General Health Status
University of Colorado Hospital
COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT
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OVERVIEW

Health is defined by the World Health Organization in 1948 as a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Various measures of general health status provide information about the larger population. Healthy People 2020 assesses general health status of the U.S. population by monitoring the following indicators:

- Life expectancy
- Healthy life expectancy
- Years of potential life lost
- Physically and mentally unhealthy days
- Self-assessed health status
- Limitation of activity
- Chronic disease prevalence

In the U.S., life expectancy is up for all races and both sexes, with White females living the longest. A significant cause for this increase in life expectancy is that cigarette consumption has decreased significantly since the mid-1980s. Prior to this time, per capita cigarette consumption was greater in the United States than the rest of the developed world.

Figure 1 U.S. Life Expectancy Up

1 http://www.definitionofwellness.com/dictionary/health.html
2 http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/GenHealthAbout.aspx
4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy is a mortality measure that is often used to describe the overall health status of a population. Life expectancy is defined as the average number of years a person of a certain age is expected to live, if age-specific death rates and morbidity rates remain constant throughout one’s life. The following charts show the life expectancy for men and women in Colorado. Douglas County has the highest life expectancy for men. The mountain resort communities also have high life expectancy, while the Eastern Plains and Southern Colorado counties have the shortest life expectancy.

Figure 2 Male Life Expectancy, 2007

http://www.pophealthmetrics.com/content/9/1/16
Women live longer than men, with the mountain resort communities for both genders showing the greatest longevity. Douglas County has the highest life expectancy for the Denver metro area. The Eastern Plains shows a decline in life expectancy from 1997 to 2007.

Figure 3 Female Life Expectancy, 2007

http://www.pophealthmetrics.com/content/9/1/16
LEADING CAUSES OF PREMATURE DEATH

The leading causes of premature death in Colorado are cancer, heart disease, and unintentional injuries. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of premature death.

Figure 2.4. Leading causes of years of potential life lost before life expectancy — Colorado, 2008

Cause of death

- Cancer (malignant neoplasms)
- Heart disease
- Total unintentional injuries
- Suicide
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases
- Stroke (cerebrovascular disease)
- Perinatal period conditions
- Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
- Diabetes mellitus
- Congenital anomalies
- Homicide and legal intervention
- Alzheimer’s disease
- Influenza and pneumonia
- Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, nephrosis
- Septicemia
- Human immunodeficiency virus disease
- Atherosclerosis

Years of potential life lost

Data source: Vital Statistics, Health Statistics Section, CDPHE
Cause of death includes the primary (underlying) cause of death only, not the contributing causes.

Figure 4 Leading Causes of Years of Potential Life Lost Before Life Expectancy – Colorado, 2008

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TOP TEN CAUSES OF DEATH IN COLORADO

Cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease and strokes, is responsible for the most deaths in Colorado. Within this group, strokes are responsible for about 5% of all deaths, and are the leading cause of disability. Cardiovascular disease and cancer comprise almost 50% of all deaths. Respiratory diseases and unintentional injuries are responsible for about 7% each of all deaths.

Figure 5 Top Ten Causes of Death Colorado

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8 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/scripts/htmsql.exe/cohid/deathquick1.hsxml
GENERAL HEALTH IS FAIR OR POOR

**BRFSS Survey Question: How is your general health? (Answer: Fair or Poor)**

Self-assessed health status measures how a person rates his or her health, whether it is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor. Self-assessed health status is an accurate indicator of health and is useful for comparing populations.

Denver and Adams Counties have the highest percentage of people who said that their general health was fair or poor. On the contrary, Douglas County had the smallest percentage of people stating that their general health was fair or poor. Arapahoe County had rates below the state average.

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**Figure 6 General Health is Fair or Poor**

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Females report fair/poor general health significantly more than males.

People are significantly more likely to experience fair/poor general health status as they age.

People of White race are significantly less likely to experience fair/poor general health in comparison to other races and ethnicities. Conversely, Hispanics are more likely to experience fair/poor general health status in comparison to those of White race.

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11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
Lower income and education levels were significantly associated with fair/poor general health status. Improvements in general health status were reported as income and education levels increased.

Fair/Poor General Health by Income

Fair/Poor General Health by Education

Fair/Poor General Health by Marital Status

Figure 10 Fair/Good General Health by Income

Figure 11 Fair/Poor General Health by Education

Figure 12 Fair/Poor General Health by Marital Status

14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
SHORT-TERM PHYSICAL HEALTH

BRFSS Survey Question:  For how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good? (Answer: 1 to 7 days; 8 or more days)

Counties with the greatest percentage of people reporting poor short-term physical health were Douglas and Arapahoe. Denver and Adams Counties had rates below the state average.

![Physical Health Not Good 1-7 Days in Last Month](chart)

*Figure 13 Physical Health Not Good 1-7 Days in Last Month*¹⁶

LONG-TERM PHYSICAL HEALTH

BRFSS Survey Question: For how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good? (Answer: 1 to 7 days; 8 or more days)

The largest percentage of people who thought their physical health was not good for 8+ days in the past month live in Adams and Denver Counties. Douglas County had the smallest percentage of people reporting poor long-term health.

Figure 14 Physical Health Not Good for 8+ Days in Past Month

Females report fair to poor physical health more frequently than males on both a short- and long-term basis.

While young people report fair/poor physical health more frequently on a short-term basis, older people report fair/poor physical health more often on a long-term basis. Differences among races and ethnicity were not significant.
Rising income and education are significant positive influencers of long-term physical health, but not short-term health. Conversely, those with low income and education levels report fair to poor health more frequently.

When examining marital status, people who have never married report fair to poor health more frequently on a short-term basis, whereas those who are divorced/separated/widowed report fair/poor health more frequently on a long-term basis.

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
BIRTH RATES

While not a direct measure of overall health, birth rates help gauge which county populations will grow through non migratory measures. Birth rates are highest in Adams County, while Denver, Douglas and Arapahoe Counties’ rates were close to the state average.

Figure 22 Birth Rates

INTERVENTIONS

See specific health indicators for relevant interventions.

RESOURCE INVENTORY

See specific health indicators for relevant resources.