



Community Health Needs Assessment

Appendix B

A community and data-driven look at health and wellbeing in Virginia Beach.

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Appendix B- Focus Group Findings

Virginia Beach Community Members Focus Groups Discussions

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Community Health Team, conducted nine focus group discussions across various dates and locations in Virginia Beach. These sessions gathered input from 39 of the 44 participants who signed up for the focus groups, capturing diverse community perspectives on issues affecting their lives. The findings and recommendations reflect these discussions.

The primary focus areas of the discussions included healthcare access and quality, economic stability, public transportation, childcare, community engagement, education, and the neighborhood environment. Through thematic analysis, we identified overarching themes and patterns that reveal the key issues faced by the community. This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of these insights and propose actionable recommendations to address the highlighted challenges.

Findings

Healthcare Access and Quality

Challenges in locating healthcare providers and long wait times, especially for specialists:

"Trying to find a specialist for something can put you on the wait list for quite a while. That's frustrating."

"It took us probably about a month of calling various doctors to find one..."

"Prescriptions are a huge problem. I'm ADHD on the high side. You can't get Adderall or stuff like that. And what's happening is you can't get your medication. So, they give you something else, but that doesn't really work."

"But there is a mental health crisis around here not a place to go to that you can just go to your doctor they prescribe your pills and that's it."

"The mental health piece is really frustrating."

**Concerns
over the
impact of
automation
and reliance
on military-
centric
employment
limiting job
options:**

"This area is harder because it's so military-centric."

"My wife... found it so hard to find a job that she had to go back to college and get an accounting degree."

"We can talk about bringing more jobs to the area... It's like your public transportation is not keeping up with the demand for it."

"People are putting in hundreds of applications a day and they're not getting anything back."

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Public Transportation

Inadequate public transportation limiting access to essential services and employment opportunities:

"Transportation in Virginia Beach does not exist, and you have a bus that might come around if you catch that bus but around this area unless you have a car you're going nowhere."

"If you don't have a car... the amount that you have to walk to get to the bus it's very prohibitive."

"There is no real public transportation in this area... It's awful."

"Every time I go to a big city that has it, it is so convenient."

Childcare and Education

High costs and limited availability of childcare; concerns about the quality and accessibility of educational resources:

"It is so expensive, awful to put kids into childcare..."

"A lot of people... don't know where to go to get the resources."

"Private daycares or preschools that can't handle the kids with behavioral issues."

"Parents need to be educated... a lot of them are in denial."

Community Engagement and Services

Desire for more community and cultural events; suggestions for accessible community health spaces:

"I partake in community Outreach Quest."

"They have events, they have calendar events, various things like they do line dancing. One time they had a jewelry class, you know, craft class they've had during football season. On some Sundays, they would have a football gathering."

A mental health area, a wellness area, fitness area. An area where you can come in and they could just check your cholesterol or do a weight thing or something like that."

"The need for improved transportation services to help seniors access various programs and maintain social connections."

Neighborhood and Built Environment

Positive community spirit tempered by development concerns:

"Everyone's very friendly, laid back... and everyone's in transplant."

"I feel totally safe in my neighborhood."

"They're doing all this building, but nobody looked at the access of the roads."

"It's like a lot of the new developments they don't have the infrastructure in place to handle the increased traffic and it's causing a lot of congestion."

Social/Community Context

Connections made through shared experiences; mental health highlighted as a significant concern:

"Most of my direction to this point is through people just happen to have kids the same age as me."

"If you go online, they have Nextdoor app. You can go on there anytime people are asking, 'Can you give me suggestions about this or that.'"

"I find out a lot of things just from talking to my neighbors what's happening and online, everyone goes online to see what's going on."

"Mental health, young people especially, depression. Post-COVID... kids got locked in by themselves, became socially isolated."

"Mental health should be more accepted. People need help, but they're often afraid to seek it because of the stigma."

"There needs to be more mental health facilities with licensed social workers and psychiatrists. There's not enough of 'em and there's a lot of people."

Recommendations

Increasing Mental Health Resources: Increase resources dedicated to mental health, particularly community-based support that could be accessed through cultural and social activities.

Community-Wide Health Initiatives: Participants advocated for broader community engagement in health initiatives, suggesting that a more inclusive approach could lead to better health outcomes.

Enhance Mental Health Education and Stigma Reduction Campaigns: Launch community-wide campaigns focused on mental health awareness, aiming to reduce stigma and encourage more people to seek help when needed.

Strengthen Community Health Centers: Boost resources for community health centers to offer more comprehensive services, including mental health support, chronic disease management, and preventive care.

Implement More Community Outreach Programs: Continue to develop outreach programs that specifically address the unique needs of different community segments, such as the elderly, immigrants, and low-income families, ensuring they are aware of and can access available services.

Integrate Technology in Health Education and Services: Utilize technology to enhance health education and service delivery, such as through telemedicine services, health education apps, and online resources that make it easier for residents to manage their health.

These recommendations aim to improve health equity, enhance community engagement, and ensure all Virginia Beach residents have access to necessary resources, thereby creating a more supportive, accessible, and inclusive healthcare environment to address both immediate and long-term health challenges within the community.

Focus Groups facilitated and report submitted by Mary Combs for the Community Development Team.



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement; Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems, 2014. Graphic designed by ProMedica.

