



**Report to the Partnership For A Healthy Delaware County:  
2013 Community Themes and Strengths Assessment**

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### Prioritized Findings from the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment

The prioritized findings from the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment (CTSA), as identified by the Partnership for a Healthy Delaware County (PHDC)'s CTSA subcommittee and approved by the PHDC on October 16, 2013, included:

- Diet and exercise (including the issues of obesity/overweight, lack of exercise, and poor eating habits);
- Substance use (including the issues of prescription and other drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and smoking/tobacco use);
- Mental health (including the issues of mental health problems/suicide and stress);
- Access to health care for everyone;
- Traffic congestion;
- Unintentional injuries (e.g., falls); and
- Child abuse and neglect.

### Overview and Method

The Partnership for a Healthy Delaware County (PHDC), with support from the Delaware General Health District (DGHD), has embarked on a comprehensive community health assessment and strategic planning effort using the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) process as a framework. This collaborative project is guided by the PHDC's vision for Delaware County: "A community where we work together to provide opportunities for complete health and well-being."

Four critical community assessments are prescribed by the MAPP process. One of the four assessments is the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment, which answers the following questions:

- How is quality of life perceived in our community?
- What assets do we have that can be used to improve community health?
- What problems are facing the community?

Along with the other MAPP assessments, the results of the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment will inform the work of the PHDC members as they complete the MAPP process, including development of the Community Health Improvement Plan as part of the MAPP cycle.

The following method was used to implement the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment (CTSA):

- The PHDC's CTSA subcommittee, with assistance from DGHD staff and researchers from The Strategy Team (TST), identified the questions to include in the CTSA survey. A copy of the final questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.
- The CTSA was administered via two modes in September 2013. First, DGHD programmed the questionnaire into an online survey application, and a link to this survey was posted on the DGHD website and sent to PHDC members, Sustainable Delaware, and to the 2010 PACE-EH

Steering Committee for dissemination to their agencies and constituents.<sup>1</sup> Second, a self-administered paper version was distributed by DGHD staff at multiple Delaware County events and festivals.<sup>2</sup>

- A total of 277 individuals completed the survey. Twelve were removed from analysis because they were not Delaware County residents aged 18 or older, leaving 265 total respondents. Table 1 shows the demographics of the survey respondents. Note that due to small numbers, data for certain minority residents were combined into “other.”

**Table 1: Demographics of survey respondents**

<b>Age</b>		<i>n=233</i>	<b>Educational attainment</b>		<i>n=237</i>
<i>18-34</i>	12%		<i>HS degree or GED or less</i>	13%	
<i>35-44</i>	15%		<i>Some college or college degree</i>	70%	
<i>45-59</i>	31%		<i>Graduate degree</i>	17%	
<i>60+</i>	42%				
			<b>Race</b>		<i>n=234</i>
			<i>White/Caucasian</i>	93%	
			<i>Black/African-American</i>	3%	
			<i>Other</i>	3%	

This report now turns to the results from the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment. These results will inform the work of PHDC members as they complete the MAPP process.

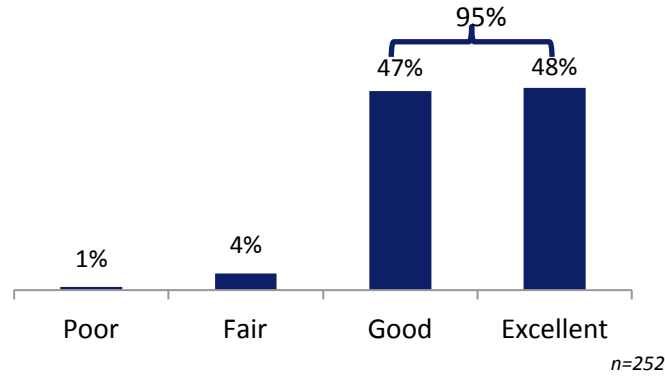
### Quality of Life in Delaware County

To answer the CTSA question, “*How is quality of life perceived in our community?*”, respondents were asked, “**How would you rate the quality of life in Delaware County?**” To answer this question, survey respondents rated the quality of life in Delaware County as excellent, good, fair, or poor. As shown in Figure 1 (next page), survey respondents overall have a very positive opinion about the quality of life in Delaware County. Nearly all respondents (95%) see the quality of life as good or excellent.

<sup>1</sup> The sampling method was non-representative. This means results cannot be generalized to *all* Delaware County residents. The results should be interpreted as providing directional guidance regarding how Delaware County residents view the quality of life and health within the community.

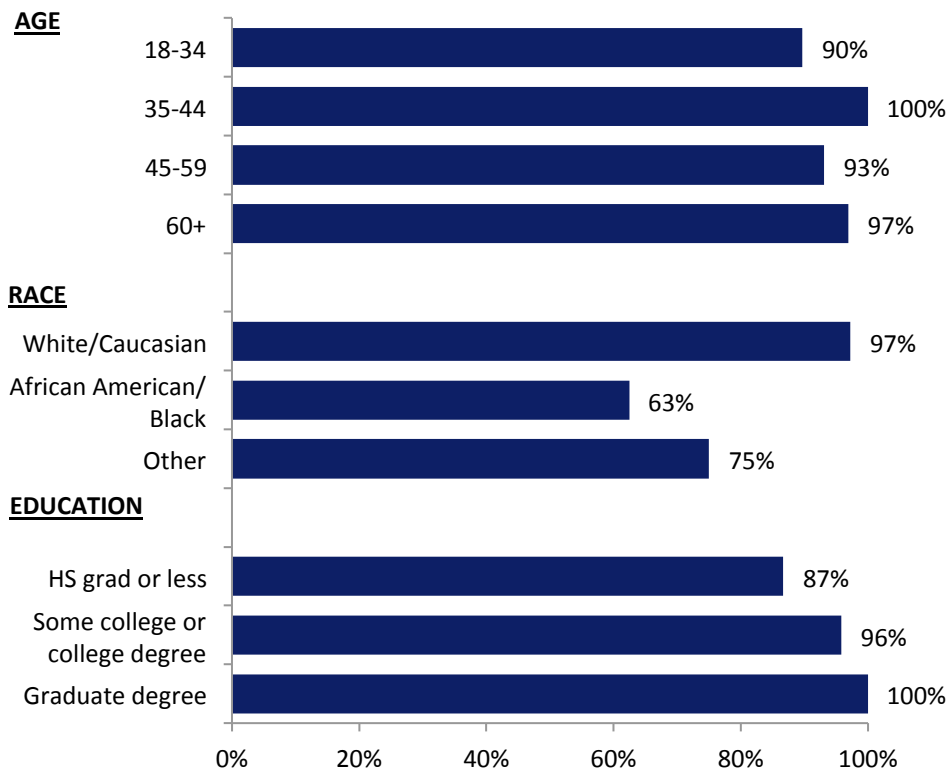
<sup>2</sup> Paper and pencil survey data were entered into the online survey application. Community events included the Galena Festival, Delaware County Fair, and Community Festival.

**Figure 1: Ratings of Quality of Life in Delaware County**



Quality of life ratings were also analyzed by age, race, and education. As Figure 2 shows, the majorities within the age and education subgroups rate the quality of life in Delaware County as good or excellent. One notable exception was observed – African American/Black and other racial minority respondents view the quality of life less positively than White/Caucasian residents.

**Figure 2: Ratings of Quality of Life in Delaware County as Good or Excellent by Subgroups**

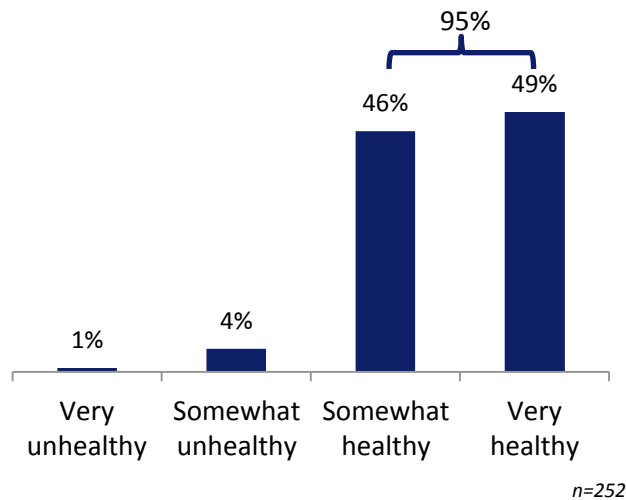


**Ratings of Health in Delaware County**

Quality of life may be related to several dimensions. To drill deeper, survey respondents rated both how healthy or unhealthy Delaware County is as a place to live as well as their own personal health.

Most respondents perceive Delaware County as a healthy place to live and rate their own health highly. As shown in Figures 3a and 3b, majorities of respondents rate Delaware County as either a somewhat or very healthy place to live (95%) and rate themselves somewhat or very healthy (91%). However, only about one-third (32%) consider themselves to be very healthy.

**Figure 3a: Ratings of Delaware County as a Healthy Place to Live**



**Figure 3b: Ratings of Personal Health**

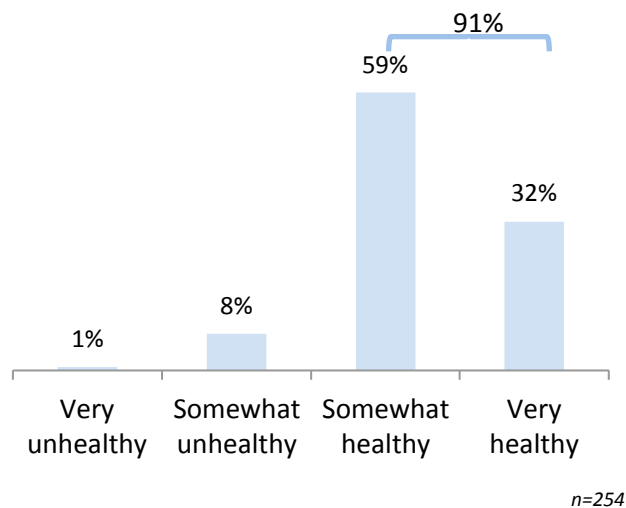
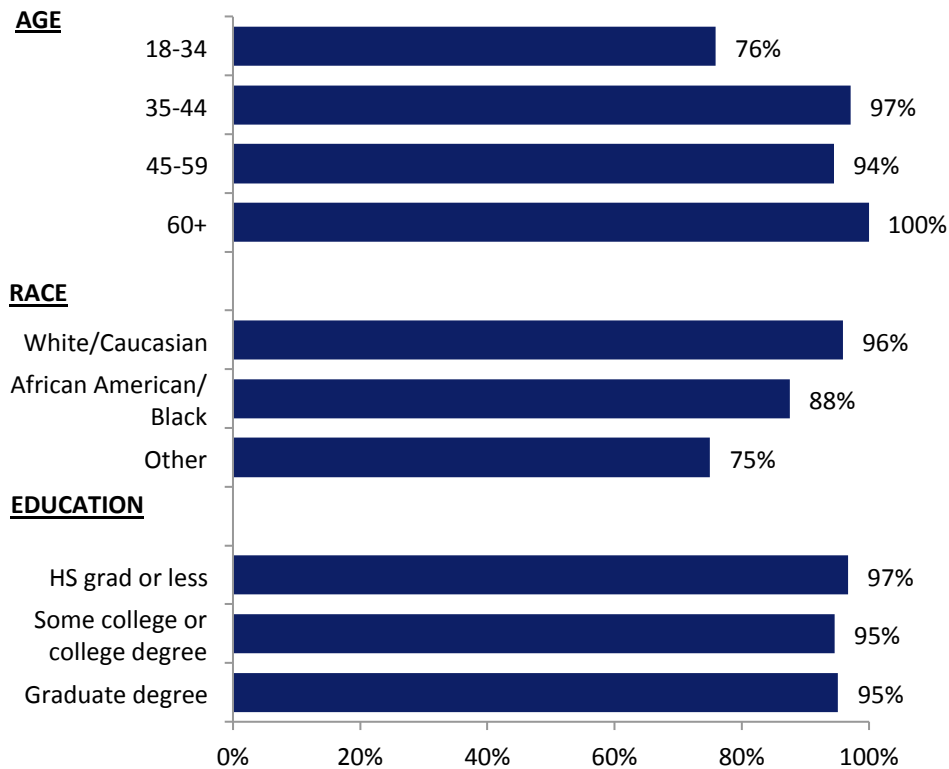


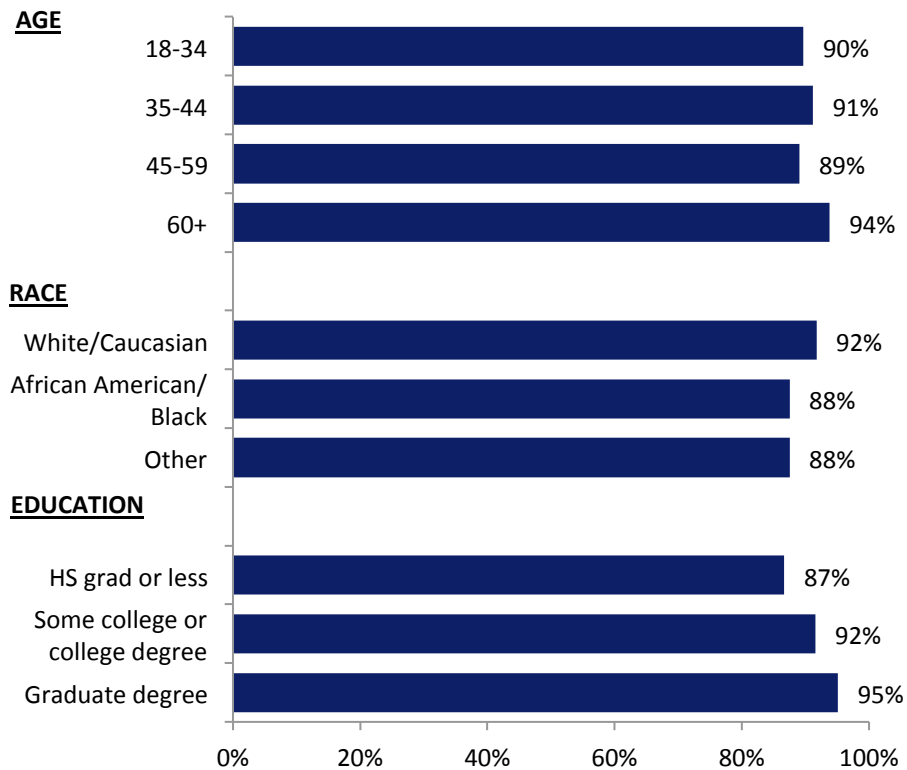
Figure 4 presents health ratings of Delaware County as a “somewhat healthy” or “very healthy” place to live by age, race, and education. At least three-fourths of each subgroup considers Delaware County a healthy place to live. However, younger residents (i.e., age 18-34) are less likely to perceive Delaware County as a healthy place to live compared to older residents. Also, African American/Black and other minority residents evaluate the community less positively in this regard than White/Caucasian residents.

**Figure 4: Ratings of Delaware County as a Somewhat or Very Healthy Place to Live by Subgroups**



As shown in Figure 5, there was little variation in ratings of personal health by subgroups. Again, large majorities of each subgroup consider themselves healthy.

**Figure 5: Ratings of Self as Somewhat or Very Healthy by Subgroups**



### Delaware County's Perceived Strengths

One of the primary objectives of the CTSA is to measure the community's perceived strengths, which could be leveraged to improve the health and well-being of residents. To answer the CTSA question *"What assets do we have that can be used to improve community health?"*, respondents were asked, **"In your opinion, what do you think are the most important factors that make Delaware County a great place to live?"**

To this end, respondents were presented with 24 potential community strengths and were asked to select the five most important factors that make Delaware County a great place to live.<sup>3</sup>

Table 2 (next page) presents the results for each specific strength individually and grouped into conceptually similar categories. Category percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who selected at least one of the strengths listed below it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In a few cases, survey participants provided more than five responses. In these instances, the researchers used a random selection process to select five responses. Respondents had the option of specifying an "other" response to this question. Three people did so, and their responses were coded by a researcher into one of the existing categories.

<sup>4</sup> For example, 67% of respondents selected at least one of the three factors in the "outdoor environment" category (i.e., parks and green space, clean and healthy environment, or natural beauty).



**Table 2: Most Important Factors that Make Delaware County a Great Place to Live**

		n=265
<b>Outdoor Environment</b>		<b>67%</b>
	<i>Parks and green space</i>	43%
	<i>Clean and healthy environment</i>	28%
	<i>Natural beauty</i>	17%
<b>Safety</b>		<b>63%</b>
	<i>Safe community</i>	37%
	<i>Local 24-hour police, fire and rescue activities</i>	29%
	<i>Access to safe and affordable housing</i>	18%
<b>Educational and Economic Opportunity</b>		<b>60%</b>
	<i>Quality schools</i>	54%
	<i>Opportunities to earn a living wage</i>	14%
	<i>Access to job training and higher education</i>	8%
<b>Activities / Programming</b>		<b>43%</b>
	<i>Activities and support for older adults</i>	29%
	<i>Activities and support for children and youth</i>	18%
	<i>Activities and support for middle-age adults</i>	4%
<b>Access to Healthy Living</b>		<b>40%</b>
	<i>Exercise and physical activity opportunities</i>	18%
	<i>Access to health care for everyone</i>	17%
	<i>Access to healthy foods</i>	15%
	<i>Access to dental care for everyone</i>	6%
<b>Friendly and Welcoming</b>		<b>35%</b>
	<i>Friendly community</i>	28%
	<i>Respectful and welcoming to everyone</i>	8%
	<i>Supportive and caring environment</i>	6%
<b>Diversity and Values</b>		<b>26%</b>
	<i>Religious or spiritual values</i>	15%
	<i>Cultural diversity</i>	8%
	<i>Diverse cultural / arts opportunities</i>	7%
<b>Community Support</b>		<b>25%</b>
	<i>Good support for families</i>	15%
	<i>Services and support for everyone needing help</i>	13%

Note: multiple responses allowed, so percentages will not sum to 100

With regard to the broader conceptual categories, residents perceive the *outdoor environment*, *safety*, and *educational and economic opportunity* as the most important factors that make Delaware County a great place to live. For each of these broader conceptual categories, one of the specific strengths within the category was selected by at least 60% of respondents.

Specific factors that make Delaware County a great place to live were selected by at least one-quarter of respondents included *local 24-hour police, fire and rescue activities* (29%), *activities and support for older adults* (29%), a *clean and healthy environment* (28%), and being a *friendly community* (28%).

Taken together, these results suggest that the outdoor environment, high quality schools and city services (especially support for older adults) are the biggest perceived assets of Delaware County.

### Most Important Problems Facing Delaware County Residents

The CTSA also focuses on *"What problems are facing the community?"* To answer this question, respondents were asked, **"In your opinion, what do you think are the most important problems facing Delaware County residents today?"** Respondents were presented with 26 potential problems facing Delaware County residents and selected five as the most important.<sup>5</sup>

The first 24 survey participants were asked a slightly different version of this question: **"In your opinion, what do you think are the most important public health problems facing Delaware County residents today?"**<sup>6</sup> Analysis indicated that including "public health" in the question wording influenced responses, so these responses are reported in a separate table (Table 3b).<sup>7</sup>

Tables 3a and 3b present the results for each specific problem individually and grouped into conceptually similar categories. Category percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who selected at least one of the problems listed below it.

Table 3a presents the large majority of the data, which are responses to the question without the phrase "public health." With regard to the broader conceptual categories, over half of respondents selected eating and exercise related issues (58%) or other personal health behaviors (56%) as one of the five most important issues facing the county. Within these categories, Obesity/overweight and Prescription and other drug abuse were selected most often. A community issue was selected by 46% of respondents, though this percentage was driven largely by the 34% who think traffic congestion is a problem.

Table 3b presents the 23 responses to the question with the phrase "public health." An examination of the broader conceptual categories reveals personal health behaviors were selected as the most important "public health problems" facing Delaware County. Large majorities selected either personal eating and exercise habits (70%) or other health behaviors (83%). Within these categories, obesity and overweight, prescription and other drug abuse, and alcohol abuse were most often selected. Traffic congestion (39%) and poor eating habits (35%) were also frequently chosen.

Overall, these results reveal that residents believe poor personal health choices are the most important problems facing Delaware County residents today.

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<sup>5</sup> If paper survey respondents selected more than five problems, TST randomly selected five responses. Additionally, 28 substantive "other" responses were provided. Five of these responses were coded into one of the existing categories. The remaining 23 were idiosyncratic, but three were mentioned by more than one respondent: cell phone use while driving / reckless driving, too much growth, and poor access to affordable housing.

<sup>6</sup> One of these respondents was not a resident of Delaware County and was not included in this analysis.

<sup>7</sup> Almost all (95%) of the respondents who read the question including the phrase "public health" selected at least one public health related factor (i.e., *not using seatbelts, poor eating habits, obesity/overweight, alcohol abuse, prescription and other drug use, smoking/tobacco use, lack of exercise, infectious diseases, chronic disease, or mental health problems/suicide*) compared to 76% of respondents who read a version of the question without the phrase "public health." This was a statistically significant difference indicating the question wording influenced responses.

**Table 3a: Most Important Problems Facing Delaware County:  
Responses to Question without "Public Health" in the Question Wording**

	n=242
<b>Personal Eating and Exercise Habits</b>	<b>58%</b>
<i>Obesity / Overweight</i>	45%
<i>Lack of exercise</i>	24%
<i>Poor eating habits</i>	21%
<b>Other Personal Health Behaviors</b>	<b>56%</b>
<i>Prescription and other drug abuse</i>	38%
<i>Alcohol abuse</i>	16%
<i>Smoking / Tobacco use</i>	15%
<i>Unintentional injuries (e.g., falls, motor vehicle accidents)</i>	6%
<i>Unsafe / Unprotected sex</i>	5%
<i>Not using seatbelts</i>	2%
<b>Community Issues</b>	<b>46%</b>
<i>Traffic congestion</i>	34%
<i>Shortage of parks and recreation facilities</i>	8%
<i>Inadequate / Substandard housing</i>	7%
<i>Air, water pollution</i>	6%
<i>Unclean environment</i>	2%
<b>Personal Psychological Issues</b>	<b>35%</b>
<i>Mental health problems / Suicide</i>	18%
<i>Stress</i>	15%
<i>Discrimination and intolerance</i>	7%
<b>Lack of Access to Health Care / Healthy Food</b>	<b>28%</b>
<i>Lack of access to health care for everyone</i>	17%
<i>Lack of access to dental care for everyone</i>	10%
<i>Lack of access to affordable, healthy food</i>	10%
<b>Crime</b>	<b>22%</b>
<i>Crime (other)</i>	14%
<i>Child abuse and neglect</i>	10%
<i>Domestic violence</i>	7%
<i>Rape, sexual assault</i>	2%
<b>Illness</b>	<b>14%</b>
<i>Chronic disease (cancer, arthritis, asthma)</i>	14%
<i>Infectious diseases (TB, HIV, etc.)</i>	<1%

Note: multiple responses allowed, so percentages will not sum to 100.

**Table 3b: Most Important Problems Facing Delaware County:  
Responses to Question with "Public Health" in the Question Wording**

	n=23
<b>Other Personal Health Behaviors</b>	<b>83%</b>
<i>Prescription and other drug abuse</i>	48%
<i>Alcohol abuse</i>	48%
<i>Smoking / Tobacco use</i>	26%
<i>Unsafe / Unprotected sex</i>	13%
<i>Not using seatbelts</i>	13%
<i>Unintentional injuries (e.g., falls, motor vehicle accidents)</i>	4%
<b>Personal Eating and Exercise Habits</b>	<b>70%</b>
<i>Obesity / Overweight</i>	61%
<i>Poor eating habits</i>	35%
<i>Lack of exercise</i>	26%
<b>Community Issues</b>	<b>48%</b>
<i>Traffic congestion</i>	39%
<i>Shortage of parks and recreation facilities</i>	4%
<i>Air, water pollution</i>	4%
<i>Unclean environment</i>	4%
<i>Inadequate / Substandard housing</i>	0%
<b>Crime</b>	<b>30%</b>
<i>Domestic violence</i>	26%
<i>Child abuse and neglect</i>	13%
<i>Rape, sexual assault</i>	4%
<i>Crime (other)</i>	0%
<b>Personal Psychological Issues</b>	<b>26%</b>
<i>Stress</i>	13%
<i>Mental health problems / Suicide</i>	9%
<i>Discrimination and intolerance</i>	4%
<b>Lack of Access to Health Care / Healthy Food</b>	<b>22%</b>
<i>Lack of access to dental care for everyone</i>	13%
<i>Lack of access to affordable, healthy food</i>	9%
<i>Lack of access to health care for everyone</i>	0%
<b>Illness</b>	<b>9%</b>
<i>Chronic disease (cancer, arthritis, asthma)</i>	9%
<i>Infectious diseases (TB, HIV, etc.)</i>	0%

Note: multiple responses allowed, so percentages will not sum to 100.

## Summary

**Most Delaware County residents have positive perceptions of their community.** Most residents (95%) indicated the quality of life in Delaware County is "good" or "excellent" and that Delaware County is a "somewhat healthy" or "very healthy" place to live. Most also considered themselves healthy, although only 32% say they are "very healthy."

**What are Delaware County's strengths?** Natural resources, quality schools, and the sense of safety and security were the community strengths identified most frequently by respondents.

<b>Most Important Community Assets</b>	<b>Percent selecting</b>
Outdoor environment: parks and green space	43%
Outdoor environment: clean and healthy environment	28%
Educational and economic opportunity: quality schools	54%
Safety: safe community	37%
Safety: local 24-hour police, fire and rescue activities	29%
<b>Other Important Community Assets</b>	
Activities / programming: activities and support for older adults	29%
Activities / programming: activities for children and youth	18%
Friendly community	28%
Safety: access to safe and affordable housing	18%
Outdoor environment: natural beauty	17%
Access to healthy living: access to health care for everyone	17%

**What important problems face Delaware County residents?** Many respondents identify unhealthy personal health choices as important problems facing Delaware County residents.<sup>8</sup>

<b>Most Important Problems Facing the Community</b>	<b>Percent selecting</b>
Personal eating and exercise: obesity / overweight	45%
Personal eating and exercise: lack of exercise	24%
Personal eating and exercise: poor eating habits	21%
Other personal health behaviors: prescription and other drug abuse	38%
Community issues: traffic congestion	34%
<b>Other Important Problems Facing the Community</b>	
Personal psychological issues: mental health problems / suicide	18%
Lack of access to health care/healthy food: lack of access to health care for everyone	17%
Other personal health behaviors: alcohol abuse	16%
Other personal health behaviors: smoking / tobacco use	15%
Personal psychological issues: stress	15%

<sup>8</sup> Percentages are out of the 242 participants who read this question without the "public health" phrase.

## Appendix A: Community Themes and Strengths Assessment Survey

The following is the final version of the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment survey that was administered in-person and electronically to residents of Delaware County. Note that the final version of the survey does not include the words “public health” in Question 6.

### Community Themes and Strengths Assessment Survey

Your opinion is important to us! The purpose of the survey is to gather opinions about the health and quality of life in Delaware County. This information will be used to develop a plan for the public health system in Delaware County. This survey takes about 5 minutes to complete.

**1. Are you a Delaware County resident who is 18 years or older?**

- Yes  No (We're sorry, but everyone taking the survey must be a Delaware County resident and be at least 18 years or older.)

**2. How would you rate the quality of life in Delaware County?**

- Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

**3. How would you rate Delaware County as a healthy place to live?**

- Very healthy  Somewhat healthy  Somewhat unhealthy  Very unhealthy

**4. How would you rate your own personal health?**

- Very healthy  Somewhat healthy  Somewhat unhealthy  Very unhealthy

**5. In your opinion, what do you think are the most important factors that make Delaware County a great place to live? (Select only 5)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality schools                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural diversity                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to safe & affordable housing          | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious or spiritual values                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to health care for everyone           | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to earn a living wage              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to dental care for everyone           | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to job training & higher education        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to healthy foods                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Diverse cultural/arts opportunities              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural beauty                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise & physical activity opportunities       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean and healthy environment                | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive & caring environment                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and green space                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful and welcoming to everyone             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities and support for children & youth  | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly community                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities and support for middle-age adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe community                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good support for families                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Local 24-hour police, fire and rescue activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities and support for older adults      | <input type="checkbox"/> Services and support for everyone needing help   |

Other, please specify:

**6. In your opinion, what do you think are the most important problems facing Delaware County residents today? (Select only 5)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not using seat belts  | <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate/substandard housing             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor eating habits  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of access to affordable, healthy food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obesity/overweight  | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic congestion                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol abuse   | <input type="checkbox"/> Unclean environment                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription & other drug abuse                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Air, water pollution                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking/tobacco use   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of parks & recreation facilities  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe/unprotected sex  | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of exercise  | <input type="checkbox"/> Child abuse & neglect                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infectious diseases (TB, HIV, etc.)                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Rape, sexual assault                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic disease (cancer, arthritis, asthma)                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Crime (other)                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of access to health care for everyone                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of access to dental care for everyone                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination & intolerance               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health problems/suicide                                |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unintentional injuries (e.g., falls, motor vehicle accidents) |   |

Other, please specify:

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**7. What is your zip code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Which one of these groups would you say best represents your race?**

- African American/Black  Asian/Pacific Islander  Latino  Native American
- White/Caucasian  Other/Multiracial

Other, please specify:

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**9. What is your age?**

- 18-34  35-44  45-59  60 and older

**10. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?**

- Less than 12<sup>th</sup> grade  High School diploma or GED  Some college or a college degree

Other, please specify:

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*Thank you for completing the survey.  
Results will be shared with the community in November 2013.*

END OF REPORT

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