

For Immediate Release
Wed., Feb. 10, 2016

CONTACT: Susan Lampert Smith
(608) 890-5643
Ssmith5@uwhealth.org

**Wisconsinites living longer but not necessarily healthier
Despite moderate health gains, study shows growing number of adults reporting poor health**

MADISON, Wis. – A new report from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute reveals that Wisconsinites may be living longer, but not healthier.

The 2015 Wisconsin Health Trends: Progress Report reveals that nearly all age groups are living longer, but an increasing percentage of adults are reporting their health as fair or poor. Rates of certain health behaviors such as smoking, teen births, and excessive drinking continue to decrease, yet obesity rates and socioeconomic trends that influence health, such as high school drop-outs, unemployment, children in poverty and violent crime rate, continue to worsen.

The report compares the state's expected gains to its actual improvement on 19 leading health indicators in order to measure progress on the goal of Wisconsinites living longer and better by 2020. Indicators measured include health outcomes, key health behaviors, clinical care, socioeconomic, and environmental factors that influence these health outcomes.

Though Wisconsin shows some overall health improvements, these gains don't hold true for all subgroups of the population. For example:

- Males of all ages continue to have a higher death rate than females;
- The percentage of children in poverty is much higher for those living in urban counties compared with those living in rural, non-urban and suburban counties;
- African American infants are almost twice as likely to be born at a low birthweight compared with infants of other racial/ethnic subgroups; and
- Smoking rates are more than four times higher for those without a high school degree compared with those with a college degree.

“It's important for us to acknowledge that our state's progress toward improved health is tempered by the continuing disparities we see within various groups of our population,” said Karen Timberlake, director of the UW Population Health Institute. “This report shows that we must dig deeper to understand trends that influence our health, and ask ourselves what we can do differently to ensure improved health for all. These findings are our call to action.”

Many of the health trends Wisconsin is experiencing – if left unaddressed – will lead to poorer health outcomes and greater gaps in the future. To improve health, we must consider the diverse factors that influence how long and how well we live, and examine the circumstances that produce longer, healthier lives for some of the state’s residents but not others.

The UW Population Health Institute produces the Wisconsin Health Trends: Progress Report to track opportunities to improve Wisconsin’s health and make progress toward the goal of becoming the healthiest state in the nation, and one with less health disparity. The 19 health indicators presented in the report support the work of public health professionals, policymakers and concerned citizens who are interested in assessing long-term and recent trends in leading health indicators. Wisconsin’s greatest opportunities for health improvement may be recognized through targeted interventions that are likely to decrease health disparities. This project was supported by a grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

For a complete listing of these indicators, to read the full report, or to see disparities by population subgroups, visit the UW Population Health Institute website at:

<https://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu/programs/match/healthiest-state/progress-report/2015/index.htm>.

The UW Population Health Institute advances health and well-being for all by developing and promoting evidence-based approaches to health improvement through policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels.

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