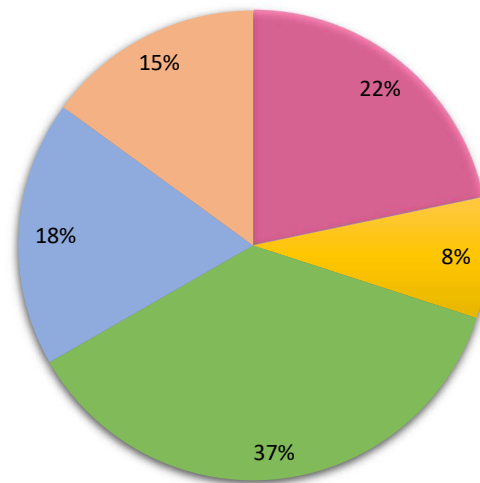


FOCUS GROUP RESULTS SUMMARY OF THE LORD FAIRFAX HEALTH DISTRICT

Overview

With a total of 66 participants, 9 focus group sessions were held in the Lord Fairfax Health District to better understand the concerns, goals, and health needs of the community and its members. A variety of topics were discussed including health needs, transportation, cost/insurance, a mobile health unit, mental health, substance use disorder, smoking, maternal, and child health.

Focus groups were conducted in all localities of the Lord Fairfax Health District; Frederick/Winchester, Warren County, Page County, Shenandoah County, and Clarke County. This allowed us to hear the thoughts, opinions, and needs of those across all localities. The results of these focus groups are divided into overall district results and results of each specific locality.



Percentage of participants by locality

■ Frederick/Winchester ■ Warren ■ Page ■ Shenandoah ■ Clarke

The information received will allow us to better guide our efforts toward the specific issues that community members view as the 'problem areas' of their specific communities. Each locality has different priorities and needs, and those should be addressed with this in mind to have the most substantial impact on the locality. The grant funding (ARPA Targeted Community Outreach) that allowed us to conduct these focus groups, will continue to be used to address these specific concerns.

We hear you and we thank you for your participation.

Overall District Results

District-Wide Highlights:

All localities see a need for more supportive resources and face barriers towards accessing services.

These barriers primarily impact the most vulnerable members of the community. All localities feel a lack of medical providers, appointments, and mental health resources. Similarly, the cost of health care and insurance is expensive which causes many people delay or avoid going to the doctor if they can't afford the services. Needs regarding public transportation with expansive routes is clearly needed and would significantly improve people's access to available services. Many individuals state a major concern towards vaping among teens with a need for more education to teens and parents.

Transportation:

There are very few public transportation options in the district. Current bus and trolley routes don't go into rural areas/neighborhoods. If services are available, vehicles may not be ADA compliant or may have long walks to bus stops due to inconvenient placing.

Cost/Insurance:

The cost of health insurance is high and healthcare costs are high regardless of insurance status. If people can't afford it, people delay seeking care, which can cause a condition to worsen. The lack of providers impacts people's ability to access preventative healthcare.

Mobile Health Unit:

Participants agree a mobile health unit would benefit the district. They believe that it can address issues like transportation and access to healthcare services. It would also be beneficial to work in collaboration and alongside other organizations to provide services.

Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders:

There are very few services available in the area for treatment and medications. The services that are present have very limited scope of practice or have very long wait times. There are few support systems for those in treatment as well. More detox centers, transitional housing, and support for families are needed. Stigma is present in the district which discourages people seeking help.

Smoking and Tobacco Use:

Tobacco use is common within the district. Vaping is a major issue amongst the youth while cigarettes are more common with older generations. Many see it as a generational habit that they pick up from their parents. Education is needed to combat misinformation about vaping to youth and adults alike.

Maternal and Child Health:

Few localities have sufficient OBGYN care for its population's need. Many people drive to Winchester or Front Royal for OBGYN care. More robust pediatric healthcare services are needed in the localities.

- Many areas need better access to birth control & family planning resources
- There are few pediatric practitioners and daycare facilities/childcare facilities
- WIC appointments are difficult to get, despite the need for services

Shenandoah County

Highlights:

The services available in Shenandoah County are helpful, but need to be expanded to support the needs of the community, ShenGo is the only public transportation offered, but routes don't expand from the main road. Cost and availability prevent people from caring for their health. There is a lack in mental health and substance use disorder resources. Smoking and tobacco use habits are higher in Shenandoah County than the US average. Options are limited for pediatricians and there are major waitlists to be seen.

Transportation:

ShenGo routes do not extend into towns, it only follows the main road in Shenandoah County. This helps people travel from town to town, but not within the towns. Lack of transportation would prevent people from going to appointments and caring for their health. People who experience barriers to using public transportation may be refugees and newcomers with language barriers, the elderly, and low-income individuals because ShenGo can be costly.

Cost/Insurance:

Cost and availability prevent people from caring for their health by avoiding going to the doctors. Costs and copay for services are high and insurance does not cover all associated costs for services.

Mobile Health Unit:

Participants agree a MHU would be beneficial to Shenandoah County especially since transportation is a large barrier. Many areas of the county have fewer services available than others, making it difficult for those areas to have the best opportunities for living healthy lives. A MHU would be able to address those disparities by supporting medical services in those areas.

Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders:

There are limited mental health and SUD resources in the area. Cost of medication and treatments is an issue and many insurance plans do not cover the costs. There is a lack of sober living facilities and the presence of stigma and lack of compassion in the community.

Smoking and Tobacco Use:

Vaping is a big issue. People see consequences so far in the future that they don't realize it. Educating parents is a potential way to address the generational factor of the issue. If parent realize that their children adopt the habits of their parents, they may act differently.

Maternal and Child Health:

Maternal and child health are large issues.

- There is help for when you are pregnant, but few when the child is born
- It's difficult to find places to take the children for care
- There are no local areas for delivery. Patients must travel to access delivery care.

Moving Forward

The Lord Fairfax Health District has received so many wonderful ideas and valuable feedback during these sessions. The health district will take this feedback and use it to advocate for our community members. We are dedicated to protecting and promoting your well-being, and to create a healthier Virginia.

This information will be used to know what the most pressing issues in the community are and be used to specifically address these issues. Outreach events encouraging healthy habits in youth and adults alike, creating target marketing towards educating community members, and providing better avenues for accessing opportunities for healthy living are among some plans to engage community members throughout the district with health as a priority. **Our goal is to find solutions that work for each community, because each communities' needs are different.**

The Lord Fairfax Health District has great hopes of obtaining a mobile unit. We hope to be able to use this funding to acquire a mobile health unit this year to address transportation disparities in our more rural areas. Our goal is to provide health department services in areas farther from the health departments, with a focus on those who have difficulty accessing care or experience barriers to transportation and to our more vulnerable populations.

Please reach out to Katherine Schroeder (Katherine.Schroeder@vdh.virginia.gov / 540-722-3470) with any questions you may have about these focus groups or the plans to address community health issues. [Find us on Facebook](#) to stay up to date with LFHD! Thank you again for your participation in our focus groups!