OKALOOSA COUNTY
Community Health Assessment
2017
2017 Community Health Assessment

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Letter to the Community

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

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

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

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

In health,

Karen A. Chapman, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Acknowledgments
The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County thanks the following individuals and organizations for their invaluable contributions to this report.

CHA Leadership Team
Al McDonough, Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office
Anthony Sawyer, S4P Synergy, Inc.
Claude Betene a Dooko, USAF - AFSOC 1 SOAMDS/SGPM
Dick Rynearson, City of Fort Walton Beach
Lida Deonarine, North Okaloosa Medical Center
Renea Black, Early Learning Coalition
Rick Owen, United Way of Okaloosa and Walton Counties

Data Collaborative Group
Key staff from the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County

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Access to Care Roundtable
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Councilman J. B. Whitten, Crestview
Dan Cobbs, Bridgeway Center, Inc. CEO
Dana Williams, Mary Esther City Clerk
Dave Whalen, Twin Cities Hospital CEO
David Popwell, Niceville Police Department Chief
David Triana, United for a Good Cause
Dr. Marty Walker, Northwest Florida State College Director of Nursing Education
John Hofstad, Okaloosa County Administrator

Rob Brown, Okaloosa County
Ted Corcoran, Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce
Teri Schroeder, Okaloosa County School District
Tracey Vause, Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services
Wesley Boles, Fort Walton Beach Medical Center
Introduction
The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) produces a Community Health Assessment (CHA) every five years. The CHA tells the story of public health in Okaloosa County. It shares the wonderful things about our community and the ways we can improve. We all have a role to play in making Okaloosa County a healthier place to live, learn, work and play! As you read the CHA, think about how you can become involved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Using this CHA as a guide, we will create the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). It will be used to improve health concerns reported in the CHA, in partnership with a group of caring people from community organizations. Together we form the Healthy Okaloosa Collaborative’s CHIP teams. The CHIP teams work to improve health in Okaloosa County.
Health begins where you live, learn, work and play. All Okaloosa County residents should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income, education, ethnic background or abilities.

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

What determines our health?

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

Education: high school graduation, language, literacy

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

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

Neighborhood & Built Environment: public safety, access to healthy foods, quality of housing, access to sidewalks, air quality, water quality, street lighting, parks²
Why does the CHA include information on education and income? Higher education and incomes impact health in many ways. People with higher incomes have the opportunity to make healthy choices because they are more likely to live in safe homes and neighborhoods, have access to healthy foods and safe places to exercise, have health insurance and resources to deal with stressful life events. Those who are working and still struggling to pay the rent can’t always make healthy choices because they don’t have as many resources. Families who are struggling to get by are also more likely to face more overall stress and have less resources to deal with stressful events. Chronic stress creates higher levels of harmful hormones, which can increase the risk of many diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.¹,³

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

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puppies Born</th>
<th>Puppies Died</th>
<th>Death Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>800 Striped</td>
<td>50 Striped</td>
<td>50 of 800 = 6% (1 out of every 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Spotted</td>
<td>50 Spotted</td>
<td>50 of 200 = 25% (1 out of every 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 Total</td>
<td>100 Total</td>
<td>100 of 1,000 = 10% (1 out of every 10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

**FACT**

- Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field and 7th Special Forces add both economic and cultural benefits to Okaloosa County.
- Annual festivals and opportunities for families and visitors to enjoy local culture.
- **120+** local, state and federal parks and natural beach areas.
- Okaloosa County Public Schools rank among the top in the state.
If trends continue, Okaloosa County will grow an average of 1,000 people each year. By 2030, the population is estimated to be between 210,600 and 242,100.

### Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than High School</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College/Associates Degree</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor or Above</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Education Disparities

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

“Better-educated individuals live longer, healthier lives than those with less education.” - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Median Household Income

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

- Okaloosa County: $55,880
- Florida: $47,507
- United States: $53,889

Income Disparity

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity

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

Poverty Disparity

Poverty by Race/Ethnicity

- Black or African American: 24%
- Hispanic or Latino: 23%
- Asian: 13%
- White: 12%
- Other: American Indian/Alaska Native (2%) Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (1%)

Children in Poverty

22% of children in Okaloosa County are living in poverty.
Medical & Dental Resources

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

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

Health Insurance Coverage⁷

- **Private Coverage**: 70%
- **Public Coverage (Medicaid/Medicare)**: 31%
- **Uninsured**: 15%

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

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

Emergency Medical Response⁹

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

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

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

- **Advanced Life Support (ALS) Fire Station**
  - Basic life support (BLS) fire stations are available throughout the County.
Built Environment in Okaloosa County

From 2007-2014, five bicyclists and 31 pedestrians were killed by motor vehicles in Okaloosa County, including two children less than 14 years old. Twenty-eight children were seriously injured by vehicles while riding their bicycles. These individuals were Okaloosa County residents.\(^\text{12}\)

**Approximately 2%** of residents ride a bicycle or walk to work.\(^\text{7}\)

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

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

Most pedestrian accidents in Florida occur at non-intersections, on weekdays between 6 p.m. and midnight.\(^\text{13}\)

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

Florida had the 2nd highest rate in the US for pedestrian fatalities in 2015.\(^\text{14}\)
“Everyone wants low taxes, but they want more roads, schools without leaky roofs, and public transportation.”
- Key Informant, 2016

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

9 Schools

out of 32 in Okaloosa County are over capacity.16

Percent of Residents on Public Community Water Systems Receiving Optimal Fluoridation19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Okaloosa</th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Goal*: 80%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environmental Poisonings

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

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

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

FACT

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

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

*All goals from Healthy People 2020
Although Okaloosa residents are more likely to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer than other Florida residents, they are less likely to die from it.¹⁷
**Heart Disease**

- The rate of heart failure deaths in Okaloosa County is **DOUBLE** the state of Florida.\(^{22}\)
- Smoking causes **one in three** deaths from cardiovascular disease, including heart disease, and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease.\(^{2}\)

**Race Disparity**

- **24%** decrease in breast cancer deaths from 2009-2015.\(^{17}\)

**Women in Okaloosa County** are diagnosed with breast cancer at earlier stages than women in Florida.\(^{17}\)

- Women are more likely than men to experience “silent” heart attacks, which have less recognizable symptoms like chest pain. This may explain why fewer women survive their first heart attack than men.\(^{23}\)

**Race Disparity**

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

**Stroke**

- Okaloosa County residents who do not graduate high school are **3x more likely** to have a heart attack than those who do complete high school.\(^{22}\)

- Fort Walton Beach Medical Center is a **Certified Primary Stroke Center**, a facility which can provide highly specialized care to stroke patients.\(^{10}\)
Healthy Weight in Okaloosa County

Residents who are Overweight or Obese by Race/Ethnicity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 out of 3 kids are now considered overweight or obese.\(^{24}\)

Currently, almost 1 in 10 adults have diabetes.\(^{22}\)

65% of adults are not at a healthy weight.\(^{22}\)

52% of adults with diabetes have received diabetes self-management education.\(^{22}\)

Research estimates that by 2050, 1 in 3 individuals will have diabetes in the U.S.\(^{2}\)

6 out of 10 children born today in Florida will be obese by the time they graduate high school.\(^{25}\)

73% of males and 55% of females are overweight or obese.\(^{22}\)

FACT: Being overweight or obese is a risk factor for nearly every leading cause of death, including: cancer, heart disease, stroke and chronic lower respiratory disease.\(^{2}\)
Physical Activity in Okaloosa County

Nationally, research estimates that $117 billion in health care costs per year can be linked to a lack of physical activity.\(^2\)

97% of high school students feel there are opportunities to get involved in sports, clubs and other school activities.\(^2\)

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

1/2 of Okaloosa County adults do not get regular physical activity.\(^2\)

4 out of 5 middle and high school students are not active for at least 60 minutes per day.\(^2\)

1/2 of Okaloosa County adults do not get regular physical activity.\(^2\)

- 90% of Okaloosa Middle School students who participate in a sport
- 78% of Florida Middle School students who participate in a sport
- 58% of Okaloosa High School students who participate in a sport
- 63% of Florida High School students who participate in a sport

The average commute time (the time it takes to get to work) is 23 minutes, leaving less time for physical activity.\(^1\)

FACT

- Okaloosa County has a higher percentage of residents who meet physical activity recommendations than the state.\(^2\)
- Special Olympics offers 16 sports and serves almost 300 athletes throughout Okaloosa County.\(^2\)
- Okaloosa County is the home of the first Special Olympics in Florida.\(^2\)
**Nutrition in Okaloosa County**

- **Only 18%** of adults eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.\(^{22}\)

**Race/Ethnicity Disparity**

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

- **Nearly 1/3** of adults in Okaloosa County have high cholesterol.\(^{22}\)
- People with high cholesterol have 2x the risk of heart disease as people with low cholesterol.\(^{16}\)

**FACT**

Breastfeeding provides optimal nutrition for infants. Studies show that breastfeeding reduces the risk of childhood obesity. Breastfeeding is especially important for underweight babies, who need optimum nutrition and their mother’s immunity to get through the first few months of life.\(^{2}\)

**Over 5,500** students participated in the Health Department’s education programs on nutrition and physical activity in the 2016-2017 school year.\(^{28}\)

**Income Disparity**

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

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“Breastfeeding is a natural safety net against the worst effects of poverty.” - James P. Grant, Former Executive Director of UNICEF \(^{27}\)
Half of all elementary students come from families who do not make enough money to pay for their school lunches.\(^\text{17}\)

There are approximately 477 farms in Okaloosa County, each averaging approximately 129 acres.\(^\text{29}\)

87\% of those farms are operated by families or individuals.\(^\text{29}\)

Residents Who Live Within 1/2 Mile from a Grocery Store or Other Healthy Food Source\(^\text{17}\)

- Multiple community organizations partner with local schools to provide a weekend supply of food to children in need.\(^\text{30}\)
- There are over 10 food pantries in Okaloosa County.\(^\text{31}\)
- There are several local farmer’s markets which sell fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers to consumers.\(^\text{32}\)
Pregnant women in Okaloosa County are almost TWICE as likely to smoke than all other pregnant women in Florida.

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

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

FACT

* All goals from Healthy People 2020
Smoking Among Youth

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

Spotlight on e-Cigarettes

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

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

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

“People believe that vaping is a ‘healthy’ alternative.” - Key Informant, 2016

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.²
- Nationally, 90% of smokers start before age 18.²
- Okaloosa women smoke at significantly higher rates compared to other women in Florida.¹⁷
- Tobacco use, including smokeless tobacco, increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke and respiratory illnesses.²
- Half of all current smokers will die from a tobacco-related illness if they continue to smoke.²
Social & Mental Health in Okaloosa County

“While the ‘public face’ of homelessness is often that of people experiencing long-term chronic homelessness, the reality is that the experience of homelessness spans demographics and populations – young and old, employed and unemployed, healthy and ill, female and male.”

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

**FACT**

- In Florida, mental illness is the number one disabling condition that leads to homelessness.
- Parental drug and alcohol abuse is the number one reason children in Okaloosa County are removed from their homes.

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

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

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

- Nationally, more than **1 in 10** homeless adults are veterans.

- There are approximately **1,400 foster children** in the Circuit 1 Area (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties), but only 330 foster homes.
“We are in desperate need of behavioral health services in our county. There are no inpatient services for children and they end up in Pensacola or Panama City.” - Key Informant, 2016

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

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

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

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

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

**56%** of female high school students report feeling depressed or sad most days, compared to **31%** of male high school students.  

**1/4** of adults report that they are limited in their daily activities because of physical, mental or emotional problems.  

Florida ranks 49th of the 50 states in funding allocated for mental health services.
Injury & Violence in Okaloosa County

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Leading Cause of Injury Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 2% of Population</td>
<td>Suffocation due to unsafe sleep practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-14 17% of Population</td>
<td>Drowning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-64 66% of Population</td>
<td>Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVAs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+ 15% of Population</td>
<td>Falls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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

The average cost of a non-fatal hospitalization for a fall is $97,407.41

Deaths related to opioids, such as heroin and fentanyl, **increased by 80%** in Florida from 2014-2015.42

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

Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has observed a **219% increase** in the need to administer Narcan™, a drug used to reverse the effects of opioid overdose, since 2013.9
Suicides in Okaloosa have been higher than Florida since 2001.12

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

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

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

Okaloosa ranked in the top 10 worst counties in Florida for domestic violence offenses in 2015.17

Suicide12

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

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

Of those who die by suicide, 75% are male.12

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office reports a 386% increase in heroin and fentanyl-related arrests from 2014-2016.43

In Florida, women are more likely than men to attempt suicide, usually by poisoning.17

The Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office reports a 386% increase in heroin and fentanyl-related arrests from 2014-2016.43

In May 2017, Florida’s Governor declared the opioid epidemic in Florida a public health emergency. This allowed the state to obtain grant money to pay for prevention, treatment and recovery services.44
Infectious Diseases in Okaloosa County

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bacteria²</th>
<th>How do you get it?</th>
<th>Who has the highest risk?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salmonella</strong></td>
<td>Undercooked eggs, poultry or meat; also present in animal feces, such as birds and reptiles</td>
<td>Children &lt; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campylobacter</strong></td>
<td>Undercooked poultry, unpasteurized milk and animal feces</td>
<td>Adults &gt; 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shigella</strong></td>
<td>Contact with fecal matter from an infected person</td>
<td>Children 1-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Okaloosa County has twice the number of reported Campylobacter infections as Florida.¹⁷

Outbreaks of Shigella infections occur commonly in schools, child care settings and long-term care facilities such as nursing homes. Children ages 1-9 accounted for 60% of all Shigellosis cases from 2007-2017.⁴⁵

FACT

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

Most common ways you get an enteric illnesses:²

- Contact with feces or vomit from an infected person
- Contaminated Food or Water
- Contact with animals and their feces

The enteric virus most commonly reported to the Health Department is norovirus, commonly referred to as the “cruise ship virus.” This virus spreads quickly among individuals in close contact of one another.²
Most of the mosquito-borne diseases reported occur among individuals who were bitten while traveling to countries where mosquito illnesses, such as malaria, are common.  

Animals considered high-risk for carrying rabies include:  
- Raccoons  
- Foxes  
- Bats  
- Stray dogs and cats  

There are three important mosquito-borne diseases that occur in Florida:
- Eastern equine encephalitis  
- St. Louis encephalitis  
- West Nile fever/encephalitis  

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

Since 2011, there has been a 51% increase in reported animal bites.  

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

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

From 2010-2016, more than 500 people were recommended to receive rabies PEP.
96% of kindergarteners in Okaloosa were fully vaccinated in 2017. Florida’s goal is 95%.\textsuperscript{17}

The number of reported cases of pertussis (whooping cough) has \textbf{tripled} since 2008. The majority are due to unvaccinated children.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{FACT}

Pertussis causes a mild cough in adults, but 50\% of babies who contract it require hospitalization.\textsuperscript{2}

Vaccinations will prevent more than \textbf{732,000 deaths} among children born in the last 20 years.\textsuperscript{47}

The percentage of children ages 4-18 with religious exemptions to vaccinations is \textbf{approaching 10\%} in some areas of Fort Walton Beach, Destin and Okaloosa Island.\textsuperscript{48}

According to research, \textbf{college-educated, white mothers} are more likely to refuse or delay their children’s vaccinations when compared to women of other races and educational levels.\textsuperscript{49}

\textbf{FACT}

The estimated number of Okaloosa residents with evidence of having a hepatitis C infection has \textbf{doubled} since 2011.\textsuperscript{17}

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

\textbf{FACT}

CDC recommends everyone born from 1945-1965 get tested for hepatitis C.\textsuperscript{2}
**HIV/AIDS**

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

**Who is at high risk for HIV?**

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

**Age at HIV/AIDS Diagnosis**

- 20-29: 41%
- 30-39: 27%
- 40-49: 16%
- 50-59: 13%
- 60+: 3%

**Race Disparity**

HIV Infection by Race

Black residents are 6x more likely to become infected with HIV than White residents.

For every woman diagnosed with HIV, two men are diagnosed.

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

“Knowing your status is not only vital to your physical and emotional health, but it is also the single most important thing any individual can do toward ending HIV.” - Health Educator, Office on Women’s Health
Sexual Health in Okaloosa County

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

Chlamydia
84%
64% 36%
Chlamydia infections occur most frequently in 15-24 year olds.

Gonorrhea
15%
51% 49%
Gonorrhea infections occur most frequently in 15-24 year olds.

Syphilis
1%
12% 88%
Syphilis infections occur most frequently in 25-34 year olds.

Race Disparity
Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) by Race¹⁷

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

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

FACT

Teen moms in Okaloosa County are more likely to give birth to underweight babies and are less likely to initiate breastfeeding than moms ages 19 and older.\(^{17}\)

2% of teen moms in the U.S. earn a college degree by age 30.\(^{52}\)

Of teen moms in Okaloosa County, 2% earn a college degree by age 30.\(^{52}\)

Okaloosa County girls ages 13-18 are 13% more likely to give birth as a teen than girls of the same ages in Florida.\(^{17}\)

13% of teen moms in Okaloosa County give birth to underweight babies and are less likely to initiate breastfeeding than moms ages 19 and older.\(^{17}\)

Children of teen moms are more likely to:

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

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

From 2014 to 2016, 218 babies were born in Okaloosa County to teen moms (13-18 years old).\(^{17}\)

Only 48% of teen moms ages 13-18 who gave birth from 2014-2016 had adequate* prenatal care.\(^{17}\)

*(Kotelchuck index)

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

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

Infant Mortality Rate Per 1,000 Births

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Okaloosa</th>
<th>Florida</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goal*: 6.0

Infant mortality is the death of a baby before his or her first birthday. The infant mortality rate is an important marker of a community's overall health.²

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

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

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

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

Why do babies die?

Prematurity

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

Unsafe Sleep

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

Homicide

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

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

Birth Defects

Complications

Women in Okaloosa County are less likely to receive early and adequate prenatal care compared to women in Florida.¹⁷
Child care is out of reach for low-wage workers. The average annual cost of child care in Florida is about $8,694. This is nearly double the annual cost of in-state tuition at a 4-year public college.  

Falls are the most common cause of hospitalization for children ages 1-14. Male children are twice as likely to die from drowning as female children.  

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

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

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

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

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

The Early Learning Coalition provides assistance to eligible low income parents, allowing them to work and get the education or training needed to find quality jobs.  

89% of high school students reported that they feel safe in their neighborhood.  

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Priority Areas

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

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

**Decreasing Drug Use**
- High opioid use*
- Drug use among teens*

**Protecting Children & Teens**
- Domestic violence*
- Child abuse*
- Sexual violence against children*
- STDs

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

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

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

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

**Supporting Mental Health**
- Lack of mental health services*
- Suicide

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

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

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