



BrainGain@PEC



Brought to you by the PEC Policy Department
For more information, email Policy Department.

Date: November, 2020

BrainGain@PEC provides brief summaries of research or publications on family homelessness and related issues. Previous issues of BrainGain@PEC can be found at <http://bit.ly/2iaczvQ>.

PENNSYLVANIA FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS: NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT 2020

PEC is summarizing Pennsylvania's 2020 "Family Support Needs Assessment" which found that Philadelphia **met** the elevated needs threshold in 5 domains (Maternal and Child Health, Substance Use, Socioeconomic Status, Child Safety and Maltreatment, and Community Environment) and met a moderate need in Child Care.

The Needs Assessment also asserts that, although Philadelphia has one of the highest concentrations of health care providers per capita in the country, the community **faces adverse** maternal, child and infant health outcomes.

Home visiting services could help reach these needs, but it currently **only reaches 2%** of Philadelphia families. There are 73,814 families with children under the age of 5 who are living below 200% of the federal poverty line, yet **only 1,122** slots are funded. Home visiting services provide family-focused education, goal setting and connectivity to services, which improves stability and care coordination that is especially crucial during a pandemic.

The Needs Assessment is a county-level assessment of the health of children, mothers, and families, as well as the social and environmental circumstances of families and communities in the state, including **delivery of home visiting services**. Produced by the **Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning**, in partnership with the **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**, the assessment is designed as a **public health tool** offering a systematized way to identify geographic areas of elevated need and disparity to inform future decision-making and deploy resources to improve maternal, child, and family health and well-being.

Find Pennsylvania's [original report](https://bit.ly/36ezYRX) at <https://bit.ly/36ezYRX>.

States receiving federal **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)** dollars **must complete** a statewide needs assessment every five years.

PEC summarized the Needs Assessment for early childhood **stakeholders** in Pennsylvania to reference policymaking decisions that impact children and families at the local, county and state levels.

Highlights:

- Pennsylvania's urban and rural communities are both **experiencing pronounced needs** related to substance use, mental health, intimate partner violence and economic conditions such as unemployment.
- Pennsylvania's **evidence-based home visiting system serves approximately 5%** of the total eligible population across the state (8,200 families), and **only 2% of eligible families in Philadelphia**
- There was a **significant increase** (52%) in statewide **investment** in evidence-based home visiting programs over the last four years.

Key Findings:

- Philadelphia was one of 5 counties that met elevated needs in 5 domains
- 15 counties met elevated needs threshold in **three or more** domains, **including Philadelphia**
- 23 counties **did not meet** the elevated need for any of the six domains
- 44 counties **met** the elevated need status in at least one domain
- The top three functions of home visiting services **endorsed as most useful** among nearly 300 home visited families surveyed were related to **child development and early learning**
- **Roughly 1 in 2** community survey respondents ranked the overall health of mothers and children in their community as excellent or good
- The breadth of impact on issues related to **substance use, mental health and intimate partner violence** facing Pennsylvanian families of young children was clearly messaged from community members and home visiting administrators

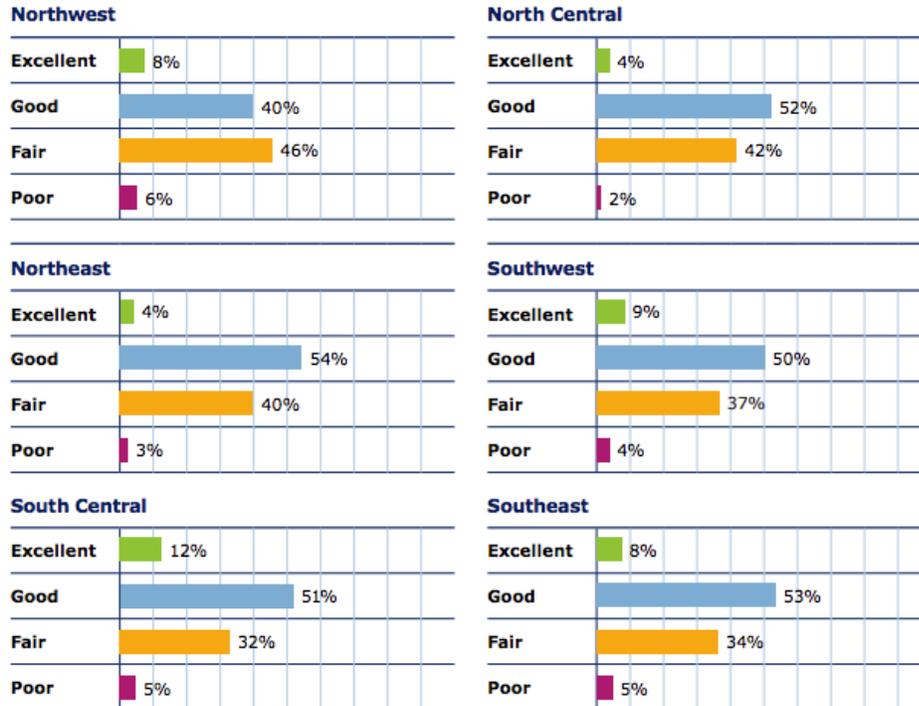
Community Services & Home Visiting Findings:

- There were **regional differences** in perceived most-valuable services
- Half of respondents (54%) viewed services in their community as very available or having above average availability
- **Only 13%** reported availability of substance use treatments in their community
- Respondents noted an overall **high level of need** for substance use issues (68%), social and economic concerns (63%) and childcare (59%)

- PA's southern regions ranked the state of maternal and child health in their community higher than the northern regions (see Figure below).

FIGURE 12: OVERALL RATINGS OF HEALTH OF PREGNANT WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Please rate the overall health of pregnant women, children and families in your community.

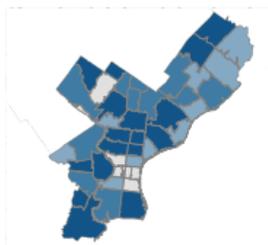


Sub-County Analysis: Philadelphia, Chester, Delaware & Montgomery

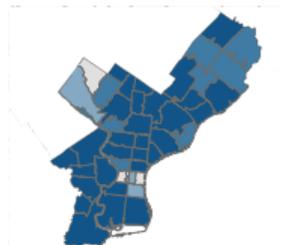
■ Low Need
 ■ Below Median Need
 ■ Above Median Need
 ■ Elevated Need
 Suppressed Data

Philadelphia

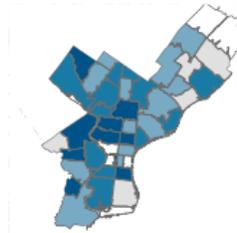
POVERTY RATE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5



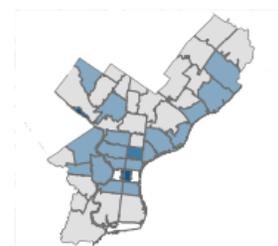
RECIPIENT OF SNAP OR SSI



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

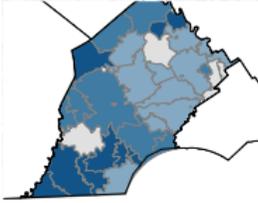


SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

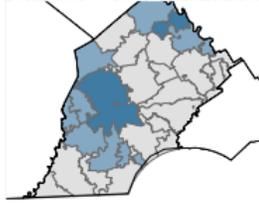


Chester

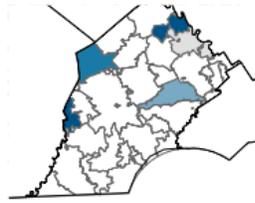
POVERTY RATE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5



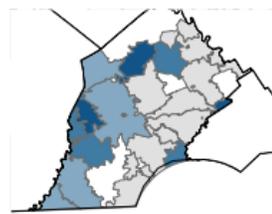
RECIPIENT OF SNAP OR SSI



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

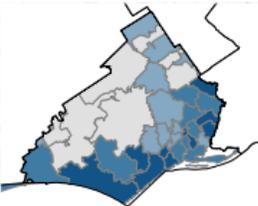


SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

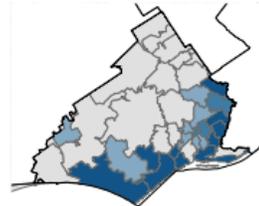


Delaware

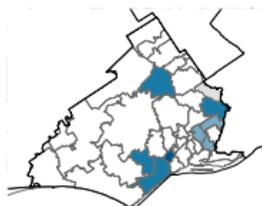
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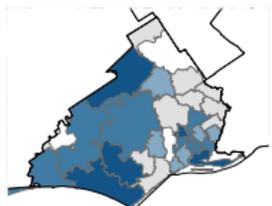
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INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

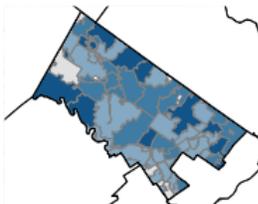


SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

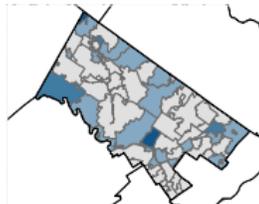


Montgomery

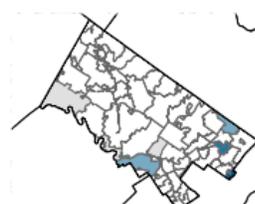
POVERTY RATE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5



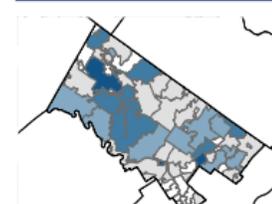
RECIPIENT OF SNAP OR SSI



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER



Implications of Timeline: Data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

- The loss of connection between the home visitor and client in familiar environment is **likely to be felt** by both families and home visitor.
- **89,000** Pennsylvanian children are in the care of grandparents who are caught between caring for their health and caring for their grandchildren.

- **85,000 children ages 0-5** were enrolled in subsidized childcare centers, many of which have forced to close. [info on closures](#)
- **For new mothers**, the effects of removing crucial support provided by family and friends in a high-stress time, coupled with the lack of postpartum depression and anxiety screening and treatment, **could be dire**.
- Nearly all 880 practices that participated in a National Council for Behavioral Health reporting having to **reduce** their operations.
 - Smaller organizations have cancelled, rescheduled, or turned away 36% of patients due to pandemic.
- In 2018, one third of child abuse reports were from school employees.
 - ChildLine calls have declined sharply since last spring, raising concerns for safety and well-being of children
- Parents struggling with substance use, untreated mental health, and intimate partner violence are on the rise.
- The **preexisting affordable housing crisis** will be compounded by the economic impact of COVID-19 to have long-term negative impacts for families.
- **From March-May**, nearly 15,000 Pennsylvanian children have enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program and **enrollment in Medical Assistance** (Medicaid) has **increased** by 62,000 people (a 2.2% increase) since February.
- 123,000 people have **enrolled in SNAP** since February, a **7.1% increase**.