

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS



"HOW HEALTHY WE ARE AND HOW LONG WE LIVE IS NOT JUST THE RESULT OF OUR GENES AND OUR BIOLOGY, BUT ALSO A DIRECT RESULT OF THE HEALTH CHOICES WE MAKE, THE PLACE WHERE WE LIVE, THE HEALTH CARE WE RECEIVE, AND POLICIES AND LAWS THAT AFFECT OUR OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICES."

-HEALTH DATA MATTERS

WHY IT MATTERS IN THIS ASSESSMENT

Health implications include health behaviors and health outcomes. In this section, we explore the rates and key causes of illness, injury, and death in Mesa County. We find that when compared to Colorado as a whole, Mesa County has similar or worse rates of the majority of health behaviors and outcomes. Some bright spots are found in infectious disease rates, child welfare, adult asthma rates, and youth tobacco use and exposure.



HEALTH BEHAVIORS

"Health behaviors are actions individuals take that affect their health. They include actions that lead to improved health, such as eating well and being physically active, and actions that increase one's risk of disease, such as smoking, excessive alcohol intake, and risky sexual behavior."

-County Health Rankings

BEHAVIORS IMPACT OUTCOMES

In the United States, many of the leading causes of death and disease are attributed to unhealthy behaviors. For example, poor nutrition and low levels of physical activity are associated with higher risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

Because of differences in the Social Determinants of Health explored earlier, not everyone has the same context in which to develop good health behaviors. By addressing the Social Determinants of Health to improve quality of life in our community, we believe we will positively affect these health behaviors and outcomes.

CHILD WELFARE

The Division of Child Welfare for Mesa County has committed to a fundamental shift in philosophy to serving families in a more "upstream," and preventive manner, in an effort to better serve families in their homes. This has resulted in a significant reduction of children needing to be placed in County custody. The "out of home" child population is at its lowest point in over six years.



**TRENDING
DOWN**

**ONLY 3.8% OF CHILDREN ASSESSED BY THE
DIVISION OF CHILD WELFARE IN 2020 WERE
REMOVED FROM PARENTAL CUSTODY.**

**THIS PROPORTION IS NEARLY HALF OF THE AVERAGE REMOVAL
RATE SEEN IN PREVIOUS YEARS.**

The primary removal reason for children in Mesa County continues to be meth use, accounting for 32.4% of all 2020 removals.

In 2020, of the 4,099 referrals received by Mesa County's Division of Child Welfare, 1,168 resulted in an assessment, and 531 cases were opened based on high risk assessments. Regardless of whether a case was opened, families were given referrals to relevant services at Hilltop, Mind Springs Health, Amos Counseling, and Griffith Center, as well as providers who address substance use, mental health, parenting skills, domestic violence treatment for offenders and victims, and youth mentoring.

Mesa County's Division of Child Welfare has also created a new Family Empowerment Team, which is tasked with working with families to provide needed resources and support on a voluntary basis. Family Coaches on the Family Empowerment Team have served 26 different cases since the creation of the team in February 2020. Mesa County also provided support and services to 198 clients and their families, in-home, in 2020.

SUBSTANCE USE

Overall substance and drug use among high school students in Mesa County is similar to Colorado as a whole. Mesa County sees more high school students using tobacco and e-cigarette products than Colorado. Mesa County also has high tobacco use among adults (18 years and older) with the lowest levels reported among adults in the highest income brackets. Rates of prescription pain medicine, cocaine, and meth use are similar to the state. Mesa County has a higher rate of hospitalizations and deaths due to drug overdoses than the state.



MARIJUANA USE

High School

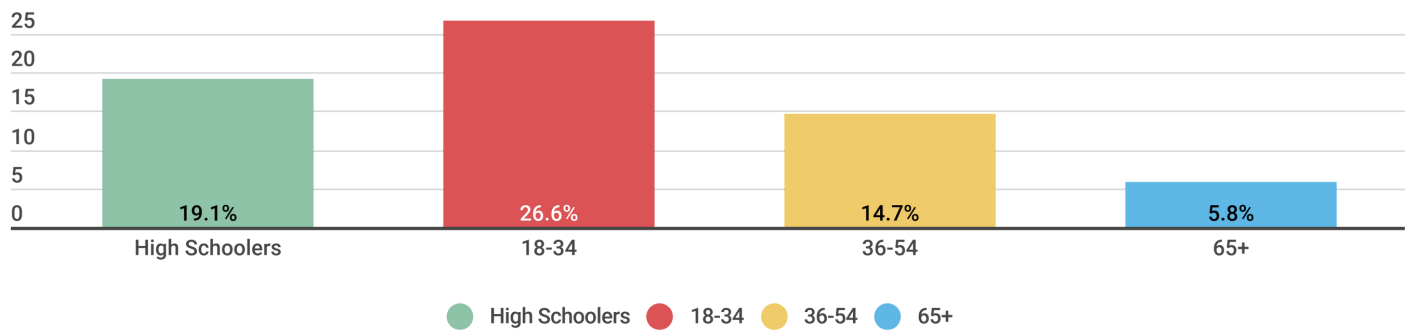
- Percent of students who used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days:
 - Mesa County: 19.1%
 - Colorado: 20.6%
- Percent of students who tried marijuana for the first time before age 13:
 - Mesa County 2019: 6.8%
 - Mesa County 2017: 9.0%
 - Colorado 2019: 6.7%
 - Colorado 2017: 6.5%

Adult (2017-2019)

Current users:

- Mesa County: 15.4%
- Current use by age:
- 18-34: 26.6%
 - 35-64: 14.7%
 - 65+: 5.8%
- Colorado: 17.8%

MARIJUANA USE BY AGE IN MESA COUNTY (2017-2019)



THE HIGHEST RATE OF MARIJUANA USE IS AMONG ADULTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-34 YEARS.



ALCOHOL USE

Alcohol consumption among high schoolers in Mesa County closely mirrors consumption statewide. Since 2015, alcohol consumption has varied somewhat on the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, with a small spike observed in 2017. However, no trend over time is clear, and the differences are not statistically significant.

High School

- Percent of students who had one or more drinks in the past 30 days:
 - Mesa County: 28.9%
 - Colorado: 29.6%
- Percent of students who binge drank in the past 30 days:
 - Mesa County: 12.7%
 - Colorado: 14.2%
- Percent of students who had their first drink (more than a few sips) before the age of 13:
 - Mesa County: 19.8%
 - Colorado: 17.6%

Adult

- Heavy Drinker (15+ drinks/week for adult men, 8+ drinks/week for adult women):
 - Mesa County: 5.5%
 - Colorado: 6.5%
- Current Binge Drinker (5+ drinks on an occasion for men, 4+ for women):
 - Mesa County: 18.8%
 - Colorado: 18.2%

TOBACCO USE

Mesa County high school students use both cigarettes and electronic vapor products at a higher rate than students statewide. Cigarette smoking has declined across the state, and there may be a downward trend in Mesa County, but changes are not statistically significant. Use of electronic vapor products seems to be increasing, but again, the trends are not statistically significant at this point.

High School

- Percent of students who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days:
 - Mesa County:
 - 2019: 7.8%*
 - 2017: 8.0%
 - 2015: 9.1%
 - Colorado:
 - 2019: 5.7%
 - 2017: 7.2%
 - 2015: 8.6%
- Percent of students who used an electronic vapor product in the past 30 days:
 - Mesa County:
 - 2019: 31.5%*
 - 2017: 30.7%
 - 2015: 29.7%
 - Colorado:
 - 2019: 25.9%
 - 2017: 27.0%
 - 2015: 26.1%
- Percent of students who smoked a cigarette, even one or two puffs, for the first time before age 13:
 - Mesa County: 9.6%*
 - Colorado: 7.6%
- Percent of students who were inside a car with a parent who was smoking a cigarette, cigar, pipe, or vaping product one or more times in the past week:
 - Mesa County 2019: 15.5%
 - Mesa County 2015: 22.0%**
 - Colorado 2019: 11.8%
 - Colorado 2015: 14.1%



CURRENT TOBACCO USERS

MESA COUNTY ADULTS

2016-2018: 18.2%*

2015-2017: 19.5%

2014-2016: 19.6%

COLORADO ADULTS

2016-2018: 14.5%

2017-2019

Income greater than
250% of poverty:

11.6%

current
smokers

Income below
250% of poverty:

25.9%

current
smokers

*indicates statistical difference from the state

**indicates statistical difference over time

● ● ● AREA OF ACTION



- Consider how to direct tobacco prevention and cessation information to communities that need it most. Investigate at what age low-income smokers begin smoking so prevention efforts can reach them most effectively.
- Review vaping education programs to assess effectiveness. Continue tracking vaping data to determine trends. Determine if there are any disparities within youth tobacco and e-cigarette use. Ensure that tobacco education programs start at the middle school level.

DRUG USE

High School (2019)

Mesa County high school students use prescription pain medications, cocaine, and methamphetamines at similar rates to the state.

Percent of students who have used a drug one or more times during their life:

- Prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription
 - Mesa County: 14.5%
 - Colorado: 15.2%
- Cocaine
 - Mesa County: 5.8%
 - Colorado: 5.2%
- Methamphetamines
 - Mesa County: 2.2%
 - Colorado: 2.3%

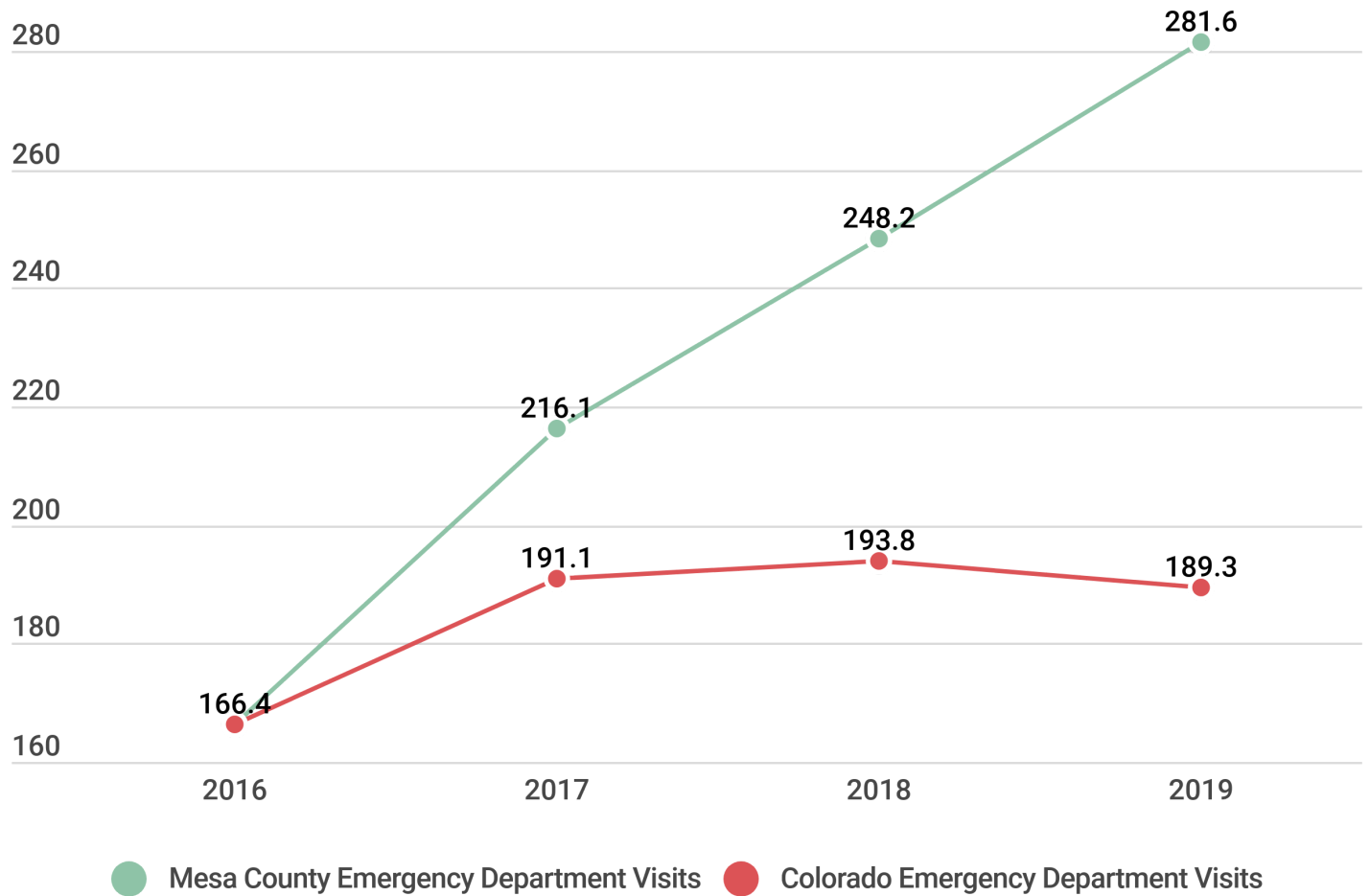
AGE-ADJUSTED RATE OF OVERDOSE PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2016-2019)



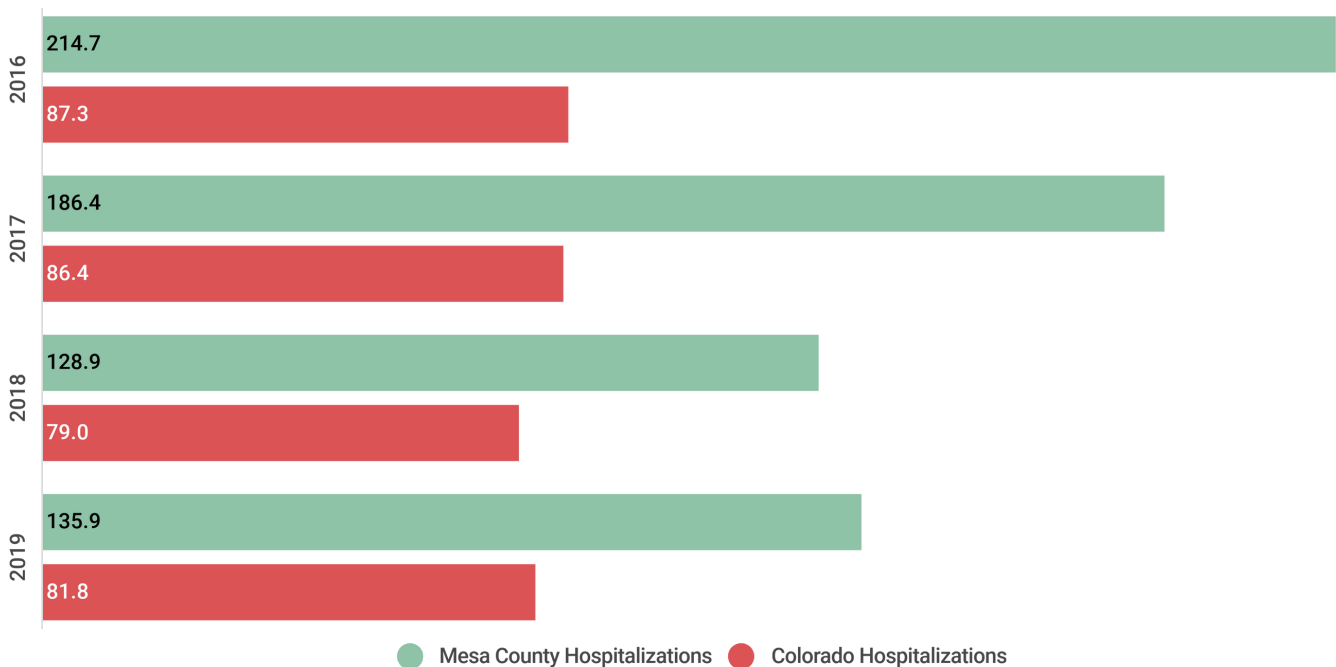
	Any Drug	Any Opioid	Amphetamines
Mesa County - Overdose ED visits and hospitalizations	394.6*	63.0	19.9*
Colorado - Overdose ED visits and hospitalizations	269.0	54.0	12.0
Mesa County - Overdose Deaths	20.1*	13.5*	6.1
Colorado - Overdose Deaths	17.0	9.5	5.0

*indicates statistical difference from the state

RATE OF EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS DUE TO OVERDOSE IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2016-2019)



RATE OF HOSPITALIZATIONS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS DUE TO OVERDOSE IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2016-2019)



Targeted education programs promoting overdose intervention practices like Naloxone/Narcan may be effectively reducing the number of serious overdoses and deaths. Small sample sizes make it difficult to confirm this trend, but initial findings are promising.

●●● AREA OF ACTION

Investigate what other factors may be contributing to the trend of decreased need for hospitalization for overdose. Consider the effectiveness of overdose intervention in the emergency department and support successful practices there.

INTERSECTING ISSUES



Substance use plays a large role in suicide in Mesa County. Between 2014 and 2018, 47.2% of suicide toxicology screens indicated the presence of alcohol, 20.9% indicated benzodiazepines, 18.4% indicated marijuana, and 17.8% indicated opiates.

For more information about the intersection between substance use and mental health, see page 104.



MORE MESA COUNTY OVERDOSE EMERGENCIES CAN BE TREATED WITHOUT ADMISSION.



OVERDOSE HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS ARE GOING DOWN.



EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TREATMENT OF OVERDOSE IS GOING UP.



HEALTHY EATING, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND OBESITY

HEALTHY EATING

Fruit and vegetable consumption among high school students is minimal. Among adults, vegetable consumption is better. Mesa County adults have a higher rate of sugary beverage consumption than the state.

High School (2019)

- **31.3%** of Mesa County students and **33.6%** of Colorado students eat fruit at least once a day.
- **22.3%** of Mesa County students ate vegetables other than carrots, potatoes or green salad at least once a day, and **13.0%** ate green salad at least once a day.

Adult (2015-2019)

Vegetable Consumption at least once per day:

- Mesa County: 84.4%
- Colorado: 81.7%

Consumption of one or more sugary beverage per day:

- Mesa County: 52.2%*
- Colorado: 43.2%

*indicates statistical difference from the state

OBESITY RATES

Obesity rates among Mesa County residents have remained relatively stable over time, both for teens and adults. Approximately one in four adults and one in ten high school students in Mesa County are obese.

26.5% of adults (2016-2018) and 11.7% of high schoolers (2019) are obese. Over time there appears to be an upward trend in the adult obesity rate, but it's not significant.

In addition, 32.5% of adults (2016-2018) and 12.5% of high schoolers (2019) are overweight. Combined, this means 59.0% of adults and 24.2% of high schoolers are above a healthy weight.



● ● ● AREA OF ACTION

- Review community-level obesity intervention efforts for efficacy.
- Improve strategies to increase access to and appeal of fruits and vegetables to increase consumption among youth and teens.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Only half of Mesa County high school students report regular physical activity. When looking at adults, three out of every five meet physical activity thresholds.

High School (2019)

- Percentage of students active for at least 60 minutes on five or more of the previous 7 days:
 - Mesa County: 49.2%
 - Colorado: 48.0%

Adult (2017-2019)

- Met aerobic recommendations of physical activity index:
 - Mesa County: 61.6%
 - Colorado: 59.6%
- Leisure-time physical activity:
 - College-educated:
 - Mesa County: 85.7%*
 - Colorado: 86.8%
 - Non-college educated:
 - Mesa County: 75.1%*
 - Colorado: 71.5%

*indicates statistical difference from the state



AREA OF ACTION

- Identify opportunities to increase access and appeal of leisure-time physical activity, particularly in neighborhoods and areas with less educational attainment.

IMMUNIZATIONS

SCHOOL IMMUNIZATIONS

Elementary school records of immunization (DTaP, Hep B, MMR, Polio, Varicella) in Mesa County vary by district. District 51 has elementary immunization rates between 94.1% and 95.5% depending on type. Plateau Valley School District has elementary immunization rates between 91.3% and 92.1%. De Beque School District varies from 82.8% for Varicella to 94.5% for DTaP, with the others falling in between. Overall, Colorado has elementary immunization rates between 94.6% and 95.8%.

Adolescent immunization rates for the Tdap vaccine drop by approximately 2% in Plateau Valley, District 51, and Colorado overall, and by approximately 30% in De Beque.

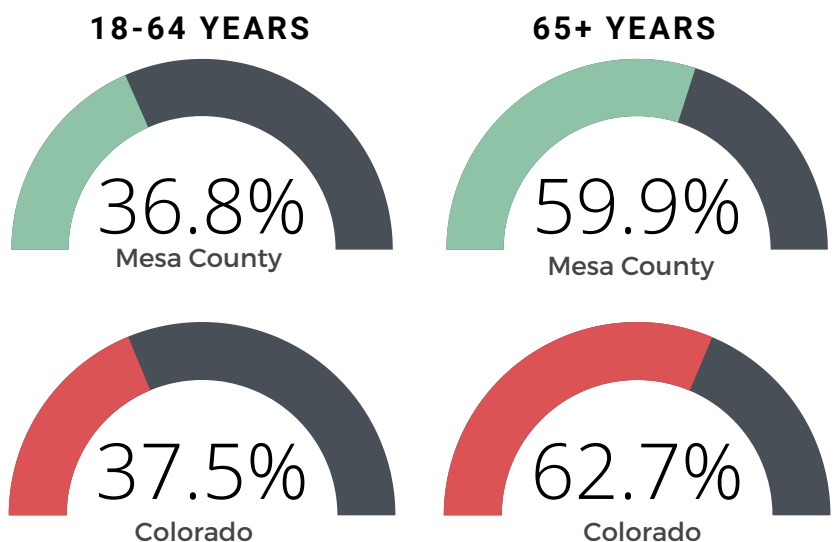
In Plateau Valley and District 51, most non-immunized students in all age groups have requested an exemption. 3.5-5.1% of total students receive a personal exemption, 0.25-0.4% of students receive a religious exemption, and 0.06-0.08% of students receive a medical exemption.

In De Beque, where rates of non-immunization range from 5.5% to 17.2% for elementary school vaccines and 34.7% for adolescent vaccines, a significant majority of non-immunized students are simply out of compliance for not providing complete records.

ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS

Only one-third of adults 18-64 years report receiving a seasonal flu vaccine. Among adults 65 years and older, that number increases to nearly 60%.

PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO RECEIVED A FLU VACCINE IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2017-2019)



**DISTRICT 51
ELEMENTARY
IMMUNIZATION
RATES ARE BETWEEN
94.1% AND 95.5%**



● ● ● AREA OF ACTION

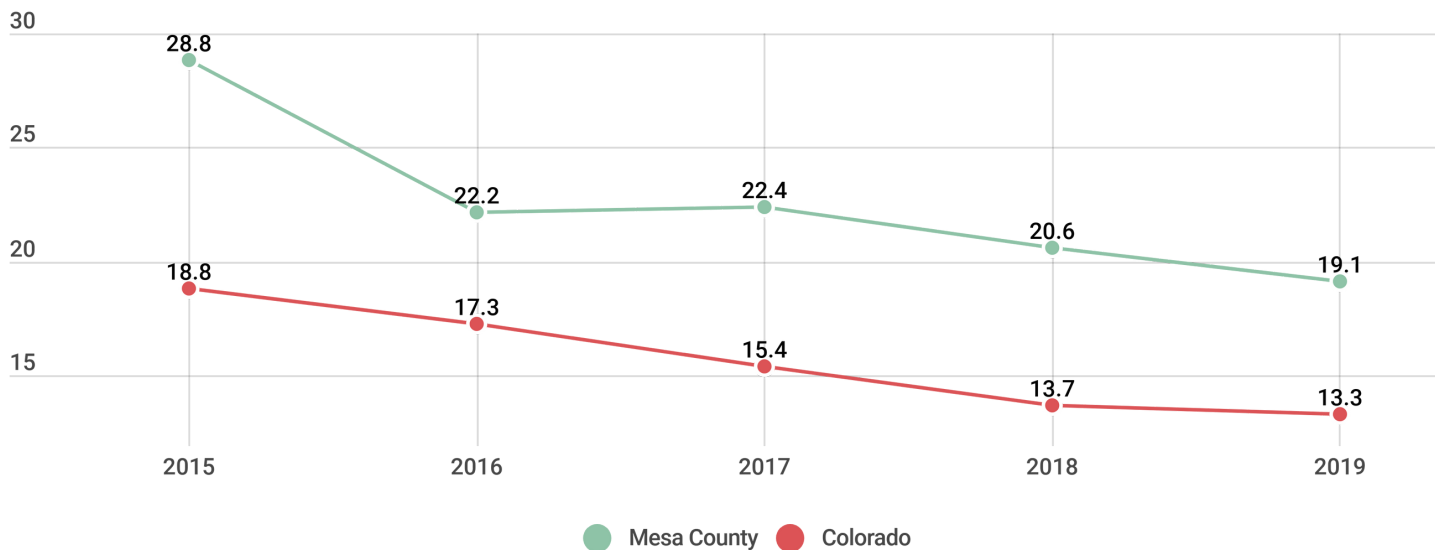
- Increase immunization rates for Varicella (chickenpox), the elementary vaccine with the lowest rate.
- Increase Tdap immunization rates for adolescents.
- Support De Beque School District in collecting immunization records, especially from adolescents.

SEXUAL HEALTH BEHAVIORS

Mesa County high school students engage in sexual intercourse at rates comparable to their peers statewide. A small number of these students first had sexual intercourse before the age of 13, which appears to be more common in Mesa County than in Colorado in general. These behaviors don't seem to have changed significantly over the period of 2017-2019, but longer trends are often difficult to measure because of small sample sizes and changes in the way questions are asked.

Male students were approximately 50% more likely than female students to have used drugs or alcohol before the last time they had sex. The majority of students used some form of birth control, a practice which may be reflected in the falling teen birth rate in Mesa County.

RATE OF BIRTHS TO MOTHERS (15-19 YEARS) PER 1,000 FEMALES IN THAT AGE GROUP IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2015-2019)



THE TEEN BIRTH RATE IN MESA COUNTY DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM 2015-2019

Although the rate remains higher than Colorado, it has been on a downward trend since 2008.

HIGH SCHOOL

Percent of students who have ever had sexual intercourse:

- Mesa County:
 - 2019: 37.5%
 - 2017: 37.1%
- Colorado:
 - 2019: 34.6%
 - 2017: 32.7%

Percent of students who had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13:

- Mesa County:
 - 2019: 3.9%
 - 2017: 3.6%*
- Colorado:
 - 2019: 3.0%
 - 2017: 2.7%

*indicates statistical difference from the state
**males significantly higher than females

Among students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months, the percentage who drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse:

- Mesa County:
 - 2019: 18.7%**
 - 2017: 20.1%**
 - 2015: 20.7%
- Colorado:
 - 2019: 21.5%
 - 2017: 19.3%
 - 2015: 20.6%

Among students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months, the percentage who used any method of birth control to prevent pregnancy before last sexual intercourse:

- Mesa County:
 - 2019: 82.4%
- Colorado:
 - 2019: 79.2%

● ● ● AREA OF ACTION

- Investigate the role of geography in teen birth rate, and identify services or educational resources that may be lacking in areas with high rates.





HEALTH OUTCOMES

The impact of health behaviors and the Social Determinants of Health can be seen in health outcomes such as rates of disease and causes of death.

In general, Mesa County has higher rates when compared to Colorado.

CHRONIC DISEASE

Mesa County has higher rates of chronic disease than Colorado, including eight types of cancer, heart disease, and arthritis. Mesa County has lower rates of prostate cancer and current asthma in adults.

AGE-ADJUSTED RATE OF CANCER PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2016-2018)

	Mesa County	Colorado
Cancer Incidence All Sites	411.6	392.1
• Breast	64.3	67.9
• Male Prostate	34.9	43.6*
• Lung and Bronchus	49.7*	39.1
• Colon and Rectum	32.4	31.7
• Urinary Bladder	16	17.7
• Melanoma of the Skin	22.2	21.8
• Oral Cavity and Pharynx	13.4	10.6
• Cervix Uteri	5.5	3.1

AREA OF ACTION

- Investigate the higher rates of chronic disease seen in Mesa County, particularly lung and bronchus cancer, arthritis, and periodontal disease.

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WITH A CHRONIC DISEASE DIAGNOSIS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2016-2018)

	Mesa County	Colorado
Heart Disease	3.5%	2.9%
Diabetes	9.1%	6.8%
Arthritis	27.3%*	22.8%
Stroke	2.3%	2.2%
Lost 6 or more teeth due to decay or periodontal disease (2016, 2018)	18.6%*	10.0%
Asthma, current, adults	8.3%	17.8%*
Asthma, ever, adults	13.4%	14.0%
Asthma, ever, high school students (2019)	20.7%	20.2%

*indicates statistical difference from the state

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Mesa County has lower total rates of infectious disease than Colorado, but a higher rate of hospitalization due to flu.

INCIDENCE RATE OF DIAGNOSED REPORTABLE DISEASES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2017-2019)

	Mesa County	Colorado
Total	337.4	375.2*
Influenza - Hospitalized	114.2*	72.7
Hepatitis C, Chronic	86.7	95.0
Campylobacteriosis	23.8	22.0
Carbapenem-Resistant Pseudomonas Aeruginosa (CRPA)	17.0	17.0
Animal Bites	14.6	51.3*
Pertussis	14.4	10.3
Salmonellosis	13.3	13.8
Strep Pneumo Invasive	9.2	10.7
STEC (Shiga Toxin Producing E.coli)	7.4	7.0
Hepatitis B, Chronic	6.1	9.3

*indicates statistical difference from the state

● ● ● AREA OF ACTION

- Examine whether the high rates of influenza hospitalization are an artifact of a vulnerable, aging population or an indication that approaches to flu prevention and treatment need to be adapted in Mesa County.

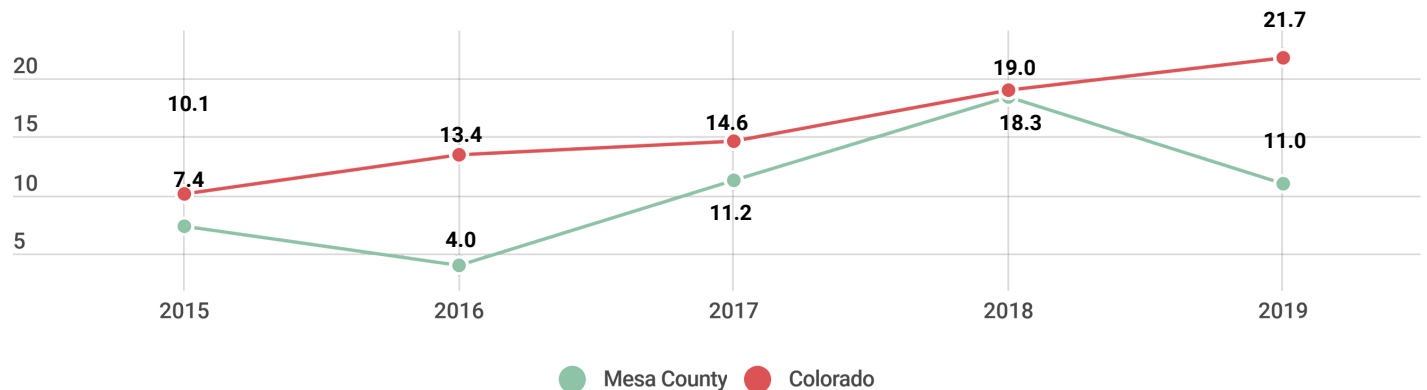
SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI)

Between 2015 and 2019, STI rates increased steadily at the state level, with the largest rate of increase in gonorrhea and syphilis, both of which doubled. Gonorrhea and syphilis both increased in Mesa County, but yearly variation makes it difficult to clearly state the magnitude of the change.

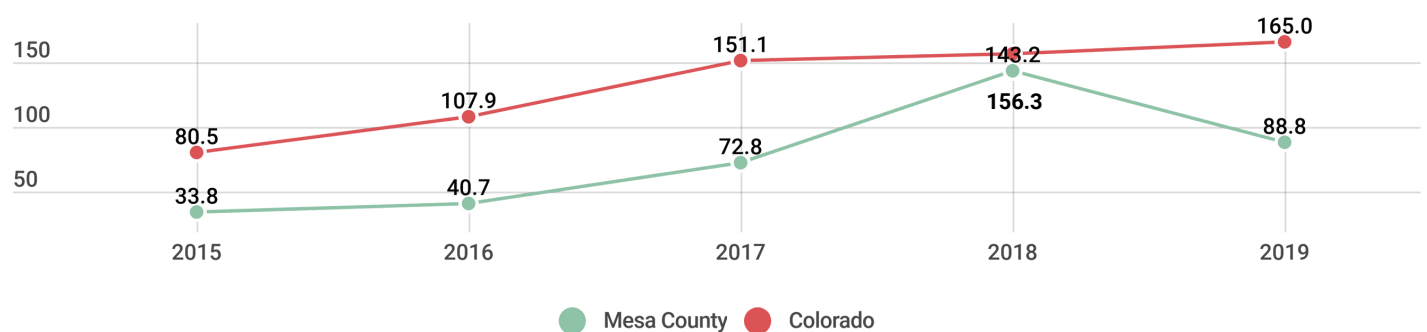
COUNT AND RATE OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2019)

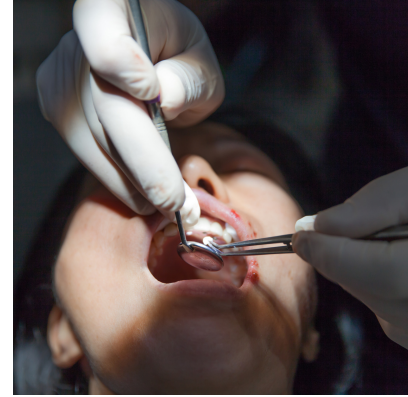
	Mesa County	Colorado
	Count (Rate)	Count (Rate)
Chlamydia	736 (477.3)	29,121 (505.7)
Gonorrhea	137 (88.8)	9,503 (165.0)
Syphilis	17 (11.0)	1,249 (21.7)
HIV	6 (3.9)	446 (7.7)

INCIDENCE RATE OF SYPHILIS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2015-2019)



INCIDENCE RATE OF GONORRHEA PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2015-2019)





MORTALITY

Overall causes of death and years of potential life lost are two tools that give us different windows into mortality in Mesa County. The cause of death table reports the most frequent causes of death across the whole community, regardless of the age at which a person died. Years of Potential Life Lost looks at deaths in the population under age 65, and measures the gap between the deceased person's age and 65, which highlights causes of death that occur most often among young people.

While several of these causes of death appear to be primarily unforeseen medical issues, others appear more preventable. Mesa County Public Health and our partners aim to address the Social Determinants of Health associated with these causes of death, by examining the underlying economic, educational, social, environmental, and health care conditions.

YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST (YPLL)

Mesa County has higher rates of years of potential life lost (YPLL) than Colorado in 6 of the top 10 causes of YPLL for Mesa County. Three are causes of death specific to younger people: drug overdose, homicide and legal intervention, and perinatal period conditions (conditions present at birth).

Notably, the top three causes of YPLL are not caused by disease, but instead by intentional self-harm or accident.

**THE TOP 3
CAUSES OF
YEARS OF
POTENTIAL LIFE
LOST (YPLL) ARE
NOT DISEASE
RELATED.**

● ● ● AREA OF ACTION

- Identify interventions for accidental and intentional causes of death to reduce local rates to state and comparison community rates. Consider safety practices, resilience, and coping skills.
- Establish and strengthen multi-disciplinary teams within Mesa County to address the causes of years of potential life lost (YPLL).

RATE OF TOP 10 LEADING CAUSES OF YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST BEFORE AGE 65 PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY AND COLORADO (2019)

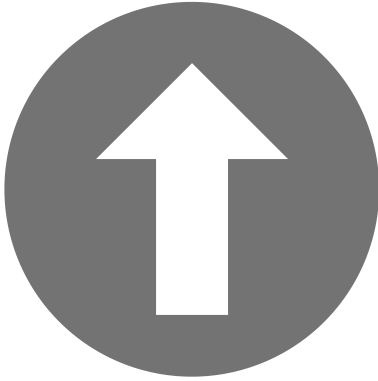
	Mesa County YPLL before age 65	Colorado YPLL before age 65
All Causes	4263.7	3764.9
Suicide	758.5*	566.8
Other Accidents (e.g. Falls, accidental poisonings)	710.8*	621.2
Drug Overdose (All Manners)	465.9	462.6
Heart Disease	421.4*	295
Malignant Neoplasms (Cancer)	418.7	432.6
Transportation Accidents	369.6*	299.7
Homicide and Legal Intervention	210.5*	167.8
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	196.6	178.3
Perinatal Period Conditions (conditions present at birth)	174.3	198.4
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	87.7*	55.6

*indicates statistical difference from the state

Blue highlight indicates top ten causes of years of potential life lost not present in top ten causes of death

Drug overdose, homicide and legal intervention, and perinatal period conditions are all top ten causes of years of life lost that are not top ten overall causes of death. These deaths disproportionately impact younger populations in Mesa County.

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH



Mesa County's overall age-adjusted death rate is 16-27% higher than the state and comparison communities.

Mesa County has higher age-adjusted death rates for 8 of the top 10 leading causes of death. When compared to the community with the lowest rates, Mesa County has nearly double (or more) the rate of death by chronic lower respiratory disease, non-transport accidents, Alzheimer's, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis.

Data on current incidences of disease in Mesa County and Colorado (see page 169) suggest that Mesa County has higher rates of many of these diseases, including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. This seems to account for the higher rates of death from cancer and diabetes—if we could lower the incidence in the community, the rate of death would align with or drop below the state's rate of death for those diseases.

However, the higher mortality rates for heart disease cannot be fully explained by the higher incidence rates, since Mesa County has 20% more cases of heart disease, but 30% more deaths caused by heart disease. This suggests that people suffering from heart disease in Mesa County are somewhat more likely to die of the disease than people in Colorado.

● ● ● AREA OF ACTION

- Investigate why heart disease appears to be more fatal in Mesa County than in Colorado.



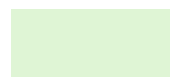
AGE-ADJUSTED RATE OF THE TOP 10 LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH IN MESA COUNTY, COLORADO, AND COMPARISON COMMUNITIES (2017-2019)

Cause of Death	Mesa County	Colorado	Bend, OR*	Bozeman, MT*	St. George, UT*
All Causes	744.1	643.8	617.8	578.7	585.3
Heart Diseases	167.2	125	123.8	140.1	111.2
Malignant Neoplasms (Cancer)	136.2	126.3	130.5	115.3	105.7
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	52.8	42.6	29.9	28.1	27.1
Cerebrovascular Diseases	37.6	34.8	33.3	30	31.9
Non-transport Accidents (e.g. falls, accidental poisoning)	44.2	39.5	36.2	22.6	33.6
Alzheimer's	33.9	31.5	39.0	15.2	35.5
Intentional Self Harm (Suicide)	31.9	21.2	21.7	22	24.1
Diabetes Mellitus	18.4	16.4	16.4	10.9	20.5
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	17.1	14.0	12.8	NA	6.2
Transportation Accidents	15.4	12.0	14.1	12.4	10.9

*County-wide estimates were used for comparison communities.



Red highlight indicates highest rate



Green highlight indicates lowest rate



ALZHEIMER'S AND DIABETES MELLITUS ARE TOP 10 CAUSES OF DEATH FOR THE OVERALL POPULATION THAT ARE NOT TOP 10 YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST, SUGGESTING THEY MORE HEAVILY IMPACT OLDER AGE GROUPS.

Another cause of death of interest is injury by firearms. Since these deaths are included in intentional self harm and non-transportation accidents, they aren't listed in the table to avoid double-counting those deaths. However, it is worth noting that Mesa County has more deaths by firearms than deaths from diabetes, and the rate of deaths by firearms is 50% higher in Mesa County than in Colorado, Bend, OR, and St. George, UT.

RATE OF DEATH BY FIREARMS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY, COLORADO, AND COMPARISON COMMUNITIES (2017-2019)



*County-wide estimates were used for comparison communities.

SUICIDE

Suicide is a critical public health issue in Mesa County as we consistently see rates higher than both Colorado and the United States. The suicide rate for all ages as well as the rate for teens (15-19) is more than double the national rate.

Mesa County, 2019:

- Age-adjusted rate: 31.4/100,000
 - 15-19 years: 28.0/100,000
- White males accounted for 89.4% of the suicide deaths (46.3% of the population)

Colorado, 2019:

- Age-adjusted rate: 22.3/100,000
 - 15-19 years: 21.0/100,000
- White males accounted for 69.9% of suicide deaths (42.2% of population)

US, 2019:

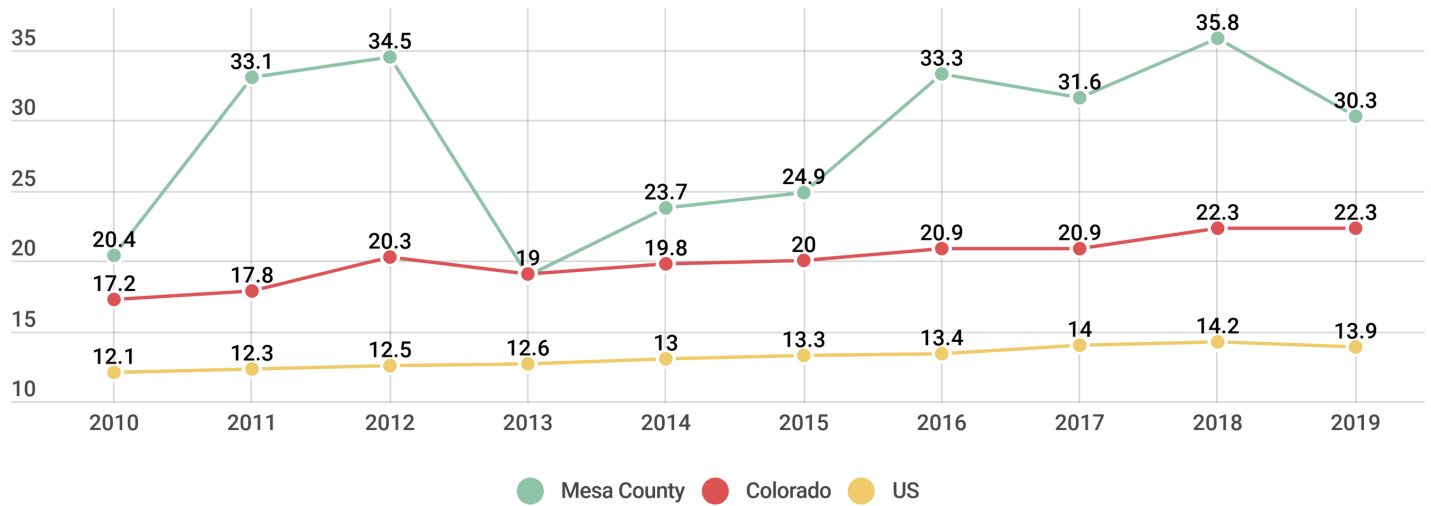
- Age adjusted rate: 13.9/100,000
 - 15-19 years: 10.5/100,000
- 1,380,000 estimated suicide attempts
- White males accounted for 69.4% of suicide deaths (35.6% of the population)

YOUTH SUICIDE RATES IN MESA COUNTY ARE HIGHER THAN THE STATE AND NATIONAL AVERAGE.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT ISOLATED IN MESA COUNTY.

FROM 2015-2019 MESA COUNTY RANKED 8TH OUT OF 64 COLORADO COUNTIES.

INCIDENCE RATE OF SUICIDE PER 100,000 RESIDENTS IN MESA COUNTY, COLORADO, AND THE US (2010-2019)

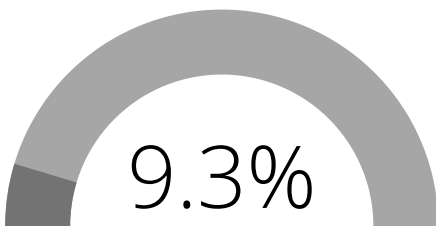


3 IN 5
SUICIDE DEATHS AMONG THOSE OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE WERE VETERANS.

Between July 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, there were 471 hospitalizations or emergency department visits for suicide attempts and ideation at St. Mary’s Hospital. More than 100 (112) of these attempts involved drugs or alcohol. More than half (56.3%) were female, and 99 were under the age of 18.

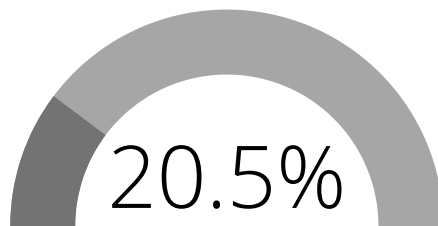
Among Mesa County deaths due to suicide, as the age of the person increases, the likelihood of them being a veteran increases as well.

35-44 YEARS



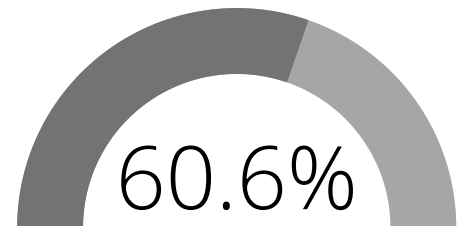
Percent with Veteran Status

45-64 YEARS



Percent with Veteran Status

65+ YEARS



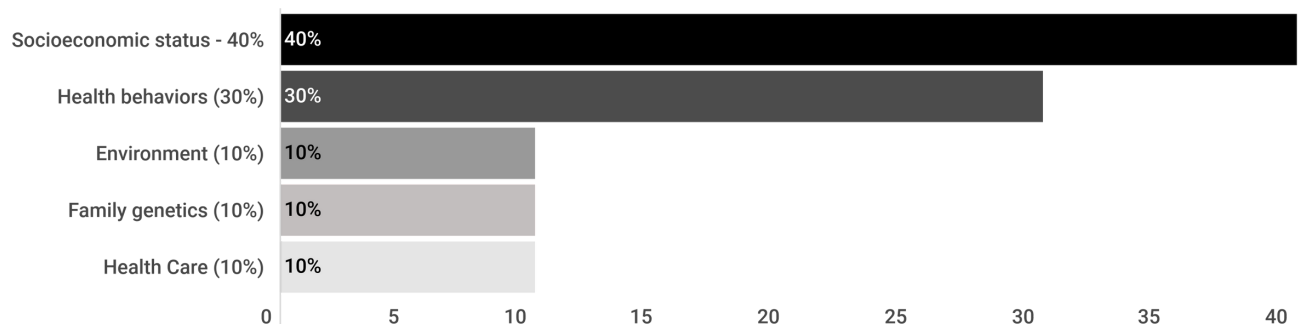
Percent with Veteran Status



● ● ● AREA OF ACTION

- Support Veteran’s groups in suicide-reduction efforts, especially among the 65 and older population.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR A HEALTHY LIFE?



CONCLUSION

Our community approach is rooted in the idea that by addressing the Social Determinants of Health, we can positively impact and influence health behaviors and outcomes. This section highlights an important area (child welfare) that has seen improvement through addressing the Social Determinants of Health, but also shows multiple areas that are in need of similar solutions.

Mesa County's high rates of chronic disease and flu hospitalizations, low seasonal flu vaccine coverage, and leading causes of death point to interventions addressing substance use, lack of healthy eating and physical activity, lack of health care access, and poor mental health. In addition, community members are losing healthy years of their lives to preventable causes such as suicide and overdose.

Mesa County can significantly improve the health of our community by addressing upstream factors such as increasing access to preventive health care and mental health services, improving the environment and context for community members to choose a healthy lifestyle, strengthening economic resilience through an economy that supports the local workforce, and building social connectedness across neighborhoods.

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