

Health Status and Medical Services Utilization: 2013

Current Population Reports

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INTRODUCTION

Health status and medical services utilization are important indicators of population well-being. Health status captures how people view their overall health, while medical services utilization measures interactions with medical providers and the health care system. The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) contains information on both topics.

This report presents estimates of adult health status in 2013 and shows how health status varies across social and demographic groups. The report also presents estimates of medical services utilization for the adult population and by health status. Data for the report come from Wave 1 of the 2014 SIPP Panel. Unlike prior SIPP panels that asked about health status and medical service utilization in topical modules, the 2014 SIPP Panel asked about these topics in all waves of the survey.

WHAT IS SIPP?

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is a nationally representative panel survey administered by the U.S. Census Bureau that collects information on the short-term dynamics of employment, income, household composition, and eligibility and participation in government assistance programs. It is a leading source of information on specific topics related to economic well-being, family dynamics, education, wealth and assets, health insurance, child care, and food security. Each SIPP panel follows individuals for several years, providing monthly data that measure changes in household and family composition and economic circumstances over time. For more information, please visit the SIPP Web site at <www.census.gov/sipp>.

KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Health status captures a person's overall health at the time of the interview. A person can report their health status or have it reported by another household member. Health status can fall into one of five categories: excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor.

Medical services utilization is a broad concept that captures use of the health care system. This SIPP brief includes four measures of medical services utilization over the previous calendar year:

- Number of medical provider visits.
- Number of dentist visits.
- Number of nights spent in the hospital.
- Taken a prescription medication.

HEALTH STATUS

Health status is an important indicator of well-being and is strongly associated with overall health and longevity (Idler and Benyamini, 1997).

In 2013, men were more likely than women to be in excellent, very good, or good health, and less likely to be in fair or poor health

(Table 1).¹ Of men, 84.7 percent were in excellent, very good, or good health compared with 82.7 percent of women.² These findings are consistent with past research showing that women tend to have

poorer overall health but live longer lives (Case and Paxson, 2005).

Health status differed by race and Hispanic origin. Black non-Hispanic adults were least likely to be in excellent, very good, or good health compared with all other groups. In 2013, 78.7 percent of Black non-Hispanic adults were in good or better health compared with 84.3 percent of

¹ Data on health status were collected between February 2014 and May 2014, but weighted to represent the population as of December 2013.

² The percentage of people in aggregated health categories may not match the sum of rows in Table 1 due to differences in rounding.

Table 1.

Health Status by Selected Characteristics: 2013

(Numbers in thousands. Adults in the civilian noninstitutionalized population)

Characteristic	Total number	Health status (percent)									
		Excellent		Very good		Good		Fair		Poor	
		Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹
Population 18 years and older . . .	239,690	26.1	0.2	30.7	0.2	26.9	0.2	11.6	0.2	4.7	0.1
Sex											
Male	115,601	27.5	0.3	30.9	0.3	26.4	0.3	10.7	0.2	4.5	0.1
Female	124,089	24.9	0.3	30.6	0.3	27.3	0.3	12.3	0.2	4.9	0.1
Race and Hispanic Origin²											
White, non-Hispanic	156,392	26.1	0.3	32.0	0.3	26.3	0.3	10.9	0.2	4.7	0.1
Black, non-Hispanic	28,323	23.0	0.6	27.1	0.6	28.6	0.6	15.9	0.5	5.4	0.3
Other, non-Hispanic	18,765	28.4	0.9	30.3	0.9	26.6	0.9	10.2	0.4	4.4	0.4
Hispanic	36,211	27.7	0.6	28.3	0.5	28.0	0.5	11.7	0.5	4.3	0.2
Age											
18 to 24 years	30,475	48.1	0.7	31.1	0.7	16.4	0.5	3.9	0.3	0.5	0.1
25 to 44 years	81,505	32.4	0.5	34.4	0.4	24.3	0.4	7.0	0.2	2.0	0.1
45 to 64 years	82,726	19.6	0.4	30.1	0.4	29.8	0.4	14.2	0.3	6.3	0.2
65 years and over	44,983	11.8	0.4	25.1	0.5	33.2	0.5	20.2	0.4	9.7	0.3
Marital Status											
Married	126,056	24.6	0.3	32.5	0.3	27.8	0.3	10.9	0.2	4.1	0.1
Widowed	13,942	11.2	0.6	22.3	0.8	31.8	0.8	22.7	0.7	12.0	0.6
Divorced	27,527	18.1	0.7	27.8	0.7	30.2	0.6	16.0	0.6	7.8	0.4
Separated	5,027	15.6	1.1	26.5	1.4	29.7	1.3	18.7	1.2	9.5	0.8
Never married	67,138	36.1	0.5	30.7	0.4	22.4	0.4	8.1	0.3	2.8	0.1
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio											
Less than 100 percent	34,487	23.8	0.6	25.1	0.6	25.5	0.5	16.5	0.6	9.2	0.4
100 to less than 199 percent	40,955	20.6	0.5	26.7	0.5	29.0	0.5	16.5	0.4	7.2	0.3
200 to less than 299 percent	39,235	23.0	0.6	29.3	0.6	29.5	0.6	12.9	0.4	5.2	0.2
300 to less than 399 percent	31,752	23.7	0.6	32.0	0.7	29.3	0.6	11.1	0.4	3.8	0.3
400 percent or higher	93,260	31.6	0.4	34.8	0.4	24.4	0.4	7.1	0.2	2.1	0.1

¹ Standard errors were calculated using replicate weights, Fay's Method.

² Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group, such as Black, may be defined as those who reported Black and no other race (the race-alone or the single-race concept) or as those who reported Black regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). Hispanics may be any race. The body of this report (text, figures, and tables) shows data for people who reported they were a single race. Use of the single-race concept does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The U.S. Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. In this report, the term "non-Hispanic White" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported White and no other race. "Non-Hispanic Black" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported Black and no other race. "Non-Hispanic Other" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported Asian alone, Pacific Islander alone, American Indian alone, Alaskan Native alone, or multiple races.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014 Panel, Wave 1. For information on confidentiality protection and sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/methodology/sampling.html>.

White non-Hispanic adults; 85.4 percent of non-Hispanic adults with some other racial identification; and 83.9 percent of Hispanic adults. Non-Hispanic adults with some other racial identification were most likely to be in good or better health.³

Older adults were more likely to have fair or poor health. In 2013, only 4.4 percent of adults aged 18 to 24 were in fair or poor health, while 29.9 percent of adults aged 65 and older were in fair or poor health.

Health status also varied by marital status. In 2013, never-married adults were more likely than all other marital groups to be in excellent, very good, or good health with 89.2 percent of never-married adults in that health status. Widowed adults were less likely than all other groups to be

³ The percentages of White non-Hispanic adults and Hispanic adults in excellent, very good, or good health were not statistically different from each other.

in good or better health; 65.3 percent of widowed adults were in excellent, very good, or good health. Never-married persons were, on average, younger than all other groups, and widowed adults were, on average, older, which may explain some of these health differences.⁴

Finally, adults living in families with higher incomes were more likely to be in better health. In 2013, adults living in families with incomes at or above 400 percent of the poverty threshold were the most likely to be in excellent, very good, or good health; 90.7 percent of adults in these families were in one of these three health status categories compared with 74.3 percent of adults in families

⁴ The median age of widowed adults (aged 18 and older) was 74.8 years; the median age of divorced adults was 52.8 years; the median age of married adults was 50.3 years; the median age of separated adults was 46.0 years; and the median age of never-married adults was 26.0 years. All differences in median age were statistically significant.

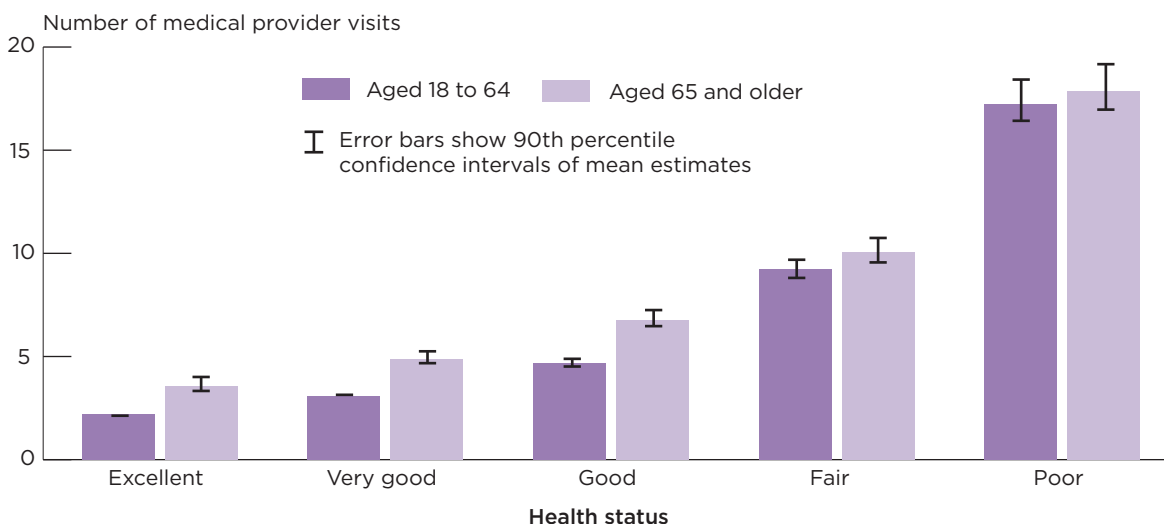
with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.

MEDICAL SERVICES UTILIZATION

Just under 90 percent of adults used any medical services in 2013 (Table 2). Adults used some medical services more commonly than others. In 2013, 76.6 percent of adults had at least one medical provider visit, while just 10.7 percent spent at least one night in the hospital.

Health status and medical services utilization are connected. Adults may use some medical services to maintain good health and may use others to treat a health problem or condition. Adults in worse health were more likely to have had at least one medical provider visit, spent the night in the hospital, or taken a prescription medication in 2013. Of adults in poor health, 92.9 percent had at least one medical provider visit compared with 67.0 percent of adults in

Figure 1.
Average Number of Medical Provider Visits by Health Status: 2013
(Adults in the civilian noninstitutionalized population)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014 Panel, Wave 1.

Table 2.

Health Status by Medical Services Utilization: 2013

(Numbers in thousands. Adults in the civilian noninstitutionalized population)

Characteristic	Total number/percent	Standard error	Health status (percent)									
			Excellent		Very good		Good		Fair		Poor	
			Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹
Population 18 years and older	239,690	X	62,602	578	73,662	565	64,359	491	27,708	413	11,359	250
Percentage of Distribution												
No medical services utilization	10.7	0.1	14.3	0.4	11.3	0.3	10.0	0.3	5.6	0.3	2.7	0.5
Any medical services utilization	89.3	0.1	85.7	0.4	88.7	0.3	90.0	0.3	94.4	0.3	97.3	0.5
Medical Provider Visits												
No visit.	23.4	0.2	33.0	0.5	24.3	0.4	20.6	0.4	12.9	0.5	7.1	0.6
Visited once	14.3	0.2	21.3	0.4	16.4	0.4	11.0	0.3	5.4	0.3	2.8	0.3
Visited twice.	16.6	0.2	20.3	0.5	19.1	0.4	15.3	0.4	9.3	0.4	4.8	0.4
Three or more visits	45.6	0.3	25.3	0.5	40.2	0.4	53.1	0.5	72.4	0.6	85.3	0.8
Dentist Visits												
No visit.	34.6	0.3	27.3	0.5	29.9	0.5	37.5	0.5	47.9	0.7	56.7	0.9
Visited once	16.9	0.2	19.4	0.4	16.8	0.3	16.6	0.3	14.5	0.5	11.8	0.8
Visited twice.	33.3	0.3	40.5	0.5	37.2	0.4	29.7	0.4	21.7	0.5	17.7	0.8
Three or more visits	15.2	0.2	12.8	0.4	16.1	0.3	16.3	0.3	15.9	0.5	13.8	0.7
Nights in Hospital												
0 nights	89.3	0.1	95.7	0.2	93.7	0.2	88.7	0.3	76.3	0.6	60.5	1.0
1 to 7 nights	8.6	0.1	4.0	0.2	5.8	0.2	9.5	0.3	17.3	0.6	24.6	0.8
8 or more nights	2.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.1	1.8	0.1	6.4	0.3	14.8	0.8
Prescription Medicine Use												
Never taken	44.3	0.2	67.4	0.5	48.8	0.4	35.0	0.4	16.8	0.6	6.8	0.7
Ever taken.	55.7	0.2	32.6	0.5	51.2	0.4	65.0	0.4	83.2	0.6	93.2	0.7

X Not applicable.

¹ Standard errors were calculated using replicate weights, Fay's Method.

² Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group, such as Black, may be defined as those who reported Black and no other race (the race-alone or the single-race concept) or as those who reported Black regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). Hispanics may be any race. The body of this report (text, figures, and tables) shows data for people who reported they were a single race. Use of the single-race concept does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The U.S. Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. In this report, the term "non-Hispanic White" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported White and no other race. "Non-Hispanic Black" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported Black and no other race. "Non-Hispanic Other" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported Asian alone, Pacific Islander alone, American Indian alone, Alaskan Native alone, or multiple races.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014 Panel, Wave 1. For information on confidentiality protection and sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/methodology/sampling.html>.

excellent health. Of adults in poor health, 39.5 percent spent at least one night in the hospital compared with 4.3 percent of adults in excellent health. Finally, 93.2 percent of adults in poor health took a prescription medication, while just 32.6 percent of adults in excellent health took a prescription medication in 2013.

In 2013, adults in better health had, on average, fewer medical provider visits (Figure 1). Among adults in excellent, very good, or good health, adults aged 18 to 64 had fewer medical provider visits than adults 65 years and older. However, there were no statistically significant differences by age in the number of medical provider visits for adults in fair or poor health. It is possible that younger adults in excellent, very good, or good health have fewer medical provider visits because less routine medical care is required at these ages or because younger and older adults have different expectations for what it means to be in good or better health.

Unlike other medical services, adults in better health were more likely to have had a visit to a dentist in 2013. Of adults in excellent health, 72.7 percent had at least one dentist visit, while only 43.3 percent of adults in poor health had at least one dentist visit. Interestingly, adults in excellent health were the most likely to have exactly two dentist visits, which is

a typically recommended number of annual visits for routine care.

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. This means the 90 percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. To minimize these errors, the U.S. Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and the statistical review of reports.

To see the nonresponse bias study for the 2014 SIPP Panel, please visit www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/tech-documentation/nonresponse-reports/2014nonresponse-reports.html.

For further information on the source of the data and accuracy of

the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, see the 2014 Panel Source and Accuracy Statements at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/tech-documentation/source-accuracy-statements.html or contact Mahdi S. Sundukchi of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division at mahdi.s.sundukchi@census.gov.

Additional information on the SIPP can be found at the following Web sites: www.census.gov/sipp/ (main SIPP Web site) and www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/sipp/methodology/2014-SIPP-Panel-Users-Guide.pdf (SIPP User's Guide).

SUGGESTED CITATION

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REFERENCES

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Appendix Table 1.

Estimated Population by Health Status and Selected Characteristics: 2013

(Numbers in thousands. Adults in the civilian noninstitutionalized population)

Characteristic	Total number	Health status									
		Excellent		Very good		Good		Fair		Poor	
		Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹
Population 18 years and older . . .	239,690	62,602	578	73,662	565	64,359	491	27,708	413	11,359	250
Sex											
Male	115,601	31,745	346	35,728	384	30,485	339	12,419	255	5,223	146
Female	124,089	30,857	377	37,934	405	33,874	374	15,289	263	6,136	176
Race and Hispanic Origin²											
White, non-Hispanic	156,392	40,742	431	50,059	474	41,119	408	17,051	285	7,421	208
Black, non-Hispanic	28,323	6,509	171	7,684	174	8,095	170	4,491	128	1,543	80
Other, non-Hispanic	18,765	5,336	160	5,687	165	4,997	163	1,912	83	832	78
Hispanic	36,211	10,015	230	10,231	191	10,148	186	4,253	163	1,563	82
Age											
18 to 24 years	30,475	14,659	228	9,474	203	5,007	167	1,177	77	158	33
25 to 44 years	81,505	26,384	368	28,048	337	19,779	350	5,671	156	1,622	95
45 to 64 years	82,726	16,235	299	24,861	348	24,628	314	11,779	262	5,223	173
65 years and over	44,983	5,323	176	11,279	226	14,944	235	9,081	184	4,356	135
Marital Status											
Married	126,056	31,054	420	40,932	438	35,092	378	13,757	306	5,221	171
Widowed	13,942	1,556	83	3,116	113	4,427	110	3,169	95	1,674	81
Divorced	27,527	4,992	180	7,665	188	8,323	177	4,410	152	2,137	101
Separated	5,027	785	57	1,333	69	1,492	66	942	63	475	41
Never married	67,138	24,215	316	20,617	256	15,024	264	5,429	177	1,852	93
Family Income-to-Poverty Ratio											
Less than 100 percent	34,487	8,196	205	8,645	196	8,800	179	5,687	199	3,160	123
100 to less than 199 percent	40,955	8,447	203	10,935	215	11,874	212	6,766	180	2,933	121
200 to less than 299 percent	39,235	9,015	222	11,505	217	11,590	234	5,079	149	2,046	92
300 to less than 399 percent	31,752	7,520	192	10,160	207	9,313	195	3,537	128	1,221	86
400 percent or higher	93,260	29,425	385	32,417	355	22,781	334	6,638	207	1,998	122

¹ Standard errors were calculated using replicate weights, Fay's Method.

² Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group, such as Black, may be defined as those who reported Black and no other race (the race-alone or the single-race concept) or as those who reported Black regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). Hispanics may be any race. The body of this report (text, figures, and tables) shows data for people who reported they were a single race. Use of the single-race concept does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The U.S. Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. In this report, the term "non-Hispanic White" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported White and no other race. "Non-Hispanic Black" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported Black and no other race. "Non-Hispanic Other" refers to people who are not Hispanic and reported Asian alone, Pacific Islander alone, American Indian alone, Alaskan Native alone, or multiple races.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014 Panel, Wave 1. For information on confidentiality protection and sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/methodology/sampling.html>.

Appendix Table 2.

Estimated Population by Health Status and Medical Services Utilization: 2013

(Numbers in thousands. Adults in the civilian noninstitutionalized population)

Characteristic	Total number	Standard error ¹	Health status									
			Excellent		Very good		Good		Fair		Poor	
			Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹	Estimate	Standard error ¹
Population 18 years and older	239,690	X	62,602	578	73,662	565	64,359	491	27,708	413	11,359	250
Percentage of Distribution												
No medical services utilization	25,597	336	8,979	221	8,333	219	6,427	168	1,556	93	303	53
Any medical services utilization	214,093	336	53,624	221	65,330	219	57,932	168	26,152	93	11,055	53
Medical Provider Visits												
No visit	56,182	557	20,658	307	17,902	284	13,254	256	3,563	139	804	65
Visited once	34,341	485	13,358	268	12,047	271	7,111	186	1,503	81	322	38
Visited twice	39,790	515	12,732	294	14,104	277	9,825	244	2,582	117	548	50
Three or more visits	109,376	611	15,854	303	29,610	310	34,169	309	20,059	154	9,685	93
Dentist Visits												
No visit	82,964	673	17,119	314	22,026	340	24,108	306	13,268	184	6,443	101
Visited once ²	40,502	450	12,125	274	12,344	226	10,677	217	4,018	145	1,338	86
Visited twice	79,864	603	25,343	334	27,403	323	19,086	263	6,020	146	2,013	91
Three or more visits	36,361	443	8,016	252	11,890	208	10,488	215	4,402	130	1,565	79
Nights in Hospital												
0 nights	214,015	335	59,934	121	68,986	163	57,067	183	21,150	157	6,877	115
1 to 7 nights	20,538	317	2,515	116	4,307	160	6,135	169	4,784	153	2,797	96
8 or more nights	5,137	169	153	29	369	45	1,157	72	1,773	90	1,685	87
Prescription Medicine Use												
Never taken	106,120	534	42,192	290	35,959	331	22,552	287	4,645	153	771	75
Ever taken	133,570	534	20,410	290	37,703	331	41,807	287	23,062	153	10,588	75

X Not applicable.

¹ Standard errors were calculated using replicate weights, Fay's Method.² Health status by dentist visits does not sum to total number in population due to difference in rounding.Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014 Panel, Wave 1. For information on confidentiality protection and sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/methodology/sampling.html>.