



The State of Missouri's Health

Missouri spends approximately \$6,967 per person on health care per year, which is the 23rd highest amount among all U.S. states.¹ Currently, Missouri spends \$5.86 per person on public health annually, which is less than any other U.S. state, and approximately \$22 below the national median.² Many of the state's health indicators fall in the bottom third compared to other states. This factsheet examines several reports ranking Missouri's health.

Demographics

Currently, Missouri has a population of approximately 6 million people: 1.5 million children under the age of 18; 883,181 seniors 65 years and over; and 3.5 million adults between the ages of 18 and 64. The median age in Missouri is 38 years, slightly older than the national median age (37 years).³ Median household income in the state is estimated at \$46,931, about \$5,319 less than the national median.⁴ In the period 2009-2013, 15.6 percent of people lived below the federal poverty level in Missouri, compared to 15.4 percent nationally.⁵

Health Rankings Report

The United Health Foundation provides annual health rankings of all 50 states. The 2014 edition⁶ ranks Missouri 36th overall, an improvement from 2013's overall ranking (39th). The rankings are computed from 30 measures divided into two different categories: health determinants (i.e., personal behaviors, community and environment, public and health policies and clinical care) and health outcomes (i.e., mortality and quality of life). The health determinant measures influence health outcomes of state residents. Improving the determinant indicators will improve health outcomes over time.

Strengths

Among health determinant measures, Missouri ranked among the top 20 in the nation for high school graduation (86 percent, rank-12th). Missouri's rate of high school graduation is noted as a strength, as education-related indicators can provide a measure of a given health consumer's ability to learn about, create and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

One health outcome indicator trending in a positive direction has been a decrease in the number of the uninsured to 13.3 percent in 2014 from 14.4 percent in 2012. The state ranks slightly better among health outcome indicators than it does in health determinant indicators. This would seem to indicate that, without intervention, the overall health of Missourians could decline as health determinant indicators may impact both the short- and long-term health outcomes of residents.

Challenges

The rankings for Missouri's health outcome indicators range from 22nd to 45th. These rankings include:

- 30th for poor mental health days (3.8 days in previous 30 days),
- 39th for cancer deaths (204.8 deaths per 100,000 population),
- 40th for premature death (8,120 years lost per 100,000 population) and
- 41st for cardiovascular deaths (281.1 deaths per 100,000 population).

Challenges also exist among the health determinant indicators. Missouri ranks 34th and 41st for the percentage of its population that is obese (30.4 percent) and that smoke (22.1 percent), respectively. Missouri also has poor rankings for public health funding (rank-45th) and immunization for adolescents (rank-43rd). These challenges reflect a state that must acknowledge and begin to address weaknesses in the health care system, as well as encourage and support the personal health of its residents.

Health System Performance Reports

In 2014, the Commonwealth Fund updated a state scorecard that examined health system performance across five dimensions: 1) Access; 2) Prevention and Treatment; 3) Avoidable Hospital Use and Costs; 4) Equity and 5) Healthy Lives.⁷ This scorecard offers a framework for states to “gauge efforts to ensure affordable access to high-quality, efficient and equitable care.” Overall, Missouri ranked 34th among states across all five dimensions.

Rankings Within the Dimensions

Missouri’s most favorable ranking was in the equity dimension (rank-26th). This dimension examined three types of equity: income, insurance coverage and race/ethnicity. It should be noted that the state’s ranking worsened for six indicators in the equity dimension since the 2009 rankings. Those indicators included: at risk adults without a doctor’s visit; adults without a usual source of care; adults with poor health-related quality of life; uninsured ages 0-63; adults without a usual source of care and adults with poor health-related quality of life.

The prevention and treatment dimension included indicators that measure the performance of three related components: receipt of recommended care, preventive care and patient-centered care. Overall, Missouri ranked 28th in this dimension. Missouri also ranked 27th in the access dimension, which examined insurance coverage. The state ranked 39th in the avoidable hospital use and cost dimension, which examined hospital admissions, readmission and emergency visits for certain vulnerable populations. Missouri’s lowest ranking was in the healthy lives dimension (rank-40th). This ranking included indicators that measured the degree to which a state’s residents live long and healthy lives.

In 2011, the Commonwealth Fund released a state scorecard examining performance of states’ child health systems.⁸ Measured according to the five dimensions studied on previous state scorecards, Missouri’s child health system ranked 21st for overall performance. Ranking in the top quartile for multiple indicators, Missouri ranked highest in prevention and treatment (rank-19th overall), percentage of children with a medical home (rank-8th) and percentage of children ages 2-17 receiving needed mental health care (rank-6th). Despite these indicators, Missouri ranked 30th for children’s potential to lead healthy lives.

Missouri’s Uninsured

One of the indicators that played a major role in the state ranking reports was the percentage of uninsured state residents. Missouri’s uninsured population has decreased over the last three years. The decline in the uninsured may be tied to the economic recovery and increased enrollment in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Endnotes

- 1 Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), State Health Facts: Health Care Expenditures Per Capita by State of Residence, 2009.
- 2 Trust for America’s Health, Key Health Data about Missouri: Public Health Funding Indicators, 2014.
- 3 U.S. Census Bureau (Census), “Missouri Age-Groups and Sex,” American FactFinder, 2012.
- 4 Census, “Selected Economic Characteristics, American Community Survey 1-year estimates,” American FactFinder, 2013.
- 5 Census, “State and County Quick Facts: Missouri: 2013,” 2014.
- 6 United Health Foundation, America’s Health Rankings: Missouri, 2014.
- 7 Commonwealth Fund Commission on a High Performance Health System, Aiming Higher: Results from a State Scorecard on Health System Performance, Commonwealth Fund, 2014.
- 8 Commonwealth Fund, State Scorecard on Child Health System Performance, 2011, Commonwealth Fund, 2011.

About Missouri Foundation for Health: Missouri Foundation for Health is a resource for the region, working with communities and nonprofits to generate and accelerate positive changes in health. As a catalyst for change, the Foundation improves the health of Missourians through partnership, experience, knowledge and funding. To learn more please visit mffh.org.