

# Adventist Health Priority Area Overview



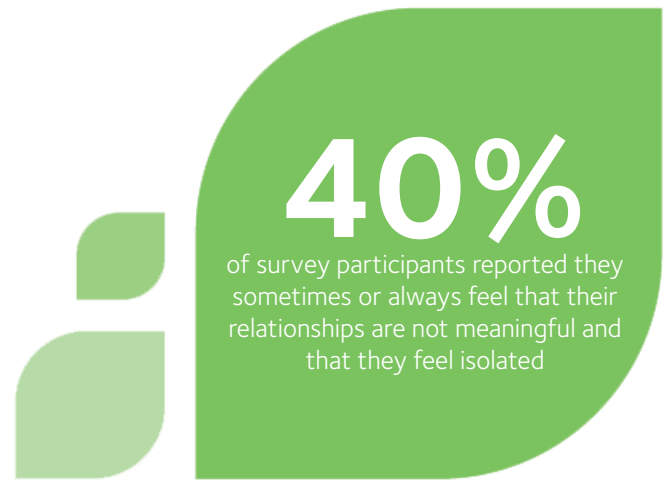
## Community Vitality

Community vitality is about whether people feel a sense of belonging to the place where they live and whether they feel connected to one another. Do they trust their leaders? Do they engage in community life and participate in decision-making? Do all groups in the community—across racial / ethnic, language, or other social or demographic differences—feel like they belong? These all contribute to whether people want to live in a place. That sense of belonging can, in turn, affect the community's tax base and resources to support schools, roads, parks, etc. In addition, social isolation has profound effects on the health of people. Some estimate it is the equivalent of smoking one quarter of a pack of cigarettes every day.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Health:** According to a 2018 national survey by Cigna, loneliness levels have reached an all-time high, with nearly half of 20,000 U.S. adults reporting they sometimes or always feel alone. These numbers are alarming because of the health and mental health risks associated with loneliness. According to a meta-analysis co-authored by Julianne Holt-Lunstad, PhD, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Brigham Young University, lack of social connection heightens health risks as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or having alcohol use disorder. She's also found that loneliness and social isolation are twice as harmful to physical and mental health as obesity.

A 2016 study led by Newcastle University epidemiologist Nicole Valtorta, PhD, linked loneliness to a 30 percent increase in risk of stroke or the development of coronary heart disease (Heart, Vol. 102, No. 13). Valtorta notes that a lonely individual's higher risk of ill health likely stems from several combined factors: behavioral, biological and psychological.



**Cost:** In a 2017 AARP study, the cost to Medicare of social isolation and loneliness was estimated at \$6.7 billion annually. Specifically, the increased cost was due to the higher health care costs of socially isolated and lonely seniors.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS



- PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
- HEALTH CENTERS
- SENIOR CENTERS
- SCHOOL DISTRICT
- LOCAL VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS
- FOOD BANKS
- SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES
- BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS

## SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERTS



- PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER
- COUNSELING CENTER ADMINISTRATOR
- BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
- SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
- SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR

## GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS:

**Social Isolation:** Social isolation can be defined structurally as the absence of social interactions, contacts, and relationships with family and friends, with neighbors on an individual level, and with "society at large" on a broader level.

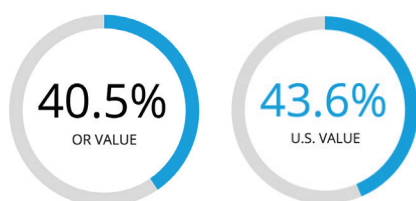
**Social Connection:** Social connection is the experience of feeling close and connected to others. It involves feeling loved, cared for, and valued, and forms the basis of interpersonal relationships.

**Belonging:** Belongingness is the human emotional need to be an accepted member of a group. Whether it is family, friends, co-workers, a religion, or something else, people tend to have an 'inherent' desire to belong and be an important part of something greater than themselves.

**Loneliness:** Loneliness is defined by people's levels of satisfaction with their connectedness, or their perceived social isolation.

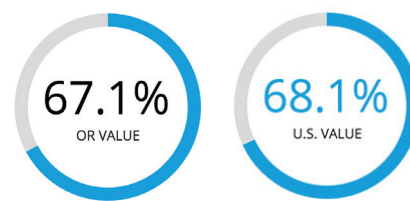
### Percent of Children (ages 0-17) who did Volunteer Work or Community Service in the Past Year

POM: 2017-2018 | Sources: National Survey of Children's Health



### Percent of Children (ages 0-17) who Live in Neighborhoods with a Library

POM: 2017-2018 | Sources: National Survey of Children's Health



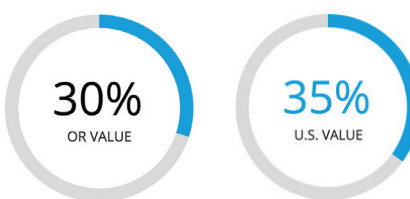
### Percent of Population who Engaged in Volunteer Work in the Past Year

POM: 2018 | Sources: Corporation for National and Community Service



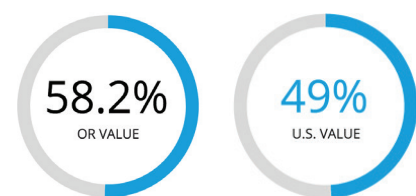
### Children under 18 who Live with Single Parent

POM: 2018 | Sources: American Community



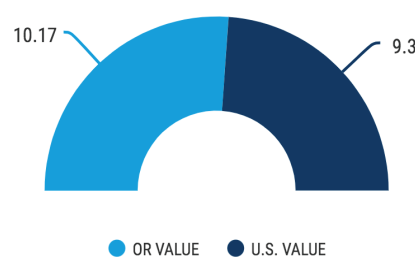
### Percent of Adults (Age 18+) who Reported Voting in Last Election

POM: 2018 | Sources: American Community Survey



### Social Associations\* (rate per 100,000 individuals)

POM: 2017 | Sources: County Health Rankings

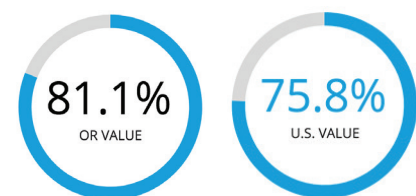


Per population of 100,000

\*Social Associations is a measure of the number of people who are members of community organizations, such as civic organizations, fitness centers and sports organizations, religious organizations, and business and professional organizations.

### Percent of Children (ages 0-17) who Live in Neighborhoods with a Park or Playground

POM: 2017-2018 | Sources: National Survey of Children's Health



# Evidence Matters



Explore the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps "What Works for Health" tool to help find policies and programs that are a good fit for your communities health priorities:

[www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health)

## RESOURCES

**AARP Foundation (Connect2Affect):** A network of resources that meets the needs of anyone who is isolated or lonely, and that helps build the social connections older adults need to thrive.

**Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness:** The mission of the Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness is to engage diverse stakeholders, increase public awareness, promote innovative research, and advocate for policy change that combats the adverse consequences of social isolation and loneliness and advances approaches that improve social connectedness for all Americans.

**Food Well Alliance:** Food Well Alliance is a collaborative network of local leaders working together to build thriving community gardens and urban farms.

**Rural Health Information Hub (RHI HUB):** Important resources focusing on Community Vitality and Rural Healthcare.

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):** The Division of Family & Consumer Sciences (DFCS) supports community vitality by focusing on the socio-economic potential of rural/urban interdependence and addressing the critical needs of people and places.