



Macomb County Community Health Survey

2020–2021 REPORT



Health Department



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About this Report

THE MACOMB COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY

The Macomb County Community Health Survey collected responses from October 5, 2020 to January 10, 2021. The survey was created as part of the Community Health Assessment, a collaborative data collection and priority-setting process by the Macomb County Health Department and its partners (collectively known as Healthy Macomb). In addition to recurring community health survey questions regarding local health priorities, health care access barriers, and quality of life, respondents were also asked how they may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in Macomb County and how and where they have received COVID-19 information.

This report summarizes main data points and themes from the various questions listed. To see all of the proportions from the graphical data presented in this report, you can visit our interactive report [here](#).

THE HEALTHY MACOMB PARTNERSHIP

Healthy Macomb is a partnership between the Macomb County Health Department and over 20 organizations and agencies dedicated to identifying and creating solutions to the health concerns in our county. The main objectives of this partnership are to regularly gather input from our residents, identify priority health issues in our county, and create and carry out a plan to address these concerns over the coming years.

The Healthy Macomb partnership will seek to re-engage in the Community Health Assessment process over the next year when partner organizations and health department staff are able. This process will include more extensive community data collection, a review of health and wellbeing indicators, and engagement with community members and organizations in Macomb County.



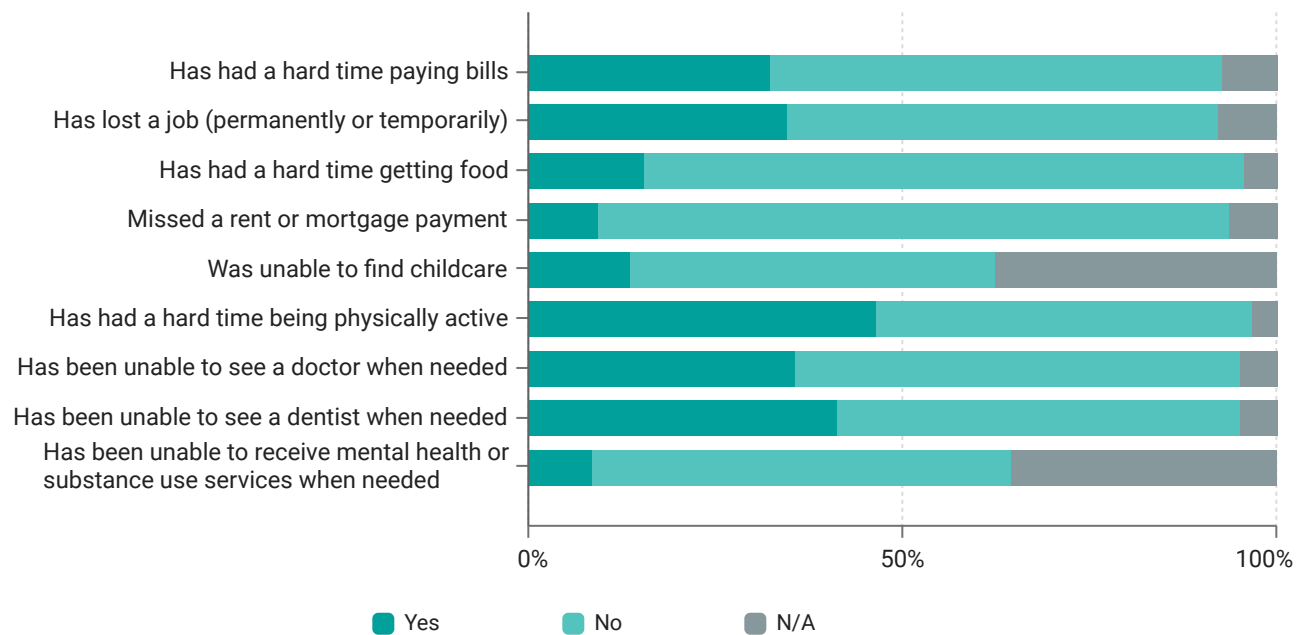
To stay updated with upcoming work from Healthy Macomb, you can visit cha.macombgov.org.

COVID-19

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Community Impact

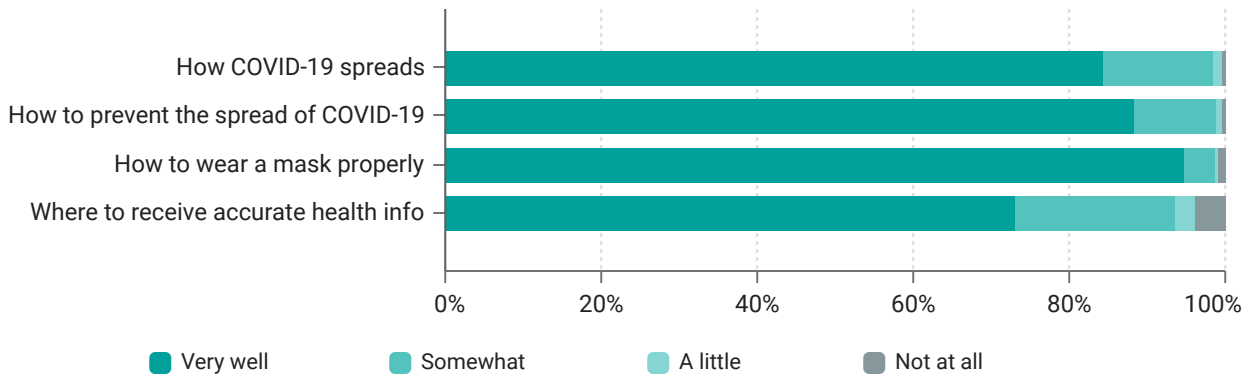
Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, households across Macomb County and Michigan have been negatively impacted in a variety of ways. To better understand how those in Macomb County were impacted specifically, respondents were asked the following questions about how they or those in their household have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as their knowledge of COVID-19 information and where they obtain their health information.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I or someone in my household... (n=1708)



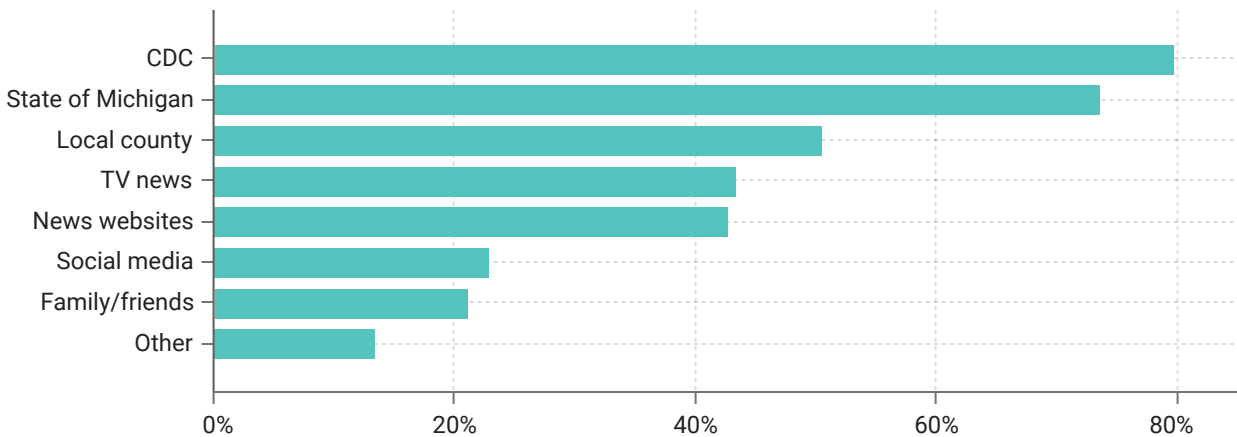
Respondents reported being most impacted by having difficulty being physically active (46%), having difficulty seeing a doctor (36%) or dentist (41%), and facing financial difficulties with paying their bills (32%) or facing loss of employment (34%). However, even the smallest percentage of "yes" responses—9% of respondents reported missing their rent or mortgage payment—illustrates the widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the physical, mental, and financial wellbeing of community members in and around Macomb County.

Please indicate how well you understand the following: (n=1713)



Nearly all respondents had either a "somewhat" or "very well" understanding of how COVID-19 spreads, how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and how to wear a mask properly. Nearly 95% of respondents stated they knew how to wear a mask properly "very well." The largest area for improvement was respondents knowing where they could receive accurate health information, with nearly 21% responding "somewhat" and nearly 7% responding either "a little" or "not at all."

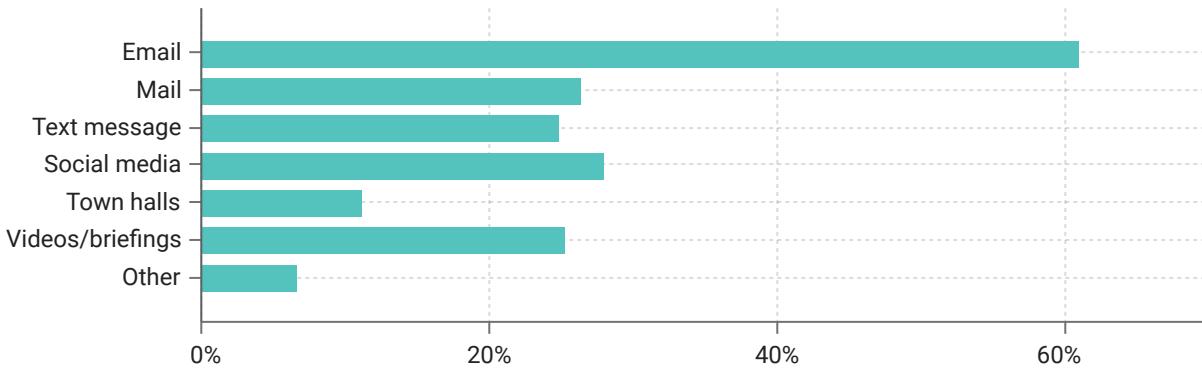
Where do you get information about COVID-19? (Please select all that apply.) (n=1704)



While responses varied, the vast majority of respondents reported obtaining COVID-19 information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (80%) and the State of Michigan (74%), such as the Michigan Department for Health and Human Services (MDHHS). Among respondents who selected "Other," the main themes found were healthcare professionals or institutions and/or the respondent's place of work as well as academic, scientific, epidemiological, or other official sources of public health information. A smaller proportion of "Other" responses indicated a distrust of media institutions or a willingness to do individual research or use intuition when it came to COVID-19 information.

How would you prefer to receive information from your local health department?

(Please select all that apply.) (n=1660)



Respondents overwhelmingly preferred email (61%) as a method of receiving health information from their local health department. Other responses were relatively similar among responses with the exception of town halls (11%), which were the least preferred option. Among respondents who selected "Other," the main sources shared were various news sources and health department or county websites. Another subset of "Other" respondents indicated that they preferred to not receive health information from their local health department or wanted to seek out their own health information.

Open-ended responses

In addition to the structured questions above, respondents were also asked to share any additional feedback or important information related to how COVID-19 has impacted their health and the health of their community. Nearly 900 respondents elected to share open-ended feedback, and recurring COVID-19 themes from their responses were organized and are presented below.

Note: Responses were collected from respondents from October 5, 2020 to January 10, 2021 and may not reflect the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic or current attitudes of community members.

COVID-19 POLICIES

The greatest overall theme was attitudes toward COVID-19 policies and restrictions. While these responses were largely focused on mask mandates, they also discussed other COVID-19 policies and safety measures.

Mask mandates and mask-wearing

Above all other themes, respondents indicated that they wanted a mask mandate in Macomb County and greater mask-wearing overall. These respondents discussed wanting a mask mandate in order to protect their community, particularly at-risk individuals and essential workers, and to allow schools and businesses to open by mitigating COVID-19 transmission and risk. Many respondents noted that the lack of a mask mandate or mask-wearing negatively impacted their feelings of safety in their community. Other respondents stated that the lack of mask mandates, either as a county policy or business policy, would impact their business choices.

While less significant in comparison, another common theme was also anti-mask mandate sentiments. These respondents were against government regulation of mask-wearing, felt that masks were ineffective or counterproductive, or wanted mask-wearing to only apply to those who were at added risk of COVID-19 complications.

Open-ended responses (continued)

Other COVID-19 policies and restrictions

Two other common themes include both favorable and negative views of COVID-19 restrictions outside of mask mandates. Those in favor were supportive of social distancing and gathering restrictions or wanted greater enforcement of COVID-19 policies. Some expressed a need for policies to prioritize the health of their community over the economy. Others expressed the need for greater education around COVID-19 safety measures, such as the importance of mask-wearing. Some respondents also expressed specific concern over the Michigan Supreme Court ruling that reduced the emergency powers of Governor Whitmer.

Some of those opposing COVID-19 restrictions believed that the government was overreaching or abusing its powers, committing civil rights violations, or enacting unconstitutional policies. Others wanted to open up businesses or schools for in-person learning. Respondents also expressed negative attitudes toward COVID-19 shutdown policies, explaining that such policies worsened the economy and negatively impacted families and children.

Attitudes toward government and politics

Respondents also shared various attitudes towards government leaders or levels of government as well as the influence of politics on the pandemic response. The majority of these responses focused on Macomb County, with major themes being the responsibility of Macomb County to uphold COVID-19 precautions to protect the public and disappointment in Macomb County for their policy decisions. Other respondents praised Macomb County for upholding individual liberties or working to keep small businesses open, and others expressed appreciation for the Health Department for their COVID-19 response efforts.

Similar themes appeared for the State of Michigan as well as federal leadership and agencies. Themes appeared both criticizing COVID-19 restrictions at the state level as unfair or intrusive and praising COVID-19 prevention efforts and policies of the State of Michigan as necessary and helpful in protecting the public. Respondents also expressed frustration with the lack of a federal COVID-19 response, and others highlighted the importance of adhering to CDC guidance regarding COVID-19 safety measures and policies.

Lastly, many respondents lamented the influence of politics and partisanship on COVID-19 policy decisions as well as the behaviors and attitudes of community members. Some respondents specifically expressed mistrust of the government due to misinformation or the government handling of the pandemic.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

Many survey respondents included reactions toward their community members or community more broadly. The main message among these responses was distrust or skepticism of community members due to anti-mask behaviors or rhetoric, denial of science or severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, or attitudes of self-importance. Other respondents highlighted the lack of community knowledge or will to engage in COVID-19 prevention efforts. Some respondents also noted community tensions and animosity due to political views of the COVID-19 pandemic response, and others went further and expressed embarrassment of living in Macomb County or a desire to leave Macomb County due to anti-restriction and anti-mask community attitudes and policies.

COVID-19 MESSAGING AND MISINFORMATION

Another theme among survey respondents was comments about the mixed messaging and misinformation. Many respondents expressed concern over mixed messaging from various sources regarding COVID-19 information, with some respondents expressing frustration that COVID-19 efforts and messaging in Macomb County were not in agreement with messaging from the State of Michigan. Other respondents were frustrated by the widespread presence of COVID-19 misinformation, especially on social media.

Open-ended responses (continued)

IMPACTS OF COVID-19

Many respondents touched on the various ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their lives. These themes below are divided into primary health impacts of the COVID-19 virus and secondary impacts of the pandemic and subsequent COVID-19 restrictions.

Primary health impacts of COVID-19

Many respondents touched on their vulnerability or the vulnerability of family members due to pre-existing conditions or being in an at-risk group (e.g., older adults). Multiple respondents reporting working in a healthcare setting or essential workplace, with some expressed concern or stress over COVID-19 risk. Others specifically discussed having COVID-19 or friends, family members, or other community members they knew having COVID-19; many of these responses also discussed knowing someone who had passed away from COVID-19. Another common theme among respondents was fear, anxiety, or stress over the virus or the lack of safety precautions in their community, especially related to family or others who are at especially high risk of COVID-19 complications or infection. Another subset of respondents expressed that they either have not been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or did not know someone who has been infected with COVID-19. Some respondents also expressed that COVID-19 risk was overstated by the media or that COVID-19 death statistics were inflated to exaggerate COVID-19 risk.

Secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

Survey respondents discussed multiple secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic related to physical and mental health, education, financial hardship, and family and social connection. A significant portion of respondents discussed the negative impacts of the pandemic on their mental health, stress, and anxiety or the mental wellbeing of those in their community. Others discussed the negative impact of the pandemic on children's wellbeing and social development as well as the quality of students' education. Respondents also expressed barriers to or difficulties receiving health care during the pandemic or difficulty being physically active and healthy. Some respondents also highlighted the negative isolation faced by older adults during the pandemic or the COVID-19 risk of those living in long-term care facilities. Other secondary health impacts included increased levels of substance use and domestic violence in one's community.

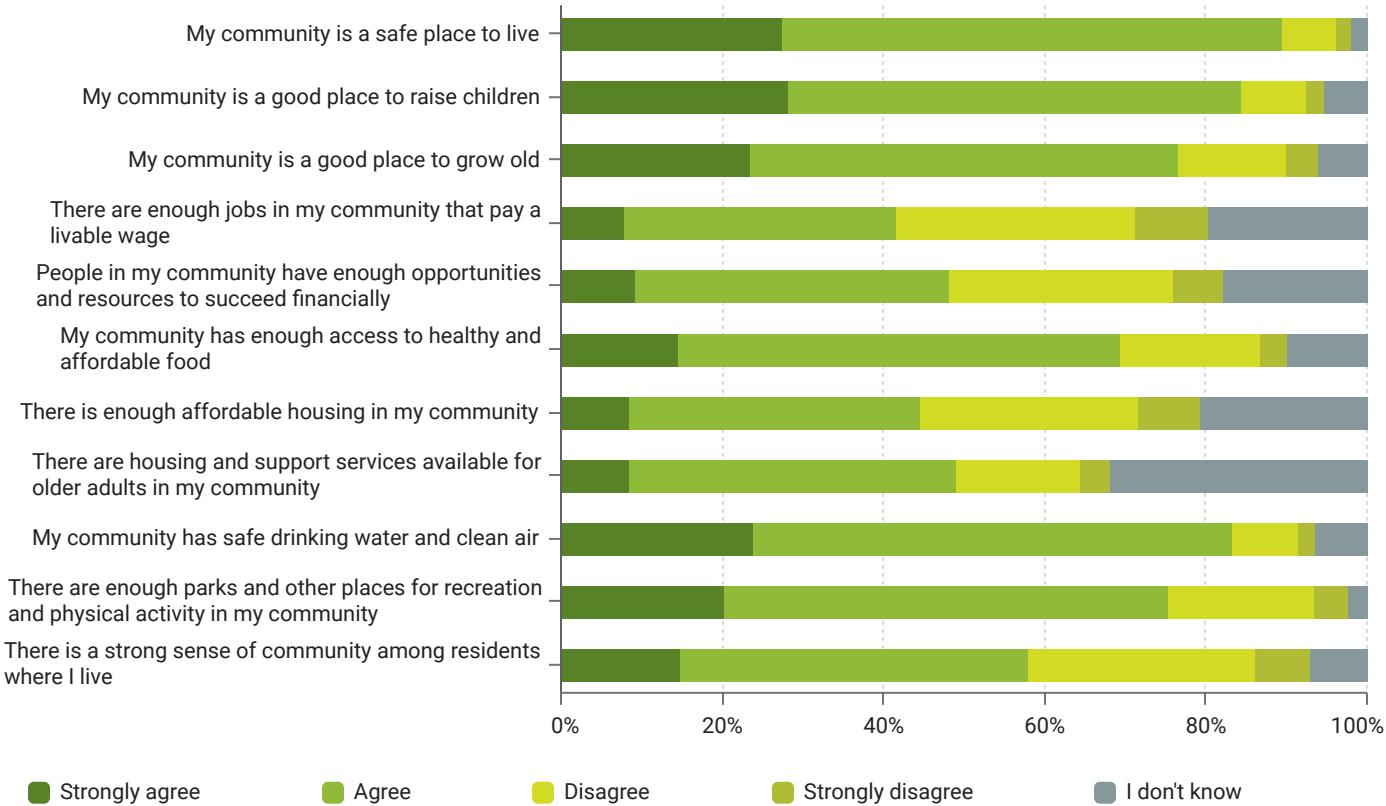
Many respondents also discussed the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These responses mainly highlighted both the hardships of businesses or personal experiences of job loss, reduced employment, or financial challenges due to the pandemic. Some respondents also expressed difficulty with obtaining or utilizing health insurance or social assistance benefits due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Others discussed the difficulties of balancing work and homeschooling responsibilities, which sometimes resulted in a loss of income in the household.

Lastly, multiple respondents reported the difficulties of losing social connection during the pandemic. Respondents discussed being unable to visit with family, friends, or loved ones living in long-term care facilities due to restrictions or risk of exposure. Others lamented the loss of community centers or spaces during the pandemic or the loss of some personal relationships due to political and social beliefs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Health Priorities and Areas for Improvement

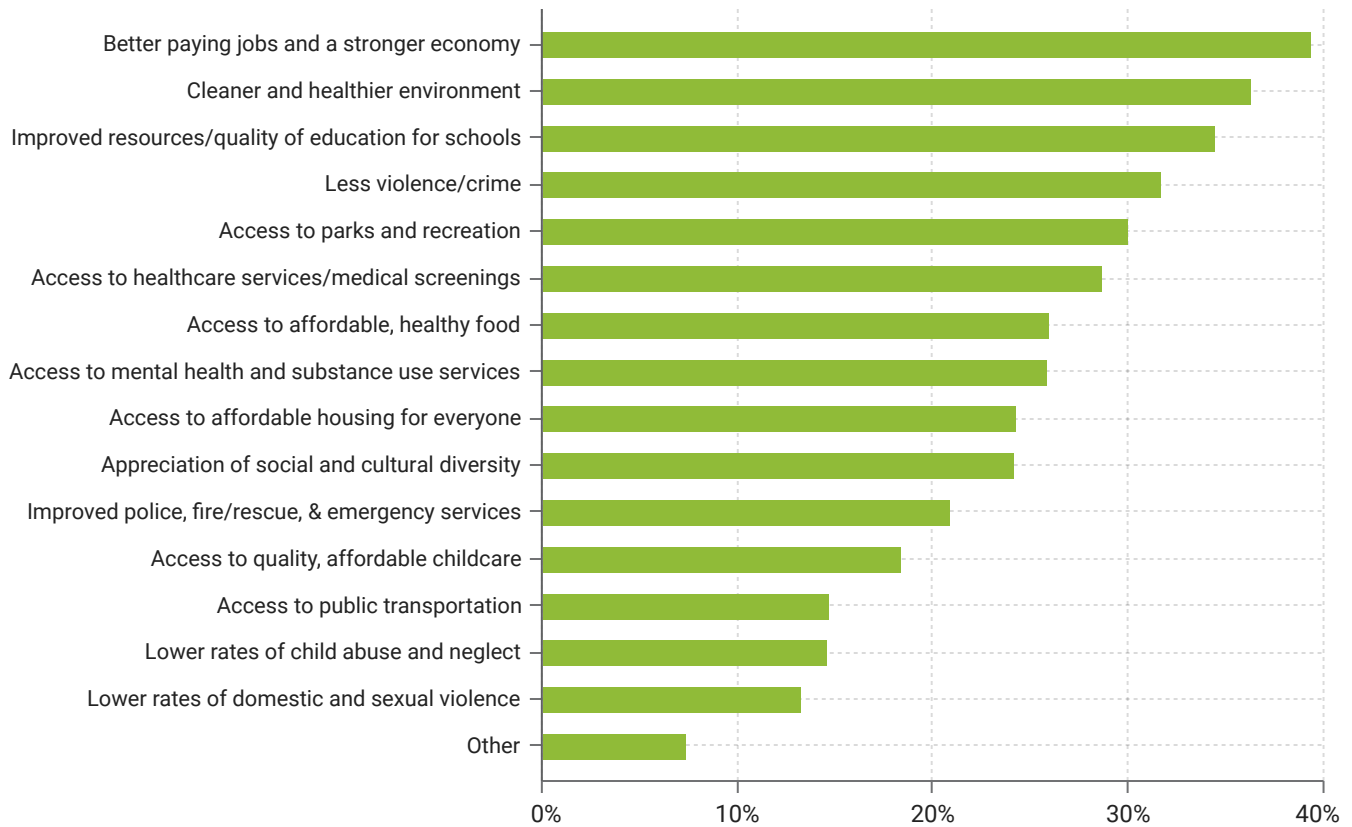
In addition to questions about COVID-19, respondents were asked about health priorities in their community—such as ways in which the quality of life in their community could be improved and some of the health issues that were most pressing in their community—and were asked about their access to health care and other health-related services.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (n=1397)



The statements that respondents answered the most with either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" were having a safe community (89%), living in a community that was good for raising children (84%), and having safe drinking water and clean air in their community (83%). The statements that respondents answered the most with either "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree" were having enough well-paying jobs in their community (39%), having a strong sense of community (35%), having enough affordable housing in their community (35%), and having enough resources and opportunities to succeed financially in their community (34%).

Which of the following options would improve the quality of life most in your community? Select up to five. (n=1338)



Among the options provided, respondents' top responses that would improve the quality of life the most in their community were better paying jobs and a stronger economy (39.3%), a cleaner and healthier environment (36.2%), improved resources and quality of education for schools (34.4%), less violence and crime (31.6%), and access to parks and recreation (29.9%).

Among those who responded "Other," common themes were greater enforcement and education around COVID-19 safety measures, the removal of COVID-19 restrictions and a return to in-person learning for children, improved public infrastructure (e.g., roads, sewage), greater free speech and less government involvement, and greater access to and opportunities for safe bicycling and walking (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes).

Given the large number of options for this question and the variability of answers across different groups and geographic regions, the top five responses for various underrepresented groups as well as the north, central, and south regions of Macomb County are presented on the following two pages.

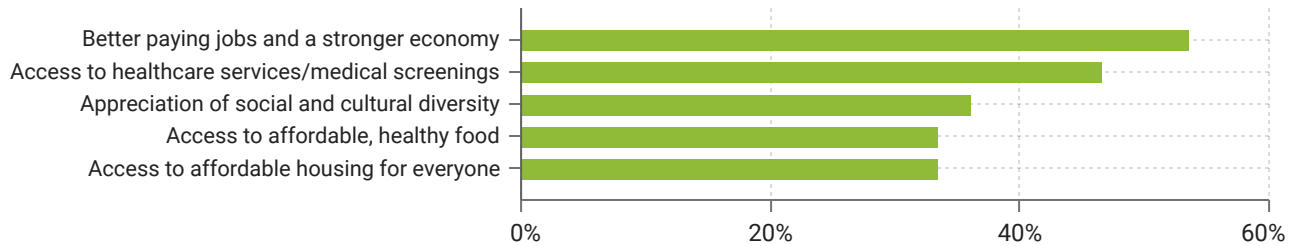
Community Health

Which of the following options would improve the quality of life most in your community? (continued)

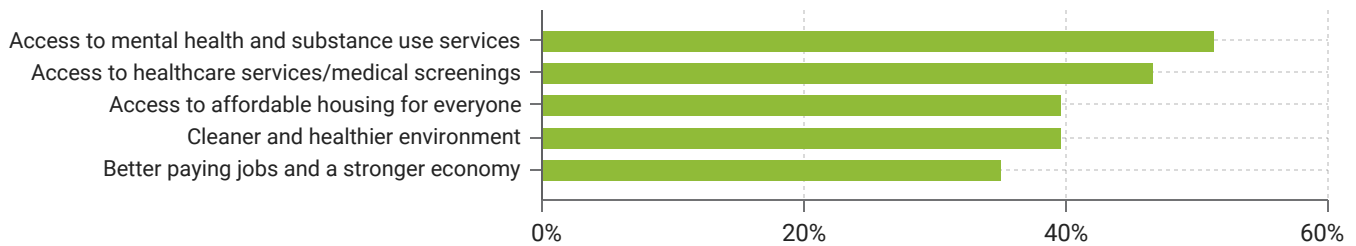
The following response breakdowns highlight groups that face greater health inequities and those who were underrepresented in our survey responses.

Note: When responses were filtered to show the top five responses for those who are White; those who identify as straight or heterosexual; those whose annual household income is \$35,000 or greater; and those whose highest level of education is at least some college experience, the results indicated the same top five responses as the overall survey results.

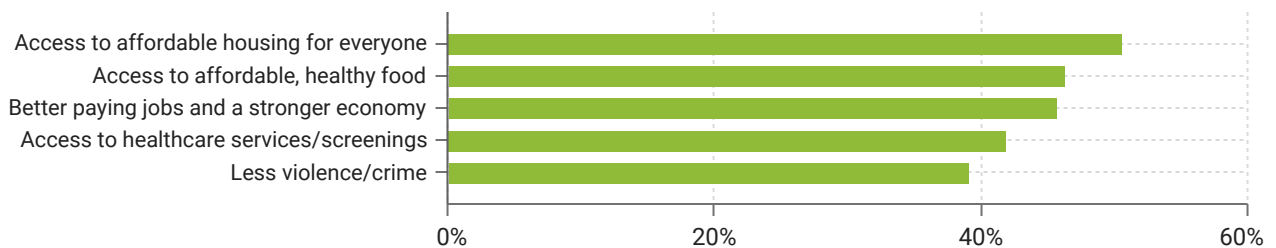
PEOPLE OF COLOR (n=115)



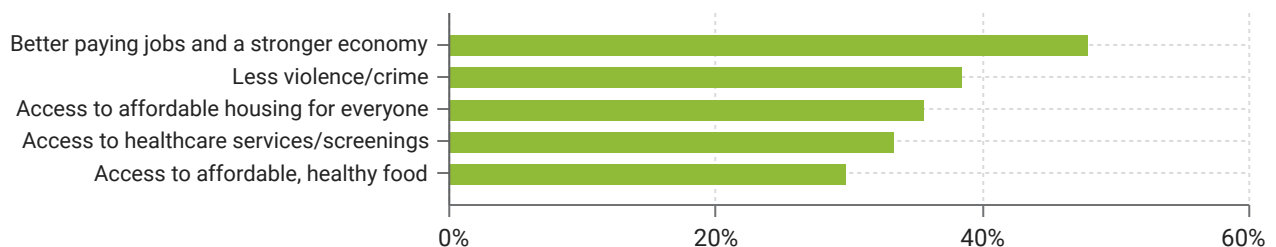
IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+ (n=44)



ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME LESS THAN \$35,000 (n=185)



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR LESS EDUCATION (n=146)



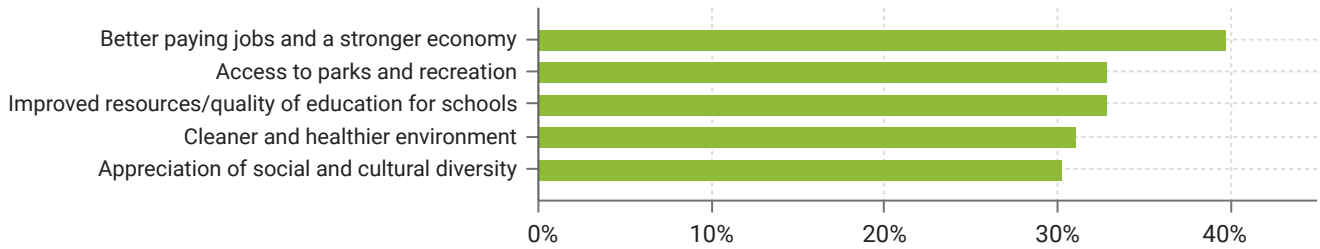
Community Health

Which of the following options would improve the quality of life most in your community? (continued)

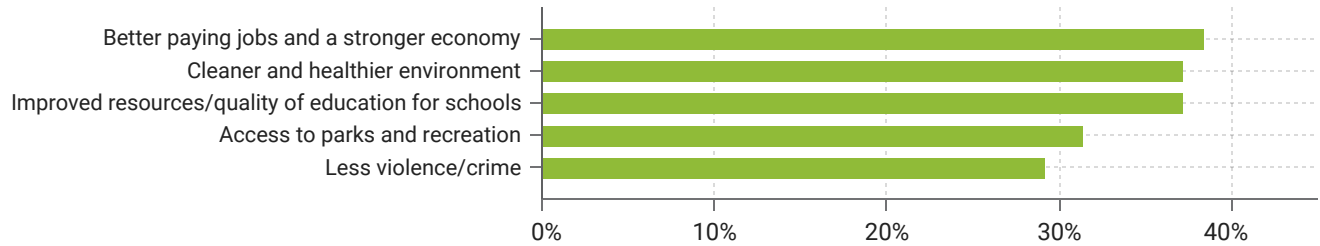
The region designations below are as follows:

- **North Region:** Armada Township, Bruce Township, Lenox Township, Memphis, New Haven, Ray Township, Romeo, City of Richmond, Richmond Township and Washington Township.
- **Central Region:** Chesterfield Township, Clinton Township, Harrison Township, Macomb Township, Mount Clemens, New Baltimore, Shelby Township, Sterling Heights and Utica.
- **South Region:** Center Line, Eastpointe, Fraser, Grosse Pointe Shores, Roseville, St. Clair Shores and Warren.

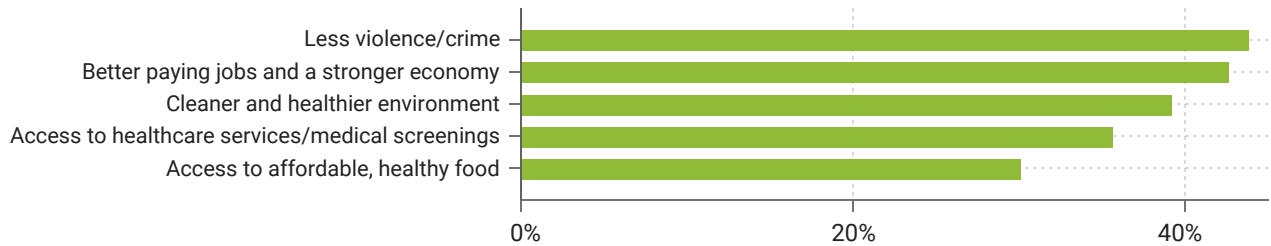
NORTH REGION (n=116)



CENTRAL REGION (n=820)

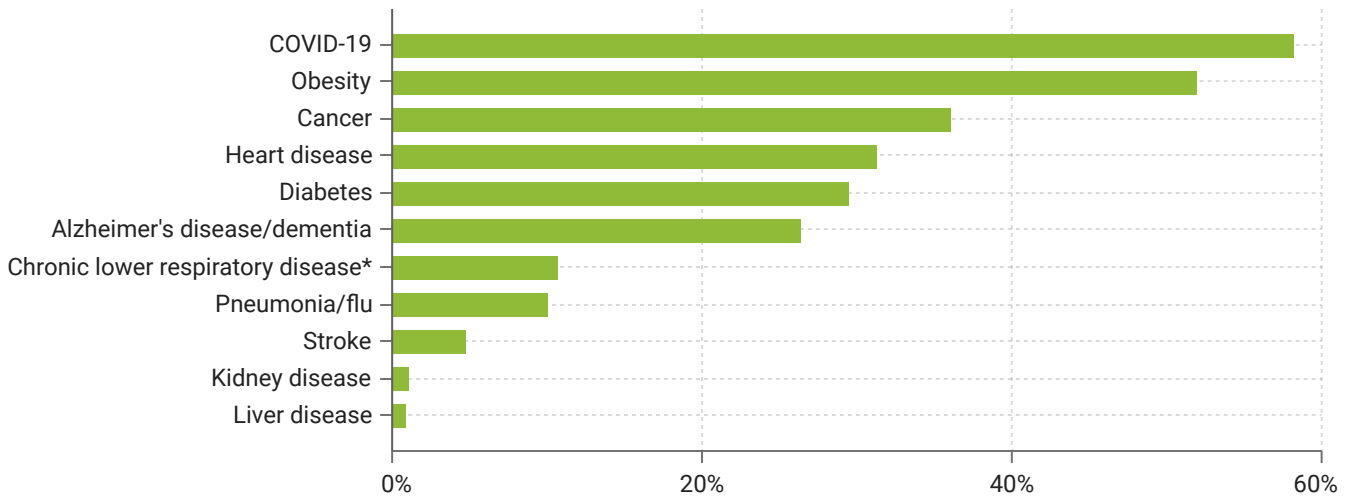


SOUTH REGION (n=327)



Community Health

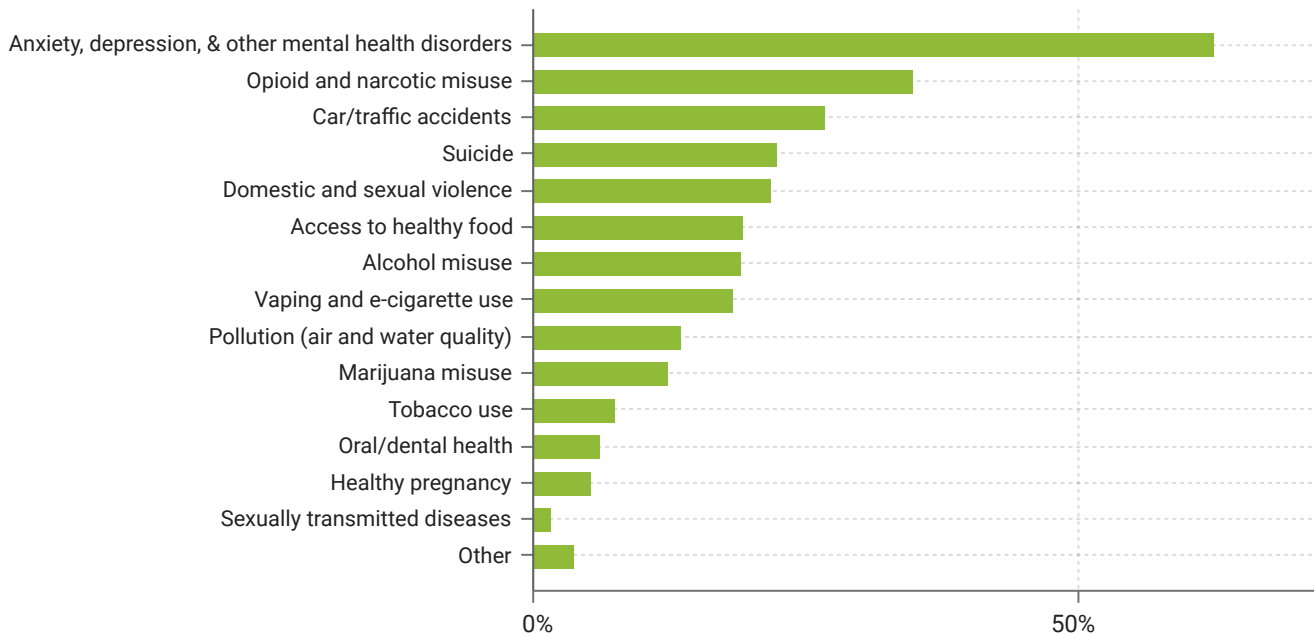
Which of these medical conditions do you feel are most important and need to be addressed in your community? Please select up to three options. (n=1316)



Among respondents, the top three medical conditions to be addressed in their community were COVID-19 (58%), obesity (52%), and cancer (36%).

*Chronic lower respiratory disease includes conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

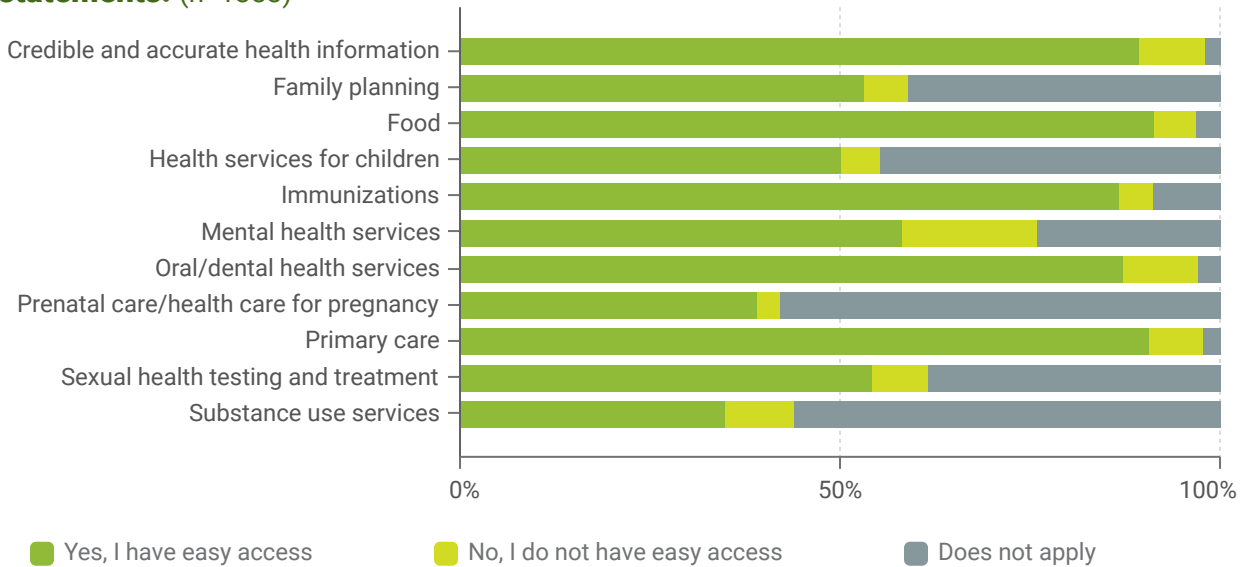
What additional health issues do you feel are most important and need to be addressed in your community? Please select up to three options. (n=1316)



Among the additional health issues to be addressed, survey respondents overwhelmingly chose anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders (62%) as the top issue to focus on. Other top responses included opioid and narcotic misuse (35%), car and traffic accidents (27%), and suicide (22%).

Community Health

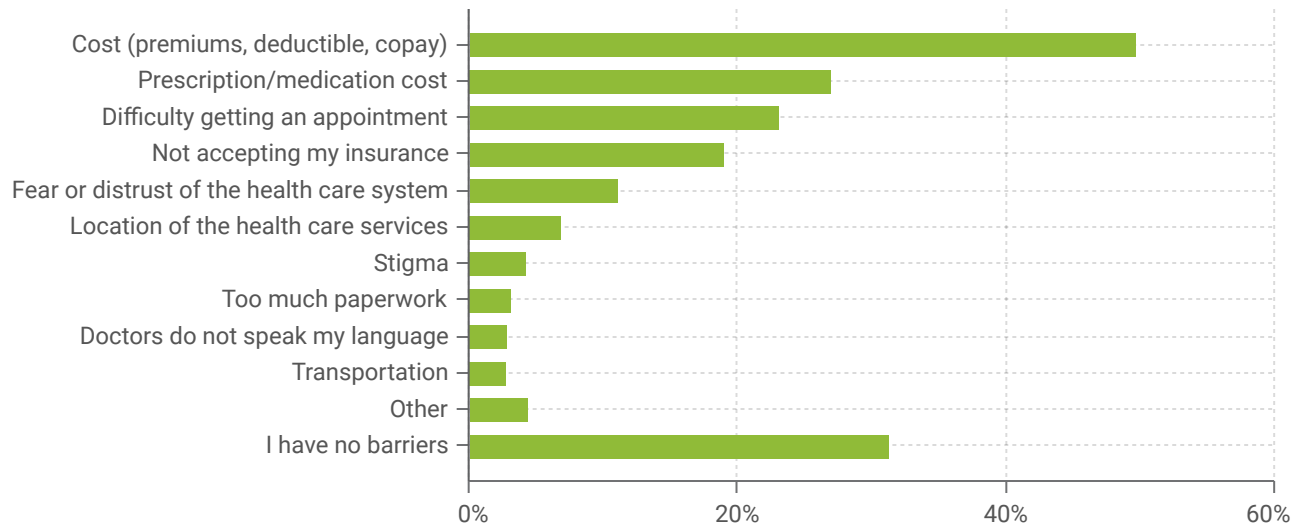
Please indicate whether you think you have easy access to each of the following statements: (n=1383)



The vast majority of respondents indicated that they had easy access to food (91%), primary care (91%), credible and accurate health information (89%), oral/dental health services (87%), and immunizations (87%). The greatest area to which respondents lacked easy access was mental health services (18%), followed by oral/dental services (10%) and substance use services (9%).

Which of the following options make it harder for you to get health care services?

Please select up to three options. (n=1346)



The greatest barriers respondents identified to accessing health care services were the overall cost (50%), the cost of prescriptions or medications (27%), and difficulty getting an appointment (23%). Among respondents who selected "Other," themes identified were COVID-19 risk or restrictions (or lack of adherence to COVID-19 safety measures), poor quality of care, and difficulty obtaining or utilizing insurance.

Open-ended responses

In addition to the structured questions above, respondents were also asked to share any additional feedback or important information related to their health and the health of their community. Recurring themes from their responses that were not directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic are outlined below.

One common theme among respondents was **health care access and insurance**. Multiple respondents discussed the high cost of health insurance or difficulty obtaining health insurance. Others highlighted poor quality of care in health care settings, staffing shortages, and an inequitable health care system overall. Another theme was **health information and resources**. Multiple respondents were seeking more information about what the Macomb County Health Department offered for residents or general access to community health resources.

Multiple respondents discussed improvements to **parks, recreation, and infrastructure**. Some respondents wanted completed or additional sidewalks to improve the walkability of their community, with others stating they felt unsafe walking in their community. Others specifically requested either more or improved parks, trails, and green space in their community as well as bike trails and greater lake access.

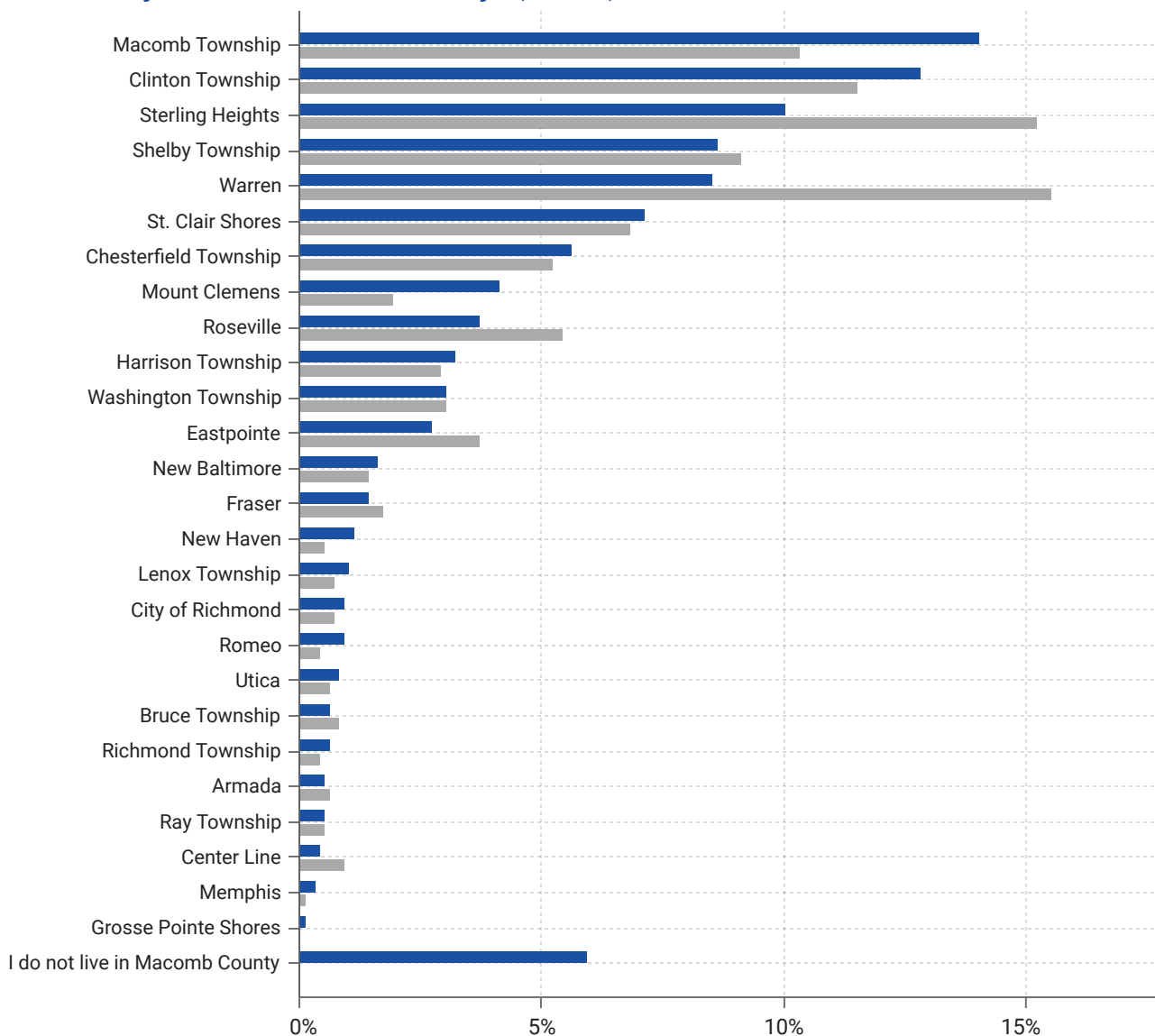
Another common theme was **diversity, equity, and inclusion**. Respondents emphasized the need to improve cultural diversity and inclusion in Macomb County. Others specifically highlighted the issues of racism and discrimination in their community; some went further and expressed a desire to leave the county overall due to racism and discrimination. Respondents also wanted the county to address racism systemically and more directly promote equity and social justice.

Some additional themes highlighted by survey respondents include improving access to mental health services and addressing mental health concerns, greater assistance and resources for older adults, addressing substance use, improving food and grocery store access, improving insurance coverage and cost of dental care, increasing affordable opportunities for physical activity, and improving community cohesion and an overall sense of community.

Demographics

The remaining questions illustrate the demographics of the survey respondents. The proportion of survey respondents in each demographic category is in blue and, when applicable, proportions represented in the general Macomb County population from the US Census are in light gray.

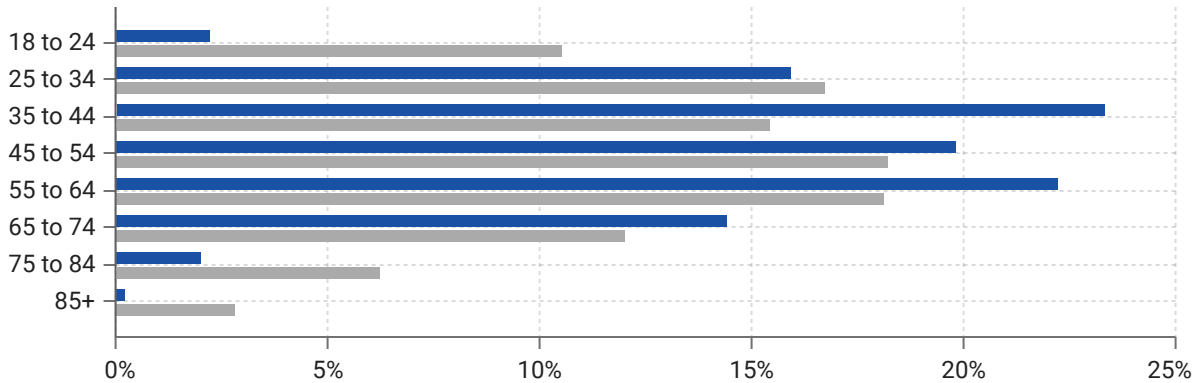
Where do you live in Macomb County? (n=1402)



While the distribution of respondent municipality of residence roughly mirrors that of Macomb County, some municipalities in central Macomb were overrepresented among survey respondents (Macomb Township, Clinton Township, and Mount Clemens) while other cities in central and south Macomb were underrepresented (Warren, Sterling Heights, Roseville, Eastpointe, and Center Line).

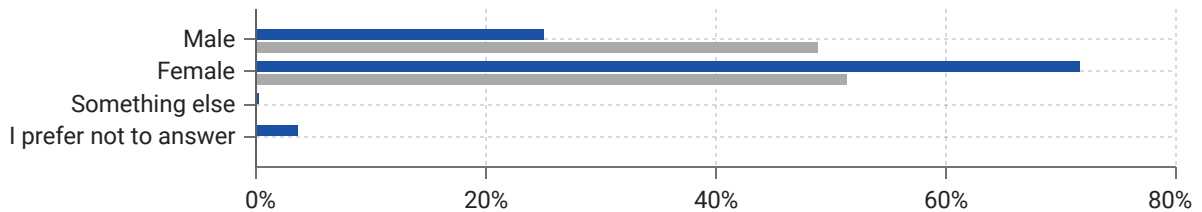
Demographics

What is your age? (n=1376)



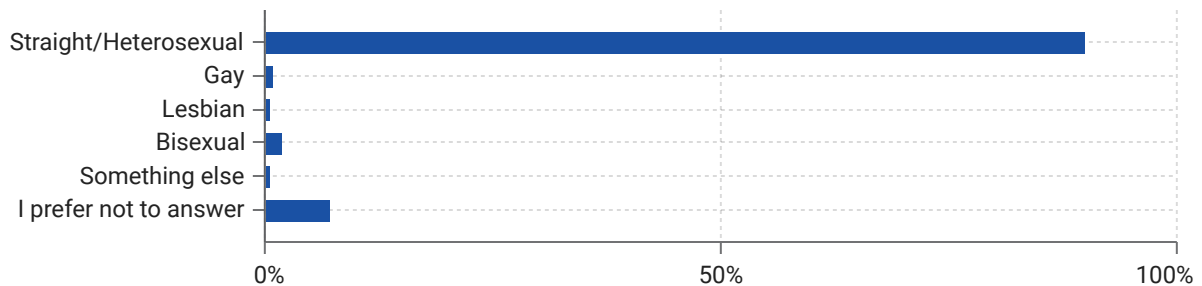
Macomb County residents aged 35 to 74 were overrepresented among respondents, particularly the 35 to 44 age group, while those 18 to 24 and those 75 and older were underrepresented among respondents.

What is your gender? (n=1382)



Among survey respondents, male respondents were largely underrepresented (25%) compared to female respondents (72%).

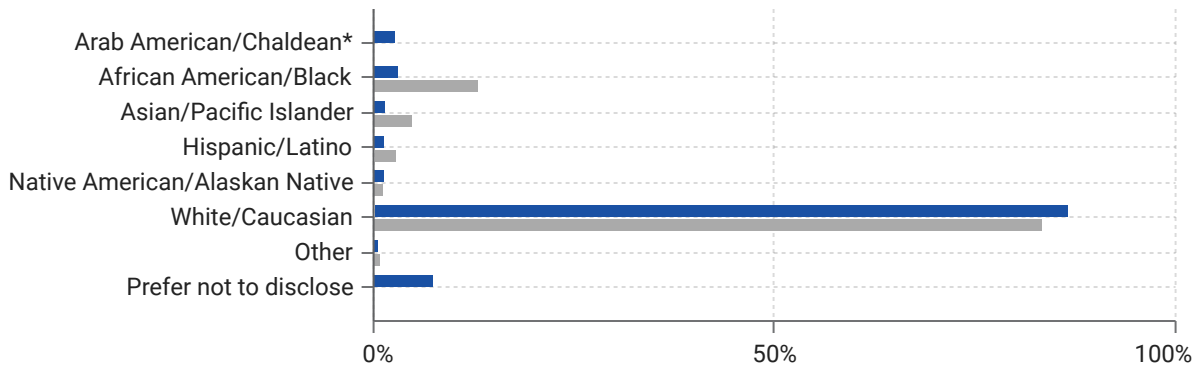
What is your sexual orientation? (n=1378)



While there are no community-level estimates of sexual orientation for Macomb County, the proportion of survey respondents who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual (2.8%) roughly mirrors a proportion estimate for the Michigan population (about 3.7%).

Demographics

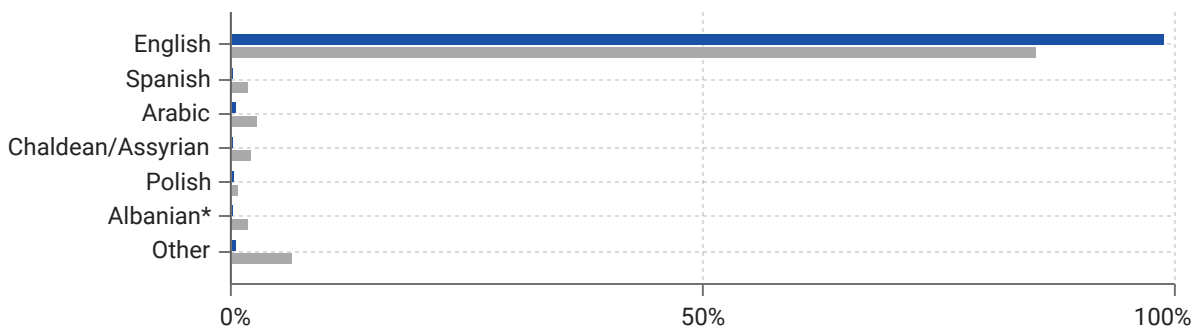
What race(s) or ethnic group(s) do you identify with? Select all that apply. (n=1378)



Among survey respondents, African American and Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic and Latino residents were underrepresented compared to the general population in Macomb County.

*Note: There are not county-level estimates available for those who identify as either Arab American or Chaldean.

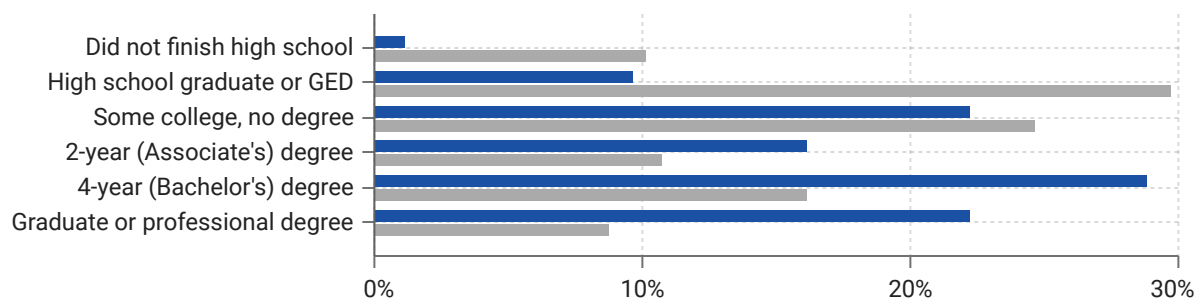
What is the primary language you speak at home? (n=1378)



Among survey respondents, non-English speakers were underrepresented overall. Macomb County has a significant proportion of residents who speak Arabic (2.6%), Chaldean or Assyrian (2.0%), Spanish (1.7%), and Albanian (1.7%) that were marginally represented among those who responded to the survey.

*Note: The county estimate for those who primarily speak Albanian at home also includes those who speak Romanian, Lithuanian, Swedish, and Pashto.

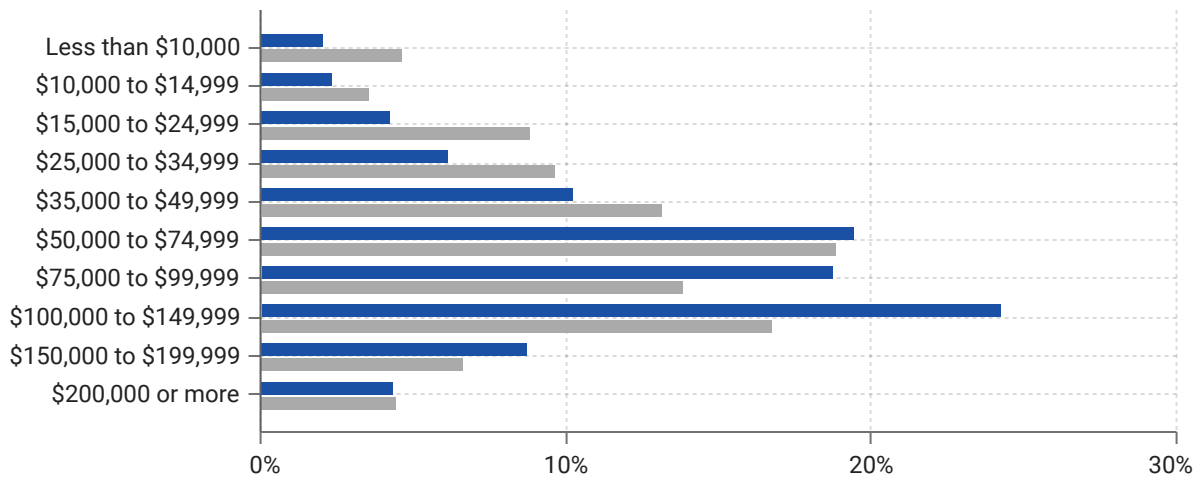
What is the highest level of education that you have achieved? (n=1371)



Among survey respondents, those who were more highly educated were overrepresented in our survey while those either whose highest level of education was high school or did not graduate high school were largely underrepresented.

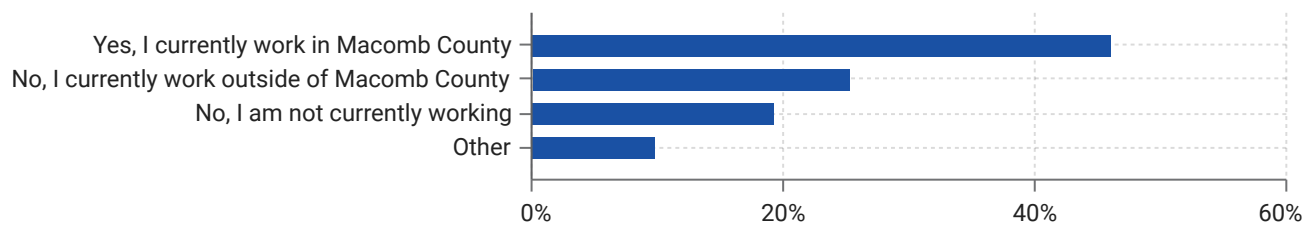
Demographics

What is your annual household income? (n=1270)



Among survey respondents, Macomb County residents with an annual household income of \$75,000 to \$200,000 were overrepresented, while residents with an annual household income of less than \$50,000 were underrepresented.

Do you work in Macomb County? (n=1375)



Among survey respondents, 46% reported working in Macomb County and 25% reported working outside of Macomb County. Among those who responded "Other," the vast majority indicated that they were retired. Others reported working in multiple counties or working from their home in Macomb County during the pandemic but normally would be working outside of Macomb County.

Acknowledgments

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