

HEALTH EQUITY, EPIDEMIOLOGY, AND DATA REPORTS



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Our Vision

Healthy people in a healthy St. Joseph County




Health Equity, Epidemiology, and Data (HEED) Unit

The St. Joseph County Department of Health works to promote physical and mental health and facilitate the prevention of disease, injury and disability for all St. Joseph County (SJC) residents.

To guide this work, the Department of Health has embraced a data-driven, evidence-based and community-centered focus on health equity.

Over the past two years the HEED Unit has worked to define the burden of disease in SJC, understand how social and structural factors impact health in the county, and center community voices in creating a healthier county.

HEED Reports Series:

-  Burden of Disease
-  Health Equity Report
-  Health Equity Data Analysis



The creation of the reports uses a tree analogy to show the relationship between root causes and outcomes in health. The soil correlates to the systems of power and its nutrients represent community assets, policies, and practices. The leaves and fruits represent health outcomes. When the systems of power are advantageous—that is, when community policies and practices lead to fair access to resources—the soil quality is good and health outcomes improve. When the soil is lower quality, the health of the tree (and the community) is diminished.

The Burden of Disease Report 2021

Data-driven

Leading Cause of Death in SJC (2018 to 2020) All Age Groups	Death	Rate / 100,000 People
Diseases of Heart	1780	218.7
Malignant Neoplasms / Cancer	1643	201.8
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	534	65.6
Cerebrovascular Diseases	525	64.5
Alzheimer Disease	483	59.3
Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)	423	59.5
COVID-19	372	45.7
Diabetes Mellitus	274	33.7

Source: CDC WONDER

This report establishes the leading causes of death in the county, the illnesses that burden the community, and a discussion of healthcare costs. The report analyzes the impact of illnesses across various demographics. It determines the main payer for the hospitalization of the county residents. It provides a detailed baseline for health outcomes in SJC. This data-driven report creates a foundation for the Health Equity Report.

The Health Equity Report 2022

Education



Food Systems



Neighborhood and Built Environment



Economic Stability



Community and Social Context



Healthcare System



This report documents the county health outcomes in relation to the conditions and contexts in which people live and how these places influence illness and wellbeing. The report discusses the social determinants of health and explores the concepts of health disparities and health equity. It further suggests evidence-driven approaches that can be implemented across multiple levels of society to improve health outcomes. This report informs the different approaches the department of health takes towards engaging the community in creating better health outcomes. It leads us to the community centered model referred to as the Health Equity Data Analysis (HEDA).



Evidence-based

The Health Equity Data Analysis - Ongoing

The Burden of Disease Report 2021 and Health Equity Report 2022 are based on data and evidence from multiple departments and organizations in the United States as well as scholars and researchers. The Health Equity and Data Analysis (HEDA) is built on the premise that local community voices are important in discussions of data and evidence. This dialogue builds locally responsive approaches to improve health outcomes.



Health Cafes

In SJC, the HEDA process is conducted through multiple health cafes located in selected neighborhoods in the county. The health cafes are open conversation spaces hosted by the Department of Health Community Health Workers (CHWs). These conversations follow a set of questions exploring the health of the community, resources, and challenges to being healthy, and possible changes that can be implemented to improve local health. The participants in the conversations are residents of SJC living within the identified neighborhoods. The evaluation of information from the health cafe sessions will guide how the department of health engages residents to advance health and health equity.

Community-centered