

Utah Community Health Indicators Report

Utah Department of Health

Office of Public Health Assessment

Having data and information on community health status can identify community health needs and help to frame potential strategies and solutions. In a recent 2004 report, the Utah Department of Health has published results for 42 measures of community health. The measures cover a range of topics, including healthy births, lifestyles, chronic conditions, and access to health care (see box, next page). An online version of the full report may be found in the publications section of <http://ibis.health.utah.gov> (under Office of Public Health Assessment).

The 42 measures that appear in the Community Health Indicators Report were designed to be informative, comprehensive, and concise. The measures were drawn from a variety of sources, including:

- Healthy People 2000 Health Status Indicators
- Healthy People 2010 Leading Health Indicators
- HRSA/ASTHO/Public Health Foundation Community Health Status Indicators Project
- Utah's Public Health Outcome Measures Report
- Utah Indicators of Child Health and Well-Being

It is hoped that the set of indicators will be especially helpful for community health assessment because they:

- are few in number
- provide a comprehensive view of community health
- allow for reporting of data at the community level
- have data from sources for which state and national benchmarks are available
- are understandable and acceptable, and
- are outcome-oriented measures that imply interventions

The Community Health Indicators Report looks at health status at the smallest possible levels of geography that the data will allow. Depending on the measure, data might be reported for a small area, local health district, county, or the state.

Individual health is closely linked to community health and the environment. When community members help plan health promotion activities, they bring an understanding of the community history and social context, and the health activities have a greater chance of producing positive results. Reporting at a local level will allow public health officials and community leaders to understand the specific health issues that confront their neighborhoods and help to inform their decisions on health promotion activities that best address the problem.

This summary provides brief examples from four of the 42 community health measures found in the report:

- Overweight/Obesity by Local Health District
- Childhood Poverty by County
- Adolescent Births by Small Area
- Adult Diabetes Hospitalization by Small Area

The IBIS website at <http://ibis.health.utah.gov> provides a good starting point for those interested in community health issues. We also recommend contacting state and community health programs for more information and ideas for community health activities. The program contact information for each indicator is found at the bottom of each report page.

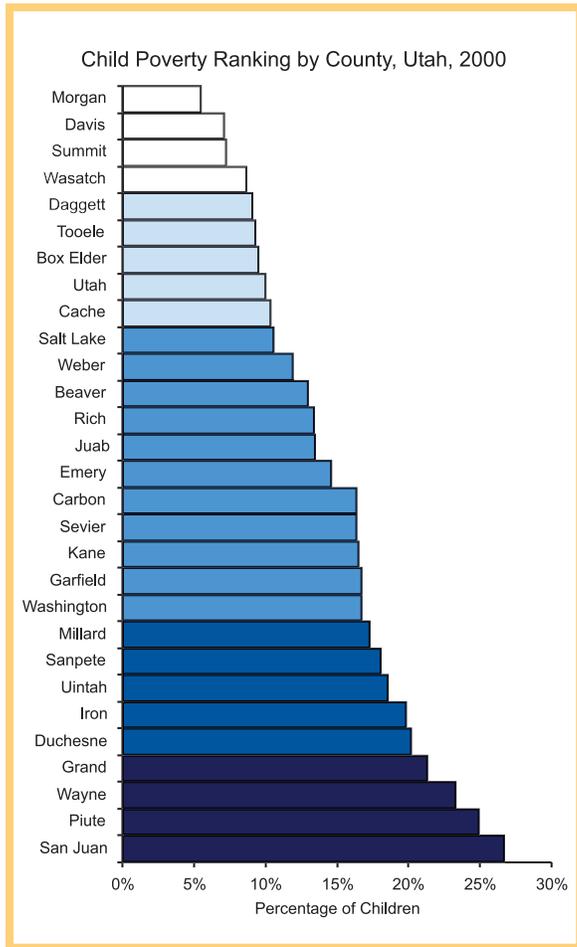
The UDOH intends to routinely update and publish information on the Indicator-Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS-PH) website as new data become available. We invite readers to think about health promotion priorities in their communities while using Community Health Indicators Report as a guide.

For more information on the Utah Community Health Indicators Project, contact Brian Paoli, Utah Department of Health, Office of Public Health Assessment by phone (801) 538-6772 or Email bpaoli@utah.gov.

Childhood Poverty

Poverty in the early years of a child's life has especially harmful effects on continuing healthy development and well-being, including developmental delays and infant mortality. Well-being in later childhood, with respect to teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and educational attainment is also influenced by early childhood poverty.

Poverty and health status are closely linked. Families with lower incomes are less able to afford regular health care. Some illnesses that are easily treated will become chronic due to the lack of care. Medical conditions, either among a wage earner or a child, are also frequently a cause of family poverty.



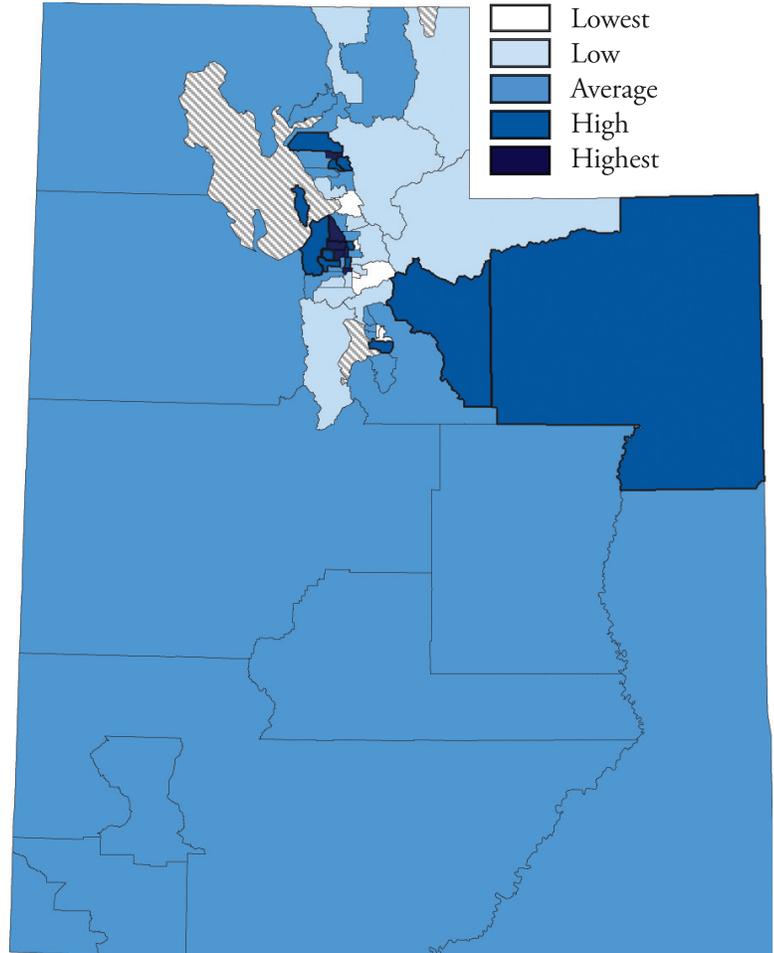
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Adolescent Births

Compared to babies born to older mothers, babies born to adolescent mothers, particularly young adolescent mothers, are at a higher risk for low birth weight and infant mortality. In addition to the health risks for the infant and mother the burden of poverty and other adverse socioeconomic circumstances frequently accompany early childbearing.

Fortunately in Utah and nationally the rate of adolescent births has followed a declining trend for the past 10 years. Despite this overall trend there remain large differences across Utah's 61 small areas. Adolescent birth rates from 2000 to 2002 ranged from 2.3 in the Foothill/U of U area to 70.7 in downtown Ogden. (A key to all 61 Utah small areas may be found in the report.)

Number of Live Births per 1,000 Adolescent Females (Aged 15-17) by Small Area, Utah, 2000-2002



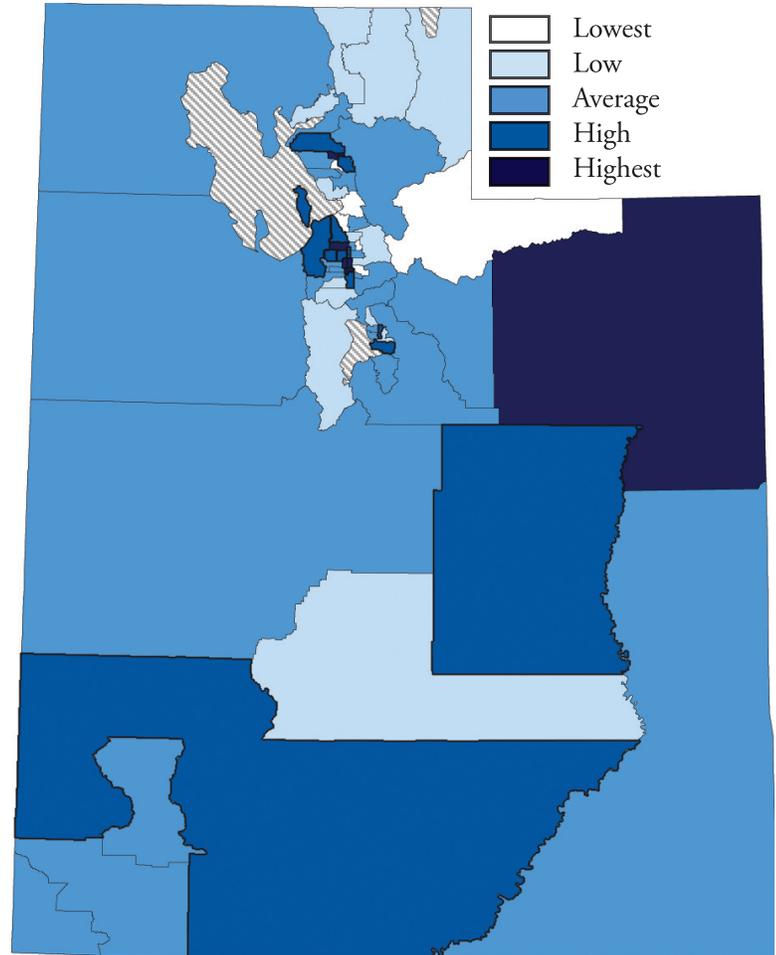
Source: Utah Birth Certificate Database

Adult Diabetes Hospitalizations

Ambulatory care sensitive conditions refer to those conditions for which a significant number of hospitalizations could be avoided with timely preventive care. Uncontrolled diabetes is a life-threatening condition that can be very effectively managed with patient education and appropriate outpatient services. Of the 61 Utah small areas, those with highest rates of adult diabetes hospitalization are Glendale, Midvale, Downtown Ogden, Taylorsville, and TriCounty Health District.

Certain risk factors lead to higher rates of diabetes-related complications that may require hospitalization. In particular, members of minority racial or ethnic groups and people with low incomes have an excess risk. The Glendale area had the highest diabetes adult hospitalization rate, and also had the highest proportion of uninsured persons (24.9%, compared with 8.7% statewide).

Age-adjusted Hospitalization Rates per 10,000 for Adult Diabetes by Small Area, Utah, 2001-2002



Source: Utah Hospital Discharge Database

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