

# Conducting a Health Needs Assessment at a Family Medicine Residency Clinic

Emmeline Ha, MD; Andrew Schechtman, MD  
Stanford-O'Connor Family Medicine Residency, San Jose, CA

## BACKGROUND

In 2019, a needs assessment for the Stanford Family Medicine Residency clinic was conducted with the hopes of improving the curriculum's community outreach. Goals of the assessment were: to gather quantitative and qualitative data to increase resident understanding of their patient population, to influence residency recruitment to better represent our patients' demographics, and to guide future resident community projects.

## METHODS

- Gathered de-identified demographic data of the patient population through electronic medical record reports. Obtained social determinants of health data from the Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks, and Experiences (PRAPARE) survey, which had been integrated to clinic workflow prior to this study.
- Created and distributed an anonymous "Health Needs Assessment" survey (Figure 1) to a random sample of clinic patients for one week in April 2019. Questions included ranking importance of health issues, opinions about health need priorities, and feedback for improving clinic experience.
- Completed descriptive analysis on all data collected. Patient's zip codes were mapped using the American Academy of Family Physician's Health Landscape software, and geographic analysis was then compared to Santa Clara Public Health's Public Health Interactive Maps. Qualitative responses from patient feedback were grouped into overlying themes and distributed to clinic providers.
- Conducted outcomes survey in 2021, following two years of publicizing findings within the residency program. Survey examined the health assessment's effect on resident attitudes towards their clinic population and the impact on their individual scholarly projects.

## REFERENCES

- HealthLandscape - Turning statistics into information. Retrieved May 1, 2019, from <https://www.healthlandscape.org/PopHealthProfiler/>
- Public Health Interactive Maps. (n.d.). Retrieved May 1, 2019, from <https://sccphd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=b43cdd360add4bdf9ab517a0a765d507>

## RESULTS

- Clinic demographic and patient social determinants of health results were summarized into an infographic for easy-view (Figure 2). This infographic was distributed to all residents and clinic staff, shared during residency applicant recruitment, and posted online on the residency website.
- Geographic mapping of patient ZIP codes showed that most patients live in Santa Clara and west San Jose, which has a greater density of health disparities compared to Santa Clara County's public health data (Figure 3).
- 123 patients submitted "Health Needs Assessment" surveys. Top health issues, barriers to health, and needs for improving health are summarized in Table 1. Most patients provided positive feedback regarding clinic care delivery and empathy. Suggestions for clinic improvement included increased access/availability, better communication, and improved environment decor/logistics (Figure 4).
- 22 / 28 residents responded to the outcomes survey. 73% reported that the needs assessment had a positive influence on their perspective towards the clinic and its patients. 25% had their scholarly projects directly influenced by the assessment's results (Figure 5)

Figure 1. Health Needs Assessment survey distributed to patients in April 2019.

**Indian Health Center – Family Health Center Health Needs Assessment**

DISCLAIMER: The purpose of this survey is to assist us in improving our health care delivery and services for all of our patients, including you. Any information obtained in this survey will not be identified to your name or medical chart and will not affect your visit today. Thank you for your participation!

**Please select the top five health issues that you find important to you and your family.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/> Joint or back pain
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart disease/High blood pressure	<input type="checkbox"/> Women's health/Prenatal care
<input type="checkbox"/> Stroke	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health
<input type="checkbox"/> Lung disease/Quit smoking	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol/Drug use
<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual health
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy weight	<input type="checkbox"/> Routine check ups/Vaccinations
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Vision/Dental health
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

**What do you feel are barriers to getting health care for you or your family? Select all that apply.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Cost/Insurance issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Fear (eg, not ready to talk about medical problem)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/language barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> Too much paperwork
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of available doctor	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't understand the need to see a doctor
<input type="checkbox"/> Location/transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Time (eg, clinic hours, job/school schedule)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> None	

**What do you need more of to improve your or your family's health? Select all that apply.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Free or affordable health screenings	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe place to live/walk/play
<input type="checkbox"/> Access to healthier food	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Access to transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Stress reduction
<input type="checkbox"/> Job opportunities/training	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health support
<input type="checkbox"/> Education opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Care support (children, elderly)
<input type="checkbox"/> Stable/affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural or religious community
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

**What does our clinic do well for you or your family's health?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What could our clinic do better to improve your or your family's health?** Please suggest any specific projects, services, or assistance we could offer.

\_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Dr. Ha  
Updated 4/2019

Figure 2. Infographic of clinic demographic information using assessment results.

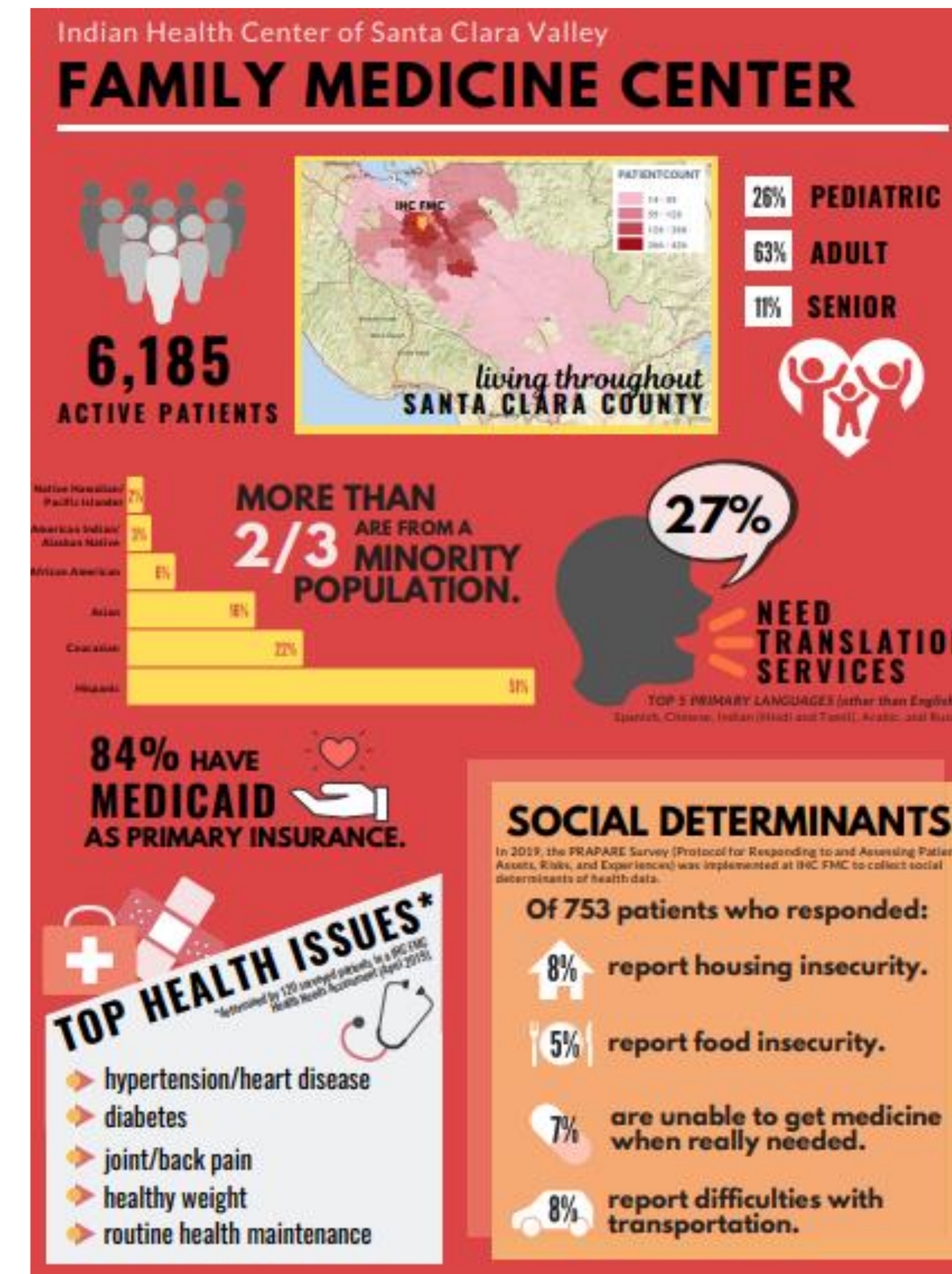


Figure 3. Distribution of clinic patients in Santa Clara County (top) corresponds with lower life expectancy distribution map published by Santa Clara County (bottom).

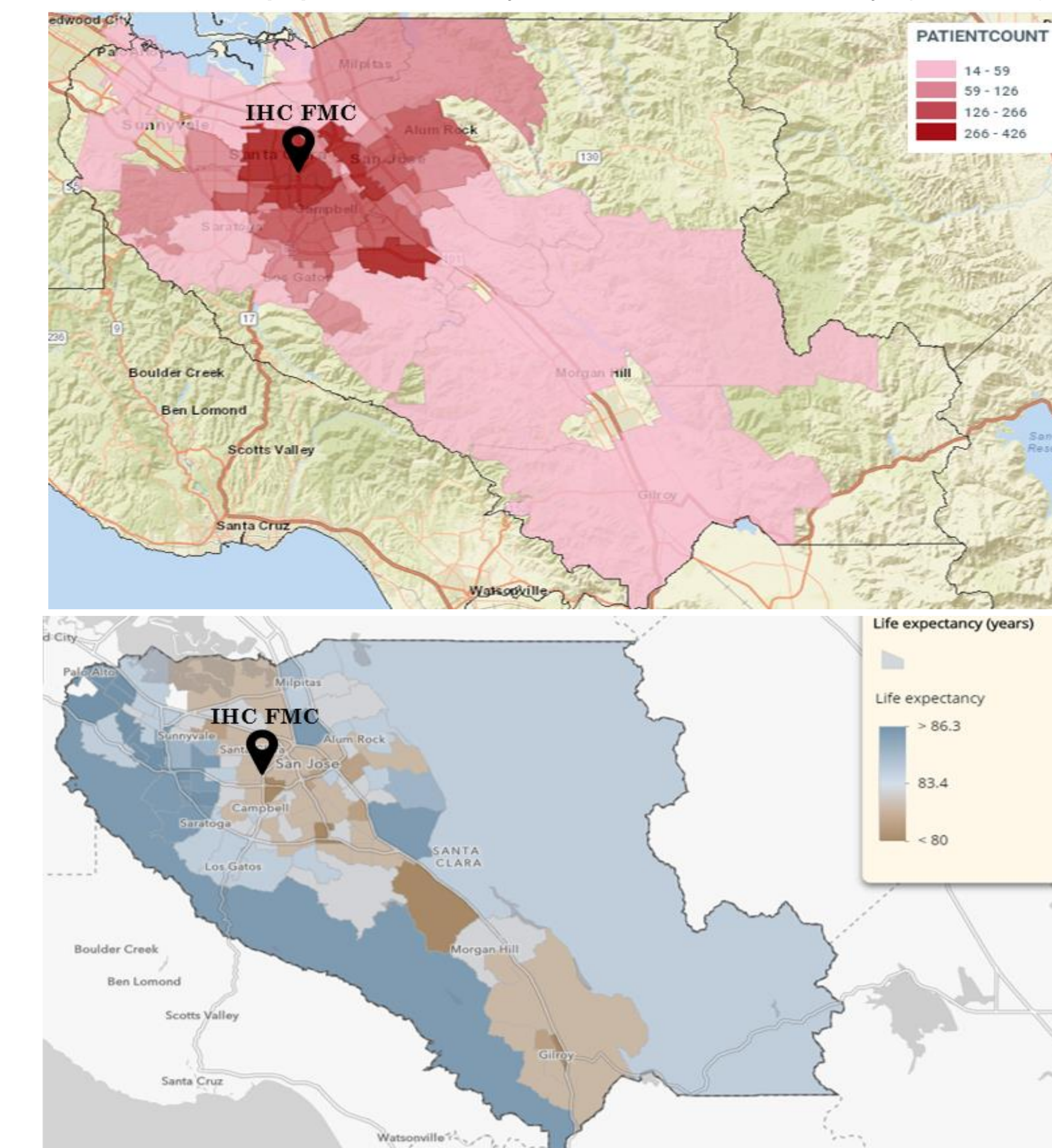


Table 1. Patient results from needs assessment survey.

<b>Top Five Health Issues Important to Patients</b>	Heart disease/High Blood pressure
	Diabetes
	Joint or back pain
	Healthy Weight
	Routine check ups/vaccinations
<b>Top Three Barriers to Health</b>	Cost/Insurance Issues
	Time (e.g. clinic hours, job/school schedule)
	Lack of available doctor
<b>Top Five Needs in order to Improve Health</b>	Free or affordable health screenings
	Stress reduction
	Access to healthier food
	Stable/affordable housing
	Mental health support / Care support (children/elderly)

Figure 4. Suggestions for improvement proposed by patients.

- Increase Access**
  - More open appointments
  - Late hours vs. weekend availability
- Communication**
  - Improved answering service (e.g. rerouting, forward directly to FMC during business hours)
  - Online capabilities (e.g. scheduling appointments)
  - Prescriptions: on time refills, clarifying dose changes (e.g. after visit summaries)
  - Trans education/training for staff
- Environmental**
  - Add plants
  - Better parking

Figure 5. Impact of assessment results on resident attitudes and education.

"Did results from the needs assessment positively influence your perspective of our clinic and its patients?"

**75% YES**

"The infographic was very helpful for recruitment season and for my own understanding of our clinic population/actual breakdown." – PGY-1

"Did the needs assessment results or infographic influence your FCM or QI project in any way?"

**25% YES**

"I looked at the needs that patients reported to try to address some of the gaps in care, such as more availability of appointment times." – PGY-2

## CONCLUSIONS

Patient-centered and community-oriented approaches facilitate critical insight into assessing and prioritizing health problems. This simple health needs assessment yielded actionable insights that helped Stanford Family Medicine residents better understand the needs of their clinic patients. This understanding influenced clinic improvement initiatives and future resident projects.