SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Child Health USA 2014 is the latest in the series of annual reports on the health status and service needs of America's infants, children, and adolescents. The following summary outlines the key findings pertaining to population characteristics, health status and behaviors, health services financing and utilization, and other special features impacting U.S. children.

Population Characteristics

There were approximately 74 million children under 18 years of age living in the United States in 2013, representing 23.3 percent of the population.

- More than 16.5 million children (22.3 percent) lived in households with incomes below the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty threshold ($23,834 for a family of four in 2013).
- Racial and ethnic diversity continued to increase, particularly for Hispanic children who represented more than 24 percent of all children in 2013 (up from 8.8 percent in 1980).
- In 2011–2012, 19.8 percent of U.S. children under 18 years of age had a special health care need as defined by having a chronic medical, behavioral, or developmental condition lasting 12 months or longer and experiencing a service-related or functional consequence.

Health Status and Behaviors

Indicators of child health and well-being are essential for identifying priority areas for the development and assessment of health interventions.

- In 2012, approximately one in five adolescents had a mental disorder and the increased risk for struggles with school, use of drugs and alcohol, and the development of chronic illnesses in adulthood.
- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance among adolescents aged 12–17 years, with 12.9 percent reporting past-month use in 2012. In 2012, 9.5 percent of adolescents reported using illicit drugs, with marijuana the most commonly reported.
- In 2011, 24,001 U.S infants died before their first birthday, representing a rate of 6.07 deaths per 1,000 live births. Conditions related to prematurity accounted for more than a third of these infant deaths.
- In 2011–2012, nearly 30 percent of children aged 2–11 years were overweight or obese, 66.9 percent were of normal weight, and 3.4 percent were underweight. The prevalence of overweight and obesity was highest among Hispanic children (40 percent).
- In 2013, 42 percent of fourth-graders and 36 percent of eighth-graders were at or above proficiency in mathematics, while 35 percent and 36 percent, respectively, were at or above proficiency in reading.
- According to preliminary data for 2013, the overall birth rate for adolescents aged 15–19 years was 26.6 births per 1,000 females, representing an 11 percent decline from 2012 (29.4 per 1,000) and an historic low for the United States.
- In 2013, only 27.1 percent of high school students reported meeting the 2008 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines for participation in physical activity.
- Nearly 20 percent of high school students reported being bullied on school property and 14.8 percent reported being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, Web sites, or texting, in 2013.

Health Services Financing and Utilization

The availability of and access to health care services is important for ensuring the health and well-being of U.S. children. Without these services, children are at risk of poor health outcomes.

- In 2013, more than 6.5 million children aged 18 years and under were uninsured, representing 8.9 percent of all children in the United States.
- During the 2013–2014 flu season, 58.9 percent of children aged 6 months–17 years received the influenza vaccine, which represented a 2.3 percentage point increase in coverage as compared to the 2012-2013 flu season.
- The proportion of children aged 10–71 months receiving a standardized developmental screening increased considerably from 19.5 percent in 2007 to 30.8 percent in 2011-2012.
- In 2012, approximately 65 percent of children aged 2–17 years received dental care in the past 6 months. The proportion of children receiving dental care was highest among children aged 5–11 years (70.3 percent) and lowest among those aged 2–4 years (45.3 percent).
- A majority of children under 18 years of age (96.2 percent) had a usual source of care, such as a physician's office or health center, in 2012. The percentage of children with a usual source of care was highest among privately insured children (98.2 percent) and lowest among those who were uninsured (73.2 percent).

Special Features

Several areas of special significance to children's health are also examined in *Child Health USA 2014*, as "special features."

- In 2011, the child mortality rate was 25.7 per 100,000 among children aged 1–19, representing a decline of more than 25 percent since 1999. Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native children had the highest mortality rate (47.6 per 100,000) and Hispanic children had the lowest mortality rate (21.1 per 100,000).
- In 2011–2012, 22.6 percent of children aged 0–17 years experienced at least two adverse childhood experiences, such as experiencing economic hardship often (25.7 percent) and living with a parent who was divorced or separated after the child was born (20.1 percent).
- Among children aged 6 months–5 years, 73.2 percent were reported to usually or always exhibit four age-specific behaviors associated with flourishing (curiosity, resilience, attachment to caregivers, and positive affect). Less than half (47.7 percent) of school-aged children were reported to usually or always exhibit three age-specific flourishing behaviors (curiosity, resilience, and self-regulation).