ATCHISON COUNTY
Community Health Profile
JUNE 2024
This report highlights data from the full Atchison County Community Health Assessment (CHNA) conducted in 2023. Sources for all data included in this report can be found in the full CHNA, available at atcomopublichealth.org or by calling the Atchison County Health Department at 660-736-4121.

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Everyone deserves health – not just the absence of disease, but a rich, full life with physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and financial health. Yet some people in our community are not doing as well as others.

To some degree we all make choices about our own health – what to eat, how often to exercise, what sexual activity to engage in, and whether to drink or use tobacco products. But these choices aren’t options for everyone. For example, a person may choose to eat healthy foods, but not have the income to allow buying fresh fruits or vegetables, not have a car to drive to a grocery store, or not have a stove in their home to cook on. This person experiences barriers to health.

We also know that our health is influenced by far more than just our personal choices. Socioeconomic factors such as our level of education, our job, and our income influence our health. Environmental factors such as the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the neighborhood and housing in which we live influence our health.
Public health is what we do collectively, as a community, to eliminate those barriers and ensure the conditions in which everyone can be healthy. For example, when we use our strengths and expertise collaboratively, we can ensure that everyone has access to fresh fruits and vegetables, a safe place to exercise, and the opportunity for a good education which will increase options for better paying jobs. This work can’t be done by one organization alone. It requires all of us working together – the health department, healthcare providers, schools, churches, clubs, private businesses, community members, and more. Together we can identify what is most needed in our community and then develop programs, services, and policies to ensure that everyone can thrive.

This Community Profile sheds light on areas of highest need in our community. It is organized around Missouri’s Foundational Public Services (MO FPHS) model, which defines the essential capabilities and public health areas of expertise that must be available in every community.

The profile report features outcomes from several community planning meetings and a series of in-depth community health assessments conducted in 2022 – 2023. During those meetings, attendees identified a shared vision for our community:

Atchison County will be a place where faith, service, and community collectively prioritize youth, stabilize families, serve all residents with compassion and acceptance, and provide support and affordable access to resources that assure the highest level of physical, mental, and spiritual health.

The information in this Community Profile and the companion report “Atchison County Community Health Needs Assessment” provides the insight we need to identify key focus areas for improving community health. Together we can apply our expertise, energy, and resources to addressing these areas. We hope you’ll join us on the journey toward achieving our vision to improve health for everyone in our community!
Atchison population has decreased even while the Missouri and U.S. populations increased. It has experienced the greatest population loss among all Missouri counties since 2000.

The proportion of older adults (65+) is higher in Atchison County than state and national averages.

Atchison County has a less diverse population than the U.S. overall, with 97% of residents identifying as White.

Atchison County ranks #23 (of 115) as the most educated counties in Missouri.

High school graduation rates in Atchison County match or exceed state and national trends.

School funding adequacy is much higher than the state average.

Funding per pupil varies by up to 18% between school districts.

Rock Port students consistently rate among the highest in the state in math and English performance scores (MAT).

Residents hold fewer advanced degrees than state and national averages, but about average for rural Missouri counties.

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**POPULATION**

5,520 persons

1 in 5 are under 18 (20%)

1 in 4 are 65+ (26%)

10.03 people per 1 square mile

- **14.15%** since 2000

**AGRICULTURE**

85% of county is cropland

401 farms

55% of producers report farming as primary occupation

**RACE/ETHNICITY**

97% White

0.6% Black

0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

2% Hispanic/Latinx

0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native

6 in 10 were born in Missouri (60%)

**EDUCATION**

3 school districts:
Fairfax R-III, Rock Port R-II, Tarkio R-I

90% high school graduation rate

$1,672 school funding adequacy

5 in 10 have some college (54%)

2 in 10 have a Bachelor’s degree or higher (21%)

$14,049 spending per student

6 in 10 were born in Missouri (60%)
Life Expectancy and Quality of Life

Life expectancy measures the average number of years a person can expect to live based on the mortality rates of a particular population. It is a widely used indicator of the overall health of a community. Life expectancy statistics provide insight into the quality of healthcare, access to healthcare, environmental factors, lifestyle choices, and socioeconomic status in a community.

Generally, longer life expectancies are associated with better access to healthcare, healthier lifestyles, and higher socioeconomic status. Shorter life expectancies are associated with factors such as high poverty rates, limited access to healthcare, unhealthy behaviors, and environmental pollution. Life expectancy data can be used to identify health disparities and targeted interventions that will improve the health of the population.

✔️ Life expectancy in Atchison County is 76.6 years of life, equal with the Missouri average and higher than the national average.

Quality of life can be broadly separated into physical and mental measurements, although the two are closely linked. Physical quality of life is measured by access to healthy food in a community, opportunities to exercise, and the number of physically unhealthy days. Access to a healthy and balanced diet is crucial for maintaining good health and preventing chronic diseases. Lack of access to healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, can lead to malnutrition, obesity, and other diet-related illnesses.

Regular physical activity helps maintain good health and prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Exercise can also improve mental health by reducing stress and anxiety. Lack of exercise can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle, which increases the risk of chronic diseases and reduces the overall quality of life.

The average number of physically unhealthy days is a measure of the number of days people report having poor physical health. A higher number of physically unhealthy days indicates a greater burden of chronic disease and poor health in a community, which can significantly impact the quality of life. Chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity can limit an individual’s ability to carry out daily activities and lead to a reduced quality of life.

- 14% are food insecure (MO average 13%)
- 2% have limited access to healthy food (MO average 7%)
- 30% are physically inactive (MO average 30%)
- 36% of adults are obese (MO average 35%)
- 22% of adults smoke (MO average 20%)
- 18% have poor or fair health (MO average 18%)
- 13% have frequent physical distress (MO average 12%)

⚠️ Only about 1 in 3 people in Atchison County have access to parks, gyms, or fitness centers.

⚠️ Rates of smoking and adult obesity are higher in Atchison County than other counties in Missouri.
Community members of Atchison County were asked about recreation opportunities in our community in the *Community Themes and Strengths* survey in November 2022. Their perspectives are shown in the table below. (n=217)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Location</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River / lake / woods</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports field / golf course</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming pool</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library or park</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health club / gym / fitness center</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie theater social club / service club</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live theater / dance performance / concert</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior center</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average number of mentally unhealthy days is a measure of the number of days individuals in a community report experiencing poor mental health. A higher number of mentally unhealthy days indicates a greater burden of mental illness and poor mental health in a community. Mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, can significantly impact an individual’s quality of life, reduce productivity, and increase healthcare costs.

16% of residents report frequent mental distress (MO report 16%)

8 in 10 residents of Atchison County report more physically unhealthy days or mentally unhealthy days than other counties in Missouri.

Community members of Atchison County were asked about health in our community in the Community Themes and Strengths survey in November 2022. Their perspectives are shown in the table below. (n=217)

**How would you rate our community as a healthy place to live?**

- **1.8%** Very unhealthy (4)
- **9.7%** Unhealthy (84)
- **38.7%** Somewhat healthy (84)
- **6.9%** Very healthy (15)
- **42.9%** Healthy (93)

When asked in the Community Themes and Strengths survey what they considered to be the most important factors that define a healthy community, the top responses were (n=217):

- Access to healthcare: 22%
- Access to healthy food: 10.4%
- Clean environment: 10%
- Healthy behaviors and lifestyles: 8.9%
- Healthy economy: 8.8%
- Quality education: 6.5%
- Safe neighborhoods: 6.3%
- Safe, affordable housing: 6.1%
HOUSING

Homeownership can provide stability and financial security for families, which can positively impact physical and mental health outcomes. Severe housing cost burden refers to households that spend more than 50% of their income on housing. Overcrowding refers to the number of people living in a household compared to the number of rooms available. Severe housing cost burden can lead to financial stress and a lack of resources to meet other basic needs, such as food and healthcare and high overcrowding rates can contribute to the spread of infectious diseases, such as the inability to isolate from an infected family member.

Rates of homeownership are higher in Atchison County than other counties in Missouri. Housing stability is high, housing costs are low, and equity markers like severe housing cost burden, overcrowding, childcare cost burden, and residential segregation are much lower than state and national averages.

3 in 10 homes are rentals

Households with housing-cost burden decreased from 2011 to 2020.

ECONOMY

Communities with higher poverty rates typically have limited access to healthy food options, healthcare, and safe living environments. Higher unemployment rates can lead to stress, financial hardship, and reduced access to healthcare. Lower education levels can lead to fewer job opportunities and lower incomes. These factors can all negatively affect physical and mental health, contribute to higher rates of chronic diseases, such as obesity and diabetes, and reduce overall quality of life.

$31.83 living wage (MO average $36.09)

$53,867 median household income (MO average $61,043)

$30,737 per capita income (MO average $33,770)

The median household income in Atchison County is $7,176 lower than the Missouri median and $15,154 lower than the U.S. median.

The median income for Hispanic residents is $63,750, which is $12,306 higher than median income for white residents.

A person needs to earn nearly $32/hour to keep up with the cost of living, but the minimum wage in Atchison County is $12.00/hr.

12% of county residents live in poverty (MO average 13%)

Atchison County is ranked 33 of 115 Missouri counties for child poverty

More than 1 in 10 residents live below the federal poverty level.

More than 4 in 10 children live in poverty.
EMPLOYMENT

Atchison County has 185 employer establishments and more than six in ten (61.1%) of residents are in the civilian labor force, including 52.9% of women. Employment participation dropped 5.50% between 2019 and 2020, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The most common employment establishment is health care and social assistance, followed by transportation and warehousing. The average travel time to work is 20.7 minutes and 81.1% of workers drive to work alone, likely reflecting the rural nature of the county.

Labor participation is on target with the number of residents over age 65, indicating that the number of jobs is sufficient, but the pay scale is lower than other Missouri counties.

This pay differential may influence decisions made by younger workers and high school graduates to remain in the area or seek employment elsewhere.

High childcare costs can likewise create financial stress for families and limit access to quality childcare services, which can negatively affect child development and lead to increased stress for parents.

Licensed childcare capacity dropped significantly from 84.3 per 1,000 children in 2016 to 39.2 per 1,000 children in 2021.

Community members of Atchison County were asked about employment opportunities in our community in the Community Themes and Strengths survey in November 2022. Their perspectives are shown in the table below. (n=217)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think there are enough jobs in our community for adults?</th>
<th>Do you think there are enough jobs in our community for youth?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.4% (53)</td>
<td>19.8% (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.6% (164)</td>
<td>80.2% (174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maternal, Child and Family Health

**Family health** refers to the health of the family unit as a whole, including the well-being of parents, children, and other family members. It includes issues related to family planning, such as contraception and fertility, as well as efforts to promote healthy relationships and communication within the family. It also includes men’s health throughout their lifespan and healthy aging.

**Maternal health** refers to the physical and mental well-being of women in reproductive health, prenatal care, childbirth, and postpartum care. It includes access to healthcare, nutrition, and education to ensure the best possible outcomes for both the mother and the baby. It also includes health factors for women throughout their lifespan.

**Child health** refers to the physical and mental well-being of children from birth to adolescence. It includes access to healthcare, nutrition, and education, as well as efforts to prevent illnesses and injuries.

**Maternal, child, and family health is important because these groups are often the most vulnerable in society and have specific health needs that require attention. Improving the health of mothers, children, and families can have a ripple effect, leading to improved health and well-being for entire communities.**

- **3%** of babies are born at a low birthweight (MO average 9%)
- **5 of every 1,000** infants die before their first birthday (MO average 6.2)
- **15%** of children live in single-parent households (MO average 25%)
- **16%** of children live in poverty (MO average 16%)
- **4 in 10** of children are enrolled in free or reduced school lunch program (U.S. average 41%; MO average 50%)

Atchison County is ranked 43 of 115 counties in Missouri for childhood food insecurity, with “1” indicating the most positive finding and “115” the worst.
The goal of injury prevention is to reduce the incidence, severity, and impact of injuries on individuals and communities by identifying contributing factors and risks and then implementing strategies to reduce or eliminate these risks. Communities can advocate for changes to laws or develop local policies that help reduce the risk of injury. They can also promote healthy behaviors and habits to prevent injuries.

24 injury deaths

6 deaths by suicide

19% excessive drinking (MO average 20%)

12 motor vehicle deaths

40% driving deaths with alcohol (MO average 28%)

3 drug overdose deaths
Chronic diseases are long-lasting and often debilitating health conditions that can significantly degrade a person’s quality of life. Common chronic diseases include diabetes, heart disease, asthma, COPD, and cancer. Chronic disease control is the prevention and management of chronic diseases.

The health department works with partner organizations to prevent the onset of chronic disease by promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting policies, removing barriers, and providing health education and resources. Public health partners also offer screenings, educational resources, and disease management support for people who have chronic disease.

**Atchison County ranks in the middle (#58 of 115) of Missouri counties for cancer deaths (180 per 100,000 people), although Missouri has higher rates of cancer than the national average.**

174 cancer deaths per 100,000 persons (MO average 163)

Preventive screenings such as mammograms, pap tests, and prostate exams can help detect cancer or pre-cancerous conditions at an early stage, allowing for earlier treatment and a better chance of a positive health outcome. The Health Department provides free breast and cervical screening, pap tests, HPV tests, and pelvic exams to women who meet income eligibility requirements. Uninsured or underinsured women may also qualify for a free mammogram.

42% of women with annual mammogram (MO average 45%)

Atchison County has lower rates of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease mortality than the Missouri or national average.

Atchison County has fewer hospitalizations for diabetes but much higher death rates for diabetes than the Missouri and national averages.
9% adults have diabetes (MO average 9%)

⚠️ Atchison County has a lower rate of diabetes than the state average, but more than twice as many Atchison County residents (43 in 100,000) die of diabetes complications than the Missouri average (20 in 100,000)

Atchison County has lower rates of asthma than the Missouri average.

2.16 out of 100,000 Hospitalization rate for asthma (MO average 9.63)

However, if it is not treated, asthma can lead to emergency room visits and hospitalization, which can create a significant economic burden.

21.92 out of 100,000 Hospitalization rate for COPD (MO average 18.80)

Community members of Atchison County were asked about chronic disease in their family in the Community Themes and Strengths survey in November 2022. The most common chronic diseases listed were high blood pressure, arthritis, and hearing or vision loss. Their responses are shown in the table below. (n=217)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Atchison County</th>
<th>Missouri Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing or vision loss</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia/Alzheimer’s</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung disease/Asthma/COPD</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not living with any chronic</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illnesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you or anyone in your immediate family living with any of the following chronic illnesses?

- 22.7% High blood pressure (111)
- 13.9% Arthritis (68)
- 11.1% Hearing or vision loss (54)
- 9.6% Diabetes (47)
- 9.4% Mental illness (46)
- 8.6% Other (42)
Communicable Disease Control

The Health Department monitors infectious diseases that can be passed from person to person like seasonal flu, measles, whooping cough, and chlamydia or from animals to people like West Nile Virus, H5N1 (avian influenza), or rabies. Together with their partners, they work to prevent, slow, and stop communicable diseases from spreading through the community.

They collect, analyze, and share data on the presence of diseases in the community. They provide vaccinations that protect against more than a dozen diseases. They encourage community members to choose healthy habits like handwashing and staying home when sick to prevent the spread of disease. When a disease gets past all of these protective measures and starts to spread in the community, the Health Department and its partners respond quickly to stop the outbreak and protect community health.

6 in 10 infants in Atchison are up-to-date on some of the recommended childhood vaccinations.

The percent of children at 1 - 17 who are up-to-date on recommended vaccinations ranges from 52% - 100%, depending on the vaccine.

1 in 10 children are vaccinated against COVID (11%)

Nearly 4 in 10 children are vaccinated against seasonal influenza (flu) (36%)

9 in 10 adults have received at least one vaccination against COVID (92%)

7 in 10 adults have been vaccinated against seasonal influenza (flu) (71%)

An increasing number of parents have applied for religious exemptions to vaccination for their children in the past two years. In August 2022, more than 9% of kindergarteners and 6% of first graders entering school were not fully vaccinated due to religious exemptions. This leaves children at risk for vaccine preventable diseases like measles, mumps, and chicken pox.

The rate of sexually transmitted infections is much lower than state and national comparisons.

137 cases of chlamydia per 100,000 persons (MO rate 518.5)
Environmental health focuses on the relationship between people and the environment (air and water quality, exposure to toxic substances, and food safety). The Health Department and its partners work to prevent environmental health problems by promoting policies to regulate and reduce pollution, ensuring air and water quality, promoting sustainable practices, and providing education and resources on environmental health issues. In the event of an environmental health crisis, the Health Department works with its partners to protect community health.

In order to prevent disease, the Health Department regulates wastewater system installations and provides private well water testing on request. It prevents foodborne illness outbreaks by working with food vendors to ensure compliance with the Missouri Food Code. It also inspects child care centers and lodging facilities (motels) to ensure safety and sanitation.

82 environmental inspections were conducted in 2022.
Linkage to Medical, Behavioral, and Community Resources

There are many reasons that some people aren’t as healthy as others. In some cases the barrier is a lack of access to resources. The Health Department cannot provide every program and service people depend on to live healthy lives, but it can collaborate with community partners to make referrals that help connect people with the resources they need to thrive.

Atchison County has a higher primary care physician to population ratio than the state average.

1:2572
Primary care providers per population (MO average 1:1405)

1:510
Other primary care providers (includes nurse practitioners) (MO average 1:890)

Poor oral health can lead to a range of health problems, including oral infections, gum disease, tooth decay, tooth loss, and even serious systemic health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Since the start of data collection for this project another dentist has retired, leaving only one dentist to serve the entire county population.

1:5520
Oral health care provider (dentists) (MO average 1:1650)

Behavioral Health Resources contribute to the community health in Atchison County by addressing mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, and substance use issues that, left untreated, can significantly impact a person’s quality of life. This includes access to mental health services, substance use treatment, support groups, and crisis intervention services. Early intervention and treatment for behavioral health issues can lead to cost savings in the long run by reducing emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and other health care costs associated with untreated mental health and substance use issues. Atchison County has significantly fewer mental health care providers than the Missouri average.

1:1699
Mental health care provider to population ratio (MO average 1:457)