

Health Status and Healthcare Access for People with Disabilities in Florida

In this report, we assess demographics, access to health care, health status, chronic illness, and disease management in Florida residents with and without disabilities using data from the 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The BRFSS, coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and administered by the UF Survey Research Center, is a random-digit dial telephone survey of non-institutionalized, community-dwelling, civilian adults aged 18 years and older. For a full report including American Community Survey (ACS) data, visit <http://fodh.php.ufl.edu/publications/>

Demographics

The proportion of persons with disabilities increases with age. One-fourth of persons with disabilities are between the ages of 55 and 64. Nearly one-third of persons with disabilities are over the age of 65. Among those with a disability, 57.5% are female and 42.5% are male. 73.3% of persons with disabilities are White, 12.6% Hispanic, 8.2% African American, and 5.8% other or multiracial compared to 62.9%, 12.0%, 19.3% and 5.9% in persons without disabilities respectively.

Persons with disabilities are more likely to be divorced, widowed, or separated compared to persons without disabilities.

- 19.4% of persons with disabilities report being divorced compared to 13.5% of persons without disabilities.
- 12.7% of persons with disabilities report being widowed compared to 6.0% of persons without disabilities.
- A lower proportion of persons with disabilities reported never having been married (14.0% compared to 23.0%, respectively).

Persons with disabilities have disproportionately lower levels of income, education, and employment.

- 20.6% of persons with disabilities make less than \$15,000 a year, compared to 11% of persons without disabilities.
- 11.8% of persons with disabilities did not graduate high school compared to 8.2% of persons without disabilities.
- 29.1% of persons with disabilities report graduating from college or technical school compared to 35.9% of persons without disabilities.
- Nearly 20.0% of persons with disabilities are unable to work compared to only 1.1% of persons without disabilities.
- Less than one-third (28.8%) of persons with disabilities are currently employed compared to over half of persons without disabilities (57.2%).
- Nearly one-third of persons with disabilities are retired, 30.4% compared to 19.0% of persons without disabilities. This could be attributed to the high proportion of persons with disabilities who are over the age of 65.

Disability Status by Employment Status in Florida



Health Care Access

Persons with disabilities who lack health insurance are at a disadvantage as it represents a significant barrier to consistent access to quality care and preventive services.

19.3% of persons with disabilities have no health insurance.

A higher proportion of persons with disabilities have more than one health care provider and visit a doctor more frequently compared to persons without disabilities.

- 72.5% of persons with disabilities report seeing a doctor within the past 12 months compared to 65% of persons without disabilities.
- However, nearly 1 in 10 persons with disabilities have not seen a doctor in 5 years or more.
- 12.2% of persons with disabilities report having more than one health care provider compared to 7.4% of persons without disabilities.
- 17.8% of persons with disabilities do not have a personal doctor, compared to 29.6% of persons without disabilities.

Healthcare costs represent a significant barrier to care for persons with disabilities. A greater proportion of persons with disabilities report that they needed to see a doctor in the past 12 months, but were unable to because of cost.

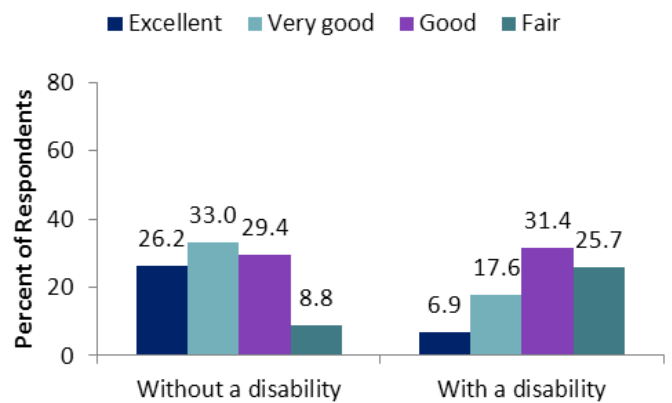
1/3 of persons with disabilities reported cost as a barrier to care.

Health Status & Behaviors

Persons with disabilities rated their general health significantly lower than persons without disabilities.

- Only 6.9% of persons with disabilities rated their health as excellent, compared to 26.2% of persons without disabilities.
- Only 17.6% of persons with disabilities rated their health as very good, compared to 33.0% of persons without disabilities.
- 25.7% of persons with disabilities rated their health as fair, compared to only 8.8% of persons without disabilities.

General Health by Disability Status in Florida



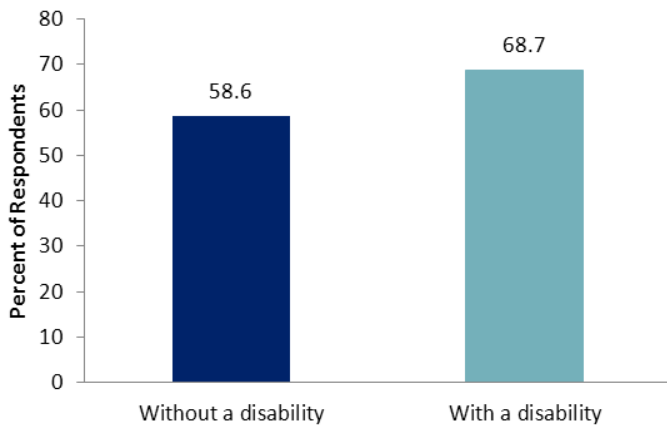
Persons with disabilities report twice the levels of daily smoking compared to persons without disabilities. A greater proportion of persons with disabilities report having a smoking history.

- 19.1% of persons with disabilities smoke every day compared to 11.5% of persons without disabilities.
- 33.1% of persons without disabilities were former smokers who currently don't smoke compared to 26.0% of persons without disabilities.
- 56.3% of persons without a disability never smoked compared to 40.0% of persons with a disability.

Among current smokers, a significantly higher proportion of persons with disabilities tried to quit smoking for one day or more during the past year.

- 68.7% of persons with disabilities stopped smoking for one day or longer in the past year, compared to 58.6% of persons without disabilities.

Percent of Current Smokers who are Trying to Quit by Disability Status in Florida



A significantly lower proportion of persons with disabilities reported engaging in physical activity compared to persons without disabilities.

- 38.6% of persons with disabilities reported inactive as their physical activity level compared to 19.6% of persons without disabilities.
- 32.1% of persons without disabilities were highly active compared to 25.6% of persons with a disability.

A significantly higher proportion of persons with disabilities reported being overweight or obese, defined as a body mass index greater than 25. Given persons with disabilities engage in less physical activity and are generally more overweight or obese leads to the need for more targeted physical activity and nutrition programs for this population.

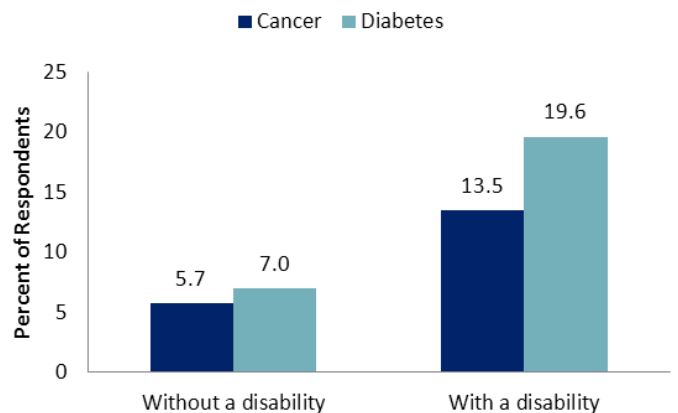
- 65.8% of persons with disabilities are overweight or obese compared to 55.7% of persons without disabilities.

Chronic Illness

Persons with disabilities have higher rates of diabetes and cancer.

- 19.6% of persons with disabilities have diabetes compared to 7.0% of persons without disabilities.
- 13.5% of persons with disabilities have cancer compared to 5.7% of persons without disabilities.

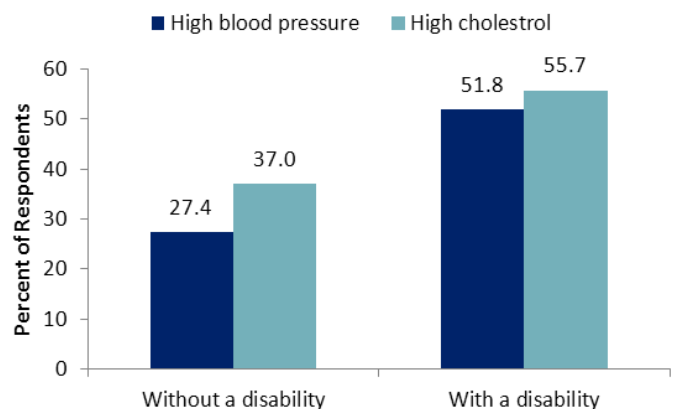
Percent Reporting Cancer and Diabetes by Disability Status in Florida



Persons with disabilities also have higher rates of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

- Over half of persons with disabilities have high blood pressure and high cholesterol compared to 27.4% and 37.0% of persons without disabilities.

Percent with High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol by Disability Status in Florida



Persons with disabilities are disproportionately burdened by chronic conditions when compared to persons without disabilities. The chronic condition count includes asthma, arthritis, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and COPD. This shows the importance of designing interventions that increase the participation of persons with disabilities in self-management programs in order to support healthy behaviors and optimize health outcomes.

Persons with disabilities have a mean chronic condition count of 2.47 compared to 1.25 for persons without disabilities.

Disease Management

Persons with disabilities who had diabetes did not differ from those without disabilities and diabetes in terms of how many times they checked their blood glucose. Individuals with diabetes who also have a disability report higher levels of taking insulin for diabetes management compared to persons without a disability.

- 65.0% of persons with disabilities reported checking their blood glucose every day.
- 10.7% of persons with disabilities reported never checking their blood glucose.
- 34.0% of persons with diabetes and disabilities are taking insulin for diabetes treatment compared to 24.4% of persons without disabilities who live with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities were less likely to follow through with their doctor’s recommendations for physical activity to control high blood pressure.

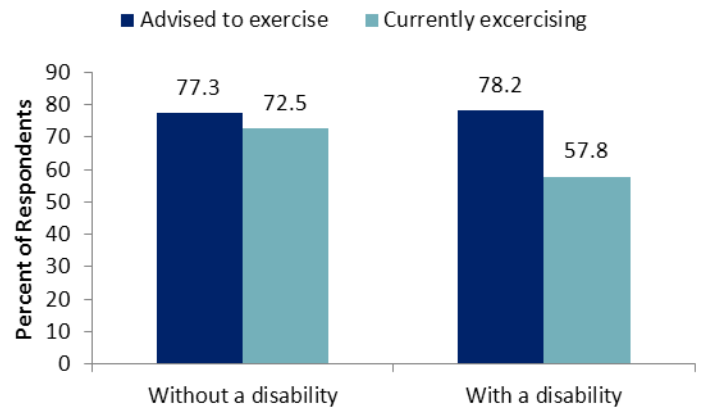
- Over 75.0% of all persons were advised by a health care professional to start exercising in order to help or control their high blood pressure.

Funding Information:

The Florida Disability and Health Program is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Grant: U59DD000992-01).

- However, only 57.8% of persons with disabilities reported currently exercising, significantly less than the 72.5% of persons without disabilities who currently exercise.

Physical Activity in Persons with Hypertension by Disability Status in Florida



Future Implications

The data and information found in the Disability Data Report can help guide educational efforts about the health and access needs of persons with disabilities. The chronic illness, health behavior, quality of life, and chronic disease management (CDM) data can inform educational efforts and identify areas of need for persons with disabilities.

The data also highlights the need to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in health promotion programs and preventive health services. The relatively low rate of CDM participation for persons with disabilities suggests that there is room for improvement in terms of accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities.

The findings will also guide the development of an in-depth questionnaire designed to measure the accessibility of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in Florida. The low rates of CDM participation found in persons with disabilities shows the need for in-depth qualitative review that can help uncover the barriers to care for persons with disabilities.