fact sheet

Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

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The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a standardized instrument developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor lifestyles and behaviors related to the leading causes of mortality and morbidity. BRFSS is the largest telephone-based surveillance system in the world. The Survey Research Unit of the Health Statistics Section of the Colorado Department of Public Heath and Environment has been collecting these data since January 1990. Questionnaire topics include:

Chronic Conditions
➤ Obesity
➤ Diabetes
➤ Hypertension
➤ Asthma
➤ Cardiovascular disease
➤ Disability
➤ Arthritis

Risk Factors
➤ Tobacco use
➤ Secondhand Smoke
➤ Alcohol consumption
➤ Physical activity
➤ Diet
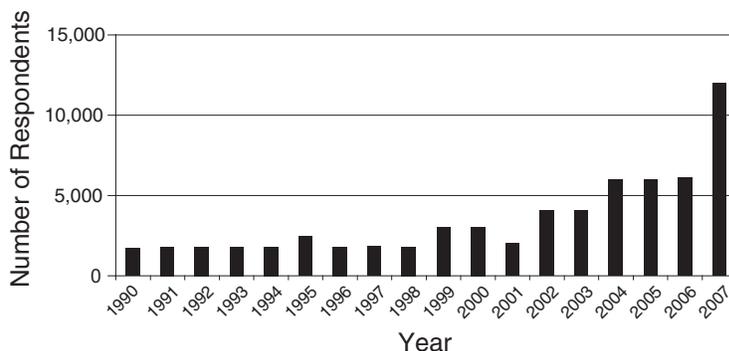➤ Emotional support and life satisfaction
➤ Health insurance coverage

Preventive Practices
➤ Breast and cervical cancer screening
➤ Colorectal cancer screening
➤ Prostate cancer screening
➤ Skin cancer screening
➤ Flu and pneumonia vaccination
➤ HIV testing
➤ Cholesterol screening
➤ Diabetes self management practices

Growth of the Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

1990 completed interviews = 1,725
2007 completed interviews = 11,901

The BRFSS questionnaire is divided into three sections:

➤ **Core** (80 questions) Provided by CDC
Examples: demographics, diabetes, tobacco use, diet and exercise, health
status, health care access, alcohol consumption, weight status, cancer
screening;
➤ **Optional Modules** (46 questions) Provided by CDC and selected by CDPHE
Examples: adult asthma history, immunizations, prediabetes, diabetes, visual
impairment and access to eye care, anxiety and depression;
➤ **State-Added Questions** (54 questions) Developed by internal and external
stakeholders
Examples: graduated drivers license, weight control, folic acid intake

How are the data used?

➤ To provide behavioral statistics for state and regional health program planning;
➤ To highlight differences/disparities between demographic groups;
➤ To reveal health trends;
➤ To allow comparisons to other states and to national health goals;
➤ To identify emerging health problems;
➤ To educate the public about risk behaviors and preventive health practices;
➤ To monitor health objectives, such as those stated in *Healthy People 2010*;

**Example One: Monitoring Colorado* progress with the *Healthy People 2010*
Health Objectives****

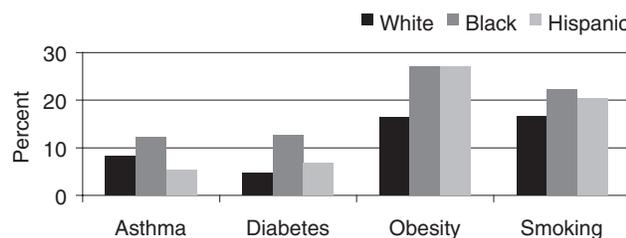|	Colorado Estimate	HP 2010 Objective
Health insurance (ages >18):	85%	100%
Pap smear, within past three years (women, ages >18):	81%	90%
Mammogram, within past two years (women, ages >40):	73%	70%
Influenza immunization, within past year (ages >65):	78%	90%
Pneumococcal pneumonia vaccination, ever had (ages >65):	75%	90%
Diabetes, diagnosed (ages >18):	5.4%	2.5%
Obese, BMI*** 30.0 or higher (ages >20):	20%	15%

* Colorado 2006 BRFSS Estimates
** *Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health*; U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services, 2000
*** Body Mass Index

Example Two: Using Colorado BRFSS data to detect health disparities

Prevalence of select health risk factors by race/ethnicity, Colorado BRFSS, 2006