

Community Health Assessment 2023

PREVENT

PROTECT

PROMOTE



Spencer Hospital
Clay County Public Health
Healthier Together.

Table of Contents

About Clay County Public Health.....	Page 3
Introduction of the Community Health Assessment	Page 3
Methods Used to Assess the Community	Page 4-5
• Survey	Page 4
• Key Informants	Page 4
• Existing Data and Sources	Page 5
Social Determinants of Health.....	Page 5
Demographics.....	Page 6
Income, Economics, Education.....	Page 6
Families	Page 7
Child Care.....	Page 7
Housing	Page 8
Food Access	Page 8
Transportation.....	Page 9
Health Behaviors.....	Page 9-11
• Heavy Alcohol Consumption	Page 9
• Tobacco Usage.....	Page 10
• Opioids.....	Page 10
• Physical Inactivity	Page 11
Health Outcomes	Page 11-14
• Mental Health.....	Page 11
• Suicide	Page 12
• Chronic Disease	Page 13
• Obesity.....	Page 14
Access to Care.....	Page 15
Conclusion.....	Page 16
Appendices	Page 17-26

About Clay County Public Health

Clay County Public Health is a hospital-based public health department located in Spencer, Iowa. The five-member Clay County Board of Health is appointed by the Board of Supervisors as the policy making board of the public health department. The Board is responsible for providing essential public health services and does so through a sub-contract with Spencer Hospital. Services are financially supported through allocations from Clay County, Spencer Hospital, and state and federal grants.

Clay County Public Health's mission is to protect and improve the physical and mental health of our citizens. This work is achieved through promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing disease, injury and disability.

Introduction of the Community Health Assessment

At least every five years in Iowa, local public health departments assess the health of their counties, identify needs, and develop strategies to improve quality of life for all residents.

Once data is collected, priority areas are identified with the following goals in mind:

1. Reduce health inequities among residents negatively impacted by challenging socio-economic factors.
2. Increase accessibility to preventive services for all community residents.
3. Improve overall community health and well-being.

This Community Health Assessment offers information on many, yet not all, indicators of good health and well-being. Additionally, Clay County has many assets and strengths not mentioned in this report.

A County Snapshot from the **County Health Rankings 2023** is found in **Appendix A**. It offers a more comprehensive list of health factors and outcomes. Clay County ranks #27 out of 99 counties in Iowa.

Methods Used to Assess the Community

Survey

A community survey was available online and shared through local media, websites, and several community partners. The survey was available in Spanish, as well as in paper copy. A total of 162 surveys were completed. A summary of the survey results is found in Appendix B.

Key Informants

Community leaders, decision makers, and collaborating organizations were vital to offering insight into priority needs and concerns. Their knowledge of local resources, as well as gaps in service helped identify primary concerns of the populations with whom they work, as well as of the community overall.

Through focus groups and stakeholder meetings, we were able to gather valuable information to begin the process of prioritization of issues and strategize improvement plans.

Recently, the newly established Clay County Behavioral Health LINC (Local Initiative for Networking and Collaboration) joined forces with Clay County Public Health to offer quarterly meetings with service providers. The *Clay County Community Provider LINC* Events offered valuable discussions on housing, transportation, behavioral health, addiction recovery, physical wellness, dental care, food, aging and education.

Key informants included representatives of the organizations outlined below:

- Avera Medical Group Spencer
- ATLAS
- Avera@Home of Spencer Hospital
- Care Connections of Northern Iowa
- Spencer Chamber of Commerce
- Child Health Specialty Clinics
- City of Spencer
- Classroom Clinic
- Clay County Sheriff's Office
- Clay County Attorney's Office
- Clay County Behavioral Health LINC
- Clay County Board of Health
- Clay County Board of Supervisors
- Clay County Emergency Management
- Clay County Environmental Health
- Clay County General Relief
- Clay County Public Health
- Clay County Veteran Affairs
- Community Housing Initiatives
- Crosswinds Church
- Dept. of Corrections- Drug Court
- Elderbridge Agency on Aging
- Family Crisis Centers
- Foundation Church
- Grand Avenue Community Outreach
- Grand Avenue Free Medical Clinic
- Dept. of Human Services
- Head Start
- Hope Haven
- ISU Extension & Outreach
- Juvenile Court Services
- Longhouse/Northshire
- Lutheran Services of Iowa
- NAMI NW IA
- Northwest Iowa Regional Housing Authority
- NW Iowa Planning and Development
- Occasions (Senior Center)
- RIDES-Regional Transit Authority
- Rosecrance Jackson
- Sacred Heart Preschool & Daycare
- Schmidt Pediatric Dentistry
- Seasons Center for Behavioral Health
- Spencer Addiction Services
- Spencer Healthcare & Wellness
- Spencer Hospital
- Spencer Public Library
- Spencer Community Schools
- Spencer Family YMCA
- Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.

Existing Data and Sources

A variety of existing public health data supported the information collected through the survey, focus groups and stakeholder meetings. Data for Clay County were obtained from the following sources (specific citations are included with the graphs throughout this report):

- Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES), University of Missouri Extension, SparkMap (sparkmap.org)
- 2023 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps from University of Wisconsin
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal
- Open Street Map
- Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved [11/12/23], from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>
- Iowa Health Fact Book (University of Iowa College of Public Health and Iowa HHS)
- US Census Bureau
- Feeding America
- Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral

Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that have a major impact on their health and quality-of-life.

Examples of SDOH include access to:

- Safe and affordable housing
- Transportation
- Education and job opportunities
- Nutritious foods and physical activity

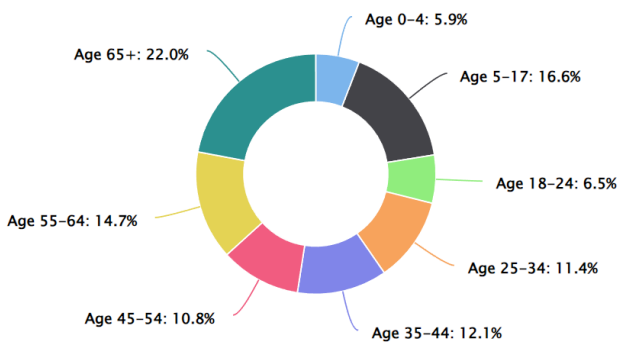


Demographics

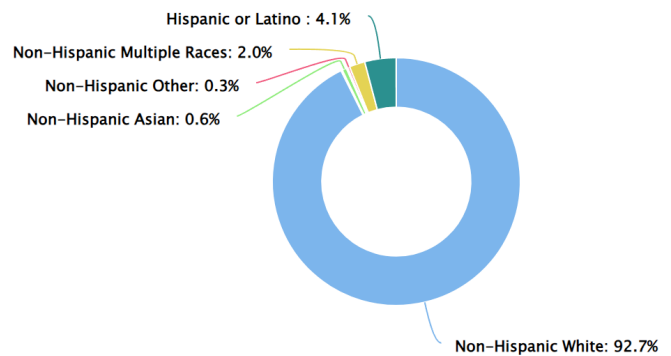
Clay County is home to a population of 16,475 people. Spencer is the county seat and has a population of 11,356. Clay County is home to nine additional rural communities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022

Total Population by Age Groups, Total
Clay County, IA



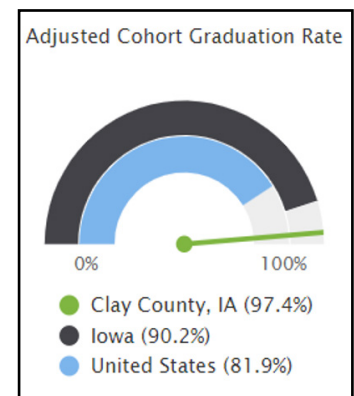
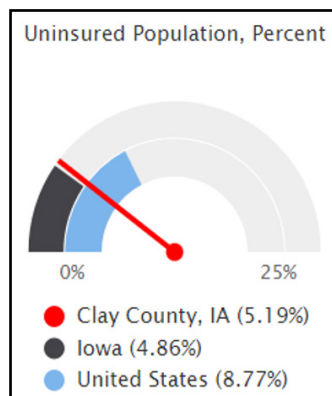
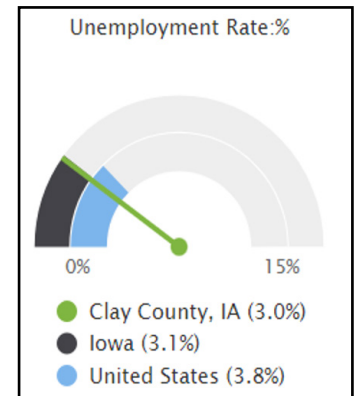
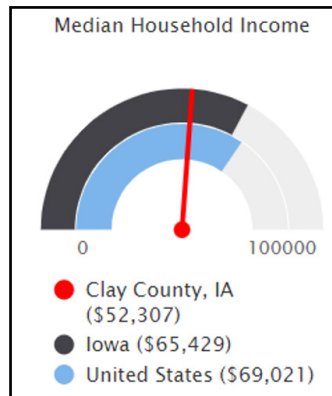
Total Population by Combined Race and Ethnicity
Clay County, IA



Income, Economics, Education

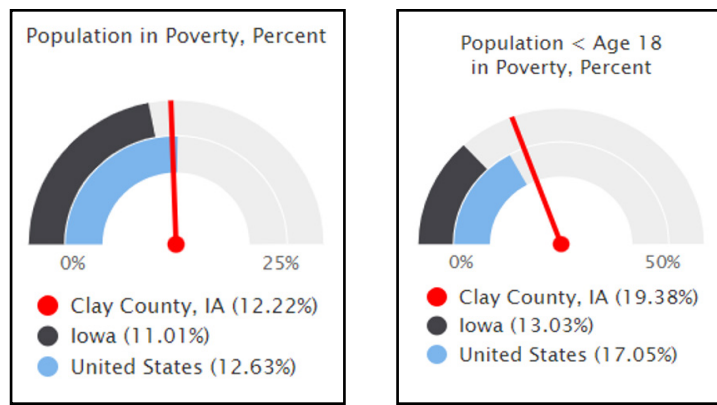
Economic and social insecurity often are associated with poor health. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of educational achievement affect access to care and a community's ability to engage in healthy behaviors. Approximately 1,970 people live in poverty in Clay County. Without a network of support and a safe community, families cannot thrive. Ensuring access to social and economic resources provides a foundation for a healthy community.

Source: SparkMap-using variety of data sources



Families

Single-parent families face issues such as increased incidence of poverty and limited access to quality health care and support services. Children in poverty are more likely to have physical, mental, and behavioral health problems, educational challenges, contact with child welfare and justice systems, and employment challenges in adulthood. The number of Clay County residents living in poverty is above the state and national rate.



Child Care

Child care that is accessible, affordable and high quality are all important to working parents with young children. According to data and input from child care providers and families, availability is not sufficient to meet the needs in Clay County. Issues of significance include:

- The number of child care programs has decreased by 20% in the past 5 years
- The number of families with working parents has increased by 18%
- Infant care spaces are very limited
- The cost for infant care in a licensed center has increased by 50%

Source: Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral, 2023

Clay County is home to many quality centers and in-home providers, yet demand out numbers the supply. Before and after-school care programs are available and transportation to and from these programs is available.

Housing

In Clay County, 22.9% of households are disproportionately burdened by higher housing costs where housing costs exceed 30% of household income. Safe, affordable and accessible housing is important to overall health. *Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2017-21*

Homelessness in Clay County has become a larger issue in the past several years. In 2022, approximately 130 individuals experienced homelessness and received assistance by various community organizations and churches to find emergency and/or permanent housing.

Source: Clay County Housing Team, 2023

Several community agencies have worked together to alleviate this challenging issue. In the fall of 2023, the new Community Housing Access Resource Team (CHART) launched with Navigators available 24/7 to provide emergency housing assistance to those eligible. They also work with individuals to prevent recurrence. Local issues identified include:

- Inadequate affordable housing including rental properties
- Inadequate number of 2-3 bedroom rentals
- Difficulty finding rental properties with history of criminal record or credit issues

Food Access

Food insecurity is defined as the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life. Hunger and health are very connected.

- Food insecurity can lead to Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity.
- Children at risk of hunger are more likely to be in poor health and struggle in school.

FOOD INSECURITY	Clay County	Iowa
Among Total Population	8.8% (1,140 individuals)	7.5%
Among Children < 18	12.9% (500 individuals)	9.4%

Source: Feeding America, 2021

The Clay County Hunger Coalition is a group of community partners who work with people experiencing food insecurity. Clay County has many food pantries and community meal opportunities. The coalition helps to promote food access throughout the county, including rural communities. Local issues identified include:

- Inadequate food at the food pantries as more people are seeking help
- Lack of regular food pantries in rural area of the county

Transportation

Adequate and reliable transportation services are fundamental to healthy communities. Transportation issues can affect a person’s access to health care services, food, and social connections.

In Clay County, the average household is spending 27% of their annual income on transportation costs. Transportation costs impact the amount of money left for groceries, medications, and housing. *Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2017-21*

Public transportation is available to most residents of Clay County. However, affordability for low-income residents is a challenge. Local issues identified include:

- Inadequate free or reduced cost transportation options
- Inability to expand public transportation services due to inadequate funding and labor (drivers)

Health Behaviors

Health behaviors such as poor diet, lack of exercise, and substance abuse contribute to poor health status.

Heavy Alcohol Consumption

In Clay County, 25% of adults (3,073) self-reported excessive drinking in the last 30 days, which is greater than the state rate. Excessive drinking is a growing problem among adults in Clay County.

EXCESSIVE DRINKING	Clay County	Iowa	United States
2011	11%	20%	--
2016	20%	22%	--
2023	25%	25%	19%

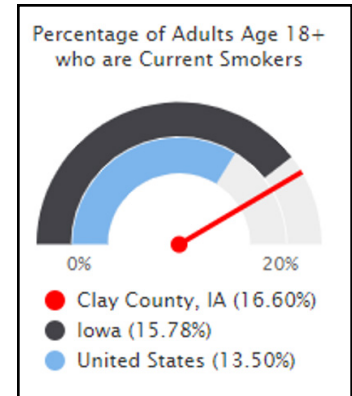
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (County Health Rankings).

Alcohol use is a behavioral health issue that is also a risk factor for a number of negative health outcomes, including: physical injuries related to motor vehicle accidents, stroke, chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer, and mental health conditions such as depression and suicide.

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Tobacco Usage

In Clay County, 16.60% adults age 18+ currently smoke every days or some days, which is slightly greater than the state rate.



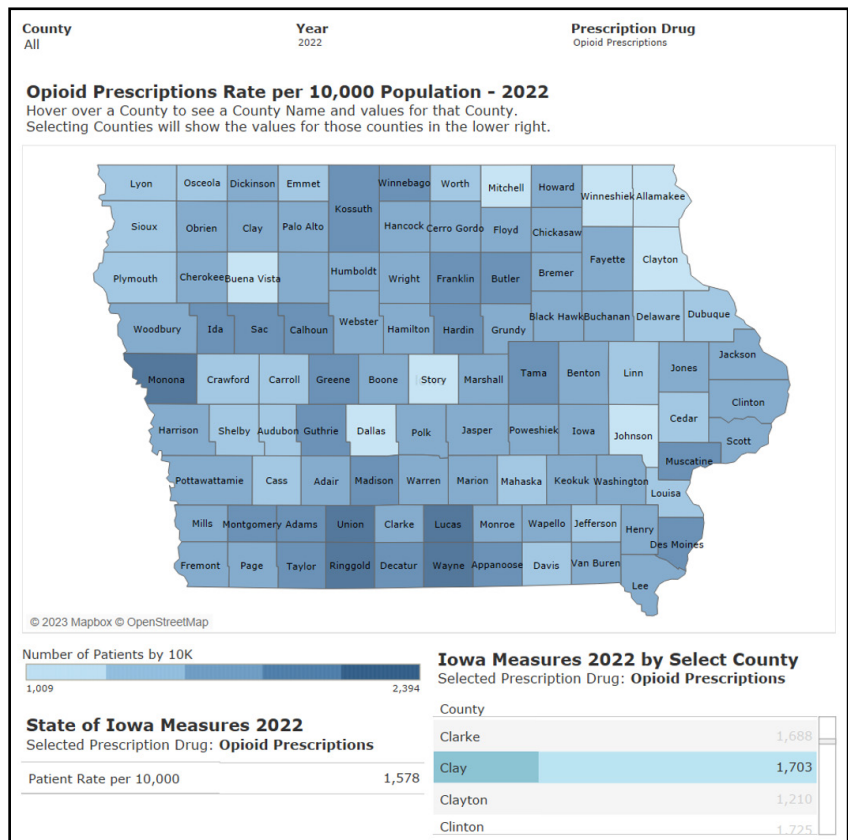
Opioids

Opioid use and misuse has been on the rise in the United States for the past decade. Opioid overdoses have reached epidemic levels with the most significant increase in the past 3 years. Opioid overdoses can be attributed to misuse of prescription opioids, heroin, or fentanyl.

County-level data to support this issue is insufficient. Yet opioid prescription rates are monitored statewide through the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP). The PMP is designed to help prescribers evaluate and monitor controlled substance medication use and treatment outcomes of their patients. The intent of the PMP is to lead to more appropriate prescribing, a decrease in patient abuse of controlled substances, a decrease in controlled substance dependence, and a decrease in the diversion of these substances for illicit use.

- 2022 data for Clay County and Iowa to the right. Clay County is higher than the state rate for opioid prescriptions.

Source: Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal



Physical Inactivity

Lack of regular physical activity is related to current and future health issues in adults, such as obesity and poor heart health. Adults in Clay County have become less active. Currently, 23% of adults in Clay County report no active leisure time.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY	Clay County	Iowa	United States
2016	16.8%	19.8%	20.7%
2023	23%	23%	22%

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (County Health Rankings).

Health Outcomes

Mental Health

Despite the numerous local professional, services, and supports, the mental health of Clay County residents continues to worsen. According to local service providers, the most significant issues locally are:

- Increase in co-existing social and health issues
- Decrease in family supports
- Patient acknowledgment of diagnosis and compliance with treatment
- Increase in children with behavioral health diagnoses
- Inadequate inpatient bed availability
- Provider shortage
- Transportation to appointments
- Stigma

POOR MENTAL HEALTH DAYS <i>Number of days in past 30 where mental health reported as "not good"</i>	Clay County	Iowa	United States
2011	2.1	2.7	--
2016	2.8	3.1	--
2023	4.2	4.2	4.4

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (County Health Rankings).

Suicide

In the 5-year period from 2016-2020 there were a total of 21 deaths due to suicide. This represents an age-adjusted death rate of 27.3 per every 100,000 total population which is much higher than the state or national rates.

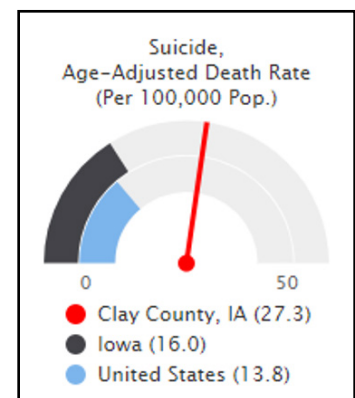
In 2021, community stakeholders were brought together to assess the need for enhanced or additional services in Clay County for suicide education, intervention and prevention. The most significant gaps in current services were:

- Limited outpatient resources
- On-site mobile crisis response still in development stage
- Substance misuse assessment and treatment
- Limited/lack of mental health therapists
- Communication among providers and responders
- Education for consumers, caregivers and providers

Many current community supports were identified regarding crisis intervention and suicide prevention services locally. These include support from the medical/mental health community, civil services, faith-based leaders, judiciary system, law enforcement, and various service agencies.

Recent developments include:

- Development of a behavioral health provider advisory board to enhance coordination of service providers in Clay County
- Addition of the Behavioral Health Outreach Navigator who serves as a communication liaison in the provider community, facilitating discussions on resources, services, and other ways to nurture hope, health, and wellness through community collaboration.
- Completion of Mobile Crisis services available 24/7 to provide a face-to-face crisis screening and intervention. Mobile crisis services are only available to law enforcement, hospitals, medical clinics, MHDS Regions, Juvenile Court, and Department of Human Services. Additionally, schools can access these services for students. In the event that an individual calls the crisis line and is in need of immediate intervention, mobile crisis staff will work with law enforcement to assure the safety of all involved.



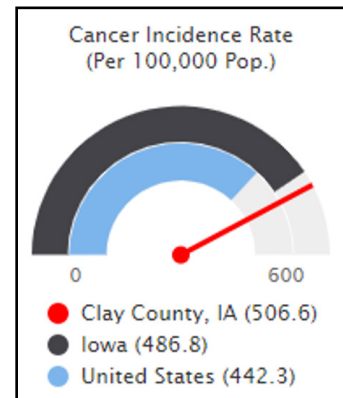
Chronic Diseases

Chronic diseases are defined broadly as conditions that last 1 year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limit activities of daily living or both. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States.

Cancer

Cancer is a major burden in Clay County, Iowa and throughout the United States. The incidence of cancer in Clay County is higher than the state and national rates. The top five most commonly diagnosed cancers by site for the 5-year period 2016-2020 were:

- Prostate
- Lung
- Breast
- Colon & Rectum
- Bladder



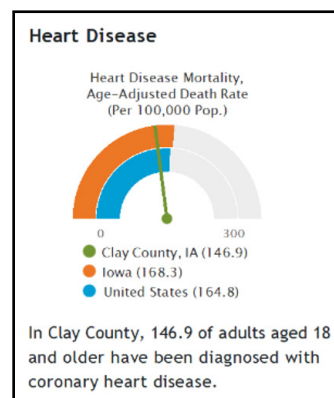
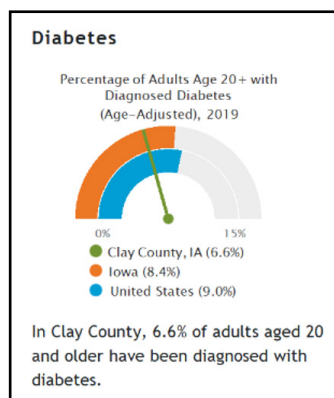
Advances in screenings are finding cancers earlier and survival rates are improving. Screenings (i.e. mammograms, colonoscopies) and treatments are available locally.

Diabetes

Approximately 11.3% of the U.S. population have diabetes, compared to 6.6% of adults in Clay County. Up to 23% of adults are undiagnosed and over 1/3 have prediabetes.

Heart Disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. In 2021, 1 in every 5 deaths were from heart disease.



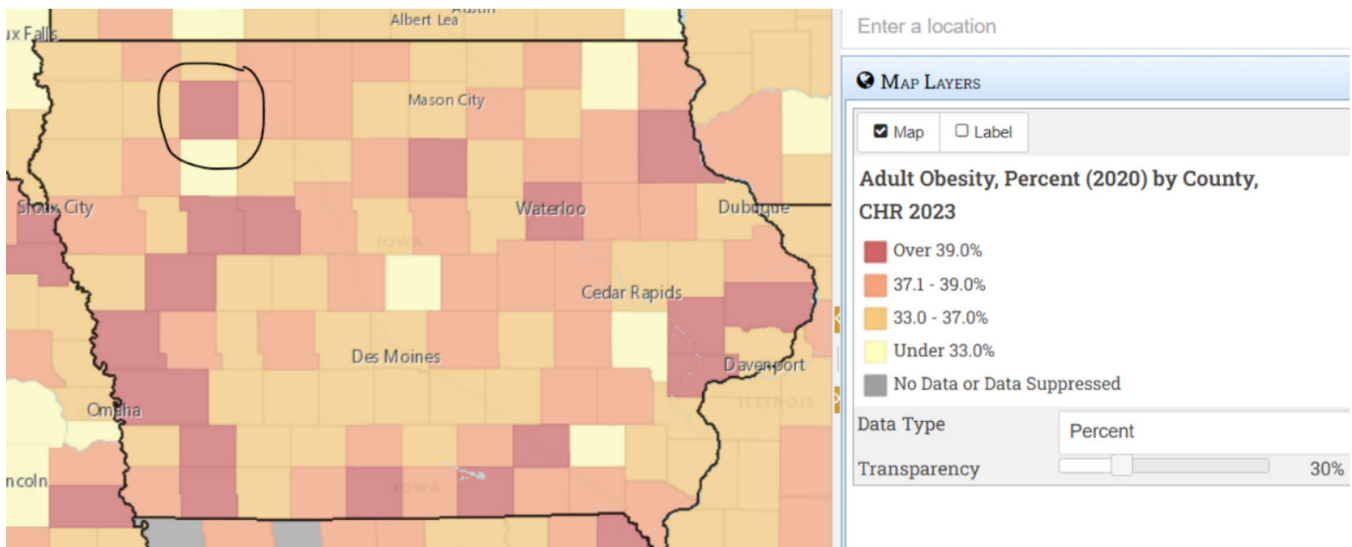
Obesity

Overweight and obesity are conditions that increase the risk of developing high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease and several types of cancer. Children with obesity and more likely to become adults with obesity.

Iowa ranks 11th in the nation for adult obesity. This health issue in Clay County continues to worsen as indicated by data below.

ADULT OBESITY (BMI >30)	Clay County	Iowa	United States
2011	29%	28%	27%
2016	31%	31%	--
2023	40%	37%	32%

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (County Health Rankings).



Clay County offers many opportunities for active living. Local parks, trails, gyms and the YMCA are available for physical activity in Spencer. Parks are available in most rural communities, as well. Community gardens, farm stands, and farmer’s markets offer opportunities for fresh produce.

Access to Care

Data indicates the ratio of healthcare providers to patients is better than state and national rates. However, Clay County residents still have difficulty accessing care. Service providers and patients expressed difficulty with the following:

- Providers who do not accept Medicaid:
 - » Mainly dentists. **No dentists in Clay County accept patients enrolled in Medicaid.** Low reimbursements are at the core of this issue.
- Providers who do not accept Medicare, indicated by mental health providers
- Transportation to appointments
- Lack of providers accepting new patients
- Cost of co-pays
- Lack of dental insurance; Cost being the barrier
- Language barriers

ACCESS TO PROVIDERS	Clay County	Iowa	United States
Primary Care	1,230:1	1,360:1	1,310:1
Dentist	910:1	1,430:1	1,380:1
Mental Health Provider	260:1	530:1	340:1

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (County Health Rankings, 2023).

Lack of dental care for Medicaid enrolled children has been an ongoing issue for many years. Data support this:

DENTAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN	Clay County	Iowa
% children enrolled in Medicaid	43%	39%
% children enrolled in Medicaid <i>WITHOUT</i> a service from a dentist	68%	55%

Source: Iowa I-Smile Needs Assessment FY2023

The I-Smile program and subcontractors in Clay County are instrumental in offering preventive dental services (screenings, fluoride varnish, sealants) to Medicaid enrolled children at WIC, preschools and schools. Some dentists treat children pro bono when severe disease or decay is present. Most communities, including Spencer, continue to invest in fluoridation of their municipal water. Everly and Peterson do not currently have fluoridated water.

Conclusion

This Community Health Assessment offers information on many, yet not all, indicators of good health and well-being. Additionally, Clay County has many assets and strengths not mentioned in this report.

Clay, IA - Rank **#27** of 99 ranked counties in Iowa

Health Outcomes

Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is right now, in terms of length of life but quality of life as well.

Clay (CY) is ranked in the higher middle range of counties in Iowa (Higher 50%-75%)



Health Factors

Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is right now, in terms of length of life but quality of life as well.

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County Demographics

The health of a place results from past and present policies and practices. The land known as Clay County, along with the entirety of the U.S., has been home for many thousands of years to hundreds of Indigenous nations. Native Land Digital “strives to create and foster conversations about the history of colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and settler-Indigenous relations.”

Clay County, Iowa is Micropolitan (intersecting an urban core of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population). In Clay County, 34.3% of the population lives in a low population density area (500 or fewer people per square mile and less than 2,500 people).



Health Outcomes			
Length of Life	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Premature Death	6,200	6,500	7,300
Quality of Life	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Poor or Fair Health	12%	12%	12%
Poor Physical Health Days	2.7	2.8	3.0
Poor Mental Health Days	4.2	4.4	4.4
Low Birthweight	6%	7%	8%
Additional Health Outcomes (not included in overall ranking)	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Life Expectancy	79.3	78.7	78.5
Premature Age-Adjusted Mortality	340	340	360
Child Mortality		50	50
Infant Mortality		5	6
Frequent Physical Distress	9%	8%	9%
Frequent Mental Distress	14%	14%	14%
Diabetes Prevalence	9%	9%	9%
HIV Prevalence	37	111	380
Health Factors			
Health Behaviors	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Adult Smoking	17%	17%	16%
Adult Obesity	40%	37%	32%
Food Environment Index	8.6	8.6	7.0
Physical Inactivity	23%	23%	22%
Access to Exercise Opportunities	75%	79%	84%
Excessive Drinking	25%	25%	19%
Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	30%	27%	27%
Sexually Transmitted Infections	268.5	478.5	481.3
Teen Births	15	16	19
Additional Health Behaviors (not included in overall ranking)	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Food Insecurity	9%	7%	12%
Limited Access to Healthy Foods	5%	6%	6%
Drug Overdose Deaths		11	23
Insufficient Sleep	32%	32%	33%
Clinical Care	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Uninsured	7%	6%	10%
Primary Care Physicians	1,230:1	1,360:1	1,310:1
Dentists	910:1	1,430:1	1,380:1
Mental Health Providers	260:1	530:1	340:1
Preventable Hospital Stays	1,971	2,400	2,809
Mammography Screening	38%	47%	37%
Flu Vaccinations	61%	57%	51%
Additional Clinical Care (not included in overall ranking)	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Uninsured Adults	8%	7%	12%
Uninsured Children	3%	3%	5%

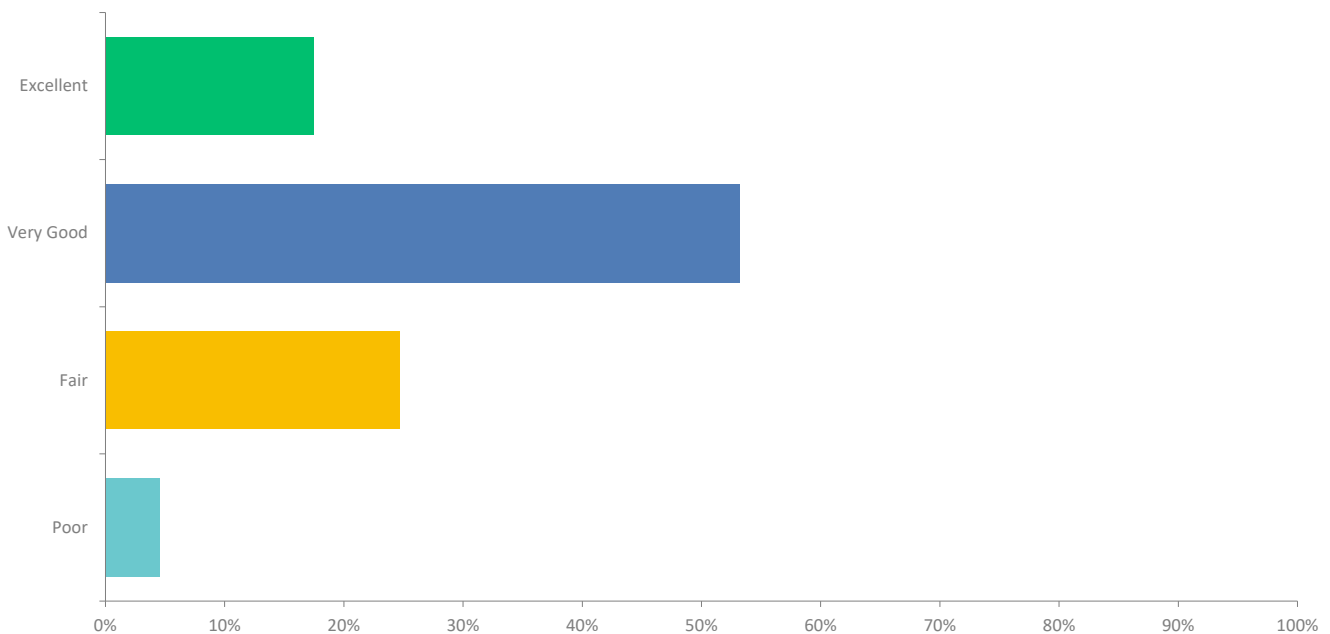
Other Primary Care Providers	590:1	800:1	810:1
Social & Economic Factors	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
High School Completion	95%	93%	89%
Some College	73%	70%	67%
Unemployment	3.6%	4.2%	5.4%
Children in Poverty	12%	12%	17%
Income Inequality	4.7	4.2	4.9
Children in Single-Parent Households	30%	21%	25%
Social Associations	15.6	14.5	9.1
Injury Deaths	69	70	76
Additional Social & Economic Factors (not included in overall ranking)	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
High School Graduation	98%	92%	87%
Disconnected Youth		6%	7%
Reading Scores	3.0	3.1	3.1
Math Scores	3.5	3.1	3.0
School Segregation	0.03	0.18	0.25
School Funding Adequacy	\$4,222	\$1,562	\$1,062
Gender Pay Gap	0.74	0.78	0.81
Median Household Income	\$60,200	\$65,600	\$69,700
Living Wage	\$40.39	\$42.39	
Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Priced Lunch	44%	41%	53%
Residential Segregation - Black/White		62	63
Child Care Cost burden	25%	26%	27%
Child Care Centers	7	8	7
Homicides		3	6
Suicides	27	16	14
Firearm Fatalities	17	10	12
Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths	12	11	12
Juvenile Arrests	29	37	24
Voter Turnout	72.6%	72.9%	67.9%
Census Participation	69.5%		65.2%
Physical Environment	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Air Pollution - Particulate Matter	6.5	7.4	7.4
Drinking Water Violations	No		
Severe Housing Problems	10%	12%	17%
Driving Alone to Work	78%	79%	73%
Long Commute - Driving Alone	22%	21%	37%
Additional Physical Environment (not included in overall ranking)	Clay (CY)	Iowa	United States
Traffic Volume	177	354	505
Homeownership	70%	72%	65%
Severe Housing Cost Burden	10%	10%	14%
Broadband Access	85%	85%	87%

Note: Blank values reflect unreliable or missing data.

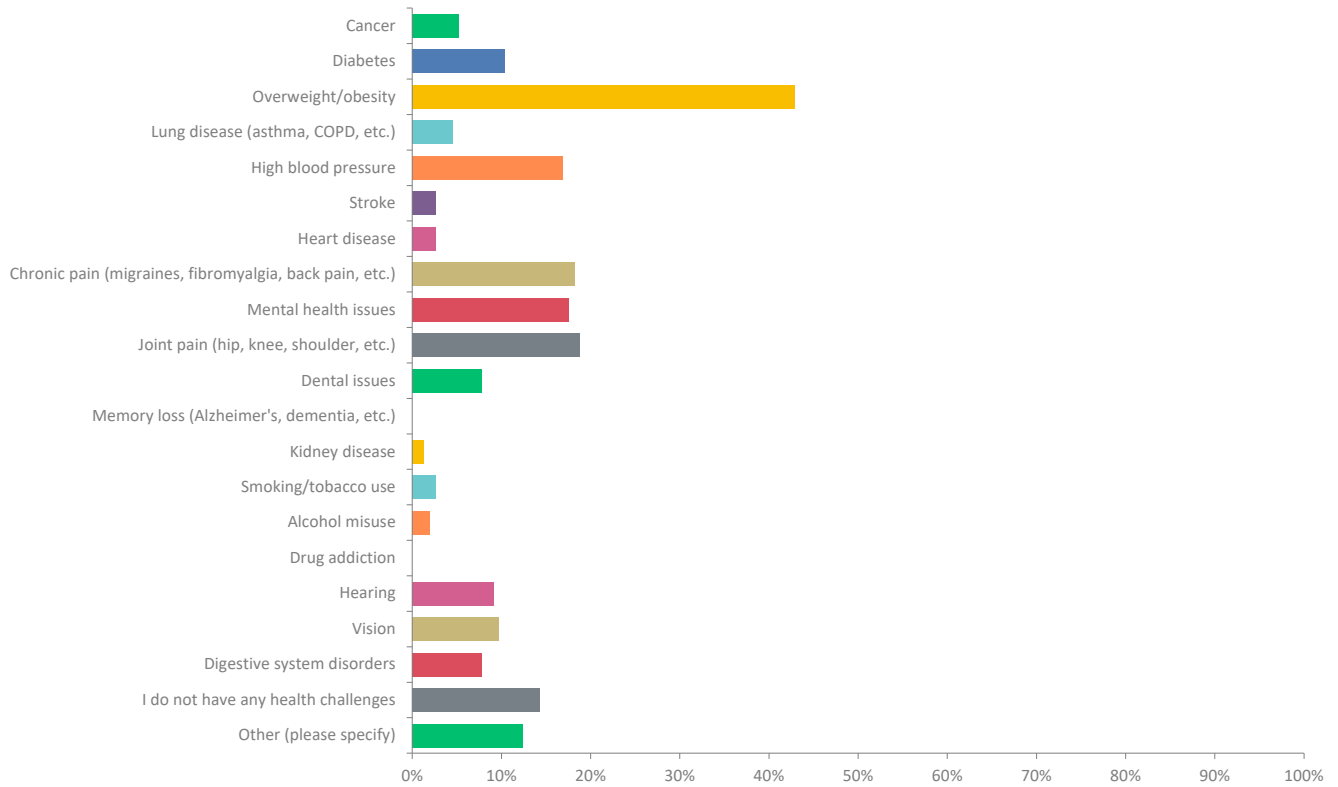
Who Completed the Survey?

- 162 respondents
- 82% from Spencer
- 60-69 year olds most represented, followed by 30-39 year olds
- 83% female
- 97% white
- 40% have 4-year college degree or higher; 16% high school graduate or below
- 62% employed; 30% retired
- 68% privately insured; 32% Medicare; 12% Medicaid

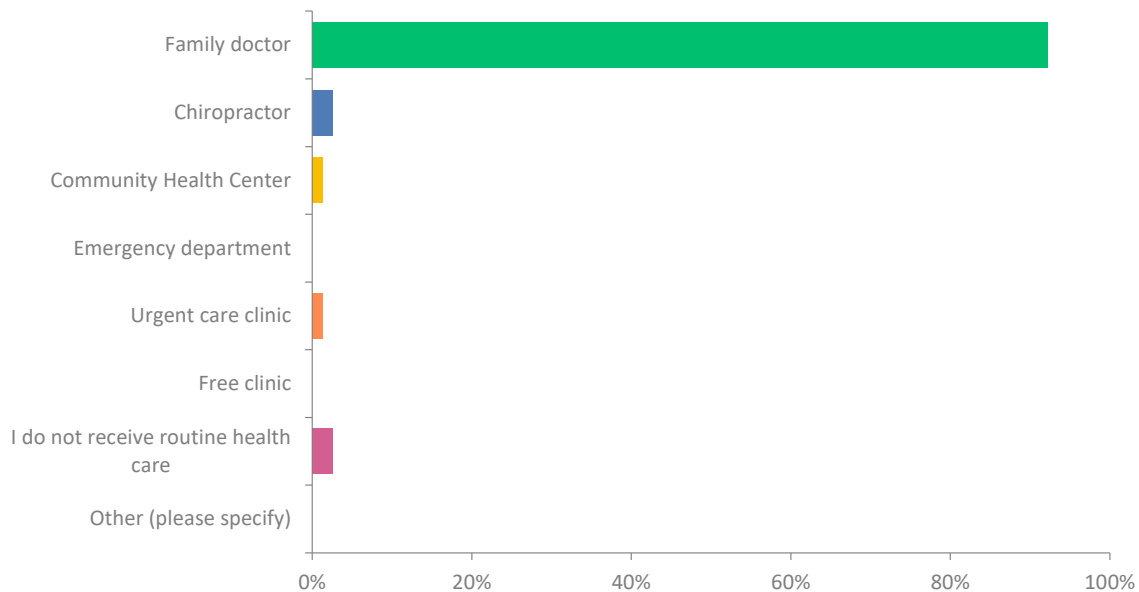
How would you describe your overall health?



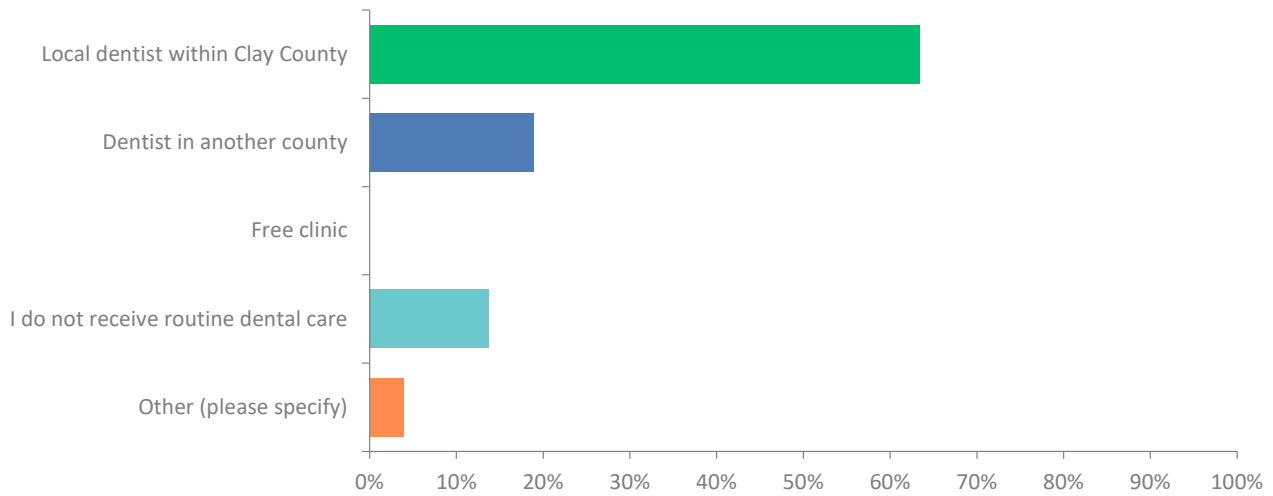
Select the top three health challenges you face:



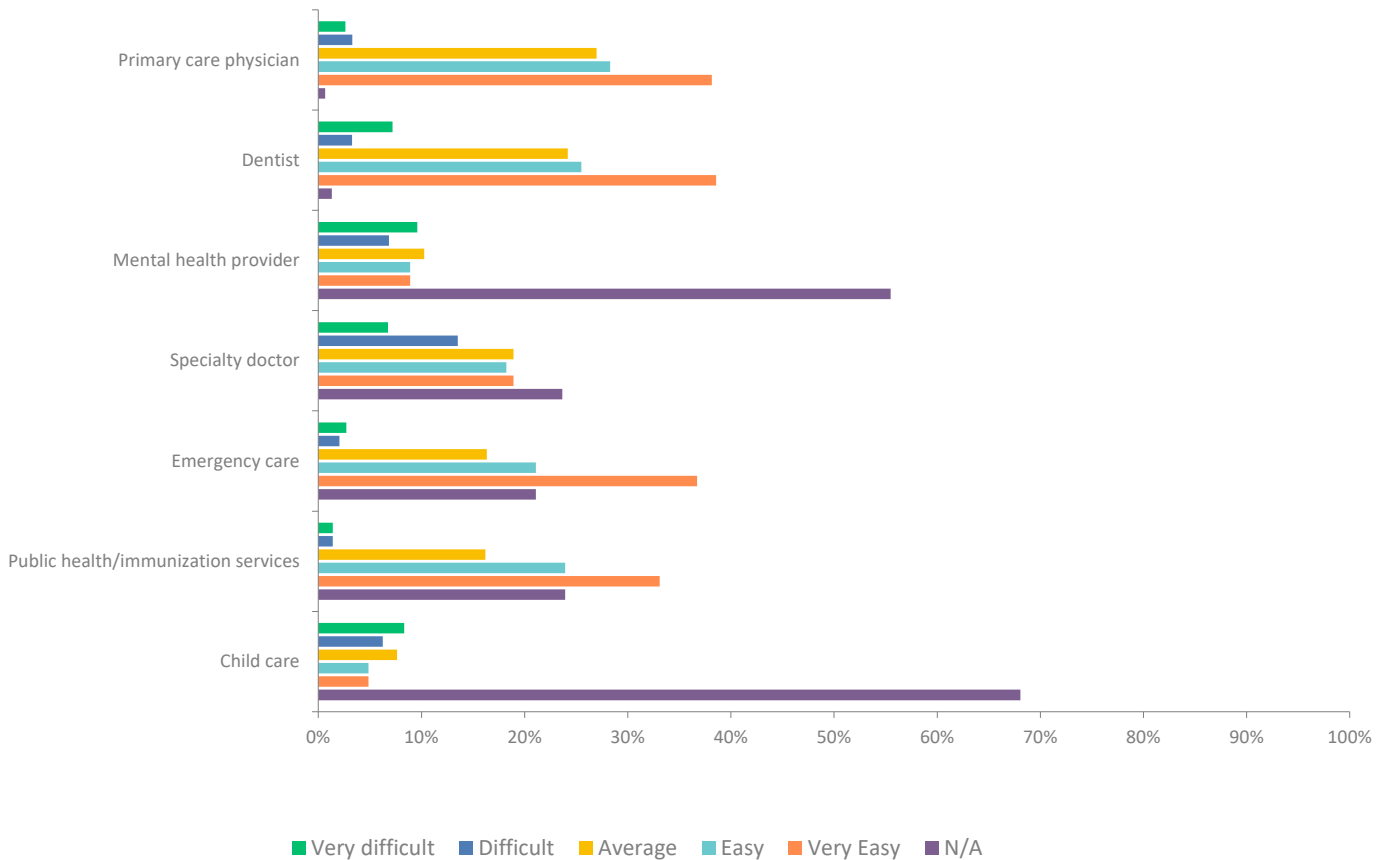
Where do you go for routine health care?



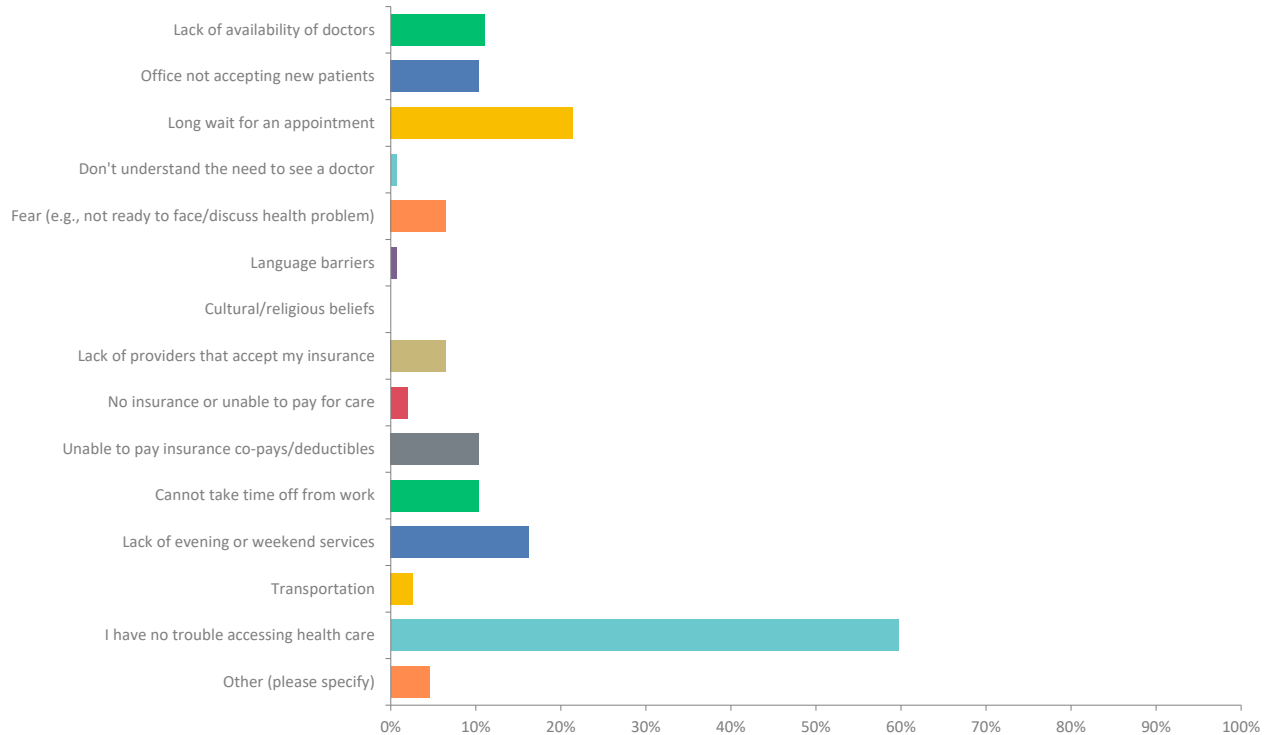
Where do you go for routine dental care?



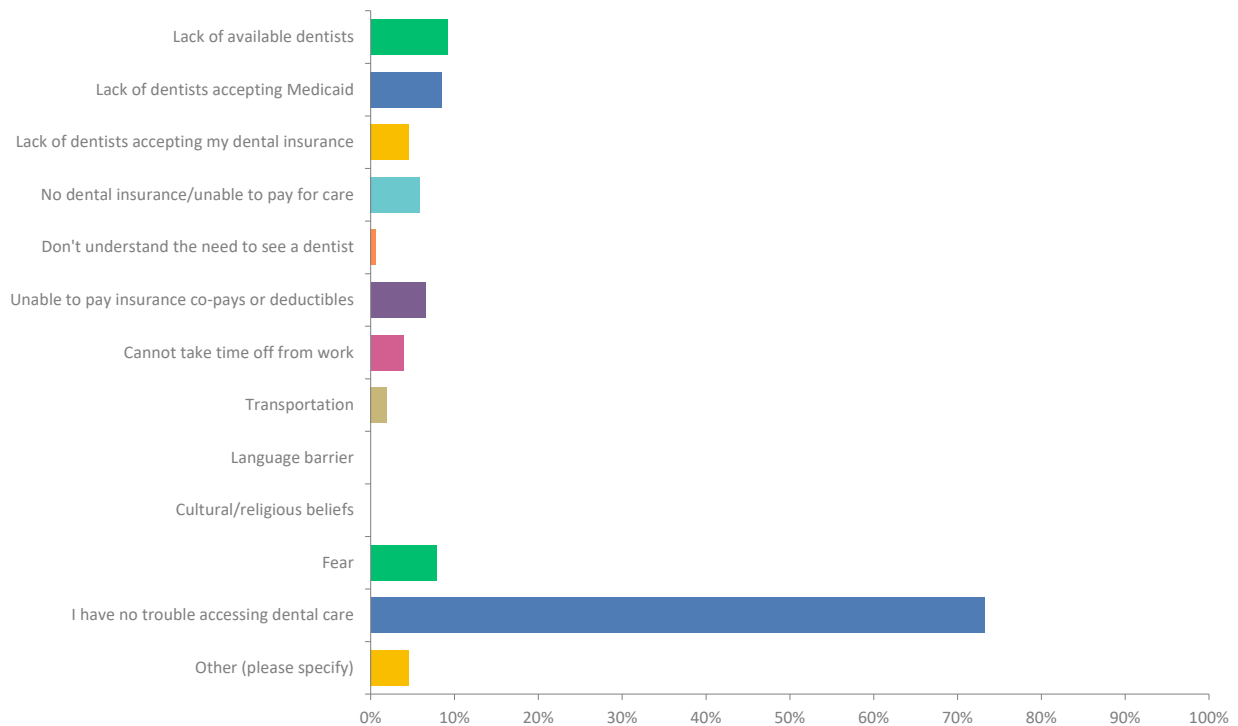
How easy or difficult is it for you to access the following services?



Are there any issues that prevent you from accessing health care?



Are there issues preventing you from accessing a dentist?



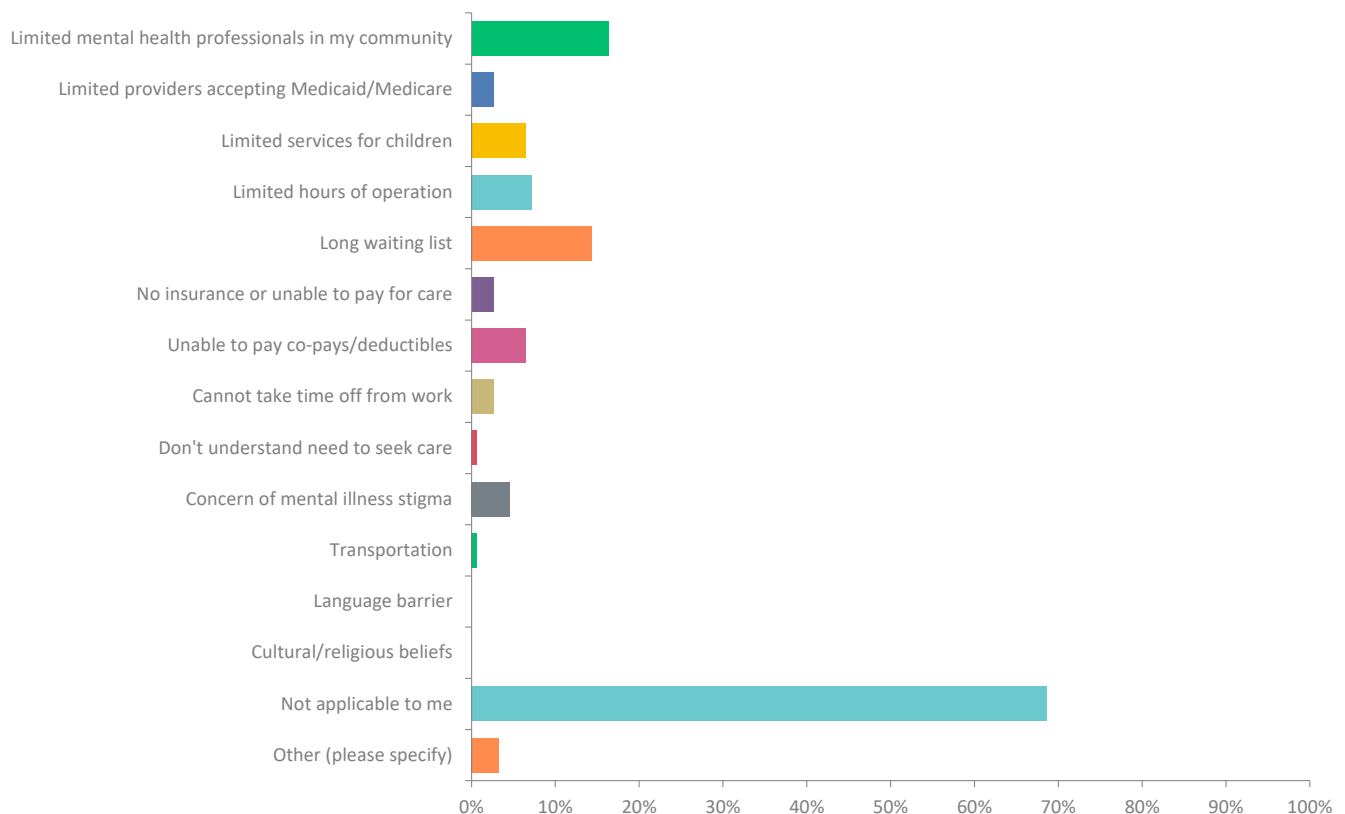
Are you or an immediate family member (parent, guardian, sibling, spouse) currently receiving mental health services?

- 25% - yes
- 75% - no

Are you able to find a mental health provider or professional to meet your needs?

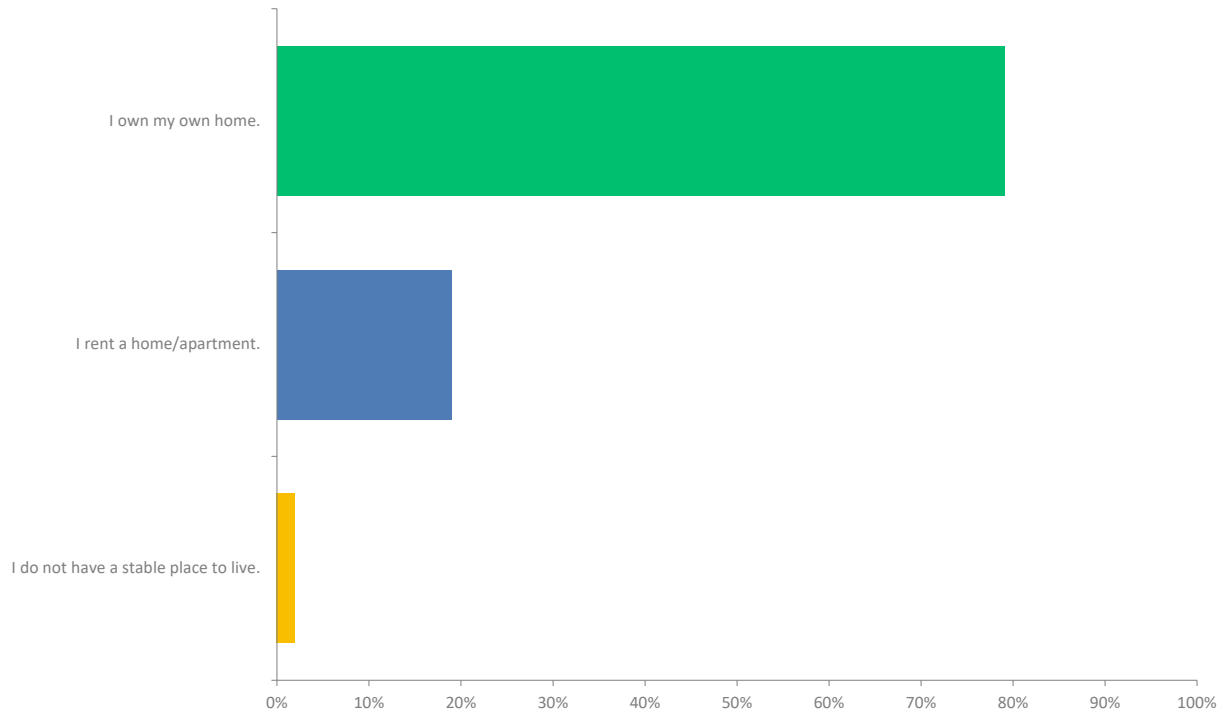
- 25% - yes
- 14% - no
- 59% - NA

What are the greatest barriers that prevent you from accessing mental health care?

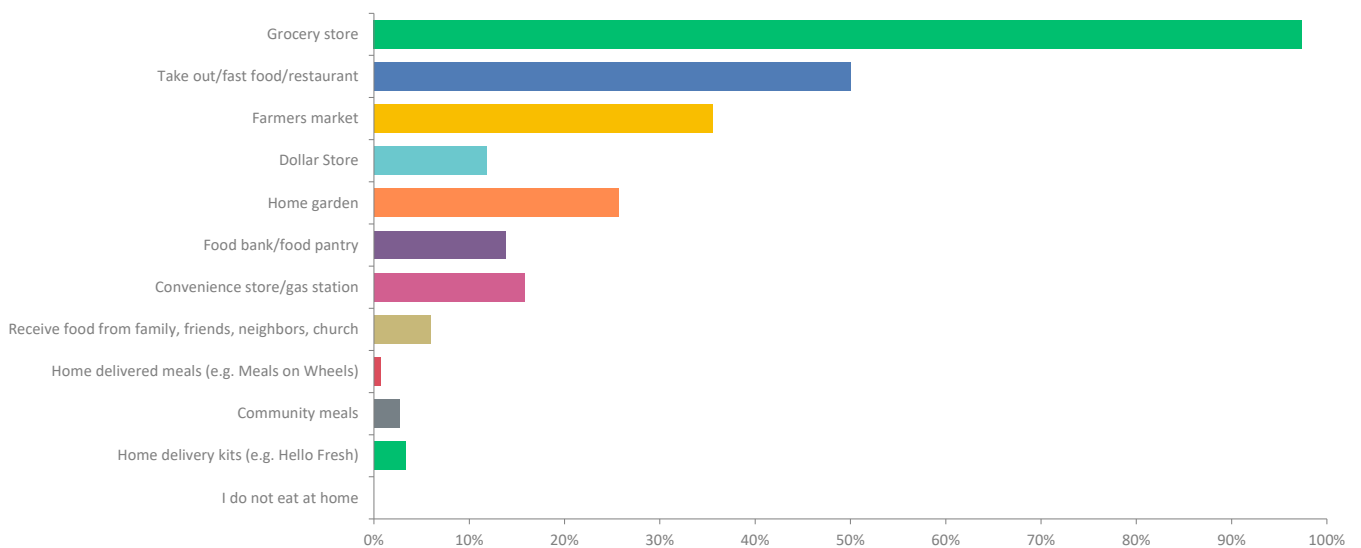


Housing

What is your current living situation?



Food Access



Substance Abuse, Misuse, and Addiction

- 80% of respondents had not binged alcohol, misused prescription drugs or opioids, used marijuana or tobacco

I feel that Clay County needs more services, education and/or support regarding the following:

For Adults:

- Overweight and Obesity
- Nutrition
- Mental/behavioral health

For Children:

- Mental/behavioral health; tied with...
- Safe and affordable childcare
- Dental care (dentists accepting Medicaid)

What is needed to improve the overall health and well-being of your family and neighbors?

