

# COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

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## Louisa County, Iowa October 2023

Louisa County Public Health  
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*Louisa County*  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT

# Community Health Assessment

A community health assessment (CHA) refers to a state, tribal, local, or territorial health assessment that identifies key health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis. (6) They are an important tool in identifying the specific health needs of a community and are used by local partners to identify priority areas for work on community health improvement plans.

Louisa County Public Health (LCPH) completed their CHA in 2023 by gathering data from sources including community members, stakeholders, local partners, secondary sources, and by conducting a community survey. The survey was sent electronically to all local agencies, businesses, and partners who provide services to Louisa County, as well as posted on our website and social media sites. Along with the emails and posts, a definition of the CHA and how it helps to direct the future of health initiatives in our county was provided. Flyers were also posted at businesses, libraries, and other public gathering places with a QR code to the survey. Surveys were collected throughout the summer and fall of 2023, with an end total of 65 respondents.

Data was divided into three categories including health issues, preventable injuries, and infrastructure issues. The following were the top three concerns identified for each category based on the percentage of survey participants who identified the concern:

**Health Issues:**

1. Mental & Emotional Health (75.4%)
2. Drug Use (53.8%)
3. Elderly Wellness (29.2%)

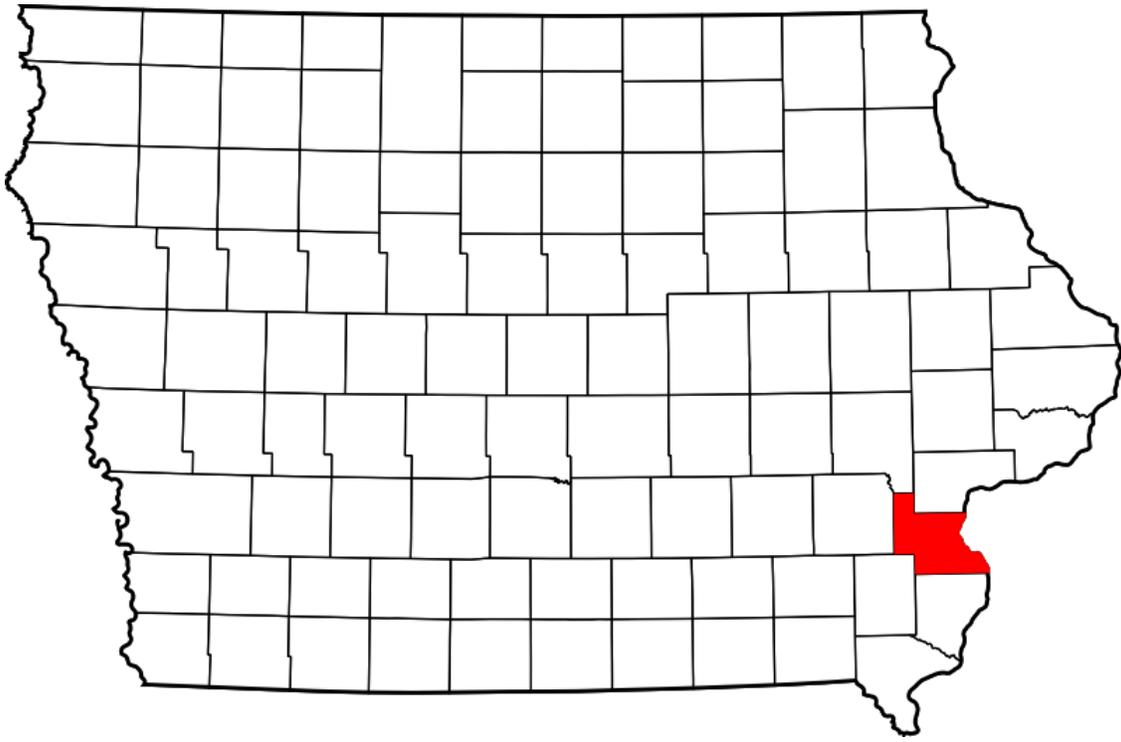
**Preventable Injuries:**

1. Suicide (61.5%)
2. Motor Vehicle Accidents (50.8%)
3. Elderly Falls (38.5%) & Farming Accidents (38.5%)

**Infrastructure Issues:**

1. Affordable & safe housing (50.8%)
2. Access to quality health services (41.5%) & Poverty (41.5%)
3. Lack of health insurance (21.5%)

# Louisa County Demographics



Louisa County is located in southeast Iowa and has a population of 10,677 (per US Census July 1, 2022). Louisa County is considered rural, meaning it does not have an urban core of at least 10,000 people and 100% of the population lives in a low population density area, which is defined as 500 people or less per square mile. Louisa County is approximately 400 square miles. (1)

**Louisa County is ranked among the least healthy counties in Iowa in both health outcomes and health factors with an overall health ranking of 89<sup>th</sup> out of 99 counties.**

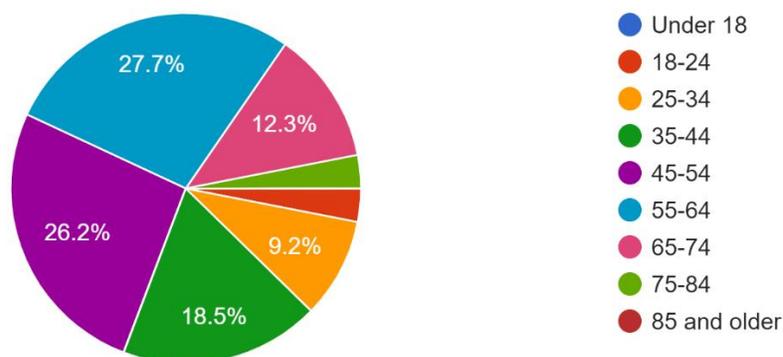
Over 20% of Louisa County residents are aged 65 and over and 77.2% of residents are non-Hispanic white. (2)

# Survey Participant Demographics

Survey participants aged 45- 64 years made up over 50% of respondents.

Question 20: What is your age?

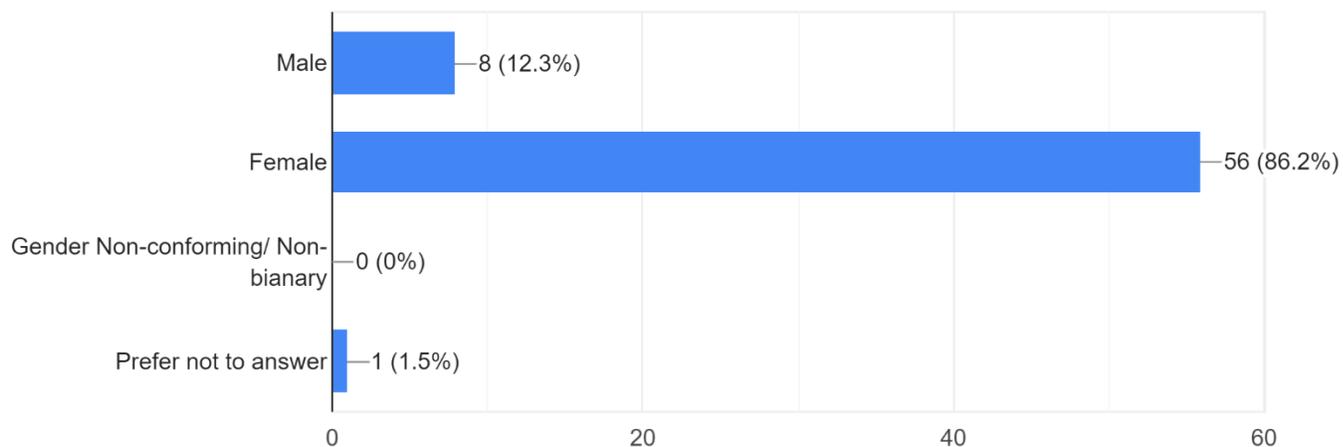
65 responses



Females were 86.2% of respondents.

Question 19: To which gender do you most identify currently?

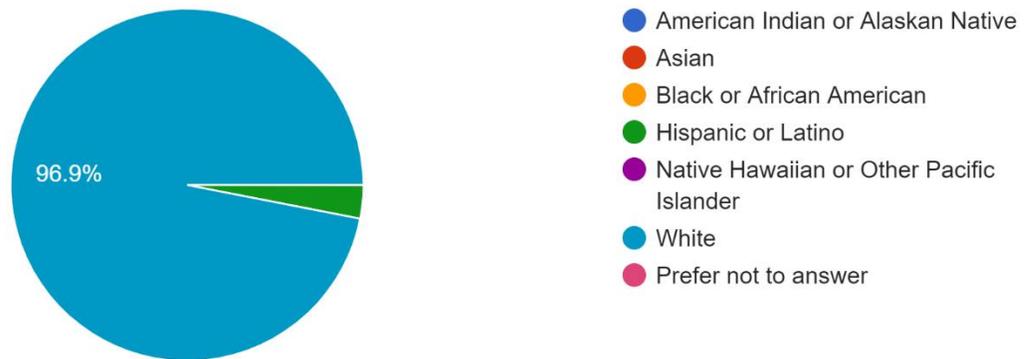
65 responses



100% of survey participants identified as either white or Hispanic or Latino.

Question 22: What race/ethnicity do you identify with?

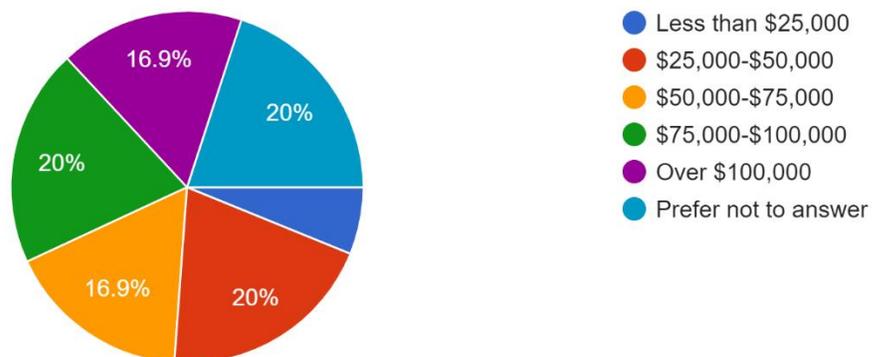
65 responses



There was an almost equal mix of yearly income levels amongst survey participants.

Question 21: What is your yearly income?

65 responses



## Health Issues: Mental & Emotional Health (Including Drug Use & Suicide)

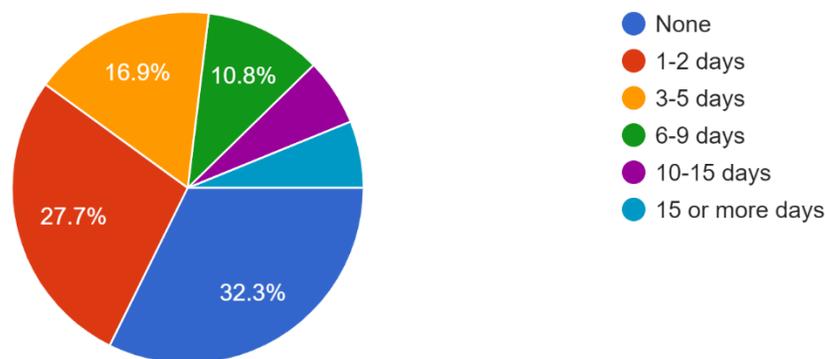
Mental health concerns have been on the rise in recent years, not only locally, but spanning the state, country, and globe. The problems continue, compounded most recently from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While not unique to Louisa County, a major concern in addressing mental health concerns is a lack of mental health providers. **In Louisa County, there is only one mental health provider for every 1,790 people. (1)**

Of the 65 Louisa County CHA survey respondents, **67.8% stated they have had at least one day in the past 30 in which they considered their mental health not good.**

Question 12: Thinking about your mental health (which includes stress, depression, and emotional problems), how many days during the past 30 days would you consider your mental health not good?

65 responses



## Drug Use

Louisa County ranks 88<sup>th</sup> in Iowa counties for substance treatment admissions including admissions for alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamines, and opioids. (3) Additional available data states that 24% of Louisa County adults report binge drinking alcohol. (1)

Data from the 2021 Iowa Youth Survey reports that Louisa County 6<sup>th</sup> graders often do not associate drug behaviors with poor outcomes. According to the report, of those surveyed, 22% viewed regular methamphetamine use as an activity that is little or no risk to their physical or mental health. Similarly, 24% of Louisa County 6<sup>th</sup> graders viewed binge drinking as a little to no risk activity. (4)

The number of Louisa County adults who drink excessively, or binge drink, is 24%. (1) Of the Louisa County 11<sup>th</sup> graders who stated they had consumed alcohol, 50% stated they were between the ages of 15 and 16 when they had their first alcoholic drink (more than a few sips). (4)

## Suicide

Of our Louisa County CHA respondents, 61.5% ranked suicide as a preventable injury of concern in our county, making suicide the number one preventable injury concern of Louisa County residents. Injury mortality rates for suicide in Louisa County from 2017 - 2021 ranked Louisa County 68<sup>th</sup> in Iowa counties. (3)

When asked if they had thoughts of killing themselves in the past 12 months, 17% of Louisa County 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 21% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and 24% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders responded yes. Of those, 43 - 47% reported having a plan to commit suicide and 36% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who reported suicidal ideation had attempted suicide in the past 12 months. (4)

## Infrastructure Issues: Affordable & Safe Housing

When asked about their top concerns for infrastructure issues in Louisa County, 50.8% of the CHA survey respondents reported affordable and safe housing as a top concern.

In Louisa County 12% of households experienced at least one of the following housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities (data collected from 2015-2019). (1) Overcrowded households make up 2.7% of all Louisa County households, which is higher than the National and State rates of 1.8% and 1.7% respectively. (5)

There is also an affordable housing shortfall of -31.9, this number represents the availability of affordable housing relative to a community's low-income population. Negative numbers indicate a shortfall. (5)

## Infrastructure Issues: Access to Quality Health Services (Including Lack of Health Insurance)

Of our Louisa County CHA respondents, 41.5% reported they felt Louisa County lacked access to quality health services.

As of 2021 data, Louisa County had only one primary care physician (PCP) per 11,010 people, a concerning trend that has worsened over the years. As recently as 2013, there was one PCP for every 5,660 people in the county. Dental providers fare better in Louisa County with one dentist per 2,690 registered Louisa County residents. (1)

Louisa's low number of physicians, and unique status as one of the few counties in Iowa without a hospital, leave us with a poor state ranking of 96<sup>th</sup> out of 99 counties when looking at access to health care providers. (3)

### Lack of Health of Health Insurance

Louisa County CHA respondents (21.5%) felt that lack of health insurance may also be a factor in the lack of access to quality health services, ranking lack of insurance as the 3rd highest health infrastructure concern as viewed by respondents.

Louisa County ranks behind its peers related to residents without health insurance with **8.9% of those under the age of 65 reporting a lack of health insurance**, compared to the statewide rate of 5.7%. (5) However, this rate has improved; in 2010, 15% of residents under the age of 65 reported a lack of health insurance. (1)

# References

1. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps  
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/iowa/louisa?year=2023>
2. US Census Bureau  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/louisacountyiowa,US/PST045222>
3. Iowa Health Fact Book  
<https://iowahealthfactbook.org/factbook/#/counties/Louisa>
4. Iowa Youth Survey 2021  
<https://iowayouthsurvey.idph.iowa.gov/Reports/Counties>
5. US News & Entertainment 2022 Healthiest Communities  
<https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/iowa/louisa-county#housing>
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/cha/plan.html>

## Conclusion

The data collected in Louisa County's Community Health Assessment highlights numerous concerns of residents that are backed by trusted data. This report will be presented to the Louisa County Board of Health, Board of Supervisors, and shared with community partners and stakeholders via email distribution and posts to our website and social media. It is our hope that with this knowledge, we can continue to work with the community and our partners to address these issues and create a healthier Louisa County.



## Louisa County Public Health

Monday - Friday  
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

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