

# The Creation of the 2025 Lorain County Community Health Assessment (CHA)



**Kiara Williams, BS**  
MPH Candidate, Health Promotion Disease Prevention  
Case Western Reserve University



## Public Health Implications

The Lorain County 2025 CHA serves as a blueprint for improving public health outcomes and fostering a healthier, more equitable community.

- **Informed Decision-Making:** The CHA provides evidence-based data to inform policy decisions and program planning, ensuring that public health efforts are tailored to the specific needs of the community.
- **Resource Allocation:** By identifying the most pressing health issues, the CHA helps direct resources effectively to areas with the highest need, maximizing the impact of public health programs.
- **Community Engagement:** Involving residents in the assessment process strengthens community partnerships and fosters trust, making it more likely that health initiatives will be embraced and sustained.
- **Addressing Social Determinants of Health:** The CHA highlights factors like socioeconomic status, education, and access to healthcare that contribute to health disparities, enabling targeted strategies to improve these conditions.
- **Health Equity:** The CHA supports efforts to achieve health equity by identifying and addressing the unique needs of vulnerable populations in Lorain County, such as low-income families and immigrant communities.

## Lessons Learned

I've gained a deep appreciation for the level of coordination, collaboration, and intention that goes into public health planning. Being on the inside of the CHA for the first time, I learned how critical it is to not only gather accurate data, but to center community voices in the process. This experience showed me that public health is truly a collective effort; driven by diverse partners, each bringing a unique perspective and set of resources to the table.

One key lesson I took away is the importance of translating data into action. It's not just about collecting numbers, it's about identifying disparities, understanding lived experiences, and using that insight to shape policies and programs that are equitable and impactful. I also saw firsthand how much trust and transparency matter when engaging with community members. Their willingness to share their experiences makes the CHA meaningful and effective.

Overall, this project reinforced my commitment to health equity and helped me see the value of building strong, sustained relationships with both partners and the communities we serve.

## Background

Achieving health equity and addressing root causes of poor health are priorities for local health departments, making Community Health Assessments (CHAs) essential for guiding public health planning. A CHA identifies key health needs through data collection and community engagement, helping local health departments prioritize resources for better resident well-being.

This practicum site for this project was conducted at Lorain County Public Health (LCPH), located at 9880 Murray Ridge Road in Elyria. LCPH provides services such as immunizations, food safety education, and emergency preparedness. Serving all cities and townships in Lorain County, LCPH works to improve community health by addressing social determinants, reducing disparities, and fostering partnerships.

## Population

Lorain County, Ohio, has a population of approximately 317,910 residents, with a median age of 42.1 years. The gender distribution is nearly equal, with 50.4% female and 49.6% male. The age breakdown shows that 21.7% of the population is under 18, 58.9% are between 18 and 64 years old, and 19.4% are 65 years or older. The county is predominantly White (75.9%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (10.5%), Black or African American (7.3%), and smaller percentages of Asian (1.1%) and two or more races (4.6%).

The median household income is \$70,693, with an estimated poverty rate of around 11%, and 73.7% of households are owner-occupied. The county spans 490.54 square miles, with an urban population of 268,324 and a rural population of 44,640, resulting in a population density of 638 people per square mile. Approximately 7.7% of the population speaks a non-English language at home, with Spanish being the most common.

## Learning Objectives

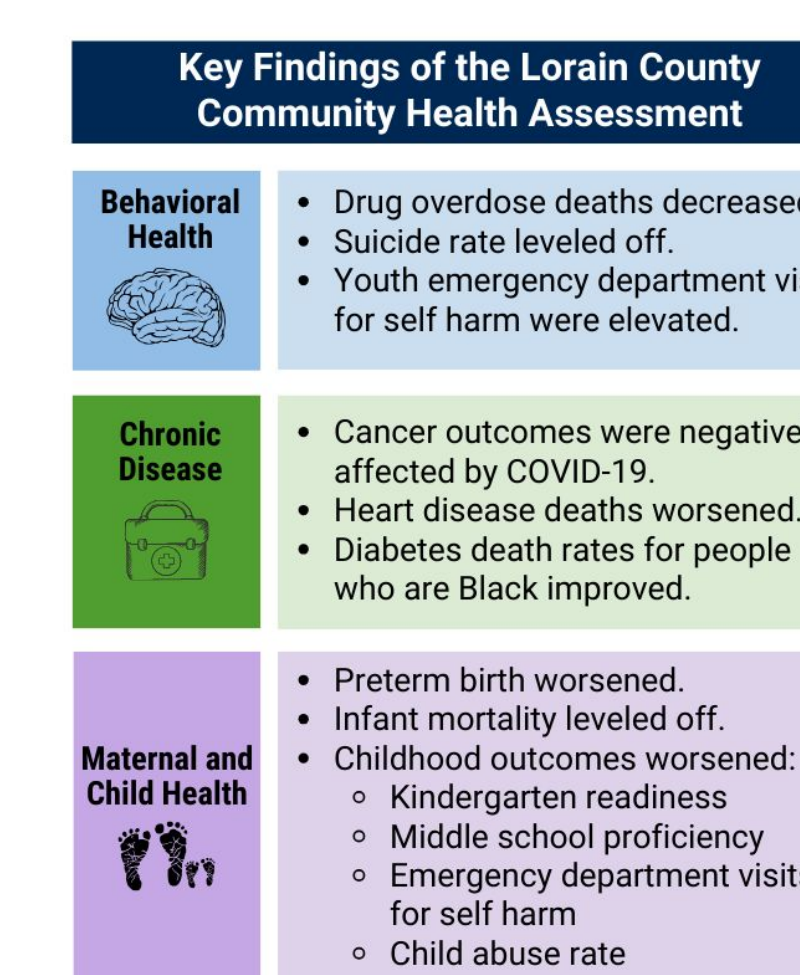
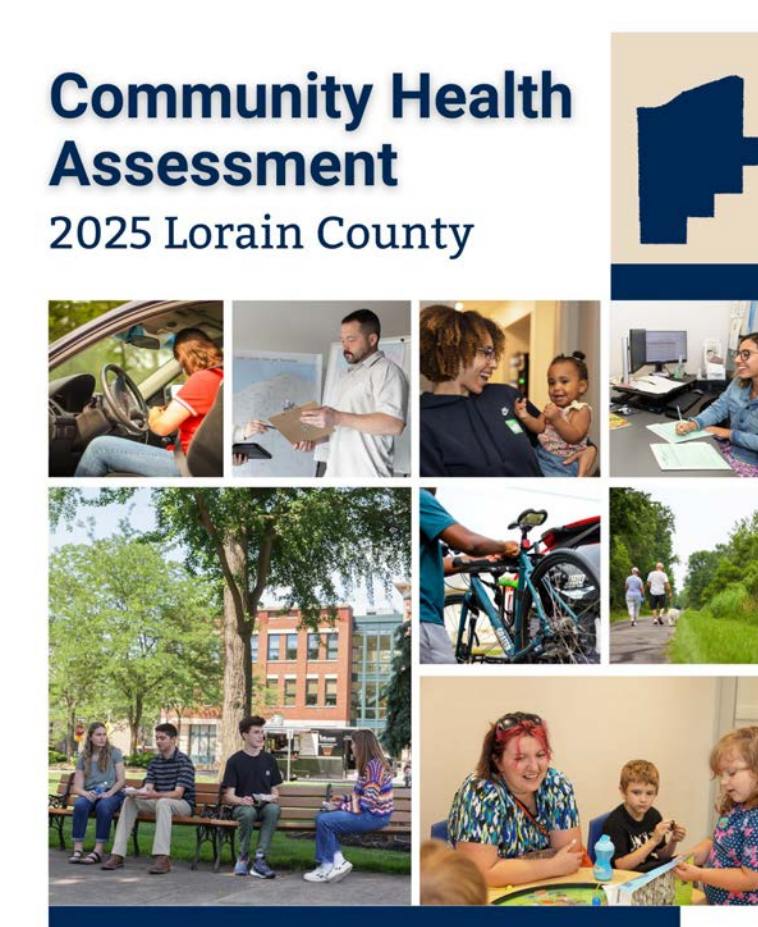
- To evaluate the alignment between CHA findings and resident experiences to ensure the CHIP reflects community priorities and needs.
- To analyze community and stakeholder feedback to identify key themes and gaps in the CHA data, informing the development of the CHIP.
- To create effective engagement materials to facilitate discussions to educate residents about the Lorain County CHA findings and gather actionable input.

## Activities

- Analyzed stakeholder and resident interviews for the 2025 Community Health Assessment (CHA)
- De-identified qualitative responses and aligned feedback with Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)
- Organized and summarized data to ensure community input was reflected in CHA findings
- Drafted a Community Engagement Playbook outlining steps, tools, and messaging strategies
- Participated in planning meetings with Lorain County Public Health staff to support CHA and CHIP efforts

## Deliverables

- **2025 Community Health Assessment (CHA):**
  - Contributed to the development of the CHA by analyzing qualitative data from community and stakeholder interviews. Helped identify Lorain County's top three priority health needs: Behavioral Health, Chronic Disease, and Maternal and Child Health.
- **Community Engagement Playbook:**
  - Created a detailed guide that includes presentation materials, scripts, handouts, visuals, and step-by-step strategies for educating the public on CHA findings. *This playbook will be used throughout the CHIP development process to ensure consistent, effective, and accessible community engagement, while supporting transparency and trust-building with residents.*



## Acknowledgements

The Lorain County 2025 Community Health Assessment (CHA) was made possible through the collaboration of community residents, stakeholders, and partner organizations. Special thanks to the CHA and CHIP Steering Committee members, including:

- Cleveland Clinic Avon Hospital
- Lorain County Health and Dentistry
- Lorain County Metro Parks
- Mental Health, Addiction, and Recovery Services (MHARS) Board
- Mercy Health Allen & Lorain Hospitals
- University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center

## Funding Provided By

- Lorain County Public Health
- Lorain County Health and Dentistry
- Mercy Health Lorain Hospital
- University Hospitals

## 2025 Lorain County CHA



<https://www.loraincountyhealth.com/cha>