

Leading Health Indicators

The Leading Health Indicators reflect the major public health concerns in the United States and were chosen on the basis of their ability to motivate action, the availability of data to measure progress, and their relevance as broad public health issues. The Leading Health Indicators illuminate individual behaviors, physical and social environmental factors, and important health system issues that greatly affect the health of individuals and communities. Underlying each of these indicators is the significant influence of income and education.

The process of selecting the Leading Health Indicators mirrored the collaborative and extensive efforts undertaken to develop Healthy People 2010. The process was led by an interagency work group within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Individuals and organizations provided comments at national and regional meetings or via mail and the Internet. A report by the Institute of Medicine provided several scientific models on which to support a set of indicators. Focus group discussions were used to ensure that the indicators are meaningful and motivating to the public.

The Leading Health Indicators serve as a link to the original 467 objectives in Healthy People 2010 and have served as the building blocks for many State and community health initiatives. Furthermore, some States and communities have used the Leading Health Indicators as a framework to plan programs aimed at promoting health and preventing disease. For each of the Leading Health Indicators, specific objectives and subobjectives derived from Healthy People 2010 are used to track progress. This set of objectives and subobjectives provides a snapshot of the health of the Nation. The specific objectives and subobjectives used to track progress toward the Leading Health Indicators are listed below. For information regarding the assessment of progress for these objectives and subobjectives, please refer to the corresponding focus areas found in Section 2 of this publication.

Physical Activity

Objective 22-2

Increase the proportion of adults who engage in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day 5 or more days per week or vigorous physical activity for at least 20 minutes per day 3 or more days per week.

Objective 22-7

Increase the proportion of adolescents who engage in vigorous physical activity that promotes cardiorespiratory fitness 3 or more days per week for 20 or more minutes per occasion.

Overweight and Obesity

Objective 19-2

Reduce the proportion of adults who are obese.

Objective 19-3c

Reduce the proportion of children and adolescents aged 6 to 19 who are overweight or obese.

Tobacco Use

Objective 27-1a

Reduce tobacco use by adults—cigarette smoking.

Objective 27-1b

Reduce tobacco use by adolescents – cigarettes.

Substance Abuse

Objective 26-10a

Increase the proportion of adolescents not using alcohol or any illicit drugs during the past 30 days.

Objective 26-10c

Reduce the proportion of adults using any illicit drug during the past 30 days.

Objective 26-11c

Reduce the proportion of persons aged 18 years and older engaging in binge drinking of alcoholic beverages.

Responsible Sexual Behavior

Objective 13-6

Increase the proportion of sexually active persons who use condoms.

Objective 25-11

Increase the proportion of adolescents who abstain from sexual intercourse or use condoms.

Mental Health

Objective 18-9b

Increase the proportion of adults aged 18 years and older with recognized depression who receive treatment.

Injury and Violence

Objective 15-5

Reduce deaths caused by motor vehicle crashes.

Objective 15-32

Reduce homicides

Environmental Quality

Objective 8-1a

Reduce the proportion of persons exposed to air that does not meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's health-based standards for harmful air pollutants—ozone.

Objective 27-10

Reduce the proportion of nonsmokers exposed to environmental tobacco smoke.

Immunization

Objective 14-24

Increase the proportion of young children and adolescents who receive all vaccines that have been recommended for universal administration for at least 5 years.

Objective 14-29a

Increase the proportion of noninstitutionalized adults who are vaccinated annually against influenza.

Objective 14-29b

Increase the proportion of noninstitutionalized adults who are ever vaccinated against pneumococcal disease.

Access to Health Care

Objective 1-1

Increase the proportion of persons with health insurance.

Objective 1-4a

Increase the proportion of persons of all ages who have a specific source of ongoing care.

Objective 16-6a

Increase the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care beginning in the first trimester.