



# The link between poverty and self-reported health in Ohio

There are many ways to assess a person's health. One way is to ask people to evaluate their own health. The Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP) asked Ohio adults, "In general, would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?" Research has found a powerful link between people's response to this question and the predicted length and quality of their lives.<sup>1</sup>

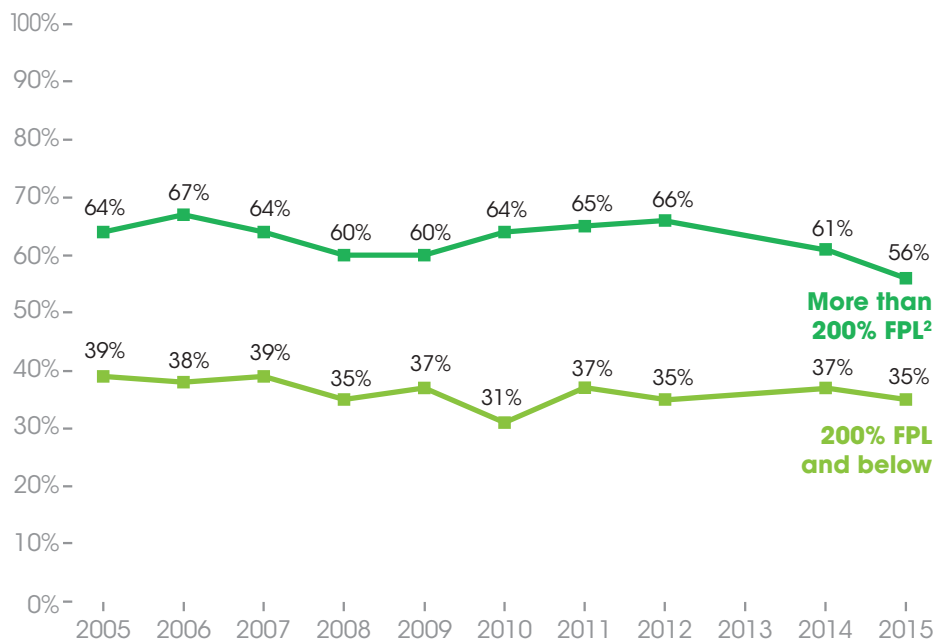
## Nearly half of Ohio adults report excellent or very good health

In 2015, nearly half of Ohio adults (47%) reported that their health was excellent or very good. This has remained stable since 2008. About 3 in 10 (33%) said their health was good, and 2 in 10 (20%) reported fair or poor health.

Younger Ohio adults were more likely to report excellent or very good health. Nearly 7 in 10 adults ages 18 to 29 (66%) reported excellent or very good health. Only 4 in 10 adults 30 or older reported excellent or very good health.

<sup>1</sup> DeSalvo, K.B., et al. (2006). Clinical Review: Mortality Prediction with a Single General Self-Rated Health Question. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 21 (3), 267-275.

## Percentage of Ohio adults reporting excellent or very good health



## Adults with higher incomes report better health

As noted in previous OHIP results, better self-reported health is strongly associated with higher incomes. In 2015, nearly 6 in 10 adults earning more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)<sup>2</sup> (56%) reported excellent or very good health. This compares with

<sup>2</sup> In 2014, 200% of the Federal Poverty Level was \$47,700 for a family of four.

only 35% of adults earning 200% FPL and below.

OHIP has found this gap in health status by income consistently over the past decade. These findings are also consistent with national and international work that has identified poverty as one of the key social determinants of health.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Healthy People 2020. (2016). Social Determinants of Health. Accessed Jan. 29, 2016, at <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>.

Increased poverty is associated with higher rates of illness, shorter life expectancy, high stress levels, low birthweight babies and many other negative health outcomes.<sup>4</sup> Understanding this connection is important for efforts to improve health in our society.

## **Adults with more education report better health**

Education is another social determinant of health. In 2015, OHIP found that adults with more education reported better health. More than 6 in 10 college graduates (64%) reported excellent or very good health. Only 4 in 10 Ohio adults with less than a college degree reported excellent or very good health.

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<sup>4</sup>Kaplan, G.A. (2009). The Poor Pay More: Poverty's High Cost to Health. Funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Accessed Jan. 29, 2016, at <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2009/09/the-poor-pay-more.html>.