

# Bexar County Health Status Report 2008

## Introduction & Purpose

In 2009, the Bexar County Health Collaborative, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, and Bexar County's Department of Community Resources collaborated to fund an oversample of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey for Bexar County to gain insight into health issues affecting local residents.

## Methodology

Established in 1984 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a state-based system of health surveys that collects information on health risk behaviors, preventive health practices, and health care access primarily related to chronic disease and injury. It is the largest continuously collected health survey in the world. Analysis of the data was completed by researchers at the Center for Community Health Development (CCHD), Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health.

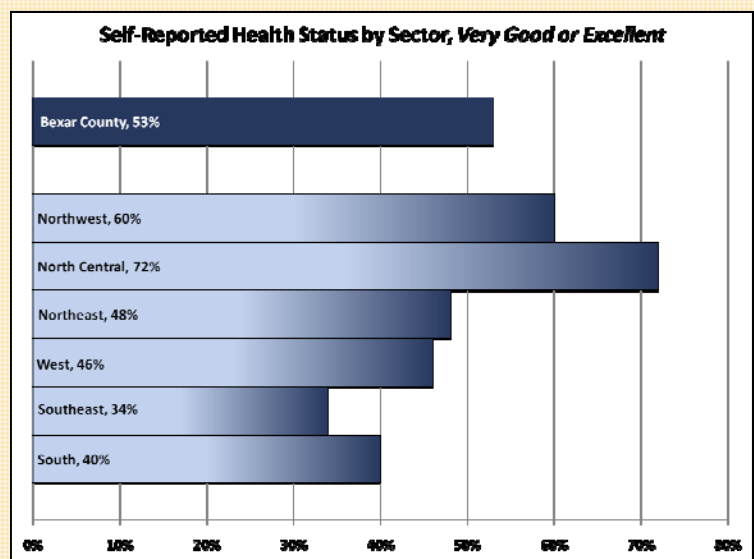
## KEY FINDINGS

In analyzing the BRFSS data for Bexar County— in comparison to reference populations, as well as among subregions within the county— several key findings emerged that merit attention:

### Overall Health

Physical and mental health status of Bexar County residents varies greatly in different regions of the county.

- Overall, 53 percent of Bexar County residents report their health status as *excellent* or *very good*, which is comparable to Texas and the U.S.
- A considerably larger proportion of residents in the North Central region of the county reported *excellent/very good* health status at 72 percent, which is more than twice the lowest region (Southeast: 34%)
- Over one-third of residents of the Southeast region reported five or more days of poor physical health in the last month (38%) compared to only 13 percent of North Central region residents.
- Across Bexar County, two-thirds of residents (67%) reported good mental health— with no poor mental health days in the last month.
- Similar to physical health, a significantly greater proportion of Southeast residents (26%) reported five or more days of poor mental health in the last month than the North Central region (11%).



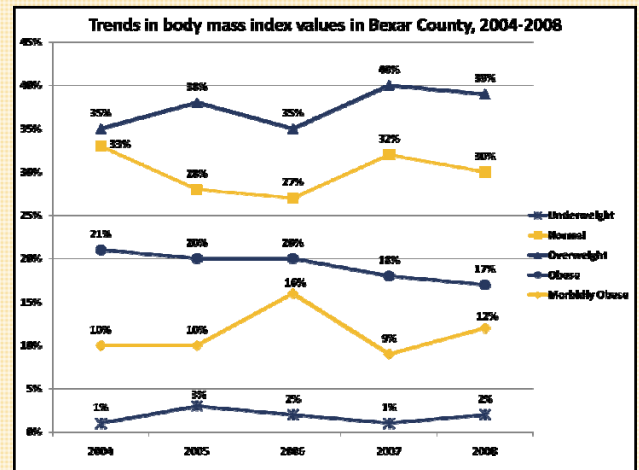
# Obesity/Physical Activity

The obesity rate is high and continues to rise in Bexar County.

- More than two-thirds of Bexar County adults (68%) were overweight or obese in 2008.
- From 2004 to 2008, there is evidence of a decreasing trend in those with a BMI in the normal range, and increasing trends in those classified as overweight and morbidly obese.
- Only 22 percent reported being advised to lose weight by their health service provider.

The majority of Bexar County adults engage in activities for the purpose of getting exercise.

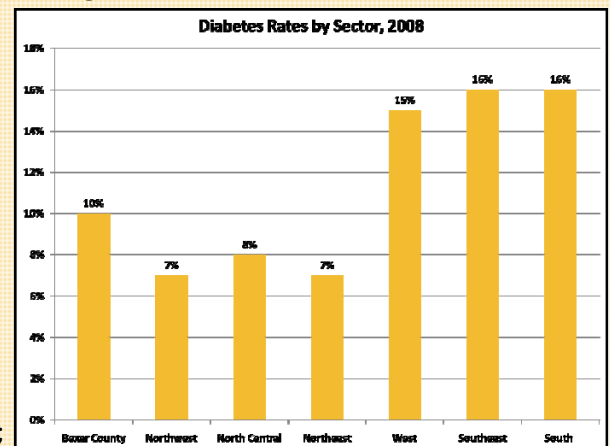
- Three of every four adults in Bexar County (77%) report that they participate in activities other than their regular job for the purpose of exercise, which is higher than Harris and Hidalgo counties (73% and 61% respectively), Texas (72%), and the U.S.



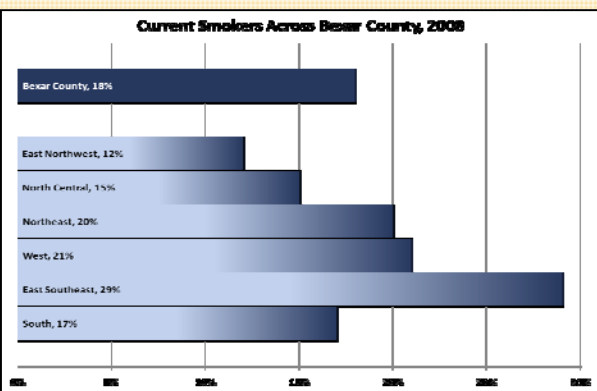
# Diabetes

Bexar County residents have a high rate of diabetes, and many cases are not managed well.

- One in 10 Bexar County adults suffers from type 2 diabetes.
- The diabetes rate is lowest in the northern areas of the county, with rates nearly double in the southern and west areas of the county. Rates are higher among those with less education and the lower income.
- The diabetes rate in Bexar County is higher among Black/African Americans (14%) and Hispanic/Latino (13%) compared to White/Caucasians at six percent.
- Only 57 percent of diabetics have had a class in diabetes self-management, with trends showing a steady decrease from 71 percent in 2004.
- Ten percent of diabetics in Bexar County *never* check their blood sugar; twelve percent of diabetics in Bexar County *never* check their feet.
- One in four diabetics in Bexar County (25%) didn't have their hemoglobin A1c checked in the past year, and 14 percent had never heard of A1c.
- Fourteen percent of diabetics in Bexar County reported not seeing a doctor regarding their diabetes in the past year, increasing from 11 percent in 2004.



# Tobacco Use



There are regional disparities in tobacco use in Bexar County.

- The overall rate of current smokers in Bexar County (18%) is roughly equivalent to the rate in Texas and the U.S. (both 19%).
- The rate of current smokers is highest in the Southeast region at 29 percent; this is double the rate of the lowest regions (Northwest: 12%; North Central: 15%).
- Over half of all current smokers in Bexar County (56%) reported trying to quit in the past year.

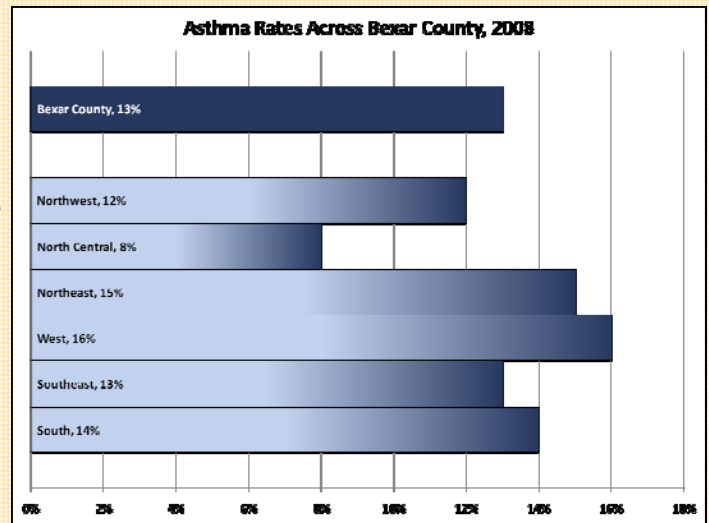
A total smoking ban in restaurants and bars would result in more business.

- While seven percent of residents said they would visit restaurants *less often* if there was a total smoking ban, 24 percent said they would eat at restaurants *more often*, resulting in a net positive change of 17 percent; eleven percent of residents said they would visit bars and clubs *less often* if there was a total smoking ban, but 19 percent said they would visit these establishments *more often*, resulting in a net positive change of eight percent.

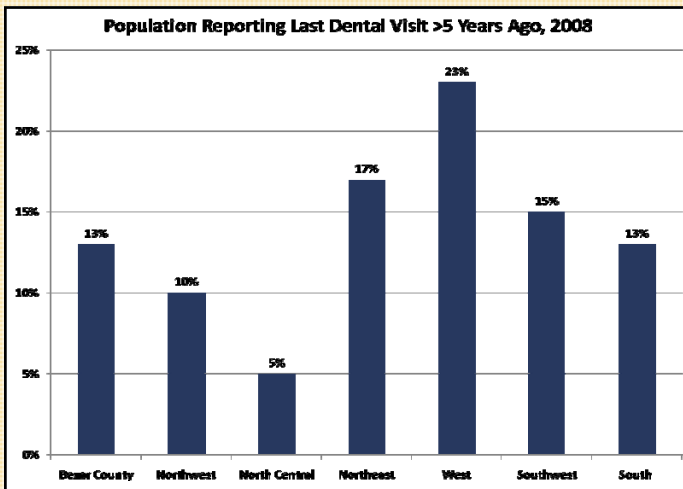
# Asthma

There are regional disparities in the rate of those who suffer from asthma in Bexar County.

- The rate of asthma in the more affluent North Central region of the county was eight percent. In areas of the county housing a greater proportion of economically disadvantaged residents, the rates are nearly double that— 16 percent in the West, 15 percent in the Northeast, and 14 percent in the South.
- While the BRFSS survey does not provide information on health behavior risk factors associated with asthma, there are several environmental factors linked to an increase in asthma— the more important behaviorally is cigarette smoking. We know that secondhand smoke exposure has also been linked to the development of asthma in early life. A review of several studies revealed that asthma was also 38 percent more common in overweight adults (those with a BMI greater than 25 but less than 30) and nearly twice as common among obese adults (those with a BMI of 30 or greater).



# Oral Health



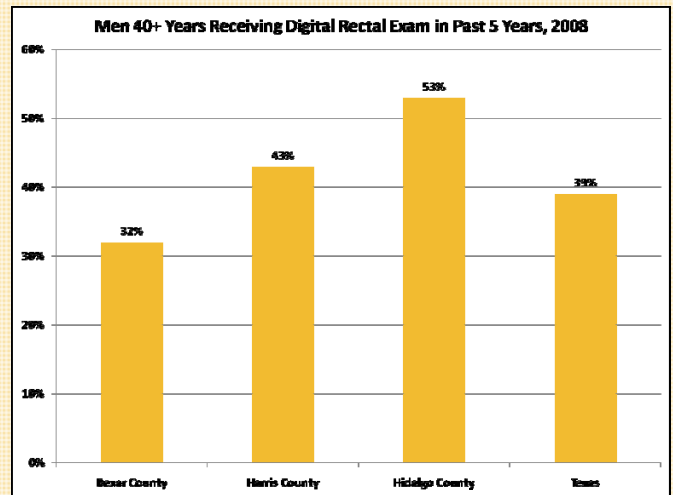
Oral health is a concern for half of the adult population.

- Only three in five Bexar County adults (59%) reports having dental insurance coverage.
- Over one-third of adults (37%) have not seen a dentist in the past year.
- In the West subregion, 23 percent of residents reported that their last dental visit was five or more years ago.
- Two in every five Bexar County adults (40%) report having had teeth removed because of decay or gum disease.
- Less than half of respondents (49%) reported their overall oral health status as excellent or very good.

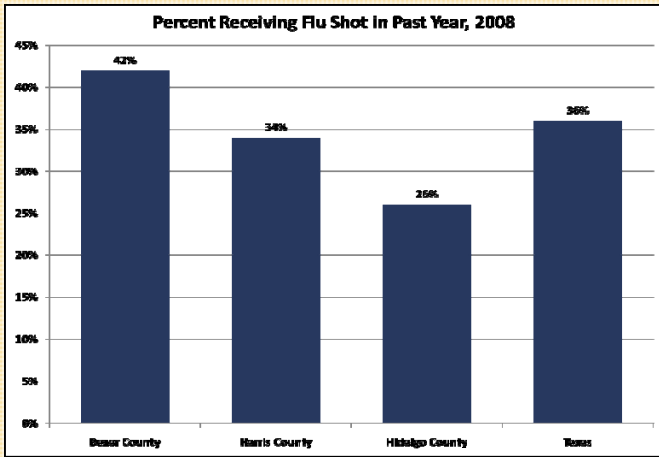
# Prostate Cancer

The rate of prostate cancer in the Northeast region of Bexar County is almost three times the county rate.

- Only a third (32%) of male Bexar County respondents 40 years and older reported receiving a digital rectal exam during the past 5 years— considerably lower than Harris County (43%), Hidalgo County (53%), and Texas (39%).
- Eight percent of men in the Northeast region have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, compared to less than one percent in the West and three percent in Bexar County overall.
- While the BRFSS survey does not provide information on health behavior risk factors associated with prostate cancer, some studies have suggested that diet plays a role in the risk of prostate cancer— such as red meat, high fat dairy products, and excess calcium intake. Obesity is also correlated with some forms of aggressive disease.



# Flu Shot



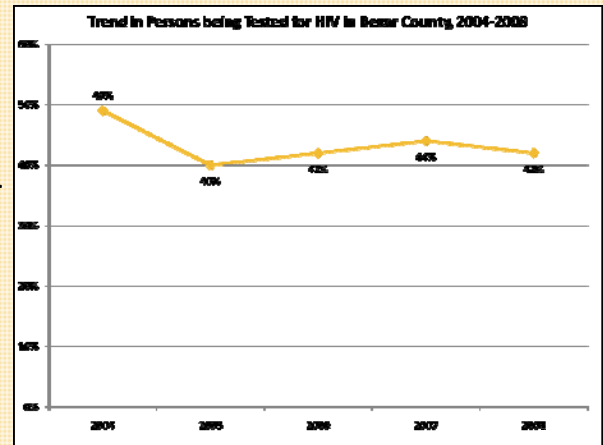
Bexar County residents receive flu shots at a higher rate than their peer counties and the state.

- Almost half of Bexar County adults (42%) reported having a flu shot in 2008, compared to Harris County at 34 percent, Hidalgo County at 26 percent, and Texas at 36 percent.
- Each subregion of the county had a relatively similar proportion of residents receiving the flu shot in 2008, with the highest in the Northeast at 46 percent and the South at 44 percent. The lowest was in the Southeast at 35 percent.

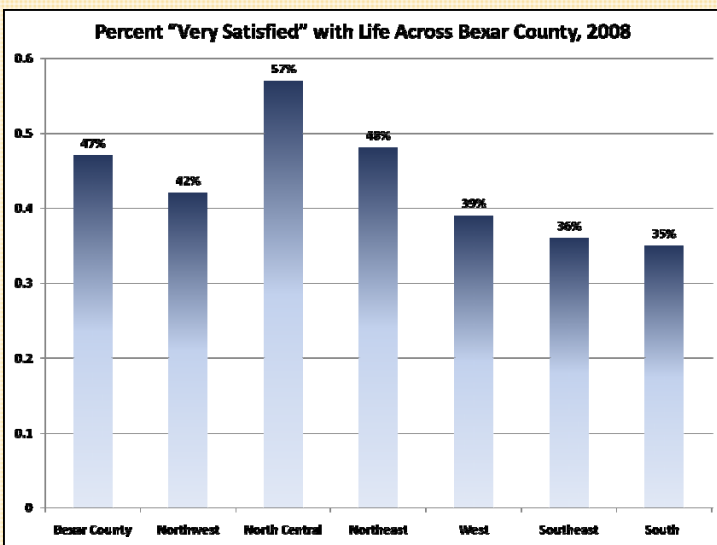
# HIV Testing

The rate of people being tested for HIV is dropping.

- While about half the population reported ever having an HIV test in 2004, only 42 percent reported being tested in 2008.
- The proportion of Bexar County residents being tested for HIV in 2008 is slightly less than Harris County at 48 percent and Texas at 44 percent. However, it is more than the 36 percent of Hidalgo County residents that were tested for HIV during the same year.
- The rate of people tested is lowest in the South at 31 percent, and highest in the West and Northeast at 53 percent and 52 percent respectively.



# Life Satisfaction



Life satisfaction varies greatly in different areas of Bexar County.

- Overall, 47 percent of residents report being *very satisfied* with their life, which is equivalent to the State of Texas. There is, however, substantial variation across the county that corresponds with demographic differences in education, employment, and income.
- Residents of the North Central region of the county reported significantly higher satisfaction with 57 percent indicating they were *very satisfied* with their life.
- Residents in the South (35%), Southeast (36%), and West regions (39%) of the county reported the lowest satisfaction rates with just over one in three residents identifying themselves as *very satisfied* with their life.