



Paul A. Pettit, MSL, CPH
Public Health Director

**GENESEE COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
3837 West Main Street Rd.
Batavia, NY 14020
(585) 344-2580 x5555

**ORLEANS COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
14016 State Route 31, Suite 101
Albion, NY 14411
(585) 589-3278

Healthy Community Survey and Findings

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Survey Created, Distributed and Analyzed by:
Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments

About the Survey:

The Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health) want to gain a better understanding into the perspectives of our local community residents, particularly how residents define 'health' and what topics related to health are of value to them. In an effort to do this, GO Health created the Healthy Community Survey (HCS). This survey and its' data will be added into the Community Health Assessment (CHA) documentation as an appendix. With the integration of the HCS into the CHA, the survey questions will be included in the next version of the Community Health assessment survey and community conversations to gain current information and feedback pertaining to health. This data will lead to better tailored educational materials and outreach programming opportunities for the residents served by GO Health.

Through the HCS, GO Health strives to reach and understand the perspectives of the diverse community that we serve. In an effort to do this, the survey was distributed as a hard copy at community events and as an electronic version through Survey-Monkey, which was available as a QR code and on our social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). Some events that contributed towards survey participation were the Genesee County Fair, the Orleans County Fair, and the COVID-19 Appreciation luncheon offered in 2021. Both county fairs were open and accessible to the entire public. The COVID-19 Appreciation luncheon was held to recognize volunteers of GO Health during the pandemic and had more than 100 individuals in attendance from a list of 400+ volunteers of varying community backgrounds. Additional platforms were used for survey distribution and yielded low survey response. These unsuccessful outreach opportunities include seasonal events within both counties including the Concert Series, Farmers Markets, and outdoor mobile vaccination clinics. The success of these events may have been impacted by COVID-19 hesitancy and safety protocols. Survey responses were collected from July 26, 2021 through the end of October 2021.



Healthy Community Survey

PLEASE DO NOT PLACE YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY

This survey will be used by the Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments to gain a better understanding of how the community views health, and what health issues are most important to them.

1. Select your gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other: _____

2. Age:

- Under 18
- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 and over

3. Ethnicity:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black
- White
- Hispanic Origin
- Other: _____

4. Resident of:

- Genesee County
- Orleans County
- Other: _____

5. How would you rate the overall health of the county you live in?

- Very Healthy Healthy Somewhat Healthy Unhealthy Very Unhealthy

6. What do you think are the three most important factors for a “Healthy Community?”
(What improves the quality of life in a community the most?) **Select only three.**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low crime / safe neighborhoods | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Activity opportunities (e.g. gyms, community activities) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to quality education / Good schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent race relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to health care (e.g. family doctor, mental health support) | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and cultural events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and recreation / Clean Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Good jobs and healthy economy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong and healthy family life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to nutritious food | <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction recovery/education opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle to support healthy eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Low death and disease rates |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

7. What are your top 3 priorities to improve your own personal health?

8. What does health mean to you? Define “health” in your own words:

9. What does it mean for a community to be healthy? Define “healthy community” in your own words:

Thank you for completing the survey!

Version 7/26/2021

Survey Findings:

Table 1: Demographics of Survey Participants (N=86)

Characteristic	Number of Participants (%)	Missing Responses
Sex		0
Male	18 (20.9)	
Female	68 (79.1)	
Age, years		0
Under 18	0 (0)	
18 to 29	10 (11.6)	
30 to 29	13 (15.1)	
40 to 49	16 (18.6)	
50 to 59	21 (24.4)	
60 to 69	14 (16.3)	
70 and over	12 (14.0)	
Race/Ethnicity		5
White	78 (96.3)	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1 (1.2)	
Asian/Pacific Islander	1 (1.2)	
Black	0 (0)	
Hispanic Origin	1 (1.2)	
County of Residence		3
Genesee	50 (60.2)	
Orleans	27 (32.5)	
Other*	6 (7.2)	

*Participants from counties other than Genesee and Orleans were not excluded from the analyses of this survey

The final audience reached in the HCS was more extensive than we expected. Due to having the survey available at the county fairs in which attendance is open to all, responses were not limited to Genesee and Orleans County residents. We received responses from people who reside in alternate counties such as Erie, Monroe, Ontario, and Wyoming. These responses account for about 7% of responses and we decided to include them in our data. There was also a diverse range in ages for those who responded to the survey ranging from

18 to 70+. A majority of those who responded to the survey were white (96%) and female (79%).

For future survey distributions, GO Health would like to continue to strive to reach a more diverse population and may need to explore additional distribution plans in order to do so. Genesee and Orleans Counties have many minority populations who were not reached during the distribution of this survey. Therefore, GO Health aims to offer the survey to a wider audience including reaching the Tonawanda Seneca Reservation, Amish/Mennonite Communities, and the Seasonal/Year-round Migrant Workers within the counties. For more details related to these populations and their role within Genesee and Orleans Counties, please see the Community Health Assessment.

Question 5 Analysis: “How would you rate the overall health of the county you live in?”

Question format: Quantitative, Likert Scale
Number of Participants who answered: 85

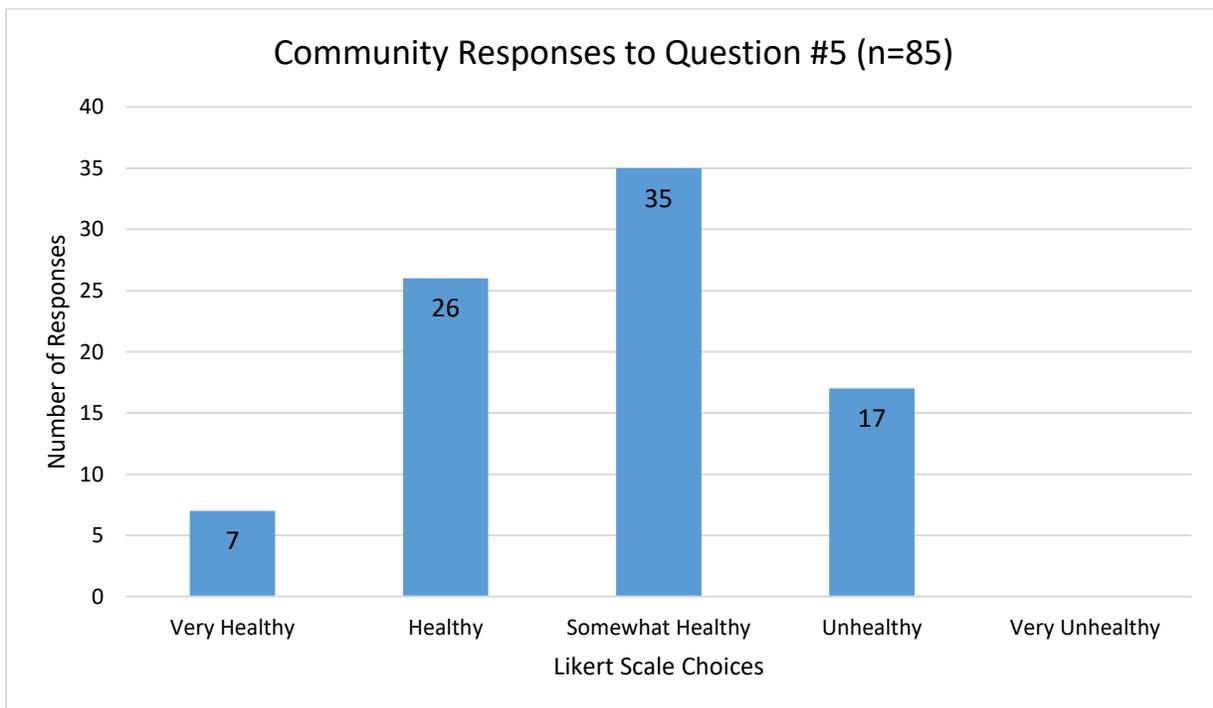


Figure 1: Distribution of Likert Scale responses of survey participants.

Of all the community residents surveyed, only 8.2% of responses indicated that participants viewed their community as “Very Healthy.” For other responses, “Healthy”, “Somewhat Healthy”, and “Unhealthy” were respectively selected 30.6%, 41.2%, and 20% of the time. No participants selected that their county’s health was “Very Unhealthy”. For Genesee and Orleans county-specific responses, please see Table 2 below.

Table 2: County-specific responses to Question #5.

County	Likert Scale Response	# of Participants (%)
Genesee (n=49)	Very Healthy	5 (10.2)
	Healthy	21 (42.9)
	Somewhat Healthy	18 (36.7)
	Unhealthy	5 (10.2)
Orleans (n=27)	Very Healthy	1 (3.7)
	Healthy	3 (11.1)
	Somewhat Healthy	11 (40.7)
	Unhealthy	12 (44.4)

Genesee County residents ranked their county as “Very Healthy” and “Healthy” for 53.1% of the responses. Whereas Orleans residents placed their county into these two rankings for only 14.8% of the responses.

Question 6 Analysis: “What do you think are the three most important factors for a “Healthy Community?” (What improves the quality of life in a community the most?) Select only three.”

Question format: Quantitative

Number of Participants who answered: 83

Table 3: Frequency that an Important Factor was selected by Participants as a Top 3 contributor for a “Healthy Community” (n=83)

Important Factor	Number of Times a Participant selected the Factor in their Top 3*
Low crime / safe neighborhoods	29
Access to quality education / Good schools	16
Access to health care (e.g. family doctor, mental health support)	79
Social encouragement to use healthcare	1
Parks and Recreation / Clean Environment	9
Affordable Housing	12
Access to nutritious food	9
Lifestyle to support healthy eating	4
Physical Activity opportunities (e.g. gyms, community activities)	14
Excellent race relations	2
Arts and cultural events	7
Good jobs and healthy economy	25
Strong and healthy family life	12
Addiction recovery/education opportunities	5
Low death and disease rates	6
Other	15

*While prompted to select three choices, not all responding participants selected exactly three prompts

The Top 3 Important Factors selected by participants were Access to Health Care, Low Crime/Safe Neighborhoods, and Good Jobs and Healthy Economy which were respectively selected 79, 29, and 25 times by participants.

Question 7 Analysis: “What are your top 3 priorities to improve your own personal health?”

Question format: Qualitative, open ended
 Number of Participants who answered: 70

Table 4: Personal Health Priorities of Community Participants by Age (n=70)

Theme of Personal Health Priority	Ages 18-29 (n=7)*	Ages 30-39 (n=10)*	Ages 40-49 (n=14)*	Ages 50-59 (n=17)*	Ages 60-69 (n=11)*	Ages 70 and Over (n=11)*	Total Responses (n=70)*
Exercise	6	8	12	16	11	9	62
Improve Mental Health	1	3	5	6	0	1	16
Reduce Overall Stress	2	0	3	6	1	1	13
Eat Healthier	6	8	9	8	9	7	47
Focus on Family/Friends and Community	1	1	2	2	0	4	10
Prioritize Personal Time	2	0	0	4	1	0	7
Prioritize Sleep	2	3	0	1	0	3	9
Improve Physical Health	1	2	2	3	3	0	11
Increase Access to Healthcare/Routine Care	0	0	0	1	3	2	6
Other**	1	2	2	3	1	2	11

*While prompted to list three priorities, not all responding participants listed exactly three prompts

**Other includes topics related but not limited to: increasing sunshine exposure, job satisfaction, increasing monetary savings/income, personal decision-making abilities, and religious/cultural devotion.

Question 8 Analysis: “What does health mean to you? Define “health” in your own words:”

Question format: Qualitative, open ended
Number of Participants who answered: 59

Table 5: Frequency of Themes/Topics in Participant Responses for Defining “Health” (n=59).

Themes/Topics:	Total*
"Feeling good"	39
Strong Physical Wellbeing	35
Acceptance of one's role in their health	15
Knowledge of Community/Surroundings and Willingness to Participate	8
Illness-free and Resilience	4
Stability in Life	3

*Participant responses were eligible to fit more than one theme/topic as each participant was given the freedom to write as much or as little as they wanted.

Further defining the Question 8 Themes/Topics from survey participants:

- ❖ “Feeling good”
 - Being in a sound mental and/or spiritual state of being.
- ❖ Strong Physical Wellbeing
 - Participants noted health characteristics directly related to their physical state including weight, food intake, and exercise habits. Not included: statements related to physical illness or disease.
- ❖ Acceptance of ones’ role in their health
 - Participant definitions recognize the need for bodily respect, needing to care for oneself and/or having the capacity to do so, commentary related to “living life to the fullest”, and accepting what life gives you.
- ❖ Knowledge of Community/Surroundings and Willingness to Participate

- Participant definitions included social activities and their contributions to health as well as how community-level health systems influence individual-level health.
- ❖ Illness-free and Resilience
 - Participant definitions included “health” directly defined by the presence or absence of diagnosable disease. Also noted, when disease is present we can define health by how capable an individual is at recovering.
- ❖ Stability in Life
 - The importance of external factors in an individual’s life remained consistent. Of particular note for survey participants, individual finances.



Question 9 Analysis: “What does it mean for a community to be healthy? Define “healthy community” in your own words:”

Question format: Qualitative, open ended
 Number of Participants who answered: 48

Table 6: Frequency of Themes/Topics in Participant Responses for Defining a Healthy Community (n=48).

Themes/Topic Areas	Total Responses*
Variety of Accessible Agencies/Resources	25
Sense of a Unified Community	24
Low Risk Environment	19
Access to Healthy Social Activities	8
Perception of "Feeling Healthy"	6
Reduced Burden of Disease	5
Good Economic Standing	5
Housing Availability	5
Education-focused	4
Other	2
Prepared for Public Health Pandemics	1

*Participant responses were eligible to fit more than one theme/topic as each participant was given the freedom to write as much or as little as they wanted.



Genesee and Orleans Counties understand the complexity in defining what it means to have a healthy community. In an effort to elaborate on this complexity, we have briefly summarized the sub-themes noted by participants below:

- ❖ Variety of Accessible Agencies/Resources
 - Participants consistently emphasized that a healthy community is one that has ample access to affordable, high quality healthcare resources. Additional resources that were noted include programming specific to low-income residents, the elderly, and those struggling with safe housing and/or addictive substances.
- ❖ Sense of a Unified Community
 - In defining a unified, healthy community, participants noted the importance of a community being family-centered, striving to create strong mental health within its residents, and a willingness to give and receive aid to the other members of the community. Overall, a sense/perception of a unified community was conveyed to also rely on the interconnectedness of those with varying backgrounds (e.g. religion, race/ethnicity/nationality, culture, language, age) and opinions.
- ❖ Low Risk Environment
 - For participants, a low risk environment is one that has low crime rates and is generally deemed “safe”, is sanitary, and has little to no use of addictive substances (e.g. cigarettes, alcohol, illegal substances (or illegal use of these substances)). Additionally, participants defined low risk as being related to regular access to safe, outdoor exercise options and regular access to sources of healthy foods.
- ❖ Access to Healthy Social Activities
 - Specifically, community organized activities that allow socialization and/or encourage healthy behaviors.
- ❖ Perception of "Feeling Healthy"
 - Some participants noted that their individual perception about their own health and the health of those around them is a way in which they gauge community-level health.
- ❖ Reduced Burden of Disease

- For the purposes of this theme/topic, participants noted that a healthy community should have low morbidity/mortality rates for diseases.
- ❖ Good Economic Standing
 - Economic opportunities and access to “good jobs”
- ❖ Housing Availability
 - Participants noted that housing should be safe, and accessible to all.
- ❖ Education Focused
 - A healthy community is one that “stresses education” and the learning opportunities for children/future generations.