Income and Health

According to the State of Delaware Community Health Status Assessment (CHSA) published in 2013, “Quality of life and health status are intrinsically linked to economic, income and educational attainment of Delaware residents” (DHSS, 2013, p. 7). Below are some of the ways that income and health outcomes are linked.

Spotlight

Level of income can dictate access to:

- Health-related resources (doctors’ appointments, medication, insurance)
- Nutrition (fruits and vegetables, low-fat options)
- Housing (environmental location, quality)
- Education (no degree vs. high school vs. college)

People who earn a higher income have lower health risks and better health outcomes. Figure 1 shows a higher median household income in New Castle County in 2015 than in Sussex County. That same year, the prevalence of diabetes was 11.8% in Sussex County as compared to a prevalence of 8.5% in New Castle County, as shown in Figure 2. Diabetes is related to a variety of health risks (including sedentary lifestyle, obesity, family history and age), which can be linked to income. Diabetes increases the risk of other health issues including nerve damage, kidney disease and stroke.

Conclusions

Income can pose barriers to health. According to Aron, et. al., “programs and policies that improve the income and the income-generating potential of individuals, families, and entire communities are powerful tools for improving health, narrowing health inequalities, and containing spiraling health care costs” (p. 10). It is crucial to take steps toward improving the financial situations of families and individuals in Delaware in order to improve the health of the Delaware population.

References

