

2025

Community Health Needs Assessment:

Partnership for a Healthy Community

PEORIA COUNTY

TAZEWELL COUNTY

WOODFORD COUNTY

Introduction

Community Health Needs Assessment

*Collaboration for
Sustaining Health Equity*

The Tri-County County Community Health-Needs Assessment is a collaborative undertaking by the Partnership for a Healthy Community to highlight the health needs and well-being of residents in Tri-County County.

Through this needs assessment, collaborative community partners, including Carle Eureka Hospital, Carle Health Methodist Hospital, Carle Health Pekin Hospital, Carle Health Proctor Hospital, Bradley University, Heart of Illinois United Way, Heartland Health Services, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, Peoria City/County Health Department, Tazewell County Health Department and Woodford County Health Department have identified numerous health issues impacting individuals and families in the Tri-County County region. Several themes are prevalent in this health-needs assessment – the demographic composition of the Tri-County County region, the predictors for and prevalence of diseases, leading causes of mortality, accessibility to health services and healthy behaviors.

Results from this study can be used for strategic decision-making purposes as they directly relate to the health needs of the community. The study was designed to assess issues and trends impacting the communities served by the collaborative, as well as perceptions of targeted stakeholder groups.

In order to perform these analyses, information was collected from numerous secondary sources, including publicly available sources as well as private sources of data. Additionally, survey data from

2,329 respondents in the community were assessed with a special focus on the at-risk or economically disadvantaged population. Areas of investigation included perceptions of the community health issues, unhealthy behaviors, issues with quality of life, healthy behaviors, and access to medical care, dental care, prescription medications and mental-health counseling. Additionally, social drivers (determinants) of health (SDoH) were analyzed to provide insights into why certain segments of the population behaved differently.

Ultimately, the identification and prioritization of the most important health-related issues in the Tri-County County region were identified. The collaborative team considered health needs based on:

- 1. magnitude of the issue** (i.e., what percentage of the population was impacted by the issue)
- 2. severity of the issue in terms of its relationship with morbidities and mortalities**
- 3. potential impact through collaboration**

Using a modified version of the Hanlon Method, the collaborative team prioritized three significant health needs:

- **Food insecurity among youth**
- **Access to behavioral health**
- **Suicidal and self-harm thoughts & behaviors**

Food Insecurity Among Youth

Access to Behavioral Health

Suicidal and Self-Harm Thoughts & Behaviors

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Food Insecurity Among Youth

Food Insecurity — the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods—continues to affect school-aged youth across the Tri-County area of Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties.

According to the Community Status Assessment (CSA), younger individuals with lower household incomes and unstable housing are significantly less likely to consume fruits and vegetables, often citing affordability, lack of importance, and dislike as barriers. The Community Context Assessment (CCA) further reveals that school-aged youth frequently skip meals or opt for unhealthy options due to time and financial constraints. Community Partner Assessment (CPA) data shows that about half of local organizations prioritize food insecurity, particularly through efforts targeting economic stability and the built environment.

In Peoria County, the food insecurity rate stands at 14.5%, while Tazewell County reports a child food insecurity rate of 15.5%. Although specific data for Woodford County is limited, regional trends suggest similar challenges.

These local rates exceed the Healthy People 2030 target of reducing household food insecurity to 6% and very low food security in children to 0.3%. This gap underscores the urgent need for coordinated, youth-focused interventions across the Tri-County area.

It is essential that everyone has access to food and drink necessary for living healthy lives. Food insecurity exists when people don't have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for a healthy life. In the Tri-County region, approximately 6% of residents go hungry at least 1-2 times per week, which is double the prior estimate in 2022 of 3%. Hunger was higher for Black residents and those reporting lower household income or unstable housing. Seniors, low income, and minority groups noted that limited access to healthy and fresh produce leads to a reliance on processed or fast foods.

Food Insecurity Among Youth

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Suicidal and Self-Harm Thoughts & Behaviors

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Access to Behavioral Health

Access to Behavioral Health — defined as the ability to obtain timely, affordable, and culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services—is a critical determinant of overall well-being, particularly when navigating complex systems of care.

In the Tri-County area of Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties, improving access and resource navigation is essential, especially for underserved populations. According to the Community Status Assessment (CSA), only about 51% of residents reported speaking with someone about their mental health in the past year, with barriers including providers' not accepting insurance and a shortage of counselors, particularly in Tazewell County.

The Community Context Assessment (CCA) highlights long wait times—especially for Medicaid recipients—and a lack of providers in areas like Eureka. Minority and low-income residents face additional challenges, often relying on law enforcement rather than behavioral health professionals for crisis intervention. Community Partner Assessment

(CPA) data shows that 72% of organizations are addressing healthcare access, with 67% specifically focused on mental and behavioral health. While Woodford County reports relatively better mental health outcomes, Peoria and Tazewell face more significant challenges, particularly among those with unstable housing or from minority backgrounds.

All three counties are designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), reflecting a broader national trend. These local gaps stand in contrast to the Healthy People 2030 goal of increasing the proportion of adults with serious mental illness who receive treatment to 64.6% and reducing barriers to timely care. Addressing these disparities requires coordinated, community-based strategies that enhance provider availability and improve system navigation for all residents.

Food Insecurity Among Youth

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Suicidal and Self-Harm Thoughts & Behaviors

Suicidal and Self-Harm Thoughts & Behaviors

— ranging from ideation and planning to attempts—are serious public health concerns that require both preventative and clinical interventions to reduce risk and promote mental well-being.

In the Tri-County area of Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties, addressing suicide risk is especially urgent given disparities in healthcare access and mental health support. While 87% of residents report having a primary care provider (PCP), Black and Latino/a/x individuals and those experiencing housing instability are significantly less likely to have one, limiting early identification and intervention opportunities. Younger, higher-income, and more educated individuals more frequently use urgent care, which may not be equipped for sustained behavioral health support.

The Community Context Assessment (CCA) highlights that minority groups often need help navigating healthcare systems, a barrier

echoed in the Community Partner Assessment (CPA), where 67% of organizations identified healthcare access and quality as a top priority. Suicide remains a leading cause of death nationally, with over 49,000 deaths in 2023—one every 11 minutes. Local data from Tazewell and Woodford Counties emphasize the importance of early intervention and community-based crisis services. These efforts align with the Healthy People 2030 goal of reducing the suicide rate to 12.8 per 100,000 population. To meet this target, the Tri-County region must expand culturally competent care, improve system navigation, and strengthen the integration of behavioral health into primary care and community settings.

Collaborative Team

COLLABORATIVE TEAM

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