

# HEALTH PATHWAYS

Many chronic health conditions are rooted in social inequities felt most by low-income residents and communities of color. The Health Pathways strategy targets medical and social determinants of health to address chronic health conditions and improve health outcomes.

## Health Disparities

Residents of Geauga County have an average life expectancy above state and national averages. Nevertheless, residents have higher rates of heart disease and breast cancer, both of which are trending up. In measures like low birth weight, Black babies make up a disproportionate share. Programs and services that address community conditions or offer preventive health can help reduce disparities in health.

## Community Conditions

Community health includes the built environment and access to quality food. Geauga County has low rates of food insecurity, but two-thirds of food insecure adults do not qualify for SNAP benefits. Geauga County's low rating of "F" in air quality exacerbates health issues.

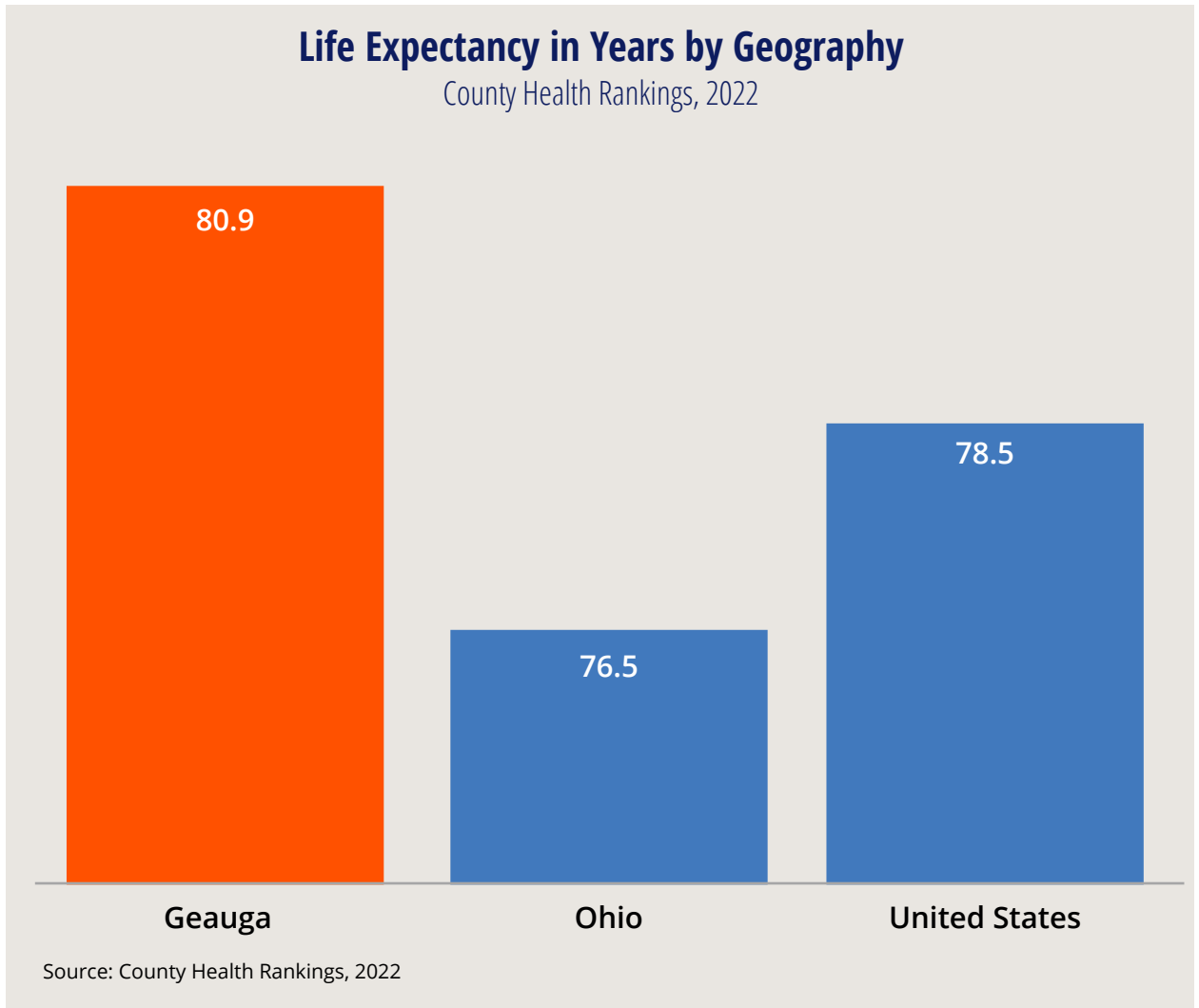
## Trauma and Behavioral Health

Gauga County fares worse than the national average across all behavioral health measures like adult depression, binge drinking, and mental health. Therefore, trauma informed care should be embedded in all human services. The county also has higher rates of uninsured children and adults up to age 45, compared to the state of Ohio, impeding access to care.

# SECONDARY DATA: HEALTH CONDITIONS AND OUTCOMES

## Life Expectancy

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps reports health outcomes and health factors by county. Geauga County has a higher life expectancy, 80.9 years, than the state, 76.5 years, and national life expectancy, 78.5 years.

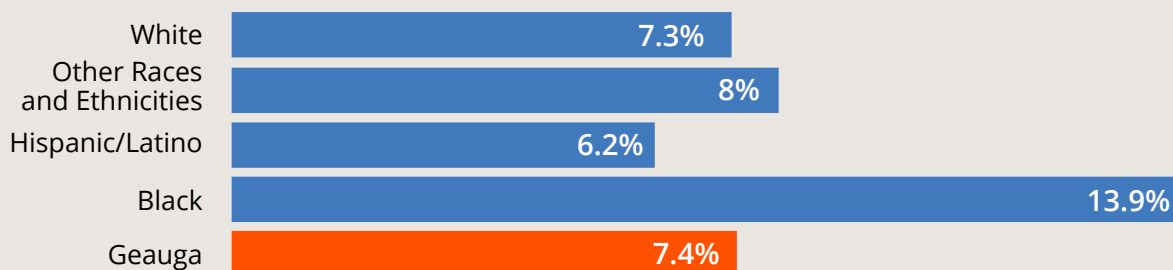


## Pre/Postnatal

Low birth weights are most often the result of premature birth; one that occurs before 37 weeks of pregnancy. In Geauga County, 7.4 percent of babies born are considered to have a low birth weight. Black babies have higher incidences of low birth weight at more than double the rate of those of Latino descent, close to double the rate of their White peers, and over 1.5 times that of babies of other races and ethnicities. According to the March of Dimes, babies with low birth rates are more likely to experience breathing problems, bleeding in the brain, intestinal complications, jaundice and infections. Access to prenatal care and reduce the risk of low birth weight.

### Share of babies born weighing less than 5lbs 8oz out of all births

Urban Institute Mobility Index Framework



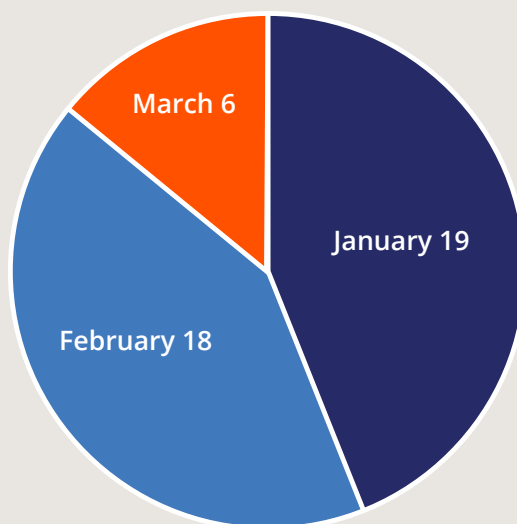
Source: Urban Institute Mobility Index Analysis, 2018, Geauga, OH, Provided February 2023

The Ohio Department of Health offers Home Visits to new parent through multiple models and agencies. In Geauga, this important service is offered to new parents with infants and toddlers, up to the age of three, through the Help Me Grow Early Intervention Program. Workers visit the home and provide information on community services and resources for families, and offer screenings to children to ensure healthy development.

As of March 2023, the program had capacity for 12 families in Geauga County to receive services. At this point in time, 11 families were receiving ongoing services representing 21 individuals. Catholic Charities Corporation is the agency that provides home visiting services in the county. Since the beginning of 2023, it has made 43 home visits: 19 in January, 18 in February, and 6 in March, as of the writing of this report.

### Home Visits, Geauga County

Ohio Department of Health, 2023



Source: Ohio Department of Health DataOhio Project, 2023

## Infant Mortality

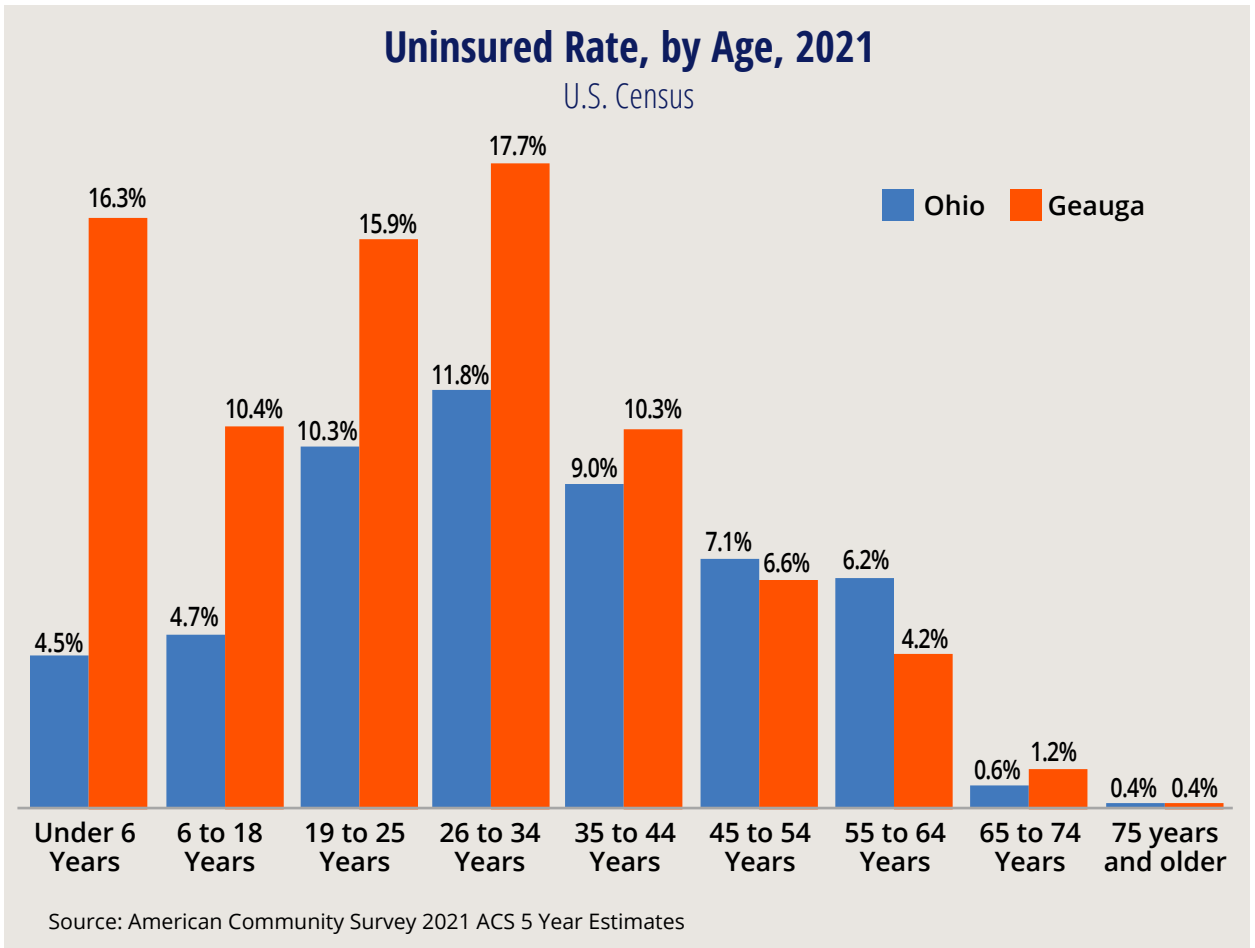
Infant mortality is rare in Geauga County. There were fewer than five infants who died before their first birthday out of 937 live births in 2020. The numbers are so low that we are unable to calculate infant mortality rate. Both deaths occurred in the postneonatal period, between day 28 and 364 after birth. Preterm birth, complications during delivery and birth defects are the leading causes of most neonatal deaths according to the World Health Organization.

Source: Ohio 2020 Infant Mortality Annual Report;

\*\*Note: Neonatal, Postneonatal, and Infant Mortality Rate are suppressed due to sample size.

## Access to Health Services

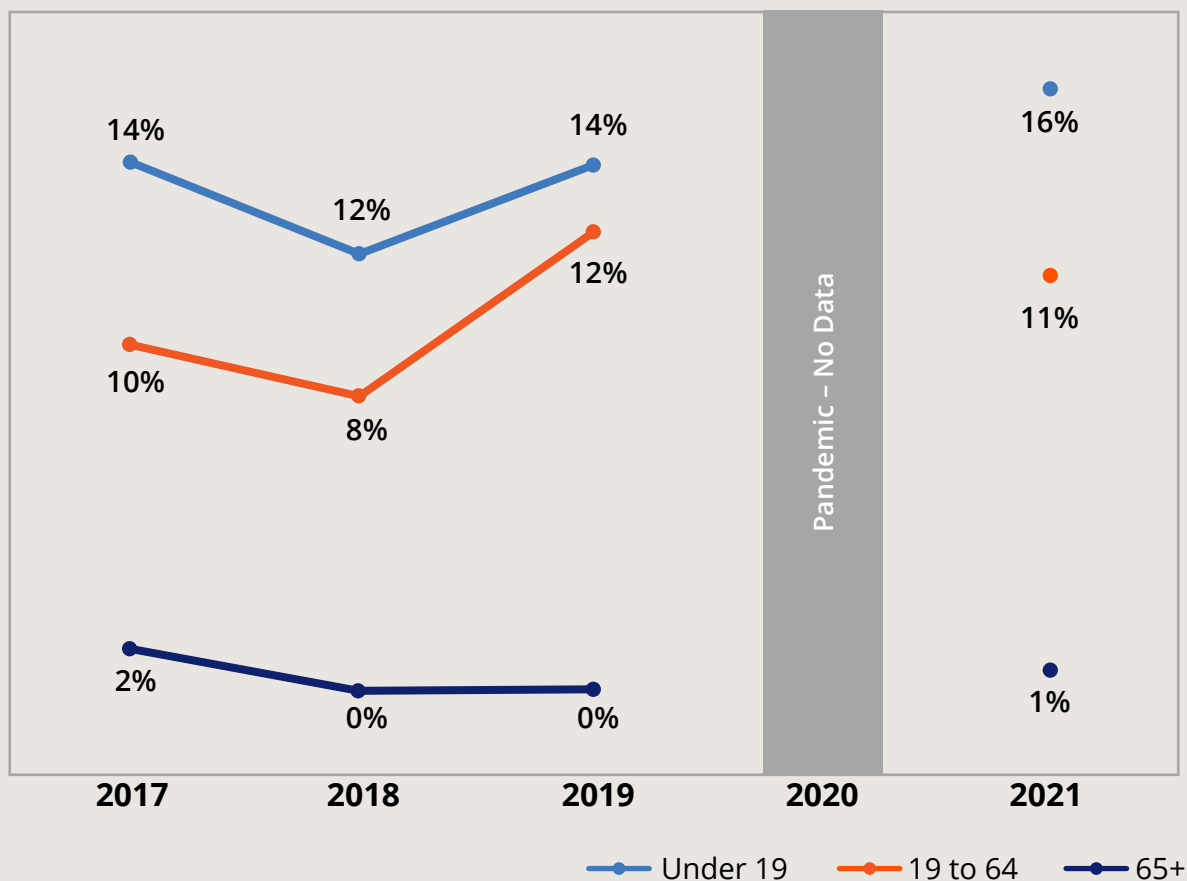
Having health coverage, local options for care, and a usual source of care are important aspects of access to care which allows individuals to get their health care needs met. Geauga County has a higher uninsured rate than the state or national average. In 2021, there were 7,906 people who did not have health insurance in Geauga County, or 8.4 percent of the population.



Particularly concerning is the fact that children are more likely to be uninsured in Geauga than in the state as a whole, especially young children. Over sixteen percent of children ages 5 and younger in Geauga County were uninsured in 2021, more than 3.5 times the uninsured rate for young children across Ohio. This is particularly concerning because uninsured children are less likely to be up to date on vaccines and are at higher risk of developing preventable conditions if they do not receive regular care. The unusually high number of Geauga children who lack health insurance could be influenced by the fact that it is a higher income area, so fewer families qualify for Medicaid health coverage. Also, while adults with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level qualify for Medicaid, children can be covered by Medicaid up to 206 percent of federal poverty level, or over \$51,000 household income for a family of 3. In Geauga County, people with higher income make up a greater share of the total people who are uninsured.

## Uninsured in Geauga County

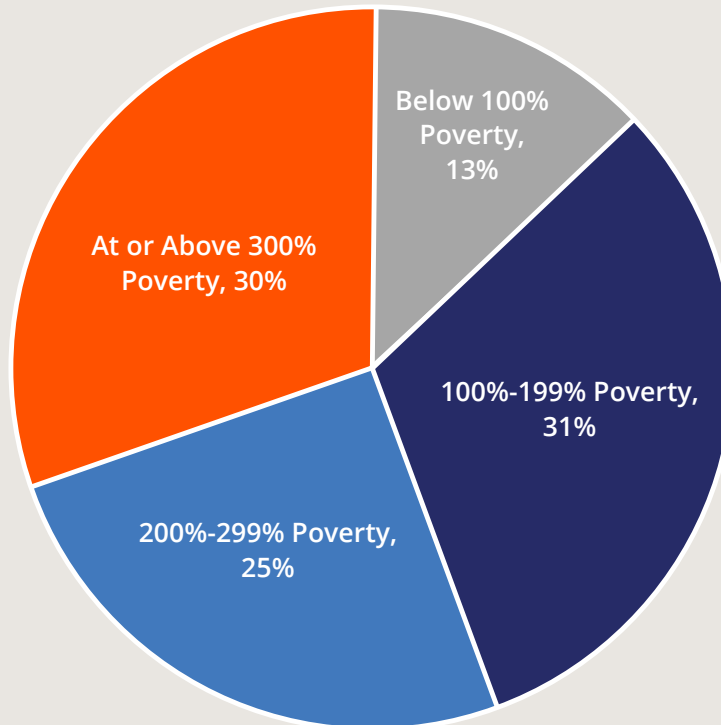
Youth under 19 were more likely to be uninsured than any other age group over the past 5 years.



Source: American Community Survey 2017-2021 ACS 1-Year Estimates  
\*No Census data available for 2020

## Share of Uninsured, by Income to Poverty Ratio, Geauga County, 2021

U.S. Census



Source: American Community Survey 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

County Health Rankings' model of health includes several additional data points which are indicators of access to health care. Geauga County fares slightly worse than the rest of the state in provider availability. For these statistics, a lower number is desirable. There are 1,440 residents for every primary care physician, and 2,070 residents per dentist, compared to 1,290:1 and 1,570:1 respectively. There are also 410 residents for every mental health provider, which includes marriage and family therapists and mental health providers that treat alcohol and other drug abuse.

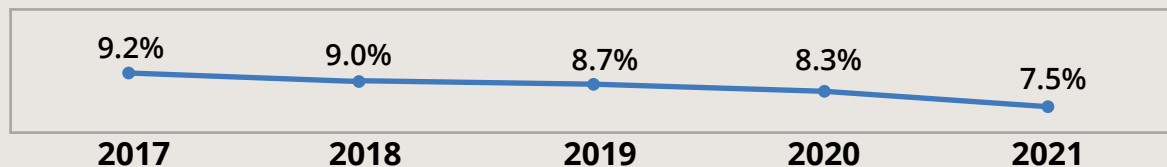
While 91.5 percent of Geauga County adults had a usual source of care in 2021 according to the Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey, 19.7 percent found the care they needed harder to secure than three years ago, and 14.5 percent said they avoided or delayed care.

## Food Security

In Geauga County, 7,140 people were food insecure in 2021, according to Feeding America. This placed the food insecurity rate in the county at 7.5 percent that year. Close to two-thirds (64%) of those who were food insecure were above the SNAP threshold of 130 percent of the federal poverty level, while a little more than a third (36%) were below it.

### Food Insecurity – Geauga County

The percentage of people of all ages who are food insecure in Geauga has declined since 2017. The food insecurity rate in 2021 was the lowest it had been in 5 years.



Source: Feeding America, 2021

## Environmental Quality

Environmental quality data was accessed through Healthyneo.org in March 2023.

The American Lung Association has rated Geauga County an “F” in Air Quality, which has not changed over the past 10 years with the exception of a slightly worsened rating between 2013-2015. Poor air quality can cause difficulty breathing and aggravate existing lung conditions. Children, people with lung disease, and older adults tend to be more sensitive to poor air quality.



Geauga County has a rating of 30 in Physical Health Environment as ranked by County Health Rankings. The physical environment includes all of the parts of where we live and work including homes, buildings, streets, and parks. The design of the environment as well as maintenance influence who accessible it is to the general public. The more accessible the environment, the more opportunity for residents to engage in activities related to a healthy lifestyle including walking, running and biking.



In 2021, Geauga County experienced 24 Extreme Heat Days according to the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Record. The number of high heat days over the past 9 years has varied, with most years having a number of days in the mid-20s. There was a high of 44 days in 2016, and a low of 13 or 14 days every 2 years from 2015 to 2019. Extreme heat days can lead to heat rash, heat exhaustion and heat stroke and is leading cause of weather-related deaths. In 2021, there were 19 Extreme Precipitation Days, which can lead to increased extreme storms and flooding incidents.

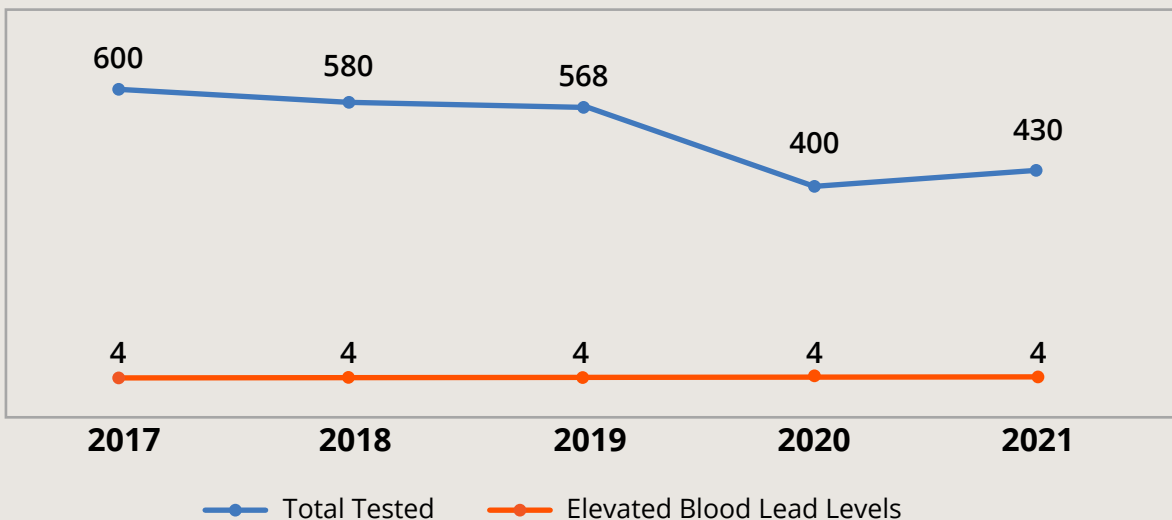


## Lead Poisoning

The age of available housing is a significant factor in determining the quality of housing and potential health hazards. According to Healthy Northeast Ohio's website, houses built before 1950 that have not undergone substantial updates may contain hazardous materials. For example, lead-based paint, which was banned in the United States in 1977, is a known toxin that can cause nervous system damage, stunted growth, and delayed development, especially in children under six years of age. The long-term inhalation of asbestos fibers from insulation in older homes can also trigger cancer development and other lung diseases such as asbestosis.

### Blood Levels of Lead – Geauga County

In the last 5 years, confirmed elevated blood levels of lead in children under 6 have remained constant in Geauga County.

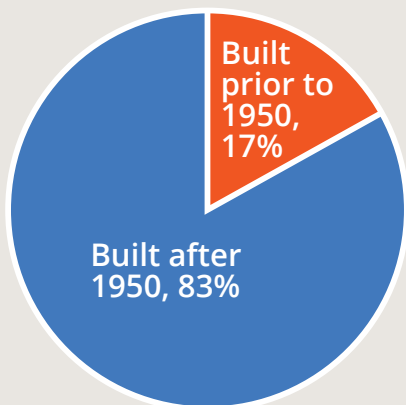


Source: Ohio Department of Health

In Geauga County, seventeen percent of homes were built before 1950. There is one zip code within Geauga County where blood lead testing for children less than six years of age is required due to high risk of exposure. In 2021, there were 4 confirmed cases of elevated blood levels of lead in children less than six years of age in Geauga County. No amount of lead exposure is safe, and any amount can create permanent, irreversible effects to children's brains and other organs, as well as their mental and behavioral health. Lead poisoning disproportionately affects low-income children and families of color further contributing to generational poverty and racial injustice.



### Age of Housing



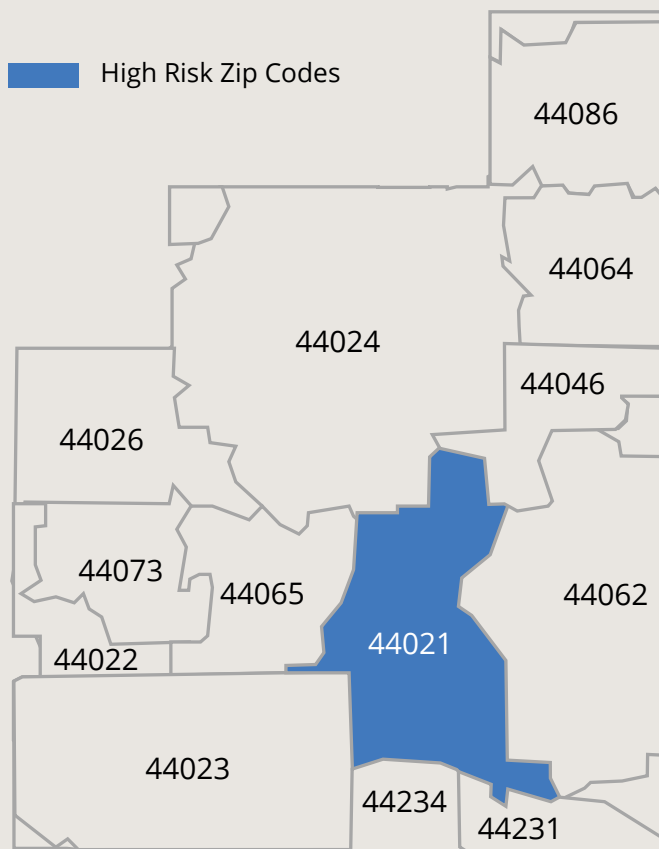
Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year averages 2021 accessed on Healthy Northeast Ohio March 2023

In Ohio, an elevated level of lead is defined as 5 µg/dL of blood, but the Lead Exposure and Prevention Advisory Committee recommended updating the reference value to 3.5 µg/dL. In 2021, 70% of elevated blood lead levels in children were between 5-10 µg/dL, and an additional 29% were between 10-45 µg/dL.

In 2021, four children tested positive for high lead levels, including very high levels of lead exposure. At these levels,

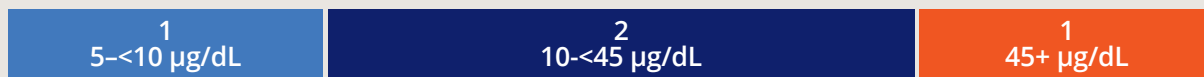
treatment is indicated to actively try to remove the lead from a child’s body. Treatment can be considered at lower levels as well. At lower levels, children require additional testing and monitoring and the source of lead exposure must be identified and removed.

### Geauga County High Risk Zip Codes Requiring Blood Lead Testing for Children Less than 6 Years of Age



Source: Ohio Department of Health

### Confirmed elevated blood levels in 2021 for children less than 6 years of age

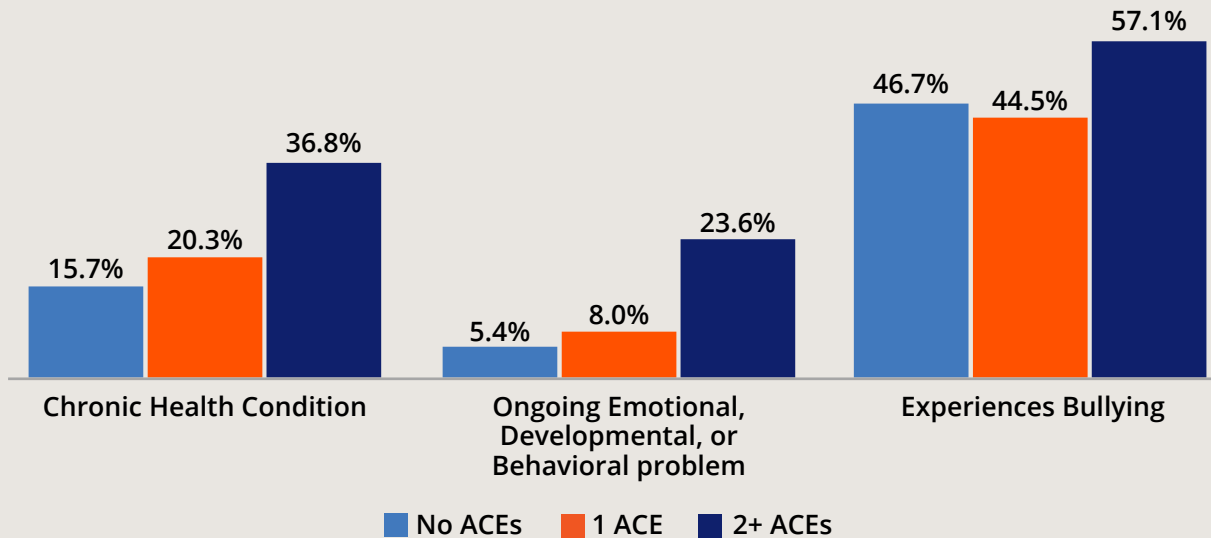


Source: Ohio Department of Health

## Adverse Childhood Experiences

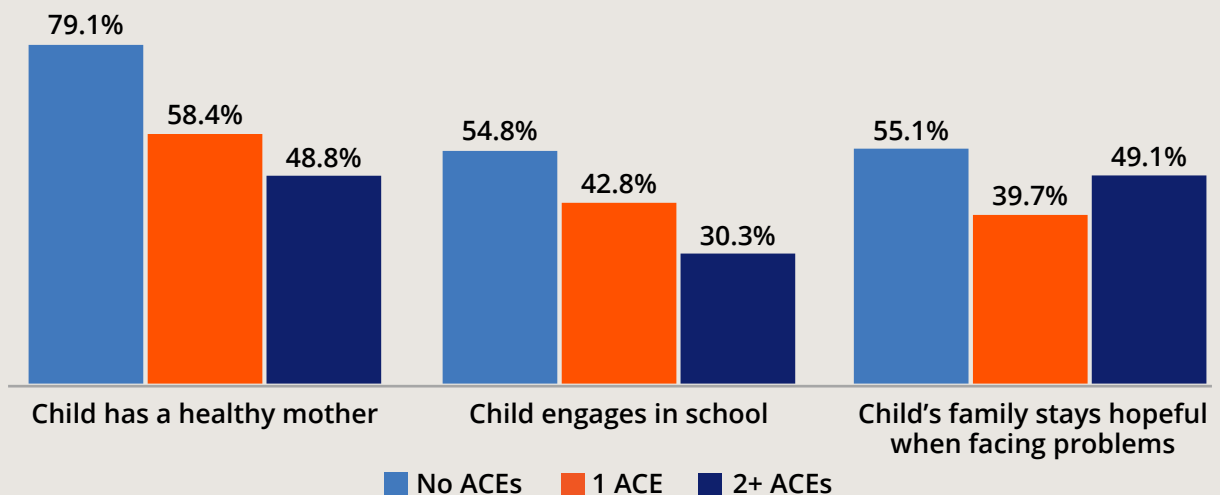
### Increased adverse experiences in childhood are associated with negative health and social emotional outcomes

Ohio 2018-2019 – Childhood and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative



### Protective factors are associated with fewer adverse childhood experiences

Ohio 2018-2019 – Childhood and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative



Source: Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative 2018-2019

## Social Vulnerability

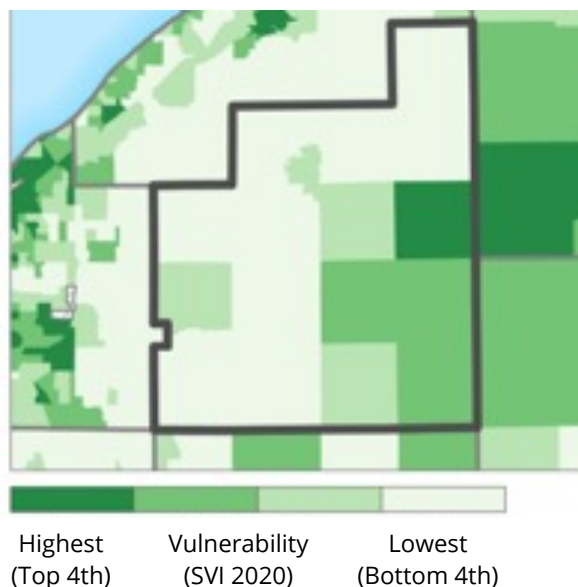
**Social vulnerability** refers to the potential negative consequences of external stresses on human health in communities. Such stresses may include natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has developed a social vulnerability index to assist local officials in identifying communities that may require support prior to, during, or after disasters. This index is used to assess the stability of a community. Reducing social vulnerability can lower both human suffering and economic loss.

In 2020, Geauga County had a social vulnerability index score of .1111 which indicates a low level of vulnerability, with 1 being the highest score possible. Little variation in the index rating exists among communities within the county, as a majority of them are within the lowest range of social vulnerability. The communities with the highest ratings include Huntsburg and parts of Middlefield index, while Aquilla, Claridon, Burton, Troy and Parkman are within the second highest range. The index consists of sixteen metrics combined into groups of four representing socioeconomic stats, household characteristics, racial and ethnic minority status and housing type and transportation. The socioeconomic status portion of the vulnerability index includes data from American Community Survey 5 Year 2020 estimates.

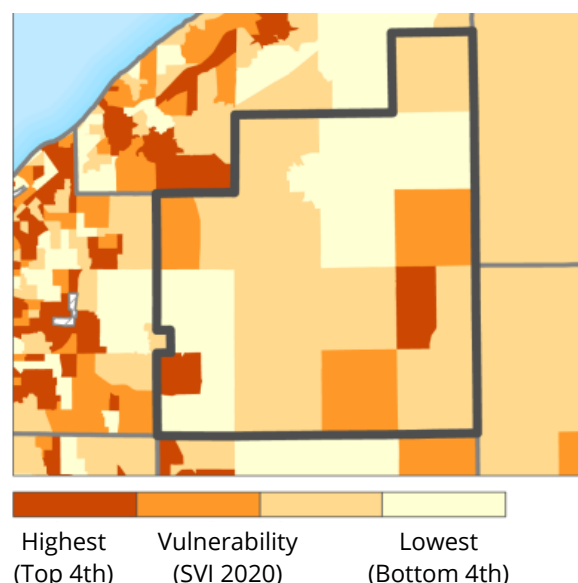
Individuals living in areas with high socioeconomic vulnerability may have limited access to personal and community resources to manage financial challenges. The socioeconomic status index includes variables such as residents with incomes below 150% of the federal poverty level, unemployment, housing cost burden, lack of high school diploma, and no health insurance. A majority of communities in Geauga have low rates of socioeconomic vulnerability.

Vulnerability mostly increases in the far east and southeastern communities within the county.

### Socioeconomic Status



### Household Characteristics

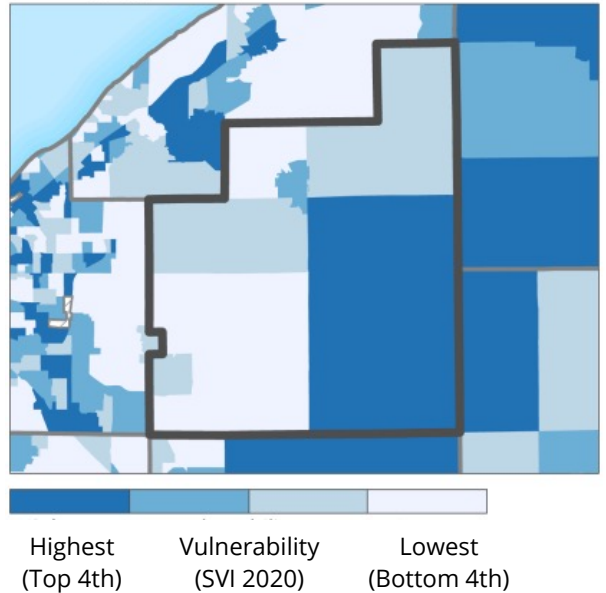


The household characteristic index includes population groups that may have difficulty navigating systems during a crisis, such as residents aged 65 and older, aged 17 and younger, those with disabilities, single parent households, and those with limited English proficiency. Pockets of medium and low vulnerability exist throughout most of the county. High vulnerability in this index only occurs in parts of Bainbridge and Middlefield. There is also a medium-high level that exists in parts of Chesterland, and in Huntsburg and Troy. Supports for these groups should be located throughout the county with slightly more concentration centralized in these five counties.

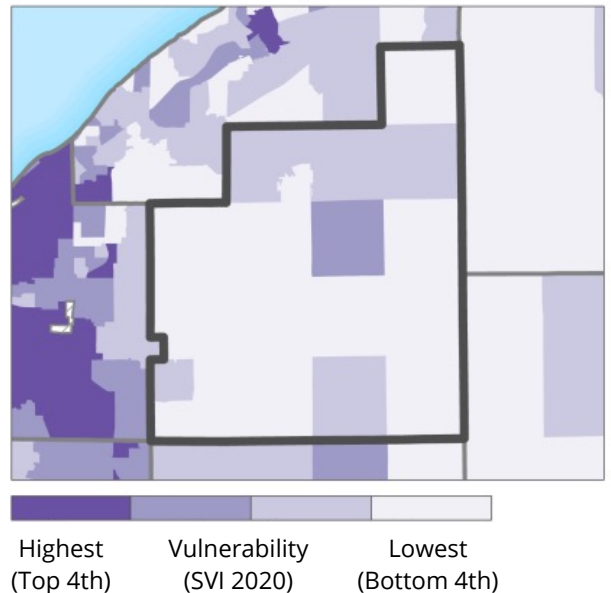
The Housing Type and Transportation Index consider the presence of multi-unit structures, mobile homes, crowding, lack of vehicles, and group living arrangements. Residents included in this group likely face challenges to being able to efficiently being able to navigate the community. They also experience both the stressors and benefits of close quarters living. There is a notable section of the county, in the southeastern area, that has a large geography of high vulnerability in this index. Mediation and specialized transportation services should be prioritized for the highly vulnerable areas of the county. The rest of Geauga is indexed at a low or medium low vulnerability.

The Racial and Ethnic Minority Index is a map of residents who are Hispanic or Latino (of any race), and those who are not Hispanic Latino and identify as Black and African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Two or More Races and Other Races. Historic disinvestment in BIPOC communities have left them more vulnerable to external stressors and crisis situations. In Geauga County, most of the county is indexed at a low vulnerability in this area, with some communities being indexed as medium-low across the top and the southeastern corner of the county. Aquilla and Claridon are slightly higher in the medium-high category. Investment into these communities, including economic development and health and social services, can improve the conditions and provide residents with resources necessary to weather a crisis.

## Housing Type/Transportation

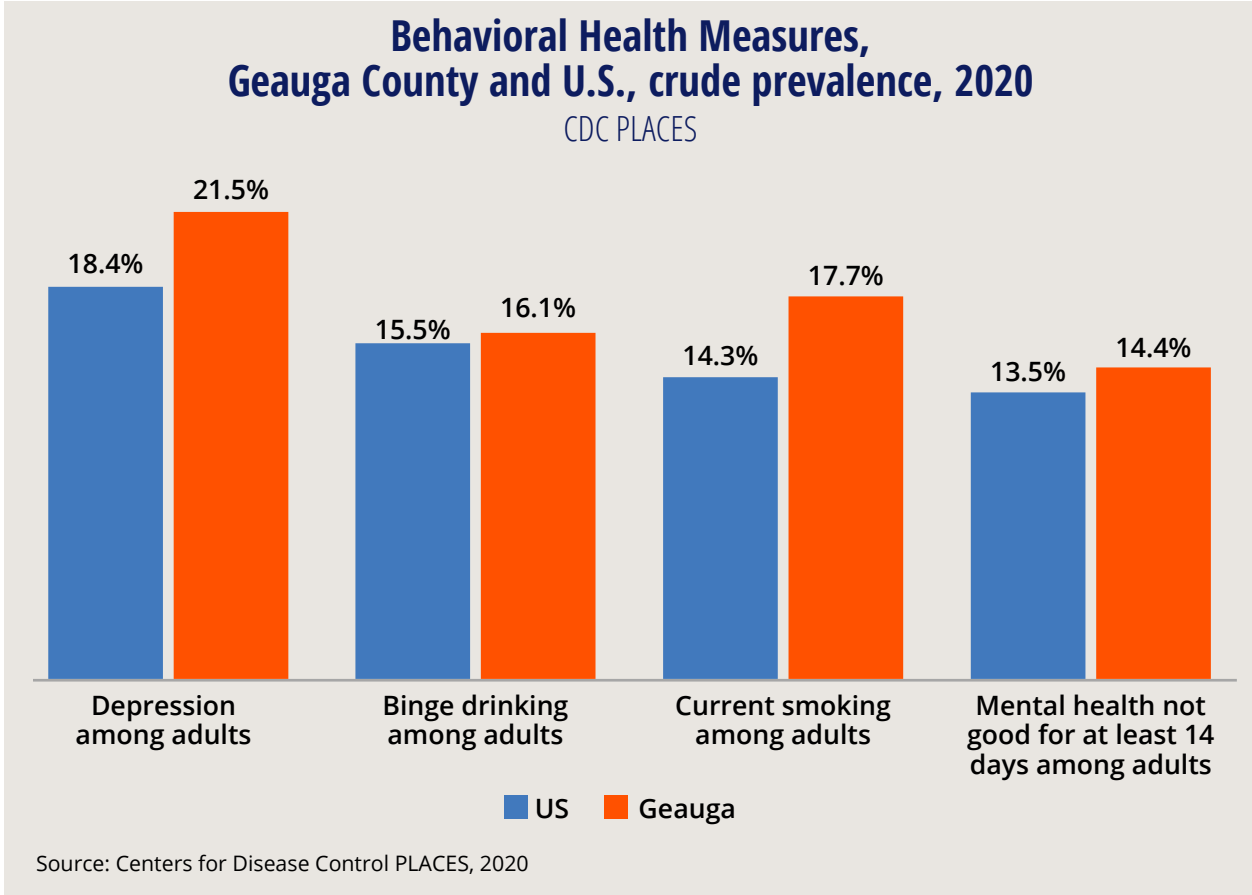


## Racial and Ethnic Minority Status



# Behavioral Health

**Behavioral health** encompasses mental illness and substance use disorders. The Geauga County Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services is commissioned to “assess community needs and to plan, organize and manage public resources so essential services are provided” to its county residents.

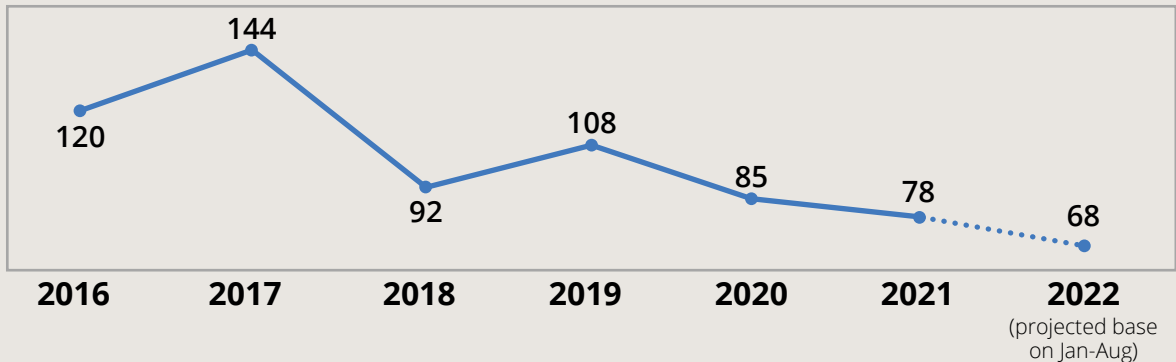


Gauga County is slightly worse than the national average on every measure of behavioral health included in the CDC PLACES data set. Especially concerning is the fact that more than one-in-five adults reported that they have diagnosed depression in 2020, higher than the national average. Binge drinking was also more common here, with 16.1 percent of adults reporting they had five or more drinks (men) or four or more drinks (women) on an occasion in the past month.

Estimated Drug Overdoses measures the number emergency visits to a medical provider where drugs were identified as the cause of traumatic injury, and only cases where the case notes included the terms “OD” or “overdose”. Suicide attempts and injury from everyday drugs like Tylenol are excluded, and these totals do not include victims who were treated by first responders and not transported to emergency departments.

## Estimated Drug Overdoses, Geauga County, by Year

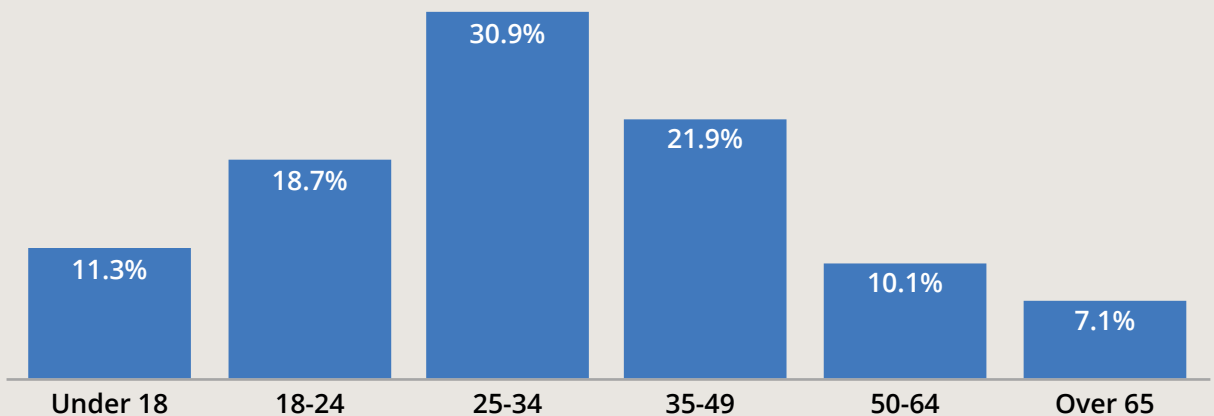
Statewide Estimated Drug Overdoses Dashboard Compiled by Summit County Public Health



Between 2016 and 2022, three Zip Codes in Geauga had at least 100 drug overdoses. These include 44024 (Chardon), 44062 (Middlefield), and 44023 (Chagrin Falls). These are raw counts rather than rates, so the fact that these are more densely populated areas than other parts of the county may influence the number of overdoses. About sixty percent of all overdose patients were male, and the average age was 35.6 years. Overdose patients in Geauga are heavily concentrated between the ages of 25 and 34.

## Estimated Drug Overdoses, Geauga County, by Age, 2016-2022

Statewide Estimated Drug Overdoses Dashboard Compiled by Summit County Public Health



## Deaths of Despair

Between 2018 and 2021, 164 Geauga County residents died from causes often termed “Deaths of Despair”, including intentional self-harm (suicide), accidental poisoning (including drug overdose), and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis. Deaths of Despair accounted for 4.2 percent of all people who died from the County over the four-year period.

# EXISTING HEALTH PATHWAYS COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

## LifeLine, Inc.'s 2021 Social Services Needs Assessment Excerpts

Innovative partnerships formed during the pandemic have led to new ways to distribute food and many of these partnerships continue well past the pandemic. This has led to less food scarcity than in past years' assessments.

According to data from the 2021 State of Poverty in Ohio report released by OACAA, 9% of Geauga County's population is enrolled in Medicaid in 2019, significantly less than Ohio's 25.3%, and the percentage of Geauga County's residents without health insurance in 2019 was 8.8%, significantly higher than Ohio's 6.1%.

In the 2019 Community Health Assessment, individuals with household incomes less than \$25,000 represented the highest percentage of those ranking their overall health as fair or poor at seventeen percent. Ultimately, respondents ranked mental health and addiction as the top problem, followed by chronic disease and maternal/infant health.

Gauga County has six food pantries located throughout the county, coordinated by the Geauga Hunger Task Force. According to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's Geauga County Quick Facts for 2018, 9.2% of Geauga County's population is food insecure, with 16.2% of the child population food insecure and 16,983 Geauga County residents eligible for Greater Cleveland Food Bank services.

During the focus groups conducted in conjunction with the needs assessment, there were many issues discussed surrounding expanded mental health supports including additional services for youth, seniors, veterans and victims of domestic violence. Additional concerns included reducing the stigma of mental health issues, increasing group supports and reducing the wait times for services.

## Geauga County Community Health Assessment

The Geauga County CHA identifies high and rising rates of Atrial Fibrillation within older adults, which may cause or worsen heart disease. The Assessment also found Breast Cancer rates above state and national trends. Finally, the Assessment notes high levels of alcohol consumption and adults who drink excessively.

**According to data from the 2021 State of Poverty in Ohio report released by OACAA, 9% of Geauga County's population is enrolled in Medicaid in 2019, significantly less than Ohio's 25.3%, and the percentage of Geauga County's residents without health insurance in 2019 was 8.8%, significantly higher than Ohio's 6.1%.**

LifeLine, Inc.'s 2021 Social Services Needs Assessment



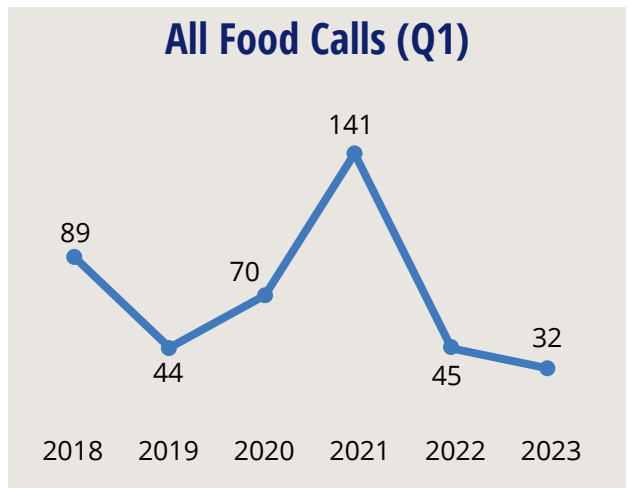
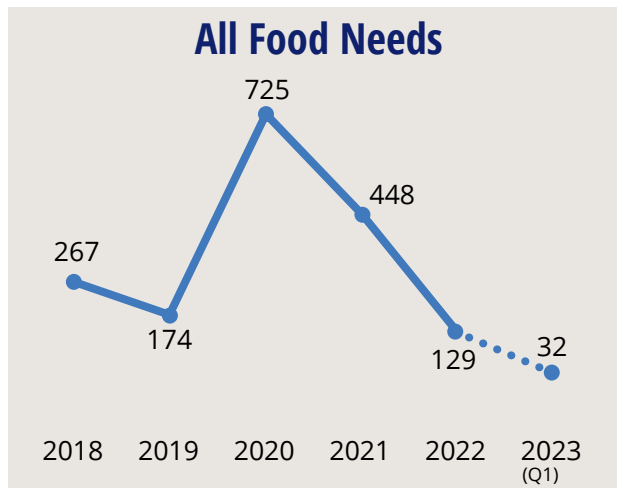
# 211 DATA TRENDS

The data for this report was obtained from United Way of Greater Cleveland 211 and covers the period from 2018 to March 2023. The analysis was conducted on needs expressed in Geauga County and explored for each indicator, but low numbers makes it difficult to draw conclusions from the data. However, it is important to note that low volume does mean that Geauga County is without need for resources, assistance, and services.

## Food and Nutrition

All food needs expressed to 211, including pantries, prepared meals, SNAP and WIC, significantly peaked in 2020 before dropping in 2021 and 2022. The volume in 2022 is the lowest of the past few years recorded, which is interesting given the cost of food with inflation. Need rose to the highest ever in July of 2020 with 281 expressed needs during that month consisting of mostly fresh food resources. There was also a period of increased volume from February to July of 2021 which consisted almost exclusively of adults aged 55 regarding food pantry resources.

Expressed needs for pre and post-natal/baby resources were highest in 2018 at 25 and lowest in 2022 with 16. This low number is interesting, especially in 2021 and 2022 given the baby formula shortage that was occurring nationwide at that time with the shutdown of the Abbott plants.





## Behavioral Health

Behavioral health expressed needs were highest in 2019 with 76 and fell in 2020 and 2022. Quarter 4 of 2019 had the highest volume of expressed needs in behavioral health. The needs throughout the years consisted mostly of mental health resource needs, with a large chunk also being substance use resource needs too.

The age of callers varied throughout the years as well, but adults aged 25-44 make up the overall majority of callers.

Calls about mental health specific resources didn't follow the same pattern but did still drop in 2020 before rising in 2021 and 2022. The call volume is still not as high as pre-pandemic, but does remain on the higher end. Calls were highest in quarter 4 of 2019 at 21 calls during that quarter. The age of clients varied, but adults aged 25-44 again made up the majority.

Expressed needs for substance use disorder services were highest in 2019 and 2020 at 23 and lowest in 2022 with 8. Clients aged 25-44 made up the majority of clients.

