

# Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

## What Is It?

The BRFSS is the nation's premier system of health-related telephone surveys that collect state data about U.S. residents regarding their health-related risk behaviors and chronic health conditions. Established in 1984, the BRFSS completes more than 400,000 adult interviews each year, making it the largest continuously conducted health survey system in the world.

At the heart of this surveillance system is a phone-based survey, conducted with adults aged 18 and older. Each year, all US states and territories conduct the same core survey ([www.cdc.gov/BRFSS](http://www.cdc.gov/BRFSS)), from which the data are aggregated to provide both state-to-state comparisons and national estimates. The BRFSS objective is to collect uniform, state-specific data on preventive health practices and risk behaviors that are linked to chronic diseases, injuries, and preventable infectious diseases that affect the adult population.

## Why Do It?

By collecting behavioral health risk data at the state and local level, BRFSS has become a powerful tool for targeting and building health promotion activities.

The PRCHN provides the local community with timely data on a wide variety of health, health behavior, and well-being indicators collected to represent all residents of Cleveland and/or Cuyahoga County.

There are core BRFSS questions asked in one or more of our local surveys to compare to state or national estimates. We also include local questions that help inform health items specific to our community. Some examples include the following: perceptions of neighborhood food availability and quality; neighborhood safety; quality life and support; hopefulness for family and the city of Cleveland.

In 2005, the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (PRCHN) helped to establish the Cleveland and the Cuyahoga County BRFSS in collaboration with the Cleveland Department of Public Health and Cuyahoga County Board of Health, both mirrored after the national BRFSS. Federal and state grant funding for this local effort ended in 2009. In 2014, the PRCHN conducted the 2014-2015 data collection for the city of Cleveland with funding from Saint Luke's Foundation.

*Health and health behavior surveillance conducted at the local level is extremely valuable to both researchers and communities trying to understand, monitor, and evaluate efforts to impact critical public health issues.*



The PRCHN is committed to finding funding to establish a new, sustainable surveillance program that builds off prior years' data but conducted using geographic-based sampling. This would allow data to be reconfigured across multiple years to provide neighborhood cluster estimates (2-3 neighborhoods), providing researchers and community partners with **local data at the level of targeted intervention/programming**, and a mechanism for evaluating the impact of the three local public health initiatives (i.e., HIP-C, Healthy Cleveland, Health Alliance).



Prevention Research Center  
at Case Western Reserve University

## Contact Us:

Prevention Research  
Center for Healthy  
Neighborhoods

[www.prchn.org](http://www.prchn.org)

**Elaine Borawski, PhD**

PRCHN Director  
216.368.1024  
[exb11@case.edu](mailto:exb11@case.edu)

**Lauren Bottoms**

216.368.8516  
[lx307@case.edu](mailto:lx307@case.edu)

### Mailing address:

10900 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106



Funding for this publication was made possible (in part) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the US government.

**Working with communities from within to prevent and reduce chronic disease**