

2013 RHP 17 Regional Health Assessment

A Community Snapshot:

RHP 17



Community Description

Throughout the nine county region, participants described their communities as great places to live that are filled with friendly, giving, and supportive community members. They mentioned that the region provides the benefits of small town living while having access to the bigger city amenities. They also described the community as traditional and rich in history. Many said the region is growing and changing with an increase in the older adult population, since the area is attractive for many retirees. Residents also cited an increase in diversity with a growing Hispanic population. Other regional characteristics included being close knit, a wonderful place to raise children and have a family, and a good place to have a business.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

Although the obesity rate in the region appears to be leveling off, the existing rate of obesity is cause for concern, as well as the prevalence of chronic diseases related to obesity.

- ⇒ Across the region, 63.3 percent of adult residents are overweight or obese. The rate for morbid obesity is 13.3 percent.
- ⇒ Across the region, several chronic disease exceed the national rates.

High cholesterol and hypertension rates for RHP 17 are substantially higher than the national rates.

Disease	RHP 17 (Rural rates)	U.S.
Depression	21.1% (17.9%)	12%
Emphysema/COPD	4.7% (6.8%)	2%
High cholesterol	33.2% (33.5%)	13%
Hypertension	32.8% (36.6%)	24%

Public transportation was described as unreliable, unaffordable, and inadequate in every community.

Transportation

Transportation is a significant barrier to access to care for residents and to economic growth for communities.

- ⇒ In every community, the public transportation system was described as unreliable, unaffordable, and inadequate.
- ⇒ A third of all rural residents (32.9%) travel more than 20 miles to obtain medical care.
- ⇒ The mean distance to medical care is 13.7 miles— ranging from 10.5 miles in Brazos County compared to 42 miles in Leon County.

Population Growth

Communities throughout the region are recognizing rapid population growth without the infrastructure and capacity necessary to accommodate it.

- ⇒ Many residents say that the infrastructure (roads, buildings, utilities) in their community is aging or does not have the capacity to accommodate the growing population.
- ⇒ Growth in some communities is in the population, but not in the business sector to provide jobs and local resources for the increasing population. This is causing increased socioeconomic disparities, particularly in rural communities.

Residents, community leaders, and service providers all expressed a concern for the unmet needs of older adults.

Resources for Older Adults

As the population grows, the proportion of older adults is increasing, and the current resources and services available for the older adult population and their caregivers are insufficient.

In community discussion groups, EVERY county, residents, community leaders, and service providers expressed concern for the unmet needs of older adults:

- ⇒ Gaps in coverage/services
- ⇒ Transportation services
- ⇒ Cost of available services
- ⇒ Lack of adult day care and respite care for caretakers
- ⇒ Inadequate financial resources forcing choice among basic needs

Economy

The state of the economy is making it difficult for families to maintain financial stability.

- ⇒ Many communities are recognizing the need for more local opportunities for vocational training to enable residents to find employment.
- ⇒ Unemployment and under employment places families in situations where they cannot afford to meet their basic needs.

Youth Risk Behaviors

Residents are concerned about the risky behaviors of young people in their communities.

- ⇒ Across the region, residents indicated that there is a lack of recreational opportunities for youth and adolescents.
- ⇒ Residents feel that having few organized recreational activities leaves youth with idle time that contributes to participation in risky behaviors and crime.

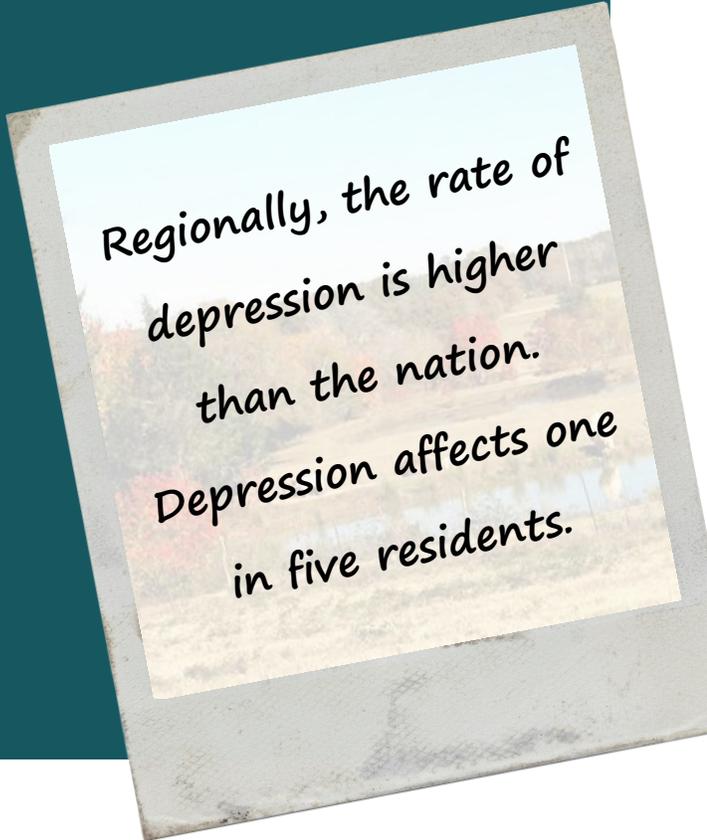
Mental Health

Mental health needs continue to exceed the resources and services currently available, and many communities lack local mental health services altogether. Often accompanying mental health issues, alcohol and substance abuse are significant concerns that many residents feel are unacknowledged and unaddressed.

- ⇒ Across the region, 21.1 percent reported being diagnosed with depression, and 20.4 percent reported being diagnosed with anxiety.
- ⇒ Nearly half of all residents report having at least one poor mental health day in the past month; 10 percent reported more than 10 poor mental health days.
- ⇒ One-quarter of residents in the region (25.4%) feel that alcohol abuse is a serious problem or a very serious problem.
- ⇒ Almost one-third of those surveyed (29.6%) feel that illegal drug use in the region is a serious problem or a very serious problem.



Across the region, at least 2/3 of respondents in each county identified youth risk behaviors as a key community issue.



Regionally, the rate of depression is higher than the nation. Depression affects one in five residents.



Across the region, those who were uninsured reported less access to primary medical care.

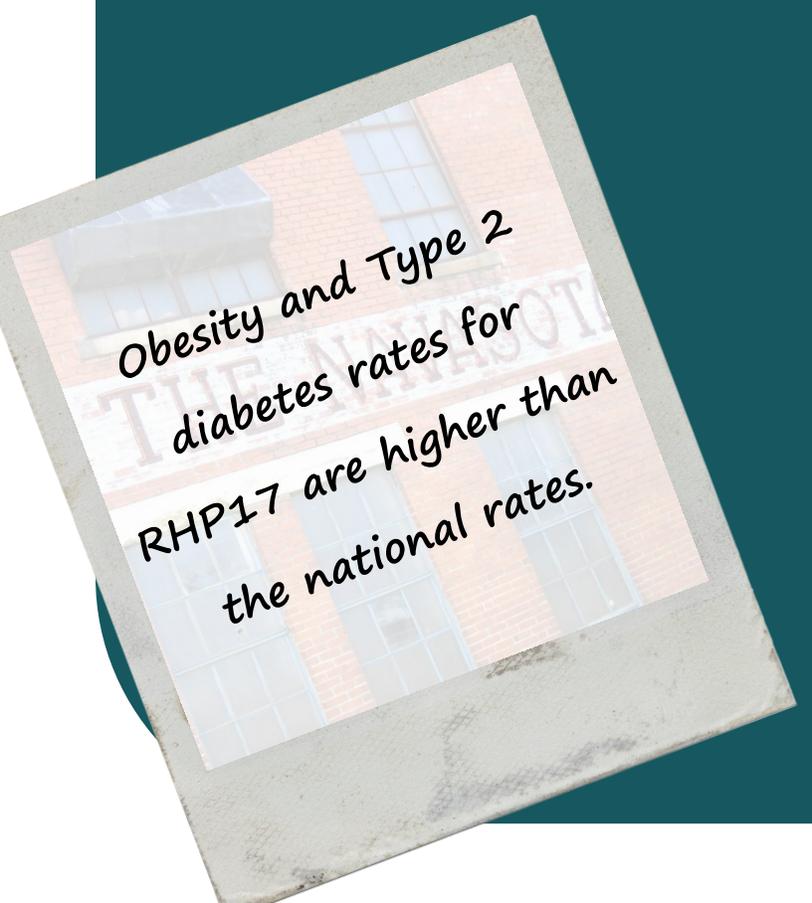
Disparities

The rural communities, the low-income, and those of a minority population continue to face substantial disparities in access to resources and services, as well as in health outcomes.

- ⇒ Across the region, a greater proportion of those without a high school education reported fair or poor health status.
- ⇒ A greater proportion of those who were uninsured did not have a regular health provider, delayed medical care because of cost, and rated their access to care as fair, poor, or very poor.

Communication

- ⇒ Every community expressed concern with communication and outreach, particularly in its inability to reach the growing Hispanic community.
- ⇒ Residents feel that there is not enough communication between them and the decision-makers in their communities.
- ⇒ Communication among organizations that provide services is not organized; many do not know what other organizations provide.
- ⇒ Community leaders see a need for better information distribution about available services to those who may need them.



Obesity and Type 2 diabetes rates for RHP17 are higher than the national rates.

Community Advice

- ⇒ Do your homework. Residents emphasized the importance of knowing the community, its history, and learning the community values.
- ⇒ Communicate. Efforts should be communicated early, often, and to the entire community. Utilize word of mouth and local media outlets.
- ⇒ Be inclusive and engage the community. Residents highlighted the importance of including the entire community and finding ways to reach those who might not be well-connected. Get involved locally and listen to the feedback given.
- ⇒ Collaborate and leverage resources. Work together and build partnerships, use existing initiatives to maximize efficiency.

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A Community Snapshot: Brazos Valley



Community Description

The Brazos Valley is a seven-county region including Brazos , Burleson , Grimes , Leon , Madison , Robertson , and Washington Counties. Throughout the Brazos Valley, discussion group participants said that their community is friendly with giving and generous attitudes and a close-knit atmosphere. Residents enjoy the centrally-located region that offers them easy access to the amenities of larger cities. The Brazos Valley continues to grow, and with this growth many communities have seen a rapid influx of older adults, particularly retirees. The region is also recognizing a growing Hispanic population. The communities in the Brazos Valley are known for having deep-rooted histories and traditions, with a strong foundation in their faith.

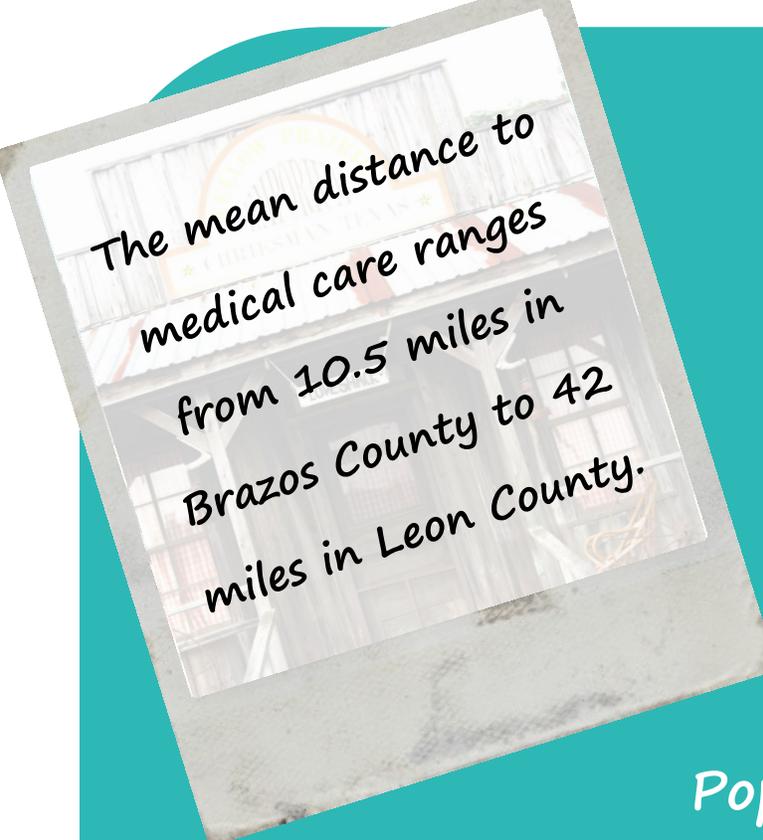
Obesity & Chronic Disease

Although the obesity rate in the Brazos Valley appears to be leveling off, the existing rate of obesity is cause for concern, as well as the prevalence of chronic diseases related to obesity.

- ⇒ Across the Brazos Valley, 64.5 percent of adult residents are overweight or obese. The rate of morbid obesity is 14.7 percent.
- ⇒ Across the region, the rates of several chronic diseases far exceed the national rates.

Disease	RHP 17 (Rural rates)	U.S.
Anxiety	23.7% (21.9%)	17%
Depression	24.6% (20.0%)	12%
Emphysema/COPD	5.4% (7.5%)	2%
High Cholesterol	30.3% (37.0%)	13%
Hypertension	33.9% (41.5%)	24%

The rate of depression in the Brazos Valley is twice the national rate.



The mean distance to medical care ranges from 10.5 miles in Brazos County to 42 miles in Leon County.

Transportation

Transportation is a significant barrier to access to care for residents and to economic growth for communities.

- ⇒ In every community, the public transportation system was described as unreliable, unaffordable, and inadequate.
- ⇒ Forty-three percent of rural residents travel more than 20 minutes to obtain medical care.
- ⇒ The mean distance to medical care is 13.7 miles— ranging from 10.5 miles in Brazos County compared to 42 miles in Leon County.

Population Growth

Communities throughout the region are recognizing rapid population growth without the infrastructure and capacity necessary to accommodate it.

- ⇒ Many residents say that the infrastructure (roads, buildings, utilities) in their community is aging or does not have the capacity to accommodate the growing population.
- ⇒ Growth in some communities is in the population, but not in the business sector to provide jobs and local resources for the increasing population. This is causing increased socioeconomic disparities, particularly in rural communities.



Residents, leaders, and service providers all expressed a concern for the unmet needs of older adults and their caregivers.

Resources for Older Adults

As the population grows, the proportion of older adults is increasing, and the current resources and services available for the older adult population and their caregivers are insufficient.

In community discussion groups in EVERY county, residents, community leaders, and service providers expressed concern for the unmet needs of older adults:

- ⇒ Gaps in coverage/services
- ⇒ Transportation services
- ⇒ Cost of available services
- ⇒ Lack of adult day care and respite care for caretakers
- ⇒ Inadequate financial resources forcing choice among basic needs

Economy

Although slowly improving, the state of the economy continues to be a challenge for families to maintain financial stability.

- ⇒ Many communities recognize the need for more local vocational training to enable residents to find employment.
- ⇒ Unemployment and underemployment places families in situations where they cannot afford to meet their basic needs.

Youth Risk Behaviors

Residents are concerned about the risky behaviors of young people in their communities.

- ⇒ Across the Brazos Valley, residents indicated that there is a lack of recreational opportunities for youth and adolescents.
- ⇒ Residents feel that having few organized recreational activities leaves youth with idle time that contributes to participation in risky behaviors and crime.

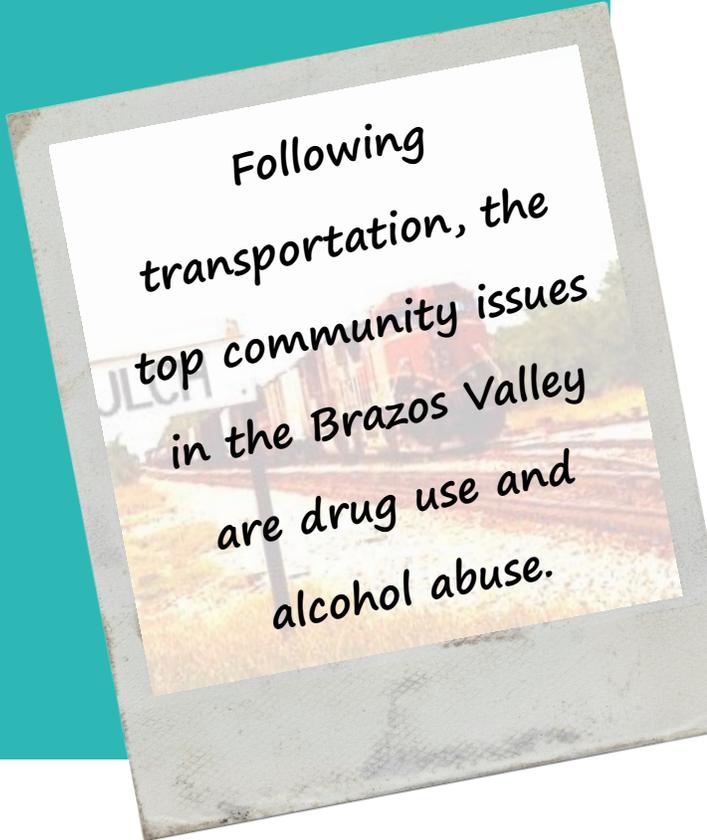
Mental Health

Mental health needs continue to exceed the resources and services currently available, and many communities lack local mental health services altogether. Often accompanying mental health issues, alcohol and substance abuse are significant concerns that many residents feel are unacknowledged and unaddressed.

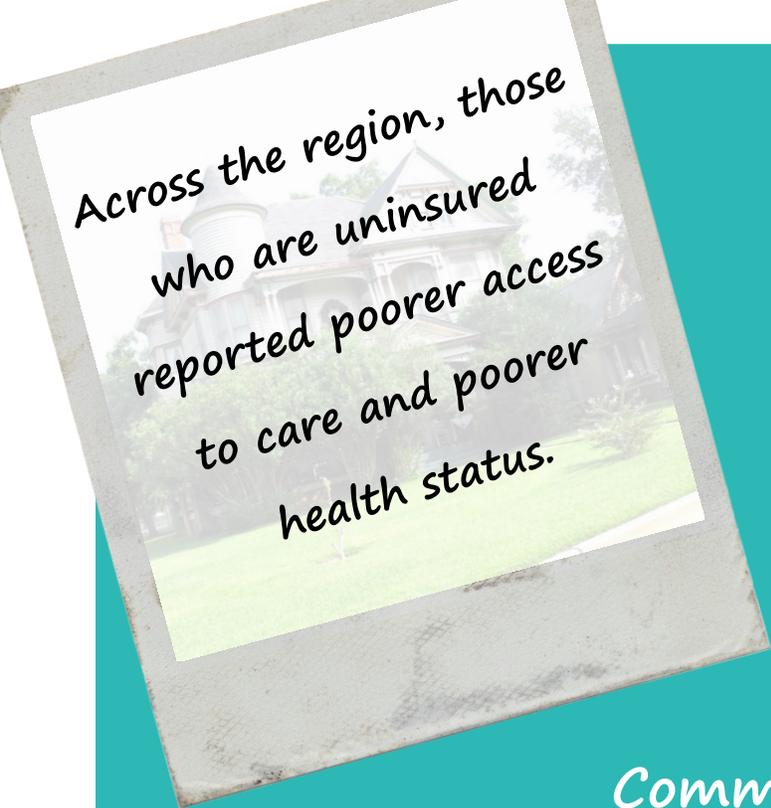
- ⇒ Across the region, 24.6 percent reported being diagnosed with depression, and 23.7 percent reported being diagnosed with anxiety.
- ⇒ One-third of residents in the region (32.2%) feel that alcohol abuse is a serious problem or a very serious problem.
- ⇒ Over one-third of those surveyed (34.9%) feel that illegal drug use in the region is a serious problem or a very serious problem.



With a growing population, many Brazos Valley communities recognize the need for more vocational training.



Following transportation, the top community issues in the Brazos Valley are drug use and alcohol abuse.



Across the region, those who are uninsured reported poorer access to care and poorer health status.

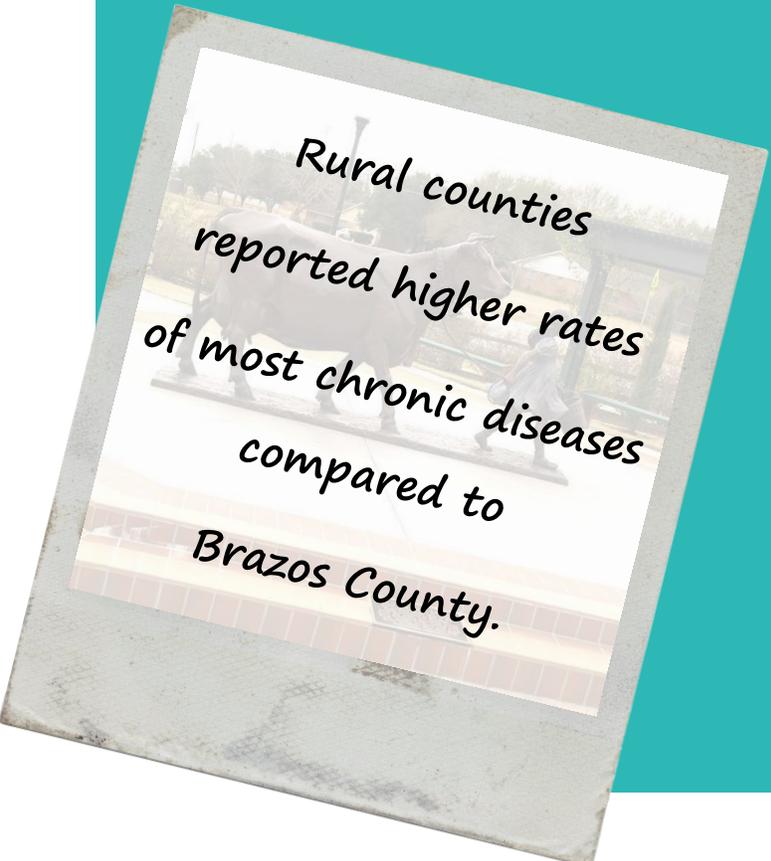
Disparities

The rural communities, the low-income, and those in minority populations continue to face substantial disparities in access to resources and services, as well as in health outcomes.

- ⇒ Across the region, a greater proportion of those below the federal poverty level reported *fair* or *poor* health status.
- ⇒ A greater proportion of those who were uninsured did not have a regular health provider, delayed medical care because of cost, and rated their access to care as fair, poor, or very poor.

Communication

- ⇒ Every community expressed concern with communication and outreach, particularly in its inability to reach the growing Hispanic community.
- ⇒ Residents feel that there is not enough communication between them and the decision-makers in their communities.
- ⇒ Communication among organizations that provide services is not organized; many do not know what other organizations provide.
- ⇒ Community leaders see a need for better information distribution about available services to those who may need them.



Rural counties reported higher rates of most chronic diseases compared to Brazos County.

Community Advice

- ⇒ **Get to know the community.** Learn about the history of the community and know what the community values.
- ⇒ **Communication.** Communicate your efforts early and update the community often. Use multiple ways to reach people. Be inclusive in your efforts.
- ⇒ **Collaborate and leverage resources.** Don't duplicate, but expand services and leverage resources. Focus on sustainability and ensure that the service or resources will remain at the end of your project.

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A Community Snapshot:

Brazos County



Community Description

Brazos County residents see their community as a great place to raise a family with a friendly and supportive environment. Residents said the area is diverse, with growing population of both younger and older adults, which provides a strong volunteer base for civic activities and enhances the community's philanthropic efforts. The county's stable economy has buffered some of the economic downturn felt in other areas of the country. Local residents also said the university offers a unique aspect to the community through its strong sense of tradition related to school activities.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Brazos County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with hypertension, depression, high cholesterol, anxiety, asthma, and arthritis/rheumatism.

Of the seven Brazos Valley counties, Brazos County reported the lowest rates of *congestive heart failure, high cholesterol, stroke, diabetes, and arthritis*. However, Brazos County had the highest rate of asthma in the Brazos Valley region.

Brazos County
had the highest
rate of asthma in
the Brazos Valley
region.

Disease/Condition	Brazos County
Overweight/Obesity	61.0%
Hypertension	29.5%
Depression	27.3%
High Cholesterol	26.3%
Anxiety	24.7%
Asthma	19.6%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	14.6%

Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Brazos County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

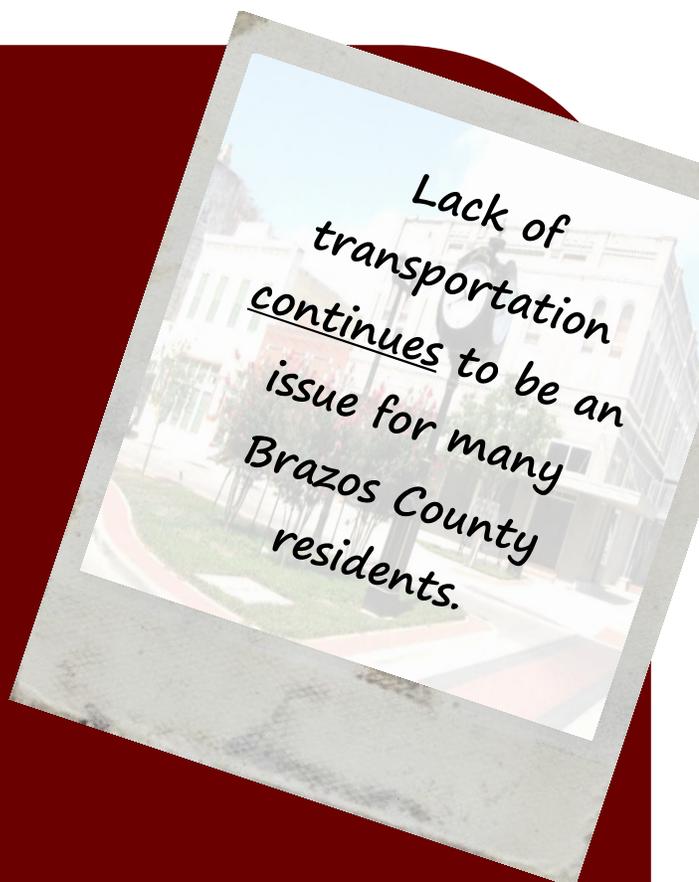
1. Illegal drug use (30.7%)
2. Alcohol abuse (29.3%)
3. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (27.4%)
4. Risky youth behaviors (such as alcohol use, drug use, truancy, etc.; 26.9%)
5. Teen pregnancy (24.4%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Poverty, economic disparities, and racial tension
- ⇒ Underemployment
- ⇒ Lack of vocational training, particularly in fields like technology
- ⇒ Lack of access to affordable primary and specialty care
- ⇒ Need for behavioral health facilities and specialists
- ⇒ Inadequate resources and services for the growing population of older adults and their caregivers
- ⇒ Lack of affordable, healthy food and healthy school lunch options



The needs of respondents in Brazos County continue to exceed the resources available.



Lack of transportation continues to be an issue for many Brazos County residents.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Childcare assistance services (72.6%)
2. Utility assistance (69.4%)
3. Food, meal, and nutrition services (68.8%)
4. Literacy training, GED, or English as a second language courses (59.6%)
5. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair or weatherization (53.5%)

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A Community Snapshot:

Burleson County



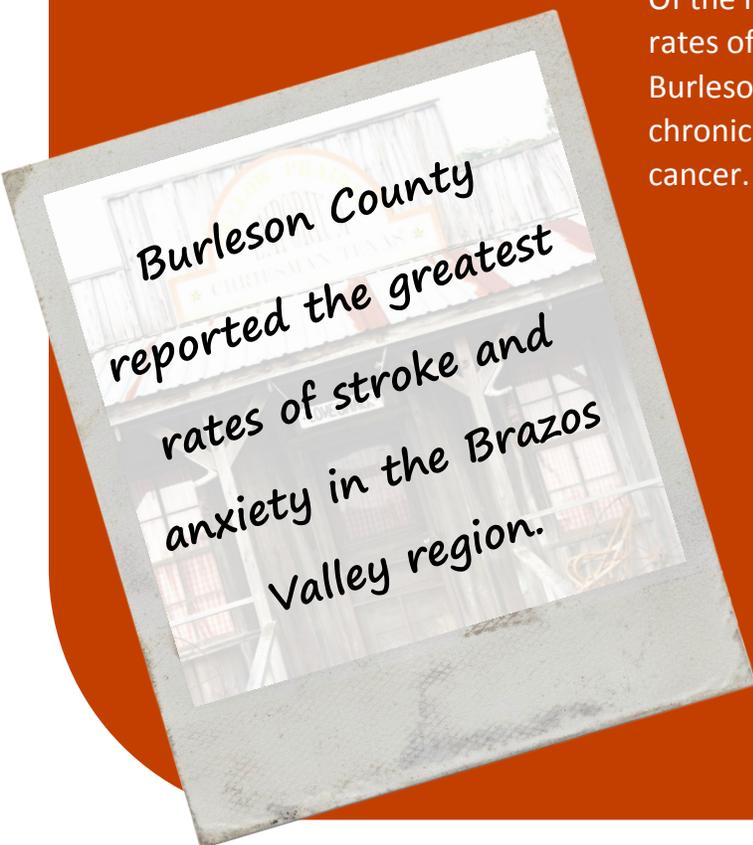
Community Description

Burleson County residents described their community as having a small, close-knit and friendly atmosphere. They also said that the community's proximity to larger towns allows residents to enjoy their amenities and is a prime location in the state. The county is growing into a place for retirees who want to escape the city and retreat to the small town. Despite the growing number of retirees, there are also many families with several generations still living in Burleson County. These families have a deep-rooted history in the community.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Burleson County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with high cholesterol, hypertension, anxiety, arthritis/rheumatism, depression, and Type 2 diabetes.

Of the nine counties, Burleson County reported the highest rates of *stroke* and *anxiety* in the region. In addition, Burleson County was higher than the regional rate for all chronic conditions except asthma, depression, and skin cancer.



Disease/Condition	Burleson County
Overweight/Obesity	61.0%
High Cholesterol	36.9%
Hypertension	35.8%
Anxiety	30.2%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	27.8%
Depression	20.2%
Diabetes (Type 2)	16.0%

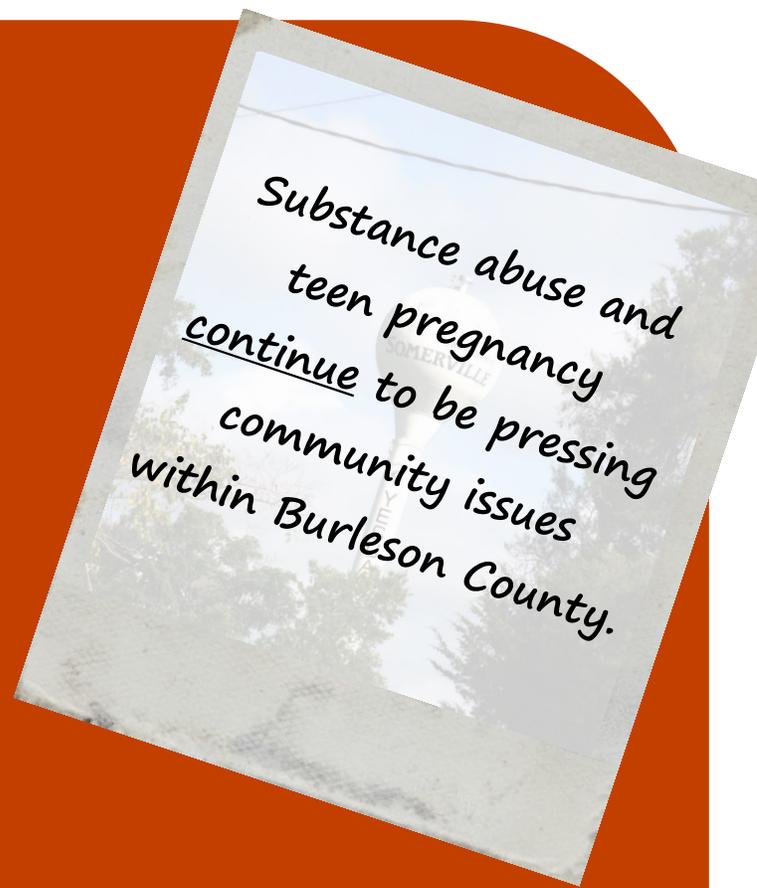
Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Burleson County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

1. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (44.5%)
2. Risky youth behaviors (such as alcohol use, drug use, truancy, etc.; 40.3%)
3. Lack of jobs for unskilled workers (37.9%)
4. Teen pregnancy (36.5%)
5. Access to affordable healthy food (31.7%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Lack of or limited access to health care
- ⇒ Lack of local job opportunities
- ⇒ Aging community infrastructure, such as roads
- ⇒ Growing need for affordable mental health services
- ⇒ Lack of affordable and reliable public transportation
- ⇒ Limited local media sources
- ⇒ Rising illegal and prescription medication substance abuse



Burleson County respondents reported the highest number of poor physical & mental health days in the past month.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Childcare assistance services (75.0%)
2. Literacy training, GED, or English as a second language courses (66.7%)
3. Alcohol/drug abuse services (66.7%)
4. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; weatherization (61.1%)
5. Services for children with emotional problems or delinquent behavior (60.0%)

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A Community Snapshot: *Grimes County*



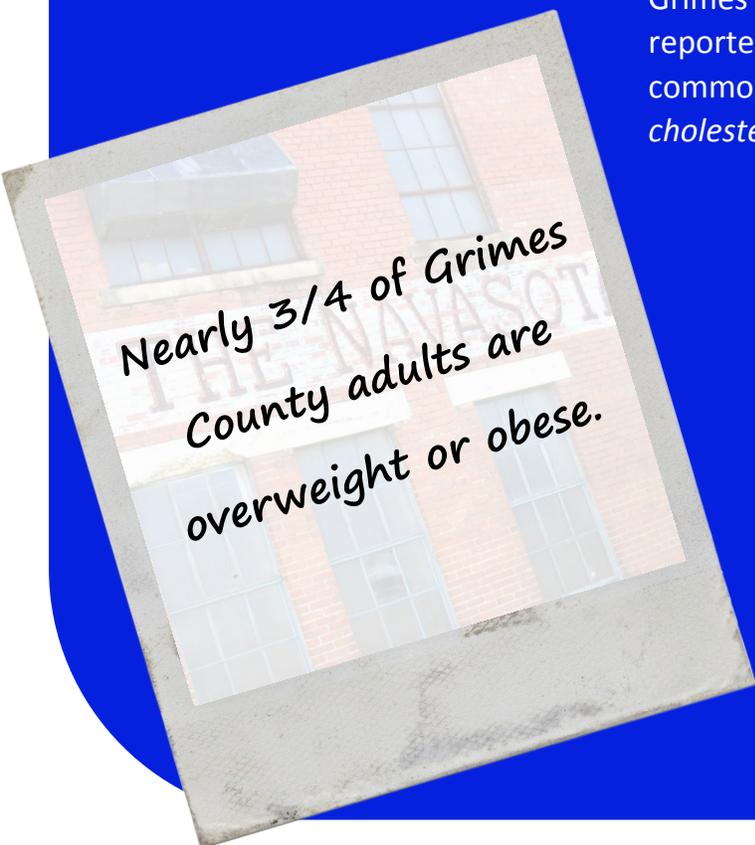
Community Description

Grimes County residents described their community as friendly and a great place to live and raise a family. The small, rural atmosphere makes the county appealing to those who want to live outside the big city while being close enough to work and enjoy the amenities of larger more suburban communities. The population of Grimes County is growing with many older adults retiring in the quiet community. The growth of Grimes County is bringing greater diversity, with many new residents joining those whose families have lived in Grimes County for generations.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Grimes County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with high cholesterol, hypertension, arthritis/rheumatism, anxiety, depression, and asthma.

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.*



Disease/Condition	Grimes County
Overweight/Obesity	70.3%
High Cholesterol	39.4%
Hypertension	39.4%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	32.2%
Anxiety	21.6%
Depression	20.4%
Asthma	18.6%

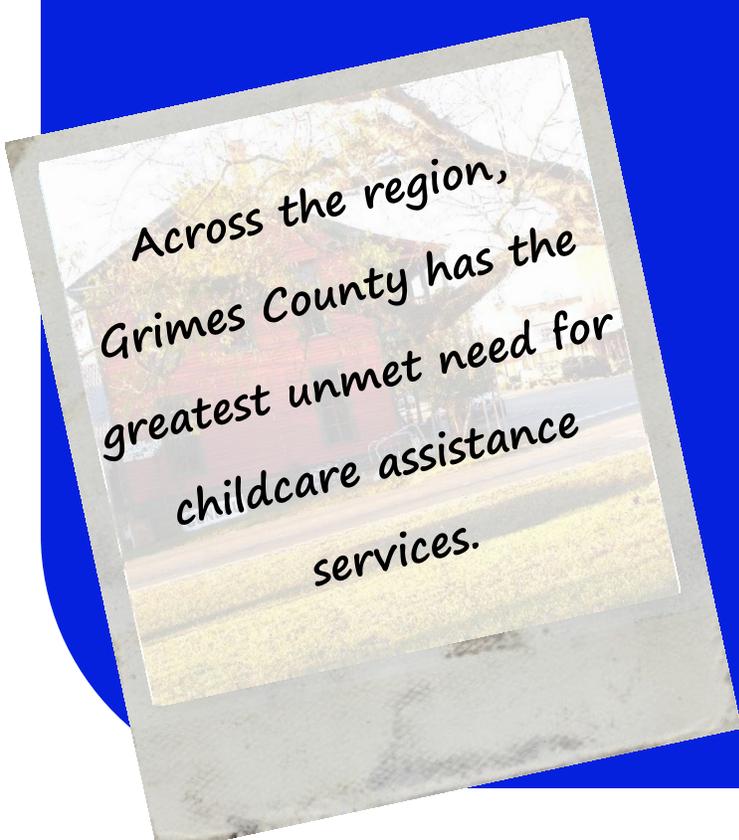
Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Grimes County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

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%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Lack of local health care resources
- ⇒ Lack of adequate county infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles
- ⇒ Lack of recreational activities for youth and adults
- ⇒ Poverty and lack of jobs
- ⇒ Homelessness



Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Childcare assistance services (92.3%)
2. Food, meal, and nutrition services (77.3%)
3. Information and referral services (75.0%)
4. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (73.7%)
5. Utility assistance (71.4%)

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A Community Snapshot:

Leon County



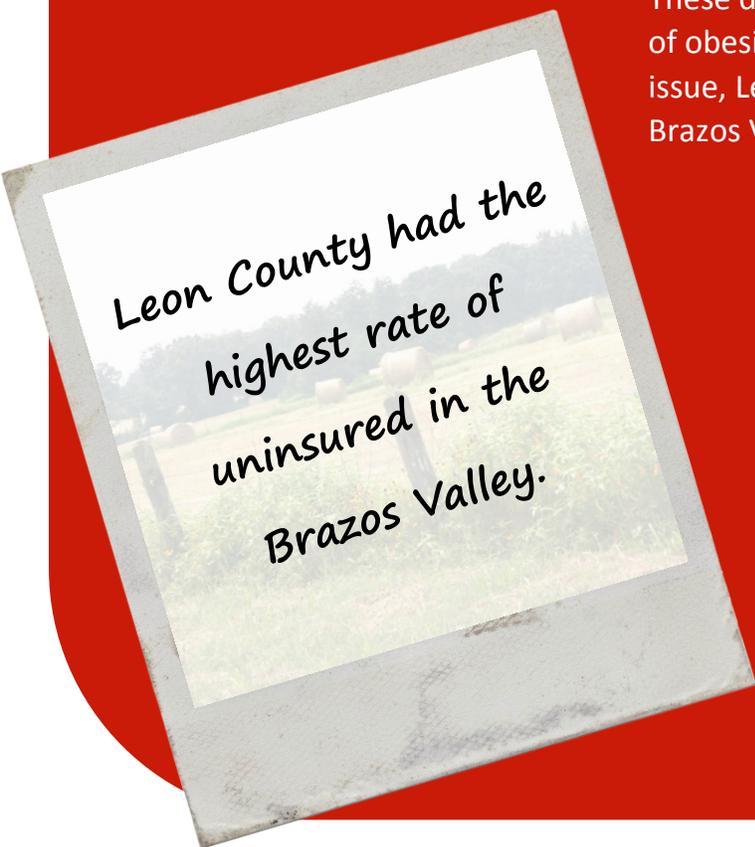
Community Description

Leon County was described by residents as a rural community, that while large and spread out in land mass, is very close knit, well-connected, and filled with friendly, caring, supportive community members. The community is traditional and rich in history with many families residing locally for generations. Leon County is supportive of local businesses and has many businesses that support local farmers. The community is steadily growing, especially the older adult population because the county is attractive for retirees who want a relaxed environment with lower crime rates. It also attracts individuals interested in hunting and the oil and gas industry.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Leon County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis/rheumatism, depression, anxiety, and asthma.

These diseases rates are not surprising given the proportion of obesity and older adults in Leon County. To compound the issue, Leon County had the highest rate of uninsured in the Brazos Valley.



Disease/Condition	Leon County
Overweight/Obesity	68.2%
Hypertension	49.2%
High Cholesterol	44.4%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	28.0%
Depression	26.3%
Anxiety	22.3%
Asthma	13.1%

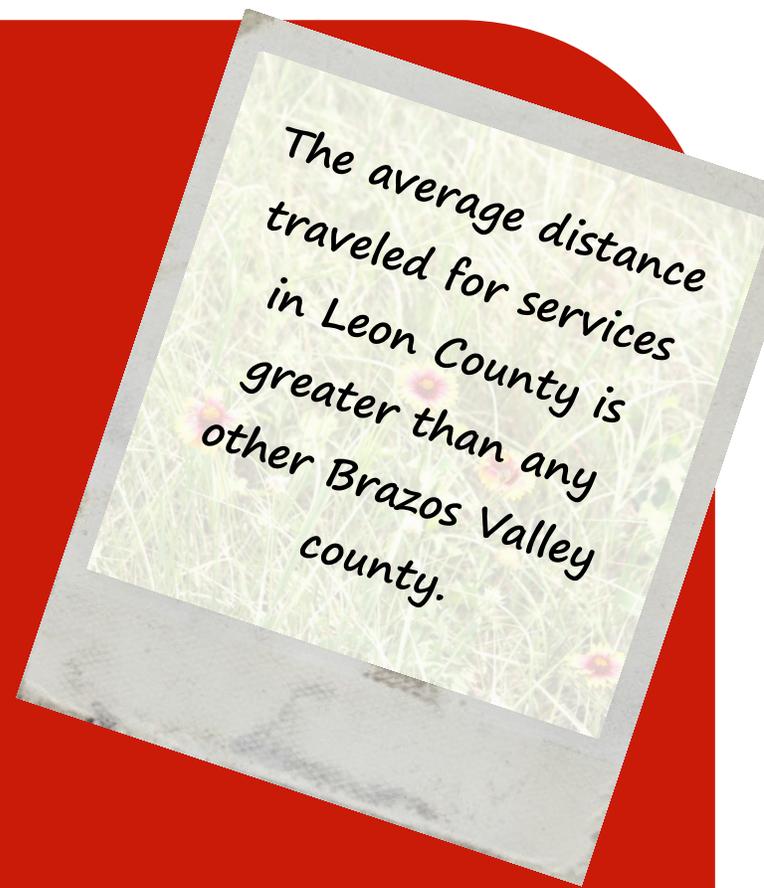
Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Leon County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

1. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (75.7%)
2. Lack of jobs for unskilled workers (62.3%)
3. Lack of recreational and cultural activities (54.6%)
4. Illegal drug use (53.9%)
5. Unemployment (53.6%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Need for further economic development
- ⇒ Difficulty in centralizing resources do to geography of county
- ⇒ Poor community infrastructure (roads, police force, technology services, etc.)
- ⇒ Lack of affordable housing
- ⇒ Lack of access to local health care services
- ⇒ Lack of services for the aging population
- ⇒ Lack of opportunities for physical activity



Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Childcare assistance services (86.7%)
2. Utility assistance (78.4%)
3. Food, meal, and nutrition services (76.9%)
4. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (75.0%)
5. Work-related or employment services (47.4%)

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A Community Snapshot:

Madison County



Community Description

Madison County residents described their community as small, friendly, and rural. Discussion group participants said the community is generous and supportive, which is likely due to the strong presence of faith-based organizations. There is a growing older adult population in Madison County. However, residents also mentioned that the community struggles with change as it grows and that residents are sometimes resistant to new ideas. Discussion group participants also highlighted the county's deep-rooted history and traditions. Residents said there are a large number of health and human service organizations that deliver services within the county.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Madison County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis/rheumatism, anxiety, depression, and Type 2 diabetes.

The chronic disease rates in Madison County are not surprising given the proportion of obesity and older adults in Madison County. In addition to these chronic conditions, Madison County also reported the highest rate of current smokers (24.7%)

Madison County had the highest rate of current smokers (24.7%) in the Brazos Valley region.

Disease/Condition	Madison County
Overweight/Obesity	74.6%
Hypertension	45.3%
High Cholesterol	35.1%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	29.8%
Anxiety	20.3%
Depression	17.3%
Diabetes (Type 2)	14.6%

Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Madison County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

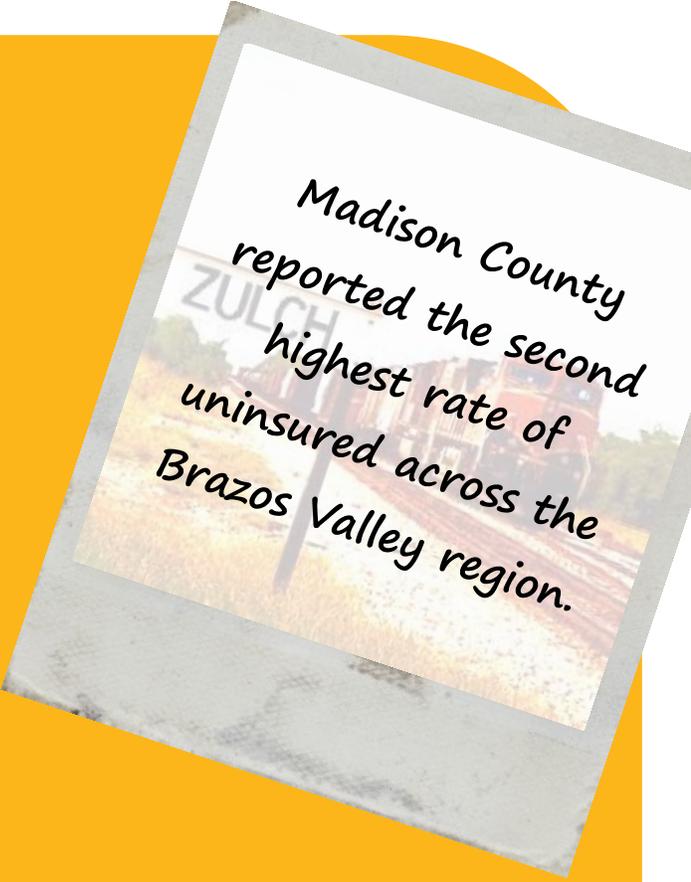
1. Abuse of drugs, including prescription drugs (63.2%)
2. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (62.4%)
3. Unemployment (55.9%)
4. Alcohol abuse (55.9%)
5. Lack of jobs for unskilled workers (54.0%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Lack of jobs and educational opportunities
- ⇒ Limited access to affordable housing
- ⇒ Lack of local businesses such as grocery stores
- ⇒ Lack of affordable, reliable public transportation
- ⇒ Difficulties accessing affordable primary and specialty care
- ⇒ Social issues such as poverty, crime, substance abuse, and racial tension
- ⇒ Lack of recreational opportunities for youth, which contributes to risky behaviors, such as underage drinking, abuse of prescription drugs, and teen pregnancy



Madison County respondents reported consuming the greatest number of alcoholic drinks per week compared to the region.



Madison County reported the second highest rate of uninsured across the Brazos Valley region.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Food, meal, and nutrition services (91.7%)
2. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (89.5%)
3. Services for the disabled or their families (84.6%)
4. Affordable after school or summer day programs for children (75.0%)
5. Services for children with emotional problems or delinquent behavior (66.7%)

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A Community Snapshot:

Montgomery County



Community Description

Montgomery County residents describe their community as a growing, conservative community that is large in both population and geography. The community is characterized as diverse, vibrant, unique, and a great place to live and raise a family. Residents said that even as the community grows, it still has that small town feel and is close-knit and supportive. The population is increasing as the county's location is ideal, offering quick commutes to cities such as Houston and Bryan/College Station. There are many recreational opportunities available, and there has been a growth in economic development bringing new jobs to the area.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Montgomery County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with high cholesterol, hypertension, and arthritis/rheumatism.

Of the nine counties, Montgomery County reported higher rates of diabetes, high cholesterol, and overweight/obesity in comparison to the rural counties. However, Montgomery County reported lower rates for a number of other chronic diseases.

Compared to rural RHP 17 counties, Montgomery County reported higher rates of Type 2 diabetes.

Disease/Condition	Montgomery County
Overweight/Obesity	65.2%
High Cholesterol	36.2%
Hypertension	32.6%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	20.3%
Depression	19.6%
Anxiety	18.9%
Asthma	10.4%

Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Montgomery County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

1. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (43.0%)
2. Abuse of drugs, including prescription drugs (24.7%)
3. Risky youth behaviors (such as alcohol and drug abuse, truancy, etc.; 21.9%)
4. Alcohol abuse (18.7%)
5. Lack of jobs for unskilled workers (16.8%)

Community discussion group participants identified several additional community issues including:

- ⇒ Affordability of health care services, including dental care
- ⇒ Increased demand for affordable housing, particularly with rapid population growth
- ⇒ Inadequate infrastructure for growing population
- ⇒ Lack of resources and services for youth
- ⇒ Need for more vocational training options
- ⇒ Poor access to mental health services
- ⇒ Poverty and homelessness

Montgomery County is struggling to maintain services and resources to keep up with its growing population.

Despite being a metropolitan community, Montgomery County lacks affordable, reliable public transportation.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Food, meal, and nutrition services (64.8%)
2. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (61.5%)
3. Literacy training, GED, or English as a second language course (53.5%)
4. Work-related or employment services (49.5%)
5. Information and referral services (49.1%)

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A Community Snapshot:

Robertson County



Community Description

Robertson County residents describe their community as having a rural, small-town atmosphere as well as access to the amenities of bigger cities nearby. Many Robertson County residents live in the county, but work and participate in activities elsewhere. The community is seeing an influx of retirees from larger cities, but is not equally contributing to economic growth. The county was described as being close knit with strong bonds shared between community members and very conservative with a strong religious influence. Residents highlighted the distinct communities within the county and pointed to a divide among them.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Robertson County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis/rheumatism, anxiety, depression, and Type 2 diabetes.

Of the seven counties in the Brazos Valley region, Robertson County reported the highest rates of a number of chronic diseases common among older adults, including *high cholesterol, hypertension, and diabetes.*

Robertson County reported the highest rate of type 2 diabetes across the Brazos Valley region.

Disease/Condition	Robertson County
Overweight/Obesity	72.6%
Hypertension	50.5%
High Cholesterol	45.9%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	35.5%
Anxiety	24.7%
Depression	24.2%
Diabetes (Type 2)	16.7%

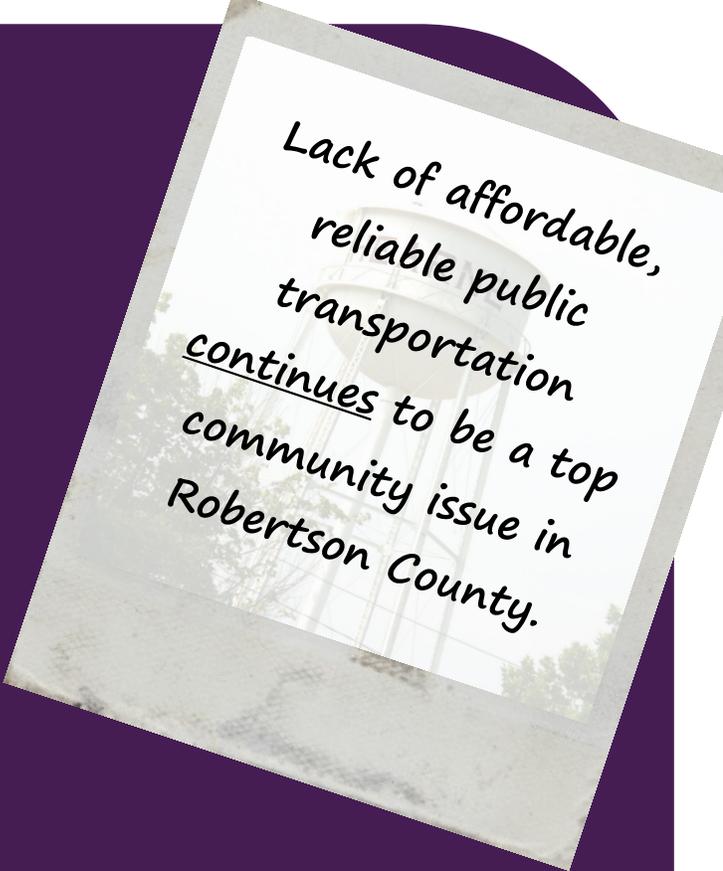
Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Robertson County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

1. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (54.3%)
2. Lack of jobs for unskilled workers (54.1%)
3. Abuse of drugs, including prescription drugs (53.8%)
4. Risky youth behavior (such as alcohol use, drug use, truancy, etc.; 52.2%)
5. Unemployment (49.8%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Lack of affordable, reliable public transportation
- ⇒ Population growth that does not support infrastructure development
- ⇒ Lack of local job opportunities
- ⇒ Lack of retail business, especially grocery stores
- ⇒ Need for educational opportunities, including vocational training options
- ⇒ Poor access to health care services



Lack of affordable, reliable public transportation continues to be a top community issue in Robertson County.



Everyone who reported needing literacy training, GED, or ESL services reported not receiving them.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Literacy training, GED, or English as a second language (100.0%)
2. Financial assistance with auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (66.7%)
3. Information and referral services (50.0%)
4. Utility assistance (46.2%)
5. Respite care (break from caring for child or adult dependent; 44.4%)

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A Community Snapshot: Walker County



Community Description

Walker County is located just outside of the Houston metropolitan area, and residents describe the community as small and conservative but with access to bigger city amenities. They also said that Walker County is a community that cares about its residents. Community members are seen as friendly and active supporters of local causes. The population of Walker County is growing, specifically among older adults and retirees. Residents emphasized a stable economy, with the main employer being the State of Texas through facilities such as the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and Sam Houston State University.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Walker County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis/rheumatism, anxiety, depression, and Type 2 diabetes.

Of the nine counties, Walker County reported the *lowest* rates for a number of chronic diseases including overweight/obesity, hypertension, depression, and anxiety. Additionally, Walker County had the highest proportion of respondents that meet the weekly physical activity recommendations.

Walker County reported the lowest rates in the region for a number of chronic diseases.

Disease/Condition	Washington County
Overweight/Obesity	46.0%
Hypertension	28.2%
High Cholesterol	28.2%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	23.8%
Anxiety	14.4%
Depression	14.2%
Diabetes (Type 2)	9.6%

Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Walker County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

1. Lack of jobs for unskilled workers (61.5%)
2. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (59.7%)
3. Unemployment (53.4%)
4. Risky youth behaviors (such as alcohol or drug abuse, truancy, etc.; 42.6%)
5. Abuse of drugs, including prescription drugs (28.1%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Lack of adequate roads, water, and mail delivery to support growing population
- ⇒ Lack of affordable housing
- ⇒ Limited incentives for new businesses, thus lack of jobs for local residents
- ⇒ Decline in community engagement and participation
- ⇒ Poverty and racism
- ⇒ Poor school systems
- ⇒ Limited access to local health services

With difficulty finding jobs locally, Walker County residents identified an unmet need for education and employment services.

Survey respondents and discussion group participants both identified lack of local jobs as a key community issue.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Literacy training, GED, or English as a second language (76.0%)
2. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (62.5%)
3. Utility assistance (59.1%)
4. Food, meal, and nutrition services (56.0%)
5. Work-related or employment services (53.8%)

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A Community Snapshot:

Washington County



Community Description

Washington County residents describe their community as laid back, conservative, and a great, safe place to live. The community is generous and boasts beautiful, natural scenery making it an attractive place to live and visit. There is a sense of community based on local history and shared family values. Discussion group participants emphasized that the community is growing and becoming more diverse with larger populations of both younger and older residents, families who have lived there for generations as well as those who are new to the area, and increased proportions of racial and ethnic minorities.

Obesity & Chronic Disease

An ongoing concern in Washington County is the growing number of people struggling with overweight and obesity and the chronic diseases often linked to these conditions. In addition to overweight/obesity, local residents most frequently reported being diagnosed with hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis/rheumatism, anxiety, depression, and Type 2 diabetes.

Given the proportion of obesity and older adults in Washington County, these chronic disease rates are not surprising. Washington County reported the highest rate of arthritis/rheumatism across the Brazos Valley.

Washington County residents reported the highest rate of arthritis/rheumatism across the region.

Disease/Condition	Washington County
Overweight/Obesity	72.3%
Hypertension	37.7%
High Cholesterol	35.2%
Arthritis/Rheumatism	24.4%
Anxiety	17.2%
Depression	15.9%
Diabetes (Type 2)	11.2%

Top Community Issues

The community survey asked residents about what they perceived to be serious community issues. In Washington County, the top 5 issues that emerged were:

1. Poor or inconvenient public transportation (46.3%)
2. Alcohol abuse (41.4%)
3. Illegal drug use (37.5%)
4. Risky youth behaviors (such as alcohol or drug use, truancy, etc.; 35.6%)
5. Teen pregnancy (29.7%)

Community discussion group participants also identified several community issues including:

- ⇒ Access to health care, especially specialty care
- ⇒ Lack of health services for the aging population
- ⇒ Limited public transportation options
- ⇒ Lack of affordable recreation activities for youth or adults
- ⇒ Youth risk behaviors such as substance abuse and property crime
- ⇒ Poverty
- ⇒ Lack of jobs locally

Youth risk behaviors was identified as a key community issue by both survey respondents and discussion group participants.

Inadequate services and resources for the aging population continues to be seen as an issue in Washington County.

Top 5 Unmet Needs

1. Utility assistance (76.5%)
2. Food, meal, and nutrition services (75.0%)
3. Affordable after school or summer day programs for children (66.7%)
4. Information and referral services (66.7%)
5. Financial assistance for auto, appliance, or home repair; or weatherization (61.9%)