

# Lafayette County, Missouri



**2024**

# Community Health Assessment

# Executive Summary

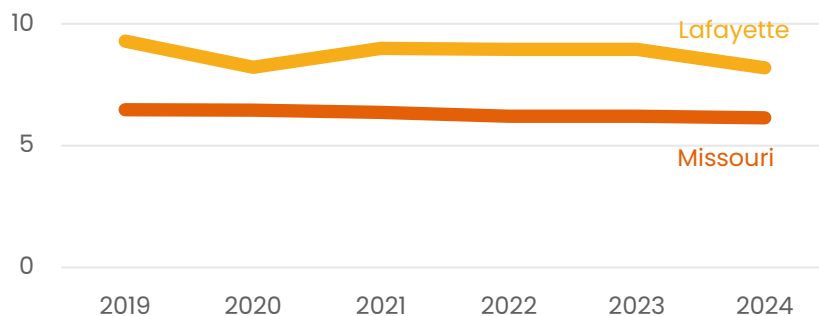
The 2024 Community Health Assessment provides a comprehensive overview of the health status, behaviors, and outcomes of Lafayette County residents, as well as the social determinants of health that influence these outcomes. Prepared by the Lafayette County Health Department, this assessment aims to guide evidence-based decision making and planning to improve health and advance health equity in the county.

As the local public health authority, the Lafayette County Health Department plays a vital role in preventing disease and injury, promoting healthy lifestyles, protecting against environmental hazards, and preparing for emergencies.

The report highlights three priority public health issues where Lafayette County has the greatest opportunity and need for improvement:

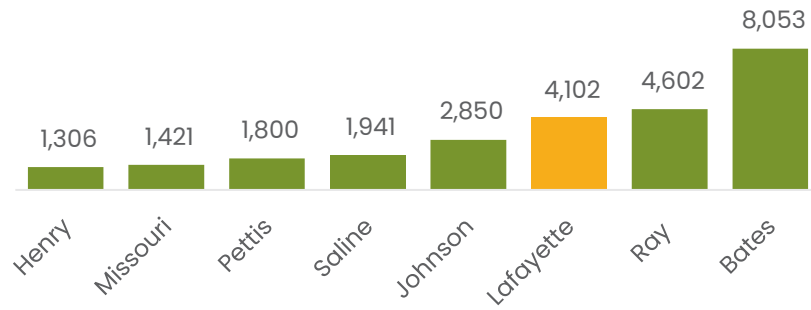
1. Women's Health: Lafayette County faces significant disparities in access to obstetric services compared to the state overall, with no OB/GYN providers in the county and long travel distances to birthing hospitals. These barriers contribute to poor birth outcomes, including high rates of low birthweight and infant mortality.

The infant mortality rate in Lafayette County is consistently higher than the state of Missouri.



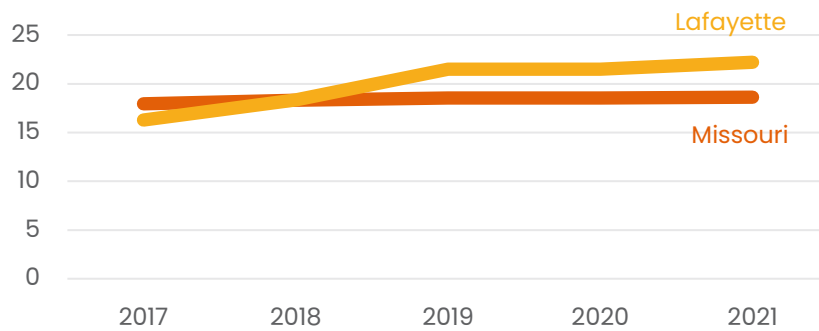
2. Health Care Access: Residents of Lafayette County encounter higher uninsurance rates than the state average, particularly among children. The county also has a severe shortage of primary care providers. These factors combine to limit access to essential preventive and medical care.

Lafayette County has a shortage of primary care providers.



3. Safety: Lafayette County experiences elevated rates of motor vehicle deaths and suicide compared to state and national averages. The county's suicide rate is particularly concerning, exceeding most neighboring counties and trending upward in recent years.

The suicide rate in Lafayette County surpassed Missouri's in 2019 and has remained higher.



Achieving meaningful progress on these complex issues will require sustained collaboration between the health department, partners across sectors, and the community at large. By working together and implementing proven strategies, Lafayette County can build a healthier, more equitable future for all residents.

## Letter from the Administrator

To the Residents of Lafayette County:

On behalf of the Lafayette County Health Department, I am pleased to present the 2024 Community Health Assessment. This report provides a comprehensive look at the many factors that influence the health and wellbeing of our community.

As the local public health authority, our mission is to prevent disease and injury, promote healthy lifestyles, protect against environmental hazards, and prepare for emergencies. To effectively carry out this mission, we must first understand the unique strengths and challenges facing our community. That is the purpose of this assessment.

The data and insights presented here will guide our department's strategic priorities and programs in the coming years as we work to create a healthier Lafayette County for all. Of course, no single organization can tackle every issue alone. Meaningful progress requires collaboration across sectors and engagement from community members like you.

I hope you will read this assessment with an eye toward where you can make a difference, whether in your own household, your neighborhood, your school, or your business. Together, we can build a healthier, more equitable, and more resilient Lafayette County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Breann Jensen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "B".

Breann Jensen  
Administrator  
Lafayette County Health Department

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Letter from the Administrator .....	4
Table of Contents.....	5
Acronyms .....	6
Introduction.....	7
What determines health?.....	7
The Role of Public Health.....	8
Purpose and Process .....	9
Women’s Health.....	10
Evidence-Based Practices.....	12
Health Care Access.....	13
Evidence-Based Practices.....	15
Safety.....	16
Evidence Based Practices .....	18
Conclusion.....	19
Appendix .....	20

## Acronyms

FPHS	Foundational Public Health Services
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
MHFA	Mental Health First Aid
PHAB	Public Health Accreditation Board
SBHCs	School-Based Health Centers

# Introduction

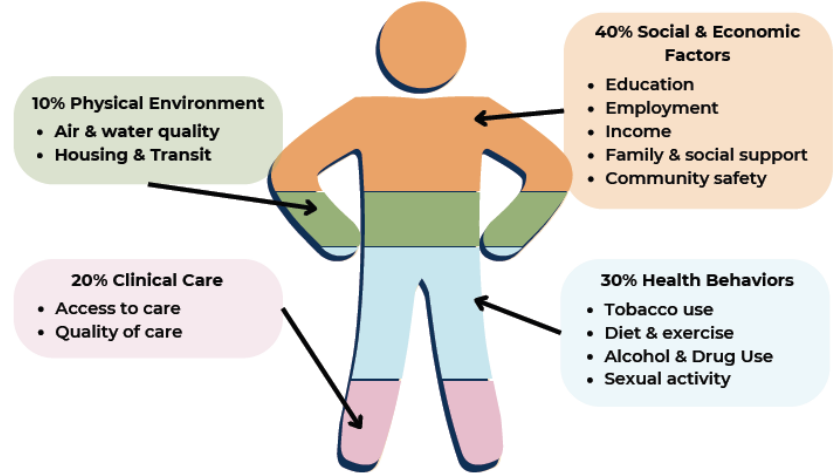
## What determines health?

Health is more than just a result of individual choices and access to medical care. A wide range of social, economic, and environmental factors - known as social determinants of health - combine to shape the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, social determinants account for 70-90% of health outcomes, while medical care accounts for only 10-20%. These social determinants can be grouped into 5 key domains:

- Neighborhood & Built Environment
- Economic Stability
- Health Care Access & Quality
- Education Access & Quality
- Social & Community Context

### Health Factors Model<sup>1</sup>



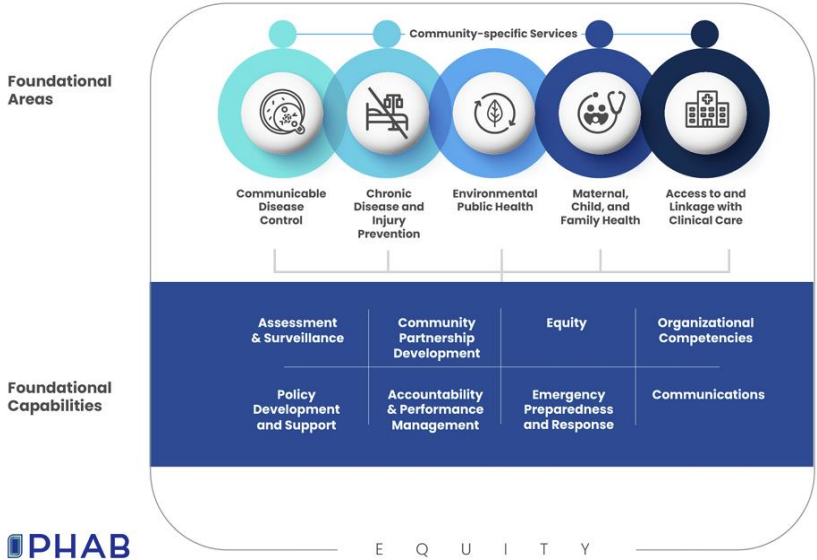
This report will explore how these factors intersect to influence health in Lafayette County.

<sup>1</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmap. "Explore Health Topics." Accessed at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/what-impacts-health/county-health-rankings-model>

# The Role of Public Health

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is a nonprofit organization that aims to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing and ultimately transforming the quality and performance of state, local, tribal, and territorial public health departments through accreditation.

As part of this work, PHAB created the Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) framework, which outlines the essential responsibilities and services that every community should expect from their governmental public health department.





## Purpose and Process

This Community Health Assessment is a key first step in carrying out these essential functions in Lafayette County, Missouri. This assessment provides the Lafayette County Health Department with data to support decision making. It aims to answer three fundamental questions:

1. What does the health status of the Lafayette County community look like?
2. What populations are experiencing inequities in health and social determinants?
3. How do systems and social determinants influence health outcomes?

To answer these questions, the assessment compiles and analyzes quantitative data from local, state, and national sources. The entirety of data is referenced in this report's appendix. This report highlights the three priority issues where Lafayette County has the most opportunity to advance community health.

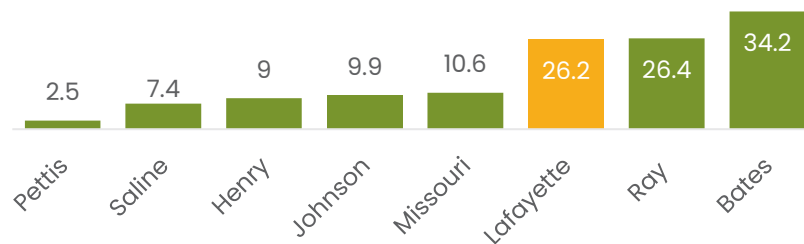
# Women's Health

The data reveals significant disparities in access to obstetric services for women in Lafayette County compared to the state of Missouri overall. This lack of access may be contributing to worsening trends in birth outcomes, including low birthweight and infant mortality. Improving women's and infants' health will require a multi-pronged strategy to expand provider availability, reduce transportation barriers, and address social determinants of maternal-child health.

Access to obstetric care is a challenge in Lafayette County, with no full-time OB/GYN providers located within the county borders. The ratio of 0 providers per 100,000 women<sup>2</sup> falls well below the Missouri state average of 42.3.<sup>3</sup> Neighboring counties also struggle with OB/GYN shortages, though Saline County fares better with 13.2 providers per 100,000 women.

Lafayette County residents face long travel times to access birthing hospitals. The average distance to a birthing facility is 26.2 miles, significantly higher than the statewide average of 10.6 miles. This barrier to timely obstetric care may contribute to poorer birth outcomes.

Distance to a birthing hospital for Lafayette County mothers is more than twice the state average.



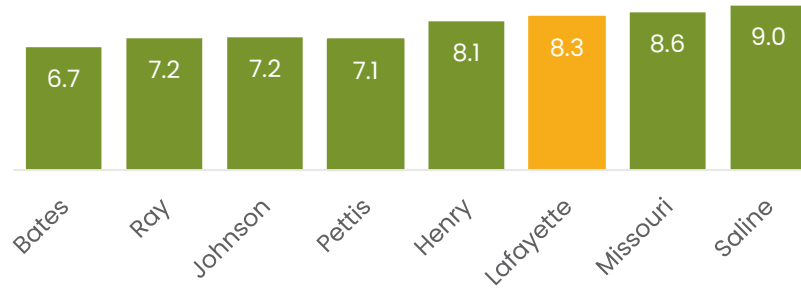
Source: Data is from the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project State Inpatient Database, Missouri. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2019. Web. 1 Nov 2022. American Hospital Association, 2021; American Board of Family Medicine, 2017-2020; U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Area Health Resources Files, 2022.

One key measure of maternal and child health is the percentage of infants born at a low birthweight (under 2,500 grams). In Lafayette County, 8.3% of infants had low birthweight in 2024, like the statewide average of 8.6%.

<sup>2</sup> There may be OB/GYN providers operating on a limited or visiting basis within the County but not practicing full-time.

<sup>3</sup> "Women's Health Providers by State." American's Health Rankings. Accessed at <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/OBGYN>

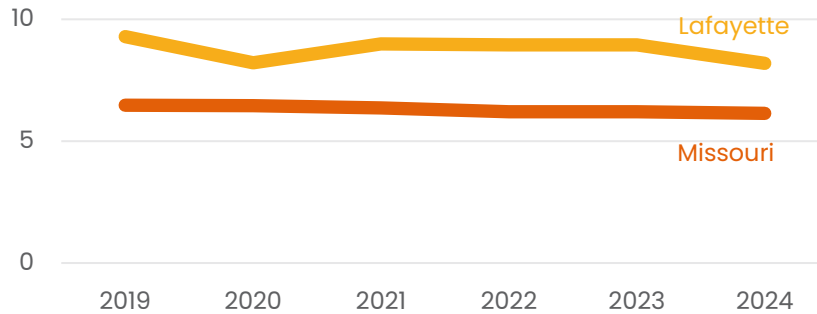
Lafayette County has more low birthweight babies than most neighboring rural counties.



Source: Data is from the National Center for Health Statistics – Natality and Mortality Files; Census Population Estimates Program. Data was taken from the 2019 to 2024 County Health Rankings, which used data from 2011 to 2022.

Infant mortality is another critical indicator of maternal-child health system performance. In 2024, Lafayette County's infant mortality rate was 8.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, higher than the statewide rate of 6.1 per 1,000.

The infant mortality rate in Lafayette County is consistently higher than the state of Missouri.



Source: Data is from the National Center for Health Statistics – Natality and Mortality Files. Data was taken from the 2019 to 2024 County Health Rankings, which uses underlying data from 2011 to 2021.

## Evidence-Based Practices

### Group Prenatal Care

Group prenatal care provides care in a supportive group setting, improving birth outcomes for disadvantaged women. Participants receive better prenatal care, are more likely to breastfeed, and attend postpartum visits. Potential benefits include improved mental health and contraception use. GPC can reduce disparities in prenatal care access and outcomes, advancing health equity.<sup>4</sup>

### Smoke-Free Policies for Indoor Areas

Smoke-free indoor policies protect maternal and infant health by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, which increases risks of preterm birth, low birthweight, and SIDS. Comprehensive policies decrease preterm births and may lower SIDS rates. Smoke-free environments benefit vulnerable infants and children. Combining strong policies with cessation support for pregnant women and new mothers is crucial.<sup>5</sup>

### Nurse-Family Partnership

The Nurse-Family Partnership is a highly effective home visiting program supporting low-income, first-time mothers. Nurses provide education on maternal and child health from pregnancy through the child's second birthday. NFP improves family outcomes, child health, and maternal well-being while reducing risks and costs. Implemented in 40 states with telehealth options, NFP decreases health disparities.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> "Group Prenatal Care" County Health Rankings & Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/group-prenatal-care>

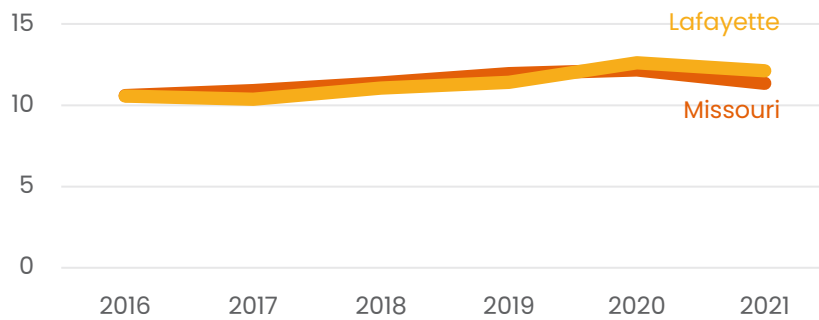
<sup>5</sup> "Smoke-Free Policies for Indoor Areas." County Health Rankings & Roadmap. Available <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/smoke-free-policies-for-indoor-areas>

<sup>6</sup> "Nurse-Family Partnership" County Health Rankings and Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/nurse-family-partnership-nfp>.

# Health Care Access

Lafayette County faces significant challenges in ensuring access to health care for its residents. The county's uninsurance rates have been rising in recent years and now exceed the state average. In 2021, 12.1% of Lafayette County residents under age 65 lacked health insurance, compared to 11.4% statewide. While the county previously had lower uninsurance than Missouri, this trend has reversed, suggesting a growing barrier to accessing needed medical services.

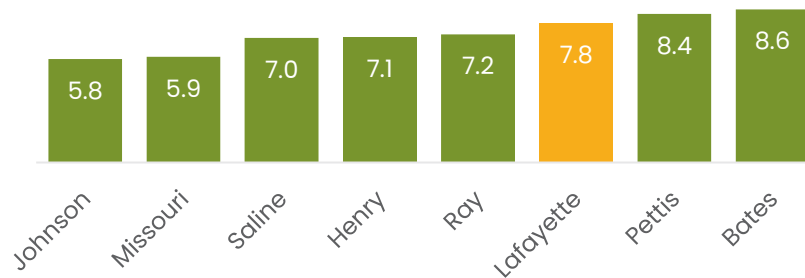
The rate of uninsurance in Lafayette County has recently surpassed the state of Missouri.



Source: From the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2016 to 2021.

The situation is particularly concerning for children in Lafayette County. In 2021, 7.8% of children under 19 were uninsured, a rate significantly higher than the state average of 5.9%. Neighboring counties also tend to have lower rates of child uninsurance. Lack of health coverage can prevent children from receiving essential preventive care and treatment, setting the stage for worse health outcomes down the road.

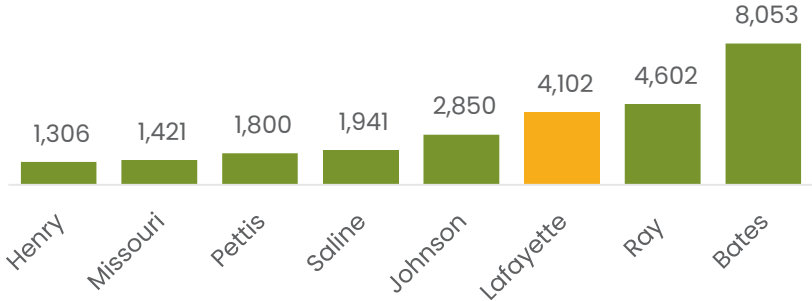
Lafayette County has a relatively high percent of uninsured children.



Source: From the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2021.

In addition to coverage barriers, Lafayette County residents encounter shortages of key health care providers. The county has just one primary care physician for every 4,102 residents, a ratio far worse than the state at 1,421 physicians for every resident. Most peer counties also have better access to primary care. Without an adequate supply of these frontline providers, patients may struggle to get prompt appointments, receive coordinated care, and access services close to home.

Lafayette County has a shortage of primary care providers.



Source: Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association, 2016 to 2021.

## Evidence-Based Practices

### Health Insurance Enrollment and Outreach

Health insurance enrollment outreach and support programs effectively increase coverage rates among the uninsured. These programs help individuals navigate complex health insurance options, including Medicaid, marketplace plans, and employer-sponsored coverage. Outreach efforts include community events, media campaigns, partnerships with trusted organizations, and individual enrollment support. By helping eligible individuals understand options, apply for coverage, and maintain enrollment, these programs significantly reduce uninsurance rates and improve access to care. Outreach to communities of color and low-income households is particularly important for advancing health equity.<sup>7</sup>

### School-Based Health Centers

School-based health centers (SBHCs) increase access to health care for children and adolescents, particularly those from underserved communities. SBHCs provide primary care, mental health, and preventive services directly on school grounds, reducing barriers such as transportation, cost, and scheduling conflicts. By bringing services to where students spend much of their time, SBHCs improve health outcomes, reduce absenteeism, and increase academic achievement. They effectively reach minority youth, low-income students, and those with chronic conditions. Expanding SBHCs advances health equity for children.<sup>8</sup>

### Rural Training in Medical Education

Rural training programs in medical education effectively increase access to health care in underserved rural areas. By providing medical students with specialized training and experience in rural settings, these programs increase the likelihood of graduates practicing in rural communities. This approach addresses the shortage of primary care physicians and other providers in rural areas, improving access to essential services for residents. Successful programs include targeted recruitment of rural students, rural-focused curricula, and immersive clinical experiences. Expanding rural training opportunities significantly reduces geographic disparities in access to care.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> "Health Insurance Enrollment and Outreach Support." County Health Rankings and Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/health-insurance-enrollment-outreach-support>.

<sup>8</sup> "School-Based Health Centers." County Health Rankings and Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/school-based-health-centers>.

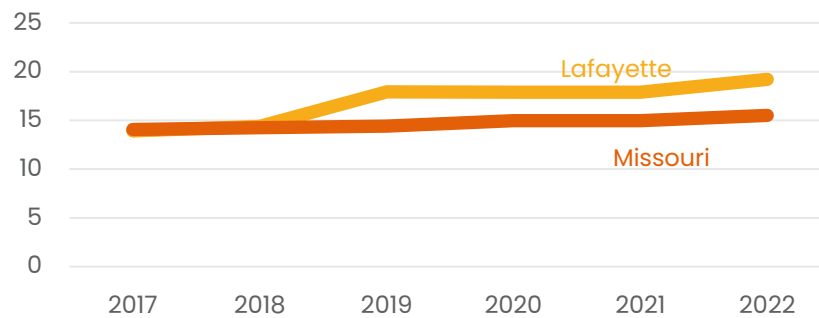
<sup>9</sup> "Rural Training in Medical Education." County Health Rankings and Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/rural-training-in-medical-education>.

# Safety

Lafayette County faces significant challenges in preventing injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes, suicide, and other causes. The county's mortality rates in these areas consistently exceed state averages and neighboring counties.

Motor vehicle crashes are a major concern, with Lafayette County reporting 19.2 deaths per 100,000 population in 2022. This is notably higher than the statewide rate of 15.5 per 100,000. While the county's motor vehicle mortality rate has remained relatively stable over the past five years, it has consistently been above the state average.

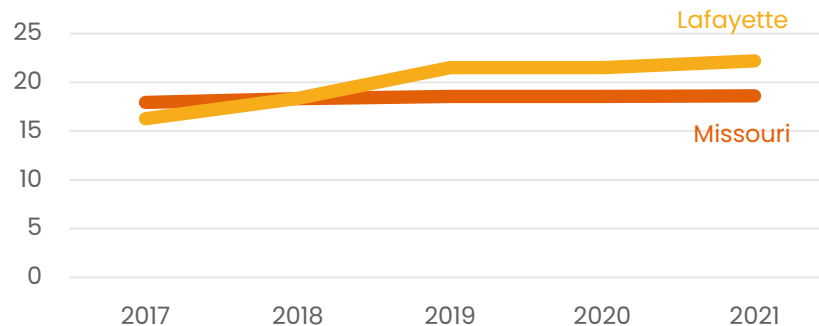
Lafayette County has higher motor vehicle deaths than the state of Missouri.



Source: Data is from the National Center for Health Statistics - Mortality Files; Census Population Estimates Program, 2011 to 2022.

Even more alarming is Lafayette County's suicide rate, which at 22.2 deaths per 100,000 in 2021, is higher than the state average of 18.6.

The suicide rate in Lafayette County surpassed Missouri's in 2019 and has remained higher.

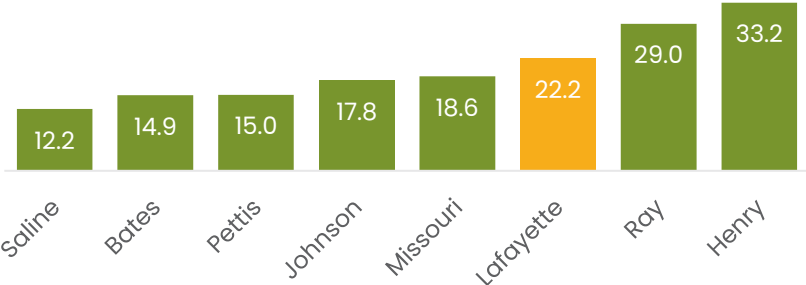


Source: Data is from the National Center for Health Statistics - Natality and Mortality Files; Census Population Estimates Program, 2017 to 2021.

The county's suicide rate has been trending upward over the past several years and exceeds that of most neighboring counties except Ray.



The suicide rate in Lafayette County is high compared to neighboring counties.



Source: Data is from the National Center for Health Statistics – Natality and Mortality Files; Census Population Estimates Program, 2021.

# Evidence Based Practices

## Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a promising approach to prevent suicide by training lay people to recognize signs of mental health problems and provide initial support. MHFA courses increase participants' knowledge and confidence in helping individuals in distress. While more research is needed to confirm long-term effects, MHFA has the potential to reduce stigma, encourage help-seeking, and ultimately prevent suicides, especially in rural areas where access to mental health services may be limited.<sup>10</sup>

## Car Seat Distribution and Education Programs

Car seat distribution and education programs play a crucial role in preventing motor vehicle deaths among infants and young children. By providing free or low-cost car seats and teaching parents how to correctly install and use them, these programs significantly increase the use of proper child restraints. Car seat distribution initiatives have been shown to be effective in diverse communities, including rural, urban, and tribal populations. Expanding access to these life-saving programs is an important strategy for reducing child fatalities in crashes.<sup>11</sup>

## Enhanced Prevention of Alcohol Sales to Minors

Enhanced enforcement of laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors can indirectly contribute to reducing motor vehicle deaths among young drivers. By conducting compliance checks and other enforcement strategies, law enforcement can reduce underage drinking, which is a significant risk factor for alcohol-related crashes. Studies suggest that increasing the frequency of compliance checks is associated with decreased alcohol-related crashes among drivers under 21. However, these efforts should be combined with other strategies to comprehensively address underage drinking and impaired driving.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> "Mental Health First Aid" County Health Rankings and Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/mental-health-first-aid>.

<sup>11</sup> "Car Seat Distribution and Education Programs." County Health Rankings and Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/car-seat-distribution-education-programs>

<sup>12</sup> "Enhanced enforcement of laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors." County Health Rankings and Roadmap. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/strategies-and-solutions/what-works-for-health/strategies/enhanced-enforcement-of-laws-prohibiting-alcohol-sales-to-minors>.

## Conclusion

The findings from this 2024 Community Health Assessment provide the Lafayette County Health Department with a comprehensive understanding of the key health issues facing our community. Armed with this data, we can strategically focus our efforts and resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Addressing the priorities of women's health, health care access, and safety will require sustained, collaborative action from partners across sectors. The evidence-based practices highlighted in this report provide a menu of proven strategies for the Health Department and our community partners to consider implementing. In the coming months, the Health Department will work to share the results of this community health assessment with stakeholders and residents to identify shared goals and strategies.

Improving community health is an ongoing journey, not a destination. By regularly measuring and reporting on our progress, we can continually adjust our approach, respond to emerging issues, and ensure we are diligently pursuing a vision of health equity for all Lafayette County residents.

# Appendix

The full data that contributed to this assessment is available at [LafayetteCountyHealth.org](https://LafayetteCountyHealth.org).

