



Rural Health Scholars Martha's Vineyard Population & Community Health Clerkship 2021

Read Allen

Brian Nickley

Gianna DiPinto

Elisa Rocha

Danielle Heims-Waldron

David Runyan

Erin Johnson

Sabine Shaughnessy

Identifying Education and Training Needs Within The Youth Population on Martha's Vineyard

Researched by University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School

Sponsored by Duke's County Health Council

Hosted by ACE MV



Presentation Outline

- I. Background on Martha's Vineyard
- II. Study Methods and Population
- III. Identified Areas of Focus
- IV. Recommendations
- V. Next Steps & Acknowledgements

Who are the Rural Health Scholars?

UMass Chan Medical School: Graduate Nursing & Medical Students



Read Allen



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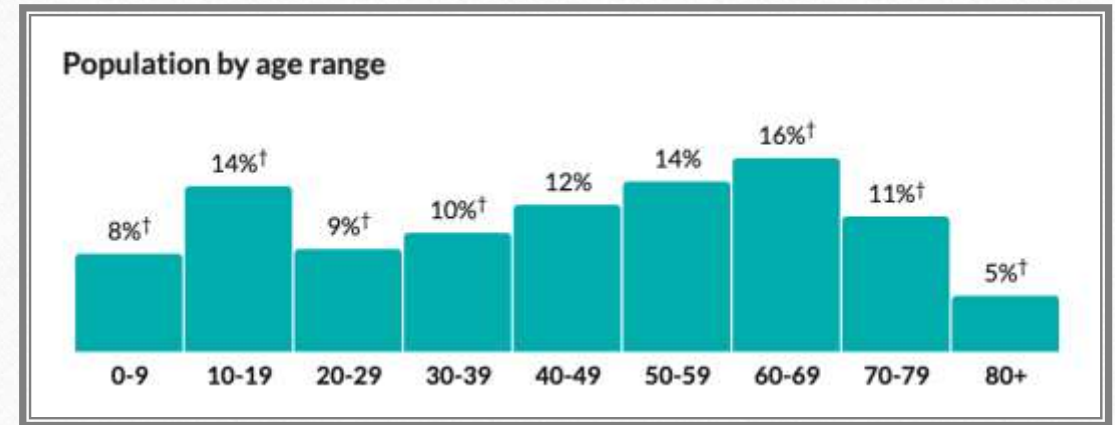
Sabine Shaughnessy



Erin Johnson

Background on Martha's Vineyard: General Population

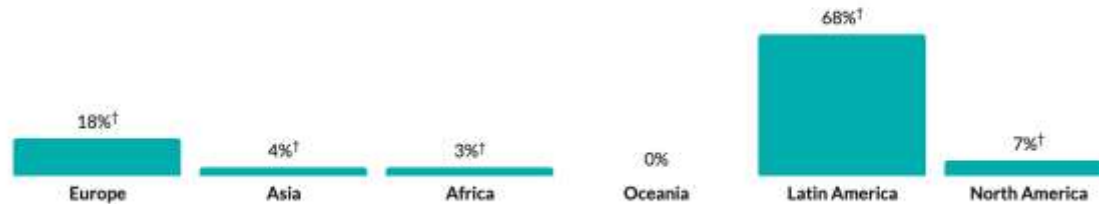
- Population 2010: 16,535
- Population 2019: 17,263
- Population 2020: 20,600
- 24.6% increase since 2010
 - Aquinnah 42%
 - Chilmark 40%
 - West Tisbury 30%
 - Tisbury 22%
 - Edgartown 27%
 - Oak Bluffs 18
- 300 Wampanoag tribal member island residents
- **Median age 20 percent higher** than Massachusetts: 39.5



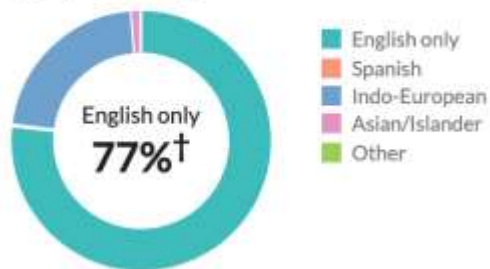
2019 Census Data

Background on Martha's Vineyard: Foreign Born Population

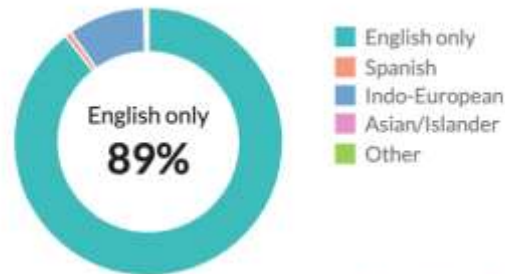
Place of birth for foreign-born population



Language at home, children 5-17



Language at home, adults 18+



2019 Census Data

11.1% of total population is foreign born

16.8% total MA population foreign born

20% of total population is Brazilian

Portuguese is considered 2nd language in MV

27% increase Brazilian population in MA
between 2008 and 2017

Background on Martha's Vineyard: Housing

2010

2020

17,118 houses available

2% increase
→
+ 417

17,535 houses available

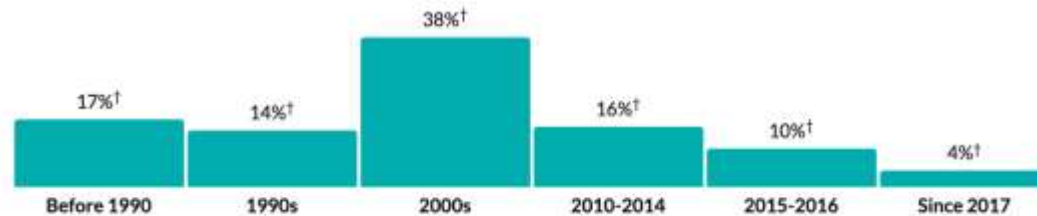
Population of 17,530

20% increase
→
+ 3,070

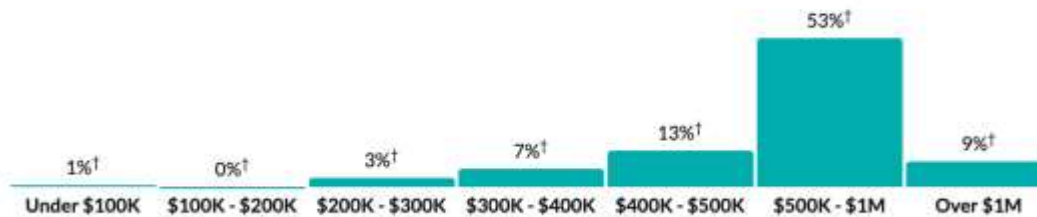
Population of 20,600

Background on Martha's Vineyard: Housing

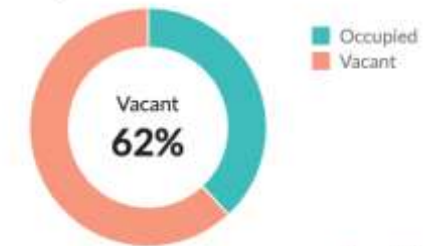
Year moved in, by percentage of population



Value of owner-occupied housing units



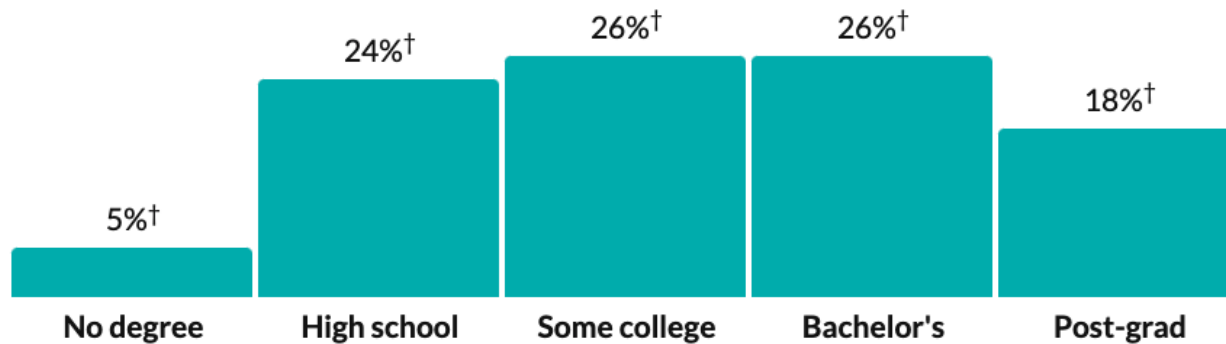
Occupied vs. Vacant



- Median Housing price:
 - 2018: \$737,500
 - 2019: \$807,000
 - Oct. 2020: \$927,835
 - Nov. 2020: \$1.2M

Background on Martha's Vineyard: Education

Population by highest level of education



25 or older, 2019 Census Data

Educational Attainment:

- 94.9% high school degree or higher
- 44.9% bachelor's degree or higher

(Slightly higher than MA average)

Study Questions

1. In what ways do the social, health, environmental, educational, and occupational landscapes of Martha's Vineyard relate to the how young people [high school non completers (16+), college non completers (18+), and new arrivals to the Island from Brazil or other countries (16-26)] are experiencing life on MV?
2. In what ways might the MV community better support and promote young persons':
 - Overall wellbeing
 - Educational and occupational training or skill development in areas of interest
 - Developmental and relational assets

Who is the Target Population?

16-26 years old living on Martha's Vineyard

16+ high school non-completers

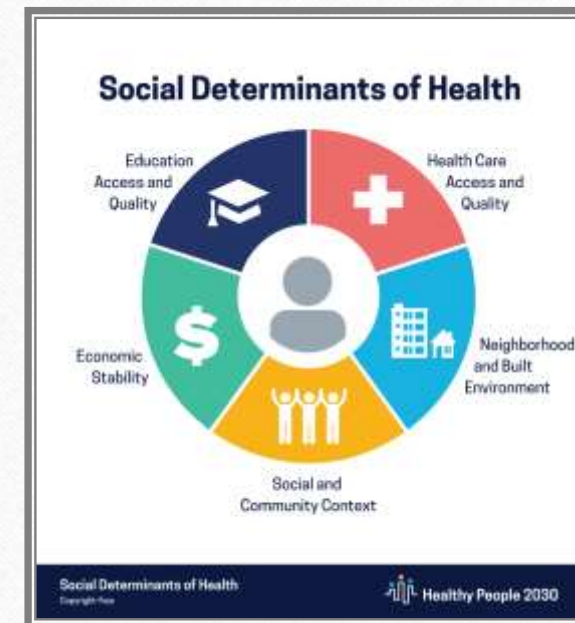
18+ college non-attenders, non-completers, un- or under employed

Newcomers or immigrants from Brazil or other countries

68 stakeholders and target demographic interviewed directly

Why This Population?

- Members of this demographic are uniquely affected by the following factors:
 - Economic Instability
 - Education
 - Housing Insecurity
 - Language & Literacy
 - Healthcare Access
 - Social & Community connections



Assets of Population

- The island economy needs young people
 - Aging population- there is a need for youth to take over existing businesses
 - Large job market – employers constantly looking for employees
- Residents of the island
 - Desire to return
 - Passionate about the community and island wellbeing
 - Support for other students & new arrivals to the island
 - Presence of the Wampanoag tribe has led to a rich history and multigenerational knowledge about the island

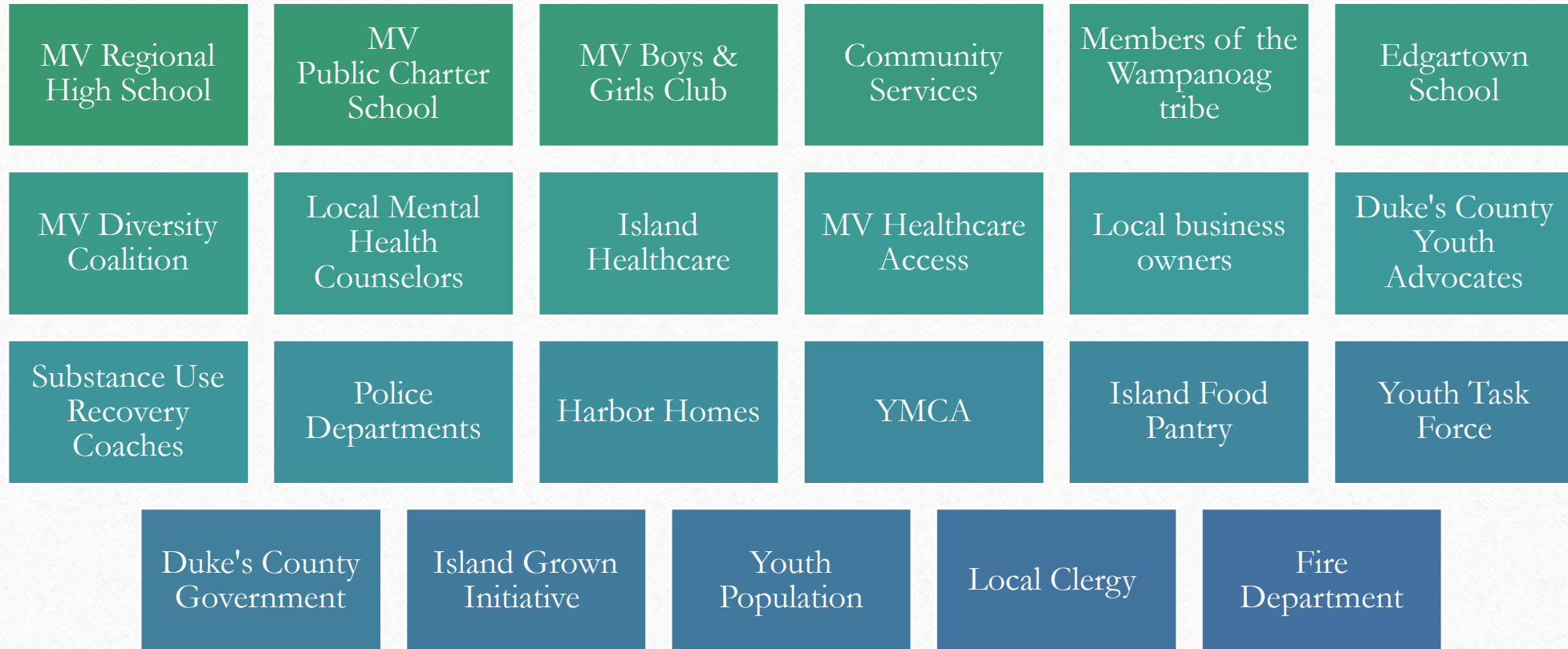
Study Methods

- Background information on island demographics was collated utilizing publicly available census data
- Data was collected through interviews with local stakeholders, community members, and members of the target population
 - Four teams of two students each were formed and conducted individual (1-2 persons) or focus group (3-4 persons) style interviews, which were secured by snowball sampling
 - Interviews were phenomenological in nature, with pre-determined questions available to help guide the flow of discussion as needed
 - Interviewees included community leaders and stakeholders as well as members of the 16-26 population
- From 10/21 to 10/30, 55 local stakeholders and 13 youths in the target population were interviewed
- All interviews were qualitatively analyzed by the Scholars – data extracted were common threads and themes, gaps/barriers to opportunity, and potential solutions

Study Context

- In the process of learning about and from the target youth population on island, it became clear that we could not give this presentation without acknowledging the impact larger socioeconomic, cultural, and systemic realities have on these young people
- Given the scope and the intersectional nature of our study, we focused our attention on areas of strengths and untapped potential on island
- Our data and recommendations are based on direct quotes and anecdotes shared by the target population, stakeholders, and community members

Local Stakeholders



Areas of Focus



Housing Crisis



Education



Workforce & Trades



Community Dynamics



Social Opportunities



Mental Health & Substance Use



"Silos" on Martha's Vineyard



"I know that my children will not be able to live here."



"The biggest barrier to success is the cost of living. You can't look past that. There are plenty of jobs, but they can't afford to live here."

Housing Crisis

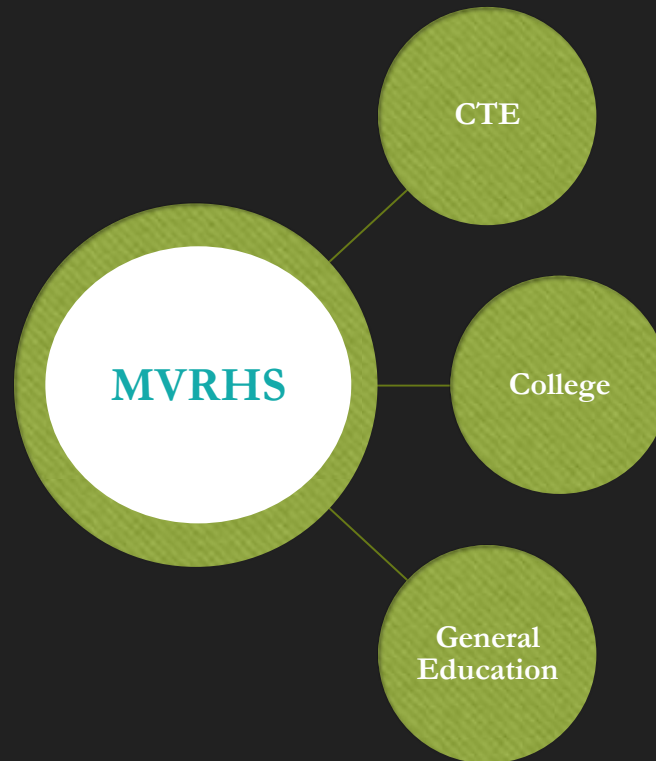


- Reduced independence for youth population
 - Common for young people to live with parents until late 20's – 30's because of cost of living
- Unsafe and unstable housing
 - "Island Shuffle"
 - Large number of people per house to reduce cost
 - Both affordable/subsidized and tribal housing options have strict criteria
- Weakens infrastructure
 - Large and young workforce due to island culture and cost of living. Entry level service or trade work often pays high at a young age without prerequisite skills or knowledge, reducing incentive to pursue skills-based training (in high school or after)
 - Leads to:
 - Macro-level employment sector gaps in areas that cannot compete with high pay of service or certain trade jobs (ie. carpentry and service vs nursing and childcare)
 - Micro-level gaps for employers who can't find workers



"We're graduating too many kids without options"

MVRHS School "Paths"



C.T.E. = Career and Technical Education

Structured Education for Youth: College



Strengths	Target Areas
Diverse range of academic and elective classes	Some college students cite culture shock and lack of social and soft skills needed to succeed in off-island college settings
Students have voiced that they view teachers/faculty as passionate and committed	General perception that college is the school's focus and assumed default (ie. publicized class rank)
Many students graduate on to go to college	Minimal exit data and follow-up
Abundance of resources for academic support	Less support for middle academic bracket, students might go off to college when they aren't ready or when they shouldn't go at all
Numerous scholarship opportunities to college-bound graduates	Lack of exposure to career opportunities may lead to misunderstanding of how college can help attain professional goals

Structured Education for Youth: Career and Technical Education (CTE)



Strengths	Target Area
Diverse "tracks" within CTE and increased student awareness of trades/careers via required rotations	Need for more general MVRHS support and promotion of CTE, in both practice and language. Strong stigma associated with vocational program
Mentorship and internship opportunities (ie. Co-Op)	Advertising (self-motivation is required to seek out opportunity)
Strong correlation to ending up in those industries	Skills from CTE not always clear/beneficial to employers or employees, students, and parents
New first year "soft skills" component of CTE course helps prepare students for professional communication	Can be selective (teachers recommend based on first year performance)
Aims to change the narrative about trade and service work	Entrenched genderism within certain career pathways and lack of diverse mentorship

Structured Education for Youth: General Education



Strengths	Target Areas
Open-minded school environment that works hard to accommodate needs of its diverse student population	Unstructured and inconsistent MVRHS support for career or educational development after graduation
Wide range of general and specialized classes to choose from	Minimal exposure to off-island careers, areas educators may help students explore their passions
MVRHS and community supports the idea that not everyone has to fit into a specialized mold	Difficult to integrate into CTE, work study and college pathways after sophomore year. Challenging for 'late bloomers'

Structured Education for Youth: Unique Considerations for Immigrants



- Language barriers limit:
 - Engagement in society
 - Ability to go to English-speaking colleges
 - Especially challenging for those who arrive as teens
- Family expectations
 - Stay at home to take care of siblings instead of school
 - Expectation of working in the family business or other jobs to support family
- Community integration
 - Close-knit community
 - Benefit of a supportive religious community
- Undocumented youth
 - Can't get paid in the CO-OP and Work Study programs
 - Barriers to success post-high school – e.g. federal loans, in-state tuition, discrimination



“We don’t instill enough desire in the children because how can you aspire to what you’ve never been exposed to?”

Community Support for Workforce Development & Trades



Strengths	Target Areas
Employers are willing to set up apprenticeships—but don't have the proper connections to youth to do so	Need for greater connections between community mentors & prospective employees
Wide range of world-renowned trades on the island (builders, artists, craftsmen etc.)	Many trades employers prefer on-job training to external training and certification
Youth who aspire to work in trades from a young age are generally satisfied with their work/choices	Youth who work in the trades as a secondary choice after high school or college are less satisfied with their work/choices



"The island charm can be a toxic trait. The older generation doesn't like change."



"[Young people are] empowered by the community because we are so small and there are always connections they can access...the issue is when a family arrives here without those connections"

Community Dynamics: A Small Island



Strengths	Target Areas
Social emotional support from community members	Lack of privacy
Connections for housing, jobs, referrals, other resources	Limited representation and diversity in local politics and among boards of directors
Sense of belonging and connectedness	Lack of accountability
Comfort and safety	Disconnect between older and younger generations
Generations on the island create family history	Socioeconomic barriers make leaving the island more challenging, leading to differences in exposure among youth
	Limited social sphere prevents youth from developing "soft skills"



"When I was growing up here, we had safe social places to have fun. The youth on the island now don't have access to this, and it's a big problem."

Social Opportunities



CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY	SEASONS	PHYSICAL SPACES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family, tight-knit community, life-long islanders = special social bond• Isolation for newcomers, those without family or connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer "frenzy" vs winter "hibernation"• Transient social community• Boredom may lead to increased substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very few places to socialize (especially for 16-20 y.o.)• Bars become go-to for 21+• Used to be more spaces for young people



"The opposite of addiction is connection."

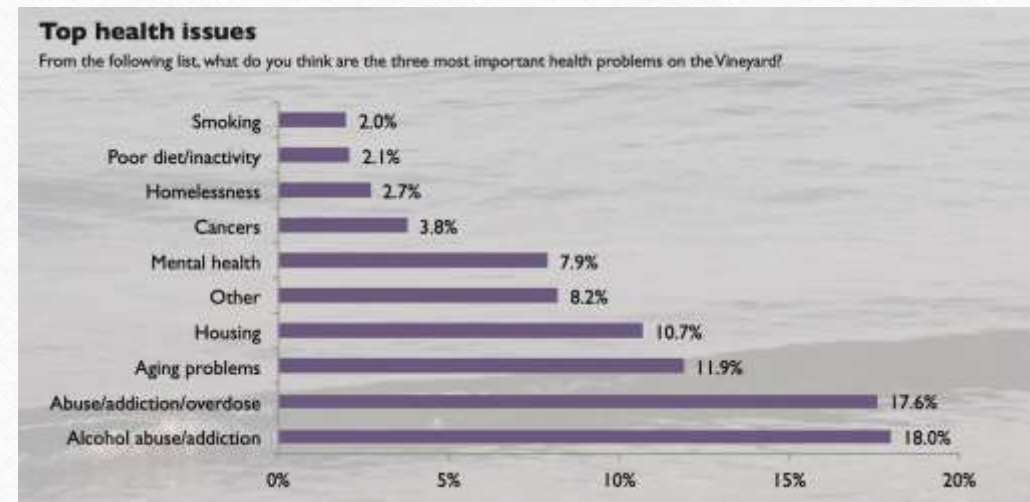


"I didn't feel like I could speak to my guidance counselor about these things because I didn't feel like we connected."

Mental Health & Substance Use



- Mental health services are overwhelmed
- The pandemic has caused feelings of isolation, exacerbating mental health issues
- Substance use rates have surged in recent years
- Reliance on guidance counselors to identify young people that might need SUD support
- Many youth were either intimidated or disinterested in expressing a need for support to guidance counselors
- Lack of appropriate SUD services on island



2016 Survey of MV community



"Everything exists in silos. We need to break down those walls."

"Silos" on Martha's Vineyard



- Despite the availability of social services and support organizations, many interviewees felt that communication and cohesion between these groups could be improved
- Similar funding sources for all community-based organizations may decrease motivation to collaborate
 - Also results in stakeholders with power and agency not accurately reflecting the demographic of people served
- Individualistic mentality (town and tribal governments & residents) means challenges with community-oriented decision making
 - "not in my backyard" mentality
- "Siloing" of tightly interconnected issues: e.g. housing underpins almost every issue MV faces

Recommendations

Proposed Solutions



Housing Crisis



Education



Workforce & Trades



Community Dynamics



Social Opportunities



Mental Health & Substance Use



"Silos" on Martha's Vineyard

Housing Crisis



- Recap: Housing options are both limited and expensive, creating a barrier to having safe, affordable housing. It may have also created a sense of normalcy in relying on staying home rather than living independently
- Recommendation:
 - 1. Create affordable options through employer housing provided for employees
 - Martha's Vineyard Hospital is a good model to follow
 - 2. Further encourage current movements
 - Renting out (either residences or guest houses)
 - Land banks
 - Innovative agreements with wealthy home-buyers to purchase 'affordable' houses in addition to more expensive, new residence
 - Expand zoning laws to accommodate innovating housing units

Education



- Recap: Many youth on Martha's Vineyard do not want, or are not able, to complete a college degree
- Recommendation:
 - 1. Community College options
 - Gauge target areas of most need
 - Contact CCCC to determine pathway for MV site and/or accredited classes on island
 - 2. Formal mentorship starting in middle school as well as follow-up guidance with youth post high-school
 - Create innovative channels for underrepresented jobs/employers to connect with students
 - Emphasis on assigning mentors or formal pairings
 - Create mentor program that brings employers into MVRHS and extends beyond high school
 - One organization to spearhead this initiative

Education



- Recommendations:
 - 3. Career & job fairs for promotion and exposure to different career paths
 - Resume and bolster pre-COVID fairs at MVRHS, integrating professional, vocational, and gap year opportunities with increased representation of businesses and employers and adding student skill building workshops before and after the fair
 - 4. Examine goals of skills-based training programs: does it translate to needs and perceptions of students, parents, and employers? Does it reflect future interest of ACE MV?
 - Community discussion on values and perceptions
 - If gaps, make intended goals of programs clear from start
 - 5. Paid opportunities for undocumented students to participate in work study and Co-Op programs
 - Potential scholarships to support such students

Workforce Development & Trades



- Recap: Youth on the island are generally not encouraged to go into trades nor are they sufficiently prepared for work in trades fields
- Recommendation:
 - 1. High School CTE Enhancements
 - Resumé workshops, email writing, practice interviews, etc.
 - Parity in opportunity and advertisement of CTE with other college-prep pathways in school system
 - 2. Parent Orientation
 - Decrease the focus on class rank in parent orientation
 - Orientation for the parents in the high school should showcase different paths- trades, careers, college
 - Promote parent involvement in empowering students in the career decision process
 - 3. Apprenticeships to gain **exposure** to different fields
 - Open houses offered through community stakeholders for the youth to attend to gain more understanding and exposure to certain career paths

Social Opportunities



- Recap: Need for more safe, fun opportunities & social spaces for the youth
- Recommendation:
 - 1. Alliance among organizations to host social events year-round
 - Strong resources present on the island, opportunity exists to improve collaboration
 - Combined effort to provide social opportunities for each age group (16-18, 18-20, and 21+)
 - Commit to hosting at least one event for each age group every two months
 - 2. Community space for young people

Mental Health and Substance Use



- Recap: Boredom, isolation, and chronic stress can lead to increased social/behavioral health concerns and substance use
- Recommendation:
 - 1. Attract more behavioral health specialists
 - Focus on clinicians with experience serving youth
 - Consider funding full-time position for advanced behavioral health clinician in HS
 - 2. MVRHS Guidance and School Adjustment Counseling
 - Continue to foster diversity in guidance and counseling staff
 - Empower students to select counselor based on best fit
 - 3. Improve prompt access to detox/substance use rehab services
 - Invest in dedicated detox/inpatient rehab on island OR
 - Streamline the process of connecting these individuals with appropriate off island resources

"Silos" on Martha's Vineyard



- Recap: There is little formal collaboration among organizations serving youth population. Social services are available but are challenging for population to seek out.
- Recommendation:
 - 1. CBO Collaboration
 - Identify **all** MV youth-related organization and develop communication system
 - Identify overlapping funding requests, reduce competition to promote maximal wellbeing for youth population
 - 2. Formation of quarterly Youth Summit
 - Island Food Equity Network could service as model (ex. CBO collaboration identified and now addressing SNAP gap on island)
 - Ensure the inclusion all groups identified above
 - Leadership and feedback opportunities for youth population
 - 3. Consider integrating issues across initiatives as well
 - e.g. housing crisis cuts across almost every single issue on island. Housing representative at the table?

Next Steps and Limitations

- Weather challenges due to the nor'easter disrupted ability to interview certain members of the community
 - Lack of service/WiFi, unsafe meeting environments, and minimal time to make-up interviews that had been cancelled or postponed
- Not enough Brazilian youth interviewed
 - Mistrust of research group due to undocumented status
 - No response from a portion of the subjects asked to interview
 - Difficulty in finding subjects to interview in this category
- Population pool not large enough to represent the entire community
 - Not enough interviews with the Wampanoag community

Acknowledgements



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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of Nursing



ADULT &
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION

MARtha's
VINEYARD



MARtha's VINEYARD
HOSPITAL
One Hospital Rd., PO Box 1077, Oak Bluffs, MA 01907

We are truly grateful for the conversations we've had and are touched by the people we have met during our time here on Martha's Vineyard. The stories we have heard from members of the community have given us a new perspective and understanding of the challenges faced by this population on the island. We would especially like to thank the UMass Chan Medical School, Martha's Vineyard Hospital, the Dukes County Health Council, and ACE MV for the opportunity to be here. We are grateful for every member of the community who we've been fortunate to meet throughout the course of this project. We strived to prioritize meeting the needs of the island, recognizing the opportunities already present on the island and building on them in a hope to create an even stronger foundation of ideas for MV to flourish from. Thank you all for taking the time to speak with us as we continued to learn more about the island and those who make up MV's diverse community.