

# Community Health (Survey #2) Findings

From "Kansas Rural Health Pilot", 2014

The Cheyenne County Healthcare Consortium is presently engaged in a 3-year community project funded by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, the Sunflower Foundation, the Kansas Health Foundation, and the BlueCross BlueShield of Kansas Foundation. The first year of planning is drawing to a close.

A community survey was conducted in early 2014 to assess community perceived needs, health attitudes, and health behaviors. 439 survey instruments were turned in. This was a high level of sampling as 439 is 16% of the adult population in the county.

Intent: "A fundamental underpinning of the pilot project is that community and healthcare provider leadership should conduct a broad assessment of health related needs prior to initiating health care service development of infrastructure change in their community. This will provide a foundation to further target, refine, and develop implementation plans addressing pilot objectives stabilizing and improving access, quality, cost, and local health care economic conditions." Technical aspects of the assessment were reviewed at webinars conducted on July 14 and July 16.

## Highlights:

- Survey results of the ranking of **Health Issues** in Cheyenne County show 1. Aging (34%), 2. Obesity (31%), 3. Mental Health (16%), 4. Cancer (8%), and 5. Heart Disease (6%).
- Survey results of the ranking of **System of Care Issues** show 1. Assisted Living (28%), 2. Cost of care (20%), 3. Staffing (20%), 4. Care is far away (10%), 5. Keeping the hospital (10%). Comment: "Cheyenne County was unusual to the extent that it prioritized the need for an assisted living facility as its top issue."
- Of the 192 comments received, the top three concerns were Cost/Reimbursement at 43, Assisted Living at 37, and Aging Services at 36.
- Of the 22 categories of priorities, the top 5 comprising 52% of the total were Access, Mental Health, Cost/Financial Base, Prevention, and Community Services. That Mental Health scored second highest is unusually high in comparison to its ranking in surveys of other frontier counties.
- 50% of all respondents are employed in either healthcare or education sectors (p. 7/26).
- 88% of respondents report having health insurance coverage. 12% are uninsured (p. 11/26).
- 10.14% of respondents report having needed to see a doctor in the past year but were unable to do so because of cost (p. 14/26).
- 27.23% of respondents report having been bothered in the past year by emotional issues such as feeling anxious, depressed, or irritable.
- 53.73% of respondents consider their body to be overweight or obese.
- 12.06% of respondents report receiving treatment from a doctor or other health professional for any type of mental health condition or emotional problem (p. 18/26).
- 73.82% of respondents feel Assisted Living should be available within 30 minutes of their home.
- 54.71% of respondents feel Mental Health Services should be available within 30 minutes of their home.

## Some study observations:

Across four rural Kansas survey areas, obesity, cancer, and heart disease were a top priority in all four communities. Mental health and substance abuse were also major concerns. Needs for assisted living, for better fitness facilities, and the distance needed to travel for care were also important issues.