

NEWS RELEASE



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UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

FOR THE GOOD HEALTH OF NEVADA

Health Report Card: Nevada leads nation in smoking and chronic drinking

Lynne Williams/Lynette Boggs, medical school information
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

How healthy is the Nevada lifestyle compared to the rest of the country?

According to survey findings recently made at the University of Nevada School of Medicine, we're the worst in the nation when it comes to smoking and chronic drinking. And only two other states have worse drinking and driving statistics.

The Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) is a national survey commissioned annually by the Centers for Disease Control to measure behavioral health risk categories such as the state percentage of adults who smoke. Sandra Daugherty, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the medical school's Department of Family and Community Medicine, directed the survey. Other categories measured included the Nevada statistics for drinking and driving, seat belt use, and exercise regimen.

More than 1,600 Nevada adults over 18 were randomly selected for participation in the 1992 BRFSS, funded by the American Heart Association, the Washoe and Clark County Health Departments and the Centers for Disease Control. The survey was conducted separately in Washoe and Clark counties to provide estimates of high-risk behavior in the two urban counties.

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"This profile is the basis for the School of Medicine's ongoing efforts to encourage the public to reduce health risks tied to behaviors which can lead to costly diseases and also premature death," says Dr. Daugherty. It was also discovered that health risk behaviors are different for the northern and southern areas of Nevada, adds Martin Atherton, state biostatistician. For example, 32 percent of Clark County residents reported being current smokers, compared to 26 percent among Washoe County residents. Statewide, the survey revealed that nearly 31 percent of adult Nevadans smoke. Smoking leads to the death of an estimated 2,100 Nevadans each year, Dr. Daugherty says.

On the positive side, fewer Nevadans are overweight than the national average, and only three states have a population that is more physically active.

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Attachments: Survey Data

Media representatives who would like a copy of the complete report can contact Lynne Williams in Reno at 784-6003.