



PINELLAS HIGHLIGHTS

# FAMILY & SOCIAL SUPPORT



Foundation for a  
Healthy St. Petersburg



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**Foundation for a  
Healthy St. Petersburg**

# **FAMILY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT**

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Strong family and social support systems improve population health because these resources help reduce stress and bolster mental and physical well-being.

# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

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## Family and Social Support

Social support stems from relationships with family members, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Socially isolated individuals have an increased risk for poor health outcomes. Individuals who lack adequate social support are particularly vulnerable to the effects of stress, which has been linked to cardiovascular disease and unhealthy behaviors. Examples include overeating and smoking in adults and obesity in children and adolescents.<sup>i</sup>

One important measure of social support is children in single-parent households. Children in single-parent households is defined as the percentage of children living in family households who are raised by a single parent.<sup>ii</sup> The percentage of children in single-parent households is 41% in Pinellas County compared to 38% in the state. Other youth related family and social support indicators are below:

- 15% of Pinellas youth are considered disconnected youth, the percentage of teens and young adults ages 16-24 who are neither working nor in school <sup>iii</sup>
- 17.3% of families with children under age 18 are below poverty level <sup>iv</sup>
- 8% of children ages 0-17 without health insurance <sup>v</sup>
- 295 children ages 5-11 and 340 children ages 12-17 were in foster care in Pinellas in 2017 <sup>vi</sup>

Strong social support is important to health as it helps patients seek care and adhere to their medical regimens. Many people living in Pinellas County are struggling with quality of life issues and require assistance from the community. For instance, according to Florida CHARTS (2016 data):<sup>vii</sup>

- 27.5% of adults surveyed in Pinellas County are limited in activities because of physical, mental or emotional problems
- 10.1% of adults surveyed in Pinellas County use special equipment because of a health problem
- 15% of the civilian non-institutionalized population in Pinellas County has a disability
- 11,356 of the Census population 18-64 in Pinellas have vision difficulty and 11,451 have hearing difficulty
- The age-adjusted suicide rate in Pinellas County (2015-2017) is 18.1 per 100,000 population as compared to the state age-adjusted rate of 14.2

Another important measure of family and social support is social associations defined as the number of membership associations per 10,000 population.<sup>viii</sup> Associations include membership organizations, such as civic organizations, bowling centers, golf clubs, fitness centers, sports organizations, religious organizations, political organizations, labor organizations, business organizations, and professional organizations.<sup>ix</sup> According to the Robert Wood Johnson 2018 County Health Rankings, Pinellas County's social associations ranking is 7.4 (the ranking for all of Florida is 7.1) <sup>x</sup>

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

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According to the Mayo Clinic,<sup>xi</sup> several studies have demonstrated that having a network of supportive relationships contributes to psychological well-being. In terms of chronic disease, the support of family or friends has been shown to lessen the chance that one will become sick or die from heart disease. Research conducted at Brigham Young University and the University of North Carolina showed that people who did not have strong social support were 50% more likely to die from illness than those who had such support.<sup>xii</sup>

### **Strong social support will help patients adhere to their medical regimen by reminding them to:** <sup>xiii xiv</sup>

- Keep their medical appointments
- Monitor their blood sugar and blood pressure
- Take their medication
- Get regular exercise
- Eat healthier foods

When patients adhere to their medical regimens, they can expect improved outcomes and a better quality of life.<sup>xv xvi</sup>

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

*This series of Pinellas Highlights is intended to illustrate the Foundation's definitions of the Social Determinants of Health framework and to provide specific data related to the Foundation's geographic focus area. The data presented is not comprehensive.*

# ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY ST. PETERSBURG

The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg (FHSP) is a private foundation formed in 2013 following the sale of the nonprofit Bayfront Health St. Petersburg. It is the steward of almost \$180 million in assets to support health equity in Pinellas County. Our mission is to end differences in health due to social or structural disadvantages to improve population health. We do this by inspiring and empowering people, ideas, information exchange, organizations and relationships.

Not everyone in Pinellas County is able to attain their highest level of health and well-being. Too often, the place where a person is born, grows, lives, works, learns, or ages contains impediments stemming from entrenched social or demographic factors such as race, gender, personal attribute, income, or geography. This is unacceptable and ultimately unsustainable. The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg seeks to address health disparities, advance population health, and achieve health equity in Pinellas County.

The Foundation is focused on social factors, which directly impact health outcomes, such as housing, income, education, transit, and many others as listed in the Social Determinants of Health Framework below.



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