

# Kentucky adults say obesity, cancer are most important health issues

The **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)**, funded by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Interact for Health, asked Kentucky adults to name the most important health care issue facing Kentucky's men, women and children. Respondents could provide any answer.

## Obesity cited as top issue for children

One in 4 Kentucky adults (25%) said obesity was the most important health issue facing children. In Kentucky, 19% of high school students were obese in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Problems with health insurance or health care (10%), cancer (8%) and hunger/malnutrition (6%) were also mentioned.

About 1 in 3 Kentucky adults (32%) mentioned other health issues facing children. These included diabetes, mental health issues, common cold/flu, lack of preventative screenings or vaccinations, substance use, and others. Another 19% reported they did not know the most important health issue facing Kentucky's children.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015 Kentucky Youth Behavior Survey, Accessed Dec. 1, 2016. <http://bit.ly/2h8tBsH>

## Top four health care issues identified as the most important for men, women and children in Kentucky\*

	CHILDREN		WOMEN		MEN
1	Obesity 25%		Cancer 39%		Cancer 21%
2	Problems with health insurance or health care 10%		Heart disease 11%		Heart disease 20%
3	Cancer 8%		Problems with health insurance or health care 10%		Problems with health insurance or health care 12%
4	Hunger/malnutrition 6%		Obesity 9%		Obesity 10%

\* KHIP asked three open-ended questions: "What is the most important health care issue facing men in Kentucky?"; "What is the most important health care issue facing women in Kentucky?"; and "What is the most important health care issue facing children in Kentucky?"

## For women, cancer named top health issue

Nearly 4 in 10 Kentucky adults (39%) identified cancer as the most important health issue facing women in Kentucky. Three in 10 (30%) specified breast cancer, and 1 in 10 (9%) said cancer generally. This was followed by heart disease (11%), problems with health insurance or health care (10%) and obesity (9%). Cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death for women in Kentucky.<sup>2</sup>

Another 19% of Kentucky adults

named other health issues such as diabetes, smoking, substance use, prenatal and reproductive health, mental health issues, and others. Twelve percent reported not knowing.

## Cancer, heart disease named men's top issues

About 2 in 10 Kentucky adults identified either cancer (21%) or heart disease (20%) as the

### Continued on back

<sup>2</sup> CDC's WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System), 2014 Leading Causes of Death, Kentucky, All Races, Females, Males. Accessed Dec. 1, 2016. <http://bit.ly/2iICzN9>

most important issue facing men. Problems with insurance (12%) and obesity (10%) were also mentioned. Cancer and heart disease are also the leading causes of death for men in Kentucky.<sup>3</sup>

Another 24% of Kentucky adults named other health issues such as diabetes, substance use, smoking,

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

mental health issues, and others. Fourteen percent said they did not know.

### **New concerns compared with 2010**

Two issues were mentioned much more often in 2016 than in 2010, the last year KHIP asked these questions. Mentions of health care and health insurance problems more than doubled.

In 2010, no more than 4% of respondents cited those issues as the most important for women (4%), men (2%) or children (2%). In 2016, at least 10% of Kentucky adults mentioned those issues for women (10%), men (12%) and children (10%). Also, less than 1% of adults mentioned hunger/malnutrition as an issue for Kentucky's children in 2010, compared with 6% in 2016.