



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
*of* HEALTH SERVICES



# 2025 Wisconsin State Health Assessment Executive Summary

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Division of Public Health

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# 2025 Wisconsin State Health Assessment Overview

The 2025 Wisconsin State Health Assessment (SHA) provides a snapshot of Wisconsin's health and wellbeing. It contains data from across health topics, provides context in which to understand that data, and supports collaboration to improve health and well-being across Wisconsin.

## Reading the SHA

The SHA is organized to highlight factors that influence and impact people's health, from upstream, root causes to downstream health and well-being outcomes. This represents how social and community factors impact people's health behaviors and, ultimately, their health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> The sections are:

- 1) **Social and community health factors**, including how they are influenced by laws and policies.
- 2) **Health behaviors**, including how the decisions people make are influenced by their social and community environments.
- 3) **Health and well-being outcomes**, including those that result from social and community factors, health behaviors, and other factors, like genetics.

The SHA also contains sections describing Wisconsin's people and the assets and opportunities that can be leveraged to improve health and well-being.

## Creating the SHA

Wisconsin Stat. § 250.07(1)(a) requires DHS to produce a state health plan for the people of Wisconsin at least every 10 years. Best practice and Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation requirements set the adopted five-year cycle.

The 2025 SHA was developed using an adapted Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) 2.0 framework. The process included:

- **Engaging community members and partners** to understand their perspectives on health and well-being in Wisconsin.
- **Gathering and analyzing data** from a wide range of health and well-being factors and outcomes.
- **Examining all information** in the context of community infrastructure, assets, power, and other factors that may support improvement of health and well-being.

The SHA describes the factors that prevent people from achieving their best possible health and well-being, along with the assets and resources that support them to thrive. Based on the findings of the SHA, DHS develops a State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) that contains goals and strategies to improve the health and well-being of Wisconsinites.

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<sup>1</sup> [Social Determinants of Health, UCLA Health](#)

# Key findings

The 2025 Wisconsin State Health Assessment (SHA) was developed through a multi-step process that engaged individuals and partners across the state and examined a wide range of factors that impact health and well-being.

In developing the SHA, Wisconsinites statewide provided input and shared what prevents them from achieving their best possible health and well-being. The most shared barriers are in the areas of:

- **Health care**, including high costs; poor access to care; and lack of whole-person, prevention-focused care.
- **Economic stress**, including the rising cost of living.
- **Mental health**, including feelings of burnout and poor access to mental health care.
- **Housing**, including a lack of affordable housing.
- **Transportation**, including inadequate public transportation; challenges of transportation in rural areas; and need for transportation options to work, health care appointments, and other necessary places.

Quantitative data adds to the picture of Wisconsin’s health and well-being. For self-reported health, 1 in 5 Wisconsinites say they have poor or fair physical health, while 1 in 7 say they have poor or fair mental health. Wisconsinites are dying younger than they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. Across all data, differences exist depending on age, geography, education, race/ethnicity, and other demographic factors.

Wisconsin has rich assets and opportunities that can be leveraged to improve health and well-being. If adequately resourced, community-based organizations, businesses, Wisconsin’s governmental public health system and other institutions have the knowledge and skills to engage partners across the state to improve the health and well-being of Wisconsinites.

## Wisconsin’s people

Wisconsin is home to a diverse and resilient population. Understanding the people who make up Wisconsin—and the demographic factors and patterns across them—provides critical context toward the goal of improving overall health and well-being for people in every corner of the state. These details make it possible to identify patterns in health outcomes and needs, and understand what factors are contributing to positive health and well-being, and who may be at greater risk for poor health outcomes. Wisconsinites’ health and well-being shape the state’s culture, vitality, and future.

### Key data

- Over five years, Wisconsin’s **population increased by 1.08%**.
- Approximately **three times as many Wisconsinites live in urban counties** (4,447,785) as in rural counties (1,513,190).
- The **median age** in Wisconsin has grown to **40.6 years** and is expected to continue to increase.
- Wisconsin’s population is becoming **more diverse**.

# Social and community health factors

Social and community health factors influence people's ability to make decisions for their health, maintain healthy behaviors, and access resources needed for well-being. They include employment and income levels; access to housing, child care, education and health care; environmental factors like safety, transportation access, natural resources; and more.

## Key data

- An estimated **35% of Wisconsin households cannot afford basic needs.**
  - About 11% of households fall below the federal poverty level (FPL).
  - An additional 24% are above the FPL level but below the threshold needed to afford their basic needs.
- Approximately **1 in 4 households are housing cost burdened.**
  - On a given night in 2025, at least 5,225 Wisconsinites experienced homelessness, including more than 1,000 youth.
- More than **1 in 10 Wisconsinites did not see a doctor when they needed to because they could not afford it.**

# Health behaviors

Making healthy choices and adopting healthy behaviors are not always easy; each choice and behavior is influenced by social and community factors. When laws and policies support social and community health factors, people are more likely to have the basic resources they need and can more easily make healthy choices. Health behaviors then collectively influence health outcomes.

## Key data

- More than **1 in 5 Wisconsin adults did not have a check-up** in the past year.
- About **7 in 10 Wisconsin children completed** the recommended childhood combined **seven-vaccine series** by the age of 2.
- **One in 5 Wisconsin high school students have seen someone violently hurt** in their neighborhood.
- More than **62% of Wisconsinites aged 16 and older say they do favors for one another.**

# Health and well-being outcomes

Health and well-being outcomes represent the physical and mental health status of an individual or an entire population. These outcomes are the result of a combination of the personal health behaviors and social and community factors that contribute to health and well-being across populations, as well as biological factors like genetics and age.<sup>2</sup>

## Key data

- **One in 5** Wisconsinites say they have poor or fair **physical health**.
- **One in 7** Wisconsinites say they have poor or fair **mental health**.
- The top three causes of death in Wisconsin are **heart disease, cancer, and unintentional injury**.
  - **Younger Wisconsinites** are more likely to die of unintentional injury, suicide, and homicide.
  - **Older Wisconsinites** are more likely to die as a result of chronic disease.

# Assets and opportunities

Wisconsin communities have many assets that support health and well-being that cut across geographic regions, business and social sectors, and government. If well supported and appropriately leveraged, Wisconsin's assets can support health and wellbeing improvement. These assets include:

- Governmental public health infrastructure.
- Sense and strength of community.
- Community-based organizations and resources.
- Institutional-based resources.
- Natural resources.

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<sup>2</sup> [Determinants of Health, WHO](#)