

Mt. Baker

Community Health Snapshot

December 2018

Where you live affects your health.

The 2011 and 2018 Community Health Assessments found that while Whatcom County residents are healthy on average, not everyone experiences the same level of good health or access to healthy opportunities. Income, education, and place are some of the well-known factors that contribute to differences in health.

This report describes what we learned in taking a closer look at the relationship between place and health in the Mt. Baker area specifically. It summarizes the public health data available for this geographic community, using school district boundaries, as well as feedback from community members about concerns and strengths they feel are important to their community's health.

The information in this report is a companion to the 2018 Community Health Assessment. While not comprehensive, it gives further information about some of the difference in how health is experienced throughout the county.

Both the countywide 2018 Community Health Assessment and the seven Community Health Snapshots, one for each school district area, contribute to a Community Health Improvement process. This process includes developing a Community Health Improvement Plan that ultimately takes action to change the underlying factors that affect the community's health, make health choices easier, improve access to care, and provide everyone with an equal chance at a healthy life.

Why School Districts?

Schools can help create a sense of community for many people. We used school districts as community boundaries in these assessments because people often identify their community in connection to schools and school districts. School districts also have clear geographic boundaries, and some school district-level community health data is readily available.



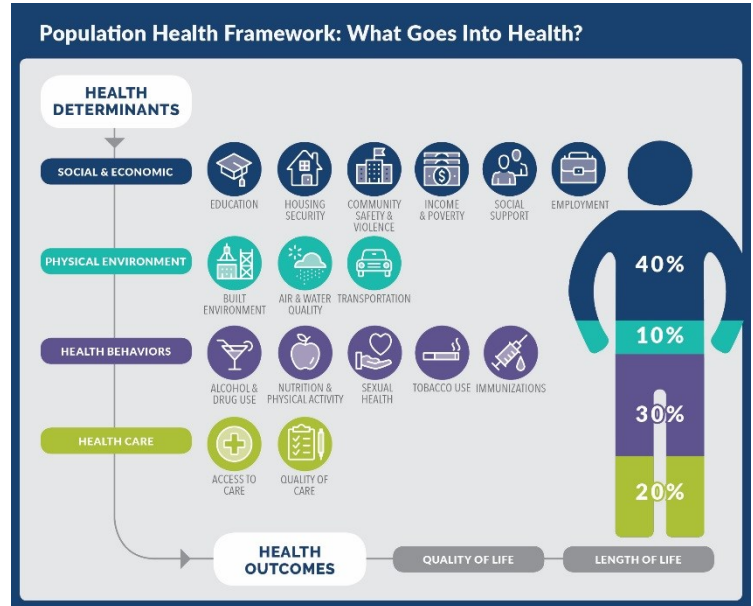
Whatcom County
HEALTH
Department



Population Health Framework: What Goes Into Health?

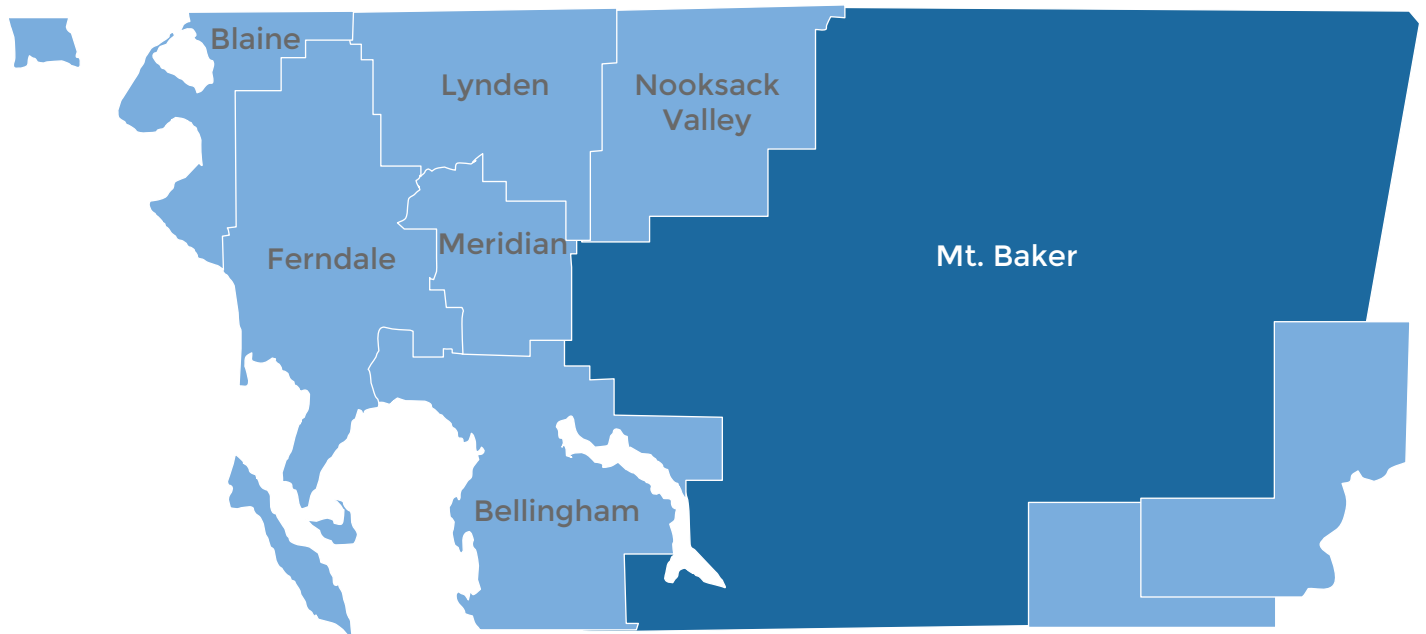
We've used the population health framework shown to the right in our assessment of community health. It demonstrates how health outcomes – the length and health-related quality of one's life – are the result of complex interactions between many factors, or **health determinants**. Health determinants fall into one of four categories: social and economic factors, physical environment, health behaviors, and health care.

The Population Health Framework is adapted from the County Health Rankings population health model. More information can be obtained at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/what-and-why-we-rank>



Mt. Baker Area Overview

This Mt. Baker Community Health Snapshot includes data and information for a vast geographic area in East Whatcom County including Acme, Deming, Glacier, Kendall, Maple Falls, Peaceful Valley, Nugent's Corner, Van Zandt, and the Nooksack Reservation.



Measuring and Understanding Population Health

The data and information in this report expands on the 2018 Whatcom County Community Health Assessment by providing greater depth of data on how health is experienced in the Mt. Baker area compared with Whatcom County.

How to Read the Data Tables

Type of Indicators	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Mt. Baker data is <u>not statistically</u> different than Whatcom County	2016	↔	28.48
Data is not available for Mt. Baker	2016	-	80.85
Mt. Baker data is statistically better than Whatcom County	2016	59.63	77.39
Mt. Baker data is statistically worse than Whatcom County	2012-2016	19.50%	16.0%
Mt. Baker data is statistically different than Whatcom County	2012-2016	9.49	11.01
Unable to determine if statistically different than Whatcom County* (Margin of error or confidence intervals not available)	2016	59.54%*	47.82%

Mt. Baker Area Demographics

Population information assists communities in identifying and meeting current and future health needs, including culturally appropriate and geographically accessible health care and public health services.

Population, 2012-2016	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Total Population	15,089	209,729
Acme CDP	162	
Deming	246	
Glacier	80	
Kendall	133	
Maple Falls	55	
Peaceful Valley	3,503	
Age Distribution, 2012-2016	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Median Age	42.7	36.8
Under 5 years	5.2%	5.5%
5 to 14 years	11.5%	11.1%
15 to 24 years	11.5%	18.2%
25 to 44 years	23.1%	24.5%
45 to 64 years	33.3%	25.5%
65+	12.7%	15.5%
Gender, 2012-2016	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Female	49.0%	50.5%
Male	51.0%	49.5%

Race and Ethnicity	Mt. Baker, 2012-2016	Mt. Baker School District Students, 2015-2016	Whatcom County
African American/Black	0.3%	0.6%	0.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3.3%	5.7%	2.7%
Asian	1.6%	1.0%	4.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
White/Caucasian	84.8%	75.3%	80.1%
Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Ethnicity (any race)	7.2%	11.1%	8.8%
Two or more races	2.4%	6.1%	3.0%

Households, 2012-2016	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Number of Households	5,657	81,019
Households with Children (Under 18)	30.2%	27.3%
Speak a Language Other than English	9.4%	12.4%
Veterans Population	11.2%	8.2%
Population with a disability	15.6%	13.6%

Health Outcomes

Health outcomes result from the interactions between a variety of factors that affect health. Positive health outcomes include not just the absence of disease and premature death, but also include a sense of functioning well mentally, physically, and socially. Understanding the magnitude of premature death, the leading causes of death, and the causes of preventable death is important for prioritizing interventions aimed to prevent and reduce the burden of disease. Quality of life is affected by disease or disability that prevents someone from attaining their full well-being.

Length of Life	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Life expectancy at birth (years)	2016	-	80.85
Unintentional injury death rate per 100,000	2012-2016	↔	28.48
Coronary heart disease death rate per 100,000	2012-2016	↔	77.39
Lung cancer death rate per 100,000	2012-2016	↔	37.05
Stroke death rate per 100,000	2012-2016	↔	37.17
Motor vehicle traffic death rate per 100,000	2012-2016	↔	6.58
Suicide death rate per 100,000	2016	-	13.6
Quality of Life	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Infant low birth weight	2012-2016	↔	5.51%
Adults with depression	2016	-	22.6%
Adults reporting ≥14 days per month of poor mental health	2016	-	13.4%
10th grade students reporting depression (in the last 12 months)	2016	-	32.6%
10th grade students seriously considering suicide (in the last 12 months)	2016	-	18.1%
Leading Causes of Death (rate per 100,000)	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Major cardiovascular diseases	2012-2016	↔	185.81
Malignant neoplasms (Cancer)	2012-2016	↔	154.58
Alzheimer's disease	2012-2016	↔	48.49
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	2012-2016	↔	34.01
Accidents	2012-2016	↔	28.48

Social & Economic

Social and economic determinants of health include conditions such as poverty, employment, and educational achievement. It is widely acknowledged in public health that these factors affect long-term health both directly and indirectly, through influences on health behaviors, access to resources, and the ability to participate in society.

Community Safety & Violence	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Victims of child abuse and neglect per 1,000*	2016	62.1*	50.9
Domestic violence offenses per 1,000*	2016	-	7.39
Jail incarceration rates per 100,000 (ages 15-64)	2014	-	276.3
Education	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Children who demonstrate readiness skills for kindergarten in all areas*	2016	64.96%*	47.82%
On-time graduation rate*	2016	75.2%*	76.6%
Postsecondary school enrollment	2015	65.7%*	59.3%
Adults ages 18-24 enrolled in college or graduate school	2012-2016	23.7%	58.1%
Housing Security	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Number of homeless public school students	2015-2016	68	981
All cost burdened households (<i>Housing cost is > 30% of income</i>)	2011-2015	-	37.77%
Homeowner vacancy rate	2012-2016	↔	1.4%
Rental vacancy rate	2012-2016	↔	3.6%
Severe housing problems (<i>1 or more of the following: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen or plumbing</i>)	2009-2013	-	21.0%
Income & Poverty	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Median Household Income	2012-2016	↔	\$54,212
Population living below the poverty level	2012-2016	↔	16.0%
Population 18 and under living below poverty level	2012-2016	↔	15.3%
Children eligible for free-reduced lunch per 100 students*	2016-2017	51.3%*	42.8%
Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)*	2016	21.79%*	17.73%
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), per 100 Child Recipients*	2016	5.53*	5.05
Gini Index (<i>income inequality score ranging from 0-perfect to 1-inequality</i>)	2012-2016	↔	.4507
Unemployment	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Unemployment rate	2012-2016	↔	7.7%
Social Isolation	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Population 65+ living alone	2012-2016	↔	11.5%
Population That Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	2012-2016	↔	4.7%

Community Views

What we heard...

Education

- Community members report that school districts are proactive in getting services, supports and scholarships to students in need.

Housing Security

- **The rate of homeless individuals and children is concerning for residents.**
- **For many residents the quality of their housing is substandard.** It was stated that, “People may have a roof over their heads, but don’t have water or heat.”
- **In the Mt. Baker area, homeless individuals are squatting in empty vacation or part-time homes, living in travel trailers and empty lots.**

Community Safety & Violence

- **In rural parts of the county, community members experience long delays if they need assistance from services like law enforcement of the fire department.**
- **Residents reported that the Hispanic community is not coming forward** out of fear and a negative political climate.
- **Residents report they have stopped using the new Peaceful Valley trail** due to homeless tents and shelters that are now there and it doesn’t feel safe anymore.
- **Isolation increases the risk for family violence,** and domestic violence has impacted the Mt. Baker community.

Income & Poverty

- **In the Mt. Baker area, there is a high poverty rate** and wide inequality between rich and poor. The distance to high paying jobs is a challenge to economic development.

Social Support

- **Residents reported community members valuing helping one another,** and that their small size contributed to this sense of community.
- **While some individuals report feeling closely connected to their small community,** the vastness of this area can hinder community cohesion and create isolation.
- **Community members report distrust between residents based on socio-economic status.**
- **There are differences in social and extracurricular curricular activities within communities,** while some residents point to sports and scouting activities, others don’t feel there are opportunities for children to be active or involved in their community.
- **Many remote areas in the county, including Kendall, don’t have commercial amenities or health care services to serve the population.**
- **Parents report a lack of support for youth and inadequate opportunities for social activities.**
- **The East Whatcom Regional Resource Center has provided a base for quality social services and community gatherings** including DSHS, health care providers, the Opportunity Council, and Northwest Clean Air Agency providing assistance with heat pumps.

Employment

- **In East Whatcom County, the transition from dairy to berry farming and loss of farming jobs has impacted the economy and employment outlook for future generations.** People are struggling economically and not seeing opportunities for work. Additionally, business income does not always support the local economy.

Physical Environment

The physical environment includes both the natural environment (water, air, land) and the built environment (buildings, roads, parks, and other infrastructure). Having access to clean water, clean air, and preventing exposure to environmental toxins are foundational to good health. The built environment influences health by providing or limiting opportunities for healthy living, including access to safe areas to be physically active, access to nutritious foods and safe access to work.

Water & Air Quality	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Population served by Community Water Systems (CWS) as sources of drinking water	2016	-	78%
Built Environment	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Adequate access to locations for physical activity	2010 & 2014	-	87%
Population living within a half a mile of a park	2015	-	53%
Commute	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Driving alone to work	2012-2016	↔	74.0%
Commuters biking to work	2012-2016	0.0%	1.5%
Commuters walking to work	2012-2016	↔	4.8%

Community Views

What we heard...

Built Environment

- **Libraries and community spaces are viewed as community strengths.**
- **Residents witness a lot of littering and pollution.**

Air & Water Quality

- **Residents are experience poorer air quality** and citing wood stove use and burning wet wood and garbage.

Transportation

- **Lack of transportation in rural areas negatively impacts residents' ability to work.** Residents without a reliable vehicle are at a disadvantage.
- **In more distant areas of the county transportation** significantly impacts social connections, childcare and healthcare opportunities.
- **There are gaps in public transportation** including inability to do same day medical non-emergency transportation, causing people to delay medical needs until it is an emergency. Lack of early morning coverage is problematic for medical appointments and travelling outside of Whatcom County. At the same time, residents appreciate hourly service seven days per week in some areas.
- **The Mt. Baker Highway is dangerous with high speeds, lack of shoulder and unsafe passing** and makes biking and walking in the area unsafe and unavailable.

Natural Environment

- **Many residents site the natural beauty throughout Whatcom County as a major asset and positive contributor to their health.**

Health Behaviors

Behaviors such as exercising, eating healthfully, using substances, or getting vaccines are important factors that directly relate to health outcomes. Many public health and health care interventions focus on changing individual behaviors, and data about personal health behaviors can provide cues for developing effective interventions to promote healthy behavior choices.

Alcohol & Drug Use	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Opiate treatment admissions per 100,000	2013-2015	-	349.8
10th grade students who reported drinking and driving (in the last 30 days)	2016	-	4.1%
Binge drinking among 10th grade students (in the last 30 days)	2016	-	9.0%
Marijuana use among 10th grade students (in the last 30 days)	2016	-	16.3%
Clients of State-Funded Alcohol or Drug Services (Age 18+) per 1,000*	2012-2016	14.63*	15.07
Immunizations	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Personal vaccination exemption rate among kindergarten students	2016-2017	9.2%	7.1%
Nutrition & Physical Activity	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
10th grade students eating ≥5 fruits and vegetables per day	2016	-	19.1%
Adults who met aerobic physical activity guidelines	2015	-	62.6%
10th grade students who met aerobic physical activity guidelines	2016	-	22.2%
Sexual Health	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Birth rate per 1,000 population	2012-2016	↔	11.01
Births to School-Age (10-17) Mothers rate per 1,000	2016	↔	2.54
Chlamydia incidence rate per 100,000	2016	-	325.5
Gonorrhea incidence rate per 100,000	2016	-	47.9
Tobacco Use	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
Births where the mother smoked during pregnancy	2012-2016	12.64%	8.87%

Community Views

What we heard...

Alcohol & Drug Use

- **Lack of transportation to treatment services** negatively impacts residents' ability to care for alcohol and drug addiction.
- **In the Mt. Baker area, the substance abuse prevention coalition is viewed as a community asset.**

Nutrition & Physical Activity

- **Community members find that a lot of people are really healthy**, tending to eat vegetables and be out in nature more than in other areas.
- **For some residents, access to physical activity is perceived as a barrier to a healthy lifestyle.**

Health Care

Access to quality health care is important to maintaining good health. The supply and accessibility of medical facilities and providers, having health insurance, cultural sensitivity in care, and limitations in insurance coverage all affect health.

Access to Care	Year	Mt. Baker	Whatcom County
First trimester prenatal care	2012-2016	↔	79.94%
Children and youth (≤ 18 years) without health insurance	2012-2016	↔	5.3%
Adults (18-64 years) without health insurance	2012-2016	19.8%	13.6%

Community Views

What we heard...

Access to Care

- **The lack of health care services is challenging for many residents**, this includes primary care, urgent care, mental and behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, and lab work facilities. Time and transportation hurdles deter many residents from seeking care they need.
- **School nursing staff is limited and stretched thin.**
- **Residents find that mental health services are insufficient** to address problems related to depression, anxiety, and suicidality in youth and adults and prevent problems related to substance abuse.

For additional information on this report and other community health assessments go to:
<http://www.whatcomcounty.us/2929/Community-Health-Assessment>

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