

Alaska Health Status Indicators

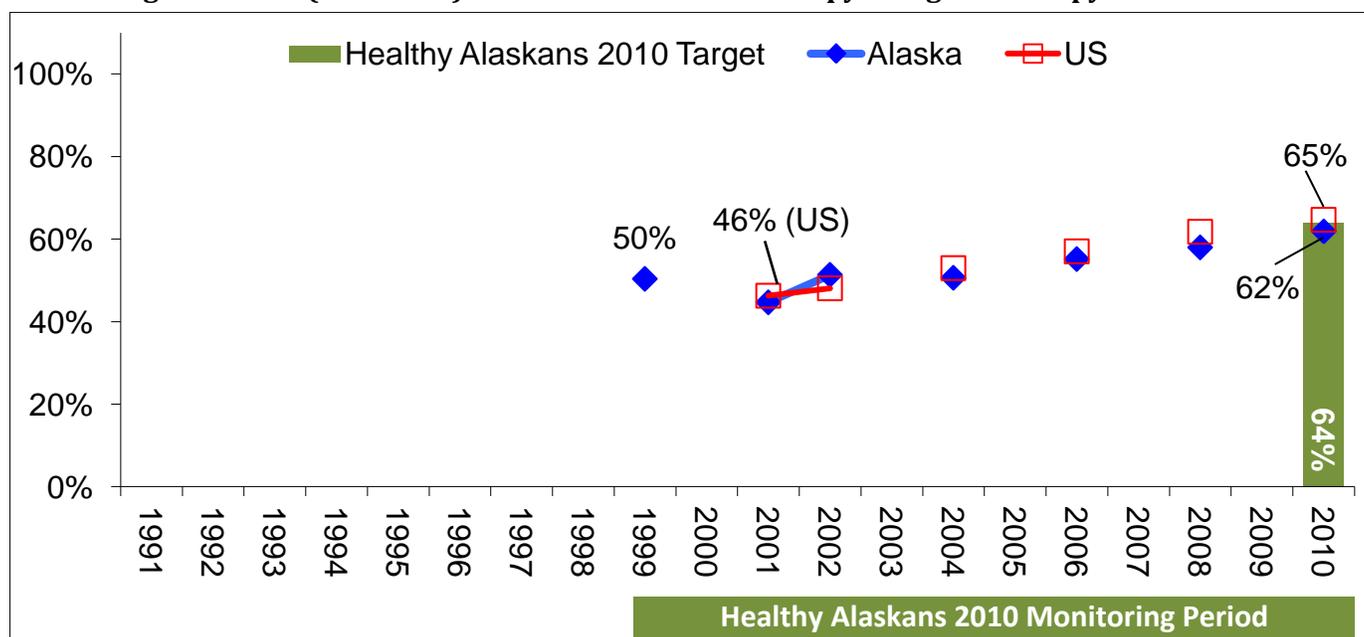
Indicator: *Adult Colorectal Cancer Screening*

Why is this important?

Even though the exact cause of most colorectal cancers is not known, it is possible to prevent many cases. Prevention and early detection are possible through screening because most colorectal cancers develop from polyps (precancerous tissue growths). Early detection screening tests for colorectal cancer can help find polyps, which can be easily removed, thereby lowering a person's cancer risk. Colorectal cancers are more successfully treated when detected early. Screening tests can detect colon polyps before they become cancerous, as well as early stage colorectal cancers. Beginning at age 50, people of average risk with no symptoms should get colorectal cancer screening. The various screening tests have different recommended yearly intervals.¹

How are we doing?

Percentage of Adults (50 Years+) Who Ever Had a Colonoscopy or Sigmoidoscopy: Alaska and the U.S.



The percentage of Alaska adults age 50 or older who have had a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy in their lifetime has increased over the past decade from 50% in 1999 to 62% in 2010.

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

The *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target for the prevalence of history of screening for colorectal cancer is 64% (of adults age 50 or older) or higher. The percentage of Alaska adults age 50 or older who have had a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy in their lifetime has increased from 49% to 62% during the *Healthy Alaskans 2010* monitoring period, approaching but not quite meeting the target. **The *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target of 64% has not been met.**

❖ How does AK compare with the US?

The Alaska and rate for colorectal cancer screening has paralleled the US rate.

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❖ How are different populations affected?

There are no significant differences in colorectal cancer screening rates by race, region, education, or income level. Note that the small sample size for this indicator may limit the ability to detect significant differences between groups. (Source: 2008 BRFSS)

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

In collaboration with partners statewide, the Alaska Comprehensive Cancer Control Partnership supports an active committee on colorectal cancer. This group, the Alaska Colorectal Cancer Partnership, includes partners in the tribal health system, private hospitals and providers, non-profit organizations, community health organizations and cancer survivorship and advocacy groups. Activities include: addressing access to colorectal cancer screening; support of patient navigators in tribal, private and public health systems; training in family history to assist those with inherited risk; and increasing colorectal cancer screening rates through public education (small media). Additional information on current efforts to address prevention and control of colorectal cancer in Alaska is available at <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/cancer/comprehensive.htm>.

Indicator Definition and Notes

Percentage of adults aged 50 years and older who answer “Yes” to the following question: *Sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy are exams in which a tube is inserted in the rectum to view the colon for signs of cancer or other health problems. Have you ever had either of these exams?*

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 1999, 2001, and even years from 2002 to 2008.

References

1. American Cancer Society, “Colorectal Cancer.” http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@nho/documents/document/colorectal_cancer.pdf.



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

