

Utah Department of Health Report Evaluates Health Disparities Uniquely by Legislative District

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SALT LAKE—

After a data request from the legislature, the Utah Department of Health Office of Health Disparities published a [report](#) earlier this year on the status of health disparities by legislative district in Utah. This report illustrates an unfortunate reality for many Utahns: health can be a very different experience based on where you live.

This week the Department of Health sent the [top line data points](#) of this report to the Governor's office as the priority of their monthly update.

What is a health disparity?

The Office of Health Disparities defines a health disparity as:

"Health disparities are more than adverse health outcomes. Although all health disparities are adverse health outcomes, not all adverse health outcomes are health disparities. A "disparity" implies that the difference is avoidable, unfair, and unjust. Health disparities are differences in health outcomes closely linked to economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and geographic disadvantage."

Key Data Points:

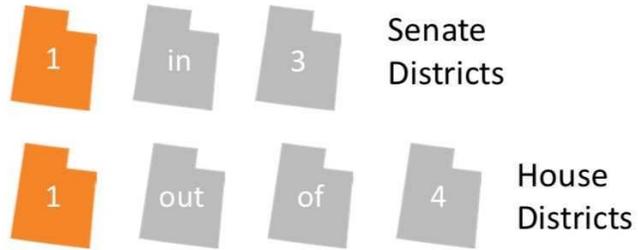
- **72% of Senate districts and 52% of House districts** have health disparities in life expectancy at birth, the most prevalent health disparity in Utah.
 - *For example, between Senate Districts one and two, the former encompasses Glendale which has a life expectancy of 75 years old and uninsurance rate of 20% while the latter encompasses the East Bench which has an uninsurance rate of 1.9% and a life expectancy of 86 years. A few miles represents a life expectancy discrepancy of over 10 years.*
- **45% of Senate districts and almost 1/3** of House districts experience health disparities in: health care coverage, adults reporting current smoking, and adult obesity.

- **Roughly 25% of both Senate and House districts** experience a health disparity in: drug poisoning deaths, poor or fair general health, suicide, poor mental health, diabetes, and infant mortality.

WHERE YOU LIVE IN UTAH HELPS TO PREDICT YOUR HEALTH

Burden of Disparities Among Districts

Figure 2. Some districts shouldered a high burden of health disparities.



experienced **6 or more** health disparities

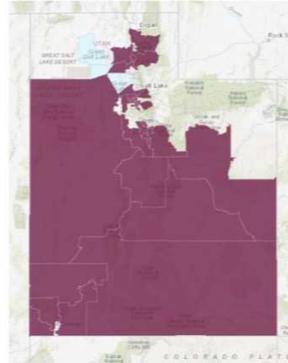
Health Disparities by Legislative District

Figure 1. Most legislative districts experienced health disparities (76% of Senate districts and 57% of House districts).

Senate Districts

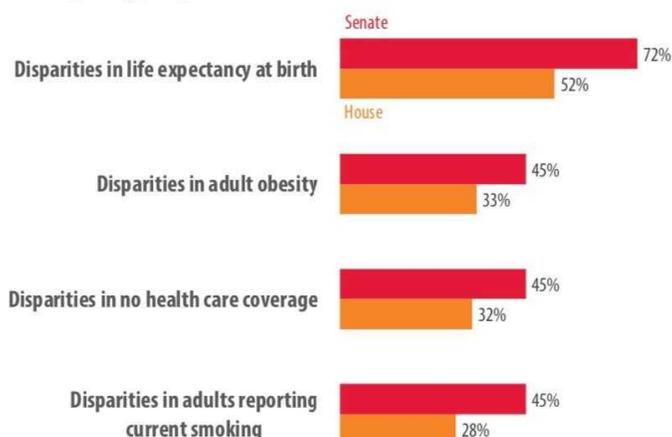


House Districts



Gaps in Opportunities

Figure 3. Senate and House districts in Utah experienced gaps in opportunities for their constituents to live long, healthy, quality lives.



Images credited to the Office of Health Disparities at the Utah Department of Health, report found [here](#)

Courtney Bullard, education and collaborations director at Utah Health Policy Project said, "This report gives legislators the unique opportunity to create policies for their constituents that targets the real, underlying conditions that affect health. As this data shows, health outcomes aren't necessarily caused by health-related issues. We have folks come to UHPP to enroll in insurance every day, but that is just one piece of improving someone's health. Where someone lives, what their transportation options are, how close they live to a hospital, if they have access to affordable childcare, healthy food, good air, and education all contribute to their overall health. We have to start crafting policies that connect health to everything else it touches in a person's life."

Ciriac Alvarez Valle, health policy and community engagement fellow at Voices for Utah Children said, "Your zip code should not determine your health. Studies show that what is good for parents is good for their children therefore, it's important for us to address both the needs of parents and children for the overall health of our community. Utah should be a place where families and children can thrive regardless of geography or income among other things. We will continue to work on policies that address the needs of our communities that directly correlate to the health of families like early childhood education, juvenile justice, tax & budget, and ensuring all children have health coverage."

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