

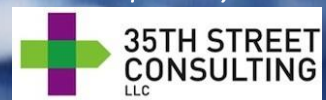


Ocean County Health Department

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 2025-2030



Prepared by:



A New Jersey Certified WBE and SBE
www.35thStreetConsulting.com



What is a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) helps organizations translate data into actionable steps to address the health priorities identified in the Community Health Assessment (CHA). The CHIP serves as a strategic planning guide and a tool for measuring impact by outlining goals, objectives, strategies, and action steps over a five-year period. By linking initiatives and community activities to measurable objectives, the CHIP provides a framework for assessing the effectiveness of collective efforts toward improving community health.

About the Ocean County Health Department

The Ocean County Health Department (OCHD) serves all people across Ocean County. The following mission, principles, and values guide the programmatic work the OCHD does to serve the people of this area.

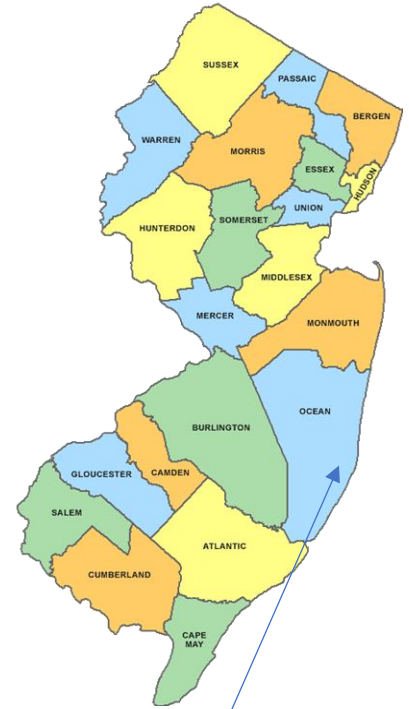
Mission: In partnership with our community, we are committed to serving as a leader to promote healthy lifestyles, ensure a clean and safe environment, and provide high-quality public health services to protect our present and future generations.

Values: Adaptability, Compassion, Cultural Competence, Diversity, Equality, Innovation, Integrity, Professionalism, Respect

Principles:

- To assess public health priorities of the community through comprehensive health planning
- To inform and educate our community about public health issues and concerns
- To empower individuals to take responsibility for their health and wellness and that of their communities
- To utilize a systemic, team approach to effectively solve problems and achieve our mission
- To promote a work environment which continually strives to incorporate our agency's values

"Overall, I think OC has done a great job of community-focused events and activities."



In fulfillment of the Foundational Public Health Services, the Ocean County Health Department provides the following services for all Ocean County communities.

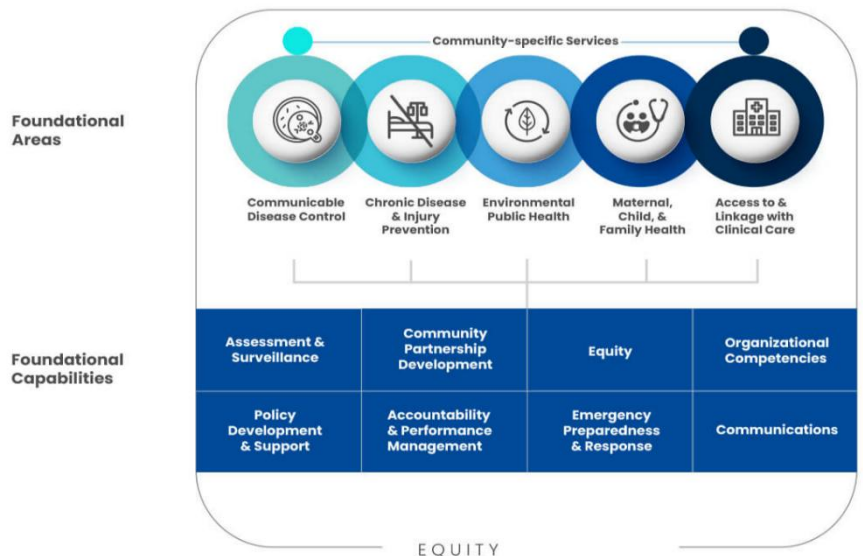
Ocean County Health Department Services



Ocean County Health Department Trainings, Partnerships, and Programs

- Partnership for a Healthier Ocean County
- Overdose Fatality Review Board
- Operation Helping Hands
- CEED Team
- Our Health to Hold

Foundational Public Health Services



February 2022





The 10 Essential Public Health Services

The Ocean County Health Department aligns with the 10 Essential Public Health Services created by the Public Health National Center for Innovations and the de Beaumont Foundation, as recognized by the CDC and others as the framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. Centered in Equity, the key directions include Assessment, Assurance and Policy Development.



The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve equity, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and overall community conditions that enable optimal health for all and seek to remove systemic and structural barriers that have resulted in health inequities. Such barriers include poverty, racism, gender discrimination, ableism, and other forms of oppression. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being.

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #1
Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #2
Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #3
Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #4
Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #5
Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws that impact health

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #6
Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public's health

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #7
Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #8
Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #9
Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and continuous quality improvement

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE #10
Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health

Created 2020



The connection between our communities and our health

By removing barriers and establishing essential resource connections, we can create communities where everyone has access to the choices and tools needed to live healthy lives. A key step in promoting health equity is to identify and address disparities in the Social Drivers of Health.

Social Drivers of Health

Social Drivers of Health (SDoH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health and quality of life outcomes. SDoH are grouped into five domains that include factors such as access to health care, safe neighborhoods, transportation options, nutritious food, and quality education. The quality and availability of these elements impact the array of healthy living choices available to people and can be measured in rates of disease and length of life. Addressing social drivers of health is a primary approach to achieving health equity.



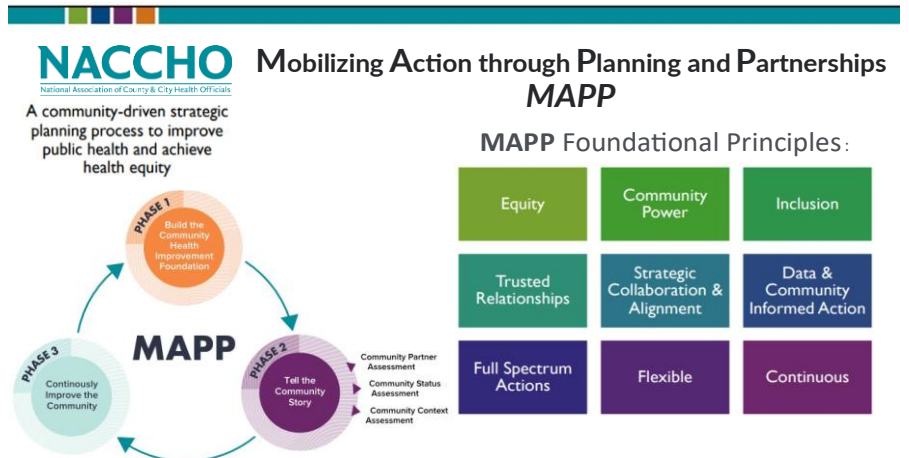
Lessons Learned (2019-2024)

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for people across Ocean County and the world, and has demanded rapid and robust responses from healthcare, social services, government, businesses, families, and individuals. COVID-19 exacerbated existing disparities within the health and social service systems and exposed long-standing inequities in power and socioeconomic opportunities within our society. In response to this unprecedented event, the Ocean County Health Department stepped up to respond, collaborate, and engage with each other, working together to create, build, and grow connections with people and organizations across Ocean County. The 2025 CHA and CHIP process builds upon that shared experience and momentum.

Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP)

The Ocean County Health Department's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) serves as a roadmap for a collaborative and inclusive response to the needs and expectations of our community. This plan aligns with the MAPP (Mobilizing Action for Planning and Participation) 2.0 framework and meets public health accreditation standards.

As a living document, the CHIP is meant to be updated regularly to reflect changes in internal and external factors, such as emerging needs, resource availability, partnerships, and policies. The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in this plan build upon previous successes while adapting to new challenges as they arise.



CHIP Steering Committee

The CHIP Steering Committee met monthly from March – July 2025, and included the following representatives:

Name	Title	Department
Dan Regenye, MHA	Public Health Coordinator/Health Officer	Ocean County Health Department
Peter Curatolo, M. ED	Coordinator of Community Health Services	Ocean County Health Department
Samantha Rice	Public Information Specialist	Ocean County Health Department
Kimberly Reilly, MA, LPC	County Alcoholism Coordinator	Ocean County Health Department
Patricia High, MHS, CIC, MCHES, HO	Assistant Public Health Coordinator	Ocean County Health Department
Daniel Krupinski, MPH, HO, REHS	Director	Long Beach Island Health Department
Sara Gonzalez, CHES	Field Representative, Health Education	Long Beach Island Health Department

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was reviewed, refined, and confirmed during an in-person forum hosted by the Ocean County Health Department on July 23, 2025. The forum gathered 36 participants from various agencies serving Ocean County. Each participant participated in refining the goals and objectives of at least one and committed to ongoing collaboration to achieve the objectives of the CHIP over time.

2025 Community Health Assessment

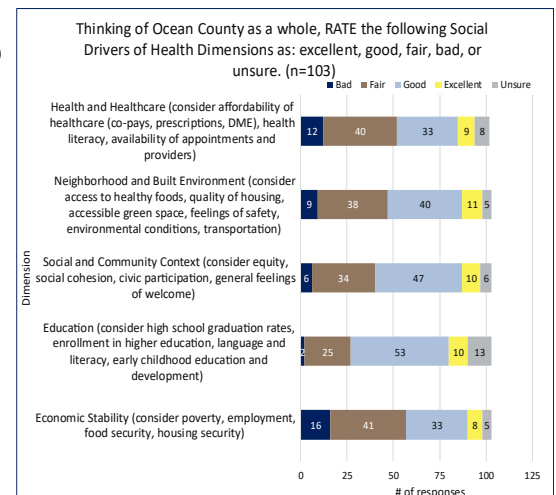
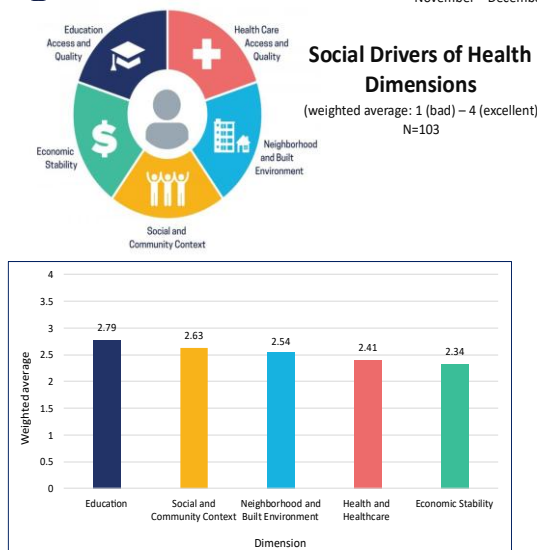
The 2025 Ocean County Health Department Community Health Assessment (CHA) was conducted following the methods and recommendations outlined in MAPP 2.0 (Mobilizing Action through Partnership and Planning) and aligns with the requirements set by the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB). This assessment included a comprehensive range of quantitative health indicators and indexes. Community involvement was a crucial part of the process. Feedback was collected through four public presentations, fourteen key informant interviews, a key stakeholder survey with 132 respondents, a community survey that reached 8,016 diverse residents, and five focus groups involving 50 Ocean County residents representing a variety of perspectives. Additionally, 46 individuals participated in a Community Forum to review and discuss all the data gathered during the Community Health Assessment process.

The feedback gathered from these engagements gave insight into interpreting *why* some of the findings from the quantitative data collected were happening. The breadth of qualitative feedback helps interpret, focusing on how the social drivers of health impact people throughout Ocean County. The respondents of the Key Stakeholder Survey ranked the various dimensions of social drivers of health in Ocean County accordingly.



Ocean County Health Department Key Stakeholder Survey

November – December 2024

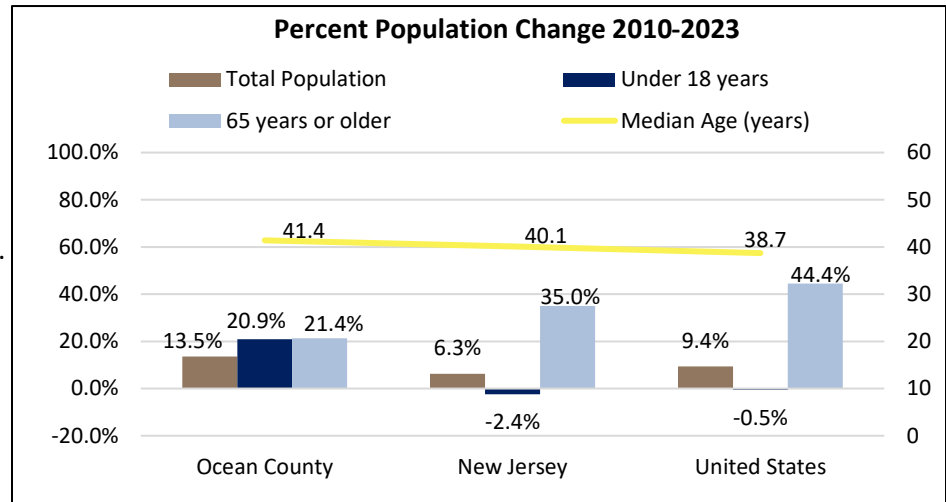




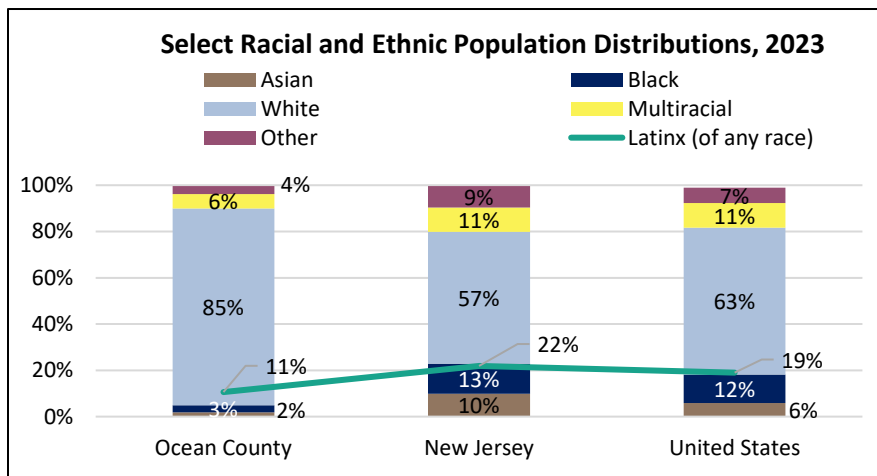
Executive Summary of 2025 CHA Findings:

Ocean County boasts the fastest growing population among New Jersey's 21 counties. Remote work opportunities have attracted an increase in younger families to the area, representing one of the drivers of population increases in all age groups.

"Hybrid work models have really sparked a migration from North Jersey to South Jersey, and we're working to understand who the population is in the north and what their needs are."



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey



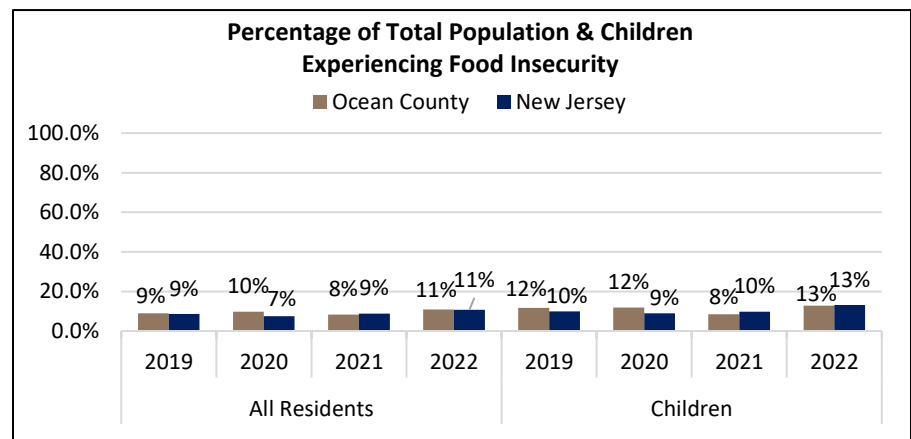
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

In 2023, Ocean County had a significantly less diverse population, with 85% identifying as White, compared to New Jersey and nationwide. Roughly 1 in 10 Ocean County residents identifies as Latinx.

"[Ocean County is the] fastest growing county in the state. It used to be 65% Medicare at SOMC, and that's changing. More families with children moving to the area...bigger houses for a little less money, great schools."

Food insecurity in Ocean County is higher than in New Jersey, with rates dropping in 2021 but rising again in 2022 for all residents as well as for children.

"South Toms River is a food desert; if you don't have a car, you're not going to be able to get to the supermarket."



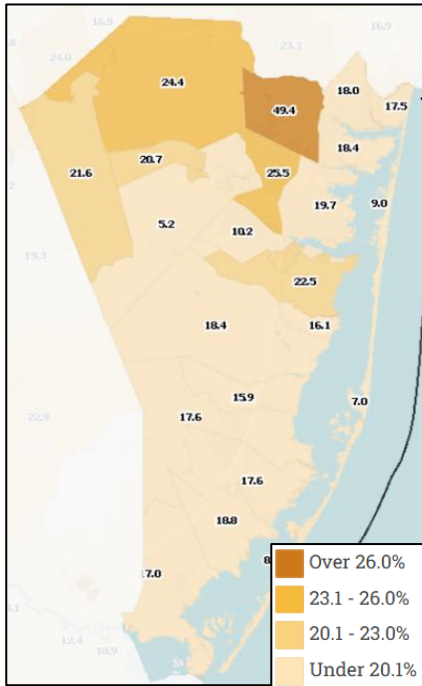
Source: Feeding America



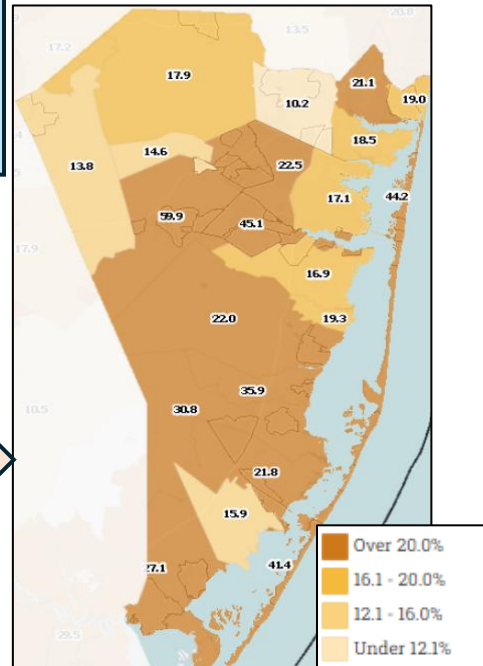
Age Distribution

The types of community level investments needed depend on the proportions of older adults or children living in the area. Nearly half of the population of Lakewood (49.4%) is under the age of 18. Comparatively, in zip code 08759, which is primarily in Manchester Township, 50.9% of the population is aged 65 or older.

Youth Population Aged 0-17 by Zip Code, 2018-2022



Older Adult Population Aged 65 or Over by Zip Code, 2018-2022



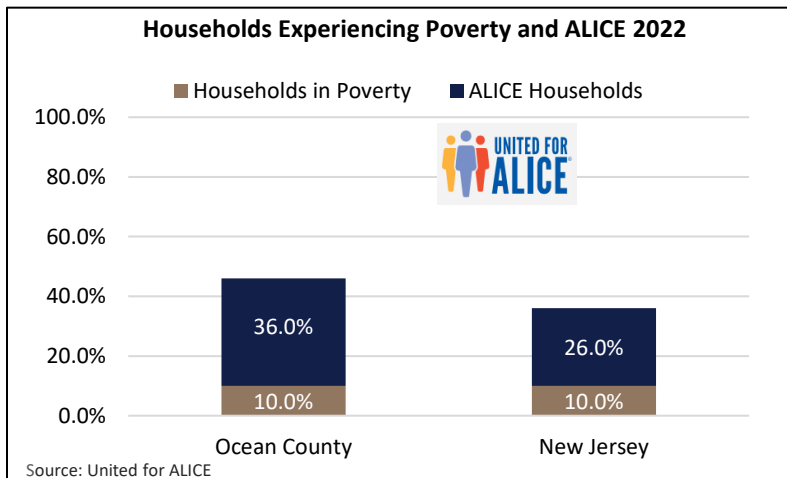
Areas with more children are more common across northern Ocean County, most notably in Lakewood at nearly 50%.

Areas with more older adults are in central Ocean County, southward and on the barrier islands.

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey & Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems

Income and Poverty

While poverty is generally low in Ocean County, more than 1 in 3 Ocean County households meet the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) criteria, but the proportion varies by municipality.

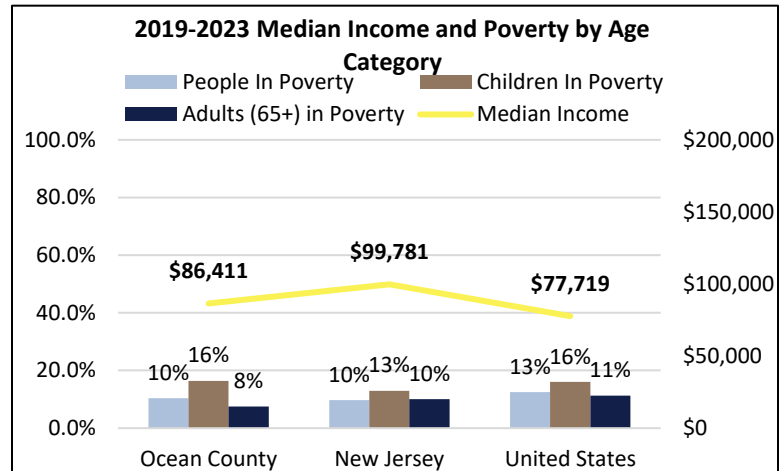


ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and represents the growing number of families who are unable to afford the basics of housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology. These workers often struggle to keep their own households from financial ruin, while keeping our local communities running.

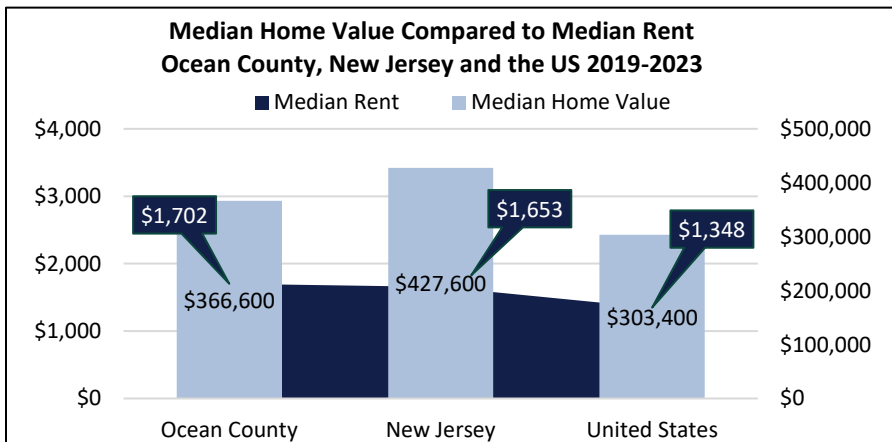
"A lot of it is financial – for 'us' [as providers] and for them – the gap between where government benefits end and what you actually need to live."

Income and Housing

Ocean County has a lower median income (\$86,411) than New Jersey (\$99,781) but a higher median income than the US (\$77,719). While overall poverty has been consistently similar to New Jersey, there are slightly more children in Ocean County experiencing poverty and slightly fewer older adults experiencing poverty compared to the state.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey



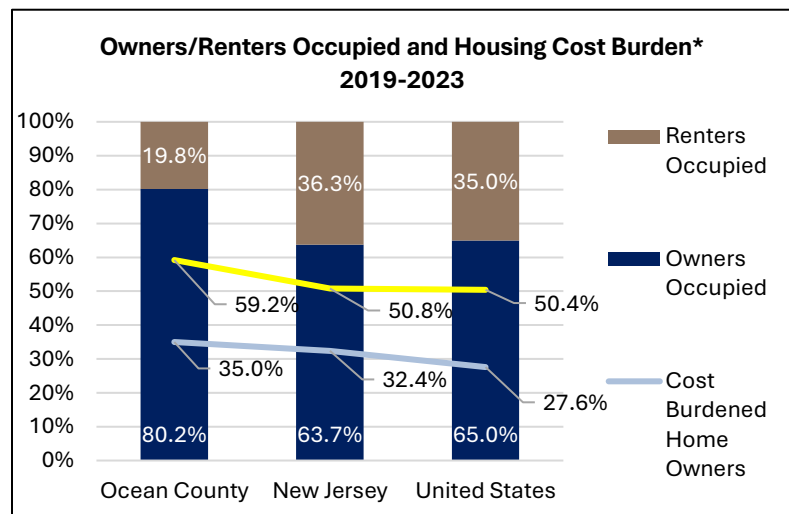
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Renting in Ocean County is expensive. The median rent in Ocean County is more expensive compared to New Jersey in general, although the median cost to buy a home is lower. This makes it harder for renters to save towards the cost of purchasing a home, even though buying a home is more affordable in Ocean County than other parts of New Jersey.

Most people in Ocean County own their homes (80.2%). 1 in 3 homeowners are cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their household income towards housing.

1 in 5 households in Ocean County are renters. 3 in 5 renters in Ocean County are paying more than 30% of their income on housing.

Focus group respondents indicated that seniors on fixed incomes often struggle to pay for home maintenance and repairs.

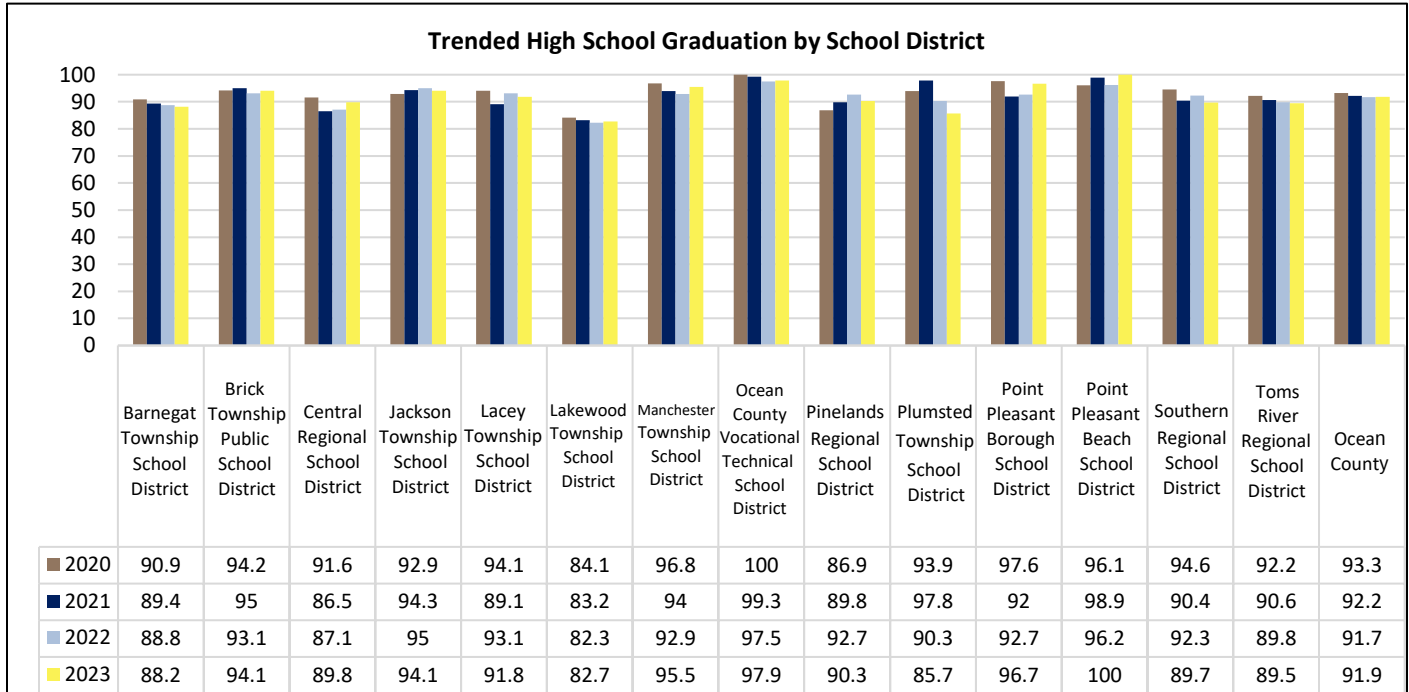


Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey



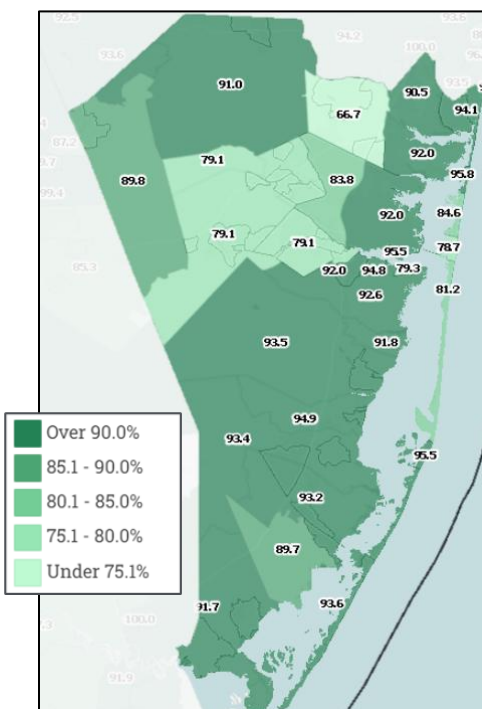
Education and the Internet

Most students in Ocean County graduate from high school on time, but the proportion varies by district. Lakewood Township has fewer graduates than other districts (82.7% in 2023) and has trended downward since 2020. Plumsted (85.7%), Pinelands (90.3%), Southern Regional (89.7%), and Lacey (91.8%) school districts are also trending downward.



Source: New Jersey Department of Education, School Performance

Households with any Broadband Internet by Zip Code, 2018-2022



In parts of Ocean County, nearly 1 in 4 households do not have access to the internet, leaving families without access to health, employment, emergency, and social information.

	With Computer Access				With Internet Access	
	Computer Device (any)	Desktop / Laptop	Smartphone	Tablet / iPad	Internet Subscription	Broadband Internet
Ocean County	92.8%	82.0%	83.1%	61.8%	87.8%	87.6%
New Jersey	96.5%	83.1%	92.1%	66.6%	94.1%	94.0%

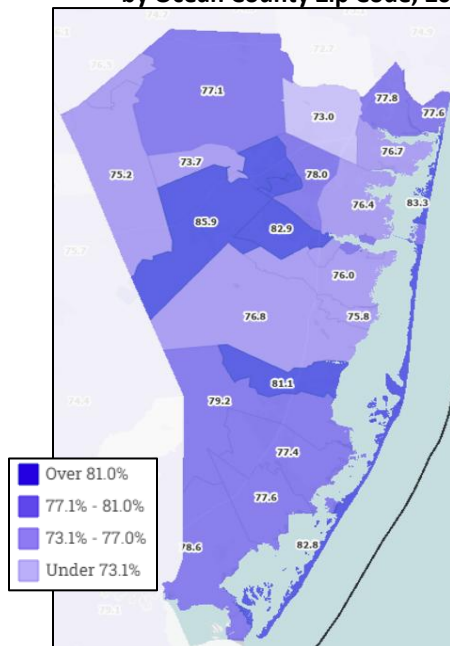
Map Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey & Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems



Access to Care

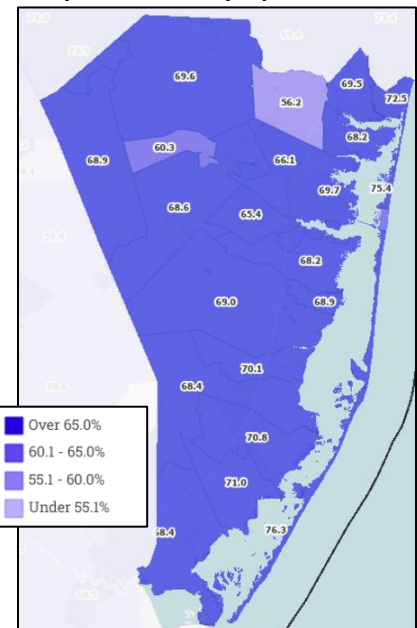
Despite having fewer available primary care providers than other parts of New Jersey and the US, most Ocean County adults reported having a primary care visit in the past year, consistent with other areas with better access to care. There are fewer dentists per person in Ocean County than in other parts of New Jersey or the US, and the proportion of dental care providers per person has decreased over recent years.

**Adults with a Primary Care Visit in the Past Year
by Ocean County Zip Code, 2022**



Source: CDC & Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems

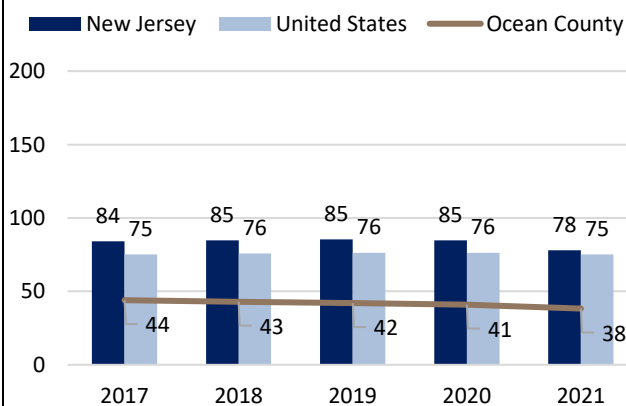
**Adults with a Dental Care Visit Within the Past Year
by Ocean County Zip Code, 2022**



Source: CDC & Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems

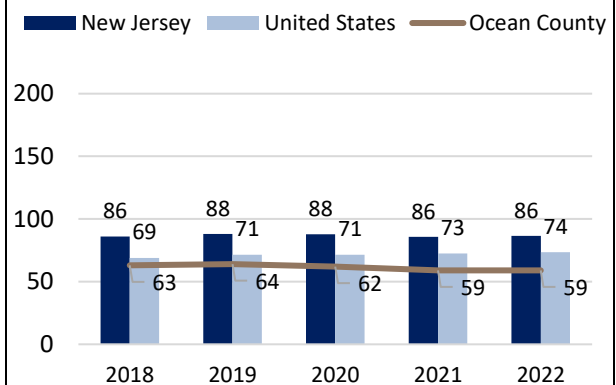
"I would want it to make the communication better in the doctor's office, but just addressing the whole healthcare of an individual, and knowing it's not something that is linear, not just something we're here for today – as a team player, the patient doesn't feel like they're empowered enough to advocate for themselves, and be active in the process."

Primary Care Physicians per 100,000 Residents



Source: Health Resources & Services Administration & CDC

Dentists per 100,000 Residents



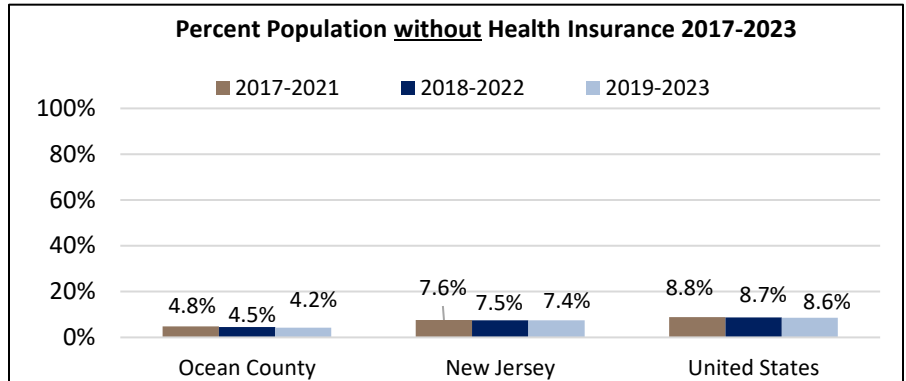
Source: Health Resources & Services Administration & CDC

"On a state level, we need to figure out how to incentivize more providers; there's clearly not enough. What do we need to do to attract specialists to the area?"

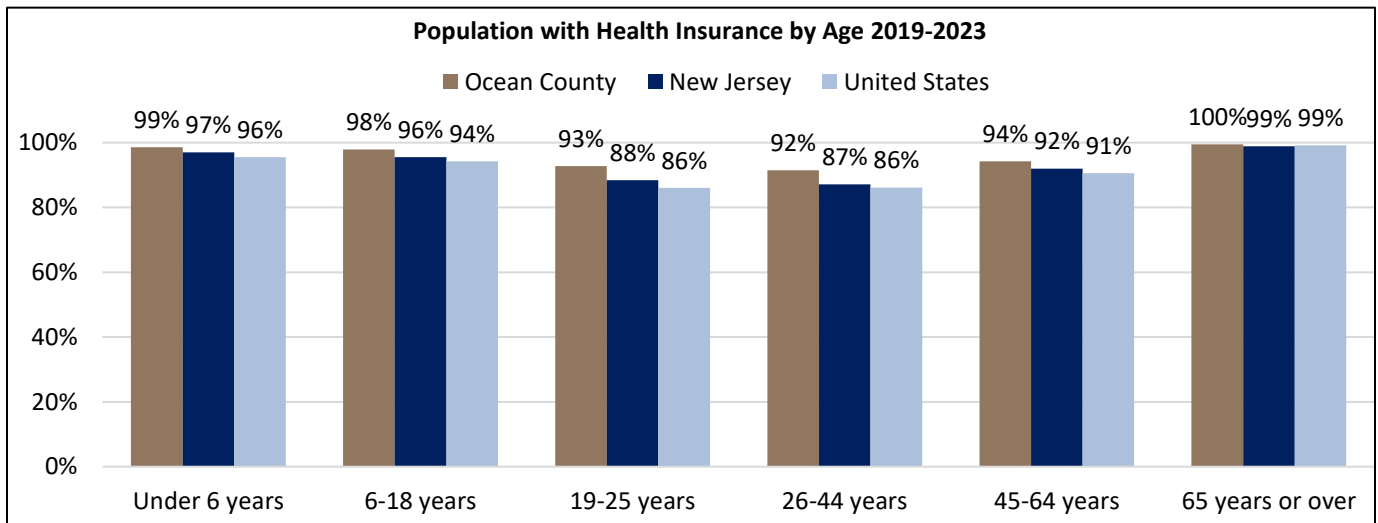


Access to Care

Not having health insurance is a barrier to accessing routine and preventative medical care. Most people in Ocean County have health insurance. While still a relatively high proportion, the least insured population across Ocean County is working-age adults (19-44 years), suggesting not all working people have affordable insurance through their job.

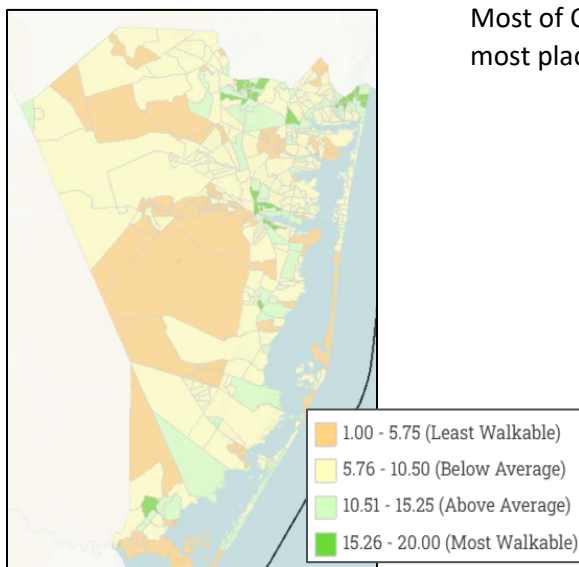


Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

National Walkability Index, 2021 by Ocean County Census Block Group



Source: Environmental Protection Agency & Center for Applied Research and Engagement

Most of Ocean County has below average walkability, meaning most places across Ocean County are car dependent.

"Please build more multi-use paths that include bike lanes and room for mobility scooters...Make it possible to leave the car at home, to bike, walk, and use mobility devices without fear of being killed by cars."

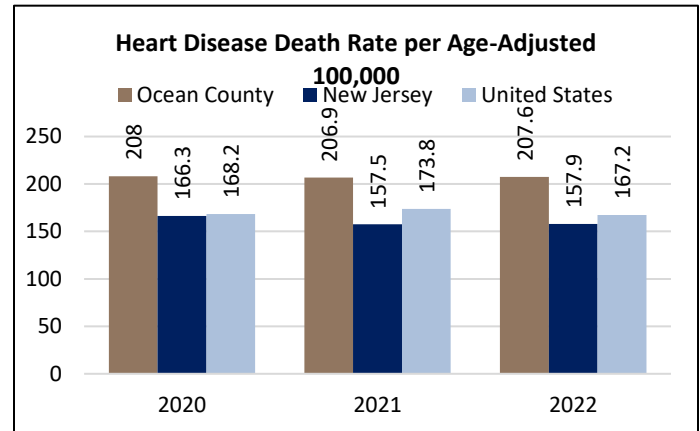
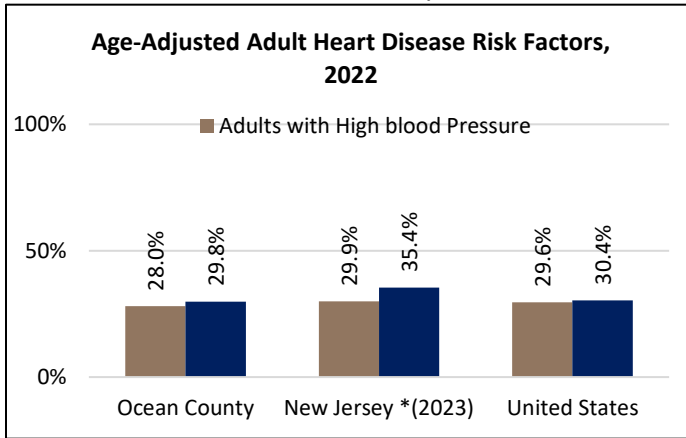




Life Expectancy and Quality of Life

Heart Disease, the Leading Cause of Death

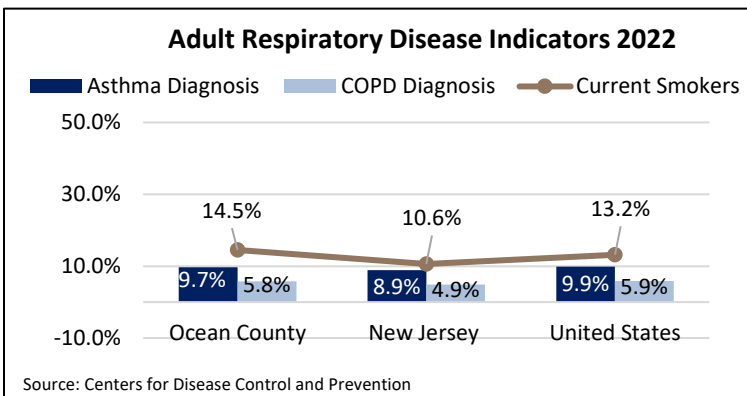
Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the US, New Jersey, and Ocean County. The prevalence of heart disease risk factors is lower in Ocean County than the state and US, **but the rate of death from heart disease is higher.**



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & New Jersey State Health Assessment Data.

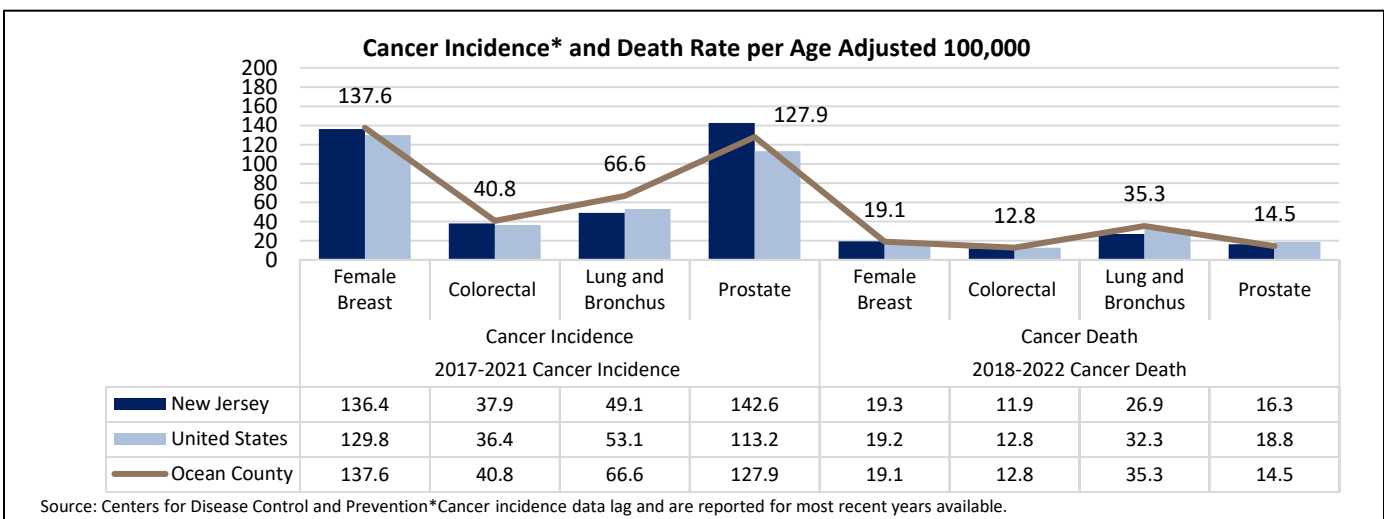
This suggests that there are opportunities to increase access to screening, prevention, and treatment options in Ocean County to reduce death from heart disease.

Cancer and Respiratory Diseases



Ocean County has more current smokers than New Jersey and the US. Ocean County has more diagnoses of asthma and COPD than New Jersey, consistent with US. The rate of death due to chronic lower respiratory disease is higher in Ocean County than New Jersey, but it is improving over time.

Among the most common forms of cancer, the incidence rates are higher in Ocean County than New Jersey and the US for most cancers.

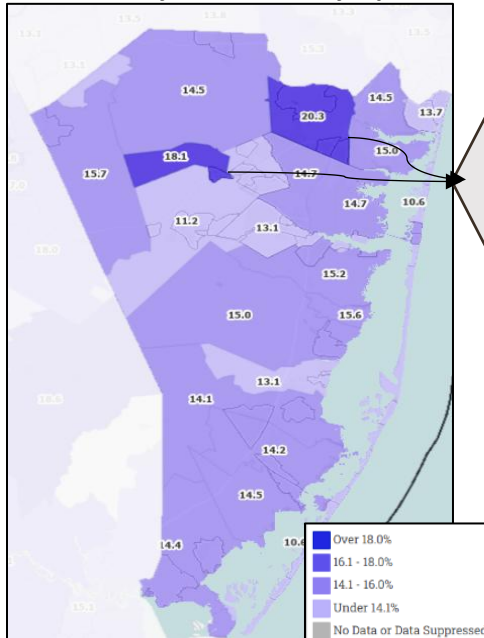




Mental Health and Substance Use

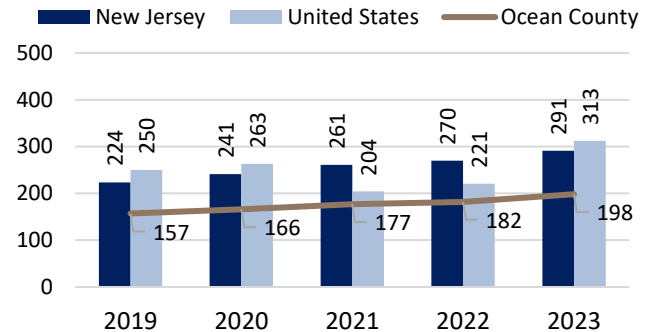
Ocean County has fewer mental health providers per population than New Jersey or the US. However, the proportion of mental health providers has been increasing over time, consistent with statewide increases.

Chronic Poor Mental Health (14+ days in past month) by Ocean County Zip Code, 2022



Higher concentration of adults with poor mental health in Lakewood and Lakehurst.

Mental Health Provider Rate per 100,000 Population

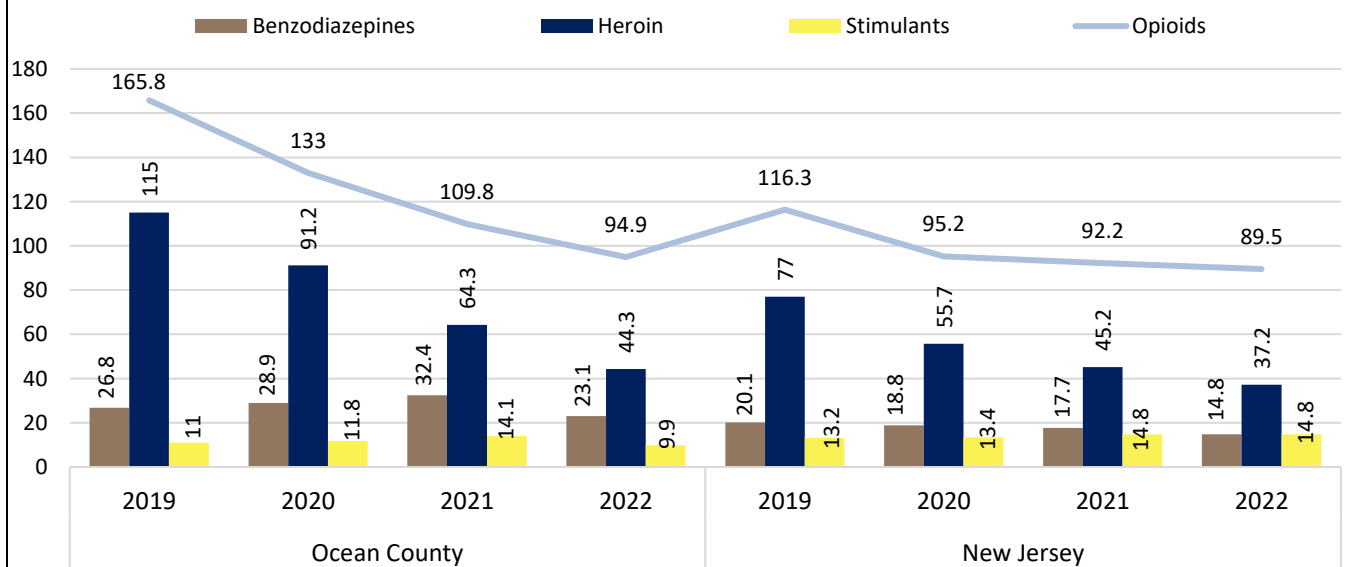


"Middle school-age kids need better services for mental health. Mental health seems to nose-dive at that grade. I see A LOT of senior services advertised not a lot for teens, parents etc."

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems

The rate of drug-related non-fatal hospital visits has been declining for all drugs in Ocean County and New Jersey since 2019. However, the rate of drug-related emergency visits remains higher in Ocean County for three of the four most common drugs than across New Jersey in general.

Drug Related Hospital Visits by Drug Type (Non-Fatal OD) Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000 Residents



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & New Jersey Department of Health, Population Health





Key Informant Interviews (14 in total)

Key Findings:

Strategic Themes

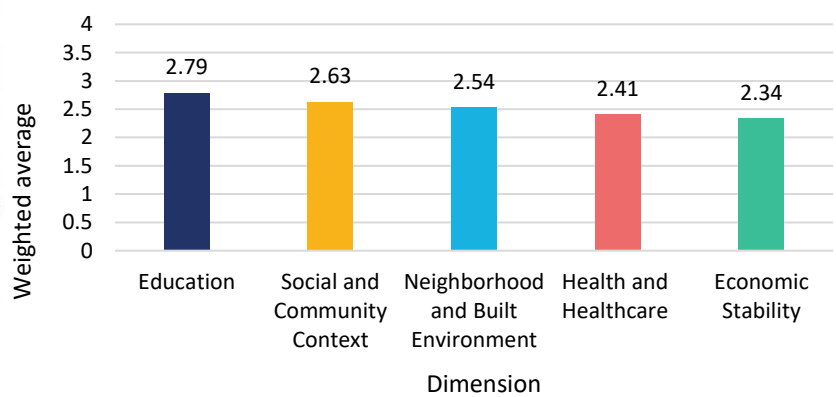
- Engaging the youth is critical (mental wellness, chronic absenteeism, substance use, general hope and direction for the future)
- Older adult health needs are paramount still, but work from home culture has brought a shifting demographic to Ocean County year-round
- Transportation is a barrier for many
- ALICE population needs particular attention, across age categories and race/ethnicity
- Social service and educator workforce is struggling with recruitment/retention
- Affordable housing crisis
- Ocean County is geographically and politically diverse, and increasingly culturally diverse...initiatives and services should be tailored specifically, strategically, and with cultural humility
- Ocean County is deeply community-oriented; variations of "we take care of one another" and "we need one another," and "we need to foster more interdependence," were repeated across interviews
- **PARTNERSHIP ACROSS THE COUNTY IS STRONG, VALUED, AND VITAL**

Direct Needs

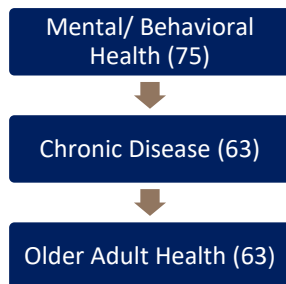
- More partnerships between healthcare and schools, such as SOMC's "Medical Academy," in order to expand the pipeline to careers in health and social service-related fields
- Youth and familial mental health support
- Engagement of grandparents raising grandchildren, a growing population
- More primary care and OBGYN physicians to Ocean County
- More accessible transportation options, especially for seniors
- Transitional housing and additional, more accessible, housing support, including utility and home repair assistance
- Affordable childcare for families
- Inclusion of Spanish language materials for all communication; increased support generally for migrant/new immigrant families
- Increased community accessibility, services, caregiver support for people/families with disabilities
- Thoughtful, flexible, and creative delivery of services to high-need populations, with diverse cultural backgrounds

Key Stakeholder Survey November – December 2024

Social Drivers of Health Dimensions (weighted average: 1 (bad) – 4 (excellent)) N=103



Top Health Concerns



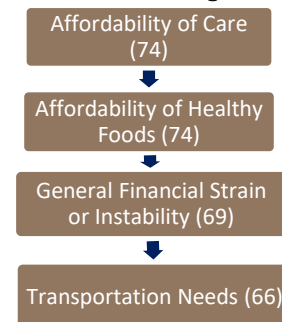
Key Stakeholder Survey

(November – December 2024):

Thinking about the people you serve, what do you think are the:

(n=132)

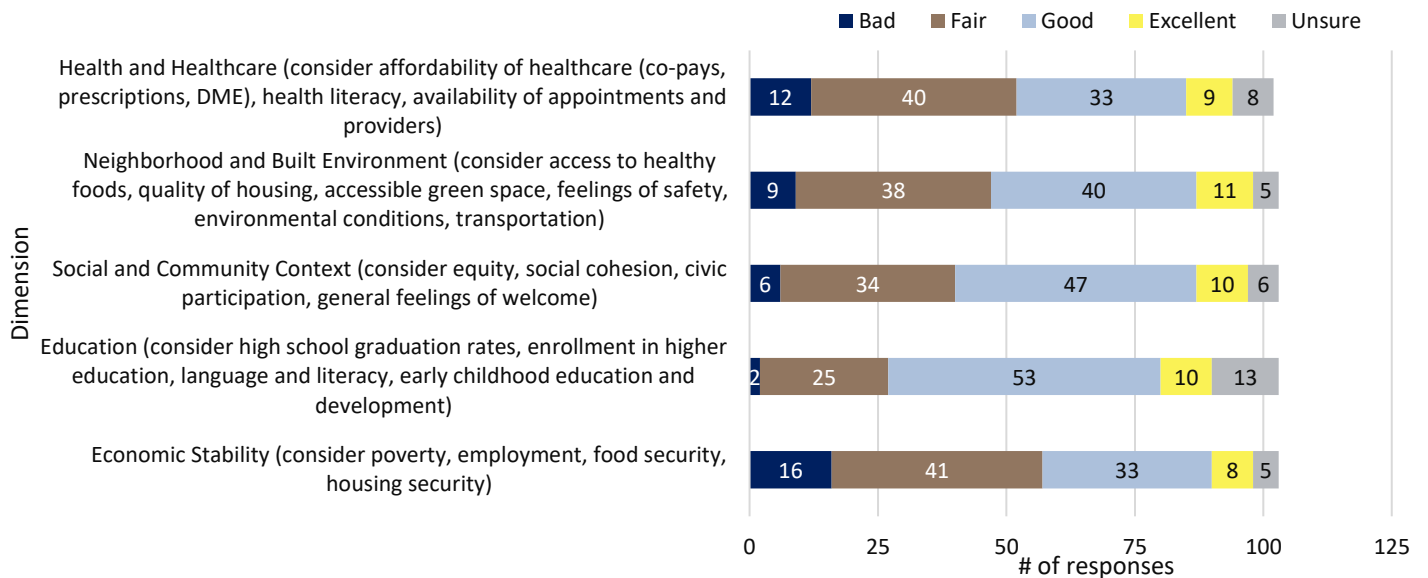
Top Barriers to Achieving a Healthy Life



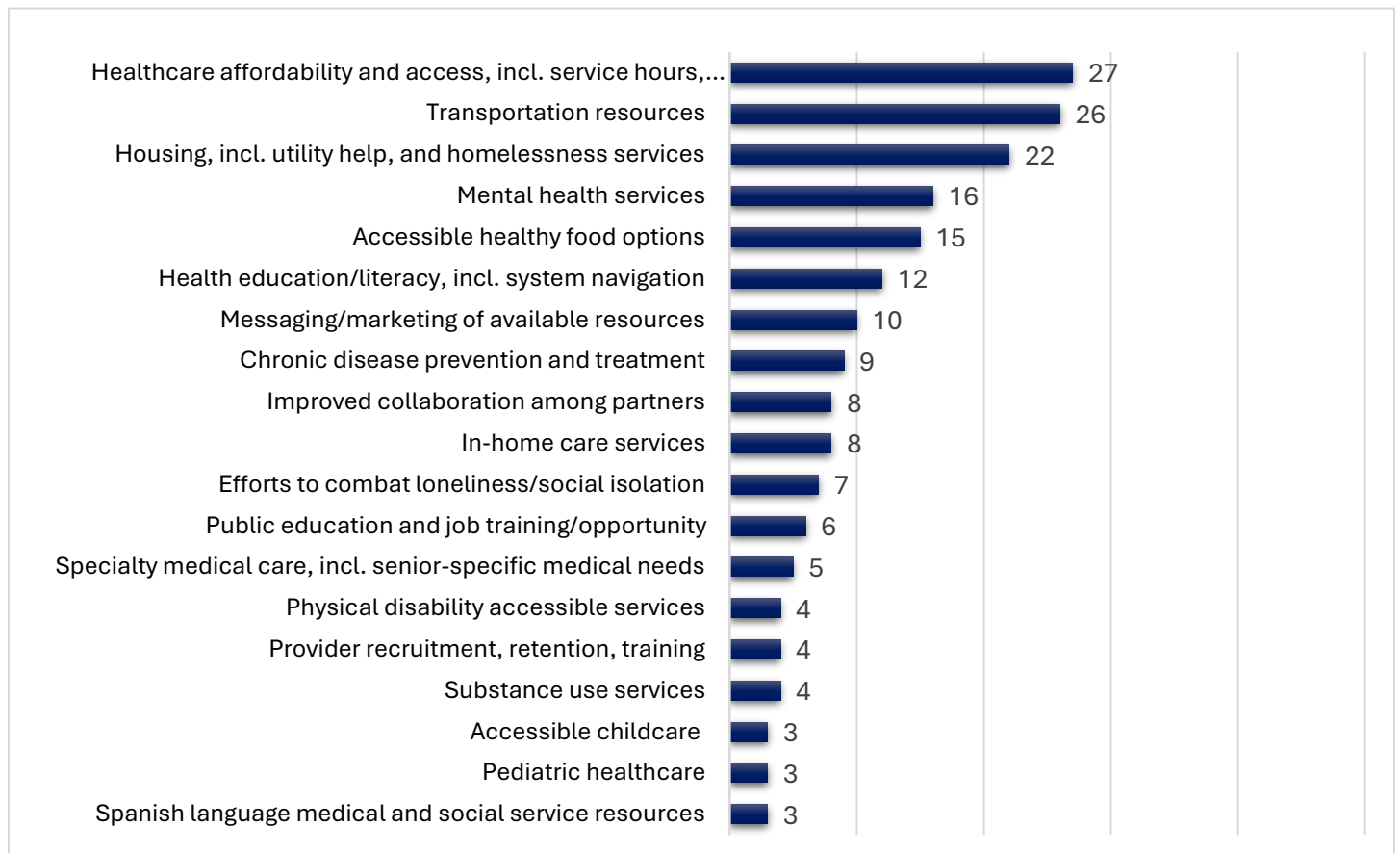


Key Stakeholder Survey November – December 2024

Thinking of Ocean County as a whole, RATE the following Social Drivers of Health Dimensions as: excellent, good, fair, bad, or unsure. (n=103)



From your perspective, what do you think should be the top 3 priorities the Partnership for a Healthier Ocean County should tackle to improve the health and quality of life of the people you serve? (n=132)



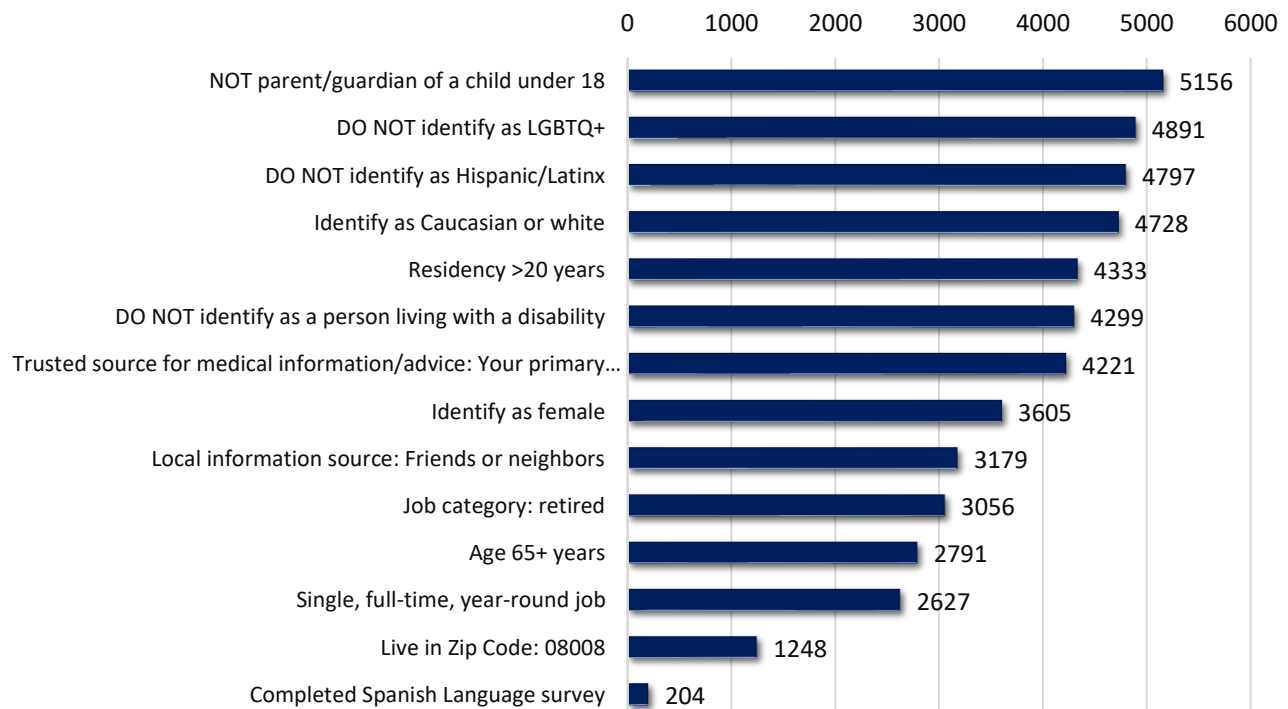


2025 Ocean County Community Survey

Participating Partner Organizations

Organization	8,016 Survey Responses (for analysis; 8,553 total responses)
Brick Schools	640
Coastal Volunteers in Medicine	7
CHEMED Health	188
Deborah Heart and Lung	355
Lakewood School District	467
Long Beach Island Health Department	1,826
Meals on Wheels of Monmouth and Ocean Counties	340
Ocean County Department of Human Services	98
Ocean County Office of Senior Services	748
Ocean County Health Department	2,925
Ocean Ride	14
O.C.E.A.N., Inc.	45
United Way of Monmouth and Ocean Counties	900

Snapshot of 2025 Ocean County Community Survey Respondents (N = 8,016)



2025 Ocean County Community Survey

Was there a time in 2024 when you needed any of these health services?

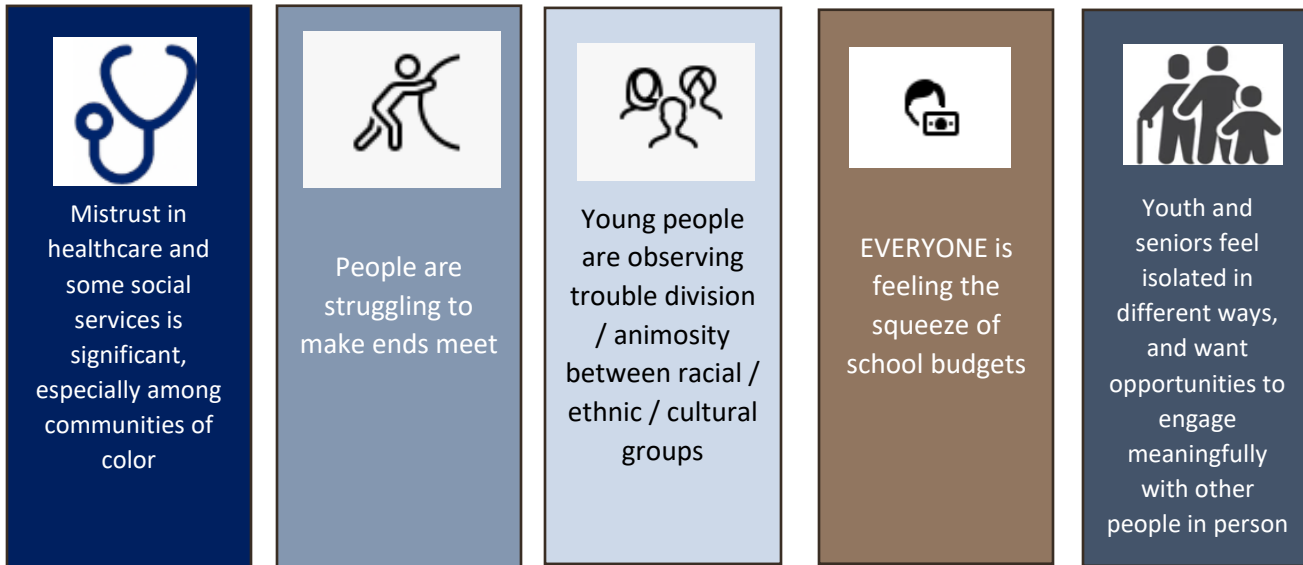
Parents of children under 18			Older adults (age 65+)		
Services Needed		Needed but Couldn't Get	Services Needed		Needed but Couldn't Get
Dental care		In-home care for seniors or homebound 	Prescription medications		In-home care for seniors or homebound 
Prescription medications		Help to care for an adult with a special health need or disability 	General or primary care		Substance use treatment 
General or specialty pediatric care or health services for children		Help to care for a child with a special health need or disability 	Vision care		Help to care for a child with a special health need or disability 
General or primary care		Mental or behavioral health care 	Dental care		Help to care for an adult with a special health need or disability 
Vision care		Substance use treatment 	Vaccines		Mental or behavioral health care 
Vaccines		Health education (dietician, diabetes education, etc.) 	Other specialty care (imaging, surgery, specialist doctors)		General or specialty pediatric care or health services for children 

Was there a time in 2024 when you needed any of these community or public health services?

Parents of children under 18			Older adults (age 65+)		
Services Needed		Needed but Couldn't Get	Services Needed		Needed but Couldn't Get
Afterschool or summer programs for kids		Financial Assistance 	Food Assistance		Employment Assistance and Job Training 
Childcare		Housing Assistance 	Financial Assistance		Childcare 
Food Assistance		Activities for seniors 	Transportation		Financial Assistance 
Financial Assistance		At home daily living supports for seniors 	Afterschool or Summer Programs for Kids		Housing Assistance 
Housing Assistance		Employment Assistance and job training 	Housing Assistance		At home daily living supports for seniors 
Environmental Services		Transportation 	At home daily living supports for seniors		Afterschool or summer programs for kids 

2025 Ocean County Focus Group Findings

Researchers conducted five focus groups with 50 people to learn more from individuals representing a variety of perspectives. This approach aimed to better understand the needs, barriers, and opportunities of greatest interest among key segments of the Ocean County population.

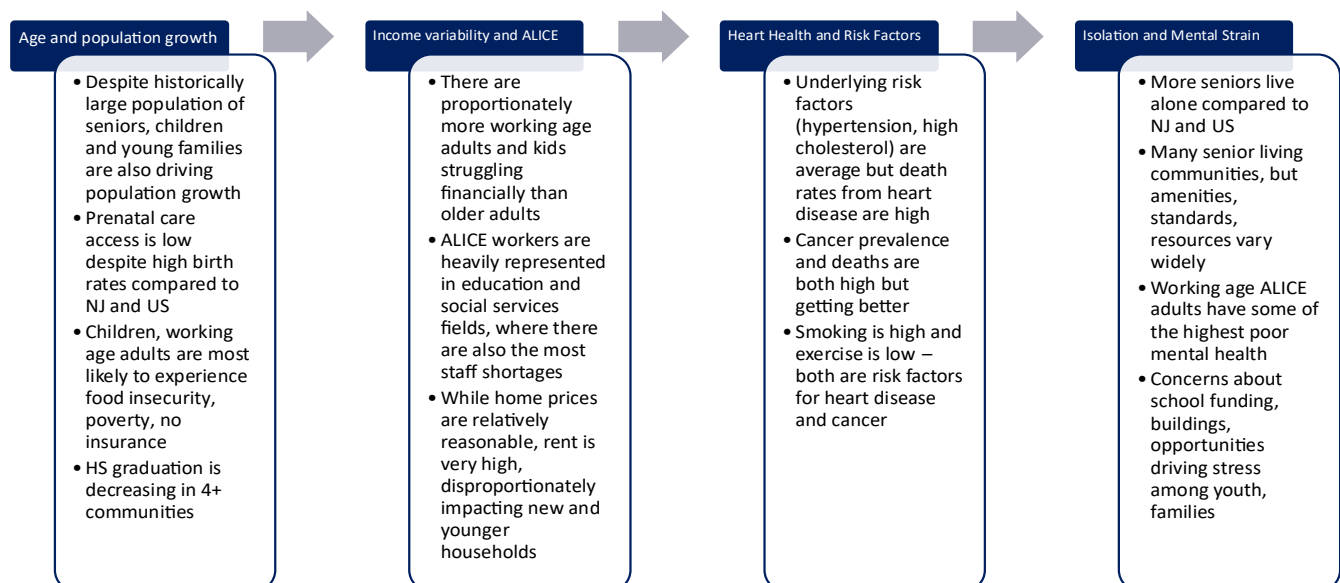


Cross-Cutting Themes

In advance of the Community Forum hosted by Ocean County Health Department on April 22, 2025, the Community Health Assessment Planning Committee determined the following cross-cutting themes from the Community Health Assessment data. These themes were pivotal in the preliminary development of the 2025 Priority areas.



Themes to consider from the 2025 Ocean County data



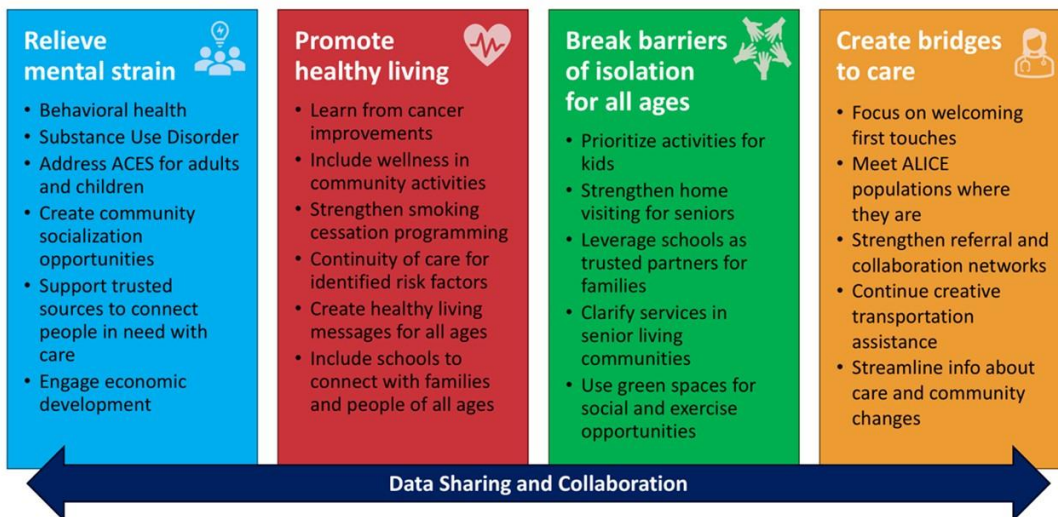


Determining Community Priorities & Tracking

Ocean County Health Department staff worked alongside the 35th Street Consulting team to update statistical data, engage key stakeholders in interviews, a Key Stakeholder Survey, a Community Survey, Focus Groups, and a Community Forum to better understand the health needs and challenges of the community. From this process, the following specific health needs were confirmed as priorities and will be the focus of the 2025-2030 CHIP. Using an equity lens, the themes identified here represent the priority areas for collective action for Ocean County Health Department and partners, as detailed in the 2025 Community Health Assessment.



Ocean County Health Department 2025 Priorities



In developing its Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), the Ocean County Health Department and the Partnership for a Healthier Ocean County aim to strengthen connections between community organizations, families, and individuals. This collaborative approach is a key strategy that supports all priority areas. By utilizing the Health Department's multidisciplinary roles throughout Ocean County, the Ocean County Health Department is dedicated to identifying opportunities to serve as a connector of resources and people. This will help address the underlying disparities in social drivers of health to improve well-being for all people in Ocean County. This strategy aligns with an upstream health promotion approach, focused on building healthier communities for everyone, both now and in the future.

The Partnership for a Healthier Ocean County (PHOC) meets quarterly to report on and adapt CHIP strategies as needed. Each meeting, partners review the status of individual programs and discuss future programs. An annual review is held during the end of year quarterly meeting, where the status and data for each CHIP strategy is reported to the partnership for review, then documented in an annual report.

Dissemination to the Public

The Ocean County Health Department reviewed and approved the CHIP report and the priority areas on July 23, 2025. Following approval, the report was made available to the public via the Ocean County Health Department website at www.oceancountyhealth.gov

For more information, feedback, or comments, please email info@oceancountyhealth.gov



2025 OCHD Prioritized Health Need: Relieve Mental Strain

GOAL: Everyone in Ocean County has access to support and resources to reduce mental strain.				
	Objectives	Community Needs	Disparities & Root Causes	Essential Public Health Services
Relieve Mental Strain	1. Increase timely access to mental wellness care by improving access to resource information.	➔ Working age ALICE adults have some of the highest poor mental health (CHA, P.141) ➔ More seniors live alone in Ocean County compared to NJ and US (CHA, P.90) ➔ Communities with highest poverty and largest number of children also report highest levels of poor mental wellness (CHA, P.29)	➔ There are proportionately more working-age adults and kids struggling financially than older adults (CHA, P.141) ➔ "The ones who fall through the cracks are just above the poverty line and are ineligible for services, under 65 and can't qualify for anything. We are missing a huge population of people who still need help." (CHA, P.117)	#1 Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets. #2 Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population
	2. Increase opportunities each year to educate public-facing staff in health, social support, and educational organizations about mental health stigma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).	➔ Mistrust in healthcare and some social services is significant, especially among communities of color (CHA, P.138) ➔ Concerns about racial, ethnic, cultural divides across communities impacting sense of "welcome" and "home"	➔ Young people are observing trouble division/animosity between racial/ethnic/cultural groups (CHA, P.138) ➔ "Thoughtful, flexible, and creative delivery of services to high-need populations, with diverse cultural backgrounds" (CHA, P.110)	#3 Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it #4 Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health
	3. Engage annually with Ocean County municipalities and partners to collaboratively prevent treatment gaps due to funding changes.	➔ While rates of ED visits for overdose and death from overdose are decreasing, they are both still higher in Ocean County than NJ (CHA, P.81)	➔ There are fewer mental health and substance use providers in Ocean County compared to NJ and the US (CHA, P.79) ➔ "We only have one substance abuse counselor in the district, and we've already had one fatal OD for a student this year." (CHA, P.97)	#5 Create, champion, and implement policies, plans and laws that impact health #6 Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public's health
	4. Increase participation in Ocean County CHIP by 10% to enhance respite and support options for the local safety net.	➔ "Speaking to parents about mental health, and parents don't understand how you feel, you can't sit down with them...and then it turns into a lesson. Or, they do understand, they just don't know how to deal with it." (CHA, P.96)	➔ "Middle school age kids need better services for mental health. Mental health seems to nose dive at that grade. I see A LOT of senior services advertised not a lot for teens, parents etc." (CHA, P.79) ➔ "Increase outreach, expand services to satellite locations to provide evening and weekend hours, host services at safe places such as places of worship, places of education. Increase collaboration with community partners to provide childcare during health education services" (CHA, P.117)	#7 Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy #8 Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce

Priority Area:	Relieve Mental Strain	Ocean County CHIP 2025-2030	
Goal:	Everyone in Ocean County has access to support and resources to reduce mental strain.		
Objectives:	Strategies	Initiatives/Actions	Partners
Success is:	We will work towards reaching everyone by:	These activities demonstrate how stakeholders are engaged:	These are the partners involved:
1. Increase timely access to mental wellness care by improving access to resource information.	▶ Working towards the creation of a centralized mental health resource HUB (modeled on 988 or 2nd floor youth) ▶ Sharing information between partners regarding services, needs ▶ Encouraging appointment availability outside of traditional hours ▶ Leveraging trusted partners to reach specialized populations (veterans, perinatal, youth, limited English, etc.) ▶ Sharing information among partners regarding resources, needs, trends, and opportunities.	▶ Encouraging health promotion, education, and services at community events ▶ Reintroducing mental health screenings and early identification in schools ▶ Leveraging web-based tools to expand access to reliable educational and informational resources ▶ Increasing socialization opportunities for families, kids, and older adults towards education, wellness, and economic opportunities	OCHD Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore New Hope Treatment Center Veterans Services CHEMED
2. Increase opportunities each year to educate public-facing staff in health, social support, and educational organizations about mental health stigma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).	▶ Strengthening partnerships with schools, youth-serving agencies, and other trusted resources for families and children ▶ Including mental wellness and support training and materials for job training, education programs for all ages ▶ Promoting trauma-informed care, ACEs identification, and mindfulness practices for all public-serving partners	▶ Supporting programs to increase awareness of signs and symptoms of behavioral health concerns (e.g., Mental Health First Aid)	
3. Engage annually with Ocean County municipalities and partners to collaboratively prevent treatment gaps due to funding changes.	▶ Identifying opportunities to collaborate across municipalities to address systemic barriers to accessing treatment and care through creative, collaborative means ▶ Building a county-wide strategy to proactively respond to federal cuts ▶ Exploring best practices from outside Ocean County ▶ Working towards increasing local capacity for key population segments (veterans, perinatal care, youth, ALICE population)	▶ Seeking collaborative funding opportunities ▶ Meeting annually with local leaders (municipal government, law enforcement, etc.) regarding options and opportunities, such as: ▶ Collaboration to increase capacity ▶ Advocacy ▶ Seeking joint funding ▶ Using Opioid Settlement Dollars	
4. Increase participation in Ocean County CHIP by 10% to enhance respite and support options for the local safety net.	▶ Expanding partnerships with schools, trusted partners, larger employers, faith-based organizations, educators, and senior and community centers to strengthen safety net awareness and opportunities	▶ Providing information, education, and support to trusted local sources to share information, materials, etc., to engage the populations they serve ▶ Identifying diverse community champions who can help reframe, tailor, and deliver clear messages about healthy living, diet, chronic disease, etc.	

2025 OCHD Prioritized Health Need: Promote Healthy Living

GOAL: Healthy living services and information for living long, healthy lives are accessible and coordinated for everyone in Ocean County.				
Promote Healthy Living	Objectives	Community Needs	Disparities & Root Causes	Essential Public Health Services
	1. Ensure data sharing and best practices learning opportunities from local successes are included in all quarterly meetings.	➔ Age-adjusted death due to heart disease is higher in Ocean County than New Jersey or US, but the prevalence of risk factors is lower than the US or NJ (CHA, P.71) ➔ Prevalence and death from cancer are both higher in Ocean County than New Jersey or the US (CHA, P.74)	➔ Death due to all cancers is trending down in Ocean County, which suggests people are being both screened and connected to effective treatment for cancer (CHA, P.74) ➔ This suggests opportunities for screening, connection to care, and treatment of heart disease and other chronic could learn from improvements in cancer outcomes (CHA, P.74)	#1 Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets. #2 Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population #3 Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it
	2. Reduce the percentage of people using tobacco in Ocean County by increasing engagement in smoking cessation and prevention programs by 10% each year.	➔ Ocean County has more smokers (14.3%) than NJ or the US (CHA, P.73)	➔ Smoking is a risk factor for cancer and many other chronic diseases (CHA, P.73)	#4 Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health
	3. Provide healthy living activities for families semiannually through partnerships.	➔ Despite historically large population of seniors, children and young families are also driving population growth (CHA, P.21)	➔ While parents of young children are slightly more likely to have access to transportation, older adults (ages 65+) report higher quality of life on almost all measures than respondents raising young children. These differences are most notable on measures of financial stability (CHA, P.126)	#5 Create, champion, and implement policies, plans and laws that impact health #6 Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public's health
	4. Discuss at least two action items related to improving care coordination between partners at each quarterly meeting.	➔ "Educate the public on all resources available and make it easy to access. I think many people are not aware what resources are available to them." (CHA, P.117)	➔ <u>Most Common Barriers to Accessing Health Care Services (2025 Community Survey):</u> (CHA, P.134) 1. I did not want to get services 2. I did not qualify for services 3. I did not know where to go 4. There was a waitlist for services 5. I could not afford my share of the cost 6. It was too frustrating to get the services I needed	#7 Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy #8 Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce

Priority Area: Promote Healthy Living		Ocean County CHIP 2025-2030	
Goal:	Healthy living services and information for living long, healthy lives are accessible and coordinated for everyone in Ocean County.		
Objectives:	Strategies	Initiatives/ Actions	Partners
Success is:	We will work towards reaching everyone by:	These activities demonstrate how stakeholders are engaged:	These are the partners involved:
1. Ensure data sharing and best practices learning opportunities from local successes are included in all quarterly meetings.	▶ Forming a consortium with clear expectations and roles ▶ Building an organized contact list to execute goals ▶ Developing roundtable formats for partnership discussions	▶ Evaluating, expanding, and sharing lessons learned in addressing cancer identification and treatment to apply to other chronic diseases ▶ Create annual strategies to address “pain points” each year.	OCHD Meals on Wheels Deborah Heart & Lung Center Hackensack Meridian Health LBI Health Department
2. Reduce the percentage of people using tobacco in Ocean County by increasing engagement in smoking cessation and prevention programs by 10% each year.	▶ Promoting existing tobacco cessation supports at all community events and health care appointments ▶ Ensuring tobacco cessation and prevention tools are relevant for all age groups ▶ Exploring web-based tools to reach a broader audience	▶ Providing health promotion and tobacco cessation information at community events ▶ Developing partnerships with: ▶ Schools, employers, faith-based organizations, educators, senior centers, community centers	
3. Provide healthy living activities for families semiannually through partnerships.	▶ Leveraging diverse partners and staff to align messaging on healthy eating, healthy living, chronic disease, cultural, dietary, and lifestyle considerations ▶ Identifying the best messengers for various communities	▶ Expanding locations, frequency, and messaging for chronic disease screening opportunities ▶ Leveraging home visiting activities to reach homebound residents ▶ Promoting collaborative events (PAD fairs, low-dose CT screenings) ▶ Collaborating on care transitions with partners (Deborah, HMM, LBIHD, etc.)	
4. Discuss at least two action items related to improving care coordination between partners at each quarterly meeting.	▶ Co-branding messaging to combat misinformation ▶ Collaborating on emergency preparedness and health education materials	▶ Strengthening referral systems and streamlining service access ▶ Improving clarity on service eligibility and availability	

2025 OCHD Prioritized Health Need: Break Barriers of Isolation for All Ages

GOAL: All residents of Ocean County have access to engaging, free, age-appropriate, accessible community activities that build community cohesion and wellness.				
Break Barriers of Isolation for All Ages	Objectives	Community Needs	Disparities & Root Causes	Essential Public Health Services
	1. Increase the proportion of youth and families who report feeling connected to their community each year by expanding the promotion of free and low-cost social, educational, wellness, and economic opportunities for families and youth.	➔ In Ocean County, children, working-age adults are most likely to experience food insecurity, poverty, no insurance (CHA, P.141) ➔ HS graduation is decreasing in 4+ communities across Ocean County (CHA, P.74) ➔ Concerns about school funding, buildings, and opportunities driving stress among youth, families (CHA, P.141)	➔ “Although relatively affluent, Ocean County still has deep pockets of poverty plagued by high taxes, unaffordable housing, inequitable educational systems, and other social drivers of health, all in need of policy, system, and environmental changes.” (CHA, P.117) ➔ Ocean County has more accessible green space than most of the US, but fewer local people are using it regularly	#1 Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets. #2 Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population #3 Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it
	2. By 2030, implement a standardized format for presenting eligibility and access information for all services, amenities, and opportunities for older adults in Ocean County.	➔ Senior services providers and community residents described confusion regarding the differences in care and support between senior living developments ➔ Ocean County has many senior living communities, but amenities, standards, resources vary widely (CHA, P.141) ➔ “I think Ocean County offers a lot in terms of support for Seniors and just our residents in general. We have beautiful parks and offer every season. I don't think people realize just how lucky we are” (CHA, P.116)	➔ “Creating more awareness. Most underprivileged seniors in the community are unaware of the resources the county offers, which honestly feels lacking.” (CHA, P.117) ➔ 2025 Community Survey: <i>What community investments would improve your well-being?</i> Support, expand, use public/green spaces, Free/low-cost community events (CHA, P.135)	#4 Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health #5 Create, champion, and implement policies, plans and laws that impact health #7 Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy #8 Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce

Priority Area: Break Barriers of Isolation for All Ages		Ocean County CHIP 2025-2030	
Goal:	All residents of Ocean County have access to engaging, free, age-appropriate, accessible community activities that build community cohesion and wellness.		
Objectives:	Strategies:	Initiatives/ Actions	Partners
Success is:	We will work towards reaching everyone by:	These activities demonstrate how stakeholders are engaged:	These are the partners involved:
1. Increase the proportion of youth and families who report feeling connected to their community each year by expanding the promotion of free and low-cost social, educational, wellness, and economic opportunities for families and youth.	▶ Strengthening partnerships with schools, youth-serving agencies, and other trusted resources for families and children ▶ Leveraging schools as trusted partners for communicating, serving, and including families ▶ Including support for schools, educational, youth-serving organizations for families, kids towards education, wellness ▶ Encouraging volunteerism to engage people of all ages, including grandparents raising grandchildren ▶ Expanding the techniques of promoting free and low-cost activities across Ocean County ▶ Leveraging existing social events to include wellness, educational, and economic activities	▶ Ensuring activities for kids, including childcare, activities, and engagement, are included in events designed for adults ▶ Leveraging OCHD to identify, engage, promote diverse social and community events, activities, and volunteer opportunities ▶ Filling gaps in intergenerational programs ▶ Increasing communication of free community events/programs through many strategies, such as: ▶ Brochures and handouts for activities, events, opportunities, and services ▶ Create events/programs that include information on services and opportunities ▶ Offer activities at accessible times (outside work hours) ▶ Use municipal forms and services to share info ▶ Address language barriers	OCHD Meals on Wheels School districts Mobile response ARC CVIM-Easter Seals Just Believe Parks and recreation Police Department Red Cross Senior Club House VOTEC YMCA
2. By 2030, implement a standardized format for presenting eligibility and access information for all services, amenities, and opportunities for older adults in Ocean County.	▶ Strengthening relationships with senior living communities ▶ Clarifying, updating, and sharing information about available resources across senior living communities ▶ Developing relationships with Commerce/Industry such as Private Industry Council, Chambers of Commerce, JCPNL/NJN, etc. ▶ Improving access to reliable information regarding resource eligibility and access for seniors	▶ Leveraging quarterly meetings to maximize the availability of home visiting opportunities for seniors ▶ Leveraging relationships with partners who specialize in serving key population segments (ex: homebound seniors, youth, parents, job seekers, etc.) to reach diverse audiences ▶ Senior living clubhouses to share information and events ▶ Working with police department to share information/work with outreach groups ▶ Encouraging volunteerism across generations (ex: Senior Bites) ▶ Creating a “One Stop Information Shop” to host information like: ▶ Community events ▶ Eligibility information ▶ Volunteer opportunities (to give or receive)	

2025 OCHD Prioritized Health Need: Create Bridges to Care

GOAL: Through meaningful and effective collaboration between partners, all Ocean County residents will be empowered with the information and resources they need to take positive steps towards their individual wellness goals.

	Objectives	Community Needs	Disparities & Root Causes	Essential Public Health Services
Create Bridges to Care	1. Expand outreach locations, services, and information types to better support the ALICE population each year.	➔ “Increase outreach, expand services to satellite locations to provide evening and weekend hours, host services at safe places such as places of worship, places of education. Increase collaboration with community partners to provide childcare during health education services” (CHA, P.117) ➔ Transportation is among the top 3 reported needs in the Key Stakeholder Survey, Interviews, Focus Groups and the Community Survey (CHA, P.106)	➔ 2025 Community Survey: What is most helpful to you in accessing public health and community services? (CHA, P.134) ➔ “Personal transportation or community transportation services, such as Ocean Ride” ➔ Across Ocean County, workers who meet the ALICE criteria, struggling to make ends meet, are most likely to: (CHA, P.32) • Be employed in Education or Health Care and Social Services fields, • Have only a high school education, • Be between the ages of 25-44 years old.	#1 Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets. #2 Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population #3 Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it
	2. Increase the use of preferred communication techniques to accommodate generational, language, and other differences in welcoming people and improving information access each year.	➔ “I would want it to make the communication better in the doctor’s office, but just addressing the whole healthcare of an individual.” (CHA, P.63)	➔ “Me, as a non-Spanish-speaker, I rely really heavily on my resources, one-pagers, infographics that are in Spanish, and also my partners; I know who to partner with. I step outside of my comfort zone. Meeting people where they are, it’s easy for me to say come meet me at the health department but they’re not comfortable.” (CHA, P.111)	#4 Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health #5 Create, champion, and implement policies, plans and laws that impact health
	3. Improve the timeliness and reach of information about community changes available for the public each year.	➔ Focus group respondents indicated confusion and concern about the impacts of housing construction, school changes, and environmental impacts (CHA, P.138)	➔ “Increase outreach, expand services to satellite locations to provide evening and weekend hours, host services at safe places such as places of worship, places of education. Increase collaboration with community partners to provide childcare during health education services” (CHA, P.117)	#7 Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy #8 Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce

Priority Area: Create Bridges to Care

Ocean County CHIP 2025-2030

Goal:	Through meaningful and effective collaboration between partners, all Ocean County residents will be empowered with the information and resources they need to take positive steps towards their individual wellness goals.		
Objectives:	Strategies	Initiatives/ Actions	Partners
<i>Success is:</i>	<i>We will work towards reaching everyone by:</i>	<i>These activities demonstrate how stakeholders are engaged:</i>	<i>These are the partners involved:</i>
1. Expand outreach locations, services, and information types to better support the ALICE population each year.	- Prioritizing flexibility in location, hours, etc. in communities with large ALICE populations - Including childcare and elder care information in communication with people of <i>all</i> ages - Exploring ways to expand workplace-based health initiatives - Leveraging schools as trusted community institutions and workplaces for many ALICE population	- Building relationships with employers most likely to employ ALICE workers - Encouraging partnership members to collaborate to provide services for each other's staff who could be ALICE workers - Empowering trusted resources: Prioritize educating and empowering school staff with information to help themselves and their families	OCHD Ocean Ride Ocean County College Ocean County Vocational Schools Ocean County Library
2. Increase the use of preferred communication techniques to accommodate generational, language, and other differences in welcoming people and improving information access each year.	- Committing to promoting welcome and respect in the "first touch" as a standard among all partner agencies - Making training and support resources available in customer service for all partner agencies - Exploring diverse communication methods to reach diverse audiences (text, web, phone, etc.) - Identifying and empowering trusted resources to craft and deliver important messages (key leaders, focus groups, partner agencies, etc.)	- Leveraging quarterly meetings to make best practices in creating welcoming "first touch" interactions with all people in Ocean County - Including front line staff in customer service trainings - Focusing on finding and empowering trusted resources as communicators	
3. Improve the timeliness and reach of information about community changes available for the public each year.	- Leveraging quarterly meetings to gather and share information about changes in communities across Ocean County - Strengthening referral and collaboration networks - Expanding creative transportation assistance programs serving Ocean County residents - Co-branding information to expand circulation and reduce misinformation and miscommunication	- Creating a public-facing central resource to share updates and information about health, well-being, and community opportunities - Use quarterly meetings to share updates and provide consistent messaging - Documenting the impact of existing transportation programs - Review data regarding utilization, impact of existing programs - Leverage partners (WIB, incentives, etc.) to increase the pool of CDL-certified drivers - Explore partnerships (Library, senior centers, etc.) to support older adults using ride share apps	

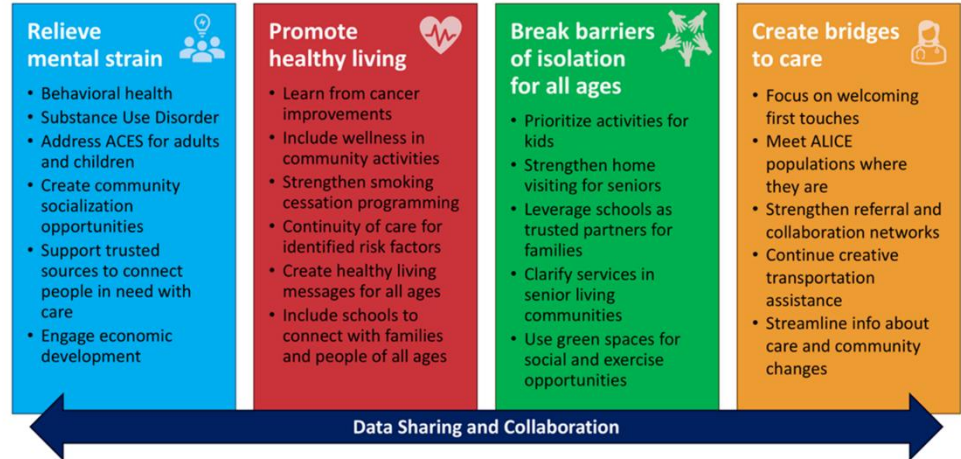
Alignment with New Jersey State Health Improvement Plan

New Jersey State Health Improvement Plan Priorities

- Health Equity
- Mental Health and Substance Use
- Nutrition, Physical Activity and Chronic Disease
- Birth Outcomes
- Immunizations
- Alignment of State and Local Health Improvement Planning



Ocean County Health Department 2025 Priorities



Our Research Partner



A New Jersey Certified WBE and SBE

www.35thStreetConsulting.com

A New Jersey certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and Woman Owned Business Enterprise (WBE), **35th Street Consulting** specializes in transforming data into action that advances health and community development through practical strategies. Our multidisciplinary team partners with healthcare, government, nonprofits and others to engage the people they serve to use data to direct funding and action towards policies and programs that achieve realistic, measurable improvements in creating healthy communities for all.

