



San Joaquin County 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
MAY 2022

Executive Summary

San Joaquin County is one of California’s fastest growing counties; it includes seven cities, many small towns, and a number of rural farm and ranching communities. County residents are diverse, including Latinx, White, Asian, Black/African American, multiethnic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native populations. San Joaquin is a county of contrasts, home to economic and community growth opportunities and a variety of assets and resources to support health, while facing significant challenges in terms of economic security and health inequities.

The San Joaquin County 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) presents a comprehensive picture of community health that encompasses the conditions that impact health in the County. The overall goal of the CHNA is to inform and engage local decision-makers, key stakeholders, and the community-at-large in efforts to improve the health and well-being of all San Joaquin County residents. From data collection and analysis to the identification of prioritized needs, the development of the 2022 CHNA report has been an inclusive and comprehensive process guided by a Core Team planning group and broadly representative Steering Committee, with input from hundreds of community residents. This collaborative effort stems from a desire to address local needs and a dedication to improving the health of everyone in the community.

Conducting a CHNA every three years has been a California requirement for nonprofit hospitals for more than 20 years and is now a national requirement for Public Health Accreditation. San Joaquin County’s CHNA is unique in that all of its non-profit hospitals, the local health department and key stakeholders join together to support one countywide assessment. The process in 2022 included interviews with 10 key informants, 29 focus group discussions with 291 diverse community residents, and data analyses of over 100 indicators, creating a robust picture of the issues affecting people’s health where they live, work, and play.

The 2022 CHNA process applied a social determinants of health framework and examined San Joaquin County’s social, environmental, and economic conditions that impact health in addition to exploring factors related to diseases, clinical care, and physical health. Analysis of this broad range of contributing factors resulted in identification of the top health needs for the County. This CHNA report places particular emphasis on the health issues and contributing

CHNA Health Needs

Highest Priority

- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Access to Care
- Income and Employment

Medium Priority

- Housing
- Chronic Disease/HEAL
- Community Safety

Lower Priority

- Family and Social Support
- Education
- Transportation

factors that impact historically underserved populations that disproportionately have poorer health outcomes across multiple health needs. It explored disparities for populations residing in specific geographic areas referred to as “Priority Neighborhoods”, as well as disparities among the County’s diverse ethnic populations. These analyses will inform intervention strategies to promote health equity.

Through a comprehensive process combining findings from demographic and health data as well as community leader and resident input, nine health needs were identified (see box). Through a multi-step prioritization, the following three health needs emerged as the highest priorities for San Joaquin County:

Mental Health/Behavioral Health Including Substance Use: Mental health affects all areas of life, including a person’s physical well-being, ability to work and perform well in school and to participate fully in family and community activities. Residents of San Joaquin County experience more days of poor mental health per month and have a higher rate of deaths by suicide, drug overdose and alcohol poisoning combined than the California average, with significantly fewer mental health care providers available. Key informants and focus group participants stressed the urgency of increasing access to mental health and substance use treatment and services by addressing the barriers presented by cost, lack of insurance, transportation, language/cultural competency and social stigma.

Access to Care: Access to comprehensive, quality healthcare is important for health and for increasing the quality of life for everyone in San Joaquin County. The health care provider shortage within the County can lead to poor health outcomes, which are particularly notable among pregnant and postpartum women of color and their babies. Key informants and focus group participants described the difficulties residents experience in accessing medical, dental and specialty care due to a lack of providers or available appointments, inadequate insurance coverage, language/cultural barriers and the cost of services, co-pays, insurance and prescriptions.

Income and Employment: People with steady employment are less likely to have an income below poverty level and more likely to be healthy. San Joaquin County’s higher unemployment, lower average income and pervasive poverty, especially among people of color, affect opportunities and behaviors that exacerbate chronic disease and disability, reduce food security, limit healthy food and physical activity choices, erode mental health, and impact substance use. Key informants and focus group participants reported extensive job loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately affected historically underserved communities and threatened residents’ ability to maintain housing, provide their families with healthy foods, and access medical care.

For the 2019 CHNA, community members identified Chronic Disease/Healthy Eating Active Living as their top health issue. There has been progress on this health need but there is much more to do. As a result, it remains a priority and will be addressed in the subsequent development of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Additional health needs that were explored during the CHNA, including Chronic Disease/Healthy Eating Active Living, are described in the full report.

San Joaquin County will use the results of this CHNA to drive the development of a CHIP. The CHIP will identify strategies and actions to address health needs using a collaborative approach. It will leverage resources and skills from a variety of County organizations and agencies to maximize the potential for a collective impact that results in concrete changes for County residents. Community partners across the County will work together to set priorities and coordinate and target resources.

Additionally, the hospitals involved in the CHNA will each develop a complementary Implementation Strategy (IS) plan to outline how they will address priority health needs. These strategies will build on a hospital's own assets and resources, as well as on evidence-based strategies and best practices, wherever possible. Their IS will be filed with the Internal Revenue Service. Both the San Joaquin County CHNA and the IS report, once finalized, will be posted publicly on each of the hospitals' websites.

The 2022 CHNA report and the subsequent CHIP will be available at www.healthiersanjoaquin.org