impact a variety of aspects contained within the CHA. This skews the data to Polk County residents with higher income, age, and retired citizens. This is a limitation of the data collected and indicates the results may not be expandable to a generalized Polk County community. The percentage of White persons is lower than the reported 96.3% reported by the US Census[2]. The responses were divided into four key categories: annual income less than \$25,000, annual income more than \$25,000, high school education or less, and some college or more. These categories were determined by grouping all recipients in different income brackets or separately grouping the respondents by education levels. Any data labeled "General" is the statistics for all respondents without being broken down into separate groups.

3 Context

3.1 Health Disparities

PCHD is committed to preventing health disparities in our community. Health disparities are defined as preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by populations that have been disadvantaged by their social or economic status, geographic location, and/or environment. Those who may be susceptible to experiencing health disparities include individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups, individuals with disabilities, women, individuals that identify as LGBTQI+, and those with English as a second language.

3.2 Health Equity

Health Equity is defined as the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Attaining this requires ongoing societal efforts that involve addressing historical and contemporary injustices. Health equity is achieved by overcoming economic, social, and other obstacles to health and health care, and eliminating preventable health disparities. Polk County takes health equity seriously and is continually working towards achieving health equity for our consumers[11]. Some of the services Polk County offers to address these issues are referenced in the Appendix section below.

3.3 Health Behaviors

Health behaviors are actions individuals take that affect their health. They include actions that lead to improved health, such as eating well and participating in physical activity, as well as actions that increase one's risk of disease, such as smoking, excessive alcohol intake, and risky sexual behavior[4].

3.4 COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March 2020[12]. A state of emergency was declared in Wisconsin on March 12, 2020[13]. This resulted in school closures, a shift in workplace location to home for those with flexible job types, loss of employment and/or wages for others and working in an environment with an increased risk of exposure for many. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the health and well-being of the communities PCHD serves.

During much of the COVID-19 pandemic, PCHD's efforts were diverted toward pandemic response. Some of the duties that were required of PCHD were, organizing contact tracing, outbreak management, testing, public education and guidance, and vaccine distribution. To increase vaccination rates in underserved and at-risk populations within our community, PCHD strategically set up mobile vaccination clinics and drive thru clinics in accessible locations. PCHD also provided vaccine information in different languages, had staff members available for questions and assistance to address concerns and remove barriers. As a result of the pandemic response, access to normally provided services was significantly limited. This likely had the greatest impact on the underserved and disadvantaged populations within our community.

4 Survey Findings

After data analysis there were several main findings regarding health behaviors in Polk County identified in this report. One main finding was that tobacco use amongst high school students in Polk County is higher than the national average although it seems to have decreased over the last two years, based on the YRBS. The second finding was that Polk County residents with lower incomes were far less likely to eat three or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Ability to access healthy foods may have been a potential barrier to regular fruit and vegetable consumption for lower-income respondents. Another key finding was that one in four Polk County community members admitted to binge drinking monthly. Lastly, depression rates among adult and youth Polk County residents were concerning.

Based on survey data, three top health concerns were identified within Polk County:

1. Substance Abuse and Misuse
2. Mental Health
3. Nutrition and Physical Activity

These top three health concerns are a combination of the top six health concerns as responded by community members, see Figure 2. Addiction and alcohol make up four of the top six

most common health concerns in Polk County based on the survey results. The other two health concerns relate to obesity and depression. Throughout this CHA there is data to support these health concerns as key priorities in Polk County.

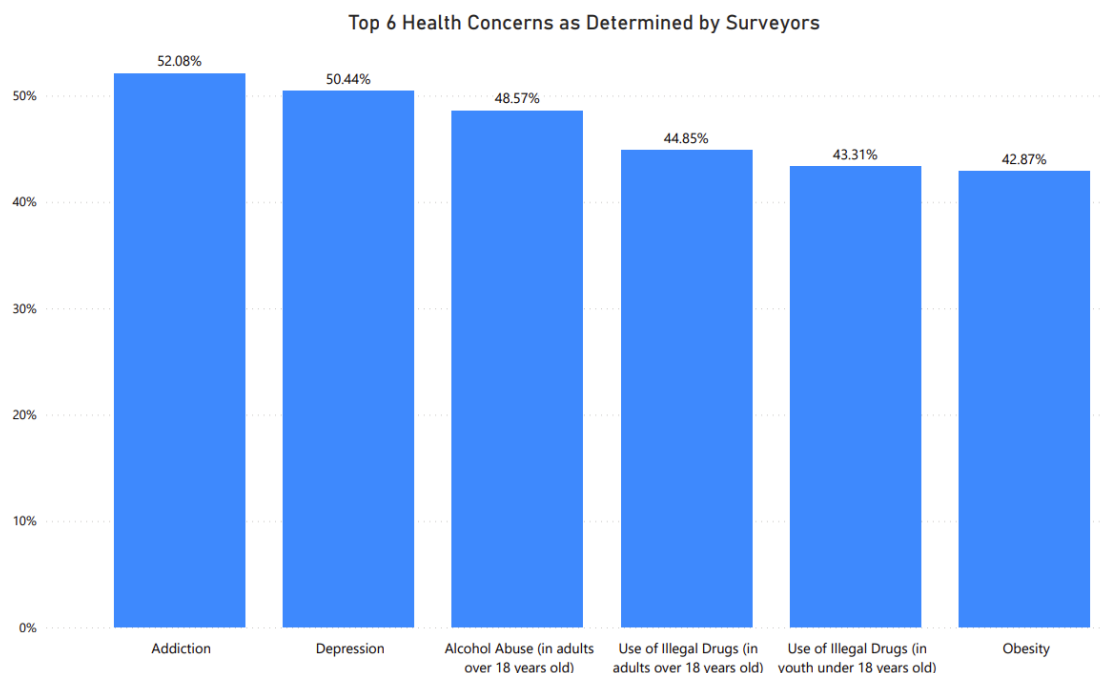


Figure 2: Top 6 Health Concerns in Polk County as Determined by Surveyors

As shown in the Figure 3 below we can see that respondents of the PCHD CHA were personally impacted by the following health concerns: mental health, significant loss/separation, alcohol use or misuse, and illegal drugs, in the last year. Respondents were also impacted by the following social factors within the last year: unemployment, legal trouble or arrest, and domestic violence or feeling unsafe at home.

In the last year, have you or your family been impacted by:

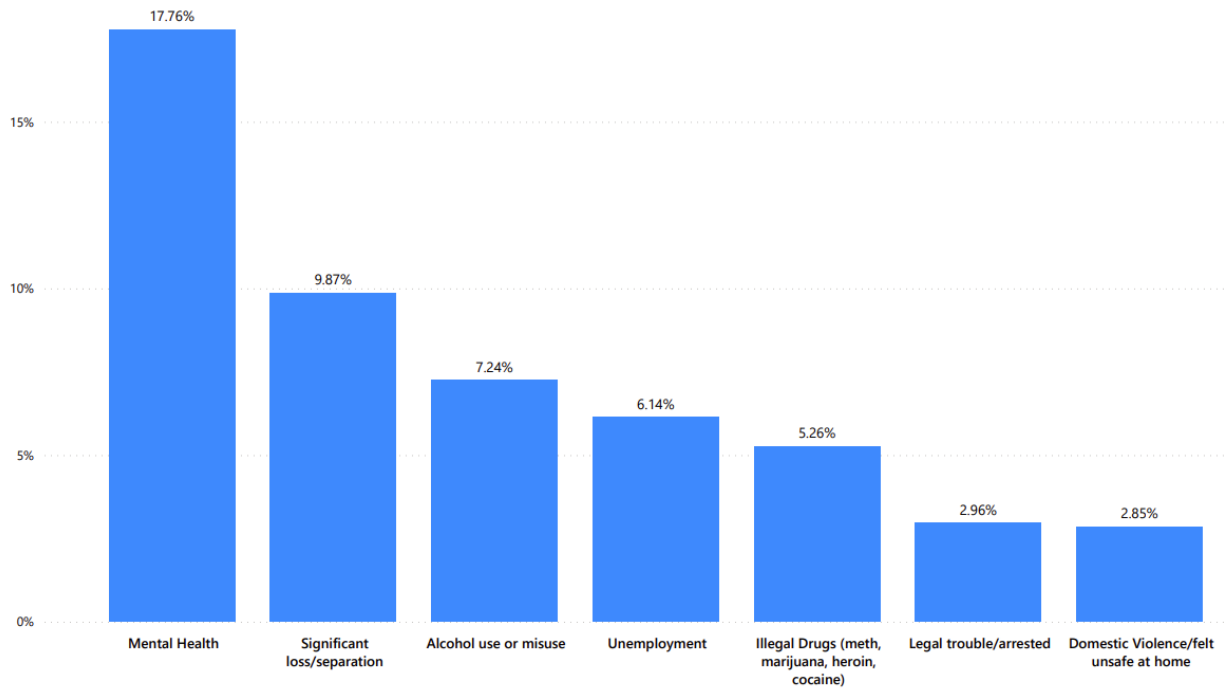


Figure 3: Categories Surveyors were Impacted by in the last year.

Based off the CHA results, three social determinants of health appeared to be associated with our top health concerns:

1. Economic stability
2. Health care and quality/access to care
3. Education

These three social determinants can influence individual health outcomes. Economic stability can influence the ability to access both mental and physical healthcare, nutritious foods, and physical activity opportunities. Without being able to access quality healthcare, a person is more likely to have a difficult time fighting addiction, obesity, and mental health concerns. Increased levels of education can positively influence mental and physical health, economic stability, access to healthcare, substance abuse and misuse, and health equity.

5 Substance Abuse and Misuse (Priority 1)

PCHD CHA survey respondents were asked about health concerns in Polk County. Survey respondents identified many health concerns related to substance use. Adult alcohol abuse was the top substance use-related health concern reported by 48.57% of respondents. This was followed by use of illegal drugs in both adults (44.85%) and youth (43.31%). E-cigarette/vaping use in youth was identified as the 4th highest substance use-related concern among survey respondents. Youth alcohol abuse, adult prescription drug abuse, adult e-

cigarette/vaping use and youth prescription drug abuse were also listed as concerns in Polk County by a substantial portion of respondents.

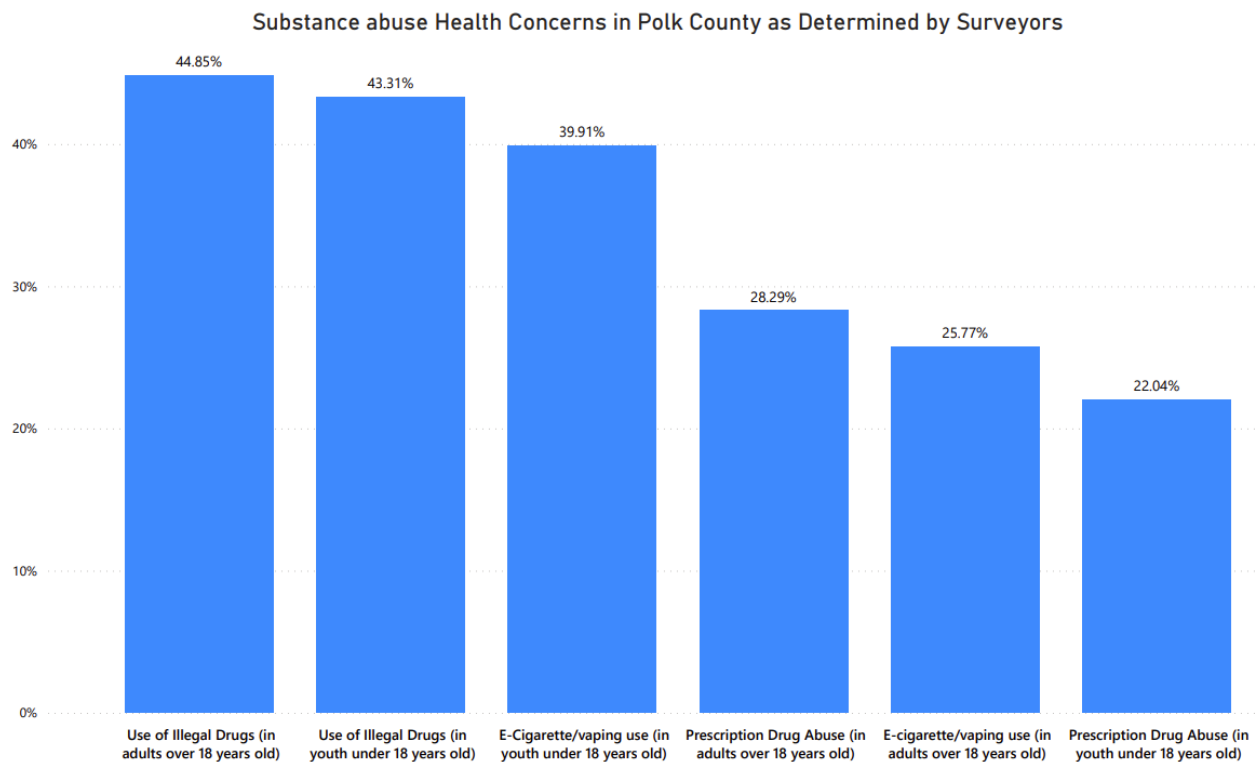


Figure 4: Substance abuse Health Concerns determined by Polk County Community Health Surveyors.

5.1 Tobacco Use

The PCHD CHA asked participants to identify if they formerly or currently use cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, vapes, nicotine patches, or chew. Figure 5 is a graph with data extracted directly from the survey results. The gray bar represents overall survey respondents and data is further broken down by income and education level.

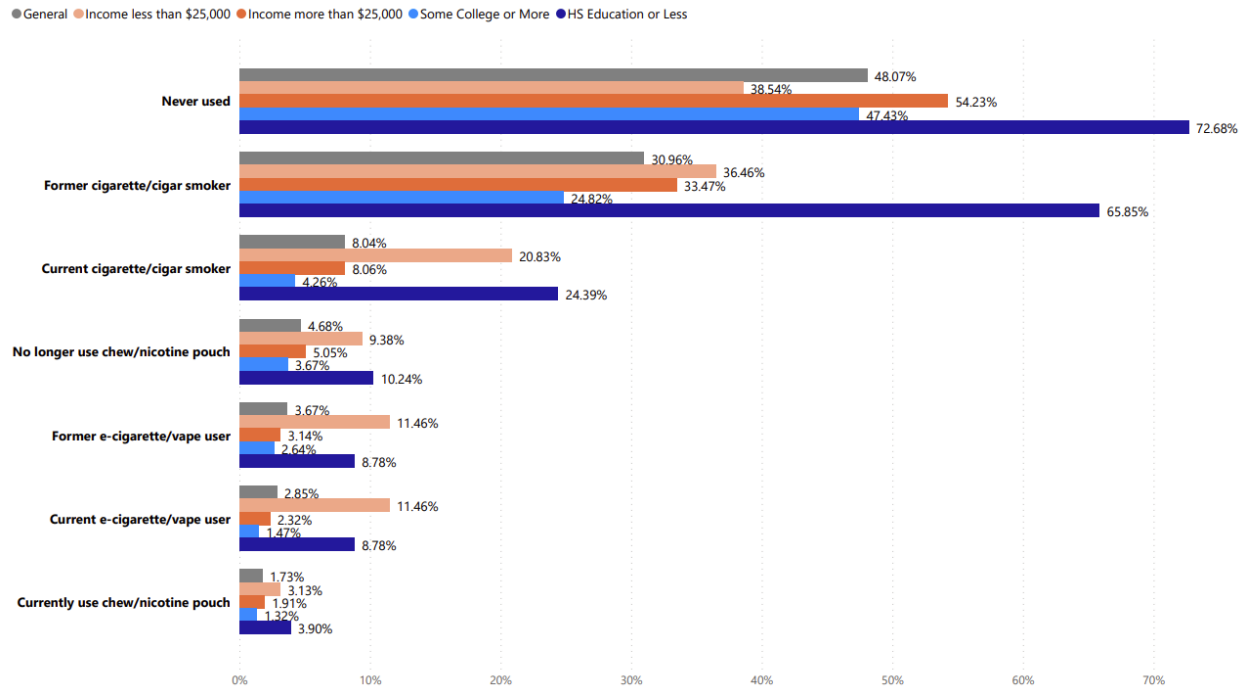


Figure 5: Survey respondent breakdown of current and past smoking habits.

From Figure 5, there is a significant difference in the use of tobacco products between participants who have at least some college education and those who have a high school education or less. In nearly every category, respondents who had a high school education or less were approximately three times more likely to be current or former tobacco product users than respondents who had at least some college education. Additionally, those with a high school education or less were more than two times as likely as the overall population to currently or formerly use tobacco products. Respondents with an income of less than \$25,000 were more than 2.5 times as likely to currently smoke cigarettes or cigars, compared to the general population. These respondents were approximately 4 times more likely to be current e-cigarette users, compared to the overall population. These results seem to indicate a health disparity, among Polk County residents, based on income and education.

PCHD also looked at secondary data, Figure 6, to determine the rates at which Polk County youth are using tobacco products. Figure 6 shows data collected by both the 2019 and 2021 Polk County YRBS. This data shows that there has been a decrease in current e-cigarette (vaping products) amongst high school users, Figure 6a and 6b, from 2019 to 2021 with 15% of high school students in Polk County reporting currently using vaping products, this is almost a 10% decrease in the past two years. However, middle school data, Figure 6c and 6d, shows that overall rates of e-cigarette use remained relatively stable, but that there was an increase in use among 6th and 7th grade students[9]. Although, these two surveys indicate that rates of youth vaping have decreased, Polk County's rate of 15% in high schoolers is still 3.7% higher than the national average in 2022. The middle school rate of 6% is nearly double the national average of 3.3% in 2022[14]. This means that Polk County youth are vaping at a higher rate than youth in the United States as whole.

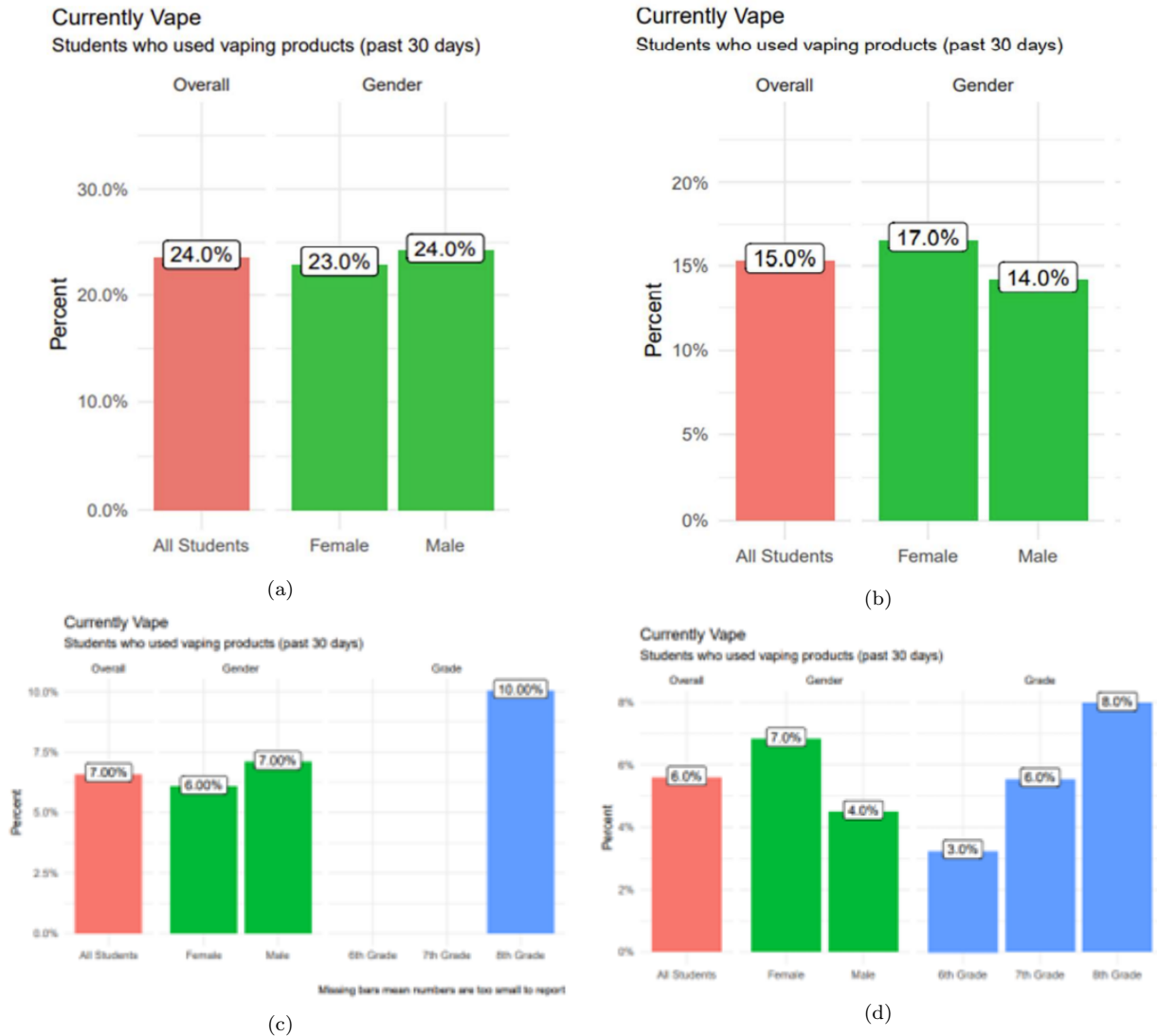


Figure 6: Percentage of student survey respondents who indicated the use of vaping products in the past 30 days. Where the student population for each graph is (a) 2019 High School, (b) 2021 High School, (c) 2019 Middle School, and (d) 2021 Middle School. Results and Graphs published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and taken from the Polk County 2019 and 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results both High School and Middle School versions[9]

In Figure 7, data from the 2019 and 2021 Polk County YRBS indicates that current use of any tobacco product decreased from 11% to 7% among high school students. During this period, the use of chew/smokeless tobacco decreased from 7% to 4%, the use of cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars decreased from 6% to 2%, and the use of cigarettes decreased from 7% to 5[9]%. Among middle school students, current use of any tobacco product decreased from 3% in 2019 to 1% in 2021. Tobacco was recently listed as the 6th health priority from the 2019 Polk County CHA, which could indicate that the decrease was due to education on tobacco use or due to COVID-19 interrupting survey distribution and data collection[9]. While these decreases in current tobacco use by Polk County youth seem promising, e-cigarette use remains higher than the national average. It is possible that the decrease in tobacco use, among Polk County youth, could partially be the result of tobacco use being

replaced by the use of e-cigarettes.

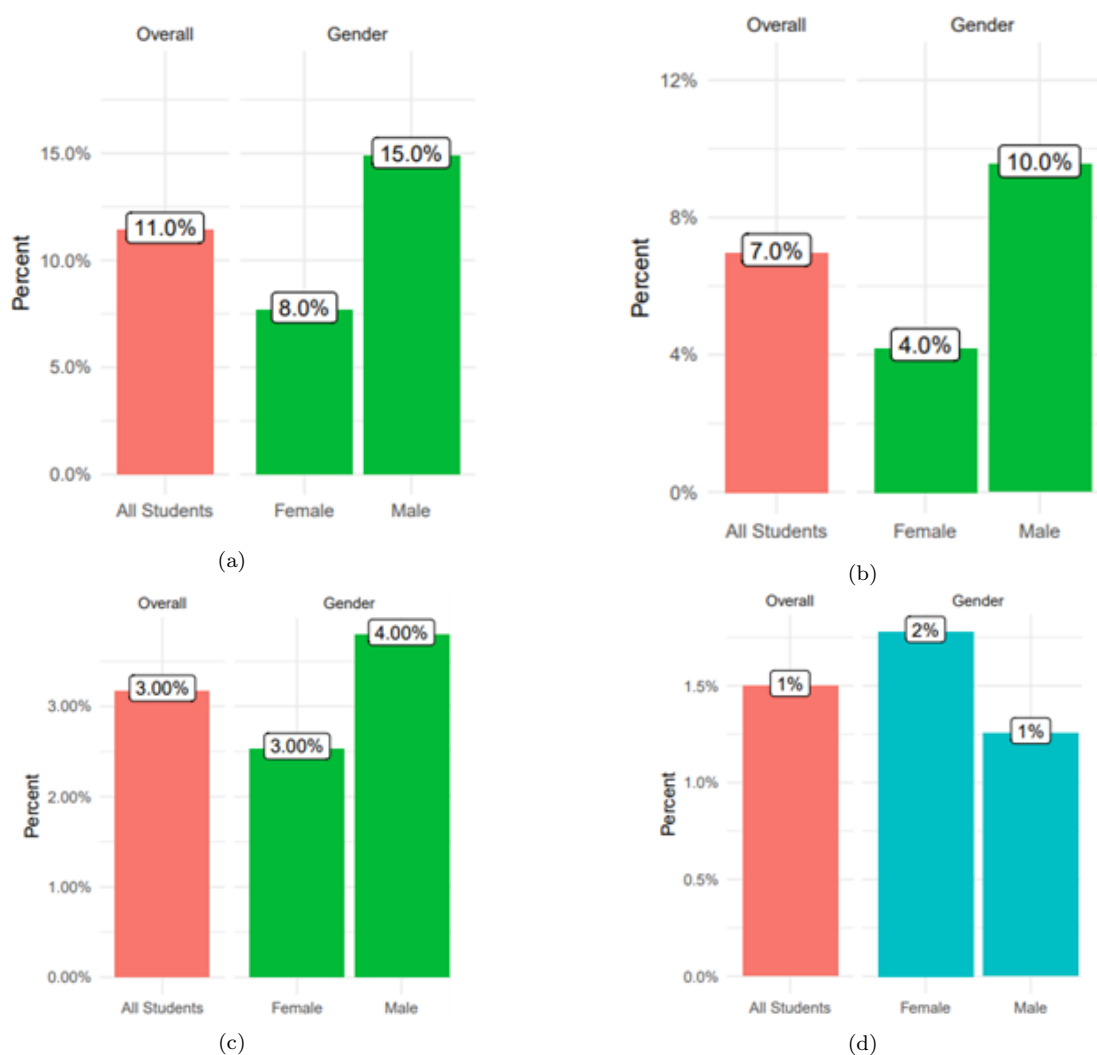


Figure 7: Rates of overall tobacco use reported in (a) 2019 high school students, (b) 2021 high school students, (c) 2019 middle school students, and (d) 2021 middle school students. Results and Graphs published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and taken from the Polk County 2019 and 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results both High School and Middle School versions^[9]

5.2 Alcohol and Drug Use

Over consumption of alcohol is a risk factor for several adverse health outcomes, including alcohol poisoning, high blood pressure, heart attacks, liver disease, accidents, violence and risky sexual behaviors. Excessive use of alcohol contributes to more than 95,000 deaths each year and is the 3rd preventable cause of death in the U.S.^[15]



Figure 8: Drink sizes as determined by the Center for Disease Control[16].

- Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion for men or 4 or more on one occasion for women in the past month.[17]
- Excessive drinking is defined as engaging in either binge drinking or heavy drinking. Heavy drinking is defined as consuming 15 or more drinks in a week for men and 8 or more for women. [16]

According to the Department of Health Services, the estimated binge drinking rate for Polk County in one month is 23.6%[18]. However, the survey showed that 26.09% of respondents reported binge drinking in the last month, aligning with County Health Rankings report that 26% of adults binge drink in Polk County[4]. A breakdown by income and education shows little to indicate a specific group binge drinking more than others. This suggests that binge drinking is an issue across all groups in Polk County.

Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, how many times during the past month did you have:
 Male - five or more drinks in once sitting. Female - four or more drinks in one sitting.

● General ● Some College or More ● HS Education or Less ● Income Less than \$25,000 ● Income More than \$25,000

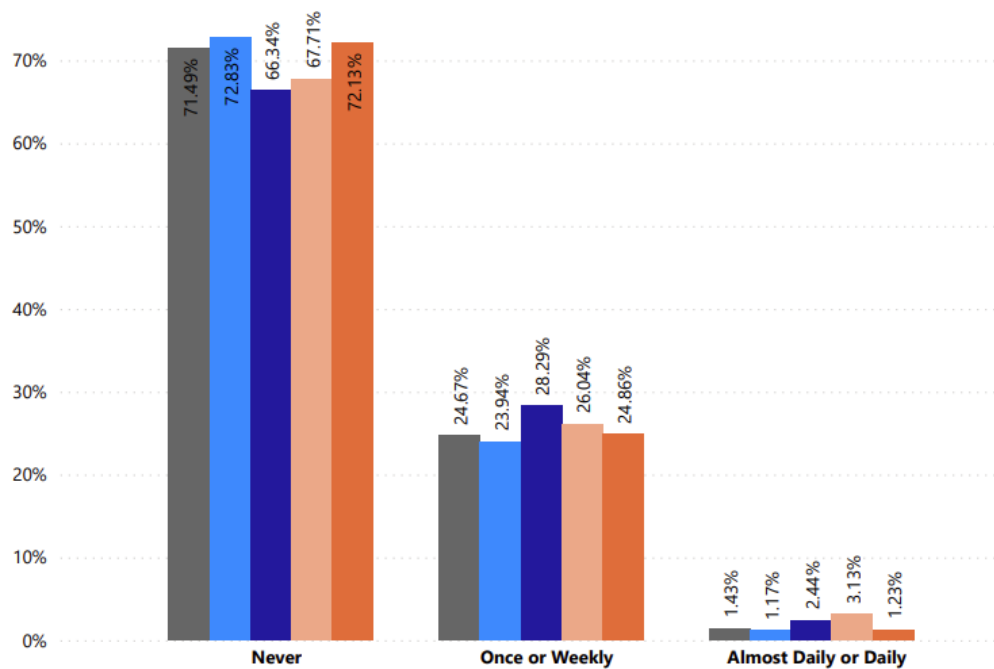


Figure 9: Survey respondent breakdown of binge drinking habits.

Polk county's adult binge drinking rate of 26.09% is higher than the Wisconsin adult binge drinking rate of 21.9% in the past month[18]. Both Polk County and Wisconsin as a whole have significantly higher binge drinking rates than the U.S. average of 16.1% [18]. The impact of high binge drinking rates in Polk County and Wisconsin are reflected in the large number of alcohol-related deaths. In 2020, Polk County's per capita rate of alcohol-related deaths was 83 per 100,000. This was significantly higher than Wisconsin's alcohol-related death rate of 53 per 100,000 which, itself, was significantly higher than the U.S. rate of alcohol-related deaths at 13.1 per 100,000. Residents in Polk County, in 2020, were more than 6-times as likely to suffer an alcohol-related death than the rest of the U.S. population. It is unknown to what extent these numbers were impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 10 shows the Polk County 2019 and 2021 YRBS results for high school students who currently use alcohol and reported binge drinking in last 30 days.

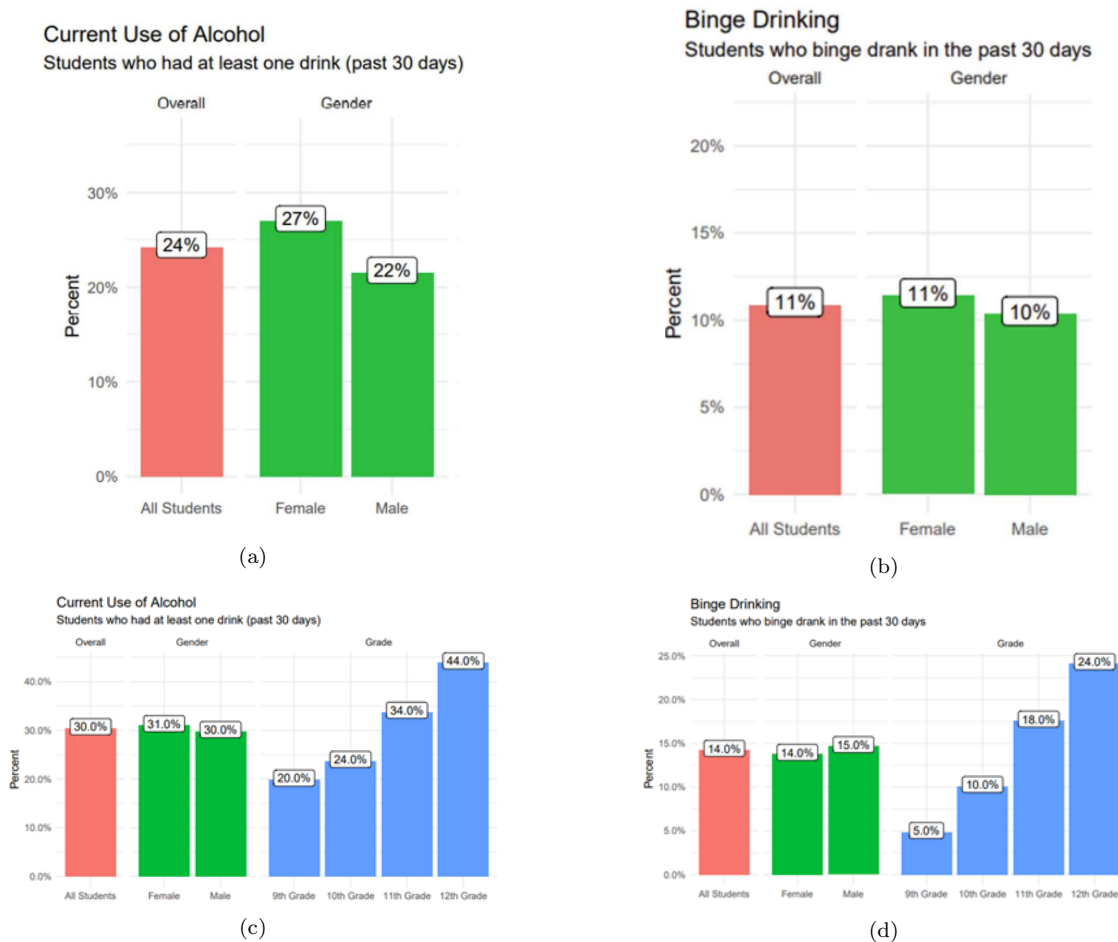


Figure 10: Self reported (a) current use of alcohol and (b) binge drinking by high school students in Polk County from the Polk County 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results (High School Version), (c) current use of alcohol and (d) binge drinking by high school students in Polk County from the Polk County 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results (High School Version)

The data show that there was a decrease of 6% from 2019 to 2021 in the rates for current alcohol use amongst youth, from 30% to 24%. There was also a 3% decrease in binge drinking rates in the past 30 days, from 14% to 11%. The graphs above show that, in the past few years, youth drinking has started to decrease. While rates of alcohol use may be declining, Wisconsin youth tend to perceive binge drinking as less risky than youth across the U.S. (36.7% vs. 43.1%). These results suggest that prevention and education efforts should focus on the low perception of risk related to alcohol use.^[18]

Drug Use

As shown in the Figure 4 we can see that 44.85% of survey respondents over the age of 18 and 43.3% under the age of 18 feel that the use of illegal drugs is a major health concern for Polk County, and we can see that 5.26%, Figure 3, were personally impacted by illegal drug use in the last year. Tracking illegal drug use in the community can be difficult. Data from arrest records show that charges related to illegal drug use have decreased from 2020 with all charges for cocaine, heroin and meth being significantly lower in 2022, Table 3. It is not known if 2020 was a statistical outlier due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential

impacts on the social determinants of health.

Table 3: Drug use charges per 100,000 persons in Polk County as estimated using CJCC dashboard data [19]. *The population for 2022 was estimated by increasing the 2021 population by 1%.

DRUG USE CHARGES IN POLK COUNTY				
Year	Cocaine charges per 100,000	Heroin charges per 100,000	Meth charges per 100,000	THC charges per 100,000
2020	24.4	8.89	471.35	322.39
2021	2.20	2.20	440.23	308.16
2022*	4.36	4.36	257.16	183.07

YRBS data from 2019 to 2021 tracked self-reported drug use by Polk County youth. As we can see in Figure 11 the percentage of high school students that had ever used marijuana decreased by 5% from 2019 to 2021. However, the rate of students that started using before the age of 13 increased from 11% in 2019 to 18% in 2021 as referenced in the YRBS results. It should also be noted that the proportion of students who were currently using marijuana was unchanged from 2019 to 2022 at 10%.

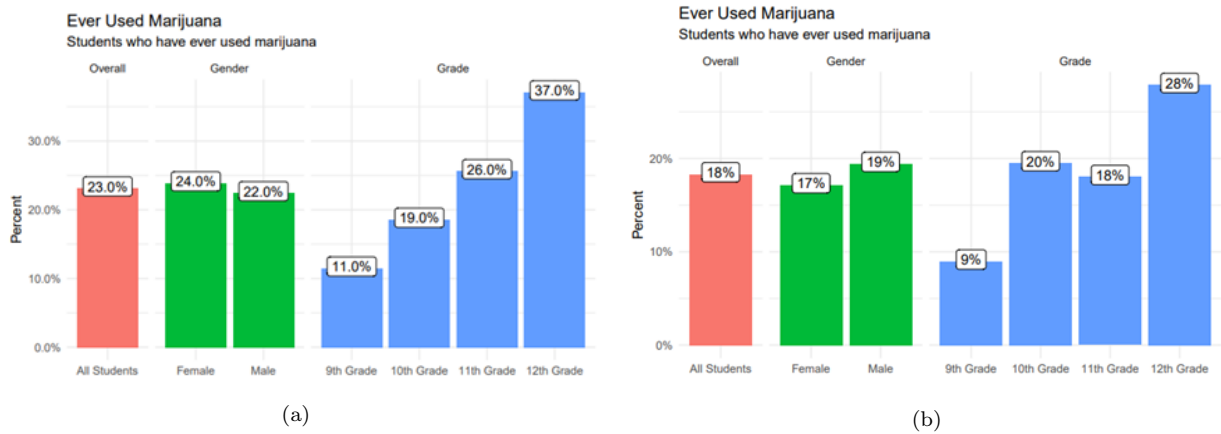


Figure 11: Self reported marijuana use by high school students in (a) 2019 and (b) 2021. Results and Graphs published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and taken from the Polk County 2019 and 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results High School version[9]

YRBS data also shows that the percentage of high school students that misused legal drugs increased from 9% in 2019 to 10% in 2021. This includes the misuse of prescription painkillers and the misuse of over-the-counter medications. One significant finding from these survey results was that legal drug misuse increased in younger high school students from 2019 to 2021. Legal drug misuse increased from 9% to 12% among 9th grade students and from 7% to 12% among 10th grade students from 2019 to 2021. The YRBS suggests that age of use of marijuana and misuse of legal drugs is possibly decreasing. This could imply that Polk

County youth are using drugs at a younger age. This could be a result of social impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Polk County youth may have experienced parental job loss leading to economic hardship, and school closures leading to isolation and lack of involvement and support.

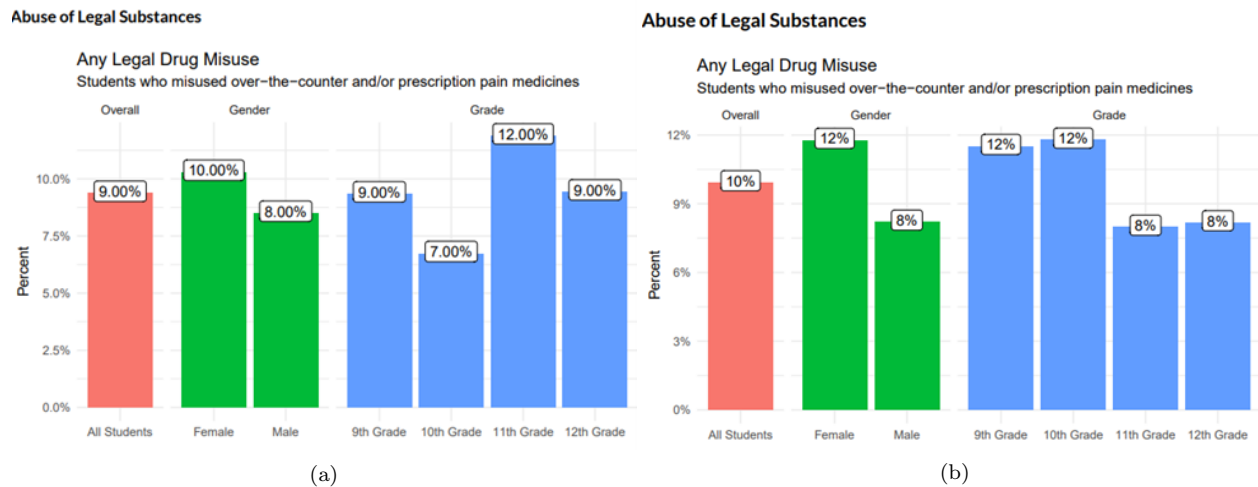


Figure 12: Self reported legal drug misuse by high school students in (a) 2019 and (b) 2021. Results and Graphs published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and taken from the Polk County 2019 and 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results High School version[9]

6 Mental Health (Priority 2)

Mental health includes a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how a person thinks, feels and acts. Mental health also determines how a person handles stress, relates to others and makes healthy choices[20]. The mental health crisis across the United States is a crucial and often overlooked health need, with one in five Americans suffering from poor mental health or a mental illness. Mental health is often times overlooked due to stigma and lack of acceptance. However, when a person is struggling with their mental health it also affects their overall health, including increasing their risk for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

6.1 Community Mental Health

Based on the PCHDs CHA it was found that 44.3% of survey respondents reported feeling sad or depressed at least 1 to 2 days in the previous two weeks. Specifically, we noticed that high levels of sadness or depression (at least 5-7 days in the past two weeks) were most prevalent among lower income respondents, Figure 13. Among respondents earning less than \$25,000 per year, 13.54% reported feeling sad or depressed almost every day, compared to 2.46% of those earning more than \$25,000 per year. While respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to experience occasional feelings of sadness or depression, those who had earned a high school diploma or less were more likely to report feeling sad or depressed more frequently.

In the last two weeks, how many days have you felt sad or depressed?

● General ● HS Education or Less ● Some College or More ● Income More than \$25,000 ● Income Less than \$25,000

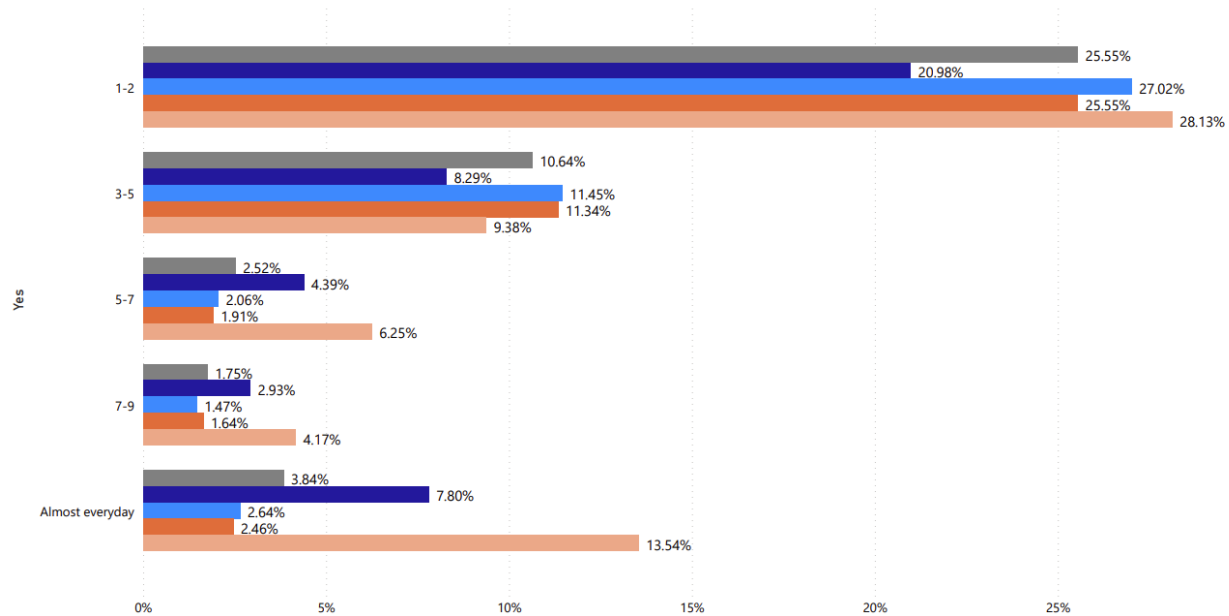


Figure 13: Self reported weekly days of depression or sadness by community survey respondents

PCHD CHA found that there was a notable increase in feelings of sadness or depression in respondents who have an annual income of \$25,000 or less and a high school education or less. It was also found that suicidal ideation had a notable increase in respondents with less than \$25,000 of annual income, as shown in Figure 14.

In the last 12 months have you ever felt so overwhelmed that you considered suicide?

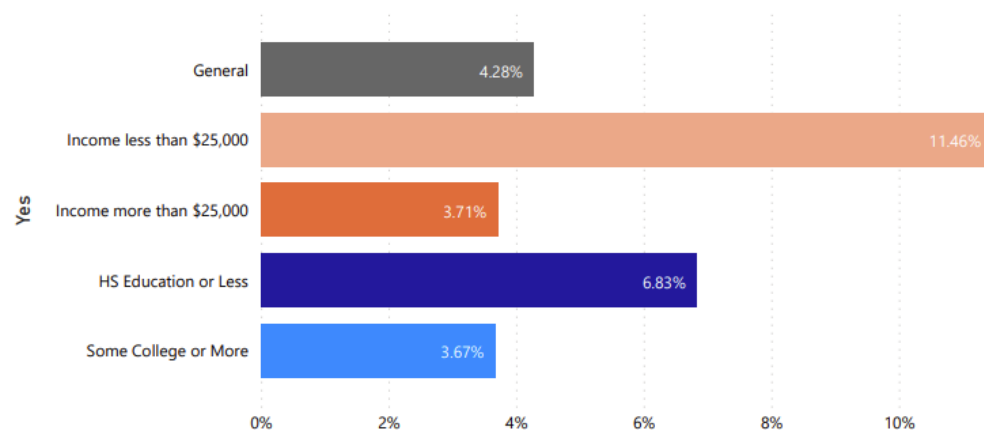


Figure 14: Self reported suicidal ideation by community survey respondents

Figure 15 represents the most used services, related to mental health, in Polk County in 2021. A total of 1,042 Polk County residents were served in 2021 through mental health services. Crisis services were, by far, the most utilized service that was tracked during 2021. During this time, 1 in 55 Polk County residents utilized crisis services compared to 1 in 161

across the state of Wisconsin. Polk County residents were nearly three times as likely to access crisis services compared to Wisconsin residents, as a whole.

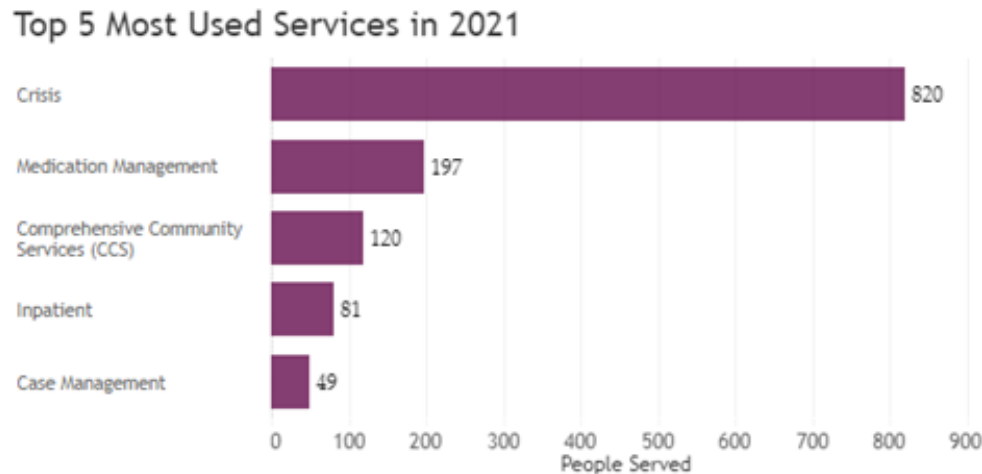


Figure 15: Most used mental health services in Polk County Wisconsin as according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Graphics taken from the Department of health services, Mental Health: County Services Dashboard[21].

A mental health crisis can take many forms. Generally, a mental health crisis is a period of intense difficulty or instability that can't be resolved without the help of trained professionals. A mental health crisis does not always mean someone is a danger to themselves or others. The disproportionately high rate of use of crisis services in Polk County could indicate that community members struggling with mental health may face barriers to accessing preventative mental health services. It should also be noted that access to preventative mental health services may have been disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.2 Youth Mental Health

Of the 820 Polk County residents who accessed crisis services, 241 of those were youth between the ages of 0 to 17 years of age. According to the 2021 YRBS, high school students in Polk County self-reported a 32% depression rate and a 17% overall suicidal ideation rate. Polk County youth were over 8-times more likely to report feeling sad or depressed almost every day than the CHA respondents. PCHD CHA respondents were primarily over the age of 18 years old.

In addition to an overall increase in self-reported depression and thoughts of suicide among Polk County high school students, the most notable increase was seen among 9th and 10th grade students. Self-reported depression increased from 21% to 33% in 9th grade students, and from 25% to 33% in 10th grade students, from 2019 to 2021. The proportion who had considered suicide in the past 12-months increased from 13% to 19% of 9th grade students and from 15% to 19% of 10th grade students, from 2019 to 2021. These results seem to mirror the changes in legal drug misuse over the same time period, where there was an increase in misuse by younger high school students. These findings could indicate that substance misuse

and mental health concerns affect one another. These results could also suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the mental health of younger students.

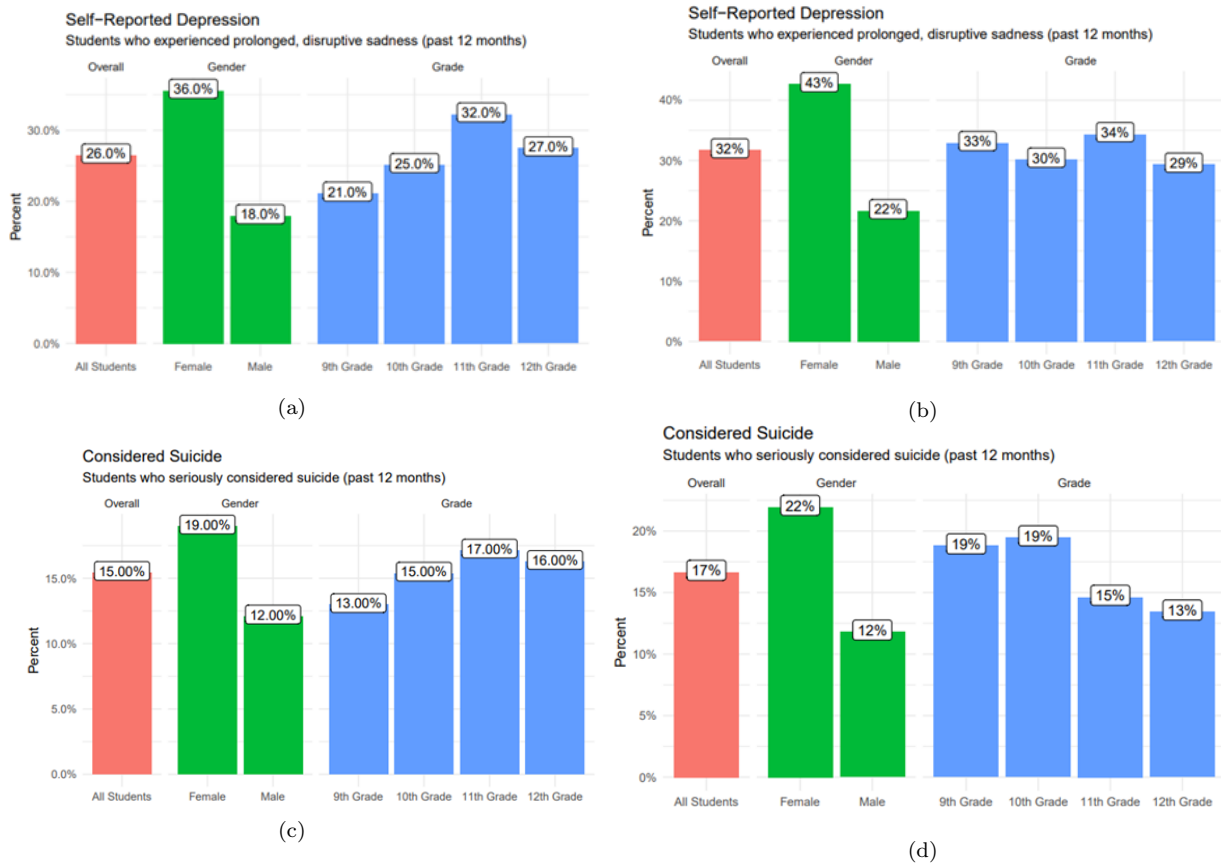


Figure 16: 2019 YRBS (a) self reported depression by high schoolers(b) 2021 YRBS Results self reported depression by high schoolers in Polk County. 2019 YRBS Results (c) self reported suicidal ideation by high schoolers(d) 2021 YRBS Results self reported suicidal ideation by high schoolers in Polk County. According to the YRBS “The question on self-reported depression asked whether students had felt “so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that [they] stopped doing some usual activities” within the past 12 months.” [22]

In general, self-reported rates of anxiety and depression were higher for students who: had a low sense of school belonging, had experienced bullying, violence or trauma, had low grades and had anything else that set them apart from their peers, including race, class, sexual orientation, and disability. Specific rates for subgroups can be found in the “Higher Risk Populations At A Glance” section and in the question-specific tables at the end of this report.” [22]

Mental health is a concern among all ages, with more than 1 in 4 Polk County middle school students self-reporting depression in 2021[9]. During that same year, nearly 1 in 5 middle school students reported considering suicide in the past 12 months. Based on YRBS data, most students do not receive the emotional help they need to address their mental health concerns. Only 42% of middle school students, and 22% of high school students, believe that they get the emotional support they need[9]. This demonstrates a greater need for mental health support in educational settings throughout Polk County.

7 Nutrition and Physical Activity (Priority 3)

Healthy diet and physical activity level are important to a long, healthy, and sustainable life. Research shows that higher levels of physical activity, and less time spent sedentary, are associated with significantly reduced risk for premature death[23]. A diet rich with fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins, and low in added sugars is associated with better physical health and well-being[8]. Both nutrition and physical activity are important determinants of an individual's weight status. Children and adults who are overweight or obese often experience poorer physical and emotional health and well-being[8].

While physical activity and nutrition are important to health and longevity, only 50% of Wisconsin adults meet the recommended level of physical activity of 150 minutes of aerobic activity per week. Only 1 in 6 Wisconsin adults meet the recommended consumption of five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. PCHD's CHA found that only 41% of respondents reported exercising 3-4 days or more per week. Additionally, only 42% of CHA respondents reported eating 3 or more servings of fruits or vegetables per day. This data seems to indicate that most Polk County adults are not meeting the recommended levels of physical activity and healthy food consumption.

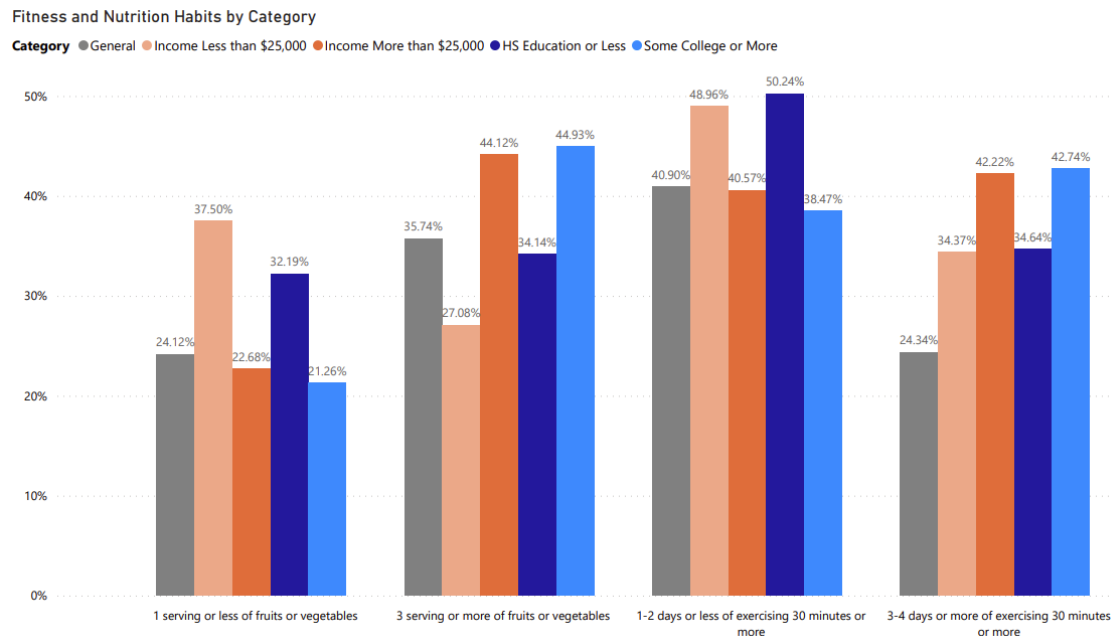


Figure 17: Self reported fitness and nutrition habits by Polk County residents

Table 4: Self reported community exercise habits

On average how many days per week do you exercise 30 minutes or more?		
	Percent of survey respondents that indicated 1-2 days or less	Percent of survey respondents that indicated 3-4 days or more
Income less than \$25,000	48.96%	34.37%
Income more than \$25,000	40.57%	42.22%
HS Education or Less	50.24%	34.64%
Some College or More	38.47%	42.74%

CHA data seemed to show that income and education levels were associated with physical activity levels. Respondents with an annual income greater than \$25,000 were about 23% more likely to report exercising at least three to four days per week. Likewise, respondents with some college or more were about 23% more likely to report exercising at least three to four days per week, compared to those with a high school education or less.

Table 5: Self reported community fruit and vegetables diet

On average how many servings of fruits and vegetables do you consume?		
	Percent of survey respondents that indicated 1 serving or less	Percent of survey respondents that indicated 3 serving or more
Income less than \$25,000	37.5%	27.08%
Income more than \$25,000	22.68%	44.12%
HS Education or Less	32.19%	34.14%
Some College or More	21.26%	44.93%

CHA data also seemed to show that income and education levels were associated with fruit and vegetable consumption. Respondents with an annual income greater than \$25,000 were 63% more likely to report consuming at least three servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Likewise, respondents with some college or more were about 32% more likely to report consuming at least three servings of fruits and vegetables per day, compared to those with a high school education or less.

Poor nutrition and physical activity contribute to various chronic conditions including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity. Obesity is defined as a complex medical condition that is sometimes measured as a weight to height ratio or body mass index of $>30 \text{ kg/m}^2$. Similarly, overweight is considered a BMI between 25 and 30 kg/m^2 . Obesity is linked to increased risk of type II diabetes, heart disease, stroke, breathing problems, sleep apnea, depression and anxiety. Physical inactivity and poor nutrition increase the risk for becoming overweight or developing obesity. The most recent data from the CDC Behavior Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) shows that approximately 32% of Wisconsin adults were classified as having obesity. The prevalence of obesity among Polk County adults falls in line with Wisconsin, as a whole, at a rate of 32.5% (Figure 18). As discussed earlier, social determinants of health, such as income and education levels, were linked to nutrition and physical activity habits. Disparities in obesity rates can also be seen based on racial and ethnic differences[8].

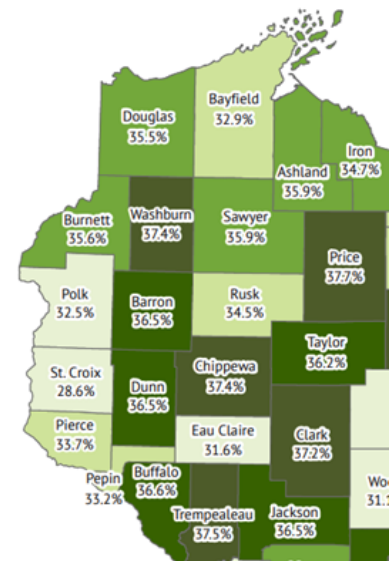


Figure 18: Wisconsin Obesity Age-Adjusted Adult Prevalence By County[24]

Income restrictions may cause a person to rely on low-cost, highly processed foods. Nearly 1 in 10 of Polk County residents used Foodshare services monthly in 2022. In 2022, there was a total of 706 WIC participants in Polk County. WIC is designed to serve women, infants and children, including those who are pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding and children up to the age of five. According to the CDC, obesity affects children of low-income families, including those served by WIC, more than children of higher income families[25]. Removing barriers to accessing nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities are important for achieving health equity.

8 Clinical Care

Clinical care refers to ability to access care, the quality of care, as well as affordability and timelines of receiving care. Access to care, quality of care, and barriers to accessing care were assessed in the PCHD CHA survey. Specifically, rates of health insurance coverage and the factors that affected respondents' ability to access care were evaluated.

8.1 Access to Care

According to County Health Rankings and Road Maps, 7% of adults under the age of 65 report being uninsured[4]. Only 5.37% of the survey participants for Polk County indicated they were not insured and 52.74% of respondents were younger than 65. It is important to note that 47.26% of respondents were older than 65 which is disproportionate to the true

age breakdown of Polk County and thus may have a larger impact on insurance holdings.

Is every member of your household covered by insurance?

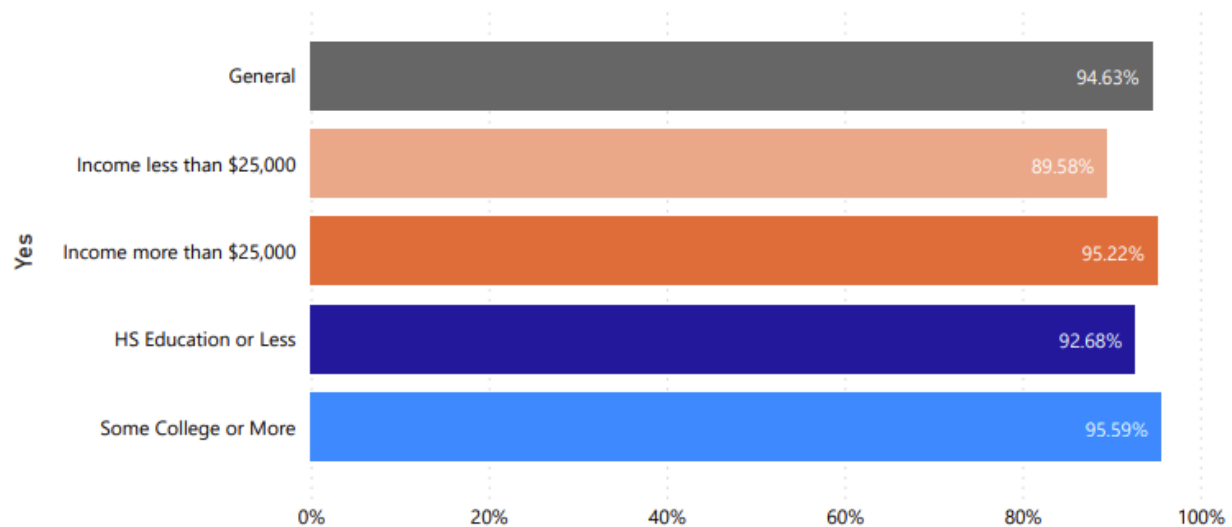


Figure 19: Survey respondent breakdown of household health insurance coverage by income, education, and general responses.

Even with a large proportion of respondents having primary health insurance, 14.25% of respondents stated that something prevented them from getting medical care in the last year. Respondents with an annual income of \$25,000 or less were nearly 64% more likely to report barriers to accessing care, compared to those with an annual income of more than \$25,000. This may indicate that the cost of medical care is too high for members of the community earning less than \$25,000 annually.

In the last 12 months, was there something that prevented you from getting the medical care you needed?

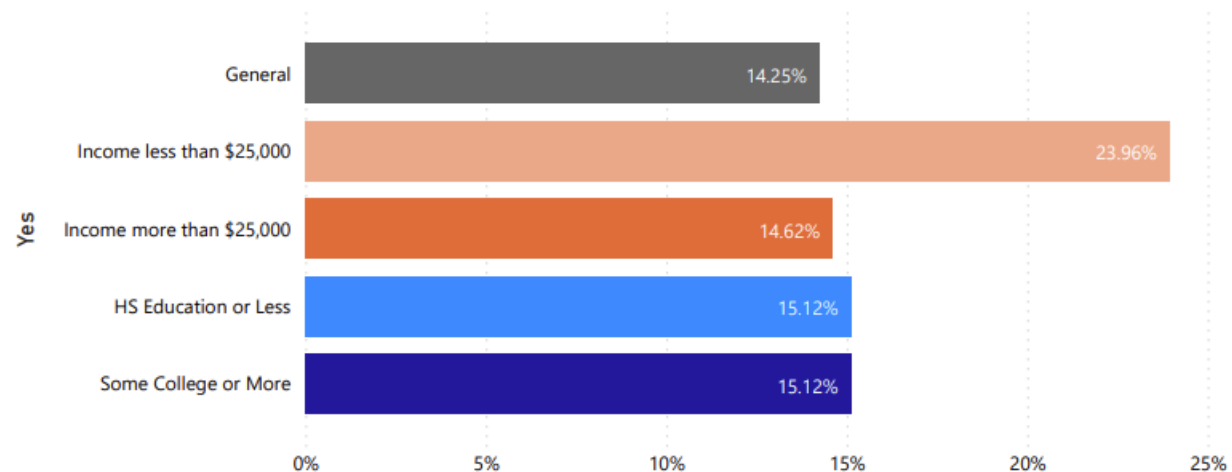


Figure 20: Percent of survey respondents who have been prevented from getting medical care.

The respondents who stated that something prevented them from getting medical care were asked what prevented them from accessing care. The top reason for not receiving medical care was that the respondents could not afford to pay (31.1%). This was followed by "insurance did not cover it" (24.4%), and that "co-payments were too high" (22.2%). The three most common barriers to accessing care were tied to financial limitations. Income seems to be a primary social determinant for accessing healthcare. This is followed by issues with timing medical visits or the open hours of the medical facility. While we present the six most identified reasons that survey respondents were prevented from getting care, it is important to consider that the community in general may face other barriers. PCHD's sample size was not large enough to detect racial and ethnic disparities in access to care.

Quality of care was not addressed in the PCHD CHA for further information please look at [Amery Hospital and Clinics CHNA](#). It is available [here](#) and gives a detailed description of both access to care and quality of care for Polk County residents. It is important to note that the Amery CHNA also contains people outside of Polk County.

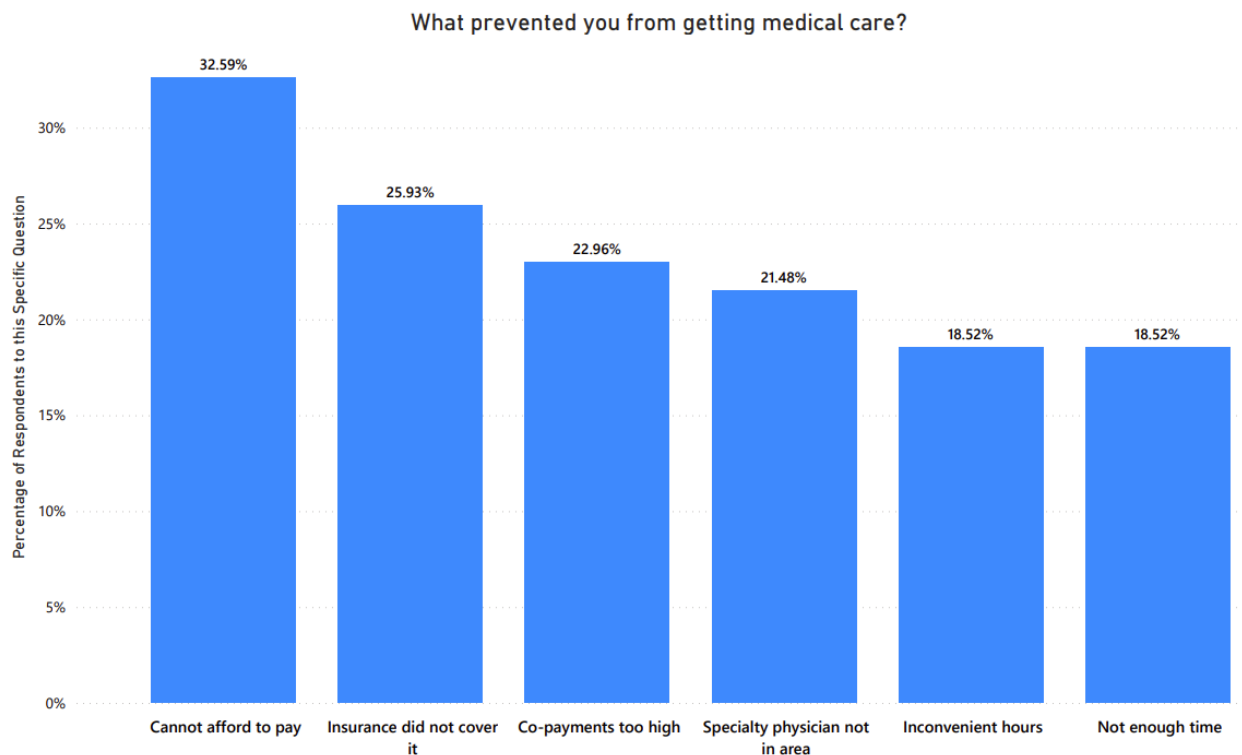


Figure 21: Top 6 reasons survey respondents who stated they were prevented for gaining access to care or could not receive care.

9 Social and Economic Factors

Social and Economic Factors are defined as education, employment, income, family and social supports, and community safety. These factors can impact the quality and longevity of a person's life. Based on PCHD's CHA responses, income and education seemed to be linked to the identified health priorities. PCHD CHA respondents also reported being impacted

by other social and economic factors. The ability to access childcare, phone/internet, stable housing, transportation, stable employment, and utilities were identified as issues personally impacting survey respondents or their families.

Of those who responded to the question that addressed what has impacted them or their family in the last year, it was identified that health care, phone/internet and food were the top three impacted areas.

10 Physical Environment

Physical Environment refers to where individuals live, learn, work, and play. This can include the water we drink, the homes we live in, transportation and infrastructure, and even the air we breathe. If one's physical environment is insufficient, it can increase the risk of certain health conditions. There are many resources that address these topics including the [Wisconsin DNR Find A Lake](#) website, [Wisconsin Impaired Water Search DNR](#), [Polk County WI Transportation](#), [AirNow.gov](#), housing resources are listed in the additional resources section below.

11 Summary and Future Initiatives

The previous Polk County CHA conducted in 2019 identified the following priority health concerns in our community[26]

1. Substance Abuse and Misuse
2. Mental Health
3. Nutrition and Physical Activity

With the help of community partners PCHD developed a Community Health Improvement Plan with specific goals and objectives to address these major health concerns in 2020[26]. A CHIP is a long-term strategic plan that serves as a guide for the community to address the health priorities that were identified and collaborate with community partners and stakeholders to improve the health of the county. These specific goals and objectives are identified below.

11.1 Mental Health

Goal: *Decrease the number of people that have done nothing to address their thoughts of suicide in the last 12 months from 14% to 12% as measured by the CHA Survey.*

Objectives:

1. Provide Information by distributing the Mental Health Task Force community resource brochure, hold mental health awareness events and suicide awareness walk
2. Enhance Skills by providing MHFA, QPR, and ACE's trainings throughout the county

3. Provide Support by providing psychosocial support groups for students who have been identified as needing support through screenings
4. Enhance Access by providing mental health screenings to high school students in Polk County and pilot screenings for middle school students
5. Change Consequences by exploring a suicide prevention plan
6. Change the Physical Design of the community by participating in and promoting the "Make It OK" campaign to reduce stigma
7. Modify/Change Policy by exploring policies that will impact mental health

Due to the challenges of COVID-19, PCHD was not able to determine if the overall goal of decreasing the number of people that have done nothing to address their thoughts of suicide in the last 12 months from 14% to 12% had been achieved. With the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, objectives 1, 4, and 6 were able to be completed successfully.

11.2 Substance Use

Goal: *Reduce binge drinking from 25% to 23% 'in the last month' as measured by the CHA Survey*

Goal: *Reduce the percent of individuals or families negatively impacted by meth use from 14.9% to 12% as measured by the CHA Survey*

Objectives:

1. Provide Information by sharing information with parents, elected officials, law enforcement, schools, business etc.
2. Enhance Skills by assisting coalition members and partners in attending trainings
3. Provide Support by working with Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC) to host more aftercare activities for those in recovery
4. Reduce Access to Tobacco, Alcohol and Prescription Drugs (Rx Drugs)Change Consequences by helping retailers stay in compliance by using trainings instead of fines and by educating youth for first time offenses rather than using fines
5. Change the Physical Design of the community by changing the alcohol environment at community festivals
6. Modify/Change Policy in schools and municipalities

Based on the results of the 2022 CHA survey, the overall goal relating to decreasing binge drinking rates was not achieved. The current CHA indicated that 28.5% of respondents indicated engaging in binge drinking at least once in the past thirty days. Due to the challenges of COVID-19, PCHD's resources were directed toward the pandemic efforts. Additionally, it is not known if social factors, impacted by the pandemic, affected alcohol-related behaviors

in Polk County. Although the first goal was not met, PCHD and partners were able to achieve objectives 1,2, and 4.

The current CHA survey did not exclusively assess the impact of “meth use,” but did find that individuals and families that reported being impacted by illegal drug use decreased to 5.3%. Because “illegal drug use” also consists of “meth use,” this would seem to indicate that the number of individuals and families that were impacted by meth use decreased below the stated goal of 12%.

11.3 Nutrition and Physical Activity

Goal: *Increase the consumption of fruit and vegetable servings of 3 or more per day from 37% to 40% as measured by the CHA Survey.*

Objectives:

1. Provide Information on healthy eating through “Harvest of the Month” initiatives
2. Enhance Skills through gardening education classes provided throughout the county
3. Enhance Access to vegetables through the “Veggie Rx” program

Based on the results of the 2022 CHA survey, the overall goal relating to increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables servings of 3 or more per day from 37% to 40% was not achieved. The 2022 CHA indicated that 35.7% survey respondents reported eating 3 or more servings of fruits or vegetables a day.

Goal: *Increase physical activity to 150 minutes per week to 45% as measured by the CHA Survey*

Objectives:

1. Provide Information through an informational campaign regarding new physical activity guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
2. Enhance Skills through exercise classes provided throughout the county
3. Enhance Access to and increase use of Polk County trails through the promotion of the polkcountyonthemove.org website

The 2022 CHA survey did not specifically assess whether respondents performed physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week. Both the previous and current surveys assessed how many days per week respondents participated in at least 30 minutes of physical activity. The previous CHA showed that 42% of respondents indicated exercising at least 3 days per week. For the 2022 CHA survey, 24.3% of respondents indicated that they exercised at least 3 days per week. This is a significant decrease from the previous CHA, indicating that the goal was likely not achieved. It is important to note, however, that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on exercise habits are not known. Additionally, respondents to the current CHA survey were disproportionately older, compared to the general population, which may have impacted these findings.

11.4 Conclusion

Through the completion of the 2022 CHA, review of secondary data, and responses from community members, the top three health priorities for Polk County were identified as substance abuse and misuse, mental health, and nutrition and physical activity. These same priorities were also identified in the 2020 CHIP. Due to the unforeseen circumstances of the past few years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, PCHD and community partners efforts were diverted elsewhere to assist in the pandemic response. This resulted in little progress being made toward the above stated goals.

Economic stability, health care and quality/access to care, and education were then identified as social determinants of these priorities. For many Polk County residents, these social determinants were also impacted by the pandemic. Job loss and high unemployment rates affected economic stability. COVID-19 precautions and the impact of the pandemic on the healthcare system limited access to care. The education of both youth and college students was affected by school closures and a sudden shift to virtual learning.

To address these concerns identified in the 2022 CHA, PCHD along with community partners will be developing the 2023 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP will create an action plan that establishes goals and objectives to improve community health and create steps to achieve those objectives. The CHIP is a crucial step in developing policies, programs, and actions that will target and meet the needs of Polk County residents. The CHIP process will begin in March 2023.

12 Acknowledgements

Polk County Health Department would like to acknowledge and recognize community members, organizations, and several entities that made this possible. Without the assistance of community partners, we would not be able to obtain the outreach that was needed for data collection. We would like to thank the following individuals, establishments, and our partners for their involvement:

3 Arrows Coffee Company, ADRC, Amery Area Food Pantry, Amery Hospital and Clinic, Amery Library, Amery School District, Amery Senior Center, Baker Orchard, Balsam Lake Library, Bishop Fixture & Millwork, Café Wren, Centuria Post Office, Chet Johnsons, Clear Lake Library, Community Referral Agency, Core Products International Inc., Cushing Post Office, Dresser Library, Frederic Library, Golden Age Manor, Hack's Pub, Joyful Morning Café, Julia's Java, Logger Bar & Grill, Luck Laundromat, Luck Library, Luck Pharmacy, Luck Senior Center, Lumberjacks, MacDonald and Owen Lumber, Menards, Mental Health Task Force, Milltown Laundromat, Milltown Library, Milltown Post Office, Osceola Library, Osceola Medical Center, Polk County Community Services Division, Polk County Daycare and Childcare Providers, Polk County Highway Department, Polk County Information Technology Department, Polk County Jail, Polk United, Pro Nails, Rocket Powder Coating, SMC, St. Croix Falls Laundromat, St. Croix Laundry and Car Wash, St. Croix Falls Library, St. Croix Falls, St. Croix Health, St. Croix Falls Senior Center, Stratis Industries, Tangen Drug, Wild River Fitness, Wisconsin Well Woman Program, and various volunteers that

helped with the distribution.

13 Community Survey Participants

Community Survey Participants						
	Total	Percent	Re-	Percent Polk County	Actual	Wisconsin
	sponders	(%)	sponders	(%)	population	(%)
Gender						
Female	65.24			49.1	50.23	
Male	30.37			51	49.77	
Non-binary	0.22			No Data	No Data	
Transgender	0.11			No Data	No Data	
Other	0.11			No Data	No Data	
Prefer not to say	1.21			No Data	No Data	
Blank	2.74			No Data	No Data	
Race						
White	92.65			96.3	86.6	
Blank	2.74			No Data	No Data	
Prefer not to say	2.74			No Data	No Data	
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0.55			1.1	1.2	
Asian/Pacific Is- lander	0.55			0.6	3.2	
Other	0.55			1.4	2.2	
Black/African American	0.22			0.5	6.8	
Income						
More than \$25,000 Annually	80.26			No Data	No Data	
\$25,000 or Less An- nually	10.53			8.5 (persons in poverty)	10.8	
Education						
Some College or More	74.68			22.3	31.5	
HS Graduate	19.41			93.8		
Less Than HS Grad- uate	3.07			6.2		
Employment						
Retired	48.90			No Data	No Data	
Employed	39.91			63	66	
Unemployed	4.17			3.3	3.2	
Stay-at-Home	2.85			No Data	No Data	
Student	0.77			No Data	No Data	

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- (23) Ekelund U, Tarp J, Steene-Johannessen J, Hansen BH, Jefferis B, Fagerland MW, Whincup P, Diaz KM, Hooker SP, Chernofsky A, Larson MG, Spartano N, Vasan RS, Dohrn IM, Hagströmer M, Edwardson C, Yates T, Shiroma E, Anderssen SA, Lee IM. Dose-response associations between accelerometry measured physical activity and sedentary time and all cause mortality: systematic review and harmonised meta-analysis. *BMJ*. 2019 Aug 21;366:l4570. doi: 10.1136/bmj.l4570. PMID: 31434697; PMCID: PMC6699591.
- (24) CDC Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Obesity Age-Adjusted Adult Prevalence By County (2021).
- (25) Center for Disease Control and prevention. Obesity Among Young Children Enrolled in WIC <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-among-WIC-enrolled-young-children.html>.
- (26) Polk County Community Health Improvement Plan https://cms5.revize.com/revize/polkcountyhealth/Document_Center/CHNACHIP/CHIP-online.pdf.

14 Appendix

Energy Assistance

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
West CAP	Serves Polk, Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, and St. Croix counties.	Energy Assistance, crisis assistance, furnace assistance. Go to westcap.org to fill out an application or to book a phone appointment. For questions, contact 715-598-4750 or email info@wcap.org . If you have a no heat emergency, contact 715-598-4750.

Mental Health and Substance Use

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
Amery Hospital & Clinic	265 Griffin Street E,	Mon-Fri 8am-9pm
	Amery, WI	715-268-0060
Counseling & Psychological Services by Unity Clinic	1504 190th Avenue, Balsam Lake, WI	Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm
		715-483-0343
Family Therapy Associates	250 S Washington Street, Saint Croix Falls, WI	Mon-Thurs 8am-4:30pm
		Fri 8am-3pm
Hope Road Wellness Center	107 Hope Road, Frederic, WI	715-246-4840
		Mon-Thurs 8am-5pm
Lifestance Health	215 West Main Street, Balsam Lake, WI	Fri 8am-12pm
		715-869-6484
Peace Tree Counseling	204 3rd Avenue W, Osceola, WI	Mon-Thurs 8am-7pm
		Fri 8am-4pm
Polk County Behavioral Health	100 Polk County Plaza, Balsam Lake, WI	612-924-3807
		Mon-Thurs 9am-8pm
River Valley Renewal	809 U.S. 8, Saint Croix Falls, WI	Fri 9am-1pm
		715-755-2233
St. Croix Health – Frederic Clinic	205 Oak Street W, Frederic, WI	Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pm
		715-485-8400
St. Croix Health	235 East State Street, Saint Croix Falls, WI	Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm
		Fri: Closed
		715-483-7300
		Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm
		715-327-5700
		Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
		715-483-0243

Health Care Coverage, Medicaid, Badger Care and FoodShare

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
ABC For Rural Health	Serving Wisconsin's Rural Health Care Consumers	608-358-0028 Email us at info@safetyweb.org with your name, phone number, and a short summary
		Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 8:00am-4:00pm
Great Rivers Consortium	100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 180, Balsam Lake, WI	Wed: 8:00am-11:00am
		1-888-283-0012

Physical Activity and Fitness

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
		Mon-Thurs 8:00am – 5:30pm
Amery Hospital & Clinic Fitness Center	265 Griffin Street E, Amery, WI	Fri 7:00am-5:00pm 715-268-8000
Body Logic	202 Main Street W, Mill- town, WI	Open 24/7 715-825-3488
Kyuki-do Martial Arts	308 Keller Ave N, Amery, WI	Open Monday – Thursday 715-268-5899
Snap Fitness Osceola	2388 State Road 35, Osce- ola, WI	Open 24/7 715-294-4554
Snap Fitness St. Croix Falls	340 E McKenny Street, Saint Croix Falls, WI	Open 24/7 715-483-9765
Sunshine Community Fit- ness Center Amery	571 US Hwy 46, Amery, WI	Open 24/7 888-722-1968
Sunshine Community Fit- ness Center Balsam Lake	314 Main Street, Balsam Lake, WI	Open 24/7 888-722-1968
Sunshine Community Fit- ness Center	560 5th Street, Clear Lake, WI	Open 24/7 888-722-1968
Sunshine Community Fit- ness Center Cumberland	1252 5th Ave, Cumberland, WI	Open 24/7 888-722-1968
Sunshine Community Fit- ness Center	432 US Hwy 8 & 63, Turtle Lake, WI	Open 24/7 888-722-1968
		Mon-Thurs 8am-7pm
Wild River Fitness Center	2630 65th Avenue Osceola, WI	Fri-Sat 8am-noon 715-294-2161

Food Pantries

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
		Mon: 9am-12pm
Amery Area Food Pantry	230 Deronda Street Amery, WI	Thurs: 3pm-6pm 715-268-5999
		Tue: 12pm-4pm Wed-Thurs: 9am-4pm Sat: 9am-12pm
Family Pathways Food Shelf	1100 Wisconsin Ave S, Frederic, WI	*Call for appointment 715-327-4425
		Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9am-5pm
Family Pathways Food Shelf	2000 US Highway 8, St. Croix Falls, WI	Wed: 10:30-5pm 715-483-2920
		Wed-Thurs: 1:15pm-5pm
Lifeline Food Pantry	560 5th Street Clear Lake, WI	715-263-3846
		Tues: 11am-1pm
Loaves & Fishes	300 N 1st Street Luck, WI	Thurs: 11am-1pm Wed: 2pm-5pm
People Loving People	103 E. Main Street Dresser, WI	Sat: 11am-1pm 715-755-2300
		Mon: 9:00am-11:00am
		Wed: 3:00pm-6:00pm
Sr. Croix Falls UMC Food Pantry	809 Pine Street, Saint Croix Falls, WI	Fri: 9:00am-10:00am 715-483-9494
		Mon, Wed: 9am-12pm
The Open Cupboard	406 2nd Ave, Osceola, WI	Thurs 11am-7pm

Food Distributions

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
		11:00am-1:00pm
St. Croix Valley Food Bank	507 W. Main Street, Balsam Lake, WI	Open last Wednesday of each month 715-629-5405 or endhunger@stcroixvalleyfoodbank.org
		7:30am to 9:00am
Ruby's Pantry	9000 Griffin Street E, Amery, WI	Open the second Saturday of each month
	Located at SMC Ltd Shipping area	\$25 cash donation per share. Large amounts of grocery items are provided. All are welcome.
		1st Saturday of the Month
Ruby's Pantry	1060 Water Street, Cumberland, WI	Registration at 7:00am Food Bundles available 8:00am-9:30am

Free Community Meals

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
		4th Tuesday of the month
Alliance Church of the Valley	1259 State Road 35, Saint Croix Falls, WI	5:00pm-6:30pm 715-483-1100
		3rd Wednesday of the month (September- May)
Bone Lake Lutheran	1101 255th Ave, Luck, WI	5:30pm-6:30pm 715-472-2535
Georgetown Lutheran Church	877 190th Ave, Balsam Lake, WI	3rd Thursday of the month 12:00pm-1:30pm 715-857-5580
		Last Wednesday of the month 5:30pm-6:30pm
United Methodist Church	306 River Street Osceola, WI	Runs January - October. Not available November or December. 715-755-2275
		Last Sunday of every month
West Denmark Lutheran Church	2478 170th Street, Luck, WI	5:00pm-Close 715-472-2383

Farmers Markets

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
		Runs September 24th – October 31st.
Apple Hill Farm	1428 345th Ave, Frederic, WI	Sat 9:00am-5:00pm
		Sun 11:00am – 5:00pm
		Runs October 6th – October 24th
	Soo Line Park	3:00pm-6:00pm
Amery Farmers Market	Corner of Center St and Keller Avenue	Sat – June 11 through October 29th
	Amery, WI	9:00am-12:00pm
		Website: Amerywisconsin.org
Balsam Lake Farmers Market	507 Main Street, Balsam Lake, WI on County Rd I	Runs May 27th – October 14
	Located at Our Lady of the Lakes Church parking lot	Fridays 3:00pm-5:00pm
Frederic Farmers Market	303 Wisconsin Ave N, Frederic, WI	Runs July 9th – October 29th
	Located in Inter-County Co-op Publishing parking lot	Saturdays 8:00am-12:00pm
Osceola Farmers Market	306 River Street, Osceola, WI	Runs June 10th – October 21st
	Located in the park	Fridays 2:00pm-6:00pm
St. Croix Falls Farmers Market	230 S Washington St, St. Croix Falls, WI	Runs May 21st – October 22nd
	Located in Public Library Plaza	Saturdays 10:00am – 1:00pm

Hospital and Clinics

Service	Location	Hours and Contact
Amery Hospital & Clinic – Luck Clinic	2547 State Road 35 Suite #1 Luck, WI	Mon-Fri 8:00am-5:00pm Primary Care and Family Medicine Mon-Fri 8:00am-5:00pm Sat 9:00am-noon
St. Croix Health – St. Croix Falls Clinic	216 S Adams Street, St. Croix Falls, WI	715-483-3221 Primary Care, Internal Medicine, Women’s Health and more Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:30pm
St. Croix Health – Frederic Clinic	205 Oak Street, Frederic, WI	715-327-5700 Family Medicine, Cancer Care, Audiology and more Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:30pm
St. Croix Health – Unity Clinic	1504 190th Avenue, Balsam Lake, WI	715-825-3278 Family Medicine, Psychological Services Mon 7:30am-7:30pm Tues 7:30am-6:30pm Wed & Thurs 7:30am-5pm Fri 8:00am-5:00pm
Amery Hospital & Clinic	365 Griffin Street E., Amery, WI	715-268-8000 Emergency Services, Birth Center, Behavioral Health, Orthopedic Care and more Mon-Fri 7:00am-1:30pm
Osceola Medical Center	3600 65th Avenue, Osceola, WI	715-294-2111 Primary Care, Walk-in Clinic, Emergency Care and more

Shelter/Housing

Service	Location	Hours and Contact Info
Amery Housing Authority	300 Harriman Ave N, Amery, WI	Low Income Affordable Housing, Public Housing 715-268-2500
Community Referral Agency	Milltown, WI	Domestic Abuse Service 715-825-4414
Frederic Housing Authority	104 3rd Ave S, Frederic, WI	Low Income Affordable Housing, Public Housing 715-327-8490
Frederic Housing Authority	283 Golf Drive, Clear Lake, WI	Low Income Affordable Housing, Public Housing 715-263-3370
Luck Housing Authority	416 S 1st St, Luck, WI	Low Income Affordable Housing, Public Housing 715-472-2032
Northwoods Homeless Shelter	116 Maple St W Amery, WI	Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, General assistance 715-268-5730
Osceola Housing Authority	602 3rd Ave, Osceola, WI	Low Income Affordable Housing, Public Housing 715-294-3629

Legal Services

Service	Location	Hours and Contact
		Assists with evictions, divorce, public benefits, bankruptcy and more. Services are free for eligible individuals.
Judicare	Serves 33 counties in northern Wisconsin.	Apply online or over the phone: 715-842-1681 Judicare.org

Veterans Services

Service	Location	Hours and Contact
		Mon-Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm
Polk County Government Center	100 Polk County Plaza Suite #70 Balsam Lake, WI	715-485-9243 Or email cvso@polkcountywi.gov

Additional Resources

Service	Location	Hours and Contact
		Mon-Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm
Aging & Disability Resource Center	100 Polk County Plaza Suite #60 Balsam Lake, WI	715-485-8449

14.1 Community Survey



Polk County Community Health Assessment

Polk County Health Department is conducting a survey to determine the most important health needs in Polk County. The information provided will be used to help us understand and improve the health of Polk County residents. Your participation is voluntary and will not affect your health care in any way. All responses are completely confidential.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

1. In the last 12 months was there something that prevented you from getting the medical care you needed?
☐ Yes ☐ No (Skip to question 3)
2. What prevented you from getting medical care? **(Please check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Uninsured	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> Inconvenient hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Cannot afford to pay	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not enough time
<input type="checkbox"/> insurance did not cover it	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go	<input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being judged
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-payments too high	<input type="checkbox"/> Language barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> Fear of bad diagnosis
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialty physician not in area		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____		
3. Does every member in your household currently have health insurance?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. On an average day, how many servings of fruit and vegetables do you eat? **(1 cup = 1 serving)**
☐ None ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 or more
5. On average how many days per week do you exercise 30 minutes or more?
☐ None ☐ 1-2 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 5 or more
6. In the last two weeks how many days have you felt sad or depressed?
☐ None ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 5-7 ☐ 7-9 ☐ Almost all days
7. In the last 12 months have you ever felt so overwhelmed that you considered suicide?
☐ Yes ☐ No (Skip to question 9)
8. How are you addressing the problem? **(Check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Medication	<input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a healthcare provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a trusted person
<input type="checkbox"/> Doing Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a counselor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing health behaviors (eating better, more exercise, regular sleep)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____		
9. Please check all that apply to you.

Cigarettes/cigars	<input type="checkbox"/> Never tried	<input type="checkbox"/> Stopped	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently use
E-cigarettes, or vape	<input type="checkbox"/> Never tried	<input type="checkbox"/> Stopped	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently use
Chew/nicotine pouch	<input type="checkbox"/> Never tried	<input type="checkbox"/> Stopped	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently use
10. If you currently use tobacco, how frequently do you use it?
☐ Never ☐ Daily ☐ Almost daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Occasionally (2-3 times/month)
11. On average, how many alcoholic beverages do you consume per week?
The size of a standard drink is one: 12 oz can/bottle of beer, 5 oz glass of wine, 1.5 oz shot of liquor.
☐ None ☐ 1-6 per week ☐ 7-13 per week ☐ 14 or more per week

12. Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, how many times during the past month did you have
Male: five or more drinks in one sitting **Female:** four or more in one sitting
☐ Never ☐ Once ☐ Daily ☐ Almost daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Occasionally (2-3 times/month)
13. In the past year, have you or any family members you live with been impacted by:
☐ Domestic violence/ felt unsafe ☐ Unemployment
☐ Alcohol use or misuse ☐ Significant loss/separation
☐ Illegal drugs (meth, marijuana, heroin or cocaine) ☐ Legal trouble/ arrested
☐ Mental Health
14. In the past year, have you or any family members you live with been unable to get any of the following:
☐ Food ☐ Health Care (medical, dental, mental, vision)
☐ Stable Housing ☐ Health Insurance
☐ Childcare ☐ Phone/internet
☐ Job/Stable employment ☐ Utilities (heat, energy)
☐ Transportation
15. What do you feel are the most important health related concerns in Polk County? (**Check all that apply**)
- Chronic Conditions**
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> Strokes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart Health | |
- Health**
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to Get Immunizations (shots) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive health/birth control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dental Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Pandemics |
- Mental Health**
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Support from Family or Friends |
- Nutrition**
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Healthy Food Options | <input type="checkbox"/> Having enough food to eat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obesity | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Breastfeeding Support |
- Safety**
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Gun Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse/Neglect | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Concerns at Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe/Unhealthy Homes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car/ATV/Snowmobile Accidents | <input type="checkbox"/> Falls/ Mobility |
- Substance Use**
- | | |
|--|--|
| <i>Youth (under 18 years old)</i> | <i>Adult (over 18 years old)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Abuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription Drug Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription Drug Abuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Illegal Drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Illegal Drugs |
- Tobacco Use**
- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Youth (under 18 years old)</i> | <i>Adult (over 18 years old)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco use | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-cigarette/Vaping Use | <input type="checkbox"/> E-cigarette/Vaping Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondhand Smoke | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondhand Smoke |

Lack of Access to

- ☐ Stable Housing
- ☐ Childcare

- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Adult Dependent Care

Other

- ☐ Ability to Get a Job
- ☐ Having Money to Meet Basic Needs
- ☐ Inflation
- ☐ Crime and Violence

- ☐ Language Barriers
- ☐ Level of Education
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Community Support

16. Where/which event are you currently taking this survey? _____

17. What is your zip code? _____

18. How would you describe your race?

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Asian

19. How would you describe your ethnicity?

- ☐ Hispanic/Latino(a)
- ☐ Non-Hispanic/Latino(a)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

20. How would you describe your gender identity?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

21. What is your age group?

- ☐ Under 18 years old
- ☐ 18 to 24 years old
- ☐ 25 to 34 years old
- ☐ 35 to 44 years old
- ☐ 45 to 54 years old
- ☐ 55 to 64 years old
- ☐ 65 to 74 years old
- ☐ 75 or 84 years old
- ☐ 85 years or older

22. Number of dependent children under the age of 18:

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 or more

23. What is your highest degree or level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Less than high school
- ☐ Completed some college
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ High school graduate/GED
- ☐ Associate Degree
- ☐ Doctorate/PhD/MD
- ☐ Completed some high school
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree

24. What is your current work situation?

- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Stay-at-home parent/caregiver
- ☐ Retired

25. What was your gross annual household income?

- ☐ Less than \$25,000
- ☐ \$25,000 to \$34,999
- ☐ \$35,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 or more

26. What is your main health insurance?

- ☐ None/uninsured
- ☐ Medicaid
- ☐ Tribal
- ☐ Private insurance through your employer or spouse
- ☐ Medicare
- ☐ Private-through Marketplace
- ☐ Military

Polk County Public Health Department would like to thank you for completing this survey. We value your responses.