The Colorado

Health Report Card

CO 10

The Colorado Health Foundation™

How healthy is Colorado?

The Colorado paradox

For a state with a reputation as the "leanest" and "most active" in the country, we are not as healthy as you might think. Colorado's overall health grades haven't improved since 2006 when the Colorado Health Foundation issued its first Report Card. The overall grade for *Healthy Beginnings* (an indicator that measures prenatal care for babies and their mothers) remained unchanged at a mediocre C. Meanwhile, the state's grade for *Healthy Children* stalled at an unacceptably low D+. Only the grade for *Healthy Aging* (which evaluates how Colorado's older adults compare with peers in other states) improved from the previous year, moving from a B+ to an A-. Just as we would expect better grades from students, Coloradans should expect better results in the health indicators for pregnant women, infants and children.

Though new national and local policy reforms are designed to extend coverage and quality care for underserved Coloradans, it will take the continued efforts of health care providers, business and community leaders, and families working together to implement effective new policies and encourage health-conscious behaviors that ensure a healthier future for Colorado.

Grading Colorado's health

The 2010 Colorado Health Report Card includes 38 health indicators spanning the life course. Working with the Colorado Health Institute, we have selected these indicators to provide a comprehensive picture of the health of Colorado's residents.

For the past five years, we have monitored the health of Coloradans and assigned a letter grade to each of five life stages: *Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Children, Healthy Adolescents, Healthy Adults* and *Healthy Aging*. The grades are based on Colorado's ranking among states and Coloradans' health status relative to national benchmarks featured in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Healthy People 2010* initiative. The Report Card is updated every year to reflect the most current data available. Many of the indicators tracked in the Report Card will most likely be effected by the implementation of national health care reform. The health insurance coverage indicator is likely to see the most significant change as more people gain coverage through the health insurance exchange.

Expanded information for each indicator is available on the Report Card website (www.ColoradoHealthReportCard.org) and in the supplement "Health at a Crossroads," a supplement to the Report Card. The supplement includes policy profiles for each life stage and outlines provisions in the national health care reform law and recent policy initiatives in Colorado that could exert a positive impact on select indicators.

Health care reform and Colorado

Evaluating the data, it is clear that Colorado is doing poorly in the area of children's health. Colorado ranked No. 34 among the states for delayed or no prenatal care, with nearly 23 percent of pregnant Colorado women initiating prenatal care after their first trimester, or not at all.[1] Considering that prenatal care has a significant and positive impact on birth outcomes for both infants and their mothers, those numbers are unacceptably low.

With new insurance coverage expansions, more mothers will access prenatal and postnatal care from Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+). Beginning in mid 2010, the state of Colorado expanded eligibility for CHP+ up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). Additionally, the state health insurance exchange (which will begin operating in Colorado in 2014, pending passage of state legislation in 2011) will provide subsidies to families between 134 percent and 400 percent of FPL to purchase a health plan—potentially improving access to comprehensive prenatal care for pregnant women.

National health care reform also may provide relief in other areas where Colorado is lagging behind the rest of the country—such as insurance coverage, access to preventive oral health care and childhood obesity. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act contains several provisions to increase health insurance coverage among children—especially low-income children. Colorado ranks No. 38 among states where children receive preventive dental care.[2] Expanded coverage through Medicaid, CHP+ and health plans purchased from the exchange will increase access to pediatric oral health benefits.

Some parts of health care reform are designed to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce the burden of chronic disease and improve the overall health of populations. Health care reform will make grants available to train and deploy community health workers to provide health education, outreach and enrollment assistance for health coverage while linking individuals and businesses to community resources.

Whether you support all, some or none of the elements of national health care reform, there is clearly much work to be done, especially for the sake of our children, to improve health in Colorado in the years to come.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Vital Statistics, 2007 birth certificate data.

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007 National Survey of Children's Health.

Report Card Results

Life Stage	Grade & Avg. Rank
Healthy Beginnings	C 25.6
Healthy Children	D+ 30.5
Healthy Adolescents	B- 18.2
Healthy Adults	B 15.3
Healthy Aging	A- 8.5

RANK
1 = Best
50 = Worst

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

Healthy Beginnings

Every child deserves a healthy start. Delayed 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 see that they receive all the recommended childhood vaccinations. Colorado does poorly compared to other states in a number of these areas, receiving a grade of C in 2010. Policymakers, health care providers and families can all do better in ensuring that our children have a healthy beginning that can contribute to a longer life expectancy.

Health Indicator	Rank among states
22.7 percent of women receive initial prenatal care later than the first trimester or not at all	**34th**
89.9 percent of women abstain from cigarette smoking during the last three months of pregnancy	**14th**
9.0 percent of babies are born with a low birth weight (less than 5 pounds, 9 ounces)	**37th**
Infant mortality rate (**5.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births**)	**13th**
65.2 percent of preschool-age children received all recommended doses of six key vaccines	**30th**

Average Rank	**25.6**
Average Grade	C

Healthy Children

Too many Colorado children live in poverty, and too few have health insurance. More than 16 percent of the state's children 12 years and younger lived at or below the federal poverty level during 2007–2009 (about $22,050 for a family of four in 2009). Approximately 12 percent of children had no form of insurance during this time period as well. Children without insurance are more likely to lack a medical home and thus are less likely to get coordinated medical, mental and dental care. Too few Colorado children get enough exercise, and 14 percent are obese. Unlike Colorado's adults who have the lowest obesity rate in the nation, Colorado's children rank in the middle of the pack with respect to obesity. This poor ranking along with lower ranks in many other indicators results in a low grade of D+.

Insuring our children, seeing that they have a medical home and making sure they get enough exercise will better prepare them for the challenges of adolescence and adulthood.

Health Indicator	Rank among states
11.8 percent of children are not covered by private or public health insurance	**44th**
16.1 percent of children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level	**14th**
59.3 percent of children have a medical home that is accessible, continuous, comprehensive, family-centered, coordinated and compassionate	**30th**
77.0 percent of children received all the routine dental preventive care needed in the past 12 months	**38th**
64.1 percent of school-age children participated in vigorous physical activity for four or more days per week	**34th**
14.2 percent of children are obese	**23rd**

Average Rank	**30.5**
Average Grade	**D+**

Healthy Adolescents

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 nutrition and avoiding risky sexual behaviors. Specifically, Colorado has the lowest percentage of adolescents who were sexually active in the past three months.

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 most states. Underlying all this is the same lack of health insurance found among younger children: 11 percent of adolescents and 12 percent of children are uninsured. Addressing these issues will enable Colorado's adolescents to enter adulthood with good health and good health habits.

Health Indicator	Rank among states
11.2 percent of adolescents are not covered by private or public health insurance	**32nd**
12.4 percent of adolescents live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level	**18th**
24.4 percent of adolescents ate five or more servings per day of fruits and/or vegetables during the past seven days	**1st**
47.0 percent of adolescents participated in vigorous physical activity on five or more of the past seven days	**10th**
25.1 percent of adolescents had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row on one or more of the past 30 days	**37th**
17.7 percent of adolescents smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days	**20th**
25.4 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	**19th**
7.6 percent of adolescents attempted suicide one or more times during the past 12 months	**22nd**
27.4 percent of adolescents were sexually active in the past three months	**1st**
Among students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months, **63.2 percent** reported using a condom during last sexual intercourse	**11th**
Teen fertility rate (**43.4 births to teen mothers per 1,000 teenage women**)	**29th**
Average Rank	**18.2**
Average Grade	**B-**

Healthy Adults

Colorado's working-age adults are healthier than their counterparts in most other states, according to measures in this Report Card. The state has the second-lowest prevalence of both hypertension and diabetes. Colorado's adults are more likely than adults in all but three other states to exercise, and Colorado has the lowest rate of adult obesity in the country. But the state does poorly in terms of insurance coverage: One in five working-age adults lacked health insurance in 2007–2009. In addition, Colorado ranks in the bottom half of all states with respect to adults having a regular source of medical care and binge drinking, suggesting room for improvement.

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

Health Indicator	Rank among states
19.8 percent of working-age adults are not covered by private or public health insurance	**30th**
76.6 percent of adults have one (or more) person(s) they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider	**31st**
21.6 percent of adults consumed five or more fruits and/or vegetables per day within the past week	**28th**
83.5 percent of adults participated in any physical activity within the past month	**4th**
19.0 percent of adults are obese	**1st**
18.8 percent of adults currently smoke cigarettes	**14th**
18.6 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	**29th**
13.2 percent of adults report that their mental health was not good eight or more days in the past month	**12th**
4.2 percent of adults reported that they were diagnosed with diabetes	**2nd**
17.0 percent of adults reported that they were diagnosed with high blood pressure	**2nd**
Average Rank	**15.3**
Average Grade	**B**

Healthy Aging

Colorado's older adults do relatively well according to the measures used in this Report Card and compared to their peers in other states. Colorado scores in the top 10 on five of the six *Healthy Aging* indicators. 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.

Based on this good performance, Colorado gets an A- for *Healthy Aging*, still leaving room for improvement. Approximately one in five older adults reported that poor physical health kept them from doing their usual activities on eight or more days in the past month. Even though Colorado is ranked second for flu and pneumonia vaccinations, only 60 percent of older adults have actually been adequately vaccinated.

Health Indicator	Rank among states
94.6 percent of older adults have one (or more) person(s) they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider	**27th**
60.1 percent of older adults have had a flu shot during the past 12 months and have had a pneumonia vaccination	**2nd**
75.2 percent of older adults participated in any physical activity in the past 30 days	**1st**
17.6 percent of older adults report that their **physical** health was not good eight or more days in the past month	**7th**
6.1 percent of older adults report that their **mental** health was not good eight or more days in the past month	**5th**
20.1 percent of older adults reported eight or more days of limited activity in the past month due to poor physical or mental health	**9th**
Average Rank	**8.5**
Average Grade	**A-**

The Colorado Health Foundation™

www.ColoradoHealthReportCard.org

501 South Cherry Street, Suite 1100 ◦ Denver, Colorado 80246 -1325
TEL: 303.953.3600 ◦ **FREE:** 877.225.0839 ◦ www.ColoradoHealth.org

Acknowledgments

The 2010 Colorado Health Report Card was produced in partnership with The Colorado Health Institute. Contributing staff members include:

Emily King
GIS Specialist/Research Assistant

Amy Downs
Director for Policy and Research

Rebecca Crepin
SAS Programmer/Analyst

Anna Furniss
Program Manager, Research and Analytical Services

Megan Dwyer
Research Associate

Tasia Sinn
Research Assistant

Sherry Freeland Walker
Communications Director

Special thanks to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

© 2010 The Colorado Health Foundation. All rights reserved.
The Colorado Health Foundation is proud to be an equal opportunity employer.