



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Behavior Risk Factor Survey Finds Health Advantages, Concerns for Kent County Residents

GRAND RAPIDS – Results of the 2014 Behavior Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) found trends which should be concerning to all of us. Drinking and driving is up, perceived health status is down, and obesity continues to plague our region. The good news is that many health indicators in Kent County residents are better than the statewide and national averages. Many more residents have health care coverage than six years ago, and the number of “current smokers” has decreased from 20.6% to 12.8% (below the statewide and national average). The release of the report comes as we recognize *Michigan Public Health Week*, April 13-19, 2015.

The 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) was completed by a professional surveying company using a method set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Survey specialists spoke with 1,225 individuals from a variety of demographic groups. Data from the BRFS is necessary for the completion of the Kent County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) processes.

“Knowing this data helps us look at policy and environmental changes that could help us all live healthier lives,” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department. “Having this data updated on a regular basis helps us see where we are failing, and where we are succeeding, in the health of our communities. This information is extremely useful as our community works to understand and overcome socio-economic determinants of health.” The last Kent County BRFS was completed in 2008. Important data worth noting:

- 13.7% report fair or poor health, up from 10.8% in 2008;
- 45.9% of adults reported no influenza shot in 2014, up from 32.9%;
- 26.1% of adults did not see a dentist during the past year, up from 21.1% in 2008;
- 14.2% of respondents reported asthma, up from 10.1% in 2002;
- 27.6% reported obesity, a significant increase from 17.0% in 2002.

Important screenings for HIV and cancer were reported less frequently than survey respondents in 2008. Learn more about the BRFS or to read the report, go to <http://www.accesskent.com/Health/brfs.htm>.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.