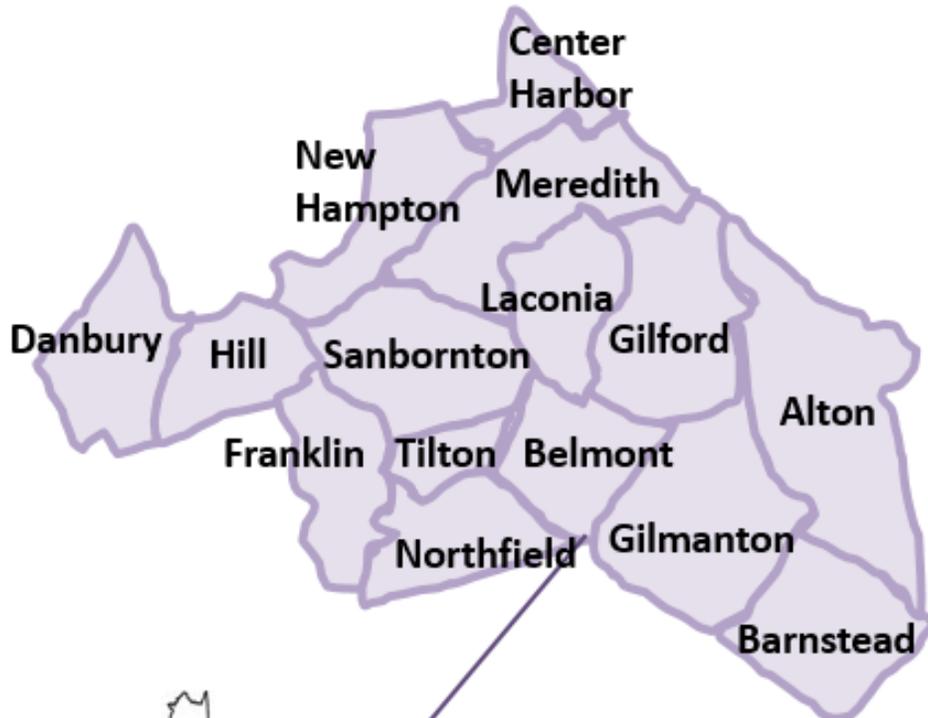


Winnepesaukee Public Health Region Community Needs Assessment 2018



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
PUBLIC HEALTH**

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January, 14, 2019

For the purposes of this report, the **Lakes Region** (see map above) is comprised of the following New Hampshire municipalities: Franklin, Danbury, Hill, Northfield, and the 11 municipalities of Belknap County - Alton, Barnstead, Belmont, Center Harbor, Gilford, Gilmanton, Laconia, Meredith, New Hampton, Sanbornton, and Tilton. In a number of instances throughout this report, data is only available at the county level and statistics are derived from county statistics weighed by town population as a proportion of the Winnepesaukee Public Health Region.

Demographics –

Compared to the New Hampshire population overall, the population of the Lakes Region is somewhat older, growing at a slightly slower rate, and lives in a more rural (less densely populated) setting. Belknap County is the second smallest county in New Hampshire in terms of population. The population of the county tends to be older than the population of state (20% of Belknap County is age 65 or older compared to 15% statewide). The median age in Belknap County is 46.7 compared to 42.7 for the entire state. The median household income in Belknap County is \$65,834 which is about 10% lower than the state median household income of \$71,305. The county also has a poverty rate of 9.1% which is about 10% higher than the state average of 8.1%. The high school graduation rate is similar to the state's rate at 92.4%. The percentage of bachelor degree attainment, however is about 15% less than the state on average at 31.5%. The county also has a large veteran population compared to the state (12.3% vs 9.4%) with the majority of these veterans having served in Vietnam. The vacancy rate of all housing units in Belknap County is 36% which is more than double the rate in New Hampshire of 16%. The county has more single unit structures than multi-unit structures and only 1 in 6 structures in the county are multi-unit compared to 1 in 4 structures in the state. Despite the older age of the region, the fertility rate (percent of women age 15-50 who gave birth in the past year) of the region is 30% more than NH and the USA on average (6.8% vs 5.1%).¹

Methodology -

This year's community needs assessment was not designed to use a random sample representative of the region unlike the original Community Health Improvement Plan. Instead, we used a combination of community forums and a modified version of the survey used for the original community needs assessment. The survey was distributed through mailing lists, drop boxes in the local community, and in-person at two different events. Many of the surveys that were filled out in person had to be excluded from the results because they did not follow the directions of the survey. In total, we received 196 responses for this survey. Due to a lack of random sampling as well as the size of the sample, the results of the survey cannot be considered statistically representative of the population it is surveying. Below, all community forums and survey collectors are listed.

Community Discussion Forums

1. Recovery Community-Client, Staff, and allies-Kelley Gaspa-John Beland-@PPH 1030 am-12PM 3/28/18
2. Career FT Group- Tuesday March 22, 2018 at 9:00 am, Laconia Fire Department - John & Audrey
3. Volunteer Group- Thursday March 29, 2018 at 6:30 pm, Sanbornton Fire Department - John & Nathan

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2017). *American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from *Census Reporter Profile page for Belknap County, NH* <<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US33001-belknap-county-nh/>>

4. Laconia downtown businesses-Daisy Pierce and John Beland April 3rd at 8am at Lakes Region Mental Health Center Room 118 - Winnisquam conference room.
5. Franklin downtown businesses/Choose Franklin -Shelley and Daisy March 29th at 8am-Location TBD
6. Franklin Senior center-Rick- Nathan Friday April 6th at 12pm
7. Rivers Edge Lakes Region Land Developers April 3, 10am – Alida and Jenn

Surveys-to Mailing Lists (Survey Monkey)

8. FaceBook survey to Lakes Region Community Services Council Facebook Followers – Posted 3/13/17
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HVTV9K9>
9. PPH emailing listserv – Jennifer, complete template on Constant Contact will need to review with Shelley and staff
10. Leadership Lakes Region-John Beland sent link to John <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89ZQLLK>
11. Family Resource Center Mailing List and Thrive- Marti-Sent email to Marti with Link -
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8D7SK3Z> LRCCS Face book page and sent it to the Belknap Economic Development Council and the Family Resource Center
12. Stand-up Laconia – Kelley to contact Clare-Link sent to Kelley
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5RM5VS9>
Up on 3/8/18
13. Barnstead- FB Survey Monkey
14. Alton FB Carissa Joined Follow UP - Alton Facebook - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8DJDK5L>
15. Sanbornton-Carissa up on Facebook 3/5/18 t <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GZQPNXR>

In Person Surveys

16. Gilford Rotary Club-Shelley, John and Sandi Beinoras - completed
17. Hands across the Table-Carissa scheduled for 3/21/18 will show up at 4:30 meal is at 5 (Nathan, Karin, Kate, Kimbly, Robin, Alida (Tentative)

Survey Drop Box Locations –

18. Tilton Veterans Home
19. Belmont- Library
20. Center Harbor- Town Clerks/Town Hall
21. Gilford-Town Hall
22. Gilmanton- Town Hall
23. Laconia- Library
24. Meredith- Meredith Library
25. New Hampton- Town Hall
26. Northfield -Town Hall
27. Tilton-Town Hall
28. Hill-Town Hall
29. Danbury-No Box for Danbury
30. Franklin—Town Hall
31. Horizons
32. Riverbend
33. Health First Franklin and Laconia
34. Lakes Region Mental Health

Survey Results –

The majority of our respondents to the community needs assessment survey live in the Laconia/Gilford area and have been living in the area for over 15 years. The most important issues in the community according to these respondents are alcohol and drug abuse, mental illness, mental health care, health care for seniors, and obesity. Some of the other popular choices were primary health care,

nutrition, and dental care. According to County Health Rankings, 20% of adults in Belknap County reported excessive drinking which is close to the state average. Given a small sample size, 50% of all driving deaths in Belknap County between 2012 and 2016 were alcohol related which is the largest county percentage in NH. Between 2014 and 2016, there were 51 drug overdose deaths in Belknap County for a drug overdose mortality rate of 28 per 100,000 people which makes Belknap the median county in the state for this measure during that time period. According to the state's medical examiner office, this number had increased to 34.8 per 100,000 people in 2017 (an increase of about 20%) making it 2nd in the state behind Hillsborough County. It is perhaps no coincidence that these issues are all highly visible in the public conscience at the moment. While Belknap County has one of the highest rates of mental health providers to population in the state (220:1), the area that HealthFirst serves scored a 16 out of 26 as a designated health professional shortage area for mental health professionals.

According to survey respondents, the most important safety issues in the community are child abuse/neglect, crime, and domestic violence/partner abuse. In this case, respondents are correct about this concern. The Laconia area registered 37% more reports of child abuse/neglect from 2013-2016². Half of these reports were related to incidents of substance abuse as well. Crime is an issue in the city of Laconia primarily. Both Laconia and Franklin have violent crime incidences that are higher than the state average (4.68 and 3.34 vs. 1.99 per 1,000 residents, respectively). Property crime in Laconia is a huge issue at 34.56 per 1,000 residents which is more than double the rate of Franklin's property crime rate of 15.46 per 1,000 residents which is more in line with the state average of 13.82 per 1,000 residents. While there is no county data, we found more domestic violence, domestic violence is certainly a problem that is exacerbated by drug abuse and other prevalent factors within Belknap County.

The most important issues to promote healthy individuals and families according to the community survey were making a living wage, affordable housing, and employment opportunities. The median household income in Belknap County is \$65,834 which is about 10% lower than the state median household income of \$71,305. The county also has a poverty rate of 9.1% which is about 10% higher than the state average of 8.1%. In terms of affordable housing, the median gross rental cost in Belknap County slightly decreased in 2018 while the median cost of a 2 bedroom apartment increased 4.2%. The only county with a larger increase was Coos County at 5.3%³. Unemployment in Belknap County is following national trends and is currently at 2.5%. When asked as a follow-up to the previous question where the community should focus its resources to combat these issues, the top responses were substance abuse recovery, job development, and public transportation. Thanks to the DSRIP Medicaid waiver being funded by CMS and DHHS, the integrated delivery network that includes the Winnepesaukee Public Health Region was able to open an IOP program run by Horizons Counseling in the morning as well as in the evening in Laconia. There are also federal dollars that have been allocated to designate Lakes Region General Hospital as the "hub" (named by LRGH as "The Doorway") in our public health region where people seeking recovery options can be assessed and then referred to the correct services that will help them with their treatment. There are other organizations that can help with recovery in the region as well like Navigating Recovery. The Belknap Economic Development Council works with businesses and young people entering the workforce to provide internship opportunities, loans, and redevelopment projects that benefit the community's businesses and workforces.

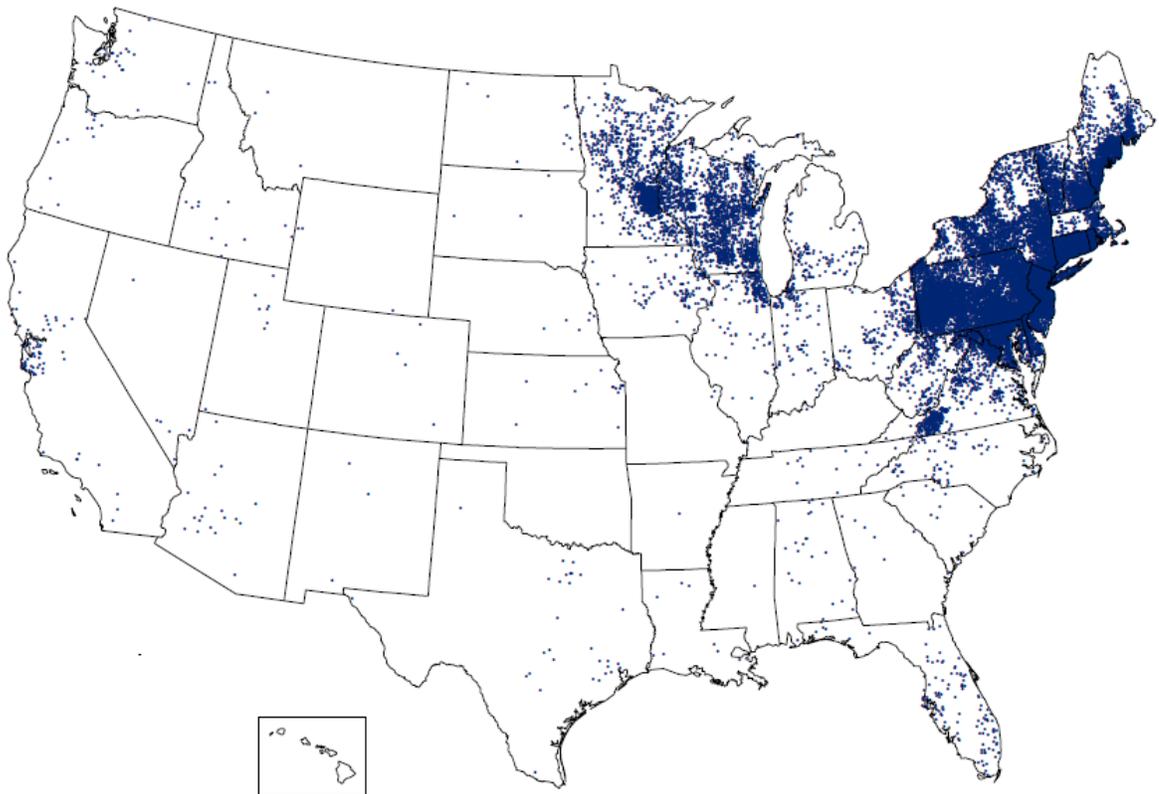
² https://www.laconiadailysun.com/news/local/local-increase-in-child-abuse-neglect-reports-tops-state/article_b9abb29c-74c9-11e8-92c9-83b0b4ef62df.html

³ <http://nhhousingdata.nhhfa.org/diveport#page=a0057>

Transportation in the Winnepesaukee Public Health Region is available for the elderly and disabled the Community Action Program (CAP) of Belknap-Merrimack Counties. Local public transportation however is not available in the region.

Newly added on this year's survey was a question concerning environmental issues that the community thought was important. The top answers were water quality, Lyme disease and ticks, and toxic substances. It makes sense living in the Lakes Region that water quality is a large concern. Currently, Lake Winnepesaukee is classified as oligotrophic, which means it has low phosphorus levels, low plant productivity, and is rich in dissolved oxygen throughout the lake (all good things)⁴ Lyme disease has received growing attention, especially in NH where scientists are worried about the effects of warmer winters such as an increased deer population, higher tick activity, and a lower tick mortality rate during winter (requires multiple days of temperatures below 10 degrees Fahrenheit).

Reported Cases of Lyme Disease -- United States, 2017



1 dot placed randomly within county of residence for each confirmed case

5

We know that it can be tough to find some services in our community so we asked respondents which services they had the hardest time finding. The top answers were dental health, primary care, and

⁴ <http://winnepesaukeegateway.org/lake-management/water-quality-and-lake-health/>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/stats/maps.html>

mental health. These answers corroborate the HPSA (health professional shortage area) scores of HealthFirst Family care of respectively, 24, 17, and 16 (out of a maximum score of 26) for dental, primary care, and mental health professionals as of 12/13/2016⁶. The top reasons for not receiving these services were cost, availability, and eligibility to receive the services. Respondents answered that the top services that were most needed in the area were drug/alcohol abuse treatment/prevention services, public transportation, mental health counseling, and job training. Below are word clouds that represent frequently occurring words in our survey responses to the question of both positive and negative aspects of living in the Lakes Region according to our respondents.

Survey Respondents (Joys of Living in the Lakes Region)



Survey Respondents (Challenges of Living in the Lakes Region)



Overall, it appears that the respondents of this survey have a good pulse on the challenges that are affecting the community. There are some interesting follow-ups that we have to think about looking at the services that are respondents of aware of and the services that they feel our community needs more of. For example, 73% of our respondents are aware of after-school activities for youth which means they exist in some capacity but 35% of our respondents also think that after-school activities for youth should be more available within the community. We must ask the community as a follow-up next time to

⁶ <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find>

provide an explanation of their picks to get deeper at the heart of why certain services that they are aware of need more resources and attention.

Throughout the process of reevaluating our community health improvement plan, the analysts involved as well as the priority leaders have run into issues finding appropriate sources to reevaluate their objectives/goals. The reason for this is that many of the original sources are not published on an annual basis and some of the original data sources have not been updated for over 3 years. This is because when the community health improvement plan was originally created, it was not created with the consideration of data sustainability and re-evaluation. Going forward, all priority groups will be identifying sources of data and new goals where appropriate with the help of the data analyst at PPHNH that can be re-evaluated on an annual basis so that progress towards goals outlined in the CHIP can be evaluated on an annual basis. The information in this community needs assessment is available to all partners in the region and will be used by the partners as well as the priority groups to plan the next community health improvement plan.