



For Immediate Release
Sept. 1, 2020

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Nearly two-thirds of Ohioans exposed to adverse childhood experiences, HPIO analysis finds

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) -- [Analysis](#) of the health impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio found that nearly two-thirds of Ohioans have been exposed to ACEs, with Ohioans of color and Ohioans with low incomes, disabilities and/or who are residents of urban or Appalachian counties more likely to experience multiple ACEs.

"Exposure to ACEs is a pervasive problem affecting many children in Ohio and across the country," said Reem Aly, Vice President at HPIO. "Policymakers and other stakeholders can use these findings to develop a comprehensive plan that effectively prevents and mitigates the impact of ACEs and improves overall health and well-being."

ACEs are "potentially traumatic events" that occur during childhood (ages 0-17). There is variation among researchers in what is considered an ACE. However, ACEs can generally be grouped into three categories: abuse, household challenges and neglect.

National data and analysis provide clear evidence that ACEs exposure is linked to poor health and well-being through adulthood, including disrupted neurodevelopment, social problems, disease, disability and premature death. HPIO's analysis suggests that preventing exposure to the following ACEs may yield the most significant health impacts: emotional and sexual abuse and living in a household with someone who has a substance use disorder, mental health problem or who is incarcerated.

Efforts to prevent and mitigate the effects of ACEs are critical to improving the health of Ohioans. For example, if exposure to ACEs were eliminated in Ohio, an estimated 36% of depression diagnoses and 33% of current smoking could be prevented.

Data to evaluate the impact of ACEs on the health of Ohioans is limited. Prior to this brief, there was no publicly available analysis of ACEs in Ohio using data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), a tool used to collect state data on health-related measures. HPIO contracted with researchers from the Ohio University Voinovich School for Leadership and Public Affairs to analyze the most-recently available BRFSS ACEs data.

[Click here to read the data brief, the first in a three-part series to be produced by HPIO.](#) For any questions about the brief, or if you would like to talk with HPIO Vice President Reem Aly or President Amy Rohling McGee, please call or text Nick Wiselogel at 614.530.9918 or email nwiselogel@hpio.net.