The Health District of Northern Larimer County* has surveyed adults living in Larimer County, Colorado every three years, beginning in 1995. Our 9th Community Health Survey was conducted in the Fall of 2019. Out of 12,000 household addresses randomly selected to participate in the survey, a total of 2,532 usable surveys were collected, for a response rate of 25 percent. These responses were statistically weighted by geographic and demographic characteristics to more closely match the adult population of Larimer County. Data presented in this report examines the results from surveys completed by respondents in Larimer County in 2019, as well as results from previous Community Health Surveys.

The following is a compilation of key findings from the Health District's 2019 Community Health Survey. It is organized by areas in which our community is doing well, followed by areas of potential concern for our community.

*This report represents data from the adult population of Larimer County. A version with data specific to respondents within the Health District's service area is available at www.healthdistrict.org.
Issues with Positive Indicators

1. Cigarette smoking has consistently declined since the first survey assessment in 1995.
   Those who report smoking cigarettes everyday or some days has decreased from 19% in 1995 to 7% in 2019. Reports of someone in the household smoking tobacco indoors has dropped from 11% in 2004 to 5% in 2019. In 2019, 5% reported that someone in their household used a nicotine-containing electronic device, or e-cigarette, indoors.

2. The Healthy People 2020 goal for seatbelt use was met in 2019.
   In 1995, just 66% of respondents said they always wear seatbelts when driving or riding in a vehicle. The number of seatbelt wearers has increased over time, and 93% of respondents reported wearing seatbelts in 2019. This rate is on par with the Healthy People 2020* goal of 92% and higher than the Colorado Department of Transportation reports for the state of Colorado (88%) and the US (86%).

3. Obesity rates remain stable, amidst state and national increases.
   Obesity, while not improving, remains stable from 2016 at 16% (up from 11% in 1995). In comparison, Colorado’s obesity rate is 23% and nationally it is 42%. However, obesity was more common among certain populations, including those over the age of 65 (20%), those from lower-income households (<185% of the Federal Poverty Level or FPL) (26%), and those who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a (23%).

4. Increased vaccination for influenza reported.
   In 2019, 57% of respondents reported getting an influenza shot or nasal mist during the flu season. In 2010, just 41% reported being vaccinated to prevent influenza.

5. Fewer say they put off getting dental care because of cost.
   In 2019, fewer adults reported not going to a dentist because visits were too expensive in the past two years. It fell from 42% in 2007 to 33% in 2019. Also, compared to 2016, significantly more respondents with Medicaid were aware that Medicaid covers some dental services in Colorado. In 2016, just 63% were aware, and in 2019, 71% of Medicaid users were aware.

6. Fewer say they go to Urgent Care or ERs for routine health care.
   In the latest survey, when asked where they usually go for care when sick or in need of medical advice, 15% said they had no regular medical home or the place they go to is to an urgent care center or an emergency room. In 2016, 20% of respondents reported these places as their usual source of routine care.

7. More who needed mental health services report using them.
   In 2016, 15% of respondents reported that someone in their household needed and used mental health services in the past year; this increased to 21% in 2019. Also, more are reporting that at some point a health-care provider has told them they have a mental health issue other than anxiety or depression, going from 5% in 2016 to 8% in 2019.

*Healthy People 2020 is an initiative by the Department of Health and Human Services to set goals and track community progress of Leading Health Indicators across numerous public health areas.

†Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is a measure of income issued every year by the Department of Health and Human Services to determine eligibility for a number of social services. These data refer to the 2018 FPL standards.

‡Medicaid is a public health insurance program that provides health-care coverage to low-income families or individuals in the U.S.
Issues of Potential Concern: Mental Health

1. More are reporting experiencing days in the past month when their mental health was poor.
   In 2019, 48% of Health District residents experienced at least one poor mental health day in the past month, up from 35% in 2016. The average number of days in the past month when survey respondents’ mental health was not good increased from 3.1 to 3.5 days.

2. Lower-income residents report more poor mental health days.
   Survey respondents from lower-income households (<185% of the FPL) reported significantly more days in the past month with poor mental health than those from higher-income households (7.6 vs. 2.3 days). Those from lower-income households also reported more days in the past month that poor mental health kept them from doing their usual activities (4.0 days vs. 1.2 days).

3. Certain populations of adults are significantly more likely to report considering suicide in the past year.
   Rates of survey respondents saying they have considered suicide as a solution to their problems have consistently been 5% to 7% across all survey years. However, in 2019, 14% of younger adults (age 18-34) reported considering suicide, compared to 4% for adults age 35 and older. Also, while 6% of “straight” respondents considered suicide, 19% of persons identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer reported considering suicide in 2019.

4. Reports of current mental health issues have increased.
   Overall, those self-reporting currently having depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues increased from 21% in 2016 to 30% in 2019. Women are more likely to report this than men (36% vs. 24%), as were those age 18-34 (52%) compared to age 35 and older (28%).

5. One in five respondents with health insurance is unaware if mental health care is covered.
   20% of respondents with health insurance answered “I don’t know” to a question about whether mental health care is covered by their insurance. For those who indicated a current mental health issue, such as depression or anxiety, almost one-third reported not being covered or not knowing if mental health care is covered by their health insurance.

6. Many report putting off mental health care due to cost.
   Among all adults, the percentage of those who reported putting off a visit to a mental health care provider due to cost in the past two years rose from 16% in 2016 to 22% in 2019. Among those in households with incomes between 186%-250% FPL, nearly half (49%) of those who needed mental health care reported putting off mental health care due to cost.
Issues of Potential Concern: Substance Use

Eleven percent of respondents are considered "heavy drinkers."

When asked how many alcoholic drinks they typically have each week, 10% of respondents drank enough to be considered a heavy drinker.* Heavy drinking is more common for those in higher-income households (above 400% FPL) at 12%, while 8% of those from households below that income cut-off report heavy drinking. Those who identify as white and not-Hispanic Latino/a are three-times as likely to be a heavy drinker (11%) compared to people of color (3%).

Binge drinking remains a concern.

Locally, 23% of respondents to the 2019 Community Health Survey reported a binge-drinking** episode in the past month. National surveys reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that about 16% of adults in the U.S. and 19% of adults in Colorado report at least one binge-drinking episode in the past month. In Larimer County, reports of binge-drinking are significantly lower for those from lower income households (<185% FPL) than those from higher income households (12% vs. 26%).

More report driving after drinking alcohol.

Drinking and driving has significantly increased from 4% in 2016 to 9% in 2019. Men are more likely to have 2+ drinks in an hour and then driving than women (12% vs 5%). 13% of respondents age 18-34 reported driving after drinking 2+ drinks, compared to 8% of those age 35 or older.

Measured since 2013, use of marijuana is steadily increasing.

The percentage of those who have never used marijuana decreased from 50% to 39% between 2013 and 2019. Of those who’ve ever used marijuana, the percentage who used it in the past year has increased from 34% to 51%. Of those who’ve used in the past year, 26% report marijuana use in the past month. Twenty percent reported using marijuana every day in the past month, and slightly over half (53%) said they usually used it for non-medical or recreationally.

One-quarter of those who use marijuana drive after using it, and indoor use is common.

In 2019, 24% of those who reported using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days reported that they drove at least one time within 2-3 hours of using marijuana. Also, 18% of survey respondents said that they live with someone who smokes or vapes marijuana inside the house.

Nearly one quarter of survey respondents thought they needed to cut down on their use of alcohol or drugs.

In 2019, survey takers were asked questions from the CAGE questionnaire, typically used in a clinical setting to identify potential substance use issues. One in four (24%), report that they had “felt the need to cut down on their drinking or drug use.” Seventeen percent report they had “felt bad or guilty about their drug use,” and 6% report that someone had criticized them for their drinking or drug use.

*Heavy drinking refers to 8 or more drinks per week for women and 15 or more drinks/week for men.

**Binge-drinking refers to 4 or more drinks/occasion for women and 5 or more drinks/occasion for men.
Issues of Potential Concern: Access and Affordability

1. Uninsured rates have increased since 2016, especially among those from low income households.
   After falling from 12% to 4% between 2013 and 2016, in 2019, 8% of Larimer County survey respondents ages 18 to 64 reported having no health insurance. In 2019, 18% of respondents age 18-64 from lower income households (<185% FPL) were uninsured, significantly more than in 2016, when 5% reported being uninsured.

2. Those identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a are more likely to report putting off needed dental care because of cost.
   Compared to respondents of white non-Hispanic or Latino(a) race and ethnicity, Hispanic or Latino/a respondents were almost twice as likely to report currently having a toothache or other dental problem (29% vs. 17%) and, in the past two years, often putting off dental care because it is too expensive (31% vs. 14%).

3. A quarter of uninsured residents and Medicaid clients cannot pay their medical bills.
   25% of survey respondents who have Medicaid and 21% of uninsured survey respondents report being contacted by a collections agency for unpaid medical bills in the past year. Twenty percent of those without insurance and 17% of those on Medicaid said they had to change their way of life considerably in order to pay medical bills.

4. Cost of housing is a concern for those with lower incomes.
   In 2019, 24% of respondents from lower-income households (<185% FPL) were “usually” or “always” worried about having enough money for housing, and 27% reported that in the past 3 months they were unable to pay all or part of their rent or mortgage. This compares to just 4% for those from higher income households on both of these indicators.

5. Hispanic or Latino/a residents worry more about affording food and housing.
   17% of Hispanic or Latino/a respondents reported, in the past year, usually or always worrying about having enough money for food, compared to 8% for white/non-Hispanic respondents. Almost twice as many Hispanic residents were usually or always worried about paying their rent or mortgage (10% compared to 6%).

6. Finding childcare is difficult.
   57% of those who had tried to find child care in the past year reported “a lot” or “some” difficulty finding the type of child care they wanted. An additional 15% were not able to find the child care program they wanted. 43% of those who had difficulty indicated cost as the primary reason.
About the Health District
The Health District of Northern Larimer County has been meeting healthcare needs in our community since 1960. Today, the Health District provides medical, mental health, dental, preventive and health planning services to residents of the district.

About the 2019 CHS
The 2019 Community Health Survey was a 12-page, 70-question survey designed to collect data on a variety of health conditions and behaviors, healthcare affordability and coverage, access to healthcare and need for various services. A random-sample of approximately 12,000 households in Larimer County were contacted by mail and asked to participate in the survey through a secure online survey, or through the mail. The survey was available in English and Spanish. A total of 2,532 surveys were returned from adult residents of Larimer County, resulting in an overall response rate of 25%. Data was weighted by age, gender, race and ethnicity and census tract, using the 2019 estimated Larimer County population from the Colorado State Demography Office. Weighting is a common statistical technique used to improve representation of underrepresented groups in the sample so that results may be generalizable to the population.

For more information, please go to healthdistrict.org. You may also contact the Research and Evaluation Team by sending an e-mail to shewitt@healthdistrict.org for more information.