2025 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Butler County, Missouri

Butler County
Health Department
Missouri

CONTENTS

A C R O N Y M S

CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CHA: Community Health Assessment

CHI: Community Health Improvement

CHIP: Community Health Improvement Plan

CHR: County Health Rankings

MAPP: Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships

NACCHO: National Association of County and City Health Officials

SDOH: Social Determinants of Health

BCHD: Butler County Health Department

E X E C U T I V E

S U M M A R Y

Butler County Health Department (BCHD) collaborated with community partners to conduct an extensive community health assessment (CHA) process for Butler County, Missouri, spanning from September 2024 to February 2025. The aim was to ensure that the assessment was community-driven, transparent, and aligned with community values and health equity principles.

Butler County is in Southeast Missouri and has a population of 42,130 according to the 2020 U.S. Census data. Caucasians comprise 89.1 percent of the total population. The county has a higher percentage of the older population (age 65+) than does Missouri. Approximately 58 percent of Butler County residents older than 25 have graduated from high school, with 11 percent going on to receive a post-secondary degree. Butler County has 19 percent of its residents living in poverty and about 13 percent are uninsured. Butler County has two hospitals, several primary and specialty care physician practices, a federally qualified health center, a county health department, emergency services, several counseling centers and multiple long-term care facilities. The community profile chapter includes social, economic, and community health programs.

Health Outcomes
The health outcomes chapter contains information on mortality including leading causes of death, cancer incidence, chronic disease, and infant mortality; and on morbidity, including obesity, diabetes, infectious disease and health status at birth. The chapter also includes information on mental health and preventable hospitalizations. The leading causes of death in Butler County are:
- Heart Disease
- All Cancers
- Smoking Attributable
- All Injuries and Poisonings
- Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease

Health Behaviors
The chapter addressing Health Behaviors is comprised of information on diet and exercise, tobacco use, substance abuse, maternal health and prevention, and screening. In Butler County, 33 percent of residents are physically inactive, 28 percent smoke cigarettes, and the food environment index are 6.1 out of 10.

Health Measures
The chapter on Health Measures includes data regarding causes of death for children and adolescents, teen substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and the health of senior citizens. The main causes of death for children and adolescents are unintentional injuries and motor vehicle deaths. As explained in the chapter, some rates are considered unstable due to sparse numbers of incidents, but overall, the rate of death of children and adolescents per 100,000 population is higher in all individual categories.

Primary Research

One focus group was held for Butler County Partners in the Health Department. A list of questions asked can be found below. Participants were asked to fill out a pre-survey as well.

1. What are the primary populations you serve?
   a. What are the biggest challenges the population you serve face?
   b. How are you working towards/what are you doing to address these challenges?

2. As an agency what are the challenges you face in delivering your services?
   a. What might BCHD do to help?

3. Do you feel that access to resources is a common issue within your population?
   a. Please share specific issues regarding resource access.
4. What do you consider the top social determinants?
   a. What can be done to address these?
   b. Is anyone currently focusing on the determinants mentioned?

5. What do you perceive as the top 5 health priorities in Butler County?
   a. Of these health priorities discussed, which one needs to be addressed first by BCHD?
6. We understand there are issues with equity across the state, what can be done to address inequity in our area?
7. What is your organization doing to address health inequity within your population?

8. What media tools and/or methods are you using to communicate educational messages within your population?
   a. What is working?
   b. What is not?

A consumer survey was conducted in person and online. The survey was available through a QR code and a direct online link. The consumers also received the same pre-survey questions in their survey. The questions are found below.

1. What are the services you use in your community?
   a. Which services do you use most?
   b. Which do you use least and why?
   c. How do these services help you?

2. What is your biggest challenge, receiving these services?

3. What do you perceive as the top 5 health priorities in Butler County?
   a. Of these health priorities which ones need to be addressed first by BCHD?

4. What methods do you use to receive information about the services you use most?

5. What is your preferred method of contact to receive information about the services you use?

Summary of Findings

The following lists represent the key findings of this Community Health Assessment by type of need:

Health Needs
Cancer
Communicable Diseases
Heart Disease
Maternal and Child Health
Mental and Behavioral Disorders
Obesity, Nutrition, Activity

Behavioral Needs
Injuries and Violence
Preventative Practices and Screenings
Substance Use and Abuse
Smoking, Vaping, and Tobacco Use

Community Needs
Affordability of Healthcare and Prescription Drugs
Availability and Accessibility of Healthcare
Community Safety
Housing Availability
Transportation

Priority Needs
Mental Health
Substance Use and Abuse
Access to Healthcare
Chronic Disease
Tobacco Use

Prioritization Process

The CHA team met and discussed prioritization of issues. The group considered previous methods used for prioritization. The team chose to use a custom method based on relevant factors regarding primary and secondary data. The custom prioritization method included the following components:

Focus Group Pre-Survey Data – the focus group members were asked to assign a severity weight from one to ten for a list of more than twenty health issues and the average of the responses were calculated.

Focus Group Pre-Survey Prioritization Exercise – Focus group members were asked to list the top five issues they believed Butler County faces.

Focus Group Mentions – The number of times focus group members mentioned the different health issues.

MAPP 2.0 **PRINCIPLES**

Developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), MAPP is a community-wide strategic planning process for improving community health. Facilitated by public health leaders and used by local health departments across the country, MAPP helps communities apply strategic thinking to prioritize public health issues and identify the resources needed to address them. All aspects of MAPP's newest version are centered on the following principles:

Equity: Encourages the shared exploration of social injustices including structural racism, class and gender oppression that create and perpetuate inequities.

Inclusion: Fosters belonging and preventing othering by identifying and eliminating barriers to community participation and ensuring all stakeholders and community members can contribute to the MAPP process regardless of their background or experience.

Trusted Relationships: Builds connection and trust by honoring the knowledge, expertise, and voice of community members and stakeholders.

Community Power: Actively builds community power to ensure those most impacted by the inequities and actions addressed through Community Health Improvement are those that guide the process, make key decisions, and help drive action.

Strategic Collaboration & Alignment: Creates a community-wide strategy that appropriately aligns the missions, goals, resources, and reach of cross-sectoral partners to improve community health and address inequities.

Data & Community Informed Action: Identifies priorities, strategies, and action plans that are driven by the community's voice and grounded in community need as identify through timely qualitative and quantitative data.

Full Spectrum Actions: Encourages community improvement through approaches ranging from provision of direct services to PSE and community power building for supportive communities that enable health and well-being for all.

Flexibility: Meets the real-time, evolving, and unique needs of diverse MAPP communities, organizations, and sectors through an adaptable framework.

Continuous: Maintains continuous learning and improvement through iterative community assessment, planning action, and evaluation cycles.

COMMUNITY & PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

To ensure inclusivity and transparency throughout the CHA process, BCHD aimed to involve a diverse range of community residents and local health system partners at every stage. The CHA process was informed by the contributions of various partners listed below and community members, who participated by attending community meetings, providing feedback and data, and engaging in other ways throughout the process.

Jerry Lathum – New Madrid County Health Department
Taylor DeBerry – FCC BH (Family Counseling Center Behavioral Health)
Nancy Herzog – FCC BH (Family Counseling Center Behavioral Health)
Kathy Bullis Reed – Aging Matters
Jessica Dawson – Poplar Bluff Housing Authority
Robbie Myers – Butler County EMA
Amy Bland – Butler County Health Department
Leslie Maples – Children's Division
Jomy Berry – Probation and Parole
Emily Goodin – Butler County Health Department
Gina Martin – Aging Matters
Carl Harbison – Missouri Highlands
Ashley Harbison – Community Urgent Care
Amanda Gowen – Haven House

BCHD expresses its gratitude for the expertise, dedication, and extensive time contributed by all the individuals listed above towards the CHA process. Building on this foundation of community engagement and partnership, BCHD is determined to develop and implement a community health improvement plan for Butler County.

PROCESS & METHODS

The Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework guides the Community Status Assessment (CSA) in collecting quantitative data that paints a picture of the community's health status, including demographics, health outcomes, and health inequities. The CSA goes beyond looking solely at health behaviors and outcomes to also identify social drivers of health (SDOH) and systems of power, privilege, and oppression that contribute to health disparities in the community. By involving community members in the assessment process, the CSA tells the story of the community from their perspective.

To ensure a thorough analysis of Butler County's health status, quantitative data was collected from reputable sources such as United States Census Bureau, County Health Rankings, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, etc.

The CSA provides a comprehensive view of Butler County's health, serving as a valuable supplement to the Community Context and Community Partner Assessments.

GEOGRAPHIC

PROFILE

Butler County, located in the Southeast Ozark Foothills Region of Missouri, is known for its wooded hills, fertile valleys, and Ozark streams. With a total area of 699 square miles and with a population of 42,130, Butler County was founded on February 27, 1849. Butler County is named after William O. Butler who was a former U.S. Senator. The first meeting in the Butler County Courthouse was held on June 18, 1849.

The county is bordered by Wayne and Stoddard counties to the north and east, with Dunklin County to the south and east, and Arkansas to the south. Ripley and Carter counties last to the west. There are multiple major highways that cut through Butler County, including, U.S. Routes 60, 67, and 170 along with State Route 51, 53, and 145. The Missouri Department of Transportation has plans for Interstate 57 to extend through Butler County as well.

Within Butler County, Poplar Bluff is the largest city with multiple towns surrounding it including Broseley, Ellsinore, Fisk, Naylor, Neelyville, Qulin, and Williamsville.

Zip Code and City	Population	Zip Code and City	Population
63901 – Poplar Bluff	34,354	63940 – Fisk	1,207
63937 – Ellsinore	2,609	63953 – Naylor	999
63954 – Neelyville	936	63961 – Qulin	1,477
63967 – Williamsville	1,837	63962 – Rombauer	35
63966 – Wappapello	2,169	63945 – Harviell	1,350
63932 – Broseley	1,157		

Data Collected from UnitedStatesZipCodes.org (2025)
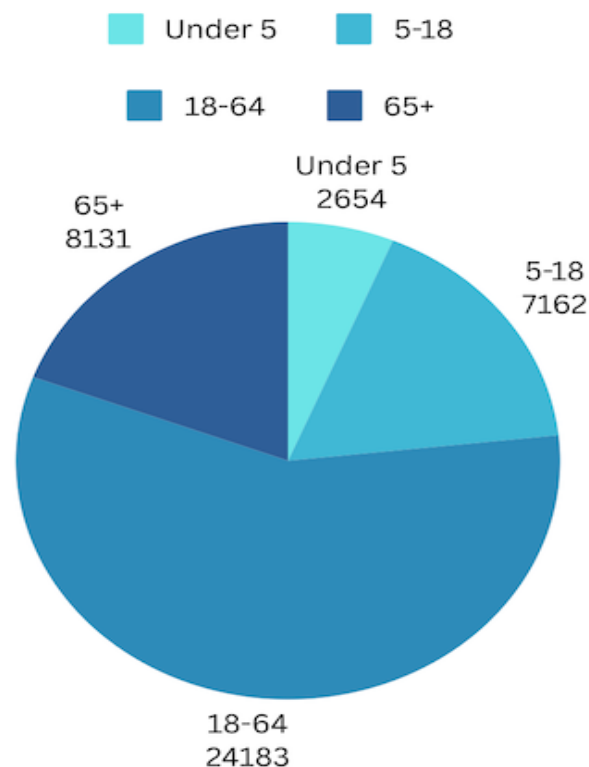
COUNTY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on the most recent census data, Butler County, Missouri has a population of 42,130. The county is comprised of 16,490 households with the average household size being 2.5 and the median age being 40.5 years old. The demographic breakdown of the population indicates that 23.3% are below the age of 18, 57.4% fall within the 18-64 age group, and 19.3% are 65 years and older. English is the exclusive language spoken by 97.6% of residents, with other languages being spoken by only 2.4% of the population.

Regarding racial diversity, 89.1% of the residents identify as only White, while 3% identify as two or more races. Additionally, 6.1% identify as Black or African American alone, 0.9% as Asian, 0.8% as American Indian and Alaska Native. The Hispanic or Latino population makes up 2.5% of residents. Additionally, 82.4% of Missouri residents are White alone, 11.7% are Black or African American alone, 2.3% Asian, and 0.6% American Indian and Alaska Native alone.
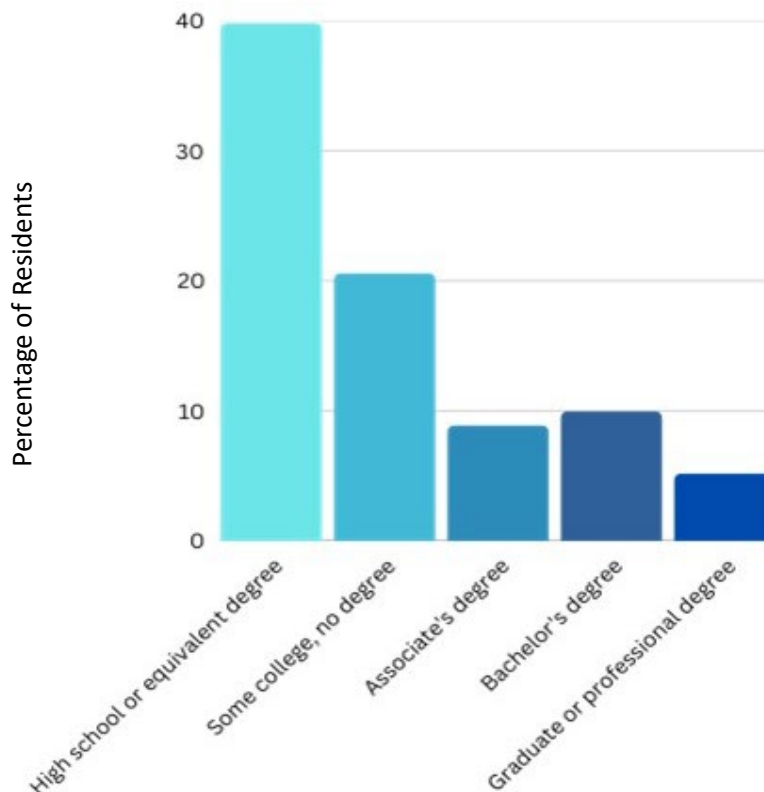
Age Distribution in Butler County

SOCIAL DRIVERS OF

HEALTH

According to the Show Me Crime Reports, Butler County experienced 94 violent crimes in 2024, which is a 14.63% increase from 2023, and 64 property crimes in 2024, which is a decrease of 7.25% from 2023. According to the United States Census Bureau the county's educational attainment is significant with 84.5% possessing a high school diploma and 15.2% having a bachelor's degree or higher. The median annual household income in Butler County in 2022 was $47,245, compared to the $65,920 of the median household income for Missouri and $77,540 for the United

18.6%
Your paragraph text
Poverty Rate in Butler County

States.   Despite these figures, the poverty rate in the county stands at 18.6%, with an average unemployment rate of 4.4% in 2023. According to a Community Needs Assessment from South Central Missouri Community Action Agency, 24.1% of Butler County residents are at Level 1 or below for adult literacy rate, 38.8% are at level 2 or below, and 37% are at level 3 or below
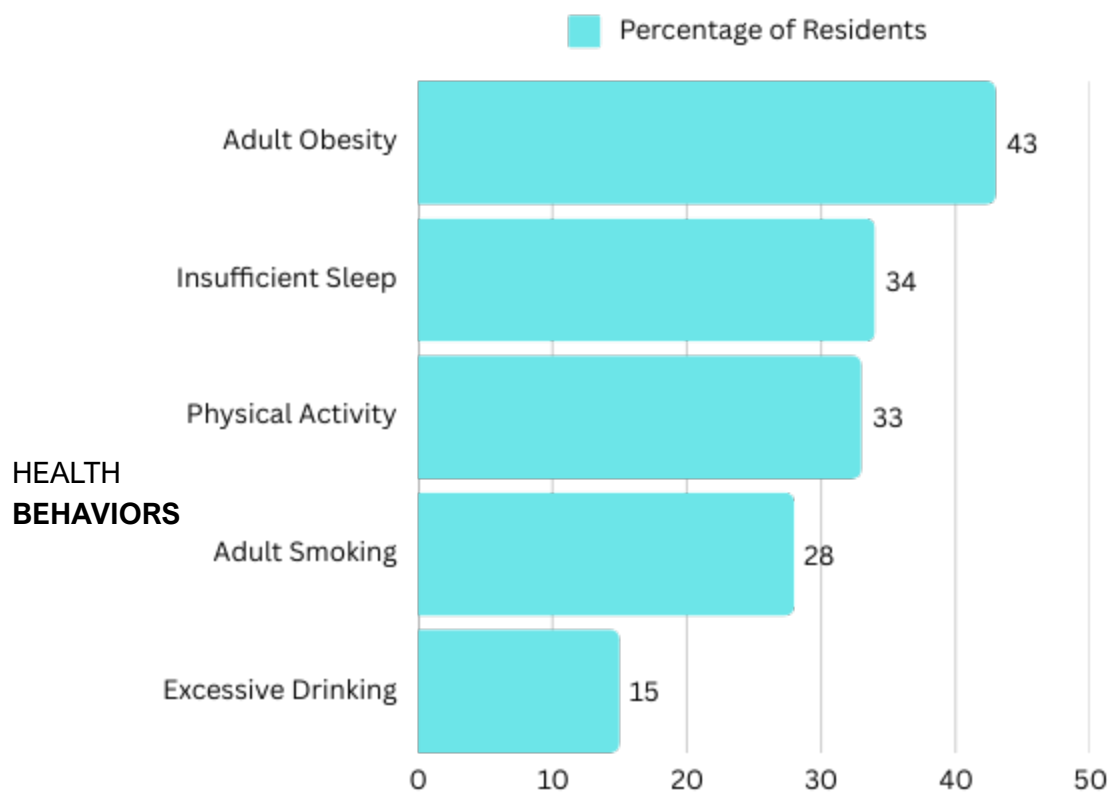
Educational Attainment in Butler County
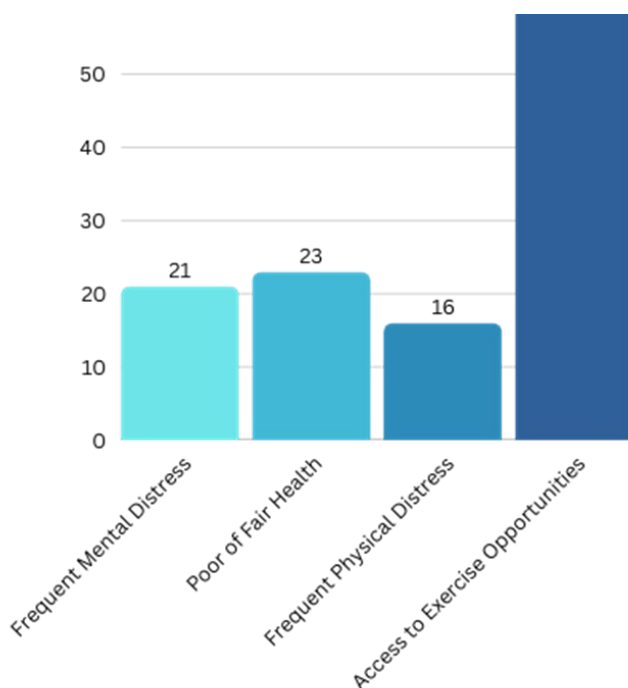
HEALTH

BEHAVIORS

According to the 2023 County Health Rankings (CHR), Butler County ranks 108th out of 115 counties in terms of health outcomes and length of life and sheds light on several health behaviors affecting the residents of Butler County. The data within County Health Rankings for 2021 states that 28% of adult residents are current smokers and 15% engage in excessive drinking. Within the years 2017-2021, 19% of driving deaths were linked to alcohol-impairment driving. According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services in 2023, there were 275 cases of chlamydia and 92 cases of syphilis. In 2021, there were 6 new cases of HIV, as reported by the 2021 Epidemiologic Profile for the Southeast HIV Region.

Health Behaviors in Butler County

HEALTH
BEHAVIORS

County Health Rankings further reveals that physical and mental health present challenges for many Butler County residents. 33% of adults reported that they have little to no time for leisure-time physical activity, and the average life expectancy for Butler County is 71.4 years old.

Reported Health Factors Among Butler County

Moreover, 34% of adults reported sleeping less than seven hours per night on average.

The data also shows that 43% of adults in Butler County are considered obese, with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or greater. Access to healthy foods is another challenge, with 9% of residents with low income and no nearby grocery stores, and 17% are lacking reliable food sources. According to the SNAP Retailer Locator from the USDA, there are 28 locations within Butler County that accept SNAP. As reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2021), 20.3% of families in the county receive food stamps/SNAP benefits.
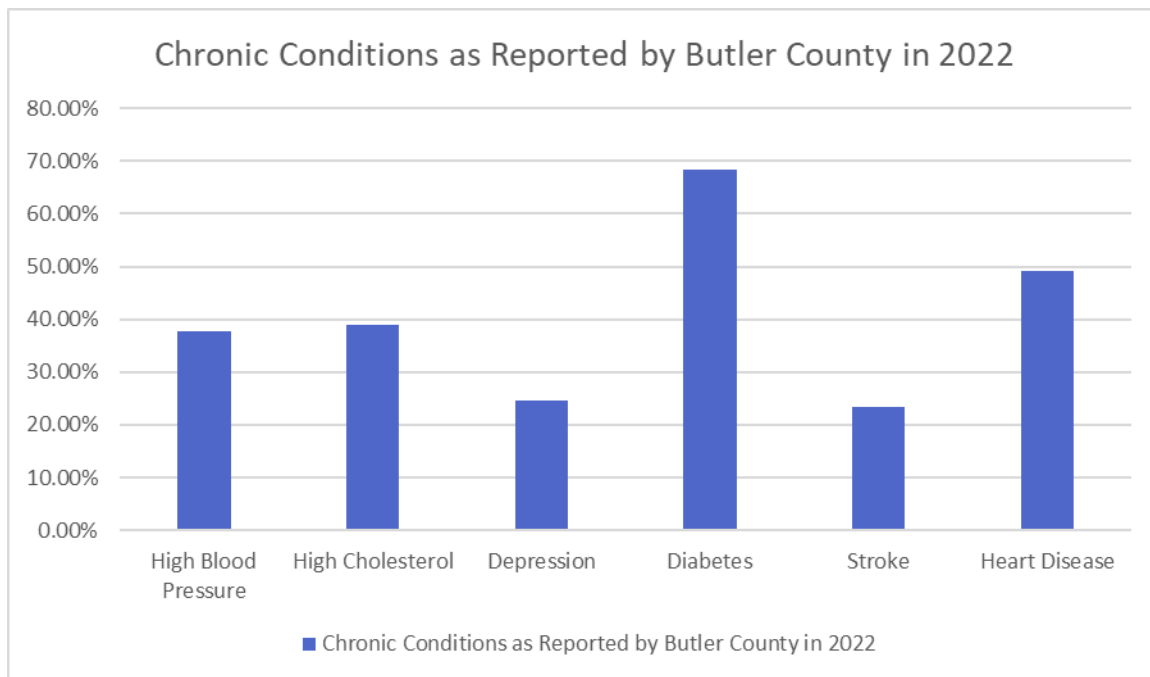
MORBIDITY

& MORTALITY

According to the Butler County Environmental Health Profile, in 2016 9.8 out of every 10,000 residents are hospitalized due to asthma and 60.9 due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and 33 due to heart attacks. ER visits related to asthma within 2016 were 36.5, 103.8 COPD ER visits, 88.1 due to heat related illness, and 83.4 to lung cancer incidence.

As reported by the State Cancer Profiles of 2023, the county's overall cancer incidence rate is 485.4 per 100,000 people making the average annual count 275. Additionally, the county recorded 12,575 COVID-19 cases and 186 deaths.

According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, there were 8 fatal overdoses within 2023 in Butler County, 5 of which were due to opioids. In total there were 1,948 fatal overdoses within Missouri in 2023. It is stated that drug overdose is the #1 leading cause of death for adults 18-44 in age within Missouri.

Chronic Conditions as Reported by Butler County in 2022

H E A L T H C A R E

A C C E S S

Butler County's healthcare system is stronger than other countries within the region and the state. The ratio of population to primary care physicians is 1,050:1 as of the most recent County Health Rankings (CHR). Additionally, the population to dentist ratio is 1,360:1 and the population to mental health providers is 310:1. The percentage of adults under the age of 65 that do not have health insurance was 18% for the population of the Butler County.

Location	Population to Primary Care Physician Ratio	Population to Dentist Ratio	Population to Mental Health Providers Ratio
Butler County	1,050:1	1,360:1	310:1
Missouri	1,420:1	1,600:1	410:1
United States	1,330:1	1,360:1	320:1

According to Data USA in 2023 with the most recent data, 86.7% of Butler County population has health coverage, but 13.3% remain uninsured. Among those with insurance, 33.7% are on an employee plan, 25.7% are covered by Medicaid, 14.4% have Medicare, 10.6% are on non-group plans and 2.4% are covered by a military or VA plan. Of those insured, 47.2% were men and 52.8% were women.

Healthcare providers within the area include Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center, John J. Pershing Veterans' Administration Medical Center, Missouri Highlands Health Care, Poplar Bluff Regional Primary Care, Saint Francis Clinic, Community Urgent Care and Mercy Primary Care. The Mental Health facilities within the county include the Family Counseling Center Behavioral Health, Saint Francis Behavioral Health, Southeast Missouri Behavioral Health, Missouri Highlands and Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center Behavioral Health unit.

The Butler County Health Department provides numerous public health services including but not limited to WIC, Health Education, STI testing and treatment, Environmental Services, and more.

Emergency Services within Butler County that are registered with the Missouri Department of Safety include the Butler County Fire Protection District, Poplar Bluff Fire Department and the Qulin Fire Protection District. The ambulance services include Butler County EMS, Medic One Ambulance, Rural Metro Ambulance Emergency Ambulance and Air Evac.

NEXT STEPS

The community survey and feedback from the community focus groups has given Butler County Health Department (BCHD) a comprehensive understanding of the health concerns and priorities of residents, their usage of department services, and their desire for new programs and services. This information will be used to better recognize the needs of the community and develop strategies to address these issues. The main objective of the survey is to gather a general understanding of the perceptions of residents and should be considered as such when interpreting the results.

The information obtained from the surveys and feedback has already proven invaluable in the development of future programs and initiatives. The results highlighted recurrent barriers and needs of respondents and BCHD has already begun to develop responses to these results in the updating of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP will use data from the three assessments along with community input to identify priority issues, implement strategies for action, and establish accountability to ensure measurable health improvement.

Based on the 2023 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Butler County currently ranks 108 out of 115 counties in terms of health outcomes and factors. Conducting a Community Health Assessment process is a critical step towards improving this ranking and enhancing the health of Butler County residents.

A P P E N D I X   A : F O C U S   G R O U P   Q U E S T I O N S

Partner Community Health Assessment Focus Group Questions

2. What are the primary populations you serve?
    c. What are the biggest challenges the population you serve face?
    d. How are you working towards/what are you doing to address these challenges?

9. As an agency what are the challenges you face in delivering your services?
    a. What might BCHD do to help?

10. Do you feel that access to resources is a common issue within your population?
    a. Please share specific issues regarding resource access.
11. What do you consider the top social determinants?
    a. What can be done to address these?
    b. Is anyone currently focusing on the determinants mentioned?

12. What do you perceive as the top 5 health priorities in Butler County?
    a. Of these health priorities discussed, which one needs to be addressed first by BCHD?
13. We understand there are issues with equity across the state, what can be done to address inequity in our area?
14. What is your organization doing to address health inequity within your population?

15. What media tools and/or methods are you using to communicate educational messages within your population?
    a. What is working?
    b. What is not?

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Community Member's Community Health Assessment Focus Group Questions

1. What are the services you use in your community?
    a. Which services do you use most?
    b. Which do you use least and why?
    c. How do these services help you?

2. What is your biggest challenge, receiving these services?

3. What do you perceive as the top 5 health priorities in Butler County?
    a. Of these health priorities which ones need to be addressed first by BCHD?

4. What methods do you use to receive information about the services you use most?

5. What is your preferred method of contact to receive information about the services you use?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Risky Behaviors Questionnaire provided to Partners and Community members

Definition: Risk-taking behavior refers to engaging in actions or activities that have the potential to be harmful or dangerous, increasing the risk of unintentional injuries and violence.

Instructions: Please tell us, through numbering the below items 1-20, how serious you believe these behaviors are in life. When ranking, the number **1** is **the most** serious, and the number **20** is **least** serious.

____   Stealing
____   Texting while driving
____   Drinking alcohol
____   Having unprotected sex
____   Self - Injurious Behavior
____   Vandalism
____   Drunk driving
____   Using Illicit Substances
____   Excessive eating/Restrictive eating
____   Street racing
____   Engaging in extreme sports
____   Choosing to not wear sunscreen
____   Fighting
____   Overspending
____   Gambling
____   Starting Fires
____   Trespassing
____   Sharing sexually explicit content
____   Tobacco use
____   Choosing to not wear seatbelt

A P P E N D I X   D :   F O C U S   G R O U P   Q U E S T I O N S

Health Problems by Ranking Questionnaire provided to Partners and Community members.

Health Problems by Ranking
Definition: Health problems are considered a disease or medical ailment or an environmental condition that poses the risk of disease or medical ailment.
Instructions: Please tell us, through numbering the below items 1-10, how serious you believe these Health Problems are in life. When ranking, the number **1** is **the most** serious, and the number **10** is **least** serious.

____   Unsafe Housing
____   Access to Healthcare
____   Chronic disease
____   Cancer
____   STD/HIV/AIDS
____   Hepatitis
____   COVID-19/ long covid
____   Tobacco Use
____   Drug abuse
____   Mental Health

A P P E N D I X   E : C O N S E N T

Below is a copy of informed consent received by all participating members of the focus groups.

CONSENT TO AUDIO- OR VIDEO RECORDING & TRANSCRIPTION

Accreditation Focus Group
Brittany Axelson, LMSW & Karra Dunn
Butler County Health Department

This Focus Group involves the audio recording of your discussion in the group today. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio or audio recording or the transcript. Only the Accreditation team will be able to listen to the recordings.

The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your discussion may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the Focus Group.

By signing this form, I am allowing the researcher to audio record me as part of this focus group. I also understand that this consent for recording is effective until the following date: December 31, 2024. On or before that date, the tapes will be destroyed.

Participant's Signature: _____Date:_____

APPENDIX F: DATA SOURCES

Measure	Source	Year
Demographics	U.S. Census Bureau	2015-2021
Health Providers	MICA (Missouri Information for Community Assessment) MO Dept. of Health & Senior Services – Licensure & Certification	2016 2022
Social Drivers of Health/ Health Status	County Health Rankings	2021
Substance Use and Tobacco	County Health Rankings MO Dept. of Mental Health MO Dept. of Health & Senior Services	2018 2020 2016-2019
Other Sources for General Information	Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Trust for America's Health	