

**Community Health Assessment for Benton and Franklin Counties, Completed 2004
Based on Washington State’s Public Health Improvement Plan Key Health
Indicator Report Card**

The 2002 Washington State Public Health Improvement Plan Key Health Indicator Report Card:

| Report Card on Washington’s Health – “How healthy are we?” | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| <u>General Health Status</u> | | |
| <u>Years of Healthy Life development</u> | <u>Emotional well-being</u> | <u>Healthy child</u> |
| <p>How safe and supportive are our surroundings?</p> <p>How safe are our food, water, and air? -Illnesses commonly associated with unsafe food, unsafe water, or poor hygiene</p> <p>-Safe drinking water</p> <p>-Air quality</p> <p>How safe and supportive are our communities?</p> <p>- Economic: Percent below poverty threshold</p> <p>- Social connectedness: Civic involvement/interpersonal trust School retention rates</p> <p>- Injuries and violence: Unintentional injuries Domestic violence Child abuse and neglect Violent crimes</p> <p>How supportive is our health care system? -Access to health care</p> <p>- Vaccine-preventable diseases</p> | | <p>How healthy are our behaviors?</p> <p>Do we smoke cigarettes? - Percent non-smokers</p> <p>Do we eat fruits and vegetables? - 5 fruits and vegetables per day</p> <p>Are we physically active? - 30 minutes a day, 5 times per week</p> <p>Do we abuse alcohol? - 5+ drinks on one occasion during the last month</p> |

Assessment Population

The population assessed was the residents of Benton and Franklin Counties in Washington State. The population of each county was examined individually with the results being presented in one document due to the bi-county nature of the Benton Franklin Health District. The Health District is responsible for public health services to both counties. The socio-demographic description of each county will be presented separately.

Benton County is situated in south central Washington State. Its population in 2003 was 151,600 people ranking it as the tenth largest county population in Washington State. It consists of 1,703.1 square miles of land area 35% of which is farmland. The population density is 89 persons per square mile. Washington State has a population density of 92 persons per square mile. The median household income in 2002 was \$49,706 ranking the sixth highest in Washington State. Sixteen percent of the population is eligible for Medicaid with 40% of the births paid for by Medicaid. Six percent of its children live in high poverty neighborhoods. Forty-nine percent of the infants born in 2001 were served by the Women, Infant, Children (WIC) Nutrition program. (Washington Health Foundation)

Benton County's population is 86% White and less than 1% Black. Approximately 12% of the population identify themselves as Hispanic. The median age of the population is just over 35 years of age and slightly over half are female. The population has increased by over 9000 residents since 2000. (Washington State Office of Financial Management)

Franklin County is separated from Benton County by the Columbia River. Its 2003 population was 53,600 ranking it as the 20th largest county population in Washington

State. It consists of 1,242.4 square miles, approximately 71% of which is farmland. The population density is 43 persons per square mile. The median household income in 2002 was \$41,895 ranking it the 15th highest in Washington State. Over 29% of the

population is eligible for Medicaid with 62% of the births paid for by Medicaid. Sixty-nine percent of its children live in high poverty neighborhoods. Sixty percent of the infants born in 2001 were served by the WIC program. (Washington Health Foundation)

Franklin County's population is 62% White, 2.5% Black. Forty seven percent of the population identify themselves as Hispanic. The median age of the population is 28 years of age and 52% are male. The population has increased by nearly 1,700 residents since 2000. (Washington State Office of Financial Management)

In order to promote consistency the information is presented in the same order as was the state-level Report Card. Comparisons of state to local data are made where possible.

The over-arching general health status measurements include: Years of Healthy Life, Emotional Well-being and Healthy Child Development. The **Years of Healthy Life** would be calculated utilizing methods from CDC and the National Center for Health Statistics (Molla et al). Health Status was obtained from the BRFSS-based survey. In Benton and Franklin Counties, 54% of those surveyed reported their health status from the prior 30 days to be very good or excellent. In 2003, the Washington State BRFSS found 56.6% of the population reporting very good to excellent health.

The **Emotional Well-being** measurement for the state indicated that nearly 10% of the population reported 14 or more days of poor mental health in 2001. From the survey data, there were 9.5% of the respondents reporting 11 or more days of poor mental health during the past month in 2004. The "number of days" interval was slightly different between the 2001 BRFSS results and the 2004 Benton Franklin survey. Otherwise, the state and county levels are quite similar.

The health status indicator "**Healthy Child Development**" was based on kindergarten retention rates and is dependent on the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's data and research division collecting this information. At the time of the development of the state Report Card it was projected that the information would be

collected beginning with the 2003-2004 school year. Data were not available for either the state or county-level

The next measurements are of the health determinants “How safe and supportive are our surroundings?” and “How healthy are our behaviors?” Each of these determinants was further broken down into several subsections with one or more indicators each that were measured.

How safe and supportive are our surroundings?

How safe are our food, water, and air?

- As a measurement for the **safety of our food** the rate of illnesses associated with contaminated food was used. In 2003, the rates of foodborne illnesses in Benton and Franklin Counties were 46 per 100,000 and 34 per 100,000 respectively. This was an increase over 2002 when the rate was 32 per 100,000 in Benton County and 29 per 100,000 in Franklin County. The rate for Washington State for 2002 (excluding acute viral gastroenteritis) was 44 per 100,000 (Washington State Dept. of Health 2002 Communicable Disease Report). For purposes of comparison, the 2002 data was used for the report card data for Benton and Franklin Counties. (Figure 2) State-level data for 2003 was not available.

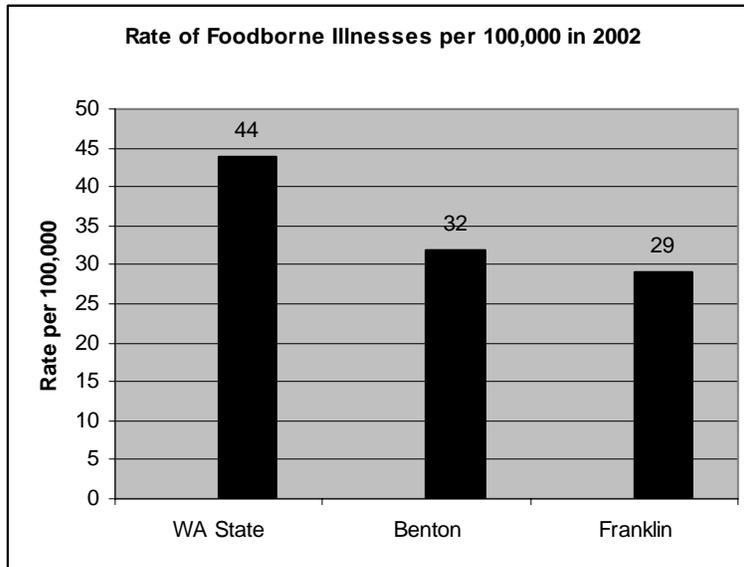


Figure 2
Rate of Foodborne Illnesses per 100,000

- Safe drinking water was measured at the state level by obtaining data from the State Department of Health's Drinking Water Section that monitors Group A systems from which the majority of the state receives their water. Group A systems over 14 connections or more than 24 people. The findings in 2002 were that 98% of the systems in the state, serving 92% of the population, did some testing and did not exceed allowable levels of nitrate or coliform.

In Benton County in 2003, there were 18 coliform violations or 23% in Group A systems and 9 coliform violations or approximately 22% of Group A systems in Franklin County. Nitrate levels in Group A systems were too high in 11% of the tests done in Benton County on Group A systems. In Franklin County the nitrate levels were too high in 19% of the Group A tests done in 2003. (Figure 3)

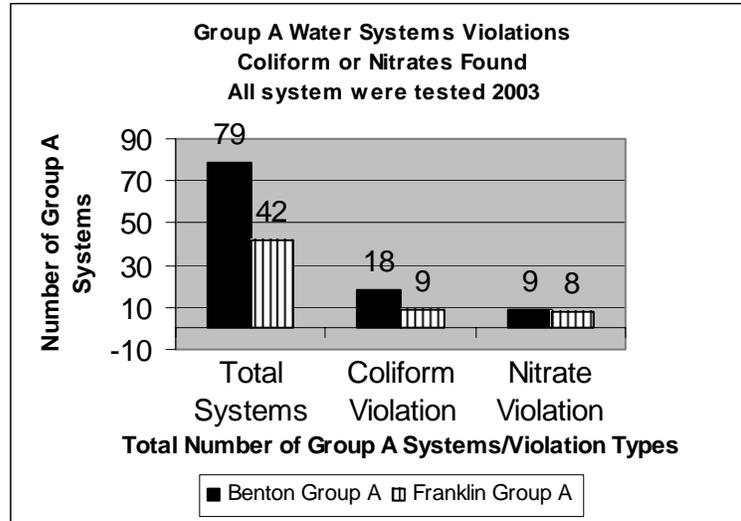


Figure 3
Group A Water Systems Violations

Because much of Benton and Franklin Counties are rural in nature, there were a significant number of Group B water systems. Group B systems serve up to fourteen connections. The Benton Franklin Health District (BFHD) monitored these systems. The data received from the Environmental Health Section of the BFHD indicated that in 2003 Benton County's Group B systems had 3 coliform violations in the systems that were tested. There were 8 violations for nitrate levels. There were many systems that did not test as recommended and were considered in violation hence they were counted more than once as being in violation due to failure to monitor. For Franklin County there were no coliform violations but there were 6 violations for nitrates. (Figure 4) The state Office of Drinking Water does not test Group B systems.

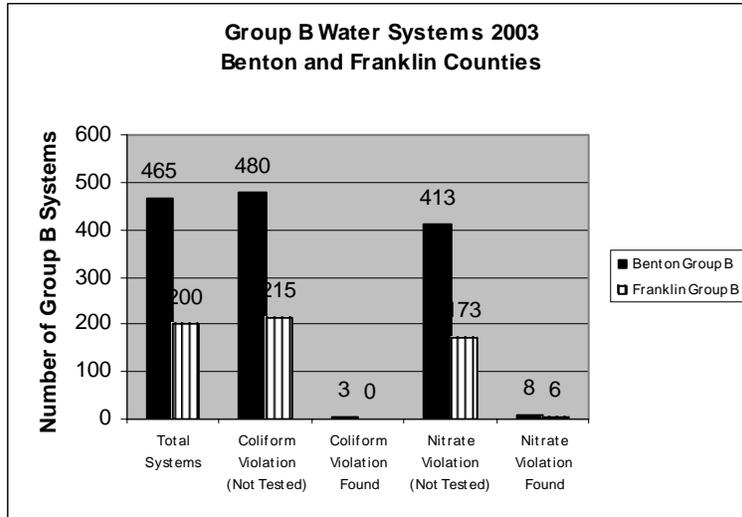


Figure 4
Group B Water Systems 2003

- The **air quality** information available for Benton and Franklin Counties came from the Environmental Protection Agency. There was no monitoring for pollutants other than particulate matter. Benton County had 320 days of good air quality in 2003 while Franklin County enjoyed 328. The days when air quality was not as good were due mainly to particulate matter, in the case of both counties, dirt particles. Comparable data from the state were not available.

How safe and supportive are our communities?

Economic

- The state Report Card utilized information from the Washington State Population Survey and it was decided to set the cut-off for poverty as the percent of incomes up to twice the federal poverty level. Nearly 41% of the state's households in 2000 had incomes that were at risk for poverty at twice the federal poverty level. For Benton and Franklin Counties the percentage of families at risk was 36 and 45 percent respectively. (Figure 5)

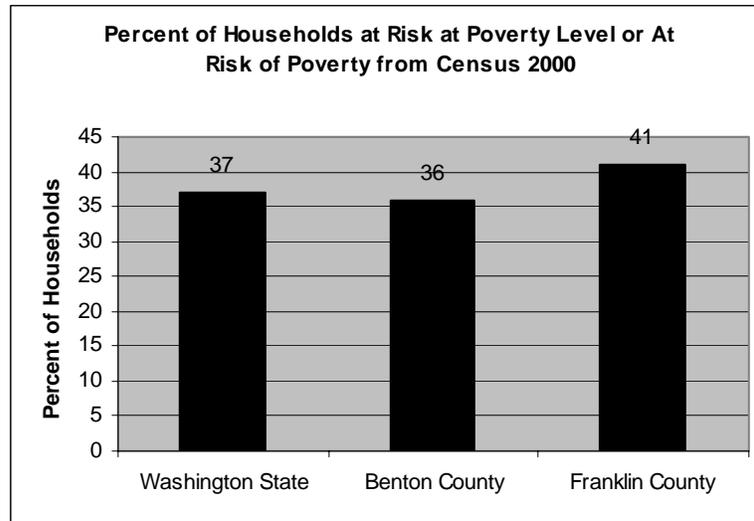


Figure 5
Percent of Households at Poverty Level or At Risk of Poverty

Social Connectedness

- Social connectedness was not measured as a part of the state’s 2002 Report Card however, the BRFSS items were determined that would address this indicator. The Benton Franklin PHIP survey (see Appendix A) did ask the questions selected for future use in the Report Card. In this survey it was determined that 21% of the respondents had served on a local organization’s committee and 29% had attended a meeting regarding a town or school issue in the past year. Over half of the respondents (52%) stated they had done at least one act of volunteer work during the past year.

Sixty two percent of the respondents agreed with the statement, “I spend a lot of times visiting friends” and 80% had entertained others in their home at least once during the past year.

The perception of trust was nearly evenly divided between the statements, “Most people can be trusted” and “You cannot be too careful in dealing with people”. Slightly more (50%) agreed with the first statement and 43% agreed with the second.

In general, the subgroups with more positive responses to the social connectedness items tended to have higher incomes, higher education, were older than 45 years of age and in excellent to very good health. Those whose responses were less positive tended to have lower incomes, lower education levels, poorer health and were Hispanic.

School retention rates

The high school retention rate at the state level was about 90% in 2001 as reported in the PHIP Report Card. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction reported the percent of students graduating in 2002 as 83.2. The graduation rates for Benton and Franklin Counties for 2002 were 87.8 and 83.3 respectively.

Injuries and Violence

Unintentional injuries

- The death rate due to unintentional injuries (motor vehicle crashes, falls, firearms, fire, bicycle crashes, etc.) for the State of Washington in 2002 was just over 36 per 100,000 residents. For the same time period, the death rates due to unintentional injuries in Benton and Franklin Counties were just under 39 per 100,000 and just over 38 per 100,000 respectively.

Domestic violence

- Domestic Violence data obtained from the Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs indicated that, during 2002, the rate per 1,000 population for domestic violence offenses (reported) was 7. For the same time

period, the rate in Benton County was just over 8 per 1,000 and in Franklin County just over 9 per 1,000.

Child abuse and neglect

- In Washington State, the year 2002, the rate of Child Protective Services referrals per 1,000 children age 0-19 was 21.5. In Benton County the rate was just over 33 and Franklin County nearly 30. These represent referrals made to the Children’s Administration, Department of Social and Health Services and are not unduplicated meaning there could be repeat referrals on the same child. (Figure 6)

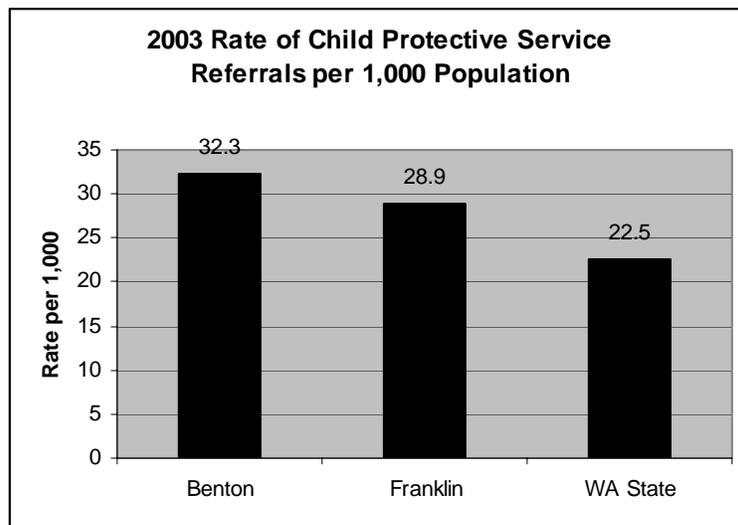


Figure 6
2003 Rate of Child Protective Services Referrals per 1,000 Population

Violent crimes

- Also from the Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs was the data regarding serious violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault). For Washington State in 2002 the rate of violent crime per 1,000 population was 3.5. For the same time period the rate was 2.3 per 1,000 in Benton County and 3.2 per 1,000 in Franklin County. (Figure 7)

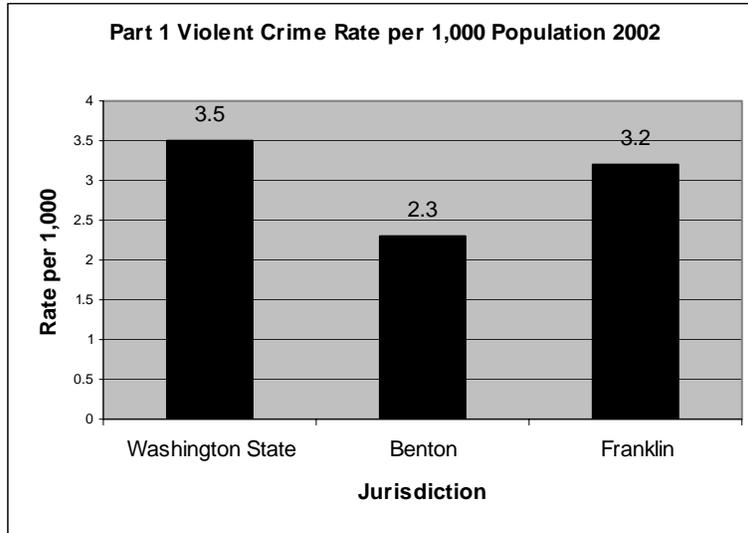


Figure 7
Part 1 Violent Crime Rate per 1,000 Population 2002

How supportive is our health care system?

Access to health care

- According to BRFSS data in 2001, 1 in 6 households or nearly 17% were unable to obtain or experienced difficulty or delay in accessing health care in Washington State. The survey done in Benton and Franklin Counties in 2004 indicated that 22% of the population stated they were unable to obtain or found it difficult or experienced a delay in obtaining health care.

Vaccine-preventable Disease

- The rate of vaccine-preventable disease for the State of Washington in 2002 was nearly 14 per 100,000 whereas the rate for Benton County for the same time period was 1.4 per 100,000 and for Franklin County, nearly 4 per 100,000. (Figure 8)

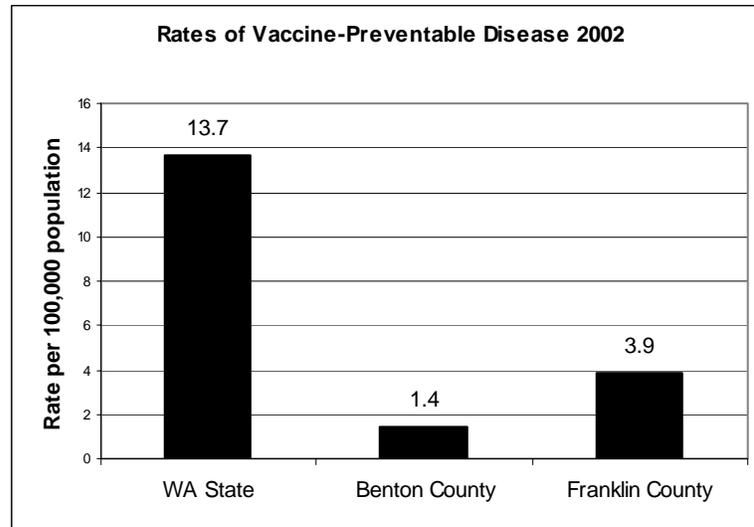


Figure 8
Rates of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases 2002

How healthy are our behaviors?

Do we smoke cigarettes?

- The information gathered from the BRFSS-based survey in Benton and Franklin Counties found that 83% of the population did not smoke. This data was unchanged since 1995's survey. In 2001, the state BRFSS data indicated that 80% of the population did not smoke. At the county level those who were most likely to smoke were more likely to be in the younger age groups with the percent of smokers decreasing in the higher age brackets. In addition, other characteristics of smokers included those with a high school or lower education, those with incomes lower than \$25,000 per year, residents of Benton County (the city of Kennewick in particular) and those who were unemployed.

Do we eat fruits and vegetables?

- Twenty percent of the respondents in the 2004 survey indicated that they ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day while the state BRFSS in 1994-2000 indicated nearly 25% of the adult population did eat five servings a day. In Benton and Franklin Counties the respondents most likely to get the

five servings per day included those over age 55, college graduates and those who said they are in excellent health.

Are we physically active?

- Sixty four percent of the respondents in the Benton Franklin survey reported that they engaged in vigorous or moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes, 5 days per week. In 2001, nearly 66% of Washington adults attained this level of activity. Among those respondents in Benton and Franklin Counties meeting the guidelines were those who said their health was excellent, had incomes over \$75,000 and were in the 18 to 24 age bracket.

Do we abuse alcohol?

- Binge drinking is defined as drinking 5 or more drinks of alcohol on one occasion during the last month. The state level data in the 1995 BRFSS was approximately 1 in 7 adults or just over 14%. In 2004, the percent of Benton and Franklin County residents who reported binge drinking was 16%. Those who engaged in this behavior more often than other groups included 18-24 year olds.

QUESTIONS?

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