

Obtaining local data from Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

A new type of local estimate is available through the county health rankings: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

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Existing sources for BRFSS

The “SMART” BRFSS website includes BRFSS data and documentation for selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas, and can be found here:

- https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/smart/smart_2015.html

County Health Rankings has provided county-level BRFSS estimates based on up to seven years of data for smaller counties, but these estimates are still often suppressed or have wide confidence intervals because BRFSS samples are small.

What's new is local estimates from BRFSS data based on *multi-level modeling*

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/content/rankings-include-county-level-data-brfss-merge-2011-prior-years-how-did-rankings-account>

- The county data for 2014 (in the 2016 County Health Rankings) is really a combination of county and state data.
- More weight is given to county data when more people in the county included in the BRFSS sample.
- State data that informs these estimates is adjusted to account for differences between state and county demographics.
- Therefore these are more complicated estimates, and subject to more sources of error than the old estimates.
- These are more precise estimates than the old method gave.

County Health Rankings provides only a few variables from BRFSS

- Poor or fair health
- Poor physical health days
- Mentally unhealthy days
- Adult smoking
- Adult obesity
- Physical inactivity index
- Excessive drinking

Where to find the data

- You can download data here:
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data>
- or use the menu driven system from the main page:
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>
- Some additional BRFSS estimates based on the same or a similar method is available via the CDC interactive atlases for diabetes and CVD
<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/atlas/countydata/atlas.html>
<https://nccd.cdc.gov/DHDSPAtlas/>

Finding the data source in County Health Rankings (always know your data source)

1. click on the “Measures” tab

2. click on the “Data Source” link

