

# Health Disparities Experienced by Kansans with Disabilities



**Disability and Health Program**  
 kansans with disabilities can be healthy

Twenty-eight percent of Kansas adults have disabilities. People with disabilities use health services for the same reasons everyone else does: to be healthy and active and to participate in their communities. However, health disparities between Kansans with disabilities and Kansans without disabilities are significant. The Kansas Disability and Health Program (DHP), with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), collects and monitors health disparity data and develops targeted interventions in the areas of physical activity, nutrition, and oral health to reduce these disparities and improve health and quality of life among Kansans with mobility limitations and/or intellectual disabilities.

## Physical Health and Activity

Kansans with disabilities are more likely to report fair or poor health, and they are more likely to report poor physical or mental health that keeps them from doing their usual activities. Physical activity promotes overall health and prevents many health problems. Kansans with disabilities were less likely to participate in physical activity at recommended levels, and in 2019, 41.2% reported participating in no physical activity at all. In comparison, 28.0% of people without disabilities reported no physical activity in 2019.

	People with Disabilities			People without Disabilities		
	2015	2017	2019	2015	2017	2019
Report Fair/Poor Health	44.1%	42.7%	42.7%	7.7%	7.7%	7.9%
Poor Physical or Mental Health that Prevents Usual Activities	60.0%	57.3%	63.7%	28.3%	31.7%	35.2%
Not Participating in Levels of Recommended Physical Activity	87.0%	87.4%	78.4%	78.9%	78.7%	70.7%
No fruit at least once/day	46.6%	42.1%	44.6%	42.9%	35.9%	40.0%
No vegetables at least once/day	25.4%	22.0%	24.0%	21.4%	15.6%	18.3%



## What are health disparities?

Health disparities are preventable differences in health that certain groups of people experience. These differences are related to disadvantages such as poverty, disability, and lack of education. Health disparities occur when opportunities like employment or health care services are not equally available to everyone.

## Co-existing Health Conditions

In addition to their disabilities, Kansans with disabilities experience a higher rate of health conditions such as depression, diabetes, asthma, and heart attack. In 2019, rates of depression for people with disabilities exceeded those for people without disabilities by 25.4%; rates of diabetes for people with disabilities exceeded those for people without disabilities by 13%. People with disabilities were also more likely to be obese or to have a variety of cardiovascular conditions.

	People with Disabilities			People without Disabilities		
	2015	2017	2019	2015	2017	2019
Depression	38.5%	42.1%	38.4%	14.3%	14.0%	13.0%
Diabetes	21.1%	21.4%	20.2%	6.6%	6.8%	7.2%
Asthma	16.3%	16.2%	15.0%	6.4%	6.7%	7.9%
Heart Attack	10.1%	9.2%	9.8%	2.3%	2.4%	2.2%
Hypertension	52.2%	51.1%	49.1%	25.9%	26.7%	28.0%
Stroke	8.8%	7.4%	7.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%
High Cholesterol	52.6%	47.3%	47.8%	32.8%	29.7%	30.0%
Obesity	44.7%	40.5%	43.0%	31.1%	29.4%	32.0%

## Preventive Care and Other Health Risk Factors

Although Kansans with disabilities are more likely to receive a flu shot, have their cholesterol checked, have a usual source of health care, and get a routine check-up, women with disabilities in Kansas are less likely to receive preventive care such as a pap smear or mammogram. Kansans with disabilities are also less likely to have health insurance and more likely to smoke or use tobacco.

	People with Disabilities		People without Disabilities	
	2016	2018	2016	2018
No Pap Smear in Past 3 years (Age 21-64)	44.3%	28.7%	25.6%	19.0%
No Mammogram in Past 2 Years (Age 40+)	37.2%	37.7%	26.9%	27.5%
No PSA test in past 2 Years (Age 40+)	59.5%	65.8%	60.1%	67.6%
No Health Insurance (Age 18-64)	23.5%	15.3%	13.6%	11.6
Smokes/Uses Tobacco	26.8%	26.8%	14.3%	13.9%

All data presented here are from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Available at [kdheks.gov/brfss/Questionnaires/quest2019.html](http://kdheks.gov/brfss/Questionnaires/quest2019.html)



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