

# What Kentuckians think should be state's priorities

Every day, Kentucky's elected officials grapple with many important issues. With limited resources, they often have to make difficult decisions. To learn which issues Kentuckians think are important, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati asked about policy priorities in the most recent **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**.

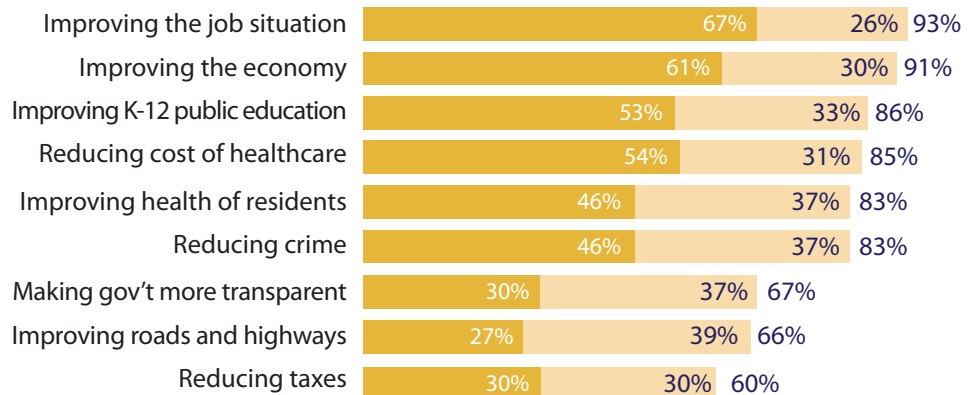
## Jobs, economy are the top priorities

KHIP asked, "How important is it to you that the Governor and the Kentucky Legislature work on each of the following issues in the next year?" Kentuckians place the greatest importance on priorities that would grow Kentucky's economy. More than 9 in 10 respondents think it is extremely or very important for policymakers to work on improving Kentucky's job situation (93%) and improving its economy (91%).

## Education, health and crime are high priorities

More than 8 in 10 Kentuckians said it is extremely or very

**How important is it to you that the Governor and the Kentucky Legislature work on each of the following issues in the next year?**



Extremely important      Very important

important for policymakers to work on improving K-12 public education (86%), reducing the cost of healthcare (85%), improving the health of Kentucky residents (83%) and reducing crime in Kentucky (83%).

## Other important issues

The majority of those surveyed reported that other issues were also important. Kentucky adults said it was important for policymakers to work on making

government more transparent (67%), improving Kentucky's roads and highways (66%) and reducing state taxes (60%).

## Kentuckians agree on priorities

Regardless of political party, Kentuckians agreed on the relative importance of these policy priorities. Jobs and the economy were rated the most important priorities for the state by both Democrats and Republicans.

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# Kentuckians' experiences with health insurance

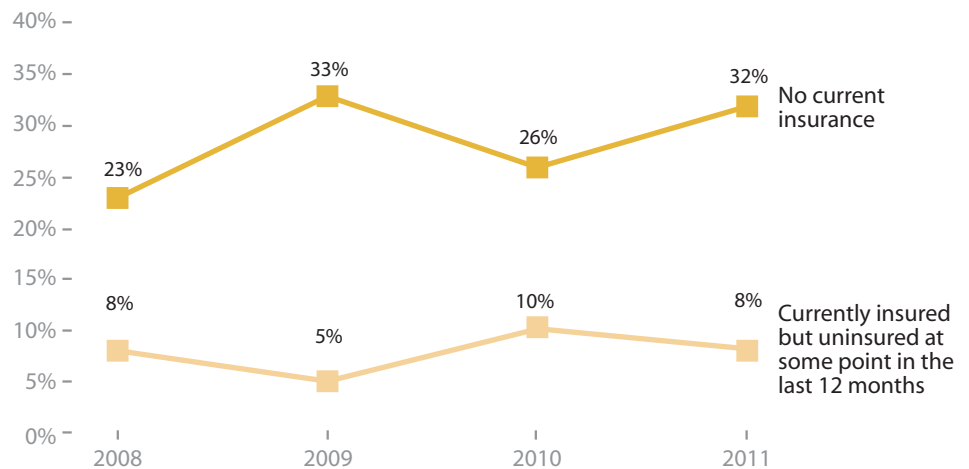
Having health insurance is an important factor in being able to get needed healthcare. The **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** included a number of questions about health insurance coverage to provide a picture of the insurance status of Kentucky adults and their family members. Because nearly all Kentuckians older than 65 (98%) are insured, this summary focuses on Kentuckians ages 18-64.

## 1 in 3 Kentucky adults ages 18-64 uninsured

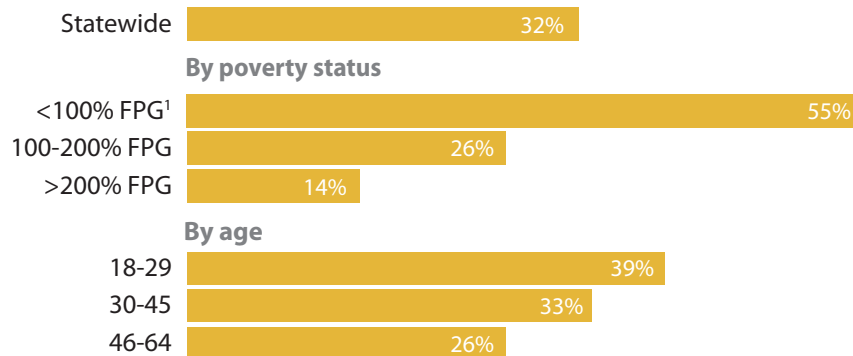
Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) Kentucky adults were uninsured, up from about 1 in 4 (26%) in 2010 but consistent with 2009 findings. In general, as age, education level and income increased the percentage of Kentuckians who were uninsured decreased. This is consistent with previous surveys.

Another factor in being able to get healthcare is how stable a person's health insurance coverage is. A measure of this is whether a person

**Percentage of Kentucky adults ages 18-64 who were uninsured currently or at any time in the last 12 months**



**Kentucky adults ages 18-64 who are currently uninsured**



<sup>1</sup> In 2010, 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) was an annual household income of \$22,050 and 200% FPG was \$44,100, both for a family of 4.

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has been covered continuously for the past 12 months. About 1 in 12 (8%) Kentuckians ages 18-64 who were insured at the time of KHIP had been uninsured at some point in the past 12 months. Therefore, 4 in 10 Kentucky adults ages 18-64 (40%) had been uninsured at some point in the last 12 months, including currently.

### **More than half of low-income adults uninsured**

Kentucky adults with lower household incomes reported significantly higher rates of being currently uninsured. More than half (55%) of adults living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG<sup>1</sup>) reported being uninsured, compared with 14% for those living above 200% FPG.

### **Younger adults more likely to be uninsured**

Nearly 4 in 10 (39%) adults ages 18-29 reported not having health insurance. This is down from 2009 (47%), but consistent with previous KHIPs. More adults ages 18-29 report being uninsured than adults ages 46-64 (26%).

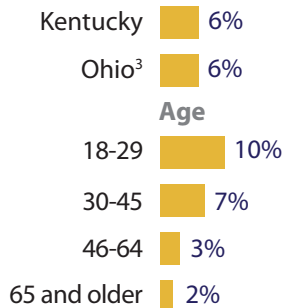
# Misuse of prescription pain relievers in Kentucky

Kentucky ranks sixth in the nation for overdose deaths involving prescription pain relievers; in 2008, its rate was 17.9 deaths per 100,000 residents.<sup>1</sup> These drug overdose deaths correspond to a steep increase in the sale of opioid prescription pain relievers (which include OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet and codeine). Kentucky

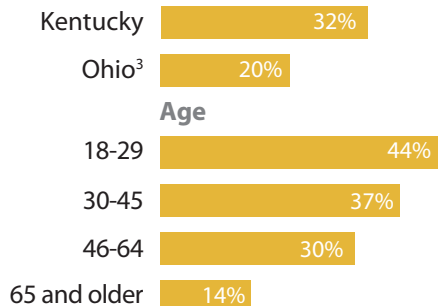
is in the top quarter of states in the rate of prescription pain relievers sold per capita.<sup>2</sup>

To understand prescription pain reliever use in Kentucky, the 2011 **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** asked several questions about prescription pain reliever use and misuse.

## Have you ever used a pain reliever when not prescribed or for the feeling it caused?



## Have any of your family members or friends experienced problems as a result of abusing prescription pain relievers?



## Majority prescribed pain drug in last five years

More than half of Kentucky adults (55%) reported being prescribed a pain reliever that could not be bought over the counter, such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet or codeine, in the last five years. Of these adults, almost 7 in 10 (67%) reported that they had been prescribed the right amount of pills needed to control pain. About 1 in 6 (18%) felt they had been prescribed more pills than were needed.

## One in 3 knows someone who has abused pain drug

Kentucky adults were asked if they had ever, even once, used a

pain reliever such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet or codeine when not prescribed or for the experience or feeling it caused. Only about 1 in 16 (6%) said they had done so. However, almost 1 in 3 Kentuckians (32%) reported that they have friends or family members who have experienced problems as a result of abusing prescription pain relievers, compared with about 1 in 5 Ohioans (20%).<sup>3</sup>

## Young adults more likely to report having misused

Young adults are more likely to have misused a prescription pain reliever. About 1 in 10 Kentuckians ages 18 to 29 (10%) reported ever

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<sup>1</sup> Paulozzi, LJ, Jones, CM, Mack, KA, Rudd, RA. (2011.) Vital Signs: Overdoses of Prescription Opioid Pain Relievers – United States, 1999-2008. MMWR 60(43):1487-1492. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/3llb65s>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP) conducted in July 2011, results available at: [https://www.healthfoundation.org/data\\_publications/ohip.html](https://www.healthfoundation.org/data_publications/ohip.html)

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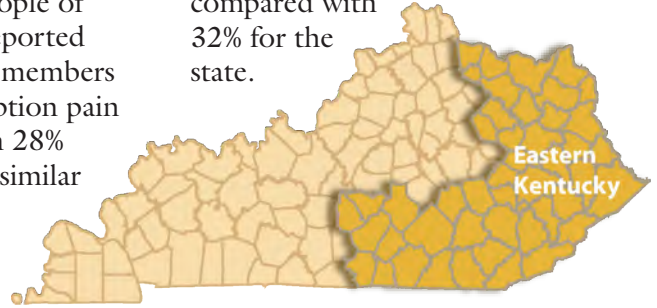
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misusing a prescription pain reliever, compared with only 2% of adults older than 65. Likewise, young adults were more likely to know someone who has experienced problems because of abusing a prescription pain reliever. More than 4 in 10 Kentuckians ages 18 to 29 (44%) reported they have friends or family members who have experienced problems because of abusing prescription pain relievers. Only 14% of adults ages 65 and older have friends or family members who have experienced problems because of abusing prescription pain relievers.

## Appalachians and Eastern Kentuckians at greater risk

About 4 in 10 (39%) people of Appalachian heritage<sup>4</sup> reported having friends or family members who had abused prescription pain relievers, compared with 28% of non-Appalachians. A similar percentage of Eastern Kentucky<sup>5</sup> residents (43%) reported having

friends or family members who had experienced problems as a result of abusing prescription pain relievers, compared with 32% for the state.



<sup>4</sup> Appalachians are adults who were born or had at least one parent born in an Appalachian county, as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

<sup>5</sup> Eastern Kentucky is the 46-county region defined by the Big Sandy, Buffalo Trace, Cumberland Valley, FIVCO, Gateway, Kentucky River and Lake Cumberland Area Development Districts. Most of the counties in Eastern Kentucky have been classified as part of the Appalachian Region by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

# Kentuckians' opinions on a statewide smoke-free law

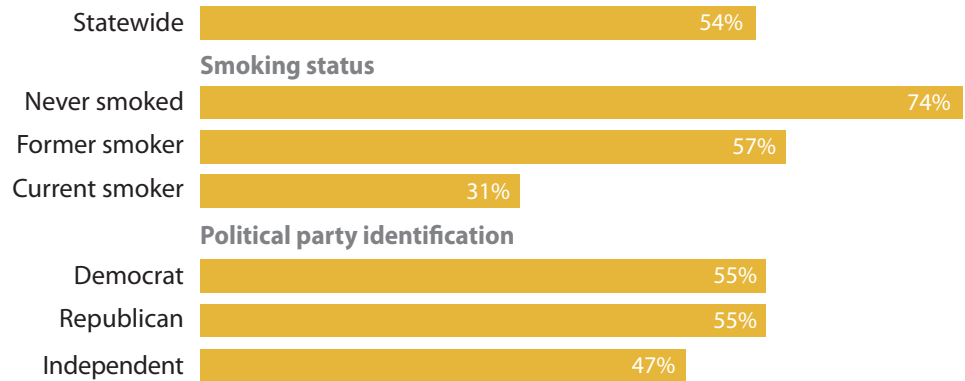
Secondhand smoke exposure poses significant health risks, and smoke-free environments are the only way to fully protect nonsmokers from these hazards.<sup>1</sup> To mitigate these risks, many Kentucky communities have adopted smoke-free policies. Currently, 1 in 3 Kentucky residents is protected by a local smoke-free policy.<sup>2</sup> To protect everyone, the Kentucky legislature is considering a statewide law eliminating smoking in all indoor public places.

To learn what Kentuckians think about this proposed law, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati included a question on the most recent **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2006) *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*.

<sup>2</sup> Kentucky Center for Smoke-Free Policy. (2011) Percent of Kentucky Population Covered by 100% Smoke-free Workplace Laws or Regulations. Retrieved from <http://www.mc.uky.edu/tobacco-policy/Ordinances/Smoke-freeOrdinances.HTM>.

**Would you favor or oppose a state law in Kentucky that would prohibit smoking in most public places, including workplaces, public buildings, offices, restaurants and bars?** Graph presents only those who favor a state law



## Majority of adults favor smoke-free law

More than half of Kentucky adults favored a statewide smoke-free law (54%), while 43% opposed a law, and 4% had no opinion.<sup>3</sup> This is an increase in support from 2010, when Kentuckians were split about the law (48% in favor/48% opposed).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> These percentages do not add to 100% because of rounding.

<sup>4</sup> In 2010, KHIP asked "Would you favor or oppose a statewide smoke-free law in Kentucky?"

Support for the law increases as age, income and level of education increase. Support was higher among women (64%) than men (43%).

## Support stronger among registered voters

Among respondents who were registered to vote, nearly 6 in 10 favored a statewide smoke-free law (58%), while 38% opposed a law and 4% had no opinion. Support

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among registered voters was significantly higher than among non-voters.

Democrats (55%) and Republicans (55%) reported similar levels of support for a statewide smoke-free law. Slightly fewer than half of Independents (47%) supported a law.

## **Highest support among non-smokers**

There is a strong relationship between support for a statewide smoke-free law and whether one smokes. Of those who had never smoked, 3 in 4 favored a smoke-free law (74%). More than half of individuals who had smoked

previously (57%) also supported a law. Nearly 4 in 10 KHIP respondents said they were a current smoker (39%).<sup>5</sup> Of these, just 3 in 10 current smokers (31%) favored a statewide smoke-free law.

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<sup>5</sup> The 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System estimate of adult smokers in Kentucky was only 25%, which was lower than what KHIP found. Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/brfss/](http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/).

# Kentuckians' opinions on the Affordable Care Act

Since it was enacted in March 2010, various parts of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) have taken effect. Other parts of the law will be phased in through 2014.

The Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati asked Kentuckians about the law on the most recent **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**.

## Majority of Kentuckians support healthcare for all

Nearly 9 in 10 Kentuckians (89%) favor providing access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans. Previous KHIPs have found similarly high levels of support. Despite this high level of support for affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans, a large minority of Kentucky adults does not support the ACA.

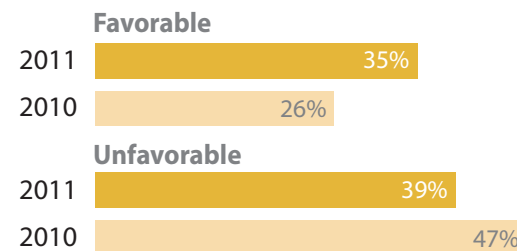
## One-third of Kentuckians favor ACA; support growing

About 1 in 3 Kentucky adults (35%) reported having a generally favorable opinion of the ACA. This

**Regardless of whether you favor or oppose the new healthcare reform law, generally speaking, do you favor or oppose providing access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans? (Graph shows percentage who favor access.)**



**Given what you know about the new health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it? (Percentages do not add to 100% because the response "don't know" is not included.)**



is an increase from 2010, when just 1 in 4 (26%) reported favorable views.

While the percentage of Kentuckians who support the ACA is comparable to national polling results<sup>2</sup>, fewer Kentucky adults oppose the law.

<sup>1</sup> In 2009, KHIP asked "Do you favor or oppose providing access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans?"

About 4 in 10 Kentucky adults (39%) reported having generally unfavorable views of the ACA, compared with more than half (51%) nationally. Another 1 in 4 Kentucky adults (27%) expressed no opinion about the law.

Political affiliation made a difference in who favored the law. Fewer than 2 in 10 Republican respondents (18%) reported a generally favorable view of the ACA, compared with nearly half of Democratic respondents (47%) and 4 in 10 Independents (38%).

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<sup>2</sup> The national Kaiser Health Tracking Poll, conducted at the same time as KHIP, found 34% favorable, 51% unfavorable, 15% don't know. Results available at: <http://tinyurl.com/63eytaw>.

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## Most components of the law increase support

The majority of Kentuckians said that elements of the law that were recently phased in made them feel more favorable toward the law. Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) felt more favorable because of free preventive services for seniors. About 2 in 3 felt more favorable because of increased accountability for insurance companies (69%) and grants to support workplace wellness programs (63%).

Views were mixed regarding a part of the ACA that will require chain restaurants to post calorie and nutritional information for menu items. About 4 in 10 felt more favorable because of this (41%), but nearly half (47%) said it doesn't make a difference.

## Individual mandate decreases support

The ACA requires that nearly all Americans obtain health insurance by 2014 or else pay a fine. Just 1 in 5 respondents (20%) favored this part of the law, known as the individual mandate, while 3 in 4 opposed it (77%).

### Percentage of Kentuckians who feel **more favorable** toward the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) because it includes the following elements:

Free preventive and screening services, such as mammograms and colonoscopies, and annual wellness check-ups for Medicare recipients

79%

Requiring insurance companies to spend between 80 and 85 cents of every healthcare dollar collected on patient care instead of administrative expenses, salaries and marketing

69%

Providing funding to small employers that establish wellness programs in the workplace

63%

Requiring chain restaurants to post calorie and nutritional information for their standard menu items

41%

### Percentage of Kentuckians who **favor** the part of the health reform law that will require nearly all Americans to have health insurance:

20%

# Where do Kentuckians get their health insurance?

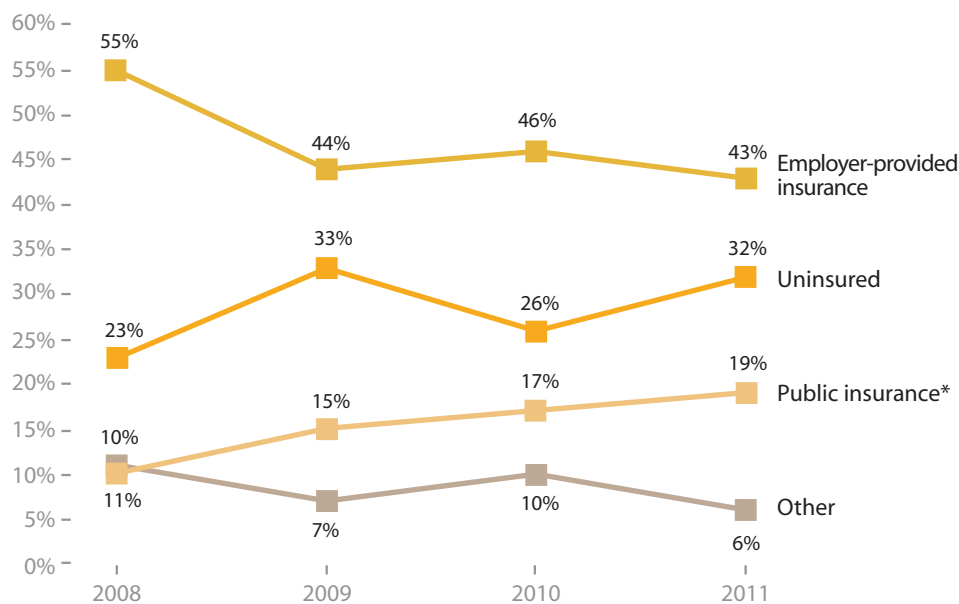
Like most states, Kentucky has seen a shift in whether its residents have health insurance and if so, where they obtain that insurance. Across the nation the number of working-age adults who are uninsured has increased. There has also been a noticeable reduction in employer-provided insurance and an accompanying shift to public insurance. Kentucky has also experienced this trend.

**The Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** included a number of questions about health insurance coverage to provide a picture of the insurance status of Kentuckians and their family members. Because most adults over age 65 (98%) are insured, this analysis will focus on adults ages 18-64.

## More working-age adults uninsured and on public insurance

Nearly one-third of Kentucky adults ages 18-64 (32%) are currently uninsured. This is up from 1 in 5 (23%) just four years ago (2008).

**Type of insurance coverage for Kentucky adults ages 18-64** (Percentages do not add to 100% because responses from the "other/don't know" category are not shown)



\* Medicare, Medicaid, military benefits and combinations of the three.

More working-age adults are receiving public insurance from Medicare, Medicaid, military insurance or some combination of the three. Currently, 2 in 10 Kentucky adults ages 18-64 (19%) are covered by some form of public insurance, up from 1 in 10 adults ages 18-64 (10%) in 2008.

## Fewer get insurance from employers

In 2008, more than half (55%) of Kentucky adults got their health insurance through their employer or their spouse's employer. In 2011, that percentage was down to 4 in 10 (43%).

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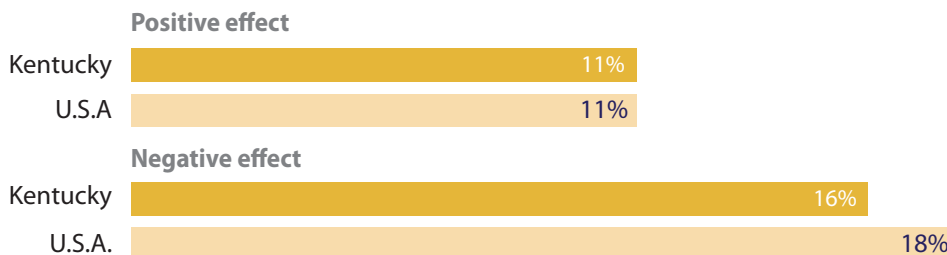
# Has the Affordable Care Act affected Kentuckians?

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), which became law in March 2010, is being gradually phased in through 2014. Some parts of the law designed to protect consumers have already taken effect:

- Children can stay on their parents' insurance until age 26;
- The full cost of preventive services is covered, with no co-payments;
- The Medicare doughnut hole – a coverage gap in which Medicare recipients pay the full cost of prescription drugs – is slowly being closed;
- Some prescription drug costs have been reduced;
- Children with pre-existing conditions cannot be denied insurance, and;
- Some states, including Kentucky, have created high-risk pools to provide more affordable health insurance to people with pre-existing conditions.

Have Kentuckians experienced any changes because of the ACA? To find out, the 2011 **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** asked Kentucky adults whether they or their families have been affected by the law.

## Adults reporting the Affordable Care Act had an effect on them or their family<sup>1</sup>



## Nearly 3 in 10 Kentuckians already reporting changes because of ACA

When asked about the ACA's impact on them and their families, nearly 2 in 10 Kentucky adults (16%) said the law had negatively affected them, while 1 in 10 said they had been positively affected (11%). More than 6 in 10 said the law had not affected them or their family (64%). An additional 1 in 10 said they didn't know if the law had affected them (8%) or the law affected them both positively and negatively (1%).

National results are similar, with nearly 2 in 10 (18%) reporting that they or their family have been

negatively affected by the health reform law (18%) and 1 in 10 (11%) reporting that they or their families had personally benefited from the health reform law (11%).<sup>1</sup>

## Positive, negative perception varies by political party

More Democrats (14%) than Republicans (7%) in Kentucky reported positive benefits from the law, while more Republicans (20%) than Democrats (10%) reported negative effects.

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<sup>1</sup> National results are from the November 2011 Kaiser Health Tracking Poll, available at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8259.cfm>. Question wording differed slightly between KHIP and the Kaiser Health Tracking Poll.

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## Perceived effects center on cost and coverage

Whether Kentuckians reported being positively or negatively affected by the ACA, the reasons they believe they were affected were related to cost and health insurance issues.

The top reasons Kentuckians reported being negatively affected by the law:

- Increased out-of-pocket, insurance or medication costs (41%)
- Reduced quality of care, including reduced insurance coverage and increased wait times (19%)

The top reasons Kentuckians reported being positively affected by the law:

- Lowered out-of-pocket, insurance or medication costs (38%)
- Expanded coverage for children, pre-existing conditions and services that were not previously covered (27%)
- Health reform has generally helped me or others (17%)

# What Kentuckians think about childhood obesity

Children who are overweight or obese are at an increased risk for health problems now and when they reach adulthood. According to a 2007 study, 37% of Kentucky children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese, compared with 32% of children ages 10-17 across the nation.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky has the fourth highest rate of childhood obesity and overweight in the U.S.

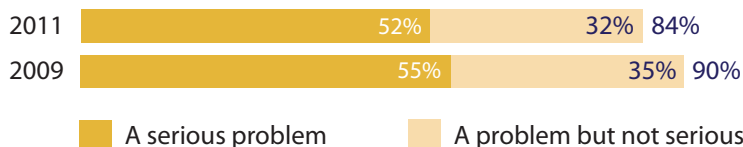
To learn what Kentuckians think about this important health issue, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati included questions about childhood obesity on the latest **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**.

## Most think childhood obesity is a serious problem

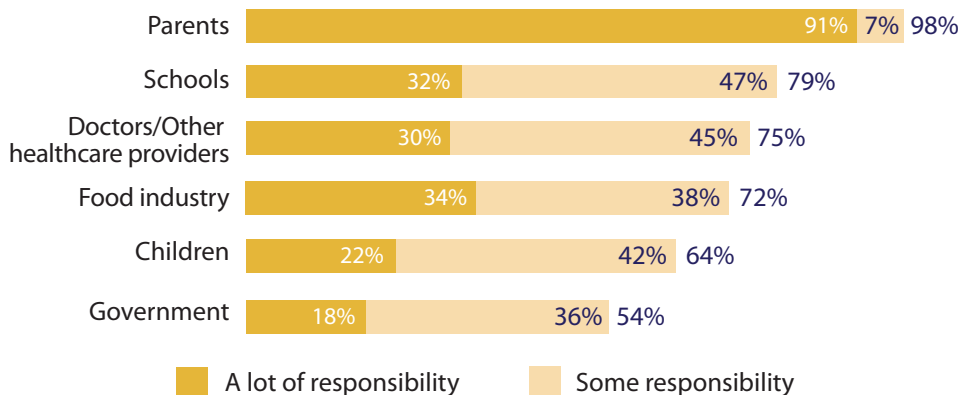
More than half of Kentucky adults (52%) said that childhood obesity was a serious problem in Kentucky. An additional 1 in 3 said that

<sup>1</sup> Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2007 National Survey of Children's Health, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health Available at [www.childhealthdata.org](http://www.childhealthdata.org). Children with a body mass index (BMI) between the 85th and 95th percentiles were classified as overweight; those with a BMI at or above the 95th percentile were classified as obese.

**Some people say childhood obesity is a problem in Kentucky, while others do not. Would you say childhood obesity is a serious problem, a problem but not serious, or not a problem?** (Graph presents only those who said it was a serious problem or a problem but not serious.)



**How much responsibility does each of the following have in addressing the problem of childhood obesity in Kentucky?** (Asked only of those who said childhood obesity was a problem.)



childhood obesity was a problem, but not serious (32%). Though 84% of Kentucky adults view childhood obesity as a problem, this is a smaller percentage than in the past. On the 2009 KHIP, 9 in 10 Kentuckians (90%) reported that childhood obesity was either a serious problem, or a problem, but not serious.

## Parents considered most responsible for addressing childhood obesity

Respondents were asked who they felt had the most responsibility for addressing the problem of

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childhood obesity. More than 8 out of 10 reported that parents had the most responsibility (84%).

### **Others also seen as bearing responsibility**

While parents were viewed as having the most responsibility for addressing childhood obesity, a majority of respondents indicated that other parties also bear responsibility.

Nearly all respondents (98%) said parents have some or a lot of responsibility for addressing childhood obesity. About 8 in 10 respondents (79%) said schools had some or a lot of responsibility. Respondents also said doctors and other healthcare providers (75%), the food industry (72%), children themselves (64%) and the government (54%) have some or a lot of responsibility for addressing childhood obesity.

### **Lifestyle changes most often cited to address childhood obesity**

When asked what should be done to address the childhood obesity problem in Kentucky, lifestyle changes were the most common recommendations. Respondents most often suggested teaching children about healthy eating (27%), encouraging exercise (12%), curtailing junk food (11%) and monitoring portion sizes (11%).

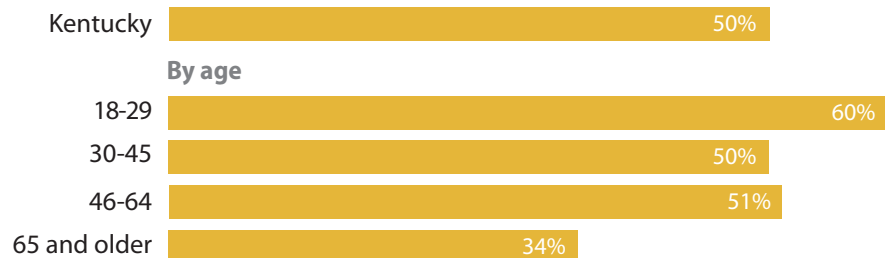
# Kentuckians' access to mental health services

Mental health issues, including depression, are a significant public health issue in Kentucky. In the past year, 1 in 5 adults (20%) in the United States experienced mental illness.<sup>1</sup> When people experience depression or other mental health issues, it is important that they be able to access the treatment and support services they need. To learn if Kentuckians know how to get help when they need it, the **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** included several questions about access to mental health treatment services.

## Perceived need for treatment is high

One-half of Kentucky adults (50%) reported a friend or family member had *ever* behaved in a way that made them think that friend or family member had a serious problem with depression. Younger adults were more likely to have known someone they perceived

### Has a family member or friend ever behaved in a way that made you think they had a serious problem with depression?



### Suppose a family member or friend asked you for help finding services or treatment for depression. Would you know who to contact to help them find services or treatment? (Graph presents those who said "yes.")



as depressed. Among adults ages 18-29, 6 in 10 (60%) reported having perceived a friend or family member as depressed, compared with just 1 in 3 adults 65 and older (34%).

While perceived depression is not the same as a clinical diagnosis, these results suggest that many Kentuckians need access to mental health treatment services.

## Most report knowing where to get help

If a friend or family member asked for help finding services or treatment for depression, 6 in 10 Kentucky adults (62%) reported they would know who to contact. Women (66%) were more likely than men (58%) to report knowing where to get help for a friend.

**Continued on back**

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2012.) Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings. Retrieved from [www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10MH\\_Findings/2k10MHRResults.pdf](http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10MH_Findings/2k10MHRResults.pdf)

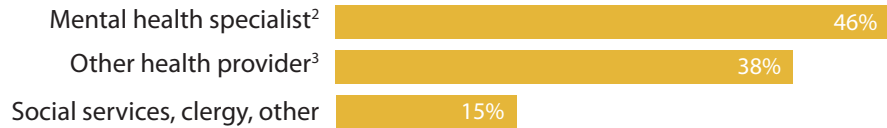
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## Few turn to mental health specialists for help

Of those who said they knew where to get help for a friend or family member who was depressed, KHIP asked where they would get that help. Fewer than half (46%) of those who knew where to get help would tell their friend or family member to contact a mental health specialist.<sup>2</sup> Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) would tell

**Suppose a family member or friend asked you for help finding treatment services for depression. Who would you tell them to contact?** (Asked only of those who said they knew who to contact.)



their friend to contact another healthcare provider<sup>3</sup>, including a hospital or primary care physician, and 15% would turn to social services, clergy, or another source.

<sup>2</sup> Responses in this category included mental health hospitals and clinics, psychiatrists, psychologists or other mental health professionals.

<sup>3</sup> Responses in this category included doctor or primary care physician, hospital, local health department, insurance provider and other providers not specified as mental health.



# The link between poverty and health in Kentucky

Since 2008, the **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** has been tracking health opinions and the health status of adults in the state. An important indicator of well-being in the state is overall health status.

KHIP asks “Would you say that, in general, your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?”

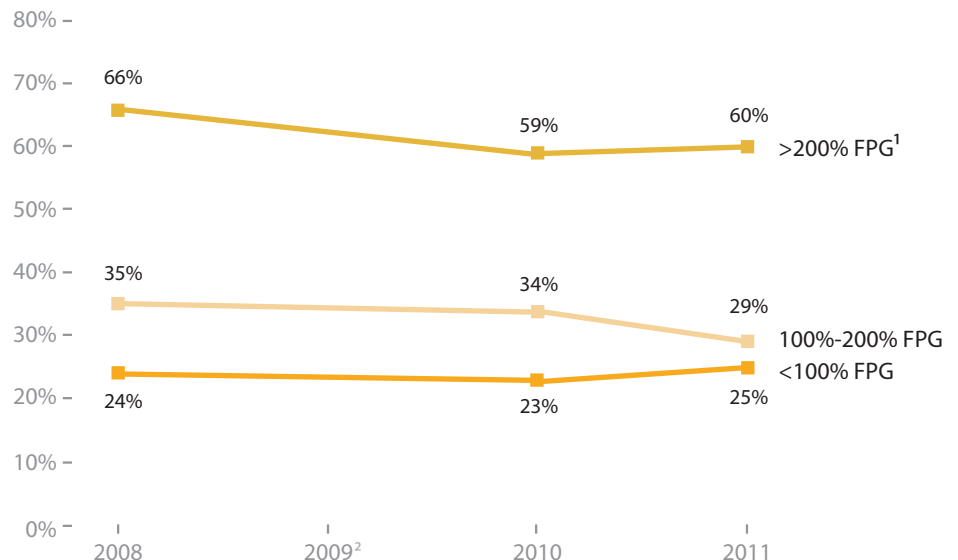
## Kentuckians with higher incomes report better health

Since KHIP began, people with higher incomes have consistently reported better health status. About 6 in 10 Kentuckians living above 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG)<sup>1</sup> reported being in “excellent” or “very good” health since 2008. This compares with 2 in 10 Kentuckians living below 100% FPG and about 3 in 10 living between 100% and 200% FPG.

## More people living in poverty

While health status for each income category has remained constant, the number of people in each category has not. Since 2008, the percentage

**Kentucky adults reporting “excellent” or “very good” health, by household income, 2008-2011**



<sup>2</sup> The question “Would you say that in general your health is excellent, very good, fair or poor?” was not asked on the 2009 KHIP.

of adults living below 100% FPG has been steadily increasing from about 1 in 5 (19%) in 2008 to more than 1 in 3 (34%) in 2011. We estimate that since 2008 an additional 637,000 Kentucky adults have fallen below the poverty line.

The increase in poverty is of concern to anyone working to improve the health of Kentuckians. Research has shown a strong link between higher income and better health. As poverty has increased in Kentucky the percentage of adults reporting their health as excellent or very good has dropped from almost half (49%) in 2008 to just more than 4 in 10 (42%) in 2011.

<sup>1</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2010 was an annual household income of \$22,050 and 200% FPG was \$44,100, both for a family of 4.

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# Rates of caregiving among Kentucky adults

As our population ages, more Kentuckians need assistance with everyday tasks. Often this assistance comes from an unpaid caregiver such as a spouse, family member or friend. The demands of caregiving mean that without proper social supports, this loving act may have a negative impact on the health and well-being of caregivers.<sup>1</sup>

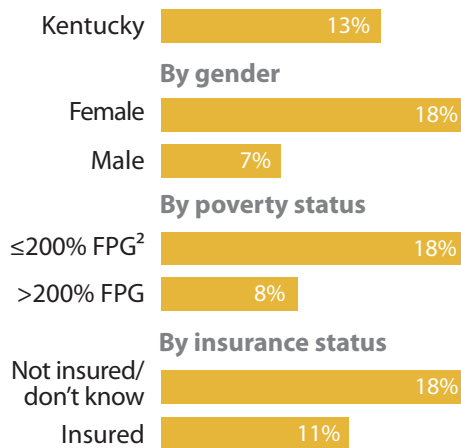
The most recent **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** asked about assistance provided to family members who are chronically ill or disabled and are no longer able to care for themselves.

## 1 in 8 Kentucky adults are caregivers

About 1 in 8 Kentucky adults (13%) reported that they are responsible for the care of family members who are chronically ill or disabled and are no longer able to care for themselves. Women (18%) were more likely to report being caregivers than men (7%).

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Caregiving: A Public Health Priority. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/aging/caregiving/index.htm>

### Are you responsible for the care of a member of your family who is chronically ill or disabled and no longer able to care for themselves?



## Low-income, uninsured more likely to be caregivers

Nearly 1 in 5 people (18%) living at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG<sup>2</sup>) report having a caregiving role, compared with fewer than 1 in 10 of those living above 200% FPG (8%).

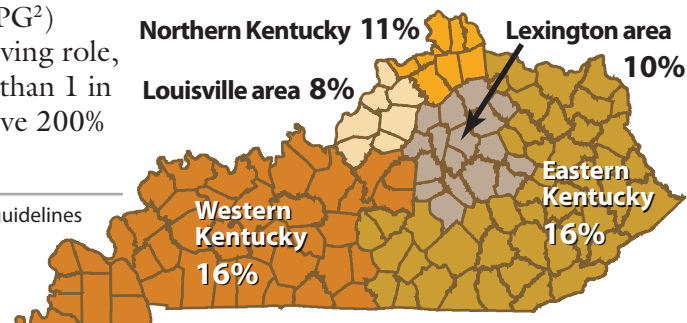
<sup>2</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2010 was an annual household income of \$22,050 and 200% FPG was \$44,100, both for a family of 4.

Caring for a family member may make it difficult to hold a full-time job, leaving caregivers at risk of being without health insurance.<sup>3</sup> Nearly 1 in 5 uninsured Kentuckians (18%) report caring for a chronically ill or disabled family member, compared with 1 in 10 (11%) of those with health insurance.

## Caregiving varies by region

Kentucky adults were more likely to report being caregivers in Eastern and Western Kentucky (both 16%) than in the central part of the state. Louisville respondents were the least likely to report having a caregiving role, with just 8% providing such assistance.

<sup>3</sup> Ho A, Collins SR, Davis K and Doty MM. (2005) A Look at Working-Age Caregivers' Roles, Health Concerns, and Need for Support. The Commonwealth Fund Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/8xv9b3a>



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# Disposal of prescription pain relievers in Kentucky

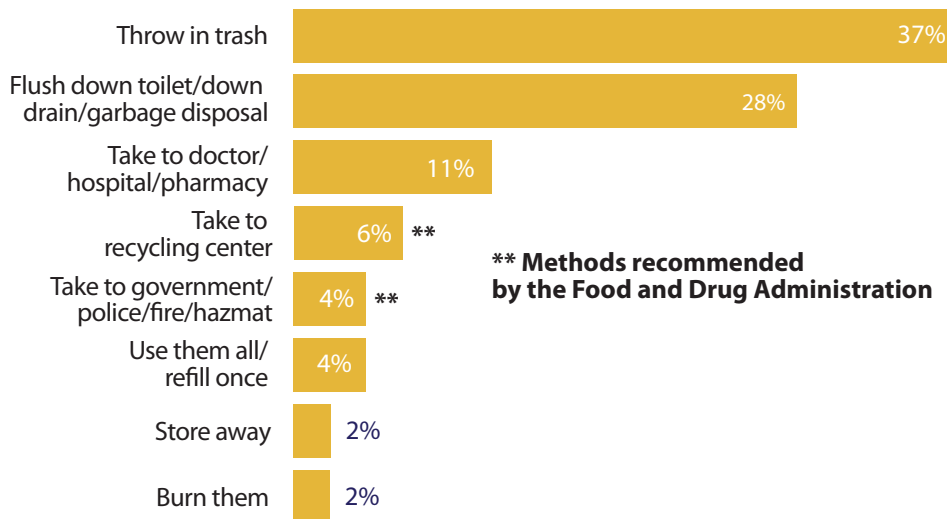
The 2011 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)* estimates that more than 1 million Kentucky adults have family members or friends who have experienced problems as a result of abusing opioid prescription pain relievers such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet, or codeine.

Kentucky ranks sixth in the nation for overdose deaths involving prescription pain relievers.<sup>1</sup> These drug overdose deaths correspond to a steep increase in the sales of opioid pain relievers. Kentucky is in the top quarter of states in the rate of prescription pain relievers sold per capita.<sup>2</sup>

Kentuckians may not know that keeping unused prescription drugs in a medicine cabinet raises the risk of misuse and abuse of those drugs. In addition, many Kentuckians are not disposing of their drugs properly.

<sup>1</sup> Paulozzi, LJ, Jones, CM, Mack, KA, Rudd, RA. (2011.) Vital Signs: Overdoses of Prescription Opioid Pain Relievers – United States, 1999-2008. MMWR 60(43):1487-1492. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/3llb65s>.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## How do you typically dispose of unused or expired prescription medications?\*



**\*\* Methods recommended by the Food and Drug Administration**

\* Does not add to 100% because the responses "other," "do not use medications" and "don't know" were not included

To understand what happens to unused and expired prescription drugs, KHIP asked about prescription drug disposal methods in Kentucky.

## Most Kentucky adults dispose of prescription drugs in unsafe ways

More than 6 in 10 Kentucky adults (65%) dispose of prescriptions drugs by throwing them away or flushing them down the drainage system. This

is a public safety and public health issue. Chemicals from wastewater find their way into the water supply. These chemicals can harm people and wildlife.

## Take-back programs the safest disposal method

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends the use of medicine take-back programs as the safest way to remove expired,

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unwanted, or unused medicines from the home and to reduce the chance of accidental poisonings and overdoses. Just 1 in 10 Kentucky adults (10%) dispose of prescription drugs in a manner that complies with FDA recommendations.

The United States Drug Enforcement Administration

(DEA) launched the first National Prescription Drug Take Back Day in September 2010. The events are held twice a year, in fall and spring. The next National Drug Take Back Day will be held April 28, 2012. This service is free and anonymous.

To find a “take-back” location near you and to learn dates of future

take-back events, visit the DEA website at [http://www.dea.gov/diversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/index.html](http://www.dea.gov/diversion/usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html).

If you miss the April 28 take-back day, you can return unused or expired prescription drugs to a pharmacy, which will properly dispose of them in the safest way for a small fee.

# Ownership and storage of firearms in Kentucky

In 2008, 576 Kentuckians died because of injury by firearms.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky was 16th in the nation in firearm deaths at 13.3 per 100,000 people, compared with 10.3 deaths per 100,000 for the nation.<sup>2</sup> Firearms that are not properly handled and stored can pose a significant threat to the health of adults and children.

To learn about firearm ownership and storage habits among Kentuckians, the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky included questions about firearms on the latest **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**.

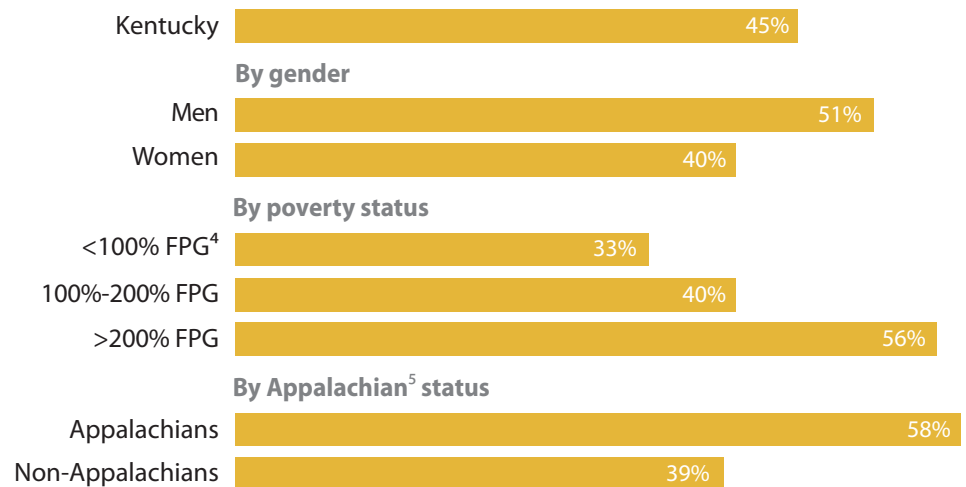
## Almost half report firearm around home, some loaded and unlocked

More than 4 in 10 Kentucky adults (45%) reported keeping firearms around their home, including in

<sup>1</sup> This includes accidental discharge of a firearm, intentional self-harm by a firearm, assault by a firearm, and legal intervention involving firearm discharge.

<sup>2</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics, National Vital Statistics Report Volume 59, Number 10, December 2011, Table 19. Retrieved Jan. 30, 2012, from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59\\_10.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59_10.pdf).

### Are any firearms kept in or around your home?<sup>3</sup>



a garage, outdoor storage area or motor vehicle.<sup>3</sup> This means that an estimated 750,000 Kentucky homes have firearms. More than 3 in 10 adults (35%) with firearms in or around their home keep their guns loaded. This means an estimated 250,000 Kentucky homes have loaded firearms. One-fifth of adults

(20%) with firearms in or around their home keep their guns unlocked as well as loaded. This means an estimated 148,000 Kentucky homes have loaded and unlocked firearms.

## More than 4 in 10 homes with firearms have children present; some of the firearms are loaded and unlocked

Children are present in more than 4 in 10 homes (45%) that have firearms. This means an estimated 244,000 homes with children

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younger than 18 have firearms present. In addition, children are present in 44% of homes that have loaded firearms and 39% of homes that have loaded and unlocked firearms.

### Men, those with higher incomes, Appalachians more likely to report firearms around home

Men (51%) were more likely to report having a firearm around their home than women (40%). The presence of firearms increased as income increased. One-third of

adults (33%) living below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG)<sup>4</sup> reported a firearm around their home, compared with nearly 6 in 10 adults (56%) living above 200% FPG. Nearly 6 in 10 adults (58%) of Appalachian heritage<sup>5</sup> report firearms around their home, compared with nearly 4 in 10 non-Appalachians (39%).

<sup>4</sup> 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2010 was an annual household income of \$22,050 and 200% FPG was \$44,100, both for a family of 4.

<sup>5</sup> Appalachians are adults who were born or had at least one parent born in an Appalachian county, as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

### Large urban areas report fewer firearms around home

More than half of Kentuckians living in Eastern Kentucky (57%) and Western Kentucky (51%) reported keeping a firearm in their home. That compares with 39% in the Lexington area, 37% in Northern Kentucky and 32% in the Louisville area.

#### Are any firearms kept in or around your home? (Map shows only the "yes" responses.)

