



DELAWARE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Community Context Assessment

March 2024

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## Overview

The purpose of the Community Context Assessment (CCA) is to gather insight from communities with lived experiences to inform the Community Health Assessment. In the CCA, qualitative data is collected to understand the strengths and assets, built environment, and opportunities to improve health and social systems in communities. These conversations with community members bring to life and give context to the quantitative data that highlights health concerns.

## Methods

With the oversight and support of the CHA Steering Committee, the Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT) planned to collect information from community members through broad large-group discussions open to all community members – Community Conversations- and small group sessions held with traditionally hard to reach or vulnerable populations- Focus Groups.

### Community Conversations

Five Community Conversations were held from July 19 to August 17 reaching 136 participants (Table 1). Five municipalities were identified to reflect the diverse demographics and geographic characteristics across Delaware County: Morton, Upper Darby, Chester, Concord, and Radnor.

The purpose of the Community Conversations was to:

- Understand the perceived strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement related to health in Delaware County
- Identify opportunities for the use of Opioid Settlement Funds (in partnership with Delaware County Council and Human Services)
- Engage the community in a conversation about health



**Figure 1. DCHD staff, community volunteers and participants at the Morton Community Conversation**

To recruit community participation, flyers advertising the events were shared electronically through the Delaware County Newsletter, staff email system, and with community organizations, municipal leadership, and State Representatives/ Senators to share with residents of these municipalities. Press releases were issued, and event information was shared on DCHD social media pages. At each Community Conversation, participants were offered a healthy meal and volunteers staffed a children’s table to allow parents to focus on the event. Conversations were 90 minutes in length, each moving quickly to stay on task.

**Table 1. Community Conversations**

Municipality/Area	Location	Date	Number of Participants
Morton	DCIU Conference Center	July 19	18
Upper Darby	Watkins Senior Center	July 20	13
Chester	ACCESS Chester Community Center	August 9	73
Concord	Concord Township Municipal Building	August 10	12
Radnor	Radnor township Municipal Building	August 17	20

Participants were assigned to a table (most events had 4-5 tables, with at least 4 people at each table). Each group was staffed with a table leader and a scribe. Ideas were shared during the conversation and noted on flip chart paper to be voted on by participants from all tables.

Each community conversation was structured as follows:

- Welcome and Overview from DCHD Leadership
- Health Data Presentation from DCHD Epidemiology
  - Question 1: When you think about the things that make it easier for people to be healthy, what is going well in your community and Delaware County?
  - Question 2: What are the things that get in the way of good health in your community and Delaware County?
  - Question 3: What are your ideas to make Delaware County a healthier place to live, work, and play?
- Prioritization of Ideas for Solutions
- Overview of Opioid Settlement Funds
  - Question 4: How do you think the Opioid Settlement Funds should be used in Delaware County?



**Figure 2. Participants at the Upper Darby Community Conversation vote for health improvement ideas**

Groups had 10 minutes to answer each question at their table. After groups discussed Question 3, they presented their ideas to improve health in Delaware County to the whole group. Using three dot stickers, participants voted for their favorite ideas. Participants voted on ideas for Opioid Settlement Fund use as they exited the event. Ideas for use of the Opioid Settlement Funds have been shared with County staff working on this project and are not focused on this in this report.

Summaries were typed up for each Community Conversation location, including idea voting results and sent to participants for review and feedback. Key themes were identified for each conversation event for community assets, barriers, and ideas to improve health.

**Focus Groups**

Ten Focus Groups were held with populations of interest from June 21 to October 25, gathering insights from 67 community members (Table 2) who might not otherwise be interested in or able to join a Community Conversation. CHAT reviewed disparities in health and demographic data to identify populations of interest for the Focus Groups. Community Health Survey demographic results were also monitored to identify underrepresented groups and adjustments were made to the Focus Group schedule as necessary.



**Figure 3. A small group discusses community health at the Radnor Community Conversation**

The goal of each focus group was to:

- Learn about participants’ experience in the health and social care settings
- Understand the health and quality of life issues that are more important to participants
- Identify the barriers and assets to health in Delaware County

**Table 2. Focus Groups**

Population	Location/Organization	Date	Number of Participants
Young Fathers, Black Men	Fatherhood Summit, Boys & Girls Club of Chester, PA	6/21	4
LGBTQIA+ Community	Mosaic Medical, Sharon Hill, PA	8/23	7
Black Men	The Line-Up Barbershop, Yeadon, PA	9/10	5
Displaced Persons, Hispanic/Latino Residents	Murphy’s Giving Market, Upper Darby, PA	9/12	10
People with Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Experience	MVP Recovery, Media, PA	9/14	8
Displaced persons, People experiencing poverty	Community Action Agency of Delaware County, Boothwyn, PA	9/26	8
Expectant and New Parents	Delco Community Baby Shower and Resource Expo, DCIU Conference Center, Morton, PA	9/30	11
Chester Area Residents	ACCESS Chester Community Center, Chester, PA	10/10	3
Asian Residents, New Americans	Jaisohn Memorial House, Media, PA (virtual)	10/20	5
Military Veterans	American Legion Post 214, Upper Darby, PA	10/25	6

CHAT reached out to trusted community organizations serving these populations to assemble focus groups. Each participant received a \$25 gift card to a local grocery store as a gift of appreciation. Focus Groups were led by two DCHD staff members or volunteers, with one acting as a leader, and the other as scribe. With the consent of the participants of each focus group, the team asked the 8 questions below that gauged their experiences, concerns, and ideas related to health. All 67 community members across the 10 focus groups were asked the same questions, with some adjustments made regarding the group that was being addressed. Their answers were recorded and summarized in a report.

Focus Groups were asked the following questions:

- 1) What does it mean to you to be healthy; what does “being healthy” look like and feel like?
- 2) Tell me about experiences using or trying to use health care services in your community.
  - a. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor, or other health care provider?
- 3) When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
- 4) If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
- 5) What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
- 6) What are the things in your community or workplace that lead to **good** health and high quality of life?
- 7) What are the things in your community or workplace that lead to **poor** health and quality of life?
- 8) Is there anything further anyone would like to add about any of the topics we’ve already discussed and that you feel you’ve not had a chance to say?

Notes from the conversations were reviewed and coded into topic categories. Summaries were typed up from each focus group, observing the most consistent responses that reflected the groups’ main points. Community strengths, weaknesses, barriers, and observations were reported. From these the team was able to pull key themes that were echoed from the first focus group with Mosaic, to the last focus group with Jaisohn house.

## Findings

### Strengths and Assets

While Delaware County is diverse in terms of ethnicity of residents and community living environments, there were common themes across all municipalities that held community conversation events. Participants at all conversation locations cited the following as things that made it easier for people to live a healthy life:

- Access to medical care opportunities, including hospitals and immunizations
- Strong community connections, including community programs, church groups, libraries, youth programs, senior services and holding of community meetings

- Enthusiasm about the new Delaware County Health Department and new programs/services that will be implemented
- Non-profit and volunteer-based organizations in place that have been in place for many years to provide services and meet their daily living needs
- Accessibility to healthy foods, including grocery stores, farmer markets, convenience stores, food pantries and community gardens
- Recreational spaces to be physically active, including trails, parks, open spaces, and public pools



**Figure 4. A small group discusses community health at the Chester Community Conversation**

Focus Group participants highlighted community aid as the greatest asset of Delaware County when it comes to health and social care needs. They expressed sincere appreciation for the organizations that connect them with tools and resources to improve their quality of life.

### Barriers to Health

As with shared community strengths, there were common barriers to health shared by Community Conversation participants at all five locations:

- Need for better information access for available county programs and resources, especially for those who do not use the internet or have limited English proficiency, impaired vision or need other accommodation
- Need for more convenient and affordable transportation options to access health care and other essential services
- Shortage of mental health services to address behavioral health issues among adults, youth, and senior citizens since the pandemic, brought on by stress, trauma, and grief
- Need for adequate and affordable health insurance coverage to address health issues
- Challenges in accessing health care due to hospital closures, staffing shortages, limited appointments available and medical providers leaving area

Some participants at community conversation locations cited additional health barriers, including overdevelopment of land impacting the natural environment and increasing noise pollution (Radnor, Concord, Morton), lack of affordable housing (Morton, Upper Darby, Chester, Radnor), and air pollution caused by trash disposal related to incinerator affecting health, including development of asthma and cancer (Morton, Upper Darby, Chester).

Several of the barriers identified in the Community Conversations were echoed at the Focus groups, including mental health, health care access, and housing needs.

Common barriers identified by Focus Group participants included:

- Lack of opportunities for education and economic growth
- Poor mental health personally and across the community:
  - People living with serious mental health problems and need but do not receive help; and
  - Difficulty in accessing mental health support and inconsistent care due to provider turnover
- Lack of access to healthy foods
- Poor health care infrastructure
- Language barriers, including difficulty finding health care providers who speak languages other than English or provide effective translation services
- Lack of access to housing

## Findings



### Concerns

- Mental health
- Environmental racism
- Language barriers prevent residents from accessing resources and programs
- Hospital closures



### Strengths

- New County health department
- Strong community organizations assisting residents
- High value of healthy food and physical activity



### Needs

- Improved transportation and housing access
- Culturally sensitive care in health and community settings



Figure 5. Small groups discuss community health at the Concord Community Conversation



### Emerging Themes

- In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are struggling with poor mental health and chronic stress. There is a desire to achieve peace of mind for optimal health, and awareness and access to mental health services is limited.
- Residents across Delco are concerned about the environmental racism and challenges faced in the Chester area due to the presence of the trash incinerator.
- There is a strong sense of community in Delco, but minoritized populations and those who do not speak English feel less connected than the population at large.
- Access to medical care is critical to prevention and management of chronic disease. The community is concerned about recent hospital closures. Challenges in accessing health care and need for affordable health insurance has a major effect on the quality of life across all the communities in Delaware County.
- Strong community connections to organizations that offer free and low-cost services play an important role in maintaining health and wellbeing, are truly appreciated by all residents of the county and need to be broadly advertised to reach their targeted population.
- Access to quality food and opportunities to stay physically active are recognized as foundations for maintaining good physical and mental health.
- Access to transportation and affordable housing plays a major role in accessing essential services and this could be improved in many of our communities.
- Culture, language, and family circumstances impact how individuals navigate health systems; minoritized populations struggle with feeling unsafe and/or face poor treatment from health care providers and in the community.

### Participant Recommendations

There were many good and thoughtful ideas generated during the CCA, some that would be easier to implement than others, but all worthy goals to achieve to better the quality of life in our community. Listed below are some that were shared at multiple events:

- Establish an easily accessible database of community health services and resources
- Increase access to healthy food sources which are fresh and affordable
- Increase mental health resources for all members of our community, including mobile crisis intervention units, and consistency in care
- Transition trash disposal from incineration to more environmentally healthy options
- Find options for more affordable housing, including more homeless shelters, subsidized rental properties, etc.

- Prioritize the development of youth programs, including recreation, mentorship opportunities, and educational events focused on skills needed for future employment
- Recognize racism as a public health threat and take steps to address it
- Improve cultural and linguistic competencies in community, social, and physical/mental healthcare settings
- Develop process innovations to streamline service delivery to make it easier for residents to access care and support
- Support holistic and preventive approaches to health in physical, mental, and maternal health provider and community settings



## Recommendations

 <u>Wellbeing</u>	 <u>Community</u>	 <u>Help</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a directory of local health and support services</li> <li>• Increase access to healthy food</li> <li>• Make mental health care more accessible</li> <li>• Address pollution from trash incineration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find solutions for housing struggles, including shelters and rental assistance</li> <li>• Expand youth programs and activities</li> <li>• Fight racism in healthcare and beyond and build cultural understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it simpler for residents to access needed care and support</li> <li>• Promote well-being through physical, mental, and maternal health initiatives</li> </ul>

### Facilitator Observations

Participants at all Community Conversation locations demonstrated a sincere interest in sharing their thoughts and ideas on what was going well and what needed improvement in their communities to improve health. It is important to keep in mind that these events provided a sampling of thoughts and ideas from those residents that were in attendance and other residents from these communities may feel differently about these topics. All participants exhibited a strong sense of respect and willingness to listen to other points of view at each table, which was cultivated by the table leader and documented by the table scribe. Ideas were presented by a representative from each table (4-6 at each event) with passion and enthusiasm and the entire room listened respectfully and applauded after each presentation. These events were truly a display of people coming together to accomplish a common goal, which was to share with DCHD thoughts and ideas to improve the quality of life in their community.

After 10 focus groups ranging with diverse groups of individuals, there are clear and consistent community strengths and assets that are shown through each of the groups. It is clear from these meetings that community aid, community crowd funding, food banks, and local non-profit organizations are the backbone of the community. It is noted that the organizations who took the lead in pulling together each focus group act as a positive asset in the lives of the individuals in attendance.

This is shown to be true for members across the MVP recovery, Mosaic, Jaisohn memorial house, CAADC, American Legion, and Murphy's Giving Market.

#### Recommendations for Future Efforts

During the planning phases of the CCA, many groups were recognized as populations of interest for the Focus Groups, but due to time and access constraints, not all these groups could be included. As DCHD advances its community health improvement efforts and expands its partner network, opportunities to reach these groups will improve. It is recommended that future focus groups include people with physical and mental disabilities (e.g. vision, hearing, cognitive, ambulatory), new Americans and multicultural communities, people who do not speak English, and youth.

As the Community Conversation locations were advertised publicly, DCHD received feedback that additional communities who would have liked to host. Although conversations were open to all Delaware County residents, promotional efforts were primarily made in municipalities where the conversation sites were located, as well as nearby municipalities. In the next assessment, it would be advisable to locate conversations in different communities to provide equitable access.

## Appendix A: Community Conversation Summaries

### Morton Community Conversation

Focus Group Date: July 19, 2023

Location: DCIU Conference Center, 200 Yale Ave. Morton, PA 19070

Participants: 18 Community Members

#### Questions and Discussion

#### 1. When you think about the things that make it easier for people to be healthy, what is going well in your community and Delaware County?

- Transportation to medical, food, gym
- Telehealth helps to bridge the gap
- Many open spaces, parks, safe trails, trees, yards for children to play
- Rose Tree Park and park programs
- Access to fresh, local food products, supermarkets
- Farmer's Markets
- Grocery delivery services
- Food banks, community gardens, church food pantries, senior food boxes
- Walkable communities
- Many exercise opportunities
- Youth sports
- Free food for children at Swarthmore School and at library
- Access to hospitals, medical care, and immunizations
- Education about substances, and substance use disorders in high school
- Chair yoga for seniors
- Education programs
- Swimming pools
- Volunteer organizations
- Delco Council newsletter
- Delaware County Health Department
- Strong community connections, church groups, library programs
- Cultural activities

#### Key Points:

Morton Community Conversation participants were positive about access to medical care opportunities. They considered access to hospitals, medical care, and immunizations assets, and expressed the benefits of telehealth as helping to meet the gap in medical care. Participants reported many assets regarding the accessibility of healthy foods, the close proximity of grocery stores, farmer's markets, and the convenience of grocery delivery services. They mentioned food pantries, community gardens, and senior food boxes. Regarding opportunities to be physically active, Morton participants were positive about having many open spaces to recreate, including trails, parks, and green spaces. Strong community connections were reported as

an asset to good health in Delaware County, including community programming, church and library groups, youth programs, senior yoga, etc.

## 2. What are the things that get in the way of good health in your community and Delaware County?

- High cost of health care, health insurance, not having insurance
- Transportation issues
- Money (income), benefits
- Loss of hospitals, health care facilities, and emergency responders
- Food deserts in Chester
- Dissemination/awareness of health department services
- Culture
- Loss of maternal/neonatal care
- Mental health
- Drug and alcohol services
- Lack of ADA accessible locations
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Difficulty scheduling appointments at primary care offices
- Lack of accessibility to computers for some community members
- Not enough tech/trade schools
- Lack of affordable elder care and in-home care
- Noise pollution
- Air pollution
- Transportation to access food and gym
- Telehealth
- Safety
- Lack of access to local produce
- Need more walkable, bikeable communities
- Need more green spaces
- Inability to get food, and food delivery
- Lack of high-paying jobs
- Cost of urgent care
- High cost of healthy food
- Minimal teaching in school about health
- Lack of central communication about healthy options
- Trash incinerator in Chester
- Lack of beds in treatment facilities
- Inadequate mental health services
- Affordable, safe, secure housing
- Food banks need to be evenly distributed across county, and need to offer healthier foods
- Lack of fruits and veggies
- Abundance of fast-food options
- Not enough available appointments for mental health, too few therapists
- Former toxic waste sites- soil and ground-water

### Key points:

Participants were concerned about the high cost of health care services, and health insurance. They spoke of a need for more mental health and drug and alcohol services. It can be difficult to schedule appointments, and urgent care services are expensive. They were also concerned about recent hospital closures and loss of maternal/neonatal care. Regarding food security, participants expressed the desire for more convenient access to local produce, and that food banks could be more evenly distributed across the county and could offer healthier foods. The high cost of healthy food, food deserts in Chester, and abundance of fast-food restaurants were reported as barriers to health. Noise pollution, air pollution, the trash incinerator in Chester,

and former toxic waste sites were expressed as environmental concerns. Areas for improvement included greater access to affordable childcare and elder care, as well as better-paying jobs.

### 3. What are your ideas to make Delaware County a healthier place to live, work, and play?

Participants were asked to generate ideas to improve health in Delaware County. Ideas were presented to the group, and each participant was given three dot stickers to vote for their top ideas. The top ideas at the Morton Conversation included making environmentally friendly improvements to the trash incinerator in Chester (7 votes), providing more affordable public housing (6 votes), increasing access to affordable medical services (5 votes), and increasing mobile mental health crisis units (5 votes). All ideas are listed below along with the number of votes received.

Votes	Ideas to Improve Health
7	Transition trash disposal from incinerator to more environmentally healthy options
6	Affordable housing including public
5	Access to more affordable medical services
5	Increase in mobile mental health crisis units
4	No or low-cost daycare especially for single moms
4	Increase in mental health resources and providers
4	Greater mental health treatment options
4	Equal access to programs regardless of economic status
3	More recreation centers
3	produce trucks to food deserts
2	More free activities for children
2	More natural bodies of water
2	Medical house calls
2	More advertisement of Delco health department services
2	Safe green spaces for recreation
2	Increase in EMS investments and primary care providers
2	Healthy food in food bank produce
2	More residential treatment recovery centers
2	Communicate county wide the opportunities available
2	Incentives for college students to enter social work, mental health
1	More parks
1	More CPR Basic life support training
1	More accessible Delco go
1	Increase greenery and walkable streets
1	Open space for preservation
1	Safe housing emergency for domestic violence victims
1	Education on programs offered in Delco

4. How do you think the Opioid Settlement Funds should be used in Delaware County?

Participants were provided with an overview of the Opioid Settlement Funds and were asked about how they feel the funds should be allocated in Delaware County. Ideas were shared with the group, and participants were provided with 3 dot stickers to vote for their favorite ideas. The top ideas included supporting grandparents of children affected by the opioid crisis through the foster care system (17 votes), facilitation of collaborative efforts between providers to standardize treatment and recovery effort in the county (10 votes), and focus efforts on 69<sup>th</sup> Street (9 votes).

Votes	Ideas for Allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds
17	Supporting grandparents of children affected by opioid crisis; piggyback off foster system
10	Delco Health Department to facilitate collaborative efforts between providers to standardize treatment and recovery effort in the county (advisory board)
9	Targeting 69th street
7	Use abandoned buildings / public buildings for recovery and rehabilitation
7	Address needs of pregnant and parenting women and families
6	Free health care and follow-up to children born to mothers with substance abuse
6	Treatment hub
4	Funding training CRS / pregnant women perinatal CRS
4	Enhanced training of 1st responders for mental health and 1st line medical staff
3	More inpatient care
3	Outreach services in street and in school
2	Warm hand-off programs
2	More access to NARCAN programs through peer-to-peer programs
2	Research with more public accountability
2	Support people in treatment and recovery
2	Access to improved mental health care
1	Continued care more than initial crisis
1	Early intervention strategies
1	Narcan availability in public spaces
1	Preventive programs in SUD for children
1	Support people in treatment and recovery
1	Easy access to fentanyl test strips and NARCAN in school settings
1	Supporting and training of mental health workers, counselors, coaches
1	Residential treatment centers and recovery homes
1	Wrap-around services
1	Expansion of warm hand-off programs and recovery services - recovery coaches
1	Address needs of pregnant women and families including neonatal abstinence syndrome
1	Increase education from K-12 holistic and realistic education + parents + personal stories
1	Increase risk mitigation education for physician prescription patterns / tracking of patterns
1	Increase testing kits accessibility

## Upper Darby Community Conversation

Focus Group Date: July 20, 2023

Location: Watkins Senior Center, 326 Watkins Ave Upper Darby, PA 19082

Participants: 13 Community Members

### Questions and Discussion

#### 1. When you think about the things that make it easier for people to be healthy, what is going well in your community and Delaware County?

- New Health Department with Environmental Health Services (Food Safety)
- Church-sponsored health fairs, screenings, immunizations through Crozer
- Many COVID-19 vaccination and testing sites
- Crozer health system program provides transportation for patients
- Access to health centers, doctors, and hospitals
- Many parks that are accessible and well-maintained
- Tracks, trails and open spaces provide opportunities for walking
- Many fitness centers
- More non-smoking areas
- Cultural diversity
- Good schools and educational opportunities
- Municipalities investing in their community and parks
- Policemen
- Better sustainability through reduced carbon footprint
- Many community groups/organizations
- Amazing Grazing Goats
- Access to grocery stores, Wawas, Walmart, and department stores
- Increase in community pride
- Churches, community centers, library, senior centers
- Transportation via SEPTA
- Resources are accessible
- Jails and prisons

#### Key points:

Participants in the Upper Darby Community Conversation listed a variety of community assets that promote good health in the area. They commented on accessibility of opportunities to be active (parks, trails, open spaces), health care access (COVID-19 vaccination and testing sites, doctors, hospitals, transportation to medical visits), food access (grocery, convenience, and department stores), community connectedness (cultural diversity, religious centers, libraries, senior centers, good relationships with police), and transportation opportunities through SEPTA.



## 2. What are the things that get in the way of good health in your community and Delaware County?

- Increasing costs for food, good, services, living expenses, and high health care costs
- Loss of two hospitals (including DCMH)
- Limited healthcare appointments, especially night/weekend appointments
- Hospitals and clinics not accessible
- Doctors leaving area, fewer providers
- Lack of health insurance
- Lack of mental health services (although telehealth has improved access)
- Agencies working in silos
- Pollution, dumping of trash, poor lighting
- Lack of summer programming for children, including summer feeding/lunch program
- Need for improvements to roads and sidewalks
- Socialization
- Lack of music, events, festivals, sporting events
- Community violence, people do not feel safe leaving home
- Lack of food pantries
- Unhealthy, sugary foods are more affordable
- Lack of access to supermarkets, fresh fruits and vegetables
- Government red tape
- Many people experiencing homelessness due to pandemic; need for more services for displaced persons
- Major setbacks from COVID
- School lunches are unhealthy
- Communication is not always good, lack of transparency results in distrust
- Too many bars and alcohol distributors
- Need for more alcohol and drug-free activities
- Racism
- Inadequate wages, income
- Many people do not understand data, results in disconnection
- Need to extend hours for senior centers
- Drugs easily accessible
- Need for more drug and alcohol services
- More transportation options needed for medical appointments
- Better partnerships with SEPTA needed

**Key points:**

Participants provided a wide variety of barriers to good health in the community. Recent hospital closures have resulted in many concerns about health care access; additionally, doctors are leaving the area, appointments are not available during convenient times, there is a lack of treatment options for mental health and substance use disorders, and health insurance access is an issue. Regarding food access, the costs of food have risen, access to supermarkets and fresh fruits and vegetables are limited, school lunches are perceived to be unhealthy, more food pantries are needed, and there are no summer feeding programs for children. Community problems include racism, homelessness, poor communication, inadequate wages, need for more community programming, and easy access to drugs and alcohol.

3. What are your ideas to make Delaware County a healthier place to live, work, and play?

Participants were asked to generate ideas to improve health in Delaware County. Ideas were presented to the group, and each participant was given three dot stickers to vote for their top ideas. The top ideas included opening a community hospital in Upper Darby (7 votes), facilitating easier access to county resources (6 votes), and better assessment and approach to mental health care (5 votes).

Votes	Ideas to Improve Health
7	Community Hospital Upper Darby
6	Easier access to county resources
5	Better assessment and approach to mental health care
4	Community garden
4	Hub with daycare and online Upper Darby welcome center
4	More affordable housing to low income
3	Better paying jobs
3	Access to emergency care
2	School meals for children in summer
2	Mobile health care
2	Emergency care mobile units
2	Investment in public places
1	More music festivals
1	More supermarkets
1	Mental health resources
1	Affordable childcare
1	Engagement activities for children
1	Free rehab centers

4. How do you think the Opioid Settlement Funds should be used in Delaware County?

Participants were provided with an overview of the Opioid Settlement Funds and were asked about how they feel the funds should be allocated in Delaware County. Ideas were shared with

the group, and participants were provided with 3 dot stickers to vote for their favorite ideas. The top ideas included targeting 69<sup>th</sup> street (9 votes), using abandoned buildings for recovery and rehabilitation (7 votes), and addressing the needs of pregnant/parenting women and their families (7 votes).

Votes	Ideas for Allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds
9	Targeting 69th street
7	Use abandoned buildings for recovery and rehab
7	Address needs of pregnant / parenting women and their families
6	Free health care and follow-up to children born to mothers with substance abuse disorder
5	Treatment hub
4	Funding for training/ CRS/Pregnant women/perinatal CRS
3	More patient care
1	Narcan vending machine
1	Preventive programs for children

## Chester Community Conversation

Focus Group Date: August 9, 2023

Location: ACCESS Chester Community Center, 701 Booth St. Chester, PA 19013

Participants: 73 Community Members

### Questions and Discussion

1. When you think about the things that make it easier for people to be healthy, what is going well in your community and Delaware County?

- Establishment of DCHD, involvement and curiosity of health department
- Health screenings (asthma, breast cancer)
- Warming centers for homeless persons on west side (Emergency Services)
- Attention to health disparities
- Health care that is quality and local, Urgent Care with accessible hours
- Improvements to EMS and Law Enforcement equipment
- Access to vaccinations
- Health Board educates about where doctors are located
- Access to optical care
- Rec Center is open longer
- Walking trails
- Swimming pools, public parks, new playground in Sun Village and new playground equipment throughout the county
- Monitoring of air and water quality, clean air, availability of clean water
- Services available, such as leaf pick up, city-issued trash cans with wheels, etc.
- Community violence has decreased
- More health materials, resources and events, greater awareness
- Community pride in Chester, strong engagement, connection and collaboration, civic engagement
- Community organizations provide resources to bridge the gap
- Community events and meetings
- Libraries
- Keystone Wellness Center- food pantry/exercise
- Food pantry, farmer's market, food banks (increasing), supermarket, free food giveaways in different parts of the county, local groups focusing on local food
- Delco has pockets of healthy, fresh food and produce

- Leadership change in government, Rep Kazeem's office and constitutional services, curiosity from local leaders
- Communication to residents has improved
- Access Center serves homeless (but not open long enough), and options are healthy
- Chester Housing Authority's gardens
- Chester Education Center provide jobs, career services
- Police are more responsive, and are responding to mental health calls
- Church-based programs
- Vendor visitors who bring products that are economical for residents
- Collaborative work with outside resources
- COSA, access to health care and transportation for seniors

**Key points:**

Chester Community Conversation participants were enthusiastic about the community connections and energy in the area- both among citizens, and with recent changes in government, library programming, church groups, community organizations, and community meetings being held to address issues. Regarding food access, food pantries, the farmer's market, food banks, and food giveaways all help to address food security in the community. Several services are helping to meet community needs, including warming centers for displaced persons, leaf pick up, trash cans with wheels, and health screenings. Police and EMS equipment, and playgrounds have all improved. COSA provides good care and access to resources for seniors. Public pools and parks are assets to the community.

2. [What are the things that get in the way of good health in your community and Delaware County?](#)

- Health equity issues, better needs assessments needed
- Hospital closures, lack of health care facilities
- Health data across systems
- Staffing shortages at hospitals and doctor's offices; doctors not showing up to appointments
- Not enough medical providers for children
- Fear of, Lack of trust in medical system
- Doctors not addressing special needs
- Limited linkages between health care services
- Not enough training for health care issues
- Crozer is dirty and needs to be cleaned
- More health education is needed for issues specific to Chester
- Underqualified home health care taking advantage of the system
- Need more grief counselors, mental health providers for young males

- Exercise facilities are limited, Silver Sneakers not available locally
- Need more public open spaces for outdoor recreation
- Pollution from industries causing poor air quality, asthma, cancer, bad smells from trucks/trash plant
- Business decisions not in the best interest of residents
- Political motivation behind community initiatives
- Concern about mosquito spraying in summer months
- Lack of participation, community events to bring people together
- Health education in schools needs to start earlier (before 5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Lack of safe parks, no streetlights
- Split between east and west side causes safety issue
- Lack of city-specific data
- Trash dumping- causes sidewalk hazards
- Stigma over Chester keeping proper
- Free food programs are not well-known
- Lack of access to fresh, healthy produce
- No grocery stores in the area, existing markets do not provide quality food; supermarkets are needed
- High cost of food, especially healthy food
- Fast food culture
- Properties need to be better maintained, many abandoned houses and cars
- Access center hours need to be extended for homeless persons
- Need for homeless to be provided with job opportunities
- Communication and awareness of programs is limited, lack of resources, lack of public health service knowledge
- Cyber security threats
- Limited income, funds, livable wages to get by
- No bathrooms at the field for Cheetah parents
- Support network for seniors needed, including transportation to hospitals and recreational services
- Poor quality of senior homes and Salvation Army homes
- Drug use and prostitution
- Transportation options are limited and inaccessible
- Accidents

**Key points:**

Participants expressed many concerns about the medical system, including a general fear of and lack of trust in the system. Health care facilities/hospitals have closed, and there is a shortage of providers (pediatrics specifically). There is a need for more education on how to

manage health conditions and general health education for Chester-specific issues. They have many concerns about the health and environmental impacts due to air pollution caused by the trash incinerator; they want access to better data to support this issue. Access to healthy food is insufficient- supermarkets are needed, and there is a need to improve awareness of emergency food resources. There is also a need for more indoor and outdoor opportunities for physical activity, including improvements to parks and streetlights. Public safety, drugs, and prostitution were listed as concerns.

### 3. What are your ideas to make Delaware County a healthier place to live, work, and play?

Participants were asked to generate ideas to improve health in Delaware County. Ideas were presented to the group, and each participant was given three dot stickers to vote for their top ideas. The top ideas included the development of a publicly accessible database of health services available (18 votes), end the use of the Covanta waste incinerator in Chester (16 votes), and create more fresh, healthy food resources in the area (10 votes). All ideas are listed below along with the number of votes received.

Votes	Ideas to Improve Health
18	Database of health services available
16	End use of Covanta waste incinerator / stop burning trash in Chester / incinerator out of Chester
10	More healthy food sources / fresh food sources / affordable local & farm market
8	Increasing homeless shelter access / shelter for homeless in our city
8	Bring a high-quality market
7	Bring back the YMCA to Chester
7	More mentors for kids
6	Cleaning abandoned housing and lots
6	Ensure grant funds from Chester stay in Chester, not given to County
5	A new park / fix parks / accessible park
5	City Council to listening more to family's health and social needs / increase connectivity with city officials
5	Build I-95 residential wall for noise
4	More activities for kids and seniors / more places for seniors
4	Clean air / water / environment
4	Safer streets with lights and roads / more better police / fix streets' lights
4	Better communication and access to information on services
4	Safe areas to walk and play, including kids
4	Offer incentives for business to come develop in food desert areas
3	Security at the senior housing developments
3	Handle homeless soliciting at stores
3	New youth center 911

3	Make sure and prioritize residents' safety first especially lights during soccer games
3	More meals for seniors and disabled people
3	Better communication between departments
3	Better wages and affordable health care
3	Teach home agriculture and nutrition
2	More healthy eating programs for kids
2	Increased police presence at night / more police presence non-intimidating
2	Prevention & crisis work on mental health for youth
2	Better schools
2	Clean up the trash and weeds
2	Access to community information / better distribution of information about available services
2	Public notifications when construction or demolition is planned
2	Enforce business to pay their share of taxes
2	Publish community events
2	Have a place for nonprofits to photocopy event flyers free of charge
2	Easier access to health care
2	Jobs for teens and young adults
2	Mental health facility
2	Family consumer science home economics classes in curriculum
1	Requiring police to patrol and introduce themselves on foot in their division
1	Monitoring parks with security
1	Upkeep of playgrounds and parks
1	Better follow-up emergency department for kids with asthma
1	More respect and communication
1	Better places to eat
1	More places to go with family and friends
1	More green spaces
1	Demolish abandoned houses
1	Increase paid personnel
1	No natural gas plant
1	Improve poverty programs
1	Increase and enforce fines for dumping
1	Take care of trash, overgrown trees, and foliage
1	Drug programs for addiction
1	Improve stigma of Chester
1	Affordable childcare



4. How do you think the Opioid Settlement Funds should be used in Delaware County? Participants were provided with an overview of the Opioid Settlement Funds and were asked about how they feel the funds should be allocated in Delaware County. Ideas were shared with the group, but there was not enough time for participants to vote on their favorite ideas. Ideas are listed below, sorted by themes that emerged.

<b>Education</b>
Education to prevent use
Education on Narcan training
Education on healing
Education on Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in schools and community
Education for families who need 911
<b>Support for Families</b>
Support to help families feel more stable
Support and Increase family rights in getting addicted persons in care
Support families impacted in Chester with funding for care, help with mental health services
<b>Rehabilitation Facilities</b>
Long term rehabilitation facilities away from local environments of people with SUD
Rehabilitation centers located in Chester
<b>Support for Incarcerated Persons</b>
Support incarcerated persons
Improve prison access to substance abuse and mental health services so they are better when released
<b>Community Centers</b>
Create a family center to support families with (SUD)
Create community center in neighborhoods with counseling and recreation services
<b>Prevention Programming</b>
Invest in prevention programs with education and resources for younger generations
Provide mental health treatment and prevention for young people
<b>Other</b>
Work on stigma
Mentorship with intergenerational support "The village" concept
Mobile units to engage the homeless populations
Transportation vouchers to the programs (SUD)
Improve 302 process (letters are making it difficult)
Improve "Warm hand over" between providers of pregnant women with SUD
Improve primary care providers' accountability when prescribing opioids
Improve systems with Children Youth Services (CYS) referrals not just closing cases for safe homes without required support
Support organizations currently providing prevention activities in Chester
Trauma informed care for children and families
Better follow-up care

## Concord Community Conversation

Focus Group Date: August 10, 2023

Location: Concord Township Municipal Building, 43 S. Thornton Rd. Glen Mills, PA 19342

Participants: 12 Community Members

### Questions and Discussion

1. When you think about the things that make it easier for people to be healthy, what is going well in your community and Delaware County?

- New Health Department
- Access to opportunities for physical activity (tennis course, parks, recreation centers, YMCA)
- Open spaces and fresh air
- Community connections, outreach, and resources
- Accessible services
- County task force
- Programs through libraries and other organizations
- Assistance for community gardens available
- School lunch choices
- Advertising, clear and concise marketing

**Key points:** Concord Community Conversation participants were very positive about the connectivity of the community and spoke of many assets including indoor and outdoor physical activity opportunities, open space, fresh air, accessible and well-advertised services and programs. They are excited about the new health department, and opportunities to develop community gardens.

2. What are the things that get in the way of good health in your community and Delaware County?

- The impacts of the pandemic, including isolation and the lack of socialization
- Increased concerns about mental health
- Not enough activities for youth
- Areas for improvement include culture and acceptance
- Lack of health and home economics classes in school
- Need for changes to school start times to accommodate cognitive needs of students

- Environmental justice issues
- Language barriers
- People not aware of the resources available
- Poor lifestyle choices, lack of motivation
- Children spending too much time using screens/electronic devices; need for DCIU to work with schools/families on this issue
- Not enough places in school where resources and information are available to the public
- Children having to support their families
- Struggles of senior citizens
- Lack of transportation options

**Key Points:**

Participants expressed many concerns about youth, including their educational (need for health and home economics classes), mental health, and leisure time activity needs (need for more activities, less screen time). The impacts of the pandemic, including isolation, lack of socialization, and its impact on physical and mental health were discussed. They spoke of the need for improvements regarding addressing culture, language, acceptance, and environmental justice. Struggles of senior citizens, and lack of opportunities for transportation were also listed.

3. [What are your ideas to make Delaware County a healthier place to live, work, and play?](#)

Participants were asked to generate ideas to improve health in Delaware County. Ideas were presented to the group, and each participant was given three dot stickers to vote for their top ideas. The top ideas included increasing mental health resources and transitional supports (6 votes), later school schedule to account for needs of students and families (5 votes), support healthy homes with a focus on environmental justice (4 votes), and monthly health themes in schools (4 votes). All ideas are listed below along with the number of votes received.

Votes	Ideas to Improve Health
6	Increase mental health resources / transitional support
5	Later school schedule to account for needs of students and families
4	Support health homes FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
4	Monthly health themes in schools
3	Job for teens, chances to learn or develop skills, programs based for exposure
3	Marketing of resources and public information
2	Maternal Health
2	Increase activities in classes to increase student engagement
2	Community parks
2	Community gardens
1	Education, health, active events for outreach and engagement
1	Healthy living - information for influence and resource to support targeted communities

1	Community focused events
1	Youth focused events
1	Monthly newsletters
1	Spotlight on health fun locations for meetups / resources
1	Volunteer opportunities with the health department who can share resources

4. How do you think the Opioid Settlement Funds should be used in Delaware County?

Participants were provided with an overview of the Opioid Settlement Funds and were asked about how they feel the funds should be allocated in Delaware County. Ideas were shared with the group, and participants were provided with 3 dot stickers to vote for their favorite ideas. The top ideas included youth mental health first aid training (6 votes), support for families (5 votes), attention to incarcerated populations (5 votes), support for families supported by grandparents/other caregivers (5 votes), and support for youth impacted by incarceration and drug use (5 votes).

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Ideas for Allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds</b>
6	First aid training youth focused
5	Family support
5	Attention to incarcerated populations
5	Support for families supported by grandparents / other care givers
5	Support for youth impacted by incarceration and drug use
3	Prevent overprescribing and dispensing opioids
3	Actionable implementation programs
2	Education programs
2	Funding for facilities / knowledge of available facilities
1	Peer support groups
1	Spiritual support for success
1	Narcan program
1	Substance abuse education / literacy
1	Education on referrals
1	Programs for youth impacted by the cycle of addiction

## Radnor Community Conversation

Focus Group Date: August 17, 2023

Location: Radnor Township Municipal Building, 301 Iven Ave. Wayne, PA 19087

Participants: 20 Community Members

### Questions and Discussion

1. When you think about the things that make it easier for people to be healthy, what is going well in your community and Delaware County?

- Access to medical care is good; there are many doctors, hospitals, primary care options
- New Health Department has been created
- Increased availability of alternate health care modalities
- Insurance coverage is good
- New health initiatives
- Many open spaces, trails, parks, and outside activities
- Fresh air
- Natural resources
- Tree canopies
- Yoga studios and gyms/fitness centers
- Strong sense of community, opportunity for human interaction
- High levels of education
- Community events
- Culture
- Schools screening
- Balance between education and extra-curricular activities
- Programs for youth
- Sunshine rules
- Safe day and night
- Variety of food sources
- Work from home opportunities provide more free time
- Dense population means more businesses want to be here, economics are good, and phenomenal finance market
- Access to good, healthy food
- Organic grocery stores
- Social norms
- Good quality of life
- Younger generations influence healthier behaviors
- Radnor Board of Health does a great job
- Senior Center
- Transportation options

## Key points:

Participants in Radnor had many positive things to say about access to medical care, and open spaces in which to be physically active. Respondents feel that food is accessible, that there is a strong sense of community, and that businesses are thriving. They are excited for new health initiatives, and for the new health department.

### 2. What are the things that get in the way of good health in your community and Delaware County?

- Poor air quality
- Ineffective communication systems; need for internet-based and hard copy distribution of information
- Lack of medical freedom, especially regarding vaccination
- Vaccine coercion
- Closing of local hospitals
- Less centralization of health care
- Not having a health department for so long
- Mental health crisis
- Lack of centrally-located health centers that address mental health and substance use disorders
- Not enough sidewalks
- Lack of public pools
- Not enough activities for kids in the summer
- Pest control spraying is not being regulated
- Lack of residential engagement
- Road safety is a concern; many drivers are distracted, and traffic has increased
- Noise, particularly along the “Blue Route”
- Overdevelopment of land, and devastation to the natural environment, environmental impact
- Not enough enforcement of zoning
- Poor water quality
- Cost of healthy food is prohibitive
- Food pantries have limited healthy options
- Lack of affordable housing
- Political red tape
- Family predisposition
- Concern about conflicts of interest in board studies
- Targeting of youth via social media regarding promiscuity; concerns about STI
- Need for more scientific debate
- Concerns about political and scientific censorship
- Need for better communication
- Need for cooling centers
- More activities are need for seniors outside of senior center
- Lack of transportation

**Key points:**

Environmental concerns rose to the top of the list for barriers at this conversation. Specifically, residents were concerned about traffic safety, air quality, noise, water quality, and the impacts of overdevelopment on the environment. Medical freedom and vaccine coercion were also a top concern for this group. Mental health was identified as a health problem, and participants would like more treatment facilities for mental health and substance use disorders. A lack of cooling centers, and activity opportunities for seniors were also concerns. Residents also feel that there is an opportunity to improve communication to the public by improving dissemination of information through internet-based and hard-copy/paper distribution.

3. What are your ideas to make Delaware County a healthier place to live, work, and play?

Participants were asked to generate ideas to improve health in Delaware County. Ideas were presented to the group, and each participant was given three dot stickers to vote for their top ideas. The top ideas included investing in a mobile mental health/substance use disorder treatment unit (7 votes), the development of a wellness center for substance use disorder treatment/prevention in Folsom (7 votes), and investing in more urban gardens, green spaces and trees (5 votes). All ideas are listed below along with the number of votes received.

Votes	Ideas to Improve Health
7	Mobile units for early intervention treatment of mental health / substance use disorders
7	Purchase the school at Belmont Ave in Folsom and develop it into a sober living wellness center that offers prevention education, harm reduction, treatment, and works to break stigma.
5	More urban gardens, plant trees, more greenery
4	Housing that is accessible to all
3	Strong code that is enforced
3	Noise restriction designating time for yard work
3	More access to public or community-sponsored transportation
3	Open sober living facilities
2	Light pollution ordinance
2	More mental health resources
2	Stop over-vaccinating
2	Bridges mentorship programs through universities and colleges
2	Promoting walkability in urban planning
2	Leverage publicly owned infrastructure available for recreation to those without access
2	Hire 2 counselors for every park to hold summer activities
1	No 5 G
1	Lessons learned

1	Integrating network of trails
1	Oversight of drug prescriptions
1	Increasing community gardens / more food
1	Healthy school lunch food programs
1	Later school time for Delco students
1	Quality health care hospitals through Delco
1	Address food insecurity
1	Municipal-supplied newsletters to communicate events to those technologically challenged
1	Mobilize activities sending them to different neighborhoods

#### 4. How do you think the Opioid Settlement Funds should be used in Delaware County?

Participants were provided with an overview of the Opioid Settlement Funds and were asked about how they feel the funds should be allocated in Delaware County. Ideas were shared with the group, and participants were provided with 3 dot stickers to vote for their favorite ideas. The top ideas included NARCAN training, education and distribution (7 votes), mobile mental health/substance use disorder units (7 votes), and more prevention education for elementary school students.

Votes	Ideas for Allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds
7	Narcan training, education, and distribution
7	Mobile mental health / substance use disorder units for early intervention
7	More education in lower grades on prevention
5	Direct funding for graduate mental health counselor
5	Addiction education in schools at all age levels
4	Mental health trained first responders
4	Pain management resources outside of pills for health providers
3	Prevent over-prescribing
3	Legal consequences for Kraton* distribution (*herbal substance that can produce opioid- and stimulant-like effects.
2	Information on 988 systems
2	More mental health professional integration in law, schools, community, enforcement with follow-up
1	More access to first responders to get Naloxone in parks , recreational centers with AEDs
1	Anti-drug campaign for children
1	Physician education to limit opioids prescription
1	School health for mental health / prevention programs



## Appendix B: Focus Group Summaries

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## Fatherhood Summit

Focus Group Date: July 21, 2023

Location: Boys & Girls Club of Chester PA (East 7<sup>th</sup> St. Chester, PA)

Participants: 4 Community Members

Special Population(s): Young Fathers, Black Men

### Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Multi-layered: Mental, Spiritual, emotional, and physical
  - Ability to Respond to needs appropriately
  - Financial Health – Resources
  - Occupational Health
  - Environmental Health
  
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care Services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - Avoided using because they are not inviting
  - Community health events are more beneficial
  - Holistic approach
  - Experienced being treated second class
  
3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
  - Multi-layered
  - Strive for Positive outlook
  - Daily Self-care routine
  
4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
  - There's no trust with health care providers, so we try to avoid services – focus more on holistic approaches and preventative measures.

5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
  - Declare Racism a public health crisis
  - More trauma informed Care services
  - Men's Health Groups
  - Health Dept. to supplement health care Services
  - Holistic Service
  
6. What are things community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others
  - Parks
  - More farmers and produce Markets
  - Grocery store accessibility
  
7. What are the things in your community or work, place that led to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain
  - Lack of education and economic growth

## Mosaic Medical

Focus Group Date: August 23, 2023

Location: Mosaic Medical (940 Chester Pike, Sharon Hill, PA 19079)

Participants: 7 Community Members

Special Population(s): LGBTQIA+ Community

### Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Having clean air
    - One participant lives in Chester near the Covanta incinerator, has noticeable breathing issues, and added that the incinerator impacts neighboring boroughs
  - Being able to access safe spaces to workout
    - Safe in regards of community violence + body autonomy from personal violence
  - The ability to travel to exercise locations/gyms
  - Eating clean and healthy foods
  
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care Services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - It is a nightmare to find providers that take Medicaid and specifically your type of Medicaid
  - For trans participants they had experience with misgendering, deadnaming, including on intake forms and online
  - Wait times to get appointments with providers, having to go to multiple locations for one issue to be resolved
  - Mosaic helps connect to services, and to providers that are knowledgeable on all health concerns without bias.
  - Being told you're drug seeking instead of getting treatment or testing

3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
  - Mosaic has been helpful, providing free group/music/art therapy sessions.
  - Mental health diagnosis is hard to get they can be hard can be hard to diagnose, and insurance pushback on coverage is a challenge without a diagnosis.
  - Mosaic is amazing; they don't "other" participants and make it easy to be comfortable in discussing gender/sexuality.
  
4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
  - It's hard to find a therapist that has expertise in LGBTQ+ issues adults and children, mainly getting therapy session through Mosaic.
  - Children of trans parents, facing bullying and most times don't have access to a therapist.
  
5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
  - Standard of training and forms (accreditation/certs) for physicians to increase care for LGBTQ+. It will act as a stamp of approval for LGBTQ+ individuals when looking for a health care provider
  - Safe community center for LGBTQ+ youth and their families. This can help with community awareness and limit bullying.
  - More organizations like Mosaic, or even a seal of approval from DCHD + Mosaic
  
6. What are things in the community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others
  - Community aid, one participant talks about living in Chester and how the community helps one another with food/resources
  - Mosaic and their staff being a large help in getting proper health information and care/support. It's far for some participants but it's completely worth the travel.
  
7. What are the things in your community or work, place that lead to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain
  - Limited access to in-network care
  - Negative social perspective on those that are trans, so safety and body autonomy is jarring and anxiety inducing when in public spaces

## The Line-Up Barbershop

Focus Group Date: September 10, 2023

Location: The Line-Up Barbershop (208 Macdade Blvd. Yeadon, PA 19050)

Participants: 5 Community Members

Special Population(s): Black Men

### Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Regular physical activity, whether through sports, fitness routines, or recreational activities, is seen as crucial for maintaining physical health and well-being.
  - Maintaining physical health is a fundamental priority. This includes regular exercise, a balanced diet, and getting enough sleep. As men that do so much and care for our families, we understand that we aren't able to always do these things. Your family depends on you, so you sacrifice yourself.
  - Eating healthy, a lot of what's on the market is designed to kill you. One participant talked about cooking their own food and prioritizing knowing what is going into the food that is being made.
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - Many Black men are aware of the health disparities that exist in their communities and are concerned about addressing and reducing these disparities. The larger issue with going to a health care provider is not being seen. You think about how black boys and men have been used as experiments in health care, and now you deal with bias from doctors. Most black men would rather handle the issue recreationally and go about their day. We see how harmful that is, and the women in our lives even with their own history with medical providers still encourage us to seek medical attention. We go because they worry.
  - You go to see a doctor but never leave with the issue being fixed or addressed, especially when it comes to pain.

3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
  - As men we don't feel there's space to talk about our mental health. When we are with our close friends the focus is directed on drinking or smoking. There isn't a time to talk about what's paining us mentally, the focus becomes trying to cover it up some way. The outlets that is acceptable for us as black men are very small. What made the difference in mental health is growing brotherhood with men that can listen, give guidance, and can be there outside of a party or talking about/being around women.
  
4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
  - Only one of the men in the room was a father, and he reported that's not information he's aware of. When his children are having a bad mental day or period, he steps in to do what they enjoy and validates their feelings. He spoke on the importance of giving this to his children, because the world won't, and he didn't get that type of affirmation as a child.
  
5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
  - More mental health safe spaces for black men and boys, this conversation that is being held is a great example of what is needed overall. Black men desire to have the capacity to speak with those that look like them and understand them
  - A possible grant that encourages more black physicians to work and practice in Delco
  - Delco funding rec / athletic spaces for boys and men to work out and play. Many basketball courts are heavily monitored by police, and it increases stress when you're trying to relieve it.
  - The DCHD clinics are great for the community, but it is noticed that much of the operations aren't directed toward men's health
  
6. What are things community or workplace that led to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others
  - There's a large understanding of community here, one of our participants host a yearly bookbag drive for the kids in Darby. Another is a police officer that works on community relations from Drexel Hill into Darby. There's a need to step up in ways that the county has fallen short for its residents in particular areas.

7. What are the things in your community or work, place that led to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain

- When it comes to those that show up for their community, it's the same faces that tend to show up. The biggest question and strife in getting black men to rally together, is more of us seeing the importance of showing up. We know the issue has been the lack of being heard or seen as valuable, but we need to see that change. There's a correlation to how services are limited but how we don't show up. It's not just harming us individually, but all of us collectively.
- For many of us growing up in parts of Delco there isn't healthy food always available, but our mother's made it work.



## Murphy's Giving Market

Focus Group Date: September 12, 2023

Location: Murphy's Giving Market (7408 West Chester Pike, Upper Darby, PA)

Participants: 10 Community Members (2 groups)

Special Population(s): Displaced Persons, Hispanic or Latino Residents

### Group 1 Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Basic health services
  - Fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Includes a wide range of health activities.
  - Physical fitness
  - Feeling energized when you are physically active (i.e., Walking or running are beneficial exercise)
  - Healthy diets, foods and vegetables.
  - Resources regarding Maternal health.
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - One participant said that they do go for regular checkups and doctor's visits. One participant expressed that he was fearful and reluctant to visit the doctor's office due to potentially hearing bad news. He remarked that there is a family history of heart and other medical conditions. While the third participant in this group stated that she is disappointed in her experiences when attending the doctor. She spoke about the struggle to get an appointment, the lack of reliability in processing her prescriptions, as well as having to pay excessive amounts out-of-pocket
  - Participants communicated there was a lack of information on providers, apprehension to hearing difficult news, and a lack of effectiveness when they do visit the doctor.
  - Depressive episodes were also mentioned as participants sought out medical attention. The depression stemmed from the inadequacy of medical professionals and receiving misinformation from doctor to doctor. The process of receiving medical care was also discussed, and how the participants were frustrated with

feeling as though they were getting the “run around”. In short, the desire for a streamlined health care process was alluded to.

- Other factors that related to accessing services within the community included not having geographically accessible doctors, lack of offices and an abundance of urgent care facilities, insurance carrier issues, the closure of the local hospital. Now, patients are referred to Mercy hospital which could potentially be difficult to get to for residents. All these issues lead to people “self-helping” as opposed to seeing medical professionals.
- For those that did visit the doctor they reported improved health and information that contributed to an increased state of health, but others who never visited the doctor could not respond to this question.

### 3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?

- Participants correlated mental health with their own mental health conditions and other issues observed within the community i.e., drug and other substance abuse. It was reported that their mental health was poor due to high levels of depression, seeing community members who are struggling. Frequent frustration was expressed at feeling like local governments are helping residents, stress induced by food insecurity, stressors of keeping house and home. One major theme discussed was how mental health was impacted by the onset of the pandemic. Quarantine forced many families to stay within the home, which then caused an elimination of activities to keep children engaged. Also, being cooped up within the home also contributed to poor mental health. As a group we discussed helpful tools to improve mental health, faith-based practices were mentioned.

### 4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?

- Participants did not have much of an idea of who to call for specific health emergencies. For instance, if someone was having a mental health-related incident there was not a definitive answer provided as to who they would call. They stated they would direct all calls to 9-1-1. Discussion reflected an increased need for information on therapeutic resources and providers. Most of the group shared that when issues arise involving mental health, they reach out to family and loved ones to self-help. An area of improvement for the health department was offering more homebound calls for families, so that they and their loved ones could receive care at once and in an environment, they are comfortable with.

5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
  - Participants stated that they would like to see a centralized system for residents to access care and providers. They expressed difficulties in consistent medical providers, providers who lack cultural competency, and are more concerned with quantity of patients as opposed to positive patient outcomes. An improved welfare caseworker system that educates, responds to and cares for those who use the welfare system.
6. What are things in the community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others
  - The group did not have much to share in the way of good things in their communities, and mostly had poor experiences and feedback to share. One thing they do appreciate about their community is they pool together to do activities and get things accomplished. They stated they would like to see improvements in centers and organizations like the YMCA offering free or low-cost services to the community. Increasing access to fresh fruits and improving the hygiene and cleanliness of public spaces hygiene places in public spaces.
7. What are the things in your community or workplace that lead to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain

*This question was skipped because the topic was discussed at length during prior conversation.*

8. Is there anything further anyone would like to add about any of the topics we have already discussed and that you feel you have not had a chance to say?
  - The group expressed a desire to find and appoint one dedicated leader to address issues and concerns, something along the lines of a community advocate. They expressed how thankful they are Murphy's Giving Market, for the good quality of food.

## Group 2 Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Healthy foods, cleanliness of facilities, better resources for getting healthy foods, safety and cleanliness of neighborhoods spaces, annual doctor's visits, physical exercise etc.

2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care Services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - Some participants reported having access to medical doctors and therapists. Those who did not report seeing a medical professional routinely reported that they have supportive family members who assist them with care. They remarked that the advances in technology make it extremely easy to research wellness resources and remedies for ailments.
3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
  - Seeing a doctor, using the right medications, knowledge on resources and drug education, going for walks helps with mental health, telephone medicines, only mental health resources are the pharmacy and hospital.
4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
  - Outside of the family some have access and know where to access mental health services. Whereas others are strictly dependent on their families. There seems to be a divide in accessible information. It is important to note that the group consisted of those who speak English as a first language and ESL participants. Language and cultural barriers possibly are preventing residents from understanding the services and resources offered to them.
5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
  - Participants wanted more therapists and health care professionals that performed trauma informed care, more orthodontists, more dental providers etc. The general request was for more medical providers of varying specialties. As well as increased information on who to call when medical emergencies of various types are occurring, which doctors to visit etc.
6. What are things in your community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others
  - More fresh foods and veggies at foodbanks, more medical services, they do not know what services are here and available, no lists of things going on more accessible locations for healthy foods

7. What are the things in your community or workplace that lead to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain
  - Poor health outcomes within the community were attributed to drug and alcohol abuse, increased rates of depression and anxiety that goes untreated. Participants even mentioned the influx of those addicted to various substances near 69<sup>th</sup> street.
8. Is there anything further anyone would like to add about any of the topics we have already discussed and that you feel you have not had a chance to say?
  - Increasing lines of communication about services offered by the county, improvements to infrastructure surrounding case workers, as well as increased childcare health and food services.

## MVP Recovery

Focus Group Date: September 14, 2023

Location: MVP Recovery (206 S. Orange St. Media, PA)

Participants: 8 Community Members

Special Population(s): People who have experienced mental health and substance use disorders

### Questions and Discussion

#### 1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?

- One participant described himself as a health-motivated person, his health is important to him so that he can continue to be an active grandfather. He describes interacting with his family as fun and exciting. He, and other participants frequently associated their health with their families. He displays lots of "Youthful exuberance" and takes pride in his level of activity. He admits to neglecting his health, but would not visit the doctors due to social constructs and stigmas around men seeking out care. To contribute to his health, he is an avid runner.
- Other participants describe healthy living as taking care of yourself and your body. If you do not take care of your body, it will not take care of you. Healthy diets. Participants speak of their relationships with their children, keeping up with them and prioritizing their health. The participants seemed to have been as involved as their conditions will allow.
- Activities associated with healthy living included: regular checkups and routine visits to the doctors, taking medications routinely, getting up and moving (walking, running etc.), sober living, and being diligent about taking medication, getting a good amount of sleep and good rest.
- Throughout the discussion we talked about movement even if you are not in a gym setting. Diligence when putting things into your body, and an understanding of what you are intaking. The conversation evolved into balanced lifestyles.

2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?

- The group discussed how family history of ailments made it difficult to interact with health care. Additionally, still having to maintain their responsibilities and support those who were in poor health could be difficult and stressful at times. Overall, most participants reported a good experience in the treatment and care received. Some participants were forthcoming about their addictions, while others chose not to disclose unless medically necessary. Some participants shared their negative experiences with certain hospitals. For example, one participant recounted her experience with Fitz Mercy hospital including their long wait times, their discrimination toward the homeless population etc. Feelings of being pushed out of health care spaces due to being homeless. When she was vocal about being homeless, she was pushed out, and knows that when accessing hospitals, it is better if you do not mention being unhoused.
- Other participants discuss how being an addict negatively impacts their medical experience. Not receiving proper care because they are addicts. Besides addiction reports being in good health. Discussed family dynamics around taking children to doctor's office visits.
- Another major point of discussion was the closure of local hospitals, and the influx of patients flooding into the hospitals that remain open.
- One participant stated she does not regularly go to the hospital but has regular appointments with a mental health professional. She reported that if her mental health is in alignment her physical health is usually in alignment.

3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?

- One participant stated that when she feels like she is struggling she reaches out and talks to people, she stays consistent on her medication, when her recovery is in trouble she reaches out as well. Amongst the group there was a shared theme of the support received from family and friends. When she feels like she is isolated she reaches out for help. She understands the negative impacts of isolating and withdrawing.
- The men in the group were at times slightly reluctant to discuss their mental. One participant realizes when he is distant from family, in an effort not to distance himself and withdraw too much he tries to keep up with calling family members and staying consistent with routines. He discusses how important and fundamental routines are for his recovery and the importance of understanding how his day-to-day is going.
- One participant reports random depressive episodes, feelings of loneliness, etc. but continues to remain positive in light of her circumstances and keep motivated, lots

of trauma. Family keeps her motivated to keep going. All participants seemed to understand the concept of mental health whether that be good or bad, and what seems to impact them and their individual experiences.

- Another participant recounts traumatic experiences in his life, living with PTSD and having been in bad environments, he details how he is being haunted by his past which negatively impacts his mental health. However, he shares how he feels he has a reliable community at MVP to support him when he is struggling. He didn't allude to having much support outside MVP and mentions that he struggles to reach out when he's in need of assistance.

4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?

- The group discusses how they rely on family members and how their support brings their family closer, even through difficult times. Participants recount their experiences parenting young children, discussing how not being with their children impacts their mental health. Some parents report that their children live a somewhat sedentary and shut-in lifestyle, and they encourage them to be more active outside. One participant speaks about living a sober lifestyle for herself and her children. Embracing community with other women being important to her.
- The group also discussed the communication patterns around informing their children about their addiction. Some prefer not to keep their children in the dark while others have not shared their experience with addiction. Discussions about clear communication with their children about their recovery.
- While the participants did not clearly identify an understanding of where to go for mental health resources or to access them, it seems as though she has the support of family to help her, and her children manage mental health issues and crises.

5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?

- Participants state that they would like to see increased clothing, transportation (bus passes) and housing resources.
- One participant shares her experience with being on a housing list since she was 18 years old, she is now in her 30's. Participants discuss the challenges they face in terms of housing expenses to include coming up with first and last month's rent as well as a security deposit. Participants also discuss how a lot of services offered are in Philadelphia, which can be inconvenient to get to and needing more resources available to Delco residents here, where they reside. One participant spoke about how he is confined to Delco for legal reasons, so he cannot seek housing and clothing resources outside of this jurisdiction.
- Some participants shared their knowledge of existing services and programs such as the Delco Victim's Advocacy Hotline. Residents need low-cost or free services. They



mention facing barriers to care that include establishments that do not take certain insurance providers.

- Another suggestion was applying for state or federal funding that could relieve the burden of these issues and get grant access to assist with mental health services. We discussed participants wanting a better explanation of their insurance plans, benefits, co-pays and how funds are allocated for different services throughout the county for those who may be under and uninsured.
- Participants would like to see more recreation services, and places to keep children positively engaged. Increased educational resources, and opportunities for parents to engage with their children and other parents.
- Other suggestions include better intake practices for rehabilitation centers. Having trained professionals come in and perform intakes, to determine what levels of care individuals need.
- The final resource participants would like to see are recovery homes that allow clients to have their children stay at the facility. Lots of families are relying on the support of their families to care for their children in their absence. However, it is a tough ask to have someone care for their children for an extended and prolonged period. Having facilities that allow parents and their children to remain united is a worthwhile expenditure. The closest establishment that houses both parents and children is in Bensalem, which is not close by.

6. What are things in your community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others

- Participants state the following activities in their community aid in good health: yoga, healthy mindsets, therapy, mindfulness classes, areas to go walking etc. Having access to good insurance plans. One participant states that he is at his best when he can get into a groove and routine, a nice run, setting his day off right. He likes to read but needs an extra push. In general, all participants value how important community has been in assisting them with their health and sobriety.

7. What are the things in your community or work, place that lead to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain

- Participants in the group associate poor health experiences with the following things: poor mental health, lack of access to healthy foods, poor health care infrastructure, lack of access to housing, people living with serious mental health problems that need attention that do not receive it.

## Community Action Agency of Delaware County (CAADC)

Focus Group Date: September 26, 2023

Location: CAADC (1414 Meetinghouse Rd. Boothwyn, PA)

Participants: 8 Community Members

Special Population(s): Displaced Persons, People experiencing Poverty

### Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Participants stated that being healthy means focusing on mental health and mind-sets. Being healthy also means getting appropriate amounts of sleep, a healthy diet, being mindful of the company you keep. The conversation evolved into health, particularly mental health during and post the COVID-19 pandemic, and how being relegated to the home increased people "getting into their heads" and impacting their mental health. Focusing on mental health should be a priority. Without good mental health standing you cannot progress physically. Other aspects attributed to good health included gut health. Taking overall care of yourself, and not prioritizing just one type of health. Engaging in healthy activities and getting away from technology. Violence prevents some people from going outside and enjoying nature. Positive health outcome associated with moving out of the city. Sports and activities, outside the park.
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - One participant spoke about a recent experience with a dental provider and the lack of access to emergency appointments. They ran into barriers with people not taking their health insurance. Another commonly expressed issue was specialists not being able to provide a follow-up appointment until a year later. Many participants spoke about having to self-help when it comes to delivering medication because health care providers are not available. Other barriers to accessing health care included transportation issues and not being able to navigate to providers easily.
  - The discussion led to health care insurance not being as helpful as you would think. To find a place willing to accept their insurance meant that they would have to travel

too far. Another frequent occurrence in their experiences included getting the run-around from doctors and their offices. Veterans accessing appointments also came up as well. A large part of their experience trying to access health care services revolved around participants not having sufficient energy for themselves after having to jump through all these hoops. A lack of guidance and information from health care providers on symptoms or diagnoses for their patients, high co-pays and not fully addressing concerns and their root causes all negatively impacted their experience accessing services.

- Overprescribing and not actually treating was also a concern discussed amongst the group. Medical professionals not listening to their patients and relying on their experiences and trusting patients' experiences was noted in the discussion.
- Participants describe asking for help for years and feeling unheard. Participants discuss how they rely on their family members to care for them. The discussion evolved into how being displaced impacts levels of care. Some recount shelters being more supportive of the journey of accessing health care services when in the shelter as opposed to when they were on their own. An additional layer of accessing care was having to bring their children with them to appointments, and how that can be time-consuming and difficult because they cannot be left alone.

### 3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?

- Mental health is extremely important to participants. The group discussed how important familial support could be to them but feeling like they have a lack of that support. We discussed how the mental health of participants can be negatively impacted when they must respond to their family's health concerns.
- Participants expressed desire for health care professionals that you can trust to field their concerns.
- One participant discussed how his children served as pseudo-therapists, and how much they learn from their children. While others spoke about how unaffordable mental health services can be.
- Participants shared the mental health resources that they knew of amongst the group. There was a lot of resource sharing and navigation amongst the group.
- After we discussed the financial impacts of accessing therapy, many admitted to not understanding therapy as a practice. They recognized that mental health was important, but some were not sold on the benefits of going to therapy. The group spoke about how they felt therapy did not serve them, how providers do not get in depth and address the root causes of their behaviors or circumstances. One take away could be that improving those areas would increase the likelihood that people will access therapeutic resources.

- By increasing cultural competency, improving treatment methods, and increasing therapeutic education may increase residents taking steps to improve their mental wellbeing.
  - Since this population faces housing insecurity, the discussion went in the direction of shelters not being helpful resources for improving mental health. For example, many participants spoke about how their children were leveraged against them and were threatened to be removed. This has a significant impact on their mental health. Other restrictions imposed by shelters such as strict curfews, dismissive attitudes, and poor treatment all negatively impact the mental health of participants.
4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
- Participants stated that they generally know where to go, they know how to use the contact numbers on the back of their insurance cards. This conversation led to resource sharing and navigation; participants shared about the Crozier health network having mental health services.
  - The participants seemed to have a clear understanding of the resources available to them, but often remarked they would like to see more services in the Delaware County Area, as opposed to having to venture to Philadelphia and surrounding areas. We spoke about participants using “9-8-8” as opposed to “9-1-1”, and how “9-8-8” was more for mental health de-escalation as opposed to police intervention. As a group we also discussed how accessing mental health services can be a double-edged sword, wanting to access help, but not wanting to be viewed as an unfit parent. Other challenges related to mental health services included long waitlists and the difficulty in finding therapists to fit their needs.
5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
- Participants spoke about the improvements they would like to see in existing services to include closer dates for appointments, accepting a wider range of insurance providers.
  - Other frustrations include providers only offering services for people who are not insured, which neglects individuals who are underinsured.
  - The participants share their experiences in having to exaggerate about their issues to be seen by providers.
  - In general, participants would like to see improvements to ease of access, process innovation/streamlining of services, and less hoops for people to jump through to access care. The consensus seemed as though more services were not necessarily the request but improving the existing set of resources.

6. What are things in your community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others

- Participants associated good health with the availability of religious resources, access to fresh fruits and vegetables (Yanks Farm was mentioned as a good resource for fresh foods). The availability of sporting locations such as basketball courts was attributed to good health. Participants desire more walking trails and diverse sports and activities.

7. What are the things in your community or work, place that lead to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain

*This question was unanswered because the group ran out of time.*

## Delco Community Baby Shower and Resource Expo

Focus Group Date: September 30, 2023

Location: Delaware County Intermediate Unit Conference Center (200 Yale Ave. Morton, PA)

Participants: 11 Community Members

Special Population(s): Expecting Parents and Families

### Questions and Discussion

#### 1. What does it mean to you to be healthy; what does a healthy pregnancy mean to you?

- Participants correlated being healthy and a healthy pregnancy to being mindful of nutrition, being physically active, caloric and salt intake, having a healthy balance and prioritizing mental health. The group emphasized how important mental health was during pregnancy. Participants related to the belief that if you are not thinking clearly, it's difficult to address the other areas of your health.
- For a healthy pregnancy expecting fathers stated that it's important to focus on things in your environment that you can control to prevent stress about occurrences that you cannot control. Other male participants echoed trying to help their partner mitigate, but sometimes feeling as though they cannot do much since they are not carrying the child.
- The child bearers in the group spoke about maintaining their health by controlling pregnancy cravings, staying active while pregnant, not being confined to the couch, energy conservation for their birthing experience. The conversation evolved into speaking about how laborious pregnancy can be and improving endurance to prepare for that process. Other things associated with healthy pregnancies involved open communication and remaining educated on pregnancy preparedness.

#### Postpartum:

- Participants identified several discussed behaviors and attitudes toward health postpartum to include prioritizing themselves even while becoming a parent, open lines of communication between their physician, giving themselves time to recover and bounce back after delivery, giving their birthing partner credit for carrying a child, getting to know their new selves as parents, re-education, patience, and time after having a baby, "me time" for parents outside of their children and partnerships. The group continued to stress the importance of co-parent's involvement in the pregnancy as well and making sure that they take time for themselves.
- A healthy life is one without stress, education, and awareness about what foods you are intaking, good mental health and wellbeing.

2. Tell me about experiences (your personal, friends, family, co-workers, etc.) using or trying to use maternal/prenatal health care services in your community.

- One parent shared her experience joining every program that she was able to join. She has four children and recounts that as a teen mom the Healthy Start program encouraged her to think of things that she was not prepared for as a young mother. She spoke about the continued support she receives from the organization by way of check ins on her and her children, help with transitional support, transportation, provision of resources for her older children. She stated that she benefited greatly from the program.
- In terms of services the participants want more promotion of programming. A major issue was not knowing what programs are available to access. Promoting these programs would contribute to more participation and encourage networking. Participants also would like to see more education around programming and the benefits that each program will provide. For example, some programs only help first time moms, if you do not happen to be a first-time mom it would be helpful to know what programs and services that you do qualify for. Many participants echoed that there is a bit of reluctance on parent's end to reach out and accept resources.
- Participants expressed a desire for more collaboration amongst community programs, the idea that if you look like you have it together, they do not offer because they do not want to look needy so a lot of de-stigmatization work that we must do.
- Mention of the doula program, feeling as though their provider, doctors did not provide them with lists of services, health promotion amongst physicians.
- One participant expressed the need to be more proactive in the search to find resources but would like to see an increased effort on our behalf to advertise our resources more. if you are proactive, more advertising efforts. The participants spoke about feelings of shame when asking for help, the shortage of health care providers in the area, wanting providers to be more knowledgeable and punctual for offering services. Unfortunately, the interviewee was more comfortable accessing doctors in Philly.

3. When we talk about maternal mental health, what does it mean to you?

- Participants felt there was not enough outreach regarding maternal mental health. Parents wish there were a service where they could call in or have someone call them to check in. They said that services were hit or miss and the services you have access to are largely dependent on the quality or advocacy of your caseworker if you have one. Participants also acknowledge that seeking mental health resources was also dependent on the level of initiative taken, as well continuing to demand better care from their mental health care providers

- One interviewee stated that if you do not speak up then services are not available. She speaks about how she does not have good mental health practice. She is unable to prioritize her own health because she is focused on children. If she had more support from family, then she would be more inclined to focus on her mental health.
4. If you or your child/ren need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
- Participants had a general knowledge of who to reach out to find mental health services. Many participants spoke about using the resources on the back of their insurance cards. As for seeking out mental health services here in Delco there seemed to be a general unawareness. Access was a commonly spoken about topic for this question. Not only did participants struggle to know what services were available, they also had an unclear understanding of how to access those services.

#### 5. What other health and mental and maternal health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?

- More hands-on child-birthing classes
  - Making available services available during more accommodating times for those with difficult schedules
  - Closer availability for classes, so that dates are not so spread out
- More information on home birthing resources
- More information on different types of birth experiences. I.e., water births, at home births, birthing experiences medication free etc.
  - Information on what expecting parents will need for the birthing experience they wish to have
- Better education on the risks of pregnancy and complications related to childbirth
- More outreach for soon-to-be fathers
- Offering of more classes to include:
  - Fatherhood parenting classes
  - Partnership classes to keep relationships happy and healthy throughout pregnancy
  - Therapy, workshops, and classes for parents who are not together, to help establish healthy co-parenting skills

To help improve programming participants suggest promoting events and classes in advance so that people with heavy work schedules can plan more appropriately. A commonly expressed sentiment amongst the group was that the men felt as though their partners are going through so much, and they felt a sense of overwhelm, especially some being first-time fathers in not



being able to assist them. The men echoed the desire to have more male-focused parenting classes to better assist their partners throughout their pregnancies.

Additional Comments:

- Participants stated that if as a health department we cannot provide a service, they would like more resource navigation to take place on our part and connect them to service providers that can assist them with their specific needs. Participants want to feel empowered and as though they have all the information, they require to make the best decisions for themselves and their families.
- Increasing the amount or frequency of community baby showers

## Chester Area Residents

Focus Group Date: October 10, 2023

Location: ACCESS Chester Community Center (701 Booth St. Chester, PA)

Participants: 3 Community Members

Special Population(s): Residents of Chester

### Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Mentality comes first (mind controls the body). Include people in the conversation (regardless of whether you've already decided). Remove stressors. Healthy mentality leads to healthy lifestyles.
  - Peace of mind, freedom, choice, environment are all the things that allow you to ENJOY your health. Getting up early and hopping on your bike (15-45 miles) bike tours, camping, etc. People stopped caring about others, lack of regard for others' lives.
  - Safety, breathing (developed asthma when moved to Chester). One participant managed her preexisting conditions but living in Chester has stretched her to her limits. Seniors have no sense of safety. Neighbors don't sit on their front steps. Not having stress of looking over shoulders/watching their public officials.
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care Services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - Refuse to go to Crozer. Adamant. Jefferson handles all their medical procedures. Considers Crozer a for profit entity.
  - Can't recall getting any medical care in Chester City.
  - Family doctors for decades did home visits, gone through 5 doctors since, most have left the city (with no notice).
  - Lack of representation (POC doctors/medical professionals)

3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
  - Prayer, balancing herself, not relying on “step 2”(medical professionals), knowing that you’re worth help/saving. Positive mantras.
  - People looking for external validation. Putting value in materials rather than themselves.
  - Too many parents who are children themselves. Enabling, being friends instead of a parent. Looking past one another.
  
4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
  - Not in Delco, if my children needed anything health related, I took them back Jersey
  
5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County.
  - Treatment for drug abusers (12 steps not working), alternatives, therapy, trauma management. Proof, showing up and not just telling people you want to help/going to help. Boys and Girls club is unattainable for struggling families.
  - Fun centers, way? Center, school functions, town shows, fashion shows, things to keep kids active and engaged in their community (something that’s NOT sports related)
  - Community groups/functions that the public/community doesn’t know about. More cohesiveness of the groups, groups competing against each other
  
6. What are things community or workplace that led to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others
  - Chester has a strong support for veterans, strong sense of community despite competing groups (food pantries), Chester takes care of itself to the best of its ability.
  - Chester Housing Authority community garden (despite their own issues)
  
7. What are the things in your community or work, place that led to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain
  - The lack of peace of mind, especially not being able to engage in activities that were once enjoyable (bike riding and going for walks). Not just about violence but the air quality. The air makes you so sick, you feel uncomfortable walking.

8. Is there anything further anyone would like to add about any of the topics we have already discussed and that you feel you have not had a chance to say?

- Crozer, widener, large corporations/entities need to contribute to the communities that they're a part of. When you're doing business in a community, you have a responsibility to give as much as you take. The minimum is not enough. People pay attention.
- One attendee stated she developed allergies as soon as she moved into Chester (went for a walk and experienced horrible itchiness)
- Nothing will fix itself until we work together.
- Missing children(with no press/public knowledge), most likely part of the foster care system (leads back to feeling safe in your community)
- People need knowledge, somewhere they can go for information.
- More education on heart health, health, and wellness in general, voting, county services/resources.
- Some attendees disagree with certain aspects of Delco revive (testing strips can be seen as enabling bad habits, some believe an individual's poor choices should not become the responsibility of the taxpayers, believe they need to quit or deal with the consequences.) Also acknowledged that unacknowledged trauma can lead to bad habits and it's not as simple as "just quitting".

## Jaisohn Memorial House

Focus Group Date: October 20, 2023

Location: Virtual Focus Group via Microsoft Teams

Participants: 5 Community Members

Special Population(s): New Americans, Asian Residents

### Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Mental and Spiritual health. Used frequently in attendee's medical practices (Stressors with family, work, etc. that could increase the chance of high blood pressure)
  - No dependency on medication
  - Mental health is connected to physical health and contributes to overall well-being. Interested in more resources for preventative care.
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care Services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
  - Language Barriers, difficult to find care for patients who speak other languages. (Often bringing family members. This sometimes leads to the patient not listening to treatment recommendation because their relative is delivering the message.)
  - Translators are not always available or accurate and cannot translate nuances.
  - Language access is not always user-friendly for more mature/older audiences.
  - Religious aspects are also not often taken into consideration (and can impact children)
3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
  - Recognizing, despite it being the most difficult part, is an important step in dealing with mental health.
  - Very little access to psychiatrists/therapists.
  - Asian American community acknowledges there is a stigma surrounding the topic of mental health, from youth to the elderly. Also, there is a language barrier with finding help in this area.
  - COVID put an enormous strain on mental health services and patients.

- Group counseling encourages members to begin expressing themselves and leads to individual sessions.
- Faith-based mental health is also a comfortable space but is still conservative (Mental health connected to faith. For example, there is a perception that if you're depressed, your faith is not strong enough).
- Lack of education about what Mental Health is and what it can look like. Most of the community are immigrants (perceptions of mental health are based on what they learned in their home countries). Also, an interpreter is not enough to translate, and cannot translate culture. Simply translating language is not enough to offer counsel. Layers for every generation with their thought process.
- Parent and Youth immigrants have a widening gap in communication and culture. Counseling is useful for parents and youth- consider counseling together. Depression is rampant in the community. Youth suffer isolation from parents with the difference in upbringing. Issue of parents wanting to help children but having no idea where to start (resources and education).
- An attendee removed from the Mental Health field had no idea how serious the issue was and had no idea where to go for help. Parents don't know if children are depressed/suicidal. Stigma makes them not believe it, or not want to speak about it.

#### 4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?

- Pediatrician/Primary Care was the first answer, but attendees never thought of the idea beforehand.
- Psychological consultation
- Language is still a concern, and a limitation in the Mental Health field. Private practice is not always an option (high costs for services)
- Lack of knowledge, believing one time medication will solve problems, not knowing it is a long-term process.
- Screening questions during physicals and welfare checks could be helpful.
- Government websites are not user friendly, more local community resources/projection of resources is needed.

#### 5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?

- Waiting times are incredibly long for emergency rooms/emergency services. Shorter Check-In times.
- Month-long wait times for ongoing issues.
- More language access. High immigrant population with very little resources.
- More Bilingual Providers.

- Unsure of what Delco offers NOW, but more preventive health care, community outreach in more languages. Not as organized as other counties. Delaware county communities need to be more organized, but County Government needs to set the example.
- A major hospital shut down in Delco, loss of access for those communities. More care centers.
- More Urgent Care promotion. People are going to emergency rooms, but don't need to. Mention of High Co-Pays.
- Urgent Cares closing early forcing people to go to Hospitals that wouldn't need to otherwise (possibly staffing issues). But people may not know where to go.

6. What are things in the community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others

- Art, recreation spaces. Big population areas with no parks.
- Schools with nice fields, playgrounds, gyms (if you can afford it)
- Health is related to cleanliness (clean streets can improve morale in homes, bodies, etc.)
- Senior friendly parks or senior centers. Encourage walks and hiking, entice people to go outdoors.
- High number of senior centers (serving AAPI communities) in Philly and Montco. Encourages community and good health and socialization. Unsure of any of those services in Delco. People leave Delco to find these services. (Asian hate can also be a big factor of people being afraid of traveling far for their health.)
- (In Korea) cooking, singing, photography classes provided by government/non-profits. Lessen stress of family.

7. What are the things in your community or workplace that lead to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain

- Difficulty admitting you're sick (in Asian culture). Waiting too long to get checked can lead to missed opportunities. (Especially in men)
- Pandemic has made getting people in medical settings even worse. Stigma of getting sick in places of healing.

8. Is there anything further anyone would like to add about any of the topics we have already discussed and that you feel you have not had a chance to talk about?

- Delco needs more outreach to API communities (education especially.)
- No preventative care education (waiting until they're sick)
- Providing bilingual staff otherwise they will not come. Need multi language support/staff. Delco is made up of a significant and diverse AAPI community.
- Provide a voice for the AAPI community so that they can speak on what they need.

## American Legion Post 214

Focus Group Date: October 25, 2023

Location: American Legion Post 214 (6914 Chestnut St. Upper Darby, PA)

Participants: 6 Community Members

Special Population(s): Military Veterans

### Questions and Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to be healthy? What does "being healthy" look like and feel like?
  - Healthy living is relative from person to person, and is variable by age, physical fitness, and mental healthiness.
  - Members of the group shared their own personal experiences of physical and mental ailments and discussed the importance of taking required medications to address health concerns. Diet and nutrition were also discussed.
  - Different age groups have different health concerns. For example, older persons may have more physical health issues, whereas younger persons be experiencing more mental health problems. One participant has mental and physical health issues, needs to remember to take medications and has an action plan. Costs are relatively affordable with help of the VA, but this person also knows others who are not as fortunate or well connected.
  - Another participant only uses VA hospitals for services, and experiences outrageous co-pays; this person assumes that the costs for non-veterans must be much worse.
  - Health care includes nutrition. Participants mentioned that access to fresh fruit and vegetables is limited: "Food apartheid." Veterans that live in Upper Darby must take two different buses just to get where they need to go for food. Chester and Boothwyn face traffic congestion.
  - Health also relates to mental health. Increasing more outlets post pandemic. Need for more therapeutic services
  - "There aren't any resources here, they're all in Philadelphia (38<sup>th</sup> street)." There is no transportation directly to the hospitals.
  - Bad transportation along with bad communication. There are many vets living below the poverty line that cannot even afford to take a bus. There is a big discrepancy between services for the women. No infrastructure for older female veterans. When people are



planning events for veterans only for the senior community and need to address working veterans. More programming that fits the needs of everyone as opposed to being so closed off.

- The group spoke about the spirit of collaboration.
2. Tell us about experiences (personal, friends, family, co-Workers, etc.) using or trying to use health care Services in your community. Were you able to get better after your visit with a doctor or other health care provider?
- Participants discussed how they seek healthcare through the Veterans Affairs (VA) affiliated health care establishments. Many participants shared that they only go to VA hospitals for services and spoke about how outrageous co-pays are even for him as a veteran. Others in the group had negative experiences trying to use health care services to include not being taken to a VA hospital when he needed emergency services, but also facing issues of hospital closures in the Delaware County area. The conversation moved toward the politicization of healthcare systems, navigating red tape to receive adequate care, and a lack of resource navigation.
  - Participants spoke about feeling unwell, and not being properly navigated to resources and having to go through the run around.
  - One participant spoke about billing in terms of his father and some issues that he was having. Not being connected to his father because all his items were lost, lack of connection with his father.
3. When we talk about mental health, what does it mean to you?
- The group shared their struggles with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and how it can be difficult to have faith, trust and establish relationships with mental health professionals due to such high turnover.
  - One participant recounted having five different mental health providers due to constant turnover, and not receiving notification when their providers move on.
  - Participants associate their mental health with frequent and stark transitions from the nature of active-duty wartime back to their lives in the states with their families. The challenges and adjustment of re-acclimation to civilian life negatively impacts physical and mental health.
4. If you or your children need help finding mental health services, do you know who to call or where to go?
- These questions did not garner much feedback. The nature of Veterans' service means they and their families receive free care during and sometimes after their service obligation has concluded. In terms of having their children seen, they remark having good luck with good doctors.

5. What other health and mental health care services would you like to see in Delaware County?
  - This question was not directly answered, but it was echoed throughout the conversation regarding the need for increased services, information systems, and ensuring consistent care from providers (due to high turnover among mental health care professionals). Participants in the group share how their trauma has impacted them and how it's difficult to share and establish a rapport.
  
6. What are things in the community or workplace that lead to good health and high quality Of life? Examples: access to food, places to exercise and connect with others
  - There was not much conversation around good aspects associated with good health. Generally, participants felt overlooked and as though there was a lack of resources as well as funding.
  
7. What are the things in your community or workplace that lead to poor health and quality of life? Examples: overweight, addiction to drugs tobacco, or alcohol, stress, and pain
  - Generally, participants felt overlooked and as though there was a lack of resources as well as funding.
  
8. Is there anything further anyone would like to add about any of the topics we have already discussed and that you feel you have not had a chance to talk about?
  - Participants would like to see the creation of a hub that houses resources and information that is easily accessible.
  - They would also like to see more collaboration between organizations to help support veterans within the community.