



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Community Needs Survey Helps Tell Local Story

Residents of Union County are being asked to complete a community survey during the month of November. The survey, which can be found at <https://uchd.net/community-survey/>, helps to tell the story of health and the factors that shape health for the people who call Union County home.

"Local data is crucial to identifying the unique needs of our community. It helps inform strategies to address these needs, and helps procure funding to implement solutions," said Mary Salimbene Merriman, chief epidemiologist for the Union County Health Department and chair of the community assessment workgroup.

The community survey is estimated to take about 20 minutes to complete. The survey can be done online at <https://uchd.net/community-survey/>. The survey is open through Nov. 30. The survey asks about a wide array of factors that influence health and health conditions such as diet, exercise, risk behaviors, mental health, substance abuse, health insurance, healthcare, and housing.

The goal of the community assessment workgroup is to gather 400 responses from Union County residents age 18 and older. The workgroup is working to promote the survey in a manner that invites a variety of respondents in terms of age, gender, and location of home within the county.

"We must collect a certain number of responses in order to make generalizations about health in Union County. The more surveys we collect, the more confident we can be when making general statements about local health issues," said Salimbene Merriman. "If we don't receive enough survey responses, or if the respondents are all the same in terms of age, gender, location, then it is hard to make valid generalizations about what the data represents."

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The data collected through the survey will be used to create a community assessment report. This report will be available in the Spring of 2024 and will contain aggregate data from the community survey as well as data from local, state and national sources. The report will then help to inform the 2024-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan. The Community Health Improvement Plan will set objectives and strategies on how to improve the health and well-being of the individuals who live, work and play in Union County. The data and improvement plan will also be used by the Union County Health Department and partner agencies to seek future grant funding.

“The information residents provide is crucial to our various community organizations. Local data helps determine how local dollars are spent, what items become priorities to address over the next 3-5 years and strengthens efforts to secure grant funding for our community,” said Salimbene Merriman. “We appreciate the time and support of our residents on this project.”

This year’s Union County community survey is financially supported by the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Union County and the Union County Health Department. Additional members of the community assessment workgroup include Bridges Community Action Partnership, City of Marysville, Division of Police, Council for Union County Families, Fairbanks Local Schools, Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission, Maryhaven, Marysville Exempted Village School District, Memorial Hospital, North Union Local Schools, Union County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Union County Commissioners, Union County Emergency Management Agency, Union County Job and Family Services/Human Services, Union County Senior Services, Union County Sheriff’s Office, Union County YMCA, United Way of Union County, and Wings Support and Recovery.

The community survey was last conducted by the Union County Health Department in 2018.

If you would like to see a previous Community Assessment report, please visit <https://uchd.net/data-reports/>. If you have any questions about this year’s assessment, what it will be used for, or need assistance completing the survey, please contact Mary Salimbene Merriman at 937-645-2062 or mary.merriman@uchd.net.

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