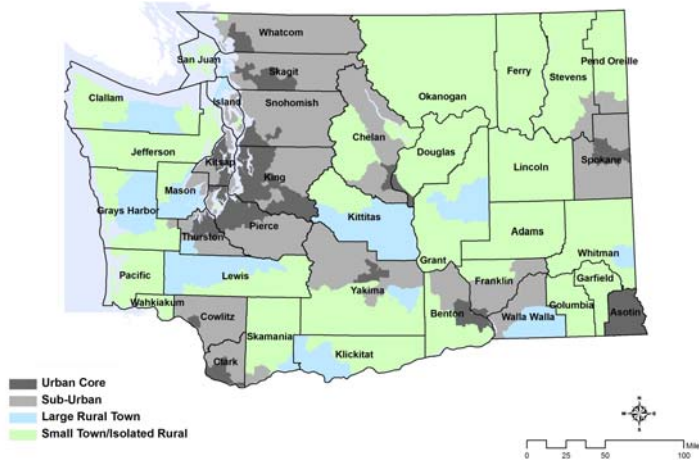


## Rural Washington: Closing Health Disparities

The Department of Health (DOH) recently completed a state-wide rural health assessment. This included a systematic look at 26 indicators of communicable disease, chronic disease prevention, maternal and child health, and access to health care.

**Rural and Urban Areas Based on RUCA Codes**



These health indicators reflect those used by local health jurisdictions. They are consistent with local, state, and national measures.

The assessment identifies 13 indicators for which rural areas are doing less well than the state as a whole (statistically significant difference  $p < 0.05$ ).

Some of the variation could be explained by differences in age structure, gender, race, income, and education. For planning programs in rural areas, it is essential to know what health problems exist. Rural areas are:

### Higher than the state average for:

- percentage of adults who are overweight.
- percentage of adults who smoke.
- percentage of women who smoke cigarettes during their pregnancy.
- rate of teenage births.
- rate of children who are hospitalized due to unintentional injuries.
- percentage of adults who delay seeing a doctor due to cost.

### Lower than the state average for percentage of:

- adults who receive yearly dental care.
- adults with health insurance coverage.
- adults with a personal health care provider.
- adults age 50 and over who receive colorectal cancer screening.
- pregnant women who receive first trimester prenatal care.
- women who receive cervical cancer screening.
- women who receive breast cancer screening.

The DOH will use the results to inform and improve its programs. It will also use them to assure that state policies consider the health and health care needs of rural residents. Over time, these indicators will help the department track trends and performance.

For more information, contact Zeynep Shorter Telephone: (360) 236-2806 Email: [Zeynep.Shorter@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Zeynep.Shorter@doh.wa.gov)  
Health Systems Quality Assurance Office of Community and Rural Health Date: 09/28/2007

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## Rural Health Assessment Indicators

(Proportions of Population at Risk with Specified Health Conditions)

Indicators	Washington State	Large Rural Town	Small Town/ Isolated Rural
1- Adult Overweight/ Obese <i>BRFSS</i> 2004-2006	<b>59% *</b> (±<1%)	<b>63% *</b> (±1%)	<b>63% *</b> (±2%)
2- Adult Cigarette Smoking <i>BRFSS</i> 2004-2006	<b>18%</b> (±<1%)	<b>19%</b> (±1%)	<b>20%</b> (±1%)
3- Maternal Cigarette Smoking <i>Birth Certificates</i> 2003-2005	<b>10%</b> (±<1%)	<b>13%</b> (±<1%)	<b>12%</b> (±<1%)
4- Teen Birth Rate <i>Birth Certificates</i> 2003-2005	<b>15 per 1,000</b> (±<1 per 1,000)	<b>23 per 1,000</b> (± 2 per 1,000)	<b>23 per 1,000</b> (±2 per 1,000)
5- Childhood Unintentional Injury Hospitalization <i>CHARS</i> 2002-2004	<b>199 per 100,000</b> (±4 per 100,000)	<b>226 per 100,000</b> (±17 per 100,000)	<b>245 per 100,000</b> (±19 per 100,000)
6- Adults with Unmet Medical Need <i>BRFSS</i> 2004-2006	<b>13%</b> (±<1%)	14% (±1%)	<b>16%</b> (±1%)
7- Adult Dental Care <i>BRFSS</i> 2004&2006	<b>71%</b> (±<1%)	<b>66%</b> (±2%)	<b>65%</b> (±2%)
8- Adults with Health Insurance <i>BRFSS</i> 2004-2006	<b>83%</b> (±<1%)	<b>80%</b> (±2%)	<b>73%</b> (±2%)
9- Adults with a Personal Health Care Provider <i>BRFSS</i> 2004-2006	<b>78%</b> (±<1%)	<b>78%</b> (±1%)	<b>75%</b> (±1%)
10- Adult Preventive Cancer Screening—Colorectal <i>BRFSS</i> 2004&2006	<b>62%</b> (±<1%)	<b>57%</b> (±2%)	<b>58%</b> (±2%)
11- First Trimester Prenatal Care <i>Birth Certificates</i> 2003-2005	<b>80% **</b> (±<1%)	<b>77% *</b> (±<1%)	<b>76% *</b> (±<1%)
12- Adult Preventive Cancer Screening—Cervical <i>BRFSS</i> 2004&2006	<b>79%</b> (±<1%)	78% (±2%)	<b>76%</b> (±2%)
13- Adult Preventive Cancer Screening—Breast <i>BRFSS</i> 2004&2006	<b>79%</b> (±<1%)	81% (±2%)	<b>74%</b> (±2%)

**Missing data:** \*\* 10%-19% missing data, \* 5% -10% missing data

**Key:**  Worse than Washington State (Statistically significant difference  $p < 0.05$ )

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