

Ohioans' Health Status and Income: A Critical Link



Having a good income is linked to having good health, and vice versa. Do healthy people make more money because they are well and able to work more days or better jobs? Or are people who make more money healthier because they have the resources to preserve and improve their health?

It is not possible to clearly answer these questions, as many factors play a part in both health status and income. Regardless, the *Ohio Health Issues Poll* has seen since it started in 2005 that people with higher incomes report better health, and people reporting better health have higher incomes. This is consistent with research done around the country.

Ohioans with Higher Incomes Report Better Health

As income increases, the percentage of Ohioans reporting better health also increases. In 2010, over 6 in 10 Ohio adults living above 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG)¹ reported being in excellent or very good health, compared to 4 in 10 Ohio adults living at 100–200% FPG and 2 in 10 Ohio adults living below 100% FPG.

¹ In 2009, 200% FPG was an annual income of \$44,100 for a family of 4.

Health status of Ohio adults, by household income, 2010 (the percent of Ohio adults responding "good" or "don't know" are not included)



*100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in 2009 was an annual household income of \$22,050 for a family of 4.

This is consistent with findings from the national *Gallup Poll*, which calculates the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index of people surveyed during the *Gallup Poll*. A higher score on the Well-Being Index indicates better physical, emotional, and financial wellbeing.

Americans making less than \$24,000 per year have an average Well-Being Index score of 57.2, compared to a score of 67.7 for Americans in the middle class and 74.3 for high-income Americans.²

² These data and more information about the *Gallup Poll* can be found at www.gallup.com/poll/143696/Health-Disparities-Across-Incomes-Wide-Ranging.aspx.

The *Gallup Poll* has also found that low-income Americans have more health problems, have less access to basic medical care, and engage in fewer healthy behaviors than higher-income Americans. These are true regardless of age.

People with Better Health Report Higher Incomes

The *Ohio Health Issues Poll* has also found that adults reporting they are in excellent or very good health also report higher incomes. Of Ohio adults reporting excellent or very good health, only 1 in 10 were living below 100% FPG, 2 in 10 were living at 100–200% FPG, and 7 in 10 were living above 200% FPG.