

ISSUE BRIEF



Kansas Hospitals and Health Systems Engaging in Population Health: *Findings from the 2023 Population Health Survey of Kansas Hospitals*



Kansas hospitals are an integral part of the health care system, essential to vibrant communities across our state. While hospitals provide care 24 hours per day, every day of the year, they also are increasingly focused on improving the health of their communities beyond the hospitals' walls. This issue brief summarizes results of a recent survey of Kansas hospitals to measure and describe population health efforts of hospitals.

The Kansas Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Healthworks, the Kansas Hospital Association and the Kansas Health Institute partnered to create and conduct this survey of Kansas hospitals and systems regarding population health activities in which their facilities are engaged. Eighty-four of the 123 acute care community hospitals in Kansas responded to the survey, for a 68.3 percent response rate. Sixty-nine percent of total respondents were Critical Access Hospitals. Of the 82 Kansas CAHs, 70.7 percent (58), completed the survey. Hospitals from each of the six KHA districts across the state responded.

This survey follows a prior population health survey conducted in 2018. This continued work provides an update on population health awareness and activities implemented among Kansas hospitals.

Key Points

- Almost nine in 10 (86.9 percent) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their hospital should focus on addressing the health of their community beyond their patient population.
- More than half (58.4 percent) of respondents agreed that their hospital should address health-related social needs (e.g., housing, transportation, poverty, education) within their community.
- Respondents are most aware of community needs related to access to health care (94.1 percent) and transportation (94.1 percent).
- More than 85 percent of respondents were aware of community needs related to access to childcare, physical activities, employment opportunities, healthy food and housing.
- Increasing access to health care was the main area (89.3 percent) in which respondents implemented population health efforts.
- Employment opportunities (71.4 percent) and access to physical activities (66.7 percent) were the second and third most-selected areas in which respondents had implemented population health efforts.
- Most respondents (78.6 percent) considered health equity during planning and while implementing population health activities.

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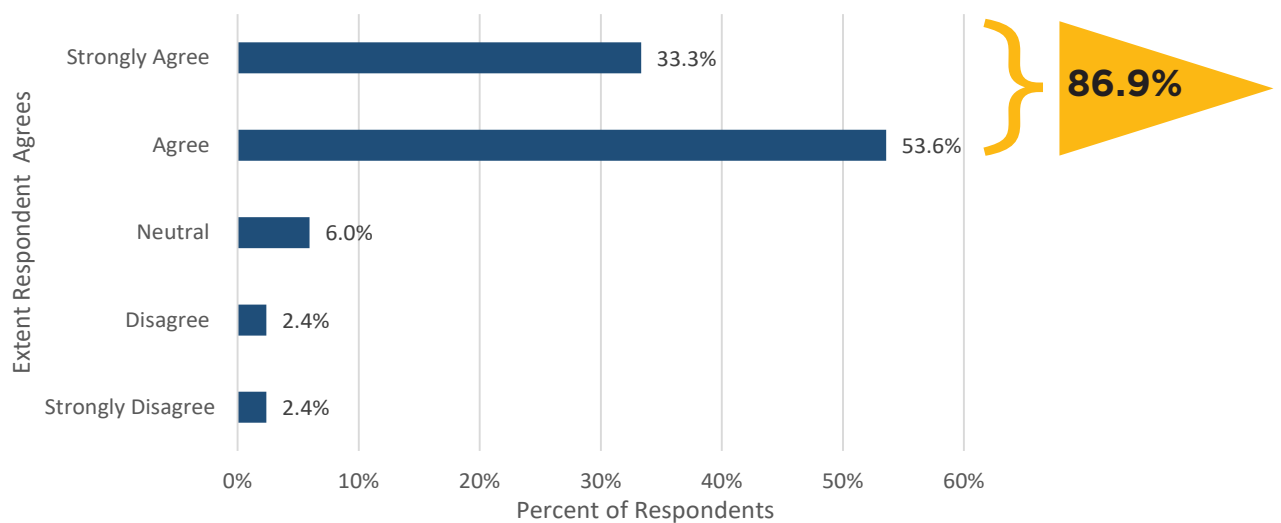


This work, funded by KDHE through the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program informs support of population health activities as part of the Kansas FLEX program.

Awareness and Views on Population Health

Hospitals were asked to describe their views on hospital engagement in terms of population health and awareness of their community's needs that impact health. Almost nine in 10 (86.9 percent) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their hospital should focus on addressing the health of their community beyond their patient population. More than half (58.4 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their hospital should address health-related social needs within their community, such as housing, transportation, poverty and education. With respect to awareness of community needs in different population health areas, respondents indicated the most awareness of needs related to access to health care (94.1 percent) and transportation (94.0 percent). Access to childcare (88.1 percent) and access to physical activity (88.1 percent), employment opportunities (86.9 percent), access to healthy food (86.9 percent) and housing (85.7 percent) were also community needs wherein respondents indicated a high degree of awareness. Community needs related to environmental issues (58.3 percent) had the least awareness among survey respondents.

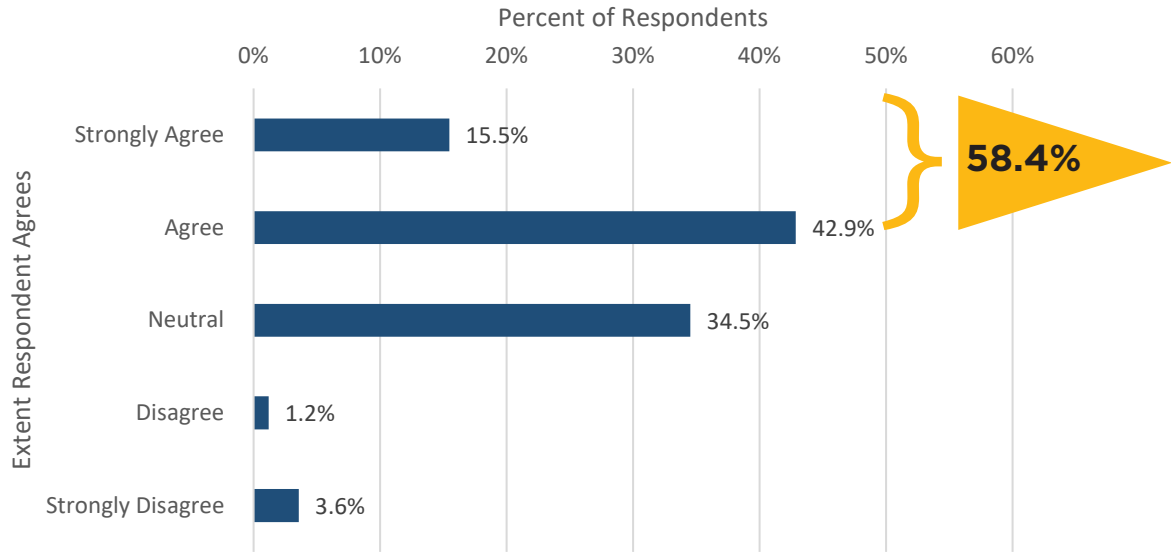
Should Hospitals Focus on Addressing the Health of Populations Beyond Patients? (n=84)



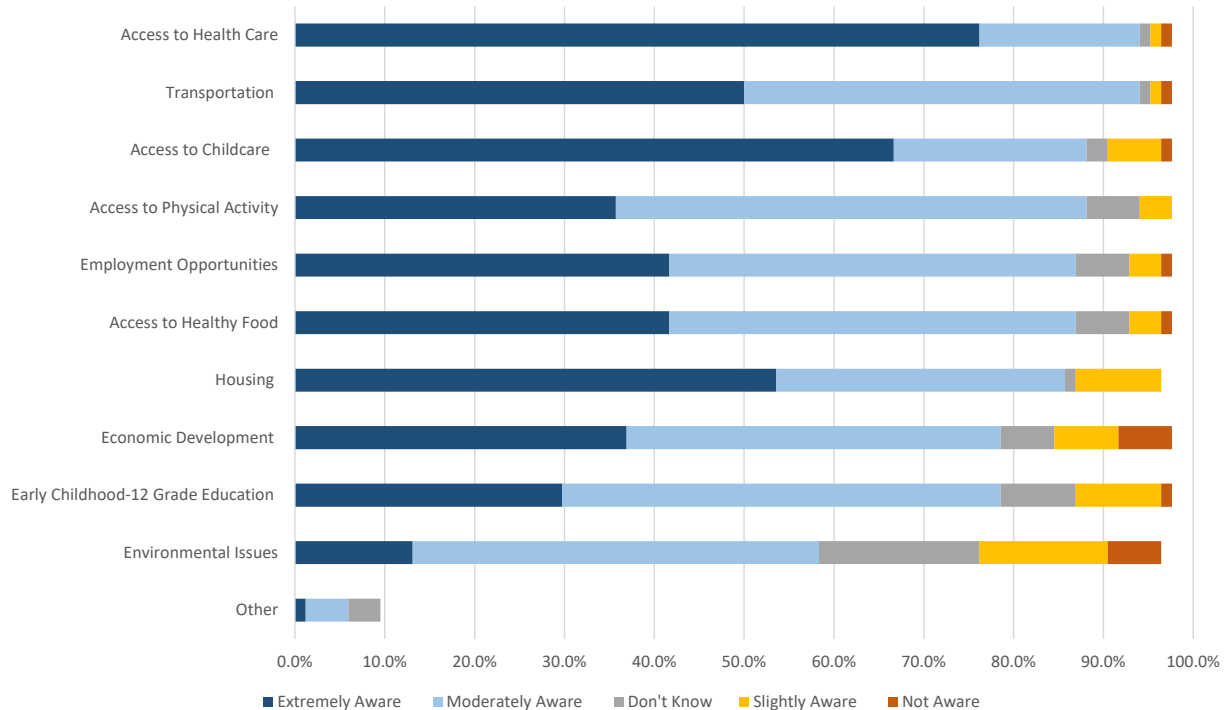
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Should Hospitals Address Social and Economic Factors? (n=84)



Hospitals' Awareness of Community Needs (n=84)



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Population Health Activities Implemented by Hospitals

Survey respondents were asked to select which population health areas their hospital had implemented efforts in their community.

Within the area of increasing access to health care services, the top three activities were 1) the provision of care coordination, 2) offering telehealth services, and 3) provision of assistance with enrolling in health insurance. While respondents indicated that care coordination and telehealth services were offered primarily to patients, assistance with enrollment in health insurance coverage was offered more frequently to both patients and nonpatient populations in the community.

Regarding employment opportunities, respondents indicated that supporting training programs was an area where their focus was on hospital staff (49.2 percent) and community members (38.3 percent). The top three employment activities were 1) supports training programs, 2) integrates focus on employment into the organization's strategic plan, and 3) provides training programs. Respondents indicated that training programs focus mainly on hospital staff (43.3 percent). Some hospitals did indicate providing this service to both patients and nonpatient populations in the community (28.3 percent). While 50.0 percent of respondents indicated that their integration of an employment focus in their organization's strategic plan involved hospital staff only, 35.0 percent of respondents indicated their hospital's strategic plan focused on both patients and nonpatients employment in the community. Similarly, 40.0 percent of respondents indicated that their support on training program focused on hospital staff only and 38.3 percent of respondents indicated the support focused on both patients and non-patient populations in the community.

Access to physical activity was the third most selected area (66.7 percent) in which survey respondents indicated that they have implemented efforts. Within this area, the most frequently implemented activity that respondents selected (69.6 percent) was the support of community assessments for physical activity opportunities in the community. More than half (51.8 percent) of respondents indicated that their facility integrates access to physical activity into their strategic plan.

Top 3 Findings

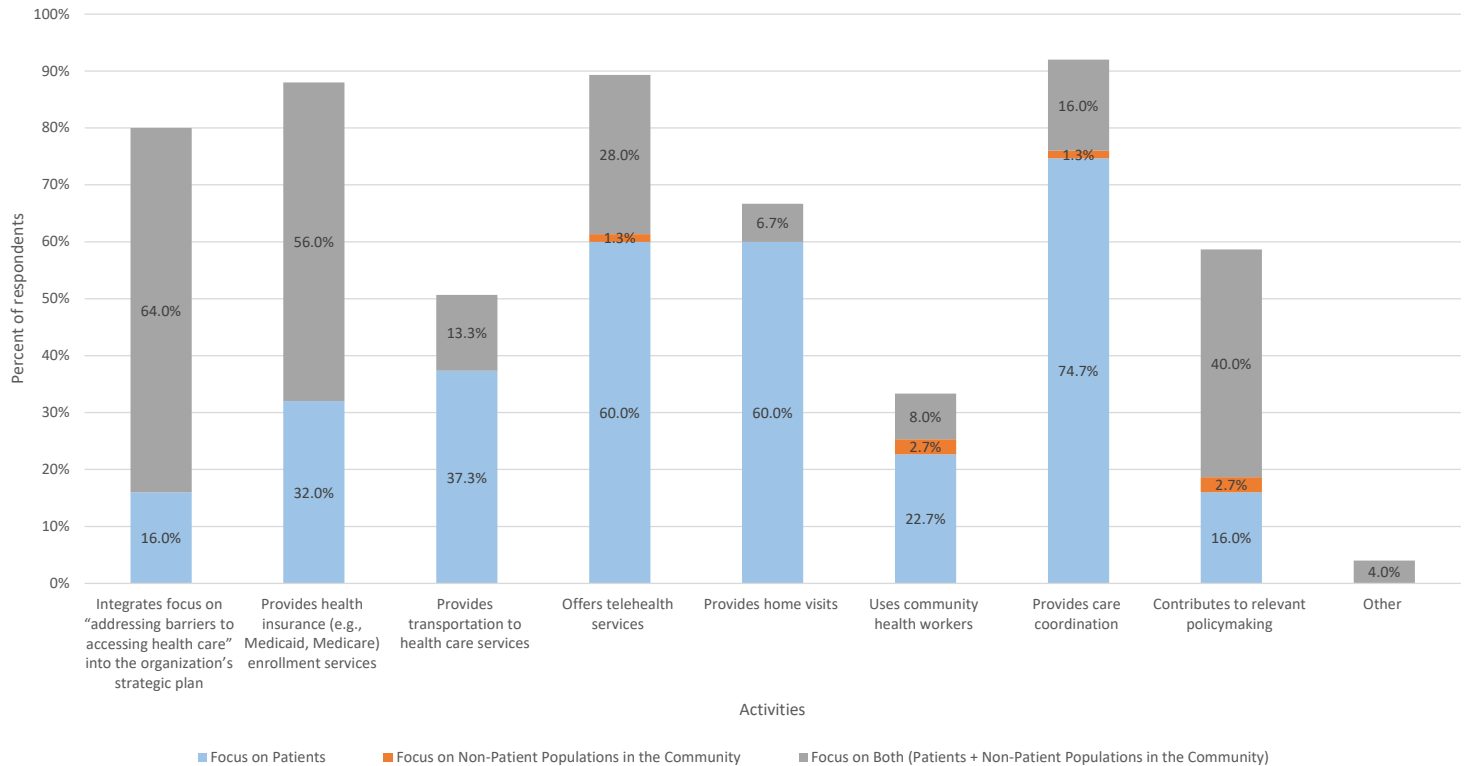
Activities related to increasing access to health care (89.3 percent), employment opportunities (71.4 percent) and access to physical activity (66.7 percent) were the top three areas in which hospitals had implemented population health efforts.



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Hospital Activities Specific to Access to Health Care (n=75)



Health Equity

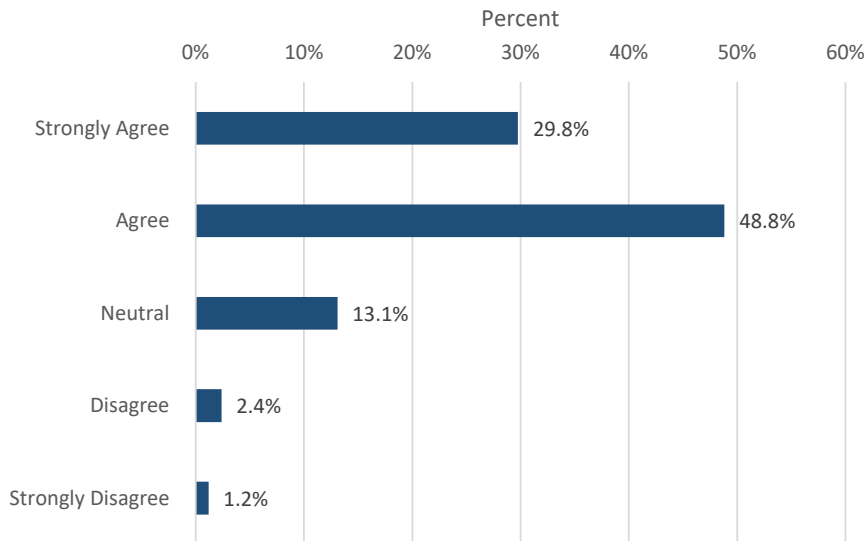
Hospitals surveyed were asked to what extent they agree that their hospital considers health equity in the planning and implementation of population health activities. Most respondents (78.6 percent) noted that their facility considers health equity during planning and implementation of population health activities. "Health equity" was defined, for the purpose of this survey, as everyone having a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health, such as poverty, discrimination and related consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.

Survey responses indicated that the top three steps that hospitals take to ensure population health activities apply to all members of the community include: collecting data on patient satisfaction; maintaining partnerships with community-based organizations that understand needs and challenges within the community; and conduct a community health needs assessment to identify community health needs.

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Extent Hospitals Consider Health Equity in the Planning and Implementation of Population Health Activities (n=84)



When asked about how hospitals measure and monitor health needs and outcomes in their population health efforts, about (48.7 percent) of survey respondents indicated that their facility collected data on patient demographics, health needs and outcomes. However, almost three in 10 (29.8 percent) respondents indicated that they were unsure if their hospital gathered such data.

Regarding the strategies used in addressing language and culture barriers, half (50 percent) of respondents indicated that their hospitals conduct cultural competency training for hospital staff and implement policies that support effective communication with patients whose primary language is not English (45.2 percent). Many other services to address language and culture barriers have been provided as 88.1 percent of respondents indicated that they offer other services besides access to medical interpreters, such as translated health education materials and documents, staff training, and policies that address language and cultural barriers.

Top 3 Strategies to Improve Data Collection and Analysis

- Standardizing demographic data collection across hospital departments (51.2 percent)
- Integration of demographic and social determinants of health data into electronic health records (44.0 percent)
- Reviewing and updating processes related to data collection (35.7 percent).

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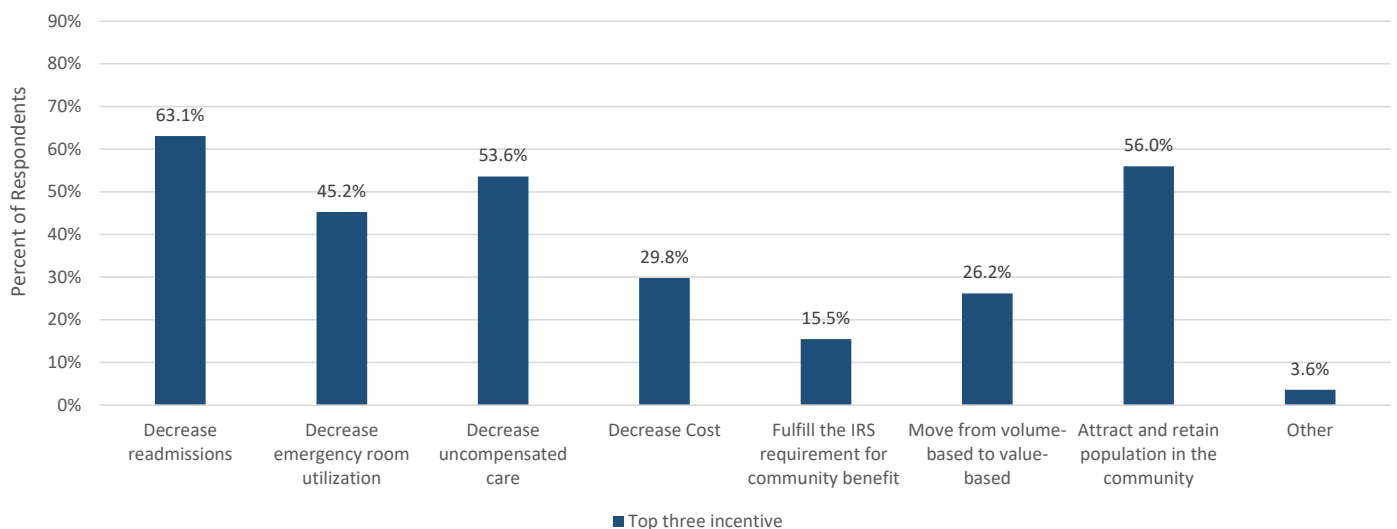


Incentives and Barriers

When asked about familiarity with legal, administrative or regulatory policies to support hospitals engagement with population health, most indicated that their facility is familiar. Only 17.9 percent of survey respondents indicated a lack of familiarity with structures or policies to support hospital engagement in population health.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their top three incentives for engaging in population health activities. The top three incentives selected by hospitals included: 1) decreasing readmissions (63.1 percent); 2) attracting and retaining the community’s population (56 percent); and 3) reducing uncompensated care (53.6 percent).

Incentives to Social and Economic Factors (n=84)



Hospitals also were asked to select their facility’s top three challenges to addressing social and economic factors and focusing on population health beyond their patients. The top three challenges hospital respondents noted included: 1) available funding (78.6 percent); 2) current reimbursement structures (71.4 percent) and 3) limited staff expertise in working on community issues (57.1 percent).

To address the top challenges, hospitals were asked to select the top three tools, resources or technical assistance needed for increasing work on population health activities. Respondents reported 1) needing help identifying funding sources (65.5 percent), 2) reimbursement for population health activities (58.3 percent) as the top tools to enhance their efforts in improving population health, and 3) help identify population health strategies (36.9 percent). Providing training to hospital staff tools, resources, or technical assistance were also identified as needed to increase population health activities.

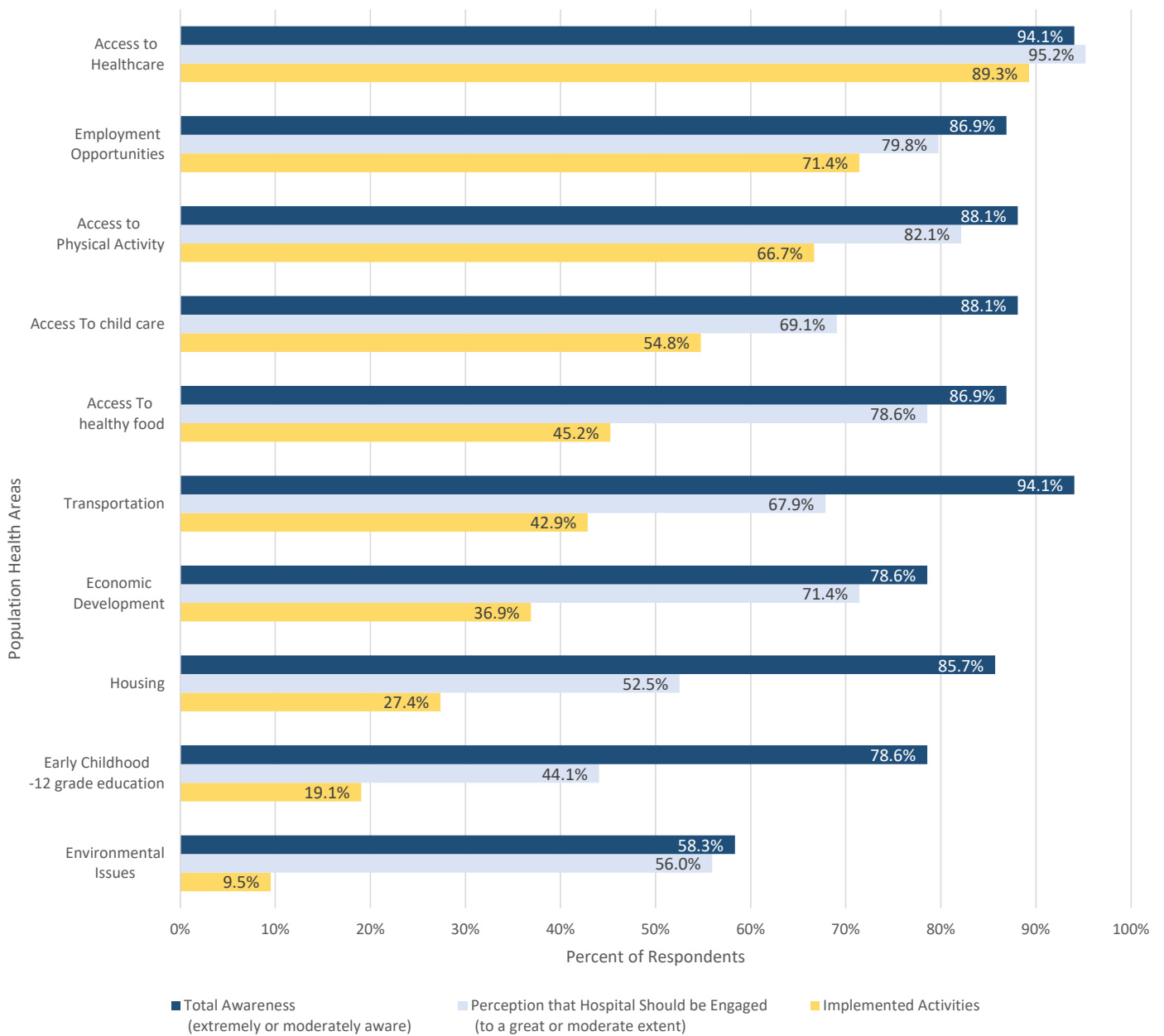
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This issue brief compared several survey responses to those from five years ago. These include awareness, interest and implemented activities by population health area. Comparison data on pages 8-10.

2023 Survey Results:

Awareness, Interest and Implemented Activities by Population Health (n=84)



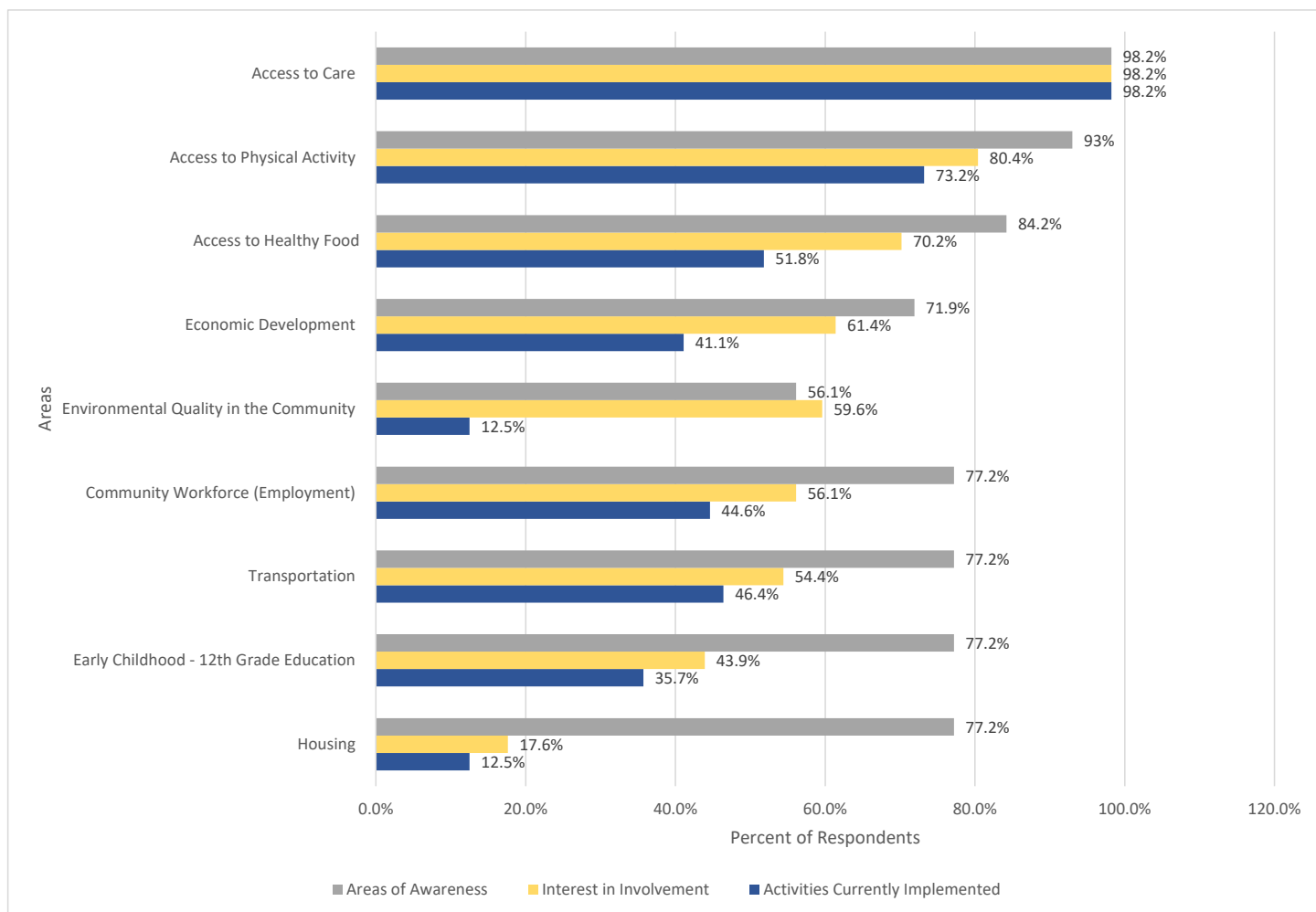
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As in 2018, access to health care was the top population health area selected in 2023 by hospitals in terms of awareness, interest and implemented population health activities. Transportation ranked higher in 2023 (in awareness and interest activities) than in 2018 and activity implementation on transportation was similar between these two years. Employment-related activities also ranked higher in 2023 than in 2018. Access to childcare was not measured in 2018 and was a new addition in 2023, with a relatively high ranking in awareness, interest and implemented activities.

2018 Survey Results

Areas by Awareness, Interest to be Involved and Implemented Activities

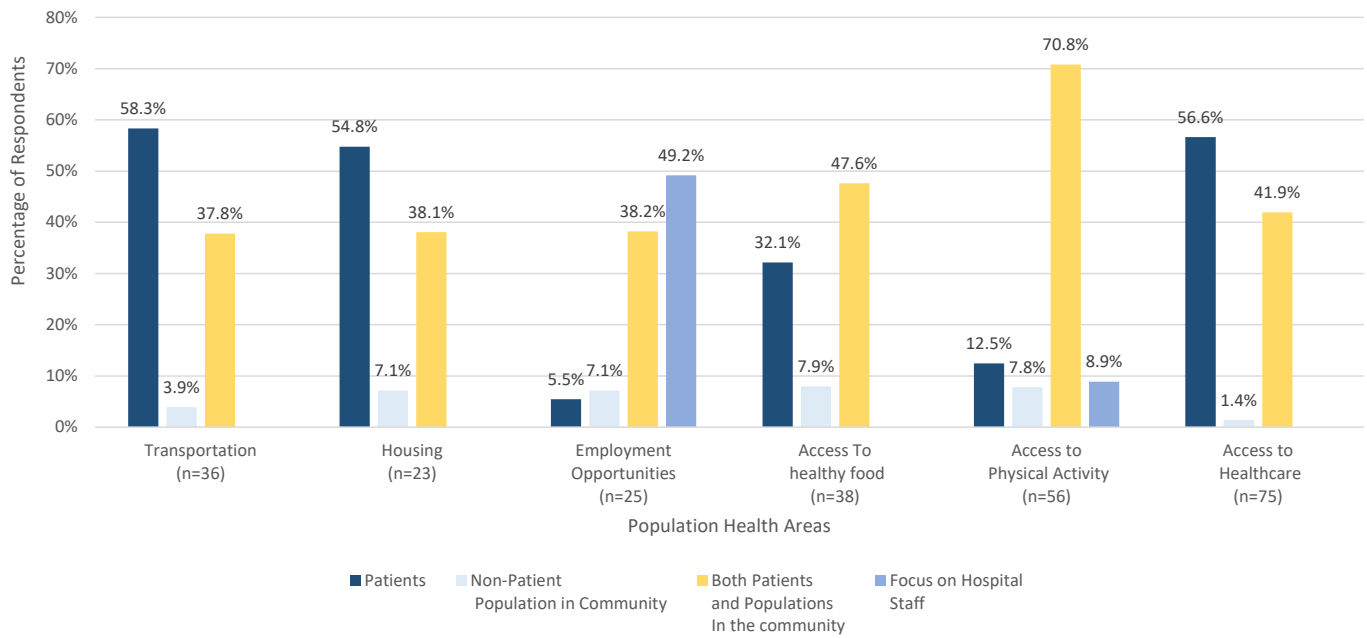


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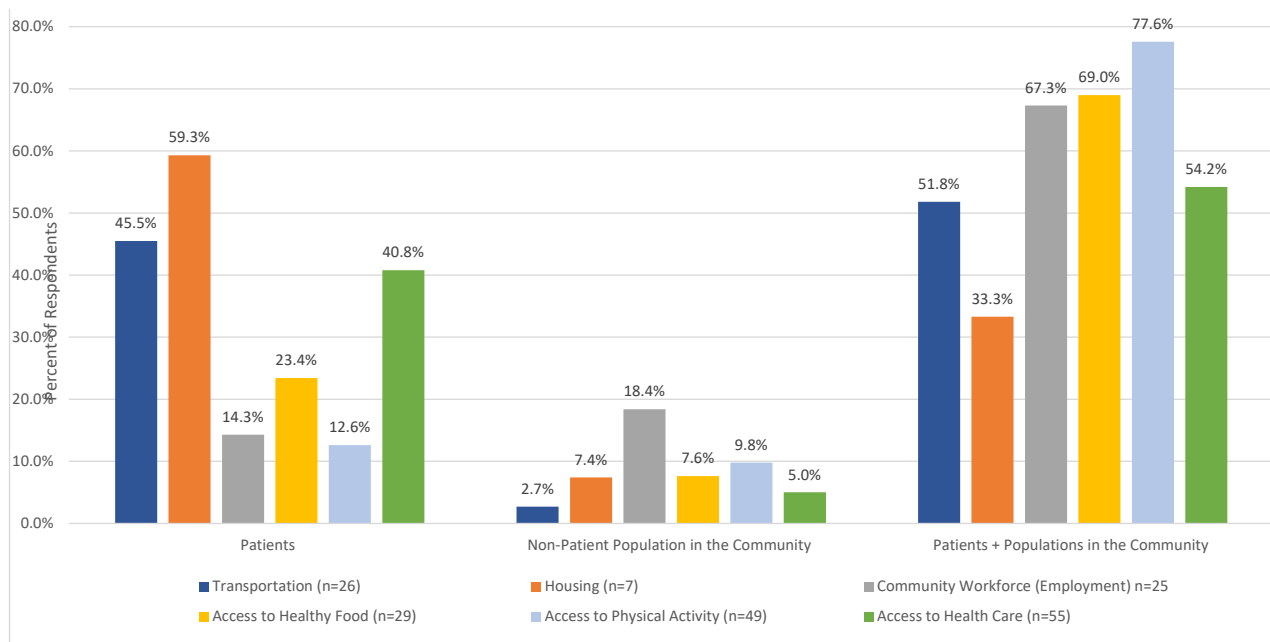
2023 Survey Results

Implemented Population Health Activities Within Each Area by Target Population (n=84)



2018 Survey Results

Implementation of Population Health Activities Within Each Area by Population



Findings from the 2023 Population Health Survey of Kansas Hospitals



Population Health Activities Implemented by Most and Fewest Respondents

Area	Most Respondents Implemented	Fewest Respondents Implemented
Transportation	Partners with/or provides transportation services to provide rides to and from the hospital	Advocates for and/or participates in implementation of policies
Housing	Provides referrals to community services	Provides subsidies for home repairs
Access to Childcare	Supports childcare initiatives in the community	Provides on-site childcare for patients
Early Childhood-12th Grade Education	Provide breastfeeding support for staff	Provides funding for water bottle refill stations at schools
Employment Opportunities	Integrates the focus on employment into the organization's strategic plan	Uses screening tools to identify needs related to unemployment or under-employment
Access to Healthy Food	Provides referrals to organizations like local food pantries, emergency food organizations, etc.	Hospital provides on-site farmer's market
Access to Physical Activity	Supports assessment of opportunities for physical activity in the community and facilitates or supports physical activity in community settings	Established a bikeshare program
Access to Health Care	Provides care coordination	Uses community health workers
Economic Development	Participates in community planning efforts	Supports local businesses
Environmental Issues	Contributes to the development of green infrastructure	Contributes to the assessment of air quality
Equity	Collects data patient care satisfaction	Provides health education and outreach to community members at risk for poorer health outcomes

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In Conclusion

Results from the 2023 population health survey demonstrate increased awareness, support and implementation of population health activities compared to the 2018 survey results, with nearly 9 in 10 (86.9 percent) hospital respondents indicating agreement or strong agreement that hospitals should focus on addressing the health of their community beyond their patient population. More than half (58.4 percent) of respondents agreed that their hospital should address health-related social needs, such as housing, transportation, poverty and education within their community. The health-related social needs that hospital respondents indicated they are most aware of include access to health care, transportation, childcare, physical activity, employment opportunities, healthy food and housing. These survey results provide valuable information to partner organizations as they work to support Kansas hospitals in addressing the needs of their patients and communities.

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Thanks you to all the Kansas hospitals who participated in the survey!

Sources

[Survey Findings Issue Brief: How Can Kansas Hospitals and Health Systems Engage in Population Health?](#) (2018)

[What is Health Equity?](#) (2017) Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Additional information may be found at www.krhop.net

