2023-2028
BREMER COUNTY
COMMUNITY
HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Bremer County Health Department

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

A community health assessment (CHA), is an assessment at a state, tribal, local, or territorial level that identifies health needs and issues through data collection and analysis (Centers for Disease Prevention and Control [CDC], n.d.). This CHA is for the entire jurisdiction of Bremer County, Iowa, and was completed following Iowa Administrative Code 641-77.3(1). This CHA also serves as the foundation of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

The development of this CHA involved the systematic collection and analysis of data and information from primary and secondary data sources with efforts from partners including Community Memorial Hospital, Waverly Health Center, and Waverly-Shell Rock Area United Way. Primary (quantitative) data was collected via the Bremer County Community Health Survey which was available in both paper and online formats.

This CHA is based on the County Health Rankings Model (Figure 1), a model of population health that recognizes many factors that influence our health outcomes and how long and how well we live. These factors range from our own personal behaviors, but also a multitude of community factors such as social, economic, and environmental conditions that contribute to our community health.

Figure 1

County Health Rankings Model
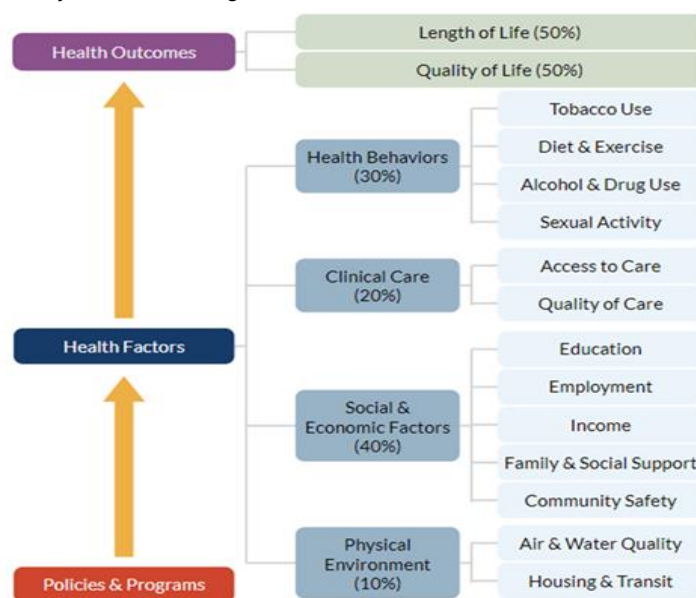
Note. From *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps,* by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI), 2014, County Health Rankings Model (https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-model). Copyright 2014 by UWPHI.

BREMER COUNTY PROFILE

Bremer County is located in northeast Iowa and has a total area of 439 square miles. Bremer County is included in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls, Iowa Metropolitan statistical area. In Bremer County, approximately 64.5% of the population lives in low population density areas of 500 or fewer people per square mile and less than 2,500 people (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps [CHRR], n.d.).

Figure 2

Bremer County, Iowa

(Benbennick, 2006)

Figure 3

Bremer County Townships
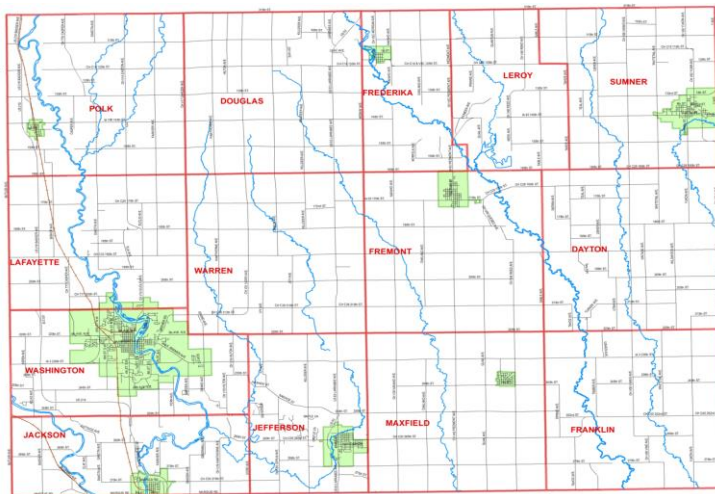
(Bremer County GIS Department, 2023)

Cities (Incorporated Places)
- Denver
- Frederika
- Janesville
- Plainfield
- Readlyn
- Sumner
- Tripoli
- Waverly-County Seat

Townships
- Dayton
- Douglas
- Franklin
- Frederika
- Fremont
- Jackson
- Jefferson
- Lafayette
- LeRoy
- Maxfield
- Polk
- Sumner
- Warren
- Washington

DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Population

The population of Bremer County has been steadily increasing over time. Census data from 2020 estimated the population of Bremer County to be 24,988, an increase of 712 people since the 2010 census. Figure 4 shows the growth of Bremer County from 1900 to 2020.

Figure 4

Population Growth of Bremer County
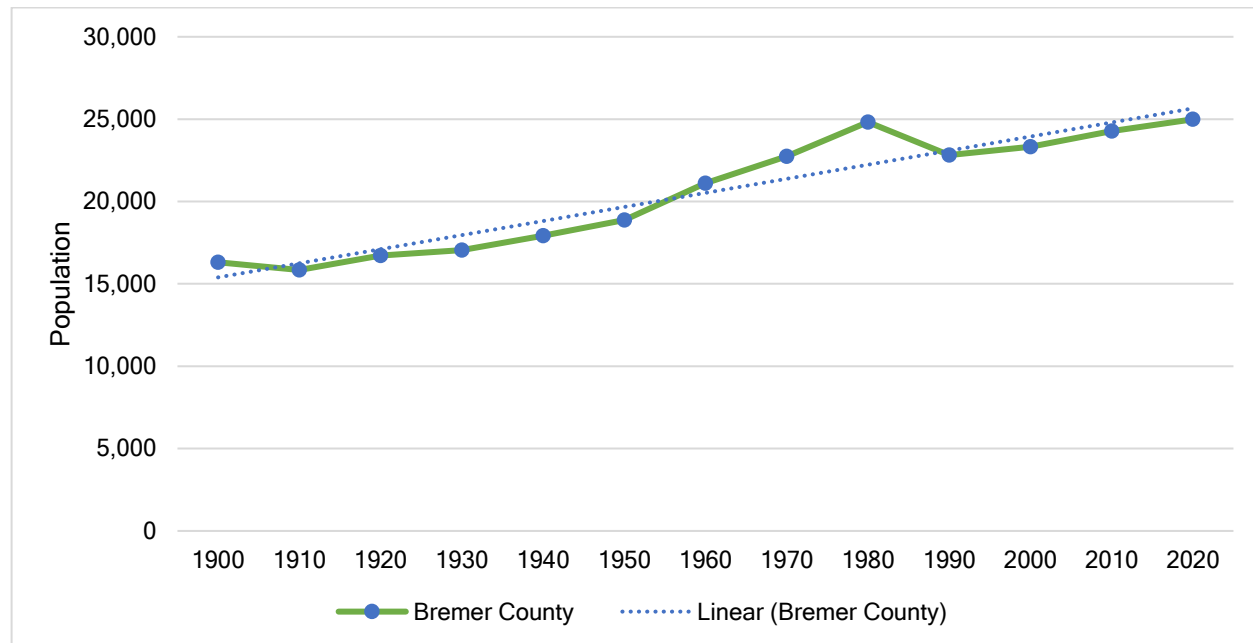
Age, Median Age, and Gender

According to the Iowa Data Center (n.d.a.), the median age of the entire Bremer County population for the period 2017-2021 was 39 years.

- For males alone, the median age was 38 years.
- For females alone, the median age was 40 years.

Figure 5 reports the Bremer County population by age and gender.

Figure 5

Bremer County Population by Age and Gender for Years 2017-2021
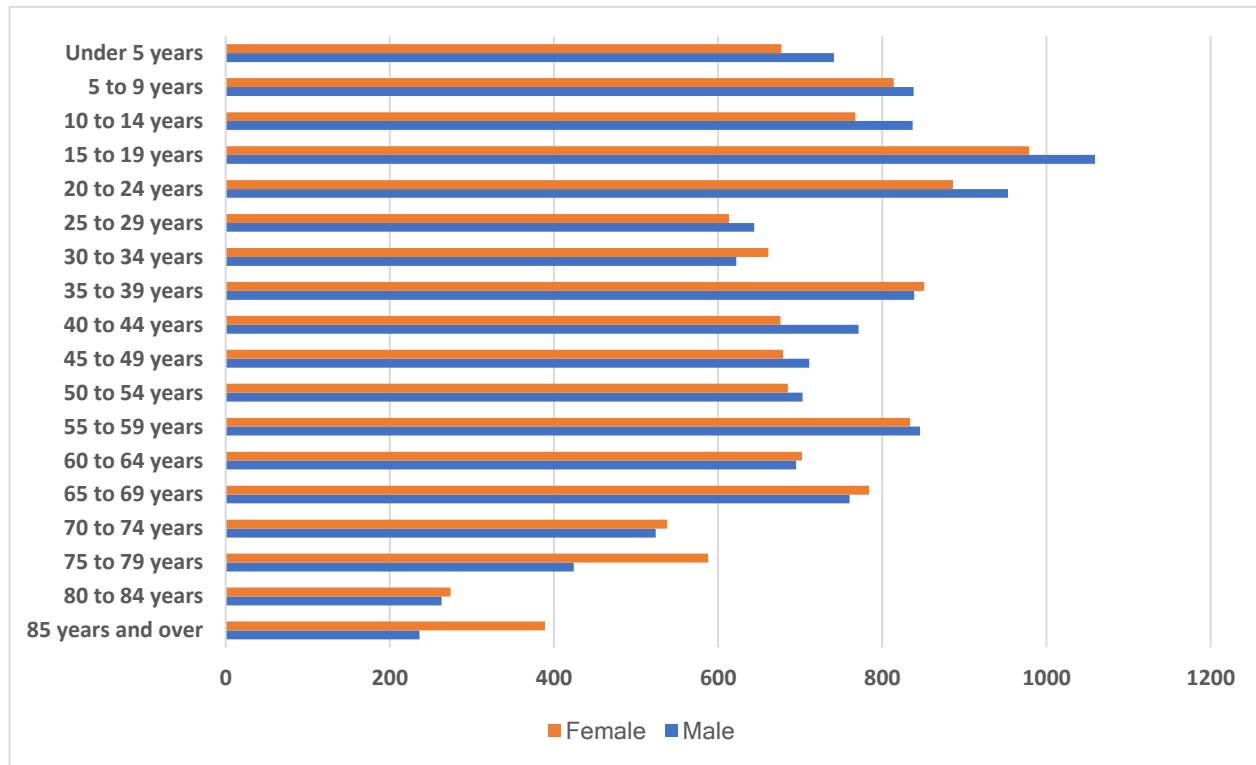
(Iowa Data Center, n.d.a)

Race

Over 94% of the Bremer County population reports being white alone and not of Hispanic or Latino origin. Table 1 reports the total population of Bremer County by race and Hispanic origin from 2017 through 2021.

Table 1

Bremer County Race and Hispanic Origin

	Estimate	Percent
Total population	24,863	-
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	97	0.4%
Asian alone	239	1.0%
Black or African American alone	236	0.9%
Hispanic or Latino origin	443	1.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders alone	17	0.1%
Some other race alone	102	0.4%
Two or more races	591	2.4%
White alone	23,581	94.8%
White alone not Hispanic or Latino	23,448	94.3%

(Iowa Data Center, n.d.a.)

Population with a Disability

Disability status is an important demographic indicator because disabled individuals comprise a vulnerable population that requires targeted services, emergency preparedness considerations, and outreach by providers. According to the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey from 2017-2021, 11.12% (2,730 out of 24,558 individuals) of the total Bremer County population (for whom disability status is determined) had a disability (SparkMap, n.d.). Table 2 shows the Bremer County population with any disability by age group and Table 3 shows the percentage of any disability by disability status.

Table 2

Bremer County Population with Any Disability by Age Group

Age Group	Under Age 18	Age 18-64	Age 65+
Percent	7.08%	8.41%	24.49%
Total Number	400	1,204	1,126

Table 3

Bremer County Population with Any Disability by Disability Status

Report Area	Hearing	Vision	Cognitive	Ambulatory	Self-care	Independent Living
Bremer County	3.87%	1.14%	4.59%	4.32%	1.67%	4.31%

Population with Limited English Proficiency

Out of 23,445 individuals aged five and older for the timeframe 2017-2021, 1% (164 individuals) reported speaking a language other than English at home and speaking English less than "very well." Figure 6 reports the percentage of the total population aged five and older who speak a language other than English at home and speak English less than "very well".

Figure 6

Bremer County Population with Limited English Proficiency by Language Spoken at Home

Spanish 19%
Other Indo-European Languages 6%
Asian and Pacific Island Languages 43%
Other Languages 32%
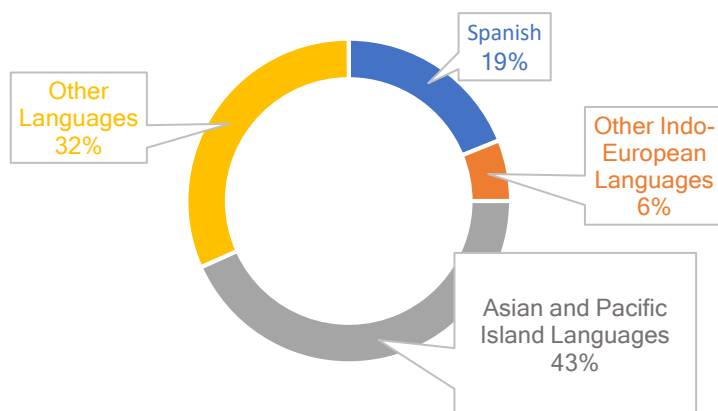
(SparkMap, n.d.)

Veteran Population

Table 4 reports the veteran population age 18 and older for the period 2017-2021 that served (even for a short time) in a branch of the U.S. military. Out of the population 18 and older, approximately 7.7% are veterans.

Table 4

Total Veteran Population and Last Period of Service for Veterans

	Estimate	*Percent*
Civilian population 18 years and over	19,144	
Total Veteran Population	1,470	7.7%
Gulf War (9/2001 or later)	171	11.6%
Gulf War (8/1990 to 8/2001)	181	12.3%
Vietnam era	650	44.2%
Korean War	147	10.0%
World War II	38	2.6%

(Iowa Data Center, n.d.b.)

HEALTH FACTORS

Health is influenced by a variety of factors. Health factors influence how long we live and are the things we can improve collectively or individually to live longer and healthier lives. Several intersecting factors determine an individual's or community's health including social and economic factors, clinical care, healthy behaviors, and the physical environment.

Social & Economic Factors

Education

Educational Attainment

Bremer County is home to seven public (primary and secondary education) school districts and one institution of higher learning. Educational attainment shows the distribution of the highest level of education achieved and is calculated for persons over 25 years old. Table 5 shows education attainment in Bremer County and is based on estimated averages for the period 2017 to 2021.

Table 5

Educational Attainment for Bremer County Population 25 Years of Age and Over

	Estimate	Percent
Total	16,312	-
Less than 9th grade	164	1.0%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	409	2.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	4,959	30.4%
Some college, no degree	2,798	17.2%
Associate's degree	2,490	15.3%
Bachelor's degree	3,616	22.2%
Graduate or professional degree	1,876	11.5%

(Iowa Data Center, n.d.b.)

Employment

Labor Force Participation Rate & Unemployment Rate

For the period 2017-2021, of the 19,846 working-age population (aged 16 and older), 13,422 were included in the labor force. The labor force participation rate was 67.63%. Bremer County's labor force participation rate was higher than the state and US averages.

At the time of this report, August 2023, the total number of unemployed individuals was 419, or 2.9% of the civilian non-institutionalized population age 16 and older (non-seasonally adjusted). This compares to a state unemployment rate of 3.3% and the national unemployment rate of 4.0% for the same period. From 2011-2021, average annual employment rates ranged from 4.4% in 2011 to 2.9% in 2021.

Income

Median Income

The median household and family incomes are based on 2017-2021 American Community Survey estimates. The median household income is the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years and older in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not.

Figure 7

Bremer County Median Income
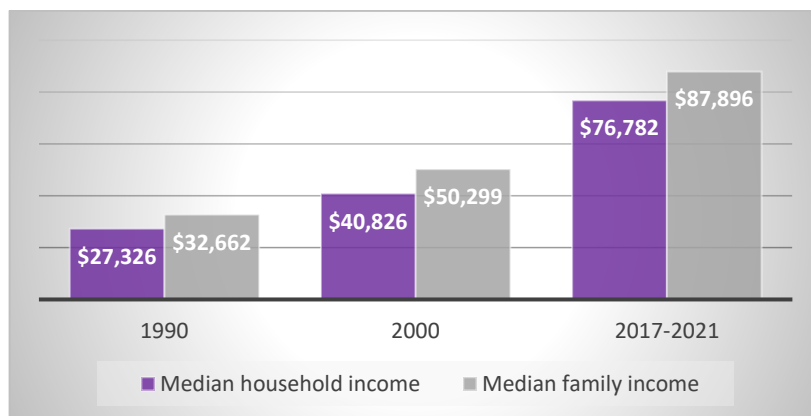
Poverty

Poverty is a key driver of health status. It creates barriers to accessing health services, healthy food, and other necessities that contribute to poor health status. From 2017-2021 the rate of Bremer County population 18 and younger with income below 100% of the federal poverty level was 8.73% and the rate of the total Bremer County population with income below 100% of the federal poverty level was 7.42%. When looking at other federal poverty levels for the same period, 6.17% were living at 101-150%, 5.14% were living at 151-200%, 50.25% were living at 201-500%, and 31.02% were living at over 500% of the federal poverty level.

Living Wage

According to 2022 data from the Living Wage calculator (n.d.), a household of one adult and two children in Bremer County would need to make an hourly wage of $42.32 to cover basic household expenses. Basic household expenses include the cost of food (based on the

USDA low-cost food plan), childcare, health care, housing, transportation, and other necessities (internet and cell phone service).

Family & Social Support

Households and Families

The average household size in Bremer County is **2.4** and the average family size is **2.9** (Iowa Data Center, n.d.b.). Table 6 reports the total number and percentage of households by composition from 2017-2021 according to American Community Survey subject definitions. In addition, Figure 8 reports the percentage of households with children composition and relationships to householder for Bremer County for the period 2017-2021.

Table 6

Bremer County Family and Non-Family Households

Total Households	Family Households	Family Households, Percent	Non-Family Households	Non-Family Households, Percent
9,638	6,704	69.56%	2,934	30.44%

(SparkMap, n.d.)

Figure 8

Bremer County Households with Children by Composition and Relationship to Householder

Single-Female Family Housholds 19.60%

Single-Male Family Households 8.90%

Non-Family Households 0.00%

Married Family Households 71.50%
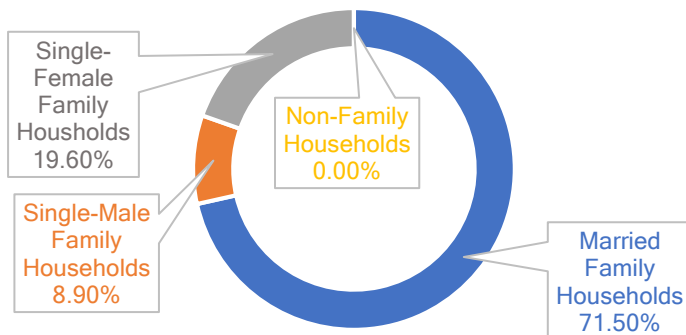
(SparkMap, n.d.)

Child Care Cost Burden and Child Care Centers

Child care cost burden is the cost of child care for a household with two children as a percent of median household income. Data from 2021 and 2022 shows that the average household in Bremer County spent 23% of its income on childcare for two children. This compares to 26% for Iowa and 27% for the US.

Additionally, in Bremer County there were nine child care centers per 1,000 children under age five, eight child care centers per 1,000 children under age five in Iowa, and seven child care centers per 1,000 children in the US for the years 2010-2022. Child care centers are regulated by state licensing and measure one aspect of child care availability.

Community Safety

Injury Deaths

From 2016-2020, there were 52 deaths per 100,000 people due to injury. Injuries may be intentional or unintentional. This measure includes but is not limited to, falls, suicides, motor vehicle crashes, homicides, firearm fatalities, and poisonings. Of these 52 deaths,

- 11 were deaths by suicide per 100,000 people,
- Eight were firearm-related deaths per 100,000 people, and
- 10 were deaths from motor vehicle crashes per 100,000 people.

Clinical Care

Clinical care is anything that directly relates to medical treatment or testing of patients. Access to affordable, quality medical treatment services can prevent disease and help detect diseases early. Clinical care includes access to care and quality care.

Access to Care

Uninsured

In Bremer County, the percentage of the population under age 65 without health insurance as of 2020, was 4%, a trend which has improved since 2008. At the state and national levels, 6% and 10% of the population under age 65 did not have health insurance, respectively.

Access to Providers

Access to health care requires financial coverage and access to providers.

- One area where Bremer County is trending worse is the ratio of population to primary care physicians. In 2020, there was one primary care physician per 2,300 people in Bremer County. Figure 9 shows the primary care physician trends in Bremer County, Iowa, and the US since 2010.
- Bremer County has been trending better for the ratio of population to dentists. In 2021, there was one dentist per 1,570 people in Bremer County. Figure 10 shows the dentist trend in Bremer County, Iowa, and the US since 2010.
- In 2022, there was one mental health provider per 600 people in Bremer County. This compares to one mental health provider per 530 people in Iowa and one mental health provider per 340 people in the US.

- In 2022, there was one primary care provider other than a physician per 700 people in Bremer County. This includes nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and clinical nurse specialists who can provide routine and preventative care. This compares to one primary care provider other than a physician per 800 in Iowa and 810 in the US.

Figure 9

Primary Care Physician Trends
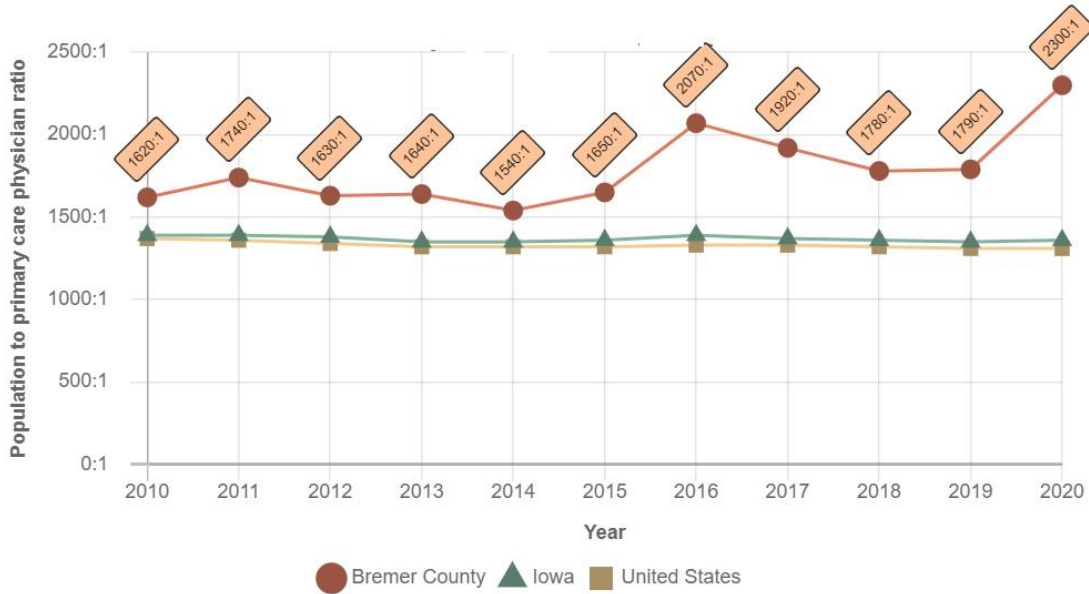
Note. The data in this figure reflects the average population served by a single primary care physician. Source: CHRR, n.d.

Figure 10

Dentist Trends
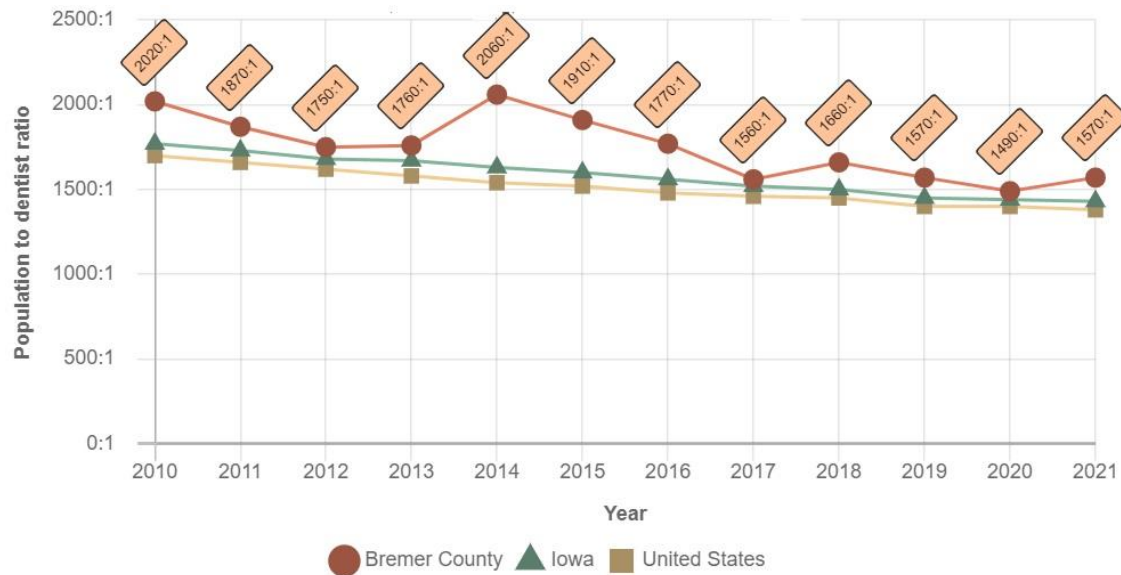
Note. The data in this figure reflects the average population served by a dentist. Source: CHRR, n.d.

Quality of Care

Quality of care measures are crucial in maintaining and improving the standards of healthcare, promoting patient safety, and ensuring that healthcare is efficient and effective. High-quality care in inpatient and outpatient settings can help to improve health and reduce the likelihood of receiving unnecessary or inappropriate care (CHRR, n.d.). Three measures explored in this CHA related to quality of care include preventable hospital stays, mammography screenings, and vaccinations.

Preventable Hospital Stays

Preventable hospital stays are defined as the rate of hospital stays for ambulatory-care-sensitive conditions per 100,000 Medicare enrollees (CHRR, n.d.). In Bremer County, 2,164 stays per 100,000 people enrolled in Medicare might have been prevented by outpatient treatment in 2020. There has been no significant trend in preventable hospital stays in Bremer County since 2012.

Mammography Screening

Evidence suggests that mammography screening reduces breast cancer mortality, especially among older women. In 2020, 52% of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 received an annual mammography screening in Bremer County. This compares to 47% and 37% for Iowa and the US, respectively. The percentage of Medicare enrollees receiving an annual mammograph in Bremer County has remained unchanged since 2012.

Flu Vaccinations

Influenza is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalizations and even death. It is recommended that everyone 6 months and older get a seasonal flu vaccine each year, and those over 65 are especially encouraged because they are at higher risk of developing serious complications from the flu (CHRR, n.d.). From 2012-2020, the percentage of Medicare enrollees receiving an annual flu vaccine has improved. In 2020, 56% of Medicare enrollees in Bremer County received an annual flu vaccine. This compares to 57% of Medicare enrollees in Iowa and 51% of Medicare enrollees in the US. Flu vaccine rates for the entire Bremer County and Iowa population are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Flu Vaccine Population Covered by Flu Season

Flu Season	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Percent of Bremer County Population Receiving Flu Vaccine	41.1%	46.1%	49.3%	45.6%	40.8%	41.8%
Percent of Iowa Population Receiving Flu Vaccine	34.5%	38.0%	40.6%	38.5%	33.9%	37.0%

(Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal [IPHTP], n.d.a)

Health Behaviors

Health behaviors are actions and habits that can improve or damage the health of individuals or community members. Health behaviors can largely be determined by the choices available in the places where people live, learn, work, and play. Health behaviors include, but are not limited to, tobacco use, diet and exercise, alcohol and drug use, and sexual activity.

Tobacco Use

According to data from 2020, 15% of adults in Bremer County are current cigarette smokers (age-adjusted). This compares to 17% of adults in Iowa and 16% of adults in the US. According to the Iowa Youth Survey from 2018, the percentage of 11th graders participating in the survey who used any tobacco product was 24%. This compares to 18.1% in 2014 and 14.6% in 2016 (IPHTP, n.d.b.).

Diet & Exercise

Balanced nutrition and physical activity are essential for health, yet only one-third of adults engage in the recommended amount of physical activity. In addition, many Americans exceed calorie recommendations and do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Lack of physical activity and a poor diet increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.

Adult Obesity

In Bremer County, the percentage of adults age 18 and older who reported having a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kg/m2 (age-adjusted) was 38% in 2020. This compares to 37% and 32% for Iowa and the US, respectively.

Food Environment Index

The food environment index is defined as an index of factors, such as access to healthy foods and food insecurity, that contribute to a healthy food environment, from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). Using data from 2019 and 2020, the food environment index was:

- 9.6 out of 10 for Bremer County

- 8.6 out of 10 for Iowa
- 7.0 out 10 for the US

Physical Inactivity

According to data from 2020, the percentage of adults age 18 and older reporting no leisure-time physical activity (age-adjusted) was:

- 21% of adults in Bremer County
- 23% of adults in Iowa
- 22% of adults in the US

Access to Exercise Opportunities

Access to exercise opportunities is a measure of the population with adequate access to locations for physical activity, such as a park or recreational facility. Data from 2020 and 2022 showed that 74% of people in Bremer County lived close to a park or recreational facility, while 70% and 84% lived close to a park or recreation facility at the state and national level, respectively.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a condition in which individuals or households lack consistent access to enough safe, nutritious food to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Food insecurity has slightly improved in Bremer County since 2011. Data from 2020 shows that 5% of people in Bremer County did not have a reliable source of food.

An additional measure that impacts food security is access to healthy foods. In 2019, 1% of people in Bremer County had low incomes and did not live close to a grocery store, limiting their ability to access healthy foods. This compares to 6% at both the state and national level.

Alcohol & Drug Use

When consumed in excess, alcohol is harmful to the health and well-being of those who drink as well as others. Prescription drug misuse and illicit drug use also have substantial health, economic, and social consequences, however, drug overdose deaths, prescription drug misuse, and illicit drug use data are not available for Bremer County.

Excessive Drinking

The percentage of adults reporting binge or heavy drinking (age-adjusted) in 2020 was:

- 25% of adults in Bremer County
- 25% of adults in Iowa
- 19% of adults in the US

Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths

From 2016-2020, the percentage of driving deaths with alcohol involvement was:

- 20% in Bremer County
- 27% in Iowa
- 27% in the US

Sexual Activity

High-risk sexual practices such as unsafe sex and a higher number of lifetime sexual partners can lead to sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies, which can lead to immediate and long-term health, economic, and social well-being.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

The rate of newly diagnosed chlamydia cases per 100,000 population in Bremer County has been trending worse since 2007. Figure 11 shows the newly diagnosed chlamydia cases in Bremer County, Iowa, and the US.

Figure 11

Chlamydia Trends

Note. STIs should only be compared across states with caution. Source: CHRR, n.d.

Teen Births

The number of births per 1,000 female population ages 15-19 from 2014-2020 were:

- Five teen births per 1,000 in Bremer County
- 16 teen births per 1,000 in Iowa
- 19 teen births per 1,000 in the US

Physical Environment

Air & Water Quality

Clean air and safe water are essential for healthy brain and body functions, growth, and development. Poor air and water quality are detrimental to vulnerable populations such as the young, elderly, and individuals with chronic health conditions.

Air Pollution-Particulate Matter

Millions of Americans have been diagnosed with asthma. Air pollution is associated with increased asthma rates, can aggravate lung conditions and diseases, and increases the risk of premature death from heart and lunch disease (CHRR, n.d.). Particulate matter (PM) refers to tiny particles or droplets in the air that can have various sizes and compositions. PM can originate from various sources, including vehicle emissions, industrial processes, construction activities, and natural sources like dust and wildfires. Exposure to high levels of PM, especially PM2.5, can have detrimental health effects. According to 2019 data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an annual average of 8.1 micrograms per cubic meter of PM2.5 was measured in the air. This compares to 7.4 micrograms per cubic meter of PM2.5 for Iowa and the US during the same period. PM2.5 is a measure in Bremer County that has improved since 2002.

Water Quality

According to data from 2021, no community water system in Bremer County reported a health-based drinking water violation.

Private well water, as opposed to a public water supply system, is water that is obtained from a well that is privately owned and maintained by an individual or a household. The measures bulleted below show the number and types of tests conducted on private water wells to ensure safe drinking water in private wells from 2015-2020 (IPHTP, n.d.c).

- Arsenic Testing 2016-2020
  - Bremer County: Total tests: 379; Elevated tests: 79; Percent elevated tests: 20.84%
  - Iowa Total tests: 16,114; Elevated tests: 2,500; Percent elevated tests: 15.51%
- Nitrate Testing 2015-2020
  - Bremer County: Total tests: 957; Elevated tests: 47; Percent elevated tests: 4.92%
  - Iowa Total test: 36,019; Elevated tests: 4,826; Percent elevated tests: 13.40%

- Total Coliform Bacteria Testing 2015-2020
  - o Bremer County: Total test: 925; Elevated tests: 260; Percent elevated tests: 28.11%
  - o Iowa Total tests: 44,361; Elevated tests: 14,514; Percent elevated tests: 32.72%
- Fecal Coliform Bacteria Testing 2015-2020
  - o Bremer County: Total test: 34; Elevated tests: 0; Percent elevated tests: 0%
  - o Iowa Total tests: 1,656; Elevated tests: 94; Percent elevated tests: 5.68%

Housing & Transit

Housing options and transit systems that shape our communities' built environment affect where we live and how we get from place to place, but also affect our health. Housing is related to health through the quality of homes. If the safety and quality of homes are poor, brain and nervous system development may be compromised, asthma may be exacerbated, and physical illness and psychological distress may occur. Transit, whether in the form of city or regional buses, cars, bikes, sidewalks, bike paths, and highways connects us to where we live, work, play, and get health care. A lack of transit options or living in an area with high exposure to traffic air pollution can impact physical activity, respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular disease, and pre-term birth and premature death.

Homeownership

Homeownership is central to opportunities for living long and well, and stable and affordable housing is an essential element of healthy communities.

- From 2017-2021, 83% of housing units in Bremer County were owner-occupied.
- From 2017-2021, 72% of housing units in Iowa were owner-occupied.
- From 2017-2021, 65% of housing units in the US were owner-occupied.

Housing Costs-Cost Burden (30%)

This indicator reports the percentage of households where housing costs are 30% or more of total household income. This indicator provides information on the cost of monthly housing expenses for owners and renters. Of the 9,638 total households in Bremer County from 2017-2021, 17.21% live in a cost-burdened household where housing costs exceed 30% of household income. Figure 12 shows a map of cost-burdened households by census tract.

Figure 12

Cost Burdened Households (Housing Cost Exceeding 30% of Household Income), Percent by Tract
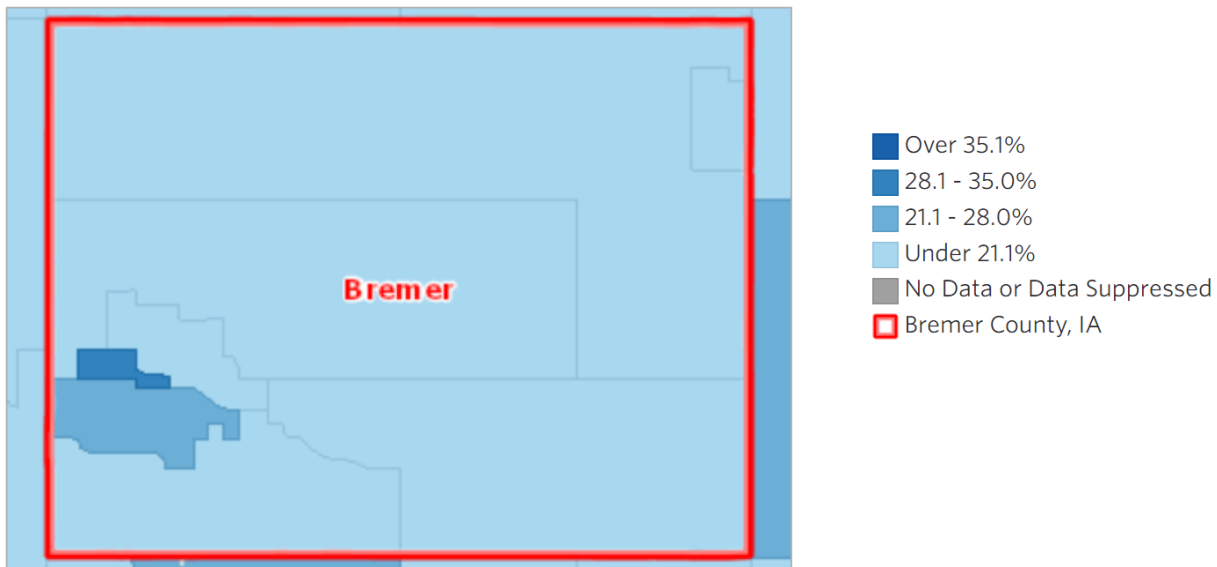
(SparkMap, n.d.)

Severe Housing Problems

Severe housing problems are defined as overcrowding of a home, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities (CHRR, n.d.).

- In Bremer County, 8% of households experienced at least one of the four housing problems above from 2015 to 2019.
- In Iowa, 12% of households experienced at least one of the four housing problems above from 2015-2019.
- In the US, 17% of households experienced at least one of the four housing problems above from 2015 to 2019.

Broadband Access

Access to reliable, high-speed broadband internet improves access to education, employment, and health care opportunities. From 2017-2021, 88% of households in Bremer County had a broadband internet connection, which was higher than the state percentage of 85% and the US percentage of 87%.

Driving Alone to Work and Long Commutes

From 2017-2021, 78% of the workforce in Bremer County drove alone to work and 27% of workers who drove alone had commutes more than 30 minutes each way. Whereas, 79% of the workforce in Iowa drove alone to work and 21% of workers who drove alone had commutes of more than 30 minutes each way. In the US, 73% of the workforce drove alone to work and 37% of workers who drove alone had commutes of more than 30 minutes each way.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

The health factors outlined in the previous section, as well as policies and programs at the local, state, and national levels, impact health outcomes, how long people live on average within a community, and how much physical and mental health people experience in a community while they are alive (CHRR, n.d.). This section outlines the length of life and quality of life in Bremer County.

Length of Life

The length of life is the time between birth and death. This measure helps us measure how long people live and what may lead to early death. Length of life includes premature death, life expectancy, and mortality rates.

Premature Deaths

Premature death is defined as the years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted). When looking at premature death trends in Bremer County from 1998-2020, the data examined did not show any statistically significant patterns.

From 2018-2020:

- Bremer County
  - Premature death
    - 5,200 years of life were lost to deaths of people under age 75, per 100,000 people.
  - Premature age-adjusted mortality
    - There were 280 deaths per 100,000 people aged 75 or younger.
- Iowa
  - Premature death
    - 6,500 years of life were lost to deaths of people under age 75, per 100,000 people.
  - Premature age-adjusted mortality
    - There were 340 deaths per 100,000 people aged 75 or younger.
- United States
  - Premature death
    - 7,300 years of life were lost to deaths of people under age 75, per 100,000 people.
  - Premature age-adjusted mortality

- There were 360 deaths per 100,000 people aged 75 or younger.

Top 10 Causes of Death

Table 8 shows the top 10 causes of death in Bremer County from 2013-2022. Each cause of death (age-adjusted rate) is the total number of deaths for each cause per 10,000 population. Categories of disease are based on ICD-10 mortality coding.

Table 8

Top 10 Causes of Death in Bremer County

Cause of Death	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1. Diseases of the heart	15.5	14.8	16.9	16.9	18.7	15.8	16.0	20.3	17.4	17.8
2. Malignant neoplasms (cancer)	12.1	14.4	18.1	15.2	14.2	15.7	12.6	15.4	13.4	14.5
3. Cerebrovascular diseases	4.0	2.5	2.4	3.4	4.5	3.6	2.4	2.9	1.7	1.9
4. Chronic lower respiratory diseases	2.4	4.3	3.0	4.9	4.4	2.2	3.6	2.7	2.4	2.5
5. Alzheimer's disease	*	2.8	4.1	*	3.2	2.8	2.5	2.9	3.7	2.7
6. Accidents (unintentional injuries)	5.4	2.1	2.9	3.1	1.9	3.0	4.6	2.3	2.9	1.4
7. Influenza and pneumonia	2.6	*	*	1.3	*	1.5	1.8	2.0	*	1.9
8. Diabetes mellitus	*	*	1.9	1.7	2.1	*	*	*	1.7	1.7
9. Essential (primary) hypertension and hypertensive renal disease	*	*	1.4	*	*	1.6	*	2.7	2.0	*
10. Intentional self-harm (suicide)	*	*	*	2.0	*	1.8	*	*	*	1.9

Note. Asterisks (*) indicate suppressed values. Source: IPHTP, n.d.d.

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is a statistical measure used to estimate the average number of years a person is expected to live.

From 2018-2020:

- The average life expectancy in Bremer County is 80.8 years.
- The average life expectancy in Iowa was 78.7 years.
- The average life expectancy in the US was 78.5 years.

Child and Infant Mortality

The occurrence of death within the child and infant populations is not available for Bremer County (the data is suppressed). Child mortality is the number of deaths among residents under age 18 per 100,000 population. Infant mortality is the number of infant deaths (within 1 year) per 1,000 live births.

From 2017-2020:

- Child Mortality
  - There were 50 deaths among residents under age 18 per 100,000 population in Iowa and the US.

From 2014-2020:

- Infant Mortality
  - There were 5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in Iowa.
  - There were 6 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in the US.

Quality of Life

Quality of life represents the well-being of a community and how people perceive their health to be. Quality of life includes birth outcomes and self-reported physical and mental wellness.

Poor or Fair Health

According to data from 2020, 10% of adults in Bremer County reported that they consider themselves in fair or poor health. This compares to 12% of adults reporting fair or poor health in Iowa and the US.

Poor Health Days

Poor health days are the average number of physically and mentally unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days (age-adjusted) in 2020.

- Poor Physical Health Days
  - In Bremer County, adults reported that their physical health was not good on 2.5 of the previous 30 days.
  - In Iowa, adults reported that their physical health was not good on 2.8 of the previous 30 days.
  - In the US, adults reported that their physical health was not good on 3.0 of the previous 30 days.
- Poor Mental Health Days
  - In Bremer County, adults reported that their mental health was not good on 4.0 of the previous 30 days.
  - In Iowa and the US, adults reported that their mental health was not good on 4.4 of the previous 30 days.

Frequent Distress

Frequent physical and mental distress is the percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor physical health and poor mental health per month (age-adjusted) in 2020.

- Frequent Physical Distress
  - In Bremer County, Iowa, and the US, 8% of adults reported experiencing poor physical health for 14 or more of the last 30 days.
- Frequent Mental Distress

- o   In Bremer County, 13% of adults reported experiencing poor mental health for 14 or more of the last 30 days.
- o   In Iowa and the US, 14% of adults reported experiencing poor mental health for 14 or more of the last 30 days.

Low Birth Weight

Low birthweight describes newborns who are born with a birth weight of less than 2,500 grams (approximately 5.5 pounds), regardless of gestational age. Infants born with low birth weight have a greater chance of dying than those with normal birth weight and may face adverse health outcomes such as decreased growth, lower IQ, impaired language development, and chronic conditions during adulthood (CHRR, n.d.).

From 2014-2022:

- 6% of babies in Bremer County had a low birth weight.
- 7% of babies in Iowa had a low birth weight.
- 8% of babies in the US had a low birth weight.

Diabetes Prevalence

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition known to have broad impacts on physical, social, and mental well-being and causes significant morbidity and mortality in the US (CHRR, n.d.). According to data from 2020, the percentage of adults aged 20 and above with diagnosed diabetes was 8% in Bremer County and 9% in Iowa and the US.

BREMER COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY

To learn more about the community health issues affecting Bremer County residents, the Bremer County Health Department developed a survey with 36 items reflecting community health issues and demographic questions. The survey was designed to be a self-administered instrument. The survey was available online and in print. A link to the online version was placed on the Bremer County website, the Bremer County Health Department's Facebook page, and widely disseminated through email and other means. In addition, staff attended community meetings to solicit survey completion. A total of 112 Bremer County residents completed the survey.

What the Survey Showed:

Demographics of Individuals Completing the Survey			
Residence (Urban or Rural Setting)		**Highest Level of School/Education Completed**	
Urban	66.07%	GED/HSED	0.90%
Rural	33.93%	High School Diploma	6.31%
Age Range		Some College	12.61%
18-24	1.80%	Associate Degree	10.81%
25-34	9.01%	Trade School	4.50%
35-44	27.93%	Bachelor's Degree	36.94%
45-54	26.13%	Master's Degree	20.72%
55-64	20.72%	Professional Certification	3.60%
65+	14.41%	Doctoral Degree	3.60%
Race/Ethnicity		**Gender Identity**	
Hispanic or Latino	2.70%	Female	75.89%
White or Caucasian	94.59%	Male	24.11%
Unknown	2.70%	Non-binary	0%
Employment Status		**Total Annual Household Income**	
Full-time employment	67.86%	Under $15,000	0.93%
Part-time employment	12.50%	Between $15,000 and $29,999	2.78%
Self-employed	2.68%	Between $30,000 and $49,999	9.26%
Homemaker	1.79%	Between $50,000 and $74,999	18.52%
Student	0.89%	Between $75,000 and $99,999	12.96%
Retired	14.29%	Between $100,000 and $150,000	38.89%
		Over $150,000	16.67%

Survey Questions and Responses			
Where do you primarily get your health information?		**How do you rate the overall health of your community?**	
Physician/health care provider/pharmacist	73.87%	Very healthy	6.25%
Internet	19.82%	Healthy	42.86%
Other	4.50%	Somewhat healthy	47.32%
Friends/family	0.90%	Unhealthy	3.57%
Social media	0.90%	Very unhealthy	0%
Top Factors for a "Healthy Community" (Top five responses recorded below)		**Top Health Problems of Concern in your Community** (Top five responses recorded below)	
Access to healthcare	76.79%	Mental illness	53.57%
Access to healthy food	41.07%	Limited or no access to mental health services	39.29%
A good place to raise children	33.93%	Obesity	34.82%
Healthy behaviors and lifestyles	21.43%	Age-related issues (e.g. arthritis, hearing/vision loss, dementia, etc.)	32.14%
Affordable housing	21.43%	Cancer	25.89%
Current State Regarding Food		**Health Concerns Relative to Children's Health in Your Community** (Top responses recorded below)	
I feel myself/my family never worry about where our next meal is coming from	92.73%	Access to mental health services	48.21%
I feel myself/my family sometimes worries about where our next meal is coming from	7.27%	Childcare affordability and availability	46.43%
"Risky Behaviors" Observed in your Community (Top responses recorded below)		Screen time/social media overuse	46.43%
Texting and/or using a cell phone while driving	41.96%	Bullying (including cyber)	38.39%
Being overweight/obese	41.96%	Affordable fresh foods/ healthy diets/nutritious school lunch options	29.46%
Alcohol abuse	41.07%	Structured, safe, or supportive living environment	14.29%
Physical inactivity	38.39%	**How would you rate your physical health?**	
Unhealthy eating (a lot of fast food, low intake of fruits/vegetables	38.39%	Excellent	5.41%
Illegal drug use	27.68%	Very good	41.44%
Driving while drunk or high	23.21%	Good	39.64%
How would you rate your overall personal health?		Fair	12.61%
Healthy	60.71%	Poor	0.90%
Somewhat healthy	25.89%		
Very healthy	9.82%		
Unhealthy	3.57%		

How do you rate your mental health?		How do you rate your dental health?	
Excellent	10.71%	Excellent	27.68%
Very good	41.07%	Very good	39.29%
Good	33.04%	Good	21.43%
Fair	13.39%	Fair	10.71%
Poor	1.79%	Poor	0.89%
On your last routine/regular health care visit, where did you go?		How long has it been since you have visited the doctor for a routine checkup, not due to illness or injury?	
Family doctor/general medical practitioner	90.18%	Less than one year	75.89%
Urgent care	2.68%	1-2 years	14.29%
Emergency department	0%	3-5 years	3.57%
Telemedicine	0.89%	5+ years	4.46%
I don't receive routine care	6.25%	I don't know	1.79%
When you get sick, how do you access care?		In the last year, was there a time you needed care from a doctor or general medical practitioner but were unable to access it?	
Family doctor/general medical practitioner	77.68%	Yes	5.36%
Urgent care	50.00%	No	94.64%
Emergency department	5.36%	In the last year, was there a time you needed dental care but were unable to access it?	
Telemedicine	4.46%	Yes	5.41%
I do not go anywhere	7.14%	No	94.59%
Healthy Behaviors You Feel Most Confident in Improving (Top responses recorded below)		In the last year, was there a time you needed mental health care but were unable to access it?	
Getting more physical activity	72.32%	Yes	8.11%
Drinking more water	68.75%	No	91.89%
Eating more fruits/vegetables	62.50%	Factors Preventing You from Being Healthier/Improving Health (Top responses recorded below)	
Decreasing stress	41.07%	No motivation/not a priority right now	57.97%
Getting immunizations/shots	11.61%	Lack of time	51.40%
Routine physical exams	11.61%	Healthy fresh goods are expensive	46.73%
What activities/programs do you feel would help you start or maintain a healthy lifestyle? (Top responses recorded below)		Cannot afford a gym membership, no childcare available, no gym access where I live, etc.	23.36%
More fresh food and produce available at a lower cost	66.36%	Gym fear/anxiety	19.63%
Affordable wellness and fitness facilities	47.66%	Mental health issues	15.89%
Additional recreational paths, trails, sidewalks	31.78%	Outdoor factors (lighting issues, lack of trails/sidewalks	15.89%
Employee wellness programs/worksite wellness programs	27.10%		
Community physical activity programs (water aerobics, volleyball league, fitness classes, etc.)	20.56%		

Three Social Issues Affecting Community (Top responses recorded below)		Three Environmental Health Concerns Community Faces (Top responses recorded below)	
Single-parent families	55.05%	Slips/trips/falls	57.58%
Stigmas (mental health, felons, substance abuse)	39.45%	Mold/moisture	53.54%
Poverty	36.70%	Radon exposure	40.40%
Substance misuse	34.86%	Outdoor air quality (asthma triggers)	29.29%
Discrimination	30.28%	Contaminated private wells	17.17%
Which group is discriminated against most in your community?		What could be done in Bremer County to best support you and your community?	
Those struggling with mental health/illness	23.96%	Mental health access and awareness	18.92%
Low income	20.83%	Reduction in taxes	10.81%
LGBTQ+	18.75%	Access to healthy food	9.01%
Do you/your family feel prepared for a natural and/or man-made disaster? (Prepared means you are equipped with at least 72 hours' worth of food, water, medications, and other necessary supplies).		Public transportation improvements	8.11%
Yes	70.37%	More jobs and higher wages	8.11%
No	26.63%	Affordable housing	7.21%
Which of the following preparedness statements are true for you/your family? (Top responses recorded below)			
My family has a cell phone with a charger	99.10%		
My family has a first-aid kit	81.08%		
My family keeps a supply of bottled water and extra non-perishable food items on hand	60.36%		
My family has a weather radio, flashlight, and batteries in our home	58.56%		
My family has discussed a central meeting place	43.24%		

Top Health Priorities in Bremer County

1. Chronic Disease Management
2. Mental Health and Access to Mental Health Services
3. Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)

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