

Alaska Health Status Indicators

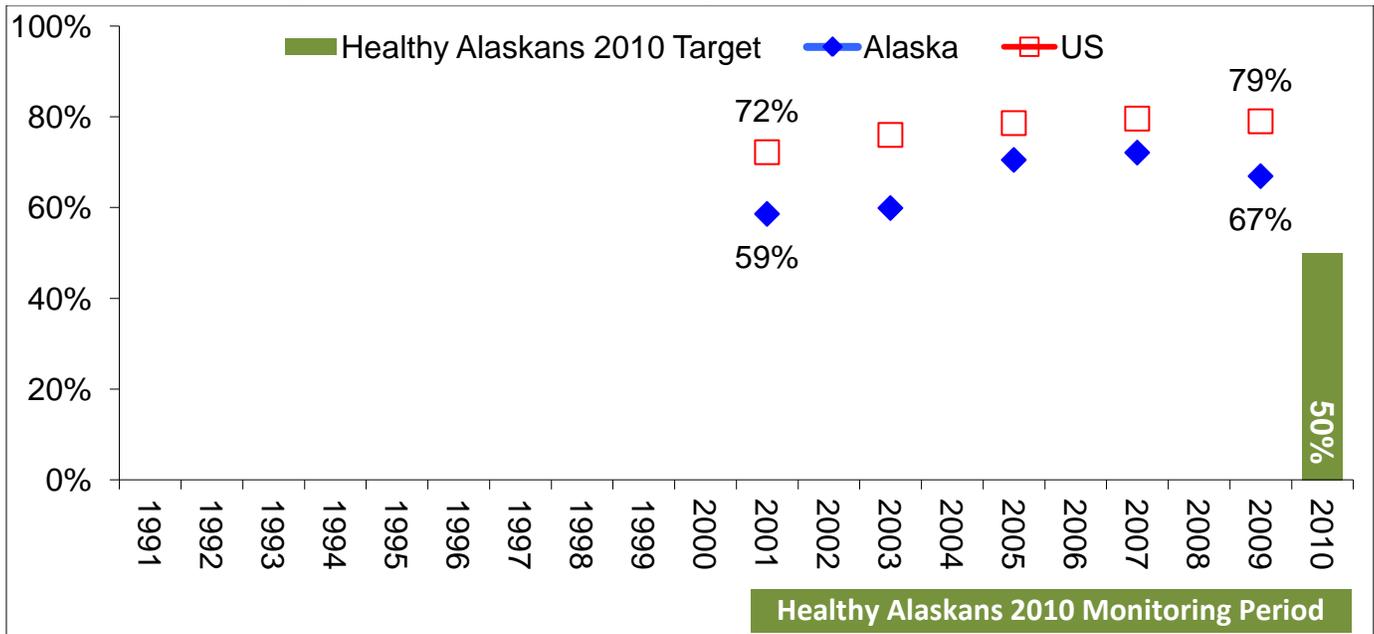
Indicator: *Adult High Blood Pressure, Controlled*

Why is this important?

High blood pressure is most often an asymptomatic condition¹ and is called “the silent killer” because people do not notice or feel damage until more serious illness develops. Studies show people with hypertension are less likely to take medications than those with more noticeable conditions². The consequences of not controlling high blood pressure include loss of vision, kidney failure, aneurysms, heart failure, heart attack, and stroke. Our challenge is to motivate those with high blood pressure to take their medications even though they may not feel ill.

How are we doing?

Percentage of Adults with Controlled High Blood Pressure: Alaska and the U.S.



This indicator was not measured prior to 2001. The percentage of adults with high blood pressure who are taking their medications has increased over the past decade from 59% in 2001 to 67% in 2009.

❖ How is Alaska Doing Relative to the *Healthy Alaskans 2010 Target*?

The *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target for the prevalence of controlled high blood pressure is 50% or higher. The percentage of Alaska adults with high blood pressure taking medication increased from 59% to 67% during the *Healthy Alaskans 2010* monitoring period. **The *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target of 50% has been met.**

(Note: The goal was developed before good baseline data for Alaska had been collected. Further, national statistics at the time calculated a much lower percentage with 18% of adults with high blood pressure taking their medication from 1988 to 1994.)

❖ How does AK compare with the US?

Alaska consistently ranks behind the rest of the US in percentage of adults with high blood pressure taking blood pressure medication, i.e., their high blood pressure is being controlled.

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❖ How are different populations affected?

For the years 2001 to 2009, 69% of women with hypertension took medication to control their high blood pressure. In those same years, 62% of men with high blood pressure took their medication. There are no significant differences in controlled high blood pressure prevalence by race, region, education, or income level. (Source: 2009 BRFSS)

What is the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services doing to improve this indicator?

In collaboration with partners in the Take Heart Alaska Coalition³, the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program implements Alaska's Cardiovascular Health Plan. Program activities include increasing the number of health care providers who are aware of and use current blood pressure guidelines. The guidelines are described in the seventh report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure. The Program tracks blood pressure treatment through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Future activities include working with a subgroup within the National Association of Chronic Disease Director's Cardiovascular Health Council specializing in physician adherence to hypertension protocols. The program is also researching the need for and use of establishing a cardiovascular disease registry which would potentially track prescription and use of hypertension medication. Additional information on current hypertension prevention and control efforts in Alaska is available at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/chp/>.

Indicator Definition and Notes

Percentage of adults aged 18 years and older with high blood pressure who answer "Yes" to the following question: *Are you currently taking medicine for your high blood pressure?* High blood pressure is indicated by the answering "Yes" to the following question: *Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that you have high blood pressure?* Note that this excludes women who report a history of pregnancy-related high blood pressure.

Data Sources

Alaska: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services; US: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Alaska data were obtained from the Standard AK BRFSS standard survey from 2001 to 2009.

References

1. American Heart Association, High Blood Pressure. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_002020_SubHomePage.jsp.
2. Harmon G., J. Lefante, and M. Krousel-Wood. "Overcoming barriers: the role of providers in improving patient adherence to antihypertensive medications." *Curr Opin Cardiol*. 2006 Jul;21(4):310-5.
3. Take Heart Alaska: www.takeheart.alaska.gov



Available at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/>

