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America's Health Rankings[™] **Components of Health**

The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” This understanding of health is the foundation for *America's Health Rankings*[™], which, for two decades, has analyzed a comprehensive set of health, environment and social-economic data, environmental conditions, health policies and behavior factors to provide a more holistic view of the health of the nation beyond just death-related statistics.

America's Health Rankings[™] is based on the perspective that, in addition to our individual genetic predisposition to disease, health is the result of four essential and controllable components:

- Behaviors
- The environment of the community in which we live
- The public and health policies and practices of our government
- The clinical care we receive



These four components are viewed as the primary health outcomes of a state, as well as the nation. These health determinants interact with each other in a complex web of cause and effect that impact the healthy outcomes we desire.

America's Health Rankings[™] analyzes state-specific measures — both health outcomes and health determinants — across these four components and reports a view of the health of the nation on a state-by-state basis.

Health determinants are environmental factors and influencers that contribute to the health of an individual. These determinants include many factors, some of which we do not have complete control over. Actions to improve health determinants will eventually improve health outcomes for states and the nation.

Health outcomes include the length of life, the disparity among outcomes in a state and the quality of life. These measures represent the burden placed on the overall health of the population by death, disparity and depressed quality of life.

Understanding the impact and interactions of health determinants and outcomes is vital if we are to create the health we desire, including a long, disease-free, robust life for all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or socio-economic status.

Summary Description of Components:

Determinants	Description
Behaviors	
Prevalence of Smoking	Percentage of population over age 18 that smokes on a regular basis. This is an indication of known, addictive, health-adverse behaviors within the population.
Binge Drinking	Percentage of population over age 18 that has drunken excessively in the last 30 days. Binge drinking is defined as five drinks for a male and four for a female in one setting. It is a proxy indicator for excessive drug and alcohol use within a population.
Prevalence of Obesity	Percentage of the population estimated to be obese, with a body mass index (BMI) of 30.0 or higher. Obesity is known to contribute to a variety of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and general poor health.
High School Graduation	Percentage of incoming ninth graders from a high school with a regular degree, as reported by NCES in compliance with the No Child Left Behind initiative. It is an indication of the individual's ability to learn about, create and maintain a healthy lifestyle and to understand and access health care when required.
Community & Environment	
Violent Crime	The number of murders, rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults per 100,000 population. It reflects an aspect of overall lifestyle within a state and its associated health risks.
Occupational Fatalities	Number of fatalities from occupational injuries per 100,000 workers. This measure reflects job safety as a part of public health.
Infectious Disease	Number of AIDS, tuberculosis and hepatitis (A and B) cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention per 100,000 population. This is an indication of the toll that infectious disease is placing on the population.
Children in Poverty	The percentage of persons under age 18 who live in households at or below the poverty threshold. Poverty is an indication of the lack of access to health care by this vulnerable population.
Air Pollution	The average exposure of the general public to particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less in size (PM2.5). Health studies have shown a significant association between exposure to fine particles and premature death from heart or lung disease. Fine particles can aggravate heart and lung diseases and have been linked to cardiovascular symptoms, cardiac arrhythmias, heart attacks, respiratory symptoms, asthma attacks and bronchitis.

Public & Health Policy	
Lack of Health Insurance	Percentage of the population that does not have health insurance privately, through their employer or the government. This is an indicator of the ability to access care as needed, especially preventive care.
Public Health Funding	State funding dedicated to public health as well as federal funding directed to states by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration expressed on a per capita basis. This represents the annual investment being made in public health programs to monitor and improve population health.
Immunization Coverage	Percentage of children ages 19 to 35 months who have received four or more doses of DTP, three or more doses of poliovirus vaccine, one or more doses of any measles-containing vaccine, three or more doses of HiB, and three or more doses of HepB vaccine.
Clinical Care	
Prenatal Care	Percentage of pregnant women receiving adequate prenatal care, as defined by Kotelchuck's Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization (APNCU) Index. This measures how well women are receiving the care they require for a healthy pregnancy and development of the fetus.
Primary Care Physicians	Number of primary care physicians (including general practice, family practice, OB-GYN, pediatrician and internists) per 100,000 population. This measure reflects the availability of physicians to assist the population with preventive and regular care.
Preventable Hospitalizations	Discharge rates among the Medicare population for diagnoses that are amenable to nonhospital-based care. This reflects the effectiveness that a population uses the various delivery sites for necessary care.
Outcomes	Description
Poor Mental Health Days	Number of days in the previous 30 days when a person indicates their activities are limited due to mental health difficulties. This is a general indication of the population's ability to function on a day-to-day basis.
Poor Physical Health Days	Number of days in the previous 30 days when a person indicates their activities are limited due to physical health difficulties. This is a general indication of the population's ability to function on a day-to-day basis.
Geographic Disparities	The variation among the overall mortality rates among the counties within a state. Equality among counties would be expressed by low variation. This measure indicates how equal the outcomes are across a state.
Infant Mortality	Number of infant deaths (before age 1) per 1,000 live births. This is an indication of the prenatal care, access and birth process for both child and mother.
Cardiovascular Deaths	Number of deaths due to all cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease and strokes, per 100,000 population. This is an indication of the toll these types of diseases place on the population.
Cancer Deaths	Number of deaths due to all causes of cancer per 100,000 population. This is an indication of the toll cancer is placing on the population.
Premature Death	Number of years of potential life lost prior to age 75 per 100,000 population. This is an indication of the number of useful years of life that are not available to a population due to early death.

Supplemental Measures

Behaviors	
Cholesterol Check	Percentage of adults who have had their blood cholesterol checked within the last five years.
Dental Visit	Percentage of adults who have visited the dentist or dental clinic within the past year for any reason.
Diet	Percentage of adults who consume five or more servings of vegetables and fruit a day.
Teen Birth Rate	The number of births per 1,000 mothers age 15 to 19.
Chronic Disease	
Cardiac Heart Disease	Percentage of adults who have been told by a health professional that they had angina or coronary heart disease.
Diabetes	Percentage of adults who have been told by a health professional that they had diabetes (does not include pre-diabetes or diabetes during pregnancy).
High Cholesterol	Percentage of adults who have had their cholesterol checked and been told that it was high.
Heart Attack	Percentage of adults who have been told by a health professional that they had a heart attack (myocardial infarction).
Stroke	Percentage of adults who have been told by a health professional that they had a stroke.
Hypertension	Percentage of adults who have been told by a health professional that they had high blood pressure.
Economic	
Personal Income	Per capita personal income in current dollars.
Unemployment Rate	Total unemployed as a percent of the civilian labor force (U-3 definition). This is the usual number cited by officials and in the media.
Underemployment Rate	Total unemployed, plus all marginally attached workers, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers (U-6 Definition). This more comprehensive definition accounts for individuals that are not fully employed, are involuntarily working part time or have stopped looking for employment.
Income Disparity (Gini coefficient)	A common measure of income inequality that varies between 0, which reflects complete equality of income and 1, (Gini coefficient) which indicates complete inequality (one person has all the income or consumption, all others have none).

Visit www.americashealthrankings.org for more information about the report methodology and quick access to key 2009 rankings across the United States and state by state.