



# BRADFORD COUNTY HEALTH EQUITY PLAN

*July 2022 – July 2027*



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# DOH-Bradford County

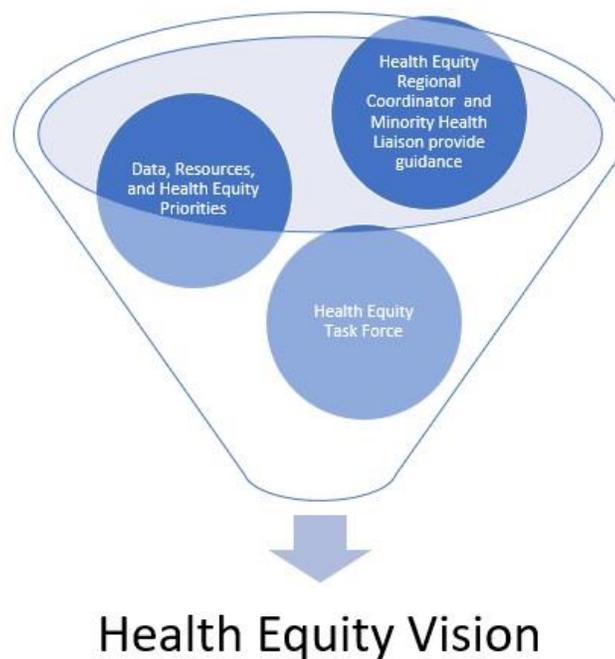
## Health Equity Plan

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## **I.VISION**

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The vision of the Bradford County Health Equity plan is to advance the residents of Bradford County towards an equitable, sustainable, and healthy future. Our health equity plan aims to address the inequities in our communities and to provide solutions to resolve these disparities. The vision for this health equity plan was created by the Bradford County Health Equity Taskforce, composed of various community members and leaders from organizations in the county. The Health Equity Taskforce used a voting method to achieve a consensus on a clear vision for the county. The following is the vision for the Bradford County Health Equity Plan:



**To create an equitable community where all members have access to the necessary resources to achieve their highest level of health.**

## **II. PURPOSE OF THE HEALTH EQUITY PLAN**

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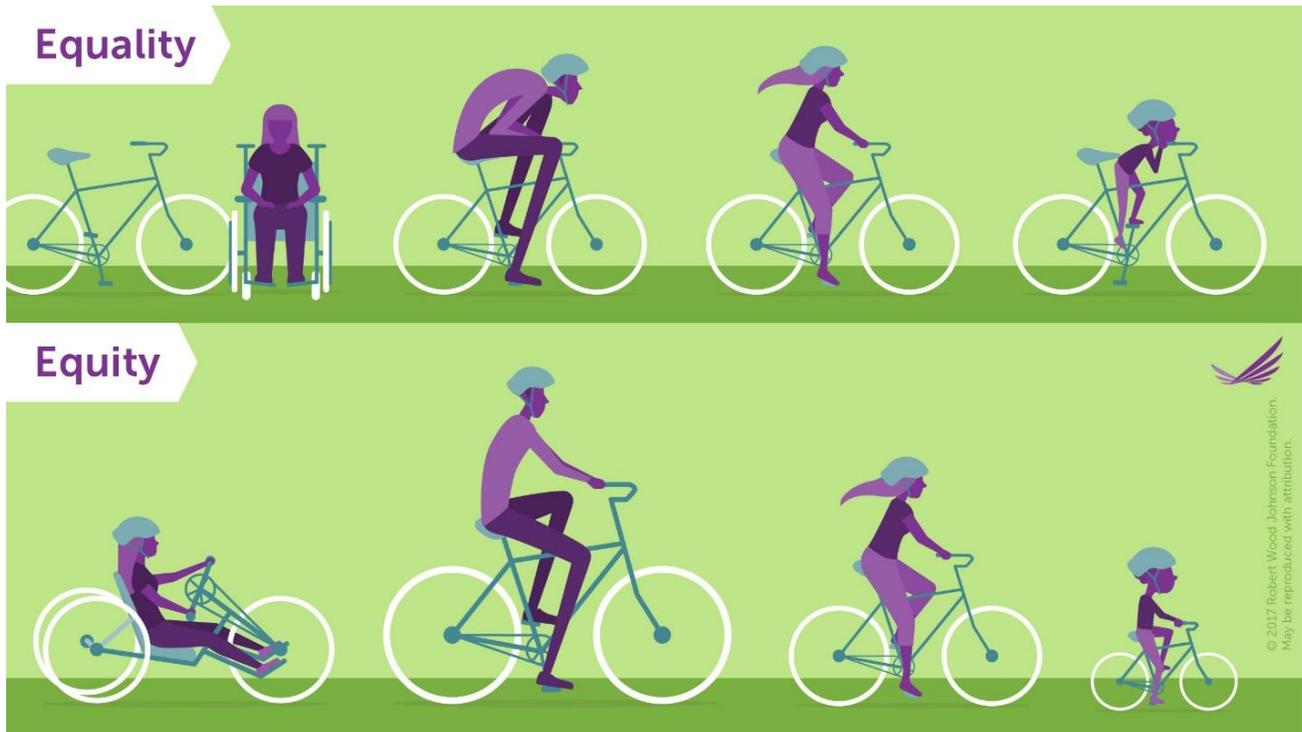
**Health Equity is achieved when everyone can attain optimal health.**

The Florida Department of Health’s Office of Minority Health and Health Equity (OMHHE) works with government agencies and community organizations to address the barriers inhibiting populations from reaching optimal health. A focus on health equity means recognizing and eliminating the systemic barriers that have produced disparities in achieving wellness. In response to Chapter 2021-117 of the Florida Statute, effective July 1, 2021, each county health department (CHD) has been provided resources to create a Health Equity Plan to address health disparities in their communities.

The Health Equity Plan should guide counties in their efforts to create and improve systems and opportunities to achieve optimal health for all residents, especially vulnerable populations. County organizations have a critical role in addressing the social determinants of health (SDOHs) by fostering multi-sector and multi-level partnerships, conducting surveillance, and integrating data from multiple sources, and leading approaches to develop upstream policies and solutions. This plan acknowledges that collaborative initiatives to address the SDOHs are the most effective at reducing health disparities.

The purpose of the Health Equity Plan is to increase health equity within Bradford County. To develop this plan, Bradford County health department followed the Florida Department of Health’s approach of multi-sector engagement to analyze data and resources, coordinate existing efforts, and establish collaborative initiatives. This plan addresses key SDOH indicators affecting health disparities within Bradford County. This Health Equity Plan is not a county health department plan; it is a county-wide Health Equity Plan through which the Health Equity Taskforce, including a variety of government, non-profit, and other community organizations, align to address the SDOH impact health and well-being in the county.

### III. DEFINITIONS



**Health equity** is achieved when everyone can attain optimal health

**Health inequities** are systematic differences in the opportunity's groups have to achieve optimal health, leading to avoidable differences in health outcomes.

**Health disparities** are the quantifiable differences, when comparing two groups, on a particular measure of health. Health disparities are typically reported as rate, proportion, mean, or some other measure.

**Equality** each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.

**Social determinants of health** are the conditions in which people are born, grow, learn, work, live, worship, and age that influence the health of people and communities.

## **IV. PARTICIPATION**

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Cross-sector collaborations and partnerships are essential components of improving health and well-being. Cross-sector collaboration uncovers the impact of education, health care access and quality, economic stability, social and community context, neighborhood and built environment and other factors influencing the well-being of populations. Cross-sector partners provide the range of expertise necessary to develop and implement the Health Equity Plan. In recruiting members for the initial Health Equity Team, we did an in-reach of current CHD staff who worked in various departments. This team brought diverse experience and expertise to the table as we discussed and reviewed the data revealing the health disparities prevalent in Bradford County. After identifying the target health disparity, we recruited members from our existing partnerships connected with our County Health Advisory Council made up of various service providers and community stakeholders. Emails and letters were sent out to community partners from faith-based organizations, the county district school board members, local government officials and law enforcement to recruit a more diverse Health Equity Taskforce. The Coalition is made up of community leaders and elected officials, representing members of our priority populations.



*Figure 1: Bradford County Faith Community Center food drive to service members of the community.*



*Figure 2: Line of cars waiting to receive food from Bradford Food Pantry*



*Figure 4: Starke Seventh Day Adventist Food Distribution*



*Figure 3: True Vine Ministries Outreach Food Distribution*

There are various food distribution sites located in Starke, Florida. Most are in partnership with the USDA and Farm Share. These food distribution sites also accept local donations for their items. Throughout Bradford County several food drives take place weekly, monthly, and yearly. The volunteers who help run the food drive are individuals from all backgrounds and organizations. These volunteers all come together to serve one purpose, to give to those that are in need. In collaboration with the food distribution sites, the Bradford County Department of Health provides COVID-19 vaccinations to individuals at some food distribution sites. These food distribution sites are an example of the cross-sector collaborations and partnerships that bring together community members and organizations with the common goal of providing healthy food choices and vital resources to county residents.

### **A. Minority Health Liaison**

The Minority Health Liaison supports the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity in advancing health equity and improving health outcomes of racial and ethnic minorities and other vulnerable populations through partnership engagement, health equity planning, and implementation of health equity projects to improve social determinants of health. The Minority Health Liaison facilitates health equity discussions, initiatives, and collaborations related to elevating the shared efforts of the county.

**Minority Health Liaison:** Iana Patterson

**Minority Health Liaison Backup:** John “Dan” Mann

## B. Health Equity Team

The Health Equity Team includes individuals that each represent a different program within the CHD. The Health Equity Team explores opportunities to improve health equity efforts within the county health department. Members of the Health Equity Team assess the current understanding of health equity within their program and strategize ways to improve it. The Health Equity Team also relays information and data concerning key health disparities and SDOH in Bradford County to the Health Equity Taskforce. The Minority Health Liaison guides these discussions and the implementation of initiatives. The membership of the Health Equity Team is listed below.

| <b>Name</b>          | <b>Title</b>                             | <b>Program</b>                                    |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Dan Fox              | Social Work Services Program Consultant  | Mental Health                                     |
| Shelby Parmenter     | Dental Assistant                         | Dental  |
| Tiffany Fish         | School Health Coordinator                | School Health                                     |
| James Lyons          | Government Operations Consultant         | Operations  |
| Debbie Williams      | Human Services Program Specialist        | Heart Health Plus                                 |
| Maricelis Wood       | Human Services Program Specialist        | Healthy Start                                     |
| Tracy Toms           | Human Services Program Specialist        | FL Healthiest Weight & Chronic Disease Prevention |
| Arianna Young        | Dental Program Manager                   | COVID Contact Tracing                             |
| John Mann            | Operations/Management Consultant Manager | Operations/Management                             |
| Morgan Raulerson     | Biological Scientist III                 | COVID Contact Tracing                             |
| Michael Johnson, Jr. | Social Work Services Program Consultant  | Mental Health                                     |

The Health Equity Team met on the below dates during the health equity planning process. Since the Health Equity Plan was completed, the Health Equity Team has met at least quarterly to track progress.



| Meeting Date | Topic/Purpose   |
|--------------|---|
| 3/16/22      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An introduction to health equity and health disparities</li> <li>• Discuss existing Health Advisory group members and potential members for the taskforce</li> </ul> |

### C. Health Equity Taskforce

The Health Equity Taskforce includes CHD staff and representatives from various organizations that provide services to address various SDOH. Members of this Taskforce brought their knowledge about community needs and SDOH. Collaboration within this group addresses upstream factors to achieve health equity. The Health Equity Taskforce wrote the Bradford County Health Equity Plan and oversaw the design and implementation of projects. Health Equity Taskforce members are listed below.

| Name         | Title                              | Organization                 | Social Determinant of Health                                  |
|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Dan Fox      | Mental Health Counselor            | Florida Department of Health | Social and Community Context, Health Care Access, and Quality |
| Casey King   | Dental Assistant                   | Florida Department of Health | Health Care Access and Quality                                |
| Tiffany Fish | School Health Coordinator          | Florida Department of Health | Education Access and Quality                                  |
| James Lyons  | Government Operations Consultation | Florida Department of Health | Health Care Access and Quality                                |

## DOH-Bradford County

### Health Equity Plan

|                    |   |   |  |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| Debbie Williams    | Heart Health plus                                 | Florida Department of Health                        | Health Care Access and Quality   |
| Maricelis Wood     | Healthy Start                                     | Florida Department of Health                        | Health Care Access and Quality   |
| Tracy Toms         | FL Healthiest Weight & Chronic Disease Prevention | Florida Department of Health                        | Health Care Access and Quality   |
| Arianna Young      | Biological Scientist                              | Florida Department of Health                        | Health Care Access and Quality   |
| Terricena Kittles  | Health Service Manager                            | Episcopal Children's Services                       | Social and Community Context, Health Care Access, and Quality  |
| Candace Osteen     | Civic Communications                              | Bradford County School Board                        | Education Access and Quality   |
| Deanna Coleman     | ESE Staffing Specialist/Student Services          | Bradford County School's                            | Education Access and Quality   |
| Shrishti Singh     | Tobacco Treatment Specialist                      | Suwannee River Area Health Economic Center (SRAHEC) | Health Care Access and Quality   |
| Iana Patterson     | Director  | Bradford County Faith Community Center              | Social and Community Context   |
| Chelsea McBride    | Prevention Specialist                             | Hanley Foundation                                   | Social and Community Context   |
| Shelby Parmenter   | Mental Hygienist                                  | Bradford Department of Health                       | Social and Community Context   |
| Pretina Hutchinson | Mobile Response Team Program Manager              | Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc.                 | Social and Community Context   |
| Janice Mortimer    | Mayor City of Starke                              | City of Starke                                      | Economic Stability, Social and Community Context, Education Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment |
| Monique Bessette   | Tobacco Treatment Coordinator                     | Suwannee River Area Health Economic Center (SRAHEC) | Economic Stability, Social and Community Context, Healthcare Access and Quality, Education Access, and Quality     |
| Jimmy Crosby       | City Clerk, City of Starke                        | City of Starke                                      | Economic Stability, Social and Community Context, Education Access and   |

## DOH-Bradford County

### Health Equity Plan

|                    |                                 |   |  |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
|                    |                                 |   | Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment  |
| Michael T. Johnson | Mental Health Counselor         | New River Health, Florida Department of Health-Bradford | Social and Community Context, Healthcare Access, and Quality   |
| Brandon Ludwig     | Director of Community Services  | City of Starke  | Economic Stability, Social and Community Context, Education Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment |
| Valeria Gorden     | Counselor                       | Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc.                     | Social and Community Context, Healthcare Access, and Quality   |
| Glenda Ruise       | Chairperson                     | Concerned Citizens of Bradford County                   | Social and Community Context, Economic Stability, Education Access, and Quality                                    |
| Kimberly Henderson | Elder Abuse Project Coordinator | Elder Options   | Social and Community Context, Healthcare Access, and Quality   |

## DOH-Bradford County

### Health Equity Plan

The Health Equity Taskforce met on the below dates during the health equity planning process. Health Equity Taskforce members continue to be added in an effort to ensure diverse participation in the health equity planning process. Since the Health Equity Plan was completed, the Health Equity Taskforce has continued to meet at least quarterly to track progress.

| Meeting Date | Organizations   | Topic/Purpose  |
|--------------|---|--|
| 05/16/2022   | Episcopal Children's Services, SRAHEC, Bradford County Faith Communication Center, Hanley Foundation, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc., Bradford County School District  | SDOH Overview, Health Disparities and SDOH Data review, Projects           |
| 06/06/2022   | Episcopal Children's Services, SRAHEC, Bradford County Faith Communication Center, Hanley Foundation, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc., City of Starke, Bradford County School District, New River Health, Concerned Citizens of Bradford County, Elder Options                              | Determining Projects, Lead Members, Objectives, and Goals                  |
| 07/11/2022   | UF/IFAS Extension, Meridian Behavioral Health, Bradford/Union DOH, Santa Fe College, Lake Butler Hospital, Elder Options, Hanley Foundation, Center for Independent Living, City of Starke, CivCom, Bradford county Coalition, Suwanee River Health and Economic, Bradford County Commissioners | Discuss the Bradford and Union Health Equity Plan projects and Initiatives |

## D. Coalition

The Health Equity Coalition met on Thursday July 28, 2022. The Coalition discussed strategies to improve the health of the community. The strategies focused on the social determinants of health: education access and quality, health care access and quality, economic stability, social and community context, and neighborhood and built environment. Membership includes community leaders working to address each SDOH, as well as any relevant sub-SDOHs. The Coalition assisted the Health Equity Taskforce by reviewing their Health Equity Plan for feasibility. The Coalition approved the Health Equity Plan and will continue to meet monthly. See Addendum for a List of Coalition members.

## E. Regional Health Equity Coordinators

There are eight Regional Health Equity Coordinators. These coordinators provide the Minority Health Liaison, Health Equity Team, and Health Equity Taskforce with technical assistance, training, and project coordination.

| <b>Name</b>              | <b>Region</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Carrie Rickman           | Emerald Coast |
| Quincy Wimberly          | Capitol       |
| Diane Padilla            | North Central |
| Ida Wright               | Northeast     |
| Rafik Roberts            | West          |
| Lesli Ahonkhai           | Central       |
| Kimberly Watts (Interim) | Southwest     |
| Frank Diaz-Gines         | Southeast     |

## V. TRAINING, AND PROMOTION

### A. County Health Equity Training

Assessing the capacity and knowledge of health equity helped the Minority Health Liaison identify knowledge gaps and create training plans for the Health Equity Taskforce, the Coalition, and other county partners.

Below are the dates, SDOH training topics, and organizations who attended training.

| Date       | Topics   | Organization(s) receiving trainings   |
|------------|--|---|
| 05/16/2022 | SDOH Training, Health Equity Vs. Health Equality, Health Disparities, Defining Health Equity | Episcopal Children’s Services, SRAHEC, Bradford County Faith Community Center, Hanley Foundation, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc. |

### B. County Health Department Health Equity Training

The Florida Department of Health in Bradford County recognizes that ongoing training in health equity and cultural competency are critical for creating a sustainable health equity focus. At a minimum, all DOH-Bradford staff receive the *Cultural Awareness: Introduction to Cultural Competency* and *Addressing Health Equity: A Public Health Essential* training. In addition, the Health Equity Team provides regular training to staff on health equity and cultural competency. The training is recorded in the following chart:

| Date    | Topics   | Number of Staff in Attendance                       |
|---------|--|---|
| Ongoing | SDOH, Health Equity, Health Disparities, Cultural Competency | All staff receive training during NEO and annually. |

## C. Minority Health Liaison Training

The Office of Minority Health and Health Equity and the Health Equity Regional Coordinator provide training and technical support to the Minority Health Liaison on topics such as: the health equity planning process and goals, facilitation, and prioritization techniques, reporting requirements, and taking a systems approach to address health disparities. The Minority Health Liaison training is recorded below.

| Date       | Topics   |
|------------|--|
| 03/14/2022 | ClearPoint Training  |
| 03/21/2022 | Regional Health Coordinator met with Minority Health Liaison (Kevin Bradley) to discuss Health Equity Planning Process, Reporting Requirements, and a review on addressing chosen health disparity, Mental Health, and the Social Determinants of Health |
| 06/28/2022 | Regional Coordinator will meet with new Minority Health Liaison (Iana Patterson) for Onboarding Training   |

## D. National Minority Health Month Promotion

### “Give Your Community a Boost”

The “Give Your Community a Boost” event took place on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at the Bradford County Department of Health. This event was held to raise the importance of improving the health of racial and ethnic minorities by reducing health disparities. This event offered free health screenings and health equity education. The Minority health Liaison was on hand to explain the upcoming efforts of the CHD along with other community partners to promote health equity. Dental, Healthy Start, Snap-Ed and Diabetes prevention education was also provided to attendees. COVID-19 vaccines and boosters were also available. Advertisement for this event was done by placing a flyer in the Heart Healthy monthly newsletter and in the local newspaper. Flyers were also distributed throughout the city of Starke to various businesses. Our community partners also distributed the flyers and relayed the information to their client base.



## **VI. PRIORITIZING A HEALTH DISPARITY**

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The Health Equity Team identified and reviewed health disparities data in Bradford County. Data was pulled from multiple sources including Florida Health CHARTS, Florida Environmental Public Health Tracking, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA), AARP Livability Index, the UF Health Shand's Needs Assessment Platform, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

After a data review by the Health Equity Team, mental health is the identified health disparity in Bradford County. As defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Mental health can affect how we make healthy choices, affecting our overall health. Those who seek help are often faced with the stigma associated with mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and addiction. This may make it harder for individuals to seek help when necessary.

Poor mental health affects individuals in every aspect of their lives. The social determinants of health play a role in affecting mental health. Individuals who are unemployed tend to have limited income, and limited availability to healthy foods. These are all stressors that contribute to poor mental health. Stress, anxiety, and depression may be brought on by the circumstances individuals face in their daily lives.

Relative to other fields, data in mental health has been limited. Despite limited data, the Bradford County Taskforce has identified our priority populations to be people living with a disability, Black/African Americans, Veterans, and the LGBTQ+ community. In the United States, 45% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in 2021. The Health Equity Taskforce acknowledges that this data may not be reflective of the county, but data specific to Bradford County is limited for this community. Despite county specific data, we do not want to exclude them as a priority group and thus have included this group as a priority population. The Health Equity Taskforce will continue to focus efforts to acquire additional data for this population group by collaborating with the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity.

Data in Bradford County shows Bradford County Mental Health Hospitalization Rates per 1,000 population have been lower than state of Florida rates. Despite being lower than the state, it is worth noting these rates have been consistently increasing since 2015. Of more importance, suicide rates in Bradford County have been higher than state rates for the past three years, with a rate of 20.1 in the year 2020, compared to 13.1 in the state. Emergency Room visits for mental health reasons exceeded state rates throughout 2015-2019. Based on this data, the Bradford County Health Equity Team determined mental health is an issue that needs to be addressed. Data concerning Mental Health is below:

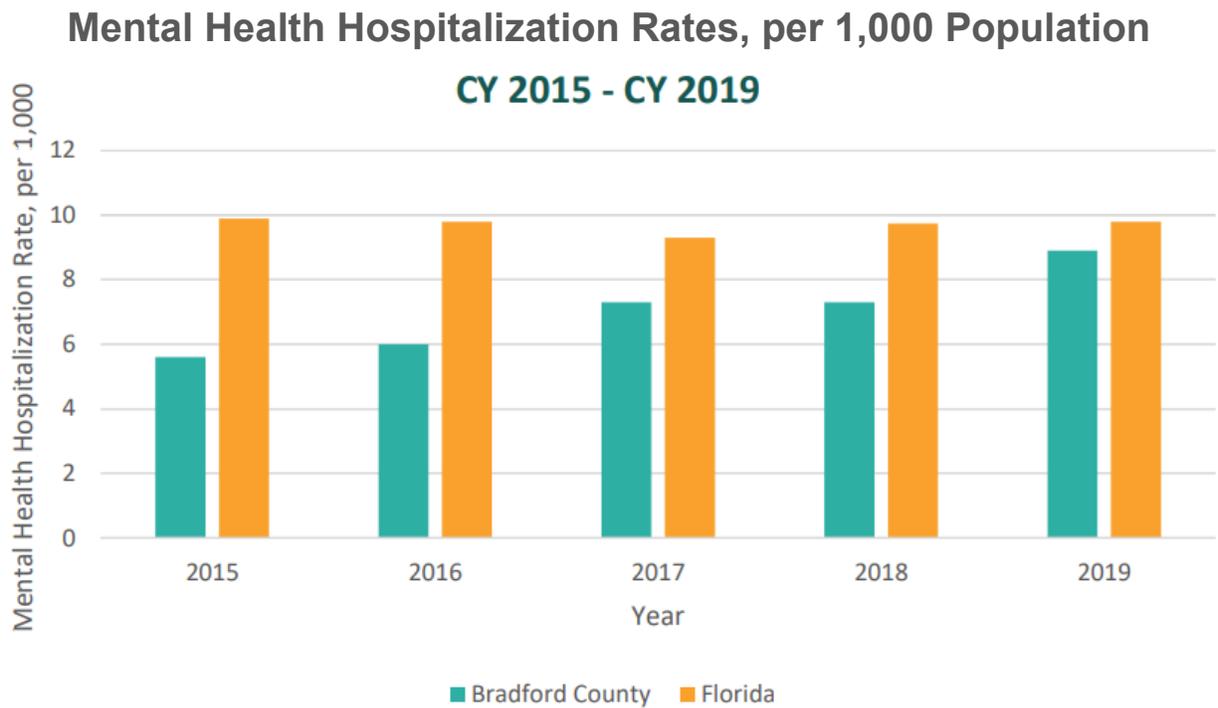


Figure 2: Bradford County Community Health Assessment. Prepared by WellFlorida Council.

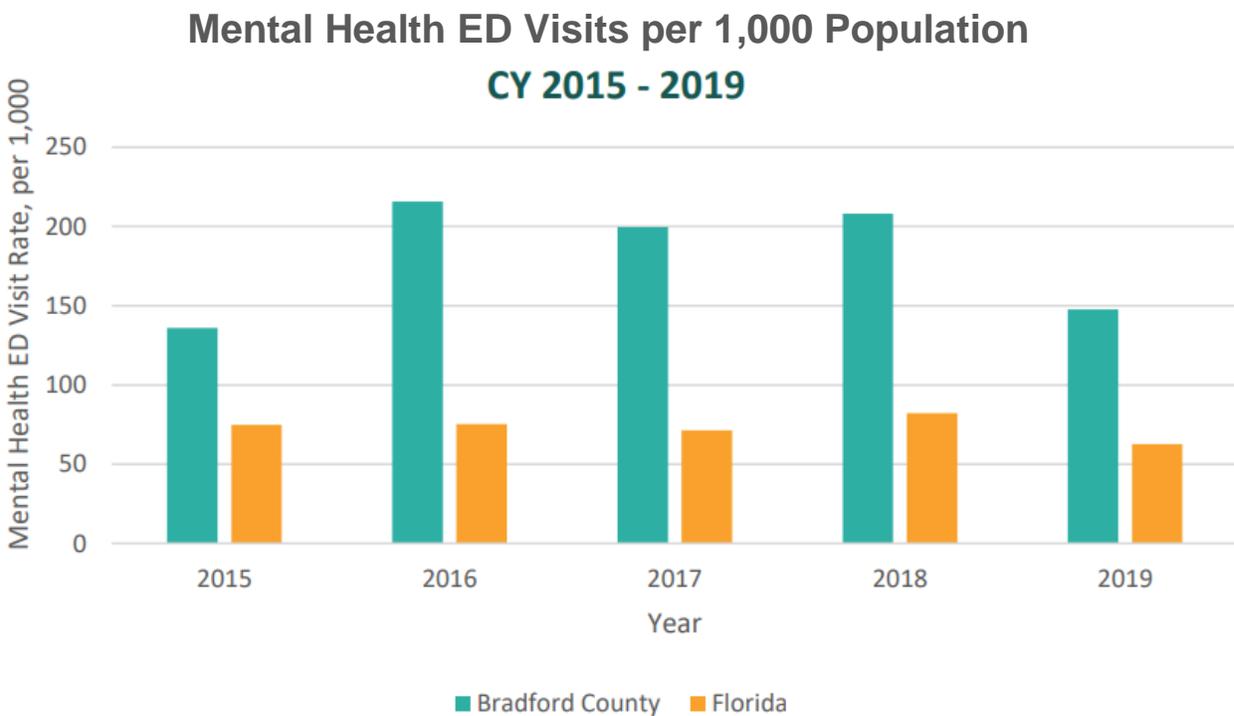


Figure 3: Bradford County Community Health Assessment. Prepared by WellFlorida Council.

## A. Bradford Death from Suicide

### Bradford County Age-Adjusted Deaths from Suicide, Single Year Overall

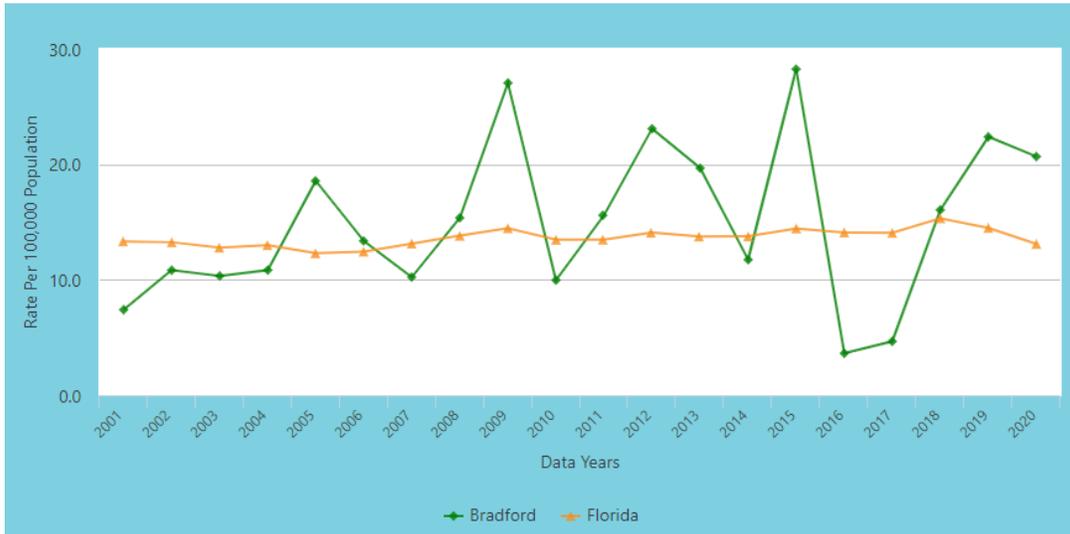


Figure 4: Age-adjusted Deaths from Suicide, Single Year. Source: Florida Department of Health Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

Figure 3 demonstrates age-adjusted deaths from suicide within Bradford County. In the year 2020, the Bradford County Rate for suicide was 20.7, this figure is higher when compared to the state rate of 13.1.

### Age-Adjusted Deaths from Suicide, Single Year, White/Black

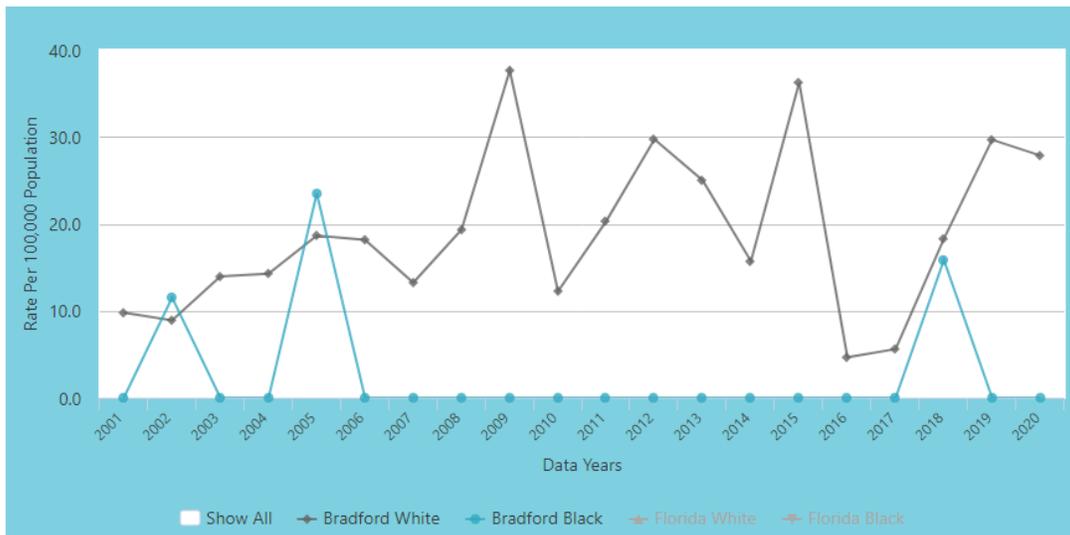


Figure 4: Age-adjusted Deaths from Suicide, Single Year, Race. Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

Figure 4 compares the rates of death from suicide in Bradford Black and Bradford White individuals. The rate of death from suicide has been consistently higher for Bradford White individuals as Bradford Black individuals had a rate of 0.00 in the year 2020 compared to a rate of 27.8 for Bradford White individuals.

**Age-Adjusted Deaths from Suicide, Single Year, Ethnicity**

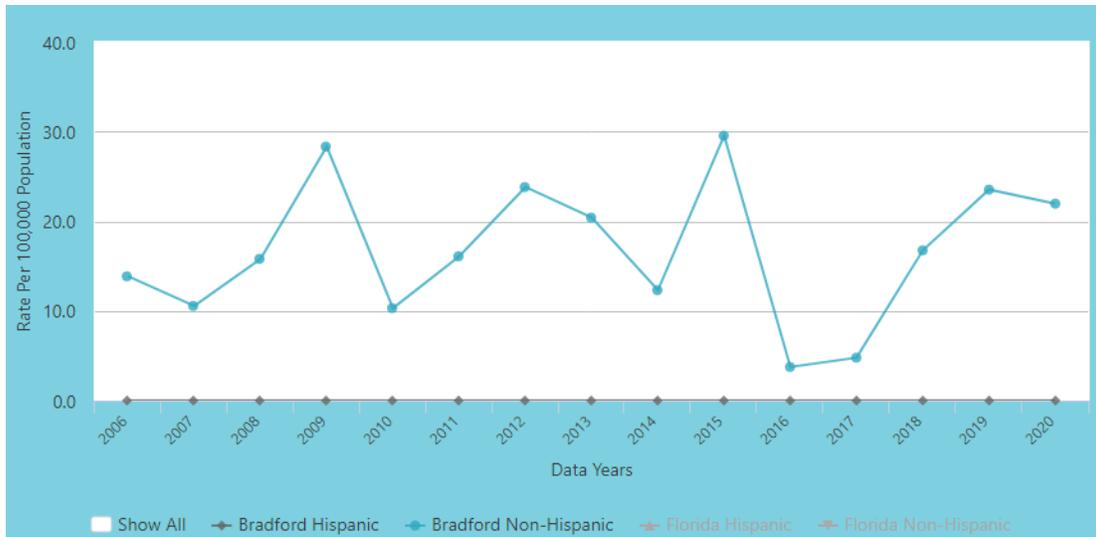


Figure 5: Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

Limited data regarding this indicator was found for Hispanics. According to BRFSS data, there have been zero reported deaths from suicide in Bradford County.

**Deaths from Suicide, Age 65 and Older**

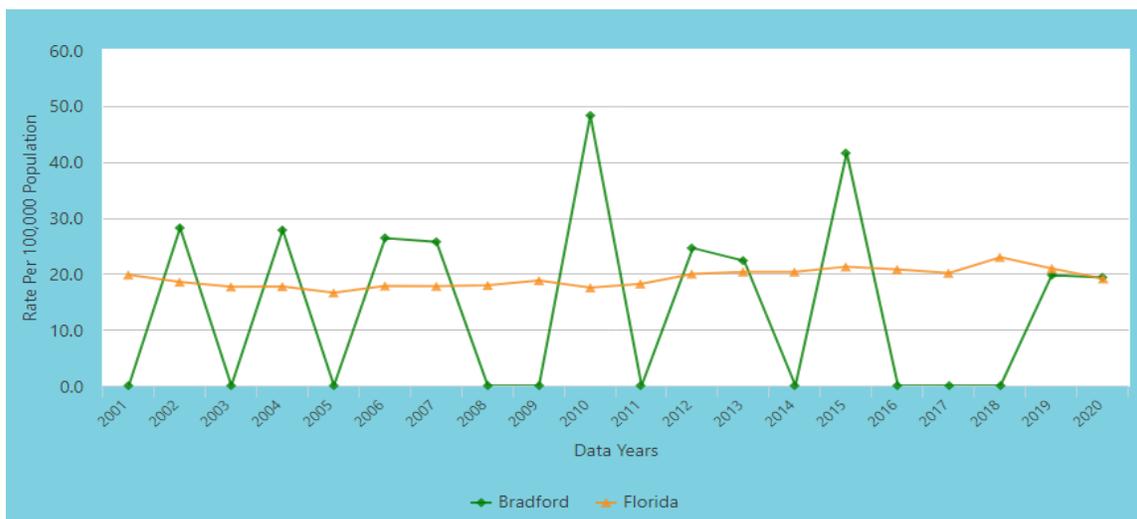


Figure 6: Deaths from Suicide, Age 65 and Older, overall. Source: FL Health Charts.

**Deaths from Suicide, Age 18-44**

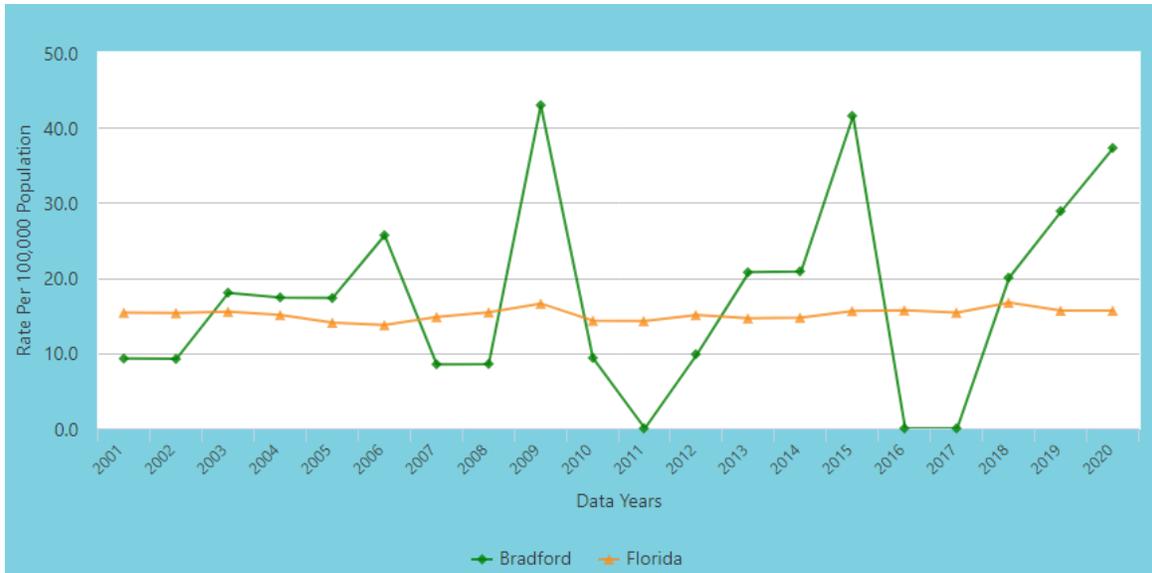


Figure 8: Deaths from Suicide, Age 18-44 Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management

The rate of deaths from suicide in Bradford County in the year 2020 was 19.3 for individuals aged 65 and older, compared to the rate of 37.3 for individuals aged 18-44 years of age. Rates for both groups dropped significantly in the year 2016. In the year 2019, rates rose for both population groups as the rate of deaths from suicide for elderly individuals was 20.9 compared to the rate of 28.9 for individuals 18-44.

**Deaths from Suicide, Age 12-18**



Figure 9: Source: Deaths from Suicide, Age 12-18 Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management

Deaths from suicide in children aged 12-18 show a recent spike with a rate of 47.9 per 100,000 population in the year 2019.

### Deaths from Suicide, Veterans

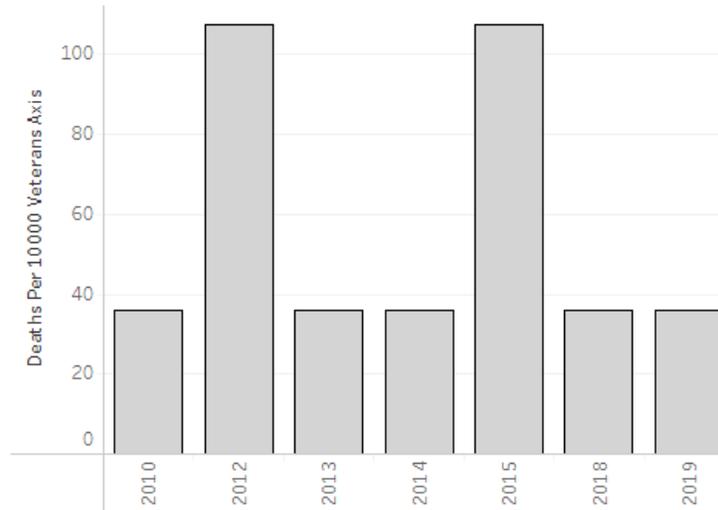


Figure 5: Deaths from Suicide, Veterans. Source: The Fire Watch <https://www.thefirewatch.org/the-data>

The rate of death from suicide in Bradford County is 56.34 per 100,000 veterans. Veterans in Bradford County make up 10.60% of the community with a total population of 2,789, according to The Fire Watch. During deployment, veterans experience several traumatic events. This increases the rates of poor mental health, PTSD, depression, and substance abuse.

### Deaths from Suicide, LGBTQ

According to The Trevor Project’s 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, with 14% of LGBTQ youth attempting suicide in 2021. The rates of youth who attempted suicide were greatest in Native/Indigenous youth with 21% attempting suicide. This was followed by 20% attempting suicide in Middle Eastern/Northern African and 19% in Black youth. These groups were the most at risk for attempting suicide at a national level.

Data specific to Bradford County for the LGBTQ+ community is insufficient for county analysis. The Health Equity Taskforce will work with the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity to acquire this data. Upon attaining this data, the Health Equity Taskforce will modify the Bradford County Health Equity Plan and adjust our project accordingly.

## B. Poor Mental Health Days Bradford County

### Adults who had poor mental health on 14 or more of the past 30 days, Overall

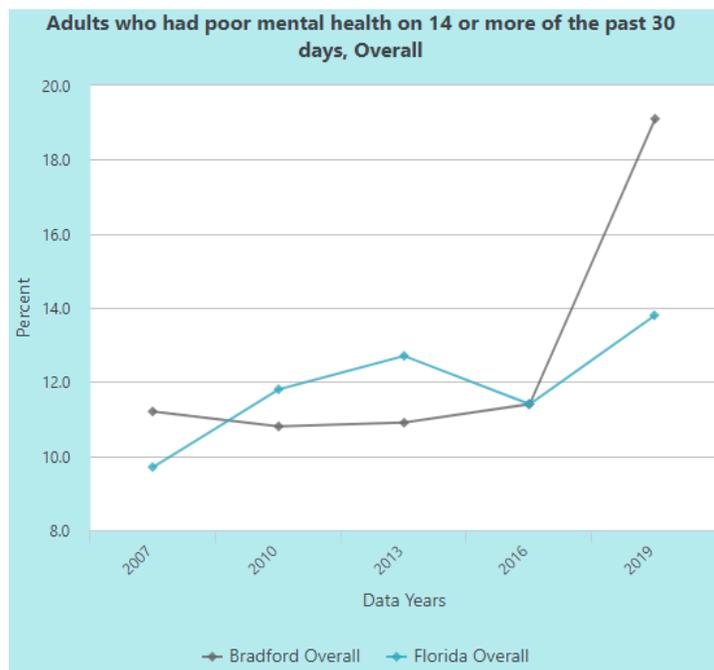


Figure 6: Adults who had poor mental health on 14 or more of the past 30 days, overall. Source: Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

The above figure demonstrates higher rates of adults who had poor mental health on 14 or more of the past 30 days in Bradford County. Poor mental health days are self-reported and are a measure of the quality of life for individuals in the county.

#### Individuals with Disabilities with Poor Physical and Mental Health

According to the CDC, “adults with disabilities report experiencing frequent mental distress almost 5 times as often as adults without disabilities ([The Mental Health of People with Disabilities | CDC](#)). In Bradford County, individuals with disabilities in the 18–65-year age range reported an average rate of 16.11 poor physical and mental health days compared to a rate of .16 of poor mental health days for non-disabled individuals. (Knowli Data Science and the FSU Claude Pepper Center Faculty, 2022). The percentage of individuals with a disability who have ever been told they had a depressive disorder is 54% compared to the rate of non-disabled individuals of 7%. The rate of frequent mental distress for individuals with a disability is much higher than non-disabled individuals.

## Adults who had poor mental health on 14 or more of the past 30 days by Income

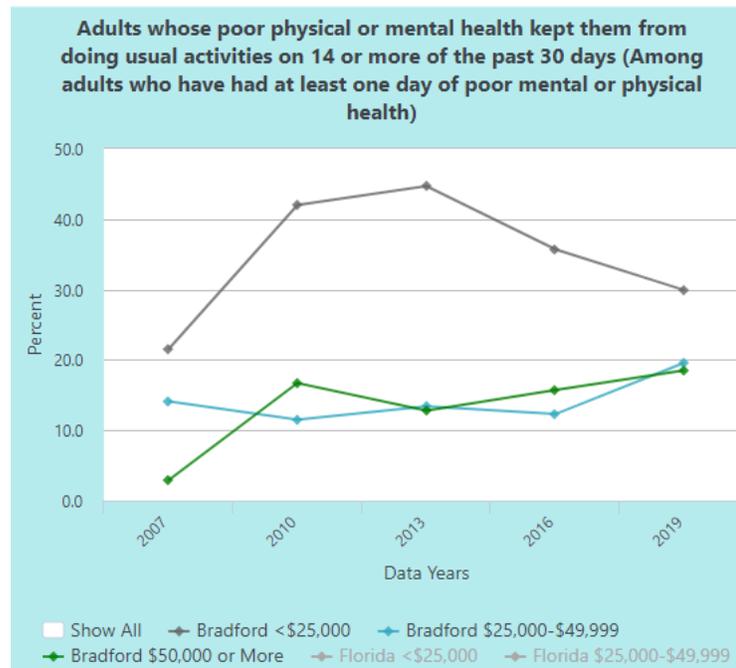


Figure 7: Source: FL Health Charts

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, “On a family level, poverty causes stressors such as insecurity in food, housing, income, and more. These stressors can also cause an increased risk of mental health problems and substance abuse in the parents. ([Low-Income Communities | Anxiety and Depression Association of America, ADAA](#)) The above figure shows the rate of adults with an income below \$25,000 had poor physical or mental health days that kept them from doing usual activities on 14 or more of the past 30 days. This figure shows a clear linkage between low income and poor mental health in Bradford County. In Bradford County, Black residents had a lower median household income than white residents, with Black residents earning an average of \$32,402 compared to an average income of \$48,577 for White residents in the year 2020. In the year 2019, Hispanics earned an average of \$55,179 compared to an average of \$52,665 for non-Hispanics. The clear linkage between poor mental health and low-income allows us to conclude, Black and African American residents in Bradford County are at a high risk of poor mental health outcomes.

## C. Mental Health Index

### Mental Health Index by Zip-Code

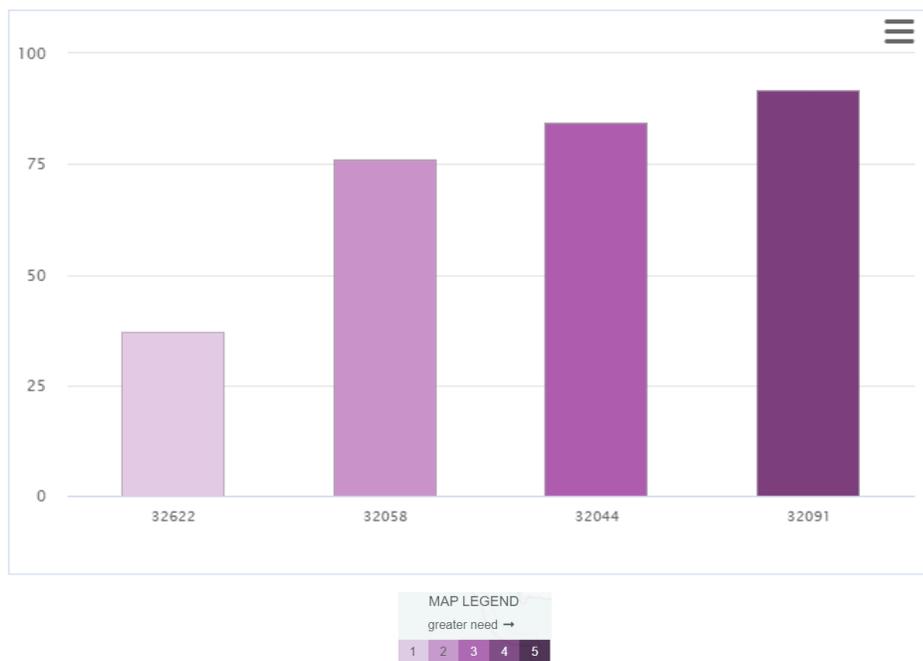


Figure 8: Mental Health Index-Bradford County Source: UF Health Community Health <https://ufhealth.org/community-health>

Figure 4 demonstrates zip-code 32091 scored 91.6 on the 2021 Mental Health Index created by Conduent Healthy Communities Institute. This Mental Health Index is a measure of socioeconomic and health factors correlated with self-reported poor mental health. Below is a breakdown by race of the population within each zip-code of concern. According to the Mental Health Index, Starke, Hampton, and Lawtey are among the areas of highest need in Bradford County. Figure 4 demonstrates zip-code 32091 scored 91.6 on the 2021 Mental Health Index created by Conduent Healthy Communities Institute. This Mental Health Index is a measure of socioeconomic and health factors correlated with self-reported poor mental health. Below is a breakdown by race of the population within each zip-code of concern.

### Starke-32091 Population Breakdown by Race



Figure 9: Source: US Zip Codes

### Hampton-32044 Population Breakdown by Race

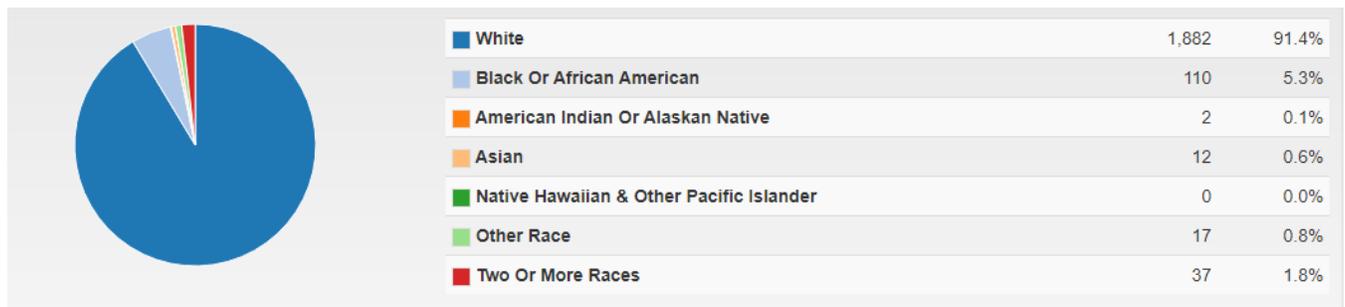


Figure 10: US Zip Codes

### Lawtey-32058 Population Breakdown by Race



Figure 11: US Zip Codes

## VII. SDOH DATA

Social Determinants of Health (SDOHs) are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes. The SDOHs can be broken into the following categories: education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, social and community context, and economic stability. The Health Equity Team identified multiple SDOHs that impact the prioritized health disparity, mental health. They are listed below.



## A. Education Access and Quality



- **Education Access and Quality data for Bradford County**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median usual weekly earnings for adults aged 25 and over that lack a high school diploma is \$493, compared to \$678, for workers who have a diploma. That's an **annual difference of \$9,620**. Earnings are higher for those with a high school diploma. Median weekly earnings for workers with a high school diploma but no college was \$781. That works out to \$40, 612 per year. The unemployment rate for those with a high school diploma is 7.1%. (<http://www.smartasset.com>). As evidenced by the Health Disparities Report from [www.AmericasHealthRankings.org](http://www.AmericasHealthRankings.org), “Educational attainment is a strong predictor of health. Americans with higher levels of education have better job opportunities, earnings, and resources to live longer, healthier lives than those with less education. Lower educational attainment is associated with greater prevalence of many chronic conditions, mental and behavioral health challenges, and premature death.” The article goes on to prove that adults between the ages of 18-44 without a high school diploma are more affected. This population has a higher rate of unemployment. Unemployment rates decrease with each increase in educational attainment. Education, or the lack thereof, is linked to mental health and health disparities in employment. Different skill levels and educational background can create inequalities in wages, opportunities for promotions and job security.

**Individuals with No High School Diploma (Aged 25 Years and Older), Single Year, Overall**

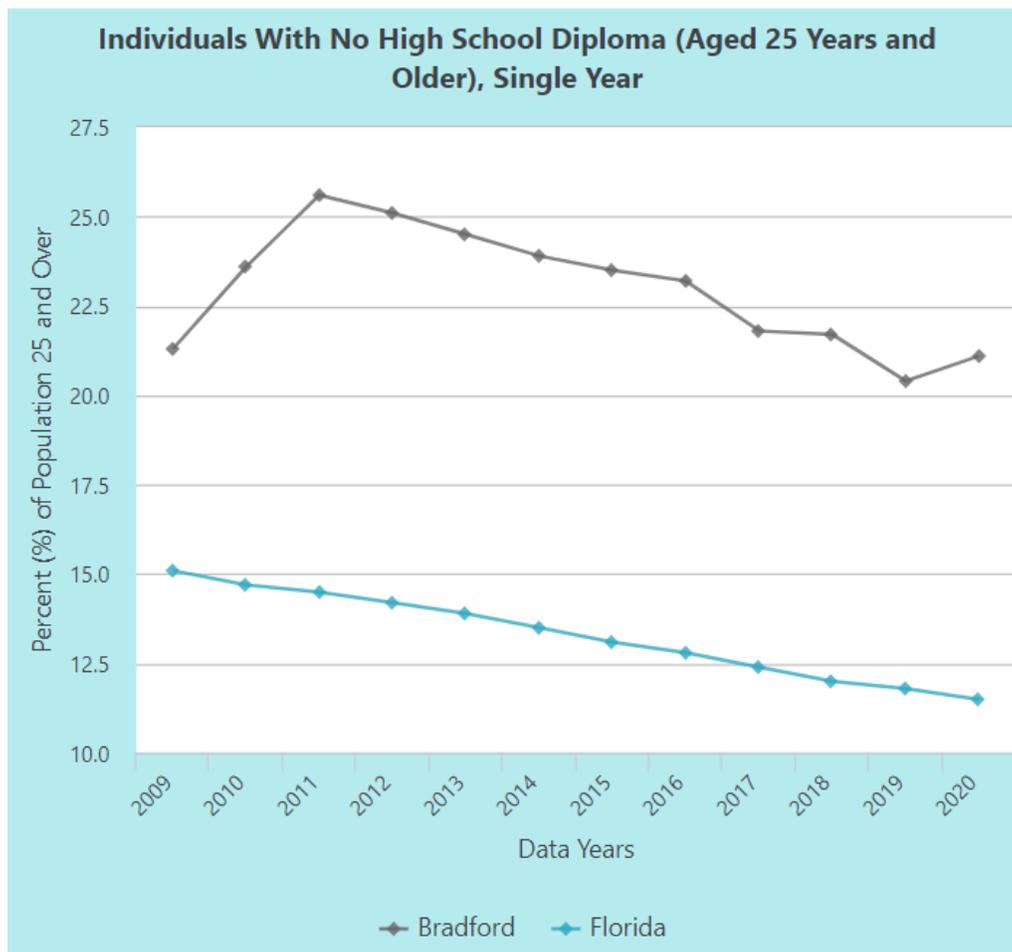


Figure 12: Individuals with No High School Diploma (Aged 25 Years and Older), Single Year. Source: FL Health Charts <https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndGrp.Dataviewer>

The rate of individuals with no high school diploma in Bradford County is 21.1% which is greater than the Florida rate of 11.5%. Individuals who have attained higher education tend to live healthier lives. Education is linked to income, where attaining less education is often linked to lower income. Individuals who attain higher education tend to be healthier than those who did not receive a high school diploma. While this figure has dropped within the last decade, there has not been a drastic change in the rate of individuals aged 25 years and older with no high school diploma.

**Individuals with No High School Diploma (Aged 25 Years and Older),  
Single Year, White/Black**

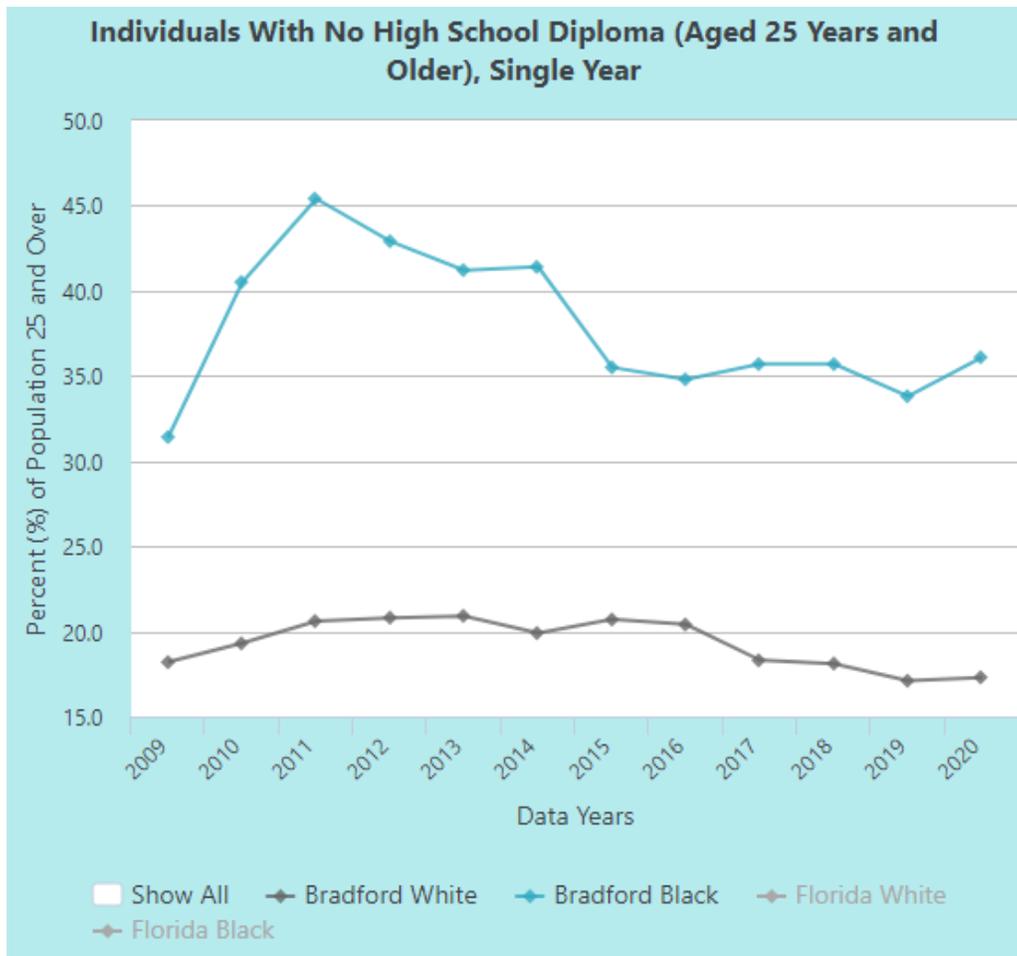


Figure 13: Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

The above figure shows a clear disparity in individuals with no high school diploma aged 25 years and older for Bradford Black individuals with a consistently higher percentage than Bradford White individuals. The percentage of individuals with no high school diploma was 36.1 in the year 2020 compared to 17.3 for Bradford White individuals.

**Individuals with No High School Diploma (Aged 25 Years and Older),  
Single Year, Disabled/Non-Disabled**

Data for this indicator has not yet been collected for individuals with a disability. The Health Equity Taskforce will work with the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity to acquire additional data for this indicator.

### High School Graduation Rate, Single Year, Overall

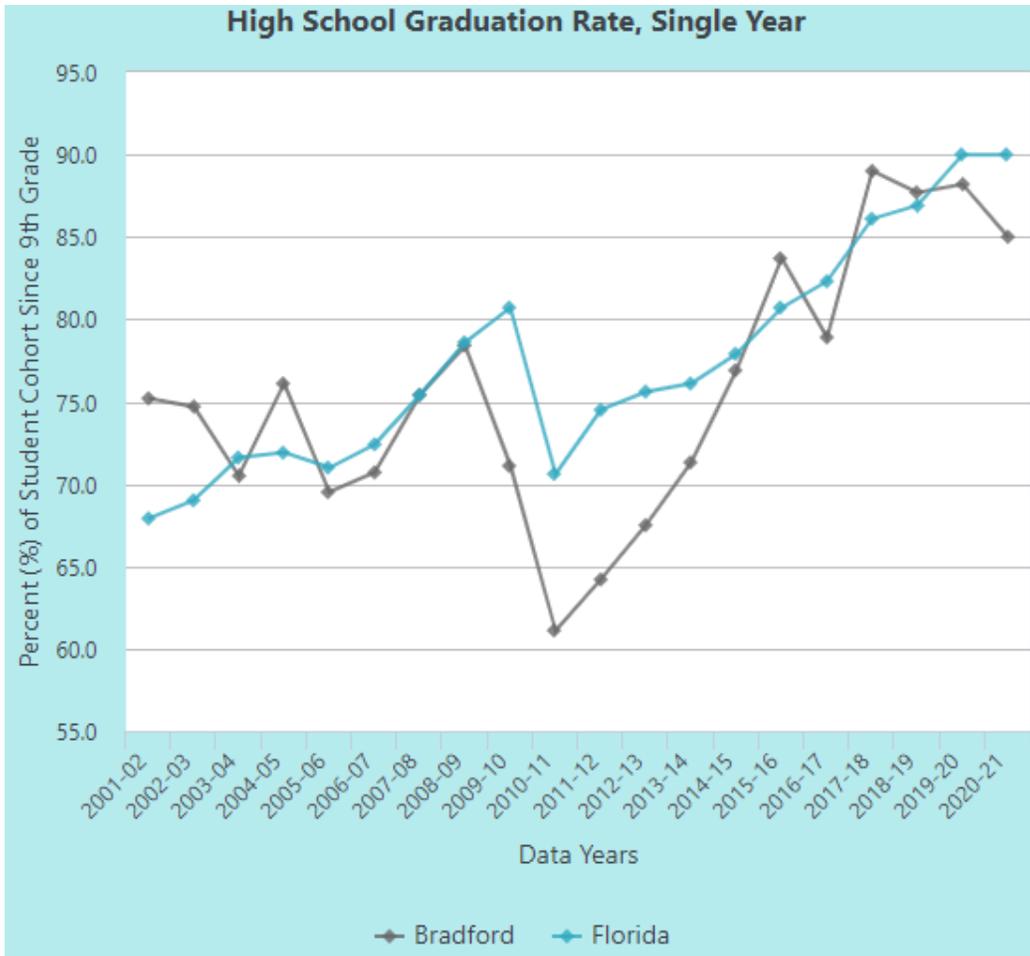


Figure 14: Source: FLHealth Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

Highschool graduation rates for Bradford County have been declining since 2018. For the school year 2020-2021, the Bradford County graduation rate was 85.0% compared to the Florida rate of 90.0%. Receiving a high school diploma allows individuals to have a higher earning potential, thus maximizing economic stability.

#### High School Graduation, LGBTQ+

According to Healthy People 2020, “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students report that physical and verbal abuse in school often influences their decision to drop out. LGBT high school students also tend to have less academic success and lower self-esteem”, ([High School Graduation - Healthy People 2030 | health.gov](https://www.health.gov/our-initiatives/healthy-people-2030)). despite the efforts of the Health Equity Team and taskforce to identify data regarding high school graduation rates for the LGBTQ+ community, data regarding this indicator is not available in Bradford County.

**High School Graduation Rate, Percentage of Student Cohort Since 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Single Year, By Race, White/Black**

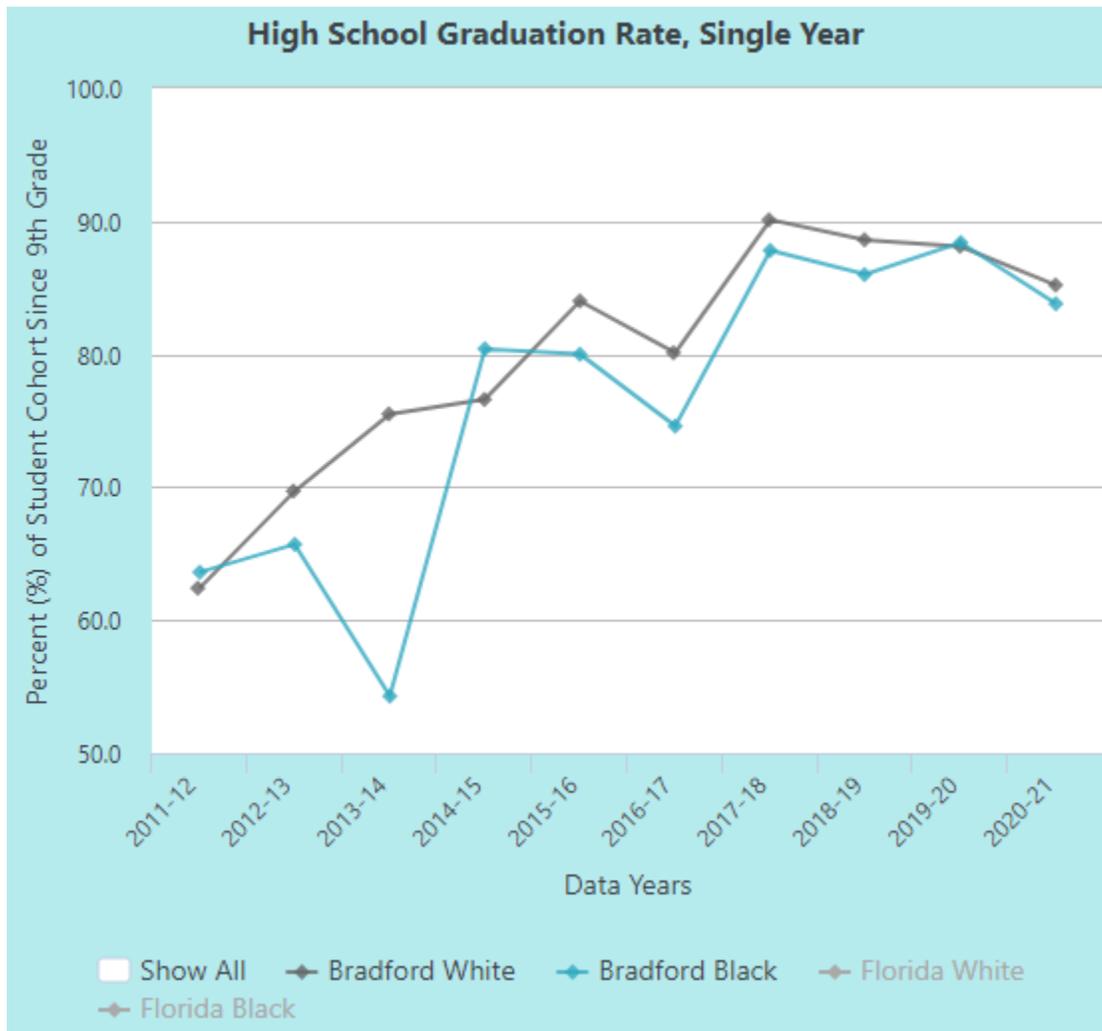


Figure 15: Source: FLHealthCharts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

In the year 2020-2021, Black students had a graduation rate of 83.8, this rate is lower than the state of Florida rate of 87.1 for Black students. The graduation rate of White students in the same year was 85.2%, much lower than the state of Florida rate of 91.8% for White students. Comparatively, Black students in Bradford County had the lowest high school graduation rate of these groups. Our priority population has historically been impacted by policies that have placed them at a disadvantage in comparison to the majority group.

### High School Graduation Rate, Percentage of Student Cohort Since 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Single Year, By Race (Disabled/Not Disabled)

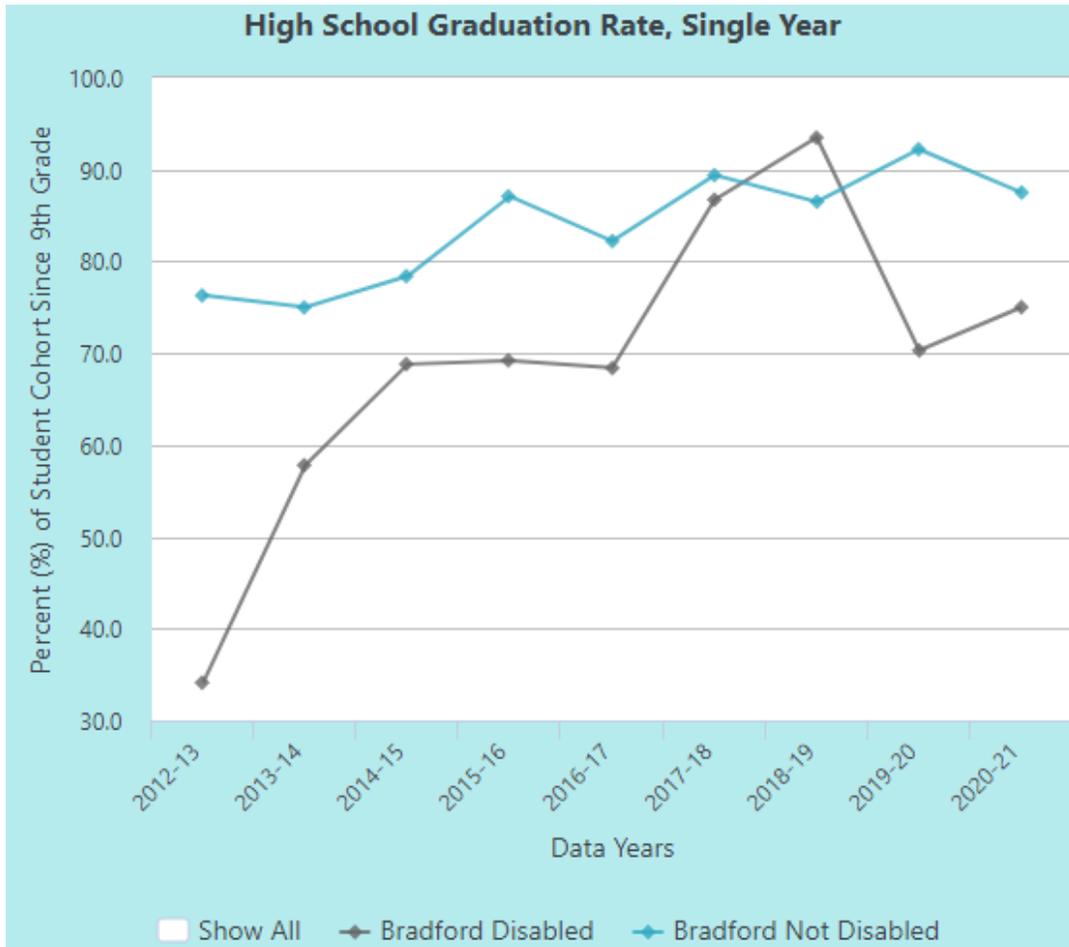


Figure 16: High School Graduation Rate (Disabled/Not Disabled). Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

The above graph shows a clear disparity between disabled and non-disabled individuals who graduate from high school in Bradford County as the rates of individuals with a disability who graduated from high school has been lower than for individuals who are not disabled, except for the year 2018-2019, where individuals with a disability had a high school graduation percentage of 93.5. In the year 2020-2021, there is a clear disparity between these two groups as individuals with a disability had a high school graduation percentage of 75.0, much lower than individuals without a disability with 87.5% of these individuals graduating from high school.

| Education Access and Quality |  |   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| SDOH                         | Vulnerable Populations Impacted                  | How the SDOH Impacts Mental Health  |
| High School Graduation       | Black and African American, Disabled individuals | Receiving a high school diploma allows individuals to have a higher earning potential. Individuals who receive a high school diploma are more likely to have a higher income, thereby having access to greater resources such as quality food, healthcare, health insurance, and reliable transportation. Receiving a high school diploma leads to better health outcomes in these individuals. |

## B. Economic Stability

Employment serves as a major anchor of the SDOH, Economic Stability. It is highly documented that unemployment can lead to negative health consequences and those who are unemployed suffer from various stress-related illnesses. Individuals tend to have experiences such as perceived job insecurity or underemployment that have detrimental implications on mental health long-term.

According to an article in the Gallup, “one in five Americans who have been unemployed for a year or more say they currently have or are being treated for depression—almost double the rate among those who have been unemployed for five weeks or less”, ([In U.S., Depression Rates Higher for Long-Term Unemployed \(gallup.com\)](#)). Another finding reported by Gallup found unemployed Americans are more than twice as likely as those with full-time jobs to say they currently have or are being treated for depression. The overall implication of these findings is economic stability, particularly employment impacts mental health. These findings suggest economic stability is of particular importance for the residents of Bradford County, as it is tied to poor mental health outcomes. Persons who are in poverty are exposed to greater stressors because of limited income. The inability to put food on the table, pay for housing, utilities or transportation has serious implications for poor mental health outcomes. When considering improving mental health in Bradford County, economic stability is crucial.

## Unemployment Rate, Single Year, Overall

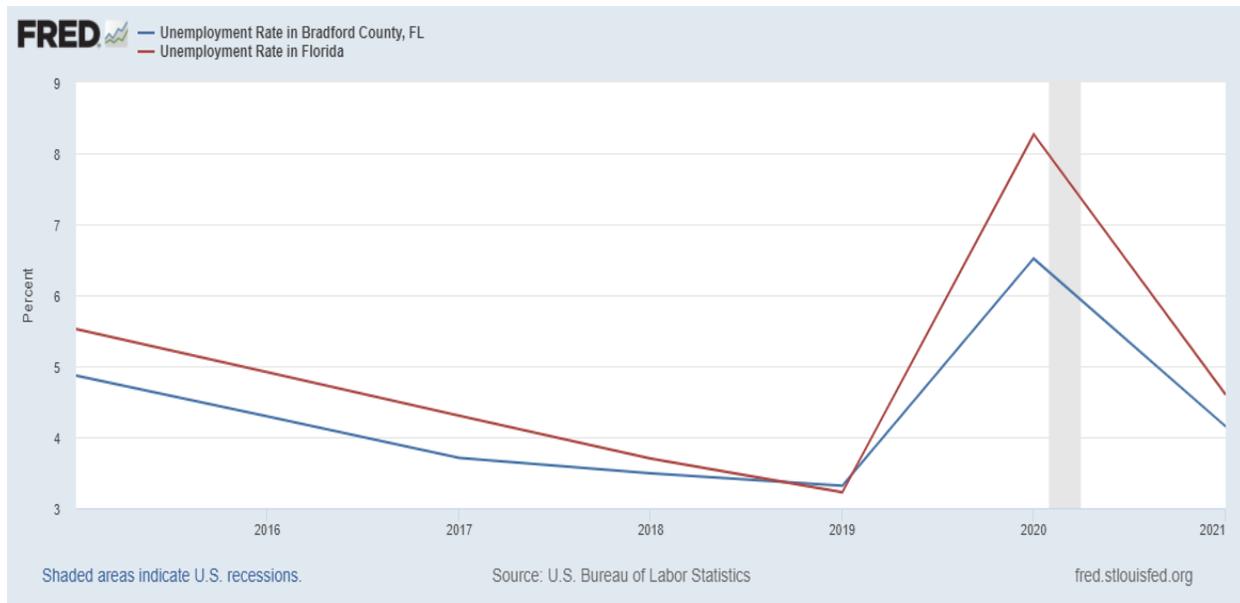


Figure 17: Unemployment Rate: Bradford & State of Florida. Source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics

According to the figure above, estimates showed unemployment rates in Bradford County have been lower or on par with the state rate for the last decade. The unemployment rate for Bradford County in 2019 was estimated at 3.4 percent of the labor force, nearly equivalent to the state rate of 3.3% (FDOH, Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management). Figure 11 shows through the year 2019, unemployment had been on a steady decline since prior years. This data is impacted in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic and the U.S. recession that occurred during that year. Unemployment rates in 2021 were higher than in 2019, with Bradford County at a rate of 4.2% (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics). This is slightly lower than the 4.6% state rate of unemployment. Employment in the United States is linked to availability to health insurance. Inability to pay for medical services impedes individuals from seeking preventive healthcare and mental health services. In the year 2020, the unemployment rate was 5.9%, which affected access to health care and economic stability of the Bradford County Population.

### Individuals Below Poverty Level, Single Year, Overall

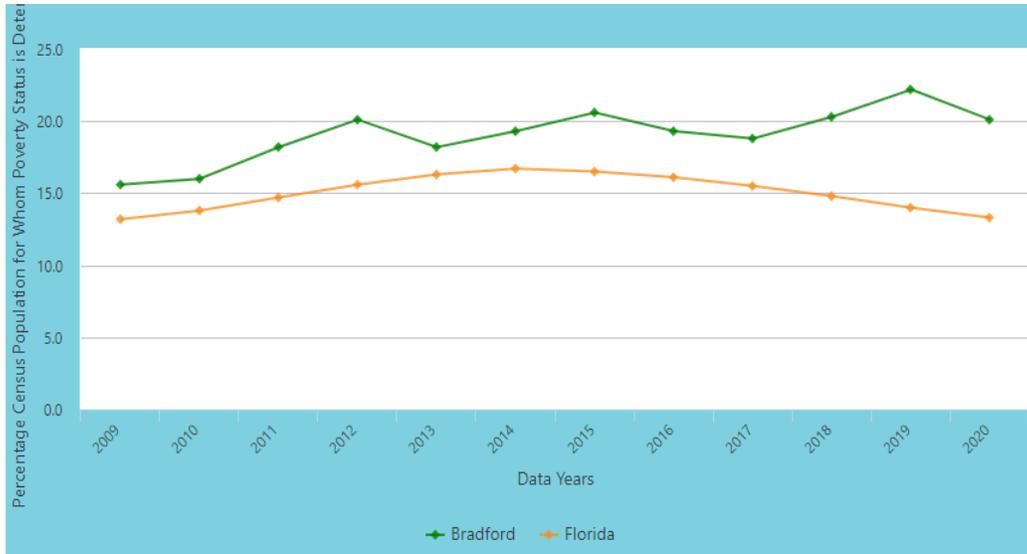


Figure 18: Individuals Below Poverty Level, Single Year, overall. Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

The above figure shows Bradford County has been consistently above the state of Florida rate of individuals living below poverty. In the year 2020, the rate of individuals living below poverty was 20.1 compared the Florida rate of 13.3.

### Individuals Below Poverty Level, Single Year, Race, White/Black



Figure 19: Individuals Below Poverty, Single Year. Source: FL Health Charts, Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

The above graph shows the disparity of individuals living below poverty between White and Black individuals in Bradford County. The rate of individuals living below poverty for Bradford Black individuals was 33.9 in the year 2020. This is much higher than Bradford White individuals living below poverty for the same year with a rate of 17.8. Differences in income, opportunity and education have an impact on poverty levels. Income directly affects access to healthcare, healthy food options, transportation, and housing. This social determinant of health particularly impacts the African American and Black population in Bradford County. According to the American Community Survey data, median household income was lowest for Black Residents in Lawtey (ZCTA 32058) at 17,473 dollars. Lawtey (ZCTA 32058) scored a 3 on the Mental Health Index and is among the three zip codes of focus for poor mental health.

**Individuals Below Poverty, Single Year, Disabled/Non-Disabled**

People with at least one disability reported having an income less than \$10,000 at a higher rate than individuals without a disability. This rate was 0.39 for individuals with a disability, compared to a rate of 0.23 for individuals without a disability. According to the US. Census Bureau, “as a group, full time, year-round workers with a disability earn 87 cents for every dollar earned by those with no disability” ([census.gov](https://www.census.gov)). Historically, individuals with a disability earn less than those without a disability.

The impact of economic stability on mental health in Bradford County.

| Economic Stability |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| SDOH               | Vulnerable Populations Impacted                             | How the SDOH Impacts Mental Health   |
| Employment         | Black and African American, People living with a disability | Unemployment is shown to cause detrimental effects on mental health and even physical health. According to Connie Wanberg PhD, work provides time structure, identity, purpose, and social interaction ( <a href="#">The toll of job loss (apa.org)</a> ). The loss of this can lead to increased risk for poor mental health, particularly for individuals who have limited financial resources. In the United States, many |

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
|        |   | individuals rely on employer-paid insurance. Unemployment can lead to loss of insurance coverage and thus limited access to mental health resources that without insurance can be very expensive.  |
| Income | Black and African American, People living with a disability | Income inequality and disparities in Bradford County are very pronounced for two of our priority population groups, Black/African American and people living with a disability. Income directly impacts mental health as individuals with low-income face greater stressors. These individuals many times are working to provide basic and necessary essentials, such as housing and food for their families. Ultimately, low income is a risk factor for poor mental health in Bradford County. |

## C. Neighborhood and Built Environment



- **Neighborhood and built environment data for Bradford County**

**Population Living Within ½ Mile of a Park, Single Year,**

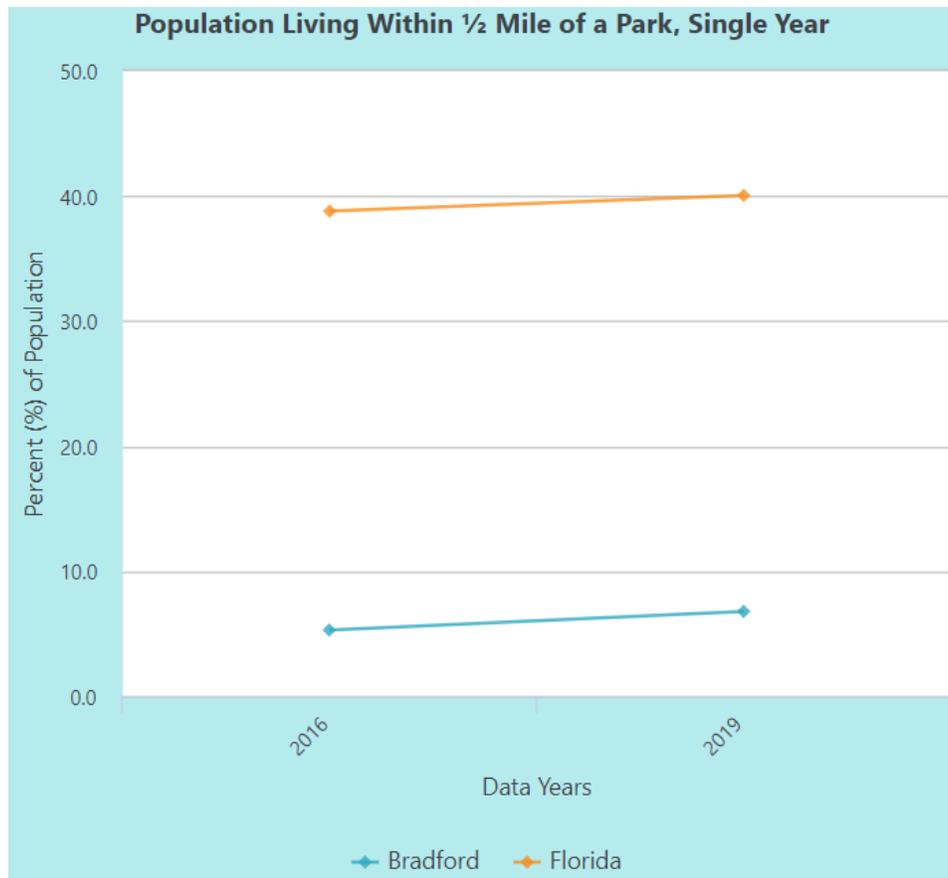


Figure 20: Population Living Within 1/2 Mile of a Park, Single Year Source: FLHealthCharts

The above figure shows that in 2019, 6.8% of the population in Bradford County lived within ½ a mile of a park compared to 40.1% of the Florida population. Walkability and access to safe community spaces can improve overall community health by supporting physical activity. Exposure to nature and natural environments can have a positive impact on health. Having access to public parks encourages individuals to walk or bike there, thereby increasing physical activity and decreasing chronic disease rates. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, “more time spent in parks and green spaces have help individuals fight against mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress” ([Parks and Improved Mental Health and Quality of Life | Fact Sheets | Parks and Health | National Recreation and Park Association \(nrpa.org\)](#)). Bradford County’s limited availability to parks and recreational spaces can negatively impact mental health in the community. Bradford County has limited parks and developed recreational spaces that include sidewalks for easy and safe accessibility. While there are several parks in Bradford County, only one has

sidewalks for easy walkability. Our priority cities, Lawtey and Hampton also have limited availability to parks and recreational centers.

### Population Living Within ½ Mile of a Healthy Food Source, Single Year,



Figure 21: Population Living Within 1/2 Mile of a Healthy Food Source, Single Year. Source: FL Health Charts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management.

In an article published by the National Library of Medicine, a possible link was found between consuming nutritious foods and improved mental health. This research “supports the idea that creating environments and developing measures that promote healthy, nutritious diets, while decreasing the consumption of highly processed and refined “junk” foods may provide benefits even beyond the well-known effects on physical health, including improved psychological wellbeing” (Food for Thought 2020: Food and mood: how do diet and nutrition affect mental wellbeing? - PMC (nih.gov)). The rate of individuals living within ½ a mile of a healthy food source is very low at 1.9% in the year 2019, compared to the Florida rate of 27.7. Residents of Bradford County have limited access to grocery stores. Currently the city of Lawtey, zip code 32058, does not have a grocery store. This puts the residents of Lawtey at a high disadvantage as they are not able to access healthy foods without having to go out of their way. Due to a lack of public transportation, it is not always feasible for the low-income population of Lawtey to travel to Starke or other neighboring cities to be able to make healthy food choices.

- **The impact of neighborhood and built environment on mental health.**

| <b>Neighborhood and Built Environment</b> |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>SDOH</b>                               | <b>Vulnerable Populations Impacted</b>                    | <b>How the SDOH Impacts Mental Health</b>  |
| Parks                                     | Residents of Lawtey, Hampton, and Brooker                 | Access to parks and outdoor recreational activities can provide increased opportunities for Bradford County residents to participate in physical activity. Exercise and recreational activities have been shown to improve mental health and overall physical health. By providing increased access to public parks, residents will benefit both physically and mentally as exercise is an important factor to decreasing rates of chronic diseases and improving mental health.   |
| Access to nutritional food                | Low-income residents of Bradford County, Lawtey residents | Access to nutritional foods impacts all Bradford County residents as healthy foods are often not attainable at proximity. Lack of nutritional foods can further increase the risk of poor mental health as recent research suggests a connection between your gut microbiome and poor mental health. Per, a research article published by NIH, “an unhealthy gut microbiome can result from a poor diet low in fiber and high in saturated fats. Including nutritional foods in your diet can have anti-inflammatory properties” ( <a href="#">Food for Thought 2020: Food and mood: how do diet and nutrition affect mental wellbeing? - PMC (nih.gov)</a> ). This research provides support for the role of nutritional foods in improving mood and overall mental health. |

## D. Social and Community Context



- **Social and community context data for Bradford County**

Social and community context are the interactions we have with our family, friends, co-workers, and community members. These relationships have an impact on our health and overall well-being. Poor support systems and low community engagement can lead to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. The Bradford County Health Equity Taskforce raised concerns about poor social and community support within the county. The geography of Bradford County does not always lend to high community support as many residents are isolated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, broadband became a crucial service. This service allowed the community to stay connected virtually during a time where physical interaction and participation was not possible. Maintaining and building connections with other community members enabled residents to keep in touch and avoid complete isolation. According to the Pew Research Center, seven-in-ten Americans say they ever use any kind of social media site ([Social Media Use in 2021 | Pew Research Center](#)). This measure shows social media has become an increasingly used tool among communities. While there are age gaps in social media use, it has become a way for residents to stay connected.

Not only was broadband connection important for social connectivity, but it is an important tool that was used by teachers to stay connected with their students. For some, the inability to connect to reliable internet services posed as a barrier to receiving lessons and continue their studies. Not only is reliable internet service used in the educational realm, but many providers are transitioning to telehealth services. Telehealth services enable providers to reach additional members of the community including home-bound individuals.

## **Engagement in Bradford County**

Bradford County engagement was observed by the AARP livability index with Bradford County scoring 41 out of a 1-100 index. This score was measured based off five different metrics including broadband cost and speed, opportunity for civic involvement, voting rate, social involvement index, and cultural, arts, and entertainment institutions. Bradford County scored 0.89 on a 0 to 2.5 on the Social Involvement Index based on the AARP livability score. This index measures the extent to which residents belong to groups, organizations, or associations, see, or hear from friends and family, do favors for neighbors, or do something positive for their community. Overall scores for these measures in Bradford County are low. Regarding our areas of concern, Starke scored 41 in overall engagement and 0.9 on the Social Involvement Index, measuring about the same as Bradford County. The city of Hampton scored an overall score of 42 for Engagement and 0.89 on the Social Involvement Index. The city of Lawtey scored an overall score of 39 and a score of 0.9 on the social involvement index. These scores are overall very low for our priority areas, demonstrating the need for a greater focus on social and community involvement.

## **Broadband in Bradford County**

The AARP offers data on the percentage of residents who have access to high-speed, competitively priced services. This data is a percentage of residents who have access to three or more wireline internet service providers, and two or more providers that offer maximum download speeds of 50 megabits per second. In Bradford County, the overall percentage is 46.8. In Starke, 50.5% of residents have a high-speed, competitively priced service. This is greater in Hampton with 72.9% of residents who have high-speed, competitively priced broadband. Internet service decreases drastically for residents of Lawtey, with 11.6% having access to high-speed competitive services. Limited broadband services have a detrimental impact for community members to stay connected with their communities, receive telehealth services and online classes.

- **The impact of social and community context on mental health.**

| <b>Social and Community Context</b> |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>SDOH</b>                         | <b>Vulnerable Populations Impacted</b>                | <b>How the SDOH Impacts Mental Health</b>  |
| Broadband Services                  | Lawtey Residents, Starke Residents                    | In the age of technology, internet service provides an opportunity to engage with your community at a distance. Safe use of this technology can increase meaningful connections in communities. Access to internet services has recently allowed for community members to receive healthcare via telehealth. These services have expanded as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lack of internet service in rural communities has made it difficult to expand this service in these areas. The goal of telehealth is to make healthcare more accessible, but the lack of broadband services in Bradford County have made this increasingly difficult to achieve. |
| Community Engagement                | Lawtey Residents, Starke Residents, Hampton Residents | Community involvement creates an atmosphere of support. Participation in community events, or in organizations within the community can provide individuals with a sense of belonging that can lead to improved mental health among residents of Bradford County.  |

## E. Health Care Access and Quality



According to HealthyPeople2020, “Limited availability of health care resources is another barrier that may reduce access to health services and increase the risk of poor health outcomes. For example, physician shortages may mean that patients experience longer wait times and delayed care.”, [Access to Health Services | Healthy People 2020](#)). Access to quality healthcare services is essential to maintain good health. Bradford County has limited providers and practitioners. Mental health counselors are also limited in Bradford County. Limited availability of these resources impacts the mental health of Bradford County individuals. Due to limited availability of providers, Bradford County residents may be at increased risk of poor mental health.

- **Health care access and quality data for Bradford County**

### Population Without Health Insurance Coverage in Bradford County, Overall

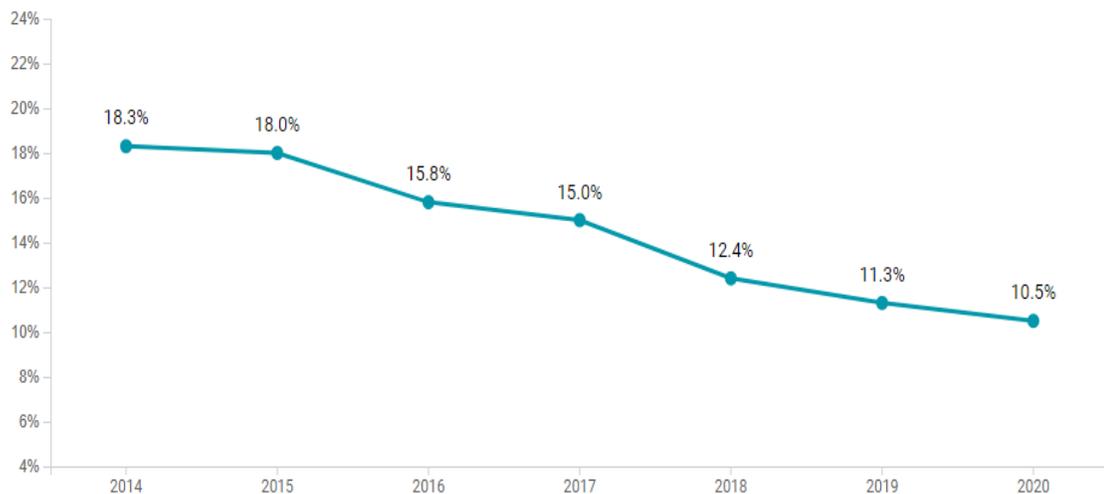


Figure 22: Population Without Health Insurance Coverage in Bradford County, Florida. Source: United States Census Bureau. 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=0500000US12007>

The above figure demonstrates declining rates of residents in Bradford County without health insurance coverage. This rate has been dropping since 2014 from a rate of 18.3% to a rate of 10.5% in the year 2020. Comparable to the State of Florida rate, Bradford County has a higher rate of individuals with health insurance coverage, as the Florida rate for percent of the population without health insurance coverage was 12.7% in the year 2020. Greater access to health insurance coverage allows residents to visit their primary care providers and specialists with more frequency. According to the American Hospital Association, health insurance creates greater access to care and is associated with “lower death rates, better health outcomes, and improved productivity” ([American Hospital Association, 2017 report-coverage-overview-2017\\_0.pdf \(aha.org\)](#)). Within the 32091-zip code, 8.5% of the population do not have health care coverage in comparison to 12.7% of the population in the state of Florida (US. Census Data).

### Healthcare Services that are Difficult to Obtain

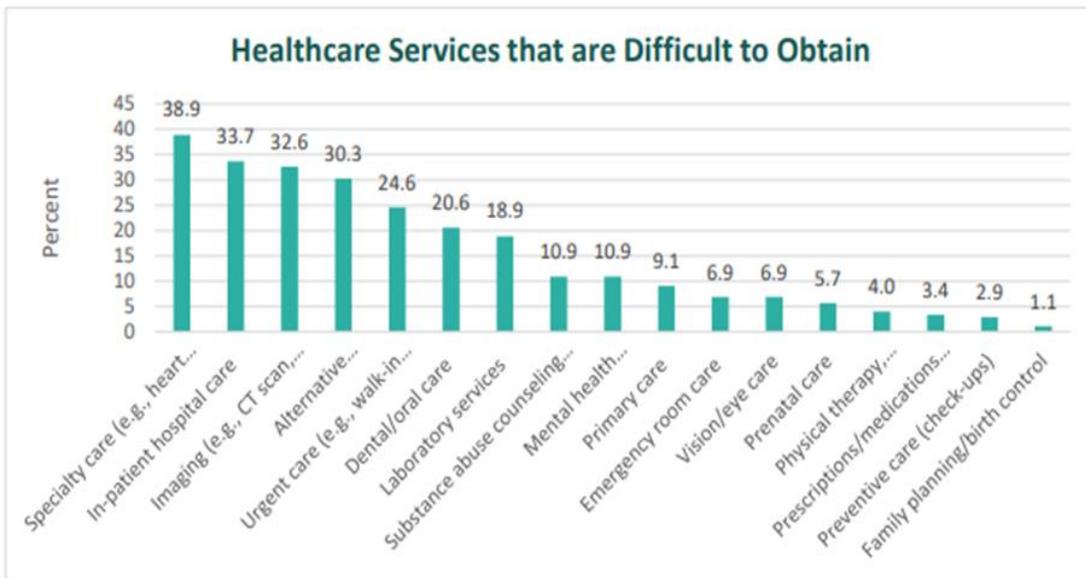


Figure 23: Healthcare services that are difficult to obtain. Source: Bradford County Community Health Assessment, Prepared by WellFlorida Council.

Healthcare access indicators demonstrate positive trends in healthcare access in Bradford County. The percentage of adults in Bradford County with any type of health insurance (83.8 percent) was comparable to the state (83.7 percent). A higher percentage of adults reported having a personal doctor (77.3 percent) as well as a medical checkup in the past year (80.0 percent), compared to state averages of 72.0 percent and 76.5 percent, respectively. Still, 15.4 percent of

respondents in Bradford County reported that they could not see a doctor in the last year due to cost. Access to healthcare in Bradford County residents is essential to ensure preventative measures are taken. Greater provider availability would yield better health outcomes for Bradford County residents.

### Health Professional Shortage Area Score

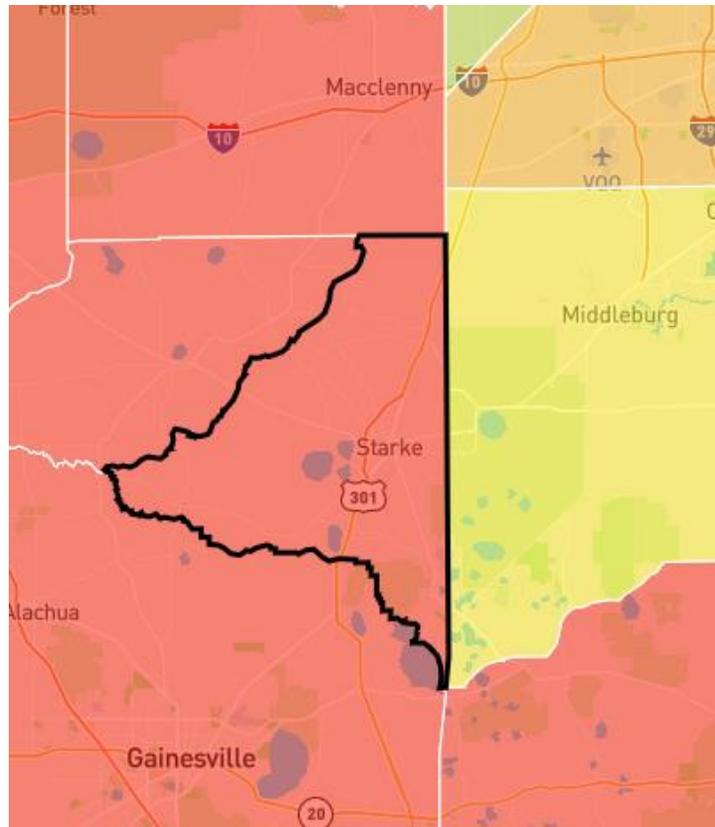


Figure 24: Health Professional Shortage Area Score. Source: AARP Livability Index.  
<https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/search/Bradford%20County%2C%20Florida%2C%20United%20States>

Health care access may be limited due to provider availability in Bradford County. The above figure was taken from the AARP livability index. As part of the overall livability index score, categories are divided and scored separately, one of which is health. The overall score for health according to the AARP livability index is 25 on an index of 1-100. This score was assigned based on several metrics one of which is healthcare professional shortage areas. This metric scored 20 on an index of 0-25, with a higher score signifying worse outcomes. This metric has gotten worse by 6 points since 2015, as the rate during that year was 14. This metric is determined using data from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Bradford County does not currently have a long-term care hospital. Shand's Starke Regional Medical Center only provides emergency care and limited

extended care to residents. Our two other priority cities, Lawtey and Hampton are dependent upon providers located in the city of Starke. Low provider availability may discourage Bradford County residents from seeking medical attention and preventative care.

### Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Single Year

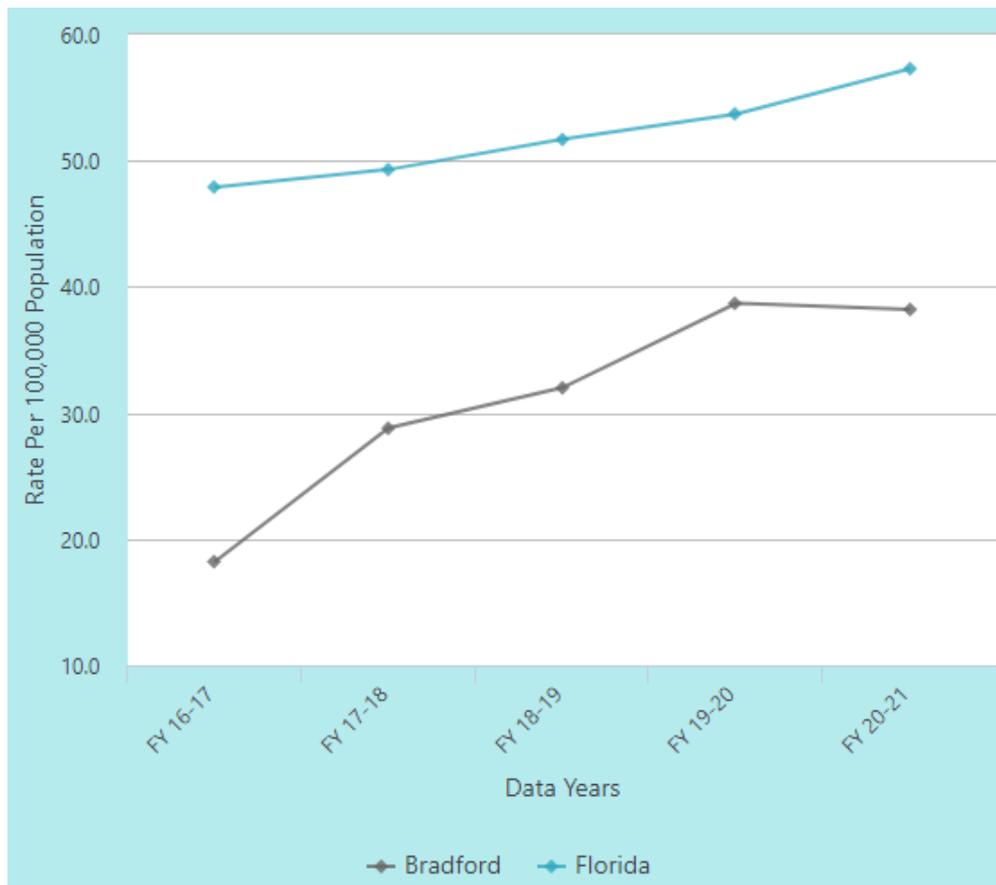


Figure 25: Source: FLHealthCharts. Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management

The above figure demonstrates the low number of licensed mental health counselors in Bradford County. The shortage of licensed mental health counselors makes it difficult for individuals seeking mental health resources to attain them. Bradford County saw a rate of 38.2 per 100,000 population in FY 2020-2021, compared to the state rate of 57.3 for the same year.

The impact of health care access and quality on mental health.

| <b>Health Care Access and Quality</b> |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>SDOH</b>                           | <b>Vulnerable Populations Impacted</b>       | <b>How the SDOH Impacts Mental Health</b>   |
| Health Coverage                       | Black and African Americans, White Residents | Health care coverage impacts availability to mental health resources as many mental health counselors often do not take Medicaid. Cost of services is a barrier for individuals who do not have health care coverage. In Bradford County, overall health care coverage is greater than the Florida rate, but for individuals who are not employed, health care coverage is not available. |
| Provider Availability                 | Hampton Residents, Lawtey Residents          | Greater provider availability and availability of licensed mental health professionals are essential to providing necessary treatment and prevention for individuals to achieve their greatest level of health. Without these providers, residents lack professional medical care that can have detrimental effects on their overall physical and mental health.                          |

## VIII. SDOH PROJECTS

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The Minority Health Liaison recruited and engaged members across the county, including government agencies, nonprofits, private businesses, and community organizations, to join the Health Equity Taskforce. The Minority Health Liaison took into consideration the prioritized health disparity and the impactful SDOHs identified by the Health Equity Team during recruitment.

### A. Data Review

The Health Equity Taskforce reviewed data, including health disparities and SDOHs provided by the Health Equity Team. The Health Equity Taskforce also researched evidence-based and promising approaches to improve the identified SDOHs. The Health Equity Taskforce considered the policies, systems and environments that lead to inequities.

### B. Barrier Identification

Members of the Health Equity Taskforce worked collaboratively to identify their organizations’ barriers to fully addressing the SDOHs relevant to their organization’s mission. Common themes were explored as well as collaborative strategies to overcome barriers.

| Partners                     | SDOH                           | Partner Barriers   | Theme  | Collaborative Strategies   |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Florida Department of Health | Health Care Access and Quality | Provider Availability, (Primary Care and Mental Health Counselors), Parent participation and input, Community members have a difficult time trusting provider, services etc. | Building trust in the community, Provider Availability | Working collaboratively with organizations on the taskforce to provide a Community Resource Hub for residents to seek resources, and an overall sense of community to build lasting relationships. |

## DOH-Bradford County

### Health Equity Plan

|                                     |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc. | Social/Community Context, Access to Health and Quality Health Care | Provider Availability, Expansion of Telehealth services for individuals without broadband, Community members have a difficult time trusting providers and services.                    | Building trust in the community, Provider Availability | Working collaboratively with organizations on the taskforce to provide a Community Resource Hub for residents to seek resources, and an overall sense of community to build lasting relationships. |
| Bradford County School Board        | Education Access and Quality                                       | Parental participation and input in child's education, Relationship building with parents to gain trust, Low education, and literacy   | Building trust in the community                        | Working collaboratively with organizations on the taskforce to provide a Community Resource Hub for residents to seek resources, and an overall sense of community to build lasting relationships. |
| Episcopal Children's Services       | Social/Community Context, Education Access and Quality             | Parental participation and input in child's education, Relationship building with parents is difficult and makes it harder to provide services, Low literacy, and education of parents | Building Trust with the community                      | Working collaboratively with organizations on the taskforce to provide a Community Resource Hub for residents to seek resources, and an overall sense of community to build lasting relationships. |
| UF IFAS Extension                   | Healthcare Quality and Access, Social/Community Context            | Limited availability of healthy foods for Bradford County residents,   | Provider Availability                                  | Establishing a community garden to increase access to healthy food options and providing a mobile  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | Limited providers available in Bradford County |  | medical unit to increase availability of primary care for residents. |
|--|--|--|--|--|

## C. Community Projects

The Health Equity Taskforce researched evidence-based strategies to overcome the identified barriers and improve the SDOH that impact the prioritized health disparity. The Health Equity Taskforce used this information to collaboratively design community projects to address the SDOHs. During project design, the Health Equity Taskforce considered the policies, systems and environments that lead to inequities. Projects included short, medium, and long-term goals with measurable objectives. These projects were reviewed, edited, and approved by the Coalition to ensure feasibility.

### **TEAM: HEALTH EQUITY TASKFORCE**

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## Community Resource Hub

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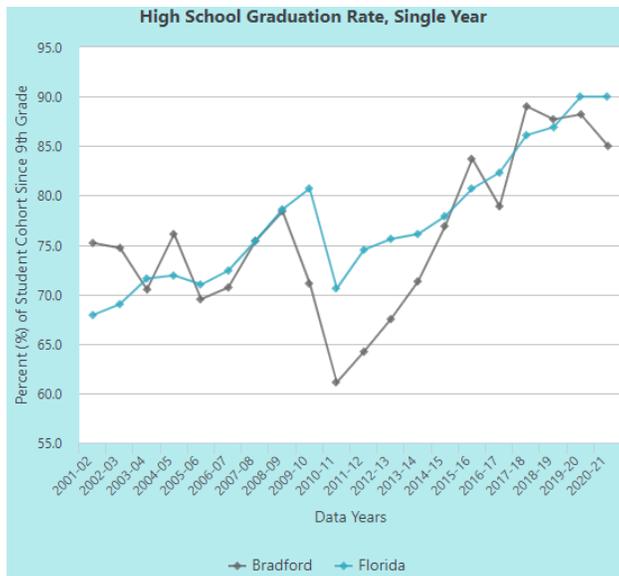
### Background

Bradford County residents particularly in the cities of Starke, Hampton and Lawtey are faced with poor economic stability and low educational attainment. Bradford County overall saw a lower rate of high school graduation and higher rates of individuals below poverty compared to the State of Florida. The populations most affected by these issues are Black residents and people living with a disability. Addressing these issues can improve the overall mental health of individuals in Bradford County.

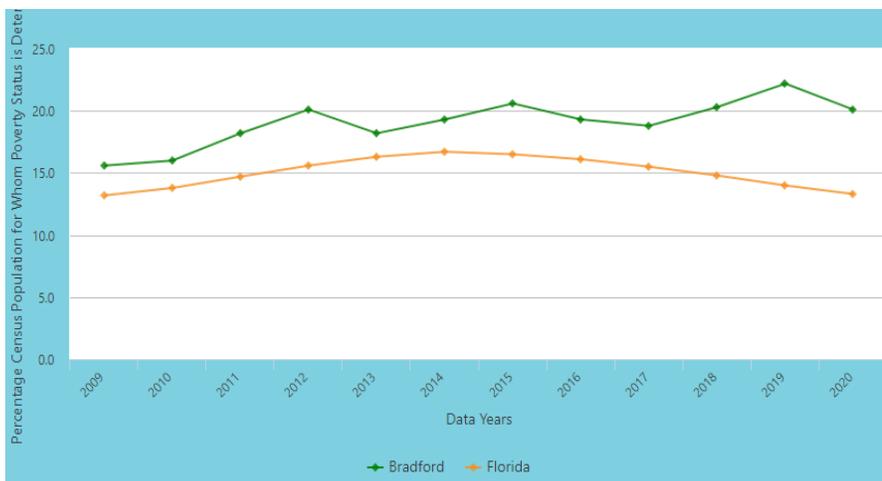
Some barriers to these issues include limited availability for primary care and mental health counseling. Lack of providers and mental health counselors can exacerbate poor mental health in the county. The Health Equity Taskforce identified mistrust of organizations in the community is also a barrier to reaching our priority populations. Historically, our priority populations have been targeted by policies and systems that have fairly so,

created mistrust of many organizations within the county. Building relationships and trust among our priority populations is essential to bridge the gap in resources for these individuals. The following is data that has prompted the Health Equity Taskforce to develop this project:

**Bradford County High School Graduation Rates**



**Bradford County Individuals Below Poverty Level**



**Description and Deliverables**

The Health Equity Taskforce will establish a community resource Hub in each of the priority cities, Starke, Hampton, and Lawtey. The Health Equity

Taskforce identified mistrust in the community as a barrier to seeking services in Bradford County. The intent of the community resource hub is to establish a space where residents can seek resources and services with the goal of creating a lasting relationship between community organizations, and the residents of Bradford County. One of the services that will be provided at the hub includes GED and tutoring services available to both parents and students. These services will be provided by volunteers and partners. By providing GED and tutoring services, we hope to see an increase in high school graduation rates. Increased educational attainment for both adults and students will improve indicators for income in Bradford County and improve overall economic stability. Mental health counseling services will also be offered at the community resource hub. A relationship has been established with Meridian Behavioral Center and mental health counselors in Bradford County. These services will be provided by community partners and volunteers during established dates and times. The community resource hub will be an opportunity for residents to establish a sense of community and belonging. All members of the Health Equity Taskforce will be active partners in this effort.

The Health Equity Coalition has reviewed and approved this project for feasibility. The recruitment of staff and volunteers for this project is still in progress. The timeline for this project has not yet been established but will be discussed at the next Health Equity Taskforce Meeting.

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### Progress

Project has not yet begun. Progress will be reported on a quarterly basis.

## IX. HEALTH EQUITY PLAN OBJECTIVES

### A. Mental Health

#### Health Disparity Objectives:

- By June 2027 decrease the percentage of adults who had poor mental health on 14 or more of the past 30 days from 19.1% to 15% [FLHealthCharts]
- By June 2027 decrease the rate of individuals with disabilities who had poor physical and mental health days from 16.11(2022) to 10.0. [Knowli Data Science and the FSU Claude Pepper Center Faculty, 2022].

#### Community Resource Hubs Table

|  | Lead Entity and Unit            | Lead Point Person | Data Source      | Baseline Value | Target Value | Plan Alignment |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Long-Term SDOH Goal: <b>Economic Stability</b> : The goal of Bradford County is to improve employment opportunities and increase resources to all residents with the aspiration to decrease poverty in the county. |                                 |                   |                  |                |              |                |
| Objective: By June 2027 decrease the rate of residents living below poverty line from 20.1 to 17.0   | Bradford County DOH             | To be determined  | FL Health Charts | 20.1           | 17.0         |                |
| Long Term SDOH Goal: <b>Education Access and Quality</b> : To improve the educational attainment of all residents of Bradford County by providing tutors at the Bradford County Community Resource Hub.            |                                 |                   |                  |                |              |                |
| Objective: By June 2027 improve high school graduation rates from 85.0% to 90.0% for all Bradford Students.  | Bradford County School District | To be determined  | FL Health Charts | 85.0%          | 90.0%        |                |

|  |                                   |                         |  |            |            |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|------------|------------|--|
| <p><b>Medium-Term SDOH Goal: Improve <i>Social and Community Context</i>: To provide a resource hub where residents of Bradford County can create lasting relationships with members of the community and organizations.</b></p> |                                   |                         |  |            |            |  |
| <p>Objective: By December 2025 increase the number of community members receiving mental health counseling from TBD to TBD</p>   | <p>Meridian Behavioral Center</p> | <p>To be determined</p> | <p>Meridian Behavioral Center</p>              | <p>TBD</p> | <p>TBD</p> |  |
| <p><b>Short-Term SDOH Goal: Improve <i>Neighborhood and Built Environment</i>: To establish a community resource hub and improve the proximity of available resources to Bradford County Residents.</b></p>                      |                                   |                         |  |            |            |  |
| <p>Objective: By December 2023 increase the percentage of residents receiving services from taskforce members (Names of Providers) by 30% to target value</p>  | <p>Bradford County DOH</p>        | <p>To be determined</p> | <p>Bradford County Health Equity Taskforce</p> | <p>TBD</p> | <p>TBD</p> |  |

## **X. PERFORMANCE TRACKING AND REPORTING**

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Ongoing communication is critical to the achievement of health equity goals and the institutionalization of a health equity focus. The successes of Health Equity Plan projects are shared with OMHHE, partners, other CHDs, CHD staff, and the Central Office through systematic information-sharing, networking, collecting, and reporting on knowledge gained, so that lessons learned can be replicated in other counties and programs. Regional Health Equity Coordinators facilitate systematic communication within their region.

The Minority Health Liaison serves as the point of contact in their county for sharing progress updates, implementation barriers, and practices associated with the Health Equity Plan. The Minority Health Liaison is responsible for gathering data and monitoring and reporting progress achieved on the goals and objectives of the Health Equity Plan. At least quarterly, the Minority Health Liaison meets with the Health Equity Taskforce to discuss progress and barriers. The Minority Health Liaison tracks and submits indicator values to the OMHHE within 15 days of the quarter end.

Annually, the Minority Health Liaison submits a Health Equity Plan Annual Report assessing progress toward reaching goals, objectives, achievements, obstacles, and revisions to the Regional Health Equity Coordinator and Coalition. The Regional Health Equity Coordinator and Coalition leaders provide feedback to the Minority Health Liaison and the Health Equity Taskforce from these annual reports. The Minority Health Liaison then submits the completed report to OMHHE by July 15<sup>th</sup> annually.

## **XI. REVISIONS**

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Annually, the Health Equity Taskforce reviews the Health Equity Plan to identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and lessons learned. This information is then used to revise the plan as needed.

| <b>Revision</b> | <b>Revised By</b> | <b>Revision Date</b> | <b>Rationale for Revision</b> |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
|                 |                   |                      |                               |
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## **ADDENDUM: HEALTH EQUITY COALITION**

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| <b>Name</b>        | <b>Title</b>                              | <b>Organization</b>                        |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Janice Mortimer    | Mayor City of Starke                      | City of Starke                             |
| Jimmy Crosby       | City Clerk, City of Starke                | City of Starke                             |
| Brandon Ludwig     | Director of Community Services            | City of Starke                             |
| Carolyn Spooner    | District 1 County Commissioner            | Bradford County                            |
| Mary Lou Hildreth  | City/Clerk Administrator                  | City of Hampton                            |
| Candace Osteen     | Civic Communications                      | Bradford County School Board               |
| Pam Whittle        | President/CEO                             | North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce |
| Michael T. Johnson | Community Leader/ Mental Health Counselor | Antioch Baptist Church/Bradford DOH        |
| Dewayne McBride    | Community Leader/ Career Counselor        | Church Pastor/Career Source                |
| Olivia Scott       | Retired Educator                          | Bradford Co. Schools                       |