

Health Workforce and Primary Source of Care

DESCRIPTION

Together, health insurance, local care options, and a usual source of care help to ensure access to health care. Having access to care allows individuals to enter the health care system, find care easily and locally, pay for care, and get their health needs met. Access to care requires not only financial coverage, but also access to providers. While high use of specialist physicians has been shown to be associated with higher (and perhaps unnecessary) utilization, sufficient availability of primary care physicians, dentists and mental health providers is essential for preventive and primary care, and, when needed, referrals to appropriate specialty care.¹ Having a usual source of care is associated with a higher likelihood of appropriate care, and a usual source of care is associated with better health outcomes.²

HOW WE ARE DOING

In 2015, the Ramsey County ratio of primary care physicians to population was 942:1, and was the third lowest ratio among Twin Cities metro counties.³ The ratio of dentists to population in Ramsey County was 1210:1 during 2016 and the ratio of mental health providers during 2017 in Ramsey County was 272:1, the lowest ratio among metro counties of the Twin Cities.³ Based on data from the Metro SHAPE 2014 Adult Survey, 79.8 percent of Ramsey County adults aged 25 and older stated they have at least one person they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider. This does not meet the Healthy People goal. Reports of having a personal doctor or health care provider varied by household income. For metro residents with a household income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), 25.3 percent reported they did not have someone they identified as their personal doctor, compared to 19.6 percent of individuals with a household income greater than or equal to 200 percent of the FPL. Young people are also much less likely to have a specific source of ongoing care. Among metro adults, 41.1 percent of those 25-34 years do not have a personal doctor, compared to only 3.4 percent of those 75 years or older.⁴

BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People 2020⁵: Increase the proportion of adults aged 18 to 64 years who have a specific source of ongoing care.
U.S. Target: 89.4 percent.

DISPARITIES

Access to care often varies based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and residential location.⁵ People with low incomes are less likely than those with higher incomes, and the uninsured were twice as likely as the insured to lack a usual care source.²

RISK FACTORS

Barriers to health services include the high cost of care, inadequate or no insurance coverage, lack of availability of services, and lack of culturally competent care.⁵

Information to note

- Ramsey County's ratio of mental health providers to population is the lowest among counties in the metro area.
- About 20% of adults aged 25 and older in Ramsey County do not have at least one person they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider.

¹ Steinbrook R. Easing the shortage in adult primary care-- Is it all about money? N Engl J Med. 2009;360:2696-2699.

² Clancy C, Munier W, Brady J, et al. 2012 National healthcare quality report. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); 2013.

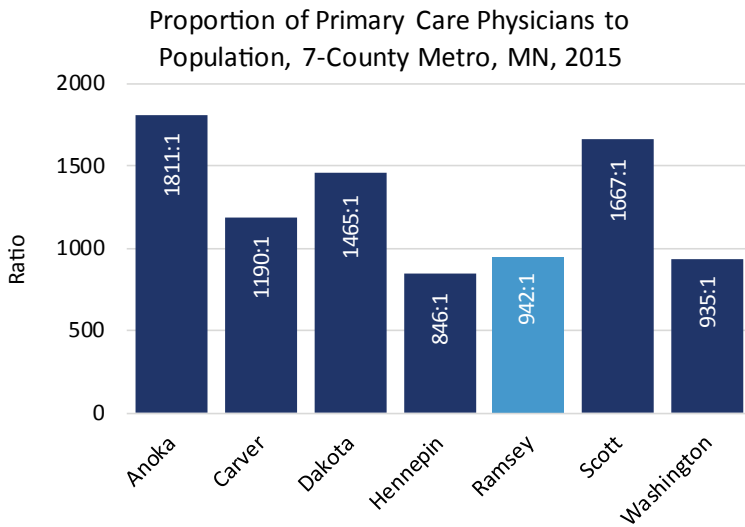
³ Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association, Area Health Resource File/National Provider Identification file, and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). National Provider Identification file. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/minnesota/2018/downloads>. Accessed July 2018.

⁴ Metro Public Health Analyst Network. Metro SHAPE Six County Data Book. 2014; Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health data set.

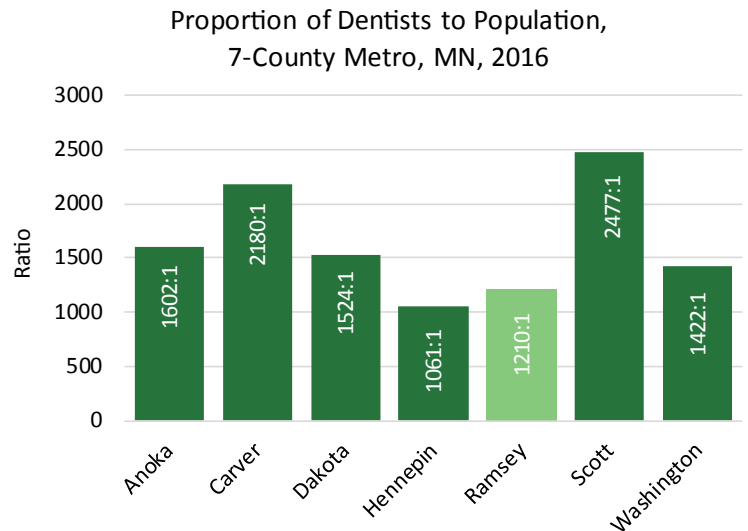
⁵ Access to Health Services. Healthy People 2020. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Access-to-Health-Services/objectives>. Accessed July 2018.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

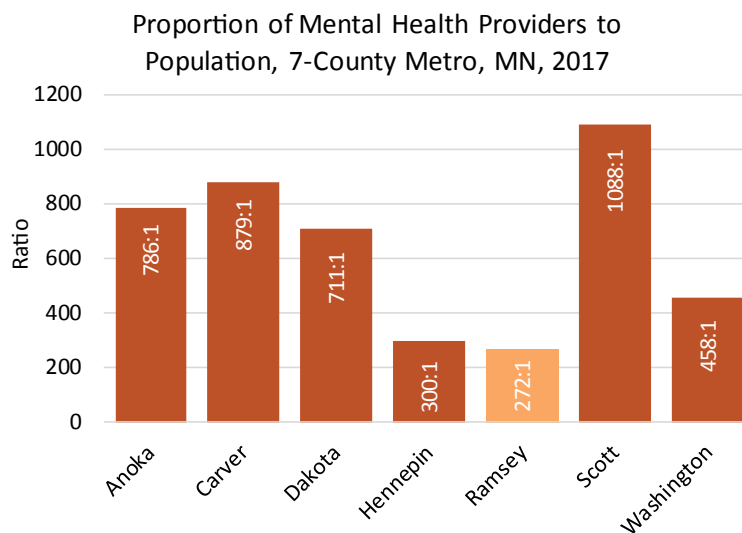
Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health provides data monitoring and reporting for this topic in order to better understand the overall health and current conditions in the community. The information may help inform community partners, policy makers or county program leadership.



Source: Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association.⁶



Source: Area Health Resource File/National Provider Identification file.⁷



Source: CMS/National Provider Identification file.⁸

⁶ Area Health Resource File/American Medical Association. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/minnesota/2018/downloads>. Accessed July 2018.

⁷ Area Health Resource File/National Provider Identification file. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/minnesota/2018/downloads>. Accessed July 2018.

⁸ CMS/National Provider Identification file. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/minnesota/2018/downloads>. Accessed July 2018.