WCHIP
Walton Community Health Improvement Partnership

2023-2025
Community Health Improvement Plan
Walton County, Florida

Published: January 2023
Updated: January 2024

ELEVATING THE HEALTH OF WALTON COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

The Walton Community Health Improvement Partnership (WCHIP) formed in 2011 to bring a broad-base of stakeholders together to improve the health of Walton County residents. Over the past decade, WCHIP has grown to nearly 50 partners. WCHIP focuses it efforts on tackling root causes to health issues with policy, system, and environmental improvement strategies. WCHIP's key responsibilities are to:

- Provide a common agenda;
- Establish shared measurements, fosters mutually reinforcing activities;
- Encourage continued communication; and
- Build strong community support across multiple sectors including health, business, education, faith, non-profit, government, and civic partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our community and world in ways we never anticipated. Partners recognized that never has our community needed a coordinated approach to community health improvements more, so the team continued to work diligently using virtual platforms to move the work forward. The pandemic has highlighted health inequities and calls the community to collectively work on the community's health with an equity-focused lens. Every three years, community organizations in Walton County work collaboratively on a two-step process to understand and respond to health problems within our community. The first phase of this process involves identifying local health issues and resources through a Community Health Assessment (CHA). Community partners engaged with the public to determine what are the perceived health issues for Walton County.

This document outline the actions that the community will take to improve the health status of residents. The CHA informed the design of six critical cross-cutting strategic issues that are our priority areas of the 2023-2025 Community Health Improvement Plan:

Mental Well-being and Substance Use

Access to Care

Maternal and Child Health

Injury, Safety and Violence

Social and Economic Conditions Impacting Health

Chronic Diseases and Conditions

WCHIP's vision is to elevate the health of Walton County.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Florida Department of Health in Walton County (DOH-Walton) thanks the following individuals and organizations for their invaluable contributions. This plan would not be possible without your dedication to the health of our communities.

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Our Dedicated Community Partners

90 Works

A Bed 4 Me Foundation

American Heart Association

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast

BeGenerous, Inc.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast

CareerSource Okaloosa | Walton

Caring and Sharing of South Walton

Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida

CenterWell Home Health

Chautauqua Rehabilitation and Nursing Center

Center for Independent Living of NWFL

City of DeFuniak Springs

City of Freeport

City of Paxton

Community Redevelopment Agency of DFS

Covenant Care

Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County

Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast

Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center

Emerald Coast Regional Council

Emerald Coast Technical College

Florida Department of Children and Families

Florida Department of Health in Escambia County

Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County

Florida Department of Health in Walton County

Freedom Life Compass

Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

Habitat for Humanity of Walton County

Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa
and Walton Counties

Homelessness and Housing Alliance

Lakeview Center of Walton County

Main Street DeFuniak Springs

Matrix Community Outreach Center

Mental Health Association of Okaloosa-Walton

Northwest Florida Area Agency on Aging

Northwest Florida Health Council

Northwest Florida Health Network

OASIS Florida

PanCare of Florida

Point Washington Medical Clinic

SEDNET

Shelter House of Northwest Florida

Tri-County Community Council

UF/IFAS Extension Office - Walton County

United Way Emerald Coast

Walton Community Health Center

Walton County Baptist Association

Walton County Board of County Commissioners

Walton County Economic Development Alliance

Walton County Emergency Management

Walton County Housing Agency

Walton County Public Library System

Walton County Prevention Coalition

Walton County School District

Walton County Sheriff's Office

Walton County Tax Collector

Walton Okaloosa Council on Aging

West Florida Area Health Education Center

OVERALL METHODOLOGY

A Collaborative Approach

In Spring 2022, as primary data collection for the 2022 Community Health Assessment was ongoing, DOH-Walton staff prepared to structure the Assessment report. They consulted with partners from non-profit, hospital and government sectors on the strengths and weaknesses of their last Community Health Assessment from 2019.

Data Sources

The Community Health Assessment (CHA) report draws from many different data sources, both numerical (for example, disease rates) and narrative (for example, focus groups), to present a comprehensive picture of health in Walton County. The report synthesizes official data reported to DOH-Walton and the Florida Department of Health from hospitals and other organizations, self-reported survey data and information about how the community perceives health issues. DOH-Walton is the local repository of public health data and partners with state and national public health organizations on data collection and analysis. Integrating all of these different data sources provides a more comprehensive picture of population health than any one source on its own. Data collection and analysis were completed in August 2022, and the final report was released in November 2022.

In Summer 2022, DOH-Walton worked with community partners to conduct a community survey (386 responses), interviews with 20 community leaders knowledgeable about health, and one health care focus group. In order to draw statistically valid conclusions about the population of Walton County, the survey called for a sample size of at least 383 respondents*. The community survey asked respondents to choose the most important health problems in Walton County and indicate their satisfaction with current efforts to address these issues. The interviews and focus group provided a more in-depth understanding of how Walton County adults perceive health problems and potential solutions.

Ongoing meetings to update the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and report on activities occur monthly at community meetings and steering committtee meetings. The CHIP is updated annually and reviewed by community partners for approval.

For these surveys, significance is set at a 95% confidence level, which means that if a survey were conducted 100 times, it would produce the same results at least 95 times.
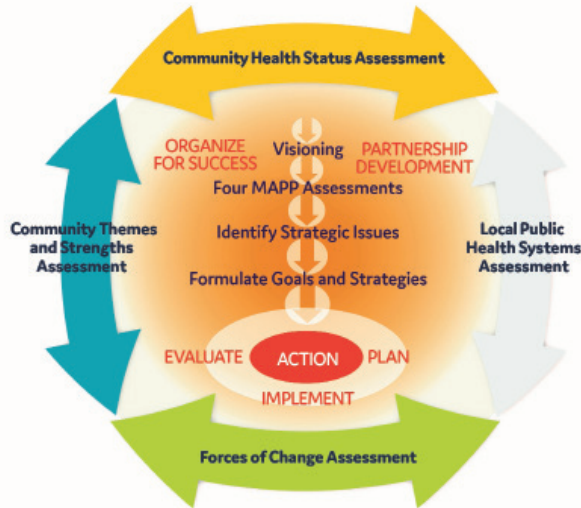
Timeline

January 2022	Organizing for Success
February 2022	Visioning with Steering Committee
March 2022	Local Public Health Systems Assessment
May 2022	Community Themes and Strengths Assessment
June 2022	Forces of Change Assessment
July 2022	Community Health Status Assessment
October 2022	Review Assessment Findings with Steering Committee
Novemeber 2022	Review CHA and Define Priorities

2023-2025 Community Health Improvement Plan

MAPP Framework[1]

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

1. Community Health Status Assessment: Investigates health outcomes and quality of life at a detailed level. Health issues are identified and highlighted by gathering data for a variety of indicators and analyzing differences across time periods, among population subgroups, or with peer, state, or national data.
2. Community Themes and Strengths Assessment: Examines health issues Walton County residents feel are important and the assets the community possesses to address those issues.
3. Forces of Change Assessment: The impact of forces, such as legislation and technology, that affect the context of the community are evaluated.

4. Local Public Health System Assessment: Comprehensively examines organizations from across multiple sectors and their contribution to the public's health.

The next steps after the production of this CHA is for the community to identify the most critical issues that must be addressed for Walton County to achieve its vision. After identifying a list of strategic issues, broader goals addressing these issues are created and specific strategies to meet these goals are developed. Strategies are planned, implemented, and evaluated in a continuous cycle which celebrates successes and adapts to new will be included in this 2023-2025 Community Health Improvement Plan.

DRIVERS OF HEALTH

Despite spending more per person on health care than any other developed nation, the United States continues to see poorer health outcomes and greater differences in health across communities.[7] Public health research indicates that factors other than health care contribute to these differences. Global and national health authorities including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognize that external factors such as education and income drive health. These factors are sometimes called the social determinants of health. These social determinants of health strongly influence health behaviors, access to clinical care, and even our genes and biology. DOH-Walton refers to them as drivers of health. The drivers of health can be broken down into four categories: socioeconomic factors, physical environment, health behaviors and health care.[6,8] There are marked differences in drivers of health along racial and ethnic lines, and these differences can contribute to poor health outcomes among minority populations.[5]
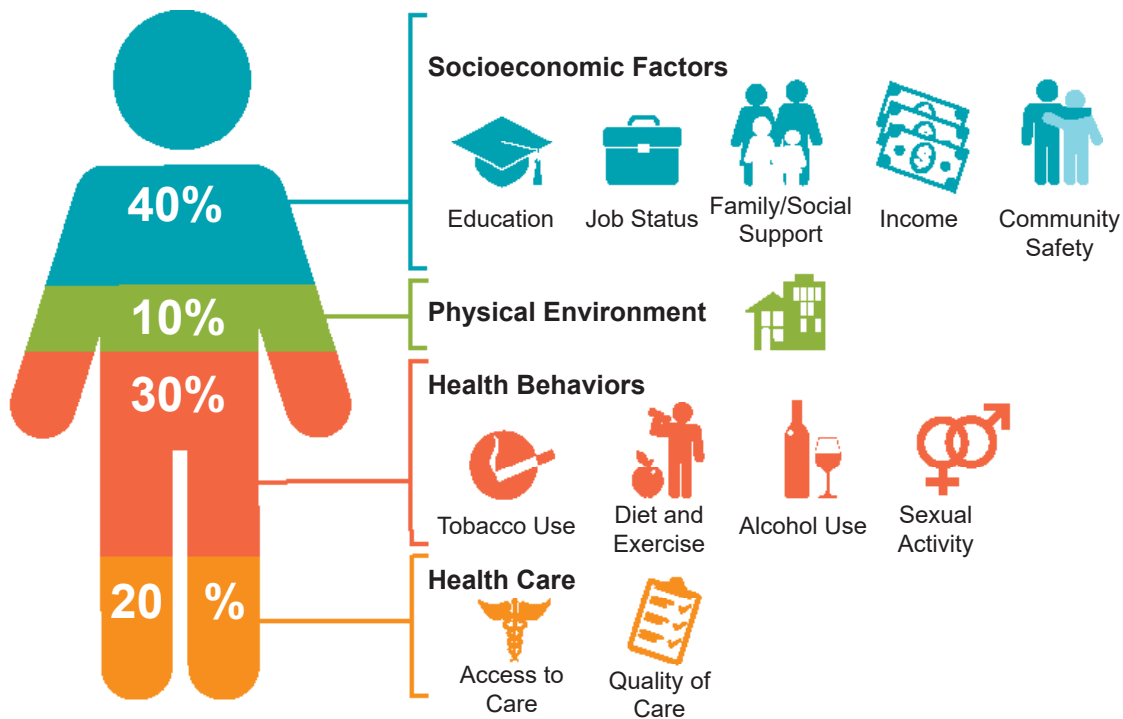
An example of this is the influence of access to healthy foods on chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Some define geographic areas in Walton County have limited access to healthy foods. Those same areas have lower life expectancy. Due to their environment and neighborhood, they have less opportunity to make healthy eating choices.

Policy is a critical tool for changing environments. Policy is any action or inaction the government takes or chooses not to take that seeks to address problems or issues. The goal is to create a systematic approach through informed policy changes by local government, thereby addressing a root causes.

Our income, education, housing and transportation create opportunities or barriers to health.

Healthy choices should be convenient choices for everyone in Walton County.
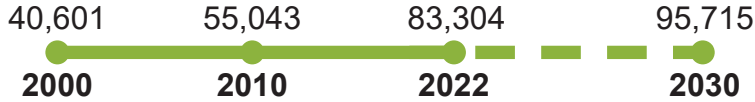
FACTORS THAT DRIVE OUR HEALTH[6]

40%

Socioeconomic Factors

Education

Job Status

Family/Social Support

Income

Community Safety

10%

Physical Environment

30%

Health Behaviors

Tobacco Use

Diet and Exercise

Alcohol Use

Sexual Activity

20 %

Health Care
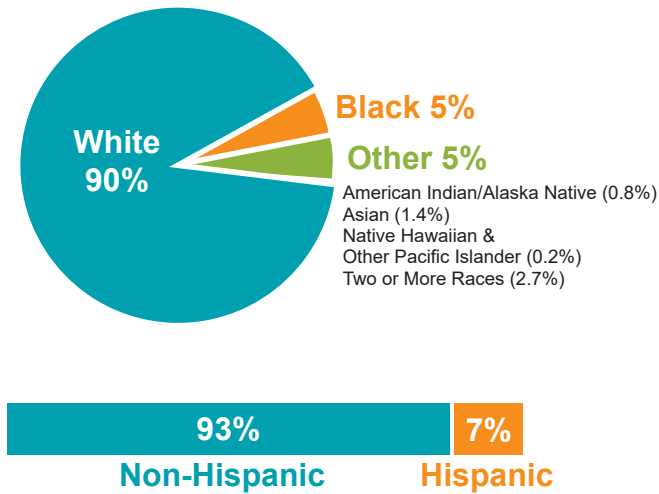
Access to Care

Quality of Care

Health begins where you live, learn, work and play. All Walton 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 so that everyone can have the opportunity to make healthy choices.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to U.S. News, Walton County is the fifth fastest-growing county in the United States.[3] From 2022 to 2022, Walton County had a population growth rate of 10.8%.[2]
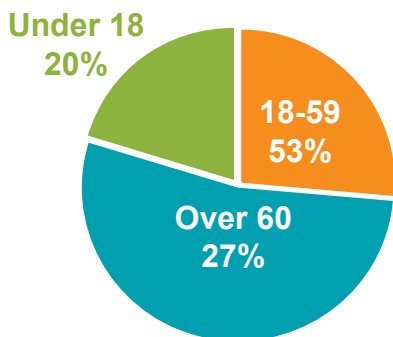
40,601	55,043	83,304	95,715
2000	**2010**	**2022**	**2030**

Life Expectancy[10]

77.2

78.5

Population by Race and Ethnicity (2023)[2]

White 90%

Black 5%

Other 5%
American Indian/Alaska Native (0.8%)
Asian (1.4%)
Native Hawaiian &
Other Pacific Islander (0.2%)
Two or More Races (2.7%)

93%	7%
Non-Hispanic	**Hispanic**

By 2030, the Hispanic population is anticipated to represent almost 12% of Walton County's total population.[4]

Median Age[2]

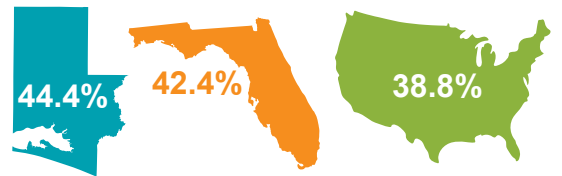44.4%   42.4%   38.8%

Veteran Population[2]

11.0%   7.4%   6.2%
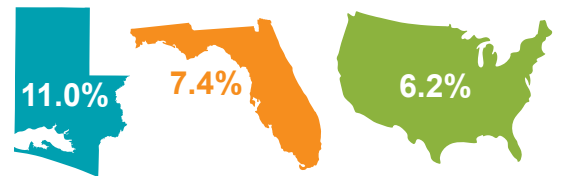
Foreign-Born Population[2]

7.5%   21.1%   13.7%

Population by Age (2023)[2]

Under 18 20%

18-59 53%

Over 60 27%
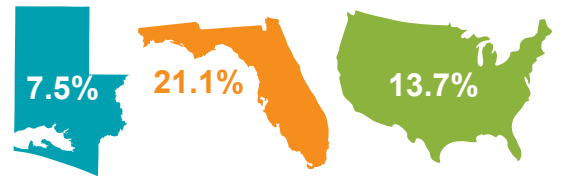
Certain populations tend to experience adverse health outcomes or have different health needs based on demographics. Key populations that can be at risk and should be monitored include the following:

- **Older Adults:** Tracking the population of older adults is important because this population has unique health needs, which should be considered separately from other age groups. Walton County's older adults is one of the fastest growing demographics.

- **People Experiencing Poverty or At-Risk:** Living in poverty creates barriers for achieving optimal health. People experiencing poverty are less likely to have the education needed to earn higher income. Examples include limited access to health services, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, and other necessities to living a healthy life. ALICE® refers to the population in our communities that are *Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed*. ALICE represents hard-working households who live paycheck to paycheck; reduced hours, a family emergency, or unexpected expense can be catastrophic. **Nearly 32% of all families in Walton County are ALICE.**[9]

- **People with Disabilities:** Until recently, people with disabilities have been overlooked in public health surveys, data analyses, and health reports. Emerging data indicate that individuals with disabilities experience health disparities in health behaviors, clinical preventive services, and chronic conditions. Walton County has a higher percentage of individuals with disability status, compared to Florida and the United States.

- **Minority Populations:** The data show that racial and ethnic minority groups, throughout the United States, experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, asthma, and heart disease, when compared to their White counterparts.

- **Rural Communities:** People living in rural areas generally are located farther from health care facilities and other services than people living in urban areas. More than 46 million people in the United States—or 15% of the population—live in rural areas. There are more older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans living in rural areas. Rural areas tend to have higher rates of people who do not have health insurance and who have limited access to health care services because many medical centers in rural areas are closing. Walton County is considered a medically underserved community with parts of the county being designated as rural.

1 in 4 residents are over the age of 60.[2]

1 in 7 residents are living in poverty.[2]

Percent of Population with a Disability, Under Age 65[2]

16.6%

13.6%

12.6%

1 in 3 Non-Hispanic Black residents could not see a doctor in the past year due to cost.[10]

Percent of Population without Health Insurance, Under Age 65[2]

15.4%

13.9%

9.3%

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

COMMUNITY THEMES & STRENGTHS

The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment is a vital part of a community health improvement process. During this phase, community thoughts, opinions, concerns, and solutions are gathered – anything that provides insight into the issues the community feels are important. Feedback about the quality of life in the community and community assets is also gathered. The information gathered during this phase will feed into the Identify Strategic Issues phase of the MAPP process.

In Summer 2022, DOH-Walton worked with community partners to conduct a community survey (386 responses), interviews with 20 community leaders knowledgeable about health, and one health care focus group.

Key Informants

Tony Anderson, *Walton County Board of County Commissioners*

Ann Sexton, *City of Paxton*

Bob Campbell, *City of DeFuniak Springs*

Russell Hughes, *Walton County School District*

Bill Barrett, *Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast*

Laura Tiu, *UF/IFAS Extension Office - Walton County*

Sgt. Mark Wendal, *Walton County Sheriff's Office*

Cory Godwin, *Walton County Jail*

Susan Bakalo, *Life Enrichment Senior Center*

Bill Imfeld, *Walton County Economic Development Alliance*

Gabrielle Kilgore, *Walton Area Chamber of Commerce*

Shakisha McDonald, *Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast*

Carly Barnes, *Caring and Sharing of South Walton*

Chelsea Blaich, *Main Street DeFuniak Springs*

Caitlin Cerise, *Walton County Public Library System*

Travis Digges, *City of Freeport Parks and Recreation Department*

Samantha Graves, *City of Freeport Planning and Zoning Department*

Joel Paul, Jr., *Tri-County Community Council, Inc.*

Steve Vergara, *Trinity Fellowship Church*

Focus Group

Walton Community Health Center Board of Directors

Major Findings

Most Important Factors in a Healthy Community
1. Affordable and accessible housing
2. Access to quality healthcare and wellness programs
3. Low crime and safe neighborhoods
4. Clean environment (water, air, etc.)
5. Quality education
6. Good employment and entrepreneurship opportunities
7. Community services for vulnerable populations (older adults, individuals with disabilities, homeless, etc.)
8. Access to mental healthcare

Greatest Perceived Health Issues in Walton County
1. Limited access to healthcare and wellness programs
2. Limited community services for vulnerable populations (older adults, individuals with disabilities, homeless, etc.)
3. Limited access to mental healthcare
4. Cost of medications
5. Homelessness
6. Lack of health insurance
7. Limited access to healthy food options
8. Motor vehicle accidents

Top Perceived Personal Behaviors Affecting the Health of Walton County Residents
1. Drug use
2. Not seeing a doctor or dentist routinely
3. Being at an unhealthy weight
4. Texting/using cell phone while driving
5. Alcohol use
6. Lack of exercise
7. Poor eating habits
8. Tobacco use

FORCES OF CHANGE

Forces of Change Assessment identifies known or likely major contextual elements that could support, bolster, hinder, or even negate taking action on key strategic assessment was conducted in Summer 2022 with the CHA Steering Committee. The committee identified forces that could affect the 2023-2025 Community Health Plan in either a positive or negative way. The summary of the findings can be found below.

Forces (Trends, Events, and Factors)	Threats	Opportunities
Decreasing income stability due to economy trends (Inflation, gas prices, housing, medical costs, food, transportation)	People might not afford medications, routine health care, or healthy food choices, housing, etc.	Partnerships with health care, non-profits, and local governments; The need of interventions such as establishing more community gardens or encourage at-home growing.
Lack of housing options (Affordable, workforce, rental, etc.)	Increased homelessness and families living in unsafe conditions	Multifamily/generational living together
Population growth	Lack of services, infrastructure, lack of housing, overcrowding of schools	Increase in local economy, Increase in tax base
Lack of substance use treatment centers and mental health counselors	Increase in accidental overdose deaths, drug use, and crime rates	Access of telehealth services, 988
Temporary closure of local emergency department	Residents have to travel an extra 30 minutes to receive emergency care; First responders have to spend extra time on each incident; Increased ambulance expenses	EMS home visits; Better collaboration with first responders
Increasing populations with limited English proficiency	Limited services provided in preferred language	Cultural diversity; Partnerships focusing on literacy
Rural setting, mixed-rural	Limited transportation, long drives for primary and specialty healthcare, work, etc, healthcare with limited operating hours, mixture of rural and developing urban settings/cultures	Beautiful lands, parks, farms, etc
Proximity to coast	Hurricanes, flooding, increased population that are not included in resident estimates	Tourism taxes
Ending of COVID-19 funding	Removing people from public assistance (housing, etc.), impacts on testing, vaccine availability	Highlighting the importance of the local public health system and the need for adequate funding
The hiring crisis, especially for public sector and non-profits	People living jobs, limited pool of applicants, positions/programs being closed and ended	Ensuring that resources are being used responsibly and strategically
Increasing travel	Increase likelihood of travel-related infectious diseases	Cultural experiences; Vacations for mental health
Increasing community involvement to address issues	N/A	Working together and not against each other

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

The Local Public Health Systems Assessment was conducted in March 2022 virtually via a survey to a sampling of 20 local public health practitioners and community partners. The survey used the 10 Essential Public Health Services (EPHS) framework for public health. Participants of the LPHSA scored each of the sub-elements of the EPHS based on if the local public health system is caring out the EPHS and to what extent, from "No" to "Optimal." The sub-element scores were then averaged to determine the overall score for the EPHS. The summary of the findings can be found below.

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE	WEIGHTED SCORE	LEVEL
#1: Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets.	85.1	Optimal
#2: Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population.	82.4	Optimal
#3: Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it.	80.0	Optimal
#4: Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health.	84.5	Optimal
#5: Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws that impact health	80.6	Optimal
#6: Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public's health	87.9	Optimal
#7: Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy	84.0	Optimal
#8: Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce	75.6	Significant
#9: Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and continuous quality improvement	79.3	Significant
#10: Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health	81.4	Optimal

Top 3 Local Strengths
(Highest Scoring Sub-Elements)

87.4 Collaborate and facilitate data sharing with partners, including multi-sector partners. (EPHS #1)

87.2 Build relationships with payers and healthcare providers, including the sharing of data across partners to foster health and well-being. (EPHS #7)

87.2 Conduct enforcement activities that may include, but are not limited to sanitary codes, especially in the food industry; full protection of drinking water supplies; and timely follow-up on hazards, preventable injuries, and exposure-related diseases identified in occupational and community settings. (EPHS #6)

Top 3 Areas of Improvement
(Lowest Scoring Sub-Elements)

68.4 Foster leadership skills at all levels. (EPHS #8)

70.6 Build a pipeline of future public health practitioners. (EPHS #8)

75.8 Build a culturally competent public health workforce and leadership that reflects the community and practices cultural humility. (EPHS #8)

COMMUNITY HEALTH STATUS

The Community Health Status Assessment identifies priority community health and quality of life issues. Questions answered include: "How healthy are our residents?" and "What does the health status of our community look like?"

The Community Health Status Assessment was reviewed by the Walton County CHIP Steering Committee (CHA) in August 2022. Members were provided a draft of the 2022 CHA document and a survey to record any comments or edits. The comments and edits were then incorporated into the final version of the 2022 CHA. The final data included in the document was determined by DOH-Walton staff members based on the guidance of the teams. A summary of highlights are included in this document. To view the entire document, visit walton.floridahealth.gov or scan the QR code to the right.

Leading Causes of Death, 2018-2022[10]

	Walton	Florida
1	Cancer	Heart Disease
2	Heart Diseases	Cancer
3	Unintentional Injury	Unintentional Injury
4	Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	Stroke
5	COVID-19	COVID-19
6	Stroke	Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases
7	Alzheimer's Disease	Diabetes
8	Diabetes	Alzheimer's Disease
9	Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome & Nephrosis	Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis
10	Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis	Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome & Nephrosis

The Walton Community Health Improvement Partnership has been actively working on bettering the health of Walton County residents since 2012. WCHIP brings together over 40 different organizations to strategically plan activities to address local health issues. Through policies, systems, and environmental changes, WCHIP has made some made strides in elevating the health of Walton County. This can be illustrated by the County Health Rankings. Walton County has made improvements in rankings, especially for Health Outcomes. Both of which the assessment with explore. A summary of the last 10 years of County Health Rankings can be found below.

County Rankings[7] (of Florida's 67 Counties)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Health Outcomes (Length of Life and Quality of Life	41	46	38	34	32	29	17	20	20	19	18
Health Factors (Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social & Economic Factors, and Physical Environment)	25	29	32	30	38	36	37	35	31	24	21

IMPORTANT HEALTH FINDINGS

- Nearly 50% of all cancer deaths from 2018 to 2020 were related to tobacco use.[10]
- Out of the 44 residents that died by suicide from 2020 to 2022, 82% were White male residents.[10]
- Male residents are over twice as likely to die from unintentional injury (125.1 per 100,000) compared to female residents (54.9 per 100,000).[10]
- Female residents are nearly twice as likely to die from Alzheimer's disease (60.2 per 100,000) compared to male residents (33.3 per 100,000).[10]
- Black residents are over twice as likely to die from colorectal cancer (35.7 per 100,000) compared to White residents (12.3 per 100,000).[10]
- Female students were over twice more likely to have done something to purposely hurt themselves (23.1%), compared to male students (8.2%).[14]
- Residents with annual incomes under $25,000 are less likely to see a doctor due to cost (35%) compared to those with incomes between $25,999 to $49,999 (24%) and those with incomes $50,000 and higher (7%).[10]
- Hispanic females age 18 years and younger are twice more likely to have a baby (12.6 per 1,000 live births) compared their non-Hispanic counterparts (5.1 per 1,000 live births).[10]
- White residents of Walton County are more likely to have any type of health insurance compared to Black and Hispanic residents.[10]
- There is nearly a 14 year difference in the census tract with the highest life expectancy and the lowest in Walton County.[10]

KEY HEALTH STATUS INDICATORS

Indicator	Walton County Baseline	Walton County Current	Florida	Local Trend
Homeless Estimate[10]	50 (2022)	206 (2023)	30,809 (2022)	▲
Median Household Income[2]	$68,111 (2021)	$74,832 (2022)	$67,917 (2022)	▲
Owner-Occupied Households With Monthly Housing Costs of 30% or More of Household Income[2]	23.6% (2021)	28.5% (2022)	25.5% (2022)	▲
Rented Households With Monthly Housing Costs of 30% or More of Household Income[2]	54.4% (2021)	68.9% (2022)	57.6% (2022)	▲
Unemployment Rate[2]	3.5% (2021)	2.6% (2022)	2.9% (2022)	▼
Families With Female Householder (No Spouse Present) Below Poverty Level With Related Children[2]	42.4% (2021)	32.3% (2022)	30.7% (2022)	▼
Unsatisfactory Inspections of Mobile Home and RV Parks, Percent of Mobile Home and RV Parks Inspected (2019)[10]	29.9% (2022)	32.7% (2023)	21.4% (2023)	▲
Persons without Health Insurance[10]	13.6% (2021)	15.2% (2022)	11.2% (2022)	▲
Adults who have a Personal Doctor[10]	77.8% (2016)	67.8% (2019)	72.0% (2019)	▼
Adults Who Had Poor Mental Health on 14 or More of the Past 30 Days[10]	11.3% (2016)	16.2% (2019)	13.8% (2019)	▲
High School Students Who Have Experienced at Least One Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)[14]	76% (2020)	73% (2022)	67.2% (2022)	▼
High School Students Who Have Experienced Four or More Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)[14]	28.6% (2020)	27.9% (2022)	21.4% (2022)	▼
High School Students Who Experienced Sexual Abuse[14]	10.5% (2020)	7.3% (2022)	6.6% (2022)	▼
High School Students Who Experienced Physical Abuse[14]	11.1% (2020)	13.6% (2022)	10.7% (2022)	▲
High School Students Who Experienced Mental Illness in Their Household[14]	39.0% (2020)	39.8% (2022)	32.9% (2022)	▼
Female Students Who, in the Past Year, Did Something to Purposely Hurt Themselves Without Wanting to Die[14]	19.4% (2020)	23.1% (2022)	19.4% (2022)	▲
Adults With Good Mental Health[10]	88.7% (2016)	83.8% (2019)	86.2% (2019)	▼

Indicator	Walton County		Florida	Local Trend
	Baseline	Current		
Drug Overdose Deaths (Rate per 100,000 Population)[10]	46.7 (2021)	30.6 (2022)	35.9 (2022)	▼
Infant Mortality (Rate per 1,000 Live Births)[10]	6.2 (2019-2021)	6.7 (2020-2022)	5.9 (2020-2022)	▲
Deaths From Motor Vehicle Crashes (Rate per 100,000 Population)[13]	31.1 (2021)	33.6 (2022)	15.8 (2022)	▲
Forcible Sex Offenses (Rate per 100,000 Population)[13]	10.1 (2021)	17.3 (2022)	10.3 (2022)	▲
Deaths From Unintentional Injury (Rate per 100,000 Population)[10]	103.6 (2021)	93.0 (2022)	69.4 (2022)	▼
School Readiness at Kindergarten Entry[5]	49.6% (2023)	49.1% (2024)	51.0% (2024)	▼
Population Living Within ½ Mile of a Park[10]	19.2% (2019)	20.0% (2022)	43.0% (2022)	▲
Food Insecurity Rate[11]	13.2% (2019)	11.0% (2021)	10.6% (2021)	▼
Deaths From Cancer (Rate per 100,000 Population)[10]	132.1 (2021)	161.9 (2022)	138.8 (2022)	▲
Adults Who Are Current Smokers[10]	15.3% (2016)	28.6% (2019)	14.8% (2019)	▲
Deaths From Heart Diseases (Rate per 100,000 Population)[10]	146.1 (2021)	154.5 (2022)	146.9 (2022)	▲

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN PRIORITY AREAS

MENTAL WELL-BEING AND SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

Mental health and substance use disorders and their associated stigma affect millions of Floridians, with prevalence increasing over the last few decades. As a result, mental health-related issues are a major cause of disability in Florida. Furthermore, the effects of mental health and substance use disorders extend beyond the person directly experiencing the issue to family members, friends and their communities. Mental and emotional well-being empowers individuals to realize their own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and contribute to their communities. Prevention and early intervention strategies that work to reduce and treat mental health and substance use disorders are essential forensuring optimal mental and physical health for all Floridians.

Lead:

Bryan Callahan   Walton County Prevention Coalition

Lead Facilitator:

Holly Holt   Florida Department of Health in Walton County

Workgroup Members:

Bethany Guillary	Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties
Ardelle Bush	Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties
Tia Guidry	Lakeview Center of Walton County
Stephanie Wedel	Freedom Life Compass
Sharon Wheeles	Walton County School District
Tracy Leitner	Walton Community Health Center
Doris Bontrager	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Kuila Cannon	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Jennifer Edwards	West Florida AHEC
Kelly Jasen	United Way Emerald Coast
Venita Morell	Mental Health Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties
Kyle Merritt	Northwest Florida Health Council
Renee Phillippe	Covenant Care
Judea Kring	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Lauren Anzaldo	Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
Anna Tedder	SEDNET
Mark Sherrod	Northwest Florida Health Network

Community resources for mental health and substance use includes:

- Walton Community Health Center
- Lakeview Center of Walton County
- Walton County Prevention Coalition
- Women United
- Mental Health Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties

GOAL MW 1   Reduce the impact of adult mental, emotional and behavioral health disorders.

Objective MW 1.1

By December 31, 2025, increase the percentage of adults in Walton County with good mental health from 83.8% (2019) to 84.8%.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Promote local mental health resources
- Offer Adult Mental Health First Aid Training
- Promote opportunities for social connectedness for older adults

GOAL MW 2   Reduce the impact of youth mental, emotional and behavioral health disorders.

Objective MW 2.1

By December 31, 2025, reduce the percentage of youth (aged 11-17) in Walton County who, in the past year, did something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die from 15.2% (2022) to 14.1%.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Promote self-calming technique training with early childcare and after-school programs
- Promote school-based counsellors and mental health education

GOAL MW 3   Reduce substance use disorders and drug overdose deaths.

Objective MW 3.1

By December 31, 2025, reduce the rate per 100,000 of drug overdose deaths in Walton County from 46.7 (2021) to 38.5.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Expand naloxone distribution to priority communities
- Establish Jail Bridge Program with linkage to treatment for Opioid Use Disorder
- Expand and promote medicine-assisted therapy
- Collaborate with hospitals to enhance transitional treatment and overdose rescue efforts
- Collaborate with local healthcare to assist with assessing and refining opioid prescribing practices
- Promote screening for fentanyl in routine clinical toxicology testing

ACCESS TO CARE

Primary care providers offer a usual source of care, early detection and treatment of disease,4 chronic disease management, and preventive care. Patients with a usual source of care are more likely to receive recommended preventive services such as flu shots, blood pressure screenings, and cancer screenings. However, disparities in access to primary care exist, and many people face barriers that decrease access to services and increase the risk of poor health outcomes. Some of these obstacles include lack of health insurance, language-related barriers, disabilities, inability to take time off work to attend appointments, geographic and transportation-related barriers, and a shortage of primary care providers.These barriers may intersect to further reduce access to primary care.

Lead:

Kyle Merritt   Northwest Florida Health Council

Lead Facilitator:

Holly Holt   Florida Department of Health in Walton County

Workgroup Members:

Bethany Guillary	Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties
Ardelle Bush	Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties
Tia Guidry	Lakeview Center of Walton County
Stephanie Wedel	Freedom Life Compass
Sharon Wheeles	Walton County School District
Tracy Leitner	Walton Community Health Center
Doris Bontrager	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Kuila Cannon	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Jennifer Edwards	West Florida AHEC
Kelly Jasen	United Way Emerald Coast
Venita Morell	Mental Health Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties
Bryan Callahan	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Renee Phillippe	Covenant Care
Judea Kring	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Lauren Anzaldo	Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
Anna Tedder	SEDNET
Mark Sherrod	Northwest Florida Health Network

Community resources for access to care include:

- Walton Community Health Center
- PanCare Health
- Lakeview Center of Walton County
- Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast
- Point Washington Medical Clinic
- 211 Northwest Florida
- Mobile Integrated Health/ Community Paramedicine

GOAL AC 1 — Increase access to quality primary, preventative and sub-specialty care for all people across the lifespan.

Objective AC 1.1

By December 31, 2025, increase the percentage of adults in Walton County who have a personal doctor or primary care provider from 67.8% (2019) to 72.0%.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Establish a family practice residency program.
- Continue to implement the community paramedicine program.
- Convene local healthcare system to coordinate activities to address identified gaps in care.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

The well-being of women, infants, children and families determines the health of the next generation. Events over the life course influence maternal and child health risks and outcomes. Difference in health outcomes such as infant mortality, by race and ethnicity, can predict future public health challenges for families, communities and the health care system.

Lead:

Bethany Guillory	Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties

Lead Facilitator:

Holly Holt	Florida Department of Health in Walton County

Workgroup Members:

Bryan Callahan	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Ardelle Bush	Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties
Tia Guidry	Lakeview Center of Walton County
Stephanie Wedel	Freedom Life Compass, Inc.
Sharon Wheeles	Walton County School District
Tracy Leitner	Walton Community Health Center
Doris Bontrager	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Kuila Cannon	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
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Renee Phillippe	Covenant Care
Judea Kring	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Lauren Anzaldo	Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
Anna Tedder	SEDNET
Mark Sherrod	Northwest Florida Health Network

Community resources for maternal and child health include:

- Florida Department of Health in Walton County
- Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast
- Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties
- Pregnancy Resource Center
- Florida Department of

GOAL MCH 1 — Reduce infant morbidity and mortality.

Objective MCH 1.1

By December 31, 2025, reduce the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births in Walton County from 6.2 (2019-2021) to 5.9.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Determine areas of opportunity from the local Fetal Infant Mortality Review data.
- Design a safe sleep campaign.

GOAL MCH 2 — Increase mitigation of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a community-level prevention strategy.

Objective MCH 2.1

By December 31, 2025, reduce the percentage of high school students in Walton County who have experienced four or more ACEs from 28.6% (2020) to 28.4%.[14]

Key Strategies:
- Establish parenting classes and support groups using evidence-based programming.

PRIORITY AREA 4 INJURY, SAFETY AND VIOLENCE

For people ages one to 44 years, injuries are a major cause of death in Florida. Every year, people suffer preventable unintentional injuries from falls, motor vehicle crashes and intentional injuries such as intimate partner violence, abuse and other types of violence. Injuries and violence contribute to lost productivity, poor mental health, years of potential life loss and premature death. Injuries happen every day, but most are preventable. Injuries occur in predictable patterns and therefore, intervention strategies such as sharing effective solutions and implementing prevention programs are keys to keeping Floridians safe.

Lead:

Kay Brady — Retired Professional

Lead Facilitator:

Brandi Gill — Florida Department of Health in Walton County

Workgroup Members:

Deb Willis	West Florida AHEC
Kendra Wood	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Carolynn Zonia	Community Resident
Tom Baker	Walton County Housing Agency
Shannon Bexley	Walton County Housing Agency
Wyndy Crozier	Emerald Coast Technical College
Jacqueline Doyle	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Jennifer Edwards	West Florida AHEC
Marlee Tucker	United Way Emerald Coast
Joel Paul, Jr.	Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Linsey Hall	Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast
Jill Breslawski	UF IFAS Extension Office
Emily King	Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program
Candy Nowling	Matrix Community Outreach Center
Emily Proctor	Caring and Sharing of South Walton
Catie Feeney	Walton County Emergency Management
Inger Berg	American Heart Association
Dana Hodges	Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast
Dianne McManus	Homelessness & Housing Alliance
Anthony Valle	City of DeFuniak Springs Council Member
Uriah Matthews	Walton County Economic Development Alliance
Josh Ervin	Community Redevelopment Agency of DeFuniak Springs

Community resources for injuries, crime, and violence include:
- West Florida Area Health Education Center
- Walton Okaloosa Council on Aging
- Walton County Sheriff's Office
- City of DeFuniak Springs Police
- Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center

GOAL ISV 1   Reduce preventable non-intentional injuries.

Objective ISV 1.1

By December 31, 2025, reduce the age-adjusted rate per 100,000 of deaths from motor vehicle crashes in Walton County from 29.0 (2019-2021) to 25.0.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Provide traffic safety training for older adults and teens.

Objective ISV 1.2

By December 31, 2025, reduce the rate per 100,000 of hospitalizations from non-fatal injuries for residents aged 1-5 years in Walton County from 108.7 (2020-2022) to 100.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Provide safe swimming education to low income families.

GOAL ISV 2   Improve services and resources available for survivors of sex crimes and human trafficking.

Objective ISV 2.1

By December 31, 2025, reduce the rate per 100,000 of forcible sex offenses in Walton County from 12.0 (2022-2022) to 11.5.[13]

Key Strategies:
- Promote available resources to human trafficking victims.
- Educate partners on the signs of human trafficking.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IMPACTING HEALTH

PRIORITY AREA 5

Social and economic conditions impacting health are the conditions in the environments where people live, work and play that influence health throughout the lifespan. These factors, including but not limited to income, employment, social supports, literacy skills and transportation have a major impact on people's ability to lead long, healthy lives.

Lead:

Linsey Hall	Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast

Lead Facilitator:

Brandi Gill	Florida Department of Health in Walton County

Workgroup Members:

Deb Willis	West Florida AHEC
Nicole Larson	West Florida AHEC
Kendra Wood	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Carolynn Zonia	Community Resident
Tom Baker	Walton County Housing Agency
Shannon Bexley	Walton County Housing Agency
Wyndy Crozier	Emerald Coast Technical College
Jacqueline Doyle	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Jennifer Edwards	West Florida AHEC
Marlee Tucker	United Way Emerald Coast
Joel Paul, Jr.	Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Kay Brady	Retired Professional
Jill Breslawski	UF IFAS Extension Office
Emily King	Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program
Candy Nowling	Matrix Community Outreach Center
Emily Proctor	Caring and Sharing of South Walton
Catie Feeney	Walton County Emergency Management
Inger Berg	American Heart Association
Dana Hodges	Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast
Dianne McManus	Homelessness & Housing Alliance
Anthony Valle	City of DeFuniak Springs Council Member
Uriah Matthews	Walton County Economic Development Alliance
Josh Ervin	Community Redevelopment Agency of DeFuniak Springs

Community resources for poverty include:

- Caring and Sharing of South Walton
- Caring of Sharing of North Walton
- Walton County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
- The Matrix Community Outreach Center
- Tri-County Community Council
- Walton County Housing Agency
- Homelessness and Housing Alliance
- Walton County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
- Walton County School District
- Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast
- Emerald Coast Technical College
- Northwest Florida State College
- Walton County Public Library

GOAL SEC 3 Expand access to high-quality educational opportunities for all across the lifespan.

Objective SEC 3.1

By December 31, 2025, increase the percentage of public school kindergarten students in Walton County that meet the standards of being ready for entry from 51.6% (2020) to 56.9%.[5]

Key Strategies:
- Promote literacy-rich environments for early childhood development

GOAL SEC 1 Support communities to promote healthy, interconnected and safe environments.

Objective SEC 1.1

By December 31, 2025, increase the percentage of the population that lives within a half-mile of a park in Walton County from 20% (2022) to 23%.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Promote local parks and recreation opportunities
- Identify areas and partners for new parks (PACE-EH Project)

Objective SEC 1.2

By December 31, 2025, decrease the food insecurity rate in Walton County from 13.2% (2019) to 12%.[11]

Key Strategies:
- Establish new points of distribution in food secure communities (PACE-EH Project)

GOAL SEC 2 Enhance opportunities to foster economic vitality and resilience for all people.

Objective SEC 2.1

By December 31, 2025, reduce the proportion of families that spend more than 30 percent of income on housing in Walton County from 29.4% (2021) to 28%.[2]

Key Strategies:
- Develop coordinated housing strategy with mulnicipalities and stakeholders

Objective SEC 2.2

By December 31, 2025, reduce the percentage people living in poverty in Walton County from 16.5% (2021) to 16%.[2]

Key Strategies:
- Promote local employment and educational opportunities

PRIORITY AREA 6 — CHRONIC DISEASES AND CONDITIONS

Heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer and illnesses related to tobacco use are among the most common health problems affecting people of all ages, socioeconomic statuses and ethnicities. Risk factors–lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, excessive alcohol use, the environment and social and economic factors–cause much of the illness, suffering and early death related to chronic diseases and conditions.

Lead:

Jill Breslawski	UF IFAS Extension Office

Lead Facilitator:

Brandi Gill	Florida Department of Health in Walton County

Workgroup Members:

Deb Willis	West Florida AHEC
Nicole Larson	West Florida AHEC
Kendra Wood	Florida Department of Health in Walton County
Carolynn Zonia	Community Resident
Tom Baker	Walton County Housing Agency
Shannon Bexley	Walton County Housing Agency
Wyndy Crozier	Emerald Coast Technical College
Jacqueline Doyle	Walton County Prevention Coalition
Jennifer Edwards	West Florida AHEC
Marlee Tucker	United Way Emerald Coast
Joel Paul, Jr.	Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Kay Brady	Retired Professional
Linsey Hall	Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast
Emily King	Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program
Candy Nowling	Matrix Community Outreach Center
Emily Proctor	Caring and Sharing of South Walton
Catie Feeney	Walton County Emergency Management
Inger Berg	American Heart Association
Dana Hodges	Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast
Dianne McManus	Homelessness & Housing Alliance
Anthony Valle	City of DeFuniak Springs Council Member
Uriah Matthews	Walton County Economic Development Alliance
Josh Ervin	Community Redevelopment Agency of DeFuniak Spring

Community resources for active and health living include:

- Local Parks and Recreation
- Main Street DeFuniak Springs Farmers Market
- Walton County WIC
- Walton County UF/IFAS Extension Office
- Local Community Gardens
- Little Food Pantries
- Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida
- West Florida Area Health Education Center
- Walton County Prevention Coalition

GOAL CD 1 Reduce new cases of cancer and cancer-related illness, disability and death.

Objective CD 1.1 By December 31, 2025, reduce the age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population of deaths from cancer in Walton County from 145.3 (2019-2021) to 137.7.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Promote prevention and early detection screenings

Objective CD 1.2 By December 31, 2025, reduce the percentage of adults in Walton County that are current smokers from 28.6% (2019) to 25%.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Promote tobacco cessation resources

Policy Supports:
- Establish policies for tobacco free parks and public spaces

GOAL CD 2 Improve cardiovascular health by reducing new cases, disability and death from heart disease, stroke and other related illnesses.

Objective CD 2.1 By December 31, 2025, reduce the age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population of deaths from heart diseases in Walton County from 148.9 (2019-2021) to 144.5.[10]

Key Strategies:
- Promote opportunites for physical activity and nutrition
- Promote cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training
- Establish more automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in worksites and public spaces

MONITORING PLAN

To hold DOH-Walton staff and WCHIP partners accountable, the action plans will be monitored on a quarterly basis at scheduled WCHIP Steering Committee meetings. Workgroup leads and facilitators will work together to make sure action plans are up-to-date and include all vital information for tracking progress. This monitoring tool will reflect the status of each action step within each action plan, and will track progress on the process and outcome indicators.

Additionally, the WCHIP Steering Committee will host an annual review meeting each November to review the progress made on the action plans and to make amendments as needed. The WCHIP Steering Committee will update the CHIP annually based on the feedback from the annual review meeting. The internal DOH-Walton Performance Management Council will monitor progress of the CHIP action plans quarterly. Figure 1.1 provides an illustration of the CHIP implementation and monitoring process for the 3 year cycle (1/1/2023 – 12/31/2025). An example monitoring tool is included on the next page.

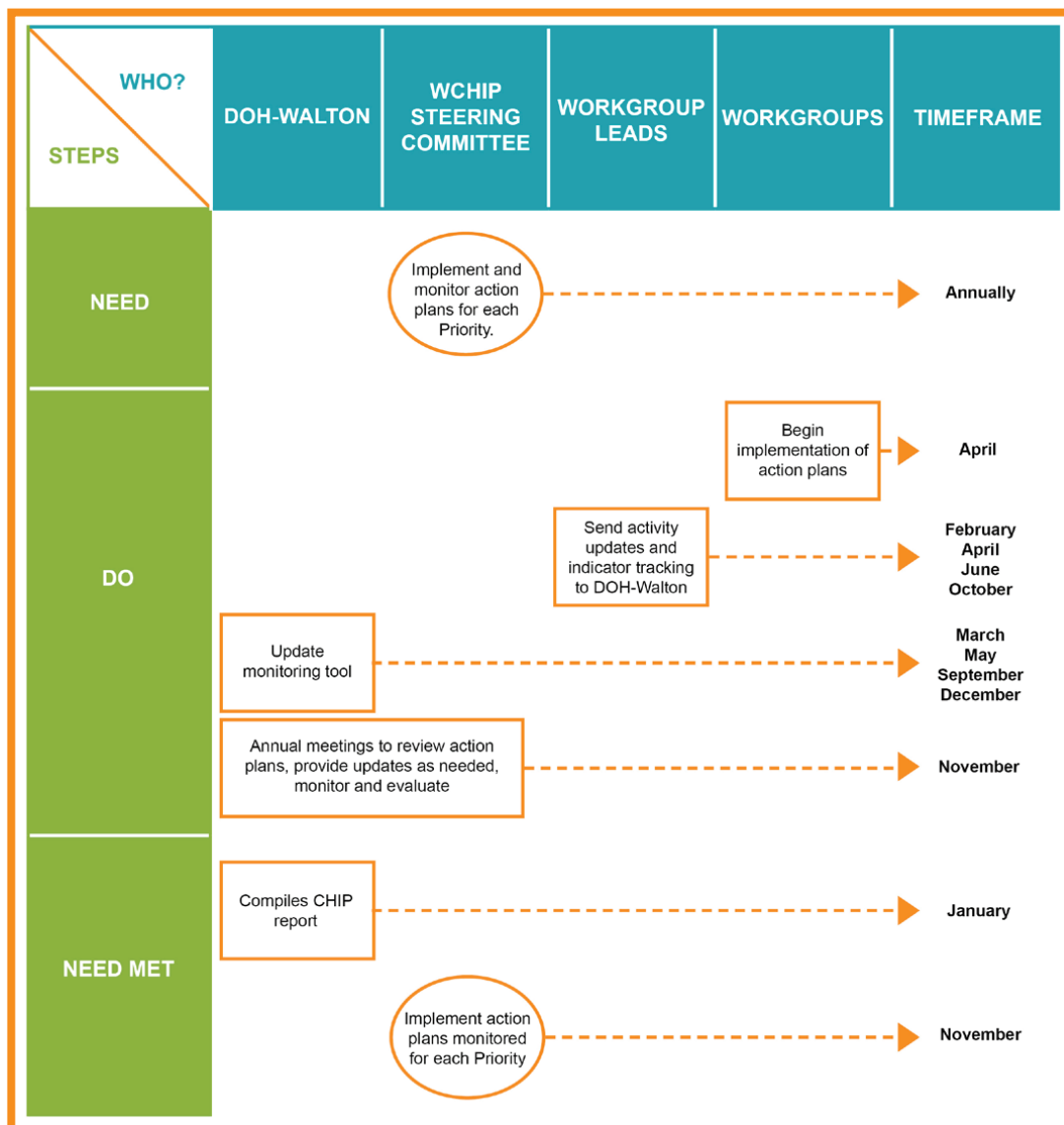Figure 1.1: CHIP Implementation and Monitoring Process Map

Figure 1.2: CHIP Quarterly Monitoring Tool

Date: _____

___ Mental Well-being and Substance Use Prevention
___ Access to Care
___ Maternal and Child Health
___ Injury, Safety, and Violence
___ Social and Economic Conditions Impacting Health
___ Chronic Diseases and Conditions

Monitoring Tool
2023 Quarter 1 Report (January 1, 2023 – March 31, 2023)

Goal:

Strategy:

Objective:

Action Steps	Action Status	Owner/Lead	Key Partners	Resources Needed	Outputs (Products)	Actual Start Date	Actual End Date	Progress Notes
	See status definitions below	Name of owner/lead for this action step	Names of partners, consultants, etc. who helped carry out the action step in Q1	List of needed resources to complete the action step.	Description of any products or results of the action completed during Q1	Actual start date of action step described	Actual finish/end date of action step described	Any information that would be helpful in knowing more about this action step's progress and activities in Q1
1.								
2.								
3.								
…								

Complete = Action Step is complete on or after the target date.
On Schedule = No changes/delays and no scope changes.
At Risk = Action Step needs some attention; milestones in action step are maybe being met, but results are not as anticipated.
Not On Schedule = It looks like the Action Step will not be met by the target date. Action Step may take longer to complete than originally anticipated.
Not Feasible = Action Step has been excluded from the Action Plan.

Please email completed form to wchip@flhealth.gov

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL, STATE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Walton County CHIP	Florida State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)	Healthy People 2030
Priority 1: Mental Well-being and Substance Use	Priority 5: Mental Well-being and Substance Abuse Prevention • Reduce the impact of adult mental, emotional and behavioral health disorders. • Reduce the impact of pediatric mental, emotional and behavioral health disorders. • Reduce substance use disorders and drug overdose deaths.	Mental Health and Mental Disorders • Goal: Improve mental health.
Priority 2: Access to Care	Priority 6: Social and Economic Conditions Impacting Health • Improve access to high-quality health care services for all across the lifespan.	Health Care Access and Quality • Goal: Increase access to comprehensive, high-quality health care services.
Priority 3: Maternal and Child Health	Priority 4 :Maternal and Child Health • Reduce infant morbidity and mortality. Priority 3: Injury, Safety, and Violence • Increase mitigation of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a statewide prevention strategy.	Pregnancy and Childbirth • Goal: Prevent pregnancy complications and maternal deaths and improve women's health before, during, and after pregnancy. Infants • Goal: Improve the health and safety of infants.
Priority 4: Injury, Safety and Violence	Priority 3: Injury, Safety, and Violence • Prevent or reduce childhood injuries. • Prevent or reduce adult injuries. • Prevent or reduce injuries in vulnerable populations.	Injury Prevention • Goal: Prevent injuries
Priority 5: Social and Economic Conditions Impacting Health	Priority 6: Social and Economic Conditions Impacting Health • Expand access to high-quality educational opportunities for all across the lifespan. • Support communities to promote healthy, interconnected and safe environments. • Enhance opportunities to foster economic vitality and resilience for all people.	Economic Stability • Goal: Help people earn steady incomes that allow them to meet their health needs. Education Access and Quality • Goal: Increase educational opportunities and help children and adolescents do well in school. Neighborhood and Built Environment • Goal: Create neighborhoods and environments that promote health and safety.
Priority 6: Chronic Diseases and Conditions	Priority 2: Chronic Diseases and Conditions • Reduce new cases of cancer and cancer-related illness, disability and death. • Improve cardiovascular health by reducing new cases, disability and death from heart disease, stroke and other related illnesses.	Cancer • Goal: Reduce new cases of cancer and cancer-related illness, disability, and death. Heart Disease and Stroke • Goal: Improve cardiovascular health and reduce deaths from heart disease and stroke.

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WE NEED YOUR HELP IN CREATING A HEALTHY WALTON!

Get involved by attending an upcoming meeting.
Email us for more information:

WCHIP@FLHEALTH.GOV

Published: January 2023
Updated: January 2024