



**Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in  
North Carolina**

**REPORT CARD  
2003**

**Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities  
and  
State Center for Health Statistics**

**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**

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## RACIAL AND ETHNIC HEALTH DISPARITIES IN NORTH CAROLINA REPORT CARD

**Purpose:** The North Carolina Health Disparities Report Card is intended to monitor the state's progress towards eliminating the health status gap between racial and ethnic minorities and the White population. The report establishes a baseline for our efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in health. The health status ranking of North Carolina in the nation is closely tied to the health status of minorities and other underserved populations. Although data are presented by race and ethnicity to describe the health status gaps, race/ethnicity in and by itself is not a cause of a particular health condition or status.

**Data:** The Health Disparities Report Card contains data from various sources. The baseline years may vary by indicator and availability of reliable data. The major racial and ethnic groups have been included for each indicator even if data are not available, to highlight the need to put more resources in collecting such data. The key indicators were chosen because of their relationship to health and health disparities and based on availability of data. The symbol ♦ is used in this report for indicators where reliable rates could not be calculated due to inadequate data or small number of events.

**Disparity Ratios and Grades:** Grades were based on the ratio of the measure for a specific racial or ethnic group to the measure for the White population of North Carolina (White). For example, the infant mortality rate of 15.1 for African Americans was divided by the rate for Whites, 6.4 ( $15.1/6.4=2.4$ ). This ratio indicates that the infant mortality rate for African American was 2.4 times higher than that of the White population. A ratio of 1.0 indicates no disparity between the groups. These grades do not consider trends in the data or the ranking of North Carolina relative to the United States, so a grade of A or B could still mean that improvement is needed.

The following guidelines were used in assigning grades (except for the social and economic well-being indicator "*median family income*", where the scale was reversed):

### **Disparity Ratio and Grades:**

- 0 – 0.5 = A**
- 0.6 – 1.0 = B**
- 1.1 – 1.9 = C**
- 2.0 – 2.9 = D**
- 3.0 or Greater = F**

**Emmanuel M. Ngui** (Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities) and **Paul A. Buescher** (State Center for Health Statistics), North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, developed this report card, with valuable contributions from many staff members of the State Center for Health Statistics. Special thanks to Mark Mather, Policy Analyst, Population Reference Bureau, Washington, DC for the data on poverty rates.

## LEADING HEALTH INDICATORS

<b>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Percent of children under 18 years of age living below the Federal Poverty Level<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1999</b>		
All	16.1		
White	9.4	1.0	
African American or Black	30.2	3.2	<b>F</b>
American Indian	25.4	2.7	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	10.6	1.1	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	29.2	3.1	<b>F</b>
<b>Percent of families living below the Federal Poverty Level<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1999</b>		
All	12.3		
White	8.4	1.0	
African American or Black	22.9	2.7	<b>D</b>
American Indian	21.0	2.5	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	10.3	1.2	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	25.2	3.0	<b>F</b>
<b>Percent of single parent families<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1999</b>		
All	18.6		
White	12.3	1.0	
African American or Black	42.8	3.5	<b>F</b>
American Indian	30.1	2.5	<b>D</b>
Asian	15.3	1.2	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	36.4	3.0	<b>F</b>
<b>Median family income (\$)¹</b>	<b>1999</b>		
All	46,335		
White	51,053	1.0	
African American or Black	31,951	0.6	<b>C</b>
American Indian	33,654	0.7	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	53,926	1.1	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	30,592	0.6	<b>C</b>

<b>MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births (Infant Mortality Rate)<sup>3</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 4.5)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	8.6		
White	6.4	1.0	
African American or Black	15.1	2.4	<b>D</b>
American Indian	11.9	1.9	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.1	1.0	<b>B</b>
Hispanic/ Latino	5.8	0.9	<b>B</b>
<b>Percent of births that were low birthweight (&lt;2,500 grams)<sup>4</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 5.0)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	8.9		
White	7.2	1.0	
African American or Black	13.8	1.9	<b>C</b>
American Indian	10.2	1.4	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.8	1.1	<b>C</b>
Hispanic/ Latina	6.2	0.9	<b>B</b>
<b>Percent of women with late prenatal care (after 1<sup>st</sup> trimester or no prenatal care)<sup>4</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 10.0 percent)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	15.5		
White	12.1	1.0	
African American or Black	24.7	2.0	<b>D</b>
American Indian	24.9	2.1	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	17.0	1.4	<b>C</b>
Hispanic/ Latina	31.0	2.6	<b>D</b>
<b>Percent of women who smoked during pregnancy<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	14.4		
White	15.7	1.0	
African American or Black	11.0	0.7	<b>B</b>
American Indian	26.2	1.7	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.7	0.2	<b>A</b>
Hispanic/ Latina	1.7	0.1	<b>A</b>

<b>ADULT HEALTH</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Percent of adults ages 18-64 with no health insurance<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	15.6		
White	13.8	1.0	
African American or Black	19.5	1.4	<b>C</b>
American Indian	25.3	1.8	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	14.4	1.0	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	26.8	1.9	<b>C</b>
<b>Percent of adults who could not see a doctor in the previous 12 months due to cost<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	12.0		
White	10.8	1.0	
African American or Black	15.8	1.5	<b>C</b>
American Indian	18.5	1.7	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	11.3	1.1	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	15.3	1.4	<b>C</b>
<b>Percent of adults who did not visit a dentist in the past year<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>1999 &amp; 2001</b>		
All	31.7		
White	29.0	1.0	
African American or Black	41.7	1.4	<b>C</b>
American Indian	41.6	1.4	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	31.4	1.1	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	24.4	0.8	<b>B</b>
<b>Percent of adults in fair or poor health<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	16.7		
White	15.7	1.0	
African American or Black	21.0	1.3	<b>C</b>
American Indian	25.8	1.6	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	10.2	0.7	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	11.6	0.7	<b>B</b>

<b>ADULT HEALTH</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Heart disease deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 166.0)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	257.8		
White	249.6	1.0	
African American or Black	308.7	1.2	<b>C</b>
American Indian	312.3	1.3	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	83.1	0.3	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	78.5	0.3	<b>A</b>
<b>Stroke deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 48.0)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	74.5		
White	70.1	1.0	
African American or Black	98.9	1.4	<b>C</b>
American Indian	74.6	1.1	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	42.2	0.6	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	31.4	0.5	<b>A</b>
<b>Diabetes deaths per 100,000 population (All mentions)<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 45.0)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	93.0		
White	78.1	1.0	
African American or Black	169.5	2.2	<b>D</b>
American Indian	154.6	2.0	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	41.6	0.5	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	41.2	0.5	<b>A</b>
<b>Chronic obstructive lung disease deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	45.4		
White	48.5	1.0	
African American or Black	31.8	0.7	<b>B</b>
American Indian	44.2	0.9	<b>B</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.6	0.2	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	7.7	0.2	<b>A</b>



<b>ADULT HEALTH</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>AIDS deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal – Reduce deaths from HIV infections to 0.7)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	5.6		
White	1.6	1.0	
African American or Black	21.2	13.3	<b>F</b>
American Indian	3.3	2.1	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.7	0.4	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	4.1	2.6	<b>D</b>
<b>Prostate cancer deaths per 100,000 male population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 28.8)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	35.7		
White	28.2	1.0	
African American or Black	79.6	2.8	<b>D</b>
American Indian	52.0	1.8	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	11.0	0.4	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	7.6	0.3	<b>A</b>
<b>Lung cancer deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 44.9)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	60.7		
White	61.3	1.0	
African American or Black	62.1	1.0	<b>B</b>
American Indian	47.5	0.8	<b>B</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	24.5	0.4	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	14.0	0.2	<b>A</b>
<b>Colorectal cancer deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 13.9)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	19.8		
White	18.6	1.0	
African American or Black	27.0	1.5	<b>C</b>
American Indian	16.1	0.9	<b>B</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.0	0.4	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	9.3	0.5	<b>A</b>
<b>Breast cancer deaths per 100,000 female population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 22.3)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	26.2		
White	24.4	1.0	
African American or Black	35.5	1.5	<b>C</b>
American Indian	24.0	1.0	<b>B</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.7	0.3	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	10.4	0.4	<b>A</b>

<b>COMMUNICABLE DISEASES<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>HIV and AIDS cases per 100,000 population<sup>†</sup></b>	<b>2001</b>		
All	20.1		
White	6.3	1.0	
African American or Black	66.5	10.5	<b>F</b>
American Indian	17.8	2.8	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.7	1.4	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	16.4	2.6	<b>D</b>
<b>Early Syphilis cases (Primary, Secondary &amp; Early Latent) per 100,000 population</b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 0.2)	<b>2001</b>		
All	11.8		
White	2.7	1.0	
African American or Black	37.4	13.9	<b>F</b>
American Indian	101.7	37.6	<b>F</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	◆	◆	◆
Hispanic or Latino	13.2	4.9	<b>F</b>
<b>Gonorrhea cases per 100,000 population</b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 19.0)	<b>2001</b>		
All	210.2		
White	38.0	1.0	
African American or Black	804.9	21.2	<b>F</b>
American Indian	110.1	2.9	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	192.9	5.1	<b>F</b>
Hispanic or Latino	90.8	2.4	<b>D</b>
<b>Chlamydia cases per 100,000 population</b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 3.0)	<b>2001</b>		
All	278.6		
White	99.7	1.0	
African American or Black	837.2	8.4	<b>F</b>
American Indian	261.2	2.6	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	185.2	1.9	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	389.2	3.9	<b>F</b>

◆ = Reliable rates for this indicator could not be calculated due to inadequate data or small number of events.

<sup>†</sup> HIV and AIDS cases by year of first report of individual. Rates per 100,000 population using the 2000 US Census population

<b>VIOLENCE AND INJURIES</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Homicide deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 3.0)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	7.8		
White	4.8	1.0	
African American or Black	18.4	3.8	<b>F</b>
American Indian	21.9	4.6	<b>F</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.5	0.9	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	11.5	2.4	<b>D</b>
<b>Suicide deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 5.0)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	11.2		
White	13.3	1.0	
African American or Black	5.6	0.4	<b>A</b>
American Indian	9.5	0.7	<b>B</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.7	0.4	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	4.4	0.3	<b>A</b>
<b>Motor vehicle deaths per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 9.2)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	19.6		
White	19.8	1.0	
African American or Black	21.8	1.1	<b>C</b>
American Indian	42.1	2.1	<b>D</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	14.4	0.7	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	27.4	1.4	<b>C</b>

<b>CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Deaths of children 1 to 17 years of age per 100,000 population<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	31.1		
White	30.4	1.0	
African American or Black	37.5	1.2	<b>C</b>
American Indian	53.8	1.8	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	28.7	0.9	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	29.2	1.0	<b>B</b>
<b>Pregnancies to teens ages 15-17 per 1,000 female population<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	46.7		
White	38.0	1.0	
African American or Black	72.4	1.9	<b>C</b>
American Indian	63.2	1.7	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	◆	◆	◆
Hispanic or Latina	90.0	2.3	<b>D</b>
<b>Percent of high school students who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days<sup>9</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 16.0)	<b>2001</b>		
All	27.8		
White	31.9	1.0	
African American or Black	19.2	0.6	<b>B</b>
American Indian	◆	◆	◆
Asian/Pacific Islander	◆	◆	◆
Hispanic or Latino	26.5	0.8	<b>B</b>
<b>Percent of children under age 18 who are overweight or obese (BMI &gt; = 95 percentile)<sup>10</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 5.0)	<b>2001</b>		
All	14.4		
White	13.6		
African American or Black	14.1	1.0	<b>B</b>
American Indian	13.1	1.0	<b>B</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	14.3	1.1	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	17.0	1.3	<b>C</b>

◆ = Reliable rates for these indicators could not be calculated due to inadequate data or small number of events.

<b>RISK BEHAVIORS AND HEALTH PROMOTION</b>	<b>Baseline Measure</b>	<b>Ratio to Whites</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Percent of adults who do not eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables a day<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>1998,2000, &amp; 2001</b>		
All	77.5		
White	76.2	1.0	
African American or Black	81.7	1.1	<b>C</b>
American Indian	86.4	1.1	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	71.0	0.9	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	82.4	1.1	<b>C</b>
<b>Percent of adults who engage in no leisure time physical activity<sup>5</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 20.0 percent)	<b>1998,2000, &amp; 2001</b>		
All	28.2		
White	25.8	1.0	
African American or Black	35.4	1.4	<b>C</b>
American Indian	43.0	1.7	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	34.5	1.3	<b>C</b>
Hispanic or Latino	37.1	1.4	<b>C</b>
<b>Percent adults 18+ who are overweight or obese (BMI&gt;25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	57.0		
White	54.7	1.0	
African American or Black	66.9	1.2	<b>C</b>
American Indian	59.3	1.1	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	38.6	0.7	<b>B</b>
Hispanic or Latino	58.1	1.1	<b>C</b>
<b>Percent of adults with high blood pressure<sup>5</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 16.0 percent)	<b>1997,1999, &amp; 2001</b>		
All	24.9		
White	23.5	1.0	
African American or Black	32.2	1.4	<b>C</b>
American Indian	20.9	0.9	<b>B</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.4	0.4	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	17.7	0.7	<b>B</b>
<b>Percent of adults who smoke<sup>5</sup></b> (Healthy People 2010 Goal = 12.0 percent)	<b>1997-2001</b>		
All	25.5		
White	25.8	1.0	
African American or Black	23.3	0.9	<b>B</b>
American Indian	35.3	1.4	<b>C</b>
Asian/Pacific Islander	13.3	0.5	<b>A</b>
Hispanic or Latino	31.9	1.2	<b>B</b>

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> Kids Count Census Online: From Population Reference Bureau, Analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 3 (tables p154A-p154H, P155A-P155H). Median family income for all families, both with and without children under age 18. Hispanics, who can be of any race, are included in the racial groups. The Hispanic median income is based on a separate tabulation of Hispanic versus non-Hispanic groups. Accessed on Friday, November 22, 2002 at 4PM from: <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/census/>
- <sup>2</sup> Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the 2000 Census. 2000 Summary File 3 (tables p154A-p154H, P155A-P155H).
- <sup>3</sup> 1997-2001 birth certificate and matched live birth/infant death certificate data.
- <sup>4</sup> 1997-2001 live birth certificate data for NC residents.
- <sup>5</sup> The North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), State Center for Health Statistics. BRFSS is an ongoing, monthly telephone survey, which collects data from randomly selected, non-institutionalized N.C. adults in N.C. households with telephones. The survey collects information on a broad array of health topics including insurance status, access to care, disability, chronic conditions, and health behaviors. Data are for 1997-2001, unless otherwise noted. For the BRFSS data in this Report Card, Hispanics are not included in the four racial groups. Therefore the four racial groups are White, non-Hispanic; African American, non-Hispanic; American Indian, non-Hispanic; and Asian, non-Hispanic.
- <sup>6</sup> 1997-2001 death certificates for N.C. residents, with surname matching for Hispanic/Latinos. Age-adjusted by the direct method using the 2000 U.S. total population as the standard (except the age 1-17 death rate).
- <sup>7</sup> North Carolina 2001 STD Surveillance Report: HIV/STD Prevention and Care Branch, Epidemiology and Special Studies Unit, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health.
- <sup>8</sup> 1997-2001 birth, abortion, fetal death records.
- <sup>9</sup> Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) data: 2001  
[http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/evaluation/youth\\_risk\\_behavior/yrbsindex.html](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/evaluation/youth_risk_behavior/yrbsindex.html)
- <sup>10</sup> Children seen in North Carolina health department sponsored clinics for a WIC visit or any child health visit or school-based health clinic visit during calendar year 2001. Percentiles were based on the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Year 2000 Body Mass Index (BMI) Reference.