



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

## Health Education and Outreach Unit



**GARRETT COUNTY**  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1025 Memorial Dr. Oakland, MD 21550

# OUR MISSION

Promote wellness and the prevention of risky behaviors<sup>1</sup> so that Garrett County residents live longer, healthier lives.

# BACKGROUND

Health Education and Outreach staff participated in a series of departmental meetings from January 2019 to December 2019 to develop a strategic plan and a framework to guide decision-making and resource allocation for the unit. The strategic plan and framework are used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, and ensure that wellness and prevention efforts target risk factors that contribute to the greatest number of preventable deaths.

# IMPLEMENTATION

The priority risk factors that were identified by staff through the planning process include:

- Prevent or reduce **obesity**
- Prevent or reduce **tobacco** use
- Prevent or reduce **alcohol** use
- Prevent or reduce **opioid and prescription drug** misuse
- Increase access to and use of **preventative screenings and support services**

Although the Health Education and Outreach Unit addresses additional risk factors, through the strategic planning process, staff selected the top five factors listed above based on magnitude of the problem, availability of interventions, and economic and social impact. Risk factors that staff continue to monitor and address in a lesser capacity include teen pregnancy, unintentional injury (motor vehicle and bicycle safety, poison control, fire safety, fall prevention), adverse childhood experiences and marijuana use.

# COMMUNITY IMPACT

Members of the community benefit from the services of the Health Education and Outreach Unit through many strategies and programs. The staff plan, coordinate, facilitate, direct, or assist with after school programs, community education, parent education, worksite wellness, community planning groups, school health and wellness, diet consultations, policy change initiatives, Youth in Action Teams, harm reduction activities, and public information campaigns that relate back to the mission of promoting wellness and the prevention of risky behaviors<sup>1</sup> so that Garrett County residents live longer, healthier lives.

Activities that support the strategies and programs include tobacco treatment services, vendor compliance checks, overdose response programs, fitness testing, mini health fairs, distribution of fentanyl test strips and Narcan, prescription drug take backs, blood pressure checks, Play Hard Live Clean campaign, presentations, classes, trainings, and health promotion events.

To measure the impact of these services, the staff diligently and continually record all performance and assessment activities in departmental databases. The overall goals that indicate success for Health Education and Outreach are as follows:

- Provide education to change knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors to improve health and reduce risky behaviors.
- Facilitate changes in organizational practices or policies to improve health and reduce risky behaviors.
- Increase access to and use of services and screenings to improve health and reduce risky behaviors.

The results of staff's efforts in Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022) are summarized in the pages that follow.

# DATA COLLECTION

Every effort was made to follow best practices to collect data as outlined in the logic models in the Health Education and Outreach (HEO) Strategic Plan. Data was collected during the fiscal year July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. Staff entered data from their community events, after school programs, client interactions, campaigns, and media communications into a departmental database which tracked the activities throughout the year.

The HEO Health pre-survey, administered in September and October to targeted groups, and the HEO Health post-survey, administered six months later to the same targeted groups, contain the data that is the basis for most of the outcomes reported. The targeted groups include those who HEO staff have the opportunity to educate and interact with on an ongoing basis. The youth who are included in those targeted groups are those in afterschool programs, Youth in Action Teams, Community Planning Groups, and those who participate in the high school Play Hard, Live Clean campaign. The adults who are included are those in Community Planning Groups, worksites or community groups who Outreach Workers consistently visit, and parents of afterschool participants. Only data that represents both pre- and post-results is reported.

In the pages that ensue, *outputs*, displayed throughout with green numbers, are defined as activities or items produced or completed by HEO staff. *Outcomes*, displayed with blue numbers, are defined as measures of outputs, or the level of performance or achievements resulting from the outputs. Every effort was made to accurately interpret and disseminate the findings in this report.

# ALCOHOL

Excessive alcohol use<sup>2</sup> can be harmful to health. Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience problems in school, unplanned sexual activity, increased risk of suicide, increased risk of alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, and changes in brain development. Binge drinking, among adults or underage persons, is associated with many problems, including unintentional injuries, violence, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, chronic diseases, and alcohol use disorders. The staff of Health Education and Outreach use strategies such as campaigns, coalitions, community education, after school programs, parent education, policy change initiatives, school health, and worksite wellness to reduce risky behaviors related to alcohol use and abuse. (Citation: National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*)

In Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022):

- ◇ 2,341 people were educated through 115 alcohol prevention presentations, classes, trainings, or events; and 38 media occurrences<sup>3</sup>
- ◇ 40 digital media posts<sup>4</sup> were placed, reaching 17,656 people

Alcohol Outcomes for Adult and Youth who completed the pre and post HEO Health Survey		
	Adult	Youth
Increased knowledge of alcohol prevention (67 adults, 150 youth)	9%	58%
Changed their perception of underage alcohol use to be less favorable (67 adults, 85 youth)	27%	31%
Adults decreased youth access to alcohol by locking, disposing, or monitoring it (67 adults)	33%	N/A
Youth changed their intent to drink alcohol to "not likely" (85 youth)	N/A	6%

- ◇ 63 high school students completed the alcohol section of the HEO Youth Health Survey
- ◇ 120 Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> challenges about underage alcohol use were completed at the high school
- ◇ 1,008 youth pledged to avoid alcohol and situations where alcohol is present
- ◇ 315 adults pledged to monitor and secure alcohol
- ◇ 252 resource packets<sup>6</sup> were distributed

***"It's our responsibility to educate ourselves on what to watch for in our youth and to keep the alcohol out of their hands. Please, properly store, monitor, and secure your alcohol and your medications." Outreach Worker - Heather Berg***



# OBESITY

Obesity is closely linked to or causes a large number of health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, sleep apnea, gallstones, kidney stones, infertility, and as many as 11 types of cancers. Evidence shows that obesity prevention policy and environmental change efforts should focus on facilitating a handful of key behaviors: limiting unhealthy foods, increasing physical activity, limiting screen time, improving sleep, and reducing stress. The staff of Health Education and Outreach use strategies such as campaigns, coalitions, community education, after school programs, parent education, policy change initiatives, school health, and worksite wellness to promote healthy choices and reduce risky behaviors related to being overweight and/or obese. (Citations: Centers for Disease Control, Institute of Medicine. *Bridging the Evidence Gap in Obesity Prevention*)

In Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022):

- ◇ 1,253 blood pressures were checked on 459 different adults with 28% of adults participating in regular blood pressure checks<sup>7</sup>
- ◇ 2,208 people were educated on healthy eating and physical activity through 135 healthy eating or physical activity presentations, classes, trainings, or events; and 29 media occurrences<sup>3</sup>
- ◇ 116 youth were fitness tested in afterschool programs and Crellin Elementary School
- ◇ 234 students were fitness tested at the high schools in health or physical education classes
- ◇ 26 diet consults were conducted
- ◇ 26 digital media posts<sup>4</sup> were placed, reaching 12,376 people
- ◇ 2 changes occurred in organizational practices<sup>8</sup> at worksites or in community organizations; these changes were adding indoor and outdoor walking trails at a wellness site

Obesity Outcomes for Adult and Youth who completed the pre and post HEO Health Survey		
Healthy Eating	Adult	Youth
Increased knowledge of healthy eating (67 adults, 149 youth)	37%	53%
Changed their perception of healthy eating to be more favorable (67 adults, 85 youth)	24%	27%
Increased their daily intake of fruits (67 adults, 85 youth)	30%	46%
Increased their daily intake of vegetables (67 adults, 85 youth)	30%	31%
Increased their daily water intake (67 adults, 85 youth)	31%	8%
Physical Activity	Adult	Youth
Increased knowledge of physical activity (67 adults, 85 youth)	21%	28%
Changed their perception of physical activity to be more favorable (67 adults, 85 youth)	25%	16%
Increased their daily physical activity (67 adults, 85 youth)	43%	31%

Continued on next page



# OBESITY continued

- ◇ 101 adult BMIs were checked
- ◇ 792 youth completed the Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> healthy eating challenge at the elementary and middle schools
- ◇ 806 youth completed the Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> physical activity challenge at the elementary and middle schools
- ◇ 977 youth completed the Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> mindfulness<sup>9</sup> challenge at the elementary and middle schools
- ◇ 351 youth completed the Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> water challenge at the middle schools
- ◇ 178 healthy eating and physical activity Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> challenges were completed by high school students
- ◇ 63 high school students completed the obesity section of the HEO Youth Health Survey
- ◇ Of 32 afterschool participants who completed pre- and post- fitness assessments<sup>10</sup>, 18.8% of them improved their body mass index, 56.7% improved their flexibility as measured by the Sit & Reach, and 42% improved their cardiovascular endurance as measured by a 1/2 mile walk/run

*"I like the support from other members and the fact that you can do whatever eating plan works best for you."  
~ Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) member*

*"I'm losing the weight and I feel great."  
~ TOPS member*



# OPIOID & PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription drug misuse can have serious medical consequences. Increases in prescription drug misuse over the last 15 years are reflected in emergency room visits, overdose deaths associated with prescription drugs, and treatment admissions for prescription drug use disorders, the most severe form of which is an addiction. (National Institute on Drug Abuse) To fight prescription drug abuse, the staff of Health Education and Outreach aims to first prevent drug misuse and abuse and secondly, increase access to and support for substance use disorder treatment and recovery services.

In Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022)

- ◇ **2,834** people were educated through **120** opioid<sup>11</sup> or prescription drug misuse prevention presentations, classes, trainings, or events; and **114** media occurrences<sup>3</sup>
- ◇ **60** digital media posts<sup>4</sup> were placed, reaching **24,320** people
- ◇ **349** resource packets<sup>12</sup> were distributed and **103** medication drop box surveys were completed
- ◇ **7** changes in organizational practices occurred at worksites or in community organizations; these changes included keeping Narcan<sup>13</sup> on-site for emergencies or facilitating Narcan distribution

Opioid & Prescription Drug Outcomes for Adult and Youth who completed the pre and post HEO Health Survey		
	Adult	Youth
Increased knowledge of prescription or opioid drug prevention (67 adults, 142 youth)	<b>39%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Changed their perception about sharing prescriptions to be less favorable (67 adults, 85 youth)	<b>27%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Increased adult medication safety by disposing, locking, or monitoring prescriptions (67 adults)	<b>19%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Youth changed their intent to misuse prescription drugs to "not likely" (85 youth)	<b>N/A</b>	<b>7%</b>

- ◇ **132** pounds of unwanted drugs were collected at drop boxes
- ◇ **63** high school students completed the prescription drug misuse section of the HEO Youth Health Survey
- ◇ **29** Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> challenges about prescription drug misuse were completed at the high school
- ◇ **179** adults pledged to safely dispose of and secure prescription drugs
- ◇ **662** Deterra pouches<sup>14</sup>, lock boxes<sup>15</sup>, and/or timer caps<sup>16</sup> were distributed
- ◇ **24** overdose response trainings occurred resulting in **314** people being trained and **232** units of Narcan being dispensed

***You secure your valuables. Why not prescription medications?***





# TOBACCO

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States, yet addiction to nicotine from cigarette smoking, smokeless tobacco (chew), cigars, and vaping (using e-cigarettes) is still a major public health problem. To combat the high rates of nicotine use in Garrett County, staff of Health Education and Outreach promote tobacco control interventions including actions to prevent youth from starting to use tobacco, smoke-free environments, and programs to help tobacco users quit.

In Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022):

- ◇ 63 individuals participated in tobacco treatment services<sup>17</sup>, including 26 students who were caught in possession of a nicotine product on school property
- ◇ 37 individuals began a 6-week tobacco treatment program and 18 individuals completed the program (49% completion rate). 6% of smokers remained quit at 6 months
- ◇ 46 tobacco licensees were assessed and educated about tobacco laws
- ◇ 102 compliance checks<sup>18</sup> were conducted on licensees resulting in 91% compliance
- ◇ 2,465 people were educated through 139 tobacco prevention presentations, classes, trainings, or events; and 56 media occurrences<sup>3</sup>
- ◇ 62 digital media posts<sup>4</sup> were placed, reaching 11,425 people

Tobacco Outcomes for Adult and Youth who completed the pre and post HEO Health Survey		
	Adult	Youth
Increased knowledge of tobacco prevention (67 adults, 144 youth)	25%	49%
Changed their perception about vaping to be less favorable (67 adults, 85 youth)	18%	34%
Adults reduced their tobacco use (67 adults)	7%	N/A
Youth changed their intent to vape to "not likely" (85 youth)	N/A	7%

- ◇ 63 high school students completed the tobacco section of the HEO Youth Health Survey
- ◇ 7 Play Hard, Live Clean<sup>5</sup> tobacco prevention challenges were completed at the high school
- ◇ 563 adults pledged to reduce their use of tobacco/nicotine or protect children from secondhand smoke
- ◇ 262 resource packets were distributed<sup>19</sup>

***"I would advise this class for all. I came out of my shell, it was easy to share, and I was encouraged along the way." Cessation client***

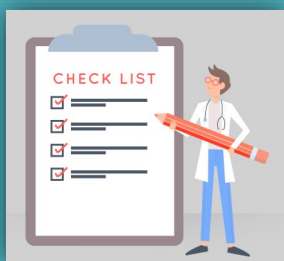


# INCREASE ACCESS TO AND USE OF PREVENTIVE SCREENING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Getting preventive care reduces the risk for diseases, disabilities, and death – yet many people don't get recommended preventive health care services. Services like screenings, dental check-ups, and vaccinations are key to keeping people of all ages healthy. The staff of Health Education and Outreach focuses on improving health by helping people get timely, high-quality health care services. In their everyday work, one of the goals of staff is to connect Garrett County residents with preventive screening and/or support services. When possible, staff check back with contacts to determine if they have followed-through with referrals or need additional assistance.

	# Referrals To/For	# Follow Through
GCHD tobacco treatment services	122	2
MD Quit Line	45	0
Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)	47	0
Cancer Prevention, Education, Screening, and Treatment Program (CPEST)	54	0
Lung CT scan based on pack year history	7	1
Substance use disorder treatment and/or recovery services (outside GCHD)	1	0
Follow-up for blood pressure	303	3
Social Services program	4	0
Community Action programs	5	2
MD Coalition of Families programs	2	0
Other GCHD Units	273	100
Other	42	8

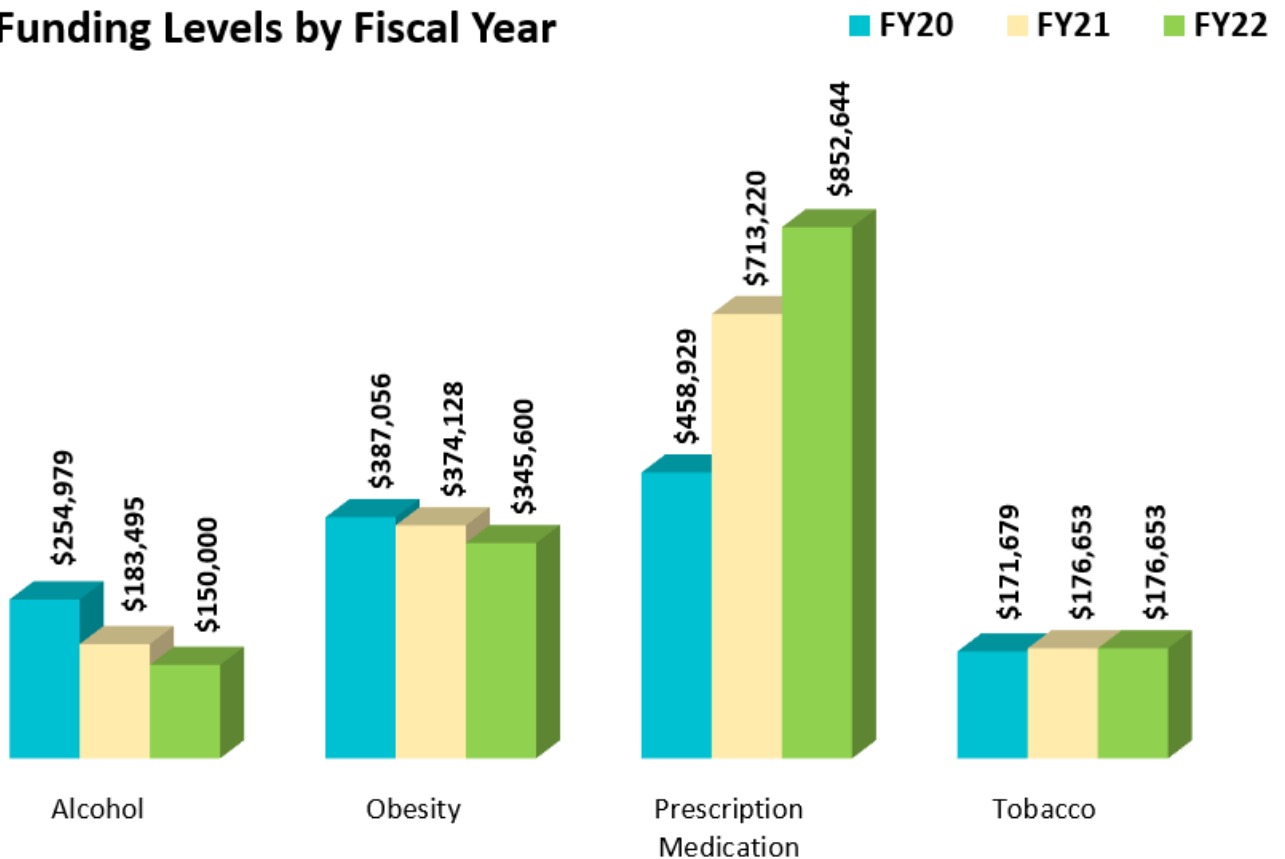
During Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022), staff referred **905** Garrett County residents to a support service or a preventative screening. While only **116** were *known* to follow through, it is very possible that there were more. Staff are only able to follow up with clients with whom they have repeat contact with. Sometimes a referral may be the result of an incoming phone call, a one time client, or just a passer-by at a health fair or community event. Among the 116 successes were connections to health insurance, flu or COVID vaccine, dental services, and behavioral health services.



## Health Education and Outreach Funding

The HEO unit is funded by grants from state and federal agencies. Some state grants are ongoing, while others are competitive and temporary. All federal grants are competitive and are typically awarded for 3-5 year grant cycles.

### Topic Funding Levels by Fiscal Year

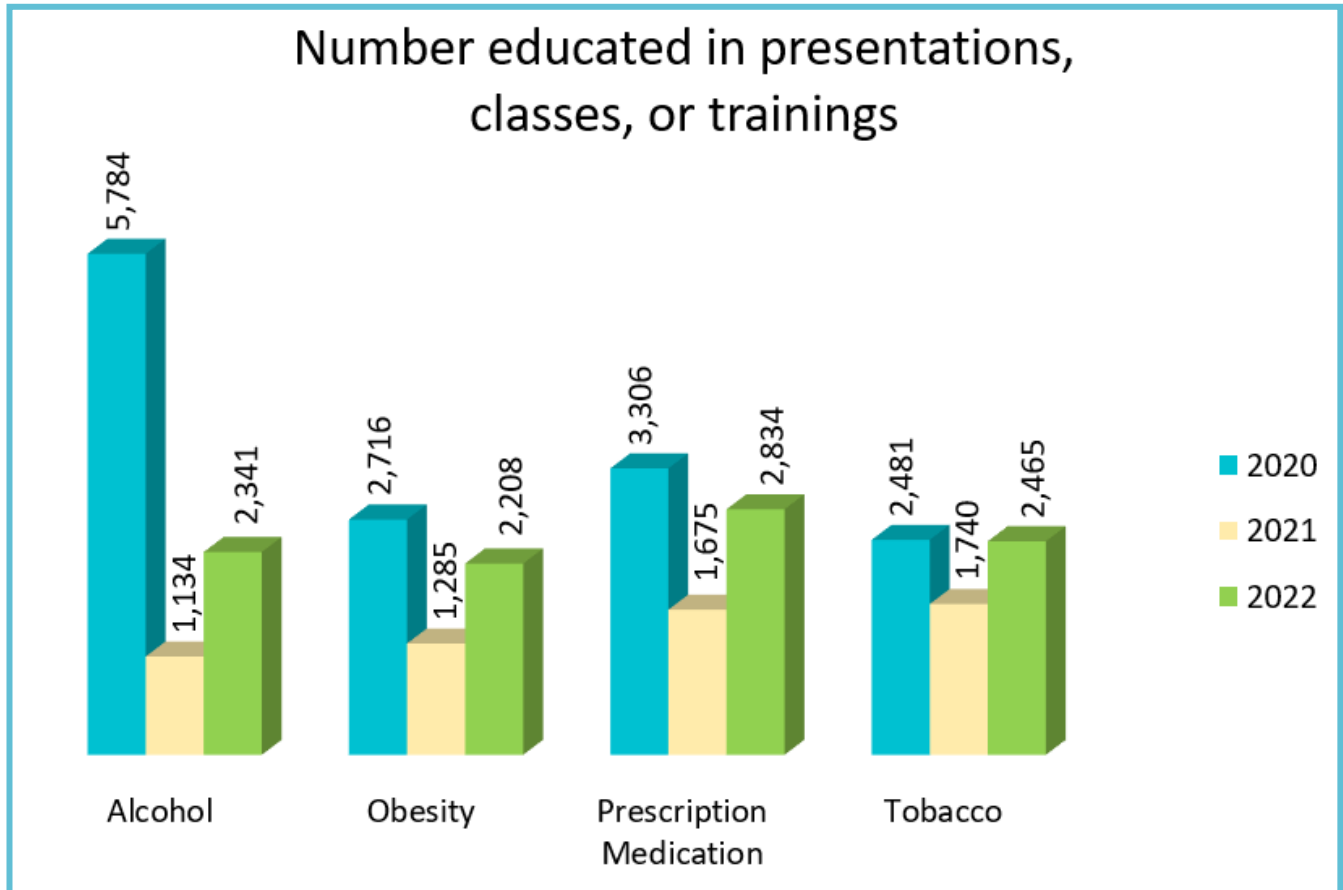


Of note:

- Garrett County participated in a State-level grant to decrease access to alcohol, which ended in FY20.
- The primary source of funds for obesity prevention is Core public health funds from the Maryland Department of Health.
- Due to the Nation's opioid addiction and overdose epidemic, the federal government has provided an increase in available funds to facilitate state- and territory-level efforts to ensure the full continuum of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and long-term recovery services.
- The HEO unit applied for and received a \$1 million dollar Rural Communities Opioid Response Program grant that was awarded at the end of FY20 and dispersed over three years.
- The primary source of funds for tobacco prevention is the Cigarette Restitution Fund Program through the Maryland Department of Health.

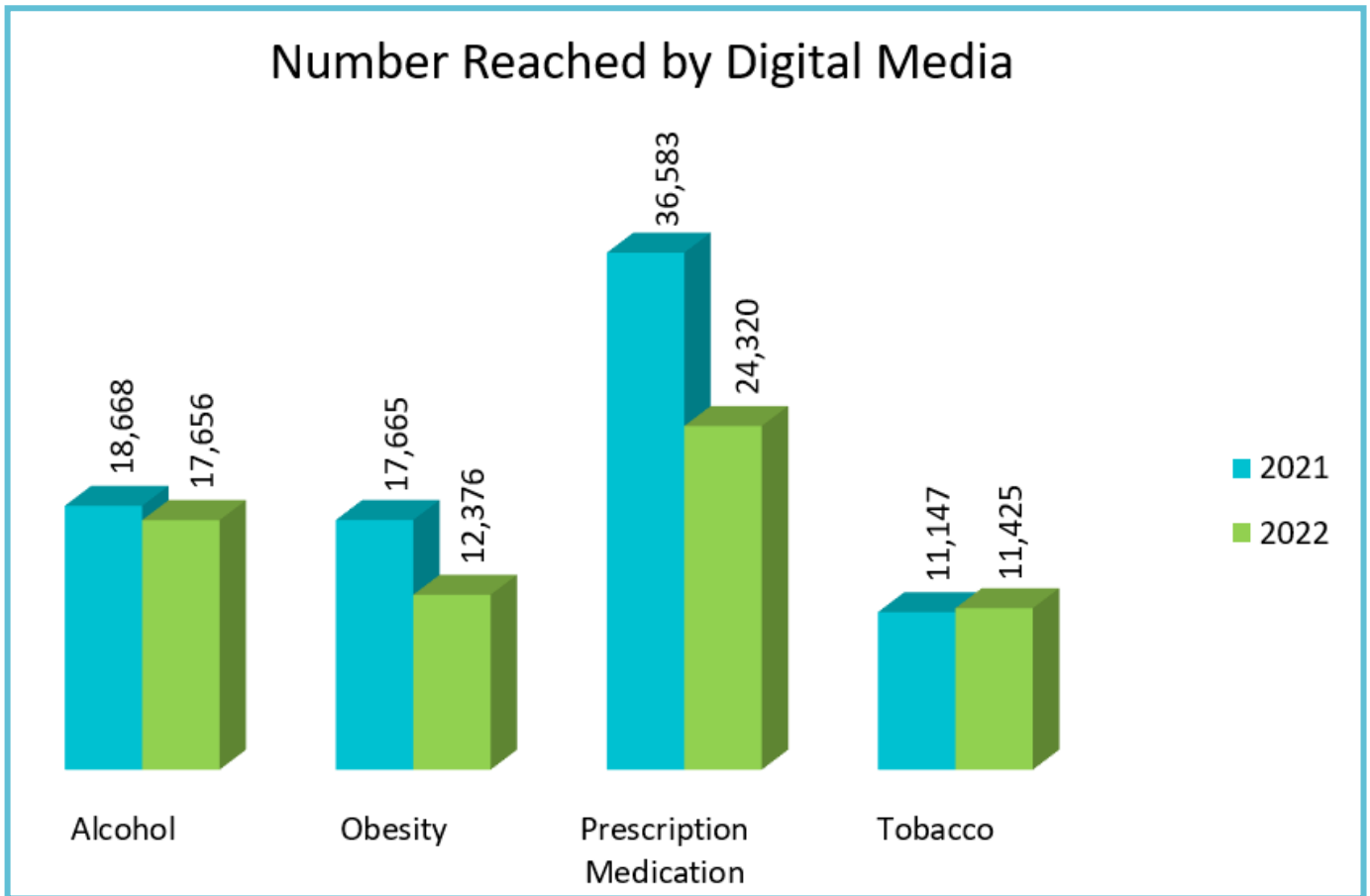
## Number educated in presentations, classes, or trainings

Throughout the year, HEO staff educate community members through presentations, classes, or trainings about the priority areas - prevent/reduce obesity, prevent/reduce tobacco use, prevent/reduce alcohol use, and prevent/reduce opioid and prescription drug misuse. The chart below illustrates the number of community members educated by topic area and fiscal year.



Of note:

- The number of people educated dropped in all categories in Fiscal year 2021 because in-person education was restricted for three quarters of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Funding to prevent/reduce alcohol use decreased after Fiscal Year 2020.



### Number reached by digital media

Another method used by HEO staff to disseminate information and promote services is digital media which includes mass emails, website posts, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. When in-person education became challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic, digital media was a valuable tool for reaching members of the public. Prior to Fiscal year 2021, the number reached through digital media was not tracked.

Some evidence of the impact of digital media can be gleaned from the number of people reached that then complete online pledges, surveys or challenges or those who comment or share a post or lastly, those who then register for a class. Such measures will be tracked in Fiscal Year 2023.

<sup>1</sup> **Risky behaviors** - those health behaviors that potentially expose people to harm and prevent them from living their healthiest life (e.g. smoking, drinking alcohol excessively, physical inactivity, lack of fruits and vegetables)

<sup>2</sup> **Excessive alcohol use** includes:

- Binge drinking, having 4 or more drinks on an occasion for a woman or 5 or more drinks on an occasion for a man.
- Heavy drinking, defined as 8 or more drinks per week for a woman or 15 or more drinks per week for a man.
- Any alcohol use by pregnant women or anyone younger than 21.

<sup>3</sup> **Media occurrences** - includes public information that is generated by the HEO staff and released in the form of advertisements in the newspaper or radio, billboards, press releases, etc. This does not include digital or social media.

<sup>4</sup> **Digital media posts** - digital and social media posts, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

<sup>5</sup> **Play Hard Live Clean** - a healthy lifestyle campaign for Garrett County kindergarten through twelfth grade students

<sup>6</sup> **Resource packets for alcohol control** - packets distributed to alcohol licensees to promote safe alcohol serving and selling practices; includes resources such as ID wristbands and signage; could also refer to packets distributed to adults to discourage the sharing of alcohol with minors

<sup>7</sup> **Regular blood pressure checks** - any participant in blood pressure monitoring services who participates in 50% or more of the opportunities to have a blood pressure check

<sup>8</sup> **Organizational practices** - the execution or implementation of a plan or an idea in an organization; in HEO, the organizational practices that staff try to impact are those that may lead to improved health for employees (e.g. designation of walking trails inside or outside a facility, vending machines with healthy options, adoption of policies to prevent the use of tobacco or vaping devices)

<sup>9</sup> **Mindfulness** - the practice of being present and fully engaged with whatever is happening at the moment

<sup>10</sup> **Fitness assessments** - tests performed to measure an individual's body mass index, flexibility, blood pressure, heart rate, and/or cardiovascular endurance

<sup>11</sup> **Opioid** - a class of drugs used to treat moderate to severe pain

<sup>12</sup> **Resource packets for prescription drug misuse and prevention** - packets distributed to pharmacies and EMS providers with overdose response resources

<sup>13</sup> **Narcan/Naloxone** - a medication used to treat a narcotic overdose in an emergency situation

Proper storage and disposal tools:

<sup>14</sup> **Deterra pouch** - carbon-activated pouch that deactivates wet and dry prescription and over-the-counter drugs

<sup>15</sup> **Lock box** - a secure container that ensures medicine is only accessible to the prescription holder and helps reduce misuse of medication by others

<sup>16</sup> **Timer cap** - a bottle cap that fits onto pill bottles and displays the time elapsed since the bottle was last opened; helps to prevent misuse of medication by others

<sup>17</sup> **Tobacco treatment services** - services provided by staff of the health department to assist individuals with giving up nicotine

<sup>18</sup> **Compliance check** - inspections of retailers to determine their compliance with federal laws and regulations, in this case with the Tobacco Sales to Minors law

<sup>19</sup> **Resource packets for tobacco control** - packets distributed to tobacco retailers to promote compliance with the Tobacco 21 law; could also refer to a quit kit distributed to individuals from the public who express an interest in quitting tobacco



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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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