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Lakeland Regional **Health**[®]

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Our Community Impact: In Review

Taking a closer look at our 2022-2025 Community Health Needs Assessment Priorities and Initiatives

Since launching our 2022-2025 Community Health Needs Assessment, our mission has been to meet our community members where they are, to listen, to innovate, and to build meaningful solutions that make life healthier and brighter for all.

In the pages ahead, you'll find highlights from the last three years—stories of community education, preventative screenings, and collaborations that reflect our shared commitment to forging a healthier future, together.

Seeing, Hearing, and Caring for Every Story: Advancing Cultural Understanding

- + Over the past three years, we chartered a dedicated group of team members who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to create resources and guide continuous learning around cultural awareness and understanding.
- + We launched **Thrive University**, a unique initiative that brought community members from across Polk County into our health system to share their personal experiences and cultural insights. Through Thrive University, **over 20 speakers** have offered their wisdom, giving shape and voice to the diverse walks of life represented in our community. In total, we've hosted **more than 25 education sessions** aimed at igniting curiosity and passion for cultural understanding and for providing truly patient-centered care.
- + Beyond education, we've highlighted the stories of our own Team Members over the years, building connections across the health system and shining a light on the remarkable community members who exists right within our halls and campuses.
- + We've stood beside our neighbors in moments of celebration and remembrance, from proudly marching in the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade and participating in MLK Day of Service volunteer activities to raising the flag alongside our community's heroes on Veterans Day.



**Bridging the Gap:
Improving Access to Quality
Coordinated Care**

At the heart of every decision we make is a Promise — to ensure that every person in Polk County has access to excellent, compassionate care when and where they need it most.

- + Over the last three years, we've opened over 6 practices and specialty clinics across Polk County, including the launch of our Kathleen Campus in North Lakeland, helping reduce barriers to care and reinforcing our commitment to tackling the physician shortage that impacts so many residents.
- + Our Graduate Medical Education Program has grown to 10 programs, bringing the complement of residents and fellows to 172 and adding new fellowships in Pulmonary and Critical

Care, Neurosurgery, and most recently, Cardiology. The GME Program will help sustain a strong healthcare workforce for generations to come.

- + Recognizing that access to care also hinges on knowledge and health literacy, we launched our **Discover** program in Polk County Public Schools and other educational settings. This innovative program not only engages students but also builds foundational health literacy skills that can empower individuals and families to navigate healthcare systems more effectively throughout their lives.
- + Our team launched the **Hospital at Home** program, offering hospital-level care in the comfort of patients' homes.
- + We **opened a Freestanding Emergency Department** in South Lakeland to meet the growing need for accessible, around-the-clock emergency care.

**Elevating Mental Health
Wellness on Our Community
Stage**

- + **The Harrell Family Center for Behavioral Wellness opened**, a 96-bed facility designed to expand access to quality mental health services across Polk County. This new center represents a significant step forward in addressing behavioral health needs with the quality, safety, and respect our community deserves.
- + **The Center for Behavioral Wellness on Missouri Avenue in downtown Lakeland** was opened to expand outpatient access and strengthen support for community-based behavioral health care. Additionally, we integrated behavioral health providers into primary care settings to enhance coordination and streamline patient care.

- + Our team **conducted and delivered Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to more than 800 law enforcement officers and 91 dispatchers** from Polk, Highlands, and Hardee counties, enhancing their ability to recognize and respond to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
- + We **expanded our Peer Recovery Specialist team**, now providing additional group therapy sessions and offering seven-day-a-week coverage across medical floors, the Emergency Department, and Behavioral Health locations to ensure continuous support for patients in recovery.
- + More than 50 presentations focused on **mental health awareness** and available resources at community events and through partnerships with local organizations, supporting stigma reduction and early intervention.



Delivering One-of-a-Kind Heart Care

- + We're proud to share that our team has achieved remarkable improvements in stroke care, **reducing treatment times for patients with large vessel occlusion (LVO)** through an advanced intervention pathway. The administration of TNK, an important clot-busting medication, is now happening in under 45 minutes on average, and the time from arrival to intervention (door-to-puncture) has decreased by 24%.
- + We launched our annual **StrokeCare Summit**, bringing the latest stroke education not only to our Team Members but also to partners and professionals across the community. We added a special community day in 2025 to the summit to raise awareness and empower residents with knowledge about stroke prevention, signs, and treatment. Participation increased 60% from 2024 to 2025.
- + We also introduced the **Stride for Life Stroke Awareness Walk** on World Stroke Day, which has quickly become an annual tradition. This event celebrates survivors, supports caregivers, and brings our community together to champion stroke prevention and recovery.
- + **Over 300 community members** participated in our heart health events, which included a convenient drive-thru "Snack and Screen" where community members received cholesterol screenings quickly and easily.
- + **HeartSmarts**, a heart health education program, was relaunched to equip participants with practical tools and

lifestyle strategies. Since its return, over 145 individuals have participated in the class during the past three years.

- + Through our **EmpowerHer Heart** event, more than 200 women came together for a powerful day of education, health screenings, and physical activity in collaboration with Bonnet Springs Park.
- + Our **ShopTalk** barbershop program has created space for conversations about men's health. These sessions have helped raise awareness about high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke risks, while also offering on-site health screenings to support early detection and care.

Empowering Our Community Against Diabetes

- + To broaden our systemwide impact, the **diabetes education** team was expanded, prioritizing prevention and community-based outreach.
- + **Recertification was successfully achieved** through the American Diabetes Association for our Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) program, reinforcing our commitment to high-quality care.
- + The **monthly diabetes support group** continued to offer valuable education and peer connection for individuals managing the condition.
- + Our yearlong **Diabetes Prevention Program** retained CDC recognition, helping participants adopt lasting lifestyle changes to lower their risk of type 2 diabetes.

- + Through **community education sessions**, residents received guidance on diabetes awareness, healthy habits, and disease management strategies.

Building a Safer Community for the Next Generation

- + Over the past three years, we've given away more than 1,000 helmets throughout the community, and in 2024 alone, **helmet distribution rose by an impressive 121%** compared to the previous year.
- + Our commitment to safety education has driven a **52% increase** in community events focused on bike and pedestrian safety from 2023 to 2024. We've also continued teaching lifesaving skills through the **Stop the Bleed** program, training nearly 500 individuals since 2022.
- + These efforts have been possible thanks to **collaboration with community partners** including the Florida Department of Health, Safe Kids, Polk County Public Schools, Heartland for Children, Senior Helpers, the Children's Resource Center, the Early Learning Coalition, the Lakeland Police Department, and the Polk County Sheriff's Office, among many others.

Defeating Cancer and Expanding Resources

- + Lakeland Regional Health is dedicated to cancer care. In 2018, Lakeland Regional Health Hollis Cancer Center received a **three-year Gold Level Accreditation** with Commendation from the Commission on Cancer (CoC). The Center was successfully **reaccredited** by the CoC in 2022, continuing its commitment to excellence in cancer care.
- + In 2024, we hosted an educational community event titled **Breast Cancer Forum: From Care to Community**, engaging both clinical team and community members.
- + Our team has **visited local churches** to educate members of the congregation on the importance of early screening and advances in care.
- + Over the last three years we have continued to work alongside Tobacco Free Florida to offer **tobacco cessation classes** at our Hollis Cancer Center.
- + Transportation continues to be recognized as a barrier to care for patients. **The American Cancer Society** has long been a strong and trusted partner of our community and the Hollis Cancer Center. Over the last three years, we partnered together and secured over **\$25,000 in grants** to reduce transportation barriers to care.



Restoring Wellness, Decreasing Obesity

- + Continued our **FitChurch Challenge** in collaboration with the YMCA of West Central Florida, a long-standing program under our Congregational Health Partnership program. Over the past three years, 15+ teams have participated annually to promote group-based wellness and weight management.
- + Launched a new, individual-focused **FIT Challenge**, expanding our reach to community members in search of personal accountability for fitness and chronic disease prevention.
- + Engaged 250+ participants in our **Get Active Steps Challenge**, encouraging daily movement through friendly competition and accountability.
- + Introduced **Hoopin' for Health**, a 3v3 basketball tournament promoting men's health and physical activity at all life stages, with over 18 teams competing; expanded to include a high school division.
- + Launched a dedicated program, a **Journey of Wellness**, to support cancer survivors through low-impact fitness classes such as yoga and guided movement sessions.
- + Co-hosted a **Summer Dance Series** at Bonnet Springs Park, offering free, fun, and accessible fitness options in a community setting.
- + Partnered with local schools to promote **prevention through education on nutrition, physical activity, and healthy habits**, reaching students and families across Polk County.





A Message from Danielle Drummond

Lakeland Regional Health President/CEO



Dear Community Member,

As we stand at the threshold of a new chapter in our community's journey, I am both humbled and inspired by the resilience and unity that define Polk County. Our population has surged, with nearly 30,000 new residents joining us in 2023 alone. This growth brings with it both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the realm of healthcare.

We recognize that access to quality, coordinated care remains a pressing concern. With approximately 50,000 uninsured adults living below 200% of the federal poverty level, and a growing demand for mental health services, our commitment to meeting these needs has never been stronger.

This Community Health Needs Assessment is more than a report; it reflects our collective voice and a roadmap for our shared future. It underscores our dedication to ensuring that every resident, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to the care and resources they need to thrive.

Together, we will navigate the road ahead, embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and upholding our Promise to serve you with compassion and excellence.

Best regards,

Danielle Drummond, MS, FACHE
Lakeland Regional Health
President and CEO

The Story of Health in Polk County

Nestled in the heart of Central Florida, Polk County is a place of deep community roots. It's where small-town warmth meets big-city expansion, where generations of families build their lives, and where neighbors look out for one another. With scenic lakes, sprawling citrus groves, and a thriving business landscape, Polk County is a place of opportunity. But behind the postcard views and rapid growth, there's another story — the story of health in our community.

To live in Polk County is to experience the unique intersections of tradition and change. Our community is one of the fastest-growing in the nation, bringing new energy, diverse perspectives, and expanding needs. While we celebrate economic development and new opportunities, we also see gaps in the ability to access healthcare, rising rates of chronic disease, and the effects of social determinants like income, housing, transportation, and food security.

Health here is more than just hospital visits and medical care, it's about the full picture of well-being. It's about the ability to find a trusted doctor close to home, to afford necessary medications, and to live in neighborhoods that support physical and mental health. It's about feeling safe, connected, and supported in a system that understands and responds to the community's needs.

At Lakeland Regional Health, we are proud to be the health system that grows alongside you. We were built by this community, for this community, and as we expand our services and specialties, we remain rooted in the mission to serve. We are not just a healthcare provider, we are a community partner, a trusted neighbor, and an advocate for the well-being of every person who calls Polk County home.

As we look ahead to the 2026-2029 Community Health Needs Assessment, we invite you to explore this evolving landscape with us. Together, we'll examine the challenges, celebrate the progress, and create a vision for a healthier, stronger future — one that is truly community grown, nationally known, and just for you.

Introduction

The Community Health Needs Assessment provides an overview of the health status of those who live in Polk County.

In 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) added requirements that not-for-profit hospitals must satisfy to maintain their tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. One such requirement added by ACA, Section 501(r) of the Code, requires not-for-profit hospitals to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) at least once every three years. As part of the CHNA, each hospital is required to collect input from designated individuals in the community, including public health experts, as well as members, representatives, or leaders of low income, minority, and medically underserved populations, and individuals with chronic conditions.

The CHNA process undertaken and described in this report was conducted in compliance with the federal requirements established by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.





Acknowledgments

This assessment was conducted by Lakeland Regional Health and made possible by contributions from community residents, partners, and subject matter experts throughout Polk County. **We are grateful for their input, knowledge, and support.**

Community Health Needs Assessment Core Team Members

*Lauren Springfield, MBA, MA
Director, Community Health*

Advisory Council

*Andrew Bugajski, PhD, RN
AVP, Research and Sponsored Studies*

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Manager, Clinical Decision Unit / CPC*

*Stephen Smith
Manager, Clinical Nutrition Services*

*Shirley Alleyne, MB. B.S. (M.D.), DFAACAP, FAPA
Director, Psychiatry Residency Program*

Review and Approval

The Lakeland Regional Health Board of Directors approved the CHNA on September 22, 2025.

CHNA Goals

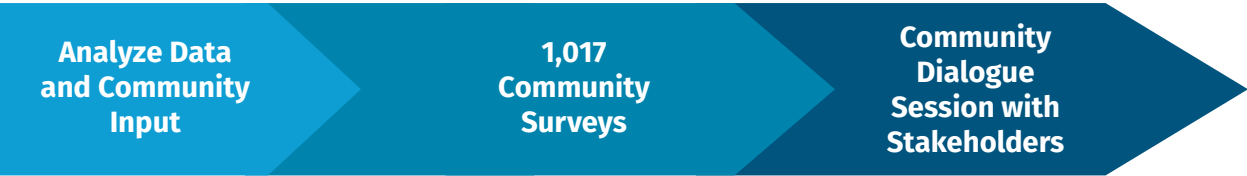
This Community Health Needs Assessment will serve as a tool that supports the work required to accomplish the following goals:

- 1. Improve the health status of Polk County residents and neighboring communities while enhancing overall quality of life.
- 2. Increase access to vital preventative and lifesaving healthcare services and programs to ensure Polk County residents have access when and where they need it the most.
- 3. Work to close gaps in healthcare system that may prevent community members from receiving the best care possible.



Exploring Polk’s Health Landscape

Developing the 2026-2029 Community Health Needs Assessment





About Lakeland Regional Health

Lakeland Regional Health has been serving the community since 1916, providing advanced, high-quality care for patients. Lakeland Regional Health offers a comprehensive array of inpatient and outpatient services at its Medical Center, Hollis Cancer Center, Harrell Family Center for Behavioral Wellness, Carol Jenkins Barnett Pavilion for Women and Children, and multiple ambulatory care locations. Lakeland Regional Health’s use of technology is redefining medicine, advancing safe and quality patient care, and promoting health and wellness.

Since 2013, Lakeland Regional Health has been named a Most Wired hospital 10 times, twice earning Most Wired Advanced status, from the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives. These designations recognize the dedication to creating an exceptional infrastructure and advanced clinical processes guided by technology.

Lakeland Regional Health Medical Center is the largest single component of Lakeland Regional Health. The 910-bed hospital is one of the largest in Florida. With more than 55,000 inpatient admissions and nearly 211,000 Emergency Department visits in 2024, the Medical Center encompasses:

- + **The nation’s second busiest single-site Emergency Department**, garnering international and national recognition, and Polk County’s only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, with 30 beds.
- + **Three state-of-the-art hybrid operating rooms**
- + **Only Trauma Center in Tri-County Area**

- + **Nationally accredited Chest Pain Center and Echocardiography Lab**
- + **Comprehensive Stroke Center, certified by The Joint Commission**
- + Bannasch Institute for Advanced Rehabilitation Medicine is **Polk County’s only CARF-accredited inpatient rehabilitation facility** providing inpatient medical physical rehabilitation services to maximize clinical outcomes for those with conditions such as stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, major multiple traumas, and neurological issues.
- + Carol Jenkins Barnett Pavilion for Women and Children is an **eight-story, state-of-the-art facility featuring a Children’s Emergency Department**, a 12-bed high-acuity Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, surgical suites, private suites for labor and delivery, Polk County’s only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and units dedicated to pediatric and women’s care. It was named a Level III Maternal Care Verified Facility by The Joint Commission in 2023 and earned High Performing in Maternity Care from U.S. News & World Report in 2024.
- + The Harrell Family Center for Behavioral Wellness is a place of hope, connection, recovery, and support. The Center provides **advanced behavioral health services, including an Intensive Outpatient Program and partial hospitalization**. Additionally, the specialized, dedicated team’s services are available not only at the Center but also throughout the LRH system, including primary care, emergency care, the Medical Center and more.
- + Lakeland Regional Health Hollis Cancer Center has been accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer since 1989. Since then, it has earned a number of prestigious accreditations and awards, including being **accredited by the Commission on Cancer**, which is granted only

to facilities that have voluntarily committed to providing the best in cancer diagnosis and treatment and complying with established CoC standards. The Hollis Cancer Center also is **accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers** and has been **recognized as a Screening Center of Excellence by the Lung Cancer Alliance**.

- + The Lakeland Regional Health Physician Group provides primary care, specialty care, and urgent care with more than **400 providers** in over **40 specialties** at more than **30 convenient locations**. All primary care locations are recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance’s Patient-Centered Medical Home Program.

Lakeland Regional Health is an award-winning workplace. Newsweek has named LRH one of America’s Greatest Workplaces in Health Care (2025), one of America’s Greatest Workplaces for Diversity and Inclusion (2024 and 2025), and one of America’s Greatest Workplaces for Women (2024 and 2025). In 2022, Forbes listed LRH as one of the Best Employers in Florida.

Mission

We deliver the best outcomes and safest care by placing people at the heart of all we do. We improve lives every day by promoting wellness, education, and discovery.

Vision

Together, our Promise is **YOUR HEALTH.®**

Definition of Community Served

All demographic data contained in this report is from the U.S. Census Bureau unless otherwise noted.

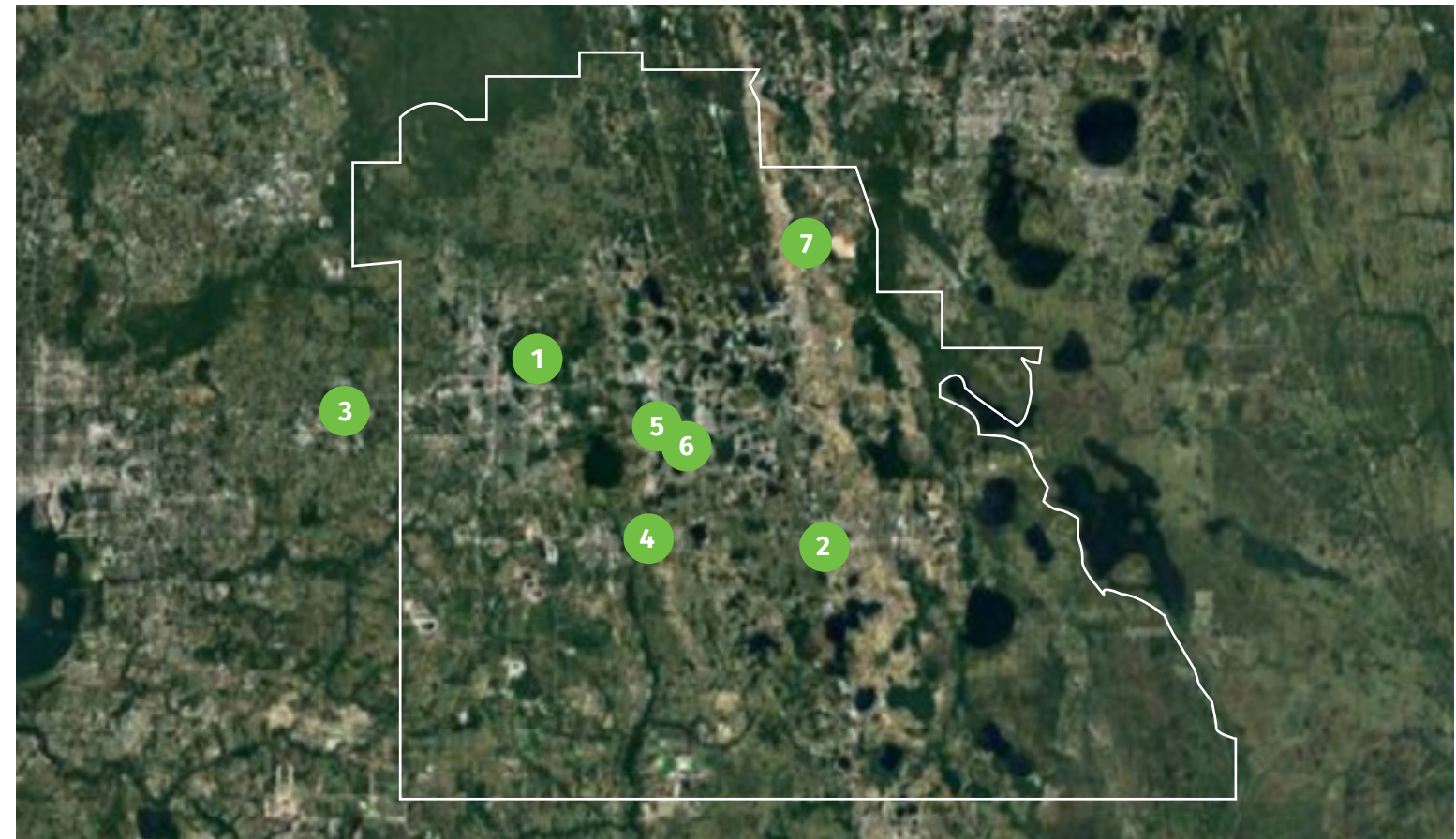
Geographic Location

Polk County is geographically larger than the state of Rhode Island and equal in size to Delaware. The total area of the County is approximately 1,796 square miles, which makes it the fourth largest county in Florida, exceeded only by Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Collier counties.

Population Demographics

Polk County is home to approximately 826,090 residents¹. The County consists of 17 municipalities, with Lakeland as its largest city having a population of 122,264 residents (2023).

¹ https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/population-demographics/data/2024_Pop_Estimates.pdf



Area Hospitals

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Lakeland Regional Health | 5. Winter Haven Hospital |
| 2. AdventHealth Lake Wales | 6. Winter Haven Women's Hospital |
| 3. South Florida Baptist Hospital | 7. AdventHealth Heart of Florida |
| 4. Bartow Regional Medical Center | |



Age and Gender

In 2024, the U.S. median age reached a new record high of 39.1, up 0.1 years from 2023, and up 0.6 years from 38.5 in 2020.² The median age in Polk County is 39.5, which is slightly below the median age of Florida, 42.8 years.³

Polk County Has the Following Resident Profile:

Women comprise 50.7% of the population of Polk County.

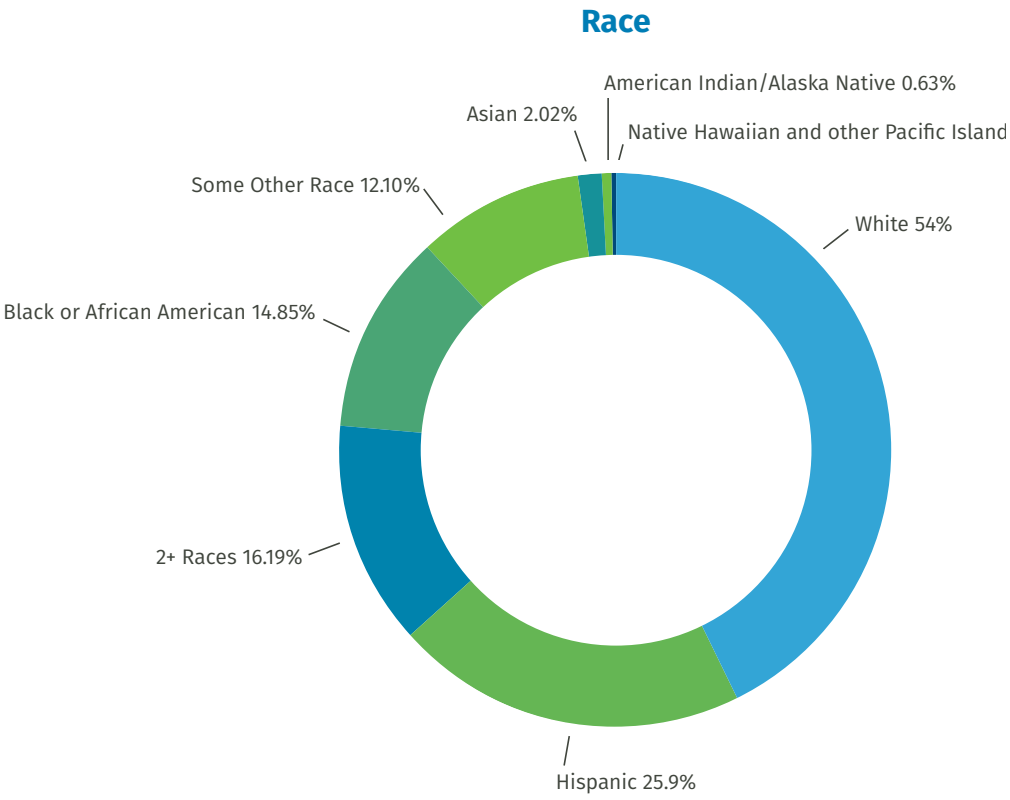
Senior adults are a considerable portion of the community and also present distinct

healthcare needs. In Polk County, seniors (persons 65 years and over) comprise 19.4% of the population. Polk County also has a proportionately large percentage of members of the senior community who are considered “seasonal residents,” visiting from October – April every year. This residency pattern seasonally increases the population in healthcare facilities across the County. Florida ranks among the top 11 states where older adults outnumber children.

Children under 5 years of age comprise 5.6% of the population, while children 6-18 comprise 22.0% of the population

² United States Census Bureau, 2025 (Older Adults Outnumber Children in 11 States, Nearly Half of Counties)
³ United States Census Bureau (Polk County, FL) (Polk County, Florida - Census Bureau Profile)

Race and Ethnicity



Respondents were permitted to select multiple options; therefore, totals may exceed 100%. Demographics information provided by Claritas, updated May 2025

Like many communities across the United States, Polk County is changing rapidly. Our population is growing, our neighborhoods are expanding and becoming more diverse, all while cities work hard to meet the needs of residents. The data in this assessment help us understand these changes and allow community organizations to tailor programs and services to the specific and unique needs of residents.

Population Growth Over Time ⁴		
2022	2023	2024
770,019	797,616	826,090

⁴ https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/population-demographics/data/2024_Pop_Estimates.pdf
https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/population-demographics/data/CountyPopulation_2023.pdf

Conditions Shaping Health and Well-Being in Polk County

Education & Literacy Levels

Education shapes a person’s ability to find employment, manage their health, and navigate systems like healthcare and housing. In Polk County, approximately 87.5% of adults, 25 years old and over have a high school diploma or higher, which is close to the state (90.3%) and national (89.8%) averages. However, when it comes to higher education, only 22.6% of residents hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, lower than both the Florida average (31.5%) and the national rate (35%).

Early literacy is also a concern. Over half of third graders in Polk County are reading below grade level, with some grade levels seeing failure rates nearing 60%. These reading gaps have long-term impacts on educational attainment and job readiness. Polk was recently ranked 60th out of 67 counties in Florida for educational outcomes in a state Child Well-Being Index, showing that gaps in literacy begin early and persist across life stages.

Employment & Income

While Polk County continues to grow economically, employment and income statistics reflect a mixed picture. As of mid-2025, the unemployment rate stands at 4.9%, higher than the state average of 3.7%. In large part, county job openings are driven by growth in transportation, healthcare, and logistics.

The median household income in Polk is around \$63,644, below both the Florida median (\$71,711) and the national median (\$78,538). At the same time, 11.1% of families live below the poverty line, which is slightly above the state average (8.9%) and the national rate (8.7%). These income disparities directly affect access to nutritious food, safe housing, and health-care.

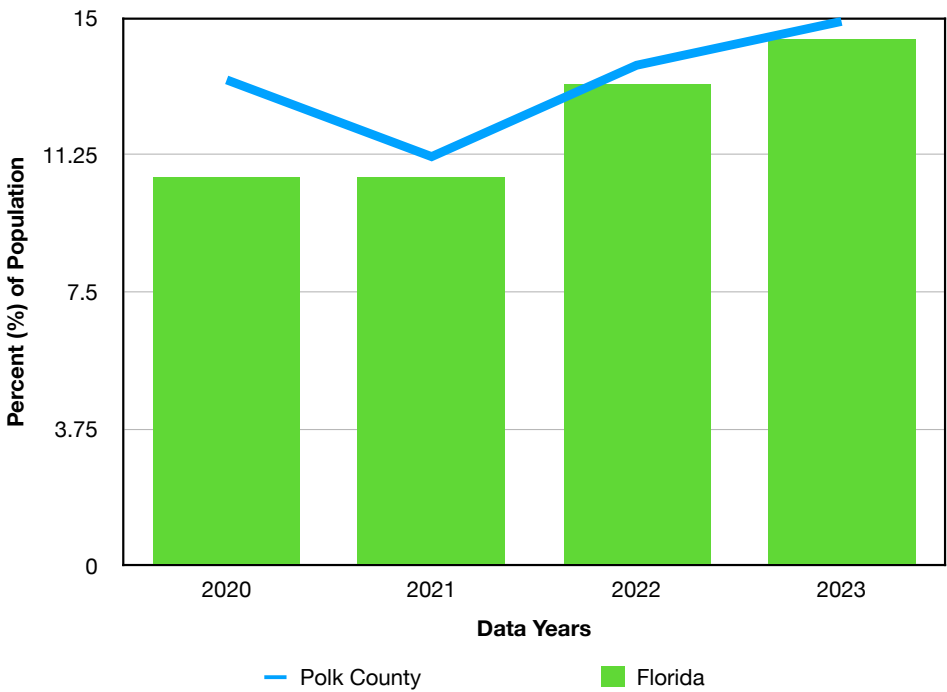
Food Security & Nutrition

Food security remains a concern for many Polk families. According to data from the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF, 2024) and the U.S. Census Bureau, a significant number of Polk County households participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps. SNAP provides monthly benefits to help low-income households buy food and has been a crucial support for families dealing with job instability or limited wages.

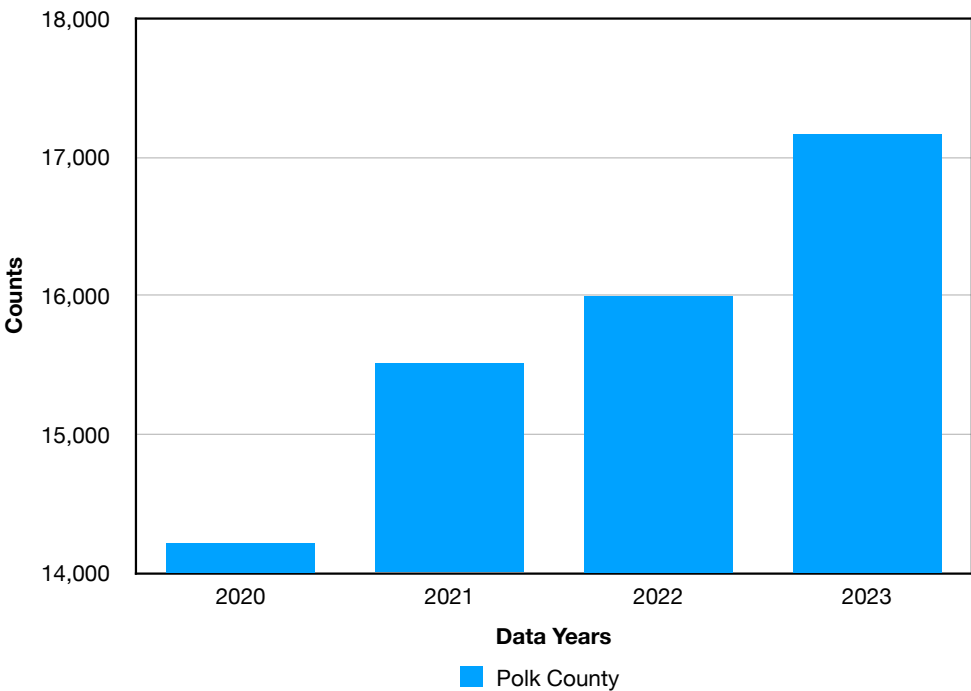
Despite this assistance, food insecurity remains a challenge. Families living on tight budgets often have limited access to fresh, nutritious food, leading to higher rates of diet-related conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. As a health system, understanding where food deserts and high SNAP participation intersect can help guide outreach, screenings, and well-ness programs.

¹ Office of Economic & Demographic Research (EDR), Florida
² US Census Bureau ACS (5-Year Estimates) – Table S1501
³ FAST — the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking
⁴ Florida Policy Institute, 2025 Florida Child Well-Being Index (https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/5cd5801dfdf7e5927800fb7f/67b5eb19f81d-3f6a52ae83ce_CWBI-2025-tables-final.pdf)
⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics via FRED

Food Insecurity Rate



Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP That Have One or More Persons Aged 60 Years and Older





Facts and Findings

826,090

Population of
Polk County

\$63,644

median household
income ⁹

11.1%
of people live below
the poverty line ¹¹

*Barriers to
access include:*
Ratio of providers to
residents, health literacy,
transportation

Among the
30
largest school
districts in the U.S.

2,170:1
Ratio of Polk County
residents to primary
care physicians
(Previous 2,080:1)

22.6%
of residents hold a
bachelor's degree
or higher ¹⁰

88.2%
of households
subscribe to
broadband internet ¹²
(Previous 70.2%)

*Cancer and
heart disease*
are the leading
causes of death

⁹ US Census Bureau ACS (5-Year Estimates) – Table S1901
¹⁰ US Census Bureau ACS (5-Year Estimates) – Table S1501
¹¹ US Census Bureau ACS (5-Year Estimates) – Table S1702
¹² US Census Bureau ACS (5-Year Estimates) – Table S2801



Processes and Methods Used to Conduct the CHNA

The Process

The health of Polk County residents is influenced by many factors. In order to gain a broad perspective of these factors, the potential barriers they may create, and to determine the priorities for the 2026-2029 Community Health Needs Assessment, Lakeland Regional Health utilized a process that included the review of existing secondary data and collection of primary data through a survey and community dialogue session. During community partner conversations and the community dialogue session, we looked to our community residents to represent their respective communities and provide feedback on how the health system could most effectively address specific areas of need.

Data Review

The first phase of the Community Health Needs Assessment process began with gathering existing, health-related data. This assessment considered multiple data sources, including secondary data (demographics, health status indicators, and measures of healthcare access), feedback from previous assessments, and assessments prepared by other organizations, including the Florida Department of Health in Polk County's most recent assessment.

The assessment was performed by reviewing data from sources including:

1. United States Census Bureau
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
3. Florida Health Assessment Resource Tool Set (CHARTS)
4. Office of Economic & Demographic Research (EDR), Florida
5. Community Commons
6. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings

Community Health Survey

1,017 community members participated in the 2026-2029 Community Health Needs Assessment survey. The survey was available both online and in hard copy in English, Spanish and Creole. The survey opened on February 3, 2025, and closed on May 30, 2025.

The survey covered the following topics:

- + Access to healthcare in Polk County
- + Health concerns in Polk County
- + Preventive health services



Community Dialogue Session

To further prioritize the health needs of Polk County, a community dialogue session was held to discuss the overall health of the community and available health services, in addition to opportunities to bridge gaps and access to current services.

The following individuals with specific knowledge or expertise in public health and those from local, regional, and state health departments and other agencies with current data as well as other relevant information were actively engaged during the CHNA process through the community dialogue session:

Name	Agency Represented	Title	Area of Expertise
Jennifer Singleton	Central Florida Health Care	Director of Quality Improvement	Clinical Health Services/ Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)/ Primary Care Access
Shawanda Bonner	City of Lakeland	Senior Planner, Neighborhood Outreach	Local Government/ Municipal Services
Sam Odom	City of Lakeland	Community Engagement Coordinator	Local Government/ Municipal Services
Melody Rider	ConnectED Polk	President	Education
Steven Hill	Dream Center of Lakeland	Program Director	Community Organizing/ Faith-Based Engagement
Nick Dell	Dream Center of Lakeland	Outreach Director	Community Organizing/ Faith-Based-Engagement
Tiffany Johnson	Feeding Tampa Bay	Nutrition Education Manager	Food Security & Nutrition
Joy Jackson, MD	Florida Department of Health in Polk	Director	Public Health
Jessica Napoleon	Florida Department of Health in Polk	Public Health Planner	Public Health
Lori Martini	GiveWell Community Foundation	Vice President/CPO	Nonprofit Leadership/ Philanthropy
Lynne Simpkins	Grassroots Solutions LLC	CEO	Community Engagement/ Advocacy
Merissa Green	City of Haines City	Communications and Marketing Manager	Local Government/ Municipal Services

Name	Agency Represented	Title	Area of Expertise
Tonya Akwetey	Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties, Inc.	Associate Director	Early Childhood/ Maternal Health
Amy Beascoechea	Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties, Inc.	Doula Coordinator/ Social Media	Early Childhood/ Maternal Health
Patty Strickland	KidsPACK	Executive Director	Food Security & Nutrition
Barbara Harrison	New Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church	Business Manager	Faith-Based Engagement/ Community Outreach
Todd Vreeland	OneBlood	Account Representative	Blood Donation Services/ Emergency Preparedness
Debra Jackson	Orangewood Neighborhood	Secretary	Neighborhood Association
Sarah Breed	Parker Street Ministries	Director of Development	Housing & Homelessness Services
Candace Barnes	Peace River Center	Chief Operating Officer	Behavioral Health/ Mental Health
Holly Vida	Polk County Board of County Commissioners	Behavioral Health Program Manager	Local Government/ Policy Development
Joy Johnson	Polk County Board of County Commissioners	Administrator, Health and Human Services	Local Government/ Policy Development
Elizabeth Palazzi-Xirinachs, DNP	Talbot House Ministries	Director of Health Services	Housing & Homelessness Services
Deborah Cozzetti	Talbot House Ministries	Director of Programs	Housing & Homelessness Services
Gretchen Ceranic	United Way of Central Florida	Director, Success By 6	Nonprofit Leadership/ Social Services
T.J. Wright	YMCA of West Central Florida	CEO	Community Wellness/ Youth Development/ Physical Activity Promotion



Summary of Community Dialogue Session

As part of the Community Health Needs Assessment process, we hosted a community dialogue session to listen directly to those on the front lines — nonprofit leaders, healthcare providers, educators, and community advocates. This conversation offered a candid look at what it really means to pursue health and wellness in Polk County.

Participants represented organizations spanning healthcare, youth and senior services, food access, housing support, and more. Through this conversation, we uncovered key challenges, identified new and emerging issues, and gained clarity on what’s standing in the way of better health outcomes for all.

Core Health Challenges in Polk County

Participants expressed concern about longstanding and deeply rooted barriers to health. Some of the most urgent challenges include:

Access & Affordability

- + Lack of affordable care for the uninsured and underinsured
- + Medicare and Medicaid acceptance issues at local facilities
- + Limited provider availability, especially for low-income populations

Transportation

- + Inadequate public transit infrastructure, especially in rural areas
- + Cost and scheduling barriers that prevent people from making appointments

Homelessness & Housing

- + Homeless individuals struggle to access consistent healthcare
- + A lack of transitional or recuperative care options post-hospitalization
- + Affordable housing shortages contributing to chronic health conditions

Aging & Isolation

- + Seniors experiencing social isolation, depression, and lack of mobility
- + Few opportunities for engagement, physical activity, or preventive care

Chronic Illness

- + Cancer and heart disease continue to be leading causes of death
- + Poor nutrition, lack of exercise, and stress all feed into preventable conditions

At-Risk Populations

- + Migrant workers, especially in agriculture, face barriers due to mobility, language, and trust
- + Cultural competency gaps among providers hurt care outcomes
- + Digital and health literacy gaps prevent many from navigating systems effectively

Shifting Needs: Emerging Concerns

Participants were also asked about changes they’ve seen over time: what’s new, what’s growing, and what demands more attention moving forward.

Growing Aging Population

- + A rapidly expanding senior population brings increasing needs for geriatric care, transitional housing, and long-term support

- + Seniors who are homeless or low-income are particularly at risk

Technology: Promise & Distrust

- + Telemedicine is growing, but older adults and underserved groups often distrust it or lack access
- + Concerns about AI in healthcare were raised, especially as it relates to the need for human connection and support
- + The need for technology education and reliable digital access is growing

Housing & Economy

- + Affordable housing is more urgent than ever, with rising rent and limited affordable supply
- + Participants connected economic instability and rising costs with an inability to seek care

Generational Health Habits

- + Long-term health is shaped by family habits, generational views of care, and lived experiences
- + There’s a need to break cycles early through youth engagement, education, and trust-building

What’s Standing in the Way: Barriers to Access

When it comes to accessing healthcare and community resources, residents face real and persistent obstacles. These fall into three major categories:

Systemic Barriers

- + Complicated systems for applying for aid or navigating healthcare systems
- + Lack of integration between community

agencies and health providers

- + Perception that healthcare is a luxury, not a right

Practical Challenges

- + Transportation issues prevent people from getting to appointments
- + Clinic hours don’t align with work schedules, especially for hourly workers
- + Lack of nutrition education and access to healthy food
- + Limited awareness of what services exist and how to use them

Perception & Mistrust

- + Distrust in providers, especially when experiences feel impersonal or rushed
- + A feeling that some patients are treated better than others based on insurance status

What We Heard: A Summary in Their Words

- + “It’s not just that people don’t go to the doctor, it’s that they don’t know where to start.”
- + “People can’t get care because they can’t get off work.”
- + “We talk about access like it’s simple, but everything is hard — finding a ride, filling out a form, knowing who to call.”
- + “There’s a whole group of people that never recovered from COVID — mentally, financially, emotionally.”



A Call to Collaboration

The community dialogue reinforced one central truth — health is not just about medicine. It's about access, trust, communication, education, dignity, and equity. Addressing Polk County's challenges will require coordinated action across systems: healthcare, housing, education, transportation, and beyond.

Our community partners are ready; however, solving these issues will require robust and continuous collaboration. The solutions must be community-driven, data-informed, and rooted in the voices of those we heard from not only in this session but also from patients and community members across Polk County. This summary serves not as an endpoint, but as a foundation to guide the next steps in strengthening the healthiest community in Florida.

"Strengthening the healthiest community in Florida through targeted outreach and strategic collaborations, supporting our reputation as the trusted healthcare leader."

Prioritization of Needs

Over the course of several months, key stakeholders from Lakeland Regional Health and our community partners met to review primary and secondary data, determine criteria to be used for prioritization, and complete the prioritization of community health needs. Prioritization of community needs took into consideration the following criteria:

- + Seriousness of the health need and the effect it has on an individual's quality of life
- + Feasibility of our organization addressing the health need
- + The degree to which the health need affects specific groups of people, equity
- + Opportunity for the health system to build upon existing programs or potential collaborations with community partners

Data Limitations and Gaps

This report was constructed to provide a comprehensive and broad picture of the health of the overall community.

The data sources used in this assessment provide a thorough and detailed understanding of the current health status of our community. However, there are some limitations with this data, as is true with any available secondary data. Some gaps exist with comparative national data derived on schedules that lag behind state or local data.

Additionally, data is not always collected on a yearly basis, meaning that some data is several years old.

Based on the experiences of community members and the expert stakeholders involved in our CHNA process, we are confident the health needs we have identified have a significant impact on vulnerable populations within our community.



General Findings

Orange denotes where Polk performance is worse than corresponding data for the region and state. Orange is used in the Polk White demographic only when performance is worse than either Polk-Black or Polk-Hispanic and when performance is worse than Polk-Overall demographic. Orange is used in Polk minority demographics only when performance is worse than Polk-Overall demographic.

2026-2029 CHNA		Updated June 2025		
Economy/Demographics	US	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2025 Unemployment (June 2025) (Source: BLS)	4.1%	3.7%	4.0% (Tampa)	4.9% (Lakeland-Winter Haven)
2023-2024 High School Graduation Rate (Source: FLDOE) Florida's federal graduation rate in 2021-22 was ranked #19 in the nation.	87% (2021-2022)	89.7%	88.0%	82.2%
2023 Bachelor's Degree or higher (25+) (Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate)	35.0%	33.2%	37.2%	22.6%
2023 Median Gross Rent (Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate)	\$1,348	\$1,564	\$1,543	\$1,272
2023 Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families (Source: ACS 5 Year Estimate)	8.7%	8.9%	9.6%	11.1%



Health Outcomes			
Cardiovascular	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Age-Adjusted Major Cardiovascular Diseases Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	195	197.9	214.7
2023 Age-Adjusted Stroke Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	44.6	35.5	51
2024 Age-Adjusted Hospitalizations from or with Coronary Heart Disease Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	246.1	249	305.8
2024 Age-Adjusted Hospitalizations from or with Congestive Heart Failure as Any Listed Diagnosis Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	1506.5	1737.9	2007.9
Respiratory	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Age-Adjusted Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	30.2	27.9	43.6
2023 Age-Adjusted Asthma Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	0.7	0.8	1
2024 Age-Adjusted Hospitalizations From or With Asthma Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	705.4	876.8	958.9

Health Outcomes					
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
188.5	244.8	158.9	210.7	235.6	182
42	64.2	42.8	49.3	60.4	60.9
222.4	248.2	223.6	277.9	281.3	318.8
1272.6	2438.7	1219.8	1745.5	2802	1808.2
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
32.1	18.7	18.1	47.1	24.4	18.6
0.6	1.3	0.4	1.1	0.6	0
540.3	1119.2	659	767	1226.8	1126.9

Health Outcomes			
Cancer	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Age-Adjusted Cancer Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	133.4	130	154.7
2023 Age-Adjusted Lung Cancer Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	28.5	25.2	33.6
2023 Age-Adjusted Female Breast Cancer Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	18.1	19	21.2
2023 Age-Adjusted Colorectal Cancer Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	12.4	14.3	14.7
2023 Age-Adjusted Cervical Cancer Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	2.4	2.8	2.7
2023 Age-Adjusted Prostate Cancer Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	16	14.6	19.2
2022 Age-Adjusted Melanoma Incidence Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	28	29.6	27.1

Health Outcomes					
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
134	134.7	104.9	158.6	136.4	118.6
29.7	21.9	16.9	36.2	23.3	14.4
17	24.1	13.9	21.1	20.6	12.9
12.1	15.8	10.9	14.8	17.9	16.1
2.3	3.3	1.9	2.8	4.1	4.1
14.7	30.2	15.7	18.6	27.8	16.3
32.9	1.5	3.8	32.4	0	2.9

Health Outcomes			
Diabetes	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Age-Adjusted Diabetes Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	21	20.5	30.3
2024 Age-Adjusted Emergency Department Visits From Diabetes (Source: FloridaCharts)	230.2	214.0	430.2
2024 Age-Adjusted Hospitalizations From or With Diabetes as Any Listed Diagnosis Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	2363.3	2734.7	3508.7
Prenatal and Perinatal Health	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Infant Deaths from 0-364 Days from Birth Rate Per 1,000 Births (Source: FloridaCharts, Healthy People)"	6	7.5	5.9
2023 Live Births Under 2500 Grams (Low Birth Weight) <2500grams - Per 1,000 Live Births (Rate) (Source: FloridaCharts, Healthy People)	9.1	9.2	9.4
2023 Repeat Births to Mothers (Aged 15-19 Years) Birth Rate Per 1,000 Females (Source: FloridaCharts, Healthy People)	12.8	14.8	15.4
2023 Resident Live Births to Mothers Who Smoked During Pregnancy Percentage of Total Births (Source: FloridaCharts)	1.8	1.7	2.4

Health Outcomes

Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
18.3	40.4	20.7	28.6	43.3	31.6
154.5	510.3	224.1	346.1	691.4	594.5
1899.2	4045.5	2368.3	2921.5	5000.4	4128.3
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
4.5	10.7	7.7	4.3	11.6	8.3
7.4	14.7	7.6	8.3	14.3	8.7
12.6	10.5	12.4	15.4	14.7	12.5
2.0	1.4	0.5	2.6	2.1	0.7

2026-2029 CHNA			
Health Outcomes			
Behavioral/Mental	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Age-Adjusted Deaths Due to Suicide Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	14.1	13.4	14.4
Injuries	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Age-Adjusted Deaths from Motor Vehicle Crashes Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: Florida Charts, CDC FastStats)	14.9	13.5	23.8
2023 Aggravated Assault Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, FBI)	103.9	131.9	136.5
2023 Age-Adjusted Deaths from Unintentional Injury Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, CDC FastStats)	63.9	66.6	67.2

Health Outcomes					
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
15.8	6.6	8	16.5	4.7	7.3
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
14.9	16.8	13.9	23.9	24.5	21.9
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					
67.3	54.4	41.5	68.3	62.5	49.9

Health Outcomes			
Infectious/ Communicable Diseases	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2023 Age-Adjusted Pneumonia/Influenza Death Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, CDC NVSS)	8.2	11.2	16
2023 Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Diagnoses Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, Healthy People)	8.7	9.1	12.1
2023 Persons With HIV (PWH) Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts, CDC)	566.4	531.8	408.2
2023 Gonorrhea Rate Per 100,000 (Source: FloridaCharts)	206.5	250	182
Weight/Nutrition/Activity	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2022 Overweight and Obese Adults % of Adults with BMI >25.0 (Source: FloridaCharts)	66.1%	68.5%	72.2%
2024 Students Who Are Overweight or Obese (FYTS), All Middle and High School Students (Source: FloridaCharts)	30.50%	30.7%	34.5%

Health Outcomes					
Florida- White	Florida- Black	Florida- Hispanic	Polk- White	Polk- Black	Polk- Hispanic
7.9	10.8	6.9	14.3	23.8	12
3.4	28.5		4.4	45.9	
293.6	1573.5		325.5	1187.7	
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					
Florida- White	Florida- Black	Florida- Hispanic	Polk- White	Polk- Black	Polk- Hispanic
64.1%	75.1%	68.5%	70.3% (2019)	68% (2019)	79.7% (2019)
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					

Health Outcomes			
Substance Use	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2022 Adults Who Are Current Smokers (BRFSS) (Source: FloridaCharts, HealthyPeople)	11.3%	9.8%	12.9%
2023 Drug Overdose Annual Age-Adjusted Death Rate Per 100,000 persons (Source: FloridaCharts)	32.5%	33.4%	33.8%
Screening and Vaccination	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2022 Adults Who Received a Flu Shot in the Past Year (BRFSS) (Source: HealthyPeople, FloridaCharts)	39%	38.6%	34%
2022 Adults Who Have Ever Received a Pneumonia Vaccination (Aged 65 Years and Older) (BRFSS) (Source: FloridaCharts)	65.5%	62.3%	58.1%
2022 Women 40+ Who Received Mammogram in the Past Year (Source: FloridaCharts)	55.5%	52.2%	62.9%
2016 Women 18+ Who Have Had a Pap Smear in the Past Year (Source: FloridaCharts)	48.4%	50.30%	55.1%
2016 Adults 50+ Who Received a Sigmoidoscopy or Colonoscopy in the Past 5 Years (Source: FloridaCharts)	53.9%	48.3%	52.4%
2016 Men Age 50+ Who Received a PSA Test in the Past 2 Years (Source: FloridaCharts)	54.9%	51.40%	55.7%

Health Outcomes					
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
13.0%	9.3%	9.0%	Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity		
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
45.1%	30.7%	30.5%	Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity		
68.1%	67.5%	51.8%	Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity		
55.4%	62.5%	56.8%	Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity		
46.0%	55.8%	51.5%	48.6%	N/A	68.8%
55.9%	51.2%	49.6%	52.9%	N/A	48.9%
58.2%	48.4%	47.0%	59.3%	N/A	N/A

2026-2029 CHNA				
Health Outcomes				
Health Systems/Access	US	FL	Hillsborough	Polk
2022 Percentage of Population Under Age 65 Without Health Insurance (Source: County Health Rankings)	10.0%	14.0%	13.0%	15.0%
2022 Ratio of Population to Primary Care Physicians (Source: County Health Rankings)	1,330:1	1,370:1	1,200:1	2,170:1
2024 Ratio of Population to Mental Health Providers (Source: County Health Rankings)	300:1	460:1	420:1	810:1
2022 Ratio of Population to Dentists (Source: County Health Rankings)	1,360:1	1,560:1	1,570:1	2,820:1
2022 Rate of Hospital Stays for Ambulatory-care Sensitive Conditions per 100,000 Medicare Enrollees (Source: County Health Rankings)	2,666	3,074	3,619	4,081

Health Outcomes					
Florida-White	Florida-Black	Florida-Hispanic	Polk-White	Polk-Black	Polk-Hispanic
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					
Data Not Available by Race/Ethnicity					



Community Priorities

Healthcare is an essential resource that we are privileged and honored to provide for the community we serve.

Lakeland Regional Health understands that everyone does not have an equal opportunity to thrive and be healthy. The environment in which someone lives can have significant effects on their health. Priorities were selected, in part, based on issue prevalence and severity according to county data, in addition to input provided by community members and county stakeholders.

Upon review of our County's current health data and as a result of the CHNA process, Lakeland Regional Health has identified the following areas of need:

1. Access to Quality, Coordinated Care
2. Cancer Screening and Prevention
3. Diabetes
4. Heart Disease and Stroke
5. Injury Prevention
6. Mental Healthcare
7. Obesity, Nutrition, and Well-being



Barriers to Care

A critical component of the CHNA process is identifying barriers and disparities on the path to obtaining quality healthcare and living a healthier lifestyle.

The identification of barriers and disparities helps pinpoint strategies for addressing the prioritized health needs. Through the review of the community survey, secondary data and the community dialogue session, the following barriers and disparities were identified as pertinent to Polk County residents:

Transportation

In Polk County, transportation remains one of the most significant barriers to healthcare access. Many residents lack personal vehicles and public transportation options, especially in rural and outlying areas, and are limited in both coverage, connection, and frequency. This lack of mobility means missed appointments, delayed diagnoses, and an overreliance on emergency care. Even when transportation exists, the time and coordination required can deter community residents from seeking preventive services. In areas where walking or

biking is the only option, safety and distance often become obstacles.

According to the Florida Department of Transportation, Polk County ranks 21 out of the state's top 25 deadliest counties for pedestrians.

Shortage of Providers and Long Waits

The shortage of healthcare providers and the long wait times for appointments further compound challenges faced by community residents. In Polk County, the ratio of primary care providers to residents is significantly lower than state and national averages, which means patients often wait weeks, or even months, for routine visits. This scarcity is felt even more in specialties like behavioral health, where patients report long delays before receiving needed care. These delays not only discourage consistent care but may cause residents to forgo services altogether, especially if urgent care or emergency departments feel like the only accessible alternative.

Healthcare Navigation and Literacy

Another key obstacle is navigating the healthcare system itself. Many community members struggle to understand how to enroll in insurance, find the right provider, or determine what services are covered. The lack of health literacy, particularly around preventive services and available resources, leads to underutilization of programs designed to help. The issue is amplified for those with limited experience using digital tools, making online appointment systems or telemedicine platforms difficult to access and understand.

Language, education, and cultural differences

Language barriers hinder communication with providers and make it difficult to follow through on care plans. Cultural norms or past negative experiences with the medical system can lead to distrust and disengagement. Community members emphasized the need for culturally competent care and increased provider

training to ensure that patients feel seen, respected, and understood.

Economic Realities

Economic realities continue to weigh heavily on families across the region. Even with insurance, costs related to copays, medications, and uncovered services are a deterrent. Many working residents reported that they simply cannot afford to take time off to seek medical care, particularly preventive services. These dynamics foster a reactive approach to healthcare, waiting until conditions are severe, rather than one rooted in ongoing prevention and wellness.

Together, these barriers create a compounding effect that limits access, delays care, and increases health disparities across Polk County. Addressing them will require a collaborative, multi-layered approach that includes not only investment in infrastructure and workforce development, but also culturally informed community outreach, flexible care delivery models, and trust-building between healthcare systems and the people they serve.



Health Needs Not Addressed

While Lakeland Regional Health recognizes affordable housing and lack of access to public transportation create significant barriers to obtaining healthcare, we recognize there are other community partners and resources better positioned to address these priorities. Lakeland Regional Health is committed to supporting ongoing initiatives related to improving the overall quality of life for all Polk County residents and will continue to work to ensure access to quality equitable healthcare.

Public Comment

Lakeland Regional Health made its prior Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) report publicly available through the organization's website and accepted written comments and feedback regarding the CHNA and implementation strategy via email.

At the time of this report, LRH had not received any written comments.

Next Steps

Lakeland Regional Health will use the findings from this Community Health Needs Assessment to guide the development of a comprehensive implementation strategy. The strategy will outline specific goals, strategies, and actionable steps to address the identified health priorities.

Implementation Strategy

Building on the findings of the 2026-2029 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), Lakeland Regional Health has developed a comprehensive Implementation Strategy to address the most significant health needs facing Polk County. This strategy outlines targeted goals, initiatives, and partnerships that reflect the health system’s mission to improve the health of the community it serves. Rooted in data and community input, the strategy seeks to drive measurable improvements and foster long-term, sustainable change across Polk County.

As Polk County continues to grow, with a population now exceeding 820,000 residents and projected growth over the next decade, our approach must evolve to meet the needs of a changing community. The county’s demographics are shifting, with increases in Hispanic/Latino populations, multi-generational households, and community members facing economic hardships. This growth requires responsive, culturally competent care delivery systems. LRH’s implementation strategy considers not only the priority health issues but also the broader social, cultural, and economic conditions that shape health outcomes.

Alignment with National Standards

This Implementation Strategy aligns with the requirements outlined by the IRS for nonprofit hospital organizations, as well as standards set by the American Hospital Association (AHA) and Healthy People 2030.

It is guided by principles of:

- + Community engagement and shared ownership
- + Evidence-based practice and measurable impact
- + Collaboration across sectors and disciplines
- + Transparency and public accountability

The strategies that follow are organized by each of the health priority areas identified in the CHNA and include initiatives/actions alongside the anticipated impact/outcome. Together, these efforts reflect LRH’s role not only as a healthcare provider but as a community partner committed to creating a healthier Polk County.

Health Equity

Cultural competency is a cornerstone of effective healthcare delivery and essential to advancing health equity. As the U.S. becomes increasingly diverse, with over 40% of the national population identifying as racial or ethnic minorities and nearly one in five speaking a language other than English at home, the ability of healthcare providers to understand and respect diverse cultural perspectives is critical.

Our commitment to health equity recognizes that not all communities start from the same place. The Implementation Strategy reflects intentional efforts to reduce disparities in access, outcomes, and quality of care across geographic regions, racial and ethnic groups, and socioeconomic levels.





Equity

We will focus on several specific efforts related to improving access and equity, including:

- + Strengthening pathways for workforce development and advancement by partnering with local schools, colleges, and workforce pipelines to provide mentorship, internships, and career navigation support for underrepresented groups in healthcare professions.
- + Supporting translation and health literacy initiatives to ensure all patients receive information in ways that are accessible, linguistically appropriate, and culturally competent.
- + Leveraging Catalyst, the system’s leadership council, to guide strategic alignment, evaluate impact, and champion cross-department collaboration on institutional goals.

Access to Quality, Coordinated Care

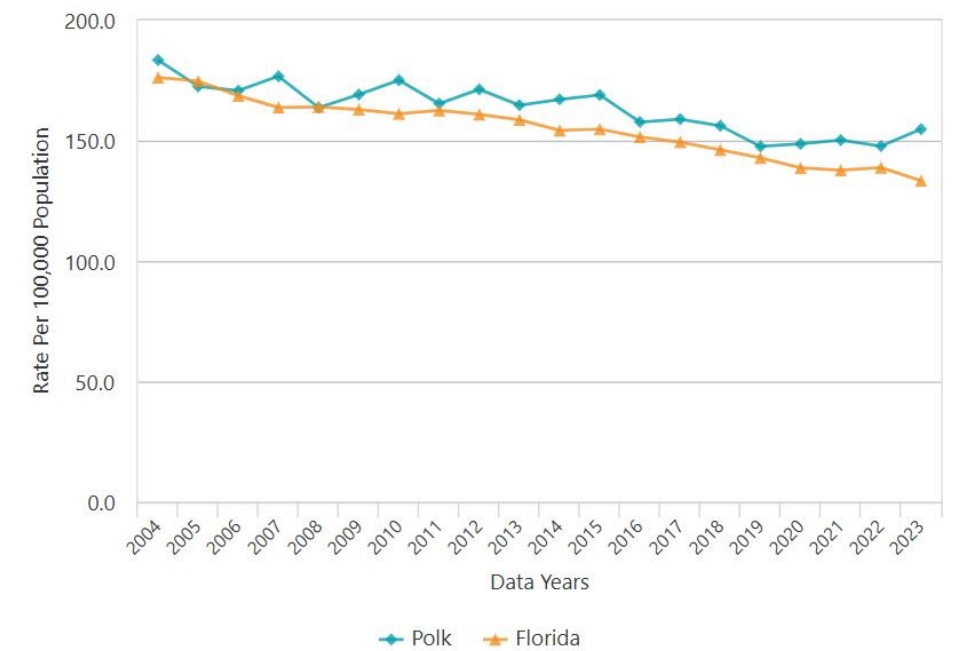
Access to timely, affordable, and coordinated healthcare remains a critical need across Polk County. While Polk is home to a growing population, many residents continue to face challenges related to insurance coverage, provider shortages, transportation, and care navigation. According to the most recent census estimates, nearly 15% of Polk County residents under 65 lack health insurance, which limits preventive care use and increases reliance on emergency departments for non-urgent needs.

This priority area focuses on improving access to primary, specialty, and behavioral health services through care coordination, education, telehealth expansion, and navigation support. Coordinated care ensures continuity across healthcare settings and improves outcomes for individuals managing chronic conditions. Enhancing access is not only vital for individual health, but also essential to reducing health system strain and advancing health equity.

	Initiatives and Actions	Anticipated Impact
Access to Quality, Coordinated Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expansion of the Lakeland Regional Health Physician Group, with a focus on high-demand specialties, culturally competent care, and strategically located sites that meet community members where they are• Continued investment in and development of the Graduate Medical Education (GME) program, including the addition of new specialty residencies and fellowship opportunities aligned with community needs• Expand Women and Children’s Services through the Carol Jenkins Barnett Pavilion for Women and Children – South• Optimize the patient care experience by increasing access to virtual visits, online scheduling, patient portals, and telehealth services across the system• Partner with community schools to enhance health education and resource sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased availability of specialty care providers within the community• Greater access to locally trained providers committed to serving our community• Increased access to high-quality, comprehensive women’s and pediatric care• Enhanced health equity through personalized, barrier-reducing support



Age-Adjusted
Deaths from Cancer,
Single Year



Cancer Screening and Prevention

Cancer remains a leading cause of death in Polk County and across the United States. Early detection through routine screenings significantly improves survival rates, yet disparities in screening rates worsen by income, insurance status, and race/ethnicity. In Polk County, breast, colorectal, and lung cancers are among the most commonly diagnosed, with late-stage diagnoses often more prevalent in underserved communities.

This priority seeks to expand awareness, education, and access to life-saving screenings for cancers with established guidelines. It also includes prevention strategies such as tobacco cessation, HPV vaccination promotion, and healthy lifestyle education. Emphasizing prevention and early detection reduces suffering and saves lives, particularly when paired with culturally competent outreach and navigation services.

	Initiatives and Actions	Anticipated Impact
Cancer Screening and Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance post-treatment care by offering comprehensive survivorship programming, including nutrition counseling, exercise programs, mental health support, and patient education workshops Invest in expanded access to cancer screenings and care services Launch targeted education campaigns around risk factors, prevention, and early detection, with an emphasis on increasing participation in routine screenings, including breast, cervical, colorectal, prostate, and skin cancer Offer regular, accessible skin checks and prevention education Advance a comprehensive approach to lung cancer prevention through expanded screening access, education on risk factors, and investment in new technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved long-term health outcomes and quality of life for cancer survivors Reduced disparities in early detection and treatment Greater public understanding of cancer risks and the importance of early detection Increased awareness of sun safety practices Improved early detection of lung cancer

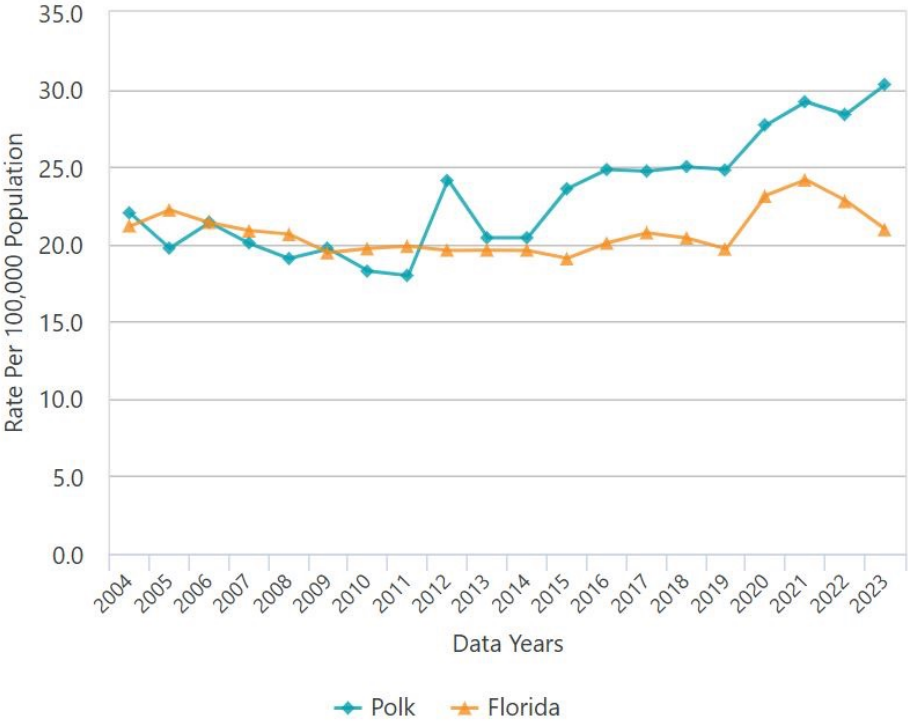
Diabetes

Diabetes remains a significant public health concern, with the CDC reporting that over 37 million Americans have diabetes, and approximately 96 million have prediabetes. In Polk County, lifestyle factors and limited access to preventive care contribute to higher diabetes prevalence. This chronic condition not only affects individuals’ quality of life but also places a substantial burden on families and the healthcare system.

Our focus is on comprehensive diabetes management and prevention strategies to reduce incidence rates and improve health outcomes for our community.



Age-Adjusted
Deaths from
Diabetes,
Single Year



	Initiatives and Actions	Anticipated Impact
Diabetes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Connect community members and existing patients to appropriate diabetes education services/ offeringsPartner with community-based organizations and providers to increase access to CDC-recognized Diabetes Prevention Program cohortsIncrease opportunities for peer support, education, and navigation assistance through community-hosted support groups tailored to adults and seniorsDeliver health screenings at community events, workplaces, and churches, with structured follow-up for those with elevated A1C or glucose levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Early detection and treatment through more widespread screeningsReduced emergency room visits and hospitalizations related to diabetes complications



Heart Disease and Stroke

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in both Florida and Polk County. Contributing factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, and tobacco use remain widespread in the region. Stroke is also a major concern, with many cases presenting late due to limited awareness of early signs or delayed access to emergency care.

This priority centers on reducing the prevalence of cardiovascular disease through prevention, education, and community-based interventions. By improving awareness of risk factors and increasing access to blood pressure screenings, nutrition counseling, and physical activity opportunities, Lakeland Regional Health and its partners can help reduce the burden of heart disease and stroke in Polk County.

	Initiatives and Actions	Anticipated Impact
Heart Disease and Stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expand hands-only CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) demonstrations at community health fairs, schools, churches, and large-scale public events. Focus on making CPR training approachable, fast, and confidence-building for all age groups and literacy levelsIncrease the number of cardiovascular health screenings offered in underserved areas, bundled with EHAC (Early Heart Attack Care) education to teach the public how to recognize and respond to subtle heart attack symptoms before they become life-threateningPartner with Polk County Fire Rescue and other emergency personnel to co-host educational outreach events, provide AED demos, and distribute materials on how to respond to heart attack symptoms and cardiac arrestPromote community-wide health screenings and education around stroke risk factors and the BE FAST stroke recognition acronym (Balance, Eyes, Face, Arms, Speech, Time) through digital campaigns, barbershop outreach, and health fairsImplement stroke education in local schools to teach students about lifestyle-related risk factors, warning signs of stroke, and how to respond if someone is having a strokeContinue and grow the Stride for Life walk as an annual awareness event focused on prevention, survivor stories, and honoring caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase bystander response rates during cardiac emergencies, which is shown to double or triple a person’s chance of survival when CPR is administered immediatelyIdentify individuals at risk earlier, increase awareness of atypical symptoms (especially in women), and reduce time to treatment by encouraging earlier care-seeking behaviorFoster a more connected response system between the public and emergency professionals, leading to faster intervention and improved outcomes during emergenciesImprove early identification of stroke symptoms and reduce time to treatment, leading to better clinical outcomes and lower disability ratesEmpower a new generation of health-literate students who can advocate for their own well-being and respond to emergencies in their homes and communitiesIncrease public engagement in stroke awareness and provide a platform for shared learning and community support



Injury Prevention

Injuries, whether unintentional (i.e., motor vehicle crashes, falls, poisonings) or intentional (i.e., violence, suicide), are a leading cause of death and disability across age groups. In Polk County, injury-related emergency room visits and hospitalizations remain high, particularly among youth, older adults, and individuals facing housing insecurity or behavioral health challenges.

This priority focuses on strategies to reduce injuries through education, safe environment initiatives, and collaboration with schools, first responders, and community organizations. Prevention efforts may include fall risk screenings, helmet and seatbelt education, firearm safety outreach, and trauma-informed violence prevention. Addressing injury is essential to improving public safety, reducing healthcare costs, and preserving long-term quality of life.

According to *Becker’s Hospital Review*, in 2024 Lakeland Regional Health Medical Center was listed as the second busiest single-sit emergency department (ED) in the nation.

	Initiatives and Actions	Anticipated Impact
Injury Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct community-based drowning prevention efforts, including educational sessions for caregivers and children in high-risk areas, distribution of water safety materials, and workshops in collaboration with local partners• Promote safe sleep education for new parents and caregivers to prevent infant suffocation and SIDS, through strategic partnerships with local hospitals, clinics, and early childhood programs• Expand car seat safety checks and promote awareness campaigns addressing seatbelt use and the dangers of distracted driving, particularly among teen drivers and underserved populations• Launch comprehensive fall prevention programming for adults, including balance screenings, fitness classes, and home safety assessments. This effort will leverage existing partnerships with the YMCA of West Central Florida and integrate stroke risk awareness• Integrate Stop the Bleed training into Polk County schools and community events to empower students, educators, and residents with life-saving emergency response skills• Support responsible firearm storage through education and distribution of gun locks, in collaboration with public safety partners and community organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce unintentional drownings among children by increasing knowledge of water safety practices and expanding access to resources in vulnerable communities• Improve infant safety and reduce sleep-related deaths by equipping caregivers with education and resources• Decrease vehicle-related injuries and fatalities by improving compliance with occupant safety measures and reducing risky driving behaviors• Lower rates of fall-related injuries and hospitalizations among seniors, while enhancing independence and quality of life• Increase community readiness and trauma response capabilities, potentially reducing fatalities from severe injuries• Reduce unintentional firearm injuries and improve home safety through secure storage practices and informed ownership

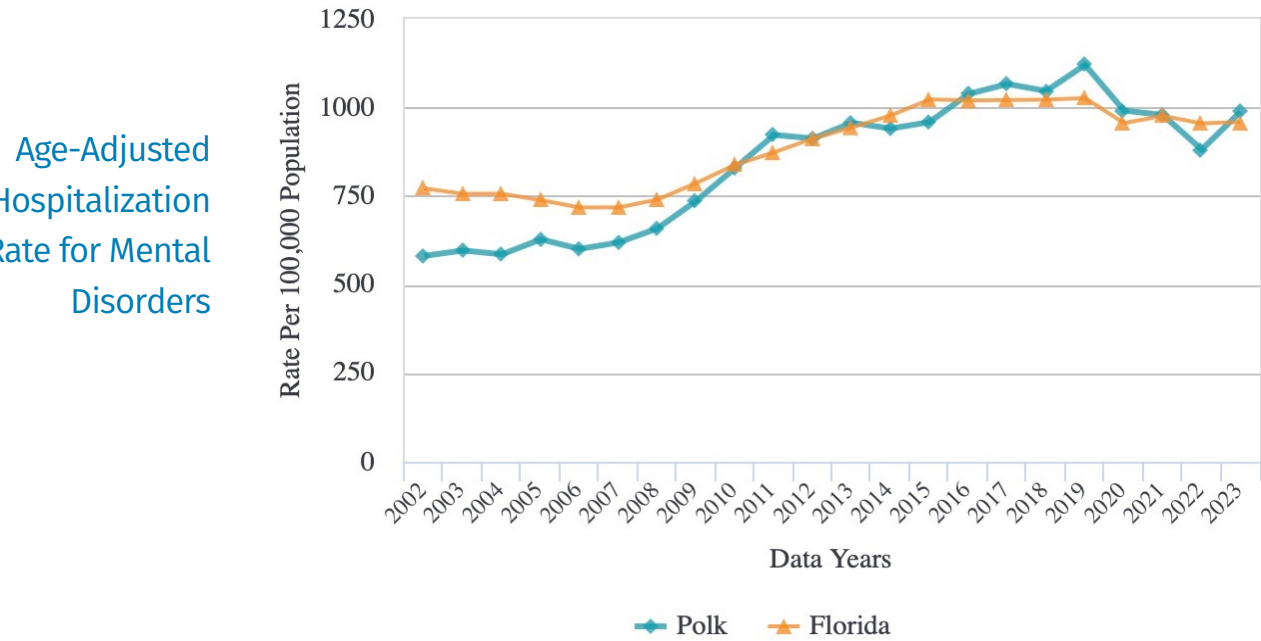


Mental Healthcare

Mental health challenges have become increasingly prominent, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. In Polk County, rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide continue to rise, while access to mental health professionals remains limited. As of 2024, Polk County has fewer than one behavioral health provider per 1,000 residents, and many families face months-long waitlists or unaffordable private care.

This priority includes improving mental health access, reducing stigma, and integrating behavioral health services into primary and community care settings.

Mental health is inseparable from physical health, and untreated mental illness worsens chronic disease outcomes, increases ED use, and undermines community resilience.



	Initiatives and Actions	Anticipated Impact
Mental Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to develop integrated care models that incorporate behavioral health services into primary care clinicsConduct community education campaigns to destigmatize mental health issues and promote available resourcesCollaborate with schools and workplaces to implement mental health awareness and support programsProvide evidence-based mental health and addiction use disorder education and training programs with a focus on building a continuum of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased early identification and treatment of mental health conditionsEnhanced community resilience and support networksReduced rates of mental health crises and associated emergency interventions

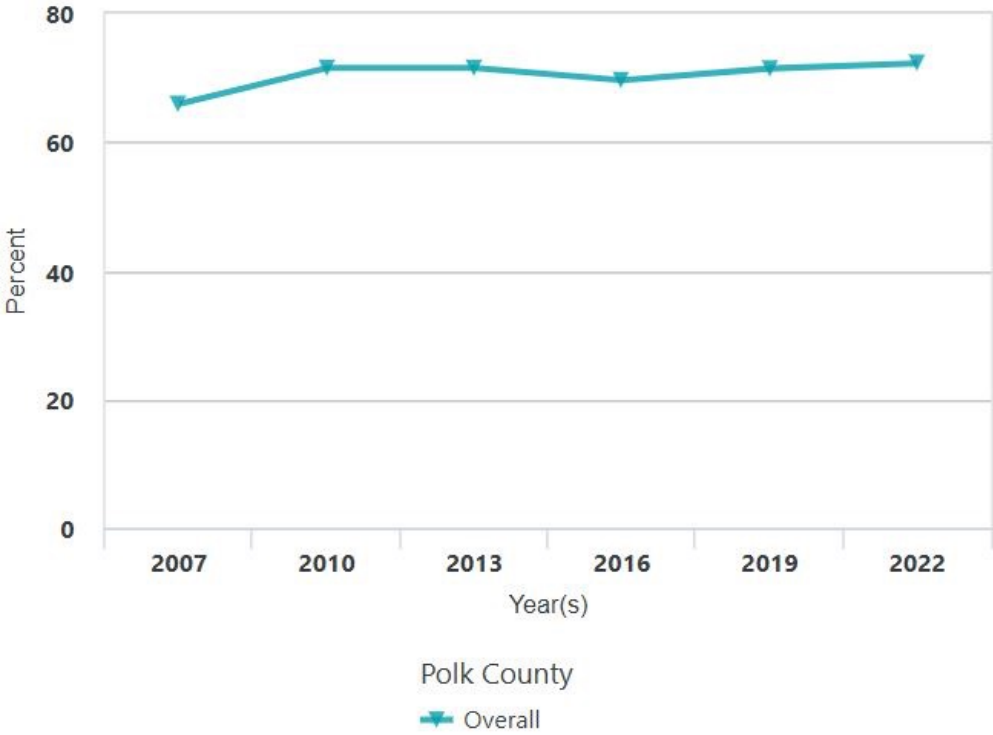
Obesity, Nutrition, and Well-being

Chronic conditions linked to nutrition, physical activity, and stress — including obesity, diabetes, and hypertension — are among the most pressing public health concerns in Polk County. Nearly 70% of adults in the county are overweight or obese, and many face barriers to accessing healthy food, safe recreational spaces, and preventive services.

Rather than focusing solely on obesity, this priority takes a holistic approach to improving wellness and reducing chronic disease risks through education, active living initiatives, food/ nutrition education programs, and community-based wellness efforts. Promoting healthy lifestyles enhances quality of life and supports prevention across all life stages, especially when paired with culturally relevant outreach that meets residents where they are.

Adults Who Are Overweight or Obese

Data Year, 2022 (72.2% compared to the state of Florida, 66.1%)



	Initiatives and Actions	Anticipated Impact
Obesity, Nutrition, and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improve our understanding of patient’s social determinants of health by implementing screening tools and strengthening coordination across the health system in an effort to address needsImplement community-based wellness programs focusing on nutrition, physical activity, and stress management in partnership with community partnersProvide healthy cooking programs and food demonstrations to equip families with knowledge and skills to prepare healthy mealsExpand access to wellness education through community classes in collaboration with YMCA of West Central Florida	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased identification and response to social needs impacting healthGreater community engagement in health promoting activitiesImproved food/nutrition literacy and cooking confidence among families



Appendix

Appendix A Community Health Needs Assessment Requirements

Section 501(r)(3)(A) requires a hospital organization to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) every three years and to adopt an implementation strategy to meet the community health needs identified through the CHNA.

Action	Lakeland Regional Health
A definition of the community served by the hospital facility	Pg. 22
Demographics of the community	Pg. 24
Description of the process and methods used to conduct the CHNA	Pg. 32
Description of how the hospital facility solicited and considered input received from persons who represent the broad interests of the community it serves	Pg. 32
The process for identifying and prioritizing community health needs and services to meet the community health needs	Pg. 34
Prioritized description of the significant health needs of the community identified through the CHNA	Pg. 36
Information gaps that limit the hospital facility's ability to assess the community's health needs	Pg. 40
Description of resources potentially available to address the significant health needs identified through the CHNA	Pg. 101
Evaluation of the impact of any actions that were taken to address the significant health needs identified in the immediately preceding CHNA	Pg. 3-10
Board approval of CHNA	Pg. 16

Appendix B Glossary of Terms

Abbreviations

ACA: Affordable Care Act
ACS: American Cancer Society
BFRSS: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (Florida)
CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CHNA: community health needs assessment
SDOH: social determinants of health

Terms

Access: Access is the potential for or actual entry of a population into the health system. Entry is dependent upon the wants, resources, and needs that individuals bring to the care-seeking process. The ability to obtain wanted or needed services may be influenced by many factors, including travel, distance, waiting time, available financial resources, and availability of a regular source of care. Access also refers to the extent to which a public health service is readily available to the community's individuals in need.

Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System: Telephone survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Florida Department of Health Division of Community Health Promotion.

Chronic Disease: Conditions that last one year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limiting activities of daily living or both. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States.

Community: Group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, common perspectives, and who may be

engaged in joint action in geographical locations or settings. This is but one definition. Community can be defined in multiple ways depending on the people asked and what groups have in common.

Community Health: A subspecialty of public health that concentrates on healthcare and wellness improvements at the local level, considering socioeconomic, cultural, and demographic factors affecting health.

Cultural Competence: A set of skills that result in an individual understanding and appreciating cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups and individuals. This competence requires that the individual draw on the community-based values, traditions, and customs to work with knowledgeable persons of and from the community in developing targeted interventions and communications.

Demographic: Demographic characteristics of a region include measures of total population as well as percent of total population by age group, gender, race and ethnicity, locations of populations and sub-populations, and the rate of change in population density over time, due to births, deaths, and migration patterns.

Federal Poverty Level: A measure of income issued every year by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Federal poverty levels are used to determine eligibility for certain programs and benefits, including savings on Marketplace health insurance, and Medicaid and CHIP coverage.

Focus Group: A focus group compromises several individuals who all discuss a particular subject, voicing and discussing their opinions and ideas on that subject.

Food Insecurity: Limited or uncertain access to adequate food because of lack of money and other resources.

Health Disparities (or inequities): Preventable differences in health outcomes experienced by various populations due to limited access to resources and social inequalities. For example, differences in health outcomes based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geographical location, or other factors.

Health Equity: Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and healthcare.

Health Insurance: A contract that requires your health insurer to pay some or all of your healthcare costs in exchange for a premium.

Mortality: The rate of death within a population.

Morbidity: The rate of the incidence and prevalence of disease within a population. Preventive Services: Routine health care that includes screenings, checkups, and patient counseling to prevent illnesses, disease, or other health problems.

Social Determinants of Health: Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

Telemedicine: Telemedicine refers to the use of electronic information and communication technologies (i.e., phone, laptop, tablet, etc.) to provide healthcare services at a distance. It enables healthcare providers and patients to interact remotely, facilitating the delivery of medical consultations, diagnoses, treatments, and monitoring without the need for in-person visits.

Wellness Programs: A program intended to improve and promote health and fitness that’s usually offered through the workplace, although insurance plans can offer them directly to their enrollees. The program allows your employer or plan to offer you premium discounts, cash rewards, gym memberships, and other incentives to participate. Some examples of wellness programs include programs to help you stop smoking, diabetes management programs, weight-loss programs, and preventative health screenings.

Appendix C
Polk County Municipalities Population Estimates

	Municipality	Population
1	City of Auburndale	17,438
2	City of Bartow	19,801
3	City of Davenport	11,660
4	Town of Dundee	5,604
5	City of Eagle Lake	3,382
6	City of Fort Meade	5,172
7	City of Frostproof	3,289
8	City of Haines City	31,156
9	Village of Highland Park	201
10	Town of Hillcrest Heights	374
11	City of Lake Alfred	6,803
12	Town of Lake Hamilton	1,767
13	City of Lakeland	122,246
14	City of Lake Wales	16,365
15	City of Mulberry	4,070
16	City of Polk City	2,884
17	City of Winter Haven	52,846

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2023 ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES DATA PROFILES



Appendix E
Community Health Survey

From February 3 – May 30, 2025, Lakeland Regional Health conducted online surveys of 1,017 residents in Polk County (Florida). The purpose of the survey was to assess access to healthcare services, to gauge barriers to accessing care, and to gain insight into residents’ attitudes toward available healthcare services.

Research Methodology

The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Respondents represented over 35 Zip codes. This is a sufficient sample size to assess resident opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups, including age, gender, and area of the county. The survey was made available via public websites, community e-newsletters, and cultivated email distribution lists.

Survey Questions

- 1. What is your zip code?
(Please use 5-digit zip code)
- 2. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary, Non-conforming
 - Prefer to self-identify:
 - Prefer Not to Answer
- 3. What is your age group? (Please check one)
 - 18-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50-64
 - 65-74
 - 75+
 - Prefer not to answer

- 4. Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic heritage?
(Please check all that apply)
 - Black or African American
 - White or Caucasian
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Other
 - Prefer not to answer
- 5. Are you Hispanic or Latino/a
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
- 6. What is the primary language you speak at home?
 - English
 - Spanish
 - Creole
 - Other (please specify)
 - I prefer not to answer
- 7. What is your highest level of education?
 - Less than High School
 - Some High School
 - High School Degree or GED/equivalent
 - Associate’s Degree
 - Bachelor’s Degree
 - Graduate or Professional Degree
 - Trade School
 - Prefer not to answer
- 8. Please select your income range.
 - Less than \$25,000
 - \$25,000 - \$50,000
 - \$50,000 - \$100,000
 - \$100,000 - \$200,000
 - More than \$200,000
 - Prefer not to say

9. **What is your current employment status? Check all that apply.**
- Full-time work
 - Part-time work
 - Self-employed
 - Out of work and not currently looking for work
 - Out of work and looking for work
 - A homemaker
 - Student
 - Student and currently working part-time
 - Student and currently working full-time
 - Retired
 - Unable to Work
 - Disabled
 - Seasonal or migrant work
 - Other:
10. **Do you have health insurance?**
- Yes
 - No
11. **How often do you get preventive health screenings (e.g., cancer screenings, blood sugar checks, cholesterol checks, etc.)?**
- Regularly
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never
12. **Do you or anyone in your household have a chronic illness (such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease)?**
- Yes
 - No

13. **If yes, what are the biggest challenges you face in managing your chronic illness? (Select all that apply)**
- Doctor
 - Cost of medications or care
 - Access to healthcare providers
 - Lack of transportation to medical appointments
 - Lack of education about managing the illness
 - Other (please specify): _____
14. **When you get sick, where do you go most often? (Please select one)**
- Clinic/Doctor's Office
 - Urgent Care
 - Emergency Room/Department
 - Health Department
 - Non-medical Healer (cultural healing)
 - I don't seek medical attention
 - Other (please specify)
15. **In the last year, was there a time when you or someone in your household needed medical care but were not able to get it?**
- Yes
 - No
16. **If you answered yes to the previous question, why weren't you or a member of your household able to get medical care?**
- I (they) did not have health insurance
 - I (they) could not afford my co-pay or deductible
 - There were no available appointments
 - I (they) did not have transportation
 - I (they) do not have a doctor
 - Other (please specify)

17. **Where do you get most of your medical information (check only one)?**
- Doctor
 - Telehealth
 - Family/Friends
 - Internet (i.e. Google, Bing, Chrome, etc.)
 - Social Media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
 - Church
 - Pharmacy
 - Other (please specify)
18. **How often do you use telehealth (virtual visits with a doctor or health provider) for your healthcare needs?**
- Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
19. **If you don't use telehealth, what are the reasons? (Select all that apply)**
- I don't have access to the technology
 - I don't know how to use the technology
 - I prefer in-person visits
 - My provider doesn't offer telehealth
 - Other (please specify):
20. **Do you feel you have access to healthcare providers who understand your cultural background, language, or beliefs?**
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
21. **Have you ever delayed or avoided seeking healthcare due to concerns about discrimination based on your race, ethnicity, or other factors?**
- Yes
 - No

22. **How many days during the past 30 days did you struggle with stress, anxiety, sadness, depression, or any other problems with emotions or days that you would categorize your mental health as not good?**
- Not at all
 - Several days
 - More than half the days
 - Nearly every day
23. **In the last year, was there a time when you experienced stress, anxiety, sadness, depression, or any other problems with emotional wellness and needed mental-health care or counseling but could not get it?**
- Yes
 - No
24. **If you answered "yes" to the previous question, why weren't you able to get mental-health counseling? Choose all that apply.**
- I was not comfortable seeking mental health care
 - I did not know where to seek mental health care
 - My health insurance does not cover mental health care
 - I did not have health insurance
 - I could not afford my co-pay or deductible
 - There were no available appointments
 - I did not have transportation to the get to the doctor
 - I do not have a doctor
 - Other (please specify)
25. **Within the past 12 MONTHS, did you worry that your food would run out before you could buy more?**
- Often true
 - Sometimes true
 - Never true
26. **Where do you get most of your food?**

(Check all that apply)

- Grocery store
- Farmer’s market
- Sit-down restaurant
- Fast food restaurant
- Convenience store
- Food bank (including at a community organization/church)
- From friends, family, or neighbors
- I prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

27. Over the past week (seven days), how many times did you engage in physical activity lasting at least 20 minutes, such as fast walking, jogging, swimming, biking, dancing, or strength training exercises?

- None
- Once
- Twice
- Three times
- Four times
- Five or more times

Community Health
Please answer the following questions about how the health of your community.

28. What are the three most important health problems that affect the health of your community? Please check only three.

- Alcohol
- Alzheimer’s/Dementia
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Drug Addiction
- Heart Disease/High Blood Pressure
- HIV/AIDS
- Infant Death
- Lung Disease/Asthma
- Mental Health (anxiety, depression, etc.)
- Obesity

- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Smoking/Tobacco Use
- Stroke
- Other

29. What are the three most important social/environmental problems that affect the health of your community? Please check only three.

- Availability/Access to Doctor
- Access to Insurance
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Elder Abuse
- Housing/Homelessness
- Lack of Job Opportunities
- Lack of Transportation
- Limited Access to Healthy Foods
- Limited Places to Exercise (such as parks, gyms, sporting courts)
- Neighborhood Safety/Violence
- Poverty
- Race/Ethnicity Discrimination

30. Do you know where to find local support programs (such as fitness programs, wellness education, or social activities) in your community?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

31. Did you know that by dialing ‘211’, you can access a free, non-emergency service that provides information about local community resources and referrals to support services?

- Yes
- No

32. Were you aware about the number ‘988’ that can connect you to a free mental health assistance?

- Yes
- No

33. Do you have reliable access to the

internet in your home?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

34. Have you used digital tools (like patient portals, apps, or websites) to manage your healthcare in the past 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

35. If you have not used digital healthcare tools, what are the reasons? (Select all that apply)

- I don’t have access to the internet
- I don’t know how to use them
- I prefer managing healthcare in-person or by phone
- I don’t trust these tools
- Other (please specify):

36. Do you or a member of your household currently require assistance with daily activities (such as bathing, dressing, or mobility) due to age or disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

37. What challenges have you or your family faced in accessing long-term care services? (Select all that apply)

- Cost of services
- Availability of services in my area
- Difficulty finding quality providers
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of information about available services
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to answer

38. Are there any services or support that you believe are lacking in

your community for older adults or individuals who need long-term care?

- Yes (please specify):
- No
- Not sure

39. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about community concerns, health problems or services in the community?

Top Health Concerns

The top five (from a list of 27) health concerns selected by community members were

- access to insurance (36.7%)
- housing/homelessness (36.7%)
- poverty (29.3%)
- availability/access to a doctor (25.7%)
- and limited access to healthy foods (20.1%)

Response Demographics

Note: Not all survey respondents answered every question in the Community Health Needs Assessment survey. As a result, some percentages may not add up to 100%.

Age	
18-29	9.5%
30-39	17.2%
40-49	17.1%
50-64	28.3%
65-74	11.0%
75+	3.5%
Prefer not to answer	0.54%

Racial or Ethnic Heritage	
Black/African American	14.1%
White/Caucasian	63.2%
Asian	2.7%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.6%
More than one	2.9%
Other	2.9%
Prefer not to answer	3.4%

Gender	
Male	14.3%
Female	72.4%
Transgender	0.3%
Non-binary, Non-conforming	0.4%
Prefer to Self-identify	0.1%
Prefer Not to Answer	0.9%

Are You Hispanic or Latino?	
Yes	9.6%
No	75.2%
Prefer to Self-identify	0.1%
Prefer Not to Answer	0.9%

What is the primary language you speak at home?	
English	83.3%
Spanish	3.1%
Creole	0.2%
Other	0.7%
I prefer not to answer	1.2%
Prefer not to answer	1.95%

When you get sick, where do you go?	
Clinic/Doctor’s Office	52%
Urgent Care	34%
Emergency Room/ Department	3%
Non-medical Healer (cultural healing)	0%
I don’t seek medical attention	9%
Other	2%

Highest Level of Education	
Less than High School	0.65%
Some High School	2.06%
High School Degree or GED/equivalent	17.01%
Associate’s Degree	19.93%
Bachelor’s Degree	30.44%
Graduate or Professional Degree	23.73%
Trade School	4.23%
Prefer not to answer	1.95%
Some College/No Degree	12.29%

Other Responses

Do you have health insurance?	
Yes	91.81%
No	8.19%

Income Range	
Less than \$25,000	3.64%
\$25,000-\$50,000	20.45%
\$50,000-\$100,000	32.55%
\$100,000-\$200,000	18.39%
More than \$200,000	4.33%
Prefer not to say	7.47%
Prefer not to answer	1.95%

Do you or anyone in your household have a chronic illness (such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease)?	
Yes	58%
No	42%

If yes, what are the biggest challenges you face in managing your chronic illness?	
Cost of medication or care	48%
Access to healthcare providers	14%
Lack of transportation to medical appointments	1%
Lack of education about managing the illness	8%
Other:	30%

Community Member Survey Comments

ACCESS TO CARE/HEALTH LITERACY

- “Access to affordable health insurance as Government Marketplace is sometimes too expensive based on household income. affordable self-pay outside of hospital needs would be helpful.”
- “Polk County has a lot of immigrants and undocumented residents who often go without basic health services, struggle with housing and adequate food for their families. I also am concerned about the “underinsured” in Polk County. Many of the major healthcare systems are limited in the insurance that they accept and are then referred to other major cities for healthcare. However, many cannot utilize these services because of the cost of transportation or the lack of support.”
- “Free clinic offered to people that don’t have health insurance. That would be a good way to support Polk County Community”
- “access for uninsured is a concern, homeless as well”
- “Not sure how it can be done, but the awareness and ease of access of knowledge of services available”
- “The community lacks health knowledge with poor health awareness in general impacting their ability to access beneficial services.”
- “At the root of our healthcare problems is the state of education in our country. If children were to grow their critical and creative thinking skills, as adults they would lead the charge to adjust policies that currently allow for substandard food production, poor work-life balance, and a growing mental health crisis. I believe that LRH could lead the way in revitalizing education by partnering with PCSB to equip our children with health education as a start. I also would like LRH team members who experience difficult situations daily to have improved access to mental health services. Thank you for all you do!”
- “Out of pocket expense. Outrageous charges for simple procedures.”
- “LTC, SNF, and ALF in Polk county are HORRIBLE. Facilities are terrible and staff is even worse!”

HOUSING

- “Cheap housing is a serious problem.”
- “there is a lack of true affordable/subsidized housing in this area, pay rates do not meet cost of living needs in this area, ability to critically think is an issue, healthcare literacy is lacking, current political messaging/propaganda is hurting people i.e. vaccine avoidance, distrust of medical community, voting against gov’t funded medical coverage despite relying on gov’t funded medical coverage.”

HOMELESS

- “Perhaps a mobile unit to help the homeless stay healthier”
- “The issue of homelessness plagues this community. The proposal to gather the homeless in camps comes with an opportunity to possibly do more screenings and medical care in these areas.”
- “We need more resources available to care for our growing homeless community.”
- “Homelessness is becoming a major concern. Insurance companies are forcing people to become homeless because of GREED.”

MENTAL HEALTH

- “I think young adults and middle aged all need more awareness of how to deal with anxiety as well as the role nutrition plays in their wellbeing.”
- “Mental health is a huge factor in our society. Social media plays a role in diminishing confidence and social capabilities. Educating young adults and children on this is important.”
- “Substance abuse resources”
- “This community is not getting better. Mental health and drug use are still high with no end in sight. I know that there are many resources available, but I do not believe we have even scratched the surface of resources that we could provide. We need the passionate, compassionate, truly caring individuals that want to see this community thrive and grow to step into or create positions that will help to bring back the community that once was.”
- “There should be regions in the state for mental health patients; especially patients coming to Polk County long distance and when they get discharge they have no resources to return to their county. Sometimes, they don’t have a reason or no family so they stay here with no jobs then cycles as “frequent flyer”

AGING

- “More info on senior support. Social services for older persons.”
- “Yes, I believe there should be more places for our senior citizens to go work or volunteer to keep them busy. I have an uncle who is turning 82 years old this year and he is able to walk and drive on his own still, but he is tired of sitting around his senior living facility because he has nothing to do. He tried to find a job and he can’t find anything that he is able to do at his age, but he would be very good at volunteering somewhere just to keep him busy. We have not been able to find anything for him to do and now he has been depressed and barley wants to get out of bed because every day he has to wake up and just stare at the wall. There needs to be more things for older people to do like clubs for playing games or cards, like a recreational center for all ages.”
- “getting delivered healthy & cooked meals to the elderly”

NUTRITION

- “Community gardens or more accessible food resources”
- “the fact that the corner stores don’t offer a better choice of foods for the people with lack or transportation. The lack of proper nutrition leads to a lot of health issues.”
- The biggest problem facing our community is nutritional ignorance. People don’t understand how the food they eat impacts their wellbeing and disease risk, and doctors aren’t educated in nutrition or counseling for behavior change. In addition, our community needs increased access to fresh, healthy foods and reduced access to processed and fast foods.

ACTIVITY FITNESS

- “Public services ads (commercials) are no longer a thing due to no TV because it is too expensive to have cable. No gym available in my area for over 30 miles and traffic is so bad I don’t want to go. I used to love the gym years ago.”

Appendix F

Community Dialogue Session

This section outlines the questions utilized by facilitators during the Community Dialogue Session. Community leaders served as subject matter experts for this discussion and engaged in detailed conversation regarding community needs, opportunities, successes, and challenges.

1. Community Health Trends & Needs

- What are the biggest health challenges you're seeing in the community right now?
- Have you noticed any emerging health concerns that weren't as prominent in the past?

2. Barriers to Health & Access

- What are the biggest barriers people face when trying to access healthcare or community resources?
- Are there specific groups or populations that seem to be struggling the most?

3. Social Determinants of Health

- Beyond healthcare, what social factors (e.g., housing, food security, transportation, employment) are impacting health in our community?
- Where do you see the greatest gaps in services or resources?

4. Strengths & Opportunities

- What programs, services, or community efforts have been most effective in improving health?
- What innovative solutions or collaborations would you like to see to address community health challenges?

5. Final Thoughts

- If you could change one thing about how we address community health, what would it be?



Appendix G

Existing Available Healthcare Facilities

The following lists represent existing facilities and resources available to address the significant health needs identified in this report through charitable and low-to-no-cost care. This list is not exhaustive, but rather it outlines those resources identified in the course of conducting this Community Health Needs Assessment.

Acute Care Hospitals

Provider	Services	Targeted Populations
AdventHealth Lake Wales	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
Lakeland Regional Health	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
South Florida Baptist Hospital	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
Bartow Regional Medical Center	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
Winter Haven Hospital	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
AdventHealth Heart of Florida	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing

Physician Care Providers

Provider	Services	Targeted Populations
Florida Department of Health in Polk County	Primary Care Family Planning Specialty Services (HIV/TB) Obstetrics/GYN Dental Care	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing
Federally Qualified Health Centers	Primary Care Obstetrics Dental Care	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
Free Clinics	Primary Care Screening Limited Specialty Care Care Coordination	Uninsured-Sliding Scale/ \$0 fees
Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine <small>(Primary health care center that provides free medical care to the working uninsured residents of Polk County.)</small>	Primary Care Vision Care Dental Care Pharmacy Services	Working uninsured/ \$0 fees
Polk Healthcare Plan	Primary Care Inpatient Care Specialty Services Urgent Care	Uninsured-Cost Sharing
We Care of Central Florida <small>(Patients are accepted and treated by volunteer physicians on a case-by-case basis.)</small>	Coordination of specialty care within in the community	Uninsured-Sliding Scale/ \$0 fees

Behavioral Health Services

Provider	Services	Targeted Populations
Lakeland Regional Health Harrell Family Center for Behavioral Wellness	24-hour crisis intervention Acute Psychiatric Stabilization for Adults & Children Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Psychotherapy – Children and Adolescent Outpatient individual and group therapy Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) Substance Use Treatment	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
Peace River Center	24-hour Crisis Intervention Short-Term Behavioral Resident Care Outpatient Behavior-al Health Services Substance Abuse Treatment	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
Tri-County Human Services Inc	Children’s Services Substance Abuse Treatment Rehabilitation Services Residential Long-Term Treatment Services Target program for groups (HIV/AIDS)	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing
Winter Haven Hospital Center for Behavioral Health	Outpatient Mental Health Services Inpatient Psychiatric Services	Uninsured-Sliding Scale Medicaid-Cost Sharing Medicare-Cost Sharing

Appendix H
Community Asset Inventory

The following asset inventory includes community-based organizations, government departments, and other community members and organizations engaged in addressing many of the health needs identified by this assessment. For a complete list and the most up-to-date information please access United Way’s comprehensive list of services by calling 2-1-1 (863.417.2744) or visiting uwcf.org/211.

Community, Civic, Non-profit Organizations

Basic Needs Assistance		
United Way of Central Florida	Access 211 888.370.7188	Comprehensive source of human and social services information.
Feeding Tampa Bay	To find food distributions or pantries visit: www.Feedingtampabay.org	Provides free groceries through community distribution and pantries.
Florida Department of Health – Polk County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program	1290 Golfview Ave Bartow, FL 33830 863.519.7542	WIC is a federally funded nutrition program serving pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women; infants; and children under the age of 5 who have low-to-moderate income and are at nutritional risk.
Meals on Wheels - Polk	620 6th Street NW Winter Haven, FL, 33881 863.299.1616	Provides hot, nutritionally balanced meals and a daily contact to the homebound residents of the Polk County area.

Basic Needs Assistance		
United Way of Central Florida	Access 211 888.370.7188	Comprehensive source of human and social services information
Feeding Tampa Bay	To find food distributions or pantries visit: www.Feedingtampabay.org	Provides free groceries through community distribution and pantries.
Florida Department of Health – Polk County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program	1290 Golfview Ave Bartow, FL 33830 863.519.7542	WIC is a federally funded nutrition program serving pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women; infants; and children under the age of 5 who have low-to-moderate income and are at nutritional risk.
Meals on Wheels - Polk	620 6th Street NW Winter Haven, FL, 33881 863.299.1616	Provides hot, nutritionally balanced meals and a daily contact to the homebound residents of the Polk County area.
Peace River Center	Domestic Violence Shelter Confidential Address 863.413.2708 (Crisis Line) 24 Hour Crisis Line 863.519.3744	Peace River Center’s Domestic Violence Program provides free, confidential services for individuals affected by domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking crimes, their family members and friends in Polk, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

Basic Needs Assistance		
Talbot House Ministries	814 North Kentucky Ave Lakeland, FL 33801 863.687.8475	Mission: Through the love of God, Talbot House Ministries provides those in need with immediate basic services and opportunities for life renewal.
Volunteers in Service to the Elderly (VISTE)	1232 E Magnolia Street Lakeland, FL 33801 863.284.0828	Services: Transportation, supplemental groceries, hot meals
The WAY Center	20 North 6th Street Haines City, FL 33844 863.422.2309	Mission is to provide a variety of spiritual and social services for families in need or crisis
Green & Gold Foundation	230 B Street Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.679.8091	Place of assistance to those in need, as well as an education center that educates, empowers, enlightens

Children and Youth Organizations		
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay	1231 East Orange Street, Lakeland, FL 33801 813.769.3600	Mission: To create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth
Boys and Girls Club of Polk County	PO Box 763 Lakeland, FL 33802 863.686.1719	Mission: To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.
Dream Center of Lakeland	635 W 5th Street Lakeland, FL 33805 863.413.0088	Dream Center of Lakeland exists to bring hope to our neighbors in need through service, resources, and education.
Girls Inc. of Lakeland	Jenkins Building 1220 W. Highland Street Lakeland, FL 33815 863.682.3002	Girls Inc. inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold, through direct service and advocacy.
InnerAct Alliance	621 S Florida Avenue Lakeland, FL 33813 863.802.0777	Mission: To reduce the abuse and underage use of harmful substances along with involvement in other risky behaviors through: Community Awareness and Involvement; Prevention Education; Economic Support; and Leadership Development.

Children and Youth Organizations		
Lakeland PAL	325 W. 2nd Street Lakeland, FL 33805 863.834.2546	Mission: To promote positive interaction between the youth in the community and the Lakeland Police Department using educational and recreational activities directed through a variety of youth programming.
Lakeland Youth Alliance (LYA)	P.O. Box 8978 Lakeland, FL 33806	Provides a non-exploitative, safe, drug and alcohol free, social outlet for youth ages 13 to 24 who are grappling with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning issues.
Pace Center for Girls	213 Tyler Avenue Lakeland, FL 33801 863.688.5596	Mission: Pace provides girls and young women an opportunity for a better future through education, counseling, training, and advocacy.

Community Service and Planning Organizations		
Polk Vision	999 Avenue H NE #79 Winter Haven, FL 33881	Facilitates countywide collaboration among schools, nonprofits, businesses, and the public sector.
Lakeland Vision	P.O. Box 1582 Lakeland, FL 33802-1582 863.682.9660	Collaborates with a broad range of community stakeholders to implement a comprehensive action plan shaped by the community's own vision of its future.

Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations	
Central Florida Development Council	1725 Bartow Road Lakeland, FL 33801 863.937.4430
The Greater Auburndale Chamber of Commerce	2701 Lake Myrtle Park Road Auburndale, FL 33823 863.967.3400
The Greater Bartow Chamber of Commerce	510 N. Broadway Avenue Bartow, FL 33830 863.533.7125
Bartow Economic Development Council	510 North Broadway Avenue Bartow, FL 33830 863.533.7125
Frostproof Area Chamber of Commerce	11 East Wall Street Frostproof, FL 33843 863.635.9112
Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce (Haines City and Davenport)	35610 Hwy 27 Haines City, FL 33845 863.422.3751
Haines City Economic Development Council	608 Ingraham Avenue, Suite B Haines City, FL 33844 863.422.2525
Lake Alfred Chamber of Commerce	115 E Pomelo Street Lake Alfred, FL 33850 863.875.7800

Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations	
Lakeland Chamber of Commerce	35 Lake Morton Drive Lakeland, FL 33801 863.688.8551
Lakeland Economic Development Council	502 E. Main Street Lakeland, FL 33801 863.687.3788
Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council	340 W. Central Avenue Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.676.3445
Mulberry Chamber of Commerce	705 North Church Avenue Mulberry, FL 33860 863.425.4414
Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce	401 Avenue B, NW Winter Haven, FL, 33881 863.293.2138
Winter Haven Economic Development Council	150 Third Street SW, Suite 206 Winter Haven, FL 33880 863.837.5280
The African American Chamber of Commerce	1543 Lakeland Hills Boulevard, Suite 17 Lakeland, FL 33805 863.327.3934
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Polk County	Catapult 502 E Main St Lakeland, FL 863.838.2084

Education		
Early Learning Coalition	115 S. Missouri Avenue, Suite 201 Lakeland, FL 33815 863.577.2450	The Early Learning Coalition of Polk County offers free Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) to all families seeking quality and affordable child care options and local community resources.
Learning Resource Center	1628 Florida Avenue S. Lakeland, FL 33803 863.688.9477	The Learning Resource Center offers an individualized approach to learning giving students the opportunity to reach their maximum potential.
Polk County Public Schools	1915 South Floral Avenue Bartow, FL 33830 863.534.0500	The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to provide a high-quality education for all students.
Lake Wales Charter Schools	130 E Central Avenue Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.679.6560	Our mission is to bring the best of public education to our community by providing innovation and choice within a continuous pre-school through postsecondary curriculum so that each child recognizes the benefits of life-long learning, constructive citizenship and personal happiness.

Foundations		
AARP Foundation Lakeland	1959 E Edgewood Drive #101 Lakeland, FL 33803 863.499.1290	The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is the nation's oldest program to help low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55+ find work.
GiveWell Community Foundation	1501 South Florida Ave. Lakeland, FL 33803 863-683-3131	The GiveWell Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity serving Polk, Hardee, and Highlands counties in Central Florida. The Community Foundation holds more than 300 charitable funds established by individuals, families.

Life Skills/Job Training		
Alliance for Independence	1038 Sunshine Drive E. Lakeland, FL 33801 863.665.3846	Adult Day Training Center that provides independent living skills and vocational training to Polk County adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities.
CareerSource Polk	600 N. Broadway Ave., Suite B Bartow, FL 33830 309 N. Ingraham Ave. Lakeland, FL 33801 500 E. Lake Howard Dr. Winter Haven, FL 33881 863.508.1100	Job search assistance, veterans' services, re-employment assistance, welfare transition program assistance
Goodwill Industries	5411 Florida Avenue S Lakeland, FL 33813 863.646.4301	Goodwill Industries-Suncoast, Inc. provides Job Connection. This program offers free services to job seekers. The program provides participants access to resources and support in developing job skills.
Lighthouse for the Blind	863.299.3633	Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision provides on-site comprehensive rehabilitation programs in two locations in Florida for persons who are blind or visually impaired.
Traviss Technical College	Polk Education Pathways 1915 S. Floral Avenue Bartow, FL 33830	Traviss Technical College offers post-secondary, dual-enrollment, and high school programs.

Healthcare

Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)		
Central Florida Health Care	Crystal Lake Elementary 903 Lowry Ave #2 Lakeland, FL 33801 866.234.8534	Primary care, Well visits, Same-day sick visits, Care for chronic illnesses, Immunizations, Dental Care, Obstetrics, Women’s health services, Family planning, Pharmacy
	Dundee 916 Dundee Rd Dundee, FL 33838 866.234.8534	
	Frostproof 109 W Wall St Frostproof, FL 33843 866.234.8534	
	Haines City 705 Ingraham Ave Haines City, FL 33844 866.234.8534	
	Lake Wales 305 W Central Ave Lake Wales, FL 33853 866.234.8534	
	Lakeland 1129 N Missouri Ave Lakeland, FL 33805 866.234.8534	
	Lakeland Hills Dental 1417 Lakeland Hills Blvd #101 Lakeland, FL 33805 866.234.8534	
	Lakeland Pediatrics 601 South Florida Ave, #6 Lakeland, FL 33801 866.234.8534	
	Winter Haven 1514 First Street N Winter Haven, FL 33881 866.234.8534	
	Winter Haven Women and Children 201 Magnolia Ave SW Winter Haven, FL 33880 866.234.8534	

Hospitals		
AdventHealth Lake Wales	410 South 11th Street Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.676.1433	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services
Lakeland Regional Health	1324 Lakeland Hills Boulevard Lakeland, FL 33805 863.687.1100	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services
South Florida Baptist Health	301 N Alexander Street Plant City, FL 33563 813.757.1200	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services
BayCare Bartow Regional Medical Center	2200 Osprey Blvd. Bartow, FL 33830 863.533.8111	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services
BayCare Winter Haven Hospital	200 Avenue F N.E. Winter Haven, FL 33881 863.293.1121	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services
BayCare Winter Haven Women’s Hospital	101 Avenue O S.E. Winter Haven, FL 33880 863.294.7010	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services
AdventHealth Heart of Florida	40100 US Highway 27 Davenport, FL 33837 863.422.4971	Emergency Services Inpatient Services Specialty Services

Clinics and Other Healthcare Providers		
Dream Center of Lakeland (Pregnancy Care Center)	635 W 5th Street Lakeland, FL 33805 863.413.0088	Dream Center of Lakeland exists to bring hope to our neighbors in need through service, resources, and education.
Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine (LVIM)	600 West Peachtree Street Lakeland, FL 33815 863.688.5846	Provides a medical home and access to doctors' visits, diagnostic testing, lab tests, ultrasound scans and x-rays at no charge. Patients must be a Polk County resident, uninsured with an income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Additionally, individuals must be employed or a full-time student.
Healthy Start	650 E Davidson Street Bartow, FL 33830 863.534.9224	Promotes and supports healthy pregnancies, babies, and families by providing a maternal and child health system of care through community partnerships.
Suncoast Community Women's Care of Lakeland	1729 Lakeland Hills Boulevard Lakeland, FL 33805 813.653.6100	Obstetrics & Gynecology (OB/GYN), Low Risk Pregnancy Care, Family Planning.
Lake Wales Care Center	140 E. Park Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.676-6678	Acute and chronic care of adult patients, referrals for specialty care, STD testing, smoking cessation classes, diabetes education classes.
We Care of Central Florida	205 Farnol Street SW Winter Haven, FL 33880 863.662-4227	Provides low income, uninsured residents of Central Florida volunteer medical specialists that will see them for care at no charge.

Hospice Care		
Good Shepherd Hospice	3470 Lakeland Hills Boulevard Lakeland, FL 33805	
Cornerstone Hospice and Palliative Care	2140 E County Road 540A, Lakeland, FL 33813	
Vitas Healthcare	6850 New Tampa Highway, Suite 600 Lakeland, FL 33815	
Compassionate Care Hospice of Central Florida Inc	2525 Drane Field Road, Suite 4 Lakeland, FL 33811	

Behavioral Health and Addictions Services		
Peace River Center	Bartow – Administrative Services	
	1239 East Main Street, Bartow, FL 33830 863.519.0575	
	Bartow Crisis Campus 1255 Golfview Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830 863.519.3744	Crisis Stabilization Unit and Mobile Crisis Response Team
	Outpatient Therapy and Psychiatry at Bartow Crisis Campus 1255 Golfview Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830 863.248.3311	
	Inpatient Short-term Residential Treatment Center 1260 Golfview Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830	
	Domestic Violence Outreach Services 244 North Broadway Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830 863.534.4350	
	Club Success Haines City 751 Scenic Hwy, Haines City, FL 33844 863.519.0874	
	Lakeland Crisis Campus 715 North Lake Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33801 863.519.3744	Crisis Stabilization Unit and Mobile Crisis Response Team
	Outpatient Therapy and Psychiatry at Lakeland Crisis Campus 715 North Lake Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33801 863.248.3311	

Behavioral Health and Addictions Services		
Peace River Center	Florida Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Team 1835 Gilmore Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33805 863.248.3314	
	Gateway 621 North Lake Parker Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33801 863.519.0575	Adult Case Management, Adult Overlay, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Supported Employment, Supported Housing.
	Outpatient Therapy and Psychiatry at Gilmore Health Campus 1835 Gilmore Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33805 863.248.3311	
	Children’s Services Center 1831 North Crystal Lake Drive, Lakeland, FL 33801 863.500.3780	Referral Only
	Substance Use Treatment Services 1825 Gilmore Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33805 863.248.3311	
	Wellness Clinic- Adult Behavioral Health Home (Primary Care Clinic) 1831 Gilmore Avenue, Lakeland, FL 33805 863.519.0930	
	Inpatient Senior Adult Behavior- al Health Services, AdventHealth Lake Wales, in affiliation with Peace River Center 410 S 11th St, Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.678.2200	
	Outpatient Therapy & Psychiatry, Lake Wales 815 State Road 60 E, Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.978.4800	By appointment only.

Behavioral Health and Addictions Services		
Peace River Center	Sebring Outpatient Therapy 7205 South George Boulevard, Sebring, FL 33876 863.248.3311	By appointment only.
Tri-County Human Services	1815 Crystal Lake Drive Lakeland, FL 33801 863.709.9392	Tri-County Human Services, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit organization, providing substance abuse, mental health, and co-occurring treatment to residents of Polk, Hardee and Highlands Counties.
Talbot House Ministries	814 North Kentucky Ave Lakeland, FL 33801 863.687.8475	Mission: Through the love of God, Talbot House Ministries provides those in need with immediate basic services and opportunities for life renewal.

Support and Resources		
Alliance for Independence	1038 Sunshine Drive E. Lakeland, FL 33801 863.665.3846	Mission: Offering individuals with disabilities the avenues to explore and experience personal growth and achievement through awareness, education, community resources and personal relationships.
Family Fundamentals	109 N. Kentucky Avenue Lakeland, FL 33801 863.686.1221 x 221	Community agencies provide services to children and their families in a one-stop opportunity.

Nutrition, Physical Activity, Healthy Living		
YMCA of West Central Florida	Lakeland 3620 Cleveland Heights Blvd Lakeland, FL 33803 Fontaine Gills Family YMCA 2125 Sleepy Hill Road Lakeland, FL 33810 Lake Wales 1001 Burns Ave Lake Wales, FL 33853 863.644.3528	Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.
University of Florida IFAS Extension	Family and Consumer Sciences 1702 Highway 17 South, Bartow, FL 33830 863.519.1072	Dedicated to providing science-based information and educational programming throughout the community to empower individuals and families to make informed decisions about their well-being.

Resources Phone Numbers and Crisis Lines

Local Resource Hotlines		
United Way 211	2-1-1	Comprehensive source of human and social service information for Polk County
24-hour Crisis Line	863.519.3744 Toll-free: 800.627.5906	Peace River Center
24-hour Domestic Violence Crisis Line	863.413.2700	Peace River Center
24-hour Sexual Assault Crisis Line	863.413.2707	

Local Resource Hotlines		
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1.800.273.8255	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) National Help Center	888.843.4564	https://www.glbthotline.org/
National Sexual Assault	800.656.4673 (HOPE)	https://www.rainn.org/
National Drug Abuse	1.800.662.4357 (HELP)	https://www.samhsa.gov/
National Elder Abuse Resources	1.855.500.3537 (ELDR)	https://ncea.acl.gov/
Veterans Crisis Line	1.800.273.8255	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/

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Lakeland Regional Health®

myLRH.org