August 2026

The health of Ohioans
What state leaders need to know

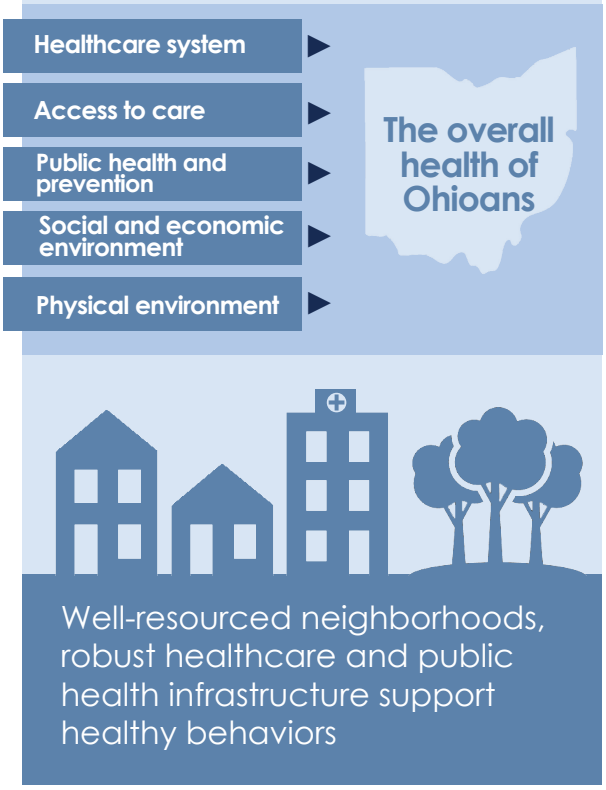
Health is influenced by many factors.

For example, individuals seeking to improve their health may choose to change their eating and exercise habits, quit smoking or drinking, sleep more or increase time with loved ones. These personal choices (often called health behaviors) are a key contributor to good health.

Health behaviors are shaped by people's environments and experiences. Communities with access to healthy food, affordable housing, job opportunities, quality education, safe infrastructure and accessible healthcare support healthier choices and better health.

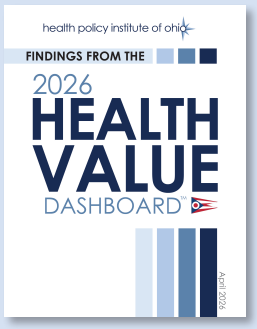
According to HPIO's **2026 Health Value Dashboard**, Ohio ranks 43rd on health value — a composite measure of population health outcomes and healthcare spending — out of 50 states and D.C. This means that Ohioans live less healthy lives and spend more on healthcare than people in most other states. But improvement is possible. Ohio can become a model of health, well-being and economic vitality, where everyone reaches their full potential.

The many factors that influence the health of Ohioans



Policy can drive improvement

HPIO gathers the most reliable data and evidence and distills it so that policymakers have the most important findings at their fingertips. A great starting point for learning about the health of Ohioans is HPIO's Health Value Dashboard. The primary purpose of the Dashboard is to highlight Ohio's strengths and challenges and spark questions that lead to data-driven policy that improves health, health equity and the value of healthcare spending in Ohio. **Key findings from the Dashboard are highlighted in this publication.**



2026 Health Value Dashboard

Published every two years, the Health Value Dashboard is a collection of tools and resources that compare Ohio's performance to all other states on measures of population health, healthcare spending and the factors that influence health, including:

- Access to care
- The healthcare system
- Public health and prevention
- The social and economic environment
- The physical environment

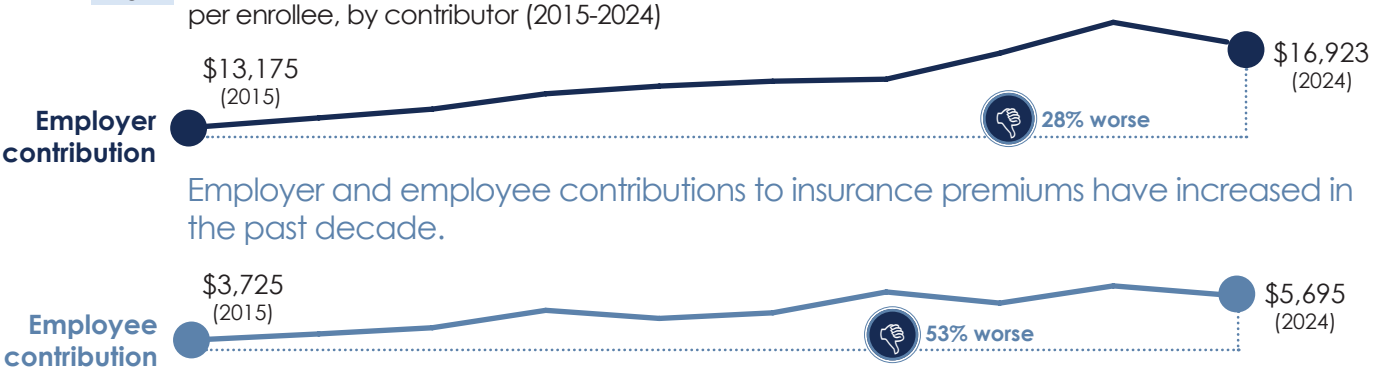
▶ DASHBOARD FOCUS AREA

Healthcare access and affordability

Healthcare costs are rising, leaving Ohioans with less room in their budgets and increasing financial pressure on businesses. Higher healthcare costs can make it harder for people to access care and for employers to offer health insurance. Rising costs also strain health systems, leading to, for example, reduced services or closed hospitals in rural areas. HPIO resources explore how Ohio leaders can ensure that healthcare is accessible, timely and affordable.

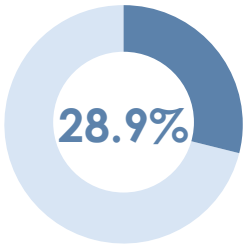
Current Ohio rank **6**

Average premium for employer-sponsored health insurance, family coverage.
Average total annual family premium for employer-sponsored health insurance per enrollee, by contributor (2015-2024)



Ohioans reporting difficulty paying for usual household expenses

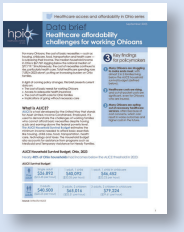
More than 1 in 4 Ohioans had trouble paying expenses in 2023



Source: Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey, 2023

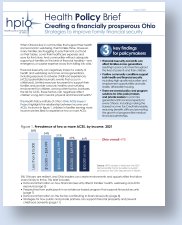
Data sources are available in data appendices posted on the **2026 Health Value Dashboard web page**.

Other resources for improving healthcare affordability



Healthcare affordability challenges for working Ohioans

This brief presents current data on the cost of basic needs for working Ohioans, access to adequate health insurance, the cost of healthcare for Ohio families and the implications of going without necessary care.



Major federal and Ohio healthcare policy changes

This fact sheet provides a high-level summary of several provisions of **HR 1**, the 2025 federal reconciliation bill sometimes referred to as the "Big Beautiful Bill," and **HB 96**, Ohio's 2026-2027 state operating budget bill. Both laws have provisions that could significantly affect healthcare access and affordability in Ohio. HPIO has covered many of these provisions in detail through its **Federal Health Policy Impact in Ohio** project.

More resources are available at HPIO's **health-care access and affordability project page**

▶ DASHBOARD FOCUS AREA

Child well-being

In recent years, Ohio policymakers have dedicated effort and resources to improving child health and well-being. Families are realizing those gains, with Ohio performing well and/or trending in the right direction on metrics related to adverse childhood experiences, high school graduation and disconnected youth. However, some children are still experiencing barriers, including children in families with low incomes.

Ohio has made progress on child well-being, but not all children have opportunity to thrive

Current Ohio rank **25**

Adverse childhood experiences. Percent of children, ages 0-17, who have experienced two or more adverse experiences (2016-2023)

34% improvement 2016 to 2023

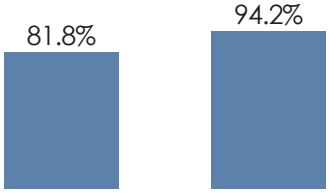


(2021-2024)

Current Ohio rank **28**

High school graduation. Percent of incoming ninth graders who graduate in four years from a public high school with a regular degree (2011-2012 to 2021-2022 school years)

6% improvement 2011-2012 to 2021-2022

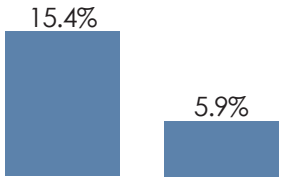


(2024)

Current Ohio rank **27**

Disconnected youth. Percent of youth, ages 16-24, who are not working or in school (2013-2023)

13% improvement 2013 to 2023



(2023)

Data sources are available in data appendices posted on the **2026 Health Value Dashboard web page**.

Note: Ranked graduation data is reported by the U.S. Department of Education and the disaggregated data is reported by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. For more information, see the data appendices.

Other resources for improving child well-being in Ohio

HPIO's Ohio Child Mental Health Project

Led by HPIO and informed by a **multi-sector advisory group**, the Ohio Child Mental Health Project includes a series of policy briefs that explore:

- Prevalence data of various mental health conditions
- Factors that contribute to mental health challenges for young Ohioans
- Access to mental healthcare services among Ohio children and youth
- Insurance coverage and affordability of mental healthcare for Ohio children and youth

▶ See all of the resources in the Ohio Child Mental Health Project by scanning the QR code to the right

▶ DASHBOARD FOCUS AREA

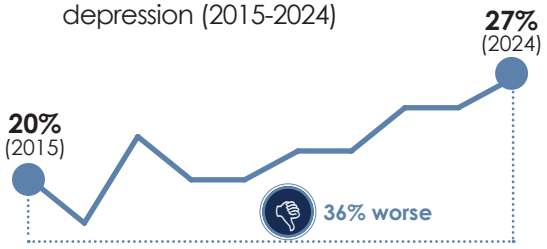
Mental health

Mental health challenges continue to worsen in Ohio. An estimated 2.5 million Ohioans — more than 1 in 4 adults in the state — had depression in 2024. Many factors have contributed to this worsening trend over the past decade, including Ohio's performance on metrics of economic instability and social disconnection.

Ohio performs worse than most other states on metrics related to mental health

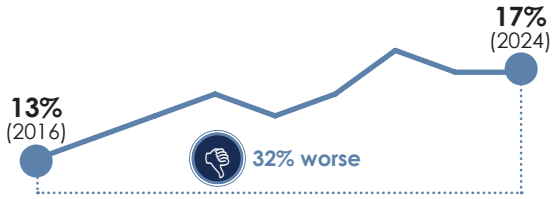
Current Ohio rank **45**

Depression. Percent of adults, ages 18 and older, who have ever been told by a health professional that they have depression (2015-2024)



Current Ohio rank **38**

Frequent mental distress. Percent of adults, ages 18 and older, who report 14 or more days of poor mental health in a month (2016-2024)



Ohio rank **31** Labor force participation

Ohio rank **37** Food insecurity

Ohio rank **38** Older adult social isolation

Ohio rank **38** Incarceration

Experiences of economic instability and social disconnection can lead to prolonged stress, which contributes to poor mental health

Data sources are available in data appendices posted on the **2026 Health Value Dashboard web page**.

Other resources for improving mental health in Ohio



Policy explainer: Mental health parity

The primary focus of mental health parity is to ensure that insurance plans do not make access to mental health and substance use disorder (collectively known as behavioral health) treatment more cost-prohibitive or restrictive than access to medical or surgical care. This policy explainer outlines federal and state mental health parity laws from 1990 to 2025.

Questions about health policy?

As Ohio's only non-partisan, independent organization solely focused on researching and analyzing health policy and its impact on Ohio, HPIO is uniquely suited to provide expertise and technical assistance. Our website also includes a wealth of information, including resources on a wide range of topics and downloadable graphics that can be used in presentations. To learn more, visit our website at:

www.hpio.net

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