

2004 Montgomery County Health Survey Results & Analysis

FINAL REPORT

**Community Resource Development
Publication # CRD-04-27**

Prepared for

**Mississippi Hospital Association
Jackson, Mississippi**

May 28, 2004

(Revised June 30, 2004)

Introduction

Health care is important for the well being of local residents, and the economic success of most rural counties in Mississippi. The non-metropolitan health care sector, which is represented by professional health services, hospitals, and nursing and protective care facilities in 80% of the counties in Mississippi, contributes more than \$2.5 billion of income annually and supports 81,000 jobs in all sectors of the state's economy. Although the economic importance of health care in Mississippi is well known, the state still ranks among the highest in the nation for heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and infant mortality. It is generally accepted that new businesses will locate to areas with good education and health care systems in place. Everyone, especially families and seniors, value locally available health care. Still, many residents see their health care system in trouble: hospitals have been closed, services have been cut, and doctors, discouraged by declining rates of Medicaid reimbursement and increasingly diminished medical infrastructure, seek opportunities away from their home towns, thus further compounding problems with access and availability.

The complexities of a troubled health care system require determined action by leaders of local communities. Community leaders, who often make decisions in a very dynamic environment, require tools to aid in the analysis of potential impacts in response to policy decisions and economic change. Identification and evaluation of local health care systems is important for rural development and community sustainability. Legislators, aware of the differential impacts across the state to a given policy, can also benefit from information that illustrates the variety and magnitude of health care impacts and policies on communities. However, information on health care; availability, access, quality of care, gaps in services, and perceived priorities of medical services, is simply not available from secondary sources. How residents view issues related to health care in their community can only be measured by querying people directly.

Fortunately, this information is now available to community leaders and legislators representing the citizenry of Montgomery County, Mississippi. In January 2004, the Mississippi Hospital Association sought the help and expertise of Community Resource Development (CRD), a unit of Mississippi State University Extension Service, to develop and administer a health survey of households in Montgomery County. CRD is well established as a provider of educational programs and technical assistance utilizing the latest research-based knowledge, strategies, and technology.

This report presents the results of the 2004 Montgomery County Health Survey, a random telephone survey of more than 400 households in Montgomery County. The survey was designed, implemented and analyzed by CRD. The local community advertised the survey before it was conducted. Survey data were collected from households by telephone during the third week of January. These results provide a glimpse into how the health care system is perceived by a representative sample of local residents of Montgomery County in January of 2004.

The 2004 Montgomery County Health Survey consisted of more than 40 questions related primarily to access and availability of health care, perceived quality and concerns about specific issues, open-ended questions about satisfaction with current local health services, and general demographic/economic types of questions. The total number of respondents was 411, though the counts were lower for multi-level questions, and for questions where respondents refused to answer, didn't know, or weren't sure. Anonymity was assured for all respondents, and each survey was conducted in confidence.

The average age of respondents for this survey was 52 (Figure 1). Thirty percent of the respondents were 65 years of age or older.

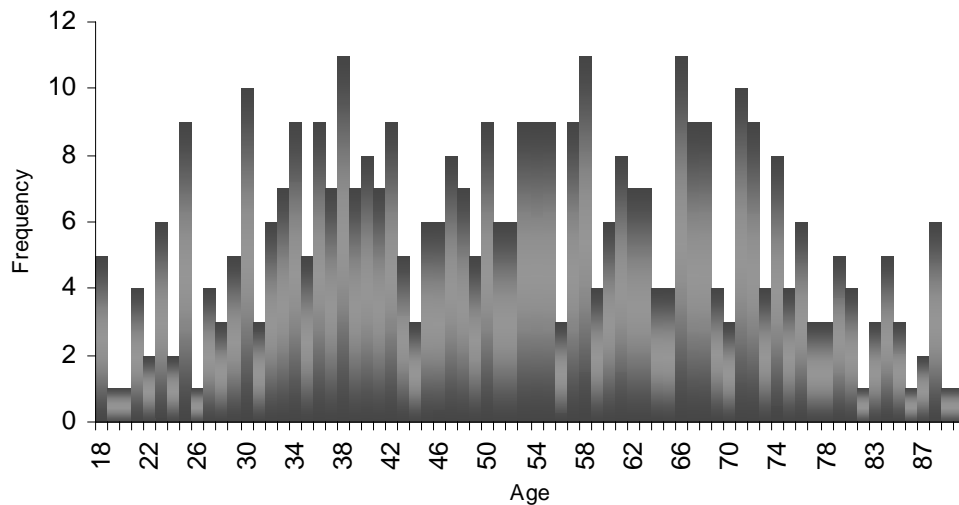


Figure 1. Age Distribution of Respondents

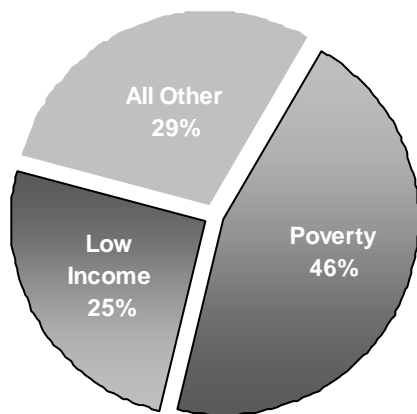


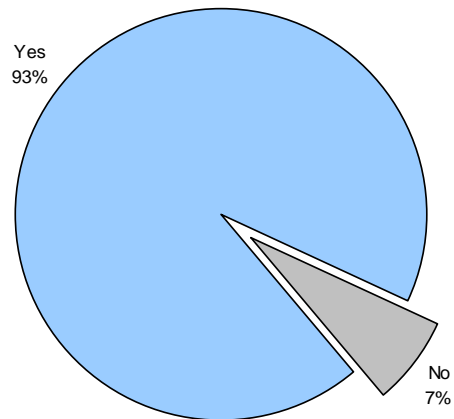
Figure 2. Respondent Income Groups

More than 75% of the respondents were female, and 62.5% of the respondents were white, while 36.3% were black/African American. Most of the respondents had incomes at or less than 200% of the poverty level according to federal poverty guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Figure 2).

More than 75% of the respondents stated that their place of residence was located in the 38 zip code prefix; the remainder were in the 39 zip code prefix.

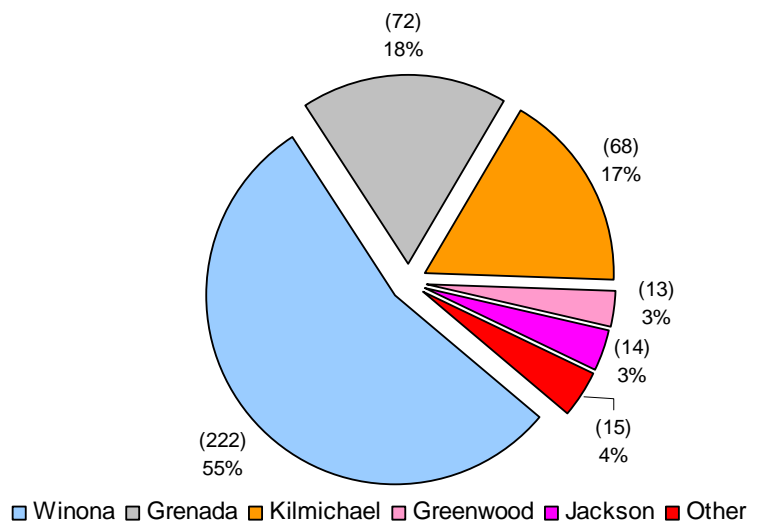
1. Do you use a family doctor for most of your routine health care?

This was the first question asked on the survey. 389 of the 411 households (93%) surveyed responded by saying "yes"; 29 persons said "no".



2. What city or town do you go to for MOST of your family's primary health care?

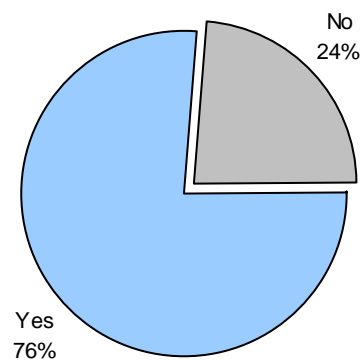
Most of the respondents stated that they received most of their health care in Winona, followed by Grenada and Kilmichael.



3. Did you or a family member use a doctor in Montgomery County in the last 12 months?

More than three quarters of the respondents (307) answered "yes" to this question. Those who answered "no" (95 respondents) were asked the following question:

"Why do you use a family doctor outside the Montgomery County area?" See next page for responses.



4. Why do you use a family doctor outside the Montgomery County area?

Respondents who answered “yes” to question number three were asked this question. One hundred eleven of the responses to this question fell into four distinct categories: convenience, familiarity, necessity, and quality of care; the remainder (196 responses) were not categorized.

Familiarity: 45% of the categorized responses were in this group. Fifty responses included such statements as, “He’s been my physician for a long time”, “I had this doctor when I lived in [another county]”, we liked him and stayed [with him]”, and “I have family who works for the doctor”.

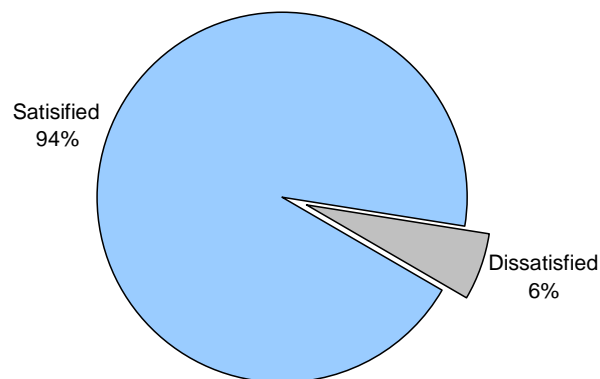
Convenience: 22% of the categorized responses were in this group. Twenty-four responses included such statements as, “I work there so it is more convenient”, “It’s closer”, and “she works there”.

Necessity: 17% of the categorized responses were in this group. Nineteen responses included such statements as, “Not one here for diabetes”, “Specialist”, “Because of the VA hospital”, and “Because that is where my cardiologist is...”

Quality: 16% of the categorized responses were in this group. Eighteen responses included such statements as, “Better doctors”, “There’s not a good selection within Montgomery County”, and “Just better doctor and better care”.

5. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of care provided by your family doctor?

There were 284 respondents who answered “yes”; 19 answered “no”, and 4 responses were unusable.



5a. Why were you satisfied?

There were 104 responses to this question, which fell into three distinct categories: resolution of problem, humanity, and quality:

Resolution (41%): forty-three of the respondents said they were healed, got better, problem solved, etc.

Humanity (37%): thirty eight of the respondents noted a high level of personal attention, good bedside manner, friendliness of doctors and staff, availability/accessibility of doctors, perceived level of trust.

Quality (22%): twenty-three of the respondents indicated satisfaction with prompt and efficient service, value for money, and level of professionalism.

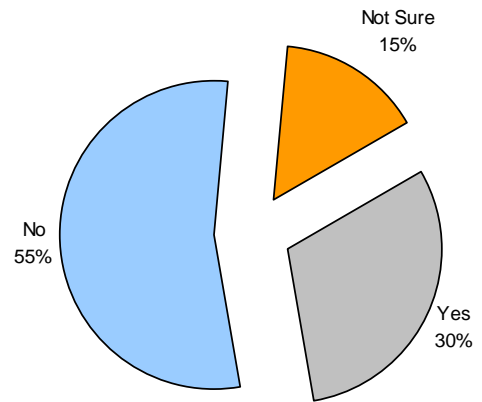
5b. Why were you dissatisfied?

Respondents indicated dissatisfaction for generally the same reasons as those who were satisfied.

Resolution and quality were the most frequently cited reasons for dissatisfaction and included statements such as, “I didn’t get the results and the attention I was looking for”, “Wait time was too long”, “It was too slow”, and “Because the level of service was not good.”

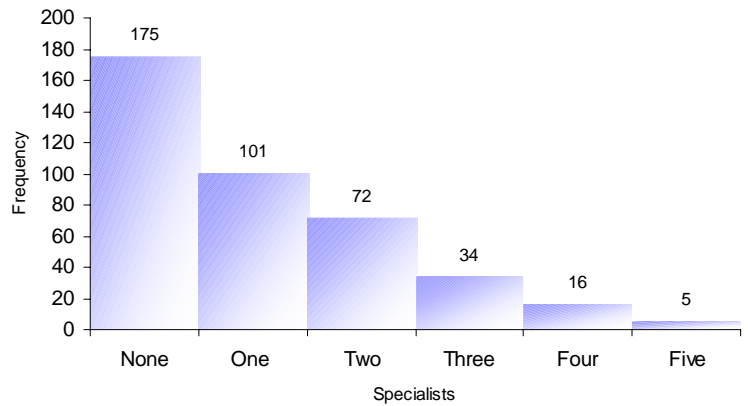
6. Do you think there are enough family doctors in Montgomery County?

YES: 125, NO: 222, DKNSR: 64



7. How many different kinds of specialists (doctors) did you or a family member see in the past 12 months?

55.5% of the respondents saw one or more specialists in the past 12 months. 24.6% saw one specialist, 17.5% saw two specialists, 8.3% saw three specialists.



7a. What specialists were used by you or your family?

For this question there were 228 responses. Listed below are the specialties that represent at least 5% of the respondents' answers. The number of respondents is listed and the percentage in parentheses. Due to random sampling, caution is advised when comparing between specialties.

Cardiologists: 32 (14.0%), Obstetrics/Gynecologist: 21 (9.2%), Optometry/Ophthalmology: 13 (5.7%). Other categories of note: Orthopedics, Oncologist, Dermatology, Family Practitioner, Neurology, and Ear, Nose & Throat.

7b. In what city is this specialist located?

For this question there were 228 responses. The number of respondents is listed and the percentage in parentheses. Due to random sampling, caution is advised when comparing between locations.

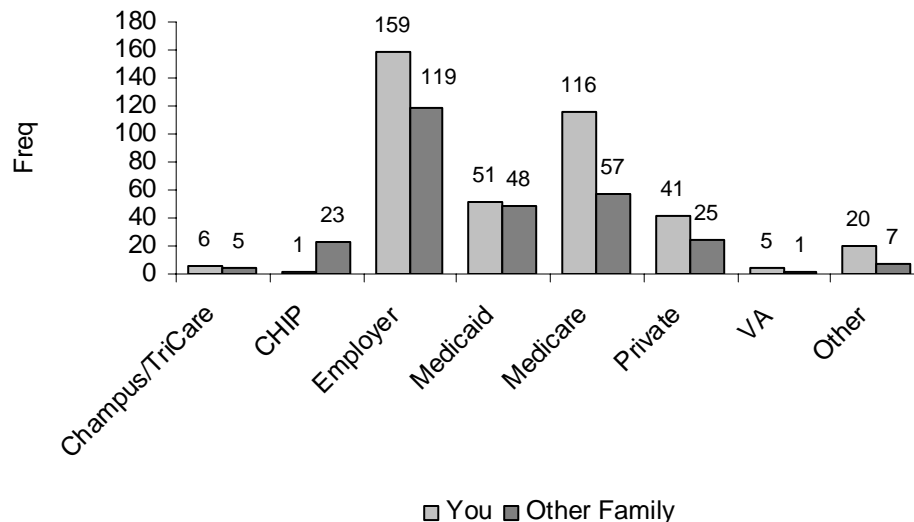
Jackson: 75 (32.9%), Grenada: 54 (23.7%), Greenwood: 34 (14.9%), Winona: 17 (7.5%), Memphis, TN: 13 (5.7%), Oxford: 10 (4.4%), Tupelo: 3 (1.3%), Other: 22 (9.6%).

Health Insurance Coverage

8. Do you or your family have health insurance coverage?

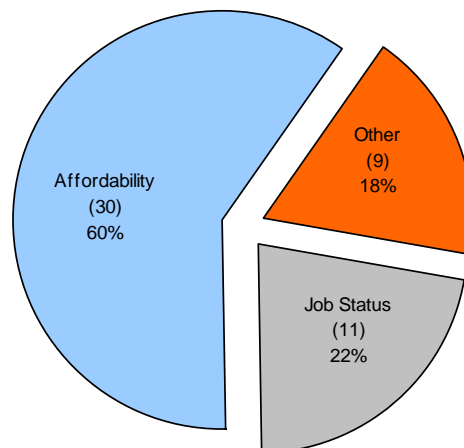
YES: 88% (359 respondents)
NO: 12% (51 respondents)

Respondents who answered “yes” to question number eight were queried to determine the types of health insurance under which they and their family were covered. Evident in the results was the preponderance of respondents and their family members who were covered by employer/previous employer insurance plans: 159 of the respondents themselves were covered in this way, and 119 of the respondents “other family members” were covered by employer insurance. 116 respondents were covered by Medicare. Only 41 of the respondents were covered under a self-paid plan or private insurance. Responses to Other were mostly Blue Cross/ Blue Shield, or AARP insurance. It should be noted that some employers offer Blue Cross/Blue Shield – respondents with employer-led Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans could have answered “yes” for “Employer” as well as “Other – Blue Cross/Blue Shield”.



9. Which of the following BEST describes why you do not have health insurance for you or your family?

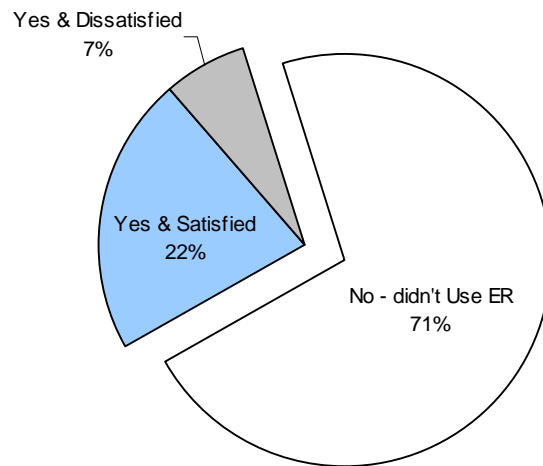
There were 51 respondents who did not have health insurance, and who were consequently asked this question. One person refused to answer the question. The results here are based on the remaining responses. “Couldn’t afford to pay the premiums” was the most frequently cited reason. Job status includes unemployment and changed employers.



Tyler Memorial Hospital Emergency Room

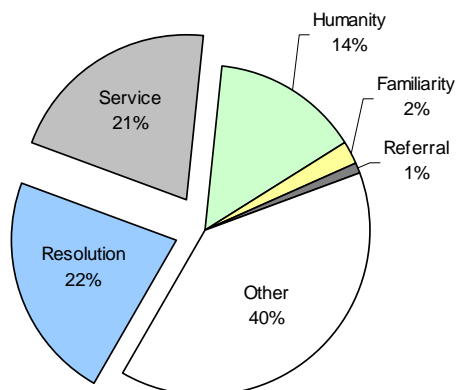
10. Have you or any member of your family used Emergency Room services at Tyler Memorial Hospital in the past 12 months?

There were 118 respondents who answered "yes"; they were then asked, "Were you or your family satisfied or dissatisfied with the services?" There were 90 respondents who said they were satisfied and 28 who were not satisfied. There were 293 respondents who said they had not used the emergency room (71%). Of the 29% of the respondents who said they or their family had used emergency room services at Tyler Memorial Hospital, 76.3% of them said they were satisfied.



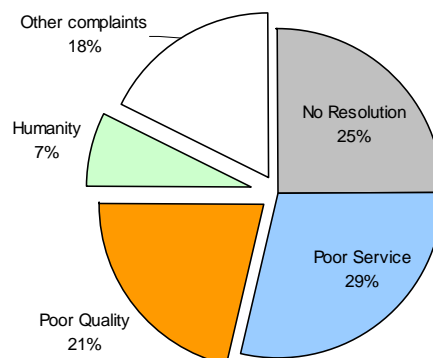
10a. Why were you satisfied?

Reasons related to resolution, service, and humanity (see question 5a for explanation) represented most of the answers given by respondents (57%). Familiarity and referrals were also stated as reasons for being satisfied.



10b. Why were you dissatisfied?

Reasons for dissatisfaction included lack of resolution (e.g., "not cured"), poor service or poor quality. Service issues centered mostly on unsatisfactory waiting periods. Quality issues included complaints such as misdiagnosis, and inability of staff to perform routine care (e.g., "one person couldn't get the needle in").

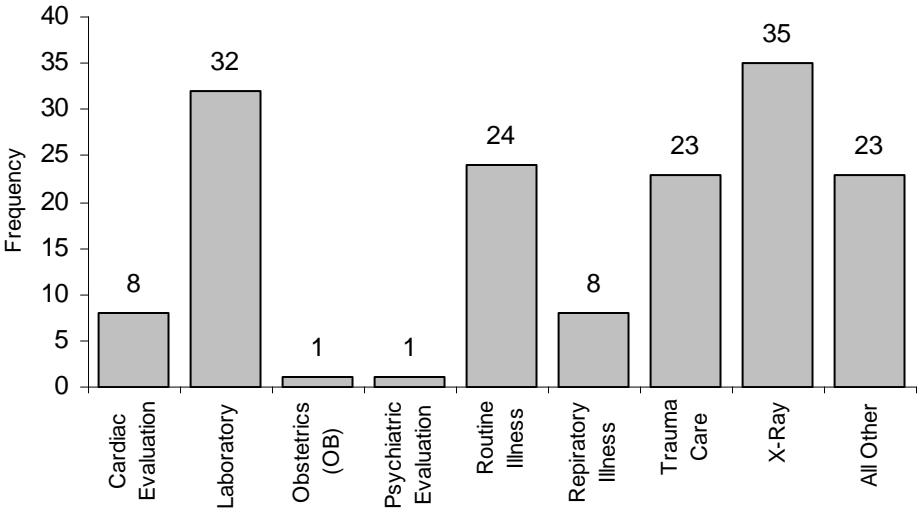


11. What emergency room services were used (at Tyler Memorial)?

There were 118 respondents who answered “yes” to question 10. Respondents who answered “yes” to question 10 were asked to answer whether or not they had made use of the any of the emergency room services in the following list:

- 1. Cardiac Evaluation
- 2. Laboratory
- 3. Obstetrics (OB)
- 4. Psychiatric Evaluation
- 5. Respiratory Therapy
- 6. Routine Illness
- 7. Trauma Care
- 8. X-Ray (Radiology)
- 9. Other

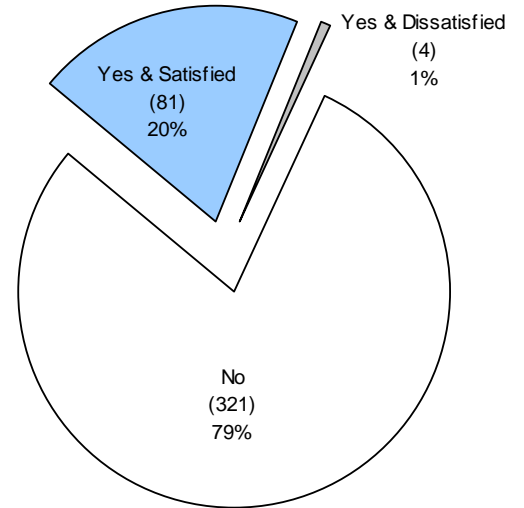
The results of this question are presented in the following figure. 35 of the respondents said they used X-Ray services, 32 used lab services, and 24 respondents used the emergency room at Tyler Memorial for routine illness. Some respondents used multiple services, therefore the total of services sued will add to more than the number of respondents for this question.



Tyler Memorial & Kilmichael Hospitals

12. Other than the emergency room at Tyler Memorial Hospital, have you or any member of your family used the services of Tyler Memorial or the Kilmichael Hospital in the past 12 months?

Respondents who answered “yes” were asked, “Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your Tyler Memorial or Kilmichael Hospital experience?” Of the 21% of the respondents who said they had used these hospital services, more than 90% were satisfied.



12a. Why were you satisfied?

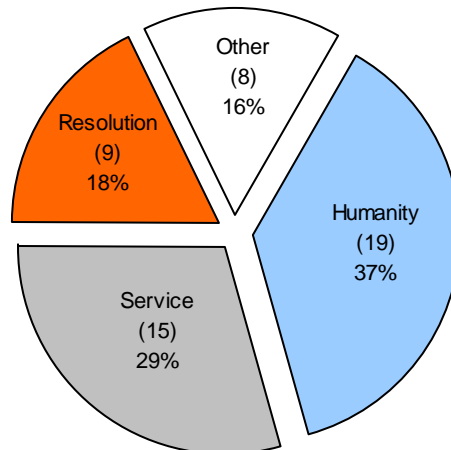
There were 81 responses to this question, which fell into three distinct categories: humanity, service and resolution:

Humanity (37%): For example, “Everybody is just like your friend”; “real nice people”.

Service (29%): For example, “I just love their service”; “good service”; “no long wait”.

Resolution (18%): For example, “met the needs of my illness”; “found out what was wrong”.

Other responses included reasons related to convenience, familiarity with doctors and staff, and quality (e.g., “they’re excellent at drawing blood”).



12a. Why were you dissatisfied?

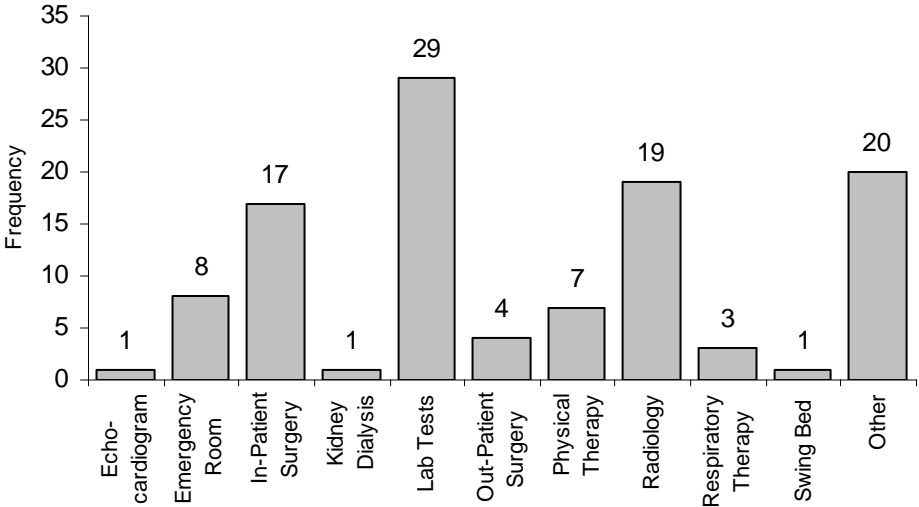
The response rate was too low to provide meaningful data on why respondents were dissatisfied (n=4).

13. What hospital services did you use?

There were 88 respondents who answered “yes” to question 12. Respondents who answered “yes” to question 12 were asked whether or not they had made use of the any of the services in the following list:

1. Behavioral Health Services
2. Echo-Cardiogram
3. Emergency Room (at Kilmichael Hospital)
4. In-patient Stay
5. Kidney Dialysis
6. Laboratory (blood) tests
7. Out-patient Surgery
8. Physical Therapy
9. Radiology (X-ray, CT or CAT Scan, mammogram)
10. Respiratory Therapy
11. Swing Bed

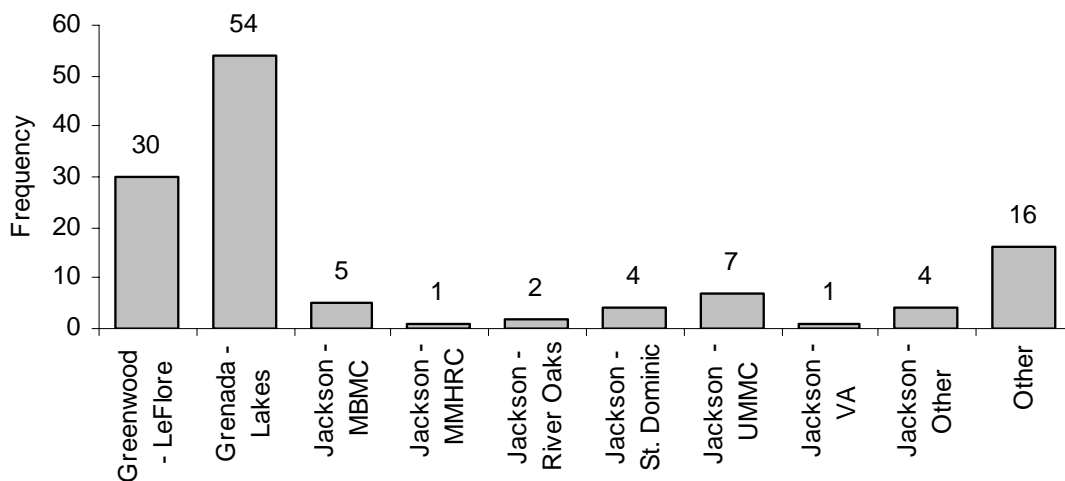
The results of this question are presented in the following figure. 29 of the respondents said they used at least one of the hospitals for lab tests, 19 used radiological services, and 17 were admitted for in-patient surgery. Note that some respondents may have used multiple services. There were 17 respondents who said they used In-Patient Surgery services, and one who said they used Kidney Dialysis services, however neither of these services are locally available.



14. Not counting the Tyler Memorial or Kilmichael Hospitals, have you or any member of your family used the services of any other hospital in the past twelve months?

122 of the 411 total respondents answered “yes” to this question, one person refused, and the remainder, 288 persons, said “no”. Respondents who answered “yes” were then asked whether or not they used any of the hospitals in the following list (abbreviations in parentheses refer to figure column titles).

- Greenwood - LeFlore
- Grenada - Lakes Hospital
- Central Mississippi Medical Center - Jackson
- Jackson – MBMC: Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, Jackson
- Jackson – MMHRC: Mississippi Methodist Hospital & Rehabilitation Center, Jackson
- Jackson - River Oaks
- Jackson - St. Dominic
- Jackson – UMMC: University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson
- Jackson – VA: Veterans Administration Hospital, Jackson
- Jackson – Other
- Other (not Jackson); specify



Respondents either answered “no”, or refused to answer for the following facilities:

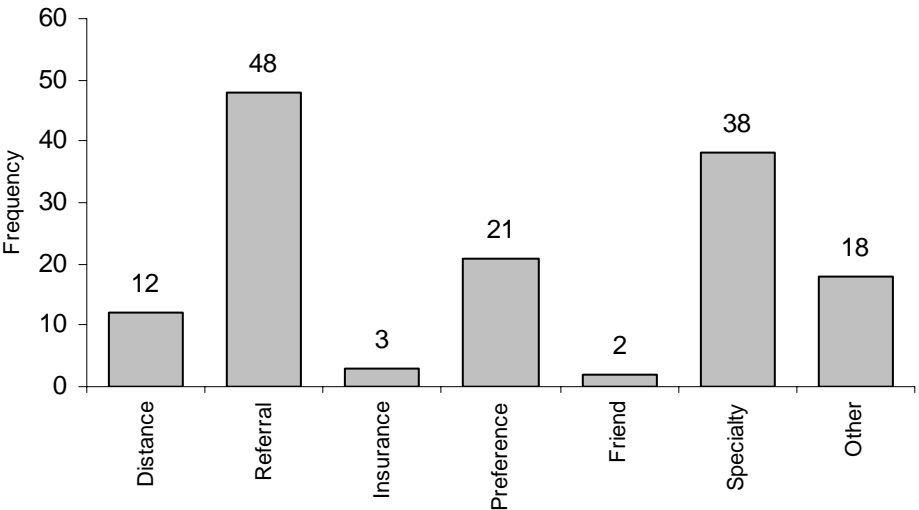
- Central Mississippi Medical Center - Jackson
- Mississippi State Hospital – Jackson
- Women’s Hospital at River Oaks – Jackson

Four respondents who answered “Other” stated that they used a hospital in Jackson. All other responses were for facilities in Oxford, Starkville, Greenville, Tupelo, Eupora, Flowood, and Tennessee.

15. Why did you or your family member choose these hospitals?

Respondents who answered “yes” to question 14 were asked whether or not they made their decision based on any of the items in the following list. Respondents may have answered “yes” to multiple items.

- Distance from Home
- Doctor Referral
- Insurance Coverage
- Personal Preference
- Recommended by Friend
- Specialty Services
- Other, specify



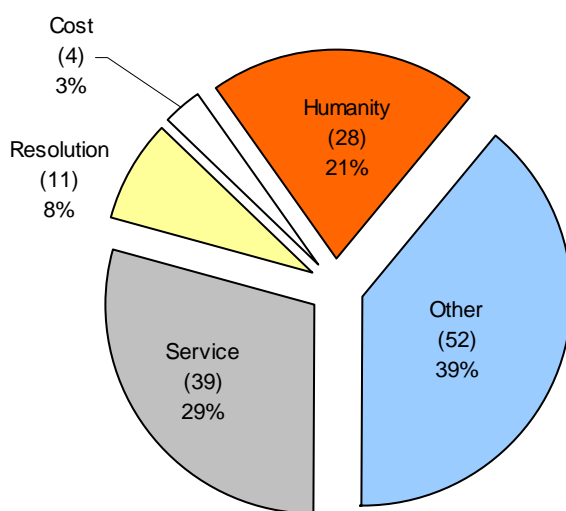
There were 113 respondents for this question. There were 38 respondents who said they used specialty services at another hospital. Respondents who specified “other”, when asked to specify why, gave the following answers (note that comments are drawn from raw data and may represent conversational grammar):

“I was hurt at work and it was closest”, “Because that’s where her Mom and Dad went”, “The service she had were not offered at Tyler Memorial Hospital”, “Closest one at the time he needed services”, “The pediatrician is there”, “Closest to where she was out for her serious condition”, “Surgery”, “That’s where his doctor is”, “The charge is lower and they are dependable”, “Surgery”, “With grandson for breathing machine”, “Went to the E.R. because the student health center was closed”, “closer at the time I was injured”, “were not satisfied with the hospital in Winona”, “got new equipment and likes the hospital”, “surgeon was in Grenada”, “better service”, and “had family there”.

16. Have you or a family member used the services of the Montgomery County Health Department in the past 12 months?

YES:	33% (136 respondents)
NO:	66% (272 respondents)
REFUSED:	1% (3 respondents)

All respondents were asked this question. Those who answered “yes” were asked, “Were you or your family satisfied with the services?” and 98.5% (134 of the 136 respondents) reported that they were satisfied, while the balance answered with “didn't know” or “weren't sure”. Respondents were then asked **why** they were satisfied with the services at the Montgomery County Health Department. The responses fell into four distinct categories and are presented in the figure below.



Representative Responses

Service: “prompt and accurate as always”, “easy access, didn't have to wait”, “it was a quick turn around...”, “I was seen in a timely manner”

Personal Attention: “friendly services”, “real nice”, “they were courteous and helpful”, the nurses were very nice”, “they took the time to be concern[ed] with my family”

Resolution: “issue resolved”, “they took care of our needs”, “they did what they were supposed to do”, they gave me the medicine I needed”

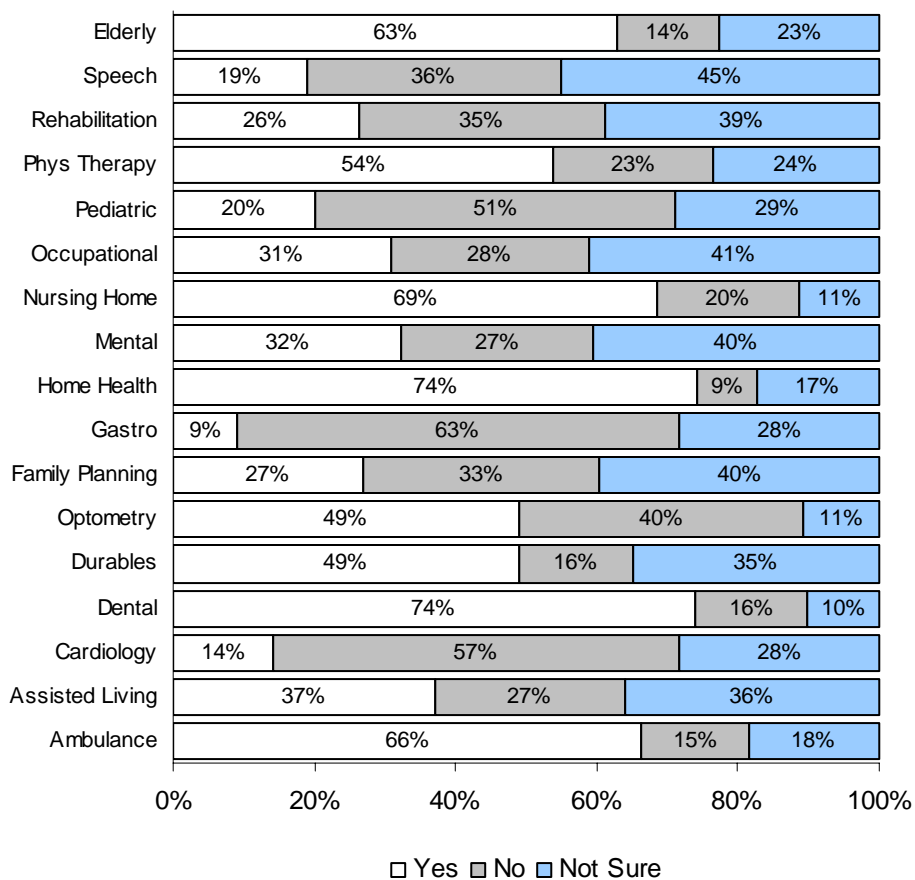
Cost: “the cost was reasonable”, “cheaper to go there”

17. Do you feel that your community provides adequate services for:

All respondents were asked to answer this question for each of the following services:

Services for the Elderly (Meals on Wheels)
 Speech Therapy
 Rehabilitation Services
 Physical Therapy
 Pediatric Services
 Occupational Therapy
 Nursing Home Facilities
 Mental or Behavioral Health Services
 Home Health Care Services

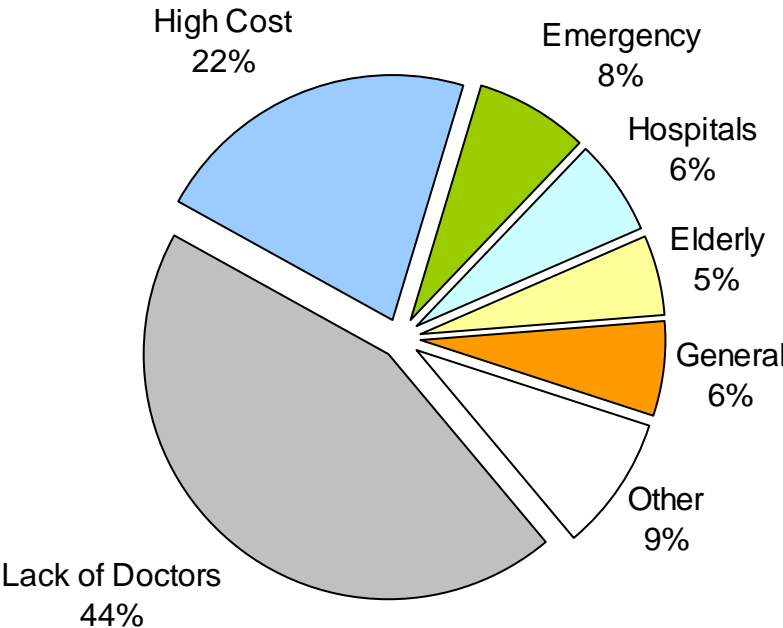
Gastroenterology Services (Stomach & Intestine Specialist)
 Family Planning or Pre-Natal Care
 Eye Glasses Services (Optometrist)
 Durable Medical Equipment
 Dental Services
 Cardiology Services (Heart)
 Assisted Living Facilities
 Ambulance Services



18. What concerns you MOST about health care in your community?

All respondents were asked to answer this open-ended question. More than 60% of the respondents provided useful information, while the balance answered either too vaguely to categorize or not at all. The number one concern was a perceived lack of doctors or specialists - 44% of the categorized responses fell in this group.

- Lack of Doctors:** Lack of doctors or specialists.
- High Cost:** of services and insurance premiums, deductibles, etc.
- Hospitals:** quality or availability of hospital services.
- Emergency:** lack of emergency services (e.g., ambulance, E.R.)
- Elderly:** services for the elderly
- General:** Lack of services in a general sense (e.g., "lack of service" stated, but not characterized)
- Other:** includes the concerns for the effect insurance has on the availability of doctors, issues about health-related transportation (excluding ambulance services), and Medicaid/Medicare.



Representative Responses

"they don't have enough specialists – [if I] had a bad accident [I] would have to go to Jackson"; "afraid there will not be any before too long"; "prices are too high even with insurance", "no specialists – have to travel [a long] distance to get anything done"; "young people get more advantages than the elderly", "we need more doctors"; "too many health problems [and] not enough doctors"; "hospital is not equipped for serious injury"; "how long the hospital is going to survive"; "we could use more ambulance services"; etc.

19. What types of services are needed for the elderly in your community?

All respondents were asked to answer this open-ended question. More than 39% of the respondents provided useful information, while the balance answered either too vaguely to categorize or not all. The service that was most frequently cited was related to transportation: 27% of the categorized responses were for a lack of adequate transportation for the elderly.

Transportation: transportation specifically for elderly, including help with handicapped.

Home Health Care: periodic visits to homes of elderly residents to help with routine health and/or general care.

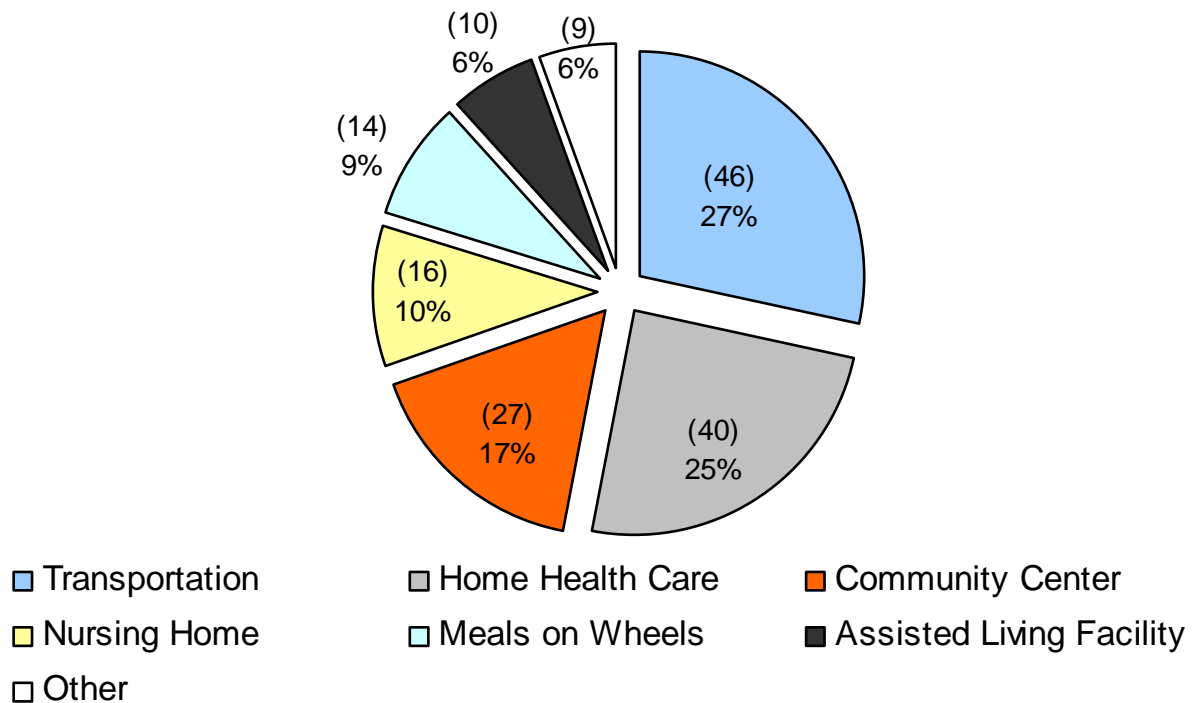
Community Center: specifically for elderly residents, also includes elderly day care, and recreational facilities.

Nursing Home: expressed concern for more nursing homes, or better quality nursing homes.

Meals on Wheels: program to provide nutritious foods to the elderly

Assisted Living Facility: expressed concern for more and/or larger selection/better quality facilities.

Other: geriatric specialists, renal dialysis machines/facilities, fiscal assistance



Representative Responses

"a better system for getting them to and from the doctor"; "someone just to visit and sit with them and help them around or anything they can't do"; "need programs, place to go for the elderly, recreation", "more nursing homes"; "they need a little more meals on wheels"; "more volunteers to help"; "assisted living facilities"; "more nursing homes in the area"; "van with a wheelchair lift"; "lower prices for medicines they take".

Summary

The results of this household survey represent an inside look at the perceptions residents had about health care in Montgomery County in January 2004. Response data from more than 400 Montgomery County households paint a picture of concern for health care, and demonstrate that issues related to health care are on the minds of many.

Most of the households sampled had low incomes, and nearly half were in poverty. Even so, 93% use a family doctor for health care, mostly in **Winona, Grenada** and **Kilmichael** (76% used a doctor in Montgomery County). One out of four respondents who used a doctor in the last 12 months said they traveled out of the county. The primary reason was **familiarity** with the doctor in that county, though issues of **convenience, necessity, and quality** were also factors they considered.

An overwhelming majority (94%) of respondents to this survey were satisfied with the quality of care provided by their family doctor, and lauded their providers for **resolution of their problem, friendliness and accessibility** of doctors and staff, and **prompt and efficient service**. Those who were dissatisfied complained about **waiting times that were too long, or lack of results**. More than half the respondents also said that they thought there were **not enough family doctors** in Montgomery County.

Most of the households surveyed indicated that they had health insurance coverage, mostly employer-led plans, yet Medicare was an important source of coverage for many. Affordability was the primary reason for **not** having health insurance.

While only a third of households surveyed used the **Montgomery County Health Department**, there was almost **unanimous satisfaction with their services**. Respondents praised the department for **prompt and accurate service, friendly and courteous staff**, and getting the job done at a **reasonable cost**.

A **lack of doctors and specialists** was cited most frequently (44% of respondents) as the issue with which respondents were MOST concerned. The **high cost of health care** was also frequently cited, as was the lack of emergency medical services such as ambulances and emergency rooms. When asked what types of services were needed for the **elderly**, most respondents answered with concerns about **transportation and home health care**. **Community centers, elderly day care, and recreational programs** were also noted.