

# COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

*2021*

BERKSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEMS



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
II. Introduction .....	5
1. About Berkshire Health Systems .....	5
2. Our Goals for Community Health.....	5
3. Community Health Needs Assessment .....	6
<b>III. Methodology for 2021 CHNA</b> .....	<b>7</b>
1. Social Determinants of Health Framework .....	7
2. Assessment Methods .....	8
<b>IV. About Our Community</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1. Background .....	9
2. Overall Health Status of Residents .....	13
<b>V. Priority Health Issues Impacting the Health of Berkshire County</b> .....	<b>15</b>
1. Health Conditions and Behaviors .....	15
Suicide in Berkshire County .....	17
Heart Disease Mortality .....	18
Cancer Mortality .....	18
Diabetes .....	19
Adult Smoking .....	19
Opioids and Prescription Drugs .....	20
Infant and Perinatal Care and Controlled Substances.....	21
Health Conditions and Behaviors Impacting Youth.....	22
COVID-19 in Berkshire County .....	23
2. Social and Economic Determinants that Impact Health .....	24
Poverty .....	24
Physical Environment.....	25
Safety .....	27
Education .....	28
Food Insecurity .....	30
3. Access Challenges to Quality Health Care .....	30
<b>VI. Community and Health System Resources to Address Identified Needs</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>36</b>

# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

Berkshire Health Systems is the leading provider of comprehensive healthcare services for residents and visitors to Berkshire County, serving a population of nearly 130,000.

BHS supports 24-hour emergency care at its two inpatient acute care facilities, Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) in Pittsfield and Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington, as well as the Satellite Emergency Facility on the BMC campus in North Adams. Our hospitals offer advanced imaging and lab services and are closely integrated with the specialty care provided at the BMC Cancer Center. Berkshire Visiting Nurses Association (BVNA), BHS Urgent Care Center, and the BHS medical group network of primary and specialty care providers extend our continuum of expert care beyond the hospital. BHS offers its broad range of award-winning services at 30 practices in 48 locations across the county.

As the largest employer in the Berkshires, BHS supports more than 4,000 jobs in the region, and, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, BHS is committed to partnering with local municipalities and community organizations to help the county thrive.

### **Our Mission**

We will advance health and wellness for everyone in our community in a welcoming, inclusive, and personalized environment.

Our formal Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for 2021 relies heavily upon social and economic determinants of health framework and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings to analyze and prioritize the factors that contribute to the health of a population.

Our assessment included the evaluation of publicly available data, findings from local organization reports, and feedback collected from focus groups and surveys. This data, in conjunction with the Massachusetts focus areas and priorities, was used to determine our annual community benefit priorities.

Vulnerable populations— **older adults, youth/adolescents, and medically underserved individuals**— were identified through the analysis of available data sources and confirmed by community feedback.

## 2. FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the priority health needs identified in the 2021 CNHA, organized into three overarching categories:

- Health Conditions and Outcomes
- Community Level Social and Economic Determinants that Impact Health
- Barriers to Accessing Quality Care

## Health Outcomes and Behaviors

- *Chronic Disease with a Focus on Cancer, Heart Disease, and Diabetes*

Berkshire County has the highest rate of premature death in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Community Health Rankings (2021). Residents report a higher rate of poor mental health days than the state overall, and have higher rates of smoking (19%), obesity (27%) and excessive drinking (26%), all of which contribute to higher rates of chronic disease within the community. More than 20% of the population is over the age of 65, making the community highly susceptible to the variety of increased health issues that accompany aging.

- *Mental Illness and Mental Health, including Suicide Prevention and Treatment*

In addition to the high level of reported poor mental health days in the Berkshire Community, rates of suicide are among the highest in the state at 17.4 per 100,000. A recent survey of youth revealed a similarly high level of suicidal behaviors with between 14-17% of youth stating that they had planned a suicide attempt in the past 12 months and 7-11% of youth having attempted suicide in the past 12 months.

- *Substance Use Disorders*

Berkshire County's rate of substance use has skyrocketed, as evidenced by the nearly 200% increase in overdose deaths in the past 10 years. Berkshire County also reports the second-highest rate of pregnant women who used opioids during pregnancy.

- *COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination*

BHS continues to provide the major infrastructure supporting the community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the health system's fiscal year ended 09/30/2021, BHS performed more than 160,000 COVID tests and cared for more than 500 hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

## Community Level Social and Economic Determinants that Impact Health

- *Improving Community Safety*

Berkshire County ranks 10<sup>th</sup> of 14 counties in the state for violent crimes, but 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state for homicide risk at 2.36 per 100,000 people.

- *Creating Initiatives to Improve Social Determinants of Health*

A variety of social and economic issues converge on Berkshire County to create significant challenges that can impact the health of its residents. Berkshire County follows Suffolk and Hampden County, ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state (tied with Bristol County) for prevalence of food insecurity (9.9%). Berkshire County housing stock is significantly older than the rest of the state, with more than 45% of all housing being built before 1950, as opposed to only 37% for the rest of the state. The county's median household income is at least 25% lower than the state average and a higher number of children under 18 live below the poverty level (13.9%).

## Barriers to Accessing Quality Care

- *Increasing Insurance Enrollment*

Given the age and economic demographic of the county, more than 45% of Berkshire residents are heavily reliant on public sources of financing for access to health care. Nearly 3.0% are uninsured.

- *Enhancing the Healthcare Workforce*

The region's significant reliance on government-reimbursed services can have a direct influence on locally available programs and services. BHS continues to face staffing challenges, like those experienced across the nation and is exploring career training programs that can simultaneously help to reduce clinician shortages and help to raise median income levels through strong employment opportunities for Berkshire residents.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### 1. ABOUT BERKSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEMS

Berkshire Health Systems is the leading provider of comprehensive healthcare services for residents and visitors to Berkshire County. From inpatient surgery and cancer care to provider visits and imaging, Berkshire Health Systems (BHS) offers a continuum of programs and services that help patients to connect to the care they need, no matter where they are in the rural Berkshire community.

BHS supports 24-hour emergency care at its two inpatient acute care facilities, Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) in Pittsfield and Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington, as well as the Satellite Emergency Facility on the BMC campus in North Adams. Our hospitals offer advanced imaging and lab services and are closely integrated with the specialty care provided at the BMC Cancer Center. Berkshire Visiting Nurses Association (BVNA), BHS Urgent Care Center, and the BHS medical group network of primary and specialty care providers extend our continuum of expert care beyond the hospital. BHS offers its broad range of award-winning services at 30 practices in 48 locations across the county.

As the largest employer in the Berkshires, BHS supports more than 4,000 jobs in the region, and, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, BHS is committed to partnering with local municipalities and community organizations to help the county thrive.

#### **Our Mission**

We will advance health and wellness for everyone in our community in a welcoming, inclusive, and personalized environment.

#### **Our Vision**

We will be the region's trusted healthcare partner and community advocate for improving overall quality of life.

### 2. OUR GOALS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH

In 2021, Berkshire Health Systems adopted a new mission statement and vision, both of which exemplify a formal institutional shift to a purpose that relies on building strong and responsive relationships with our local community. BHS has subsequently been working to implement a strategic plan that establishes ambitious goals for improving the overall health and well-being of the Berkshire community and reducing health disparities in our service area by 2027:

- Berkshire County has improved its ranking to no lower than 9<sup>th</sup> among the 14 Massachusetts counties for overall health factors
- Demonstrated reduction in health inequities impacting Berkshire populations that have been historically marginalized

To achieve these goals, BHS is reviewing all programs, services, operational processes, and policies through a lens that emphasizes diversity, equity, and inclusion. We acknowledge that we are in the earliest stages of this important work and look forward to engaging our community more fully in regular opportunities for conversation and feedback. We expect to make changes in our community benefits programming structure to better support this work as we move forward.

### 3. COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Berkshire Health Systems conducts a periodic assessment of our community health needs to better understand the health issues impacting our local community, in accordance with the federal requirements established in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) and in alignment with the Community Benefits Guidelines for Non-Profit Hospitals established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General. This CHNA will be used to update BHS's hospital-specific community health implementation strategies, as well as to inform the community of our efforts to improve our region's overall health.

The objectives of the CHNA are:

- To gather statistically valid information on the health status of the residents of Berkshire County
- To develop accurate comparisons to state and national benchmarks of health and quality of life measures to provide trending information for the future
- To identify key areas of significant community needs and vulnerable populations
- To utilize findings for community benefit and hospital planning activities

Through this work, we strive to engage community organizations and individual community members so that we can collect feedback that represents a meaningful cross-section of our community; however, in 2020 and 2021, our community engagement efforts were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in more limited data collection. As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, we are exploring new methods of connecting and engaging with all sectors of our community to provide a more comprehensive assessment in the future.

### III. METHODOLOGY FOR 2021 CHNA

#### 1. SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH FRAMEWORK

Our formal Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for 2021 relies heavily upon social and economic determinants of health framework and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings to analyze and prioritize the factors that contribute to health of a population.

BHS recognizes that socioeconomic status, education, employment, housing, food security, transportation, and social factors all have a significant impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of a population. These social determinants of health (SDOH) can impact as much as 80% of a person’s overall health, while traditional clinical medicine impacts only about 20% of a person’s health.



Factors Impacting Health Outcomes, Adapted from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings Model

The priorities established in this assessment have been guided by our acknowledgment of the statewide priority health outcome focus areas identified by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in 2017 as key drivers of morbidity, mortality, and health care cost:

- Chronic disease with a focus on cancer, heart disease, and diabetes
- Housing stability/homelessness
- Mental illness and mental health
- Substance use disorders

These focus areas are also informed by the DPH's six social determinants of health priorities, which ask our organization to recognize and address issues of racism and institutional bias that emerge in each of these priority areas and create a significant impact on health outcomes, especially among historically marginalized populations:

- Built Environment
- Social Environment
- Housing
- Violence
- Education
- Employment

## 2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

The report contains the most recent available data collected through September 2021 and serves as a valuable resource to help guide BHS along with our community at large on the best ways to improve the health of the people living in our service area.

Our assessment included the evaluation of:

- Publicly available social, economic, and health data
- Findings from recent Berkshire County assessment reports created by local municipalities and planning or community-based agencies
- Feedback collected from focus groups and surveys

This data, in conjunction with the Massachusetts focus areas and priorities, was used to determine our annual community benefit priorities. When creating implementation plans to advance these priorities, Berkshire Medical Center and Fairview Hospital strive to identify opportunities to better align existing resources with target populations and to identify gaps in service and implement evidenced-based, best-practice programs to meet community need.

### **Data Limitations and Information Gaps**

That this type of study does have data limitations and some gaps in information. Though demographic, socioeconomic, and health status indicators provide an effective means of identifying potential needs and/or problems, this type of broad-based view can never succeed in identifying all the needs facing a community. Furthermore, complete data is unavailable for certain underrepresented populations. This CHNA is simply one element in a series of efforts to collect and disseminate health status information so that our entire community can work together to promote better health outcomes for all the people living in Berkshire County.

## IV. ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

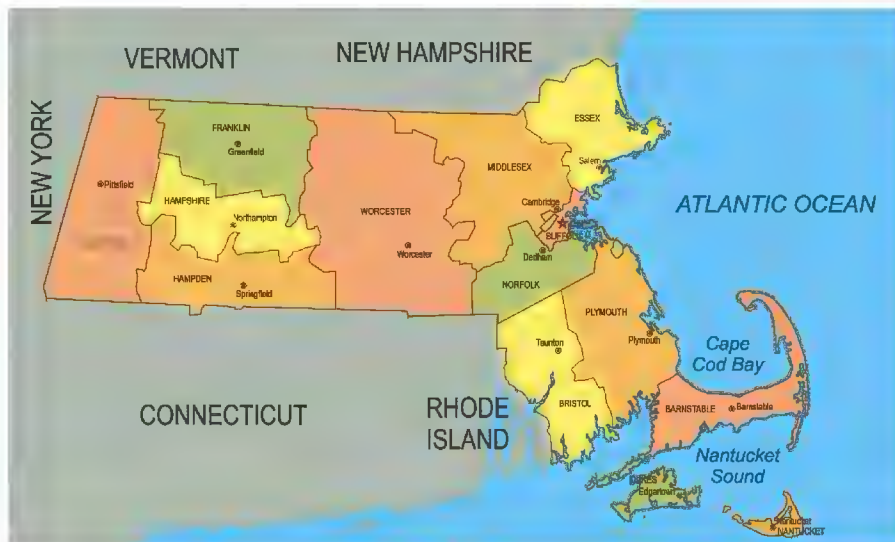
### 1. BACKGROUND

Berkshire County, Massachusetts is the western-most of the 14 counties in Massachusetts. The Berkshires run along the New York border from Vermont in the north to Connecticut in the south and encompasses most of the mountainous ridge that separates the Hudson and Connecticut River Valleys. The 32 communities of Berkshire County cover nearly 927 square miles and have an overall population density of 140 persons per square mile compared to 835 persons per square mile for the Commonwealth. With about 12% of the landmass and only 2% of the population, Berkshire County is the second most rural county in the state (Census, 2020).

The Berkshires is a nationally recognized year-round tourist destination, known for its cultural offerings and outdoor recreation. Boasting award-winning art museums, historical destinations, and theatres alongside scenic hiking, biking, and skiing, the Berkshires has been a holiday destination for Boston and New York residents for hundreds of years and is home to many seasonal residents.

The county is traditionally divided into three regions: north, central, and south (See Appendix IV). It takes about two hours to drive from the Town of Sheffield in the south to Williamstown in the north. There is no county government, and all local services are the responsibility of each of the county's 32 towns and cities. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts funds a County Sheriff's Department, District Attorney's Office, the court system, and Registry of Deeds. Each area of the county is serviced by a Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC).

Though the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority does oversee a limited-schedule public bus system, most transportation in the county is by private automobile, which creates significant challenges for any residents who do not own cars. Albany, New York is the closest international airport.

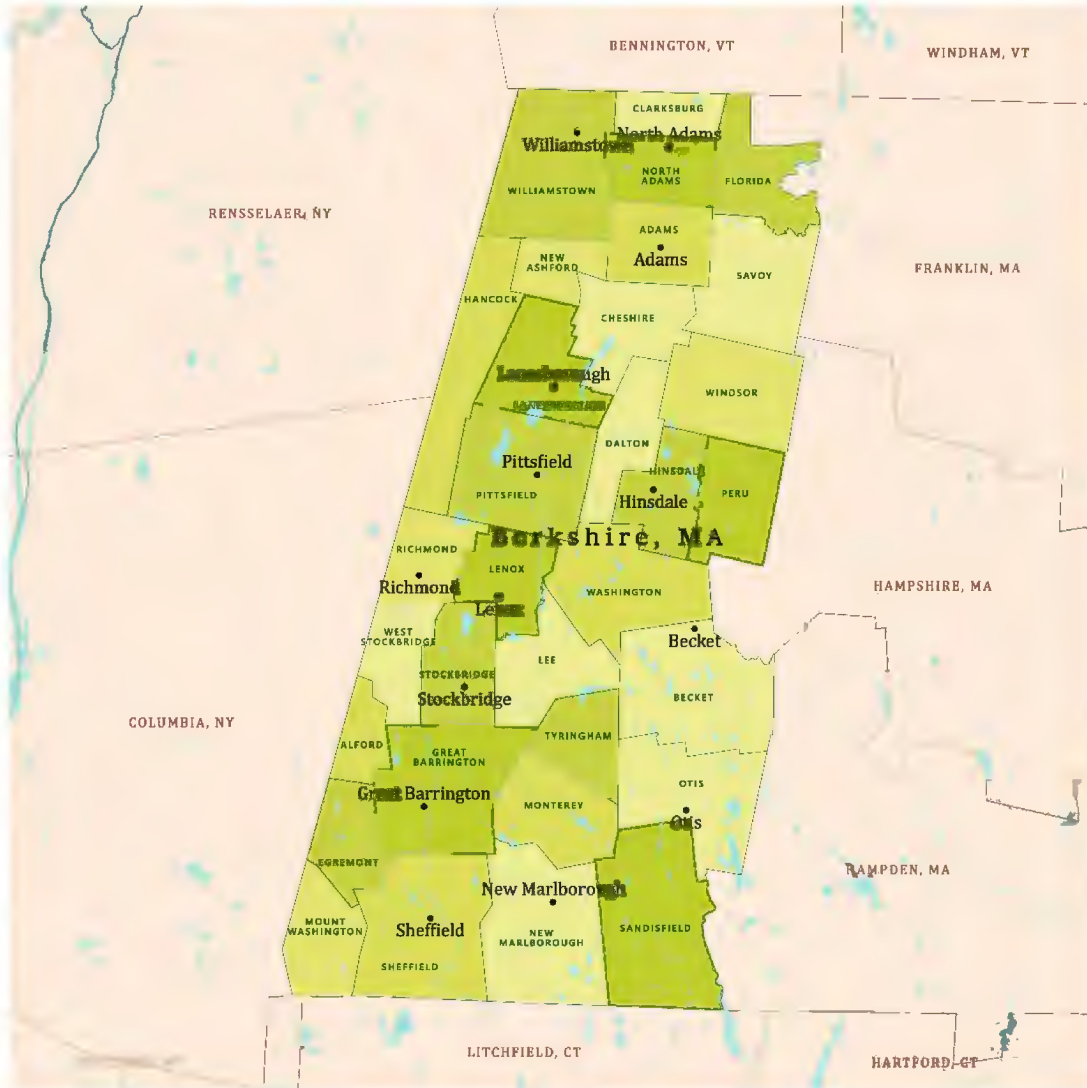


**Berkshire Count In Context**

Source: Kosmozoo/DigitalVision Vectors via Getty Images."

### BHS's Primary Service Area

The primary service area of Berkshire Health Systems is Berkshire County, but BHS also welcomes patients from nearby rural towns in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont, as well as seasonal visitors. Berkshire Medical Center, the region's 298-bed community teaching hospital, is located in Pittsfield, in the center of the county. Fairview Hospital, the county's 25-bed community access hospital, is located in Great Barrington, in the southern part of the region.



Cities and Towns of Berkshire County, Source: FrankRamspott/DigitalVision Vectors via Getty

Berkshire County's population, according to the 2020 census, is 129,026, with population largely concentrated in the county's two cities—Pittsfield (43,927) and North Adams (12,961). (Table 1)

**Table 1 Communities in BHS's Service Area**

Town	Population	%
Adams	8,166	6.3%
Alford	486	0.4%
Becket	1,931	1.5%
Cheshire	3,258	2.5%
Clarksburg	1,657	1.3%
Dalton	6,330	4.9%
Egremont	1,372	1.1%
Florida	694	0.5%
Great Barrington	7,172	5.6%
Hancock	757	0.6%
Hinsdale	1,919	1.5%
Lanesborough	3,038	2.4%
Lee	5,788	4.5%
Lenox	5,095	3.9%
Monterey	1,095	0.8%
Mount Washington	160	0.1%
New Ashford	250	0.2%
New Marlborough	1,528	1.2%
North Adams	12,961	10.0%
Otis	1,634	1.3%
Peru	814	0.6%
Pittsfield	43,927	34.0%
Richmond	1,407	1.1%
Sandisfield	989	0.8%
Savoy	645	0.5%
Sheffield	3,327	2.6%
Stockbridge	2,018	1.6%
Tyringham	427	0.3%
Washington	494	0.4%
West Stockbridge	1,343	1.0%
Williamstown	7,513	5.8%
Windsor	831	0.6%
<b>Total Berkshire County</b>	<b>129,026</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Data Source:** US Census Bureau, 2020 Census

**Table 2 Sociodemographic Characteristics of BHS's Service Area**

<b>Sociodemographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Berkshire County</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>
<b>Sex and Age</b>		
Total Population	125,927	6,873,003
Male	48.5%	48.5%
Female	51.5%	51.5%
Median age (years)	47.2 yrs.	39.6 yrs.
Under 5 years	4.2%	5.2%
5-19 years	15.7%	17.6%
20-64 years	56.9%	60.25%
65 years and over	23.2%	16.5%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
One race	96.3%	95.2%
White	89.9%	76.6%
Black or African American	2.7%	7.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	0.2%
Asian	1.7%	6.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	1.6%	4.2%
Two or more races	3.7%	4.8%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5.0%	12.0%
Not Hispanic or Latino	95.0%	88.0%
Not Hispanic or Latino, White Alone	87.7%	70.8%

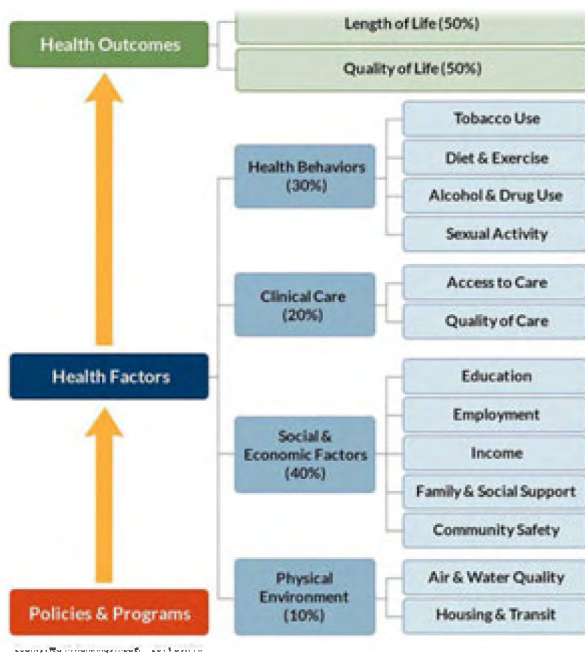
**Data Source:** US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020, 5-year estimates

## 2. OVERALL HEALTH STATUS OF RESIDENTS

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have developed County Health Rankings to help communities understand what influences how healthy residents are and how long they will live. The rankings look at a variety of measures that affect health, including social determinants of health factors, health behaviors, and health outcomes. Each county is given a “Health Factors” rank and a “Health Outcomes” rank.

For 2021, Berkshire County ranked among the lowest third of counties in the state for both health outcomes and factors—13<sup>th</sup> of 14 counties for health outcomes and 11<sup>th</sup> of 14 counties for health factors.

Berkshire County’s rate of premature death is more than 30% higher than both the state and national rates and more residents report that they are in poor physical shape or have poor mental health than are reported at the state and national level.



County Health Rankings Model © 2014 RWJF

Source: RWJF County Health Rankings Model



Health Outcome Ranks 1 to 4 5 to 7 8 to 10 11 to 14

Source: RWJF Health Outcome Ranks for 2021, Massachusetts



RANK 1-4 5-11 12-14 NOT RANKED (NR)

Source: RWJF Health Factor Ranks for 2021, Massachusetts

Measure (Rank of 14 counties)	2021 BERKSHIRE COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS SNAPSHOT				
<b>Health Outcomes (13)</b>					
<b>Length of Life (14)</b>	<b>Berkshire County BC vs.</b>		<b>Mass</b>	<b>BC vs.</b>	<b>U.S. Top Performer</b>
Premature death	8,200		5,600		5,400
<b>Quality of Life (11)</b>	<b>Berkshire County BC vs.</b>		<b>Mass</b>	<b>BC vs.</b>	<b>U.S. Top Performer</b>
Poor or fair health	15%		14%		14%
Poor physical health days	3.9		3.5		3.4
Poor mental health days	5.0		4.3		3.8
Low birth weight	8.0%		8.0%		6.0%
	Worse than MA/US		Similar to MA/US		Better than MA/US

## V. PRIORITY ISSUES IMPACTING THE HEALTH OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY

The core priority health needs impacting our community have remained consistent since our 2018 CHNA and continue to focus our attention on a combination of health conditions/behaviors, access to care issues, and social and economic determinants that impact health. The data below is presented according to these three general categories. Our community benefit priorities, as established by BHS with input from our community are:

- Chronic Disease with a Focus on Cancer, Heart Disease, and Diabetes
- Mental Illness and Mental Health
  - Suicide Prevention and Treatment
- Substance Use Disorders
- Additional Health Needs Identified by the Community
  - Increasing insurance enrollment
  - Improving community safety
  - Enhancing the healthcare workforce
  - Identifying and creating initiatives to improve social determinants of health
  - COVID testing and vaccination

Our target populations have also remained the same as in prior years:

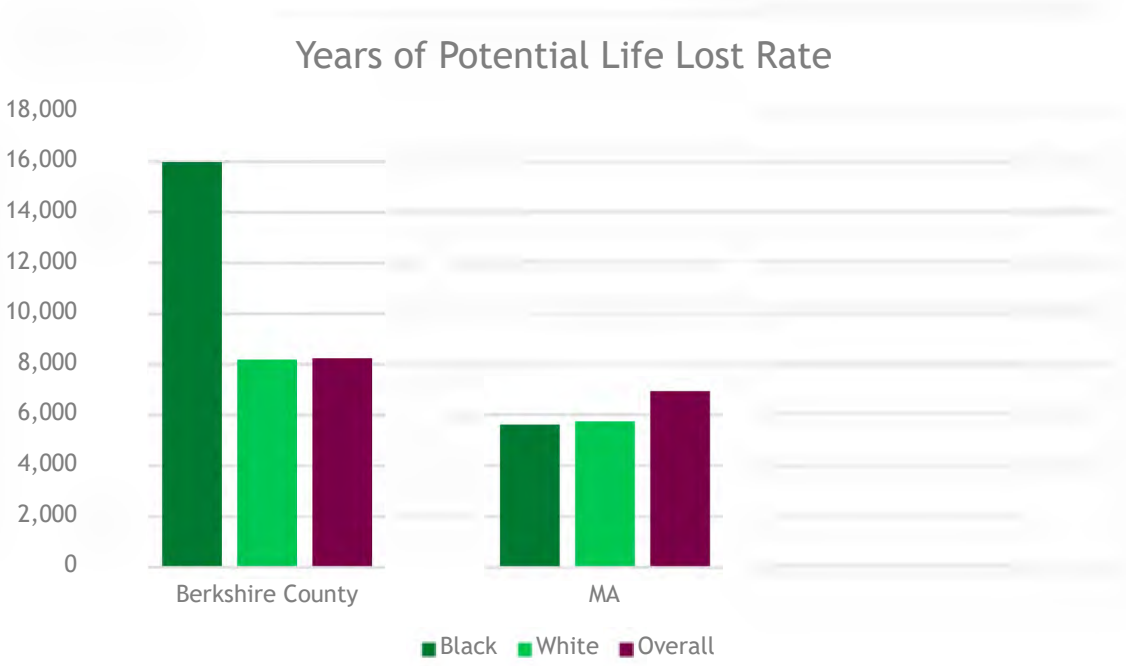
- Children/Adolescents
- Older Adults
- Medically Underserved Individuals

### 1. HEALTH CONDITIONS AND BEHAVIORS

Among adults in the county, conditions related to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, low-physical activity, and diabetes are significant. According to data compiled by the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, the leading causes of death for Berkshire County residents as of 2021 were:

- Circulatory Diseases (All Cardiovascular)
- Cancer: All Types
- Respiratory Diseases (Diseases of the lung other than lung cancer)
- Nervous System Diseases
- Mental Disorders: All

According to RWJF’s County Health Rankings, Berkshire County has the highest years of potential life lost rate (YPLL) in the entire state. The data also indicates that premature death is almost twice as common among the county’s black population as its white population (15,952 vs. 8,168).



Data Source: RWJF County Health Rankings, 2021

Similarly, Berkshire County residents report slightly more frequent “poor physical health days” and significantly more frequent “poor mental health days” than the state and US top performers.

**Table 3: RWJF Health Outcomes Overall**

Quality of Life	<i>Berkshire County</i>	<i>Error Margin</i>	<i>Top US Performers</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>
Poor or Fair Health	15%	13-18%	14%	14%
Poor Physical Health Days	3.9	3.5-4.4	3.4	3.5
Poor Mental Health Days	5.0	4.5-5.5	3.8	4.3
Low Birthweight	8%	7-9%	6%	8%

Data Source: RWJF County Health Rankings, 2021

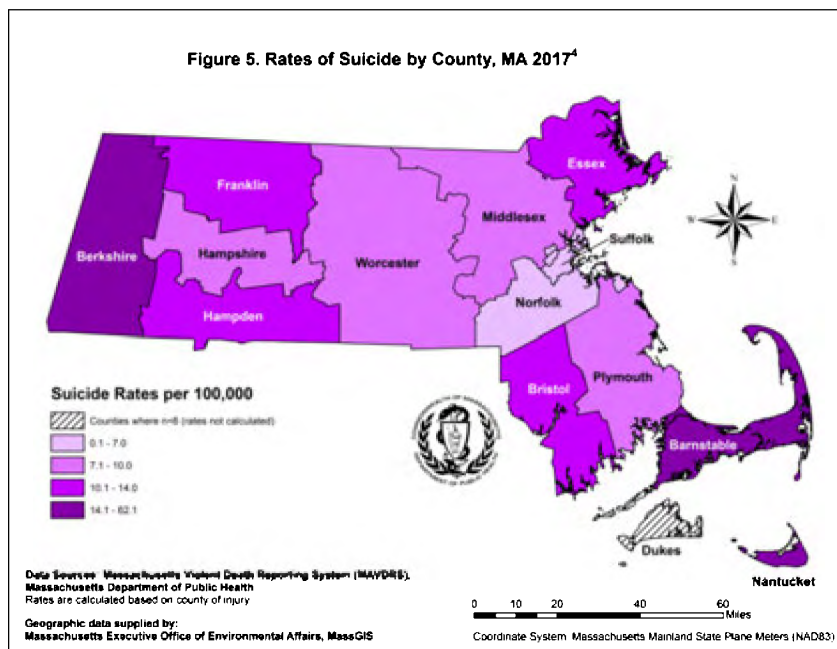
**Table 4: RWJF Health Outcomes Overall**

<i>Health Behavior</i>	<i>Berkshire County</i>	<i>Error Margin</i>	<i>Top US Performers</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>
Adult Smoking	19%	15-22%	16%	14%
Adult Obesity	27%	23-23%	26%	25%
Food Environment Index (access and food insecurity) 0 = worst 10 = best	8.3		8.7	9.2
Physical Inactivity	20%	17-23%	19%	20%
Excessive Drinking	26%	25-27%	15%	24%
Sexually Transmitted Infections	200.3		161.2	444.0
Teen Births	12	10-13	12	9

Data Source: RWJF County Health Rankings, 2021

**Suicide in Berkshire County**

According to the most recently available data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, suicide rates in Berkshire County were 17.4 per 100,000, which places them among the highest in the state.



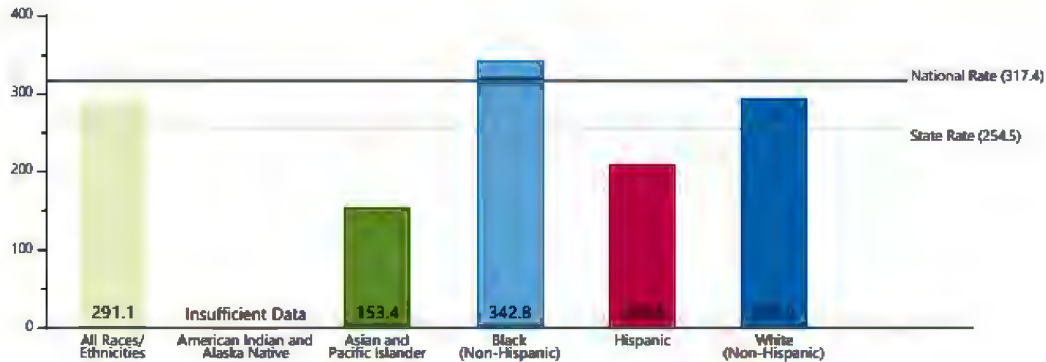
Data Source: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/suicide-in-massachusetts-2017-data-report/download>

## Heart Disease Mortality

Heart Disease Mortality Age-Adjusted Annual Death Rate per 100,000 in Berkshire County (291.1) is above the state (254.4) and below the national average (317.4).

Health-related disparities for heart disease and stroke are more prevalent in Black (Non-Hispanic) populations in the county.

**Heart Disease Death Rate per 100,000, 35+, All Races/Ethnicities, Both Genders, 2017-2019**



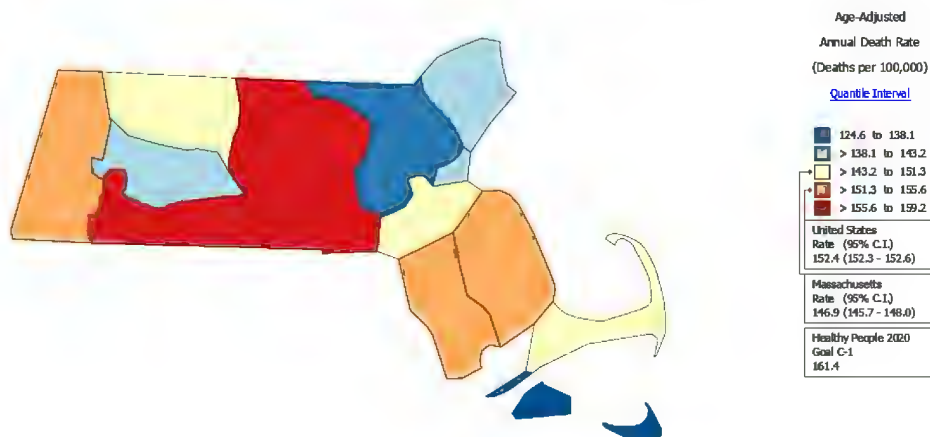
Data Source: CDC Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke

## Cancer Mortality

The leading causes of cancer deaths in Berkshire County are Lung, Breast, Prostate, Colorectal, and Pancreatic.

Overall, cancer death rates in Berkshire County have been steady since 2000. The total cancer age-adjusted death rate is higher (152.9) than the state average in 2015-2019 of 146.9.

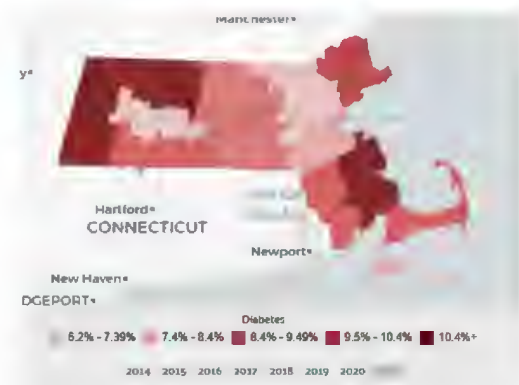
**Death Rates for Massachusetts by County**  
All Cancer Sites, 2015 - 2019  
All Races (includes Hispanic), Both Sexes, All Ages



Data Source: CDC, United States Cancer Statistics: Data Visualization

## Diabetes

Diabetes is one of the multiple conditions considered to be related to cardiovascular disease. 2021 data from County Health Rankings shows that Berkshire County has the second-highest prevalence of diabetes in the state of Massachusetts at 10.7%



Data Source: [Berkshire County, MA | Data USA](#)

## Adult Smoking

Smoking is an addiction that can contribute to multiple medical conditions, from cardiovascular disease to cancer. Data from the 2021 County Health Rankings shows that Berkshire County has the second-highest prevalence of smoking in the state of Massachusetts at 19%.



Data Source: [Adult smoking in Massachusetts | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#)

## Opioids and Prescription Drugs

Over the past several years, use of drugs, particularly opioids and prescription drugs has emerged as a growing behavioral health issue. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of opioid-related overdose deaths in the county increased from 4 to 56, a dramatic spike of nearly 200%. Opioid usage appears to be more prevalent in the central and northern regions of Berkshire County, as evidenced by a higher overdose rate in those regions.

In an attempt, to aide in the reduction of opioid-related overdose deaths many local pharmacies are carrying nasal Narcan that can be provided without a physician's prescription. Additionally, patients or their friends or family who are brought to any of the Berkshire County Emergency Department with an opioid overdose are provided with nasal Narcan upon discharge



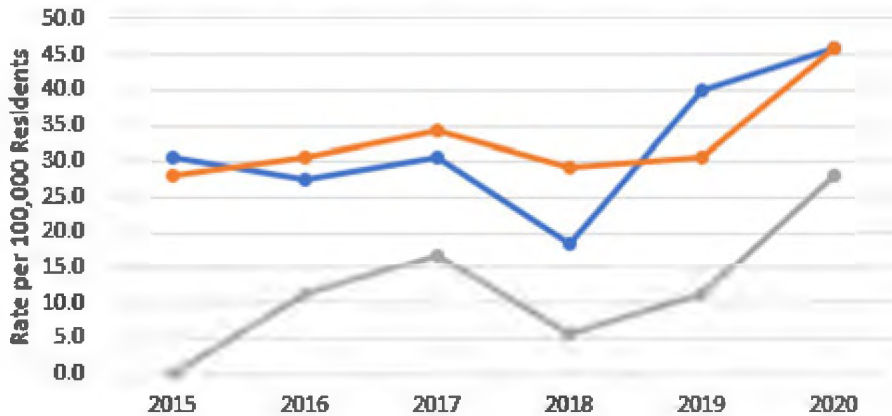
### Number of Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths, All Intent by County, MA Residents: 2010-2020

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
POSTED: NOVEMBER 2021

County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total 2010-2020
Barnstable	20	19	24	43	53	67	81	67	71	73	76	594
Berkshire	4	9	16	22	29	32	35	30	40	39	56	312
Bristol	78	82	95	115	145	172	243	240	218	260	233	1881
Dukes	0	0	0	1	5	7	3	2	4	3	7	32
Essex	49	57	93	119	205	235	274	299	273	279	253	2136
Franklin	6	6	8	10	11	18	14	9	22	17	20	141
Hampden	48	45	59	69	64	98	130	113	208	199	215	1248
Hampshire	12	10	11	30	26	16	36	28	38	39	34	280
Middlesex	91	130	118	152	273	341	402	348	321	304	299	2779
Nantucket	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	12
Norfolk	58	64	70	82	125	164	213	166	170	129	156	1397
Plymouth	38	67	57	86	110	174	190	202	151	176	185	1436
Suffolk	63	85	90	110	146	199	241	251	215	218	289	1907
Worcester	79	82	91	115	162	222	246	250	281	267	282	2077
<b>Total Deaths</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>2,110</b>	<b>2,008</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>2,005</b>	<b>2,106</b>	<b>16,234</b>

Data Source: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/opioid-related-overdose-deaths-by-county-november-2021/download>

## Opioid Deaths in Berkshire County, MA

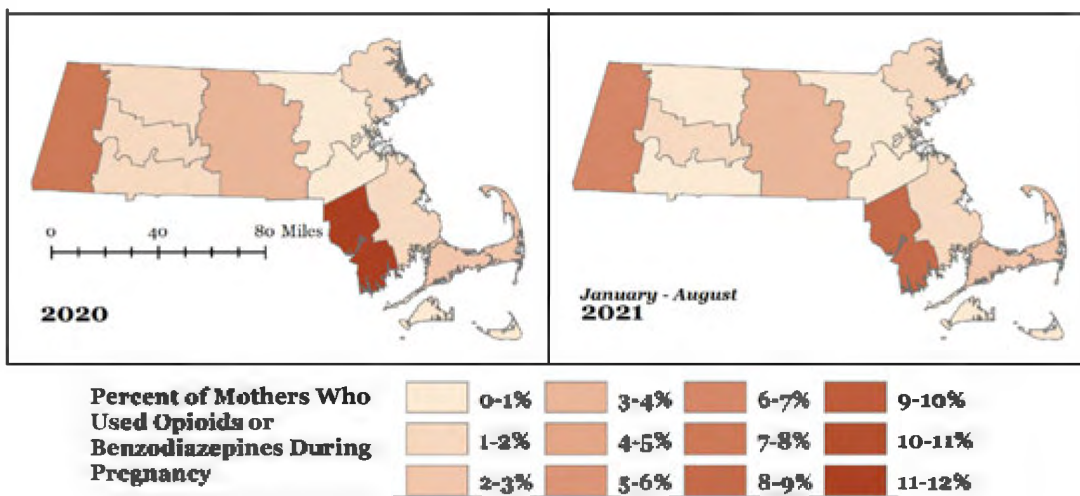


Data Source: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/opioid-related-overdose-deaths-by-city-town-november-2021/download>

### Infant and Perinatal Care and Controlled Substances

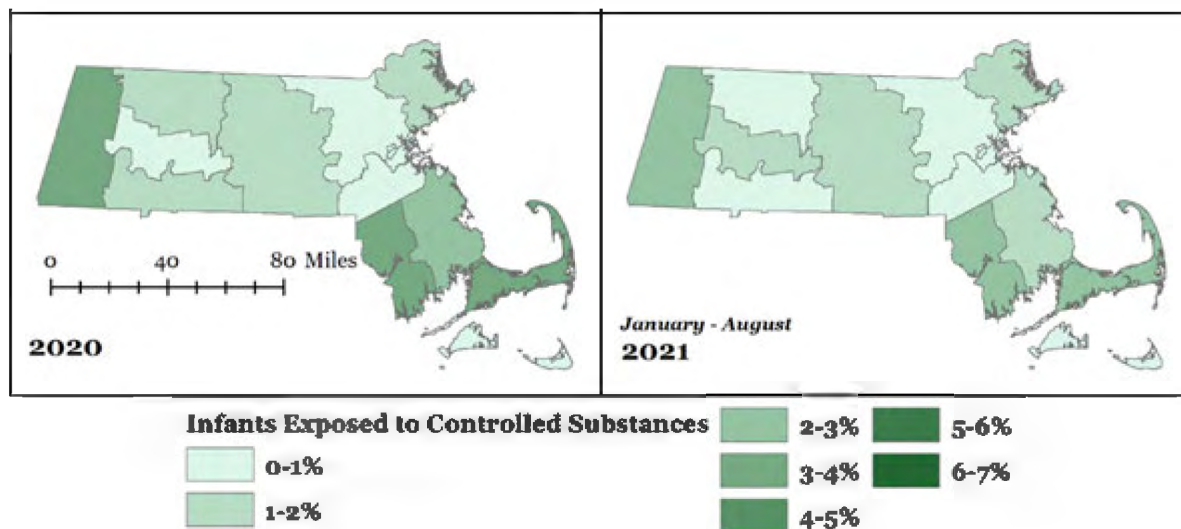
As opioid use has increased in our community, so has the use of opioids in women of child-bearing age. Babies born to mothers who have used opioids during pregnancy are at risk for neonatal abstinence or withdrawal, which can have both short-term and long-term side effects. Although rates decreased between 2020 and 2021, Berkshire County still had the second-highest rate of mothers who used opioids during pregnancy and the second-highest rate of babies born withdrawing from opioids in the state of Massachusetts.

In Bristol County, mothers who used opioids or benzodiazepines during pregnancy decreased 22% between 2020 and the first eight months of 2021 (from 11.2% to 8.7%). In Berkshire County, the highest rate of mothers who used opioids or benzodiazepines during pregnancy decreased 53% (from 7.9% to 3.7%).



Data Source: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/newborn-and-maternal-substance-exposure-surveillance-november-2021/download>

In August 2021, the three counties with the highest rates of infants born exposed to controlled substances were Bristol, Berkshire, and Barnstable. The results for Bristol County decreased 58% from 2020 to the first eight months of 2021 (1.2% to 0.5%); in the same period Berkshire County decreased 51% (from 3.7% to 1.8%) and Barnstable County decreased nearly 10% from 3.1% to 2.8%.



Data Source: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/newborn-and-maternal-substance-exposure-surveillance-november-2021/download>

### Health Conditions and Behaviors Impacting Youth

Community partners Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, The Berkshire Youth Development Project, Berkshire United Way, and the Railroad Street Youth Project with the support of BHS, conducted a county-wide prevention needs assessment survey in 2021.

Data below is a summary from the North, Central, and South Berkshire Reports. Overall, most of the data is consistent between the areas of the county. There are some differences between the county, for example alcohol use is more likely in central county and cigarettes are more likely in south county where suicidal ideation is more likely in north county. Among adolescents, alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco appear to be the most prevalent substances being used. Overall, many children are impacted by both issues of food security and obesity. A total of 12% of Berkshire County children are food insecure according to the 2019 Berkshire County Community Food Assessment prepared by Be Well Berkshires/Mass in Motion. About 25% of children in the state of Massachusetts struggle with obesity, as indicated in the CDC's most recent State Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Profile.

**Table 5: Summary Results of Youth Health Behaviors, 2021**

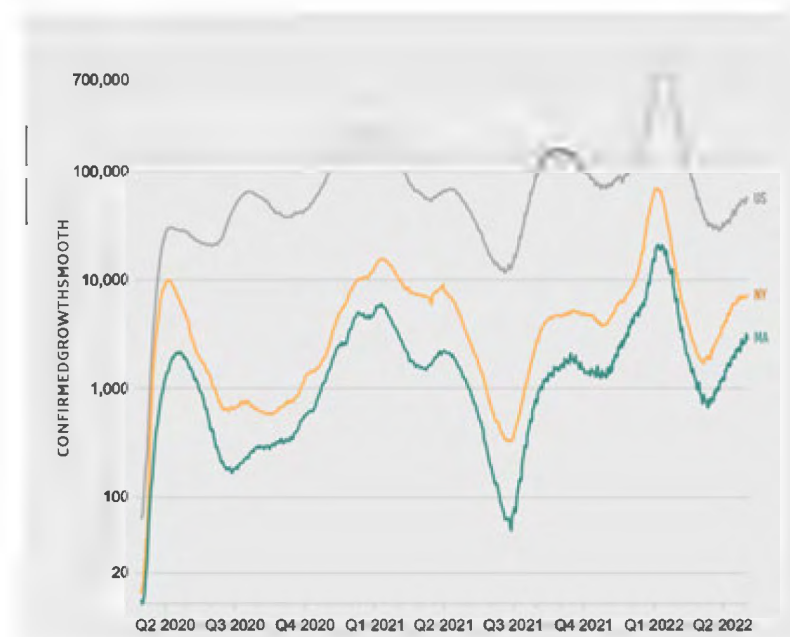
Youth Behavior	North 2021 (N=482)	Central 2021 (N=831)	South 2021 (N=314)
Alcohol use	31.50%	37.50%	36.90%
Cigarette use	6.80%	9.30%	10.10%
E-Cigarette use	22.00%	26.10%	17.20%
Marijuana use	21.00%	27.30%	17.30%
Planned suicide in last 12 months	17.20%	14.10%	15.20%
Attempted suicide in last 12 months	7.70%	10.40%	8.00%

**Data Source:** Berkshire County Prevention Needs Assessment, 2021

### COVID-19 in Berkshire County

On March 6, 2020, Berkshire Medical Center reported the first inpatient case of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Since then, BHS has been on the leading edge of COVID response for testing, treatment, and vaccination, working quickly and efficiently to support the needs of the Berkshire community during the ongoing public health emergency.

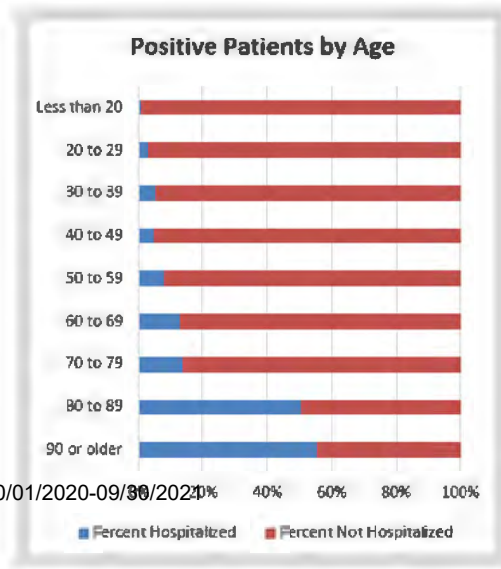
In 2020, Berkshire Health Systems established a COVID Call Center and opened outdoor testing sites in North Adams, Pittsfield, and Great Barrington. In 2021 BHS opened permanent testing sites in North Adams, Pittsfield, and Great Barrington and began providing COVID-19 vaccinations at all three of these sites. In addition to our stand-alone services, BHS worked with the Berkshire Vaccine Collaborative to vaccinate tens of thousands of community members through large-scale public health clinics.



**7 Day Rolling Average of Daily New Cases**

**Data Source:** [the COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering \(CSSE\) at Johns Hopkins University CSSE Covid 19 Time Series; https://datausa.io/coronavirus#cases](https://datausa.io/coronavirus#cases)

October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021  
Data



Data Source: BHS Internal Data, 10/01/2020-09/30/2021

Data Source: BHS Internal Data

## 2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS THAT IMPACT HEALTH

### Poverty

Berkshire County’s poverty rate mirrors that of the state, however, the county has a slightly increased rate of poverty among minors (under 18 years old). Median household income for the region is at least 25% lower than the state average.









Poverty	Berkshire County	Massachusetts
Percentage of All People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Level	9.7%	9.8%
Poverty Under 18 years	13.9%	12.2%
Income		
Median Household Income	\$62,166	\$84,385
Median Nonfamily Income	\$36,294	\$48,876



Data Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates, 2020

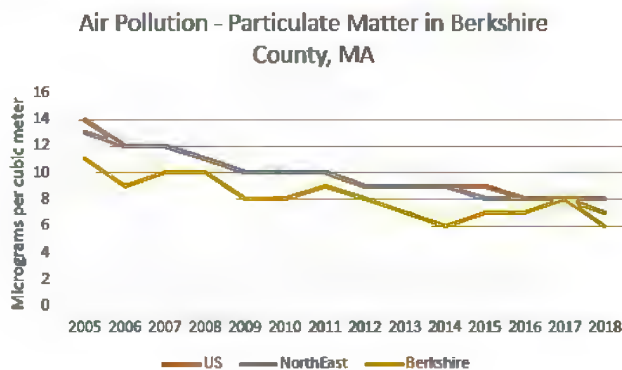
## Physical Environment

Berkshire County ranks 4<sup>th</sup> of 14 counties in Massachusetts for Physical Environment. The county performs more poorly than the state in terms of air pollution and residents who drive alone to work; however, Berkshire County has fewer severe housing problems and shorter commutes than the rest of the state. Nevertheless, Berkshire County housing stock is significantly older than the rest of the state, with more than 45% of all housing being built before 1950, as opposed to only 37% for the rest of the state. (ACS, 5-year estimates, 2020).

In a rural area, with limited public transportation, access to professional health care services, educational opportunities, access to healthy foods and community services, all have a direct impact on health status. Geographic distance also causes many rural residents to suffer from social isolation, lack of connection to information, as well as limited emergency services due to dwindling resources available in rural communities.

Measure (Rank of 14 Counties)	2021 BERKSHIRE COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS SNAPSHOT				
	Berkshire County	BC vs. Mass	Mass	BC vs. U.S. Top Performer	U.S. Top Performer
Physical Environment (4)					
Air pollution - particulate matter	6.7		6.0		5.2
Drinking water violations	None				
Severe housing problems	15%		17%		9%
Driving alone to work	76%		70%		72%
Long commute - driving alone	24%		44%		16%

	Worse than MA/US		Similar to MA/US		Better than MA/US
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## Commuting

20.4 +/- 0.6

Average travel time to work (in minutes) in Berkshire County, Massachusetts

30.0 +/- 0.1

Average travel time to work (in minutes) in Massachusetts

Table:  
S0801

Table Survey/Program:  
2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Means of Transportation to Work (Workers 16 Years and Over...

VIEW OPTIONS

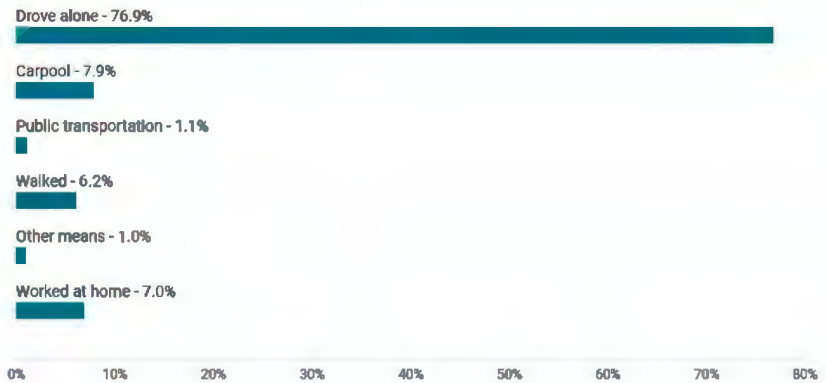


Chart Survey/Program: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles

Data Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020, 5-year estimates, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US25003>

## Housing

### Financial Characteristics

\$894 +/- \$26

Median Gross Rent in Berkshire County, Massachusetts

\$1,336 +/- \$7

Median Gross Rent in Massachusetts

Table:  
DP04

Table Survey/Program:  
2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Occupied Units Paying Rent in Berkshire County, Massachuse...

VIEW OPTIONS

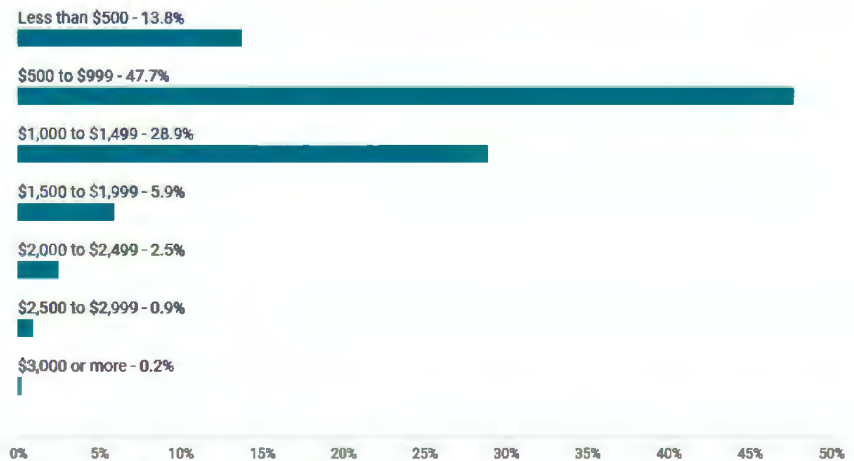
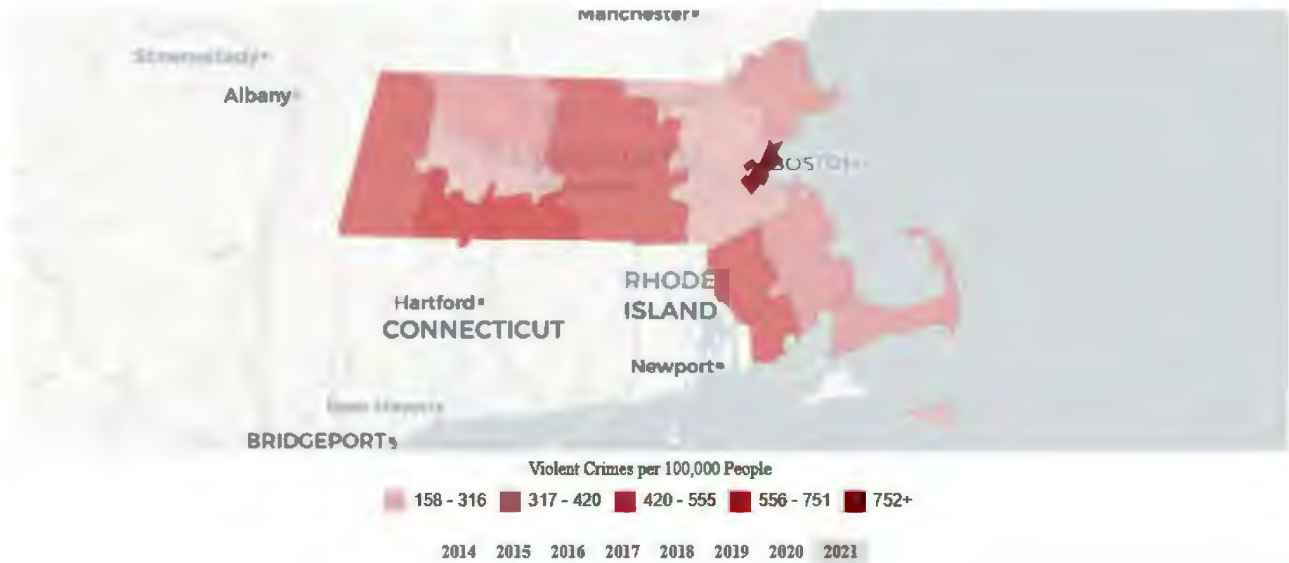


Chart Survey/Program: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles

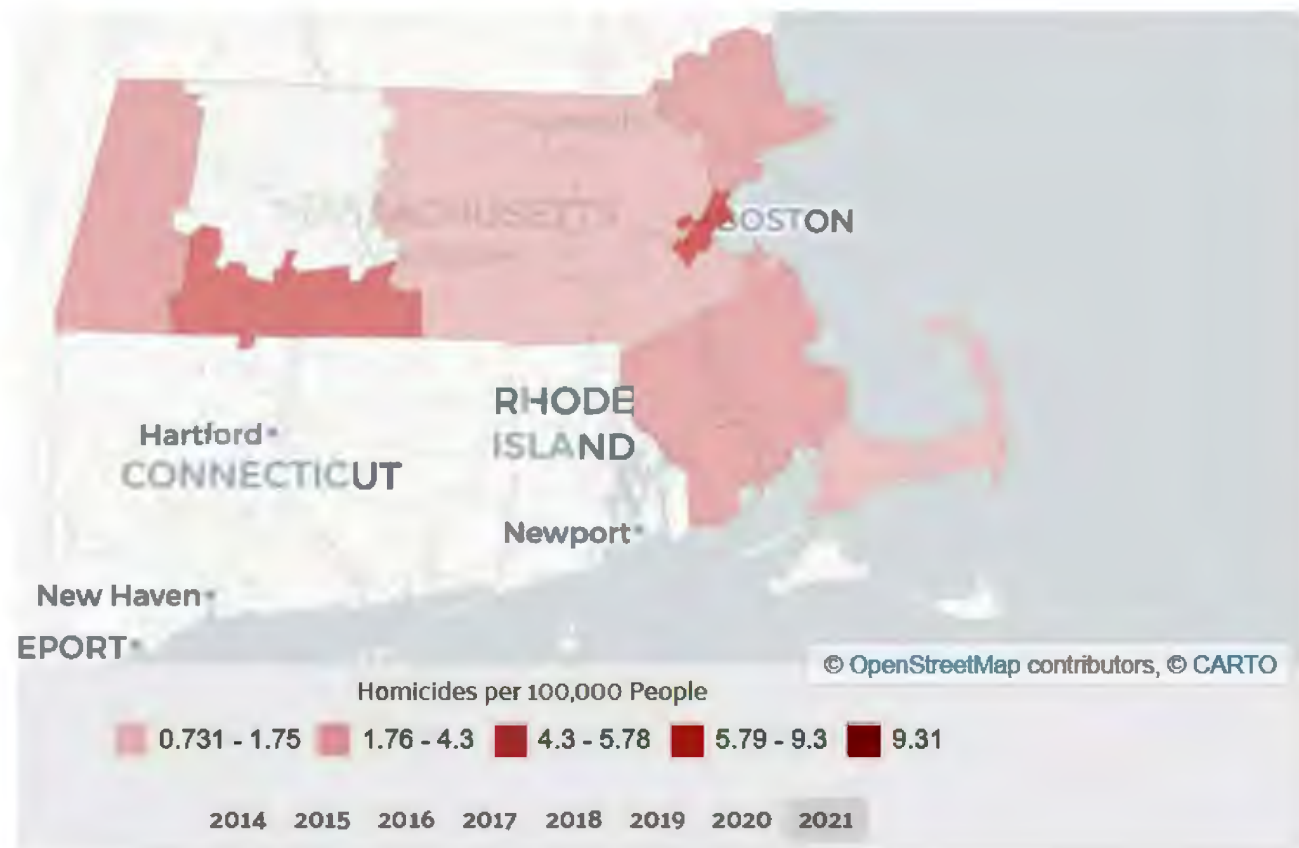
Data Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020, 5-year estimates, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US25003>

## Safety

Berkshire County ranks 10<sup>th</sup> of 14 counties in the state for violent crimes, but 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state for homicide risk at 2.36 per 100,000 people.

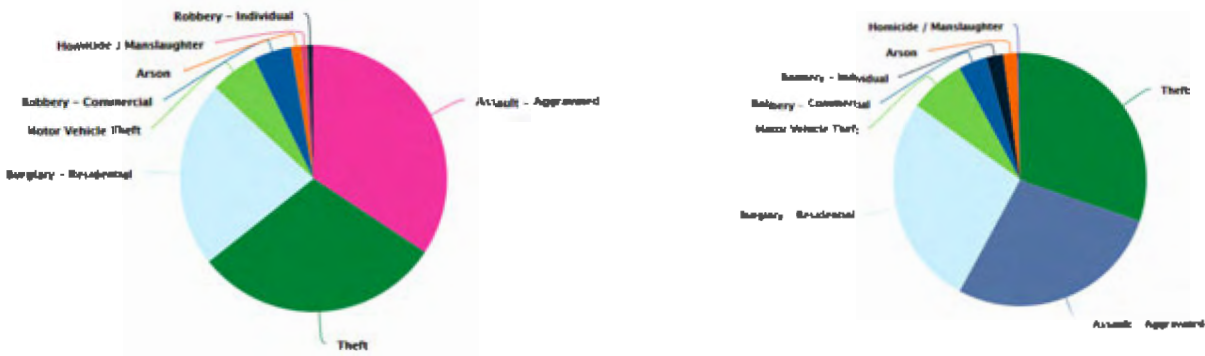


Data Source: [Berkshire County, MA | Data USA](#)



Data Source: [Berkshire County, MA | Data USA](#)

The graphics below display data from the City of Pittsfield Police Department, comparing crime in 2020 to crime in 2021.



Data Source: [LexisNexis® Community Crime Map](#)

### Education

The education level of Berkshire County residents largely mirrors that of Massachusetts, surpassing the state in the percentage of individuals who have graduated from high school and have at least some college, or an Associate’s Degree. Berkshire County has a significantly smaller population of Bachelor’s educated residents than the state overall (35.3% vs. 44.5%)

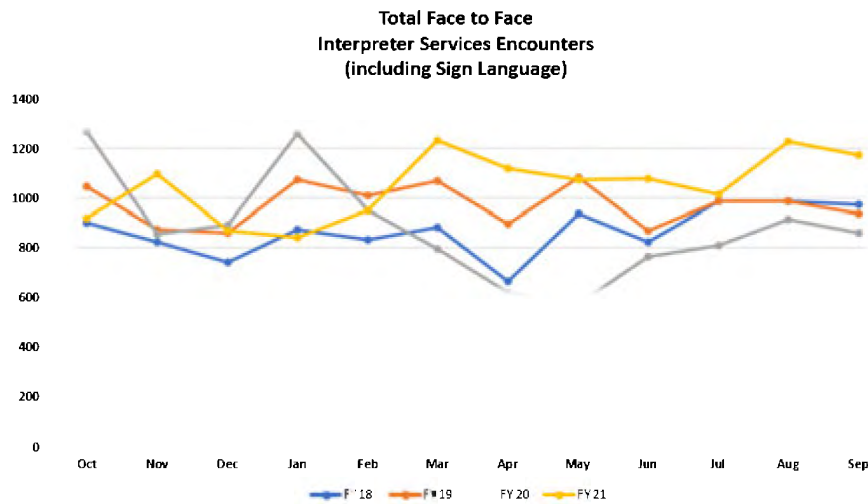
A total of 7.5% of individuals over the age of 5 speak a language other than English at home. This figure has been rising consistently, indicating the growth of immigrant populations. BHS language service encounters reveal a similar trend, with a higher average number of requests for language support services in 2021.

The connection between education and income can be a significant determinant in health status, as it can relate to food security, housing, behavioral health choices, and general feeling of well-being.

**Table 6: Educational and Language Characteristics**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Berkshire County</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>
Population 25 years and over		
Less than high school diploma	7.2%	8.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	29.8%	23.5%
Some college or associates degree	27.7%	23.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	35.3%	44.5%
<b>Language Spoken at Home (population over 5)</b>		
Speaks language other than English at home	7.5%	23.9%

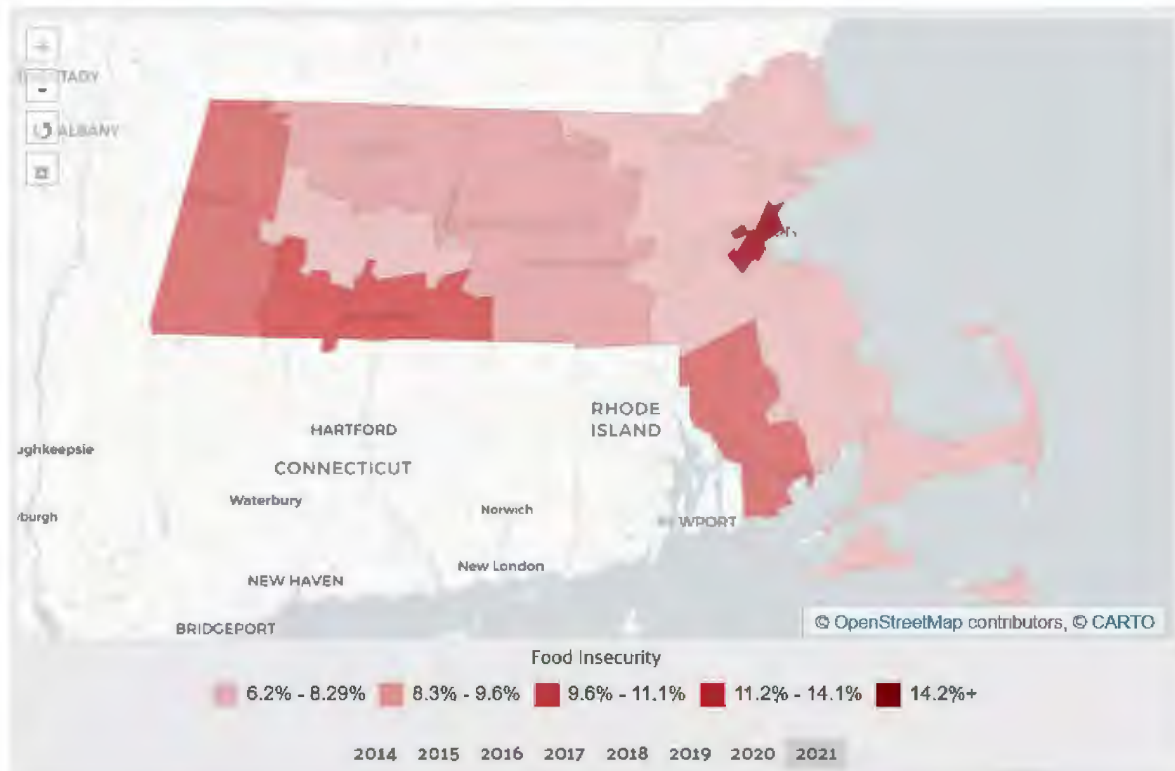
**Data Source:** US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates, 2020



**Data Source:** BHS Internal Data, 10/01/2020-09/30/2021

## Food Insecurity

Berkshire County follows Suffolk and Hampden County, ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state (tied with Bristol County) for prevalence of food insecurity (9.9%).



Data Source: [Berkshire County, MA | Data USA](#)

## 3. ACCESS CHALLENGES TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE


















Berkshire County ranks 5<sup>th</sup> of 14 counties in the state for clinical care and access. Though the county presents well in terms of provider to patient ratios, patients frequently struggle with appointment availability and transportation to and from healthcare locations.

BHS continues to face staffing challenges, like those experienced across the nation. To address these issues, BHS has begun to create career training programs, particularly in nursing areas, that can simultaneously help to reduce clinician shortages and improve employment opportunities for Berkshire residents.

Given the age and economic demographic of the county, Berkshire residents are heavily reliant on public sources of financing for access to health care. This makes the providers of health care services dependent on government-reimbursed services and can have a direct influence on what services are available locally.

Insurance	Berkshire County	Massachusetts
With Private Health Insurance Coverage	71.2%	74.5%
With Public Health Insurance Coverage	45.7%	36.1%
Without Health Care Coverage	2.6%	2.7%

Data Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates, 2020

2021 BERKSHIRE COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS SNAPSHOT					
Measure (Rank of 14 Counties)	Berkshire County	BC vs. Mass	Mass	BC vs. U.S. Top Performer	U.S. Top Performer
Clinical Care (5)					
Uninsured	3%		3%		6%
Primary care physicians	850:1		970:1		1,030:1
Dentists	1,110:1		930:1		1,210:1
Mental health providers	110:1		150:1		270:1
Preventable hospital stays	3,715		4,764		2,565
Mammography screening	51%		54%		51%
Flu Vaccinations	53%		55%		55%
	Worse than MA/US		Similar to MA/US		Better than MA/US

## VI. COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SYSTEM RESOURCES TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Since 2018, BHS has developed and implemented several key programs to address the priority health issues identified in the 2018-2020 CNHA.

### **Priority: Substance Use Disorders**

#### **Program: SUT Clinic at Hillcrest Family Health Center**

The Substance Use Treatment Clinic developed in 2019 is provided by a Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Certified Nurse Practitioner and Registered Nurse Manager who provide treatments related to all forms of substance use disorders and practice using the Harm Reduction Model of Care. Care includes support, medications including inductions, oral, sublingual, injectable and transdermal formulations. Coordinates care with the patient's primary care physician and social services. The goal of the program is to help manage their substance use disorder, reduce emergency department utilization, and reduce inpatient and observation admissions. The providers are both certified recovery coaches. Recruitment for other positions such as Community Health Worker/Recovery Coach and Medical Assistant has been challenging. Below is a graph of the volume growth of the program since 2019.



**Data Source:** BHS Internal Data

**Priority: Substance Use Disorders**  
**Program: Berkshire Harm Reduction**

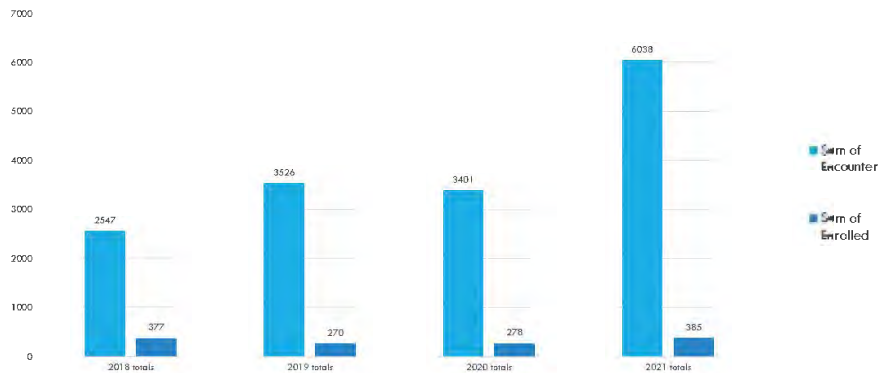
Berkshire Harm Reduction program began in 2018. It embraces an approach that focuses on helping people who use drugs reduce their high-risk behavior and the harm associated with drug use. The harm reduction team encourages active drug users to make changes with a non-judgmental approach that reduces potential harm to themselves, their families, and the community.

There are currently three permanent office locations serving clients in Pittsfield, North Adams, and Great Barrington. In 2022, the program plans to add a mobile harm reduction unit to service clients in areas not conveniently accessible to the three office locations.

Berkshire Harm Reduction offers:

- Safe syringe disposal & sterile syringe distribution
- Injection/Smoking supplies
- Overdose prevention & harm reduction education
- Naloxone training & distribution
- Referrals for substance use/addiction counselling & for those who wish to seek treatment
- Education, prevention, testing & treatment for Hepatitis C, HIV & sexually transmitted infections (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis)
- HIV case management
- Hepatitis C telehealth treatment

*Pittsfield and North Adams Harm Reduction Client Encounters, 2019-2021*



Data Source: BHS Internal Data

**Priority: Mental Illness and Mental Health**  
**Program: Zero Youth Suicide Program**

Origins and Program Description: In 2016, Berkshire Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences was awarded a 5-year grant from Mass DPH / SAMHSA to implement a Zero Suicide model of care for youth ages 10-24 years old at Berkshire Health Systems (BHS). In addition to the initiation of universal suicide risk screening in BHS emergency room and acute care settings, the Department of Psychiatry developed the Youth Zero Suicide Team and, in response to significant gaps in the system of care for youth in our region, implemented a range of ambulatory youth behavioral health services. Youth identified as at-risk through universal screening received services aimed at stabilization and support: individual and group treatment, case management and family support. This array of services was well received by youth, their family members, and local providers. Over the course of carrying out this Garrett Lee Smith grant, over 1400 unique youth, ages 10-24 were identified through universal suicide risk screening in BHS's emergency and acute care services.

**Priority: Housing/Homelessness**  
**Chronic Disease with a focus on Cancer, Diabetes, Heart Disease**  
**Programs: Flex Services**  
**Emergency Food Access During COVID-19 Pandemic**

The CHNA and surveys conducted in Berkshire County identified priority concerns related to housing and health services as well as increased identification for Social Determinants of Health. As we know food and housing are major contributors to the health of an individual and their family. Through the support of the MA Health Flexible Service Programs, Berkshire Health Systems works in collaboration with Berkshire Regional Housing and Service Net to provide tenancy preservation and stable housing. The tenancy preservation program seeks to help members who are experiencing housing instability maintain self-sufficiency and stable housing. The housing support intervention program seeks to help members who are experiencing acute homelessness find stable housing.

In 2021, Berkshire Health Systems developed a Medically Tailored Meal (MTM) Program for residents with low income, hypertension and/ diabetes where members receive 10 weeks of medically tailored meals, registered dietician education and follow up. The goal of the program is to teach the patient that by eating the right diet which is comprised of affordable options the patient may be able to manage their hypertension/diabetes and have a better quality of life.

In 2020, Berkshire Health Systems received funding from MA Health to provide emergency food to facing food access difficulties or insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and developed a grocery delivery program (GDP). In 2021, the Grocery Delivery Program has continued as a flexible services program. The MTM and GDP are operationalized in collaboration with the Berkshire County House of Correction.

The MTM/GDP programs also promote face-to-face contact with the patient and provides a means to reducing social isolation. For example, a community health worker who delivered food to a patient home recently noticed that the member was not doing well and was approached by the wife stating the member had been extremely depressed. The FS (Flexible Service) CHW (Community Health Worker) contacted the social worker who phoned the patient, assured his safety, and provided the patient with the emotional support he needed.

Historical organizational response to access to access to food, education, and food insecurity include participating in the Woman, Infants and Children Program (WIC), Operation Better Start Program (OBS), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and provides Community Wellness events.

## **APPENDICES**

- I: Community Benefits Leadership Team
- II: Health Care Facilities and Community Resources
- III: Community Feedback Results
- IV: Berkshire County Towns By Region
- V: References and Sources of Information

## **APPENDIX I: Community Benefits Leadership Team**

- Maureen Daniels, Director of Wellness & Population Health
- Deborah Delaney, BHS Vice President of Finance
- Roberta Gale, Vice President Community Health
- Casey Joseph, Director of Clinical and Quality Analytics
- Ben Knauth, BHS Director of Cost Accounting and Business Development
- Lee Santos, BHS Director of Reimbursement
- Lauren Smith, Fairview Director of Community Relations and Development
- Jennifer Vrabel, BHS Executive Director, Communications, Planning, and Development

## **APPENDIX II: Health Care Facilities and Community Resources**

Berkshire County has broad and rich resource to meet community needs. This list is not comprehensive of all related resource and programs but reflects the primary resources related to health care.

### **Hospitals**

- Berkshire Medical Center North Campus – Satellite Emergency Facility
- Berkshire Medical Center - Community Teaching Hospital
- Fairview Hospital – Critical Access Hospital

### **Home Health Care**

- Amedisys
- At Home TLC
- Berkshire VNA
- Home Care Services of MA
- Home Instead
- Hospice Care in the Berkshires
- Hospice Services of Western Ma.
- Kindred At Home
- Molari
- Mountainview Home Care
- Visiting Angels

### **Communities/Skilled Nursing**

- Berkshire Place
- Berkshire Rehabilitation
- Curtis Manor Retirement Home and Cottages
- Craneville
- Fairview Commons and Rehabilitation Center
- Great Barrington Rehabilitation and Nursing
- Hillcrest Commons
- Kimball Farms
- Mt. Greylock Extended Care Facility
- Mount Carmel
- North Adams Commons
- Springside of Pittsfield
- Williamstown Commons

### **Community Services (primary focus related to healthcare)**

- Berkshire Area Health Education Resources
- Berkshire County Board of Health Association
- Berkshire County Emergency Planning Council

- Berkshire County Red Cross
- Berkshire Community Health Network
- Berkshire Family and Individual Resources
- Berkshire Immigrant Center
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance
- Berkshire WIC North
- Berkshire WIC South
- Department of Transitional Assistance
- Elder Services of Berkshire County
- Family Planning Services (Tapestry Health)
- Hospice Care in the Berkshires
- Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
- Pregnancy Support Services
- Rape Crisis Center
- Tri-Town Health Department
- United Way

### **Dental, Medical and Mental Health Professional Services**

- Berkshire Breast Health Team
- Berkshire District Dental Society
- Berkshire District Medical Society
- Berkshire Medical Reserve Corps
- Brien Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (Community Mental Health Center)
- Clinical Support Options
- Counseling Center in the Berkshires
- Community Health Center of the Berkshires
- Community Health Programs
- Elizabeth Freeman Center
- Hillcrest Dental
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Spectrum Health Systems
- Volunteers in Medicine

### **Education/School Districts**

- Berkshire Community College
- Head Start
- Pittsfield Public Schools
- Berkshire Hills Regional School District
- Mount Greylock Regional School District
- North Adams Community Schools

## **Community Collaborative Committees**

- Berkshire County Regional Commission
- Berkshire County Regional Emergency Operations Planning Committee
- Regional Pain Collaborative

## **Societies/Organizations**

- American Cancer Society
- American Diabetes Association
- American Heart Association
- American Stroke Association
- Berkshire Community Action Council
- Berkshire County Sheriff's Department
- Berkshire District Attorney
- Berkshire Youth Development Health Program
- Berkshire Youth Development Project
- Berkshire United Way
- Boxcar Media
- Chamber of Commerce
- Center for Ecological Technology
- Community Health Initiative (CHI)
- Community Health Network Association (CHNA)
- Elder Services
- Greylock Federal Credit Unit
- Local ambulance companies
- Local pharmacies
- Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Massachusetts Medical Society
- Pittsfield Board of Health
- Pittsfield Police
- Pittsfield Senior Center
- Teen Parent Program
- Tri-Town Health Department
- University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
- YMCA

Berkshire County has broad and rich resource to meet community needs. This list is not comprehensive of all related resource and programs but reflects the primary resources related to health care.

## APPENDIX III: Community Feedback Results

### 2021 Results

#### Community Health Needs Focus Groups

##### Methodology:

The 2021 Community Benefits Program- Community Feedback components of the Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation strategy was conducted through two methods, a community survey and virtual community forums. A distribution list of 300 individuals was created to include a wide variety of organizations across Berkshire County with an emphasis on reaching those serving under-resourced individuals and communities of color. This list was used for both the survey and the forums. The list included:

- BHS and affiliates; Community Benefits Advisory Group; County Health Initiative
- State and local government officials, municipal offices (i.e., public health, town administrators and councils on aging)
- Faith-based organizations, higher education, school superintendents, Berkshire Food Collaborative
- Berkshire United Way partner agencies (100+ non-profit agencies including COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund grantees)
- Berkshire Bridges Working Cities Initiative

##### Survey:

A 34-question survey was developed and administered through Survey Monkey. A separate Spanish version was created as well. The survey questions consisted of current community benefit programming and activities offered through BHS. Survey participants were asked to rank programming (most important, important, least important). The survey also included 7 demographic questions. Delivery of the survey happened via email and social media with 116 individuals participating.

##### Demographics of Participants:

**By Region:** North County (16%), Central County (64%) South County (20%)

**By Race:** Asian (1.77%); Black (2.62%); Hispanic (2.45%); White (88.1%);  
Two or more races (2.25%)

**By Age:** 75% were 45 years of age or older

**By Gender:** 81% were female

**By Household Income:** 78% had a household income over \$50,000

**By Education Level:** 92% had a college degree (Associate Degree or above)

**By Employment Status:** 72% were fully employed and 16% were retired

Programming identified as most important include providing treatment for SUD's/Behavioral Health, supporting more access to Mass Health insurance enrollment, continuing COVID testing and vaccination, addressing barriers to health care (language, transportation, access, etc.), working together with community partners on SDoH and other public health initiatives, and filling open positions (hospital, practices, mental health agencies).

### **Community Forums:**

Two community forums were held via Zoom on Friday, September 24th from 9-11:30am and Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm. We had 81 registrants with 39 participants for the Friday session and 23 participants for the Tuesday session. Community health data was presented. Participants were then assigned to breakout sessions with facilitated discussion questions. Input from participants helped to further identifying priority areas, priority populations, barriers, and strategies to best meet the needs of our community.

### **Priority Areas and Populations:**

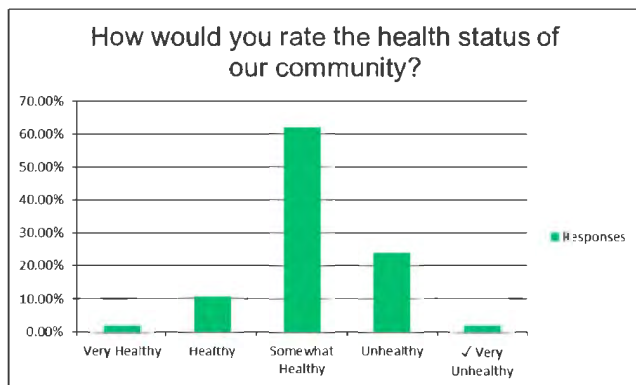
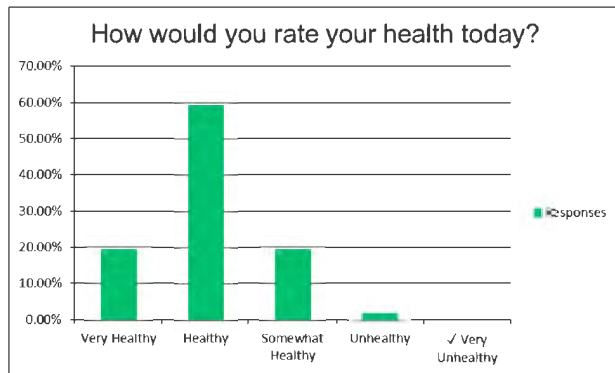
All participants agreed that we should “stay the course” with the priority areas and populations that were identified in 2020.

Though, three priority areas did emerge as the most important to address in our community:

1. Behavioral Health and Substance Disorders
2. Access to Care
3. Social Economic conditions

There was significant conversation in both sessions to address priority populations with a whole-family, holistic approach. The greatest barriers facing our community include a lack of understanding for residents on how and where to access resources, the coordination of services amongst agencies, workforce shortages affecting the ability to effectively service our community, and transportation, especially for those living in the more rural areas of our county.

Participants were asked how you rate your health and the health of the community with the following results:



## Top Issues and Priorities in Berkshire County based on survey findings

### *Most Important Concerns:*

- Increase support for patients with SUD and Behavioral Health Conditions including treatment, housing and health services
- Support increased access for Mass Health Insurance enrollment
- Continue community collaboratives for COVID testing and vaccination
- Increase suicide prevention education and support once identified
- Working to create welcoming and equitable environments, increasing identification and treatment for Social Determinants of Health, and other public health initiatives
- Workforce enhancements – filling open positions in hospitals, practices, mental health
- Increase community safety – work together to respond to natural disaster, public health pandemics, or critical emergencies

### *Important Concerns:*

- Provide education: Sexually transmitted diseases, clean needles, overdoses
- Provide nutrition education, healthy food opportunities, and policy change
- Health programs and screenings to prevent chronic diseases
- Increase medical translation through trained professionals

- Address barriers to health care – language, transportation, access, etc.
- Community Health Workers – provide patients with visits in the community and the community, offer training opportunities
- Obesity – help children and families prevent and overcome obesity
- Provide scholarship opportunities

## Summary of Findings from Community Forums

### 2021 Priorities:

- Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder
- Chronic Conditions and Infectious Disease
- Access to Care
- Social Economic
- Workforce Development

### 2021 Priorities:

- Children/Adolescence
- Older Adults
- Medically Underserved

### Top Barriers:

- Community is resource rich but coordination poor
- Agencies working silos
  - No one-stop resource management
  - Community members have limited knowledge/understanding of how or where to access resources for our vulnerable populations
- Workforce shortages
  - More behavioral health specialties, telehealth
  - Expanded training opportunities
  - Long wait for primary care visits
- Transportation
  - Rural areas

## APPENDIX IV: Berkshire County Towns By Region

Region	Town	Zip 1	Zip 2	Zip 3
Central	Becket	01223		
Central	Berkshire (Lanesborough)	01224		
Central	Dalton	01226	01227	
Central	Hancock	01201	01237	01267
Central	Hinsdale	01235		
Central	Lanesborough	01201	01237	
Central	Lee	01238		
Central	Lenox	01240		
Central	Lenoxdale (Lenox)	01242		
Central	Peru	01235		
Central	Pittsfield	01201	01202	01203
Central	Richmond	01254		
Central	South Lee (Lee)	01260		
Central	Washington	01223		
Central	Windsor	01270		
North	Adams	01220		
North	Cheshire	01225		
North	New Ashford	01220	01237	01267
North	Clarksburg	01247		
North	Florida	01247		
North	North Adams	01247		
North	Savoy	01256		
North	Williamstown	01267		
North	Drury (Florida)	01343		
South	East Otis (Otis)	01029		
South	Ashley Falls (Sheffield)	01222		
South	Glendale (Stockbridge)	01229		
South	Alford	01230	01226	
South	Egremont	01230		
South	Great Barrington	01230		
South	Housatonic (Great Barrington)	01236		
South	Mill River (New Marlboro)	01244		
South	New Marlboro	01244		
South	Monterey	01245		
South	North Egremont (Egremont)	01252		
South	Otis	01253		
South	Sandisfield	01255		
South	Sheffield	01257		

<b>Region</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Zip 1</b>	<b>Zip 2</b>	<b>Zip 3</b>
South	Mount Washington	01258		
South	South Egremont (Egremont)	01258		
South	Southfield (New Marlboro)	01259		
South	Stockbridge	01262	01263	
South	Tyringham	01264		
South	West Stockbridge	01266		

## Appendix V: References and Sources of Information

Age-Friendly Survey 2015  
Berkshire Benchmarks  
Berkshire Health Systems Community Benefit Committee  
Berkshire Health Systems Internal Data  
Berkshire Health Systems Wellness Data  
Berkshire Medical Center Operation Better Start Data  
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
Berkshire United Way Prevention Needs Assessment 2021  
CDC Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke  
Community Health Initiative  
Community Health Initiative Steering Committee  
County Health Rankings: 2021 University of Wisconsin Public Health Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Elder Services of Berkshire County  
Internal Revenue Service. Instructions for Schedule H (Form 990)  
Massachusetts Cancer Registry  
Massachusetts Department of Mental Health  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Massachusetts Medical Society: Physician Workforce Study  
National Center for Education Statistics  
Northern Berkshire Coalition North County Assessment  
Patient Family Advisory Committees (Spanish, North County, BMC, FVH, Cancer)  
South Berkshire County and the Rural Health Network  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Unemployment Rates.  
U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2020  
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.  
U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. Guidelines for Medically Underserved