



WAKE COUNTY

2022 Community Health Needs Assessment

Executive Summary



WAKE COUNTY: A Great Place to Live

Wake County was ranked 2021's healthiest county in North Carolina by the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Program and is consistently ranked as one of the best places to live, work, play and learn in our country. This success is largely due to the collaborative efforts of various partners, including those involved in the development of this Community Health Needs Assessment and the residents of Wake County.

Wake County is committed to ensuring all residents are afforded the opportunity to live healthy, productive lives.

The 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process identifies and analyzes the community health needs of Wake County residents. The purpose of a CHNA is to collect and use data to identify community assets and priorities that can improve community health and wellbeing. By identifying these priorities with broad community input, local leaders can collaborate and leverage shared resources and expertise to act. This assessment process was led by Live Well Wake working to fulfill the vision that every Wake County resident, regardless of background or neighborhood, deserves an equal opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being.

2022 Community Health Needs Assessment Overview

The Live Well Wake team worked from June 2021 through April of 2022 to plan, collect and analyze data, prioritize, and finalize this report. The 2022 Wake CHNA followed an eight-phase process developed by NCIPH and informed by the County Health Rankings Model, emphasizing how policies and programs influence a variety of health factors which lead

to health outcomes. The process included collecting new data through a community health opinion survey and focus groups, and reviewing existing, secondary data. Secondary data was collected on national (U.S. Census Bureaus) and state (NC Center for Health Statistics) levels. The COVID-19 pandemic required some data collection methods to be adapted.

The overarching goals of the 2022 CHNA are to:

- » Evaluate the impact of implementation strategies and action plans that resulted from the 2019 CHNA;
- » Collect and analyze primary (new) and secondary (existing) data to identify areas of need within the county;
- » Report findings to the residents of Wake County, hospitals, community agencies, and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services;
- » Engage the community to determine the priorities to be addressed; and,
- » Develop a community-based action plan to address the priorities.

To avoid the development of multiple CHNAs and the duplication of efforts among agencies in Wake County, a joint CHNA has been developed through the collaborative efforts of nine organizations, including Advance Community Health, Alliance Health, Citrix, Duke Raleigh Hospital, UNC REX Healthcare, Wake County Health and Human Services, Wake County Medical Society Community Health Foundation, and WakeMed Health and Hospitals.

The Community Health Needs Assessment process offers a valuable opportunity to address the county's most pressing needs and advance residents' the health and well-being. Wake County is fortunate to have the Live Well Wake collaborative of hospitals, non-profits, and community leaders working together to align objectives, use data, and build action plans.





Summary of Wake County Priority Areas

Existing data was analyzed to quantify priority areas of concern. Wake County demographic, social, and health indicators were compared to applicable population health benchmarks and peer counties. Community members were invited to review the data dashboard and vote on priorities online.

Based on data findings and input gathered from community organizations and residents through focus groups and surveys, the following **three focus areas** have been identified as county-wide priorities for the 2022 CHNA:

- » **Affordable Housing and Homelessness**
- » **Access to Healthcare**
- » **Mental Health**

An overview of each priority area is included on the following page.





Affordable Housing & Homelessness

Affordable Housing and Homelessness remains a priority in 2022. This priority contains information related to the cost of housing, housing choices and number of persons experiencing homelessness.

Key data themes revealed:

- » It is projected that **one out of every four** community members are struggling to find a place to live that they can afford.
- » The county has lost **59%** of its stock of rental units below \$750 a month and **40%** of units below \$1,000 a month.
- » While participants acknowledged ongoing work to address housing shortages, they also raised concerns about whose needs are continuing to go unmet.

In prioritizing affordable housing and homelessness, the steering committee recognized that poverty and employment are an underlying factor to housing affordability.



Access to Health Care

The Access to Care priority includes information pertaining to how and why people use or do not use healthcare, how many people have health insurance, how much healthcare there is in the community, and how much information there is about healthcare.

Key data themes revealed:

- » **Affordability** was a central topic to the access to health care conversations with discussions around how it is important to consider the percentage of people who are uninsured and living below the poverty line.
- » **Access to care** and **health insurance coverage** has remained a top area of concern for residents since the 2016 CHNA.
- » The need for **additional community education** related to the importance of seeking care and the availability of existing community resources were described as areas for improvement.



Mental Health

The Mental Health priority includes data related to mental health disease (like depression, Alzheimer’s, and Schizophrenia), poor mental health days and hurting oneself. In 2019, Wake prioritized mental health along with substance use. While there was much conversation about both topics throughout the assessment process, the Steering Committee ultimately decided to prioritize mental health specifically. By focusing on Mental Health specifically, the county will have a more focused task at hand which will then have downstream impacts on substance use.

Key data themes revealed:

- » Wake County already has a range of services addressing mental health throughout the county and is home to thousands of outpatient therapy providers.
- » While mental health impacts everyone, prioritization discussions highlighted a few populations who are particularly impacted by mental health.
- » Ideally, Wake would like to have a **holistic approach** that **combines both mental and physical health**.

The Live Well Wake Lead Organization Team includes these organizations:



For more information: livewellwake.org