

INTRODUCTION

Montana BRFSS, 2011

From 1981 to 1983, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded states in the U.S. to conduct point-in-time pilot surveys about health-related behaviors that were thought-to-be associated with an increased risk of disease and premature death. Montana has the distinction of having been one of the original 29 states to conduct the pilot surveys for CDC. Because of successful implementation of these pilot surveys, the CDC established the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) in 1984 and Montana was one of the 15 states to secure funding from CDC when this initiative formally began. BRFSS is an annual state-based telephone survey assessing the health status and behavioral risk factors of the non-institutionalized adult population 18 years of age and older. The BRFSS began with four primary goals:

1. To document health trends at the state level;
2. To identify emerging health issues;
3. To compare health behaviors across states; and
4. To measure progress toward the nation's health goals.

Through cooperative agreements between CDC and state departments of public health, the BRFSS expanded to include all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories. BRFSS is now the largest continuously conducted telephone health survey in the world.

The BRFSS survey provides valuable information on health trends, chronic disease risks, and data for monitoring the effectiveness of policies, programs, and interventions. Subject areas include self-reported health status, access to health care, health awareness, use of preventive services, as well as knowledge and attitudes of health care and health care practices. Each year modifiable behaviors such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, overweight, and physical inactivity contribute to a substantial portion of the mortality and morbidity associated with chronic disease and unintentional injury. Underutilization of preventive health services (e.g. blood pressure, cholesterol, and cancer screenings) may also contribute to morbidity and premature death from many diseases. Measuring the prevalence of high-risk behaviors and preventive health service utilization provides information for developing and monitoring interventions designed to reduce premature death and disease. In 2011, 72% of Montana deaths were associated with modifiable health risk behaviors and conditions (Table A).

The *Healthy People 2020* (U.S. DHHS) is a national initiative designed to serve as a road map for improving the health of all people in the United States during the second decade of the 21st century. *Healthy People 2020 (HP 2020)* builds on similar initiatives pursued over the past three decades. Four overarching goals serve as a guide for developing objectives that will measure progress:

1. Attain high-quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death;
2. Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups;
3. Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all; and
4. Promote quality of life, healthy development, and health behaviors across all life stages.

Data from the annual BRFSS survey are one of the primary means of monitoring progress towards achieving *HP 2020* health objectives. Table B summarizes Montana's progress toward *Healthy People 2020* goals that were measured on the 2011 survey.

Table A: Behavioral Risk Factors Associated with the Leading Causes of Death in Montana, 2011*

Rank	Cause of Death	# of Deaths	% of Total Deaths ¹	Crude Rate ²	Associated Risk Factors ³
1	Cancer	1,991	21.9%	199.6	Smoking, high-fat diet, chronic alcohol abuse
2	Heart Disease	1,907	21.0%	191.1	Smoking, physical inactivity, hypertension, high-fat diet, high blood cholesterol, overweight
3	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	638	7.0%	63.9	Smoking, exposure to certain chemicals
4	Unintentional Injuries	577	6.3%	57.8	Binge and chronic drinking, non-use of safety belts
5	Cerebrovascular disease (including stroke)	451	5.0%	45.2	High blood pressure, smoking, high blood cholesterol
6	Alzheimer's disease	258	2.8%	25.9	Head injuries
7	Diabetes	246	2.7%	24.7	Overweight, physical inactivity, poor nutrition
8	Intentional Self-Harm	225	2.5%	22.6	Depression, alcohol or substance abuse, major stressor events
9	Pneumonia and Influenza	155	1.7%	15.5	Infection with pneumococcal bacteria or influenza virus, compromised immune system
10	Chronic Liver Disease	126	1.4%	12.6	Chronic alcohol abuse, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C
Total deaths from leading causes		6,574	72.3%		

* Mortality data are from Montana Vital Statistics, 2011 Annual Report.

¹ Total deaths from all causes in 2011, excluding fetal deaths, were 9,098.

² Cause-specific crude death rates are per 100,000 estimated population.

³ Not a comprehensive or definitive lists of all associated risk factors.

Table B: Healthy People 2020 Objectives¹ for the Nation and Montana: Summary of Montana 2011 BRFSS Data

Healthy People 2020 Objective ²	2020 Target	MT 2011	
Health Insurance (AHS-1.1)	100.0	75.9	
Usual Primary Care Provider (AHS-3)	≥ 83.9	71.6	
Reduce Health Care Access Limitations due to Cost (AHS-6.2)	≤ 4.2	15.4	
Increase the Proportion of People ³ Using the Oral Health Care System (OH-7)	≥ 49.0	61.4	✓
Annual Influenza Immunization, 65 and older (IID-12.7)	≥ 90.0	55.9	
Pneumococcal Pneumonia Vaccination, 65 and older (IID-13.1)	≥ 90.0	69.6	
No Leisure Time Physical Activity (PA-1)	≤ 32.6	24.4	✓
Obese, BMI ≥ 30 (NWS-9)	≤ 30.5	24.6	✓
Cigarette Smoking (TY-1.1)	≤ 12.0	22.1	
Smokeless Tobacco Use (TU-1.2)	≤ 0.3	7.1	
Binge Drinking, During the Past Month (SA-14.3)	≤ 24.4	20.8	✓
Arthritis, Reduce Activity Limitations due to Arthritis (AOCBC-2)	≥ 35.5	49.5	
Reduce the Prevalence of Hypertension (HDS-5.1)	≤ 26.9	30.2	
Cholesterol Screening, Previous 5 Years (HDS-6)	≥ 82.1	69.5	
Cholesterol, Reduce High Cholesterol Prevalence (HDS-7)	≤ 13.5	34.6	
Increase the Use of Safety Belts (IVP-15)	≥ 92.4	73.1	

¹ Objectives are for adults age 18 or older except as noted.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Healthy People 2020*. Washington, DC, 2010.

³ Includes children, adolescents, and adults.

✓ Met *Healthy People 2020* Objectives in Montana in 2011.