

Executive Summary

Logan County completed a Community Health Risks and Needs Assessment in 2018 to better understand the scope of challenges facing the residents of Logan County and to fulfill requirements of various regulatory agencies that oversee health and social service entities in the community. These agencies include Mary Rutan Hospital and the Mary Rutan Foundation, the Logan County Health District, United Way, Community Health & Wellness Partners of Logan County, and the MHDAS Board of Logan and Champaign Counties.

Health agencies must define and review the areas they serve. The agencies are charged with planning, monitoring, and measuring the availability, accessibility, and impact of their services on distinct populations. Agencies should take care to eliminate (when possible) barriers of physical characteristics, residential patterns, its economic and social groupings, and available transportation.

Therefore, as part of the review process, the health agencies must assess the need for health service in the area based on the population served or proposed to be served. The following factors should be used including (but not limited to):

- Available Health Resources
- Health Indices
- Economic Factors
- Demographic Factors

The Logan County Health Risks and Needs Assessment Committee and Epiphany Community Services (ECS) conducted a robust sampling of the community and collected primary data from focus groups, key informant interviews, and community surveys. Secondary data (existing) was gathered from multiple sources in areas of health, mental health, legal services, schools, law enforcement, emergency services, social services, and census information. ECS used a mix of quantitative and qualitative data for the assessment.

The Logan County Needs Assessment group provided expertise on community context, needs, exploration paths, and connections to key audiences, ECS provided technical expertise and services related to the construct, collection, and analysis of all community assessment data. Over the past three years, these groups have had the same priorities for the Logan County Community:

- Healthy living to prevent chronic disease
- Substance abuse
- Mental health
- Resource and awareness communication
- Housing and homelessness

Introduction

To address the challenges facing Logan County, members of the Logan County Health Risk and Community Needs Assessment Committee, gathered data related to Logan County's community. The goal of this needs assessment is to create a picture of the needs of Logan County so the Mary Rutan Hospital, Mary Rutan Foundation, the Logan County Health District, the MHDAS Board of Logan and Champaign counties, United Way, Community Health & Wellness Partners of Logan County, and other agencies may better target their work to improve the quality of life in Logan County. This report identifies community and data strengths and challenges and provides conclusions and recommendations for the next steps in addressing challenges.

Community Overview

Logan County, seated in west central Ohio, is a rural farming and manufacturing community located approximately 60 miles west of the state capital, Columbus. Logan County covers a span of nearly 500 square miles of primarily agricultural land. 2016 projected data for the United States (U.S.) Census²⁰ reported a total population of 45,165. The county seat, Bellefontaine, holds the largest population in the county with 13,370 residents.

The major employer is manufacturing, followed by agriculture, administrative, waste services, health care, social assistance, and education. People travel between 15 and 29 minutes to work. Public transportation is lacking in terms of accessibility and affordability. Over the past year, improvements have been made to the local public transportation system, although it is still limited. Efforts continue to make it more accessible and affordable.

There are four school districts, each district encompasses several small communities. There are 7,625 students in Logan County. The average high school graduation rate for 2015/16 was

95.9%¹. The graduation rate has increased from 92.1% in 2014/15 and is higher than the Ohio rate of 83.5%.

When considering the racial composition, Logan County is a predominately white community, comparable to the state of Ohio. 2016 projected numbers for the US Census reports that 94.9% of residents designated white as their race. Persons reporting two or more races is the next largest racial group making up 2.2% of the population. Logan County has a diverse population regarding socio-economic, religion, agriculture, and resort communities which have different norms, values, and attitudes.

According to Ohio County Profiles², 2016, approximately one-quarter of the population of Logan County is under the age of 18 and a little over half the population are ages 24 to 64. A very small percentage, only eight percent, is young adults ages 18 to 24. The median household income in 2016 was \$49,783 (the US Census²⁰ projects \$51,136) with 13% (the U.S. Census²⁰ projects 12.2%) of residences living below poverty level.

There are over twenty-one parks that provide residents with recreational opportunities, with nine of those having designated walking trails. The Indian Lake State Park provides a walking and bike path that runs along the edge of Indian Lake midpoint between Russell's Point and Lakeview. The newest fitness project is the 18-mile bike trail expansion, Simon Kenton All Purpose Bike Path, allowing bicyclists to travel between Cincinnati and Bellefontaine. Six fitness facilities are located within the county, along with a ski resort, pool, recreational lake, bowling lanes, golf courses, zip line & rope course, and horseback riding. There are limited indoor opportunities for fitness during inclement weather, especially options that are no cost. Additionally, many of the county's recreational opportunities require transportation for most residents. Fresh produce is available in the summer at two farmer's markets in Bellefontaine. Grocery stores are available in most communities, although a few of the smaller areas do not have grocery stores and residents would be required to travel to obtain food.

Community Strengths/Assets

In general, Logan County is a healthy community with a strong understanding of its problems, county residents feel able to address issues. Residents view Logan County as a good place to live and are willing to invest the time and talents in the community. The results of this assessment indicated an engaged community with a great deal of pride in its successes. Primary data collection through interviews, key informant interviews, and focus groups allowed a richer picture of the community to be developed. These data sources revealed many strengths.

- The community thinks highly of their community schools.
- The graduation rate in Logan County is higher than the state average⁶
- Youth feel supported by their parents
- The Logan County teen birth rate is lower than the state of Ohio⁶
- Logan County's infant mortality rate is substantially lower than the state rate. ⁶
- Logan County median income is above the State of Ohio's median income⁶
- The Logan County unemployment rate is lower than the State of Ohio rate ⁶
- Most interviewees enjoy living in Logan County and feel the community has a great deal to offer its residents.
- Community members are willing to invest in the community through volunteer work to support community efforts and facilities.
- The community has two new Urgent Care facilities
- Relationships between law enforcement agencies are good
- The faith-based community enjoys good support from the community
- The revitalization efforts in Bellefontaine are appreciated by community members
- The restoration of the Holland Theatre in Bellefontaine is viewed as a positive effort
- The agricultural community's work ethic is viewed as having a positive effect
- The development and ongoing work of CORE is viewed as having a positive effect
- United Way is viewed as a positive and forward-looking organization
- The community has a generous spirit
- Consolidated Care is viewed positively
- Community Health and Wellness Partners of Logan County is viewed positively.
- The youth perceive they see people out in the community
- New businesses are coming to the area
- The youth feel the sports teams are good

- The Amish feel blessed by the way the community accepts them.
- Most people feel they are healthy.
- 2-1-1 in place for use, which connects callers, at no cost, to critical health and human services in their community.
- Healthy Living, Healthy You is a successful campaign, gaining recognition
- The community is exercising more.
- The coalitions have become purposeful in their work

Community Challenges

Logan County has a great number of strengths as identified by primary and secondary data collection. Despite the strengths, there are areas of challenge and questions for the community to address. Challenges include:

Logan County faces two challenges of the composition of the population; 1) the population is not growing and 2) the population is aging. This aging population will present challenges to Logan County policymakers and programs, such as Social Security and Medicare. It will also affect families, businesses, and health care providers²¹.

In terms of community issues, one of the biggest findings is the percentage of respondents indicating drug abuse as a big issue and the need for alcohol/drug abuse programs. Responses from the 2018 Community needs survey indicate year over year the percentage of respondents indicating drug use is a “big problem” as increased, from 70.3%, 2012 to 85.8%, 2018. (See Table 1:c Drug Abuse under Community Issues) This corresponds to recent reports of drug abuse in the community but does not correspond with the low percentage of respondents reporting the use of drugs. In addition, other issues mentioned by respondents include health care, care for elderly, and the need for evening/weekend transportation.

Health issues indicate some areas of note. In the Personal Health section, an area that requires attention is the relatively high percentage of respondents indicating they are overweight or obese. There has been an increase in the recognition of the Healthy Living Healthy You campaign, though there is still work required to inform people everything the campaign is focused on.

In the Health Care Access and Health Care Coverage sections, there are some positive things to highlight. Most respondents indicated having healthcare coverage, having a regular health care provider, and getting regular checkups. However, is a trend for a lower percentage of respondents to report family coverage.

One issue that came out of the drug and alcohol sections of the 2018 community needs survey was that just over 15% of respondents report knowing a heroin user. The respondents indicated the user were predominantly (85.1%) from the 21 to 40 age group. From the key informant interviews, heroin issue was noted as an issue that needed to be addressed. Secondary data supports this under the ER visits report from Mary Rutan Hospital. The ER reported 107 drug overdoses in 2017 up from 34 in 2015. The ER reported 26 alcohol-related issues in 2017 up from 15 in 2015.

The one finding in the sexual health section that was notable was a positive one, trending from 2012, to 2015 to 2018 was a low percentage of respondents are indicating multiple sexual partners. This is true even for the young adult group. However, according to the Logan County Health District reporting there is an increase in incidences of all sexually transmitted diseases, including chlamydia, gonorrhea, and Hep B (see Table 13).

For mental health, there was a slight increase in respondents indicating that mental health issues are a 'big problem' in their community. All age groups except 65+ reported higher percentages in 2018 than 2015 that mental health issues were a "big problem". Percentages were slightly lower for 65+ but the difference was minimal.

In the 2018 community needs survey percentages of respondents being diagnosed with any mental illness, were lowest for the 65+ respondents, higher for female than male respondents, and highest in Russells Point. Key informants indicated the need for mental health facilities, seeing mental health as an increasing need.

According to the Ohio Kids Count 2017 Fact Sheet, child maltreatment in Logan County is higher than the state rate.⁶ Responses in the 2018 Community needs survey indicate over one quarter of respondents view child abuse as a big problem. Juvenile Division Cases Filed by Year (Table 20) increased from 95 (2014) to 146 (2016).

The 2018 School survey Logan County youth have low social competency and low positive identity ratings, according to the youth surveys⁵ (see Tables 2 to 5). These skills are often referred to as “life skills” which could result in potentially fewer youth being academically and vocationally successful compared to their predecessors.

On the Community Needs Survey 2018, there are parenting issues worth noting. One parenting issue is a concern, that nearly one-quarter of respondents with children indicated they have children with asthma. On a positive note a large percentage of respondents indicated eating regular meals with family members, most respondents reported that their children have health care coverage, and on the school survey youth rated family support and family boundaries over 60% (an external asset). In youth focus groups the participants indicated they prefer eating as a family, when dining at home or dining out.

In the Social, Economic area there were mixed responses and data. From the Ohio County Health Ranking (Table 9), Logan County moved from a ranking of 45th in 2016 to 31st in 2018 in Social & Economic factors. These factors include High School graduation, some college, unemployment, childhood poverty, income inequality, children in single-parent households, social associations, violent crime, injury deaths.

However, in the internal assets area of the school survey, students reported the lowest rating for social competencies. This includes; Young person knowing how to plan and make choices; having empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills; having knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds; resisting negative peer pressure and dangerous situations; and finding ways to resolve conflict nonviolently⁷. Key informants and focus group participants indicated a need for life skills training at all ages in the community.

Social Context was the last section of the survey. There are still low percentages of respondents reporting issues with their housing and low percentages reporting money issues. However, 2-1-1 (a simple, easy-to-remember number to call when you need non-emergency help or access to human services. It is a free 24-hour service) reporting indicated housing issue needs as the top five reasons for calls. Focus groups and key informant interviewees all mentioned housing and homelessness issues. The housing issues apply to all income and ownership groups.

From the youth focus groups, improving community pride was an issue they felt was needed. Key informants mentioned an improving sense of pride, particularly in Bellefontaine.

There continue to be some differences to note with regards to census tract, like surveys in 2012, 2015, and in 2018. Respondents from Indian Lake – Lakeview, Russells Point, and some of the areas in Bellefontaine (e.g., West, and Central) still tended to provide more “at risk” responses than those from other areas. For instance, these are the areas where respondents are reporting the highest percentage of depression symptoms and mental health dysfunction, abuse, smoking, issues with getting help when they need it, lowest incomes, most negative views of the community, and the most community issues/problems in general.

Overall, some challenges for the community were highlighted in the secondary data. For example, consider the 2-1-1 reporting, of housing issues and the lack of housing issues in the survey responses. Another example is found in the maltreatment of children numbers for Logan County and the court cases. In the 2018 survey, respondents indicate child abuse as a distant second place to drugs as a “big problem”. This indicates the need to go beyond the convenience sampling and access people who are experiencing access inequity. The community challenge is “how” to access this group.

Recommendations

There are many strengths in the Logan County community. However, there are areas for improvement necessary to address the challenges facing the community. A review of data and an assessment of community challenges indicates that Logan County and community organizations address the following:

- Enhance the existing coalitions created to address the priorities, add dedicated leadership
- Continue to support CORE
- Strengthen supports for the populations in the community living below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) measures
- Work with local organizations and agencies to understand the housing needs of the community and begin a plan for the housing needs
- Continue to work with local organizations and agencies regarding the county-wide transportation issues

- Collaboration with local leaders, parents, and youth to develop strategies to address the lack of inclusivity that is felt in the community, efforts should be made to develop a sense of county level and community, not just individualized towns
- Outreach to parents and community members with messages on how to support the children of the community
- Outreach to parents and community members on how to help children gain life skills
- Review of prevention programming, practices and policies, and identification of gaps that may be impacting the level of adult abuse of both alcohol and drugs
- Continue collaboration between businesses, education, and the community working to prepare the area youth for the workforce
- Partnership with law enforcement agencies to identify “hot spots” to patrol and provision of support to ensure resources
- Partnership with faith communities to share messages about substance abuse issues and engagement with parents and the community regarding these issues
- Work with the hospital to obtain additional health data, allowing for a more comprehensive “health” picture of the community

Future Data Collection

- Review the questions on the survey, with the new data from the 2018 survey, key informants, focus groups, secondary data, and survey responses. Select questions that reflect the new priorities and track from previous surveys.
- Create a large and small survey – placing the smaller survey online.
- Add questions on the survey regarding the children of Logan County
- Conduct a community mapping effort to determine the assets in Logan County
- Create a plan and implement ways to assess people who experience inequities in accessing resources and services
- Check assessment year to assessment year to understand the value of the use of census tracts

Conclusions

Overall, Logan County and its towns are strong communities with an understanding of the challenges they face. Many residents consider Logan County a great place to live and have a family.

Drug abuse while seen as a big problem in the community, the reported use of drugs, is far less than the qualitative data indicates. Some secondary data supports increased community use. There is a need to look at the strategies in the community related to prevention, intervention, and enforcement to get a better grasp of the challenges in addressing the current problem behaviors.

Many indicators point to improving economic conditions. There are areas that are still in need of housing, child care, and transportation specifically. Community leaders should reflect on how and to whom services are delivered and develop strategies to best meet the challenges of those requiring services. Support such as transportation services, government daycare, and housing initiatives should be considered.

Youth in the community, as indicated in the School Survey are unable to see success in their lives. This belief could lead to less academically, professionally, and socially successful youth. This is a challenge for the community hoping to gain new employers.

Logan County has previously demonstrated a willingness to address challenges facing the community. It has the capacity, through local leaders, faith organizations, businesses, schools, nonprofit organizations, and residents, to address existing and emerging issues successfully.