



OHS CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARD REPORT OF MILLENNIALS AND THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

AT NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY: MARCH 19, 2019

REPORT WRITTEN BY: KELLY RAY

EVENT OVERVIEW

On March 19, 2019 at the New Haven Free Public Library – The Office of Health Strategy (OHS) Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) organized the Millennials and the Future of Healthcare event to empower young adults to stay up-to-date with reform efforts and share information regarding current healthcare trends. Young adults had the opportunity to learn about health information technology and express their concerns and opinions. The event also opened the door to future interaction between these millennials and the CAB for future input. The event featured two speakers: Victoria Veltri, Executive Director of the Office of Health Strategy, and Dr. David Pearlstone, CEO of DICOM Director. CAB members Kelly Ray and Jason Prignoli then organized small group discussions to dig deeper into a series of questions with event participants.



The event was attended by 28 guests. Attendees had the opportunity to engage in a rich full-group discussion with Dr. David Pearlstone, and then participated in small focus group discussions dedicated to understanding young adult perspectives. CAB members were both a part of these conversations as facilitators and listeners. Young adult attendees came from different backgrounds and while most RSVPed, a few “walk-in” attendees also came to the event after hearing about it at the New Haven Free Public Library.

The event began with registration, a pre-event survey, and complimentary refreshments. Victoria Veltri, the Executive Director of OHS, gave opening remarks at the event. She described the importance of the event and set a welcoming tone for an outstanding session. Next, keynote speaker Dr. David Pearlstone facilitated an interactive discussion around the impact that Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, blockchain, and revolutionary changes in imaging will have on healthcare. Participants had the opportunity to discuss what can be done to effectively augment community outreach strategies and address barriers to healthcare access. For example, participants debated the use of technology as a means to improving healthcare access in low-income neighborhoods. People questioned whether healthcare access issues stem from lack of knowledge about how to use smartphone health apps or unaffordability of mobile devices. While some people believed that low-

income neighborhoods lacked the means to access the technology, others asserted that the real issue is lack of the knowledge and information about how to use existing technology. One participant said that everyone in a low-income neighborhood has a mobile phone so we should leverage that tool to help people with health issues. Participants thought there should be more community education around how to use certain apps on a smartphone to help people manage their health.

After the keynote, the audience was split up into two small discussion circles. Each group was facilitated by at least one CAB member, and notes were taken on flip charts and in notebooks. Each group had the opportunity to engage in an in-depth discussion about how young adults use healthcare, learn about how they can leverage technology and about resources that exist (in order to aid themselves and the people around them), and share insight into their community. Questions covered a broad range of topics including: debriefing Dr. Pearlstone's presentation, the role of technology in healthcare, concerns and uses of the current healthcare system, and what can be done to improve the healthcare system in order to best support young adults. CAB members and participants alike shared personal anecdotes relating to healthcare access and what can be done to improve these experiences. Groups were later adjourned with a quick wrap-up.



Based on the pre-event and post-event survey results, it is clear that the young adults who CAB engaged in the listening session were eager to talk about their healthcare experiences. They also shared what they think can be done to improve healthcare for other young adults. Despite having an eager and diverse population of young adults, there were still some voices missing from the room. For example, the majority of attendees (89%) identified as Christian, and the remaining (11%) identified as "other." Moreover, most young adults in attendance agreed that they "know a lot about healthcare," according to survey

results. However, in the state of Connecticut, there are populations other than Christian, and there are populations that would "strongly disagree" that they know a lot about healthcare. Other groups that were not represented at the event include but are not limited to; Native Indians/Alaskan Natives, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and people without at least some college education.

It is imperative that in future listening sessions, the CAB hears from people with diverse backgrounds and experience levels. Engaging the voices of these historically underrepresented consumers (or non-consumers) will give OHS a better understanding of how to serve these populations. These populations can give the CAB insight into what barriers they face regarding healthcare, and help our state address these barriers. We need to understand whether barriers stem from lack of education, support, finances, or knowledge of resources. Underrepresented populations will be able to speak to their individualized needs in a way that no one else can.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. After transitioning out of pediatric care, many young adults view accessing primary care as inconvenient for their lifestyle.
 - a. Millennials don't want to take the time to wait on the phone to access care, which results in overuse of urgent care as opposed to primary care. Young adults would appreciate the convenience of booking online appointments and question why this service does not exist in Connecticut.
 - b. Young adults would prefer to address healthcare issues and schedule healthcare appointments over the phone rather than in person, since in-person attendance would likely require missing work and causing an inconvenience.
 - c. Telemedicine has potential to help with follow-up care due to its convenience and privacy.
2. Many young adults conduct online "research" into their own medical conditions. Some will "self-diagnose" using services similar to WebMD (a popular website that shares information on various ailments), and most will at least search drugs they have been prescribed in order to understand what they are taking.
3. With regards to dentistry, seeing primarily a hygienist and then a dentist for only a short amount of time makes these interactions with the dentist feel impersonal, as if a patient is a number instead of a human.
4. Young adults do not consider access to their own medical charts online as meaningful, but acknowledge that this access to information is incredibly useful to caregivers.
5. Most young adults would prefer to have comprehensive and easy-to-follow information about how payment relates to services, in order to better enable cost transparency.
6. With regards to sharing and digitizing medical "big data," young adults worry that data is too quick to link correlation to causation.
7. The misconception that underserved people do not have access/use technology is the main reason why they are unaware of the services that they could be using.
 - a. Bringing technology that will promote healthcare literacy into the lives of young adults through trusted networks (barbershops, beauty shops, religious organizations, places of work) will increase the utilization of pre-existing services.
8. The healthcare system should have better methods of tackling issues such as mental illness and substance abuse and should do a better job of making services accessible and user-friendly.
9. Healthcare is too expensive, and young adults feel that there is little incentive for preventative care. Young adults would appreciate if there was more explanation/transparency regarding cost calculation of insurance and other expenses.
10. Since most issues can be resolved with an increase in education, young adults feel as though high school students should be equipped with preventative care strategies.
11. Out-of-the box ways to communicate with target populations (trusted connections) should be used when engaging with young adults as they will be more likely to take the guidance into consideration.

EVENT DETAILS

WHAT WE LEARNED:

Young adults attended the event in order to understand more about the changing world of healthcare today. Young adults also had the opportunity to network with others passionate about healthcare, and were willing to participate in future events with the CAB in order to further the discussion.

A few expressed that based on the flyer, it was unclear as to what they were supposed to walk away with. At the next event, young adults wanted to learn about health insurance and calculation of costs, and about technology and how it can better serve disadvantaged communities and young people.



Many event participants felt as though the event could have been better advertised with social media and word-of-mouth from trusted community organizations. They also mentioned that the pre-survey and post-survey, although both were comprehensive, took too much time to fill out, and could be shortened. A few expressed concerns about how they wished that the event provided more information on how technology can better serve young people while still being cost effective.

Above all else, young adults valued convenience for their busy lifestyles. Many of the Millennials in the room advocated for personalizing care to fit the time-sensitive needs of young people in the workforce. Urgent care often took the place of primary care as it is seemingly inconvenient for young adults to find time to visit a Primary Care Physician (PCP).

Telemedicine would certainly accommodate the busy schedules of young adults, however, young adults are also cost-sensitive. They would like to learn more about the ways in which future technology will impact costs, and if the costs will be proportional to the benefit they gain from using the services or if they will overpay for services that had previously much cheaper. Many young adults expressed that current costs and the billing systems are often incredibly confusing and can be difficult to navigate without an advocate.

Many Millennials acknowledged that they currently serve as (or will become) caregivers, so they want to be empowered through technology in order to help out the people around them. Many caregivers require basic knowledge of the healthcare system and often have to figure it out on their own, but would appreciate the aid of technology.

CHALLENGES ABOUT HEALTHCARE:

The conversation regarding healthcare challenges circulated around three main barriers. The first barrier discussed was cost. Many millennials feel that as young professionals, they don't make enough money to invest



in a health insurance plan. Young adults also feel that if they are not currently experiencing a health issue, then their insurance is unnecessary. Many lack an understanding of what exactly they are paying for since healthcare payments are often confusing and not easily transparent. When visiting the doctor's office, young adults also worry about running into hidden fees and would prefer understanding the price of the service before receiving the care (with exception to situations in which the patient's life is in danger).

The second barrier discussed was education.

Many aspects of healthcare are incredibly difficult to navigate, especially without the help of an advocate or a trusted advisor (usually a friend or family member with a profession in the field of healthcare). Information regarding payments and navigating the exchange is often difficult to understand and break down. Some form of "education" or one-to-one breakdown session should be available to young adults attempting to find care that meets all of their specific needs. Young adults also wish they knew more about preventative care so that they could avoid illness (and costs) altogether. They feel as though this preventative care "education" they lack should be a staple in high school learning.

The third and final barrier to accessing healthcare was a lack of knowledge about how technology can enhance a young consumer's experience with care. Most people have access to technology on a daily basis, yet they still lack awareness of the available resources. By providing better (more user-friendly) applications and instructions on how to access them (in every language so that they are available to the majority of consumers), young adults will be able to make more educated and sustainable decisions regarding their care.

CAB FEEDBACK:

CAB members noted the event was a success. Although the sample size of young adults was small, many diverse perspectives were in attendance and allowed for an honest, productive and thorough conversation. The discussion was further propelled by "walk-in" attendees, who played an active role in the conversations which proved that young adults are motivated and ready to speak their minds. The CAB simply needs to outreach to them.

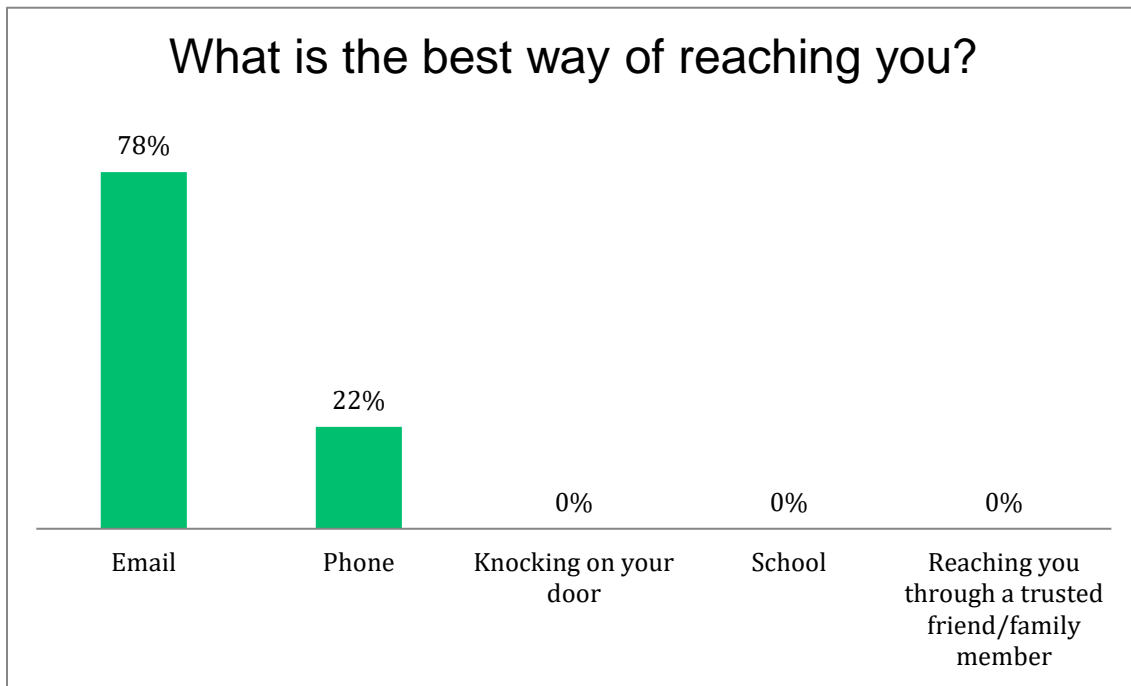
One CAB Member commented: “Really great discussions and folks [are] excited about another event next year!” Another said, “Having Laura Morris and Vicki Veltri [from Office of Health Strategy] with us meant so much and Vicki’s remarks got the discussions going on such a positive note.” The event was also described as “very well executed, very well done” and the “audience was energetic and engaged.”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Young adults wished that healthcare was more affordable and easier to access and navigate. By combining these ideas, millennials will be able to find/create the best plan for their individual needs. Specifically, young adults mentioned the following strategies for improvement:

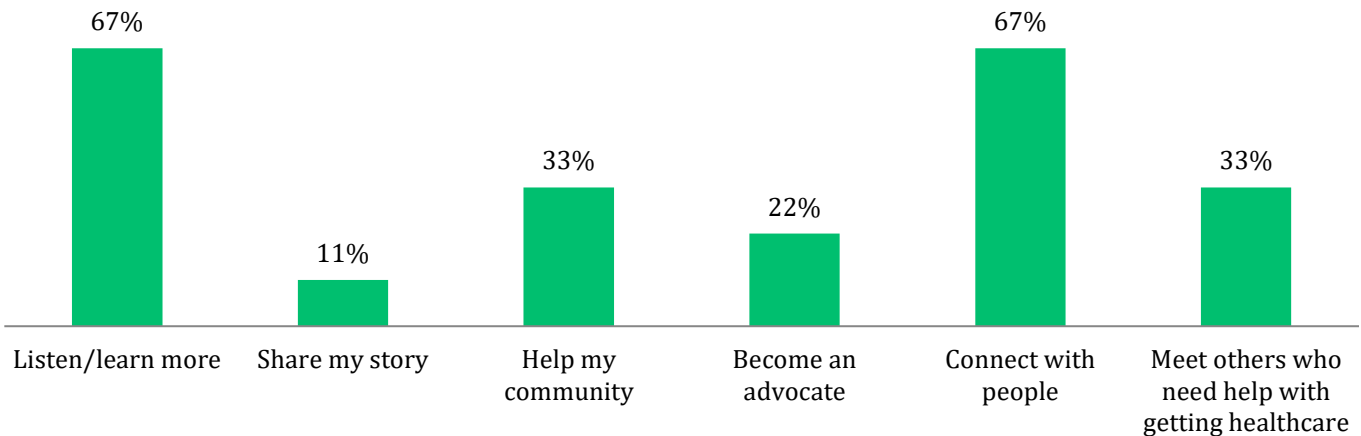
- Having trusted community organizations host a professional/expert in order to help young adults navigate the exchange. (For example, a library could offer a service where consumers could drop in and meet with professionals in order to help select the best plan for their needs.)
- Help underserved populations use technology to strengthen their connection to the healthcare system instead of assuming they don’t have access (or, in the instance that they do not have access – find ways to provide them with the technology even if it is only temporary).
- Cost transparency in the doctor’s office and emergency rooms (get rid of the fear of hidden fees)
- Teach preventative care/strategies in high school (incorporate it into the curriculum)
- Explain how technology can be used cost effectively to support millennials better than it has in the past
- Hear from a few populations that we did not hear from in this event (ex. religious organizations, people without college educations, certain racial/ethnic groups)
- Make addiction services free/cheap
- Offer incentives for preventive care (give away coupons for healthy groceries). Provide better incentives such as savings towards premiums or discounted fees for healthcare services for young people who actively get well, engage in preventative care visits, and stay active and healthy.
- Get inside the communities to find the leaders to drive change. For example, religious leaders are very powerful in communities and getting them on board is very important because people will listen to them. Social workers can be important also. Church youth pastors, who are members of the community can be great partners to bring healthcare information to youth/young adults. Think of out-of-the box ways to connect to youth young adults, especially youth fresh out of juvenile detention and their guardians most of whom are single mothers. Again, barber shops/beauty shops can be great partners.
- Expand Medicaid to give more access to young people, most of whom are “working poor.”

PRE SURVEY FEEDBACK



YOUR INTERESTS Would you be able to go to/be a part of: (Check all that apply)		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Online forums	55.56%	5
In person focus groups	44.44%	4
Social Media campaigns	55.56%	5
Community Education events	44.44%	4
Other (please specify)		0
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0

If you attend a forum/focus group/community discussion about healthcare, what do you want to get out of it?

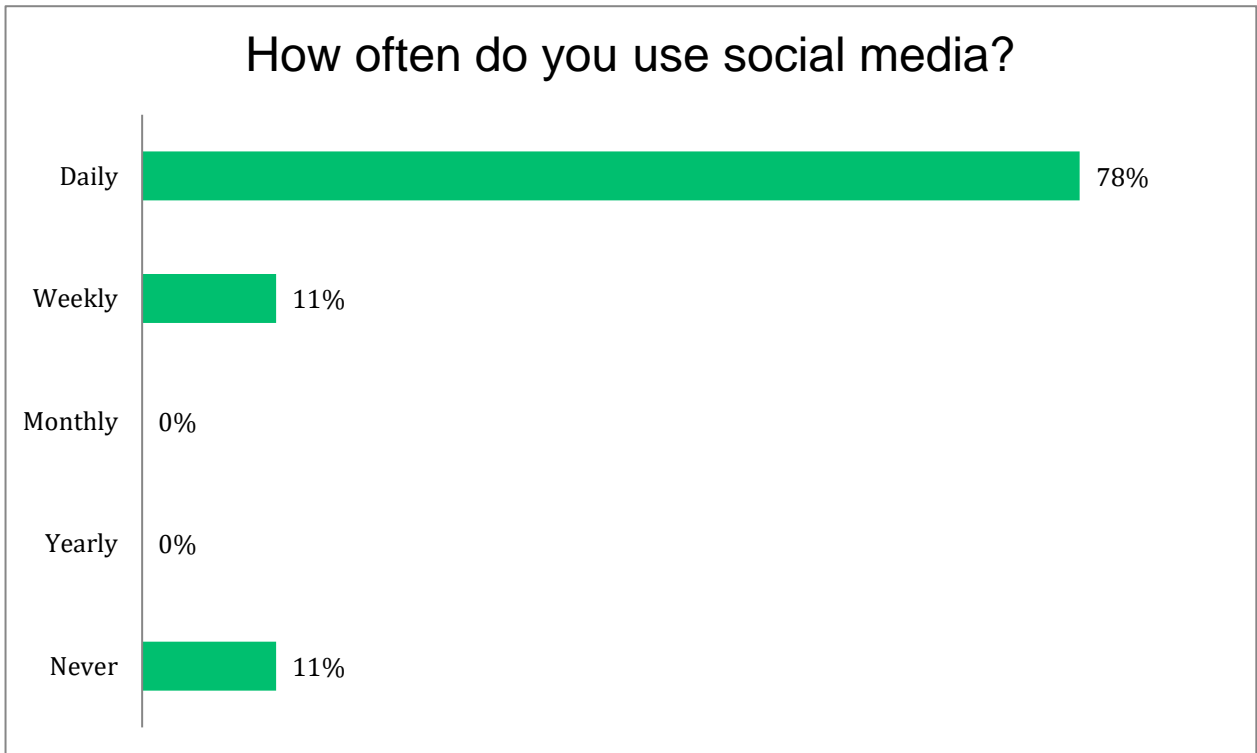


SOCIAL MEDIA: What do you use the most to talk to people on your computer or smartphone? (Mark one)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Facebook	75.00%	6
Twitter	0.00%	0
Instagram	25.00%	2
Google +	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)		0
	Answered	8
	Skipped	1

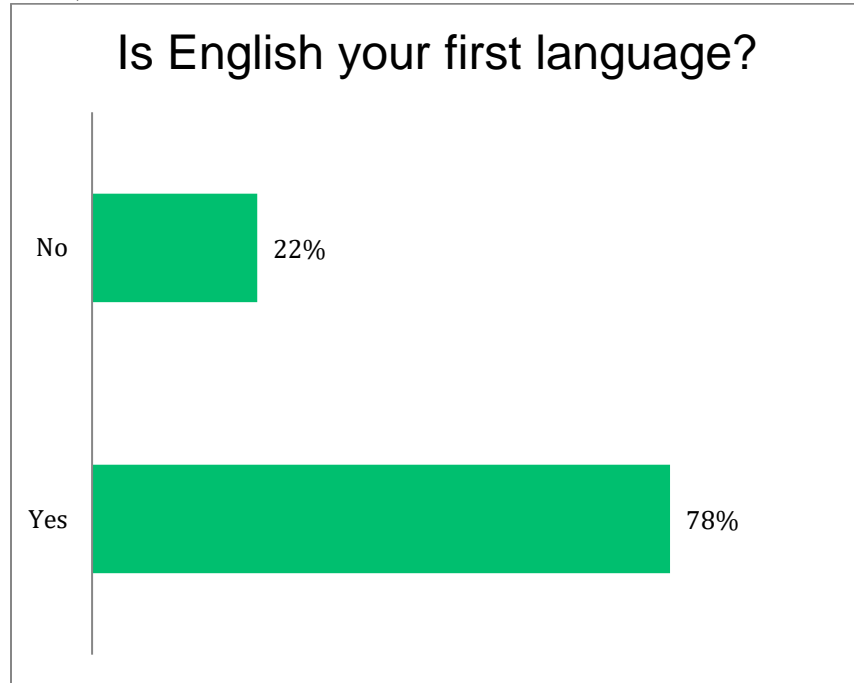
What would you most likely use to learn about or talk about healthcare? (Mark one)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Facebook	83.33%	5
Twitter	0.00%	0
Instagram	0.00%	0
Google +	16.67%	1
Other (please specify)		3
	Answered	6
	Skipped	3



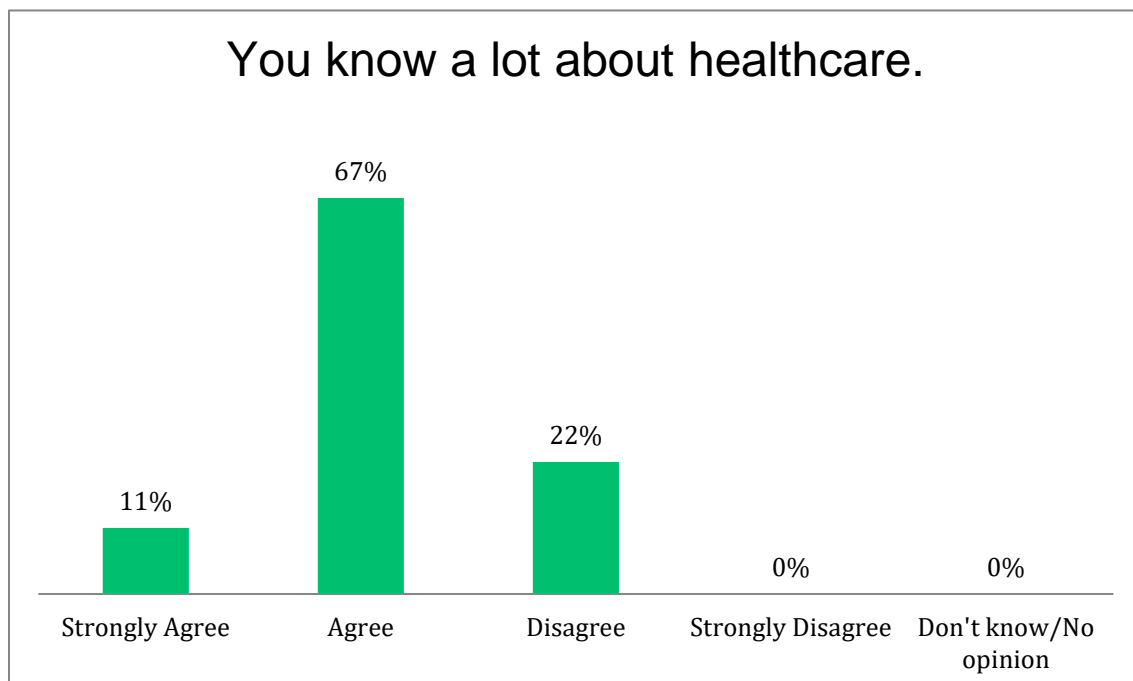
YOUR HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE: Do you currently have health insurance?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	88.89%	8
No	11.11%	1
Don't know	0.00%	0
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0

Do you have a relationship with your primary care provider?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	50.00%	4
No	50.00%	4
	Answered	8
	Skipped	1



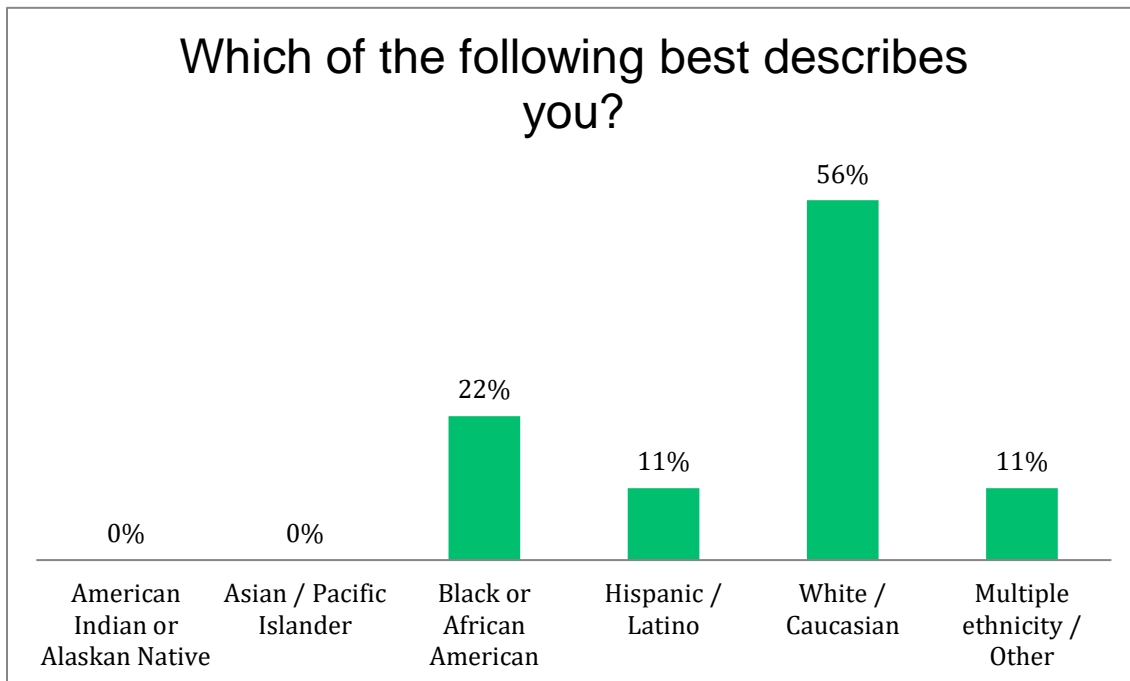
Have you ever used an interpreter for medical appointments?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	25.00%	2
No	75.00%	6
Don't know	0.00%	0
	Answered	8
	Skipped	1

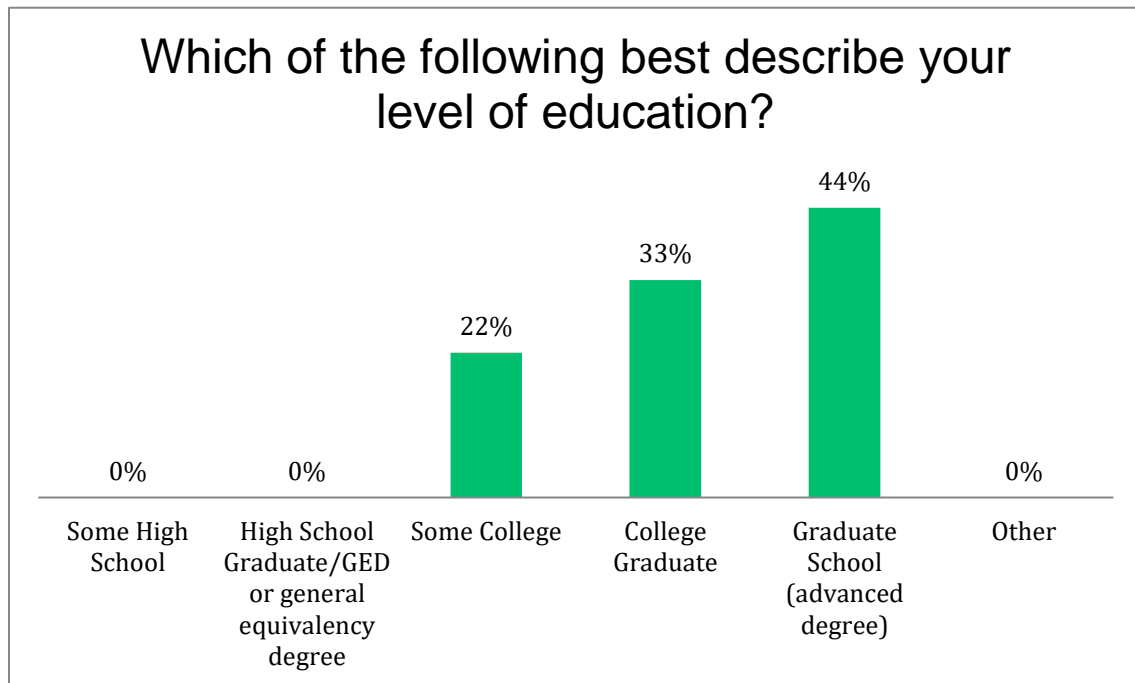


You are comfortable when visiting the doctor's office.		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	22.22%	2
Agree	66.67%	6
Disagree	11.11%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Don't know/No opinion	0.00%	0
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0

Gender:		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	66.67%	6
Male	33.33%	3
Other (please specify)		0
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0



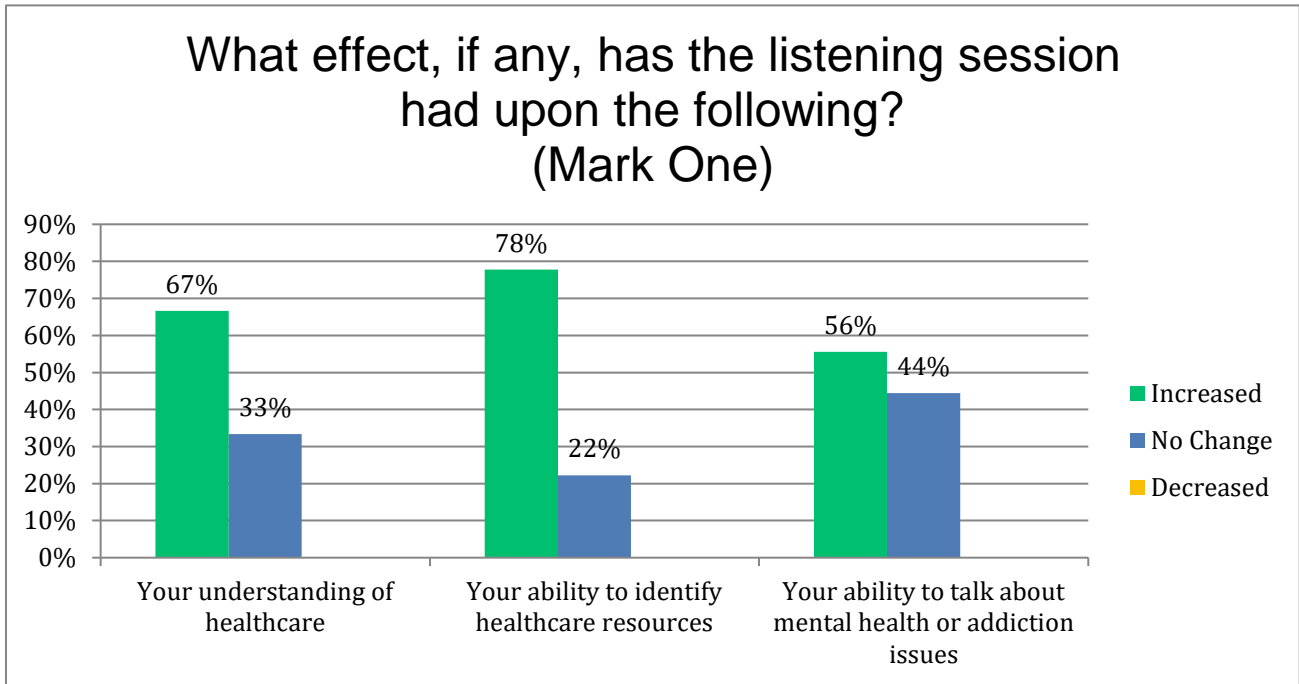
Do you identify with any of the following religions? (Please check all that apply)		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Christianity	88.89%	8
Hinduism	0.00%	0
Judaism	0.00%	0
Inter/Non-denominational	0.00%	0
Islam	0.00%	0
Buddhism	0.00%	0
No religion	0.00%	0
Other	11.11%	1
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0



What is your age		
Answer Choices	Responses	
18-26	11.11%	1
27-34	44.44%	4
35-44	22.22%	2
45-54	22.22%	2
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0

Do you think your religion affects how you view healthcare?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	44.44%	4
No	44.44%	4
Don't know	11.11%	1
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0

POST SURVEY FEEDBACK



The issues discussed were easy to understand		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	44.44%	4
Agree	44.44%	4
Disagree	11.11%	1
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Don't know/No opinion	0.00%	0
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0

Overall I would rate the Community Conversation as...		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
Good	22.22%	2
Very good	77.78%	7
	Answered	9
	Skipped	0

