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Center for State Health Policy

# Data Brief December 2013

Challenges to Improving Local Health System Performance: Social Indicators of Well-Being in 13 Low-Income New Jersey Communities

#### Key findings.

- Data on social determinants of health (socioeconomic, demographic, and health care indicators) describe challenges to population health and local health care system performance improvement.
- Comparing these data on social determinants of health to findings in earlier briefs on health system performance in the same 13 low-income study areas reveals that communities with more social challenges to health also have higher rates of avoidable hospitalizations and emergency department (ED) visits.
- Among the 13 study areas, Camden, Atlantic City, and Newark face the most social challenges to health overall, while Jersey City, Asbury Park, and New Brunswick face fewer social challenges compared to the others.

his data brief highlights key findings from a project that examined specific patterns of social indicators of health for 13 New Jersey low-income communities.<sup>1</sup> It is intended to supplement an earlier report by Chakravarty et al. (2013) which examined patterns of hospital utilization among residents of the same 13 communities in an effort to identify opportunities to improve care and reduce costs for health care services. The 13 study areas are selected from communities with at least 5,000 Medicaid beneficiaries. Social determinants of health include demographic, social, economic, and environmental factors that have been shown to contribute to individual and population health; e.g., those who are employed, have higher incomes, live in safe neighborhoods, and have access to health care tend to be healthier and have better health outcomes than those who are unemployed or low-income, live in unsafe neighborhoods, and are uninsured resulting in poor access to health care (HealthyPeople.gov 2013). These are often

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The 13 communities consist of one or more municipalities. For brevity, this brief refers to each area by its main municipality. See Appendix Table 7 for a complete listing of included areas. Chakravarty et al. (2013) provide more information about the selection of the study areas.

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Areas	Overall Rank*	Socio-economic Challenges**	Demographic Challenges**	Health Care Challenges**
Camden	13	13	10	11.5
Atlantic City	12	11.5	12	8.5
Newark	11	11.5	4	13
Paterson	10	9.5	13	6
Perth Amboy	9	8	8.5	11.5
Elizabeth	8	7	11	10
Plainfield	7	4	6	8.5
Trenton	6	9.5	2	7
Union	5	6	8.5	5
Vineland	4	3	7	3
Jersey City	3	5	3	4
Asbury Park	2	2	5	1
New Brunswick	1	1	1	2

Rankings: Regions are arranged in order of most (\_\_\_\_\_) to least (\_\_\_\_\_) overall challenge rank based on the average of individual indicator rankings. See appendix for social indicator definitons and data sources; \*mean rank of three dimension mean ranks; \*\* mean rank of indicators in each dimension. Ranks with decimals (e.g., 8.5) indicate ties.

Source: Newman et al. (2012); tabulations by Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, 2013

considered challenges for improving health services delivery as many are immutable. The social indicators chosen for this brief are grouped into three dimensions: (1) Socioeconomic Challenges; (2) Demographic Challenges; and (3) Health Care Challenges (see Box 1 for indicators within each dimension). Within each dimension, each indicator is ranked to illustrate how the different New Jersey lowincome communities compare to each other. Average ranks across metrics are used to derive rankings for each of the three dimensions and the average of the dimension ranks are used to calculate an overall ranking. In the charts that follow, the ranks are arranged in order of most (dark blue) to least (light blue) challenged. All findings are based on analysis of the most recently-available New Jersey data for each metric. Additionally, these overall findings are compared to the overall findings for health system performance for the same 13 study areas (Chakravarty et al. 2013). Detailed tables for all social indicator measures and data methods/sources/years are located in the Appendix.

Table 1 lists the ranks for each of the three social dimensions of challenges and the overall rank (based on the mean of the three dimension ranks). The 13 study areas are sorted according to their overall rank, with the areas facing the most challenges having the highest ranks. The Camden, Atlantic City, and Newark areas rank the highest among social indicators (most challenged),

while the New Brunswick, Asbury Park, and Jersey City areas show the lowest levels of challenges. Some areas, including Paterson, Perth Amboy, and Elizabeth, rank in the middle overall but are highly challenged in demographic or health care indicators.

Figure 1 compares the overall rankings for the social indicators (vertical axis) to the overall rankings for health system performance (horizontal axis) from the prior data brief by Chakravarty et al. (2013).<sup>2</sup> Across the 13 communities, social indicator ranks are positively related to ranks of health system performance (Spearman rank correlation = 0.53, p<.05, one-tailed). That is, those communities with more social challenges to health also tend to have higher rates of avoidable hospitalizations and avoidable ED visits.

While the analysis in this brief cannot be used to determine whether or how high rates of social challenges may have contributed to worse health system performance, it is reasonable to expect that communities facing more social challenges may have a more difficult time achieving high system performance. It is therefore noteworthy that some communities with high rates of social challenges "outperform" other communities facing fewer challenges. In Figure 1, those communities above the diagonal line

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Health system performance is characterized by Chakravarty et al. (2013) using the following measures: (1) avoidable, ambulatory care sensitive inpatient hospitalizations, (2) avoidable/preventable treat-and-release emergency department [ED] visits, (3) hospital inpatient high-users, (4) ED high users, and (5) 30-day all-cause hospital readmissions.



rank better on health system performance than on social challenges, and, can be viewed as doing better than expected given the challenges they face. For example, the Paterson area ranks 10th in social challenges but achieved a rank of 5th in system performance. Conversely, some communities, shown below the diagonal line may be seen as ranking worse on system performance relative to social challenges. The Asbury Park area, for instance, ranks second lowest on social challenges but near the top of indicators of poor system performance (ranking 9th).

#### **Ranked Correlations of Indicators with Overall Rank**

Correlations close to one (in absolute value) indicate a very strong relationship to the overall rank, while those close to zero indicate a weak relationship. For positive correlations, the indicator is in the same direction as the overall rank whereas for negative correlations, the indicator is in the reverse direction.

Drivers of Social Challenges Overall Rank	ling		
Social Indicators	Social Indicator Dimension	Correlation with Overall Rank	Absolute Value of Correlation
Median Household Income	SES	(-0.91)	0.91
% Unemployed (Age 16+)	SES	0.85	0.85
Child Dependency Ratio (Children/Working Age Adults)	DEMO	0.83	0.83
% Female-Only Householders with Children < Age 18	DEMO	0.82	0.82
% Late or No Prenatal Care	НС	0.81	0.81
% Below Poverty	SES	0.78	0.78
% Deaths < Age 65 (including homicides)	НС	0.74	0.74
% Vacant Housing Units	SES	0.62	0.62
% NJ ASK Grade 3 Partially Proficient (Literacy)	SES	0.50	0.50
% Uninsured	НС	0.48	0.48
Aged Dependency Ratio (Older Adults/Working Age Adults)	DEMO	(-0.42)	0.42
Total Dependency Ratio (Children + Older Adults/Working Age Adults)	DEMO	0.34	0.34
% Spanish Spoken at Home Students	DEMO	0.12	0.12
% Non-English Spoken at Home Students	DEMO	(-0.08)	0.08

# Box 1 | Ranked Correlations of Indicators with Overall Rank:

Values are color-coded in order of high (\_\_\_\_\_) to moderate (\_\_\_\_\_) to low (\_\_\_\_\_) correlation with Overall Social Challenges Rank. Key for Dimensions: SES = Socio-economic Indicator; DEMO = Demographic Indicator; HC = Health Care Indicator Source: Newman et al. (2012); tabulations by Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, 2013

#### How to Read the Following Figures

Color-coding is used to indicate the most ( ) to least challenged ( ) within each indicator. Actual values are indicated along the bottom of each figure on the horizontal axis. Study areas are represented in the text and all charts by main municipality name. The vertical line in the figures indicates NJ state average level (if available). On all figures, the study areas are listed in order of their Overall Ranking (i.e., those facing the most to least challenges).

Table 2 shows the overall and individual indicator rankings for the socio-economic challenges across the 13 study areas. Figures 2–4 show the actual values and respective rankings of the individual socio-economic indicators across the 13 study areas. The purely economic indicators (Income, Unemployment, Poverty, Vacant Housing) show the same pattern as the overall rank, while 3rd grade literacy is moderately related. Across these measures, some communities – including the Camden, Atlantic City, and Newark areas – show consistently high levels of difficulties. Other communities, including the Paterson, Perth Amboy, Plainfield, and Trenton areas, rank very high on socioeconomic challenges by at least some of the measures.

Areas	Overall SES Rank	Median HH Income	% Unemployed	% Below Poverty	% Vacant Housing Units	% 3rd Grade Partially Proficier
Camden						
Atlantic City						
Newark						
Paterson						
Perth Amboy						
Elizabeth						
Plainfield						
Trenton						
Union						
Vineland						
Jersey City						
Asbury Park						
New Brunswick						







Table 3 shows the overall and individual indicator rankings for the demographic challenges across the 13 study areas. Figures 5–6 show the actual values and respective rankings across the 13 study areas for each demographic indicator. Percent Non-English Spoken at Home did not significantly contribute to the overall rank, while Percent Female Householders with Children < Age 18 and the Child Dependency Ratio were strongly related. The Aged Dependency and Total Dependency Ratios were moderately related to overall rank.







Table 4 shows the overall and individual indicator rankings for the health care challenges across the 13 study areas. Figures 7-8 show the actual values and individual rankings across the 13 study areas for each health care indicator. Late or No Prenatal Care and Early Deaths (including homicides) were strong indicators of overall rank, while Percent Uninsured was moderately related.







### **Individual Area Findings**

- Camden performed poorly for nearly all measures, with somewhat better performance for some health care challenges and fewer demographic challenges.
- The Atlantic City area fared poorly for many socioeconomic and demographic challenges, but performed somewhat better for health care challenges.
- Although the Newark area performed poorly for socioeconomic and health care challenges, it performed better for demographic challenges.
- The Paterson area, although performing poorly for demographic challenges in particular, fared better for health care challenges.
- Perth Amboy performed particularly poorly for health care challenges.
- The Elizabeth and Union areas faced high demographic challenges in particular.
- The Trenton area fared well for demographic challenges, but poorly for socio-economic ones.
- The Jersey City, Asbury Park, and New Brunswick\* areas performed well in comparison to other study areas across nearly all measures. (\* *The inclusion of Franklin Township, much of which is middle-to-high income, improves this area's social indicator standing.*)

### **Conclusions & Looking Ahead**

Data on social determinants of health (socio-economic, demographic, and health care indicators) can be used to describe expected challenges to achieving high health system performance. In comparing this data to earlier briefs on hospital use across the same 13 communities, those areas facing more social challenges to health also have higher rates of avoidable hospitalizations and avoidable ED visits. While there is an association between community rankings in social challenges and lower health systems performance, the data in this brief make it clear that the social determinants we measured do not fully explain why some communities do better than others. This finding underscores that achieving better performance may well be attainable in low-performing communities, even in light of poverty, challenging demographics, and other social factors.

Communities that appear above the diagonal line in Figure 1 achieved a better rank in health system performance than they did when ranked by social challenges. Within the limitations of the data, it appears that these communities are "beating the odds." That is, they are doing better than the social challenges data might suggest. There may be many reasons for this "positive deviance." There are certainly some factors mediating our measured social challenges that may lessen avoidable hospital utilization. For example, new immigrant communities may bring utilization patterns and health practices that lead to lower hospital use. But it is also important to consider how the health care delivery systems in these communities may have found ways to deliver care more effectively and efficiently than other communities facing similar social challenges. Considering which factors may lead to the comparatively better performance in these communities will be useful for identifying best practices for achieving high health system performance. Future briefs by the Center for State Health Policy will further explore the factors that differentiate higher and lower performing communities.

pendix Data Table 1   <b>Sc</b>	ocio-economic	: Indicators			
Urban Area	% Below Poverty	Median Household Income	% Unemployed	NJ ASK 3rd Grade Literacy, % Partially Proficient	% Housing Units Vacant
Camden	36.1%	\$27,027	19.6%	79.9%	13.6%
Atlantic City	22.8%	\$32,907	17.4%	55.0%	11.5%
Newark	22.9%	\$37,765	14.4%	56.9%	13.0%
Paterson	22.0%	\$42,264	13.3%	63.3%	5.8%
Perth Amboy	19.4%	\$47,696	15.5%	51.9%	6.7%
Elizabeth	14.4%	\$47,143	12.4%	47.5%	7.7%
Plainfield	13.8%	\$56,939	10.9%	60.1%	7.5%
Trenton	21.1%	\$47,064	11.0%	66.1%	11.3%
Union	16.0%	\$46,154	11.7%	42.1%	6.9%
Vineland	14.9%	\$51,603	13.2%	47.5%	5.5%
Jersey City	16.4%	\$54,133	10.8%	48.7%	10.1%
Asbury Park	11.1%	\$64,185	11.6%	50.3%	6.6%
New Brunswick	14.3%	\$72,285	8.0%	58.4%	4.6%
Correlation with Overall Rank	0.78	0.91	0.85	0.50	0.62

Source: Newman et al. (2012); tabulations by Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, 2013

# Appendix Data Table 2 | **Demographic Indicators**

Urban Area	% Female-Only Householders with Children < 18	% Non-English Spoken at Home	% Spanish Spoken at Home	Aged Dependency Ratio	Child Dependency Ratio	Total Dependency Ratio
Camden	40.6%	28.9%	27.9%	11.34	38.87	50.21
Atlantic City	27.4%	42.5%	31.3%	18.11	31.95	50.06
Newark	30.7%	21.3%	14.2%	13.34	30.52	43.86
Paterson	20.9%	56.1%	48.0%	14.89	33.40	48.29
Perth Amboy	23.0%	30.3%	29.7%	13.55	32.81	46.36
Elizabeth	19.2%	60.9%	48.8%	14.86	29.73	44.58
Plainfield	19.4%	48.0%	44.1%	13.15	30.70	43.85
Trenton	26.3%	3.2%	1.6%	14.66	26.78	41.45
Union	16.8%	73.3%	69.4%	17.02	26.23	43.25
Vineland	17.2%	18.4%	16.2%	21.16	30.84	52.00
Jersey City	18.4%	43.4%	23.6%	13.66	24.64	38.30
Asbury Park	15.4%	10.4%	5.8%	25.65	26.79	52.43
New Brunswick	14.4%	42.2%	36.1%	13.46	25.65	39.11
Correlation with Overall Rank	0.82	-0.08	0.12	-0.42	0.83	0.34

# Appendix Data Table 3 | Health Care Indicators

Urban Area	% Uninsured	% Late or No Prenatal Care	% of Deaths <65 Years (including homicides)
Camden	23.0%	8.4%	50.2%
Atlantic City	18.1%	9.1%	37.6%
Newark	24.7%	11.7%	45.1%
Paterson	24.6%	7.9%	31.7%
Perth Amboy	29.4%	9.9%	27.8%
Elizabeth	27.7%	9.0%	31.2%
Plainfield	26.1%	7.3%	34.6%
Trenton	20.3%	8.2%	34.1%
Union	29.2%	4.2%	23.4%
Vineland	13.8%	7.1%	28.3%
Jersey City	17.9%	5.1%	33.7%
Asbury Park	5.4%	5.2%	24.2%
New Brunswick	19.3%	3.9%	26.6%
Correlation with Overall Rank	0.48	0.81	0.74

## Appendix Data Table 4 | Racial-Ethnic Distribution

Urban Area	% White	% White Non-Hispanic	% Black	% Hispanic	% Asian
Camden	17.6%	4.9%	48.1%	47.0%	2.1%
Atlantic City	26.1%	14.8%	40.6%	33.9%	11.2%
Newark	19.4%	8.5%	63.4%	26.1%	1.4%
Paterson	46.9%	23.2%	19.3%	53.5%	5.1%
Perth Amboy	50.3%	12.0%	10.5%	78.1%	1.7%
Elizabeth	56.1%	25.2%	22.3%	50.6%	2.2%
Plainfield	33.2%	15.2%	40.6%	41.5%	2.4%
Trenton	36.3%	25.7%	45.7%	26.6%	1.9%
Union	62.5%	15.7%	4.7%	76.5%	5.0%
Vineland	68.5%	53.1%	15.8%	29.2%	1.5%
Jersey City	40.1%	28.7%	22.4%	27.2%	20.4%
Asbury Park	64.4%	57.8%	25.7%	11.5%	3.7%
New Brunswick	45.1%	33.2%	21.6%	30.3%	14.2%
Correlation with Overall Rank	-0.65	-0.75	0.50	0.33	-0.38

# Appendix Data Table 5 | Gender and Age Distribution

Urban Area	% Female	% Children (Age 0–14)	% Working Adults (Age 15–64)	% Older Adults (Age 65+)	Total Population
Camden	51.4%	25.9%	66.6%	7.6%	74,996
Atlantic City	51.3%	21.3%	66.6%	12.1%	60,268
Newark	51.7%	21.2%	69.5%	9.3%	409,997
Paterson	51.2%	22.5%	67.4%	10.0%	294,085
Perth Amboy	50.7%	22.4%	68.3%	9.3%	49,723
Elizabeth	50.9%	20.6%	69.2%	10.3%	161,873
Plainfield	49.7%	21.3%	69.5%	9.1%	70,140
Trenton	49.7%	18.9%	70.7%	10.4%	109,742
Union	50.6%	18.3%	69.8%	11.9%	183,338
Vineland	52.1%	20.3%	65.8%	13.9%	94,699
Jersey City	50.9%	17.8%	72.3%	9.9%	302,435
Asbury Park	53.0%	17.6%	65.6%	16.8%	88,766
New Brunswick	50.5%	18.4%	71.9%	9.7%	106,619

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Indicators	Data Source	Data Year(s)	Denominator for Percents	
Socio-economic Challenges		1		
Median Household Income % Below Poverty	American Community Survey (ACS)	2010 5-yr estimates	# Households Total Population	
% Unemployed	NJ Dept of Labor & Workforce Development	2011	# Age 16+	
% Vacant Housing Units	US Census Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics	2010	# Housing Units	
**% NJ ASK Grade 3 Partially Proficient (Literacy)	NJ Dept of Education New Jersey School Report Card	2011	# 3rd Graders	
Demographic Challenges				
Child Dependency Ratio (Children/ Working Age Adults) Aged Dependency Ratio (Older	LIS Census file			
Adults/Working Age Adults) Total Dependency Ratio (Children + Older Adults/Working Age Adults)	QT-P1: Age Groups and Sex 2010	2010	# Age 16-64	
% Female-Only Householders with Children < Age 18	US Census Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics	2010	# Households	
% Spanish Spoken at Home Students % Non-English Spoken at Home Students	NJ Dept of Education New Jersey School Report Card	2011	# Public and Charter School Students	
Health Care Challenges		·		
% Late or No Prenatal Care % Deaths < Age 65 ( <i>including homicides</i> )	NJ Dept of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics and Registration New Jersey Death and Birth Certificate Databases	2004 to 2008	# Births # Deaths	
% Uninsured	American Community Survey (ACS)	2010 3-yr estimates	Total Population	
Other Demographics				
Total Population % Female % Children (< age 15) % Working Age Adults (age 15–64) % Older Adults (age 65+)	US Census file: QT-P1: Age Groups and Sex 2010	2010	Tellower	
% White % White Non-Hispanic % Black % Hispanic % Asian	US Census Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics	2010	1 IOTAI POPULATION	

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\*\* Those 3rd graders who score in the Partially Proficient level for literacy are considered to be below the state minimum of proficiency.

Source: Newman et al. (2012); tabulations by Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, 2013

# Appendix Table 7 | List of 13 Study Areas and 33 Included Municipalities (alphabetical by Main Municipality)

Main Municipality	Municipality
	Asbury Park City
Achury Dark	Neptune Township
ASDULY PAIK	Ocean Township
	Tinton Falls Borough
Atlantic City	Atlantic City
Allalitic City	Pleasantville City
Camden	Camden City
	Elizabeth City
Elizabeth	Linden City
	Winfield Township
Jorcov City	Bayonne City
Jersey City	Jersey City
	City of Orange Township
Nowork	East Orange City
Newdik	Irvington Township
	Newark City
Now Pruncwick	Franklin Township
New Brunswick	New Brunswick City
	Clifton City
Paterson	Passaic City
	Paterson City
Perth Amboy	Perth Amboy City
Disipfield	North Plainfield Borough
Pidiffieid	Plainfield City
Troptop	Ewing Township
Trenton	Trenton City
	Guttenberg Town
Union	North Bergen Township
Union	Union City
	West New York Town
	Buena Vista Township
Vineland	Millville City
	Vineland City

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#### **Other CSHP Reports for the 13 Study Areas**

Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Opportunities for Better Care and Lower Cost:</u> <u>Data Book on Hospital Utilization and Cost in Camden</u>, January 2013.

Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Opportunities for Better Care and Lower Cost: Data</u> <u>Book on Hospital Utilization and Cost in Greater Newark</u>, January 2013.

Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Opportunities for Better Care and Lower Cost:</u> <u>Data Book on Hospital Utilization and Cost in Trenton</u>, January 2013.

Michael J. Yedidia, Oliver Lontok, Joel C. Cantor. <u>Development of</u> <u>Medicaid Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) in Three New Jersey</u> <u>Communities</u>, July 2013.

Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Hospital Utilization and Costs in Asbury Park City-</u> <u>Neptune Township</u>, March 2013.

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Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Hospital Utilization and Costs in Elizabeth City-Linden City-Winfield Township</u>, March 2013. Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Hospital Utilization and Costs in Jersey City-Bayonne</u> <u>City</u>, March 2013.

Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Hospital Utilization and Costs in New Brunswick</u> <u>City-Franklin Township</u>, March 2013.

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Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Hospital Utilization and Costs in the Union City</u> <u>Area</u>, March 2013.

Sujoy Chakravarty, Joel C. Cantor, Jian Tong, Derek DeLia, Oliver Lontok, Jose Nova. <u>Hospital Utilization and Costs in Vineland City-</u> <u>Millville City</u>, March 2013.

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