

Challenges

- **Workforce:** Leadership is split between Lenowisco and CP due to population size, however, these counties are **geographically isolated**, and personnel are often stretched thin—sometimes requiring **hours** of travel every day.
- **Time:** I was only able to get a general overview of the HD as their dedicated team covers **seven counties**.
- **Lack of public understanding** of services provided by the health department.

Project Overview

Goals:
 Work in population health to improve health outcomes in rural communities in the Cumberland Plateau and LENOWISCO Health Districts.

Outcomes/Contributions:
 (1) Participated in local public health outreach and coalitions to improve rural health outcomes. (2) Worked with key community stakeholders to plan programs and events. (3) Helped plan and implement a Population Health Pilot Program, “Food is Medicine.”

Issues Identified

- **Transportation:** This area overwhelmingly lacks access to reliable personal transportation, and most counties do not have the infrastructure to provide consistent public transit. For many residents, **medical services are over an hour away**, leading to delayed diagnoses and preventable deaths.
- **Availability of Healthcare Services:** There are not enough specialized care practitioners in SWVA. Those requiring specialized care for a chronic illness must drive long distances or rely on a primary care physician.

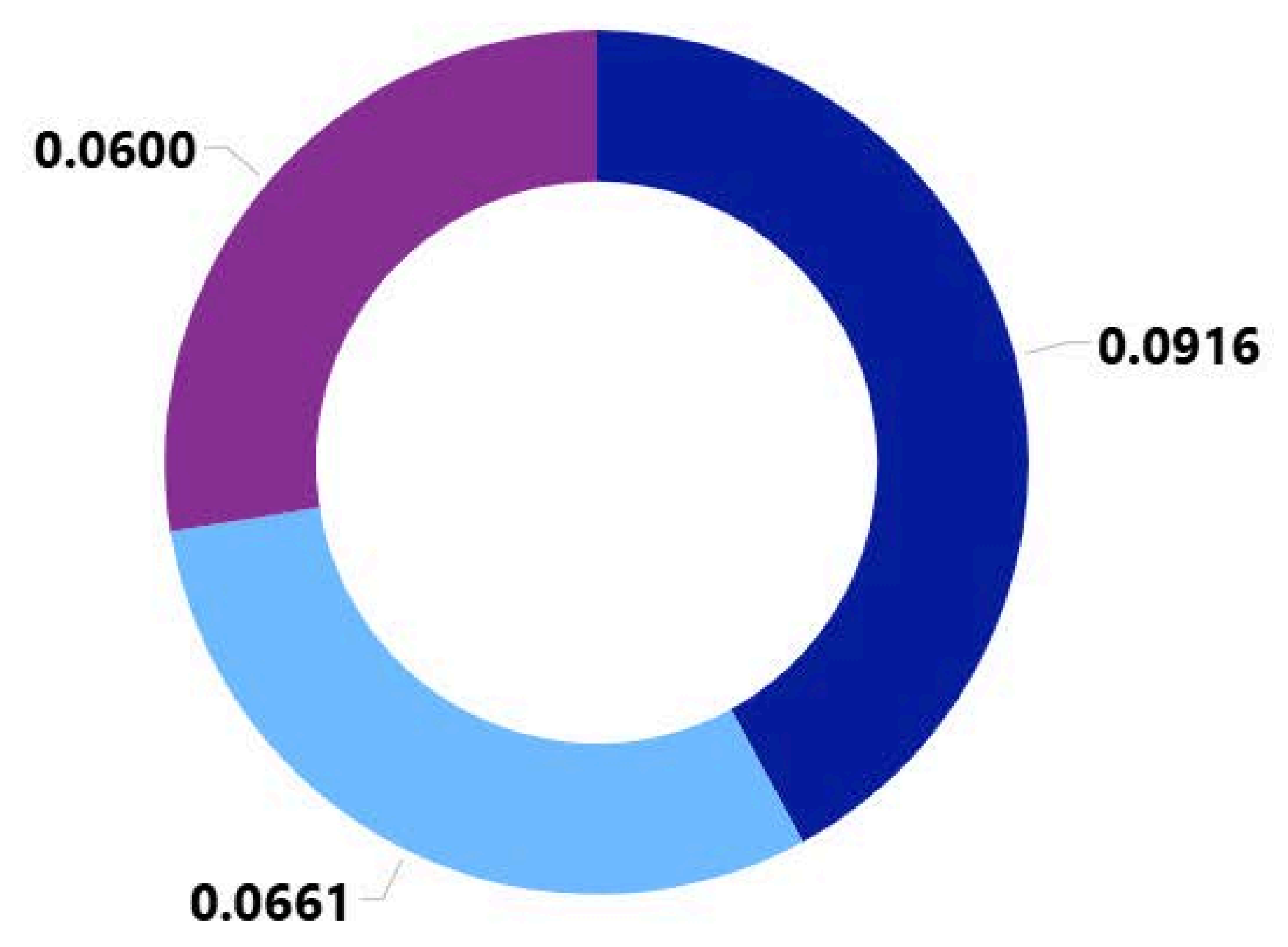
Population Health

- Participated in community and re-entry resource fairs
- Fitted children for bicycle helmets
- Developed and established community partnerships at coalition meetings: ASAC, Perinatal Health Network, Russell County Health Coalition, and Concerned About Our Community.
- Taught REVIVE Training
- Participated in mobile health clinic events.
- Provided rapid testing at local events.
- Worked the Missions of Mercy free dental clinic event.
- Worked on collaborative mobile food program community health fairs.

Virginia’s Blind Spot: Health Realities Below Roanoke

Comparison of Lack of Motor Vehicle Access: Cumberland Plateau and LENOWISCO Vs. Commonwealth of Virginia

● Lenowisco Health District ● Cumberland Plateau Health District ● Virginia



Virginia Wellbeing Dashboard. Households With No Access to a Vehicle. <https://www.vawellbeingdashboard.org/data/households-with-no-access-to-a-vehicle>. Accessed July 2025.

It is important that the solution to these problems includes not only investing in facilities and physicians but also investing in providers’ relationships with the community. Trust has a significant impact on healthcare, especially in areas that have historically lacked faith in institutions.

Key Takeaways

- **Building AND maintaining trust and relationships with the community is fundamental.**
- Working in rural areas requires resourcefulness and flexibility.
- Collaboration with other counties, outside coalitions, and local leadership is crucial.

Abigail’s Info

- MPH, expected Spring 2026
- Concentration: Epidemiology
- Interests: Rural Health, Pathological Epi., Infectious Disease, & Health Disparities




Thank You!

I would like to thank the LENOWISCO and Cumberland Plateau teams. You all are some of the most dedicated people I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

Thank you to Dan for being a great mentor and giving me the opportunity to work with the population health team.