

## The State of Missouri's Health

Missouri spends approximately \$5,500 per person on health care per year, which is the 21<sup>st</sup> highest amount among all U.S. states.<sup>1</sup> Even at this spending level, many of the state's health care indicators fall in the bottom third compared to other states. This fact sheet examines two reports that rank the state of Missouri's health and indicates areas where the health care system works well and where it needs improvement.

### Demographics

Currently, Missouri has a population of approximately 5.84 million people: 1.42 million children under 18; 780,000 seniors 65 years and over, and 3.64 million adults between the ages of 18 and 64. The median age is 37.2 years, almost a year older than the national median age. Median household income in Missouri is \$42,841, about \$6,000 less than the national median household income. In Missouri, 13.6 percent of people live below the federal poverty level compared to 13.3 percent nationally.<sup>2</sup>

### Health Rankings Report

The United Health Foundation provides annual health rankings of all 50 states. The 2007 edition<sup>3</sup> ranks Missouri 35<sup>th</sup> overall, unchanged from 2006 but down three rankings since 2000 and nine rankings since 1990. The rankings are computed from 20 measures divided into two different categories: health determinants and health outcomes. To further define the determinants category, the study divided these measures into four groups: Personal Behaviors, Community Environment, Public and Health Policies, and Clinical Care. The health determinant measures influence the health outcomes of the residents of a state. Improving the determinant indicators will improve health outcomes over time. The health outcome indicators use both mortality and quality-of-life measures.

### Strengths

Three of Missouri's health determinant measures rank in the top 15 in the nation:

- children ages 19 to 35 months receiving complete immunizations (85.2%, rank – 5<sup>th</sup>),
- pregnant women receiving adequate prenatal care (81.9%, rank – 7<sup>th</sup>), and
- ninth graders graduating high school within four years (80.4%, rank – 14<sup>th</sup>).

(The education-related indicator is included in the rankings because it is a measure of a given health consumer's ability to learn about, create, and maintain a healthy lifestyle.)

In comparing Missouri's rankings for health determinants versus health outcomes, the state ranks higher among the health determinant indicators than the health outcome indicators. This would seem to indicate that the overall health of Missourians could improve over time. However, the challenges that face Missouri may impact both the short- and long-term health outcomes of Missouri residents.

### Challenges

The rankings for Missouri's health outcome indicators range from 37<sup>th</sup> to 43<sup>rd</sup>. These rankings include:

- 37<sup>th</sup> for years lost due to premature death (8,112 years lost per 100,000 population),
- 43<sup>rd</sup> for cardiovascular deaths (355.7 deaths per 100,000 population),
- 42<sup>nd</sup> for cancer deaths (213.7 deaths per 100,000 population), and
- 42<sup>nd</sup> for poor mental health days (3.7 days in previous 30 days).

Challenges also exist among the health determinant indicators. Missouri ranks 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> for the percent of its population that is obese (27.2%) and that smokes (23.2%). Missouri also has poor to average rankings for preventable hospitalizations (41<sup>st</sup>), violent crime (39<sup>th</sup>), and prevalence of binge drinking (34<sup>th</sup>). These challenges reflect a state that must acknowledge and begin to address weaknesses in the health care system as well as encourage and support the personal health of its residents.

## Health System Performance Report

In 2007, The Commonwealth Fund produced a state scorecard that examined health system performance across five dimensions: 1) Access, 2) Quality, 3) Avoidable Hospital Use and Costs, 4) Equity, and 5) Healthy Lives.<sup>4</sup> This scorecard offers a framework for states to “gauge efforts to ensure affordable access to high-quality, efficient, and equitable care.” Overall, Missouri ranked 37<sup>th</sup> among states across all five dimensions.

### *Rankings Within the Dimensions*

Missouri’s most favorable ranking was in the access dimension (22<sup>nd</sup>); however, a large part of this ranking was based on the percentage of uninsured Missourians and was published before the newest data was released that showed a 14 percent increase in Missouri’s uninsured population. This increase in the uninsured would have negatively impacted the state’s ranking on this dimension. Missouri ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in the equity dimension, which examined three types of equity: income, insurance coverage, and race/ethnicity.

The next highest ranking was 30<sup>th</sup>, which was for the avoidable hospitalization dimension. The indicators used to determine this ranking included a variety of measures of efficiency. The quality dimension included indicators that measure the performance of three related components: receipt of the “right care,” coordinated care, and patient-centered care. Overall, Missouri ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> within this dimension of the health system. Finally, Missouri’s lowest ranking was in the healthy lives dimension (45<sup>th</sup>). This ranking included indicators that measured the degree to which a state’s residents live long and healthy lives. These indicators closely relate to many of the indicators found in the United Health Foundation’s health rankings report.

## Missouri’s Uninsured

One of the indicators that played a major role in both of the state ranking reports was the percentage of uninsured state residents. From 2006 to 2007, Missouri’s uninsured population increased from 668,000 to 772,000.<sup>5</sup> This is an increase of 14 percent in one year, with the percentage of uninsured Missourians increasing from 11.7 to 13.3 percent. The growth in the uninsured can be tied to both the decrease in Medicaid coverage in 2005 as well as the decrease in the number of Missourians with employer-sponsored health coverage.

Cover Missouri is a project that aims to develop an effective and feasible set of policy options with assistance from communities across the state that will enable all Missourians to have access to quality, affordable health coverage.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Congressional Budget Office, *Geographic Variation in Health Care Spending*, 2008, <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/89xx/doc8972/02-15-GeogHealth.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, “Missouri Fact Sheet,” 2006 American Community Survey, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&\\_geoContext=&\\_street=&\\_county=&\\_city\\_Town=&\\_state=04000US29&\\_zip=&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=&_city_Town=&_state=04000US29&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010).

<sup>3</sup> United Health Foundation, *America’s Health Rankings: A Call to Action for People and Their Communities*, 2007, <http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/media2007/shrmediakit/ahr2007.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> The Commonwealth Fund Commission on a High Performance Health System, *Aiming Higher: Results from a State Scorecard on Health System Performance*, The Commonwealth Fund, 2007, [http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr\\_doc/StateScorecard.pdf?section=4039](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/StateScorecard.pdf?section=4039).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Table HI05. Health Insurance Coverage Status and Type of Coverage by State and Age for All People: 2006,” *Current Population Survey 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*, [http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032007/health/h05\\_000.htm](http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032007/health/h05_000.htm).