OKALOOSA COUNTY

Community Health Assessment

2017

2017 Community Health Assessment

Florida HEALTH
Okaloosa County

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Letter to the Community

To effectively improve the health of all people in our community, we must understand that health is impacted by many factors. Commonly, people think that improving access to health care, medical interventions and medications will solve many of our health issues. Health care is only one factor that impacts health. Our health is impacted just as much, if not more, by where we live, learn, work and play.

The 2017 Community Health Assessment (CHA) includes information on many factors that impact health in Okaloosa County. This document points out health gaps by educational attainment, income levels, gender and race to name a few. What we know for sure - good health and wellness is deeply rooted in one's level of education. People who have more education (4+ years of education after high school) live from seven to 13 years longer (depending on gender/race) than people with less than a high school education. This gap in life expectancy is shockingly large and has grown rapidly since 1990. For example, white men with 4+ years of education after high school live 13 years longer than white men with less than a high school education (Olshansky et al., 2012). Linked to educational attainment is household income level. Jobs which result in higher household income levels allow people the opportunity to make healthy choices such as living in safe neighborhoods and homes, having access to healthy food options and safe places to exercise.

The 2017 Community Health Assessment draws on data from many agencies and partners. The 2017 CHA also relied on extensive input from many community partners and residents as we designed the presentation format and made decisions on content and priorities.

This is the second Community Health Assessment presented to Okaloosa County. The first was in 2012. We hope this document will challenge our community to tackle many of the winnable battles identified at the end of the document. Some of these challenges are great but so is our opportunity to change the future. There is hope! Get involved! Join the Healthy Okaloosa Collaborative by contacting HealthyOkaloosa5210@flhealth.gov.

In health,

Karen A. Chapman, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Olshansky, S. J., Antonucci, T., Berkman, L., Binstock, R. H., Boersch-Supan, A., Cacioppo, J. T., . . . Rowe, J. (2012). Differences In Life Expectancy Due To Race And Educational Differences Are Widening, And Many May Not Catch Up. Health Affairs, 31(8). doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2011.0746

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Access to Care Roundtable
African American Community Leaders
Healthy Okaloosa Schools Development Team
Sexual Assault Interagency Council

Key Informant Interviews

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Introduction

The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) produces a Community Health Assessment (CHA) every five years. The CHA **tells the story of public health in Okaloosa County**. It shares the wonderful things about our community and the ways we can improve. We all have a role to play in making Okaloosa County a **healthier place to live, learn, work and play**! As you read the CHA, think about how you can become involved.

Methodology

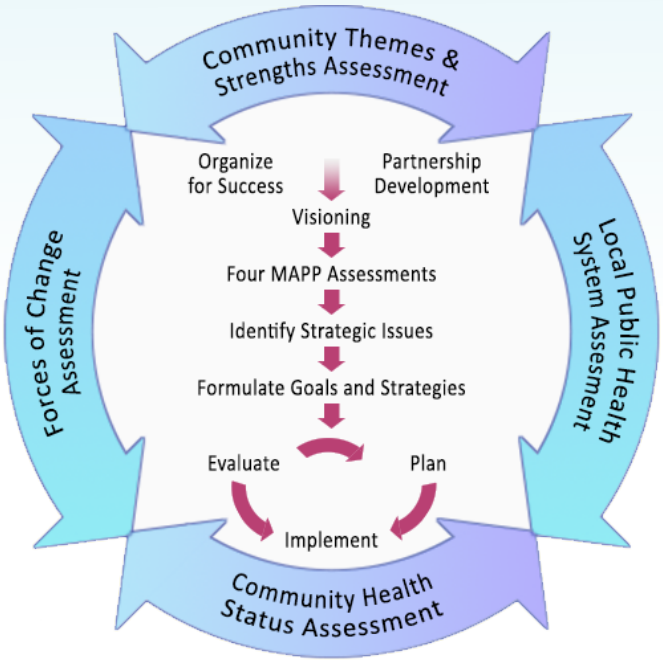
To develop the CHA, we used the **Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships** (MAPP) model. The MAPP model is made up of four assessments that help identify public health issues in our community:

Community Health Status Assessment | This explains the health standing of our community. It helped us identify our key community health problems by reviewing data about health conditions, quality of life and risk factors in the community.

Community Themes and Strengths Assessment | Information was collected from focus groups, 27 individual interviews and 176 survey participants. This data helped us learn: what issues are important to our community, how the quality of life is seen in our community and what resources our community has that can be used to improve health.

Local Public Health System Assessment | Facts and figures were collected from four public health system scoring groups. This data helped us learn: how well public health services are being provided to our community and the performance and abilities of our community health system.

Forces of Change Assessment | Information was collected from community leaders, which helped us learn: what is happening or could happen that affects the health of our community and what dangers or opportunities are exposed by these occurrences.



After the MAPP assessments were completed in April 2016, DOH-Okaloosa created the 2017 CHA document. The CHA was then **edited by various community partners** including the CHA Leadership Team and the Access to Care Roundtable members. Afterward, the document was reviewed by the public through a series of **town hall meetings and online feedback**. The responses provided by the community shaped the final CHA document.

Using this CHA as a guide, we will create the **Community Health Improvement Plan** (CHIP). It will be used to improve health concerns reported in the CHA, in partnership with a group of caring people from community organizations. Together we form the **Healthy Okaloosa Collaborative's CHIP teams**. The CHIP teams work to improve health in Okaloosa County.

Health begins where you live, learn, work and play. All Okaloosa County residents should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income, education, ethnic background or abilities.

It is important to work toward raising the bar for all Okaloosans so everyone can have the opportunity to make healthy choices. A **disparity** is when different groups of people have very different levels of health for no obvious reason. For example, it is important to know if people in one part of our county are sicker than people in the rest of the county. We would want to figure out what is going on and identify opportunities for better health.[1]

What determines our health?

Economic Stability: employment, income, housing, affordability of food and other necessities

Education: high school graduation, language, literacy

Social & Community Context: social support, discrimination, civic participation, policies, culture

Health & Health Care: access to health care, access to interventions, health literacy (or ability to understand and interpret health information)

Neighborhood & Built Environment: public safety, access to healthy foods, quality of housing, access to sidewalks, air quality, water quality, street lighting, parks[2]

Why does the CHA include information on education and income? Higher education and incomes impact health in many ways. People with higher incomes have the opportunity to make healthy choices because they are more likely to live in safe homes and neighborhoods, have access to healthy foods and safe places to exercise, have health insurance and resources to deal with stressful life events. Those who are working and still struggling to pay the rent can't always make healthy choices because they don't have as many resources. Families who are struggling to get by are also more likely to face more overall stress and have less resources to deal with stressful events. Chronic stress creates higher levels of harmful hormones, which can increase the risk of many diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.[1, 3]

So, it makes sense that groups of people with more education and higher incomes generally have better health and live longer than those with lower incomes. Middle-income Americans are healthier than those who struggle financially, but they are less healthy than those with high incomes. Groups of people with the lowest incomes tend to have the worst health and die younger.[1]

Why are the statistics broken down by population groups? By comparing, we can see where we are doing well and where we could improve. It is helpful to look at how healthy people in Okaloosa are, as a group, compared to people in the rest of Florida or in the whole United States. These comparisons cannot be applied to individual people, only to groups of people. For example, men might be twice as likely to die of accidental poisoning than women, but that does not mean a specific man is twice as likely to die from poisoning than his sister.

The graphic on the left shows the group of men have a 25% chance of being orange, *not* that one man has a 25% chance of being orange.

What are rates? Rates are a way to compare between groups of different sizes. Let's say 1,000 puppies were born and 100 of those puppies died. Fifty of the puppies who died had stripes, and 50 had spots. These numbers would make us think striped and spotted puppies die at the same rate. But, what if 80% of the puppies born had stripes and 20% had spots? Then we would expect that if 100 puppies had died, 80 would have stripes and 20 would have spots. Rates help us see the number of puppies who die in relation to the number of puppies born.

Puppies Born	Puppies Died	Death Rate
800 Striped	50 Striped	50 of 800 = 6% (1 out of every 16)
200 Spotted	50 Spotted	50 of 200 = 25% (1 out of every 4)
1,000 Total	100 Total	100 of 1,000 = 10% (1 out of every 10)

This symbol is used throughout the CHA to highlight disparities, or areas that need improvement. We focus on the issues that need improvement so we can work together on solutions!

Community Profile

Population Timeline[4]

2000 — 2005

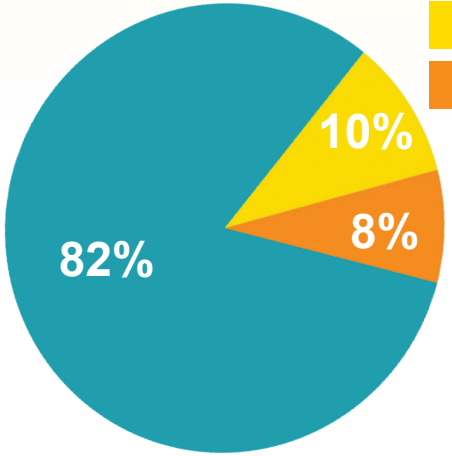
170,498

Housing Boom

FACT

During the tourist season, Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety plans for an additional **30,000 to 50,000 people** any given day for Emergency Management Operations.[5]

Population by Race[4]



White

Black or African American

Other:

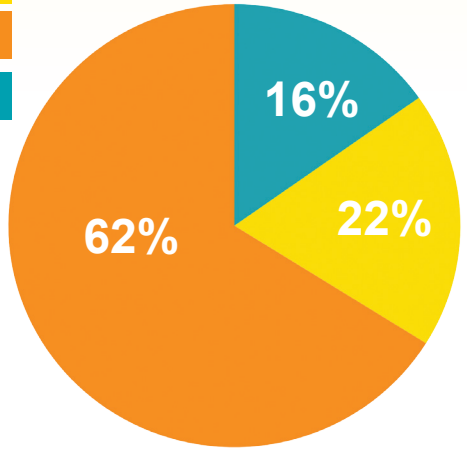
American Indian/Alaska Native (0.7%)
Asian (3.2%)
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (0.2%)
Two or More Races (4.2%)

Population by Age[4]

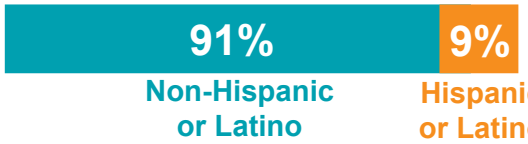
0-18 Years Old

19-64 Years Old

65+ Years Old



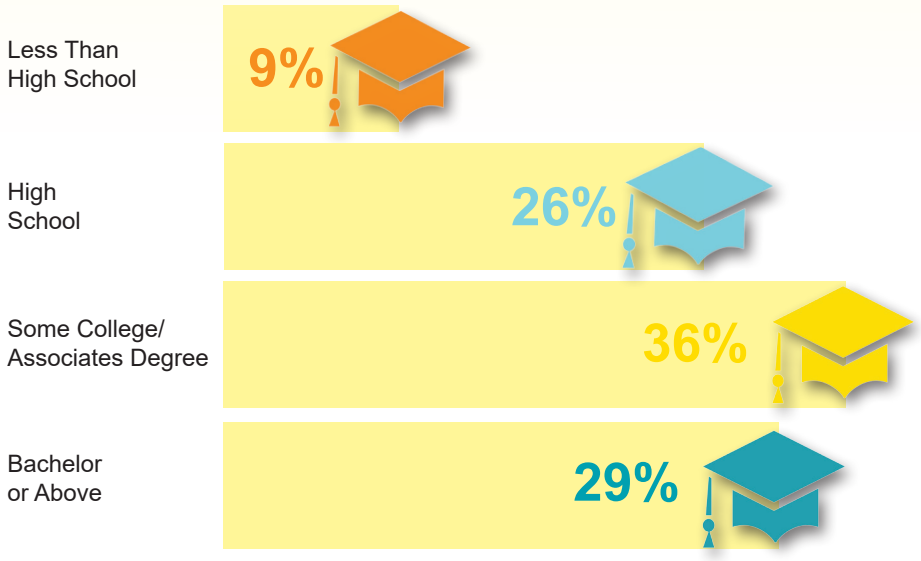
Population by Ethnicity[4]



- Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field and 7th Special Forces add both economic and cultural benefits to Okaloosa County.
- Annual festivals and opportunities for families and visitors to enjoy local culture.[5]
- **120+** local, state and federal parks and natural beach areas.[5]
- Okaloosa County Public Schools rank among the top in the state.[6]

If trends continue, Okaloosa County will grow an average of **1,000 people each year.** By 2030, the population is estimated to be between **210,600 and 242,100.**[4]

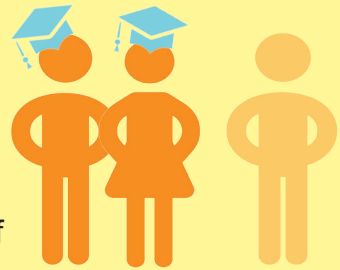
Educational Attainment[7]



Education Disparity

High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity[6]

Almost 1/3 (29.1%) of Black students in Okaloosa County do not graduate high school compared to 11.8% of Asian, 13.2% of White, and 18.5% of Hispanic students.

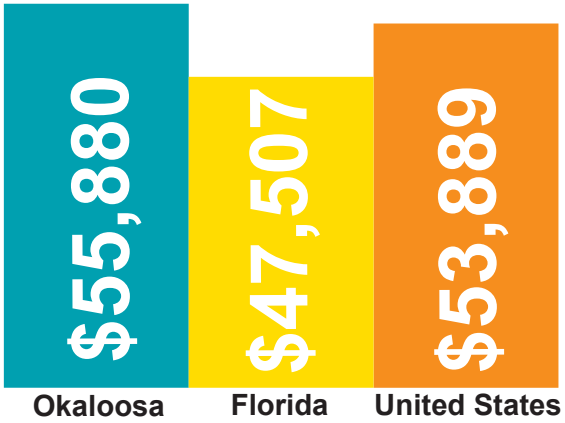


"Better-educated individuals live longer, healthier lives than those with less education." - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation[1]

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Median Household Income[4]

Household - According to the US Census Bureau, a single housing unit and all of the people that live in it.



Income Disparity

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity[7]

White	$68,285
Asian	$62,857
Native American	$60,234
Black or African American	$48,388
Hispanic or Latino	$47,317

Children in Poverty[4]

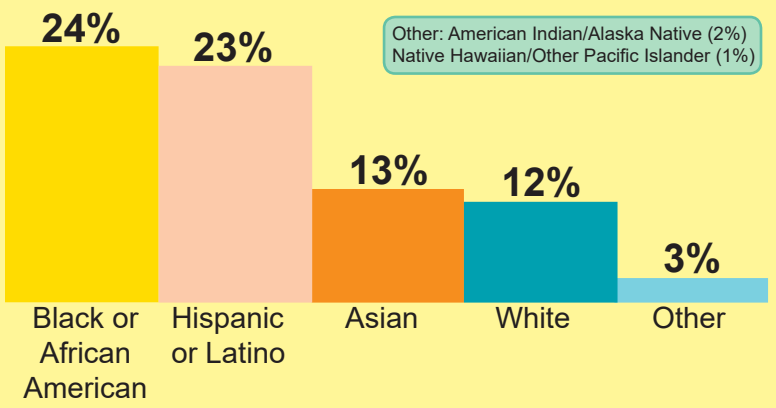
22% **of children in Okaloosa County are living in poverty.**

Family Poverty Levels[8]

Persons in Household	Total Income
1	$12,060
2	$16,240
3	$20,420
4	$24,600
5	$28,780

Poverty Disparity

Poverty by Race/Ethnicity[7]



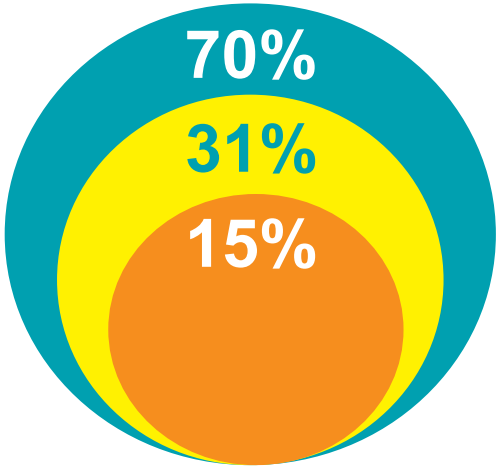
Medical & Dental Resources

Okaloosa County has 1 family doctor/provider for every 1,290 residents. This is less than the goal of having 1 for every 1,040 residents.[1]

Okaloosa County has 1 dentist for every 1,320 residents. This exceeds the goal of having 1 for every 1,340 residents.[1]

Health Insurance Coverage[7]

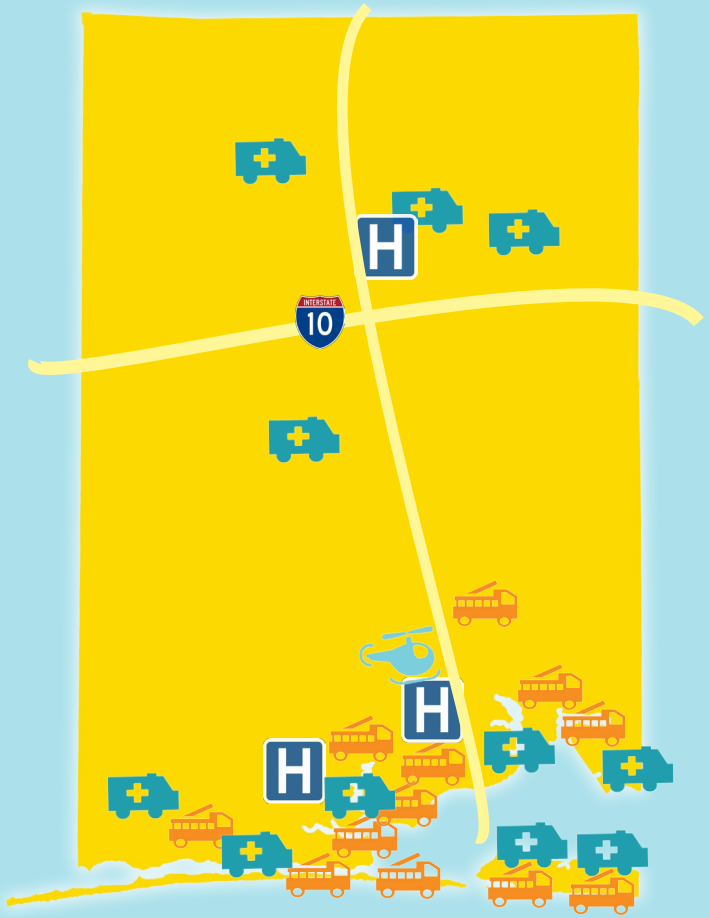
Private Coverage
Public Coverage (Medicaid/Medicare)
Uninsured



People can have more than one type of coverage and as a result, these numbers will add to more than 100%.

- In 2017, Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) became accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services, making them among the top 1% of EMS agencies in the U.S.[9]
- In 2017, Fort Walton Beach Medical Center became a Level II Trauma Center.[10]
- The Crestview Health Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center, offering medical and dental care to the uninsured.[11]

Emergency Medical Response[9]



Hospital
Fort Walton Beach Medical Center
North Okaloosa Medical Center
Twin Cities Hospital

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Station
Ground transportation to stabilize and move patients from accident scenes to healthcare facilities.

Air Medical Services Station
Air transportation to stabilize and move patients from accident scenes to healthcare facilities.

Advanced Life Support (ALS) Fire Station
Basic life support (BLS) fire stations are available throughout the County.

Built Environment

in Okaloosa County

From 2007-2014, **five bicyclists and 31 pedestrians were killed** by motor vehicles in Okaloosa County, including two children less than 14 years old. Twenty-eight children were seriously injured by vehicles while riding their bicycles. These individuals were Okaloosa County residents.[12]

Approximately 2% of residents ride a bicycle or walk to work.[7]

Most pedestrian accidents in Florida occur at non-intersections, on weekdays between 6 p.m. and midnight.[13]

Okaloosa County is split in half by Eglin Air Force Base, creating a barrier to integrated transportation between the north and south portions of the county.

Florida had the 2nd highest rate in the US for pedestrian fatalities in 2015.[14]

45% of residents live within a ten-minute walk (1/2 mile) of a park.[7]

"Fishing, recreation, outdoor activities are easily available to residents of all income levels." - Key Informant, 2016

- There are 31 public boat ramps and 10 public beach access points in Okaloosa County.[5]
- A Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant is providing funds to re-establish the protective dunes on Okaloosa Island.[5]
- Sunset Park in Fort Walton Beach was redesigned to be accessible for handicapped children.[5]
- In 2016, five new pedestrian crosswalks were activated at key locations along Highway 98 in Destin.[15]

"Everyone wants low taxes, but they want more roads, schools without leaky roofs, and public transportation."
- Key Informant, 2016

Environmental Poisonings

Lead exposure can seriously harm a child's health. Homes built before 1978 probably contain lead-based paint. It is recommended that all children be screened for lead poisoning; however, **only 8% of Okaloosa children** less than 3 years old have ever received a blood screening test, versus **14% of children in Florida.**[17]

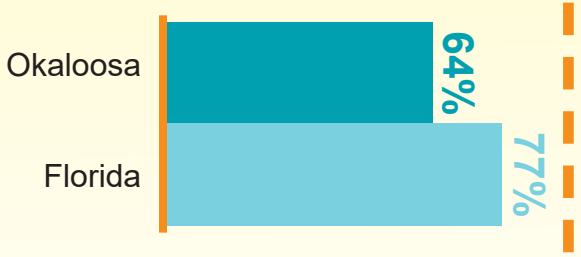
25%
of the square footage in Okaloosa County school buildings is more than 40 years old.[16]

9 Schools out of 32 in Okaloosa County are over capacity.[16]

More than 1/3 of houses in Okaloosa County are 35 years or older.[18]

There are 15 public community water systems in Okaloosa County.[2] Only five of these water systems are optimally fluoridated.[19]

Percent of Residents on Public Community Water Systems Receiving Optimal Fluoridation[19]



Goal*: 80%[20]

* All goals from Healthy People 2020

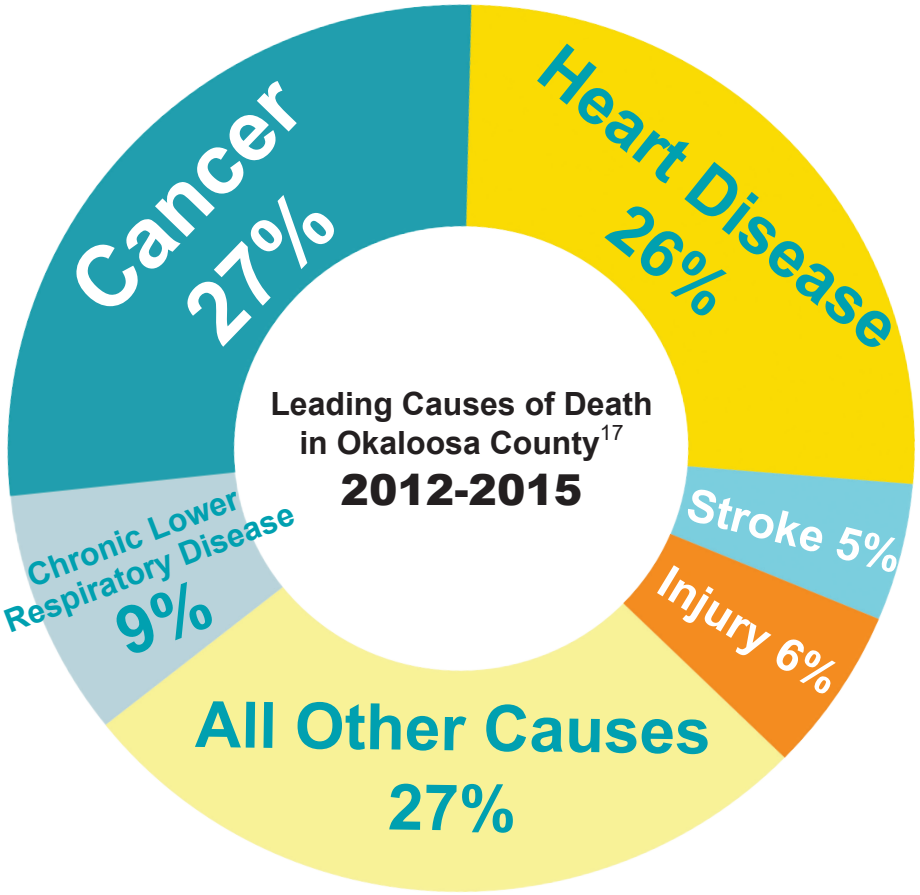
FACT

Almost all water contains fluoride, but usually not enough to prevent tooth decay. Fluoride can be safely added to drinking water supplies to help reduce cavities.[2]

Oral health is essential to general health and overall quality of life.[21]

Leading Causes of Death

in Okaloosa County



Cancer

Leading Types of Cancer Deaths[17]

1. Lung Cancer	32%
2. Colorectal Cancer	8%
3. Breast Cancer	6%
4. Prostate Cancer	5%

Lung cancer diagnoses in Okaloosa County have increased steadily since 2008, while Florida lung cancer diagnoses have decreased.[17]

Smoking causes **9 out of 10** lung cancer deaths.[2]

FACT

Since 2004, cancer is the leading cause of death in Okaloosa County. However, heart disease is the leading cause of death for both Florida and the U.S.[17]

Chronic Lower Respiratory (lung) Disease deaths, which includes Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or COPD, have been higher in Okaloosa County than Florida for decades, likely a result of the high tobacco use in Okaloosa.[17]

Although Okaloosa residents are **more likely** to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer than other Florida residents, they are **less likely** to die from it.[17]

FACT

Women in Okaloosa County are diagnosed with breast cancer at earlier stages than women in Florida.[17]

24% decrease in breast cancer deaths from 2009-2015.[17]

Race Disparity

Cancer Deaths by Race[17]

Black men are **more likely** to be diagnosed with and die from prostate cancer than White men.

The number of new diagnoses of prostate cancer has **decreased by approximately 50%** since 2005.[17]

Heart Disease

The rate of heart failure deaths in Okaloosa County is **DOUBLE** the state of Florida.[22]

Smoking causes **one in three** deaths from cardiovascular disease, including heart disease, and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease.[2]

FACT

Women are more likely than men to experience "silent" heart attacks, which have less recognizable symptoms like chest pain. This may explain why fewer women survive their first heart attack than men.[23]

Okaloosa County residents who do not graduate high school are **3x more likely** to have a heart attack than those who do complete high school.[22]

Stroke

Race Disparity

Stroke Deaths by Race[17]

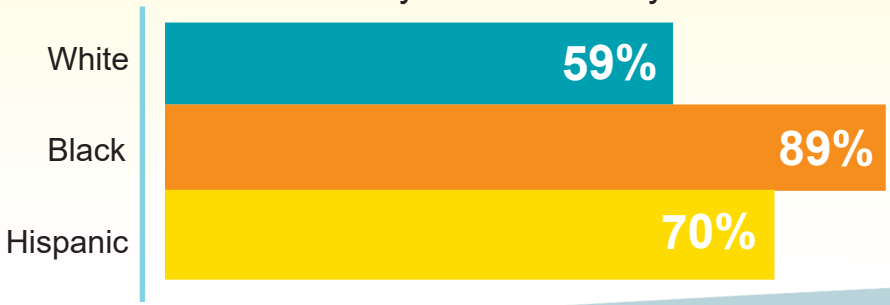
Black residents are **TWICE** as likely to die from a stroke compared to White residents.

Fort Walton Beach Medical Center is a Certified Primary Stroke Center, a facility which can provide highly specialized care to stroke patients.[10]

Healthy Weight

in Okaloosa County

Residents who are Overweight or Obese by Race/Ethnicity[22]



65% of adults are not at a healthy weight.[22]

1 out of 3 kids are now considered overweight or obese.[24]

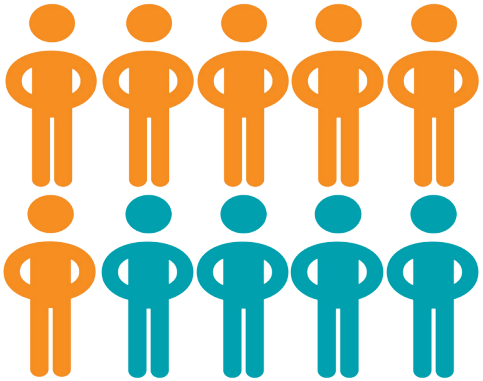
73% of males and **55%** of females are overweight or obese.[22]

Currently, almost 1 in 10 adults have diabetes.[22]

52% of adults with diabetes have received diabetes self-management education.[22]

Research estimates that by 2050, 1 in 3 individuals will have diabetes in the U.S.[2]

6 out of 10 children born today in Florida will be obese by the time they graduate high school.[25]



FACT

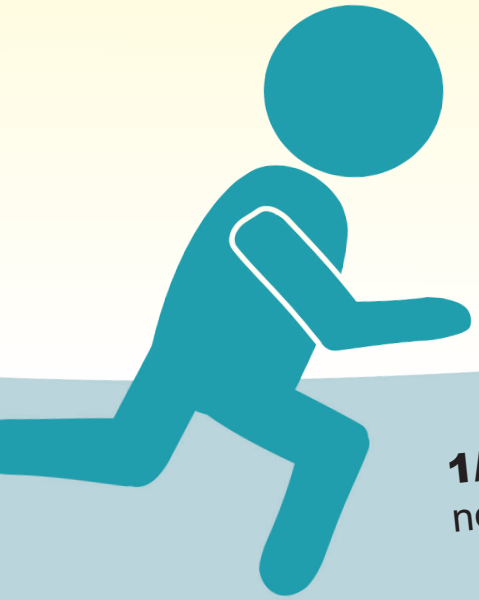
Being overweight or obese is a risk factor for nearly every leading cause of death, including: cancer, heart disease, stroke and chronic lower respiratory disease.[2]

Physical Activity

in Okaloosa County

97% of high school students feel there are opportunities to get involved in sports, clubs and other school activities.[24]

Nationally, research estimates that **$117 billion** in health care costs per year can be linked to a lack of physical activity.[2]

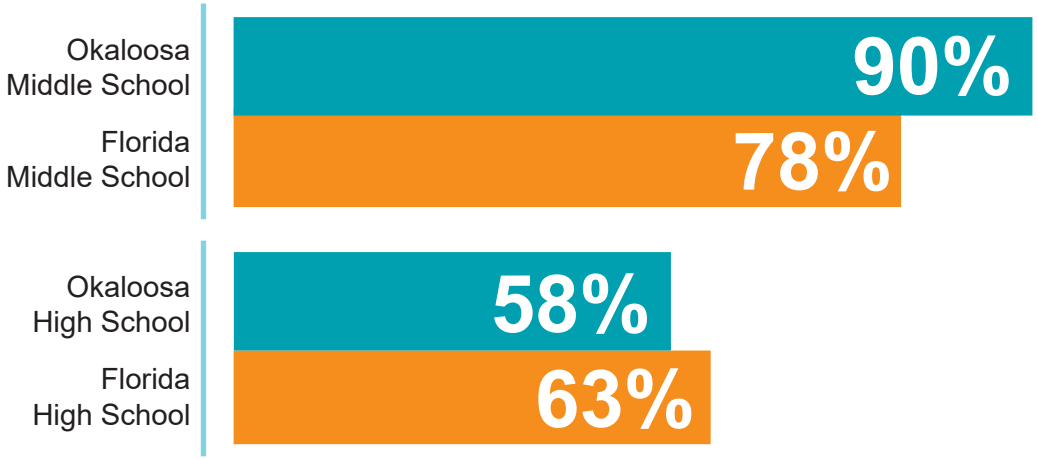


"Kids need to play and older people need to move." - Key Informant, 2016

1/2 of Okaloosa County adults do not get regular physical activity.[22]

4 out of 5 middle and high school students are not active for at least 60 minutes per day.[24]

Middle & High School Students Who Participate in a Sport[24]



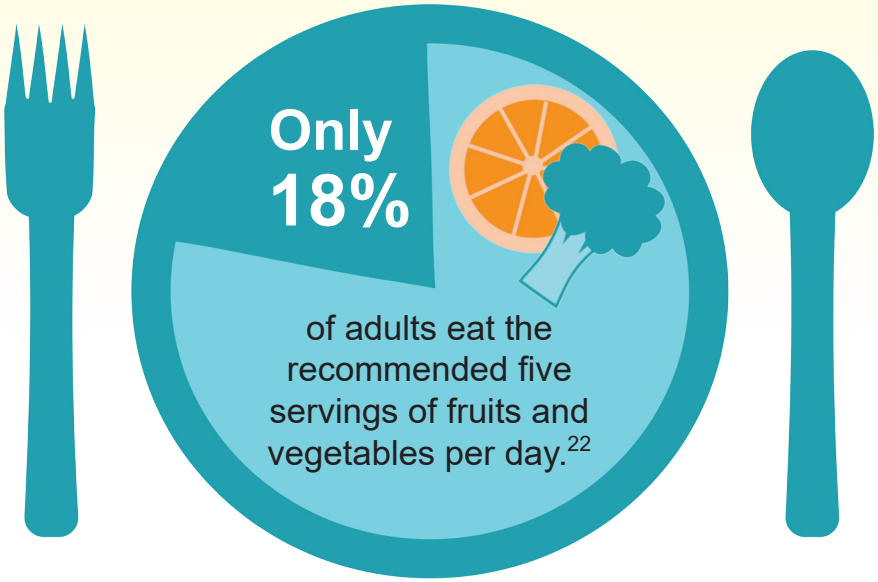
FACT

The average commute time (the time it takes to get to work) is 23 minutes, leaving less time for physical activity.[17]

- Okaloosa County has a higher percentage of residents who meet physical activity recommendations than the state.[22]
- Special Olympics offers 16 sports and serves almost 300 athletes throughout Okaloosa County.[26]
- Okaloosa County is the home of the first Special Olympics in Florida.[26]

Nutrition

in Okaloosa County



"Breastfeeding is a natural safety net against the worst effects of poverty." - James P. Grant, Former Executive Director of UNICEF [27]

FACT

Breastfeeding provides optimal nutrition for infants. Studies show that breastfeeding reduces the risk of childhood obesity. Breastfeeding is especially important for underweight babies, who need optimum nutrition and their mother's immunity to get through the first few months of life.[2]

Race/Ethnicity Disparity

Nutrition by Race[22]

Hispanic or Latino adults in Okaloosa County are **less likely** to have high cholesterol than other Hispanic or Latino adults in Florida.

Over 5,500

students participated in the Health Department's education programs on nutrition and physical activity in the 2016-2017 school year.[28]

- **Nearly 1/3** of adults in Okaloosa County have high cholesterol.[22]
- People with high cholesterol have 2x the risk of heart disease as people with low cholesterol.[16]

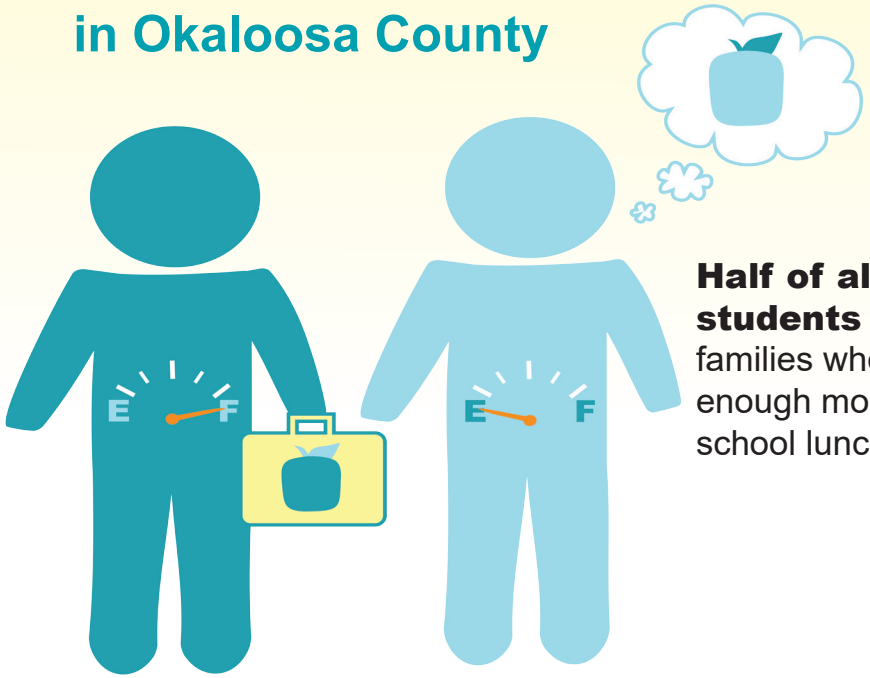
Income Disparity

Nutrition by Income[22]

Okaloosa adults with annual household incomes of more than $50,000 per year are more likely to eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day than Okaloosa adults in households making less than $50,000 per year.

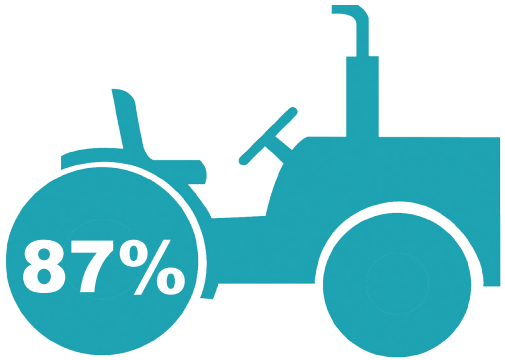
Food Access

in Okaloosa County



Half of all elementary students come from families who do not make enough money to pay for their school lunches.[17]

There are approximately **477 farms** in Okaloosa County, each averaging approximately **129 acres**.[29]



of those farms are operated by families or individuals.[29]

- Multiple community organizations partner with local schools to provide a weekend supply of food to children in need.[30]
- There are over 10 food pantries in Okaloosa County.[31]
- There are several local farmer's markets which sell fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers to consumers.[32]

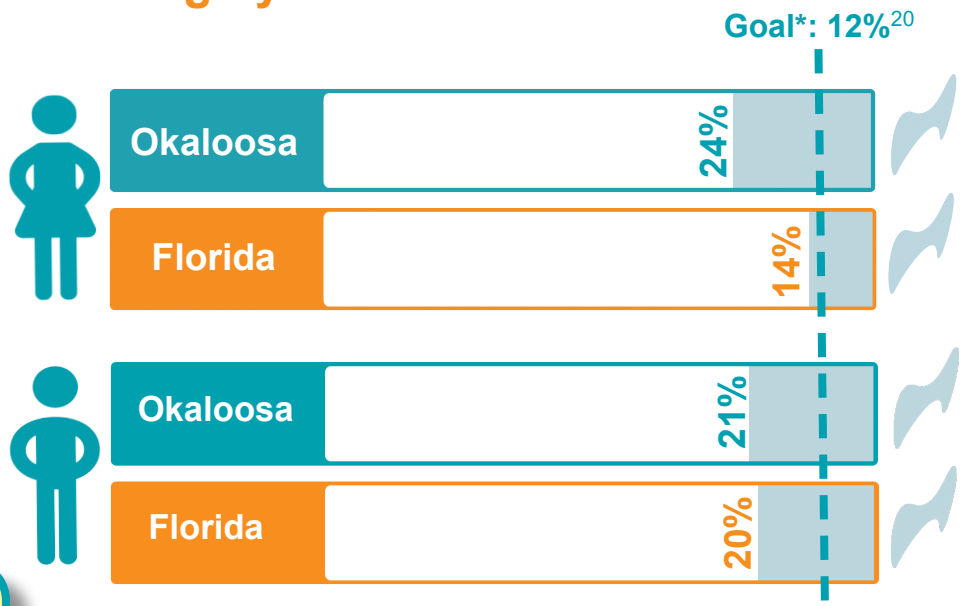
Tobacco

in Okaloosa County

Current Adult Smokers[22]

Since 2002, statewide smoking rates have been declining. However, Okaloosa County rates have not improved.[17]

Smoking by Sex[22]



Smoking During Pregnancy[17]

Pregnant women in Okaloosa County are almost

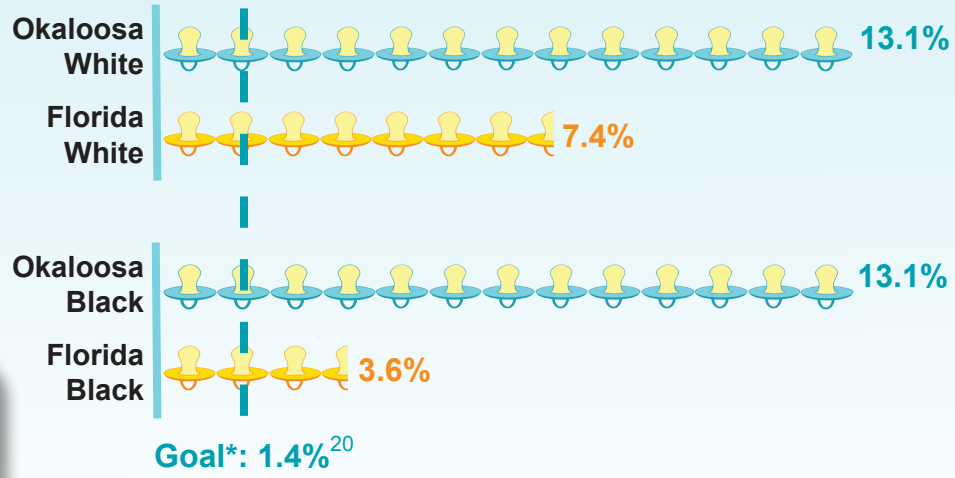
TWICE

as likely to smoke than all other pregnant women in Florida.

FACT

Moms who smoke during pregnancy are at a greater risk for having a low birth weight and/or preterm delivery compared to moms who do not smoke during pregnancy.[2]

Percentage of Pregnant Smokers

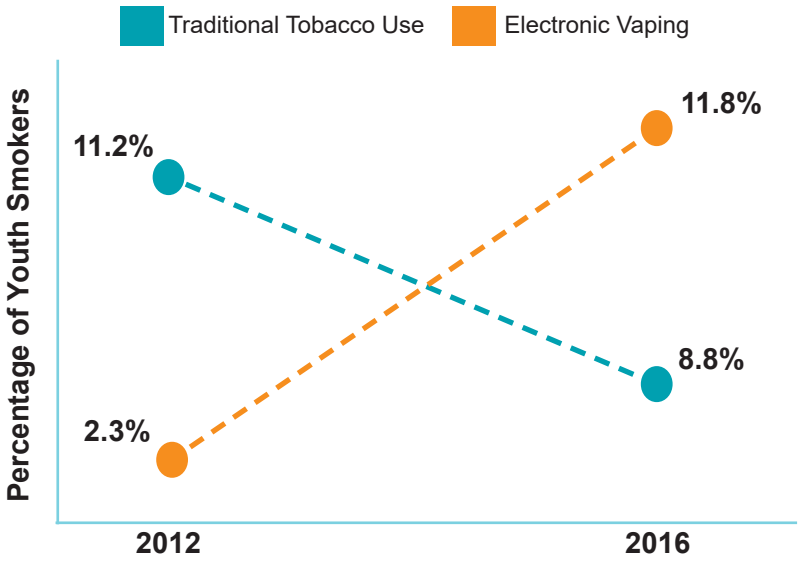


** All goals from Healthy People 2020*

25%

of smokers are 44 years old or younger.[22]

Smoking Among Youth[24]



- Tobacco-related deaths are preventable.[2]
- There are a growing number of Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) clubs in local schools.[28]
- **82% of youth** in Okaloosa County are committed to never using cigarettes.[24]
- Tobacco Free Florida offers free tools and services via phone, in-person and online.[33]

Spotlight on e-Cigarettes[33]

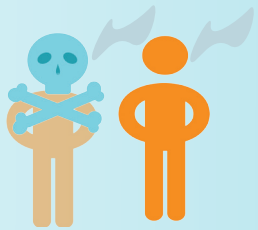
Electronic cigarettes are devices that deliver vapor to the user by heating "e-liquids." Many e-liquids contain nicotine, a highly addictive chemical. Nicotine is the main reason people continue to use tobacco.

The vapor that e-cigarettes release may not be tobacco smoke, but it is still harmful. Studies have shown that probable **cancer-causing chemicals** are measurable in some e-cigarette vapor. Bystanders exposed to e-cigarette vapor can also absorb its nicotine.

It is common for people to use e-cigarettes to attempt to quit smoking. Most e-cigarette users—**nearly 6 in 10**—do not quit smoking. They continue to smoke conventional cigarettes while also using e-cigarettes. There are still many unknowns regarding the health impacts of e-cigarettes. Regulations for e-cigarettes and vaping products are lagging.

"People believe that vaping is a 'healthy' alternative." - Key Informant, 2016

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.[2]
- Nationally, **90% of smokers** start before age 18.[2]
- Okaloosa women smoke at significantly higher rates compared to other women in Florida.[17]
- Tobacco use, including smokeless tobacco, increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke and respiratory illnesses.[2]
- **Half of all** current smokers will die from a tobacco-related illness if they continue to smoke.[2]



Social & Mental Health

in Okaloosa County

"While the **'public face' of homelessness** is often that of people experiencing long-term chronic homelessness, the reality is that the experience of homelessness spans demographics and populations – young and old, employed and unemployed, healthy and ill, female and male."[34]

- **62%** are male
- **18%** are children
- **Over 50%** are White
- **20%** have a disability

Nationally, more than **1 in 10** homeless adults are veterans.[34]

The number of homeless students in the Okaloosa County School District **nearly doubled** from the 2014-2015 to the 2015-2016 school year.[34]

FACT

In Florida, mental illness is the number one disabling condition that leads to homelessness.[34]

FACT

Parental drug and alcohol abuse is the number one reason children in Okaloosa County are removed from their homes.[35]

- Children in Crisis provides emergency shelter to over 100 children per year to help with the shortage of foster homes.[37]
- Shelter House fielded 1,792 calls from residents in crisis, and sheltered 333 adults and children from 2013-2014.[38]
- The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center's multi-disciplinary team serves approximately 400 children and families each year.[39]

9th Okaloosa County ranks 9th in the state for the percentage of children age 18 and younger in foster care.[17]

There are approximately **1,400 foster children** in the Circuit 1 Area (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties), but only 330 foster homes.[37]

Percentage of Adults Who Have Ever Been Diagnosed With a Depressive Disorder[22]

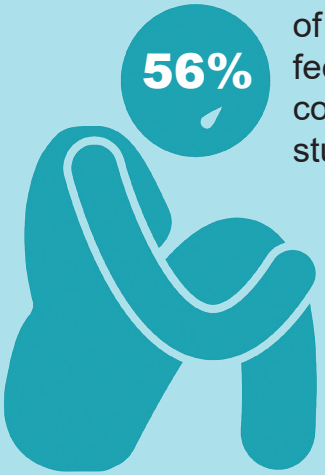
"We are in desperate need of behavioral health services in our county. There are no inpatient services for children and they end up in Pensacola or Panama City." - Key Informant, 2016

Income & Education Disparity

Depression by Income and Education[22]

Residents who live in households with annual incomes of less than $25,000 per year are **3x more likely** to be depressed than adults in households making $50,000 or more per year.

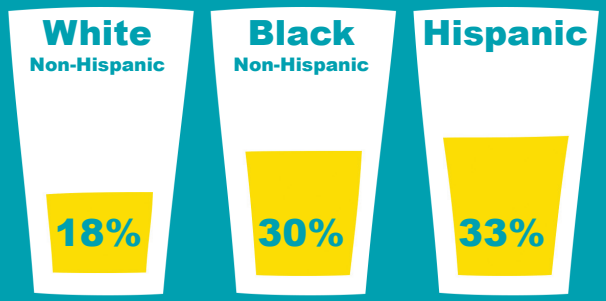
Adults with less than a high school education reported more days of poor mental health (10 days) in the past 30 days than individuals with at least a high school diploma (3 days).



of female high school students report feeling depressed or sad most days, compared to 31% of male high school students.[24]

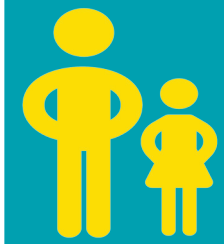
of adults report that they are limited in their daily activities because of physical, mental or emotional problems.[22]

Binge Drinking by Race/Ethnicity



Binge drinking is having 5 or more drinks for males or 4 or more drinks for females during a single occasion in the past 30 days.[22] Heavy drinking is having more than 2 drinks per day for males and more than 1 drink per day for females.[2]

Nearly **1 in 5 residents** engage in heavy or binge drinking.[22]



Men are nearly **TWICE** as likely to engage in heavy and binge drinking.[22]

15% of high school students report blacking out after drinking on more than one occasion.[24]

Florida ranks 49th of the 50 states in funding allocated for mental health services.[40]

Injury & Violence
in Okaloosa County

Age Group	Leading Cause of Injury Death[12]
Less than 1 2% of Population	Suffocation due to unsafe sleep practices
1-14 17% of Population	Drowning
15-64 66% of Population	Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVAs)
65+ 15% of Population	Falls

Okaloosa County has fewer MVAs compared to other counties in Florida, but they are **deadlier and more likely to involve alcohol.**[17]

Falls were the cause of **1 out of every 3** Emergency Department visits and 2 out of every 3 injury hospitalizations.[12]

In Florida, **traumatic brain injury and hip fractures** make up the majority of fall-related injury deaths.[12]

FACT

The average cost of a non-fatal hospitalization for a fall is $97,407.[41]

Unintentional Poisoning in Adults
(Most commonly due to overdoses or excessive use of drugs)

Race Disparity
Unintentional Poisoning Deaths by Race[17]

White residents are **TWICE** as likely to die due to an unintentional poisoning than Black residents.

Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has observed a

219% increase

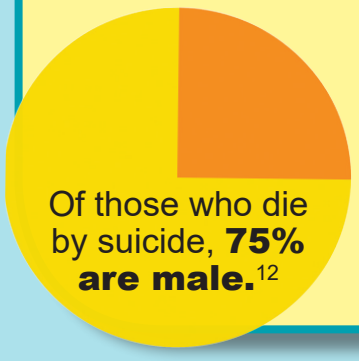
in the need to administer Narcan™, a drug used to reverse the effects of opioid overdose, since 2013.[9]

Deaths related to opioids, such as heroin and fentanyl, **increased by 80%** in Florida from 2014-2015.[42]

Suicide[12]

Nationally, suicide is the **7th** leading cause of death among men and **14th** among women.

Suicides in Okaloosa have been **higher than Florida** since 2001.[12]



Women in Florida are **more likely than men** to attempt suicide, usually by poisoning.

Okaloosa County ranks **16th** out of 67 counties for the percentage of **children ages 5-11** who were the victims of abuse.[17]

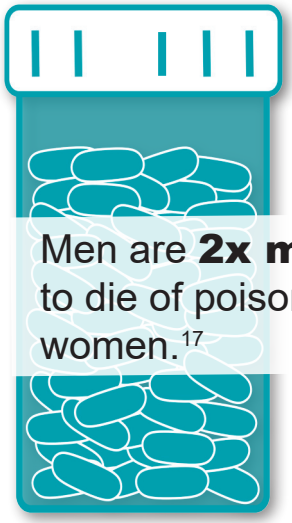
CRIME SCENE: DO NOT CROSS

Homicide is rare. Okaloosa County has **HALF** the rate of homicides as Florida.[17]

In the past 5 years, the number of rape and other forcible sexual offenses in Okaloosa County **increased significantly** compared to the rest of Florida.[17]

Children ages 5-11 in Okaloosa are **30% more likely** to be the victim of sexual violence than children of the same ages in Florida.[17]

Okaloosa ranked in the **top 10 worst counties in Florida** for domestic violence offenses in 2015.[17]



Men are **2x more likely** to die of poisoning than women.[17]

Drugs/substances that cause the highest numbers of deaths:[42]

Fentanyl
Cocaine
Benzodiazepines
(tranquilizers such as Valium and Xanax)
Morphine
Heroin
Alcohol

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office reports a **386% increase** in heroin and fentanyl-related arrests from 2014-2016.[43]

In May 2017, Florida's Governor declared the opioid epidemic in Florida a **public health emergency**. This allowed the state to obtain grant money to pay for prevention, treatment and recovery services.[44]

Infectious Diseases

in Okaloosa County

Enteric Diseases: Intestinal infections that can cause fever, stomach ache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and headache. These infections are usually caused by certain bacteria and viruses.[2]

Bacteria[2]	How do you get it?	Who has the highest risk?
Salmonella	Undercooked eggs, poultry or meat; also present in animal feces, such as birds and reptiles	Children < 5
Campylobacter	Undercooked poultry, unpasteurized milk and animal feces	Adults > 60
Shigella	Contact with fecal matter from an infected person	Children 1-10

Salmonella was the most commonly reported bacterial disease from 2013-2016. Okaloosa County ranks 9th in the state for the highest number of Salmonella infections.[17]

2x Okaloosa County has twice the number of reported **Campylobacter** infections as Florida.[17]

Outbreaks of **Shigella** infections occur commonly in schools, child care settings and long-term care facilities such as nursing homes. Children ages 1-9 accounted for 60% of all Shigellosis cases from 2007-2017.[45]

Viruses

The enteric virus most commonly reported to the Health Department is norovirus, commonly referred to as the "cruise ship virus." This virus spreads quickly among individuals in close contact of one another.[2]

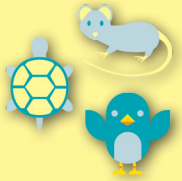
FACT

A person with norovirus can shed billions of norovirus particles in feces and vomit, but it only takes 18 virus particles to infect another person.[2]

Most common ways you get an enteric illnesses:[2]

Contact with feces or vomit from an infected person

Contaminated Food or Water



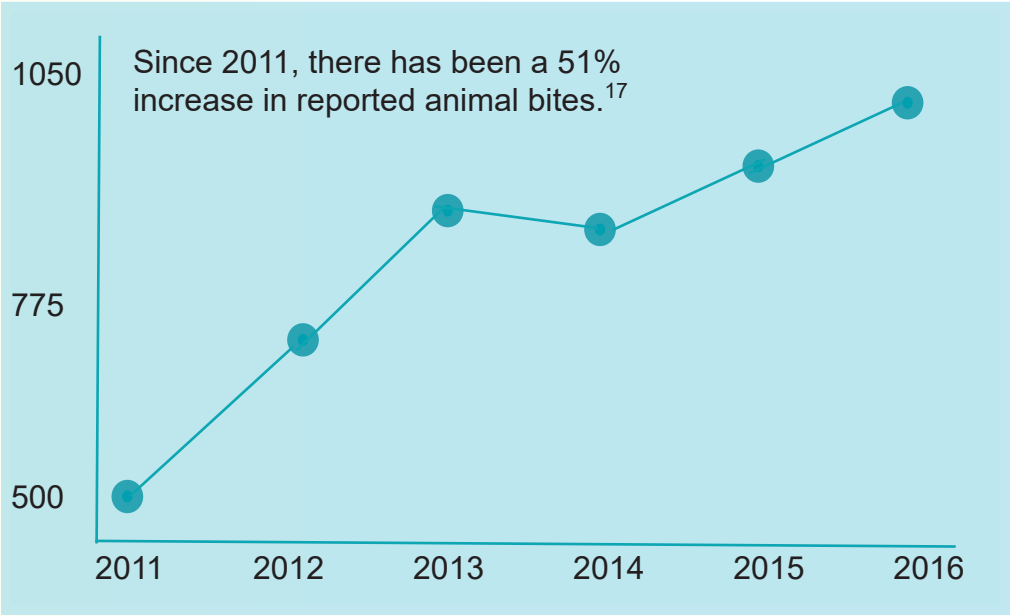
Contact with animals and their feces

Vector-Borne Diseases:

Animals can spread certain diseases to humans.[2]

FACT

Most of the mosquito-borne diseases reported occur among individuals who were bitten while traveling to countries where mosquito illnesses, such as malaria, are common.[45]



The majority of reported animal bites involved dogs (77%) and cats (18%).[28]

There are three important mosquito-borne diseases that occur in Florida[17]:

- Eastern equine encephalitis
- St. Louis encephalitis
- West Nile fever/encephalitis

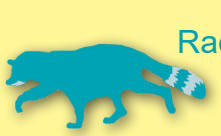
Okaloosa County has approximately **3x** the number of reported animal bites compared to Florida.[17]

FACT

In Florida, it is required by law to report any animal bite to the Health Department to determine the victim's risk of rabies and need for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Rabies PEP is a series of injections which can prevent the nearly 100% fatal disease.[46]

From 2010-2016, more than 500 people were recommended to receive rabies PEP.[28]

Animals considered high-risk for carrying rabies include:[46]


Raccoons

Foxes

Bats

Stray dogs and cats

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases:

Certain dangerous diseases, like polio and smallpox, can be prevented with vaccinations.[2]

96% of kindergarteners in Okaloosa were fully vaccinated in 2017. Florida's goal is 95%.[17]

The number of reported cases of pertussis (whooping cough) has **tripled** since 2008. The majority are due to unvaccinated children.[17]

FACT

Pertussis causes a mild cough in adults, but **50%** of babies who contract it require hospitalization.[2]

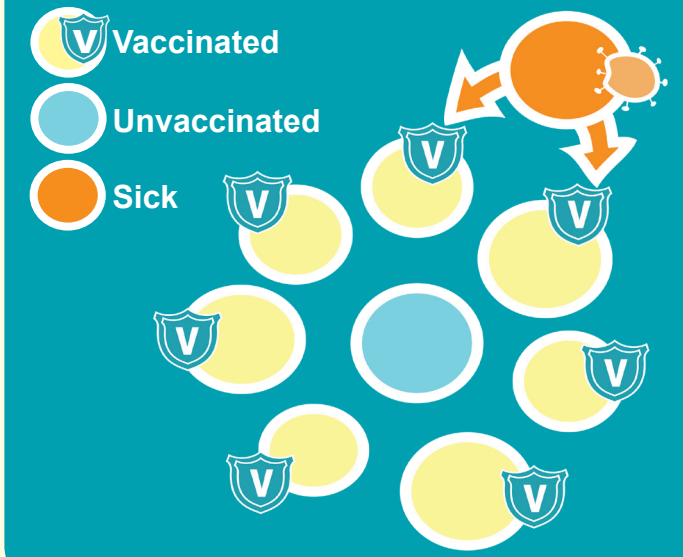
Vaccinations will prevent more than **732,000 deaths** among children born in the last 20 years.[47]

The percentage of children ages 4-18 with religious exemptions to vaccinations is **approaching 10%** in some areas of Fort Walton Beach, Destin and Okaloosa Island.[48]

According to research, **college-educated, white mothers** are more likely to refuse or delay their children's vaccinations when compared to women of other races and educational levels.[49]

Herd Immunity

When the majority of a population is vaccinated against a contagious disease, it becomes harder for the disease to spread. This results in overall community protection. Even those who cannot receive vaccines, such as infants and people with weakened immune systems, get protection from the "herd."[2]



Viral Hepatitis:

Hepatitis B and C are diseases caused by two different viruses that affect the liver.[2]

Hepatitis B and C are transmitted through blood and body fluids.[2]

The estimated number of Okaloosa residents with evidence of having a hepatitis C infection has **doubled** since 2011.[17]

The number of new cases of hepatitis B has **declined gradually** over the past several years due to widespread hepatitis B vaccination. Most new cases of hepatitis B involved drug use (both non-injection and injection).[2]

FACT

CDC recommends everyone born from 1945-1965 get tested for hepatitis C.[2]

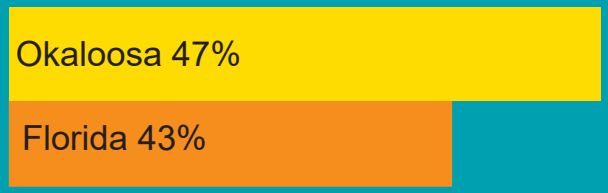
HIV/AIDS

Stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS is still a major public health concern. However, with new medications it is now possible for those who are HIV-positive to live a long and healthy life.[2]

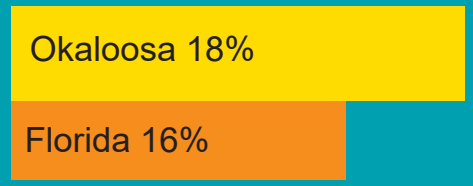
Who is at high risk for HIV?[2]

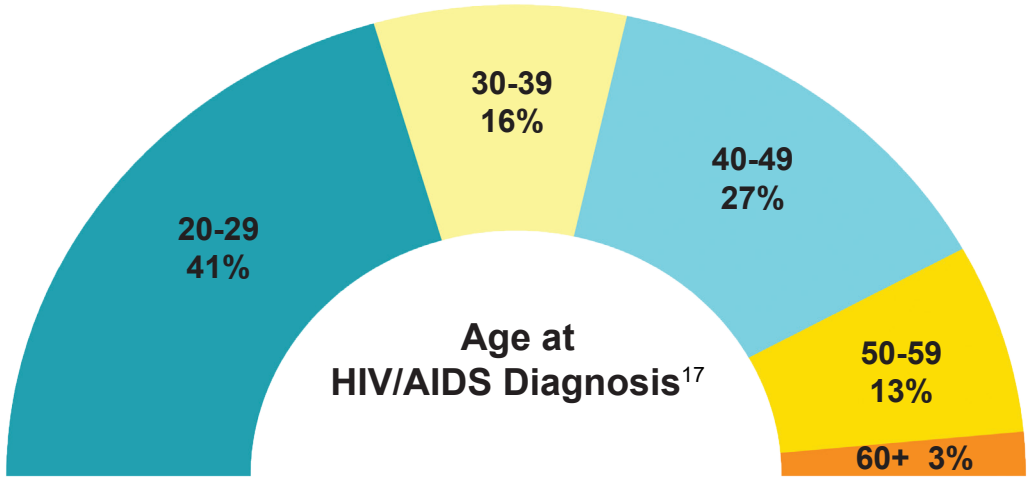
- Men who have sex with men
- Men and women with multiple sexual partners
- Individuals who have been treated for 1 or more STDs in the past 6-12 months
- Intravenous (IV) drug users

Percentage of Residents Who Have Ever Been Tested for HIV[22]



Percentage of Residents Who Have Been Tested for HIV in the Past Year[22]





Race Disparity

HIV Infection by Race

Black residents are **6x** more likely to become infected with HIV than White residents.[17]

For every woman diagnosed with HIV, two men are diagnosed.[17]

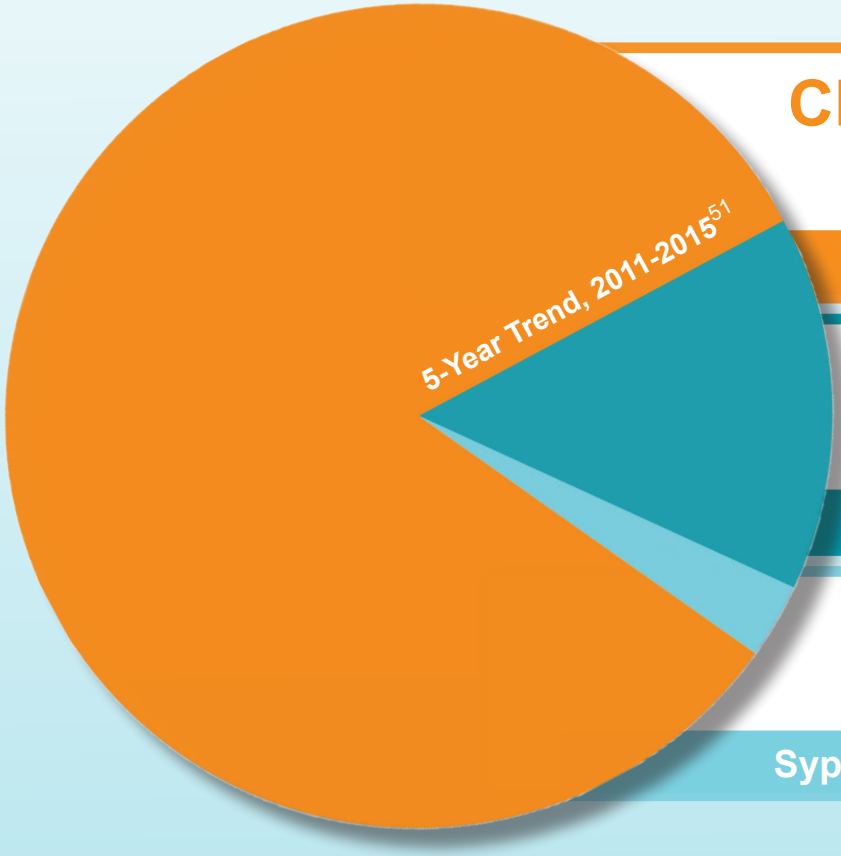
Anyone who tests HIV-positive can receive rapid access to HIV treatment at the health department.[28]

"Knowing your status in not only vital to your physical and emotional health, but it is also the single most important thing any individual can do toward ending HIV." - Health Educator, Office on Women's Health[50]

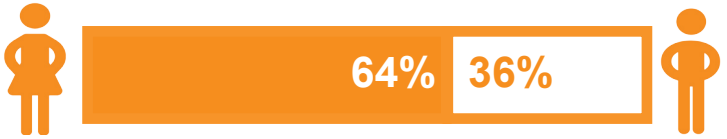
Sexual Health
in Okaloosa County

FACT

Every pregnant woman should be tested for HIV and STDs. Untreated STDs in pregnant women can have serious health consequences for newborns, including: premature birth, low birth weight, eye and lung infections, developmental problems and death.[2]

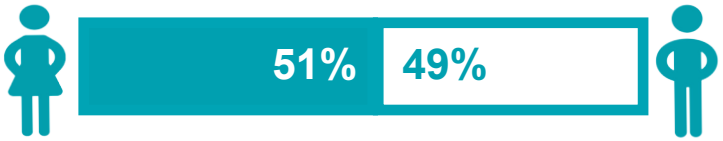


Chlamydia
84%



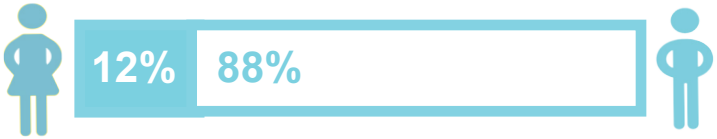
Chlamydia infections occur most frequently in 15-24 year olds.

Gonorrhea
15%



Gonorrhea infections occur most frequently in 15-24 year olds.

Syphilis
1%



Syphilis infections occur most frequently in 25-34 year olds.

Race Disparity

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) by Race[17]

Black residents are **5x** more likely to become infected with chlamydia or syphilis and **10x** more likely to become infected with gonorrhea.

- Okaloosa County ranks **22nd out of 67** counties in Florida for the highest number of chlamydia infections.[51]
- Untreated STDs can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). One in eight women with PID will have trouble getting pregnant.[2]

Teen Pregnancy

in Okaloosa County

"Low teen pregnancy rates are an important characteristic of a healthy community." - Key Informant, 2016

FACT

Teen moms in Okaloosa County are more likely to give birth to underweight babies and are less likely to initiate breastfeeding than moms ages 19 and older.[17]

From 2014 to 2016, **218** babies were born in Okaloosa County to teen moms (13-18 years old).[17]

Only **48%** of teen moms ages 13-18 who gave birth from 2014-2016 had adequate* prenatal care.[17]

*(Kotelchuck index)

2% of teen moms in the U.S. earn a college degree by age 30.[52]

From 2014-2016, there were **25** repeat births among teens (ages 13-18) in Okaloosa. Of those births, **76%** occurred among White teen mothers.[17]

Okaloosa County girls ages 13-18 are **13% more likely** to give birth as a teen than girls of the same ages in Florida.[17]

13% of teen moms who gave birth from 2014-2016 smoked during pregnancy.[17]

- In 2016, Okaloosa County Public Schools enrolled 68 students in the Teenage Parenting Program (TAPP).[16]
- TAPP helps teen parents receive their high school diploma by providing support through parenting classes, child care resources and transportation assistance.[16]

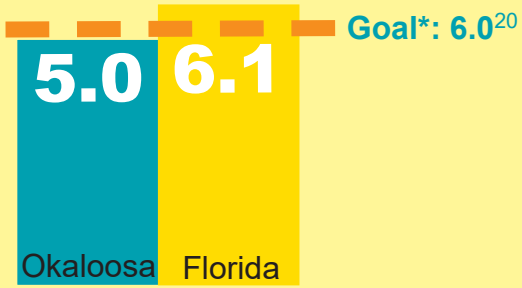
Children of teen moms are more likely to:[2]

- Develop health problems
- Have lower school achievement
- Become teen parents
- Become incarcerated as adults

Infant & Child Health

in Okaloosa County

Infant Mortality Rate Per 1,000 Births[17]



*Based on Healthy People 2020

Infant mortality is the death of a baby before his or her first birthday.

The infant mortality rate is an important marker of a community's overall health.[2]

Race Disparity

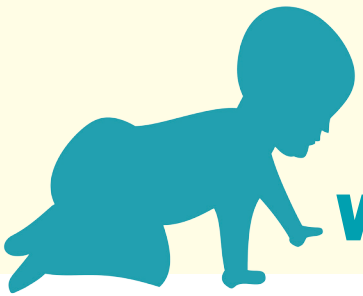
Infant Mortality by Race[17]

Black babies born in Okaloosa County are **2.5x more likely to die** before their first birthday compared to White babies.

For every White infant death in the Ocean City-Wright area, there are five Black infant deaths.

For every White infant death in Crestview, there were three White infant deaths in the Baker/Laurel Hill/Auburn/Dorcas areas.[17]

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) is a drug withdrawal syndrome that occurs among infants after exposure to opioids during pregnancy. NAS can cause tremors, feeding difficulties and temperature instability in infants.[46] From 2010 to 2014, the number of babies born with NAS in Okaloosa County **doubled**.[54]



Why do babies die?

Prematurity

Black women in Okaloosa are **48% more likely** to have a low birth weight baby (less than 5.5 lbs) than White women in Okaloosa County.[17]

Unsafe Sleep

91% of accidental deaths among infants less than one year old were a result of unsafe sleeping environments. Infants in Okaloosa County are **2x as likely** to die of suffocation than infants in Florida.[53]

Homicide

83% of infant homicides from 2004-2015 occurred in the Ocean City-Wright area.[53]

Birth Defects

Heart defects are the most common type of birth defect among Okaloosa County infants.[17]

Complications

Women in Okaloosa County are **less likely** to receive early and adequate prenatal care compared to women in Florida.[17]

Injury

is the #1 killer of children in Okaloosa County

Falls are the most common cause of hospitalization for children ages 1-14.[12]

Male children are **twice** as likely to die from drowning as female children.[12]

2x

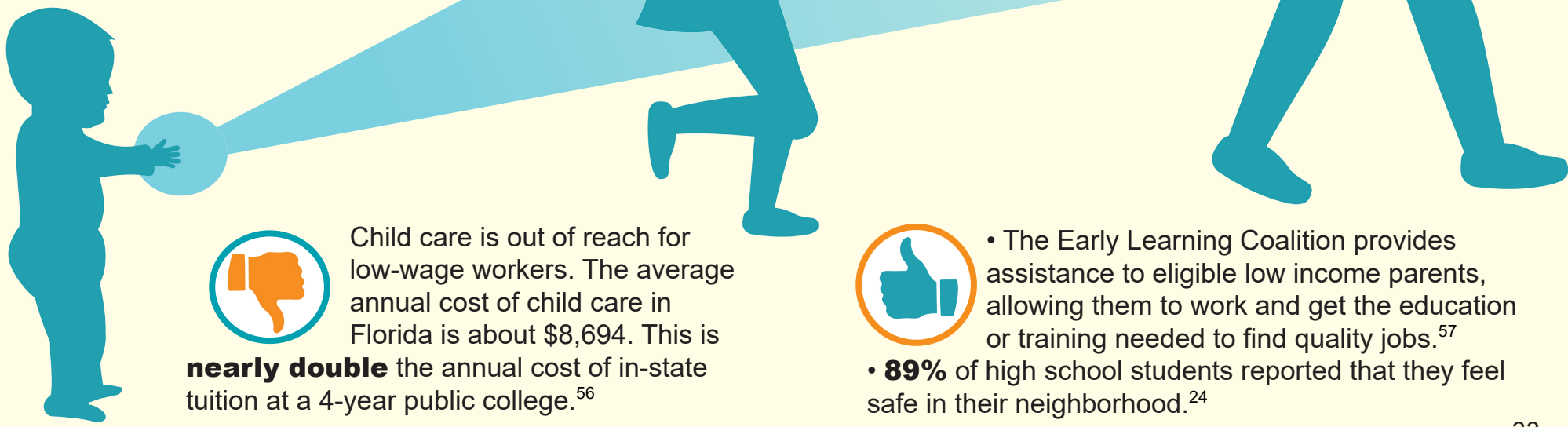
The American Academy of Pediatrics urges schools to start at 8:30 a.m., a time that allows students the opportunity to get enough sleep.[55]

Adolescents who do not get enough sleep are more likely to be depressed, overweight, and use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.[2]

In some areas of Okaloosa County, school buses begin picking up children **before 6 a.m.**[16]

56%

The number of licensed child care centers and homes offering child care in Okaloosa County has **decreased by 56%** since 2007.[17]



Child care is out of reach for low-wage workers. The average annual cost of child care in Florida is about $8,694. This is **nearly double** the annual cost of in-state tuition at a 4-year public college.[56]

- The Early Learning Coalition provides assistance to eligible low income parents, allowing them to work and get the education or training needed to find quality jobs.[57]
- **89%** of high school students reported that they feel safe in their neighborhood.[24]

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*For the specific date ranges used to collect the asterisked data, please contact HealthyOkaloosa5210@flhealth.gov. Thank you!

Priority Areas

Priority areas were selected based on input from the Community Health Assessment (CHA) Leadership Team and community feedback via town hall meetings, online surveys and in-person meetings. The following items were chosen as important public health concerns in Okaloosa County:

Advancing Education

- Low high school graduation rates*
- High teen pregnancy rate*
- School start times too early for middle and high school students*
- Lack of quality, affordable child care
- Lack of access to job readiness training

Improving Infant Mortality

- Pregnant women who smoke*
- High teen pregnancy rate*
- Infant mortality disparities*

Supporting Mental Health

- Lack of mental health services*
- Suicide

Decreasing Drug Use

- High opioid use*
- Drug use among teens*

Bettering Built Environment

- Lack of adequate public transportation
- Lack of fluoride in water systems
- Outgrown/outdated infrastructure (roads, sewer, storm water management)

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

- Poor nutrition*
- Lack of physical activity*
- Unhealthy weight*
- Tobacco/nicotine use*
- Chronic disease
- Access to healthy food

Protecting Children & Teens

- Domestic violence*
- Child abuse*
- Sexual violence against children*
- STDs

Preventing Injuries

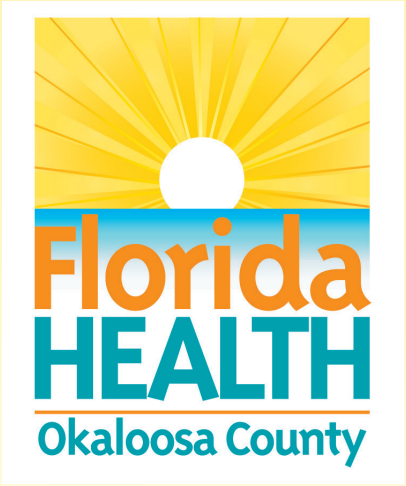
- Lack of sidewalks/street lighting*
- Pedestrian and bicycle accidents
- Lack of road and traffic safety

Strengthening Families

- Child hunger*
- Homelessness/lack of affordable housing
- Poverty/low income levels

*The asterisk identifies topics that were considered by the community to be the most important issues

Together we can make Okaloosa County a healthier place to live, learn, work and play. Join the Healthy Okaloosa Collaborative by contacting us at HealthyOkaloosa5210@flhealth.gov!



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