

## Summary Report

# 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment Report

## Vernon Parish

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The Rapides Foundation

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# Introduction



**Professional Research Consultants, Inc.**

## About This Assessment

This Community Health Needs Assessment, a follow-up to similar studies conducted in 2002, 2005, 2010, and 2013, is a systematic, data-driven approach to determining the health status, behaviors and needs of residents in Vernon Parish, as part of a larger study conducted by The Rapides Foundation. Subsequently, this information may be used to inform decisions and guide efforts to improve community health and wellness.

A Community Health Needs Assessment provides information so that communities may identify issues of greatest concern and decide to commit resources to those areas, thereby making the greatest possible impact on community health status.

This assessment was conducted on behalf of The Rapides Foundation by Professional Research Consultants, Inc. (PRC). PRC is a nationally-recognized healthcare consulting firm with extensive experience conducting Community Health Needs Assessments in hundreds of communities across the United States since 1994.

## Methodology

This assessment incorporates data from both quantitative and qualitative sources. Quantitative data input includes primary research (the PRC Community Health Survey) and secondary research (vital statistics and other existing health-related data); these quantitative components allow for comparison to benchmark data at the state and national levels. Qualitative data input includes primary research gathered through an Online Key Informant Survey of various community stakeholders.

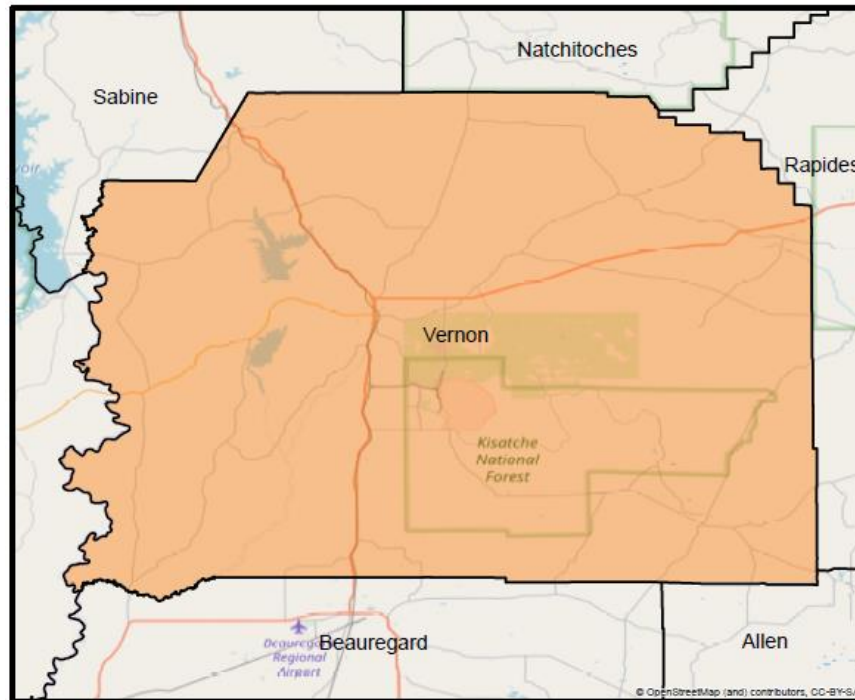
## PRC Community Health Survey

### Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used for this study is based largely on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), as well as various other public health surveys and customized questions addressing gaps in indicator data relative to health promotion and disease prevention objectives and other recognized health issues. The final survey instrument was developed by The Rapides Foundation and PRC.

### Community Defined for This Assessment

The focus of the data presented in this report is Vernon Parish, Louisiana.



### Sample Approach & Design

A precise and carefully executed methodology is critical in asserting the validity of the results gathered in the PRC Community Health Survey. Thus, to ensure the best representation of the population surveyed, a mixed-mode methodology was implemented. This included surveys conducted via telephone (landline and cell phone), as well as through online questionnaires.

The sample design used for this effort included a random sample of 400 individuals age 18 and older in Vernon Parish. All administration of the surveys, data collection and data analysis were conducted by PRC.

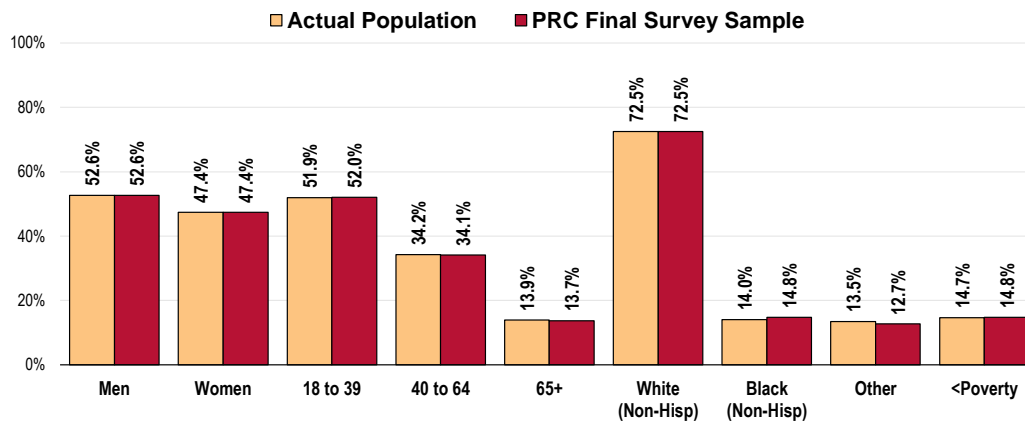
For statistical purposes, the maximum rate of error associated with a sample size of 400 respondents is  $\pm 4.9\%$  at the 95 percent confidence level.

### Sample Characteristics

To accurately represent the population studied, PRC strives to minimize bias through application of a proven telephone methodology and random-selection techniques. While this random sampling of the population produces a highly representative sample, it is a common and preferred practice to “weight” the raw data to improve this representativeness even further. This is accomplished by adjusting the results of a random sample to match the geographic distribution and demographic characteristics of the population surveyed (poststratification), so as to eliminate any naturally occurring bias.

The following chart outlines the characteristics of the Vernon Parish sample for key demographic variables, compared to actual population characteristics revealed in census data. [Note that the sample consisted solely of area residents age 18 and older; data on children were given by proxy by the person most responsible for that child’s healthcare needs, and these children are not represented demographically in this chart.]

## Population & Survey Sample Characteristics (Vernon Parish, 2018)



Sources: • 2011-2015 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.  
 • PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

Further note that the poverty descriptions and segmentation used in this report are based on administrative poverty thresholds determined by the US Department of Health & Human Services. These guidelines define poverty status by household income level and number of persons in the household (e.g., the 2018 guidelines place the poverty threshold for a family of four at \$25,100 annual household income or lower). In sample segmentation: “**low income**” refers to community members living in a household with defined poverty status or living just above the poverty level and earning up to twice (<200% of) the poverty threshold; “**mid/high income**” refers to those households living on incomes which are twice or more (≥200% of) the federal poverty level.

The sample design and the quality control procedures used in the data collection ensure that the sample is representative. Thus, the findings may be generalized to the total population of community members in the defined area with a high degree of confidence.

### Online Key Informant Survey

To solicit input from key informants, those individuals who have a broad interest in the health of the community, an Online Key Informant Survey also was implemented as part of this process. A list of recommended participants was provided by The Rapides Foundation; this list included names and contact information for physicians, public health representatives, other health professionals, social service providers, and a variety of other community leaders. Potential participants were chosen because of their ability to identify primary concerns of the populations with whom they work, as well as of the community overall.

Key informants were contacted by email, introducing the purpose of the survey and providing a link to take the survey online; reminder emails were sent as needed to increase participation. In all, 8 community stakeholders in Vernon Parish (and 1 who works more broadly throughout Central Louisiana) took part in the Online Key Informant Survey. Final participation included representatives of the organizations in the following list:

- [CASA of West Cenla, Inc.](#)
- [Hicks High School](#)
- [Iberia Comprehensive Community Health Center](#)
- [Northwest Louisiana Human Services District](#)
- [Tri Parish Rehabilitation Hospital, LLC](#)
- [Vernon Arts Council](#)
- [Vernon Baptist Association](#)

Through this process, input was gathered from several individuals whose organizations work with low-income, minority, or other medically underserved populations.

In the online survey, key informants were asked to rate the degree to which various health issues are a problem in their own community. Follow-up questions asked them to describe why they identify problem areas as such, and how these might better be addressed. Results of their ratings, as well as their verbatim comments, are included throughout this report as they relate to the various other data presented.

*NOTE: These findings represent qualitative rather than quantitative data. The Online Key Informant Survey was designed to gather input regarding participants' opinions and perceptions of the health needs of the residents in the area. Thus, these findings are not necessarily based on fact.*

## Public Health, Vital Statistics & Other Data

A variety of existing (secondary) data sources was consulted to complement the research quality of this Community Health Needs Assessment. Data for Vernon Parish were obtained from the following sources (specific citations are included with the graphs throughout this report):

- [Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems \(CARES\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Office of Infectious Disease, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Office of Public Health Science Services, Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology and Laboratory Services, Division of Health Informatics and Surveillance \(DHIS\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Office of Public Health Science Services, National Center for Health Statistics](#)
- [Community Commons](#)
- [ESRI ArcGIS Map Gallery](#)
- [Louisiana Department of Health](#)
- [National Cancer Institute, State Cancer Profiles](#)
- [OpenStreetMap \(OSM\)](#)
- [US Census Bureau, American Community Survey](#)
- [US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns](#)
- [US Census Bureau, Decennial Census](#)
- [US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service](#)



- US Department of Health & Human Services
- US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation
- US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Benchmark Data

### Trending

A similar survey was administered in Vernon Parish in 2002, 2005, 2010, and 2013 by PRC on behalf of The Rapides Foundation. Trending data, as revealed by comparison to prior survey results, are provided throughout this report whenever available. Historical data for secondary data indicators are also included for the purposes of trending.

### Regional Data

Because this Vernon Parish survey was part of a larger project covering much of Central Louisiana, comparisons can also be made for many indicators to the broader Rapides Foundation Service Area (referred to as the “RFSA” throughout this report). The RFSA is composed of data from nine Louisiana parishes: Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn.

### Louisiana Risk Factor Data

Statewide risk factor data are provided where available as an additional benchmark against which to compare local survey findings; these data are reported in the most recent *BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System) Prevalence and Trend Data* published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Department of Health & Human Services. State-level vital statistics are also provided for comparison of secondary data indicators.

### Nationwide Risk Factor Data

Nationwide risk factor data, which are also provided in comparison charts, are taken from the *2017 PRC National Health Survey*; the methodological approach for the national study is similar to that employed in this assessment, and these data may be generalized to the US population with a high degree of confidence. National-level vital statistics are also provided for comparison of secondary data indicators.

### Healthy People 2020

Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. The Healthy People initiative is grounded in the principle that setting national objectives and monitoring progress can motivate action. For three decades, Healthy People has established benchmarks and monitored progress over time in order to:

- Encourage collaborations across sectors.
- Guide individuals toward making informed health decisions.
- Measure the impact of prevention activities.



Healthy People 2020 is the product of an extensive stakeholder feedback process that is unparalleled in government and health. It integrates input from public health and prevention experts, a wide range of federal, state and local government officials, a consortium of more than 2,000 organizations, and perhaps most importantly, the public. More than 8,000 comments were considered in drafting a comprehensive set of Healthy People 2020 objectives.

### **Determining Significance**

Differences noted in this report represent those determined to be significant. For survey-derived indicators (which are subject to sampling error), statistical significance is determined based on confidence intervals (at the 95 percent confidence level) using question-specific samples and response rates. For the purpose of this report, “significance,” of secondary data indicators (which do not carry sampling error but might be subject to reporting error) is determined by a 5% variation from the comparative measure.

### **Information Gaps**

While this assessment is quite comprehensive, it cannot measure all possible aspects of health in the community, nor can it adequately represent all possible populations of interest. It must be recognized that these information gaps might in some ways limit the ability to assess all of the community’s health needs.

For example, certain population groups — such as the homeless, institutionalized persons, or those who only speak a language other than English or Spanish — are not represented in the survey data. Other population groups — for example, pregnant women, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender residents, undocumented residents, and members of certain racial/ethnic or immigrant groups — might not be identifiable or might not be represented in numbers sufficient for independent analyses.

In terms of content, this assessment was designed to provide a comprehensive and broad picture of the health of the overall community. However, there are certainly medical conditions that are not specifically addressed.

# Summary of Findings



Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

## Key Data Findings

This summary presents key findings from the data collected for Vernon Parish for the 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment sponsored by The Rapides Foundation. These include data collected through a (phone and internet-based) random sample population survey, an internet-based survey of key informants, and a review of existing public health data.

Highlighted are differences found when comparing to national data, as well as changes that have occurred since a similar survey was first implemented in Vernon Parish in 2002.

### HEALTH STATUS



**Self-Reported Health Status.** 23.5% of Vernon Parish adults characterize their overall health as “fair” or “poor” — this is significantly higher than reported nationally (18.1%) and represents a significant increase from the 17.4% first measured in Vernon Parish in 2002.

**Activity Limitations.** 28.3% of Vernon Parish adults are limited in some way in some activities because of a health-related issue. Again, this is much higher than first found in 2002 (17.7%).

**Mental Health.** 31.4% of Vernon Parish residents have experienced bouts of depression lasting two or more years during their lives. A total of 27.5% have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder by a healthcare professional (higher than the 21.6% nationwide). Overall, 32.3% of the population have ever sought help for mental health, and 6.0% report a time in the past year when they needed such services but were unable to get them.

### DEATH & CHRONIC DISEASE



**Causes of Death.** Cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) and cancers are leading causes of death in Vernon Parish. Compared to US rates, age-adjusted death rates for many leading causes of death are generally higher in Vernon Parish (including heart disease, stroke, cancer, lung disease, pneumonia/influenza, diabetes, and kidney disease).

**Cancer.** A total of 8.7% of adults have ever been diagnosed with cancer (increasing significantly from the 4.5% baseline).

**Heart Disease & Stroke.** 6.9% of Vernon Parish adults report having heart disease, and 3.9% have ever suffered from a stroke.

**Diabetes.** A total of 16.2% of Vernon Parish adults have been diagnosed with diabetes. This has increased considerably from the 6.0% reported in 2002.

**Lung Disease.** 11.5% of Vernon Parish residents have been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema).

**Overweight & Obesity.** Based on reported heights and weights, four in five Vernon Parish adults (80.7%) are overweight, including 40.1% who are obese. The prevalence of obesity in the parish is higher than the nation (32.8%) and has increased significantly since 2002 (from 23.7%).

## INFANT HEALTH & FAMILY PLANNING



**Birth Outcomes.** Of all births in Vernon Parish, 8.8% are low-weight (under 2,500g). Additionally, the parish experiences an infant mortality rate of 6.2 deaths for every 1,000 live births (deaths of infants before their first birthday).

**Teen Births.** The teen birth rate in Vernon Parish is high, with 70.3 births to girls age 15-19 for every 1,000 girls in this age group (nationally, the teen birth rate is 36.6).

## INJURY & VIOLENCE



**Unintentional Injury.** Death rates due to unintentional injuries (including motor vehicle-related deaths) are similar to the nation (a rate of 44.6 versus 43.7); note that the motor vehicle death rate (21.1) is more than twice the US rate (11.0).

**Violence.** Rates of violent crime are better in Vernon Parish than they are nationwide; still, 2.4% of Vernon Parish adults report experiencing violent crime in the area in the past five years, and 17.3% report ever experiencing domestic violence (this has increased significantly over time).

## MODIFIABLE HEALTH RISKS



**Nutrition.** Only three in 10 Vernon Parish adults (30.8%) get the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day; however, this is similar to what is found nationally (33.5%) and has improved since first measured (24.2%). It is important to note that 16.2% of parish adults report difficulty getting fresh produce, and 31.5% say they “sometimes” or “often” ran out of food in the past year before having money to buy more (much higher than the 18.0% nationwide).

**Physical Activity.** Currently, only 26.8% of Vernon Parish adults meet physical activity guidelines (compared to 22.8% nationally). Further, one-quarter (25.0%) of parish adults report not engaging in any type of physical activity outside of work in the month before the survey interview.

**Blood Pressure & Cholesterol.** In comparison to 2002 findings, the proportion of adults in Vernon Parish reporting high blood pressure has considerably increased (40.7% currently versus 26.0% in 2002). A total of 29.8% of parish adults report having high blood cholesterol (lower than the 36.2% nationally). Each of these is significantly above what was first reported in 2002.

**Tobacco Use.** 31.1% of Vernon Parish adults currently smoke cigarettes, much higher than found nationally (16.3%). Another 11.5% use smokeless tobacco (versus 4.4% nationally), and 4.5% use electronic cigarettes or vaping devices.

**Cardiovascular Risk.** A very high percentage of Vernon Parish adults (91.5%) present one or more risk factors or behaviors for heart disease and stroke (including smoking, not getting physical activity, being overweight, or having high blood pressure or cholesterol). This is significantly higher than the national percentage (87.2%).

**Substance Use.** Regarding alcohol use, one-quarter (25.3%) of parish adults are considered to be “binge drinkers,” having had a high number of drinks on a single occasion during the past month (higher than the 20.0% nationally and an increase from 15.8% in 2002). Another 1.9% of adults report illicit drug use in the past month (use of illegal drugs or improper use of prescription drugs). A total of 21.9% have used prescription opiates (either legally or illegally) in the past year.

## PREVENTION



**Routine Medical Care.** More than two-thirds of parish adults (68.8%) have been to a doctor or clinic for a routine checkup in the past year.

**Cancer Screenings.** Cancer screening levels in Vernon Parish are fairly good, including for: *female breast cancer* (74.7% of women age 50-74 have had a mammogram in the past 2 years, compared to 77.0% nationally); *cervical cancer* (69.5% of women age 21-65 have had a Pap smear in the past 3 years, compared to 73.5% nationally); and *colorectal cancer* (72.3% of all adults age 50-75 have had appropriate screening, compared to 76.4% nationally). Note, however, that mammography and Pap testing have each declined significantly since 2002 (from 86.5% and 95.2%, respectively).

**Dental Care.** A relatively low proportion of adults in Vernon Parish (50.5%) have received dental care in the past year (compared to 59.7% nationally). This is also much lower than reported in Vernon Parish in 2002 (68.2%).

**Vision Care.** A total of 51.3% of Vernon Parish adults have had a comprehensive eye exam in the past two years, a prevalence that has increased since 2002 (40.8%).

## ACCESS



**Health Insurance Coverage.** A total of 5.8% of Vernon Parish adults between the ages of 18 and 64 are without any type of insurance coverage for health care, either through private or public sources. This is much better than the national average (13.7%) and a significant improvement from what was recorded in 2002 (15.5%). Still, cost remains a barrier preventing residents from getting medical care (12.1% said they did not get needed medical care in the past year because of the cost).

**Difficulties/Delays in Accessing Health Care.** A total of 39.5% of Vernon Parish adults have experienced some type of difficulty or delay in receiving health care in the past year, compared to 43.2% of adults nationwide. Difficulty finding physicians and difficulty getting timely appointments are the barriers impacting the greatest shares of adults in Vernon Parish.

**Cost of Prescriptions.** A total of 12.5% of Vernon Parish adults have gone without a needed prescription in the past year because they could not afford it.

**Emergency Room Utilization.** The proportion of Vernon Parish adults who have used a local emergency room more than once in the past year (10.7%) is similar to that found nationwide (9.3%).

## Perceptions of Key Informants

In an online survey of key informants in the area (e.g., a public health professional, physicians, other health providers, social services representatives, community leaders), the following health issues were most often characterized as “major problems” for Vernon Parish:

- Substance Abuse (75.0% said this is a “major problem” in Vernon Parish)
- Tobacco Use (62.5% “major problem”)
- Diabetes (50.0% “major problem”)

## Significant Trends

The following tables highlight both positive and negative trends observed among the health indicators assessed in this project in comparison with baseline data.

- **Survey Data Indicators:** Trends for survey-derived indicators represent significant changes since 2002 (or 2005, 2010, or 2013 for questions not asked in earlier years).
- **Other Data Indicators:** Trends for other indicators (e.g., public health data) represent point-to-point changes between the most current reporting period and the earliest presented in this report (typically representing the span of 10 to 15 years).

	○ FAVORABLE TRENDS	⬆ UNFAVORABLE TRENDS
<b>Social Determinants</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Displacement</li> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Access to Healthcare Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Healthcare Coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty Finding Physician</li> </ul>
<b>Cancer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [50-75] Colorectal Cancer Screening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevalence of Cancer</li> <li>• [Women 50-74] Mammogram</li> <li>• [Women 21-65] Pap Smear</li> </ul>
<b>Dementias</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alzheimer’s Disease Deaths</li> </ul>
<b>Diabetes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetes Deaths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetes Prevalence</li> </ul>
<b>Heart Disease &amp; Stroke</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking Action to Control High Blood Pressure</li> <li>• Cholesterol Screenings</li> <li>• Taking Action to Control High Blood Cholesterol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood Pressure Screenings</li> <li>• High Blood Pressure</li> <li>• High Blood Cholesterol</li> </ul>
<b>Injury &amp; Violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Seat Belts (Adults)</li> </ul>	
<b>Mental Health</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Fair/Poor” Mental Health</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition, Overweight &amp; Physical Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit &amp; Vegetable Consumption (Adults)</li> <li>• Medical Advice on Weight</li> <li>• Medical Advice on Nutrition</li> <li>• Medical Advice on Exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening Activity</li> <li>• Healthy Weight/Overweight/Obesity (Adults)</li> <li>• Perceptions of Community Activity Levels</li> <li>• Fruit &amp; Vegetable Consumption (Children)</li> <li>• Moderate Physical Activity (Children)</li> <li>• Screen Time (Children)</li> </ul>
<b>Oral Health</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dental Visits (Adults &amp; Children)</li> </ul>
<b>Potentially Disabling Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye Exams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Fair/Poor” Overall Health</li> <li>• Activity Limitations</li> </ul>
<b>Substance Abuse</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Binge Drinking</li> </ul>



## Summary Tables

### Comparisons With Benchmark Data

The following tables provide an overview of indicators in Vernon Parish. These data are grouped to correspond with the Focus Areas presented in Healthy People 2020.






#### Reading the Data Summary Tables
















■ In the following tables, Vernon Parish results are shown in the larger, blue column. *Tip: Indicator labels beginning with a “%” symbol are taken from the PRC Community Health Survey; the remaining indicators are taken from secondary data sources.*















■ The columns to the right of the Vernon Parish column provide trending comparisons (trending from the earliest data year available), as well as comparisons between local data and any available regional (RFSA), state (LA), and national findings, as well as Healthy People 2020 targets. Symbols indicate whether Vernon Parish compares favorably (☀️), unfavorably (☁️), or comparably (☁️) to these external data.




































*Note that blank table cells signify that data are not available or are not reliable for that area and/or for that indicator.*




Social Determinants	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Linguistically Isolated Population (Percent)	0.8	☁️ 0.8	☀️ 1.6	☀️ 4.5		
Population in Poverty (Percent)	14.5	☀️ 20.7	☀️ 19.7	☁️ 15.1		
Population Below 200% FPL (Percent)	41.4	☁️ 44.2	☁️ 39.8	☔️ 33.6		
Children Below 200% FPL (Percent)	50.8	☁️ 52.9	☁️ 49.9	☁️ 43.3		
No High School Diploma (Age 25+, Percent)	12.5	☀️ 18.0	☀️ 16.2	☁️ 13.0		
Unemployment Rate (Age 16+, Percent)	5.3	☁️ 4.9	☔️ 4.3	☔️ 4.1		
% Displaced From Housing in Past 2 Years	15.6	☁️ 13.5			☔️ 9.4	
% "Fair/Poor" Availability of Affordable Housing	53.2	☔️ 45.7			☔️ 39.3	

Social Determinants (continued)	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% "Fair/Poor" Condition of Neighborhood Homes	21.6	 20.3				 17.0
						
		better	similar	worse		

Overall Health	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% "Fair/Poor" Overall Health	23.5	 23.3	 21.9	 18.1		 17.4
% 3+ Days Poor Physical Health in Past Month	35.4	 35.4				
% Activity Limitations	28.3	 29.6	 23.0	 25.0		 17.7
% [Limited Activities] Impairment Is Work-Related	29.0	 21.8				
% 4+ Days Health Prevented Usual Activities	17.9	 22.0				 13.4
						
		better	similar	worse		

Access to Health Services	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% [Age 18-64] Lack Health Insurance	5.8	 9.2	 16.7	 13.7	 0.0	 15.5
% Difficulty Accessing Healthcare in Past Year (Composite)	39.5	 40.1		 43.2		 35.6
% Difficulty Finding Physician in Past Year	17.7	 14.9		 13.4		 8.4
% Difficulty Getting Appointment in Past Year	17.3	 16.0		 17.5		 12.9

Access to Health Services (continued)	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Cost Prevented Physician Visit in Past Year	12.1	 16.6	 17.6	 15.4	 13.8	
% Transportation Hindered Dr Visit in Past Year	6.4	 9.7		 8.3	 7.1	
% Inconvenient Hrs Prevented Dr Visit in Past Year	12.6	 12.4		 12.5	 10.9	
% Cost Prevented Getting Prescription in Past Year	12.5	 16.6		 14.9	 15.3	
% Difficulty Getting Child's Healthcare in Past Year	5.2	 5.4		 5.6	 2.6	
Primary Care Doctors per 100,000	30.7	 58.7	 78.7	 87.8		
% Have a Specific Source of Ongoing Care	78.2	 76.7		 74.1	 95.0	
% Have Had Routine Checkup in Past Year	68.8	 77.0	 72.1	 68.3	 66.8	
% Child Has Had Checkup in Past Year	88.0	 86.4		 87.1	 91.9	
% Child [Age 5-17] Has Discussed School's Health Ed Activities	59.1	 54.1				
% Two or More ER Visits in Past Year	10.7	 12.9		 9.3	 14.0	
% Rate Local Healthcare "Fair/Poor"	18.7	 19.1		 16.2		














 better      similar      worse








Cancer	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Cancer (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	208.0	184.4	179.4	158.5	161.4	238.0
Female Breast Cancer Incidence Rate	100.1	106.3	123.2	123.5		
Prostate Cancer Incidence Rate	137.8	140.9	144.4	114.8		
Lung Cancer Incidence Rate	90.9	76.0	70.5	61.2		
Colorectal Cancer Incidence Rate	46.0	52.3	47.8	39.8		
Cervical Cancer Incidence Rate	14.0		8.8	7.6		
% Cancer	8.7	8.5				4.5
% [Women 50-74] Mammogram in Past 2 Years	74.7	79.8	78.5	77.0	81.1	86.5
% [Women 21-65] Pap Smear in Past 3 Years	69.5	76.1	81.5	73.5	93.0	95.2
% [Men 50+] Prostate Exam in Past 2 Years	71.2	70.1				77.9
% [Age 50-75] Colorectal Cancer Screening	72.3	74.9	64.1	76.4	70.5	64.5
		better	similar	worse		














Dementias, Including Alzheimer's Disease	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Alzheimer's Disease (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	29.1	50.3	41.2	28.4		23.6
		better	similar	worse		


















Diabetes	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Diabetes (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	32.1	23.2	24.6	21.1	20.5	39.0
% Diabetes/High Blood Sugar	16.2	16.3	12.1	13.3		6.0
% Borderline/Pre-Diabetes	8.4	7.3		9.5		
% [Diabetics] Taking Action to Control Diabetes	96.8	94.4				
% [Non-Diabetes] Blood Sugar Tested in Past 3 Years	52.2	53.9		50.0		
			better	similar	worse	




































Heart Disease & Stroke	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Diseases of the Heart (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	291.8	244.7	213.8	167.0	156.9	254.1
Stroke (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	45.5	55.9	45.9	37.1	34.8	39.3
% Heart Disease (Heart Attack, Angina, Coronary Disease)	6.9	8.8		8.0		5.5
% Stroke	3.9	4.5	4.0	4.7		1.7
% Blood Pressure Checked in Past 2 Years	95.1	94.2		90.4	92.6	98.2
% Told Have High Blood Pressure (Ever)	40.7	46.7	39.3	37.0	26.9	26.0
% [HBP] Taking Action to Control High Blood Pressure	91.1	92.4		93.8		78.8
% Cholesterol Checked in Past 5 Years	88.7	87.2	77.7	85.1	82.1	80.9







Heart Disease & Stroke (continued)	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Told Have High Cholesterol (Ever)	29.8	 35.1		 36.2	 13.5	 19.9
% [HBC] Taking Action to Control High Blood Cholesterol	94.2	 90.5		 87.3		 71.7
% 1+ Cardiovascular Risk Factor	91.5	 91.3		 87.2		 89.1
						
		better	similar	worse		





























HIV	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
HIV Prevalence Rate	164.2	 369.6	 502.3	 353.2	 22.1	
						
		better	similar	worse		

Immunization & Infectious Diseases	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% [Age 65+] Flu Vaccine in Past Year	66.1	 70.9	 51.6	 76.8	 70.0	 56.1
% [Age 65+] Pneumonia Vaccine Ever	75.4	 71.8	 73.1	 82.7	 90.0	 60.0
						
		better	similar	worse		








































Infant Health & Family Planning	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Low Birthweight Births (Percent)	8.8	 10.3	 10.9	 8.2	 7.8	 8.7
Infant Death Rate	6.2	 7.6	 7.9	 5.9	 6.0	 6.1
Teen Births per 1,000 (Age 15-19)	70.3	 60.9	 50.2	 36.6		 71.4
						
		better	similar	worse		

Injury & Violence	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Unintentional Injury (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	44.6	 57.3	 54.0	 43.7	 36.4	 46.9
Motor Vehicle Crashes (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	21.1	 20.9	 16.7	 11.0	 12.4	
% "Always" Wear Seat Belt	88.9	 83.1				 79.3
% Child [Age 0-17] "Always" Uses Seat Belt/Car Seat	91.8	 92.5		 85.6		 92.9
Firearm-Related Deaths (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	10.9	 15.2	 19.3	 10.5	 9.3	
Homicide (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	5.5	 7.9	 12.6	 5.6	 5.5	
Violent Crime Rate	255.8	 590.3	 512.9	 379.7		
% Victim of Violent Crime in Past 5 Years	2.4	 3.3		 3.7		 2.0
% Victim of Domestic Violence (Ever)	17.3	 17.4		 14.2		 11.4
% Victim of Domestic Violence in Past 5 Years	4.2	 5.6				
						
		better	similar	worse		












Kidney Disease	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Kidney Disease (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	17.5	 21.4	 23.9	 13.2		
		 better	 similar	 worse		













Mental Health	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% "Fair/Poor" Mental Health	14.9	 18.6		 13.0	 9.4	
% 3+ Days Poor Mental Health in Past Month	29.6	 33.0				
% Diagnosed Depression	27.5	 27.9	 19.9	 21.6		
% Symptoms of Chronic Depression (2+ Years)	31.4	 38.2		 31.4	 25.9	
Suicide (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	13.5	 14.0	 12.8	 12.4	 10.2	
% Had Someone to Turn to "All/Most" of the Time in Past Month	79.9	 81.8				
% Taking Rx/Receiving Mental Health Trtmt	19.0	 21.1		 13.9	 15.0	
% Have Ever Sought Help for Mental Health	32.3	 34.1		 30.8	 36.5	
% [Those With Diagnosed Depression] Seeking Help	86.1	 85.0		 87.1		
% Unable to Get Mental Health Svcs in Past Yr	6.0	 7.3		 6.8		
		 better	 similar	 worse		































Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Eat 5+ Servings of Fruit or Vegetables per Day	30.8	 34.1		 33.5		 24.2
% [Adults] Eats 2+ Servings of Fruit per Day	48.1	 47.9				 52.5
% [Adults] Eats 3+ Servings of Vegetables per Day	23.0	 28.0				 29.0
% Child [Age 2-17] Eats 5+ Fruits/Vegetables per Day	56.9	 54.7				 70.8
% Difficulty Getting Fresh Fruits & Vegetables	16.2	 15.0				 13.5
% Medical Advice About Nutrition in Past Year	43.7	 44.0				 31.5
% "Often/Sometimes" Ran Out of Food in the Past Year	31.5	 32.9		 18.0		
Population With Low Food Access (Percent)	48.9	 31.5	 26.8	 22.4		
% No Leisure-Time Physical Activity	25.0	 30.3	 29.1	 26.2	 32.6	 23.4
% Meeting Physical Activity Guidelines	26.8	 19.9	 18.7	 22.8	 20.1	
% [Adults] Vigorous Physical Activity	33.3	 29.6				
% [Adults] Moderate Physical Activity	27.6	 23.7				
% Strengthening Activity	32.9	 28.6	 27.2	 33.8		 46.4
% Walk Regularly (5+ Times Per Week For >10 Minutes)	45.2	 40.1				 48.7
% "Often" See Others in Community Being Physically Active	34.2	 39.7				 49.9
% Child [Age 5-17] Vigorous Physical Activity	79.8	 70.9				 89.6










Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight (continued)	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Child [Age 5-17] Moderate Physical Activity	50.6	57.7				67.7
% Child [Age 5-17] Watches TV 3+ Hours per Day	21.8	32.9				23.9
% Child [Age 5-17] Non-TV Screen Time 3+ Hours per Day	31.4	35.1				11.3
% Child [Age 5-17] 3+ Hours per Day of Total Screen Time	61.5	69.2				50.8
% "Fair/Poor" Local Physical Activity Opportunities	39.4	36.5				34.9
Recreation/Fitness Facilities per 100,000	1.9	4.8	9.5	11.0		
% Medical Advice About Exercise in Past Year	41.4	44.4				34.2
% Overweight (BMI 25+)	80.7	75.3	69.2	67.8		63.6
% Healthy Weight (BMI 18.5-24.9)	17.3	23.4	29.0	30.3	33.9	32.4
% [Overweights] Trying to Lose Weight Both Diet/Exercise	30.4	34.7				34.0
% Obese (BMI 30+)	40.1	41.4	35.5	32.8	30.5	23.7
% Medical Advice on Weight in Past Year	28.6	26.6		24.2		17.9
% [Overweights] Counseled About Weight in Past Year	33.5	32.3		29.0		
% Child [Age 5-17] Healthy Weight	47.9	49.7		58.4		
% Children [Age 5-17] Overweight (85th Percentile)	34.0	39.5		33.0		46.1

















Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight (continued)	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Children [Age 5-17] Obese (95th Percentile)	21.6	 25.0		 20.4	 14.5	 20.7
% Have Been Told That Child [<18] Is Overweight	3.1	 5.4				 2.7
% Child [Age 2-17] Physically Active 1+ Hours per Day	46.4	 52.1		 50.5		
						
		better	similar	worse		




















Oral Health	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% [Age 18+] Dental Visit in Past Year	50.5	 53.6	 56.6	 59.7	 49.0	 68.2
% Child [Age 2-17] Dental Visit in Past Year	79.1	 84.6		 87.0	 49.0	 92.9
						
		better	similar	worse		























Potentially Disabling Conditions	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% [50+] Arthritis/Rheumatism	43.5	 45.6		 38.3		
% [18+] Arthritis/Rheumatism	25.6	 28.7		 23.1		 23.8
% Eye Exam in Past 2 Years	51.3	 58.2		 55.3		 40.8
						
		better	similar	worse		














Respiratory Diseases	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
CLRD (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	50.1	 56.3	 43.9	 40.9		 50.1
Pneumonia/Influenza (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	23.9	 26.5	 16.6	 14.8		
% [Child 0-17] Currently Has Asthma	9.3	 7.6		 9.3		 7.0
% COPD (Lung Disease)	11.5	 14.7	 8.3	 8.6		 12.1
		 better	 similar	 worse		











Sexually Transmitted Diseases	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Chlamydia Incidence Rate	395.4	 536.0	 625.9	 456.1		
Gonorrhea Incidence Rate	83.6	 154.6	 194.6	 110.7		
		 better	 similar	 worse		

Substance Abuse	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
Unintentional Drug-Related Deaths (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	6.6	 10.0	 13.6	 11.3	 11.3	
Cirrhosis/Liver Disease (Age-Adjusted Death Rate)	12.2	 10.4	 9.7	 10.4	 8.2	
% Current Drinker	48.5	 49.0	 51.9	 55.0		
% Binge Drinker (Single Occasion - 5+ Drinks Men, 4+ Women)	25.3	 22.1	 16.9	 20.0	 24.4	 15.8

Substance Abuse (continued)	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Excessive Drinker	26.1	 23.6		 22.5	 25.4	
% Drinking & Driving in Past Month	2.4	 3.8	 3.5	 5.2		 2.7
% Rode w/Drunk Driver in Past Month	2.0	 5.9				 3.7
% Illicit Drug Use in Past Month	1.9	 3.2		 2.5	 7.1	
% Have Used Prescription Opiates in Past Year	21.9	 25.0				
% Ever Sought Help for Alcohol or Drug Problem	6.0	 4.3		 3.4		 3.7
		 better  similar  worse				

Tobacco Use	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Current Smoker	31.1	 23.6	 22.8	 16.3	 12.0	 30.9
% Someone Smokes at Home	19.6	 16.6		 10.7		 18.5
% [Nonsmokers] Someone Smokes in the Home	13.1	 7.0		 4.0		
% [Household With Children] Someone Smokes in the Home	23.6	 16.3		 7.2		 19.1
% [Smokers] Have Quit Smoking 1+ Days in Past Year	63.5	 60.4		 34.7	 80.0	 61.2
% [Smokers] Received Advice to Quit Smoking	61.9	 65.8		 58.0		 52.9
% Aware of Smoking Cessation Services/Programs	48.1	 41.2				 51.7

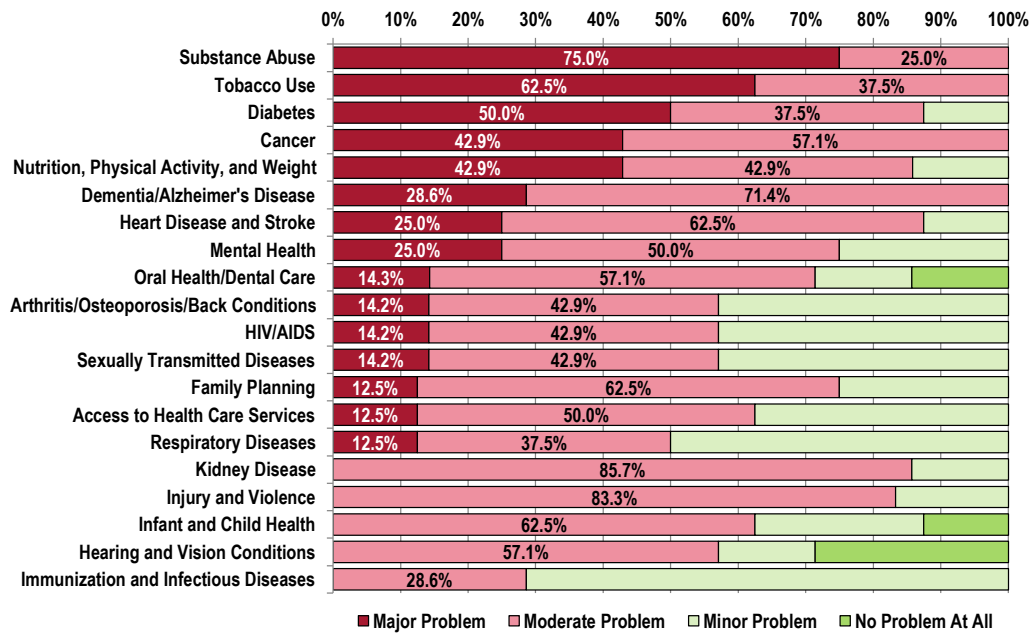
Tobacco Use (continued)	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% Community Believes Adults "Definitely" Should Not Smoke	23.7	 41.2				 29.4
% Currently Use Vaping Products	4.5	 5.6	 6.0	 3.8		
% Use Smokeless Tobacco	11.5	 7.2	 5.1	 4.4	 0.3	 11.8
						
		better	similar	worse		

Quality of Life	Vernon Parish	Vernon Parish vs. Benchmarks				TREND
		vs. RFSA	vs. LA	vs. US	vs. HP2020	
% "Fair/Poor" Overall Quality of Life in Central Louisiana	35.9	 28.2				
% Parish Life: Wrong Track and Getting Worse	12.0	 17.0				
% Know 10+ People Benefiting from Charities	35.7	 40.0				
% "Frequently/Sometimes" Donate to Charity	62.1	 67.4				
% Have Received Charitable Assistance in Past Year	2.9	 6.1				
% "Frequently/Sometimes" Volunteer	36.7	 40.9				
% Voted in Each of the Past 5 Elections	44.9	 54.5				
						
		better	similar	worse		

## Summary of Key Informant Perceptions

In the Online Key Informant Survey, community stakeholders were asked to rate the degree to which each of 20 health issues is a problem in their own community, using a scale of “major problem,” “moderate problem,” “minor problem,” or “no problem at all.” The following chart summarizes their responses; these findings also are outlined throughout this report, along with the qualitative input describing reasons for their concerns. (Note that these ratings alone do not establish priorities for this assessment; rather, they are one of several data inputs considered for the prioritization process described earlier.)

### Key Informants: Relative Position of Health Topics as Problems in the Community



# Data Charts & Key Informant Input

*The following sections present data from multiple sources, including the random-sample PRC Community Health Survey, public health and other existing data sets (secondary data), as well as qualitative input from the Online Key Informant Survey. Data indicators from these sources are intermingled and organized by health topic. To better understand the source data for specific indicators, please refer to the footnotes accompanying each chart.*



**Professional Research Consultants, Inc.**



## Community Characteristics

### Population Characteristics

#### Land Area, Population Size & Density

Data from the US Census Bureau reveal the following statistics for our community relative to size, population, and density.

**Total Population**  
(Estimated Population, 2012-2016)

	Total Population	Total Land Area (Square Miles)	Population Density (Per Square Mile)
<b>Vernon Parish</b>	52,101	1,327.91	39.24
<b>Louisiana</b>	4,645,670	43,206.73	107.52
<b>United States</b>	318,558,162	3,532,068.58	90.19

Sources: 

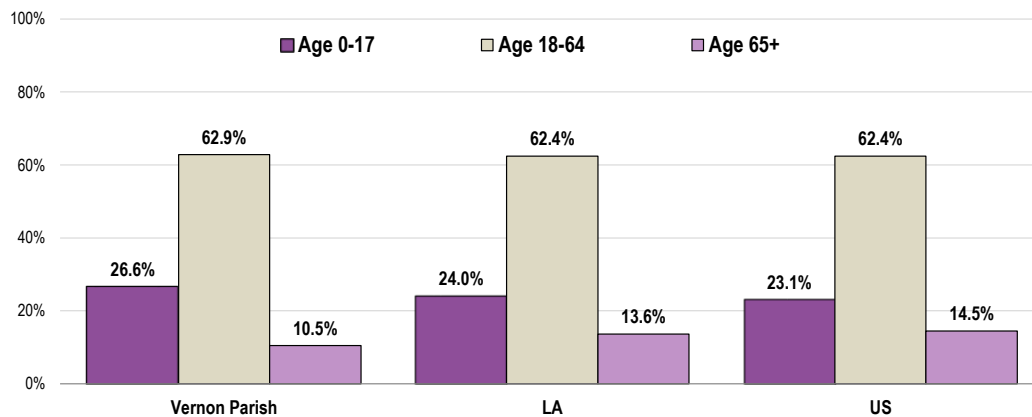
- US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
- Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.

#### Age

It is important to understand the age distribution of the population, as different age groups have unique health needs that should be considered separately from others along the age spectrum.

- Vernon Parish has a lower proportion of seniors compared to Louisiana and the US.

**Total Population by Age Groups, Percent**  
(2012-2016)



Sources: 

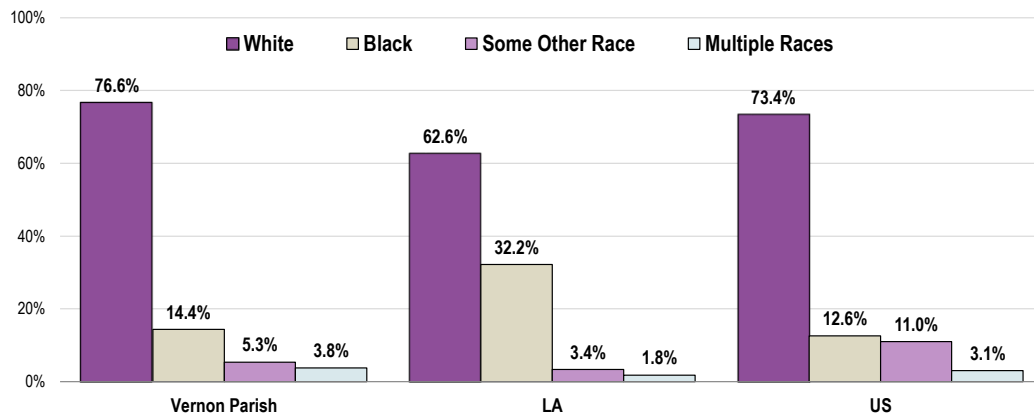
- US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
- Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.

## Race & Ethnicity

The following charts illustrate the racial and ethnic makeup of our community. Note that ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino) can be of any race.

- Vernon Parish is racially less diverse than the state and less likely to house other (non-Black, non-White) residents as compared to the US.

**Total Population by Race Alone, Percent**  
(2012-2016)

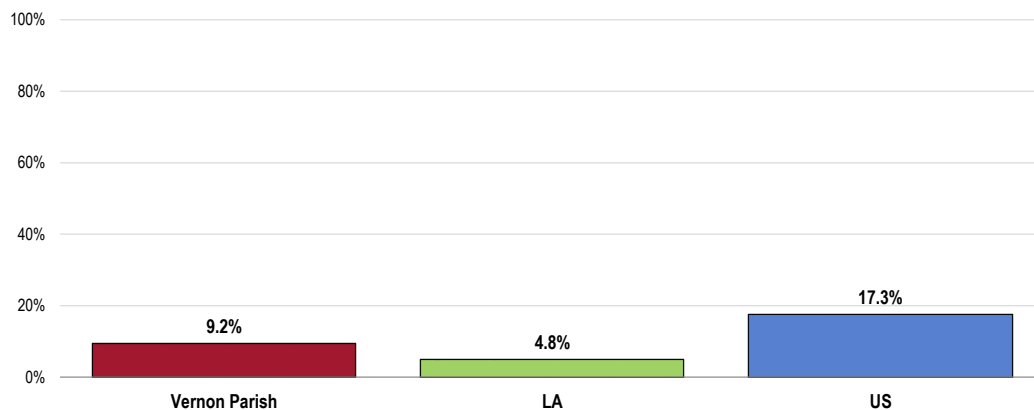


Sources:
 

- US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
- Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.

- The Vernon Parish Hispanic proportion is higher than the state but lower than the US.

**Hispanic Population**  
(2012-2016)



Sources:
 

- US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
- Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.

 Notes:
 

- Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.

## Social Determinants of Health

### About Social Determinants

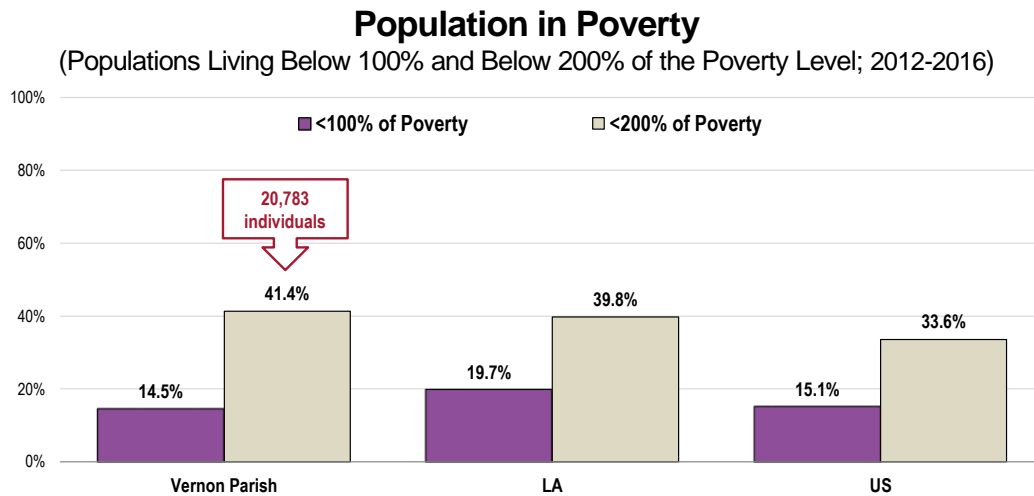
Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities. We know that taking care of ourselves by eating well and staying active, not smoking, getting the recommended immunizations and screening tests, and seeing a doctor when we are sick all influence our health. Our health is also determined in part by access to social and economic opportunities; the resources and supports available in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities; the quality of our schooling; the safety of our workplaces; the cleanliness of our water, food, and air; and the nature of our social interactions and relationships. The conditions in which we live explain in part why some Americans are healthier than others and why Americans more generally are not as healthy as they could be.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Poverty

The following chart outlines the proportion of our population below the federal poverty threshold, as well as below 200% of the federal poverty level, in comparison to state and national proportions.

- The proportion of the parish population living in poverty is lower than the state but similar to the nation.
- The proportion of persons living below 200% of the federal poverty is higher than found nationally but similar to that found statewide.

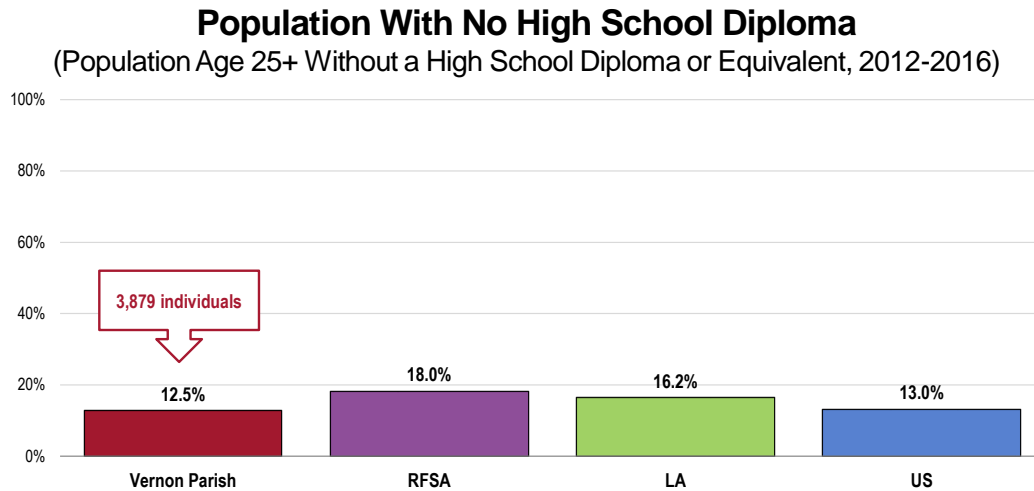


- Sources:
- US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
  - Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.
- Notes:
- Poverty is considered a key driver of health status. This indicator is relevant because poverty creates barriers to access including health services, healthy food, and other necessities that contribute to poor health status.

## Education

Education levels are reflected in the proportion of our population without a high school diploma:

- The proportion of Vernon Parish adults without a high school education is more favorable than found in the Rapides Foundation Service Area and Louisiana and similar to the US.



Sources:
 

- US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
- Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.

 Notes:
 

- This indicator is relevant because educational attainment is linked to positive health outcomes.

## Housing

Survey respondents were asked:

**“Overall, how would you rate the availability of affordable housing in your community? Would you say: excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”**

**“How would you describe the condition of the homes in your neighborhood? Would you say: excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”**

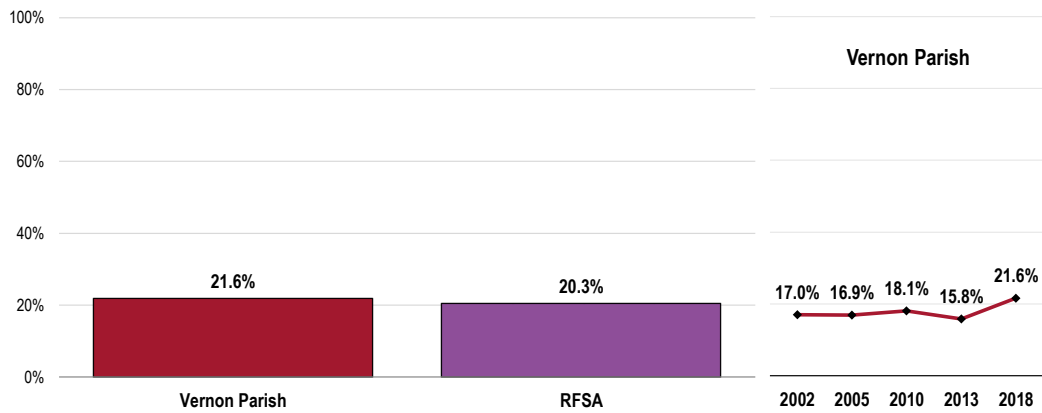
- Adults in Vernon Parish rate the availability of affordable housing less favorably than those across the Rapides Foundation Service Area. However, adults across the parish and service area rate the condition of local housing similarly.
- “Fair/poor” responses regarding affordability in Vernon Parish have increased significantly over time. Ratings of the condition of housing have not changed significantly compared to 2002.

### Perceive the Availability of Affordable Local Housing to be “Fair” or “Poor”



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 336]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Perceive the Condition of Neighborhood Homes to be “Fair” or “Poor”

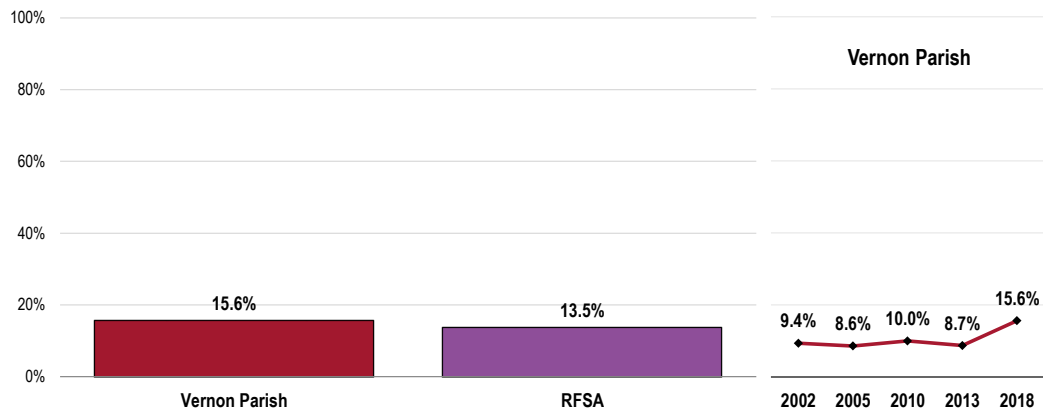


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 338]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

**“Because of an emergency, have you had to live with a friend or relative in the past two years, even if this was only temporary?”**

- The current parish finding is similar to that found throughout the Rapides Foundation Service Area but has increased significantly from previous survey findings.

### Had to Live With a Friend/Relatives in the Past Two Years Due to an Emergency (Even if Only Temporarily)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 337]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

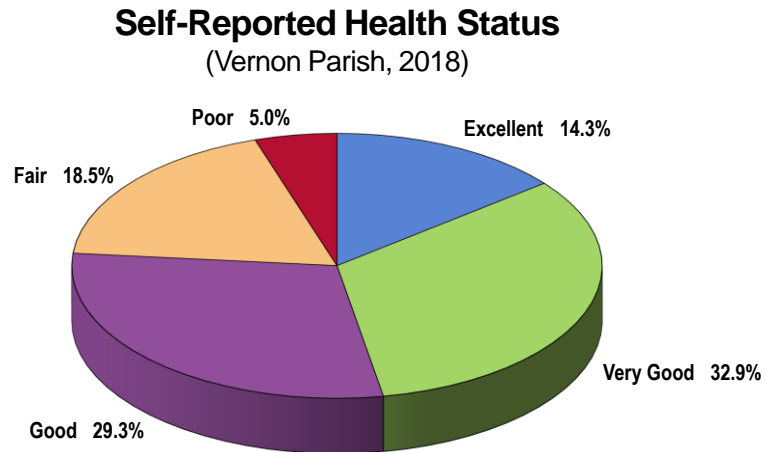
## General Health Status

### Overall Health Status

#### Self-Reported Health Status

The initial inquiry of the PRC Community Health Survey asked respondents the following:

**“Would you say that in general your health is: excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”**

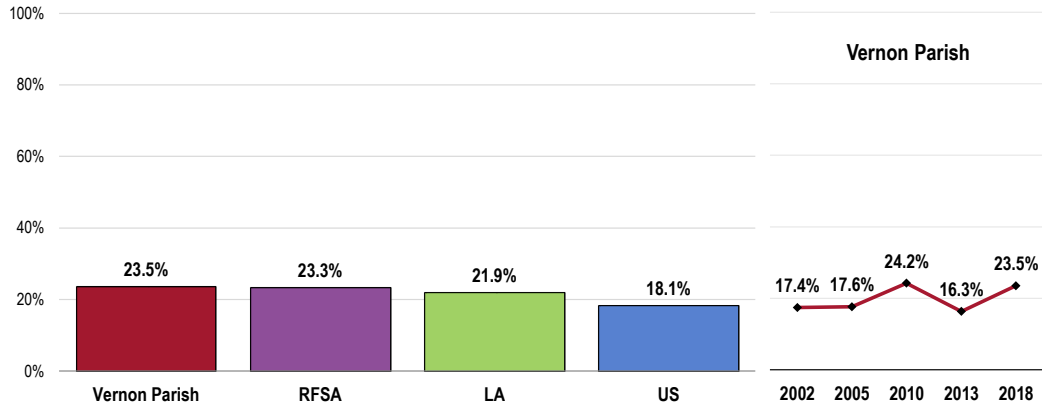


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 5]  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

The following charts further detail “fair/poor” overall health responses in Vernon Parish in comparison to past findings and benchmark data, as well as by basic demographic characteristics (namely by sex, age groupings, and income [based on poverty status]).

- “Fair/poor” evaluations of overall health in Vernon Parish are similar to what is found regionally (RFSA) and statewide but worse than found nationally. The parish response has increased considerably since the baseline 2002 assessment.

### Experience “Fair” or “Poor” Overall Health

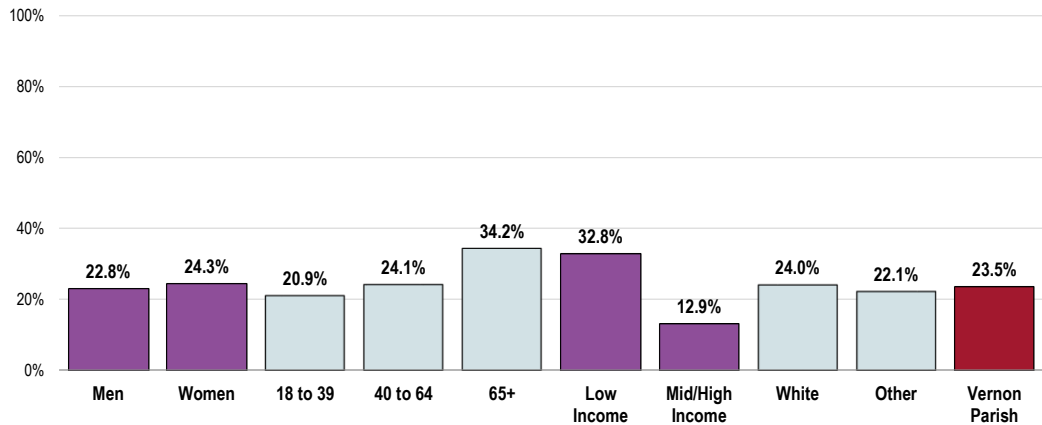


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 5]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

- “Fair/poor” health evaluations in Vernon Parish are considerably higher among seniors and lower-income residents. Differences by gender and race are not statistically significant.

### Experience “Fair” or “Poor” Overall Health (Vernon Parish, 2018)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 5]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent’s household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. “Low Income” includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; “Mid/High Income” includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.



## Activity Limitations

### About Disability & Health

An individual can get a disabling impairment or chronic condition at any point in life. Compared with people without disabilities, people with disabilities are more likely to:

- Experience difficulties or delays in getting the health care they need.
- Not have had an annual dental visit.
- Not have had a mammogram in past 2 years.
- Not have had a Pap test within the past 3 years.
- Not engage in fitness activities.
- Use tobacco.
- Be overweight or obese.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Experience symptoms of psychological distress.
- Receive less social-emotional support.
- Have lower employment rates.

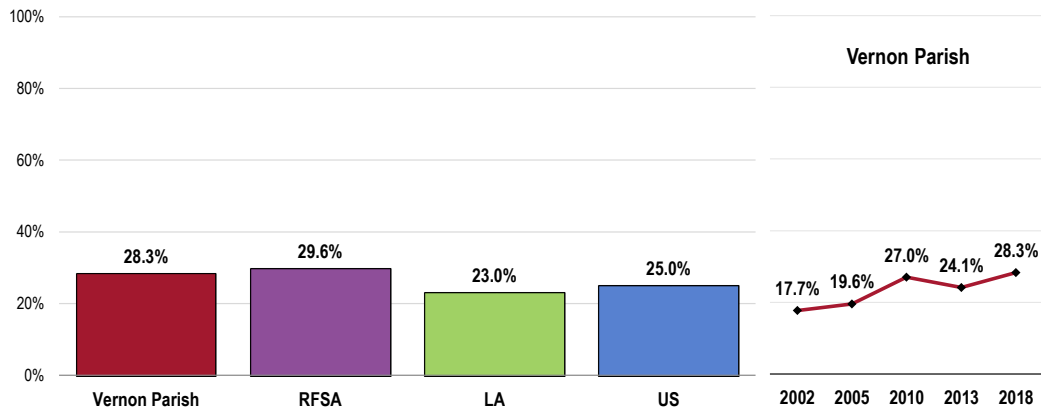
There are many social and physical factors that influence the health of people with disabilities. The following three areas for public health action have been identified, using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) and the three World Health Organization (WHO) principles of action for addressing health determinants.

- **Improve the conditions of daily life** by: encouraging communities to be accessible so all can live in, move through, and interact with their environment; encouraging community living; and removing barriers in the environment using both physical universal design concepts and operational policy shifts.
- **Address the inequitable distribution of resources among people with disabilities and those without disabilities** by increasing: appropriate health care for people with disabilities; education and work opportunities; social participation; and access to needed technologies and assistive supports.
- **Expand the knowledge base and raise awareness about determinants of health for people with disabilities** by increasing: the inclusion of people with disabilities in public health data collection efforts across the lifespan; the inclusion of people with disabilities in health promotion activities; and the expansion of disability and health training opportunities for public health and health care professionals.
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

**“Are you limited in any way in any activities because of physical, mental, or emotional problems?”**

- The proportion of adults in Vernon Parish with activity limitations is less favorable than found statewide but similar to the service area and nation. The parish rate has increased over time.

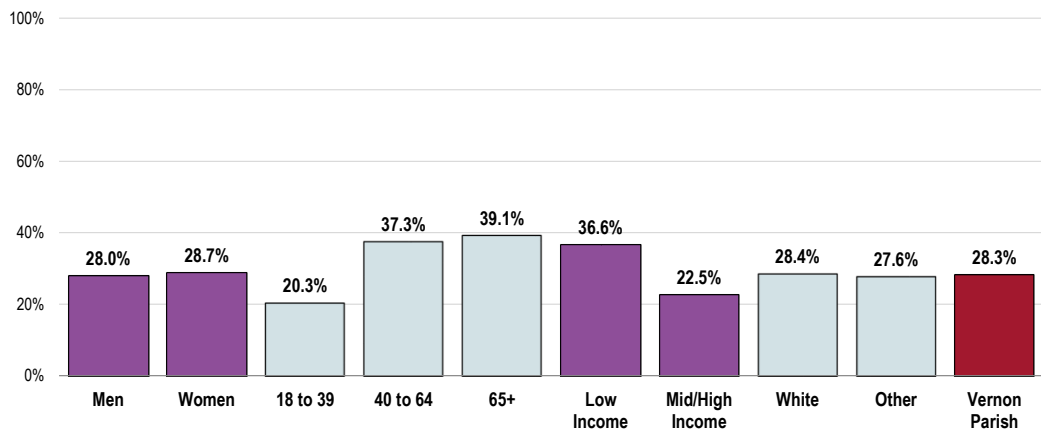
**Limited in Activities in Some Way Due to a Physical, Mental or Emotional Problem**



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 128]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2015 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

- Adults age 40 and older and those with lower incomes are more likely to have activity limitations. There are no significant differences within the other demographic groups.

**Limited in Activities in Some Way Due to a Physical, Mental or Emotional Problem (Vernon Parish, 2018)**



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 109]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

## Mental Health

### About Mental Health & Mental Disorders

Mental health is a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with challenges. Mental health is essential to personal well-being, family and interpersonal relationships, and the ability to contribute to community or society. Mental disorders are health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, and/or behavior that are associated with distress and/or impaired functioning. Mental disorders contribute to a host of problems that may include disability, pain, or death. Mental illness is the term that refers collectively to all diagnosable mental disorders. Mental disorders are among the most common causes of disability. The resulting disease burden of mental illness is among the highest of all diseases.

Mental health and physical health are closely connected. Mental health plays a major role in people's ability to maintain good physical health. Mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety, affect people's ability to participate in health-promoting behaviors. In turn, problems with physical health, such as chronic diseases, can have a serious impact on mental health and decrease a person's ability to participate in treatment and recovery.

The existing model for understanding mental health and mental disorders emphasizes the interaction of social, environmental, and genetic factors throughout the lifespan. In behavioral health, researchers identify: **risk factors**, which predispose individuals to mental illness; and **protective factors**, which protect them from developing mental disorders. Researchers now know that the prevention of mental, emotional, and behavioral (MEB) disorders is inherently interdisciplinary and draws on a variety of different strategies. Over the past 20 years, research on the prevention of mental disorders has progressed. The major areas of progress include evidence that:

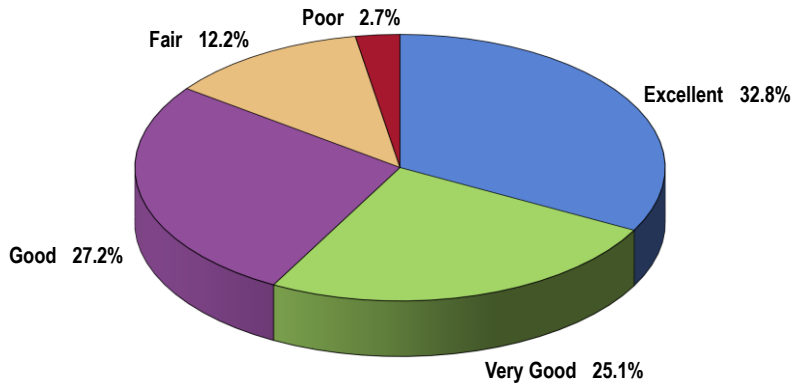
- MEB disorders are common and begin early in life.
- The greatest opportunity for prevention is among young people.
- There are multiyear effects of multiple preventive interventions on reducing substance abuse, conduct disorder, antisocial behavior, aggression, and child maltreatment.
- The incidence of depression among pregnant women and adolescents can be reduced.
- School-based violence prevention can reduce the base rate of aggressive problems in an average school by 25 to 33%.
- There are potential indicated preventive interventions for schizophrenia.
- Improving family functioning and positive parenting can have positive outcomes on mental health and can reduce poverty-related risk.
- School-based preventive interventions aimed at improving social and emotional outcomes can also improve academic outcomes.
- Interventions targeting families dealing with adversities, such as parental depression or divorce, can be effective in reducing risk for depression in children and increasing effective parenting.
- Some preventive interventions have benefits that exceed costs, with the available evidence strongest for early childhood interventions.
- Implementation is complex, and it is important that interventions be relevant to the target audiences.
- In addition to advancements in the prevention of mental disorders, there continues to be steady progress in treating mental disorders as new drugs and stronger evidence-based outcomes become available.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Self-Reported Mental Health Status

**“Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression and problems with emotions, would you say that, in general, your mental health is: excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”**

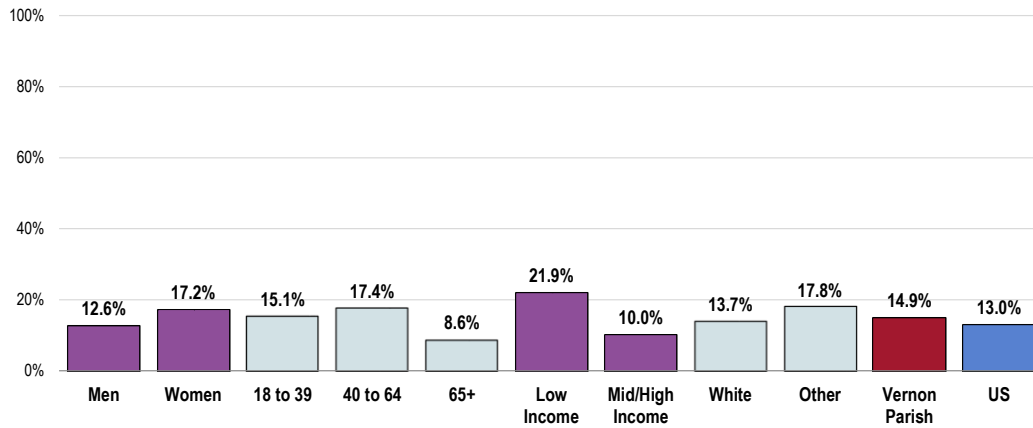
### Self-Reported Mental Health Status (Vernon Parish, 2018)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 99]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

- Ratings of “fair/poor” mental health in the parish are similar to the national response.
- Adults ages 40 to 64 are considerably more likely than seniors to experience “fair” or “poor” mental health. Also, lower-income residents are more likely than higher-income residents to give “fair” or “poor” ratings. Differences by gender and race are not statistically significant.

### Experience “Fair” or “Poor” Mental Health (Vernon Parish, 2018)



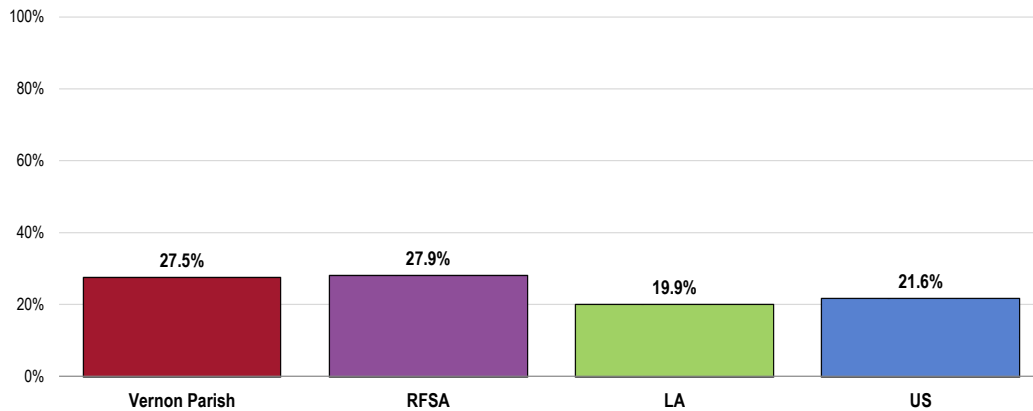
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 116]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent’s household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. “Low Income” includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; “Mid/High Income” includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

## Depression

**Diagnosed Depression:** “Has a doctor or other healthcare provider ever told you that you have a depressive disorder, including depression, major depression, dysthymia, or minor depression?”

- Diagnosed depression is higher in the parish than in the state and US but similar to the service area.

### Have Been Diagnosed With a Depressive Disorder

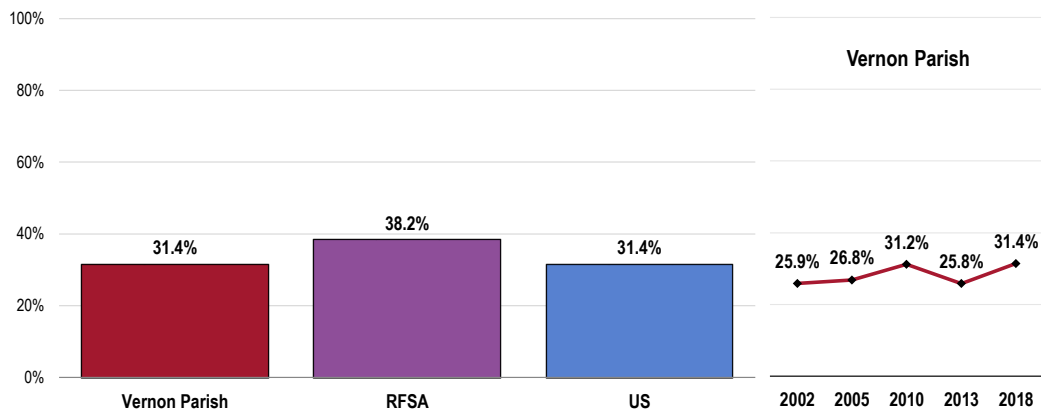


- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 119]
  - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); 2016 Louisiana data.
  - 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.
  - Depressive disorders include depression, major depression, dysthymia, or minor depression.

**Symptoms of Chronic Depression:** “Have you had two years or more in your life when you felt depressed or sad most days, even if you felt okay sometimes?”

- The level of chronic depression in the parish is more favorable than found across the region but identical to the US. The parish rate has not varied statistically since 2002.

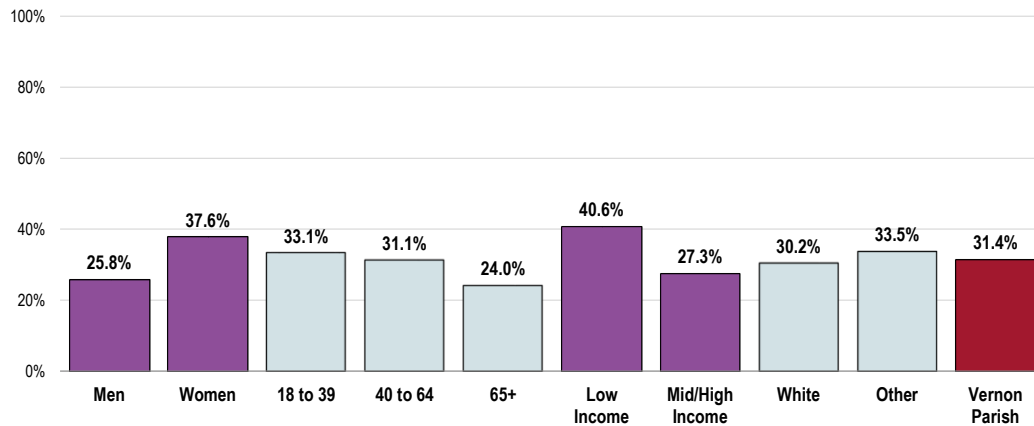
### Have Experienced Symptoms of Chronic Depression



- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 117]
  - 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.
  - Chronic depression includes periods of two or more years during which the respondent felt depressed or sad on most days, even if (s)he felt okay sometimes.

- Women and lower-income adults are more likely to experience symptoms of chronic depression. There are no significant differences by age or race.

### Have Experienced Symptoms of Chronic Depression (Vernon Parish, 2018)



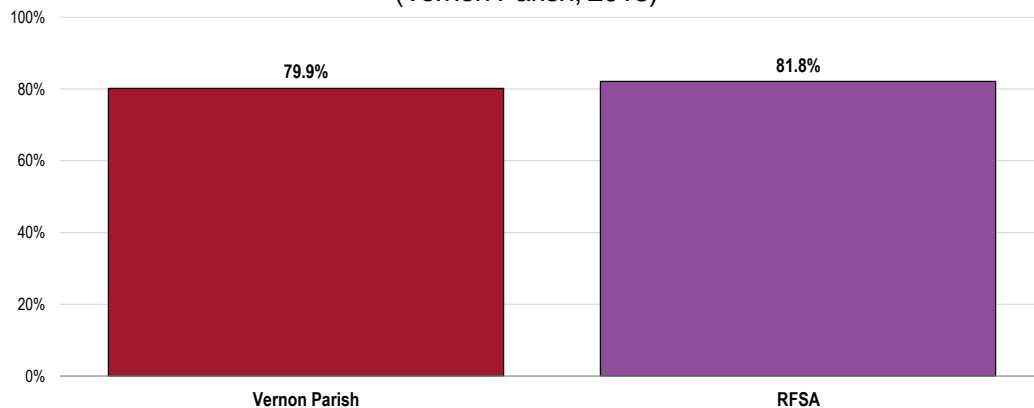
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 100]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Chronic depression includes periods of two or more years during which the respondent felt depressed or sad on most days, even if (s)he felt okay sometimes.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

### Emotional Support

**“In the past month, how often have you had someone you could turn to if you needed or wanted help? Would you say: all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, little of the time, or none of the time?”**

- The parish response is statistically similar to the Rapides Foundation Service Area.

### Had Someone to Turn to “All” or “Most” of the Time in the Past Month (Vernon Parish, 2018)



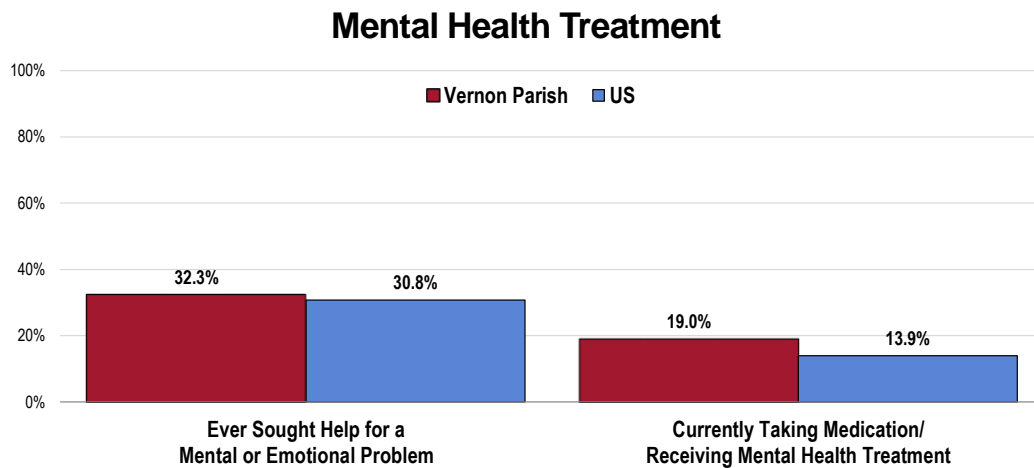
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 330]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Mental Health Treatment

“Have you ever sought help from a professional for a mental or emotional problem?”

“Are you now taking medication or receiving treatment from a doctor or other health professional for any type of mental health condition or emotional problem?”

- The proportion of Vernon Parish adults seeking professional help is similar to the national level, while the proportion of parish adults taking medication/receiving treatment is higher than found across the US.



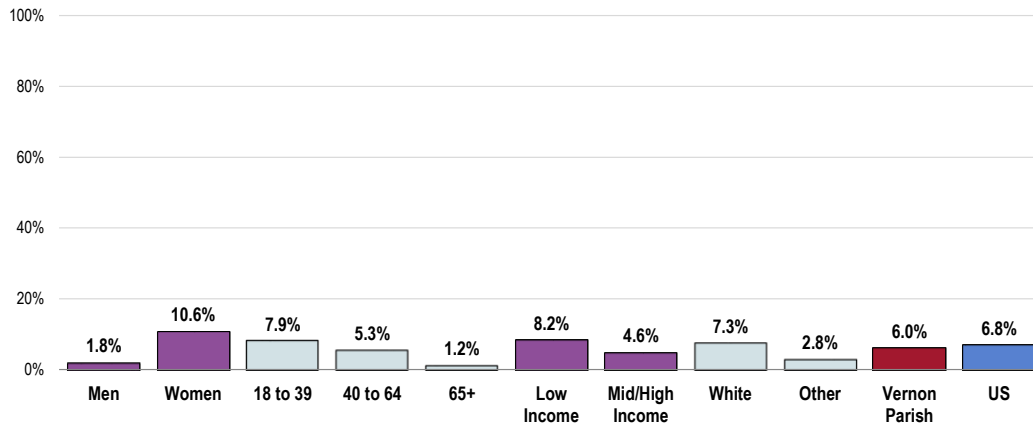
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 103-104]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

Notes: • Reflects the total sample of respondents.

“Was there a time in the past 12 months when you needed mental health services but were not able to get them?”

- The parish response is similar to the national response.
- Adults age 40 to 64 are more likely than seniors to have had difficulty getting mental health services. Also, women and White residents report greater difficulty getting services. There is no significant difference by income.

### Unable to Get Mental Health Services When Needed in the Past Year (Vernon Parish, 2018)

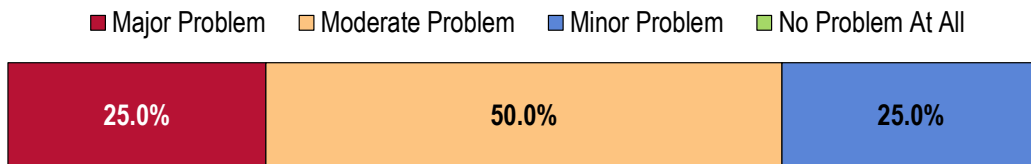


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 105]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

### Key Informant Input: Mental Health

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Mental Health* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Mental Health as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Challenges

Among those rating this issue as a "major problem," the following represent what key informants see as the main challenges for persons with mental illness:

#### Drugs/Alcohol

*Self-medication with drugs and alcohol. Over-prescription of drugs that cause suicidal and homicidal thoughts. Lack of affordable counseling services. Mental illness is so rampant that the behavior is often seen as the norm, and seeking help as a weakness. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

#### Prevalence/Incidence

*Most individuals deal with some form of mental health issues, even if it is temporary or minor depression. People tend to ignore this condition altogether, to avoid the stigmatism and labeling of mental illnesses. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*



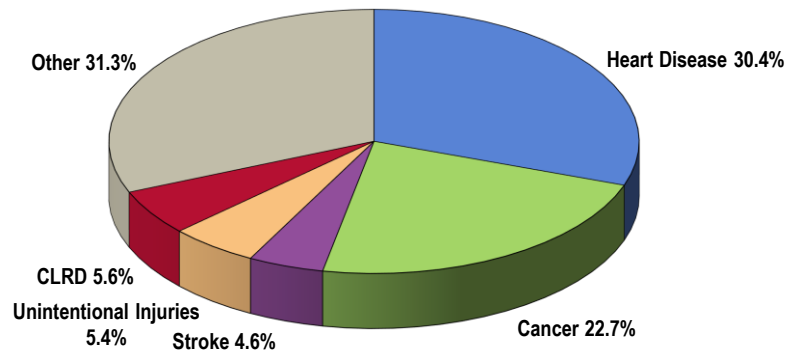
## Death, Disease, & Chronic Conditions

### Leading Causes of Death

#### Distribution of Deaths by Cause

Cancers and cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) are leading causes of death in the community.

**Leading Causes of Death**  
(Vernon Parish, 2014-2016)



- Sources: • CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.
- Notes: • Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).  
• CLRD is chronic lower respiratory disease.

#### Age-Adjusted Death Rates for Selected Causes

In order to compare mortality in the region with other localities (in this case, the state and the United States), it is necessary to look at *rates* of death — these are figures which represent the number of deaths in relation to the population size (such as deaths per 100,000 population, as is used here).

Furthermore, in order to compare localities without undue bias toward younger or older populations, the common convention is to adjust the data to some common baseline age distribution. Use of these “age-adjusted” rates provides the most valuable means of gauging mortality against benchmark data, as well as *Healthy People 2020* targets.

Charts throughout this report outline annual average age-adjusted death rates per 100,000 population for selected causes of death in the area. (For infant mortality data, see also *Birth Outcomes & Risks* in the **Births** section of this report.)

## Cardiovascular Disease

### About Heart Disease & Stroke

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, with stroke following as the third leading cause. Together, heart disease and stroke are among the most widespread and costly health problems facing the nation today, accounting for more than \$500 billion in healthcare expenditures and related expenses in 2010 alone. Fortunately, they are also among the most preventable.

The leading modifiable (controllable) risk factors for heart disease and stroke are:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Cigarette smoking
- Diabetes
- Poor diet and physical inactivity
- Overweight and obesity

The risk of Americans developing and dying from cardiovascular disease would be substantially reduced if major improvements were made across the US population in diet and physical activity, control of high blood pressure and cholesterol, smoking cessation, and appropriate aspirin use.

The burden of cardiovascular disease is disproportionately distributed across the population. There are significant disparities in the following based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, geographic area, and socioeconomic status:

- Prevalence of risk factors
- Access to treatment
- Appropriate and timely treatment
- Treatment outcomes
- Mortality

Disease does not occur in isolation, and cardiovascular disease is no exception. Cardiovascular health is significantly influenced by the physical, social, and political environment, including: maternal and child health; access to educational opportunities; availability of healthy foods, physical education, and extracurricular activities in schools; opportunities for physical activity, including access to safe and walkable communities; access to healthy foods; quality of working conditions and worksite health; availability of community support and resources; and access to affordable, quality healthcare.

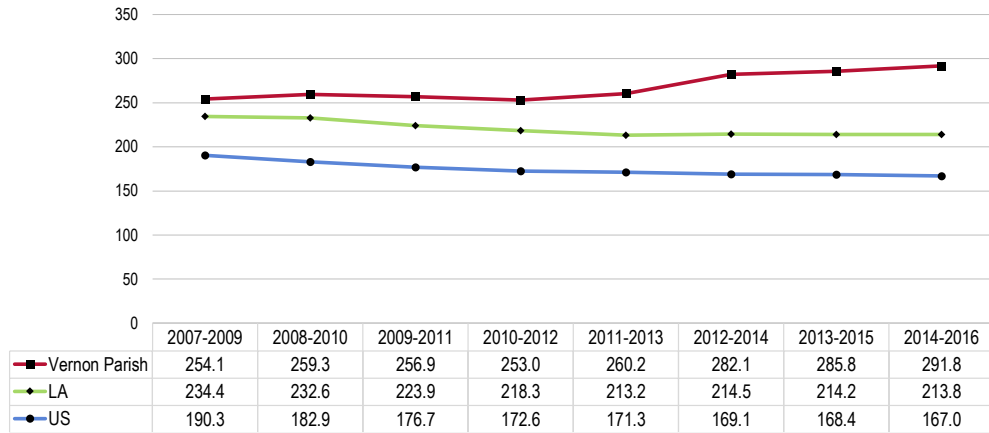
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Age-Adjusted Heart Disease & Stroke Deaths

The greatest share of cardiovascular deaths is attributed to heart disease. The following charts outline age-adjusted mortality rates for heart disease and for stroke in our community.

- The heart disease death rate in Vernon Parish is considerably higher than the state and nation; the increase over time is not statistically significant.

### Heart Disease: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends (Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population) Healthy People 2020 Target = 156.9 or Lower (Adjusted)



Sources: 

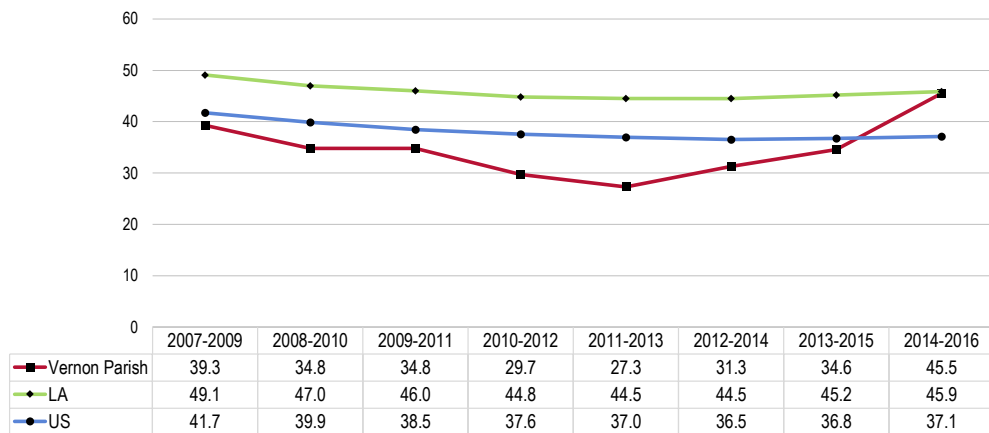
- CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.
- US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective HDS-2]

Notes: 

- Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).
- Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population.
- The Healthy People 2020 Heart Disease target is adjusted to account for all diseases of the heart.

- The stroke death rate in Vernon Parish is nearly identical to the statewide level but less favorable than the US level. The parish rate is statistically similar to the baseline, though fluctuating in the interim.

### Stroke: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends (Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population) Healthy People 2020 Target = 34.8 or Lower



Sources: 

- CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.
- US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective HDS-3]

Notes: 

- Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).
- Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population.

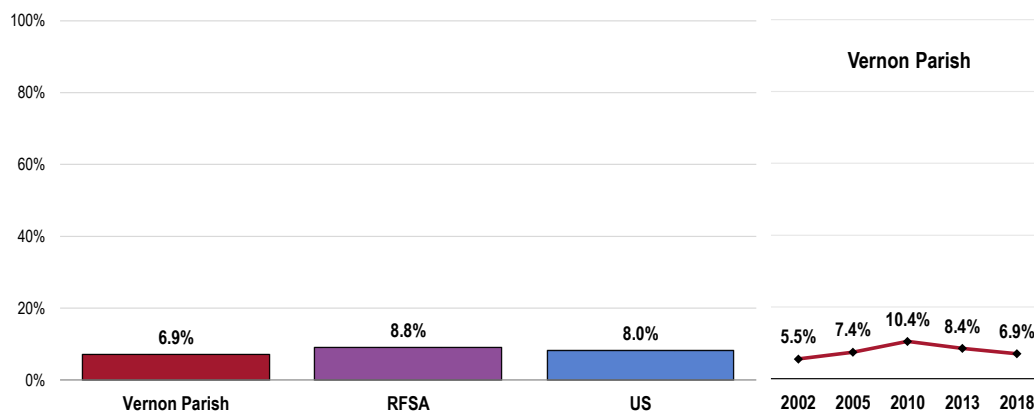
### Prevalence of Heart Disease & Stroke

“Has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional ever told you that you had: a heart attack, also called a myocardial infarction; or angina or coronary heart disease?” (Heart disease prevalence here is a calculated prevalence that includes those responding affirmatively to either.)

“Has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional ever told you that you had a stroke?”

- Prevalence of heart disease in Vernon Parish is similar to regional and national levels. The parish rate is comparable to the 2002 baseline rate.

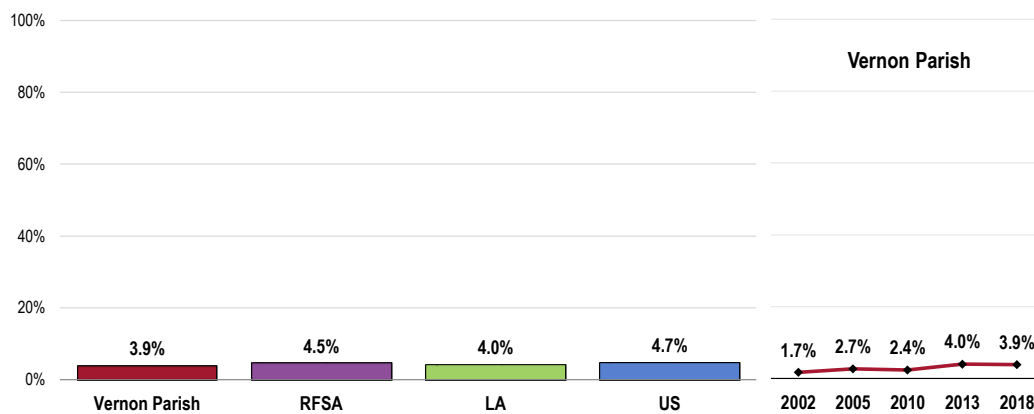
#### Prevalence of Heart Disease



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 146]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Includes diagnoses of heart attack, angina or coronary heart disease.

- Stroke prevalence in the parish is comparable to the service area, Louisiana, and the US. The increase over time is not statistically significant.

#### Prevalence of Stroke



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 35]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Cardiovascular Risk Factors

### About Cardiovascular Risk

Controlling risk factors for heart disease and stroke remains a challenge. High blood pressure and cholesterol are still major contributors to the national epidemic of cardiovascular disease. High blood pressure affects approximately 1 in 3 adults in the United States, and more than half of Americans with high blood pressure do not have it under control. High sodium intake is a known risk factor for high blood pressure and heart disease, yet about 90% of American adults exceed their recommendation for sodium intake.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### High Blood Pressure & Cholesterol Prevalence

“Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health care professional that you had high blood pressure?”

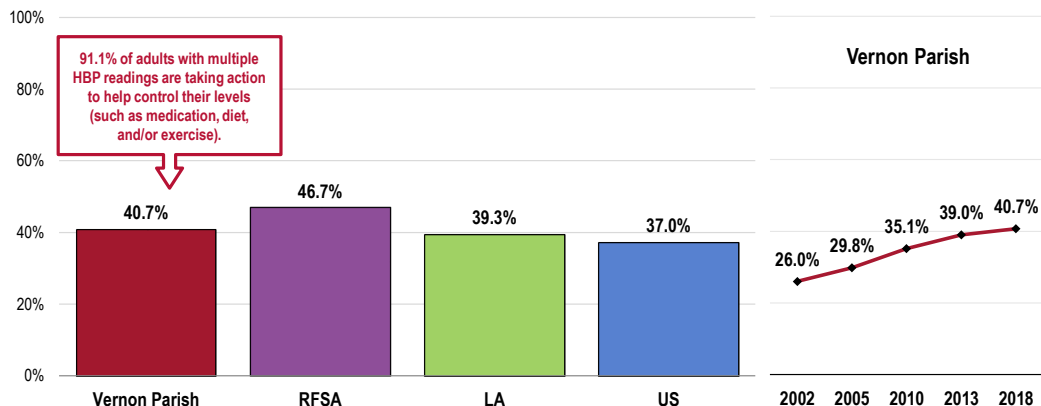
“Are you currently taking any action to help control your high blood pressure, such as taking medication, changing your diet, or exercising?”

“Blood cholesterol is a fatty substance found in the blood. Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health care professional that your blood cholesterol is high?”

“Are you currently taking any action to help control your high cholesterol, such as taking medication, changing your diet, or exercising?”

- Prevalence of high blood pressure in Vernon Parish is more favorable than found across the service area but similar to the state and nation. Parish prevalence has increased significantly over time.

### Prevalence of High Blood Pressure Healthy People 2020 Target = 26.9% or Lower

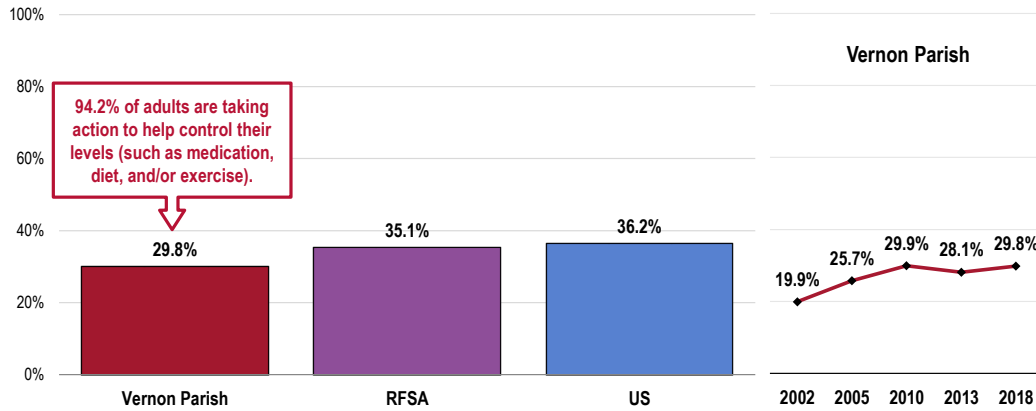


- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 41, 129]
  - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2015 Louisiana data.
  - 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
  - US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective HDS-5.1]
- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.

- Prevalence of high blood cholesterol in the parish is more favorable than found across the service area and the US. However, parish prevalence has increased considerably over time.

### Prevalence of High Blood Cholesterol

Healthy People 2020 Target = 13.5% or Lower



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 44, 148]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective HDS-7]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

#### About Cardiovascular Risk

Individual level risk factors which put people at increased risk for cardiovascular diseases include:

- High Blood Pressure
  - High Blood Cholesterol
  - Tobacco Use
  - Physical Inactivity
  - Poor Nutrition
  - Overweight/Obesity
  - Diabetes
- National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Three health-related behaviors contribute markedly to cardiovascular disease:

**Poor nutrition.** People who are overweight have a higher risk for cardiovascular disease. Almost 60% of adults are overweight or obese. To maintain a proper body weight, experts recommend a well-balanced diet which is low in fat and high in fiber, accompanied by regular exercise.

**Lack of physical activity.** People who are not physically active have twice the risk for heart disease of those who are active. More than half of adults do not achieve recommended levels of physical activity.

**Tobacco use.** Smokers have twice the risk for heart attack of nonsmokers. Nearly one-fifth of all deaths from cardiovascular disease, or about 190,000 deaths a year nationally, are smoking-related. Every day, more than 3,000 young people become daily smokers in the US.

Modifying these behaviors is critical both for preventing and for controlling cardiovascular disease. Other steps that adults who have cardiovascular disease should take to reduce their risk of death and disability include adhering to treatment for high blood pressure and cholesterol, using aspirin as appropriate, and learning the symptoms of heart attack and stroke.

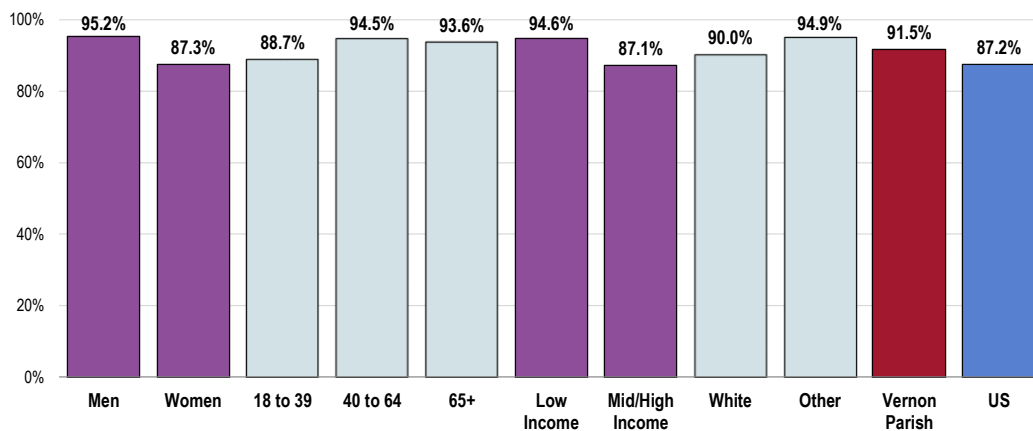
- National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### Total Cardiovascular Risk

The following chart reflects the percentage of adults in the Vernon Parish who report one or more of the following: being overweight; smoking cigarettes; being physically inactive; or having high blood pressure or cholesterol. See also *Nutrition, Physical Activity, Weight Status, and Tobacco Use* in the **Modifiable Health Risks** section of this report.

- Adults in the parish are considerably more likely than adults across the US to present cardiovascular risk factors.
- Men and lower-income adults are more likely to have risk factors. There are no differences within the other demographic groups.

**Present One or More Cardiovascular Risks or Behaviors**  
(Vernon Parish, 2018)

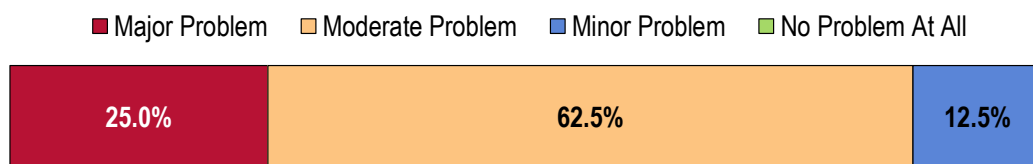


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 131]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Cardiovascular risk is defined as exhibiting one or more of the following: 1) no leisure-time physical activity; 2) regular/occasional cigarette smoking; 3) hypertension; 4) high blood cholesterol; and/or 5) being overweight/obese.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

### Key Informant Input: Heart Disease & Stroke

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Heart Disease & Stroke* as a problem in the community:

**Perceptions of Heart Disease and Stroke as a Problem in the Community**  
(Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” reasons related to the following:

#### Family History

*Hereditary, but also dietary and environmental factors. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*

#### Prevalence/Incidence

*Someone we know needs stints every month. We have had friends and family members die of cardiovascular disease. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*



## Cancer

### About Cancer

Continued advances in cancer research, detection, and treatment have resulted in a decline in both incidence and death rates for all cancers. Among people who develop cancer, more than half will be alive in five years. Yet, cancer remains a leading cause of death in the United States, second only to heart disease.

Many cancers are preventable by reducing risk factors such as: use of tobacco products; physical inactivity and poor nutrition; obesity; and ultraviolet light exposure. Other cancers can be prevented by getting vaccinated against human papillomavirus and hepatitis B virus. In the past decade, overweight and obesity have emerged as new risk factors for developing certain cancers, including colorectal, breast, uterine corpus (endometrial), and kidney cancers. The impact of the current weight trends on cancer incidence will not be fully known for several decades. Continued focus on preventing weight gain will lead to lower rates of cancer and many chronic diseases.

Screening is effective in identifying some types of cancers (see US Preventive Services Task Force [USPSTF] recommendations), including:

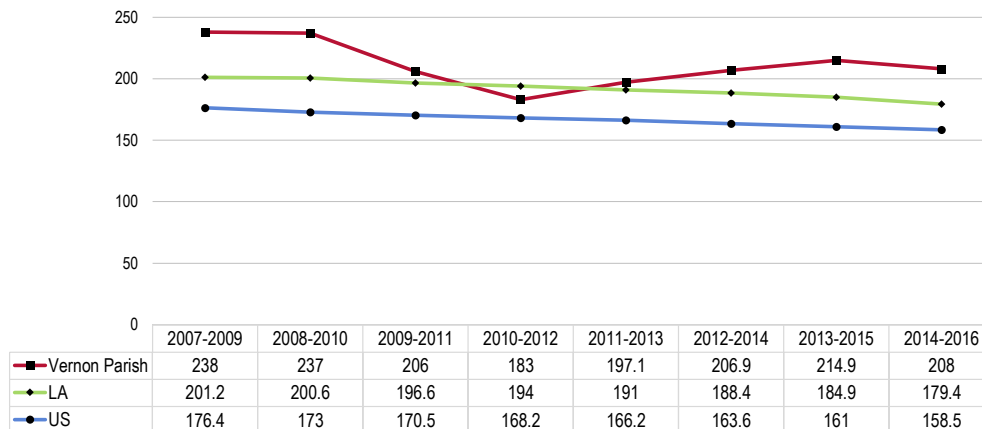
- Breast cancer (using mammography)
- Cervical cancer (using Pap tests)
- Colorectal cancer (using fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy)
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Age-Adjusted Cancer Deaths

The following chart illustrates age-adjusted cancer mortality (all types) in Vernon Parish.

- The parish death rate is less favorable than the US but comparable to Louisiana. The fluctuations over time are not statistically significant.

**Cancer: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends**  
(Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population)  
**Healthy People 2020 Target = 161.4 or Lower**



Sources: 

- CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.
- US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective C-1]

 Notes: 

- Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).
- Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population.

## Cancer Risk

### About Cancer Risk

Reducing the nation's cancer burden requires reducing the prevalence of behavioral and environmental factors that increase cancer risk.

- All cancers caused by cigarette smoking could be prevented. At least one-third of cancer deaths that occur in the United States are due to cigarette smoking.
- According to the American Cancer Society, about one-third of cancer deaths that occur in the United States each year are due to nutrition and physical activity factors, including obesity.
- National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Cancer Screenings

The American Cancer Society recommends that both men and women get a cancer-related checkup during a regular doctor's checkup. It should include examination for cancers of the thyroid, testicles, ovaries, lymph nodes, oral cavity, and skin, as well as health counseling about tobacco, sun exposure, diet and nutrition, risk factors, sexual practices, and environmental and occupational exposures.

Screening levels in the community were measured in the PRC Community Health Survey relative to: female breast cancer (mammography); cervical cancer (Pap smear testing); and colorectal cancer (sigmoidoscopy and fecal occult blood testing).

## Female Breast Cancer Screening

### About Screening for Breast Cancer

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening mammography, with or without clinical breast examination (CBE), every 1-2 years for women age 40 and older.

Rationale: The USPSTF found fair evidence that mammography screening every 12-33 months significantly reduces mortality from breast cancer. Evidence is strongest for women age 50-69, the age group generally included in screening trials. For women age 40-49, the evidence that screening mammography reduces mortality from breast cancer is weaker, and the absolute benefit of mammography is smaller, than it is for older women. Most, but not all, studies indicate a mortality benefit for women undergoing mammography at ages 40-49, but the delay in observed benefit in women younger than 50 makes it difficult to determine the incremental benefit of beginning screening at age 40 rather than at age 50.

The absolute benefit is smaller because the incidence of breast cancer is lower among women in their 40s than it is among older women. The USPSTF concluded that the evidence is also generalizable to women age 70 and older (who face a higher absolute risk for breast cancer) if their life expectancy is not compromised by comorbid disease. The absolute probability of benefits of regular mammography increase along a continuum with age, whereas the likelihood of harms from screening (false-positive results and unnecessary anxiety, biopsies, and cost) diminish from ages 40-70. The balance of benefits and potential harms, therefore, grows more favorable as women age. The precise age at which the potential benefits of mammography justify the possible harms is a subjective choice. The USPSTF did not find sufficient evidence to specify the optimal screening interval for women age 40-49.

- US Preventive Services Task Force, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, US Department of Health & Human Services

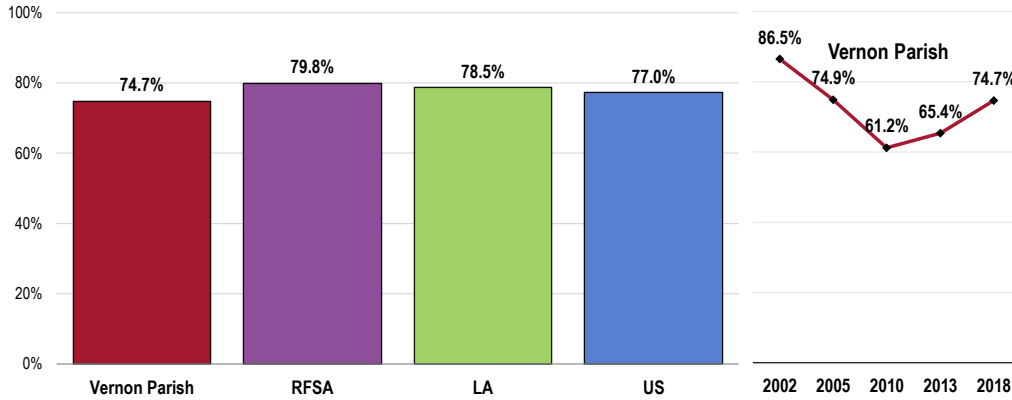
Note that other organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, National Cancer Institute) may have slightly different screening guidelines.

**Breast Cancer Screening:** “A mammogram is an x-ray of each breast to look for cancer. How long has it been since you had your last mammogram?” (Calculated here among women age 50 to 74 who indicate screening within the past 2 years.)

- Screenings in the parish are statistically similar to all populations shown. The parish rate is less favorable than the 2002 baseline.

### Have Had a Mammogram in the Past Two Years (Among Women Age 50-74)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 81.1% or Higher



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 151]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective C-17]  
 Notes: • Reflects female respondents 50-74.

## Cervical Cancer Screenings

### About Screening for Cervical Cancer

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) strongly recommends screening for cervical cancer in women who have been sexually active and have a cervix.

Rationale: The USPSTF found good evidence from multiple observational studies that screening with cervical cytology (Pap smears) reduces incidence of and mortality from cervical cancer. Direct evidence to determine the optimal starting and stopping age and interval for screening is limited. Indirect evidence suggests most of the benefit can be obtained by beginning screening within 3 years of onset of sexual activity or age 21 (whichever comes first) and screening at least every 3 years. The USPSTF concludes that the benefits of screening substantially outweigh potential harms.

The USPSTF recommends against routinely screening women older than age 65 for cervical cancer if they have had adequate recent screening with normal Pap smears and are not otherwise at high risk for cervical cancer.

Rationale: The USPSTF found limited evidence to determine the benefits of continued screening in women older than 65. The yield of screening is low in previously screened women older than 65 due to the declining incidence of high-grade cervical lesions after middle age. There is fair evidence that screening women older than 65 is associated with an increased risk for potential harms, including false-positive results and invasive procedures. The USPSTF concludes that the potential harms of screening are likely to exceed benefits among older women who have had normal results previously and who are not otherwise at high risk for cervical cancer.

The USPSTF recommends against routine Pap smear screening in women who have had a total hysterectomy for benign disease.

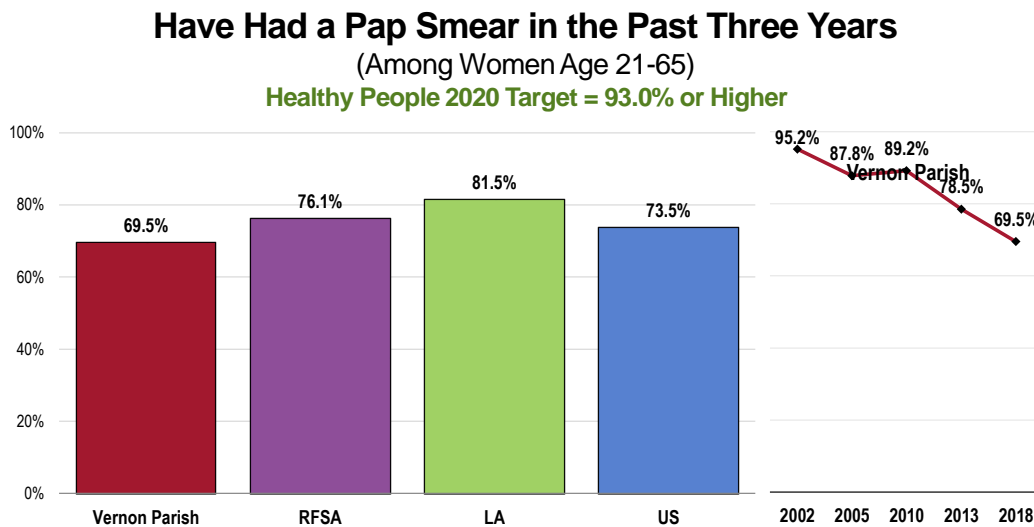
Rationale: The USPSTF found fair evidence that the yield of cytologic screening is very low in women after hysterectomy and poor evidence that screening to detect vaginal cancer improves health outcomes. The USPSTF concludes that potential harms of continued screening after hysterectomy are likely to exceed benefits.

- US Preventive Services Task Force, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, US Department of Health & Human Services

Note that other organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, National Cancer Institute) may have slightly different screening guidelines.

**Cervical Cancer Screening:** “A Pap test is a test for cancer of the cervix. How long has it been since you had your last Pap test?” (Calculated here among women age 21 to 65 who indicate screening within the past 3 years.)

- Screenings in Vernon Parish are less favorable than the statewide rate but similar to regional and national levels. The parish rate has decreased significantly over time.



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 152]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective C-15]

Notes: • Reflects female respondents age 21 to 65.

## Prostate Cancer Screenings

### About Screening for Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer that affects men. In the United States, the lifetime risk of being diagnosed with prostate cancer is approximately 11%, and the lifetime risk of dying of prostate cancer is 2.5%. Many men with prostate cancer never experience symptoms and, without screening, would never know they have the disease. In autopsy studies of men who died of other causes, more than 20% of men aged 50 to 59 years and more than 33% of men aged 70 to 79 years were found to have prostate cancer. In some men, the cancer is more aggressive and leads to death. The median age of death from prostate cancer is 80 years, and more than two-thirds of all men who die of prostate cancer are older than 75 years.

Screening for prostate cancer begins with a test that measures the amount of PSA protein in the blood. An elevated PSA level may be caused by prostate cancer but can also be caused by other conditions, including an enlarged prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia) and inflammation of the prostate (prostatitis). Some men without prostate cancer may therefore have positive screening results (i.e., “false-positive” results). Men with a positive PSA test result may undergo a transrectal ultrasound-guided core-needle biopsy of the prostate to diagnose prostate cancer.

PSA-based screening for prostate cancer has both potential benefits and harms. The USPSTF *does not* recommend screening for prostate cancer unless men express a preference for screening after being informed of and understanding the benefits and risks. The decision about whether to be screened for prostate cancer requires that each man incorporate his own values about the potential benefits and harms. The potential harms of screening, diagnostic procedures, and treatment occur soon after screening takes place. Although the potential benefits may occur any time after screening, they generally occur years after treatment, because progression from asymptomatic, screen-detected cancer to symptomatic, metastasized cancer or death (if it occurs at all) may take years or decades to occur.

The USPSTF concludes with moderate certainty that the net benefit of PSA-based screening for prostate cancer in men aged 55 to 69 years is small for some men. How each man weighs specific benefits and harms will determine whether the overall net benefit is small.

The USPSTF concludes with moderate certainty that the potential benefits of PSA-based screening for prostate cancer in men 70 years and older do not outweigh the expected harms.

- US Preventive Services Task Force, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, US Department of Health & Human Services

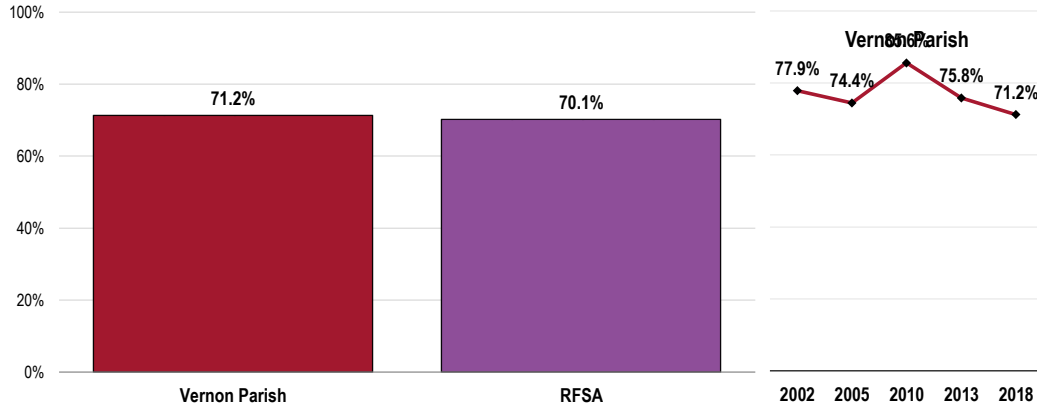
Note that other organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, National Cancer Institute) may have slightly different screening guidelines.

**Prostate Cancer Screening: “A prostate-specific antigen test, also called a PSA test, is a blood test used to check men for prostate cancer. How long has it been since you had your last PSA test?”**

**“A digital rectal exam is when a doctor, nurse or other health professional places a gloved finger in the rectum to feel the size, hardness and shape of the prostate gland. How long has it been since your last digital rectal exam?”** (Calculated here among men age 50 and older who indicate either screening within the past 2 years.)

- Screenings across the parish and Rapides Foundation Service Area are statistically similar. Despite fluctuations, the parish rate is comparable to the baseline.

## Have Had a Prostate Screening in the Past Two Years (Among Men Age 50+; 2018)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 360]  
Notes: • Reflects male respondents age 50+.

## Colorectal Cancer Screenings

### About Screening for Colorectal Cancer

The USPSTF recommends screening for colorectal cancer using fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy in adults, beginning at age 50 years and continuing until age 75 years.

The evidence is convincing that screening for colorectal cancer with fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy detects early-stage cancer and adenomatous polyps. There is convincing evidence that screening with any of the three recommended tests (fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy) reduces colorectal cancer mortality in adults age 50 to 75 years. Follow-up of positive screening test results requires colonoscopy regardless of the screening test used.

- US Preventive Services Task Force, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, US Department of Health & Human Services

Note that other organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, National Cancer Institute) may have slightly different screening guidelines.

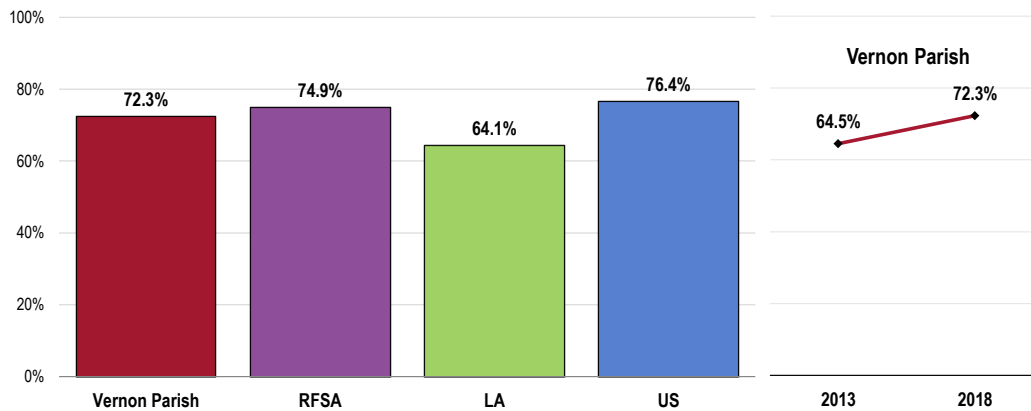
**Colorectal Cancer Screening:** “Sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy are exams in which a tube is inserted in the rectum to view the colon for signs of cancer or other health problems. How long has it been since your last sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy?” and

“A blood stool test is a test that may use a special kit at home to determine whether the stool contains blood. How long has it been since you had your last blood stool test?”

(Calculated here among both sexes age 50 to 75 who indicated fecal occult blood testing within the past year and/or sigmoidoscopy/colonoscopy [lower endoscopy] within the past 10 years.)

- Screenings in Vernon Parish are higher than found statewide but similar to the region and US. The parish rate has increased since 2013.

## Have Had a Colorectal Cancer Screening (Among Adults Age 50-75) Healthy People 2020 Target = 70.5% or Higher

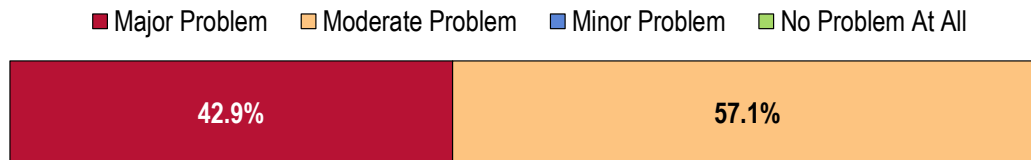


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 155]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective C-16]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents age 50 through 75.  
 • In this case, the term "colorectal screening" refers to adults age 50-75 receiving a FOBT (fecal occult blood test) in the past year and/or a lower endoscopy (sigmoidoscopy/colonoscopy) in the past 10 years.

### Key Informant Input: Cancer

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Cancer* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Cancer as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a "major problem," reasons related to the following:

### Prevalence/Incidence

*I meet people with cancer every week. We work on benefits every month to raise funds. Customers of ours are diagnosed and succumb to cancer every year. We have lost numerous family members and countless friends to cancer. My mother and grandmother died of cancer, and I and my daughters have a genetic mutation that increases our probability of breast cancer. Last year my best friend's mother and husband were diagnosed. Another friend's husband was diagnosed the year before. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

*There are many families that have been affected by cancer. All types. Brain, kidney, liver, lung, and colon. – Community Leader (Vernon Parish)*

#### **Tobacco Use**

*High tobacco use, the sun, diet, and other environmental factors contribute to the high incidence of cancer in Louisiana and Vernon Parish. There is no "cancer school" that teaches about the dangers of these factors and the correlation with cancer. More education is needed. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*



## Respiratory Disease

### About Asthma & COPD

Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are significant public health burdens. Specific methods of detection, intervention, and treatment exist that may reduce this burden and promote health.

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways characterized by episodes of reversible breathing problems due to airway narrowing and obstruction. These episodes can range in severity from mild to life threatening. Symptoms of asthma include wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath. Daily preventive treatment can prevent symptoms and attacks and enable individuals who have asthma to lead active lives.

COPD is a preventable and treatable disease characterized by airflow limitation that is not fully reversible. The airflow limitation is usually progressive and associated with an abnormal inflammatory response of the lung to noxious particles or gases (typically from exposure to cigarette smoke). Treatment can lessen symptoms and improve quality of life for those with COPD.

The burden of respiratory diseases affects individuals and their families, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, cities, and states. Because of the cost to the healthcare system, the burden of respiratory diseases also falls on society; it is paid for with higher health insurance rates, lost productivity, and tax dollars. Annual healthcare expenditures for asthma alone are estimated at \$20.7 billion.

**Asthma.** The prevalence of asthma has increased since 1980. However, deaths from asthma have decreased since the mid-1990s. The causes of asthma are an active area of research and involve both genetic and environmental factors.

Risk factors for asthma currently being investigated include:

- Having a parent with asthma
- Sensitization to irritants and allergens
- Respiratory infections in childhood
- Overweight

Asthma affects people of every race, sex, and age. However, significant disparities in asthma morbidity and mortality exist, in particular for low-income and minority populations. Populations with higher rates of asthma include: children; women (among adults) and boys (among children); African Americans; Puerto Ricans; people living in the Northeast United States; people living below the Federal poverty level; and employees with certain exposures in the workplace.

While there is not a cure for asthma yet, there are diagnoses and treatment guidelines that are aimed at ensuring that all people with asthma live full and active lives.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

[NOTE: COPD was changed to chronic lower respiratory disease (CLRD) with the introduction of ICD-10 codes. CLRD is used in vital statistics reporting, but COPD is still widely used and commonly found in surveillance reports.]

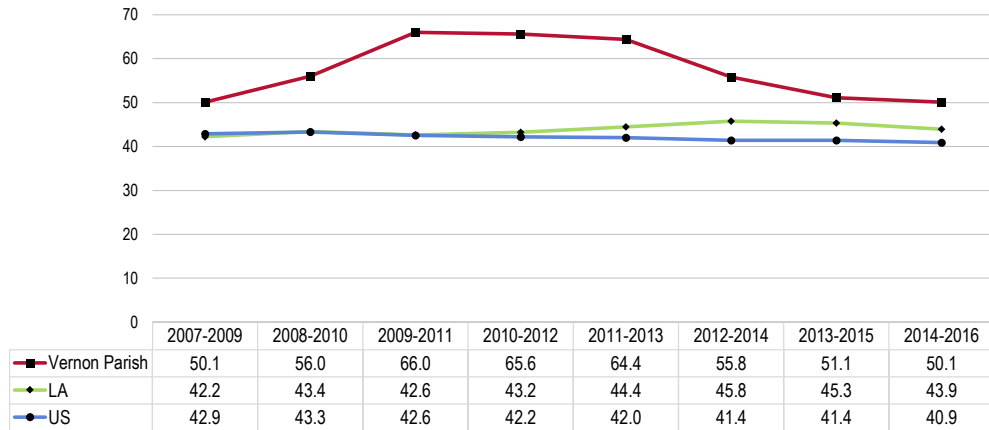
### Age-Adjusted Respiratory Disease Deaths

Chronic lower respiratory diseases (CLRD) are diseases affecting the lungs; the most deadly of these is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Pneumonia and influenza mortality also is illustrated in the following chart. For prevalence of vaccinations against pneumonia and influenza, see also *Immunization & Infectious Diseases* in the **Infectious Disease** section of this report.

- The parish CLRD death rate is less favorable than the US but similar to Louisiana. The parish rate is identical to the baseline rate, despite fluctuating during the interim.

### CLRD: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends (Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population)



Sources: CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.  
 Notes: Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10). Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population. CLRD is chronic lower respiratory disease.

- The pneumonia/influenza death rate in Vernon parish is less favorable than found across the state and nation but similar to the service area.

### Pneumonia/Influenza: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends (2012-2016 Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population)



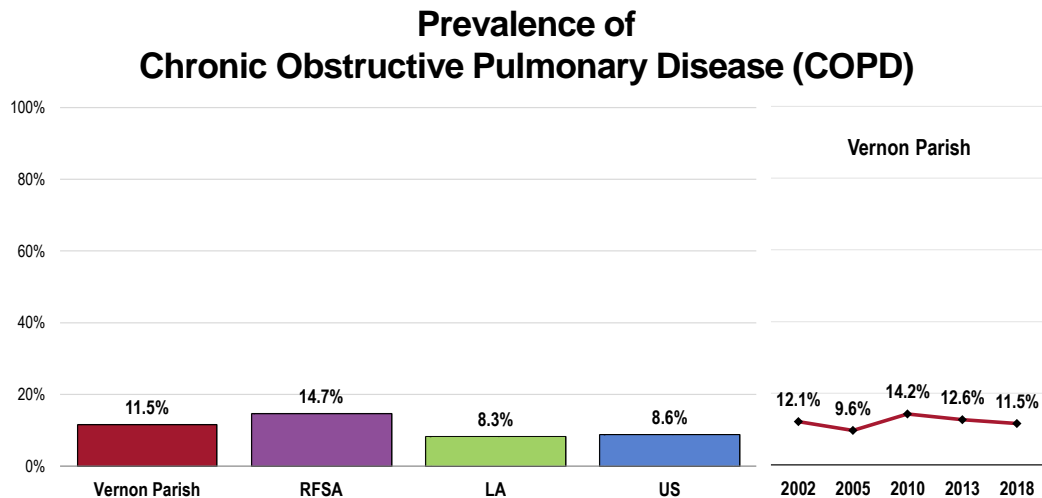
Sources: CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.  
 Notes: Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10). Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population.

## Prevalence of Respiratory Diseases

### COPD

“Would you please tell me if you have ever suffered from or been diagnosed with COPD or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, including bronchitis or emphysema?”

- Prevalence of COPD in Vernon Parish is statistically similar to all populations shown and statistically unchanged over time.



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 24]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

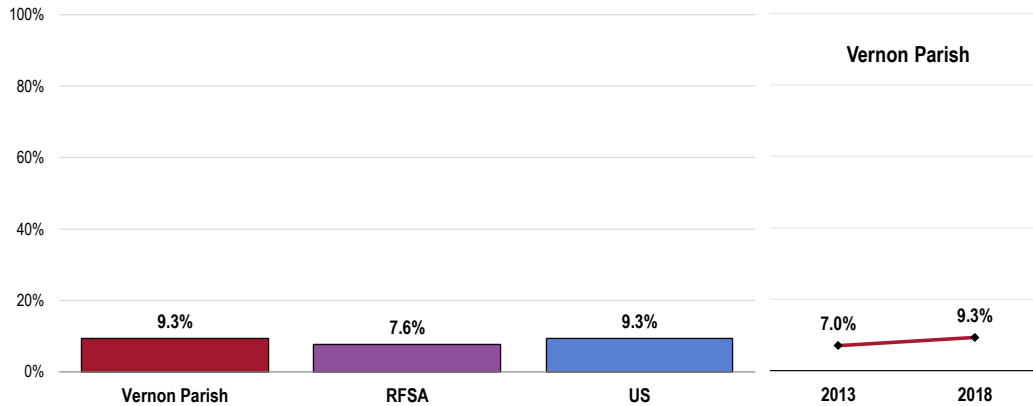
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Includes those having ever suffered from or been diagnosed with COPD or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, including bronchitis or emphysema.  
 • In prior data, the term "chronic lung disease" was used, which also included bronchitis or emphysema.

### Asthma

**Children:** “Has a doctor or other health professional ever told you that this child had asthma?” and “Does this child still have asthma?” (Calculated here as a prevalence of all children who have ever been diagnosed with asthma and who still have asthma [“current asthma”].)

- Prevalence of asthma among parish children is similar to the regional proportion and identical to the national proportion. The parish rate is comparable to the 2013 rate.

### Childhood Asthma: Current Prevalence (Among Parents of Children Age 0-17)

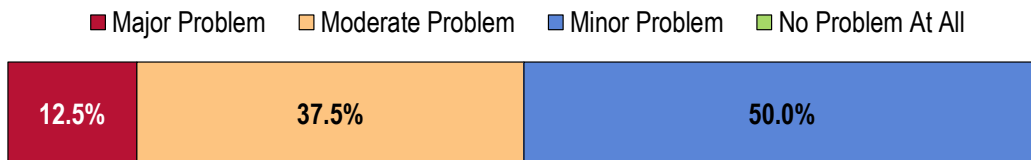


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 157]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents with children 0 to 17 in the household.  
 • Includes children who have ever been diagnosed with asthma, and whom are reported to still have asthma.

### Key Informant Input: Respiratory Disease

The following chart outlines key informants’ perceptions of the severity of *Respiratory Disease* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Respiratory Diseases as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the following reason was given:

#### Tobacco Use

*You could choke to death walking down the streets here, due to the number of people who still smoke cigarettes. It is disgusting. Then there is a vape shop on every corner, enticing all of the unsuspecting younger generations. All of that inhalation of chemicals is bound to cause respiratory issues in not only the users, but those who have to be around them, such as children, family members, and co-workers. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Injury & Violence

### About Injury & Violence

Injuries and violence are widespread in society. Both unintentional injuries and those caused by acts of violence are among the top 15 killers for Americans of all ages. Many people accept them as “accidents,” “acts of fate,” or as “part of life.” However, most events resulting in injury, disability, or death are predictable and preventable.

Injuries are the leading cause of death for Americans ages 1 to 44, and a leading cause of disability for all ages, regardless of sex, race/ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. More than 180,000 people die from injuries each year, and approximately 1 in 10 sustains a nonfatal injury serious enough to be treated in a hospital emergency department.

Beyond their immediate health consequences, injuries and violence have a significant impact on the well-being of Americans by contributing to:

- Premature death
- Disability
- Poor mental health
- High medical costs
- Lost productivity

The effects of injuries and violence extend beyond the injured person or victim of violence to family members, friends, coworkers, employers, and communities.

Numerous factors can affect the risk of unintentional injury and violence, including individual behaviors, physical environment, access to health services (ranging from pre-hospital and acute care to rehabilitation), and social environment (from parental monitoring and supervision of youth to peer group associations, neighborhoods, and communities).

Interventions addressing these social and physical factors have the potential to prevent unintentional injuries and violence.

Efforts to prevent unintentional injury may focus on:

- Modifications of the environment
- Improvements in product safety
- Legislation and enforcement
- Education and behavior change
- Technology and engineering

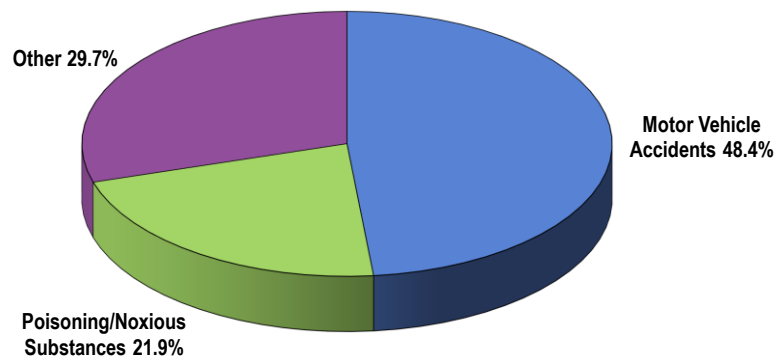
Efforts to prevent violence may focus on:

- Changing social norms about the acceptability of violence
- Improving problem-solving skills (for example, parenting, conflict resolution, coping)
- Changing policies to address the social and economic conditions that often give rise to violence
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Leading Causes of Accidental Death

Leading causes of accidental death in the area include the following:

#### Leading Causes of Accidental Death (Vernon Parish, 2014-2016)



Sources: • CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.  
 Notes: • Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).

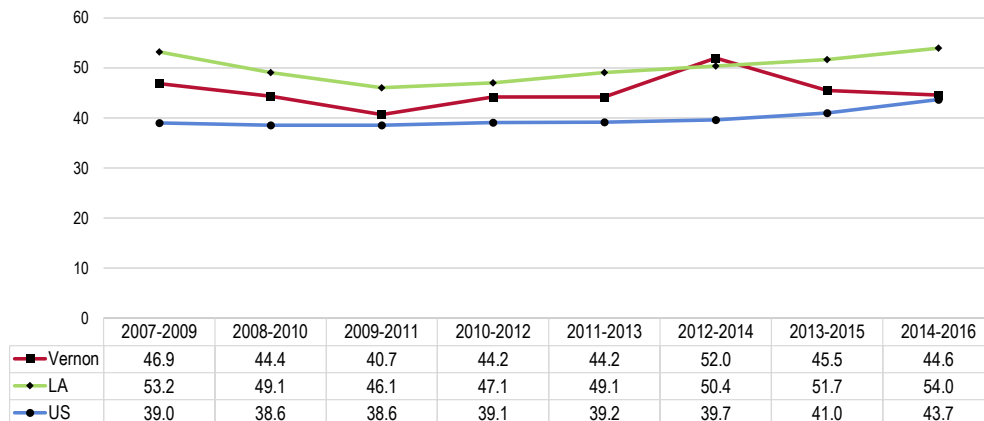
### Unintentional Injury

#### Age-Adjusted Unintentional Injury Deaths

The following chart outlines age-adjusted mortality rates for unintentional injury in the area.

- The parish death rate is more favorable than the statewide rate but similar to the national rate and the baseline rate.

#### Unintentional Injuries: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends (Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population) Healthy People 2020 Target = 36.4 or Lower



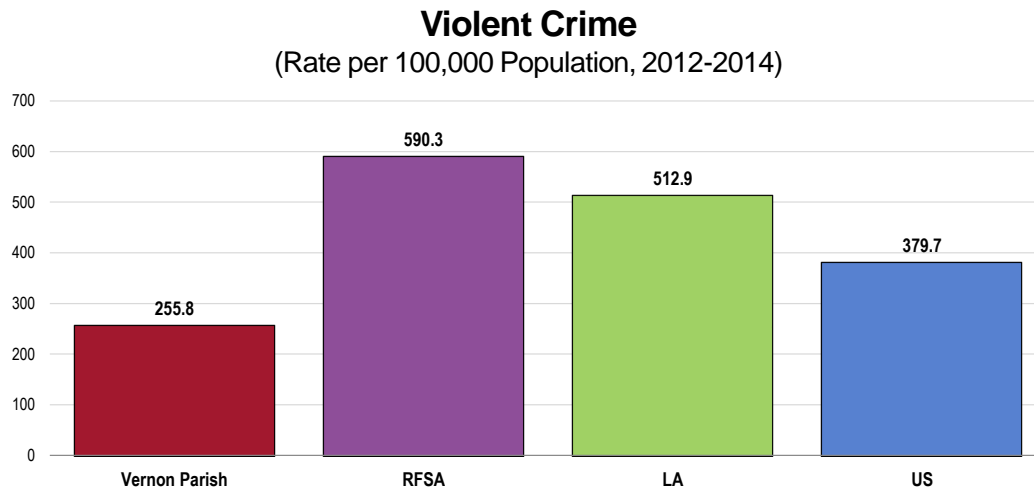
Sources: • CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective IVP-11]  
 Notes: • Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).  
 • Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population.

## Intentional Injury (Violence)

### Violent Crime

Violent crime is composed of four offenses (FBI Index offenses): murder and non-negligent manslaughter; forcible rape; robbery; and aggravated assault. Note that the quality of crime data can vary widely from location to location, depending on the consistency and completeness of reporting among various jurisdictions.

- The violent crime rate in Vernon Parish is well below that found across the region, state, and nation.

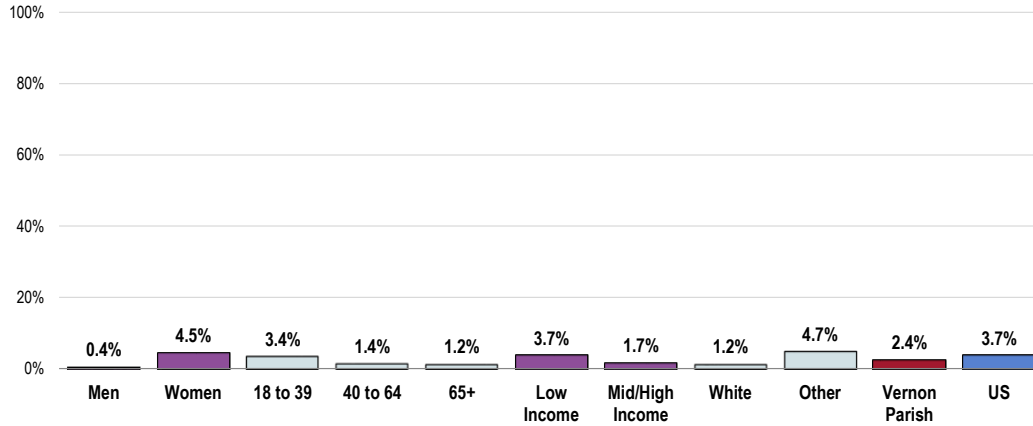


- Sources:
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI Uniform Crime Reports.
  - Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.
- Notes:
- This indicator reports the rate of violent crime offenses reported by the sheriff's office or county police department per 100,000 residents. Violent crime includes homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. This indicator is relevant because it assesses community safety.
  - Participation by law enforcement agencies in the UCR program is voluntary. Sub-state data do not necessarily represent an exhaustive list of crimes due to gaps in reporting. Also, some institutions of higher education have their own police departments, which handle offenses occurring within campus grounds; these offenses are not included in the violent crime statistics, but can be obtained from the Uniform Crime Reports Universities and Colleges data tables.

### Violent Crime Experience: "Have you been the victim of a violent crime in your area in the past 5 years?"

- Women are more likely than men to be a victim of violent crime. There are no significant differences within the other groups.

### Victim of a Violent Crime in the Past Five Years (Vernon Parish, 2018)

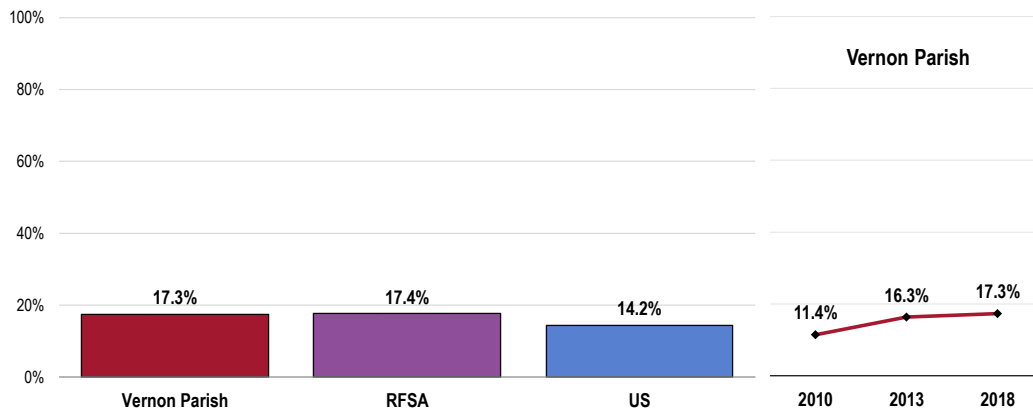


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 46]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

**Intimate Partner Violence:** “The next questions are about different types of violence in relationships with an intimate partner. By an intimate partner, I mean any current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Someone you were dating, or romantically or sexually intimate with, would also be considered an intimate partner. Has an intimate partner ever hit, slapped, pushed, kicked, or hurt you in any way?”

- Prevalence of domestic violence in the parish is similar to the service area and US. The parish rate has increased significantly over time.

### Have Ever Been Hit, Slapped, Pushed, Kicked, or Hurt in Any Way by an Intimate Partner



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 50]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.



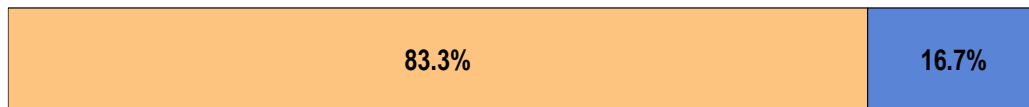
### Key Informant Input: Injury & Violence

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Injury & Violence* as a problem in the community:

#### Perceptions of Injury and Violence as a Problem in the Community

(Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

# Diabetes

## About Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus occurs when the body cannot produce or respond appropriately to insulin. Insulin is a hormone that the body needs to absorb and use glucose (sugar) as fuel for the body’s cells. Without a properly functioning insulin signaling system, blood glucose levels become elevated and other metabolic abnormalities occur, leading to the development of serious, disabling complications. Many forms of diabetes exist; the three common types are Type 1, Type 2, and gestational diabetes. Effective therapy can prevent or delay diabetic complications.

Diabetes mellitus:

- Lowers life expectancy by up to 15 years.
- Increases the risk of heart disease by 2 to 4 times.
- Is the leading cause of kidney failure, lower limb amputations, and adult-onset blindness.

The rate of diabetes mellitus continues to increase both in the United States and throughout the world. Due to the steady rise in the number of persons with diabetes mellitus, and possibly earlier onset of type 2 diabetes mellitus, there is growing concern about the possibility that the increase in the number of persons with diabetes mellitus and the complexity of their care might overwhelm existing healthcare systems.

People from minority populations are more frequently affected by type 2 diabetes. Minority groups constitute 25% of all adult patients with diabetes in the US and represent the majority of children and adolescents with type 2 diabetes.

Lifestyle change has been proven effective in preventing or delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes in high-risk individuals.

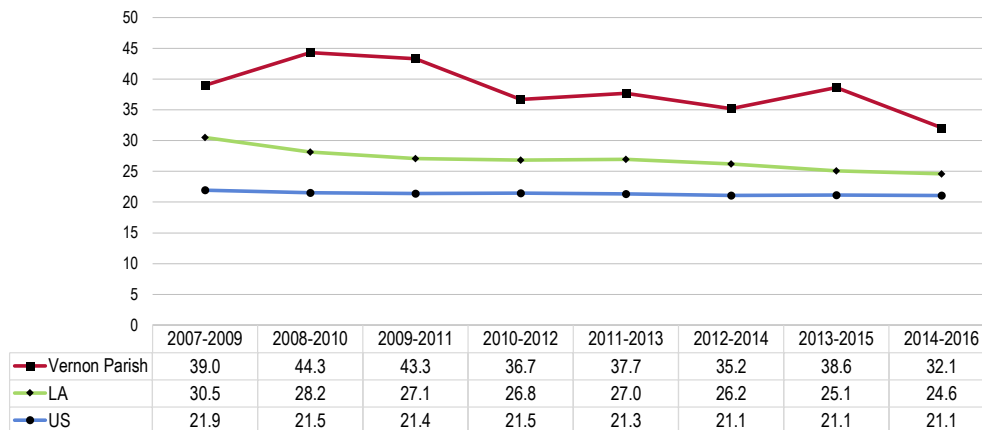
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

## Age-Adjusted Diabetes Deaths

Age-adjusted diabetes mortality for the area is shown in the following chart.

- The parish death rate is worse than found across the state and nation. However, the parish rate has trended downward over time.

**Diabetes: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends**  
(Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population)  
**Healthy People 2020 Target = 20.5 or Lower (Adjusted)**



Sources: • CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.  
• US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective D-3]

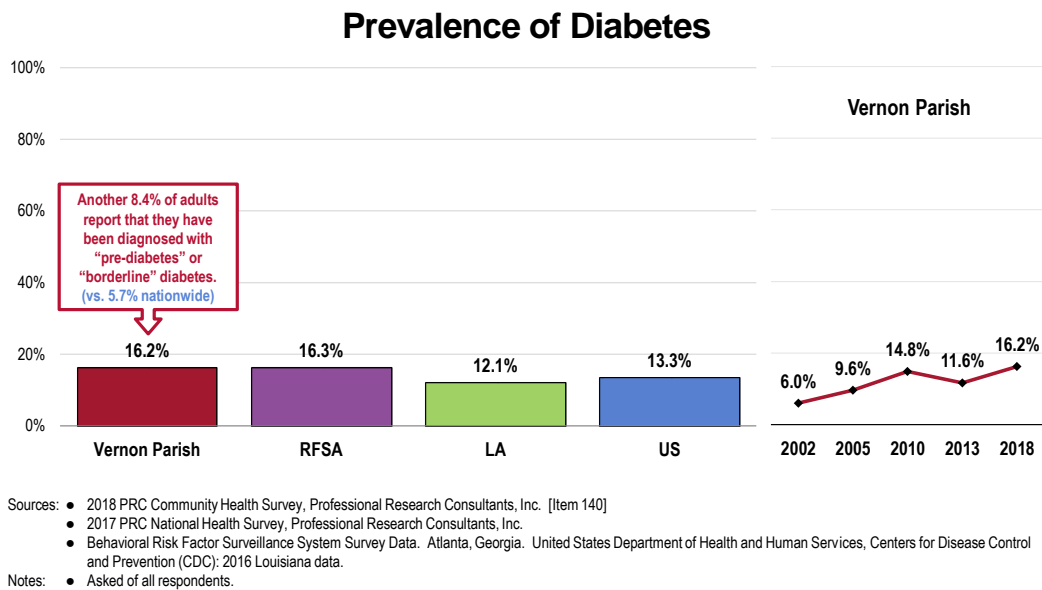
Notes: • Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).  
• Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population.  
• The Healthy People 2020 target for Diabetes is adjusted to account for only diabetes mellitus coded deaths.

### Prevalence of Diabetes

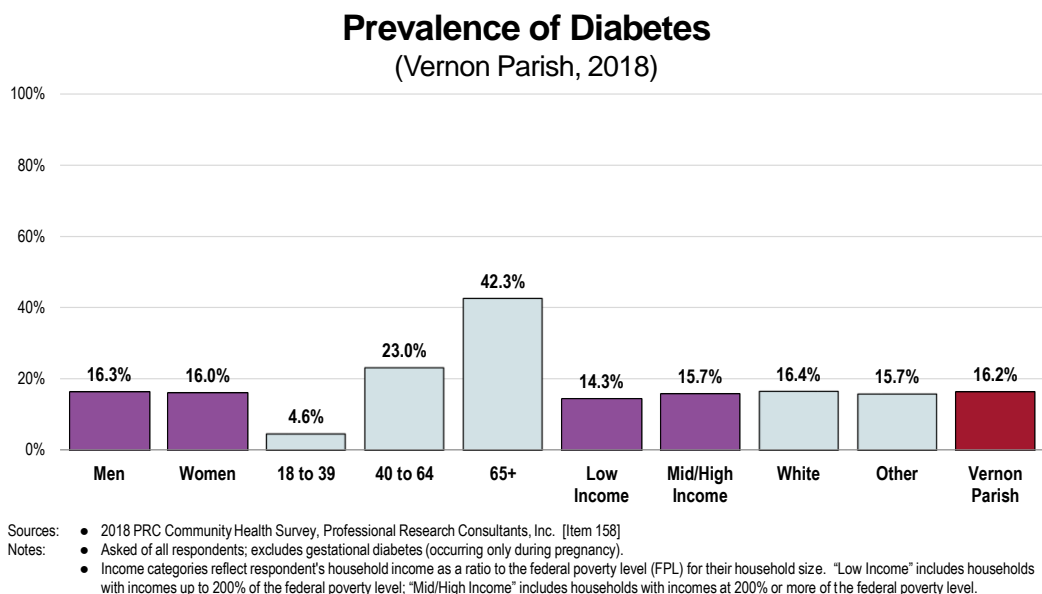
“Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that you have diabetes?  
(If female, add: not counting diabetes only occurring during pregnancy?)”

“Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that you have pre-diabetes or  
borderline diabetes? (If female, add: other than during pregnancy?)”

- Diabetes prevalence in the parish is less favorable than the Louisiana figure but similar to the regional and national findings. The parish rate has increased significantly over time.



- Note the positive correlation of diabetes prevalence with age. There are no significant differences by gender, income, or race.

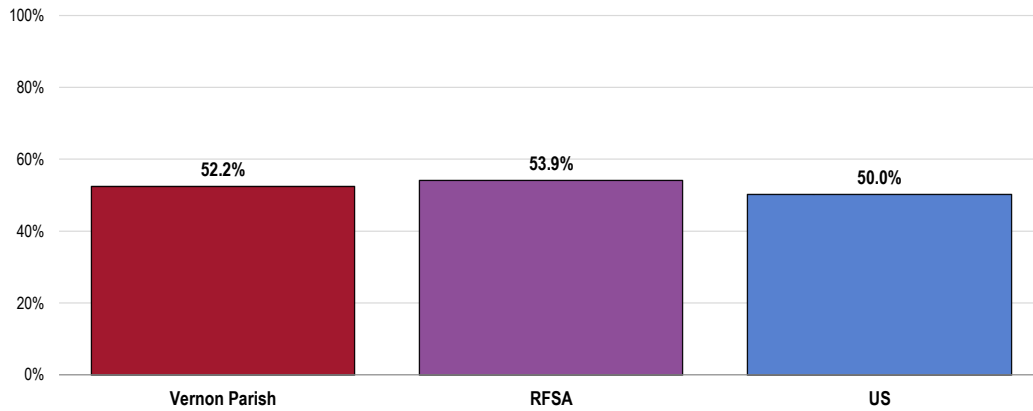


### Diabetes Testing

**Adults who do not have diabetes:** “Have you had a test for high blood sugar or diabetes within the past three years?”

- Testing within the parish is comparable to the service area and US.

#### Have Had Blood Sugar Tested in the Past Three Years (Among Nondiabetics)

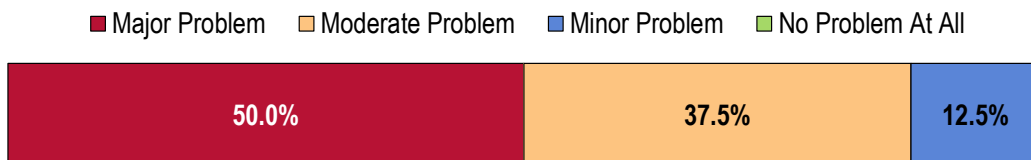


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 39]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of respondents who have not been diagnosed with diabetes.

### Key Informant Input: Diabetes

The following chart outlines key informants’ perceptions of the severity of *Diabetes* as a problem in the community:

#### Perceptions of Diabetes as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Challenges

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the biggest challenges for people with diabetes are seen as:

### Obesity and Lifestyle

*Eating right. Access to good, nutritious meals and exercise. No walking paths available in the community. – Community Leader (Vernon Parish)*

*Diet, exercise, willingness to change lifestyle; also heredity. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

### Diagnosis/Treatment

*Prevention and early education. Diet and exercise can eliminate and/or reduce the effects of diabetes. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*

### Health Education and Awareness

*The medical community does not have knowledge to educate their patients on the necessity of proper diet in the control of diabetes. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

# Alzheimer’s Disease

## About Dementia

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning—thinking, remembering, and reasoning—to such an extent that it interferes with a person’s daily life. Dementia is not a disease itself, but rather a set of symptoms. Memory loss is a common symptom of dementia, although memory loss by itself does not mean a person has dementia. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common cause of dementia, accounting for the majority of all diagnosed cases.

Alzheimer’s disease is the 6th leading cause of death among adults age 18 years and older. Estimates vary, but experts suggest that up to 5.1 million Americans age 65 years and older have Alzheimer’s disease. These numbers are predicted to more than double by 2050 unless more effective ways to treat and prevent Alzheimer’s disease are found.

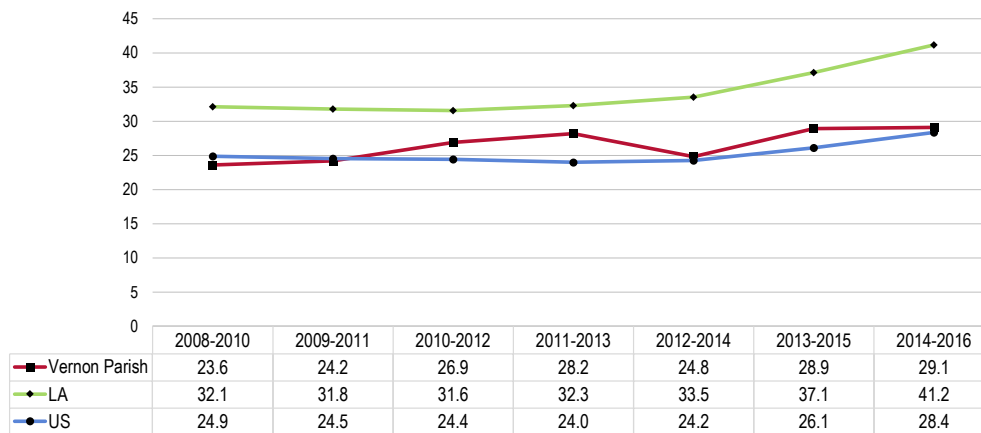
- Healthy People 2020 (www.healthypeople.gov)

## Age-Adjusted Alzheimer’s Disease Deaths

Age-adjusted Alzheimer’s disease mortality is outlined in the following chart.

- The parish death rate is more favorable than the statewide rate, similar to the national rate, and worse than the baseline rate.

**Alzheimer's Disease: Age-Adjusted Mortality Trends**  
(Annual Average Deaths per 100,000 Population)



Sources: • CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology Program Office, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Informatics. Data extracted August 2018.

Notes: • Deaths are coded using the Tenth Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10).  
• Rates are per 100,000 population, age-adjusted to the 2000 US Standard Population.

### Key Informant Input: Dementias, Including Alzheimer's Disease

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Dementias, Including Alzheimer's Disease* as a problem in the community:

#### Perceptions of Dementia/Alzheimer's Disease as a Problem in the Community

(Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

#### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” reasons related to the following:

##### Prevalence/Incidence

*I see it weekly in customers. Oceans Behavioral is so full, they cannot take more patients. Brain health supplements are in the top sellers. I know a handful of people diagnosed. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

##### Access to Care/Services

*Not enough places to take care of progressive diseases. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Kidney Disease

### About Kidney Disease

Chronic kidney disease and end-stage renal disease are significant public health problems in the United States and a major source of suffering and poor quality of life for those afflicted. They are responsible for premature death and exact a high economic price from both the private and public sectors. Nearly 25% of the Medicare budget is used to treat people with chronic kidney disease and end-stage renal disease.

Genetic determinants have a large influence on the development and progression of chronic kidney disease. It is not possible to alter a person's biology and genetic determinants; however, environmental influences and individual behaviors also have a significant influence on the development and progression of chronic kidney disease. As a result, some populations are disproportionately affected. Successful behavior modification is expected to have a positive influence on the disease.

Diabetes is the most common cause of kidney failure. The results of the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) show that moderate exercise, a healthier diet, and weight reduction can prevent development of type 2 diabetes in persons at risk.

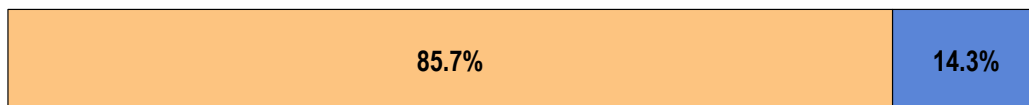
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Key Informant Input: Kidney Disease

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Kidney Disease* as a problem in the community:

#### Perceptions of Kidney Disease as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.



## Potentially Disabling Conditions

### About Arthritis, Osteoporosis, & Chronic Back Conditions

There are more than 100 types of arthritis. Arthritis commonly occurs with other chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. Interventions to treat the pain and reduce the functional limitations from arthritis are important, and may also enable people with these other chronic conditions to be more physically active. Arthritis affects 1 in 5 adults and continues to be the most common cause of disability. It costs more than \$128 billion per year. All of the human and economic costs are projected to increase over time as the population ages. There are interventions that can reduce arthritis pain and functional limitations, but they remain underused. These include: increased physical activity; self-management education; and weight loss among overweight/obese adults.

Osteoporosis is a disease marked by reduced bone strength leading to an increased risk of fractures (broken bones). In the United States, an estimated 5.3 million people age 50 years and older have osteoporosis. Most of these people are women, but about 0.8 million are men. Just over 34 million more people, including 12 million men, have low bone mass, which puts them at increased risk for developing osteoporosis. Half of all women and as many as 1 in 4 men age 50 years and older will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime.

Chronic back pain is common, costly, and potentially disabling. About 80% of Americans experience low back pain in their lifetime. It is estimated that each year:

- 15%-20% of the population develop protracted back pain.
- 2-8% have chronic back pain (pain that lasts more than 3 months).
- 3-4% of the population is temporarily disabled due to back pain.
- 1% of the working-age population is disabled completely and permanently as a result of low back pain.

Americans spend at least \$50 billion each year on low back pain. Low back pain is the:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of lost work time (after the common cold).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> most common reason to undergo a surgical procedure.
- 5<sup>th</sup> most frequent cause of hospitalization.

Arthritis, osteoporosis, and chronic back conditions all have major effects on quality of life, the ability to work, and basic activities of daily living.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

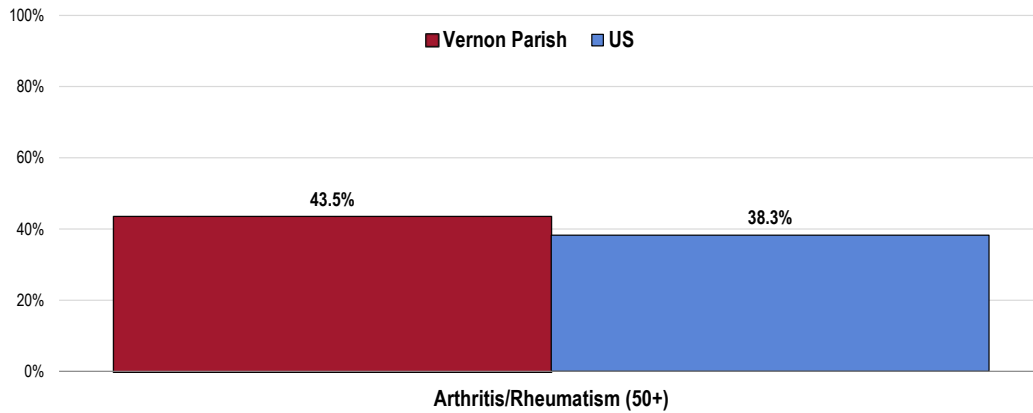
### Arthritis

**“Would you please tell me if you have ever suffered from or been diagnosed with arthritis or rheumatism?”**

See also *Overall Health Status: Activity Limitations* in the **General Health Status** section of this report.

- Prevalence of arthritis/rheumatism in parish adults age 50 and older is statistically similar to the national prevalence.

### Prevalence of Potentially Disabling Conditions

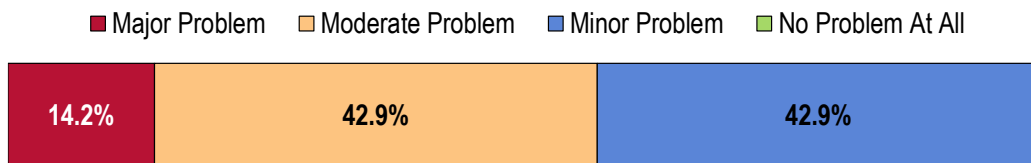


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 141]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective AOCBC-10]  
 Notes: • Reflects adults age 50+.

#### Key Informant Input: Arthritis, Osteoporosis, & Chronic Back Conditions

The following chart outlines key informants’ perceptions of the severity of *Arthritis, Osteoporosis & Chronic Back Conditions* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Arthritis/Osteoporosis/Back Conditions as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

#### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the following reason was given:

#### Prevalence/Incidence

*I see numerous people on a daily basis with these conditions, have friends and family members of every age group with arthritis, customers and employees with osteoporosis, and I personally (along with friends) suffer back pain. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Vision & Hearing Impairment

### Key Informant Input: Vision & Hearing

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Vision & Hearing* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Vision and Hearing as a Problem in the Community

(Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Infectious Disease

### About Immunization & Infectious Diseases

The increase in life expectancy during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is largely due to improvements in child survival; this increase is associated with reductions in infectious disease mortality, due largely to immunization. However, infectious diseases remain a major cause of illness, disability, and death. Immunization recommendations in the United States currently target 17 vaccine-preventable diseases across the lifespan.

People in the US continue to get diseases that are vaccine-preventable. Viral hepatitis, influenza, and tuberculosis (TB) remain among the leading causes of illness and death across the nation and account for substantial spending on the related consequences of infection.

The infectious disease public health infrastructure, which carries out disease surveillance at the national, state, and local levels, is an essential tool in the fight against newly emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. Other important defenses against infectious diseases include:

- Proper use of vaccines
- Antibiotics
- Screening and testing guidelines
- Scientific improvements in the diagnosis of infectious disease-related health concerns

Vaccines are among the most cost-effective clinical preventive services and are a core component of any preventive services package. Childhood immunization programs provide a very high return on investment. For example, for each birth cohort vaccinated with the routine immunization schedule, society:

- Saves 33,000 lives.
- Prevents 14 million cases of disease.
- Reduces direct healthcare costs by \$9.9 billion.
- Saves \$33.4 billion in indirect costs.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

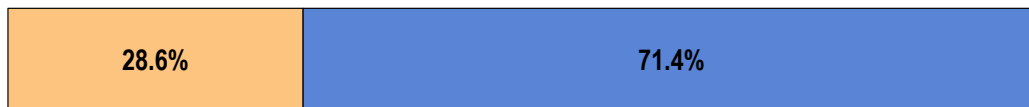
### Key Informant Input: Immunization & Infectious Diseases

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Immunization & Infectious Diseases* as a problem in the community:

#### Perceptions of Immunization and Infectious Diseases as a Problem in the Community

(Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Influenza & Pneumonia Vaccination

### About Influenza & Pneumonia

Acute respiratory infections, including pneumonia and influenza, are the 8th leading cause of death in the nation, accounting for 56,000 deaths annually. Pneumonia mortality in children fell by 97% in the last century, but respiratory infectious diseases continue to be leading causes of pediatric hospitalization and outpatient visits in the US. On average, influenza leads to more than 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths each year. The 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic caused an estimated 270,000 hospitalizations and 12,270 deaths (1,270 of which were of people younger than age 18) between April 2009 and March 2010.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Vaccinations

“During the past 12 months, have you had a flu shot?”

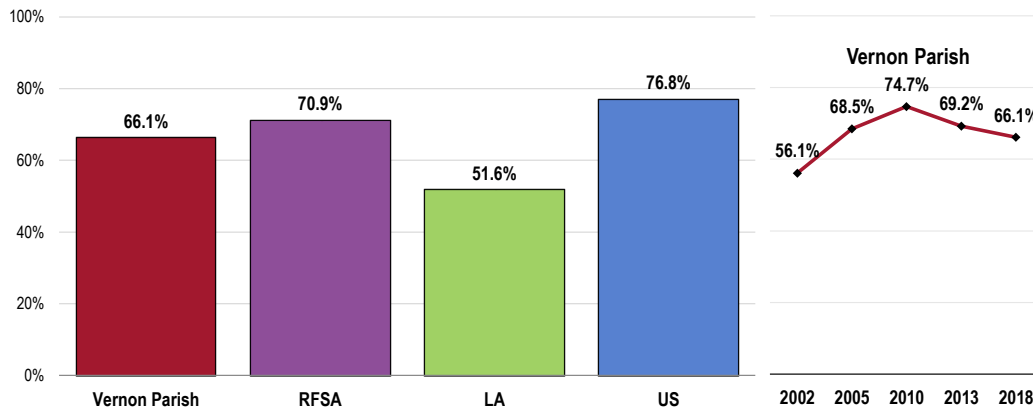
“A pneumonia shot or pneumococcal vaccine is usually given only once or twice in a person’s lifetime and is different from the seasonal flu shot. Have you ever had a pneumonia shot?”

Columns in the following chart show these findings among those age 65+.

- The flu vaccination rate among parish seniors is better than the statewide rate, worse than the national rate, and comparable to the regional rate. It is statistically similar to the 2002 baseline, despite considerable fluctuations in the interim.

### Older Adults: Have Had a Flu Vaccination in the Past Year (Among Adults Age 65+)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 70.0% or Higher



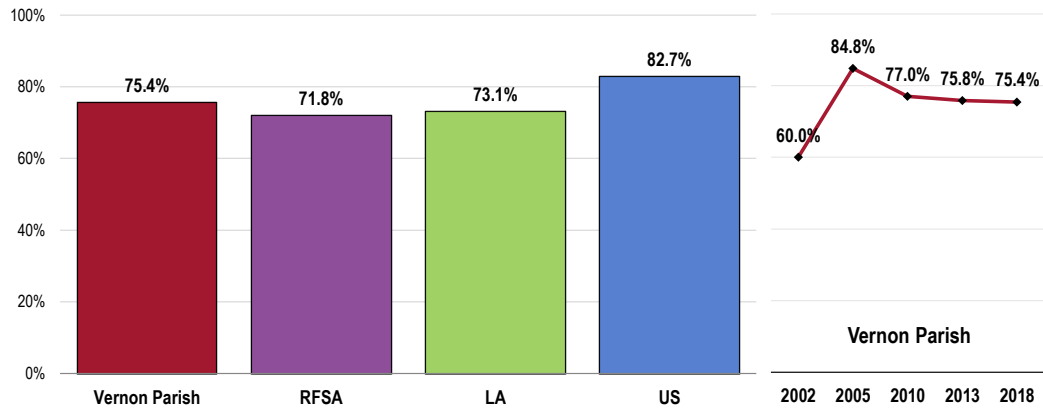
- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 163-164]
  - 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
  - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.
  - US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective IID-12.12]
- Notes:
- Reflects respondents 65 and older.
  - Includes Fluzone Intradermal as a form of vaccination.

- The pneumonia vaccination rate among parish seniors is comparable to all other populations shown. Despite fluctuations, the parish rate is statistically similar to the baseline rate.

## Older Adults: Have Ever Had a Pneumonia Vaccine

(Among Adults Age 65+)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 90.0% or Higher



- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 165-166]
  - 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
  - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.
  - US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objectives IID-13.1, IID-13.2]
- Notes:
- Reflects respondents 65 and older.

## HIV

### About Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

The HIV epidemic in the United States continues to be a major public health crisis. An estimated 1.1 million Americans are living with HIV, and 1 in 5 people with HIV do not know they have it. HIV continues to spread, leading to about 56,000 new HIV infections each year.

HIV is a preventable disease, and effective HIV prevention interventions have been proven to reduce HIV transmission. People who get tested for HIV and learn that they are infected can make significant behavior changes to improve their health and reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to their sex or drug-using partners. More than 50% of new HIV infections occur as a result of the 21% of people who have HIV but do not know it.

In the era of increasingly effective treatments for HIV, people with HIV are living longer, healthier, and more productive lives. Deaths from HIV infection have greatly declined in the United States since the 1990s. As the number of people living with HIV grows, it will be more important than ever to increase national HIV prevention and healthcare programs.

There are gender, race, and ethnicity disparities in new HIV infections:

- Nearly 75% of new HIV infections occur in men.
- More than half occur in gay and bisexual men, regardless of race or ethnicity.
- 45% of new HIV infections occur in African Americans, 35% in whites, and 17% in Hispanics.

Improving access to quality healthcare for populations disproportionately affected by HIV, such as persons of color and gay and bisexual men, is a fundamental public health strategy for HIV prevention. People getting care for HIV can receive:

- Antiretroviral therapy
- Screening and treatment for other diseases (such as sexually transmitted infections)
- HIV prevention interventions
- Mental health services
- Other health services

As the number of people living with HIV increases and more people become aware of their HIV status, prevention strategies that are targeted specifically for HIV-infected people are becoming more important. Prevention work with people living with HIV focuses on:

- Linking to and staying in treatment.
- Increasing the availability of ongoing HIV prevention interventions.
- Providing prevention services for their partners.

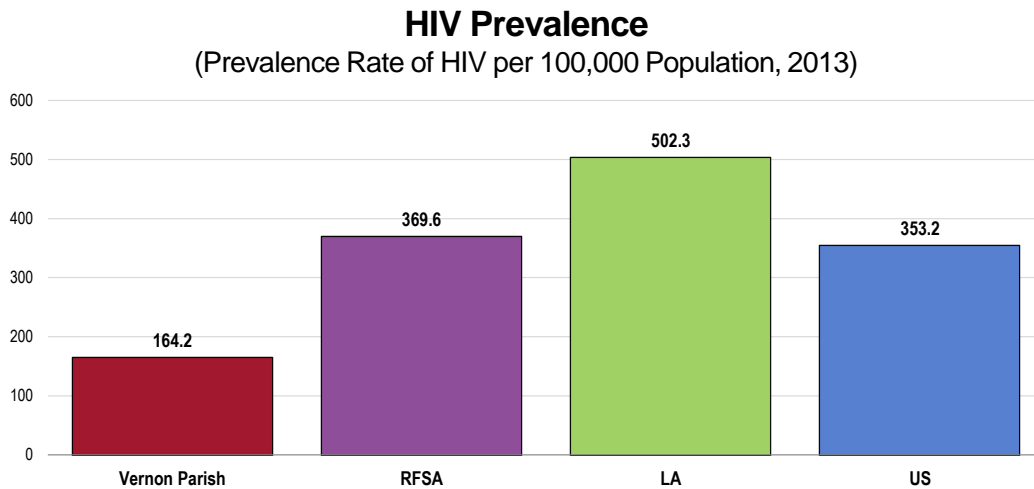
Public perception in the US about the seriousness of the HIV epidemic has declined in recent years. There is evidence that risky behaviors may be increasing among uninfected people, especially gay and bisexual men. Ongoing media and social campaigns for the general public and HIV prevention interventions for uninfected persons who engage in risky behaviors are critical.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### HIV Prevalence

The following chart outlines prevalence (current cases, regardless of when they were diagnosed) of HIV per 100,000 population in the area.

- HIV prevalence in Vernon Parish is considerably lower than found across the region, state, and nation.



Sources: 

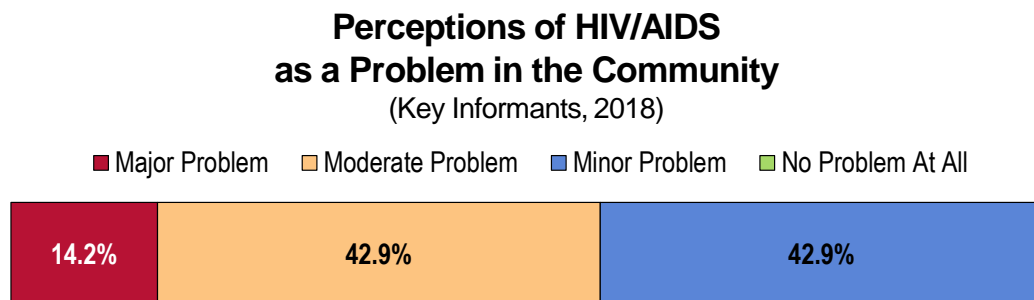
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention.
- Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.

  
 Notes: 

- This indicator is relevant because HIV is a life-threatening communicable disease that disproportionately affects minority populations and may also indicate the prevalence of unsafe sex practices.

### Key Informant Input: HIV/AIDS

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of HIV/AIDS as a problem in the community:



Sources: 

- PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

  
 Notes: 

- Asked of all respondents.

### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the following reason was given:

#### Unprotected Sex

*I know a couple of people diagnosed HIV positive, and they are promiscuous with others who are promiscuous, so there is no way that there are not dozens and dozens of undiagnosed cases. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*



## Sexually Transmitted Diseases

### About Sexually Transmitted Diseases

STDs refer to more than 25 infectious organisms that are transmitted primarily through sexual activity. Despite their burdens, costs, and complications, and the fact that they are largely preventable, STDs remain a significant public health problem in the United States. This problem is largely unrecognized by the public, policymakers, and health care professionals. STDs cause many harmful, often irreversible, and costly clinical complications, such as: reproductive health problems; fetal and perinatal health problems; cancer; and facilitation of the sexual transmission of HIV infection.

Because many cases of STDs go undiagnosed—and some common viral infections, such as human papillomavirus (HPV) and genital herpes, are not reported to CDC at all—the reported cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis represent only a fraction of the true burden of STDs in the US. Untreated STDs can lead to serious long-term health consequences, especially for adolescent girls and young women. Several factors contribute to the spread of STDs.

**Biological Factors.** STDs are acquired during unprotected sex with an infected partner. Biological factors that affect the spread of STDs include:

- **Asymptomatic nature of STDs.** The majority of STDs either do not produce any symptoms or signs, or they produce symptoms so mild that they are unnoticed; consequently, many infected persons do not know that they need medical care.
- **Gender disparities.** Women suffer more frequent and more serious STD complications than men do. Among the most serious STD complications are pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside of the uterus), infertility, and chronic pelvic pain.
- **Age disparities.** Compared to older adults, sexually active adolescents ages 15 to 19 and young adults ages 20 to 24 are at higher risk for getting STDs.
- **Lag time between infection and complications.** Often, a long interval, sometimes years, occurs between acquiring an STD and recognizing a clinically significant health problem.

**Social, Economic, and Behavioral Factors.** The spread of STDs is directly affected by social, economic, and behavioral factors. Such factors may cause serious obstacles to STD prevention due to their influence on social and sexual networks, access to and provision of care, willingness to seek care, and social norms regarding sex and sexuality. Among certain vulnerable populations, historical experience with segregation and discrimination exacerbates these factors. Social, economic, and behavioral factors that affect the spread of STDs include: racial and ethnic disparities; poverty and marginalization; access to healthcare; substance abuse; sexuality and secrecy (stigma and discomfort discussing sex); and sexual networks (persons “linked” by sequential or concurrent sexual partners).

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Chlamydia & Gonorrhea

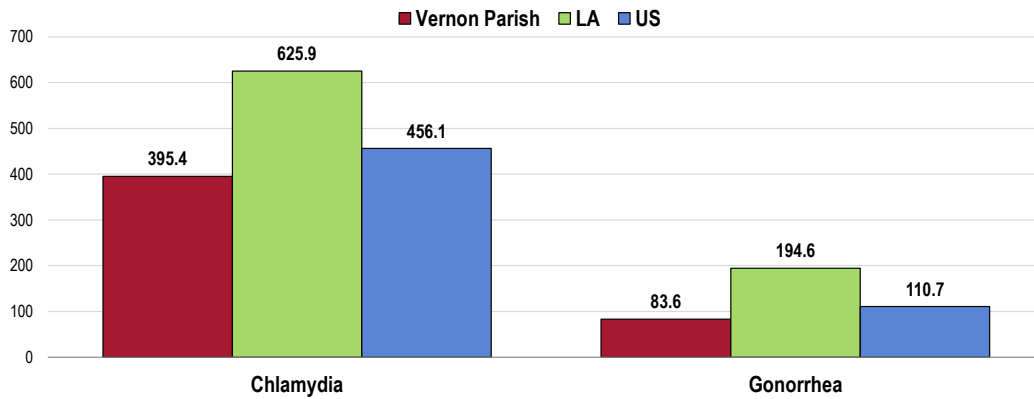
**Chlamydia.** Chlamydia is the most commonly reported STD in the United States; most people who have chlamydia are unaware, since the disease often has no symptoms.

**Gonorrhea.** Anyone who is sexually active can get gonorrhea. Gonorrhea can be cured with the right medication; left untreated, however, gonorrhea can cause serious health problems in both women and men.

The following chart outlines local incidence for these STDs.

- Chlamydia and gonorrhea rates in Vernon Parish are much lower than the state and national rates.

### Chlamydia & Gonorrhea Incidence (Incidence Rate per 100,000 Population, 2014)

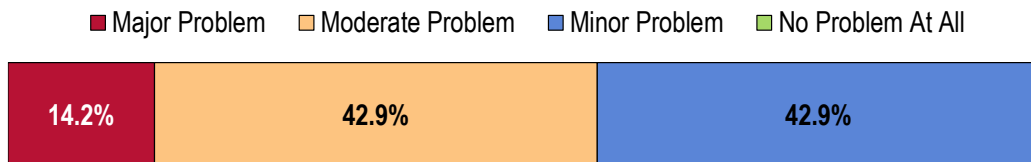


Sources: • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention.  
 • Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.  
 Notes: • This indicator is relevant because it is a measure of poor health status and indicates the prevalence of unsafe sex practices.

### Key Informant Input: Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Sexually Transmitted Diseases as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the following reason was given:

### Prevalence/Incidence

*Rampant promiscuity and lack of regular health care. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

# Births

## About Infant & Child Health

Improving the well-being of mothers, infants, and children is an important public health goal for the US. Their well-being determines the health of the next generation and can help predict future public health challenges for families, communities, and the healthcare system. The risk of maternal and infant mortality and pregnancy-related complications can be reduced by increasing access to quality preconception (before pregnancy) and inter-conception (between pregnancies) care. Moreover, healthy birth outcomes and early identification and treatment of health conditions among infants can prevent death or disability and enable children to reach their full potential. Many factors can affect pregnancy and childbirth, including pre-conception health status, age, access to appropriate healthcare, and poverty.

Infant and child health are similarly influenced by socio-demographic factors, such as family income, but are also linked to the physical and mental health of parents and caregivers. There are racial and ethnic disparities in mortality and morbidity for mothers and children, particularly for African Americans. These differences are likely the result of many factors, including social determinants (such as racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality; family income; educational attainment among household members; and health insurance coverage) and physical determinants (i.e., the health, nutrition, and behaviors of the mother during pregnancy and early childhood).

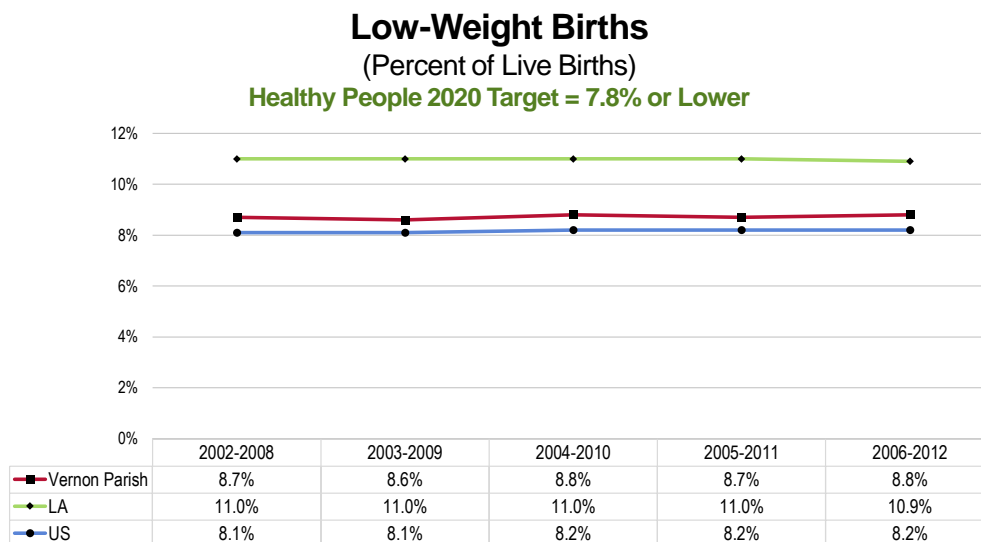
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

## Birth Outcomes & Risks

### Low-Weight Births

Low birthweight babies, those who weigh less than 2,500 grams (5 pounds, 8 ounces) at birth, are much more prone to illness and neonatal death than are babies of normal birthweight. Largely a result of receiving poor or inadequate prenatal care, many low-weight births and the consequent health problems are preventable. Births of low-weight infants are described in the following chart.

- The parish proportion is lower than found statewide but similar to the national prevalence. The parish rate has not varied statistically over time.

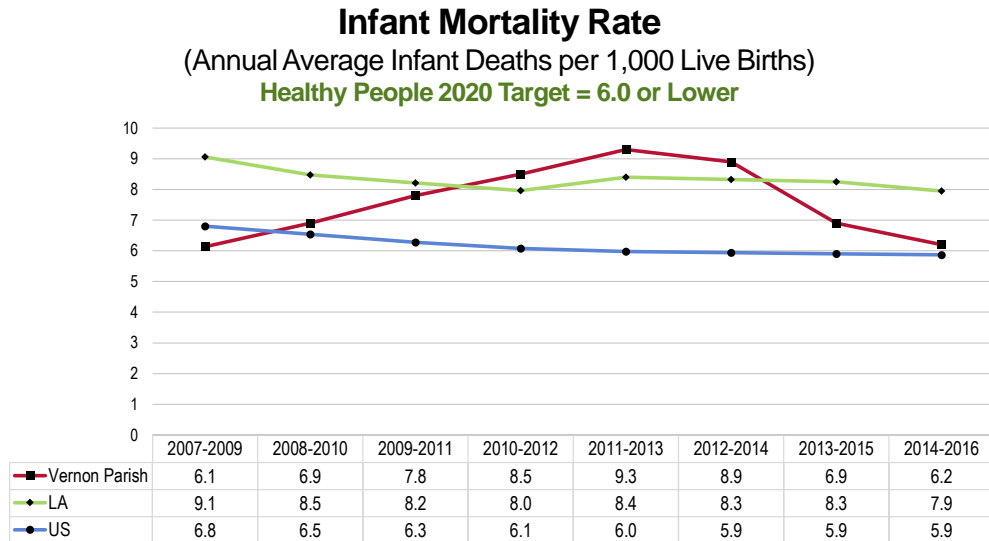


Sources: • CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics. Data extracted August 2018.  
• US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective MICH-8.1]  
Note: • This indicator reports the percentage of total births that are low birth weight (Under 2500g). This indicator is relevant because low birth weight infants are at high risk for health problems. This indicator can also highlight the existence of health disparities.

### Infant Mortality

Infant mortality rates reflect deaths of children less than one year old per 1,000 live births. These rates are outlined in the following chart.

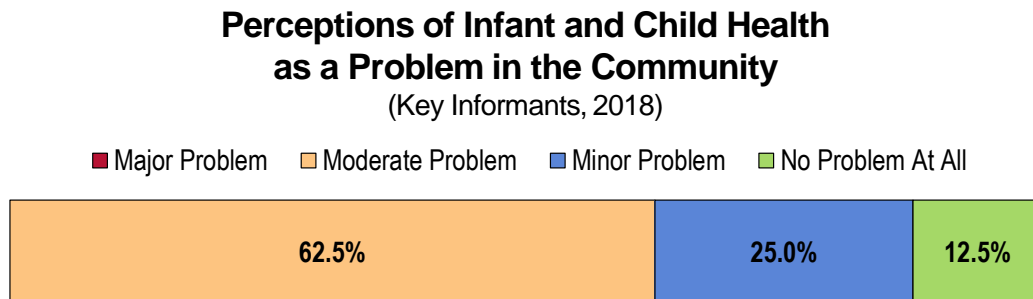
- The parish death rate is lower than the Louisiana rate but similar to the US rate. The parish rate is nearly identical to the baseline, though fluctuating considerably in the interim.



Sources: ● CDC WONDER Online Query System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics. Data extracted August 2018.  
 ● Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.  
 ● US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective MICH-1.3]  
 Notes: ● Rates are three-year averages of deaths of children under 1 year old per 1,000 live births.

### Key Informant Input: Infant & Child Health

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Infant & Child Health* as a problem in the community:



Sources: ● PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: ● Asked of all respondents.

## Family Planning

### Births to Teen Mothers

#### About Teen Births

The negative outcomes associated with unintended pregnancies are compounded for adolescents. Teen mothers:

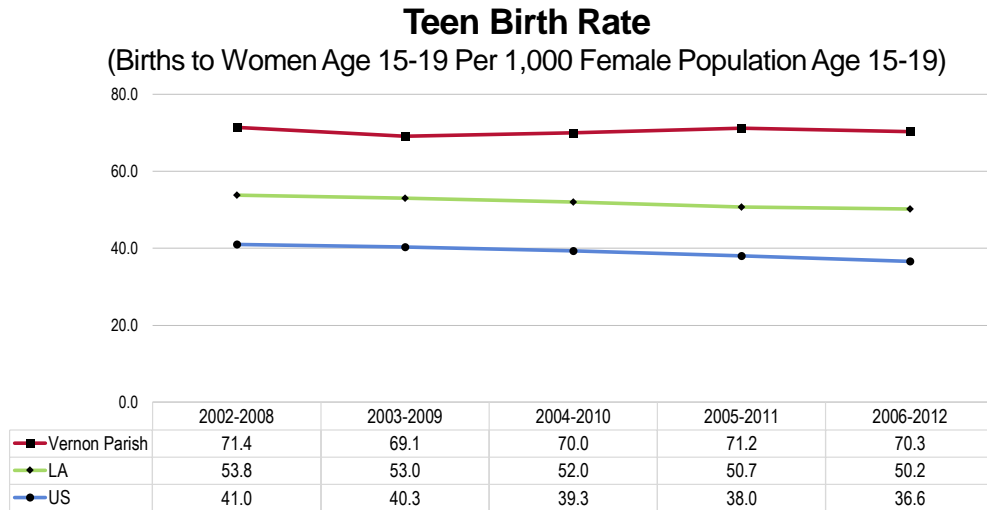
- Are less likely to graduate from high school or attain a GED by the time they reach age 30.
- Earn an average of approximately \$3,500 less per year, when compared with those who delay childbearing.
- Receive nearly twice as much Federal aid for nearly twice as long.

Similarly, early fatherhood is associated with lower educational attainment and lower income. Children of teen parents are more likely to have lower cognitive attainment and exhibit more behavior problems. Sons of teen mothers are more likely to be incarcerated, and daughters are more likely to become adolescent mothers.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

The following chart describes local teen births.

- The parish birth rate is considerably higher than found across the state and nation and has not varied statistically over time.



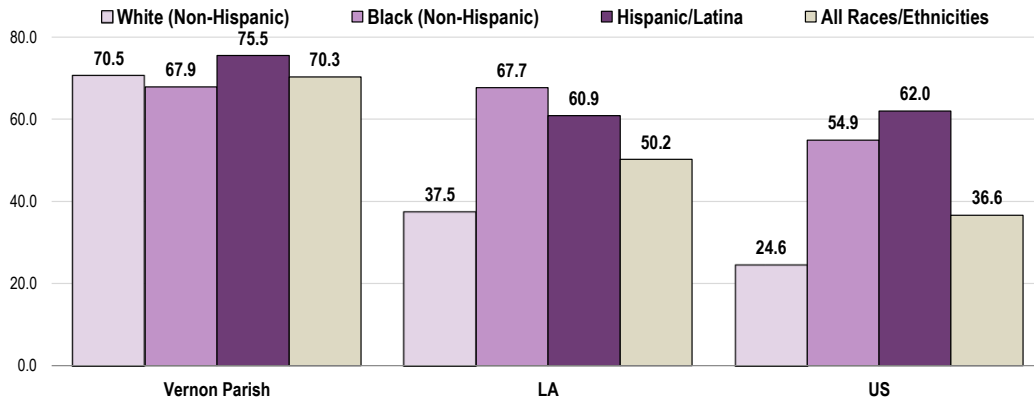
Sources: • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System. Accessed using CDC WONDER.  
• Retrieved from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.

Notes: • This indicator reports the rate of total births to women under the age of 15–19 per 1,000 female population age 15–19. This indicator is relevant because in many cases, teen parents have unique social, economic, and health support services. Additionally, high rates of teen pregnancy may indicate the prevalence of unsafe sex practices.

- Births to White and Hispanic/Latina teens in Vernon Parish are proportionally higher than found across the state and nation.

### Teen Birth Rate

(Births to Women Age 15-19 Per 1,000 Female Population Age 15-19; Vernon Parish by Race/Ethnicity, 2006-2012)

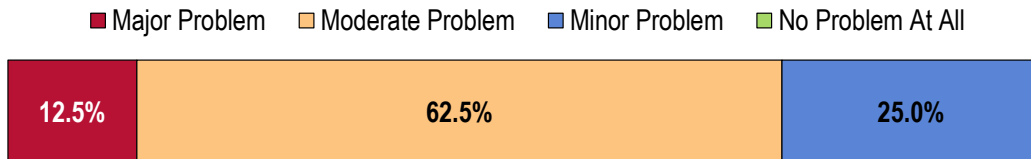


Sources: • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System. Accessed using CDC WONDER.  
 • Retrieved from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.  
 Notes: • This indicator reports the rate of total births to women under the age of 15–19 per 1,000 female population age 15–19. This indicator is relevant because in many cases, teen parents have unique social, economic, and health support services. Additionally, high rates of teen pregnancy may indicate the prevalence of unsafe sex practices.

### Key Informant Input: Family Planning

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Family Planning* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Family Planning as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the following reason was given:

#### Prevalence/Incidence

*Kids and those who are not prepared for children are having children at an alarming rate. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Modifiable Health Risks

### Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Weight

#### Nutrition

##### About Healthful Diet & Healthy Weight

Strong science exists supporting the health benefits of eating a healthful diet and maintaining a healthy body weight. Efforts to change diet and weight should address individual behaviors, as well as the policies and environments that support these behaviors in settings such as schools, worksites, healthcare organizations, and communities.

The goal of promoting healthful diets and healthy weight encompasses increasing household food security and eliminating hunger.

Americans with a healthful diet:

- Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods within and across the food groups, especially whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products, and lean meats and other protein sources.
- Limit the intake of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, sodium (salt), and alcohol.
- Limit caloric intake to meet caloric needs.

Diet and body weight are related to health status. Good nutrition is important to the growth and development of children. A healthful diet also helps Americans reduce their risks for many health conditions, including: overweight and obesity; malnutrition; iron-deficiency anemia; heart disease; high blood pressure; dyslipidemia (poor lipid profiles); type 2 diabetes; osteoporosis; oral disease; constipation; diverticular disease; and some cancers.

Diet reflects the variety of foods and beverages consumed over time and in settings such as worksites, schools, restaurants, and the home. Interventions to support a healthier diet can help ensure that:

- Individuals have the knowledge and skills to make healthier choices.
- Healthier options are available and affordable.

**Social Determinants of Diet.** Demographic characteristics of those with a more healthful diet vary with the nutrient or food studied. However, most Americans need to improve some aspect of their diet.

Social factors thought to influence diet include:

- Knowledge and attitudes
- Skills
- Social support
- Societal and cultural norms
- Food and agricultural policies
- Food assistance programs
- Economic price systems

**Physical Determinants of Diet.** Access to and availability of healthier foods can help people follow healthful diets. For example, better access to retail venues that sell healthier options may have a positive impact on a person's diet; these venues may be less available in low-income or rural neighborhoods.

The places where people eat appear to influence their diet. For example, foods eaten away from home often have more calories and are of lower nutritional quality than foods prepared at home.

Marketing also influences people's—particularly children's—food choices.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Daily Recommendation of Fruits/Vegetables

To measure fruit and vegetable consumption, survey respondents were asked multiple questions, specifically about the foods and drinks they consumed on the day prior to the interview.

**“For the next questions, please think about the foods you ate yesterday. How many servings of fruit did you have yesterday?”**

**“How many servings of 100% fruit juice did you have yesterday?”**

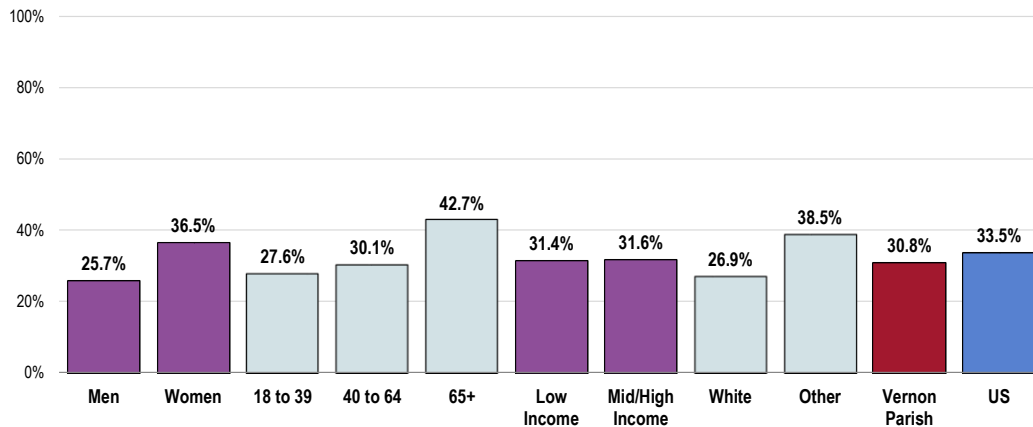
**“How many servings of dark green or orange vegetables, such as carrots, broccoli, or sweet potatoes, did you have yesterday? (Examples of dark green vegetables are broccoli, spinach, collards, etc.) (Examples of orange vegetables are carrots and sweet potatoes, etc.)”**

**“How many servings of other vegetables did you have yesterday? (Examples are potatoes, corn, onions, peas, etc.)?”**

The questions above are used to calculate daily fruit/vegetable consumption for respondents. The proportion reporting having 5 or more servings per day is shown here.

- Consumption of fruits and vegetables in the service area is comparable to the US figure.
- Men, adults younger than 65, and White respondents are less likely to eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables.

### Consume Five or More Servings of Fruits/Vegetables Per Day (Vernon Parish, 2018)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 361]

- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.
  - Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.
  - For this issue, respondents were asked to recall their food intake on the previous day.

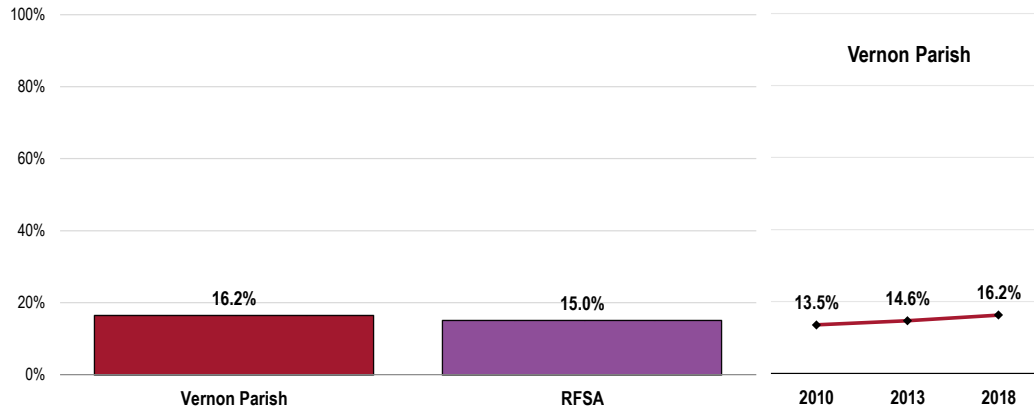


**Access to Fresh Produce**

“How difficult is it for you to buy fresh produce like fruits and vegetables at a price you can afford — would you say: very difficult, somewhat difficult, not too difficult, or not at all difficult?”

- The parish response is similar to the Rapides Foundation Service Area response and is similar to the 2010 parish response.

**Find It “Very” or “Somewhat” Difficult to Buy Affordable Fresh Produce**



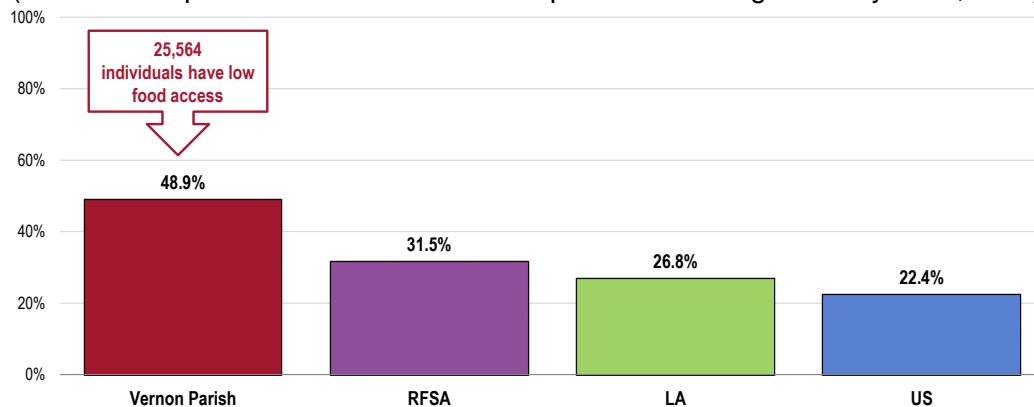
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 321]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

A food desert is defined as a low-income area where a significant number or share of residents is far from a supermarket, where "far" is more than 1 mile in urban areas and more than 10 miles in rural areas. This related chart is based on US Department of Agriculture data.

- The proportion of parish residents with low food access is considerably higher than found across the region, state, and nation.

**Population With Low Food Access**

(Percent of Population That Is Far From a Supermarket or Large Grocery Store, 2015)



Sources: • US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, USDA - Food Access Research Atlas (FARA).  
 • Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.  
 Notes: • This indicator reports the percentage of the population living in census tracts designated as food deserts. A food desert is defined as low-income areas where a significant number or share of residents is far from a supermarket, where "far" is more than 1 mile in urban areas and more than 10 miles in rural areas. This indicator is relevant because it highlights populations and geographies facing food insecurity.

## Physical Activity

### About Physical Activity

Regular physical activity can improve the health and quality of life of Americans of all ages, regardless of the presence of a chronic disease or disability. Among adults, physical activity can lower the risk of: early death; coronary heart disease; stroke; high blood pressure; type 2 diabetes; breast and colon cancer; falls; and depression. Among children and adolescents, physical activity can: improve bone health; improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness; decrease levels of body fat; and reduce symptoms of depression. For people who are inactive, even small increases in physical activity are associated with health benefits.

Personal, social, economic, and environmental factors all play a role in physical activity levels among youth, adults, and older adults. Understanding the barriers to and facilitators of physical activity is important to ensure the effectiveness of interventions and other actions to improve levels of physical activity.

Factors **positively** associated with adult physical activity include: postsecondary education; higher income; enjoyment of exercise; expectation of benefits; belief in ability to exercise (self-efficacy); history of activity in adulthood; social support from peers, family, or spouse; access to and satisfaction with facilities; enjoyable scenery; and safe neighborhoods.

Factors **negatively** associated with adult physical activity include: advancing age; low income; lack of time; low motivation; rural residency; perception of great effort needed for exercise; overweight or obesity; perception of poor health; and being disabled. Older adults may have additional factors that keep them from being physically active, including lack of social support, lack of transportation to facilities, fear of injury, and cost of programs.

Among children ages 4 to 12, the following factors have a positive association with physical activity: gender (boys); belief in ability to be active (self-efficacy); and parental support.

Among adolescents ages 13 to 18, the following factors have a positive association with physical activity: parental education; gender (boys); personal goals; physical education/school sports; belief in ability to be active (self-efficacy); and support of friends and family.

Environmental influences positively associated with physical activity among children and adolescents include:

- Presence of sidewalks
- Having a destination/walking to a particular place
- Access to public transportation
- Low traffic density
- Access to neighborhood or school play area and/or recreational equipment

People with disabilities may be less likely to participate in physical activity due to physical, emotional, and psychological barriers. Barriers may include the inaccessibility of facilities and the lack of staff trained in working with people with disabilities.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Leisure-Time Physical Activity

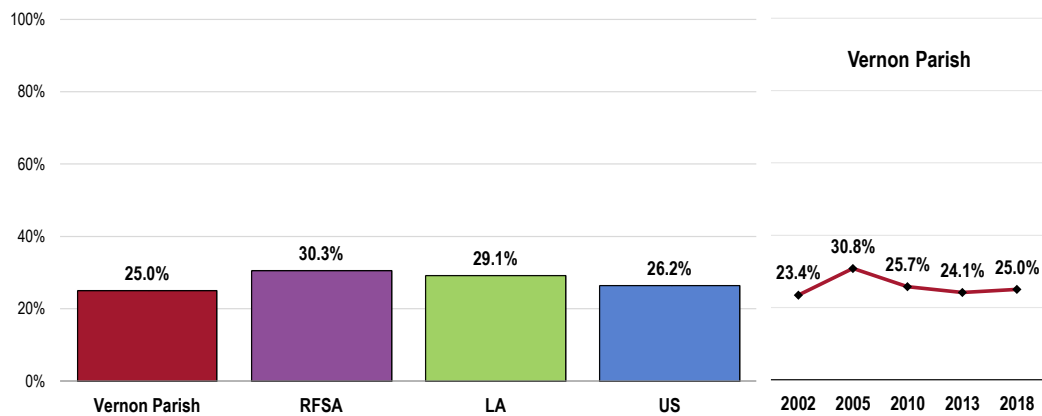
Leisure-time physical activity includes any physical activities or exercises (such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, walking, etc.) which take place outside of one's line of work.

**“During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises, such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?”**

- The proportion of parish adults who do not engage in leisure-time activity is better than found across the service area but similar to statewide and national findings. The parish rate is similar to the 2002 rate.

## No Leisure-Time Physical Activity in the Past Month

Healthy People 2020 Target = 32.6% or Lower



- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 106]
  - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.
  - 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
  - US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective PA-1]
- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.

### Recommended Levels of Physical Activity

Adults should do 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity (such as walking), or 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity (such as jogging), or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. The guidelines also recommend that adults do muscle-strengthening activities, such as push-ups, sit-ups, or activities using resistance bands or weights. These activities should involve all major muscle groups and be done on two or more days per week.

The report finds that nationwide nearly 50 percent of adults are getting the recommended amounts of aerobic activity and about 30 percent are engaging in the recommended muscle-strengthening activity.

- 2013 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, US Department of Health and Human Services. [www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity)

### Meeting Physical Activity Recommendations

To measure physical activity frequency, duration and intensity, respondents were asked:

**“During the past month, what type of physical activity or exercise did you spend the most time doing?”**

**“And during the past month, how many times per week or per month did you take part in this activity?”**

**“And when you took part in this activity, for how many minutes or hours did you usually keep at it?”**

Respondents could answer the above series for up to two types of physical activity. The specific activities identified (e.g., jogging, basketball, treadmill, etc.) determined the intensity values assigned to that respondent when calculating total aerobic physical activity hours/minutes.

Respondents were also asked about strengthening exercises:

**“During the past month, how many times per week or per month did you do physical activities or exercises to strengthen your muscles? Do not count aerobic activities like walking, running, or bicycling. Please include activities using your own body weight, such as yoga, sit-ups, or push-ups, and those using weight machines, free weights, or elastic bands.”**

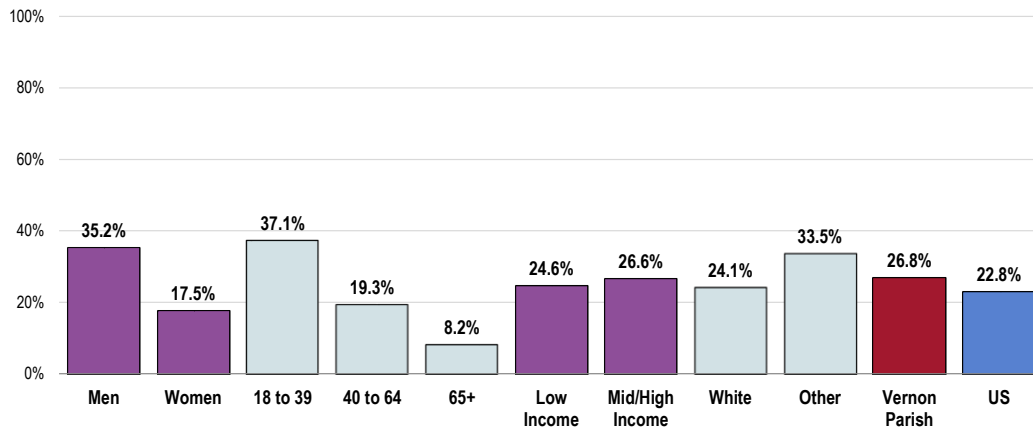
“Meeting physical activity recommendations” includes adequate levels of both aerobic and strengthening activity:

- Aerobic activity is at least 150 minutes per week of light to moderate activity, 75 minutes per week of vigorous physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both;
- Strengthening activity is at least 2 sessions per week of exercise designed to strengthen muscles.
- The proportion of parish adults who meet both activity recommendations is similar to the US finding.
- Women are less likely than men to meet both activity recommendations. Also, note the negative correlation with age. No significant differences were found within the other demographic groups.

### Meets Physical Activity Recommendations

(Vernon Parish, 2018)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 20.1% or Higher



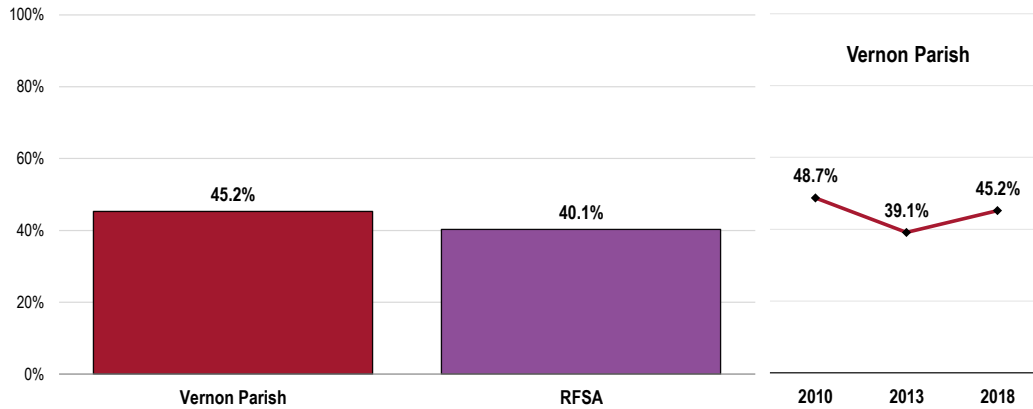
- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 152]
  - US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective PA-2.4]
- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.
  - Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.
  - Meeting both guidelines is defined as the number of persons age 18+ who report light or moderate aerobic activity for at least 150 minutes per week or who report vigorous physical activity 75 minutes per week or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity and report doing physical activities specifically designed to strengthen muscles at least twice per week.

### Walking

**“How many days per week or per month do you walk for more than 10 minutes at a time?”**

- The parish response is comparable to the regional response and the baseline rate.

### Walk for More Than 10 Minutes at a Time at Least Five Times per Week



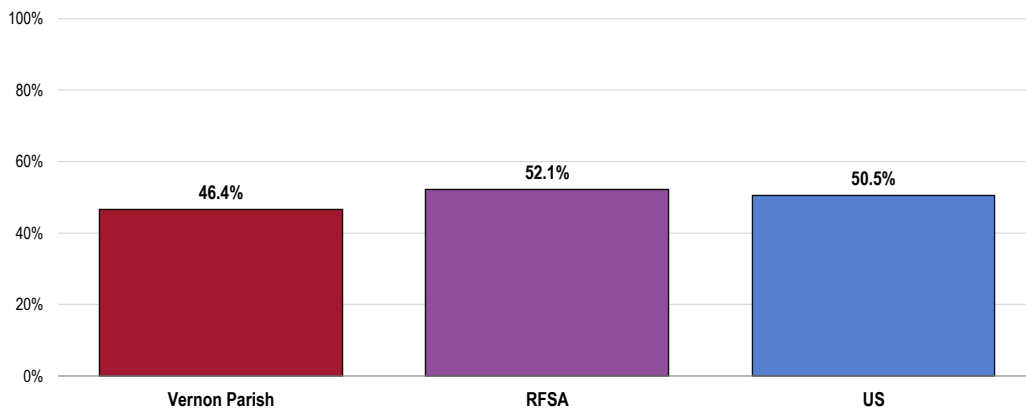
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 366]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Children’s Physical Activity

“During the past 7 days, on how many days was this child physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day?”

- Physical activity among parish children is proportional to regional and national levels.

### Child Is Physically Active for One or More Hours per Day (Among Children Age 2-17)



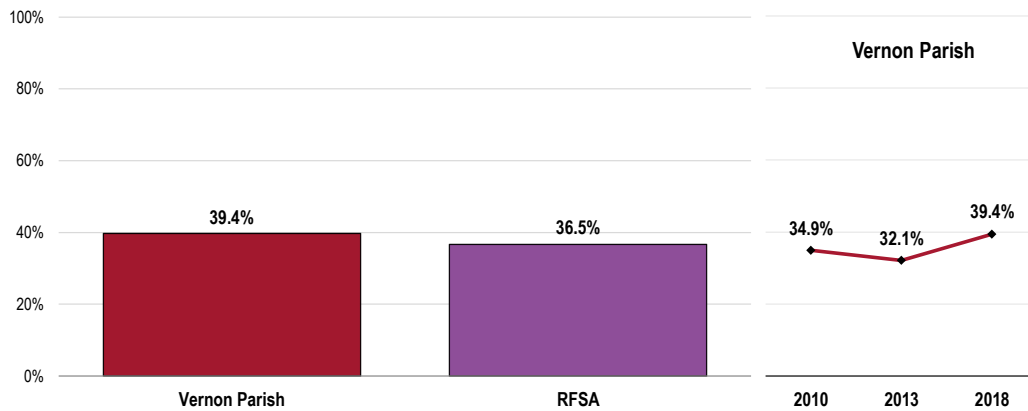
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 142]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents with children age 2-17 at home.  
 • Includes children reported to have one or more hours of physical activity on each of the seven days preceding the survey.

**Community Opportunities for Physical Activity**

**“How would you rate the availability of opportunities to participate in physical activity in your community? Would you say: excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”**

- “Fair/poor” evaluations from the parish and service area are comparable. The parish response is similar to the 2010 response.

**“Fair” or “Poor” Evaluations of the Availability of Opportunities to Participate in Physical Activity in the Community**



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 327]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Weight Status

### About Overweight & Obesity

Because weight is influenced by energy (calories) consumed and expended, interventions to improve weight can support changes in diet or physical activity. They can help change individuals' knowledge and skills, reduce exposure to foods low in nutritional value and high in calories, or increase opportunities for physical activity. Interventions can help prevent unhealthy weight gain or facilitate weight loss among obese people. They can be delivered in multiple settings, including healthcare settings, worksites, or schools.

The social and physical factors affecting diet and physical activity (see Physical Activity topic area) may also have an impact on weight. Obesity is a problem throughout the population. However, among adults, the prevalence is highest for middle-aged people and for non-Hispanic black and Mexican American women. Among children and adolescents, the prevalence of obesity is highest among older and Mexican American children and non-Hispanic black girls. The association of income with obesity varies by age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

Body Mass Index (BMI), which describes relative weight for height, is significantly correlated with total body fat content. The BMI should be used to assess overweight and obesity and to monitor changes in body weight. In addition, measurements of body weight alone can be used to determine efficacy of weight loss therapy. BMI is calculated as weight (kg)/height squared (m<sup>2</sup>). To estimate BMI using pounds and inches, use: [weight (pounds)/height squared (inches<sup>2</sup>)] x 703.

In this report, overweight is defined as a BMI of 25.0 to 29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and obesity as a BMI ≥30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. The rationale behind these definitions is based on epidemiological data that show increases in mortality with BMIs above 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. The increase in mortality, however, tends to be modest until a BMI of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> is reached. For persons with a BMI ≥30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, mortality rates from all causes, and especially from cardiovascular disease, are generally increased by 50 to 100 percent above that of persons with BMIs in the range of 20 to 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

- Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report. National Institutes of Health. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in Cooperation With The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. September 1998.

Classification of Overweight and Obesity by BMI	BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )
Underweight	<18.5
Healthy Weight	18.5 – 24.9
Overweight, not Obese	25.0 – 29.9
Obese	≥30.0

Source: Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report. National Institutes of Health. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in Cooperation With The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. September 1998.

### Adult Weight Status

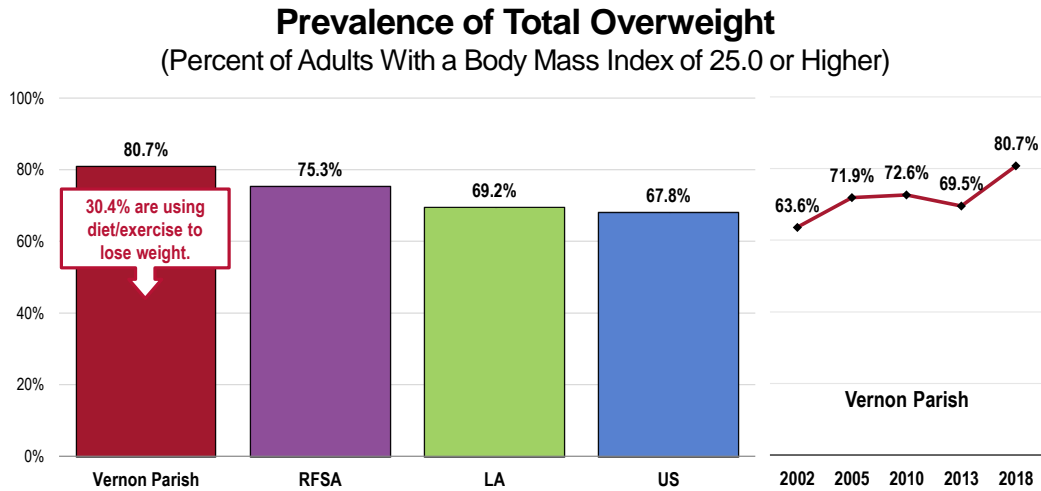
**“About how much do you weigh without shoes?”**

**“About how tall are you without shoes?”**

**“Are you now trying to lose weight?”**

Reported height and weight were used to calculate a Body Mass Index or BMI value (described above) for each respondent. This calculation allows us to examine the proportion of the population who is at a healthy weight, or who is overweight or obese (see table above).

- A full 8 in 10 parish adults are overweight, higher than found across the service area, state, and nation. The parish rate has increased significantly over time.



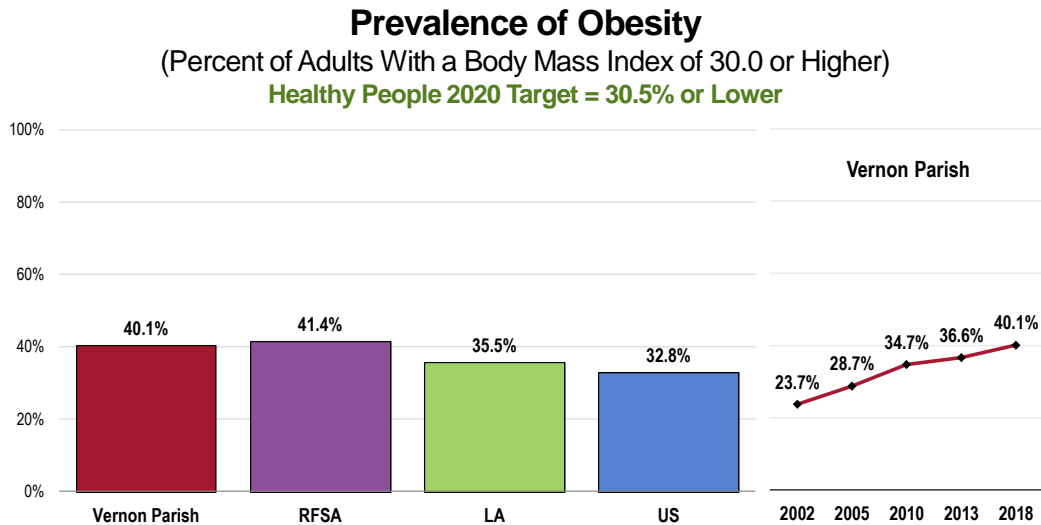
Sources:

- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 154-367]
- 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); 2016 Louisiana data.

Notes:

- Based on reported heights and weights, asked of all respondents.
- The definition of overweight is having a body mass index (BMI), a ratio of weight to height (kilograms divided by meters squared), greater than or equal to 25.0, regardless of gender. The definition for obesity is a BMI greater than or equal to 30.0.

- Prevalence of obesity among parish adults is less favorable than found across the US but similar to the service area and state. Parish prevalence has increased significantly over time.



Sources:

- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 176]
- 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
- US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective NWS-9]
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); 2016 Louisiana data.

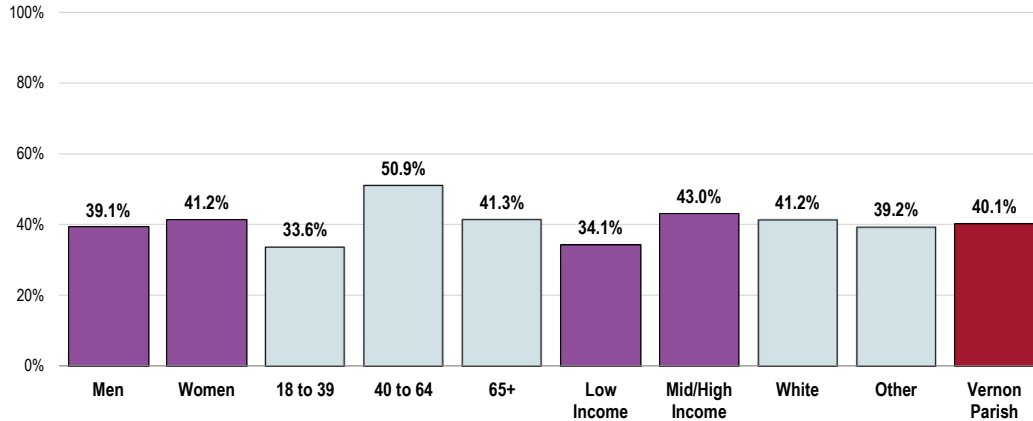
Notes:

- Based on reported heights and weights, asked of all respondents.
- The definition of obesity is having a body mass index (BMI), a ratio of weight to height (kilograms divided by meters squared), greater than or equal to 30.0, regardless of gender.



- Adults ages 40 to 64 are more likely than younger adults to be obese. No significant differences are found within the other groups.

**Prevalence of Obesity**  
 (Percent of Adults With a BMI of 30.0 or Higher; Vernon Parish, 2018)  
 Healthy People 2020 Target = 30.5% or Lower



Sources:
 

- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 154]
- US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective NWS-9]

 Notes:
 

- Based on reported heights and weights, asked of all respondents.
- Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.
- The definition of obesity is having a body mass index (BMI), a ratio of weight to height (kilograms divided by meters squared), greater than or equal to 30.0, regardless of gender.

## Childhood Overweight & Obesity

### About Weight Status in Children & Teens

In children and teens, body mass index (BMI) is used to assess weight status – underweight, healthy weight, overweight, or obese. After BMI is calculated for children and teens, the BMI number is plotted on the CDC BMI-for-age growth charts (for either girls or boys) to obtain a percentile ranking. Percentiles are the most commonly used indicator to assess the size and growth patterns of individual children in the United States. The percentile indicates the relative position of the child's BMI number among children of the same sex and age.

BMI-for-age weight status categories and the corresponding percentiles are shown below:

- Underweight <5<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Healthy Weight ≥5<sup>th</sup> and <85<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Overweight ≥85<sup>th</sup> and <95<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Obese ≥95<sup>th</sup> percentile

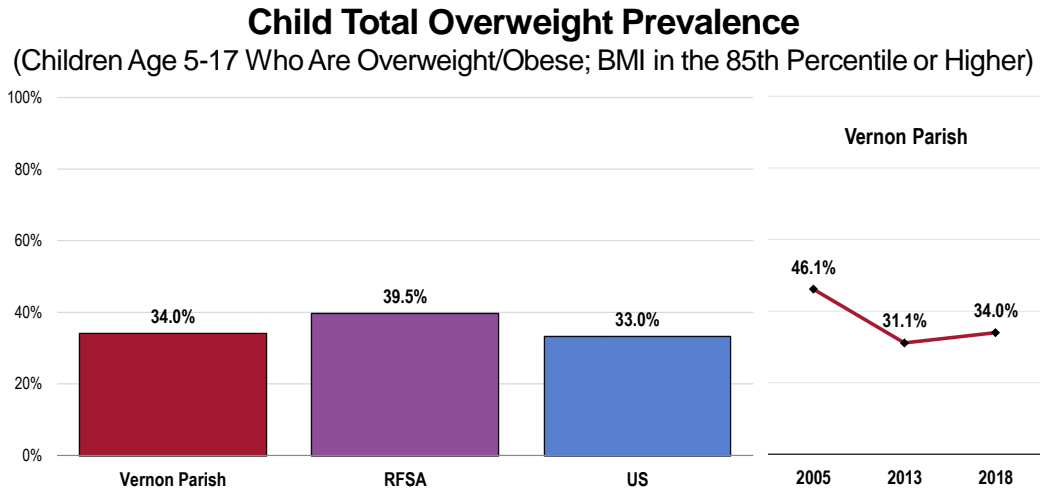
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The following questions were used to calculate a BMI value (and weight classification as noted above) for each child represented in the survey:

**“How much does this child weigh without shoes?”**

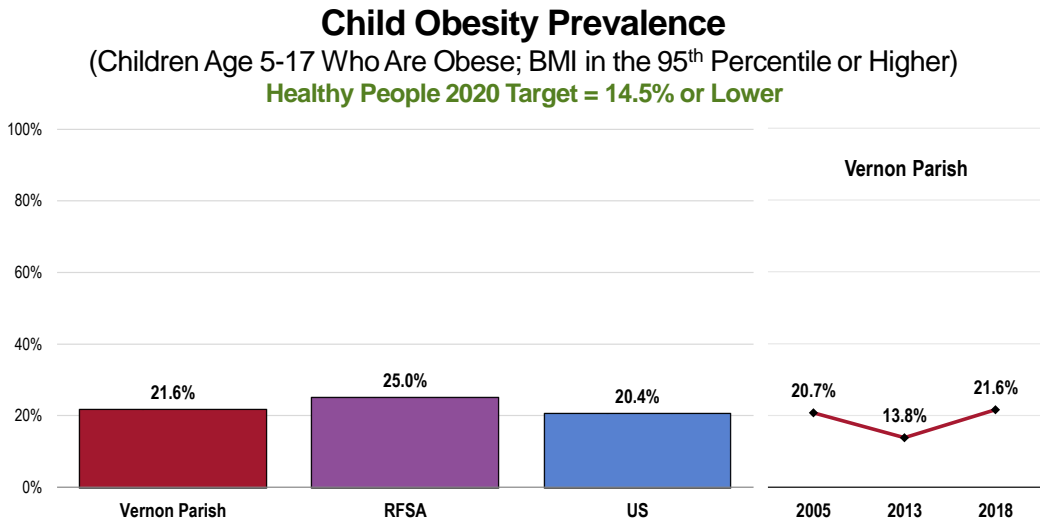
**“About how tall is this child?”**

- Overweight prevalence among parish children is similar to regional and national levels. The decrease over time in child overweight is not statistically significant.



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 180]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents with children age 5-17 at home.  
 • Overweight among children is determined by children's Body Mass Index status at or above the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of US growth charts by gender and age.

- Prevalence of obesity among parish children is similar to regional and national levels and statistically unchanged over time.



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 180]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective NWS-10.4]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents with children age 5-17 at home.  
 • Obesity among children is determined by children's Body Mass Index status equal to or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of US growth charts by gender and age.

## Key Informant Input: Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Weight

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Weight* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Weight as a Problem in the Community

(Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” reasons related to the following:

### Access to Healthy Foods/Nutrition

*The biggest challenge is that people like to think Ramen noodles are \$0.30 and forget that so is a serving of beans. They want to get a \$1,000 cell phone and claim they can't afford healthy food. Lack of education as to the importance of making healthy food choices is our biggest challenge. There is no emphasis placed on the walking tracks or other community exercise facilities. Everyone is so busy watching TV and sitting around that they go eat fast food, sugar-laden crap food, and go out and make bad food choices, rather than preparing nutritious meals. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

### Obesity

*Our community is very overweight. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

### Family History

*Family history and habits. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Substance Abuse

### About Substance Abuse

Substance abuse has a major impact on individuals, families, and communities. The effects of substance abuse are cumulative, significantly contributing to costly social, physical, mental, and public health problems. These problems include:

- Teenage pregnancy
- Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)
- Other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Domestic violence
- Child abuse
- Motor vehicle crashes
- Physical fights
- Crime
- Homicide
- Suicide

Substance abuse refers to a set of related conditions associated with the consumption of mind- and behavior-altering substances that have negative behavioral and health outcomes. Social attitudes and political and legal responses to the consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs make substance abuse one of the most complex public health issues. In addition to the considerable health implications, substance abuse has been a flash-point in the criminal justice system and a major focal point in discussions about social values: people argue over whether substance abuse is a disease with genetic and biological foundations or a matter of personal choice.

Advances in research have led to the development of evidence-based strategies to effectively address substance abuse. Improvements in brain-imaging technologies and the development of medications that assist in treatment have gradually shifted the research community's perspective on substance abuse. There is now a deeper understanding of substance abuse as a disorder that develops in adolescence and, for some individuals, will develop into a chronic illness that will require lifelong monitoring and care.

Improved evaluation of community-level prevention has enhanced researchers' understanding of environmental and social factors that contribute to the initiation and abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs, leading to a more sophisticated understanding of how to implement evidence-based strategies in specific social and cultural settings.

A stronger emphasis on evaluation has expanded evidence-based practices for drug and alcohol treatment. Improvements have focused on the development of better clinical interventions through research and increasing the skills and qualifications of treatment providers.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Alcohol Use

**Excessive Drinkers.** Excessive drinking reflects the number of adults (age 18+) who drank more than two drinks per day on average (for men) or more than one drink per day on average (for women), or who drank 5 or more drinks during a single occasion (for men) or 4 or more drinks during a single occasion (for women) during the past 30 days.

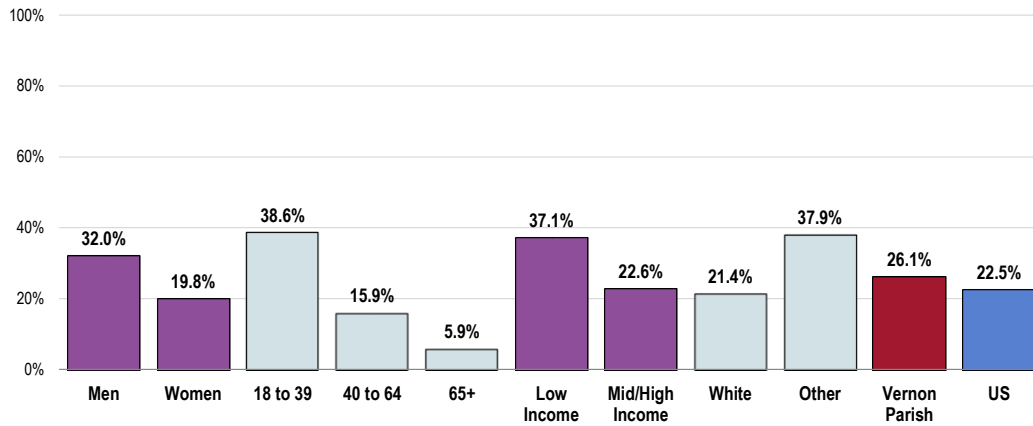
**“During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of any alcoholic beverage such as beer, wine, a malt beverage, or liquor?”**

**“On the day(s) when you drank, about how many drinks did you have on the average?”**

**“Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, how many times during the past 30 days did you have 5 (if male)/4 (if female) or more drinks on an occasion?”**

- The level of excessive drinking in Vernon Parish is similar to the US finding.
- Excessive drinking is considerably higher among men, adults younger than 65, lower-income adults, and non-White respondents.

**Excessive Drinkers**  
(Vernon Parish, 2018)  
Healthy People 2020 Target = 25.4% or Lower



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 168]  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective SA-15]

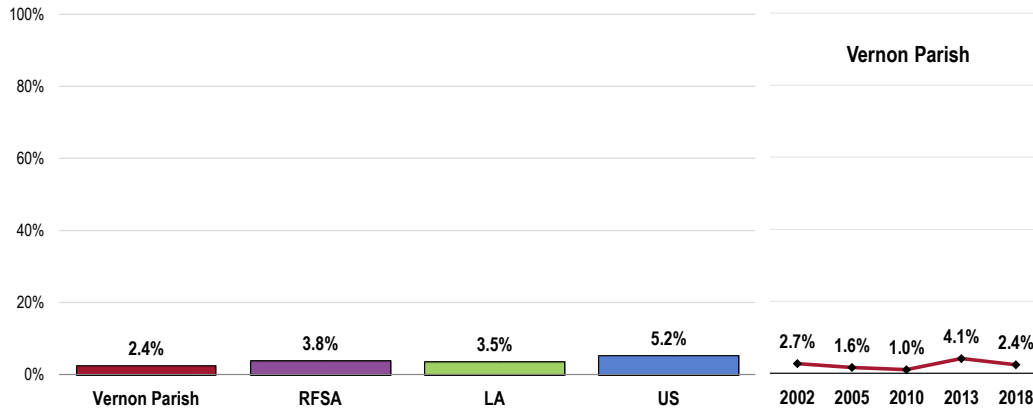
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.  
 • Excessive drinking reflects the number of persons aged 18 years and over who drank more than two drinks per day on average (for men) or more than one drink per day on average (for women) OR who drank 5 or more drinks during a single occasion (for men) or 4 or more drinks during a single occasion (for women) during the past 30 days.

**Drinking & Driving.** As a self-reported measure – and because this indicator reflects potentially illegal behavior – it is reasonable to expect that it might be underreported, and that the actual incidence of drinking and driving in the community is likely higher.

**“During the past 30 days, how many times have you driven when you've had perhaps too much to drink?”**

- Drinking and driving in Vernon Parish is considerably lower than is found across the US but similar to regional and statewide rates. The parish rate is comparable to the baseline.

### Have Driven in the Past Month After Perhaps Having Too Much to Drink



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 66]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

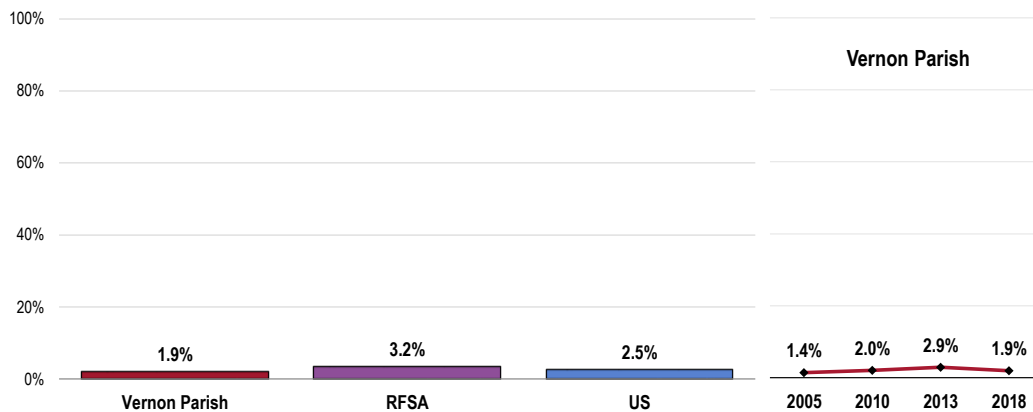
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Illicit Drug Use

“During the past 30 days, have you used an illegal drug or taken a prescription drug that was not prescribed to you?”

- Illicit drug use in the parish is proportional to the service area and national findings. The parish rate has not varied statistically over time.

### Illicit Drug Use in the Past Month Healthy People 2020 Target = 7.1% or Lower



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 67]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective SA-13.3]

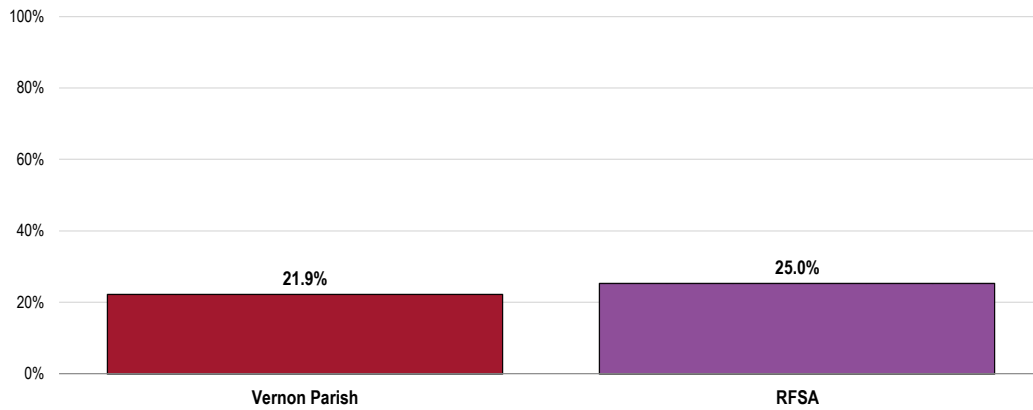
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Use of Opiates/Opioids

“Opiates or opioids are drugs that doctors prescribe to treat pain. Examples of prescription opiates include morphine, codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, methadone, and fentanyl. In the past year, have you used any of these prescription opiates, whether or not a doctor had prescribed them to you?”

- Use of prescription opiates in the service area is comparable to the regional figure.

**Used Prescription Opioids or Opiates in the Past Year (Whether Prescribed or Not)**  
(Vernon Parish, 2018)



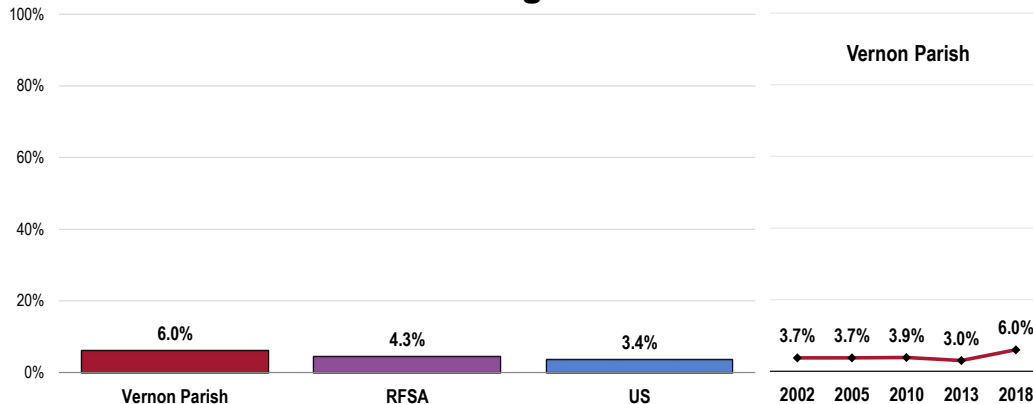
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 314]  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
• Examples of prescription opiates include morphine, codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, methadone, and fentanyl.

### Alcohol & Drug Treatment

“Have you ever sought professional help for an alcohol or drug-related problem?”

- The proportion of parish adults who have sought professional help is higher than found nationwide but similar to the service area. The parish rate is statistically similar to the 2002 rate.

**Have Ever Sought Professional Help for an Alcohol/Drug-Related Problem**



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 68]  
• 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Key Informant Input: Substance Abuse

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Substance Abuse* as a problem in the community:

#### Perceptions of Substance Abuse as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: ● PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: ● Asked of all respondents.

#### Barriers to Treatment

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the greatest barriers to accessing substance abuse treatment are viewed as:

#### Prevalence/Incidence

*Addiction is prevalent - I do not have the answers, but wish I did. Addiction affects every family member when one person is battling addiction. There is not much outreach to the addicted in our community. Marijuana seems to be overlooked by law enforcement. I do not believe law enforcement can keep up with the drug abuse because it is so widespread. – Community Leader (Vernon Parish)*

*Illegal drug usage is a major problem in Vernon Parish. – Community Leader (Vernon Parish)*

#### Easily Accessible

*Same as tobacco usage, 21 and older has access to all alcohol in stores. Physicians readily prescribe opioids to patients, who would have benefited from other pain management options. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*

#### Impact on Caregivers/Families

*It affects family members of people I know. They get so caught up in it that they think it is normal to use drugs. When they are arrested, they get right out and start using again. There is no real punishment and no real rehab. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

#### Lack of Funding

*The greatest barriers are funding and training. I say funding in the manner of funds needed for facilities within the area. And, training, there is not enough of trainings held within the community for the citizens to understand the crisis that is affecting families. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*



## Tobacco Use

### About Tobacco Use

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Scientific knowledge about the health effects of tobacco use has increased greatly since the first Surgeon General's report on tobacco was released in 1964.

Tobacco use causes:

- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Lung diseases (including emphysema, bronchitis, and chronic airway obstruction)
- Premature birth, low birth weight, stillbirth, and infant death

There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke causes heart disease and lung cancer in adults and a number of health problems in infants and children, including: severe asthma attacks; respiratory infections; ear infections; and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

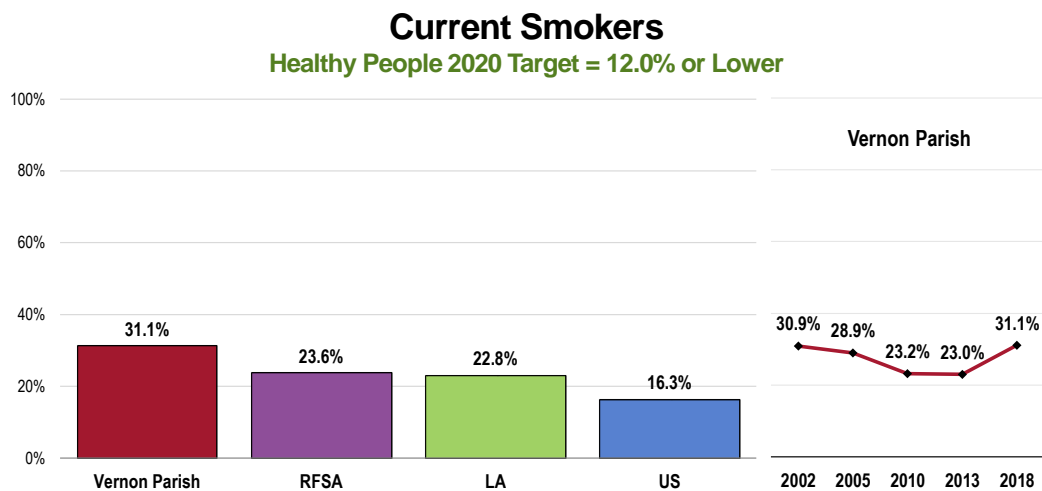
Smokeless tobacco causes a number of serious oral health problems, including cancer of the mouth and gums, periodontitis, and tooth loss. Cigar use causes cancer of the larynx, mouth, esophagus, and lung.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Cigarette Smoking

“Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?”

- Cigarette smoking in Vernon Parish is considerably higher than found across the service area, state, and nation. The parish rate is similar to the baseline rate, though fluctuating in the interim.



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 181]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective TU-1.1]

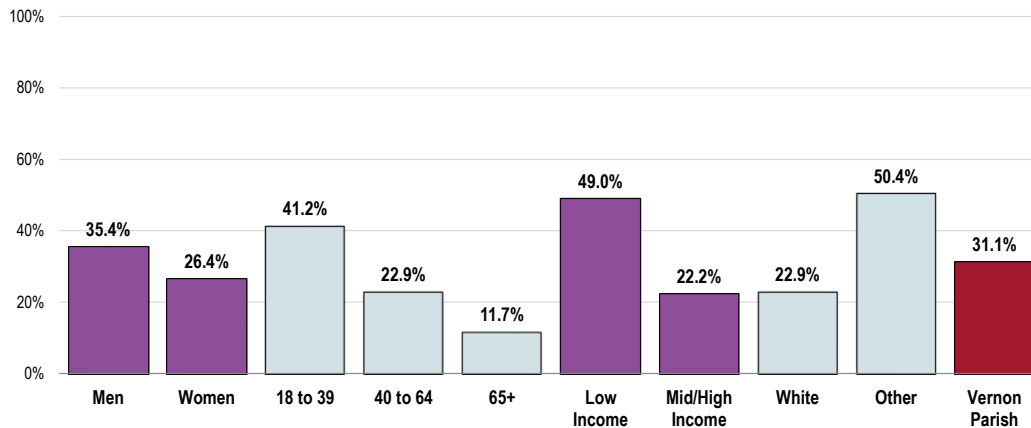
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Includes regular and occasional smokers (those who smoke cigarettes every day or on some days).

- Cigarette smoking is more prevalent among men, adults younger than 65, those at lower incomes, and non-White respondents.

## Current Smokers

(Vernon Parish, 2018)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 12.0% or Lower



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 159]

• US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective TU-1.1]

Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

• Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

• Includes regular and occasion smokers (every day and some days).

## Smoking Cessation

### About Reducing Tobacco Use

Preventing tobacco use and helping tobacco users quit can improve the health and quality of life for Americans of all ages. People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk of disease and premature death. Benefits are greater for people who stop at earlier ages, but quitting tobacco use is beneficial at any age.

Many factors influence tobacco use, disease, and mortality. Risk factors include race/ethnicity, age, education, and socioeconomic status. Significant disparities in tobacco use exist geographically; such disparities typically result from differences among states in smoke-free protections, tobacco prices, and program funding for tobacco prevention.

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

**“In the past 12 months, has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional advised you to quit smoking?”**

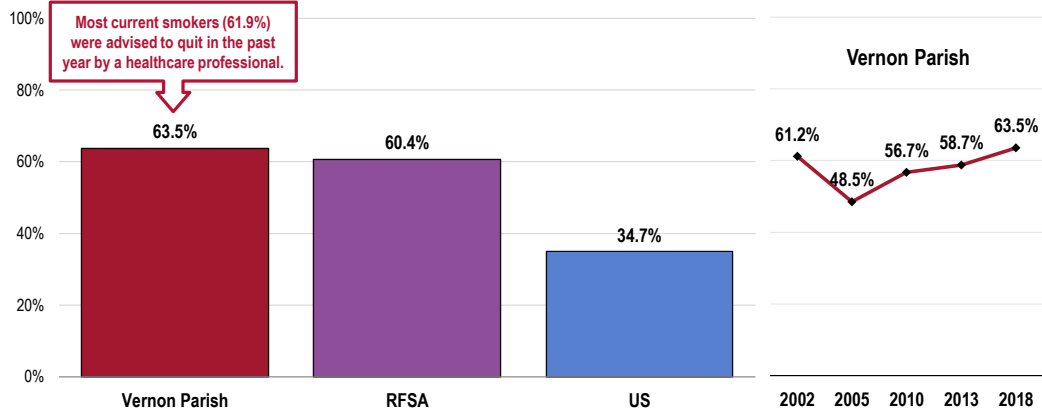
**(Asked of respondents who smoke every day or on some days.)**

**“During the past 12 months, have you stopped smoking for one day or longer because you were trying to quit smoking?” (Asked of respondents who smoke every day.)**

- Attempts to quit smoking in the parish are considerably higher than found across the US but similar to the Rapides Foundation Service Area. The parish rate is back to level with the 2002 rate.

## Have Stopped Smoking for One Day or Longer in the Past Year in an Attempt to Quit Smoking (Among Everyday Smokers)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 80.0% or Higher

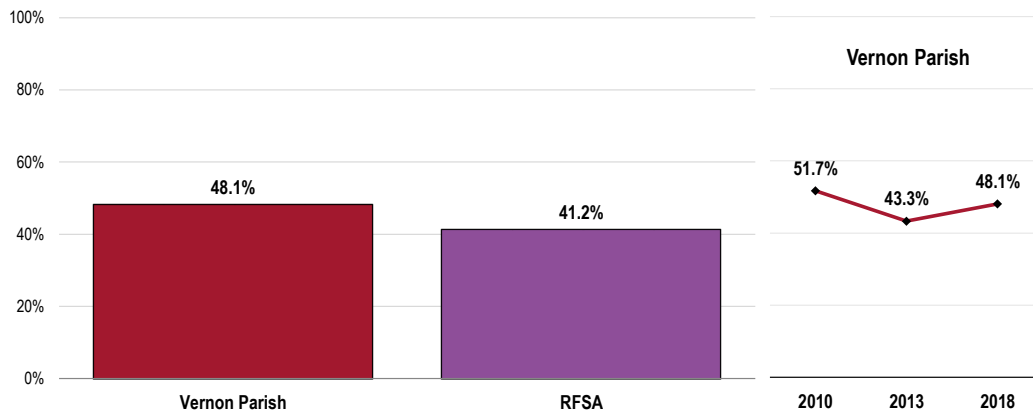


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 50-51]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective TU-4.1]  
 Notes: • Asked of respondents who smoke cigarettes every day.

### “Are you aware of any services, programs or classes in your area to help smokers quit smoking?” (Asked of all respondents.)

- Awareness of cessation programs in the parish is considerably higher than is found in the Rapides Foundation Service Area. The parish rate is similar to the 2010 rate.

## Aware of Services, Programs, or Classes to Help Smokers Quit Smoking



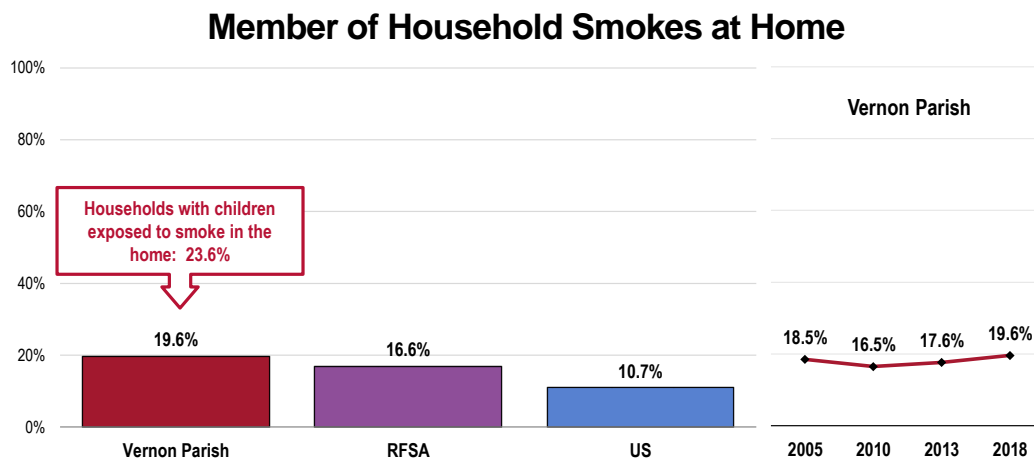
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 310]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Secondhand Smoke

“In the past 30 days, has anyone, including yourself, smoked cigarettes, cigars or pipes anywhere in your home on an average of four or more days per week?”

The following chart details these responses among the total sample of respondents, as well as among only households with children (age 0-17).

- The proportion of parish households with a smoker is significantly higher than the national proportion but similar to the service area figure. The parish rate is comparable to the 2005 rate.



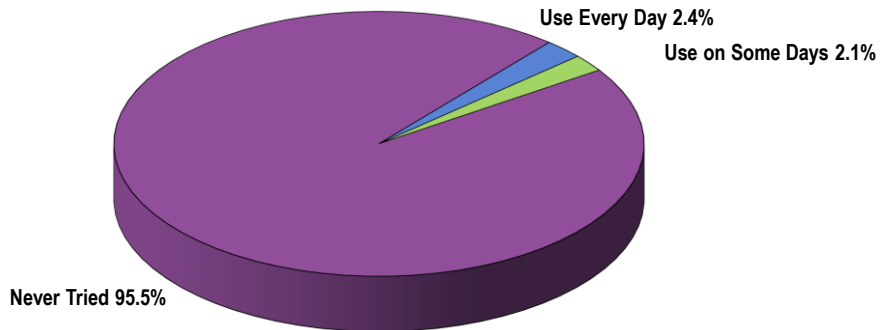
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 52, 162]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • “Smokes at home” refers to someone smoking cigarettes, cigars, or a pipe in the home an average of four or more times per week in the past month.

## Use of Vaping Products

“The next questions are about electronic vaping products, such as electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes. These are battery-operated devices that simulate traditional cigarette smoking, but do not involve the burning of tobacco. The cartridge or liquid “e-juice” used in these devices produces vapor and comes in a variety of flavors. Have you ever used an electronic vaping product, such as an e-cigarette, even just one time in your entire life?”

“Do you now use electronic vaping products, such as e-cigarettes, “every day,” “some days,” or “not at all”?”

### Use Vaping Products (Vernon Parish, 2018)



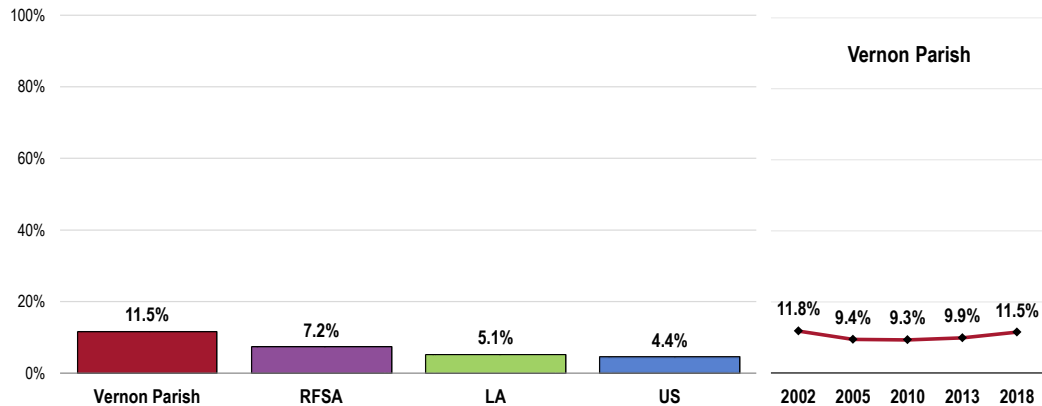
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 54]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

### Smokeless Tobacco

“Do you currently use chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus every day, some days, or not at all?”

- Use of smokeless tobacco in Vernon Parish is considerably higher than the regional, state, and national proportions. The parish rate has not varied statistically over time.

### Use of Smokeless Tobacco Healthy People 2020 Target = 0.3% or Lower



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 312]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective TU-1.2]

Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Includes chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus.

## Key Informant Input: Tobacco Use

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Tobacco Use* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Tobacco Use as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem   ■ Moderate Problem   ■ Minor Problem   ■ No Problem At All



Sources: ● PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
Notes: ● Asked of all respondents.

## Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” reasons related to the following:

### Prevalence/Incidence

*It is common for many families to have at least one member who either smokes, chews or dips. – Community Leader (Vernon Parish)*

*You can smell it everywhere you go. I know dozens of people who still smoke. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

### Culture/Social Norms

*Widely accepted by many in community. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

### Easily Accessible

*Tobacco products are readily available to anyone 21 years or older in Louisiana at any corner convenience store. Vape products, which are just as dangerous, have also infiltrated stores and other places, which openly promote tobacco usage. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*

### Health Education and Awareness

*Lack of education, peer pressure with youth in community, and continuation of family lifestyles. – Social Services Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Access to Health Services

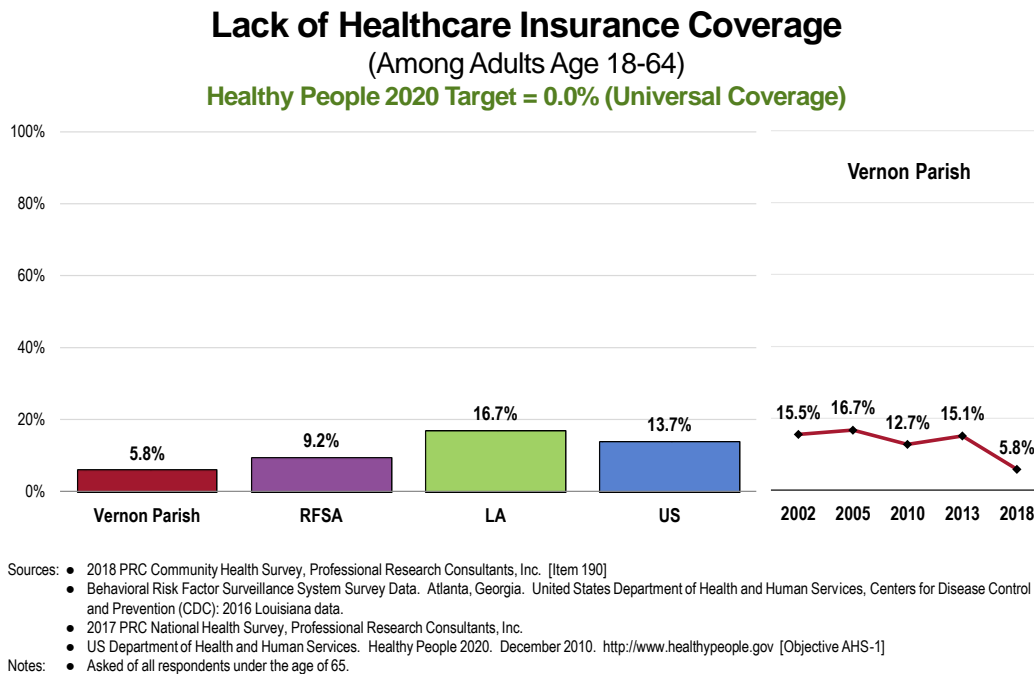
### Lack of Health Insurance Coverage (Age 18 to 64)

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their healthcare insurance coverage, if any, from either private or government-sponsored sources. Here, lack of health insurance coverage reflects respondents age 18 to 64 (thus excluding the Medicare population), who have no type of insurance coverage for healthcare services – neither private insurance nor government-sponsored plans (e.g., Medicaid).

**“Do you have any government-assisted healthcare coverage, such as Medicare, Medicaid (or another state-sponsored program), or VA/military benefits?”**

**“Do you currently have: health insurance you get through your own or someone else's employer or union; health insurance you purchase yourself; or, you do not have health insurance and pay for health care entirely on your own?”**

- The proportion of parish adults without healthcare coverage is considerably better than found in the service area, Louisiana, and US. The parish rate has become more favorable over time.

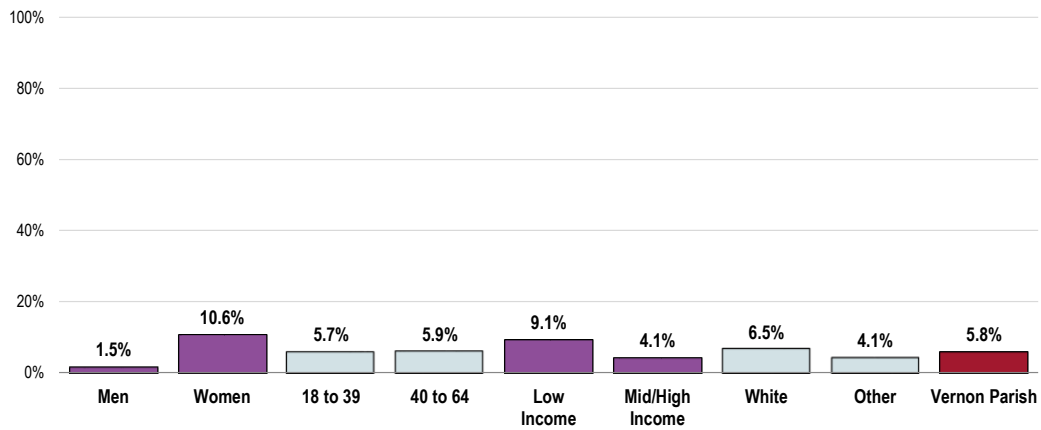


- Women are more likely than men to be without healthcare coverage. There are no significant differences within the other groups.

## Lack of Healthcare Insurance Coverage

(Among Adults Age 18-64; Vernon Parish, 2018)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 0.0% (Universal Coverage)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 169]

• US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective AHS-1]

Notes: • Asked of all respondents under the age of 65.

• Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.



## Difficulties Accessing Healthcare

### About Access to Healthcare

Access to comprehensive, quality health care services is important for the achievement of health equity and for increasing the quality of a healthy life for everyone. It impacts: overall physical, social, and mental health status; prevention of disease and disability; detection and treatment of health conditions; quality of life; preventable death; and life expectancy.

Access to health services means the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes. It requires three distinct steps: 1) Gaining entry into the health care system; 2) Accessing a health care location where needed services are provided; and 3) Finding a health care provider with whom the patient can communicate and trust.

- Healthy People 2020 (www.healthypeople.gov)

### Barriers to Healthcare Access

To better understand healthcare access barriers, survey participants were asked whether any of the following barriers to access prevented them from seeing a physician or obtaining a needed prescription in the past year.

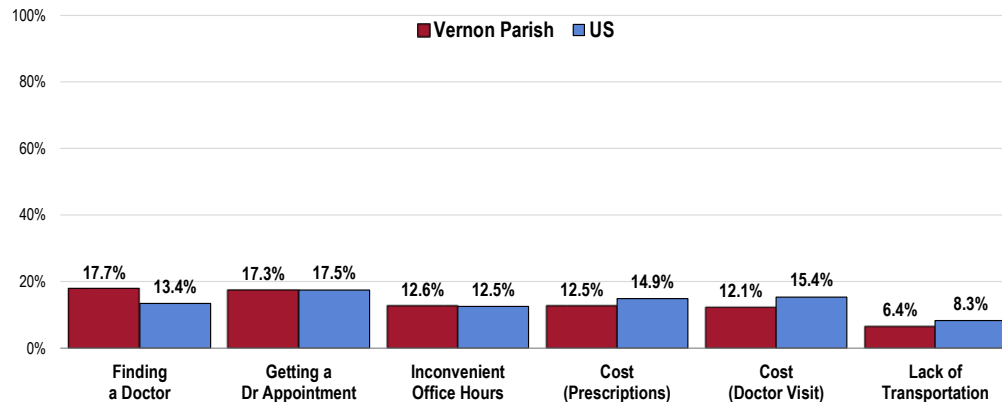
“Was there a time in the past 12 months when...

- ... you needed medical care, but had **difficulty finding a doctor?**”
- ... you had difficulty getting an **appointment** to see a doctor?”
- ... you needed to see a doctor, but could not because of the **cost?**”
- ... a **lack of transportation** made it difficult or prevented you from seeing a doctor or making a medical appointment?”
- ... you were not able to see a doctor because the **office hours were not convenient?**”
- ... you needed a **prescription medicine**, but did not get it because you could not afford it?”

The percentages shown in the following chart reflect the total population, regardless of whether medical care was needed or sought.

- All barriers to access shown below are statistically similar between the parish and US.

### Barriers to Access Have Prevented Medical Care in the Past Year

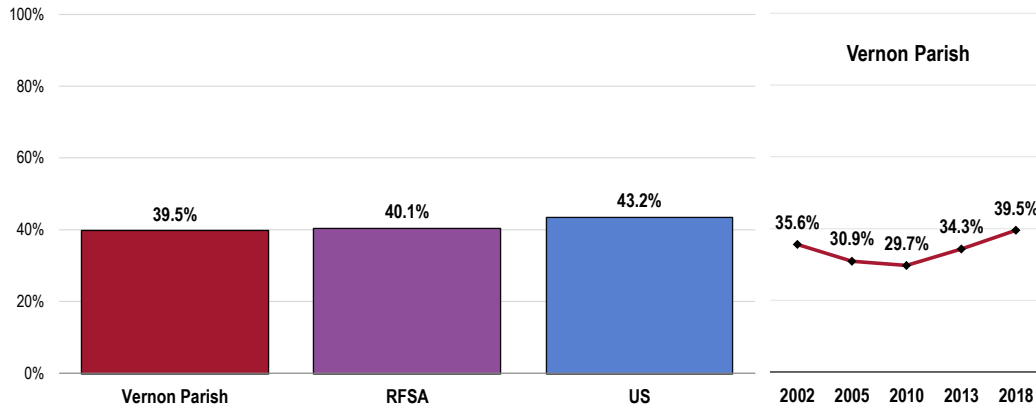


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 7-11, 13]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

The following charts reflect the composite percentage of the total population experiencing problems accessing healthcare in the past year (indicating one or more of the aforementioned barriers or any other problem not specifically asked), again regardless of whether they needed or sought care.

- The parish composite is comparable to the regional and national composites and to the 2002 baseline.

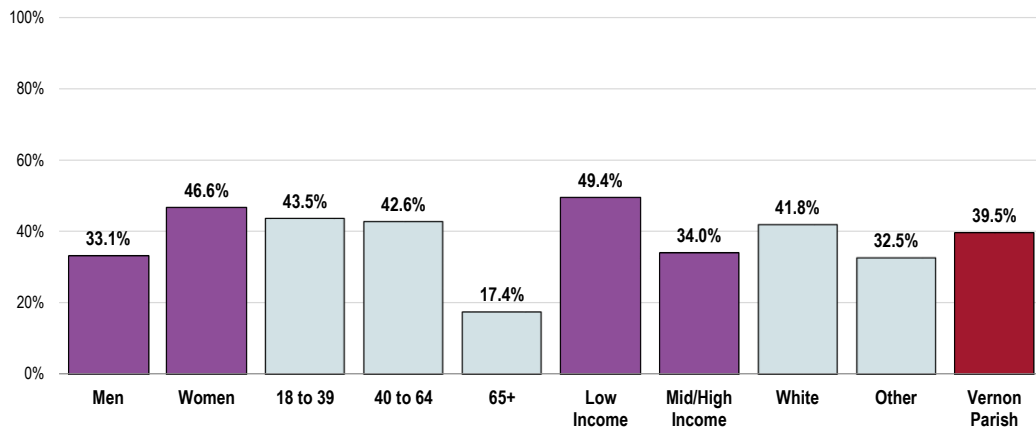
### Experienced Difficulties or Delays of Some Kind in Receiving Needed Healthcare in the Past Year



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 194]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Represents the percentage of respondents experiencing one or more barriers to accessing healthcare in the past 12 months.

- Women, adults younger than 65 and lower-income adults are more likely to have experienced difficulties accessing healthcare. There is no significant difference by race.

### Experienced Difficulties or Delays of Some Kind in Receiving Needed Healthcare in the Past Year (Vernon Parish, 2018)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 171]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Represents the percentage of respondents experiencing one or more barriers to accessing healthcare in the past 12 months.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

### Accessing Healthcare for Children

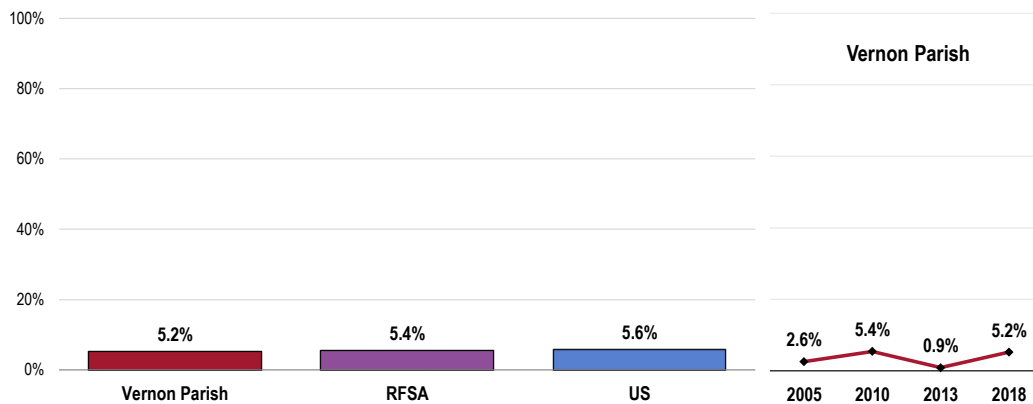
Surveyed parents were also asked if, within the past year, they experienced any trouble receiving medical care for a randomly-selected child in their household.

**“Was there a time in the past 12 months when you needed medical care for this child, but could not get it?”**

**“What was the main reason you could not get medical care for this child?”**

- The proportion of parish parents reporting difficulty getting pediatric care is similar to regional and US levels and statistically unchanged from 2005 survey results (increasing since 2013).

### Had Trouble Obtaining Medical Care for Child in the Past Year (Among Parents of Children 0-17)

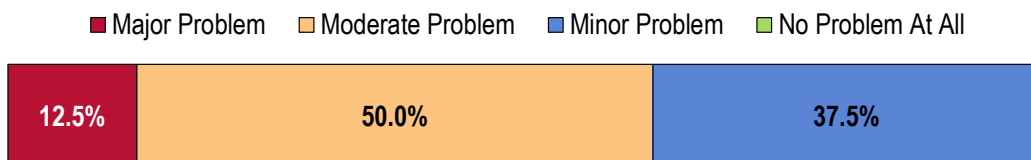


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 118]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents with children 0 to 17 in the household.

### Key Informant Input: Access to Healthcare Services

The following chart outlines key informants’ perceptions of the severity of *Access to Healthcare Services* as a problem in the community:

### Perceptions of Access to Healthcare Services as a Problem in the Community (Key Informants, 2018)



Sources: • PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a “major problem,” the following reason was given:

### Access to Care/Services

*Access is a created problem, due to reimbursement and other factors, which cause some private practices to only accept certain patients. While the uninsured decreased due to Medicaid expansion, many providers in the community refuse to increase appointment slots for Medicaid patients. The few who are uninsured still struggle, unless they have cash to pay for services. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Primary Care Services

### About Primary Care

Improving health care services depends in part on ensuring that people have a usual and ongoing source of care. People with a usual source of care have better health outcomes and fewer disparities and costs. Having a primary care provider (PCP) as the usual source of care is especially important. PCPs can develop meaningful and sustained relationships with patients and provide integrated services while practicing in the context of family and community. Having a usual PCP is associated with:

- Greater patient trust in the provider
- Good patient-provider communication
- Increased likelihood that patients will receive appropriate care

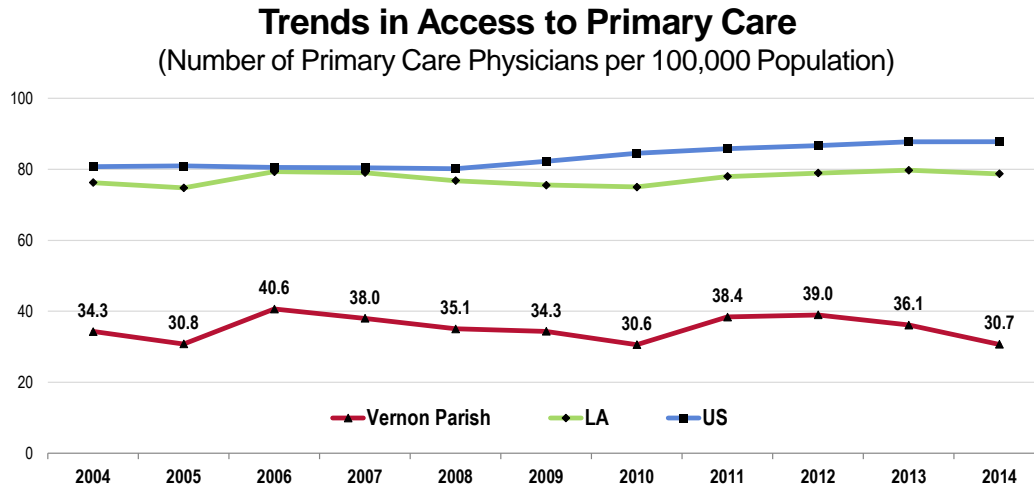
Improving health care services includes increasing access to and use of evidence-based preventive services. Clinical preventive services are services that: **prevent** illness by detecting early warning signs or symptoms before they develop into a disease (primary prevention); or **detect** a disease at an earlier, and often more treatable, stage (secondary prevention).

- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Access to Primary Care

This indicator is relevant because a shortage of health professionals contributes to access and health status issues.

- The proportion of primary care physicians in Vernon Parish is much lower than found across the state and nation.



- Sources:
- US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Area Health Resource File.
  - Retrieved August 2018 from Community Commons at <http://www.chna.org>.
- Notes:
- This indicator is relevant because a shortage of health professionals contributes to access and health status issues.
  - These figures represent all primary care physicians practicing patient care, including hospital residents.

### Specific Source of Ongoing Care

Having a specific source of ongoing care includes having a doctor’s office, clinic, urgent care center, walk-in clinic, health center facility, hospital outpatient clinic, HMO or prepaid group, military/VA clinic, or some other kind of place to go if one is sick or needs advice about his or her health. This resource is crucial to the concept of “patient-centered medical homes” (PCMH).

**“Is there a particular place that you usually go to if you are sick or need advice about your health?”**

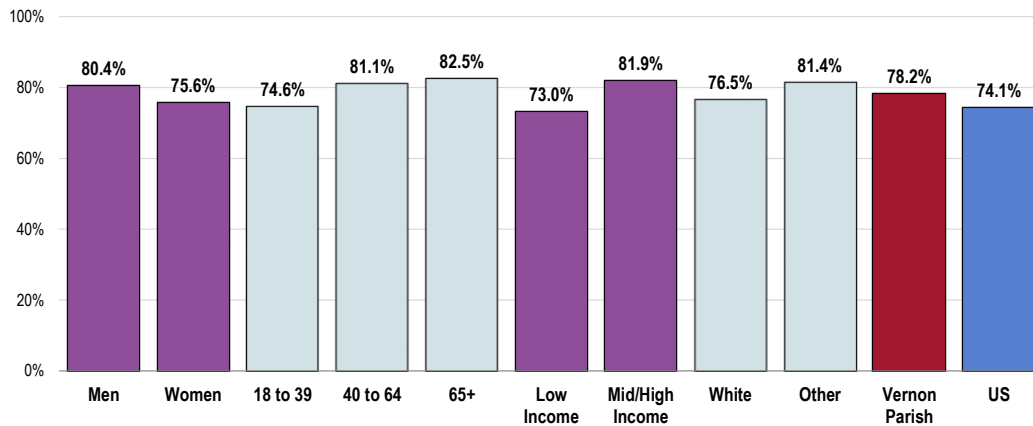
**“What kind of place is it: a medical clinic, an urgent care center/walk-in clinic, a doctor's office, a hospital emergency room, military or other VA healthcare, or some other place?”**

The following chart illustrates the proportion of Vernon Parish population with a specific source of ongoing medical care. Note that a hospital emergency room is not considered a specific source of ongoing care in this instance.

- The proportion of parish adults with a specific source of care is comparable to the national rate.
- There are no significant differences within the demographic groups.

### Have a Specific Source of Ongoing Medical Care (Vernon Parish, 2018)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 95.0% or Higher



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 170]  
 • US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective AHS-5.1]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • Income categories reflect respondent’s household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. “Low Income” includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; “Mid/High Income” includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

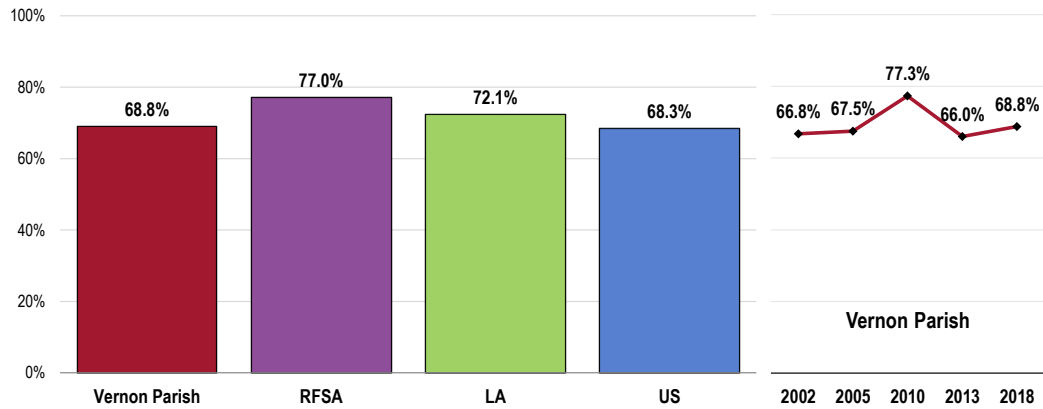
### Utilization of Primary Care Services

**Adults:** “A routine checkup is a general physical exam, not an exam for a specific injury, illness or condition. About how long has it been since you last visited a doctor for a routine checkup?”

**Children:** “About how long has it been since this child visited a doctor for a routine checkup or general physical exam, not counting visits for a specific injury, illness, or condition?”

- Physician visits within the parish are less favorable than the service area prevalence but similar to the state and national figures. The parish rate is comparable to the 2002 rate after spiking in 2010.

### Have Visited a Physician for a Checkup in the Past Year

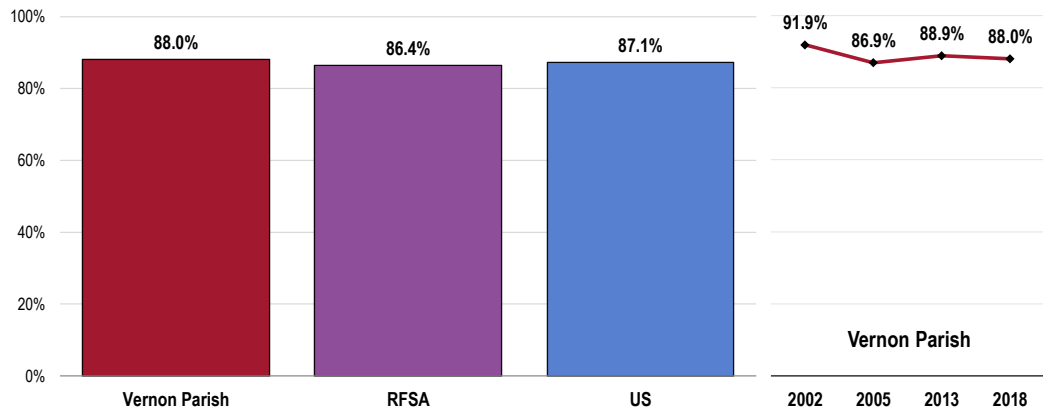


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 18]  
 • Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2016 Louisiana data.  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

- Pediatric physician visits within the parish are comparable to the regional and national prevalence. The parish rate is statistically similar to the baseline rate.

### Child Has Visited a Physician for a Routine Checkup in the Past Year (Among Parents of Children 0-17)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 138]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

Notes: • Asked of all respondents with children 0 to 17 in the household.

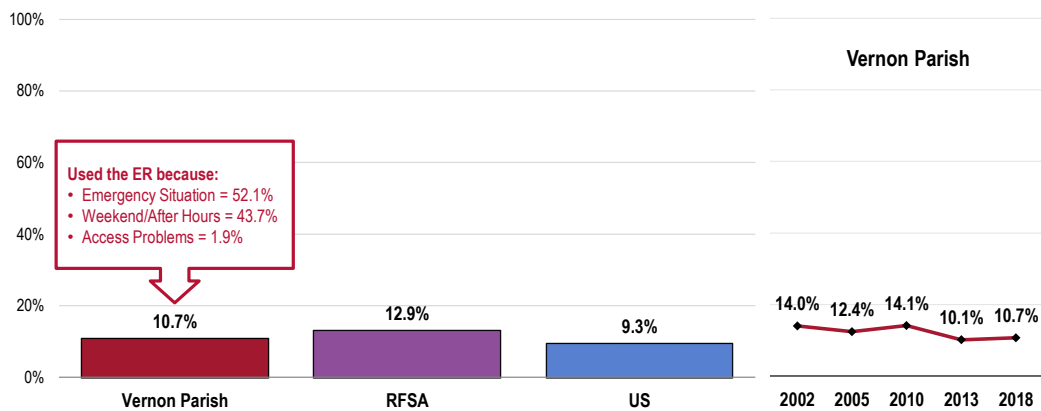
## Emergency Room Utilization

“In the past 12 months, how many times have you gone to a hospital emergency room about your own health? This includes ER visits that resulted in a hospital admission.” (Responses here reflect the percentage with two or more visits in the past year.)

“What is the main reason you used the emergency room instead of going to a doctor’s office or clinic?”

- Emergency utilization in the parish is comparable to regional and national levels. The parish rate has not varied statistically over time.

### Have Used a Hospital Emergency Room More Than Once in the Past Year



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Items 22-23]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.



## Oral Health

### About Oral Health

Oral health is essential to overall health. Good oral health improves a person's ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow, and make facial expressions to show feelings and emotions. However, oral diseases, from cavities to oral cancer, cause pain and disability for many Americans. Good self-care, such as brushing with fluoride toothpaste, daily flossing, and professional treatment, is key to good oral health. Health behaviors that can lead to poor oral health include: **tobacco use**; **excessive alcohol use**; and **poor dietary choices**.

The significant improvement in the oral health of Americans over the past 50 years is a public health success story. Most of the gains are a result of effective prevention and treatment efforts. One major success is community water fluoridation, which now benefits about 7 out of 10 Americans who get water through public water systems. However, some Americans do not have access to preventive programs. People who have the least access to preventive services and dental treatment have greater rates of oral diseases. A person's ability to access oral healthcare is associated with factors such as education level, income, race, and ethnicity.

Barriers that can limit a person's use of preventive interventions and treatments include: limited access to and availability of dental services; lack of awareness of the need for care; cost; and fear of dental procedures.

There are also social determinants that affect oral health. In general, people with lower levels of education and income, and people from specific racial/ethnic groups, have higher rates of disease. People with disabilities and other health conditions, like diabetes, are more likely to have poor oral health.

Potential strategies to address these issues include:

- Implementing and evaluating activities that have an impact on health behavior.
  - Promoting interventions to reduce tooth decay, such as dental sealants and fluoride use.
  - Evaluating and improving methods of monitoring oral diseases and conditions.
  - Increasing the capacity of State dental health programs to provide preventive oral health services.
  - Increasing the number of community health centers with an oral health component.
- Healthy People 2020 ([www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov))

### Dental Care

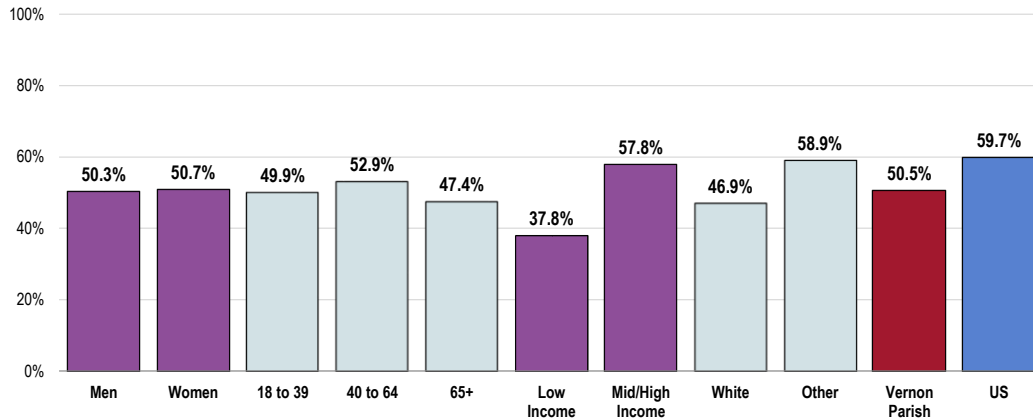
**“About how long has it been since you last visited a dentist or a dental clinic for any reason?”**

- The proportion of dental visits in the parish is less favorable than the national prevalence.
- Lower-income residents and White respondents are less likely to have had a recent dental visit. There are no significant differences by gender or age.

## Have Visited a Dentist or Dental Clinic Within the Past Year

(Vernon Parish, 2018)

Healthy People 2020 Target = 49.0% or Higher



- Sources:
- 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 20]
  - US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. December 2010. <http://www.healthypeople.gov> [Objective OH-7]
- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.
  - Income categories reflect respondent's household income as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) for their household size. "Low Income" includes households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level; "Mid/High Income" includes households with incomes at 200% or more of the federal poverty level.

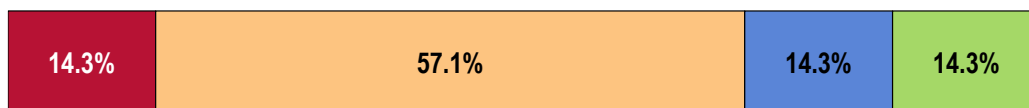
### Key Informant Input: Oral Health

The following chart outlines key informants' perceptions of the severity of *Oral Health* as a problem in the community:

## Perceptions of Oral Health as a Problem in the Community

(Key Informants, 2018)

■ Major Problem ■ Moderate Problem ■ Minor Problem ■ No Problem At All



- Sources:
- PRC Online Key Informant Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
- Notes:
- Asked of all respondents.

### Top Concerns

Among those rating this issue as a "major problem," the following reason was given:

#### Affordable Care/Insurance Issues

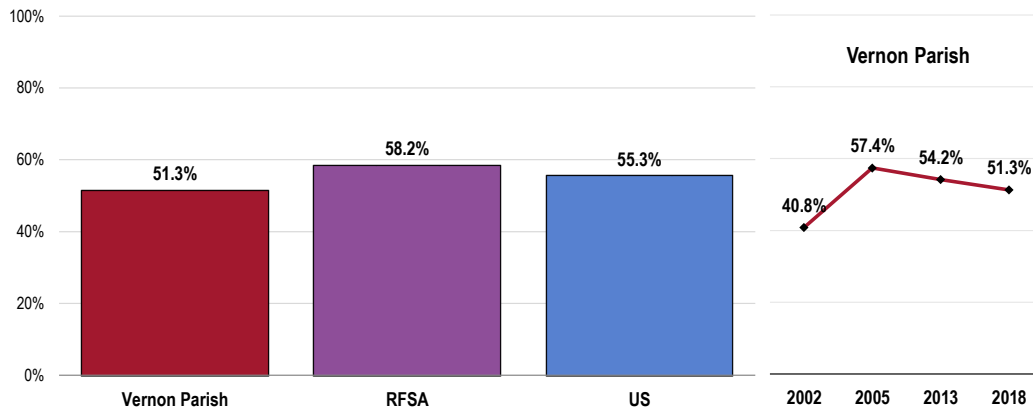
*Dental costs are significant, and the lack of dental coverage inhibits access to proper dental care. Most adults cannot afford 2 dental visits per year. Lack of dentist accepting Medicaid patients can create access issues for children with this type of coverage. – Other Health Provider (Vernon Parish)*

## Vision Care

“When was the last time you had an eye exam in which the pupils were dilated? This would have made you temporarily sensitive to bright light.” (Responses in the following chart represent those with an eye exam within the past 2 years.)

- The proportion of parish adults who have had a recent eye exam is less favorable than the regional proportion but similar to the national finding. The parish rate is more favorable than the 2002 rate.

**Had an Eye Exam in the Past Two Years During Which the Pupils Were Dilated**



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 19]  
 • 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

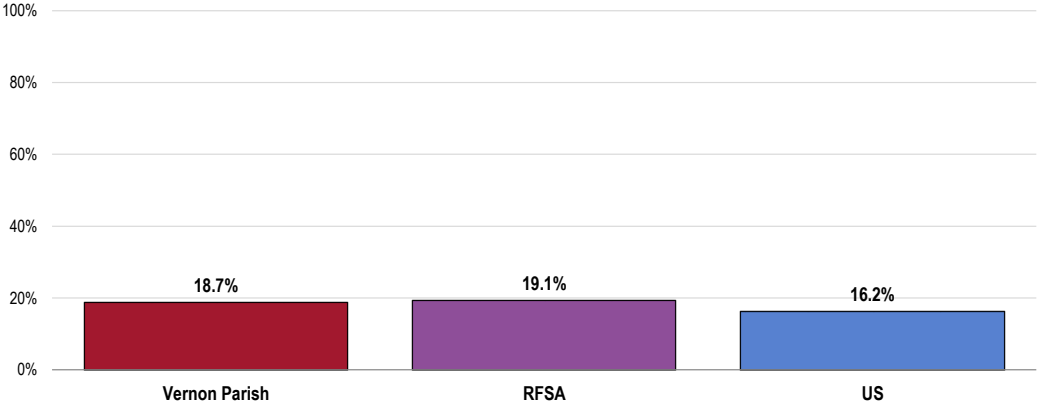
# Local Resources

## Perceptions of Local Healthcare Services

“How would you rate the overall health care services available to you? Would you say: excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”

- “Fair” and “poor” responses in Vernon Parish are similar to responses recorded across the service area and nation.

**Perceive Local Healthcare Services as “Fair/Poor”**



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 6]  
• 2017 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.

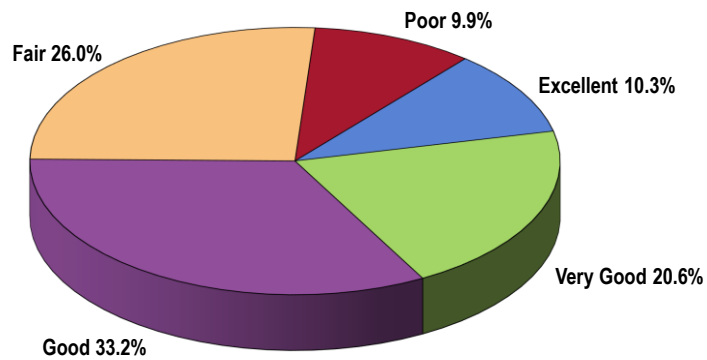
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Quality of Life

### Life in Central Louisiana

“Now I would like to ask you some questions about this area in general. Would you say that the overall quality of life in Central Louisiana is: excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”

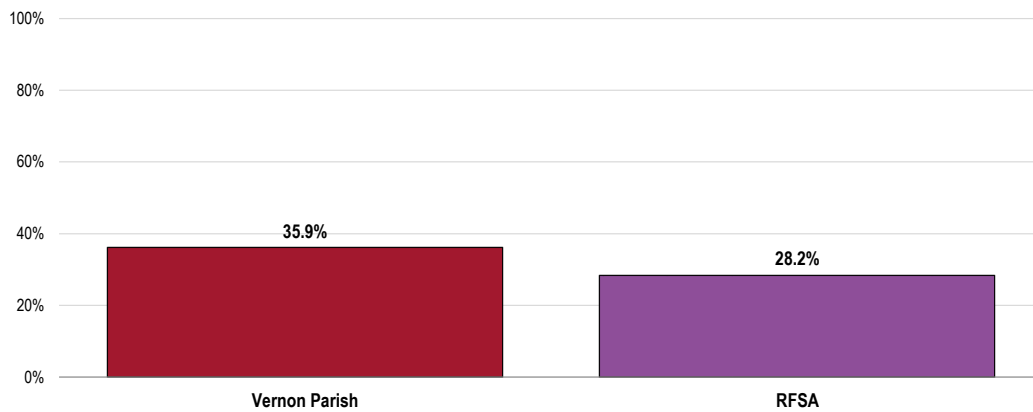
**Rating of the Quality of Life in Central Louisiana**  
(Vernon Parish, 2018)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 333]  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

- Those in Vernon Parish are much more likely than those across the service area to rate quality of life in Central Louisiana as “fair” or “poor.”

### Quality of Life in Central Louisiana is “Fair” or “Poor”

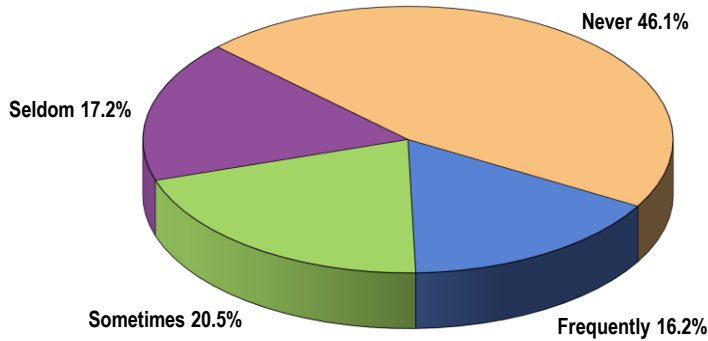


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 333]  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

## Charitable Contribution

“How often do you work as a volunteer for charitable organizations or community groups? Would you say: frequently, sometimes, seldom, or never?”

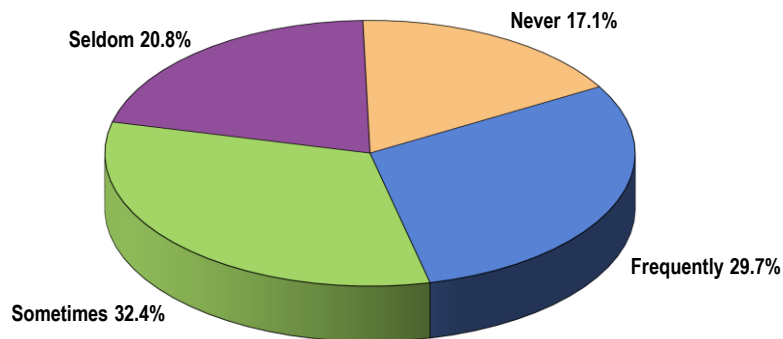
**Frequency of Volunteering for Charitable Organizations or Community Groups**  
(Vernon Parish, 2018)



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 339]  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

“How often do you contribute money to charitable organizations or community groups? Would you say: frequently, sometimes, seldom, or never?”

**Frequency of Contributing Money to Charitable Organizations or Community Groups**  
(Vernon Parish, 2018)

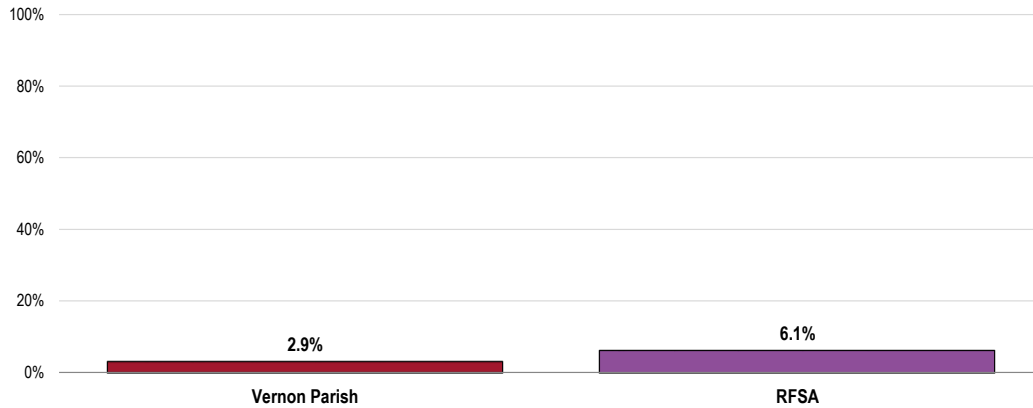


Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 341]  
Notes: • Asked of all respondents.

“In the past 12 months, have you received assistance from a local program, church, or charitable organization to help meet some of your basic needs such as food, clothing, transportation, or child care? Please do not include any government-sponsored program or service in your response.”

- The proportion of those receiving assistance in the parish is considerably lower than found across the Rapides Foundation Service Area.

### Received Assistance from a Local Program, Church, or Charitable Organization in the Past Month



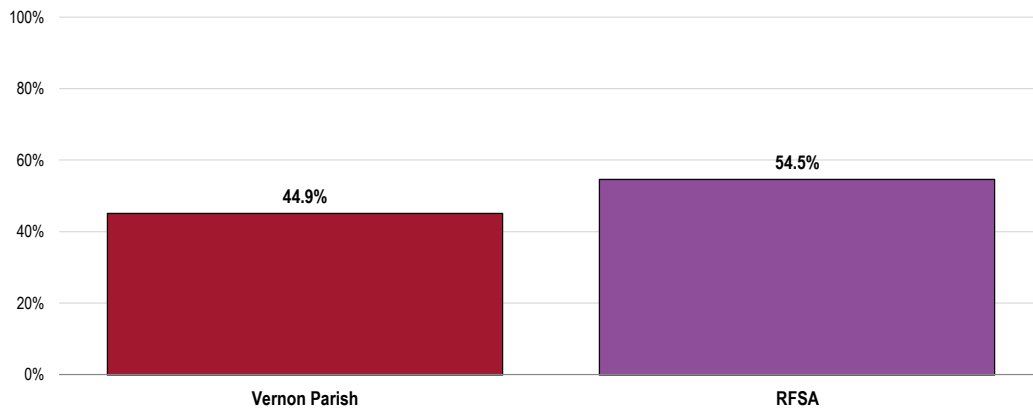
Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 342]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.  
 • In this case, assistance does not include government-sponsored programs or services.

### Civic Participation

“For the last five times you were eligible to vote in a local, state, or national election, about how many times did you actually go and vote?”

- Adults in Vernon Parish are much less likely than those across the service area to vote regularly.

### Voted in Each of the Past Five Voting Opportunities [Including Local, State, and National Elections]



Sources: • 2018 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 344]  
 Notes: • Asked of all respondents.