



THE HEALTH STATUS OF MEN IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA: HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND ACCESS TO CARE

June 2014

June is Men's Health Month, which is celebrated across the country with screenings, health fairs, media appearances, and other health education and outreach activities. The purpose of Men's Health Month is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. Men die 5.2 years earlier than women, on average.¹ Men are at higher risk for early death because a higher percentage of men have no health care coverage and men may have less healthy lifestyles, including risk-taking at younger ages.² Men in Southeastern Pennsylvania face similar barriers to care as men nationally.

Public Health Management Corporation's (PHMC) Center for Data Innovation and the Community Health Data Base (CHDB) used data from the 2012 Household Health Survey on the health of men, 18 years or older, for this analysis. The Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Household Health Survey is administered by telephone in more than 10,000 households in the SEPA region, including Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. Every two years, this survey collects key health information on SEPA residents to support health programs across the five county area.

Access to Care

Nationally, adult men receive less routine health care than do adult women: men make half as many physician visits for prevention as do women.³ Data from Southeastern Pennsylvania showed similar differences between men and women.

- More than 214,000 adult men in Southeastern Pennsylvania do not have a regular source of care.
 - Men (85.0%) are less likely than women (91.9%) to have a regular source of care.
 - Eight percent (8.2%) of men did not see a physician in the past year, compared to 5.3% of women.
- One in eight men in the region (12.5%) did not receive health care when they were sick in the past year due to cost; this represents 180,100 men in SEPA.
- 167,000 men (11.6%) did not fill a prescription medication in the past year due to cost.

Insurance Status

Health insurance coverage is an important factor in accessing a source of primary care. Nationally, men are at higher risk for poor health because they are less likely to have insurance coverage than women.

- In SEPA, men ages 18-64 are less likely to be insured than women the same age (7.1% compared to 5.3%), and may face additional barriers to health care for this reason.

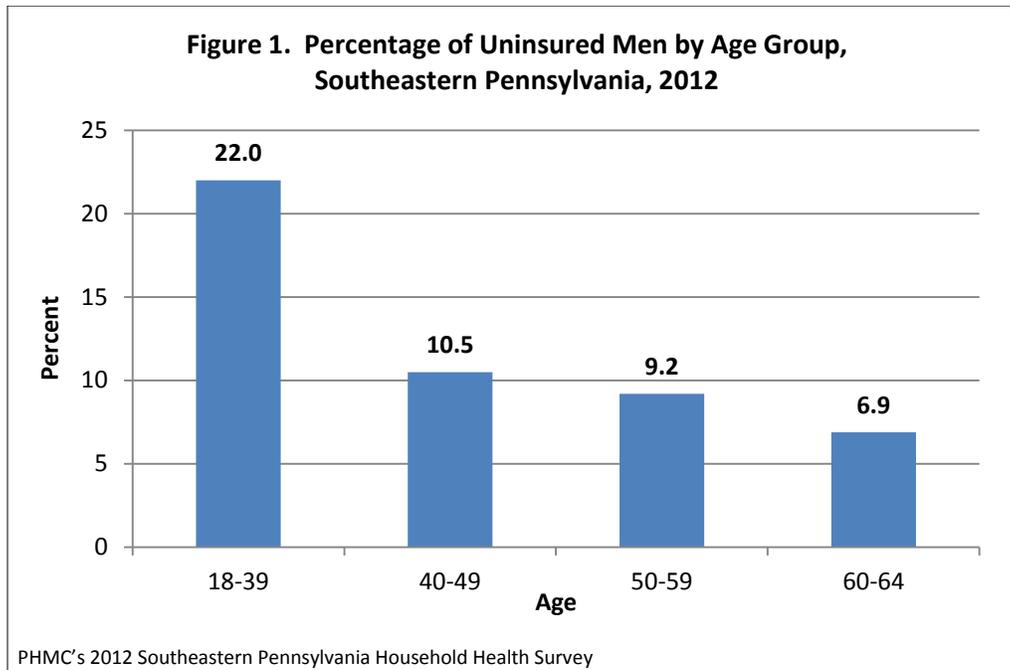
¹ <http://www.menshealthmonth.org/>

² <http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/silenthealthcrisis.pdf>

³ <http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/silenthealthcrisis.pdf>



- More than one-third of men in SEPA (37.3%) are uninsured because someone in the family with health insurance lost their job or changed employers.
- An additional 20.1% had no insurance because the cost was too high, and 11.8% were not insured because their employer did not offer it or they did not qualify for coverage.
- Young men are less likely to be insured than older men, with 22.0% of men ages 18-39 in SEPA who are uninsured compared to 10.5% of men 40-49, 9.2% of men 50-59, and 6.9% of men 60-64 (Figure 1).

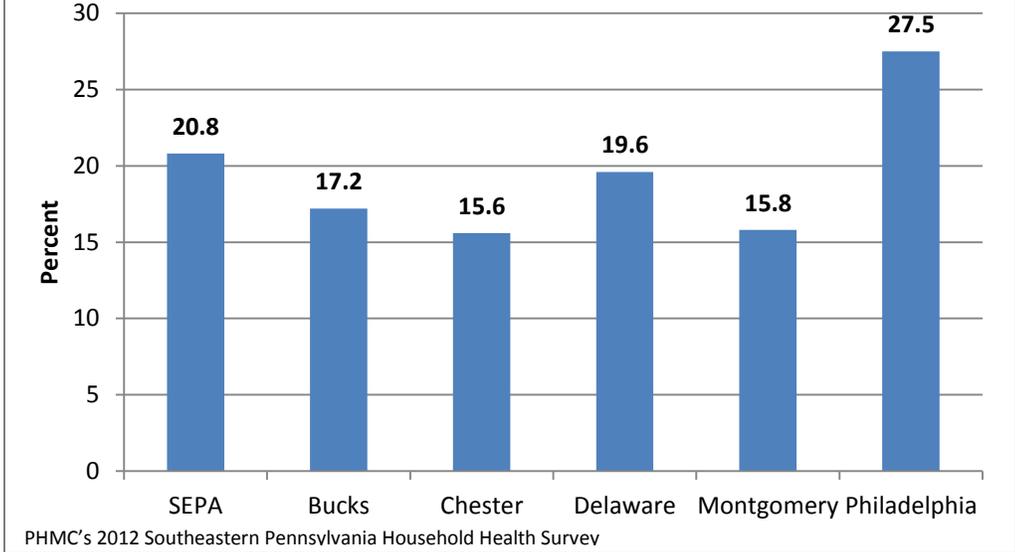


Health Behaviors

Longer lifetimes and better quality of life can be achieved through making lifestyle changes, including eating a healthy diet, being physically active, and avoiding smoking. In Southeastern Pennsylvania, many men have the opportunity to improve their health behaviors and change their overall health and well-being. SEPA men are more likely than women to engage in behaviors which negatively impact health.

- One in five SEPA men smokes cigarettes, representing approximately 298,600 men.
- Men are more likely to smoke cigarettes than women (20.8% versus 16.2%, respectively), and are less likely than women to have tried to quit smoking in the past year (53.0% versus 60.4%, respectively).
- Smoking rates among men are much higher in Philadelphia (27.5%) compared to the other SEPA counties: 19.6% in Delaware County, 17.2% in Bucks County, 15.8% in Montgomery County, and 15.6% of men in Chester County (Figure 2).
- Men (6.5%) are also more likely than women (2.1%) to engage in binge drinking or have a substance abuse problem (3.4% versus 1.3%, respectively).
- Although men (57.5%) are more likely than women (53.9%) to exercise three times a week or more, over 153,000 men in SEPA (10.7%) never exercise. However, more than two-thirds of men in our region (67.2%) are overweight, and one-quarter (25.5%) are obese.
- This represents nearly one million men in our region (955,500) whose health might be improved by decreasing their body weight.

Figure 2. Smoking among Men (18+) in Southeastern Pennsylvania by County, 2012



The findings on men's health in SEPA reflect national trends. In many ways, men face additional health risks when compared to women. These data also show that men may be able to make lifestyle changes that will improve their overall quality of health and longevity.

For more information about men's health or the Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, contact Lisa R. Kleiner at lisa@phmc.org.

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