



## **Population Health Trust August Newsletter**

### ***Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health***

**August 2025**

Knowing more about the health of youth in Skagit was a priority for the Trust's Community Health Assessment (CHA). While we can learn a lot from reviewing data from the [Healthy Youth Survey](#) (HYS), we wanted to go beyond those standardized questions to better understand the needs of kids today. To do this, we set out to collect qualitative data through panel presentations, focus groups, and key informant interviews.

Once we collected the data, it was coded, analyzed, then sorted into themes. Below is a summary of key findings that emerged.

#### Youth Behavioral Health

Youth of all ages are struggling with significant mental health challenges, especially anxiety and depression. Substance use continues to be an area of concern, especially vaping and the use of nicotine. Additionally, problematic internet use, excessive screen time, and social media addiction were seen as a growing problem among youth.

#### Access to Services and Navigation

Many families struggle to access basic preventative care like wellness and dental exams, as well as counseling, behavioral health, and cessation services. There are also significant gaps in identifying students with learning disabilities due to the limited capacity of schools. Additionally for kids ages birth to 3, there is still a need for clear access points to developmental screenings.

#### Family Caregiver Support

Families and caregivers are struggling to meet the demands of parenting while managing their own mental health and work-life balance, creating a feeling of “burnout.” This can contribute to the youth taking on caregiver responsibilities or

grandparents raising grandchildren. Some families are feeling the stress of potential separation through deportation.

#### Housing and Basic Needs

Food and housing insecurity were frequently mentioned during the data collection process. Families often struggle to afford rent, food, and transportation, working multiple jobs with unpredictable schedules that make accessing services difficult.

#### Community Partnership and Coordination

While there are challenges to youth health, local organizations are working collaboratively to support kids. The main barriers to these initiatives are sustainable funding and equitable access to services for the most vulnerable populations. Additionally, the lack of system-level infrastructure limits coordination, data-sharing, and long-term sustainability across organizations.

#### Youth Empowerment and Skill-Building

There are many skill-building and prosocial programs designed to support kids, often serving as connection points across systems. Youth empowerment is happening in powerful ways, including opportunities for youth to be included in the decision-making process in their schools and communities.

We are entering into the final stages of our CHA. As data collection and analysis wraps up, we are turning our attention to root cause analysis, a series of community listening sessions, and report writing. Look to future newsletters for updates and opportunities to participate in the process.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping Skagit County healthy!



The Population Health Trust was founded in 2015 and is the Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health. For more information, check out our [website](#).

#### Population Health Trust

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