

Collier County Community Input 2025



Prepared by



In Partnership With



healthcare
network



Table of Contents



Community Survey Results, pg. 3



**Community Outreach Questionnaire,
pg. 29**



Focus Group, pg. 31



Community Leader Interview, pg. 34

Introduction and Overview



Partner Agencies: NCH, the Florida Department of Health in Collier County, and Healthcare Network. Survey created and analyzed by the Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida



Why: To assess Collier County residents' perceptions of healthcare and health issues in the county



How: Surveys and promotional materials were available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. Survey collection was done via SurveyMonkey and paper surveys.



When: January - April 2025



Outcome: 441 residents shared their thoughts on health and healthcare in Collier County

English Poster:

NCH **healthcare network** **HPC** **HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FL** **Florida HEALTH Collier County**

**Your voice matters!
Take the survey today!**

Please join us by completing a survey about health and healthcare in Collier and Lee Counties. Your feedback will help shape the services offered in your community.

Scan Me  or 

**Your Health. Your Voice.
Your Future**

Spanish/Haitian Creole Poster:

NCH **healthcare network** **HPC** **HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FL** **Florida HEALTH Collier County**

**¡Tu voz importa!
¡Responde la encuesta hoy mismo!**

Únete a nosotros completando una encuesta sobre la salud y la atención médica en los condados de Collier y Lee. Tus comentarios nos ayudarán a mejorar los servicios que se ofrecen en tu comunidad.

Escanea para realizar la encuesta. 

Tu salud. Tu voz. Tu futuro.

**Vwa ou enpòtan!
Pran sondaj la jodia!**

Tanpri ranpli yon sondaj sou sante ak swen sante nan zòn Collier ak Lee. Fidbak ou ap ede fòme sevis yo ofri nan kominote'w la.

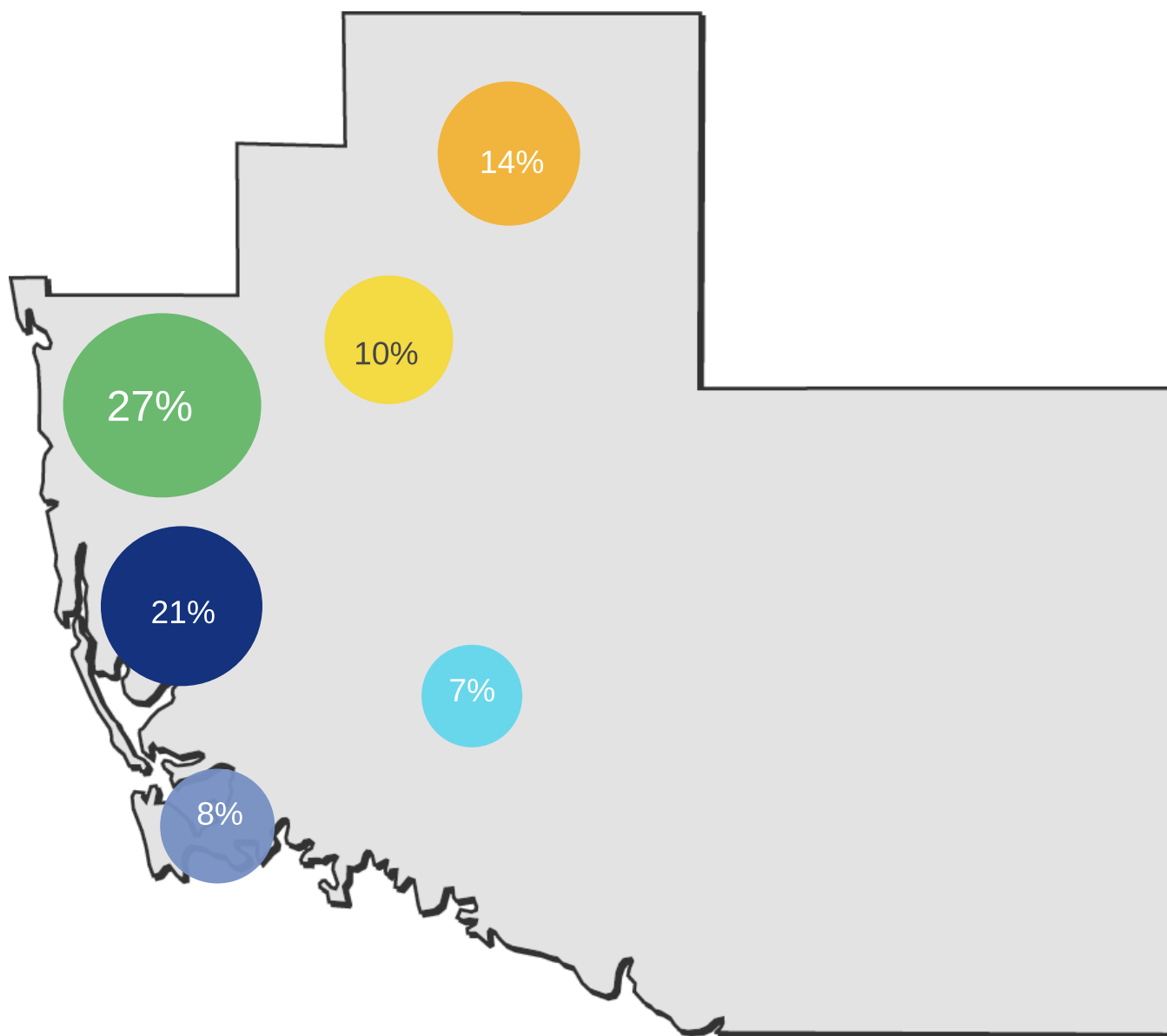
Eskane sa 

Sante'w, Vwa'w, Avni'w.

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Survey Takers by Community

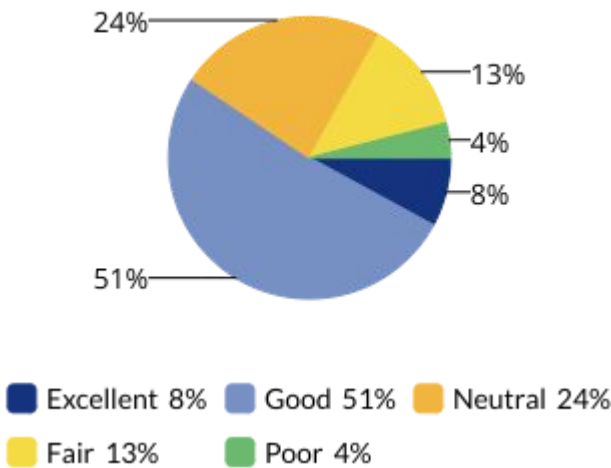
We asked survey participants to provide their zip codes. We grouped the zip codes into six different communities: **City of Naples (n=120)**, **Golden Gate (n=33)**, **Immokalee (n=60)**, **Marco Island (n=34)**, **North Naples (n=87)**, and **Orangetree (n=42)**, representing where most survey participants (86%) reported living.



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

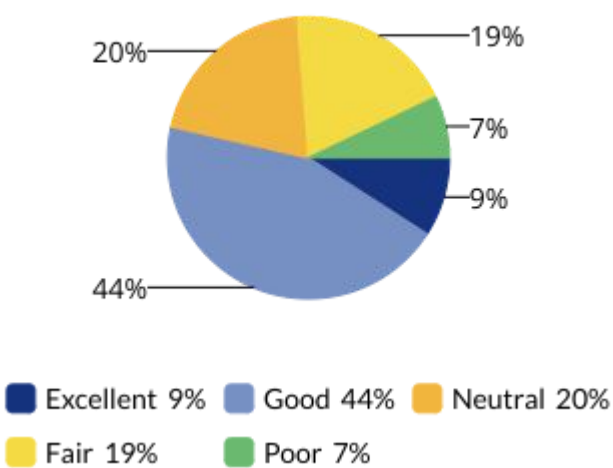
Community Health Perceptions and Access

How would you rate the general health of your community?



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

How would you rate the quality of healthcare in your community?



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

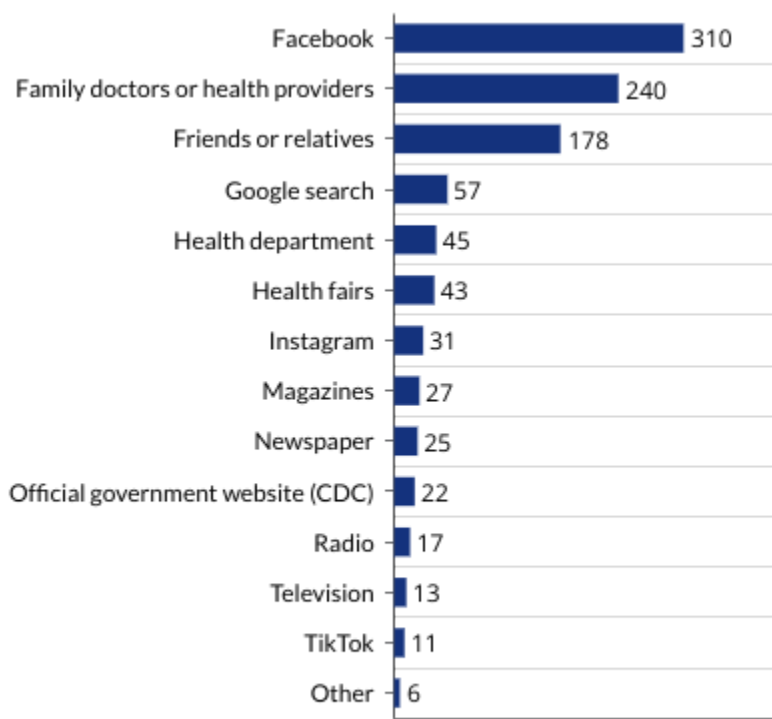
When asked, the majority of the residents believed the general health of the community and the quality of healthcare in the community are **good** (**general health [51%]**, **quality healthcare [44%]**). Looking further into the identified communities, Immokalee had the lowest average rating by residents when compared to the other communities. The best average for this breakdown is a 4.

	General Health of Community	Quality of Healthcare in Community
Golden Gate	2.6	2.5
Immokalee	1.6	1.5
Marco Island	2.7	2.1
Naples	2.7	2.6
North Naples	2.8	2.5
Orangetree	2.7	2.5
Collier Overall	2.4	2.3

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

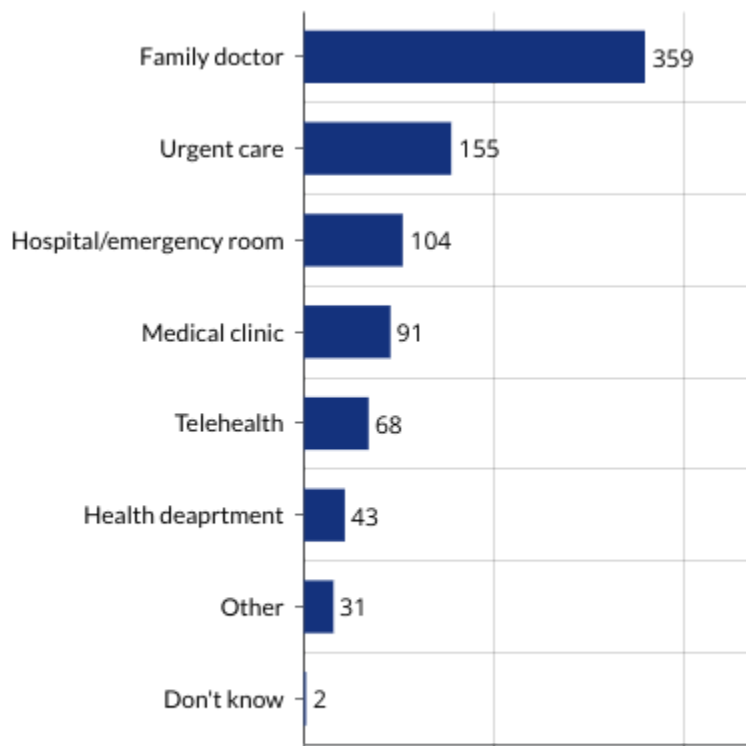
Community Health Perceptions and Access

Where do residents go to get health information?



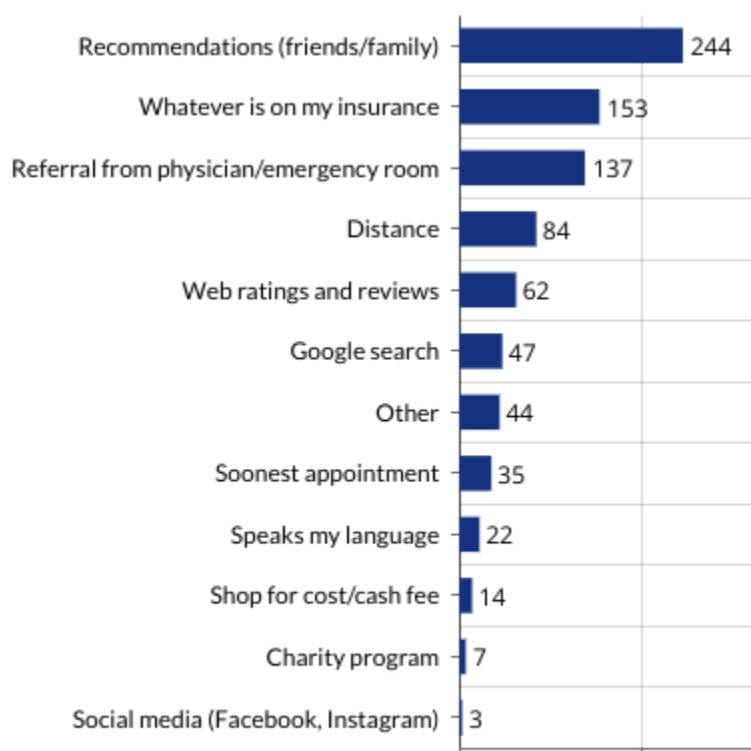
Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Where do residents go to get healthcare?



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

How do you choose your healthcare provider?



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

In Collier County, the most popular sources of health information among residents were Facebook (310 responses), health providers (240 responses), and friends or relatives (178 responses). Notably, in 2022, social media ranked as the fourth most common source, indicating a significant increase in its use for disseminating health information.

Additionally, 85% of residents in Collier County reported having a primary care provider.

When choosing a healthcare provider, the top reasons cited by residents were recommendations from friends and family (244 responses), coverage by insurance (153 responses), and referrals from physicians or emergency rooms (137 responses), whatever is on their insurance (153 responses), and referral from physician/emergency room (137 responses) were the top selected responses.

Key Health Concerns and Risky Behaviors

What are the three most important health concerns?

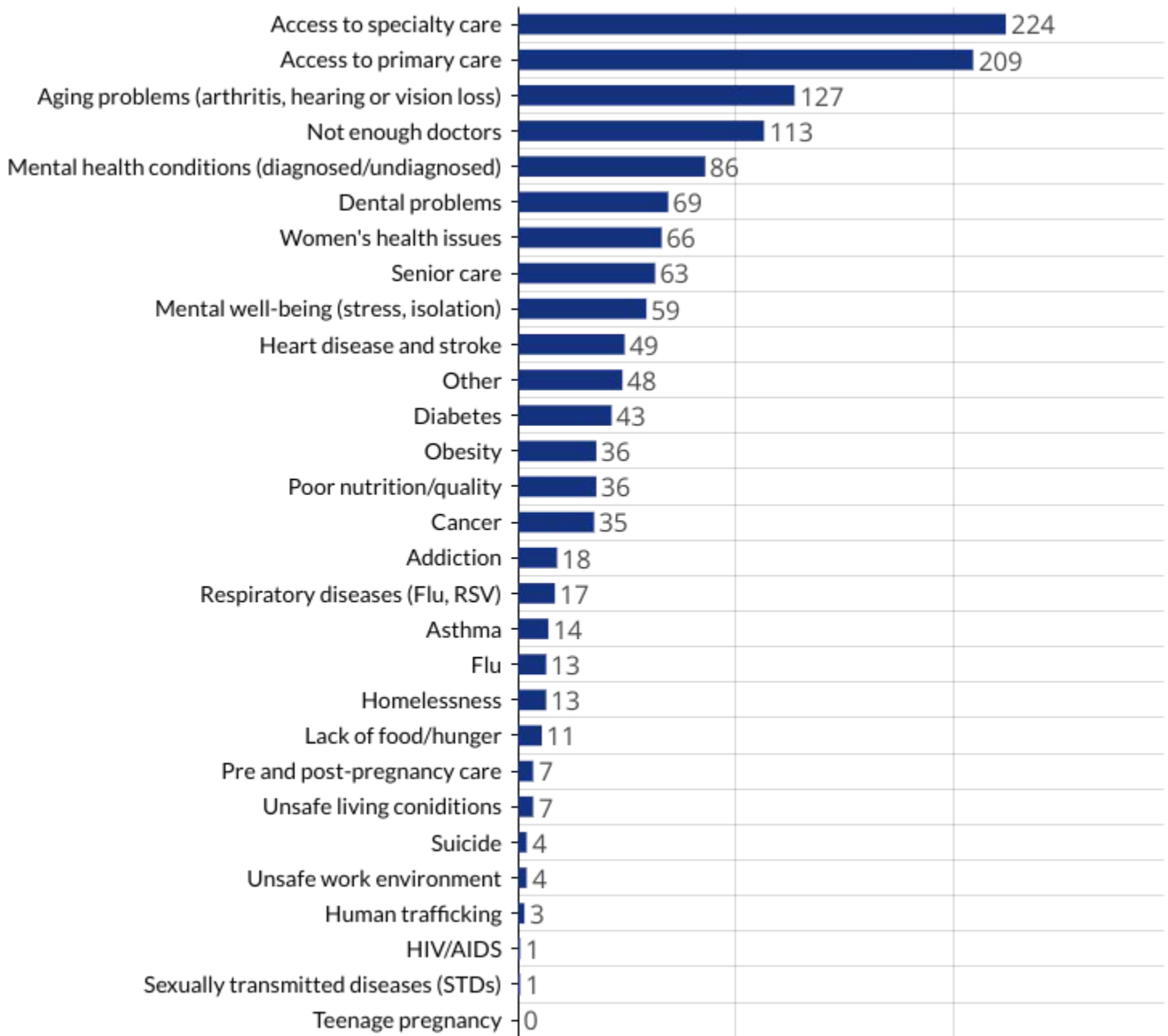
2025 Top 5 responses

1. Access to specialty care
2. Access to primary care
3. Aging problems
4. Not enough doctors
5. Mental health conditions



2022 Top 5 responses

1. Access to primary care
2. Diabetes
3. Access to specialty care
4. Mental health problems
5. Obesity

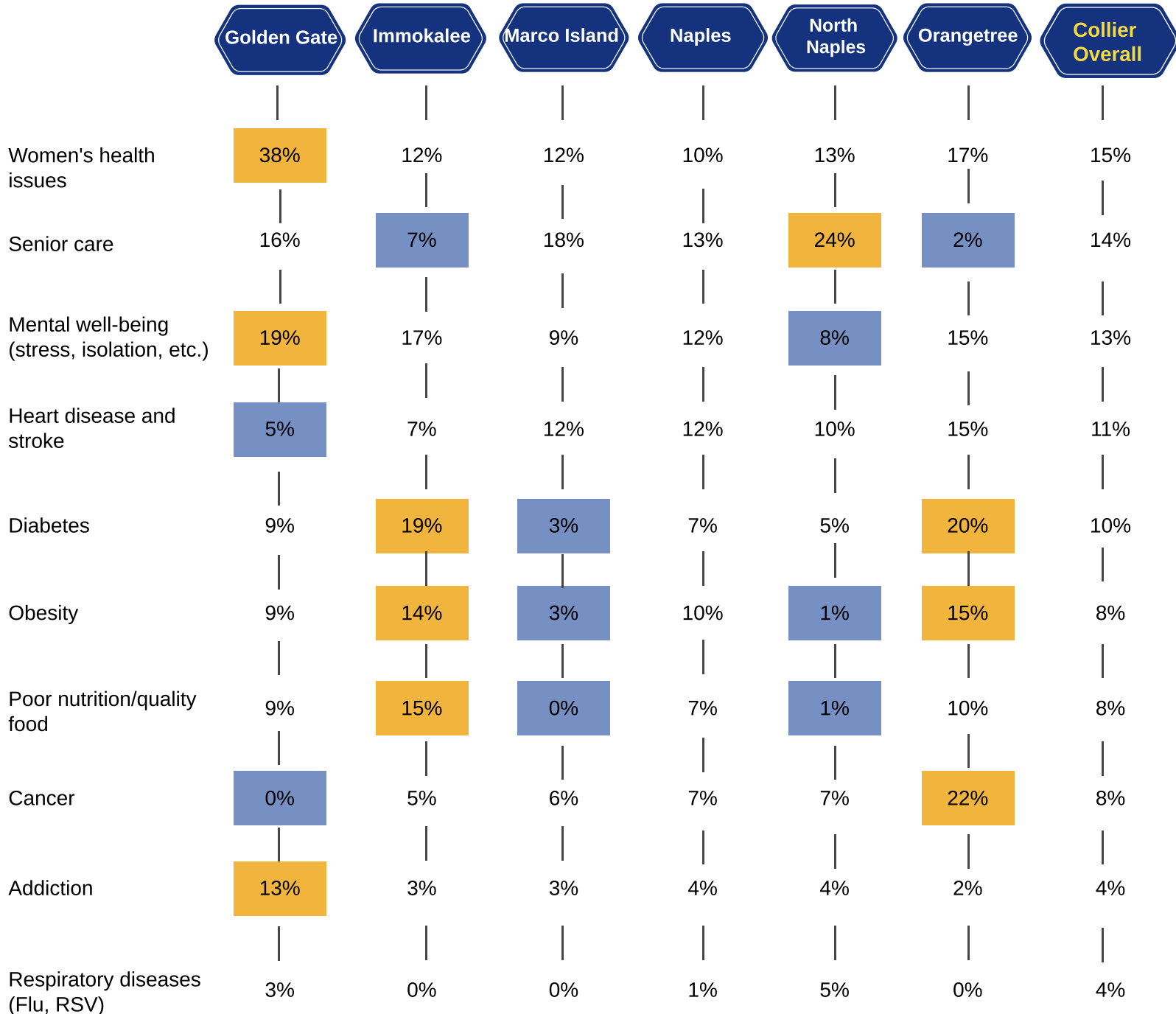


Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Key Health Concerns and Risky Behaviors

What are the three most important health concerns?

The following chart highlights the percentage of respondents from the six highlighted communities that selected the following health concerns as the most important for them, their family, and their community. The percentages highlighted in **orange** indicate a higher concern than the Collier County average. The percentages highlighted in **light blue** show a lower concern than the Collier County average. Shading shows at least a 5% difference.



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Key Health Concerns and Risky Behaviors

Which of the following are the three most important risky behaviors in your community?

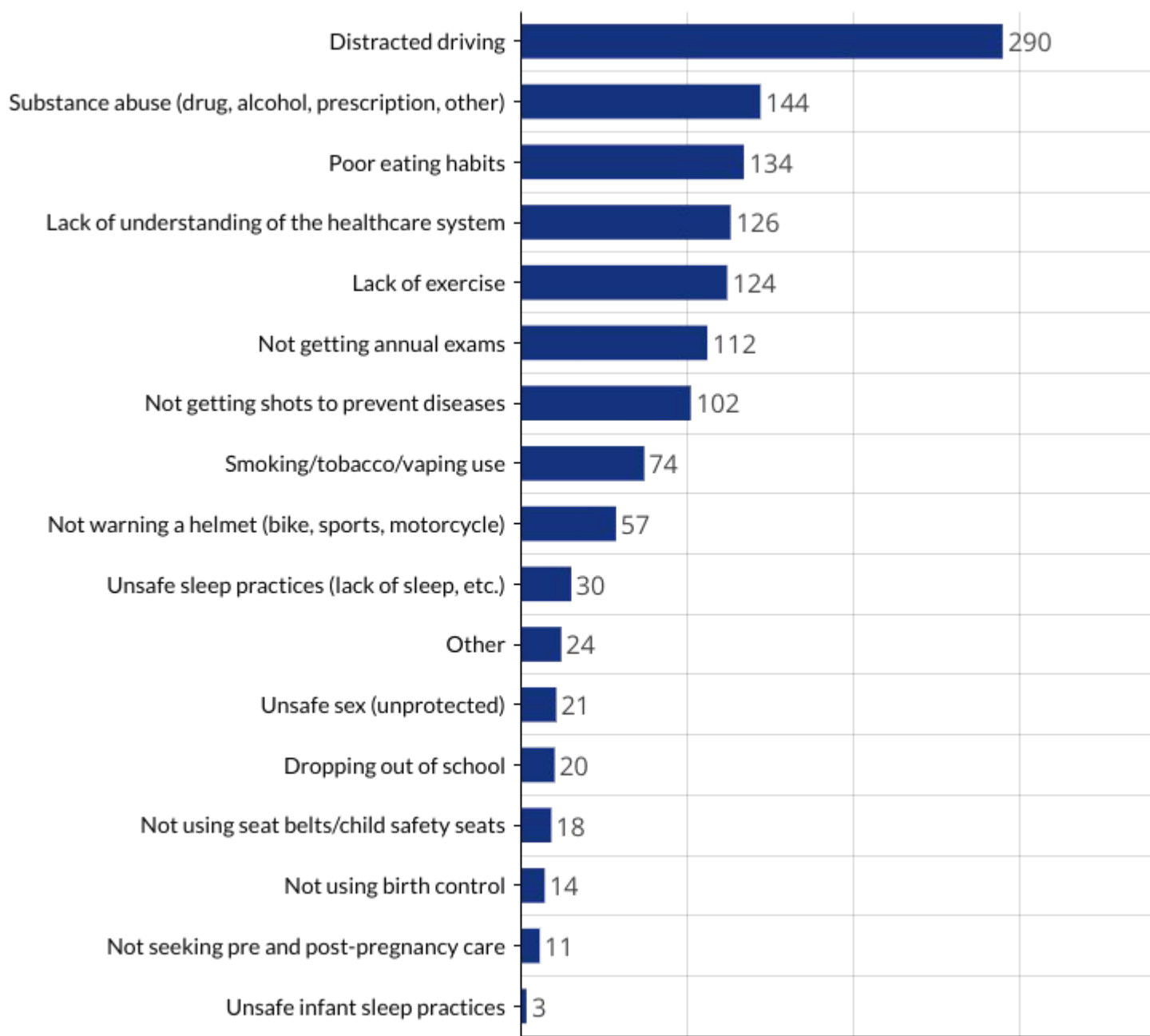
2025 Top 5 Responses

1. Distracted driving
2. Substance abuse
3. Poor eating habits
4. Lack of understanding of the healthcare system
5. Lack of exercise



2022 Top 5 Responses

1. Being overweight
2. Poor eating habits
3. Lack of exercise
4. Substance abuse
5. Smoking/tobacco/vaping use



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Barriers to Healthcare and Environmental Factors

What do you think is the main reason that keeps people in your community seeking medical treatment?

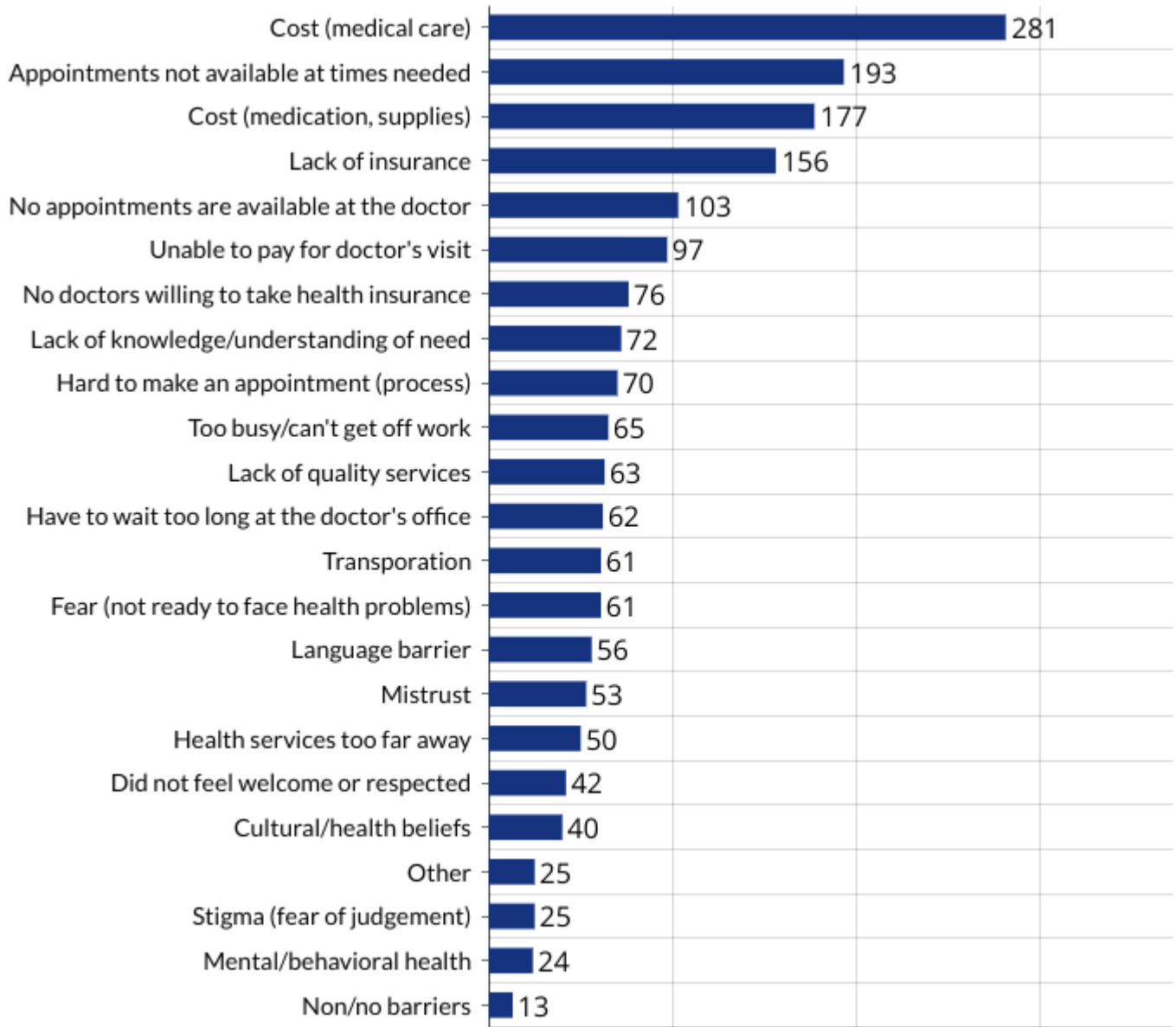
2025 Top 5 Responses

1. Cost (medical care)
2. Appointments not available at times needed
3. Cost (medication, supplies)
4. Lack of insurance
5. No appointments are available at the doctor



2022 Top 5 Responses

1. Lack of insurance
2. Fear
3. Unable to pay for doctor's visit
4. Hard to make an appointment
5. Cultural/health beliefs



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Barriers to Healthcare and Environmental Factors

What do you think is the main reason that keeps people in your community seeking medical treatment?

The following chart highlights the percentage of respondents from the six highlighted communities that selected the following health concerns as the most important for them, their family, and their community. The percentages highlighted in **orange** indicate a higher concern than the Collier County average. The percentages highlighted in **light blue** show a lower concern than the Collier County average. Shading shows at least a 5% difference.

	Golden Gate	Immokalee	Marco Island	Naples	North Naples	Orangetree	Collier Overall
Cost (medical care)	84%	73%	39%	62%	57%	51%	63%
Appointments not available when needed	38%	61%	52%	35%	38%	61%	44%
Cost (medication, supplies)	63%	51%	24%	32%	34%	34%	40%
Lack of insurance	50%	56%	18%	32%	28%	24%	35%
No appointments are available at doctor	13%	22%	42%	22%	30%	22%	23%
Unable to pay for doctor's visit	28%	34%	6%	20%	16%	29%	22%
No doctors willing to take health insurance	19%	15%	15%	20%	13%	17%	17%
Lack of knowledge/ understanding of need	19%	29%	12%	11%	19%	10%	16%
Hard to make an appointment (process)	13%	21%	25%	15%	12%	18%	16%
Too busy/can't get off work	22%	27%	6%	8%	14%	22%	15%
Lack of quality services	13%	25%	18%	11%	12%	20%	14%
Transportation	19%	44%	0%	10%	9%	12%	14%
Have to wait too long at doctor's office	9%	36%	9%	8%	10%	19%	14%
Fear (not ready to face health problems)	16%	22%	9%	11%	12%	15%	14%
Language barrier	19%	39%	12%	6%	6%	7%	13%
Mistrust	13%	17%	6%	12%	14%	7%	12%
Health services too far away	9%	36%	22%	4%	3%	17%	11%

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Barriers to Healthcare and Environmental Factors

Which environmental factors affect your health, your friends, and/or your family's health?

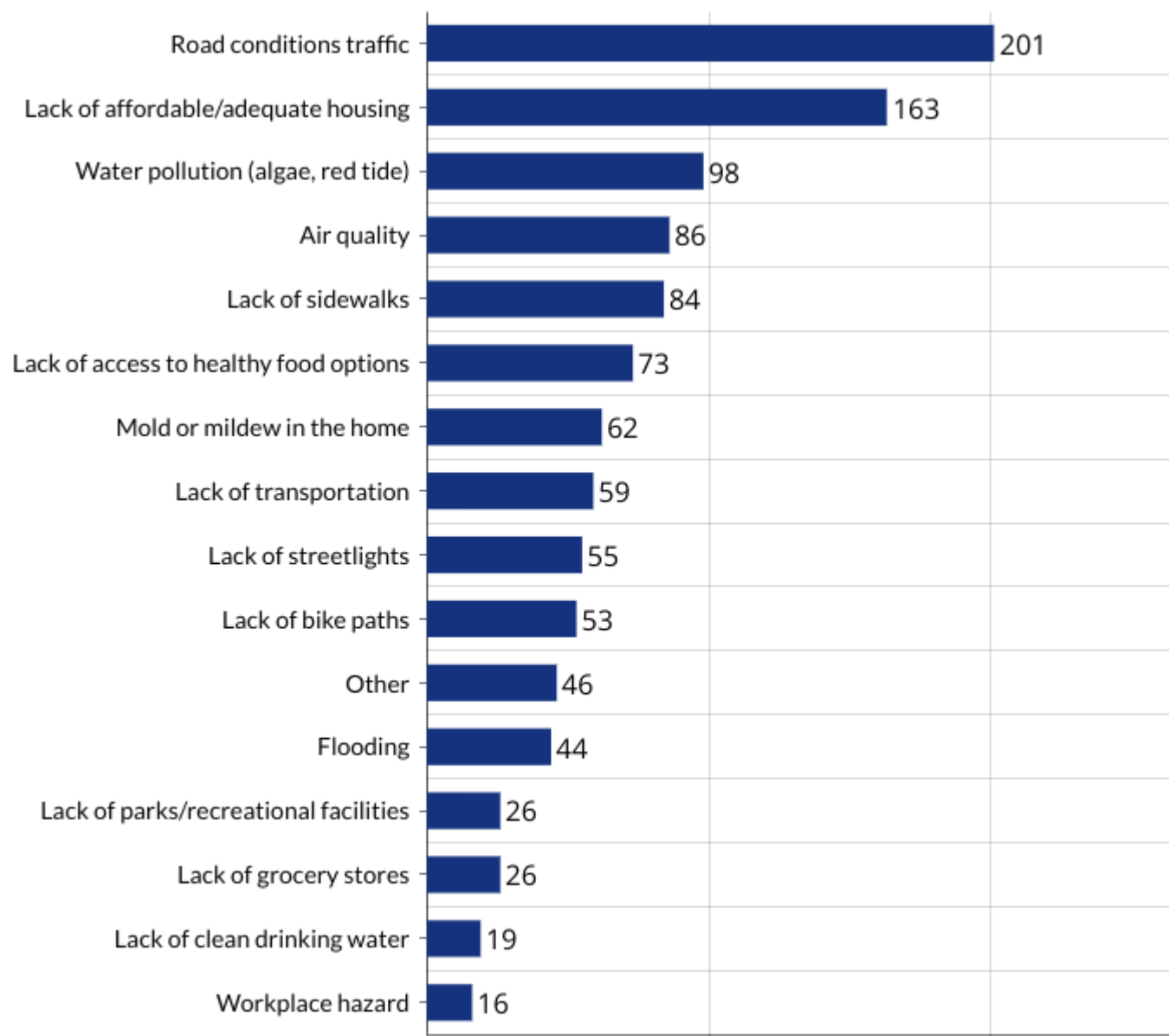
2025 Top 5 Responses

1. Road conditions traffic
2. Lack of affordable/adequate housing
3. Water pollution (algae, red tide)
4. Air quality
5. Lack of sidewalks



2022 Top 5 Responses

1. Lack of affordable/adequate housing
2. Air quality
3. Lack of transportation
4. Lack of sidewalks
5. Lack of access to healthy food options

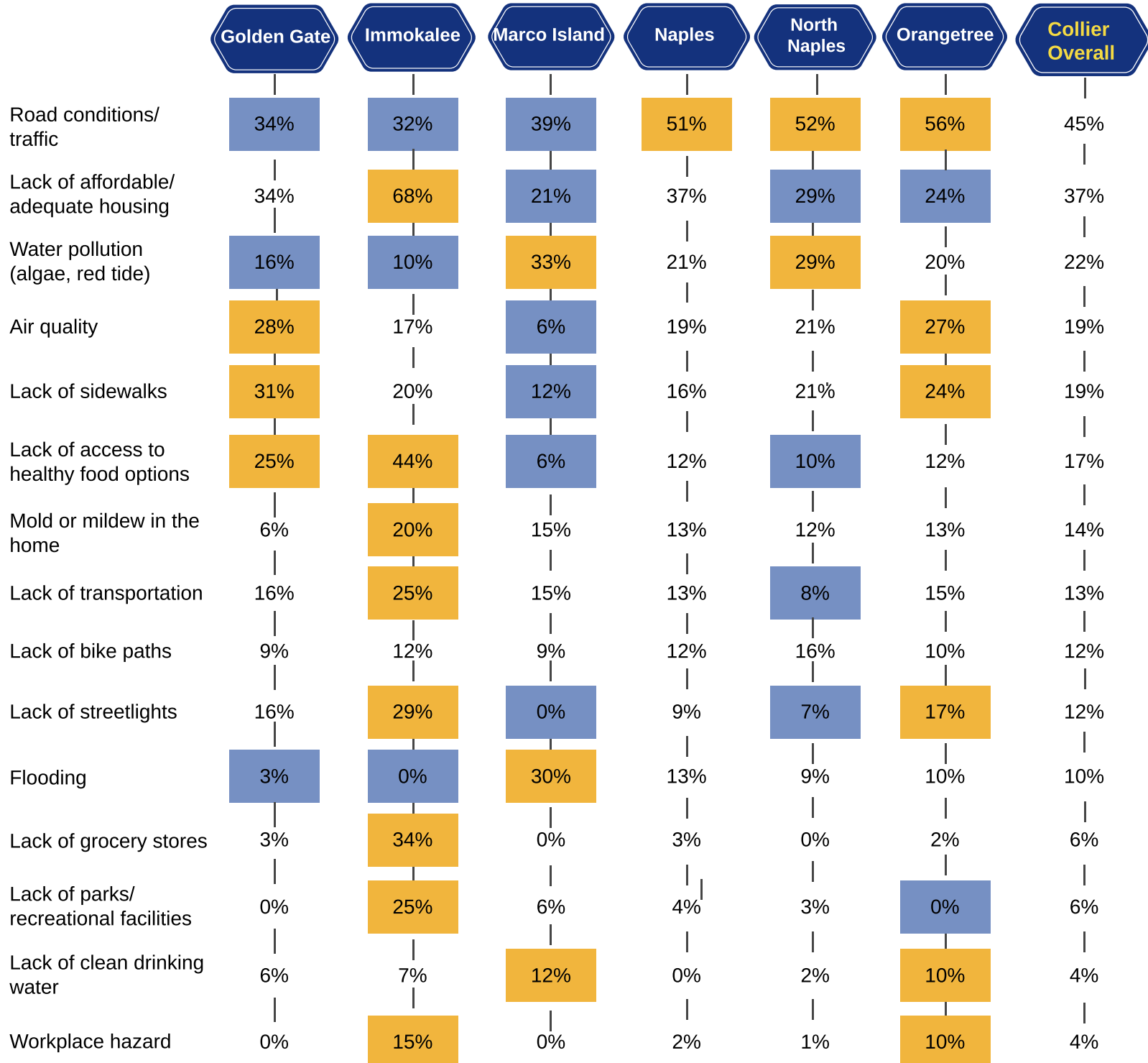


Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Barriers to Healthcare and Environmental Factors

Which environmental factors affect your health, your friends, and/or your family's health?

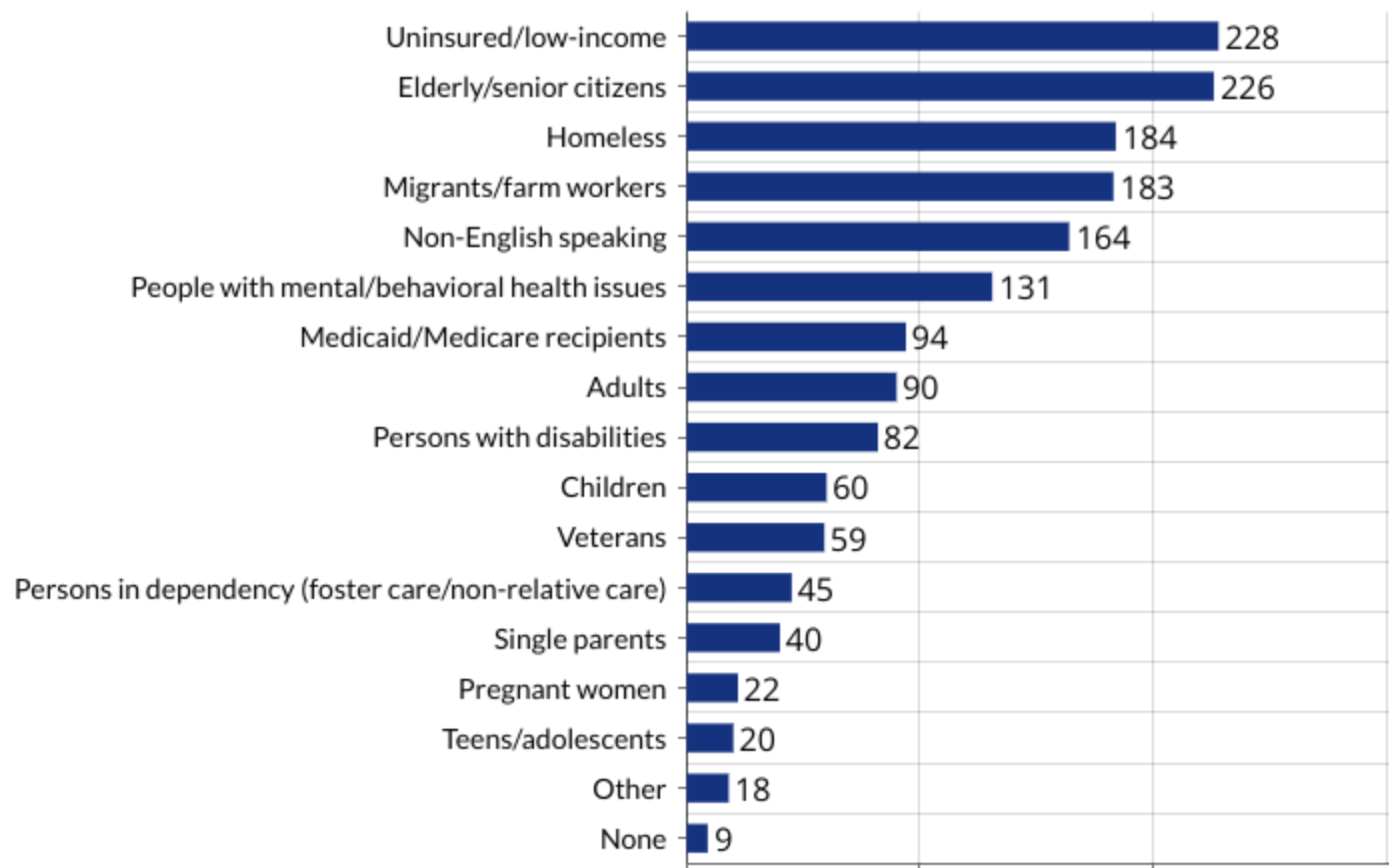
The following chart highlights the percentage of respondents from the six highlighted communities that selected the following health concerns as the most important for them, their family, and their community. The percentages highlighted in **orange** indicate a higher concern than the Collier County average. The percentages highlighted in **light blue** show a lower concern than the Collier County average. Shading shows at least a 5% difference.



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

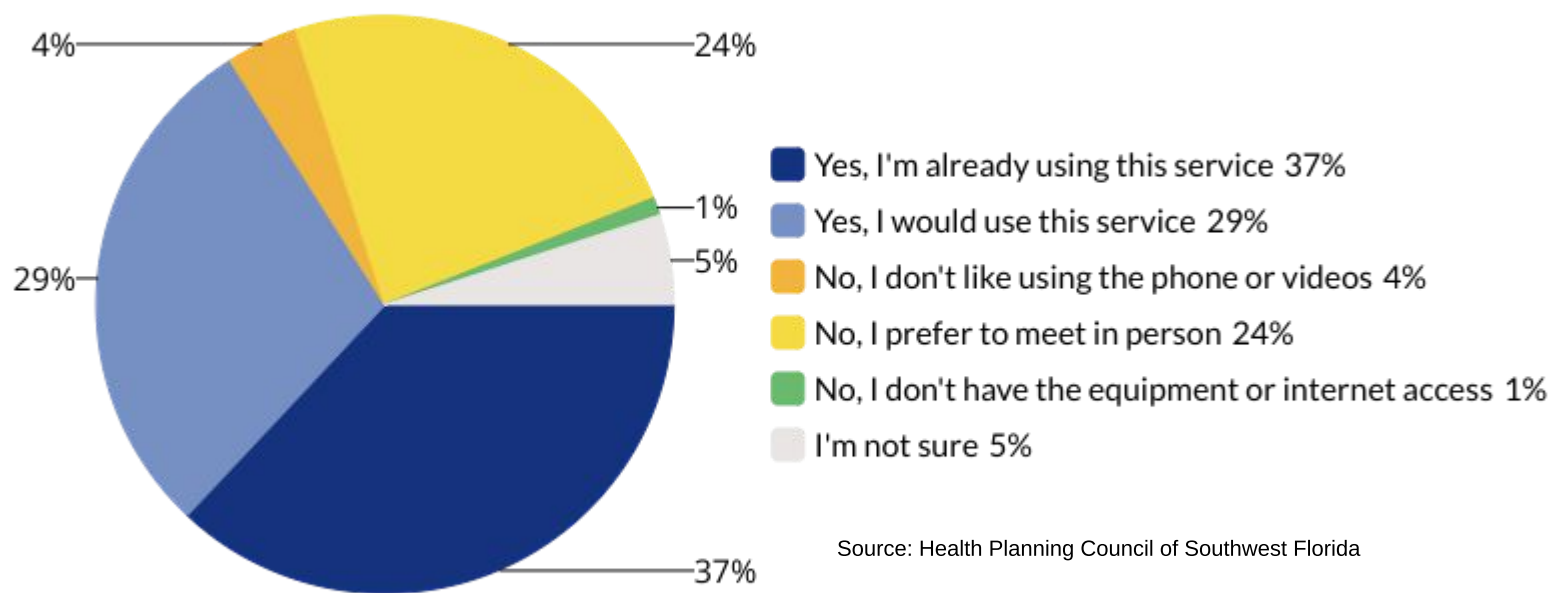
Healthcare Access Challenges and Service Needs

What types of residents have more difficulty accessing healthcare than others in your community?



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

If telemedicine (medical visits via phone or computer with video) were available, would you or your family/friends use those services?



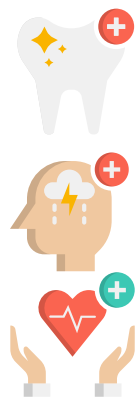
Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Access Challenges and Service Needs

Are there services that you, your friends, and your family in your community have difficulty accessing?

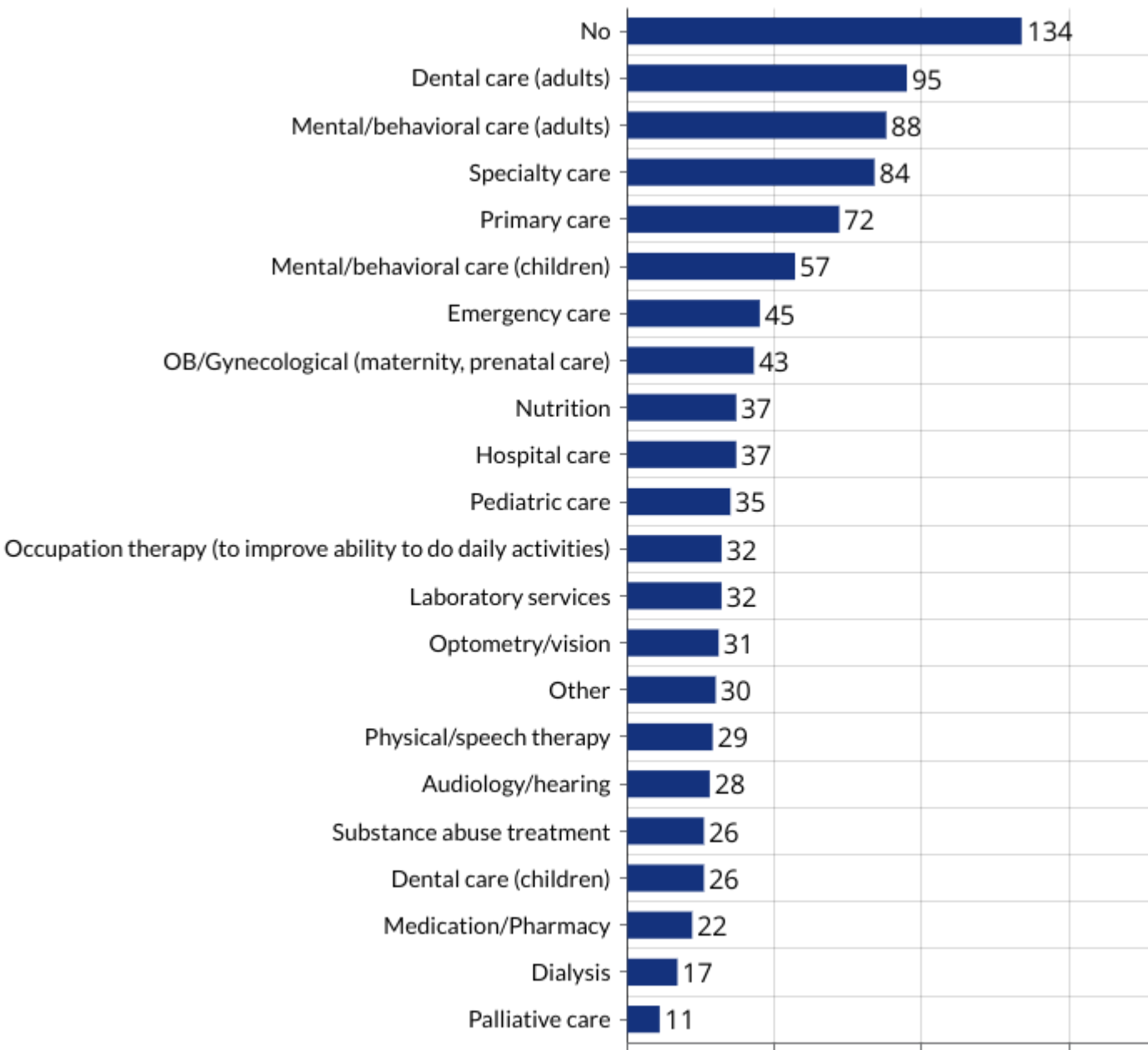
2025 Top 5 Responses

- 1. No difficulty accessing services
- 2. Dental care (adults)
- 3. Mental/behavioral care (adults)
- 4. Specialty care
- 5. Primary care



2022 Top 5 Responses

- 1. Dental care (adults)
- 2. Specialty care
- 3. Mental/behavioral health care (adults)
- 4. Emergency care
- 5. Hospital care

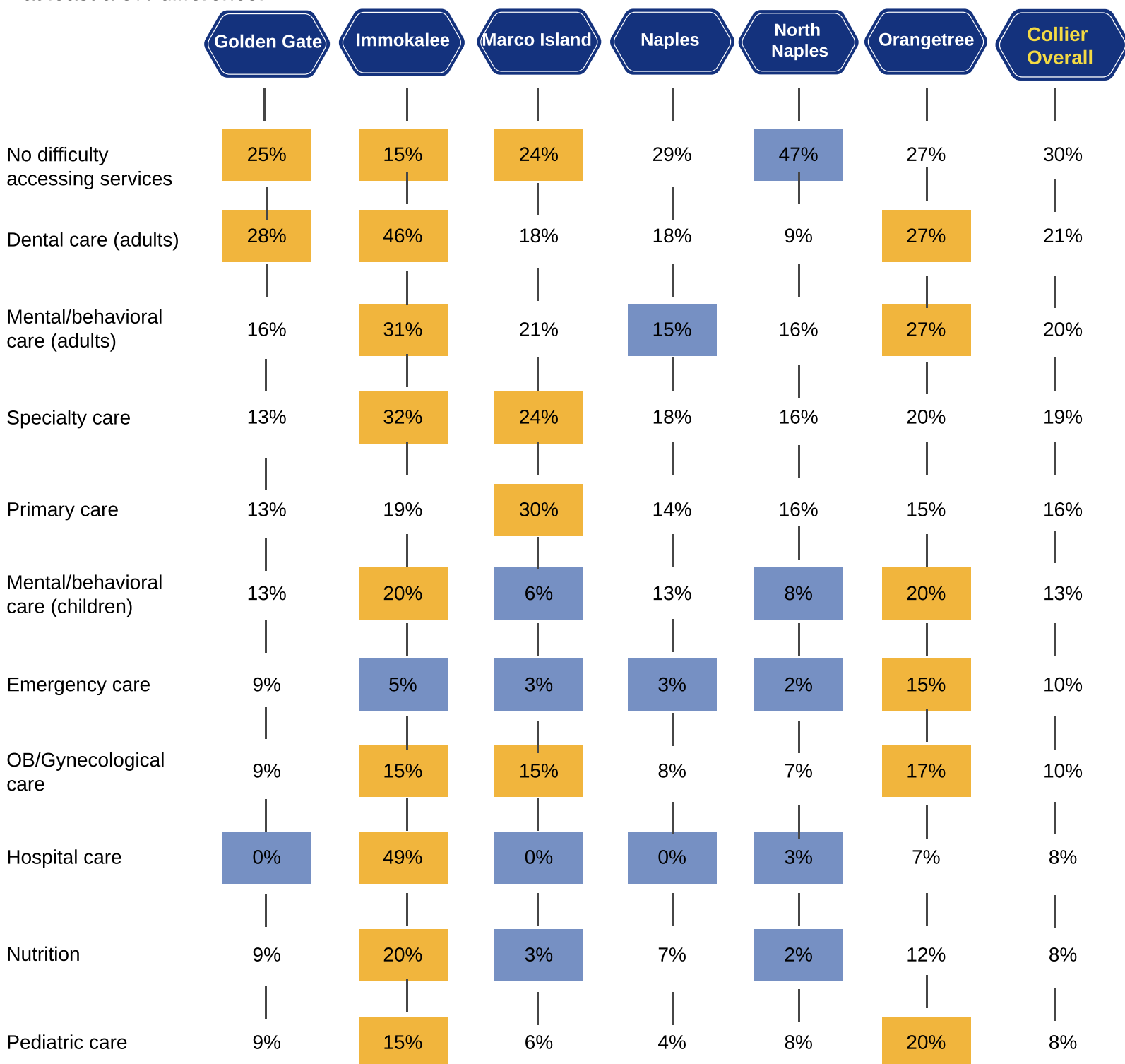


Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Access Challenges and Service Needs

Are there services that you, your friends, and your family in your community have difficulty accessing?

The following chart highlights the percentage of respondents from the six highlighted communities that selected the following health concerns as the most important for them, their family, and their community. The percentages highlighted in **orange** indicate a higher concern than the Collier County average. The percentages highlighted in **light blue** show a lower concern than the Collier County average. Shading shows at least a 5% difference.



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Access Challenges and Service Needs

What does your community need to improve the health of your family, friends, and neighbors?

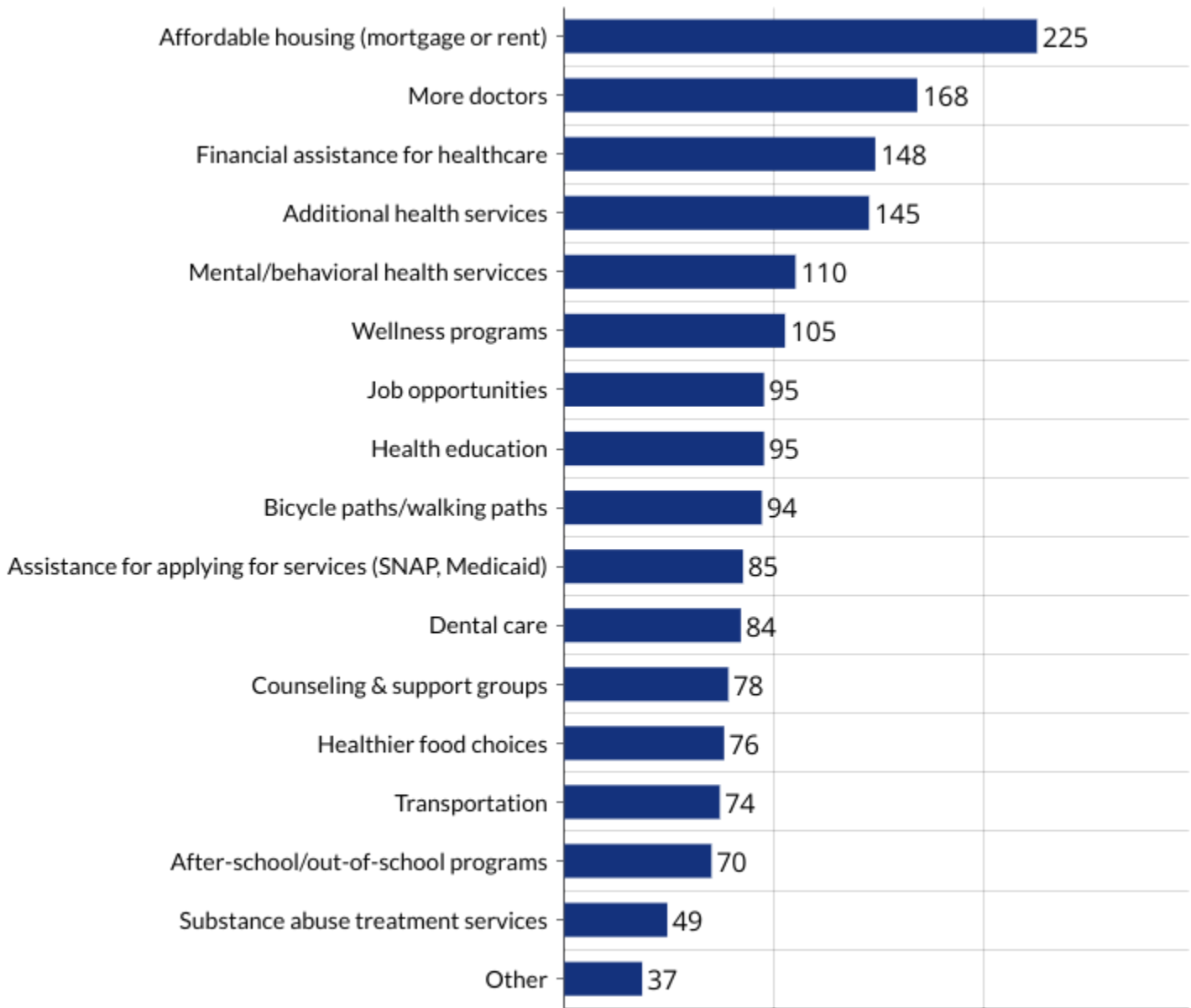
2025 Top 5 Responses

1. Affordable housing (mortgage or rent)
2. More doctors
3. Financial assistance for healthcare
4. Additional health services
5. Mental/behavioral health services



2022 Top 5 Responses

1. Affordable housing (mortgage or rent)
2. More doctors
3. Additional health services
4. Mental/behavioral health services
5. Financial assistance for healthcare



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Access Challenges and Service Needs

What does your community need to improve the health of your family, friends, and neighbors?

The following chart highlights the percentage of respondents from the six highlighted communities that selected the following health concerns as the most important for them, their family, and their community. The percentages highlighted in **orange** indicate a higher concern than the Collier County average. The percentages highlighted in **light blue** show a lower concern than the Collier County average. Shading shows at least a 5% difference.

	Golden Gate	Immokalee	Marco Island	Naples	North Naples	Orangetree	Collier Overall
Affordable housing	66%	66%	30%	53%	47%	41%	51%
More doctors	22%	49%	45%	34%	49%	41%	38%
Financial assistance for healthcare	38%	47%	27%	33%	28%	29%	33%
Additional health services	25%	59%	30%	26%	29%	41%	33%
Mental/behavioral health services	28%	31%	21%	23%	23%	32%	25%
Wellness programs	16%	37%	9%	28%	21%	32%	24%
Health education	22%	39%	9%	18%	19%	24%	21%
Bicycle paths/ walking paths	34%	22%	15%	18%	23%	22%	21%
Job opportunities	9%	40%	3%	20%	17%	29%	21%
Assistance for applying for services	22%	36%	6%	14%	22%	15%	19%
Dental care	28%	37%	6%	18%	14%	22%	19%
Counseling & support groups	28%	20%	3%	21%	14%	20%	18%
Healthier food choices	22%	37%	0%	19%	10%	15%	17%
Transportation	28%	25%	9%	18%	17%	12%	17%
After-school/out-of-school programs	25%	25%	6%	13%	12%	12%	16%
Substance abuse treatment services	19%	19%	3%	9%	9%	17%	11%

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Ranking of Community Priorities

As part of the community health survey, participants were asked to prioritize 10 healthcare-related areas. The 10 public health categories were ranked by their order of importance as perceived by Collier County residents. The 2022 and 2019 results are displayed to compare the shift in the county's priorities over the last seven years. The top five priorities are the primary focus of the local public health system's efforts.

2025



2022



2019



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Access Challenges and Service Needs

Ranking of Community Priorities by Community

Golden Gate

1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease
3. Alcohol and drug use
4. Communicable disease
5. Dental health
6. Mental health
7. Health of older adults
8. Disabilities
9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries

Immokalee

1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease
3. Alcohol and drug use
4. Dental health
5. Mental health
6. Health of older adults
7. Disabilities
8. Communicable disease
9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries

Marco Island

1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease
3. Health of older adults
4. Alcohol and drug use
5. Dental health
6. Disabilities
7. Communicable disease
8. Mental health
9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries

Naples

1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease
3. Alcohol and drug use
4. Health of older adults
5. Mental health
6. Disabilities
7. Dental health
8. Communicable disease
9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries

North Naples

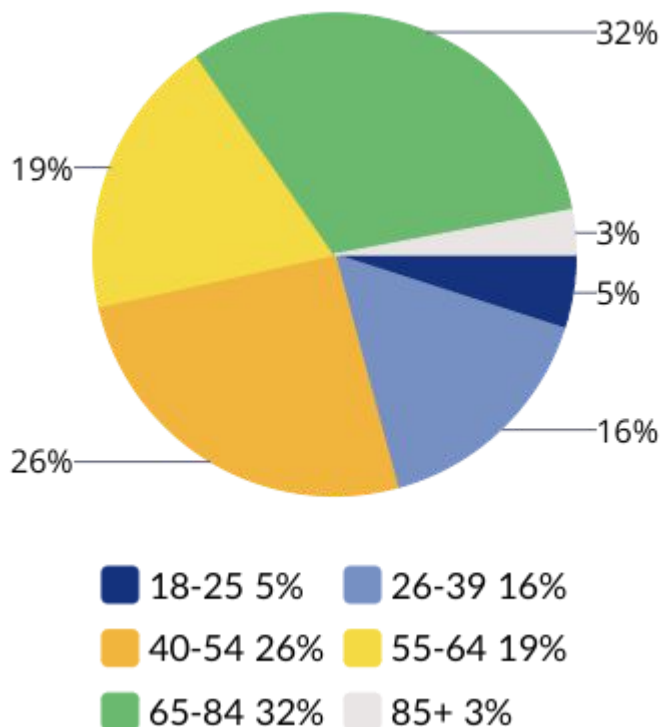
1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease
3. Alcohol and drug use
4. Health of older adults
5. Mental health
6. Communicable disease
7. Dental health
8. Disabilities
9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries

Orangetree

1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease
3. Alcohol and drug use
4. Health of older adults
5. Dental health
6. Disabilities
7. Communicable disease
8. Mental health
9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries

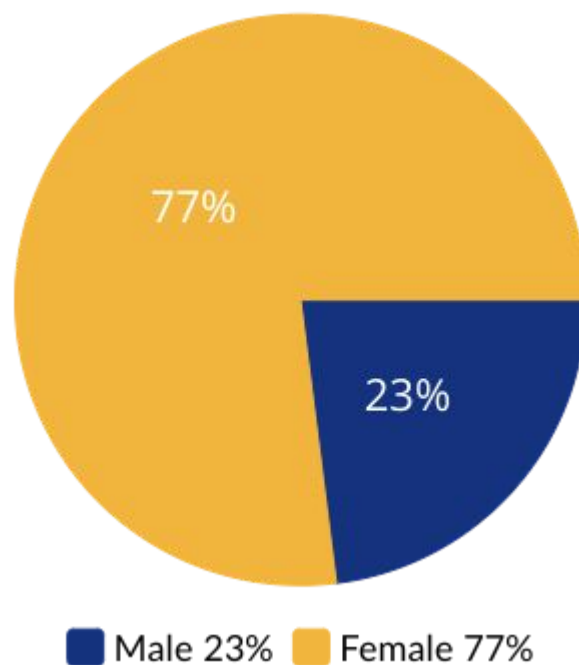
Demographics

Age



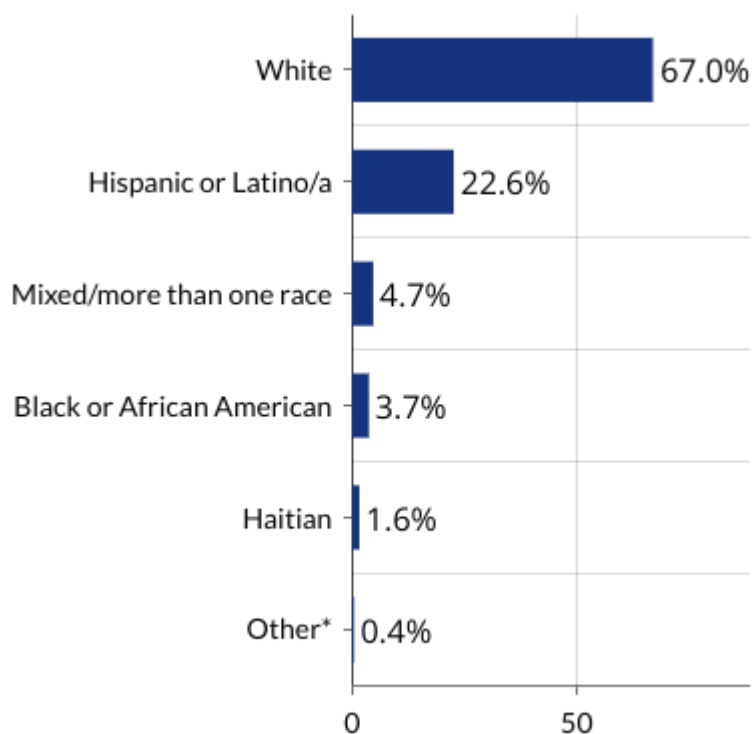
Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Sex



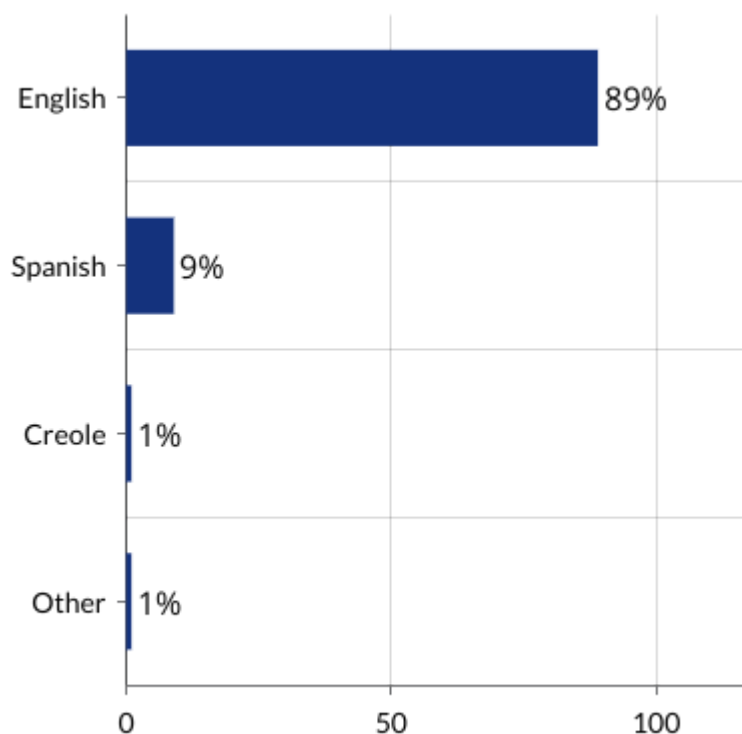
Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Race



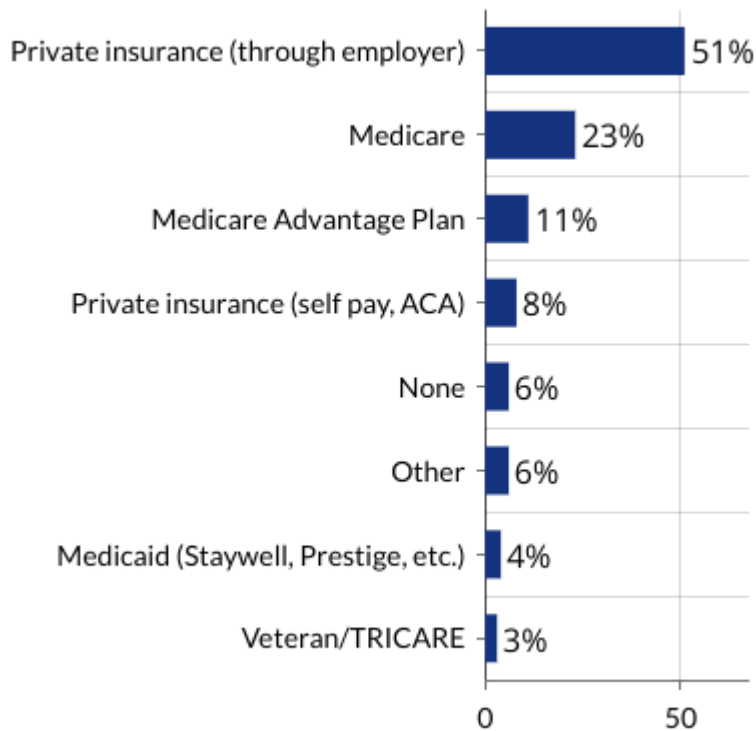
*Other - American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian

Primary Language



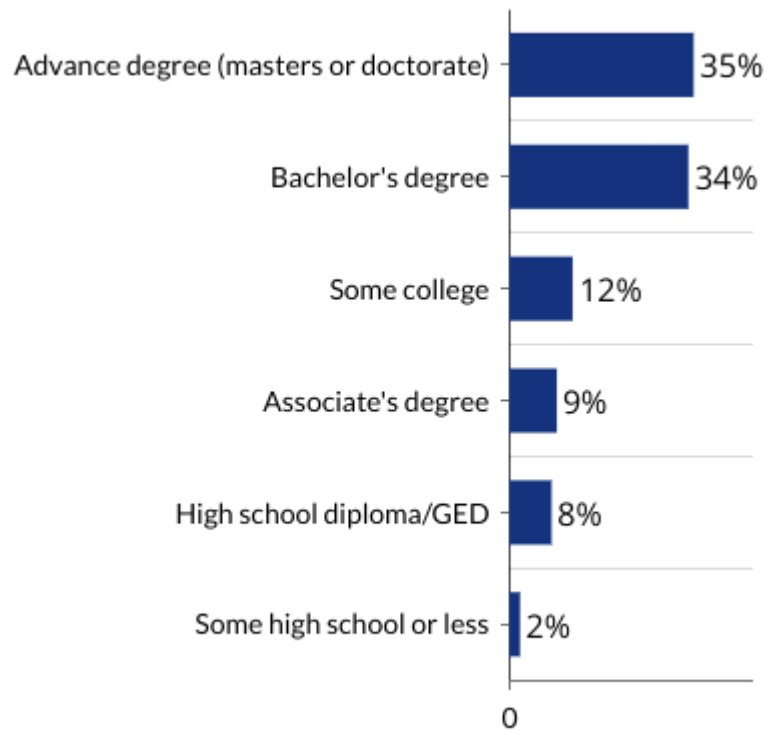
Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Insurance Type



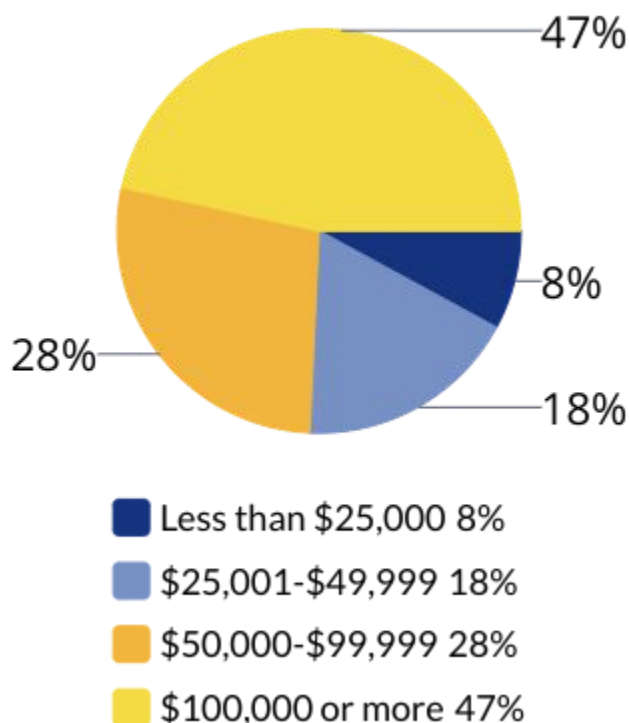
Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Highest Level of Education



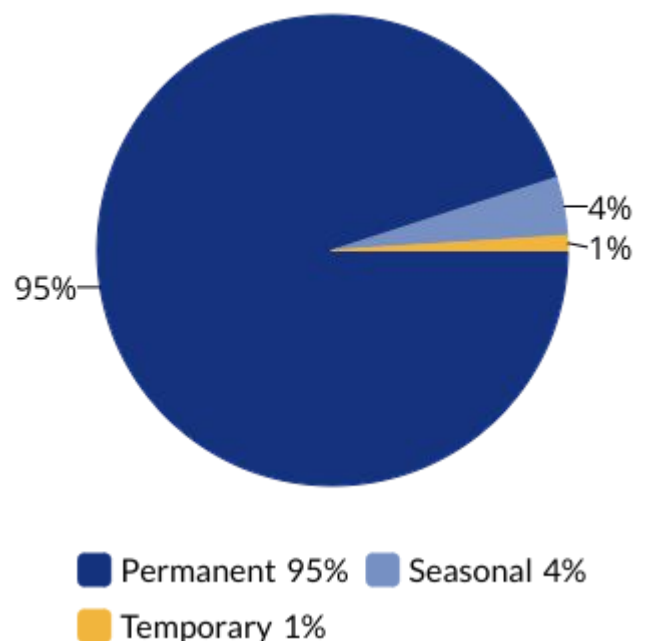
Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Annual Household Income



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

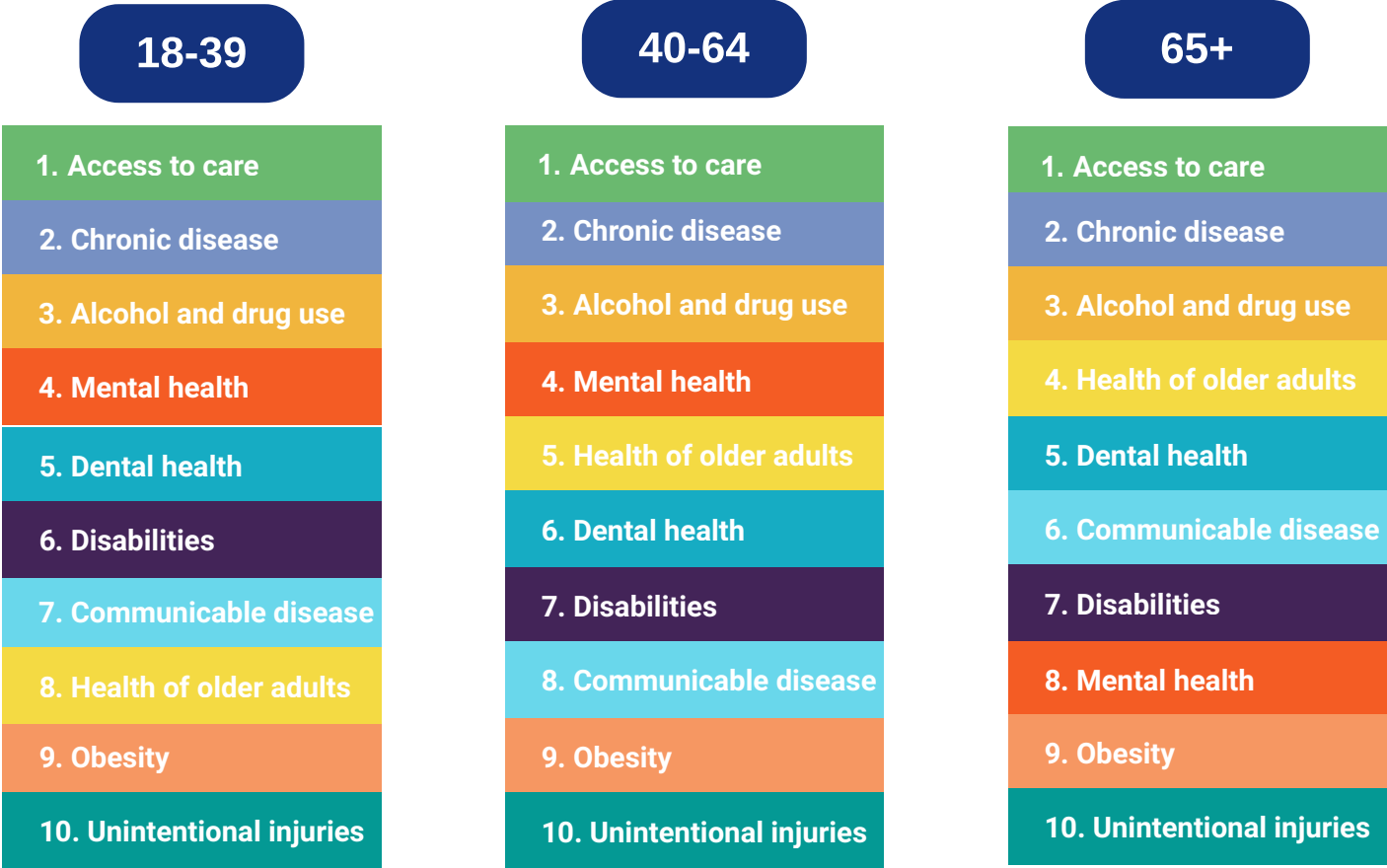
Residency Status



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Survey Responses by Age

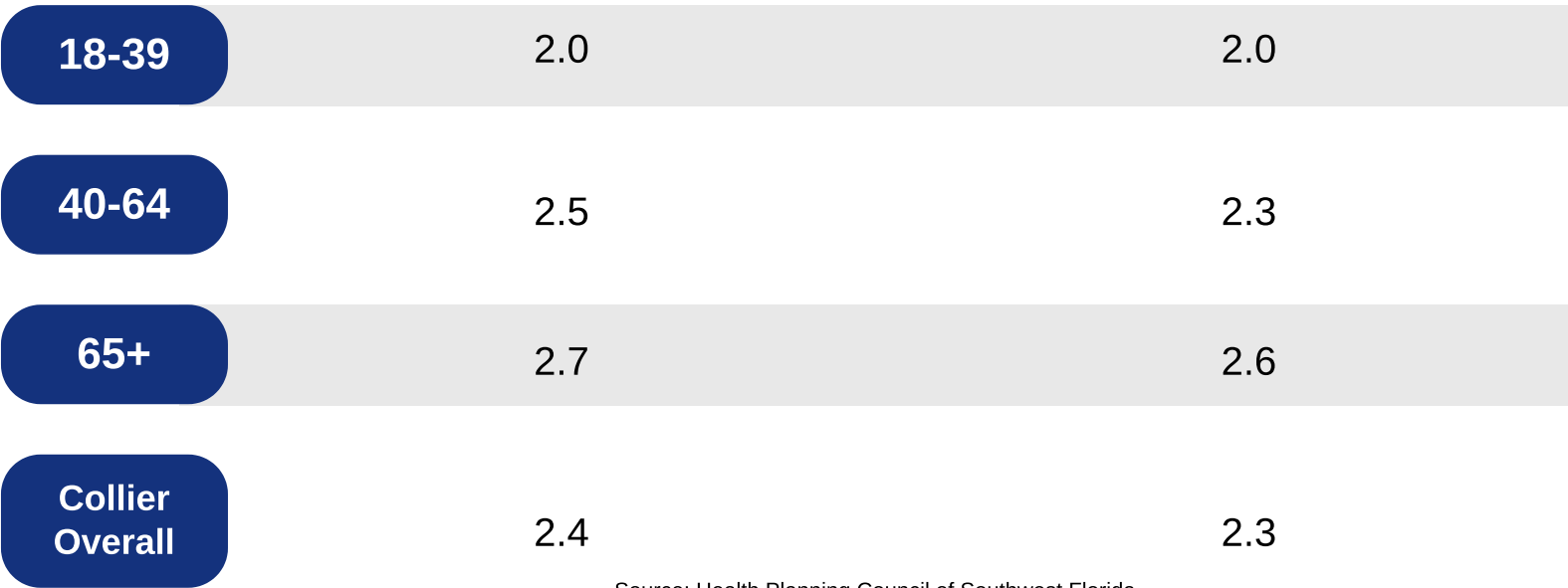
Ranking of Community Priorities



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Community Health Perceptions and Access

General Health of Community Quality of Healthcare in Community



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Survey Responses by Age

Health Concerns

	18-39 (n=81)	40-64 (n=186)	65+ (n=154)	Collier Overall
Access to specialty care	41%	48%	59%	51%
Access to primary care	51%	45%	49%	47%
Aging problems	11%	24%	45%	29%
Not enough doctors	17%	28%	27%	26%
Mental health conditions	36%	25%	3%	19%

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Needs

	18-39 (n=81)	40-64 (n=186)	65+ (n=154)	Collier Overall
Affordable housing	70%	56%	34%	51%
More doctors	36%	34%	45%	38%
Financial assistance for healthcare	45%	37%	23%	33%
Additional health services	45%	30%	29%	33%
Mental/behavioral health services	27%	29%	19%	25%

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Survey Responses by Education Level

Ranking of Community Priorities

Less than a Bachelors Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degree
1. Access to care	1. Access to care	1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease	2. Chronic disease	2. Chronic disease
3. Alcohol and drug use	3. Alcohol and drug use	3. Alcohol and drug use
4. Dental health	4. Health of older adults	4. Health of older adults
5. Communicable disease	5. Dental health	5. Mental health
6. Health of older adults	6. Mental health	6. Dental health
7. Disabilities	7. Disabilities	7. Disabilities
8. Mental health	8. Communicable disease	8. Communicable disease
9. Obesity	9. Obesity	9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries	10. Unintentional injuries	10. Unintentional injuries

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Community Health Perceptions and Access

	General Health of Community	Quality of Healthcare in Community
Less than a Bachelors Degree	2.2	2.2
Bachelor's Degree	2.5	2.3
Advanced Degree	2.6	2.4
Collier Overall	2.4	2.3

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Survey Responses by Education Level

Health Concerns

	Less than Bachelor's Degree (n=134)	Bachelor's Degree (n=148)	Advance Degree (n=154)	Collier Overall
Access to specialty care	40%	51%	59%	51%
Access to primary care	47%	44%	52%	47%
Aging problems	24%	31%	29%	29%
Not enough doctors	17%	24%	34%	26%
Mental health conditions	24%	14%	21%	19%

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Needs

	Less than Bachelor's Degree (n=134)	Bachelor's Degree (n=148)	Advance Degree (n=154)	Collier Overall
Affordable housing	58%	53%	44%	51%
More doctors	33%	39%	42%	38%
Financial assistance for healthcare	42%	30%	30%	33%
Additional health services	35%	32%	32%	33%
Mental/behavioral health services	23%	22%	30%	25%

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Survey Responses by Income Level

Ranking of Community Priorities

Less than 50K	50 - 99K	100K +
1. Access to care	1. Access to care	1. Access to care
2. Chronic disease	2. Chronic disease	2. Chronic disease
3. Alcohol and drug use	3. Alcohol and drug use	3. Alcohol and drug use
4. Dental health	4. Health of older adults	4. Health of older adults
5. Health of older adults	5. Dental health	5. Mental health
6. Communicable disease	6. Disabilities	6. Dental health
7. Disabilities	7. Communicable disease	7. Disabilities
8. Mental health	8. Mental health	8. Communicable disease
9. Obesity	9. Obesity	9. Obesity
10. Unintentional injuries	10. Unintentional injuries	10. Unintentional injuries

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Community Health Perceptions and Access

General Health of Community

Quality of Healthcare in Community

Less than 50K	General Health of Community	Quality of Healthcare in Community
Less than 50K	2.2	2.2
50 - 99K	2.4	2.2
100K +	2.6	2.4
Collier Overall	2.4	2.3

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Survey Responses by Income Level

Health Concerns

	Less than 50K (n=101)	50 - 99K (n=114)	100K + (n=187)	Collier Overall
Access to specialty care	41%	48%	57%	51%
Access to primary care	38%	39%	58%	47%
Aging problems	22%	27%	31%	29%
Not enough doctors	18%	23%	33%	26%
Mental health conditions	21%	25%	20%	19%

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Healthcare Needs

	Less than 50K (n=101)	50 - 99K (n=114)	100K + (n=187)	Collier Overall
Affordable housing	56%	61%	47%	51%
More doctors	36%	36%	42%	38%
Financial assistance for healthcare	42%	39%	30%	33%
Additional health services	39%	28%	35%	33%
Mental/behavioral health services	21%	29%	29%	25%


Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Community Outreach Questionnaire

In partnership with NCH, the Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier), and Healthcare Network (HN), the Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida (HPC) created a two-question questionnaire to accompany the community survey. The questionnaire was created to provide another opportunity to collect community feedback on health and healthcare in Collier County while conducting community outreach. Outreach workers from the partner agencies asked community members questions and recorded their responses in SurveyMonkey.

The findings of the questionnaire were compiled by HPC and are as follows: The views expressed in these responses are those of members of the community who answered the questionnaire. They do not represent the views or opinions of HPC, nor do they represent the views or opinions of NCH, DOH-Collier, or HN.

Below is a copy of the questionnaire that the outreach workers filled out.



Community Outreach Questionnaire

- What do you most need to improve your or your family's health?
- What makes it hard to get that?
- Location:



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

With the help of the community outreach workers at the partner agencies, we had a total of 123 community members complete the questionnaire. About 60 percent of people who answered the questions were from Immokalee, 29 percent from Naples, and 12 percent from Golden Gate. The Questionnaire revealed several key areas of concern and barriers to healthcare in Collier County.

The most frequently mentioned needs were:

- Access to healthcare
- Dental care
- Transportation
- Financial assistance

The most common barriers were:

- Scheduling and availability issues
- Financial constraints
- Transportation problems

Community Outreach Questionnaire

Access to Healthcare

Members of the community emphasized the need for improved access to medical attention, access to a hospital, and general healthcare services. Some of the specific concerns included difficulty obtaining appointments, long wait times, and limited availability of services. When talking about difficulties with accessing healthcare in Collier County, some respondents pointed out the need for a doctor who is caring and responsive, as well as wanting more time with the doctor. The need for having access to information on services available and information about the medication they have been prescribed was also mentioned.

Dental Care

A significant number of community members highlighted the need for better dental care services, specifically for adults. The primary barrier to accessing this service was the difficulty of getting appointments and finding a provider that accepts their dental insurance.

Transportation

Transportation issues were a recurring theme with many respondents when identifying a significant barrier to accessing healthcare in Collier County. Some of the identified transportation-related problems included the inconvenience of specialist locations, a lack of knowledge on how to get to places using the bus system, and bus schedules not matching their needs. A community member acknowledged that there is a small demand for taxi service, which could hinder a taxi service from serving the area. Transportation is a true hindrance to accessing healthcare when it is outside of the county. There isn't a bus access to get community members between Collier and Lee Counties.

Financial Barriers

Financial constraints were frequently mentioned, including the high cost of care, lack of health insurance, and the unaffordability of healthy foods. A high frequency of respondents stated that having access to healthy food would improve their and their families' health. Currently, there is a lack of grocery options, which hinders access to affordable, healthy foods in the community. Some community members currently only have access to small local shops that don't offer an array of healthy foods. Other community members expressed concerns about the availability of affordable housing, the availability of work that pays enough to live in the area, and the unaffordable cost of child care.

Availability and Scheduling

Scheduling difficulties and long wait times were stated as obstacles to accessing needed healthcare services. Some respondents said they had to take time off work to access healthcare services because they are only offered during the workday. A barrier that was mentioned consistently when talking about accessing healthcare services is the limited availability of appointments. Some also mentioned that it can be difficult to make the appointments as well.



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida and Build LLC (Baker Senior Center Naples)

NCH, the Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier), and the Healthcare Network (HN) decided that a focus group should be conducted to gather additional community feedback regarding health and healthcare in Collier County, as part of the community feedback section of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida (HPC) designed the focus group questions, which were reviewed and improved by NCH, DOH-Collier, and HN.

A community champion was identified through NCH, DOH-Collier, and HN. The community champion was used to help with promoting and inviting individuals from the community to gather for the focus group. A flyer was created to help promote the focus group; it contained a call for participation, location, time, and date.

In April 2025, a focus group was conducted with a group of seniors at a local senior center in Naples. Before the focus group began, HPC had the participants fill out a demographic form. In the focus group, there were nine individuals who identified as permanent residents and two seasonal residents of Collier County. Fifty-five percent of the participants were female, while 45 percent were male. The majority (82%) of the participants identified as white, and 18 percent identified as Indian. The demographic questionnaire included a question about annual household income. Ten percent of participants reported making less than \$25,000 a year, 40 percent stated they make between \$25,001 and \$49,999, and 50 percent reported making \$100,000 or more a year. All participants were college-educated, ranging from some college experience to holding either a bachelor's or advanced degree.

Focus Group

The focus group session had a facilitator and a recorder. Prior to the start of the focus group, a script was read aloud describing the purpose of the focus group, ground rules, and instructions on the process. The focus group started with an icebreaker. The facilitator asked if each participant could state their name and how long they've lived in Collier County. The questions that were asked during the focus group consisted of the following:

- General thoughts on health and well-being
- What are some things in the area that have positively impacted their health or the health of their family
- The problems or barriers to maintaining good health and well-being
- Groups of people who need additional services or assistance in improving their health and well-being
- What is needed to improve the health of the community

Overall Perceptions of the Healthcare System

Participants in the focus group expressed their overall frustration with accessing primary care physicians in Collier County. Over the past couple of years, they have observed many physicians transitioning to the concierge model. There was also a desire for more personal interactions with doctors. When they finally have the chance to see a doctor, they feel rushed. During visits to either a doctor's office or a hospital, they can sense that the staff is overwhelmed. Another frustration mentioned by the participants was the lengthy wait times for specialist referrals. They typically have to wait a few months to see the specialist they were referred to.

A significant concern was the lack of coordination and communication between different healthcare systems/offices. This leads to difficulty in continuity of care and requires patients to manage their own information transfer. Focus group participants expressed frustration with the challenges of using patient portals and technology to access healthcare and their health information. They felt that the healthcare system wasn't considerate enough of those who are uncomfortable with digital access.

Community Strengths Supporting Health and Healthcare

Unanimously, the focus group attendees stated that the availability of senior centers (like the Naples Senior Center) and other local organizations was a highly valued asset to the community. They provide exercise classes, social engagement, and various programs that help combat isolation and encourage seniors to stay active. Services provided by local organizations like the Lions Club, which provided free eye exams, were recognized as a positive resource. Additionally, having access to outdoor activities and walking paths was noted as a community strength. Some participants discussed the positive past experiences at NCH.

Barriers to Health and Well-being

We asked participants what some problems or barriers are for you or your friends/families in maintaining good health and well-being. Some barriers that were identified were transportation, cost and access, communication and language, technology, system navigation, and gaps in services.

The lack of reliable and accessible public transportation was a commonly stated barrier among the group. It was noted that accessing public transportation was even more difficult for those with disabilities. Challenges in obtaining affordable medication, dental care, and vision care were highlighted. Many were aware that financial assistance programs exist through medication manufacturers, but they noted that navigating these programs was very difficult. Trying to navigate a language barrier was mentioned as another barrier to accessing care.

Many seniors found technology, like patient portals, challenging. They expressed a desire for intergenerational tech support programs to help them become more comfortable with using technology on their own. The amount of cumbersome paperwork and lack of electronic medical record (EMR) coordination among the healthcare entities in Collier County was a consistent frustration for many seniors in the focus group.

It was noted that there are insufficient mental health services in Collier County, particularly for those with severe conditions. They expressed the need for more senior centers distributed throughout the county. In addition to the senior center, for which we were conducting the focus group, there was one more senior center serving the county. It was stated that this location cannot adequately serve the volume of seniors residing in Collier County. A lack of affordable activities, especially for veterans, was identified. Options for nursing home care, Alzheimer's, and dementia support in the area are limited. Some participants mentioned that there is a need for affordable fresh food and nutrition classes.

Identified Priorities Needs

We asked participants to list what was needed to improve the health of the community. Below was what was listed:

- **EMR record coordination between entities**
- Affordable activities
- Affordable fresh foods
- Transportation, especially for those with disabilities
- **Mental health services**
- Availability of primary care
- **Lack of affordable dental services**
- **Lack of affordable vision services**
- Nutrition and food classes
- Additional senior services
- Class to navigate Medicaid and health insurance
- Trusted help
- Access to gas cards
- Additional nursing homes
- Alzheimer's and dementia care

Participants were then asked if they were put in charge of Collier County, which issues from the list would they address first. After going around the group, the top item identified as most important was the coordination of EMR records between identified healthcare entities, followed by increasing mental health services and increasing access to affordable dental and vision services. They said they would pursue legislative or regulatory action to mandate EMR interoperability, potentially offering financial assistance to systems that would comply. Next, they would increase county-level leadership and funding, improve provider reimbursement, and explore successful service models from other areas. Participants wanted to address the need for respite care for caregivers (noting the Baker Senior Center as a positive example). Then they would explore solutions to mitigate high costs due to the lack of Medicare coverage. They also acknowledge that many seniors seek care outside the United States due to expense, and address concerns about potential upselling of unnecessary dental and vision services.

Community Leader Interviews

The Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida (HPC) conducted fourteen key informant interviews in 2025 with the cooperation of NCH, the Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier), and the Healthcare Network (HN). The purpose of conducting the interviews was to better understand the perspectives of key community leaders on the health and healthcare needs of Collier County residents. These conversations were intended to ascertain opinions among key individuals likely to be knowledgeable about the community and who are influential over the opinions of others about health concerns in the area. The findings provide qualitative information and reveal factors affecting the views and sentiments regarding healthcare services in Collier County. A summary of community leaders' opinions is reported without judging the veracity of their thoughts and opinions.

Methodology

The steering committee, consisting of NCH, DOH-Collier, HN, and HPC, compiled a list of possible interview subjects. The list included healthcare providers, healthcare consumers, county government officials, and representatives of local businesses and community organizations. HPC staff conducted the interviews over Zoom. The average interview lasted between twenty-five and forty-five minutes. These interviews were conducted between February and April of 2025. The interviewees were told that none of their comments would be directly attributed to them but that a list of all participants would be included in this report. All reports were conducted using a standard questionnaire.

Overall Impression of Health in Collier County

HPC staff asked the interviewees to share their overall impression of health in Collier County, including the services available to meet healthcare needs and the general health of community residents. Listed are the key themes from the responses to this question:

- Access to care is a major challenge
- Gaps in specific healthcare services: behavioral healthcare, specialty care, pediatric care, OB/Gynecological care, dental, optometry, and audiology
- Lack of affordable healthcare services
- Strong network of nonprofit organizations
- Lack of affordable housing for low-income population
- Lack of affordable workforce housing
- Increase in need for community awareness of resources and providing education on the resources
- Challenges of accessing transportation



Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Most Pressing Health Needs

HPC staff asked the interviewees what they think are the most pressing health needs in Collier County. Many of the identified pressing health needs in Collier County are deeply intertwined, with the core issue being the affordability and accessibility of comprehensive healthcare services, compounded by specific shortages in behavioral health, specialty, pediatric, and maternity care, and significant logistical challenges related to transportation and affordable housing. Listed are some of the responses from community leaders to this question:

- Need access specialists
- Diagnostic services
- Fall prevention/education
- Need healthcare professionals (difficulty recruiting)
- Healthcare navigators
- Access to primary care
- Behavioral healthcare
- Maternity and prenatal care
- Access to pediatric care
- Affordable dental care

To follow up, we asked the community leaders if they had any thoughts on local actions that can help address any of the needs they mentioned. Several responses highlighted the importance of community-wide efforts, including multi-agency involvement and public-private partnerships, to tackle health challenges more effectively. Actions also include educating families and the community on available services and how to access them, and enhancing awareness of existing insurance coverage and market providers. Efforts to recruit and retain medical professionals by addressing factors like the cost of housing and providing competitive compensation were also mentioned.

Important Health Issues by Population

Community leaders were asked to provide their thoughts on the most important health issues affecting different populations in Collier County. The highlighted populations were children, teens/adolescents, adults, and the elderly.

Children:



- Basic pediatric care
- Obesity
- Behavioral health

Adults:



- Access to specialty care
- Behavioral healthcare
- Access to primary care

Teens/adolescents:



- Behavioral health
- Smoking/vaping issues

Elderly:



- Access to senior centers
- Isolation
- Alzheimer's
- Fall prevention

Source: Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida

Community Leader Interviews

Critical Challenge Facing Residents and Next Steps

Of all the needs and services discussed throughout the interviews, we asked key informants what they believed was the most critical challenge facing Collier County residents.

- Access to affordable care
- Behavioral health services
- Access to transportation
- Affordability of living
- Lack of primary care
- Specific service shortages (pediatric, specialty care, and maternity care)

After identifying the most critical challenges facing residents, community leaders were asked whether any actions were needed to address these challenges and who they believed should be responsible for implementing them. Key actions include leveraging improved data for decision-making, enhancing community education on available services, and actively recruiting and retaining medical professionals. Additionally, efforts should focus on strengthening the roles of non-profits and improving transportation infrastructure. Responsibility is viewed as shared, necessitating a collective impact model with public-private partnerships to foster a healthier community.

Interviewed Community Leaders

Mary Beth Geier Florida Director Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation	Dr. Tom Felke Professor/Associate Dean Florida Gulf Coast University
Noemi Perez President & CEO The Immokalee Foundation	Dan Summers Director Collier County Bureau of Emergency Services
Dianna Dohm Executive Director Marco Island Area Chamber	Barbara Bacigalupo Director of Operations Support Avow Hospice
Kimberly Kossler Administrator & Health Officer Florida Department of Health in Collier County	Jamie Ulmer President and CEO Healthcare Network
Dr. Jaclyn Faffer President/CEO Baker Senior Center Naples	Jorge Aguilera Deputy Chief North Collier Fire Control & Rescue District
Tiffani Mensch President and CEO United Way Collier and the Keys	Maria Ellis Coordinator, Mental Health Services Collier County Public Schools
Lindsey Touchette Vice President of Community Engagement Collier Community Foundation	



2025 Collier County Community Input

Prepared by the Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida, Inc.

Contact:

Phone: 239-433-6700

Email: Planning@hpcswf.com

Website: Hpcswf.com