



P A J A R O V A L L E Y
**COMMUNITY
HEALTH TRUST**

**2007 Community Assessment Project
Pajaro Valley Oversample Telephone Survey Results
Executive Summary**

Introduction

As part of our continuing mission to improve the health and quality of life for all people of the greater Pajaro Valley, the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust (Community Health Trust), with support from the Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County (HIP), contracted with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct an oversample of Pajaro Valley residents as part of the Community Assessment Project's (CAP) community survey. The intent of the oversample was to gain a more comprehensive view of the quality of life in the Pajaro Valley.

Findings from the survey confirm that disparities exist between the quality of life in the Pajaro Valley and that of the rest of Santa Cruz County. Significant disparities are evident in several topic areas: Economy, Education, Health, Public Safety, the Natural Environment, and the Social Environment.

The Community Health Trust hopes that the dissemination of these findings will provide fact-based information to empower stakeholders to work together and target improvements in the standard of living for all Pajaro Valley community members. Working together to reduce or eliminate these disparities will ultimately result in a stronger and healthier community.

The following statistics highlight some of the report findings.

Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

There were significant demographic differences between Pajaro Valley respondents and respondents in the rest of the county, which may explain some of the variances. 53.2% of Pajaro Valley respondents described their race/ethnicity as Latino/Hispanic as opposed to only 4.0% in the rest of the county. In addition, 52.3% of Pajaro Valley respondents had a household income of less than \$25,000 per year, while only 14% of the rest of county indicated a similar income level. The survey also indicated that Pajaro Valley respondents were also far more likely to have children under the age of 6 (60.4% vs. 25.2% of the rest of the county).

Economic Issues

As housing prices for both sale and rental properties have appreciated rapidly in Santa Cruz County while hourly wages have grown at a much slower rate, many Santa Cruz County families now spend a much higher percentage of their income on housing costs. Findings from the CAP survey indicate that this is a serious issue in the county as a whole but particularly among Pajaro Valley residents. 15.7% of Pajaro Valley residents surveyed

indicated that they spend more than 75% of their total household net income on housing, and 20.4% indicated they spent between 50-74%. In other parts of the county, only 4% of residents indicated spending more than 75% of their income on housing, and 17.3% indicated spending between 50-74%.

Likely due in part to the high percentage of Pajaro Valley families spending more than 50% of their income on housing, the percentage of residents building assets for the future is much lower among Pajaro Valley residents. In fact, 34.7% of Pajaro Valley residents indicated that they are not building assets for the future, a rate much higher than the rest of the county where only 14.1% are not saving any money for the future.

Education Issues

Overall, Pajaro Valley respondents are more satisfied with the local system of education. 35.6% of Pajaro Valley respondents indicated that they were “very satisfied” with their local system of education as opposed to only 21.4% in the rest of the county. Far more Pajaro Valley residents feel that bilingual education is “very important” than residents in the rest of the county (63.6% as compared to 46.2%). A greater percentage of Pajaro Valley respondents also feel that attending a quality preschool is “very important” to a child’s success (80.1% as compared to 65.4%). Despite the fact that 81.1% of Pajaro Valley respondents are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the local school system, 27.6% noted that gangs are the most serious problem facing local schools today. Only 4.1% of residents in the rest of the county noted gangs as a serious educational issue.

Only 56.3% of PV residents indicated that they have a computer in their home in contrast to 84.5% of the rest of the county.

Health Highlights

Access to healthcare is an important indicator of quality of life and overall community health. Disparities in health coverage between Pajaro Valley residents and residents of the rest of the County are also significant. While nearly 92.1% of Santa Cruz County residents indicated having health insurance, only 69.4% of Pajaro Valley respondents reported having health insurance. The increasing costs of care and diminishing health insurance coverage are putting strains on the ability of Pajaro Valley residents to receive care. Fourteen percent (14.7%) of Pajaro Valley residents were unable to obtain health care when needed, in contrast to only five percent (5.8%) of residents in the rest of the County. The two primary reasons stated for why Pajaro Valley residents were unable to obtain needed health care were lack of insurance coverage and the cost of receiving care. The CAP survey indicated that 90.8% of Santa Cruz County residents reported having a regular source of health care. This number drops to 81.5% when one looks only at Pajaro Valley residents. Pajaro Valley residents were also far more likely (21.5% vs. 2.7%) to get their medical care at a community clinic, such as Salud Para La Gente, Planned Parenthood, Santa Cruz Women’s Health Center, or the County Clinic. For many underserved populations, community clinics play a critical role as the safety net.

The survey indicated that a large percentage (75.5%) of Santa Cruz County residents visited a dentist, hygienist, or orthodontist in the previous six months. In contrast, only 54.2% of Pajaro Valley residents had visited the dentist, hygienist, or orthodontist in the

previous six months. In fact, Pajaro Valley residents were far less likely (32.9% vs. 15.6%) to have seen a dentist, hygienist, or orthodontist in one year or more.

The number of Pajaro Valley residents that have a living will or advanced health care directive is also far less (23.8%) than the number of residents in the balance of the County (45.2%).

Health can be enhanced and disparities reduced through greater attention to prevention. Improving health-related behaviors such as poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, tobacco use, and supporting community environments is fundamental for effective prevention. The survey found that 29.9% of Pajaro Valley residents reported engaging in physical activity fewer than two days a week as opposed to 18.1% of residents in the rest of the county. In fact, 11.9% of Pajaro Valley respondents say that they do not engage in any physical activity. The number of adults that are obese (determined by BMI) among Pajaro Valley residents is higher than the balance of the county (22.3% vs. 11.9%). In addition, the number of individuals who have been told they have diabetes or pre-diabetes is higher among Pajaro Valley residents (13.6% vs. 6.6%). However, more Pajaro Valley residents reported eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables day compared to the rest of the county (61.7% vs. 54.6%).

Like physical health, mental health is impacted by biological, physiological, social, and cultural factors. According to the survey, Pajaro Valley residents were far less likely (48.7% vs. 72.9%) than the balance of the county to report that their general mental health was “excellent” or “very good” and far more likely to report that their general mental health was “fair” or “poor” (26.4% vs. 9.4%).

Public Safety

Although the overall crime rate in Watsonville was only slightly higher than the county as a whole (46.6 vs. 42.5 per 1,000), 51.4% of Pajaro Valley residents stated that they were “very concerned” about crime in Santa Cruz County as opposed to 33.5% of the rest of the county. In addition, only 28.9% of Pajaro Valley respondents say they feel “very safe” in their neighborhood compared to 75.4% of the rest of the county. Another alarming finding was that 28.6% of Pajaro Valley residents said that their children “do not” have a safe place to play in their neighborhood. This percentage is also high among the rest of the county, with 21.8% of respondents stating that their children do not have a safe place to play.

Another important area of focus is emergency preparedness. The survey found that few Pajaro Valley families have a disaster preparedness plan or kit (only 34.4% vs. 55.9% in the rest of the county).

Social Environment

In any given month in the last 12 months, 20.1% of Pajaro Valley residents found themselves having to go without basic needs such as child care, health care, food, or housing. The percentage drops to only 6.3 for residents in the rest of the county. Of those that responded “yes” that they had to go without basic needs, 51.5% of Pajaro Valley residents said that had to go without health care (including dental care).

The percentage of respondents who felt they had been discriminated against in the last 12 months was higher among Pajaro Valley respondents. 21.3% of Pajaro Valley respondents have felt discriminated against in Santa Cruz County in the last 12 months vs. only 12.6% of respondents in the rest of the county. Of those that felt discriminated against, 54.8% felt discriminated against because of ethnicity/race.

When asked what takes away from their quality of life, 20.6% of Pajaro Valley respondents said gangs/crime in contrast to only 4.7% of respondents in the rest of the county. And when asked if you could make a major change locally, 20.8% vs. only 3.6% said that they would have no violence, drugs, or gangs.

Natural Environment

The percentage of respondents who indicated that they frequently used transportation other than their own car was significantly higher among Pajaro Valley respondents (20.1% vs. only 12.2%).