

Alaska Health Status Indicators

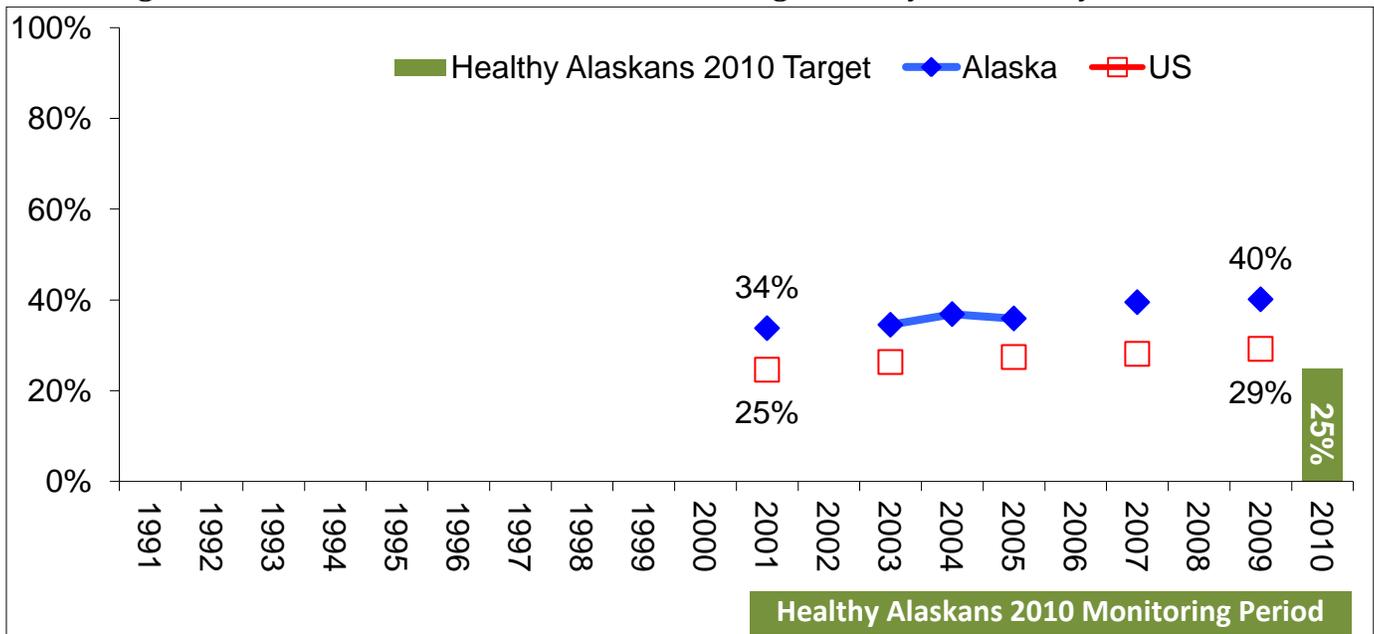
Indicator: *Adult Vigorous Physical Activity*

Why is this important?

Regular physical activity can improve the health and quality of life of Americans of all ages, regardless of the presence of a chronic disease or disability. Among adults and older adults, physical activity can lower the risk of: early death, coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, breast and colon cancer, falls, depression, and obesity. Among children and adolescents, physical activity can: improve bone health, improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, decrease levels of body fat, and reduce symptoms of depression.^{1,2}

How are we doing?

Percentage of Adults Who Meet Recommendations for Vigorous Physical Activity: Alaska and the U.S.



This indicator was not measured prior to 2001. The percentage of Alaska adults who meet the recommendations for vigorous physical activity (that is, engage in vigorous physical activity for 20 or minutes, 3 or more days per week³) increased slightly over the past decade, from 34% 2001 to 40% in 2009.¹

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

The *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target for adult prevalence of meeting vigorous physical activity recommendations is 25% or higher. The prevalence of meeting the vigorous physical activity recommendations among adults in Alaska has increased slightly during the *Healthy Alaskans 2010* monitoring period, from a baseline of 34% in 2001 to its current level of 40%. **The *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target of 25% has been met.**

❖ How does AK compare with the US?

The rate of meeting vigorous physical activity recommendations among adult Alaskans has consistently been above that seen in the US overall. Similarly, the rate of meeting the newer 2008 overall physical activity recommendations has been consistently higher in Alaska than in the US.

¹ Since the development of the Healthy Alaskans 2010 targets, the US Department of Health and Human Services released its recommendations for physical activity levels among adults. This 2008 guideline recommends adults obtain 150 minutes of at least moderate physical activity per week.¹ The percentage of adult Alaskans meeting this recommendation has remained relatively stable at about 74% between 2001 and 2009.

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❖ How are different populations affected?

In Alaska, men (46%) are more likely to obtain the recommended level of vigorous physical activity than are women (34%). Meeting vigorous physical activity recommendations declines with age. Adults with only a high school education (28%) are less likely to meet the recommendations than are those who have obtained some college education (44%) or a college degree (39%). There are no significant differences in the prevalence of meeting moderate physical activity recommendations by race, region, or income level. (*Source: 2009 BRFSS*) Additional statistics on levels of physical activity in Alaska are available at:

<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/obesity/resources.htm>.

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

The Obesity Prevention and Control Program (OPCP) coordinates with the Department of Education & Early Development to support quality school-based physical education to teach skills that lead to enjoyment of lifelong physical activity. Together, the departments developed Alaska Physical Education Standards (adopted by the State Board of Education in July 2010); co-hosted trainings for school nurse, health and PE teachers. The OPCS staff promotes active transportation by playing a major role in the coordination of Bike to Work Day and by participating in the development of local and statewide transportation planning efforts. Additional information on current efforts to increase physical activity and prevent obesity in Alaska is available at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/obesity/>.

Indicator Definition and Notes

Percentage of adults aged 18 years and older who report engaging in “vigorous” physical activity (that is, activity that “causes large increases in breathing or heart rate”) for a minimum 3 days per week, 20 minutes or more per day, based on the following set of questions:

- *Now thinking about the vigorous activities you do in a usual week, do you do vigorous activities for at least 10 minutes at a time, such as running, aerobics, heavy yard work, or anything else that causes large increases in breathing or heart rate? (Must respond “Yes”)*
- *How many days per week do you do these vigorous activities for at least 10 minutes at a time? (Days per week)*
- *On days when you do vigorous activities for at least 10 minutes at a time, how much total time per day do you spend doing these activities? (Hours and minutes per day)*

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 in odd years, and from the Supplemental BRFSS survey in 2004. The Supplemental BRFSS survey is conducted using identical methodology as the Standard BRFSS and allows a doubling of the BRFSS sample size for those measures included on both surveys.

References

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2008 Physical activity guidelines for Americans. Washington: HHS; 2008.
2. US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Physical activity guidelines advisory committee report, 2008. Washington: HHS, 2008.
3. US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity. Promoting Physical Activity: A Guide for Community Action; 1999. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.



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

