



Vinton County Community Health Assessment

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Sponsored By:

The Vinton County Health
Department

On Behalf of the Community

Assembled By:

Ohio University's Voinovich School of
Leadership and Public Affairs

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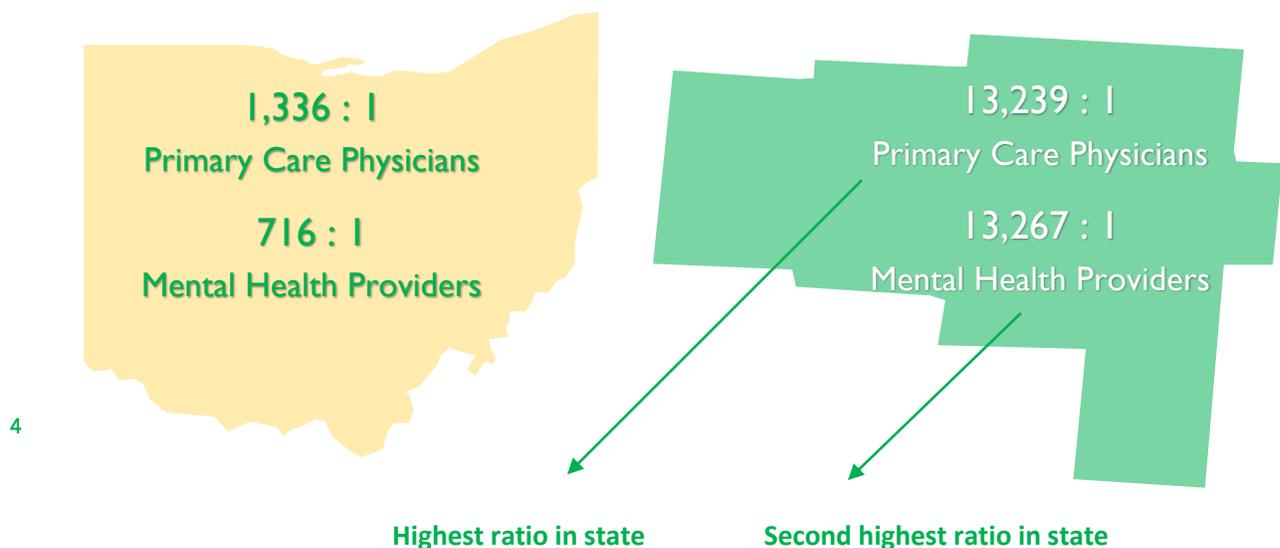
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- ⇒ Almost 60 percent of Vinton County residents live in the areas with no healthy food outlets.¹
- ⇒ Vinton County has the tenth highest reported number of Hepatitis C cases per 100,000 (38.8) in the State of Ohio.²
- ⇒ Vinton County has higher than state and national rates of obesity and overweight³.

Access to Care

“There’s no specialists okay? So you don’t have any pulmonologists, don’t have any cardiologists, you don’t have any dermatologists, you don’t have any endocrinologist...No kind of ‘ologist.”

“Treat them [individuals addicted to substances] locally. Treat them within the county.”



¹ Modified Food Retail Environment Index. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. 2011.

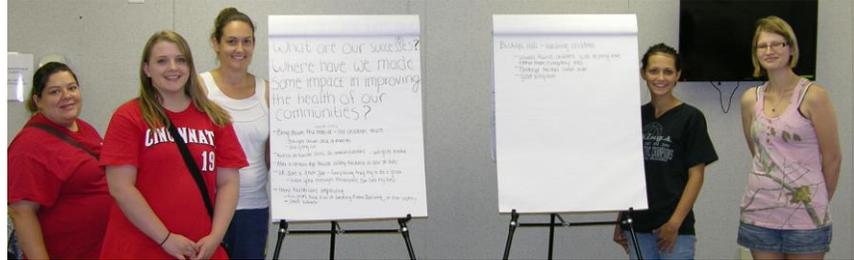
² Ohio Department of Health, adapted by Ohio MHAS (2013)“Hepatitis C Rates in Ohio,” retrieved from mha.ohio.gov/portals/0/assets/.../ohio_hepatitis_c_2011_v3.pdf

³ Network of Care

⁴ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.). Health Resources and Services Administration Data Warehouse. Retrieved from <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/tools/analyzers/HpsaFindResults.aspx>; Ohio Department of Health (2015); Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas in Ohio. Retrieved from <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/~media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/ohs/oral%20health/HPSA%20weblis%202015.pdf>

Successes

- ✓ The Vinton County Health Department is perceived as a good resource.
- ✓ Offering in-home immunizations is helping with vaccinations.
- ✓ Project DAWN-Deaths Avoided With Nalaxone is identified as a successful initiative.
- ✓ Ahoy Transportation is identified as a helpful resource.



“Honestly, the VCHD is only agency that actually promotes and advertises their services to the community.” ~ Survey Respondent

Demographics⁵

- The median household income is nearly \$12,000 below the state (\$36,705 compared to \$48,308).
- Fewer residents have private insurance and more have public insurance compared to the state.
- Like much of Southeast Ohio there is a higher poverty rate in the county compared to the state (20.6% compared to 15.8%)
- Educational attainment is much lower than the state (percent without a HS diploma is higher, percent with bachelors or higher degree is lower).

⁵ Sources: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates ('09-'13);

Full Report

Detailed Methodology

The Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) method informs the overall process⁶. The MAPP method outlines six steps, with the third step having four MAPP Assessments. The Framework “is a community-driven strategic planning tool for improving community health. This tool helps communities apply strategic thinking to prioritize public health issues and identify resources to address them” (National Association of County & City Health Officials, 2015, para 1).

Five focus group discussions and two surveys were conducted with community members and professionals living in and or working in Vinton County to gather input on quality of life and health based concerns.

In addition to the five focus groups a smaller group comprised of stakeholders –a Core Group reviewed the focus group themes and assisted with selecting secondary health indicator data to report. They also discussed factors to consider as Forces of Change that may affect the health of the community. Members of this group are professionals from community organizations such as Help Me Grow, Hopewell Health Centers, The Vinton County Health Department, the Vinton County Local School District, Shepherd’s House, and the Family and Children First Council.

This Report is organized into several sections- county-wide demographic data, health indicator and threats/success perceptions, forces of change discussions, and health services survey results. This assessment was completed in 2015 and is relevant for five years.⁷

County Demographics⁸

Vinton County has an estimated population of 13,365 and is predominantly white (99.7%). The Village of McArthur, located within Vinton County, has an estimated population of 1,656 (Figure 1 on page 5).

- ⇒ The median household income is nearly \$12,000 below the state (\$36,705 compared to \$48,308).
- ⇒ A lower percentage of residents have private insurance and a higher percentage have public insurance compared to the state.
- ⇒ Like much of Southeast Ohio there is a higher poverty rate in the county compared to the state (20.6% compared to 15.8%)-See map on page 6.
- ⇒ Educational attainment is much lower than the state.

⁶ National Association of County & City Health Officials, 2015

⁷ <http://www.phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/SM-Version-1.5-Board-adopted-FINAL-01-24-2014.docx.pdf>

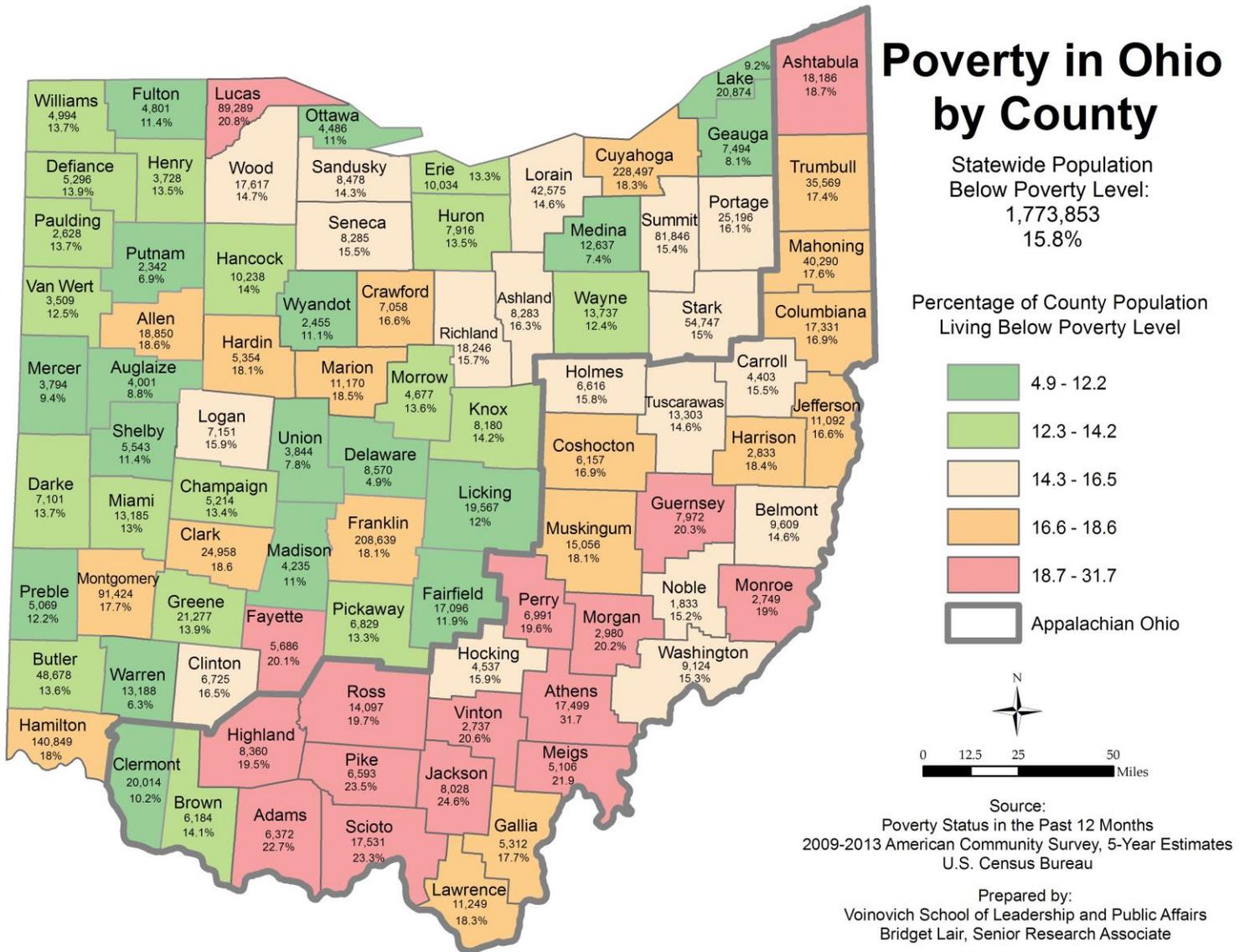
⁸ Sources: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates ('09-'13);

Figure 1. Vinton County Demographics¹

	Vinton County	Village of McArthur	Ohio
General and Economic			
Population	13,365	1,656	11,549,590
Median household income	\$36,705	\$30,250	\$48,308
Population below the Poverty Line	21%	33%	15.8%
Population under 18 below the Poverty Line	33%	53%	22.8%
Unemployment ²	9%	15%	10%
Commute to work (mean, in minutes)	29	21	23
Health Insurance			
No insurance	14%	8%	11.6%
Private Insurance	53%	47%	69.6%
Public Insurance	46%	57%	31.1%
Education			
% without HS Diploma	22%	17%	11.5%
% with HS or higher	80%	84%	63.3%
% with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	9%	11%	25.1%
Gender			
Male	50%	48%	48.9%
Female	50%	52%	51.1%
Culture/Ethnicity			
White	99.7%	99.5%	82.9%
Black/African American	0.2%	2%	12.1%
Asian	.1%	.5%	1.7%
Hispanic	0%	0%	3.2%
Other	2%	6%	1%
% Immigrants ³	.2%	.01%	4.1%
Age Distribution			
<5	6%	8%	6.1%
5-17	18%	16%	17.2%
18-24	8%	9%	9.6%
25-44	24%	26%	25%
45-64	29%	27%	27.7%
65+	15%	15%	14.4%
Disabilities			
% of Population living with disabilities	18%	16%	13.6%
% over 65 living with disabilities	47%	51%	35.2%
Sources: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates ('09-'13);			
¹ Due to rounding, Demographics totals may add up to more than 100%			
² Unemployment shows the Percent Unemployed from Civilian Labor Force			
³ For Immigrant calculation: Data taken from Nativity and Citizenship Status in the United States ACS 5 Year Estimates ('09-'13). Formula used: (U.S. Citizen by Naturalization + Not a U.S. Citizen)/Total			

Like much of Southeast Ohio Vinton County has higher poverty than the state (20.6% versus 15.8%).

Figure 2. Poverty Rates in Ohio



Health Concerns and Successes

Focus group participants (Figure 3) were asked to identify threats to health and well-being in the county, as well as successful efforts to improve the health and well-being of county residents. Themes were identified across focus groups. This information was combined with secondary indicator data identified with the guidance of the core group of stakeholders. The combined data is presented here in this section of the report.

Figure 3. Vinton County Focus Group Participants, Summer 2015

Date of Focus Group	Number of Participants	Group Identifier
05/27/15	7	Vinton County Health Dept. Board Members
06/16/15	13	Family and Children First Council Members
06/30/15	20	Seniors
07/09/15	5	Help Me Grow Parents
07/29/15	6	Home Visiting Nurses

Health Behaviors in Vinton County

Vinton County ranks 58 out of Ohio's 88 counties (meaning more than half of Ohio's counties rank better) when it comes to health behaviors tracked in the 2015 County Health Rankings.⁹

Substance Abuse

Illegal Drugs and Prescription Painkillers

Substance abuse (especially abuse of heroin, methamphetamines and prescription painkillers) is a grave problem in Vinton County. In addition to compromising the physical and mental health of users and their families, drug abuse underpins many of the other threats to well-being in the county. As one focus group participant observed, *"Your health suffers, your family life suffers, your friends, your community, I mean it all suffers because of no jobs, drugs...I mean people end up dead, it's like they're breaking into everybody's house."*

- ⇒ Vinton County ranks 13 out of Ohio's 88 counties (meaning 75 of Ohio's counties rank better) for unintentional drug overdose death rates (the average adjusted death rate from unintentional drug overdoses in Vinton County was 21 per 100,000, compared to the statewide rate of 13.9 deaths per 100,000).¹⁰

⁹ County Health Rankings are available from <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/ohio/2015/overview>

¹⁰ Ohio Department of Health (2014). Unintentional Drug Overdose Death Rates for Ohio Residents by County, 2007-2012. Retrieved from

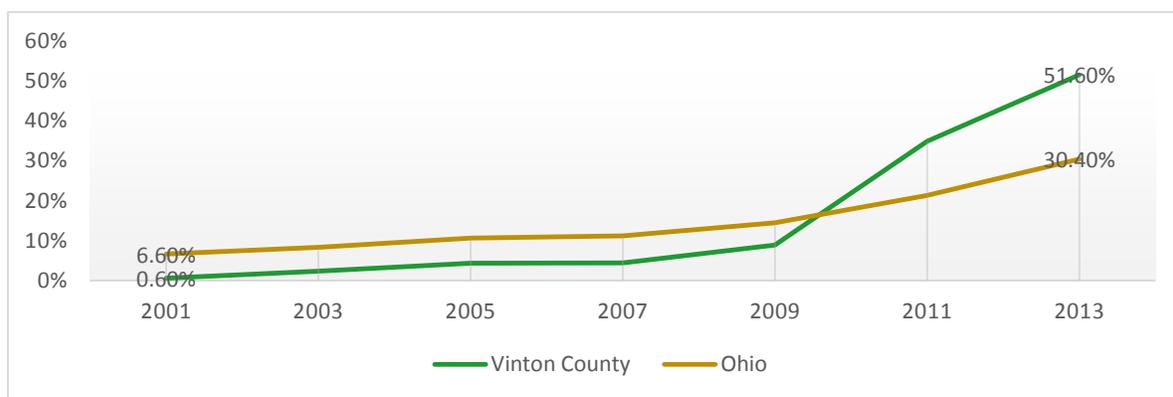
<http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/~media/HealthyOhio/ASSETS/Files/injury%20prevention/2012%20overdose%20data/CountyDrugData%202012.ashx>

Opioid use is a particular problem. In 2012 the county was identified as a “hot spot” for abuse of prescription opioids, and opioid usage has continued to increase since then.¹¹ Health professionals in the county reported that abuse of prescription painkillers has grown to the point that many health care providers are reluctant to prescribe them, even to patients who need them.

⇒ Between 2013 and 2014, the per capita rate of prescription opioid doses in Vinton County fell by 3.8 percent, though at 102.7 doses per person it was still the second highest rate in the entire state.¹²

Figure 4 below provides details on the growth of opioid abuse in the county. The figure portrays the percentage of clients in treatment for substance abuse who had an opiate related diagnosis.

Figure 4. Unduplicated Admissions for Opiate Abuse and Dependence (2001-2013)



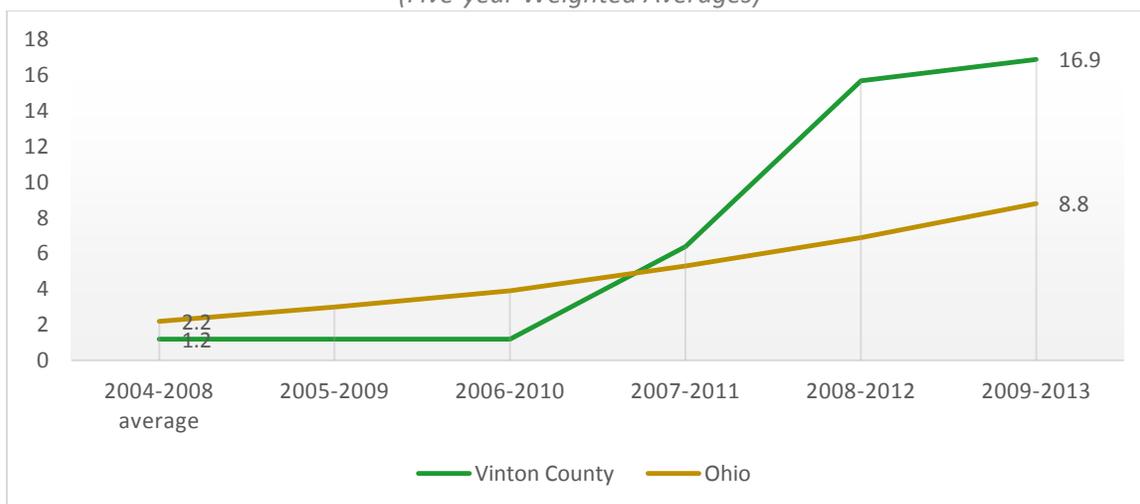
Source: Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (ODMHAS), “Admissions for Opiate Abuse and Dependence” retrieved from <http://mha.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=701#2347720-admissions-for-opiate-abuse-and-dependence>

Another effect of widespread drug use is an increase in the number of babies born addicted to drugs, especially opiates. One health provider reported, “We have low birth weight. We have babies born addicted to opiates. We have lots of babies born in this county who are failure to thrive, [and have] dental issues from the meth.” Figure 5 below shows the increase in neonatal abstinence syndrome (caused by exposure to addictive drugs while in the womb) in Vinton County since 2004.

¹¹Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (ODMHAS) (2012), “Hot Spot Analysis by County-Opiates,” Retrieved from http://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/Research/Maps/Ohio_Opiate_Hot_Spot_2012.pdf

¹²ODMHAS (2015) “Change in Prescription Opioid Doses per Capita: Ohio’s Automated Rx Reporting System—2013-2014,” retrieved from http://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/Research/Maps/Per_Capita_2013to2014_v2_NoBup.pdf; and ODMHAS (2015) Prescription Opioid Doses per Capita: Ohio’s Automated Rx Reporting System-2014” http://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/Research/Maps/Per_Capita_2014_v2_NoBup.pdf

Figure 5. Discharge Rates for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome per 1,000 Live Births (Five-year Weighted Averages)



Source: ODMHAS, “Hospital Discharges for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome,” retrieved from <http://mha.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=701#2347728-hospital-discharges-for-neonatal-abstinence-syndrome>

Participants report that drug use has become so widespread that residents are using drugs near playgrounds while their children play nearby. According to one resident, *“In the past six months I have been in three different locations where I have found needles, and they all were within 15 feet of a trash can....at public places.”* County residents also report that there is an increase in the number of grandparents and even great-grandparents who are raising children, because the children’s parents are addicted to drugs.

Vinton County residents also noted that crime and fraud are increasing as those addicted to drugs seek ways to support their dependencies. Service providers in a focus group reported that many drug addicts barter their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card for drugs: *“Most of the time their drug dealer has their card, and is an authorized user.”* Another focus group participant discussed the fraud surrounding Suboxone, a drug used to treat opiate addiction: *“I’ve been told by one of the drivers [who provides transportation to medical appointments] that they’ve drove people to Columbus to fill their script, stopped and circled, [and the patients] fill the order, and sell it in the parking lot.”*

Another impact of drug use is the increase of Hepatitis C. As one service provider explained, *“Cases of Hep C have just exploded with sharing of needles.”*

⇒ Vinton County has the tenth highest reported number of Hepatitis C cases per 100,000 (38.8) in the State of Ohio.¹³

Efforts to address the drug problem are underway in the county and include:

- ✓ Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided with Nalaxone), which allows the Health Department to distribute Nalaxone, a medication that can be used to prevent deaths from opioid overdoses.
- ✓ Though not identified by focus group participants, VCHD staff note: there is a drug taskforce, Integrated Services offers behavioral health care and other support services and the sheriff's office offers a drug take-back program.

Alcohol

Health professionals and local families also identified alcohol abuse as another substance abuse problem in the county.

⇒ Vinton County has the highest percentage of driving deaths with alcohol involvement (2009-2013) in the State of Ohio. Seventy-five percent of vehicle accident deaths in Vinton County involved alcohol, compared to 36 percent for the state as a whole.¹⁴

Substance Abuse Treatment

Some focus group members voiced concern not only about drug and alcohol abuse, but also about a lack of local rehabilitation centers that could serve those trying to stop substance abuse. A lack of beds and a lack of facilities as well as the concern about sending residents out of the county for treatment were discussed as one participant noted, *"Treat them locally. Treat them within the county."*

Tobacco

Community members and service providers also indicated that tobacco use is a problem in the county.

⇒ While Vinton County has roughly the same percentage of adult smokers as the state as a whole (21%), it has a higher rate of current and former smokers than the state. See Figure 6 below for more details.¹⁵

There are some indications that there is a desire to quit among Vinton County's tobacco users.

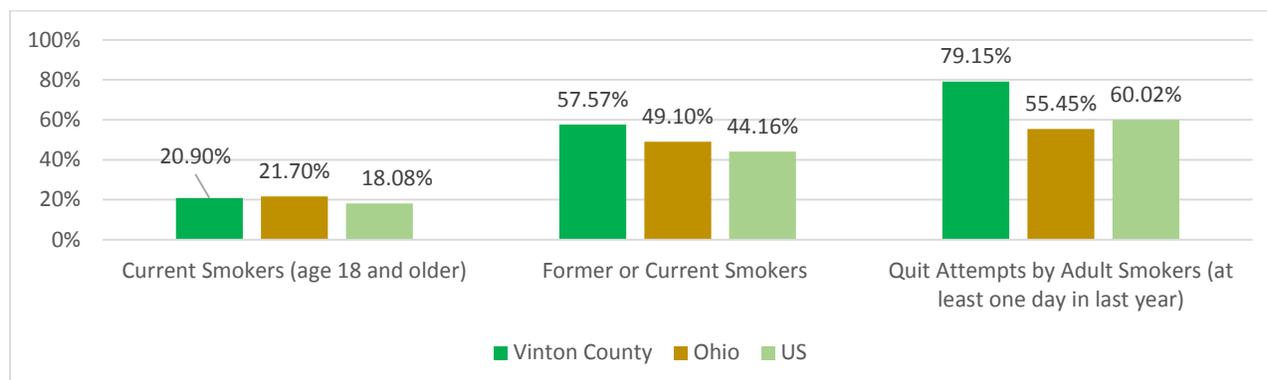
- ✓ Visiting nurses report that their tobacco cessation programs have been successful.
- ✓ Compared to the State of Ohio and the US, Vinton County has a higher percentage of adult smokers who have attempted to quit smoking. Figure 6 provides more details.

¹³ Ohio Department of Health, adapted by Ohio MHAS (2013) "Hepatitis C Rates in Ohio," retrieved from mha.ohio.gov/portals/0/assets/.../ohio_hepatitis_c_2011_v3.pdf

¹⁴ 2015 County Health Rankings

¹⁵ 2015 County Health Rankings

Figure 6. Tobacco-related Statistics for Vinton County, Ohio, and the US (2012)



Sources: Data gathered by Community Commons from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, accessed via the Health Indicators Warehouse; US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse, 2006-12; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, additional data analysis by CARES, 2011-12.

Youth Substance Abuse

Abuse of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco is a problem not just for adults in the county, but for youth as well. Community members report that county residents are using drugs at earlier ages than before, as drugs become more widely available. One participant reported that even “4th graders [are] coming home with drugs that they can buy with their lunch money.”

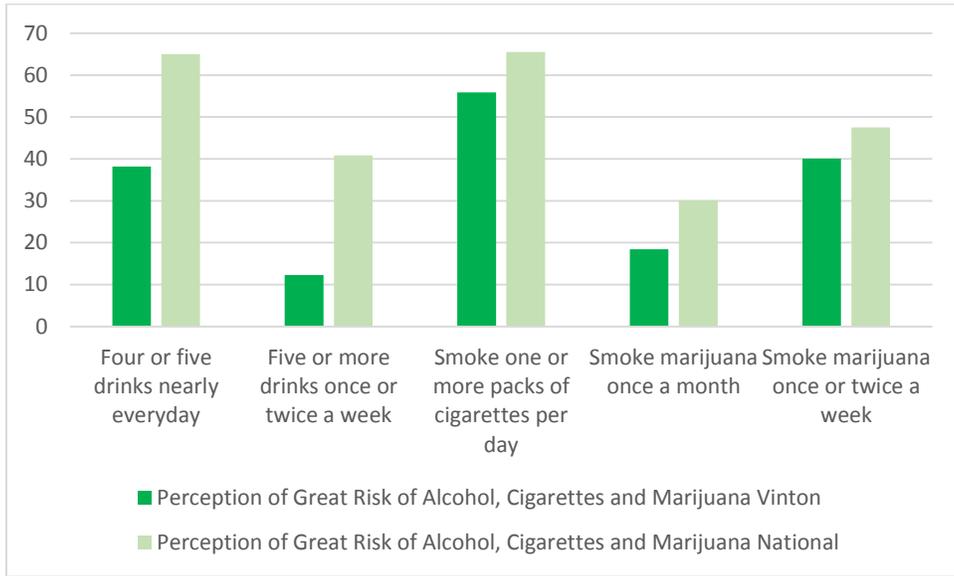
- ⇒ In Vinton County, 8.7 percent of youth responding to a 2011/2012 Youth Opinion Survey reported some level of marijuana or hashish use in the past 30 days (n=393).¹⁶
- ⇒ In Vinton County 17.9 percent of youth (under age 21) reported that they had used alcohol in the last 30 days (n=396).¹⁷
- ⇒ Vinton County youth have perceived less risk in substance use or abuse than their peers nationally.¹⁸
- ⇒ Fourteen point two percent of youth reported that they had smoked all or part of a cigarette in the last 30 days (n=394).¹⁸
- ⇒ Medical professionals in the county report that youth are mixing alcohol and marijuana.

¹⁶ Ohio University’s Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (2012). *Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board, Youth Opinion Survey Results for Vinton County*. The Youth Opinion Survey was distributed during the 2011/2012 school year to sixth, eighth, tenth and twelfth grade students in Athens, Hocking and Vinton Counties. Survey results in this document include only those responses provided by students living in Vinton County.

¹⁷ Ohio University’s Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (2012). *Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board, Youth Opinion Survey Results for Vinton County*.

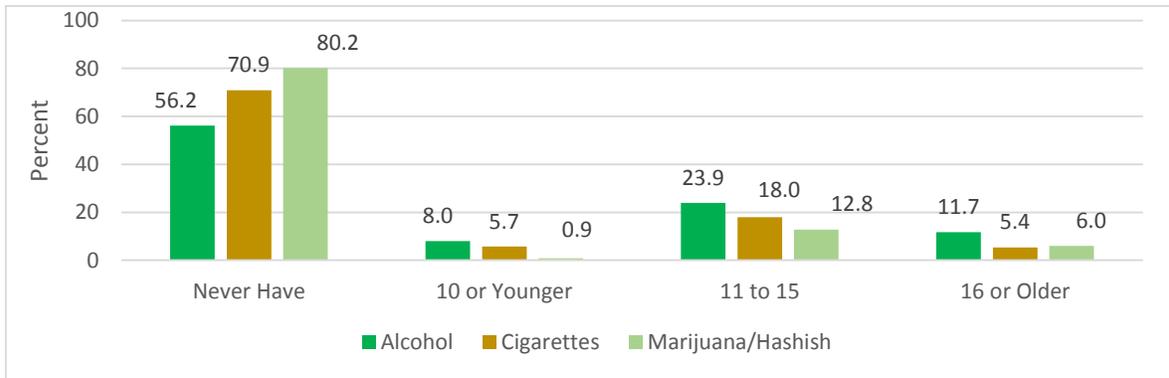
¹⁸ Ohio University’s Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (2012). *Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board, Youth Opinion Survey Results for Vinton County*.

Figure 7. Vinton County Youth Perception of Risk



Source: Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (2012). *Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board, Youth Opinion Survey Results for Vinton County.*

Figure 8. Vinton County Youth Reported Age of Onset



Source: Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (2012). *Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board, Youth Opinion Survey Results for Vinton County.*

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Focus group participants identified sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as an area of concern for Vinton County.

⇒ Rates of chlamydia have increased from 134 in 2010 to 165.7 in 2014.

While the rate appears to be growing in Vinton County, STD rates overall are not higher than the state rates.

✓ Rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and total syphilis are much lower than the average rates for the State of Ohio.

While care should be taken when interpreting small numbers, Figure 9 below compares rates per 100,000 population for select STDs in Vinton County and Ohio.

Figure 9. STD Rates per 100,000 Population

Disease	Vinton County	Ohio
Chlamydia	165.7	469.3
Gonorrhea	22.6	138.6
Total Syphilis	0	10.5

Source: 2010-2014 Ohio Infectious Disease Status Report: Chlamydia, 2010-2014 Ohio Infectious Disease Status Report: Gonorrhea, 2010-2014 Ohio Infectious Disease Status Report: Total Syphilis, accessed from <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/healthstats/disease/std/std1.aspx>

Teen Pregnancy

The rate of teen pregnancy, another indicator of unsafe sexual practices, is much higher in Vinton County than in the state.

- ⇒ Between 2006-2012, the teen birth rate (per 1,000 population) was 52.3. The average rate for the state of Ohio was 36, and the average rate for the US was 36.6.¹⁹

There are some efforts underway to address these problems.

- ✓ Some service providers reported that abstinence education has been offered in the county.

Obesity and Overweight in Vinton County

Many service providers involved in the focus groups observed that obesity and overweight are problems in Vinton County. They largely attributed the problem to lack of education about healthy foods and lack of access to healthy foods. One individual remarked, *“When I go to pick up my kids from school, 90 percent of those kids are overweight.”*

- ⇒ Between 2006-2012 obesity and overweight rates in Vinton County exceed the state and national averages: 38.8 percent of adults in Vinton County report having a Body Mass Index of 30 or greater, compared to 29.6 percent of Ohioans and 35.7 percent in the US (2009-2010).^{20 21}

Clinical Care in Vinton County

According to the 2015 County Health Rankings, Vinton County ranks eighty-second out of Ohio’s 88 counties in terms of clinical care. Among the reasons for this are poor service provider- to-population ratios, and inadequate access to health insurance.

¹⁹ US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2006-12.

²⁰ Network of Care

²¹ <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/Pages/overweight-obesity-statistics.aspx>

Access to Care

Lack of insurance or inadequate insurance

According to health providers and families in the county, lack of insurance (or inadequate insurance) plays a big role in preventing Vinton County residents from accessing needed care.

- ⇒ Fourteen percent of Vinton County residents are not covered by any health insurance.
- ⇒ Vinton County has the highest percentage of residents receiving public assistance through Medicaid in the state.

Figure 10 below provides more details on health insurance in the county.

Figure 10. Health Insurance in Vinton County

Health insurance coverage	Vinton County	Ohio
Private health insurance (employer-based and direct-purchase)	58%	75%
Medicare	24%	21%
Medicaid	23%	11%
No insurance	14%	13%

Source: 2013 data, American Community Survey (2014). Vinton County, OH Healthcare Data, retrieved from <http://www.towncharts.com/Ohio/Healthcare/Vinton-County-OH-Healthcare-data.html>

Many families reported that having insurance does not guarantee access to care. Many people reported difficulty finding local providers who accept their insurance. One parent said, *“We have to go to Nelsonville because they’re the only ones who accept our insurance.”*

Even when providers accept insurance, many families find the expense of copays and deductibles to be cost-prohibitive.

- ⇒ Twelve percent of Vinton County residents (2006-2012) reported that they could not see a doctor in the previous twelve months because of cost. The average for the state was thirteen percent.²²

Affording insurance payments themselves can be burdensome. One health professional described the experience of many area residents who struggle to pay for insurance: *“You can’t make enough money to buy insurance, but you make too much money, because you have a job, to get on Medicaid.”*

Availability of Service Providers

Health providers in Vinton County stressed that there are only sufficient resources to provide very basic medical care. According to one health department employee: *“You can come to us for some very, very basic needs, and you can go next door to Family Health Care. They have available slots. Other than that you’re going out of county”*. There are no emergency rooms in the county. The closest urgent care

²² County Health Rankings

center is located in Jackson County at Jackson Urgent Care, 18.67 miles away from McArthur. The closest emergency room and hospital is located in Hocking County at the Hocking Valley Community Hospital. There are also very few specialists in the county. As one health professional stressed, *“There’s no specialists okay? So you don’t have any pulmonologists, don’t have any cardiologists, you don’t have any dermatologists, you don’t have any endocrinologist...No kind of ’ologist.”* Even the basic care available in Vinton County is difficult to access because of the small number of providers.

⇒ Vinton County has three Health Professional Shortage Area designations including for primary care mental health care, and dental health care.²³

Figures 11, 12, and 13 below provide information about the lack of health providers in Vinton County.

Figure 11. Ratio of Care Providers to Population

Type of Provider	Vinton County	Ohio	State Ranking
Ratio of population to primary care physicians²⁴	13,239:1	1,336:1	Second highest ratio in state
Ratio of population to mental health providers²⁵	13,267:1	716:1	Highest ratio in state
Ratio of population to dentists²⁶	4,425:1	1,746:1	Eleventh highest ratio in state

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.). Health Resources and Services Administration Data Warehouse. Retrieved from <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/tools/analyzers/HpsaFindResults.aspx>; County Health Rankings

²³ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.). Health Resources and Services Administration Data Warehouse. Retrieved from <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/tools/analyzers/HpsaFindResults.aspx>; Ohio Department of Health (2015); Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas in Ohio. Retrieved from <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/~media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/ohs/oral%20health/HPSA%20weblis%202015.pdf>

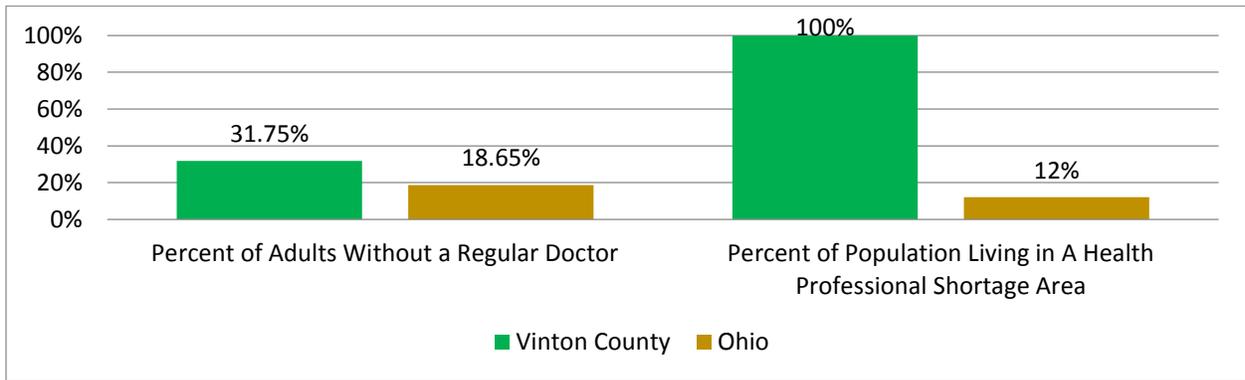
Health Professional Shortage Area designations: primary care (Geographic-high needs), mental health care (Population-Medicaid eligible) and dental health care (Geographic)

²⁴ County Health Rankings, 2012 data

²⁵ County Health Rankings, 2014 data

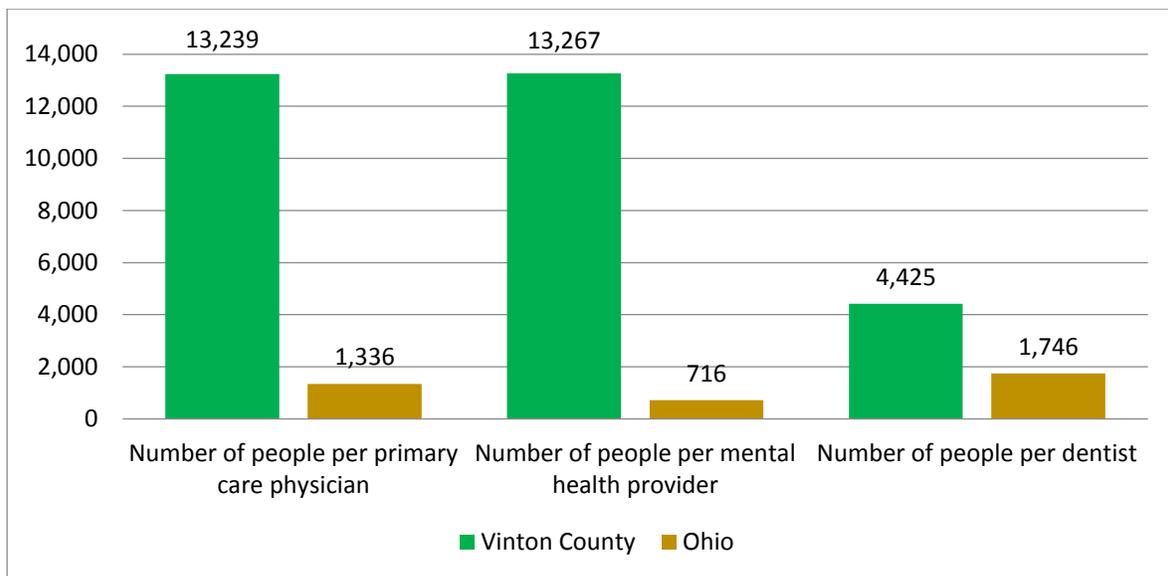
²⁶ County Health Rankings, 2013 data

Figure 12. Access to Health Professionals



Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.). Health Resources and Services Administration Data Warehouse. Retrieved from <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/tools/analyzers/HpsaFindResults.aspx>; County Health Rankings

Figure 13. Ratio of Residents to Health Professionals



Some focus group participants observed that it is difficult for providers to maintain practices in the county, because of low Medicaid reimbursement rates: *“The problem is that most of those folks, if they have a payer source it’s Medicaid... You can’t exist on Medicaid rates.”* As a result, as one parent observed, *“When you do find a good doctor or something in the area, they don’t stay for very long. And I don’t know if that has to do with pay or insurances, I don’t know what it has to do with, but they just don’t seem to stay around for very long at all.”*

Because of these issues, many residents do not see doctors regularly, and do not have a primary care provider. As one service provider recalled, *“When I worked squad, a lot of times we did go out and they would say ‘Ok who’s your primary care doctor?’ And they would say, ‘Uh, whoever’s on in the ER.’ And that’s all they knew. They didn’t know primary care.”*

- ✓ While focus group members stressed the lack of specialists in the area, they did report that speech therapy and Early Intervention programming are available in the county.
- ✓ There are also support services available for individuals with developmental disability through Southern Ohio Adventures Recreation, and for individuals with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness through the North Market Street House.

Transportation

Because there are few in-county clinicians, access to out-of-county transportation is critical for gaining access to healthcare. However, focus group participants made very clear that transportation is a serious problem in the county. As in most rural areas, gaining access to reliable, affordable transportation is one of the biggest impediments to accessing clinical care. When residents do have access to transportation, they often cannot afford the gas required to travel to the service provider. One focus group participant summed up the problem: *“You know we don’t have public transport. We can’t even ask for a taxi. There’s no taxi. There’s no bus. There’s nothing for people that live out in the middle of nowhere to go anywhere.”*

There are some transportation services available. The Ahoy program provides non-emergency transportation to Vinton County residents who qualify through Job and Family Services. For a small fee (one dollar per one-way trip in-county; four dollars per one-way trip out of county) Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc. provides transportation to medical appointments. (This service can also bring residents to shopping destinations, banks, pharmacies, and employment sites.) Some focus group participants noted that even the modest charges for this service are too high for many residents.

There are also facilities located in Athens County, Gallia County, Ross County, and Meigs County, but they are greater than a 30 minute commute. One mother of a young boy with autism reports that her son is at the age at which early interventions have *“the most impact, and I have to run all over the countryside just trying to find these therapies that he needs.”*

There are many other efforts being undertaken in Vinton County to address the transportation problem.

- ✓ Many health-related programs provide transportation voucher, gift cards for gas, or other forms of transportation assistance to Vinton County residents.
- ✓ The Vinton County Health Department employs traveling nurses who drive to families’ homes in order to provide immunizations to children.
- ✓ The Nationwide Children’s Hospital’s mobile unit provides some services for children in the area.

- ✓ A mobile van from Ohio University comes to the county a few times a year to offer mammograms, pap smears, blood pressure checks, cholesterol screenings, and other preventive health screenings.
- ✓ Participants reported that there has been an increase in Home and Community Based Services waivers for community members with developmental disabilities.

Preventable Hospital Events

Because of difficulty accessing primary care, rates of preventable hospital events (hospital stays that could have been avoided) are comparatively high in Vinton County.

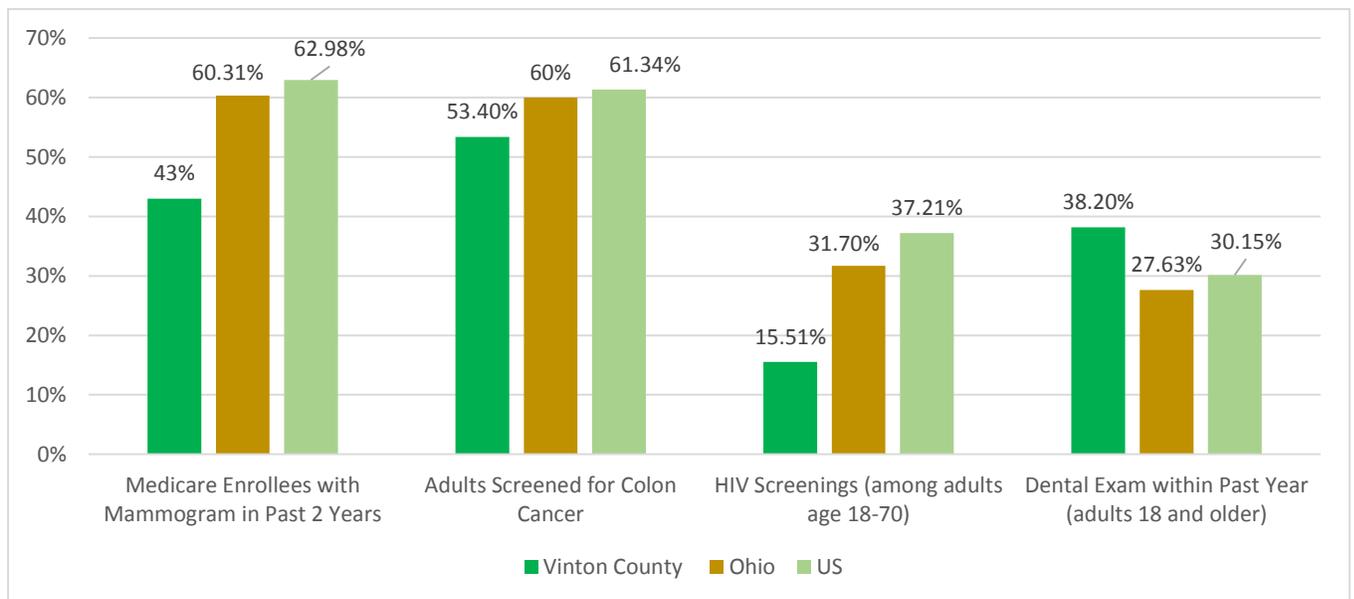
- ⇒ The rate of preventable hospital events among Medicare enrollees in Vinton County (per 100,000 population) is 96.92, compared to 71.71 for the state and 59.24 for the nation.²⁷

Preventive Care

Difficulty accessing care means that many Vinton County residents do not have adequate access to preventative health screenings.

- ⇒ Medicare enrollees in the county have lower access to mammograms than their counterparts in the State of Ohio and the nation.
- ⇒ Adults in Vinton County have lower rates of colon cancer screenings than in the state and nation.
- ⇒ HIV screenings among adults in Vinton County occur at a lower rate than in the state and nation.

Figure 14. Rates of Preventative Health Screenings



²⁷ Dartmouth College Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care. 2012

Source: Community Commons gathered data from Dartmouth College Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care. 2012; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the Health Indicators Warehouse. US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. 2006-12; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2011-12; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2006-10

Another area in which preventive care is largely unavailable is oral health. Figure 15 below provides more details on access to oral health care in the area.

Figure 15. Oral Health Care

Oral Health Care (2009-2010)	<18	18-64	65+
Percent with dental visit in last year	58.3%	39.2%	30.4%
Percent who have never visited a dentist	23.4%	N/A	N/A
Percent uninsured for dental care	11.7%	48.5%	64.2%
Percent who could not receive needed dental care	6.6%	20.8%	3%

Source: Ohio Department of Health (2012). Ohio Oral Health Surveillance System, 2012. Retrieved from <http://publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/oralhealth/ReportsDisplay.aspx?Report=BOHSReport&Format=pdf&CountyName=Vinton&ReportVersion=2012>

There are many ongoing efforts and successes in the county designed to increase access to preventive health care.

- ✓ Vinton County residents appear to be accessing care for diabetes, as evidenced by favorable rates of hemoglobin A1C tests among Medicare patients with diabetes. In Vinton County, 92.75 percent of residents who receive Medicare and have diabetes report receiving this test in the last year, compared to 84.37 percent of Ohioans, and 84.57 percent of US residents.²⁸
- ✓ To increase access to health screenings, some local churches provide monthly health screening for their members.
- ✓ Area organizations like WIC, Help Me Grow, and the school system collaborate with the Health Department to make sure that area children have access to immunizations.

Health care providers in the area asserted that, given sufficient resources, they can make preventive care available to Vinton County residents, specifically in the case of immunizations: *“We prove to them again every year that if we had the resources to do reminders and recalls, and make contacts with these parents, and kind of prod them along, that we can get them in, and get their children immunized. So it’s yeah. It’s possible.”*

²⁸ Data Source: Dartmouth College Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care. 2012.

Social and Economic Factors in Vinton County

Safety

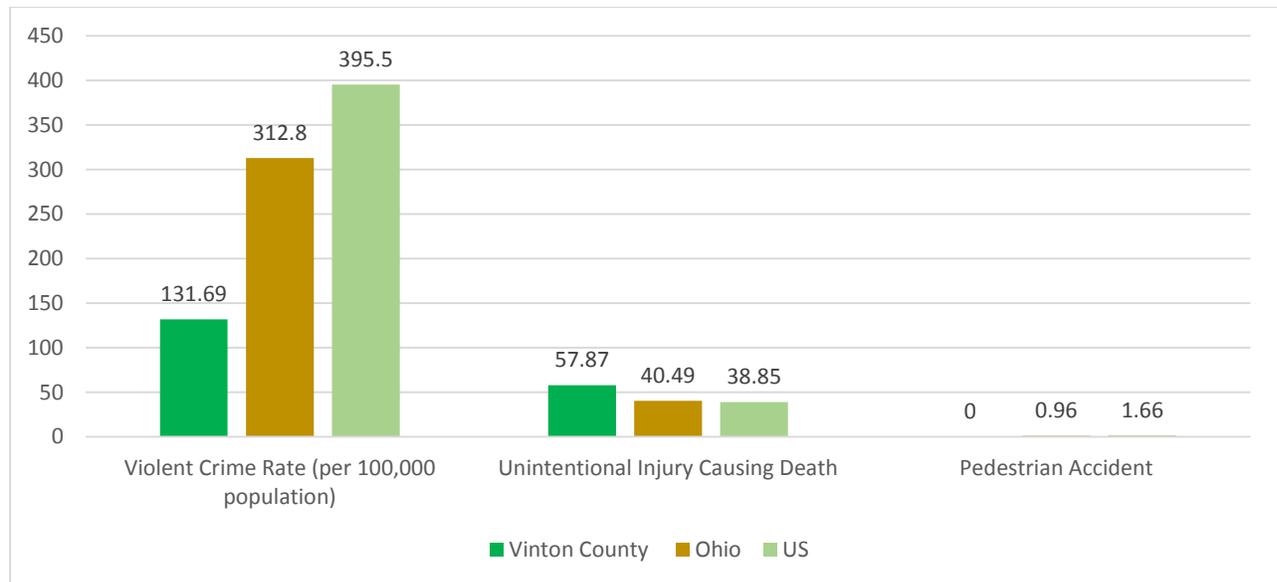
Safety was a concern for many participants in the assessment process.

- ⇒ The rate of injury deaths in Vinton County is higher than the state average. The rate of injury deaths per 100,000 population for Vinton County in 2015 was 72, compared to 62 for the state as a whole.²⁹
- ⇒ Vehicle accident deaths for Vinton County in 2012 occurred at an adjusted rate of 15.62 per 100,000, a higher rate than the 58.4 per 100,000 for the State of Ohio.³⁰

Vehicular safety was an issue of concern for many, largely due to the phenomenon of texting and driving. Other vehicular safety concern result from the drug dealing occurring in residential areas. Residents are concerned about increased traffic, speeding, and crime in these areas.

Substance abuse underpins many of the other safety-related concerns identified through the assessment process as well. Improper disposal of needles is an area of concern for many, especially in public areas like parks. One participant observed that, *“It makes it hard to let your children like walk two feet from you in the park because you are afraid they are going to step on something, or grab something, or get poked with something, or you know pick something up and eat something.”* Participants also report that crime is increasing, as drug-addicted residents steal to obtain money for drugs, though this crime may not always be reported because it often occurs within families.

Figure 16. Safety Statistics



Source: Community Commons gathered data from Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI Uniform Crime Reports, additional analysis by the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, accessed via the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2010-12; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System, accessed via CDC WONDER;

²⁹ County Health Rankings, 2015

³⁰ Network of Care, 2012

There are efforts underway to address safety concerns in Vinton County.

- ✓ Multiple programs in Vinton County provide free car seats to mothers with young children to increase vehicular safety.
- ✓ Free bicycle helmets are available to some county residents through an annual Bike Rodeo.
- ✓ Older community members have been provided with safety necklaces in case of emergency.
- ✓ EMS is available within Vinton County to respond to emergencies.

Education/Health Awareness

Health professionals and service providers identified a lack of education and health awareness as a serious threat to health in the county.

- ⇒ 16.9 percent of Vinton County residents have an Associate’s degree or higher, compared to 34.2 percent of Ohioans. Figure 17 provides more details (please note this is a different data source than the educational attainment data on page nine and some percentages are slightly different).

Figure 17. Education Levels in Vinton County and Ohio

Education level	Vinton county	Ohio
No high school diploma	19.6%	11%
High school graduate or equivalent	47.5%	34.2%
Some college-no degree	15.9%	20.5%
Associate’s degree	8.4%	8.2%
Bachelor’s degree	5.6%	16.4%
Master’s degree or higher	2.9%	9.7%

Source: Ohio Development Services Agency (2014). Ohio County Profiles, Vinton County. Retrieved from <http://development.ohio.gov/files/research/C1083.pdf>

Aside from formal schooling, Vinton County residents have limited access to resources that could facilitate self-education, such as the internet. A widespread lack of education makes for a vulnerable population, which can be taken advantage of easily, and which is not able to advocate effectively for its own health. According to one health service provider, *“They get taken advantage of... When they do get the money to get the ride to the doctor’s office, they’re going to a doctor that they really shouldn’t have been seeing.”*

Health service providers identified several specific types of health education and awareness that are needed in the county. These included how to identify healthy foods, how to prepare healthy foods, how

to buy healthy foods in bulk to save money, and more generally how to budget money so that it lasts through the month.

There are many ongoing efforts to provide health education and improve health awareness in the county, many provided through the Health Department, Help Me Grow, Job and Family Services, and WIC. These include:

- ✓ Healthy food education in the public schools.
- ✓ CPR lessons
- ✓ Tobacco cessation
- ✓ Bike safety
- ✓ Abstinence
- ✓ Rabies education
- ✓ In addition, Sojourners helps at-risk youth in the area obtain their GEDs.

Cultural and Psychological Barriers

Apathy

Vinton County service providers who have worked with residents for years report that there is a cycle of poverty-related problems that fuels a widespread apathy in the community. Many residents who attempt to gain employment and improve their situation feel penalized for their efforts. People looking for employment are frustrated by lack of jobs in the area, lack of resources (such as internet access and transportation) needed to learn about employment opportunities, and lack of examples in their own families and community of people who have improved their situation. Even those residents who overcome significant obstacles and obtain employment find that they lose many forms of government assistance that they still need in order to meet their basic needs, and that there is not enough childcare in the community. As a result, they often feel worse off than when they were unemployed.

As these dynamics play out in an area marked by substance abuse and lack of access to health-supporting resources, a sense that there is no reason to try to improve one's situation can be fostered. This attitude is a source of frustration for area serviced providers, who made observations such as:

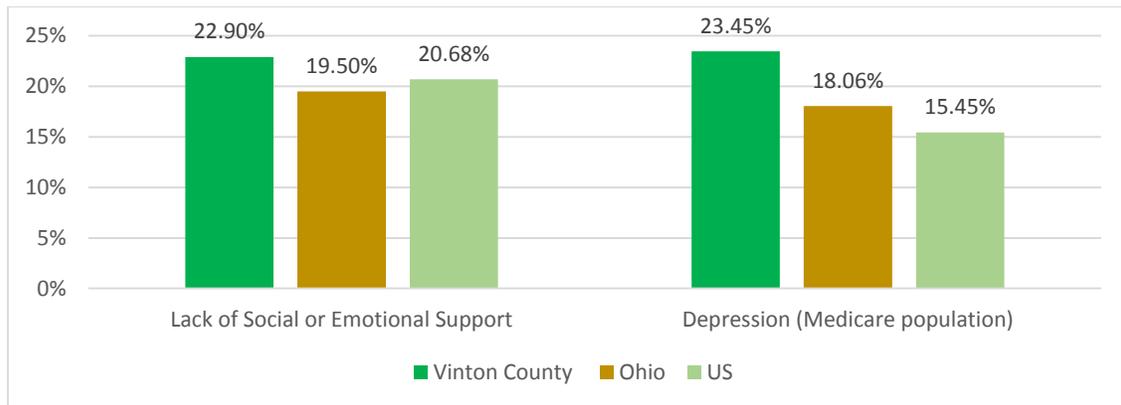
- ⇒ *"More or less it boils down to if they have worked all their lives they can't get any help, but if they've been lazy all their lives they can get anything want."*
- ⇒ *"The people who seem to really need the help are the ones we can't offer it to."*
- ⇒ *"Legislation is deciding that this person, because they're on this program, can get so many hours, whereas we have a better picture of them by going in there every day. We know more of what they need, but yet our opinions don't matter."*

These situations can also breed a culture of *"rights without responsibility,"* which was a source of much consternation for service providers.

These factors take a toll of Vinton County residents, who report feeling unhappy or depressed more often than the state average.

- ⇒ Vinton county residents report having an average of 4.5 mentally unhealthy days per month, compared to the state average of 3.8.³¹
- ⇒ 22.9 percent of resident report a lack of social or emotional support, compared to 19.5 percent of Ohio residents.
- ⇒ 23.45 percent of Vinton County Medicare enrollees suffer from depression, compared to 18.06 percent statewide. See Figure 18 below for details.

Figure 18. Emotional Support and Depression in Vinton County



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the Health Indicators Warehouse. US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. 2006-12; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. 2012

Independence/Stoicism

Service providers also observed that many community members prefer to provide for themselves, and do not want to accept any help. According to one provider, *“It’s the mindset of people that feel, basically, they can do everything themselves and aren’t willing to accept help. And that is a hard thing to work with.”*

Civic trust

Vinton County residents reported that there is a lack of trust in the local government, particularly the local law enforcement. Some residents perceive the police force to be corrupt, slow to respond, and to be implicated in drug activity itself. Many residents perceive that one’s degree of access to justice is determined by *“who you are, what you know, where you come from, and what you do, and who you are like cool with,”* according to one community member. As another participant reported, *“You can’t trust no one. It’s kind of sad.”*

³¹ 2015 County Health Rankings

Child Well-Being

Children in Vinton County are vulnerable. They endure high rates of poverty, lack of access to healthy foods and recreational opportunities, and chronic drug abuse in their community. Thirty-five percent of children under 18 in the county are living in poverty (the second highest rate in the state).³²

Abuse and neglect

Many focus group participants stressed that child abuse and neglect are significant problems in the county, and are often related to opiate use. Service providers expressed frustration with a perceived lack of response when they report child abuse or neglect: *“We see a lot of children, young kids, who are basically neglected. And it’s almost to the point that the only way Children’s Services can intervene is if there is an immediate threat, or physical abuse, something very, very serious.”*

- ⇒ In 2013, there were a total of 180 newly opened cases of child abuse in Vinton County. Overall, these cases represent 5.66 percent of all children under the age of 18 in Vinton County. (Statewide, the number of newly opened cases in 2013 represented 3.71 percent of all children under the age of 18 in Ohio.) Figure 19 provides more information.

Figure 19. Child Neglect and Abuse

Data Year 2013	Vinton County	Ohio
Physical Abuse	30%	29%
Neglect	22%	29%
Sexual Abuse	12%	10%
Emotional Maltreatment	1%	2%
Multiple Allegations of Abuse/Neglect	8%	13%
Family in Need of Services/Depd/Other	27%	18%
Total Number of Newly Opened Cases	180 (total of 3,181 children which equals 5.66% of total children under 18)	100,139 (total of 2,695,816 children which equals 3.71% of total children under 18)

Source: 2015-2016 PCSAO Factbook, 12th edition, retrieved from <http://www.pcsao.org/factbook>

In 2012 Vinton County had a rate of 8.7 per 1,000 population substantiated reports of child maltreatment (compared to a state average of eight substantiated reports per 1,000 population).³³

³²County Health Rankings; Ohio Department of Health. (n.d.). Public Health Assessment and Wellness. Retrieved from <http://ship.oh.networkofcare.org/ph/county-indicators.aspx>

³³ Source: Children’s Defense Fund (2014). Ohio Kid’s Count Data Book. Retrieved from <http://www.cdfohio.org/assets/pdf-files/2014.pdf>

It should be noted that focus group participants indicated that neglect or abuse of seniors and middle age individuals with disabilities is also a problem: *“We’ve reported things for seniors too where we thought seniors were being abused or not in a good situation and they’d tell us ‘well there’s nothing we can really do about it.’”*

There are some efforts underway to assist children who are being abused or neglected.

- ✓ Alternate Response Children Services connects families to services within the community.
- ✓ There is a Rapid Response Team that can be sent out if there is a family dispute for which the Sherriff’s office is contacted and a child is involved.

Lack of foster care

Vinton County has the highest rate of children in foster care per 1,000 population in the entire state. Service providers report that many more foster care providers are needed.

⇒ Vinton County has 20.9 children in foster care per 1,000 population, compared to an average of 8.5 children per 1,000 population in the state.³⁴

Focus group participants said that children are staying in homes that are not safe. One participant argued, *“To keep those children out of those homes would make a difference.”* Another service provider reported that children from exceptionally unsafe homes were being sent out of county for foster care, far away from any family or existing support systems.

There are some supports for foster children in the region.

- ✓ One of the main foster care resources in Vinton County is Sojourners foster care program, which includes a network of foster care and adoption services throughout the region. Sojourners provides support services to foster families and wraparound care for children in the foster care system.
- ✓ The Vinton County Public Children Services Agency administers local adoption assistance, foster care services and child welfare intervention programs-as reported by VCHD staff.³⁵

Physical Environment in Vinton County

Vinton County ranks forty-ninth out of 88 Ohio Counties in terms of its physical environment, according to the 2015 County Health Rankings.

³⁴ Kids Count Data Center (2013). Children in Foster (Substitute) Care. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/2488-children-in-foster-care?loc=37#detailed/2/any/false/36,868,867,133,38/any/10245,15678>

³⁵ <https://jfs.ohio.gov/county/cntypro/pdf07/Vinton.pdf>

Environmental Issues

A health department official reported that there are solid waste problems in the county, but not enough resources to address them: *“If you drive around and look through the county, there’s a lot of solid waste issues out there that we can’t respond to again. And people know it. But nobody has the resources to address it.”*

Access to healthy foods

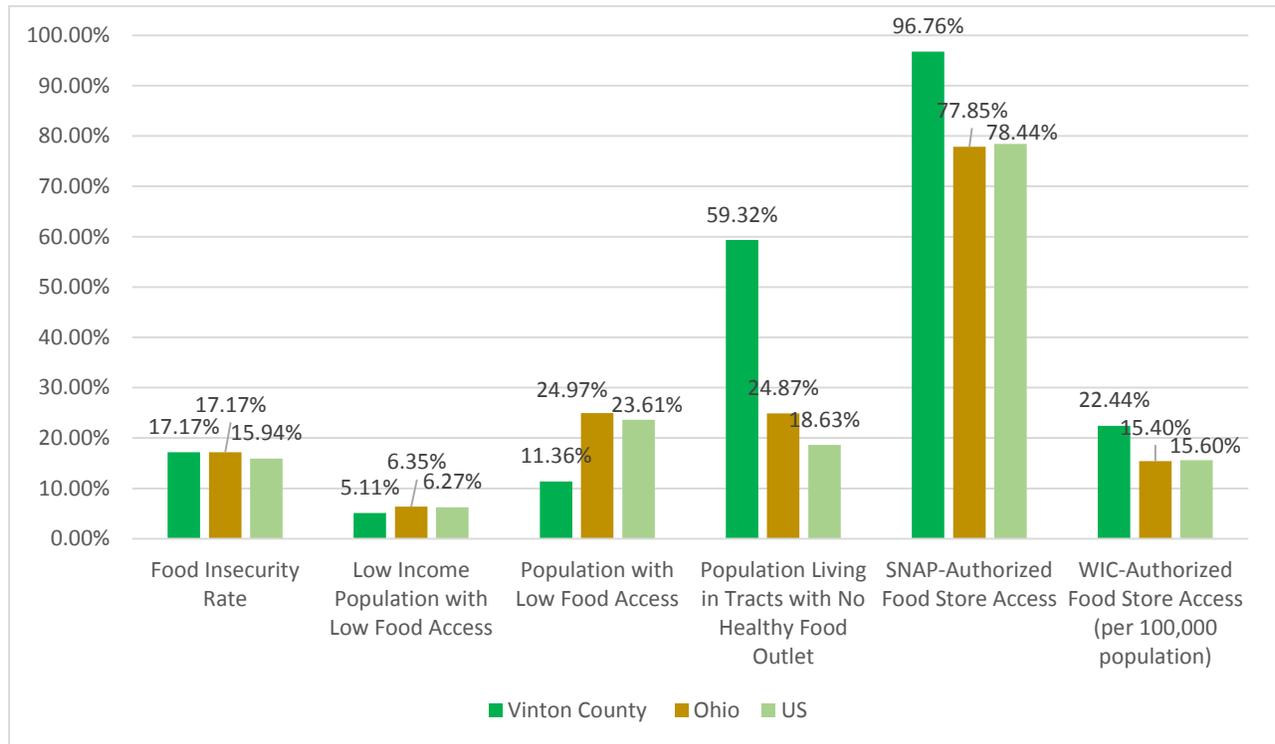
Community members and service providers agreed that a lack of access to healthy, fresh foods is a significant problem for Vinton County residents and many related this to health. A 2014 Windshield Survey³⁶ noted that there were two or three family owned type restaurants, a Subway sandwich shop, a dollar store, and a McDonald’s/gas station across from the high school within McArthur. County residents need to drive at least 30 miles to Wellston, Chillicothe, or Athens in order to reach a grocery store; there are no grocery stores in Vinton County. Given the poverty of the area and the lack of access to transportation, the distance to grocery stores can be prohibitive for many residents. According to one service provider, *“It’s easier to go to McDonalds for a happy meal than it is to get carrots and celery and ranch dip.”* Other participants observed: *“If we had a grocery store it would help a tremendous amount of the problems;”* and *“If [residents] had the means to get fresher better groceries, their money would probably last longer.”*

- ⇒ 2011 data indicate that 100 percent of Vinton County residents live in census tracts with either no healthy food outlets, or low healthy food access (compared to 49.63% of Ohio residents and 49.52% of US residents). Almost 60 percent of Vinton County residents live in the areas with no healthy food outlets.³⁷

³⁶ Mary McPherson, MSN, WHNP-BC for Hopewell Health Centers Inc., Vinton County Ohio, Windshield Survey. August, 2014.

³⁷ Modified Food Retail Environment Index. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. 2011.

Figure 20. Healthy Food Access in Vinton County



Source: Data gathered by Community Commons from Feeding America 2012, US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, USDA - Food Access Research Atlas. 2010; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. 2011; US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA - SNAP Retailer Locator. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2014; US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, USDA - Food Environment Atlas. 2011

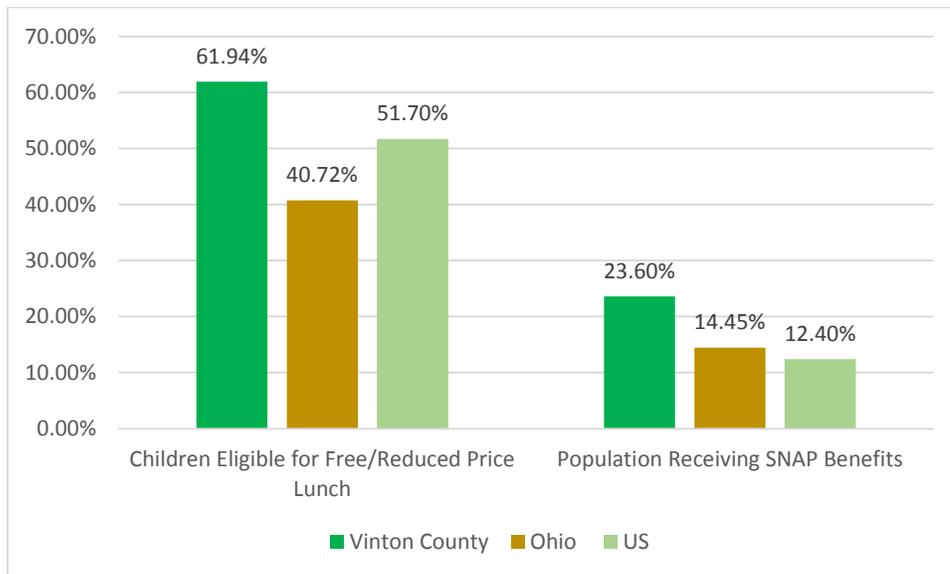
Some focus group participants speculated that it is difficult for small area stores to stock fresh foods because of limited demand. Residents who have only periodic access to transportation often have to purchase all their groceries at once, so they will buy any fresh meat or produce at a larger, out of county store where they can purchase all their groceries.

Despite these significant obstacles to healthy food access in Vinton County, focus group participants also noted that there are some efforts to increase healthy food access in Vinton County.

- ✓ There is a local farmers market in McArthur, which operates during summer months.
- ✓ Women Infants and Children (WIC) provides support to qualifying families. Cross Creek, a local store, stocks WIC-eligible products.
- ✓ L&S Drive Thru is beginning to offer local produce sponsored by Rural Action, a nonprofit organization.
- ✓ Some local churches provide weekly food assistance to area residents.
- ✓ Free lunches are provided to all school children from preschool to fifth grade. After fifth grade, many children qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program.
- ✓ Blizzard packs are given to residents who live farther out in the community, and contain food and safety devices in the event that residents are trapped in their homes.

- ✓ Meals on Wheels continues to deliver food to families that are unable to obtain or prepare it themselves.
- ✓ The senior center has free lunch available for residents five days a week.
- ✓ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides assistance obtaining food to some county residents. See Figure 21 below for more information.

Figure 21. Select Food Access Assistance in Vinton County



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NCES - Common Core of Data. 2012-13; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2009-13.

Access to recreational facilities

Both health professionals and local families said that the lack of recreation facilities significantly contributes to poor health in Vinton County. A lack of sidewalks means that it is often unsafe to walk, ride a bike, or jog. One service provider noted that the local high school cross-country team has to run on dangerous motorways because of a lack of safe areas to run through. While there are parks and playgrounds in the area, many residents no longer feel that those areas are safe because of drug use and related dangers. One participant stated, *“There is absolutely no recreation. You can hike, and at the third bush you can get some drugs.”*

⇒ The average number of fitness or recreation facilities per 100,000 population in Ohio is 9.53.³⁸
The number of facilities in Vinton County is one.

³⁸ US Census Bureau, [County Business Patterns](#). Additional data analysis by [CARES](#). 2013. Source geography: County

Figure 22 below provides details on physical activity in the county compared to Ohio. It should be noted that, while 74 percent of residents reported having access to locations for physical activity, many of these locations are likely the outdoor spaces that have been identified as unsafe because of drug use.

Figure 22. Physical Activity in Vinton County

	Vinton County	Ohio
Percentage of adults with no physical activity (2011)	33%	26%
Percent of population with adequate access to locations for physical activity (2010 & 2013)	74%	83%
Percent of population reporting no leisure time physical activity (2012)	29.1%	25.48%

Source: County Health Rankings; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2012. Source geography: County

Lack of recreation facilities and safe playgrounds and parks contributes to another problem identified by focus group participants: there is little for Vinton County youth while not in school. According to one service provider: *“There’s nothing to keep their brains busy. There’s no safe place to ride a bike.”* Another participant said, *“I just think it would be nice to have something for our kids to do in their spare time. We have no bowling alley, no movies, no extracurricular activities for children to do at all except get into trouble.”*

There have been efforts to address this problem.

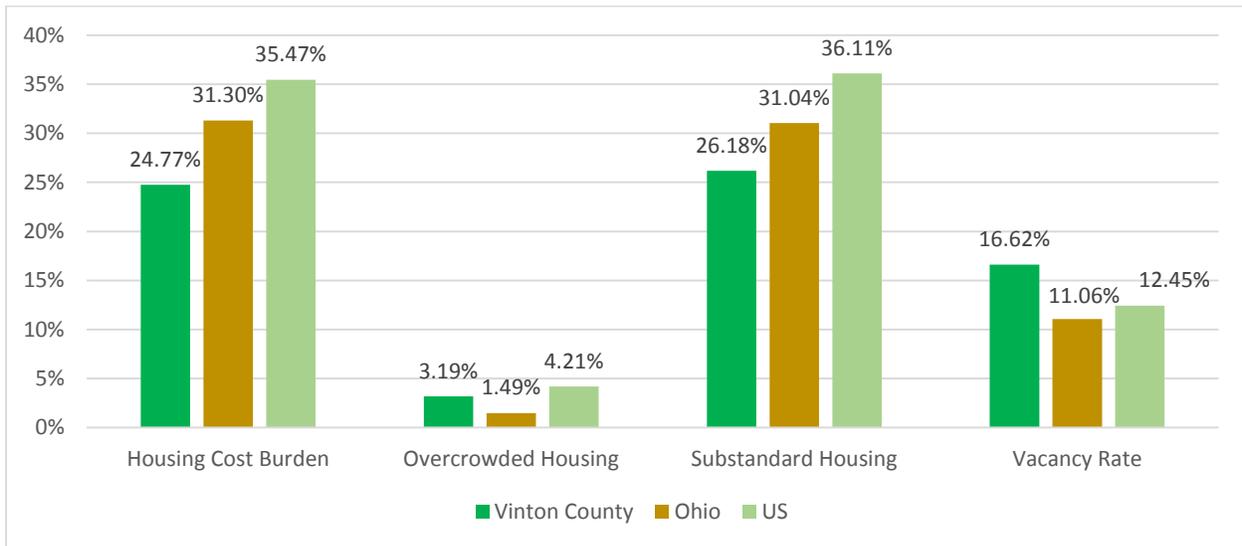
- ✓ A recent addition to the public library increases the availability of safe space for residents to access for recreation.

Housing

Health care providers reported that many families in the county live in housing that is substandard, which compromises their health. Health providers offered many observations of substandard living conditions, including: *“You can’t believe people live in conditions like this, and they do. I don’t know how they survive the winter;”* *“Some of these families there is no running water or anything like that.”* Nearly a quarter of residents are housing cost burdened (meaning they pay over 30 percent of their income for housing) and the rate of overcrowding in Vinton County housing is higher than the state’s.

The vacancy rate in the county is also higher than the state average, which may mean that there is more housing available, or may also mean that the available housing is in too poor a shape or is not accessible to families with limited transportation access. See Figure 23 below for details.

Figure 23. Housing Indicators



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2009-13. Source geography: Tract

There are mixed indications of how much access residents have to quality affordable housing. The vacancy rate for the county (16.62 percent) is higher than the state average (11.06 percent), which indicates that some housing may still be available. However, this housing may be considered by residents to be substandard, or may be located in areas that are inaccessible to families with limited access to transportation. There are fewer Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-Assisted units per 10,000 residents (403.75) than there are available in the state (1,583.1) and nation (1,468.19).³⁹ As HUD is a primary provider of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families, this may indicate that it is difficult for Vinton County residents with low incomes to access quality affordable housing.

Another housing related problem is an increase in incidents of bed bugs, roaches, and other infestations. One service provider explained why the problem is growing: *“They can’t get rid of them because they can’t afford the exterminator”* and wouldn’t have a place to go while the residence was being exterminated.

In August 2014 a windshield survey was conducted throughout Vinton County by Mary McPherson with Hopewell Health Care Centers, Inc. Vinton County was observed as extremely rural, and the survey was conducted on nine state routes throughout the county. Much of the housing observed in the windshield survey is in disrepair and dilapidated. There appears to be some variance in the eastern part of county, but overall there is a lack of well-kept adequate housing for Vinton County residents. There is also notice of the lack of care for lawns like mowing and weeding, and front porches contain piles of possessions in many places. McArthur has more well managed, older dwellings along with well cared for lawns, shrubbery and flowers, compared to the area of the county around it.

There are some efforts underway to improve the quality of residents’ living conditions.

- ✓ Service providers reported that there have been community clean up days.

³⁹ US Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2013.

Health Outcomes in Vinton County

Vinton County ranks seventy-third out of 88 Ohio Counties in the 2015 County Health Rankings of health outcomes.

Morbidity

Vinton County ranks seventy-seventh in terms of morbidity in the 2015 County Health Rankings for Ohio. Nineteen percent of county residents report that they have poor general health, and over 35 percent report poor dental health.

Figure 24. Self-reported General and Dental Health

	Vinton County	Ohio	US
Poor General Health ⁴⁰	19%	15.3%	15.3%
Poor Dental Health ⁴¹	35.62%	18.66%	15.65%

Sources: County Health Rankings, 2006-2012; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2006-10. Source geography: County

Chronic Health Conditions and Health Factors

Health professionals identified chronic health issues such as congestive heart failure, obesity, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and autoimmune diseases as threats to the health of many Vinton County residents. Also of concern in the county are higher incidences of lung cancer, compared to the state average, and higher rates of death from the disease.

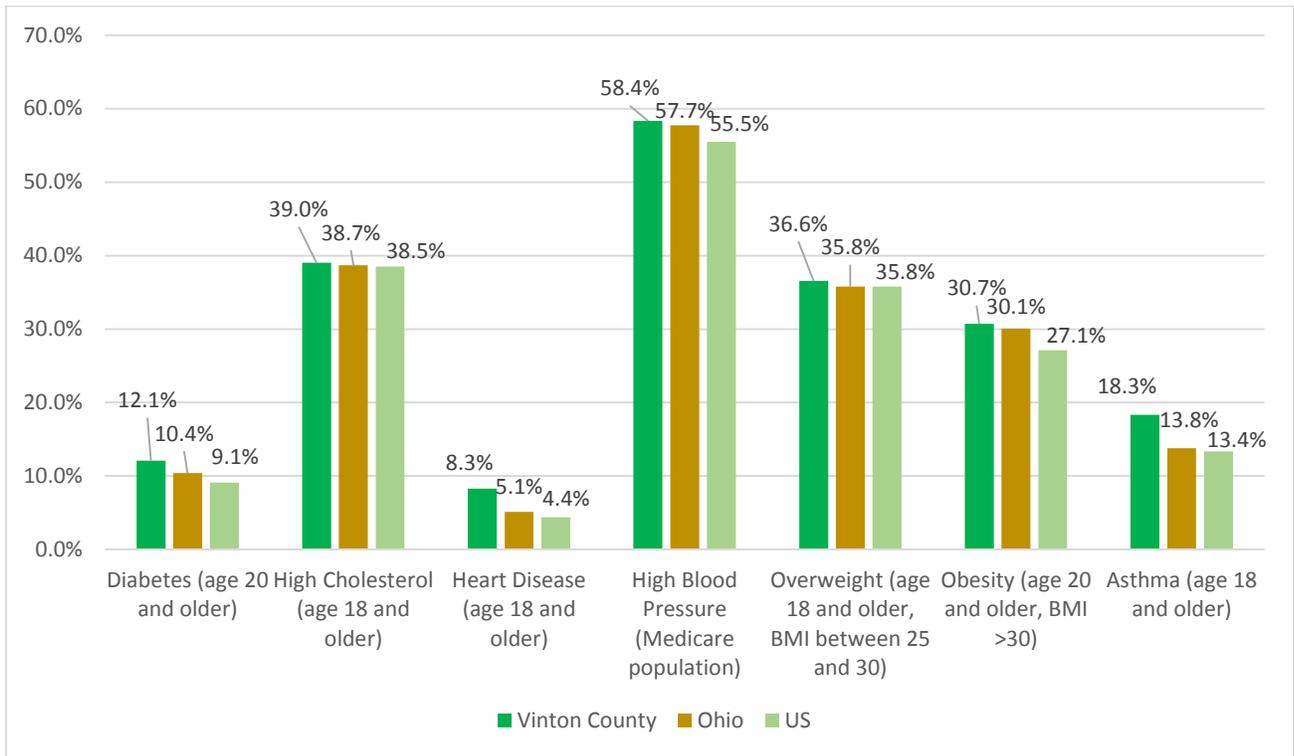
- ⇒ In Vinton County there is an adjusted rate of 111 cases of lung and bronchus cancer per 100,000, compared to a statewide rate of 72.8 per 100,000.
- ⇒ There are higher rates of diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, and asthma in the county, when compared to the state average.

Figures 25 and 26 provide details on the most recently calculated rates of these conditions in Vinton County.

⁴⁰ Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who report having fair or poor health.

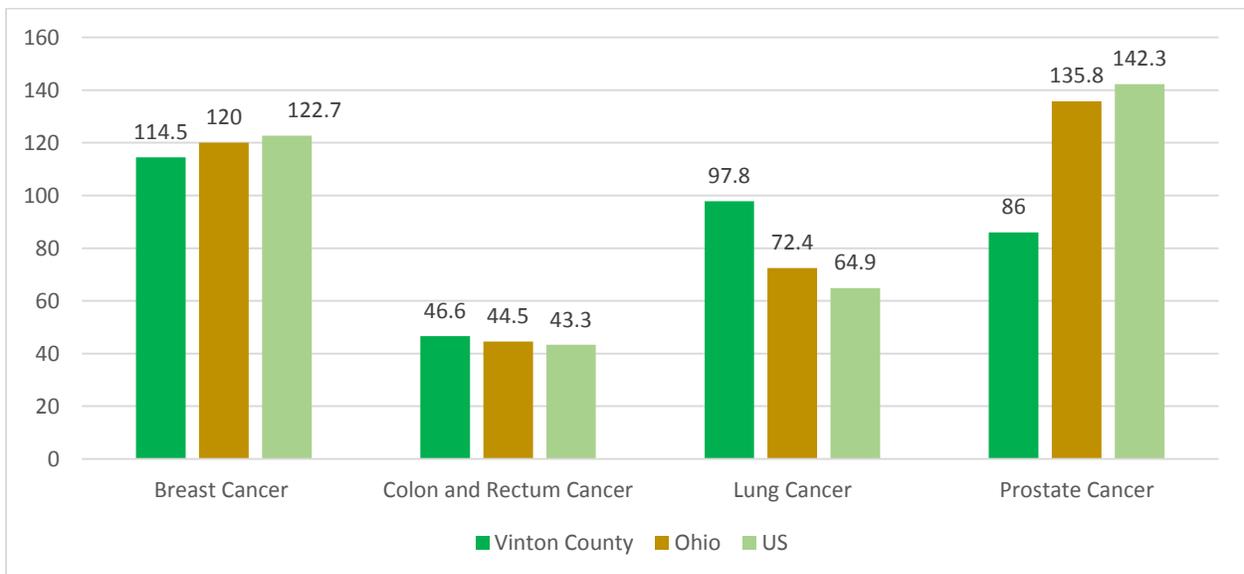
⁴¹ Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who report that at least six permanent teeth have been removed due to tooth decay, gum disease, or infection. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

Figure 25. Prevalence Rates for Select Diseases and Conditions



Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2012; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2011-12; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. 2012; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2012.

Figure 26. Cancer Rates



Source: National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program. State Cancer Profiles. 2007-11

Oral health in the county also suffers because of lack of regular, preventive checkups and cleanings.

- ⇒ 41.5 percent of Vinton County third graders have untreated tooth decay (compared to the state average of 18.7 percent).

Mortality

Vinton County ranks sixtieth in the state in terms of mortality in the 2015 County Health Rankings.

- ⇒ Death rates from diabetes, heart disease, chronic lower respiratory diseases, and lung/trachea/bronchus cancer in Vinton County exceed the state averages. Figure 27 below provides details.

Figure 27. Mortality Rates (per 100,000 population)

Health Condition	Vinton County	Ohio
Diabetes (age-adjusted death rate per 100,000) <small>⁴²</small>	57.1	26.1
Heart disease (death rate per 100,000)	238.4	196.9
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	74.6	51.3
Lung, Trachea, and Bronchus Cancer Deaths	83.9	64.5
Stroke (2007-2011)	31.9	43.3

Source: Network of Care; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System, accessed via CDC WONDER. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-Ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research. 2007-11.

⁴² Network of Care

Local Assessment Survey Results

A survey of selected items from the National Public Health Performance Standards (NPHPS), developed partly by the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) was completed by health workers in Vinton County. This survey was distributed and collected in paper form by the Vinton County Health Department and analyzed by the Voinovich School team. The National Public Health Performance Standards “provide a framework to assess capacity and performance of public health systems and public health governing bodies”⁴³. These standards are built around the “10 essential public health services” to gauge state and local public health systems’ delivery of the most necessary services to the communities they serve.⁴⁴

Vinton County health workers (19) completed a survey containing items chosen from the National Public Health Service Performance Standards tool. The tool assesses local public health systems’ ability and capacity to deliver each of the 10 Essential Public Health Services. Responses from participants were all measured on a scale of “No Activity, Minimal, Moderate, Significant, Optimal,” when asked “At what level does the public health system...?” Questions were selected to assess each of the 10 essential services, with varying numbers of responses per item. Overall, respondents reported “significant” as the level of the Vinton County public health system’s ability to provide services 1 through 9, listed in Table 28 below.

The mean responses range from 3.2 to 3.7 (moderate levels of delivery) regarding the local Vinton County health systems’ ability and capacity to deliver the 10 Essential Public Health Services. Essential Service 2 - Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards garnered the highest mean response to the questions included, at 3.7. The result is closer to “Significant” levels of delivery, whereas Essential Service 10 - Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems with a mean of 3.2 was closer to “Minimal” levels of delivery in the local public health system.

Each Essential Service has specific model standards within, and the questions of the survey reflected not only the overarching Essential Service but smaller standards as well. The items on the survey worked to measure a specific substandard of the Essential Services for the Local Public Health System. Results of items in the survey with most responses reporting “optimal level” are those concerning the local public health system’s ability and readiness for public health emergencies, the level that they ensure people are linked to personal health services, the capacity of assessment and development of workforce, and evaluating both personal health systems and the local public health system. These strengths were balanced out with some items with most respondents answering “minimal level.” The items measured at this level were those questions about the local public health service’s identifying of public health service needs of populations, the evaluation of population-based health services, and linking with Institutions of Higher Learning and finally the capacity to initiate or participate in research.

⁴³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015.

⁴⁴ American Public Health Association, 2015.

Figure 28. Vinton County Health Service Worker Results

Essential Service	Most Common Response	Average (Mean) Response
1. Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems	Significant (4)	3.3
2. Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards	Significant (4)	3.7
3. Inform, Educate, and Empower People about Health Issues	Significant (4)	3.6
4. Mobilize Community Partnerships to Identify and Solve Health Problems	Significant (4)	3.6
5. Develop Policies and Plans That Support Individual and Community Health Efforts	Significant (4)	3.4
6. Enforce Laws and Regulations That Protect Health and Ensure Safety	Significant (4)	3.4
7. Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Healthcare When Otherwise Unavailable	Significant (4)	3.6
8. Assure a Competent Public Health and Personal Healthcare Workforce	Significant (4)	3.5
9. Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-Based Health Services	Significant (4)	3.4
10. Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems	Minimal (2)	3.2

¹The responses for each question was as follows: 1= No Activity, 2= Minimal, 3= Moderate, 4= Significant, 5= Optimal

Core Group work on Forces of Change

Factors that can be considered forces of change are identified in the focus groups and secondary data discussed above because they are for example threats that are on the rise, such as substance abuse.

Discussion with the Core Working Group during one meeting utilized the Force of Change discussion questions from within Step Three of the MAPPs process. The group discussed topics about the forces impacting the local health system in Vinton County.

Much discussion surrounded children and the information/tools to equip children for their future and give them options. Education at school and community level was identified as a possible intervention, and even the creation of after-school programs to address specific needs like physical activity, parent involvement, and other needs to address the sometimes cyclical nature of poverty. The core group also suggested more collaboration among agencies locally in order to meet needs in the communities. An idea about a paper survey focused on “what would better your life specifically,” and ways to recruit foster parents were also suggestions for future changes. One member noted “the rich are getting rich and the poor are getting poorer”.

Another concern raised was about the growing digital divide. As many medical and other providers move toward electronic communication and online forms, those without internet access or electronic computing devices will have increased challenges.

A suggestion focused on having a positive celebration to “expand, define and be proud of Vinton County” where residents could build relationships and see more opportunities in their communities. These are all initial ideas but the group is planning to continue to work to better their communities in Vinton County.

Community Themes and Strengths

Many community successes and strengths are identified in the focus groups addressed previously. There were several other strengths and successes mentioned during the focus groups that do not necessarily fall under the previous categories. These include:

- ✓ The school system recently changed regulations so that children must stay on campus during lunch. Focus group participants report that this is reducing the amount of trouble youth can get into during the day. Focus group participants also reported that the school system includes many active and committed teachers who provide a lot of support to the county's youth.
- ✓ The local branch of Rio Grande is also a resource for youth in the county.
- ✓ The Senior Center and other senior support services in the county received praise from focus group participants. According to one health care provider: *"When I was practicing here, I had the confidence in adult protective services, and they were humane, they were thorough, they were kind, and they had good outcomes."*
- ✓ Focus group participants also praised the local home health agency, which has lots of contacts throughout the community, which are especially helpful in times of disasters.
- ✓ The Veterans Administration received praise from some focus group members for its work with veterans in the county.
- ✓ Focus group participants praised the Vinton County Health Department, especially its dedication to county residents. One health department employee articulated the ethos that other community members attributed to the department: *"Because we are a small county a lot of the employees are from the county, I really feel that the employees go above and beyond what is expected. Their job isn't just from 8-4:30 or 7:30-4. It's if my patient needs something I am going to be there. On the clock, off the clock, it doesn't matter because they need something."*

Themes/Strengths and Resources from Community Survey

A 2014 Windshield Survey⁴⁵ documents signs of economic challenges but also strengths and resources in Vinton County including: many churches, a quiet setting, the library and some visible health services.

To gather additional input on community themes and strengths a post on the Vinton County Health Department Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/vintonhealth?fref=nf>, 2015 Aug 5) included a link to an electronic survey. Emails were also sent to contact lists from the VCHD to encourage survey responses. The post on social media and email message to recipients encouraged further distribution of the link to as many community members as possible. Parents, seniors, professionals, and anyone else with internet access to check the social media page are the respondents. Admittedly, there is a segment of the population without internet access. Therefore, the survey results are skewed though the number of responses was good, the focus groups discussed above are known to include broad community representation.

⁴⁵Mary McPherson, MSN, WHNP-BC for Hopewell Health Centers Inc., Vinton County Ohio, Windshield Survey. August, 2014.

The survey consisted of eight questions about residency, job location, local health resources, and quality of life. A total of 130 surveys were received. All participants worked or lived within Vinton County; 115 participants were Vinton County residents (89.1%), and 80 worked within Vinton County (62%). Of the participants who live in Vinton County, 86 percent have lived there two or more years.

The survey included open-ended questions specific to Health Vinton County. Firstly, “What helpful health resources are available in Vinton County?” Nothing/unsure was used when a participant responded that there was nothing helpful, or stated they weren’t sure of anything helpful. Program/Education refers to funded programs such as smoking cessation, breast health education, or project DAWN⁴⁶; “Medical Services” refers to responses about doctors/doctors’ offices, visiting mobile units, clinics, Hopewell Health Centers, and home health services. It should be noted that many participants when answering this question wrote responses akin to “Hopewell and I’m not sure what else,” or “doctors in McArthur and that’s about it.” “Other” includes singularly reported resources i.e. the library, internet access, and free school lunches. The Vinton County Health Department was the most reported response (59). Interestingly, 26 participants (20%) did not answer the question and 18 indicated “Nothing/I Don’t Know”. Only four respondents reported nutrition resources were helpful and available in Vinton County. Some participants included multiple resources within their response, and therefore were counted in all applicable categories. Please see Figure 29 below.

Figure 29. Helpful Health Resources in Vinton County

Category	Responses
Health Department	59
Medical Services	36
Organizations	28
No Response	26
Outdoor/Physical Activity Opportunities	21
Nothing/I Don’t Know	18
Other	14
Programs/Education	12
Food/Nutrition	4

Forty eight respondents did not answer: “Related to health, what is working well in Vinton County?”, and 26 stated nothing or I do not know in response. The VCHD was identified by 21 respondents as working well in Vinton County. Again, only 2 nutrition/food responses were reported. There were also participants who stated they leave the county for all their health care needs. Some participants noted multiple health areas that are working well in Vinton County in their response and were counted in more than one category, please refer to Figure 30 below for more information.

⁴⁶ (<http://www.vintonohhealth.org/Default.aspx?PageId=512>).

Figure 30. "Related to health, what is working well in Vinton County?"

Category	Responses
No Response	48
Nothing/I Don't Know	26
Health Department	21
Medical Services	21
Other	14
Fitness	12
Organizations	10
Programs/Education	5
Nutrition	2

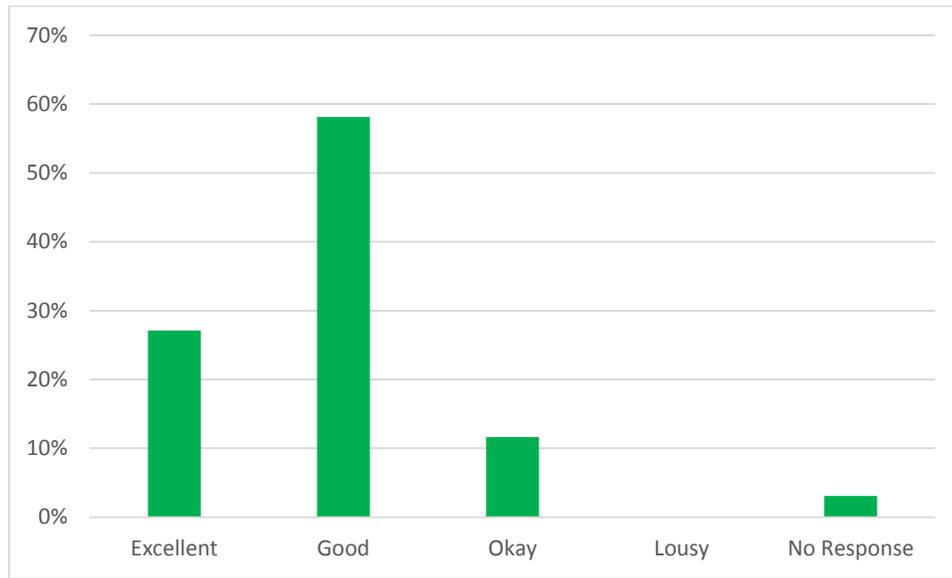
When asked "Related to health, what is **not** working well in Vinton County," Food Access/Nutrition/Diet, referring specifically to lack of fresh food and or a grocery store, had the highest response (40) Thirty-eight participants (29.2%) did not answer. Another area of concern is access to care, including reports of a lack of providers, long distances to providers, and few available health care options to choose (26 responses). Seventeen participants' responses were included in the 'other' category with concerns such as: lack of advertising of health benefits, lack of programs for rural residents, transportation issues, lack of re-entry and addiction programs, and abuse of the welfare system. Again multiple concerns were reported by several individuals, and some responses are counted in more than one area.

Figure 31. "Related to health, what is not working well in Vinton County?"

Category	Responses
Food Access/Nutrition/Diet	40
No Response	38
Access to Care	26
Other	17
Education	9
Substance Abuse	8
Physical Activity	7
Nothing/I Don't Know	6
Cost Issues	5
Quality of Care	5

Though there are substantial challenges in Vinton County, 58.14 percent of the total respondents indicated their quality of life is "Good". Four participants did not answer (Figure 32). It is again important to note that this survey was administered electronically so those without internet access are not included.

Figure 32. Quality of Life in Vinton County



Conclusion

Vinton County Ohio is predominantly white, has a higher poverty rate and lower educational attainment than the state. Through the Vinton County Community Health Initiative a process of engaging the community, assessing the community's health, identifying health needs/priorities and successes, as well as external forces that may have bearing on health and health services has started. Many needs and successes are identified by cross-referencing focus group themes, survey responses and existing data on population demographics, health, and social determinants of health.

Needs or challenges include: substance abuse and the need for treatment, lack of a grocery store and access to health care, among many others. These particular challenges were heard in all focus groups as well as in surveys and existing health related indicator data confirms the community's concerns. There were also concerns about lack of transportation, apathy, poor housing conditions and the need for education.

Successes or strengths include: the VCHD is noted by many as a helpful resource, various medical services, project DAWN, local agencies and opportunities for outside physical activity are noted as helpful among many others.

While efforts addressed in this report include a Forces of Change discussion and a Local Public Health Services Assessment, both of these components warrant revisiting. Due to attendance challenges, the Forces of Change discussion included few stakeholders and the Local Public Health Services Assessment would be more complete with broader input.

Next Steps:

There is much work to be done in the County related to health. Increased collaboration and continued community engagement would add to existing efforts to improve community health.

Toward engagement, this Community Health Assessment will be broadly disseminated to the community via printed copies, posting on the VCHD website and email distribution to individual stakeholders or agency representatives who contributed to the process.