

Chautauqua County

2025-2030

Community Health

ASSESSMENT *and* Community Health

IMPROVEMENT PLAN



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The Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD) wishes to thank all members of the Chautauqua County Community Health Planning Team (CCCHPT) for their collaboration, support, flexibility, and willingness to try new health improvement initiatives.

CCCHPT Members:

- Allegheny Health Network Westfield Memorial Hospital
- Brooks-TLC Hospital System, Inc.
- UPMC Chautauqua Hospital
- Chautauqua County Department of Mental Hygiene and Social Services
- Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services
- Chautauqua Health Network
- Healthy Community Alliance
- Heritage Ministries
- Prevention Works
- The Chautauqua Center
- The Resource Center
- Western New York Public Health Alliance

The CCHD would also like to thank the countless community agencies, partners and individuals who took the time to provide input through community health surveys, community conversations or key stakeholder interviews. We are also grateful to the New York State Department of Health staff for providing extensive guidance and data to ease the community health assessment process.



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Executive Summary

This section provides a brief overview of Chautauqua County's Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan.

Highlights

The complete Community Health Improvement Plan for Chautauqua County can be found in the accompanying document. A sample of planned interventions for each of the selected priority areas are featured in the executive summary document..



In conjunction with the New York State Department of Health's (NYSDOH) Prevention Agenda for 2025-2030, the Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD), hospitals and community partners collaborated to complete the Chautauqua County Community Health Assessment, Community Service Plans, and the Community Health Improvement Plan for 2025-2030.

The Prevention Agenda for 2025-2030 is New York State's health improvement plan; a comprehensive blueprint for local and state action to improve health and well-being throughout New York, with a particular focus on prevention and on reducing health disparities. The Prevention Agenda was developed and updated by the New York State Public Health and Health Planning Council and outlines priorities for state and local action to achieve the vision that every individual in New York State has the opportunity, regardless of background or circumstances, to attain their highest level of health across the lifespan. This is the fourth cycle for this statewide initiative that started in 2008. New to this 2025-2030 cycle, in recognition of significant disparities in socioeconomic opportunity and its effects on health, the Prevention Agenda framework was revised to align with the five social determinates of health addressed in Healthy People 2030. The new framework incorporates each social determinant of health as a separate domain, similar to the priorities identified in previous Prevention Agenda cycles. The five domains included in the updated plan are:

- Economic Stability
- Social and Community Context
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Health Care Access and Quality
- Education Access and Quality

The NYSDOH outlines goals and objectives, as well as appropriate evidence-based interventions for each priority area. Indicators for tracking progress of interventions are provided at the county-level, including racial, ethnic and socioeconomic breakdowns to track changes in health disparities.

As in prior Community Health Assessment processes, local health departments throughout New York State were once again required to collaborate with county hospitals. In Chautauqua County, partner hospitals include:

- Allegheny Health Network Westfield Memorial Hospital (WMH), located in Westfield, NY
- Brooks-TLC Hospital System, Inc. located in Dunkirk, NY
- UPMC Chautauqua, located in Jamestown, NY

Thanks to our key stakeholders for public health and health care who were invited to assist in the community health assessment process. Collectively, the local health department, hospitals and community organizations make up the Chautauqua County Community Health Planning Team (CCCHPT). In addition to the hospitals, partners are:

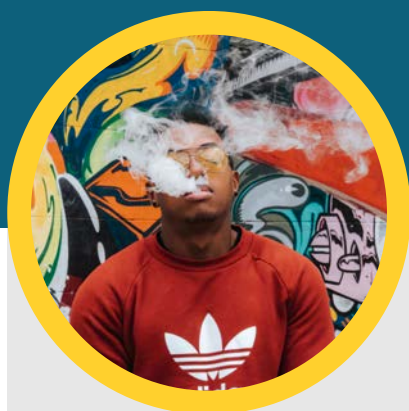
- Chautauqua County Department of Mental Hygiene and Social Services, local government unit
- Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services, local government unit
- Chautauqua Health Network, rural health network
- Healthy Community Alliance, WNY rural health
- Heritage Ministries, aging services
- Prevention Works, addiction prevention agency
- The Chautauqua Center, federally qualified health center
- The Resource Center, service provider for people with disabilities and diagnostic and treatment center

Following guidance from the NYSDOH, the CCCHPT collaborated to assess the community's perceived health priorities, assets, and needs through both web-based and paper surveys, as well as a series of community discussions. The team also conducted a thorough review of secondary health data provided by the NYSDOH and other key sources, ultimately identifying both collaborative and organization-specific priority areas.

Since 2010, the CCCHPT has guided the development of the county's Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, providing critical input throughout the process. In addition, subgroups of the CCCHPT met to examine specific topics in detail, helping to streamline the assessment. Broad community engagement was achieved through voluntary participation in a community health survey, as well as meetings with additional partners and existing workgroups to identify community health needs and priorities.

Priority Areas

The following collaborative Prevention Agenda priority areas were selected for Chautauqua County's Community Health Improvement Plan:



01 Social & Community Context

- Tobacco/E-Cigarette Use
- Healthy Eating



02 Health Care Access & Quality

- Access to and Use of Prenatal Care



03 Economic Stability

- Housing Stability & Affordability

The complete Community Health Improvement Plan for Chautauqua County can be found in an accompanying document. However, a summary of planned interventions for each of the selected priority areas is featured below.

01 Social and Community Context

Priority: Tobacco/E-Cigarette Use

Chautauqua County faces ongoing public health challenges from tobacco and e-cigarette use. Adult tobacco use remains higher than state and national averages, contributing to elevated rates of lung cancer, COPD, and heart disease. While youth cigarette smoking is at historic lows, nicotine vaping has risen sharply, with student vaping rates 4–5 times higher than cigarette use, creating new risks for addiction and long-term health consequences.

To address these challenges, the county will collaborate with the Chautauqua County Board of Health on implementing local licensing requirements for all tobacco and e-cigarette retailers, enabling improved monitoring and enforcement, and will advocate for stronger regulations on retailers, including restrictions on proximity to schools and residential areas. Progress will be tracked by documenting the number of discussions with the Board of Health in meeting minutes and through updates to the Chautauqua County Sanitary Code, ensuring accountability and measurable steps toward reducing tobacco-related harm in the community.

01 *Social and Community Context*

Priority: Healthy Eating

Breastfeeding is a critical component of healthy early childhood nutrition and maternal health. Despite national and state recommendations for exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding alongside complementary foods, Chautauqua County has low initiation and continuation rates. Only 73% of infants receive any breast milk at birth, and just 20% of WIC-enrolled infants are still breastfed at six months, far below top-performing counties in New York State. Breastfeeding provides numerous health benefits, including reduced risk of infections, obesity, diabetes, and certain cancers, highlighting the importance of supporting parents through education, hospital policies, workplace accommodations, and access to lactation consultants and community programs.

To improve access to skilled support, the county aims to increase the number of Certified Lactation Consultants (CLCs) and ensure postpartum individuals have timely access to CLCs following hospital discharge. Progress will be tracked through the number of new CLCs and the dissemination of contact information to postpartum individuals, helping strengthen early childhood nutrition, maternal health, and long-term chronic disease prevention.

02 *Health Care Access and Quality*

Priority: Access to and Use of Prenatal Care

Access to and use of prenatal care in Chautauqua County remains a significant public health concern. Early and adequate prenatal care is critical for identifying risks, promoting maternal and fetal health, and improving birth outcomes. In the county, 73% of births receive first-trimester care, and 76% receive adequate prenatal care. Additionally, 7.7% of births occur with late or no prenatal care, among the highest rates in the state. Access has been further limited by reductions in prenatal care providers, including the 2021 suspension of labor and delivery services at Brooks-TLC, leaving UPMC Chautauqua as the sole hospital providing these services. Geographic barriers and rural population distribution also pose transportation and access challenges.

To address these issues, the county aims to conduct a feasibility study to explore strategies for expanding access in rural areas. Progress will be measured by documentation of the feasibility study through meeting minutes and/or a written report.

03 *Economic Stability*

Priority: Housing Stability and Affordability

Housing stability and affordability are closely linked to childhood lead exposure in Chautauqua County. Nearly half of homes were built before 1950, and older housing—particularly in the City of Jamestown—contributes to elevated risk for lead poisoning among children. In Chautauqua County, approximately 60 children per year are identified as lead poisoned (≥ 5 mcg/dL), with 80% of cases occurring in rental housing. The City of Jamestown, which represents 22% of the county population, accounts for roughly 75% of these cases. Lead exposure in children—even at low levels—can result in lasting developmental and behavioral harm, and the broader economic costs in New York State exceed \$6 billion annually. Programs such as the Chautauqua County Health Department's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and the emerging lead rental registry are critical to reducing exposure and improving housing safety.

To further address this issue, the Health Department aims to increase the number of lead home inspections by 50% annually from the 2024 baseline, with program performance and progress reviewed regularly and findings shared at scheduled stakeholder meetings.

Community Health Assessment

This section provides a summary of the contributing causes of health challenges in Chautauqua County and identifies health disparities.

Public Health

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities. This work is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and injury prevention, and detecting, preventing and responding to infectious diseases. [1]

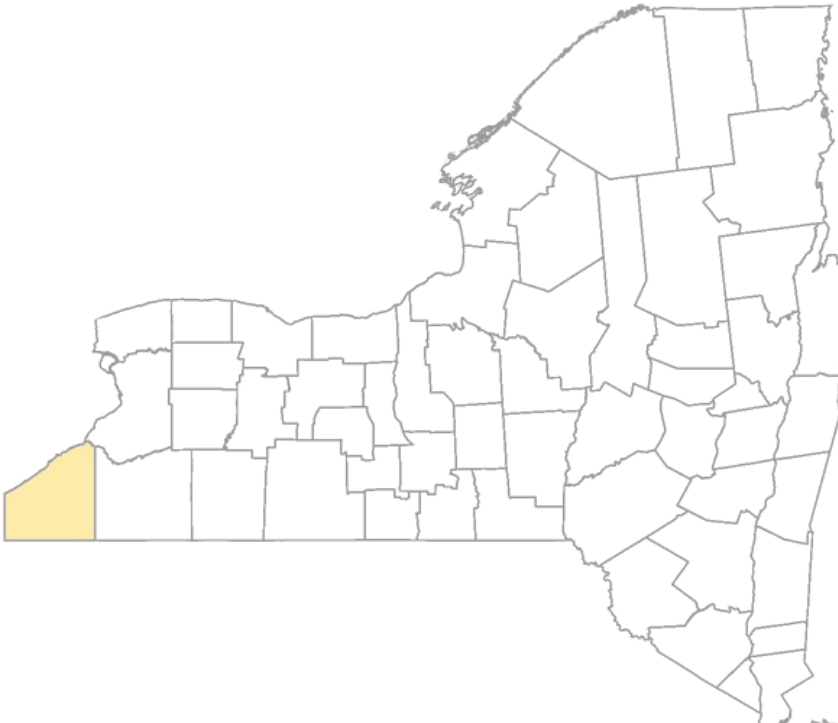


● ● ● **COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION**

SERVICE AREA & DEMOGRAPHICS

This Community Health Assessment covers Chautauqua County, the service area of the Chautauqua County Health Department. Located in the westernmost part of New York State, the county shares a border with Pennsylvania. It includes two cities and is served by three hospitals that provide care to both residents and visitors.

- UPMC Chautauqua services the City of Jamestown and surrounding areas.
- Brooks TLC Hospital Systems, Inc. services the City of Dunkirk and surrounding areas.
- Allegheny Health Network's Westfield Memorial Hospital serves the Village of Westfield and surrounding rural communities.



- Geographic Area: 1,065 square miles
- School Districts: 18
- Colleges: 2
- Townships: 27
- Villages: 15
- Cities: 2

DECLINING POPULATION

The population of Chautauqua County continues to decline, from 134,156 residents in 2013 to 126,329 in 2023.

5.8%
population
decline from
2013 to 2023



In the five years from 2014 to 2018, the county averaged approximately 150 more deaths than births each year.

During the following five years, from 2019 to 2023, that average was nearly 400 more deaths than births each year.





Race and Ethnicity (2024 estimates)

Of the estimated 124,105 county residents, 85.7% are white, 2.3% are black/African-American, 5.2% are of another race, and 6.9% are of two or more races. Ethnically, 10.2% of county residents are Hispanic or Latino.

Marital Status

Among the estimated 96,381 county residents who are age 20 or older, 49.3% are now married (not including separated), 7.3% are widowed, 13.1% are divorced, 2.1% are separated, and 28.1% have never married.

Education

Of county residents age 25 and over:

- 90.0% have at least a high school diploma (or equivalency), compared to 87.9% statewide.
- 25.1% have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 39.5% statewide.

Disabilities

- 16.8% of total population has a disability
- 6.1% of the total population under 18 years of age has a disability
- 45.7% of the total population 75 years of age and older has a disability

AGING POPULATION

Over
45%

While nearly all other age groups in the county have decreased in size, the number of county residents age 65-74 has increased by over 45% from 2010 to 2023.



A Closer Look

Take a closer look at the aging population in Chautauqua County.

click for data
visualization



Age and Gender

The 2024 estimates from the U.S. Census showed the median age of Chautauqua County residents to be 43 years, with a 49% male to 51% female ratio. 20% of the population is 18 years of age or younger and 11% of the population is age 0-9. Data also indicates that the county's population is getting older. In 2000, the population age 65 and over totaled 22,367. By 2024, that number is estimated to have increased by almost 25%.

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DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION METHODS

The data reviewed for this project comprise local, state, and federal sources, along with other datasets referenced throughout the document and detailed in the references section of this report. The Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD), with the help of community partners, conducted a community health survey open to all county residents from January to March 2025, resulting in 1,544 responses that were incorporated into the assessment. The Chautauqua County Community Health Planning Team (CCCHPT) played a vital role by providing insights based on their observations within their respective areas of service as they relate to the overall health and wellness of the county. Four CCCHPT meetings were held throughout 2025, with additional subgroup meetings convened to address specific topics. Information was also gathered from other local surveys, including the Prevention Works CLYDE survey and Cornell Cooperative Extension's food access survey. Together, these sources provided a comprehensive foundation for the analysis.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement played a central role in the Community Health Assessment process, ensuring that the priorities identified reflect the experiences and needs of Chautauqua County residents. Two primary methods were used to gather community input: the Community Health Assessment Survey and collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) and other key partners. Together, these efforts provided both quantitative and qualitative insights into the health status, concerns, and strengths of the community.

The Community Health Assessment Survey was widely distributed through multiple channels, including community-based organizations, social media, local media releases, and outreach events. The CCHD worked with partners across sectors to ensure broad access to the survey, with particular attention to reaching diverse and underserved populations. Targeted outreach occurred at soup kitchens, food pantry events, social service offices, and healthcare waiting rooms to increase participation among residents who might otherwise be underrepresented. Survey responses provided valuable data on community perceptions of health priorities, access to care, behavioral health needs, and social determinants of health.

Equally important to this process was the collaboration with CBOs, healthcare providers, social service agencies, and other community partners. These organizations contributed critical qualitative insights drawn from their direct work with local residents. Through structured discussions, informal feedback sessions, and shared observations, partners provided context to the survey findings and highlighted emerging issues not easily captured through quantitative data alone. Their firsthand perspectives helped identify community strengths—such as collaboration among service providers and strong neighborhood networks—as well as persistent challenges related to economic hardship, behavioral health, transportation, and access to care.

By integrating data from the community survey with partner and CBO observations, the CCHD developed a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of community health needs across Chautauqua County. This blended approach ensured that both individual voices and organizational expertise informed the identification of priority health issues and will continue to guide collaborative planning and action in the next phase of the community health improvement process.

Preliminary findings of data collected were shared at the CCCHPT meetings, as well as other meetings to include the CHQ Health Action Team, Chautauqua Substance Abuse Response Partnership, and Chautauqua Partners for Infants and Families Coalition.



Learn more

[click for data
visualization](#)



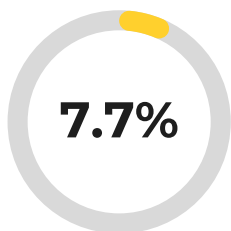
View the Chautauqua County
Community Health Survey Results

Main Health Challenges

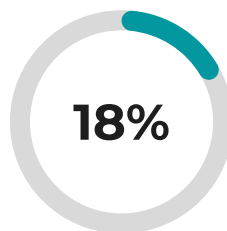
FACING CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY



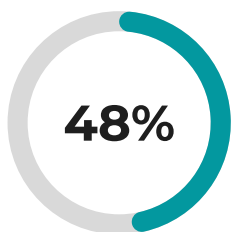
The following section outlines key health indicators, health challenges, and their associated risk factors, as well as the contributing causes and health disparities affecting Chautauqua County. While not exhaustive, this overview provides critical context for understanding the rationale behind the goals and priorities identified in the Community Health Improvement Plan. These challenges highlight the need for coordinated, evidence-based strategies and sustained community collaboration to achieve measurable and equitable improvements in population health across the county.



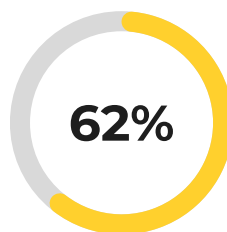
7.7%
Expecting mothers
receiving little or no
prenatal care



18%
Residents using
tobacco,
6% higher than
NYS average



48%
Homes built before
1950 with potential
for lead based paint



62%
Medicaid insured
children not
receiving annual
dental care

ECONOMIC STABILITY ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Poverty levels in Chautauqua County exceed those of both New York State and the United States overall, indicating significant economic challenges for many local residents. The county's median household income is \$55,234, substantially lower than the state median of \$82,095 and the national median of \$77,719 (U.S. Census Bureau). Based on income and poverty data, Chautauqua County ranks among the poorest counties in New York State, with the sixth-highest percentage of residents living in poverty. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2019–2023), 17.0% of county residents live below the federal poverty level.

Children are especially affected by poverty in Chautauqua County. Data from the 2023 American Community Survey show that 24.1% of residents under age 18 live in poverty—substantially higher than the state average of 18.6%. Families headed by single women face the most severe economic hardship, with 30.7% living below the poverty line compared to 22.6% statewide. These figures highlight the need for continued community collaboration to expand economic opportunity, strengthen family supports, and improve access to essential services that reduce the long-term impact of poverty on health and well-being.

Socioeconomic disparities are closely linked to poorer health outcomes, influencing physical health, mental well-being, and educational achievement. In Chautauqua County, poverty rates among adults age 25 and older strongly correlate with educational attainment. Among adults without a high school diploma, 27.8% live below the federal poverty level, compared to just 6% of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher. This trend is consistent with statewide data and underscores the connection between education, income, and overall health outcomes.

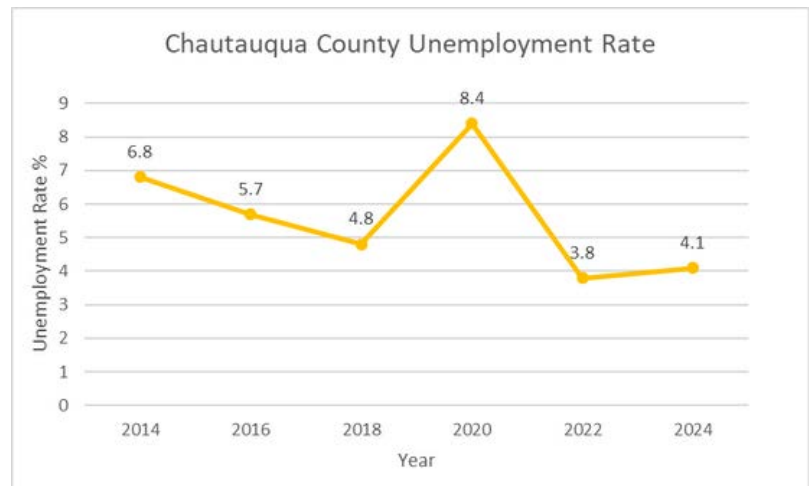
Unemployment

Unemployment and underemployment continue to pose public health challenges in New York State, influencing access to care and contributing to long-standing health inequities. People who are unemployed often experience greater barriers to achieving positive health outcomes, and longer periods without work can lead to declining health and increased difficulty accessing services.

According to the NYS Department of Labor, Chautauqua County's unemployment rates have decreased from 6.8% in 2014 to 4.1% in 2024.

The county's workforce is diverse, with the largest share employed in management, business, science, and arts; followed by sales and office work; service occupations; and production and transportation. Leading industries include education, healthcare, and social assistance, along with manufacturing, retail, and tourism-related sectors. Most workers (73%) are employed in the private sector, with nearly 20% in government roles.

Overall, while some economic measures have improved, continued focus on workforce development and job stability remain essential.



What's happening?

Across Chautauqua County, a united effort to address the complex challenges of poverty and unemployment continue. The County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency, in conjunction with the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth, recently launched two marketing campaigns - Choose CHQ and Live CHQ - to promote the County as a viable place to open or expand a business and to raise a family. The goal of the campaigns is to encourage economic development and investment, which in turn will help provide more career opportunities for our residents. The agencies also work with other stakeholders on workforce development, to help residents learn new skills, which can open the door to new employment opportunities.

Learn more:



ECONOMIC STABILITY

ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Nutrition Security

Nutrition security remains a significant concern in Chautauqua County. According to the 2025 County Health Rankings, 6% of county residents have limited access to healthy foods—three times the New York State rate of 2% and equal to the national rate of 6%. Additionally, food insecurity affects 15% of the county's population, compared to 13% statewide and 14% nationally. These concerns were reflected in the 2025 Chautauqua County Community Health Survey. Of the 1,544 respondents, over half (56%) identified access to affordable and healthy food as one of the top three priorities the county should address to improve community health.

Additionally, one third (34%) of respondents cited access to reliable transportation—for essential needs such as grocery shopping—as one of the top three factors impacting overall health and well-being. In response to the question “Over the past year, there were times when I or someone in my household was hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food,” over 17% responded that this was sometimes or often true — underscoring that food insecurity remains a concern for many households in the county.

Further insights were captured in a 2024 food access survey conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Key findings revealed that many individuals were not enrolled in SNAP due to income levels slightly above eligibility thresholds, yet they still struggled to afford groceries—particularly fresh fruits and vegetables—due to financial constraints such as high gas prices, high gross income relative to net income, and other essential expenses. Participants emphasized the need for lower food prices and increased availability of fresh, high-quality, and affordable produce. Reported barriers to food access included transportation challenges, affordability, physical access to grocery stores, and strict benefit eligibility requirements. Respondents also expressed strong support for expanded efforts to increase access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables across the county.



Housing Stability and Affordability

Housing insecurity refers to unstable living conditions resulting from challenges such as affordability, safety concerns, and lack of consistent occupancy. Contributing factors may include environmental hazards like lead paint or asbestos, life transitions, job instability, overcrowding, or the threat of eviction. These conditions often force individuals to prioritize housing costs over essential needs, including health care, leading to delayed or foregone medical treatment. Improving housing stability and affordability in New York State is critical to reducing homelessness, minimizing exposure to unsafe or inadequate housing, and preventing health issues and injuries tied to poor living environments and lack of access to care.

According to the 2023 U.S. Census, Chautauqua County contains 66,328 housing units, with 69.1% classified as owner-occupied. The median value of owner-occupied homes in the county is \$119,300 and the median monthly cost for rental housing is \$797.

Housing remains a concern for some residents. In the 2025 Community Health Survey, 32% of survey participants identified affordable and safe housing as one of their top three community health concerns.

The age and condition of the housing stock present ongoing challenges. Nearly half (47.8%) of homes in Chautauqua County were built before 1950, when lead paint was more widely used, compared to 37.2% statewide. This issue is especially pronounced in the 14701 ZIP code, which includes the City of Jamestown, where 54.1% of homes were built before 1950. These figures highlight the need for ongoing attention to both housing quality and access in efforts to improve overall community health and well-being.

What's happening?

Community partners across Chautauqua County collaborate through initiatives such as the Homeless Coalition, Healthy@HomeCHQ, and the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG) to promote housing stability and affordability. CCPEG recently completed a countywide Housing Market Assessment & Development Plan to help identify housing needs in various communities and work toward addressing those needs. In addition, the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency is working with several developers to create an estimated 300 new housing units by 2030.

ECONOMIC STABILITY ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Housing Stability and Affordability (con't)

The City of Jamestown has been identified by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) as a high-risk area for children with elevated blood lead levels, primarily due to its aging and deteriorating housing stock. Although the use of lead-based paint was officially banned in 1978, it had largely fallen out of use after 1950—making older homes a significant source of potential lead exposure. The Chautauqua County Health Department's (CCHD) Lead Poisoning Prevention Program offers services county-wide to children with elevated blood lead levels and is currently finalizing the implementation of a lead rental registry program. The City of Jamestown is one of 25 designated areas of concern and has received targeted funding from NYSDOH to support the launch of this registry. While the program is still in its early stages, it is anticipated to have a meaningful impact on reducing lead exposure and improving housing safety throughout Chautauqua County.

Childhood Lead Poisoning in Chautauqua County

Research has consistently demonstrated that there is no safe level of lead exposure for children. Even very low blood lead levels have been linked to lasting developmental and behavioral harm. Studies show that blood lead levels as low as 2 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL) are associated with measurable decreases in academic performance and cognitive outcomes.

In NYS, the current public health action level is 5 mcg/dL. Children at or above this threshold are considered lead poisoned and require case management and environmental intervention.

Local Lead Data: Based on the most recent three years of data from the NYS Lead Web system:

- Approximately 60 children per year in Chautauqua County are identified as lead poisoned (≥ 5 mcg/dL).
- An additional 10–20 children per year test just below this action level.
- 80% of all lead-poisoned children in the county live in rental housing, underscoring the link between substandard housing and exposure risk.
- The City of Jamestown, while home to only 22% of the county's population, accounts for roughly 75% of all childhood lead poisoning cases annually.

The burden of lead poisoning extends far beyond immediate health effects. A 2022 analysis by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Altarum estimates the lifetime economic cost of lead exposure in New York State at over \$6 billion. This figure includes costs related to:

- Healthcare and public health interventions
- Special education and social assistance services
- Lost lifetime earnings and productivity
- Premature mortality

Housing and Environmental Factors: The primary cause of childhood lead poisoning in Chautauqua County is lead paint dust originating from the county's aging housing stock. As these homes continue to age, the deterioration of paint and underlying surfaces leads to increased release of lead dust, especially during renovation or routine wear and tear.

LEAD PAINT POISONS KIDS!

Lead poisoning can cause permanent learning and behavior problems, but lead poisoning is **100% PREVENTABLE**.

This cycle's Community Health Improvement Plan includes making positive strides to increase lead paint abatement efforts in homes. Each year, from 2026-2030, the CCHD will increase the number of lead home inspections by fifty percent annually from the total number conducted in 2024. The CCHD will regularly review program performance and assess progress toward annual inspection targets. Updates and findings will be presented at scheduled stakeholder meetings.



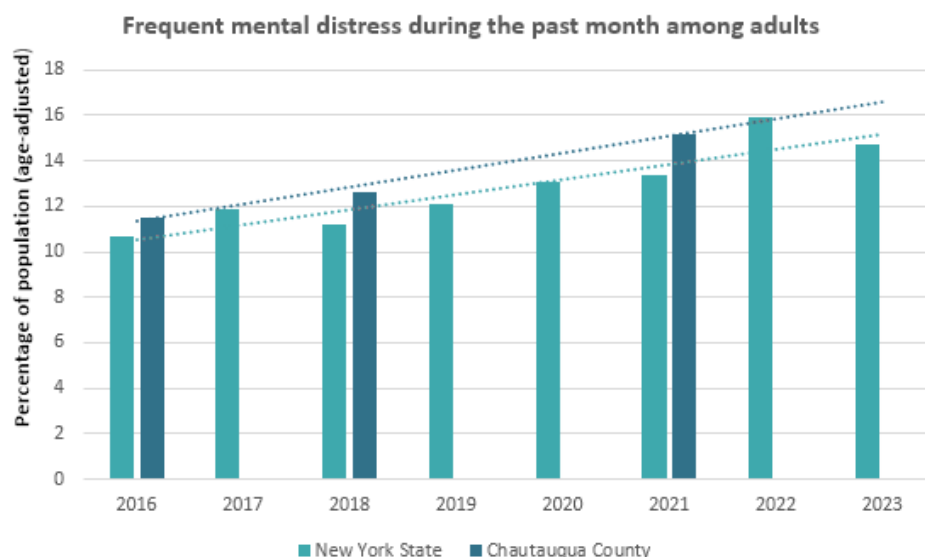
SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

MENTAL WELLBEING AND SUBSTANCE USE

The complexities of monitoring and addressing public health challenges are especially evident with a community's mental health needs and substance misuse patterns. The following provides a summary overview of key areas of behavioral health in Chautauqua County.

Overall Mental Health

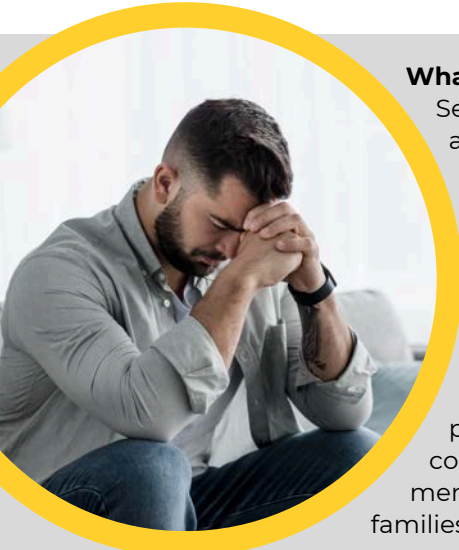
Recurring poor mental health impacts not only an individual's quality of life but also physical health, relationships, and productivity. Survey data indicates a trend of increasing rates of mental distress among many county residents which parallels, and slightly exceeds, a statewide trend:



Depression

The age-adjusted rate of depression among adults in Chautauqua County (age 18 and over), as measured by the 2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, was 23.8%, higher than the national rate (21.3%) and higher than all but one other county in western New York. Of note, however, is that, among all counties in New York State, Chautauqua County's rate of adult depression has fallen from 2nd highest (2020) to 6th highest (2021) to 17th highest (2022).

58% of respondents to the 2025 Chautauqua County Community Health Survey identified mental health such as stress, anxiety, depression and suicide as one of the top three priorities the county should address to improve community health.



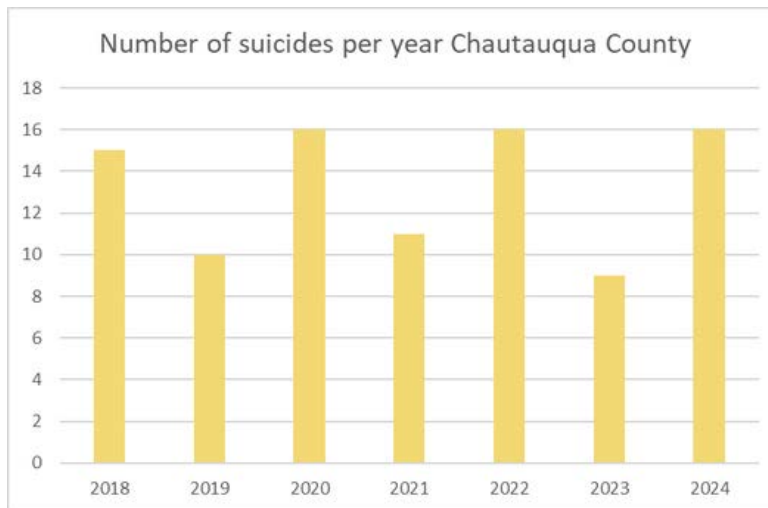
What's happening? The Chautauqua County Department of Mental Hygiene and Social Services continues to lead county-wide efforts to strengthen mental wellbeing and address substance use through an integrated, coordinated system of care. This year, we expanded access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) with an increase in MAT providers, enhanced integrated Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services across our clinics, and partnered with non-clinical behavioral health programs to promote community wellness practices such as mindfulness and stress-reduction education. Chautauqua County's continuum of care remains robust with ongoing collaboration to bring additional licensed inpatient SUD and withdrawal management beds online through the New York Medical Center. Opioid Settlement Funds awarded by the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) supported prevention and wellness initiatives in schools and advanced planning for a future community Wellness Center. Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to promoting mental wellbeing, preventing substance-related harms, and supporting individuals and families in achieving healthier, more stable lives.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

MENTAL WELLBEING AND SUBSTANCE USE

Suicide

The rate of suicide in Chautauqua County over the period 2018-2023 (13.1/100,000 population) is higher than that of western New York (11.3) and New York State as a whole (8.7). However, this rate has fallen in Chautauqua County in recent years.



Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). Examples include abuse/neglect, witnessing violence, the presence of substance misuse or mental health problems in the household, or other severe experiences. A link between ACEs and adult onset of chronic disease, incarceration, and employment challenges is widely recognized. Frequent exposure to these stressors in childhood can increase the likelihood that individuals face more health challenges and poor outcomes later in life.

Confidently measuring the prevalence and trends of these experiences among a local population is challenging. The 2022-2023 National Survey of Children's Health indicates that 13.4% of New York State children age 0-17 years have experienced two or more ACEs. Yet results from the 2021 NYS Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicate that over 3 times as many NYS adults (41.9%) report experiencing two or more ACEs.

In Chautauqua County, the 2021 NYS BRFSS indicates that 35.1% adults have experienced two or more ACEs (although this is considered an unstable estimate). Rates from the same survey found 41.9% of adults across the state and 39.3% of adults in western New York reporting two or more ACEs. Of note is that survey results in 2016 showed Chautauqua County's rate (38.5%) to be higher than the state or the region.

One indicator of the extent of ACEs among children in Chautauqua County is the number of reported instances of childhood abuse/maltreatment, an experience almost certainly involving multiple ACEs. The Council on Children & Families' "Kids' Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse" reports that, in 2023, 30.4/1,000 children in Chautauqua County were the focus of an indicated report of abuse/maltreatment, representing over 750 unique children and an 8% increase from the previous year. This rate is in the highest percentile among NYS counties (outside of NYC) and over twice the statewide rate. No other western NY county is in the highest percentile.

Prevention of the potentially lifelong consequences of ACEs will include measurable reduction in abuse and maltreatment along with establishing means for tracking the prevalence and trends of other ACEs.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT
MENTAL WELLBEING AND SUBSTANCE USE

Adolescent Substance Use

The Community-Level Youth Development Evaluation (CLYDE) Survey, sponsored by HOPE Chautauqua and Prevention Works, collects anonymous, self-reported information from Chautauqua County 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. Compared to the 2021 and 2023 surveys, the 2025 survey found:

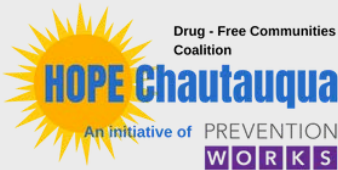
- Rates of past 30-day alcohol use decreasing
- Rates of past 30-day tobacco use decreasing
- Rates of past 30-day nicotine vaping decreasing
- Rates of past 30-day marijuana use decreasing (after increasing in the 2023 survey)

While the above trends are encouraging, rates of past 30-day use among county 12-grade students of alcohol (23.6%), marijuana (16.4%), and nicotine vaping (15.8%) are still at concerning levels.

View CLYDE Survey Results
Anonymous, self-reported information from 8th, 10th, and 12th grade Chautauqua County students.

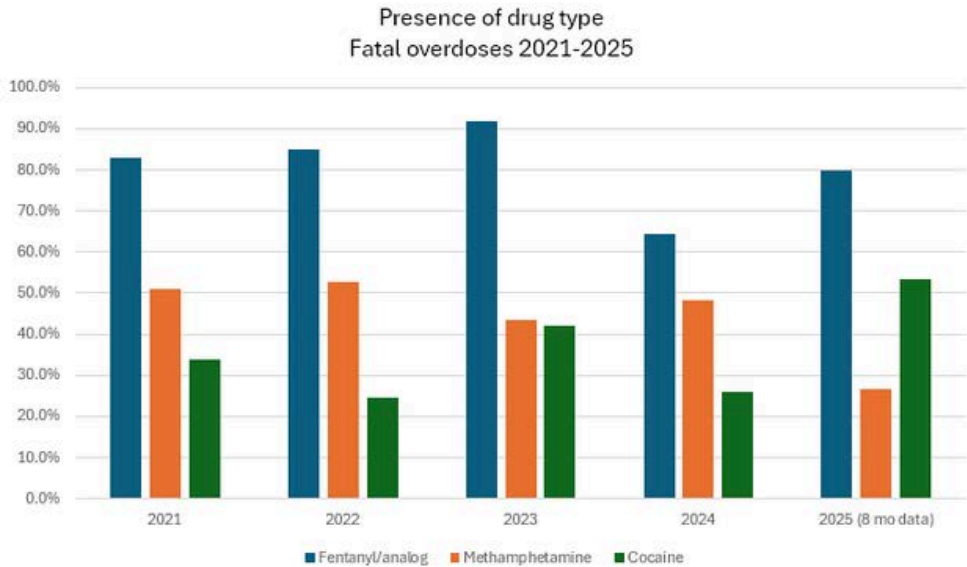
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Sponsored by:



Drug and Alcohol Use

Accurate information on illicit drug use in a community is difficult to monitor. However, data from fatal overdoses indicates that fentanyl remains a significant presence in the local drug supply. Overall stimulant use (methamphetamine and cocaine) has remained fairly constant, although the relative presence of these 2 drugs has shifted periodically, most recently with an increase in the presence of cocaine.



The age-adjusted prevalence of binge drinking among Chautauqua County adults (according to the 2022 BRFSS) was 19.9%, a rate in the lowest quartile among all New York State counties. The percentage of fatal motor vehicle accidents in the county involving a driver under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication declined from 2021-2023.

While these indicators suggest reduced heavy alcohol use among county residents, the medical consequences of alcohol use continue to be high. Chautauqua County ranked in the top percentile of counties in New York State for alcohol-induced deaths during the years 2018-2023.

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SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

MENTAL WELLBEING AND SUBSTANCE USE

Tobacco/Nicotine Use

I. Prevalence: Local, state, and national data reveal the challenges and opportunities for reducing tobacco-related morbidity and mortality in our county.

Based on the most recent comparable data (2022), rates of tobacco use in Chautauqua County (18%) are higher than across New York State (12%) and the US as a whole (13%). Within Chautauqua County, rates of tobacco use vary geographically, as high as 25% in some census tracts.

The health consequences associated with tobacco use are many and severe:

- Cigarette smoking is linked to around 80% of lung cancer deaths. Rates of lung cancer deaths in Chautauqua County are 70% higher than in New York State.
- About 75 percent of all chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) cases occur in people with a history of smoking. Rates of COPD deaths in Chautauqua County are twice New York State's rate.
- Cigarette smokers are 2 to 4 times more likely to get heart disease than nonsmokers. Rates of deaths due to heart disease in Chautauqua County are 37% higher than across New York State.

The consequences of tobacco use also include other potentially fatal diseases, as well as years of ill health suffered due to these illnesses, harms caused by second-hand smoke, and massive economic and social impacts of these consequences.

II. Trends: Rates of cigarette smoking have continued a downward trend that began nationally in the 1960s. While smoking rates in Chautauqua County are still high relative to the state and the nation, notable progress has been made over even the past few years. A downward trend from 2018 to 2022 could represent a decrease of around 6,000 tobacco smokers in the county.

Rates of adult nicotine vaping (e-cigarette use) doubled from 2018 to 2021.

There are also encouraging trends in youth tobacco use. Cigarette smoking among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in the county has fallen 90% compared to the 1997 nationwide rate. In 2025, the self-reported rate of past 30-day tobacco use among 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students was 2.1%. However, while rates of student cigarette smoking are at historic lows, rates of vaping nicotine have been 4-5 times higher than rates of smoking.

Data is concerning regarding the apparent age distribution of active adult tobacco users. Responses from the county's 2022 Community Health Assessment Survey suggest that the highest rates of nicotine use (tobacco and e-cigarettes) are among 21-29 year olds. This observation is consistent with the conclusion of a 2020 paper published on JAMA Network Open: "A substantial proportion of beginning smokers and most new daily smokers are now young adults, reflecting a shift from adolescence to early adulthood...."¹

Learn more

Learn more about tobacco trends in Chautauqua County

click for data visualization



1. Barrington-Trimis, J. L., Braymiller, J. L., Unger, J. B., McConnell, R., Stokes, A., Leventhal, A. M., Sargent, J. D., Samet, J. M., & Goodwin, R. D. (2020). Trends in the Age of Cigarette Smoking Initiation Among Young Adults in the US From 2002 to 2018. JAMA network open, 3(10), e2019022. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.19022>

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

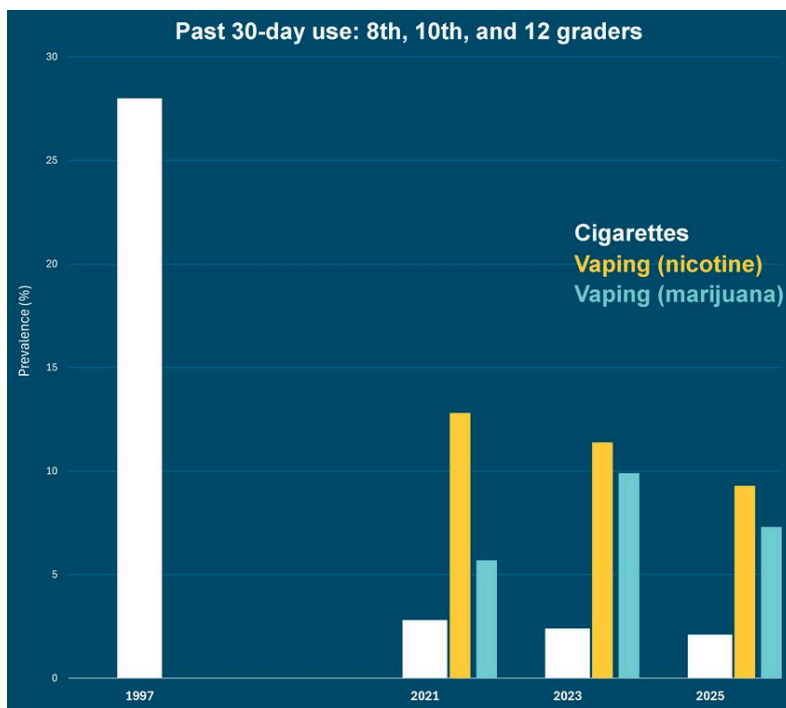
MENTAL WELLBEING AND SUBSTANCE USE

Tobacco/Nicotine Use (cont'd)

III. Prevention efforts: Because of nicotine's extremely high potential for addiction and because a young person's developing brain is especially vulnerable to any addiction, efforts to prevent youth tobacco use are a major public health priority.

While self-reported adolescent cigarette use is presently low, other patterns of youth substance use remain a concern:

- Rates of nicotine vaping are many times higher than cigarette use.
- Rates of self-reported marijuana vaping are higher than rates of cigarette smoking.



Data sources:

Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975–2024

CLYDE Survey of Chautauqua County School Students conducted by HOPE Chautauqua, 2025



Looking ahead

- Expansion and enhancement of existing school-based tobacco (and other substance) use prevention and early intervention services can bring further reduction to county-wide tobacco use. Key partners in reducing youth tobacco use include Tobacco-Free Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany, Prevention Works and, on behalf of the county's school districts, BOCES.
- Access to tobacco products, especially by underage youth, can be reduced through the adoption of a local tobacco retailer license ordinance in addition to the current state-required licenses.

Few public health initiatives promise greater returns than reducing tobacco use. Real progress is already being made. Generations of a healthier Chautauqua County live on the other side of our collective efforts.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Healthy Eating *See also nutrition security section on page 16 of this document.*

A healthy diet plays a vital role in preventing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and some cancers. The New York State Prevention Agenda and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) emphasize the importance of consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables while limiting foods and beverages high in added sugars, including sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs). However, many New Yorkers do not meet these dietary recommendations—approximately one in five adults consume SSBs daily, while more than one-third consume less than one fruit per day and nearly one in five consume less than one vegetable daily.

Just as improving dietary habits is essential for chronic disease prevention, supporting breastfeeding practices serves as a key indicator of early nutritional health. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, with continued breastfeeding alongside complementary foods for up to two years or beyond. National Healthy People 2030 objectives aim to increase the proportion of infants breastfed through one year to 54.1% and exclusively breastfed at six months to 42.4%. Despite these goals, New York State falls below both national targets based on 2020 birth data, reflecting the need for stronger breastfeeding promotion and support efforts statewide.

In Chautauqua County, breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates remain among the lowest in New York State. Only 73.1% of infants were fed any breast milk in the delivery hospital, ranking the county 57th out of the 61 counties reporting data; top-performing counties had rates between 92% and 97%. Among WIC-enrolled infants, only 20% were still breastfeeding at six months, ranking the county 53rd out of 59 reporting counties. In contrast, the best-performing counties reported continuation rates between 50% and 70%.

These low rates highlight the need for enhanced breastfeeding education, support, and environmental changes that make breastfeeding easier for parents. Breastfeeding offers numerous health benefits for both infants and mothers, including reduced risk of infections, obesity, diabetes, and certain cancers. Improving breastfeeding outcomes in Chautauqua County will require coordinated action—such as strengthening hospital breastfeeding policies, increasing workplace accommodations for expressing milk, and expanding access to lactation consultants and community-based support programs like WIC. Increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration can significantly improve early childhood nutrition, strengthen maternal health, and reduce chronic disease risk across the lifespan.

What's happening?

Local hospitals and prenatal care providers are actively working to encourage and support mothers in initiating breastfeeding. The Chautauqua Partners for Infants and Families group meets regularly to share information across organizations that serve new mothers and to identify service gaps and opportunities for improvement. The Healthy Community Alliance administers the Perinatal and Infant Community Health Collaborative (PICHC) grant, which supports maternal and infant health services in Chautauqua County. Additionally, the Chautauqua County Health Department offers the Welcome Home Baby Program, providing all new mothers with the opportunity for a free home visit after they are discharged from the hospital. While this is not an exhaustive list, these efforts reflect a broader commitment across the community to support new moms and improve infant health outcomes.

This cycle's Community Health Improvement Plan includes making positive strides to increase the number of Certified Lactation Consultants (CLCs) in Chautauqua County and implementing strategies to ensure postpartum individuals have timely access to CLCs following hospital discharge.

*Percentage based on infants receiving WIC benefits.



20%

Percent of
breastfed infants
at 6 months*

NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT
SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Opportunities for Active Transportation and Physical Activity

Regular physical activity provides lifelong health benefits, including a reduced risk of chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and various cancers. It also contributes to stronger muscles and bones, better mental health and sleep, and increased life expectancy.

Access to physical activity opportunities is relatively strong in Chautauqua County, although participation levels indicate room for improvement. According to the 2025 County Health Rankings Annual Data Release—which draws on data from 2024, 2022, and 2020—79% of Chautauqua County residents have access to places for physical activity, such as parks or recreational facilities. This ranks the county 30th out of the 62 New York State counties.

Despite this access, physical inactivity remains a concern. Based on 2022 data, 28% of adults in Chautauqua County reported no physical activity outside of work, ranking the county 7th out of 62 counties for physical inactivity. Across New York State, 25% of adults reported being physically inactive, with rates ranging from 17% to 36% depending on the county.

These trends are reflected in the 2025 Chautauqua County Community Health Survey, in which 45% of the 1,544 respondents identified obesity, weight management, and nutrition as one of the top five health issues the county should address to improve overall community health. Additionally, 27% of respondents cited access to community spaces—such as parks, walkways, bike paths, and community centers—as one of the top three factors impacting health and well-being.

Together, these findings highlight the importance of not only maintaining and promoting access to recreational resources, but also increasing community engagement in physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices.

Current progress

There are many opportunities to be physically active in Chautauqua County. Parks, trails, and green spaces are available year-round for walking, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and more.

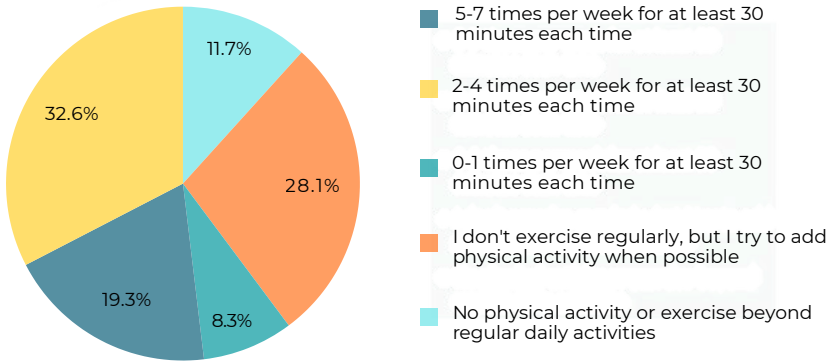
Learn more:



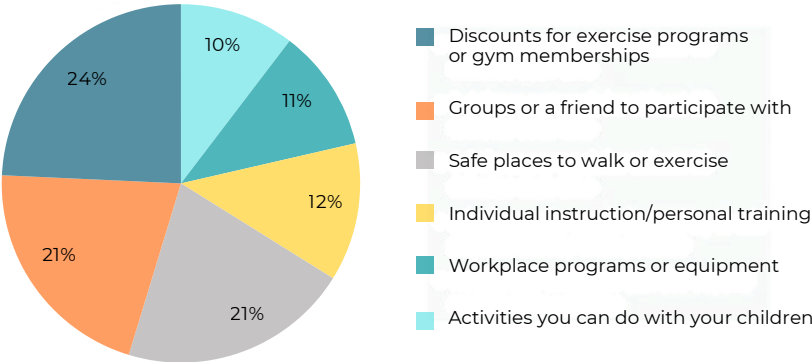
The County’s Complete Streets Committee, along with several local municipalities that have adopted complete streets policies, is working to make our communities more walkable and accessible.

While progress takes time and coordination, these efforts are helping to create more equitable access—not just to green spaces, but to essential services like grocery stores and recreation centers. By improving sidewalks, street crossings, and connectivity, Chautauqua County is taking meaningful steps toward a healthier, more inclusive future.

2025 Chautauqua County Community Health Survey - 1544 respondents
How often do you participate in physical activity or exercise?



2025 Chautauqua County Community Health Survey - 1544 respondents
Which, if any, of the following would help you become more active?
Top six answers listed. Respondents could select all that apply.



NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Access to Community Services and Support:

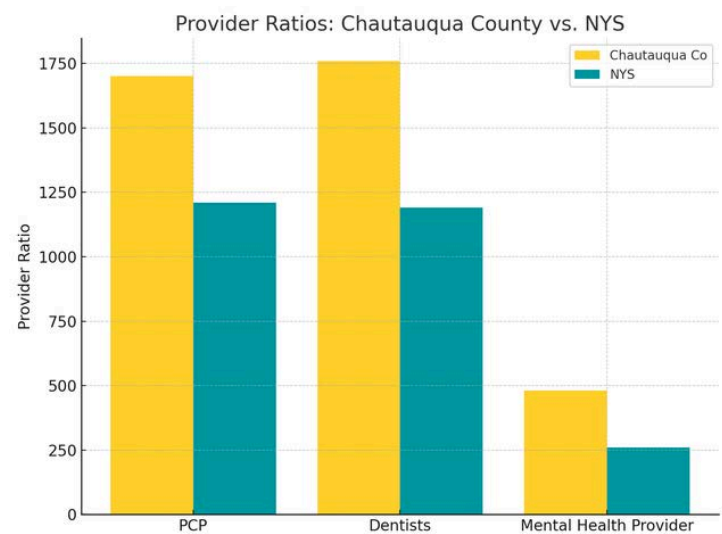
Access to reliable **transportation** remains a factor influencing residents' ability to reach employment, healthcare, education, and social services in Chautauqua County. According to 2023 U.S. Census data, the mean travel time to work is 19.3 minutes. The 2019–2023 American Community Survey shows that 10.9% of households in the county lack access to a vehicle, increasing to 13.7% in Dunkirk and 19.0% in Jamestown, where reliance on public transportation is greater.

CHQ Transit provides county-wide public transportation through fixed routes in populated areas, rural routes that connect smaller towns with advance scheduling, and demand-response (Dial-A-Ride) service for riders who can't access standard routes. Service extends up to ¾ mile beyond city routes, helping residents travel to work, shopping, medical care, school, and other destinations without needing a personal vehicle. While fixed routes run on regular schedules and rural or demand-response services offer added flexibility, the most remote rural areas receive limited service, available Monday through Friday.

Health insurance is an essential component of healthcare access and overall community well-being. According to the 2020 U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5.7% of Chautauqua County residents were uninsured. Among those with coverage, 36.0% had employer-sponsored insurance, 30.8% were covered by Medicaid, 23.9% by Medicare, and 3.6% by military or Veterans Administration (VA) plans. Uninsured rates vary by age, with the highest percentages among younger adults—12.6% of residents under 18, 18.4% between ages 18–34, 16.8% between ages 35–64, and only 0.6% among adults 65 and older, reflecting Medicare eligibility in older populations. These figures indicate that while most residents have some form of coverage, younger adults and working-age populations remain at higher risk of being uninsured, which may limit their access to preventive and primary care services.

Access to a **regular source of care** is a critical component of overall health. In Chautauqua County, the ratio of primary care physicians to residents has improved since 2010, however, the threshold is still far below state and national averages. Dental and Mental Health providers are also below state and national averages.

As outlined in greater detail later in this report, access to both **dental and prenatal care** has emerged as increasing concerns due to persistent barriers, including financial limitations, transportation challenges, and reduced provider availability. The overall number of providers offering these services in Chautauqua County has declined, as has the number of providers accepting patients covered by Medicaid. Addressing these service gaps remains a critical public health priority to promote equitable access to essential care and improve health outcomes across the county.



Climate change is increasingly affecting New York State and Chautauqua County, with rising temperatures, more extreme heat days, and increased precipitation. From 1902 to 2022, New York State has warmed by approximately 0.25°F per decade, while annual precipitation has risen by about half an inch over the same period. Extreme heat days have also increased, a trend that is expected to continue. These impacts do not affect all residents equally—those with limited financial resources may struggle to afford air conditioning or higher utility costs, putting vulnerable groups such as older adults, children, and people with chronic conditions at higher risk for heat-related illness.

To support residents during extreme heat events, the Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD) identified community spaces that offer free, air-conditioned public access, including libraries, supermarkets, and malls. These cooling centers are listed on the CCHD website, and participating sites are encouraged to post signage to increase awareness. This initiative helps ensure that residents have accessible, safe places to stay cool as extreme heat becomes more frequent.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT
SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

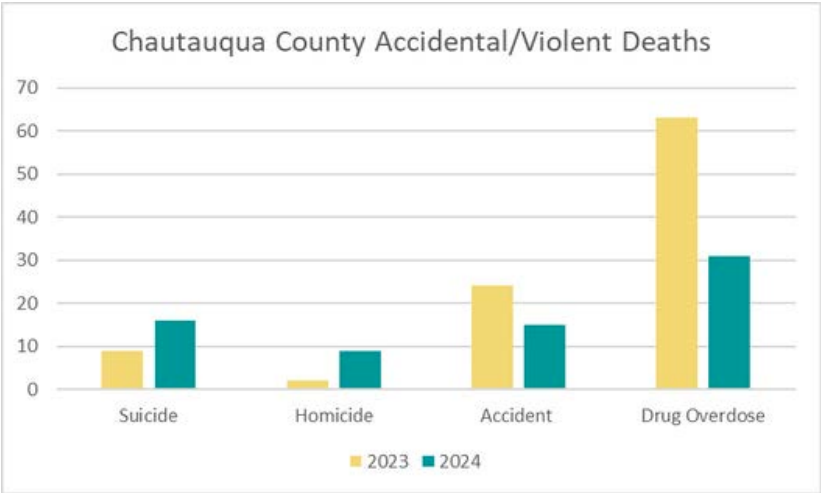
Injuries and Violence:

Injuries, both unintentional and intentional, occur where people live, learn, work, and play. Injuries are the leading cause of death in NYS for individuals aged 1-44. Many unintentional injuries are caused by motor vehicle crashes, falls, and drug overdoses, while intentional injuries are a result of assaults and self-harm.

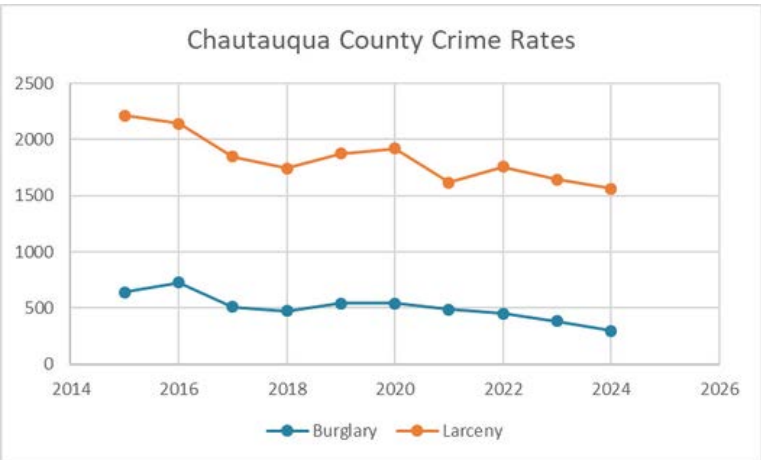
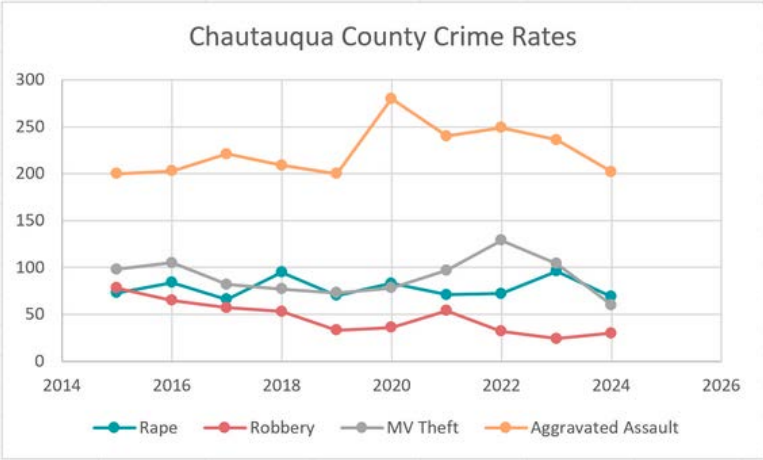
According to the 2025 Chautauque County Community Health Survey, respondents identified the following safety measures as one of the top three factors the county should focus on to improve health:

- o 28% — Safety in neighborhoods
- o 11% — Physical safety including concerns such as risk of falls, firearm misuse, and domestic violence

Data from the Chautauque County Coroner’s Office highlight emerging trends related to injuries and violence. The county experienced an increase in suicides, with 16 deaths reported in 2024, up from 9 in 2023, and homicides rose from 2 in 2023 to 9 in 2024. In contrast, accidental deaths not related to drug overdoses declined from 24 in 2023 to 15 in 2024, and accidental overdose deaths showed a significant decrease, falling from 63 in 2023 to 31 in 2024.



According to University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute School of Medicine and Public Health’s County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, Chautauque County’s crime rate trends are as follows:



These data reflect both progress and ongoing challenges in addressing injury- and violence-related health outcomes. Continued collaboration among law enforcement, behavioral health providers, community-based organizations, and public health agencies is essential to strengthen prevention, early intervention, and crisis response efforts, ultimately reducing injury-related deaths and improving overall community safety and well-being.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO CARE

Oral Health:

Thousands of county residents of all ages are not receiving regular dental care, many due to barriers of finances, transportation, and/or provider availability.

In a recent survey of New York State residents, 11.5% of respondents stated they cannot afford to go to the dentist. Nearly half (48.9%) with annual household incomes below \$50,000 stated that they do not always get needed oral health services.

In the county's 2025 Community Health Survey, 70% of respondents from households with less than \$50,000 annual income (n=577) reported at least one barrier that kept them or someone in their household from getting dental care that was needed or recommended. The most common barrier identified was expense. The oral health of children may be especially impacted by financial barriers, as 4000 school-age children in the county live in poverty.

In a geographically large, rural county with the majority of dental providers concentrated in urban/suburban settings and nearly 11% of county households without a vehicle, transportation is a second significant barrier to dental care access.

A third major barrier to adequate oral healthcare for large numbers of county residents is a shortage of dental professionals. The 2025 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps reports that Chautauqua County had 1830 people for every dentist, compared (unfavorably) to ratios of 1200:1 statewide and 1360:1 nationwide.

The availability of dental care is a barrier especially for the 38,000+ county residents on Medicaid/means-tested public health insurance (including nearly 9000 children), as well as the 7,000 residents (including 2600 children) with no health insurance at all. Chautauqua County is designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration as a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area for the Medicaid eligible population. With few dental practices in the county accepting Medicaid, large numbers of residents face at best lengthy delays for dental appointments. Only 23% of Medicaid insured residents, and 38% of Medicaid insured children, had at least one preventive dental visit within the last year.

62 %

of Medicaid insured children are not receiving annual dental care

For over a decade, thousands of school age children who would likely have received no dental care otherwise had a remedy to these barriers in the University of Buffalo's Mobile Dental Unit. However, UB has discontinued their program for Chautauqua County schools beginning in the current academic year.

A recent report prepared by the Center for Health Workforce Studies, Oral Health Needs Assessment for New York State, 2024, examined 151 geographic "rational service areas" (RSAs) across New York State. Each RSA is a whole county or, in urban areas, a sub-county unit. A composite oral health score, consisting of 5 sociodemographic and 10 oral health indicators, was calculated for each RSA. RSAs with higher composite scores are those with a higher need for oral health services. Chautauqua County had the highest composite oral health score out of all 151 RSAs.

Further evidence of the serious state of the county's oral health is the rate of outpatient visits due to dental caries in children aged 3 to 5. The rate for Chautauqua County is over 2.5 times higher than the statewide rate.

Looking ahead: The Chautauqua County Health Department is working with local providers and funders on modeled care delivery approaches to increase access to dental services. These efforts include exploring innovative clinic models, expanding community-based preventive services, and strengthening partnerships with schools and community organizations to reach underserved populations. Collaborative planning is also underway to address provider shortages. Together, these strategies aim to create a more accessible and equitable oral health system for residents across the county.



A Closer Look

Get a closer look at oral health care in Chautauqua County

click for data visualization



HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY
HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO CARE

Preventive Services for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control

In Chautauqua County, as across the state and the nation, chronic diseases are the leading causes of death. Just two chronic disease categories – heart disease and cancer – together account for over 40% of all deaths.

Heart disease deaths per 100,000 population in Chautauqua County fell by 17% from 2022 to 2024. Nevertheless, our county’s rate of death due to heart disease has continued to be in the highest quartile of all NYS counties and among the highest of the eight Western New York (WNY) State counties; this has also been true of premature deaths (ages 35–64) due to heart disease. The percentage of adults self-reporting an existing coronary heart disease has also been in the highest quartile of New York State counties.

The prevalence of risk factors among Chautauqua County adults is consistent with high rates of heart disease. Surveys have found our county’s rates of cigarette smoking, high cholesterol, lack of leisure time physical activity, frequent mental distress, diabetes diagnoses, and obesity are frequently in or near the highest quartile of all NYS counties. Approximately 30% of adult county residents have reported having high blood pressure.

After increasing 15% from 2019 to 2021, the rate of deaths due to cancer fell 14% from 2021 to 2024, the rise and the decline largely due to rates of cancer deaths among women. Among all cancer deaths, lung/bronchial cancer is by far the most prevalent (25%). For women, breast cancer is the second most common (12%), followed by colon and pancreatic cancer (7% each). For men, prostate and pancreatic cancer account for 8% and 7% of cancer deaths, respectively.

The rate of death due to cancer is higher for Chautauqua County than for New York State (excluding NYC) but lower than the other 7 counties in WNY. Among specific cancers, Chautauqua County’s mortality rate for lung/bronchial and for pancreatic cancer are higher than the rate for NYS (excluding NYC) but lower for colorectal, prostate, and breast cancer (2018-2022).

The total incidence of cancer (i.e., occurrence of new cancer cases) is higher in Chautauqua County than across the state but consistent with the WNY rate. The highest cancer incidence in Chautauqua County is for prostate, lung, and breast cancers. The incidence rate, and the mortality rate, of breast cancer is lower in Chautauqua County than for New York State (excluding NYC).

Other prevalent chronic diseases include dementia, chronic lower respiratory diseases (e.g., COPD), cerebrovascular diseases (stroke), and diabetes mellitus. Mortality rates in Chautauqua County are substantially higher than for New York State as a whole for all of these illnesses. Along with heart disease and cancer, these chronic diseases account for 60% of all deaths in the county.

AGING POPULATION

Over
45%

While nearly all other age groups in the county have decreased in size, the number of county residents age 65-74 has increased by over 45% from 2010 to 2023.



A Closer Look

Take a closer look at the aging population in Chautauqua County.

click for data
visualization



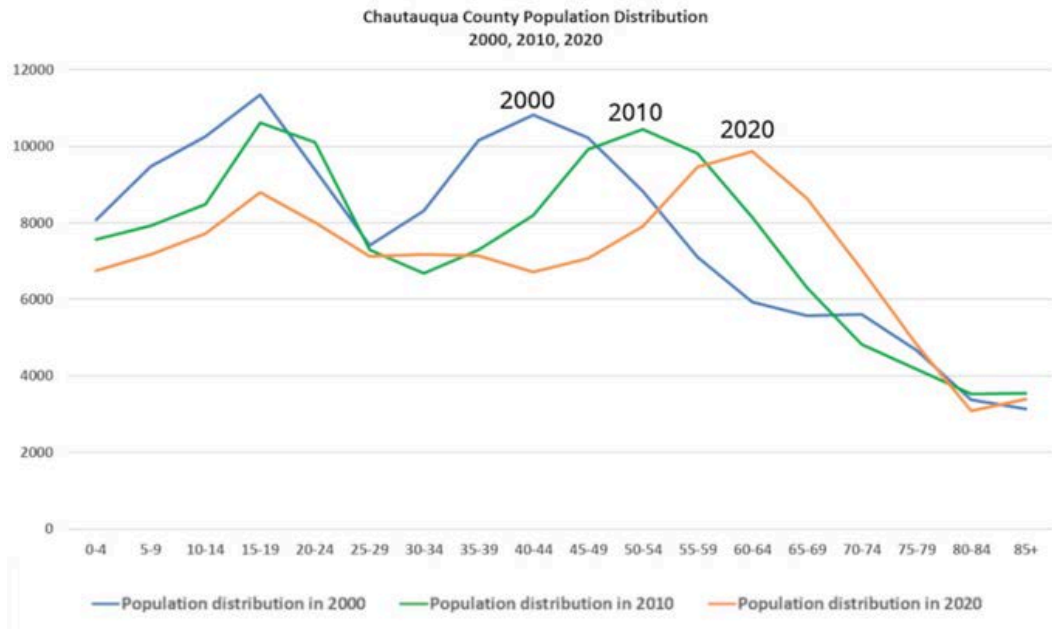
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HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

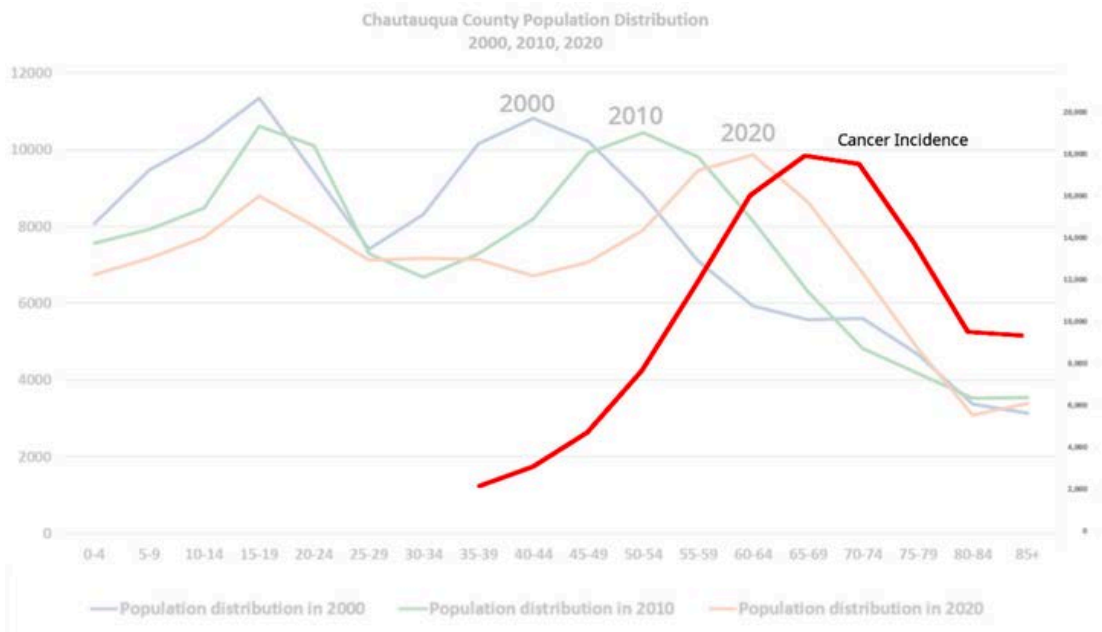
HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO CARE

Preventive Services for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control (cont'd)

Because chronic diseases become more prevalent and require more care as people grow older, the age distribution of a county's population is a significant public health measure. As evident in the figure below, the peak of a generational wave in Chautauqua County is now entering retirement years. The colored lines represent the age distribution in the county in the years 2000, 2010, and 2020.



The implications of this trend for the county's healthcare system are considerable. As one example, the figure below superimposes on the previous graph the age distribution of new cancer diagnoses in New York State. The peak age demographic in Chautauqua County is now entering the ages at which new cancer diagnoses are most prevalent. The same principle applies to other chronic diseases as well.



In summary, as a result of shifting age demographics in the county, the prevalence of chronic illnesses is likely to significantly increase in the coming years, and the healthcare needs of residents, already stretching the capacity of providers, are likely to strain those resources even more if preparations are not begun now.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO CARE

Communicable Disease

I. Vaccine-Preventable Communicable Diseases

A. Influenza (Flu): For individuals at increased risk, including adults 65 or older, children under age 2, and individuals with chronic health issues, influenza can lead to serious health complications. Flu vaccinations have been consistently shown to reduce medical visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. In Chautauqua County, rates of flu vaccination among Medicare enrollees (49% in 2023) have tracked slightly higher than both state and national rates. In 2023, Chautauqua County was in the top quartile of counties across New York State for flu vaccination rates among Medicare fee-for-service recipients.

According to the New York State Department of Health's Communicable Disease Annual Reports, rates of laboratory confirmed influenza in the county have been significantly lower than statewide rates over recent years. Rates of pneumonia/flu hospitalization of county residents 65 years and older have been slightly lower in Chautauqua County compared to WNY and New York State.

B. COVID-19: While rates of COVID-19 infection and deaths have fallen dramatically since the height of the public health emergency, smaller outbreaks continue to recur. Deaths of county residents due to COVID-19 have also continued, including 42 deaths in 2023 and 17 deaths in 2024. COVID-19 vaccination rates in Chautauqua County, as measured by the percentage of residents ages 65+ with a first booster dose who received a second booster dose (62.9%), have exceeded state and national rates.

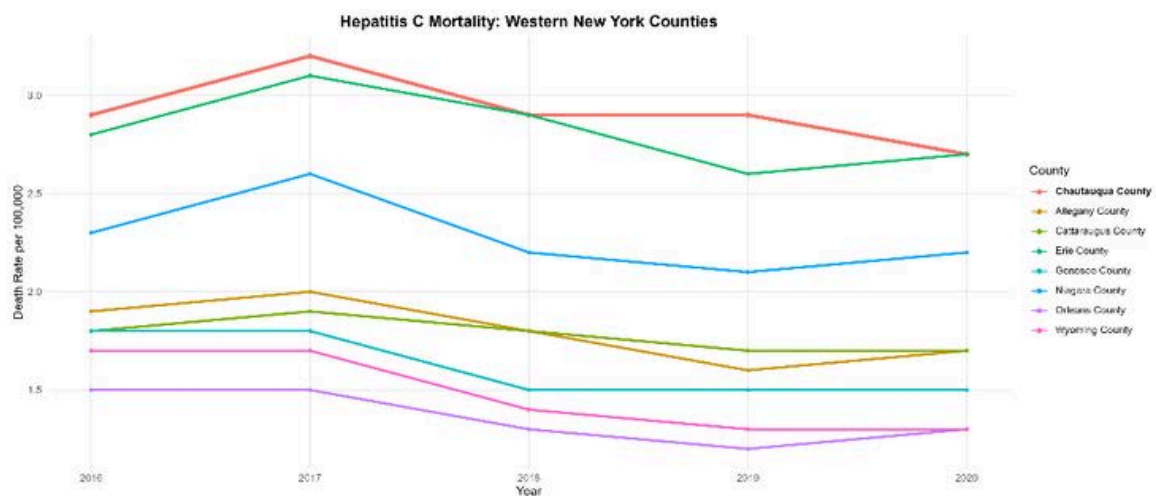
C. Pneumococcal Disease: *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is a bacteria which can cause pneumonia, sepsis, and meningitis. More than 2 million pneumococcal infections are estimated to occur each year in the US, resulting in 6,000 deaths. The rate of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* infections in the county exceeded the statewide rate in 2022 and 2023. The percentage of Chautauqua County adults age 65 and older having received a pneumococcal immunization (81.1%) exceeds the western New York and statewide rates (2021 data).

D. Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR): Each of these highly contagious viral infections can, and have, caused serious health consequences, posing risks which decidedly outweigh any risks of the MMR vaccine which has been extensively studied over several decades. In Chautauqua County, 83.7% of children have received 1 MMR immunization by 2 years of age (as of 1/1/2025), higher than the statewide rate but lower than most other counties in western New York.

II. Non-Vaccine-Preventable Communicable Diseases

A. Hepatitis C: The hepatitis C virus is transmitted through contact with infected blood, such as from sharing needles or other drug-injection equipment. Hepatitis C can be successfully treated, but many infected individuals, while able to spread the virus to others, are unaware of their infection until the disease is more advanced and symptoms appear. Untreated chronic hepatitis C can cause liver disease, liver failure, liver cancer, and death.

Hepatitis C is a severe public health issue in Chautauqua County. Rates of death due to hepatitis C have been higher in our county than other counties in WNY.

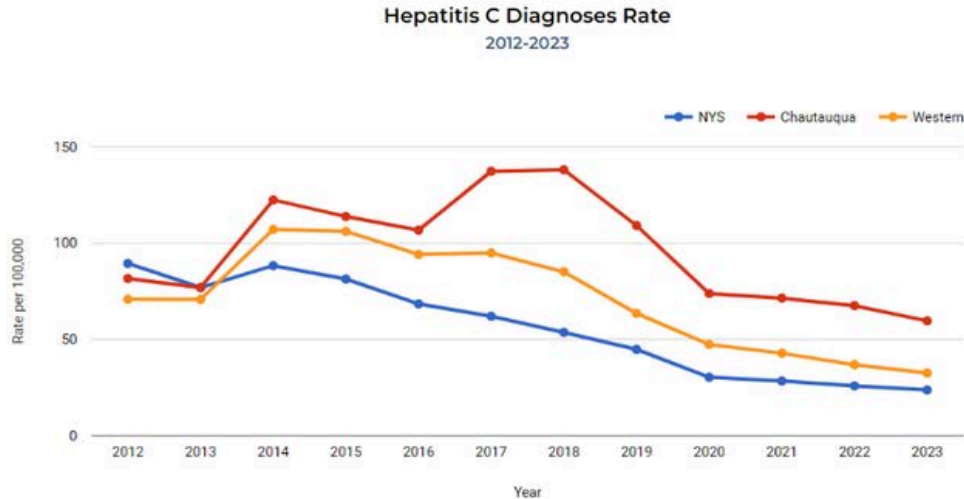


HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

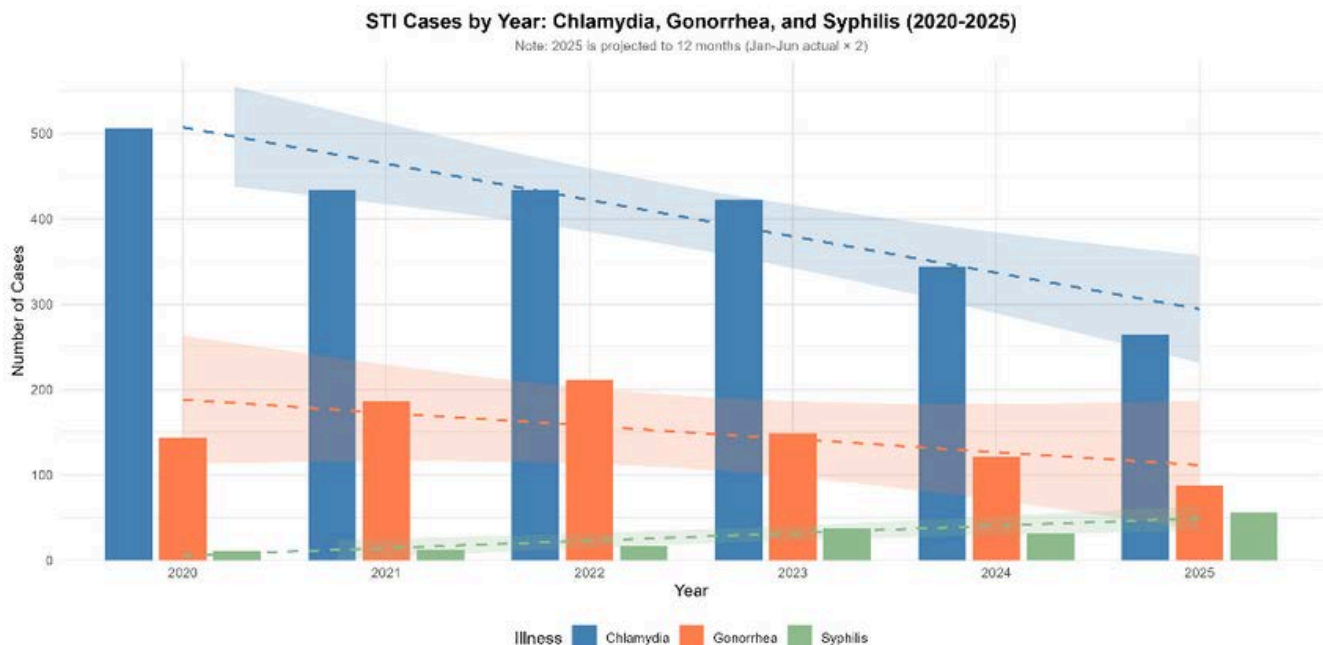
HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO CARE

Communicable Disease *cont'd*

Rates of hepatitis C diagnoses in the county have been declining over recent years, principally among individuals under age 40. Rates have nevertheless remained higher than in the region and the state. The number of individuals with hepatitis C being treated/cleared of infection has been increasing, although again rates in Chautauqua County have lagged behind the region and the state.



B. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): The annual number of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis cases in the county are displayed in the figure below, along with trend lines for each of the diseases. While the overall number of STIs has been decreasing over recent years, the number of syphilis cases has been rising.



C. HIV/AIDS: The number of newly-diagnosed HIV cases in the county declined from the years 2017-2019 (16) to 2020-2022 (12) to 2023 (2), resulting in county case rates below those of western New York and New York State. The New York State Department of Health reports 207 persons living with HIV or AIDS in Chautauqua County as of December 2023.

D. Lyme Disease: Spread through the bite of a blacklegged tick infected with the *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacterium, Lyme disease, if untreated, can cause fever, rash, facial paralysis, irregular heartbeat, and arthritis. According to the New York State Department of Health's Communicable Disease Annual Reports, rates of Lyme disease have increased dramatically in Chautauqua County in recent years, although they have remained below statewide rates.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO CARE

Prevention of Infant and Maternal Mortality

Infant mortality is a key indicator of population health, reflecting the well-being of pregnant individuals and infants, as well as overall access to quality health care. Infant mortality refers to the death of a child before age one and is measured as the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

Perinatal mortality (28 weeks gestation to under 7 days of life) in Chautauqua County was 3.6 per 1,000 live births—lower than both Western New York (WNY) (5.7) and New York State (NYS) (4.7). When applying a broader perinatal definition (20 weeks gestation to under 28 days of life), the county's rate rose to 6.8 but remained below NYS (8.7) and WNY (9.3). Fetal death rates (20 weeks gestation or more) were also lower locally at 3.5 compared with 6.0 in NYS and 5.4 in WNY.

In contrast, post-neonatal mortality (1 month to 1 year) was higher in Chautauqua County at 2.7 per 1,000 live births, compared with 2.2 in WNY and 1.5 statewide. The neonatal mortality rate (under 28 days) was 3.3, slightly above NYS (2.6) but below WNY (3.9). Overall, the county's infant mortality rate was 6.0 per 1,000 live births, higher than the NYS rate of 4.2 and comparable to the WNY rate of 6.1. These trends highlight ongoing challenges in maternal and infant health, particularly related to mortality beyond the neonatal period.

The US is one of the few countries where maternal deaths have increased since 2000, driven by factors such as chronic health conditions, mental health challenges, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, delivery complications, and postpartum hemorrhage. From 2020 to 2022, Chautauqua County's maternal mortality rate was 54.7 deaths per 100,000 live births—more than twice the NYS average of 21.3 and substantially than the WNY rate of 35.3.

Early Intervention

The NYS Early Intervention Program provides services and support for infants and toddlers from birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities, along with their families. The program's mission is to identify and evaluate children as early as possible when developmental concerns arise and to offer timely interventions that promote healthy growth and strengthen family well-being.

Chautauqua County's Early Intervention Program is administered by the Chautauqua County Health Department. Staffed by registered nurses and case managers, this program served a total of 789 children during the program year from October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025. This reflects a continued decline in participation, following 904 children served in the 2024 program year and 1,004 in 2023.

What's happening

Over the past few years, the Chautauqua County Preschool Program has worked closely with local school districts to establish contracts allowing districts to be providers of services such as physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and speech therapy for children ages 3 to 5 with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This approach helps address the ongoing provider shortage, enhances collaboration between school staff and service providers, and allows children to continue working with the same therapists as they transition into kindergarten and beyond. In addition, with State Education Department approval, these agreements have enabled districts to open their own Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) classrooms for Pre-K students, allowing children to receive needed services within their home districts rather than being sent elsewhere.

The Early Intervention Program has also launched Parent-Child Groups on both ends of the county to help address the shortage of Early Intervention providers, including speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, and special instruction teachers. Beyond bridging service gaps, these groups provide families the chance to connect with one another and explore community resources such as the Chautauqua Children's Gym in Dunkirk and the Maker Space at the Jamestown Prendergast Library.



HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO CARE

Access to and Use of Prenatal Care

Prenatal care is one of the most common preventive care services in the US and aims to improve the health of 4 million pregnant women and their children each year. The 3 main components of prenatal care are: risk assessment, health promotion and education, and therapeutic intervention.

Prenatal care is most effective when it starts early and continues throughout pregnancy. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that pregnant women have at least 8 contacts with a health professional during their pregnancy, with the first contact taking place within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Increased frequency of fetal and maternal assessment helps early detection of potential complications and improves the birthing person's prenatal care experience.

Early (first trimester) prenatal care is associated with positive birth outcomes. Rates of early and adequate prenatal care in Chautauqua County have remained largely stagnant and continue to fall below those of most counties in NYS. Only 76.1% of births in the county receive adequate prenatal care, placing Chautauqua 36th out of 61 counties, while top-performing counties report rates between 85% and 87%. Particularly concerning is the percentage of births with late (third trimester) or no prenatal care, which stands at 7.7% in Chautauqua County—one of the highest in the state—ranking 52nd out of 60 counties. Top-performing counties in this measure report significantly lower rates, ranging from 2.7% to 3.5%. These figures highlight a pressing need to improve access to timely and adequate prenatal care within the county.

The number of providers offering prenatal care in the county has decreased over the last few years, including Dunkirk, the second largest populated area of the county. In October 2021 Brooks-TLC suspended their labor and delivery services at the hospital, leaving UPMC Chautauqua as the only hospital in Chautauqua County with labor and delivery services.

The vast geographic area of the County coupled with the fact that almost half of its residents are sparsely populated throughout the rural area lends itself to transportation and access challenges.

Learn more

Learn more about prenatal care trends in Chautauqua County

click for data visualization



What's happening?

Local hospitals and prenatal care providers are exploring innovative solutions to address gaps in prenatal care, and while there is still significant work to be done, progress has been made in improving access in areas where provider availability has declined. The County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency is also actively working on initiatives to attract growth and support the development of new businesses. This is not an exhaustive list, but it highlights some of the ongoing efforts to strengthen community resources and services.

This cycle's Community Health Improvement Plan include completing a feasibility study to explore strategies for expanding access to prenatal care in rural and underserved areas.



7.7%

Mothers receive no prenatal care or care in their third-trimester

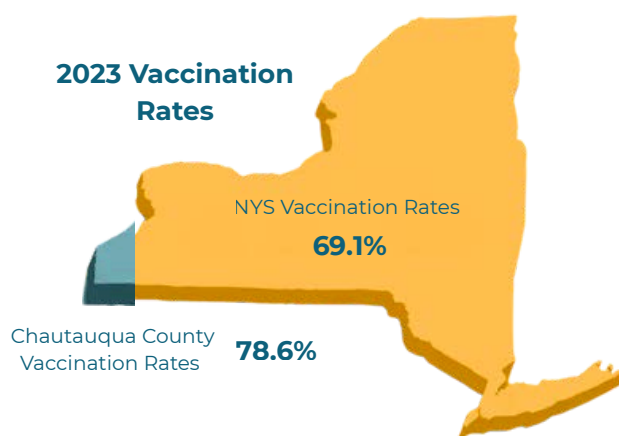
HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

HEALTHY CHILDREN

Preventive Services for Children

Preventive health services are essential for children as they protect against disease, facilitate early identification and treatment of developmental or health concerns, and establish a foundation for lifelong wellness. Immunizations and preventive screenings, typically conducted during routine well-child visits, enable healthcare providers to detect problems before they become serious, monitor growth and development, and educate families on safety and health promotion. Unfortunately, health disparities, including limited access to healthcare, lack of insurance coverage, and unreliable transportation, continue to prevent many vulnerable populations from receiving these critical services.

Immunizations protect children from serious and life-threatening communicable diseases. According to 2023 data from the NYS Immunization Information System (NYSIIS), between 73.7% and 79.6% of children aged 24–35 months in Chautauqua County had received the minimum vaccine requirements for children attending daycare, Head Start, nursery, and pre-kindergarten programs. While immunization rates in 2023 remained consistent, earlier years were slightly lower — 68.1% in 2018 and 66.1% in 2022. Countywide vaccination rates (78.6%) remain slightly below the WNY regional average but exceed the statewide rate (excluding New York City) of 69.1%.



Health screenings are another key component of preventive care, allowing for the early detection of conditions such as hearing or vision impairments and developmental issues related to lead exposure. In 2022, 23.4% of infants in NYS received a diagnostic hearing test after failing their newborn screening, and only 15.5% received this follow-up test by three months of age, as recommended. Lead screenings also remain an important public health priority. The most recent data (2022) indicate that 58.7% of children born in 2019 received at least two lead screenings by 36 months of age, consistent with the recommendation that children be tested at both one and two years of age, and any time there is a suspected risk of exposure.

What's happening

To increase vaccination rates among children and adults, the Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD) offers immunizations to all residents regardless of insurance status. Immunization clinics are available at the CCHD office in Mayville and at various community locations throughout the county. From May through October, the CCHD Mobile Health Vehicle travels across Chautauqua County with stops at schools, food pantries, and community organizations, in an effort to expand access to essential preventive services. Additionally, monthly clinics are offered in rural communities such as Cherry Creek and Clymer, often hosted at local fire departments and churches. Providing immunization services through the Mobile Health Vehicle and other community-based locations has helped overcome transportation and healthcare barriers, ensuring residents can access the vaccines necessary to stay healthy and safe. In 2024, the CCHD administered 959 total vaccines, including 662 for individuals aged 0–18 years. This represents a modest increase from 2023, when 932 total vaccines were administered, 569 of which were given to those in the 0–18 age group.



As highlighted previously in this report, the CCHD Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provides county-wide services for children with elevated blood lead levels and offers proactive prevention measures. Free lead paint testing is available for any pre-1978 residence in which a child under six spends at least six hours per week, at no cost to the tenant, landlord, or homeowner. The program also supplies paint, materials, and training to ensure lead-safe remediation practices. The department is currently finalizing the implementation of a Lead Rental Registry Program, which introduces proactive inspections focused on older rental housing in the 14701 zip code. Under this program, landlords will be required to register their pre-1980 properties with two or more rental units. Inspections will occur every three years, and landlords must promptly complete lead-safe repairs when hazards are identified. This initiative aims to reduce lead exposure risks and safeguard the health and development of Chautauqua County's youngest residents.

EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY

PREK-12 STUDENT SUCCESS AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Health and Wellness Promoting Schools

Chautauqua County school districts develop wellness policies in alignment with federal and state guidelines, emphasizing nutrition, physical activity, and overall health to enhance student well-being and academic success. Each district establishes specific policies, often supported by school health advisory councils to include nutrition education, snack and vending standards, opportunities for physical activity, and initiatives that support students' mental and emotional wellness.

Strong health and wellness policies directly contribute to lowering absenteeism rates and supporting improved academic outcomes. In NYS, the chronic absenteeism rate has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic and remained high through the 2022–23 school year, with 26.4% of all students considered chronically absent. The U.S. Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as the percentage of students who miss at least 10% of school days in a year for any reason, including excused, unexcused, or disciplinary absences. There are several factors associated with increased rates of chronic absenteeism, including physical health issues, mental health issues, substance use, school environment, and fitness. Implementing comprehensive wellness initiatives that address physical, mental, and emotional health can help reduce these absences and create a more engaged, successful student body.

Current Progress

In addition to work being done by school professionals within each district and regionally through the supportive efforts of Erie 2-Chautauqua Cattaraugus BOCES (E2CCB) initiatives, Chautauqua County is home to a variety of community-based organizations and programs that support health and wellness in schools and help address barriers some students face in attending school. While this is not an exhaustive list, we have highlighted a few key resources.

- Prevention Works offers a variety of classes and individualized supports for youth across the county. The organization plays a critical role in providing substance use prevention, social-emotional learning, and intervention services. Through its wide range of programs, young people learn positive behaviors, gain essential life skills, receive education on drug and alcohol prevention, and access interventions for challenges related to substance use.
- The Chautauqua County Department of Mental Hygiene provides comprehensive mental health and substance use services to students. The department plays a key role in promoting emotional well-being, offering counseling, crisis intervention, case management, and community-based programs. Through its range of services, students and families receive support for mental health challenges, guidance in coping skills, access to substance use treatment, and resources to strengthen overall emotional and social wellness.
- The Chautauqua Health Network (CHN) connects schools with community partners to enhance access to healthy foods and increase opportunities for physical activity. In collaboration with the Chautauqua County Health Department, CHN has developed the *Hit the Trails & Parks Program* for local students, families, and schools. This free program encourages students and their families to stay active by exploring the county's parks and trail systems.



EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY
PREK-12 STUDENT SUCCESS AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Opportunities for Continued Education

In 2024, the most recent year for which data is available, 56% of Chautauqua County residents age 25 and older had some college education. According to New York State Department of Labor statistics, there is a significant difference in lifetime earnings between individuals with a bachelor's degree and those with a high school diploma or GED.

Continuing education not only supports career advancement and higher earnings but also has a positive impact on health and overall well-being. Individuals with advanced education tend to have improved health outcomes, safer jobs, and more secure housing compared with those who have a high school diploma or GED. They are more likely to have access to quality healthcare through insurance and are less likely to experience chronic health conditions such as diabetes, depression, and cardiovascular disease.

Chautauqua County provides a wide range of continuing education opportunities for adults and career-seekers through community colleges, universities, workforce programs, and local organizations. Together, these programs promote improved health outcomes while offering residents accessible pathways to acquire new skills, advance their careers, and engage in lifelong learning.

Jamestown Community College (SUNY JCC) offers not only associate degree programs but also non-credit workforce development opportunities, including job training, custom employer programs, and short courses in skilled trades, industrial maintenance, and CNC/machining. In addition to SUNY Fredonia's bachelor's and master's degree programs, the university provides extended learning options, including online and community non-credit courses for skills training and personal enrichment through platforms such as Ed2Go.

For non-college adult and workforce education, Erie 2–Chautauqua–Cattaraugus BOCES (E2CCB) serves as a regional hub offering HSE/GED prep, ESL, trade programs, and LPN training, with the LoGuidice Educational Center in Fredonia as the local site.

Career support and job placement resources are available through Chautauqua Works, the local American Job Center, and the NYS Department of Labor – Jamestown Career Center, which provide free job-search assistance, workshops, training referrals, and employer services. Adult literacy, ESL, and high-school equivalency support are offered by Literacy Volunteers of Chautauqua County, with classes and tutoring also hosted at public libraries such as Jamestown's Prendergast Library.

Lifelong learning and personal enrichment opportunities include multi-week skill-building programs through Goodskills, as well as seasonal adult classes in arts, music, writing, fitness, and lecture series at Chautauqua Institution. For entrepreneurship and small business development, the NY Small Business Development Center at JCC offers free advising, workshops, and training for startups and small businesses.

ASSETS AND RESOURCES

In Chautauqua County, local and regional public, private, and philanthropic organizations collaborate to strengthen community and improve health for our rural population. We are fortunate to have many assets and resources for health improvement in the priority areas of this Community Health Assessment. Several of these community services, resources and programs are described below; however, this is not an exhaustive list.

Community Services and Programs

- Chautauqua County Health Department provides the following services:
Lead Poisoning Prevention Programs; Early Intervention, Children's Health Homes, Preschool Special Education and Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Programs; services to new mothers through our Welcome Home Baby Program and breastfeeding support; immunization services; communicable disease investigation; Mobile Health services; Opioid Overdose Prevention Program; Chronic Disease Prevention; Correctional Health Services; Coroner Program; Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program; Many programs related to environmental health including monitoring public drinking water, inspection services for food service, public bathing beaches, public water supplies, temporary residences, body art facilities, and public swimming pools.
- Allegheny Health Network (AHN) Westfield Memorial Hospital provides Chautauqua Primary Care Clinic, diabetes education, emergency room, colonoscopy, imaging, laboratory, IV infusion, physical therapy services, Women's Wellness Suite and Orthopedic Clinic.
- Brooks-TLC Hospital System, Inc. offers cardiac rehabilitation, cardiology, emergency care, gastroenterology, hospitalist services, infusion center, intensive care, laboratory services, orthopedic services, pain management, physical therapy/rehab, radiology/diagnostic imaging, speech/language services, substance use disorders, surgical services, urgent care and urology services.
- UPMC Chautauqua Hospital offers services for bariatrics, behavioral health, inpatient chemical dependency, outpatient chemical dependency, psychology, breast health, cancer, diabetes, ear, nose, and throat, emergency, endoscopy, general surgery, heart and vascular, imaging, occupational medicine, occupational therapy, orthopedics, outpatient laboratory, palliative care, patient navigation, physical therapy, speech and hearing, women's health and wound healing.
- Chautauqua County Department of Mental Hygiene offers Single Point of Access (SPOA) for Children & Adults; Children's Health Homes of Update NY (CCHUNY); Health Home Care Management (HHUNY); Chautauqua Substance Abuse Response Partnership; Chautauqua Tapestry; Suicide Prevention Alliance of Chautauqua County; Outpatient Chemical Dependency Clinics; Outpatient Mental Health Clinics; Crisis Services; Crisis Hotline; Mobile Crisis Team; Medication for Assisted Treatment (MAT) of Opioid Use Disorder.
- Chautauqua County Office for Aging Services offers Adult Day and Respite; Caregiver Services; Elder Abuse Prevention; Employment Training; Health Insurance Counseling; Housing & Home Repairs; In-Home Care Services; Legal & Financial; Mental Health Resources; Nutrition and Meal Services; Senior Safety; Support Groups; Wellness Programs; Chautauqua County NY Connects.
- Chautauqua Health Network (CHN) is a NYS designated Rural Health Network dedicated to strengthening the local health and wellness delivery system in Chautauqua County, as well as advancing the interests of hospitals & patients by strengthening the economic viability of hospitals, promoting access to quality health care, facilitating partnerships to address community health needs, planning for the efficient delivery of care, and developing and disseminating appropriate health resources.
- The Chautauqua Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center located with offices in Jamestown, Dunkirk, & Forestville. Services provided include but are not limited to primary care, pediatrics, family planning, physical therapy, pediatric occupational therapy, behavioral health, group therapy, dental health, podiatry, chiropractic, rheumatology.
- The Resource Center offers site based disability services, non-site-based disability services, primary care, dental care, podiatry, school-based health center, personalized recovery oriented services, health homes, children's health homes, community oriented recover and empowerment services, manufacturing services & employment services.

Additional Community Organizations and Programs include Catholic Charities; Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.; Chautauqua County Rural Ministry; Chautauqua Children's Safety Education Village; Child Advocacy Program; Cornell Cooperative Extension; Council of Addiction; Erie-2 Chautauqua Cattaraugus BOCES; Evergreen Health; Goodskills Career Builder; Jamestown Community Learning Council; Mental Health Association; Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation; Prevention Works; Project Crossroads- Jamestown Police Department; Recovery Options Made Easy (ROME); Safe Point Lighthouse Treatment Center; St. Susan's Center; Tobacco Free WNY; UCAN City Mission; United Way of Chautauqua County; Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC); YMCA of Jamestown; YMCA of Lakewood; YWCA of Jamestown; and YWCA of Westfield.

Physical Assets and Resources

Chautauqua County offers a wide range of physical assets that support community health and well-being. The county is home to eight trail systems and more than 20 parks that provide year-round recreational opportunities. In addition, there are numerous city and village parks, and several schools make their athletic facilities available for public use.

In 2012, the Chautauqua County Department of Planning and Economic Development completed a Greenways and Trails Plan. Since then, several of the plan's recommendations—such as trail upgrades, expansions, and the development of new routes—have been successfully implemented, with additional projects currently in progress.

Local Food Resources

Chautauqua County is home to 11 farmers markets located throughout the region, including in the cities of Jamestown and Dunkirk, as well as in several towns and villages such as Cassadaga, Clymer, Falconer, Fredonia, Lakewood, Mayville, and Westfield. These weekly, seasonal markets continue to be a popular source of fresh, local produce and other goods. Many of them participate in programs that support under-resourced households, including WIC, SNAP, and the "Double Up Food Bucks" initiative, which helps stretch food dollars for those in need. In addition to these markets, numerous farm stands are located across the county, offering additional access to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Transportation

CHQ Transit provides county-wide public transportation through fixed routes in populated areas, rural routes that connect smaller towns with advance scheduling, and demand-response (Dial-A-Ride) service for riders who can't access standard routes. Service extends up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile beyond city routes, helping residents travel to work, shopping, medical care, school, and other destinations without needing a personal vehicle. While fixed routes run on regular schedules and rural or demand-response services offer added flexibility, the most remote rural areas receive limited service, available Monday through Friday.



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Community Health Improvement Plan

This section provides a summary of the major community health needs identified through the assessment process, along with the methods used to prioritize them, and outlines the goals, strategies, and action plans developed to address these priority areas.



Identifying Community Health Priorities

To identify community health needs and set priorities for the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), the Chautauqua County Community Health Planning Team (CCCHPT) reviewed data to find conditions where Chautauqua County was performing significantly worse than New York State. Health issues that affected many residents—even if they were similar to state averages—were also marked as important.

Beyond comparing data, the team considered input from the community health survey and community conversations to ensure that local voices were reflected in the priorities. They also reviewed existing resources, programs, and funding opportunities that could support improvement efforts.

In selecting the final priority areas, the CCCHPT applied the SMARTIE criteria—ensuring goals were Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable. This approach helped ensure that priorities were both actionable and aligned with the community’s values and needs.

The framework below summarizes the process used to identify and select these priority areas.

Framework for Selecting Priority Areas

The CCCHPT followed a structured, collaborative process to identify and prioritize health needs in Chautauqua County. This framework ensured that decisions were guided by data, informed by community voices, and aligned with available resources.

Step 1: Review of Health Data

County and state health indicators were compared to identify areas where Chautauqua County performed significantly worse than New York State averages.

Step 2: Assessment of Community Input

Findings from the Community Health Survey and community conversations were reviewed to understand the issues most important to residents and families.

Step 3: Evaluation of Impact and Feasibility

Each issue was assessed based on the number of people affected, the potential for measurable improvement, and the availability of existing infrastructure, support, and funding.

Step 4: Application of the SMARTIE Criteria

Priority areas were evaluated using the SMARTIE method—ensuring goals were Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable.

Step 5: Selection of Final Priorities

The final priority areas were chosen based on overall health burden, community input, and the potential for meaningful, equitable change in Chautauqua County.



Results from Public Input Efforts

The Chautauqua County Community Health Survey provided valuable insight into the community's perceptions and priorities.

Responses show medical health such as chronic disease, mental health, dental health, and housing options that are affordable and safe are among the leading health concerns. Community factors like access to affordable healthy food, reliable transportation, and access to community groups that encourage healthy habits are important.

Equally important was the collaboration with community based organizations (CBOs), healthcare providers, social service agencies, and other community partners. These organizations contributed critical qualitative insights drawn from their direct work with local residents. Through structured discussions, informal feedback sessions, and shared observations, partners provided context to the survey findings and highlighted emerging issues not easily captured through quantitative data alone. Their firsthand perspectives helped identify community strengths—such as collaboration among service providers and strong neighborhood networks—as well as persistent challenges related to economic hardship, behavioral health, transportation, and access to care.

By integrating data from the community survey with partner and CBO observations, the Chautauqua County Health Department (CCHD) developed a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of community health needs across Chautauqua County. This blended approach ensured that both individual voices and organizational expertise informed the identification of priority health issues and will continue to guide collaborative planning and action in the next phase of the community health improvement process.

Selection of Final Priority Areas

Based on the data analysis, community input, and the framework described on the previous page, the CCCHPT identified the most significant and actionable health issues affecting Chautauqua County residents. These priorities reflect both the areas of greatest health burden and the community's expressed needs and values. The selected priority areas will guide coordinated efforts to improve health outcomes, promote equity, and strengthen the overall well-being of individuals and families throughout Chautauqua County. These areas align with the New York State Prevention Agenda domains and reflect both the greatest community health needs and opportunities for meaningful improvement.

Priority Areas Selected



01a Tobacco/ E-Cigarette Use

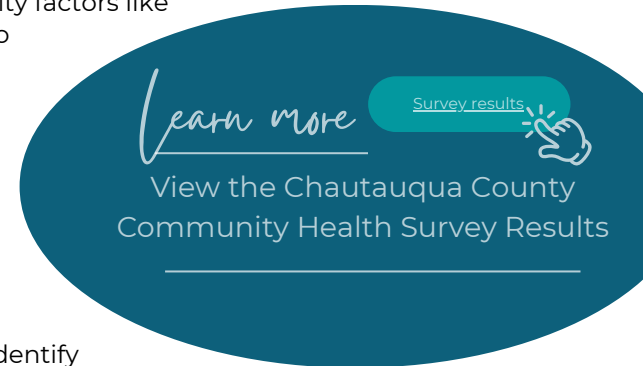
Prevention Agenda Priority Area: Tobacco and E-Cigarette Use

Domain: Social and Community Context

All CCCHPT members agreed to collaborate on reducing tobacco and e-cigarette use across Chautauqua County. This work will focus on decreasing the overall prevalence of tobacco use by strengthening restrictions and policies within the Chautauqua County Sanitary Code, with the goal of reducing access to tobacco and e-cigarette products.

Rationale and Supporting Data:

- High burden of tobacco use and elevated mortality rates from cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer.
- Supported by local health behavior and survey data.
- Identified as a concern in both community input and state data.
- All agencies have a vested interest in chronic disease prevention and management.
- Builds on a long history of tobacco reduction efforts by the CCHD and its partners.



Prevention Agenda Priority Area: Healthy Eating

Domain: Social and Community Context

The CCHD, local hospitals, and the Healthy Community Alliance (HCA) will work together to increase the number of Certified Lactation Consultants (CLCs) and expand access to breastfeeding support for new mothers.

Rationale and Supporting Data:

- The percentage of WIC infants breastfeeding for at least six months is significantly lower in Chautauqua County compared to New York State.
- The CCHD currently offers breastfeeding support through the Welcome Home Baby program, home visits, a breastfeeding hotline, a closed Facebook group, and hospital outreach.
- The HCA, through the PICHC grant, will engage community partners to address social determinants of health affecting women, infants, and families.
- UPMC Chautauqua, HCA, and CCHD will collaborate to expand training and certification opportunities for new CLCs and promote breastfeeding education throughout the county.

**01b Healthy Eating****Prevention Agenda Priority Area: Access to and Use of Prenatal Care**

Domain: Health Care Access and Quality

The CCHD, local hospitals, The Chautauqua Center (TCC), and the HCA will collaborate to increase access to prenatal care, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Rationale and Supporting Data:

- The percentage of births with late or no prenatal care is higher in Chautauqua County than in Western New York or statewide averages.
- Partners will conduct a feasibility study to identify strategies for improving prenatal care access for pregnant individuals in rural communities.

**02 Access to & Use of Prenatal Care****Prevention Agenda Priority Area: Housing Stability and Affordability**

Domain: Economic Stability

The CCHD Environmental Health Division will continue efforts to improve housing safety by increasing the number of homes tested for lead.

Rationale and Supporting Data:

- Chautauqua County is a grantee of the New York State Department of Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention Program.
- Nearly 47.8% of homes in the county were built before 1950, compared to 37.2% statewide, increasing the risk of lead exposure.
- The Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provides services to children countywide who have elevated blood lead levels.
- In 2025, the City of Jamestown was designated as one of 25 areas of concern in New York State and received targeted funding to support the launch of a lead testing rental registry.

**03 Housing Stability & Affordability**

Additional Areas of Focus

While the CHIP prioritizes specific areas for coordinated action, the CCCHPT recognizes that other important health and social issues also affect the well-being of county residents. Through data review and community input, the team identified dental health, the needs of an aging population, and the lack of supportive transition or “exit” plans from skilled nursing facilities to home settings as additional areas of concern.

Although these topics are not directly addressed as priority areas within the current CHIP, CCCHPT members are committed to exploring solutions and supporting initiatives that improve these conditions through other community partnerships, programs, and advocacy efforts. The team will continue to monitor these and other emerging issues to ensure that Chautauqua County’s health planning efforts remain comprehensive and responsive to the community’s evolving needs.

Moving Forward

The CCCHPT is committed to working collaboratively across sectors to implement these priority initiatives. Each partner agency will contribute its expertise, resources, and community connections to advance shared goals and promote equitable health outcomes. Progress will be monitored through ongoing data collection, evaluation, and community feedback to ensure that strategies remain effective and responsive to local needs. Through these collective efforts, Chautauqua County aims to build a healthier, more resilient community for all residents.

Implementation and Evaluation

The CCCHPT will oversee the implementation of the CHIP through a coordinated, collaborative approach. Each partner organization—including the CCHD, local hospitals, TCC, The Chautauqua Health Network, and the HCA—will lead or support activities aligned with their areas of expertise and capacity.

Implementation will be guided by the SMARTIE framework, ensuring that strategies and objectives remain Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable. Action plans will include measurable goals, timelines, and responsible partners for each priority area.

Progress will be tracked through regular data collection, review of key performance indicators, and ongoing community engagement. The CCCHPT will meet periodically to evaluate progress, share updates, identify barriers, and adjust strategies as needed to maintain momentum and relevance.

Community input will continue to play a central role throughout the implementation process. Feedback gathered through surveys, community conversations, and partner meetings will inform continuous improvement and help ensure that actions are meeting the needs of Chautauqua County residents.

Evaluation findings will be summarized and shared with partners, stakeholders, and the public through annual reports, presentations, and updates to the CHIP. This transparent, collaborative approach will help maintain accountability and foster community trust as the CCCHPT works to create lasting improvements in health and well-being.

Plans for Distribution

The CCHD, in partnership with the CCCHPT, will make the 2025-2030 Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan available to the community through several means, including:

- Posting the CHA and CHIP documents on the County website
- Posting the CHA and respective CSPs on hospital websites (AHN Westfield Memorial Hospital, Brooks-TLC Hospital System, Inc., and UPMC Chautauqua)
- Developing a press release and distributing to all local media
- Posting links to the CHA, CHIP, and CSPs on CCHD Facebook and Instagram pages
- Emailing links to CHA and CHIP to all Chautauqua County Government employees
- Sharing documents and links to documents with community partners at various coalition and workgroup meetings
- Forwarding links to CHA, CHIP, and CSPs to various community email lists (e.g. faith-based organizations, local physicians, youth-serving organizations, wellness coordinators at worksites, school administrators, etc.)

The CCHD and CCCHPT will additionally respond to any media requests generated from this outreach.

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