

June 2025

Crawford County

Community Health Needs Assessment



MEADVILLE
MEDICAL
CENTER

MORE
THAN A HOSPITAL



TITUSVILLE
AREA
HOSPITAL

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Preface

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires that all 501(c)(3) hospitals, like the Meadville Medical Center and the Titusville Area Hospital, conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and adopt an implementation strategy to meet identified community health needs at least once every three years. The ACA specifies that the process of completing a community health needs assessment must include:

1. **Collecting** input from persons who represent the broad interests of the community served by the hospital.
2. **Publishing** the findings of the community health needs assessment so they are available to the community at large.
3. **Developing** and **implementing** a strategy to meet the needs identified in the assessment.

This report (2025) summarizes our work to collect and publish an assessment of the community needs in Crawford County, PA. This report serves as a tool for Meadville Medical Center and Titusville Area Hospital, as well as other agencies and organizations across the county that are interested in and committed to improving public health, to develop and implement strategies addressing the needs and inequalities discussed here.

2024-25 CHNA

The CHNA is a project to assess the health in Crawford County, PA. This multi-year project aims to **collect, analyze, distribute, and utilize valid and reliable data to improve community health.**

The 2024-25 CHNA in Crawford County included three phases of data collection: (1) review of public health surveillance data; (2) assessment of emergency department (ED) admissions data at the Meadville Medical Center; and (3) key informant interviews with community leaders throughout the county.

We decided to pay particular attention to youth behavioral and mental health for the following reasons --

1. For the past decade, mental health has been identified as one of the leading community health needs in Crawford County. And we know that adverse mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness, have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic.²
2. There are no local public health services in Crawford County, meaning students who are struggling do not have local support, services, or preventive education from a local public health department.³

The goal of the 2024-25 CHNA in Crawford County was to determine the health needs throughout the county, with an emphasis on youth behavioral and emotional health.

A healthy community is one in which residents receive appropriate preventive care and the needs of the community are identified and communicated broadly, allowing policies, programs, and interventions to be implemented that improve the health of all.

² <https://www.spandidos-publications.com/10.3892/etm.2021.9675>

³ <https://communities.springernature.com/posts/surviving-a-pandemic-without-a-local-health-department>

Introduction

The Meadville Medical Center Health System (MMCHS) is located in Crawford County, Pennsylvania, with facilities in Meadville and Titusville. The MMCHS is comprised of Meadville Medical Center (MMC), a community hospital with 178 inpatient acute care beds and 32 skilled nursing beds,⁴ and Titusville Area Hospital (TAH), a 25-bed nonprofit community hospital.⁵ The population served by the MMCHS includes the majority of the residents in Crawford County (~82,000 individuals).⁶

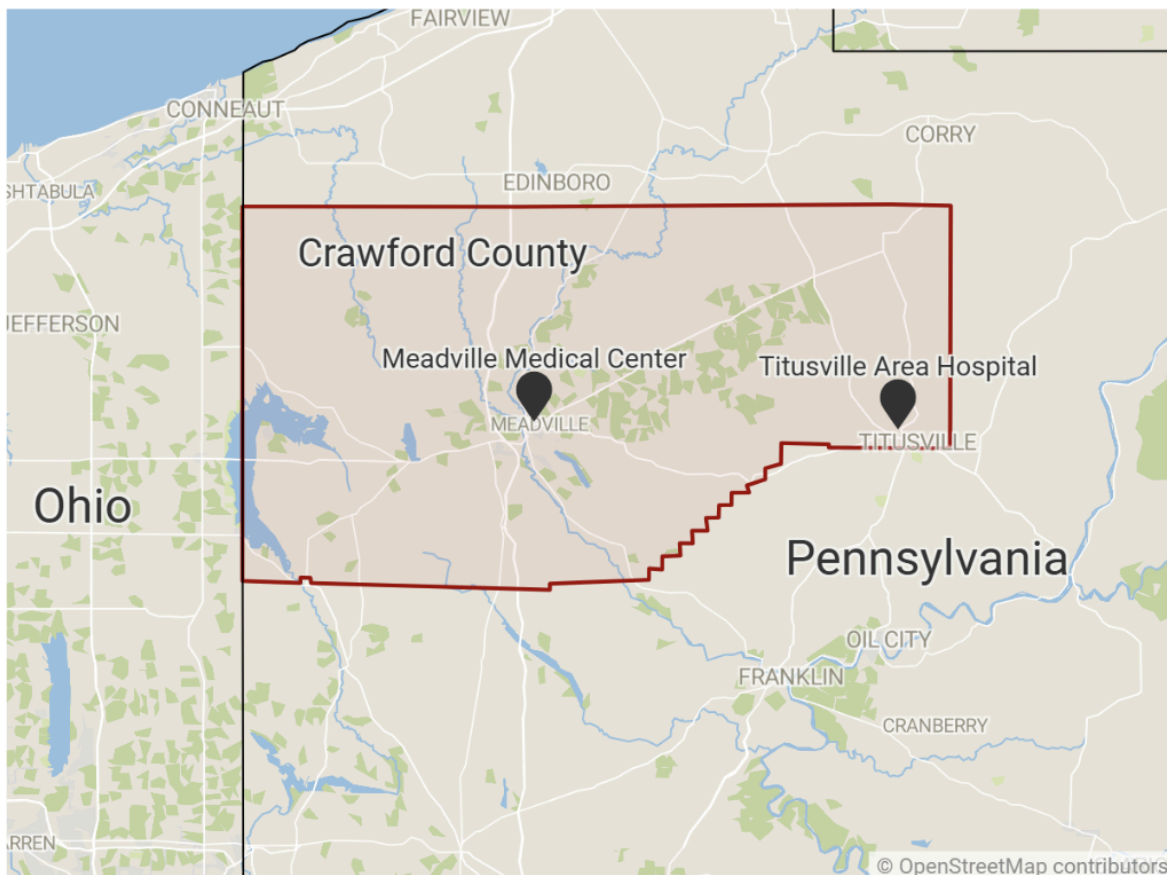


Figure 1: Geographic locations of Meadville Medical Center and Titusville Area Hospital.

⁴ <https://www.aha.org/system/files/content/17/2017-11-meadville-care-coord-case.pdf>

⁵ https://www.ahd.com/free_profile/391314/Titusville_Area_Hospital/Titusville/Pennsylvania/

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/crawfordcountypennsylvania/>

Crawford County is a rural community located 90 miles north of Pittsburgh, PA, and 40 miles south of Erie, PA. Approximately 13 percent of the population in Crawford County lives below the poverty line, and 18% of all children in the county live in poverty. Less than a quarter (~21 percent) of adults have completed a Bachelor's degree, even though 91 percent have completed high school, and over 23 percent of the population is senior citizens.⁷

Eighty-four percent of households in Crawford County have access to broadband internet (far below the state and national averages). And 10% of the population lacks health insurance.⁸

The city of Meadville, the Crawford County Seat, is home to approximately 12,300 residents as well as the MMC, Allegheny College, and city, county, and state government offices.⁹ However, approximately 18 percent of city residents live in poverty. The city of Titusville is home to just over 5,000 residents as well as the TAH. Approximately 22 percent of Titusville residents live in poverty.¹⁰ The median home value in Crawford County is \$143,400 (in 2023). This is 41 percent lower than the median home value in Pennsylvania.

Throughout the county, the ratio of each primary care provider to individuals in the community is 1 to 1630 patients; for each mental health provider, the ratio is 1 to 550 patients; and for each dentist, that ratio is 1 to 2230 patients. The ratio of providers to population served in Crawford County is greater than the state and national averages.¹¹ This highlights the challenge (which is seen across the country, not just in Crawford County) of finding enough providers to serve in rural communities.¹²

⁷ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/crawfordcountypennsylvania/>

⁸ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/crawfordcountypennsylvania/>

⁹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/meadvillecitypennsylvania/PST045224>

¹⁰ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/titusvillecitypennsylvania/PST045224>

¹¹ <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/pennsylvania/crawford?year=2025>

¹² <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/charts-of-note/chart-detail?chartId=106208#:~:text=The%20availability%20of%20healthcare%20professionals,Regions%20published%20in%20March%202023.>

METHODS: 2024-25 Crawford County Community Health Needs Assessment

The 2024-25 CHNA involved a multi-step data collection process. We began our work by reviewing the most recent public health surveillance data related to youth behavioral and emotional health, as well as the social determinants of health. We made comparisons across time (2022 vs. 2023 vs 2024) and geography (comparing measures in Crawford County to state and national rates). Additionally, we used surveillance data to compare the prevalence of important determinants of health -- smoking, obesity, and vaccine uptake.

In addition to gathering publicly available data, we completed key informant interviews with leaders of agencies and organizations across the county and a retrospective analysis of ED admissions at the Meadville Medical Center (there are 35,157 ED admissions annually).

Review of Public Health Surveillance Data

We compiled data from several publicly available datasets. The majority of the data – including demographic characteristics as well as premature death, life expectancy, infant mortality, percent of adults who smoke or are obese, alcohol-impaired driving deaths, chlamydia rates, teen birth rates, food insecurity, percent of adults without health insurance, the primary care physician (PCP) to population ratio, percent of women receiving a mammogram, percent of adults receiving a flu vaccination, and firearms fatalities – were obtained from the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Project.¹³ Cancer incidence and mortality data were collected from the National Cancer Institute.¹⁴ Results from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) provided data related to youth risks and behaviors.¹⁵

Study Design for Key Informant Interviews

Twenty-two key informant interviews with our community stakeholders were conducted. Each interviewee was asked five questions:

1. What organization do you represent? What services does that organization provide? What populations do they serve? And what do they do in the community?
2. Based on what you do and who you serve in the community, what is the most pressing health need facing our community?
3. What do you think is the root cause of that need?
4. What do you believe the Meadville Medical Center Health System should do to address that need and/or its root cause?

¹³ <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/methodology-and-sources/methods>

¹⁴ <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/incidencerates/>

¹⁵ <https://epis.psu.edu/pays>

5. Based on the work that you do, how do you perceive the behavior/mental health of children in our community? What challenges are we facing as a community? How can we make our community healthier, especially for our children?

Responses to these questions were grouped thematically.

ED Admissions Analysis

Records from all emergency department (ED) patient visits between January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024, were retrieved from the Meadville Medical Center. The records were de-identified (no name, address, or SSN) to maintain patient confidentiality. Records contained information regarding service date and time, discharge date and time, ICD-10 diagnosis code, health insurance type, age, sex, race, and whether or not the patient had a primary care provider.

We grouped ICD-10 diagnosis codes into categories, including respiratory complications, mental health, and vaccine-preventable diseases, among others.

Additionally, during the 2022-23 school year, an Allegheny College student used the data from the 2021-2022 needs assessment to determine the proportion of ED admissions that were nonurgent and could have been treated in a doctor's office (e.g., did not require a visit to the emergency room). Her work also provided a breakdown of the various types of health insurance – private insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, Affordable Care Act/Pennie plans, and those without health insurance – used by individuals who visit the ED at the Meadville Medical Center.

HS Enrichment

Since the 2024-25 needs assessment paid particular attention to the emotional and behavioral health of youth in the community, we decided to include a group of high school students as members of our research team. As a research team, we believe that one cannot understand important things from a distance – we needed to work alongside the youth in the county to understand their needs and develop proposed solutions to address those needs. Students were able to sign up to participate in the Allegheny College Enrichment Program, which provides co-curricular classes to gifted and talented students from the school districts across the county. The enrichment class was led by Dr. Becky Dawson, PhD MPH, and two Allegheny College students under her supervision: Samuel Ault and Matilda Jo Miller Earwood.

The high school enrichment research team met five times throughout the spring of 2025 to explore and analyze all of the data collected. Specifically, the research team from the College taught the high schoolers how to analyze each dataset separately and then how to draw conclusions from across the

data, so that every finding was supported by at least two data sources. From their analysis and building upon the analysis already performed by college students, the high school researchers provided insights into the data trends and suggested interventions and changes that they believed would be well-received and effective based on their lived experiences as young people in our community. Their insights and suggestions are attributed to them throughout this report.

Background & Results of Previous Surveys

Since 2008, the Meadville Medical Center Health System has conducted four community health needs assessments ([2008](#), [2015](#), [2018](#), [2021](#)). Through these assessments, we have found that members of the Crawford County community report the following –

- More time and money are needed to lead healthy lives
- Chronic diseases, mental health, obesity, poverty, and substance abuse are the main health concerns
- Lack of safe opportunities to exercise (at no cost) during the winter
- Food insecurity and concerns about not having enough food.

As we discuss the results of the 2024-25 community health needs assessment below, we kept the results from previous needs assessments in mind, as change takes time. We also want to note that new initiatives and organizations have begun to address these needs throughout our community, and we celebrate them. For example, the Meadville Medical Center hired a child psychiatrist to provide care for children.¹⁶ The City of Meadville has revived its Summer Parks Program, which provides free supervised outdoor activities for children (K-6 grade) in the summer. Additionally, the program provides free lunches to participants.¹⁷ And [Meadville Food 4 Thought](#) is working across the community to address food insecurity, especially among children.¹⁸

¹⁶ <https://www.mmchs.org/news/specialty/child-psychiatry/>

¹⁷ https://www.meadvilletribune.com/news/serious-play-summer-parks-program-returns/article_c31fce70-345a-423a-87d2-88794ce0ac32.html

¹⁸ <https://www.creatinglandscapes.org/food/index.html>

RESULTS -- from public health surveillance data

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings measures conditions that influence how well and how long we live — from access to affordable housing, to jobs that pay a living wage and opportunities for a good education.¹⁹ We collected data from the County Health Rankings website (Table 1) to determine view trends over time in Crawford County related to conditions that influence the health of the community. Additionally, we compared the data from Crawford County to the state of Pennsylvania (2024) to see how these conditions and the health status of our community here in Crawford County compare to the state.

From this data, we see that the proportion of individuals 65 and older in the county continues to increase and is higher than the state average. The proportion of individuals completing high school in the county has remained relatively steady and about the same as the state average. The median household income in Crawford County is nearly \$20,000 less than the state median and below the median of the other rural counties in Pennsylvania (Table 1). A lower median household income is associated with poorer health outcomes, including shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality rates, and increased risk of chronic diseases. These disparities are often attributed to factors like limited access to quality healthcare, nutritious food, safe housing, and education, all of which impact health.²⁰

As noted previously, nearly 1 in 5 children in Crawford County are living in poverty.

And 12% of the population is food insecure, which is slightly higher than the other rural counties in Pennsylvania. It is important to note that in the 2023 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (discussed in detail below), 23.4% of 12th graders have worried during the past year that food at home would run out before their family got money to buy more (Table 2).

¹⁹

https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22375379183&gbraid=0AAAAAocQrf0jpXRR0IAMOgwGFjFYiQVhk&clid=Cj0KCOjwXo_CbHDbARIsADWpDH5-o25N8kJzrtXMvgTT9H1O47AmpynNwzQexnW7hjS7Usj4p9GnncaApo7EALw_wcB

²⁰

<https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/poverty-health.html#:~:text=Poverty%20and%20low%20income%20status%20are%20associated%20with%20various%20adverse,14%20leading%20causes%20of%20death.&text=Individual%2D%20and%20community%2Dlevel%20mechanisms%20mediate%20these%20effects>

²¹ <https://winsprojectinc.wixsite.com/website>

Table 1: Conditions that Influence How Well & How Long People Live

Trends over time in Crawford County (CC) and then comparing the county to the state (2024)

	CC 2018	CC 2020	CC 2022	CC 2024	Other rural counties in PA	State 2024
Demographic Characteristics						
Percent of population 65 and older.	19.2	20.6	21.8	22.6	—	19.6
Percent of population that is Non-Hispanic White.	95	94.7	94.6	94.4	—	74.5
Percent of population that is rural.	63.7	63.7	63.7	65.8	—	23.5
Median Household Income	\$45,400	\$50,800	\$52,400	\$54,800	\$57,000	\$71,800
Residential Segregation -- Black/White	65	64	73	70	64	72
Percent of people (>16) who were unemployed but seeking work	6	4.7	8.9	4.8	6.4	4.4
Percent of children living in poverty	22	19	18	19	18	15
Health Characteristics						
Premature deaths -- the number of years of life lost to deaths of people under age 75, per 100,000.	7200	8500	8000	9100	7426	8000
Life expectancy (in years)		76.9	77	75.8	78	77.3
Number of deaths among children less than 1 year of age per 1,000 live births.	6	8	8	9	6.6	6
Percent of adults who smoke.	16	20	24	22	21.4	15
Percent of adults who are obese.	35	37	33	39	35.4	33
Percent alcohol-impaired driving	35	34	42	28	27.8	25

deaths.						
Number of new cases of chlamydia (STI) diagnosed per 100,000 people	205.3	178.7	242.2	193.2	173.9	409.8
Number of teen births per 1,000 individuals 15-19	23	20	18	18	18.7	13
% of population food insecure	13	12	12	12	11.6	9
Number of deaths per 100,000 people	34	35	29	35	–	39
Percent of individuals (less than 65 years of age) who do not have health insurance.	10	8	9	8	8.9	7
Number of people in the county per primary care physician	1600	1490	1540	1630	2471.8	1260
Percent of female Medicare enrollees receiving annual mammography screening	68	46	51	52	43	47
Percent of Medicare enrollees who received an annual flu vaccination	n/a	44	45	43	48.9	53
Number of deaths due to injury (homicide, suicide, motor vehicle crashes, poisonings) per 100,000	80	88	92	98	93.8	96
Number of firearm-related deaths per 100,000	11	13	12	13	13.9	13

Data source – RWJF County Health Rankings

The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) monitors health-related behaviors and experiences of middle and high school students. Specifically, it provides information about:

- Youth health conditions and behaviors: asthma, obesity, mental health, including suicide, injury and violence, diet and physical activity, sexual behavior, and substance use, including use of tobacco and e-cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs
- Student experiences: bullying, parental monitoring, school connectedness, unstable housing, and exposure to community violence.²⁵

We collected data from PAYS (Table 2) to view trends over time in Crawford County related to youth health conditions and behaviors, as well as 12th-grade student experiences. Additionally, we compared the data from Crawford County to the state of Pennsylvania (2023), and for two of the questions, we were able to compare Crawford County data to the other rural counties in Pennsylvania to see how these conditions and behaviors of our community here in Crawford County compare to the state. Table 3 looks at the same health conditions and behaviors and makes the same comparisons among 6th graders who responded to the survey.

More than 70% of 12th graders in Crawford County report that they have experienced some form of emotional abuse.

The key cause for concern we saw among the 12th graders was binge drinking, where the rate of reported binge drinking in the county was approximately 40% higher than the state average in 2023. The high school research team confirmed that binge drinking is common among high school students of all ages. In addition to binge drinking, the high school research team reported that vaping is also very common among high school students and that there is a lack of education regarding the health effects of both alcohol consumption and vaping. Additionally, the high school research team was concerned about how students were punished for drinking and vaping on school property. While they recognize that both are illegal and there needs to be consequences for breaking the law, they suggested and found evidence that youth who are abusing alcohol or vaping should also be educated and provided with cessation resources to help them quit; in addition to just getting in trouble for drinking or vaping on school property.

The proportion of 12th graders across that county who feel safe at school is declining (2021-2023).

Currently, 3 in 10 high school seniors do not feel safe in their school, which is considerably higher than the state average. Students in high school feel unsafe due to the threat of gun violence, fights in school, and bullying. Bullying across the county is also increasing; currently, 7.4% of 12th graders report being bullied several times per month. This is nearly double the state average.

²⁵ <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/health/programs/healthy-living/tobacco-prevention-and-control/youth-risk-behavior-survey.html>

Table 2: 12th Grade Report of Health Risks

Trends over time among 12th graders in Crawford County (CC) and then comparing the county to the state (2023)

	CC 2019	CC 2021	CC 2023	Other rural counties in PA	State 2023
Substance Use					
% of students with lifetime use of vaping	n/a	n/a	37.1	20.3	25.2
% of students vaping in the past 30 days	41.6	25.3	25.2		14.9
Percent of students reporting binge drinking.	16.2	11.3	14.1		9.5
% of students with lifetime use of marijuana	42.9	32.9	35.7		26.2
% of students using marijuana in past 30 days	21.7	15.2	18.9		14.6
Emotional Abuse & Bullying					
Percent of students reporting emotional abuse, insults, and name-calling.	66.3	65.6	71.1		68.7
Have you stayed home from school this year because you were worried about being bullied?	3.8	5	5.7		4
How frequently bullied: YES, several times per month	5.7	5.4	7.4		3.8
I feel safe at my school.	75.7	73.9	70.3	68.9	78.3
Isolation & Home Environment					
Percent of students reporting isolation from friends & family.	18.7	18	16.5		18
% of students who lived away from home because kicked out, ran away, or abandoned.	6.6	9.5	7.2		4.8

Data source: PA Youth Risk Survey (PAYS)

Table 3: 6th Grade Report of Health Risks

Trends over time among 6th graders in Crawford County (CC) and then comparing the county to the state (2023)

	CC 2019	CC 2021	CC 2023	State 2023
Substance Use				
% of students with lifetime use of vaping	n/a	n/a	7	4.6
% of students vaping in the past 30 days	2	6	4	2.4
Percent of students reporting binge drinking.	2	2	1	1
% of students with lifetime use of marijuana	1	2	3	1.7
% of students using marijuana in the past 30 days	0.4	1	2	0.7
Emotional Abuse & Bullying				
Percent of students reporting emotional abuse, insults, and name-calling.	57	62	63	62.7
Have you stayed home from school this year because you were worried about being bullied?	3	8	7	6.8
How frequently bullied: YES, several times per month	6	9	9	8.6
I feel safe at my school.	91	89	89	82.3
Isolation & Home Environment				
Percent of students reporting isolation from friends & family.	9	7	11	8.5
% of students who lived away from home because kicked out, ran away, or abandoned.	5	2	2	1.9

Data source: PA Youth Risk Survey (PAYS)

Connecting Health Risks to Cancer Incidence & Mortality

All new cases of cancer are reported to the National Cancer Institute, a branch of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).²⁶ This registry provides information on both incidence (number of new cases) and mortality (number of deaths) by county and by state. This data was used to compare cancer incidence and mortality in Crawford County to the state (Tables 4 and 5).

While the incidence rate for all cancers was approximately the same in Crawford County compared to the incidence rate in Pennsylvania and the other rural counties across the state, there is a higher incidence of cervical, colon, oral cavity/pharynx, uterine, lung, and childhood cancers, as well as leukemia and non-Hodgkin lymphoma in Crawford County compared to the state rates (Table 4).

There are also differences in cancer mortality rates (deaths per 10,000 people in the population) comparing the county to the state. In Crawford County, there is a higher mortality rate of uterine cancer, lung cancer, and oral cavity cancer, as well as all cancers combined, compared to the state (Table 5).

It is important to note that when there is a pattern of higher cancer mortality and similar incidence, this is indicative of individuals waiting too long to seek care (and being diagnosed at higher staged cancers, which are more difficult to treat), lower screening rates, and failure of patients to complete treatments they are prescribed which could be caused by medical expenses, or lack of continuity in care.

Since 2019, the percentage of adults who report smoking has been increasing, from 18% in 2019 to 22% in 2024 (Table 1); similarly, the rate of vaping among high school seniors is high (Table 2). These trends likely contribute largely to the county's high incidence of lung cancer cases and deaths. The upward trend of youth and adults who vape or smoke is also noticeable within the community infrastructure.

The data also show that Crawford County has a higher incidence of cervical cancer compared to the state. This type of cancer is preventable via the HPV vaccine,²⁷ which is administered to all adolescents and young adults between the ages of 9-45.²⁸ The proportion of individuals in Crawford County who have received their HPV vaccine is not consistently tracked (a county health

²⁶ <https://datascience.cancer.gov/training/learn-data-science/generate-data-basics>

²⁷ <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/hpv/hpv-vaccine.html>

²⁸ <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2020/08/human-papillomavirus-vaccination>

department could track this statistic); however, we do know that across Pennsylvania, the HPV vaccination rate is only 66%.²⁹ From other available vaccination data,³⁰ we know families in Crawford County are opting out of required vaccines for their children (e.g., MMR, DTaP, Varicella) at a higher rate than the state. Given these two things – a low HPV vaccination rate in Pennsylvania and an increased rate of families opting out of required vaccines for their children in Crawford County – we estimate that less than 66% of adolescents and young adults in the county have received the HPV vaccine. The outcome of a low vaccination rate is an increased incidence of cancers associated with HPV, such as cervical and oral cancers.

Table 4: Cancer Incidence

Rate (per 100,000 population) comparing Crawford County to the State

Type of Cancer	Incidence Rate in Crawford County	Incidence Rate in Other Rural PA Counties	Incidence Rate in Pennsylvania
All cancer	459.8	462.6	459.7
Breast (in females)	110.7		131.2
Cervical	11.4		7
Colon	40.6		37.2
Childhood cancer (age <15, all sites)	23.1		17.9
Liver & bile duct	5.9		8.4
Oral cavity/pharynx	14.4		12.3
Uterine	35.5		32.6
Leukemia	17.5		14.6
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	21.4		19.2
Lung & bronchus	65		57.8

Data source: cancer.gov

²⁹ https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/Immunize_HPV/PA

³⁰

<https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/health/documents/topics/documents/programs/immunizations/School%20Immunization%20Survey%20Summary%20by%20County%202023-2024.pdf>

Table 5: Cancer Mortality

Rate (per 100,000 population) comparing Crawford County to the State

Type of Cancer	Mortality Rate in Crawford County	Mortality rate in other PA rural counties	Mortality Rate in Pennsylvania
All cancer	159.9	160.6	152.2
Breast cancer (in females)	20.7		19.6
Cervical	n/a		2
Colon	13		12.1
Childhood cancer (age <15, all sites)	n/a		2.1
Liver & bile duct	5		6.4
Oral cavity/pharynx	3.8		2.5
Uterine	35.5		32.6
Leukemia	6.6		6.1
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	21.4		19.2
Lung & bronchus	40.5		34.3

Data source: cancer.gov

RESULTS – key informant interviews

Carson Messemer, a senior Global Health major at Allegheny College, conducted 22 key informant interviews with our community stakeholders. Each interviewee was asked five questions:

1. What organization do you represent? What services does that organization provide? What populations do they serve? And what do they do in the community?
2. Based on what you do and who you serve in the community, what is the most pressing health need facing our community?
3. What do you think is the root cause of that need?
4. What do you believe the Meadville Medical Center Health System should do to address that need and/or its root cause?
5. Based on the work that you do, how do you perceive the behavior/mental health of children in our community? What challenges are we facing as a community? How can we make our community healthier, especially for our children?

Carson's complete senior comprehensive project that details this portion of the needs assessment can be [found online](#).

Through these interviews, we found that members of our community and organizations that are working to improve health and safety want increased communications and collaborations with the Meadville Medical Center and Titusville Area Hospital.

The interviewees almost universally identified mental health and substance use/addiction as the most pressing needs in our community. These needs were immediately followed up by a request for most providers who can provide care for individuals, especially children, who have mental health disorders and substance abuse issues.

Through the key informant interviews, lack of access to healthcare (specifically, lack of knowledge about where to access care for mental health and substance abuse, especially for children) was identified as a key need and root cause for the problems our community faces. Interviewees also identified poverty, low literacy rates, and the fact that 16% of county residents do not have internet access as contributing factors to the needs identified.

The majority of interviewees wanted to see more community health education, in addition to more health care providers serving in our community. Community organizations need education so they

can direct their clients and members to the available resources in the county. And health education about the dangers of alcohol, vapes, drugs, unprotected sex, and illegal drugs is needed throughout the county. This education is needed within the schools, but also at community organizations and localities, such as public libraries, churches, and non-profit organizations, especially those providing childcare services.

When asked specifically about the needs of the youth in our county, the interviewees identified mental health as the greatest need. Our children are struggling because of generational trauma, loneliness, too much time on social media, substance abuse, vaping, and bullying.

RESULTS: ED Analysis:

During 2022-24, 12,987 ED visits (~12%) were made by youth aged 12-18 years. The most common reasons youth were admitted to the ED include:

1. Acute upper respiratory infection, including flu & COVID	926 (7.1%)
2. Checked in / left before being treated (AMA)	686 (5.3%)
3. Viral infections	648 (5.0%)
4. Fever or headache	515 (4.0%)
5. Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting	500 (3.9%)
6. Head injuries	426 (3.3%)

Following the 2022 community health needs assessment, a [more thorough analysis of the ED data](#) (2017-2021) was conducted by Allegheny College student Skyler Masse to determine whether the ED was being overused for nonurgent cases. Each of the nearly 200,000 ED admissions during 2017-2021 was classified as either an urgent or a non-urgent ED visit.

More than half (68.3%) of all patients admitted to the ED (2017-2021) were nonurgent users, which strongly suggests that the ED is being overused by individuals who could be treated by primary care providers or at urgent care centers. The ED is a convenient space to access healthcare and is open 365 days per year, 24 hours per day.

It is important to note that utilization of the ED for nonurgent issues has been found to cause a variety of issues that impact the ED's ability to effectively provide emergency services to those who are in need.

This analysis of the ED data serves as an example of the type of research questions and analyses we can do as part of the needs assessment research.

Key Areas and Next Step

Data from this needs assessment will be shared with administrators and boards at both the Meadville Medical Center and Titusville Area Hospital. The individual hospitals and/or the health system as a whole will use this data to identify a few key objectives that they can influence in a meaningful way over the coming years to address areas of deficiency.

Key Areas of Focus for Meadville Medical Center:

- Substance Abuse (including smoking and vaping)
- Obesity
- Childhood Mental Health and Bullying
- Healthy Foods & Lifestyles

Next Step:

We will convene internal committee to review data and create action plans.