



Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

SANDUSKY COUNTY, OHIO | 2025

Community Health Assessment

Research conducted by the Center for Regional Development at Bowling Green State University

Foreword

The 2025 Community Health Assessment (CHA) represents the collective efforts of community partners dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Sandusky County residents. Through collaboration with healthcare providers, schools, businesses, social service agencies, community organizations, and residents, this assessment provides a comprehensive look at the strengths, challenges, and health priorities within our community. By gathering data and listening to the voices of those who live and work here, we are better equipped to understand the needs of our population and identify opportunities for positive change.

This assessment serves as the foundation for future community health planning and action. The information collected will guide the development of our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and help ensure that resources, programs, and partnerships are focused on the issues that matter most to our community. We are grateful for the support, insight, and commitment of all who contributed to this process and remain dedicated to working together to build a healthier, safer, and stronger Sandusky County for everyone.

Sincerely,

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Firelands Bellevue Hospital
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ProMedica Memorial Hospital

Sandusky County Board of Developmental
Disabilities
Sandusky County Family and Children First Council
Sandusky County Job and Family Services
Sandusky County Juvenile and Probate Court
Sandusky County Public Health
United Way of Sandusky County
YMCA of Sandusky County

The 2025 Sandusky County Health Assessment is available on the following websites:

Firelands Bellevue Hospital

www.firelands.com/locations/profile/bellevue-hospital/

Community Health Services

www.fremontchs.com

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership

www.glcap.org

Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services

www.firelands.com

Fremont City School District

www.fremontschools.net

Mental Health and Recovery Service Board

<https://mhsosw.org/>

ProMedica Memorial Hospital

www.promedica.org/memorial-hospital

Sandusky County Board of Developmental

Disabilities

www.scbdd.org

Sandusky County Family and Children First Council

<https://sanduskycountycfsc.org/>

Sandusky County Public Health

www.scpublichealth.com

United Way of Sandusky County

www.uwsandco.org

Sandusky County Job and Family Services

<https://sanduskycountydjfs.org/>

Sandusky County Juvenile and Probate Court

www.sanduskycountyjuvenilecourt.com

YMCA of Sandusky County

<https://www.ymcafremont.org/>

Project Management, Data Collection, Secondary Data Analysis & Report Development

Center for Regional Development

The Center for Regional Development (CRD) provides technical assistance and expertise to local organizations to meet their public health goals. CRD has diverse experience in applied research in the public health sector. CRD assures excellence by providing responsiveness to the needs of the communities we work with, in-depth public engagement, in-house IRB processing, and customized deliverables tailored to your goals.

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Executive Summary & Introduction

Overview

The 2025 Sandusky County Health Assessment (CHA) presents both positive and negative trends of health and wellness of the county residents. The community survey and focus groups pointed out important trends and themes that will serve as a guide to better support residents and provide services for the community that support better health and well-being. Positive trends identified in the CHA data include high access to primary care, with 93.3% of respondents reporting that they have a personal doctor or healthcare provider, indicating strong connection to care. Additionally, over 80% of respondents reported not using any tobacco or nicotine products in the past 12 months, reflecting positive health behavior trends. However, several concerning trends were also observed. Nearly half of respondents (44.9%) reported experiencing four or more days of poor mental health in the past month, representing a notable increase compared to previous years. In addition, 53.5% of respondents fall into the obese category based on BMI, highlighting a significant risk factor for chronic disease. General observations from the CHA suggest that, although most residents have access to a primary care provider, barriers such as cost (30.4%) and difficulty obtaining appointments (16.6%) continue to limit access to care. Furthermore, while the majority of respondents did not report needing assistance across many service areas, a consistent subset of individuals experienced challenges in finding or accessing resources, indicating potential gaps in awareness or availability.

Introduction

What is a Community Health Assessment?

A CHA is an in-depth analysis of the health and well-being of residents in Sandusky County. A CHA also identifies and monitors health trends in the community. Conducting a CHA is a collaborative process that includes building partnerships, collecting and assessing data to identify community health-related needs, and determining if those needs are being met by services and resources that are currently available. The CHA will then be utilized to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP will prioritize community health concerns, identify solutions to address those concerns, develop action steps towards the solutions, and establish an evaluation framework to measure progress. The CHA establishes the baseline of health for the community and the foundation for the CHIP.

Primary Data Collection Methods

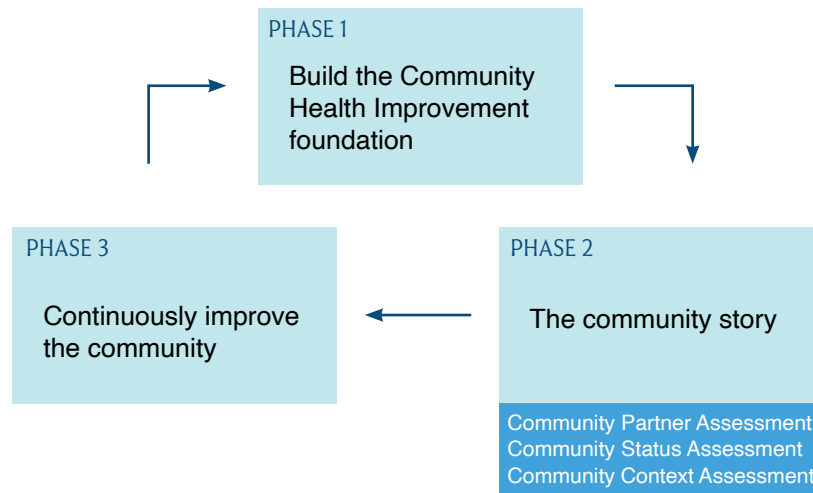
Community Survey: The CHA community-wide survey is the primary data collection method for gathering information about the health of county residents. The Sandusky County Health Partners convened to discuss

current health topics and concerns to identify themes for the assessment to help define the content, scope, and sequence of the survey. The survey for the 2025 Sandusky County Community Health Assessment was adapted from the last survey instrument to incorporate longitudinal data. The ability to compare current trends with longitudinal data was important to the Health Partners to track changes over time. The CRD team developed an initial survey instrument draft, which was reviewed by the Health Partners and edited into a finalized online questionnaire hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform. The survey had 118 questions, several of which were part of “skip logics”, meaning that some questions only appear if the respondents answered a related question in a certain way. The survey questions focused on the following areas: health care, preventative care and health screenings, alcohol use, tobacco use, drug use, sexual health, weight control and physical activity, diet and nutrition, mental health, social determinants of health, violence, and environment.

Survey Sampling: To achieve a sampling error of $\pm 5.0\%$ at a 95% confidence level, a minimum sample size of 380 respondents was required for statistical significance. While this sample size meets statistical standards, the findings should not be generalized to individuals who were not surveyed. A total of 550 responses were collected from participants recruited using non-probability sampling methods, including convenience sampling (reaching individuals who were easily accessible) and snowball sampling (where participants shared the survey within their networks).

Focus Groups: As the community survey period concluded, Sandusky County Health Partners identified priority populations for focus groups to ensure their perspectives were represented in the Community Health Assessment. The selected groups included individuals with low income, those experiencing homelessness, men, and Spanish-speaking community members. However, due to renovations at the Sandusky County homeless shelter and limited availability within the Spanish-speaking community, only two focus groups were conducted: one with low-income participants at the Pontifex community center and one with men at the YMCA of Sandusky County. Participants were asked questions related to their health status and perceptions, access to healthcare and experiences with providers, services utilized and needed, and how men perceive and engage with healthcare.

Procedure: The CRD utilizes the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) 2.0 process, which is a framework for community health assessments and planning. It focuses on engaging diverse stakeholders and using data to develop strategies for improving community health. The process is divided into six phases:



The process is divided into six phases:

Phase		Goal	Key Activity
1	Organizing for Success and Partnership Development	Establish a coalition or partnership with community stakeholders.	Identify key leaders, recruit members, create a governance structure, and outline roles and responsibilities.
2	Visioning	Define a shared vision for the community's health.	Facilitate a process where stakeholders articulate values, priorities, and aspirations for the community's health and well-being.
3	Community Health Assessment	Understand the community's health status, needs, and assets.	Conduct data collection through various methods (surveys, focus groups, interviews, secondary data analysis). Assess both health outcomes and health factors.
4	Strategic Issues	Identify and prioritize the key health issues that require attention.	Use data from the community health assessment to highlight critical health challenges and issues. Prioritize these issues based on factors like impact, feasibility, and community interest.
5	Formulation of Goals and Strategies	Develop specific goals and strategies to address the prioritized health issues.	Engage the community and stakeholders in brainstorming potential solutions. Create measurable goals and actionable strategies, ensuring they are realistic, evidence-based, and achievable within the community context.
6	Action Cycle	Implement, evaluate, and adjust the strategies.	Develop an action plan, secure resources, mobilize partners, and start implementing the strategies. Monitor progress regularly, evaluate outcomes, and adjust as needed to ensure effectiveness.

The MAPP 2.0 process is iterative and flexible, encouraging ongoing collaboration and community involvement at every stage. It integrates both qualitative (focus group) and quantitative (survey) data, focusing on building capacity, and strives for sustainability in addressing community health challenges.

Data Analysis: Survey data was collected between August and December 2025 and underwent a rigorous cleaning and validation process led by CRD to ensure data quality. Responses were systematically reviewed to identify and remove potential bots or fraudulent entries using consistency checks, response pattern analysis, and verification of key variables. This process ensured that the final dataset was accurate and reflective of Sandusky County. Findings from the cleaned survey data were then used to inform the development of focus group protocols, which were conducted in January and February 2026. Recordings and transcripts from the focus groups were analyzed using content analysis, and key themes were identified that aligned with survey findings; these themes were incorporated into the report to provide additional context within relevant sections.

Secondary Data

Multiple sources of secondary data were utilized in the CHA to support comparisons with survey findings and to provide additional context for specific data points. The secondary data sources used include:

1. Ohio Youth Surveys (OHYES!)
2. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
3. Healthy People 2030
4. Ohio Department of Health (ODH)
5. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) About Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Score
6. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps
7. United Way Referral Data
8. Feeding America
9. Sandusky Board of Mental Health Annual Report (2025)
10. Sandusky County Public Health Annual Report (2025)
11. Sandusky County Jobs & Family Services Medicaid and SNAP Recipient reports

Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Requirements

The Public Health Accreditation Board is a national organization that administers accreditation to health departments to ensure “excellence and scalable innovation” amongst health departments nationwide. As a prerequisite of accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, local health departments must conduct a community health assessment (CHA) at least every five years. The Sandusky County Health Department is accredited by PHAB and will continue to maintain its accreditation. A key component of reaccreditation is that the health department has a community health assessment that meets PHAB requirements. PHAB Standard 1 Measures 1.2.2 T/L states that health departments need to complete a CHA that includes the following things:

✓	Was done within the last 5 years
✓	Data/information from various sources and how data was obtained • Primary and secondary data • Quantitative and qualitative data • "Non-traditional" data collection encouraged
✓	Demographics of the population
✓	Description of health issues • Population groups with specific issues/inequities • Description of factors that contribute to specific populations' health challenges • Health status disparities, health equity, and high health risk populations
✓	Description of community assets or resources to address health issues

Community Resources & Support Services

This page provides quick access to local and regional resources related to the health topics and priorities identified throughout the Community Health Assessment. QR codes are included to provide direct access to organizations, programs, and services to help connect residents to available community support.

	ProMedica 		United Way of Sandusky County 211      		Fremont City Schools 
	ProMedica Memorial Hospital 		YMCA of Sandusky County 		Mental Health & Recovery Services Board   
	Firelands Health 		Sandusky County Health Department      		Great Lakes Community Action Partnership 
	Community Health Services 		Sandusky County Board of Developmental Disabilities  		
	Sandusky County Department of Jobs and Family Services   		Sandusky County Juvenile and Probate Court  		
	Firelands Counseling & Recovery Services  		Sandusky County Family & Children First Council 		

 Healthcare
 Health Behaviors
 Physical Activity and Nutrition
 Mental Health
 Social Determinants of Health, Violence, and Environment
 Youth

How to Read This Report

This report is divided into 8 sections, and each section has subsections. Each section is a topic of interest being assessed, and the subsections are more specific within each broader section. In each section, we discuss general trends, longitudinal data, and how Sandusky County data compares to state and national data.

The findings presented in this Community Health Assessment are based on self-reported data provided by survey respondents. As with all self-reported information, responses are subject to each participant's interpretation and understanding of the survey questions, as well as their honesty, accuracy, and willingness to respond. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with consideration of the potential for reporting bias, misunderstanding of questions, or nonresponse.

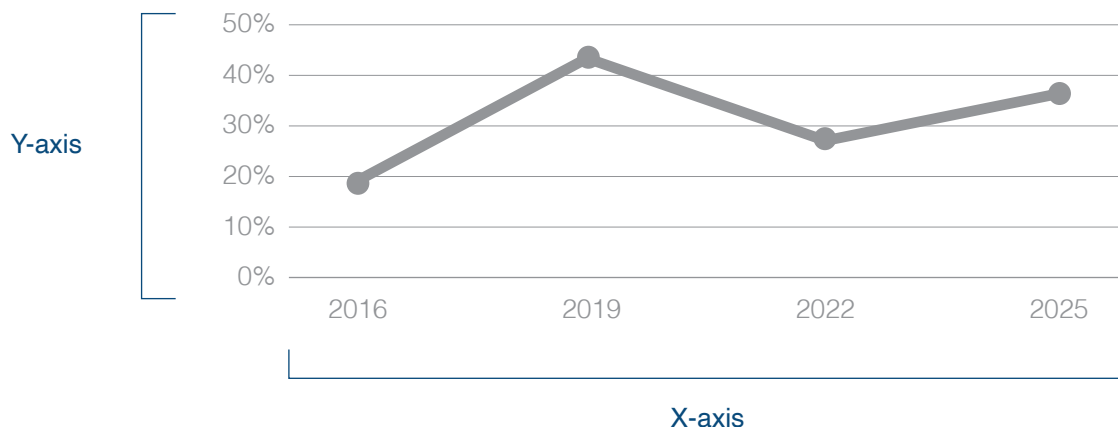
- **Longitudinal data** are questions that were asked the same way year-to-year so that we can see how the data has changed over time.
- **Line graphs** are used to show if trends are increasing or decreasing over time.
- **Bar graphs** are used to compare numbers or totals of different categories.

What does “n=___” mean?

- **“N” means the number of responses for that question.** This is the number used to calculate percentages for each part of that question.
- Since each question in the survey was voluntary (survey takers could choose to answer the question or not), not all questions have the same amount of **total** answers, or the same “n”.

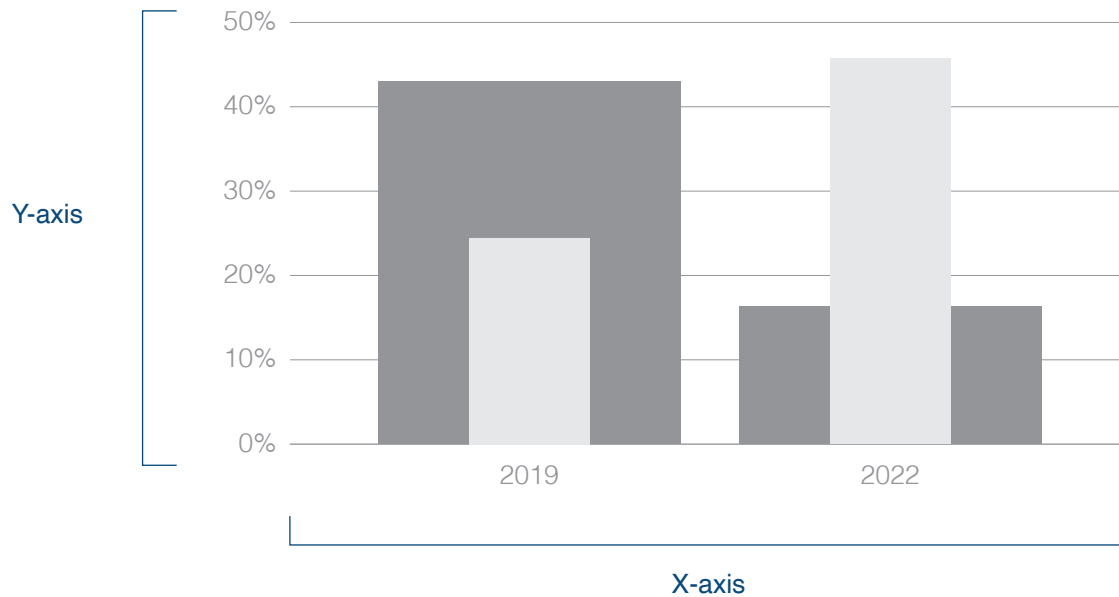
Reading a line graph

- **Check the axes:** Axes are the side and bottom of the graph. The x-axis (horizontal) shows time and increases from left to right. The y-axis (vertical) shows values and increases from bottom to top.
- **Follow the line:** The line shows how values change over time.
- **Read data points:** Note where the line hits the y-axis to see exact values. The “key” shows that different colors represent different data points.



Reading a bar graph

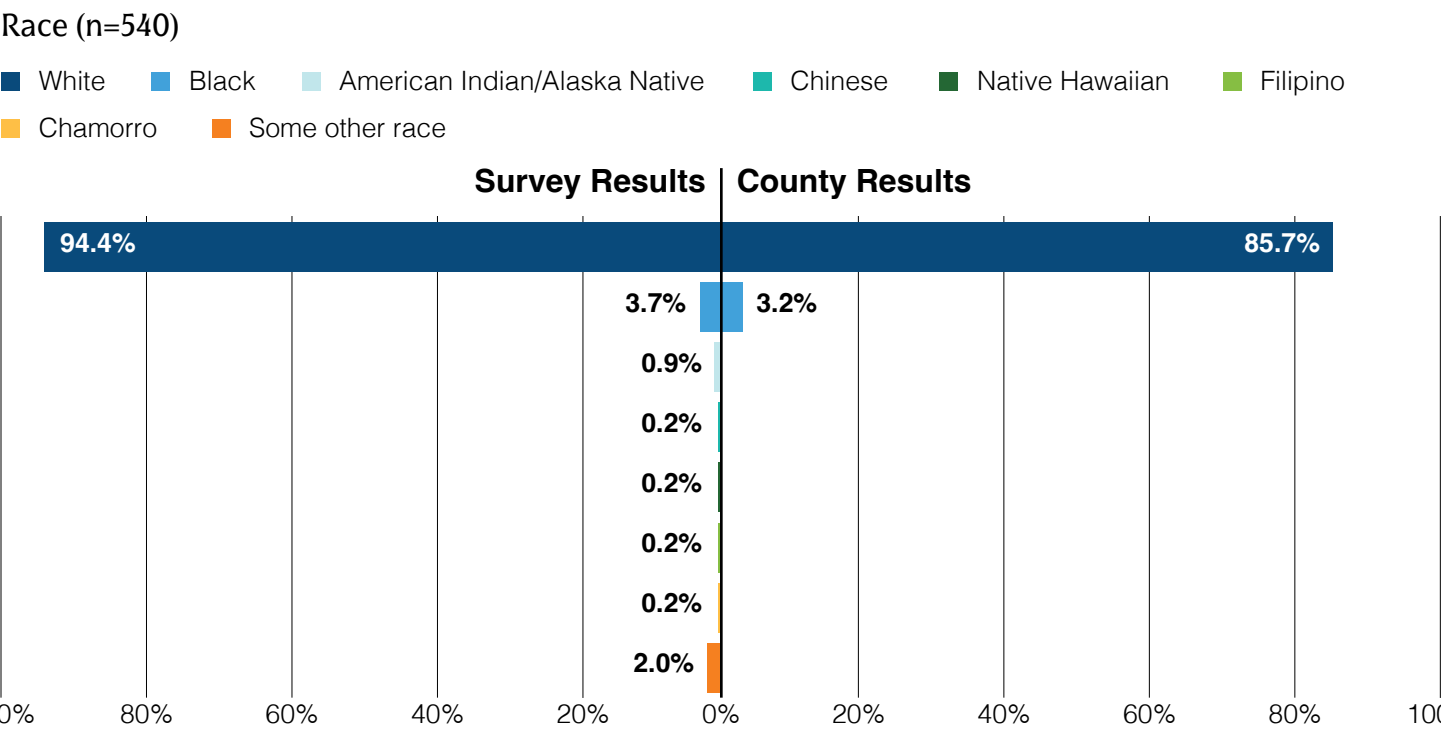
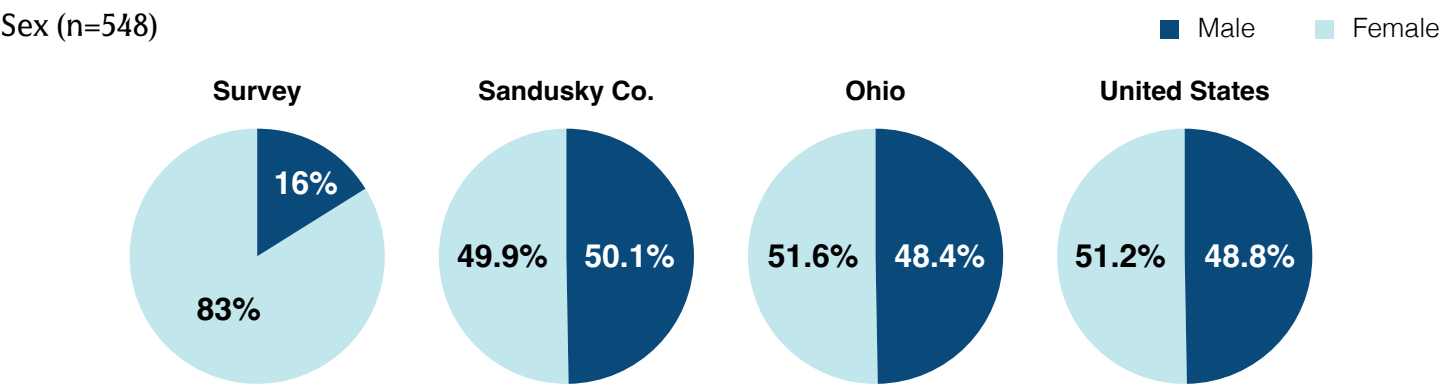
- **Check the axes:** Axes are the side and bottom of the graph. The x-axis (horizontal) shows time or categories. The y-axis (vertical) shows values and increases from bottom to top.
- **Look at the bars:** Each bar represents a category. The height or length of the bar shows how much of the percentage or number. You can check the numbers/percents on the side of the graph to see the value of that bar.
 - When there is a bar inside another bar, that is a different group, and the color is explained in the key. Compare these to see differences between groups.



Demographics

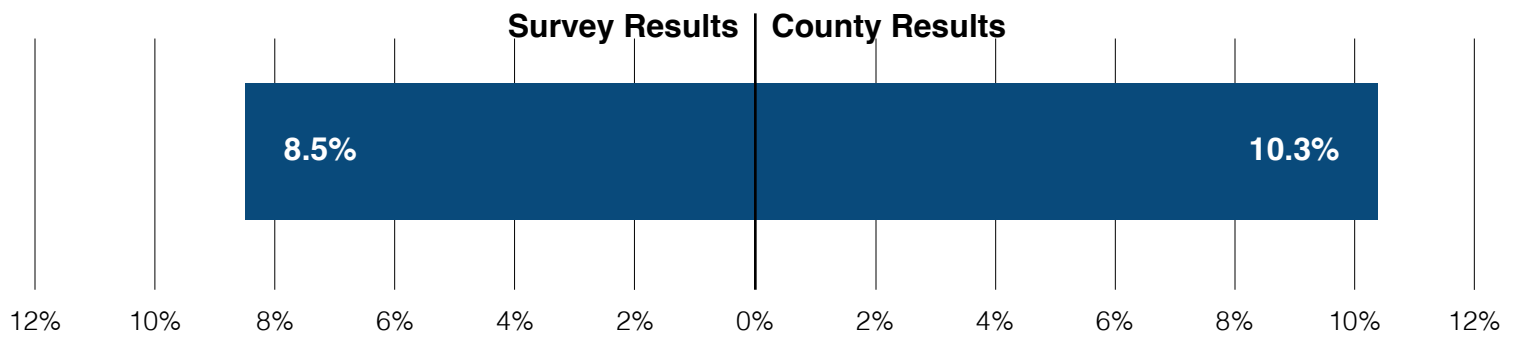
Survey respondents reflect a broad cross-section of adults across Sandusky County, though some demographic groups are more represented than others. Understanding the age, income, education, and household composition of respondents is essential for contextualizing the results that follow, particularly when interpreting trends related to health access, caregiving, and financial stability.

The 2025 Sandusky County Community Health Assessment had a total of 550 individuals respond. The community survey respondents generally reflect a female, predominantly White, and high-income population, which is consistent with response rates of national community health assessment surveys. More than half of respondents are married, and the age distribution of respondents is well distributed, representing 18 years and older age groups in the county. Hispanic or Latino residents represent a small but important portion of respondents. These demographics provide context for understanding health needs, service utilization, and caregiving responsibilities within Sandusky County.



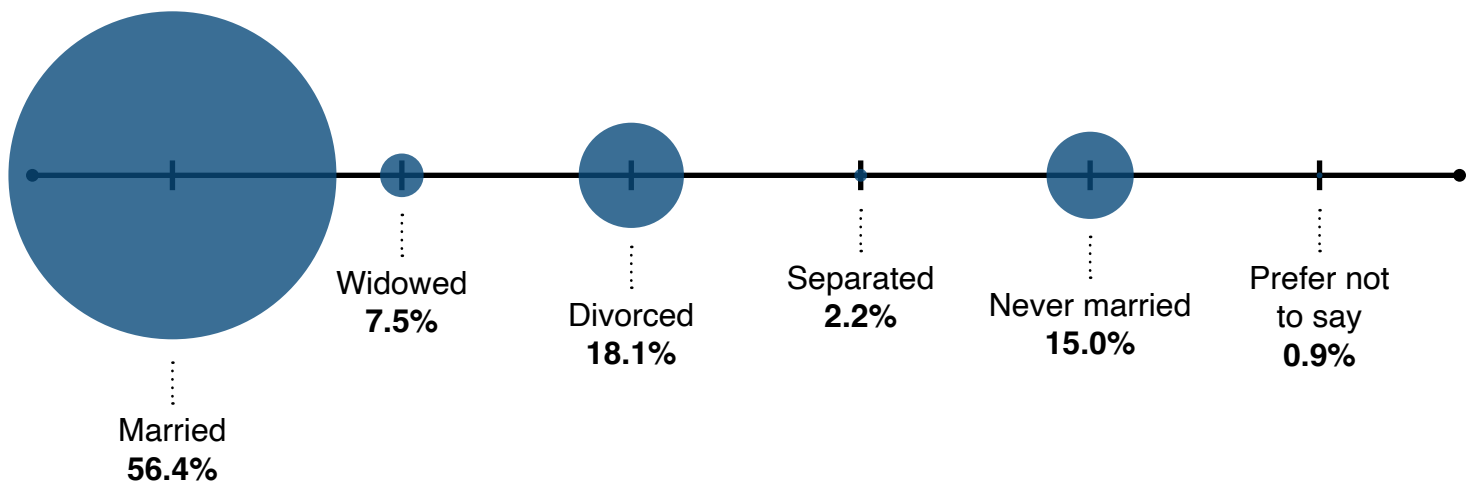
Ethnicity (n=543)

■ Of Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin



Of respondents who indicated their ethnicity (n=543), **8.5%** were Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, **89.1%** were not Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, and **2.4%** either did not know or preferred not to say.

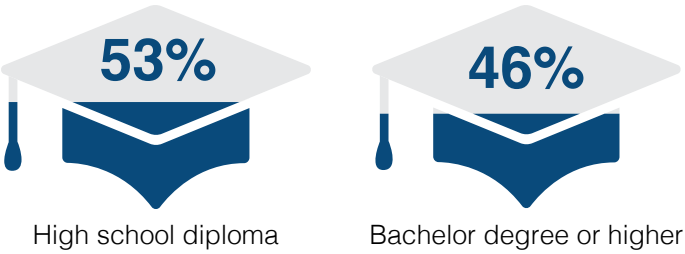
Marital status (n=548)



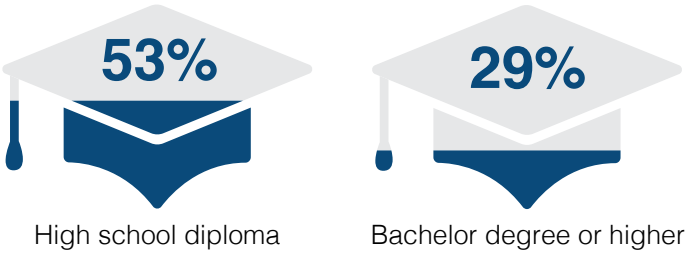
Educational attainment among survey respondents is high, with the vast majority reporting a high school diploma or higher. This mirrors county level Census data and suggests a generally well educated population. Educational attainment can influence employment opportunities, income stability, health literacy, and the ability to navigate healthcare and social service systems.

Educational attainment (n=547)

Community survey

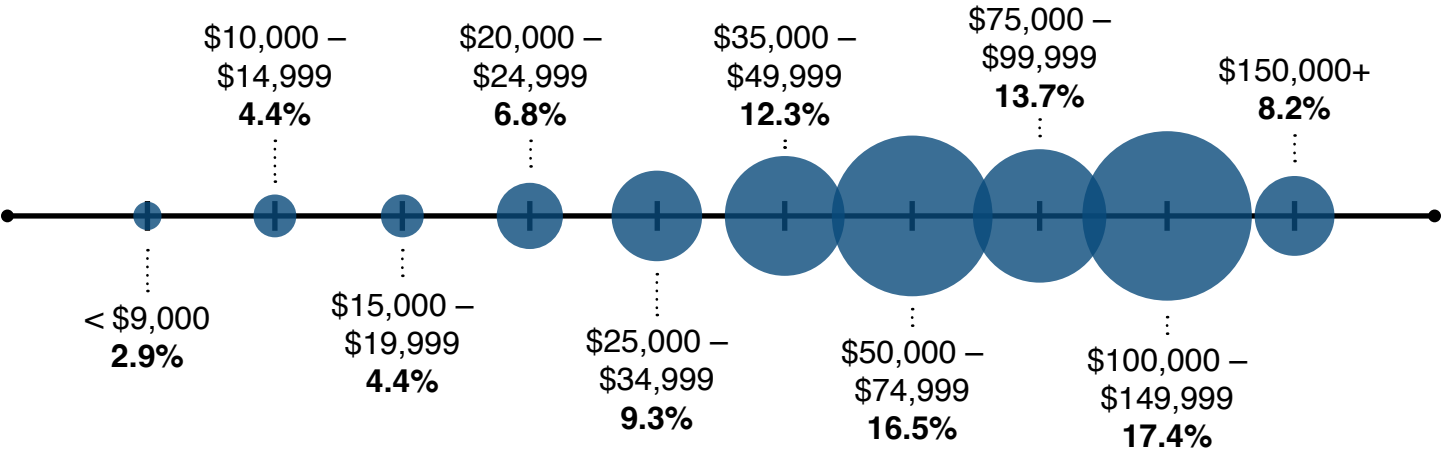


Ohio



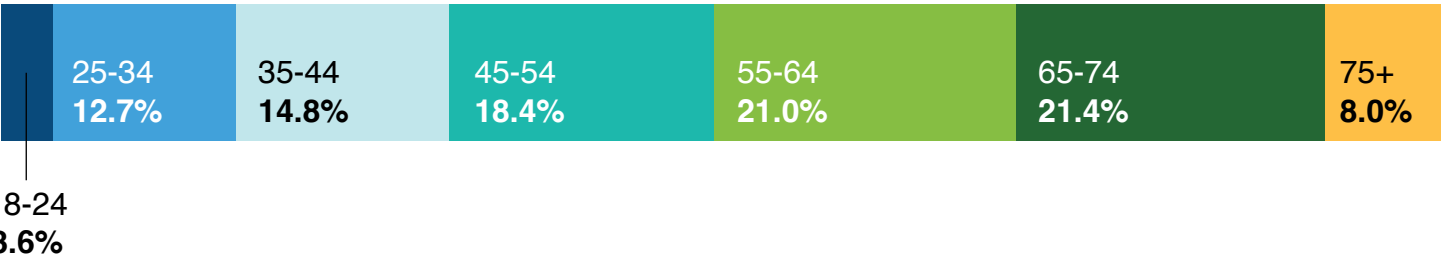
According to the United States Census, **93.6%** of Sandusky County residents have a high school diploma or higher.

Annual household income (n=546)



According to the United States Census, the median household income of Sandusky County is \$62,295.

Age (n=548)



Although 550 individuals responded to the 2025 survey, those responses represented the households of a total of 864 people.



Healthcare

HEALTH CARE, PREVENTATIVE CARE, & HEALTH SCREENINGS

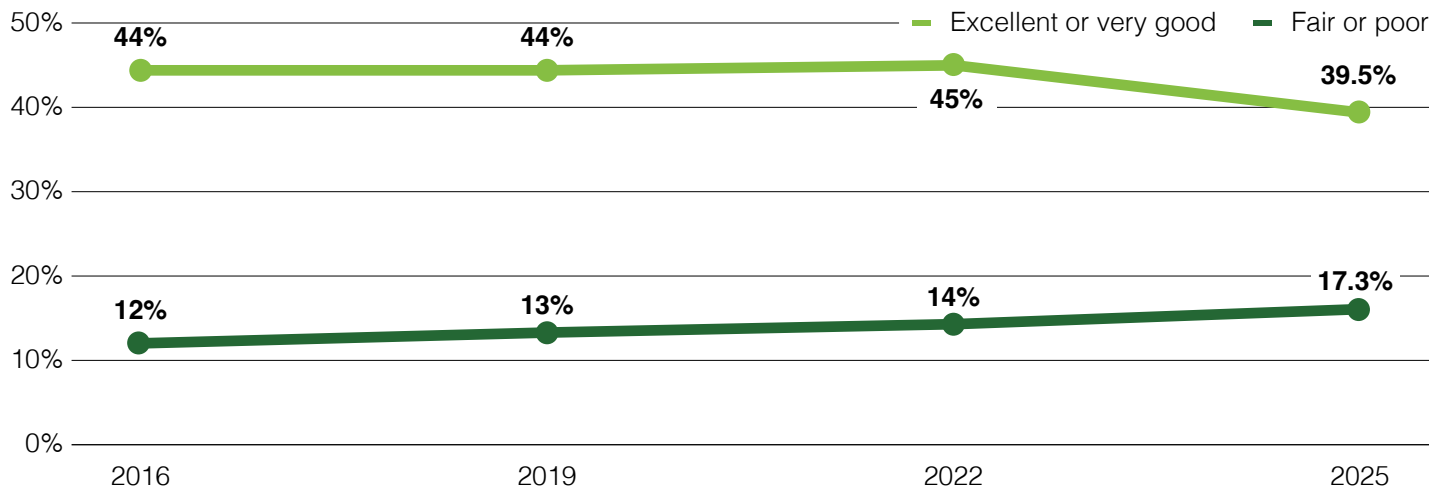
Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Overall self-rated health in Sandusky County remains relatively stable; however, survey trends indicate a gradual increase in the number of residents reporting fair or poor physical and mental health days. While most respondents report having a primary care provider and recent check-ups, access to specialty care, insurance navigation, and cost continue to drive care-seeking outside the county.

Healthcare

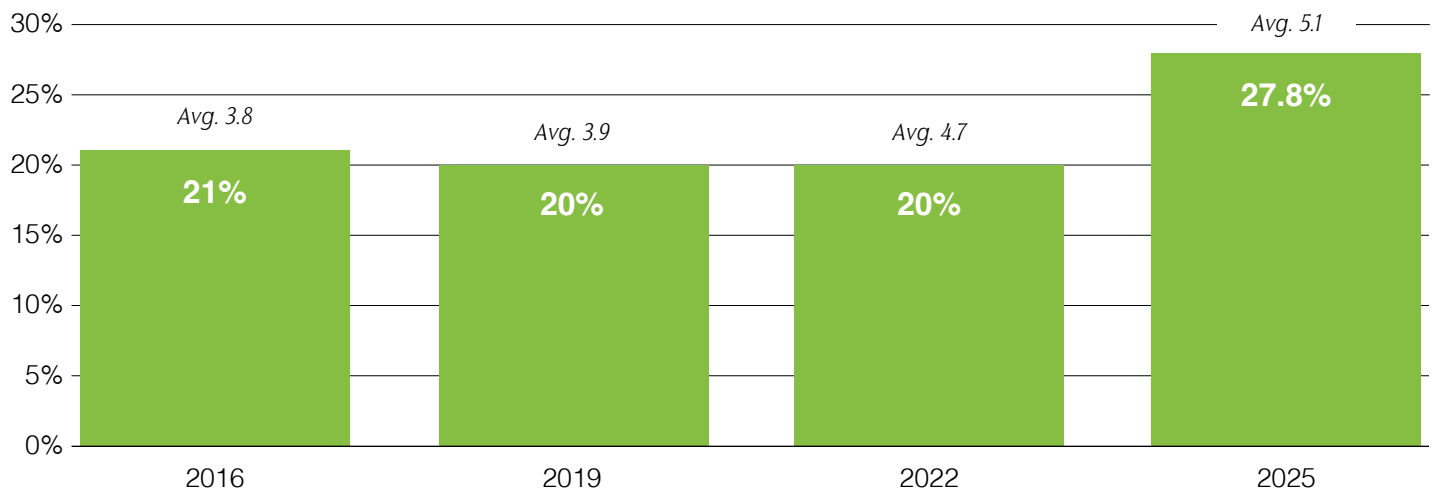
Most respondents rated their general health as excellent, very good, or good, with **39.5%** of Sandusky County respondents reporting positive health ratings in 2025. This is higher than Erie County, where only **20%** of residents rated their health as excellent, very good, or good in 2024. However, **17.3%** of Sandusky County respondents reported their health as fair or poor in 2025, which is slightly higher than Wood County, where **16%** of respondents reported fair or poor health.

In general, how would you classify your health? (n=550)



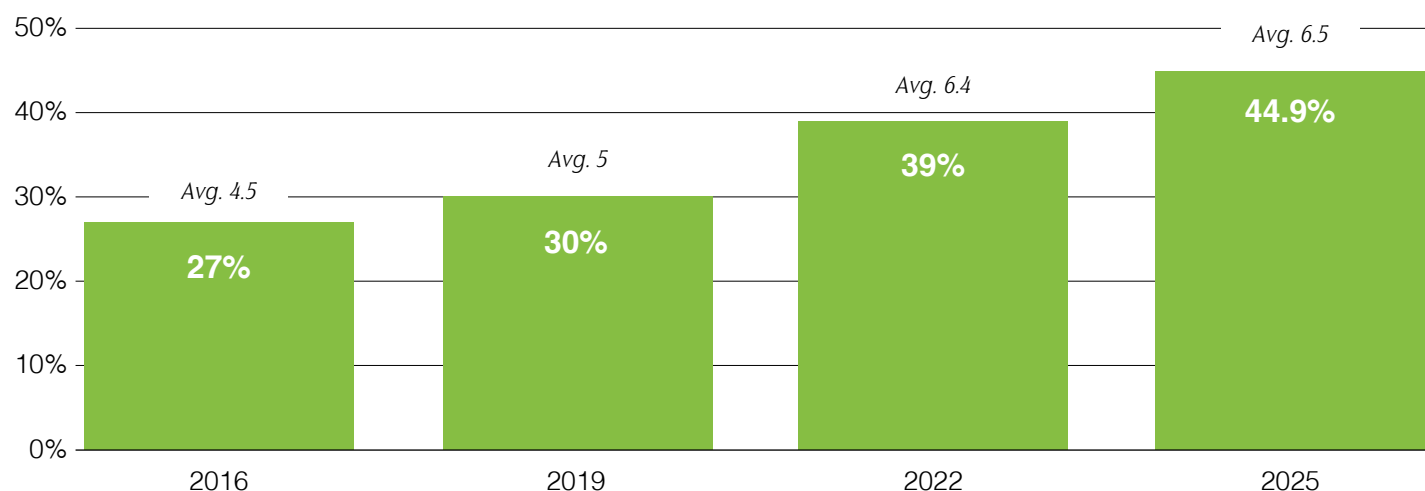
From 2016 to 2025, the percentage of respondents reporting four or more days of poor general health and poor mental health in the past month increased sharply, highlighting both physical and mental health as growing concerns in Sandusky County.

Percentage of respondents whose health was not good for **4 or more days** in the past 30 days (n=544)



The average number of days health was not good increased from 2022 at 4.7 to 5.1 in 2025.

Percentage of respondents whose mental health was not good for **4 or more days** in the past 30 days (n=539)



The average number of days mental health was not good increased from 2022 at 6.4 to 6.5 in 2025.

Chronic health conditions leave some focus group participants saying that their health is reminiscent of a “roller coaster”, as they have good days and bad days. Some conditions have left them disabled or incapacitated at times and take significant time and effort to treat.

“

My legs hurt so bad, and my elbows and wrists and everything, shoulders, it's all through my body. It just gets excruciating.

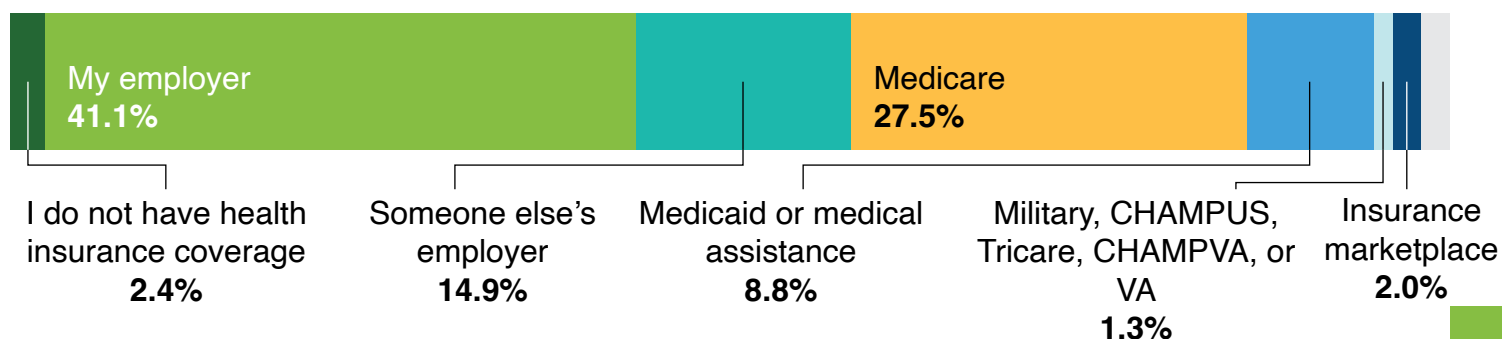
“

I've got to keep going.

Primary Care Access

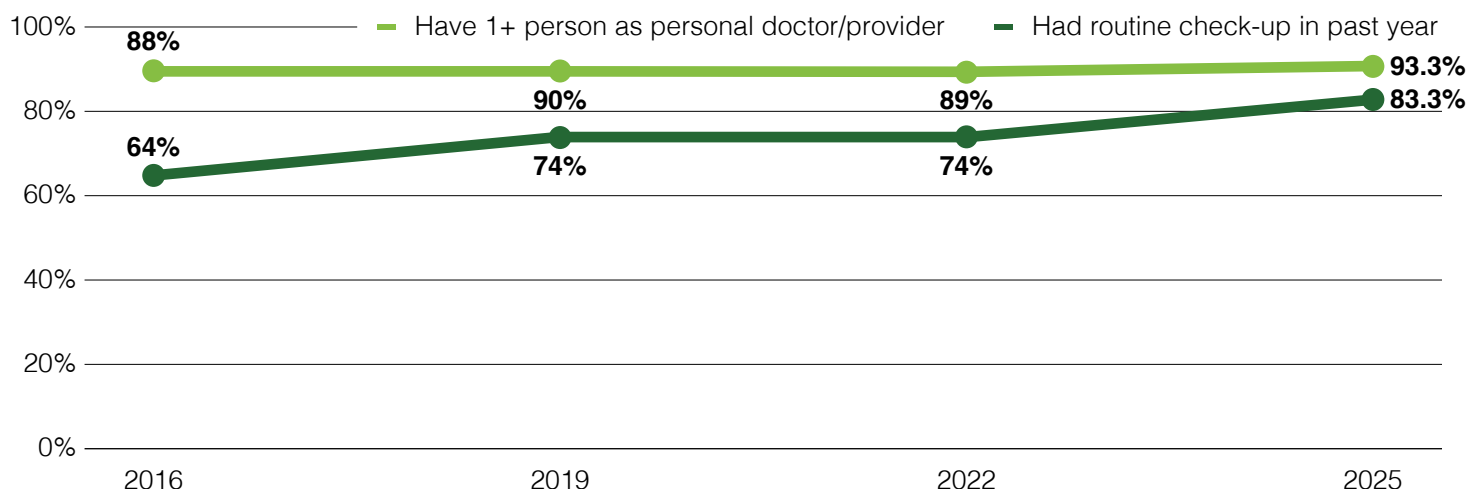
Most respondents have health insurance, primarily through an employer (41.1%) or Medicare (27.5%). A small portion remains uninsured (2.4%), which can pose significant barriers to preventive care, specialty services, and medication adherence.

What is the primary source of your health insurance coverage? (n=545)



Access to primary care in Sandusky County remains strong, with most respondents reporting a usual source of care (**93.3%**) and had a routine check up in the past year (**83.3%**).

Percentage of respondents who had access to primary care



While nearly half of respondents reported experiencing no barriers to care, cost remained the most reported obstacle among those who did experience barriers (**30.4%**). Additional barriers included providers not accepting respondents' insurance (**8.9%**). Among respondents who reported insurance-related barriers, insurance coverage sources included employer-sponsored insurance through their own or a family member's employer, Marketplace health insurance, and Medicaid or medical assistance programs.

What might prevent you from seeing a doctor or health care provider if you were sick, injured, or needed some type of health care (select all that apply)? (n=542)

1. Nothing (**46.5%**)
2. Cost (**30.4%**)
3. Difficult to get an appointment (**16.6%**)
4. Hours not convenient (**9.4%**)
5. Doctor/health care provider will not take my insurance (**8.9%**)

The top five places respondents go when they are sick or need advice about their health (n=548):

1. A doctor/healthcare provider's office (**78%**)
2. Urgent care center (**51%**)
3. Internet search (**2.7%**)
4. A public health clinic or community health center (**2.6%**)
5. A hospital emergency room (**2.0%**)

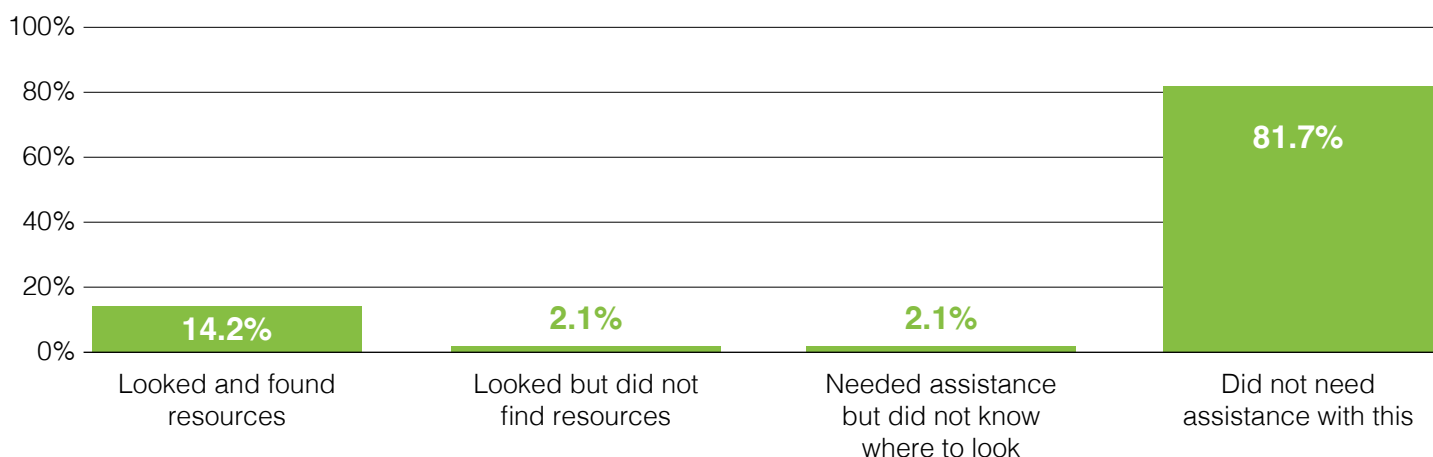
Many residents seek healthcare services outside of Sandusky County, primarily for specialty care. Focus group participants described the lack of local specialists, insurance navigation challenges, and transportation burdens as reasons for traveling outside the county for treatment.

Top five reasons in the past 12 months respondents went outside of Sandusky County for health care services (n=541)

1. Specialty care (**39.6%**)
2. Primary care provider (**18.3%**)
3. Dental services (**17.9%**)
4. Obstetrics/gynecology (**8.5%**)
5. Female health services (**8.0%**)

Focus group participants discussed prescriptions and medical procedures as significant expenses. Additionally, participants struggled with coverage such as disability and Medicaid for those expenses. They also discussed difficulties in navigating the health care and insurance systems as well as having to travel outside Sandusky County for specialty care due to a lack of community health services, insurance coverage, and providers. Due to having to travel for treatment, lack of transportation is a barrier.

Respondents reported on their efforts to find healthcare programs or assistance in the past 12 months (n=486)



“

This medication is \$3,000 and we don't even get \$3,000 a month.

“

Every time you talk to [doctors], it's always something negative.

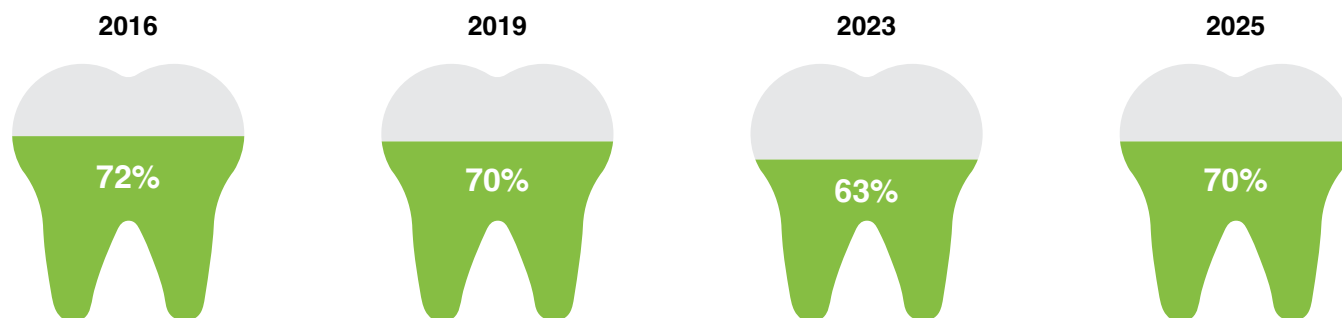
“

Sandusky [County] doesn't have any OB/GYNs anymore. So I have a problem with getting checked for cancer, because if I go back to university, Ohio State, is where I had all my cancer treatments. They're \$850 a visit just to go into the doctor's office just to be checked. So that's my problem.

Oral Health

Dental visits have declined overall since 2016; however, between 2023 and 2025, visits to a dentist or dental clinic increased by 7%.

Percentage of respondents who have visited a dentist or dental clinic (including orthodontists, oral surgeons, dental specialists, and dental hygienists) within the past year (n=547)



Among respondents that did not visit a dentist or dental clinic within the past year reported they did not go because of fear, apprehension, nervousness, pain, dislike going (6.9%), cost (4%), and having no dental insurance (4%).

Women's Health

14.2% of female respondents were pregnant within the last 5 years.

Most women who were pregnant in the past five years received early prenatal care and engaged in recommended health behaviors such as vitamin use. However, fewer received dental care during pregnancy (36.9%), and nearly one-third (32.3%) experienced depression during or after pregnancy.

Among those respondents, the following took place during the last pregnancy... (n=65)

1. Got prenatal care within the first 3 months (92.3%)
2. Took a multi-vitamin with folic acid (84.6%)
3. Received WIC services (36.9%)
4. Got a dental exam during pregnancy (36.9%)
5. Experienced depression (during or after pregnancy) (32.3%)

What is your usual source of services for female health concerns, such as family planning, annual exams, breast exams, tests for sexually transmitted diseases, and other female health concerns? (n=454)

1. Private gynecologist office (45.4%)
2. General or family physician office (25.8%)
3. Nurse practitioner/physician assistant (6.9%)

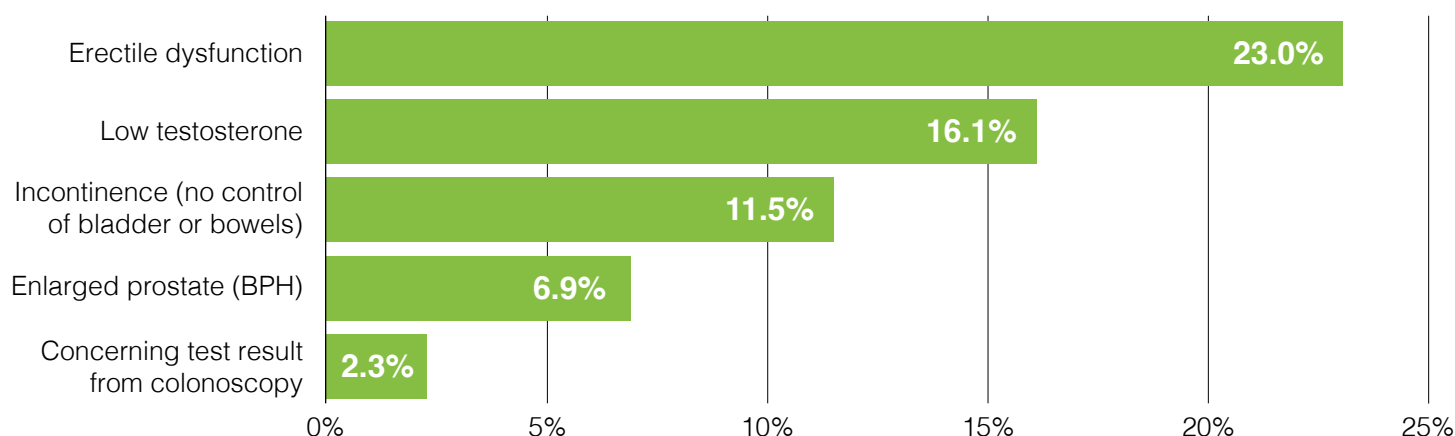
The Sandusky County WIC program served an average of 1,009 participants per month, and made an average of 66 referrals monthly to prenatal and pediatric health care or other maternal and child health and human service programs.

Source: SCPH 2025 Annual Report

Men's Health

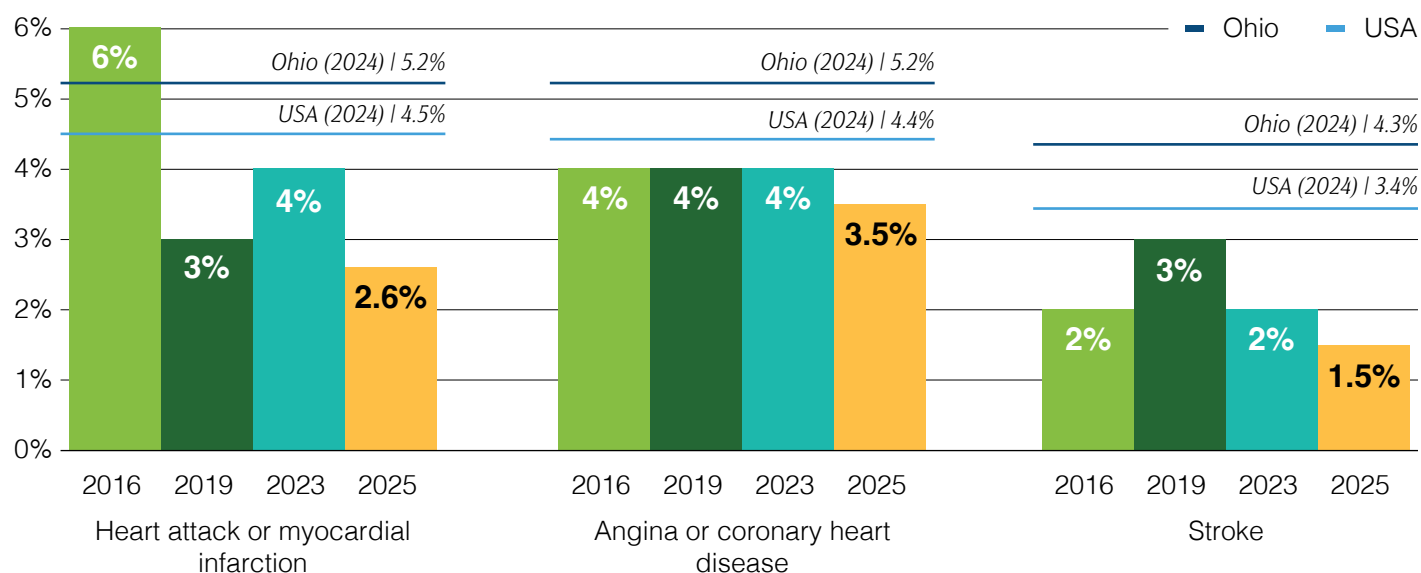
Men reported a range of health concerns, including erectile dysfunction, low testosterone, and prostate issues, while only **2.3%** reported having a concerning test result from a colonoscopy.

Have you experienced any of the following? (n=67)



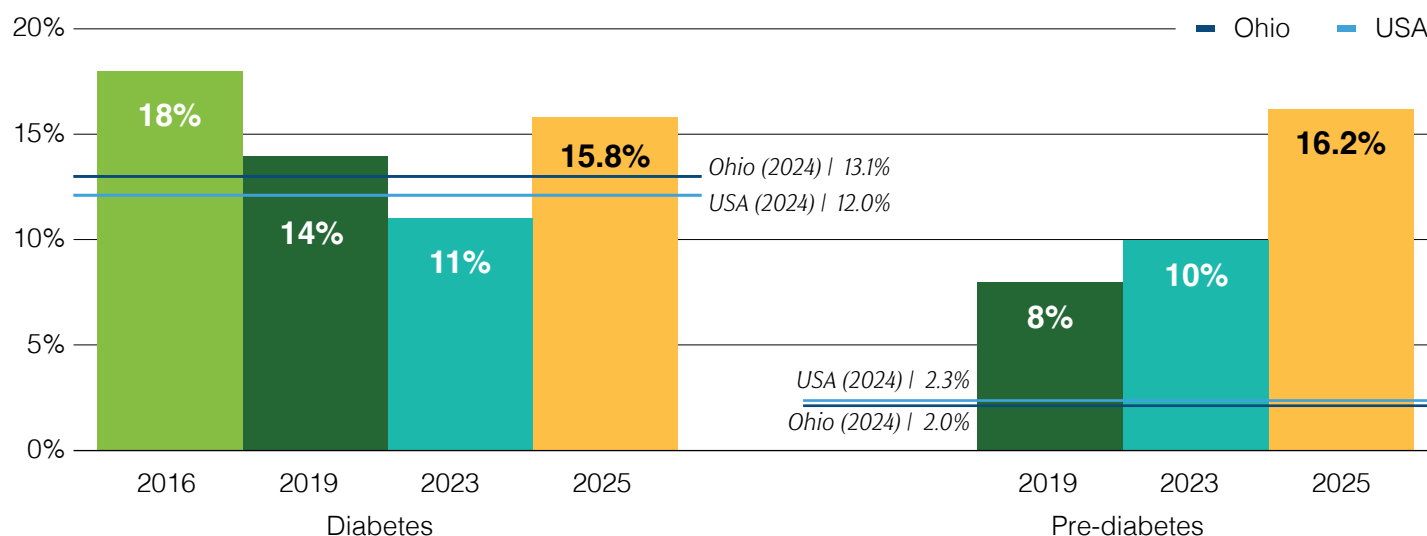
Preventative Health

Have you ever been told by a healthcare provider that you have any of the following conditions? (n=537)



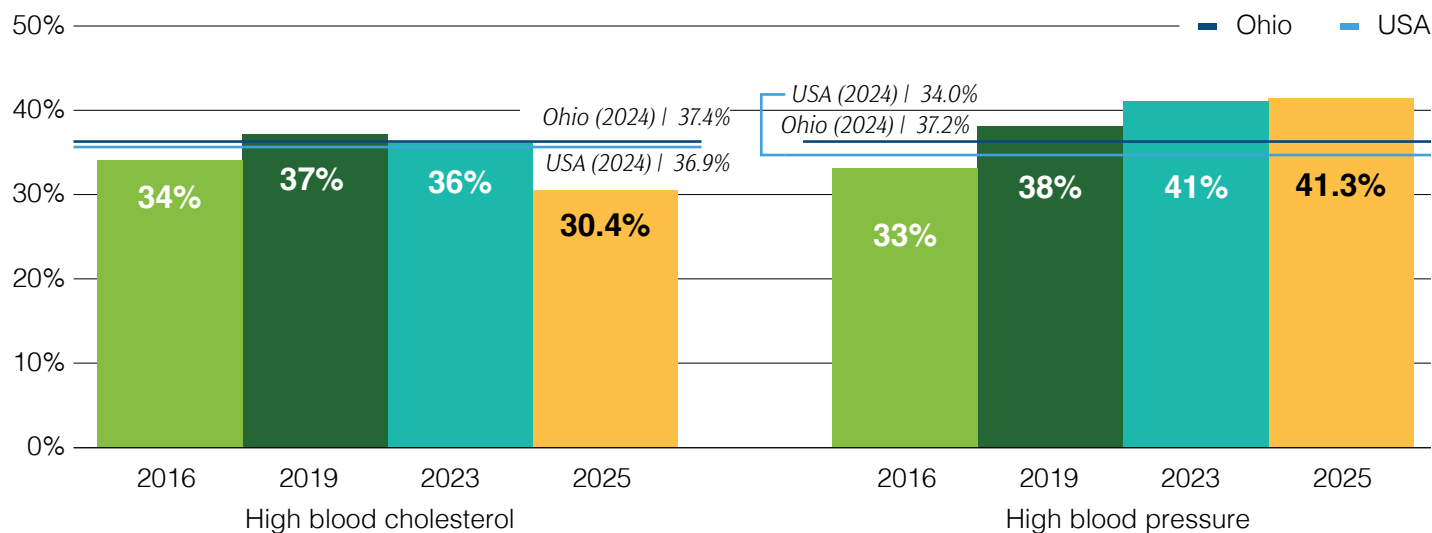
Sandusky County 2025 rates for heart attack/myocardial infarction, angina/coronary heart disease, and stroke have all decreased and remain under the state and national levels.

Have you ever been told by a healthcare provider that you have any of the following conditions? (n=537)



2025 Diabetes rates in Sandusky County are rising compared to previous years, and remain above Ohio and national levels. Specifically, pre-diabetes rose **6.2%** since 2023 and is about 14% higher than 2024 Ohio and U.S. levels.

Have you ever been told by a healthcare provider that you have any of the following conditions? (n=537)



Blood cholesterol and blood pressure rates in Sandusky County have remained relatively stable in recent years; however, more than one-third of respondents reported struggling with these conditions.

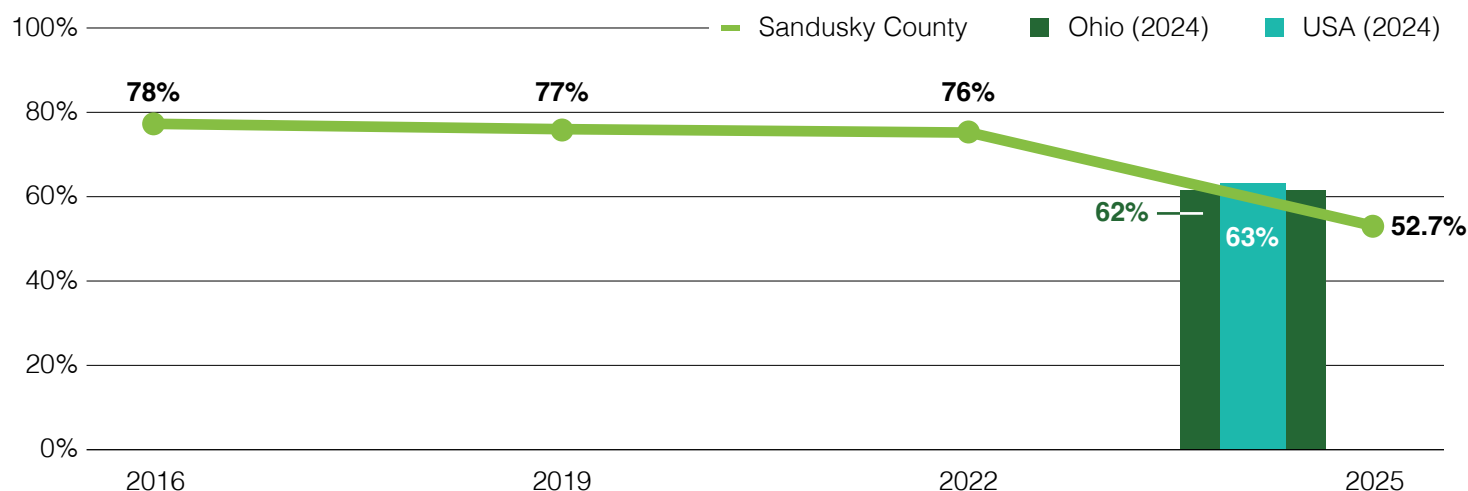
Focus group participants cited struggling with chronic health conditions and problems resulting from injuries.

“

You can't always see what [people] are suffering with...

2025 Sandusky County flu vaccination rates have fallen **23.3%** since 2022, below state and national averages.

Have you received your annual seasonal flu (Influenza) vaccine in the past year? (n=537)



Sandusky County Public Health is the largest provider of vaccinations to infants, children, adolescents, and adults in the county. The goal of the immunization program is to reduce and potentially eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases among the county's residents. The nursing staff provided services for **1,908 clients** with **3,096 immunizations** administered. This includes 237 flu vaccines and 89 COVID-19 vaccines.

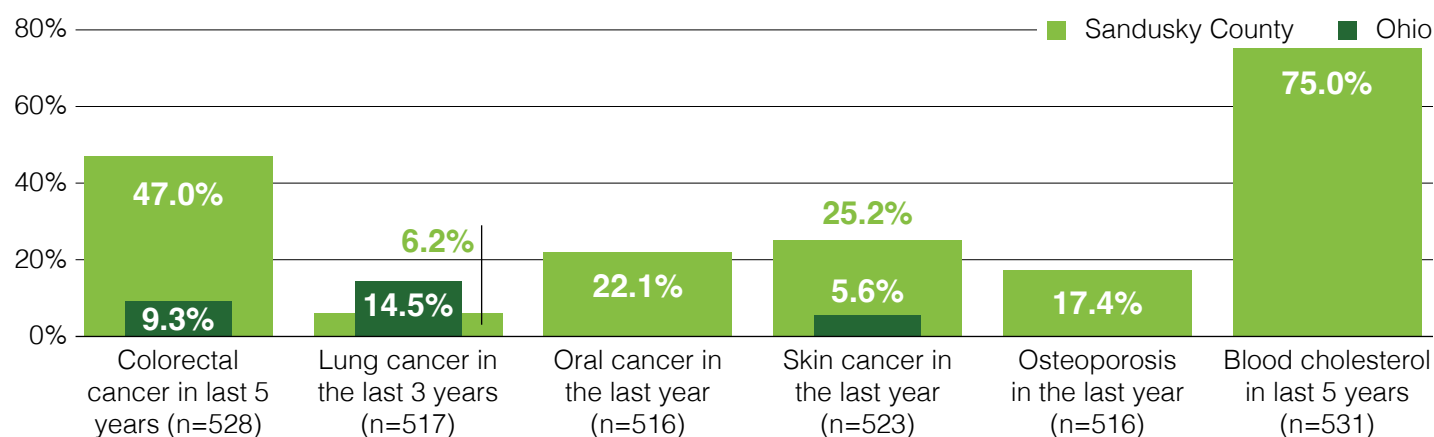
In 2025, Sandusky County Public Health reported **100 Influenza** associated hospitalizations and **62 COVID-19** hospitalizations. In 2023, there were **11** Influenza hospitalizations and **1,730** COVID-19 hospitalizations. In 2024, there were **0** Influenza hospitalizations and **1,198** COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Source: SCPH 2025 Annual Report



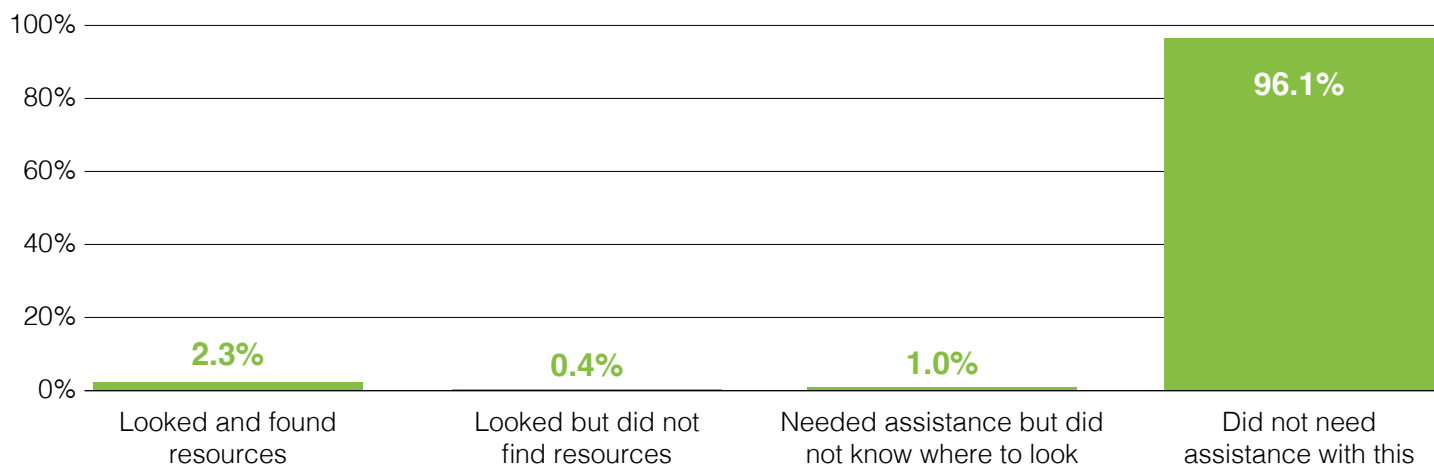
When asked about cancer screenings, Sandusky County residents reported higher screening rates than Ohio for colorectal (**47%**) and skin (**25.2%**) cancer, but lower screening rates for lung cancer (**6.2%**). Additionally, **75%** of residents reported having their blood cholesterol checked in the last five years.

Sandusky County residents have been screened for the following:



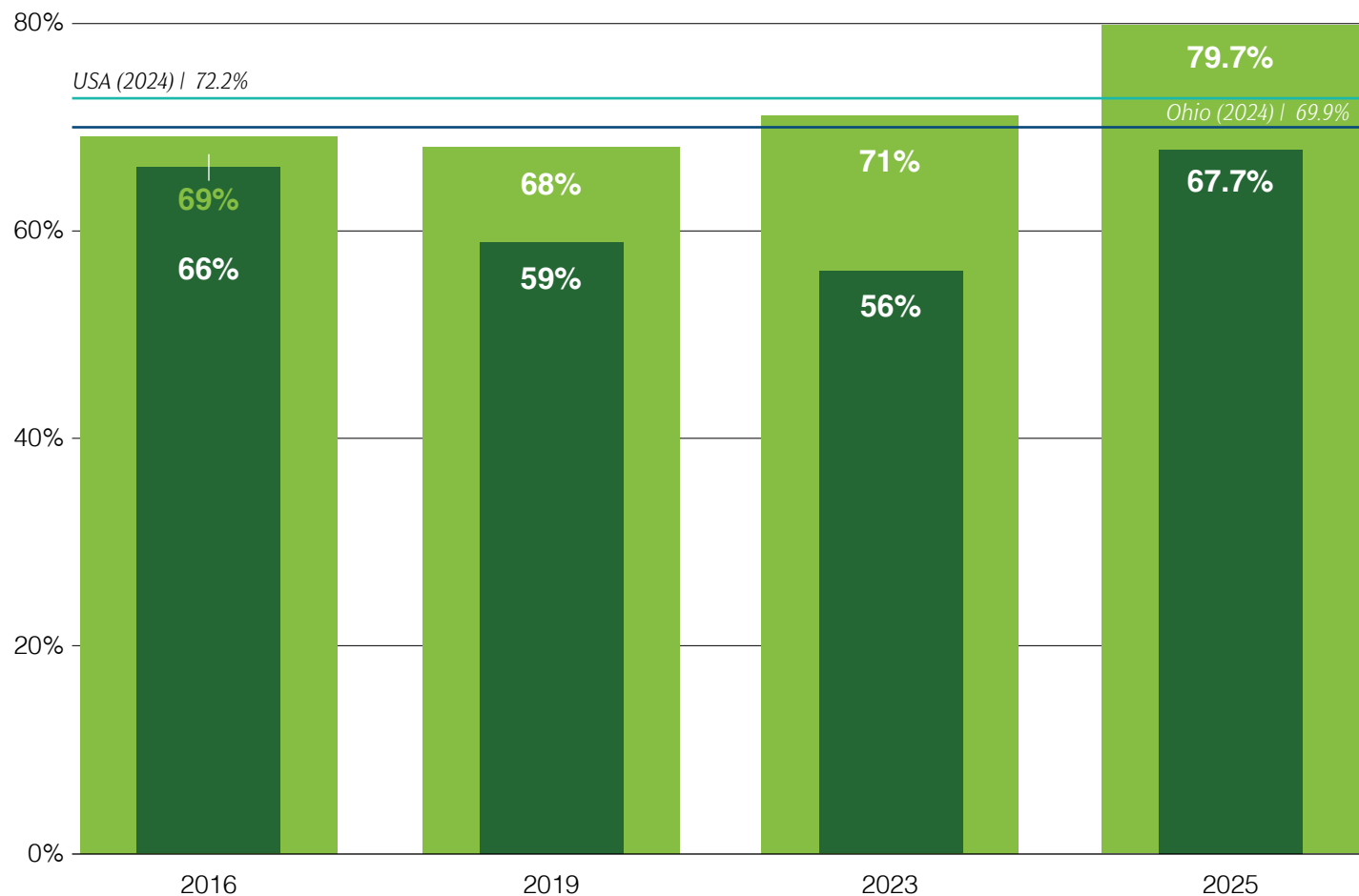
Source: Ohio Department of Health Cancer Profile 2025

In the past 12 months, have you looked for any of these types of programs or assistance for cancer support (group/counseling)? (n=485)



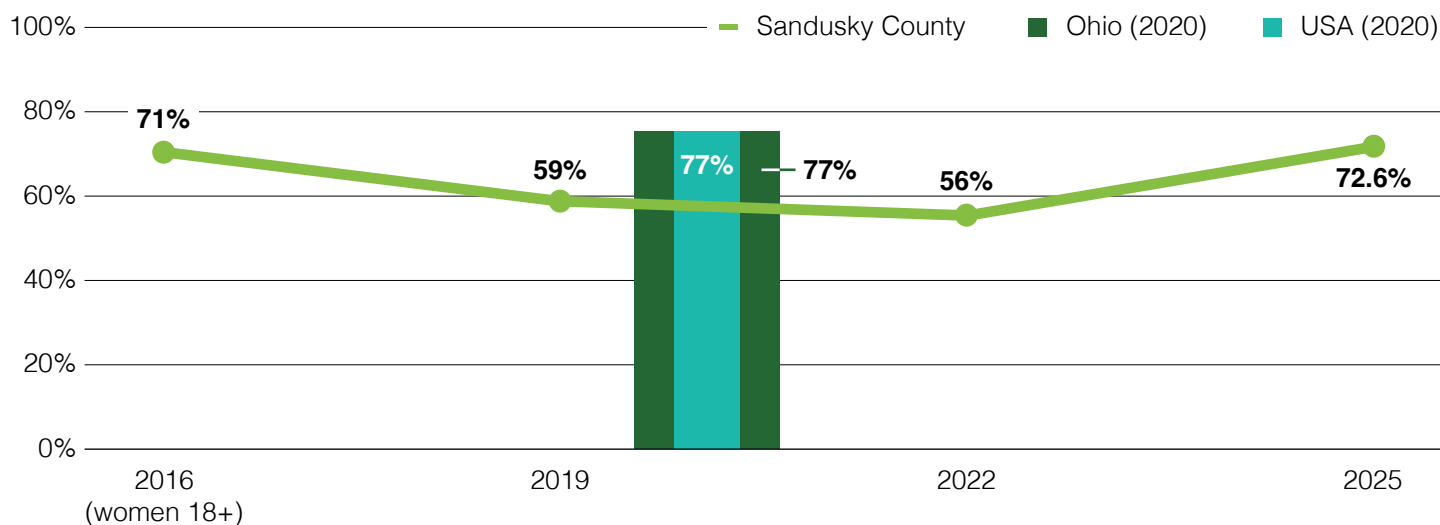
In 2025, **79.7%** of female respondents age 40 and older reported having had a mammogram within the past 2 years. Both mammogram and clinical breast exam rates have improved for Sandusky County since 2016.

For women age 40 and older, have you had a **mammogram** (an x-ray of each breast to look for breast cancer) or a **clinical breast exam** (health professional feels the breast for lumps) within the last 2 years? (n=344)



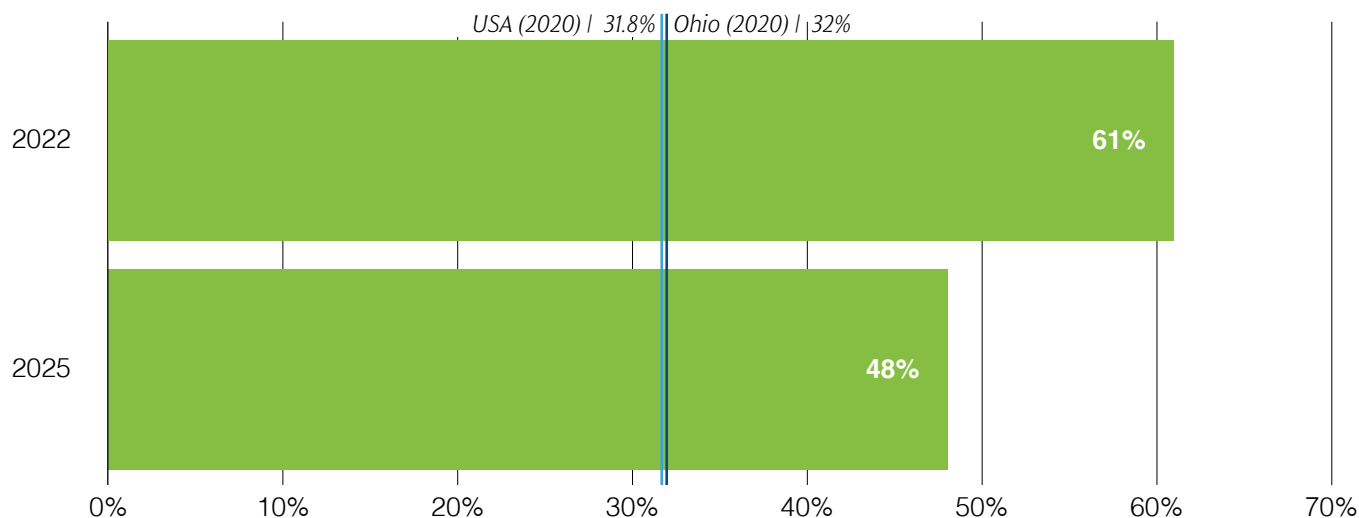
Among women ages 21–65 in Sandusky County, the percentage reporting a Pap smear within the past three years **increased from 56% in 2022 to 72.6% in 2025**. Despite this improvement, screening rates in Sandusky County remain below state and national levels, indicating continued gaps in preventive women’s health services.

Have you received a **Pap smear** (test for cancer of the cervix) within the last 3 years (women ages 21–65)? (n=343)



From 2022 to 2025, the percentage of men ages 40 and older in Sandusky County who reported receiving a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test within the past two years decreased. Sandusky County male respondents continued to report prostate exam rates that were higher than the state and national trends.

Have you received a Prostate-Specific Antigen test (blood test used to check men for prostate cancer) in the last 2 years (men ages 40 and older)? (n=75)





Health Behaviors

ALCOHOL USE, TOBACCO USE, DRUG USE, & SEXUAL HEALTH

Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Alcohol use remains common among adult respondents, though overall drinking and binge-drinking rates have declined slightly in recent years. Despite this improvement, a subset of residents continues to report risky behaviors associated with alcohol use, underscoring the importance of ongoing prevention and education.

Tobacco use continues to decline across successive CHA cycles, with fewer residents reporting current smoking. At the same time, sustained levels of former smokers and varied cessation methods point to both progress in quitting and the need for continued support.

While overall use of e-cigarettes remains lower than traditional tobacco products, survey data show notable lifetime use, particularly among younger adults. The presence of THC and nicotine-containing products reflects evolving substance use patterns that warrant continued monitoring.

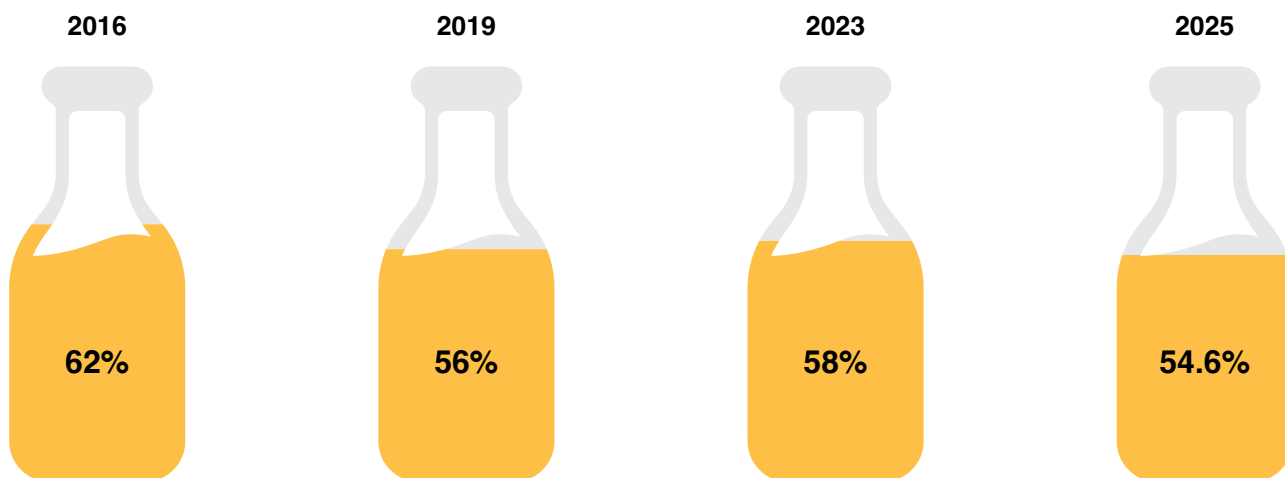
Most respondents report no illicit drug use in the past year; however, marijuana-related products account for the majority of reported use among those who do. Trends suggest shifting norms around THC consumption alongside declining misuse of prescription medications.

Most respondents report low-risk sexual behaviors, including fewer partners and contraceptive or pregnancy-preventive measures tied to life stage. However, survey findings also highlight experiences of coercion, underreporting, and gaps in HIV testing compared to state and national levels.

Health Behaviors

Alcohol Use

Those who are current drinkers (at least 1 drink of alcohol on at least 1 day during the last 30 days)
(n=550)

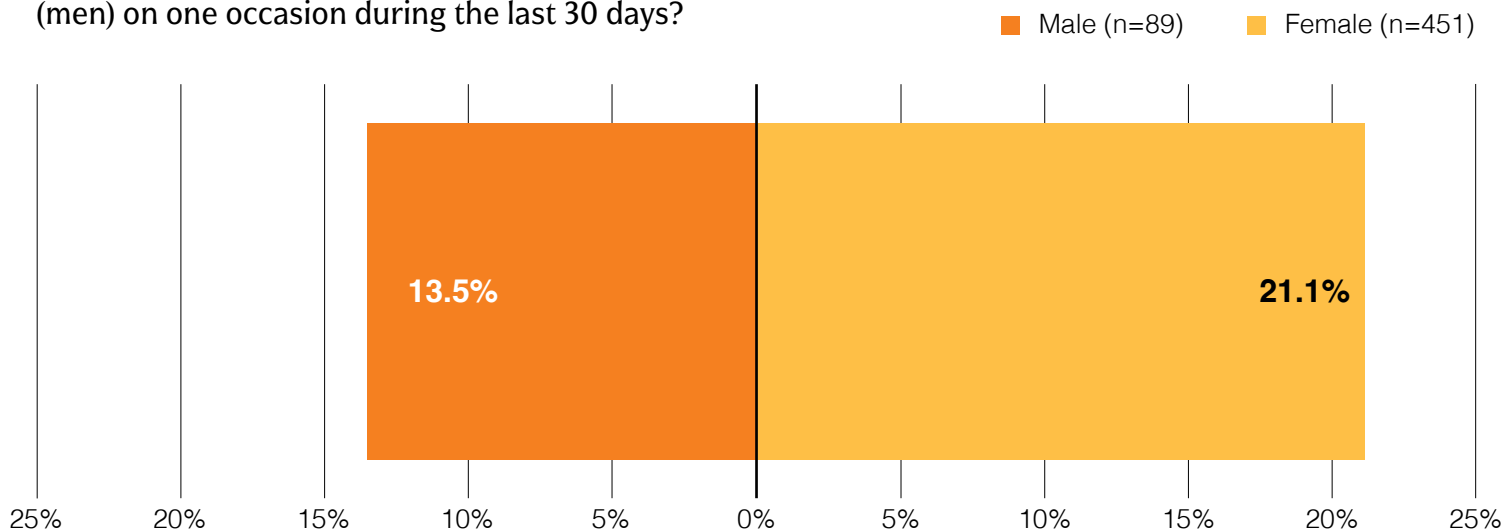


More than half (**54.6%**) of Sandusky County residents reported consuming at least one alcoholic drink on at least one day during the past 30 days, representing a decrease over the past nine years.

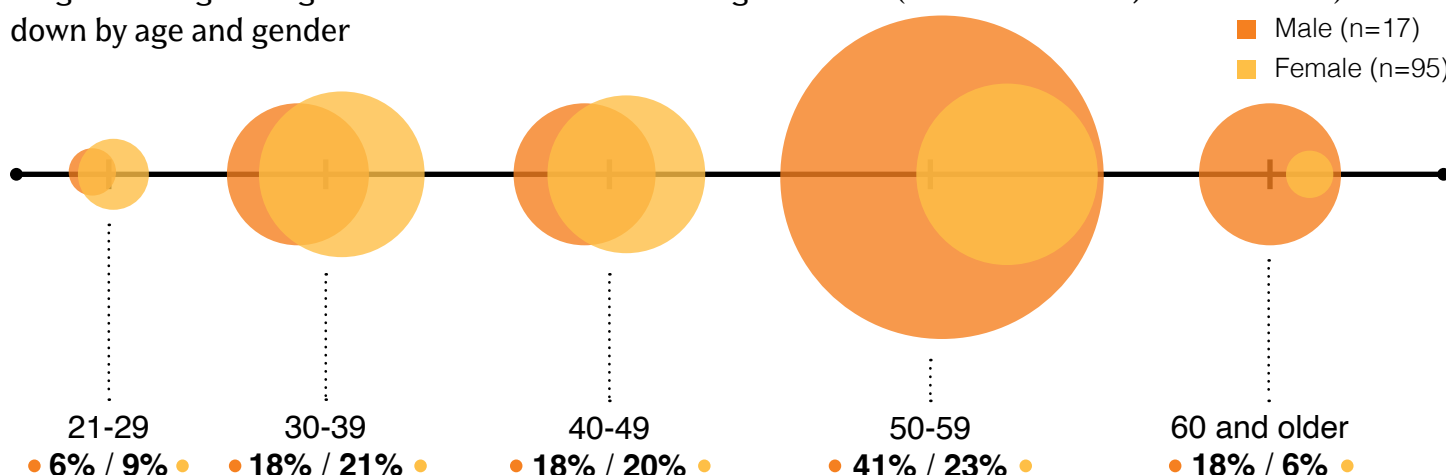
During the past 30 days, respondents who drank reported drinking an **average of 2.32 drinks** on the days when they drank alcohol. (n=296)

When comparing binge drinking behaviors by gender, **21.1% of women** reported consuming four or more drinks on one or more occasions within the past 30 days, compared to **13.5% of men** who reported consuming five or more drinks on one or more occasions during the same time period.

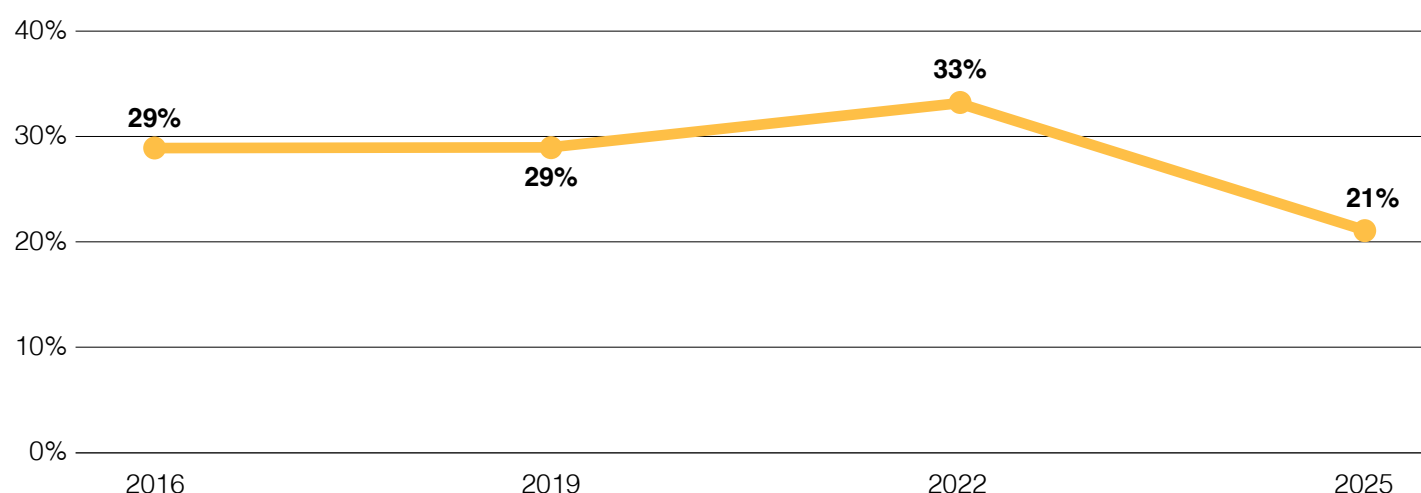
Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, did you have 4 or more drinks (women) / 5 or more drinks (men) on one occasion during the last 30 days?



Binge drinking among those who are considered binge drinkers (women: 4 drinks; men: 5 drinks) broken down by age and gender



Binge drinking among Sandusky County residents (n=535)



Among respondents who reported binge drinking, the highest proportion of male binge drinkers were ages 50–59 (**41%**), followed by ages 30–39, 40–49, and 60 and older (**18% each**). Female binge drinkers were also most commonly ages 50–59 (**23%**), followed by ages 30–39 (**21%**) and 40–49 (**20%**). Younger adults ages 21–29 represented the smallest proportion of binge drinkers among both males (**6%**) and females (**9%**).

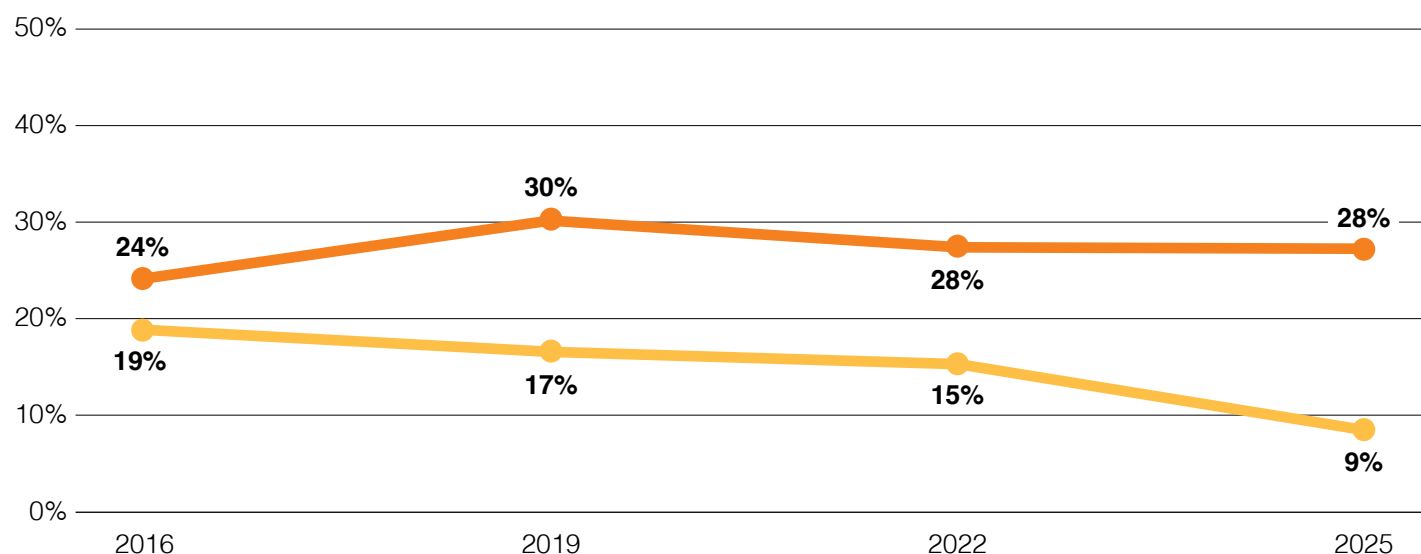
Tobacco Use

80.5% of respondents did not use any tobacco or nicotine products in the past 12 months (n=529).

Although most respondents do not use tobacco or nicotine products, current smoking rates in Sandusky County (**19.5%**) have declined over time but remain higher than rates in Ohio (**14.1%**) and the United States (**11.6%**), indicating persistent local disparities. Rates of former smoking in Sandusky County are comparable to those in Ohio (**26.8%**) and the U.S. (**25.9%**).

Smoking habits in Sandusky County

- Current smoker (now smokes cigarettes every day or some days) (n=542)
- Former smoker (smoked 100 cigarettes in lifetime and now do not smoke) (n=550)



Among the **49** (9%) respondents that stated they were current smokers, **25** (51%) of those have tried to quit smoking in the past 12 months.

Top 5 methods used to quit smoking (n=39)

1. Cold turkey (**65.8%**)
2. E-cigarette (**23.7%**)
3. Nicotine patch (**18.4%**)
4. Nicotine gum (**13.2%**)
5. Prescribed Chantix (**10.5%**)

Forms of tobacco used in past 12 months by **tobacco users** (n=103)

1. Cigarettes (**58.3%**)
2. E-cigarettes or other electronic nicotine products (e.g., vape pens, JUUL, Puff Bar) (**40.8%**)
3. Cigars (including large cigars, cigarillos like Swisher Sweets, and little cigars like Black & Milds) (**9.7%**)
4. Snus or other tobacco pouches (e.g., Camel Snus) (**4.9%**)
5. Chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip (e.g., Copenhagen, Skoal) (**3.9%**)

E-Cigarettes & Vaping

According to the CDC (2025), while cigarettes remain the most commonly used tobacco product among adults, recent national trends indicate that electronic cigarette use is increasing among adults. The percentage of adults who used electronic cigarettes increased from 4.5% in 2019 to 6.5% in 2023, with young adults ages 21-24 in 2023 were most likely to use electronic cigarettes (**15.5%**).

The average age of Sandusky County adults in 2025 who reported having ever used an e-cigarette, vape, or other electronic vaping product was 54 years old. Overall, fewer than one in five respondents have ever used e-cigarettes or vaping products, and over half of those are no longer current users.

Have you ever used e-cigarettes, vapes, or other electronic vaping products? (n=538)



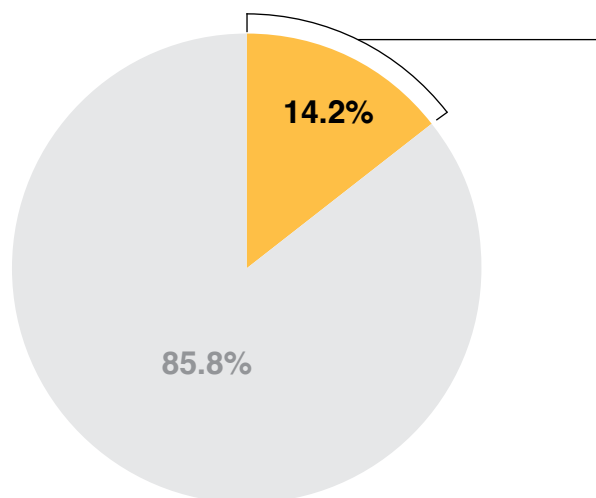
Of those who have used e-cigarettes or vapes, the top 3 substances used in e-cigarettes or other electronic vaping products are: (n=93)

1. E-liquid or e-juice with nicotine (38.7%)
2. Marijuana or THC in your e-liquid (14.0%)
3. E-liquid or e-juice without nicotine (5.4%)

Drug Use

85.8% of respondents reported never using illicit drugs in the past 12 months (n=541).

The majority of respondents report no illicit drug use or prescription medication misuse (85.8%). Among the 77 respondents who used drugs in the past 12 months, more than half (54.6%) used edible THC products.

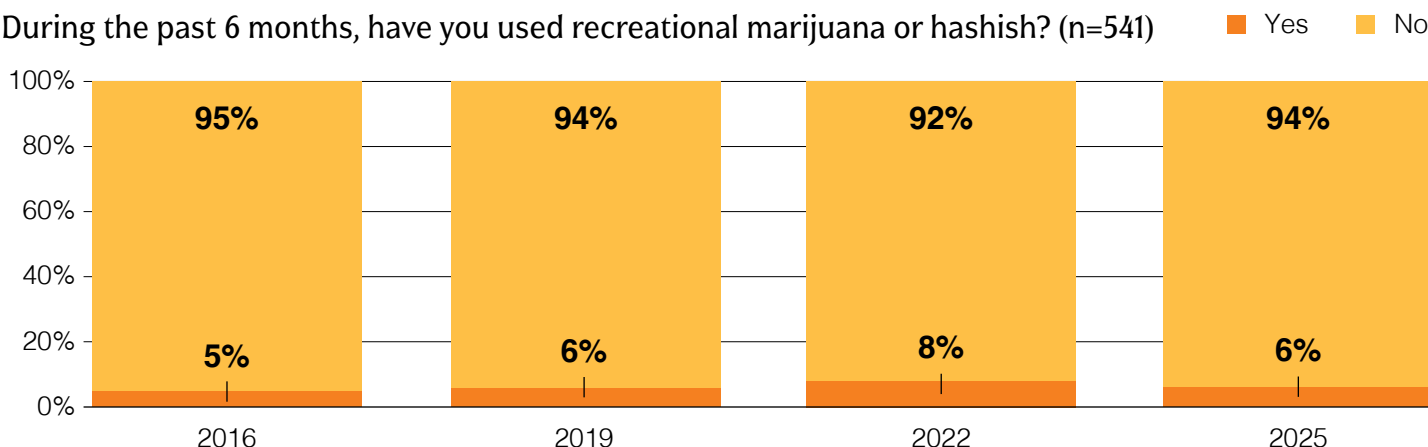


Of those who used illicit drugs in the past 12 months, the top 5 drugs used were: (n=77)

1. Edible THC products (including Delta-8 or Delta-10) (54.6%)
2. Recreational marijuana or hashish (48.1%)
3. Marijuana concentrates (e.g., wax, oil, dabs) (13.0%)
4. Medical marijuana (prescribed to you) (7.8%)
5. Prescription pain relievers not prescribed to you (e.g., OxyContin, Vicodin) (5.2%)

Among respondents who reported using illicit drugs in the past 12 months, **94%** reported using recreational marijuana in the past six months. This is consistent with trends observed in 2016 and 2019 for the county but represents a slight increase from 2022 (**92%**).

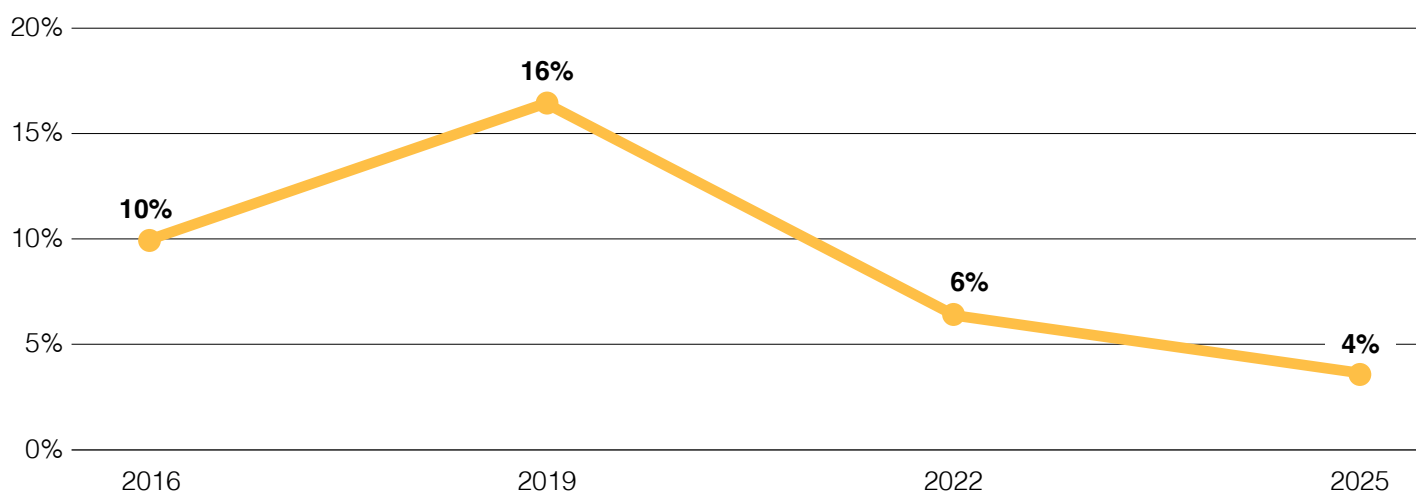
During the past 6 months, have you used recreational marijuana or hashish? (n=541)



93.8% of respondents did not misuse medications (in a way that was not prescribed, only for the experience or feeling it caused) in the past 12 months (n=532).

Among respondents who reported using prescription medications in ways other than prescribed (n=33), **48.5%** identified pain relievers (e.g., Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet, morphine, codeine, fentanyl, tramadol) as the most commonly used.

Percentage of respondents who used types of prescription medications in any way that was not prescribed for them or took only for the experience or feeling it caused in the **past 6 months** (n=532)



Among respondents who reported using prescription medications in ways other than prescribed within the past six months (n=16), **68.7%** indicated they obtained the medication from a primary care provider.

0% of respondents reported selling or giving away unused prescription medications.

The “Take it to the Box” program in Sandusky County provides 6 locations where residents can securely dispose of unwanted or expired medication.

The Prevention Partnership of Sandusky County provided 4,000 Detera bags to community members in 2025 as a new form of medication disposal. Detera bags are used to dispose of unused or unwanted medications. To use, medications are placed in the bag, water is added, and one shakes the bag to start the deactivation process. The bag is then placed in the trash for environmentally safe disposal.

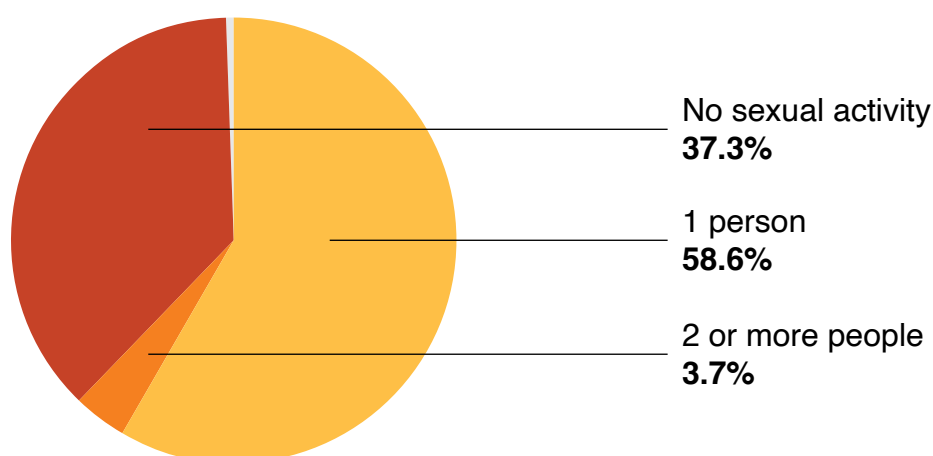
Source: SCPH 2025 Annual Report



Sexual Health

The majority of Sandusky County respondents have either 1 or 0 sexual partners, with only **3.7%** reporting having had sexual intercourse with 2 or more people in the past 12 months.

During the past 12 months, with how many different people have you had sexual intercourse? (n=536)



Survey respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced coercion into unwanted sexual activity. The majority (**85%**) reported that they had not. Among those who indicated they had experienced coercion, **13%** did not report the incident to authorities, while **2%** indicated that they did report it.

Have you ever been forced or coerced to have any sexual activity when you did not want to? (n=536)



Pregnancy prevention was assessed among 2025 respondents in Sandusky County for both men and women, with participants able to select multiple responses. The most commonly reported answers were not being sexually active (**17.4%**) and indicating that they or their partner were too old to become pregnant (**16.3%**).

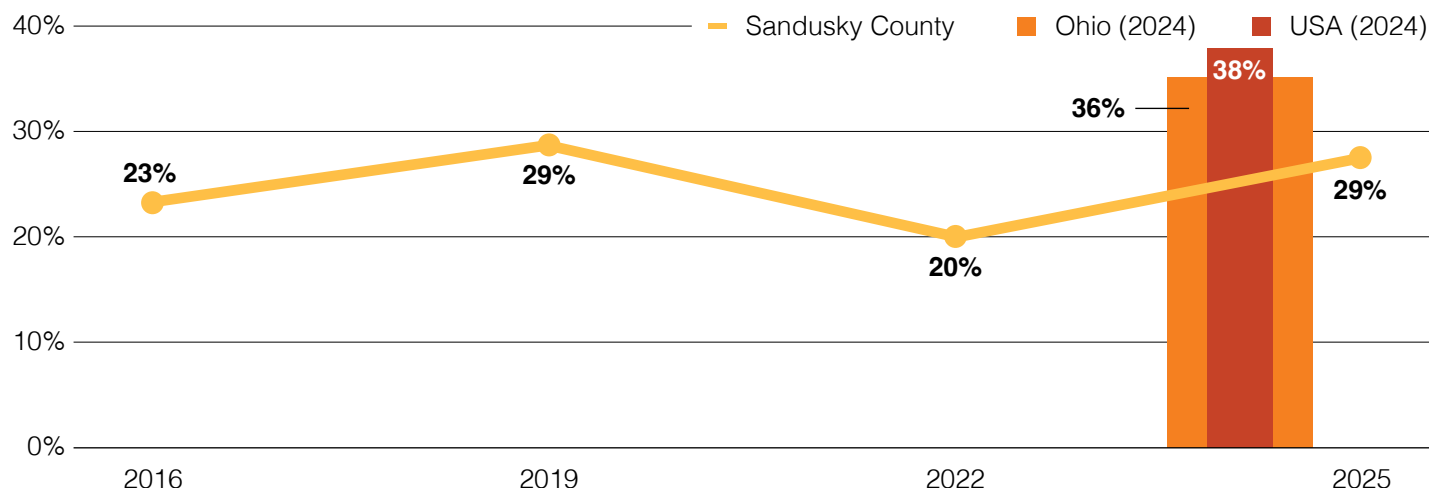
Top 5 ways respondents prevented pregnancy when thinking back to the last time they had sex (n=528)

1. No partner/not sexually active (**17.4%**)
2. My partner or myself is too old to get pregnant (**16.3%**)
3. Hysterectomy (**14.2%**)
4. Tubes tied (**13.6%**)
5. Vasectomy (**11.1%**)

Commonly reported contraceptive methods included condoms (**7.2%**), intrauterine devices (IUDs) (**4.7%**), and birth control pills (**4.4%**). Other methods—such as implants, injections, patches, and vaginal rings—were each used by less than 1% of respondents.

Additionally, **5.3%** of respondents reported using withdrawal, while **1.7%** indicated using fertility awareness-based methods, such as timing intercourse to avoid pregnancy.

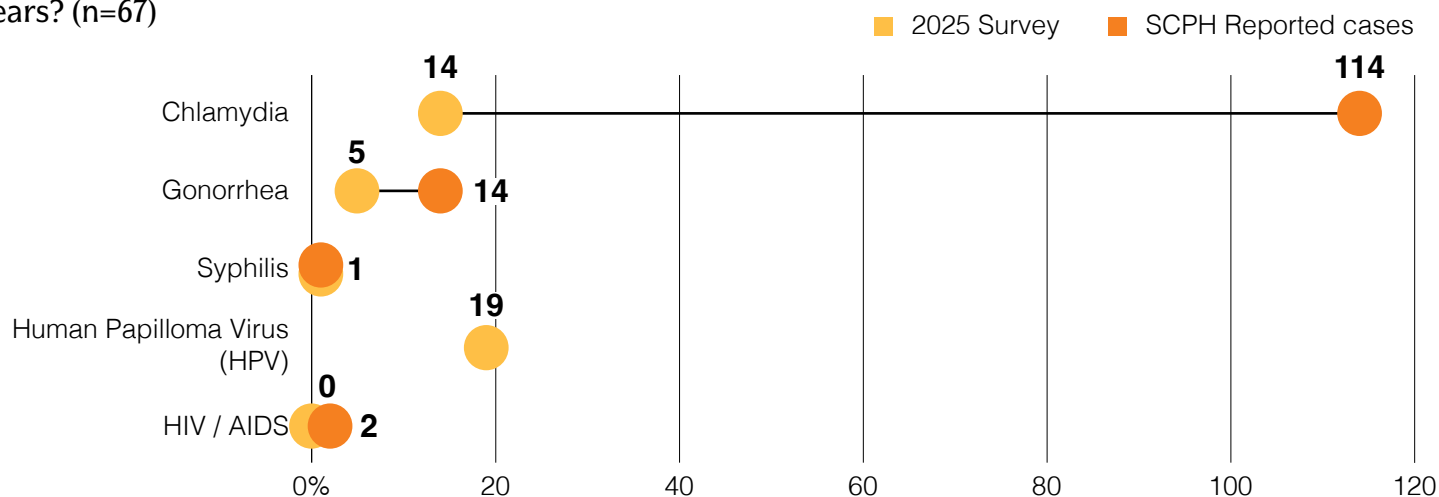
Percentage of respondents who have ever been tested for HIV not including tests done for blood donation but including testing of fluid from the mouth (n=538)



HIV testing identifies whether a person has HIV, the virus that can lead to AIDS, the most advanced stage of infection. Testing is critical, as an estimated **15%** of people with HIV in the United States are unaware of their status, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about **40%** of new infections are transmitted by individuals who do not know they have HIV. Early diagnosis and consistent treatment improve health outcomes and help individuals live long, healthy lives while reducing transmission.

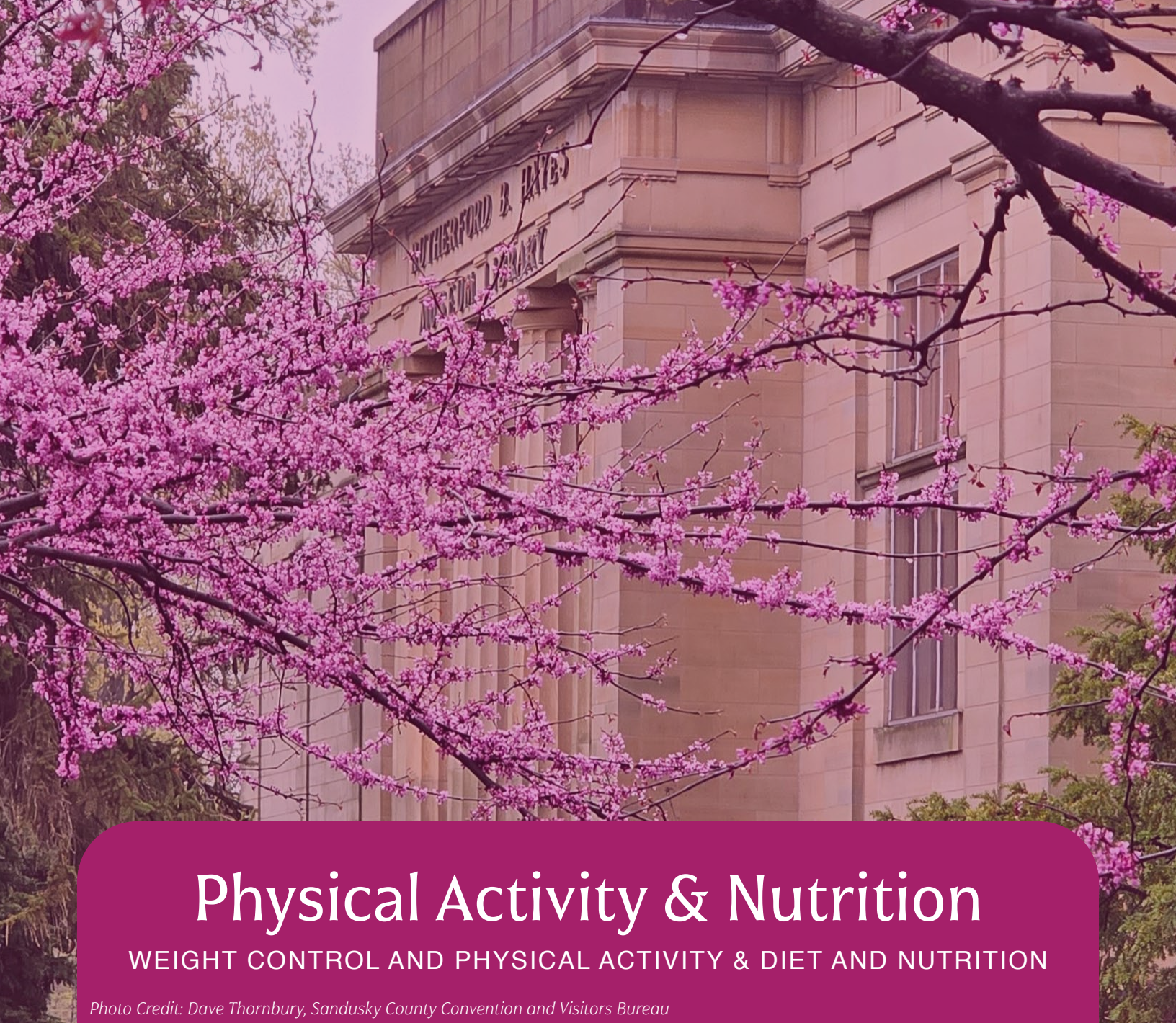
Since 2016, HIV testing rates among Sandusky County residents have fluctuated. In 2025, **29%** of respondents reported ever being tested for HIV—an increase from 2022—but rates remain below state and national benchmarks.

Have you been diagnosed with any of the following sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the past 5 years? (n=67)



The top 4 risky sexual behaviors Sandusky County respondents engaged in were: (n=535)

1. Had sex without a condom (**18.3%**)
2. Anal sex without a condom (**4.1%**)
3. Forced to have sex (**3.0%**)
4. Sex with someone I met on social media (**2.2%**)



Physical Activity & Nutrition

WEIGHT CONTROL AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & DIET AND NUTRITION

Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Many residents report engaging in physical activity and active weight-management strategies, though obesity rates remain high. Use of parks and trails is common but inconsistent, with safety, accessibility, and infrastructure improvements cited as key factors that could increase physical activity.

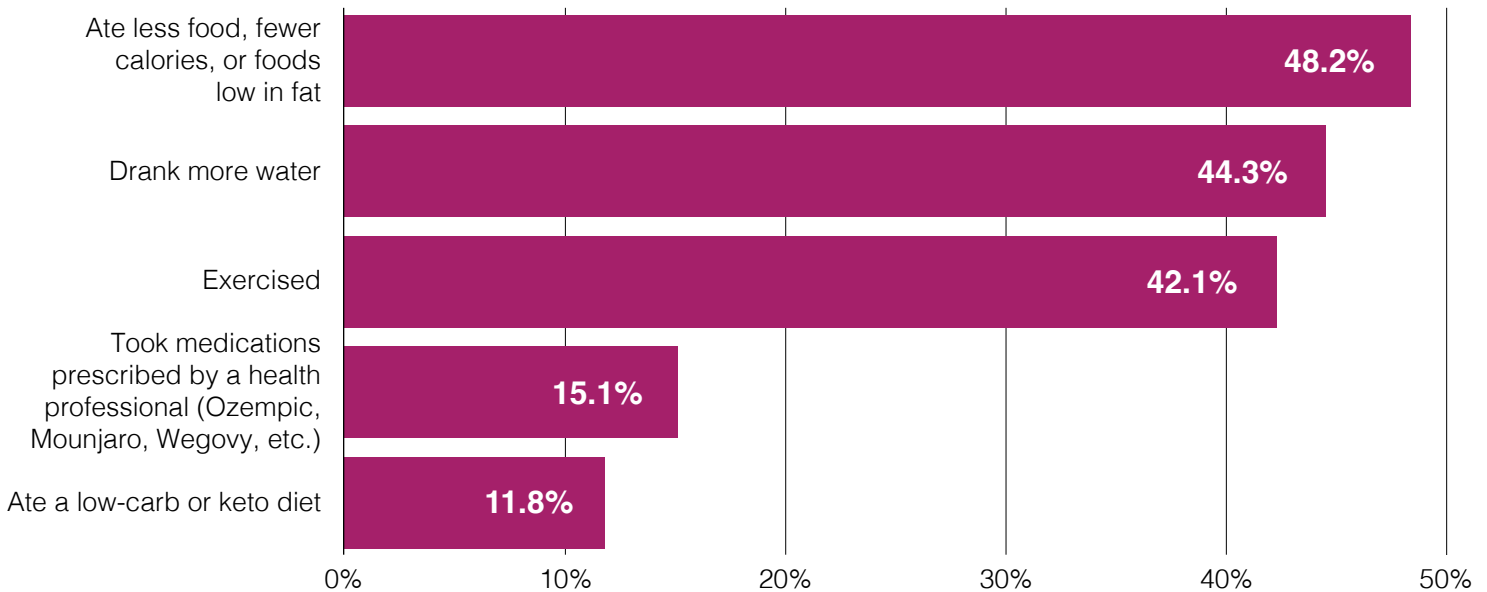
Fruit and vegetable consumption remains below recommended levels for many respondents, mirroring long-standing local and national trends. While most residents report no major barriers to healthy eating, those who do consistently identify food cost as the primary challenge.

Physical Activity & Nutrition

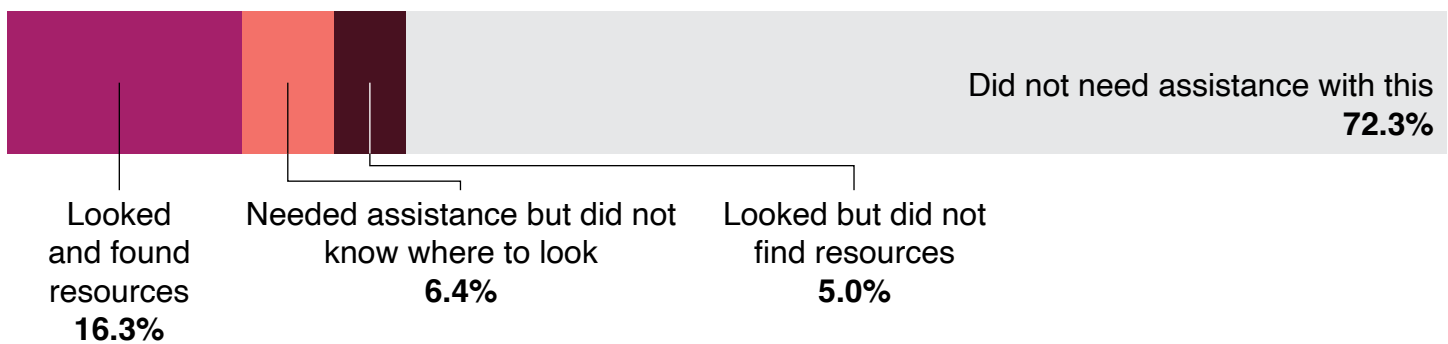
Weight Control & Physical Activity

Respondents in Sandusky County were asked about strategies they used to lose weight in the past 30 days, with the option to select multiple responses. Overall, **72.7%** reported attempting to lose weight during that time with nearly half indicating reducing food intake, calories, or fat consumption as their primary approach. Additionally, **15.1%** reported using weight-loss medications prescribed by a healthcare provider, including options such as Ozempic, Mounjaro, and Wegovy. A small proportion of respondents (**16.3%**) reported that when they sought programs or assistance for a weight-related concern in their community, they were able to find available resources.

During the past 30 days, did you do any of the following to lose weight or keep from gaining weight (select all that apply)? (n=535)

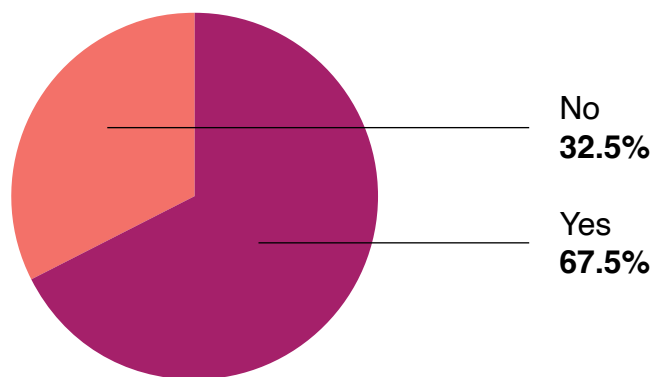


In the past 12 months, have you looked for any programs or assistance for a weight problem? (n=484)



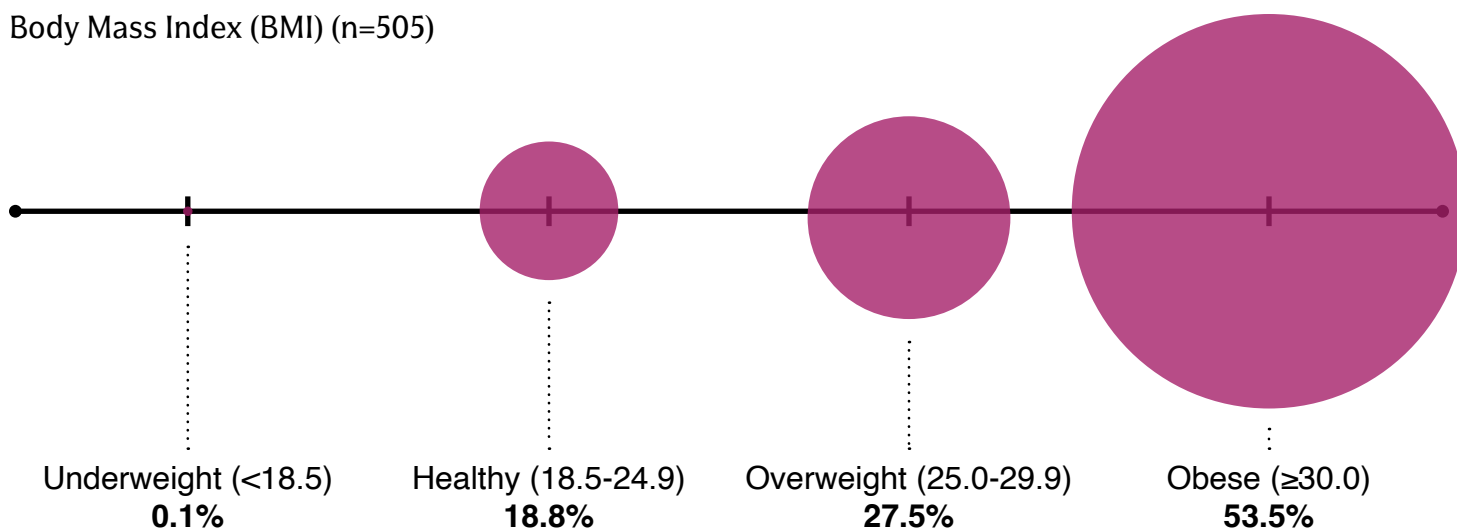
Most respondents (**67.5%**) reported engaging in some form of physical activity outside of work. Physical activity supports overall health beyond weight management; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week to help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

During the past 30 days, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise? (n=535)

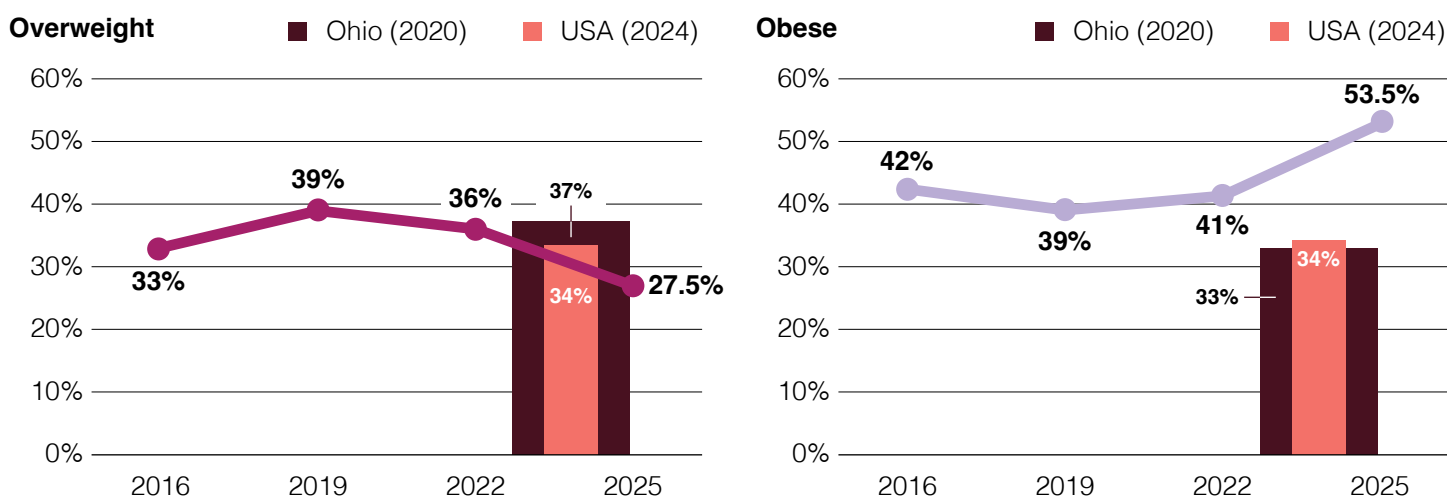


Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure based on a person's height and weight that is used to categorize weight status as underweight, healthy weight, overweight, or obese. These categories are associated with different health risks; for example, a BMI in the obesity range (30 or higher) reflects excess weight for height and is linked to increased risk of conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other chronic diseases. According to the 2025 CHA survey, **53.5%** of respondents in Sandusky County were classified as obese.

Body Mass Index (BMI) (n=505)

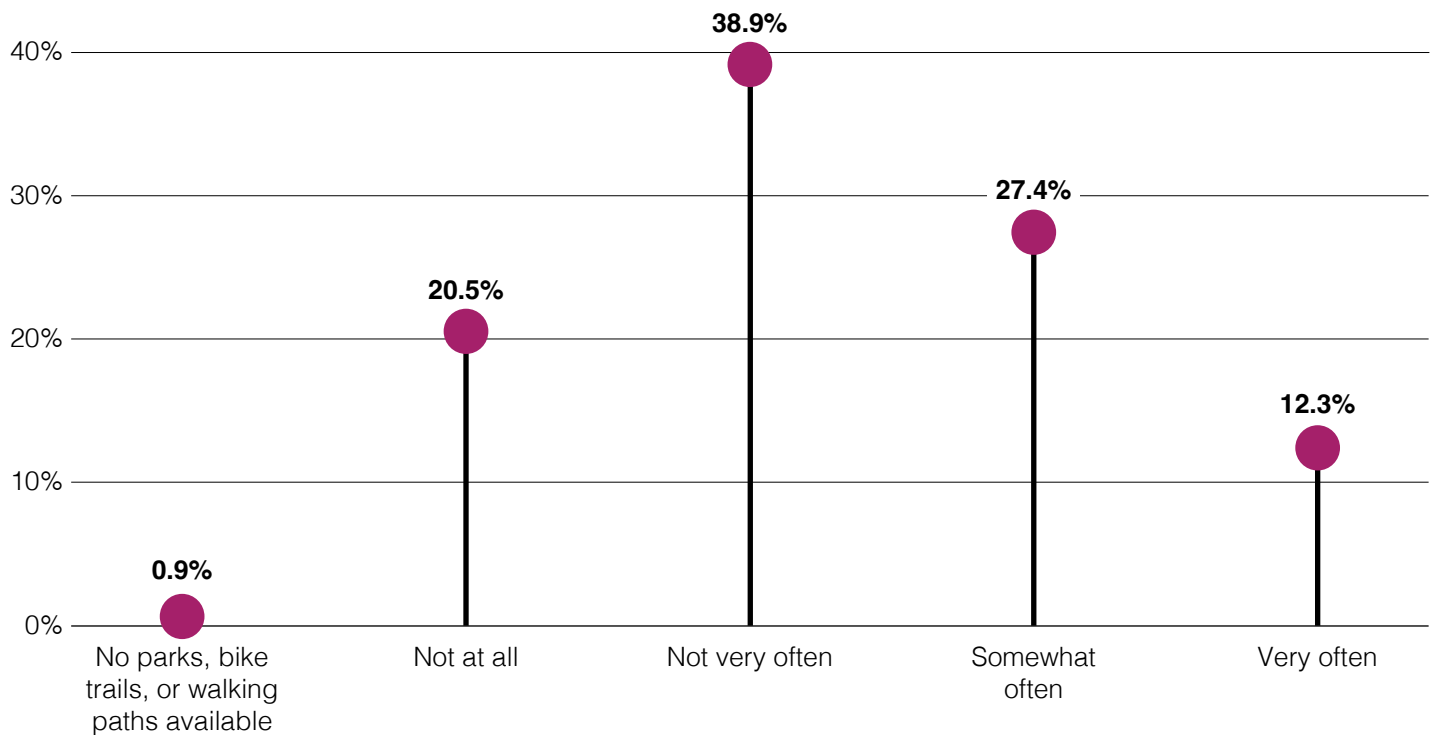


Percentage of respondents who are either overweight or obese (n=505)



Outdoor exercise—often referred to as “green exercise”—combines physical activity with time spent outdoors. It is associated with improved mood, reduced symptoms of depression, enhanced self-esteem, and is a low-cost, accessible way to support overall health. When Sandusky County residents were asked about access to outdoor spaces for exercise, **38.9%** reported that they do not frequently use parks, bike trails, or walking paths in their community. Respondents identified improvements and designated safe routes as factors that could increase use. Notably, **70.8%** of respondents still perceived local parks and trails as generally accessible and safe.

How often do you use or visit the parks, bike trails, and walking paths in your community? (n=537)



How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	N/A	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The parks, bike trails, and walking paths in my community are easily accessible (n=531)	6.6%	9.6%	13%	32.8%	38%
I feel safe using the parks, bike trails, and walking paths in my community (n=528)	5.3%	13.6%	22.3%	36.4%	22.3%
There are no parks, trails, or paths available in my community (n=513)	69%	8.8%	13.3%	5.1%	3.9%

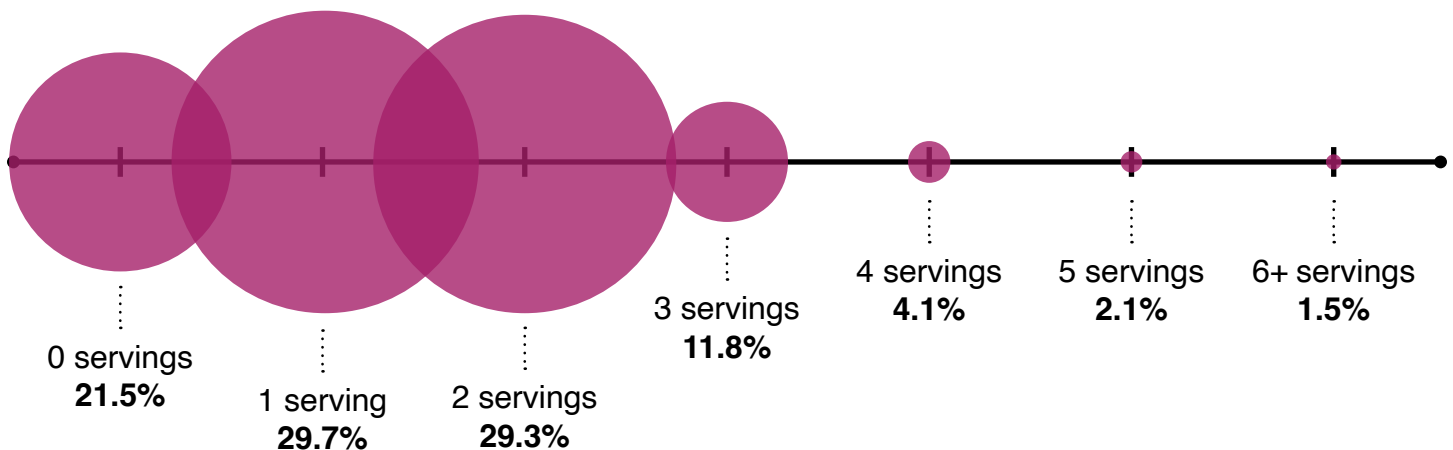
What would help you use community parks, bike trails, and walking paths more frequently? (n=526)

1. Designated safe routes (**29.8%**)
2. Improvements to existing parks, trails, and paths (**25.1%**)
3. More public events and programs involving parks, trails, and paths (**20.9%**)
4. More available parks, bike trails, and walking paths (**16.9%**)
5. Better promotion and advertising of existing parks, trails, and paths (**16.2%**)

Diet & Nutrition

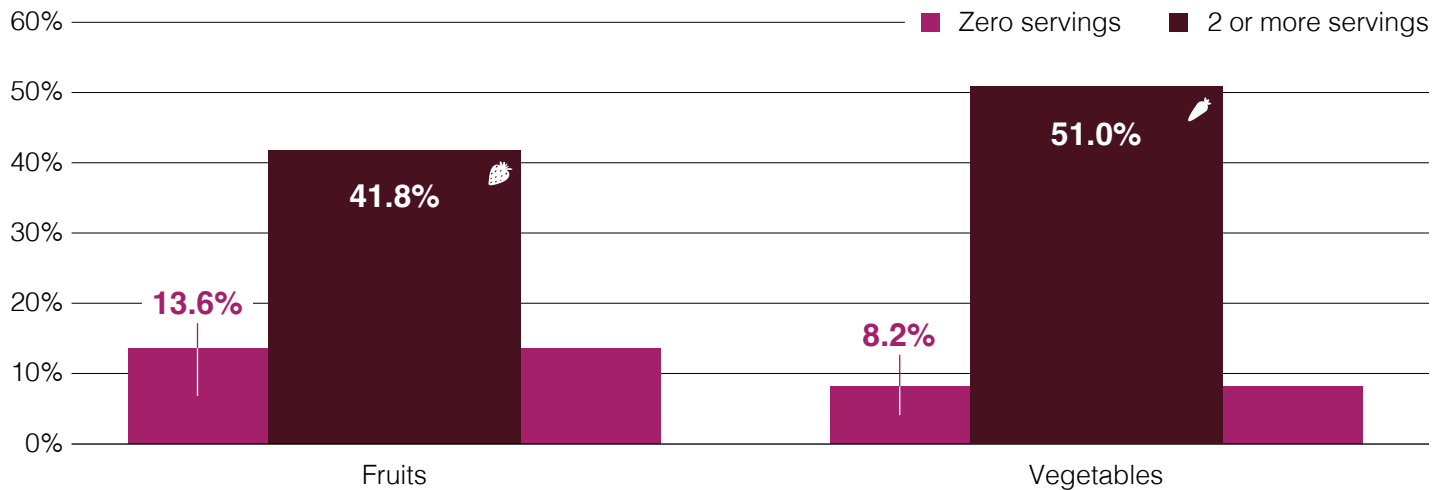
According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, up to 400 milligrams of caffeine per day—roughly equivalent to four to five cups of coffee—is considered safe for most healthy adults. In 2025, most respondents in Sandusky County reported consuming 1–2 servings (approximately 1–2 cups) of caffeinated beverages per day, well below the recommended daily maximum.

On average, how many caffeinated beverages (8oz of coffee, tea, energy drinks, etc.) do you have per day? (n=535)



The American Heart Association recommends a daily intake of 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables, based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Among respondents, **41.8%** reported consuming two or more servings of fruit per day, while **13.6%** reported no fruit intake. Vegetable consumption was somewhat higher, with **51%** reporting two or more servings daily; however, **8.2%** indicated they did not consume any vegetables. A majority of Sandusky County residents shop for their fruits and vegetables at a large grocery store such as Walmart, Meijer, or Kroger.

Percentage of respondents who have **zero servings** (1 cup) of fruit and/or vegetables per day and those who have **2 or more servings** of fruit and/or vegetables per day (n=536)



From where do you get your fresh fruits and vegetables? (n=540)

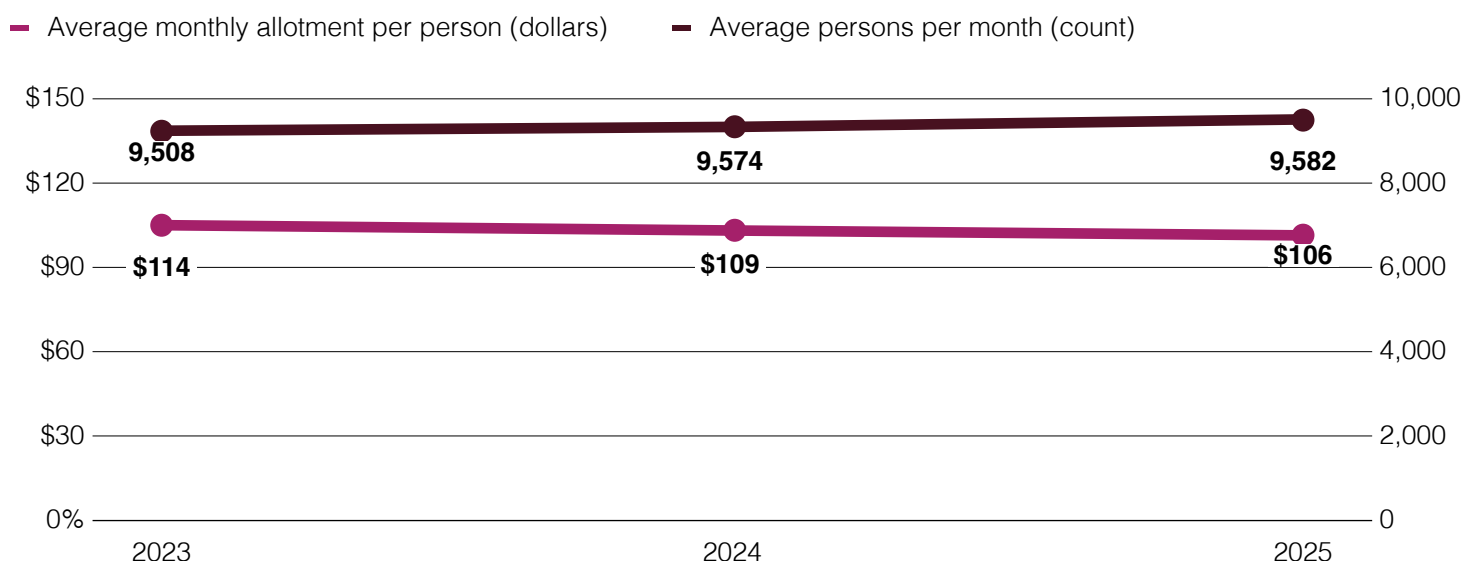
1. Large grocery store (e.g., Walmart, Meijer, Kroger) (**83.9%**)
2. Farmer's market (**46.9%**)
3. I grow my own/gardening (**27.0%**)
4. Local grocery store (e.g., Chief, Save-A-Lot) (**18.7%**)

Of the 529 respondents, 76.6% reported no difficulties or barriers to consuming fruits and vegetables. However, among the 18% who did experience challenges, the primary barrier identified was cost. In 2021, Sandusky County had a food insecurity rate of 12%, with approximately 7,090 residents classified as food insecure. Notably, 51% of those individuals fell below the SNAP eligibility threshold, defined as 130% of the federal poverty level.

Source: Feeding America

Sandusky County Job & Family Services has tracked SNAP expenditures among county residents over the past three years. During this period, both the average monthly allotment per case and per individual have decreased significantly. At the same time, the number of residents relying on SNAP benefits has increased, indicating a growing need for assistance despite declining benefit levels. See table below.

SNAP expenditures in dollars versus SNAP recipients in count



Participants of the focus groups discussed that they did not have reliable access to food because their income was too high to qualify for food stamps but low enough to struggle with affording food, so they rely on local food banks to supplement their supply.

“

I was only getting \$13 a month for food stamps, so I just said it's not worth me filling out the paperwork.

“

When you apply for food stamps it always takes months before they even answer you back.



Mental Health

Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

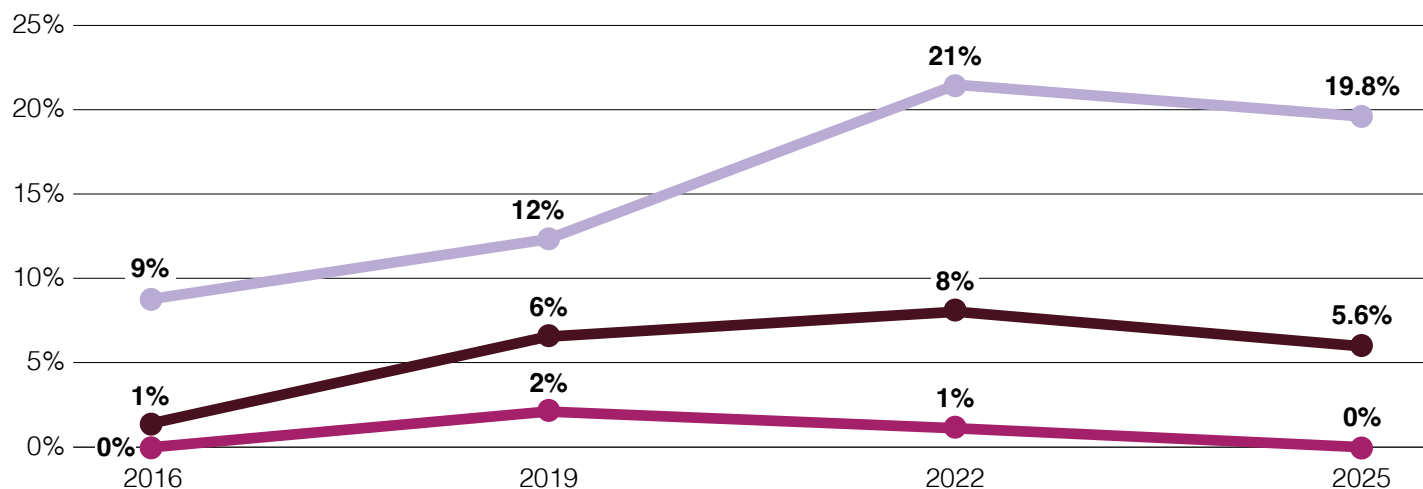
Mental health concerns—including stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms—continue to rise compared to earlier CHA cycles. Financial stress and employment-related pressures are among the most commonly cited contributors, while coping strategies vary widely. Despite growing need, many residents report limited use of mental health services.

Mental Health

From 2016 to 2025, mental health indicators showed some fluctuation. In 2025, the percentages of respondents reporting feeling sad or hopeless for two or more consecutive weeks, seriously considering suicide, and attempting suicide all decreased compared to 2022.

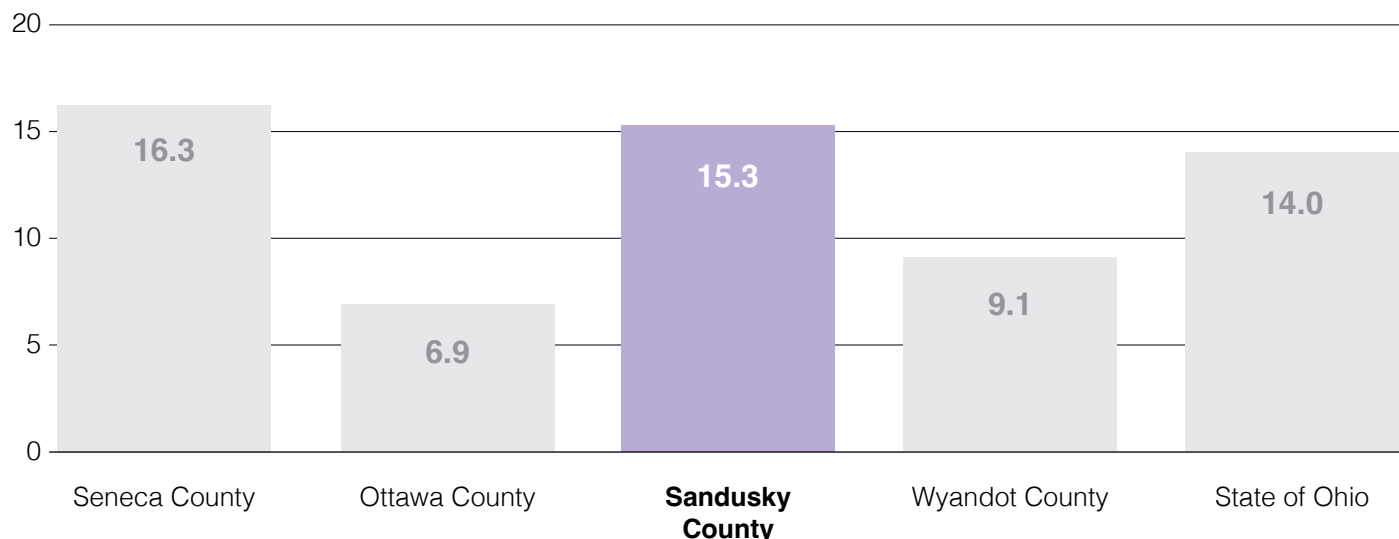
Percentage of respondents who have ever felt any of the following in the past 12 months:

- Felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2+ weeks in a row you stopped doing usual activities (n=536)
- Seriously considered attempting suicide (n=531)
- Attempted suicide (n=30)

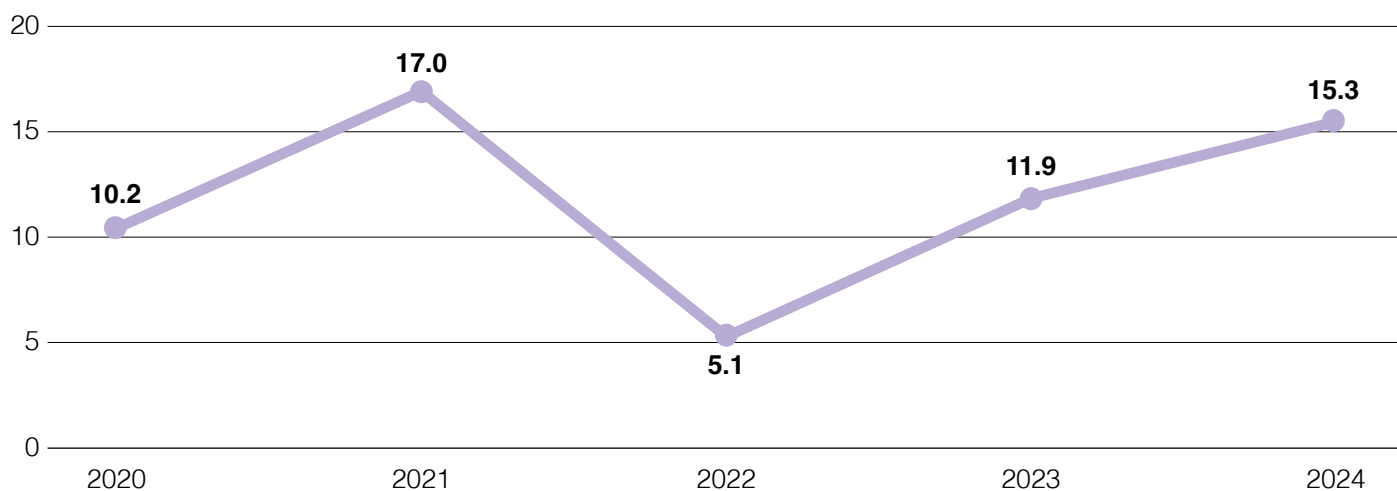


Although the 30 respondents who reported seriously considering suicide, none indicated a suicide attempt in the past 12 months for 2025. **40%** reported experiencing more severe suicidal ideation, including making a plan for how they might act on those thoughts. The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties reported that Sandusky County had a suicide death rate of 15.3 per 100,000 residents in 2024—an increase from 2023 with 11.9 per 100,000 residents.

Suicide deaths per 100,000 population in Sandusky County in 2024



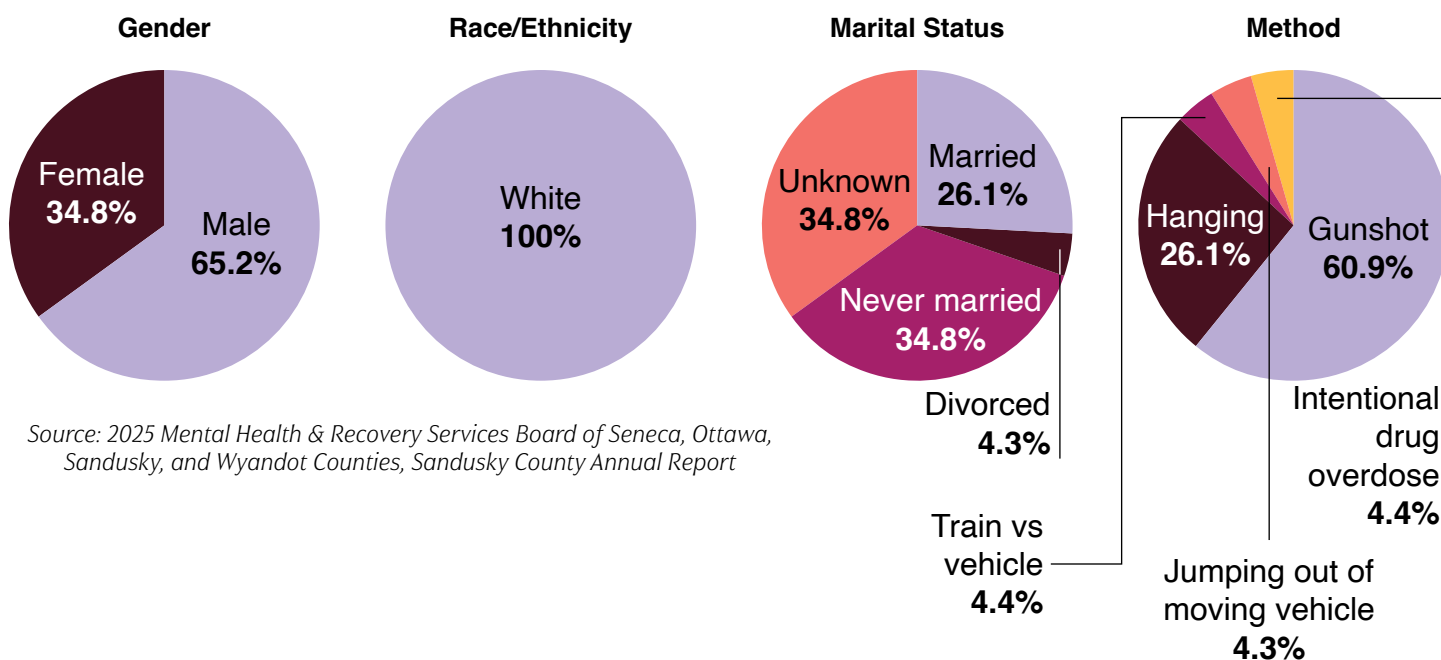
Suicide deaths per 100,000 population in Sandusky County by year



Source: 2025 Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties, Sandusky County Annual Report

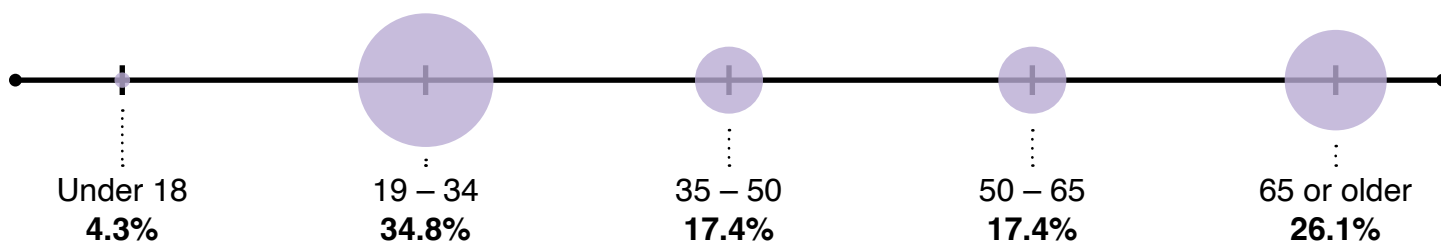
Sandusky County has a higher suicide rate than several neighboring counties, with rates fluctuating in recent years. The data indicates that suicide disproportionately affects men and middle- to older-aged adults, and that firearms are the most commonly used method—highlighting the need for targeted, population-specific prevention strategies.

Fatality suicide data by demographic in 2024



Source: 2025 Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties, Sandusky County Annual Report

Ages of those who have died by suicide in 2024



Source: 2025 Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties, Sandusky County Annual Report

The top 5 usual causes of anxiety, stress, or depression among respondents who experience anxiety are: (n=463)

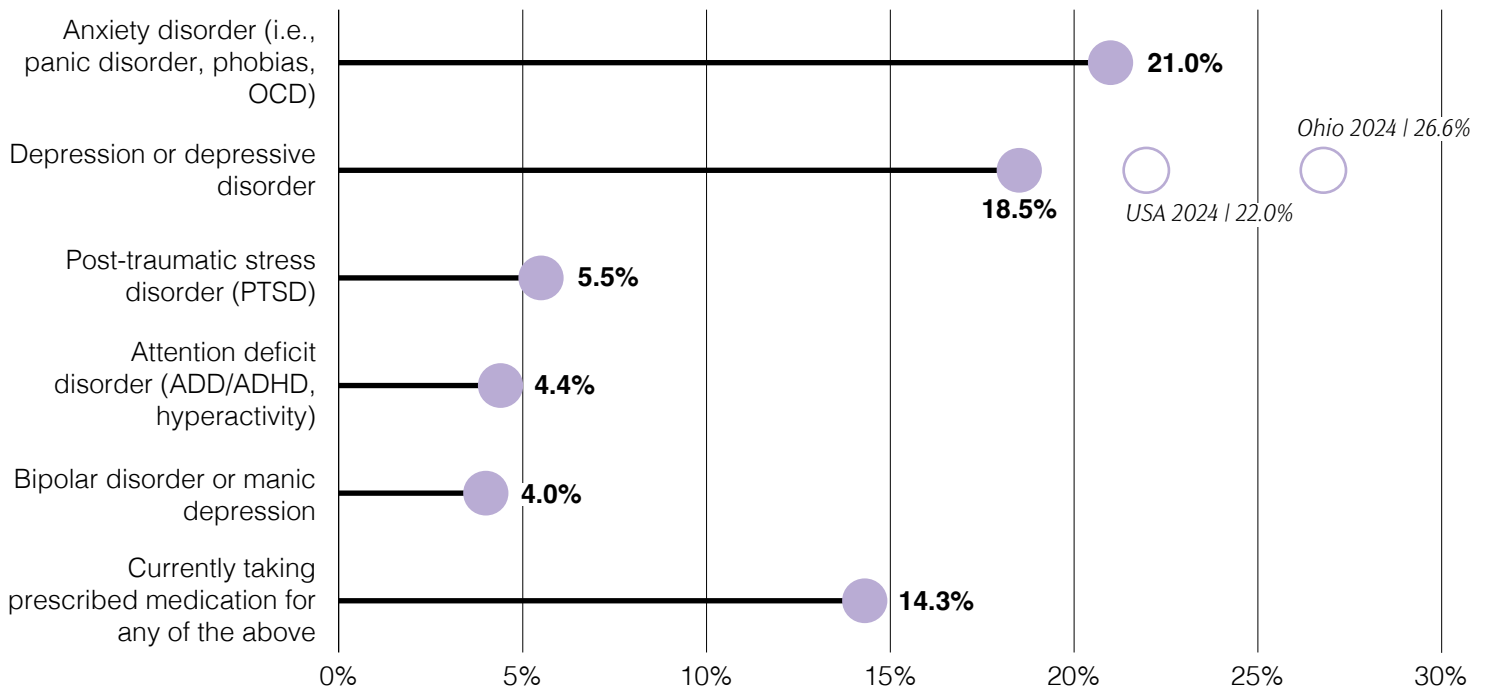
1. Financial stress (**44.9%**)
2. Job stress (**41.7%**)
3. Death of a close family member or friend (**26.3%**)
4. Current news/political environment (**24.2%**)
5. Poverty/no money (**20.5%**)

When respondents feel stressed, they deal with it in the top 5 following ways: (n=532)

1. Talk to someone I trust (friends/family) (**44.0%**)
2. Prayer/meditation (**35.3%**)
3. Either eat more or less than normal (**35.0%**)
4. Listen to music (**34.4%**)
5. Sleep (**30.6%**)

Residents were asked about their use of programs or services to support depression, anxiety, or other emotional concerns. Nearly half (47%) reported that they did not feel a need for these services, while 20.1% shared that they had accessed a program or service for support. Most respondents (68.6%) reported that they have not been diagnosed or treated for any mental health issues in the past 12 months.

Of those that have been diagnosed, the following mental health issues were reported (n=525):



When asked about gambling behaviors, **58.1%** of respondents reported that they do not engage in gambling. Among those who do, the most common frequency was once or twice a year, reported by **25.6%**.



Social Determinants of Health

Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

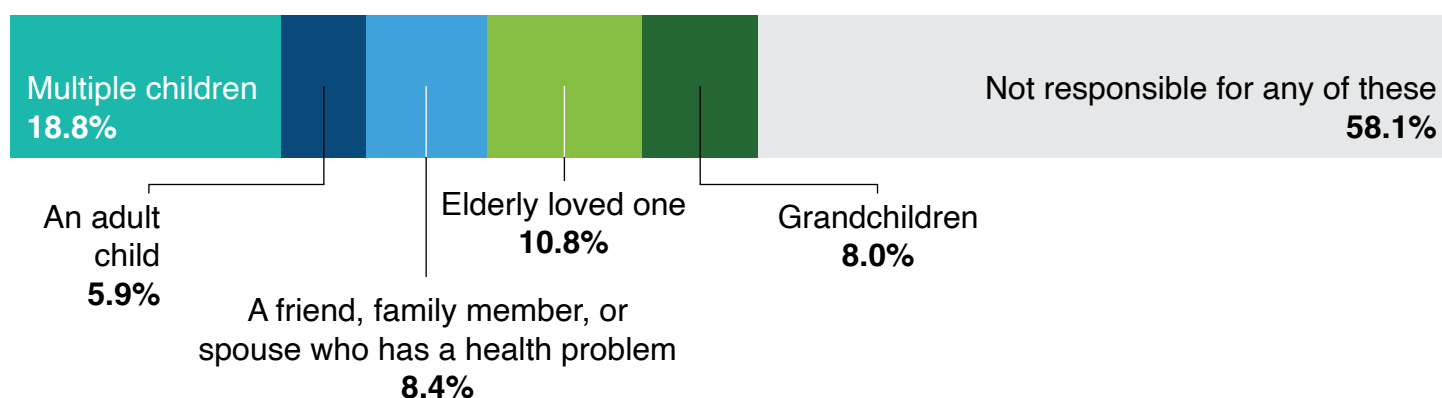
Social Determinants of Health—such as access to housing, food, transportation, employment, and essential services—are central to understanding health outcomes in Sandusky County. Survey data reveal that caregiving responsibilities, housing cost burden, and access to basic needs such as food, utilities, and transportation remain central challenges for a portion of Sandusky County residents. While most respondents report stability, those experiencing hardships often face difficulty navigating or locating assistance, reinforcing findings from United Way call data.

Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes and overall quality of life within the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, learn, worship, and age. Healthy People 2030 organizes SDOH into five key domains: Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Healthcare Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context.

Sandusky County residents were asked a variety of questions around these domains, the first being around social and community context.

Most respondents (57%) reported that they are not responsible for providing regular care or assistance to others. Among those who do serve as caregivers, they reported providing care or assistance to the following individuals: (n=526)



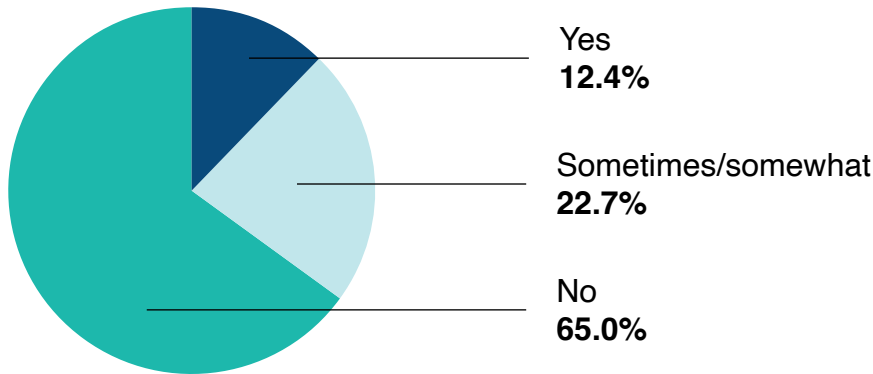
Survey respondents were asked about various community programs and how easily they were able to access them. The table below highlights available resources in Sandusky County and reflects how easily community members reported finding and using these services.

In the past 12 months, have you looked for any of these types of programs or assistance?

=Highest percentage of each program or assistance type sought after	Looked and found resources	Looked but did not find resources	Needed resources but did not know where to look
Disability benefits (n=490)	5.5%	3.3%	4.7%
Affordable childcare (n=486)	4.5%	3.1%	1.9%
Clothing (n=483)	3.5%	1.7%	2.7%
Credit counseling / budgeting (n=485)	4.7%	2.7%	7.6%
Dental care (n=487)	11.7%	4.9%	5.3%
Utility bills (n=484)	5.6%	4.5%	4.5%
Mental health / addiction / gambling (n=479)	5.8%	1.3%	1.9%
Medicare / Medicaid (n=486)	16.9%	2.3%	2.1%
Nutritional services (n=482)	6.4%	2.3%	3.1%

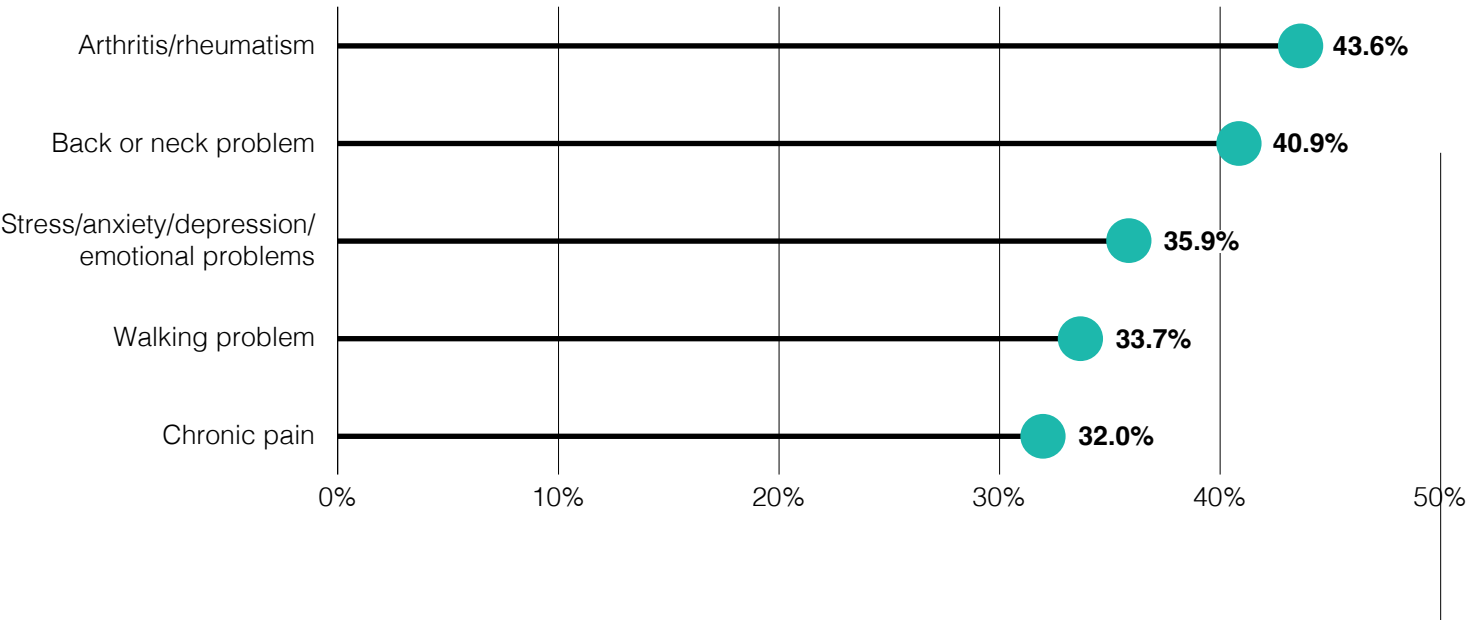
When examining physical, mental, and emotional health conditions, survey findings suggest these issues continue to affect daily life for many Sandusky County residents, with **35.1%** reporting limitations in daily activities due to a health-related condition, which reinforces the importance of addressing physical and behavioral health as part of overall community well-being and ensuring access to supportive, community-based resources and care.

Are you limited in any way in any activities because of physical, mental, or emotional issues or conditions? (n=525)



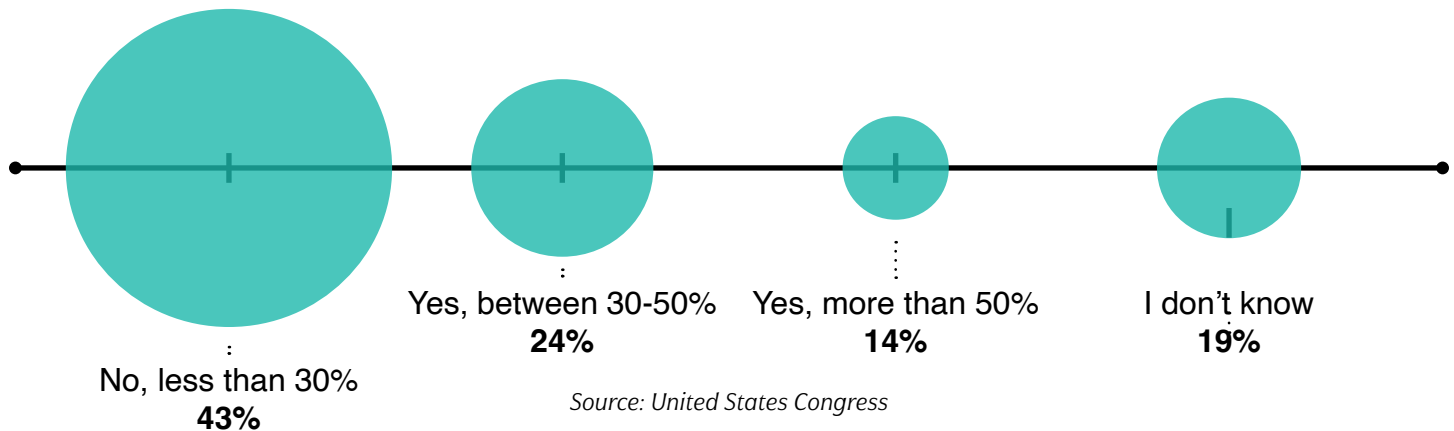
The most commonly reported conditions—including arthritis (**43.6%**), back or neck problems (**40.9%**), stress/anxiety/depression (**35.9%**), walking difficulties (**33.7%**), and chronic pain (**32%**)—underscore the importance of access to healthcare, transportation, safe environments, social support, and mental health services in supporting residents’ overall health and quality of life.

What major conditions or health problems limit your activities? (n=181)



Housing affordability is a key social determinant of health because housing costs can directly affect a household's financial stability, stress levels, and ability to meet other basic needs such as food, healthcare, transportation, and childcare. In Sandusky County, more than **one-third** of respondents reported spending over 30% of their household income on housing expenses, a common indicator of housing cost burden. Of those respondents, **14%** reported spending more than half of their income on housing, which may place households at greater risk for financial strain and housing insecurity.

Do your monthly housing expenses (rent, mortgage, etc.) cost more than 30% of your household income? (n=519)

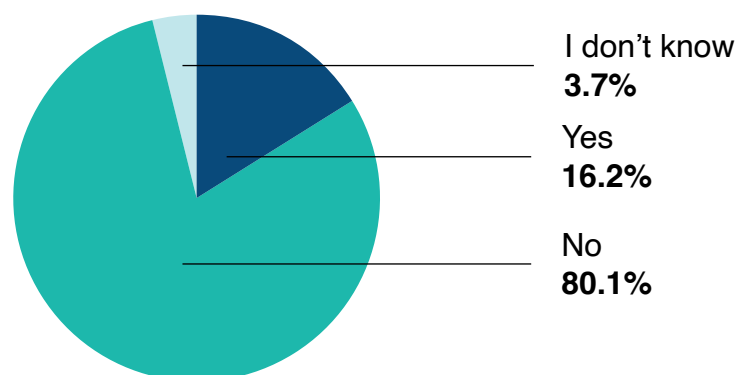


According to the Sandusky County United Way, a total of 201 contacts were made in reference to housing expense specific resources in 2025.

Source: United Way of Sandusky Co. AIRS Report 2025

Many respondents report occasional difficulty meeting basic needs such as food or utilities. While transportation is not a barrier for most residents, those who do experience issues often cite lack of a vehicle or affordability as key challenges.

In the past 30 days, have you needed help meeting your general daily needs such as food, clothing, shelter, or paying utility bills? (n=519)



According to the Sandusky County United Way, a total of 185 contacts were made in reference to Utility Assistance in 2025.

Source: United Way of Sandusky Co. AIRS Report 2025

Participants indicated whether the following statements about food were true for them:

	Often true	Sometimes true	Never true
I worried that food would run out before I got money to buy more (n=518)	5.6%  	15.6% 	78.8% 
The food I bought didn't last and I didn't have money to get more (n=514)	4.7%  	16.1% 	79.2% 
My food assistance was cut (n=509)	4.5%  	3.9% 	91.6% 
I had to choose between paying bills and buying food (n=511)	4.1%  	14.5% 	81.4% 
I went hungry or ate less to provide more food for my family (n=510)	4.5%  	9.4% 	86.1% 
I was hungry but did not eat because I did not have money for food (n=514)	2.7%  	8.9% 	88.3% 
Others in my household were hungry but did not eat because we did not have enough food (n=515)	1.4%  	2.7% 	95.9% 

44% of respondents believe there is adequate transportation services available.

88% of respondents do not have any transportation issues.

The top 3 transportation issues respondents reported having included: (n=504)

1. Not having a car (3.2%)
2. Cannot afford gas (3.2%)
3. Not having a driver's license or having a suspended license (2.6%)

In the past 30 days, did you do any of the following while driving? (n=526)

1. Drive without a seatbelt (9.5%)
2. Talk on a hand-held cell phone (17.1%)
3. Talk on a hands-free cell phone (41.6%)
4. Text (17.1%)
5. Eat (32.1%)



Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Violence

While a majority of respondents report no recent experiences of abuse, those who do most often cite emotional and verbal forms of violence. Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores suggest that a meaningful subset of residents carries long-term trauma that may influence health and social outcomes into adulthood.

Violence

During the past 12 months,

93.0%

of respondents were not physically, sexually, emotionally, financially or verbally abused.

Although most survey respondents reported not experiencing physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or verbal abuse in the past 12 months, the most frequently reported forms of abuse were emotional and verbal abuse, followed by financial abuse, electronic harassment, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.

Of those who were abused it was by a spouse/partner (3.7%) or a child (2.5%).

Among the 41 respondents who reported experiencing abuse, the most commonly reported forms were:

1. **Emotionally and verbally abused**

78.0%

2. **Financially abused**

39.0%

3. **Electronic methods** (such as texts, Facebook, etc.)

22.0%

4. **Physically abused**

14.6%

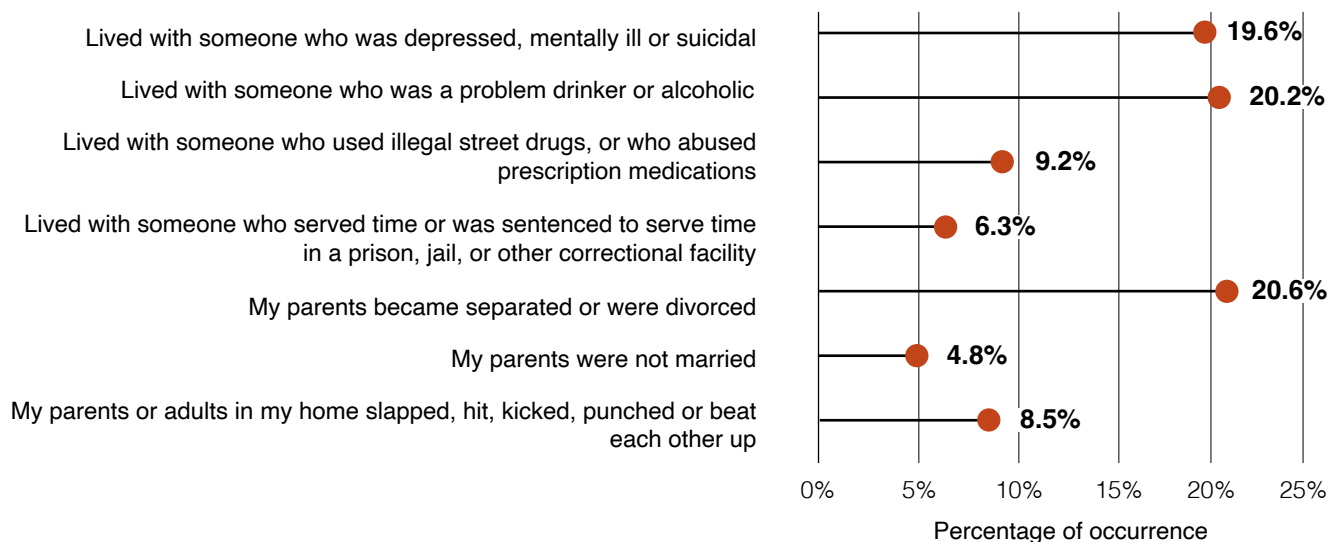
5. **Sexually abused**

9.8%

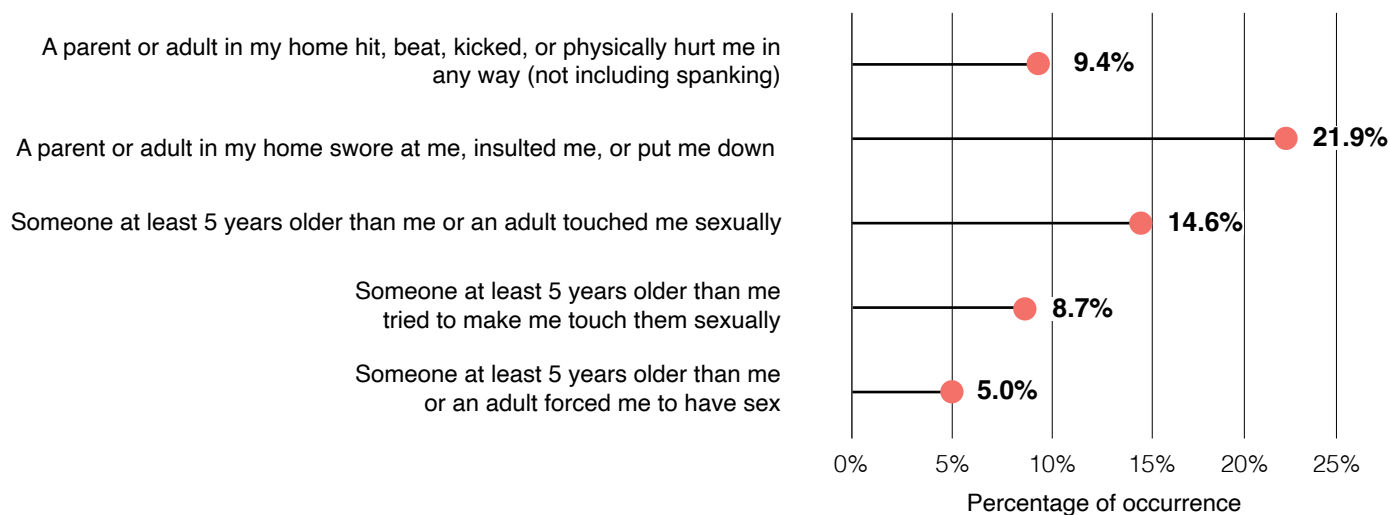
According to the CDC, adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood that impact health and wellbeing outcomes through adulthood. Respondents reported on their adverse childhood experiences that may be impacting health and wellbeing in adulthood.

In Sandusky County for 2025, the most frequently reported household challenges included living with someone who was depressed mentally ill, or suicidal (19.6%), as well as living with a problem drinker (20.2%) or someone with substance use issues (9.2%), or experiencing parental separation (20.6%). Fewer respondents reported experiencing incarceration of a household member (6.3%), or domestic violence between adults in the home (9.4%).

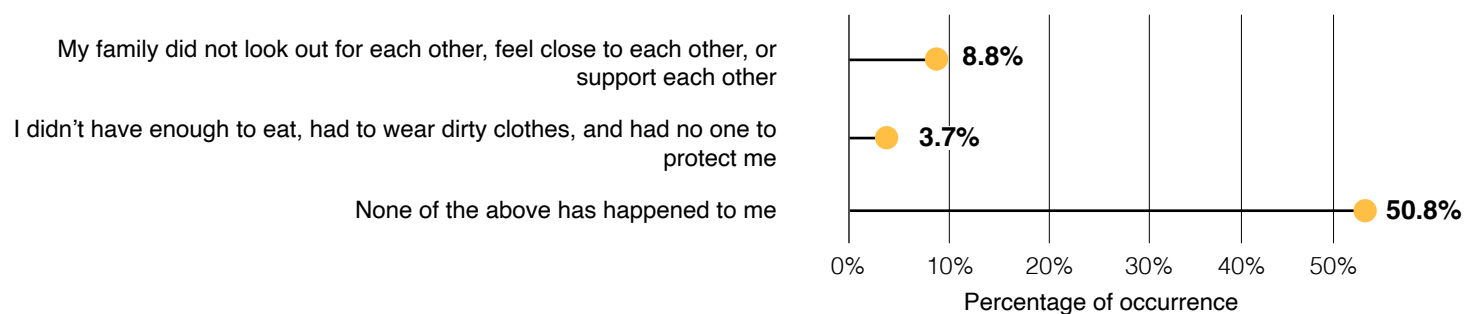
Household challenges



Abuse

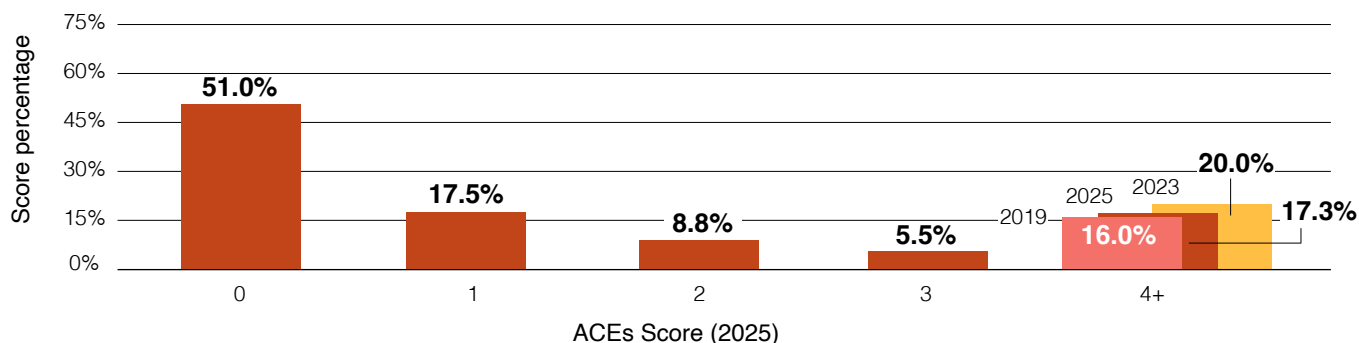


Neglect



These experiences contribute to overall **Adverse Childhood Experiences** scores, which are strongly associated with long-term health and well-being outcomes. Research shows that as the number of ACEs increases, the risk for negative physical, mental, and behavioral health outcomes also increases. In 2025, the percentage of respondents reporting an ACE score of four or more **decreased** from 2023, from **20%** to **17.3%**.

ACEs Score

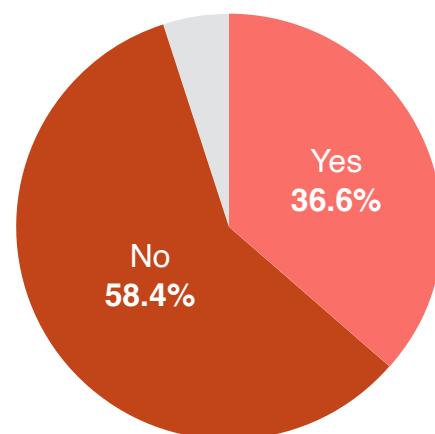


In 2020, Gallup Research Center reported that **32%** of U.S. adults say they personally own a gun and **44%**, report living in a gun household. Adults living in gun households include those with a gun in their home or anywhere on their property. In Sandusky County, **36.6% of respondents reported having a gun in or around the home.**

When asked about firearms (guns, rifles, or shotguns) kept in or around the home, respondents answered:



3 out of 10 (**30%**) of individuals who reported having guns in the home that are **loaded and unlocked have children under the age of 18 years old.**



Unsecured firearms in homes with children can increase the risk of accidental injury, suicide, and unauthorized access to weapons. National research has shown that children and adolescents are more likely to experience unintentional shootings or firearm-related harm when guns are stored loaded and unlocked.



Environment

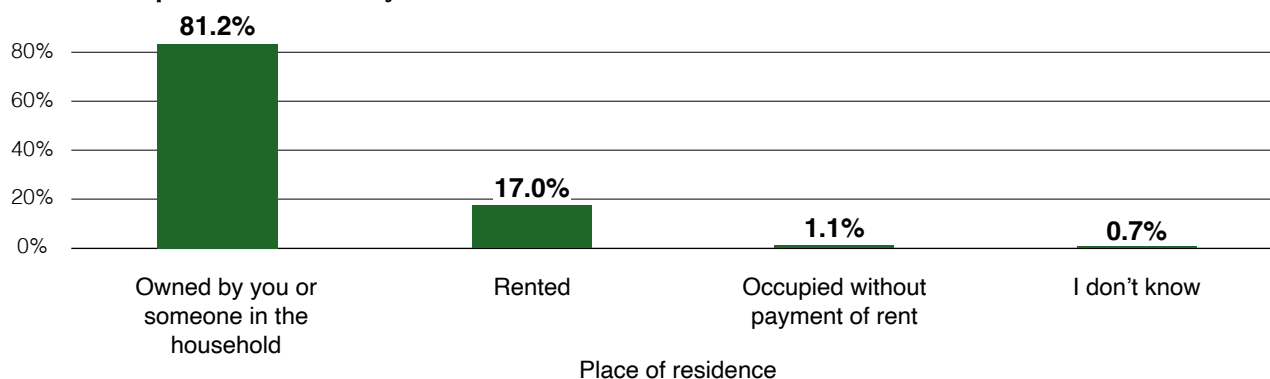
Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Residents report generally positive perceptions of parks, trails, and community involvement, yet concerns persist regarding housing affordability, environmental hazards, and infrastructure quality. Survey responses suggest uneven access to safe, healthy environments across neighborhoods.

Environment

Most respondents reported living in owned or rented housing, with very few indicating housing without payment or uncertainty about their housing arrangement.

Is the house/apartment/home you live in:



When asked about environmental threats to health, residents most often cited mold (**8.9%**), insects such as mosquitoes and ticks (**8.1%**), and moisture issues (**5.4%**). Concerns related to air quality, temperature regulation, plumbing, agricultural chemicals, and structural safety hazards were also reported, though at lower levels.

Top 8 problems respondents reported they believe think have threatened them or their family's health in the past year:

1. Mold (**8.9%**)
2. Insects (mosquitoes, ticks, flies) (**8.1%**)
3. Moisture issues (**5.4%**)
4. Air quality (**5.2%**)
5. Temperature regulation (heating and air conditioning) (**3.9%**)
6. Plumbing problems (**3.3%**)
7. Agricultural chemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, insecticides) (**2.1%**)
8. Safety hazards (structural problems) (**1.9%**)

Survey participants reflected positively on many aspects of community life in Sandusky County. Many respondents agreed that the community provides opportunities for involvement and relationship building and is a good place to raise children, suggesting a generally strong sense of community connection and belonging. At the same time, residents also identified several environmental and infrastructure-related concerns that may affect overall quality of life.

Perceptions of the built environment were mixed, particularly regarding sidewalk accessibility, park and trail availability, and neighborhood safety. While some residents reported frequent use of sidewalks and recreational spaces, others noted concerns about poor sidewalk conditions, limited crosswalk maintenance, and barriers to accessing fresh, healthy food.

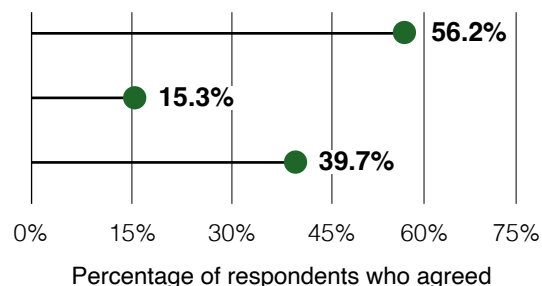
Respondents also reported moderate agreement that economic opportunities and safe working conditions exist within the community, though perceptions of long-term financial stability and growth opportunities varied. Together, these findings highlight both community strengths and areas where continued investment and improvement may support overall health and well-being.

Community

There are many ways to get involved within the community

My community provides opportunities to build meaningful personal or romantic relationships

It is a great place to raise children



Built environment

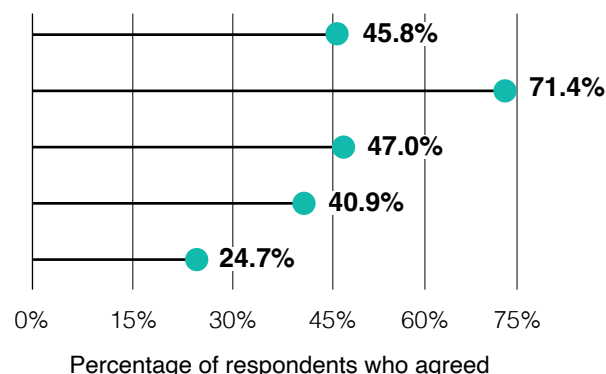
Sidewalks are prevalent and accessible

Parks and trails are available

Sidewalks, parks, and trails are used frequently

Neighborhoods are safe

Housing is safe and affordable



Survey participants wrote in stating:

“Sidewalks are terrible, that is why people with scooters have to use the road. Fresh, healthy food is not easy to get.”

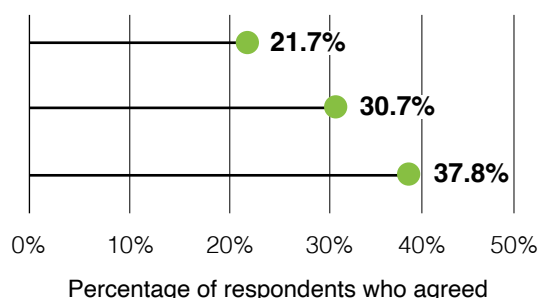
“Crosswalks are not maintained or painted.”

Employment/financial environment

There is economic opportunity/there is room to grow financially

There are good employment opportunities

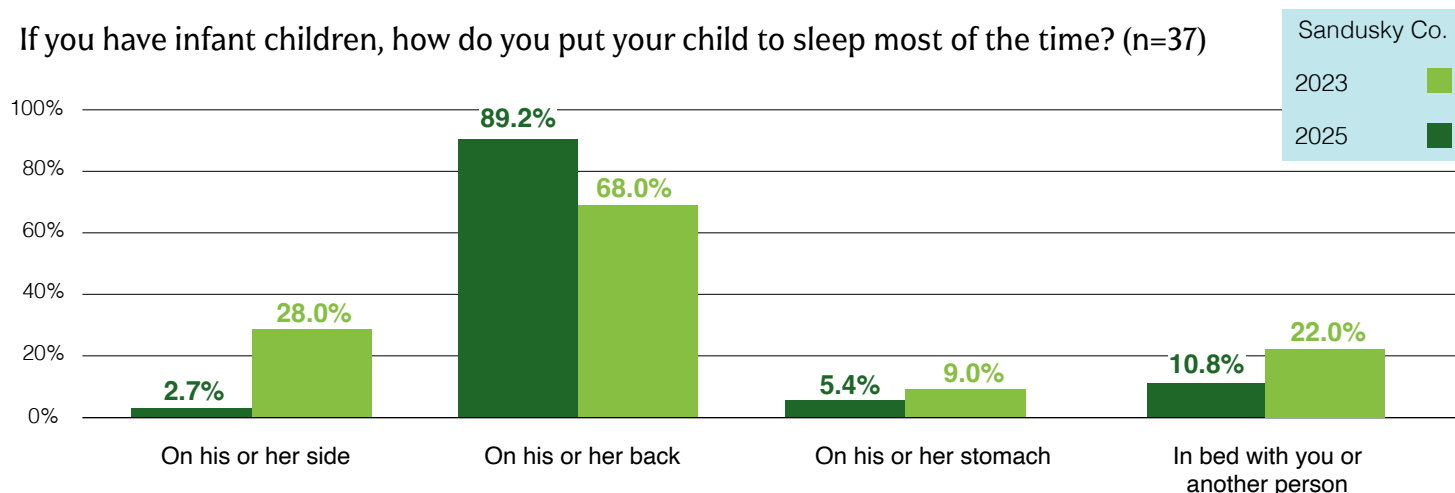
Working conditions are safe



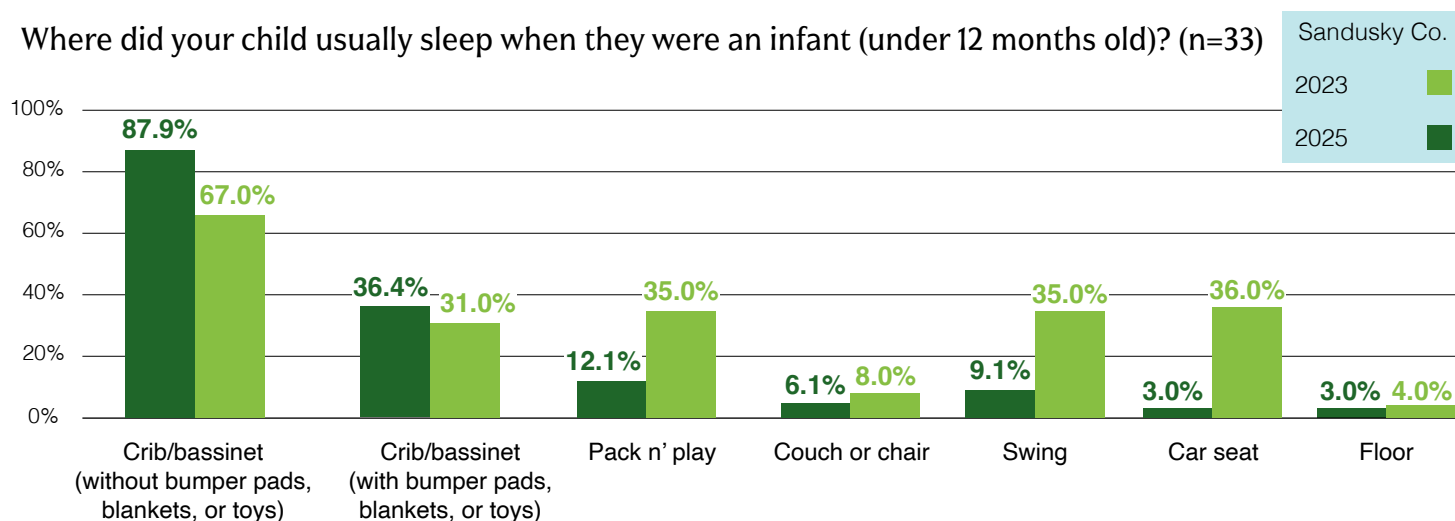
When reflecting on the social and physical environment in Sandusky County, **36% of residents reported that people are often treated differently based on the color of their skin, as well as their culture or religious beliefs.** Additionally, some residents noted that individuals may also experience **differential treatment based on their identity or sexual orientation.**

When asked about infant sleep practices, the majority of respondents who have infant children reported placing infants on their backs, which aligns with current American Academy of Pediatrics safe sleep recommendations. However, some respondents reported alternative sleep positions or locations, including side or stomach sleeping and sleeping in adult beds or other non-recommended settings.

If you have infant children, how do you put your child to sleep most of the time? (n=37)



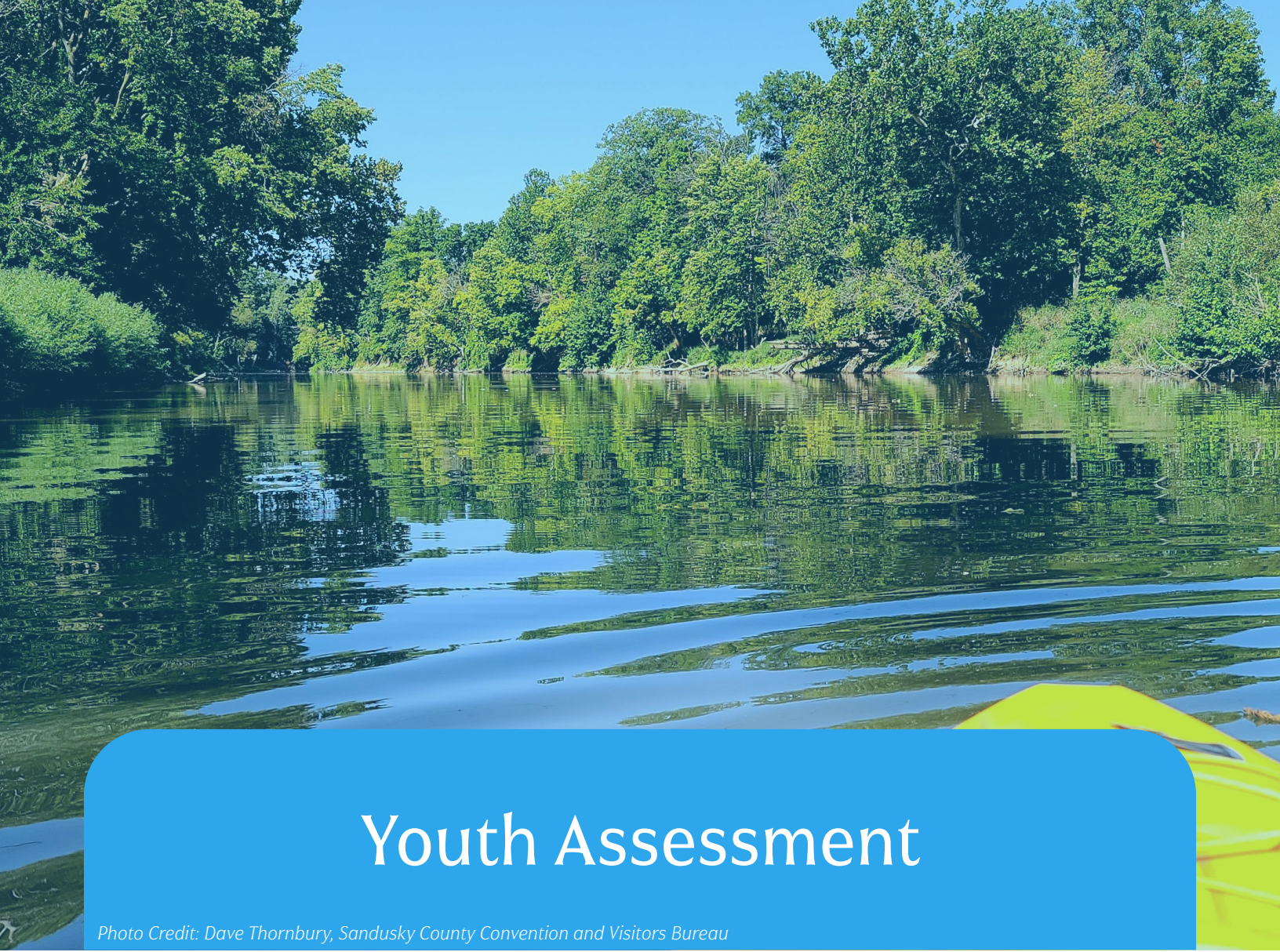
Where did your child usually sleep when they were an infant (under 12 months old)? (n=33)



Beginning in October 2025, 11 Welcome Home newborn visits were completed by the end of the year.

Sandusky County Public Health offers all Sandusky County families with a newborn (up to six weeks old) a free in-home visit by a registered nurse. This visit provides a supportive check-in for both mom and baby, including an infant weight check, newborn care education, safe sleep guidance, and support for both breastfeeding and formula feeding. Families also receive information on local community resources as needed, along with a special gift to celebrate the new arrival. The visit is provided at no cost to ensure moms have the support and resources they need to care for themselves and their babies.





Youth Assessment

Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey (OHYES!) supports meaningful, data-informed action by centering the experiences and needs of students across Ohio in grades 7–12. These insights help schools, communities, and state agencies better understand and respond to factors that influence student health, safety, and well-being at both local and statewide levels.

OHYES! highlights areas where students are thriving, as well as where additional support and resources may be needed. It also allows communities to monitor trends in youth well-being over time and make informed, responsive decisions. This section presents Sandusky County's OHYES! results, including comparisons to prior years and, when available, to statewide Ohio data.

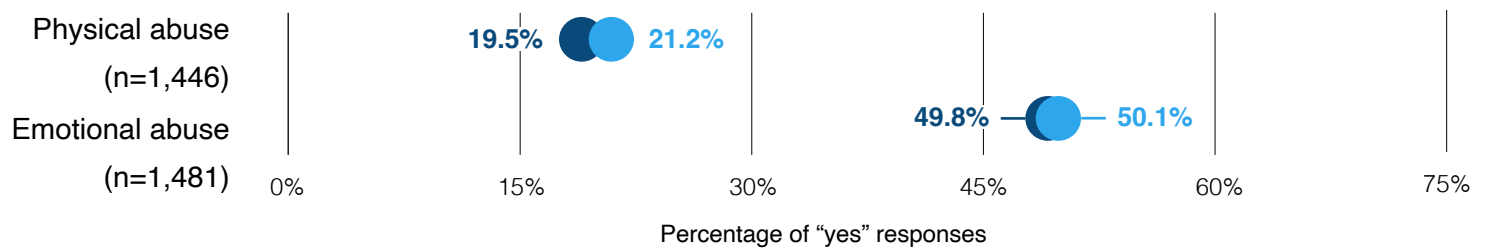
Lifetime adverse childhood experiences by category

According to the American Psychiatric Association, Adverse Childhood Experiences are strongly associated with a wide range of negative health and life outcomes. Exposure to trauma in childhood can undermine a young person's sense of safety and stability, contributing to toxic stress that disrupts neurological, endocrine, and immune system development over time. These experiences increase susceptibility to mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal behaviors.

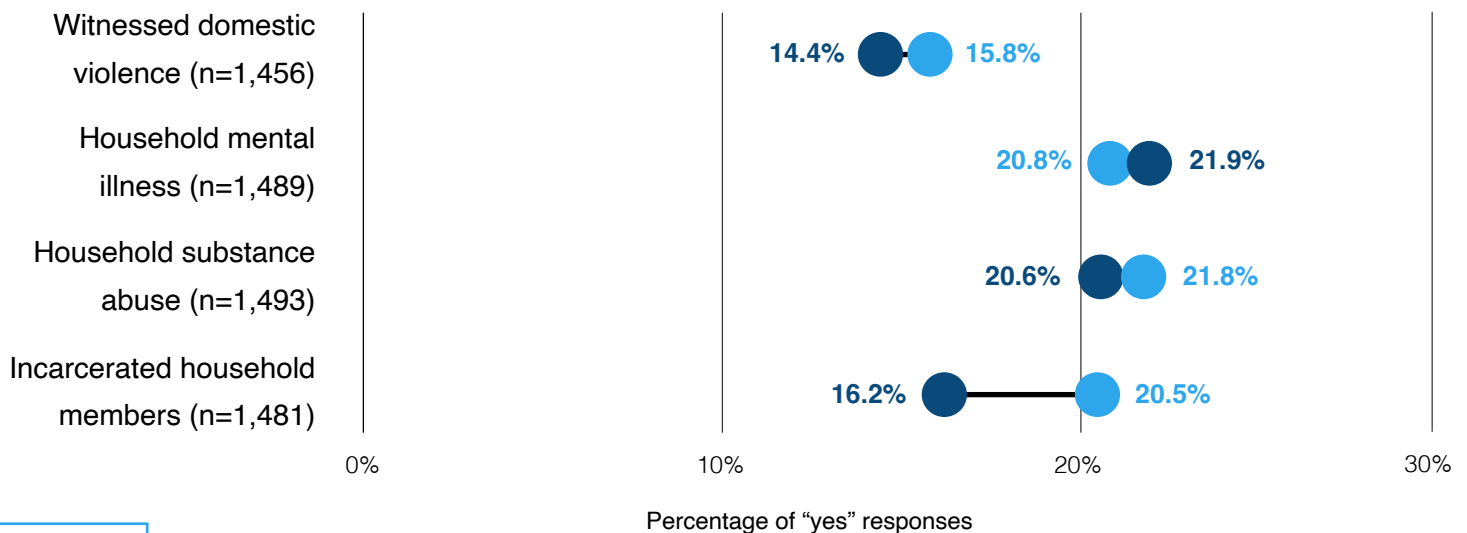
Without appropriate intervention, ACEs can also impair social, emotional, and cognitive development, often leading youth to adopt health-risk behaviors as coping mechanisms. Additionally, ACEs are linked to diminished life opportunities, as their impact on education, employment, and income can shape long-term health and overall quality of life.

Sandusky OHYES! data indicates that experiences such as emotional abuse (**49.8%**), physical abuse (**21.2%**), household substance abuse (**21.8%**), and household mental illness (**20.8%**) continue to affect a portion of Sandusky County youth.

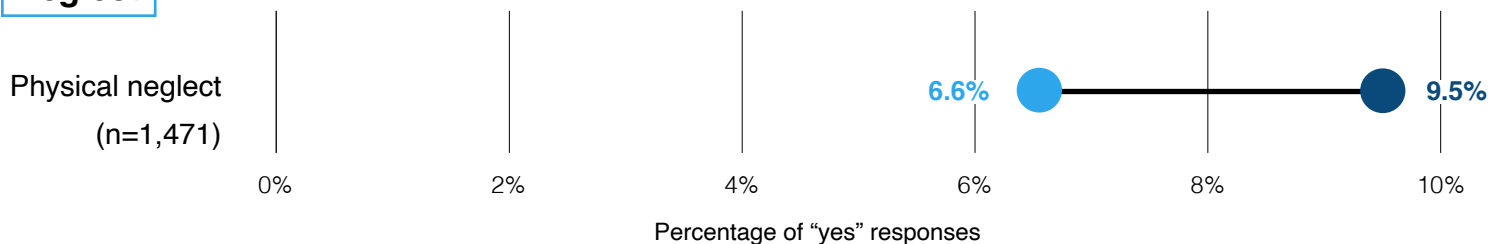
Abuse



Household challenges



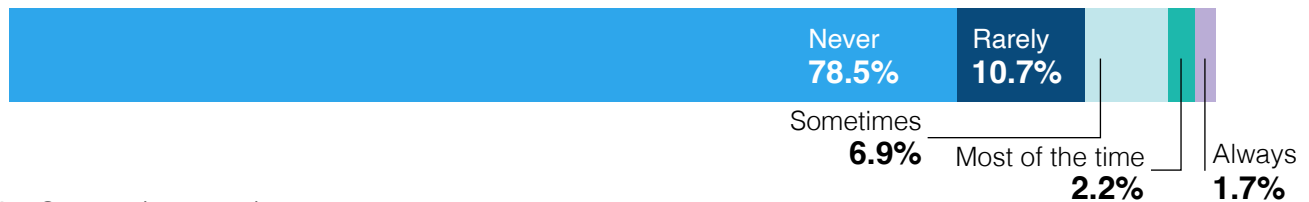
Neglect



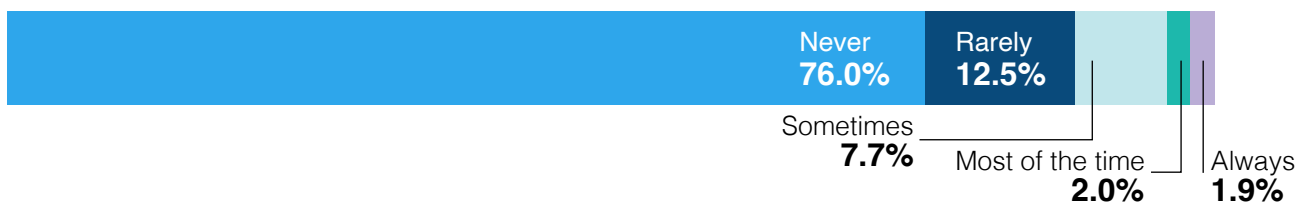
During your life, how often have you felt that you were treated badly or unfairly because of your race or ethnicity?

Almost one third of residents reported that people in Sandusky County are sometimes treated differently based on race, culture, religion, identity, or sexual orientation. Additionally, some respondents reported witnessing or experiencing violence in their neighborhoods, including physical assaults.

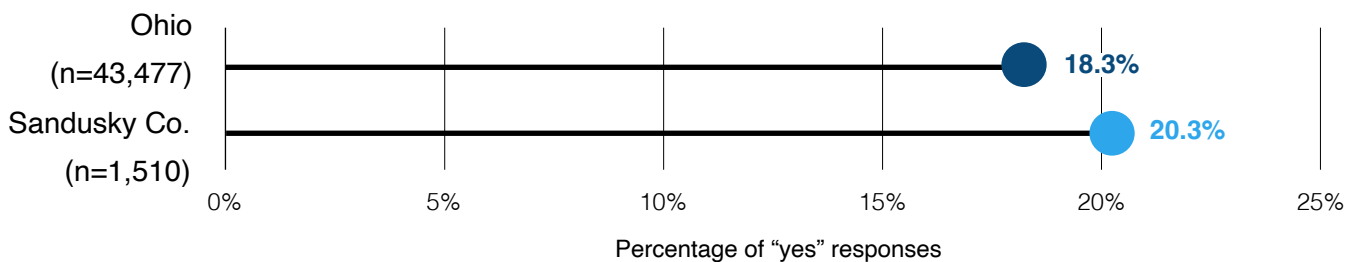
Ohio (n=43,446)



Sandusky County (n=1,450)

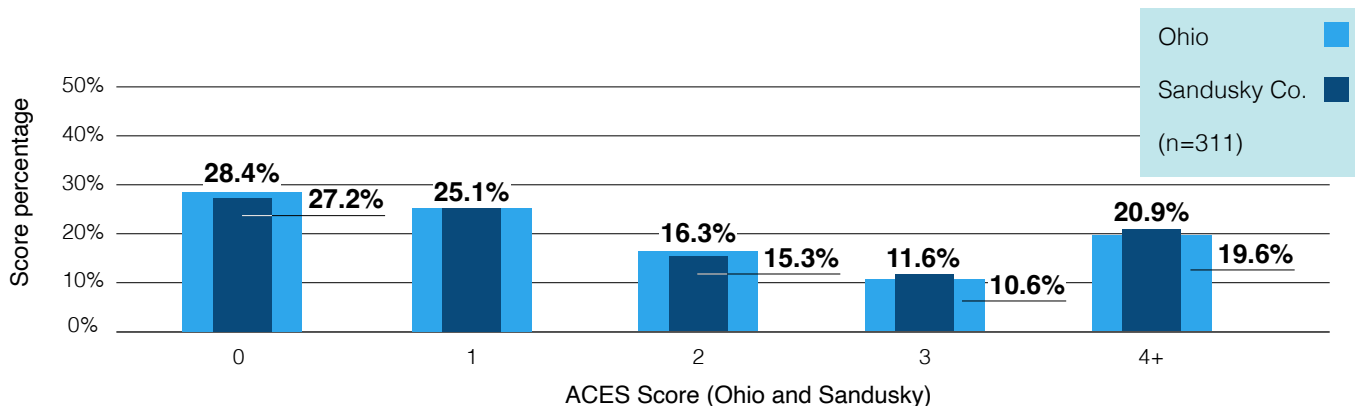


Have you ever seen someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in your neighborhood?



Combined Number of Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences

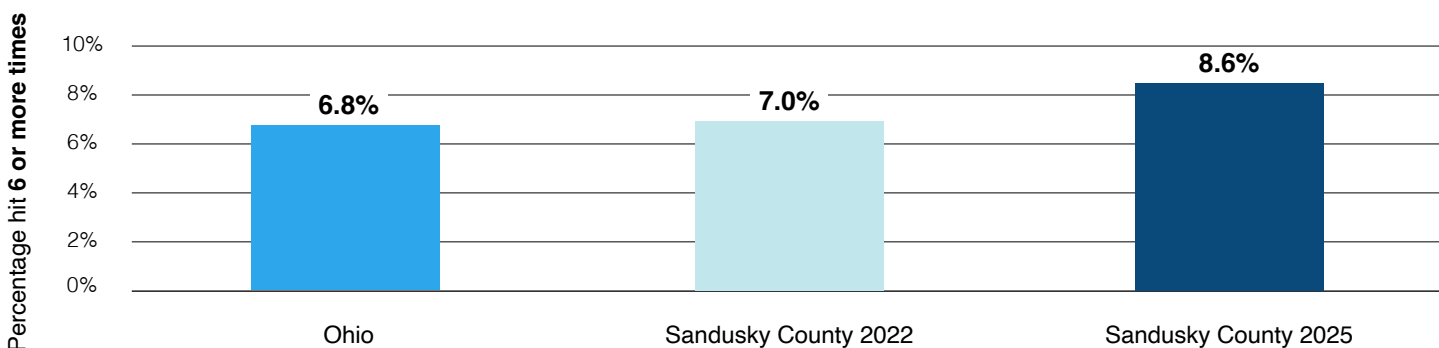
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explain that children with higher cumulative scores on combined Adverse Childhood Experiences and community adversities face a significantly increased risk of negative health and developmental outcomes. Research shows that youth with four or more ACEs are especially vulnerable to the effects of toxic stress, which can disrupt brain development and impair emotional regulation, learning, and physical health. As the number of adverse experiences increases, so does the likelihood of mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety, along with behavioral difficulties and engagement in health-risk behaviors. These compounded exposures are also associated with challenges in academic performance and social relationships, ultimately contributing to disparities in long-term health and overall well-being.



Dating violence

Recurrent dating violence (experienced six or more times) was reported by a small but notable proportion (**8.6%**) of youth in Sandusky County. This rate is slightly higher than both the Ohio average (**6.8%**) and the county's 2022 rate (**7%**).

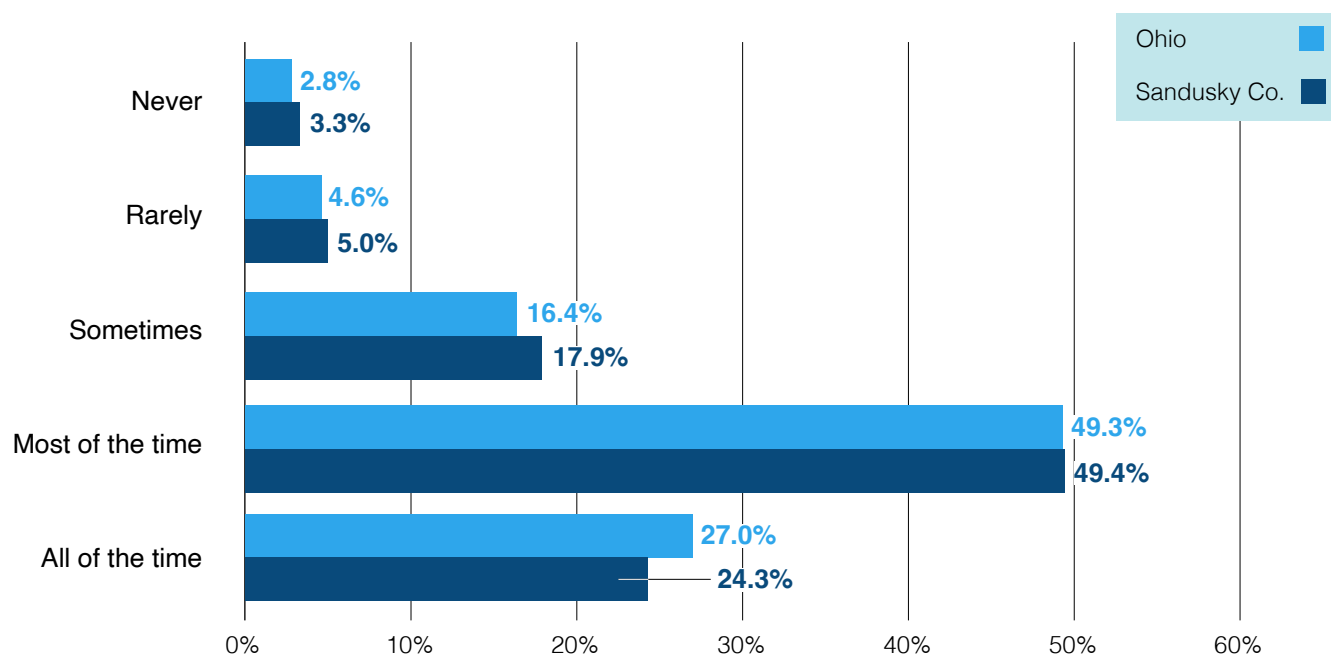
During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose? (Count such things as being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon). (n=130)



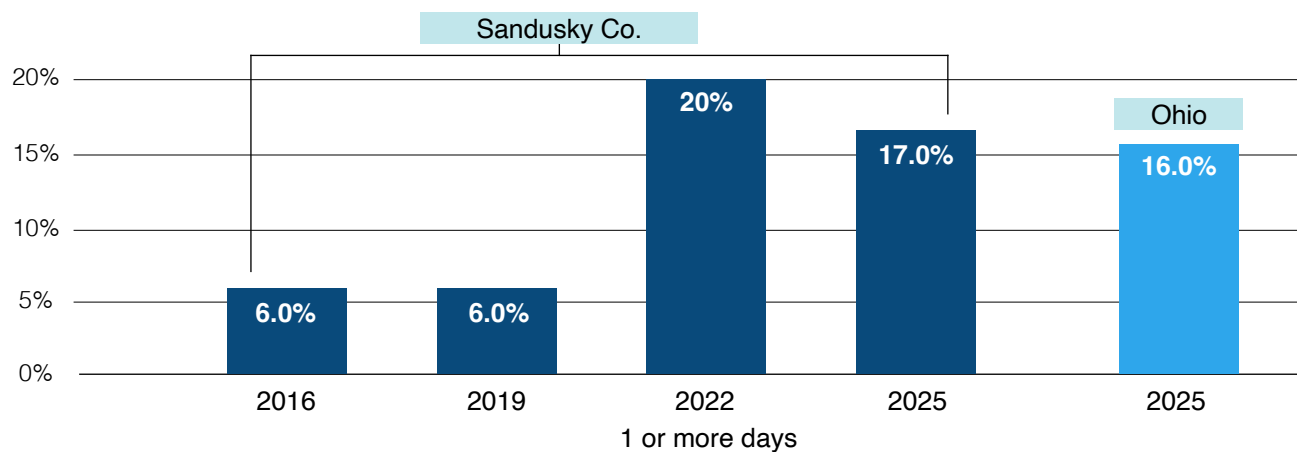
School climate and safety

Most students in Sandusky County (**73.7%**) reported feeling safe and secure at school most or all of the time. However, compared to Ohio averages, a greater percentage of local youth reported **missing one or more school days due to safety concerns or experiencing threats or injuries** involving weapons on school property in 2025.

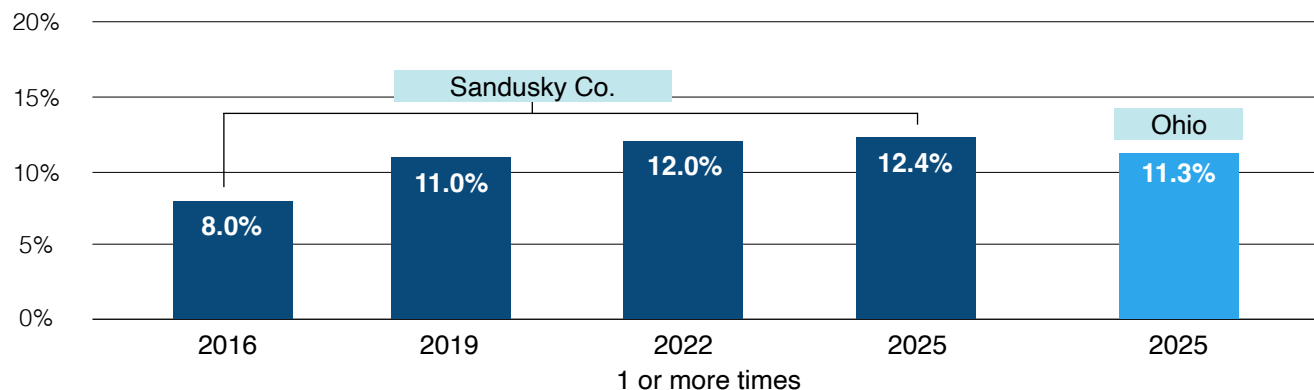
In the past year, how often did you feel safe and secure at school? (n=1,513)



During the past 30 days, on how many days did you not go to school because you felt you would be unsafe at school or on your way to or from school? (n=256)



During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property? (n=186)



Bullying remains a concern for Sandusky County youth. Forms of bullying included physical aggression, verbal harassment, social exclusion, electronic bullying, and other harmful behaviors. Sandusky County youth experienced bullying at higher rates than the Ohio average for almost all types of bullying listed.

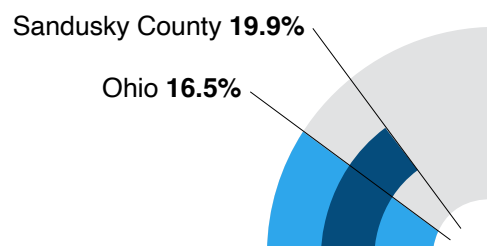
Types of bullying experienced in the past 12 months (n=1,499)

	Ohio (yes)	Sandusky County (yes)
Hit, kicked, punched, or people took your belongings	8.1%	10.1%
Teased, taunted, or called harmful names	29.6%	35.2%
Spread mean rumors about or kept out of a "group"	24.1%	28.4%
Teased, taunted, or threatened by e-mail, cell phone, or other electronic methods	8.3%	8.1%
Nude or semi-nude pictures used to pressure someone to have sex that does not want to, blackmail, intimidate, or exploit another person	2.2%	2.8%
None of the above	61.9%	55.5%

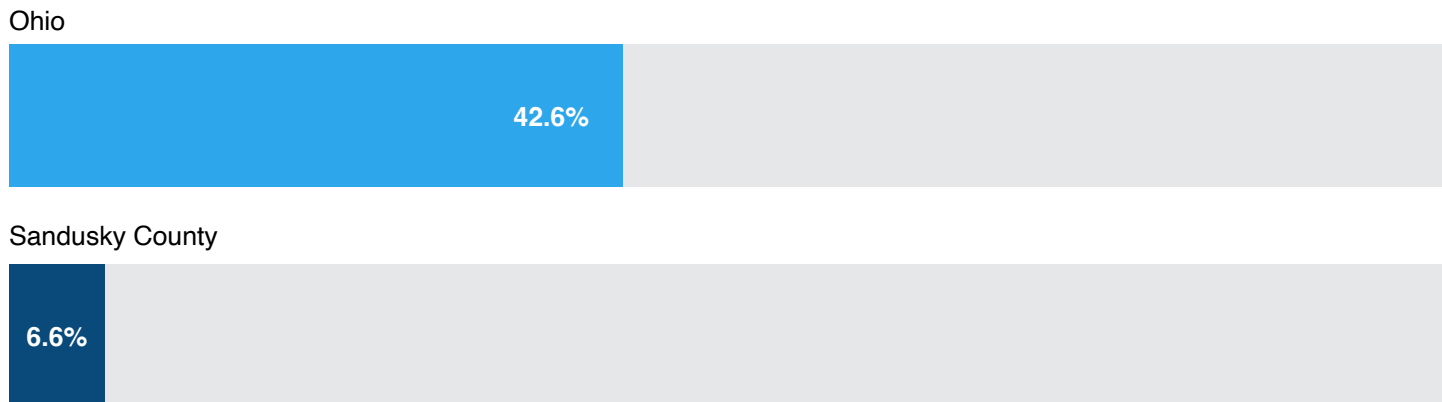
Physical fighting among youth in Sandusky County **increased by 14% since 2022**, with **19.9%** reporting involvement in a physical fight within the past 12 months. This rate **exceeds** the Ohio average of **16.5%**.

Among those who have experienced bullying in the past 12 months, **64.2% reported being bullied on school property.**

During the past 12 months, were you in a physical fight one or more times? (n=271)



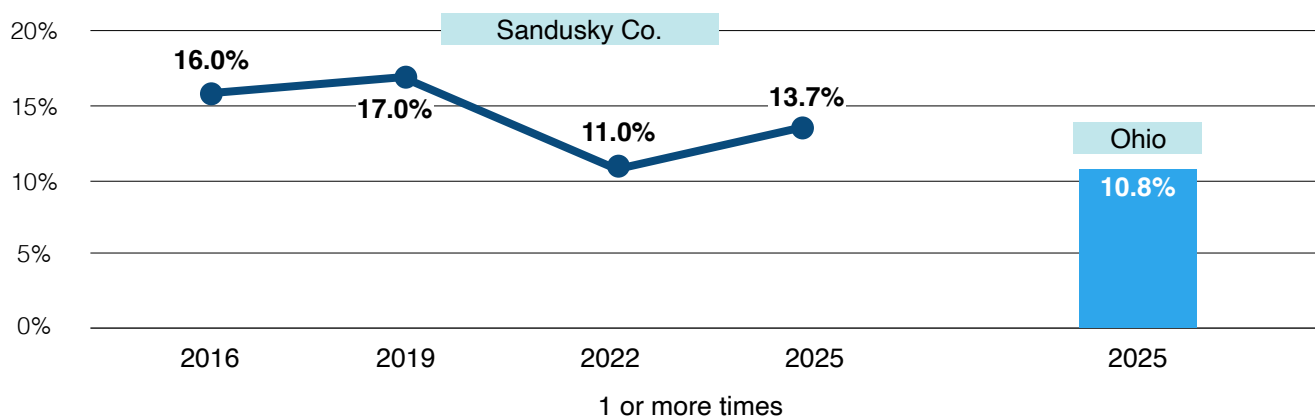
Among those who were in a physical fight in the past 12 months: During the past 12 months, were you in a physical fight 6 or more times on school property? (n=99)



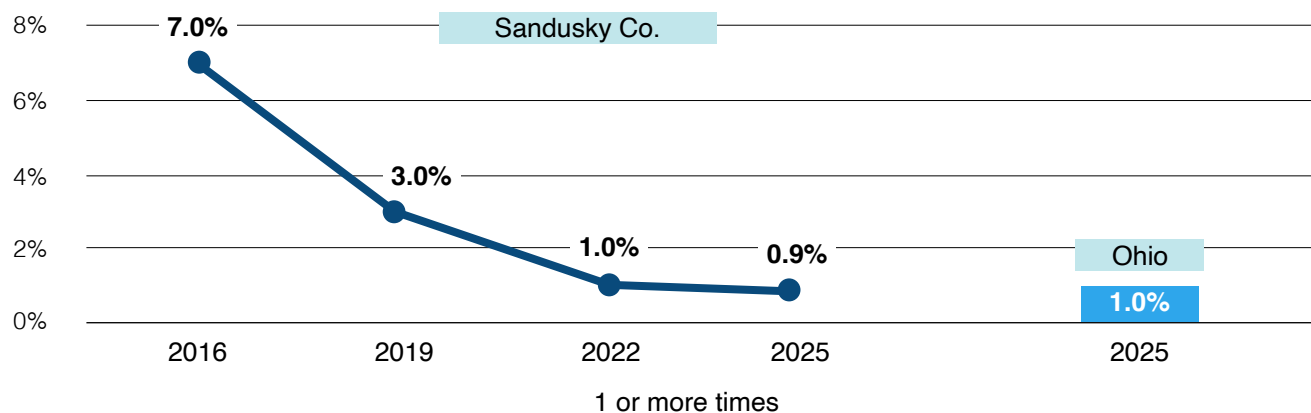
Vehicle safety

A portion of youth (**13.7%**) reported riding in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol during the past 30 days, and a smaller percentage (**0.9%**) reported driving after drinking.

During the past 30 days, respondents rode in a car or vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol one or more times (n=207)



During the past 30 days, respondents drove a car or vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol one or more times (n=13)



Health and Well-being

Body mass index and physical activity

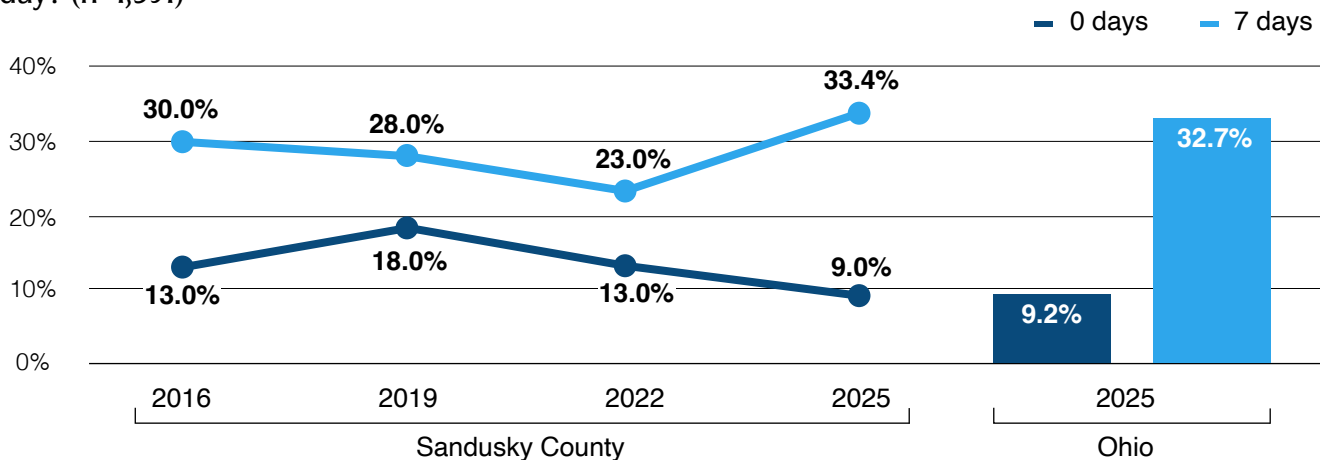
Body Mass Index (BMI) is a commonly used screening tool to assess growth and weight status in children and adolescents. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BMI in youth is calculated using height and weight but is interpreted using age- and sex-specific percentiles, known as BMI-for-age. These percentiles account for normal growth patterns and classify children as underweight (below the 5th percentile), healthy weight (5th to less than 85th percentile), overweight (85th to less than 95th percentile), or obese (95th percentile or greater).

BMI is not a direct measure of body fat but serves as an important, cost-effective screening indicator that can help identify potential health risks and guide further assessment of a child's overall health and development.

	2025 (n=1,237)				
	2016	2019	2022	Ohio	Sandusky Co.
Overweight	11.0%	11.0%	18.0%	16.7%	15.0%
Obese	23.0%	22.0%	23.0%	17.4%	20.4%

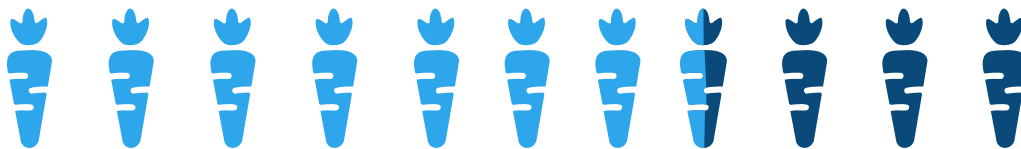
Physical activity in Sandusky County has increased in past years, from **23%** of students reporting 7 days of physical activity each week in **2022**, to **33%** in **2025**. Although, less students reported 0 days of physical activity in a week in 2025 (**9%**) than in previous years.

During the past 7 days, on how many days were you physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day? (n=1,391)



Nutrition

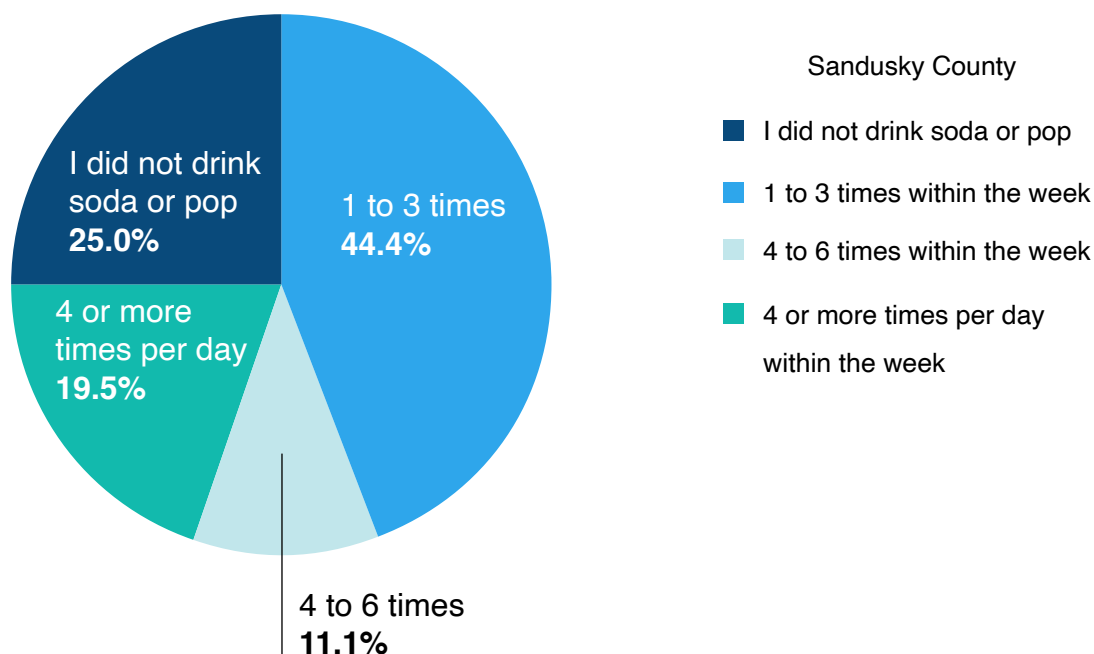
74.5% of respondents reported that, on average, they **have the recommended 1 to 4 servings of fruits and vegetables per day**.



4.3% of Sandusky County youth reported **not having access to, or being able to afford fruits or vegetables**.

Only **25%** of youth respondents in 2025 reported not regularly drinking soda or pop, while **44.4%** limited their consumption to 1–3 times per week. However, **19.5%** of youth reported consuming sugary drinks **four or more times per day**.

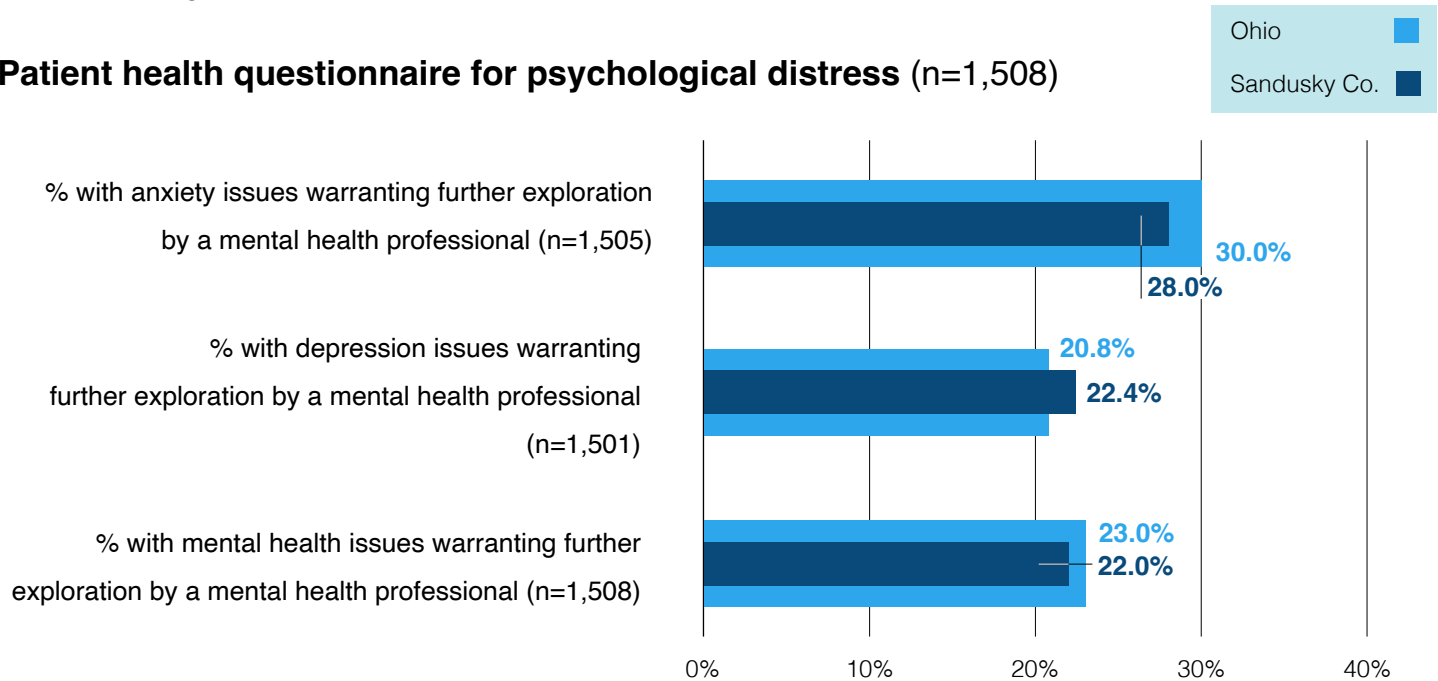
During the past 7 days, how many times did you drink a can, bottle, or glass of soda or pop, such as Coke, Pepsi, or Sprite? (Do not count diet soda or diet pop). (n=1,402)



Mental Health, Coping and Substance Use

Mental health indicators suggest ongoing challenges for Sandusky County youth. While anxiety, depression, and overall mental health issue rates are consistent with Ohio averages, almost one third of respondents reported having anxiety issues that warrant attention from a mental health professional.

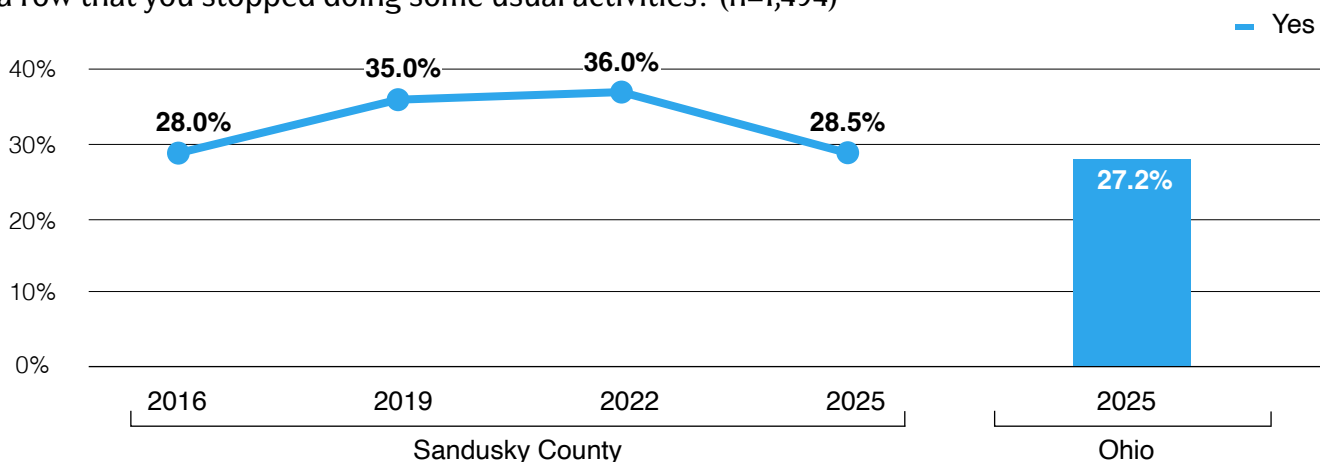
Patient health questionnaire for psychological distress (n=1,508)



Rates of persistent sadness and hopelessness among youth in Sandusky County have decreased since 2022 and are now more closely aligned with Ohio averages. However, 215 (14.6%) of youth reported seriously considering suicide in the past 12 months, slightly higher than the state average of 13%. Among those who reported suicidal thoughts, 124 (8.4%) of youth indicated they had attempted suicide one or more times during the past year, and 22 (17.7%) of those youth that attempted required medical treatment..

Suicide

During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? (n=1,494)



During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?

215

had seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months.

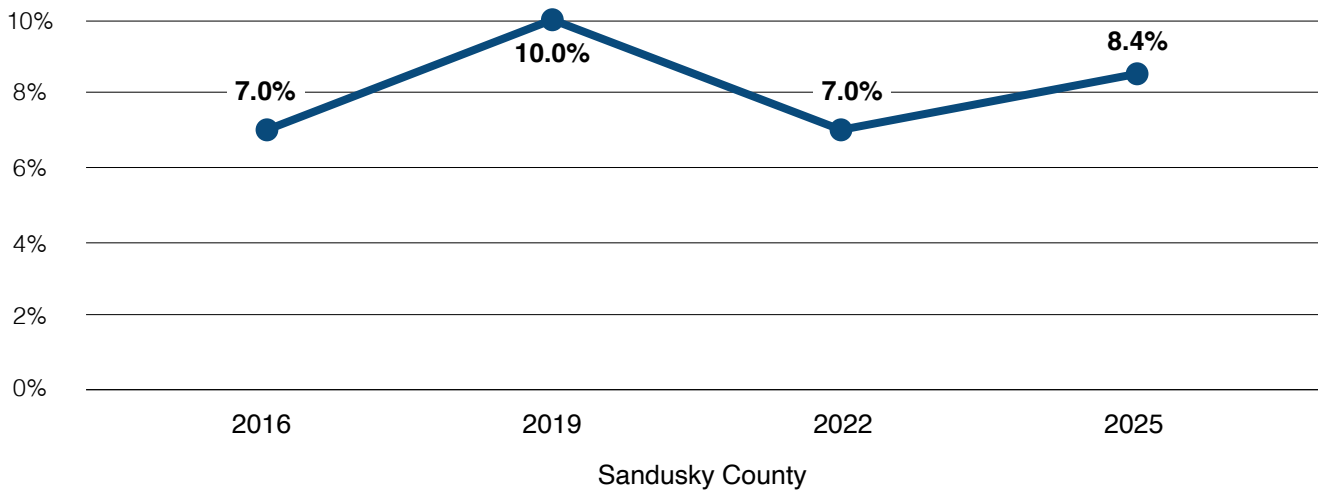
124

of those who seriously considered, actually attempted one or more times in the past 12 months.

22

of those who attempted had to be treated by a nurse or doctor for associated injuries.

Among those who considered, have you considered suicide one or more times? (n=124)



Coping strategies

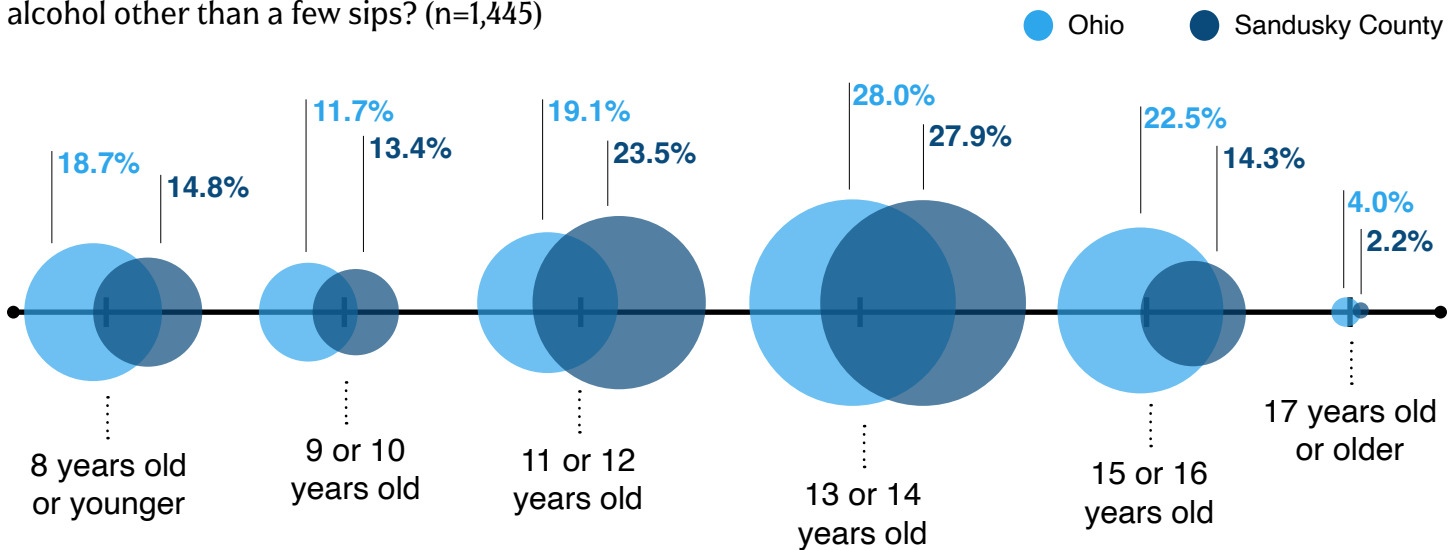
Approximately **34.5%** of youth reported seeing a doctor, nurse, therapist, social worker, or counselor for mental health support within the past 12 months—a **rate that is higher** than that reported among youth across Ohio (**33%**).

35.0%

33.0%

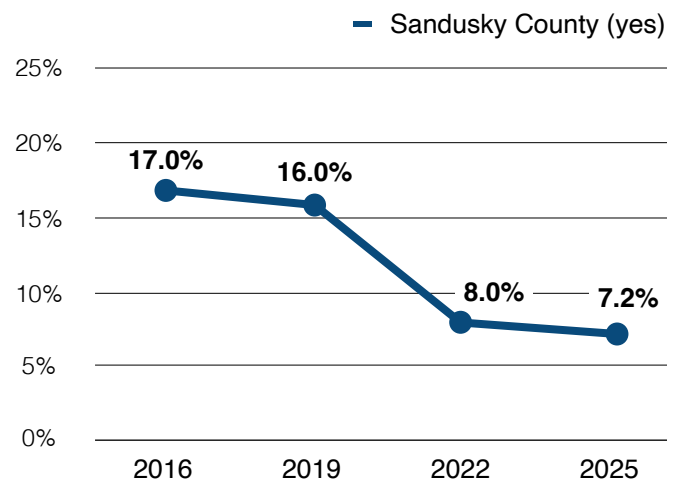
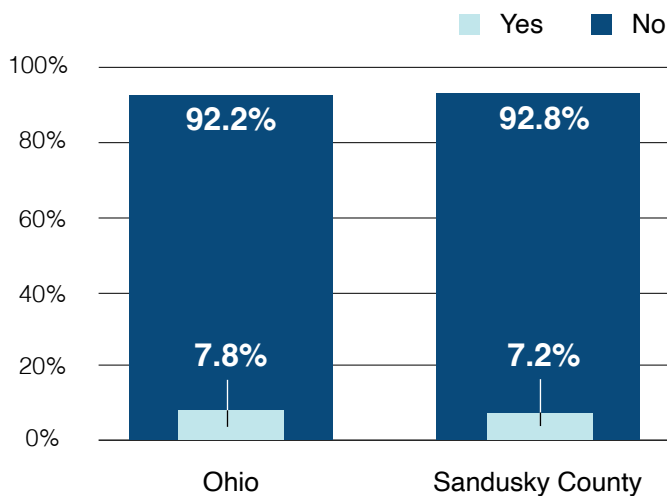
Substance use

Among those who have ever consumed alcohol: How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol other than a few sips? (n=1,445)



The majority of youth in Sandusky County reported no alcohol use within the past 30 days, with rates remaining relatively stable over time and comparable to statewide OHYES! data across survey years.

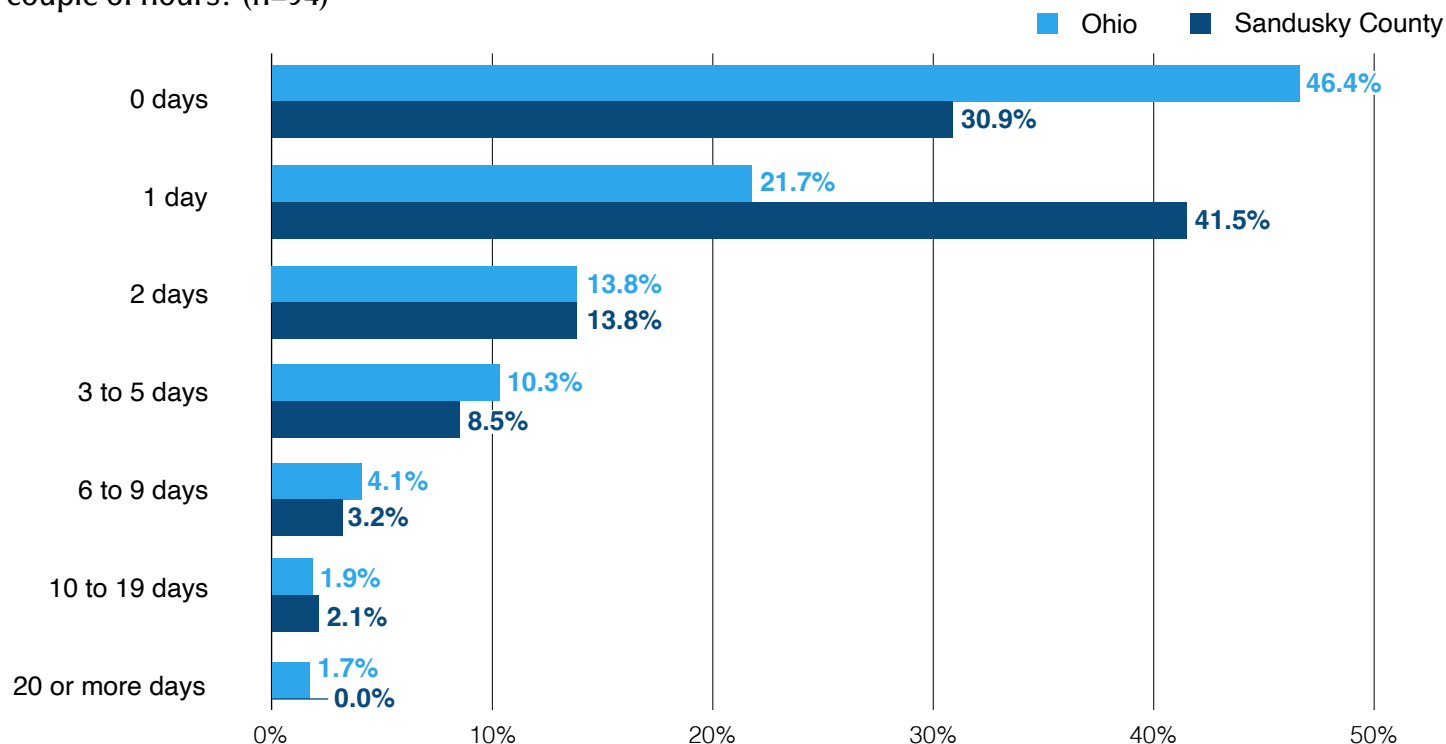
During the past 30 days did you drink one or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage? (n=1,444)



While many youth reported no binge drinking episodes during the past month, a notable percentage (41.5%) indicated consuming four or more drinks (females) or five or more drinks (males) in a row on one or more occasions.

Compared to OHYES! data, Sandusky County youth reported higher rates of binge drinking on one day during the past month, while more frequent binge drinking patterns were generally similar or lower than statewide trends. These findings suggest that although regular high-frequency binge drinking may be less common, episodic heavy alcohol use remains a concern and may increase risk for injury, impaired decision-making, academic difficulties, and other risky behaviors among youth.

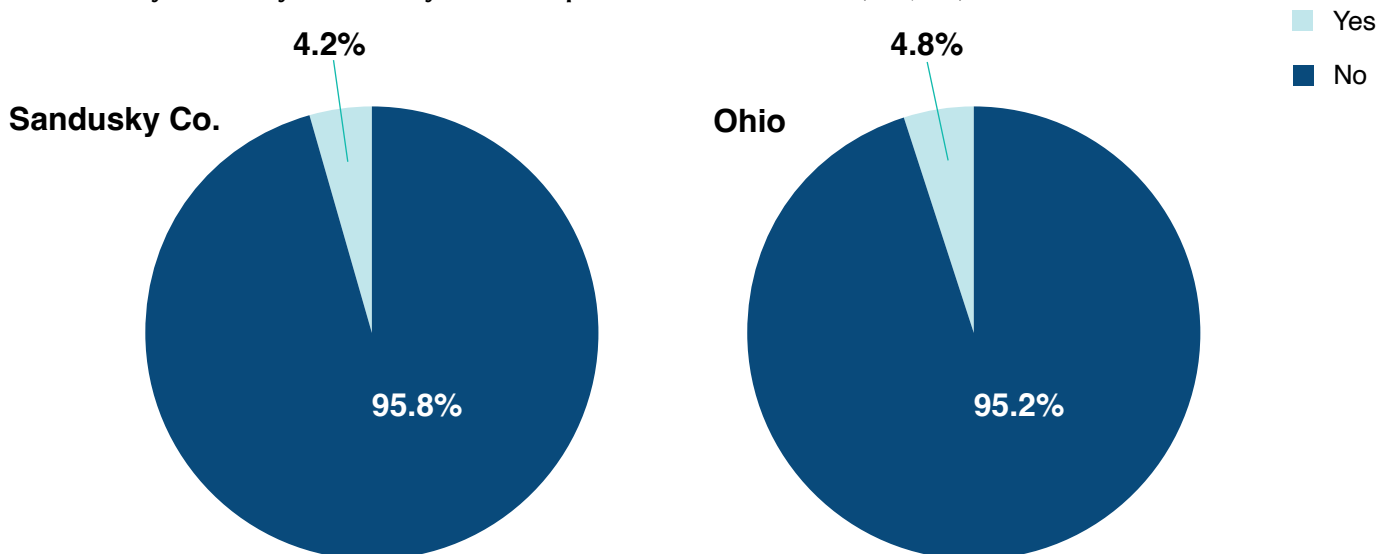
Among those who have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days: During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have 4 or more drinks (females) or 5 or more drinks (males) of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours? (n=94)



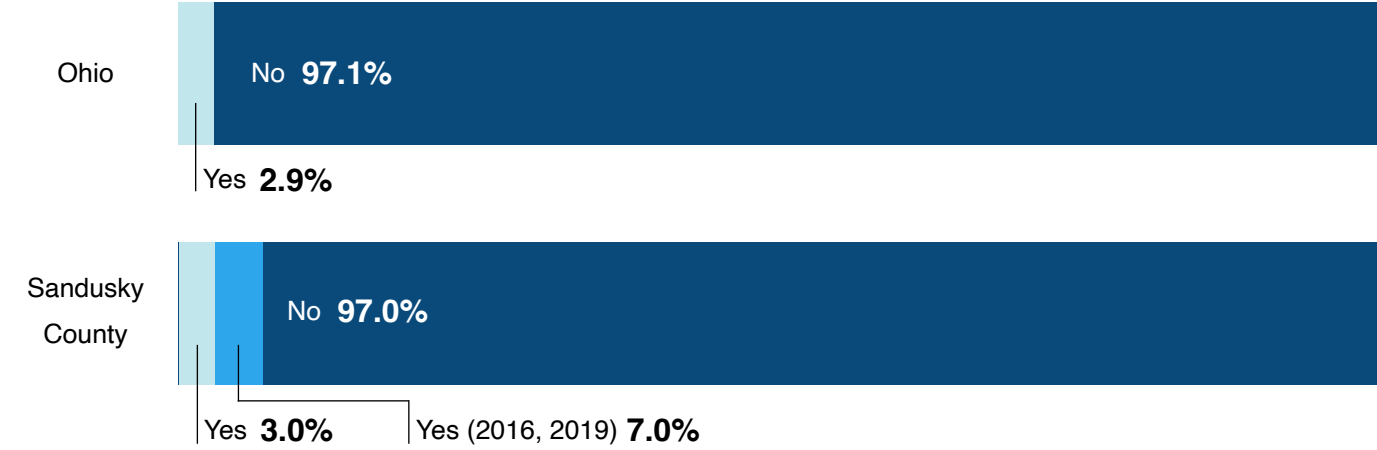
Tobacco and Vapor Products

Tobacco and vapor product use among youth in Sandusky County remained relatively low in 2025 and generally comparable to statewide OHYES! responses. Most respondents reported no use of tobacco products within the past 30 days, including cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products such as chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, and nicotine lozenges. Although overall use rates remain low, findings indicate a slight increase in tobacco and vapor product use since 2022. Current cigarette smoking among Sandusky County youth increased from 1% in 2022 to 3% in 2025, though rates remain below those reported in 2016 and 2019 (7%).

Past 30 days: 30-day use of any tobacco product - Calculated (n=1,451)



During the past 30 days did you smoke part or all of a cigarette? (n=1,477)



During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus or dissolvable tobacco products such as Copenhagen, Grizzly, Skoal, Camel Snus, or Velo Nicotine Lozenges? (Do not count any electronic vapor products). (n=1,476)

	1-all 30 days	0 days
Ohio	2.9%	97.1%
Sandusky County	3.0%	97.0%

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos or little cigars, such as Swisher Sweets, Middleton’s (including Black & Mild), or Backwoods? (n=1,471)

	1-all 30 days	0 days
Ohio	2.5%	97.5%
Sandusky County	2.0%	98.0%

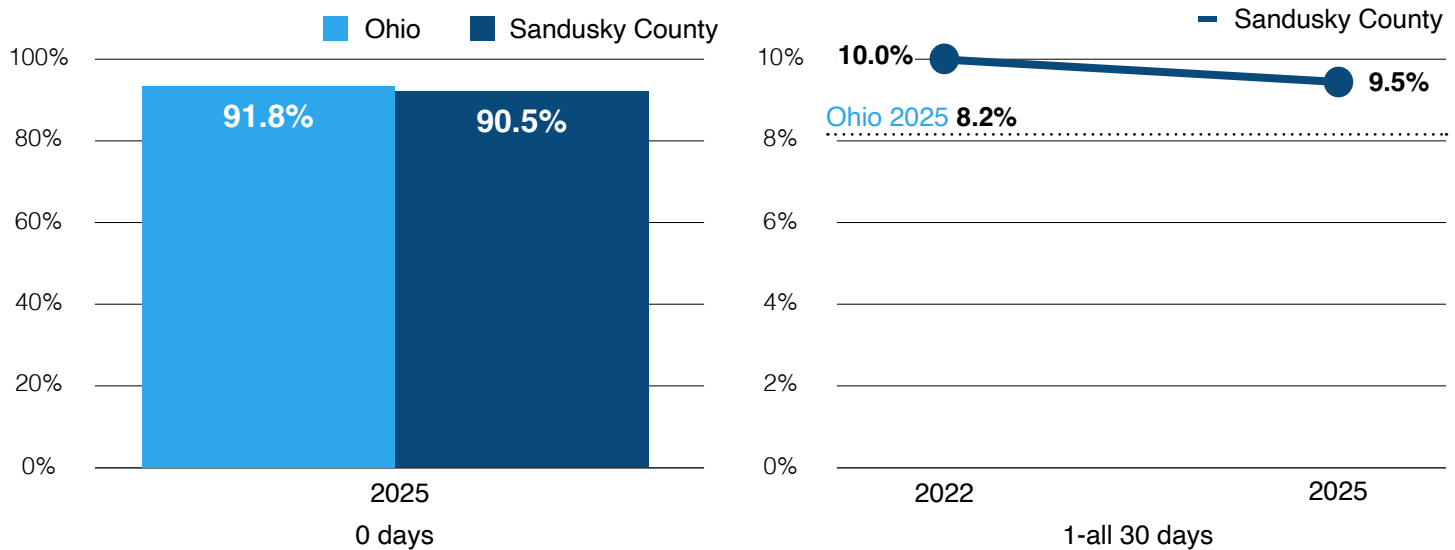
Sandusky County is performing better than Ohio based on percentage. However, it has **increased** since 2022 (1%).

Electronic Vapor Products

Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes or vapes, are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth in the United States (CDC, 2025). Data from the 2024 National Youth Tobacco Survey showed that 5.9% of middle and high school students used electronic cigarettes in the past 30 days, a decline from 7.7% in 2023 (CDC, 2025)

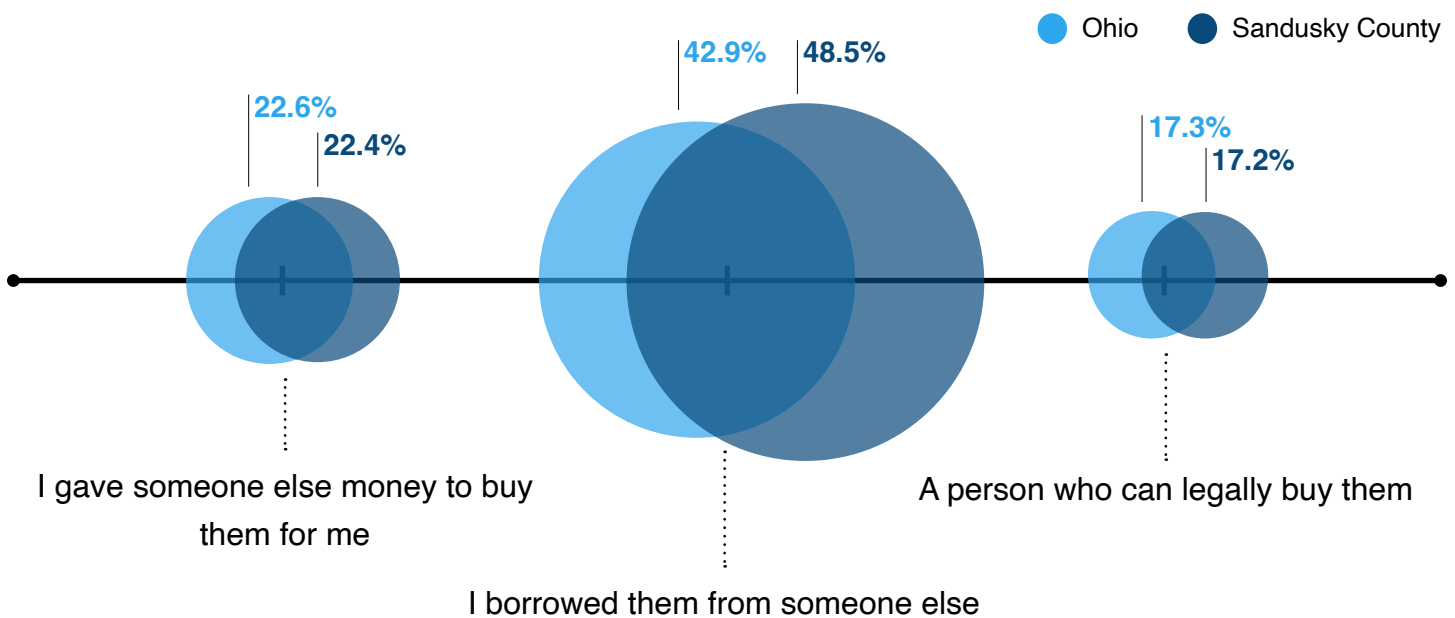
In Sandusky County, 17.4% of youth reported ever using an electronic vapor product, while 9.5% were considered current users, reporting use on one or more days within the past 30 days.

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use an electronic vapor product? (n=1,477)



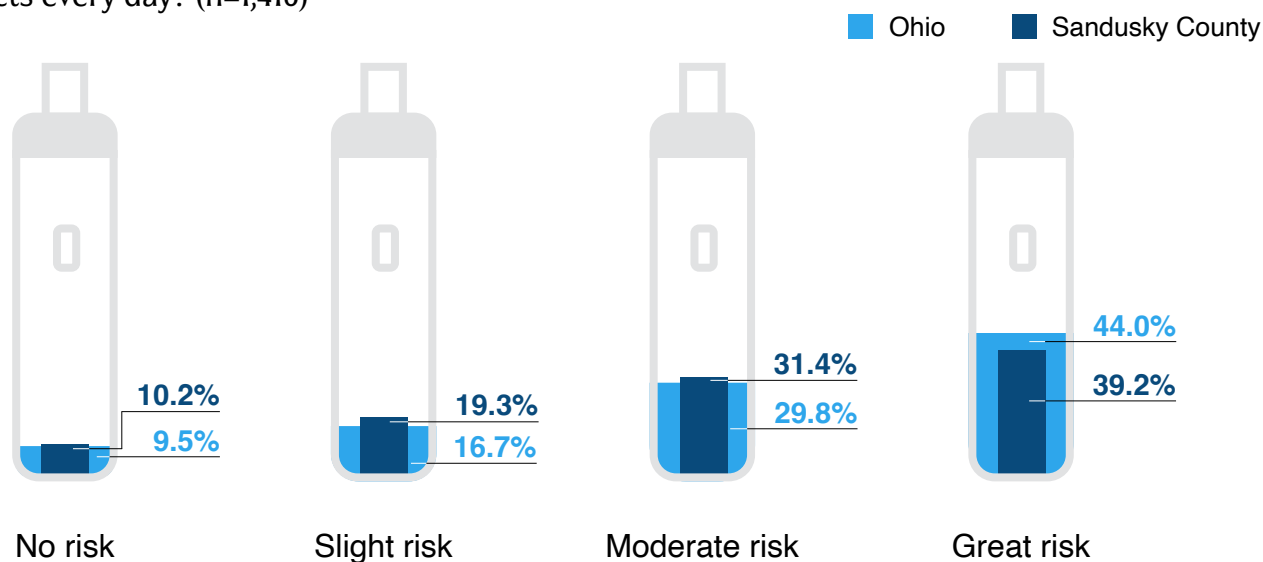
Among youth who reported using vapor products, the most common method of obtaining them was borrowing or having someone else purchase the products for them (48.5%), a rate slightly higher than statewide Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey respondents (43%).

Among those who used a vapor product in the past 30 days: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your electronic vapor products? Note: Respondents could select all that apply. (n=134)



Perceptions of harm related to electronic vapor product use can influence youth attitudes and behaviors surrounding vaping. In Sandusky County, most youth perceived regular use of electronic vapor products as posing at least a moderate or great risk to health. Compared to statewide OHYES! data, respondents were somewhat more likely to identify vaping as a “great risk” (44%) compared to Sandusky County (39.2%). These findings suggest that while awareness of the potential harms of vaping is generally high, continued education and prevention efforts may help strengthen understanding of the health risks associated with electronic vapor product use among youth.

How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they use electronic vapor products every day? (n=1,416)



Prescription Drugs

During your life, how many times have you taken any prescription drugs (such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax) without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it? (n=1,449)

Ohio

94.7%

have not taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription or differently than told in their lifetime.

Sandusky County

94.8%

have not taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription or differently than told in their lifetime.

The overwhelming majority of youth (over 94%) report never misusing prescription drugs, with Sandusky County closely mirroring OHYES! statewide results.

Nearly all youth in both Sandusky County and Ohio report no prescription drug misuse in the past 30 days, indicating low current misuse across both populations.

During the past 30 days, have you used prescription drugs not prescribed to you? (n=1,449)

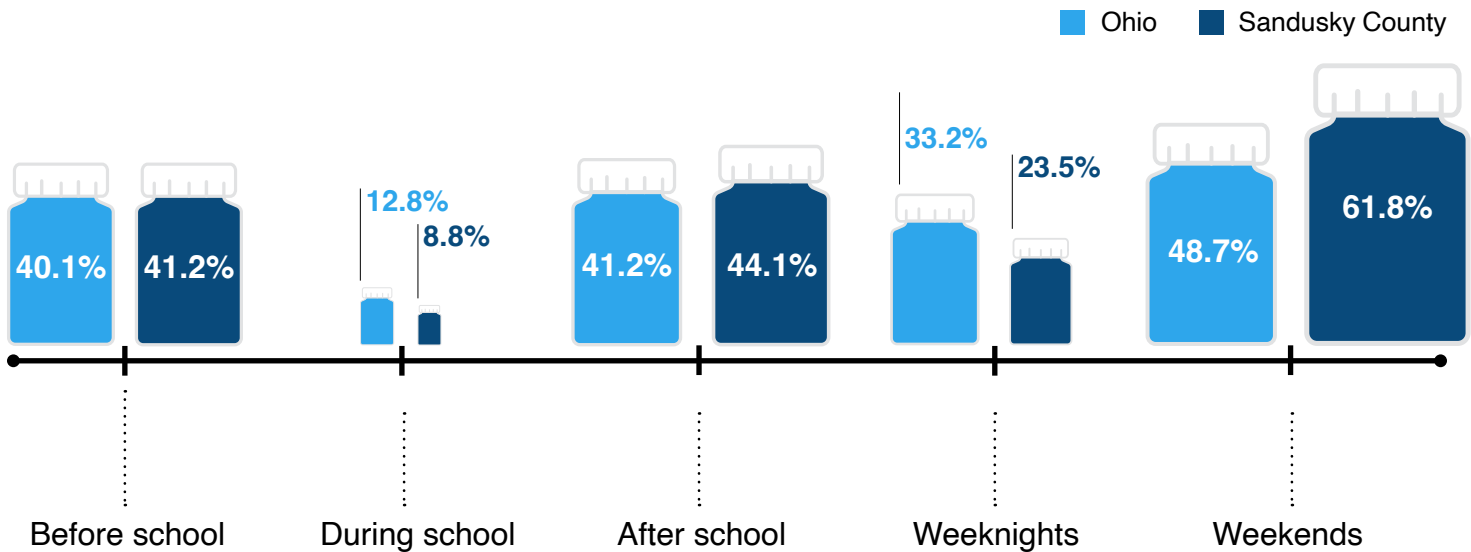
Ohio and Sandusky County

99.0%

have not used prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them.

Among youth who reported prescription drug misuse, use most commonly occurred after school and on weekends, aligning closely with OHYES! patterns and indicating higher risk during unsupervised time.

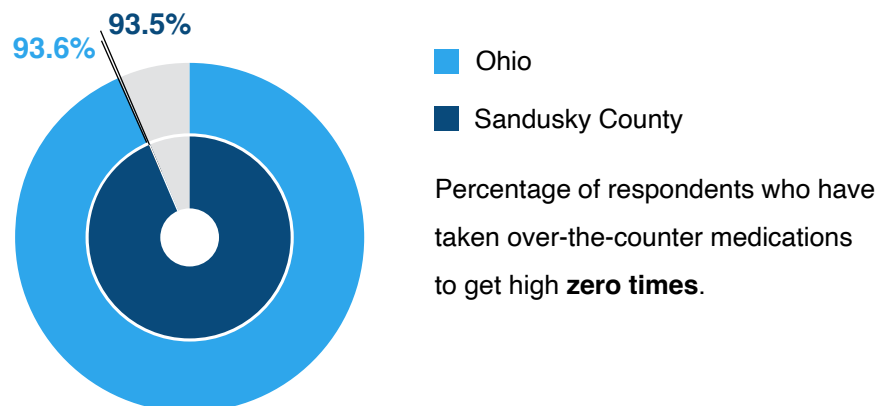
Among those who have taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription: When do you usually use prescription drugs not prescribed to you? Note: Respondents could select all that apply. (n=34)



More than **93%** of youth reported never misusing over-the-counter medications, with Sandusky County results nearly identical to statewide data.

Over-the-Counter Medications

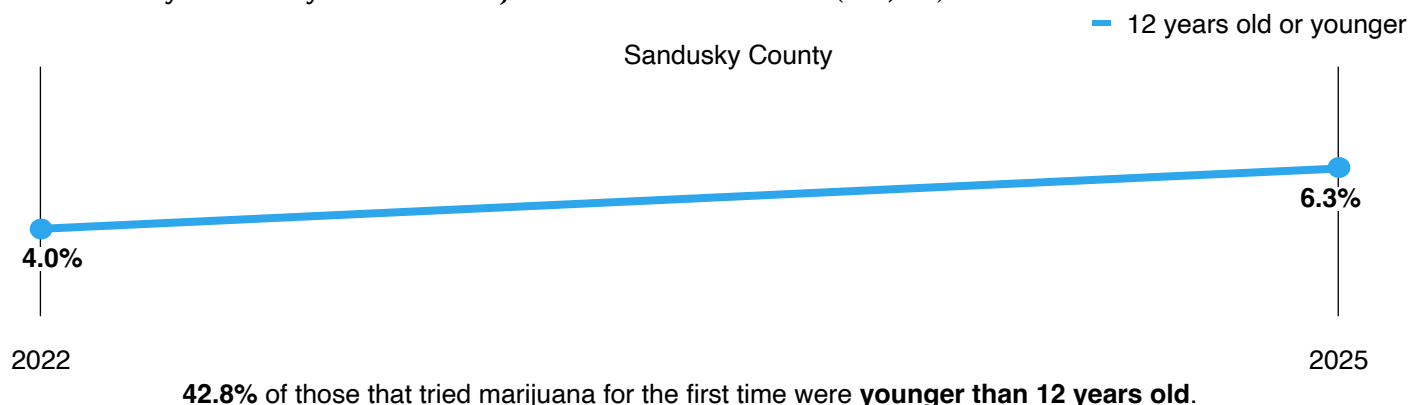
During your life, how many times have you taken over-the-counter medications such as cold medicine, allergy medicine, or pain reliever to get high? (n=1,447)



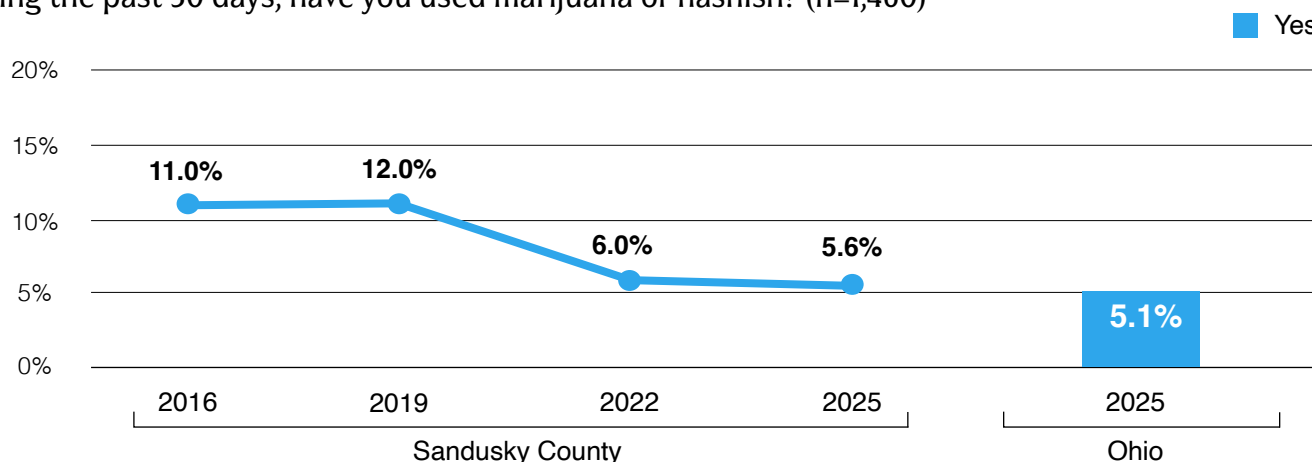
Marijuana

Early initiation of marijuana use remains a concern among youth in Sandusky County. Survey findings show that the percentage of youth reporting first marijuana use at age 12 or younger increased from 4.0% in 2022 to 6.3% in 2025. Additionally, among youth who reported ever trying marijuana, 42.8% indicated they were younger than 12 years old when they first used it. The percentage of youth in Sandusky County reporting marijuana or hashish use within the past 30 days decreased from 11% in 2016 to 5.6% in 2025. Among youth who reported use, the most common methods of consumption were smoking marijuana in a joint or blunt and using marijuana through a vape device. Early substance use is associated with increased risk for future substance misuse, mental health challenges, academic difficulties, and impaired brain development.

How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time? (n=1,461)



During the past 30 days, have you used marijuana or hashish? (n=1,460)



Among those who have used marijuana in the past 30 days: During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana? (n=81)

■ Ohio ■ Sandusky County

48.6% **43.6%**

I **smoked** it in a joint, bong, pipe, or blunt.

7.9% **10.3%**

I **ate** it in food such as brownies, cakes, cookies, or candy.

33.7% **38.5%**

I **vaporized** it.

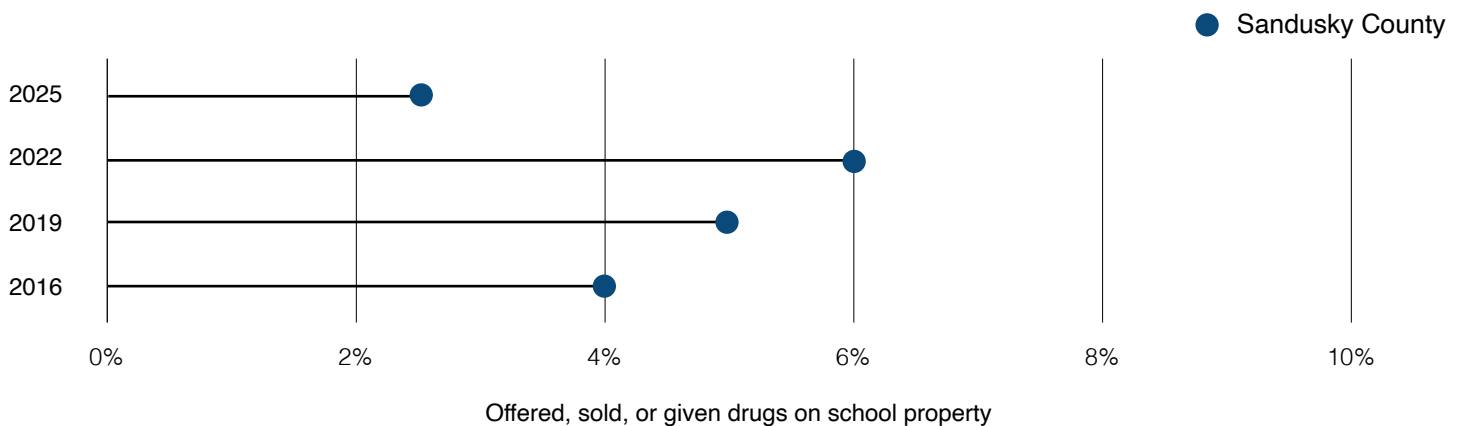
Illicit Drugs

Use of illicit drugs other than marijuana remained relatively low among youth in Sandusky County. Reported use rates for substances such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, ecstasy, hallucinogens, steroids, inhalants, and synthetic marijuana were generally low and comparable to statewide Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey data.

However, Sandusky County youth reported slightly higher rates of inhalant use, heroin use, and synthetic marijuana use compared to statewide averages. Although the percentages are small, these substances carry significant health and safety risks, particularly for adolescents.

	Ohio (yes) (n=1,358)	Sandusky County (yes)
Any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase	0.4%	0.4%
Inhalants, sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high	0.9%	1.0%
Heroin	0.2%	0.4%
Methamphetamines	0.3%	0.3%
Ecstasy	0.3%	0.2%
Hallucinogenic drugs, such as LSD, acid, PCP, angel dust, mescaline, or mushrooms	1.0%	0.9%
Steroid pills or shots without a doctor's prescription	0.4%	0.3%
Synthetic marijuana use	1.3%	1.6%

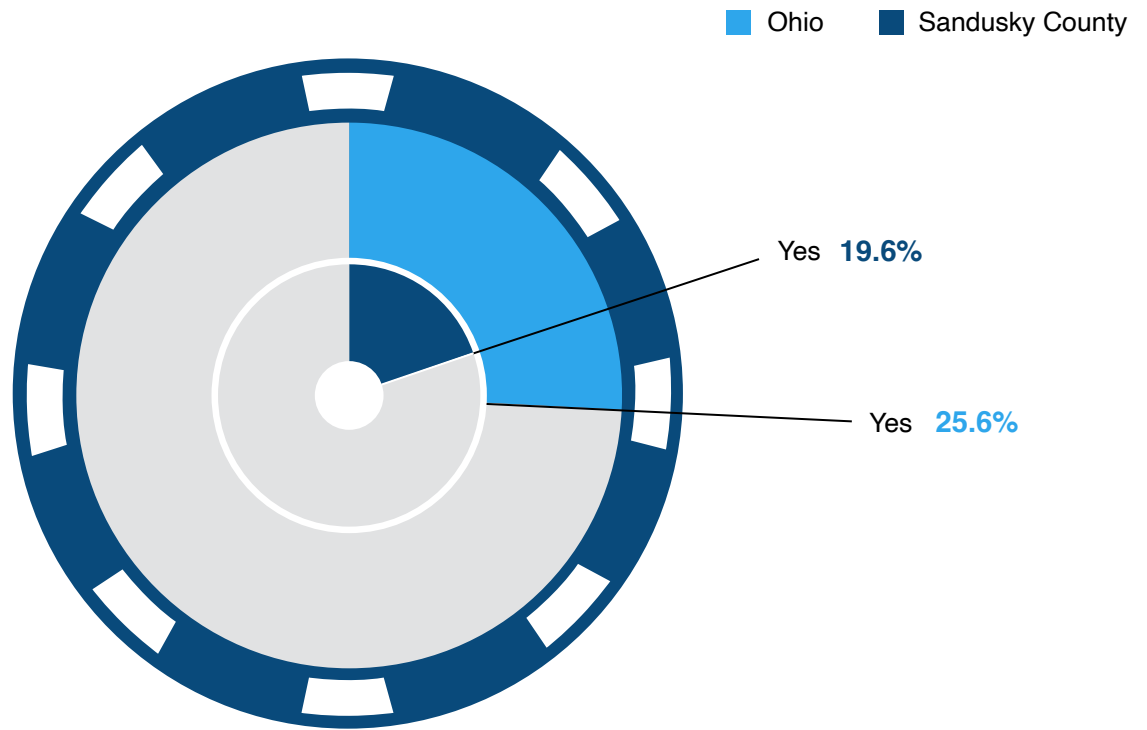
During the past 12 months, youth were offered, sold or given drugs on school property (n=1,386)

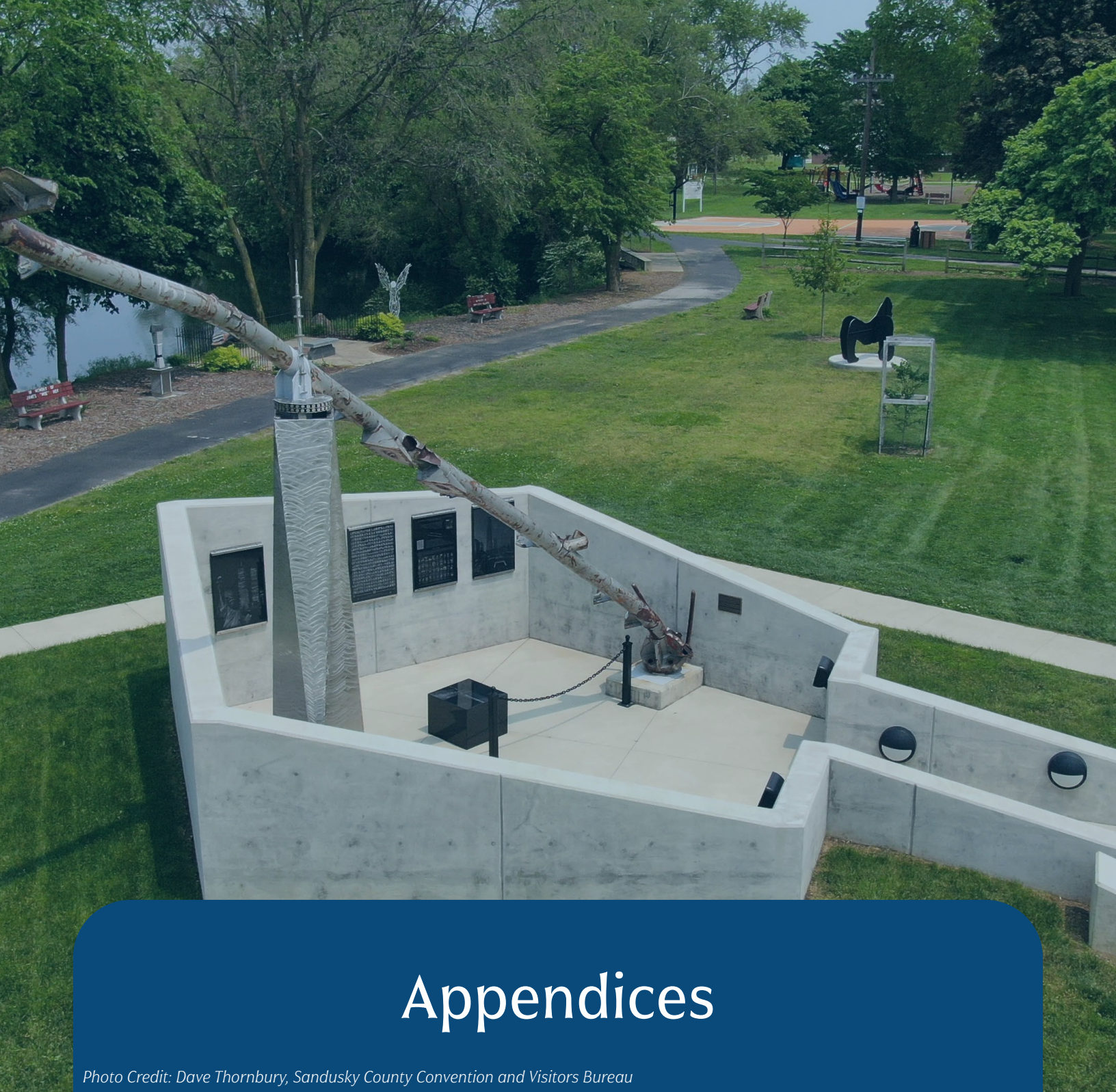


Gambling

Among youth who reported gambling within the past 12 months, most respondents in Sandusky County indicated they had not gambled more than they intended. However, nearly one in five youth gamblers (19.6%) reported gambling more than planned at least once during the past year. Compared to OHYES! data, Sandusky County youth were less likely to report gambling beyond their intentions.

Youth who reported gambling more than planned in the past 12 months (n=214)





Appendices

Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Appendix I

Community Survey Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable		2025 Community Survey Sample
Age	18 to 24	3.6%
	25 to 34	12.7%
	35 to 44	14.8%
	45 to 54	16.4%
	55 to 64	21.0%
	65 to 74	21.4%
	75 and older	8.0%
Race & Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native	0.93%
	Black or African American	3.7%
	Chamorro	0.19%
	Chinese	0.19%
	Filipino	0.19%
	Native Hawaiian	0.19%
	Some other race	2.04%
	Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin	8.5%
Sex	Male	16%
	Female	83%
Education Level	Grades 1 through 8 (elementary)	0.2%
	Grades 9 through 11 (some high school, did not graduate)	0.7%
	Grade 12 or GED (high school graduate)	23.4%
	College 1 year to 3 years (some college or technical school, but no degree)	29.3%
	College 4 years or more (college graduate)	30.2%
	Post-graduate (graduate school or higher)	16.3%
Annual Household Income	Less than \$9,999	2.9%
	\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.4%
	\$15,000 to \$19,999	4.4%
	\$20,000 to \$24,999	6.8%
	\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.3%
	\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.3%
	\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.5%
	\$75,000 to \$99,999	13.7%
	\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.4%
	\$150,000 or more	8.2%

Appendix II

Healthy People 2030 Data Comparison

Sandusky County Adult Variables		Sandusky County 2025 Survey Results	Healthy People Variable	Healthy People 2030 Target	Target Comparison
Preventative Medicine	Had a flu vaccine in the past year	52.7%	Increase the proportion of people who get the flu vaccine every year	70%	Below target
	Received lung cancer screening in the past 3 years	6.2%	Increase the proportion of adults who get screened for lung cancer	7.5%	Below target
	Received colorectal cancer screening in the past 5 years	47%	Increase the proportion of adults who get screened for colorectal cancer	72.8%	Below target
Women's Health	Had a mammogram within the past 2 years (ages 40 and older)	65%	Increase the proportion of females who get screened for breast cancer	80.3%	Below target
	Had a Pap smear in the past 3 years (ages 21-65)	72.5%	Increase the proportion of females who get screened for cervical cancer	79.2%	On target
Oral Health	Visited a dentist or dental clinic within the past year	70%	Increase use of the oral health care system	45%	Above target
	Main reason for not visiting a dentist was fear, apprehension, nervousness, pain, or dislike of going	23%	Reduce the proportion of people who can't get the dental care they need when they need it	19.4%	Above target
	Did not visit a dentist in the past year due to not having dental insurance	13%	Increase the proportion of people with dental insurance	75%	Below target
Pregnancy	Received prenatal care within the first 3 months	92%	Increase the proportion of pregnant women	80.5%	Above target
	Consumed alcohol while pregnant	1.5%	Increase abstinence from alcohol among pregnant women	92.2%	Below target
	Smoked cigarettes or used other tobacco products	0%	Increase abstinence from cigarette smoking among pregnant women	95.7%	Below target
	Used illicit drugs while pregnant	0%	Increase abstinence from illicit drugs among pregnant women	95.3%	Below target

Sandusky County Adult Variables		Sandusky County 2025 Survey Results	Healthy People Variable	Healthy People 2030 Target	Target Comparison
Cardiovascular Disease	Ever diagnosed with angina or coronary heart disease	3.5%	Improve cardiovascular health in adults	72.2%	Below target
	Ever diagnosed with a heart attack or myocardial infarction	2.6%			
	Had been told they had high blood pressure	41.3%	Reduce the proportion of adults with high blood pressure	41.9%	On target
Alcohol Consumption	Binge drinker (males having 5 or more drinks on one occasion; females having 4 or more drinks on one occasion)	21%	Reduce the proportion of people aged 21 years and over who engaged in binge drinking in the past month	22.7%	Below target
Drug Use	Misused prescription drugs in the past 6 months	4%	Reduce the proportion of people who misused prescription drugs in the past year	4.7%	On target
Weight Status & Physical Activities	Did not participate in physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise in the past 30 days	32.5%	Reduce the proportion of adults who do no physical activity in their free time	22%	Above target
	Obese	53.5%	Reduce the proportion of adults with obesity	36%	Above target
Diet & Nutrition	1 cup or more servings of fruit per day	42%	Increase fruit consumption by people aged 2 years and older	.56 cup equivalents per 1,000 calories	Above target
	1 cup or more servings of vegetables per day	51%	Increase vegetable consumption by people aged 2 years and older	.84 cup equivalents per 1,000 calories	Above target
	Cost barrier to purchasing food, including fruits and vegetables	18%	Reduce household food insecurity and hunger	6%	Above target
Social Determinants of Health	Unsafe water supply/ wells	0.8%	Increase the proportion of people whose water supply meets Safe Drinking Water Act regulations	92.1%	Below target
	Infants who sleep on their back	89.2%	Increase the proportion of infants who are put to sleep on their backs	88.9%	On target

Appendix III

Longitudinal Survey Data: Adult Variables

Adult Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Health Care Coverage, Access, & Utilization	Uninsured	8%	4%	3%	2.4%
	Had one or more persons they thought of as their personal health care provider	88%	90%	89%	93.3%
	Visited a doctor for a routine checkup in the past year	64%	74%	74%	83.3%
Preventative Medicine	Had a pneumonia vaccination	65% (ages 65 and older)	73% (ages 65 and older)	64% (ages 65 and older)	44%
	Had a flu vaccine in the past year	78%	77%	76%	52.7%
	Ever had a shingles or zoster vaccine	13%	22%	23%	36.1%
Women's Health	Had a mammogram within the past 2 years (ages 40 and over)	69%	68%	71%	79.7%
	Had a Pap smear in the past 3 years (ages 21-65)	71%	59%	56%	67.7%
	Had a clinical breast exam in the past 2 years (ages 40 and over)	66%	59%	56%	67.7%
Men's Health	Had a PSA test within the past 2 years (ages 40 and over)	N/A	N/A	61%	48%
Oral Health	Visited a dentist or dental clinic within the past year	72%	70%	63%	70%

Adult Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Health Status Perceptions	Rated general health as excellent or very good	44%	44%	45%	39.5%
	Rated general health as fair or poor	12%	13%	14%	17.3%
	Rated mental health as not good on four or more days in the past month	27%	30%	39%	44.9%
	Average number of days that mental health was not good in the past month	4.5	5	6.4	6.5
	Rated physical health as not good on four or more days in the past month	21%	20%	20%	27.8%
	Average number of days that physical health was not good in the past month	3.8	3.9	4.7	5.1
Weight Status	Overweight	33%	39%	36%	27.5%
	Obese	42%	39%	41%	53.5%
Tobacco Use	Current smoker (smoked on some or all days)	19%	17%	15%	9%
	Former smoker (smoked 100 cigarettes in lifetime and now do not smoke)	24%	30%	28%	28.2%
	Tried to quit smoking on at least one day in the past year	36%	60%	59%	51.1%
	Current e-cigarette user (vaped on some or all days)	N/A	6%	11%	8.4%
	Former e-cigarette user	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Adult Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Alcohol Consumption	Current drinker (had at least one drink of alcohol within the past month)	62%	56%	58%	54.6%
	Binge drinker (males having 5 or more drinks on one occasion; females having 4 or more on one occasion)	29%	29%	33%	21%
Drug Use	Used recreational marijuana or hashish in the past 6 months	5%	6%	8%	6.3%
	Misused prescription drugs in the past 6 months	10%	16%	6%	4%
Mental Health	Felt sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks in a row in the past year	9%	12%	21%	19.8%
	Seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year	1%	6%	8%	5.6%
	Attempted suicide in the past year	0%	2%	1%	0%
Cardiovascular disease	Ever diagnosed with angina or coronary heart disease	4%	4%	4%	3.5%
	Ever diagnosed with a heart attack or myocardial infarction	6%	3%	4%	2.6%
	Ever diagnosed with a stroke	2%	3%	2%	1.5%
	Had been told they have high blood pressure	33%	38%	41%	41.3%
	Had been told their blood cholesterol was high	34%	37%	36%	30.4%
	Had their blood cholesterol checked within the last 5 years	75%	84%	80%	75%

Adult Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Sexual Behavior	Had more than one sexual partner in the past year	6%	7%	7%	3.7%
	Ever been tested for HIV	23%	29%	20%	28.8%
Diabetes	Ever been told by a doctor they have diabetes (not pregnancy related)	18%	14%	11%	15.8%
	Had been diagnosed with pre-diabetes or borderline diabetes	N/A	8%	10%	16.2%

Longitudinal Survey Data: Youth Variables

Youth Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Weight Status	Obese	23%	22%	23%	20.4%
	Overweight	11%	11%	18%	15.0%
	Physically active at least 60 minutes per day on every day in the past week	30%	28%	23%	33.4%
	Physically active at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days in the past week	49%	47%	44%	57.7%
	Did not participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on any day in the past week	13%	18%	13%	9.0%

Youth Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Tobacco/ Electronic Vapor Product Use	Current smoker (smoked on at least 1 day during the past 30 days)	7%	7%	1%	3%
	Current cigar smoker (cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on at least 1 day during the past 30 days)	N/A	N/A	1%	2%
	Currently use an electronic vapor product (including e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes, vape pipes, vaping pens, e-hookahs, and hookah pens on at least 1 day during the past 30 days)	N/A	14%	10%	10%
	Current smokeless tobacco user (chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products—such as Redman, Levi Garrett, Beechnut, Skoal, Skoal Bandits, Copenhagen, Camel Snus, Marlboro Snus, General Snus, Ariva, Stonewall, or Camel Orbs—not counting any electronic vapor products, on at least 1 day during the past 30 days)	N/A	3%	1%	1.5%

Youth Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Alcohol Consumption	Current drinker (at least one drink of alcohol on at least 1 day during the past 30 days)	17%	16%	8%	7.2%
	Binge drinker (drank 5 or more drinks within a couple of hours on at least 1 day during the past 30 days)	7%	11%	3%	4.5%
	Drank for the first time before age 13 (of all youth)	12%	17%	16%	15.9%
	Obtained the alcohol they drank by someone giving it to them (of current drinkers)	41%	39%	43%	37.7%
	Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol (in a car or other vehicle on 1 or more occasions during the past 30 days)	16%	17%	11%	13.7%
	Drove when they had been drinking alcohol (in a car or vehicle, 1 or more times during the 30 days before the survey, among youth who had driven a car or other vehicle)	7%	3%	1%	0.9%

Youth Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Drug Use	Currently use marijuana (in the past month)	11%	12%	6%	5.6%
	Tried marijuana for the first time before age 13	N/A	N/A	4%	6.3%
	Ever used methamphetamines (in lifetime)	0%	1%	<1%	<1% (in past year)
	Ever used cocaine (in lifetime)	1%	1%	1%	<1% (in past year)
	Ever used heroin (in lifetime)	0%	<1%	<1%	<1% (in past year)
	Ever used inhalants (in lifetime)	5%	6%	1%	1% (in past year)
	Ever used ecstasy (also called MDMA, in lifetime)	1%	1%	<1%	<1% (in past year)
	Ever took steroids without a doctor's prescription (in lifetime)	1%	1%	<1%	<1% (in past year)
	Were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property (in past 12 months)	4%	5%	6%	2.5%
Mental Health	Felt sad or hopeless (almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities in the past 12 months)	28%	35%	36%	28.5%
	Seriously considered attempting suicide (in the past 12 months)	N/A	N/A	18%	14.6%
	Attempted suicide (in the past 12 months)	7%	10%	7%	8.4%
	Suicide attempt results in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse (in the past 12 months)	N/A	N/A	1%	17.7% (among those who attempted suicide)

Youth Variables		Sandusky County 2016	Sandusky County 2019	Sandusky County 2022/2023	Sandusky County 2025
Social Determinants of Health	Visited a doctor or health care professional (for a routine checkup in the past year)	64%	64%	50%	54.8%
	Visited a dentist in the past year (for a checkup, exam, teeth cleaning, or other dental work)	66%	71%	62%	66.2%
Unintentional Injuries & Violence	Were in a physical fight (in the past 12 months)	N/A	N/A	14%	19.9%
	Were in a physical fight on school property (in the past 12 months)	N/A	N/A	6%	6.6%
	Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (in the past 12 months)	8%	11%	12%	12.4%
	Did not go to school because they felt unsafe (at school or on their way to or from school in the past 30 days)	6%	6%	20%	17%
	Bullied on school property (in past year)	27%	26%	22%	64.2%*
	Electronically bullied (bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting in the past year)	15%	12%	15%	8.1%
	Experienced physical dating violence (including being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon on purpose by someone they were dating or going out with in the past 12 months)	N/A	N/A	7%	8.6%