

Spotlight on Western Kentucky

2013 KENTUCKY HEALTH ISSUES POLL

July 2014 | Results from the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Interact for Health

About the Kentucky Health Issues Poll

In Fall 2013, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Interact for Health (formerly The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati) sponsored the Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP), a telephone survey to find out what Kentuckians think about various health issues that impact our communities, our state, and our nation. This report presents the views expressed by respondents from the Western Kentucky Region. About 27% of Kentuckians live in this 42-county region (please see “About the Kentucky Health Issues Poll” on page 12 for the list of counties).

In general, responses from Western Kentucky residents were comparable to the state as a whole. Like the statewide results, in Western Kentucky:

- The majority of adults favored a statewide, smoke-free law (65%)
- The majority of adults favored tobacco free policies on school campuses (85%)
- The majority of adults favored new school nutrition standards (82%)
- The majority of adults favored requiring schools to provide 30 minutes a day of physical activity to students (98%)
- The majority say it is easy to purchase healthy foods in their neighborhood (79%)
- Only about 2 in 10 rate the conditions of their neighborhood sidewalks and shoulders as “excellent” or “very good” (19%)
- More than 4 in 10 report that their neighborhood was very safe to walk, jog, or bike (42%)
- The majority held a generally unfavorable opinion about the Affordable Care Act (51%)
- The majority favored the decision to expand Medicaid in Kentucky (74%)
- More than 7 in 10 had heard something about Kentucky’s new health insurance marketplace called kynect (73%)
- About 1 in 4 report eating the recommended daily amounts of fruits and vegetables (26%)

There was one difference in Western Kentucky as compared to the rest of the state. Adult smokers in Western Kentucky were **less likely** to:

- Have been offered help or counseling by a doctor or nurse to stop smoking



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In 95 out of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to ±2.5% and Western Kentucky estimates to ±5.6%. There are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias.

Healthy Environments

Where we live affects our health. Health policies in locations where Kentuckians live, work, and play can impact the number of residents with tobacco-free air, access to healthier foods, and opportunities for safe and convenient physical activity. To measure opinion on these matters, KHIP asked questions about some current health policy issues.

Statewide Smoke-free Law

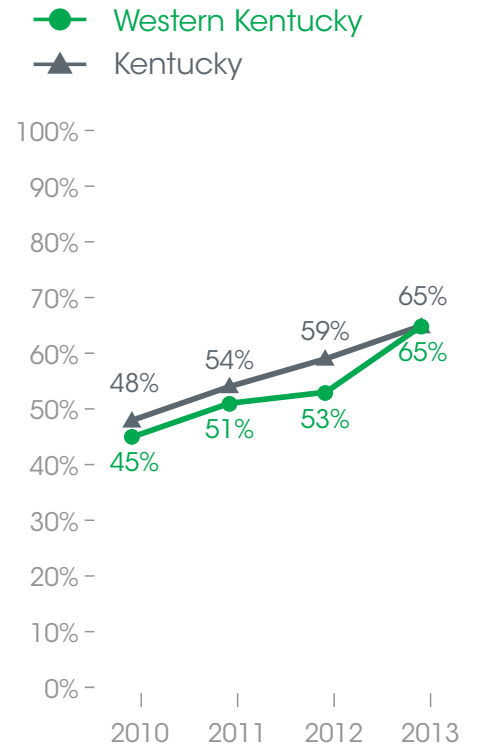
Secondhand smoke poses serious health risks, and smoke-free environments are the only way to fully protect nonsmokers from these hazards.¹ To reduce these risks, many states and communities have adopted smoke-free policies. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 26 states and the District of Columbia have adopted comprehensive smoke-free laws.² The laws cover all workplaces, including bars and restaurants. This year the Kentucky legislature considered a statewide law eliminating smoking in all indoor public places but it did not get to a vote in the House.

In 2010, KHIP began asking Kentuckians their opinions on a statewide smoke-free law. For the state as a whole, support for this law has risen from 48% in 2010³ to 65% in 2013.

In Western Kentucky, more than 6 in 10 (65%) adults favored a statewide smoke-free law, while 30% opposed a law, and 5% had no opinion. This is statistically different than the results from 2012 and an increase in support from 2010, when just 45% of Western Kentucky adults favored a statewide law. Support for the law in Western Kentucky is the same as results for the state.

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.)

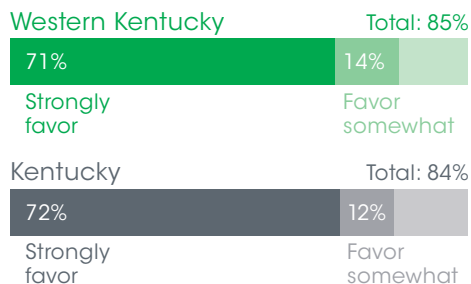


1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006). *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/>

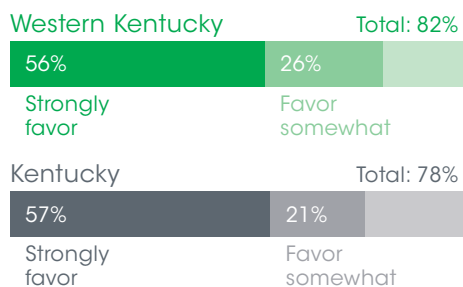
2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013). *State Smoke-free Indoor Air Fact Sheet*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. Retrieved from <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/statesystem/default/Publications.aspx>

3 In 2010, KHIP asked "Would you favor or oppose a statewide, smoke-free law in Kentucky?"

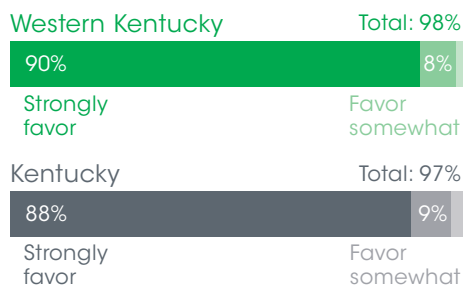
Favor tobacco-free campus policies⁶



Favor USDA new school nutrition standards⁷



Favor requiring schools to provide 30 minutes a day of physical activity to students⁸



Tobacco-free School Campuses

Many school districts have decided to go tobacco-free. Thirty-three Kentucky school districts have adopted 100% Tobacco Free Campus policies.⁴ These policies prohibit tobacco use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, inside Board-owned buildings or vehicles, on school-owned property, and during school-related student trips.

More than 8 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (85%) favor tobacco-free campus policies. This is similar to results for the state as a whole.

School Nutrition

Many Kentucky school districts are working with the new United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for nutrition, developing Farm to School programs with local farmers, and bringing fresh fruit and vegetable programs to the cafeterias.

For the state as a whole, nearly 8 in 10 Kentucky adults (78%) favored the new USDA school nutrition standards for meals served to students. Likewise, in Western Kentucky 8 in 10 adults (82%) favored these school nutrition standards.

School Physical Activity

The United States Department of Health and Human Services recommends children and adolescents get 60 minutes of physical activity daily.⁵ KHIP asked Kentucky adults their opinions about requiring schools to provide 30 minutes a day of physical activity to students.

Statewide, more than 9 in 10 Kentucky adults (97%) favored a policy requiring physical activity for students. In Western Kentucky, over 9 in 10 adults (98%) favored this policy.

4 The complete list of Kentucky school districts with 100% Tobacco Free Schools, updated 05/27/14, is available at <http://www.tobaccofreeschoolsky.org/ky-schools.html>.

5 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2012). Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report: Strategies to Increase Physical Activity among Youth. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from www.health.gov/paguidelines/midcourse/pag-mid-course-report-final.pdf

6 KHIP asked "And ... research indicates that the younger a person is when they first try tobacco, the more susceptible they are to becoming addicted. To help keep kids from smoking, some school systems are adopting tobacco-free campus policies that would prohibit the use of tobacco by students, staff, parents or guests while they are on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, such as field trips and sporting events. Would you favor or oppose schools adopting tobacco-free campus policies in your community?"

7 KHIP asked, "Recently the USDA adopted new school nutrition standards for meals served to students. These standards include things like reducing the amount of salt and saturated fats in meals, offer more whole grain food choices, establish age-based calorie limits and portion sizes, and require students to select a fruit or vegetable in their meal offerings. Would you say that you favor or oppose these new school nutrition standards?"

8 KHIP asked, "Do you favor or oppose requiring schools to provide 30 minutes a day of physical activity to students?"

Access to Healthy Foods

Like schools, conditions in our neighborhoods can make the healthy choice the easy choice. KHIP asked Kentucky adults to agree or disagree with the statement, “It is easy to purchase healthy foods in my neighborhood such as whole grain foods, low fat options, and fruits and vegetables.”

More than 8 in 10 of Kentucky adults (81%) agreed that they had easy access to healthy foods in their neighborhoods.

For Western Kentucky, almost 8 in 10 adults (79%) agreed that they had easy access to healthy foods. This is similar to results from the state as a whole.

Neighborhood Conditions

Access to good quality shoulders or sidewalks in a safe neighborhood can influence physical activity levels of residents. To assess neighborhood conditions and physical activity, KHIP asked Kentuckians to rate their neighborhood environments.

In Western Kentucky, nearly 1 in 5 adults (19%) rated the condition of neighborhood sidewalks and shoulders as “excellent” or “very good.” This is lower but not significantly different than results for the state where about 1 in 4 (26%) reported similar conditions.

Nearly 5 in 10 Kentucky adults (46%) reported their neighborhood as very safe to walk, jog, or bike. In Western Kentucky, 4 in 10 (42%) said their neighborhood was very safe. This was similar to results for the state as a whole.

How safe is it to walk, jog or bike in your neighborhood very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or not safe at all?

(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

Very safe

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Somewhat unsafe

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Somewhat safe

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Not safe at all

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



It is easy to purchase healthy foods in my neighborhood such as whole grain foods, low fat options, and fruits and vegetables.

(Percentages do not add to 100% because the response “don’t know” is not included.)

Agree

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Disagree

Western Kentucky



Kentucky

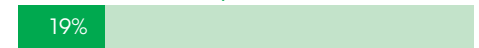


How would you rate the condition of sidewalks and shoulders in your neighborhood?

(Percentages do not add to 100% because the response “don’t know” is not included.)

Excellent/Very good

Western Kentucky



Kentucky

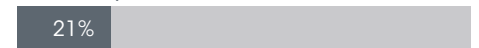


Good

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Fair/Poor

Western Kentucky



Kentucky

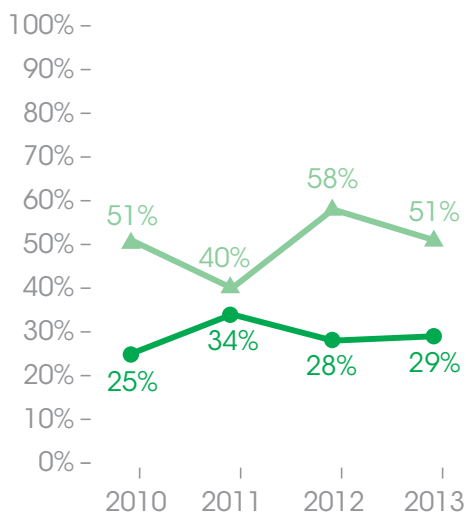


Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

(Percentages do not add to 100% because the response "don't know" is not included.)

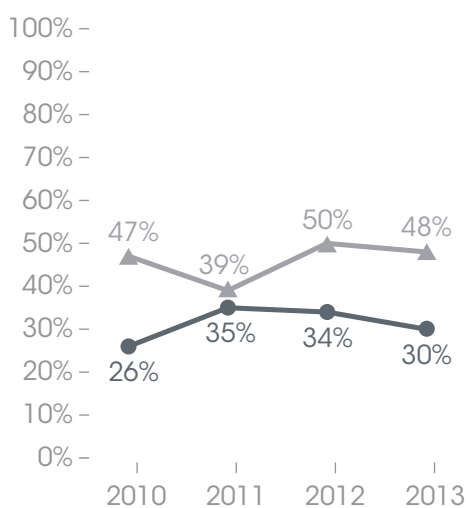
Western Kentucky

- Favorable
- ▲ Unfavorable



Kentucky

- Favorable
- ▲ Unfavorable



Health Policy

The healthcare system in the U.S. is undergoing change. KHIP asked Kentuckians their opinions on some of these changes.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

KHIP has tracked Kentuckians' views about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) since it became law in March 2010. In June 2012, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the ACA, but it remains the subject of debate. In October 2013, kynect, Kentucky's online health benefit exchange marketplace under the ACA, opened for enrollment. KHIP asked Kentuckians about their experience with the ACA and its impact on their families.

Opinions about the Affordable Care Act

Only 3 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (34%) reported having enough information about the ACA to understand how it would affect them personally.⁹ This is not significantly different than responses from the state as a whole (40%) and consistent with 2012 results.

Despite this need for more information about the law, about 3 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (29%) reported having a generally favorable opinion of the ACA, while more than 5 in 10 had a generally unfavorable opinion of it (51%). The Western Kentucky respondents reported similar opinions about the Affordable Care Act as compared to the state and the nation.¹⁰



⁹ KHIP asked, "As you may know, a health reform bill called the Affordable Care Act was signed into law in 2010. Do you feel you have enough information about the health reform law to understand how it will impact you personally, or not?"

¹⁰ National results from the Kaiser Health Tracking Poll (November 2013): favorable 33%, unfavorable 49%. Retrieved from <http://kff.org/health-reform/poll-finding/kaiser-health-tracking-poll-november-2013>

Medicaid expansion

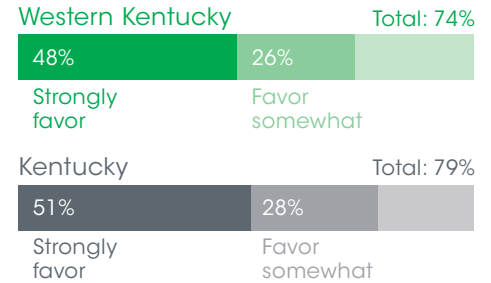
Medicaid was originally created to provide healthcare to people who have low incomes. Historically, Medicaid has focused on providing coverage for children, parents, and pregnant women as well as the blind, aged, and disabled. A major component of the ACA is new federal funding for states to increase Medicaid eligibility to 138% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) for all state residents. Kentucky decided to expand Medicaid eligibility and coverage began January 1, 2014.

Nearly 3 in 4 Western Kentucky adults (74%) favored Kentucky’s decision to expand Medicaid to cover more low-income people. Nine in 10 Western Kentucky adults (89%) said it was important to them that Kentucky Medicaid provides healthcare coverage to low-income individuals.

Views in Western Kentucky on Medicaid expansion were similar to those reported for the state as a whole.

Do you favor or oppose Kentucky’s decision to expand Medicaid to cover more low-income people?

(Graph includes only those who favor the decision.)



kynect, Kentucky’s Healthcare Connection

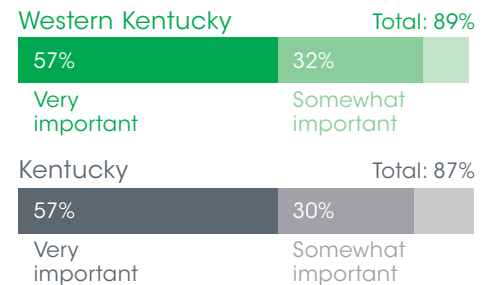
At kynect, Kentuckians can learn whether they are eligible for Medicaid and the Kentucky Children’s Health Insurance Program (KCHIP), shop for individual and small business insurance plans, and learn whether they are eligible for health payment assistance and tax credits. Uninsured Kentuckians with incomes at or below 138% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines are eligible for Medicaid and can access coverage through kynect. In addition, people who are not insured through their employers can buy individual plans on kynect. Kentucky’s smooth launch of kynect was lauded while other states and the federal exchanges experienced significant problems.

The first open enrollment period ended March 31, 2014, and saw 413,410 Kentuckians enroll in healthcare coverage through kynect. To date, Kentucky is the only Southern state to set up its own state-run healthcare exchange as part of the Affordable Care Act.

In Western Kentucky, more than 2 in 10 adults (23%) said they had heard a lot about the new health insurance marketplace called kynect and nearly 5 in 10 (49%) had heard some or only a little. Nearly 3 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (27%) reported hearing nothing at all about kynect. This is similar to the proportion of Kentuckians overall who reported hearing nothing at all about kynect (23%).

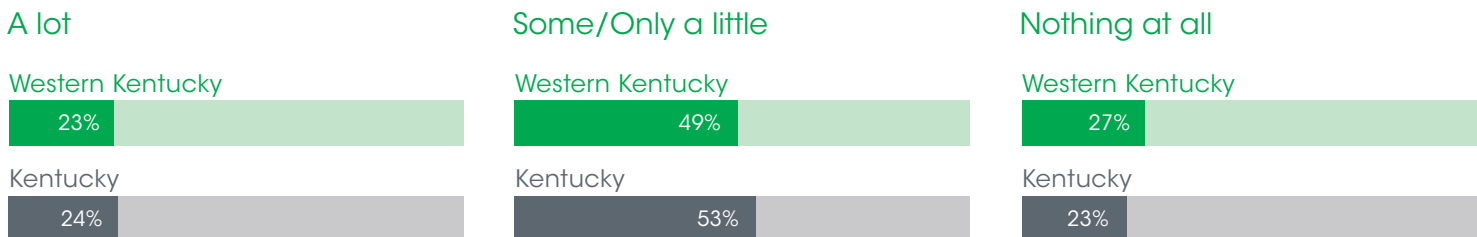
How important is it to you that Kentucky Medicaid provides healthcare coverage to low-income individuals?

(Graph includes only those say it is important.)



How much, if anything, have you heard about this new health insurance marketplace, also known as kynect, or Kentucky’s Healthcare Connection, in your state?

(Percentages do not add to 100% because the response “don’t know” is not included.)



Fruit and vegetable nutrition requirement¹²

Meets fruit and vegetable requirement

Western Kentucky

26%

Kentucky

23%

Meets fruit requirement only

Western Kentucky

22%

Kentucky

26%

Meets vegetable requirement only

Western Kentucky

19%

Kentucky

12%

Does not meet either requirement

Western Kentucky

33%

Kentucky

39%

Healthy Living

Individuals may take steps every day to improve their health status. These actions include eating healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, getting physical activity, and attending regular healthcare visits.



Eating Fruits and Vegetables

Current dietary guidelines¹¹ from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Health and Human Services recommend increasing our fruit and vegetable intake. The *Current Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010* reports that, on average, 59% of Americans eat the daily recommended servings of vegetables and 42% eat the daily recommended servings of fruit.

Nearly 3 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (26%) reported eating the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables per day. This is similar to the state as a whole where about 2 in 10 Kentuckians (23%) met both the fruit and vegetable daily requirements.

More than 2 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (22%) met the fruit requirement but not the vegetable requirement, and less than 2 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (19%) met only the vegetable requirement. One in 3 Western Kentucky adults (33%) did not meet either of the requirements. These results are similar to the state as a whole.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/DietaryGuidelines2010.pdf>

¹² KHIP asked, "In the past week, how many servings of vegetable did you eat on average, daily?" and "In the past week, how many servings of fruit did you eat on average, daily?"

Physical Activity

Being physically active is important to controlling weight and reducing the risk of diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and some cancers. It has also been shown to improve mood, concentration, and memory.

More than half Western Kentucky adults (55%) reported they were somewhat physically active and more than one quarter (24%) reported they were very physically active. This is similar to results for the state as a whole, where more than half (51%) reported being somewhat physically active and almost one quarter (24%) reported being very physically active.



In general, would you say you are very physically active, somewhat physically active, not very physically active, or not at all physically active?

(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

Very physically active

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Somewhat physically active

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Not very physically active

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Not at all physically active

Western Kentucky



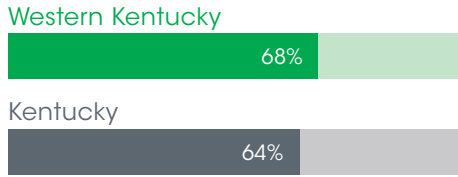
Kentucky



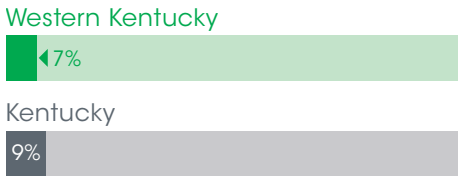
How long has it been since you last visited a dentist or dental clinic for any reason?

(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

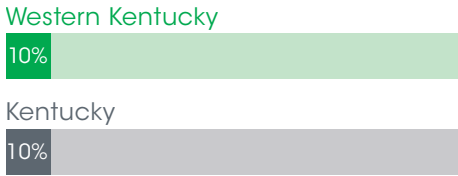
Within the past year



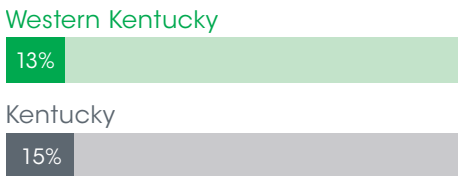
Within the past 2 years



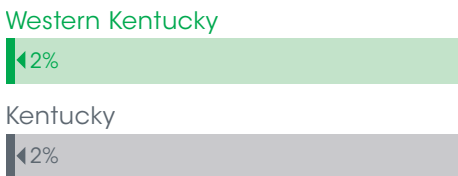
Within the past 5 years



5 or more years ago



Never



Seeing a Healthcare Provider

Oral health is critical to overall health. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends adults have regular dental visits based on their oral health status and health history, and in consultation with their dentists.¹³ Nationally, 67% of adults reported visiting the dentist or dental clinic in the past year.¹⁴ KHIP saw regional differences in past year dental visits.

Nearly 7 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (68%) said they had been to the dentist or dental clinic in the past year. Responses in Western Kentucky were similar responses in the state as a whole.

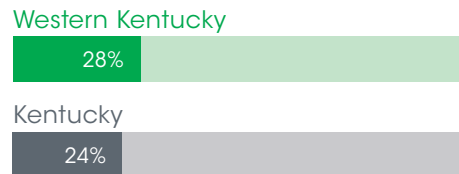
Related to oral health, KHIP 2013 asked “Has your physician ever asked you about your oral or dental health?” Almost 3 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (28%) said “Yes.” This is slightly higher than the response for Kentucky (24%) but not statistically different.

Finally, effective strategies to quit smoking are available, and clinicians who recommend these strategies have a great influence on smokers trying to quit.¹⁵ Only 4 in 10 Western Kentucky smokers (45%) reported they had been offered help or counsel to stop smoking by a doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider. This is significantly lower than the proportion of Kentucky smokers (58%) who reported being offered guidance on smoking cessation.

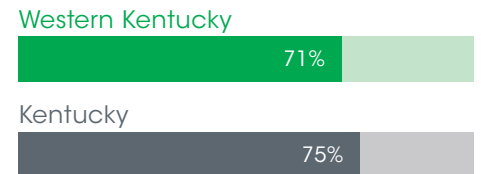
Has your physician ever asked you about your oral or dental health?

(Percentages do not add to 100% because the response “don’t know” is not included.)

Yes

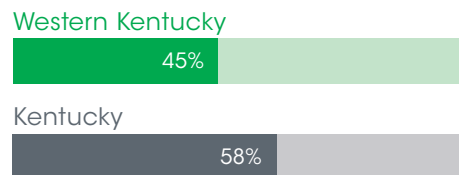


No

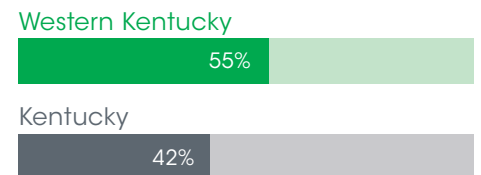


Ask only of respondents who reported they were current smokers: In the past 12 months, has your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider ever offered help or counseled you to stop smoking?

Yes



No



13 American Dental Association (2013). American Dental Association Statement on Regular Dental Visits. Chicago, IL: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ada.org/en/press-room/news-releases/2013-archive/june/american-dental-association-statement-on-regular-dental-visits>

14 Kentucky Department for Public Health, Cabinet for Health and Family Services (2013). Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Frankfort, KY: Author. Retrieved from <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/info/dpqj/cd/Kentucky+BRFSS+Data+Reports.htm>

15 Fiore MC, Jaén CR, Baker TB, et al. Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update. Clinical Practice Guideline. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK63952/>

Demographic Profile

In addition to the questions on health issues, respondents were asked several demographic questions. These findings are detailed below. (Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.)



Poverty Status

The percentage of Western Kentucky adults who lived between 138% and 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG)¹⁶ was similar to the state as a whole. In Western Kentucky, 46% of adults reported income above 200% FPG which is also similar to the state as a whole (45%).

Sex

Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Age



Western Kentucky



Kentucky



Race



Western Kentucky



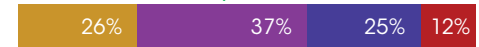
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Level of Education



Western Kentucky



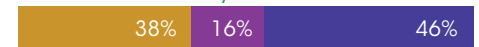
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Poverty Status



Western Kentucky

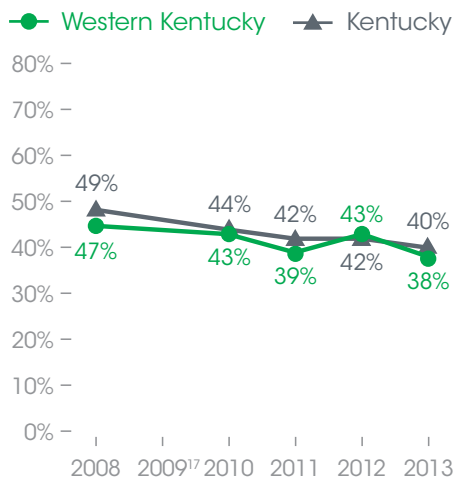


Kentucky

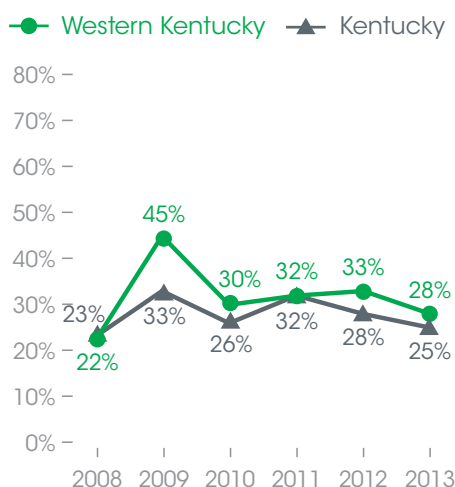


¹⁶ In 2012, 138% of the federal poverty guideline (FPG) was an annual income of \$30,675 and 200% FPG was an annual income of \$46,100 both for a family of four.

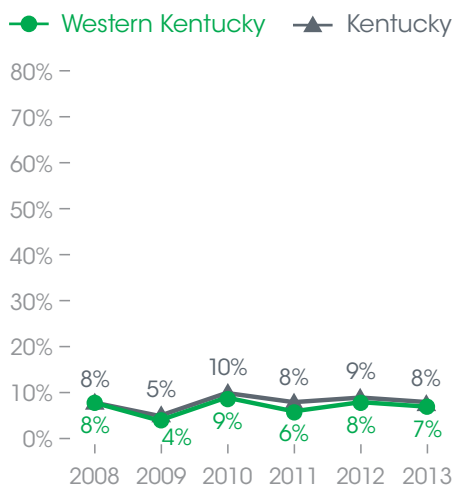
Kentucky adults reporting "excellent" or "very good" health



No current insurance, adults ages 18-64



Currently insured, but uninsured at some point in the last 12 months, adults ages 18-64



Overall Health Status

An important indicator of community health is overall health status. In 2013, nearly 4 in 10 Western Kentucky respondents (38%) described their health status as "excellent" or "very good." This is similar to the proportion for the state as a whole (40%).



Insurance Coverage

Having health insurance is an important factor in being able to get needed healthcare. Because nearly all Kentuckians older than 65 (99%) are insured, this section includes only Kentuckians ages 18-64.

Not Having Health Insurance Coverage

More than 2 in 10 working-age Western Kentucky adults (28%) were uninsured at the time of the Poll. This is a slight decrease in the number of uninsured adults since 2012 but is not significantly different. Working-age adults in Western Kentucky are slightly more likely to be uninsured than the state average (25%), although this difference is not statistically significant.

Gaps in Health Insurance Coverage

Another factor in being able to get healthcare is stability of a person's health insurance coverage. One measure of this stability is whether a person has been covered continuously for the past 12 months. In Western Kentucky, 7% of adults ages 18-64 were insured at the time of the KHIP but had been uninsured at some point in the past 12 months. In total, more than 1 in 3 working-age Western Kentucky adults (35%) had been uninsured at some point in the last 12 months, including at the time of the Poll.

17 The question "Would you say that in general your health is excellent, very good, fair or poor?" was not asked on the 2009 KHIP.



About the Kentucky Health Issues Poll

The Kentucky Health Issues Poll, funded by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Interact for Health, is conducted annually to assess what Kentuckians think about a variety of health topics affecting the Commonwealth. The 2013 Kentucky Health Issues Poll was conducted October 25, 2013-November 26, 2013 by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati.

A random sample of 1,551 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. This included 951 landline interviews and 600 cell phone interviews. Of these, 307 respondents resided in the Western Kentucky Region which includes Barren River, Green River, Lincoln Trail, Pennyrite, and Purchase Area Development Districts. The counties included in this region are:

- Allen County
- Ballard County
- Barren County
- Breckenridge County
- Butler County
- Caldwell County
- Calloway County
- Carlisle County
- Christian County
- Crittenden County
- Daviess County
- Edmonson County
- Fulton County
- Graves County
- Grayson County
- Hancock County
- Hardin County
- Hart County
- Henderson County
- Hickman County
- Hopkins County
- LaRue County
- Livingston County
- Logan County
- Lyon County
- Marion County
- Marshall County
- McCracken County
- McLean County
- Meade County
- Metcalfe County
- Monroe County
- Muhlenberg County
- Nelson County
- Ohio County
- Simpson County
- Todd County
- Trigg County
- Union County
- Warren County
- Washington County
- Webster County

This report presents a selection of questions with data specific to Western Kentucky. Additional state and regional data highlights are available from the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky (www.healthy-ky.org) or Interact for Health (www.interactforhealth.org/kentucky-health-issues-poll). Users can access the entire survey dataset, as well as results by region or demographic group, at www.oasisdataarchive.org.

If there is a question or topic you would like to see on a future KHIP, please contact Jennifer Chubinski, Director of Community Research at Interact for Health (jchubinski@interactforhealth.org) or Rachelle Seger, Community Health Research Officer at the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky (rseger@healthy-ky.org).

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