

DANIELS COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT



To promote physical and mental health; prevent disease, injury and disability and to be prepared to respond to public health emergencies.

April 2016



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Introduction

Daniels County is very unique in its own way under the “Big Sky”, with the majority of residents being engaged in farming and/or ranching. Daniels County has one hospital (Daniels Memorial Healthcare Center) which is a 24 bed Critical Assess Hospital with an attached clinic and 30 bed nursing home.

The purpose of this Daniels County Community Health Assessment was to evaluate what health issues are most essential to this small frontier community. The mission of the health department is to promote physical and mental health; prevent disease, injury and disability and to be prepared to respond to public health emergencies. Our vision is to promote, protect, and improve the health and wellness of our community.

In the fall/winter of 2015-16 a community health assessment was conducted in conjunction with a community health needs assessment for Daniels Memorial Healthcare Center, with the assistance of the Office of Rural Health. The top 4 key finding after reviewing the results were a need for Behavioral Health Services, Senior Needs in the community, Healthy Lifestyles and Access to Health Care.

CHA Methodology Summary

Key community members were mailed out a letter explaining the community health assessment process and were asked to make a commitment to the community by being on the committee. Some had questions as to what the commitment would involve, but all were committed to the survey process.

A stakeholder committee was formed to support and represent by both the health department and the hospital. A diverse group of stakeholders, who represented various organizations and populations within the county convened in August 2015. For a full list of the stakeholder committee see page 3. With the help of the Office of Rural Health a survey which represented the Community Health Services Development Process (CHSD) was completed. This stakeholder group met two times during the community health assessment process, the first in August 2015 to discuss community concerns and in designing the survey and again in February 2016 to review the results of the survey and focus groups.

Primary Data: With the assistance of the Office of Rural Health surveys were mailed out to residents in Daniels County. A random list of 650 residents were provided to the National Health Resource Center selected from the Prime Net Data Source. The survey were selected as to represent diverse ages of the population of the county.

Focus Group: A focus group meeting was held in Scobey in November 2015. This meeting was chaired by the Office of Rural Health and the group participants were identified as people living in Daniels County and the surrounding area. The focus group was designed to represent various groups of healthcare including senior citizens and local community members. The meeting lasted approximately 90 minutes with questions asked such as:

1. What would make this community a healthier place to live?
2. What do you think are the most important local healthcare issues?
3. What do you think of the hospital in terms of: quality of care, number of services, hospital staff, hospital board and leadership, business office, condition of facility and equipment, financial health of hospital, cost, office/clinic staff, and availability?
4. Local providers?
5. Local services such as: emergency room, ambulance service, healthcare for senior citizens, public/county health department, healthcare services for low income residents, nursing home /assisted living facility and pharmacy?
6. Why people might leave the community for care?
7. What other healthcare services are needed in the community?

Secondary Data: The secondary data used was 2014 Montana Vital Statistics and a Community Health Profile 2015 for Daniels County, made available through the Department of Public Health and Human Services, Public Health and Safety Division, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>, Wikipedia, www.visitmt.com/, Montana Travel Information travel planner, www.healthdata.org/, Montana Immunization Program, DPHHS, Suicide Prevention in Montana Legislative by Karl Rosston, LCSW, and Suicide Prevention Coordinator, and www.mt.gov.

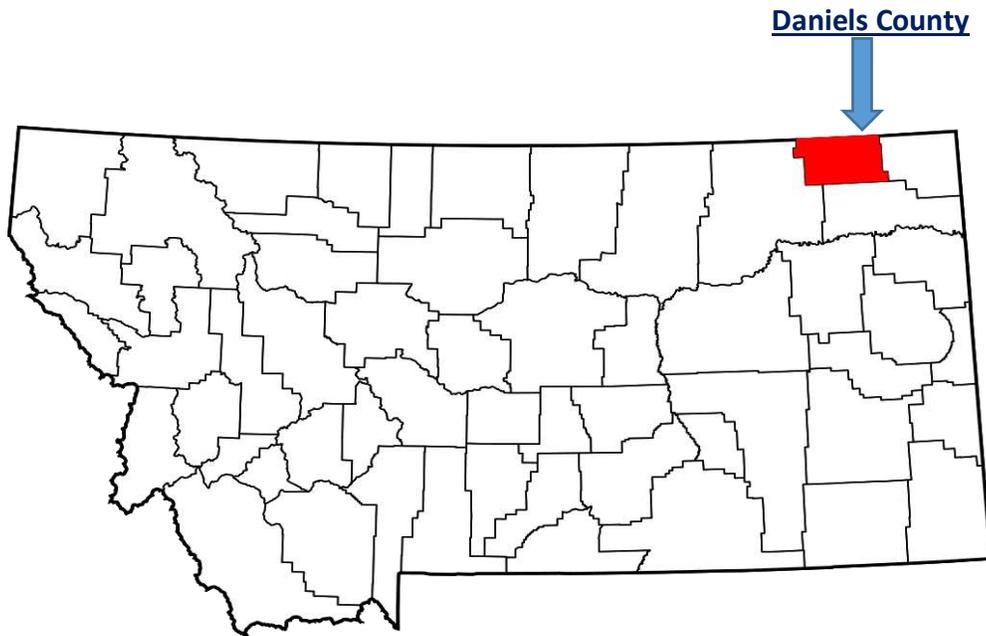
Challenges that were identified include the mailed survey. A news release was sent to the local newspaper prior to the surveys being mailed out announcing that surveys being mailed out from Daniels Memorial Healthcare Center and Daniels County Health Department to the local area. There was a total of 650 surveys mailed out to random population with only 152 being returned for a 24% response rate.

Listed are some of the survey results:

- Of the returned surveys, 85.9% listed their address as Scobey.
- Of those filling out the survey, gender included 63.2% female, 26.3% male, and 10.5% did not identify gender.
- Twenty one percent were between the ages of 56-65. Nineteen percent were between the ages of 66-75. Ages 46-55 made up 16.9%. Ages 76-85 made up 16.9%.
- This does indicate the increasing ages of residents in Daniels County and the need to address senior citizen needs.
- Employment status results: 40.4% work full time, 39% are retired and 14.4% work part time.
- When asked about their impression of the health of the community: 46% rated the community as very healthy, 45.5% rated the health of the community as health, 46.2% rated the health of the community as somewhat healthy, and 2.7% rated the community as unhealthy.

Community Description

Daniels County is a county located in northeast corner of the state of Montana. Daniels County was created in 1920 from parts of Sheridan and Valley County. As of 2000, Daniels County was considered the most rural county in the continental United States as measured by the Index of Relative Rurality. [Reference: \(Wikipedia\)](#)



Mansfield Daniels, for whom the county is named, and Jake Timmons established a large ranch along the Poplar River about 15 miles south of the Canadian Border in 1901. New settlers and travelers tended to stop at the ranch so extra rooms were added to accommodate overnight guests and supplies were laid in to sell- thus the first business in what was to become Scobey. Major Charles Robert Anderson Scobey, agent for the Fort Peck Reservation and good friend of Daniels, was instrumental in getting a post office for the new "settlement" and it was named in his honor. Soon a number of business ventures began around the new post office. In 1912 Daniels built a 20 plus room mansion, which included a ballroom, gas lighting, and waterworks. It was shortly after completion of this that he learned the Great Northern Railroad would come to his town. Unfortunately the railroad stopped on the slopes 1 1/2 miles east of town. The town began moving to the new site in the summer of 1913, so when the first train arrived on Thanksgiving Day in 1913, there was a town ready for it. Being at the end of the Great Northern rails helped Scobey become the largest primary wheat shipping point in North America in 1924. Scobey offers many recreational facilities including a senior citizen center, public swimming pool, public park, nine hole golf course, several baseball diamonds, camping facilities, bowling, roping arena, and ice skating rink. The Daniels County Museum and Pioneer Town established in 1965, sits on 20 acres just west of Scobey and has 35 buildings that been developed or restored to depict turn of the century businesses and homes. Its purpose is to collect, preserve and display Daniels County in all its forms. Daniels County has some of the best prime hunting and fishing areas in the United States. Big game hunters and bird hunters from all over the world flock to eastern Montana seeking whitetail and mule deer, antelope, pheasants, ducks, grouse and geese. Whether you are hunting, fishing or sightseeing, enjoy the wide open spaces in Daniels County's rolling prairies and farmland.
<http://www.visitmt.com/places-to-go/cities-and-towns/scobey.htm>

In Daniels County you will be greeted with a warm smile and a welcoming attitude. Scobey is a clean peaceful, and family orientated community with no shortage of enthusiasm for sports.

Considerable amount of energies are used to promote youth programs, sports, musical events, museum, fairs and rodeos. Reference: Montana Travel Information travel planner



Photo Courtesy of Randi Rath

Daniels County offers rural living and in the wide open spaces, ranching and farming in this community is common. The population as of Daniels County as of July 1, 2014 was 1793. This does represent an increase from a population of 1791 from April 2010 – 2014 for an increase of 2.4%. The county seat is Scobey with a population of 1017. Also in the county is three other small towns, with Peerless 19 miles to the west of Scobey, Flaxville being 12 miles to the east of Scobey, and Whitetail being 18 miles northeast of Scobey. Daniels County has 1427 (Wikipedia) square miles with a population per square mile being 1.2 people. This compares with 6.8 persons per square mile in Montana. Reference: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>



Photo Courtesy of Teresa Danelson

County demographics:

- 95.2% of population is Caucasian (July 1, 2013)
- 0.3% of population Black or African American alone (July 1, 2013)
- 2.5% of population American Indian and Alaskan Native (July 2013)
- 0.3% of population Asian alone (July 1, 2013)
- 1.7% of population two or more races (July 1, 2013)
- 50.5% of population is female (July 1, 2013)
- 49.5% of population is male (July 1, 2013)
- 6.0% of population is under 5 years (July 1, 2013)
- 20.5 % of population is under 18 years (July 1, 2013)
- 25.5% of population is 65 and over (July 1, 2013)
- 4.1% of population have another language other than English spoken (2009-2013)
- 2.4% of population of population are foreign born (2009-2013)
- 94.4% of population high school graduate or higher, % of persons age 25+ years, 2009-2013 (Montana is 92.1%)
- 22.9% have Bachelor's degree or higher, of persons age 25+ years, 2009-2013 (Montana is 28.7%)
- 1.96% represents number the persons her household, 2009-2013 (Montana is 2.39%)
- 5.2% of population under 65 years reported having a disability, 2009-2013 (Montana is 9.2%)
- 2.0% of population are foreign born, 2010-2014 (Montana is 13.1%)



Photo courtesy of Lois Leibrand

Daniels County and Montana Statistics

- 178 persons identified as being a Veteran, 2009-2013
- Female life expectancy in 2013 was 73.9 years.(National average is 81.2 years for females).
- Male life expectancy in 2013 was 73.9 years (National average for males is 76.5 years).

Changes over the period from 1985 to 2013 were in the middle-performing 50% of all counties for females and in the best-performing 25% of all counties for males, with females having an increase of 2.6 years and males having an increase of 5.3 years. The national average was

an increase of 3.1 years for females and an increase of 5.5 years for males.

Reference : www.healthdata.org/.../US/County_Report_Daniels_County_Montana.pdf

- \$46,100 was the mean household income, 2009-2013 (Montana is \$46,230) <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>
- Employment status results: 40.4% work full time, 39% are retired and 14.4% work part time. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>
- 9.3% of population are living in poverty (Montana has 16.5%) <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>
- 75.2% of population are owner-occupied homes. (Montana has 68.3)(National has 13.8%) Reference : [Community Health Data, MT Dept of Health and Human Services, \(2010\)](#)

There were not any listed as homeless in Daniels County. Data from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>

Births

Daniels Memorial Healthcare Center no longer delivers babies, therefore, babies are born out of the county. In 2014 there were 28 births to Daniels County residents. Reference: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/>

Deaths

According to the 2014 Montana Vital Statistics, Daniels County had a total of 28 deaths with the leading cause of death was **diseases of the heart** with 27 deaths. All other categories either has fewer than 5 deaths or the number of deaths did not meet standards of reliability or precision due to low numbers. These deaths included:

- chronic liver disease or cirrhosis
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases
- Malignant neoplasms
- Cerebrovascular diseases
- Accidents (unintentional injuries)
- Intentional self-harm (suicide)
- Influenza and pneumonia, diabetes mellitus.

There were no fetal, infant, or maternal death in Daniels County in 2014.

Reference: 2014 Montana Vital Statistics.



Photo courtesy of Lois Leibrand

Health Issues and Hospital Admissions

Daniels County like any other county, has health issues. 73.8% of respondents reported that either them self or a member of their family had been hospitalized in the past 3 years and 26.2% had not. Reference: [Community Health Profile 2015, DPHHS, Public Health and Safety Division](#)

Hospital Admissions for chronic conditions:

- 6 Asthma for Daniels County which is up from other Frontier Counties in Montana with an average was 2.2
- 48 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) admissions compared to average of 55.8
- 60 Cardiovascular Disease 60 admission compared to 67.4 other Frontier Counties.
- 54 Diabetes admissions compared to 57.9 other Frontier Counties.

Inpatient Admissions for injury by type and mechanism of injury:

- 22 unintentional injury admissions compared to 36.8 for other Frontier Counties
- 13 Falls admissions compared to 18.6 in other Frontier counties
- 9 Traumatic brain injury admission compared to 6.3 in other Frontier Counties
- 5 admissions or less compared to under 5 in other Frontier counties - struck by or against motor vehicle, poisoning, and intentional self-harm

This shows the health of the Daniels County for hospital admission is actually lower in all admissions compared to other Frontier Counties, however; with Daniels Memorial Healthcare Center being limited on what can be treated locally a substantial amount of patients are flown from the emergency room to Billings or other larger hospitals, depending on the patient needs.

Health Concerns

152 respondents were asked about community health concerns.

Residents listed their primary health concern as:

1. Cancer (67.8%)
2. Alcohol/Substance Abuse (38.8%)
3. Heart Disease (35.5%)

Other health concerns included:

- depression/anxiety
- overweight/obesity
- diabetes, stroke
- tobacco use
- lack of exercise
- lack of access to healthcare
- mental health issues
- work/economic stress
- work related accidents
- Child abuse/neglect

152 respondent were asked to identify the three most important things for a healthy lifestyle.

1. Access to health care and other services (72.4%)
2. Healthy behaviors and lifestyles (34.2%)
3. Strong family life (32.2%)

Other important things for a healthy lifestyle included:

- good jobs and healthy economy
- religious or spiritual values
- good schools
- low crime/safe neighborhoods
- clean environment
- affordable housing
- community involvement
- transportation services
- childcare services
- low death and disease rates.

Reasons for NOT being able to receive services or delay in receiving health services

Respondent were asked why they did not receive health services

- 41.2% answered “it costs too much”
- 38.2% answered “don’t like the doctors”
- 23.5% answered “could not get an appointment
- 17.6% answered “not treated with respect”
- 17.6% answered “too long to wait for an appointment”
- 14.7% answered “too far to go”
- 14.7% answered “no insurance”
- 11.8% answered “too nervous or afraid”

Communicable Diseases

Daniels County regularly evaluates local disease surveillance on a weekly basis for communicable diseases in the county. This is done at the school, daycares, hospital, nursing home and emergency room. The surveillance is for gastrointestinal, respiratory and childhood disease signs and symptoms.

Daniels County continues to be low in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) compared to other Frontier Counties from 2011-2013.

- 1 case of Chlamydia compared to an average of 154 for other Frontier Counties.
- 4 cases of Hepatitis C compared to an average of 50 for other Frontier Counties.
- 3 cases of Pertussis compared to an average of 19 for other Frontier Counties.
- 3 cases of Campylobacteriosis compared to an average of 50 for other Frontier Counties.

Sanitarian

Daniels County contracts with a sanitarian from Valley County for inspections on septic tanks, food establishments among other inspections in the county.

Preventative Services

Respondents were asked if they had utilized preventative services.

- 60.5 % had receive a flu shot
- 52.0% had a yearly cholesterol checked
- 51.3% had routine yearly blood pressure check
- 48.0% had routine yearly health checkup
- 32.2% had mammography
- 30.9% had a colonoscopy every 5-10 years
- 28.3% had a pap smear every 3-5 years
- 6.6% had children’s checkup/well baby

Immunizations for infants to adults are available at Daniels Memorial Clinic for routine vaccines. Up to date immunization rates for children up to age three, as of April 2016, for Daniels County is 89%. Compared to 42.1% in 2014. Reference: Montana Immunization Program



Photo Courtesy of Randi Rath

Health of the Community

When asked about their impression of the health of the community:

- 46% rated the community as very healthy
- 45.5% rated the health of the community as health
- 46.2% rated the health of the community as somewhat healthy
- 2.7% rated the community as unhealthy.

When asked how to improve the community's access to healthcare the residents listed the following:

1. More specialists (33.6%)
2. More primary care providers (28.3%)
3. Improved quality of care (27.0%)

Other improvements to healthcare in the community were:

- Telemedicine
- Outpatient services expanded hours
- Greater health education services
- Transportation assistance
- Cultural sensitivity

Specialist the respondents had used in the past 3 years

(Respondents were asked to choose all that applied)

- Dentist (63.2%)
- Optometrist (42.0%)
- Chiropractor (33.3%)
- Physical Therapist (29.9%)

- Cardiologist (29.1%)
- Orthopedic surgeon (26.5%)
- Dermatologist (25.6%)
- Radiologist (20.5%)
- OB/GYN (20.5%)
- General Surgeon (14.5%)
- Urologist (13.7%)
- ENT (ear/nose/throat) (12.8%)
- Ophthalmologist (12.8%)
- Podiatrist (8.5%)
- Oncologist (7.7%)
- Neurosurgeon (5.1%)

Challenges to these questions were that answers is that there was no way to know the age of the respondent that was answering the survey questions.

- Interesting findings were that respondents choose to answer the survey by wanting more specialists, but when asked what specialist they had used the top answers were dentist, optometrist, chiropractor, and physical therapist. Daniels County has all of these available in Scobey.

For those who had received specialty care, most people, or 72.6% went to Billings, with 47.9% receiving care from a specialist in Scobey, and followed by Glasgow for specialty care with 37.6%. Considering that services such as orthopedic or general surgery cannot be received in Scobey, it is understanding to see that the greater percentage of people who can received care in Scobey, prefer to.

When asked what interest there is in educational classes and programs the response: was:

1. Fitness (25.7%)
2. Women's Health (25.7%)
3. Health and Wellness (22.4%)

Other interests for educational classes include:

- Weight loss
- Nutrition
- Heart disease
- Nutrition
- Men's Health
- Cancer
- Alzheimer's
- Living Will
- Support Groups
- First Aid/CPR
- Diabetes

Respondents were asked to indicate what type of medical insurance covers the majority of their medical expenses.

- 37% indicated that they have Medicare
- 32.3% indicated that they have Employer sponsored
- 11.8% indicated that they have private insurance/private plan
- 4.7% indicated they have the Marketplace
- 3.9% have no insurance or pay out of pocket
- 2.4% have VA/Military
- 1.6% indicated Agricultural Corp. paid
- 0.8% Healthy MT kids
- 0.8% Medicaid
- 0.8% State/other
- 2.4% other



Photo Courtesy of Teresa Danelson

Behavioral Health

Due to low population behavioral health statistics for Daniels County was a challenge to find. Montana statistics were used for the behavioral health section of the this assessment.

For all age groups, Montana has ranked in the **top five** for suicide rates in the nation, for the past thirty years.

- In 2014 there were 243 for an average of 20 per month
- 81% of suicides were men in 2014
- 59 were veterans or 24% of all suicides in 2014
- Ages 25-34 years (33.2%) had the highest number of suicides per age group
- Ages 35-44 years (32.9%) had the second highest number of suicides per age group
- Ages 55-64 years (29.1%) had the third highest number of suicides per age group
- Only 40% were identified as having a mental disorder, with 80% of those with a mental disorder being diagnosed depression
- 69% were not married
- 40% had severe medical conditions
- Laborers (skilled and unskilled) was the highest population

In the recent months Daniels County has seen 3 completed suicides and at least 2 attempts. According to the Daniels Memorial Clinic medical providers, and Gina Aasheim, Counselor for Eastern Montana Community Health Center:

- mental health is of a great concern in Daniels County
- bullying at the school is of concern

Focus Group Findings

During the focus group meeting on November 3, 2015 at the Nemont Friendship Room community members had a chance to voice their opinions on the community of Daniels County.

The following key findings, themes, and health needs emerged from the responses which participants gave to the line of questioning found in Focus Group meeting.

Improve health of the community

- A need for more services specific to seniors was identified.
- There was concern regarding the future of the hospital and its impact on the community's ability to access health care.

Most important local healthcare issues

- Mental health and substance abuse appeared to be major concerns for community members.
- Community members were concerned about the financial health of the hospital.

Opinion of hospital services

- Quality of care is viewed as excellent.
- Services provided are very good, especially considering the remote location of the town.
- There is an understanding that a small hospital will not be able to offer a wide variety of services.
- Community members stated concerns regarding public outreach from hospital leadership.
The condition of the facility is viewed as dated and community members feel that a remodel is in order for the hospital to stay competitive.
- Facility upgrades in equipment have been a big improvement.
- Cost of care is considered to be high.
- It is easy to see a provider if necessary.

Opinion of local providers

- Participants utilize local providers because it is convenient and the community knows the providers.

Opinion of local services

- The emergency room provides a great service to the community and staff does a very good job considering the limitations of the hospital.
- Ambulance services are very good and community members feel blessed to have it.
- Home health and personal care services would help seniors stay in the community.
- Community members know of the public health department, but are unsure as to what services the public health department provides.

Reasons to leave the community for healthcare

- Participants stay local when services are available. They leave the community when referred for specialty care or if the needed service is not available locally.

Needed healthcare services in the community

- Mental health and substance abuse services.
- Home health and personal care services.
- More assisted living options.

Challenges

Due to low population, statistics are hard to obtain as to actual numbers. Some of the those statistics are:

- Number of Suicides
- Number of suicide attempts
- Prenatal care beginning at what month of pregnancy



Photo Courtesy of Lois Leibrand

School

Daniels County has one school and it is in Scobey. The school is Class C with an enrollment of 276 students in grades K-12. This is an increase in enrollment from last year.

Civic Organizations

Daniels County has several civic organizations that support infrastructure to promote communities activates for all ages. Many new facilities and projects have been constructed with donated funds and labor for the community without involving tax dollars.

Some examples of projects and organizations that have taken the lead on major fund raisers are:

- Scobey Swimming Pool – Scobey Alumni Foundation Inc. (SAFI)
- Friday Night Lights (lights on the football field) – Scobey Alumni Foundation Inc. (SAFI)
- Little Roar Basketball Tourney – Scobey Lion’s Club
- Scobey Community Garden – DC Health Dept. (with grants) and Eagle Scout Project (Hugh Cole)
- DC Ambulance – Radio a thon – Daniels County
- Scholarships – Beacon Foundation, Lions Club, Scobey Alumni Foundation Inc, Daniels Memorial Foundation Inc.
- Richardson Theater – Beacon Foundation took over operation of theater after owner retired and possibility closing. (operated by donated time from community members,
- New Gym at the school – Funds raised by Scobey Alumni Foundation Inc. (SAFI)
- New Fire hall in Scobey (County and City)- Funds raised by community members and other civic organizations
- Wheelchairs, walkers and other medical equipment for use- American Legion Post 56
- Fjeld Skating Rink – Scobey Lions Club
- Scobey baseball field – Scobey Lions Club
- Roping Barn – Border Sports

Summary

One hundred fifty two surveys were completed in the Daniels County area for a 24% response rate. Of the surveys returned 63.2% were female and 66.8% were 56 years of age or older, and 40.4% work fulltime.

Respondents rated the overall quality of care for medical services as “excellent” to “good”, scoring 3.4 out of 4.0 on a scale of 1-4 with 4.0 being “excellent” and 1.0 being “poor”.

Nearly half of the respondents (46.2%) feel that Scobey area is a “somewhat healthy” place to live. Respondents indicated their top three concerns were: Cancer, Alcohol/Substance Abuse and Heart Disease.

A majority of respondents (72.4%) selected “Access to health care and other services” as the most important component of a healthy community.

When asked about which health related educational programs or classes they would be most interested in the top choices were: “Fitness”, “Women’s Health”, and “Health and Wellness”. This is in alignment with the portion of respondents who indicated that “Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles” was an important component of a healthy community.

Most respondents praised the care received in the county, especially considering the limitations of being a rural area. Participants were appreciative of the care available, while also indicating the importance of having a local healthcare facility. Participants also identified additional services or needs.

With 25.5% of the population being 65 years and over it is a reminder of the aging population in the community, and planning accordingly for senior needs is important.

Prioritizations of Community Needs

The stakeholders committee, comprised of staff for Daniels County Health Department, Daniels County Commissioner, staff from Daniels Memorial Healthcare Center, and other community members from Daniels County, convened to begin an implementation planning process and review and respond to all issues and opportunities identified through the Community Health Services Development (CHSD) process.

The stakeholder committee determined the most important health needs to be addressed by reviewing the Community Health Assessment, secondary data, community demographics, and input from members representing the community. The prioritized health needs are determined through the assessment process and which the community will be addressing over the next few years relates to the following issues:

- Behavioral Health
- Senior Needs in the Community
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Access to Healthcare

The stakeholder committee will determine which needs or opportunities can be addressed considering the limitations and resources available in the county. The committee will prioritize the needs/opportunities of the health department’s vision and mission, as well as existing and potential community partners.

Resources

In prioritizing the results of the Community Health Assessment, the following list of potential community partners and resources may assist in addressing the needs of identified in the survey. More resources may continue to be identified.

- Daniels County School
- Beacon Community Foundation
- Daniels County Chamber of Commerce
- Office of Rural Health
- Montana Health Care Foundation
- Daniels County Health Department
- Daniels Memorial Healthcare Center and Clinic
- Montana State University (MSU) Extension Office
- Montana Suicide Prevention Organizations
- Montana Cancer Control Program
- Action for Eastern Montana
- Montana State Library
- Daniels County Council on Aging
- State of Montana



Community Health Assessment compiled by Daniels County Health Department with the help of

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