

Stevens County Community Health Needs Assessment

Authors:

Morgan Rosengrant, Research Scientist II
Ryan Drobny, Research Scientist I
Spokane Regional Health District, Data Center



Sonja Moore, Community Health Specialist
Northeast Tri County Health District
e: smoore@netchd.org
t: 509-563-8036



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Introduction

The Stevens County Community Health Needs Assessment process includes quantitative community survey analysis and qualitative analysis from focus groups and key informant interviews with community members and community leaders representing Stevens County.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to share the needs and priorities of Stevens County. These included:

- Emerging issues facing Stevens County
- What residents have to say about barriers and assets affecting health
- Health behaviors and outcomes

Methods

Methods included to compile this report were:

- Community survey
- Community focus groups
- Community leader key-informant interviews

Limitations

This report highlights data from a county wide survey, focus groups, and community leader key-informant interviews. Survey results were collected through a convenience sample and are not representative of the entire county due to how, where, and from whom survey data was collected. Focus group and key informant interviews do not represent the entire county due to the small sample size.

Community Survey Results

Overview

Northeast Tri County Health District (NETCHD) and the Spokane Regional Health District Data Center administered the Stevens County Community Health Needs Assessment survey during the spring of 2022. The purpose of the survey was to provide insight into the health needs in the community and identify areas of focus for potential community health improvement projects and programs. Through a convenience sample and with support from community partners, NETCHD collected 426 responses during the spring of 2022. The survey focused on quality of life and health behaviors and outcomes. The health behaviors and outcomes section were divided into three areas:

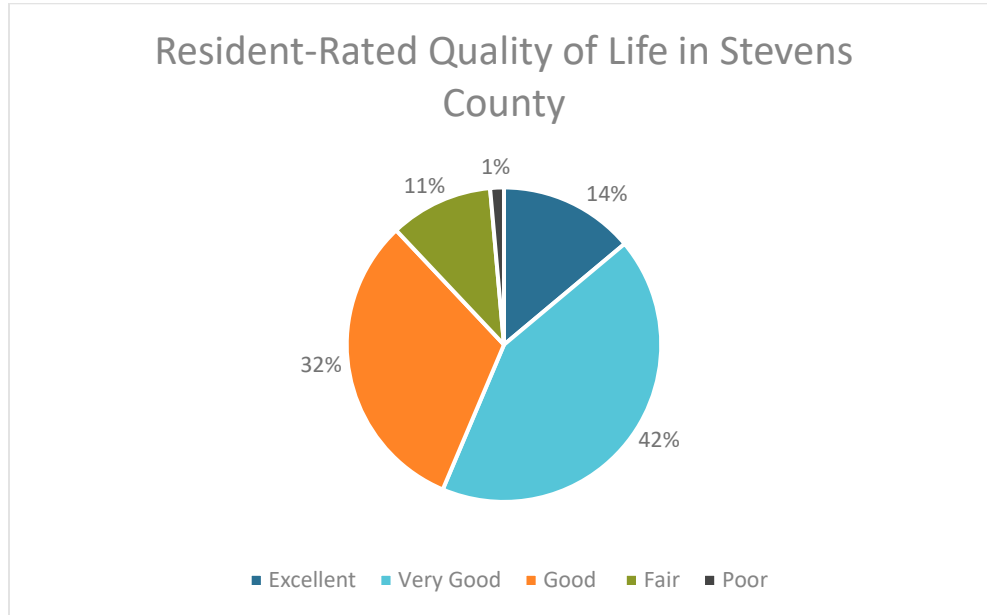
- Citizen satisfaction
- Social support
- Health outcomes

Experience as a Citizen in Stevens County

Survey respondents answered several questions regarding their experiences as citizens of Stevens County. Participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life and satisfaction with services, as well as identify the most important issue facing the area in which they live.

Quality of Life

Individuals were asked: “How would you rate the quality of life in the county you live in?” Of all respondents living in Stevens County, 56% rated the quality of life in Stevens County as excellent or very good.

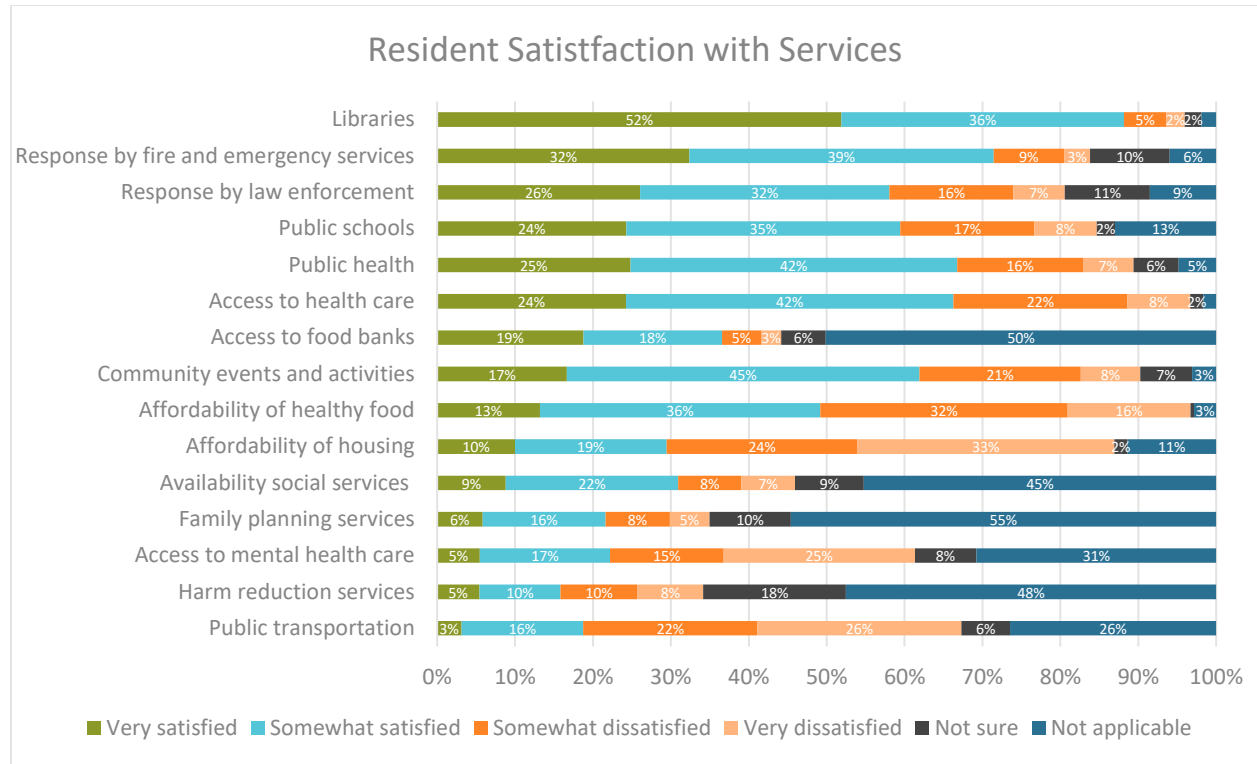


Quality of life rating differed between groups. For instance, for those respondents reporting an annual household income \$50,000 or above in Stevens County¹, 64% rated quality of life as excellent or very good, compared to 47% for those making below \$50,000.

Satisfaction with Services

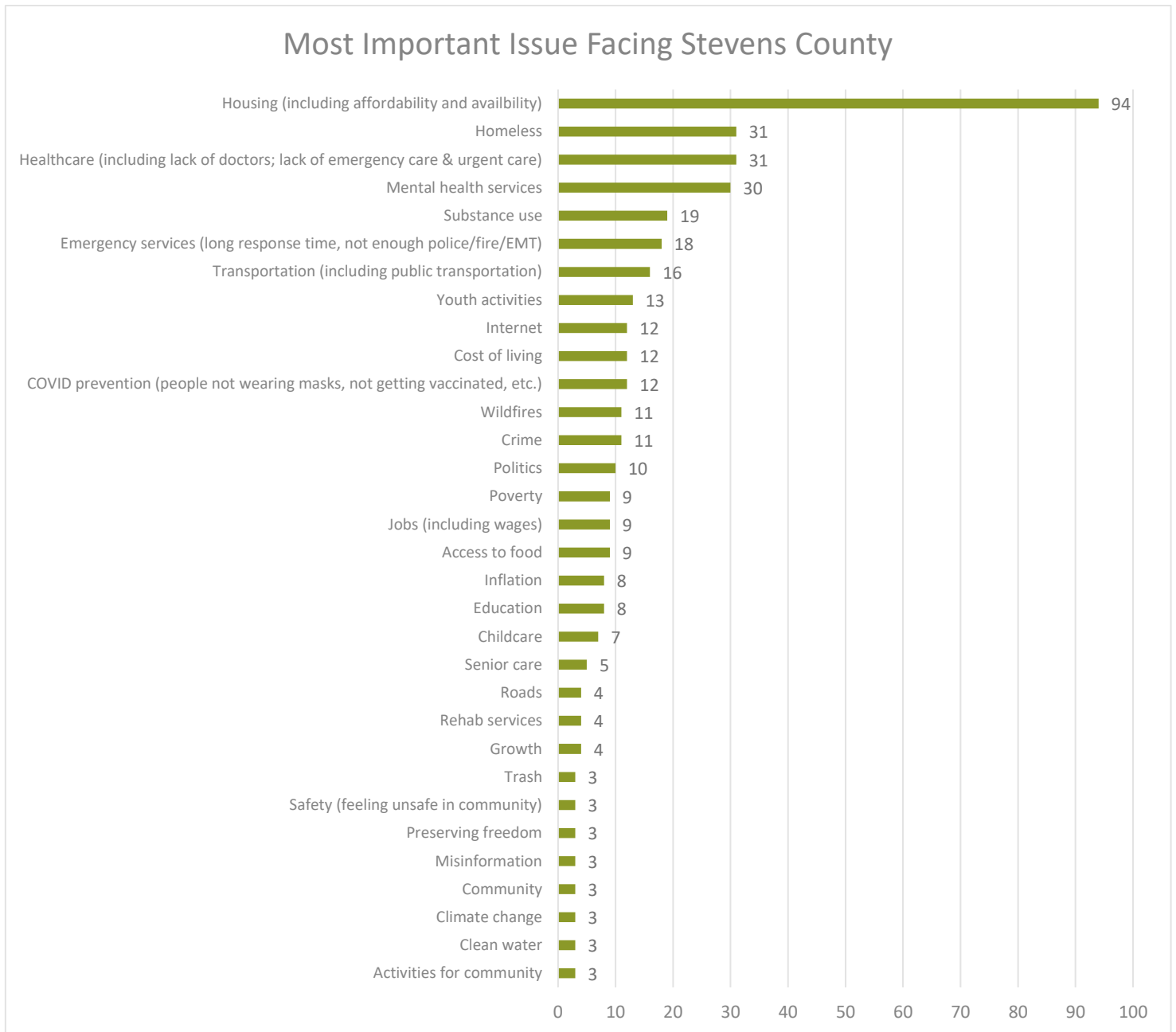
Individuals were asked to describe their level of satisfaction with several services in Stevens County. Among all respondents in Stevens County, *Libraries* received the highest satisfaction rating with 88% reporting they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the service. Among all respondents, the second highest satisfaction levels were with *Response by Fire and Emergency Services*, with 71% reporting they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. (Note, due to rounding, not all tables equal 100%)

¹ The estimated median household income for Stevens County in 2021 (2021 inflation-adjusted dollars) was \$57,206. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Most Important Issue in Stevens County

To understand which issues were important to residents of Stevens County, the survey included the question, “What is the most important issue facing the area you live in today?” Responses to this open-ended question were categorized into major themes. The most frequently cited issues were “affordable housing” and “homeless”. Respondents also identified mental health services, healthcare, and substance use as top issues.



Social Support in Stevens County

Survey respondents answered questions about their community services in Stevens County. Participants were asked to describe transportation and the stability of their housing situation.

Transportation

The survey included the question, “How do you usually get around to go to work, school, run errands, shop, etc.?” Of all respondents for Stevens County, 93% said they drive their own vehicle. Few

respondents reported other modes of transportation, with 4% getting rides from friends or family, 3% stating they walk and 0% stating they use community transportation.

Housing Stability

Housing stability was measured by the question, “How do you feel about your current housing situation?” For all respondents, 63% said their housing situation was very stable and secure while 9% said their housing situation was very unstable and insecure or fairly unstable and insecure.

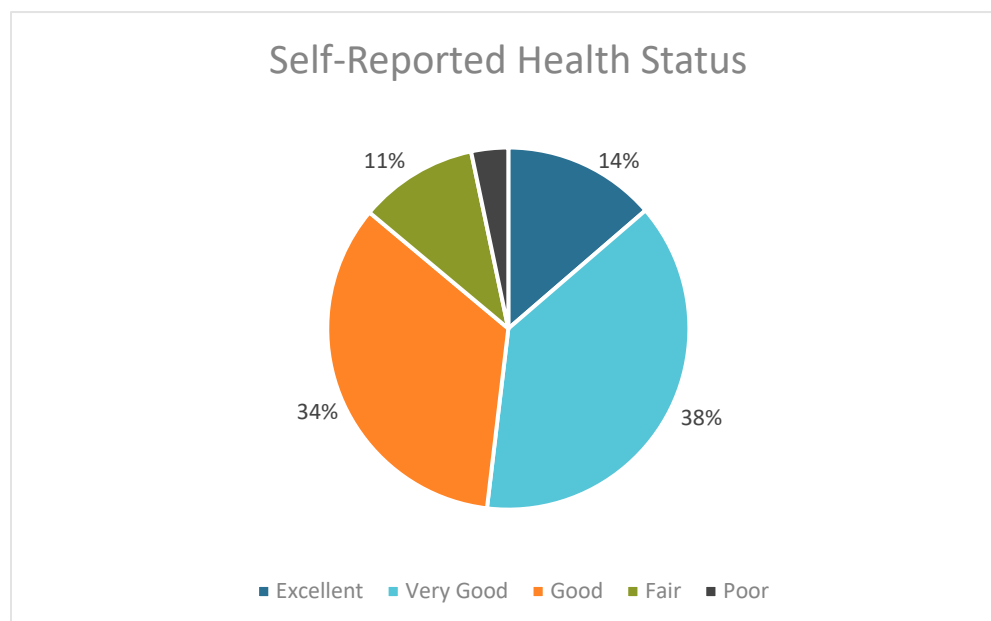
Housing Stability	Stevens County
Very stable and secure	63%
Fairly stable and secure	27%
Not sure	1%
Fairly unstable and insecure	6%
Very unstable and insecure	3%

Resident Health in Stevens County

Survey respondents answered questions about their health including general health, access and use of health services, health behaviors, and mental health. The following is a description of survey responses.

General Health

Individuals were asked to rate their general health on a scale from excellent to poor. For all respondents, 52% rated their general health as excellent or very good while 14% rated their health as fair or poor.



Personal Doctor and Doctor Visits

Individuals were asked if they had one person they consider their personal doctor or health care provider. For all respondents, 61% said they had only one and 15% said they did not have a personal doctor or health care provider.

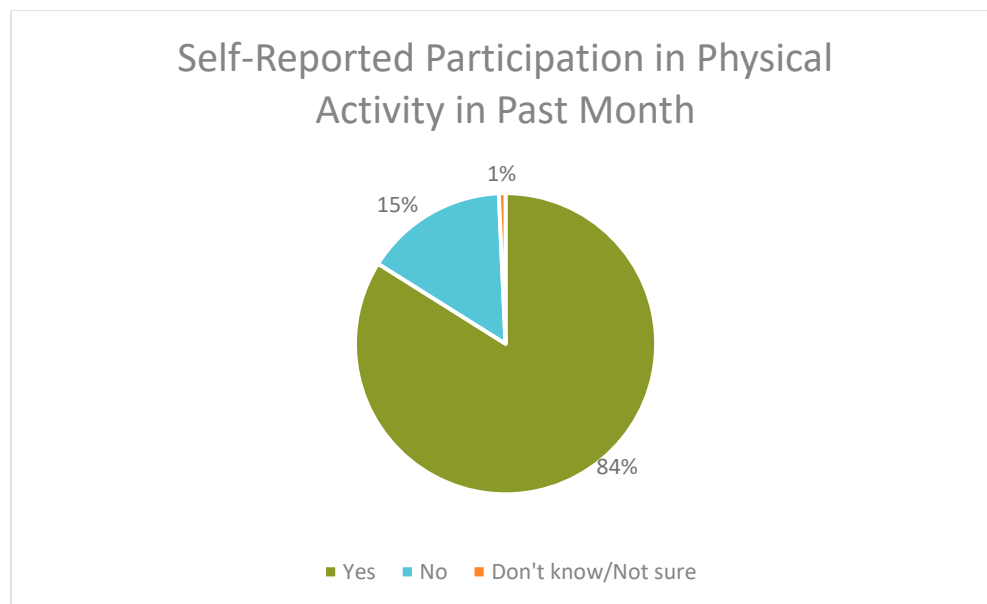
Personal Doctor or Health Care Provider	Stevens County
Yes, only one	61%
More than one	23%
No	15%
Don't know/ not sure	1%

Survey respondents were also asked if they seek medical care when they need it. For all respondents, 69% said they do seek care when they need it and 29% said they probably would but feel hesitant.

Seeking Medical Care	Stevens County
Yes, I will seek medical care	69%
Probably, but I feel hesitant	29%
No, I do not trust the doctors or medical system	1%
I do not seek medical care	1%

Physical Activity

Respondents were asked if they had participated in any physical activities in the past month outside of their job. For all respondents, 84% said they had participated in physical activities.



Mental Health

Individuals were asked two questions about mental health and treatment. Individuals were asked: “Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?” For all respondents, the average number of days with poor mental health was 5.8 days. Among those who reported having an

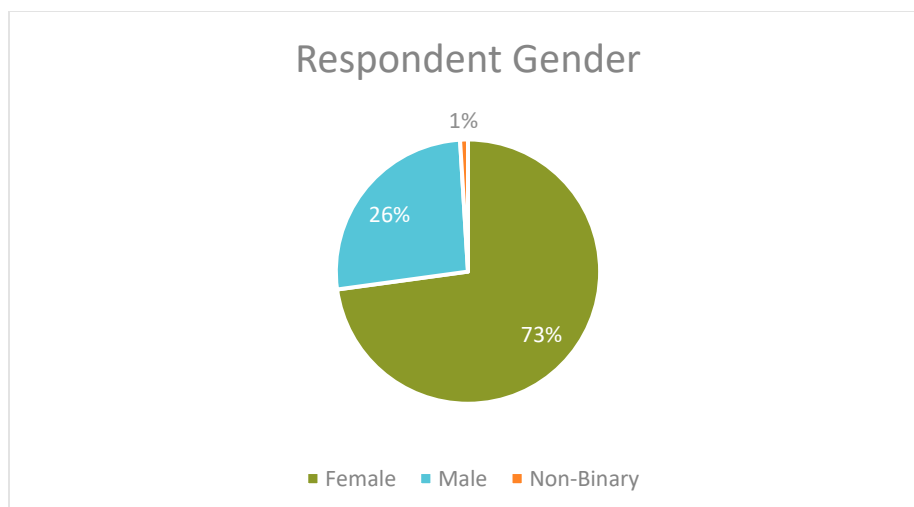
income of \$50,000 or above in Stevens County, the average number of days of poor mental health was 3.9 days, while those with income below \$50,000 reported an average of 6.4 days of poor mental health.

Finally, individuals were asked: “If you felt you needed mental health treatment or counseling but did not receive any, why not?” Respondents were asked to select all appropriate responses from a list provided. The top reasons individuals did not receive treatment or counseling were that they did not need treatment, some other reason or reasons, affordability, and not knowing where to receive services. The following table displays the number of respondents for each option.

Reason No Mental Health Treatment	Number of Individuals Selecting this Option
I did not need treatment.	241
Some other reason or reasons.	75
I could not afford the cost	56
I did not know where to get services.	51
My health insurance does not pay enough for mental health treatment or counseling.	39
I was concerned that information I gave the counselor might not be kept confidential.	29
I was concerned that getting mental health treatment or counseling might cause my family, neighbors, or community to have a negative opinion of me.	21
My health insurance does not cover any mental health treatment or counseling.	20
I was concerned that getting mental health treatment or counseling might have a negative effect on my job.	14
I did not have adequate transportation to get to mental health or counseling appointments	13
I was concerned that I might have to take medication.	10
I do not believe treatment or counseling is effective.	7
I was concerned that I might be committed to a psychiatric hospital.	7

Respondent Demographics

The survey had 426 respondents. The average age of all respondents was 55 years old. Respondents were 73% female and 26% male. 94% percent of respondents were white, all other race categories made up 4% (due to rounding, percentages do not equal 100%). 35% of respondents had annual household incomes below \$50,000.



Race	Percent
White	94%
Black or African American	0%
Asian	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%
Multi-racial	2%
Some other race	1%

Annual Household Income	Percent
Less than \$20,000	8%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	8%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	8%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	11%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14%
\$100,000 or more	19%
Prefer not to say	12%

Community Focus Groups

Overview

In support of the Stevens County Community Health Needs Assessment, the Northeast Tri County Health District conducted eight focus groups between October and November of 2022. The purpose of the focus groups was to engage community members in a discussion about top health issues that impact community health, as well as identify priorities in the community. Focus group participants were first

asked to individually identify the top issue facing Stevens County, then they reviewed community survey data and discussed the results, including what information was missing. After reviewing the data, facilitators asked focus group participants to identify the top three issues most important to the community's health.

Forty-four community members from the communities of Suncrest, Colville, Kettle Falls, Hunters, Chewelah/Valley, Loon Lake/Springdale, and Northport, Washington participated in the focus groups. Each community held one focus group except for Suncrest, where two focus groups were held. Participants were recruited through local clinics and service organizations.

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Spokane Regional Health District Data Center staff utilized the Grounded Theory technique for analysis of the transcripts. Principles of Grounded Theory include initial (open) coding, memo-ing and focus (selective) coding. Data Center staff separated themes into three categories:

- Most important issue facing the community
- Barriers and assets impacting community health
- Most important priority facing the community's health

Most Important Issues Facing the Community

Focus group participants individually responded to the question, *"What is the most important issue facing Stevens County today?"* and reviewed data collected through the community survey. They reflected on how the data collected mirrored the issues in their community experiences and what was missing from the community experience. Among all respondents, the most common issues identified were housing; transportation; communication of local information; county representation; healthcare; substance use; community services; and infrastructure.

Housing

Housing encompasses affordability, availability, and quality. Housing is limited and new housing is not being built; participants mentioned multiple people living in small spaces. Multi-unit housing and rentals were said to be lacking by participants many times. The availability of housing directly impacts the ability to attract professional workers to the area because the housing supply is so limited. Some participants thought that housing and jobs were intertwined and that one cannot be improved without the other. There was also concern for the homeless population, as resources are so limited for housing.

Transportation

Transportation speaks to the geographic nature of the land, people, and services/resources people need. Basic needs often require long trips on a limited number of narrow, two-lane highways. These long trips also tend to demand the use of personal vehicles - costing not just time but money for gas and maintenance. Public transportation, or local volunteer-based services, can be difficult to navigate and tend not to operate on all days or times. In many instances, no such services are available.

Communication of Local Information

Communication of local information touches on the way in which communities within Stevens County struggle to access information about services available to them. There are multiple sources to obtain information including social media, newspapers, fire department websites, etc., but the community lacks a central place to find information. A lack of centralized communication makes it difficult for people to find resources and services that are offered in their communities.

County Representation

County representation relates to how residents feel their community's representation in the county is impacted through the proximity of Colville, the county seat, to other parts of the county. Many of the county's resources are based in Colville (commissioners, sheriff's department, emergency services, etc.) which makes residents in the south of the county feel neglected.

Healthcare

Many services and resources are scarce or absent in Stevens County, but healthcare services are the most in demand. Long distances between residents and clinics, urgent care centers, hospitals, and specialists lead to delayed care and concern amongst residents of what to do in the event of emergencies.

Participants highlighted mental health as something with which many people in the county are struggling. All populations, from children to seniors, were mentioned as affected populations. Available mental health services are fully utilized, leaving many people without access. Additionally, concern was voiced that there is a stigma around accessing mental health services.

Substance Use and Treatment

Substance use relates to the concerns of drug use by residents and the lack of suitable treatment service options within the county. Marijuana seems to be the most prevalent among youth in the schools, while meth was mentioned as a concern for adults in the area. Many participants felt that the best option available to those suffering with substance abuse is to move out of the county where service options exist.

Community Services

Many services are scarcely available within the county. Common examples included childcare, access to food, and services geared towards seniors. Hours of operation can be a barrier to access for services like food banks, which are typically open one day per week. Childcare lacks flexibility with parents who try to reenter the workforce. Additionally, the quality and affordability of childcare is a concern for parents who feel like options are so limited that they, "just need a place." Senior care, including facilities and services, are a concern for the community, due to the rising aging population and nowhere for them to go in their area.

Infrastructure

Many of the barriers preventing solutions to the challenges/issues facing Stevens County residents are related to outdated technologies, infrastructure and means of communication. Internet access and transitioning information and services to the web is slow and inconsistent. Older forms of informing residents (newspapers, in-person, bulletin boards, etc.) are disappearing with little, if any, consistency in their replacements.

Beyond the internet and communication, some elements of physical infrastructure also were brought up. Water and sewage systems are outdated or non-existent in some communities and this serves as a barrier for other sorts of improvement.

Barriers and Assets Impacting Community Health

Throughout the focus group discussions, participants identified several barriers impacting their community's health. Participants also identified some assets that could be utilized to improve the

community's health, although assets were not provided in all themed areas. The following table describes these barriers and assets when suggested.

Barriers		Assets
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot sizes/zoning • Quality housing • Affordable housing • Lack of new housing • Lack of rentals or multi-unit housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library (for sharing information)
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow & limited highways for long travel • Difficult to navigate public transportation resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local ambulance(s)
Communication of Local Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent access to internet among residents • Absence of local newspapers • No central place to access all information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library (for sharing information) • Rural Resources
County Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from Colville to other communities • Essential services based in Colville feel disconnected from other communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries for distant/virtual county meetings
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distances to open clinics & urgent/emergency rooms • Mental health resources are maxed out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paramedicine/mobile medicine • Schools have aided services in the past
Substance Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distances to treatment facilities and programs 	
Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some storefronts being used for housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food banks • Local pharmacy • Fire department • Senior meals • Rosauers (grocery) • Rural Resources
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of city/town sewer systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet hot spots through library

Top Issues Impacting Community Health

After reviewing and discussing the data from the community survey, focus group participants were asked to identify and prioritize the top three issues impacting their community's health. Responses could be the same as their individual responses at the beginning of the meeting, but the group had to come to a consensus around the top three issues with a vote. The top issues among all eight focus groups varied, but housing, volunteerism, broadband, and lack of basic needs were prioritized by more than one group. Below are all the priorities identified with the top three priorities listed one through

three (number one with the highest number of votes and number three with the lowest number of votes). Bulleted priorities were identified as important, however were not voted into the top three.

Northport

1. Access to the medical clinic 3 days per week
2. Commercial kitchen and community center for gathering
3. Backup generator for Northport water system
 - *Mental health*
 - *Substance abuse and theft*
 - *Housing and home improvement*

Kettle Falls

1. Volunteerism
2. Youth and adult recreation services
3. Housing
 - *Downtown revitalization*
 - *Life skills*
 - *Substance abuse (all ages and substances)*
 - *Educational outreach on services for homeowners, tenants, businesses, etc.*

Colville

1. Housing (especially for homeless, women & children, transitional)
2. Childcare
3. Information literacy
 - *Jobs with livable wages*
 - *Untreated addiction*
 - *Untreated mental health*
 - *Access to reliable internet*
 - *Transportation*

Chewelah & Valley

1. Mental health
2. Housing opportunities for all, especially the workforce
3. Help for substance abuse
 - *Opportunities for seniors like housing, medication management*
 - *Childcare*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Access to local services (i.e. healthcare)*
 - *Education on health issues and personal care*
 - *Local homeless warming center*

Hunters

1. First responders and lack of volunteers (especially young people)
2. Access to onsite or mobile clinic
3. Internet connectivity

- *Affordability and availability of housing*
- *Awareness of community resources*
- *Transportation*
- *Law enforcement presence*
- *Food availability*

Loon Lake & Springdale

1. Lack of basic needs being met (i.e. clean water, hygiene, food, clothes, etc.) and what are the root causes
2. Transportation
3. Access to resources in the local community
 - *Internet connectivity*
 - *Access to urgent care*
 - *Access to mental health*

Suncrest A

1. County services access and availability in South Stevens (i.e. representation, fire, sheriff, etc.)
2. Communication of services in South Stevens
3. Parks and recreation funding
 - *Access to emergency and non-emergency care*
 - *Mental health*
 - *Drug use and abuse*
 - *Separate zip code from Spokane (99026)*

Suncrest B

1. Broadband
2. Behavioral health services
3. Senior services
 - *Communications*
 - *Affordability and attainability of housing, including apartments and condos*
 - *Health services like specialists*
 - *Food and water insecurity*
 - *Access to parks and playgrounds*

Public Health Advisory Board Interviews

The NETCHD Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) strives to balance expertise, career experience, and consumer experience in areas that impact public health with three memberships offered to each Stevens, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties, and one membership offered to each federally recognized tribe in the tri county region: Colville Confederated Tribes, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, and Spokane Tribe of Indians. The PHAB provides key input to the NETCHD Board of Health (BOH) on issues that affect the health and wellbeing of citizens and/or environmental factors within the jurisdiction of NETCHD. Given the breadth of knowledge and experience held by the PHAB, the members representing Stevens County were interviewed together to provide their individual and collective perspectives on the information gained through the eight focus groups held in Stevens County.

Most Important Issue Facing the Community

Priority Issues in the Community	Discussion
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to recruit healthcare workers without adequate housing • New housing is not being built in the area at the rate that is needed – Energy code makes new housing more expensive and building codes are restrictive • Lack of transitional housing • Poor living conditions due to many people living in a small space to avoid homelessness • Lack of senior housing/ senior care housing
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of healthcare workers – difficult to fill open job postings • Shortage of home health workers, nurses, behavioral health providers • Finding ways outside of the clinical setting to address health to reduce the burden on law enforcement and other social services – paramedicine/mobile medicine • Limited availability of appointments • Loss of ambulance service in southern Stevens County
Substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication about available services in the area
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a collaborative effort across the entire county to address issue, not just focusing on issues in Colville

Barriers

- Recruiting workers
- Building new housing
- Communication of resources
- Mistrust in the community due to COVID

Assets

- Libraries are an important place for communication to the community
- Two critical access hospitals
- Rural Resources
- Evaluation and treatment center
- Residency Program

Secondary Community Data Indicators

In addition to primary data collection, secondary data was collected for Stevens County in a separate report. The Stevens County Indicators Summary provides data demonstrating the health status of

Stevens County residents and some individual risk behaviors that contribute to health outcomes. The indicators in this report are used to monitor the population's health. The Stevens County Indicators Summary demonstrates changes within Stevens County over time and, when available, make comparisons between Stevens County, Washington State, and the United States. Additionally, lower socioeconomic status is often associated with poorer health outcomes. When available and appropriate, health indicators were analyzed by age, sex, race, education, and income to identify disparities. This report provides the community and local agencies with information on health issues and affected populations. The information may help direct health and social interventions to areas of greatest need and build support for health policies, as well as educate the public, community organizations, and policymakers on the community's health and well-being. The full report can be found at countyhealthinsights.org/county/Stevens.

The worst performing indicators are below:

- Bullied (youth)
- Flu shot (adult)
- Preschool immunization
- Sigmoidoscopy/coloscopy
- Childhood disability
- Depression (youth)
- General health (adult)Mammogram
- Overweight (youth)

Key Findings

Through primary and secondary data collection methods the top issues are displayed below. Across all community collected data and secondary data, housing and substance use were identified as top issues.

Most Important Issue (Survey)	Top Issues Impacting Community's Health (Focus Groups)	PHAB (Interviews)	Health Indicators (Worst Performing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (including affordability & availability) • Homeless • Healthcare (including lack of doctors; lack of emergency care & urgent care) • Mental health services • Substance use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Transportation • Communication of local information • County representation • Healthcare • Substance use • Community services • infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Healthcare • Substance Use • Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullied (youth) • Flu shot (adult) • Preschool immunization • Sigmoidoscopy/coloscopy • Childhood disability • Depression (youth) • General health (adult) • Mammogram • Overweight (youth)

Next Steps

Findings from this report will be used to develop goals and strategies to improve the health and well-being of residents in Stevens County. Northeast Tri County Health District will work with organizations in

Stevens County Community Health Needs Assessment 2022-2023

Stevens County to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for Stevens County. Performance measures and data collection methods will be used to track progress.