



# Healthy

WASHINGTON COUNTY



## 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) provides a framework for community action, engagement, and accountability in addressing the health needs of citizens of Washington County, Maryland. This document is published every 3 years. Below is an overview of the health needs and priorities for FY 2026-2028.



### The Findings

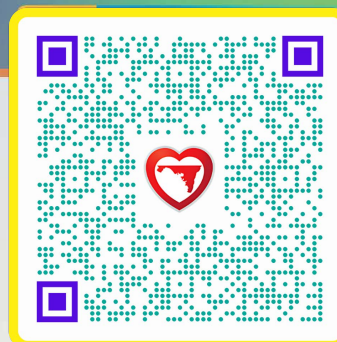
#### Top 10 Health Concerns of Washington County Residents

1. High blood pressure
2. Obesity
3. Chronic pain
4. High cholesterol
5. Mental illness

6. Diabetes/Prediabetes
7. Lack of sleep
8. Heart disease
9. Cancer
10. Dental health

Scan the QR code to read the full report or visit

[HealthyWashingtonCounty.com](https://HealthyWashingtonCounty.com)



### How Can We Improve?

#### Individual Health

- Affordable healthy food
- Specialty doctors
- Mental health services
- Access to a primary care provider
- Safe places to walk and play
- Affordable recreation activities
- Financial assistance for medical services and/or treatment

#### Community Health

- Free health screenings
- More primary care providers
- Mental health services
- Affordable housing
- Education
- Access to fresh produce
- Additional resources for those with substance use disorder



## Health Service Gaps

- **Overweight and obesity** is a primary health concern and people desire information regarding diet, nutrition, weight loss, and help making healthy lifestyle changes.
- Concerns related to **social determinants of health** are increasing. Affordable healthy food is limited and has remained a persistent issue, and food insecurity continues. Affordable housing resources are limited.
- **Knowledge of community resources** remains a barrier to certain populations.
- **Diabetes mortality rate** is one of the highest in the state and 74% of adults are overweight, increasing the risk.
- There is a **shortage of primary care and specialty providers** available in Washington County.
- There are **appointment delays** stretching an average of more than three weeks for a new patient to be seen by a psychiatrist.
- There is a **delay to timely access for substance abuse treatment** when a person desires help.
- **Crisis services are underutilized** even with the addition of a mental health urgent care.







## Conclusions

- **Health needs and priorities are similar to FY2022 findings**, however concerns related to social determinants of health are more prevalent.
- **Frequent health concerns** are mental health issues, being overweight, chronic pain, hypertension, and high cholesterol.
- **Primary barriers** include affordability, the lack of specialty doctors, and the inability to see a provider when needed.
- 35% of those completing the survey are **exercising to be healthy**.
- **74% of the adult population is overweight or obese** (BMI > 25) with a 6% increase since last CHNA.
- **Residents are at higher risk for prediabetes and developing diabetes** in the future based on lifestyles and barriers.
- Outlier for 911 behavioral health calls resulting in **more ED visits for crisis**.
- **Drug overdose fatalities have decreased since 2022**, but more treatment options are needed.
- **Evidence of health disparities for Black or African-American residents**; higher ED visits, poorly managed diabetes and hypertension, colorectal and prostate cancers.
- 23.3% of respondents said they have felt that their **gender, age, race, language, class, weight or something similar** affected how they were treated by doctors or other medical staff.
- **Transportation to medical services is a barrier** for those without independent transport.





**2026 - 2028**



## **Community Health Improvement Plan**

Healthy Washington County, Washington County Health Department, Meritus Health, and our partners will create programs and initiatives to support Washington County residents and our neighbors in achieving healthier lives based on the top health priorities chosen.

### **Food/Nutrition and Wellness**

#### ***Lack of access to affordable healthy food***

- Build a map of local grocery stores, farmers markets, etc., to increase knowledge of low-cost or free options for fresh produce.
- Establish a Food Farmacy to decrease food insecurity in Washington County for patients with chronic diseases.

### **Obesity**

- Lose 1 million pounds by 2030.
- Increase health screenings and expand Diabetes Prevention Program.

### **Mental Health**

#### ***Lack of awareness of resources***

- Improve access and knowledge of behavioral health, prevention, treatment, and recovery resources to decrease the number of overdoses and increase referrals to services.

### **Costs and Affordability**

#### ***Affordable housing***

- Host annual Housing Financial Health and Literacy Resource Fair to increase knowledge of available financial resources in the community.

### **Community Connection**

#### ***Lack of awareness of resources***

- Expand HWC social media and update resources on website to increase knowledge of HWC partner resources in the community.

### **Social Equity and Justice**

#### ***Stereotypes and stigma towards certain communities and areas***

- Host annual trainings for partners to build trust, reduce bias, and increase cultural competencies.