

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo

2024 Community Health Needs Assessment

Howard County, Indiana

Conducted May 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025



Ascension

The goal of this report is to offer a meaningful understanding of the most significant health needs across Howard County with emphasis on identifying the barriers to health equity for all people, as well as to inform planning efforts to respond to those needs. Special attention has been given to the needs of individuals and communities who are at increased risk for poor health outcomes or experiencing social factors that place them at risk. Findings from this report can be used to identify, develop, and focus hospital, health system, and community initiatives and programming to better serve the health and wellness needs of the community.

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The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment report was approved by the Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo Board of Directors on April 23 2025 (2024 tax year), and applies to the following three-year cycle: July 2025 to June 2028 (FY 2026 - FY 2028). This report, as well as the previous report, can be found at our public website.

We value the community's voice and welcome feedback on this report. Please visit our public website (<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>) to submit your comments.

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Acknowledgements and/or Executive Statement

The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) represents a true collaborative effort to gain a meaningful understanding of the most pressing health needs across Howard County. Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo is exceedingly thankful to the many community organizations and individuals who shared their views, knowledge, expertise and skills with us. A complete description of community partner contributions is included in this report. We look forward to our continued collaborative work to promote a healthier, more equitable place to live, work and play.

We would also like to thank you for reading this report, and your interest and commitment to improving the health and well-being of Howard County.

Executive Summary

The goal of the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment report is to offer a meaningful understanding of the most significant health needs across Howard County. Findings from this report can be used to identify, develop, and focus hospital, health system, and community initiatives and programming to better serve the health and wellness needs of the community.

Purpose of the CHNA

As part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and adopt an implementation strategy (IS) every three years. The purpose of the CHNA is to understand the health needs and priorities, with an emphasis on identifying the barriers to health equity, for all people who live and/or work in the communities served by the hospital, with the goal of responding to those needs through the development of an implementation strategy plan.

Community Served

Although Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo serves Howard County in addition to the surrounding areas, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo has defined its “community served” as Howard County for the 2024 CHNA. Howard County was selected as Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo’s community because it is the primary service area of the hospital and our partners, and health data is readily available at the county level.

Data Analysis Methodology

The 2024 CHNA was conducted from May 2024 through June 2025, and utilized a process which incorporated data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources included information provided by groups/individuals, e.g., community members, health care consumers, health care professionals, community stakeholders, and multi-sector representatives. Special attention was given to the needs of individuals and populations who are more marginalized and to unmet health needs or gaps in services. During 2024, a community input meeting was held and three key stakeholder interviews were conducted. Secondary data was compiled and reviewed to understand the health status of the community. Measures reviewed included chronic disease, social and economic factors, and healthcare access and utilization trends in the community and were gathered from reputable and reliable sources.

Community Needs

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo, with contracted assistance from Verité Healthcare Consulting, analyzed secondary data and gathered community input through interviews and a community input session to identify the needs of Howard County. In collaboration with community partners, Ascension St. Vincent

Kokomo used a phased prioritization approach to determine the most crucial needs for community stakeholders to address. The significant needs identified through this process are as follows, in alphabetical order:

- Access to Care
- Communicable Diseases / Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Food Security
- Maternal, Infant, and Child Health
- Mental Health Status and Access to Mental Health Services
- Obesity, Physical Inactivity, and Associated Chronic Disease
- Social Drivers of Health, including:
 - Poverty
 - Affordable Housing
 - Food Insecurity
 - Transportation
- Substance Use Disorders, including Nicotine

Next Steps and Conclusion

The 2024 CHNA was presented to the Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo Board of Directors for approval and adoption on April 23, 2025. Following approval of the CHNA, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will complete a prioritization matrix and develop an implementation strategy. The implementation strategy will focus on all or a subset of the significant needs, and will describe how the hospital intends to respond to those prioritized needs throughout the same three-year CHNA cycle: July 2025 to June 2028.

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo hopes this report offers a meaningful and comprehensive understanding of the most significant needs of Howard County members. The hospital values the community's voice and welcomes feedback on this report; comments or questions can be submitted via Ascension's public website (<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>).

About Ascension

As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the United States, Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to individuals and communities at increased risk for poor health outcomes or affected by social factors that impact health.

Ascension

Ascension is one of the nation's leading non-profit and Catholic health systems, with a Mission of delivering compassionate, personalized care to all with special attention to those most vulnerable and persons living in poverty. In FY 2024, Ascension provided \$2.1 billion in care of persons living in poverty and other community benefit programs. Ascension includes approximately 131,000 associates, 37,000 affiliated providers and 136 hospitals, serving communities in 18 states and the District of Columbia.

Ascension's Mission provides a strong framework and guidance for the work done to meet the needs of communities across the U.S. It is foundational to transform health care and express priorities when providing care and services, particularly to those most in need.

Mission: Rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, we commit ourselves to serving all persons with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable. Our Catholic health ministry is dedicated to spiritually-centered, holistic care which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities. We are advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and our words.

For more information about Ascension, visit <https://www.ascension.org>.

Ascension St. Vincent Indiana

Ascension St. Vincent operates 19 hospitals in addition to a comprehensive network of affiliated joint ventures, medical practices and clinics serving Indiana and employs more than 13,000 associates. In Fiscal Year 2024, Ascension St. Vincent provided more than \$357 million in community benefit and care of persons living in poverty throughout the state.

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo

As a Ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo is a non-profit hospital governed by a local board of trustees represented by community members, medical staff, and sister sponsorships. For many years, the hospital has provided medical care for the residents of Howard County, Indiana and neighboring areas.

In 1913, St. Vincent Kokomo, formerly St. Joseph Memorial Hospital, was established by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Tipton County. The hospital transferred their sponsorship to St. Vincent in 1994.

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo is a 167-bed acute healthcare facility and offers the following services: blood disorders, cancer, cardiovascular services, diabetes care, emergency medicine, home care, hospice, immediate care, interventional radiology, laboratory services, maternity services, medical imaging, mental & behavioral health, nutrition support, orthopedics, pediatrics, primary care, rehabilitation services, respiratory care, sleep disorders, spiritual care, sports performance, surgery, wellness medicine, women's health, and wound treatment. St. Vincent Kokomo's primary service is Howard County in Central Indiana.

For more information about Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo, visit

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/indiana/inasc/kokomo-ascension-st-vincent-kokomo>

About the Community Health Needs Assessment

A community health needs assessment is essential for community building, health improvement efforts, and directing resources where they are most needed. CHNAs can be powerful tools with the potential to be catalysts for immense community change.

Purpose of the CHNA

A CHNA is defined as “a systematic process involving the community that identifies and analyzes community health needs and assets to plan and act upon priority community health needs.”¹ The process serves as a foundation for promoting the health and well-being of the community by identifying the most pressing needs, leveraging existing assets and resources, developing strategic plans, and mobilizing hospital programs and community partners to work together. This community-driven approach aligns with Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo’s commitment to offer programs designed to respond to the health needs of a community, with special attention to persons who are medically underserved and at risk for poorer health outcomes because of social factors that put them at increased risk.

Advancing Health Equity

Health equity is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.² Progress toward achieving health equity can be measured by reducing health disparities. Health disparities are particular health differences closely linked with economic, social, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced such obstacles to health based on their race or ethnicity; religion; socioeconomic status; gender identity; sexual orientation; age; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.³

Focusing on the root causes that have perpetuated these differences contributes to the advancement of health equity. By identifying the conditions, practices, and policies that perpetuate differences in health outcomes, we can better respond to root causes when pursuing health equity.

Ascension acknowledges that health disparities in our communities go beyond individual health behaviors. Ascension’s Mission calls us to be “advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and words”; therefore, health equity is a matter of great importance to Ascension.

¹ Catholic Health Association of the United States. (2022). *A guide for planning and reporting community benefit, 2022* (p.146).

² National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2023, January 4). *Advancing health equity in chronic disease prevention and management*. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Retrieved October 11, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/healthequity/index.htm>

³ Braveman, P. (2014). What are health disparities and health equity? We need to be clear. *Public Health Reports*, 129(Suppl 2), 5-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549141291S203>

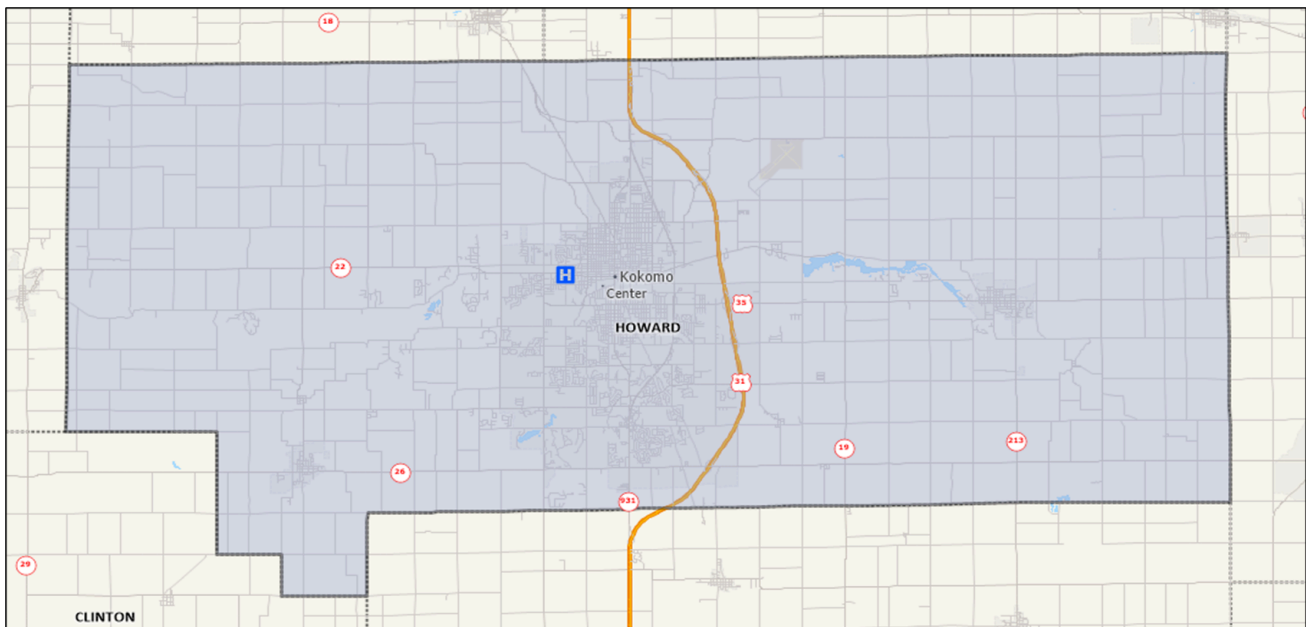
IRS 501(r)(3) and Form 990 Schedule H Compliance

The CHNA also serves to satisfy certain requirements of tax reporting, pursuant to provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, more commonly known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As part of the ACA, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA and adopt an implementation strategy every three years. Requirements for 501(c)(3) hospitals under the ACA are described in Code Section 501(r)(3), and include making both current and previous CHNA and implementation strategy reports widely available to the public. In accordance with this requirement, electronic versions of these reports can be accessed at <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>, and paper versions can be requested at Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo's Information Desk in the main lobby.

Community Served and Demographics

Community Served

For the purpose of the 2024 CHNA, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo has defined its community served as Howard County. Although Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo serves Howard County and the surrounding areas, the “community served” was defined as such because (a) most of our service area is in the county; (b) most of our assessment partners define their service area at the county level; and (c) most community health data is available at the county level. The map below portrays the community that was assessed.



Demographic Data

Located in Indiana, Howard County has a population of 83,574 and is the eighteenth county in the state. Below are demographic data highlights for Howard County.

- 20.1 percent of the community members of Howard County are 65 or older, compared to 23.0 percent in Indiana
- 95.9 percent of community members are non-Hispanic; 4.1 percent are Hispanic or Latino (any race)
- 83.4 percent of community members are non-Hispanic white; 1.4 percent are Asian; 0.1 percent are American Indian or Alaska Native, and 7.9 percent are non-Hispanic Black or African American
- The total population is projected to remain constant from 2025 to 2030, with the 65 and older population expected to increase by 5.8 percent
- The median household income is 14.7 percent below the state median income (\$57,000 for Howard County; \$66,800 for Indiana)
- The percent of all ages of people in poverty was higher than the state (16.9 percent for Howard County; 12.6 percent for Indiana)
- The uninsured rate for Howard County is lower than the state (7 percent for Howard County; 9 percent for Indiana)

Description of the Community

Demographic Highlights			
Population			
Indicator	Howard County	Indiana	Description
Percentage living in rural communities	25.7%	28.8%	
Percentage below 18 years of age	22.6%	23.0%	
Percentage 65 years of age and over	20.1%	16.9%	
Percentage Asian	1.4%	2.8%	
Percentage American Indian or Alaska Native	0.1%	0.1%	
Percentage Hispanic	4.1%	7.9%	
Percentage non-Hispanic Black	7.9%	9.9%	
Percentage non-Hispanic White	83.4%	77.0%	
Social and Community Context			
English proficiency	0.3%	1.4%	Proportion of community members who speak English "less than well"
Median household income	\$56,960	\$66,768	Income level at which half of households in a county earn more and half of households earn less
Percentage of children in poverty	21.2%	15.4%	Percentage of people under age 18 in poverty
Percentage of uninsured	7%	9%	Percentage of population under age 65 without health insurance
Percentage of educational attainment	91.3%	90.0%	Percentage of adults ages 25 and over with a high school diploma or equivalent
Percentage of unemployment	5.0%	3.0%	Percentage of population ages 16 and older unemployed but seeking work

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

To view community demographic data in their entirety, see Appendix B (Page 32).

Process and Methods Used

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo is committed to using national best practices in conducting the CHNA. Health needs and assets for Howard County were determined using a combination of data collection and analysis for both secondary and primary data, as well as community input on the identified and significant needs.

Collaborators and/or Consultants

With the contracted assistance of Verité Healthcare Consulting, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo completed its 2024 CHNA in collaboration with the following organizations:

- Dobson DaVanzo & Associates
- Community Health Network

Key stakeholder interviews and community input sessions were conducted as a collaborative effort with the organizations listed above.

Data Collection Methodology

Primary data were gathered through community input sessions with a range of public health and social service providers that represent the broad interests of community members. A concerted effort was made to ensure that the individuals and organizations represented the needs and perspectives of 1) public health practice and research; 2) individuals who are medically underserved, are low-income, or considered among the minority populations served by the hospital; and 3) the broader community at large and those who represent the broad interests and needs of the community served.

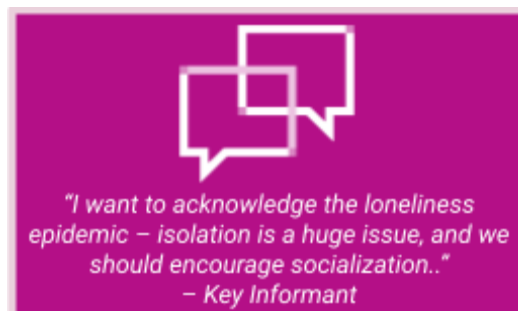
Secondary data were gathered from credible sources of reliable metrics. These metrics included a variety of community health indicators for the community, which were benchmarked against Indiana and U.S. averages.

Identified needs were determined to be “significant” if both of the following conditions were met:

- Community Importance - Stakeholders who participated in community input sessions identified the issue as problematic; and
- Unfavorable to Benchmarks - Metrics for the community from secondary data compared unfavorably to metrics for Indiana and/or the U.S.

Summary of Community Input

Community input, also referred to as “primary data,” is an integral part of a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and is meant to reflect the voice of the community. This input is invaluable for efforts to accurately assess a community’s health needs. As mentioned previously, a concerted effort was made to ensure that the individuals and organizations represented the needs and perspectives of 1) public health practice and research; 2) individuals who are medically underserved, low-income, or considered among the minority populations served by the hospital; and 3) the broader community at large and those who represent the broad interests and needs of the community served.



Multiple methods were used to gather community input, including key stakeholder interviews and a community input session. These methods provided additional perspectives on selecting and responding to top health issues facing Howard County. A summary of the process and results is outlined below.

Community Input Session

A community input session was conducted to gather feedback from the community on the health needs and assets of Howard County. Eleven individuals participated in the community input session, held in May 2024. Populations represented by participants included academia, community based organizations, employers, health care providers, and local governments.

Community Input Session	
Key Summary Points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic needs insecurity, including access to food and affordable housing, is impacting more community residents. • Access to primary care services, including urgent care, is limited and exacerbated by insurance requirements. • Substance use disorder is problematic throughout the community, increasing demands on law enforcement and the court system. • Connecting community members with mental health needs to resources can be challenging although a provider now has walk-in mental health services. • Gaps in transportation create barriers to work, grocery stores, and health care services, but plans are underway to update the public transit system, and some weekend options are available. • Trust is needed to reach vulnerable individuals. 	
Sectors Represented	Common Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academia • Community Based Organizations • Employers • Health Care Providers • Local Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to timely and affordable care is challenging for many residents. • Mental and behavioral health care needs exceed the supply of providers and are impacted by insurance coverage restrictions. • Basic needs insecurity includes lack of safe and affordable housing. • Community organizations are working together to meet needs but are struggling.

Meaningful Quotes

- Calls for food are no longer the number one need requested; housing is the number one request.
- Mental health support is needed for providers to help them cope with their own mental health.
- Kids are not ready for socialization and COVID is still affecting the population.
- Urgent Care Facilities have closed with only one facility present and now EDs are bogged down with urgent care needs.
- Vaping is off the chart

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Three interviews were conducted to gather feedback from key informants on the health needs and assets of Howard County and the State of Indiana. Seven representatives from three different organizations and agencies participated in the interviews, held in July 2024. Sectors represented by participants included the Howard County Department of Health, the Indiana Department of Health, and a state minority health organization.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key Summary Points

- **Chronic disease** and **poor health behaviors**, illustrated by rates of chronic health conditions, obesity and smoking/vaping, continue to be high and are reflected in health outcomes, including decreased life expectancy.
- Health outcomes are compounded by **inadequate access to primary care**, including **care for pregnant women**.
- **Social drivers of health** have a direct impact on health outcomes.
- **Lack of safe and affordable housing**, critical to healthy outcomes, is negatively impacting workforce development and is illustrated by increasing homelessness.
- **Substance use disorder** is a pressing issue, as illustrated by overdoses being a leading cause of death, and increased during the COVID pandemic.
- **Mental health** has become politicized, yet poor mental health impacts many residents.
- **Access to health care services**, illustrated with **access to maternal and infant health**, do not meet community members' needs when limited to the standard workday.

Sectors Represented

- Advocacy Group
- Indiana Department of Health
- Howard County Public Health Department

Common Themes

- Basic need insecurities, including food and housing, are increasing and these insecurities negatively impact health.
- Lack of adequate transportation hinders access to basic needs.
- Populations of concern include racial and ethnic minorities, children and youth, older populations, veterans, people living in rural areas, new neighbors, and low-income community members.

Meaningful Quotes

- I want to acknowledge the loneliness epidemic – isolation is a huge issue, and we should encourage socialization.
- There is not a lot of positive reinforcement –for coping skills, there are bars and fast-food restaurants.
- We need all the data possible to identify emerging issues.
- Private/public partnerships were really one of the biggest bright spots during COVID and we need to be continued.
- Key social drivers of health influencing community members' well-being are transportation and housing.
- Barriers to services are endless.
- We need more social services for formerly incarcerated residents – and Indiana has a very high incarceration rate.
- There is a need for training and mentoring to address the steep learning curve when providers transition from the academic environment to practice.

To view community input data in its entirety, see Appendix C. (Page 35).

Summary of Secondary Data

Secondary data is data that has already been collected and published by another party. Both governmental and non-governmental agencies routinely collect secondary data reflective of the population's health status at the state and county levels through surveys and surveillance systems. Secondary data for this report was compiled from various reputable and reliable sources.

Health indicators in the following categories were reviewed:

- Health outcomes
- Social and Economic Factors
- Physical environment
- Clinical care
- Health Behaviors
- Disparities

A summary of the secondary data collected and analyzed through this assessment is outlined below.

The total population of Howard County is projected to remain constant between 2025 and 2030 at approximately 84,000 persons. The 65+ population is projected to grow 5.8 percent.

Data from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps indicate that many community health issues are problematic in Howard County because the county's data are particularly unfavorable in comparison with overall Indiana and/or overall U.S. measures. The Howard County indicators below are comparatively worse than Indiana and/or U.S. averages.

- Premature death - Years of potential life lost before age 75
- Life expectancy
- Poor or fair health
- Poor physical health days
- Frequent physical distress
- Low birth weight - Percentage of babies born too small (less than 2,500 grams or five lbs 8 oz)
- Poor mental health days
- Frequent mental distress
- Suicide
- Diabetes prevalence
- Cancer deaths (by state)
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Median household income
- Unemployment
- Poverty
- Childhood poverty
- Some college

- Children in single-parent homes
- Food environment index
- Food insecurity
- Limited access to healthy foods
- Primary care physicians
- Mental healthcare providers
- Preventable hospital stays
- Flu vaccinations
- Adult obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Access to exercise opportunities
- Insufficient sleep
- Motor vehicle crash deaths
- Teen births
- Adult smoking
- Alcohol-impaired driving deaths
- Overdose deaths: any opioids by state

Additional details are below.

- Numerous census tracts are identified as Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs)
- Census blocks in Kokomo and throughout Howard County are identified as areas with high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage
- Several census tracts in Howard County have been identified as food deserts, and numerous other census tracts in Howard County have been low-income areas.

To view the secondary data and sources in their entirety, see Appendices B, D1, and D2 (Pages 32, 36, 43).

Written Comments on Previous CHNA and Implementation Strategy

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo's previous CHNA and implementation strategy was made available to the public and open for public comment via the website: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>. No comments were received from the public on the previous CHNA or implementation strategy.

Data Limitations and Information Gaps

Although it is quite comprehensive, this assessment cannot measure all possible aspects of health and cannot represent every possible population within Howard County. This constraint limits the ability to assess all the community's needs fully.

For this assessment, three types of limitations were identified:

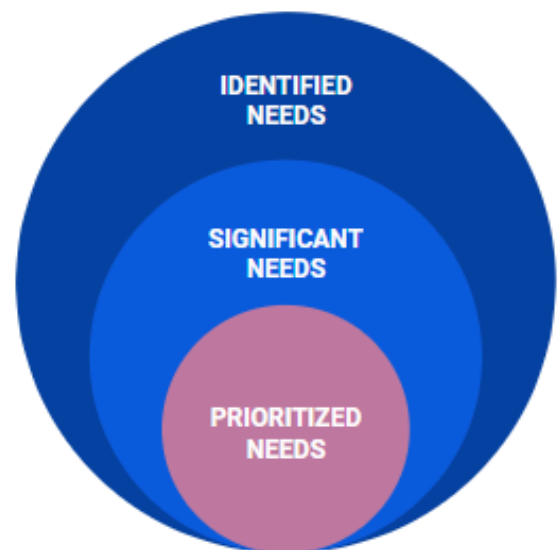
- Some groups of individuals may not have been adequately represented through the community input process. For example, these groups may include individuals who are transient, who speak a language other than English, or who are members of the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender+ community.
- Secondary data is limited in a number of ways, including timeliness, reach, and ability to fully reflect the health conditions of all populations within the community.
- An acute community concern may significantly impact a hospital's ability to conduct portions of the CHNA assessment. An acute community concern is defined by Ascension as an event or situation that may be severe and sudden in onset or newly affects a community. Such an event or situation may impact the ability to collect community input, may not be captured in secondary data, and/or can present in the middle of the three-year CHNA cycle. For the 2024 CHNA, no acute community concerns were identified:

Despite the data limitations, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo is confident of the overarching themes and health needs represented through the assessment data. This is based on the fact that the data collection included multiple qualitative and quantitative methods, and engaged the hospital and participants from the community.

Community Needs

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo, with contracted assistance from Verité Healthcare Consulting, analyzed secondary data of numerous indicators and gathered community input through a community input meeting with community representatives and three key stakeholders to identify the needs in Howard County. In collaboration with community partners, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo used a phased prioritization approach to identify the needs.

- First phase: Determine the broader set of **identified needs**.
- Second phase: Narrow identified needs to a set of **significant needs**.
- Third phase (following CHNA completion): Narrow the significant needs to a set of **prioritized needs** to be addressed in the implementation strategy plan.



Following the completion of the CHNA assessment, Ascension Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will select all, or a subset, of the significant needs as the hospital's **prioritized needs** to develop a three-year implementation strategy. Although the hospital may respond to many needs, the prioritized needs will be at the center of a formal CHNA implementation strategy and corresponding tracking and reporting. The image above portrays the relationship between the needs categories.

Identified Needs

The first phase was to determine the broader set of **identified needs**. Ascension has defined “identified needs” as the health outcomes or related conditions (e.g., social determinants of health) impacting the health status of Howard County. The identified needs were categorized into health behaviors, social determinants of health, length of life, quality of life, clinical care, and systemic issues to develop better measures and evidence-based interventions that respond to the determined condition.

Significant Needs

In the second phase, identified needs were then narrowed to a set of “significant needs” determined most crucial for community stakeholders to address. In collaboration with various community partners, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo synthesized and analyzed the data to determine which of the identified needs were most significant. Ascension has defined **significant needs** as the identified needs deemed most significant to respond to based on established criteria and/or prioritization methods.

Identified needs were determined to be “significant” if both of the following conditions were met:

- Community Importance - Stakeholders who participated in community input sessions identified the issue as problematic; and
- Unfavorable to Benchmarks - Metrics for the community from secondary data compared unfavorable to metrics for Indiana and/or the U.S.

Based on the synthesis and analysis of the data, the significant needs for the 2024 CHNA are as follows, in alphabetical order:

- Access to Care
- Communicable Diseases / Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Food Security
- Maternal, Infant, and Child Health
- Mental Health Status and Access to Mental Health Services
- Obesity, Physical Inactivity, and Associated Chronic Disease

- Social Drivers of Health, including:
 - Poverty
 - Affordable Housing
 - Food Insecurity
 - Transportation
- Substance Use Disorders, including Nicotine

To view healthcare facilities and community resources available to respond to the significant needs, please see Appendix E (Page 50).

The following pages contain a description (including data highlights, community challenges and perceptions, and local assets and resources) of each significant need.

Access to Care	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
When barriers to accessing health care services are present, community health suffers. A wide array of factors can affect access, including provider supply, transportation, language and cultural competency, cost, availability of needed specialty services, limited insurance benefits, limited education regarding available services and how to use them, and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants • LGBTQ residents • Low-income persons • Older adults • Racial and ethnic minorities
Community Input Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to primary care services, including urgent care, is limited and exacerbated by insurance requirements. • Access to timely and affordable care is challenging for many residents. • Urgent Care Facilities have closed with only one facility present and now EDs are bogged down with urgent care needs. • Health outcomes are compounded by inadequate access to primary care, including care for pregnant women. • Barriers to services are endless. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of adults reporting fair or poor health is higher in Howard County than overall Indiana and U.S. rates, 17 percent, 16 percent, and 14 percent, respectively. • The ratio of primary care physicians to population is higher in Howard County than overall Indiana and U.S. ratios, 1,820:1, 1,520:1, and 1,330:1, respectively. • Preventable hospital stays are higher in Howard County than overall Indiana and U.S. rates, 3,214, 3,135, and 2,681 hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions per 100,000 Medicare enrollees, respectively. 	

Communicable Diseases / Sexually Transmitted Infections	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that require treatment, are highly contagious, and can develop into serious diseases. Some STIs, such as HIV cannot be cured and can be deadly. Many STIs are chronic conditions such as herpes and Hepatitis B. Pelvic inflammatory disease is a complication of gonorrhea and chlamydia and can leave women unable to have children and can also be deadly. If an STI is passed on to a newborn, the baby can suffer permanent harm or death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons not using a condom when having sex • Persons who have sex with someone who has had many partners • Persons who share needles when injecting intravenous drugs • Persons who trade sex for money or drugs • Persons with more than one sex partner
Community Input Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance misuse is problematic throughout the community, increasing demands on law enforcement and the court system. • Trust is needed to reach vulnerable individuals. • Chronic disease and poor health behaviors, illustrated by rates of chronic health conditions, obesity and smoking/vaping, continue to be high and are reflected in health outcomes, including decreased life expectancy. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults in Howard County have a lower uptake of flu vaccinations than adults in Indiana and the U.S. overall, 45 percent, 50%, and 46% of fee-for-service Medicare enrollees who had an annual flu vaccination, respectively. • The rate of sexually transmitted infections is higher in Howard County than Indiana and U.S. rates, 608.2, 510.7, 495.5 newly diagnosed chlamydia cases per 100,000 population, respectively. 	

Food Security	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
Food insecurity is a disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money or other resources. Adults who are food insecure can be at risk for a variety of negative health outcomes and disparities, including rates of obesity and chronic diseases. Food insecure children may also be at an increased risk of obesity, developmental problems, and mental health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults with disabilities • Children with unemployed parents have higher rates of food insecurity than children with parents who are employed • High risk populations include those with low or limited income due to low wages and under-employment or unemployment • Racial and ethnic disparities exist related to food insecurity
Community Input Highlight	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic needs insecurity, including access to food and affordable housing, is impacting more community residents. • Many community members have problems with accessing healthy options, such as grocery stores. • Gaps in transportation create barriers to work, grocery stores, and health care services, but plans are underway to update the public transit system, and some weekend options are available. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Food environment index in Howard County is lower than the U.S. overall, 7.2 and 7.7, respectively.) • The percentage of residents who are food insecure is higher in Howard County than the overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 12 percent, 11 percent, and 10 percent of the population who lack adequate access to food. • The percentage of residents who lack access to healthy food is higher in Howard County than the overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 10 percent, 9 percent, and 6 percent of the population who are low-income and do not live close to a grocery store, respectively. • Census tracts throughout Howard County have been identified as food deserts. 	

Maternal, Infant, and Child Health	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
The health of mothers, infants, and children determines the future health of families, communities, and the health care system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families with low or limited income due to low wages and under-employment or unemployment. Racial and ethnic disparities exist Single-parent households, including single-father families
Community Input Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to primary care services, including urgent care, is limited and exacerbated by insurance requirements. Health outcomes are compounded by inadequate access to primary care, including care for pregnant women. Access to health care services, illustrated with access to maternal and infant health, do not meet community members' needs when limited to the standard workday. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of low birth weight births is higher in Howard County than overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 9 percent, 8 percent, and 8 percent, respectively. The percentage of children living in poverty is higher in Howard County than overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 21 percent, 15 percent, and 16 percent of people under age 18 in poverty, respectively. The percentage of children in single-parent homes is higher in Howard County than overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 29 percent, 24 percent, and 25 percent, respectively. The rate of teen births is higher in Howard County and overall Indiana and U.S. rates, 28, 20, and 17 births per 1,000 female population ages 15-19, respectively. 	

Mental Health Status and Access to Mental Health Services	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
Mental disorders are among the top causes of disability and disease burdens. Mental health and physical health are closely connected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members with limited financial resources or without mental health insurance benefits have additional difficulties accessing services. Older adults and other community members who have been experiencing isolation also are particularly vulnerable to poor mental health status.
Community Input Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting community members with mental health needs to resources can be challenging although a provider now has walk-in mental health services. Mental and behavioral health care needs exceed the supply of providers and are impacted by insurance coverage restrictions. Mental health support is needed for providers to help them cope with their own mental health. Mental health has become politicized, yet poor mental health impacts many residents. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The average number of poor mental health days among Howard County residents is higher than the overall U.S. average, 5.0 and 4.8 average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days, respectively. The percentage of adults reporting frequent mental distress is higher in Howard County than the overall U.S. percentage, 17 percent and 15 percent, respectively. The Howard County rate of suicide is higher than overall Indiana and U.S. rates, 18, 16, 14 deaths due to suicide per 100,000, respectively. The ratio of population to mental health providers is higher in Howard County than the overall U.S. ratio, 440:1 and ratio of the population to mental healthcare providers, respectively. 	

Obesity, Physical Inactivity, and Associated Chronic Disease	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
Good nutrition, physical activity, and a healthy body weight all contribute to overall health and well-being and, collectively, can help manage and decrease the risk of obesity and serious health conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with poor diets • People who are physically inactive
Community Input Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic disease and poor health behaviors, illustrated by rates of chronic health conditions, obesity and smoking/vaping, continue to be high and are reflected in health outcomes, including decreased life expectancy. • Poor health status and outcomes continue to be an issue. • There is not a lot of positive reinforcement –for coping skills, there are bars and fast-food restaurants. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of adults with reported obesity is higher among Howard County residents than the overall percentages in Indiana and the U.S., 42% percent, 37 percent, and 34 percent of the adult population (ages 20 and older) that reports a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kg/m2. • The percentage of adults with reported physical inactivity is higher among Howard County residents than the overall percentages in Indiana and the U.S., 27 percent, 25 percent, and 23 percent, respectively. • The percentage of diagnosed diabetes in adults is higher in Howard County than the overall U.S. percentage, 11 percent and 10 percent, respectively. 	

Social Drivers of Health, including Poverty, Affordable Housing, Food Insecurity, and Transportation	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
Contributors to health outcomes include access to social and economic opportunities, such as community resources, school quality, environment conditions, and social interactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and youth • Low-income community members • New neighbors • Older populations • People living in rural areas • Racial and ethnic minorities • Veterans
Community Input Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic needs insecurity, including access to food and affordable housing, is impacting more community residents. • Access to primary care services, including urgent care, is limited and exacerbated by insurance requirements. • Gaps in transportation create barriers to work, grocery stores, and health care services, but plans are underway to update the public transit system, and some weekend options are available. • Social drivers of health have a direct impact on health outcomes. • Lack of safe and affordable housing, critical to healthy outcomes, is negatively impacting workforce development and is illustrated by increasing homelessness. • Key social drivers of health influencing community members' well-being are transportation and housing. • We need more social services for formerly incarcerated residents – and Indiana has a very high incarceration rate. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of people with incomes below the federal poverty guideline is higher in Howard County than the overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 16.9 percent, 12.6 percent, and 12.8 percent, respectively. • The median household income in Howard County is lower than the overall Indiana and U.S. medians, \$57,800, \$66,800, and \$74,800, respectively. • Census blocks in Kokomo and throughout Howard County have high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage. • Census tracts in Howard County have been identified as food deserts, including tracts in Kokomo. While not “food deserts,” other census tracts in Howard County have been identified as low-income areas. 	

Substance Use Disorders, including Nicotine	
Significance	Populations Most Impacted
Substance use disorders have a significant impact on individuals, families, and communities. Impacts are cumulative and result in costly social, physical, mental, and public health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the CDC, smoking is most prevalent for the following categories of adults: men, people 45-64 years of age, non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, adults with a disability, people with severe generalized anxiety disorder, and people with severe depression⁴ People with untreated mental health conditions.
Community Input Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance misuse is problematic throughout the community, increasing demands on law enforcement and the court system. Mental and behavioral health care needs exceed the supply of providers and are impacted by insurance coverage restrictions. Vaping is off the chart. Substance use disorder is a pressing issue, as illustrated by overdoses being a leading cause of death, and increased during the COVID pandemic. Challenges to healthy outcomes are exacerbated by substance misuse within the family. Substance use disorder and poor mental health are experienced throughout the community and illustrated with high suicide rates among young adults, yet services are limited. 	
Secondary Data Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of adults who are current smokers is higher in Howard County than the overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 20 percent, 18 percent, and 15 percent, respectively. The percentage of alcohol-impaired driving deaths is higher in Howard County than overall Indiana and U.S. percentages, 33 percent, 18 percent, and 26 percent, respectively. The overdose death rate by any opioids per 100,000 persons is higher in Howard County than the overall rates of Indiana and the U.S., 47, 34, and 27 opioid-related deaths by state per 100,000 persons, respectively. 	

⁴ Tobacco Product Use Among Adults— United States, 2022; 2022 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) Highlight, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2024. See <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/media/pdfs/2024/09/cdc-osh-ncis-data-report-508.pdf>.

Next Steps

In the third phase, which will take place following the completion of the community health needs assessment as outlined in this report, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will narrow the significant needs to a set of prioritized needs. Ascension defines “prioritized needs” as the significant needs that the hospital has prioritized to respond to through the three-year CHNA implementation strategy. The implementation strategy will detail how Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will respond to the prioritized needs throughout the three-year CHNA cycle: July 2025 to June 2028. The implementation strategy will also describe why certain significant needs were not selected as prioritized needs to be addressed by the hospital.

Summary of Impact of the Previous CHNA Implementation Strategy

An important piece of the three-year CHNA cycle is revisiting the progress made on priority needs set forth in the preceding CHNA. By reviewing the actions taken to respond to the prioritized needs and evaluating the impact those actions have made in the community, it is possible to better target resources and efforts during the next CHNA cycle.

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo's 2021 CHNA Implementation Strategy responded to the following priority health needs: access to care; mental health; and substance use disorders. Additionally, a community engagement initiative was incorporated throughout all strategies.

Highlights from Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo's 2021 CHNA Implementation Strategy include:

- The Community Health Workers exceeded their goal by increasing the number of completed Medical Home Pathways from 2 in FY23 to 8 in FY24, despite a shortage of providers, for a 300% increase of individuals they assisted with securing a primary care provider.
- The ED Concierges increased the number of ED self-pay/charity patients that were connected to a provider from 39 in FY23 to 50 in FY24, for a 28% increase of individuals they assisted with securing a primary care provider.

Written input received from the community and a report on the actions taken to respond to the significant health needs prioritized in the 2021 CHNA implementation strategy can be found in Appendix F (Page 51).

Approval by Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo Board of Directors

To ensure Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2024 CHNA was presented to the Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo Board of Directors for approval and adoption on April 23, 2025. Although an authorized body of the hospital must adopt the CHNA and implementation strategy reports to be compliant with the provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the reports also demonstrates that the board is aware of the findings from the CHNA, endorses the health needs identified, and supports the strategies developed to respond to those needs.

Conclusion

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo hopes this report offers a meaningful and comprehensive understanding of the most significant needs of Howard County. This report will be used by internal stakeholders, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and other Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo community partners to guide the implementation strategies and community health improvement efforts as required by the Affordable Care Act. The 2024 CHNA will also be available to the broader community as a useful resource for further health improvement efforts.

As a Catholic health ministry, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo is dedicated to spiritually centered, holistic care that sustains and improves the health of not only individuals but the communities it serves. With special attention to those who are underserved and marginalized, we are advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and words. Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo is dedicated to serving patients with compassionate care and medical excellence, making a difference in every life we touch. The hospital values the community's voice and welcomes feedback on this report. Please visit Ascension's public website (<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>) to submit any comments or questions.

Appendices

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Appendix A: Definitions and Terms

Catholic Health Association of United States (CHA) “is recognized nationally as a leader in community benefit planning and reporting.”⁵ The definitions in Appendix A are from the CHA guide *Assessing and Addressing Community Needs, 2015 Edition II*, which can be found at [chausa.org](https://www.chausa.org).

Community Input

Federal law (P.L. 111-148) requires that an assessment must take into account “input from persons who represent the broad interests of the community serviced by the hospital facility, including those with special knowledge of or expertise in public health.” The proposed rule indicates that in order to meet this requirement the CHNA must at a minimum, take into account input from:

1. At least one state, local, tribal, or regional governmental public health department (or equivalent department or agency) with knowledge, information, or expertise relevant to the health needs of the community;
2. Members of medically underserved, low-income, and minority populations, in the community, or individuals or organizations serving or representing the interests of such populations and;
3. Written comments received on the hospital facility’s most recently conducted CHNA and most recently adopted implementation strategy.

The proposed regulations also provide:

1. That input from persons representing the broad interests of the community includes, but is not limited to, input on any financial and other barriers to access to care in the community and
2. That a hospital facility may take into account input from a broad range of persons located in or serving its community who may have special knowledge of or expertise in public health, including, but not limited to, health care consumers and consumer advocates, nonprofit and community-based organizations, academic experts, local government officials, local school districts, health care providers and community health centers, health insurance and managed care organizations, private businesses, and labor and workforce representatives.

Demographics

Population characteristics of your community. Sources of information may include population size, age structure, racial and ethnic composition, population growth, and density.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

A method of obtaining input from community leaders and public health experts one-on-one. Interviews can be conducted in person or over the telephone (including computer/video calls). In structured interviews, questions are prepared and standardized prior to the interview to ensure consistent

⁵Catholic Health Association of the United States. (2015). *Assessing & Addressing Community Health Needs, 2015 Edition II*.

information is solicited on specific topics. In less structured interviews, open-ended questions are asked to elicit a full range of responses. Key Stakeholders may include leaders of community organizations, service providers, and elected officials. Individuals with special knowledge or expertise in public health may include representatives from your state or local health department, faculty from schools of public health, and providers with a background in public health.

Medically Underserved Populations

Medically underserved populations include populations experiencing health disparities or that are at risk of not receiving adequate medical care because of being uninsured or underinsured or due to geographic, language, financial, or other barriers. Populations with language barriers include those with limited English proficiency. Medically underserved populations also include those living within a hospital facility's service area but not receiving adequate medical care from the facility because of cost, transportation difficulties, stigma, or other barriers.

Surveys

Used to collect information from community members, stakeholders, providers, and public health experts for the purpose of understanding community perception of needs. Surveys can be administered in person, over the telephone, or using a web-based program. Surveys can consist of both forced-choice and open-ended questions.

Appendix B: Community Demographic Data and Sources

The tables below provide further information on the community's demographics. The descriptions of the data's importance are largely drawn from the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps website.

Table 1: Population

Why it is important: The composition of a population, including related trends, is important for understanding the community context and informing community planning.

Population	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.
Total	83,574	6,833,037	333,287,557
Male	48.7%	49.7%	49.6%
Female	51.3%	50.3%	50.4%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

Table 2: Population by Race and Ethnicity

Why it is important: The racial and ethnic composition of a population is important in understanding the cultural context of a community. The information can also be used to better identify and understand health disparities.

Race or ethnicity	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.
Asian	1.4%	2.8%	6.3%
Non-Hispanic Black / African American	7.9%	9.9%	12.6%
Hispanic / Latino	4.1%	7.9%	19.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%	0.4%	1.3%
Non-Hispanic White	83.4%	77.0%	58.9%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

Table 3: Population by Age

Why it is important: The age structure of a population is important in planning for the future of a community, particularly for schools, community centers, healthcare, and child care. A population with more youths will have greater education and childcare needs, while an older population may have greater healthcare needs.

Age	Madison County	Indiana	U.S.
Median age	41.2	38.0	38.5
Ages 0-17	22.6%	23.0%	21.7%
Ages 18-64	57.3%	60.1%	61.0%
Ages 65+	20.1%	16.9%	17.3%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

Table 4: Income

Why it is important: Median household income and the percentage of children living in poverty, which can compromise physical and mental health, are well-recognized indicators. People with higher incomes tend to live longer than people with lower incomes. In addition to affecting access to health insurance, income affects access to healthy choices, safe housing, safe neighborhoods, and quality schools. Chronic stress related to not having enough money can have an impact on mental and physical health as well. ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, are households that earn more than the U.S. poverty level but less than the basic cost of living for the county. Combined, the number of poverty and ALICE households equals the total population struggling to afford basic needs.

Income	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.
Median household income	\$57,000	\$66,800	\$74,800
Per capita income	\$33,391	\$35,578	\$41,261
People with incomes below the federal poverty guideline	16.9%	12.6%	12.8%
ALICE households	25.3%	27.0%	28.6%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024; U.S. Census; 2024; United for Alice, 2024

Table 5: Education

Why is it important: There is a strong relationship between health, lifespan, and education. In general, as income increases, so does lifespan. The relationship between more schooling, higher income, job opportunities (e.g., pay, safe work environment), and social support helps create opportunities for healthier choices.

Income	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.
High school diploma or higher	91%	90%	89%
Bachelor's degree or higher	20%	28%	34%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024; U.S. Census, 2024

Table 6: Insured/Uninsured

Why it is important: Lack of health insurance can have serious health consequences due to lack of preventive care and delays in care that can lead to serious illness or other health problems.

Income	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.
Uninsured	7%	9%	10%
Medicaid Participation, not Eligible	23.8%	20.7%	21.2%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024; U.S. Census, 2024

Appendix C: Community Input Data and Sources

Community community input sessions and Key Stakeholder Interviews

The questions below are examples of questions discussed with participants of community community input sessions.

- Are any of the significant needs identified in 2021 still the most significant in the community in 2024?
- Have any of these areas gotten worse? Better?
- Do you agree or disagree with any of the issues seen in the data?
- What needs are missing from the preliminary ?
- Are any communities or part of the community particularly vulnerable for one or more of the issues we have discussed so far?
- Are there resources and organizations to address some of these needs? Do community members have difficulty finding any specific services or aid?
- If you could make one major change to improve the health and wellbeing of your community members, what would that change be?

Appendix D1: Secondary Data and Sources

The tables below are based on data vetted, compiled, and made available on the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CHRR) website (<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>). The site is maintained by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, School of Medicine and Public Health, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. CHRR obtains and cites data from other public sources that are reliable. CHRR also shares trending data on some indicators.




CHRR compiles new data annually and shares it with the public. The data below is from the 2024 publication. It is important to understand that reliable data is generally two to three years behind due to the importance of careful analysis.

How to Read These Charts

Why they are important: Explains why we monitor and track these measures in a community and how it relates to health. The descriptions for “why they are important” are largely drawn from the CHRR website.

County vs. state: Describes how the county’s most recent data for the health issue compares to the state average.

Trends: CHRR provides a calculation for some measures to explain if a measure is worsening or improving.

-  The measure is worsening in this county.
-  The measure has no significant trend.
-  The measure is improving in this county.
- N/A There is no data trend to share, or the measure has remained the same.

United States (U.S.): Describes how the county’s most recent data for the health issue compares to the U.S.

Description: Explains what the indicator measures, how it is measured, and who is included in the measure.

N/A: Not available or not applicable. There might not be available data for the community on every measure. Some measures will not be comparable.

Table 7: Health Outcomes

Why they are important: Health outcomes reflect how healthy a county is right now. They reflect the physical and mental well-being of members within a community.

Indicators	Trend	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.	Description
Length of Life					
Premature death	✗	12,300	9,300	8,000	Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted)
Life expectancy	N/A	73.0	75.6	77.6	How long the average person is expected to live
Infant mortality	N/A	7	7	6	Number of all infant deaths (within one year) per 1,000 live births
Physical Health					
Poor or fair health	N/A	17%	16%	14%	Percentage of adults reporting fair or poor health
Poor physical health days	N/A	3.9	3.5	3.3	Average number of physically unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days (age-adjusted)
Frequent physical distress	N/A	12%	11%	10%	Percentage of adults with 14 or more days of poor physical health per month
Low birth weight	N/A	9%	8%	8%	Percentage of babies born too small (less than 2,500 grams)
Falls 65+ (by state)	N/A	N/A	30.8%	27.6%	Older adult falls reported by state
Fall fatalities 65+ (by state)	N/A	N/A	58.2	78.0	Number of injury deaths due to falls among those 65 years of age and over per 100,000 population
Mental Health					
Poor mental health days	N/A	5.0	5.2	4.8	Average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days
Frequent mental distress	N/A	17%	17%	15%	Percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month
Suicide	N/A	18	16	14	Number of deaths due to suicide per 100,000
Morbidity					
Diabetes prevalence	N/A	11%	11%	10%	Percentage of adults ages 20 and above with diagnosed diabetes
Cancer deaths (by state)	N/A	184.8	166.7	149.4	Average annual cancer death rate per 100,000
Communicable Disease					
HIV prevalence	N/A	176	217	382	Number of people ages 13 years and over with a diagnosis of HIV per 100,000
Sexually transmitted infections	✗	608.2	510.7	495.5	Number of newly diagnosed chlamydia cases per 100,000

Sources: County Health Rankings, 2024; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024

Table 8: Social and Economic Factors

Why they are important: These factors have a significant effect on our health. They affect our ability to make healthy decisions, afford medical care, afford housing and food, manage stress, and more.

Indicator	Trend	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.	Description
Economic Stability					
Median household income	N/A	\$57,000	\$66,800	\$74,800	The income where half of households in a county earn more and half of households earn less
Unemployment	▲	5%	3%	4%	Percentage of population ages 16 and older unemployed but seeking work
Poverty	N/A	16.9%	12.6%	12.8%	Percentage of population living below the federal poverty line
Childhood poverty	▲	21%	15%	16%	Percentage of people under age 18 in poverty
Educational Attainment					
High school completion	N/A	91%	90%	89%	Percentage of adults ages 25 and over with a high school diploma or equivalent
Some college	N/A	60%	63%	68%	Percentage of adults ages 25-44 with some post-secondary education
Social/Community					
Children in single-parent homes	N/A	29%	24%	25%	Percentage of children who live in a household headed by a single parent
Social associations	N/A	14.6	11.8	9.1	Number of membership associations per 10,000 population
Disconnected youth	N/A	4%	6%	7%	Percentage of teens and young adults ages 16-19 who are neither working nor in school
Violent crime	N/A	N/A	306.2	369.8	Number of reported violent crime offenses per 100,000 population
Access to Healthy Foods					
Food environment index	N/A	7.2	6.8	7.7	Index of factors that contribute to a healthy food environment (0 = worst, 10 = best)
Food insecurity	N/A	12%	11%	10%	Percentage of the population who lack adequate access to food
Limited access to healthy foods	N/A	10%	9%	6%	Percentage of the population who are low-income and do not live close to a grocery store

Sources: County Health Rankings, 2024; United for Alice, 2024; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2024

Table 9: Physical Environment

Why they are important: The physical environment is where people live, learn, work, and play. The physical environment impacts our air, water, housing, and transportation to work or school. A poor physical environment can affect our ability and that of our families and neighbors to live long and healthy lives.

Indicator	Trend	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.	Description
Physical Environment					
Severe housing cost burden	N/A	9%	11%	14%	Percentage of households that spend 50 percent or more of their household income on housing
Severe housing problems	N/A	10%	12%	17%	Percentage of households with at least one of four housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, and/or lack of plumbing facilities
Air pollution: particulate matter	✓	7.3	8.8	7.4	Average daily density of fine particulate matter in micrograms per cubic meter (PM2.5)
Home ownership	N/A	72%	70%	65%	Percentage of occupied housing units that are owned

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

Table 10: Clinical Care

Why it is important: Access to affordable, quality care can help detect issues sooner and prevent disease. This can help individuals live longer and have healthier lives.

Indicator	Trend	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.	Description
Healthcare Access					
Uninsured	✓	7%	9%	10%	Percentage of population under age 65 without health insurance
Uninsured adults	✓	8%	10%	12%	Percentage of adults under age 65 without health insurance
Uninsured children	✓	4%	6%	5%	Percentage of children under age 19 without health insurance
Primary care physicians	✗	1,820:1	1,520:1	1,330:1	Ratio of the population to primary care physicians
Mental healthcare providers	N/A	440:1	500:1	320:1	Ratio of the population to mental healthcare providers
Hospital Utilization					
Preventable hospital stays	✓	3,214	3,135	2,681	Rate of hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions per 100,000 Medicare enrollees
Preventive Healthcare					
Flu vaccinations	▲	45%	50%	46%	Percentage of fee-for-service Medicare enrollees who had an annual flu vaccination
Mammography screenings	✓	45%	45%	43%	Percentage of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 who received an annual mammography screening

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

Table 11: Health Behaviors

Why they are important: Health behaviors are actions individuals take that can affect their health. These actions can lead to positive health outcomes or they can increase someone's risk of disease and premature death. It is important to understand that not all people have the same opportunities to engage in healthier behaviors.

Indicator	Trend	Howard County	Indiana	U.S.	Description
Healthy Lifestyle					
Adult obesity	N/A	42%	37%	34%	Percentage of the adult population (ages 20 and older) that reports a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kg/m ²
Physical inactivity	N/A	27%	25%	23%	Percentage of adults ages 20 and over reporting no leisure-time physical activity
Access to exercise opportunities	N/A	73%	77%	84%	Percentage of population with adequate access to locations for physical activity
Insufficient sleep	N/A	35%	36%	33%	Percentage of adults who report fewer than seven hours of sleep on average
Motor vehicle crash deaths	N/A	20	13	12	Number of motor vehicle crash deaths per 100,000 population
Teen births	N/A	28	20	17	Number of births per 1,000 female population ages 15-19
Substance Misuse					
Adult smoking	N/A	20%	18%	15%	Percentage of adults who are current smokers
Excessive drinking	N/A	16%	18%	18%	Percentage of adults reporting binge or heavy alcohol drinking
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths	▲	33%	18%	26%	Alcohol-impaired driving deaths
Overdose deaths: any opioids by state	N/A	47	34	27	Rate of opioid-related deaths by state per 100,000 persons

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

Table 12: Disparities

Why they are important: Differences in access to opportunities that affect health can create differences between groups of people in the community. A focus on equity is important to improve health for everyone in the community.

Indicator	Population	Measure
Health Disparities		
Premature death: Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted)	Overall	574 per 100,000
	Asian	N/A
	Non-Hispanic Black / African American	726 per 100,000
	Hispanic / Latino	325 per 100,000
	American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A
	Non-Hispanic White	584 per 100,000
Low birthweight: Percentage of live births with low birthweight (< 2,500 grams or 5 lbs. 8 oz)	Overall	8.9%
	Asian	N/A
	Non-Hispanic Black / African American	13.0%
	Hispanic / Latino	11.6%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A
	Non-Hispanic White	8.0%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2024

Appendix D2: Additional Secondary Data

Appendix D2 presents and discusses additional, relevant secondary data for Howard County, Indiana, and the United States. All data presented are from credible sources.

Community-Specific Secondary Data

The following section includes community-specific secondary data identified below.

- Projected population growth
- Mortality, Age-Adjusted Rates Per 100,000
- Cancer Mortality, Crude Rates Per 100,000
- Locations of Medically Underserved Areas and Populations (MUAs/MUPs)
- Area Deprivation Index for Census Blocks
- Low-income and Low-access Census tracts and Low-income Census tracts

Projected Population Growth, 2019-2025

Howard County				Indiana			
Age Cohort	2025	2030	Change	Age Cohort	2025	2030	Change
0 to 24	25,731	25,278	-1.8%	0 to 24	2,229,462	2,207,899	-1.0%
25 to 44	20,575	21,493	4.5%	25 to 44	1,802,599	1,839,566	2.1%
45 to 64	20,112	18,814	-6.5%	45 to 64	1,640,993	1,619,183	-1.3%
65 and older	17,666	18,696	5.8%	65 and older	1,233,963	1,346,861	9.1%
Total	84,084	84,281	0.2%	Total	6,907,017	7,013,509	1.5%

Source: STATS Indiana, 2024

Description. This table portrays population growth in Howard County and Indiana.

Observation. The total population of Howard County is projected to remain constant 2025 and 2030 at approximately 84,000 persons. The 65+ population is projected to grow 5.8 percent.

Mortality, Age-Adjusted Rates Per 100,000, 2016-2020

Cause	Howard County, IN	Indiana	United States
Major cardiovascular diseases	270.2	239.1	217.7
Diseases of heart	217.5	181.4	164.8
Malignant neoplasms	184.8	166.7	149.4
All other diseases (Residual)	125.9	110.5	88.7
Ischemic heart diseases	125.8	98.1	91.5
Other heart diseases	73.3	69.6	56.8
Other forms of chronic ischemic heart disease	81.8	61.3	63.3
Accidents (unintentional injuries)	75.0	57.7	50.4
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	65.8	55.3	39.1
All other forms of chronic ischemic heart disease	72.3	53.2	46.8
Other chronic lower respiratory diseases	63.0	51.2	36.2
Malignant neoplasms of trachea, bronchus and lung	49.0	44.9	34.9
Nontransport accidents	55.1	44.1	37.6
All other forms of heart disease	46.5	44.0	35.5
Cerebrovascular diseases	38.4	40.2	37.6
Acute myocardial infarction	42.4	35.8	27.1
Alzheimer disease	30.3	33.9	30.8
Accidental poisoning and exposure to noxious substances	35.5	26.9	21.0
Diabetes mellitus	30.4	26.6	22.1
Heart failure	25.4	24.9	20.6
Other and unspecified infectious and parasitic diseases and their sequelae	25.0	23.6	19.9
COVID-19	22.5	21.3	17.7
All other and unspecified malignant neoplasms	24.0	19.6	18.5
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	22.9	17.8	12.9
Renal failure	22.4	17.5	12.6
Malignant neoplasms of lymphoid, hematopoietic and related tissue	15.9	16.0	14.6
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	18.8	15.4	13.8
Malignant neoplasms of colon, rectum and anus	18.9	14.9	13.4
Septicemia	16.7	14.9	10.1
Other diseases of respiratory system	14.0	14.2	10.8
Transport accidents	19.9	13.6	12.7
Motor vehicle accidents	19.5	13.0	12.0
Influenza and pneumonia	11.4	12.9	13.6
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	16.0	12.4	11.5
Malignant neoplasm of pancreas	13.3	11.9	11.1
Malignant neoplasm of breast	12.6	11.4	10.8
Pneumonia	10.2	10.8	11.9
Hypertensive heart disease	14.3	10.4	13.3
Essential hypertension and hypertensive renal disease	7.6	10.3	9.1
Parkinson disease	12.8	9.8	8.8
Intentional self-harm (suicide) by discharge of firearms	8.6	8.5	6.9
Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, so described	9.5	8.1	16.5
Other and unspecified nontransport accidents and their sequelae	8.5	8.0	5.0
Malignant neoplasm of prostate	8.7	7.9	7.8
Assault (homicide)	7.6	7.8	6.4

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024

Description. This table provides age-adjusted mortality rates in Howard County and Indiana. Light grey shading highlights rates that were above the U.S. average; dark grey shading highlights rates more than 50 percent above average.

Observations. In Howard County, mortality rates for were more than 50 percent higher than the U.S. averages for several causes, including chronic lower respiratory diseases; acute myocardial infarction; accidental poisoning and exposure to noxious substances; nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis; renal failure; septicemia; transport accidents; and motor vehicle accidents. Numerous other causes were higher than overall U.S. rates.

Cancer Mortality, Crude Rates Per 100,000, 2016-2020

Type of Cancer	Howard County	Indiana	United States
All Cancer Sites Combined	252.5	202.3	182.5
Lung and Bronchus	69.5	53.1	41.4
Female Breast	28.6	26.4	25.3
Prostate	22.2	20.1	19.8
Colon and Rectum	24.5	17.6	15.8
Pancreas	16.8	15.2	14.2
Leukemias	9.9	7.6	7.1
Liver and Intrahepatic Bile Duct	9.4	8.0	8.6
Ovary	8.0	7.8	8.1
Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma	7.9	6.7	6.1
Corpus and Uterus, NOS	N/A	7.4	7.2
Esophagus	8.7	6.0	4.8
Urinary Bladder	6.7	5.7	5.1
Brain and Other Nervous System	N/A	5.3	5.3
Kidney and Renal Pelvis	5.8	4.9	4.3
Myeloma	5.5	3.7	3.7
Oral Cavity and Pharynx	4.3	3.5	3.3
Cervix	N/A	3.0	2.5
Melanomas of the Skin	N/A	2.7	2.5
Stomach	N/A	2.7	3.3
Larynx	N/A	1.4	1.2
Mesothelioma	N/A	0.8	0.7
Thyroid	N/A	0.7	0.6
Hodgkin Lymphoma	N/A	0.4	0.3
Testis	N/A	0.3	0.3

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024

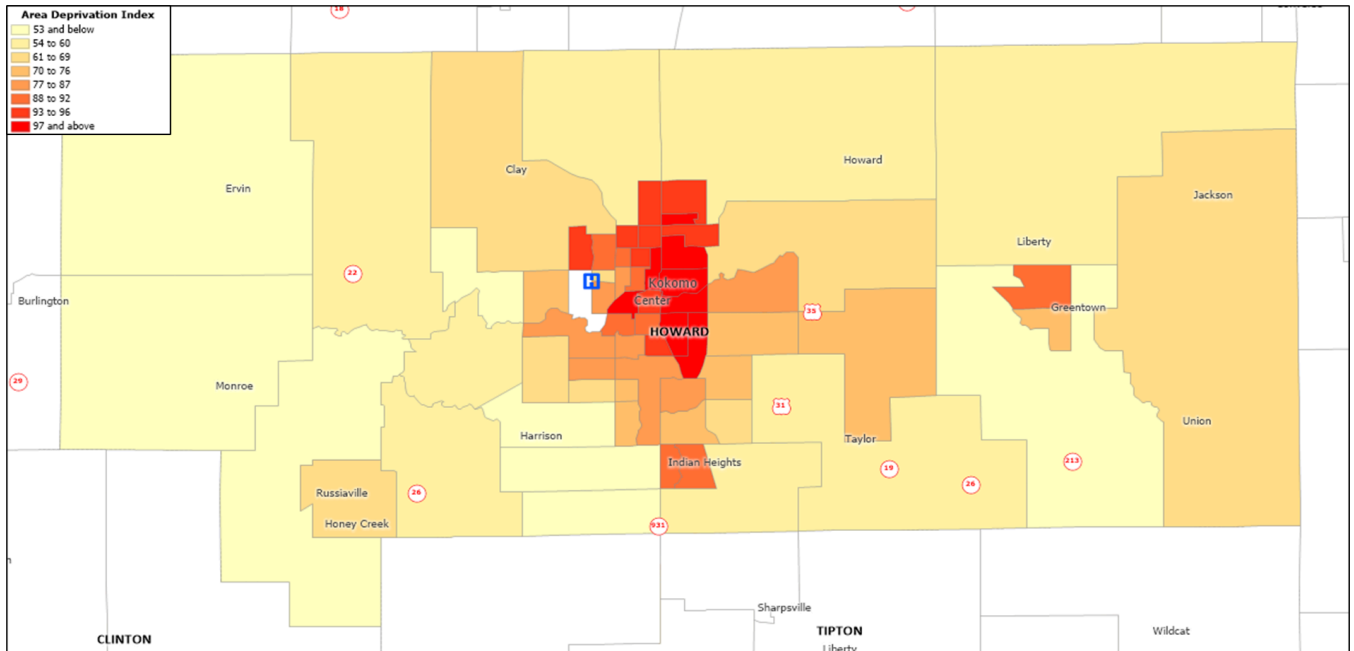
Description. This table provides crude cancer mortality rates in Howard County and Indiana. Light grey shading highlights rates that were above the U.S. average; dark grey shading highlights rates more than 50 percent above average.

Observations. In Howard County, cancer mortality rates for lung and bronchus, colon and rectum, and esophagus were higher than overall U.S. rates. Numerous causes for Indiana were higher than overall U.S. rates.

Description. Medically Underserved Areas and Populations (MUA/Ps) are designated by HRSA based on an “Index of Medical Underservice.” The index is based on the ratio of primary medical care physicians per 1,000 population, infant mortality rate, percentage of the population with incomes below the poverty level, and percentage of the population age 65 or over. Areas with a score of 62 or less are considered medically underserved. MUAs and MUPs also may be assigned by HRSA leadership and state government officials.

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Area Deprivation Index for Census Blocks, 2024

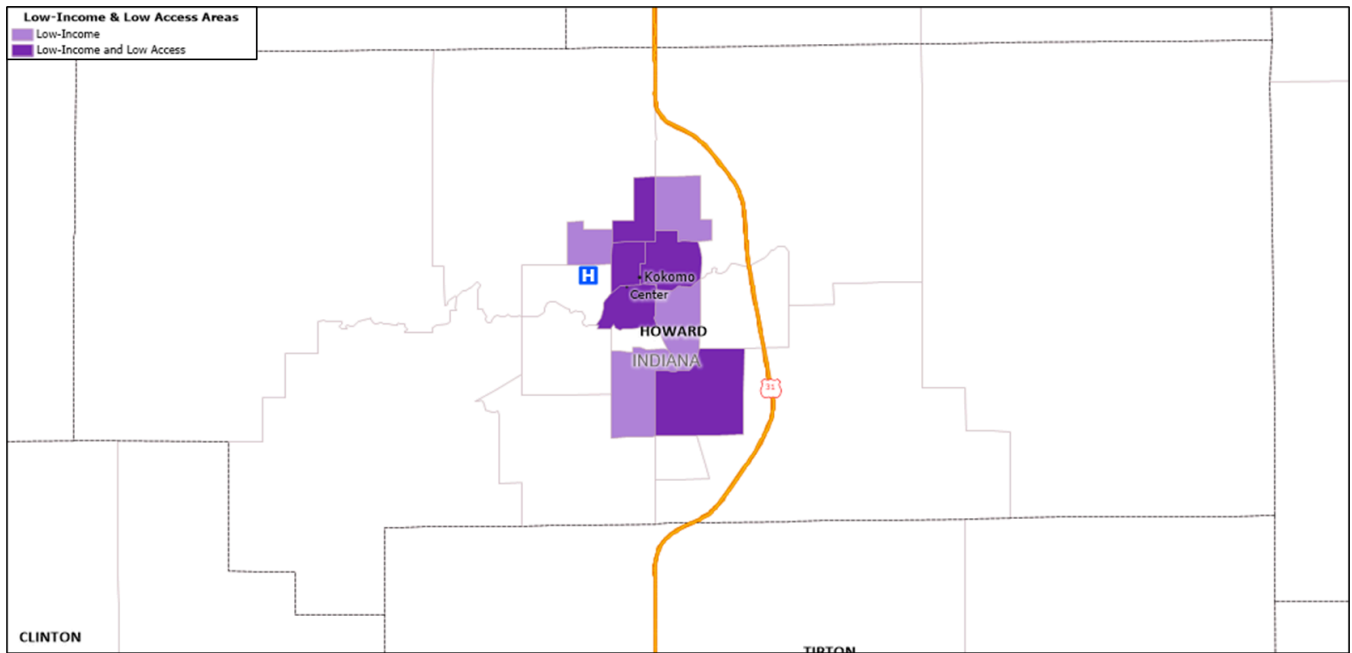


Sources: Health Resources and Services Administration, 2024, and Caliper Maptitude.

Description. The Area Deprivation Index (ADI) ranks neighborhoods at the Census block by level of socioeconomic disadvantage and includes factors for income, education, employment, and housing quality. ADI is produced by the University of Wisconsin, School of Medicine and Public Health, Center for Health Disparities Research. ADIs are calculated for census block groups in national percentile rankings from 1 to 100. A block group ranking of 1 indicates the lowest level of disadvantage within the nation and an ADI ranking of 100 indicates the highest level of disadvantage.

Observation. Numerous Census blocks in Kokomo and throughout Howard County have high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Low-income and Low-access Census tracts and Low-income Census tracts



Sources: Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2021, and Caliper Maptitude, 2024.

Description. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service identifies low-income census tracts with low-access to a supermarket. For urban areas, low-access is defined as more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store, and more than 10 miles from a supermarket or large grocery store in a rural area. These census tracts are colloquially referenced as “food deserts.” Many government-led initiatives aim to increase the availability of nutritious and affordable foods to people living in these areas.

Observations. Census tracts in Howard County have been identified as food deserts, including tracts in Kokomo. While not “food deserts,” other census tracts in Howard County have been identified as low-income areas.

Appendix E: Health Care Facilities and Community Resources

As part of the CHNA process, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo has cataloged resources available in Howard County that respond to the significant needs identified in this CHNA. Resources may include acute care facilities (hospitals), primary and specialty care clinics and practices, mental health providers, and other non-profit services. State and national resources can also provide information regarding programs that can better serve the needs of a person experiencing a specific problem.

Organization	Phone	Website
Hospitals		
Ascension St Vincent Kokomo	765-452-5611	https://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/indiana/nasc/kokomo-ascension-st-vincent-kokomo
Community Howard Regional Health Inc	765-776-8000	https://www.ecommunity.com/locations/community-howard-regional-health
Catholic Charities		
Catholic Charities Indianapolis	317-236-1500	https://helpcreatehope.org/
Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend	260-422-5625	https://www.ccfwsb.org/
Catholic Charities Diocese of Gary	219-886-3549	https://www.catholic-charities.org/
Information and Referral		
Indiana 211 Can Help	Dial 2-1-1 or 1-866-211-9966	https://in211.communityos.org/
Neighborhood Resource by Ascension	N/A	https://neighborhoodresource.findhelp.com/
Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)		
Meridian Health Services Corp	866-306-2647	https://www.meridianhs.org/
IHC Howard County WIC	765-252-4249	https://indianahealthonline.org/locations/howard-county-wic/
IHC at Kokomo	765-864-4160	https://indianahealthonline.org/locations/kokomo/

Appendix F: Evaluation of Impact from the Previous CHNA Implementation Strategy

Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo's previous CHNA implementation strategy responded to the following priority health needs: access to care; mental health; and substance use disorder.

The table below describes the actions taken during fiscal years 2023-2025 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2025) CHNA implementation strategy cycle to respond to each priority need.

Note: At the time of the report publication, the third year of the cycle will not be complete. The hospital will accommodate for that variable; results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the 2025 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.

PRIORITY NEED	Access to Care
SMART GOAL	1. By June 30, 2025, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will increase the number of patients established with a medical home by 2.0% each year, amongst individuals who complete a Medical Home Pathway, from baseline established in FY2023.
ACTIONS	STATUS OF RESULTS
Community Health Workers (CHWs) assess and address barriers to establishing a medical home, refer patients to a medical home, educate, assist with scheduling, confirm attendance at appointment, and follow up for ongoing concerns to complete the Medical Home Pathway.	<p>FY23 - Year 1: Baseline Set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CHWs assisted 2 individuals with connecting to a medical home through the completion of a Medical Home Pathway. <p>FY24 - Year 2: Met Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CHWs assisted 8 individuals with connecting to a medical home through the completion of a Medical Home Pathway (FY24 goal = 2). <p>FY25 - Year 3: In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the 2025 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.

PRIORITY NEED	Access to Care
SMART GOAL	2. By June 30, 2025, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo and Care Continuity, will increase the number of self-pay/charity Emergency Department patients connected with a provider by 5.0%, from baseline established in FY2023.
ACTIONS	STATUS OF RESULTS
ED Concierge team members receive a referral from an Emergency Department provider. Care Continuity ED Concierge team members engage patients, assist with scheduling doctor appointments, arrange transportation and follow up with appointment reminders and confirmation.	<p>FY23 - Year 1: Baseline Set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ED Concierges assisted 39 ED self-pay/charity patients with connecting to a provider. <p>FY24 - Year 2: On Track, 2-Year Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ED Concierges assisted 50 ED self-pay/charity patients with connecting to a provider (2-year goal from baseline = 41). <p>FY25 - Year 3: In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the 2025 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.

PRIORITY NEED	Access to Care
SMART GOAL	3. By June 30, 2025, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will increase the number of people enrolled in a health insurance plan by 5.0% each year, amongst individuals who complete an enrollment pathway, from baseline established in FY2023.
ACTIONS	STATUS OF RESULTS
Community Health Workers verify appropriate application is completed, review referrals for social determinants of health (SDOH), assess and address barriers, monitor patient progress, and provide ongoing management to complete the Enrollment Pathway.	<p>FY23 - Year 1: Baseline Set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CHWs assisted 63 individuals with obtaining health insurance through completion of an Enrollment Pathway. <p>FY24 - Year 2: Did Not Met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CHWs assisted 64 individuals with obtaining health insurance through completion of an Enrollment Pathway (FY24 goal=66). <p>FY25 - Year 3: In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the 2025 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.

PRIORITY NEED	Mental Health
SMART GOAL	By June 30, 2025, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo, in collaboration with the Stress Center, will provide at least one session of QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Training for community members.
ACTIONS	STATUS OF RESULTS
Identify a hospital lead, identify partners, and develop a resource list. Plan promotion activities. Promote and offer the event. Obtain applicable outputs and/or outcomes	<p>FY23: Planning Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hospital completed the following planning steps: identified a lead, determined individual roles and expectations and updated resource lists from the previous I.S. cycle to reflect possible collaborating organizations. <p>FY24: On Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During FY24, the hospital scheduled a QPR training session, which had to be rescheduled for FY25 due to insufficient registrants, despite promotion by the hospital lead through existing contacts, community partners, and social media. <p>FY25: In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the 2025 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.

PRIORITY NEED	Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
SMART GOAL	By June 30, 2025, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will develop a process to partner with community providers to enhance care coordination for persons with mental health and substance use disorder.
ACTIONS	STATUS OF RESULTS
Identify, lead, and assemble planning committee including community providers. Develop a plan to standardize a process for collaborating with community providers. Implement standardization process. Regional Director of Behavioral Health Services.	<p>FY23 - Year 1: Planning Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hospital completed the following planning steps: identified a lead, determined individual roles and expectations, identified existing external committees and internal experts to serve in an advisory role and identified an evidence-based tool to support the objective. <p>FY24 - Year 2: On Track, Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SMART Medical Clearance Form, an evidenced-based tool designed to simplify and standardize the Medical Clearance Process when individuals present in the ED in a behavioral health crisis, was implemented in the pilot hospitals' ED, which includes Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo, with plans to expand to other North Region hospitals and the Heart Center. Implementation was interrupted when a system-wide cybersecurity event in May of 2024 caused a disruption in the standardized use of the tool. Efforts are underway to reinforce consistent use of the tool. Education about the use of the new tool and how it will enhance care coordination for persons with mental health and substance use disorder is underway with community providers and partners. For example, as a board member of the Madison County Mental Health and Addiction Coalition, the President of ASV Anderson and Regional Behavioral Health Director, hosted the coalition meeting at the Anderson Center to share their services and processes and tour the facility. <p>FY25 - Year 3: In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the 2025 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.

PRIORITY NEED	Community Engagement
SMART GOAL	By June 30, 2025, Ascension St. Vincent Kokomo will strengthen community engagement to expand the reach of evidence-based programs, advocacy, and/or services through financial support, facilitation, and/or promotion.
ACTIONS TAKEN	STATUS OF RESULTS
Identify a lead, assemble a workstream and identify or develop an assessment tool. Assess, identify opportunities, and make recommendations for strengthening community engagement. Develop strategy for community engagement.	<p>FY23 - Year 1: Planning Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A market-wide workstream was developed with regional leads, individual roles and expectations were determined and an existing assessment tool (survey) was identified. <p>FY24 - Year 2: On Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The associate community engagement survey was adapted to the Indiana market and was emailed to all associates on numerous occasions throughout August of 2023, with 13% of associates responding. The results were analyzed and presented to the market-wide workstream and regional leaders. Plans were interrupted due to a system-wide cybersecurity event in May of 2024. Due to the cybersecurity recovery, the timeline for hospitals to conduct a brainstorming session to assess their survey results and identify FY25 opportunities was adjusted to take place in Q1 of FY25. <p>FY25 - Year 3: In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the 2025 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.