

# POLK COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

A demographic, socio-economic, medical and well-being report of Polk County, Iowa

Polk County Health Department  
October 2016



★ HEALTH DEPARTMENT ★

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# INTRODUCTION

## What is health?

In 1948, the World Health Organization adopted this definition:

*“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”*

There are many factors that influence health, from access to medical care and stable housing, to employment and income. Even social life could affect our health. For this reason, it is important to evaluate these different aspects in order to get a more comprehensive view of the health condition of our community.

## What will I find here?

This report includes information and data trends of factors that may be influencing the health status of residents in Polk County. These factors were divided in four areas: **demographic, socio-economic, medical, and well-being**. As a reference point, data was compared with the rest of the State wherever possible.

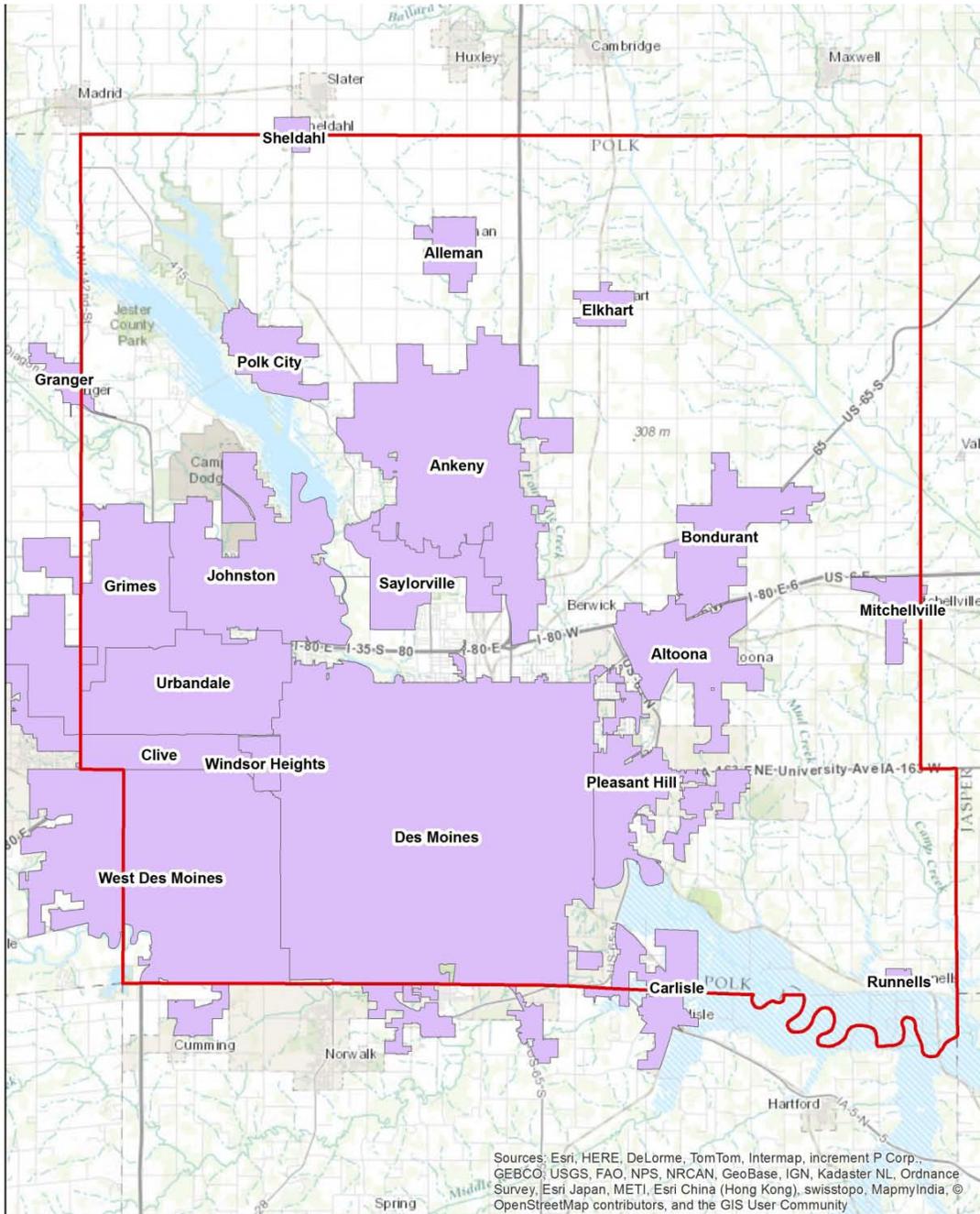
In addition, you will find a reference to the status of Polk County in two national ranking tools, the County Health Rankings and the AARP Livability Index. The first was created by the Population Health Institute at the University of Wisconsin and it compares Polk County with the rest of Iowa counties. The latter was produced by the AARP Public Policy Institute and it provides a livability score for Polk County.

Finally, you will find a list of examples of community initiatives working to improve the health and wellness of Polk County residents.

## What can I do?

Be proactive. As you read through the report, think about the ways you can use the information and data presented to improve the health of Polk County. Also, visit the web pages of the organizations included in this report to see how you can get involved.

# MAP



 Polk County





# DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics section of the Health Report focuses on the general population in Polk County. The data is then divided by cities in the county, race and ethnicity of Polk County and age breakdown by city and throughout the county.

# POPULATION

## POPULATION GROWTH



Polk County is the most populous county in Iowa and includes Des Moines, which is the State Capital. The population of the county has been steadily increasing over the years.

Between 2000 and 2010, the population of Polk County **grew 15%** to an estimated 430,635 residents. Polk County is expected to reach a population of over 479,000 residents by the year 2020. The cities that experienced the largest percentage population increases during this time frame were Granger (113.4%), Bondurant (109.1%) and Johnston (99.85%).

Geography	Population 2000	Population 2010	% Change
Alleman	439	432	-1.6%
Altoona	10,345	14,541	40.6%
Ankeny	27,117	45,582	68.1%
Bondurant	1,846	3,860	109.1%
Carlisle	3,497	3,876	10.8%
Clive	12,855	15,447	20.2%
Des Moines	198,682	203,433	2.4%
Elkhart	362	683	88.7%
Granger	583	1,244	113.4%
Grimes	5,098	8,246	61.7%
Johnston	8,649	17,278	99.8%
Mitchellville	1,715	2,254	31.4%
Pleasant Hill	5,070	8,785	73.3%
Polk City	2,344	3,418	45.8%
Runnells	352	507	44.0%
Saylorville CDP	3,012	3,301	9.6%
Sheldahl	336	319	-5.1%
Urbandale	29,072	39,463	35.7%
West Des Moines	46,403	56,609	22.0%
Windsor Heights	4,805	4,860	1.1%

Source: CensusViewer- Cities Iowa

# POPULATION

## ETHNICITY



By 2010, the Hispanic population in Polk County showed the largest percentage change from 2000 with **98% increase** followed by Asian, **over 54%**, and African American, **over 42%**.

Race/Ethnicity	Population 2010	% of Total Population 2010	Population Change 2000 - 2010	% Change 2000 - 2010
White	364,895	84.7%	99,273	10.3%
Black or African American	25,853	6.0%	7,740	42.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,384	0.3%	383	38.3%
Asian	15,220	3.5%	5,362	54.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	254	0.1%	45	21.5%
Some Other Race	12,629	2.9%	4,330	52.2%
Two or More Races	10,405	2.4%	4,201	67.7%
Hispanic or Latino	32,647	7.6%	16,157	98.0%

Source: CensusViewer- Cities Iowa

# POPULATION

## AGE



Between 2000 and 2010, the cities in Polk County that saw the greatest percent increase of children less than five years old were: Granger (**319%**), Elkhart (**230%**) and Bondurant (**178%**). During this time frame, the cities of Clive (**114%**), Pleasant Hill (**93%**) and Bondurant (**92%**), experienced the largest percentage increase among people 65 years of age.

The population with the largest expected growth is adults 65 and over. It is projected that this age group will see a **37%** increase by 2025. Children between the ages of 6 – 17 are expected to grow **18%**.

Age	Population 2010	% of Total Population 2010	Population Change 2000 – 2010	% Change 2000 – 2010
Under 5 years	32,816	7.6%	4,861	17.4%
5 – 17 years	77,109	17.9%	8,764	12.8%
18 – 64 years	274,170	63.7%	37,621	15.9%
65 years and over	46,545	10.8%	4,793	11.5%

Source: CensusViewer- Polk County



# SOCIO-ECONOMIC

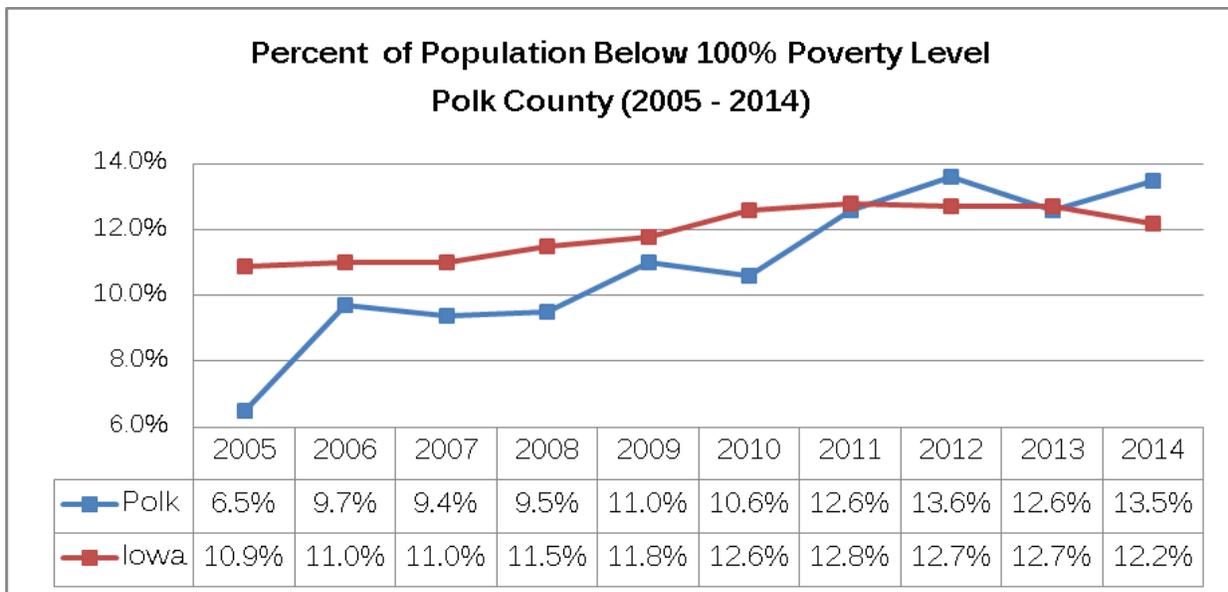
The socio-economic section looks at the trends in poverty, education, unemployment, access to health insurance and housing issues facing Polk County residents.

# POVERTY



Individuals and families need sufficient resources to meet their basic needs. This includes food, shelter and access to medical services. Generally, individuals living at or below the poverty level are dependent on government services and support (food stamps, medical benefits and other income supports) or equivalent support from family and community to meet essential needs. The most common measure of poverty is the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

During the time frame 2005 – 2014, the percentage of Polk County’s population beneath the poverty line has been steadily rising. In 2014, **13.5%** of households in Polk County were living under the poverty line.

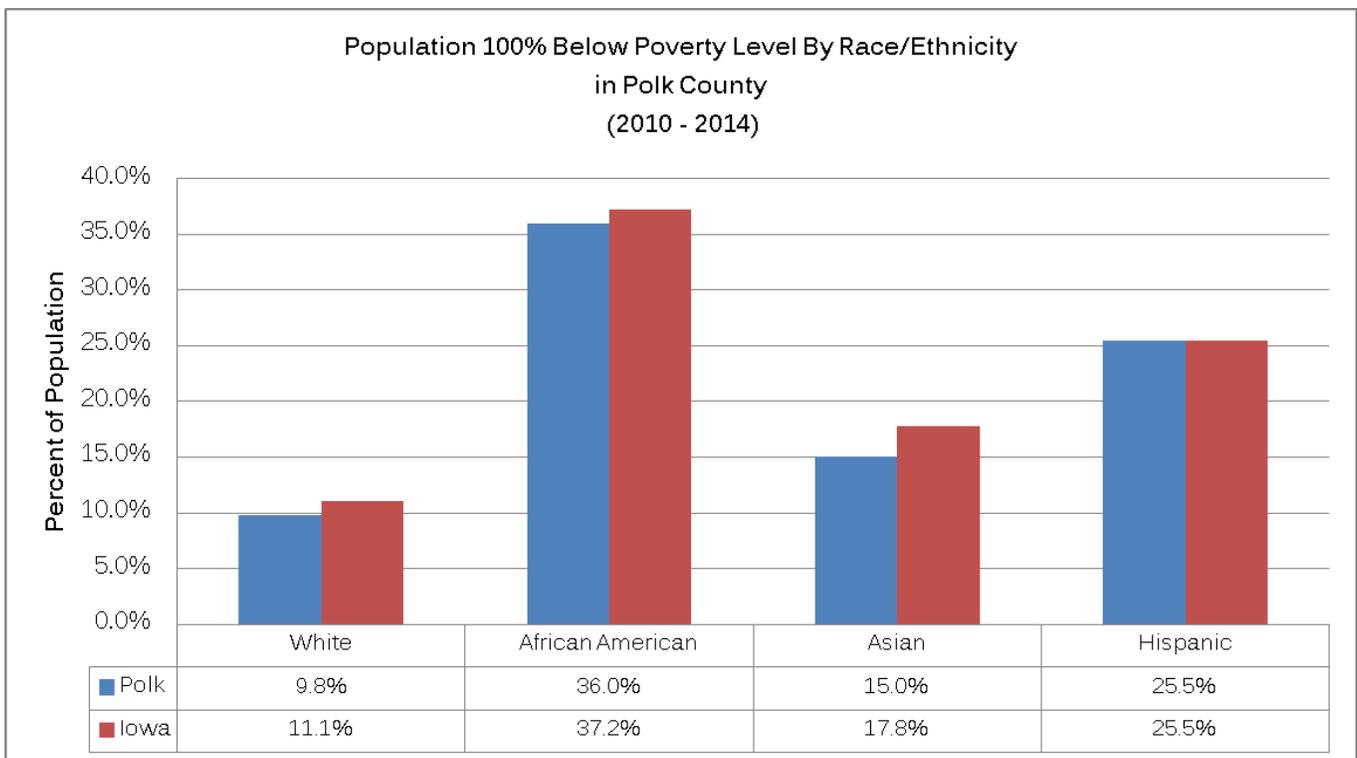


Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

# POVERTY



In addition, a comparison of individuals below poverty level based on race and ethnicity shows a great level of disparities between them. During 2010 – 2014, more African Americans proportionally lived below poverty level (**36%**) than Hispanics (**25.5%**), Asians (**15%**) and Whites (**9.8%**).



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# POVERTY



In Polk County, most ZIP codes with households living below the poverty line were highly concentrated in the Des Moines area, especially in zip codes 50314 and 50309.

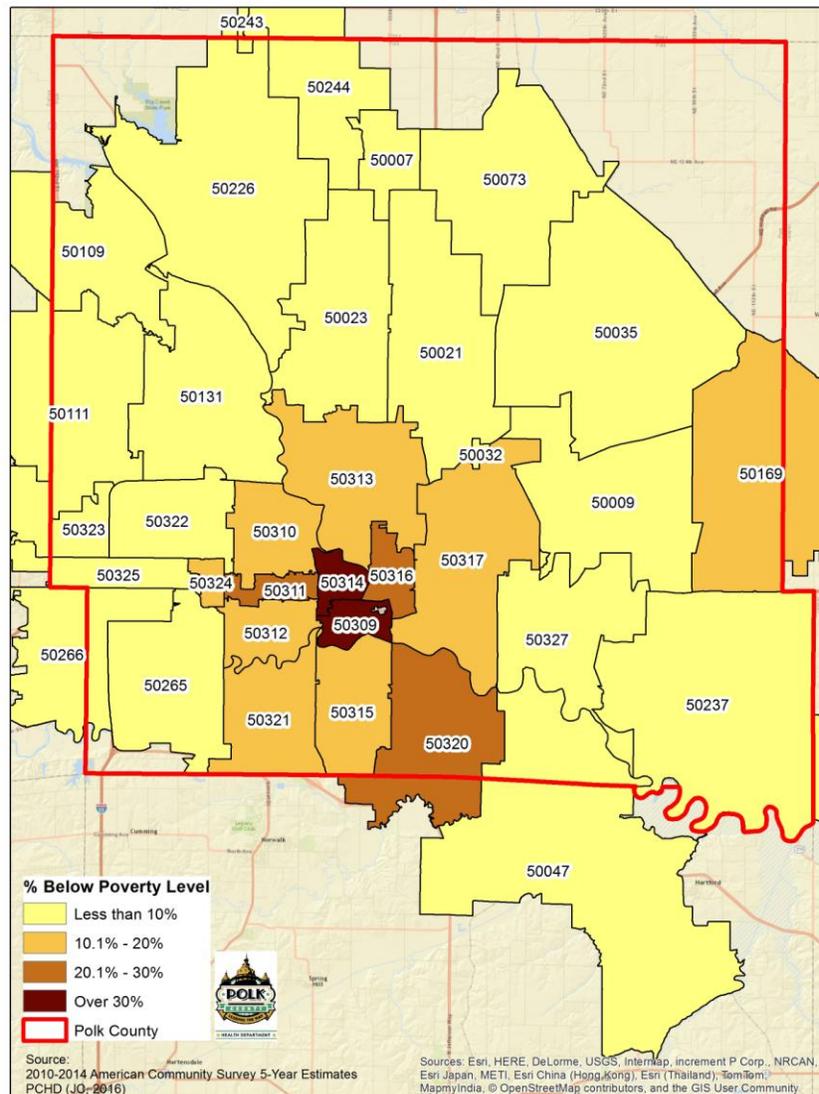


Figure 1 Percent of Families Below 100% Poverty Level by ZIP code in Polk County (2010 – 2014)

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

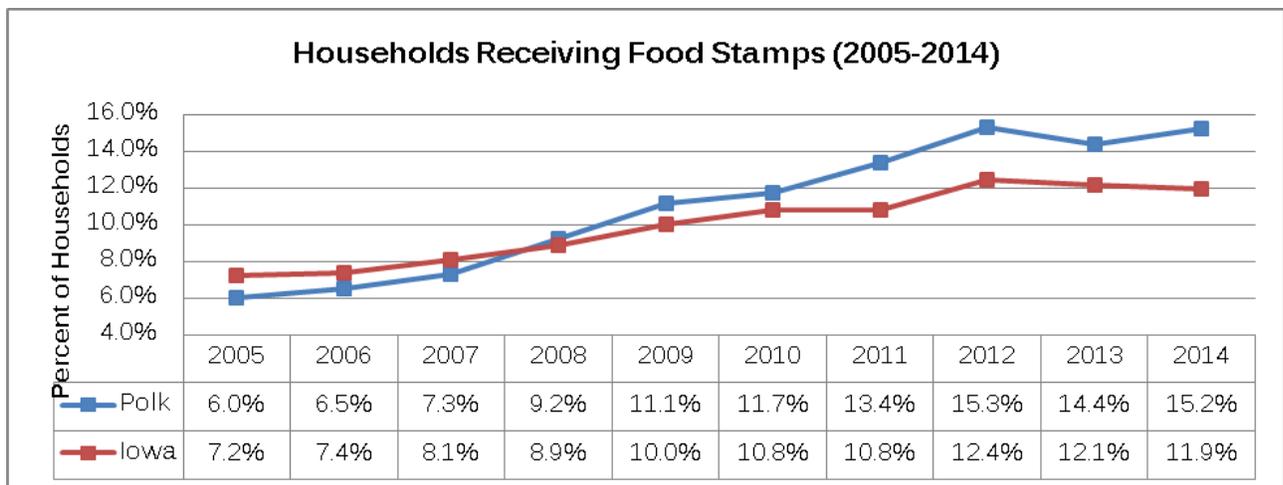
# POVERTY



Children are more likely to be living in poverty than any other age group. This fact is a cause for concern as childhood is a critical time in human development.

In 2014, **20.5%** of households with children under 18 years old were living below the poverty line in comparison with **11.7%** of 18 – 64 year olds and **8.4%** of people over 65 years old.

In 2014, **15.2%** of Polk County households received assistance from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). **Over half** of these households have children under 18 years old.



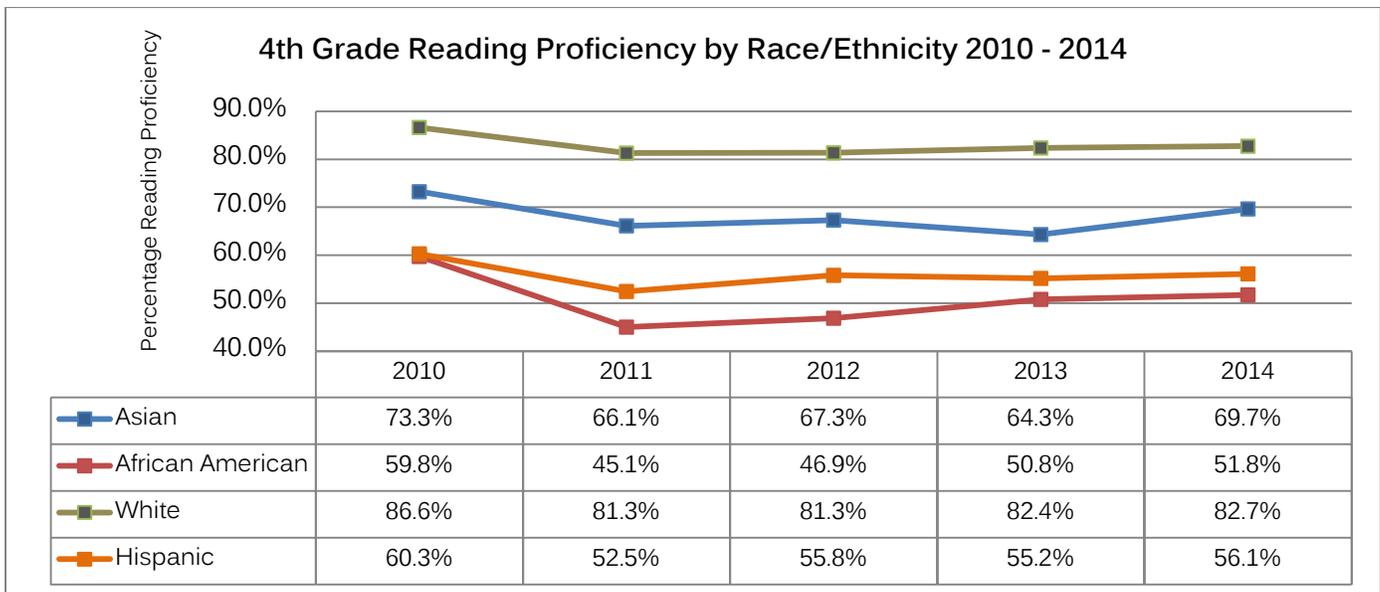
Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates <http://factfinder.census.gov/>

# EDUCATION



When children are healthy, they are more successful in school and develop better relationships with their peers. Fourth grade reading proficiency is a benchmark for a child's academic achievement. Children who show appropriate reading ability are more likely to succeed in other areas at school, like math and science. Reading ability can predict the likelihood of graduating high school.

In Polk County, fourth grade reading proficiency levels dropped in 2011 among all races/ethnicity, and have been slowly improving since. However, African-American (51.8%) and Hispanic (56.1%) have been consistently showing lower reading proficiency scores than their Asian (69.7%) and white, non-Hispanic (82.7%) counterparts.



Source: Iowa Department of Education

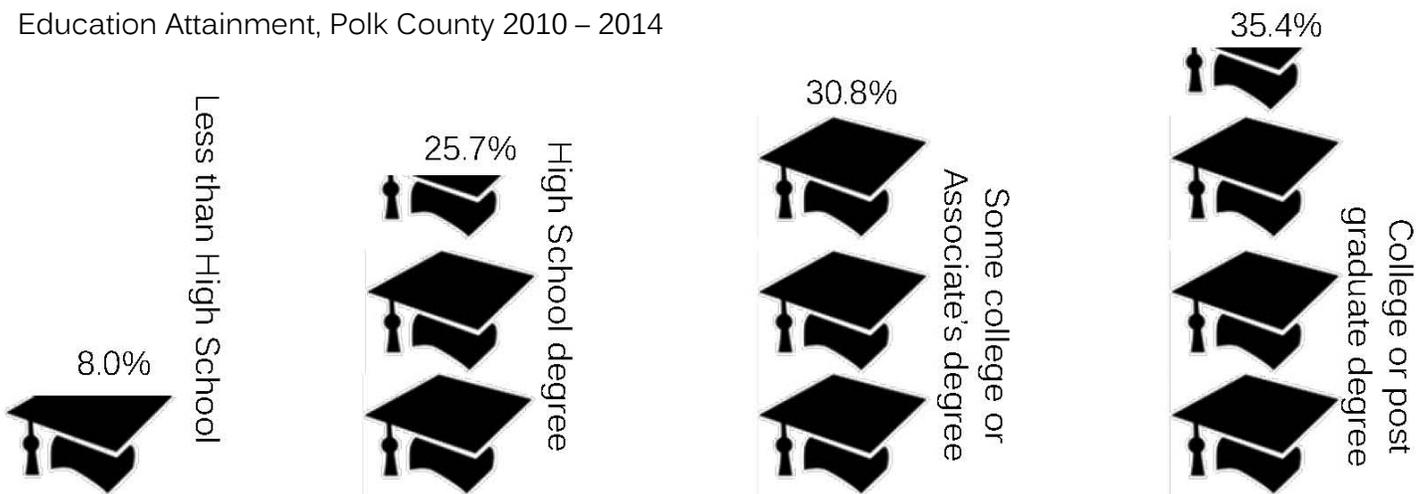
# EDUCATION



The rate of high school graduates in Polk County has risen from **87.8%** in 2010 to **89.4%** in 2014. However, these percentages are below the State, which reported a **90.4%** graduation rate in 2014.

Overall, in Polk County there is an increasing rate of continuing education past high school. Between 2010 – 2014, it was estimated that **35.4%** of residents had either a college or graduate degree. Between genders, it was found that education attainment was nearly equal across all levels.

Education Attainment, Polk County 2010 – 2014



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

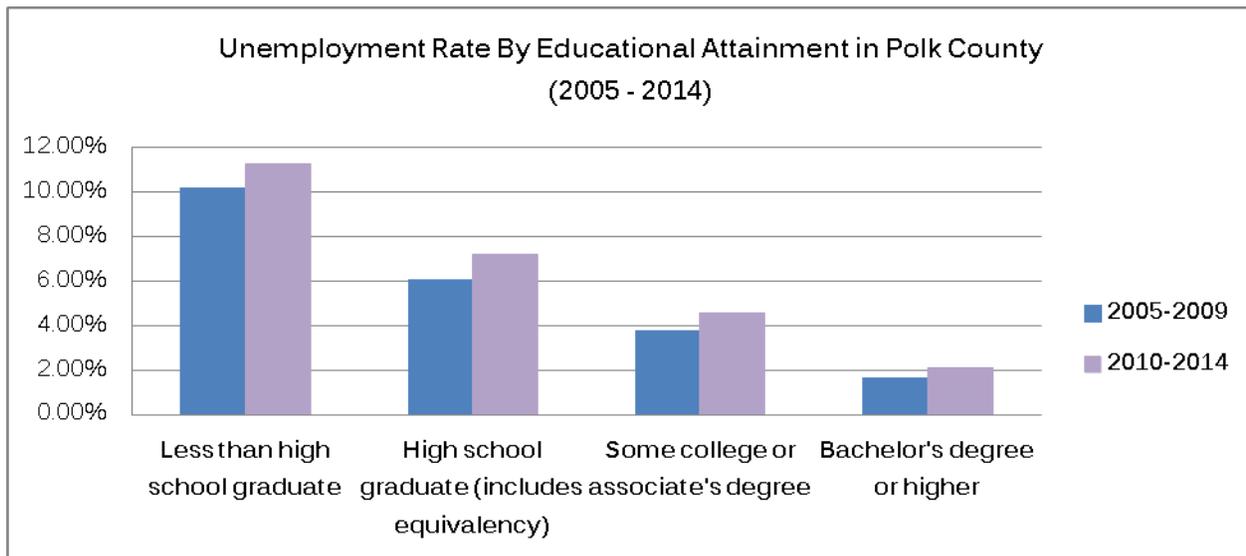
# UNEMPLOYMENT



Unemployment is greatly influenced by a person's education. Between 2010 – 2014, individuals with less than high school degree had an unemployment rate of **11%**, whereas those with a bachelor's degree or higher had a **2%** rate of unemployment.

Polk County's total unemployment rate peaked in 2011 at **7.3%**. Since then, it has been steadily declining reaching **4.5%** in 2014.

Data indicates that people with higher levels of education consistently had lower unemployment rates than people with lower levels of education. Between 2010 – 2014, individuals with less than high school degree had an unemployment rate of **11%**, whereas those with a bachelor's degree or higher had a **2%** rate of unemployment.



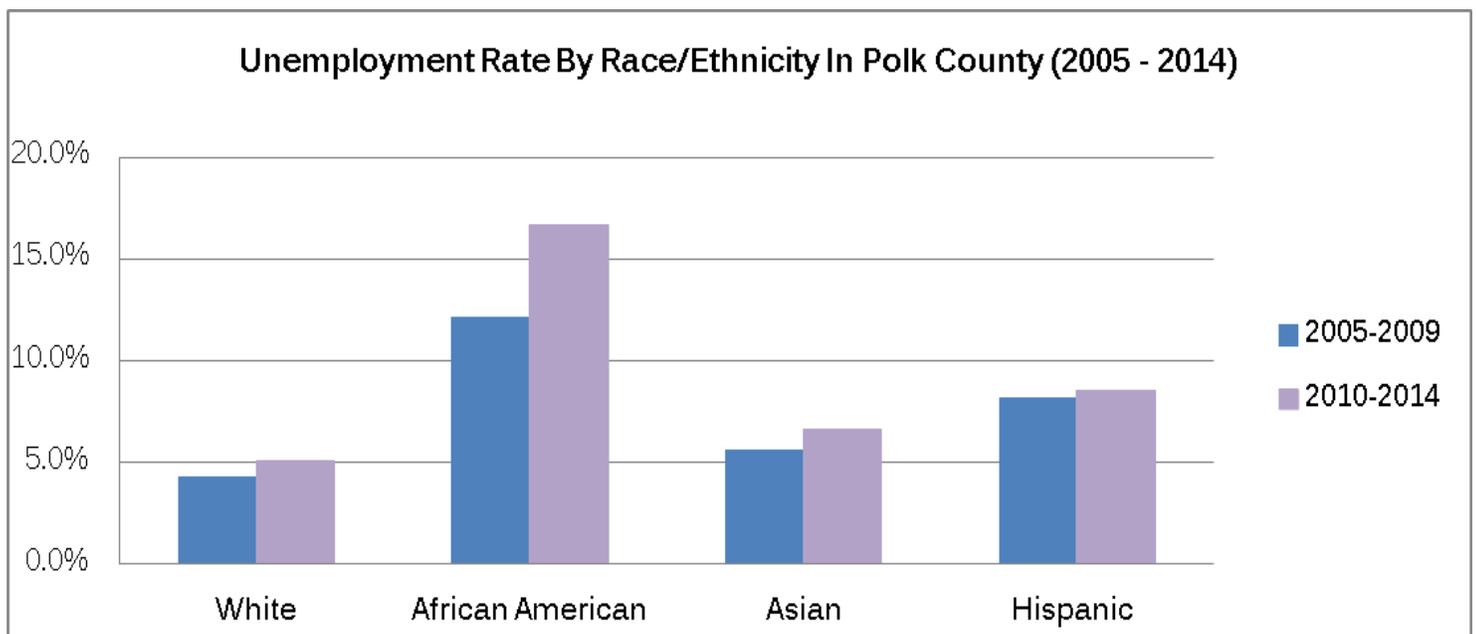
Based on Population 25-64 years old

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# UNEMPLOYMENT



A comparison of unemployment rates based on race and ethnicity shows disparities among populations. During 2010-2014, unemployment rates for African Americans (**16.7%**) were much higher than rates associated to Hispanics (**8.5%**), Asians (**6.6%**) and Whites (**5.1%**).



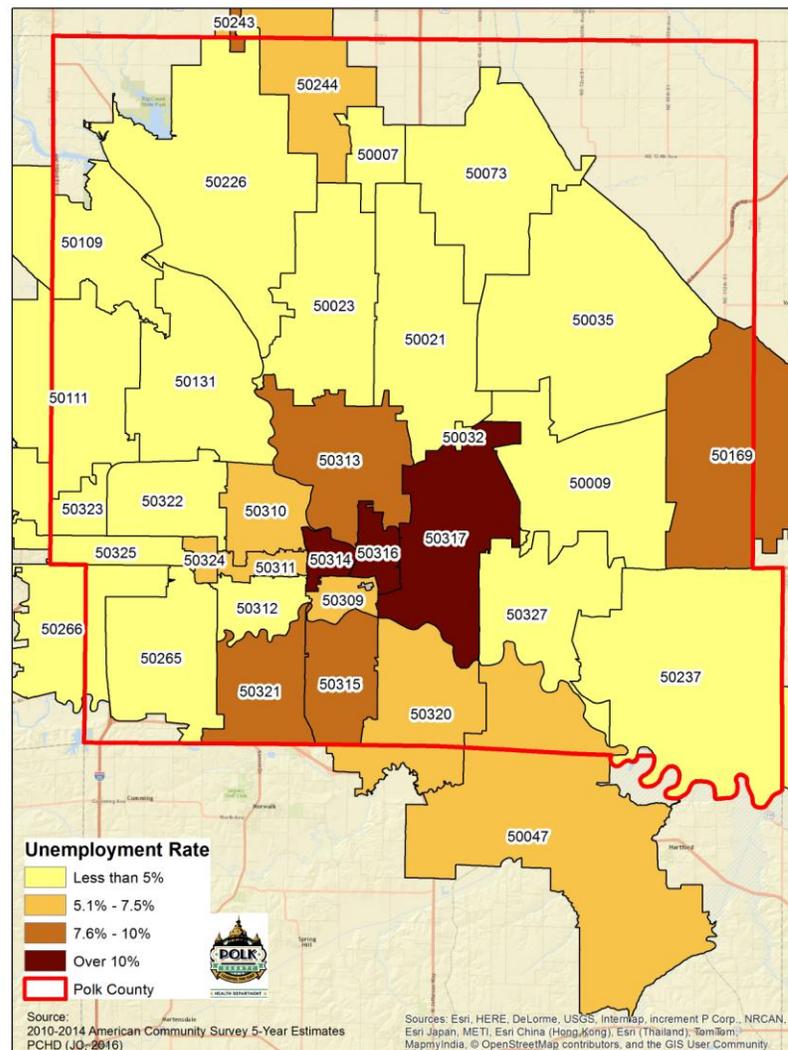
Based on Population 16 years and over

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# UNEMPLOYMENT



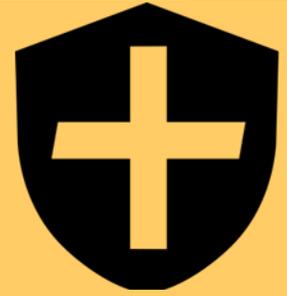
Among ZIP codes in Polk County, the codes 50314, 50316 and 50317 showed the highest percentage of unemployment.



This map illustrates unemployment rate by zip code in Polk County.

Based on Population 25-64 years old Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

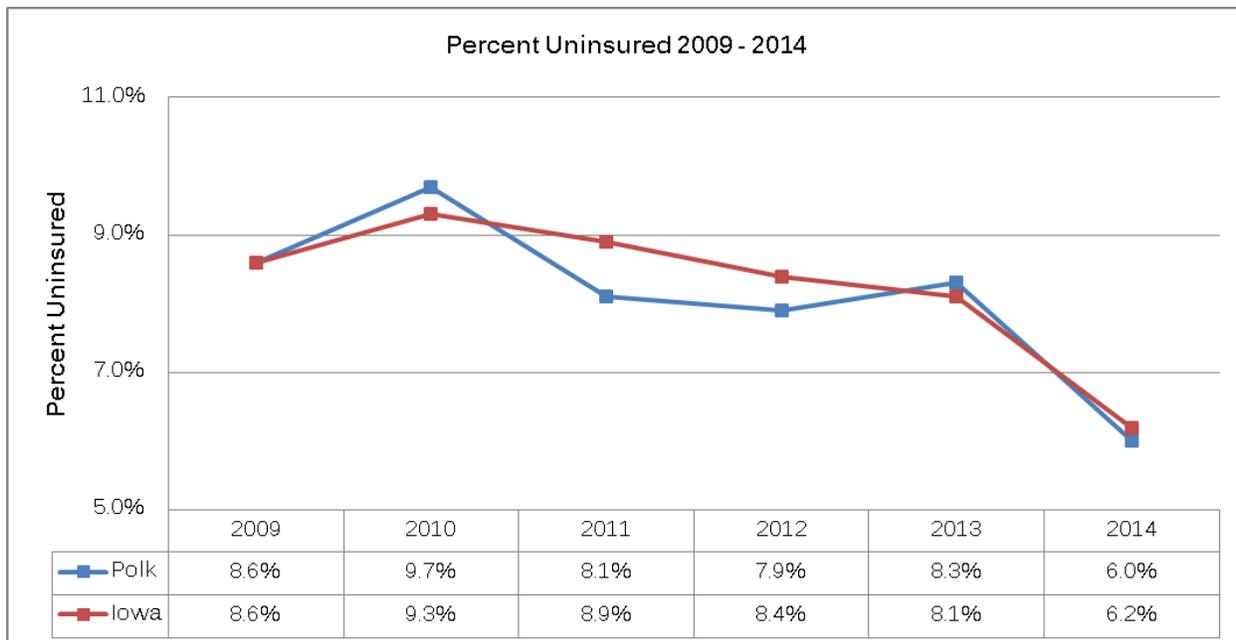
# INSURANCE



Health insurance assists people in accessing health care services and may protect them against disastrously high costs during serious illness. Those with insurance are more likely to receive preventative screenings and less likely to have undiagnosed or untreated chronic health conditions.

Lack of insurance is more likely to affect low-income households. Residents who are below 200% of the poverty line make up **56%** of the uninsured population, but only **28%** of the total population.

Since the introduction of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the rate of Polk County residents without insurance dropped from **9.7%** to **6%** in 2014.



Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

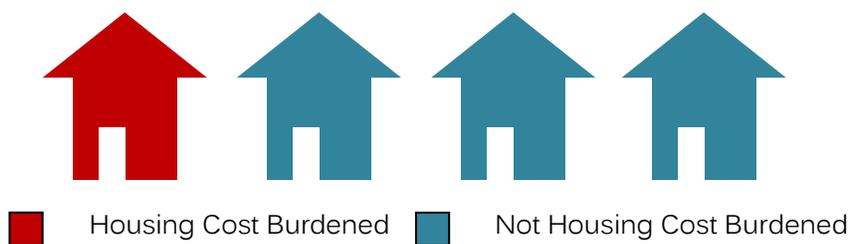
# HOUSING



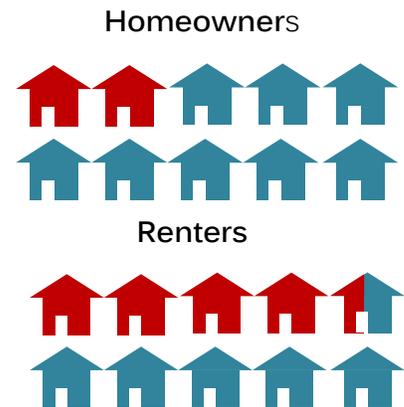
Residents who spend more than 30% of their monthly gross income on housing costs are considered "housing cost-burdened." Housing costs takes into account mortgages, loans, rent, taxes, insurance and utilities. Households that designate more of their budget on housing have less to spend on food, medical care and other necessities.

Between 2010 and 2014, nearly **21%** of Polk County homeowners and **45%** of renters are considered "housing cost-burdened". In total, **25%** of all households (a combination of all homeowners and renters) are housing cost-burdened in Polk County.

Housing in Polk County 2010 – 2014



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



The category of housing cost burden can be divided in low (30% of income), high (more than 30%) and severe (50% or more). An analysis of US Census data shows disparities among populations from different race/ethnic background in Polk County. In 2011, 29% of African Americans experienced severe housing burden while Hispanic households 27% followed by White with 10% and Asian households with 7%.

# HOUSING



Between 2010 – 2014, housing burden among households in Polk County was found predominantly in the Des Moines area. The ZIP codes 50314 and 50316 showed the highest percentages of housing burden in the county.

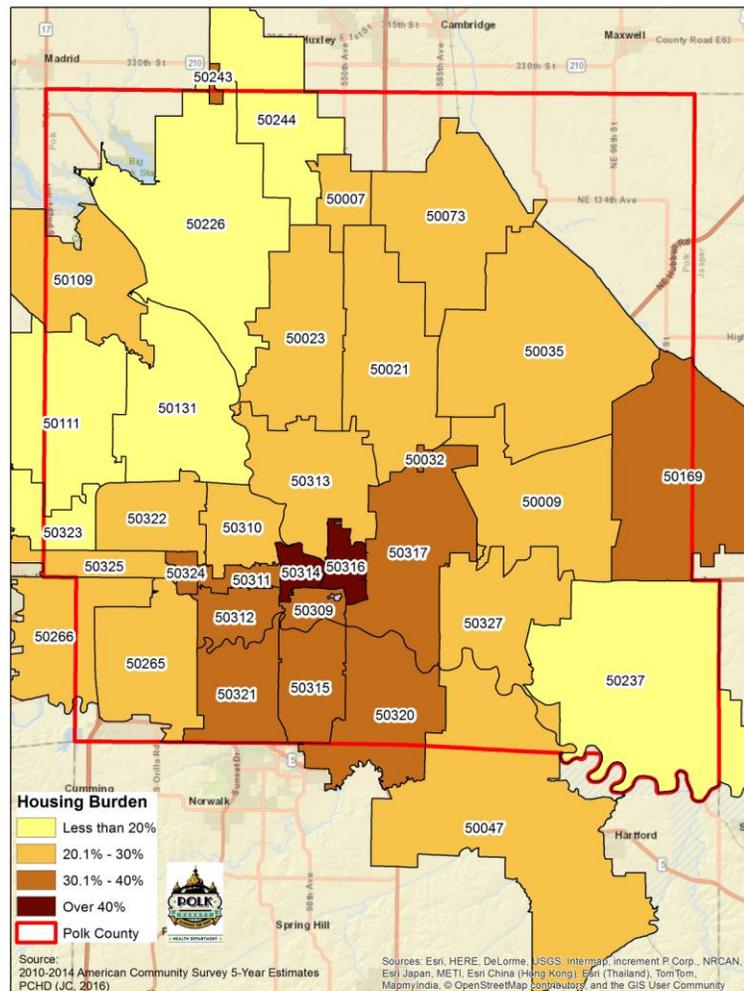


Figure 1: Percent of Households who spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs by ZIP code 2010 – 2014.

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



# MEDICAL

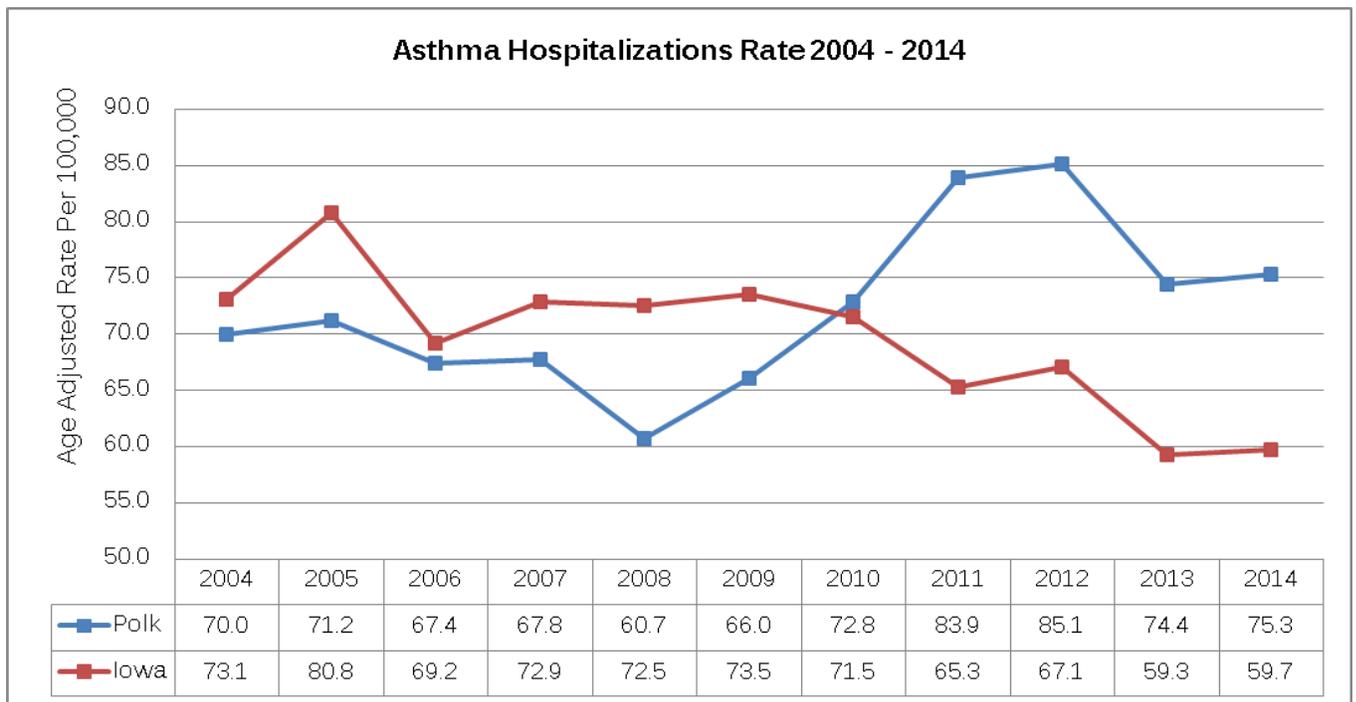
The medical section examines asthma data, sexually transmitted diseases, concerns facing prenatal care and low birth weight and immunization numbers.

# ASTHMA



Asthma is a medical condition caused by an inflammation of the airways that restricts airflow to the lungs. It can be triggered by environmental pollutants (smoking, dust, pet dander, car exhaust). Asthma is a serious chronic health condition which affects both children and adults. Children can miss school and adults be absent from employment, which leads to educational and economic consequences.

Since 2008, the rate of hospital visits due to asthma has increased in Polk County by **24%** from 70 out of 10,000 visits in 2004 to a rate of **75.3 visits per 100,000** people.

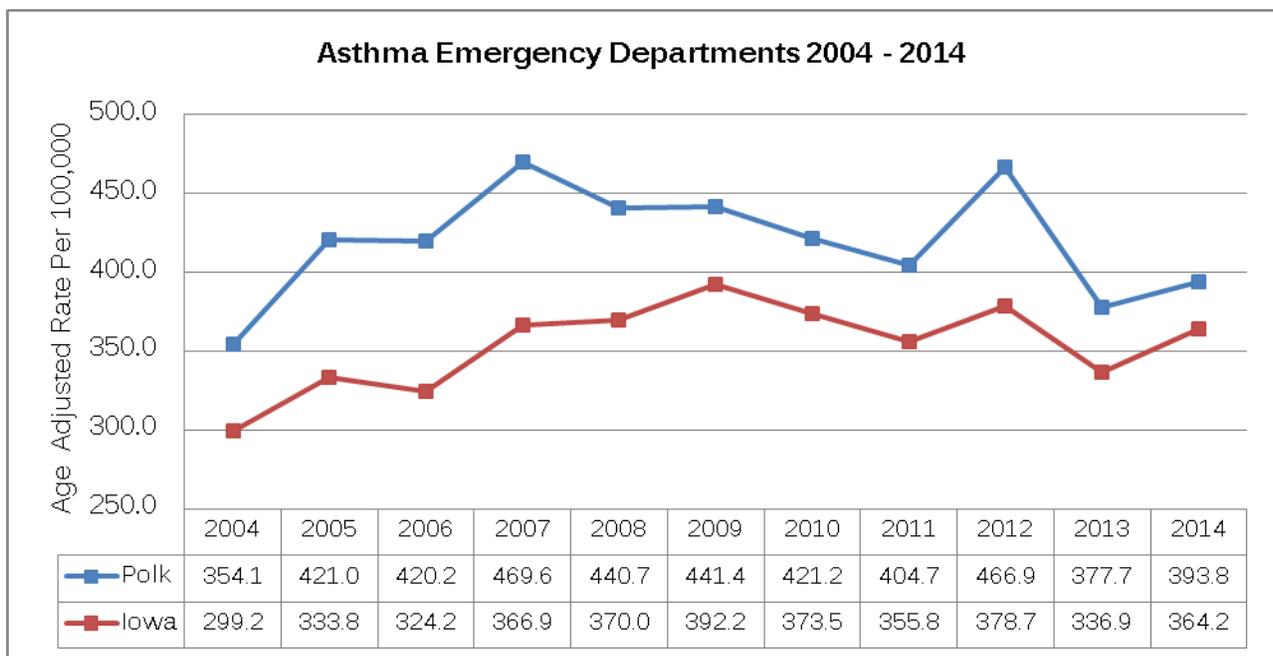


Source: IDPH Iowa Tracking Portal

# ASTHMA



Emergency department visits for asthma may be possible indicators of inadequate healthcare coverage, lack of non-emergency appointment times, poor housing conditions or lack of an adequate asthma preventive plan. Between 2004 – 2014, the rate of emergency department visits in Polk County was equal to **393.4 per 100,000 people**, which was higher than the state.



Source: IDPH Iowa Tracking Portal

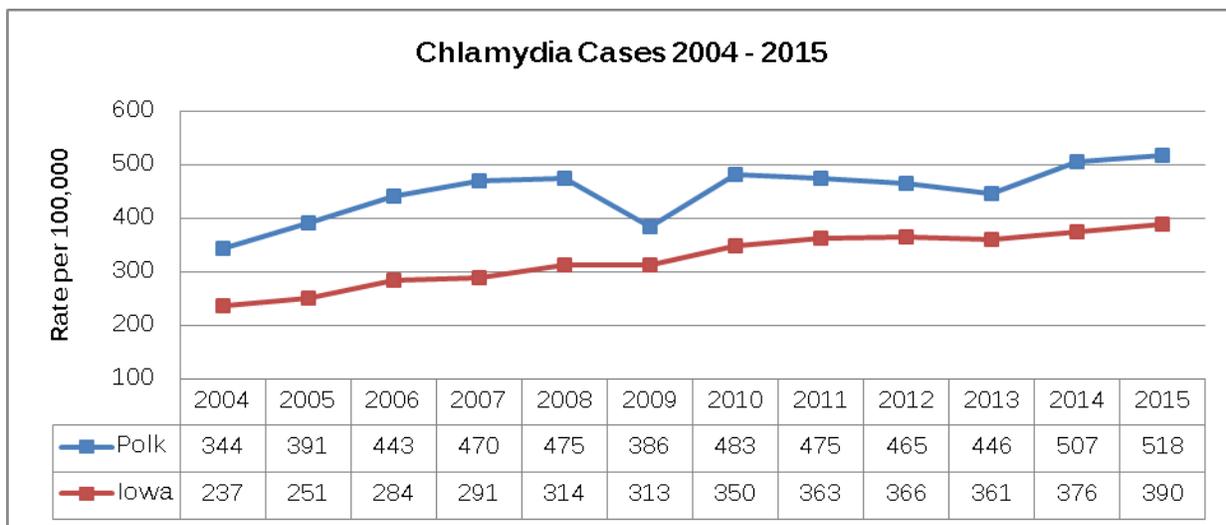
# STDs

## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES



Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) also known as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are spread from person to person via sexual contact. They can have serious health consequences. They can be prevented with condom use and are treatable with early diagnosis and medical attention. Additional cause for concern is the population in which STDs are found most often. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 15 – 24 year olds make up only **25%** of the sexually active population, but account for **half of the new cases of STDs**.

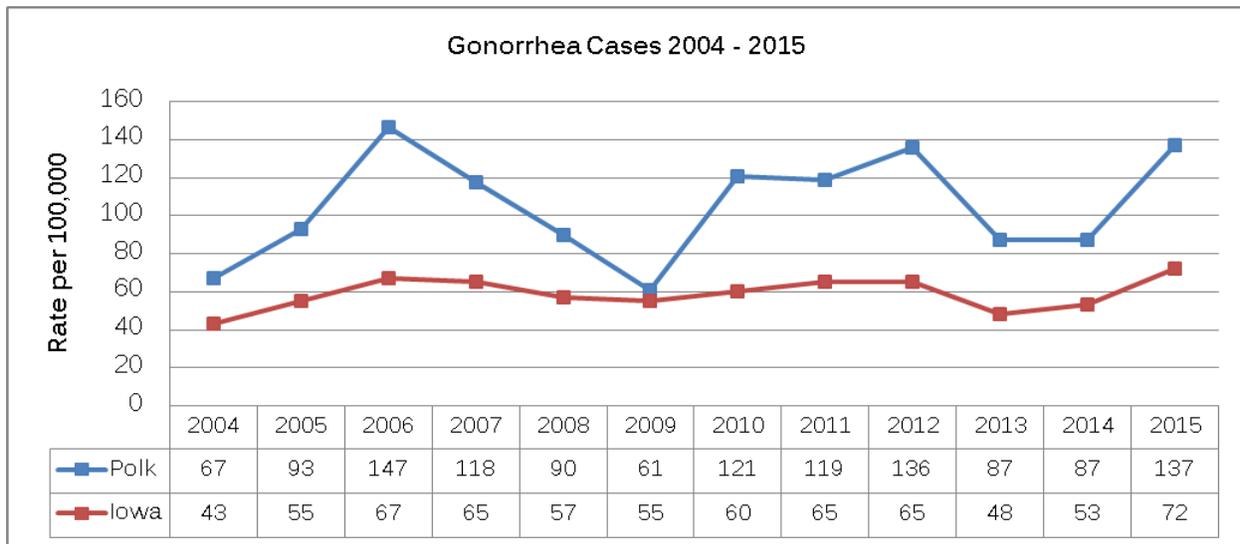
The number of cases of STDs in Polk County is concerning. The rates have been steadily growing during past years to rates significantly higher than those found in Iowa. The most common STDs seen in Polk County are Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Syphilis.



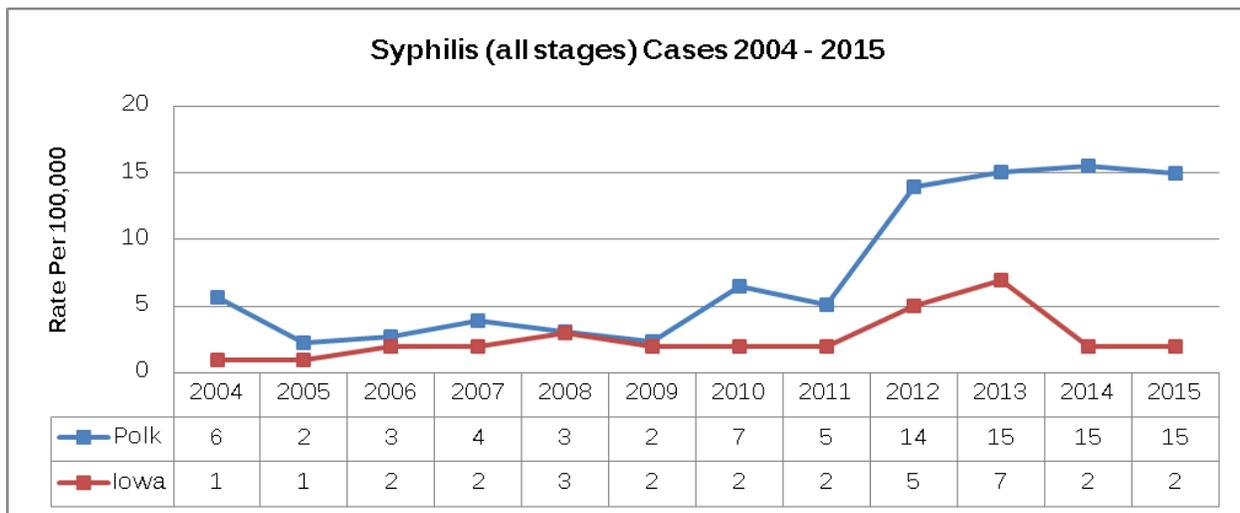
Source: IDPH Bureau of HIV, STD and Hepatitis

# STDs

## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES



Source: IDPH Bureau of HIV, STD and Hepatitis



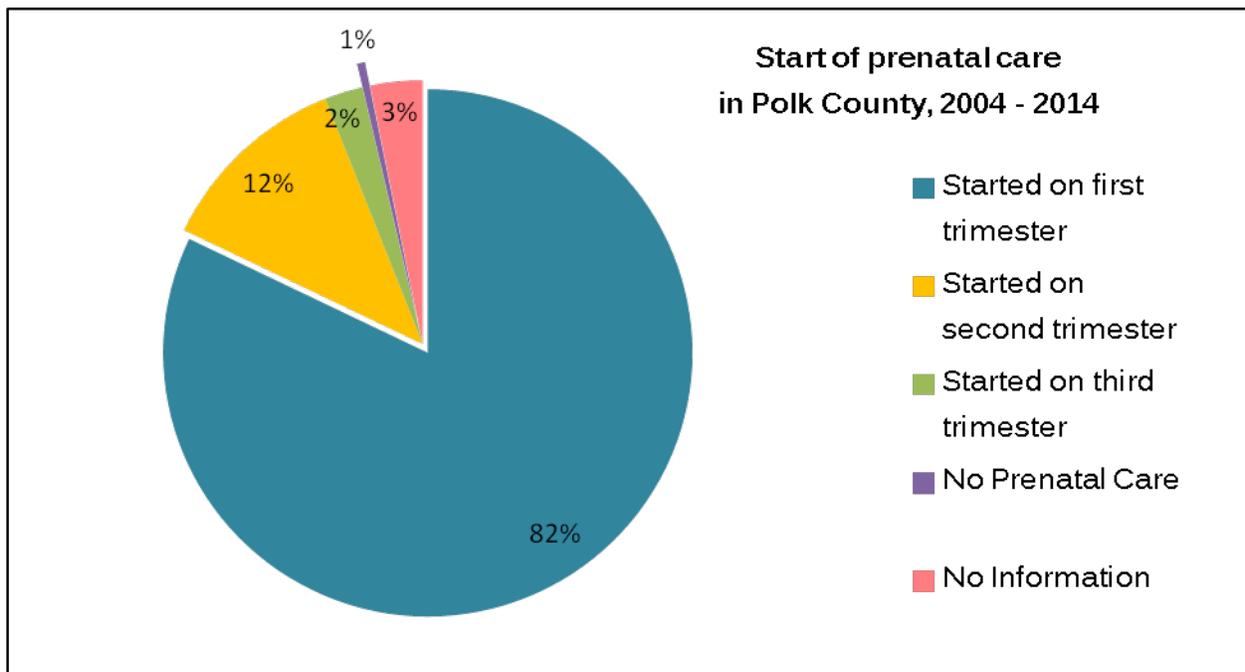
Source: IDPH Bureau of HIV, STD and Hepatitis

# PRENATAL CARE



A healthy pregnancy is the first step to a healthy baby. Prenatal care allows for healthcare providers to promote healthy lifestyle choices and quickly address medical conditions that could impact development of the fetus during pregnancy.

In Polk County, the majority of pregnant women received prenatal care and most of them started this process early in their pregnancy. Between 2004 – 2014, an average of **82%** of pregnant women started prenatal care in the first trimester. Among women who started on the second or third trimester, data indicates that African American (**65%**) and American Indian (**62%**), women were more likely to delay entry into prenatal care in their first trimester, compared to White (**85%**), Asian (**77%**) or Hispanic women (**72%**). Early entry into prenatal care is important for healthy development and birth of the baby.

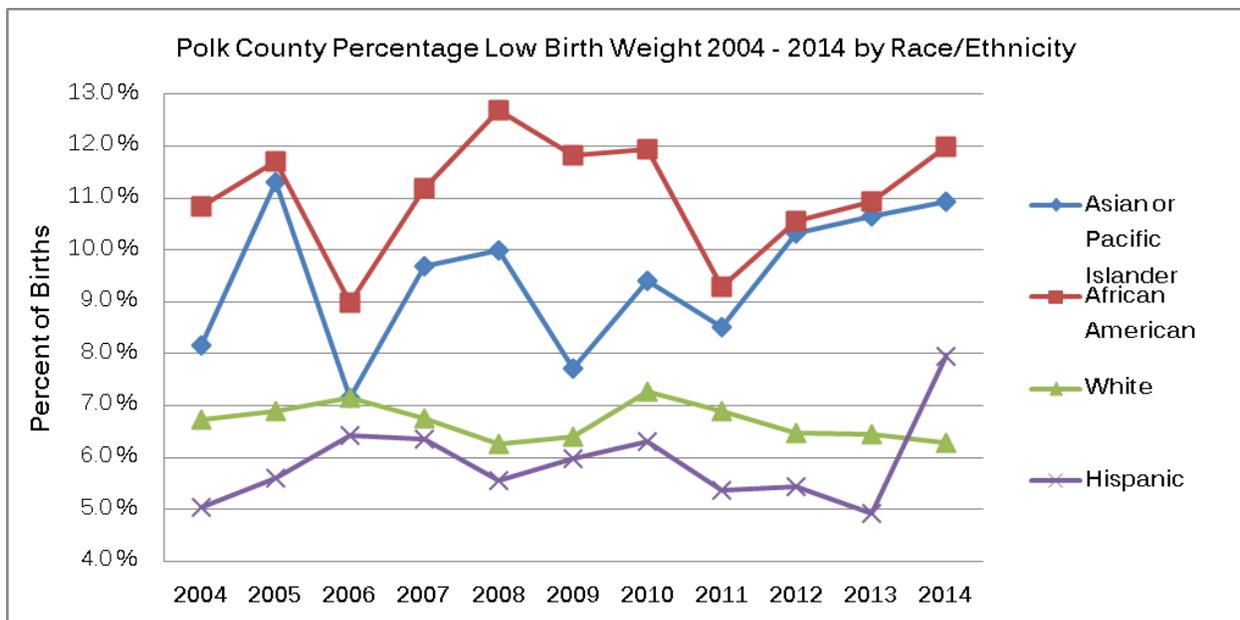


Source: IDPH Iowa Tracking Portal

# LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

A baby is considered low birth weight when it weighs less than 5.5 pounds at birth. According to CDC, low birth weight is one of the leading causes of infant mortality in the nation. Babies born at a low weight have a higher risk of health complications throughout their entire life, including brain development and respiratory problems.

Since 2004, the rate of total low birth weight babies in Polk County has fluctuated slightly, but stayed within 6 – 8% of all births. Women who do not receive prenatal care are at an increased risk of giving birth to a low birth weight baby. During 2004 – 2014, 23% of births from women who did not receive prenatal care were **low birth weight babies**. During this time frame, data shows significant differences across race/ethnicity lines. African American women are almost **twice as likely** to have a low birth weight baby compared to White and Hispanic women.



Source: IDPH Iowa Tracking Portal

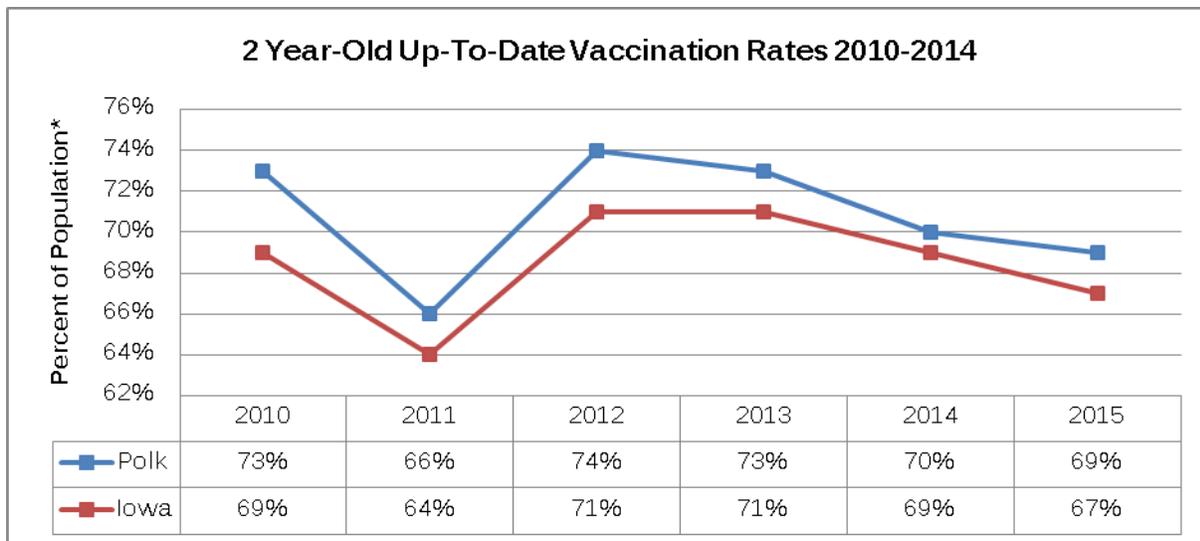
# IMMUNIZATIONS



## INFANTS

According to CDC recognized guidelines, all children should be immunized against infectious diseases starting at birth unless medical conditions prevent immunization. When there is a low immunization rate within a population, there is a higher risk of a disease outbreak. Not only do vaccinations keep a child safe from life-threatening diseases, it also protects the lives of those children who are unable to receive a vaccine for medical reasons.

The rates of immunization among infants (0 – 2 years old) in Polk County have been dropping since 2012, and in 2015 were at **69%**. While Polk County rates are slightly above those of Iowa (**67% in 2015**), the constant decline is cause for concern.



\*Based on 2 year old population registered in the Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS) and up-to-date on 4-3-1-3-3-1-4 series (4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 Hep B, 1 Varicella, 4 PCV)

Source: IDPH Immunization Program

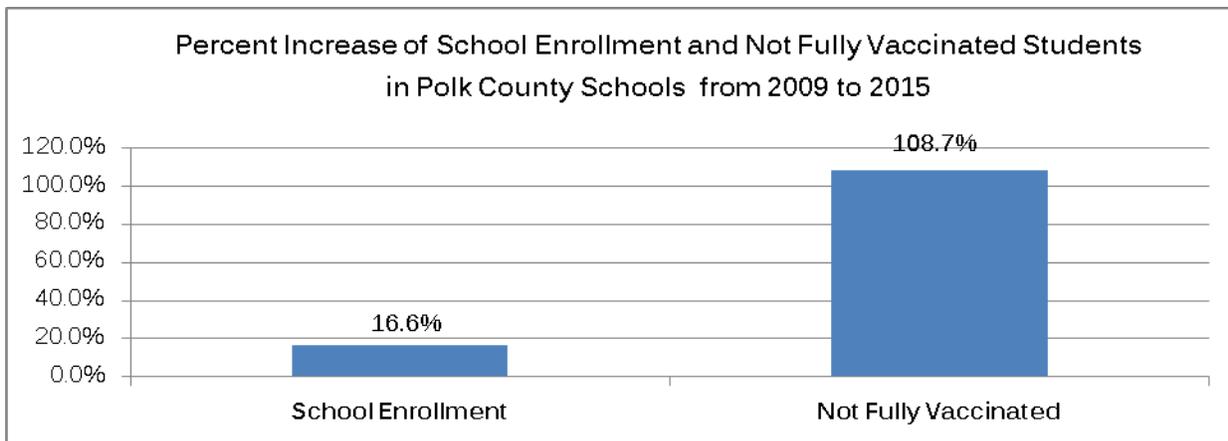
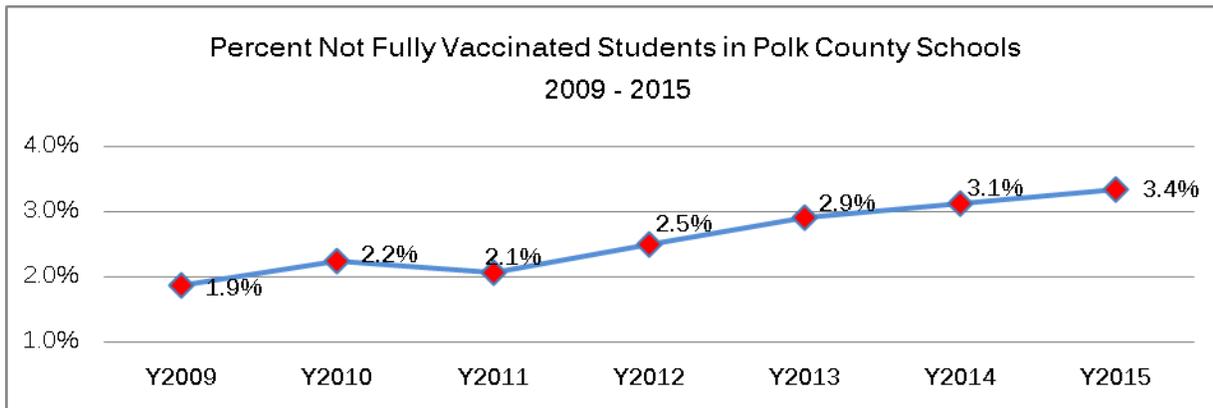
# IMMUNIZATIONS

## SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN



In Polk County, the number of students who have **not** been fully vaccinated has increased. Since 2009, the number of students in this category has increased over **108%**.

By 2015, 2,842 students or **1 in 33 students** in Polk County schools were missing at least one of the required vaccines. Consequently, many districts have fallen below recommended immunization rates and could be at risk for a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak.



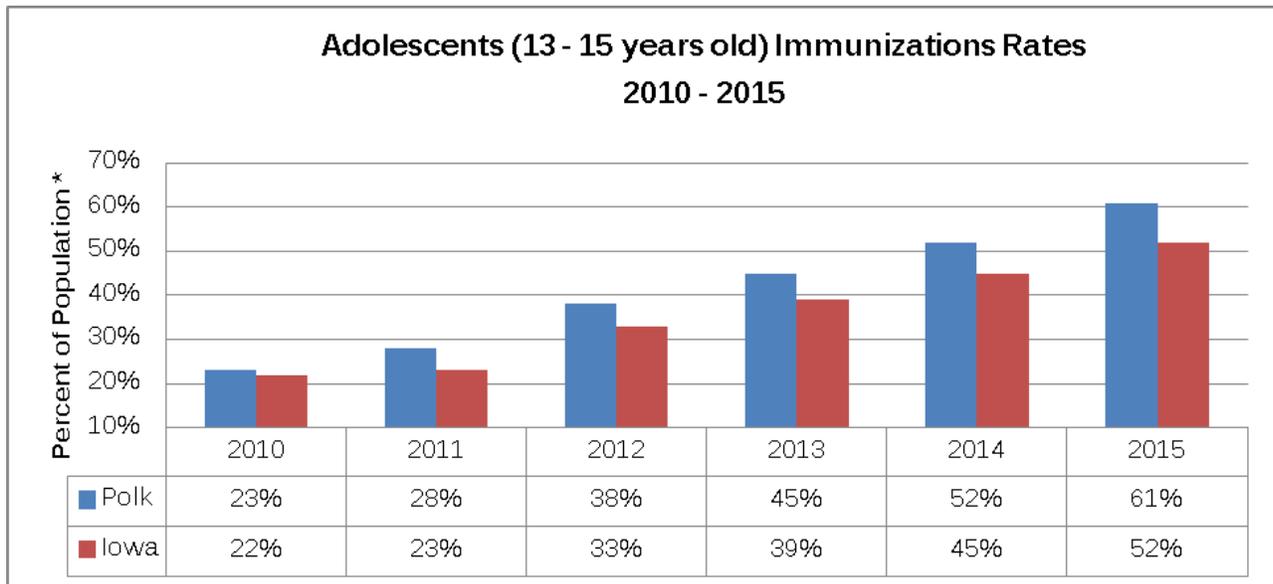
Source: Polk County Health Department (for both graphs)

# IMMUNIZATIONS

## TEENAGERS



Immunization rates among teenagers (13 –15 years old) have improved during past years. During 2010-2015, the rate of immunizations for teenagers in Polk County went from 23% in 2010 to 61% in 2015. These rates are higher than the ones found in the State. Rates of female teenagers who were vaccinated for HPV (Human papillomavirus) in Polk County slightly decreased in 2015 (25%) in comparison with 2010 (26%). In the case of males, these rates improved from 2013 (8%) to 2015 (14%).



\*Based on 13-15 year old population registered in the Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS) and up-to-date on 3-1-2-1-2 (3 Hep B, 1 Meningococcal, 2 MMR, 1 Td or Tdap, 2 Varicella)

Source: IDPH Immunization Program



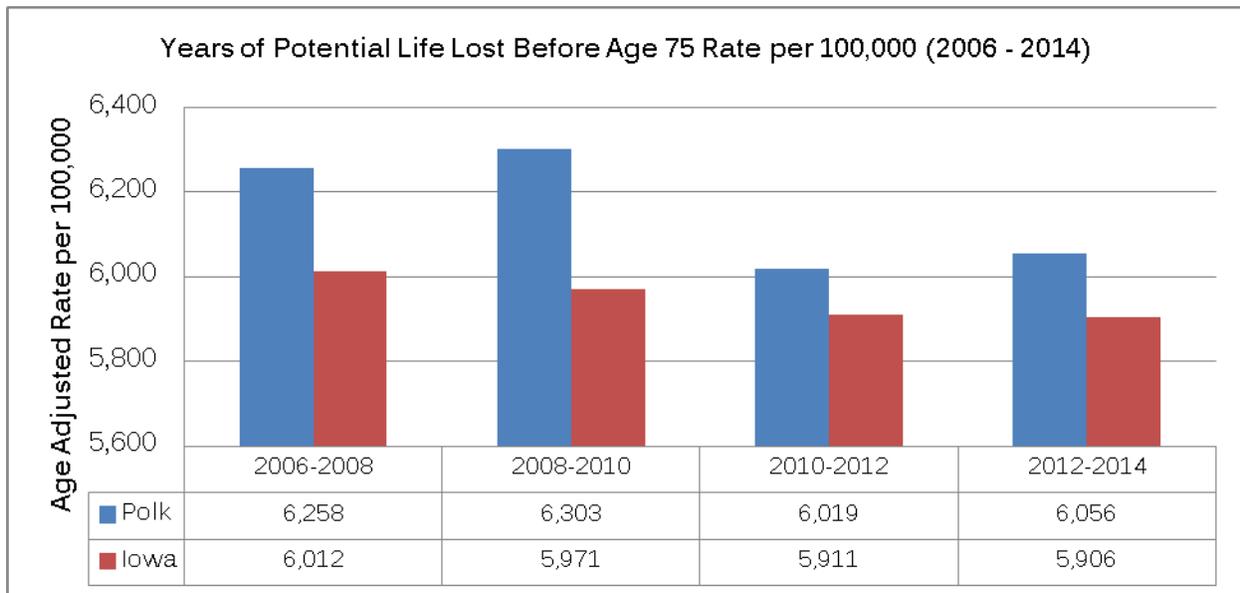
# WELL-BEING

The well-being section identifies data trends in the areas of premature death, top causes of death, hospitalizations and emergency room visits, obesity, child abuse and suicide.

# PREMATURE DEATH

Premature death data highlights the deaths that could have been prevented. When a person dies before the age of 75 years old, the difference in age is called Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL). YPLL is calculated by taking the age at death and subtracting it from 75. For example, if someone dies at age 63, their YPLL would be 12 years (75 – 63 = 12).

Premature death includes any cause of death. YPLL is presented as a rate per 100,000 people. Since 2006, the rate of YPLL has dropped **three percent** to **6,056 years lost per 100,000**.

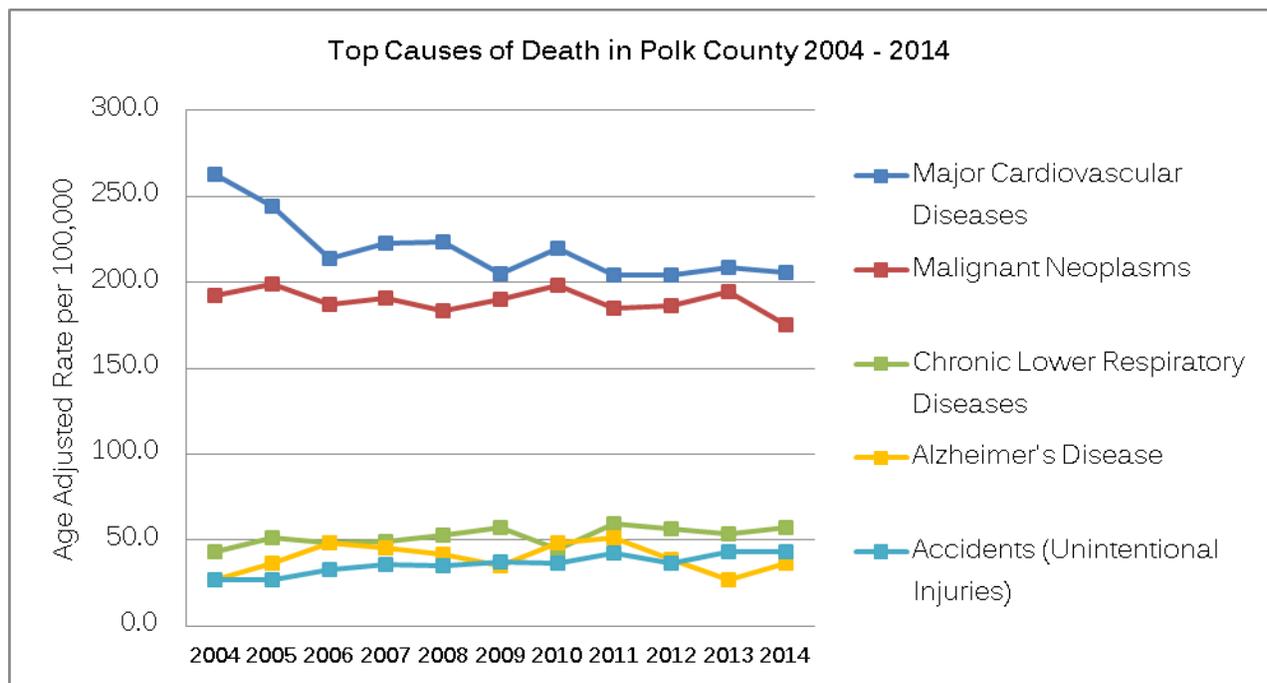


Source: Health Indicators Warehouse

# CAUSES OF ...

## DEATH

In Polk County, the number one cause of death is Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD), followed by malignant neoplasms, or cancer. There has been a decline in these causes of death since 2004. The next most common causes of death (Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases, Alzheimer's Disease and Accidents/Unintentional Injuries) are found at a much lower rate than CVD and cancer and have stayed at a relatively consistent level since 2004. The chart below shows the relationship between the top five causes of death in Polk County.

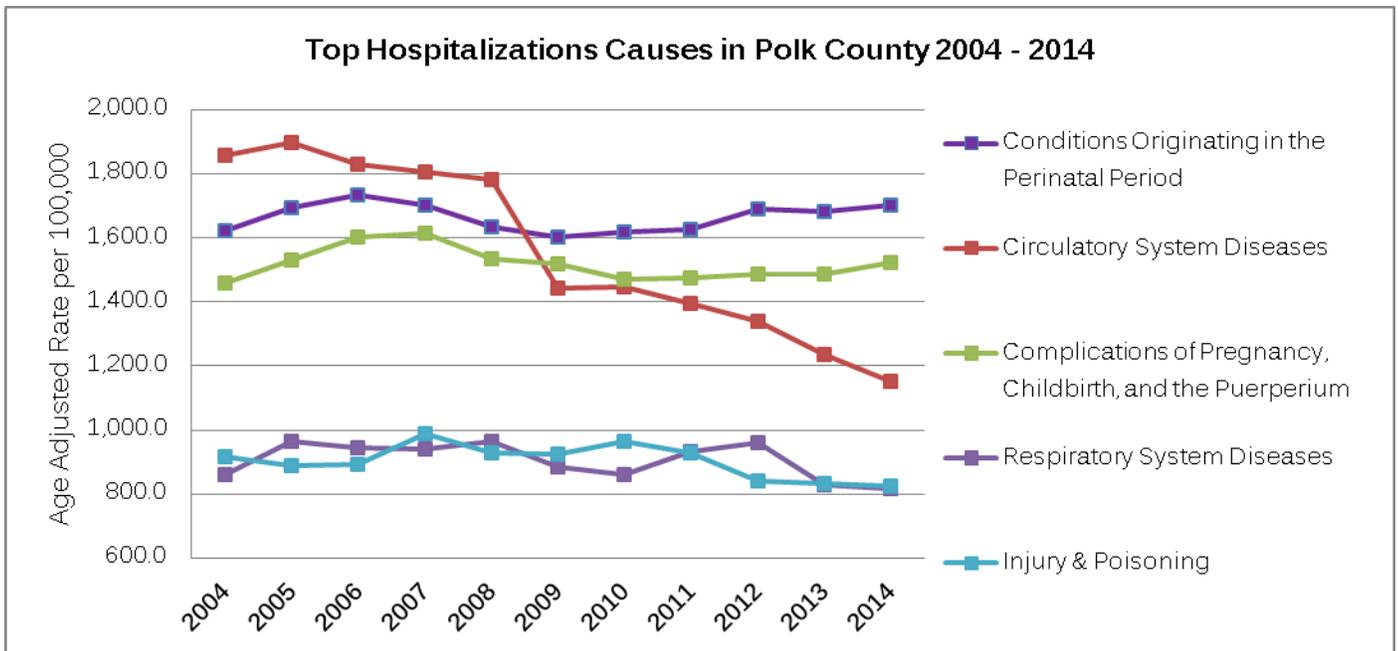


Source: IDPH Iowa Portal Tracking System

# CAUSES OF ...

## HOSPITALIZATIONS

Between 2004 – 2014, the three major causes of hospitalizations in Polk County have been **Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period** ( e.g. birth trauma), followed by **Circulatory System Diseases** (e.g. heart disease), **Complications of Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperium** (e.g. premature labor and birth). Others included, **Respiratory System Diseases** (e.g.emphysema) and **Injury and Poisoning** (e.g. fractures).

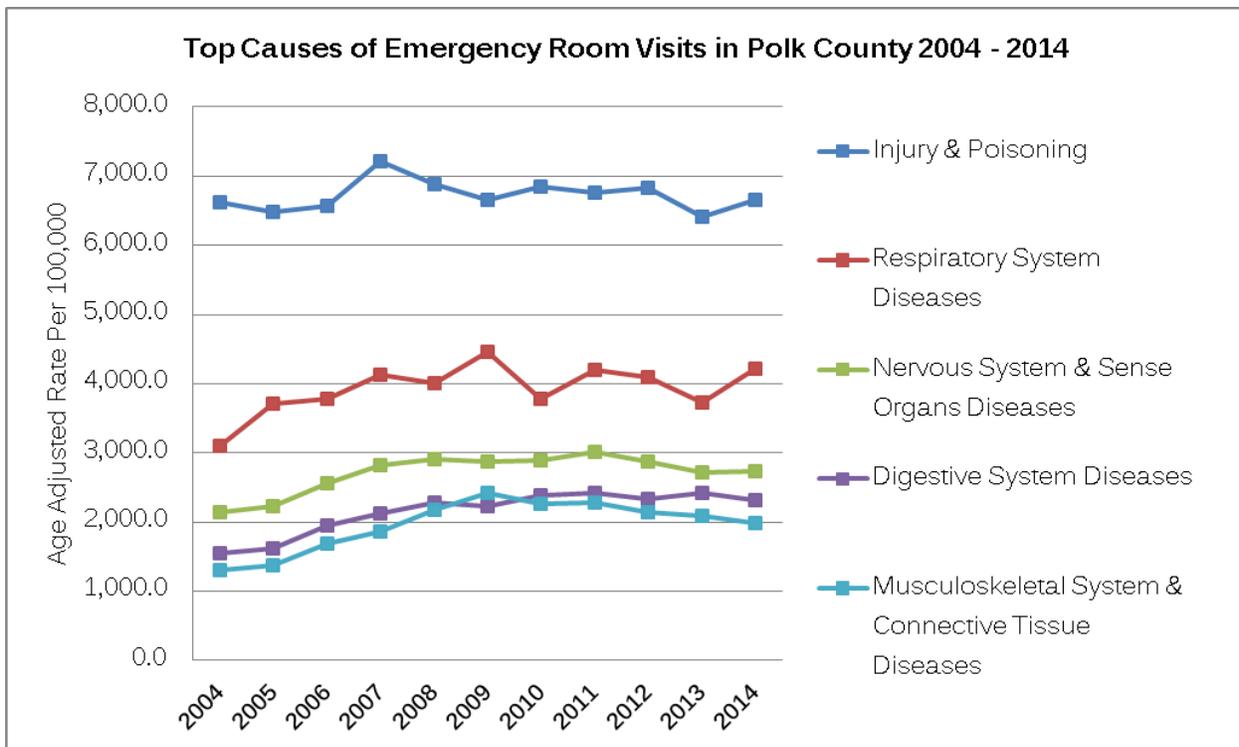


Source: IDPH Iowa Tracking Portal

# CAUSES OF ...

## EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

**Injury and Poisoning** have been the major cause of emergency room visits in Polk County. Other causes prevalent during 2004 – 2014 include **Respiratory System Diseases** (e.g. asthma), followed by **Nervous System and Sense Organ Diseases** (e.g. encephalitis), **Digestive System Diseases** (e.g. food poisoning) and **Musculoskeletal System and Connective Tissue Diseases** (e.g. joint point).



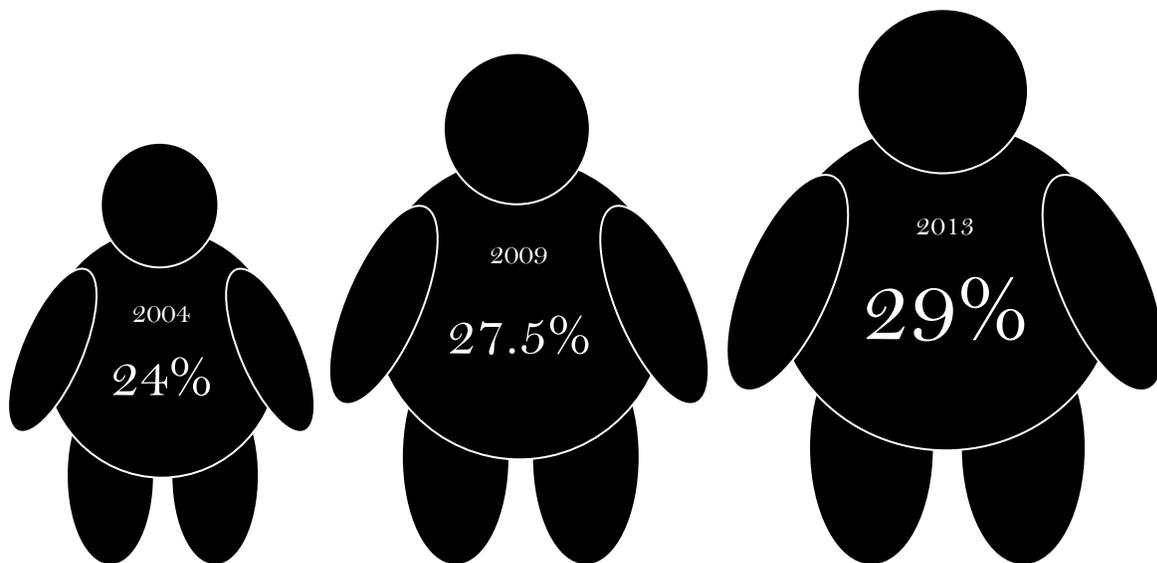
Source: IDPH Iowa Tracking Portal

# OBESITY

Obesity is defined as having a body mass index (a calculation of weight and height) of 30 or higher. Obesity can lead to serious health consequences like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and even arthritis.

There has been a steady incline of both obesity and diabetes rates in Polk County since 2004. Obesity now affects nearly one in every three people, reaching **29% in 2013**.

## Obesity Prevalence in Polk County

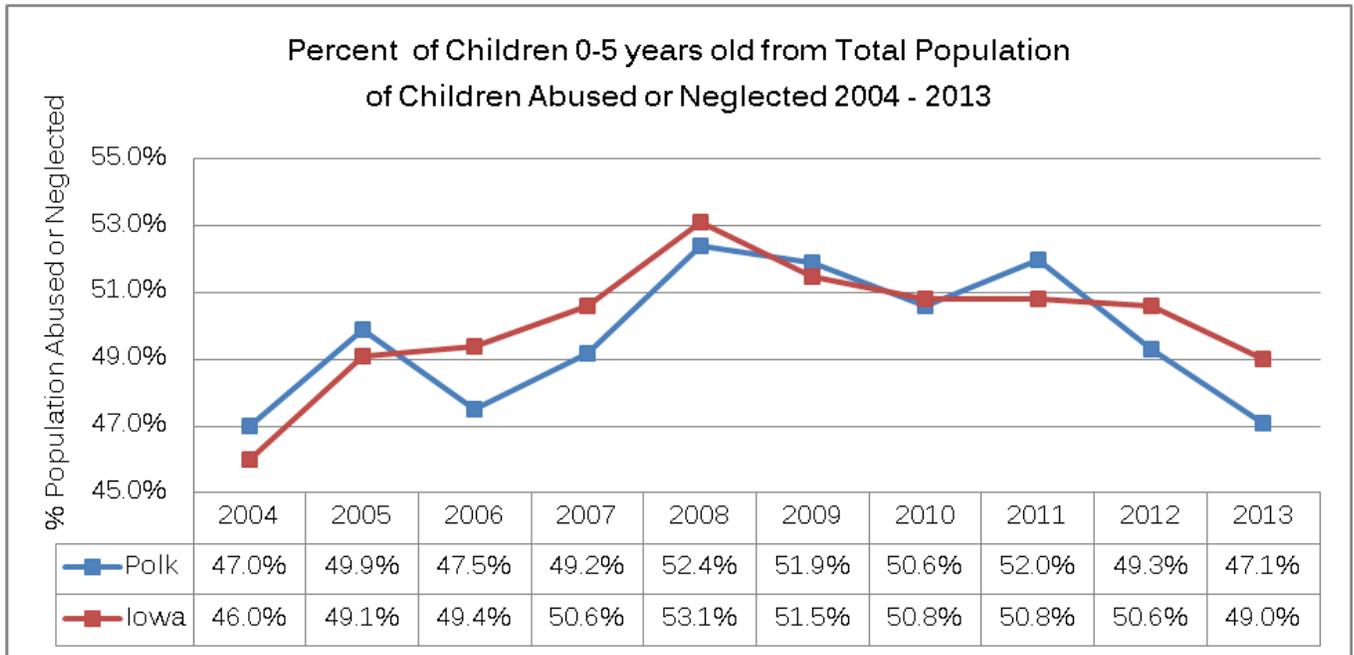


Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

# CHILD ABUSE

Children deserve to grow up feeling safe, healthy and cared for. Child abuse and neglect creates an environment that endangers a child's chance of developing normally. Abuse puts children at risk for lasting physical, emotional and behavioral problems.

Every year in 2004 – 2013, **almost half** of all children 0 –17 years old who were subject to abuse or neglect in Polk County were under the age of five years old. A total of 16,441 cases of child abuse in Polk County were reported during this time frame.



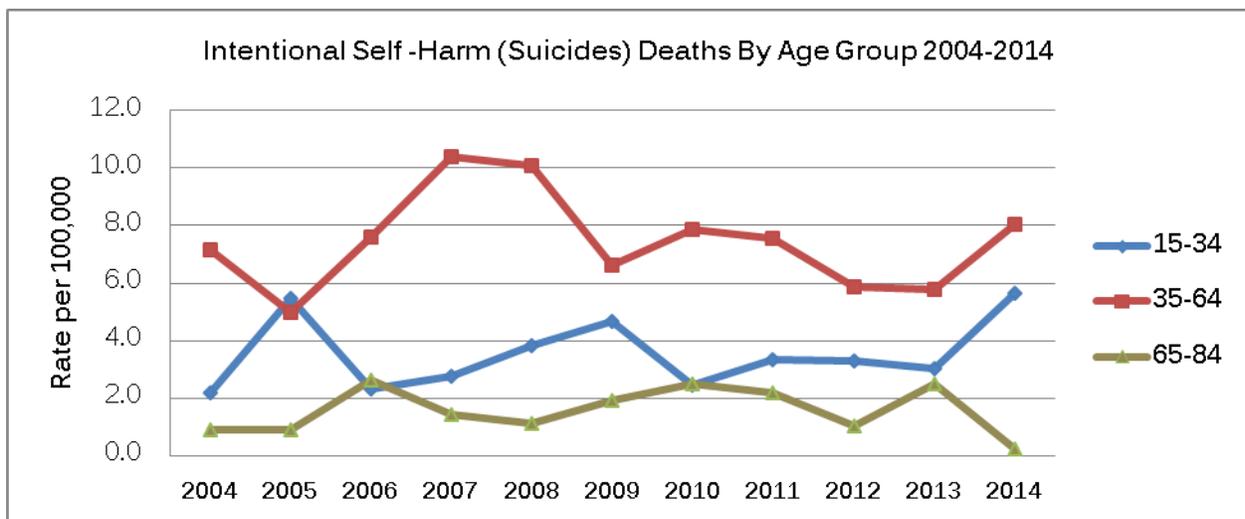
Source: Iowa Department of Human Services

# SUICIDE

Suicide is when someone harms oneself with the intent of ending their life and dies as a result. A suicide attempt refers to someone who takes harmful actions with the intent of killing oneself, but does not die. Individuals who attempt suicide can suffer serious physical and mental injuries.

Depression and other mental illness are factors that may lead to suicide attempts. Other risk factors are alcohol or drug abuse, family history of suicide, physical illness or feelings of loneliness. Suicide does not only affect the individual, but also their friends and family who are left with feelings of shock, anger, guilt and depression.

Between 2004 – 2014, a total of 604 suicides were reported in Polk County. In 2014, the rate of suicides was estimated at 14.1 per 100,000. Among age groups, individuals aged 35 –64 represented 57% of all suicides during 2004 – 2014 followed by the age group 15 – 34 years with 29% of the total. Among all cases, 38% of them were suicides by firearm discharge.



Source: IDPH Iowa Tracking Portal

# RANKING

SOURCES: COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS & ROADMAPS; AARP LIVABILITY INDEX

There are many different ways to calculate and view the overall health status of a community. Here are two methods that compare the health of Polk County with the surrounding areas.

## County Health Rankings

The *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* is a collaborative effort between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. This ranking model measures health outcomes, health factors, policies and programs in counties around the nation and ranks them within states.

In Iowa, the total score is ranked 1 through 99 (the numbers of counties in the state). Lower numbers represent better outcomes. In 2016, Polk County was ranked as **48th** in the overall state report. Health outcomes, which includes length and quality of life were ranked **48th**. Health Factors summary score is a weighted composite of four components: Health behaviors (**74th**), Clinical care (**11th**), Social and economic factors (**59th**), and Physical environment (**92nd**).

*County Health Rankings & Roadmaps - Polk County (2010-2016)*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Health Outcomes</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>48</b>
• Length of Life (50%)	N/A	57	56	58	58	46	47
• Quality of Life (50%)	N/A	72	69	63	64	65	52
<b>Health Factors</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>58</b>
• Health Behaviors (30%)	34	40	38	39	46	39	74
• Clinical Care (20%)	12	7	16	7	7	7	11
• Social & Economic Factors (40%)	47	47	51	64	54	55	59
• Physical Environment (10%)	93	9	48	43	72	98	92

Source: *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*

Visit [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) for more information, a detailed look into how each health topic is ranked and to compare Polk with surrounding counties.

# RANKING

SOURCES: COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS & ROADMAPS; AARP LIVABILITY INDEX



## AARP Livability Index

Another organization that scores the health of various communities is Public Policy Institute from AARP. Their project, The Livability Index, assesses seven broad categories of community livability: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement and opportunity. Each category is split up into more specific topics. Values are given to each category, and then combined and averaged to create the area’s total livability score, measured out of a perfect score of 100. Visit <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org> for more information.

The total Livability Score for Polk County is **59 out of 100**. For this measure, higher numbers represent better health.

Rank/Categories	Score
<b>Above Average 67-100+</b>	
<b>Opportunity-</b> Inclusion and possibilities	72
<b>Engagement-</b> Civic and social environment	68
<b>Average 34-66</b>	
<b>Environment-</b> Clean air and water	56
<b>Health-</b> Prevention, access, and quality	56
<b>Neighborhood-</b> Access to life, work, and play	50
<b>Transportation-</b> Safe and convenient options	45
<b>Below Average</b>	
This community does not score below average in any of the seven Livability categories.	

# COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Below is a more in-depth look into the missions of the community initiatives mentioned in this report. Visit the websites listed for more information or to get involved.

## Age Friendly Des Moines

The Des Moines Age-Friendly Initiative is a community-based effort designed to ensure that the Greater Des Moines, Iowa, area incorporates the infrastructure, design and community resources that will be needed to accommodate the region's growing 50+ population. Their vision is that Iowans who are 50+ will have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial to them and for society as a whole.

<http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/creating-an-age-friendly-des-moines.html>



## United Way OpportUNITY

United Way envisions a community where all individuals and families achieve their potential through education, income stability and healthy lives. The Central Iowa OpportUNITY Community Plan exists to take action against poverty in central Iowa. The plan's goal is to have

a realistic game plan of actions, big and small, that can bring financial stability and prosperity to the one-third of central Iowans who live in or near poverty. <http://www.unitedwaydm.org/opportunity>

## Central Iowa ACEs 360

The Central Iowa ACEs Steering Committee is a broad-based coalition of business, education, nonprofit and philanthropic entities that are leading efforts to raise awareness of the life-long impacts of childhood trauma and to support initiatives working to prevent or mitigate its effects. Its mission is to improve the health and well-being of all by empowering communities, organizations and people to take informed actions to prevent and mitigate the lifelong effects of childhood adversity. <http://www.iowaaces360.org/>



# COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

## Polk County Housing Trust Fund

The Polk County Housing Trust Fund is the comprehensive *planning, advocacy* and *funding* organization for Affordable Housing in Polk County Iowa. Focused around these three core activities, the Housing Trust Fund is responsible for crafting the community strategic plan for affordable housing and leading its implementation. It is also tasked with helping the community to understand the need for and benefits of adequate affordable housing. Finally, the organization is responsible for allocating community funds aimed at increasing and preserving the inventory of affordable units in the County and improving the lives of the people who live in them.

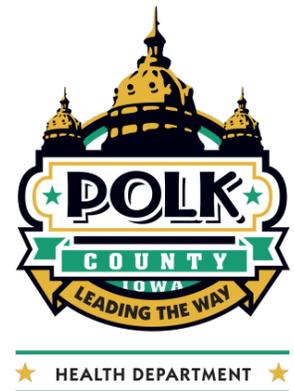
<http://www.pchtf.org/>



## Polk County Health Department Suicide Prevention Coalition

Led by the Polk County Health Department, the Suicide Prevention Coalition brings together health care and mental health providers, teachers, public health officials and survivors of suicides. Their goal is to reduce the incidence of suicide attempts and suicide completions in Polk County through engaging the community in carrying out national, state and local strategies; raising awareness; educating the public; and ensuring access to resources.

<https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health/programs/suicide-coalition/>



# COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

The following organizations, while not specifically mentioned in this report, also have notable initiatives and demonstrated efforts to improve the community. Visit the websites listed for more information or to get involved.

## Tomorrow Plan

The Tomorrow Plan looks forward to 2050 for Greater Des Moines. We are many distinct communities working as

one to compete globally and leave a dynamic, enduring legacy for future generations. We focus on the economy, the environment, community vitality, and regional cooperation. The plan will save us money, draw resources and talent to the region, and prepare us for future growth.

<http://www.thetomorrowplan.com/>



## Capital Crossroads

Capital Crossroads is a bold but achievable vision pushing Central Iowans to dream big,

not settle for good enough, think long term and work together. Seven entities initially joined together to sponsor the planning process, which encompasses a 50-mile radius around the State Capitol.

<http://www.capitalcrossroadsvision.com/>

## DART Forward 2035

The Dart Forward 2035 Plan will guide the growth of the transit system in Greater Des Moines over the next 19 years

and includes an alternatives analysis that explores different options for

rapid transit. Improving public transit in the Des Moines area will create new opportunities for residents to connect with their community, through access to jobs, as well as shopping, dining and entertainment activities. A thriving transit system will also promote economic development and a healthier

environment. <http://www.ridedart.com/media/dart-forward-2035-plan>.



# ABOUT US

The Polk County Health Department, cares about the health of our community.

This care is demonstrated in our core responsibilities:

- Prevent disease outbreaks and epidemics
- Prepare for and respond to disasters
- Ensure access to key health services
- Promote and encourage the establishment of healthy habits
- Protect against environmental hazards
- Lead a strong local public health system
- Learn what really matters to people.

This report was prepared by the Planning and Education Program of the  
Polk County Health Department.

To learn more, please visit [www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health](http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health).

## Our Mission

To create the conditions for all people to live healthy lives by engaging residents, reducing health disparities and attending to the needs of our most vulnerable families.

## Our Vision

To be a leader in encouraging everyone to take responsibility for improving their own health and building the kind of society that supports and enables all of us to live healthy lives.



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