

HENDERSON COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Developed by:

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Community Health Assessment

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I. OUR TEAM AND THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Our community health assessment team consisted of the management team of the Henderson County Department of Public Health and representatives of the Board of Directors of the Henderson County Partnership for Health. We chose these people because they make up a broad scope of community members and agencies and felt they represented the community as a whole. They also represent key relationships between the Henderson County Department of Public Health, Henderson County Public Schools, Pardee Hospital, Park Ridge Hospital, Volunteer Medical Resource Center, our local community health agency, City Council, and business.

We thank those who helped with this community health assessment and with the community health survey including: the American Red Cross, Western Carolina Community Action, Mainstay, El Centro, Pardee Education Center, Pardee Hospital, Park Ridge Hospital, Partnership for Health Lay Health Advisors, Henderson County Public Schools, Volunteer Medical Resource Center, Blue Ridge Community Health Services, Children and Family Resource Center, Child Care Resource & Referral, Henderson County Family YMCA, Interfaith Assistance Ministry, Council on Aging, Henderson County Public Library, Opportunity House, Sandra Kremer, Compassionate Companions, Jane Emmerich, Western Carolina Community Action and the Boys & Girls Club of Henderson County.

Assessment Process

As part of our community health assessment, a health opinion survey was developed. The survey was adapted from a survey developed by the state. The survey was printed in English and Spanish and was distributed to a range of people in our community targeting different income levels, the African-American community, and the Latino community. The survey was distributed to many community sites including the YMCA, public library, Council on Aging, hospitals, Children and Family Resource Center, Head Start, El Centro, American Red Cross, Boys and Girls Club and at a variety of board and committee meetings.

To increase the return rate, an incentive was offered. Participants had the option to include their name and address if they wished to be entered into a drawing for a \$100.00 gift certificate from Wal-Mart. If a participant chose to register for the gift certificate, the survey was kept in one box and the information sheet for the drawing was kept in another to ensure confidentiality. Participants were required to complete a survey to be eligible for the drawing. Most people who completed the survey also registered for the drawing.

The survey included questions about general demographics, opinions on access to care, living in the community, availability of health and human services, and unhealthy

behaviors. The final section of the survey asked for the participants' opinion of the most important health and environment problem in the community.

The survey netted a good return. Of the over 1,100 surveys that were distributed, over 800 were returned. However, only five hundred and forty-seven surveys were filled out completely to track. Of those, 76% (415) were completed by women and 24% (127) were completed by men. The majority, 86%, were completed by Caucasians, 8% by African Americans, and 6% by Hispanics/Latinos.

A sub-committee gathered and analyzed data and formulated the action plan with the groups' oversight. In addition to the Community Health Opinion Survey (see attached), data was also collected from Internet sources, databases, and the *County Health Data Book*.

II. A PICTURE OF HENDERSON COUNTY

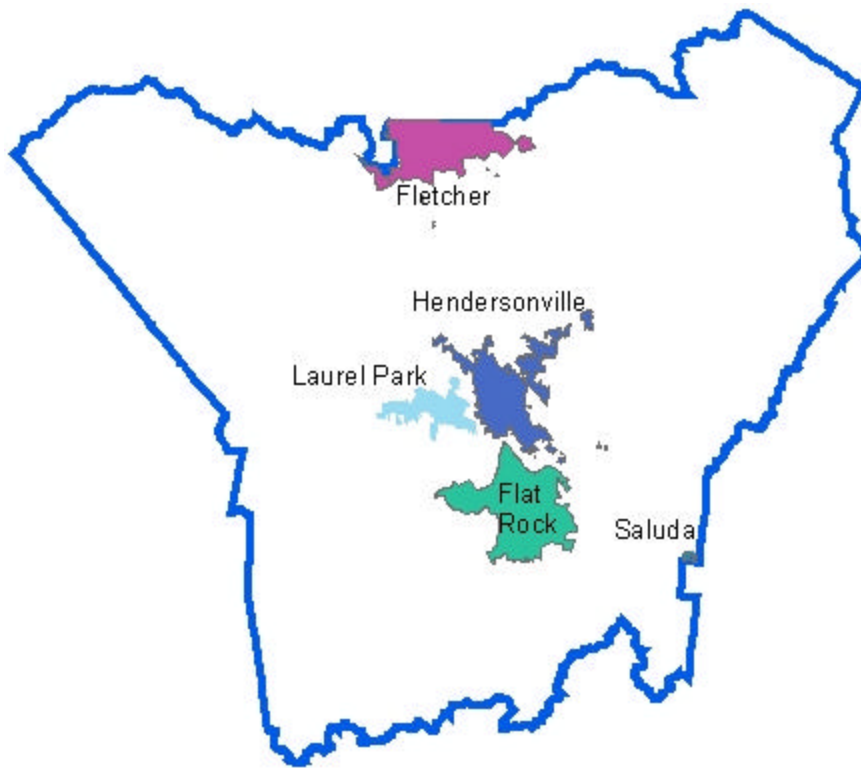
A. Geographic Information

Henderson County is in the western section of the State and is bounded by the state of South Carolina and Transylvania, Haywood, Buncombe, Rutherford and Polk counties. The present land area is 373.88 square miles with a population of 92,988 (NC Department of Commerce, 2003).

Henderson County is considered a "typical" mountain county because it is comprised of mountain ranges, isolated peaks, a rolling plateau, and level valley areas. Elevations range from 1,400 feet near Bat Cave at the foot of the Blue Ridge, to 5,000 feet on Little Pisgah Mountain.

There are many colorful community names throughout Henderson County named for land appearance as well as founders and settlers of the region. Others are of Indian origin. Zirconia, Horse Shoe, Etowah, Tuxedo and Bearwallow are but a sample.

Interstate 26 runs through Henderson County. Hendersonville is the county seat and is 120 miles to the nearest major city, which is Charlotte. The nearest commercial airport is Asheville Regional Airport, which has 8,000 feet of runway length and is 12 miles from Hendersonville. Eighty-five percent of the population is within 10 miles of a 4-lane road.



B. Historical Information

The Henderson County area was settled after 1788 when the Cherokee Nation moved to the west side of the Pigeon River. It was named in honor of Leonard Henderson, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. The county was established December 15, 1838 by an act of the North Carolina Legislature and was formed from Buncombe County. The county seat was named Hendersonville and was located on the Turnpike that was built in 1825. In the 1840s, Hendersonville received its original charter and had a population of several hundred residents. The property for the town was donated by James Brittain, Mitchell King and John Johnson.

Hendersonville was a rich, rolling uninhabited Cherokee hunting ground before Revolutionary war soldier William Mills "discovered" it in the late 1780s. He received one of the first land grants west of the Blue Ridge and established it to later become the thriving community it is today. Mills, by right of discovery, was allowed to christen some of Henderson County's picturesque regions: Bearwallow, Sugar Loaf, Bald Top, Mills River, and Mills Gap are names that remain today.

It was not without controversy that Hendersonville became the county seat. The first court was to be held at the home of Hugh Johnston, at which time the justices were to decide on a place for future courts until a courthouse was erected. Commissioners were named to acquire land, lay out a town, and erect a courthouse. This town was to be named Hendersonville. The commissioners selected a site which is now called Horse Shoe, but much dissatisfaction developed over the selection and two factions arose, one called the River party and the other the Road party. The River party favored the Horse Shoe site. In 1839, the Road party enjoined the sale of lots of the site selected at Horse Shoe and the

controversy soon became so heated that the Legislature ordered an election to be held to determine the location by popular vote. The Road party was successful. In 1840 Hendersonville was laid out on land deeded by Mitchell King of Charleston, South Carolina, for that purpose and Hendersonville became the county seat.

C. Demographic Information

Henderson County is located in the western mountains of the state. The county population in July 2002 was 92,988 (NC Department of Commerce, 2003) with a projected 2010 population of 107,566 (NC Department of Commerce, 2000 County and Regional Scans). The last census data (2000) substantiates a large influx of Hispanics to the area, which grew 466% from the 1990 census. Hispanics now account for 5.5% of the total county population. Henderson County also has a large elderly population due to a favorable climate and regional location for retirees. Twenty-two percent of the population is 65 years of age or older. A sizeable majority, 79% of the population owns their own home with 2.33 persons per household. Henderson County has a median income of \$38,109 with 9.7% below the poverty rate.

D. Social, Economic, and Political Information

Having easy access from the lowlands, Hendersonville became a vacation spot for people to spend the summer because of the area's invigorating climate. Originally, agriculture was the sole producer of revenue for Henderson county citizens. Industrial development became an important aspect of economy after World War II, with the founding of the Chamber of Commerce program. As a result, the major employers today are manufacturing (23.9%) and services (23.8%) with retail trade at 18.9% and government at 13.5% (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2000 County and Regional Scans) with an unemployment rate of 4.2% (2000 Chamber of Commerce) and a county per capita income of \$26,115. Tourism also supplies a substantial economic boost to the county. Henderson County has long been known for its thriving apple orchards and leads the state in apple production as orchards continue to spread up and down the hillsides.

Communities within Henderson County have played a large role in the success of the area. Flat Rock, with its wealthy settlers, formed a continuous and ever-renewing link between the mountain natives and the world of business and ideas. Today, Kenmore, along with Champion Hills are two of the most exclusive golf communities in the area. "Historic" Flat Rock is also home to the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, Flat Rock Playhouse, which is the state theater of North Carolina, and many antebellum homes.

Fletcher is known for the beautiful Calvary Episcopal Church, the "Westminster Abbey of the South," and has memorials to many historic figures; Mills River for its rolling valley farmland, and Bat Cave home to Chimney Rock Park.

An elected county commission representing the 5 areas of the county governs Henderson County. A full-time county manager works with the commissioners to plan and manage the affairs of the county. Commissioners meet twice a month at the county building to discuss and plan for the growth and future of Henderson County. Residents of

Henderson County vote at a rate of 60.9% (NC Rural Economic Development Center Data Bank).

Henderson County residents also enjoy a good quality of life in the mountains. Even though residents listed air quality and trash as the top two environmental concerns, the county enjoys relatively clean air and houses a substantial dump site. Many of the roads are also adopted by groups for regular trash pick-up. Henderson County, with a crime rate of 26.4% (NC Rural Economic Development Center Data Bank), is kept safe by several law enforcement agencies. The county is served by the Henderson County Sheriff's Department, Hendersonville by the Hendersonville City Police, and Fletcher by the Fletcher Police Department.

Education is priority for Henderson County parents. In 2000, 85% of students passed end of grade exams and the county had a dropout rate of 3.88% for grades 7-12 (NC Rural Center Economic Development Center Data Bank). Henderson County ranks 87th in the state in student spending at \$1,368 per student (DPI Per Pupil Expenditure Ranking, 1999-2000). Seventy-seven percent of 4th grade students are proficient in reading and math and 80% of seventh grade students are writing at or above grade level. Twenty-nine percent of the residents have a high school diploma with 24.1% having a bachelors degree or higher (NC Rural Center Data Bank).

Henderson County is home to many churches and organizations. Community organizations include Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, American Business Women's Association, Daughters of the American Revolution, SCORE, AAUW, AARP, a community chorus and a community symphony. Church denominations include Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Christian, Jehovah's Witness, Latter Day Saints, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, plus others. Many churches offer services in both English and Spanish.

The community also offers an array of non-profit agencies. These agencies include YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, domestic violence services, sexual assault and child abuse services, elderly services, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Hospice, Children and Family Resource Center, Salvation Army, PFLAG, Literacy Council, Welcome Wagon, and a community center for Latino/Hispanics. Many of these organizations are supported by grants from the Community Foundation and the local United Way, which raises over one million annually.

III. HEALTH INFORMATION

Results from the Community Health Opinion Survey of the top ten health concerns of residents were nearly identical to concerns identified by the assessment team. It appears that the community is well educated about the health issues, priorities, and gaps in services. The ten top concerns were:

1. Lack of dental care for low-income children and adults
2. Overweight/obesity
3. Asthma
4. Cancer

5. Mental health
6. Need for medication assistance
7. Substance abuse
8. Tobacco use
9. Lack of school nurses (Henderson County has one school nurse for every 3,000+ children)
10. Access to, and affordable health care

The top five environmental concerns were:

1. Air quality
2. Water quality
3. Need for greenways
4. Road/traffic conditions
5. Trash disposal/burning/littering

In addition to the Department of Public Health, Henderson County has a variety of health care resources, including two hospitals, and a community health clinic, which also serves as the Latino Health Center. In a 1999 survey, there were 78 primary care physicians serving 1,056 per physician, which was less than the state average. In addition, there were 39 dentists who served an average of 2,112 people, which was also less than the state average. While this may appear to be adequate, there is a shortage of dentists accepting Medicaid and Health Choice, and many children and families have to travel to Charlotte or Winston-Salem to receive much needed dental treatment. Henderson County has a great need of a pedodontist, since many general dentists are not comfortable seeing children less than five years of age.

IV. COMMUNITY CONCERNS/PRIORITIES

Using data from the *County Health Data Book* and Community Health Opinion Survey, the assessment team identified seven objectives that address nine of the top ten health concerns of residents. Over the next four years, the community will address the following areas:

1. **Dental Health** - The untreated dental decay rate in kindergarteners in Henderson County is 22.8%. The 2007 goal is 19% or less. Access to dental care is another critical concern. The County will address this issue and increase accessible dental health services for low-income adults and children over the next four years.
2. **Asthma** - Asthma hospitalizations in 0-14 year olds in Henderson County was 303.3. The North Carolina rate was 201.3. Plans include interventions to increase asthma management and decrease asthma hospitalizations to 200 or less by 2007.
3. **Obesity** – BMI data from the WIC Program in 1999 indicated that 50.2 percent of women prior to pregnancy were overweight or obese. In CY 2000, children receiving health department services of normal weight by age were: 2-4 years olds – 69.1%, 5-11 year olds – 69%, and 12-18 year olds – 62.3%. By June 2007, the community will establish four programs to address the issue of childhood obesity using a multi-agency approach.

4. **Mental Health** – Hospitalization rates for mental disorders, alcohol, and drug related diagnoses during 1996-1998 were above the state average (of 260.0) at 355.8. By June 2007, the community will increase mental health service opportunities in primary care offices and will increase mental health service opportunities in the public school system.
5. **Cancer (Colorectal)** – Age-adjusted colorectal cancer incidence rates for 1996-00 were higher in Henderson County (49.6) than for the state (48.4). Age-adjusted death rates for colon, rectum and anus cancer in 1999-2000 were slightly higher (21.2) than the state rate (19.2). By June 2007, the community will continue cancer screening initiatives through collaboration with community partners. The Department of Public Health will screen >50% of women for colon cancer seen through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program. In addition, two community awareness campaigns will be implemented to increase colorectal cancer screening.
6. **Lack of School Nurses** – The 2003 ratio of school nurses to students is 1:3000. The recommended ratio is 1:750. By June 2007, the community will address this issue by decreasing the nurse to student ratio to <1:2000.
7. **Tobacco Use** – In 2001, 67 people died in Henderson County due to cancer of the lung, trachea, and bronchus. The age-adjusted death rate in 1999-2001 for cancer of the lung, trachea, and bronchus was 49.3. By June 2007, the community will address tobacco use by working with a minimum of eight local businesses to adopt smoke-free policies. Smoke Free Dining Day will be held at five or more restaurants annually.

V. COMMUNITY HEALTH ACTION PLAN

See Action Plan file attached.

Henderson County Community Health Opinion Survey

PLEASE READ ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE YOU START!

This survey is part of the community health assessment currently in progress in Henderson County being conducted by the Henderson County Department of Public Health and Partnership for Health, Inc. Community health assessment is the process of learning how healthy our community is. We want to use this information to develop community-based strategies to address health concerns. The following questionnaire has been developed to assess **YOUR OPINION** of local health assets, needs, and concerns. Please take approximately 10 minutes to fill out this survey. Thank you for your opinion.

Part I: Information About You

*Before you get started, we would like to know a little about you. These questions are of a personal nature, but are important and will be kept strictly **CONFIDENTIAL**. We do not ask your name on this survey.*

Please circle the number to the left of your answer.

- 1) What is your age?
 1. Under 18
 2. 18–24
 3. 25–34
 4. 35–44
 5. 45–64
 6. 65–74
 7. Over 74
- 2) Are you?
 1. Male
 2. Female
- 3) Are there any children living in your home who are 18 years old or younger?
 1. Yes, how many? _____.
 2. No
- 4) What is your race?
 1. White/Caucasian
 2. Black/African American
 3. Hispanic/Latino/Latina
 4. Native American
 5. Asian/Pacific Islander
 6. Other Race
- 5) What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?
 1. 12th grade or less, no diploma or equivalent
 2. High school graduate or equivalent (e.g., GED)
 3. Some college, but no degree (includes vocational training)
 4. Associate degree in college (e.g., AA)
 5. Bachelors degree in college (e.g., BA, BS)
 6. Advanced degree in college (e.g., masters, doctorate)
- 6) What is your job field?
 1. Agricultural (e.g. farmer, rancher)
 2. Business and Industry (e.g. banker, retailer, plumber, attorney)
 3. Government (e.g. city manager, county employee, police)
 4. Education (e.g. teacher, principal, professor)
 5. Health Care (e.g. physician, nurse, administrator)
 6. Health & Human Services (e.g. social worker, counselor, therapist)
 7. Student
 8. Homemaker

9. Retired
10. Other _____
- 7) Are you covered by a health insurance plan?
1. Yes
 2. No
 - a. If yes, what type of coverage do you have?
 1. Medicare (includes supplemental policy)
 2. Medicaid
 3. Private Insurance (includes Blue Cross/Blue Shield)
 4. Other _____
 - b. If you have private insurance, who pays the premium cost?
 1. Employer pays the majority of the cost.
 2. I (or my family) pay the majority of the cost
 3. Employer and I (or my family) each pay about half.
 4. Other _____
- 8) What was your total household income last year (before taxes)?
1. Less than \$10,000
 2. \$10,000–\$19,999
 3. \$20,000–\$29,999
 4. \$30,000–\$49,999
 5. \$50,000–\$74,999
 6. \$75,000–\$99,999
 7. \$100,000 or more
 8. Don't know/Prefer not to answer
- 9) How many people does this income support? _____
- 10) How much of the time do you feel healthy and full of energy?
1. All of the time
 2. Most of the time
 3. Some of the time
 4. None of the time
 5. Don't know/unsure

Part II: Access to Health Care

1. When you need *medical services*, where do you **USUALLY** go: **CHECK ONLY ONE**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private physician in Henderson County | <input type="checkbox"/> Pardee Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Ridge Community Health Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Park Ridge Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Medical Resource Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Department |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not go to a physician | <input type="checkbox"/> Private physician in another county |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: please specify _____ | |

2. When you need *dental care*, where do you **USUALLY** go? **(CHECK ONLY ONE)**

- Dentist in Henderson County
- Blue Ridge Community Health Services – Stokes Dental Clinic
- Do not go to a dentist
- Other: _____

3. Do you know of any health services that are needed in your community?
 Yes – List: _____
 No

Part III: Health and Human Services Opinion Survey

This next section of the survey asks **your opinion** about some conditions and services in your community. There is no right or wrong answer—we want to know **what you think** and if you see the item as a problem or not in your community. **For each of the issues named, select one of these three responses:**

No Problem: This issue is not a problem and requires no additional attention by my community.

Some what of a Problem: This issue has the potential to become a major problem.

Major Problem: This issue is a problem. My community needs to address this problem.

Don't Know: I do not have enough information to determine whether or not this issue is a problem.

Important Note: Some of the questions address services. If your community does not provide the service, you can still answer the question. Is it a problem that the service is **NOT** offered?

Living in Our Community

In your opinion, does Henderson County have a problem with any of these issues? (Circle your answer)

	No Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Major Problem	Don't Know
1. Education & vocational training for adults	0	1	2	n/a
2. Job opportunities	0	1	2	n/a
3. Safe roads and bridges	0	1	2	n/a
4. Public transportation	0	1	2	n/a
5. Affordable Housing	0	1	2	n/a
6. Social services	0	1	2	n/a
7. Legal services	0	1	2	n/a
8. Cancer	0	1	2	n/a
9. Diabetes	0	1	2	n/a
10. Heart disease	0	1	2	n/a
11. High blood pressure	0	1	2	n/a
12. HIV/AIDS	0	1	2	n/a
13. Pneumonia/Flu	0	1	2	n/a
14. Stroke	0	1	2	n/a
15. Asthma	0	1	2	n/a
16. Mental health problems	0	1	2	n/a
17. Dental health problems	0	1	2	n/a
18. Learning and developmental disabilities	0	1	2	n/a

19. Recreation facilities (parks, walking trails, bike paths)	0	1	2	n/a
20. Animal control	0	1	2	n/a
21. Animal vaccinations	0	1	2	n/a
22. Illegal dumping	0	1	2	n/a
23. Any other issue _____	0	1	2	n/a

Health and Human Services

In your opinion, do people in your community have a problem finding or using these services? (Circle your answer)

	No Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Major Problem	I Don't Know
1. General medical care	0	1	2	n/a
2. Specialized medical care	0	1	2	n/a
3. Home health care	0	1	2	n/a
4. Dental care	0	1	2	n/a
5. Mental health care (counseling)	0	1	2	n/a
6. Emergency medical care	0	1	2	n/a
7. Child health care	0	1	2	N/a
8. Respite care (relief for caregivers)	0	1	2	n/a
9. Adult day care	0	1	2	n/a
10. Nursing home care	0	1	2	n/a
11. Hospice care	0	1	2	n/a
12. Care for pregnant women	0	1	2	n/a
13. Daycare for infants and toddlers	0	1	2	n/a
14. After school care	0	1	2	n/a
15. Childcare for sick school-age children	0	1	2	n/a
16. Hospital services	0	1	2	n/a
17. Drug & alcohol treatment	0	1	2	n/a
18. Rehabilitation after surgery or an injury	0	1	2	n/a
19. Pharmacy/drug stores	0	1	2	n/a
20. Medical equipment	0	1	2	n/a
21. Transportation to health care	0	1	2	n/a
22. Private health insurance coverage	0	1	2	n/a
23. Enrolling in Medicaid/Medicare	0	1	2	n/a
24. Food assistance (money for food)	0	1	2	n/a
25. Housing assistance (public housing or aid)	0	1	2	n/a

26. Utilities help (pay electricity or fuel bill)	0	1	2	n/a
27. Nutrition programs (i.e. Meals on Wheels)	0	1	2	n/a
28. Health education programs	0	1	2	n/a
29. Childhood immunizations	0	1	2	n/a
30. Child abuse services	0	1	2	n/a
31. Sexual assault services	0	1	2	n/a
32. Domestic violence services	0	1	2	n/a

Unhealthy Behaviors

In your opinion, are these unhealthy behaviors a problem in your community? (Circle your answer)

	No Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Major Problem	I Don't Know
1. Lack of physical activity or exercise	0	1	2	n/z
2. Poor eating habits/lack of good nutrition	0	1	2	n/a
3. Adult obesity	0	1	2	n/a
4. Childhood obesity	0	1	2	n/a
5. Tobacco use among adults	0	1	2	n/a
6. Drinking and driving	0	1	2	n/a
7. Driving or riding in a car without seatbelts	0	1	2	n/a
8. Adult alcohol abuse	0	1	2	n/a
9. Illegal drug use/substance abuse	0	1	2	n/a
10. Abuse or neglect of older people	0	1	2	n/a
11. Depression	0	1	2	n/a
12. Suicide	0	1	2	n/a
13. Sexually transmitted diseases	0	1	2	n/a
14. Sexual assault/rape	0	1	2	n/a
15. Domestic Violence	0	1	2	n/a
16. Child Abuse	0	1	2	n/a
17. Youth violence	0	1	2	n/a
18. Underage drinking	0	1	2	n/a
19. Teenage pregnancy	0	1	2	n/a
20. Tobacco use among people under 18	0	1	2	n/a
21. Peer Harassment in schools	0	1	2	n/a
22. Youth access to and use of weapons	0	1	2	n/a
23. Weapons in schools	0	1	2	n/a
24. Other_____	0	1	2	n/a

Part IV: Major Problems

1. What do you think is the **MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH** problem in your community?

2. What do you think is the **MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL** problem in your community?

Thank you very much for your response!
Survey results will be tabulated and reported to the community!

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