Background
The Partners for a Healthier Ross County is a collaborative, community-based group, with multi-sector representation, whose efforts are aimed at improving the quality of life for residents of Ross County. In 2019, Partners completed an updated community health assessment (CHA), a comprehensive and systematic data collection and analysis process designed to inform communities on top health needs and priorities to drive effective planning that results in positive change. This is an executive summary of the recently completed CHA for Ross County.

Cross Cutting Factors in Ross County
- **Poverty** – Low income continues to be a contributing factor that leads to poorer health outcomes or health behaviors in Ross County. 18% of those in Ross County are in poverty.
- **Substance Use** – Over 65% of survey respondents say they want our children to learn more about substance abuse prevention. 25% of respondents say they use tobacco or tobacco related products. More than 50% say they consume alcohol.
- **Physical Activity and Nutrition** – 25% of survey respondents do not get at least 30 minutes of physical activity per week. 32.5% say they are overweight or obese. 49.6% say they only eat 1 or less servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- **Access to Care** – 22% of survey respondents who made suggestions for improving health in Ross County say access to health care needs improved.
- **Housing** – 22% or public survey respondents say they have experienced unstable housing or homelessness. 25% say they struggle to pay for housing.
2019 Community Health Assessment - Snapshot

**Key Findings**

**Leading Causes of Death**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Rate / 100,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diseases of heart</td>
<td>206.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>196.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic lower respiratory diseases</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents/Unintentional Injuries</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*CDC, 2012-2017. CDC Wonder*

**Takeaway:** Mental Health and Obesity / Overweight continues to be top health issues in Ross County.

**Needed Health Education Topics Suggested by Public Survey Responses**

- Drugs and Substance Abuse, 21.5%
- Low Income / Poverty, 35.3%
- Mental Health education for Children, 41.2%
- Suicide Prevention for Children, 44.6%
- Drug abuse education for Children, 65.3%

*Ross County 2019 Adult Public Survey*

**Life Expectancy Comparisons**

- US, 78.8
- Ohio, 77.2
- Ross County, 75.1

*County Health Rankings, 2019 - Ohio Department of Health*

**Takeaway:** Ross County continues to have a lower life expectancy rate compared to Ohio Averages. Variations in life expectancy can vary by nearly 11 years from one neighborhood to another in Ross County.

**Road to Improvement**

The Partners for a Healthier Ross County strive to improve health outcomes in Ross County through cross-sector collaboration. Continued collaborations are imperative to improving the health of Ross County. Improvements should include:

- **Health Equity Focus**
- **Social, economic, and physical environment improvements**
- **Policy Development**
- **Improving health behaviors**
- **Increasing access to healthcare**
Background
Cancer of all types is the second leading cause of death in Ross County with lung cancer being the leading cancer in Ross County. Lung cancer rates are disproportionately higher than state and U.S. rates. Further, chronic lower respiratory diseases in the third leading cause of death. The 2019 CHA looked at tobacco use and other respiratory related diseases that may impact this issue further.

Key Findings

Lung Cancer
Lung Cancer Incidence Rates Per 100,000 Population

Asthma
Self-Reported Asthma by 2019 Public Survey Respondents

Tobacco Use
Self-Reported Tobacco Use by 2019 Public Survey Respondents

Cross Cutting Factors in Ross County
- **Income** is a factor in tobacco use which can lead to increased risk of lung and respiratory disease.
- **Age** is a factor in tobacco or vaping product use which can lead to increased risk of lung and respiratory disease.

Road to Improvement
The Partners for a Healthier Ross County strive to improve health outcomes in Ross County through cross-sector collaboration. Continued collaborations are imperative to improving the health of Ross County. Improvements should include:
- **Health Equity Focus**
- **Social, economic, and physical environment improvements**
- **Policy Development**
**Background**

Heart Disease continues to be the leading cause of death in Ross County at a rate of 206.3 cases per 100,000 individuals. Additionally, Diabetes remains in the top five leading causes of death with a rate of 34.1 cases per 100,000. A look at contributing factors to both leading causes of death was examined through the public survey, including a look at eating habits, underlying conditions, and physical activity.

**Key Findings**

**Diabetes**
Self-Reported Diabetes by 2019 Public Survey Respondents.

**Overweight or Obesity**
Self-Reported Obesity or Being Overweight By 2019 Public Survey Respondents.

**Physical Activity and Nutrition**

- 1 or less servings of fruits and vegetables each day 49.6%
- Less than 30 minutes of exercise / week 25.6%

**Heart health vs. Overweight**
Self-Reported Health Outcomes Related to Heart Health By 2019 Public Survey Respondents

**Cross Cutting Factors in Ross County**
- **Age** – Top drivers for health outcomes vary by age for diabetes, heart health, etc.
- **Physical activity and Nutrition** - Survey responses about nutrition and exercise reflect a need to focus on behavioral changes in the community, encouraging physical activity and healthy eating.

**Road to Improvement**

The Partners for a Healthier Ross County strive to improve health outcomes in Ross County through cross-sector collaboration. Continued collaborations are imperative to improving the health of Ross County. Improvements should include:

- **Health Equity Focus**
- **Social, economic, and physical environment improvements**
- **Policy Development**
Background
One of the most notable changes to the 2019 public survey was the addition of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) questions about discrimination, interpersonal violence, and substance abuse. These questions provided a significant indicator to inform a future mental health assessment.

Key Findings
Suicide Rate Comparison

Takeaway: Ross County experiences slightly higher rate of suicide compared to Ohio and US averages.

Depression and Anxiety
Percentage of Those Reporting Depression or Anxiety From 2019 Public Survey

Takeaway: Depression and anxiety continues to be a top health issue in our community. While 37.7% of survey respondents reported experiencing depression or anxiety, only 10.2% sought treatment from a mental health specialist.

Traumatic experiences
Percentage of Those Reporting Traumatic Experiences in Their Home or Household

Cross Cutting Factors in Ross County
- **Stigma** – Only a 1/3 of those reporting experiencing depression reported seeking treatment from mental health specialists. While Ross County’s ratio for Mental Health Care (340:1) is better than Ohio’s average (470:1) it appears stigma may be a contributing factor.
- **Trauma** - Traumatic experiences can be a contributing factor to overall mental health.
- **Health Behaviors** – Mental health can have an impact on one’s physical activity, nutrition, substance use, and other health outcomes.

Road to Improvement
The Partners for a Healthier Ross County strive to improve health outcomes in Ross County through cross-sector collaboration. Continued collaborations are imperative to improving the mental health of Ross County residents. Improvements should include:

- **Health Equity Focus**
- **Social, economic, and physical environment improvements**
- **Reduce the stigma associated with mental health**
- **Increasing access to mental health care**
Background
Accident/Unintentional Injury was the fourth leading cause of death in Ross County at a rate of 73.9 per 100,000. The largest factor in this category was unintentional overdose deaths related to substance abuse, where Ross County sees higher than state average rates. Additionally, Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases and Lung Cancer are top causes of death, which maybe impacted by tobacco use.

Key Findings
Tobacco, Alcohol, and Marijuana Use
Self-Reported Use of Tobacco, Marijuana, And Alcohol By 2019 Public Survey Respondents.

Top drivers for tobacco use include age and income level.

Alcohol Use by Age, Gender, Income

Top drivers for alcohol use include age & income

Overdose Fatalities 2009-2018

Substance Use Disorder continues to be a contributing factor in health outcomes in our community. Drug overdose deaths continue to be the leading accidental death cause in Ross County.

Cross Cutting Factors in Ross County
- **Income** – Income continues to be a contributing factor for use of tobacco which leads to poorer health.
- **Age** – Age is a contributing factor in tobacco and alcohol use, with those 18-30 years self-reporting the highest use of both substances.
- **SUD Education** - Over 65% of survey respondents say they want our children to learn more about drug abuse prevention

Road to Improvement
The Partners for a Healthier Ross County strive to improve health outcomes in Ross County through cross-sector collaboration. Continued collaborations are imperative to improving the health of Ross County. Improvements should include:
- **Health Equity Focus**
- **Social, economic, and physical environment improvements**
- **Policy Development**
- **Increasing recovery resources for tobacco, alcohol, drug use.**
Key Findings

**Primary Care**
Self-Reported Utilization of Primary Care Physician in Past Year by Survey Respondents

**Mental Health Care**
Self-Reported Utilization of Mental Health Services by Public Survey Respondents

**Dental Care**
Self-Reported Utilization of Dental Care Services in Past Year by 2019 Public Survey Respondents

Cross Cutting Factors in Ross County
- **Age** – is a factor in utilization of healthcare services, younger populations tend to under-utilize healthcare services for primary care.
- **Income** – is a factor in utilization of healthcare services for primary care and dental care.
- **Mental Health Care** – only 10% of survey respondents self-reported utilization of mental health care services, while over 37% of the respondents noted they experience depression or anxiety.

**Road to Improvement**
The Partners for a Healthier Ross County strive to improve health outcomes in Ross County through cross-sector collaboration. Continued collaborations are imperative to improving the health of Ross County.

- Cross Sector data sharing to identify gaps and barriers in health care access.
- Address social determinants of health to improve access to health care.
- Continue cross sector collaboration to develop community strategies to improve access to health care.

**Suggestions by Survey Respondents for Improving Access to Care (541 responses)**
Public survey respondents had the opportunity to write in suggestions on ways to improve health, 22% of them were related to improving access to healthcare in Ross County.