

**Strengths and Needs Assessment of  
Carroll County Maryland 2004:  
Analysis of the Household Survey Results—  
Households with Children Under Age Eighteen**

July 2005



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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In January 2004, a group representing various Carroll County organizations, both public/governmental and private, convened to design a project to assess the strengths and needs of Carroll Countians. These organizations included:

- The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County
- The Carroll County Local Management Board
- The Carroll County Health Department
- Carroll County Government
- The Carroll County Department of Social Services
- Carroll County Public Library
- The Carroll County Youth Services Bureau
- Literacy Council of Carroll County, Inc.
- The United Way of Central Maryland

The purpose of the project was to gather information that would assist the various entities providing services in the county to identify needs and priorities to plan services, and to allocate resources. The information could also be used to find new resources through grant writing.

The Center for Health Program Development and Management (Center) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) was engaged to conduct the three-pronged project, which included a comprehensive review of secondary data sources, such as health, crime, social services, economic, and environmental data; key stakeholder interviews; and a comprehensive survey of households in the county. The secondary data analysis was conducted in the winter-spring of 2004, and updated in 2005. The key stakeholder interviews were conducted in the spring of 2004. The household survey was conducted in the winter of 2004 and was sent to a randomly selected sample designed to yield a statistically reliable data set that could be applied to the county overall. Reports on each of these components are presented under separate cover, and findings from each component are also presented in the “Community Strength and Needs Assessment in Carroll County, Maryland: Final Report of a Multiphase Project, 2004-2005.”

The survey was conducted using two samples randomly selected from among Carroll County households. The samples represent two populations: 1) households with children under age 18 (HC18) and 2) overall community (OC). The same survey was used for both samples, though a few items were more pertinent to one or the other group. Each of the samples was analyzed separately. The achieved OC sample consists of 223 households representing 536 individuals; the achieved HC18 sample consists of 189 households representing 697 individuals. Information was gathered on a total of 1,013<sup>1</sup> individual Carroll County residents. *This report is an analysis of the HC18 sample.*

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<sup>1</sup> The total sample size is less than the two samples summed because some families are used in the analysis of both surveys.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18**

### **Strengths**

The majority of household members in families with children under age 18 are in good to excellent health, have a regular doctor, have dental check-ups annually, have some form of health insurance, never smoked or have quit, and practice protective lifestyle behaviors such as using sunscreen, helmets, and seatbelts. Half have knowledge of CPR. A very small percentage has experienced violence or discrimination. A small portion has had problems with their water source. Nearly all household members old enough to read can read well or very well with a high rate of library use. The county has a high employment rate.

### **Weaknesses**

Even though the majority of residents have excellent to good health and have a doctor, still many report not getting recommended health screenings. Almost half of the sampled individuals are overweight or obese, with 45% exercising two or fewer times a week. Sixteen percent of adults 21 or older have two to four drinks per day on most days of the week. Drugs, alcohol, sexual behavior, tobacco, and depression/stress/violence (tied) are the top five issues for 11-17 year-olds. Though residents have shown strong agreement with many issues related to quality of life measures, there is weak or moderately weak agreement (up to 35%) on issues such as being able to influence community lawmakers, having volunteered for community services, having enough cultural and arts opportunities in the community, having enough safe and organized social activities for teens, and availability of public transportation in the community.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **Households with Children Under Age 18**

Carroll County is one of the more affluent counties in Maryland, and as such, most measures of well-being are indicative of a community with relatively few problems. In such a case, it is all the more important to understand the who, where, and if possible, why of the small pockets of less positive outcomes. To that end, this summary focuses more on the areas for possible improvements, where the county is already doing rather well.

### **Sample Description**

- 189 households with a total of 697 individuals
- 45% children under age 18; 59% 18-64; and 1% 65 and older
- 12% single parents and 2% unmarried couples with children
- 86% married couples with children

### **Health Care**

- 96% reported having good to excellent health
- Fair to poor health was reported among adults aged 56-64 (14%) and those 65 years and older (50%)
- 98% have a regular doctor
- Those who did not see the doctor for a check-up in the last 12 months (15%) said it was due to:
  - Not feeling a need to do so
  - Lack of insurance
  - Lack of time
  - No money for a health check-up
- Screenings for blood pressure and cholesterol are far below suggested standards: 39% for both genders aged three and older, and 24% for both genders aged two and older, respectively. The goal should be to approach 100% for these screenings.
- While most individuals (91%) received all of the health care that they needed in the last 12 months, those who did not largely indicated reasons related to insurance and payment.

### **Weight, Diet, and Exercise**

- 47% of the respondents have a body mass index (BMI) categorized as overweight or obese, likely contributed to by the lack of exercise and poor dietary habits reported in the survey
- 44% exercise two or fewer times a week, which is well below the Surgeon General's current recommendation for "most days" of the week

- Only 1% eat the recommended seven servings of fruits and vegetables a day; 89% eat four or fewer
- 28% are trying to lose weight, among which women outnumber men two to one

### **Dental**

- 18% of household members aged three and older did not receive a dental check-up in the last 12 months (32% of these were 6-17 years old (twice as many adolescents than school-aged children), and 33% were 36-55 years old
- The main reasons for not receiving a dental check-up included not needing to do so (48%) (indicating a need for education regarding oral health and preventive dentistry) and insurance/payment issues (38%)

### **Health Insurance**

- Of the 98% insured respondents:
  - 94% are covered by commercial insurance
  - 2% are covered by the Maryland Children's Health Program.
- Those not covered cited insurance affordability/availability as the reason

### **Disability**

- 26 individuals (4%) were reported as being disabled
- Disabilities are mostly long-term (76%) and mild or moderate (80%)
- All families reported getting needed respite services (three families) and home modifications (26 families)
- Of the six families needing daycare, all but one received the services, and all but two said that is was affordable

### **Mental Health**

- Among households with children under 18, 56% of household members are reported as sometimes showing symptoms of stress such as yelling and being anxious or withdrawn
- 5% of individuals were reported as having been diagnosed with a mental illness
- 54 household members (9%) needed help for depression
- While 86% of those diagnosed with a mental illness received treatment, only a few (7%) used community support groups
- Adolescent girls were more likely to receive treatment than boys, whereas adult men were more likely to receive treatment than women

## Lifestyle

### *Smoking*

- 16% of those 18 and older (legal age for purchasing tobacco) currently smoke
- 30% have quit
- On average, males started smoking at a younger age (12 to 18) than females (13 to 19)
- 12% of survey respondents are reported as being exposed to second-hand smoke and 39% of these currently smoke themselves

### *Alcohol*

- Considering problem drinking as more than two drinks four or more days a week, or more than four drinks on any number of days, 16% of adults age 21 or older who drink are in this “problem” area
- 23% of those of driving age (16 years and older) report driving after drinking

### *Drug Usage*

- 50% of household members aged 21 years and above do not drink
- Of those that do drink, 21% reported drinking and driving
- 9% of individuals were a passenger in a car driven by a person who had been drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Very little drug usage (2%) is reported among individuals aged 13 years or older

The majority of household members reported positive health behaviors in other “lifestyle” issues that focus on protective behaviors, such as:

- Knowledge of CPR (52% of persons 12 years old or older)
- Helmet use among those participating in activities that require a helmet (76%)
- Sunscreen use (87%)
- Seatbelt use (98%)

Few household members experienced *violence* (4%) and *discrimination* (2%). Family violence was the most often reported, followed by other crime.

Fifty-two percent of households use well water, and 20% reported that their *water source* was either unsafe or that they did not know if it was safe. Less than 1% reported illness due to their water source.

## Health and Knowledge Among Young People

- The top five issues selected by respondents as important among 11 to 17 year-olds were:
  - Drugs
  - Alcohol
  - Sexual behavior

- Tobacco
- Depression/Stress/Violence
- Comprehensive sex education is favored by a large majority (78%)

### **Literacy**

Nearly all household members old enough to read are deemed to read well or very well. Eight of the eleven persons who read fairly or poorly were children.

### **Employment**

Carroll County boasts high employment rates relative to the state and other jurisdictions. However, there are interesting patterns of employment among household members. Women are much more likely than men to work part-time at a ratio greater than 3 to 1, and men are nearly twice as likely as women to work full-time.

### **Community Services**

Five services were used by 10% or more of the surveyed households:

- The library (86%)
- Night time/weekend medical care (27%)
- Counseling services (12%)
- Adult education classes (10%)
- Legal services (10%)

All of these services scored above 90% satisfaction, except for counseling services at 74%.

### **Quality of Life**

The Quality of Life Grid below reports the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to a series of statements about living in Carroll County. The table presents the overall percentage of agreement as well as a breakdown of the degree of agreement by geographic area, new versus long-term residency, and household type. The closer to 100%, the better the indication of superior quality of life.

**Table 1: Quality of Life Grid for the Household with Children Under 18 Survey**

Quality of Life Measure (Percent Who Agree to Strongly Agree)		Households with Children	Geographic (high versus low)	New versus Long-Term Resident	Type of Household (high versus low)
<b>Civic/Community Involvement and Attachment</b>	Encourage others to live in my community	84%	Finksburg 90% vs. W. Carroll 60%	89% vs. 80%	Married couples 86% vs. Unmarried couples 67%
	Voting in Local Elections	79%	Westminster 83% vs. S. Carroll 71%	75% vs. 81%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Married couples with children 77%
	Knowing names of people	66%	N. Carroll 69% vs. Finksburg 60%	58% vs. 72%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Married couples with children 65%
	Knowledge of important community events	60%	Finksburg 70% vs. W. Carroll 52%	58% vs. 61%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Married couples with children 59%
	Active in a faith organization	54%	W. Carroll 56% vs. Finksburg 50%	45% vs. 59%	Single parents 65% vs. Married couples with children 53%
	I want to retire in my community	52%	Westminster 63% vs. S. Carroll 34%	55% vs. 50%	Married couples with children 52% vs. Unmarried couples 33%
	Pitch in when something needs to be done	48%	S. Carroll 53% vs. N. Carroll 37%	42% vs. 52%	Unmarried couples 67% vs. Single parents 25%
	Involved in community	50%	Finksburg 50% vs. W. Carroll 44%	42% vs. 53%	Unmarried couples 67% vs. Single parents 45%
	Able to influence community lawmakers	28%	W. Carroll 32% vs. S. Carroll 21%	23% vs. 32%	Unmarried couples 33% vs. Married couples with children 28%
	Volunteer for community projects	26%	Westminster 29% vs. Finksburg 20%	21% vs. 30%	Unmarried couples 33% vs. Single parents 15%

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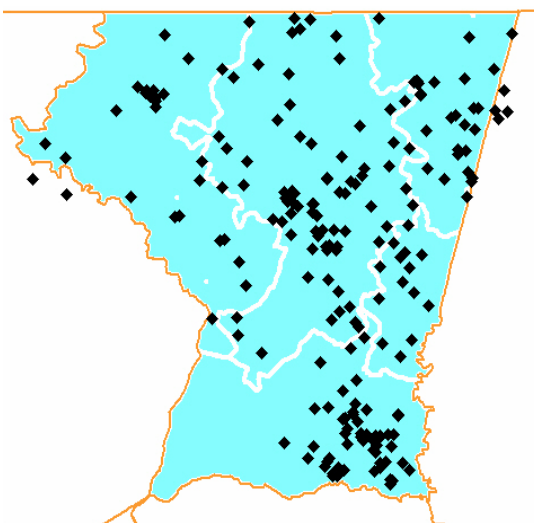
<b>Quality of Life Measure (Percent Who Agree to Strongly Agree)</b>		<b>Households with Children</b>	<b>Geographic (high versus low)</b>	<b>New versus Long-Term Resident</b>	<b>Type of Household (high versus low)</b>
<b>Community Amenities, Opportunities, and Safety</b>	I feel safe in my community	86%	Finksburg 100% vs. W. Carroll 76%	92% vs. 83%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Single parents 85%
	I can afford housing that meets my needs in my community	70%	Finksburg 80% vs. S. Carroll 58%	67% vs. 72%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Single parents 55%
	There are enough parks and recreational facilities in my community	65%	Finksburg 70% vs. W. Carroll 60%	64% vs. 65%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Single parents 60%
	There are public places in the community where community members can get together	58%	N. Carroll 66% vs. Westminster 54%	58% vs. 58%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Single parents 55%
	I could find a job in my profession in my community	44%	Westminster 51% vs. W. Carroll 32%	41% vs. 46%	Unmarried couples 67% vs. Married couples with children 44%
	There are enough cultural and arts opportunities in my community	30%	Westminster 43% vs. W. Carroll 8%	32% vs. 30%	Single parents 40% vs. Married couples with children 28%
	There are enough safe, organized social activities for teens in my community	19%	Westminster 24% vs. Finksburg 10%	21% vs. 18%	Unmarried couples 67% vs. Single parents 10%
<b>Transportation</b>	I am satisfied with the length of my commute	52%	Finksburg 60% vs. S. Carroll 41%	45% vs. 56%	Unmarried couples 100% vs. Married couples with children 49%
	I would use public transportation if it were available in my community	25%	N. Carroll 34% vs. Finksburg 10%	23% vs. 26%	Single parents 40% vs. Married couples with children 23%
	I need public transportation to get around in my community	4%	N. Carroll 9% vs. S. Carroll 2%	6% vs. 4%	Single parents 22% vs. Married couples with children 3%

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18

**General Sample Information and Household Characteristics**

The HC18 sample included **189 households** and **697 individuals**. Most households (80%) had three or fewer individuals. Thirty-eight percent of responding households are from Westminster, 25% from South Carroll, 19% from North Carroll, 13% from West Carroll, and 5% from Finksburg.

**Map 1: Distribution of Responding HC Households**



Household Members' Characteristics

Age

By design, all of the households in the HC18 sample have at least one child under the age of 18 years. Thirty-two percent of the families have at least one pre-school-aged child (0-5 years old), 37% of the families have at least one school-aged child (6-10 years old), and 63% of the families have at least one adolescent child (11-17 years old). Forty-five percent of the sampled household members are children. The next largest age group is adults between 18 and 45 who are mostly parents of the children.

**Table 2: Age Distribution of HC18 Household Members**

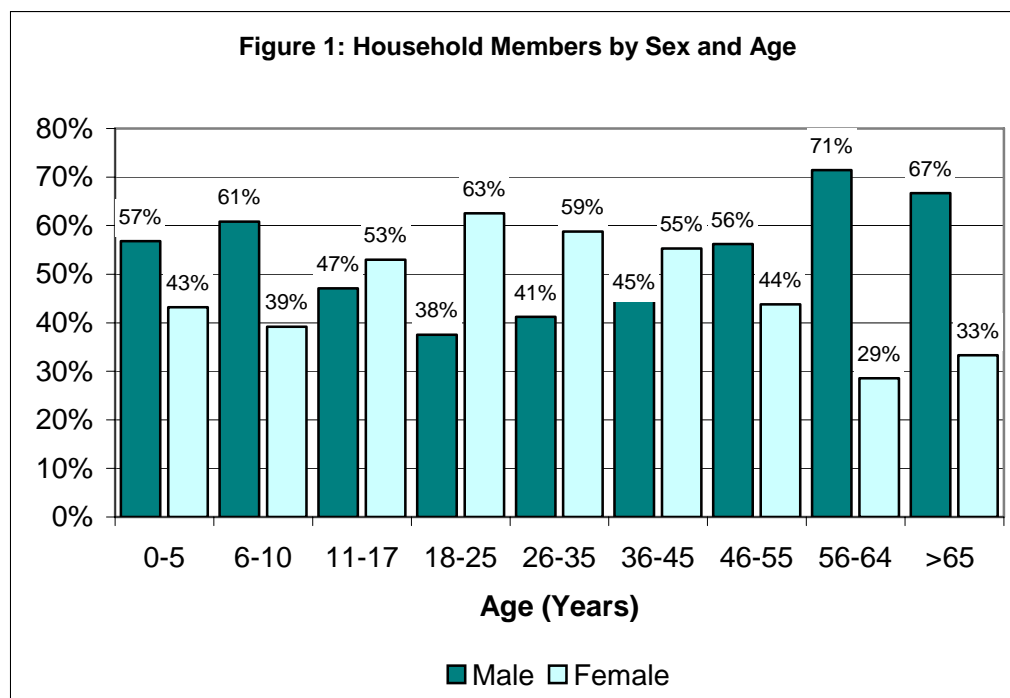
Age	Percent
0-5 years old (Preschool Child)	11.5
6-10 years old (School Age Child)	11
11-17 years old (Adolescent Child)	22
18-45 years old (Working Age Adult)	40.5
46-64 years old (Pre-Retirement Adult)	14
65 years and older (Senior Adult)	1

## Race

The sample consisted of a large majority of white individuals (96%). The remaining 4% (n=26) had the following race breakdown: 1% black or African American, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.5% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1% other. Less than 0.5% indicated that they were of Hispanic origin.

## Gender

The sample consisted of 50% males and 50% females. Overall, the number of male and female household members is about equal; however, there are more females than males who are 11-45 years old, and more males than females who are in the older age groups. Figure 1 illustrates the percentages of household members by sex and age.



## Family Types

The HC18 sample consisted of the following three family categories: married couples with children (86%), single parents (12%), and other (2%).

The 86% (n=163 families) of married couples with children under 18 years old consisted of six family “types”:

- Married couple with at least one child (80%)
- Married couple with one child under 18 years old and one adult child (15%)
- Married couple with step-children present (2%)

**Strengths and Needs Assessment of Families with Children in Carroll County 2004:  
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- Married couple with only grandchildren (1%)
- Married couple with a child and a parent (1%)
- Married couple with an adult child and a grandchild under 18 years old (1%)

The single parent families (n=23) consisted of six “types”:

- Single mothers (64%)
- Single parents with adult children and children under 18 years old (14%)
- Single fathers (9%)
- Single parent with sibling and child (5%)
- Single parent with child and parents (5%)
- Single parent with grandchild and non-related individuals (5%)

The 2% (n=3 families) of “other” family types consisted of unmarried couples with children.

### Education

Table 3 shows that educational attainment of household members was similar to the Census 2000 except for a somewhat higher percentage in the post-secondary category and fewer in the high school diploma category.

**Table 3: Educational Attainment of Household Members**

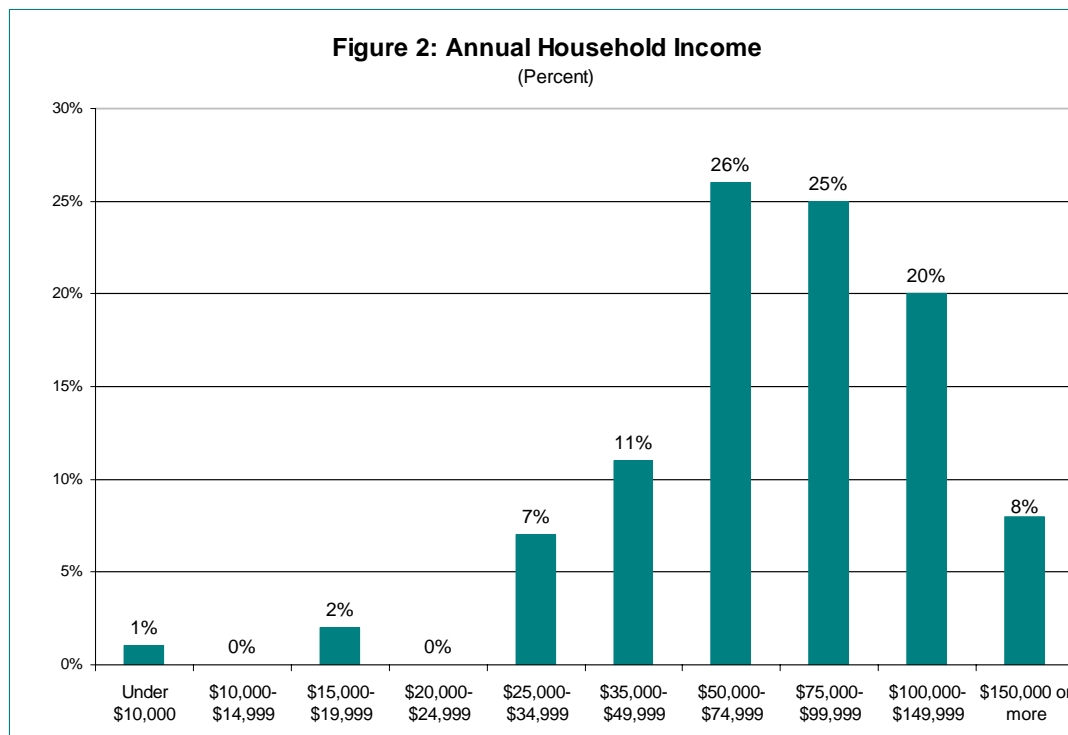
Highest Grade/Degree Completed	Censal Percentage	Sample Percentage
None	0.4	1
Nursery School to 8th Grade	4	1
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	10	3
High School Diploma	33	26
GED or High School Equivalency	Include in above in HS Percentage	2
Vocational or Trade School	-	6
Some College, no Degree	21	21
Associate’s Degree	6	7
Bachelor’s Degree	16	21
Master’s Degree/Professional Degree/Doctorate Degree	9	13

Of the 46% of individuals reported as being currently in school (n=304), their grade levels are:

- Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade public school (67%)
- College or graduate school (16%)
- Pre-kindergarten or early childhood program (8%)
- Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade private school (5%)
- Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade home school (4%)

### Income and Home Ownership

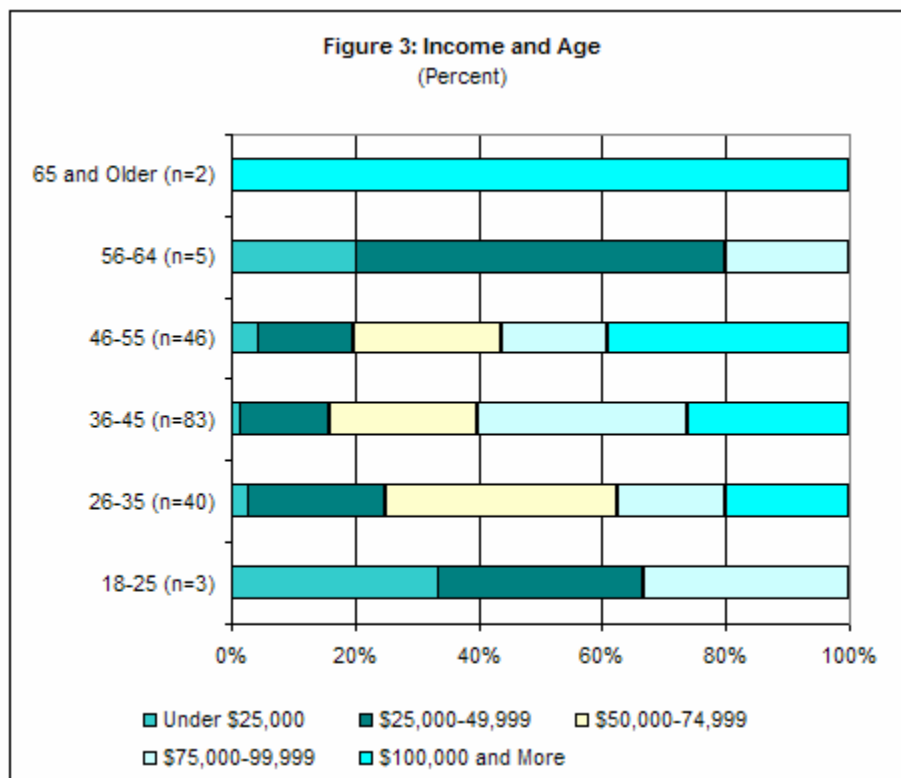
A majority (71%) of households have an annual income between \$50,000 and \$149,999 (see Figure 2).



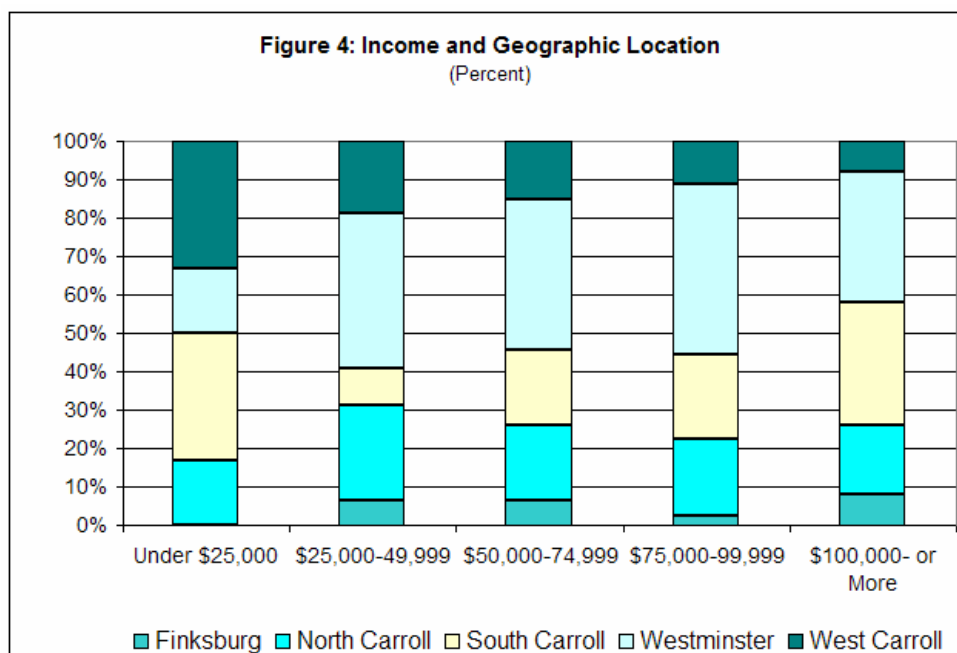
A large majority (91%) of families live in single family homes, 7% live in town homes, and 2% live in apartments or condos. Ninety-four percent of families own their home. A majority (60%) of primary respondents are long-term residents of Carroll County (that is, they have lived in Carroll County for more than ten years and are over 21 years old).

Residents aged 18-25 and 56-64 are more likely to have annual incomes of less than \$25,000 than their counterparts. Of the remaining age groups, the annual household income of the majority of residents ranges from \$50,000 to over \$150,000. Those individuals aged 65 (n=2 in this sample) and older have annual household incomes equaling \$100,000 or more. Figure 3 shows this breakdown.

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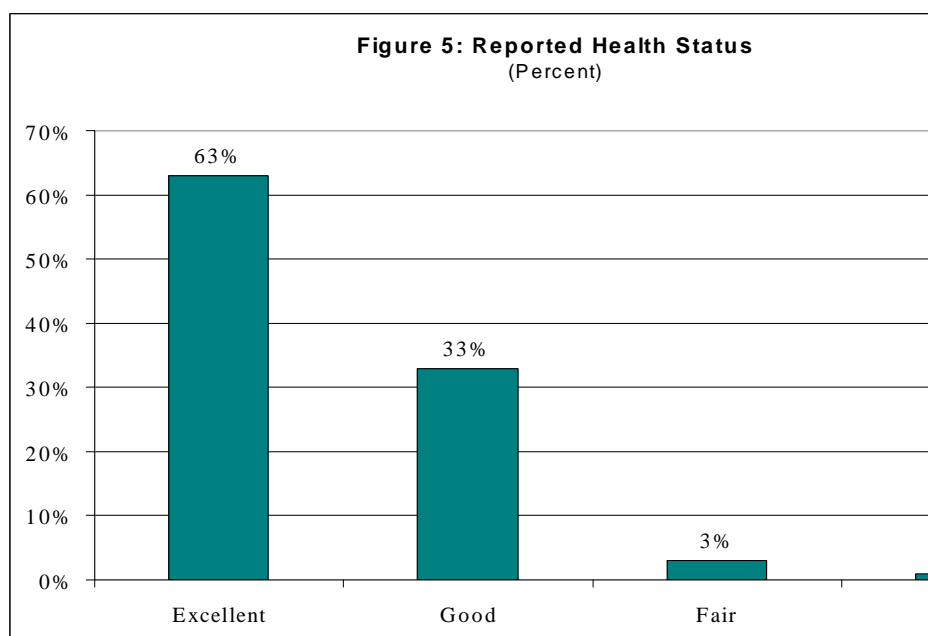
Income distribution by area varies widely, though it appears that West Carroll has a larger proportion of lower than upper income. The majority of those with incomes below \$25K live in South or West Carroll. See Figure 4 for a detailed breakdown of income by geographic area.



## Health Measures

### Health Status

As shown in Figure 5, 96% of household members' *health status* was reported as being either good or excellent (96% of males and 95% of females are in excellent or good health). Through age 55, 93% or more report good or excellent health, but this falls off to 86% at age 56, and down to 50% at age 65.



### Health Services Use

Nearly everyone was reported as having a *regular doctor* (98%), with no difference between genders. Having a regular doctor remains at 97% or better except for the 26-35 year-olds, who report having a regular doctor at 93%.

A majority of the individuals (85%) had a *check-up in the last 12 months*, with the genders being nearly the same. People aged 18 through 64 were less likely than the young and the old to have a regular check-up. Of the 15% (n=105) who did not have a check-up in the last 12 months, the most reported “main” reason was that they did not feel that they needed to see a doctor (86%). Other reasons for not having a check-up were:

- No insurance (4%)
- Lack of time (3%)
- Lack of money (2%)
- Has an appointment scheduled soon (1%)
- Don't know (4%)

The type of doctors seen most often are:

- Family doctor for medical care (63%)
- Pediatrician (68% of children)
- OB/GYN (12% of women aged 18 or over, n=24)
- Urgent care facilities/company health clinic/receive no medical care (0.5% each)

A large majority (91%) of households reported that the members of the household **received all the health care that they needed** in the past 12 months. Of the 9% (n=17) of household that did not receive all the health care that they needed, the following reasons were given (note: participants could choose more than one option):

- No insurance (43%)
- Can't pay for health care (43%)
- Deductible of co-pay is too high (29%)
- Can't get time off work (20%)
- Insurance does not cover needed care (14%)
- Lost Medicaid or Medical Assistance Eligibility (13%)
- Employer does not offer health insurance (7%)
- New to area/don't know where to go (7%)
- Don't trust doctors (7%)
- Doctors aren't taking new patients (7%)

Eighty-one percent of individuals were reported as *not* having visited the **emergency room** in the past 12 months. Fifteen percent of individuals were reported as having been to the emergency room once in the past 12 months. Four percent of individuals were reported as having gone to the emergency room two to four times in the past 12 months.

### Health Screenings

Participants were asked if they had had any of a series of health screening tests within the past 12 months. The national recommendations (shown in Table 4 below) for age and gender were used, when available, to select the appropriate test(s) for each respondent. Below are the percentages of individuals who were reported as having had the health test.

**Table 4: Health Screenings Received in the Past 12 Months**

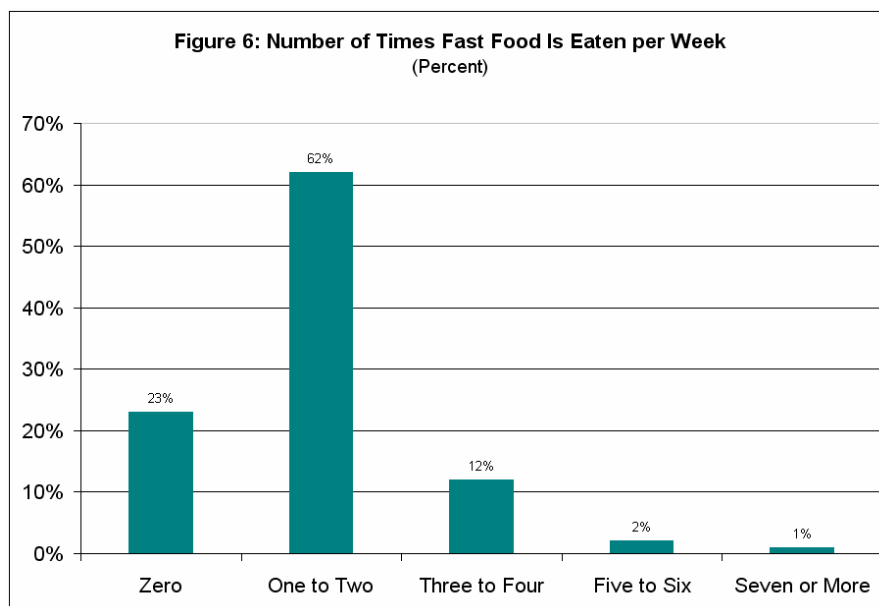
Health Test	Standard	Percentage
Blood Pressure Screening	Males and Females $\geq$ 3 years old (n=249 of 639)	39
Cholesterol Screening	Males and Females $\geq$ 2 years old (n=155 of 646)	24
HIV/AIDS Test	Males and Females $\geq$ 18 years old (n=19 of 372)	5
Chest X-ray	Males and Females all ages (n=40 of 668)	6
TB Test	Males and Females all ages (n=40 of 663)	6

Note: the term "Standard" refers to recommendations from national bodies that publish guidelines for health professionals and the public. Also, HIV/AIDS testing and chest x-ray have no recommendations for screening, but are rather clinically based tests.

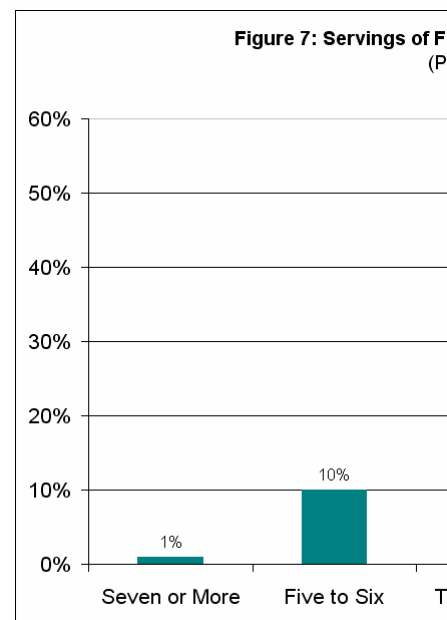
Testing levels are very low for two important screening measures that can detect highly dangerous conditions of heart disease and stroke, namely blood pressure measurement and cholesterol tests.

### Diet, Exercise, and Weight

Ninety-seven percent reported eating *fast food* four or less times per week and 23% reported eating no fast food each week (Figure 6).

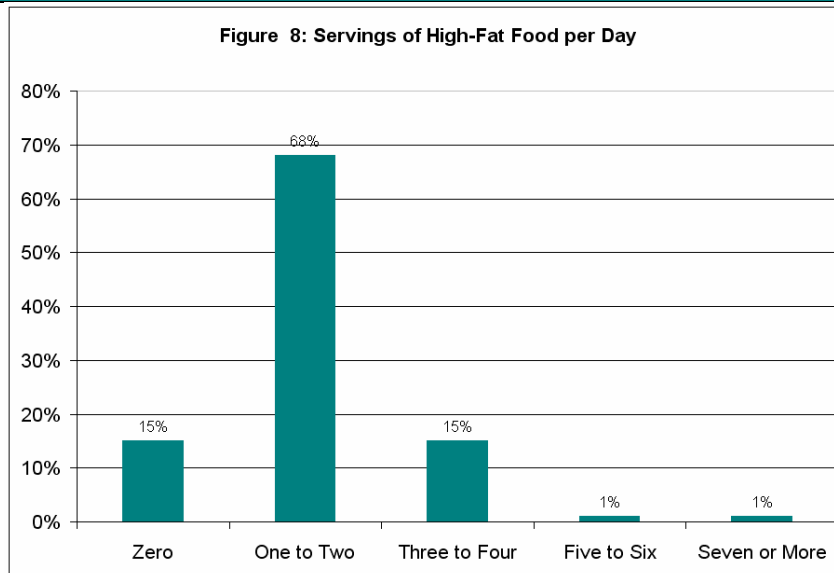


A large majority of individuals (86%) eat one to four *servings of fruits or vegetables* each day. Eleven percent of individuals eat five or more servings per day (Figure 7).

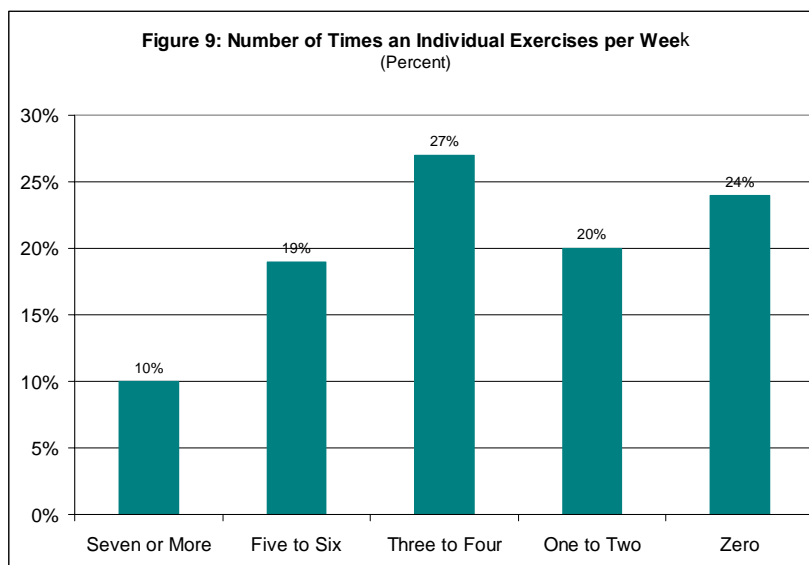


As Figure 8 shows, most household members (83%) eat two or less servings of *high-fat food* per day. Those eating three or more servings of high-fat food per day were: 24% of children five and under; 18% of six to ten year-olds; 22% of 11 to 17 year-olds; 16% of 18 to 25 year-olds; 20% of 26 to 35 year-olds; and 11% and 9% of 36 to 45 and 46 to 55 year-olds respectively. Zero individuals 56 and older reported eating three or more servings of high-fat food per day.

**Strengths and Needs Assessment of Families with Children in Carroll County 2004:  
Analysis of the Household Survey Results – Households with Children Under Age 18**

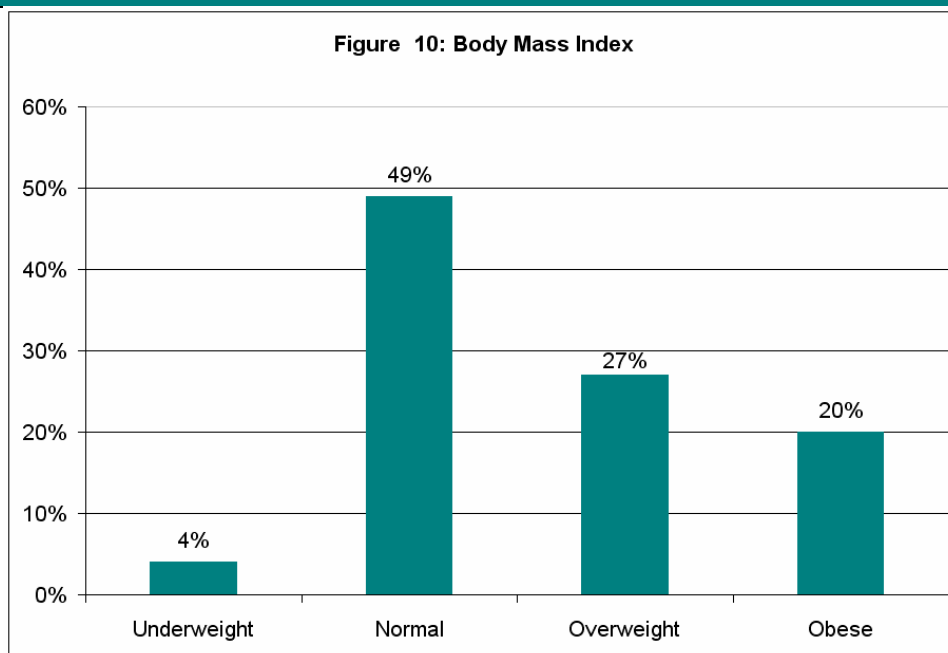


Twenty-four percent of individuals reported getting *no exercise each week*. Forty-seven percent of individuals were reported as exercising for 20 minutes one to four times a week. (See Figure 9.) Females (68%) are somewhat more likely to exercise than males (56%).



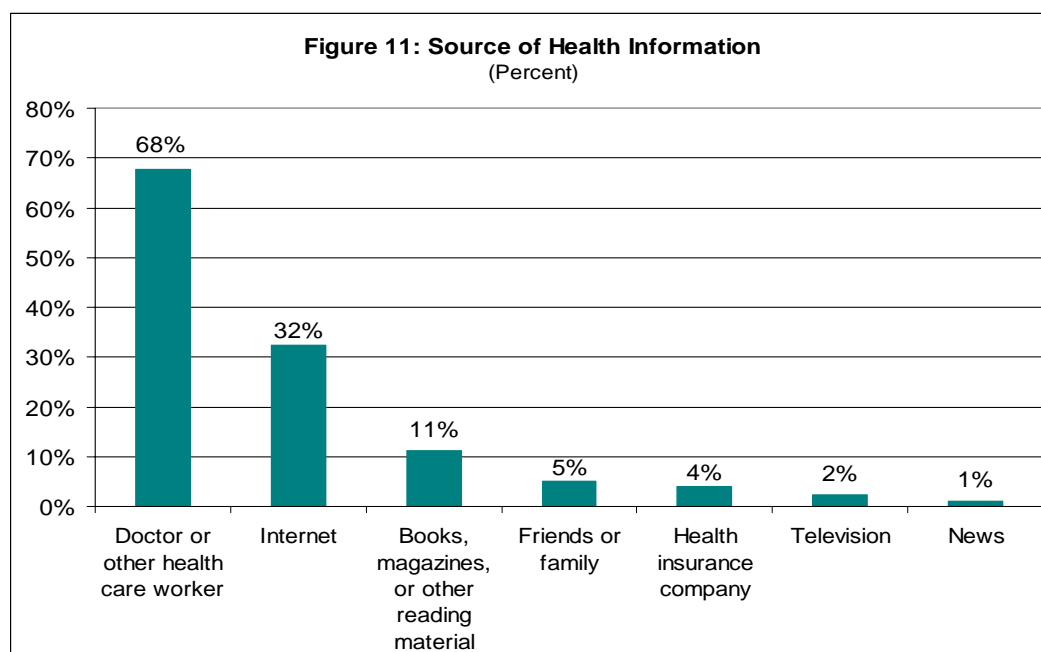
Nearly half (49%) of individuals are normal according to their *Body Mass Index (BMI)*. Forty-seven percent of individuals are characterized as overweight or obese. See Figure 10.

A majority (72%) of individuals were reported as *not trying to lose weight*, while 56% of families have a member trying to lose weight: 35% of males and 65% of females.



### Health Information

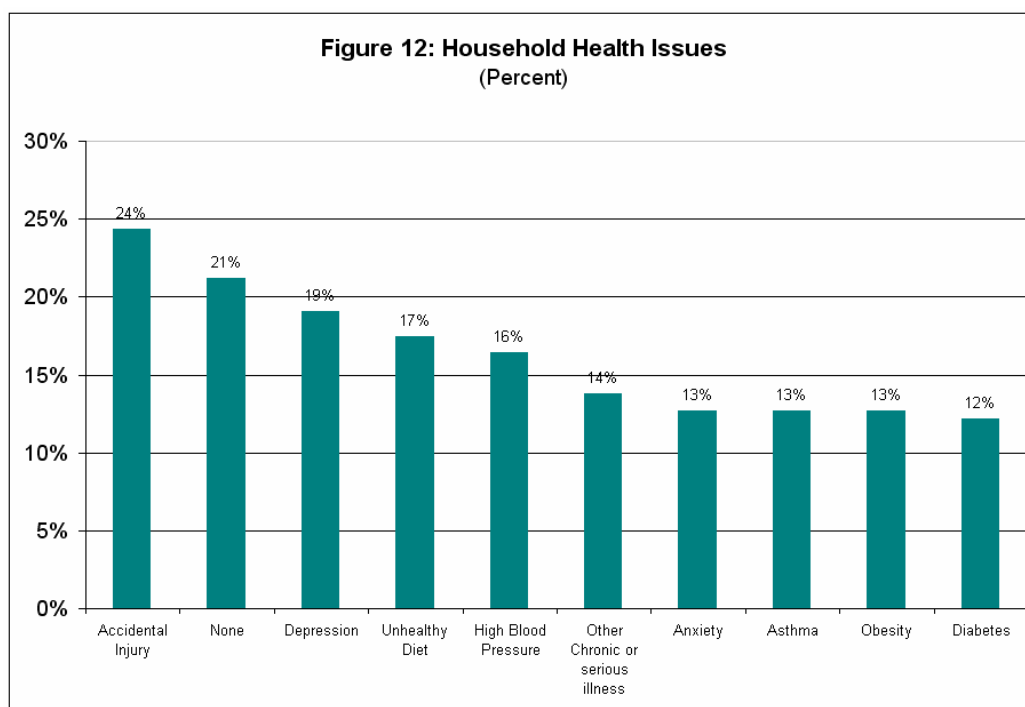
A majority of households (68%) reported obtaining health information from their doctor or other health care worker. The second most used source of health information was the Internet (32%). See Figure 11.



### Household Health Issues

**Strengths and Needs Assessment of Families with Children in Carroll County 2004:  
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As shown in Figure 12, the most reported household health issue in the past 12 months was accidental injury (24%). Twenty-one percent of households reported having no household health issues in the past 12 months.



### **Dental Health**

Eighty percent of household members over age three years were reported as having had a dental check-up in the last 12 months. Of those who had not had a dental check-up in the last 12 months (21%, n=142), the following reasons were given:

- Did not need to see the dentist (48%)
- No insurance (15%)
- Lack of money (14%)
- Dentist would not accept insurance (9%)
- Other (15%, n=21)
  - Lack of time (50%)
  - Fear (28%)
  - Need to change doctor (11%)
  - Appointment was canceled (6%)
  - Laziness (6%)

A majority of all males (77%) and females (81%) have had a dental check-up within the past 12 months.

People who have health insurance or had health insurance in the past are more likely to have had a check-up in the last 12 months (79% and 50% respectively) than those who have never had health insurance (33%). “No need to see the dentist” was the main reason cited for those individuals who have health insurance but did not visit a dentist in the last 12 months (39%). All individuals who do not currently have health insurance and 75% of those who have never had health insurance did not visit the dentist because they do not have insurance.

### **Health Insurance**

Most individuals (97%) were reported as having health insurance, while 2% were reported as not having health insurance now but used to have it, and 1% never had health insurance.

Of those individuals who were reported as having health insurance (n=660), insurance types include:

- Commercial or private health insurance (94%)
- Medicaid, including Maryland’s Children’s Health Program (2%)
- CHAMPUS/Veterans’ Administration (2%)
- Other insurance not specified (2%)

The following reasons were given by 3% (n=18) for not having health insurance:

- Working but can’t afford to pay premium (59%)
- Lost Medicaid or Medical Assistance (33%)
- Employer does not offer insurance (8%)

### **Disability**

Most household members are not reported as having a disability. However, 2% were reported as having a physical disability, 1% as having a developmental disability, and 1% as having an emotional/behavioral disability.

Of those that have a disability (4%, n=26), 76% have a long-term disability and 24% have a short-term disability. Severity of disability was described as mild (needs no assistance) for 36%, moderate for 44%, severe for 16%, and extremely severe (needs complete care) for 4%.

A majority reported that daycare (75%) and respite care (88%) were not necessary for the disabled household member.

By and large, household members with a disability are thought to be in good or excellent health. Sixty percent of those whose health is considered “poor” also have a physical disability.

Of the 25% (n=6) who reported needing daycare for a household member with a disability, 83% said that daycare was available, and 67% said that daycare was affordable. Of those who reported needing respite care for a household member with a disability (13%, n=3), all

reported that respite care was available. No households with a disabled family member reported needing home modifications or adaptive equipment that they were not able to get.

## Mental Health

Fifty-six percent of household members were reported as “sometimes” showing *symptoms of stress* (such as yelling or being anxious or withdrawn) and 6% as “often” showing symptoms. Sixty percent of females were reported to “sometimes” show symptoms of stress, and 5% “often.” Adolescent females are more likely to show signs of stress than adolescent males: 65% of females responded sometimes or often, compared to 50% of males.

There is a direct relationship between health status and stress; those who were cited as having poor health also had the highest proportion of often showing symptoms of stress.

Nine percent of household members were reported as having been *depressed to an extent that they received help for it*.\*\* Five percent of individuals were reported as having been *diagnosed with a mental illness*. Of those 5% (n=28)\*\*:

- 86% have received treatment in the past 12 months
- 7% have accessed community support groups related to their mental illness
- 14% have been hospitalized (at least once) for their mental illness in the past 12 months

Six percent of males and 4% of females were reported to have a mental illness that required treatment. Of the people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness within the past 12 months and who required treatment, 77% of all males and 65% of all females received such treatment. All of those needing treatment for a mental illness received such treatment, except among adolescents and 36 to 55 year-old adults.\*\*

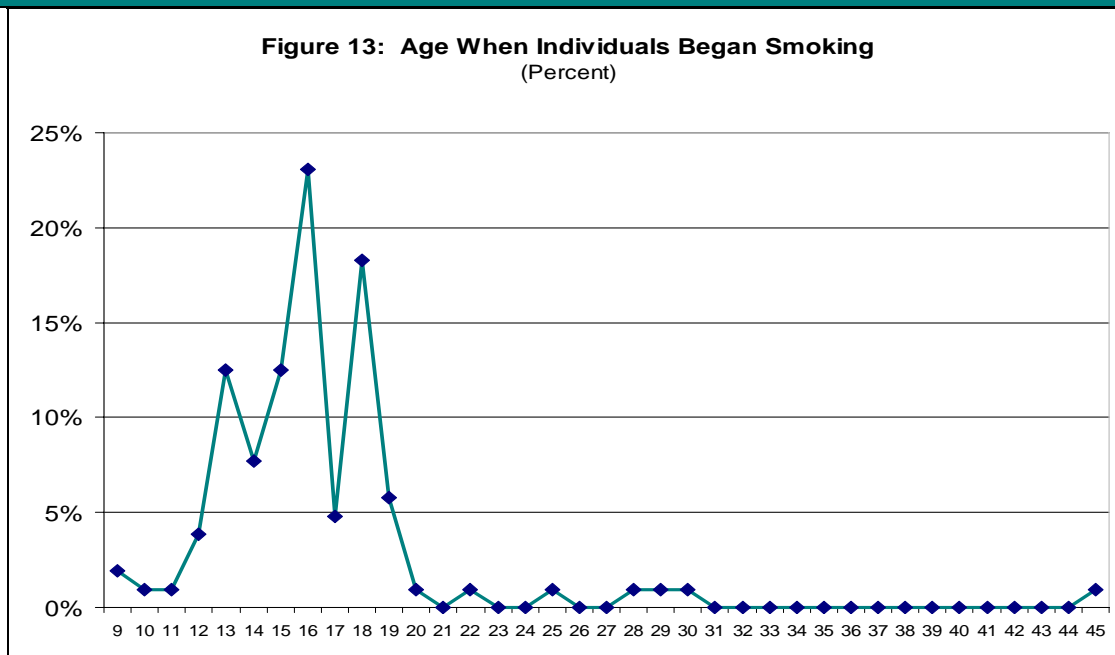
Seventy-two percent of those with insurance who required treatment of a mental illness received treatment.\*\*

## Lifestyle

### Smoking and Second-Hand Smoke

Sixteen percent of household members aged 18 and older reported that they currently smoke and 30% smoked previously but have quit (these numbers do not include one smoker who is 11-17 and 19 persons who are 0-17 and smoke but have quit). Figure 13 shows the ages when individuals began smoking.

\*\* Some analyses go below the level of generalizability.



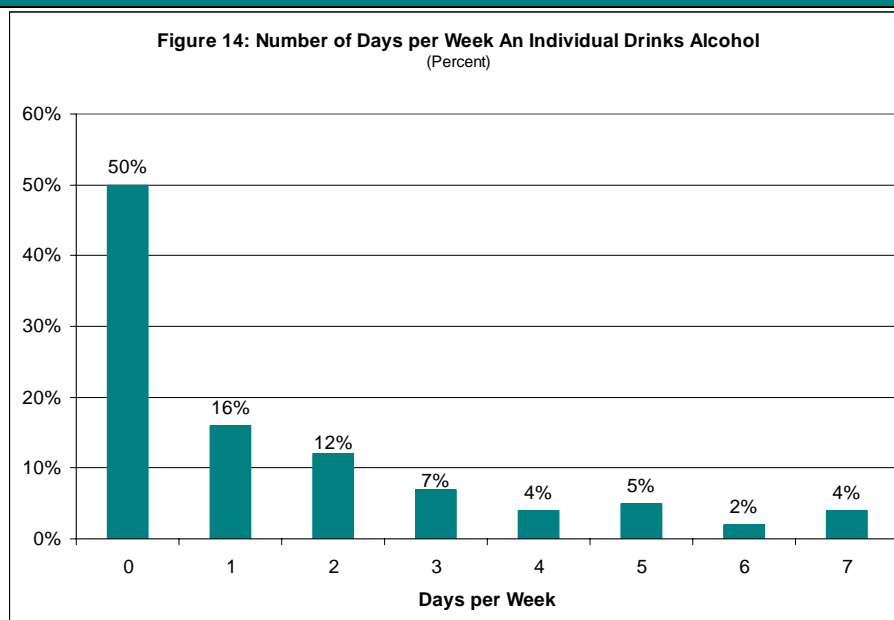
Only 12% of individuals (5% current smokers, 2% former smokers, and 5% who never smoked) were reported as being exposed to second-hand smoke on a daily basis. Of those exposed to second-hand smoke, exposure occurred at:

- Home (56%)
- Work (20%)
- A family member’s home (15%)
- A friend’s home (2%)
- Other places (8%)

### Drugs and Alcohol

Half of the individuals of drinking age (21 or older) were reported as *not drinking alcohol* any day of the week. (See Figure 14.) Of those who drink alcohol at least one day a week (50%), a majority (72%) have only one to two drinks each day that they drink; 19% of individuals have three drinks each day that they drink; and 9% have four or more drinks each day that they drink.

Considering problem drinking as more than two drinks four or more days a week, or more than four drinks on any number of days, 16% of adults aged 21 or older who drink are in this “problem” area.



**Table 5: Drinking by Gender**

Number of days per week	Sex (%)	
	Male	Female
None	44	56
Once	16	16
Twice or more	40	28

In the past 12 months, 21% of individuals who are of driving age (16 years old and older) have *driven a car after drinking* alcohol or using drugs. Of those who drove after drinking or using drugs, 66% were male and 34% were female, and all were adults 25 years old and older. In the past 12 months, 9% of individuals were a passenger in a car driven by a person who had been drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Two percent of individuals aged 13 or older were reported as having used illegal drugs in the past 12 months and only 0.2% of individuals were reported as having sought treatment for drug or alcohol abuse.

### Other Lifestyle Issues

More than half (52%) of individuals 16 years old or older were reported as knowing *CPR*. A majority of individuals (87%) were reported as *using sunscreen*. A majority of individuals (76%) were reported as *using a helmet* when appropriate. Nearly all household members (98%) were reported as *using a seatbelt* when riding in or driving a car.

Thirty-seven percent of households (n=69) in the sample had at least one school-aged child and provided information about their after-school care. Of those families that have a school-aged child, a majority reported that an adult in the household provides after-school care for the child (67%). Other *after-school arrangements* include:

- Child is home alone after school (16%)
- An older sibling provides after-school care (7%)
- Child attends an after-school program (5%)
- Child stays with a childcare provider (3%)
- A grandmother or another family member watches the child after school (2%)

Ninety-six percent were reported as *not* having been **impacted by violence or abuse** in the past 12 months. Of those (4%, n=26) who were reported as being impacted by violence, 35% were male and 65% were female. Types of violence were mostly family violence (64%) or other crime (28%) (individuals could choose more than one type of violence). School violence was reported by 8% and sexual violence by 4%.

Ninety-eight percent were reported as *not* having been **discriminated against**. Of those who were victims of discrimination (2.5%, n=16), only 13% reported having sought help from an agency.

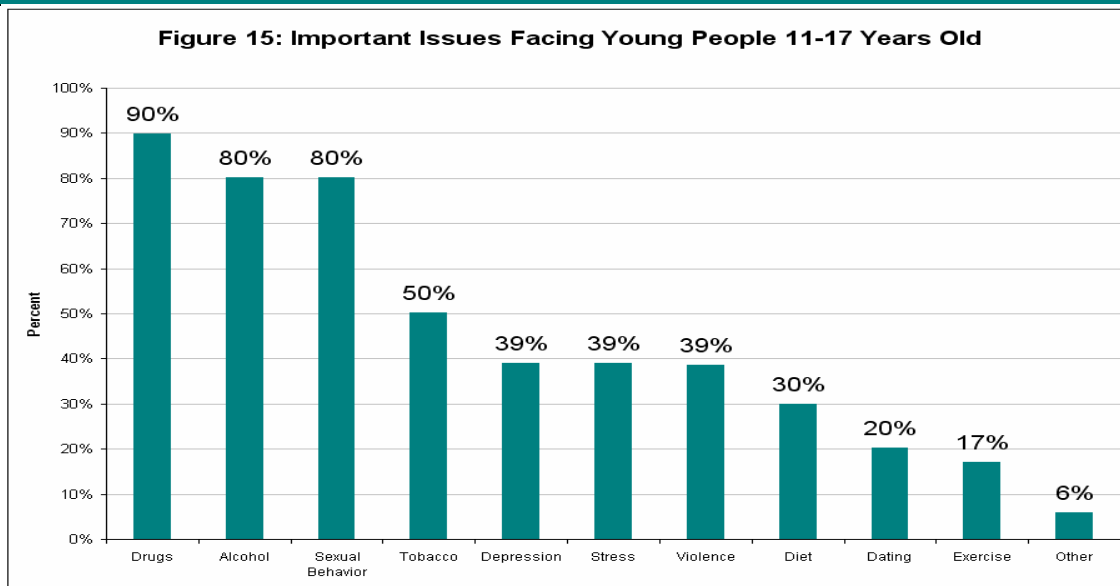
A majority of households (52%) reported that their **source of water** is a well and 48% of households reported that their water source is municipal. Ninety-four percent of households reported that they feel that their water supply was adequate in terms of quantity; 5% reported that their water supply was not adequate; and 1% reported that they did not know if their water supply was adequate. A majority of households (80%) reported that they felt their water supply was safe; 7% reported that their water supply was not safe; and 13% reported that they did not know if their water supply was safe. Only 0.5% of households reported that their water supply had caused an illness in the past 12 months, but 14% reported that they did not know if their water supply had caused any illness.

### Issues Facing Young People

The top five reported issues facing young people aged 11-17 years old are (in order): drugs, alcohol, sexual behavior, tobacco, and, tied in fifth place, depression, stress, and violence. Of the 6% (n=11) who reported other issues, the following were specified:

- Peer pressure
- Social acceptance
- Self-respect
- “Being like the cover girl”
- Education
- Lack of guidance, single parent homes, family dysfunction
- AIDS (medical issue), ADHD, STDs

See Figure 15.



A majority of households (78%) reported that comprehensive sexual information should be given to youths aged 11-17. Eighteen percent felt that this age group should receive *abstinence-based* sexual information, and 4% felt that they should receive *abstinence only* sexual information.

Eighty-five percent of households (n=160) reported currently having a member 11-17 years old. Of these households, the following topics are reported as having been discussed with the 11-17 year-old:

- Drugs (72%)
- Alcohol (69%)
- Tobacco (66%)
- Sexual Behavior (64%)
- Diet (55%)
- Dating (51%)
- Exercise (50%)
- Violence (41%)
- Stress (33%)
- Depression (29%)

Of the 64% of households (n=102) who had discussed sexual behavior with their 11-17 year-olds, the following specific topics were discussed:

- Abstinence (73%)
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections (66%)
- Contraception (50%)
- Pregnancy (54%)
- Sexual Violence (29%)
- How to communicate with a partner about sexual issues (15%)

Other topics parents mentioned discussing with their children aged 11-17 were: academics, death, values, church, mental illness, open communication, peer pressure, and pornography.

## Literacy and Employment

### Literacy

Ninety-seven percent of those individuals who are considered old enough to read were reported as being able to read well or very well. Of those who were considered not being able to read well (n=11), 62% were male and 38% were female. Among the 11 persons who could not read well, eight were 6 to 17 years old and three were 18 or over.

### Employment

Employment status of those 16 years old and older (62% of the sample, n=432) included:

- Full-time (37%)
- Part-time (14%)
- Students (9%)
- Homemakers (8%)
- Retired, Disabled and Unable to work, Unemployed (1% each)

Carroll County enjoys a high rate of employment, but interestingly only 37% of women aged 16 and older are employed full-time, compared to 63% of men.\*\* Women are much more likely, however, to work part-time: 78% compared to men at 22%.\*\*

**Table 6: Employment Status by Age for Persons Aged 16 or Older**

Age	Full-Time (%)	Part-Time (%)	Unemployed (%)	Student (%)	Homemaker (%)	Disabled and Unable to Work (%)	Retired (%)
<b>16-17 (n=40)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>63</b>	8	43	0	3	0
<b>18-25 (n=27)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>56</b>	0	41	0	4	0
<b>26-35 (n=73)</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>11</b>	0	1	27	1	0
<b>35-45 (n=150)</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>16</b>	.7	1	15	0	0
<b>46-55 (n=80)</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>10</b>	1	0	9	1	1
<b>56-65 (n=6)</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0</b>	17	0	0	17	17
<b>65+ (n=5)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	20	0	0	20	40

Note: Percents in Table 6 do not add to 100% because individuals can have more than one employment status. Percent is of the given age group.

\*\* Some analyses go below the level of generalizability.

**Strengths and Needs Assessment of Families with Children in Carroll County 2004:  
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**Community Services**

Respondents were asked to indicate which of a list of *community services* they or a family member had needed, whether they had been able to get it, and if used, how satisfied they were with the service. In the HC18 sample, the most needed/used service was the Carroll County Public Library, with 86% of households using it at a 99% level of satisfaction.

Table 7: Need for, Use of, and Satisfaction with Selected Community Services		Service Need and Usage (Percent of Households)			% of Users Satisfied
		Needed	Need but unable to get	Used	
General Services	Literacy Services	3	1	2	100
	Public Library Services	86	0	86	99
	Adult Education Classes	10	1	9	93
	Mentors for Youth	5	2	3	60
	Services for the disabled	5	1	4	71
	Help with heating or electric bill	3	2	1	100
	Alcohol or drug abuse Outpatient treatment	2	0	2	75
	Alcohol or dug abuse Inpatient treatment	1	0	1	50
	Subsidized housing/rental assistance	2	1	1	67
	Prescription assistance	6	2	4	100
	Counseling services	14	1	13	74
	Health services for uninsured/under-insured	2	1	1	No response
	Dental care at night or on weekends	13	4	9	100
	Medical care at night or on weekends	29	2	27	90
	Home health services	2	0	2	100
	Mental health services Outpatient treatment	7	0	7	83
	Mental health services Inpatient treatment	2	0	2	33
	Transportation to health care	2	0	2	100
	Other public transportation	6	0	6	100
Legal Services	10	1	9	100	
Health Department Services	Clinical/Nursing services	4	1	3	100
	Addiction services	1	0	1	100
	Environmental health services	3	1	2	100
Department of Social Services	Child support services	6	0	6	64
	Child protective services	1	0	1	100
	Food Stamps	4	1	3	100
	Medical Assistance	4	1	3	60
	Cash Assistance (TANF, SSI, Disability, etc.)	3	2	1	100

### **Services Used By 10% or More of the Households**

#### **Public Library Services (86%)**

- Of the households that used public libraries in the past year, all reported they were satisfied with the services offered
- The majority of single parents (90%) and married couples with children (85%) reported using public library services, while all the unmarried couples said they used them
- The majority of households in all the geographic areas—South Carroll (93%), Finksburg (90%), North Carroll (89%), West Carroll (83%), and Westminster (80%)—reported using public library services in the past year

#### **Medical Care at Night or on Weekends (27%)**

- Ninety percent of households that used this service in the past year reported they were satisfied with it
- One-third or less of unmarried couples (33%), married couples with children (28%), and single parents (16%) reported using medical care at night or on weekends in the past year
- More than a third of households in Finksburg (40%) and South Carroll (34%) reported using medical care at night or on weekends, while 26% in North Carroll, 24% in West Carroll, and 23% in Westminster used it

#### **Counseling Services (13%)**

- Seventy-four percent of households that used these services in the past year reported they were satisfied with them
- Nearly a quarter of households in North Carroll (24%) used counseling services in the past year, while 20% in Finksburg, 12% in West Carroll, 9% in Westminster, and 7% in South Carroll used them

### **Services Used by Less than 10% of the Households**

#### **Adult Education Classes (9%)**

- Ninety-three percent of households that used adult education classes in the past year reported they were satisfied with them

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- One-third of unmarried couples (33%) reported using adult education classes in the past year, while less than 10% of married couples with children (9%) and single parents (6%) used them
- Less than 20% of households in North Carroll (12%), South Carroll (11%), Finksburg (10%), Westminster (9%), and West Carroll (4%) used adult education classes in the past year

#### Dental Care at Night or on Weekends (9%)

- Of the households that used this service in the past year, all reported they were satisfied
- Less than 10% of married couples with children (9%) and single parents (5%) reported using dental/weekend services in the past year (*no unmarried couples used these services*)
- Less than 20% of households in South Carroll (14%), North Carroll (9%), Westminster (9%), and West Carroll (4%) used dental/weekend services (*none of the households in Finksburg used them*)

#### Legal Services (9%)

- Of the households that used this service in the past year, all reported they were satisfied with them
- One-third or less of unmarried couples (33%), single parents (32%), and married couples with children (5%) reported using legal services in the past year
- Nearly a third of households in Finksburg (30%) reported using legal services in the past year, while 15% in North Carroll, 11% in Westminster, and 5% in South Carroll used them (*none of the households in West Carroll area used them*)

#### Mental Health Services Outpatient Treatment (7%)

- Eighty-three percent of households that used these services in the past year reported they were satisfied with them
- Eleven percent of single parents and 7% of married couples with children reported using mental health services outpatient treatment in the past year (*no unmarried couples used them*)
- Twenty percent or less of households in Finksburg (20%), North Carroll (12%), Westminster (6%), and South Carroll (5%) reported using mental health services outpatient treatment (*none of the households in West Carroll area reported using these services*)

### Other Public Transportation (6%)

- Of the households that used this service in the past year, all reported they were satisfied with them
- Less than 10% of married couples with children (6%) and single parents (5%) reported using other public transportation in the past year (*no unmarried couples used them*)
- Ten percent or less of households in Finksburg (10%), Westminster (8%), South Carroll (7%), and North Carroll (3%) reported using other public transportation (*none of the households West Carroll used them*)

### Child Support Services (6%)

- Sixty-four percent of households that used these services in the past year reported they were satisfied with them
- A third or less of unmarried couples (33%), single parents (29%), and married couples with children (3%) reported using child support services in the past year
- West Carroll (16%) had the highest number of households that used child support services, while less than 10% in Westminster (6%), North Carroll (6%), and South Carroll (2%) used them (*none of the households in Finksburg area used them*)

### Sources of Information for Services in Carroll County

Households were able to select as many sources of information as desired and the most selected source of information was the telephone, followed by friends or relatives, the Internet, and the library (see Figure 16).

Of the 29% (n=54) of households that reported using the *newspaper for information*, the following were specified: Carroll County Times, Baltimore Sun, Eldersburg Gazette, Eldersburg Eagle, and Carroll County General Hospital News.

Of the 12% (n=22) of households that reported using *schools for information*, the following were specified: Francis Scott Key Elementary School, Liberty High School, North Carroll High School, Westminster High School, Carroll Springs, Century High School, Department of Education, East Middle School, Manchester, Mechanicsville Elementary School, New Windsor Middle School, Piney Ridge Elementary School, Public School, SCNC, West Elementary School, and Winfield Elementary School.

Of the 7% (n=14) of households that stated they used *faith-based organizations for information*, the following were specified: Westminster United Methodist Church, St. Johns Catholic, Grace Lutheran, and St. Bartholomew.

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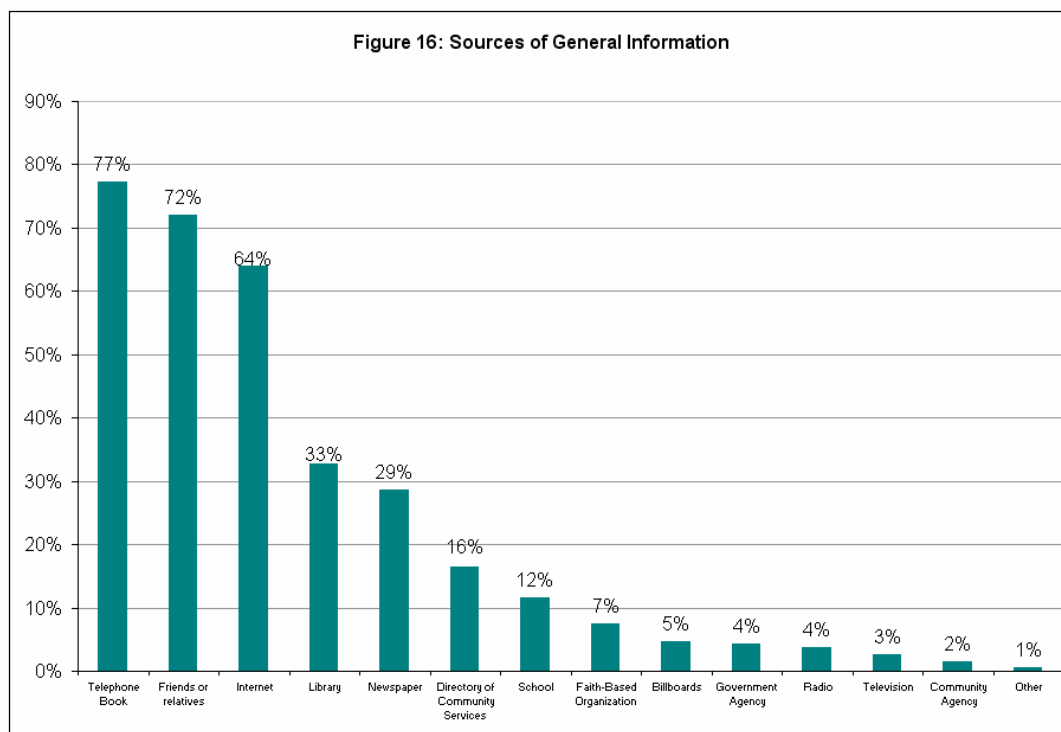
Of the 4% (n=7) of households that reported using the *radio for information*, the following radio stations were specified: WTTR, WBAL, MIX 106.5, and 98 Rock.

Of the 4% (n=8) of households that stated they used *government agencies for information*, the following agencies were specified: Department of Social Services, Commissioner’s Office, Department of Education, Family and Children Services, Town Hall Hampstead, Library, and Information Line.

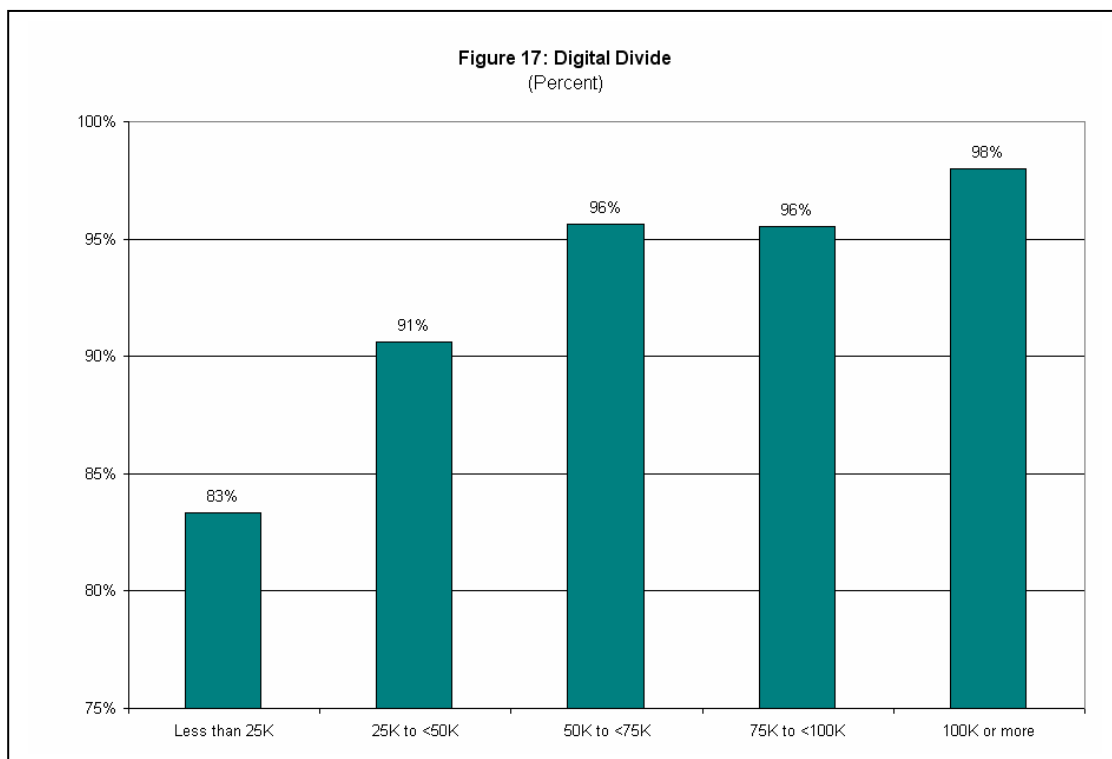
Of the 3% (n=5) of households that reported they used the *television for information*, the following stations were specified: Channel 3, Channel 13, Local Adelpia, Channel, and Fox News.

Of the 2% (n=3) of households that stated they used *community agencies for information*, the following were specified: Carroll County Health Department, Chamber of Commerce, and Boy Scouts.

Of the 1% (n=1) of households that stated *other sources of information*, all reported that their doctor was the source.



A majority of families have Internet access at home. Income did have a slight effect on whether the family had Internet access at home; those who made less than \$25,000 annually were less likely to have Internet access at home than those who made more than \$25,000. See Figure 17.



### **Quality of Life**

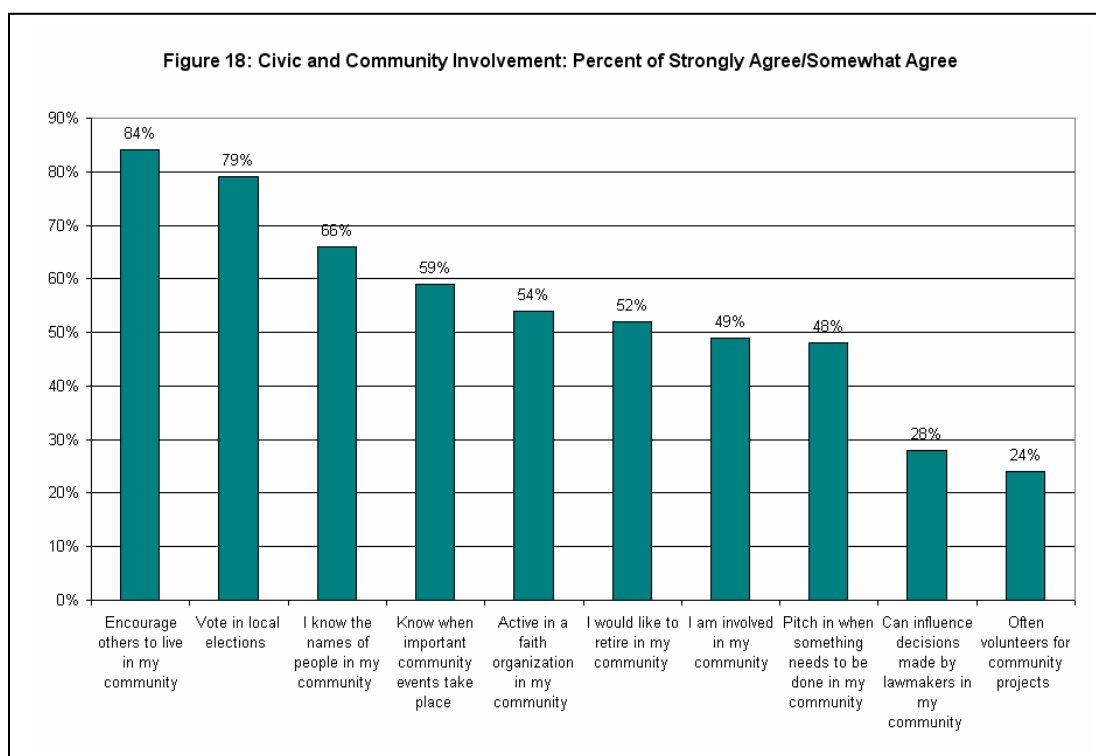
Respondents were asked to strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with a series of statements related to several aspects of quality of life, including: civic/community involvement/attachment, community amenities/opportunities/safety, and transportation. Table 8 provides a breakdown of these responses.

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**Table 8: Degree of Agreement with Selected Quality of Life Statements (%)**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does Not Apply
I usually pitch in when something needs to be done in the community (n=183)	13	35	30	10	5	7
I know the names of a lot of people in my community n=(182)	25	41	13	12	7	1
I am involved in my community (n=181)	18	31	27	13	8	3
I can influence the decisions that are made by the lawmakers in my community (n=181)	3	25	32	18	19	2
There are public places in the community where community members can get together (n=184)	15	42	30	7	4	2
I know when important community events take place (n=184)	18	41	21	10	8	1
I often volunteer for community projects (n=182)	7	17	24	22	17	13
I can afford housing that meets my needs in my community (n=182)	30	40	12	10	7	1
I would use public transportation if it were available in my community (n=184)	9	16	16	13	37	9
I need public transportation to get around in my community (n=181)	2	2	9	8	55	23
I could find a job in my profession in my community (n=185)	23	21	15	16	20	5
I am satisfied with the length of my commute (n=184)	27	24	8	10	16	15
I vote in local elections (n=185)	63	16	6	2	9	4
There are enough parks and recreational facilities in my community (n=184)	27	38	9	18	8	1
There are enough safe, organized social activities for teens in my community (n=184)	5	14	22	24	27	9
There are enough cultural and arts opportunities in my community (n=184)	7	23	26	24	16	3
I feel safe in my community (n=183)	36	50	9	4	1	0
I am active in a faith organization in my community (n=185)	33	21	17	9	12	9
I would encourage others to live in my community (n=185)	42	42	11	2	3	1
I would like to retire in my community (n=184)	25	27	24	11	13	1

## Civic/Community Involvement/Attachment Statements



### “I would encourage others to live in my community.”

Overall, 84% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 5% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 11% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Two-thirds or more of married couples with children (86%), single parents (70%), and unmarried couples (67%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I would encourage others to live in my community*.
- The majority of households with children in Finksburg (90%), Westminster (90%), North Carroll (89%), and South Carroll (82%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I would encourage others to live in my community*, while 60% in West Carroll strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- A higher number of new residents (89%) than long-term residents (80%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I would encourage others to live in my community*.

“I vote in local elections.”

Overall, 79% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 11% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 6% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- The majority of single parents (90%) and married couples with children (77%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I vote in local elections*, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- In all the geographic areas—Westminster (83%), Finksburg (80%), North Carroll (80%), West Carroll (80%), and South Carroll (71%)—the majority of households with children strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I vote in local elections*.
- A majority of new residents (75%) and long-term residents (81%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I vote in local elections*.

“I know the names of a lot of people in my community.”

Overall, nearly two-thirds of respondents (66%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 19% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 13% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Over half of single parents (70%) and married couples with children (65%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I know the names of a lot of people in my community*, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- More than half of households with children in North Carroll (69%), West Carroll (68%), Westminster (67%), South Carroll (65%), and Finksburg (60%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I know the names of a lot of people in my community*.
- The majority of new residents (58%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I know the names of a lot of people in my community*, and 72% of long-term residents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.

“I know when important community events take place.”

Fifty-nine percent of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 18% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- More than half of single parents (65%) and married couples with children (59%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I know when important community events take place*, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.

- Over half of households with children in Finksburg (70%), North Carroll (63%), Westminster (61%), South Carroll (57%), and West Carroll (52%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I know when important community events take place.***
- More than half of both new residents (58%) and long-term residents (61%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I know when important community events take place.***

**“I am active in a faith organization in my community.”**

Overall, 54% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 21% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- More than half of single parents (65%) and married couples with children (53%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am active in a faith organization in my community***, while none of the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Fifty percent or more of households with children in West Carroll (56%), North Carroll (54%), South Carroll (53%), Westminster (53%), and Finksburg (50%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am active in a faith organization in my community***.
- Slightly less than half of new residents (45%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am active in a faith organization in my community***, while 59% of long-term residents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.

**“I would like to retire in my community.”**

Overall, 52% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 24% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- One-third or more of married couples with children (52%), single parents (45%), and unmarried couples (33%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I would like to retire in my community***.
- Nearly half or more of households with children in Westminster (63%), North Carroll (57%), and West Carroll (48%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I would like to retire in my community***, while a third or more in Finksburg (40%) and South Carroll (34%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Half of long-term residents (50%) and slightly more than half of new residents (55%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I would like to retire in my community***.

“I am involved in my community.”

Nearly half of respondents (49%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 21% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 27% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- The majority of unmarried couples (67%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am involved in my community***, while nearly half of married couples with children (48%) and single parents (45%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Fifty percent or less of households with children in Finksburg (50%), South Carroll (50%), North Carroll (49%), Westminster (49%), and West Carroll (44%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am involved in my community***.
- Less than half of new residents (42%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am involved in my community***, while 53% of long-term residents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.

“I usually pitch in when something needs to be done in the community.”

Overall, 48% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 15% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 30% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Over half of unmarried couples (67%) and married couples with children (51%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I usually pitch in when something needs to be done in the community***, while 25% of single parents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- More than a third of households with children in South Carroll (53%), Westminster (52%), West Carroll (52%), Finksburg (40%), and North Carroll (37%) areas agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I usually pitch in when something needs to be done in the community***.
- Less than half of new residents (42%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I usually pitch in when something needs to be done in the community***, while 52% of long-term residents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.

“I can influence the decisions that are made by the lawmakers in my community.”

Overall, 28% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 37% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 32% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- One-third or less of unmarried couples (33%), single parents (30%), and married couples with children (28%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I can influence the decisions that are made by the lawmakers in my community.***
- Less than a third of households with children in West Carroll (32%), Westminster (30%), Finksburg (30%), North Carroll (29%), and South Carroll (21%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I can influence the decisions that are made by the lawmakers in my community.***
- Less than a third of both new residents (23%) and long-term residents (32%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I can influence the decisions that are made by the lawmakers in my community.***

“I often volunteer for community projects.”

Overall, 24% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 39% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- A third or less of unmarried couples (33%), married couples with children (27%), and single parents (15%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I often volunteer for community projects.***
- Less than a third of households with children in Westminster (29%), North Carroll (26%), South Carroll (26%), West Carroll (24%), and Finksburg (20%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I often volunteer for community projects.***
- Less than one-third of both new residents (21%) and long-term residents (30%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I often volunteer for community projects.***

## Community Amenities/Opportunities/Safety Statements

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### “I feel safe in my community.”

Overall, 86% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 5% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 9% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- The majority of married couples with children (87%) and single parents (85%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I feel safe in my community*, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- All the households with children in Finksburg strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I feel safe in my community*, while the majority in Westminster (91%), North Carroll (88%), South Carroll (80%), and West Carroll (76%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- A smaller proportion of long-term residents (83%) than new residents (92%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I feel safe in my community*.

### “I can afford housing that meets my needs in my community.”

Overall, 70% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 17% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 12% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Over half of married couples with children (71%) and single parents (55%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I can afford housing that meets my needs in my community***, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- More than 50% of households with children in Finksburg (80%), West Carroll (76%), North Carroll (74%), Westminster (71%), and South Carroll (58%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I can afford housing that meets my needs in my community***.
- Two-thirds or more of both long-term residents (72%) and new residents (67%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I can afford housing that meets my needs in my community***.

“There are enough parks and recreational facilities in my community.”

Overall, 65% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 26% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 9% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- More than half of married couples with children (64%) and single parents (60%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are enough parks and recreational facilities in my community***, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Nearly two-thirds or more of households with children in Finksburg (70%), Westminster (68%), North Carroll (63%), South Carroll (62%), and West Carroll (60%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are enough parks and recreational facilities in my community***.
- Nearly an equal number of new residents (64%) and long-term residents (65%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are enough parks and recreational facilities in my community***.

“There are public places in the community where community members can get together.”

Overall, 57% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 11% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 30% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- More than half of single parents (55%) and married couples with children (57%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are public places in the community where community members can get together***, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.

- More than half of households with children in North Carroll (66%), Finksburg (60%), South Carroll (57%), West Carroll (56%), and Westminster (54%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are public places in the community where community members can get together.***
- An equal number of both new residents (58%) and long-term residents (58%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are public places in the community where community members can get together.***

“I could find a job in my profession in my community.”

Overall, 44% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 36% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Over half of unmarried couples (67%) and single parents (55%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I could find a job in my profession in my community***, while 44% of married couples with children strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Nearly half or more of households with children in Westminster (51%), Finksburg (50%), and North Carroll (49%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I could find a job in my profession in my community***, while more than a third in South Carroll (36%) and 32% in West Carroll areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Slightly fewer new residents (41%) than long-term residents (46%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I could find a job in my profession in my community***.

“There are enough cultural and arts opportunities in my community.”

Overall, 30% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 40% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 26% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Many of the single parents (40%) and a third or less of unmarried couples (33%) and married couples with children (28%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are enough cultural and arts opportunities in my community.***
- Less than half of households with children in Westminster (43%), Finksburg (30%), North Carroll (29%), South Carroll (25%), and West Carroll (8%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***There are enough cultural and arts opportunities in my community.***

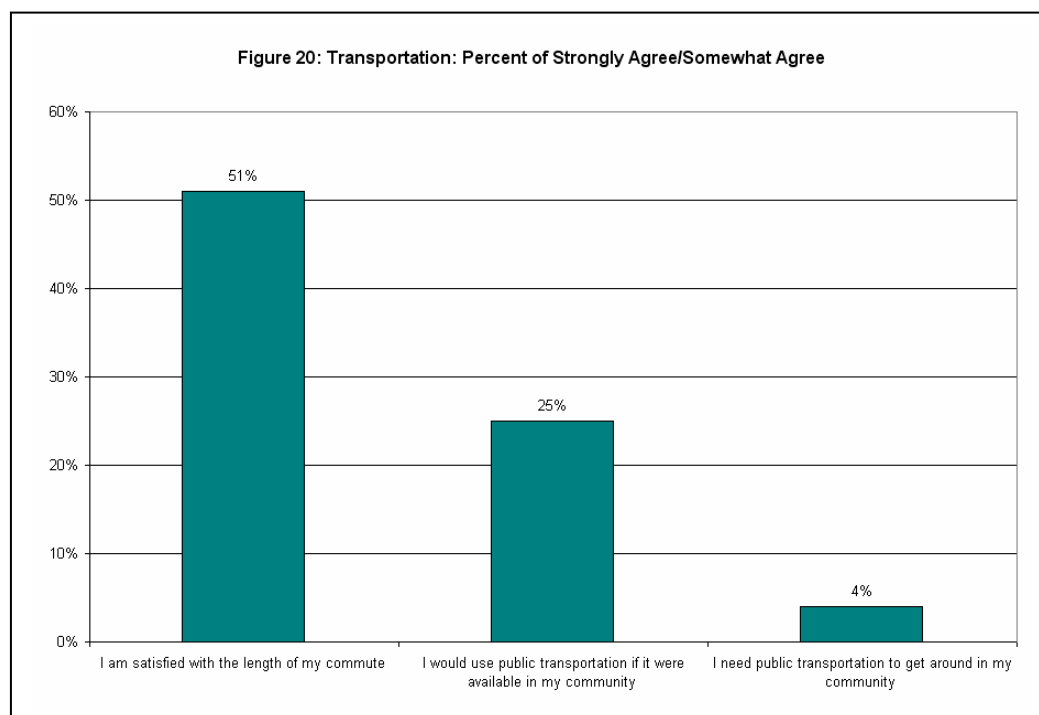
- Less than a third of long-term residents (30%) and new residents (31%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *There are enough cultural and arts opportunities in my community*.

“There are enough safe, organized social activities for teens in my community.”

Overall, 19% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 51% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 22% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- The majority of unmarried couples (67%) but only 19% of married couples with children and 10% of single parents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *There are enough safe, organized social activities for teens in my community*.
- Less than 25% of households with children in Westminster (24%), North Carroll (18%), South Carroll (18%), West Carroll (12%), and Finksburg (10%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *There are enough safe, organized social activities for teens in my community*.
- Less than 25% of both long-term residents (18%) and new residents (21%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *There are enough safe, organized social activities for teens in my community*.

### Transportation Statements



“I am satisfied with the length of my commute.”

Overall, 51% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 26% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 8% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Nearly half or more of single parents (65%) and married couples with children (49%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am satisfied with the length of my commute***, while all the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- More than half of households with children in Finksburg (60%), North Carroll (57%), West Carroll (56%), and Westminster (53%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am satisfied with the length of my commute***, while 41% in South Carroll area strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Fewer new residents (45%) than long-term residents (56%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I am satisfied with the length of my commute***.

“I would use public transportation if it were available in my community.”

Overall, 25% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 50% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Many of the single parents (40%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I would use public transportation if it were available in my community***, while a third or less of unmarried couples (33%) and married couples with children (23%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- More than a third of households in North Carroll area (34%) agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I would use public transportation if it were available in my community***, while less than one-third in West Carroll (32%), Westminster (24%), South Carroll (18%), and Finksburg (10%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.
- Less than a third of new residents (23%) and long-term residents (26%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I would use public transportation if it were available in my community***.

“I need public transportation to get around in my community.”

Overall, 4% of respondents strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement, while 63% strongly disagreed/somewhat disagreed and 9% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Less than a third of single parents (22%) and married couples with children (3%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement ***I need public transportation to***

*get around in my community*, while none of the unmarried couples strongly agreed/somewhat agreed.

- Less than 10% of households with children in North Carroll (9%), West Carroll (8%), Westminster (3%), and South Carroll (2%) areas strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I need public transportation to get around in my community* (*none of the households in Finksburg area strongly agreed/somewhat agreed*).
- Less than 10% of both long-term residents (4%) and new residents (6%) strongly agreed/somewhat agreed with the statement *I need public transportation to get around in my community*.

## METHODOLOGY

### Institutional Review Board

The study protocol was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of UMBC, which provides oversight of university research that involves human subjects to insure their privacy and safety. The study was approved under expedited review and a waiver of informed consent was granted.

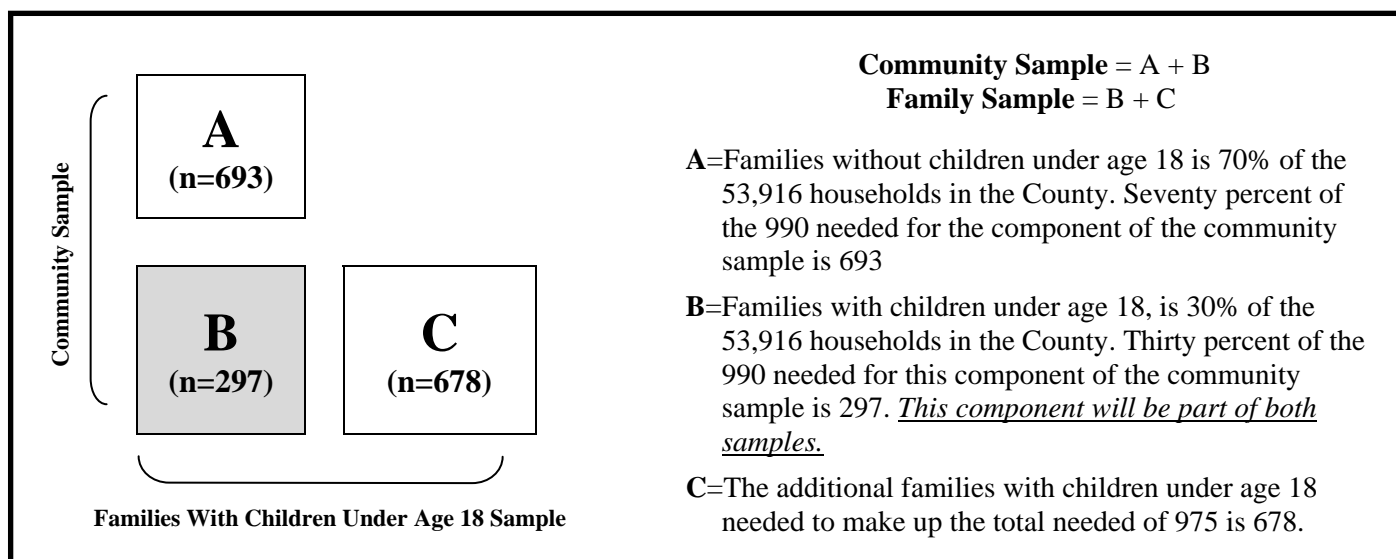
### Sample Selection

Households were selected from a purchased list of 5,000 randomly selected households, which were segmented into households with children under 18 and households without children under 18. The proportions of the household types were determined from the Census and used in apportioning the stratified sample for the overall community (OC). A single sample was drawn randomly from the HC18 list and a portion of it was used as the second strata of the OC sample.

To address the inevitability of some non-response, each sample was over-sampled 60% with the goal of achieving a high enough return to preserve the desired confidence level and margin of error, 95% and 4%, respectively. The final confidence level and margin of error are 95% and 5%, respectively.

Based on approximately 53,000 households, with a proportion of households without children being 70% and households with children under 18 being 30%, 693 and 297 households, respectively, were selected for each strata of the OC sample. An additional 678 households were drawn randomly from the HC18 list to complete the HC18 sample. A total of 1,668 surveys were mailed to Carroll County households.

**Table 9: Schema for the HC18 and OC Sample Selection**



### **Survey Development and Pilot Testing**

The instrument for this study was developed by researchers in conjunction with the Steering Committee for the project, composed of representatives from the sponsoring organizations. Over a period of several months, the group worked to meld critical components from other household surveys with elements deemed essential by various members of the work group.

The final survey instrument covers ten topics plus demographics information. These topics are:

- General Health Measures
- Dental Health
- Health Insurance
- Disability
- Mental Health
- Lifestyle
- Literacy and Employment
- Community Services
- Childcare/After-School Care
- Quality of Life

The survey was pilot tested to ascertain content validity and respondent burden (time to complete the survey and other respondent concerns). Twenty-two pilot surveys were returned. Changes were made based on the feedback of pilot test respondents, including changes to a few question responses and survey layout issues such as font and room for comments. The average time to complete the survey was 25 minutes.

### **Survey Administration**

The initial contact with the randomly selected households was an introductory letter, sent on the letterhead of the Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, advising respondents of their selection, timeframes for the survey's dissemination, and the opportunity to win one of three incentives offered for participation. A few recipients declined participation; these households were replaced with others drawn randomly from the residual list.

The survey was mailed to the randomly selected households in October 2004 and data was collected through the end of December 2004. Postage-paid envelopes were provided for survey return and returns were tracked so that follow-up postcards and phone calls could be made to non-respondents.

A total of 351 surveys were returned. Interestingly, since some households gained children through birth and now had children under 18, which they did not during the original sample drawing, or in some cases children had aged out of the HC18 sample, the returns had to be redistributed among the target groups. The final returns for the stratified OC sample totaled

162 from the households with no children under age 18; 128 from the portion of HC18 included in the second strata of the OC sample; and 128 from the remainder of the HC18 sample. A total of 223 households and 536 people were in the final OC sample; 189 households and 697 people were in the HC18 sample.

### **Data Analysis**

Surveys were entered into a specially designed ACCESS database and imported into SAS for analysis. Frequencies and cross tabulations were performed in each section of the survey as directed by the Steering Committee. Because the responding families were different than the planned proportionately balanced group of the mailed sample, weights were calculated and applied to each strata of the OC sample. Weights were calculated so as to recreate the appropriate proportions to the strata without increasing the overall number of observations in the analysis. The final weights are 1.05 for the OC stratum without children and .98 for the stratum with children. This was not necessary with the HC18 sample since there was no stratification.

Some of percentages within survey items will not add up to 100% due to rounding. Also, readers are advised that analyses between individual questions are not meant to add to 100% and in some instances only salient portions of items are analyzed so that full percentages are not shown.

Items are either analyzed as household measures or individual measures, or subsets of these. Household measures are those that ask about the experience of the household generally, and not about a specific member. Some of these questions may be directed to the primary respondent only. Most questions, however, have responses for each member of the household and are analyzed at the “individual” level. The denominator upon which a particular percentage is based will vary according to the subset of the population being considered, and directs the statement that will be made. Therefore, statements in this analysis are about persons living in randomly selected households, including analyses by gender and age groups. Some analyses go below the level of generalizability and have been marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) for the reader’s awareness.