

California Health Interview Survey

CHIS Making an Impact — 2010

Making
California's
Voices
Heard on
Health



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The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) is the nation's largest state health survey and one of the largest health surveys in the United States. Conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, CHIS regularly surveys more than 60,000 adults, teenagers and children, providing a detailed picture of the health and health care needs of California's diverse population.

Highlights of CHIS in 2010 include:

Supporting Health Reform

CHIS brings evidence to the table in the ongoing debate over health policy and reform of our health care system. Legislators, agency officials, advocates and the media rely on CHIS data to inform the discussion and decision-making.

- Congressman John Garamendi (D-Walnut Creek) cited CHIS data in arguing for passage of federal health reform that would expand insurance coverage to 7.3 million Californians, provide preventive screenings for 4.5 million seniors and enable 9,000 of his constituents with pre-existing conditions to obtain health insurance.
- A UCLA Center for Health Policy Research study, released in March, found that nearly 2 million Californians lost health insurance during the recession. Subsequent local, state and national media coverage—including a front-page story in the Los Angeles Times—prompted interest by lawmakers and contributed to the momentum for passage of historic health care reform legislation.
- The UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education analyzed CHIS data to estimate that nearly 2 million uninsured Californians would qualify for Medicaid under federal health reform, 2 million would qualify for subsidies to purchase insurance, and 95 percent of businesses employing 44 percent of the state's workers would be eligible for tax credits.

Preventing & Better Managing Chronic Diseases

Chronic diseases remain the leading cause of disability and death and are responsible for more than 70 percent of health care costs. CHIS is used widely to track chronic diseases and guide efforts to prevent and better manage them.

- After an analysis of CHIS data drew a link between soda consumption and obesity, California Senate Majority Leader Dean Florez (D-Shafter) introduced legislation to tax sodas and other sugar-sweetened beverages to fund childhood obesity programs, and San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom launched a campaign to encourage residents to opt for healthy alternatives.
- A nationwide report *Targeting Epilepsy* by the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention used CHIS data.
- Using CHIS data, the California Pan Ethnic Health Network reported that nearly 3 million food-insecure Californians are driven to make low-cost and unhealthy dietary choices that contribute directly to the onset of diabetes—a phenomenon described as “the paradox of obesity and hunger.”
- The online tool “Together We Breathe” used CHIS data to show environmental, economic and health factors related to asthma in counties across California.
- On its website, San Bernardino County displayed CHIS data on visits to dentists by children and teens—important because poor oral health can have serious consequences on development and ability to learn.

Reducing Health Disparities

Because of California's diverse population, as well as CHIS's ability to interview households in five languages, CHIS is particularly valuable in identifying health disparities and guiding state and national efforts to reduce them.

Continued

CHIS Through the Years

Informing Policy: Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislators drew on CHIS data in a 2007-2008 effort to reform California's health care system, and Schwarzenegger helped launch the landmark CHIS publication *The State of Health Insurance in California*.

Reducing Disparities: The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality uses CHIS in its *National Healthcare Disparities Report*. CHIS is the only subnational survey included in AHRQ's report.

Creating Healthy Environments: The Los Angeles Department of City Planning and the City Attorney used CHIS data to help draft a City ordinance prohibiting the establishment of new fast food restaurants in South Los Angeles.

Preventing Chronic Diseases: In Solano County, where CHIS data demonstrated the state's highest rates of asthma symptoms and prevalence of the disease among children, advocates successfully argued against a new truck stop on I-80.

Building Healthy Communities: The Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program used CHIS data on obesity to justify a "Get Kern Moving" exercise initiative.

AskCHIS: The free, easy-to-use online tool that enables anyone to search for health statistics. www.askchis.com

- Assemblyman Ted Lieu (D-Torrance) used CHIS data to justify the introduction of new legislation that would require the state to add questions about sexual orientation, gender identity and domestic partnership status in the voluntary demographic section of California's government forms, enabling the state to gather vital data about the use of public services by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered residents.
- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's *National Healthcare Disparities Report* makes extensive use of CHIS data because of its robust samples of Asians and Latinos that are unavailable in national surveys as well as cutting-edge measures related to ethnicity, immigration and culture.
- *Health Indicators for Women in Los Angeles County*, a report by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, used CHIS data to examine women's health status, insurance, access to care and other health issues, with particular attention to Latina women.
- *His Health: Alameda County Male Health Status Report 2010*, a report from Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency, used CHIS data to find significantly higher rates of illness and death among men for almost all major health indicators, with African-American men having the lowest life expectancy overall.

Building Healthier Communities

Governments, policymakers and organizations use CHIS data in a wide range of efforts to improve health at the community level.

- A collaborative of three Napa County health systems developed a community health needs assessment using CHIS data for use by policymakers, provider groups and community advocates.
- CHIS data were used extensively in Children Now's *California Report Card 2010* that gave the state's health coverage a lowly "D+" and no more than a "C" or "D" grade on 11 out of 12 other important measures of children's health and well-being.
- Data from CHIS help power the "Community Snapshot" Web tool created by The Healthy Communities Institute to provide public health, environmental and other community data to counties and states.

Learn More

CHIS is conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Health Care Services.

- **CHIS:** www.chis.ucla.edu
- **AskCHIS:** www.askchis.com
- **Contact us:** chis@ucla.edu
- **CHIS Publications:** www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu

CHIS by the Numbers

12-Month Web Traffic*: 303,322 unique visitors

12-Month AskCHIS Page Views*: 3,029,293

Total AskCHIS Queries: 584,760 since 2002

Total CHIS Public Use File Downloads: 12,883 since 2002

Trainees: More than 2,000 representatives from 800-plus organizations have been trained to use CHIS data.

Research Projects: 215 currently underway

Articles & Reports: CHIS data are used in dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles, organizational reports, fact sheets and issue briefs each year.

Media Coverage: CHIS data, reports and experts are quoted in hundreds of local, regional and national media—television, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, blogs and websites—reports each year.

Learn more: www.chis.ucla.edu

* For the 12-month period ended December 1, 2010.