Community Assessment of Benson, Arizona
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Background and Introduction
Benson, Arizona is a community located in Cochise County, southeast of Tucson and North of Sierra Vista. Benson is a junction point located right next to the Interstate 10, giving very quick access for drivers to stop by any necessary such as food or gas if needed.

• Benson was founded when the Southern Pacific Railroad came through the southern Arizona in 1880.
• Benson served as a mining region of the San Pedro Valley.
• Benson's economy involved high demand for copper and silver ore.
• Benson gained its name from "Hub City" after 1883.
• In the 1900s, Benson suffered significant loss due to the relocation of railroad tracks.
• The transitional period of Benson ended by World War II and after the war, development for the highway began.

Community Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>12,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Female Ratio</td>
<td>0.55:0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>39.6 years</td>
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• Benson is 51% male and 49% female.  
• The majority of the population in Benson is above 65 years old with the minority being between 0-14 years old.  
• The median resident age in Benson is 54.8 years old.  
• A variation of ethnicities currently reside in Benson from Caucasians (70%), Hispanics (27%), African Americans (1.5%), Native Americans (20%), and Asians (1.9%).

Methods

Primary
• The primary data is my one-month long rural rotation at the Medicine Shoppe Independent Pharmacy.
• Windshield surveys.
• Pictures were taken during windshield survey in June/July 2016.
• All of my interactions with the Medicine Shoppe staff were informal conversations.

Secondary
• Information was obtained through Benson’s City website, Benson’s Community Guide, and online sources.

Community Assessment

Education
- 1 elementary
- 1 middle school
- 2 high schools
- 2 school from kindergarten to 8th grade
- 1 community college
• There are 28.5% of students who attend high school in Benson, higher than the Arizona average of 24.8%.
• Benson has an excellent public education system, ranging from kindergarten to a four-year college.
• A low percentage of residents received a bachelor’s or associate degree after high school.

Economy/Income
• Job opportunities in Benson are currently 0.61% compared to the national average of 1.59%.
• The unemployment rate in Benson is 7.1% versus the national average being 5.2%.
• The median household income $52,044.

Transportation
- Benson Area Transit (BAT)
- Benson Airport
- Bus hours are from 8am-4pm from Monday to Friday excluding holidays.

Government
- A mayor and a vice mayor
- 5 council members, one on mayor, and one on clerk

Crime
• Lower crime rate compared to Arizona

Insurance
• The percent of adults with health insurance is 83.5% and children with health insurance are 92.3% in Cochise County.
• More people in Cochise County have health insurance compared to Arizona and the United States.

Community Resources
- 1 hospital: 22 beds
- 3 community pharmacy
- 1 police office
- 1 Safeway and 1 Walmart (grocery) provide produce

Community Barriers and Solutions

Barriers
• The education level influence on lower income and possibly lack health education.
• Children who have asthma.
• Younger generation is overweight.
• Low job opportunities in Benson.
• Inconvenient public transportation

Solutions
• Government should support more grants, scholarships, or implement courses to help people find careers they may be interested in. This will help motivate and encourage students to achieve further education after high school.
• The elementary school can also build a connection with American Lung Association. American Lung Association can help teach children about asthma and other matters if needed.
• High school students should be required to take courses in nutrition to help educate and reduce BMI, obesity, and diabetes.
• More stores, manufacturers, environmental construction, and mining should increase job opportunities for Benson residents.
• BAT should open over the weekend for residents to have transportation for their needs. Instead of closing at 4pm, BAT should close at 7pm to have the opportunity work later in the day.
• Pharmacists are very effective in managing chronic diseases. Pharmacists should help manage chronic disease through frequent checkups and proper counseling to help improve the health of the patients.

References

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank the Medicine Shoppe pharmacists and staff of Benson and their willingness to share and answer questions about their community. For more information, please contact: Karen C. Tsui tsui@pharmacy.arizona.edu