

# FOCUS GROUPS & SURVEY REPORT COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE ASSESSMENT

Freeman Regional Health Services (FRHS)  
October 28, 2022

## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present the information obtained from a focus group of stakeholders in Freeman Regional Health Services and from a community health survey open to the public. The document is divided into three sections:

- ✓ Organization and Setting
- ✓ Specific Responses in the Focus Groups and Community Health Survey
- ✓ Takeaways

This report provides an accurate representation of the focus group process and outcomes. The process followed a typical focus group format.

- Participants were invited to attend a session that best fit their schedule.
- Participants were limited to a number that would allow for a manageable discussion (less than 12 persons). A total of 11 persons were involved in the process between two sessions.
- Participants were asked a limited number of questions.
- Participants were encouraged to respond based upon their own experiences.
- The focus groups were conducted on July 20, 2022 in the Freeman Regional Health Services Conference Room.

## Organization & Setting

### Focus Group I

Date/Time: 07/20/2022; 11:00am

Location: FRHS Conference Room

Number of Participants: 6

Facilitators: Eric Ambroson

Refreshments: Lunch

### Focus Group II

Date/Time: 07/20/2022; 12:15pm

Location: FRHS Conference Room

Number of Participants: 5

Facilitators: Eric Ambroson

Refreshments: Lunch

### Community Health Survey

Date/Time: 11/15/19

Method: Online survey. Alchemer website

Number of Respondents: 71

## Demographic Data

### Focus Group I

Date/Time: 07/20/2022; 11:00am

11:00am Session			12:15 Session		
Participant	Sex	Age	Participant	Sex	Age
1	M	GG	1	M	ML
2	F	BB	2	M	ML
3	F	BB	3	M	ML
4	M	BB	4	F	ML
5	F	GX	5	F	ML
6	F	BB			

GX – Generation X  
ML – Millennials  
BB – Baby Boomers  
GG – Greatest Generation

Male: 45% Female: 55%

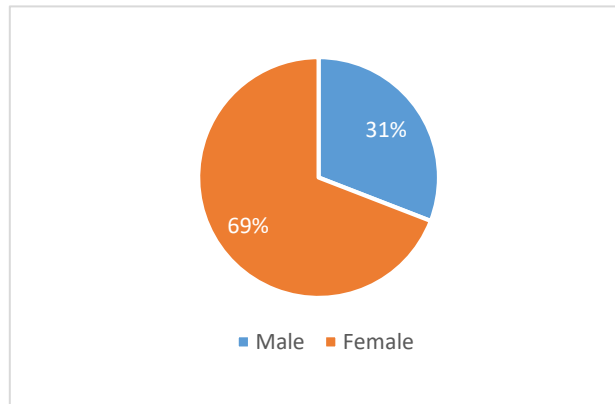
Generation X: 1 (09%) Baby Boom: 4 (36%) Greatest Generation: 1 (09%) Millennials: 5 (46%)

## Survey Respondents

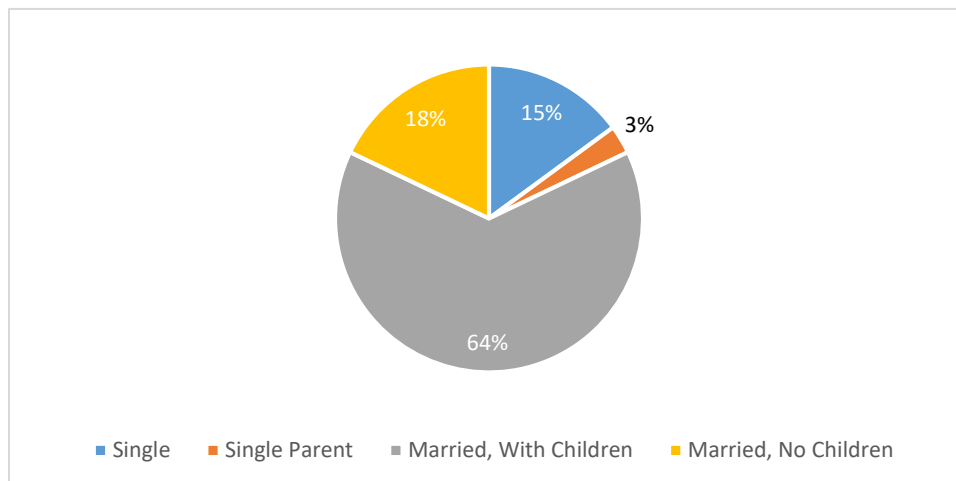
Date/Time: 10/28/2022

Number of Respondents: 128

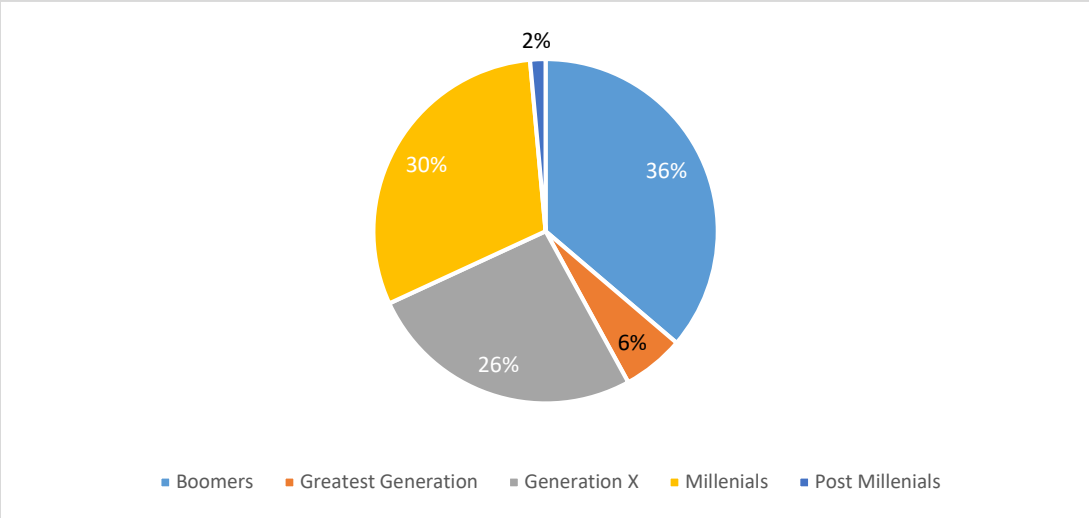
### Gender of Respondents



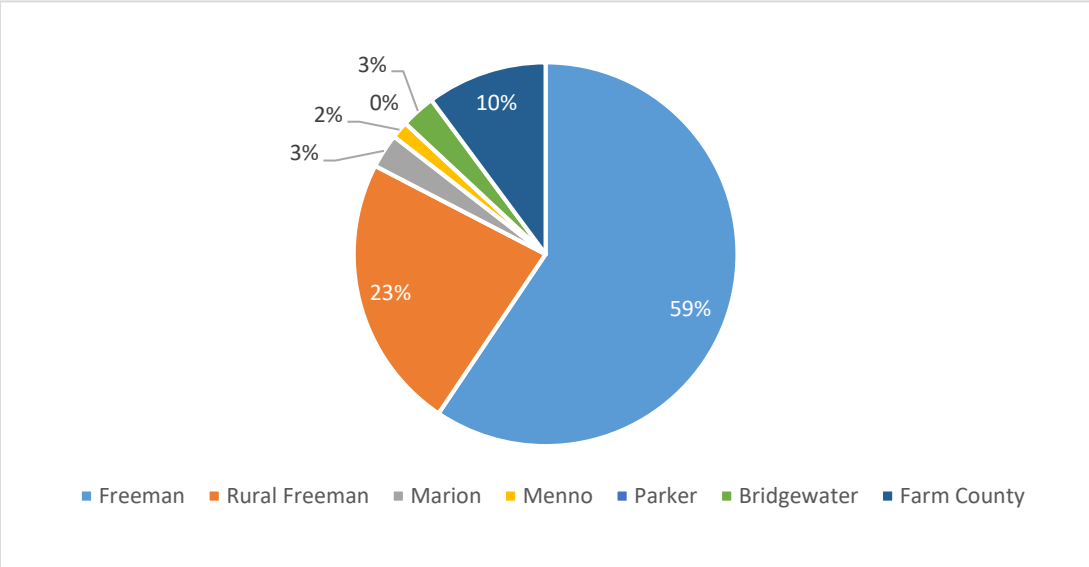
### Household Living Arrangement



**Age Group/Generation of Respondents**



**Place of Residence**



## Focus Groups Summary

### Freeman Regional Health Services

### Community Health Needs Assessment

### Focus Group Results: 11:00am Group; July 20, 2022

1. What is your vision of a healthy community? What is healthy about Freeman? What is unhealthy?

Healthy	Unhealthy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have all that we need (doctors, dentists, etc.)</li><li>• Variety for a small town</li><li>• All services available in town (vision, etc.)</li><li>• Visiting doctors from out of town</li><li>• Farmer's market</li><li>• Organic farmers</li><li>• Available screening clinics (diabetes, etc.)</li><li>• More outreach is encouraged</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alcohol/substance abuse</li><li>• Low access to hotline/resources, public services</li><li>• Drug legalization</li><li>• Opioid abuse/distribution</li><li>• Having to go outside of town is a challenge</li><li>• Cultural identity has been watered down</li><li>• Lack of nutritional education</li><li>• Traditional diets (gravies, sauces, dough, meats)</li></ul>

2. What is your perception of the Hospital? How is FRHS serving the community well? How could it serve the community better?

Does Well	Could Be Better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ER is great!</li><li>• FRHS responded to COVID well (planning, distancing, etc.)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Good experience with doctors</li><li>▪ They ask about mental health</li><li>▪ Doctor takes time w/patients</li><li>▪ Follow up call/personal touch</li></ul></li><li>• FRHS has a drawing area that brings people in from out of town</li><li>• Good physical therapy</li><li>• Impression of hospital/clinic has improved</li><li>• Team approach is good</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Labwork/Avera/Sanford communication could be better</li><li>• Delivery services are no longer available in Freeman</li><li>• More education on how to get help</li></ul>

3. What is the most pressing health care related need in the community? In what ways can FRHS address these needs?

- Specialists (more variety such as dermatologists, podiatry)
- Transportation/transit
- Support groups (grief, diabetes, etc.)
- Support for school kids (school counselor)
- Hotlines to talk to someone
- Mental health issues/can hospital supply more information?
- Wellspring
- Gender identity in school. Kids don't talk about it.
- FRHS role in community – facilitate discussion?
- Parenting class > fix broken households?
  - Families
  - Standards for children, schools are "baby-sitters"

**Focus Group Results: 12:15am Group; July 20, 2022**

1. What is your vision of a healthy community? What is healthy about Freeman? What is unhealthy?

Healthy	Unhealthy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative/willingness to work together</li> <li>• Help all groups thrive</li> <li>• Older generation is an untapped resource</li> <li>• Progressive/keep moving forward</li> <li>• Many seniors in town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more young people</li> <li>• Generational connections. How to get young people to use resources in town (pharmacy, grocery)</li> <li>• Crisis in education</li> </ul>

2. What is your perception of the Hospital? How is FRHS serving the community well? How could it serve the community better?

Does Well	Could Be Better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good relationships with doctors</li> <li>• Orthopedic institute was here/great experience</li> <li>• Good experience</li> <li>• When son broke arm, ER at FRHS was great</li> <li>• FRHS contributes to Freeman’s quality of life</li> <li>• Personal touch/they know you and they’re thorough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctor at Sanford (big city)</li> <li>• Branding is important</li> <li>• Dynamite experience at Avera</li> <li>• Can’t deliver babies here</li> <li>• How to fit into community [new people]. Welcome Wagon?</li> <li>• Partner with Freeman Development Corporation?</li> <li>• Attracting and retaining good people/jobs</li> <li>• Marketing to outsiders</li> <li>• More sponsorships in town (events, programs)?</li> <li>• Partner with high school/job shadowing</li> </ul>

3. What is the most pressing health care related need in the community? In what ways can FRHS address these needs?

- Community education about services
- Delivery of babies
- Visiting specialists; start in Freeman
- FHRS “calendar” (screenings)
- How to push information (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
  - Be all things to all people (challenge to overcome)
  - Banners on 6<sup>th</sup> Street for doctors?
- Mental health > outreach
- More transparency on long term planning
- Full service health care

**Freeman Regional Health Services**

**Community Health Needs Assessment**

**Participants’ Written Comments; July 20, 2022**

- Exercise equipment available for free to public and/or exercise programs

## Survey Summary

The following includes the facilitator's review of the Community Health Survey conducted on between July and October, 2022. Overall there were 128 people who participated in the survey. A link to the online survey was distributed to people via email and social media in the Freeman area. The Demographic section of this report illustrated "who" responded to the survey. Over two thirds of the respondents were female (69%). Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those who took the survey said they were married with children (or had children who are grown and living on their own). The majority of the respondents were split between the Baby Boom generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, (36%) and Millennials, who were born between 1981 and 1996 (30%). The vast majority of the people (82%) lived in or right outside of Freeman.

The structure of the survey was divided into four general sections:

- Health Services
- Health Education and Information Services
- Additional Community Support, and
- Quality of Life.

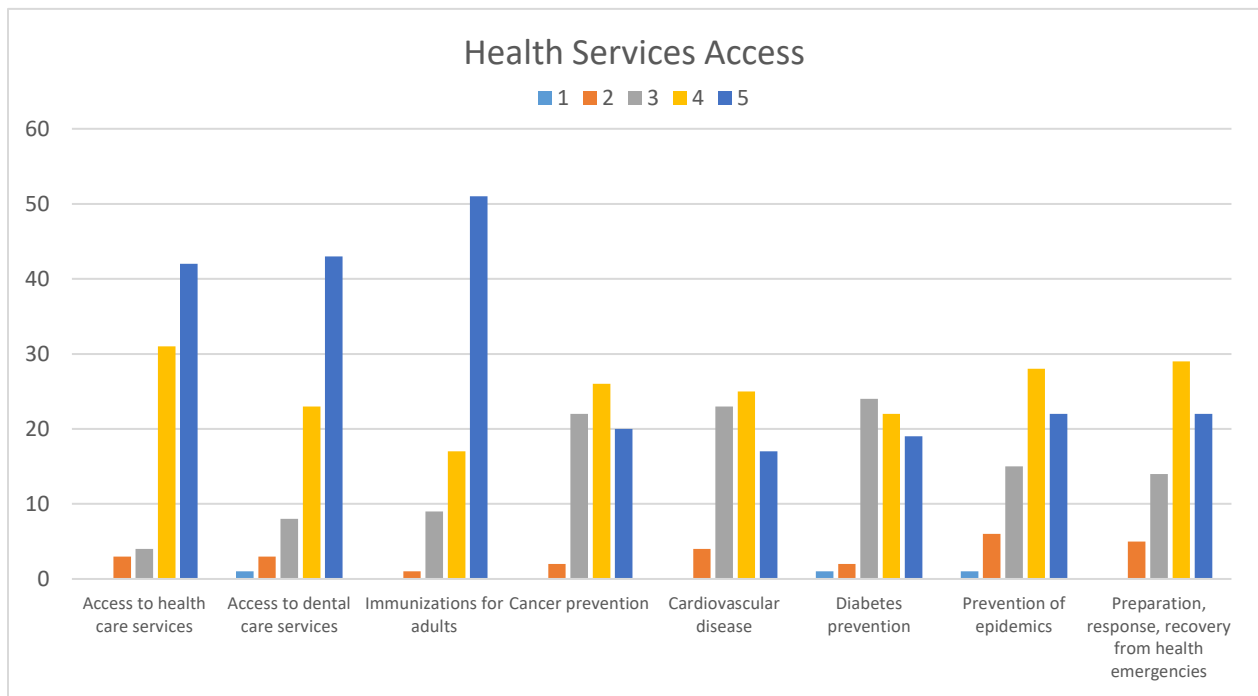
Each section had several categories or issues to which the respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction. A score of "5" was the highest satisfaction rating; while a "1" was the lowest rating. The final question asked respondents what they believed to be the most important issue in the community.

In the **Health Services Section**, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with a number of issues related to the type or amount of health care services provided in Freeman. The complete list includes the following:

1. Access to health care services
2. Access to dental care services
3. Weight management services/nutrition counseling
4. Immunizations for adults
5. Cancer prevention, screening, treatment
6. Cardiovascular disease prevention, screening, treatment
7. Diabetes prevention, screening, treatment
8. STD and HIV/AIDS screening and treatment
9. Smoking cessation
10. Mental health services and counseling
11. Alcohol/drug abuse prevention and treatment
12. Domestic abuse shelter and services
13. Violence/injury prevention programs
14. Prenatal, delivery, postpartum care and support
15. Family planning
16. Child preventive and immunization services
17. Breastfeeding support
18. Protection against environmental hazards
19. Prevention of epidemics and spread of disease
20. Preparation, response, recovery from public health emergencies

On average, 63 responses were registered with each item; with a maximum of 80 responses to “Access to health care services” and a low response rate of 48 to “Smoking cessation.” Those that took the survey may have been unfamiliar or uncomfortable with some of the issues; thus a lower response rate.

The clearest “Satisfaction” ratings were given to “Immunizations for Adults, “Access to Health Care Services,” and Access to Dental Services.” The chart below illustrates issues receiving the most responses among the participants and their rating scores. “Prenatal, delivery, postpartum care and support” had the lowest average rating of 2.76 in the category.

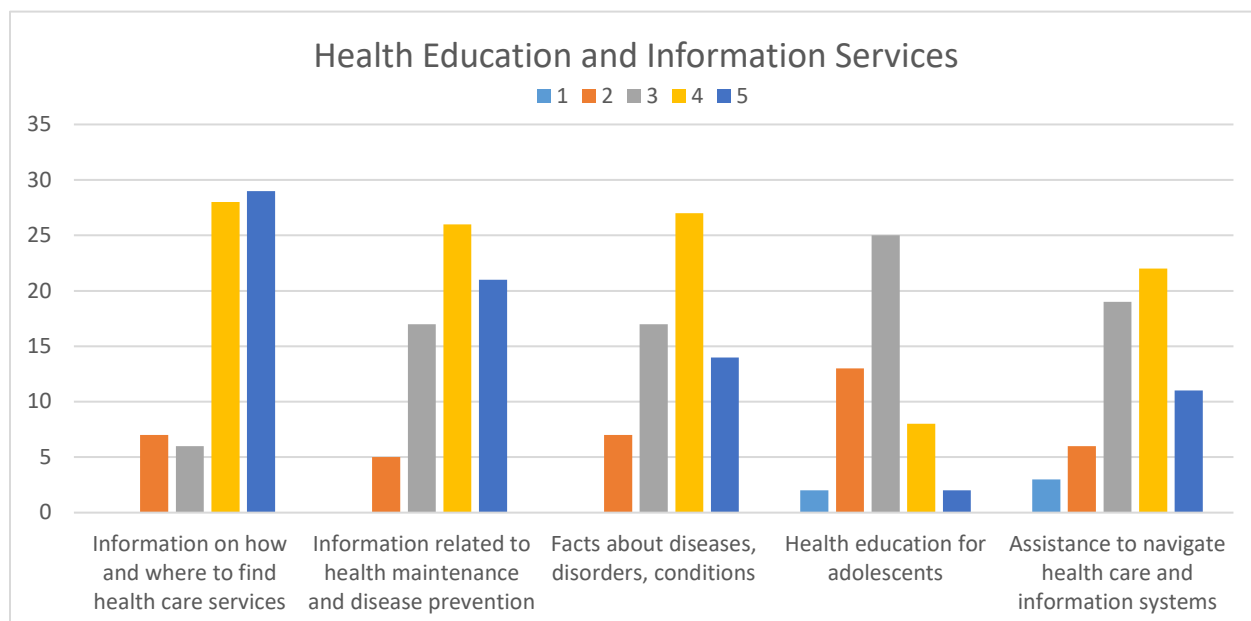


Most items in the Health Services Section received an average satisfaction rating of 3.61, which would be considered “generally satisfied.” Besides prenatal services, the lowest rated issues were “Domestic abuse shelter and services” (2.82), and “Weight management/nutritional services” (2.95), and “Breastfeeding support” (3.00). The score still registers as a “neutral” to slightly “satisfied” concern, but survey participants may be unaware of available services or have an aversion to some issues.

In the **Health Education and Information Resources Section**, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the level of information or educational resources available in Freeman. The complete list includes the following:

21. Information on how and where to find health care services
22. Information related to health maintenance and disease prevention
23. Facts about diseases, disorders, conditions
24. Health education for adolescents, including issues concerning sexuality
25. Assistance to navigate health care and information systems

This section elicited a few more responses on average among the participants, averaging about 63 responses. Eighty one percent of those surveyed were at least satisfied to completely satisfied with “Information on How and Where to Find Health Care Services.” They were, in general, satisfied with “Information related to health maintenance and disease prevention” and “Facts about Diseases, Disorders, and Conditions,” with about 63% of the respondents rating each at least a “4.” Participants were a little bit neutral with “Health Education for Adolescents, Including Issues Concerning Sexuality.” Again, the neutrality of this issues may be due to the lack of knowledge or the sensitivity of the subject. Responses in the Health Education and Information Resources Section averaged 3.69, which is a healthy “satisfied” rating.



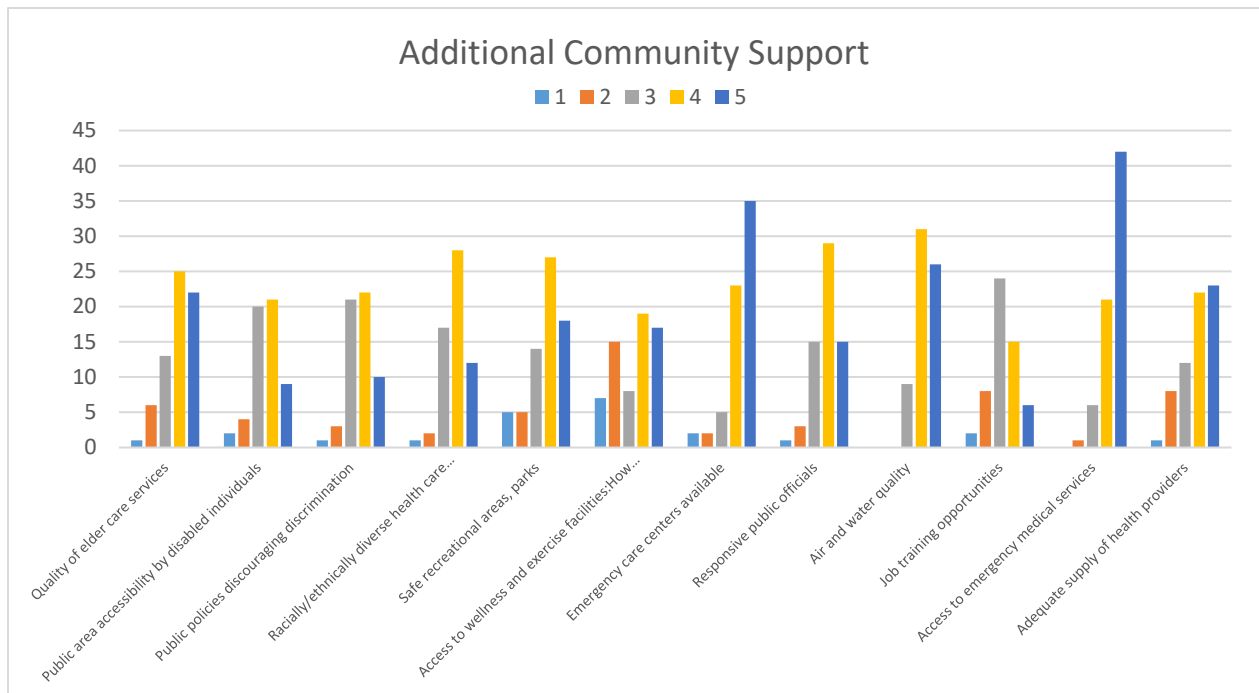
The **Additional Community Support Section** asked participants to rate sixteen services or facilities in the community that are considered vital support systems to community health. The list included the following:

26. Quality of child care services
27. Quality of elder care services
28. Public area accessibility by disabled individuals
29. Public policies discouraging discrimination of age, sex, gender, religion, race/ethnicity or sexual orientation
30. Racially/ethnically diverse health care workforce and services
31. Cultural competency training for local health care workforce
32. Safe recreational areas, parks, walking/bike paths
33. Access to wellness and exercise facilities
34. Local higher education options with open-admissions policies
35. Emergency care centers available 7 days a week/24 hours a day
36. Responsive public officials and justice system
37. Air and water quality within safe limits
38. Job training opportunities
39. Access to public transportation
40. Access to emergency medical services
41. Adequate supply of health providers



Respondents provided, on average, 62 ratings per item in the Additional Community Support Section. On average, 95 responses were registered with each item; with a maximum of 70 responses to “Access to emergency medical services” and a low response rate of 53 to “Quality of child care services.” The point of the question may have been somewhat obscure leading several to leave it blank.

The most “Completely Satisfied” ratings were given to “Access to emergency medical services,” and “Emergency care centers available 7 days a week/24 hours a day.” The chart below illustrates issues receiving the most ratings from the respondents. Other notable services included “Air and water quality,” (average rating of 4.26) and “quality of elder care services” (average rating of 3.91).



Most items in the Additional Community Support Section received an average satisfaction rating of 3.73, which would be considered “generally satisfied.” The lowest rated issues were “Quality of child care services,” (2.85) “Local higher education options,” (3.15) and “Access to wellness and exercise facilities” (3.36). The scores still register as a “neutral” to slightly “satisfied” concern, but survey participants may be unaware of available services or are sensitive to some issues.

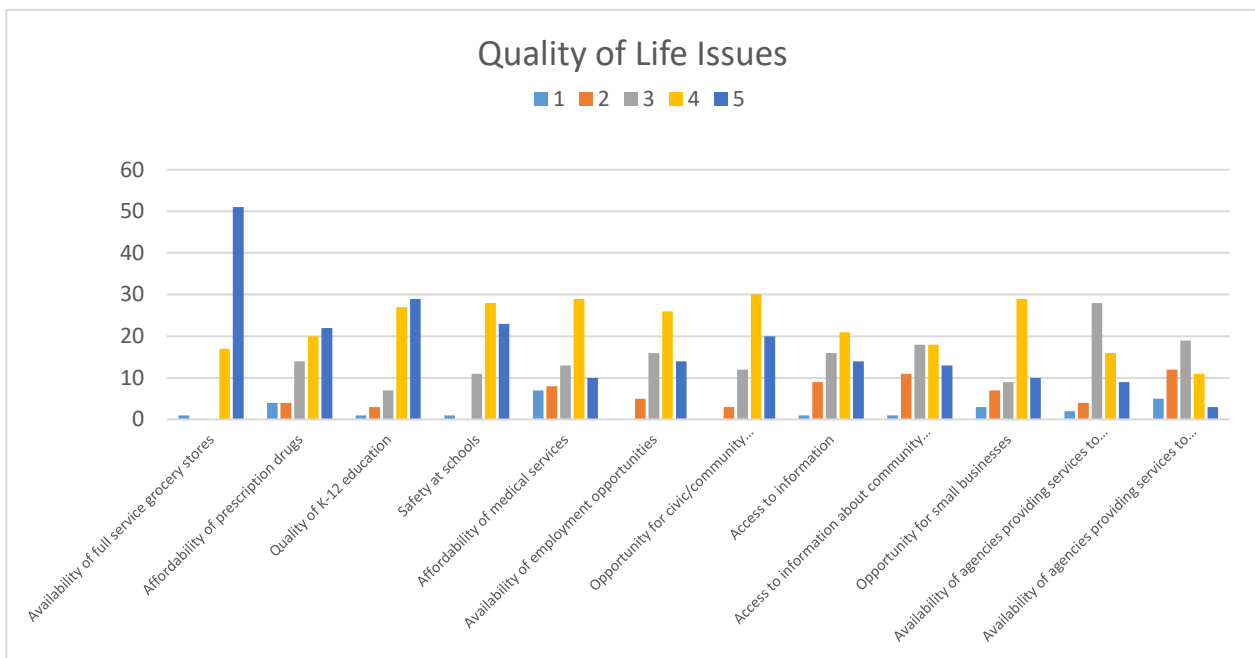
The **Quality of Life Section** of the survey asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with various issues and services that contribute to a vibrant community. The issues presented to the participants included:

- 42. Availability of full service grocery stores
- 43. Availability of affordable daycare centers
- 44. Affordability of prescription drugs
- 45. Quality of K-12 education
- 46. Safety at schools

47. Affordability of medical services
48. Response time of police to emergency calls
49. Availability of employment opportunities
50. Opportunity for civic/community involvement
51. Availability of supervised after school activities
52. Access to affordable housing
53. Access to information about city, county & state provided resources
54. Access to information about community provided resources
55. Opportunity for small businesses in the community
56. Availability of agencies providing services to adults
57. Availability of agencies providing services to youth

On average, 60 responses were registered with each item; with a maximum of 69 responses to “Availability of full service grocery stores” and a low response rate of 50 to “Availability agencies providing services to youth.” Considering the average generational group that the respondents belonged to, they may not be aware of the availability of youth services in town any more.

The clearest “Completely Satisfied” rating was given to “Availability of full service grocery stores” (4.70). “Availability of affordable daycare centers,” “Availability of after school activities,” “Access to affordable housing,” and “Availability of agencies providing services to youth” received a noticeably lower level of “Completely Satisfied” ratings. The chart below illustrates issues receiving the most ratings from the respondents. Despite of lower ratings in items regarding children and youth, “Quality of K-12 education” had a distinguished average rating of 4.19





## Focus Group Takeaways

The following includes the facilitator's review of the focus group; the themes, unique comments, and overall impressions.

### **What is Healthy?**

The group believes that Freeman is privileged to have a health care resource such as Freeman Regional Health Services. The community is diverse in its economy; offering jobs in manufacturing, retail, and services. The groups acknowledged the regional impact of Freeman; attracting people from several places to access services and shop in town. The growth of organic farmers in the area and a farmer's market in Freeman was seen as a healthy component of the community. There is a willingness to collaborate, or work together to get things done in Freeman.

The availability of the services at the hospital is also a healthy aspect of Freeman. The group believed that there is a good corps of physicians at Freeman Regional Health Services. Visiting doctors from out of town is also a good option.

### **What is Unhealthy?**

A common concern that was noted was the abuse of alcohol and other substances. Opioid distribution and abuse have found its way to Freeman. The apprehension over legalization of recreational marijuana was also a concern.

There is a concern with the lack of youth in Freeman. The groups agreed that the community needs to attract young adults to town. There is also a disconnect in generations in Freeman. How young people learn about and use the resources in town?

### **How FRHS Serves the Community Well**

The group is impressed with the hospital in general; and it contributes to Freeman's quality of life. They agree that FRHS does a good job at partnering with other entities such as Avera. The medical staff is excellent, providing a personal touch and follow up with patients. The emergency room staff and response were considered excellent.

### **Ways FRHS Can Improve the Way it Serves the Community**

While it is not FRHS' problem per se, there needs to be better communication between Avera and Sanford. The lack of pre and postnatal services was noted more than once. Some would appreciate the return of these services. The group believed that FRHS has the opportunity to expand partnerships with entities such as the Freeman Development Corporation and the Freeman School District.

The afternoon group believed that branding would help FRHS stand out in Freeman and the region. Branding could be done in the form of education, sponsoring events, and partnerships.

### **Most Pressing Need**

The groups focused on more specialized services as the primary needs in Freeman. Services such as mental health and counseling were important to the groups. Specialists such as OB/GYN, dermatologists, and podiatrists could help expand the spectrum of health care services in town. While there were not many capital items (new buildings, equipment, etc.) mentioned in the groups, there were a couple of references to a wellness center or exercise equipment.

The other pressing need is education, or outreach. FRHS could be the leader in providing communication platforms for health care information. Communication could be accomplished by providing a “hotline” to call, hosting community classes such as parenting and nutrition, and posting information on Facebook and Twitter.

### **Conclusion**

The major themes that emerged from the focus groups meetings and the community health survey is “Access to Health Care Services” and “Community Education” in Freeman. Access to health care services and community education can be more visible by a branding campaign by FRHS and developing a marketing or outreach strategy. By exposing the community to the FRHS brand in more places or events, people will become more familiar with the services and programs that Freeman Regional Health Services has to offer.

# COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

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The Community Health Needs Assessment was presented to the Freeman Regional Health Services Board of Trustees for their review and discussion. Upon their review and after hearing the recommendations of Administration, the following five priority areas were established:

## CONTINUE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

*Freeman Regional Health Services remains committed to promoting health and wellness and will continue efforts on meeting the needs of the community. To this end, FRHS will work towards the following:*

- Continue to promote community-based education programs which focus on health-related topics of interest, and which target specific common interest groups and the community as a whole. i.e. mental health, domestic violence, parenting, breastfeeding and nutrition.
- Continue to work with the Healthy Hometown powered by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield collaborative on an effort to make Freeman a cohesive, high-energy community with an infrastructure that connects residents to other people, places, and healthy foods so that residents can live active, healthy lifestyles.
- Continue to promote prenatal, postpartum care and support and well-childcare through primary care providers.

## CONTINUE TO FOSTER AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND VOLUNTEERISM.

*FRHS recognizes the importance of community outreach and the value our organization and its employees bring to the community. To promote community outreach and volunteerism, FRHS commits to the following:*

- Continue to undertake community outreach initiatives aimed at benefiting our communities. We will continue to evaluate unmet community needs and will organize efforts, when possible, to address those needs.
- As a means to encourage community volunteerism, FRHS will continue to support and advocate to its employees the value and importance of being involved in their communities. FRHS will encourage volunteerism by its employees and will continually explore opportunities that serve as a benefit to the community.

## POSITION FRHS TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SURROUNDING POPULATION.

*FRHS recognizes the changing dynamics of the diverse population within our service area. We remain committed to providing services aimed directly at meeting the changing needs of the communities we serve. Our efforts will include:*

- Continue to implement and evaluate patient and resident satisfaction surveys.
- Continue to update and remodel the facility to meet the needs and preferences of incoming patients and residents.
- Continue with facility planning for a new healthcare campus plan to meet the health & wellness of all generations in our communities.

#### PROVIDE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY BASED QUALITY CARE.

*The mission of FRHS is to provide high quality & compassionate care for all ages in order to positively impact the lives, health & wellness of our patients, residents, employees, & communities. FRHS will:*

- Continue to recruit and employ quality providers and healthcare professionals who are competent and compassionate to meet the health care needs of those within our service area.
- Provide primary care services that are appropriate for our rural setting.

#### ADDRESS ISSUES RELATING TO WORK FORCE SHORTAGES AND ACCESS TO QUALITY DAYCARE AND AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS.

*FRHS recognizes the increasing difficulty in finding the resources required to staff the various departments of the hospital, clinic, nursing home, and assisted living. To meet these needs FRHS will:*

- Continue to work with local schools and churches to promote an interest in healthcare careers.
- Promote FRHS to the public as an excellent place to work and to receive services.
- Conduct community related health activities that attract people to the community.
- Collaborate with the local community to promote quality daycare and afterschool programs.
- Collaborate with the local community to promote affordable housing for the required workforce.

*Through the engagement of staff and our community, FRHS will explore and pursue opportunities aimed at meeting the needs of our communities. Staff and public input will be critical to ensuring our efforts are successfully planned, initiated and produce the intended outcomes.*