

Gaps in Adult Health Status by Level of Education: How Do States Compare?

Differences in adult health status¹ by educational attainment are similar at the state level to those seen among adults nationally. In every state, differences in health are seen between the most-educated adults and those with less education. These differences occur along a gradient that includes not only adults with the most and least education, but those in the middle as well. Compared with adults who have graduated

from college, adults who have not completed high school experience particularly marked shortfalls, but even those who have attended some college are less healthy than college graduates. Comparing states based on the size of the gap² in adult health status by education tells us that Americans are not as healthy as they could be—both nationally and in every state.

	Number of Adults, Ages 25-74 Years ³	Overall Rate of Less Than Very Good Health (%)	Ranking on Overall Rate of Less Than Very Good Health	Less Than High-School Graduate	High-School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate	Percent of Population That Would be Affected if Gap Were Eliminated ¹	Size of Health Gap ²	Ranking on Size of Health Gap ³
Alabama	2,691,849	50.8	48	77.2	56.5	48.8	35.3	70.7	15.5	37
Alaska	380,174	43.1	25	65.5	52.9	45.0	29.8	63.7	13.3	19
Arizona	3,427,659	45.6	32	77.9	55.8	45.2	30.2	63.4	15.4	36
Arkansas	1,609,044	50.3	47	78.5	57.6	49.3	33.5	69.7	16.9	41
California	20,966,854	47.9	39	82.0	55.5	42.9	28.0	63.9	19.9	51
Colorado	2,782,543	38.0	6	79.1	49.3	39.4	23.9	56.1	14.1	26
Connecticut	2,091,367	36.3	4	71.1	48.5	40.3	25.1	50.8	11.2	7
Delaware	505,447	41.2	18	67.3	48.9	41.8	32.2	58.9	9.0	1
District of Columbia	351,075	38.3	7	70.1	59.2	47.5	23.6	43.4	14.7	32
Florida	10,664,932	44.0	28	71.9	52.1	43.9	30.6	64.6	13.4	20
Georgia	5,403,101	45.6	32	71.1	55.2	46.2	31.9	62.1	13.7	21
Hawaii	748,845	48.0	40	65.8	60.1	47.9	37.9	60.4	10.0	2
Idaho	806,110	43.3	27	71.4	51.6	44.1	28.2	67.9	15.1	35
Illinois	7,558,327	47.2	36	81.2	57.8	48.6	32.9	60.8	14.3	28
Indiana	3,629,639	47.8	37	76.5	54.8	47.0	32.1	69.7	15.7	38
Iowa	1,744,042	40.4	14	71.6	47.9	40.5	27.8	67.3	12.6	14
Kansas	1,565,541	41.3	19	73.0	51.3	42.2	28.7	61.0	12.6	14
Kentucky	2,579,348	52.8	50	74.4	60.0	50.3	33.6	74.4	19.2	49
Louisiana	2,491,883	49.4	43	68.8	56.2	49.4	34.7	68.8	14.6	31
Maine	808,867	39.5	10	68.8	48.6	41.8	25.7	63.3	13.8	22

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Source: 2005-2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data.

1 Based on self-report and measured as poor, fair, good, very good or excellent.

2 Defined as the difference between the state's overall rate and the rate among college graduates.

3 This number represents a yearly average for 2005-2007.