

INCOME

Income is closely tied to health. It can impact access to health care, educational opportunities, and personal safety. Socioeconomic status is connected to health outcomes, even when accounting for behaviors and health insurance status. [1,4,30,31]

Higher incomes are associated with better mental health.

Self-reported good, very good, or excellent mental health status by income, 2019



Studies show that higher incomes are associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety. Stress is likely a major driver of worse mental health outcomes among populations with low incomes. [2,3,4]

Sociologists debate the direction of the relationship between socioeconomic status and mental illness. The social causation theory argues that lower incomes can predispose people to mental illness due to the stress and hardships associated with economic pressures. [4,30,31]

The health selection theory (also known as social selection or drift hypothesis) argues that having poor mental health is often associated with lower-paying jobs. The lack of social supports for people with severe mental illness creates structural barriers to accessing higher-pay positions. Most evidence indicates that the social causation theory is a better fit for more common issues like depression. However, there is more evidence for health selection theory among populations with more severe mental illness. [4,5,6,31]

Despite Medicaid expansion, many Coloradans with low incomes lack access to health insurance

Percentage with health insurance by income, 2019

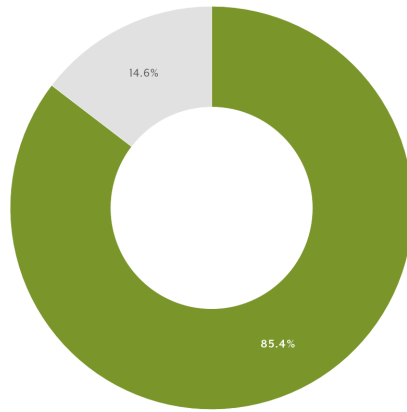


In 2019, 10 years after the Affordable Care Act was passed, 360,000 Coloradans lacked health insurance coverage.

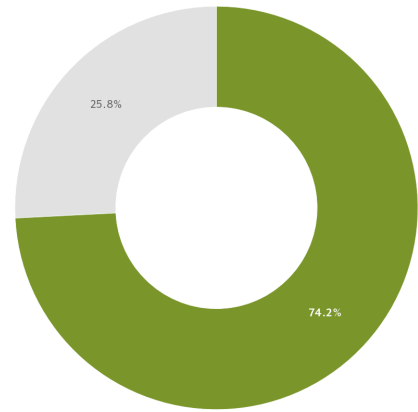
One large, randomized control trial found that insurance coverage is associated with improvements in mental health, including a 10 percent improvement in depression rates. [7]

Percentage reporting good mental health by insurance status, 2019

Insured Coloradans are more likely to report good mental health.



Insured
Percent Good Mental Health: 85.4%



Uninsured
Percent Good Mental Health: 74.2%

Housing is closely associated with health, including mental health.

Percentage reporting stable housing by income, 2019

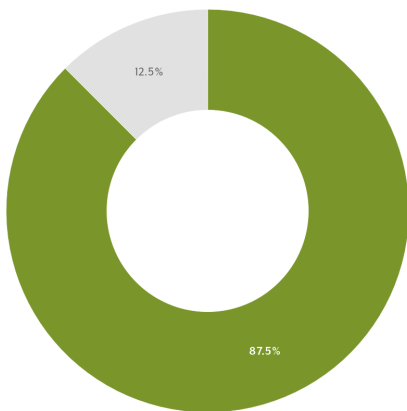


This goes beyond feeling safe in your home. A lack of stable housing can also harm mental health later in life. [8,32,33]

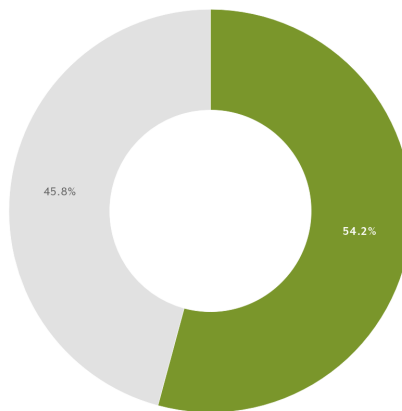
Nearly one in 10 Coloradans with low incomes are unsure of where they'll be able to live in the next two months.

Losing housing due to eviction, increasing rent costs, or other factors can lead to homelessness or concerns about safety and security.

Percentage reporting good mental health by housing stability, 2019



Housing Stable
Percent Good Mental Health: 87.5%



Housing Unstable
Percent Good Mental Health: 54.2%

Coloradans with stable housing report better mental health.