

COMMUNITY FOCUS REPORT

2021 UPDATE

A series of white papers on the report's 11 primary topics will be published on a rolling basis ahead of the 2021 edition. For news, podcasts and more information, visit springfieldcommunityfocus.org.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

Challenged by a pandemic, leaders work to improve Greene County's health outcomes across the board.

BLUE RIBBONS Collaboration · Strength of health-care infrastructure · Tobacco-use prevention

RED FLAGS Mental-health and substance-use problems · Access to care · Children's health

Collaboration extends reach of health resources

The overall health of our community depends on the health of our citizens. The community we live in is part of who we are and affects so many facets of our lives. “Community health” is an intersection of medical health, mental health, and interaction of economic and social/environmental factors. According to the 2021 County Health Rankings, Greene County ranks 42nd out of 115 counties in Missouri based on health outcomes and health factors (areas that influence health). This is up from ranking 61st in both 2018 and 2019, but still lower than its rankings in the 30s prior to 2018. This signifies progress, but a long way to go to reach our desired health levels.

BLUE RIBBONS

A perennial strength in a number of chapters including community health, **collaboration** has become even more relevant in 2021. The collaboration among health-care partners was enhanced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Public and local health providers worked together to control and contain the virus through multiple efforts. Community partners worked together to pass policies and ordinances to ensure the health of our community. In one initial response to the pandemic, CoxHealth, Jordan Valley Community Health Center, Mercy and the Springfield-Greene County Health Department worked together to deploy a community testing site for COVID-19.

Collaboration with our community health systems and partners continued throughout the response. The Mercy health-care system was the first in our area to get vaccine, and worked with CoxHealth to share supply for the community efforts. While this didn't work out for logistical reasons, this type of collaboration was evident on multiple fronts

and the willingness to work together has been instrumental in caring for our community.

Not only have health care partners come together in response efforts, but many other organizations worked with the community health partners to respond to the needs of our citizens by providing housing, food, child-care services, care for the ill and affected, and in support of our health-care workers.

Amid the pandemic, new initiatives emerged to respond and support our community. The Have Faith Initiative, which comprised leaders of the faith community, the health department, the City of Springfield and Greene County met frequently to address the spiritual needs and common good of the community.

Outside of the COVID response, collaboration has been strengthened and is thriving. Following 2019's Community Mental Health Assessment, which identified access to behavioral health and substance-use services as a key need for our area, partners from healthcare, behavioral health and the criminal justice system came together to work towards launching Burrell Behavioral Health's Behavioral Crisis Center-Rapid Access Unit (see “Success Story” sidebar).

In early 2020, community leaders and partners again came together to address the broader health needs of the community as defined by the Community Health Needs Assessment. The 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment will include an even-larger service area and engage numerous new agencies. Through this process, partners will identify and prioritize community health needs and formulate an action plan to address them.

Health care systems are our area's largest job drivers, employing approximately 22,612 employees between

COVID-19 IMPACT



Our hospital systems almost immediately shut down elective surgeries, procedures and screening tests at the beginning of the pandemic. The changes in delivery of services that have occurred through the pandemic have caused community members to potentially not seek needed and/or routine health care services. This has the potential to lead to a decrease in overall health of our community.

Due to the shutdown and quarantine/isolation of community members, mental health and well-being came even more to light. We know from previous pandemics that the negative mental-health effects can last from between one to three years, with these effects likely to be even more severe. On the upside, this has created a dialogue in our community, leading to a reduction in the stigma associated with seeking care and an increased willingness of the public and businesses to engage in conversations about mental health. Created in response to the pandemic, Burrell's Be Well Community—a free resource open to the public three days a week on Facebook—has emerged as a unique and highly used resource for the public and organizations to heal, grow and thrive in connection with one another.

During the response of the pandemic, the public health system was center stage. Our community began to interact with public health on a personal basis. Much of our community may not have previously interacted nor understood that public health is here to keep people safe. The pandemic has given the opportunity for people to better understand the purpose of public health and the integral piece that we provide to keep the community healthy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KYTV

KYTV hosted community conversations via Zoom on topics related to the coronavirus pandemic.

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CoxHealth and Mercy Hospital Springfield; the entire health care sector employs nearly 37,500 people. This provides an annual economic impact of \$4.5 billion. Our health care system offers every specialty listed by the American Medical Association. Hospitals and clinics have continued to grow to meet the health needs of our community.

In 2019, Mercy Heart Hospital Springfield completed a \$110 million project that brought all of Mercy's cardiac services under one roof. This new heart hospital is the most advanced in the region, with services including extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, which isn't offered elsewhere in our area. This hospital became critical in the care and recovery of some of our community's COVID-19 patients. Mercy has also expanded its Kids Emergency Room, a 6,300-square-foot specialized emergency pediatric care unit for our littlest citizens.

The strength and agility of our **health care infrastructure** was in action during the pandemic. CoxHealth transformed the fifth floor of CoxSouth tower into a COVID-19 unit in just a matter of weeks. This unit was ready to respond and fully equipped as other locations were filled to capacity.

Jordan Valley Community Health Center continues to expand to meet the needs of the underserved in the community. In January 2021, Jordan Valley announced the expansion of a ninth location at Grand Street and Kansas Expressway. During the pandemic response, this site was used as a community vaccination hub through a partnership between Jordan Valley and the Springfield-Greene County Health Department.

While there is a nationwide shortage of health care workers, our community has worked towards local solutions to train healthcare providers. Enrollment in Mercy's College of Nursing and Health Sciences of Southwest Baptist University is about 700 students. The Missouri State University Care Clinic provides education and offers hands-on training for students in health sciences degree programs at MSU. Cox College has expanded and renovated its campus in central Springfield to train more

students. The Cox Family Medicine Residency has further expanded to Jordan Valley Community Health Center. CoxHealth and Burrell Behavioral Health have also partnered with Ozarks Technical Community College on programs to train and employ medical assistants and behavioral-health-support professionals, respectively.

As identified in the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment, Springfield had a high prevalence of tobacco use that resulted in major health concerns related to lung and cardiovascular disease and mental health. Our community partners worked strategically on upstream policy-based approaches to **tobacco-use prevention**. In mid-2019, the Tobacco 21 ordinance was passed by Springfield City Council. This ordinance prohibited tobacco and vape sales or provision to anyone under 21 years of age.

Multiple approaches are needed to make significant changes in our community. The formation of the Greene County Tobacco and Vape Prevention Coalition has helped to decrease vaping among youth in our community. The GCTVPC has worked over the last few years to prioritize initiatives to address the vaping epidemic and lung-related illnesses and deaths. Members of the GCTVPC, including the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, Community Partnership of the Ozarks and Springfield Public Schools, implemented initiatives to reduce e-cigarette use among students during the 2018-19 school year. The Health Department and CPO developed a curriculum that was integrated into the SPS Health Curriculum for all students in grades 6-9. This work has continued through the 2020-21 school year, with curriculum expanding to include a video module in partnership with Safe and Sober and the SAVE Program, a website sharing the program's curriculum and awareness materials. The GCTVPC kicked off an awareness campaign by placing advertisements on City Utilities buses, which had more than 3 million impressions. The GCTVPC also worked with SPS to install vape drop boxes at all high schools and middle schools (14 total). The vape drop boxes

SUCCESS STORY



PHOTO COURTESY OF BURRELL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

In June 2020, Burrell Behavioral Health opened its Behavioral Crisis Center-Rapid Access Unit, a first-in-the-region facility for treatment of crisis-level mental health or substance-use needs. This 24/7/365 facility was established in large part through \$1 million from the Greene County Commission, funds allocated as part of a tax levy passed by citizens in 2017 to fund mental health needs in the county. In-kind support from CoxHealth and Mercy, plus a grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health, allowed the facility to be renovated and staffed in a matter of months during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a true community solution to a community problem, supported by City of Springfield and Greene County officials, Chief of Police Paul Williams, and a majority of health-care and law-enforcement partners.

During the BCC's first year, nearly 1,500 individuals have received care, more than 400 of whom were directly diverted from jail by law enforcement or from overtaxed local emergency departments. The BCC also has served as a model for the rest of the state, and with Governor Mike Parson's prioritization of such centers in his 2021 budget, this concept could very well be the future of behavioral health access—locally, regionally, and throughout our state.

Burrell's RAU is also identified as the "Success Story" in the Public Order & Safety 2021 Update, which details the facility's benefits from the perspectives of law enforcement and emergency response.

provide students a safe and secure place to discard their vape/tobacco products. Since they were installed in December 2020, 26 devices have been discarded.

Springfield and Greene County have seen a 2.9% decrease from 2018 to 2020

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among students who reported using vaping products, according to the Missouri Student Survey. The area has also seen an increase in perception of harm, according to the Missouri State survey and SAVE Program pre- and post-tests. According to the survey, there was a 12% decrease in students who reported “no risk” or “slight risk” from vaping from 2018 to 2020. Also, Springfield students’ perception of harm increased after they participated in the SAVE Program, with 78.67% of students reporting they think e-cigarettes are “extremely harmful” to their health prior to SAVE, and 84.82% reporting the same during the post-test.

RED FLAGS

As identified in the 2019 Community Mental Health and Substance Use Assessment, actions need to be taken to address rising **mental health problems and substance use** in our community. We saw this first hand in October 2019, when a dramatic spike in opioid drug overdoses occurred. In this particular instance, in a 24-hour period, the Springfield Fire Department had the same number of calls for overdose as they typically see in a month. The fire department, police department, first responders, health department and multiple community health and substance-use recovery providers came together to respond. Better Life in Recovery worked to train the community on Narcan use.

The Opioid/Drug Poisoning Taskforce is another example of a community-based response. Burrell and Preferred Family Healthcare also employ Certified Peer Specialists through the state’s Engaging Patients in Care Coordination program; these specialists connect with opioid-overdose patients before they leave the emergency room to provide support, resources and connection to services that can help toward long-term recovery.

According to the 2021 County Health Rankings, Greene County residents average 4.9 days in a 30-day period in which they are mentally unhealthy. This is higher than the state (4.5) and national (3.8) averages. Community providers have continued to take action to address

concerns around mental health and substance use. Community collaboration has continued to provide needed care for our community. Burrell psychiatrists are also working in the Mercy Marian Center, an inpatient behavioral health unit, and staffing beds at CoxHealth’s adolescent inpatient location at Cox North Hospital.

As we recognize that depression, anxiety and mood disorders can affect anyone, strides have been made to increase awareness and assessment of perinatal mood disorders. The Maternal Mental Health Network was created in 2019 due to a growing need for mental health services directly related to maternal infant health in southwest Missouri. This effort includes CoxHealth, Burrell, Jordan Valley, Mercy-Mercy Midwives, the health department’s WIC and NEST programs, the Doula Foundation, Lutheran Family Child Services, and the Springfield-Greene County Library District, with more partners joining regularly. As the network began to grow and make

progress in bringing providers together and more services to families, the group noticed a lack of mental health providers who specialized in perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, also known as PMADs. To close this gap and bring additional support to existing providers, members of the Maternal Mental Health Network joined with Postpartum Support International to create the first PSI chapter in Missouri. With the support of PSI, the MMHN continues to bring education and training opportunities to providers as well as raise awareness about PMAD’s through the PSI-MO Facebook page, quarterly newsletter and flyer distribution.

In the 2019 Community Focus Report, it was noted that 15.22% of Springfield adults reported that they were uninsured. Although **access to medical care** is still a Red Flag in our area, there was a small decrease in the number of uninsured; the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services reported adults aged

LEGISLATIVE IMPACT



► Prescription Drug Monitoring Program:

Until this year, Missouri had been the only state in the nation that did not have a statewide drug monitoring program. St. Louis County has had its own version, which covers about 85% of the state, including Springfield. PDMPs are an effective tool that is used to fight opioid/drug abuse by allowing medical professionals to see their patients’ medication history. This allows physicians and pharmacist to recognize signs of addiction and prevent dangerous drug interactions. After several failed attempts, the bill passed the Senate with yet another year of fierce debates, and was signed into law by Gov. Mike Parson in June.

► Medicaid Expansion:

In August 2020, Missouri residents voted to approve Medicaid expansion that would increase coverage for Missourians. The issue met with much debate during the budgeting process and the legislature did not fund implementation of the voter-approved Medicaid expansion. In July, however, the Missouri Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Gov. Parson’s administration must extend Medicaid eligibility to about 275,000 low-income

Missourians. This will help increase the number of insured Missourians without passing the cost on to either individuals or businesses, and it offers a more stable funding source to our region’s health care systems.

► Mental Health Prioritization:

The final 2021-22 budget signed by Gov. Parson included significant investment in behavioral health needs, including increased funding for behavioral crisis centers (similar to Burrell’s Behavioral Crisis Center, opened in 2020) and mental health professionals who support law enforcement across Missouri. Additionally, the Certified Community Behavioral Health Organization funding model, established as a federal pilot program (including Missouri) by U.S. Sens. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., and Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and adopted as the state model by the Missouri legislature, continues to set Missouri apart in mental health programming and innovation.

► Immunizations:

Immunization exemptions continue to be introduced in the legislature. Further exemptions would decrease the protection of the community against certain vaccine-preventable diseases.

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18–64 with no health coverage in Greene County at 13.09%.

Access to care influences quality-of-life measures: adults 18 years or older who reported having poor or fair health were at 17.4%, compared to Missouri as a whole at 18.1%. County Health Rankings reported Greene County's rate of patients to primary care physicians was 1,040 to 1. Missouri's overall rate of patients to primary care physicians is 1,420 to 1.

County Health Rankings also show our ratio of patients to dental providers at 1,300 to 1, with the overall Missouri patient-to-dental provider ratio at 1,670 to 1. Having a shortage of dental providers can be part of the reason residents don't seek routine dental care, and why access to dental access continues to be a Red Flag for our community. The 2020 Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Burden Report showed

that annually there are about 57,000 emergency department visits due to non-traumatic dental complaints.

According to the Opioid Assessment Tool, Greene County's mental health providers are calculated to be 109.49 per 100,000 population, compared to Missouri's overall mental-health providers at a rate of 35.24 per 100,000 population.

While Greene County's provider-to-citizen ratio for mental-health providers is better than the rest of the state, access to these services remains a challenge amid a growing need—a need that was escalating even before the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this Red Flag, in late 2019 Burrell Behavioral Health expanded its walk-in Connection Center, devoting the entire second floor of its main facility in Springfield to walk-in client access and relocating administration to another location. This expanded Connection Center offers daily access

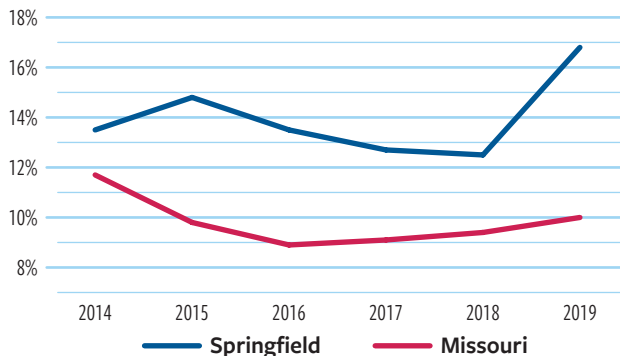
to services via walk-in or appointment, including initial assessment and intake, brief therapy as needed, and connection to other services within the Burrell system or community.

During the Community Health Needs Assessment process in 2019, the Ozarks Health Commission identified the **most vulnerable population in our community as children**. This is based on a vulnerability score for health disparities based on socioeconomic class or demographic group. Children were found to be the largest population within Greene County at 92,035 individuals, and they ranked 70% more vulnerable than children in other counties.

The Community Health 2021 Update was produced by Erica Little of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department with input from Matt Lemmon, Heather Coulter, Alexis Brown and Molly Holtmann.

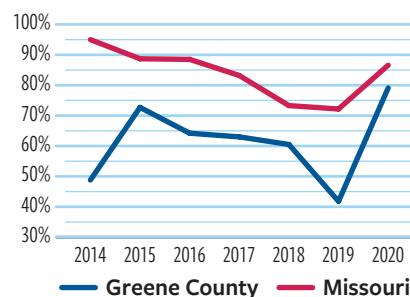
KEY METRICS

Springfield Residents without Health Insurance



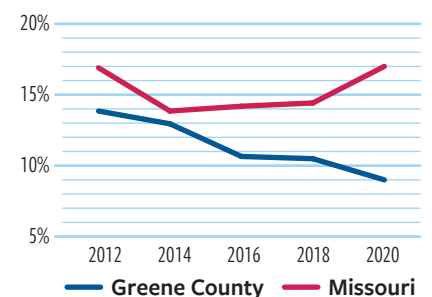
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Rate of "Graduation" in DWI and Treatment Courts



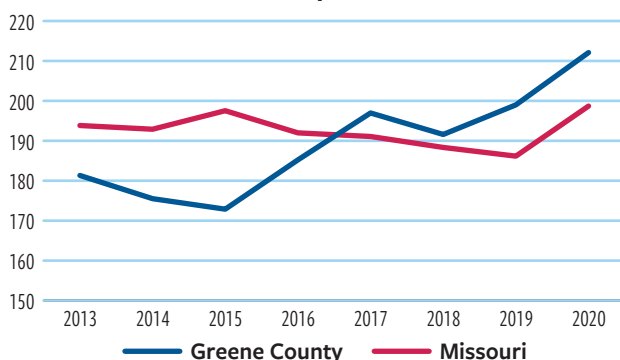
SOURCE: MISSOURI JUDICIAL ANNUAL REPORT

Alcohol Use in Past 30 Days by Students in Grades 6–12



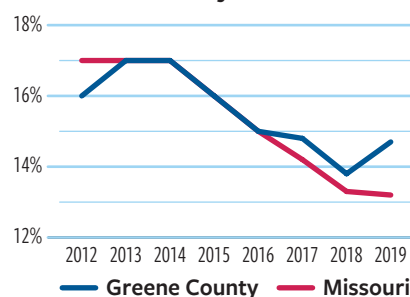
SOURCE: MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, STUDENT SURVEY

Deaths Due to Heart Disease per 100,000



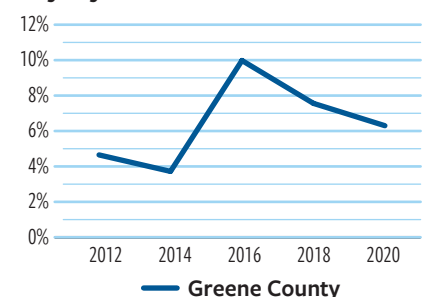
SOURCE: MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

Percentage of Households with Food Insecurity



SOURCE: MAP THE MEAL GAP — COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS

Prescription Drug Misuse in Past 30 Days by Students in Grades 6–12



SOURCE: MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, STUDENT SURVEY