

*Medina County Senior Needs
Assessment Survey*

Final Results and Recommendations

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Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey

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- Medina County Family First Council
- The HANDS Foundation
- Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority

We would like to thank the community partners who were very instrumental in disseminating and collecting surveys from older adults across the county.

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Summary

Demographic projections from the United States Census Bureau in 2000, indicate that the aging of the “baby boom” generation will increase the proportion of persons over age 65 from 13 percent currently, to 20 percent by the year 2030. A child born in 1991 can expect to live 75.5 years, about 28 years longer than a child born in 1900. By the year 2030, persons age 65 and older are expected to represent 20 percent of the population. Individuals aged 85 and older comprise the fastest-growing segment of our population with over four million older adults having reached this milestone. As the population age 65 and older continues to increase, more and more families and communities will be faced with the challenges of providing a nurturing, proactive, responsive, user-friendly environment in which older adults thrive and are able and encouraged to contribute to their own successful aging experience and to the communities in which they live.

Locally, of the 151,095 people living in Medina County, 21,818 are 60 years or older. Five percent of the population is over the age of 75. Medina County has experienced a 23.5% population growth overall between 1990 and 2000 and a 32 % increase in seniors over the age of 60 according to the 2000 U.S. Census. By 2020, there will be 46,400 individuals age 60+ in Medina County, representing a 113% increase in the 60+ population since 1990. This is the largest increase in Northeast Ohio, including Cleveland and Akron. This aging population has serious issues and concerns that must be addressed. For instance, over 10% of the 60+ population in Medina County live in poverty and nearly 30% of individuals age 60+ have at least one disability. By 2020, almost 4,000 individuals age 60+ residing in Medina County will have a sever disability. Due to this population explosion and the economic, health, and social needs that accompany this increase, it has never been as important as it is now to develop a clear understanding of the quality of life needs of older adults in the county. This growth trend is expected to continue as several major highways have made Medina County a 'bedroom community' for people who travel into Cleveland to the north and to Akron to the south. As people move into the area, many are bringing their aging parents with them.

It is apparent from the 2000 Census that the number of older adults living in the Medina County has dramatically increased in recent years. This change, especially if it continues or becomes more pronounced, could have substantial implications for how services to older adults in the county are provided. These population trends, combined with the current financial straits of local public and nonprofit services for older adults, prompted the survey sponsors (Medina County Family First Council, The Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority, and The HANDS Foundation) to collaborate on an extensive survey of older adults living in Medina County. The survey explored many different dimensions of the quality of life of older adults, ranging from basic needs for food and shelter to the more intangible things that add meaning and satisfaction to life such as community engagement.

The survey took place May through July 2008, using a variety of community partners to ensure a representative sample of Medina County seniors. A total of 709 surveys were collected. The survey sample is representative of the older adult population in Medina County in terms of race and ethnicity, age, gender, and income. The survey sample did not include older adults who were institutionalized. All interviews were conducted in English and took 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

I. Introduction

This report presents findings from a survey of older adults in Medina County, Ohio, which explored topics affecting their quality of life and participation in the community. The survey was designed and conducted collaboratively between the Medina County Family First Council, The Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority, The HANDS Foundation, and IntelliSolve, Inc.

A. Survey Purpose

The projected growth in the population age 65 and older in the next 30 years has major implications for all age groups as well as for local health, social, economic, and other community institutions. Older adults bring richness of diversity and past life experience to their local communities. However, it is apparent from the 2000 Census data that the number of older adults living in Medina County is increasing dramatically. This upward trend may have significant implications for planning for future needs of seniors and improve existing services.

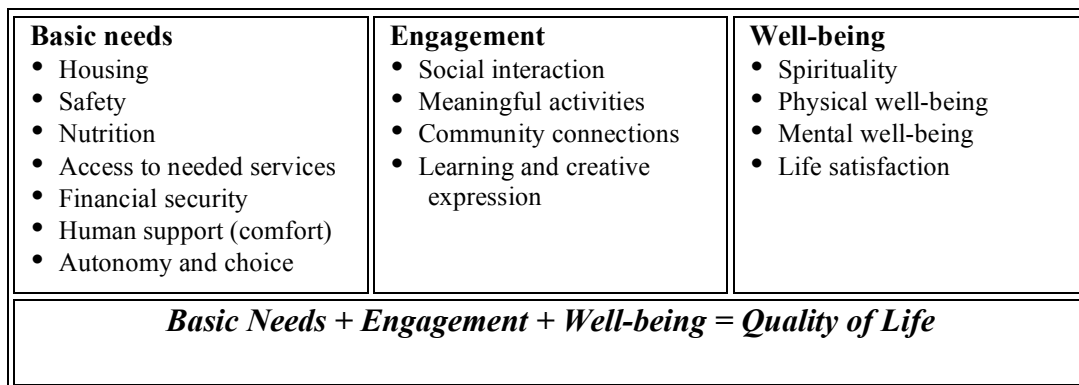
For this reason, the survey sponsors (Medina County Family First Council, The Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority, and The HANDS Foundation) wanted to understand the current state of older adults in Medina County. In order to acquire this understanding, the survey sponsors collaborated to contract with IntelliSolve, Inc. to perform a comprehensive Older Adult Needs Assessment Survey focused on quality of life issues for seniors within the community. The Survey would include, but not be limited to questions regarding demographics, health, housing, mental health, independent living, and access to community services.

B. Survey Framework

In conducting this community survey, the sponsors sought to understand the forces behind the trends suggested by the 2000 Census and to understand and improve the local quality of life and community for older adults. To achieve this goal, a comprehensive literature review of senior needs assessment surveys was performed by IntelliSolve, Inc. to determine how other communities had recently assessed their older adult needs, designed their research approach, and chosen potential survey items. In addition to the best practice research, community partners who serve older adults were solicited to provide any questions they had regarding the needs of older adults in Medina County. The findings were synthesized and potential survey items were identified for possible inclusion in the survey.

The best practice research led to the identification of a quality of life framework that fit closely with the relevant component areas and survey items IntelliSolve and the community partners had determined were of interest. The Wilder Foundation's quality of life framework for older adults is a framework for assessing quality of life that encompasses basic needs, engagement, and well-being. It is comprehensive and community-centered, and is based on the work of Mather Lifeways in Evanston, Illinois. Both the survey itself and this report of results are built on this framework, whose basic elements are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: A framework for understanding older adults' quality of life (Wilder Foundation)



C. Survey Design

1. Basic Needs

As mentioned earlier in this report, we are examining survey results through the lens of the Wilder Foundation's quality of life framework for older adults. One of the three principal components of this framework is the category of Basic Needs. Survey items used to measure *Basic Needs* are as follows:

Medical Coverage

- Do you have health care coverage besides Medicare?
- In the past year, have you carried supplemental medical insurance?
- Does your health insurance (non-Medicare) help pay for the cost of prescription drugs?
- Does your health care coverage/insurance cover mental health treatment?
- Does your insurance cover substance/chemical dependency treatment?
- Does your insurance cover home health care?
- Does your insurance cover hospice care?

Home Health and Personal Care

- In the past month, have you received help from a home health aide, friend, or family member?
- In the past month, have you received nurse visits because of a recent hospital visit or health concern?
- Do you provide care for one or more family members or friends on a regular basis?

Nutrition

- In the past month, have you received home delivered meals?
- In the past month, have you received shopping help?
- In the last month, have you received help preparing meals?
- In the past month, have you received meals served in a dining room at a community center, housing complex, or senior center?
- If you are on a special diet, are you following the diet closely?

Finances

- Are you able to manage your finances, such as balancing your checkbook, paying bills, and banking?

- In the past year, have you had enough money to purchase necessary medication?
- In the past year, have you had enough money to purchase the food you need?
- In the past year, have you had enough money to purchase the gas you need?
- Over the last 12 months, have you had to change your way of life significantly in order to pay medical bills?
- Thinking about your life, are you worried about outliving your financial resources?

Housing

- In the past year, have you had enough money to pay your rent or mortgage?
- In the past year, have you had enough money to pay your utilities?
- Are you having difficulty functioning in your home?
- Are you having difficulty maintaining your home?
- Are you likely to move in the next 2 years?
- Do you know what kind of help you need, so that you can remain in your home?

Transportation/Mobility

- Does lack of transportation prevent you from attending events or activities in your neighborhood or elsewhere?
- In the past month, have you received help with transportation?
- Does anyone in the household currently have any mobility issues?

Safety and Crime

- Is it safe to walk around your neighborhood at night?
- Is it safe to walk around your neighborhood during the day?
- Do you generally trust your neighbors to look out for you?
- Do people in your neighborhood make it a difficult place to live?
- Have you ever been a victim of crime?
- Have you been educated or warned about potential fraud schemes aimed at older adults (e.g., identity theft, home repairs, etc.)?
- Do you have a working fire extinguisher and know how to use it?
- Do you have working smoke alarms in appropriate locations?
- Do you have a "Vial of Life" in your refrigerator with a list of current medication, doctors, and emergency contacts with the corresponding sticker on your front door?
- Do you have a phone and numbers easily available to call for help?

2. Engagement

The second of the three principal components of the quality of life framework is the category of Engagement. Survey items used to measure *Engagement* are as follows:

Social Interaction

- Are you afraid of being alone?
- Do you have frequent contact with a family member or friend you feel close to?
- In the past month, have you participated in a community event or social gathering?
- In the past month, have you participated in a senior center or community center activity or social gathering?
- Have you ever participated in any type of a support group?

Technology

- Do you have any hesitations when you hear the word 'technology'?
- Are you afraid of learning how to use a computer?

- Have you had experience with using a computer?
- Would owning/using a computer enable you to live more independently?

Employment

- Are you currently retired?
- Are you currently employed full-time?
- Are you currently employed part-time?
- If you are employed, is it because you need to work?
- Have you experienced age discrimination in seeking a job?

Volunteering/Mentoring

- Do you volunteer in the community?
- Do you volunteer 5 or more hours per month?
- Are you a member of a community group or organization?

3. Well-being

The final principal component of the quality of life framework is the category of Engagement. Survey items used to measure *Engagement* are as follows:

Health

- In the past year, have you participated in an organized health education or health promotion activity?
- Did you receive a flu shot this year?
- Have you ever had a vaccination against pneumonia?
- In the past year, have you been seen by a dentist?
- Are you able to make and keep doctor's appointments?
- Do you have someone who could take care of you if you were sick or disabled?
- In the past year, have you had problems with your vision?
- In the past year, have you had problems with your hearing?

Medications/ Medical Misuse/ Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Do you understand the reasons you are taking medications?
- Are you aware of potential side effects for medications you take?
- Do you think that older adults are at risk for alcohol related problems?
- Do you think older adults are at risk for medicine related problems?
- Does your doctor or pharmacist inform you the about interaction risks of combining medications and/or herbal supplements?

Mental Well-being

- Is there someone you feel you can tell just about anything to, someone you can count on for understanding or advice?
- If you were experiencing a mental health problem, would you feel comfortable asking a professional for help?
- Have you ever talked to a counselor, family therapist, social worker or a psychologist?
- Have you ever had mental health treatment?
- Have you ever had substance/chemical dependency treatment?
- Have you felt down or hopeless in the last month?
- Have you felt confused or overwhelmed in the last month?
- Have you felt happy, excited, or content in the last month?

Recreation

- Do you frequently visit parks, recreation facilities, or senior centers?
- Do you encounter health barriers to being physically active?
- Do you encounter other barriers to being physically active?
- Do you exercise regularly (3 or more times per week)?

Physical well-being

The Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey did not include a comprehensive assessment of the respondent's health status; instead the respondents were asked a general question about their health. This questions was:

- In general, how would you rate your overall health? Would you say it is, *very good*, *good*, *fair*, or *poor*?

Life satisfaction

- Overall satisfaction with life

Additional Questions

Respondents were also asked some questions related to the services they are aware of, they have used, they know others have used, and they think are the most needed. They were also asked what services they thought would be useful that are not currently available. Finally, they were asked what they felt are the biggest problems being faced by older adults in Medina County?

D. Survey Methodology

1. Sample Selection

IntelliSolve, Inc. worked closely with the survey sponsors to create a roster of community partners across Medina County who would assist with administering as many surveys as possible within a 6-week time frame to adults ages 60 and older living in Medina County. The potential community partners were identified through the Medina County Senior Resource Guide and feedback from the Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey (MCSNA) core team, which included the survey sponsors and their representatives, as well as the director of the Office for Older Adults, a local county commissioners. A total of 30 potential partners were identified who could optimally assist in the dissemination and collection of surveys from participants across the county who would meet the following criteria: 1) Are representative of various geographic regions of the county; 2) Represent various levels of care for seniors from active through residential long-term care; 3) Represent various socioeconomic levels; and 4) Include veterans.

All 30 potential community partners were contacted and informed regarding the distribution and collection of surveys to ensure effective and efficient administering of the survey while eliminating potential for duplication. The survey began the week of May 20, 2008, and was completed July 16, 2008. The goal was to complete 400 interviews to represent a population of 21,181 older adults in Medina County. IntelliSolve, in collaboration with 30 community partners, was able to collect 709 interviews. The community partners that had success collecting surveys and the number of surveys they collected are identified in Table 1 on the following page.

To ensure the sample represented the older adult population in Medina County, the distribution by race and ethnicity, age, gender, income, and geographic location was assessed after 350 interviews were completed. Determining that the completed cases at that point represented the older adult population, data collection staff continued administering and collecting survey data to complete the final sample. All the surveys were conducted in English. Each interview took approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

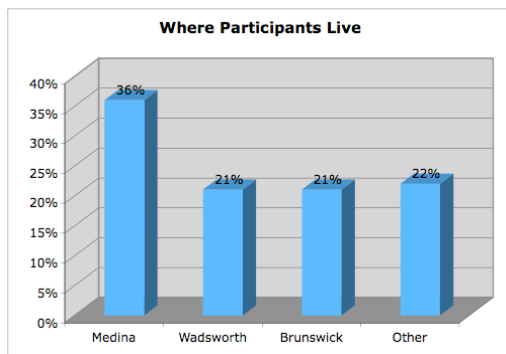
Table 1: Participating Agencies and Number of surveys returned

Agency	# Surveys Returned
Brunswick Recreation Center	18
Catholic Charities Services of Medina County	20
HANDS Foundation	56
Hospice of Medina County	8
Lodi Good Samaritans	29
Medina County District Library	50
Medina County Health Department	20
Medina County Home	7
Medina County Office for Older Adults	75
Medina General Hospital	20
Medina Community Recreation Center	14
Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority	19
Northside Christian Church	5
Nottingham Court	5
Samaritan Care Center & Villa	3
Second Baptist Church	10
Senior Day	154
Social Security Administration & S.S.I.	4
Wadsworth Center for Older Adults	103
Wadsworth Public Library	6
Wadsworth Recreation Center	8
Wadsworth-Rittman Hospital & Home Care	13
United Labor Tower	62
TOTAL	709

2. Geographic Distribution of Survey Participants

The survey was administered in such a way as to ensure comparable geographic distribution to persons age 60 and older across Medina County Figure 2 summarizes the location by city.

Figure 2: Geographic distribution of respondents by area



3. Sample Characteristics

Respondents were asked a series of questions about age, gender, and race and ethnicity, to help assess the comparability of our survey respondents with the general population of older adults in Medina County, as reflected in the U.S. Census 2000. Additionally, income level, education level, and marital status were asked to help with the interpretation of survey results.

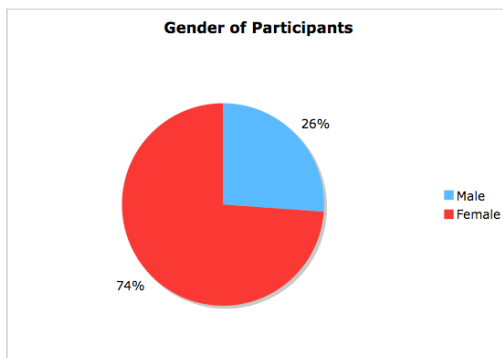
Age. Eleven percent (11%) of the survey respondents ranged from 60 to 64 years of age. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents ranged from 65-70 years of age. Thirteen percent (13%) of respondents ranged from 71-74 years of age. Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents ranged from 75-80 years of age. Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents ranged from 81-84 years of age. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents were age 85 or older (See Table 2).

Table 2: Age distribution of Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey respondents

	Percent of survey sample
60 to 64	11%
65 to 70	19%
71 to 74	13%
75 to 80	22%
81 to 84	16%
85 and older	19%
Total	

Gender. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents were women (74%) and one-fourth were men (26%), as reflected in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Participant Gender

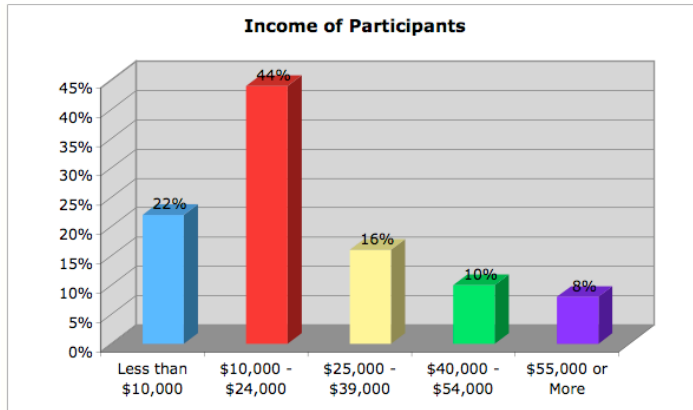


Race and ethnicity. In this regard, the survey group also closely resembled the county's older adult population as a whole. Nearly all (97%) were White; 2 percent were African American, and 1 percent self-identified as other. In addition, less than 1 percent of the survey participants were of Hispanic origin.

Household income. The household income of survey respondents is shown in Figure 4 below. About one-third of the survey participants (34%) have incomes above \$25,000, with sixteen percent (16%) reporting an income between \$25,000 and \$39,000, another ten percent (10%) reporting an income of between \$40,000 and \$54,000, and eight (8%) reporting incomes in excess

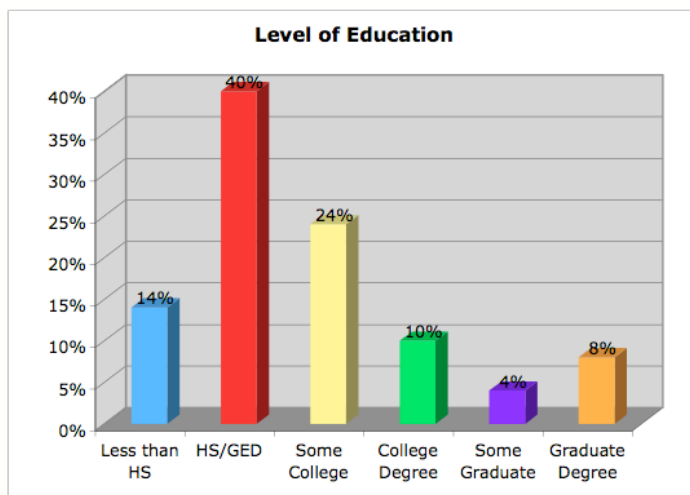
of \$55,000. Alternately, two-thirds of the survey respondents (66%) have household incomes below \$25,000, with twenty-two percent (22%) having incomes below \$10,000, and another forty-four percent (44%) reporting incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000. This group is of particular concern to service providers because their income is often too high to qualify for many publicly supported programs, yet they typically cannot afford to pay independently for substantial support services. It should be noted that fourteen percent (14%) did not respond to the household income question.

Figure 4: Household Income



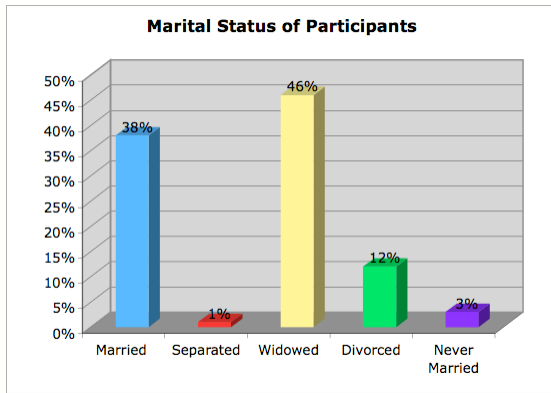
Education. A little under half of the survey group (46%) had at least some college or technical training after high school; Twenty-four percent (24%) has some college or technical training, ten percent (10%) were college graduates, about four (4%) had some graduate school training, and about eight percent (8%) had a graduate or professional degree. However, over half (54%) of the respondents had no more than a high school diploma or GED. Fourteen percent (14%) had less than a HS diploma, and Forty-one percent (41%) reported receiving their HS diploma or GED. Only 7 percent of the women had completed a graduate or professional degree, compared to ten percent (10%) of the men. The education level of survey respondents is shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Level of Education



Marital status. Figure 6 pictured below reflects the marital status of survey respondents. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the survey respondents reported being married and living with their spouse. Less than one percent reported being married but separated from their spouse. Nearly half reported being widowed (46%). Twelve percent (12%) were divorced, and another three percent (3%) were never married. Nineteen percent (19%) of the men were widowed, compared fifty-six percent (56%) of the women.

Figure 6: Marital Status

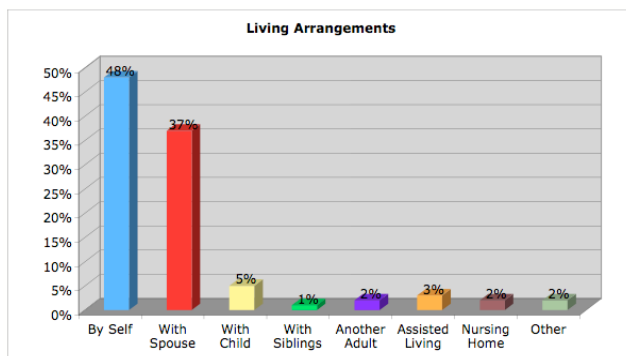


Veteran status. Approximately one-fifth of the respondents (19%) reported being a veteran. The majority of veterans were male (93%) versus female (7%).

Number in household. The grand majority (98%) of those reporting household numbers reported having between one and two persons living in the household. Another five percent (5%) reported having between three and four persons in the household. Only two percent (2%) reported having five or more persons living in the household.

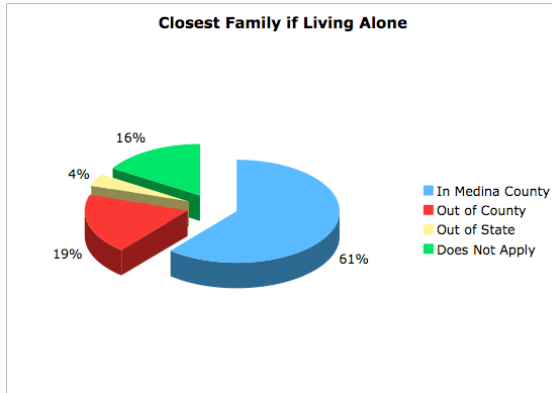
Living arrangements. Nearly half of the survey respondents (48%) reported living by themselves. Another thirty-eight percent (38%) reported living with their spouse. Five percent (5%) reported living with a child, one percent (1%) with a sibling, and two percent (2%) with another adult. Five percent (5%) reported living in an assisted living facility or nursing home. The men in the survey were more likely to be living with a spouse or partner (66%), compared to women (27%). Women were more likely to be living by themselves (56%), compared to men (25%). The living arrangements of survey respondents are shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Living Arrangements



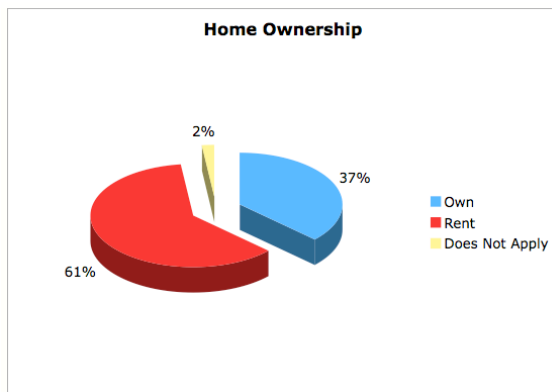
Closest family. Figure 8 shows that sixty-one percent (61%) of those respondents living alone reported that their nearest family member lives in Medina County. Another nineteen percent (19%) reported their nearest family member living outside of Medina County but within Ohio. Four percent (4%) reported their closest family member being outside of Ohio. Sixteen percent (16%) indicated this does not apply.

Figure 8: Proximity to Family



Own their home. Of those living independently, thirty-eight percent (38%) reported renting and sixty-one (61%) reported owning their own home (See Figure 9). Nearly three-quarters (74%) of men own their own home, compared to fifty-six percent (56%) of women.

Figure 9: Home Ownership



Number of bedrooms. Over half of the respondents (56%) reported having one or two bedrooms. One-third (33%) reported having three bedrooms. Eight percent (8%) of respondents indicated they had four bedrooms. Less than three percent (3%) reported having more than four bedrooms.

II. Survey Results

This survey afforded us the opportunity to learn more about the status of the quality of life and life satisfaction among older adults in Medina County using a framework that encompasses not only basic needs such as health and safety, but also higher-level needs related to engagement and overall well-being, such as social interaction, meaningful activity, learning, and physical and mental well-being.

From this survey we learned that a large majority of older adults in Medina County appear to have their basic needs met, are engaged in community life and want to be more engaged, feel good about their health, and are satisfied with their lives. However, some are clearly struggling. It is important to bear in mind, when reviewing the results of this survey, that a small percentage may amount to a sizeable number when applied to the entire population of Medina County older adults.

A. Basic Needs

Housing

Most survey participants living independently (61%) own their home. Renters made up another thirty-eight percent (38%) of the survey group. The grand majority of survey respondents (85%) reported living in their current residence three or more years. Fourteen percent (14%) reported living in their current residence between 3-5 years, another fourteen percent (14%) between 6-10 years, seventeen percent (17%) between 11-20 years, and thirty-nine percent (39%) reported living in the current residence 20 years or longer.

Thirteen percent of respondents expect to move within the next two years. Reasons given for planning to move include some “pull” factors such as wanting to be closer to children (14%), closer to shopping (8%), closer to church (4%), closer to doctor/hospital (4%), and so on. However, most reasons would be considered “push” factors such as wanting to reduce home maintenance responsibilities (24%), repairs and renovations (15%), needing help with daily living (15%), mobility issues (13%), housing costs (10%), or other reasons for moving (10%).

Older adults between the ages of 71 to 74 were the most likely to foresee moving within the next two years, with nearly one-fourth of them indicating this was a likelihood. The highest percent of those likely to move within the next two years lived in Medina (18%). Those likely to move also were more likely to make more than \$10,000 but less than \$40,000 per year. Adults older ages 71 and above were the most likely to be experiencing difficulty functioning in their home. There were no gender differences regarding difficulty functioning in or maintaining homes. Table 3 and Table 4 on the following page shows the group differences related to the housing issues that affect respondents’ ability to function, maintain, and remain in their homes.

Table 3: Housing Concerns by Respondent Characteristics

	<i>Difficulty functioning in home</i>		<i>Difficulty maintaining home</i>		<i>Foresee moving within the next 2 years</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Gender						
Male	15	9	30	18	58	14
Female	40	9	71	16	21	13
Age Group						
60 to 64	2	3	14	20	11	16
65 to 70	6	5	19	16	17	14
71 to 74	9	10	12	14	20	24
75 to 80	15	11	21	15	16	12
81 to 84	10	11	15	16	7	8
85 and older	13	12	19	18	7	7
Income						
Less than \$10,000	9	8	19	17	11	11
\$10,000-\$24,000	25	10	41	17	35	15
\$25,000-\$39,000	10	11	16	18	15	18
\$40,000-\$54,000	2	4	10	18	6	11
\$55,000 or more	3	6	6	13	6	12
Community						
Brunswick	9	7	16	12	12	10
Medina	21	9	35	16	39	18
Wadsworth	11	8	20	15	12	10
Other	14	10	31	23	16	12

Table 4: Housing Issues with Potential to Force Move by Respondent Characteristics

	<i>Needing easier home maintenance</i>	<i>Wanting to avoid repairs or renovations</i>	<i>Needing more affordable housing</i>	<i>Needing help with daily living</i>	<i>With mobility issues</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Gender					
Male	30	20	9	13	11
Female	22	13	14	15	13
Age Group					
60 to 64	29	22	13	10	14
65 to 70	30	17	14	11	10
71 to 74	27	16	14	8	15
75 to 80	25	14	10	15	12
81 to 84	19	10	7	12	13
85 and older	15	12	3	22	13
Income					
Less than \$10,000	5	7	6	17	11
\$10,000-\$24,000	21	12	10	17	14
\$25,000-\$39,000	45	32	18	15	16
\$40,000-\$54,000	31	14	17	9	9
\$55,000 or more	31	10	4	4	13
Community					
Brunswick	18	10	7	10	13
Medina	17	12	9	17	15
Wadsworth	29	14	11	15	8
Other	38	24	14	16	14

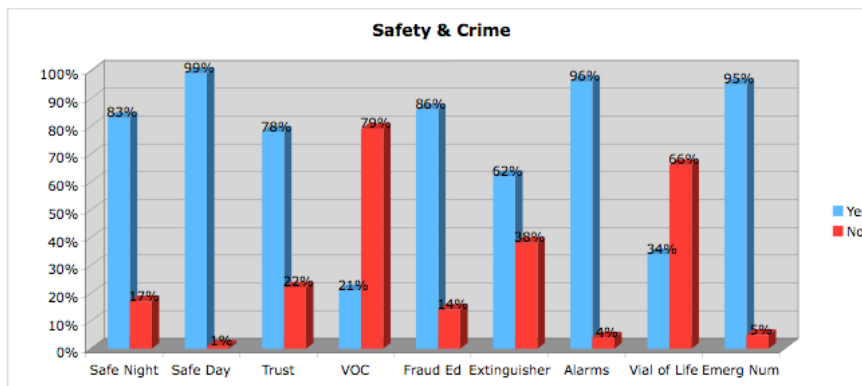
Sense of safety

Nearly all respondents said their neighborhood is safe during the day (99%), but about one-fifth (17%) feel their neighborhood is not safe at night. Perceptions of safety varied little between communities, with the vast majority of respondents (78%) indicating they generally trust their neighbors to watch out for them and only six percent (6%) reporting that people in their neighborhood make it a difficult place to live. However, a much higher percentage of those with incomes below \$24,000 reported not feeling safe at night in their neighborhood (25%), compared to those with incomes above \$25,000 (7%).

Nearly all respondents (96%) reported having a working fire alarm in appropriate locations. Nearly two-thirds (62%) said they have a working fire extinguisher and know how to use it. About one-third (34%) of respondents have a “Vial of Life” in their refrigerator with a list of current medication, doctors, and emergency contacts with the corresponding sticker on their front door. Almost everyone (95%) reported having a phone and numbers easily available to call for help. Adults over the age of 70 were much more likely to report having a “Vial of Life” in their refrigerator with a list of current medication, doctors, and emergency contacts with the corresponding sticker on their front door (> 33%) and older adults over the age of 85 were the most likely to follow this safety procedure (51%).

The vast majority of respondents (86%) indicated they have been educated or warned about potential fraud schemes aimed at older adults (e.g., identity theft, home repairs, etc.). However, only about seventy percent (70%) of those with incomes below \$10,000 reported having been educated or warned about fraud, compared with their peers (>88%). Those with incomes above \$55,000 were more likely to report having ever been a victim of crime (42%), compared to their counterparts (< 20%). Men slightly more likely to report ever having been a victim of crime than women, 24 percent (24%) to twenty percent (20%), respectively. Figure 10 shows the breakdown of responses for areas related to safety and crime.

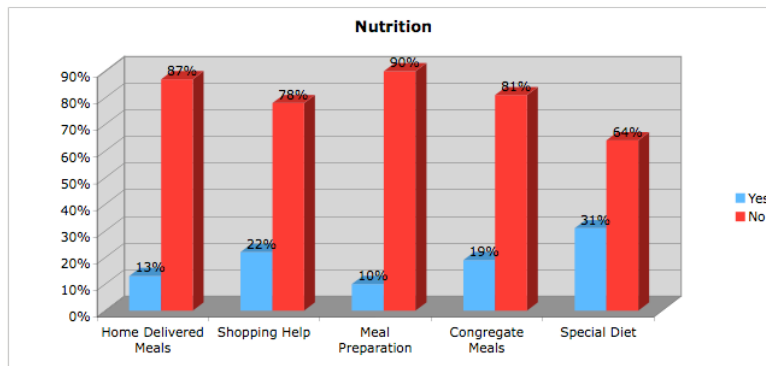
Figure 10: Safety and Crime



Meals

Twenty-two percent (22%) of the participants receive shopping assistance, nineteen percent (19%) currently use congregate dining services (meals served to a group), ten percent (10%) have help with meal preparation, and thirteen (13%) percent receive home-delivered meals. Only one-third of those individuals indicating they are on a special diet are following the diet closely. Figure 11 below shows the percentages of respondents using these services.

Figure 11: Nutrition



The differences by gender, age, income, and community for those using these food and nutrition related services are provided in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Nutrition Concerns by Respondent Characteristics

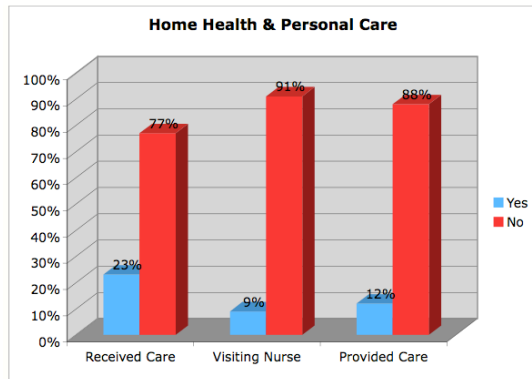
	<i>Received shopping assistance</i>		<i>Have help with meal preparation</i>		<i>Have home delivered meals</i>		<i>Currently use congregate dining services</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Gender								
Male	23	14	15	9	18	11	40	23
Female	118	25	50	11	70	15	83	17
Age Group								
60 to 64	12	17	7	10	5	7	11	15
65 to 70	11	9	7	6	8	6	20	16
71 to 74	9	11	7	8	6	7	16	18
75 to 80	34	23	16	11	17	11	27	18
81 to 84	26	26	7	19	17	17	22	22
85 and older	49	42	21	10	34	29	27	23
Income								
Less than \$10,000	54	45	27	23	31	26	23	19
\$10,000-\$24,000	58	22	24	9	39	15	53	21
\$25,000-\$39,000	10	11	6	7	5	6	20	22
\$40,000-\$54,000	2	4	2	4	1	2	7	12
\$55,000 or more	2	4	1	2	1	2	4	8
Community								
Brunswick	40	29	12	9	23	17	15	11
Medina	59	26	32	14	35	15	49	21
Wadsworth	23	16	9	7	14	10	38	27
Other	19	14	12	9	15	11	22	16

Home health care and personal care

Twenty-three (23%) percent of the survey participants received help in the last month from a home health aide, friend or family member. Nine percent (9%) had a visit in the past month by a home health nurse as a follow up to a recent hospital visit or health concern. Recipients of home health care were more likely to be female (nearly one in four compared to one in five for males), to be over the age of 80, and to have incomes of less than \$24,000. Brunswick and Medina had

the highest percentages of older adults receiving home health care, 28% and 27% respectively, compared to other rural areas (20%) and Wadsworth (14%). Recipients of visits from home health nurses were most likely to be age 75 or older, have an income of less than \$24,000, and live in Brunswick or Medina. Figure 12, shown below, identifies the percentages of respondents using home health and personal care services.

Figure 12: Home Health and Personal Care



The differences by gender, age, income, and community for those using home health related services are provided in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Home Health Concerns by Respondent Characteristics

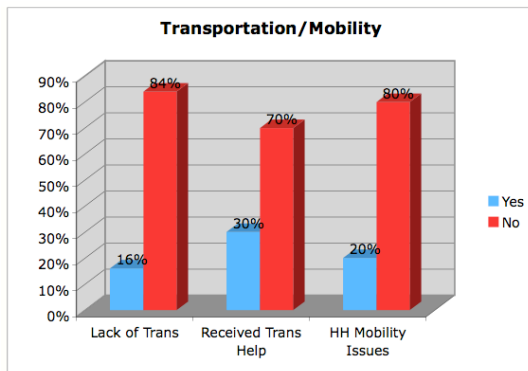
	<i>Received help in the last month from home health aide, friend or family member</i>		<i>Have had a follow-up visit in the past month from a home health nurse</i>	
	#	%	#	%
Gender				
Male	33	19	16	8
Female	116	24	39	9
Age Group				
60 to 64	12	17	5	7
65 to 70	16	13	7	6
71 to 74	15	17	4	5
75 to 80	31	21	14	10
81 to 84	29	30	10	11
85 and older	45	38	15	13
Income				
Less than \$10,000	54	44	19	16
\$10,000-\$24,000	65	25	29	11
\$25,000-\$39,000	12	13	4	4
\$40,000-\$54,000	2	4	1	2
\$55,000 or more	3	6	1	2
Community				
Brunswick	39	28	15	11
Medina	63	27	24	10
Wadsworth	19	14	8	6
Other	28	20	8	6

Transportation

Lack of transportation presented a barrier to attending events or activities for a sizable number of Medina County residents (16%). Women were more likely to report that a lack of transportation had prevented them from attending events/activities (19%), compared to men (8%), as were older adults with less than \$10,000 income (34%), compared to their counterparts (< 15%). See Figure 13 below.

More women (34%) than men (18%), more respondents with less than a HS Diploma or GED (46%), and more adults over the age of 75 (> 35%) reported having received help with transportation in the past month. Respondents with less than a HS Diploma or GED were also more likely to report mobility issues in the household (32%) and were less likely to drive their own car as a primary means of transportation (44%), when compared to their counterparts (> 69%).

Figure 13: Transportation and Mobility Issues



The majority of respondents reported driving their own car as a primary means of transportation (69%), followed by getting a ride from someone else (20%), using public or special transportation (7%), and walking (1%). Men were the most likely to drive their own car (85%), compared to women (64%). Alternately, women were much more likely to get a ride from someone (24%), compared to men (10%). Residents of Wadsworth (74%) and other more rural areas (83%) were more likely to drive their own car, when compared with the larger cities of Medina (61%) and Brunswick (64%). Alternately, residents of Medina (12%) and Brunswick (10%) were more likely to use the public bus or special transportation than either Wadsworth (1%) or the other more rural areas (1%).

The most popular responses for what purpose older adults would use transit services included: grocery shopping (46%), medical or dental appointments (46%), banking and bill paying (29%), recreation and social events (28%), entertainment (26%), senior or community centers (25%), and religious activities (23%). Adults between the ages of 60 and 70 were more likely to indicate they would use transit services for recreational or social purposes, and 60 to 64 year olds were most likely to indicate they would use transit services to attend senior or community centers and for shopping, entertainment, or dining. Older adults in the 60 to 64 age range and the over 85 age range were the most likely to indicate they would use transit services for banking and bill pay. Adult over the age of 85 were the most likely to indicate they would use transit service to attend church or a religious event or activity. Table 7 on the following page shows some of the group differences for gender, age, income, and community related to transportation.

Table 7: Transportation Concerns by Respondent Characteristics

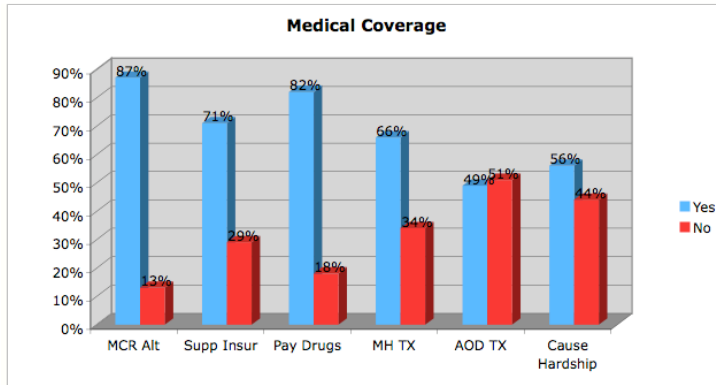
	<i>Lack of transportation presents a barrier to involvement</i>		<i>Have received help with transportation in the past month</i>		<i>Have mobility issues in the household</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Gender						
Male	12	8	29	18	28	21
Female	82	19	154	34	87	18
Age Group						
60 to 64	15	21	16	23	17	25
65 to 70	11	9	18	15	15	13
71 to 74	12	15	15	18	11	14
75 to 80	19	14	46	34	25	21
81 to 84	12	13	36	40	18	22
85 and older	26	25	52	47	28	30
Income						
Less than \$10,000	36	34	56	53	31	33
\$10,000-\$24,000	34	15	83	34	46	21
\$25,000-\$39,000	8	9	12	14	13	15
\$40,000-\$54,000	2	4	6	11	11	20
\$55,000 or more	2	4	4	8	7	15
Community						
Brunswick	25	20	43	33	24	21
Medina	40	18	82	38	44	22
Wadsworth	14	11	34	26	19	16
Other	16	12	25	19	28	22

Survey respondents were asked what other types of transportation they felt would be useful to have in Medina County. The most popular responses were: more regular busing, more senior transit services, more busing to outlying areas outside of the county (e.g., Akron, Cleveland), more taxi service, transportation to the airport, handicap accessible transportation, free or discounted transportation services for seniors, longer hours of service, more volunteers to assist with getting on and off buses, and senior cultural bus trips (e.g., art museums, Play House Square). There were an overwhelming number of Wadsworth residents calling for increased access to buses and public transportation.

Financial security

Most survey participants appear able to meet basic needs for food, medicine, and health care. The grand majority said they had health care coverage besides Medicare (87%), carried supplemental medical insurance (71%), and had enough money in the past year to purchase necessary medication (93%). Of those with supplemental insurance, eighty-two percent (82%) have prescription drug coverage. However, only two-thirds (66%) indicated their health coverage/insurance covered mental health treatment and only one-half (49%) said they are covered for substance/ chemical dependency treatment. Fifty-six (56%) have coverage for home health care and sixty-two percent (62%) are covered for hospice care. About one-fifth of survey respondents indicated they have had to change their way of life significantly in the past year to pay their medical bills. Those with incomes below \$25,000 were the most likely to report having had to change their life significantly in the past year to pay for their medical bills (> 26%), compared to their counterparts (<14%). See Figure 14 below.

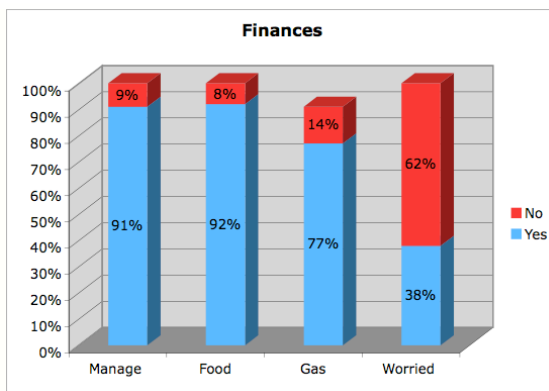
Figure 14: Medical Coverage



The vast majority of survey respondents (91%) reported that they were able to manage their finances, such as balancing their checkbook, paying bills, and banking. However, it is important to note that nearly one in five respondents (19%) with less than a HS Diploma or GED reported that they were not able to manage their finances, as did thirteen percent (13%) of adults age 85 and above.

Ninety-two percent (92%) indicated they had enough money to purchase the food they needed over the last year and eighty-four percent (84%) reported having enough money to purchase the gas they needed. Ninety percent (90%) reported having enough money to pay rent or mortgage, and ninety-three percent (93%) said they had enough money to pay utilities. Anecdotally, however, many mentioned the increasing difficulty in affording these expenses as the economy continues to be poor and gas prices keep climbing. Nine percent (9%) reported having difficulty functioning in their home and seventeen percent (17%) reported having difficulty maintaining their homes. Thirty-eight percent (38%) are worried about outliving their financial resources (See Figure 15 below).

Figure 15: Managing Finances



There were very few group differences related to having enough money to pay for housing and utilities. However, more individuals ages 60 to 64 and more individuals making less than \$10,000 were more likely to indicate they did not have enough money to pay for food. About half (50%) of the 60 to 64 year olds and respondents from rural areas indicated they were worried about outliving their financial resources, compared to their older counterparts. Older adults making less

than \$25,000 were the most likely to have made significant changes to their way of life in order to pay their medical bills (See Table 8).

It is important to note that while few respondents indicated that they did not have enough money to pay their housing or utility bills and most were able to pay for food and gas, a large portion of respondents identified rising costs in these areas as one of the biggest problems facing Medina County seniors.

Table 8: Financial Concerns by Respondent Characteristics

	<i>Not enough money to pay rent/mortgage</i>	<i>Not enough money to pay for utilities</i>	<i>Not enough money to purchase food</i>	<i>Not enough money to purchase gas</i>	<i>Worried about outliving financial resources</i>	<i>Changed way of life to pay medical bills</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Gender						
Male	2	5	6	14	32	19
Female	4	4	8	15	41	21
Age Group						
60 to 64	2	4	15	24	50	19
65 to 70	7	8	10	14	46	27
71 to 74	1	5	8	18	41	20
75 to 80	2	3	7	14	37	23
81 to 84	4	6	3	8	29	15
85 and older	2	2	2	10	28	15
Income						
Less than \$10,000	5	6	11	34	33	26
\$10,000-\$24,000	4	6	11	15	42	29
\$25,000-\$39,000	3	2	2	12	42	14
\$40,000-\$54,000	4	2	2	4	33	6
\$55,000 or more	2	4	4	4	35	6
Community						
Brunswick	1	4	11	19	37	25
Medina	3	5	7	15	38	20
Wadsworth	4	4	2	7	28	11
Other	6	4	9	16	50	27

The most popular responses for help they anticipate needing to remain in their homes included occasional homemaker services (e.g. cleaning services, meal preparation) exterior maintenance and repair (e.g., home repair, lawn and gardening services, snow removal, painting, window cleaning, adaptive living updates), home health and personal care, errand assistance, utility assistance, and rental assistance.

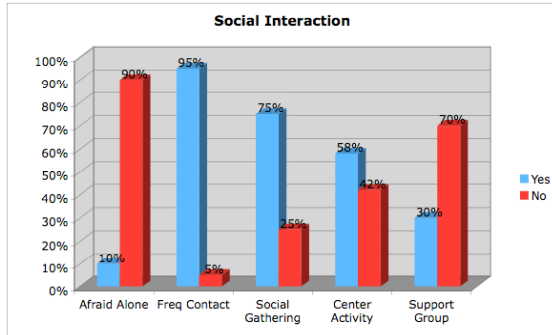
B. Engagement

Social interaction

Nearly all respondents (95%) reported having frequent contact with a family member or friend they feel close to. Three-fourths (75%) reported participating in a community event or social gathering within the past month. Over half (58%) of the respondents reported participating in a

senior center or community center activity or gathering in the past month. Another thirty percent (30%) indicated they had participated in some type of support group in the past month. Yet a significant percentage of the older adults in this survey expressed concern about being alone, in fact, one in ten (10%) said they are afraid of being alone. See Figure 16 below.

Figure 16: Social Interaction

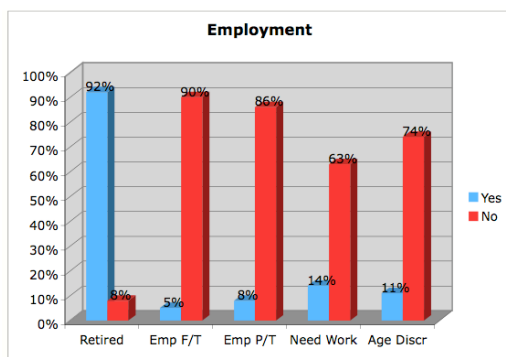


Women were more likely than men to participate in a community event (77% versus 70%) and senior center or community center activity or gathering (60% versus 51%). Women were also more likely to report participating in support groups than men (33% versus 20%). Only about half of older adults with incomes below \$10,000 reported participating in community events, compared to nearly three-quarters of those with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and nearly 9 out of every 10 of those making over \$25,000.

Employment

Most survey participants are retired (92%). However, about eight percent (8%) continue to work part-time and five percent (5%) continue to work full-time. For those who continue to work, fourteen percent (14%) reported being employed because they need to work. Eleven percent (11%) reported having experienced age discrimination when seeking a job. Older adults ages 60 to 70 were the most likely to report working full or part-time and working because the need to work. Survey respondents with incomes of \$55,000 or higher were the most likely to report working full-time, with nearly one in four (24%) indicating they were working full-time. Part-time workers were most likely to individuals with incomes between \$25,000 and \$54,000. Nearly one-fifth of individuals with incomes between \$25,000 and \$54,000 reported needing to work and nearly one in three (31%) of those making \$55,000 and over reported needing to work. Figure 17 below shows the percentages of respondents using these services.

Figure 17: Employment



The differences by gender, age, income, and community for those who are employed are provided in Table 9 below.

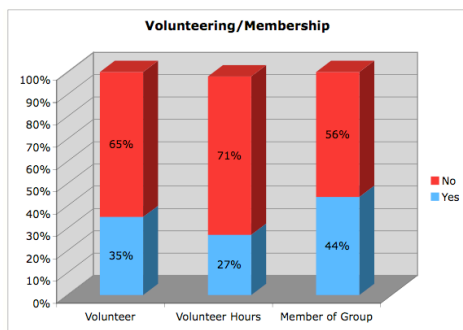
Table 9: Employment by Respondent Characteristics

	<i>Retired</i>	<i>Employed full-time</i>	<i>Employed part-time</i>	<i>Need to work</i>	<i>Age discrimination</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Gender					
Male	94	7	10	16	12
Female	92	4	8	14	10
Age Group					
60 to 64	74	18	16	42	26
65 to 70	90	8	16	23	15
71 to 74	96	1	11	10	14
75 to 80	95	2	6	7	5
81 to 84	99	1	4	4	2
85 and older	98	1	0	2	4
Income					
Less than \$10,000	94	1	3	7	9
\$10,000-\$24,000	97	2	8	11	12
\$25,000-\$39,000	89	5	15	19	10
\$40,000-\$54,000	90	6	14	21	8
\$55,000 or more	76	24	11	31	16
Community					
Brunswick	91	4	13	17	11
Medina	94	6	8	12	12
Wadsworth	96	1	5	4	5
Other	88	9	9	22	14

Volunteer work

Many older adults view retirement from the paid workforce as an opportunity to contribute to their community. About one-third (35%) of the respondents reported they volunteer in the community, with over one-fourth (27%) averaging over five hours per month. Forty-four percent (44%) reported being a member of a community group or organization (See Figure 18 below). There were no gender differences related to volunteering or number of hours volunteered. However, more women (46%) than men (9%) reported being members of community groups or organizations.

Figure 18: Volunteering and Group Membership



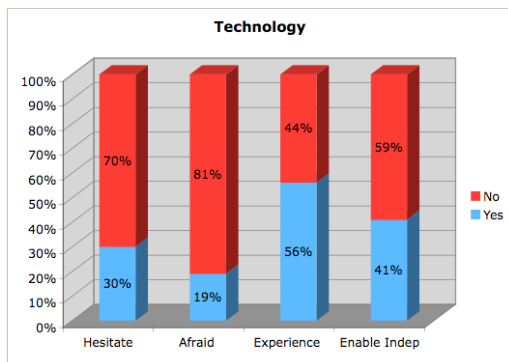
Caregiving

Twelve percent (12%) said they provide care for one or more family members or friends on a regular basis. Most of these caregivers are between the ages of 60 and 70 or between the ages of 81 and 84, with annual incomes of \$25,000 or more.

Technology

Seventy percent (70%) of the survey group said that they do not have any hesitation when they hear the word technology. Only nineteen percent (19%) indicated they were afraid of learning how to use a computer. Over half (56%) reported having experience using a computer. Forty-one percent (41%) reported that owning or using a computer would enable them to live more independently (See Figure 19 below).

Figure 19: Technology



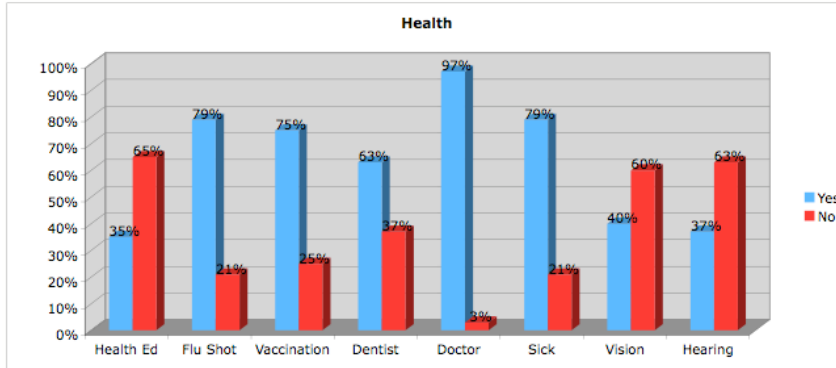
Older adults reporting hesitations when it came to technology, were more likely to be women (33%), age 75 or older (>33%), and have incomes less than \$55,000 (>26%). Individuals least likely to report having experience using computers were those with incomes below \$10,000 (36% versus 92% of those with incomes greater than \$55,000). Men (50%), adults under the age of 64 (63%), and those with incomes of \$25,000 or higher (46%) were more likely to agree that owning or using a computer would enable them to live more independently.

C. Well-being

Health and physical well-being

The vast majority of survey respondents reported having received a flu shot (79%) and having ever received a vaccination against pneumonia (75%). Sixty-three percent (63%) had been to see a dentist in the last year and nearly all have been able to make and keep doctor's appointments (97%). Unfortunately, forty-four percent (44%) of individuals with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and sixty-three (63%) of individuals with incomes below \$10,000 did not visit a dentist in the last year (See Figure 20 on following page).

Figure 20: Health



Approximately forty percent of older adults have had problems with vision and hearing in the past year, 40% and 37% respectively. The percentage of older adults reporting vision and hearing problems increases steadily with age, as reflected in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Vision and Hearing Problems by Age

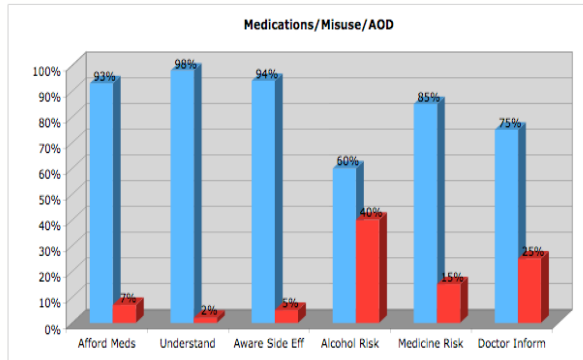
Age Group	Vision Problems		Hearing Problems	
	#	%	#	%
60 to 64	25	34	17	24
65 to 70	43	34	34	27
71 to 74	28	32	26	30
75 to 80	62	42	51	34
81 to 84	42	42	43	45
85 and older	60	52	65	55

Seventy-nine percent (79%) reported having someone who could take care of them if they were sick or disabled. However, over one-fourth (27%) of individuals with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and one-third (33%) of individuals with incomes below \$10,000 reported NOT having someone who could take care of them if they were sick or disabled, compared to those making \$25,000 or more a year (< 11%).

Only about one-third (35%) indicated that they had participated in an organized health education or health promotion activity in the past year. Health education participants were more likely to be women (77%), between the ages of 60-64 [over half of women in this age group (51%) attended health activities, compared to other age groups, < 35%], and have higher incomes. Approximately forty percent (40%) of those with incomes between \$25,000 and \$54,000, and half (50%) of those with incomes above \$55,000 attended health education or health promotion activities within the past year.

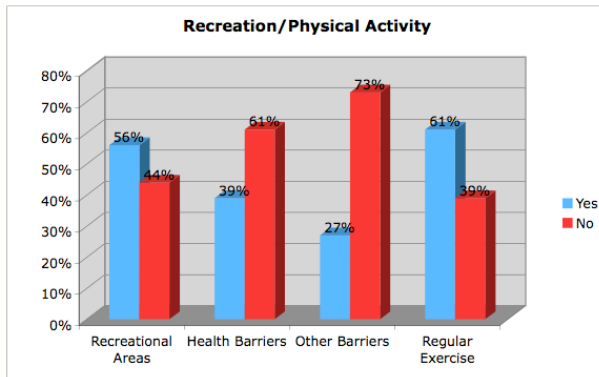
Nearly all of the survey respondents (98%) reported understanding the reasons they are taking medications and that they are aware of the potential side affects for the medications they are taking (94%). The majority of respondents indicated that their doctor or pharmacist has informed them about interaction risks of combining medications and/or herbal supplements (75%). When asked if they thought older adults were at risk for alcohol or medicine related problems, sixty percent (60%) thought older adults were at risk for alcohol related problems and eighty-five percent (85%) thought older adults were at risk for medicine related problems (See Figure 21).

Figure 21: Medications and AODs



Over half of the respondents (56%) reported frequent visits to parks, recreation facilities, or senior centers. Sixty-one percent (61%) reported exercising regularly (three or more times weekly). Thirty-eight percent (38%) reported that they have encountered health barriers to being physically active and another quarter of respondents (27%) suggested other barriers to being physically active, such as lack of transportation, limited mobility, and access to facilities (See Figure 22).

Figure 22: Recreation and Physical Activity



Only one-third (32%) of individuals with incomes under \$10,000 reported frequently visiting parks, recreation facilities, or senior centers. This income bracket was also more likely to indicate they had health barriers (52%) and other barriers (44%) to physical activity, when compared to their counterparts, less than 40% and less than 25% respectively. Women were also much more likely to report health barriers (41%) and other barriers (30%) than men, 30% and 15% respectively. Residents of Medina (63%) and Wadsworth (67%) were more likely to report exercising regularly than residents of Brunswick (55%) or other more rural areas (56%).

Two-thirds of older adults (67%) rated their health as *very good* or *good*. Twenty-eight percent (28%) rated their health as *fair*, and only five percent (5%) rated their health as *poor*. Further analyses, as shown in Table 11 below, were conducted to determine if there were any differences among the various groups of respondents. It is interesting to note that individuals making more than \$24,000 were more likely than their counterparts to rate their overall health as *very good*. With respect to gender, there do not appear to be any substantial differences between the men and women. The younger age group (ages 60 to 64) was more likely to rate their health as *very good*

compared to the other older age groups. And the oldest age group (age 85 and above) was more likely to rate their health as *fair* compared to the younger age groups.

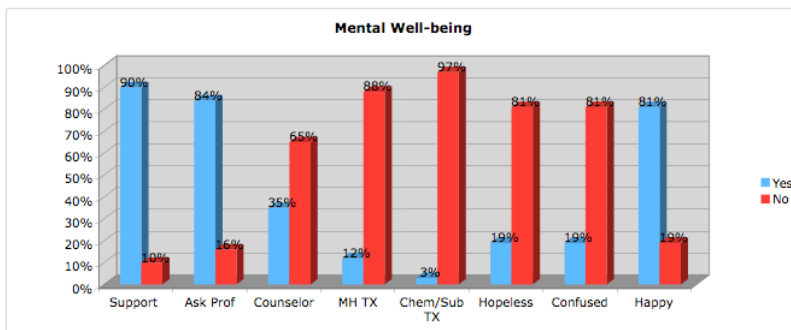
Table 11: Overall Health Rating by Respondent Characteristics

	Very Good		Good		Fair		Poor	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Gender								
Male	36	21	76	44	48	28	11	6
Female	83	17	244	51	131	27	22	5
Age Group								
60 to 64	21	29	29	40	19	26	3	4
65 to 70	27	22	69	56	21	17	7	6
71 to 74	19	21	40	45	27	30	3	3
75 to 80	25	17	76	52	36	25	10	7
81 to 84	11	11	57	57	29	29	3	3
85 and older	16	14	48	41	47	40	7	6
Income								
Less than \$10,000	11	9	53	45	41	35	13	11
\$10,000-\$24,000	33	13	123	48	85	33	17	7
\$25,000-\$39,000	29	31	43	46	21	22	1	1
\$40,000-\$54,000	13	22	29	50	14	24	2	3
\$55,000 or more	21	23	24	49	4	8	0	0
Community								
Brunswick	21	15	70	50	43	31	6	4
Medina	44	19	118	50	59	25	15	6
Wadsworth	27	19	71	51	38	27	3	2
Other	27	20	61	44	41	30	9	7

Mental well-being

The survey questions related to mental health were intended to gauge specific service needs, not to assess overall mental health of older adults or screen for clinical levels of depression. Regardless, the results point to some substantial concerns. Eighty-four percent (84%) said they would feel comfortable asking a professional for help if they were experiencing a mental health problem, but only thirty-five percent (35%) reported ever talking to a counselor, family therapist, social worker, or psychologist. Only twelve percent (12%) reported ever having had mental health treatment, and only three percent (3%) reported having had substance/chemical dependency treatment. See Figure 23.

Figure 23: Mental well-being



Approximately, one-fifth (19%) reported having felt down or hopeless in the last month and about one-fifth (19%) reported feeling confused or overwhelmed in the last month. Alternately, eighty-one percent (81%) reported feeling happy, excited, or content in the last month. When asked who they would turn to for help if someone they cared about was having a problem, the majority responded that they would most often turn to family member (85%), followed by a friend (41%), doctor (37%), pastor (33%), or neighbor (21%).

When asked about possible reasons they might refuse help with any needs or concerns they might have, the main reasons for not seeking help were: they have good help (21%), they do not want to lose independence (18%), it cost too much (14%), they can handle it by themselves or do not have issues (13%), and they do not know the person (9%). Table 12 on the following page reflects group differences for age, gender, income, and community relative to various mental well-being items.

Table 12: Mental Well-being by Respondent Characteristics

	<i>Someone they can count on</i>	<i>Comfortable asking MH professional for help</i>	<i>Ever talked with MH professional</i>	<i>Recently felt hopeless or down</i>	<i>Recently felt confused or overwhelmed</i>	<i>Recently felt happy or content</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Gender						
Male	88	80	28	14	14	77
Female	90	85	38	21	21	83
Age Group						
60 to 64	88	87	63	23	29	87
65 to 70	89	88	43	20	17	75
71 to 74	90	81	35	16	14	79
75 to 80	90	85	28	17	19	77
81 to 84	88	85	26	15	13	88
85 and older	93	77	24	20	22	86
Income						
Less than \$10,000	85	75	40	29	23	79
\$10,000-\$24,000	90	86	36	19	22	81
\$25,000-\$39,000	92	90	32	16	19	84
\$40,000-\$54,000	93	79	29	16	11	77
\$55,000 or more	94	91	40	17	17	83
Community						
Brunswick	91	85	33	16	18	76
Medina	87	84	40	20	21	80
Wadsworth	93	82	30	15	15	88
Other	90	84	34	24	21	82

Life satisfaction

Nearly all of these older adults said they are either *very satisfied* (47%) or *fairly satisfied* (40%) with their lives. Ten percent (10%) reported being *slightly dissatisfied* with their lives and three percent (3%) reported being *very dissatisfied* with their lives (See Figure 24 on following page). Further analyses, as shown in Table 13, were conducted to determine if there were any differences among the various groups of respondents. It is interesting to note that individuals making more than \$40,000 were more likely than their counterparts to rate their life satisfaction as *very satisfied*. With respect to gender and age, there do not appear to be any substantial differences.

Figure 24: Life satisfaction

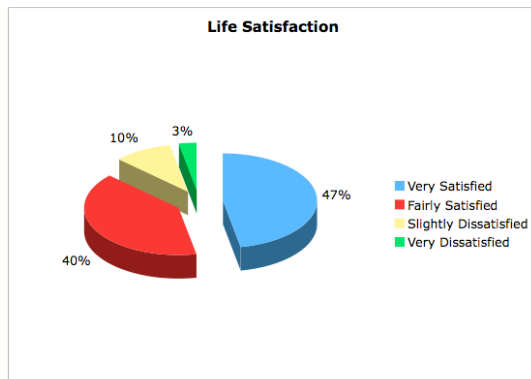


Table 13: Life Satisfaction Rating by Respondent Characteristics

	Very Satisfied		Fairly Satisfied		Slightly Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Gender								
Male	80	48	68	41	18	11	2	1
Female	221	47	186	40	43	9	20	4
Age Group								
60 to 64	36	51	26	37	6	9	3	4
65 to 70	53	43	50	41	14	12	5	4
71 to 74	42	48	34	39	11	13	1	1
75 to 80	75	52	54	38	10	7	4	3
81 to 84	46	47	40	41	7	7	4	4
85 and older	50	43	50	43	11	10	5	4
Income								
Less than \$10,000	49	43	44	39	13	11	8	7
\$10,000-\$24,000	104	42	107	42	33	13	11	4
\$25,000-\$39,000	39	42	43	46	10	11	1	1
\$40,000-\$54,000	35	60	20	35	2	3	1	2
\$55,000 or more	34	69	15	31	0	0	0	0
Community								
Brunswick	57	41	59	43	17	12	5	4
Medina	120	52	82	36	18	8	10	4
Wadsworth	64	47	61	45	7	5	3	2
Other	60	44	55	40	18	13	4	3

Access to supportive services

The survey asked if people were aware of the services available to seniors within Medina County, if they had used them personally, if someone they knew had used the services, and which services were the most needed. There was a varying rate of awareness for the different services available to seniors, with the most widely recognized services including home delivered meals (70%), transportation (64%), senior newsletters (59%), nutrition site meals (49%), and 211 (42%). The services respondents reported they were least aware of were Ombudsman (15%), chores services (17%), home repair (19%), and adult protective services (20%).

Overall, the survey participants are not heavy users of supportive services, and their help comes primarily from family and friends (See Table 14). They most commonly utilized the senior newsletters (26%), home delivered meals (16%), transportation (15%), nutrition site meals (12%), social/recreational activities (12%), medical assessments (11%), and attended senior speaker sessions (11%). The most commonly identified services used by someone they knew included home delivered meals (28%), transportation (24%), housekeeping (16%), nutrition site meals (15%), senior newsletter (14%), social/recreational activities (14%), personal care (11%), medical assessments (11%), and senior speaker sessions (10%).

Table 14: Service awareness, utilization, and greatest needs

	Aware	Used	Other	Needed
211	42%	9%	9%	20%
Housekeeping	34%	8%	16%	29%
Phone Reassurance	22%	6%	6%	10%
Friendly Visitor	22%	4%	6%	14%
Medical Assessment	32%	11%	11%	34%
Education	27%	8%	7%	13%
Employment Services	24%	2%	6%	7%
Ombudsman	15%	1%	2%	10%
Home Delivered Meals	70%	16%	28%	56%
Senior Newsletter	59%	26%	14%	20%
Transportation	64%	15%	24%	62%
Personal Care	28%	5%	11%	17%
Home Repair	19%	6%	7%	21%
Adult Day Care	28%	2%	8%	13%
Adult Protective Services	20%	3%	4%	11%
Counseling	29%	6%	7%	14%
Social/Recreational	39%	12%	14%	22%
Nutrition Site Meals	49%	12%	15%	19%
Health Ed	29%	7%	6%	13%
Substance Abuse TX	24%	1%	5%	5%
Escort Transportation	25%	2%	8%	18%
Chore Services	17%	3%	6%	15%
Legal Services	37%	8%	8%	27%
Housing	25%	5%	7%	16%
Speakers on Senior Issues	37%	11%	10%	15%

The greatest reported most needed services included transportation (62%), home delivered meals (56%), medical assessment, housekeeping (29%), and legal services (27%). The services receiving the fewest ratings as most needed included substance abuse treatment (5%), employment services (7%), ombudsman (10%), phone reassurance (10%), and adult protective services (11%).

The educational (health education, speakers, education), social/recreational services, employment, advocacy, counseling, legal, housing, and 211 were more likely to be used by the two youngest age groups (ages 60-64 and ages 65-70). Nutrition related (nutrition site meals, home delivered meals), personal care, phone reassurance, friendly visitor, and protective services were more likely to be used by the two oldest age groups (ages 81 to 84 and ages 85 and above). Older adults who reported using the supportive services in Medina County also tended to be women, individuals who live alone, and who live on a very limited income.

Survey respondents were asked what services they thought would be useful that are not currently available. The most popular responses centered on transportation, stressing the importance of regular, accessible, and affordable transportation that goes outside of the county. The next most popular responses focused on assistance with paying for basics such as food, housing, and utilities. Seniors also indicated a need for more volunteer home centered services such as home health services, small home job repair, companionship, and housekeeping. Other responses included the desire for jobs for seniors who want to work (home-based and community-based), financial counseling, and adaptive living services (e.g., widening doorways, adjusted counters and cupboards in kitchens and baths) to make homes more accessible to seniors with changing physical abilities.

Community environment

Respondents were asked what they felt were the biggest problems being faced by older adults in Medina County. Responses were coded in terms of the themes of the elements of the quality of life framework: housing, safety, access to services, human support/companionship, transportation, social interaction, learning and meaningful activity, and community connections/community involvement. While many Medina County respondents indicated they are happy with the way their community is at the present time, many offered feedback on concerns or things that could be improved. By far, the biggest concerns for those responding to this question were: 1) transportation (access to affordable bus services, more transportation to areas outside the county); 2) increasing costs of living (food, gas, utilities, medical coverage, rent/mortgage, taxes) while on fixed incomes; 3) housing (more affordable housing options that are accessible to shopping, community resources (e.g. library, community center), and social or community events; 4) affordable care and assistance services for older adults to help them maintain their independence and enjoy their community (e.g., home repair, lawn care, car repair, financial counseling, discounted social activities); and 5) awareness of resources (e.g., lack of knowledge of what is available and who to call).

Survey respondents were asked to identify their preferred method of receiving information. Most wanted to receive information face-to-face (55%), by mail (46%), through the newspaper (43%), by phone (38%), or via a newsletter (32%). A much smaller percentage of respondents wanted to receive information by e-mail (15%), flyer (11%), workshop (9%), website (7%), or 211 (3%).

Key Findings

Basic needs

- Relatively few older adults in this survey reported using supportive services personally (generally less than 10%), with some notable exceptions (senior newsletters, home delivered meals, transportation, nutrition site meals, social/recreational activities, medical assessments, and senior speaker sessions. However, respondents were slightly more likely to report that they knew others who used the services and a substantial percentage of respondents identified needed services, most notably transportation, home delivered meals, medical assessment, housekeeping, and legal services.
- The typical older adult who receives supportive services is female, living alone, and has limited personal income.
- One out of five respondents did not know where to go for information about supportive services, which signifies a need to improve awareness of information sources and service availability in Medina County.
- Most survey respondents appear financially able to meet fundamental needs for food, supplemental insurance, and prescription drugs.
- The survey showed that a large portion of the overall participants own their own home (61%); many of which reported living in their current residence for 20 years or longer (39%).
- Most respondents feel they can trust others around them, feel that their neighbors are willing to help each other out, and have someone they can call if they need immediate help.
- Nearly all respondents said their neighborhood is safe during the day (99%), with the vast majority of respondents (78%) indicating they generally trust their neighbors to watch out for them; while about one-fifth (17%) feel their neighborhood is not safe at night.
- A significant proportion of the respondents (13%) reported that they expect to move to another residential location within the next two years. “Pull” factors such as reducing home maintenance responsibilities (24%), repairs and renovations (15%), and needing help with daily living (15%) were the leading contributors.
- While the vast majority of respondents (86%) indicated they have been educated or warned about potential fraud schemes aimed at older adults (e.g., identity theft, home repairs, etc.), only about seventy percent (70%) of those with incomes below \$10,000 reported having been educated or warned about fraud.
- The survey showed that twenty-two percent (22%) of the participants receive shopping assistance, nineteen percent (19%) currently use congregate dining services (meals served to a group), ten percent (10%) have help with meal preparation, and thirteen (13%) percent receive home-delivered meals.

- Respondents who received home health care were most likely to be age 75 or older, have an income of less than \$24,000, and live in Brunswick or Medina.
- Although 69% of the respondents reported driving their own cars, lack of transportation presented a barrier to attending events or activities for a sizable number of Medina County residents (16%).
- Substantial numbers of older adults cited barriers to attending events and activities, as respondents reported that the older the person and the lower their income, the more likely they were to say that something kept them from going out to do things they would like to do.
- The most popular responses for what purpose older adults would use transit services included: grocery shopping (46%), medical or dental appointments (46%), banking and bill paying (29%), recreation and social events (28%), entertainment (26%), senior or community centers (25%), and religious activities (23%).
- Most survey participants appear able to meet basic needs for food, medicine, and health care, although 38% of the respondents reported concerns about outliving their financial resources.
- The vast majority of survey respondents (91%) reported that they were able to manage their finances, such as balancing their checkbook, paying bills, and banking. However, it is important to note that nearly one in five respondents (19%) with less than a HS Diploma or GED reported that they were not able to manage their finances, as did thirteen percent (13%) of adults age 85 and above.
- Although the majority of the respondents reported having enough money for food (92%), gas (84%), mortgage/rent (90%) and utilities (93%), many mentioned the increasing difficulty in affording these expenses as the economy continues to be poor and gas prices keep climbing.

Engagement

- The survey showed high levels of social interaction. Respondents reported relatively high levels of social interaction with frequent family activities (95%), monthly community or social events (75%), and monthly senior center events (58%).
- Older adults are a major volunteer force in Medina County. About one-third (35%) of the respondents reported they volunteer in the community, with over one-fourth (27%) averaging over five hours per month.
- Although most of the survey participants are retired (92%) about eight percent (8%) continue to work part-time and five percent (5%) continue to work full-time.
- Fourteen percent (14%) reported being employed because they need to work, with a significant portion (11%) reported having experienced age discrimination when seeking a job.

- Twelve percent (12%) of the respondents said they provide care for one or more family members or friends on a regular basis.
- A significant percentage of the older adults in this survey (1 in 10) expressed concern about being alone.

Well-being

- A significant portion of the respondents reported maintaining a high level of personal health through flu shots (79%), pneumonia vaccinations (75%) and annual dentist appointments (63%).
- Seventy-nine percent (79%) reported having someone who could take care of them if they were sick or disabled. However, over one-fourth (27%) of individuals with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and one-third (33%) of individuals with incomes below \$10,000 reported NOT having someone who could take care of them if they were sick or disabled.
- Only about one-third (35%) of the respondents indicated that they had participated in an organized health education or health promotion activity in the past year.
- Nearly all of the survey respondents (98%) reported understanding the reasons they are taking medications, are aware of the potential side effects for the medications they are taking (94%) and received consultations regarding the medication interaction risks from their doctor or pharmacist before taking their medication (75%).
- Over half of the respondents (56%) reported frequent visits to parks, recreation facilities, or senior centers, with sixty-one percent (61%) reportedly exercising regularly (three or more times weekly).
- Two-thirds of the respondents (67%) rated their health as *very good* or *good*, while twenty-eight percent (28%) rated their health as *fair*, and only five percent (5%) rated their health as *poor*.
- It is interesting to note that females were more likely than male respondents to rate their overall health as *very good*. The relative percentages are 36 percent of the female respondents versus 26 percent of the male respondents.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents said they would feel comfortable asking a professional for help if they were experiencing a mental health problem, but only thirty-five percent (35%) reported ever talking to a counselor, family therapist, social worker, or psychologist.
- Nearly all of the respondents said that they are either *very satisfied* (47%) or *fairly satisfied* (40%) with their lives, while ten percent (10%) reported being *slightly dissatisfied* with their lives and only three percent (3%) reported being *very dissatisfied* with their lives.

Issues to consider

The purpose of the Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey was to gather data about residents age 60 years and older concerning their quality of life, community life, and their need for community-based support services. The findings of the Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey have many implications for Medina County older adult services and how they are provided. The findings also have broader policy implications regarding some of the topics covered in the survey. Overall, survey respondents reported being satisfied with life, feeling good about their health in general, and having strong family connections and neighborhood ties.

The broader implications of the survey findings address issues of remaining needs in the county as they relate to older adults. Open ended responses to the question about what is the biggest problems facing older adults in Medina County supported many of the quantitative findings from the survey, suggesting that many respondents see transportation, housing affordability and alternatives, increasing costs of basic needs, affordable care and assistance services, and awareness of resources as primary needs in Medina County for older adults.

Transportation. Although nearly 7 out of 10 respondents reported driving their own cars, lack of transportation presented a barrier to attending events or activities for a sizable number of Medina County residents (16%). Transportation becomes even more of a challenge for the oldest seniors and those with lower incomes. A substantial number of respondents called for more accessible, regular, affordable public transit that meets the needs, schedules, and desired destinations of older adults in the county. Respondents said they would use transit services for grocery shopping (46%), medical or dental appointments (46%), banking and bill paying (29%), recreation and social events (28%), entertainment (26%), senior or community centers (25%), and religious activities (23%). Transportation may also be playing a significant role in the physical well-being of older adults in the county. Twenty-seven percent of respondents have encountered non-physical barriers to being physically active (44% of those making less than \$10,000), such as lack of transportation, limited mobility, and access to facilities. In fact, only one-third (32%) of individuals with incomes under \$10,000 reported frequently visiting parks, recreation facilities, or senior centers. Lack of transportation becomes a quality of life issue with real social and economic implications for Medina County because many citizens are no longer able to participate in their communities, access regular health services, or remain independent.

Affordable housing. Affordable and alternative housing options, as well as the need for rental and home assistance, appear to be an issue for many of the survey respondents. The survey showed that a large portion of the overall participants own their own home (61%), many of whom reported living in their current residence for 20 years or longer (39%). While most respondents indicated they had enough money to pay their rent or mortgage and utilities in the past year, many of the responses to the open ended questions suggest that the increasing costs of food, gas, medications, prescriptions, utilities, and housing are beginning to be felt by many and the tip of the iceberg as it relates to need may just now be appearing. In addition to the affordability of housing and basic needs (gas, food, utilities), seniors living alone are also reporting a need for supportive services that help them remain in their homes. Nearly 1 in 4 older adults between the ages of 71 to 74 reported the likelihood of moving within the next two years. The most popular responses for help they anticipate needing to remain in their homes included occasional homemaker services (e.g. cleaning services, meal preparation) exterior maintenance and repair (e.g., home repair, lawn and gardening services, snow removal, painting, window cleaning, adaptive living updates), home health and personal care, errand assistance, utility assistance, and rental assistance. And while most respondents felt they could trust their neighbors and felt safe

walking around their neighborhoods during the day, a substantial number of respondents (nearly 1 in 5) feel their neighborhood is not safe at night.

Financial management. Overall, respondents reported they had enough money over the last year to pay for basic expenses such as food, medical services and insurance, and prescription drugs. However, when asked about their future financial resources, nearly 1 in 4 said they were concerned about outliving their financial resources. About one-fifth of survey respondents indicated they have had to change their way of life significantly in the past year to pay their medical bills. This finding, together with repetitive responses from survey participants about the increasing cost of living with static incomes, suggests that the older adult population in Medina County may benefit from education about managing budgets, managing retirement investments and income, and about long-term care insurance.

Safety and security. In addition to the need to improve the sense of safety for those who do not feel safe at night in their neighborhoods, there is a significant need to improve other areas of security. Almost 1 out of every 3 older adults does not have a working fire extinguisher or know how to use it. Only one-third of respondents have a “Vial of Life” in their refrigerator with a list of current medication, doctors, and emergency contacts with the corresponding sticker on their front door. Nearly thirty percent of those with incomes below \$10,000 have not been educated or warned about fraud aimed at older adults.

Health and well-being. While there is overall high rating of health and life satisfaction in the county, there is a dramatic need to reach the older adults with limited income and other resources to ensure that their health and well-being improves to more closely match that of their counterparts. Much remains to be done as the following examples highlight: Over one-fourth (27%) of individuals with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and one-third (33%) of individuals with incomes below \$10,000 reported NOT having someone who could take care of them if they were sick or disabled, compared to those making \$25,000 or more a year (< 11%). Recipients of home health care were more likely to be female (nearly one in four compared to one in five for males), to be over the age of 80, and to have incomes of less than \$24,000. Forty-four percent (44%) of individuals with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and sixty-three (63%) of individuals with incomes below \$10,000 did not visit a dentist in the last year. Only about half of older adults with incomes below \$10,000 reported participating in community events, compared to nearly three-quarters of those with incomes between \$10,000 and \$24,000 and nearly 9 out of every 10 of those making over \$25,000. Only one-third of those individuals indicating they are on a special diet are following the diet closely.

Public awareness. Generally, respondents were not high volume supportive service users. In fact, 20 percent of the respondents did not know where to look for information about services. When asked about supportive service usage, the largest number of respondents (26%) most commonly utilized the senior newsletters (26%), home delivered meals (16%), transportation (15%), nutrition site meals (12%), social/recreational activities (12%), medical assessments (11%), and attended senior speaker sessions (11%). There was a definite discrepancy between awareness of what was available and what they thought was needed. The open-ended question regarding what services did they think would be useful that are not currently available supports the need for public awareness and outreach. Many respondents mentioned services that are readily available, such as: shopping assistance, lawn care, home repair, home health and personal care, meal delivery, telephone reassurance, employment services, fire safety, utility assistance, and social activities for seniors.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

This assessment provides a wealth of data about the strengths and needs of Medina County's older adult population. Most seniors are flourishing in Medina County. By and large, they are mobile, healthy, and engaged in a variety of productive activities. Older residents experience a good quality of life in Medina County and most plan to stay in the community. Nonetheless, there are needs evident in Medina County's older adult population which are likely to increase dramatically as the population ages over the next decades and the economy remains in its current condition.

Recommendation #1: Improve Transportation

The vast majority of responses regarding the biggest problem in Medina County for older adults centered on transportation. Older adults would like to have more accessible, affordable, regular transportation that reaches desired destinations, often beyond the boundaries of Medina County. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following transportation improvement strategies:

- The Medina County Transit Consortium should encourage a more fully integrated planning process including coordination with community-based organizations, as well as with human services and government-sponsored transportation programs. This task force should be composed of relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to, county commissioners, MCFFC, county public transit, private transit providers, older adult service providers, older adult caretakers, and older adults representing various geographic locations;
- Inventory the existing transit services, schedules, costs, and available routes (overlaid on GIS) to obtain a clear picture of what transit is available, where it is located, how often and to where it runs, and how affordable it is for older adults;
- Review existing Medina County Transit Authority ridership survey findings to analyze transit utilization and customer satisfaction data and make data-informed decisions;
- Identify opportunities (both within and outside of the city or county limits) to expand services or collaborate between providers to provide services where demand is not currently being met. Possible partners include: Geauga County Transit, Lorain County Transit, Laketran Akron, Metro Brunswick Transit, Alternative Medina County Transit, Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA);
- According to the Census Bureau, every senior over 75 has two or more disabling conditions. Existing transportation providers should consider how they will collaboratively partner with those serving older adults with disabilities (e.g., Medina County Creative Housing, MRDD, etc.) to ensure the county is meeting the transportation needs of the older adult population with disabilities;
- Research other communities (e.g., Cuyahoga County and outer ring suburbs) to determine how they addressed the increasing demands for convenient and affordable public transportation during diminishing funding;
- Offer driving assessment and training to help older adults remain on the road as safely as possible for as long as possible;

- Increase investment in public transportation to improve mobility for older adults. Transportation remains very expensive and greatly under funded in Medina County. More financial investment is needed from the private sector to make up for the lack of public funding that has plagued transportation in Ohio and in Medina County. There needs to be a transportation champion in Medina County who will work tirelessly to assure that the transportation needs (both current and future) are met;
- Create public transportation services and pedestrian-friendly environments for older adults, particularly in the more rural areas that may not currently offer convenient alternatives to driving; and
- Consider the expansion of senior transportation by funding community design initiatives that make shopping, entertainment and essential services more easily accessible. Possible solutions might include improvements to roadway design such as large print road signs, grooved lane dividers, dedicated left turn lanes, and extended walk times at pedestrian crosswalks to accommodate older drivers and pedestrians.

Recommendation #2: Increase Housing Alternatives and Affordability

Affordability of housing and housing related costs, as well as the need for housing alternatives for older adults was also identified as a significant need in Medina County. Older adult concerns regarding housing centered around the desire to remain independent, to maintain their current home, to afford utilities and repairs, and to be able to adapt their home to meet changing needs as they age. Currently, much of the focus related to senior housing is on people in crisis. Much remains to be done to be proactive in providing preventative services to help older adults afford and maintain their homes, or become aware of housing alternatives before they experience a housing crisis. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following housing improvement strategies:

- The Medina County Housing Network should encourage a more fully integrated planning process including coordination with community-based organizations, as well as with human services and government-sponsored housing programs. This task force should be composed of relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to, county commissioners, Senior Focus (MCFFC), public and private housing providers, county and city planners, older adult service providers, older adult caretakers, and older adults representing various geographic locations;
- Inventory the existing housing services, providers, costs, and locations to obtain a clear picture of what housing and housing resources are available to older adults, who is providing these housing options or services, and how affordable it is for older adults;
- Finalize and distribute widely the Housing Pathways model so that all providers of service to older adults are aware of the housing issues facing older adults, the decision-making process that often occurs when making housing decisions, and the resources available within the county to assist older adults with housing-related issues;
- Promote the development of home modification and home improvement programs that assist older citizens to adapt their existing homes to meet their needs, and market more effectively the existing services and programs available to seniors (e.g., home weatherization, home maintenance and repair, chore services, home adaptation, etc.);

- Ensure that there are resources in place to assist older adults in obtaining housing that is affordable and appropriate in size and design to accommodate their changing needs;
- Consider innovative ideas for helping older adults age in place, such as home sharing projects between seniors and young adults;
- Together with cities and townships, community-based organizations, human services, and government-sponsored housing programs, assess the existing land use plans, zoning ordinances and building codes to promote the development of a range of housing options that meet the needs of the county's aging population (e.g., access to transportation links, walkable distance from daily needs like medical services or shopping);
- Consider the expansion of senior housing partnerships with local non-profits and vendors to address countywide housing needs. Possible partnerships include: Working with Home Depot to provide adaptive living workshops where participants would receive discounts on materials to modify their homes; expanding partnerships with the Medina County Career Center and the Office of Workforce Development to modify existing homes or build new homes for seniors; or collaboration with The Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority and Senior ICAT to perform a housing assessment during in-home visits to ascertain specific needs of seniors with significant needs;
- Encourage all agencies who are considering new projects and grant writing efforts to submit their ideas through the Medina County Housing Network to increase county-wide awareness of housing projects, increase collaboration between partners with similar interests and objectives, reduce redundancy of program services and duplicate grant applications, and increase economies of scale; and
- According a survey by Catholic Charities Services of Medina County, sixty-four percent (64%) of those for whom an assessment was completed identified housing as an issue. Of these individuals, seventy-five percent (75%) had geropsych issues. The Medina County Housing Network should facilitate the development of a plan for addressing this population's housing-related needs.

Recommendation #3: Increase Financial Management Assistance

While the vast majority of older adults responding to the survey indicated they had enough money to pay their rent or mortgage and utilities and purchase the food and gas they needed over the last year, many mentioned the increasing difficulty in affording these expenses as the economy continues to be poor and gas prices keep climbing. Nearly 1 in 4 survey respondents said they were concerned about outliving their financial resources and about 1 in 5 indicated they have had to change their way of life significantly in the past year to pay their medical bills. With the full financial implications from the recent housing foreclosure crisis and the Federal Government "Bail Out" of Wall Street still unknown, it is important to take as proactive an approach as possible to ensure that a year from now, older adults are still able to afford their living expenses and can maintain their independence and financial security. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following financial management assistance strategies:

- Medina County should continue to assist older citizens by providing and expanding appropriate tax assistance, rental assistance, and utility assistance to offer a level of relief to those most in financial need. Medina County should continue to examine opportunities to

reduce the financial burden of older adults. A good example of how this could be achieved is the recent budgeting payment option for paying property taxes in Medina County;

- Inventory the existing financial assistance available to County residents, both public and private to obtain a clear picture of what assistance is available, who is providing the service, where it is located, how often and where it is offered, and how affordable it is for older adults. This inventory of resources should be made available, in a variety of formats, to all older adults in the County;
- The Medina County Financial Stability Partnership should ensure that all older adults needing financial management assistance are aware of this resource and are able to access and afford this service. Classes on budget management, asset building, managing retirement investments and income, and understanding and acquiring long-term care insurance must be readily available and accessible to older adults across the county. The County should fully utilize existing resources such as OSU Extension's Master Money Manager Program, Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP), Homestead Exemption Program, and the United Way's Sustainable Families initiative, as well as encouraging local churches and professionals (e.g., local accountant, attorneys, financial planners) to provide a portion of these programs for little to no charge to seniors as part of their community service; and
- Medina County should develop or partner with others who offer job training and retraining programs and lifelong learning opportunities that assist older adults who wish to remain in the workforce do so successfully. A variety of employment options, such as part- and flex-time work options, should be made available to attract and retain older adults who may want or need to remain in the workforce but may require flexible, adaptive workplace opportunities.

Recommendation #4: Increase Safety and Security

While the majority of Medina County residents surveyed reported feeling safe during the day within their neighborhoods, a substantial number reported not feeling safe in those same neighborhoods at night. There is also a significant need to improve other areas of safety and security. For instance, almost 1 out of every 3 older adults does not have a working fire extinguisher or know how to use it and only 1 out of every 3 older adults respondents have a "Vial of Life" in their refrigerator with a list of current medication, doctors, and emergency contacts with the corresponding sticker on their front door. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following strategies for increasing safety and security:

- Develop a task force of relevant stakeholders (i.e., representatives from police and fire, hospitals, city or township government, caretakers, and older adults), both within each community and across the county, to identify other areas of safety and security that may need addressed to ensure all seniors feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods, are aware of and possess the knowledge and tools to handle emergencies, and have community safety nets when they do not have a local family member to help them in times of need. The Senior ICAT Geriatric Assessment is a model for how such an approach could be implemented through interdisciplinary cooperative partners across the county, in a variety of environments, to achieve safety and security goals for older adults;
- Increase the awareness and utilization of neighborhood watch programs, especially in the areas where individuals were more likely to report feeling less safe (e.g., areas with respondents reporting incomes of less than \$24,000);

- Continue to build relations between the police, fire departments and older adults to improve older adult awareness of programs and services and strengthen partnerships between citizens and their community protectors. Opportunities for building these relationships while increasing safety and security knowledge might include fire safety workshops offered at older adult housing, libraries, or senior and community centers; community policing on foot in areas frequented by older adults; and increased public awareness of programs these department have in place to increase community and senior safety (e.g. Adopt a Senior, Watching Our Neighborhoods, tip lines, fraud and scam seminars, Jobs and Family Services Adult Services Program, etc.); and
- Medina County should offer additional education and training for older adults about how to protect themselves against financial fraud and predatory lending, focusing on those with incomes below \$10,000 who indicated that they had not received such training and are perhaps the least able to afford to be a victim of this type of crime.

Recommendation #5: Improve Health and Well-Being

While there is overall high rating of health and life satisfaction in Medina County, there is a dramatic need to reach the older adults with limited income and other resources to ensure that their health and well-being improves to more closely match that of their counterparts. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following strategies for improving health and well-being:

- The Medina County Health Forum should encourage a more fully integrated planning process including coordination with community-based organizations, as well as with human services and government-sponsored health and wellness programs. This task force should be composed of relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to, county commissioners, Senior Focus (MCFFC), public and private healthcare providers, older adult service providers, older adult caretakers, and older adults representing various geographic locations;
- The Medina County Health Forum should continue to fully recruit and engage all relevant program providers (e.g., Emergency Rooms, Primary Care Physicians, Senior ICAT, Geriatric Case Management, etc.) in the development of a mechanism or procedure for identifying those older adults who do not have someone who could take care of them if they became sick or disabled. Intervene early to design a plan of action for dealing with the issues that might occur if this person were to become sick or disabled and connecting them in a timely and proactive fashion to community resources;
- Develop a mechanism or procedure for identifying those older adults who do not have dental insurance and are facing significant health concerns as a result. While there is a dental clinic at the Department of Health, there is a huge demand for services potentially exhausting future budgets as this service is more fully utilized. The Department of Health should consider developing partnerships with local dentists to build a cooperative of providers who will offer pro bono care in collaboration with local hospitals or through mobile dental units;
- Develop an inventory of public and private providers of food banks, food-rescue, and food lines to obtain a clear picture of what assistance is available, who is providing the service, where it is located, how often and where programs are offered, and how affordable it is for older adults. Specific attention should be given to addressing the food security needs of shut-

ins, those with lower incomes, and individuals with special diets that are not closely following their recommended regimen; and

- Consider developing a countywide marketing campaign to increase older adult involvement in community activities and physical activities, such as the Step Up to Health Program. Determine specific barriers to low participation, especially for those reporting incomes below \$10,000. Identify useful strategies for increasing participation (e.g., improving transportation, making pathways and curbs user friendly, including more topics or activities that would have appeal for older adults, designing a public relations campaign to attract older adults to local events, activities, parks, recreation centers, senior centers, and town centers).

Recommendation #6: Enhance Public Awareness and Service Outreach

This survey made it quite clear that there is still a great deal of public awareness and outreach that needs to occur to ensure older adults are aware of the existing services, know how to access these services, and are comfortable reaching out to providers. IntelliSolve, Inc. recommends the following strategies for enhancing public awareness and service outreach:

- Medina County should find a mechanism for funding and distributing the Medina County Senior Resource Guide and the Medina County Commissioners Guide to Services in Medina County to all older adults living in the county. These resources provide substantive information to seniors regarding local resources and contact information for acquiring services and access to programs. One possible mechanism for distributing these resources widely and economically is through the HANDs Foundation Helping Hands publication. The Medina County Senior Resource Guide could be expanded to include more Brunswick programs for older adults;
- Medina County providers of older adult services and their funders should create and expand opportunities for the effective and purposeful participation of older adults on community boards and commissions as well as to create and expand meaningful volunteer opportunities in local government and non-profit organizations. This grassroots involvement would allow older adults to become intimately familiar with local resources and to become advocates in the building of public awareness and outreach for these resources; and
- Medina County should promote the development of a primary point of entry for information and access to all aging services. This single point of service should be committed to providing timely and relevant information to older adults about available resources throughout the county. They should also be committed to supporting the continuum of supportive services that older adults need to remain living independently at home and in the community. This single point of service would not seek to replace existing avenues for the provision of information and access; rather, it would act as a portal to these resources by providing links to these services in a way that is easy for older adults to navigate. An example for how this has been done in Cleveland is SeniorsConnect.org (<http://www.seniorsconnect.org/>), a website that has a user-friendly portal for accessing information and resources for seniors and is offered in partnership with the Cleveland Public Library.

Conclusion

Most of the older adults participating in the Medina County Senior Needs Assessment Survey reported moderate to high levels of well-being and overall life satisfaction. However, much remains to be done to meet the ever-increasing needs of seniors in the county, especially those with limited income and support. Program providers and local decision-makers must be very thoughtful about responding to older adult needs when the number of older adults is increasing, demands are expanding, and federal, state, and local funds are diminishing. The results of this survey will provide guidance in beginning the discussions and plans for building on the current strengths of the system serving older adults in Medina County and how these services might be improved over the next few years to ensure that all Medina County seniors have a high quality of life. An admirable number of community and county-wide collaborative organizations composed of public and private stakeholders currently exist. Engaging these collaborative organizations to enhance services is key to the successful development and implementation of effective strategies designed to address the existing gaps in services for older adults in Medina County. These strategies should embrace a “Front Door, No Wrong Door” approach that recognizes the holistic needs of older adults and is cognizant of the various pathways that exist to identifying and addressing current and future needs.

IV. Resources/References

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- Wilder Research Organization. (2003). *Survey of older adults in Ramsey County: Quality of Life and Community*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research Center.

V. Appendix

Appendix A:
Community Partners Participating in the Survey

Agency
Brunswick Recreation Center
HANDS Foundation
United Labor Towers
Lodi Ambassador & Aristocrat Apartments
Lodi Community Hospital
Lodi Good Samaritans
Bridges Home Health Care
Catholic Charities Services of Medina County
Elmcroft of Medina
Faith in Action- Medina County Caregivers
Medina County Health Department
Medina County Home
Medina County Job and Family Services
Medina County Office of Older Adults
Medina County Veteran's Service
Medina General Hospital
Medina Community Recreation Center
Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority
Nottingham Court
Ohio Bureau of Employment Services- Medina Works
Salvation Army
Samaritan Care Center & Villa
Second Baptist Church
Social Security Admini. & S.S.I.
Altercare of Wadsworth Center for Rehab. & Nursing Care, Inc.
Wadsworth Center for Older Adults
Wadsworth Public Library
Wadsworth Recreation Center
Wadsworth-Rittman Hospital & Home Care
Medina County District Library
Hospice of Medina County
Northview Manor
Northside Christian Church
Senior Day