



The Colorado

Health Report Card



The Colorado Health Foundation™

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Together, we will make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation.

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Vision

We can do better!

In many respects, it might appear that Colorado is the healthiest state in the nation. But appearances can be deceiving.

It's true that we are currently the "leanest" state and that Colorado has a reputation for performing well on many indicators of chronic disease. We are consistently among the best-performing states — if not the best — regarding heart attacks, strokes, cancer and diabetes. Taking those factors into account, along with the reputation of our "culture of fitness," mountains to climb up and ski down — not to mention 300 days of sunshine a year — it looks like we've already attained the status of "the healthiest state."

Yet, the results of the 2012 Colorado Report Card showed we're far from the top of the class by many important measures in health and health care. For example, Colorado ranked near the bottom (at No. 37) in low birth-weight babies. We're only No. 30 in childhood immunizations and among the worst states (at No. 36) in adult binge drinking. Though we've made improvements in getting health insurance coverage for children, teenagers and adults in recent years, our ranks remain only fair in this category.

Even in areas where we are doing "well" (compared to the rest of the country), some troubling trends loom on the horizon. The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that 14.2 percent of Colorado children and 21 percent of Colorado adults are obese. Putting those figures in perspective, Colorado currently may be the leanest state, but if we reported those numbers in 1995, we'd be the heaviest. Data also show a steady uptick in Colorado's childhood obesity rate.

The overall poor-to-good marks on the 2012 Colorado Health Report Card show there's much room for improvement. Given Colorado's environment, resources and innovative thinking, we should expect better results than D's, C's, and B's.

It will require time and patience, but these grades will improve if health care providers, business and community leaders and families work together to encourage health-conscious behaviors, increase the number of Coloradans with health insurance and ensure more Coloradans receive quality, coordinated health care. When that happens, Colorado will advance from a gifted-but-underachieving student to valedictorian level.

Grading Colorado's health

The 2012 Colorado Health Report Card marks the seventh year of collaboration between the Colorado Health Foundation and the Colorado Health Institute. The Report Card tracks 38 indicators spanning five life stages: *Healthy Beginnings*, *Healthy Children*, *Healthy Adolescents*, *Healthy Adults* and *Healthy Aging* to provide a comprehensive picture of the health of Colorado residents — assigning a letter grade to each of the five life stages.

An important addition to the 2012 Colorado Health Report Card's website is a "What if we were No. 1?" feature, quantifying what it would mean if Colorado were to achieve the top ranking in each particular indicator.

New methodology

Beginning with this report, we used the American Community Survey (ACS) in place of the Current Population Survey (CPS) on indicators measuring health insurance coverage and poverty. Using the significantly larger sample size in the ACS means more statistically reliable results. Also, shifting to the ACS allows us to track indicators annually and on a county-by-county basis. Throughout the report, asterisks indicate where the data source has changed. We'll also provide CPS data on the "What's New" page of the website to illustrate how the 2012 numbers compare with the previous year.

Keeping Colorado Competitive

Numerous studies suggest that Coloradan's physical and mental health is directly tied to the state's economic health. Case in point: Colorado's lackluster performance on Healthy Children indicators may threaten the state's economic competitiveness for years to come. "Keeping Colorado Competitive: A Roadmap To A Healthier, More Productive Workforce," a supplement to the 2012 Colorado Health Report Card, highlights the economic burdens these indicators place on the state and profiles evidence-based solutions that are working to address them.

Want to learn more?

For detailed information on each of the Report Card's 38 indicators, please visit www.ColoradoHealthReportCard.org.

Report Card Results

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Life Stage	Grade and average rank
Healthy Beginnings	C 25.2
Healthy Children	D+ 31.0
Healthy Adolescents	B 14.8
Healthy Adults	B+ 13.1
Healthy Aging	B+ 10.5

RANK	GRADING SCALE	
1 = Best	A (1-10) Excellent	D (31-40) Poor
50 = Worst	B (11-20) Good	F (41-50) Unacceptable
	C (21-30) Average	

Healthy Beginnings

Every child deserves a healthy start. Delaying prenatal care and smoking while pregnant are among the factors that contribute to low birth weight and to babies who die in the first year of life. As children grow, the best way to protect them against disease is to provide them with all recommended childhood vaccinations. Colorado performed poorly compared to other states in a number of “healthy beginning” areas, receiving a grade of C in 2012. Policymakers, health care professionals and families can all do better to ensure that our children have a healthy beginning that can contribute to a longer, more joyful life.

Health indicator	Rank among states
20.7 percent of women received initial prenatal care later than the first trimester or not at all	31 st
91.9 percent of women abstained from cigarette smoking during the last three months of pregnancy	5 th
8.8 percent of babies were born with a low birth weight (less than 5 pounds, 9 ounces)	37 th
Colorado's infant mortality rate was 6.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births	23 rd
75.8 percent of preschool-age children received all recommended doses of six key vaccines	30 th
Average Rank	25.2
Average Grade	C

Healthy Children

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Too many Colorado children live in poverty, and too few have health insurance. More than 23 percent of the state’s children 12 years and younger lived at or below the federal poverty level (about \$22,350 for a family of four in 2011) during 2011. Approximately 9 percent of children had no form of insurance during this time period. Children without insurance are more likely to lack a medical home and thus are less likely to receive coordinated medical, mental and dental care. Meanwhile, few Colorado children got enough exercise and 14 percent were obese. Unlike Colorado’s adults who had the lowest obesity rate in the nation, Colorado’s children ranked in the middle of the pack with respect to obesity. This poor ranking, along with lower rankings in many other indicators, resulted in a dismal grade of D+.

Insuring our children, coordinating of their health care needs and making sure they get enough exercise will better prepare them for the challenges of adolescence and adulthood.

Health indicator	Rank among states
8.6 percent of children were not covered by private or public health insurance*	42 nd
23.1 percent of children lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty level*	19 th
59.3 percent of children had a medical home that is accessible, continuous, comprehensive, family-centered, coordinated and compassionate	30 th
77.0 percent of children received one or more preventive dental visits in the past 12 months	38 th
64.1 percent of school-age children participated in vigorous physical activity for four or more days per week	34 th
14.2 percent of children were obese	23 rd
Average Rank	31.0
Average Grade	D+

* Note: Due to a change in the data source, data for this indicator is not directly comparable to previous Report Cards.

Healthy Adolescents

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The transitional years of adolescence pose special challenges for establishing good health habits. Compared to their peers in other states, Colorado's adolescents score very well on indicators of mental health and avoiding risky sexual behaviors.

Too many, however, binge drink and smoke, and the number of births to teenage mothers — while lower than in the past — is still higher than in many other states. Underlying all this is the same lack of health insurance found among younger children: 11 percent of adolescents were uninsured. Addressing these issues will enable Colorado's adolescents to enter adulthood in good health and with healthy habits.

Health indicator	Rank among states
11.3 percent of adolescents were not covered by private or public health insurance*	38 th
15.0 percent of adolescents lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty level*	14 th
91.7 percent of adolescents ate fruit one or more times during the past seven days	4 th
53.1 percent of adolescents participated in vigorous physical activity on five or more of the past seven days	4 th
22.3 percent of adolescents had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row on one or more of the past 30 days	30 th
15.7 percent of adolescents smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days	20 th
21.9 percent of adolescents felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two consecutive weeks during the past 12 months that they stopped doing some usual activities	4 th
6.1 percent of adolescents attempted suicide one or more times during the past 12 months	7 th
31.8 percent of adolescents were sexually active in the past three months	14 th
Among students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months, 70.8 percent reported using a condom	1 st
Colorado's teen fertility rate was 33.4 births to teen mothers per 1,000 teenage women	27 th

Average Rank **14.8**

Average Grade **B**

* Note: Due to a change in the data source, data for this indicator is not directly comparable to previous Report Cards.

Healthy Adults

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Colorado’s working-age adults are healthier than their counterparts in most other states, according to measures in this Report Card. The state had the second-lowest prevalence of hypertension and diabetes. Colorado’s adults were more likely than adults in all other states to exercise. Colorado also had the lowest rate of adult obesity in the country. But the state performed poorly in terms of insurance coverage: One in five working-age adults lacked health insurance in 2011. In addition, Colorado ranks in the bottom half of all states with respect to binge drinking and adults having a regular source of medical care.

The grade of B+ masks some troubling trends and disparities. The state’s obesity rate had doubled in fewer than 20 years. Meanwhile, low-income Coloradans and racial and ethnic minorities lagged behind on most indicators. Most ominously, Colorado’s failure to do better by its children threatens future grades for healthy adults and Colorado’s reputation as a healthy and prosperous state.

Health indicator	Rank among states
20.0 percent of working-age adults were not covered by private or public health insurance*	27 th
72.5 percent of adults had one (or more) person(s) they thought of as their personal doctor or health care provider	29 th
19.0 percent of adults consumed five or more fruits and/or vegetables per day within the past month	12 th
84.5 percent of adults participated in any physical activity within the past month	1 st
20.9 percent of adults were obese	1 st
20.0 percent of adults smoked cigarettes	8 th
23.0 percent of adults binge drank (males having five or more drinks on one occasion, females having four or more drinks on one occasion) in the past month	36 th
14.7 percent of adults reported that their mental health was not good eight or more days in the past month	13 th
4.8 percent of adults reported they were diagnosed with diabetes	2 nd
19.3 percent of adults reported they were diagnosed with high blood pressure	2 nd
Average Rank	13.1
Average Grade	B+

* Note: Due to a change in the data source, data for this indicator is not directly comparable to previous Report Cards.

Healthy Aging

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Colorado's older adults perform relatively well according to the measures used in this Report Card and compared to their peers in other states. Following national trends, Colorado's older adults are living longer and healthier lives. They have the highest rate of physical activity compared to older adults in other states, and are less likely to report poor physical health than seniors in all but four other states. Even though Colorado ranked fifth for flu and pneumonia vaccinations, a little more than half of older adults in the state were adequately vaccinated.

Health indicator	Rank among states
94.0 percent of older adults had one (or more) person(s) they thought of as their personal doctor or health care provider	34 th
53.6 percent of older adults had a flu shot during the past 12 months and had a pneumonia vaccination	5 th
77.6 percent of older adults participated in any physical activity in the past 30 days	1 st
16.9 percent of older adults reported that their physical health was not good eight or more days in the past month	5 th
8.0 percent of older adults reported that their mental health was not good eight or more days in the past month	12 th
20.8 percent of older adults reported eight or more days of limited activity in the past month due to poor physical or mental health	6 th
Average Rank	10.5
Average Grade	B+



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Acknowledgments

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