



# ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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## **Health Department Releases Allegheny County Health Survey Results** *Data Shows Public Health Trends in Obesity, Smoking and More*

**PITTSBURGH** – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) today announced that the results of the newest county-wide behavioral health survey will be available on its website. Using responses from 9,000 randomly-selected residents, this data will help illuminate trends in important public health topics such as obesity, smoking, insurance access, chronic disease status, and the utilization of healthcare resources.

“This is fantastic data to have at our fingertips,” said County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. “As we talk about how to make Allegheny County a healthier county, having data that not only provides us with information on the health and health concerns of our residents, but also about the progress that is being made and where there are still ongoing concerns is vital to our efforts to improve health.”

The Allegheny County Health Survey is based on the Centers for Disease Control Behavior Risk Surveillance Survey. A random telephone survey, it was conducted by the Evaluation Institute at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, asking participants questions on a broad range of health topics. Similar surveys were conducted in 2002 and 2010, but this is the largest sample in the county’s history. In addition to questions used in past surveys, new questions regarding e-cigarette use, misuse of opioid pain killers, and HPV vaccinations were added to this year’s study.

“As we strive to improve the health of the county, the data from the survey will drive and inform our efforts,” said Dr. Karen Hacker, ACHD Director. “One of the overarching themes in our Plan for a Healthier Allegheny is to address health inequality across the county. Having countywide data, as well as data as the council district level, provides us with a roadmap for action. While there are successes and existing challenges, we are excited to share this information with the public.”

The results indicate positive developments throughout the county. Some 78% of respondents thought their communities were getting healthier. Rates of smoking have gone down 4%, while the number of the people having insurance and getting screened for colon cancer have gone up 4%. But the data also highlights some challenges. For example, there was no significant improvement in a variety of chronic diseases including diabetes, hypertension, strokes or heart attacks. There was also no significant improvement in obesity and overweight. And there are some obvious disparities by race, gender, socioeconomic and geography. For the first time, the data illustrates areas of the county with a disproportionate burden of health issues; particularly in the eastern part of the county.

This latest iteration of the Allegheny County Health survey was a multi-organizational effort spearheaded by the ACHD and the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health. Funding was made possible by contributing partners from the Highmark Foundation, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the Public Health Improvement Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation.

For more information about the survey and to view the summary and snapshots, please visit <http://www.achd.net/biostats/brfss.html>.

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