

1. Community Summary

For the purposes of this Assessment, the Joplin Community is made up of Jasper, Newton and Vernon counties in Missouri, Ottawa county in Oklahoma, and Crawford, Cherokee and Labette counties in Kansas.

Jasper County

Joplin, Missouri

Straddling the border of Jasper and Newton Counties, Joplin is a commercial, medical, and cultural hub. The city offers quality of life amenities rare in a city of 50,150, providing services for a daytime population estimated at 250,000. Located just a short distance from the Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas borders, Joplin draws in thousands of individuals from neighboring communities who shop and work here as well enjoy all that Joplin has to offer. The industry in this rapidly growing region is supported by a diverse economy. As a regional provider of medical services, Joplin employs more than 5,000 people in healthcare. Joplin is also considered the “Crossroads of America” due to the trucking industry being another major employer.¹ Joplin is home to two 4-year colleges, Missouri Southern State University and Ozark Christian College. In 2017, the Kansas City University School of Medicine will open its doors to the first class of medical students. Points of interest in Joplin include the Joplin Blasters Independent Professional Baseball team, Spiva Center for the Arts, Wildcat Glades & Audubon Center, Route 66 attractions, Joplin Museum Complex, and the Schifferdecker Aquatic Park.

Carthage, Missouri

The seat of Jasper County, also known as America’s Maple Leaf City, Carthage, Missouri provides inspiration through its history, art, and architecture. Founded in 1842, the town has a rich history as a result of its role in the Civil War. In 1861, Carthage was burned to the ground in the Battle of Carthage, the first full-scale land battle of the American Civil War.² The town was later reconstructed during the Victorian era, now giving the town a charming atmosphere as one views its architectural wonders. A diverse and booming economic profile was created with the tri-state mining boom of

¹ Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.joplincc.com/community/>

² <http://www.americancivilwarstory.com/battle-of-carthage.html>

the late 1800s and early 20th century. To pay tribute to their heritage, Carthaginians celebrate through events such as Independence Day, Marian Days, Maple Leaf Festival, various Christmas events, and through visits to historic districts, Precious Moments, Route 66, and Civil War sites.³

Newton County

Neosho, Missouri

Neosho, whose name comes from the Native American meaning “clear, cold water,” is the largest city in Newton County and serves as the county seat. The city is known for its natural freshwater springs that were ideal for its original settlers, giving it the nickname “City of Springs.” Neosho has served as an agricultural hub since 1888 and houses the oldest operating fish hatchery: the Neosho National Fish Hatchery. Neosho is also the home of inventor and botanist George Washington Carver, artist Thomas Hart Benton, and ragtime pianist James Scott.^{4,5} The city continues to grow and revitalize to improve the quality of life in the area.

Barton County

Lamar, Missouri

Lamar, the seat of Barton County, prides itself as being “an industrious Midwestern city poised on the verge of tremendous growth yet with a small town heart and atmosphere.” At the center of the best agricultural county in Missouri, you will find farms, parks, and prairies. Lamar is also the first town where Wyatt Earp worked as a constable and the birthplace of President Harry S Truman. Attractions include one of the last drive-in movie theaters, the Lamar Free Fair, Truman Birthplace and Truman Day Celebration, and Heritage Days.⁶

Vernon County

Nevada, Missouri

Nevada, originally known as Nevada City until 1869 when the city was rebuilt after the Civil War, is the seat of Vernon County. Greatly touched by the Civil War, Nevada City was known as the capital for “Bushwhackers” and later the site of a hideout to Frank and Jesse James. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Nevada’s economy began to boom with the installment of the Katy and Missouri Pacific Railroads. State

³ <http://visit-carthage.com/>

⁴ <http://www.countryhomesofmissouri.com/city/detail/?id=18510>

⁵ <http://neoshocc.com/community/history/>

⁶ http://www.cityoflamar.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=145

Mental Hospital No. 3 and Cottey College also contributed to the city’s growth.⁷ Nevada was chosen by 417 Magazine as a “Top Ten Best Community to Live” based on its green space amenities.⁸

Ottawa County

Miami, Oklahoma

The county seat of Ottawa County, Miami joined the Joplin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in April 2013. The city’s population of 13,570 includes representation of several Native American tribes: Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma, Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma, Peoria Tribe of Indians, and Shawnee Tribe.

Crawford County

Pittsburg, Kansas

Established in 1876, Pittsburg, Kansas is the largest city in Southeast Kansas. A history in coal mining, railroad, and manufacturing has contributed to the economic growth of the city.⁹ Pittsburg is home to Pittsburg State University, a 223-acre campus with the state-of-the-art Kansas Technology Center. Points of interest include: Crawford County Historical Museum, Miners’ Memorial & Immigrant Park, Pittsburg Aquatic Center, and Meadowbrook Mall and Meadowbrook Commons.¹⁰

Cherokee County

Columbus, Kansas

Columbus, Kansas serves as the county seat of Cherokee County. Columbus was first settled in 1868 and became the intersection of the Saint Louis and San Francisco railroad and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas railroads. Mining of coal, lead, and zinc as well as trade in agricultural products has supplied the area with business and work even to this day.¹¹ Two schools are found in Columbus: the Unified School District 493 and Coffeyville Community College’s Columbus Technical Campus.

⁷ http://www.nevada-mo.com/page/10354_2

⁸ http://www.nevada-mo.com/page/10339_2

⁹ <http://www.pittsburgareachamber.com/Community/CommunityProfiles.aspx>

¹⁰ <http://www.pittks.org/index.aspx?nid=396>

¹¹ <http://www.columbuscityhall.com/category/index.php?categoryid=9>

Labette County

Oswego, Kansas

Oswego, Kansas, the county seat of Labette County, has a unique and rich history that reaches far into the past. Oswego prides itself on their “hidden gem”, Historical Riverside Park, over 80 acres on a bluff overlooking the Neosho River Valley. Opportunities for events and recreational outings can be found by visiting Oswego’s Municipal Airport, Golf Course, Claythorne Lodge, community center, and Labette County Fairgrounds.¹²

Ozarks Health Commission

Recognizing the value of assessing and acting together on local health issues, key players from local hospital systems, public health entities, behavioral health systems and others formed a working group to begin the task of a regional health assessment.

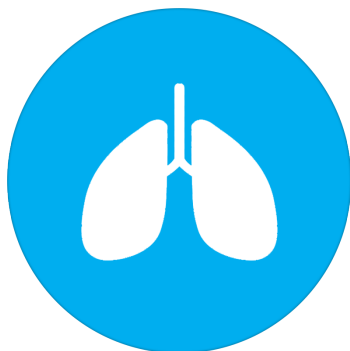
This group grew under the umbrella of the local Ozarks Health Commission (OHC). This first-time collaboration of this size in the area spans four states—Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas—51 counties and four hospital systems. This footprint will be referred to throughout the report as the OHC Region, a map of which can be found in the Executive Summary.

This assessment, along with the resulting implementation plan, will allow decision-makers to have a more holistic and up-to-date picture with which to strategically address community health concerns in their own jurisdictions. This report outlines priorities and data for the Joplin Community—all other Communities’ reports can be found at ozarkshealthcommission.org.

¹² http://www.oswegokansas.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1:oswego-home-page&catid=3:information

Primary Health Needs Identified

After careful analysis of the community health data, multiple health needs were identified and the following priorities were selected:



Lung Disease

Lung disease continues to impact the health and wellness of too many in our community.



Cardiovascular Disease

As a leading cause of death, cardiovascular disease is wreaking havoc on our community.



Mental Health

Mental health issues are a result of a multitude of factors and cause a magnitude of negative effects to our community.



Cancer

Cancer is a chronic health condition that continues to affect many citizens of the Joplin Community in a variety of forms.



Diabetes

In our community, diabetes is a health issue that causes serious health complications including heart disease and kidney failure.

Common Threads

Throughout this assessment, common threads often emerged in discussion around data and findings. While not explicitly identified as priority health issues, the Ozarks Health Commission recognizes the importance of highlighting the impact of these common threads on the health issues in the report.

In studying these common threads, the Ozarks Health Commission used the Socioecological Model¹³ as a framework to examine the impact on health issues. The Socioecological Model recognizes a wide range of factors working together to impact health and includes influences at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy levels. Each of these common threads can impact health issues at levels throughout the model, and as such, community partners targeting to affect the common threads should consider action throughout the spectrum of the model.

Throughout the common threads section, the Socioecological Model will be referenced to suggest possible strategies and provide context.

¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

Socioecological Model¹⁴



Access to Appropriate Care

The understanding of and the ability to access appropriate care and treatment is critical to improve and maintain quality of life while reducing the burden of disease.

Accessing healthcare has always been a struggle within our country, and has long been recognized as an issue, especially for vulnerable populations. Out of this need, safety net providers, such as Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics, have arisen. Additionally, various federal and state programs have been implemented and changed to provide increased access to care: most notably Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. Despite numerous efforts, access to appropriate health care remains a concern for many. Currently, 20.8% of Americans do not have adequate access to healthcare services. The OHC Region also faces challenges to accessing care, with 25.2%, an estimated 576,000 people, without health insurance. Those without care face obvious health challenges since they are not as able to adequately treat acute

¹⁴ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/prevention-chronic-care/resources/clinical-community-relationships-measures-atlas/ccrm-atlas3.html>

issues or chronic diseases, resulting in further exacerbation of the condition, reducing quality of life and resulting in early death.¹⁵

Accessing care can be a multi-faceted and complex challenge that spans all diseases and conditions and is closely connected with each of the seven assessed health issues. Examining some of the community health data more closely, there is concerning data within the OHC Region. The rate of preventable hospital events that are considered to be ambulatory care sensitive in the OHC Region is 67.7 per 1,000 Medicare enrollees, compared with a national rate of 59.2. There are fewer care physicians in the OHC Region: 63.6 per 100,000, compared to the nation's rate of 74.5. Most alarming is the percent of people living in a designated Health Professional Shortage Area, which is 60.5%, compared to 34.1% of the national population. This concern is further supported by the community survey and focus groups that were conducted. The survey demonstrated many individuals face challenges with accessing care and the cost of health care, which suggests a challenge with being uninsured or underinsured. Of the nine community focus groups, access to care was identified as one of the emergent themes in five of the Communities.

The effect of a lack of access results in significant cost to both the individuals and communities. A 2014, Kaiser Family Foundation Report sums up the impact: "In 2013, the cost of 'uncompensated care' provided to uninsured individuals was \$84.9 billion. Uncompensated care includes health care services without a direct source of payment. In addition, people who are uninsured paid an additional \$25.8 billion out-of-pocket for their care."¹⁶ Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, one of the four states within the assessment, Arkansas, has expanded Medicaid. In the first few years, 275,000 estimated people now have insurance coverage, reducing the uninsured rate by 49%.¹⁷ The other three states, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma have not expanded Medicaid, leaving thousands without viable options for health insurance. With a Medicaid expansion, Kansas would provide coverage to an estimated additional 200,000 individuals, Missouri to 452,000 individuals and Oklahoma to 348,000.¹⁸ By expanding coverage, people have the ability to not delay treatment and prevent or mitigate the effects of disease through treatment.

While having access to care is vital to improving treatment and health for people, accessing appropriate care is equally important. This certainly includes ensuring individuals have a plan to cover the cost of care and making sure that there is

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Access-to-Health-Services>

¹⁶ Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://kff.org/uninsured/report/uncompensated-care-for-the-uninsured-in-2013-a-detailed-examination/>

¹⁷ Health Insurance.org, <https://www.healthinsurance.org/medicaid/>

¹⁸ Health Insurance.org, <https://www.healthinsurance.org/medicaid/>

appropriate provider coverage in communities; however, another important component is changing the culture to access care appropriately. Too many times individuals are using the emergency department for non-emergent issues, as is shown in the primary hospital data. While everyone can use the emergency department for non-emergent issues, the emergency departments are the least efficient and effective treatment options because the facility and staff are designed to treat emergent health needs.

Improving access to appropriate care will require changes at multiple levels of influence, including individual, community, organizational and policy levels, as indicated by the Socioecological Model. Efforts to address each assessed health issue should a) focus on improving the systems around the individual to improve health and access to appropriate care, and b) work to modify the way that individuals consume health services to ensure care is effective and efficient.



Social Determinants of Health

The interconnectedness of health, education, economic viability, housing and quality of life impact an individual, family and community's ability to thrive.

Throughout the world, our country and in our own communities, factors exist that affect the ability of people to live a life that provides the best opportunity to be healthy. Health, as defined by the World Health Organization, can be considered a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. In considering the interconnectedness of the multitude of factors that affect health for people, social determinants of health are often described. The Institute of Medicine suggests the following description for:

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Improvements in population health may be achieved by assessing, understanding and addressing root causes of poor health which can often be traced to include the social determinants of health. This assessment analyzed the following social determinants of health:

- Unemployment

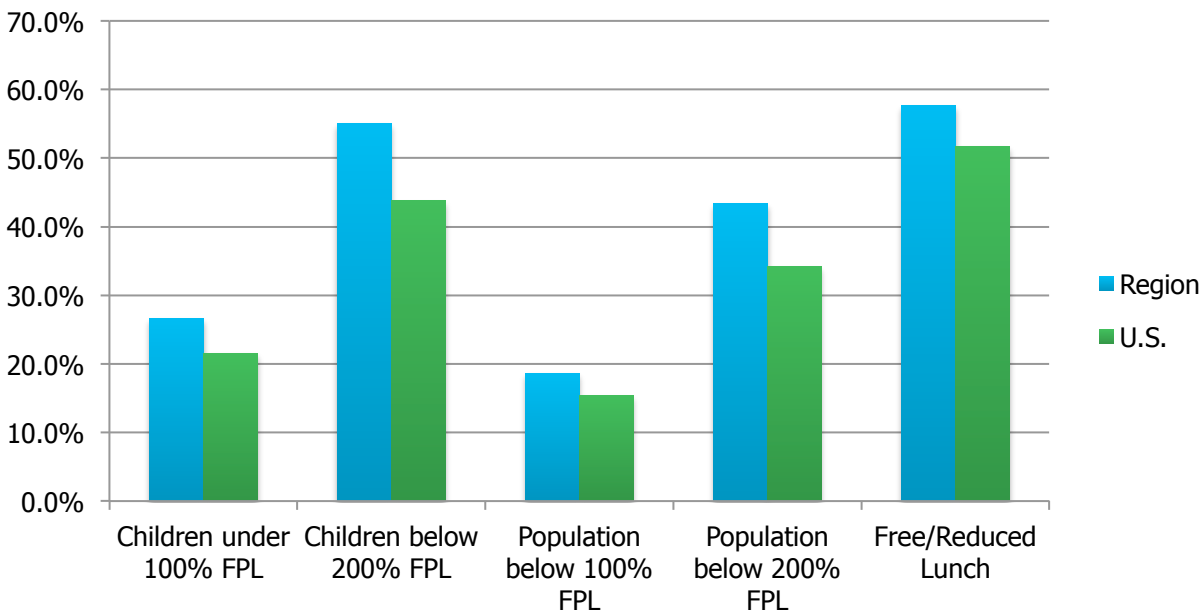
¹⁹ Gornick, Marian E., "Disparities in Health Care: Methods for Studying the Effects of Race, Ethnicity, and SES on Access, Use, and Quality of health care", <http://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Activity%20Files/Quality/NHDRGuidance/DisparitiesGornick.pdf>

- Income level
- Poverty rate
- Population receiving SNAP benefits
- Population on Medicaid
- Free and reduced lunch rate
- Education level

Although there are other factors that affect health, these are some of the most widely used and accepted indicators of determining the health of a person. Achieving a state of health and desired quality of life requires economic stability, social and community connection, safe living arrangements, access to quality and appropriate health care and much more. Just like many aspects of life that deal with resource availability, a good state of health is often associated with more readily available resources. Poor health or a lack of health affects each and every one of us by way of personal associations and community health achievement, which ultimately affects our individual and community ability to thrive.

A good example of this is the employment sector. Employers struggle with recruiting and retaining individuals to work decent-waged jobs in some scenarios because potential employees struggle with unreliable transportation or health concerns caused by poor living conditions or lack of access to healthy foods. Communities can struggle to attract businesses that pay good wages and offer good jobs because employers do not want to reside in a place where the population is burdened by higher-than-average prevalence of poor health indicators such as high rates of tobacco usage, obesity, heart disease and lung disease. Businesses are attracted to communities where neighborhoods thrive, educational attainment is high and employees are healthy and thriving—and therefore not a threat to the bottom line due to high health care costs as a result of preventable illness. The unemployment rate across the OHC Region (5.4%) varies by county, from 4.2% in Washington County, AR to 8.7% in Taney County, MO.

In addition to employment, the OHC Region struggles with a number of other indicators used to describe social determinants of health. As indicated by the chart below, poverty is higher in the OHC Region than across the U.S. Not shown in the chart, but worth noting, is that 27.9% of families earn more than \$75,000 per year, which is much lower than the country (42.8%). Also, of those 25 years of age and older, 15.3% in the OHC Region have not received a high school diploma or equivalent, which is higher than the U.S. (14.0%).



Social determinants of health tell us a story about the way that people live and, by extension, how their lives affect the community. Ultimately, where we live, where we work and our educational attainment level have huge impacts on the quality and length of our lives. Communities that consider the health impacts of policy decisions can make a positive impact on the social determinants of health.



Tobacco Use

High prevalence in tobacco use results in some of the biggest health concerns related to lung disease, cardiovascular disease and mental health. Interventions need to range from individual behavior change to policy change.

Awareness regarding the ill-health effects of tobacco use has grown significantly since the Surgeon General’s Report on Smoking and Health published in 1964. The report laid the foundation for tobacco control efforts in the United States. However, as the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, there is still a great deal of work to be done.

According to the most recent Surgeon General’s report published in 2014, smoking causes 87% of all lung cancer deaths, 32% of deaths due to coronary heart disease, and is responsible for 79% of all cases of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Nationally, 18% of adults are tobacco users. Within the OHC Region, 23% of residents

use tobacco. Additionally, the prevalence in each of the nine communities identified in this report is higher than the national average. Therefore, in order to reduce the threat of death and poor quality of life among residents in the OHC Region, it is imperative that efforts are taken to reduce tobacco use.

While the evidence reveals that tobacco use can lead to complex physiological health issues, it can also complicate existing health issues. Those dealing with mental illness may smoke to curtail the severity of their mental health symptoms. According to the most recently published Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) vital sign report on smoking among adults with mental illness, 36% of adults with mental illness were current smokers, which is much higher than those without a mental illness (21%). Additionally, 48% of people with a mental illness living below the poverty level smoke cigarettes²⁰.

Although data does not currently exist for the OHC Region regarding tobacco use among adults with mental illness, it is safe to assume that smoking in this population is significantly high considering the high rates of depression (17.5% compared to 15.5% nationally) and poverty (18.6% compared to 15% nationally) in the region. People with mental illness may not have access to tobacco cessation services and may smoke more frequently than the general population. Therefore, it is important to monitor tobacco use across all subpopulations, and use evidence-based interventions at multiple levels of influence.

According to the Socioecological Model, there are multiple levels of influence that affect a person's behavior. The levels of influence include individual, interpersonal, organizational, community and public policy. Interventions targeting the individual level include raising awareness about the harms of first, second and third-hand smoke, providing tobacco cessation classes and offering various modes of counseling to stay tobacco-free. Tobacco cessation classes may also serve as an interpersonal intervention because of the social support offered in a group setting. Organizational interventions may include tobacco-free workplace policies, as well as insurance companies increasing rates for tobacco users. At the community level, successful strategies include changing cultural norms through high-powered, cohesive and consistent media campaigns. Finally, policy-level interventions have the greatest impact. Policy advocacy at the local, states and national levels may include increasing tobacco tax, improving warning labels on tobacco products, implementing indoor air ordinances, regulating smoking in schools and implementing comprehensive tobacco control programs.

²⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6205a2.htm?s_cid=mm6205a2_w



Physical Activity and Nutrition

Good nutrition, regular physical activity and a healthy body size are important in maintaining health and well-being and for preventing health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.

Obesity continues to be a growing issue for the physical and economic health of our nation. The CDC reports that obesity rates in America have increased from 35% in 2011-2012 to 38% in 2013-2014. Currently, 27.1% of adults are obese, nationally. Within the OHC Region, 31.8% of adults are obese. The ramifications for this can be severe. Obesity contributes to the exacerbation of many chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. According to the CDC, chronic diseases are responsible for 7 out of 10 deaths each year and accounts for 86% of our nation's health care costs. The trending increase can be attributed to the American lifestyle, with most Americans eating more and moving less.

Regular physical activity improves overall health and well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases and obesity. More than 80% of adults and adolescents do not meet the guidelines for physical activity. People who are physically active tend to live longer and have lower risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression and cancer. Physical activity can also help with weight control, and inactive adults have a higher risk for premature death.

Poor diets are not only a risk factor for obesity, but for other chronic diseases as well. For example, diets high in added sugar lead to health issues such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. High dietary fat intake is a risk factor for the development of high blood lipid levels, and high dietary salt intake is a risk factor for the development of high blood pressure. In turn, high blood lipid levels and high blood pressure are significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases. Fewer than 1 in 3 adults, and an even lower proportion of adolescents, eat the recommended amount of vegetables each day.

As the Socioecological Model describes, there are multiple levels of influence that affect a person's behavior. Interventions targeting the individual level include raising awareness about the harms of obesity, proper nutrition and the importance of regular physical activity. Exercise and nutrition classes may also serve as an interpersonal intervention because of the social support offered in a group setting. Organizational interventions may include healthy food policies, such as vending machine policies. At

the community level, successful strategies include changing cultural norms through a pedestrian-friendly community that encourages walking and biking to essential resources and addressing food access concerns. Finally, policy level interventions have the greatest impact. Policy advocacy at the local, states and national levels may include increasing sugary beverage tax, nutrition labeling, regulating food advertisement, regulating nutrition and physical activity policies in schools and implementing complete streets ordinances or bicycle and pedestrian friendly policies.



Mental Health

Mental health is inextricably linked to physical health. Poor mental health can have an impact on behaviors that result in poor physical health.

The linkages between mental health conditions and physical health are still not totally understood. It is tempting to make clear distinctions between the body and the mind, but evidence continues to emerge that we should not ignore this interconnectedness and that we must acknowledge that the two cannot be thought of as separate. We must also acknowledge that there is not a simple model that explains this relationship. Metaphorically, we cannot answer which comes first, the chicken or the egg. Poor physical health can lead to poor mental health. Conversely, poor mental health can contribute to behaviors that increase one's risk for chronic health conditions.

Mental health is a common thread in many chronic health conditions. Depression has been linked to higher rates of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Additionally, persons with depression tend to engage in more risk behaviors for these diseases—such as smoking, poor diet or lack of exercise—than persons without depression.²¹ A 2006 study suggests that 80% of those diagnosed with schizophrenia use tobacco products.²² A growing body of evidence suggests that the lack of social connectedness, particularly in older adults, contributes to poor health outcomes.

While the relationship between mental health and physical health is becoming clearer, those connections remain murky and solutions to treating the mind and body together remain elusive. But what is becoming clear is that we can no longer largely rely on providing treatment for mental health issues through our emergency departments and our criminal justice system. Mental health issues need to be addressed before crisis is

²¹ Katon WJ., "Clinical and health services relationships between major depression, depressive symptoms, and general medical illness", <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12893098>

²² Keltner, Norman L.; Grant, Joan S., Perspectives in Psychiatric Care - "Smoke, Smoke, Smoke That Cigarette", <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1744-6163.2006.00085.x/abstract>

reached. Community leaders need to evaluate the causes of mental illness and take preventive measures to ensure that people live in an environment that contributes to stability of body and mind.