

**Hays County  
Community Health Needs Assessment  
May 2016**



***Prepared by Seton Family of Hospitals. Formally adopted by the Seton  
Family of Hospitals Board of Directors on May 24, 2016.***

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## **1. Introduction**

The Seton Family of Hospitals (Seton) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a long-standing history of serving Central Texas, not only as a health care provider, but as a leader and advocate for improving the health of the population as a whole. The community health needs assessment (CHNA) presented in this report provides a snapshot of local health care needs and informs Seton's decisions about how we can best serve the community.

### **What is a Community Health Needs Assessment?**

A CHNA is a tool used to identify and prioritize health issues and develop targeted interventions to build healthier communities. A CHNA provides important information to policymakers, local public health leaders, health care providers and the public about the overall health status of the community and the unmet needs or challenges that warrant further attention.

### **Why do a Community Health Needs Assessment?**

A CHNA is used to gather diverse perspectives, mobilize resources and target them to areas of greatest needs identified by the community and validated by data.

The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act further reinforced the importance of community health needs assessments by requiring hospitals designated as tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations to complete such an assessment every three years. The last CHNA for Hays County was produced in 2012.

## How did we define the community?

This CHNA addresses the health care needs within the boundaries of Hays County. This community corresponds with the geographic areas Seton uses for planning in Central Texas.

## 2. Methodology

### How did we conduct the Community Health Needs Assessment?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) encourages local health care organizations to collaborate to avoid duplication of effort. In this spirit of collaboration, Seton, St. David's Foundation (SDF) and Central Texas Medical Center (CTMC) worked together to gather data and community input to inform the CHNA process for Hays County. Seton took the lead on the collection and analysis of county-level demographic and health data, while SDF gathered community feedback. The three organizations shared all of the information collected during the CHNA process and developed their own CHNA reports.

A brief summary of the process and methods used to conduct the assessment is included in the chart below.

Seton	
Component	Sources
Phase 1: Collection and analysis of county-level demographic and health data	Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Rankings
St. David's Foundation	
Component	Sources
Phase 2: Community and provider input	Nine stakeholder interviews, one focus group and an online survey

The CHNA process included two distinct, but connected phases of analysis.

### **Phase One:**

During the first phase of the project, Seton gathered and analyzed county health data for Hays County, using the most recent data available. Seton used a Z-score methodology to compare Hays County to ten Central Texas counties, Texas as a whole and the United States across 80 different health measures. Z-scores are a way to standardize different types of data for comparison purposes. This process helped identify and prioritize major health care needs highlighted in this report.

### **Phase Two:**

For the second phase of the project, feedback was gathered from the broader community using three main methods: one-on-one stakeholder interviews using a standardized interview guide, a focus group and an online survey to rank needs in priority order.

Input was solicited from individuals with a broad understanding of the community and its health needs. Key stakeholders included local public health officials, individuals representing the interests of medically underserved, low-income and minority populations, health care providers, educators, public officials and many others. During the interviews and focus group, participants were asked to identify the most significant community health needs facing Hays County, barriers to meeting those needs and potential solutions. *For a full list of interviewees and focus group participants, please consult Appendix 6.3.*

## **How were community health needs prioritized?**

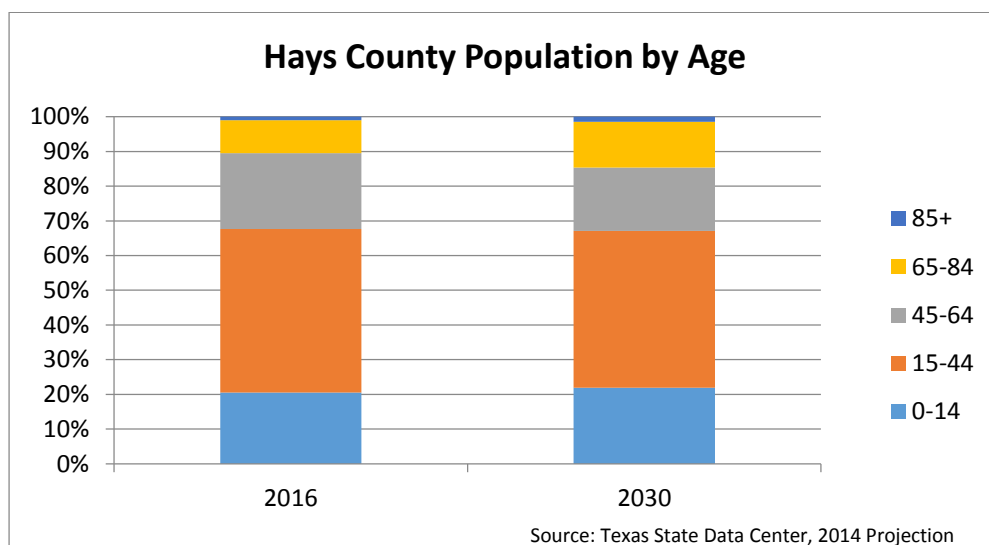
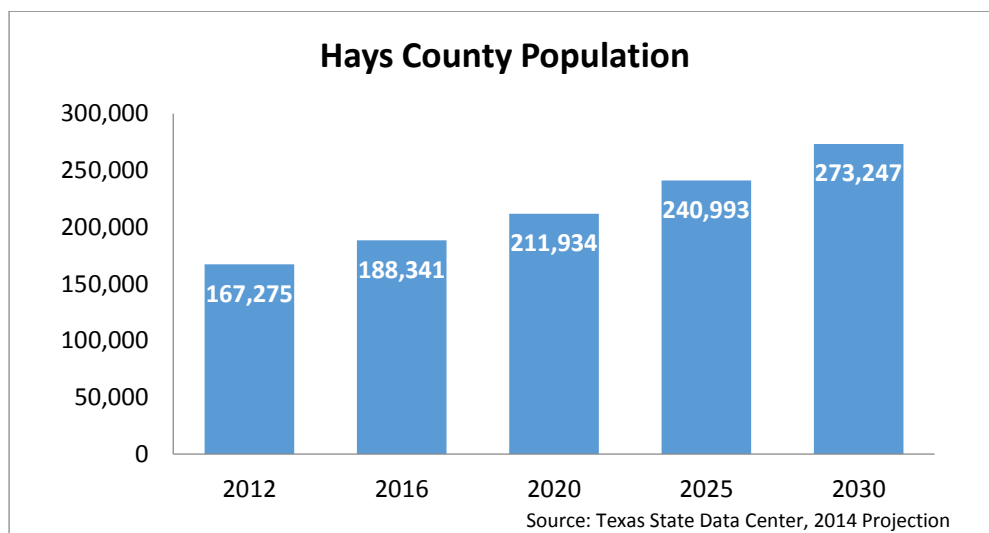
This report synthesizes the findings from both phases of the community health assessment process and identifies the most pressing health needs/priorities in Hays County. The prioritized needs that are described in the following report were either:

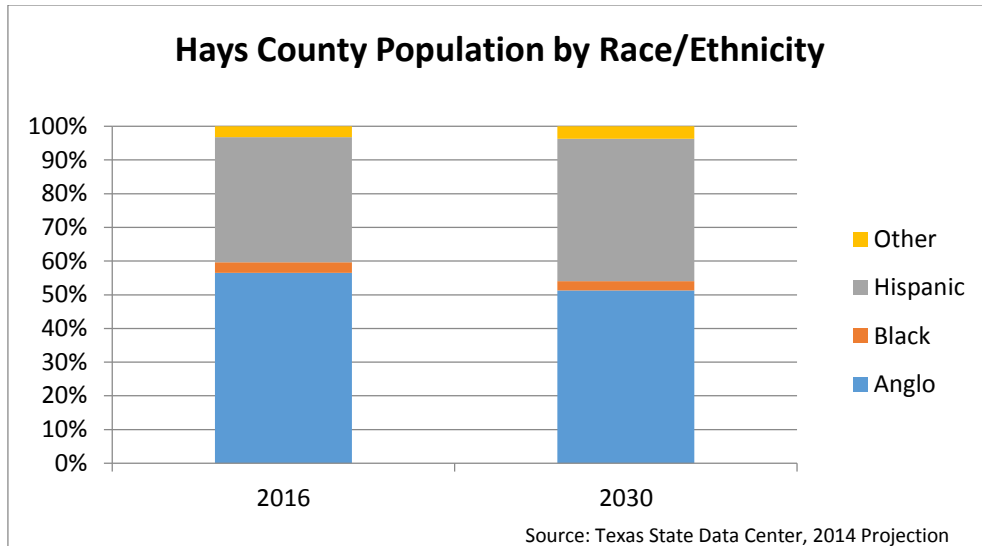
- (1) Identified consistently during focus groups, interviews and surveys as major community concerns;
- (2) Glaring data points in the county-level health data; or
- (3) Raised by the community on some level and validated by county-level data.

## **3. Demographic Snapshot**

- In 2016, Hays County was named the fastest growing county in Texas and fifth fastest in the United States by the U.S. Census Bureau. Between 2016 and 2030, the population in Hays County is expected to grow from 188,341 to 273,247, a 31 percent increase.
- San Marcos, home to Texas State University, was named the fastest growing city in the United States in 2016.
- Hays County has a large and growing Hispanic population.
- The percent of residents in Hays County over the age of 65 is expected to grow significantly over the next 15 years.
- Hays County is attracting residents from Austin and San Antonio looking for a lower cost of living and a small town feel.

- Hays County is composed of several small towns and cities including Buda, Dripping Springs, Hays, Kyle, Mountain City, Niederwald, San Marcos, Uhland, Wimberly and Woodcreek.
- Hays County experienced two massive floods in 2015, which devastated many families financially and put an enormous strain on social services and volunteer resources.





## 4. Community Health Needs

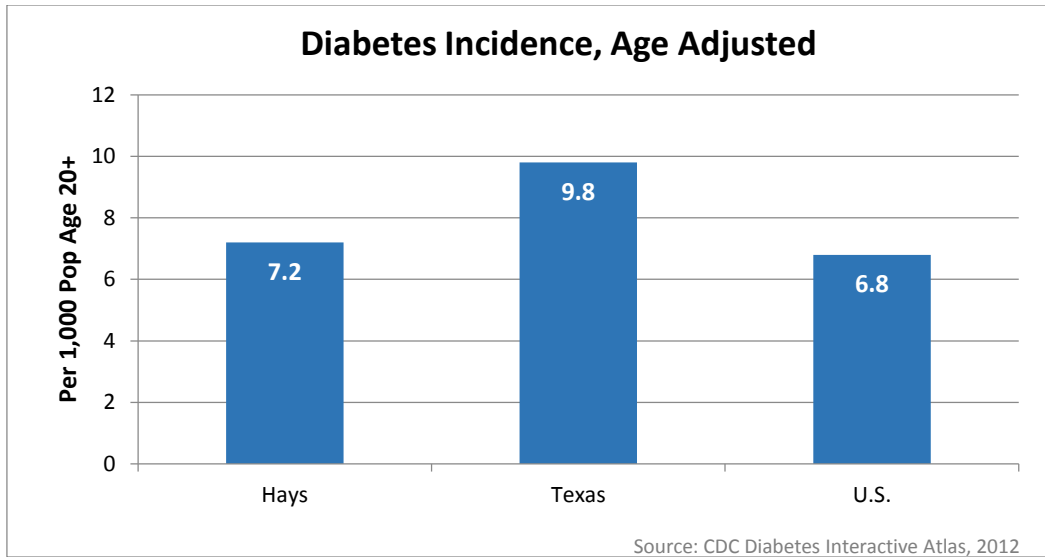
After reviewing the data and community input, Seton prioritized five main health needs: (1) chronic diseases, (2) mental and behavioral health care, (3) primary and specialty care, (4) system of care and (5) social determinants of health.

### 4.1. Chronic Diseases

Chronic diseases are long-term conditions that require active health management. Examples include obesity, diabetes and hypertension.

Community leaders in Hays County identified diabetes as a significant health problem and attributed its prevalence in part to limited access to healthy foods and a general lack of knowledge about healthy eating. The diabetes rate in Hays County, though lower than in Texas as a whole, is still slightly higher than the U.S. average. The high cost of diabetes medication was also identified as a barrier, especially for low-income patients.





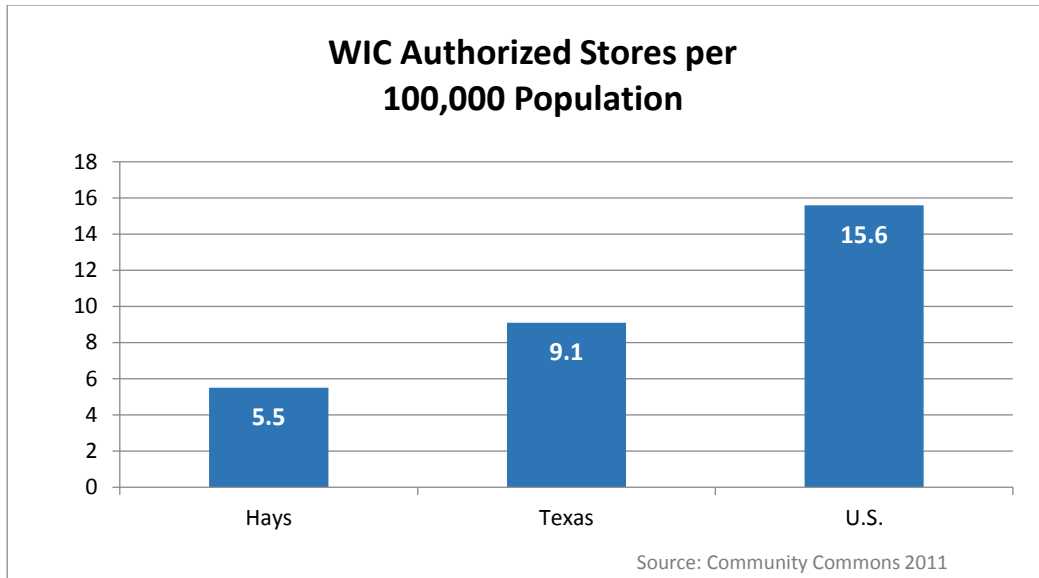
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***"I wish we could get a grant for insulin and syringes. Medicare and Medicaid will pay for amputations all day long, but they won't give people insulin and syringes to enable them to keep the blood sugars down..."***

***-Hays County Community Member***

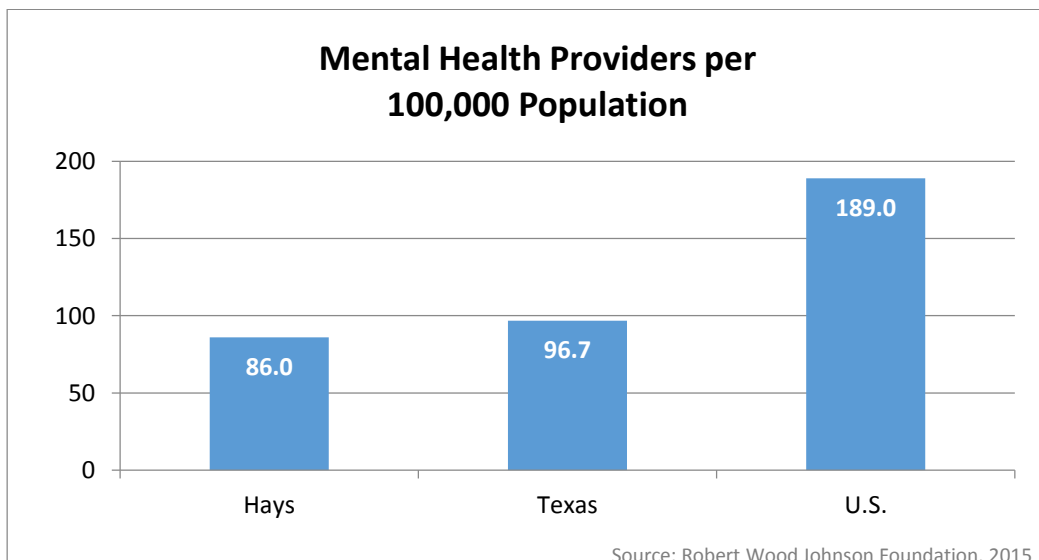
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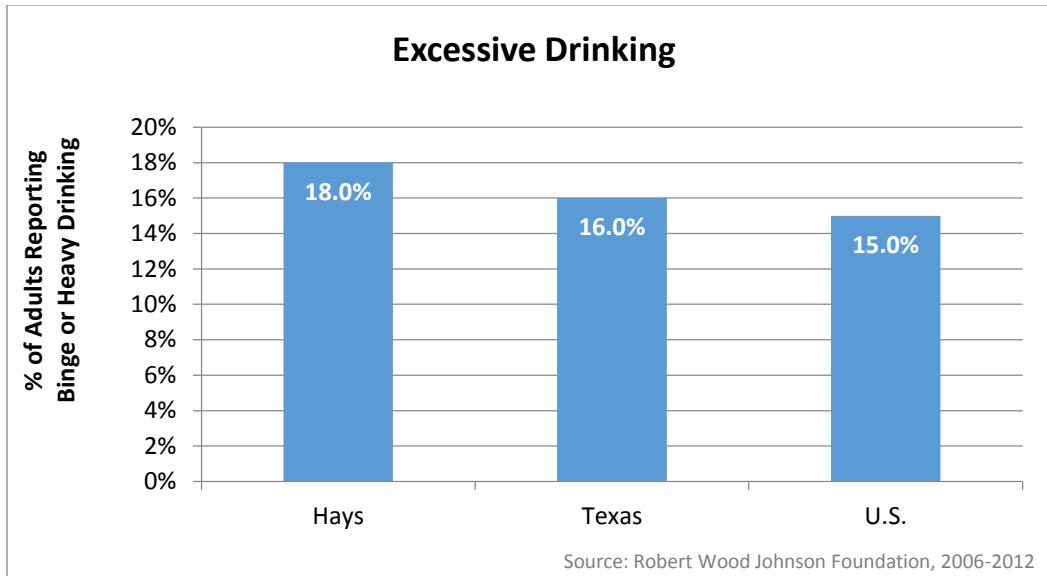
Additionally, data suggests that low-income persons in Hays County may have a difficult time accessing healthy foods. Families who qualify for free, healthy foods through the *Woman, Infant, Children* (WIC) special supplemental nutrition program will have a harder time finding a place to shop than in other parts of the country.



## 4.2. Mental and Behavioral Health

In addition to a primary care physician shortage, Hays County lags behind the state and U.S. in the number of mental health providers. Data from 2015 found that Hays County only has 86 providers per 100,000 population, compared to the U.S. average of 189. Another concerning behavioral health indicator is the rate of excessive drinking, which is higher than both US and Texas averages.





According to community input, hospital emergency rooms, law enforcement and school counselors are the primary responders to mental health crisis situations. Preventive mental health services, especially for children, are limited. According to experts in the community, available psychiatric services fill up quickly and the emergency room is often used to care for patients until a bed becomes available in an appropriate facility. The community also raised concern about the aging population and services for the elderly with dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

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***“The greatest thing that we see that’s growing is the need for behavioral health and counseling services....we have a very small number of providers in the area. It’s beyond what we can handle just here in the schools.”***

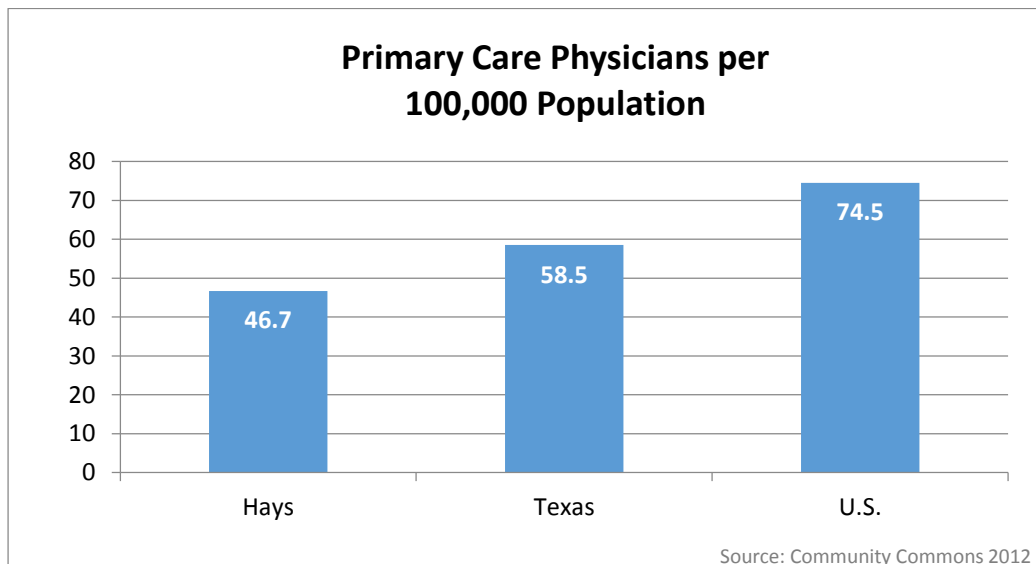
***-Representative, Hays Consolidated Independent School District***

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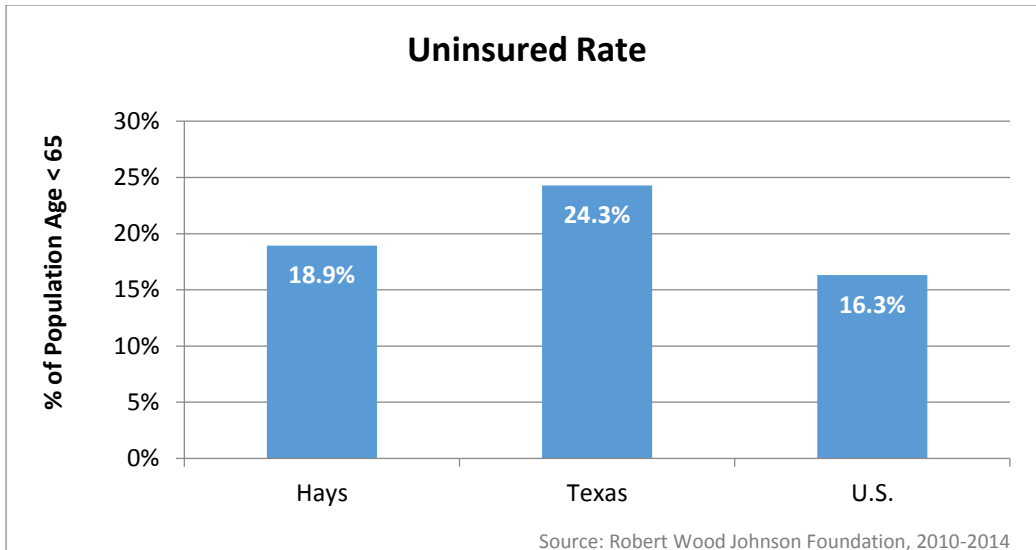
### 4.3. Primary and Specialty Care

Seton believes in the importance of providing the right health care at the right time and in the right place. Having an established relationship with a primary care provider and access to specialty medical care is essential to reaching this goal.

Hays County is a Designated Health Care Professional Shortage Area with a significantly lower number of primary care physicians than Texas and the United States.



The uninsured rate in Hays County is 18.9 percent, which is lower than the state average of 24.3 percent, but higher than the U.S. average of 16 percent. Residents without any form of health coverage are particularly vulnerable to the negative impact of the county’s ongoing provider shortage.



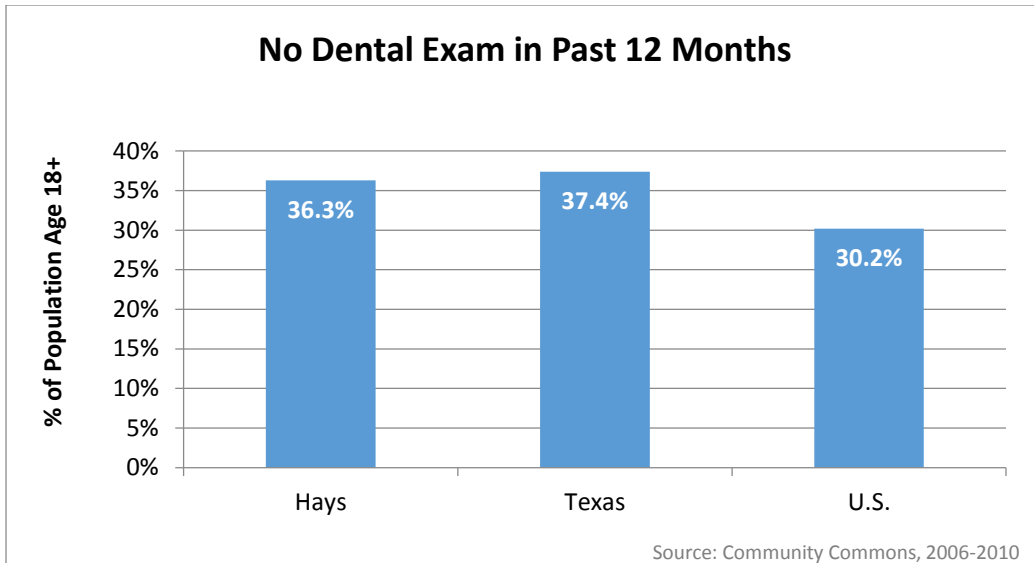
Access to dental care is about on par with the state average, but still falls below the national average with more than 36 percent of Hays County residents reporting that they did not have a dental exam in the past 12 months.

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***"The Area Agency on Aging of the Capital has a long waiting list for people who need dental. Usually by the time they contact us, it's not just a filling....The lack of dental care is a huge issue for our seniors."***

***-Hays County Provider***

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#### 4.4. System of Care

Improving the health care delivery system was one of the common themes raised during the community interviews and focus groups.

Community members in Hays County stated that many health problems are exacerbated by the challenges of navigating the health care system, finding providers and managing medications. Other community members identified better care transitions, the movement of a patient from one setting of care to another, as an area needing further attention, especially for the growing senior population.

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***"We see a lot of [elderly patients] who come in [to the Emergency Department], and they haven't been able to access routine care, don't have information about their meds. We see a lot of them come back.....A lot of that is because of the complexity of the medications they have to take, their inability to follow up and the lack of transportation resources in our town."***

***-Hays County Provider***

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### **Seton's Commitment to Improving the Health Care System**

As a leading provider of health care in Central Texas, Seton also recognizes the need to improve the system of care. Seton is a part of Ascension, the largest nonprofit health system in the United States and the largest Catholic health system in the world. Ascension has adopted four strategic goals, known internally as the "quadruple aim":

- Improved patient outcomes
- Enhanced patient experience
- Enhanced provider experience
- Lower overall cost of care

Ascension's quadruple aim is based on the "triple aim" developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) for "optimizing health system performance." The IHI is a nonprofit organization established in 1991 with the mission of improving patient care. The IHI Triple Aim includes the following three goals:

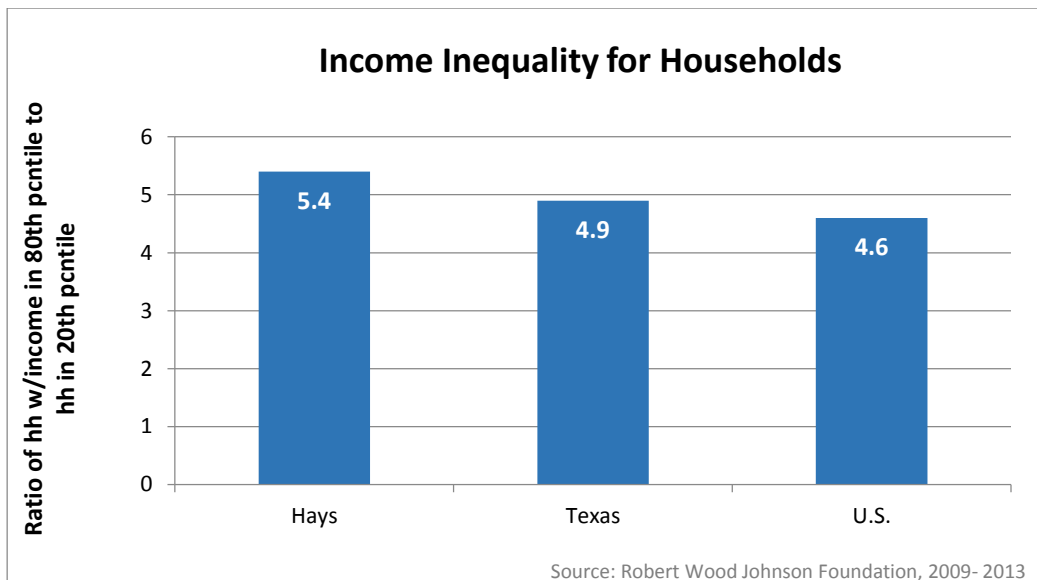
- Improving the patient experience of care (including quality and satisfaction)
- Improving the health of populations; and
- Reducing the per capita cost of health care.

## 4.5. Social Determinants of Health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define the “social determinants of health” as “conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.”

Community members in Hays County emphasized the need to address the root cause of poor health by addressing “upstream” factors such as poverty, low levels of education, poor transportation and housing options.

Poverty is a concern in Hays County, where income inequality is higher than state and national averages. Although the community gave a higher ranking to “resources and services to combat poverty,” the community also emphasized the importance of improving transportation options and expanding access to affordable housing.





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***"We have no affordable housing for low-income people. That affects their mental health. It's just a trickle down. It's like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. If you don't have shelter and food, you can't even think about the diabetes."***

***- Hays County Community Member***

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## **Seton and Social Determinants of Health**

Seton's primary role in the communities we serve is delivering quality health care. However, our mission as an organization is far-reaching. As part of Ascension, the largest nonprofit health care provider in the country, Seton is actively involved in social justice and is committed to improving the social and economic conditions that affect the diverse populations we serve. In addition, Seton leaders, physicians and associates are active participants in strategic discussions about the most pressing social and economic issues affecting the communities we serve (e.g., transportation, education, affordable housing).

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### **Seton's mission statement:**

**Our mission inspires us to care for and improve the health of those we serve with a special concern for the poor and vulnerable. We are called to be a sign of God's unconditional love for all and believe that all persons by their creation are endowed with dignity. Seton continues the Catholic tradition of service established by our founders: Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac and Elizabeth Ann Seton.**

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## **5. Conclusion**

Seton recognizes it takes the entire community, working together over many years, to improve the health and the wellbeing of individuals. As we have for more than 100 years, we will continue to collaborate and partner to address the needs in our communities.

Developing this Community Health Needs Assessment was a collaborative effort. Seton wishes to acknowledge and thank the many organizations, individuals and experts who participated in the 2016 CHNA process. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to working together to improve the health of the communities we share.

## 6. Appendix

### 6.1. Summary of Hays County Health Resources





















The chart below provides a high-level overview of the health care resources available in the Hays County, including acute care facilities (hospitals), primary and specialty care clinics and practices, mental health providers and other nonprofit services that address the social determinants of health such as transportation, affordable housing, poverty and nutrition. Many of the facilities and organizations listed below are potential resources to address the health needs identified in this CHNA. *The list is not intended to be exhaustive.*

<b>Acute Care</b>	<b>Primary &amp; Specialty Care</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>Government &amp; Nonprofit</b>
Central Texas Medical Center	2 CommuniCare clinics (Federally Qualified Health Centers)	Hill Country Community MHDD Centers	Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital of Kyle
Seton Medical Center Hays	2 Live Oak Health Partners Community Clinic	Oceans Behavioral Hospital	Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)
	2 Seton RediClinics		San Marcos Housing Authority
	Seton primary care practice in Kyle		Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS)
	Urgent care clinics		County Indigent Health Care Program
			Catholic Charities
			YMCA

## 6.2. Robert Wood Johnson County Rankings

The Robert Wood Johnson *County Health Rankings* measure the health of nearly all U.S. counties and rank them within states. The rankings are compiled using county-level measures from many different national and state data sources. These measures are standardized and combined using scientifically-informed weights.

For more information, visit: [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

Comparison of Hays County Stats to Texas and U.S. (Tables)				
	Top 5% of U.S. counties			
	Top 25% of U.S. counties			
	Average			
	Bottom 25% of U.S. counties			
	Bottom 5% of U.S. counties			
<i>Table 1</i>				
		Texas	U.S.	Hays
High school graduation rate		89.1%	82.2%	 90.2%
Some college		58.6%	63.0%	 68.6%
Unemployment		5.5%	6.6%	 4.7%
Children in poverty		25.3%	21.6%	 15.0%
Children in single parent households		33.2%	33.0%	 26.0%
<i>Table 2</i>				
		Texas	U.S.	Hays
Uninsured rates		25.2%	17.0%	 22.0%
Rate of primary care physicians		58.5	74.5	 46.7
Preventable hospital stays		62.9	59.3	 52.2
Diabetic monitoring (HbA1c)		83.3%	85.0%	 85.6%
Mammography screening		58.9%	63.0%	 60.2%
<i>Table 3</i>				
		Texas	U.S.	Hays
Premature death		6,650	6,622	 4,767
Poor or fair health		17.8%	16.0%	 13.3%
Poor physical health days		3.7	3.7	 3.4
Poor mental health days		3.3	3.4	 3.0
Low birthweight		8.4%	8.0%	 7.5%

### 6.3. Organizations Represented in Interviews and Focus Groups

Seton, SDF and CTMC collaborated with three entities to complete the CHNA:

- MIA Consulting (Demographic and health data collection and analysis)
- Nybeck Consulting (Community input)
- Mindstorm Consulting (Report preparation)

In-depth interviews and focus groups were used to gather input from the community about the health care needs of Hays County. The lists below detail the organizations that formally participated in the interviews and/or focus groups. The collaborators also launched an online survey to further refine the qualitative research findings and help rank the community health priorities.

<b>Organizations Represented by Focus Group Participants</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>
Community Action	Community-based organization
Hays County Food Bank	Community-based organization
Hays ISD	Public education, health in schools
Parish Nurse Program	Safety net clinic
San Marcos Healthy City Task Force	Community-based organization
WIC	State, county, city health dept.
<b>Organizations Represented by Interviewees</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>
CAPCOG	Community-based organization
CommuniCare Health Centers	Safety net clinic
Greater San Marcos Partnership	Economic/business
Hays CISD	Public education, health in schools
Hays County Commissioners Court	State, county, city health dept.
Hays-Caldwell Women's Center	Community-based organization
Live Oak Health Partners Community Clinic	Hospital
Methodist Healthcare Ministries	Safety net clinic
Seton Medical Center Hays	Hospital

## 6.4. Community Health Needs Listed in Priority Order from Nybeck Consulting Report

Nybeck consultants asked focus group participants to explain the most significant community health needs facing Hays County and the people served by the participant's organizations, barriers to meeting those needs, and potential solutions. The needs are listed below in priority, according to key stakeholders' responses to the online survey and a qualitative assessment of the interviews and focus group.

**Resources and services supporting healthy lifestyles.** *According to participants, a lack of education and economic inequalities lead to poor lifestyle decisions such as unhealthy diets and a lack of exercise. Diabetes is a significant health problem, partly due to lack of access to healthy foods and lack of knowledge about healthy eating. Assessment participants stressed the need for community-based strategies and interventions at early ages that promote healthy behaviors. They also suggested education and services to manage diabetes and other chronic diseases.*

**Resources and services to combat poverty.** *Hays County has relatively high poverty rates, and participants emphasized that a lack of socio-economic resources is the root cause of most community health concerns. They suggested more local partnerships to address poverty.*

**Mental and behavioral health care.** *There are very few mental and behavioral healthcare resources aimed at serving the mental health needs of the community, especially children, before emergencies develop. Assessment participants raised concerns about residents with very serious mental health problems who often require extensive treatment and case management. The County, the hospital emergency rooms, the police department, and school counselors often have to respond to crises. Suggestions included: early intervention services, strengthening and expanding integrated behavioral health care, and intensive outpatient treatment for serious mental health or substance abuse concerns.*

**Primary health care.** *There is a provider shortage in Hays County. Assessment participants suggested expanding primary health care into public schools.*

**More robust transportation system.** *Many residents do not have cars, and public transportation options are extremely limited. Participants reported a direct link between transportation problems, inability to get to health care facilities, and an overutilization of emergency department services. Some service is needed to help residents get to their appointments, return home from the hospital, and pick up their medications. Participants suggested an expansion of bus services, a voucher program run by public or private entities, a delivery service for medications, and coordination and co-location of social services.*

**Affordable housing.** *There is a lack of affordable housing in the area. In San Marcos, the university caters to students who need apartments or rooms for rent,*

*and other cities in Hays have a limited inventory of affordable housing. Several participants explicitly linked housing to health.*

**Resources and treatment for substance abuse.** *Assessment participants raised concerns about people with substance abuse problems who require extensive treatment and case management. Drug overdoses of illegal and prescription medication are common. Participants expressed concern over the lack of treatment services.*

**Patient navigation and education about available resources.** *Many health problems are exacerbated by the challenges of finding providers, navigating the health care system, and managing medication. Case managers and patient navigators, embedded into inpatient and outpatient care, can help patients with these issues.*

**Reproductive health services and teen pregnancy prevention.** *There is a relatively high rate of teen pregnancy in Hays County and a relatively high prevalence rate of STDs compared to Texas. There continues to be a need for high-quality education in schools about sexual health and responsibility.*

**Dental care.** *Many people in Hays County do not receive routine dental care and often wait until a serious dental issue occurs before seeking care. Participants suggested expanding education about dental health and dental services. One interviewee suggested that dental care be further integrated into primary care.*

## 6.5. Previous CHNA Efforts & Progress

### 2013 CHNA Prioritized Needs

Seton conducted its first CHNA for Hays County in 2013. The CHNA identified the following prioritized needs for FY 2014-2016:

1. Access to Care
2. Chronic Disease and Disease Management
3. Behavioral Health
4. Obesity
5. Community Collaboration

Seton Healthcare Family and Seton Medical Center Hays (SMCH) have worked to address these needs in Hays County. This appendix includes a summary of the impact Seton has made on these community needs in Seton Fiscal Years 2014 - 2016 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2016).

### Additional Methodology- Comments on the 2013 CHNA

The previous CHNA report for SMCH was made available online at <https://www.seton.net/locations/seton-medical-center-hays/>. The public were invited to submit comments via email to [kabney@seton.org](mailto:kabney@seton.org). No comments were received on this CHNA.

### Progress & Impact on Community Health Needs

Need	Strategy	Progress & Impact
Access to Care	1. Collaboration with CommuniCare Health Centers of Central Texas	SMCH works in partnership with CommuniCare Health Centers, a full-service primary healthcare system serving Hays County. This Federally Qualified Health Center offers an array of primary care services including pediatric care, family medicine, senior care, women's health, dental, behavioral health, minor surgery, WIC services, and vision care. Seton relies on the services and care provided by CommuniCare to better meet the health care needs of Hays County residents.
	2. Children's Care-A-Van-Children's Primary Care Mobile Clinic	Seton Edgar B. Davis Hospital Children's Care-A-Van serves children in Caldwell, Hays, Gonzales, Travis, Guadalupe, and Bastrop Counties at local area schools and churches. The Care-A-Van responds to a need for affordable and accessible





Obesity	1. Diabetes Education Program	Through the Diabetes Education Program, patients improve diabetes self-management, including improved blood sugar control, dietary intake, physical activity, and BMI/ weight loss. The program served 3,362 patients in Caldwell, Hays, Williamson, and Travis Counties from 2014 to 2016.
Community Collaboration	<p>1. Heath Information Exchange (HIE) through the Integrated Care Collaboration (ICC)</p> <p>2. Hays Healthy Communities Collaborative</p>	<p>Since 1997, Seton Healthcare Family has provided staff and financial resources to this unique collaboration which stimulates creative thinking for managing health care for uninsured Central Texans through shared data, medical records and enrollment criteria. During FY15, the ICC's ICare system increased captured data to 2,020,796 encounters with 509,508 unique uninsured or underinsured individuals.</p> <p>Seton participated in an inter-disciplinary coalition of multiple nonprofit organizations and agencies working to improve the health of Hays County. The collaborative disbanded in 2016.</p>