

Health



Where You Live Matters

a Grow Data Report

What you'll find in this chapter

Data about:

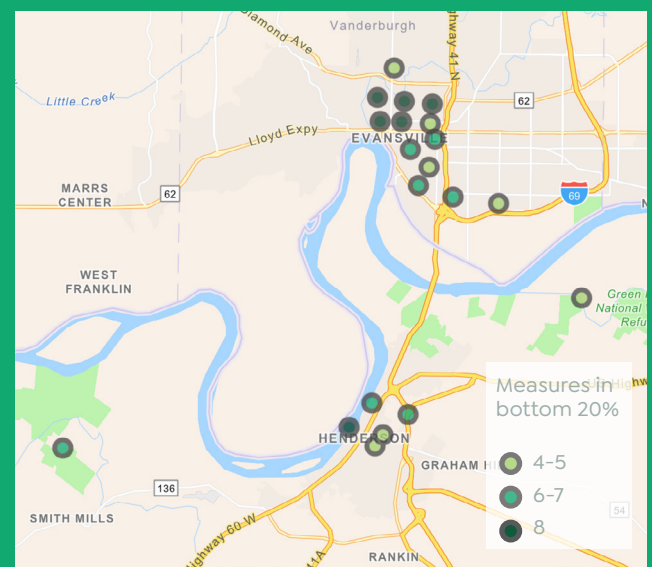
- Life expectancy at birth
- Top causes of mortality
- Disability
- Low birth weight and prenatal care
- Population with Medicaid
- Ratio of healthcare providers to population

Key Findings

- The region has a higher life expectancy (76.4 years) than Indiana (75.6 years). However, life expectancy varies from county to county, ranging from 74.3 in Henderson County to 79 years in Posey County.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the region and is on the rise.
- One in four adults in the region has been diagnosed with depression at some point.
- Rural Posey County has the fewest healthcare providers per resident, with one primary care physician for every 3,140 people and one mental health provider for every 8,354 residents.

Where you live matters

These areas ranked in the bottom 20% for at least four of the following statistics and conditions: heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stroke, depression, poor physical health, poor mental health, and rates of disability. The neighborhoods of Downtown Henderson, CHAIN, STAR, Jacobsville, and Business 41 have high rates for all these indicators.

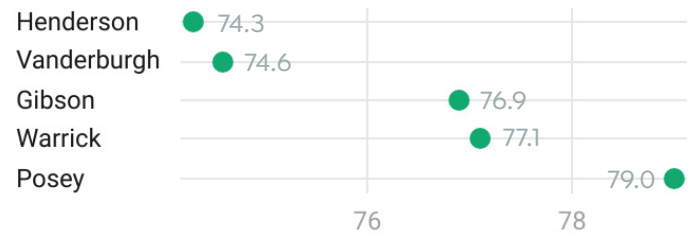


Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is one of the key indicators of population health and well-being. Life expectancy influences planning for future healthcare needs, the aging population, public health initiatives, social security systems, and retirement planning.¹ The region has a slightly higher life expectancy (76.4 years) than Indiana (75.6 years). However, life expectancy in the area varies between counties, ranging from 74.3 years in Henderson County to 79 years in Posey County. Vanderburgh has the second lowest life expectancy (74.6 years).

Henderson and Vanderburgh Counties have lowest life expectancy

Years of life expectancy at birth by county



Source: Polis Center analysis of data from National Center for Health Statistics - Natality and Mortality Files; Census Population Estimates Program, 2019-2021

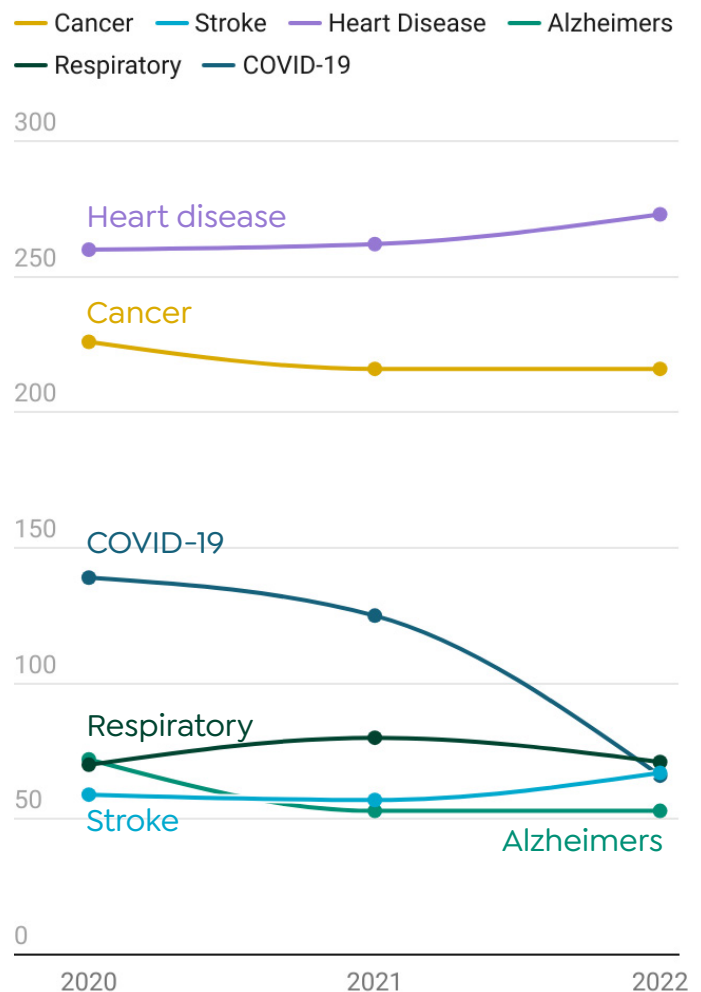
Mortality

The health and well-being of communities have a connection to socio-economic and environmental factors. Health is influenced by socio-economic, behavioral, and biological factors, including living conditions, health outcomes, and health behaviors. While several health outcomes can affect healthcare prioritization and resource allocation, we are focusing on the leading causes of death.²

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the Greater Evansville Region, just as it is in the United States. The mortality rate from heart disease has been increasing in recent years. For example, in 2020, the mortality rate from heart disease was 260 (per 100,000), which increased to 273 in 2022. Cancer is the second leading of death in the region. However, the rate has decreased slightly in recent years. The mortality rate of the region is also affected by COVID-19, which ranked as the third highest cause of death in 2020 and 2021. It fell to the fifth leading cause of death in 2022. The mortality rate from respiratory diseases and stroke remains constant, while Alzheimer's declined after 2020.

Heart disease is leading cause of death, COVID-19 was still leading cause in 2022

Top causes of death in five-county region, crude rate per 100,000



Source: CDC Places

While the region’s mortality rate is highest for cancer, heart disease, and stroke, the prevalence rate is highest for diabetes and depression. Nearly 24% of adults have been diagnosed at some point with depression and 12% with diabetes. Henderson County ranked highest in both diseases, and Warrick County ranked lowest. Depression is one of the more common health disorders and can lead to other adverse outcomes, including cardiovascular disease and premature mortality.³ Diabetes is ranked as one of the top chronic diseases and contributes to other complications such as stroke, kidney, and heart disease.⁴

Prevalence rates are similar across counties for these selected conditions

Percent of adults who, when surveyed, say they have been diagnosed with these conditions at some point

	Cancer	Heart Disease	Stroke	Diabetes	Depression
Evanville Region	9%	8%	4%	12%	24%
Vanderburgh	9%	7%	4%	12%	25%
Warrick	9%	7%	3%	11%	22%
Posey	10%	8%	4%	12%	22%
Gibson	9%	9%	4%	13%	26%
Henderson	10%	8%	4%	13%	26%

Source: CDC Places

Physical and Mental Health

Physical and mental health are vital in shaping individual quality of life. Good physical health supports a higher energy level and may reduce the risk of serious illness. On the other hand, poor physical health may hinder mobility, restrict freedom, and limit independence. Poor mental health can influence cognitive abilities and affect the ability to maintain healthy relationships.⁵

Warrick County has the lowest rates of poor mental health and poor physical health days per month

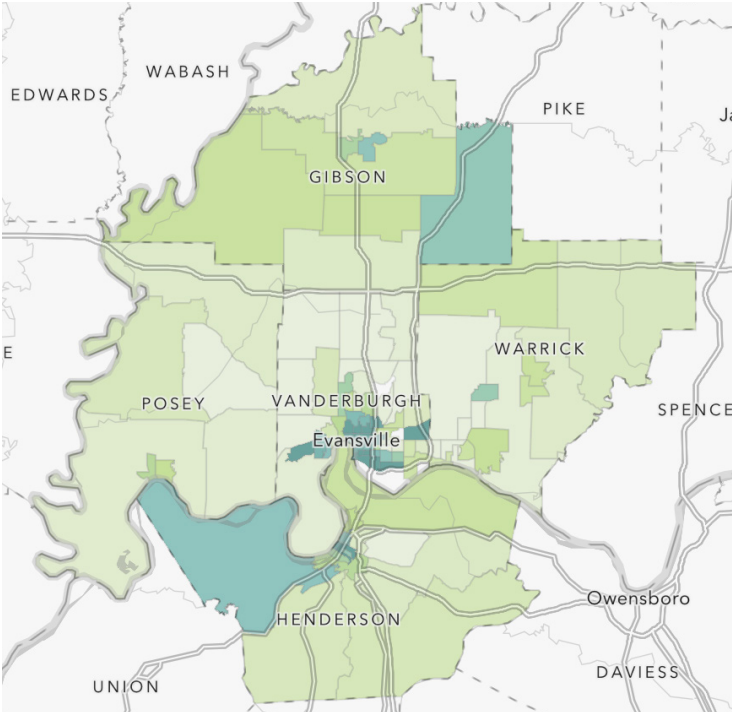
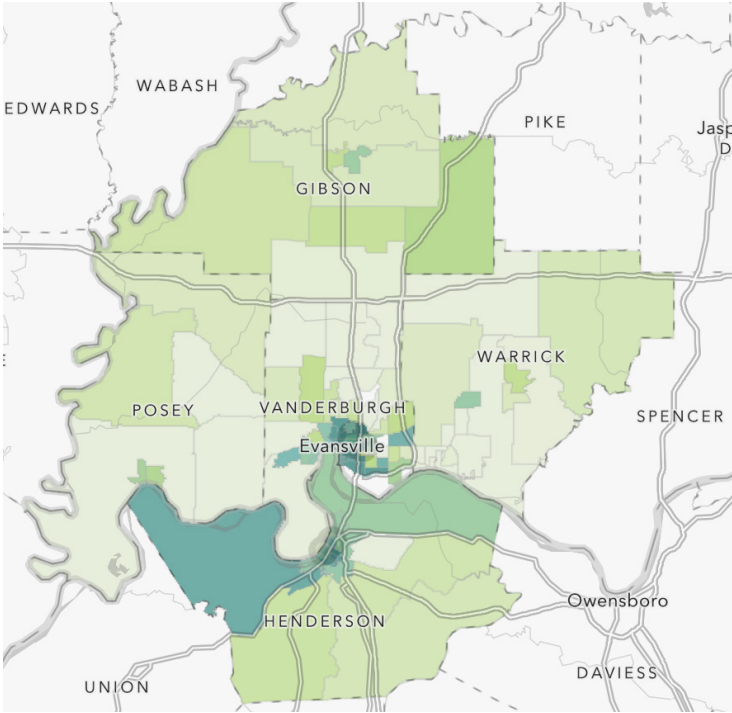
Percentage of adults with more than 14 poor mental health days or poor physical health days per month

Evansville Region	13%	17%
Warrick	11%	15%
Posey	13%	16%
Vanderburgh	13%	18%
Henderson	14%	17%
Gibson	16%	20%

Source: CDC Places (2022)

Data from CDC Places indicates that around 17% of adults suffer from more than 14 poor mental health days per month, and 13% of adults suffer from more than 14 poor physical health days per month. (Gibson County ranked highest in both cases, and Warrick ranked lowest).

Map: Places Where Mental and Physical Health are Worst



Source: CDC Places

Disability

In the American Community Survey (ACS),⁶ disability is divided into six categories: ambulatory, cognitive, hearing, independent living difficulty, self-care disability, and vision. Ambulatory difficulty refers to difficulties related to walking and climbing stairs. Difficulty in concentration, remembering, or decision-making refers to a cognitive disability, and difficulty in personal care activities such as bathing or dressing is categorized as a self-care disability. Difficulty in hearing or deafness is described as a hearing disability, and difficulty in seeing is referred to as a vision disability. Independent

living disability is defined as difficulty in doing errands alone, including visiting a doctor’s office or shopping, because of physical, mental, and emotional conditions.

Ambulatory is the highest-ranked disability in the region, as 8% of adults suffer from this, followed by cognitive (6%) and independent living difficulty (6%). Henderson County has the highest percentage of those three types of disabilities. The median age of Henderson County is 41.2 years, which is higher than that of the United States (38.1 years). In addition, nearly 19 percent of the population is 65 years and older. As disability rates tend to increase with age,⁷ the demographic characteristics of Henderson County may have contributed to the higher disability rates in the area.

We compare the disability rate by age group. We found that seniors (65+) ranked highest in all six disabilities. Racial disparities were visible in the disability rate as a higher percentage of Black adults (19%) had at least one of the six disabilities compared to Whites (16%) and Hispanics (15%).

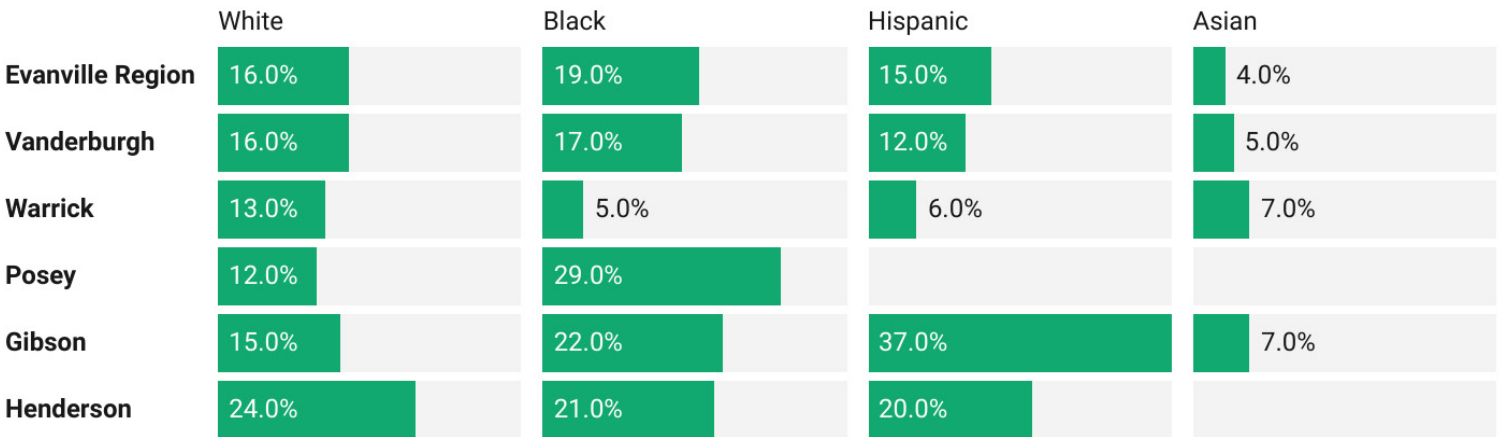
Disability rates by type of disability and county

Types of Disability	Ambulatory	Cognitive	Hearing
Evanville Region	8%	6%	5%
Vanderburgh	8%	6%	4%
Warrick	7%	4%	4%
Posey	6%	5%	4%
Gibson	8%	8%	5%
Henderson	11%	9%	7%

Types of Disability	Independent Living Difficulty	Self-Care Difficulty	Vision
Evanville Region	6%	2%	4%
Vanderburgh	6%	3%	3%
Warrick	4%	2%	2%
Posey	5%	1%	2%
Gibson	6%	2%	3%
Henderson	10%	3%	8%

Racial disparities exist in rates of disability

Share of population with a disability by race, ethnicity, and county



*Hispanic and Asian data is missing for Posey County and Asian rate is unavailable for Henderson County

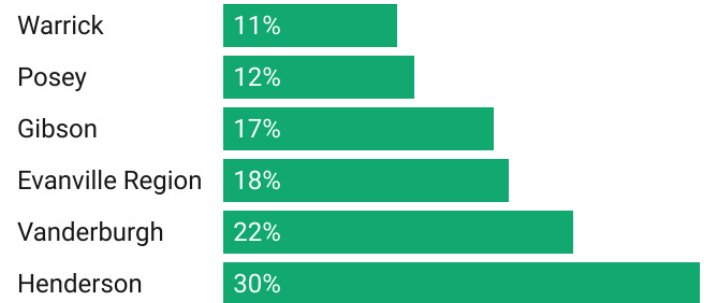
Chart: Visualization by Polis Center • Source: ACS 2022 5-Yr Averages • Created with Datawrapper

Medicaid

Medicaid is a dual federal and state program that offers medical coverage to low-income individuals and families. Enrollment in Medicaid is divided into four groups: children, adults under age 65 years, seniors (age 65+), and disabled persons.⁸ In the Evansville region, 18% of the population received Medicaid benefits. The rate is higher in Henderson County (30%) and lowest in Warrick County (11%). Vanderburgh County has the region's second-highest (22%) Medicaid-enrolled population. Factors such as age, disability, and high poverty rates contribute to the higher Medicaid population in those two Counties. For example, Henderson County has the lowest median household income (\$55,530) and the highest poverty rate (17%).

Nearly one third of Henderson County residents are on Medicaid and one fifth of Vanderburgh County

Share of population receiving Medicaid



Source: Polis Center analysis of data from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2022

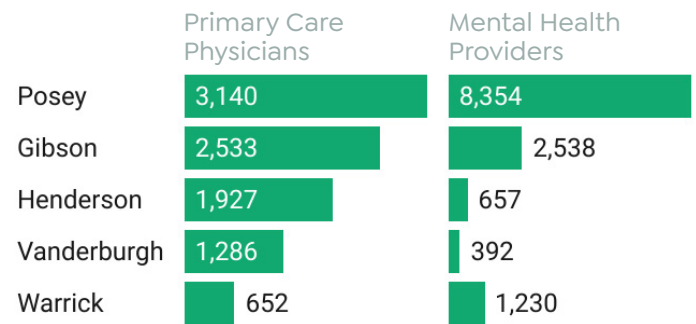
Access to Healthcare

Primary Care Physician Ratio (PCP Ratio) and Mental Health Provider Ratio (MHP Ratio) are commonly used metrics to explore healthcare access⁹. PCP ratio indicates how available primary healthcare services are, and MHP ratio measures the number of mental health providers such as physiologists and social workers. A lower ratio (e.g., 500:1) represents better access to those services, while a higher ratio (e.g., 5000:1) suggests fewer providers and limited access.

Posey County has the highest primary care physician and mental health provider ratios in the region. For every 3,140 residents, there is only one primary care physician, and for every 8,354 residents, there is only one mental health provider. Warrick County has the lowest physician ratio, and Vanderburgh County has the highest mental health provider rate.

Rural counties have fewer healthcare providers and much higher ratio of patients per provider

Residents per healthcare provider



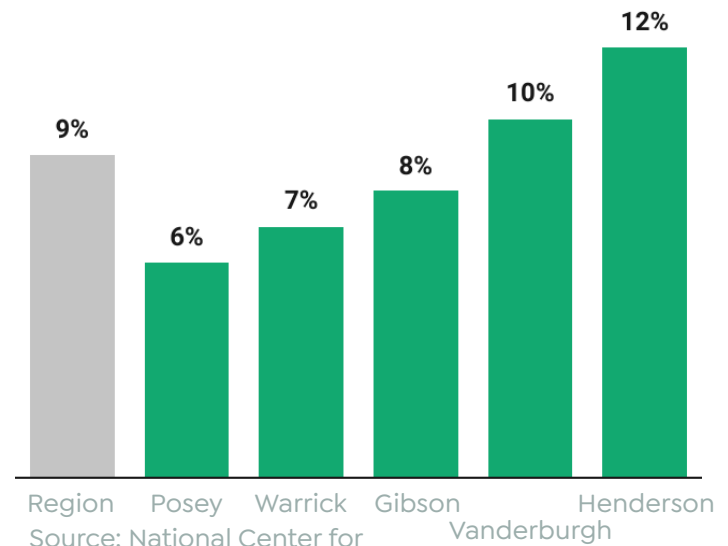
Source: CMS, National Provider Identification, 2023 and Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association, 2021

Low Birthweight

Low birth weight is an important indicator of maternal health, nutritional status, and healthcare access.¹⁰ Babies born with low birth weight have a higher risk of dying compared to normal birth weight babies and are often linked with other health issues later in life, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and neurodevelopment issues.¹¹ Data from the National Center for Health Statistics (2023) shows that nearly 9% were born in the Greater Evansville Region are associated with low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds). The rate is highest in Henderson County (12%) and lowest in Posey (6%). Vanderburgh County has the second highest (10%), followed by Gibson (8%).

More than one in ten babies born in Vanderburgh and Henderson counties have a low birth weight

Percent of live births with low birth weight



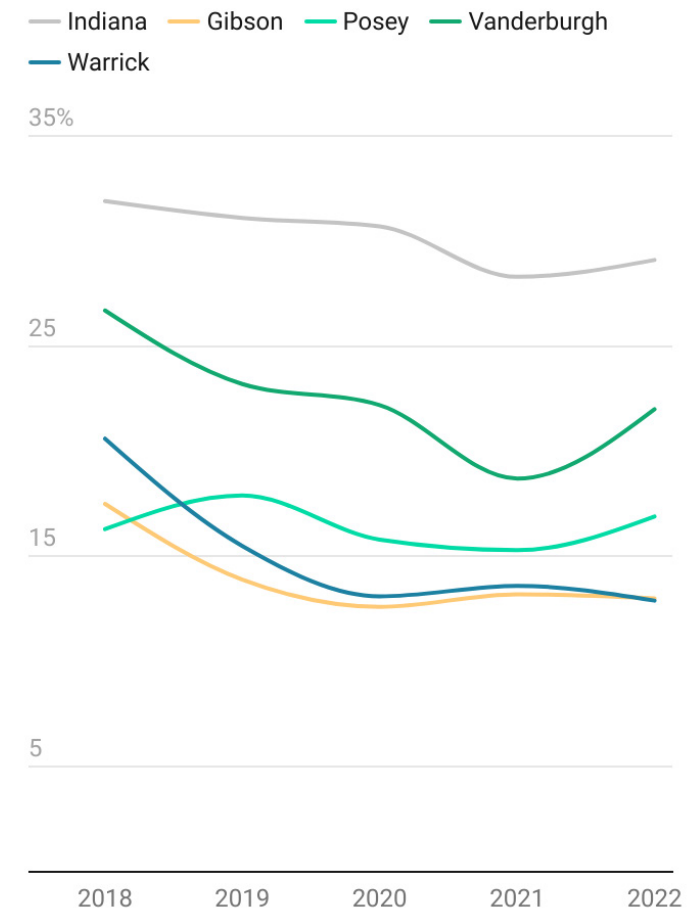
Source: National Center for Health Statistics, 2016-2022

Early Prenatal Care

Prenatal care allows healthcare providers to monitor the health of the mother and baby, examine potential problems, and take necessary steps to ensure a healthy pregnancy and delivery. Pregnant women should have access to prenatal services as they become aware of the pregnancy, especially in the first three months. The Greater Evansville Region maintains a better rate of prenatal care than the Indiana State average between 2018-2022. The region benefits from facilities such as Ascension St. Vincent Evansville, which provides extensive maternal-fetal medicine, neonatal intensive care, and certified nurse-midwifery services. Local health initiatives like “My Healthy Baby” also connect pregnant women to support services, including personalized guidance during and after pregnancy. These programs are part of Indiana’s broader efforts to improve maternal and child health outcomes through increased funding and partnerships with community organizations.¹²

Regional counties have lower rates of early prenatal care than the state average

Percent of women without prenatal care in the first trimester



Source: Indiana Department of Health

Although the Greater Evansville Region has higher prenatal care in the first trimester than the state, the rate of lack of prenatal care varies from Vanderburgh (22%) to Warrick (13%). The

rate slightly improved in 2020; however, a slight decrease was observed in 2022. The existing racial breakdown of lack of prenatal care for Vanderburgh County also exhibited disparities as both Black (32%) and Hispanic (31%) women have a higher rate compared to white (18%) women. While rates by race are unavailable for other counties due to data suppression, future studies should examine the existing racial disparities to offer a more comprehensive overview.

Endnotes

- 1 National Academies of Sciences, Division on Engineering, Physical Sciences, Board on Mathematical Sciences, Their Applications, Committee on Population, & Committee on the Long-Run Macroeconomic Effects of the Aging US Population—Phase II. (2015). The growing gap in life expectancy by income: Implications for federal programs and policy responses.
- 2 National Center for Health Statistics. (2022). Leading Causes of Deaths. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm>
- 3 Hare DL, Toukhsati SR, Johansson P, Jaarsma T. Depression and cardiovascular disease: a clinical review. *European heart journal*. 2014 Jun 1;35(21):1365-72.
- 4 Siromani JD. The impacts of different stages of chronic kidney disease, as well as the co-morbidities of diabetes and heart disease, on patients' quality of life (Doctoral dissertation, Memorial University of Newfoundland).
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- 6 Altman BM, Madans J, Weeks JD. An evaluation of the American Community Survey indicators of disability. *Disability and health journal*. 2017 Oct 1;10(4):485-91.
- 7 Berlau DJ, Corrada MM, Kawas C. The prevalence of disability in the oldest-old is high and continues to increase with age: findings from The 90+ Study. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. 2009 Nov;24(11):1217-25.
- 8 Colello KJ, Morton WR. Medicaid eligibility: older adults and individuals with disabilities. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. 2019 Dec 1.
- 9 Kroenke K, Unutzer J. Closing the false divide: sustainable approaches to integrating mental health services into primary care. *Journal of general internal medicine*. 2017 Apr;32(4):404-10.
- 10 WHO (2024), <https://www.who.int/data/nutrition/nlis/info/low-birth-weight>.
- 11 Cutland et al. Low birth weight: Case definition & guidelines for data collection, analysis, and presentation of maternal immunization safety data. (2017) <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5710991/#:~:text=Low%20birth%20weight%20is%20a%20valuable%20public%20health%20indicator%20of,14%5D%2C%20%5B15%5D>.
- 12 My Healthy Baby, <https://www.in.gov/myhealthybaby/for-the-public/>.