Delaware County 2026 Community Health Assessment
Focus Group Discussion Guide Draft
South County Residents

INTRODUCTIONS, GUIDELINES, PERMISSIONS (~5 MINUTES)

- Welcome!
- Has anyone participated in a focus group before? [SHOW OF HANDS]
- Review the focus group environment. Obtain recording permissions.
- Please turn off / silence cell phones.
- Explain purpose of conversation: Delaware County is in the midst of its Community Health Needs Assessment and Planning process, which has the ambitious goal of improving the health and wellness of residents. As part of this process, my research firm – Illuminology – is conducting focus groups with residents and community leaders and surveying residents about a variety of health issues and topics. Today, I'm excited to talk with you and hear <u>your</u> perspectives on health in the county!
- There are no right or wrong answers, and no need for group consensus. Please tell me what you're really thinking. I'm looking for your honest feedback.
- Forgive me if I move the discussion along at some points.
- Now, let's introduce ourselves to one another. Can you please share your name, what area of Delaware County you live in, and what you like most about the area or neighborhood you live in?
- *(NOTE: This guide presents a conversational roadmap, not a script to be followed word for word. The moderator will ask questions as applicable, taking into account the amount of time remaining.)*

MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH ISSUES (~20 MINUTES)

- Overall, what do you think are the most important **health issues** facing people who live in Delaware County?

- What **physical health issues** are present in the community [that we haven't already discussed]?

- What **mental health issues** are present in the community [that we haven't already discussed]? [PROBE AS NEEDED]
    - Anxiety or stress?
    - Depression?
    - Suicide or self-harm?
    - Trauma, either from childhood or adulthood? [PROBE TO UNDERSTAND EXTENT OF ISSUE AND IMPACT ON HEALTH]
    - Is there a stigma?

- What **substance misuse issues** are present in the community [that we haven't already discussed]? [PROBE AS NEEDED]
    - Alcohol?

- Vaping?
- Tobacco/nicotine use?
- Prescription drug abuse?
- Use of harder drugs?

HEALTH CARE ACCESS (~15 MINUTES)

- What are some reasons residents may not get (or may have delays in getting) health care? [PROBE AS NEEDED]
  - Cost? (Co-pay/deductible? No health insurance? Other?)
  - Availability?
  - Transportation?
  - Feeling that providers might not look like me or understand me or my community?

- Is there a particular kind of health care that is difficult to access?

- [IF NEEDED] Are the reasons for delaying / not getting care the same for physical health care versus mental health care?
  - What other reasons are there for delaying or not getting mental health care?

- Why might residents leave the county to receive health care? [PROBE TO UNDERSTAND WHERE GETTING HEALTH CARE/WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES

GEOGRAPHICAL COMPARISON (~5 MINUTES)

- We've talked about a lot of health issues and health care access issues so far. [VERY BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE]. Would you say that there are any differences in health issues or health care access issues in the northern more rural areas of the county compared to the southern more populated areas of the county, or not so much? [PROBE TO UNDERSTAND]

CROSS-CUTTING FACTORS (~30 MINUTES)

Social Determinants of Health

- Next I want to talk about the non-medical factors that might influence health. Some examples of these factors are financial stability; safe, affordable housing; access to transportation; social and community support; and access to education and information.
  - What non-medical factors do you see as issues that affect the health of the community?
  - How much or your household income goes toward your housing? Would you say it's a reasonable amount, or not so much?
    - [IF NEEDED] What issues with the cost of housing exist in the community?

Community Belonging

- Do you feel like there is a sense of belonging in the community, or not so much? [PROBE TO UNDERSTAND GAPS IN BELONGING]

Sources of Health-Related Information

- What sources do you trust for learning about health?
    - What sources do you mistrust?

[IF TIME] *Land Use/Development*

- In some parts of Delaware County there are a lot of changes in how land is being used and there is a lot of development. How do you feel that impacts the health of residents?

PARTING COMMENTS (~15 MINUTES)

[PARTICIPANTS WILL ALSO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS IN WRITING AT THE END OF THE GROUP/AFTER THE GROUP AND PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS THEY HAVE TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO VOICE ALL THOUGHTS/CONCERNS]

- [IF TIME] What are some things that community partners could do – or could do more of – to improve the health and well-being of residents?

- Thinking about the health of the community, what else do you think we should know?

<IF TIME ALLOWS & NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED>

Poverty & Discrimination

- How do you think **poverty** affects the health topics we talked about today?

- How do you think **racial/ethnic discrimination** affects the health topics we talked about today?