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# *Achieving a Healthier Gloucester County 2010*

*A Comprehensive Community Health Improvement Plan  
(CHIP 2010)*

January, 2011  
Gloucester County, New Jersey  
[www.gloucestercountynj.gov](http://www.gloucestercountynj.gov)

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The Gloucester County Department of Health & Senior Services, Division of Health Services is proud to present the 2010 “*Achieving a Healthier Gloucester County*” Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This plan serves as an update to the 2006 CHIP, released in February of 2007.

The CHIP is a collaborative effort of the “Achieving a Healthier Gloucester County” partnership, consisting of representatives from county agencies, hospitals, non-profits, faith-based groups, local boards of health, and academic institutions. Information was collected through the **2010 Gloucester County Community Health & Opinion Survey** and interviews with key informants with expertise in the health issues facing Gloucester County residents. This information, along with data collected from a wide variety of other sources, was used to identify the key health issues facing Gloucester County.

Once the key issues were identified, the collaborative determined that there were 3 urgent priorities that needed to be addressed, where the Health Department in particular could have the greatest impact. The first is combating obesity, in adults and children, by improving diet and increasing physical activity. The second area to be addressed is continuing to encourage regular screenings and checkups for residents of all ages, particularly seniors and at-risk individuals. The third priority area is to continue to increase awareness of existing services and resources throughout Gloucester County. Suggested activities for each of these priorities are incorporated into the CHIP.

Following the release of the Community Health Improvement Plan, the Gloucester County Department of Health & Senior Services, along with our numerous community partners, hopes to implement the activities listed in the CHIP and suggest new activities that will address the priority areas. As a stakeholder in the health of this community, we encourage you to join us in our efforts in “*Achieving a Healthier Gloucester County*”

# GLOUCESTER COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

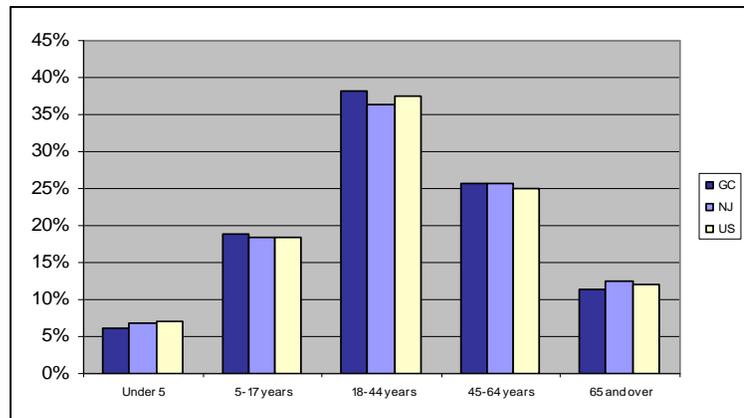
According to 2005 U.S. Census estimates, approximately 276,000 residents live in Gloucester County. The county is comprised of 24 municipalities with populations ranging from approximately 50,000 (Washington Township) to 1,600 (Newfield). Currently considered New Jersey's fourteenth most populated county, Gloucester County experienced an 8.7% growth in population between 2000 and 2005.



The majority of Gloucester County residents are between 18 and 44 years of age. The median age of Gloucester County residents (37.2 years) is similar to the median age of New Jersey residents (38 years).

Gloucester County has a lower percentage of seniors age 65 and older (11.3%) than New Jersey (12.5%) or the US (12.1%).

**Population of Gloucester County, by Age, 2005**

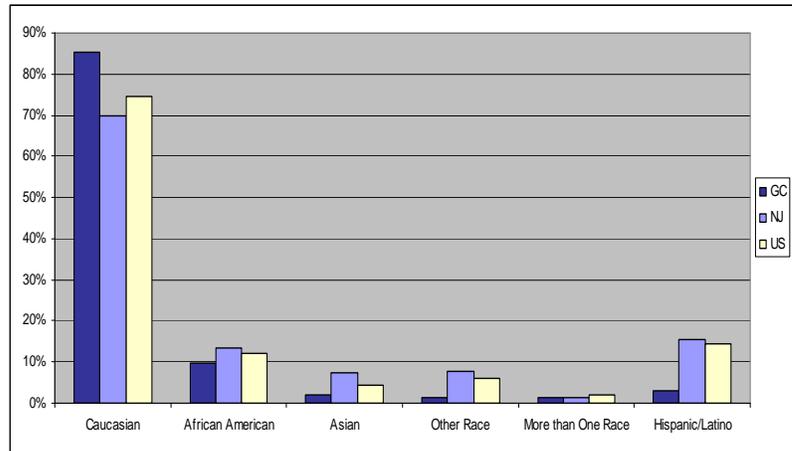


Source: U.S. Census. American Community Survey, 2005.

# **GLOUCESTER COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS**

The majority of Gloucester County residents identify themselves as Caucasian (85.4%), followed by African-American (9.7%) and Asian (2.1%). This varies from New Jersey, where 69.9% are Caucasian, 13.3% are African-American and 7.3% are Asian. In Gloucester County, 3.1% of residents are Hispanic or Latino, compared to 15.3% of New Jersey residents.

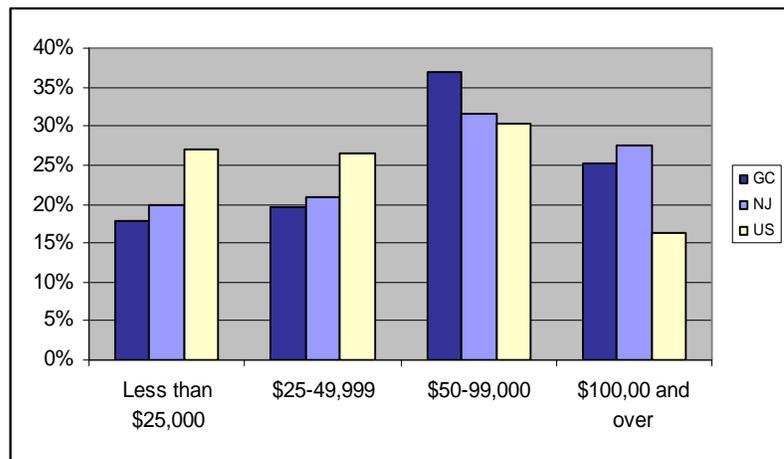
**Population of Gloucester County, by Race, 2005**



Source: U.S. Census. American Community Survey, 2005.

The majority of Gloucester County households (37%) have an income between \$50,000 and \$99,999. A lower percentage of Gloucester County households (17.9%) have an income of less than \$25,000 compared to New Jersey (19.8%) and U.S. (26.9%) households.

**Population of Gloucester County, by Income, 2005**



Source: U.S. Census. American Community Survey, 2005.

In 2005, the median income for Gloucester County residents was \$64,484, higher than that of New Jersey (\$62,672) and the U.S. (\$46,242).

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

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The data used to complete the CHIP fell into three distinct categories:

1. Secondary Data
2. Community Survey
3. Key Informants

### **Secondary Data:**

Secondary data, that is data originally collected by other entities, was used to identify changes in demographics, health behaviors, chronic health, communicable disease and mortality.

### **Community Survey:**

The Gloucester County Community Health & Opinion Survey, originally used in the 2005 CHIP process, was used again to develop CHIP 2010. Slight modifications were made to reflect current concerns; however the majority of the survey remained unchanged.

The survey went online on 5/15/2010 and remained active until 9/30/2010. Additionally, paper copies of the survey were made available during this same period. In total 445 people completed the survey.

### **Key Informants:**

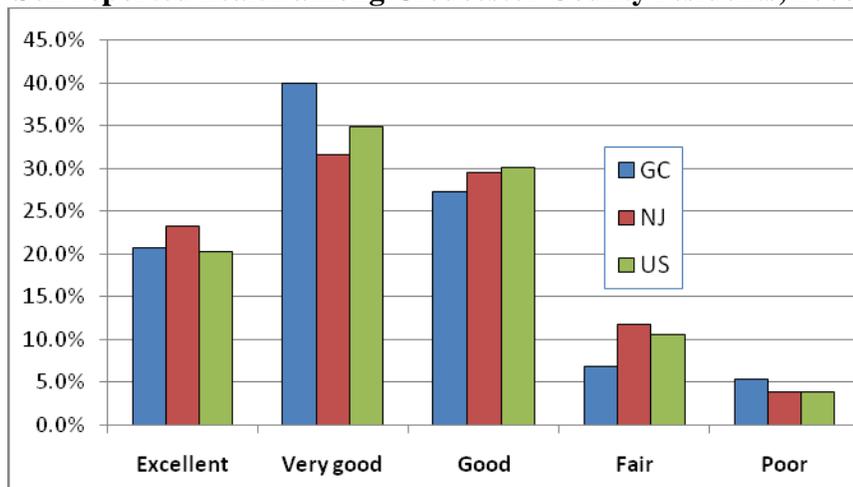
Public health professionals throughout Gloucester County were identified as “key informants” and were asked to complete a questionnaire developed by Gloucester County Health Department staff.

# GLOUCESTER COUNTY HEALTH STATUS

Results of the community health assessment, including the “Community Health and Opinion Survey”, show many advantages to living in Gloucester County. Some of the benefits include the following:

- Gloucester County has a wide variety of health-related services that are available to county residents. Many public health and medical professionals in the county are dedicated to providing quality services that meet residents’ health needs. In the 2010 *Community Health & Opinion Survey*, 87.5% of survey respondents reported being satisfied with the care they receive from their doctors.
- In 2008, over 88% of Gloucester County residents listed their overall health as excellent, very good or good.

**Self reported health among Gloucester County residents, 2008**

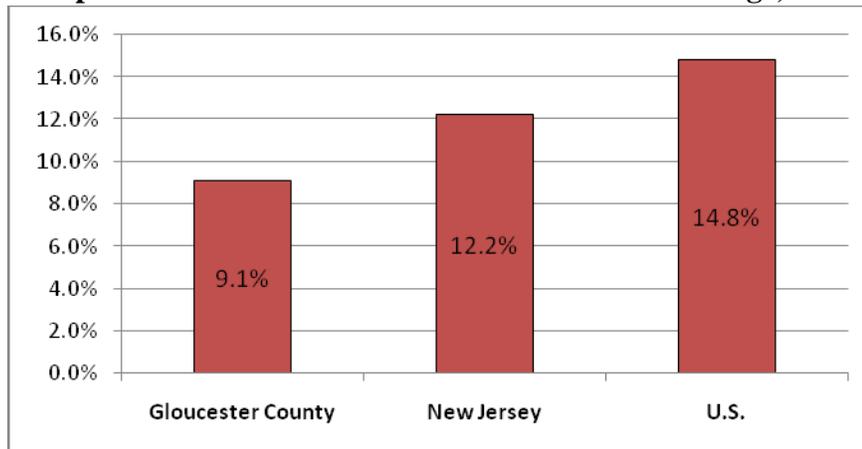


Source: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Select Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Area Health Risk Data. Available at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss-smart/SelMMSAPrevData.asp>  
Notes: Data taken from question: “How is your general health?”

# **GLOUCESTER COUNTY HEALTH STATUS**

- In 2008, it was estimated that 9% of county residents had no health insurance. This remains significantly less than that of New Jersey (12.2%) and the US (14.8%).

**Proportion of Residents with No Health Care Coverage, 2008**

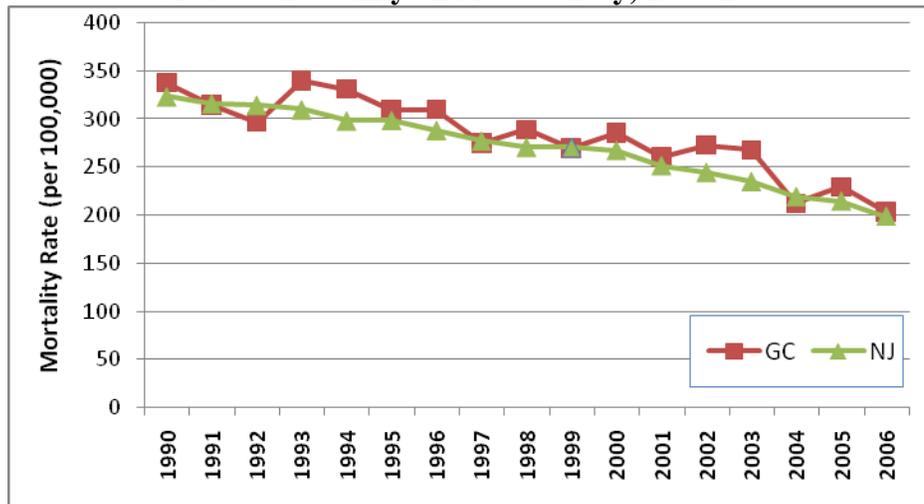


Source: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Select Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Area Health Risk Data. Available at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss-smart/SelMMSAPrevData.asp>  
Notes: Data taken from question: "Do you have health care coverage?"

# GLOUCESTER COUNTY HEALTH STATUS

- Deaths from heart disease have been steadily decreasing among Gloucester County residents over the last decade. In 2006, the death rate due to heart disease reached an all-time low at 203.4 deaths per 100,000 population in Gloucester County.

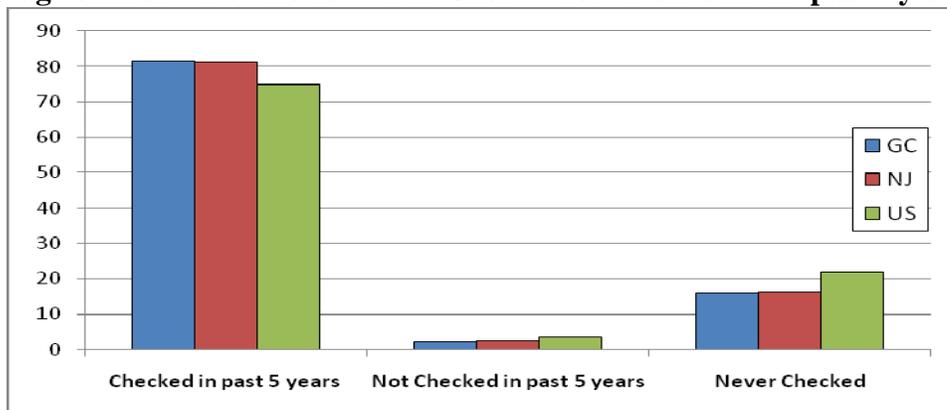
**Mortality Rates for Coronary Heart Disease, Gloucester County and New Jersey, 1990-2006**



Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, NJSHAD Query System.  
Notes: Age-adjusted rates are computed per 100,000 based on the 2000 standard population

- Many residents routinely get blood pressure and cholesterol checks to assess their risk of heart disease. Results from the *2010 Community Health and Opinion Survey* showed that 93% of survey respondents have had their blood pressure checked in the past year. Over 82% of Gloucester County residents have had their cholesterol checked in the past five years, compared to 77.6% of New Jersey residents and 73% of U.S. residents.

**Percentage of Residents who had their Cholesterol checked in the past 5 years, 2007**



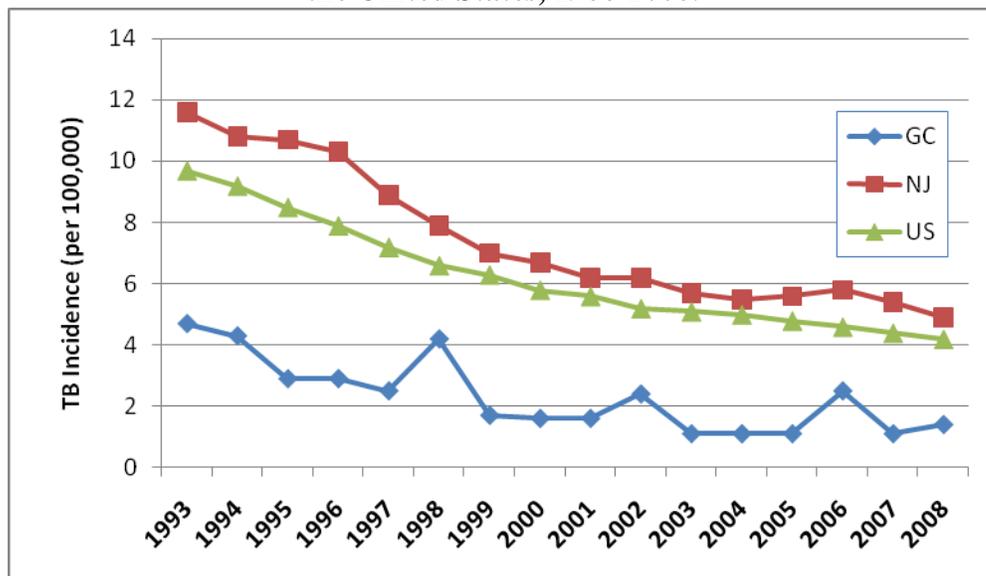
Source: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Select Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Area Health Risk Data. Available at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss-smart/SelMMSAPrevData.asp>

# GLOUCESTER COUNTY HEALTH STATUS

- Gloucester County experiences a low rate of communicable diseases every year. The number of communicable disease reports received by the Gloucester County Department of Health and Senior Services remains low. Additionally, the incidence rates of almost all reportable diseases are lower than that of New Jersey every year.

Tuberculosis incidence rates have decreased in the past twenty years in New Jersey and the United States and have remained consistently low in Gloucester County. In 2008, the tuberculosis incidence rate in Gloucester County was 1.4 cases per 100,000 residents; in New Jersey, 4.9 cases.

**Active Tuberculosis Incidence Rates for Gloucester County, New Jersey and the United States, 1986-2008.**

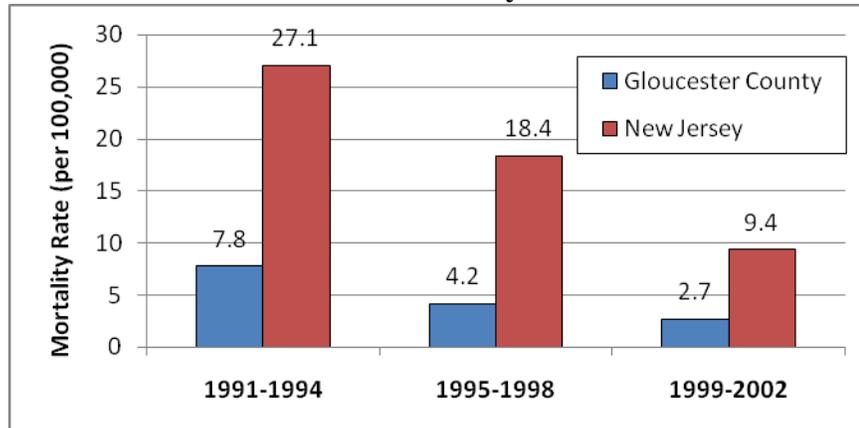


Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Communicable Disease Service, Tuberculosis Control Program; CDC. Reported Tuberculosis in the United States, 2003. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, September 2005.

# **GLOUCESTER COUNTY HEALTH STATUS**

The prevalence of persons living with HIV/AIDS in Gloucester County was 117 cases per 100,000 residents, compared to 399.8 per 100,000 residents in New Jersey (as of June 30, 2009). The mortality rate due to HIV was less in Gloucester County than in the State of New Jersey, at 2.7 per 100,000 population in Gloucester County versus 9.4 per 100,000 population in New Jersey between 1999-2002 (Figure 3).

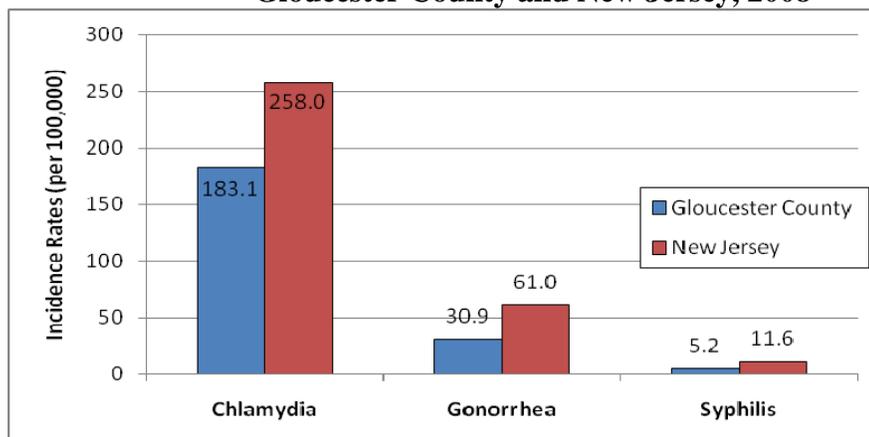
**Mortality Rates due to HIV disease, Gloucester County and NJ, for selected years**



Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, NJSHAD Query System.  
Note: Rates are age-adjusted and computed per 100,000 based on the Standard 2000 population.

The incidence rates of sexually transmitted diseases in Gloucester County remains lower than New Jersey, particularly for chlamydia and gonorrhea. In 2008, the number of new cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis per 100,000 residents was lower in Gloucester County than in New Jersey.

**Incidence Rates of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Gloucester County and New Jersey, 2008**

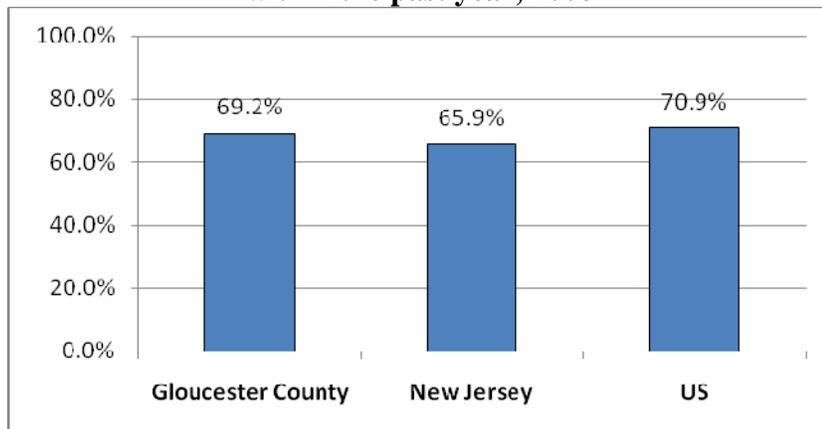


Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Infectious and Zoonotic Diseases Program, Communicable Disease Service.

# **GLOUCESTER COUNTY HEALTH STATUS**

- Many residents get a flu shot every year. The Gloucester County Department of Health dispensed an unprecedented 33,000 free seasonal and H1N1 flu shots in 2009, in addition to those distributed by private physicians. According to the *2010 Gloucester County Community Health & Opinion Survey*, over 73% of Gloucester County residents reported receiving a flu shot in the past year, which was higher than that of New Jersey and the United States.
- CDC Data shows that the percentage of Gloucester County seniors that receive the flu shot are higher than NJ numbers and comparable to United States data.

**Percentage of Adults ages 65 and older who have had a flu shot within the past year, 2008**

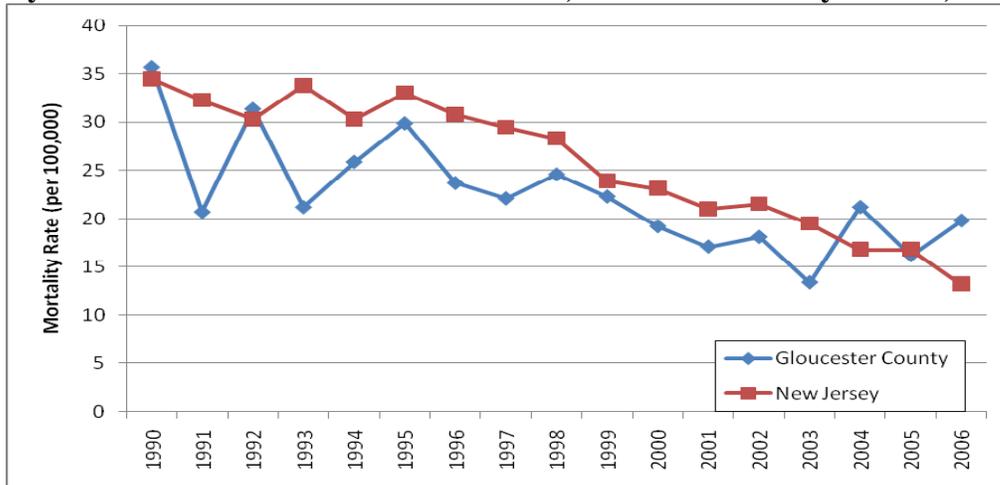


Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, SMART: Selected Metropolitan/Micropolitan Area Risk Trends. Available at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss-smart/SelMMSAPrevData.asp>

# GLOUCESTER COUNTY HEALTH STATUS

Deaths from influenza and pneumonia have consistently decreased over the last few years, due in part to the increase in influenza immunizations. However, Gloucester County experienced a spike in Mortality Rate due to Influenza and Pneumonia in 2006.

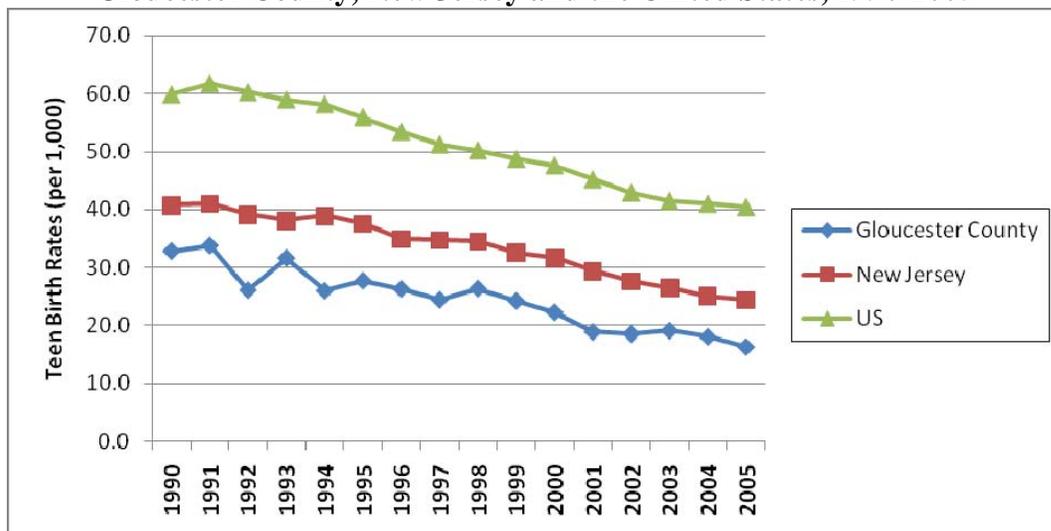
**Mortality Rate due to Influenza and Pneumonia, Gloucester County and NJ, 1990-2006.**



Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, NJSHAD Query System.

- The teen birth rate has steadily decreased over the last decade. In 2005, the teen birth rate was 16.3 live births per 1,000 age-specific female population. In New Jersey, the teen birth rate was 24.4; in the U.S. it was 40.5.

**Teen Birth Rate (among 15-19 year old females), Gloucester County, New Jersey and the United States, 1990-2005**



Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, NJSHAD Query System.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF PRIORITIES**

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In addition to highlighting the many positive areas of the health of Gloucester County residents, the data collection also showed areas that could be improved. Analysis of county, state, and national data, results of the Community Health & Opinion Survey, and information gained through the key informant interviews led to the development of the following priority areas for the Gloucester County CHIP:

1. Encourage regular screenings and checkups
2. Improve Diet & Increase Physical Activity
3. Increase Awareness of Existing Services and Resources

**PRIORITY AREA 1:**  
**Encourage Regular Screenings & Checkups**

Results of the public health assessment have identified health maintenance as a priority in the community. The inability to manage health conditions, or the lack of early diagnosis for certain conditions, may be a strong risk factor for morbidity and mortality in the county.

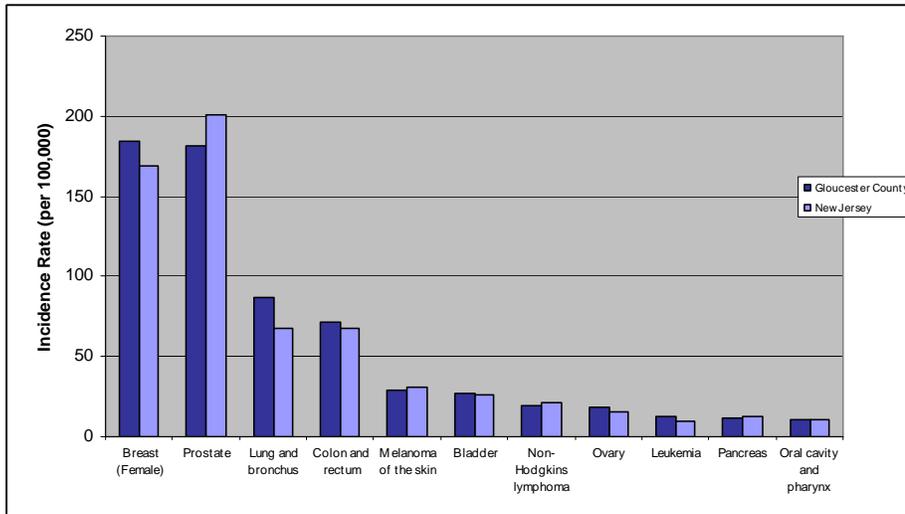
One of the most important ways to maintain health is through regular checkups and screenings. This includes maintenance of physical health through preventative measures such as cancer screenings, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar screenings, and dental visits. Health maintenance also includes the awareness of the importance of stress, anxiety and other mental health issues upon overall health.



# Priority Area 1: Encourage Regular Screenings and Checkups

The control of cancer is an important issue for Gloucester County residents, as it is for many people living in the United States. In Gloucester County, the most recent data shows that the highest cancer incidence rates, or rates of new cancer cases, include cancers of the breast, prostate, lung and colon.

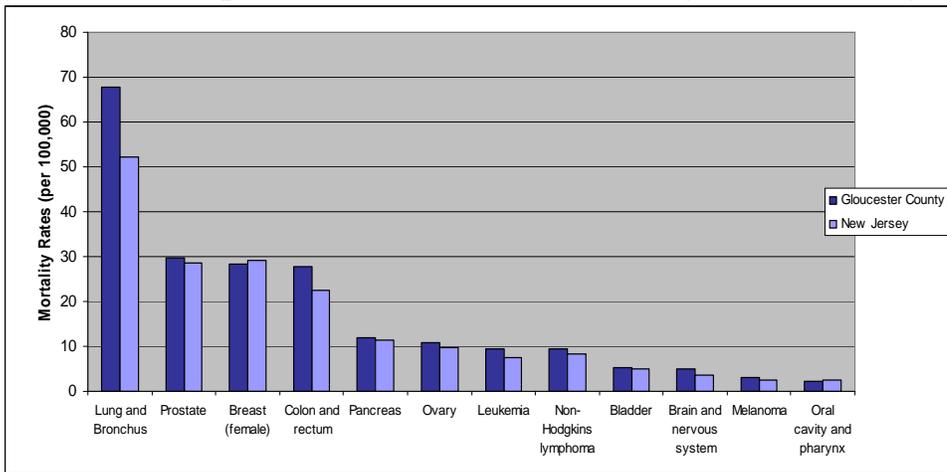
**Cancer Incidence Rates, Gloucester County and New Jersey, by Type of Cancer, 1999-2003**



Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Cancer Epidemiology Services. Available at: <http://www.cancer-rates.info/nj/> Note: Age-adjusted incidence rates are computed per 100,000 based on the 2000 standard population.

The highest cancer mortality rates occur from cancers of the lung, prostate, breast and colon.

**Mortality Rates due to Specific Cancers, Gloucester County and New Jersey, 1999-2003**



Source: NJDHSS, Division of Cancer Epidemiology Services. Available at <http://cancer-rates.info/nj/njmort.html> Note: Rates are age-adjusted and are computed per 100,000 based on the 2000 standard population.

## **Priority Area 1:**

### **Encourage Regular Screenings and Checkups**

Regular cancer screening may lead to earlier cancer detection for some of these cancers. Timely screening, diagnosis and follow-up may ultimately lead to an improved chance for cancer survival. Some key informants who were interviewed stressed the importance of cancer screenings for Gloucester County residents.

#### Key Informant Comments:

*“One of the most pressing issues for the community is early screenings for cancer.”*

*“Patients should advocate for more cancer screenings.”*

*“Free cancer screenings are underutilized.”*

**Priority Area 1:**  
**Encourage Regular Screenings and Checkups**

*45% of survey respondents have been told by a doctor that they have high blood pressure.*

*41% of survey respondents have been told by a doctor that their cholesterol is too high.*

*Almost 24% of county residents have not had their cholesterol checked in the past year.*

According to the American Heart Association, some of the major risk factors of heart disease are high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Regular blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar screenings, as well as regular doctor visits to manage heart disease, may improve health outcomes related to heart disease and stroke.

# Priority Area 1: Encourage Regular Screenings and Checkups

## Mental Health

Paying attention to mental health is an important way to maintain health. Almost 59% of the survey respondents reported that they feel stress affects their health and 20% responded that they want more info on mental health services available.

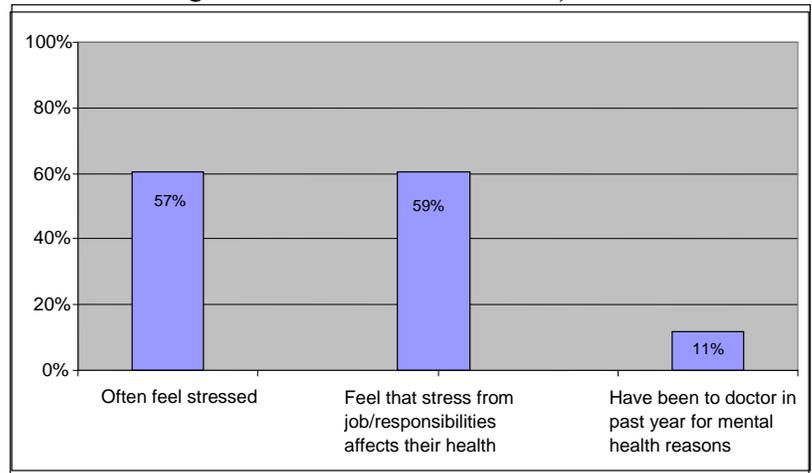
## Communication

Managing health involves being able to effectively communicate with healthcare providers. Some key informants stressed not only seeing a healthcare provider on a regular basis, but knowing what to ask during the doctor visit.

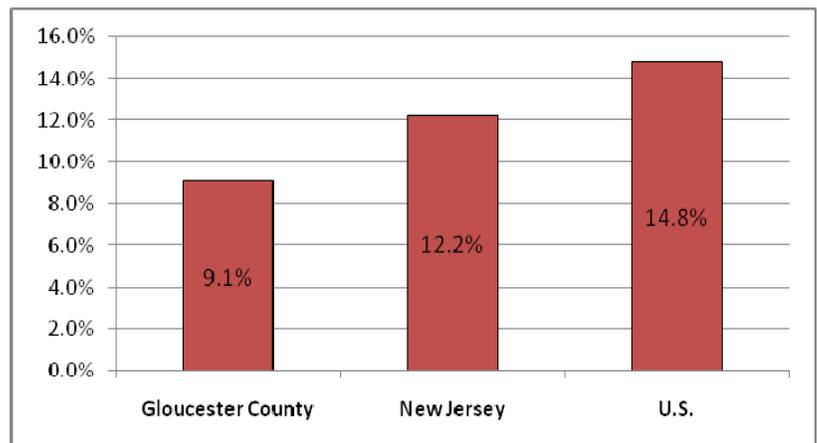
## Access to Care

Receiving regular checkups and screenings is only possible if all members of the public have a regular source of medical care. Approximately 9% of county residents do not have health insurance. In these instances, the referral to free or reduced-fee medical providers is necessary.

Percentage of Survey Respondents Addressing Questions on Mental Health, 2010



Source: "Community Health and Opinion Survey" done by the Gloucester County Department of Health and Senior Services, 2010.



## **Priority Area 1:**

### **Encourage Regular Screenings and Checkups**

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Suggested Activities to Address this Priority Area:

1. Continue to promote and publicize existing services that provide free or low cost screenings.
2. Develop educational resources to promote regularly scheduled screenings, such as cancer screenings, blood pressure tests, cholesterol tests, and routine doctor exams. The educational resources will list strategies for individuals to address physical and mental health with their healthcare provider.
3. Develop a plan to distribute these educational resources to the public via healthcare providers, local businesses, non-profit agencies and social service organizations.

Available Resources:

1. The **Gloucester County Department of Health and Senior Services** provides free blood pressure, cholesterol, derma-scan and body mass index (BMI) screenings at various sites throughout the county.
2. The **Cancer Education and Early Detection (CEED)** program through Underwood Hospital offers free cancer screenings for certain types of cancers.
3. Many county businesses have employee wellness and community outreach programs that provide or encourage screenings and checkups.
4. Two Federally Qualified Health Care (FQHC) satellite centers are currently located in Gloucester County: **CompleteCare** in Glassboro and **CAMcare Health Corporation** in Paulsboro. Both provide routine and preventative care to uninsured and underinsured families.
5. **NJ FamilyCare** provides health insurance for children and families.
6. The **Gloucester County Wellness Discount Program** provides free or low cost solutions for Gloucester County residents that are uninsured or underinsured.

## **PRIORITY AREA 2:**

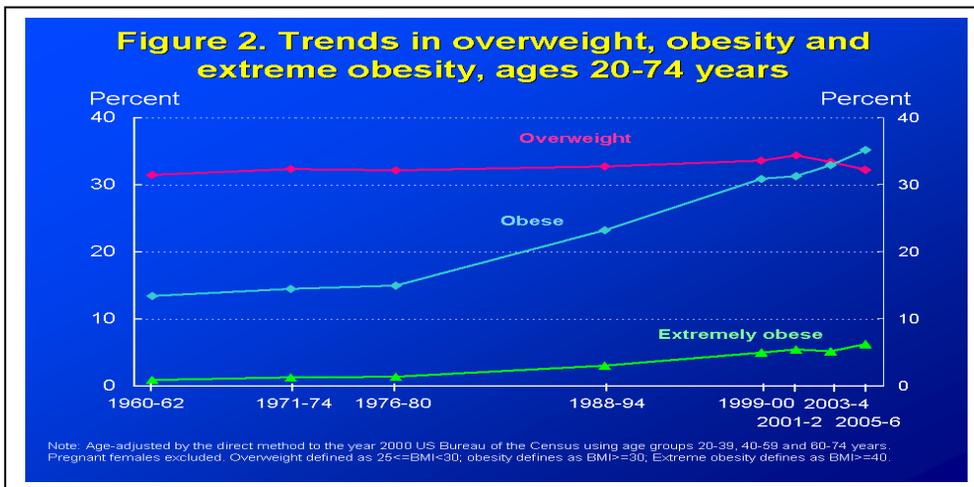
### **Improve Diet & Increase Physical Activity**

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We all have a vested interest in adopting healthier lifestyles. Not only will we reap the personal health benefits, but it will be cost effective for our community.

Obesity has been described as a national epidemic. In particular, obesity in children and adolescents is a serious issue with countless health and social consequences, both short and long term.

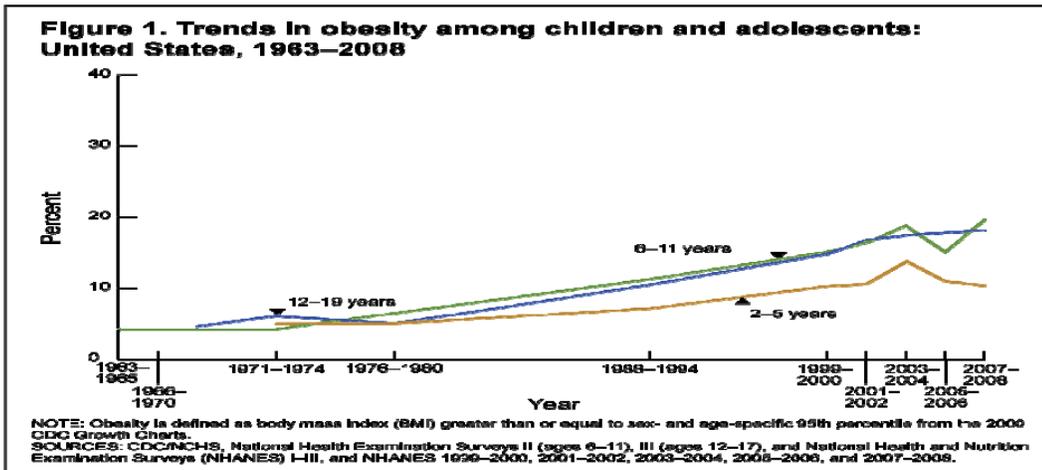
We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of obese and extremely obese Americans over the last 30 years.



## **PRIORITY AREA 2:**

### **Improve Diet and Increase Physical Activity**

We see similar increases in the obesity rates of children and adolescents:

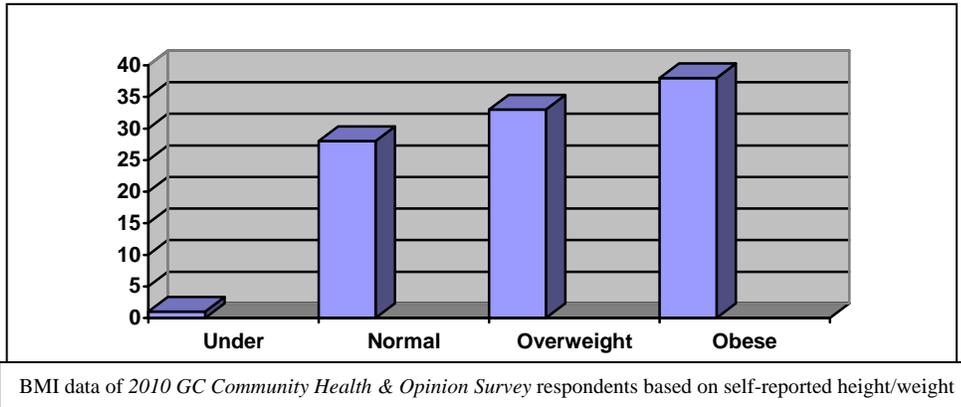


As the chart above shows, the number of overweight children has increased sharply since 1980. Additionally, recent studies have linked childhood obesity to a disturbing prediction that the current generation of children in America will be the first to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

## **PRIORITY AREA 2:**

### **Improve Diet and Increase Physical Activity**

The results of the Gloucester County Community Health & Opinion Survey show overweight / obesity remains a significant health issue for many residents.



In addition, 71% of survey respondents indicated that they have tried to lose weight in the past year, and 70% replied that they would like more information on nutrition / weight loss / exercise.

Physical activity was a re-occurring issue throughout various completed assessments as well. According to the survey, less than half of respondents (46%) indicate they exercise 1 hour, 3x a week.

Lack of physical activity is considered a major contributing factor to childhood and adolescent obesity as well. Sharp increases in “screen time”, that time spent in front of TV, computer, video game etc., negatively impacts the health of children by decreasing physical activity and increasing body weight. Long term effects of this sedentary lifestyle may include heart disease, diabetes, and other health issues.

## **PRIORITY AREA 2:**

### **Improve Diet & Increase Physical Activity**

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Suggested activities to address this priority area:

1. The Gloucester County Health Department will take the lead in forming a CHIP Sub-committee comprised of community leaders and stakeholders to address obesity in Gloucester County.
2. Additional objectives and activities will be determined by this sub-committee.
3. The first formal report of this committee will be completed by Spring 2011 and presented during the semi-annual Community Health Meeting.

Available Resources:

1. Gloucester County WIC
2. The Gloucester County Health Department offers free exercise programs for seniors at various locations throughout the year, as well as nutrition and physical activity education to schools and groups as requested.
3. Gloucester County has many parks, bike trails and walking paths, as well as various sports leagues for children and adults.

### **Priority Area 3:**

## **Increase Awareness of Existing Health Services**

Many health services and resources are available in Gloucester County. Despite this, some residents may not be aware that these services exist, or may not know how to find these resources. Also, staff from public health organizations throughout the county may not be aware that these resources exist and therefore cannot recommend them to their clients.

Results of the key informant interviews identified the need for increased awareness about the available services and resources within the county. Fourteen of the twenty-three key informants mentioned the need to increase awareness about health related services and resources available throughout Gloucester County.

#### Key informant comments:

*“An obstacle...is communication – getting the word out about education and outreach programs in our area.”*

*“We need an easy way to look for services within the county.”*

*“The public has difficulty accessing services and finding ways to get information about available programs.”*

*“People are unaware of the services offered by the Gloucester County Health Department.”*

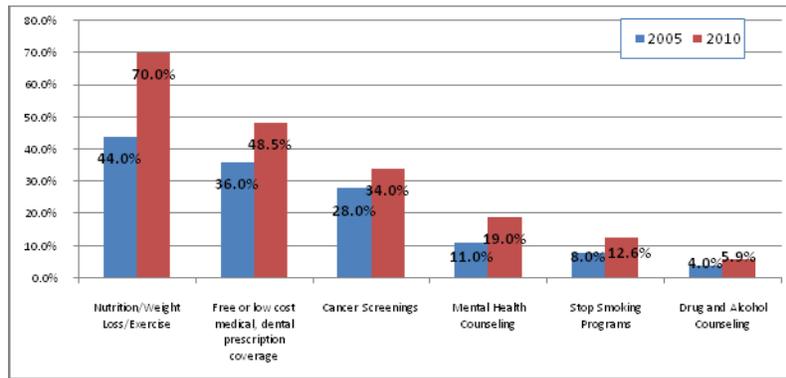
*“We need to increase advertising for health education and health promotion programs.”*

*“We estimate that 35% of the population that is eligible for our program don’t know they are eligible.”*

### Priority Area 3: Increase Awareness of Existing Health Services

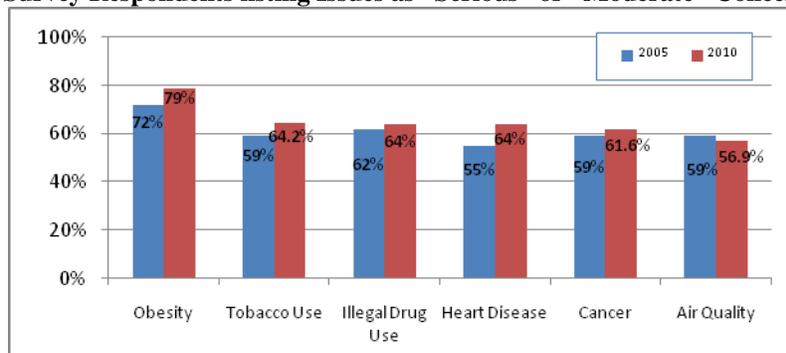
Residents who completed the “*Community Health and Opinion Survey*” were asked to indicate whether they wanted to learn more about or participate in certain services and programs if they were available. According to the survey, Gloucester County residents were most interested in information about nutrition, weight loss and exercise programs. Other areas of interest were free or low cost medical, dental or prescription programs and cancer screenings. Fewer residents were interested in mental health counseling, stop-smoking programs and drug and alcohol counseling.

**Percentage of Survey Respondents Interested in Select Programs and Services, 2005 - 2010**



Residents that completed the “Community Health and Opinion Survey” were given a chance to rank their community concerns as “not a concern”, “moderate concern” or “serious concern”. Respondents listed obesity, illegal drug use, cancer, air quality, tobacco use and heart disease among their greatest concerns.

**Percentage of Survey Respondents listing Issues as “Serious” or “Moderate” Concerns, 2005 - 2010**



Sources for both tables: “Community Health and Opinion Survey” done by the Gloucester County Department of Health and Senior Services, 2005 and 2010

### **Priority Area 3:**

## **Increase Awareness of Existing Health Services**

The graphs on the previous page point to areas that may be of greatest interest or concern to Gloucester County residents. Focusing on services that address the areas of greatest interest or concern – nutrition/weight loss, cancer screenings, heart disease, drug and tobacco use – may be a good starting point to increase awareness about these services.

In summary, assuring that the residents of Gloucester County are aware of existing services and resources is a priority. Although many residents do use available services in the county, some are unaware of important health services that can assist them. Additionally, staff from health-related agencies are sometimes unaware of services provided by other agencies within the region.

Developing coordinated strategies to educate the public about resources will help keep them informed and change the misconceptions about eligibility. In addition, by stressing the issues that are of greatest concern to residents, we can maximize public interest and participation.

### **Priority Area 3:**

## **Increase Awareness of Existing Health Services**

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Suggested Activities to Address this Priority Area:

1. Increase awareness of existing health related services and resources by gathering and maintaining a comprehensive directory of information on available programs and resources throughout Gloucester County.
2. Develop a means to easily dispense this information on a regular basis to health and social service providers throughout the county.
3. Develop an outreach and marketing strategy to dispense this information to county residents, businesses and existing organizations.
4. The Gloucester County Department of Health will enhance and distribute its existing Community Resource Guide. The Resource Guide will be made available on the county website and will be updated annually.

Available Resources:

1. The **“211” call system** is a toll-free phone number that residents and professionals can utilize to learn about health-related services, programs and resources available in the county.
2. Global Connect is a web-based messaging system that can be used to provide messages to the community or a specific region.
3. The Gloucester County website is a resource that informs county residents of existing programs within the county.
4. The Gloucester County Newsletter is mailed on a regular basis to every household in the county. The newsletter highlights various services that are available to county residents.
5. Both of Gloucester County’s hospitals and other organizations within the county have newsletters with information on available resources.
6. Local businesses, through their human resources or employee health departments, have programs to educate their employees on available services.

## **RESOURCES**

**Gloucester County Department  
of Health & Senior Services  
204 East Holly Ave  
Sewell, NJ 08080  
856-218-4101**