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Connecticut has mixed results on national health survey

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An annual report compiling key health markers found Connecticut strong in low economic hardship index, low prevalence of cigarette smoking, and low teen birth rate.

The state, though, has faces challenges in high percentage of housing with lead risk, high income inequality, and high residential segregation.

The United Health Foundation released the report, entitled America's Health Rankings Annual Report, which provides one of the most comprehensive assessments of the nation's health on a state-by-state basis.

The report was developed in partnership with the American Public Health Association.

This year's report includes data that predates the onset of the novel coronavirus pandemic, but does not assign overall state rankings.

Despite this, the report will continue to equip health leaders with data and insights that inform priorities as they manage public health work during 2021 and beyond.

The report found income inequality increased 18% between 2007 and 2019, though severe housing problems decreased 8% between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 from 19.3% to 17.8% of occupied housing units.

In addition, adults who avoided care due to cost decreased 22% between 2011 and 2019 from 12.7% to 9.9% throughout the state.

Exercise also increased 14% between 2017 and 2019 from 22.8% to 26.1% of adults.

Premature death increased 11% between 2014 and 2018 from 5,451 to 6,035 years lost before age 75 per 100,000 population.

Additionally, the low birth weight racial gap increased 19% between 2017 and 2018 from 5.4 to 6.4 percentage points.

Nationwide, the report found the percentage of American adults with multiple chronic conditions declined from 10.3% in 2018 to 9.5% in 2019, whereas obesity increased 15% nationally from 27.8% to 31.9% of adults between 2011 and 2019.

The number of American adults who received the recommended flu vaccination increased 25% nationally from 35.0% to 43.7% during 2018 and 2019.

Lastly, the prevalence of adults who reported their mental health was not good for two weeks or more in the past month increased 11% nationally, from 12.4% to 13.8% during 2018 and 2019.

The suicide rate also increased 23% nationally between 2009 and 2018.

“The issues we are seeing in this year’s report will be compounded further by the current COVID-19 pandemic. For years to follow, we expect that COVID-19 will impact almost every health and socioeconomic measure included in this report,” said Dr. Rhonda Randall, chief medical officer of UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual, in a statement.

Randall continued that having year-over-year trends is critical during a public health crisis.

Additionally, having readily available data, which provides a comprehensive view of the nation’s health, provides context during the pandemic.

Dr. Georges C. Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said in a statement the report paints a picture of the nation’s ongoing public health successes and challenges during the outset of the pandemic.

“We hope this report inspires proactive solutions about effective ways to improve the health of everyone within our communities as we navigate the evolving pandemic and head into the next decade,” he said.

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