



# American Indian Health in Wisconsin, 2015 Release Results from the Wisconsin Family Health Survey

According to the 2010 Census, 5.2 million people in the United States identify as American Indian and/or Alaska Native.<sup>1,2</sup> An estimated 86,000 American Indians live in Wisconsin, or 1.5% of the total population.<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin is home to 11 federally recognized Indian Tribes.

- Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin
- Forest County Potawatomi
- St. Croix Chippewa
- Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians
- Ho-Chunk Nation
- Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Oneida Nation
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Sokaogon Chippewa (Mole Lake)

## Demographics

Results from the 2009-2011 Wisconsin Family Health Survey (FHS) indicate that the American Indian population in Wisconsin is younger than the total state population. American Indians have a median age of 34, compared to 38 for the state. A younger median age means a higher proportion of children and young adults and a lower proportion of older adults than the total state population.

American Indians have lower rates of employment than the total state population. An estimated 56% of working age (ages 18-64) American Indians are employed (either full-time or part-time) compared to 68% of the state population of working age adults.

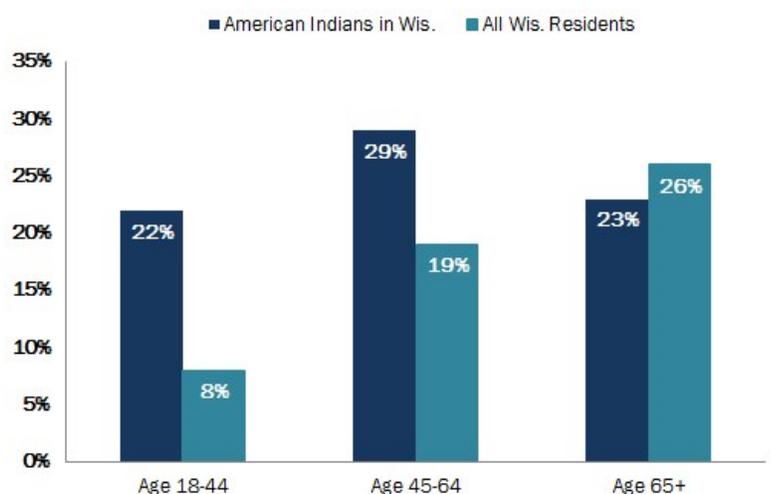
The rate of poverty among American Indians is approximately 20%, compared to 12% for the total state population.

## Health Status

According to FHS, an estimated 75% of American Indians were reported to be in “excellent,” “very good,” or “good” health. This rate is lower than that of the total state population (88%).

Although survey results indicate that most American Indians in Wisconsin are in good health, a greater proportion of American Indians are in fair/poor health compared to the total state population. As shown in Figure 1, American Indians 18 to 44 years of age are almost three times as likely as the total state population to be in fair or poor health. The proportion of American Indians in fair or poor health is approximately a quarter of the population, regardless of age.

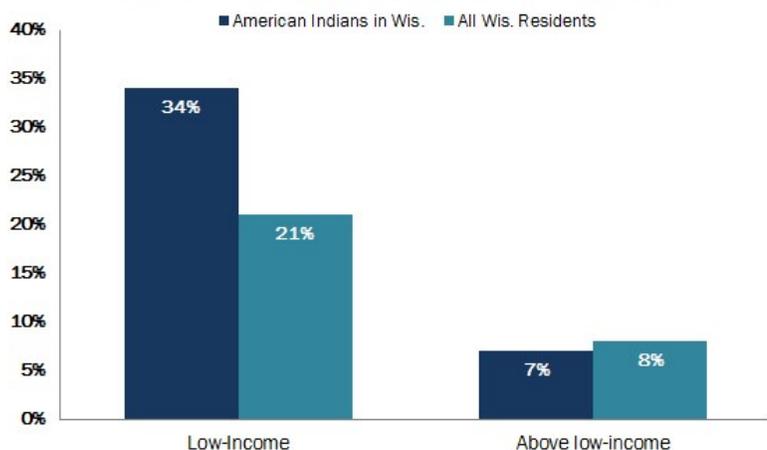
Figure 1: Percentage in Fair/poor Health by Age



Source: Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2009-2011

In contrast, the proportion of the total state population in fair or poor health increases with age, exceeding a quarter of the population only in those who are 65 years of age or older.

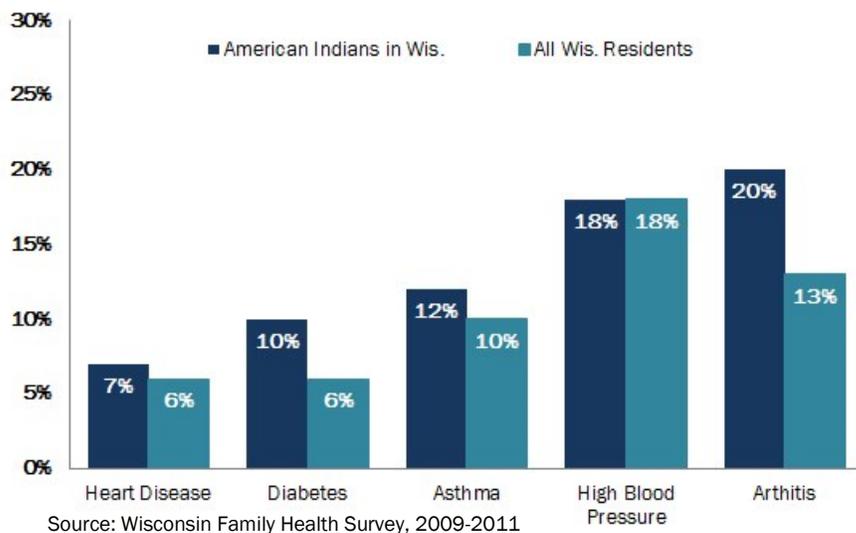
Figure 2: Percentage in Fair/poor Health by Income



Source: Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2009-2011

As can be seen in Figure 2, health status for both American Indians and the total state population varies by household income. Wisconsin residents living in low-income households, defined by a household income of less than two times the federal poverty threshold, are significantly more likely to be in fair/poor health than those living above the low-income threshold.<sup>4</sup> American Indians living in low-income households are significantly more likely to be in fair or poor health than the total low-income population of Wisconsin.

Figure 3: Percentage with Health Conditions, Age-Adjusted



Source: Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2009-2011

When controlling for differences in the age distribution of the American Indian population and the total state population, American Indians have higher rates of diabetes and arthritis than the total state population. There is no significant difference in rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, or asthma (Figure 3).

## Health Insurance and Health Care

American Indians who are members of a federally recognized tribe are eligible to use the federal health care system known as the Indian Health Service (IHS). IHS is a complex system of health care facilities. Some are administered by the federal government while others are run by individual tribes. Federal facilities serve any registered American Indian, regardless of tribal affiliation. Tribal members receive priority for health care at their own tribal facilities. However, as resources allow, tribal IHS facilities also provide health care to American Indians from other tribes. IHS is not defined as a health insurance provider. American Indians who rely on IHS and/or tribal funds as their sole source of health care coverage would be considered uninsured according to the Family Health Survey.

FHS data indicate the majority of American Indians in Wisconsin have health insurance coverage. However, American Indians are less likely than the total state population to have health insurance coverage. FHS includes a “point-in-time” question about insurance coverage. An estimated 84% of American Indians had health insurance at the time of the survey interview, compared to 92% of the total state population.

**Table 1: Health Insurance Coverage at Time of Interview and Over Past Year**

Eighty-one percent of American Indians had health insurance for all of the year prior to the survey interview, compared to 89% of the total state population. Twelve percent of American Indians were uninsured for all of the prior year; this is twice the uninsured rate of the total state population.

	American Indians	All Wisconsin Residents
<b>Insured at time of interview</b>	84%	92%
<b>Insured entire past year</b>	81%	89%
<b>Insured part of past year</b>	7%	5%
<b>Uninsured all of past year</b>	12%	6%

Source: Wisconsin Family Health Survey, 2009-2011

While survey results indicate that the majority of American Indians have health insurance coverage, American Indians are more likely than the total state population to report they are dissatisfied with the health care available to them and their families (21% vs. 12%). American Indians are also three times more likely to report they needed medical care or surgery in the last year but did not receive it (6% vs. 2%).

Results from the 2009-2011 Family Health Survey indicate Wisconsin’s American Indians face a number of health-related disparities. For more information on American Indian health and factors that influence disparities in the health of American Indians see the DHS publication, [Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 Baseline and Health Disparities Report](#). More information on the [Wisconsin Family Health Survey](#) is also available.

## Data Source and Endnotes

We would like to thank the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Epidemiology Center as well the Department of Health Services’ Office of Tribal Affairs for their guidance on this report. Unless otherwise noted, estimates were calculated from FHS, 2009-2011. FHS is a statewide, random-sample telephone survey of Wisconsin households. Once weighted, the survey results represent all people living in Wisconsin households. The survey is designed to provide estimates of health insurance coverage, various health conditions, and use of health care services for all members of a household.

1. For the purpose of this report, American Indian/Alaska Native is defined as any individual who reports American Indian or Alaska Native as their race, either alone or in combination with one or more other races.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, 2010 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics. [Factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov).
3. U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, 2010 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics (Wisconsin). [Factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov).
4. Low income is defined as under 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). The U.S. Census Bureau issues the poverty level thresholds annually. See <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/figures-fed-reg.cfm> for more information.
5. [Indian Health Service: Information for Patients](#).

