

September 2026 - Issue 2

Research Update



The 2026 National Survey on Health and Disability (NSHD) Will Launch in October!

The National Survey on Health and Disability (NSHD) is an ongoing survey of adults with disabilities that asks questions about disability, health status, housing, health care, health insurance, transportation, community participation and other aspects of daily life. This is the seventh time the NSHD has been conducted.

The NSHD project page includes additional information about what sort of topics the survey covers, research articles using data from previous NSHD waves, how to request data access for disability researchers, and more.

[Visit the NSHD Project Page](#)

Anyone (age 18+, living in the U.S., with a disability and/or health condition) who would like to take the NSHD when it releases can receive the direct survey link via email - we just need your email address to add you to our list!

[Get a Link for the 2026 NSHD Emailed to You!](#)

Help Us Promote the 2026 National Survey on Health and Disability!

We have shareable media including social media posts, images, and videos that can be used to promote the survey that you or your organization can use.

Please help us increase the number of people across the U.S. who participate in the NSHD!

Note: This promotional page will be available when the survey is live, so please use it October when the survey launches.

[2026 NSHD Promotion Page](#)

See How NSHD Data is Used

Data from the NSHD are important to show the impact of policies on the health, quality of life and community participation of adults with disabilities. Publications in journals is one way these findings are disseminated. One recent article using NSHD data is "Reasons for cannabis use among adults with disabilities: Findings from the 2023-2024 National Survey on Health and Disabilities."

This paper used data from the 2023/24 NSHD to look at who uses cannabis. The findings show that people with disabilities generally use cannabis more than people without disabilities and their top reasons for cannabis use are pain management and as a sleep aid.

["Reasons for Cannabis Use" Plain Language Summary](#)

[Read "Reasons for Cannabis Use" Full Article](#)



Other New Publications

"Mental health service utilization among people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and serious mental illness before and during the emergence of telehealth services" examines Medicaid recipients' use of services across four states.

Teens and young adults usually had the highest levels of service use, and use of services varied greatly based on disability diagnosis.

[Read about Mental Health Service Use in Emergencies](#)

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"Broad disability question in the BRFSS identifies populations missed by the American Community Survey six disability questions" looks at populations who may not be identified as having disabilities by the ACS disability questions.

Many people with depression, arthritis, diabetes, cancer, and other conditions may not be identified as having disabilities by the ACS questions.

[Read about BRFSS Question in Research Connections](#)

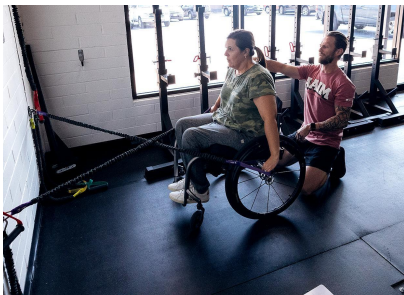
"Does Who Responds Matter?: Exploring Potential Proxy Response Bias in the Washington Group Short Set Disability Estimates" looks at whether the answers people give on surveys differs based on whether they answer questions themselves or if someone answers for them, and how that can impact our understanding of how many people with disabilities there actually are.

["Does Who Responds Matter?"
Plain Language Summary](#)

[Read about Respose Bias in Frontiers](#)

All KU-IHDPS research papers and findings are available on the IHDPS Publications page.

[Read IHDPS Publications](#)



Fitness Research in Our Communities

An ongoing research project with participants in Kansas, Missouri, and Texas is examining how community-based Functional Fitness can improve health, physical function, and access to exercise for people with disabilities.

KU-IHDPS Assistant Research Professor Lyndsie Koon leads this project, in which participants take part in Functional Fitness classes led by trained coaches with experience adapting movements for people with all different types of mobility disabilities.

People with disabilities often face barriers to being

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lack of disability-related knowledge among fitness professionals. This project is part of a broader effort to identify effective, sustainable ways to expand access to inclusive community-based exercise opportunities for people with disabilities across the U.S.

[Read More About the Adaptive Exercise Project](#)

[Watch "I am Striving" Fitness Project Video \(YouTube\)](#)



Integrated Employment

An employment-focused project in Kansas has led to nearly 200 people with disabilities finding jobs in their communities.

By using a variety of supports, including job development services, career discovery activities, targeted case management, vocational rehabilitation and personalized job support, workers were able to find competitive employment in the retail, service, and trade industries.

Researchers hope this work leads to better data tracking showing that people can find jobs in their communities with competitive wages that not only improve their lives but also have positive impacts on their states' economies and budgets.

[Learn About the Kansas Employment First Project](#)



ANG Presentations

In May, IHDPS researchers presented at the 2026 Alliance for NIDILRR Grantees (ANG) annual conference (formerly known as NARRTC).

"Using the National Survey on Health and Disability (NSHD) to Advance Survey Design, Disability Measurement, and Longitudinal Methods" shared different ways researchers can use NSHD data.

Presentations included an overview of the NSHD, a new tool that makes it easier to organize people's written descriptions of their disabilities, and ways to use responses from people who have taken the NSHD more

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than once to understand how their lives and health change over time.

"Prevalence Data and Themes from the 2025 NSHD Modules on Medical Ableism" shared findings about the experiences of people with disabilities in health care, including how often people reported experiencing ableism and common themes in those experiences.

For more information on these presentations you can email healthsurvey@ku.edu.

Alliance for NIDILRR Grantees Website



Want to use NSHD Data in your own work?

Other researchers from around the country use NSHD data to explore topics like health insurance, healthcare access, personal assistance services, community participation and many other topics.

We welcome requests from others to gain access to our de-identified, limited dataset as well as new members to our NSHD Data Analysis Team (DAT). The DAT meets monthly to share findings, discuss challenges, and build community.

We also welcome requests from disability advocates who may want to use NSHD data and findings in their roles.

Data access is free and available through a brief data use agreement.

To request access or join the team, contact Noelle Kurth at pixie@ku.edu.



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