

CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION **& HEALTH PROMOTION**

WEBINAR SERIES

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/default.aspx>



About this Webinar

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- If you have technical difficulties, please let us know by using the Chat function on the WebEx control panel.

- Please hold questions until the end of the presentation.
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 - Then “raise” your hand by clicking on the **hand** button. We can then unmute you so you can ask your question.

Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

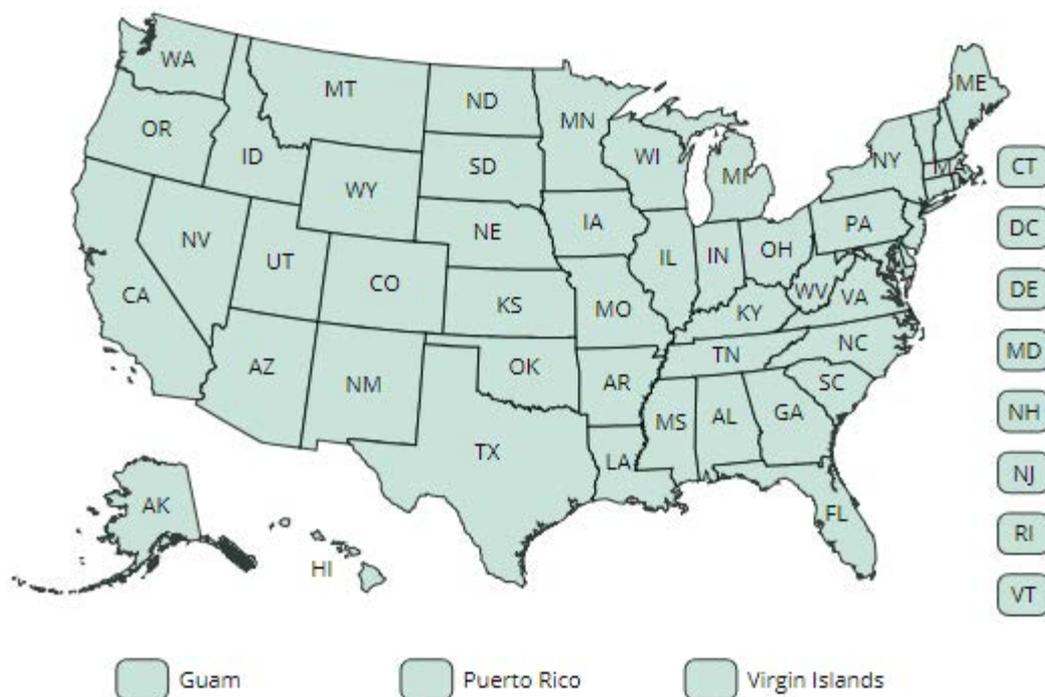
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BRFSS Background

- The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a national system of health-related telephone surveys.



BRFSS Background

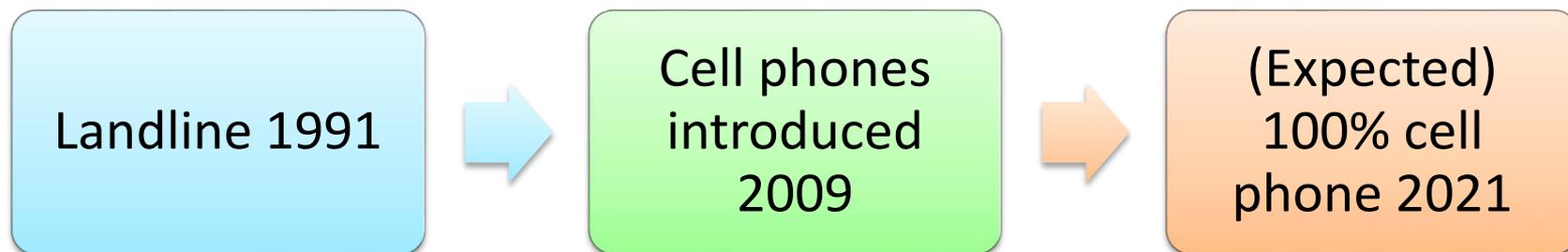
- Supported by the CDC ([Standard](#) BRFSS)
 - General health and wellness
 - Core questions are required by CDC
 - States can add limited number of optional questions
- Additional questions are asked on a parallel survey in Alaska ([Supplemental](#) BRFSS)
 - Largely tobacco-related survey

The Survey Process

- Households are chosen randomly from within regions. Within a household, one adult is randomly chosen to complete the survey.
- Surveys take about 20 minutes to complete and are administered by an external contractor.

Alaska BRFSS

- Alaska started collecting data in 1991 and has collected data every year since then.



BRFSS Process: General

- The CDC provides a list of phone numbers.
- Alaska's contractor uses this list (or "sample") to make phone calls.
- The contractor provides data to Alaska and CDC for processing.
- The CDC does basic data processing.

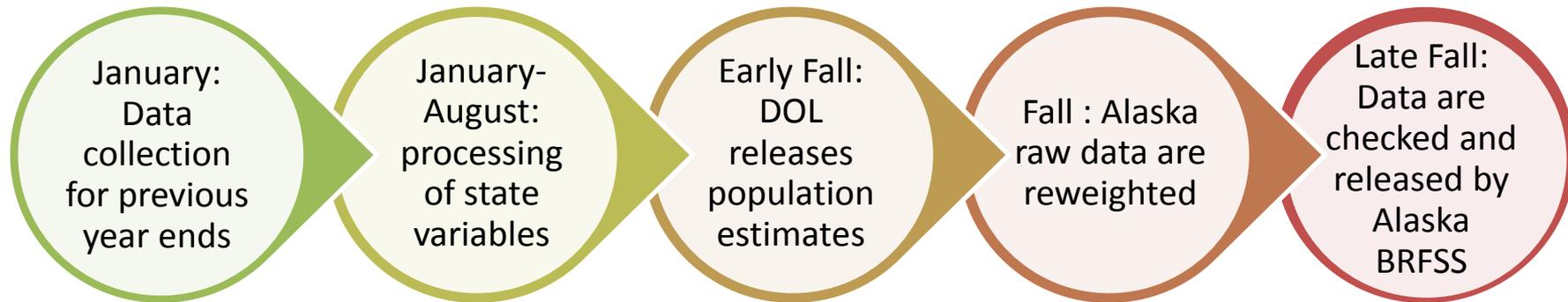
BRFSS Process: Alaska

- Alaska does further processing.
 - BRFSS Program Manager and/or Public Health Data Analyst will combine questions across several years where this makes sense.
 - State-added questions have to be cleaned and coded in house. The CDC does not process these questions at all.
 - Example: For an open-ended question, Alaska staff have to combine multiple misspellings into one answer category.

BRFSS Weighting

- BRFSS results attempt to represent all Alaskans—not just the people who happen to receive a phone call.
- To make the data more representative, data are “weighted” to account for age, race and ethnicity, sex, and geographic region within a population.
 - To do this, CDC uses the American Community Survey population estimates.
 - Alaska prefers to use the Alaska Department of Labor population estimates.

Annual BRFSS Data Release Timeline



- Early Fall: CDC releases weighted data.

BRFSS Administration

- The CDC mandates that the BRFSS be administered by telephone. No other medium is currently permitted.
- Declining rates in telephonic survey participation continue to be a challenge for BRFSS.
 - CDC is monitoring this and looking at alternative/additional modes of administering the survey.

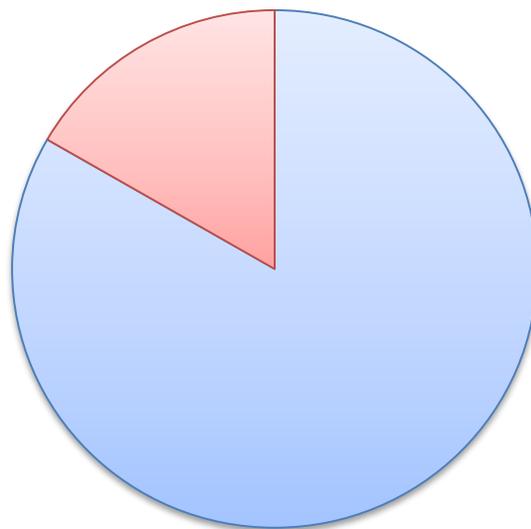
BRFSS Administration

- The BRFSS core set of questions is required by CDC and cannot be amended without written permission from CDC.
- This core is asked by all states, and the data are comparable across the United States.

BRFSS Administration

- Core consists of annual questions and biannual rotating questions.

Total Survey Time



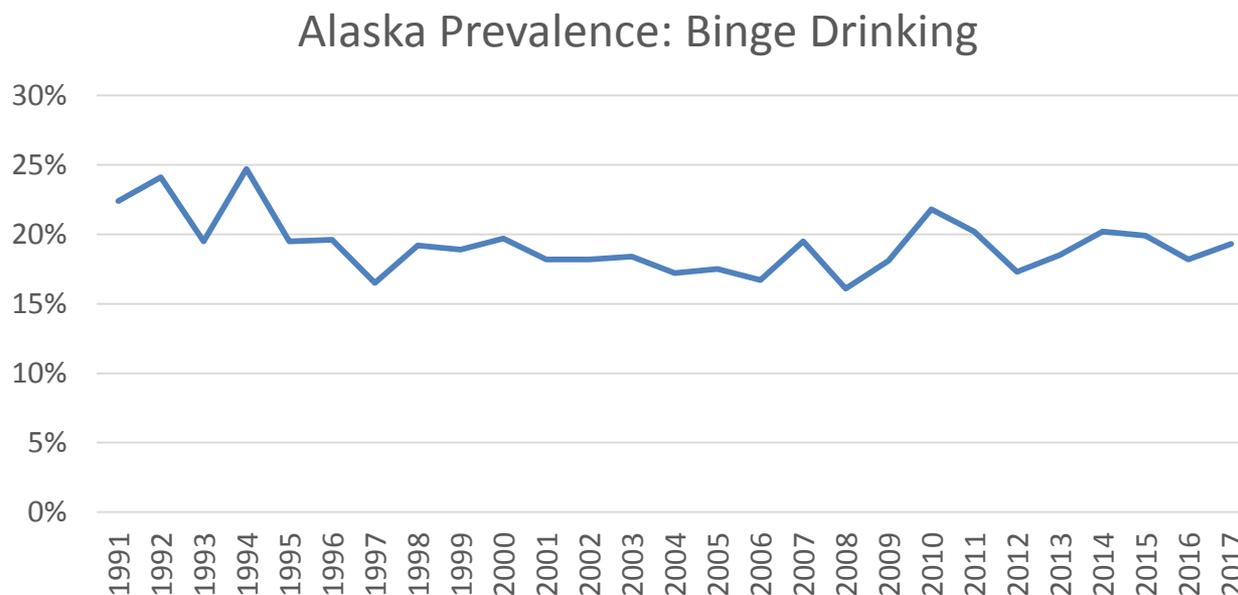
■ Core ■ State Added

Optional State-Added Questions

- A small number of questions from states may be added to the core BRFSS survey.
- These questions can come from a list of CDC Optional Modules or can be state-added questions (SAQ).
- Optional modules are processed by CDC.
- SAQ must be coded and analyzed by the Alaska BRFSS program.

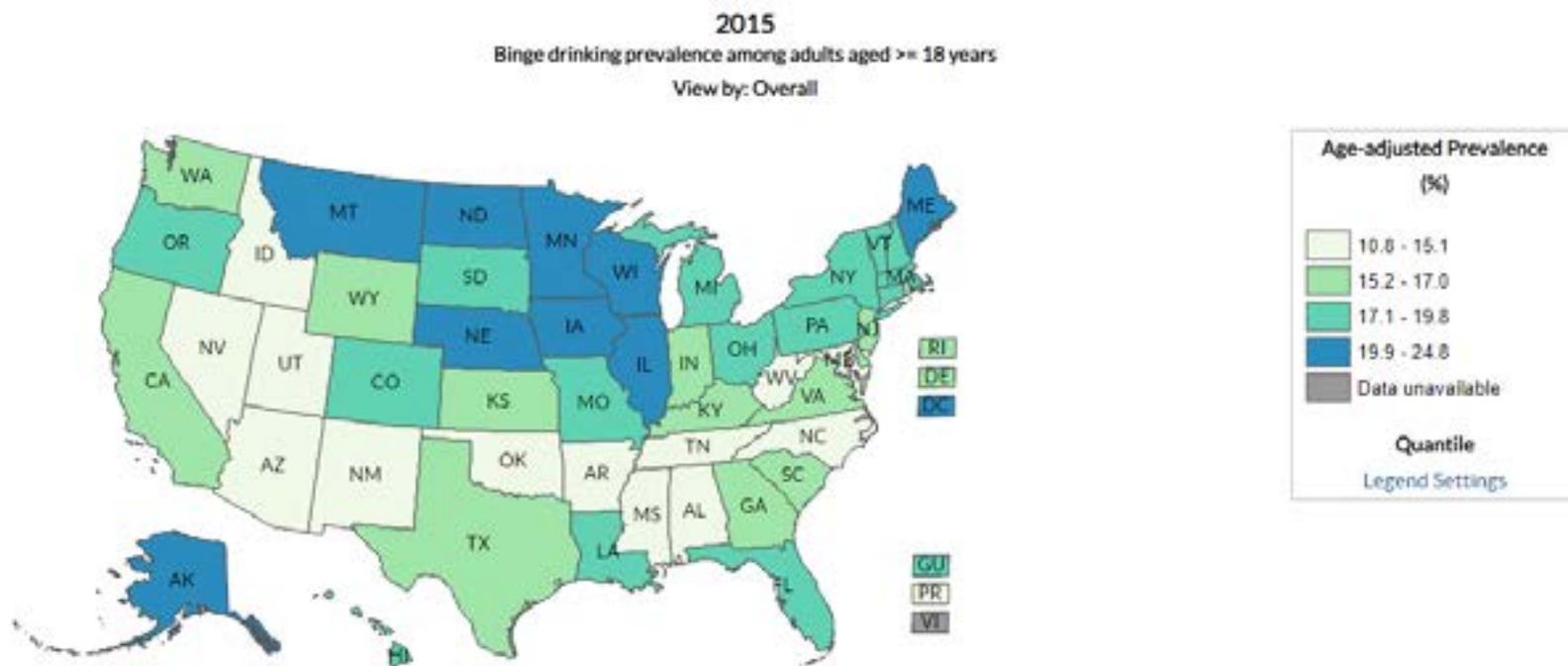
BRFSS Strengths

- Alaska BRFSS has nearly 30 years' worth of data and can track trends over time.



BRFSS Strengths

Core BRFSS questions can be compared across and among states.

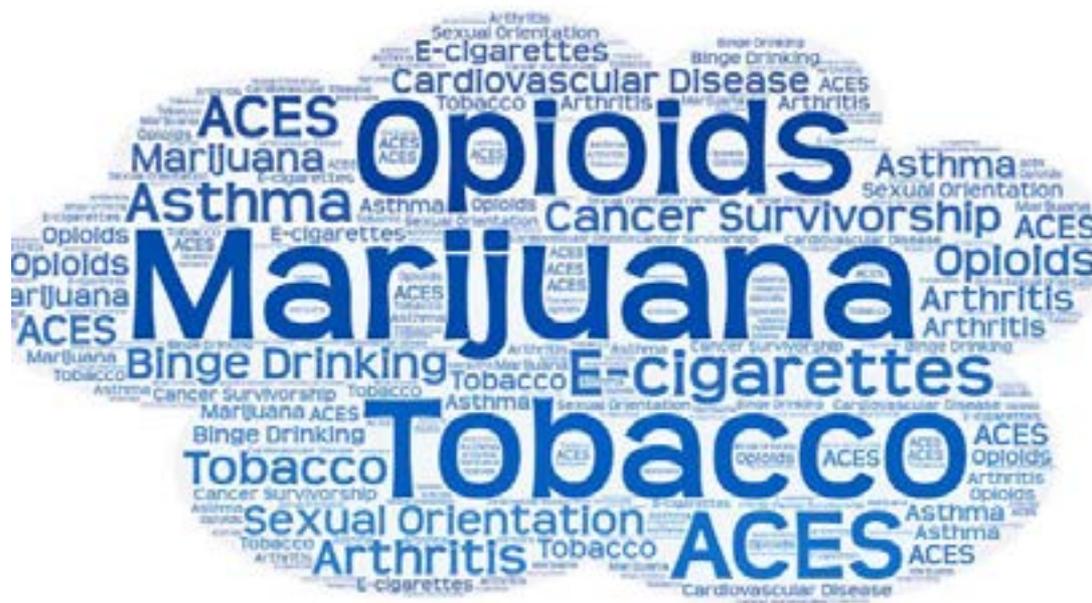


BRFSS Strengths

- BRFSS data are routinely used to measure progress on a number of federal grants.
 - Chronic Diseases
 - Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse

BRFSS Strengths

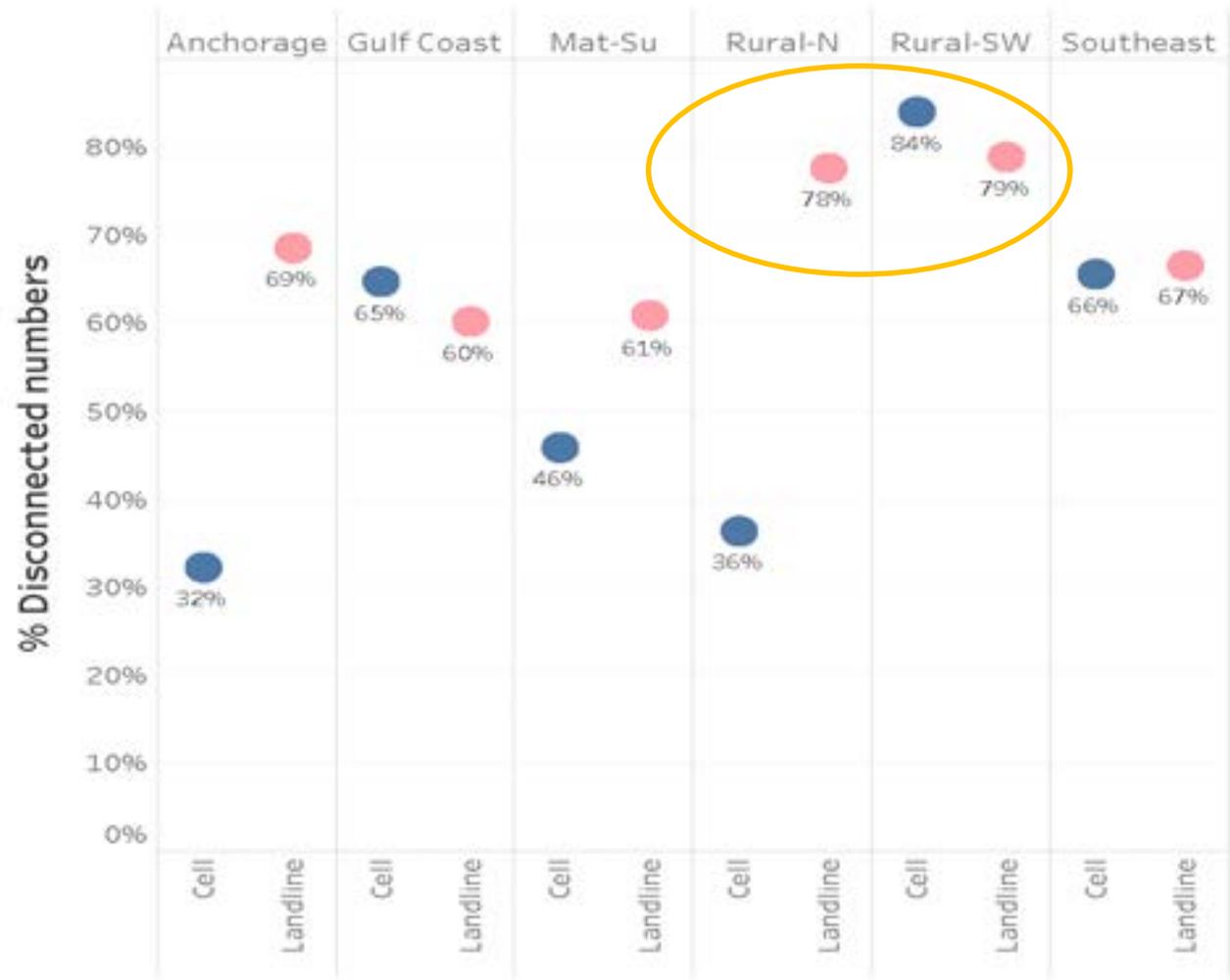
- Alaska can ask a limited number of state-specific questions to address topics that may be unique to our state.



BRFSS Challenges

- Only individuals with a working telephone can be surveyed.
- BRFSS cannot be weighted until the state Department of Labor releases population estimates. That means BRFSS is not well-suited to real-time trend monitoring.
- Alaska struggles to reach more rural areas of the state, in part due to high cell phone turnover rates.
 - We are continuing to work with our partners to address this.

Percent of Disconnected Cell/Landline Numbers



BRFSS Limitations

- BRFSS can only collect self-reported data.
 - Respondents must *know* that they have a condition/behavior AND *be willing* to report it.
 - Many are wary of reporting illegal behavior on a government administered survey.

BRFSS Limitations

- Extremely rare conditions/behaviors are difficult to collect.
- If collected, they may be subject to data sharing rules that protect respondents' confidentiality.
 - We cannot publish very small numbers because they could be used to identify individuals.

Guidelines to Protect Confidentiality

- In order to protect the respondents' confidentiality, BRFSS does not allow sharing numbers that could be used to identify individuals:
 - If the numerator is <5 (e.g. fewer than five people say that their favorite physical activity is Kung Foo)
 - If the denominator is <50 (e.g. fewer than 50 people have a favorite physical activity).

Accessing Alaska BRFSS Data

- Both Standard and Supplemental BRFSS Data are available on AK [IBIS](#).
 - Static [Indicator Reports](#)
 - Searchable [Query Modules](#)
- Some data are also available in the form of maps on [InstantAtlas](#).
- We are also exploring additional data sharing platforms at this time.

Accessing Alaska BRFSS Data

- For researchers who wish to analyze data themselves, please fill out the [New Data Request/Data Use Agreement](#) posted online and return it to the AK BRFSS program
 - http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/data/DataRequest_BRFSS.pdf

Additional Questions?

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