

Healthy People 2010 Health Status Report Executive Summary

This report is designed to provide insight into health disparities within Arkansas as they currently exist. Various subgroups of the State's overall population exhibit disproportionate rates for key factors that lead to poor health. The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) is leading efforts to eliminate these inequities through partnerships with community organizations, health care providers and other groups. This health status report provides a snapshot of what has been accomplished and areas to be addressed as we continue to develop and implement strategies to improve the overall health status of the people of our state.

The ADH Healthy People 2010 Health Status Report focuses on health status indicators that were selected from among the goals outlined in Healthy People 2010. This comprehensive, nationwide health promotion and disease prevention initiative was designed to serve as a roadmap for improving the health of all people in the United States during the first decade of the 21st Century. Healthy People 2010 has two overarching goals: to increase quality and years of healthy life, and to eliminate health disparities.

Within this Report, 60 selected health indicators were grouped into 12 categories (listed below). Data were examined to identify the current health status of three primary subgroups within Arkansas – Whites, Blacks and Latinos. These subgroups were compared using the 60 indicators to see if health disparities exist between the various groups.

The following data demonstrate significant and important differences in the health status among these subgroups:

CATEGORY	WHITES	BLACKS	LATINOS
Access to Care			Most Striking Disparities
Cancer		Most Striking Disparities	
Diabetes			Most Striking Disparities
Family Planning		Most Striking Disparities	
Heart Disease		Most Striking Disparities	
HIV		Most Striking Disparities	
Injury	Most Striking Disparities		
Maternal Child Health		Most Striking Disparities	
Nutrition		Most Striking Disparities	
Oral Health		Most Striking Disparities	Most Striking Disparities
Physical Activity		Most Striking Disparities	
Tobacco	Most Striking Disparities		

The overall Arkansas population is compared to national targets for selected Healthy People 2010 goals. These data indicate that for Arkansas to reach the national target value for the majority of the Healthy People 2010 goals, it is essential that we continue to improve.

It is important to note that data used to develop this report were drawn from multiple sources, including vital records, statewide surveys and a selection of specialized surveys among key target groups. Use of this methodology created a number of challenges. Some data were not available at the state level for all of the national Healthy People 2010 goals. In addition, data on race, ethnic origin or cultural identity have not always been collected with the disease information. Without that information, group-specific disease estimates for previous years cannot be determined, which limits our ability to track disparities over time. Further, there are changing definitions of “race” for the purposes of data collection that pose unique challenges for documenting and interpreting health disparities that may occur between and among racial/cultural groups. Finally, two of Arkansas's most important and rapidly increasing groups—Latinos and citizens of the Marshall Islands—have strong linguistic and cultural differences from the mainstream Arkansas population groups. These differences make these groups harder to reach from a data collection standpoint. Therefore, it is imperative that we interpret data patterns cautiously and draw conclusions carefully.