



GARRETT COUNTY

Data Insight

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND
CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

PREVIEW

*This is a **Data Insight Preview**. The full **Data Insight** is expected to be released soon!*



DATA INSIGHT

C: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION





Community Story

Hundreds of thousands visit Garrett County annually to enjoy outdoor recreation. Numerous public parks, lakes, and wooded trails make it desirable. However, some residents find it challenging to take advantage of recreational resources that our visitors access. In the recent publication of the 2022-2024 Community Health Assessment, 24.5% of adults reported they do not participate in leisure time physical activity, and 17.4% reported having poor to fair health according to the Indicators section of the report. In addition, 35.5% of the adult population is obese, with a BMI at or above 30. It's known that "rural children and adults have significantly higher rates of obesity than our urban counterparts," according to a research brief published by Active Living Research. Despite our challenges participating in physical activity, our community ranked Physical Activity as the third most crucial topic they want to address. We responded by creating a collective community initiative that put Garrett County in motion.



We started with our data to design GC In Motion to ensure an equitable and informed process that engages everyone! Below, you will find primary and secondary data sources that help us drive our programmatic decisions. In addition, we have real-time data sets, so anyone in the community can see how a program or intervention performs and join in the effort. We built an open-source population health framework because it's not enough to simply have the data. How does data move us into action? The Garrett County Planning Tool, replicated in urban and rural communities across the Nation, is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and empowers the entire community to work collaboratively on strategies that move the needle in a transparent space where data is collected and acted upon. This is a homegrown innovation where everyone can sit at the table. Please join the discussion at mygarrettcountry.com.

One agency can't do all the work to make a difference; this Data Insight captures the various factors and community partners that make physical activity accessible, safe, and an easy choice with policies and programs designed to reduce social and financial barriers to participation. Together, we provide miles of maintained multi-use trails, reduce barriers to utilization of our public parks, improve access to new types of movement through fitness classes, provide transportation to fitness clubs, and improve infrastructure to ensure persons with disability have access to outdoor spaces. We maintain a well-being blog and a community step challenge to keep physical activity in mind. We highlight national and state campaigns that foster activity and highlight local resources for those seeking more opportunities as we strive to eliminate health disparities and provide equitable access to services.

Get involved on a variety of levels:

If you prefer in-person meetings, contact information is available for leadership in the area of Physical Activity, along with a list of coalitions open to the public that address various issues related to physical activity in community health improvement efforts. Remember, you can always log in to

mygarrettcountry.com and join the discussion in the Action Groups focusing on physical activity and check out the community impacts those programs are making. If you know of something taking place in the community that we may have missed, please let us know and help us get others involved in building a collaborative community as we work together to improve health in Garrett County.

Sources:

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9307466/>
- https://activelivingresearch.org/sites/activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_RuralCommunities_Sept2015.pdf

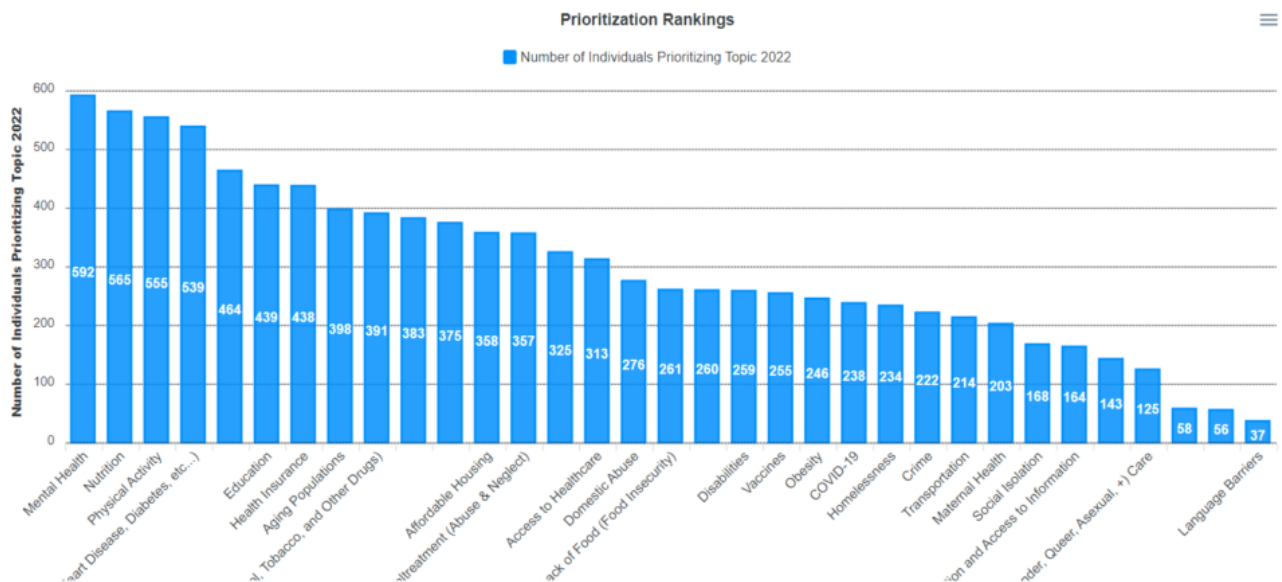


Data Story

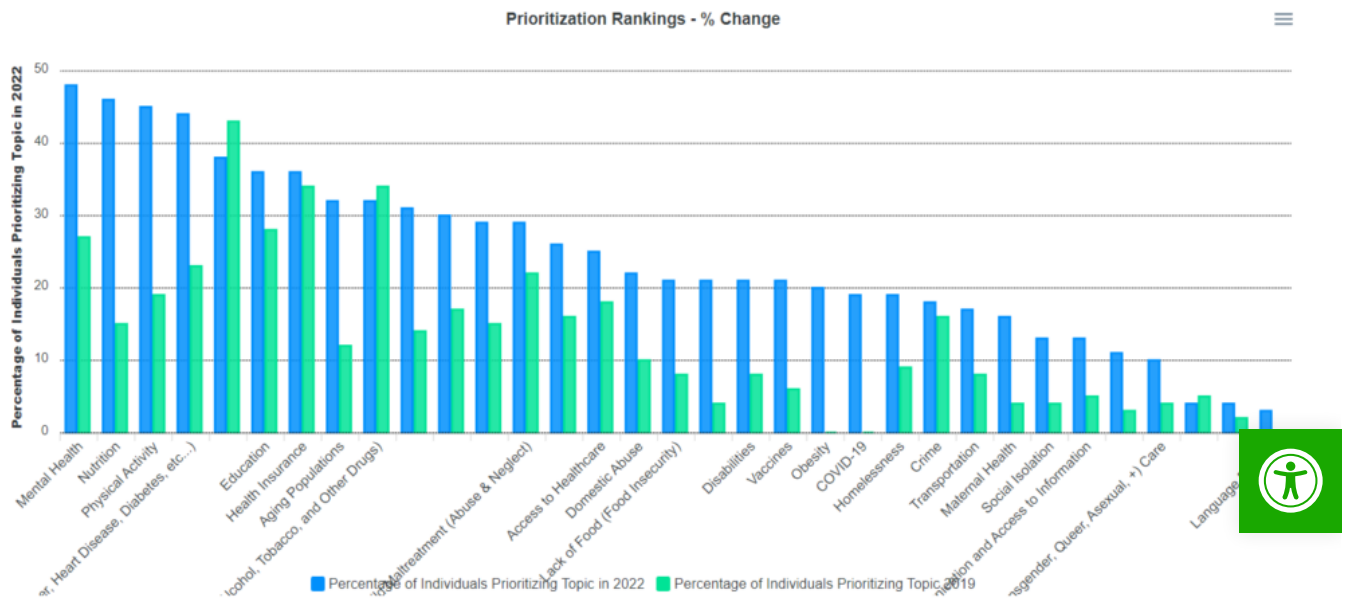
Telling a story about our data is vital to understanding the impact of programs, systems, and improvement efforts in our community. Here’s the baseline data from our current Community Health Assessment regarding physical activity. These data points are a collection of surveys and research and provide information for our community to create comprehensive strategies. These data points are not comparable outside of the individual survey instruments.

Assessment Data

Physical activity ranks third by community vote as one of the top health concerns. The chart below illustrates our community prioritization rankings in 2022 with the percentage of change in the next chart.



A interactive version of this graph, with additional data, is available at:
<https://charp.garrettcountyapps.com/>



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Focus groups were held as guided conversations about the top five issues people identified as their main concerns in our latest community prioritization survey. Below is the beginning of the focus group discussions about physical activity conducted in June of 2022.

To read the full analysis visit <https://mygarrettcounty.com/cha2024/>, and select the assessment narrative on page 10.

Focus Group Analysis

Physical Activity ranked third, up from eighth place three years ago at a 129% increase on consumer surveys. Discussions centered around our environment as it relates to physical activity, with complete consensus surrounding the beauty of our area, with most enjoying all four seasons. For adventurous people, there are also opportunities on public lands and moderate to challenging park trails. However, access is a huge obstacle for those who enjoy or require low-intensity activities or have disabilities. Very few sidewalks or designated bike paths exist. Unless people are willing to take the risk of walking or riding on the roads, there are very few options for outdoor exercise. People talked about cost and safety as barriers to physical activity. Some felt state parks are expensive to utilize and full of tourists during the summer, making them a less desirable option. However, several town parks were mentioned as unsafe because of broken or outdated equipment and used drug needles left in play areas, according to focus group participants. Many felt that the ski resort and swimming pool were not priced for local wages, making it difficult to enjoy the amenities within the

county. One community member said, "I'm not driving 27 miles to swim in the pool and then pay extra for classes after I join." Fitness classes and gym memberships are also expensive and lack childcare options. For the average working family in Garrett County, designated time for a physical activity routine for health is not the cultural norm. One community member said, "People are just getting by, with the demands of kids and sometimes working more than 40 hours a week, there isn't time left, and if there was, I'd be too tired." In every focus group, community members want more for kids to do and are concerned that they don't spend time outdoors and playing. Obesity was touched on, and concern seemed to be focused on childhood obesity. Many attributed the lack of physical activity to device use and internet connection. Solutions to the issues included more free things to do, community events, and fitness opportunities. Similar to the last report, community members want a YMCA-type center in the community close to them.

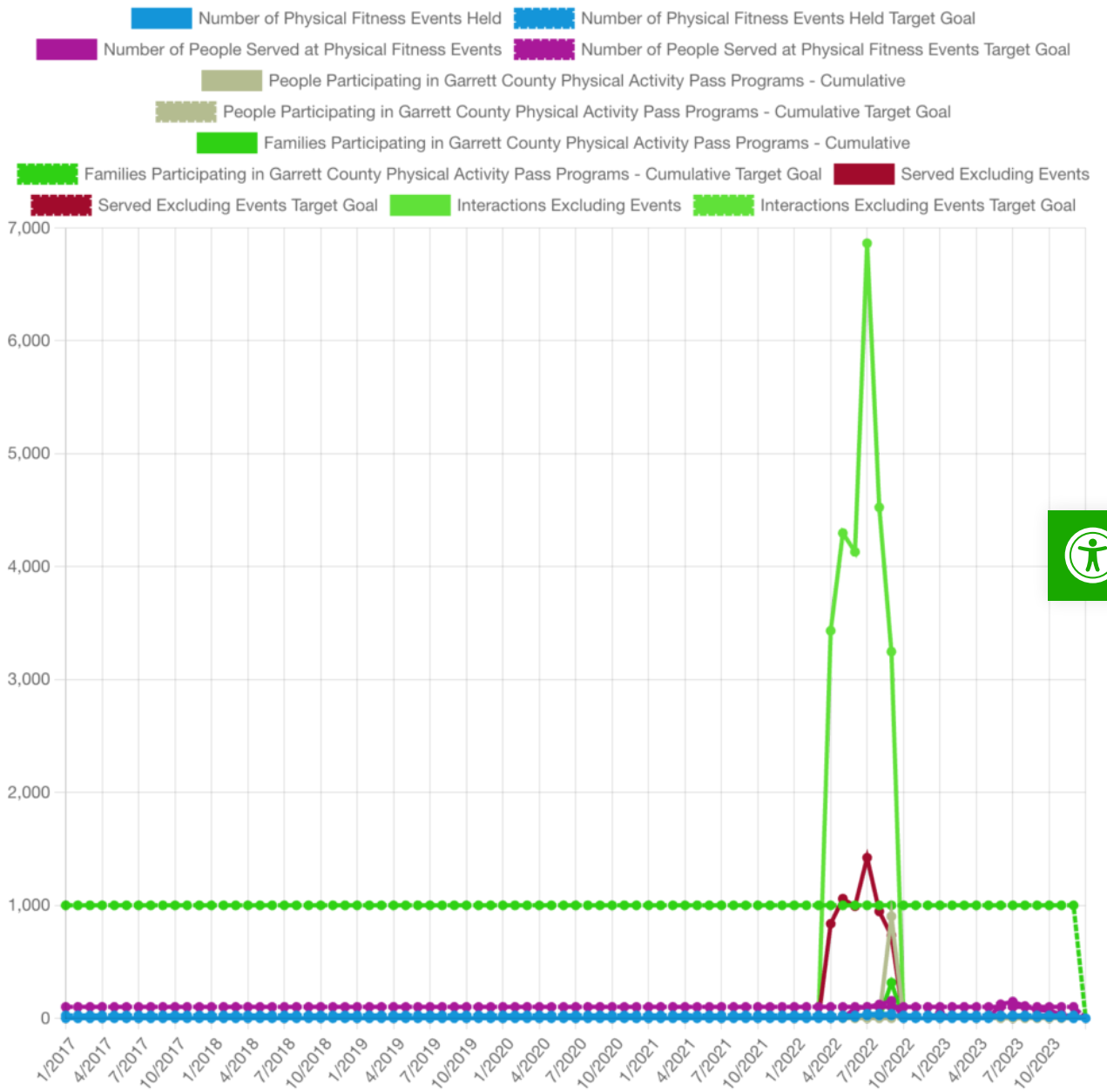
Primary Data

MyGarrettCounty.com Action Group Data (Real-Time Data)



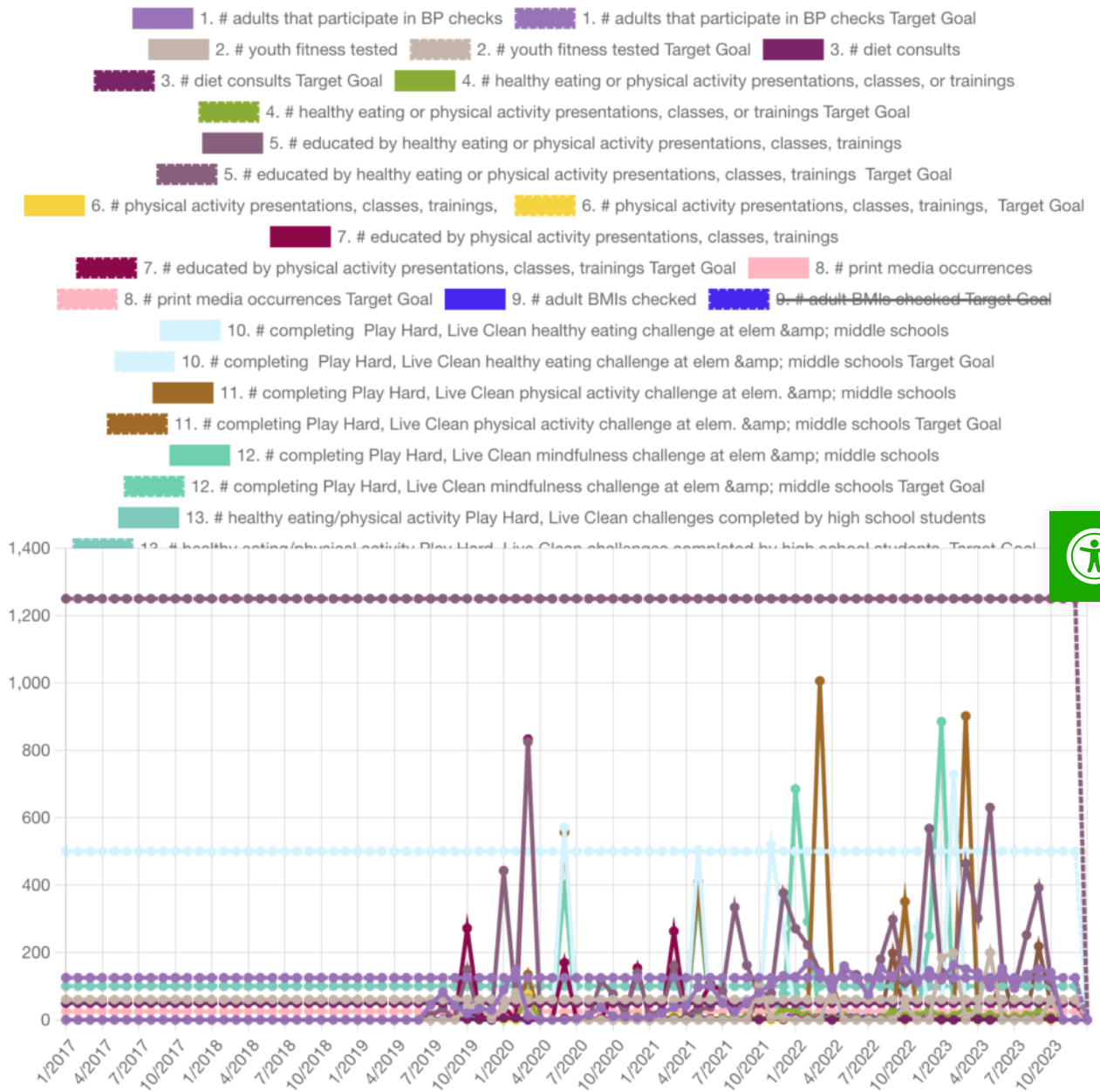
GC In Motion

<https://mygarrettcountry.com/groups/gc-in-motion/>



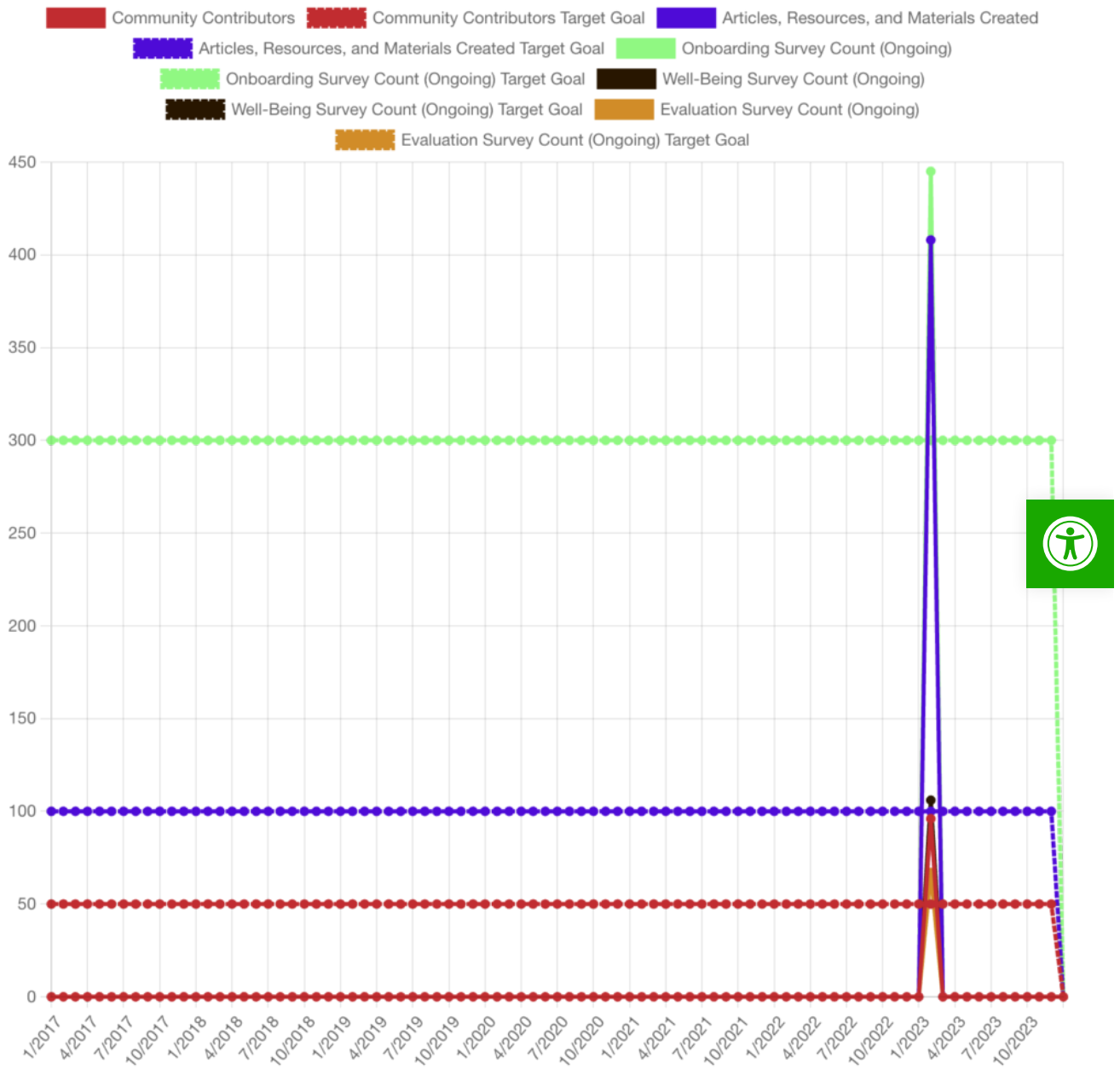
Prevent and Reduce Obesity

<https://mygarrettcountry.com/groups/prevent-and-reduce-obesity/>



Go! Garrett County

<https://mygarrettcountry.com/groups/go-gc/>

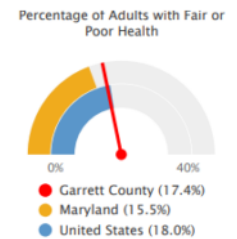


Secondary Data

Poor or Fair Health

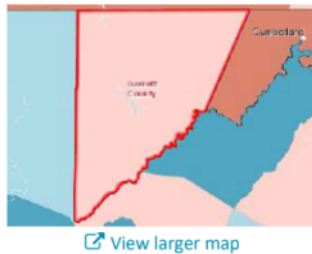
This measure is an important indicator to understand the impact of physical and mental health on self reported health status.

Report Area	Population Age 18+	Adults with Poor or Fair Health	Percentage of Adults with Poor or Fair Health
Garrett County, MD	6,401	1,112	17.4%
Maryland	3,195,098	495,415	15.5%
United States	172,018,492	30,907,322	18.0%



Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via County Health Rankings. 2018. Source geography: County



Adults with Poor or Fair Health, Rank by County, CHR 2021

- 1st Quartile (Top 25%)
- 2nd Quartile
- 3rd Quartile
- 4th Quartile (Bottom 25%)
- Bottom Quintile (Rhode Island Only)
- No Data or Data Suppressed; -1
- Garrett County, MD



Source: Page 134 – Garrett County Community Health Assessment Indicators Report – Garrett County – <https://mygarrettcountry.com/cha2024/>



Take Action

We have an opportunity and a duty to continue improving access to physical activity for Garrett County. This directly impacts the burden of chronic disease, and it will take continued collaboration to help people change how they spend their leisure time to incorporate safe, inclusive movement in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Many programs that help mobilize our community are grant-funded and often need a sustainable long-term plan. The progress of successful interventions hangs in the balance as grant funding ends. Extensive work has been done in the school system led by the Child and Adolescent Wellness Workgroup. One example is a partnership with local medical providers and the Garrett County Public School system. <https://mygarrettcountry.com/?s=Child+and+Adolescent+Wellness+Workgroup> Various stakeholders completed a Healthy Weight pilot project. Read more about this action group on mygarrettcountry.com: <https://mygarrettcountry.com/groups/healthy-weight-workgroup/>. In addition, the Health Education and Outreach Unit within the Garrett County Health Department has invested significant resources into a program called Play Hard Live Clean, encouraging youth to make good choices by recognizing and rewarding them for specific positive lifestyle achievements. On a population level, dramatic increases in opportunities for people to be physically active and investments in infrastructure for those with disabilities occurred through the Population Health, Innovation, and Informatics Unit of the Garrett County Health Department via a comprehensive initiative called GC In Motion

launched in April of 2022. Visit the Action Group to see the results of the program: <https://mygarrettcountry.com/groups/gc-in-motion/>. It's designed to increase opportunities for people to be physically active by removing barriers of all kinds. We invested in local fitness/well-being professionals and utilize Go!GarrettCounty.com as bi-directional engagement with community members. Wearable activity trackers, check-ins and reminders to be active, passes to parks and local gyms, and various free events across the county are a few of the core components of this effort. In addition, A community-wide Step Challenge (visit <https://mygarrettcountry.com/groups/go-gc/> to learn more) reaches milestones for participants as they count steps consistently every week. These are all examples of successful initiatives we stand to lose. Aggressive actions to seek funding to continue these efforts and those like them from various organizations throughout the county are essential in meeting the physical activity needs of our entire community.

The Health Planning Council is the place interagency collaboration takes place. When funding requires collaboration (it almost always does), instead of submitting applications to compete against one another, GCHD held a meeting to discuss the largest award that has come to Western Maryland in several years. The result of that effort was we all agreed to work together on the Community Health Resouce Commission's Health Equity Grant request for proposal. To keep up to date with available funding opportunities, see the action group on mygarrettcountry.com: Grants Curation <https://mygarrettcountry.com/groups/grant-development/>



Community Services

Diet Consultations

Our registered dietitian, Amy Ritchie, will provide one-on-one diet consultations to help treat and prevent disease through diet and lifestyle changes. A referral from a healthcare provider is needed for such conditions as diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or obesity. Call 301-334-7730 for more information!

<https://garretthealth.org/diet-consultation/>

SENIOR HEALTH & FITNESS CLUB @ CARC

Through a partnership between Garrett County Community Action and the Garrett College Community Aquatics & Recreation Complex, all Garrett County residents age 60 and older are eligible to join the Senior Health & Fitness Club. The Senior Health & Fitness Club allows full access to the CARC, free senior group fitness classes, field trips, special events, and more. Free transportation is also available through the Seniors on the Move program.

Be sure to “Like” the Senior Health & Fitness Club at the CARC Facebook page to stay up-to-date on resources, as limited-time information is posted regularly.

Website: <https://garrettcac.org/senior-services/>

Materials & Media

Go! Well-Being Guide

<https://gogarrettcountry.com/a-new-resource-is-available-check-out-the-well-being-guide/>



Events Calendar for Free Physical Activity Opportunities

<https://gcinmotion.garrettcountryapps.com/community-calendar/>

GC In Motion

<https://gogarrettcountry.com/garrett-county-in-motion-x-carefirst/>

Pre-Diabetes Risk Test

<https://gogarrettcountry.com/prediabetes-risk-test/>

Pre-Diabetes Classes

<https://gogarrettcountry.com/prediabetes-resources-in-garrett-county/>

References & Resources

Point(s) of Contact:

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GC In Motion/Go!GarrettCounty

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Kendra McLaughlin -MDH-

Play Hard Live Clean/Diet Consults
kendra.mclaughlin@maryland.gov

Shanna Humphrey

Senior Health & Fitness Club@CARC
shumphrey@garrettcac.org

Current Coalitions or Monthly Meetings

Health Planning Council

<https://mygarrettcountry.com/?s=Health+Planning+Council>

Campaigns & Awareness Months

Diabetes Awareness Month (Materials Currently Under Development)



Written and coordinated by the Population Health, Innovation, & Informatics Unit at the Garrett County Health Department. This health planning, improvement, and strategy division continues to foster a community of collaboration in Garrett County, Maryland. Join us at MyGarrettCounty.com!

Insight Partners

Currently Participating Partners:

Garrett County Health Department

Interested? Email shelley.argabrite@maryland.gov to find out how to participate in this insight and get connected with Action Groups on MyGarrettCounty.com working on strategies related to this insight!

Updated November 2023

Coordinated by the Garrett County Health Department's Population Health, Innovation, & Informatics Unit under the direction of Garrett County Health Planner & Health Strategist Shelley Argabrite, MA



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