

## **A Profile of Health Among Massachusetts Adults, 2008 Results from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System**

### **Highlights**

- As a result of health care reform in Massachusetts, the rate of uninsured adults continues to decline. In 2007, 5% of adults reported no health insurance; in 2008, this number dropped to 3%. The group with the most significant one year decline in number of uninsured was adults ages 18-24 (from 12% in 2007 to 5% in 2008).
- The steepness of the decline among 18-24 year olds may relate to the nature of the survey as based only on landline telephones. If persons who only have cell phones have different health behaviors than persons who have landline telephones, some of the decline might be due to this. In order to address this, the BRFSS has begun to survey cell phone users. The results of a separate pilot survey of cell phone users conducted in 2008 show that 7% of 18-34 year olds have no health insurance and 24% of them are smokers. These results must be interpreted with caution given the nature of the survey as a pilot. Nevertheless, the pilot cell phone survey found a similar decline in the uninsured and smoking though the overall percentages were higher than found in the landline survey.
- Hispanic adults in Massachusetts continue to report higher rates of self-reported fair or poor health as compared to other racial/ethnic population groups. In 2008, 26% of Hispanic adults reported fair or poor health as compared to 18% of Black, non-Hispanic adults and 11% of White non-Hispanic adults.
- Adult smoking rates remained steady in 2008 at 16%, while 28% of all adults reported being former smokers. Among young people ages 18-24, 21% reported being current smokers.
- 8 out of 10 adults did not allow smoking in their households. In terms of “second hand smoke”, 4 out of 10 adults reported any exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in the previous 7 days.
- The Massachusetts rate of binge drinking among adults 18 and older remained steady at 18%, which is significantly higher than the Healthy People 2010 objective of 6%.
- The number of overweight and obese adults is on the rise in Massachusetts as well as nationally. However the percentage of overweight and obese adults remained lower in Massachusetts (59% and 22%, respectively) than nationwide estimates (63% and 27%, respectively). Massachusetts is ranked 49th in state obesity rates, having the second lowest obesity rate among all 50 states.
- Massachusetts continued to exceed the Healthy People 2010 objective for any leisure time physical activity (78% vs.70%).

- Vaccinations among Massachusetts adults age 65 and older fell short of Healthy People 2010 objectives. In 2008, 72% of adults ages 65 and older reported receiving a flu vaccination in the past year (HP 2010 objective: 90%) and 67% of adults ages 65 and older reported receiving a pneumonia vaccination in the past year (HP 2010 objective: 90%).
- The prevalence of diabetes in Massachusetts was 7%, while those with pre-diabetes comprised 4% of the adult population.
- Mammography rates among women ages 40 years and older (85%) exceeded the objective set forth by Healthy People 2010 (70%) and was one of the highest in the US.
- In 2008, 14% of adult women and 4% of adult men reported experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime.
- The prevalence of adults who reported ever drinking and driving was 4% among men and only 1% among women.
- In 2008, 80% of Massachusetts adults reported always wearing a seatbelt.