
RHP 17 REGIONAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT 2013

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT: GRIMES COUNTY

PREPARED BY:

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

TEXAS A&M HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

SCHOOL OF RURAL PUBLIC HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION

The 2013 Regional Health Assessment, conducted by the Center for Community Health Development (CCHD) at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health (SRPH), covers the nine-county region of south-central Texas consisting of Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Montgomery, Robertson, Walker, and Washington Counties. The *Executive Report* provides comprehensive descriptions of methodology, as well as regional findings. The supplemental reports are intended to provide specific regional and county-level data.

This report presents the health status assessment findings for Grimes County. Most data and comparisons given will be compared to the Brazos Valley region (the seven counties comprising the Brazos Valley), the state, or the nation. For specific regional-level data, please refer to the regional *Executive Report*. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented are for Grimes County respondents.

FINDINGS

Community Discussion Groups

Five community discussion groups (CDGs) were conducted in Grimes County with 80 total participants. Those participating represented the diversity of the county's population; attendees were 27.5 percent male and 72.5 percent female, and 87.5 percent White/Caucasian and 12.5 percent Black/African American. These discussion groups were conducted in February, March, and April 2013. Four audiences were targeted to attend these open meetings to provide a forum for community members to discuss various issues, challenges, and resources in their community related to health: key community leaders, health care providers, social service providers, and the general public (i.e., residents) of Grimes County. Discussion groups were held at several donated locations throughout Grimes County, including:

- American Legion Hall in Anderson,
- Grimes St. Joseph Education room in Navasota, and
- Bédias Civic Center.

Community

Grimes County CDG participants described the county as a friendly community that is a great place to live and raise a family. Grimes County is centrally located with Bryan/College Station and Brenham being only a short drive away. The small, rural atmosphere makes it appealing to people who want to live outside of the hustle and bustle of city life while being close enough to commute to larger cities for work and enjoy the amenities of more suburban communities.

The population is growing, especially with older adults who are retiring in the quiet community. This growth brings diversity, in terms of new transplants and long-term residents.

Community Issues & Challenges

Grimes County CDG participants discussed a variety of community issues and challenges. Similar to other Brazos Valley communities, reliable public transportation is a key issue in the county. No public transit system is available, which imposes difficulties in accessing resources for people who do not have private transportation. The geography of Grimes County, which is 40 miles long and 20 miles wide, was cited by participants as a barrier to some collaborative efforts. For individuals living in the north end of the county, traveling to Navasota may take up to 45 minutes or more. The layout of the county interferes with community collaboration efforts, thus there is a disconnect between some of the cities within the county.

Participants noted a lack of resources, specifically related to health care, within the county. Residents reported having difficulty accessing specialty care or home health for the older adult population. Furthermore, residents expressed that the county lacks adequate infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles for its residents. Some participants highlighted a lack of accessible parks, walking trails, or bike lanes, which allow people to be physically active outside.

In addition, the lack of recreational activities available for adults and youth in the county poses a problem in terms of risk behaviors. Grimes County residents were concerned that since youth do not have a place to spend their free time, like a community center, they are more likely have idle time to participate in risky behaviors like vandalism, substance abuse, and truancy. Other social issues brought up in discussion groups were poverty in some areas of the county, lack of jobs, homelessness, and lack of services for the economically disadvantaged.

Resources

In each discussion group, Grimes County participants highlighted local resources providing a positive impact on the community. Grimes County residents said that local social service providers, specifically the Grimes Health Resource Center, were assets to the community. Civic organizations and the faith community were also identified as resources that provided a great deal of support to residents in the county. Overall, discussion group participants said that community organizations, leadership, and local residents collaborated well together.

Residents also said that economic development was a resource within the community. Local industry, which generates jobs, along with strong city- and county-level support assures that the county is forward-thinking and proactive.

Local health care options were also identified as a resource by discussion groups. Grimes County residents appreciate the local hospital and clinics available for their primary care needs. Schools were also cited as a resource within the community, specifically the sports programs for students.

Household Survey

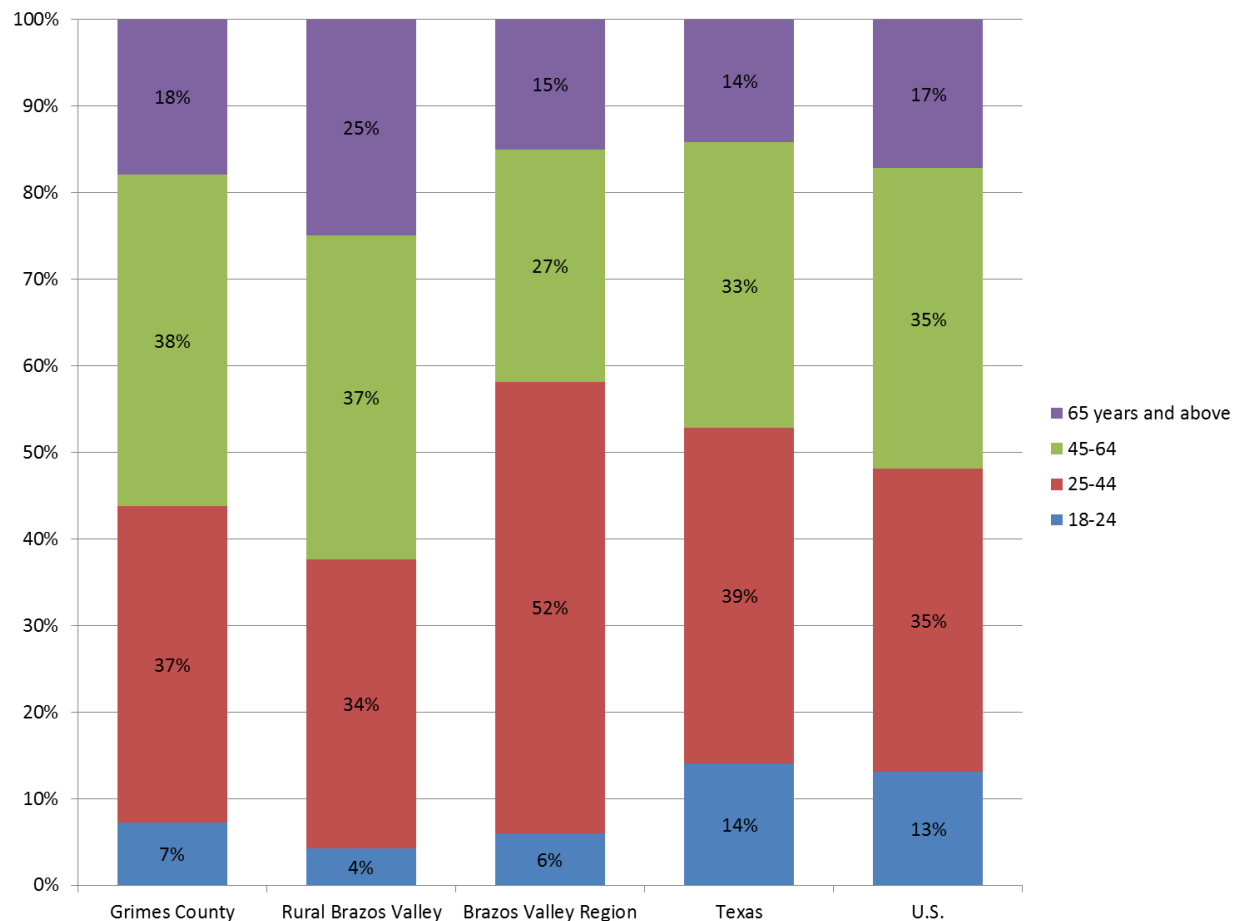
The household survey was developed and pilot tested by the Survey Committee (see Regional Report for more details). As typical in survey research, those who actually responded to the survey disproportionately represented older residents, Caucasians, and those more educated and affluent. To balance some of this bias, the analysis for this report was performed on scientifically weighted data by weighting the responses to match the age and gender distribution by county based on current Census estimates. Even with the weighting, however, we also know by comparison to Census estimates that the current sample under-represents low-income residents. This should be considered when interpreting the results; the survey analysis likely indicates a more positive reflection of the community than actually exists. Regardless, the data provides us a useful snapshot of what residents are currently experiencing. This survey was used to collect comprehensive information regarding factors affecting health status from a random sample of RHP 17 residents, with 252 surveys completed in Grimes County. What follows are the results from those Grimes County surveys.

Demographics

Age and Gender

The mean age of survey respondents from Grimes County was 48.5 years. Grimes County has a slightly younger population compared to the rest of the rural Brazos Valley counties, with a comparatively smaller proportion of residents 65 and older. Compared to Texas and the U.S., however, Grimes County has a smaller proportion of residents 18 to 24 years of age, while having a greater proportion of residents 65 years or older. Figure 1 illustrates the age distribution for Grimes County compared to the rural Brazos Valley counties, the Brazos Valley region, Texas, and the U.S.

Figure 1. Age distribution of Grimes County, rural Brazos Valley counties, Brazos Valley region, Texas, and U.S.¹

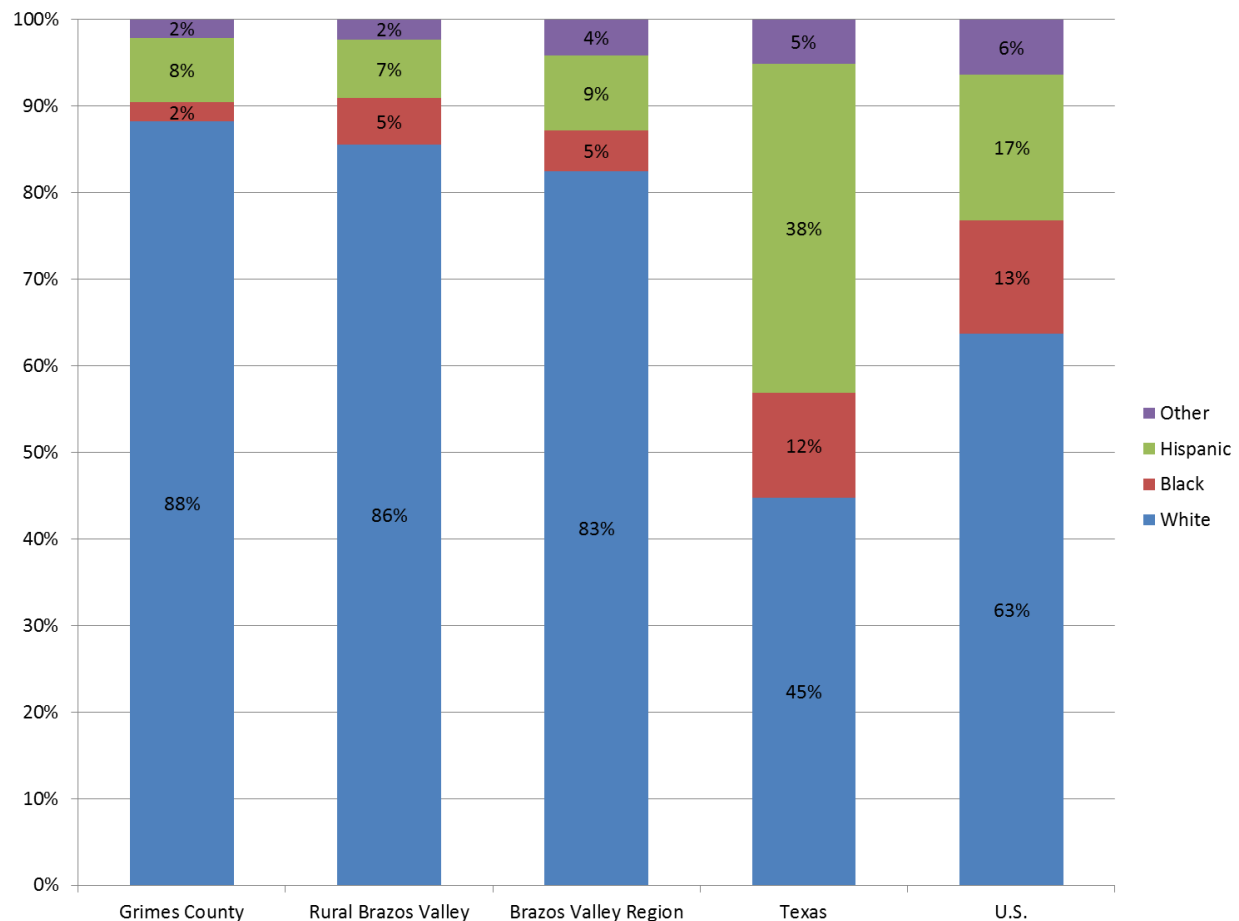


Race and Ethnicity

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the racial or ethnic group they felt best described them. A majority of Grimes County survey respondents identified themselves as White/Caucasian (88.2%), 2.2 percent indicated Black/African American, and 7.5 percent Hispanic/Latino. Two percent of the respondents identified themselves as more than one race. Comparing these figures to 2011 Census estimates indicates that minority groups are underrepresented in this survey sample. Figure 2 shows the racial/ethnic distribution of Grimes County survey respondents.

¹ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html>

Figure 2. Racial/ethnic distribution of survey respondents in Grimes County, rural Brazos Valley counties, Brazos Valley region, Texas, and U.S.²



Marital Status

The majority of Grimes County survey respondents reported being married (65.9%); 12.7 percent reported their marital status as single (never married); 6.9 percent reported being separated or divorced; 4.7 percent were widowed; and 2.9 percent indicated they were unmarried, living with a partner. In comparison, 49.6 percent of Texas residents and 48.3 percent of U.S. residents are married; a third (31.4% in Texas and 32.5% in the U.S.) of residents are single, while 13.7 percent of Texas residents and 13.2 percent of U.S. residents are separated or divorced. The remaining proportion of residents in Texas and the U.S. are widowed (5.2% and 6% respectively).

Household Composition

The mean household size for Grimes County survey participants was 2.8 persons, mirroring the state mean and approximating the national mean (2.6). Among respondents, 33.3 percent

² <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html>

reported having children less than 18 years of age living in their household. Statewide, 61.1 percent of households do not have children, and nationally, 64.4 percent of households are childless.

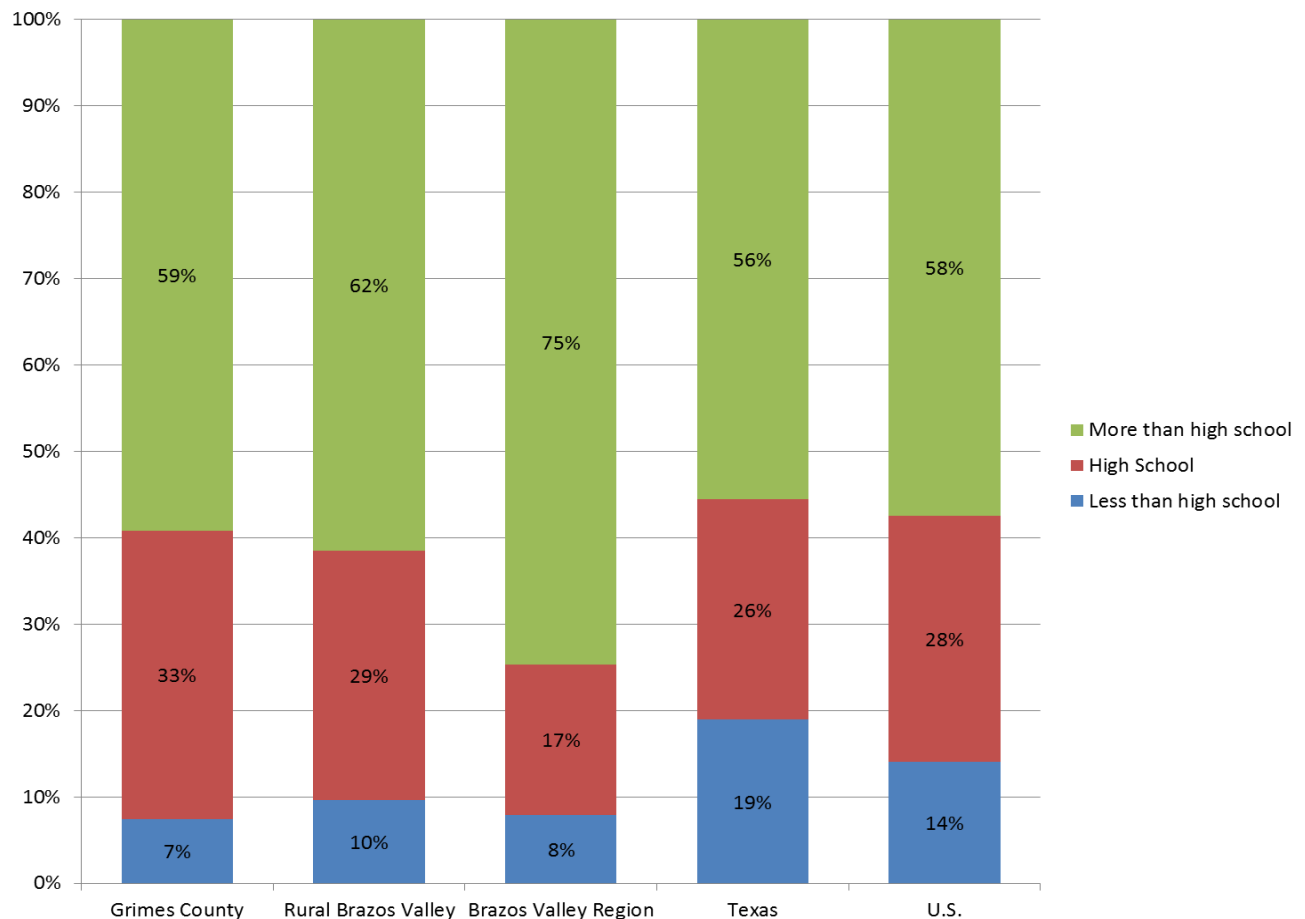
The survey asked respondents how many people in their household earned wages that contributed to their household income. In response, 10.5 percent reported that **no one** living in the household was contributing to the household income, which reflects many of the concerns heard in the discussion groups about rising unemployment. Thirty-two percent of respondents said that one person contributed all of the household income, 43.2 percent said two people contributed to the household income, and 13.9 percent said three or more people contributed.

Education

Education is an important social factor that influences health status. The mean years of education attained for survey respondents in Grimes County is 14, the equivalent of a high school diploma plus two years of college. Among survey participants, 7.4 percent reported not completing high school, while 33.4 percent received their high school diploma, and 59.2 percent proceeded to complete at least some college credit. In comparison, 19.6 percent of Texans over the age of 25 did not complete high school, and nationally, this figure is 14.6 percent.³ This is in line with the Brazos Valley regional rate. Figure 3 presents a comparison of educational attainment for Grimes County compared to the rural Brazos Valley counties, the Brazos Valley region, Texas, and the U.S.

³ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html>

Figure 3. Educational attainment in Grimes County, rural Brazos Valley counties, Brazos Valley region, Texas, and U.S.⁴



Employment

Among Grimes County survey respondents, 55.3 percent reported they were currently employed. Of those who were employed, the vast majority said they only had one employer (91.3%), but 3.6 percent said they had two employers, and another 5.2 percent reported three or more.

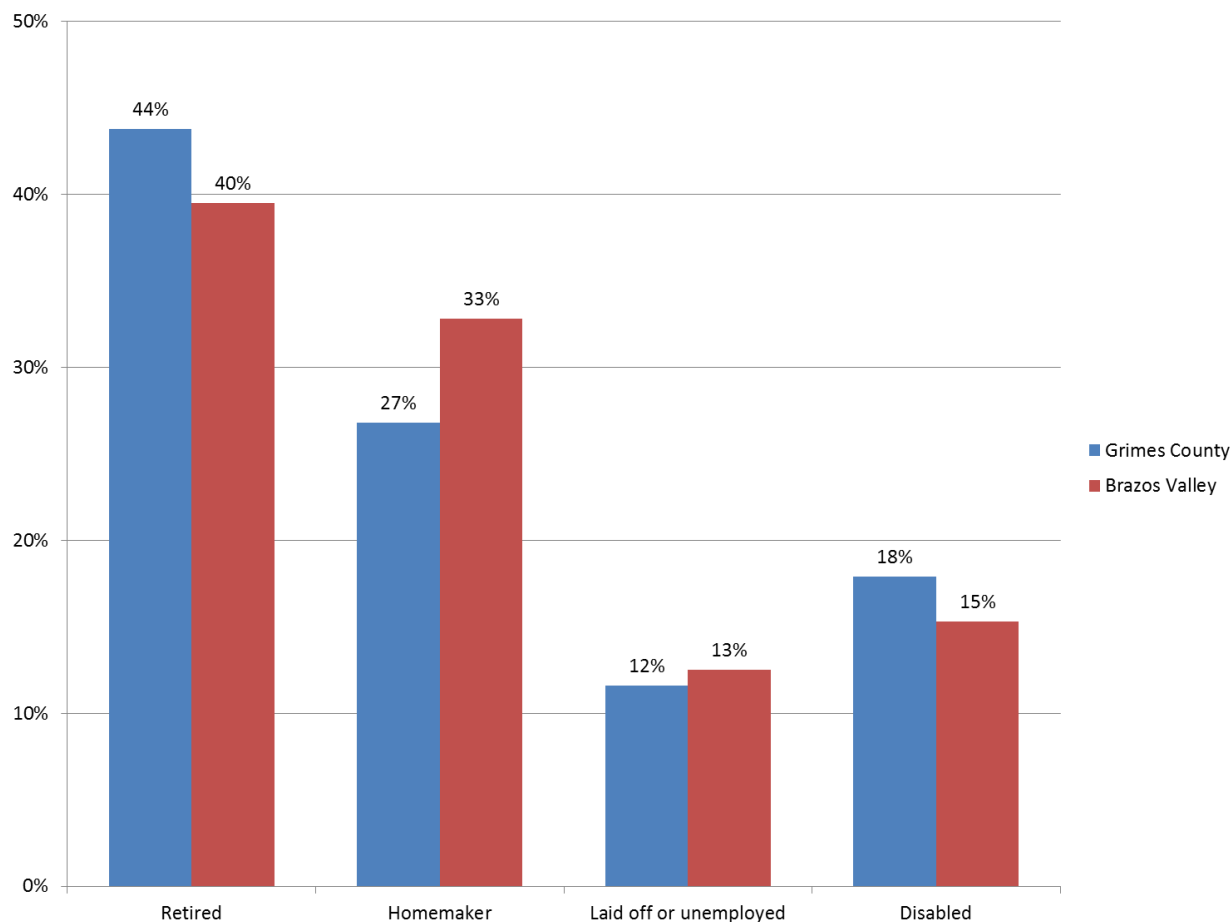
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for the State of Texas was 6.5 percent in May 2013. Locally, the Texas Workforce Commission reports that the unemployment rate for Grimes County in May 2013 was also 6.5 percent. May 2013 rates were used to provide a more accurate comparison to the survey data, collected between February and July.

Of the participants who reported they were not currently employed, 43.8 percent said they were retired, 26.8 percent said they were full-time homemakers, 17.9 percent were disabled

⁴ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html>

and unable to work, and 11.6 percent were laid off or unemployed. Compared to the 2010 rates, Grimes County doubled the number of respondents reporting being laid off or unemployed. Figure 4 illustrates the responses of Grimes County participants who were not currently employed.

Figure 4. Percentage of responses regarding work situation if not currently employed



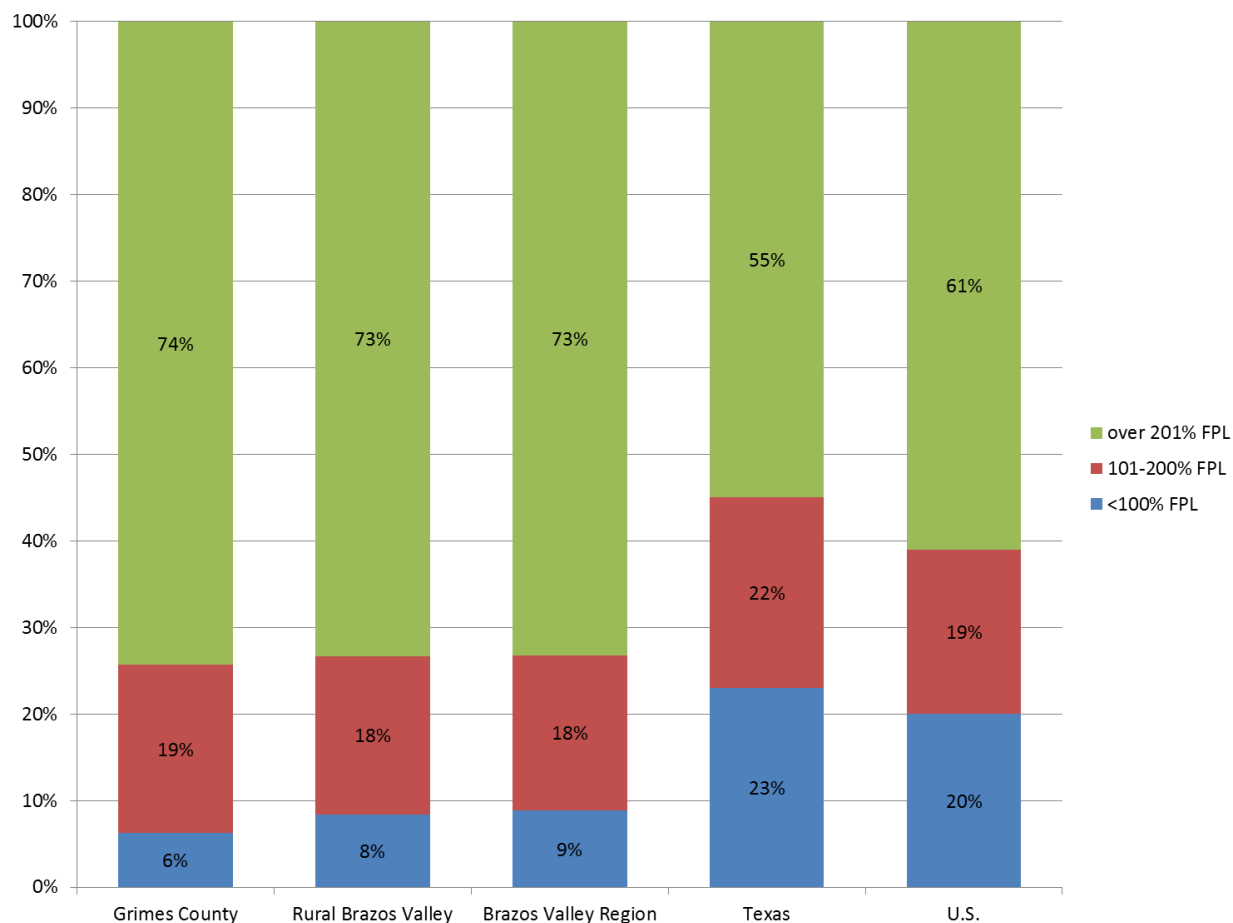
Household Income

Among survey respondents in Grimes County, the median household income was \$70,000 for 2012, which is higher than census estimates for Texas (\$50,920) and the US (\$52,762). This is not unusual for a sample survey, as the low-income are often less likely to be reached or to agree to complete a survey.

The Federal Poverty Guidelines set the federal poverty level (FPL) for 2012 at \$23,050 for a family of four. Among the survey respondents, 6.3 percent reported incomes at or below FPL, with another 19.4 percent between 101 and 200 percent FPL, which is generally considered low-income. The low-income rates are similar to Texas (22%) and the U.S. (19%), while the poverty rates among Grimes County respondents is much lower than the state and national

rates. Figure 5 compares the poverty status for Grimes County survey respondents compared to the rural Brazos Valley counties, the Brazos Valley region, Texas, and the U.S.

Figure 5. Poverty status for survey respondents in Grimes County, rural Brazos Valley counties, Brazos Valley region, Texas, and U.S.⁵



Military Service

With a growing number of veterans and their unique health needs, the survey committee thought it wise to ask about military service. Among survey respondents, 11.1 percent reported ever having served in any branch of the United States Armed Forces, while no one who completed the survey identified themselves as currently serving active duty in the military. Of Grimes County residents who reported having served in the U.S. Armed Forces, 28.9 percent reported serving in an active duty war zone. There are 1,618,413 veterans in Texas, representing approximately six percent of the population.

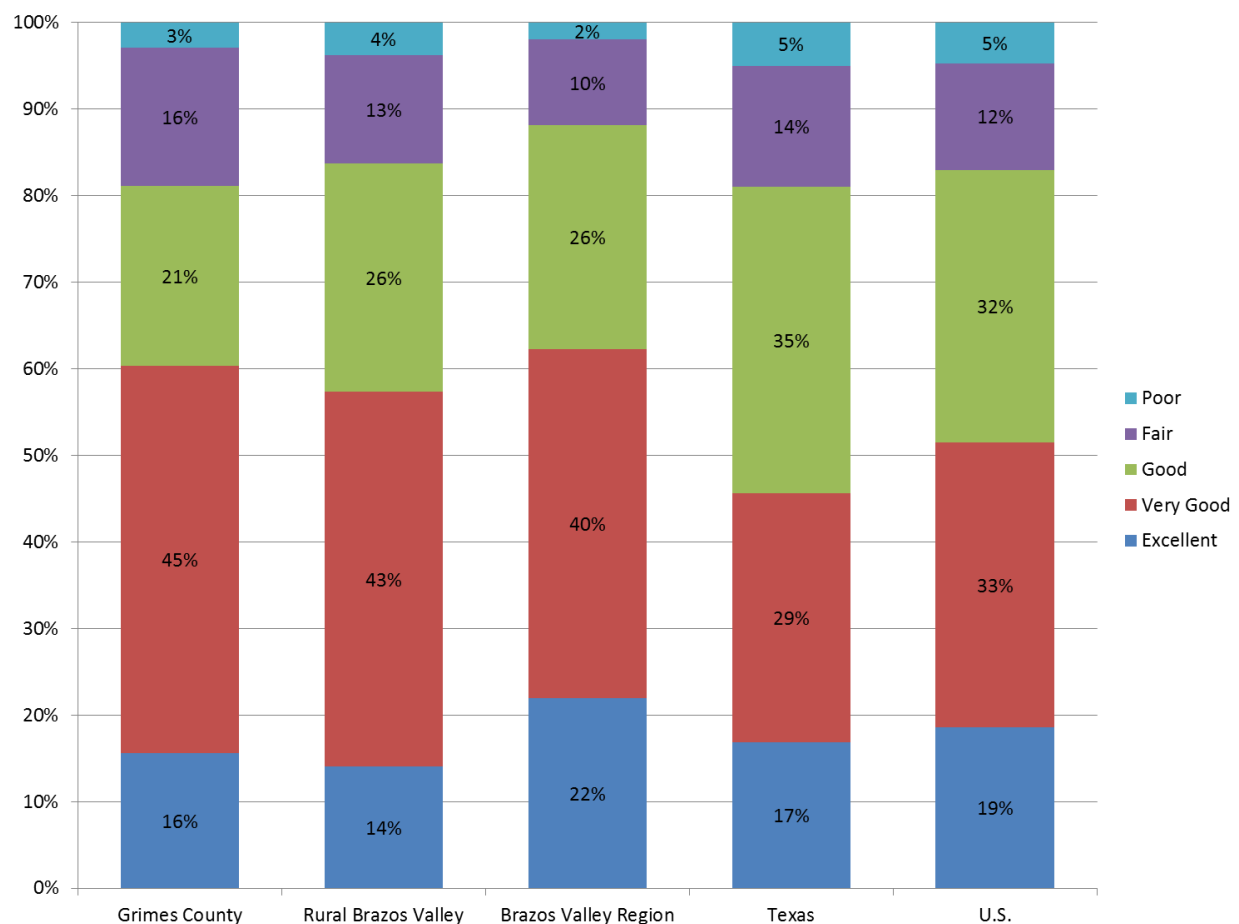
⁵ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48000.html>

Health Status

The first four questions in the survey are taken from the Health Related Quality of Life scale developed and tested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These are simple, but powerful indicators of functional health status and its impact on daily life.

The first question simply asked respondents to rate their health; the possible responses were *excellent*, *very good*, *good*, *fair*, and *poor*. In Grimes County, 15.6 percent of respondents indicated their health was *excellent*, and 44.8 percent said their health was *very good*. In contrast, 16 percent indicated their health was *fair*, and 2.9 percent said their health was *poor*. In comparison to the 2010 health assessment, the proportion reporting their health as *excellent* is twice as high, with similar numbers saying their health was *very good*. Figure 6 compares self-reported health status for Grimes County to the rural Brazos Valley counties, the Brazos Valley region, Texas, and the U.S.

Figure 6. Self-reported health status in Grimes County, rural Brazos Valley counties, Brazos Valley region, Texas, and U.S.⁶



⁶ <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/display.asp?cat=HS&yr=2011&qkey=8001&state=UB>

The second question asked how many days of the past 30 days was the respondent's physical health not good. Among Grimes County respondents, the mean number of poor physical health days was 4.1, which is slightly higher than the region (3.6). Over one-quarter (26.9%) of respondents reported between one and five days of poor physical health in the past month. About seven percent of respondents (7.4%) indicated over 10 days of poor physical health. In contrast, 63.3 percent of Texans reported no days of poor physical health, with a 19.5 percent reporting more than five days of poor physical health each month.

Similar to the previous question, the next question asked how many days of the past 30 days was the respondent's mental health not good. Among Grimes County respondents, the mean number of poor mental health days was 3.9, matching the regional mean. Nearly 20 percent (18.3%) of respondents reported between one and five days of poor mental health in the past month. Furthermore, 16.7 percent indicated more than 10 days of poor mental health, a higher rate than the region (12.6%). In addition, 20.4 percent report having been diagnosed with depression and 21.6 percent with anxiety. The self-reported depression rates are higher than the overall depression rates for Texas (8.6%). Among Texans, 66.3 percent reported no days of poor mental health, and 14.4 percent reported experiencing between one and five days of poor mental health. Given the persistent lack of mental health services available in the region, these numbers are cause for concern.

Feelings of anxiety and depression are also important indicators of residents' mental health. Table 1 shows common problems that residents reported bothering them over the past two weeks.

Table 1. Common mental health problems among Grimes County respondents

Type of Mental Health Problem	Percentage of Grimes County Respondents	Percentage of Brazos County Respondents	Percentage of Brazos Valley Region Respondents
Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	36.7%	44.9%	41.7%
Worrying too much about different things	33.5%	44.2%	42.2%
Trouble relaxing	33.2%	43.2%	41.6%
Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge	31.5%	38.7%	37.2%
Not being able to stop or control worrying	28.9%	31.1%	31.1%
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	23.5%	25.4%	23.7%
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	20.9%	25.1%	25.1%
Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	19.7%	24.7%	25.8%
Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	15.6%	21.2%	19.7%

The fourth question in this set sought to understand the extent to which physical and mental health limited one's daily activities. It asked respondents how many days of the past 30 days did poor physical or mental health keep them from their usual activities. In Grimes County, the mean number of days in which usual activities were limited by poor physical or mental health was 3.1, which is similar to the regional mean (2.9). Nearly one-third of respondents (29.5%) reported some interruption of their usual activities, with 13.8 percent indicating between one and five days, six percent reporting six to 10 days, and 9.7 percent reporting more than 10 days. In comparison, 27.7 percent of Texans reported between one and five days of limited activities and 12.2 percent reported six or more days of limited activities due to poor physical or mental health.

Many residents reported being limited in their activities due to an impairment or health problem. Commonly reported issues are listed in Table 2. Participants could identify more than one impairment; therefore, percentages in the table below are the percentages of the total number of *responses* instead of the percentage of respondents who reported the impairment.

Table 2. Major impairments or health problems among Grimes County responses

Major Impairment or Health Problem	Percentage of Grimes County Responses
Cardiovascular issues (heart problems, hypertension, high blood pressure)	20.0%
Back or neck problems	12.9%
Arthritis/rheumatism	12.4%
Lung/breathing problem	8.2%
Other impairment/problem	7.7%
Depression/anxiety/emotional problems	7.1%
Fractures, bone/joint injury	4.1%

The most commonly reported impairment or health problems were related to cardiovascular health (20%). Other impairments were related to joint and bone health issues—back or neck problems comprised 12.9 percent of the responses, followed by arthritis/rheumatism (12.4%) and fractures (4.1%).

For the given impairments and health problems, the duration of having limited activities varied among survey respondents. Most survey participants (70.5%) did not experience pain that impacted their daily activities during the past 30 days. Of those who did experience pain that impacted activity during the past 30 days, 17.6 percent reported pain for between one and five days, 8.2 percent had pain between six to 10 days, and 14.8 percent reported more than 10 days of pain. Less than one in five participants (16.4%) reported their daily activities were limited for less than one year. Daily activities were reported as limited for one to five years by almost half of respondents (45.5%). Another 11.7 percent reported limitations for the past six to 10 years and 6.8 percent had limitations to their daily activities for more than 10 years.

In the final question about residents' overall health, respondents listed a range days in the past month that they got a sufficient amount of sleep and felt very healthy and full of energy. One-quarter of participants (24%) reported that they felt they had enough rest or sleep every night of the past 30 days. Over thirty percent of participants (31.9%) reported not feeling rested between one and five days in the past month, 8.6 percent reported the same for between six to 10 days, and 14.5 percent reported not having enough rest or sleep for between 11 and 15 days. One in five participants (20.9%) reported not feeling rested for at least half of the days for the past month.

Forty-two percent of participants reporting feeling healthy and full of energy for at least 21 days of the past month and more than one in five participants (22.2%) reported feeling good for 11 to 20 days of the past month. Alarming, nearly one-fifth of participants (20.4%) did not

feel very healthy and full of energy for at least one third of the month, and an additional 15.2 percent reported never feeling healthy or full of energy.

Risk Factors

Several sets of survey questions asked about health behaviors or characteristics that often place individuals at greater risk of disease or injury. The risk factors of interest are those that individuals can sometimes control or manage to prevent development of related illnesses or complications.

Obesity

Being overweight or obese increases an individual's risk for developing many chronic diseases and other conditions such as depression and chronic pain. The way that overweight and obesity is typically assessed is through the calculation of the body mass index (BMI), which is a simple ratio of weight to height (kg/m^2). This measure does not account for individual variations in bone mass or muscle mass, but is a good general indicator of weight status for the population.

The National Institutes of Health have published the following guidelines:

- Underweight = BMI score < 18.5
- Normal weight = BMI score between 18.5 – 24.9
- Overweight = BMI score between 25 – 29.9
- Obese = BMI score between 30 and 34.9
- Morbidly Obese = BMI score \geq 35

In Grimes County, only 29 percent of residents were assessed to be at a normal weight for their height, a lower percentage than the regional rate. Startlingly, 70.3 percent of the Grimes County survey respondents were overweight (33.1%), obese (15.2%) or morbidly obese (22%). Given the number and types of conditions that are related to obesity, these statistics are cause for great concern in this community.

Nutrition

Nutrition is an important aspect of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and overall health. Accordingly, the survey asked questions about individuals' grocery shopping and eating habits.

In Grimes County, 31.7 percent of residents do their grocery shopping within 10 miles of the community where they live; this is less than half of the 76.8 percent reported in the Brazos Valley, and the rate is the second lowest of the rural Brazos Valley counties. The mean distance Grimes County residents travel to buy groceries is 18.5 miles compared to the regional average of 8.9 miles traveled for groceries.

Concerns about the economy have a pronounced impact on residents' overall nutrition. Across Grimes County, 12.9 percent of respondents said that *sometimes* or *often*, the food they bought did not last and they did not have money to get more, and 10.8 percent reported not being able to afford to eat complete meals *sometimes* or *often*. Ten percent reported eating less than they should because there was not enough money for food, while 8.8 percent reported skipping meals because of financial concerns. Grimes County had the highest rate in the Brazos Valley of residents reporting going hungry because there was not enough money for food.

Nearly one in 10 residents (8.1%) reported receiving food from a food pantry or food bank in Grimes County in the past six months compared to 4.7 percent of residents throughout the Brazos Valley.

Physical Activity

Physical activity is also a key aspect of maintaining a healthy weight and good health. The National Institutes of Health recommend 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity each week, in addition to engaging in strengthening exercises twice weekly.

Across Grimes County, only 22.5 percent of respondents meet this recommendation, while 20.8 percent reported they rarely do any physical activity. In comparison to the Brazos Valley regional rates, Grimes County residents are slightly less physically active.

The survey also sought to assess Grimes County residents' sedentary time. In a seven day period, respondents reported sitting an average of 363 minutes (6.1 hours) on weekdays and 282 minutes (4.7 hours) on weekends. Overall, Grimes County residents reported sitting about 30 minutes less in a week on average compared to the region.

In addition to obesity, nutrition, and physical activity, several other behavioral risk factors are key determinants of subsequent health and safety issues.

Cigarette Smoking

Slightly better than the State of Texas (19.2%) and the U.S. (19.3%), 16.5 percent of Grimes County survey respondents report being a *current smoker*, most of whom (92.3%) smoke a pack or less per day. Only 5.7 percent of Grimes County residents reported using other tobacco products, including chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip.

Substance Use & Abuse

When asked about their alcohol consumption habits, close to half of Grimes County survey respondents (43.4%) reported that they do not drink alcohol in a typical week. One-third (35.2%) said that they typically consume one to five alcoholic drinks in a week; one in 10 (9.5%) reported consuming more than 10 drinks in a week. Five percent of respondents reported having driven after drinking at least two drinks in the past month.

In the past 30 days (3.2%) and in the past year (8.8%), few Grimes County residents reported using prescription medications for nonmedical reasons or not as prescribed. Reported rates of consumption of marijuana and other illegal drugs were less than one percent across the county in the past 30 days.

Chronic Diseases and Conditions

Survey respondents were asked to report if they had ever been diagnosed with a list of chronic diseases/condition by a health care provider. The six most frequently reported conditions for Grimes County survey respondents were:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1) Hypertension (high blood pressure): | 39.4% |
| 2) Overweight/obesity: | 38.5% |
| 3) Arthritis or rheumatism: | 32.2% |
| 4) High Cholesterol: | 31.2% |
| 5) Anxiety | 21.6% |
| 6) Depression: | 20.4% |

Only 38.5 percent of respondents reported being told by a health care professional that they were overweight or obese, yet when calculating BMI from reported heights and weights of respondents who had not been diagnosed as such, 53.9 percent of respondents are overweight or obese. Almost half (46.1%) of undiagnosed respondents were overweight, 3.9 percent were obese, and 3.9 percent were morbidly obese. This raises serious concern regarding doctor-patient communication with respect to healthy weight, overweight, and obesity.

Grimes County, compared to the Brazos Valley region, reported slightly higher rates of a number of chronic diseases common among older adults, including hypertension, high cholesterol, congestive heart failure, stroke, and arthritis. The higher instances of these diseases are not surprising given the larger proportion of obesity and older adults in Grimes County compared to the region. Table 3 provides the rates of several commonly reported chronic conditions, with comparisons to the region, and the U.S.

Table 3. Chronic condition rates for Grimes County, Brazos Valley and U.S.

Disease/Condition	Grimes County	Brazos Valley	U.S. ^{7,8,9}
Anxiety	21.6%	23.7%	17%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	32.2%	19.9%	22%
Asthma	18.6%	17.3%	13%
Cancer	5.9%	6.0%	8%
Congestive Heart Failure	3.8%	2.9%	2%
Depression	20.4%	24.6%	12%
Diabetes (type 2)	13.1%	8.4%	9%
Emphysema/COPD	9.4%	5.5%	2%
High Cholesterol	39.4%	30.3%	13%
Hypertension	39.4%	33.9%	24%
Overweight/ Obesity ¹⁰	70.3%	64.5%	62%
Stroke	3.6%	1.8%	3%

The survey asked residents if their health care provider had ever referred them to a chronic disease management program. The majority of respondents (89.5%) said no, and only 9.3 percent reported attending a program to prevent or manage a chronic illness.

Preventive Screenings

The survey also collected information regarding individuals' participation in recommended preventive screenings. Figure 7 summarizes information regarding those who meet general preventive health guidelines.

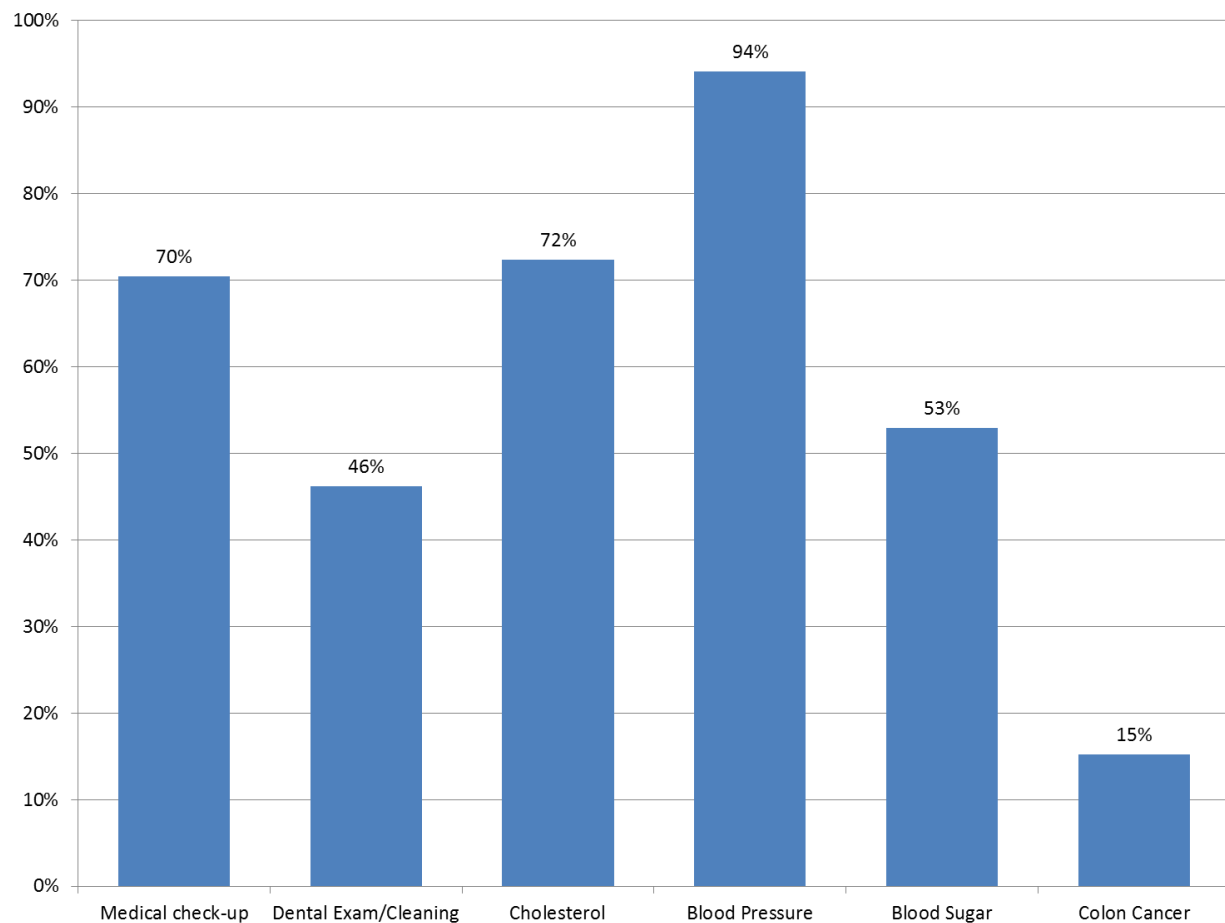
⁷ http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_242.pdf.

⁸ <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db92.pdf>

⁹ http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/NCVDSS_DTM/LocationSummary.aspx?state=United+States

¹⁰ Overweight/obesity percentages reported in Table 3 are calculated from reported height and weight of survey participants NOT the percentage who reported being diagnosed by a health care professional.

Figure 7. Percent of survey respondents meeting preventive guidelines in Grimes County



For women, a test for cervical cancer (“Pap test”) is recommended every three years beginning at 21 years of age. In Grimes County, 50.8 percent of women report having had a Pap test in the past year, and 20.8 percent indicated their last Pap test between one and three years ago; 11.3 percent said their last Pap test was more than five years ago. Among survey respondents 40 years of age and older, 56.2 percent report having had a mammogram in the past year.

Health Insurance

The *Healthy People 2020* goal for health insurance was that by 2020, every resident would have some type of health insurance. The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act¹¹ was intended to advance this goal, but currently, many residents are still uninsured. Eighteen percent of Americans under the age of 65 lack health insurance¹², and Texas ranks last among the 50 states in access to care, with a 24 percent overall uninsurance rate¹³.

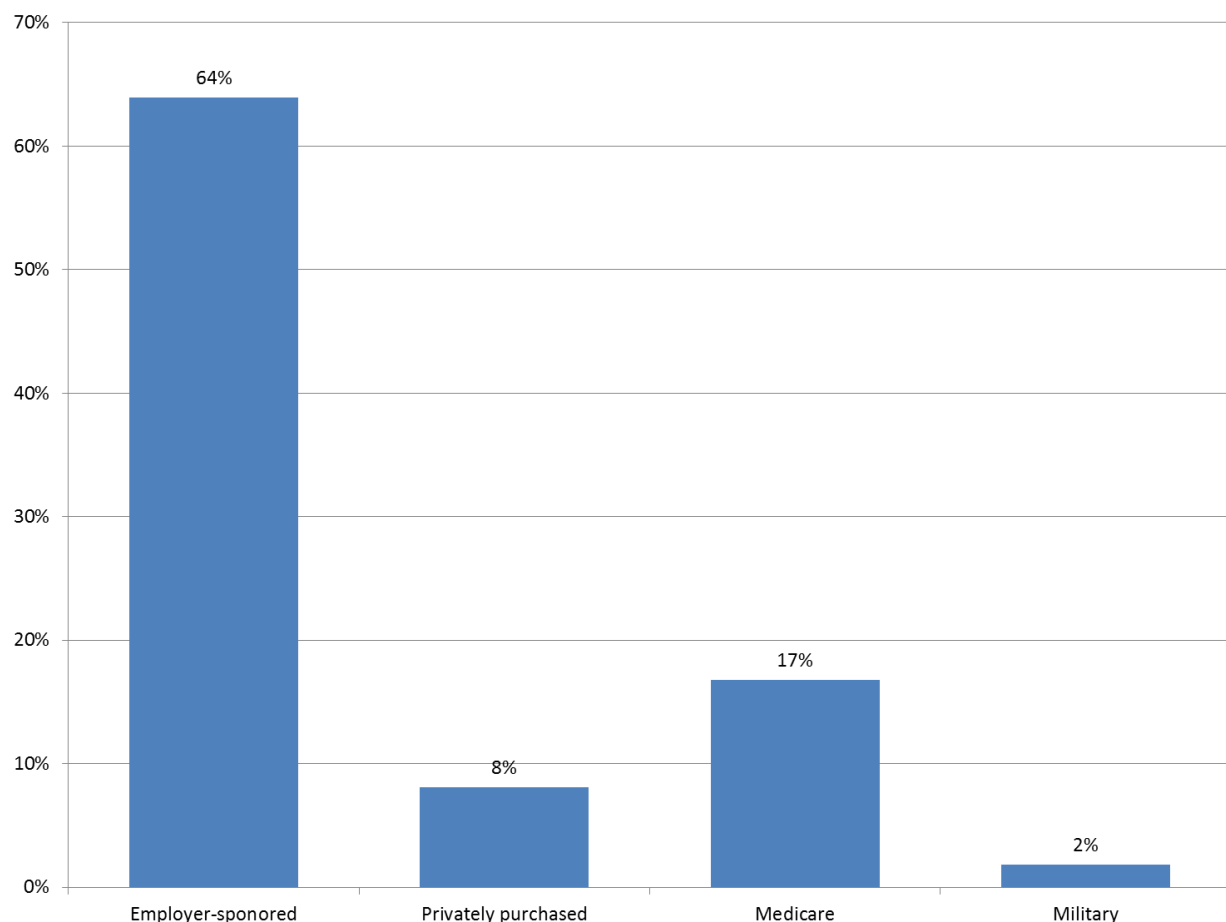
¹¹ *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (HR 3590) signed into law on March 22, 2010

¹² <http://kff.org/state-category/health-coverage-uninsured/>

¹³ <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/>

The survey question “What type of health insurance do you have?” allowed for multiple response options to be selected. Eight percent of Grimes County respondents indicated that they did not have health insurance of any kind, a slightly lower rate than the region overall. Another eight percent indicated that they had been uninsured at least one month in the past three years. Figure 8 displays the types of health insurance coverage in Grimes County.

Figure 8. Health insurance coverage in Grimes County¹⁴



As illustrated in Figure 8, 63.9 percent of survey respondents reported being covered by a health insurance plan through a current or former employer or union. Those who rely on Medicare only for health insurance comprise 4.9 percent of the Grimes County respondents, with 11.9 percent using Medicare plus another insurance.

Health Resources and Medical Home

Issues with access to health care go deeper than whether one is covered by health insurance or not. The availability of providers and services and the ability to get to those services also

¹⁴ Note that the percentages add up to more than 100 percent because some individuals are covered by more than one plan.

influence access. In Grimes County, 40.6 percent of respondents rated their access to health care as excellent, a slightly higher percentage than the rural Brazos Valley counties (36.9%).

Outpatient Care

The vast majority of Grimes County survey respondents (90.4%) reported having a provider they considered their regular health care provider. Although some did not indicate having a regular health care provider, 85.3 percent reported a private doctor's office or clinic as the place where they usually go for medical care. For outpatient care, 5.4 percent said they visited a community health center, and a combined three percent named the emergency room of a hospital, an urgent care clinic, a Veterans Affairs clinic, or the health department as a place they usually go for medical care. Of those respondents without insurance, the percent with a medical home dropped to 77.3 percent, and those with a regular health care provider dropped to 76.2 percent. Nationwide, 53 percent of uninsured adults had no usual source of care¹⁵.

Health Care Utilization

During the past 12 months, Grimes County residents accessed a range of venues for their health care. A majority of residents (87.8%) reported using a doctor's office or clinic for their health care. In the same time frame, 16.4 percent of respondents reported visiting a hospital emergency room for their own medical care. The most common reason given for visiting an emergency room was having an injury or being very sick (14%).

The survey also asked about residents' health literacy and preparation for medical visits. Among Grimes County respondents, 21.2 percent *fairly often*, *very often*, or *always* prepare a list of questions for their health care provider. Most residents appear to communicate well with their health care providers, asking questions about medications and treatment, and discussing personal problems (see Table 4).

Table 4. Communication with health care providers among Grimes County respondents

Behavior	Never/ Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often/Very Often/Always
Ask questions about medications	17.3%	13.6%	69.1%
Ask questions about treatment	8.1%	16.9%	75.1%
Discuss personal problems	10.8%	17.5%	71.8%
Prepare a list of questions for health care provider	49.9%	28.9%	21.2%

¹⁵ <http://kff.org/health-reform/fact-sheet/the-uninsured-and-the-difference-health-insurance/>

Delayed Care

With numerous barriers that inhibit access to care, the survey asked respondents about occasions in which they delay seeking the care they need. Specified reasons for delaying care included cost, not being able to miss work, and not having transportation. The most common reason given for delaying care among Grimes County respondents was cost. In Grimes County, one-third of respondents (34.4%) report delaying seeing their health care provider, and 45.1 percent put off obtaining dental care. Twelve percent of respondents indicated that they had experienced times when they had to choose between buying food, paying rent or bills, and paying for medications.

Caregiving

Many residents in Grimes County act as caregivers, providing regular care or assistance to a friend or family member at home who has a long-term health problem or disability. During the past month, 19 percent of residents in Grimes County reported providing care for at least one person. This is similar to the rates across the rural Brazos Valley region (17.1%).

The majority of the people being cared for were between the ages of 45 and 64 (70.6%); 24.6 percent of respondents reported caring for someone over the age of 65. No Grimes County respondents reported caregiving for a child between the ages of one and 17. Across the county, 68.7 percent reported caring for a parent or spouse's parent. Other relationships between caregiver and the person they cared for included caring for a spouse (16.8%), child or grandchild (4.8%), and non-relative (4.8%).

The survey also asked caregivers how many hours they provided care weekly, how long they had provided care, the areas in which the person they provide care for most requires help, and how much difficulty they faced in caregiving. Most caregivers reported providing care between one and two days per week (91.2%). Four percent of caregivers provided care between three and six days per week and 4.3 percent provided care every day of the week. The vast majority of participants had cared for someone for less than five years (49.3% reported one to five years; 40.3% reported less than one year). Six percent of caregivers reported caring for someone for more than 10 years. Caregivers most commonly reported the person they cared for needing assistance in feeling anxious or depressed (39.1%), taking care of themselves (23.9%) with respect to activities of daily living (for example, bathing, eating, and getting dressed), and with mobility (19.6%). The Grimes County rates of caregivers requiring help with feeling anxious or depressed were the highest in the region, more than double the next closest response rate.

Across the county, survey participants reported on caregiving's impact on personal finances, time, family, work, relationships, creating stress and health problems. Table 5 displays the reported impact of caregiving on the life of Grimes County resident caregivers.

Table 5. Reported difficulties associated with caregiving

Difficulties associated with caregiving	A lot	Some	A little
Affects family relationships	11.3%	65.4%	23.2%
Creates/aggravates health problems	6.1%	30.2%	63.7%
Creates stress	58.9%	27.3%	13.8%
Financial burden	57.4%	18.1%	24.6%
Interferes with work	54.1%	11.2%	34.7%
Not enough time for family	10.9%	62.2%	26.9%
Not enough time for self	10.4%	59.8%	29.8%
Other difficulty	54.6%	0.0%	45.4%

Grimes County respondents reported the highest levels of stress, work interference, and financial difficulties arising from caregiving duties in the region.

Transportation

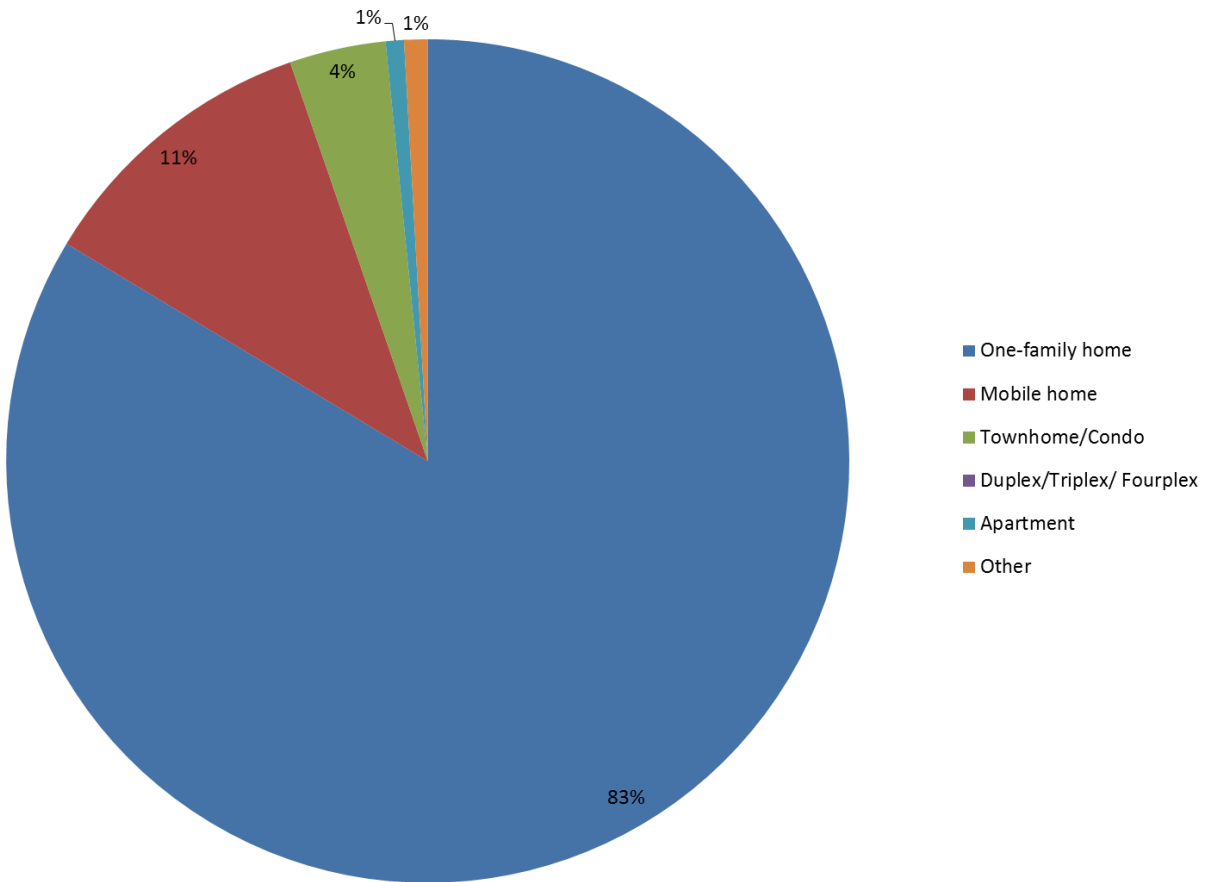
Transportation continues to pose a formidable challenge for all segments of the population and can be a significant barrier when it comes to accessing health care and related services. This issue was mentioned in every community discussion group, regardless of community sector represented.

Among Grimes County survey respondents, the median travel distance to medical care was 15 miles, and median travel time was 20 minutes. For dental care, the median distance was 20 miles, and travel time was 25 minutes. To fill a prescription, the median distance was 12 miles, and travel time was 15 minutes.

Housing

For the first time, the 2013 survey asked residents about the condition of their housing. Grimes County respondents reported primarily living in a one-family home (83.7%), followed by a mobile home (11.1%), and less than five percent combined living in a townhome or condominium (3.7%) or an apartment building with more than four units (0.7%). Figure 9 illustrates the housing situation for Grimes County.

Figure 9. Type of housing in Grimes County



Residents reported their buildings' estimated ages as well as how long they had lived there. Most residents (47.3%) lived in a building built since 2000. Additionally, the condition of respondents' homes varied. Over one in five residents (29.6%) reported living in a building constructed prior to 1980, and almost half of residents (53.1%) have lived in their current home for less than 10 years. When asked if their residence had experienced a severe problem in the past 12 months, survey respondents described a range of issues listed in Table 6. Across the county, the most reported problem with residents' homes was related to plumbing, heating/cooling, or electricity (going more than 24 hours without service).

Table 6. Severe housing problems reported in Grimes County

Housing problems	Percentage of Grimes County Respondents
Plumbing, heating/cooling, electricity	24.4%
Roof problems (such as holes, leaks, or sagging)	12.7%
Mice, rats, or cockroaches	10.8%
Broken plaster or peeling paint (interior)	6.7%
Mold	6.6%
Broken windows	4.9%
Holes in the floor	2.2%

Community Services

Discussion regarding the health of a community should never be limited to only medical services or health insurance. Numerous social and community issues impact health, and various organizations exist in the community to address these issues.

The current survey included a set of questions asking about individuals' need for and utilization of a broad range of services with response options of *did not need*, *needed and used*, and *needed but did not use*. Although the survey did not gather information on the reasons why people did not get the services they needed, information about needs is still useful.

The top five community services needed (this included *needed and used* and *needed but did not use*) as reported by survey respondents were:

- 1) Care of a medical specialist (33.4%);
- 2) Financial assistance or welfare (20.2%);
- 3) Work-related or employment services (15.8%);
- 4) Utility assistance (11.1%); and
- 5) Food, meal, and nutrition services (8.8%).

While identifying needs is important, examining gaps in service delivery when people do not get the needed services is also critical. These data offer a snapshot of the top unmet needs in Grimes County. Table 7 summarizes the data of those who needed a service but could not get it.

Table 7. Unmet needs in Grimes County

Service Category	Percent Who Needed and <u>DID NOT</u> Get
Child care services (such as assistance with payments for child care or child care subsidy)	92.3%
Food, meal, and nutrition services (such as Meals-on-Wheels)	77.3%
Information and referral services (such as 211)	75.0%
Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization	73.7%
Utility assistance	71.4%
Affordable after school or summer day programs for children	66.7%
Alcohol/Drug abuse services	66.7%
Respite care	66.7%
Services for the disabled or their families	66.7%
Financial assistance or welfare	54.9%

Community Characteristics

Specific community characteristics can influence perceptions of safety and the likelihood for community members to engage in activities outside their home. Grimes County respondents varied in their perception in how closely their fellow community members shared their values. Almost two-thirds (62.5%) of Grimes County residents felt that their community had shared values. In comparison to their regional neighbors, Grimes County residents reported slightly lower levels of trust among fellow community members, with 36.6 percent saying that most people can be trusted, compared to 39.8 percent of respondents in the rural Brazos Valley counties. Table 8 summarizes these perceived characteristics of Grimes County, listing the percentage of respondents who reported *agree* or *strongly agree* with each statement.

Table 8. Grimes County community characteristics

Community Characteristics	Percentage of Grimes County Respondents
People are willing to help their neighbors	89.8%
This is a close knit community	77.8%
Neighbors would help someone who fell	63.7%
Many people are physically active in local neighborhoods	43.0%
Most people can be trusted in the community	36.6%
Problems in neighborhoods make it hard to go outside and walk	40.0%
People are concerned they will be a victim of crime if they walk/bike in their neighborhood	6.9%

Community Issues

Survey respondents were asked to rate the severity of a list of community issues, on a scale ranging from *not at all a problem* to a *very serious problem*. In Grimes County, the top 10 issues that emerged were (in order of perceived severity):

- 1) Poor or inconvenient public transportation (49.3%);
- 2) Abuse of drugs, including prescription drugs (36.6%);
- 3) Poverty (35.6%);
- 4) Alcohol abuse (32.8%);
- 5) Risky youth behaviors (such as alcohol use, drug use, truancy, etc.) (32.4%);
- 6) Unemployment (31.2%);
- 7) Teen pregnancy (28.7%);
- 8) School drop-out rate (26.4%);
- 9) Availability of affordable housing (25.9%); and
- 10) Lack of jobs for unskilled workers (25.1%).

Community Advice

Community discussion group participants were asked to offer advice for anyone attempting to address issues in Grimes County. The following recommendations were offered in most of the discussions:

- **Get to know the community.** Learn about the community and its history. Get to know people and be inclusive. Reach out to the Navasota City Council and Chamber of Commerce to get input for new businesses. Consider the layout of the county when planning.
- **Leverage resources.** If possible, work with existing services in order to make the most of your resources. Use volunteers and coordinate services and activities with community partners.
- **Communicate.** Communicate early and often. Engage the community through media and word of mouth. Talk to key stakeholders to spread information.

Regional analysis yielded a set of key findings that are presented in the regional Executive Report. It is important to understand that the data contained in this supplemental report should be considered as a whole; that is, the statistics should be interpreted with the insights offered by the community discussion groups. These reports are intended to be utilized for planning and resource development to benefit all members of the community.