



The Colorado

Health Report Card



The Colorado Health Foundation™

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

The Colorado paradox

For a state often regarded as the “leanest” and “most active” in the country, Colorado falls short by many important health measures.

Our health grades haven’t improved much since the Colorado Health Foundation issued its first Report Card in 2006. From 2009 to 2011, the overall grade for *Healthy Beginnings* (an indicator that measures prenatal care for babies and their mothers) remained unchanged at a mediocre C. During the past year, the state’s grade for *Healthy Children* moved from an unacceptably low D+ to a marginally better C-. At the same time, grades for *Healthy Adolescents* and *Healthy Adults* stalled at B- and B respectively. Meanwhile, the grade for *Healthy Aging* (which monitors how Colorado’s older adults compare with peers in other states) fell from an A- in 2010 to a B in 2011. In part, the decline reflects the percentage of older Coloradans with mental or physical health limitations that prevented them from participating in their usual activities. Although the drop was small, we will watch the *Healthy Aging* indicators closely in future Report Cards.

Just as we would expect better grades from our students, Coloradans should expect better results in the health indicators for *all* its life stages. Though new national and local policy reforms are designed to extend coverage and quality care for underserved Coloradans, collective impact requires time and patience. Furthermore, it will take the continued efforts of health care providers, business and community leaders, and families working together to drive demand for effective new policies and to encourage health-conscious behaviors that ensure a healthier future for Colorado.

Grading Colorado’s health

The 2011 Colorado Health Report Card includes 38 health indicators spanning five life stages: *Healthy Beginnings*, *Healthy Children*, *Healthy Adolescents*, *Healthy Adults* and *Healthy Aging*. 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 six years, we have monitored the health of Coloradans and assigned a letter grade to each of the five life stages. We base the grades on Colorado’s ranking among states. The Report Card is updated every year to reflect the most current data available.

Focus on prevention

In this era of public and private sector budgetary constraints, there are significant discussions about reducing resources dedicated to health care services. For example, employers want to know how they can reduce insurance premiums and increase productivity by keeping their employees healthy. Legislators want to care for Medicaid recipients effectively while working to trim state budgets. For their part, individuals want affordable health insurance, manageable out-of-pocket costs and access to fresh, healthy food and venues for active living.

Though the financial downturn underscores the need to reduce costs and save money on health care services, we also need a clear understanding of the “net savings” from prevention efforts. That’s why the supplement for this year’s Report Card highlights prevention initiatives that show positive returns on investment. The initiatives profiled — including nurse visits, vaccinations, smoking-cessation efforts and worksite wellness programs — already provide high-quality, health-related services while lowering the dollar amounts state and local governments, businesses and individuals dedicate to health care. The supplement, “Prevention: Strong investments in Colorado’s health,” shows how these programs impact Coloradans in ways that realize returns on the state’s investment.

It’s our hope that the 2011 Colorado Health Report Card will provide Coloradans with information they need about Colorado’s challenges and successes in health — enabling Colorado to live up to its reputation and move toward the vision of becoming the healthiest state in the nation.

Want to learn more?

For detailed information on each of the Report Card’s 38 indicators, methodology and its supplement, “Prevention: Strong investments in Colorado’s health,” please visit www.ColoradoHealthReportCard.org.

Report Card Results

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Life Stage	Grade & Avg. Rank
Healthy Beginnings	C 24.6
Healthy Children	C- 30.2
Healthy Adolescents	B- 18.2
Healthy Adults	B 15.7
Healthy Aging	B 14.0

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

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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 provide them with all recommended childhood vaccinations. Colorado performs poorly compared to other states in a number of these areas, receiving a grade of C in 2011. Policymakers, health care providers 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 receive initial prenatal care later than the first trimester or not at all	31 st
91.9 percent of women abstain from cigarette smoking during the last three months of pregnancy	5 th
8.9 percent of babies are born with a low birth weight (less than 5 pounds, 9 ounces)	39 th
Infant mortality rate (6.1 infant deaths per 1,000 live births)	12 th
71.3 percent of preschool-age children received all recommended doses of five key vaccines	36 th
Average Rank	24.6
Average Grade	C

Healthy Children

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Too many Colorado children live in poverty, and too few have health insurance. More than 18 percent of the state's children 12 years and younger lived at or below the federal poverty level during 2008-2010 (about \$22,050 for a family of four in 2009). Approximately 9 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 rankings in many other indicators results in a low grade of C-.

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
9.3 percent of children are not covered by private or public health insurance	36 th
18.3 percent of children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level	20 th
59.3 percent of children have 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 are obese	23 rd

Average Rank **30.2**

Average Grade



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 nutrition 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 most states. Underlying all this is the same lack of health insurance found among younger children: 10 percent of adolescents are uninsured. Addressing these issues will enable Colorado’s adolescents to enter adulthood in good health and with good health habits.

Health Indicator	Rank among states
10.0 percent of adolescents are not covered by private or public health insurance	29 th
14.1 percent of adolescents live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level	21 st
24.4 percent of adolescents ate five or more servings per day of fruits and/or vegetables during the past seven days	1 st
47.0 percent of adolescents participated in vigorous physical activity on five or more of the past seven days	10 th
25.1 percent of adolescents had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row on one or more of the past 30 days	37 th
17.7 percent of adolescents smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days	20 th
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	19 th
7.6 percent of adolescents attempted suicide one or more times during the past 12 months	22 nd
27.4 percent of adolescents were sexually active in the past three months	1 st
Among students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months, 63.2 percent reported using a condom during last sexual intercourse	11 th
Teen fertility rate (42.5 births to teen mothers per 1,000 teenage women)	29 th
Average Rank	18.2
Average Grade	B-

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 has the second-lowest prevalence of hypertension and the third-lowest prevalence of diabetes. Colorado's adults are more likely than adults in all but four 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: Nearly one in five working-age adults lacked health insurance in 2008-2010. In addition, Colorado ranks in the bottom half of all states with respect to adults having a regular source of medical care, binge drinking and nutrition, suggesting room for improvement.

The grade of B masks some troubling trends and disparities. The state's obesity rate has doubled in fewer than 20 years, and low-income Coloradans 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
18.3 percent of working-age adults are not covered by private or public health insurance	24 th
78.4 percent of adults have one (or more) person(s) they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider	28 th
21.6 percent of adults consumed five or more fruits and/or vegetables per day within the past week	28 th
83.0 percent of adults participated in any physical activity within the past month	5 th
22.0 percent of adults are obese	1 st
17.3 percent of adults currently smoke cigarettes	15 th
17.7 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	27 th
14.8 percent of adults reported that their mental health was not good eight or more days in the past month	24 th
4.5 percent of adults reported they were diagnosed with diabetes	3 rd
17.0 percent of adults reported they were diagnosed with high blood pressure	2 nd

Average Rank **15.7**

Average Grade **B**

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 immunization compared to older adults in other states, and are more physically active than older adults in all but three other states. Even though Colorado ranks first for flu and pneumonia vaccinations, fewer than 60 percent of older adults have been adequately vaccinated, however.

Between 2010 and 2011, Colorado's grade for *Healthy Aging* dropped from an A- to a B. This change is due to small declines across a number of indicators, and a more substantial drop in the ranking for the percentage of older adults with a medical home.

Health Indicator	Rank among states
94.1 percent of older adults have one (or more) person(s) they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider	36 th
58.6 percent of older adults have had a flu shot during the past 12 months and have had a pneumonia vaccination	1 st
75.2 percent of older adults participated in any physical activity in the past 30 days	4 th
18.7 percent of older adults report that their physical health was not good eight or more days in the past month	11 th
7.1 percent of older adults report that their mental health was not good eight or more days in the past month	9 th
22.0 percent of older adults reported eight or more days of limited activity in the past month due to poor physical or mental health	23 rd
Average Rank	14.0
Average Grade	B



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