

## *Summary of Assets and Resources*

Tompkins County is a resourceful community, characterized by its commitment to seeking solutions to social needs and inequities. Residents also work to enhance and build on existing resources in the environment and community infrastructure to address health issues. Local government and agencies are committed to diversity and inclusion in the work force and in program implementation. While individuals might say that certain of these efforts are insufficient, misdirected, or disingenuous, historically the community continues to look for the best path to equity.

The cultural and artistic landscape offers a wide range of opportunities for participation and enjoyment in music, theater, art, dance, and intellectual programming. Seasonal community markets, festivals, and celebrations promote the diversity of cultures, local agencies, local artists and music, and local food and agriculture. The Ithaca Farmers Market is a centerpiece for local food and fresh produce; other municipalities have their own farmers markets, or are affiliated with the Ithaca market.

The County is rich in geographical diversity, known for its gorges and numerous hiking trails that provide a range of opportunities for physical activity. The website [IthacaTrails.org](http://IthacaTrails.org) lists over 70 different trails, which can be searched by activity, difficulty, and ecology. Some are connected with one of the three State Parks within the county, and the others are stewarded by any one of well-over a dozen different municipalities and nonprofits.

One showcase is the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, a multi-phase collaboration between the City of Ithaca and the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce. The five and a half mile trail connects the Allan H. Treman State Marine Park on the west side of Cayuga Inlet, to Stewart Park on the east side. The ten-foot wide asphalt trail was designed to be used by walkers, joggers, bicyclists, inline skaters, mobility-impaired users, and parents with strollers.

Tompkins County has an integrated system of healthcare resources along with activities and programming in the towns, villages, schools, and community centers that focus on promoting healthy lifestyles across the age spectrum and healthy communities. For the community organizations that want to refer clients to local resources, the perennial challenge is to be aware of and up-to-date on program availability. The challenge broadens with the need to ensure that the diverse population in our county, especially those most vulnerable, are able to access both the healthcare system and available cultural and recreational opportunities.

Finally, the assets that individuals offer to the well-being of our community must be recognized. Everyone has aspirations, interests, knowledge and talents to offer that we want to celebrate and acknowledge in the community's effort to improve health outcomes and achieve a more equitable future.

## **Access to Healthcare Services in Tompkins County**

Many of the agency names below are linked to the organization's website.

### ***Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD)***

A full-service health department comprised of the Divisions of Administration (including Health Promotion, Public Information, and Emergency Preparedness) Environmental Health, Community Health, and Children with Special Health Care Needs. Its mission: To strive to achieve a healthy community by protecting, and promoting public health through education, training, advocacy, and the provision of services.

TCHD provides pre- and post-natal care through the Medicaid Obstetrical and Maternal Services (MOMS) program and through pre- and postnatal home visits for at risk families. The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) is a federally funded program provided by TCHD. WIC improves the health status of eligible women, infants and children (up to five years) through the purchase of nutritious foods, nutrition and health education, breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals to local health and human service agencies. TC WIC launched eWIC, and electronic debit card system in Fall 2018.

The Children with Special Health Care Needs Division serves children who have or are at risk for chronic, physical, and developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions and who require a broader scope of health and related services to reach their fullest potential.

The Department provides childhood immunizations to children, flu immunizations to targeted populations and the public. Rabies post-exposure immunizations are also provided to the community, in collaboration with Cayuga Medical Center. Communicable disease surveillance and case management, tuberculosis, contact investigation and treatment, and anonymous HIV counseling and testing are essential programs.

The Environmental Health Division (EH) provides educational and regulatory programs including, Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems, Rabies Control, Lead Poisoning Prevention, Food Program, and Water Systems, including harmful algal blooms (HABs) and Hydrilla. EH manages the Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA) program, which enforces compliance with the county's minimum legal age for retail tobacco sales (age 21, effective 7/1/2017).

The Health Promotion Program (HPP) focuses on evidence-based programs to reduce the risk of chronic disease among Tompkins County residents. The Tobacco Control Program (Tobacco Free Tompkins, T-Free Zone), a partner in NYS Advancing Tobacco Free Communities, works to eliminate all exposure to secondhand smoke and vape aerosol, denormalize tobacco use, and reduce youth initiation through outreach, policy, and environmental change.

HPP provides the Diabetes Prevention Program in collaboration with the Cayuga Center for Healthy Living, and the Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP). HNP is a free, in-home assessment program to prevent indoor air pollution, residential fire deaths, lead poisoning, and asthma hospitalizations. Harmonicas for Health is a 6-week program for individuals with COPD and other respiratory disease. Participants learn to play the harmonica to practice breathing exercises.

The Public Health Preparedness program plans, coordinates, and facilitates training, table-top and point of dispensing exercises to prepare for public health emergencies, as mandated by the Cooperative Agreement with the CDC and the NYSDOH. The program offers a variety of opportunities for organizations, agencies, municipalities, and businesses to support countywide preparedness efforts.

The Health Department convenes community coalitions, including the Lead Poisoning Prevention Network, and the Tompkins County Immunization Coalition.

#### ***Cayuga Medical Center (CMC) -***

Cayuga Medical Center, a member of Cayuga Health System, is a 212-bed Federally-designated Sole Community Hospital. In 2018, Cayuga Medical Center provided approximately 7,500 inpatient discharges, 7,900 inpatient and outpatient surgeries, 29,600 emergency visits, 44,300 urgent care visits, and 15,500 hematology/oncology visits. Approximately 63% of CMC's total inpatient discharges were for patients with Medicare or Medicaid; 2.2% were for patients without insurance. CMC offers a Financial Assistance Policy, which helps to ensure that patients with limited income or no insurance can access health care services. Tompkins County represents the majority of CMC's primary service area and is where most of the patient population receiving services at the hospital reside.

Approximately 215 physicians (4:1 specialists to primary care) serve Tompkins County. Several specialties locally identified to be in short supply include family practice, pulmonology, obstetrics/gynecology, dermatology, neurology, vascular surgery, neurosurgery. The NYS Regents Shortage Areas identifies pathology and physical and rehabilitative medicine in addition to the local needs assessment. CMC is listed as a hospital eligible for primary care and non-primary care shortage area designation. Tompkins County's Medicaid-eligible population is designated as a HPSA for primary and dental care.

#### ***Cayuga Health Partners (CHP) -***

A collaborative partnership between Cayuga Area Physicians' Alliance (CAPA) and Cayuga Medical Center; encompassing more than 40 primary and specialty care practices. As a clinically integrated network, CAP incorporates evidence-based best practices and innovative data exchange in a way that aligns physician incentives, while driving network enhancements to achieve optimal health outcomes at an affordable cost.

***Guthrie -***

Primary care physicians and providers include specialists in family medicine and internal medicine who provide comprehensive services, including women’s health care, newborn and well-child care, pediatrics and adult/geriatric care. Guthrie providers are affiliated with Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, PA.

***Hospicare and Palliative Care Services -***

Provides hospice care for people of any age with any terminal diagnosis. Palliative care service for relief of pain, symptoms, and stress at any point in an illness. Bereavement support services provide grief counseling and support groups.

***Ithaca Free Clinic (IFC) -***

A program of the Ithaca Health Alliance, is a nonprofit organization which facilitates access to health care for all, with a focus on the needs of the un- and underinsured. A completely free, integrative medical center, IFC is staffed by volunteer physicians, herbalists, acupuncturists, nurses, and other professionals. The Ithaca Health Alliance also operates the Ithaca Health Fund, a medical assistance program.

***Ithaca Health Center (PPSFL) -***

Abortion services, birth control, HIV testing, LGBTQ services, men’s health care, morning-after pill (emergency contraception), pregnancy testing & services, STD testing, treatment & vaccines, women’s health care. Operated by Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes.

***REACH Project Inc***

Is a nonprofit organization with the belief that all individuals deserve respectful, equitable, access to compassionate healthcare in a setting where they will not be stigmatized or judged based on drug use, homelessness, or any other issue that may cause less than adequate care in the healthcare environment. The REACH Project owns and operates the first low threshold, harm reduction medical practice in Ithaca, NY: Reach Medical.

Reach Medical offers a wide range of services including: opioid replacement therapy, medical cannabis certification, Hep C treatment, primary care and behavioral services.

***Visiting Nurses Association (VNS) -***

VNS is a private, nonprofit home health agency, and the County’s only Certified Home Health Agency. VNS services include home health care, rehabilitation, tele-health, private duty care, and long-term home health care.

## **Mental Health and Substance Abuse**

### ***Tompkins County Mental Health Department -***

The county's Local Government Unit (LGU) as defined by NYS. Their mission is to meet the needs of the residents of Tompkins County in the areas of mental health, developmental disabilities, and chemical dependency by providing prevention and early detection, comprehensively planned care, treatment, and rehabilitation services. Services are provided through contracts with private sector agencies except where individuals, not-for-profit agencies, or other levels of government cannot or will not provide such services. Oversight by the Community Services Board. See also page 47 in the *Main Health Challenges* section, above.

### ***Cayuga Medical Center Behavioral Services -***

Two Behavioral Services units for inpatient care—one for adults over the age of 18 years, and one for adolescents between 13 and 17—for people with identifiable, diagnosable, and treatable psychiatric illnesses who are at imminent risk.

### ***Alcohol and Drug Council of Tompkins County -***

A private, non-profit agency which provides information, education, counseling, and referral services for area residents and organizations. The Council views addiction as a progressive, treatable disease with recognizable symptoms, and provides prevention, education and counseling services to individuals and families.

### ***Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services (CARS) -***

Offers comprehensive longer-term residential treatment at the 60-bed Residential Addiction Recovery Center in Trumansburg. Outpatient chemical dependency services include individual and group counseling, and will be providing Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) and Ancillary Withdrawal Services (AWS), including dispensing daily medications for clients meeting the criteria.

### ***Collaborative Solutions Network (CSN) -***

Initiates and supports collaboration within and between individuals, schools, human service agencies, communities and other working groups, to increase the effectiveness, interdependence and efficient use of existing resources that support children and youth with mental health challenges and their families. Guided by the System of Care approach.

### ***Family & Children's Services -***

Provides mental health care and related social services across all ages, including trauma-informed counseling for children and families, counseling services for teens and students, and for adults and caregivers. FCS provides EAP services for employers.

***Franziska Racker Centers -***

Serves children, adults, and families with a broad range of special health and mental health needs across 30 sites in 3 counties. Racker’s service areas encompass preschool special education, clinical therapies, mental health treatment programs, residential opportunities, and community support services for all ages.

***Lakeview Health Services -***

Provides safe, affordable housing and support to persons recovering from mental illness, and health care coordination services to individuals with chronic mental and physical health challenges using person-centered, recovery-oriented, and trauma-informed practices.

***Mental Health Association in Tompkins County -***

Supports active, public involvement—including providers, family members and recipients—in all aspects of mental health, including the definition of needs, the promotion of community, and the provision of services, and works toward empowering individuals, families, and groups through advocacy and services which promote mental health. MHA provides peer-peer training, including Mental Health First Aid.

## **Housing**

***211 and 211 online -***

An information service that provides referrals to health and human services agencies and organizations within the community. Telephone, online chat line, and online database of community information. Referrals to services and providers according to caller’s situation. Dial 211 for free, 24/7 phone service. Live chat service Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Text service Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., text your zip code to TXT211 or 898211.

***Continuum of Care (CoC) -***

The Ithaca /Tompkins County Continuum of Care System (CoC NY-510) is a local network of public, private, and non-profit agencies working collaboratively to end homelessness in Tompkins County. Issues include supportive housing development, barriers to entry into housing and homeless services, and at-risk youth. Led by the Human Services Coalition, ongoing initiatives include Point-in-Time Count, Coordinated Assessment System, Homeless and Housing Task Force, Independent Living Survey, CoC Program Competition.

***Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS) -***

Works with individuals of moderate income to find and remain in high-quality, affordable housing, INHS provides low-interest loans to first-time home buyers, manages well-maintained rental units, rehabs old homes, provides home-repair assistance to seniors, builds new LEED-certified green houses. Service area is Tompkins and contiguous counties.

***Tompkins Community Action (TCA) -***

Collaborates with individuals and organizations to sustain and improve economic opportunity and social justice for families and individuals impacted directly or indirectly by poverty. Working through three Departments: Family Services, Energy Services and Housing Services, TCA operates Head Start, supportive housing programs, and weatherization services. TCA's service philosophy is based on the Family Development Model.

***Unity House -***

Provides transitional and permanent housing, respite care, and rehabilitative and employment services for individuals with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and/or chemical dependencies from which they are recovering. Partners with these individuals to develop their personal skills and potential, enabling them to live more full and independent lives. Tompkins County services include 9 Independent Residential Alternative (IRA) sites, Supportive Apartment Program, and Day and Community Habilitation Services.

**Food and Nutrition**

***Childhood Nutrition Collaborative (CNC)***

CNC is a group of community organizations, agencies, school districts, and the Cornell MPH Program that comes together to use principles of collective impact to address food systems, food access, education and food insecurity. CNC has a shared workplan and is continuing to refine measures and indicators using a common reporting document. The goal is to coordinate resources and efforts in the community. The Health Department has served on this collaborative for the past three years and will continue in this role. Providing advisory support for Farm to School collective purchasing and expanding universal breakfast in school settings are priorities for CNC.

***Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCETC) -***

Offers free or low-cost educational workshops, applied research projects, and information on food-related topics including food safety, cooking and nutrition classes, healthy eating on a limited budget, food preservation. Programs include Finger Lakes Eat Smart NY, Food Entrepreneurship, Farm to School, Healthy Food for All, Fruit and Vegetable Prescription (FVRx Tompkins), Cooking Matters, the Nutrition, Health & Safety Program Committee, plus multiple programs for small farms and agriculture.

***Food Bank of the Southern Tier -***

Distributes food to people coping with hunger through a network of food pantries, meal programs, shelters, the Backpack Program, Mobile Food Pantry Program, and other hunger relief agencies in six counties including Tompkins. Through advocacy, education and community partnerships, the Food Bank's vision is to create a future without hunger for everyone in the Southern Tier. Named the 2017 Food Bank of the Year, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier is a

member of Feeding America and a regional agency of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester.

***Foodnet Meals on Wheels -***

The only local agency that delivers hot meals directly to clients, staff includes Registered Dietitian that provides meal planning, nutrition assessment, counseling and education. Their mission is to provide meals and other nutrition services that promote dignity, well-being and independence for older adults and other persons in need in Tompkins County. Meals are delivered directly to their clients' door or to one of 4 congregate meal sites.

***Greenstar Community Projects -***

- Esty Street Youth Garden is an urban garden program that teaches youth how to grow their own food, and provide fresh produce to the community
- Children Nutrition Collaborative empowers individuals to create a food system and help end hunger (see above).

***Loaves and Fishes of Tompkins County -***

A Christian ministry providing a place for free meals, hospitality, companionship, and advocacy for those in need, regardless of their faith, beliefs, or circumstances. Founded in 1983, Located in St. John's Episcopal Church in Downtown Ithaca, L&F is Tompkins County's only community kitchen serving free meals Monday through Friday, and serves nearly 2,700 meals each month.

**Community Agencies, Resources, Initiatives**

***Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes (CRC) -***

Outreach and services for individuals with a cancer diagnosis, their families, and caregivers; navigation, networking, support, and referrals to other local programs and services for additional information and needs.

***Cancer Services Program***

TCHD will continue working with the Cancer Services Program of Cayuga, Cortland, and Tompkins to promote free breast, cervical, and colorectal screening for eligible, uninsured, or underinsured women ages 40-64 and men ages 50-64.

***County Office for the Aging (COFA) -***

Provides a point of entry into aging services in Tompkins County with unbiased information regarding the array of services available for older adults and their caregivers. The COFA mission is to assist older adults and persons with long term care needs to live independently in their



homes and communities with quality of life and dignity. See also page 47 in the *Main Health Challenges* section, above.

***Catholic Charities -***

Resources and support to help vulnerable populations in need, advocate for social justice, and address the needs of the community and issues pertaining to poverty.

***Cayuga Center for Healthy Living (CCHL) -***

An individualized, medically-based program focused on disease prevention and wellness promotion through lifestyle change including diet, lack of exercise, excess weight and tobacco use. A program of the Cayuga Medical Center.

***Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCETC) -***

Offers a wide range of programming that includes agricultural programming, consumer issues, nutrition, healthy families, environmental issues, and programs that address nutrition and obesity prevention.

***Health Planning Council (HPC) -***

A program of the HSC, is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Tompkins County residents. By convening stakeholders across multiple sectors and providing a neutral forum to exchange ideas, HPC promotes collaboration, alignment of resources, and shared leadership to achieve the common goals.

HPC manages the *Tompkins Health Network*, a rural health network program focused on improving access to health care, enhancing coordination of services, and ensuring equitable health outcomes for all people. Through its Health Insurance Assistance and Community Health Advocates Programs, HPC staff meet with individuals and families looking for guidance in enrolling into a health plan or finding a doctor or other medical services. The Long-Term Subcommittee has launched Ripple Effect, a program for persons aged 50-65. Partners include Cornell, TCHD, and COFA.

***Human Services Coalition (HSC) -***

The mission of the Human Services Coalition is to identify information and service needs, to provide planning and coordination, and to enhance the delivery of health and human services in the Tompkins County area.

***Lourdes Mobile Mammography Van***

TCHD will host the Lourdes Mammography Van in May 2020 to provide breast cancer screening to women 40 and older. The van currently serves Newfield and Freeville communities, and the Free Clinic in downtown Ithaca.

***Women’s Opportunity Center (WOC) -***

Part of the NYS statewide Displaced Homemakers Program, WOC helps displaced homemakers enter the workforce after divorce, separation, or widowhood. Job search and preparation workshops emphasize job retention and the development of essential computer skills, career development, and the success of families in reaching their goals.

**Youth Services**

***Tompkins County Youth Services -***

Works with not-for-profit agencies that run programs for children, youth, and families, and support the volunteer members of Municipal Youth Boards and bureaus that are responsible for planning and providing youth programs in every community within Tompkins County.

***Ithaca Children’s Garden -***

A 3-acre public children’s garden designed for kids to provide authentic opportunities for open-ended, youth-directed discovery, nature connection, play, and empowerment, and a mission to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards.

***Ithaca Youth Bureau -***

A public multi-service agency that provides a broad variety of recreation and youth development programs to promote the health, happiness, and well-being of all youth and families in the greater Ithaca area.

***Learning Web -***

Community-based organization that provides hands-on experiential education to Tompkins County youth through the mentor-apprentice model, teaching job and life skills to empower them with self-awareness and self-esteem and make a successful transition into adult roles and responsibilities.

***Village at Ithaca -***

Advocates for excellence and equity in Ithaca and area schools by developing strategic community relationships, programs, and services to ensure that all students, particularly Black, Latino/a, low income, and other underserved students consistently meet or exceed local and New York State standards of achievement. Includes tutoring and Achievement Coaches through the Student Success Center and Family Advocacy Program.

***Additional youth development and recreational resources***

Greater Ithaca Activities Center, Southside Community Center, CCE Urban Outreach and 4-H, and the YMCA.

## **Academia**

### Colleges

Cornell University (Cornell Health) and Ithaca College (Hammond Health Center) provide primary care and counseling services for their student populations; Nurse Practitioners provide services to Tompkins-Cortland Community College students.

#### ***Cornell University MPH Program***

College of Veterinary Medicine, focused on the One Health/Planetary Health model. The two concentration areas are: Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Food Systems and Health. The program provides faculty expertise and engaged student learning and community partnerships through student Applied Practice Experience and research initiatives.

#### ***Ithaca College -***

School of Health Sciences and Human Performance, Department of Health Promotion and Physical Education offers B.S. majors in six majors. Faculty expertise and engaged student learning through internships and presentations in the classroom by Health Department staff.

#### ***Tompkins County Community College (TC3) -***

TC3 has a broad range of courses and opportunities in degree programs and continuing education. Associate degree programs include nursing, human services, chemical dependency counseling, and sustainable farming and food systems.

## **Transportation**

#### ***Bike Walk Tompkins -***

Facilitates bike share, bike education, and community planning projects. Produces semi-annual *Streets Alive!* event.

#### ***Friends in Service Helping (FISH) -***

Volunteers provide smoke-free, private, confidential rides to Tompkins County residents in need of medical and health related services that are within the County. FISH primarily serves elderly citizens who may be frail or who no longer drive, and Tompkins County residents who have limited transportation options and resources.

#### ***Gadabout -***

Safe, reliable, affordable transportation services for older and disabled residents of Tompkins County.

***Ithaca CarShare -***

A local nonprofit, membership-based, transit-oriented carsharing service providing 24/7 access to vehicles on an hourly basis. Members can book a car online, by smartphone, or by calling. Members pay an hourly and mileage rate to use the cars. 25 vehicles, 1,416 active members (2017 Annual Report).

***Supports for Health -***

A pilot project designed to improve access for Medicaid individuals to critical, non-medical, health related needs for which Medicaid does not cover transportation costs, such as access to pharmacies or grocery stores, by providing short term financial assistance in the form of vouchers for transportation, or the delivery of certain items. Supported by Care Compass Network Innovation Funds

***Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) -***

Public transit system of 34 bus routes operates daily, 360 days a year with an annual ridership of over 4 million (2018) traveling 1.6 million miles on 54 40-foot buses.

***WayToGo -***

Transportation information and learning hub that connects riders with transportation options and facilitates new community solutions; expands access to transportation by connecting people to existing options, and helping develop new community solutions.

**Economic**

***Alternatives (AFCU) -***

A Community Development Credit Union (CDCU), member-owned, locally controlled and self-supporting, providing access to safe financial services and education for underserved people. Community Programs include Free Tax Preparation, Student Credit Union, Financial Wellness, and Business CENTS.

***Workers' Center -***

Workers' Rights Hotline, local community union organizing the Living Wage Campaign, and community outreach through Occupational Safety and Health programs.

***Workforce NY -***

Workforce New York Career Center provides a one-stop shopping approach for accessing employment-related services for businesses, workers, and job seekers in Tompkins County. Priority of Service to veterans and their eligible spouses.

Additional economic development resources -

Youth Employment Services (YES), Hospitality Employment Program

## **Other Initiatives**

### *Collective Impact*

- Cradle to Career
- Childhood Nutrition – TCHD, Cornell MPH, CCE, Greenstar
- My Brother’s Keeper

## *Process and Methods*

To complete the CHA, data was compiled and collected through various means. Community input was sought in the data collection process. Preliminary findings of the assessment were distributed and presented to existing coalitions, groups, and committees throughout the county. The document was produced by the Health Promotion Program of the Tompkins County Health Department and the Planning Department of Cayuga Medical Center.

### **Data Collection**

Most secondary data for the Community Health Assessment came from federal (U.S.) and state (NYS) sources.

- U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 5-year estimates.
- New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)
  - Community Health Indicator Reports (CHIRS) is close to 350 data points organized into 15 categories, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, child and adolescent health, injury, occupational health, health status, and tobacco, alcohol, and other substance abuse. Most of the CHIRS data available for this CHA is from years 2014 through 2016.
  - Prevention Agenda (PA) dashboard. The PA dashboard tracks 44 indicators, categorized by the five PA priority areas.
  - Data for both the PA and the CHIRS are pulled from a variety of NYS databases, including Vital Records, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), the Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS), and the Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative Systems (SPARCS). Additional information on methodology may be found at [health.ny.gov/statistics/chac/indicators/methods.htm](http://health.ny.gov/statistics/chac/indicators/methods.htm).
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) works with the University of Wisconsin to publish annual County Health Rankings, a comparison of proprietary indicators across every U.S. county. The top six counties in the Health Factors rankings for New York State are Nassau (1), Putnam (4), Rockland (6), Saratoga (2), Tompkins (5), and Westchester (3). These were the basis of comparison with Tompkins County. (*See also Aggregated Data, page 10*)

### **Senior Leadership**

The Senior Leadership teams from both the Health Department and Cayuga Medical Center (CMC) provided input during the early stages of the project as Priorities and Focus Areas were considered. TCHD (April 2019) and CMC (June 2019) leadership teams reviewed the Prevention Agenda Priority Areas and Focus Areas and provided high-level recommendations about what should be investigated further during the CHA process and review of data. These discussions and recommendations were used to structure the CHA and the data collected from secondary sources. The focus groups and stakeholder interviews aligned with these focus areas.

## **Steering Committee**

A meeting was convened by the Health Department in March 2018 to discuss collaborative planning among County Departments and key partners. These agencies included, Tompkins County Health, Mental Health, Youth Services, Office for the Aging, and Planning Department Directors. Partner organizations included, Human Services Coalition, Cayuga Medical Center, Cornell MPH Program, Lakeview Health Services, and Racker Centers.

At the March 2018 meeting, the Prevention Agenda priority areas were reviewed and there was discussion about how to improve our multi-sector planning effort to best support community health and inform community action. There was initial discussion about how to develop collective goals across agencies and departments to strategically address social determinants of health.

In February 2019, the local firm Horn Research was hired to collect and compile primary data using key informant interviews and focus groups. A steering committee was convened by TCHD following the hiring of Horn Research. The committee included representatives from TCHD, Cayuga Medical Center, Health Planning Council (Human Services Coalition), County Office for the Aging, County Mental Health Services, Horn Research, TCHD Board of Health, Ithaca College Department of Health Promotion and Physical Education, and Cornell Master of Public Health program. This committee met in person monthly and communicated via email, phone, and Google Drive regularly throughout the process.

The steering committee provided guidance and feedback on the qualitative data collection process and population-level data (secondary sources) for the CHA. They drew on their professional expertise and personal experience as residents of Tompkins County to inform the decision-making process for the CHIP focus areas.

## **Community Survey**

In March 2019, TCHD launched a Community Health Survey, modeled on the Common Ground Health [\*My Health Story 2018\*](#) survey. The goal of the survey was to assess community members' perceptions of their current health status, and seek insight on how certain social determinants might influence that status. Survey responses would also inform focus group topic areas. Survey development was supported by input from community representatives, including the Early Childhood Development Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension Nutrition Advisory Committee, Multicultural Resource Center, and technical support from the Cornell MPH program, Human Services Coalition, and Horn Research.

The survey was open for 6 weeks (March through mid-April 2019) and received 1,317 responses from Tompkins County residents.

The survey instrument was distributed widely through an electronic link on the TCHD website, social media (Facebook and Twitter), the Human Services Coalition email Listserv, the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, and Chamber of Commerce. The survey link was spread through our three higher education institutions on various listservs (Cornell, Ithaca College, and TC3). Paper fliers with the URL and a QR code were distributed to at least 20 community-based organizations, some of which sent the information out further to their staff and listservs.

All Tompkins County public libraries were notified and sent a package of fliers and posters to promote the survey. Paper surveys and fliers were delivered to medical offices, including the VA Clinic and REACH Medical. Paper surveys were available at food pantries and Loaves and Fishes. Foodnet Meals on Wheels distributed paper surveys with meals to 50 households throughout the County with self-addressed envelopes. Emails were sent to the Newfield and Groton school district superintendents, Principals of Caroline and Enfield Elementary Schools, and the Ithaca High School PTA. The Human Services Coalition assisted with the distribution of the survey. The survey instrument will be available as an Appendix.

### **Key Informant Interviews**

Twenty-six stakeholders representing different sectors participated in a qualitative telephone interview during March and April of 2019. Stakeholders were asked to complete a brief pre-interview survey where they selected from a list the three most important: health issues facing the county, unmet needs, and social determinants of health that negatively and positively impact the county.

The pre-interview survey results were (N=26):

- The most important health issues identified were: 1) Drug and alcohol misuse, 2) Mental health issues, and 3) Health disparities between populations.
- The top unmet health needs were: 1) Mental health care, 2) Dental/pediatric dental care, and 3) Long-term care and nursing homes.
- The social determinants most negatively impacting the county were: 1) Poverty and income insufficiency, 2) Lack of transportation, and 3) Housing instability.
- The social determinants that positively impact the county were: 1) Strong network of community-based services, 2) Strong economy, and 3) Green spaces and walkable community.

In the follow-up qualitative interviews, stakeholders were asked to describe the thinking behind their selections and their perception of the community's awareness of and willingness to address those issues. In addition, stakeholders were asked to identify areas where prevention programming has been successful, and the types of programs and initiatives they would most like to see implemented. The full report will be available as an Appendix.



## **Focus Groups**

In July 2019, four focus groups were conducted by Horn Research. The four locations were: Jillian’s Drawers in City of Ithaca, Calvary Baptist Church in the City of Ithaca, Tompkins Cortland Community College in Dryden, and Groton Public Library in Groton. A total of 32 individuals participated.

All four groups were asked the same set of questions:

- What kinds of effort do you think would be most effective in ensuring people in your community have access to healthier foods?
- What do you think are the reasons women in your community don’t access health screenings and tests?
- What do you think are the main barriers to women receiving early prenatal care?
- Why do you think there has been an increase in emotional and mental health issues in the community? Is this something you’ve seen within your community?

## **Tompkins County Board of Health**

The Health Department’s Board of Health was updated during 2018-2019. The Board membership includes a representative from the County Legislature.

## **Tompkins County Health Planning Council and Tompkins Health Network**

The Health Planning Council was updated at their monthly meetings during 2018-19. The member organizations helped promote the Community Health Survey and several members were interviewed as a stakeholder. A summary of the CHA and initial priorities for the CHIP were presented at the October 9, 2019 meeting. A Community Health and Access subcommittee of the Health Planning Council will be convened to monitor and evaluate progress on the CHIP.