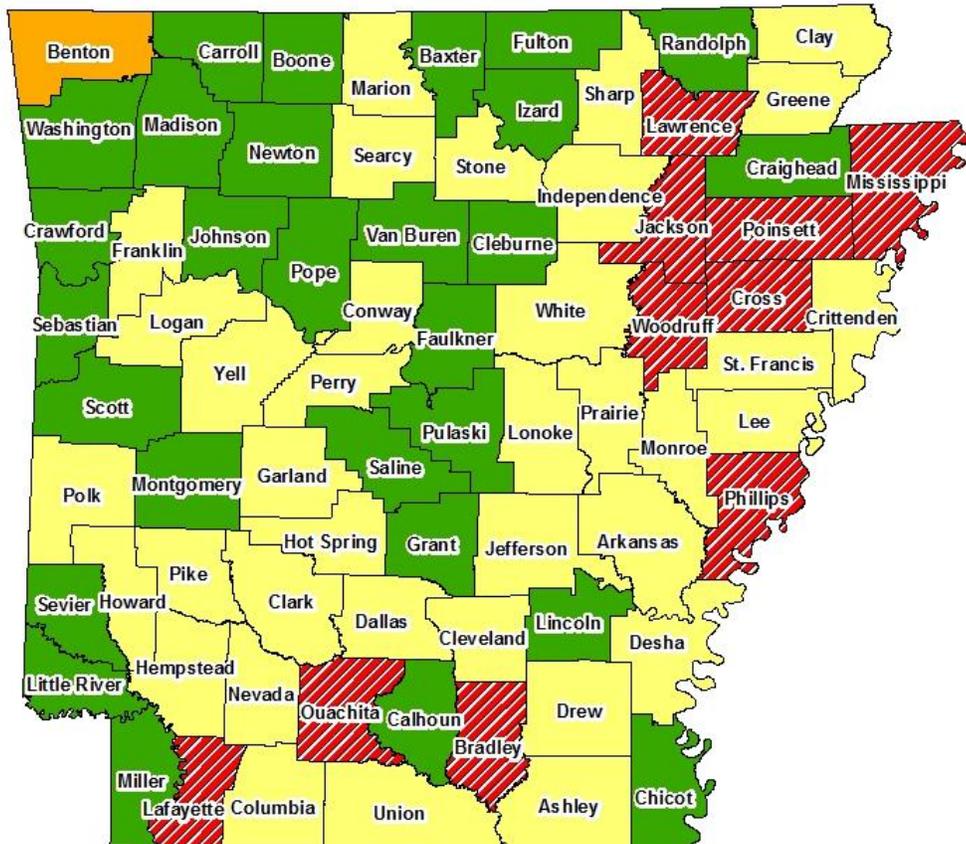


Red County Report

County Life Expectancy Profile

2015



Office of Minority Health & Health Disparities
Arkansas Department of Health

Arkansas Minority Health Commission

In Accordance with Act 790 and Act 798 of 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is prepared in accordance with the 2011 Arkansas Act 790¹ to define Arkansas “Red Counties”. Ten counties were defined and ranked as “Red Counties” in 2015. This report assists the Red County Action Planning Committee in continuing interventions in the “Red Counties”.

Key Findings

- Arkansas ranked 49th (1st being the best) in the 2014 America’s Health Rankings Annual Report², an annual assessment of the nation’s health on a state-by-state basis.
- The life expectancy in Arkansas has been consistently lower than the United States (U.S.). Arkansas ranked 47th in the U.S. in life expectancy in 2010³ (1st being the best).
- The 2011 and 2013 life expectancies were 76.1 and 76.2 years for Arkansas compared to the 78.7 and 78.8 years for the U.S., respectively. In 2013, 50 out of the 75 (67%) county-specific life expectancies fell below the state’s average life expectancy.
- Benton County had the highest life expectancy of 79.8 years, 3.6 years higher than the state’s average, and was used as reference for comparison in this report for the 2013 life expectancy.
- Poinsett and Phillip Counties had the lowest life expectancy of 72.1 years in 2013, which is 4.1 years less than the state’s average and 7.7 years less than Benton County’s life expectancy.
- In 2013, the cutoffs generated one Gold County (79.1-80.0), 28 Green Counties (76.0-79.0), 36 Yellow Counties (74.0-75.9), and 10 Red Counties (<74.0).
- The 10 Red Counties of 2013 included Poinsett, Phillips, Cross, Mississippi, Lafayette, Ouachita, Bradley, Jackson, Woodruff, and Lawrence.
- A total of 41 counties gained life expectancy in 2013 compared to the 2011 life expectancy. The highest gain was 1.9 years in Fulton County.



INTRODUCTION

According to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), life expectancy at birth represents the average number of years that the members of a particular life table cohort can expect to live at the time of birth⁴.

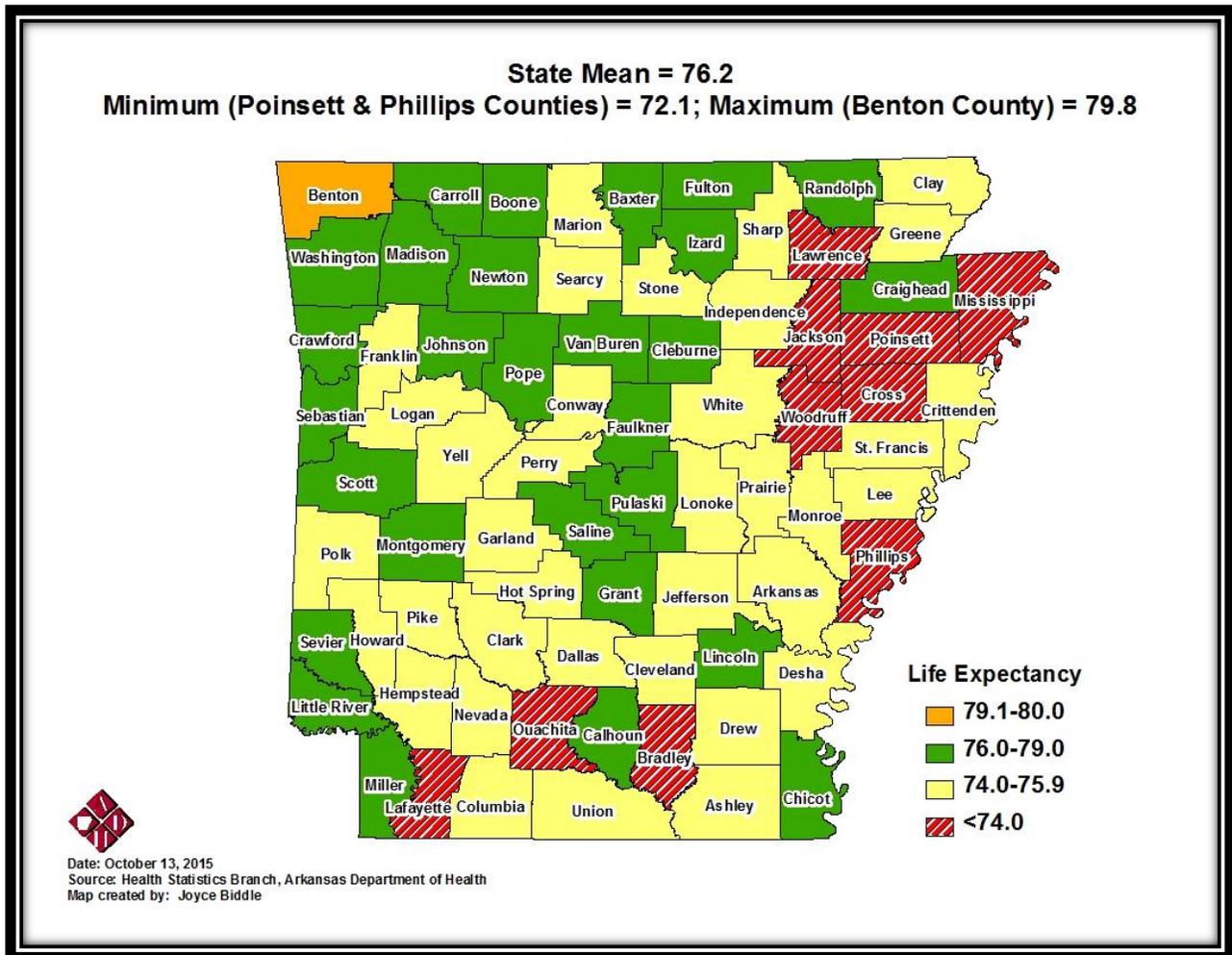
While struggling to improve health outcomes at the state level, Arkansas also faces disparities in life expectancy at the county level. Concerned with the disparity, Senator Jack Crumbly (16th District) sponsored a bill to designate counties with the lowest life expectancies in the state as Red Counties. The Red Counties were defined as counties where the life expectancy at birth ranged from six to ten years less than the county with the highest life expectancy¹.

Acts 790¹ and 798⁵ were passed in the Arkansas Legislature in 2011 to encourage state agencies and organizations to make appropriate services/programs available to improve public health in these counties. Following the directives of the legislation, the Red County Action Planning Committee (RCAPC) formed in October 2012. Several agencies, including the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), continue to work collaboratively with the RCAPC to plan and implement interventions in the 17 Red Counties identified from the 2008 data.

In the 2015 report, ten Red Counties have been identified. Life expectancy was calculated using 2012-2014 Arkansas resident death data and 2013 Arkansas population estimates. For consistency, the same categories for defining life expectancy have been used each year within the Red County Reports using Gold, Green, Yellow, and Red as depicted in the map on page 4. The Gold category represents the county with the highest life expectancy and the Red represents counties with the lowest life expectancies. The same categories were used to monitor changes in life expectancies over time within those ranges, i.e. the same cut-off points.

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

2012-2014 Death Data and 2013 Population Estimates
In Accordance with Act 790 and Act 798



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The following five tables (pp. 6-9) illustrate the life expectancies in the U.S., state of Arkansas, and the 75 counties in Arkansas.

- Table 1 shows 2013 life expectancies at the national and state levels. Arkansas counties with the highest and lowest life expectancies are also shown.
 - While Arkansas's life expectancy was lower than the national average, Benton County, located in the northwest region of Arkansas, exceeded the national average.
 - Benton County had the highest life expectancy of 79.8 years.
 - Poinsett and Phillips Counties had the lowest life expectancy of 72.1 years, 7.7 years less than Benton County.
- Table 2 presents 2013 life expectancies of 28 Green Counties ranging from 76.0 to 78.4 years. Twenty-four Green Counties were identified in 2011.
- Table 3 presents 2013 life expectancies of 36 Yellow Counties ranging from 74.2 to 75.9 years. Thirty-six counties were identified as Yellow in 2011.
- Table 4 presents 2013 life expectancies of 10 Red Counties ranging from 72.1 to 73.9 years. Fourteen Red Counties were identified in 2011.
- Table 5 presents a comparison of 2011 and 2013 life expectancies by county.
 - A total of 41 counties gained life expectancy in 2013 ranging from as low as 0.1 year (Hempstead County) to a high of 1.9 years (Fulton County).
 - The life expectancy for 34 counties decreased ranging from 0.1 (Pope, Washington, Pulaski and Conway Counties) to 2.0 years (Pike County).

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY COUNTY

Table 1: Comparing U.S., Arkansas State, and Arkansas Counties with the highest and lowest life expectancies

Location	Population 2013	Life Expectancy (Years)
United States	316,497,531	78.8
State of Arkansas	2,959,373	76.2
Benton County (highest life expectancy)	237,297	79.8
Phillips County (lowest life expectancy)	20,399	72.1
Poinsett County (lowest life expectancy)	24,145	72.1

Table 2: Green Counties Life Expectancies

County (n=28)	Population 2013	Life Expectancy (Years)
Washington	216,410	78.4
Saline	114,404	77.9
Newton	8,064	77.7
Carroll	27,808	77.5
Boone	37,396	77.4
Cleburne	25,686	77.4
Montgomery	9,226	77.2
Johnson	25,846	77.1
Van Buren	16,932	77.1
Faulkner	119,580	77.0
Scott	10,950	76.9
Little River	12,730	76.8
Fulton	12,304	76.8
Miller	43,402	76.8
Pope	62,547	76.7
Calhoun	5,241	76.7
Craighead	101,488	76.7
Izard	13,368	76.6
Madison	15,701	76.6
Baxter	40,957	76.5
Sevier	17,366	76.4
Sebastian	127,342	76.3
Grant	18,019	76.3
Pulaski	391,284	76.3
Randolph	17,692	76.1
Lincoln	14,031	76.1
Crawford	61,640	76.0
Chicot	11,335	76.0

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Health Statistics Branch, Arkansas Department of Health

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY COUNTY

Table 3: Yellow Counties Life Expectancies

County (n=36)	Population 2013	Life Expectancy (Years)
Prairie	8,374	75.9
Independence	36,997	75.9
Searcy	8,023	75.9
Drew	18,785	75.8
Hempstead	22,474	75.7
Lonoke	70,753	75.6
Cleveland	8,593	75.6
Dallas	7,933	75.6
Perry	10,345	75.5
St. Francis	27,260	75.4
Polk	20,406	75.4
Columbia	24,164	75.3
Howard	13,581	75.3
Stone	12,581	75.3
White	78,483	75.3
Garland	97,173	75.3
Clark	22,743	75.2
Conway	21,245	75.2
Marion	16,430	75.2
Sharp	17,049	75.1
Lee	10,015	75.0
Crittenden	49,746	75.0
Arkansas	18,777	74.9
Ashley	21,283	74.8
Logan	22,082	74.8
Hot Spring	33,500	74.7
Monroe	7,682	74.6
Yell	21,893	74.6
Greene	43,097	74.5
Pike	11,177	74.5
Desha	12,505	74.4
Franklin	18,034	74.4
Nevada	8,799	74.4
Clay	15,402	74.3
Jefferson	73,191	74.2
Union	40,694	74.2

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Health Statistics Branch, Arkansas Department of Health

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY COUNTY

Table 4: Red Counties Life Expectancies

County (n=10)	Population 2013	Life Expectancy (Years)
Lawrence	17,011	73.9
Woodruff	7,072	73.8
Jackson	17,615	73.8
Bradley	11,249	73.8
Ouachita	25,002	73.6
Lafayette	7,252	73.4
Mississippi	44,765	73.3
Cross	17,548	73.0
Phillips	20,399	72.1
Poinsett	24,145	72.1

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Health Statistics Branch, Arkansas Department of Health

CHANGES IN LIFE EXPECTANCIES

Table 5: Changes in Life Expectancies from 2011 to 2013

County	Life Expectancy (Years) 2011	Life Expectancy (Years) 2013	County	Life Expectancy (Years) 2011	Life Expectancy (Years) 2013
State Total	76.1	76.2	Perry	76.7	75.5
Benton	79.6	79.8	St. Francis	74.5	75.4
Washington	78.5	78.4	Polk	75.7	75.4
Saline	78.2	77.9	Columbia	74.6	75.3
Newton	76.2	77.7	Howard	74.0	75.3
Carroll	77.0	77.5	Stone	75.7	75.3
Boone	77.9	77.4	White	75.6	75.3
Cleburne	76.6	77.4	Garland	75.5	75.3
Montgomery	76.9	77.2	Clark	74.5	75.2
Johnson	76.3	77.1	Conway	75.3	75.2
Van Buren	77.7	77.1	Marion	76.5	75.2
Faulkner	77.3	77.0	Sharp	73.5	75.1
Scott	75.9	76.9	Lee	73.8	75.0
Little River	75.6	76.8	Crittenden	73.6	75.0
Fulton	74.9	76.8	Arkansas	73.7	74.9
Miller	75.0	76.8	Ashley	75.0	74.8
Pope	76.8	76.7	Logan	75.4	74.8
Calhoun	76.4	76.7	Hot Spring	75.7	74.7
Craighead	76.1	76.7	Monroe	75.1	74.6
Izard	75.8	76.6	Yell	75.2	74.6
Madison	77.0	76.6	Greene	74.7	74.5
Baxter	75.9	76.5	Pike	76.5	74.5
Sevier	75.7	76.4	Desha	73.4	74.4
Sebastian	76.5	76.3	Franklin	74.1	74.4
Grant	75.1	76.3	Nevada	74.9	74.4
Pulaski	76.4	76.3	Clay	73.1	74.3
Randolph	75.9	76.1	Jefferson	74.8	74.2
Lincoln	76.9	76.1	Union	74.8	74.2
Crawford	75.4	76.0	Lawrence	74.8	73.9
Chicot	75.0	76.0	Woodruff	72.6	73.8
Prairie	74.6	75.9	Jackson	73.1	73.8
Independence	76.2	75.9	Bradley	75.0	73.8
Searcy	76.5	75.9	Ouachita	73.4	73.6
Drew	77.0	75.8	Lafayette	72.2	73.4
Hempstead	75.6	75.7	Mississippi	72.0	73.3
Lonoke	75.3	75.6	Cross	73.3	73.0
Cleveland	76.2	75.6	Phillips	71.9	72.1
Dallas	74.9	75.6	Poinsett	71.7	72.1

Source: Health Statistics Branch, Arkansas Department of Health

DISCUSSION

Arkansas's average life expectancy for 2013 was similar to that of 2011, 76.2 and 76.1, respectively. The gap between the highest and the lowest ranking counties narrowed from 10 years in 2008 to 8.3 years in 2011, and 7.7 years in 2013. This demonstrates that the disparity in life expectancy in Arkansas is decreasing. This increase in life expectancy can be largely attributed to the initiatives and efforts of a number of organizations and partners across the state. Through these initiatives, many Arkansans have made better lifestyle choices resulting in increased life expectancy. In 2013, the life expectancy increased for 41 counties and decreased for 34 counties. Benton County continued to have the highest life expectancy (79.8). Fulton and Pike Counties experienced the greatest increase (1.9) and decrease (2.0), respectively.

Although not shown in this report, a closer look at the state's life expectancy by gender and race revealed that life expectancies gradually increased for African Americans and whites. Life expectancy for African American males in the U.S. increased from 64.5 years in 1990 to 72.3 years in 2013⁶. Similar trends were observed for African Americans in the Red Counties. A majority of the Red Counties with high African American populations are located in the Arkansas Delta Region that runs along the eastern border of the state next to the Mississippi River. Several counties in this region gained life expectancy in 2013 (Arkansas, Chicot, Craighead, Crittenden, Desha, Lee, Mississippi, Phillips, Poinsett and St. Francis counties). This potentially led to narrowing of the gap between the highest and lowest life expectancy counties in Arkansas, as mentioned above.



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