

Oregon Racial and Ethnic Group Health Status

Based on BRFSS indicators (baseline data from 1989-94)

The purpose of the BRFSS is to collect uniform, state-based data on preventive health practices and risk behaviors that are linked to chronic diseases, injuries, and preventable infectious diseases in the U.S. population. The data are collected through monthly telephone interviews conducted among a sample of each state's adult population. When aggregated, the data show the prevalence of risk behaviors and preventive health practices on an annual basis. Respondents' participation is voluntary, and personal identifiers such as names and addresses are not used. Responses are combined to provide information about the health practices of state residents.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Public Health Service initiated the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) in 1984. Early in 1988, Oregon conducted a point-in-time telephone survey modeled on the BRFSS instrument in use at that time. Beginning in 1989, Oregon has participated in this federally coordinated program by interviewing a randomly selected adult in about 250 households each month.

Because of the state's demographic composition and the fact of chance selection of households, most interviews are conducted with non-Hispanic Whites. In fact, on average, fewer than 25 respondents are selected each month from among minority populations in the state: Asians and Pacific Islanders, Blacks or African Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives, or Hispanics and Latinos. Thus it requires many months of data collection before enough members from each group has been interviewed to permit reliable prevalence estimates.