

GATHERING COMPARATIVE DATA GUIDE

The Health Indicators survey results in your Frequency Report tells you about the specific health risks of the seniors you surveyed. As you review your Frequency Report, it is important to put it into context. Comparing your results to available local, state, and/or national data will help give you a clearer picture of the health risks that are significant for the seniors you surveyed.

Comparative Data

Most questions on the Health Indicators survey are drawn from standardized surveys that are periodically administered—nationally, by states, or by localities—to understand the state of America’s health, identify the areas where we are doing well, areas where there are gaps, and to set goals for improving the health of the nation. There are several survey instruments used to collect data for health indicators, but two of the most widely used surveys are:

- The **U.S Census** (<http://www.census.gov/>): Captures descriptive and demographic information about people, communities, and the economy to help the federal government make decisions about the distribution of federal resources. The decennial census is taken every 10 years to capture every person living in the country. The **American Community Survey** (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html>) is a subset of the census administered to about 3 million households each year to provide updated and other information between the decennial census years.
- **Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)** (<https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>): Monitors the health of the nation, tracking chronic disease prevalence, health behaviors, and use of health services to identify where the gaps are and progress being made to reduce health risks.

Reliable Data Sources

To see how your results compare to those of other seniors in your zip code, county, state, or the nation as a whole, use trusted and reliable data sources such as the U.S. Census, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), or the Health Indicators Warehouse from the National Center for Health Statistics. Go to these websites and explore them. Many have interactive features that allow you to filter the data with your own search criteria (age, race, geographic area, etc...). These are all good places to start. You may also want to check your state and local health department websites to see what health issues are important to them and what data they are tracking and making available.

U.S. Census

Main website: <http://www.census.gov/>

Data tools: <http://www.census.gov/data/data-tools.html>

The U.S. Census’ data tools provide basic population information. Use “American Factfinder” to find popular facts (population, income, etc.) and frequently requested data about your community, or “Quick Facts” to find frequently requested State and County Census information.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/DataStatistics/>

The data and statistics page on CDC's website has many interactive tools for finding health-related and condition-specific information, including data from BRFSS, the National Health Interview Survey, and other instruments. Data is organized by topic (e.g. chronic conditions, healthy aging, physical activity, etc...); and by tool or resource (e.g. health data interactive, sortable risk factors and health indicators, etc...).

Healthy People 2020: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/data-search/Search-the-Data>

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2020 seeks to improve the health of Americans by setting national objectives for reducing health risks. Action campaigns and programs are undertaken by states, localities, and organizations to meet the national objectives. Its interactive tool Data2020 provides information on data and interventions specific to each of the Healthy People 2020 objectives.

State and Local Data Sources

New York State's Health Data NY: <https://health.data.ny.gov/>

Health Data NY offers a wide variety of data collected and maintained by the New York State Department of Health from numerous state and county level sources.

New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC-DOHMH):

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/data/datasets.shtml>

NYC-DOHMH collects and makes available to the public (via its data and statistics page) a wide variety of community health data. Neighborhood level data specific to people 65 years and older are available for a number of specific measures. Its interactive health data tool [EpiQuery](https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/epiquery/) (<https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/epiquery/>) can run real-time analyses on health datasets with varying topics and indicators for different NYC populations.

Additional Resources

Aging Stats: <https://agingstats.gov/>:

The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Statistics posts its report, *Older Americans 2016: Key Indicators of Well-Being*, online at Aging Stats. The statistics, reported in six subject areas: population, economics, health status, health risks and behaviors, health care, and environment, are available for download in a number of formats.

America's Health Rankings (United Health Foundation)(<http://www.americashealthrankings.org/>):

America's Health Rankings provides an assessment of the relative health of the nation. It also offers specific analysis of senior population health, across 35 measures, at both the national and state-by-state level. Its annual reports are available in English and Spanish.