

San Joaquin County 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment

Executive Summary

San Joaquin County lies in the midst of one of the most successful agricultural areas of the world, and at the same time is home to the largest city in America to file for bankruptcy. The county is celebrated for its diverse communities of Latinos and African Americans as well as Asian immigrants; but there is also a big gap in health outcomes between ethnic groups. Some parts of the county have robust commuter neighborhoods with linkage to jobs in nearby counties, while other areas struggle with some of the highest homicide rates in the nation. There are some unique challenges such as access to care for the large undocumented immigrant population, the great need for substance use disorder treatment, and the high rates of asthma in the Central Valley. San Joaquin County also struggles with the same issues that are seen across the state or nationally such as rising obesity, poor oral health, and mental illness; but these issues are compounded by underlying social determinants of health including education, economic security and affordable housing. It is a county of contrasts, holding in one hand enormous challenges and in the other hand exciting new opportunities. The direction that is taken now to address these various needs will determine the future of the 726,000 residents who make San Joaquin County their home.

The 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) offers a comprehensive community health profile that encompasses all these conditions that impact health in our county. The overall goal of the CHNA is to inform and engage local decision-makers, key stakeholders, and the community-at-large in collaborative efforts to improve the health and well-being of all San Joaquin County residents. The development of the 2016 CHNA report has been an inclusive and comprehensive process guided by a Core Planning Group and a broadly representative Steering Committee.

Every three years the nonprofit hospitals along with the county public health department and a host of community partners come together to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the health needs in the community and to prioritize those needs. This year's CHNA process included surveys of nearly 3,000 residents, interviews with key informants, 29 focus group discussions in the community, and data analysis of over 150 indicators, creating a robust picture of the issues affecting people's health where they live, work, and play.

San Joaquin County is a very multi-cultural community with 39.7% of the population identifying as Hispanic/Latino, 7.6% as African American, 14.4% as Asian, and 38% identifying as non-Hispanic white, other race, or multiple races.¹ More than 10% of residents are unemployed, 28.5% are under 18 years old and the median household income is \$53,253.² San Joaquin County faces many of the same challenges seen throughout the state, but often to a greater degree. In the County Health Rankings report San Joaquin County ranks as 41 out of 57 counties on overall health outcomes. On average, San Joaquin residents rate their health as poorer than the state overall, and there are notable disparities in health status between the county and the state.

¹ United States Census 2010; retrieved from factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

² Ibid.

The following health needs have been identified as priorities in San Joaquin County.

Obesity and Diabetes: Overweight and obesity are strongly related to stroke, heart disease, some cancers, and type 2 diabetes. These chronic diseases represent leading causes of death nationwide, as well as among residents of San Joaquin County. Diabetes is of particular concern as San Joaquin County has one of the highest rates in California for diabetes mortality.

Education: There is an important relationship between education and health. People with limited education tend to have much higher rates of disease and disability, whereas people with more education are likely to live longer, practice healthy behaviors, and experience better health outcomes for themselves and their children.³ In San Joaquin County, graduation rates are lower than the California state average, as is reading proficiency among third graders.

Youth Growth and Development: Primary and secondary data indicate that youth development tends to be undermined by trauma and violence, unhealthy family functioning, exposure to negative institutional environments and practices, and insufficient access to positive youth activities, among other things. In San Joaquin County, the disparate levels of exposure to these risk factors contribute to outcome disparities during youth and throughout adulthood. This includes disparities by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and income, with respect to outcomes such as juvenile justice involvement, foster placement, adult incarceration, educational attainment, and chronic disease.

Economic Security: Economic security is very strongly linked to health; it can impact access to healthy food, medical care, education and safe environments.⁴ Poverty and unemployment are higher in San Joaquin County than California as a whole. Concerns surrounding economic security were particularly important to community members, who highlighted the need for jobs that pay a living wage and the ability to afford descent and safe housing.

Violence and Injury: San Joaquin County's injury rates remain substantially higher than the California averages. Among unintentional injuries, the leading causes of death in San Joaquin County are poisoning, motor vehicle crashes, falls, and drowning/submersion. Among intentional injuries, core concerns are often associated with family and community violence. The homicide rate is much higher than California as a whole, particularly among men of color. Human trafficking was also noted as a growing concern by interviewees. Survey respondents identified violence as a core issue in their communities and cited concerns such as gun violence, gang activity among youth, and domestic violence as key themes.

Substance Use: San Joaquin County's rate of drug-induced deaths is 56% higher than average rate across California (17.3 per 100,000 compared to 11.1 per 100,000). Primary data collection from surveys, focus group discussions and interviews highlighted the importance of this issue for the county; 41.1% of community survey respondents report that drug abuse is among the most concerning health behaviors in their community.

³ "Exploring the Social Determinants of Health: Education and Health," Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Accessed October 19, 2015, http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70447.

⁴ "Health & Poverty," Institute for Research on Poverty, Accessed October 19, 2015, <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/research/health.htm>.

Access to Housing: Primary and secondary data indicate that access to safe and affordable housing is an important health concern in San Joaquin County, reflective of the rapid rise of housing costs occurring in California overall in recent years. In San Joaquin County, the foreclosure crisis, limited subsidized housing, rising rents, absentee landlords, and deteriorating housing stock are all significant contributing factors to the lack of safe and affordable housing.

Access to Medical Care: San Joaquin County has been successful in enrolling residents in Expanded Medi-Cal under the ACA; however, learning how to use services, retention of coverage, and the shortage of primary care providers that will accept new Medi-Cal patients remain challenges. The fact that the County's many undocumented adult residents are without insurance also remains a barrier to care.

Mental Health: Mental health was a key concern among surveyed community members. Interviewees noted that the psychology of poverty, including living day-to-day and struggling to provide basic needs, can negatively impact one's ability to make long-term plans, and can interfere with parenting abilities. In addition, poor mental health frequently co-occurs with substance use disorders. Youth, notably foster youth and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer and/or questioning (LGBTQ) youth, and residents experiencing homelessness, were noted as particularly high risk populations for mental health concerns.

Oral Health: Secondary data indicate that oral health outcomes are worse in San Joaquin County than in other parts of California, particularly among children. Access to oral health services is a concern in all age groups, marked by limited dental visits and difficulty finding affordable and nearby care.

Asthma/Air Quality: Although unhealthy ozone days have fallen by 41% in the region, the San Joaquin Valley is still home to some of the most polluted air in the United States, with San Joaquin County ranking 9th highest in the nation⁵. Asthma and breathing problems are a health need in San Joaquin County, as marked by high prevalence of asthma in adults and youth. In particular, asthma disproportionately impacts non-Hispanic Blacks.

The Community Health Needs Assessment is an important first step towards taking action to effect positive changes in the health and well-being of its residents. The results will be used to drive development of a joint Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which will identify long-term, systematic strategies and actions to address health needs. All 11 of the health needs will be considered in the CHIP. As envisioned, the CHIP will be embraced countywide as a roadmap for individual members and community partners to set complementary priorities, coordinate efforts, and target resources for maximum impact. Additionally, each hospital will develop an implementation strategy which will identify those priority health needs which the individual hospital will focus on. It is hoped that community partners and collaboratives will also develop intervention strategies that are aligned with the CHIP so that there can be a community-wide effort for health improvement.

The CHNA and the CHIP will provide the impetus for concerted action in a strategic, innovative, and equitable way. This report is an invitation for everyone to join in this journey and find their place in improving health in San Joaquin County.

⁵ State of the Air 2015, American Lung Association, San Joaquin Valley Regional Summary