

Socio-Economic Status, 2012

Our health is determined, in part, by access to economic opportunities.¹ A 2010 survey found that the percentage of Maine adults aged 18 and older who rated their general health as excellent, very good, or good fell from 95.6% among adults with household incomes of \$50,000 or more to 58.8% among those with incomes under \$15,000. One in five Maine adults with household incomes under \$25,000 reported there had been a time in the last 12 months when they had needed to see a doctor but could not because of the cost.²

Maine's median household income is significantly less than the median for the United States (\$46,933 and \$51,914, respectively), but the percentage of Mainers living below the federal poverty level is significantly lower than in the country as a whole (12.6% and 13.8%, respectively).²

In addition to income, there are many other social determinants of health, which have been defined as “conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.”¹ English language fluency, education, and household structure are some social determinants measured in the State Health Assessment. Maine has fewer adults 25 years old and over with less than a high school diploma, GED or equivalent (10.2%), than the United States (15.0%) but a greater proportion of adults 65 years old and over living alone (30.3%), compared to 27.3% nationally.¹

Socio-economic measures chosen for the State Health Assessment include:²

- High school graduation rate
- Educational attainment
- Median household income
- Poverty (less than 100% of the federal poverty level)



- Unemployment
- Single parent families
- Older adults living alone
- Homelessness
- Speak a language other than English at home
- Speak English less than very well

In addition, income- and education-specific estimates are provided for all State Health Assessment measures for which such data are available.

The socio-economic measures included in the State Health Assessment vary across population groups in Maine. For example, females were significantly more likely than males to be below the federal poverty level. People who described their race as something other than “White alone” were significantly more likely to be below the poverty level than those who described their race as White alone. The median household income ranged from \$34,016 in Piscataquis County to \$55,658 in Cumberland County.² Educational attainment for adults 25 years old and over ranged from 6.7% in Cumberland County to 16.1% in Aroostook County.¹

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. Social determinants of health: overview. Available from: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=39> (accessed 6/6/2013).

² Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. State Health Assessment – 2012. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/sha/index.shtml> (accessed 6/6/2013).