

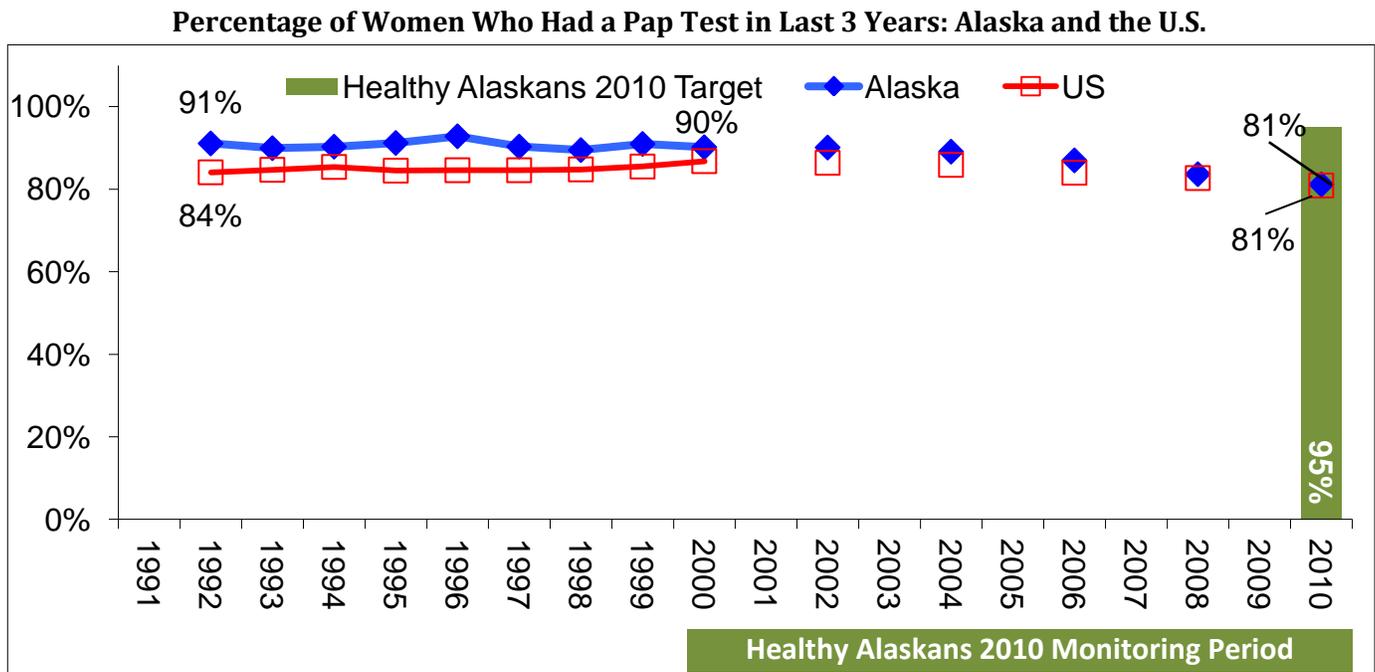
Alaska Health Status Indicators

Indicator: *Adult Cervical Cancer Screening*

Why is this important?

If detected early, cervical cancer is one of the most successfully treatable cancers. The Papanicolaou (“Pap”) test is the screening tool used to detect cancerous and precancerous changes in a woman’s cervix. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that women should have their first Pap test at age 21. Women aged 21 – 30 may then be screened every other year, women 30 and older may be screened once every three years. Women with certain risk factors may need more frequent screening and should discuss their medical history with their clinician.¹

How are we doing?



The percentage of Alaska women (ages 18 and older) who have had a pap test to screen for cervical cancer in the prior 3 years has decreased over the past two decades from 91% in 1992 to 81% in 2010. Since the development of the Healthy Alaskans 2010 targets, the US Preventive Services Task Force released its recommendations for screening for cervical cancer.² This updated recommendation is that women ages 21 and older be screened every 3 years. Future reports based on the tracking of this indicator will use this updated age range.

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

The *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target for the prevalence of screening (in the past 3 years) for cervical cancer is 95% (of women) or higher. The percentage of Alaska women who have had a pap test within 3 years decreased from 90% to 81% during the *Healthy Alaskans 2010* monitoring period. **The Healthy Alaskans 2010 target of 95% has not been met.**

❖ **How does AK compare with the US?**

The Alaska cervical cancer screening rate has been slightly higher than or equal to the US rate.

Alaska Health Status Indicators

❖ How are different populations affected?

There are no significant differences in cervical cancer screening rates 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 four Alaskan Tribal National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program grantees, DHSS's Breast and Cervical Health Check Program is working to increase both public and provider awareness about current breast and cervical cancer screening recommendations as well as access to services throughout the state. "Cervical Cancer Screening in Alaska" Guidelines are developed utilizing American College of Gynecology and American Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology recommendations and distributed to establish a standard throughout the state.

Indicator Definition and Notes

Percentage of women aged 18 years and older who answer:

- "Yes" to the following question: *A Pap test is a test for cancer of the cervix. Have you ever had a Pap test?*, and
- "Within the past year", "Within the past 2 years", or "Within the past 3 years" to the following question: *How long has it been since you last had your last Pap test?*

Note: this excludes women who report having had a hysterectomy.

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 survey from 1992 to 2000 and in even years from 2002 to 2010.

References

1. American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, "ACOG Announces New Pap Smear and Cancer Screening Guidelines." http://www.acog.org/acog_districts/dist_notice.cfm?recno=13&bulletin=3161. Accessed May 5, 2011.
2. U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, "Screening for Cervical Cancer. Recommendations and Rationale." <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/3rduspstf/cervcan/cervcanrr.htm>. Accessed May 13, 2011.



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

