

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Good nutrition and physical activity are the foundation for health, well-being, and development. Exercise and a healthy, well-balanced diet of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and other essential nutrients prevent malnutrition and decrease a person's risk for health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

More information and reports related to work on this issue can be found on the [Statewide Health Improvement Partnership \(SHIP\) page](#) on the Ramsey County website.



Food insecurity

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as “the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”¹⁸⁶ In other words, food insecurity is when people have limited access to healthy foods and do not have enough to eat in order to thrive.

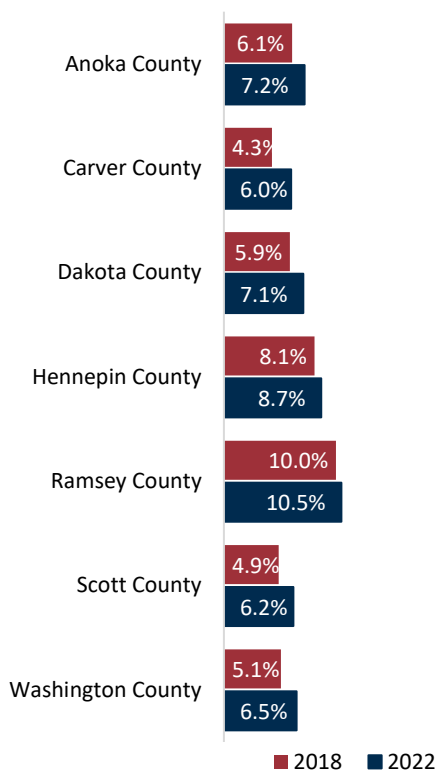


Risk Factors

Risk factors for experiencing food insecurity include poverty, unemployment, lack of affordable housing, managing disabilities and chronic health conditions, and systematic racism and discrimination.⁶⁰

- As part of [Ramsey County's 2022 Food Security Needs Assessment](#), a survey was conducted of Ramsey County residents. Respondents were asked about a range of topics regarding food insecurity, including prioritizing key food security needs. Transportation was most commonly identified, followed by greater availability of fresh foods.
- In 2022, Ramsey County had the highest percentage of people experiencing food insecurity compared to other metro-area counties.

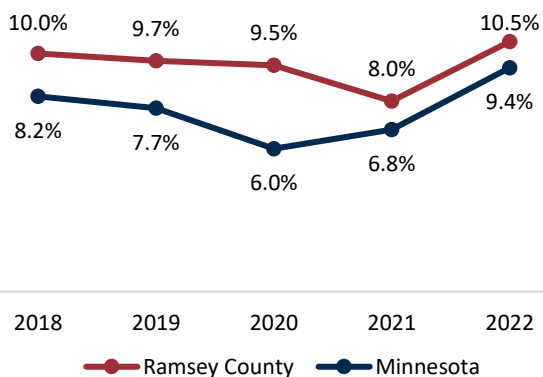
1. Food insecurity among all ages by metro-area county



Source: Feeding America.⁵⁹

- Ramsey County has greater levels of food insecurity compared to Minnesota overall.
- Food insecurity increased in Ramsey County between 2018 and 2022, with a dip in 2021.

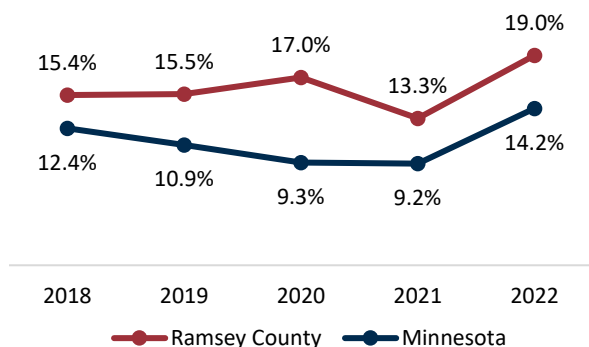
2. Food insecurity among all ages



Source: Feeding America.⁵⁹

- Food insecurity among children is higher in Ramsey County compared to Minnesota overall.
- Food insecurity among children increased in Ramsey County between 2018 and 2022, with a dip in 2021.

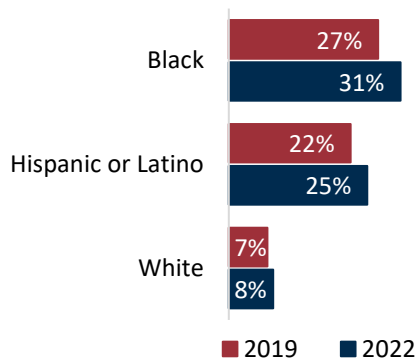
3. Food insecurity among children



Source: Feeding America.⁵⁹

- Food insecurity increased between 2019 and 2022 for people who are Black, Hispanic or Latino, or white

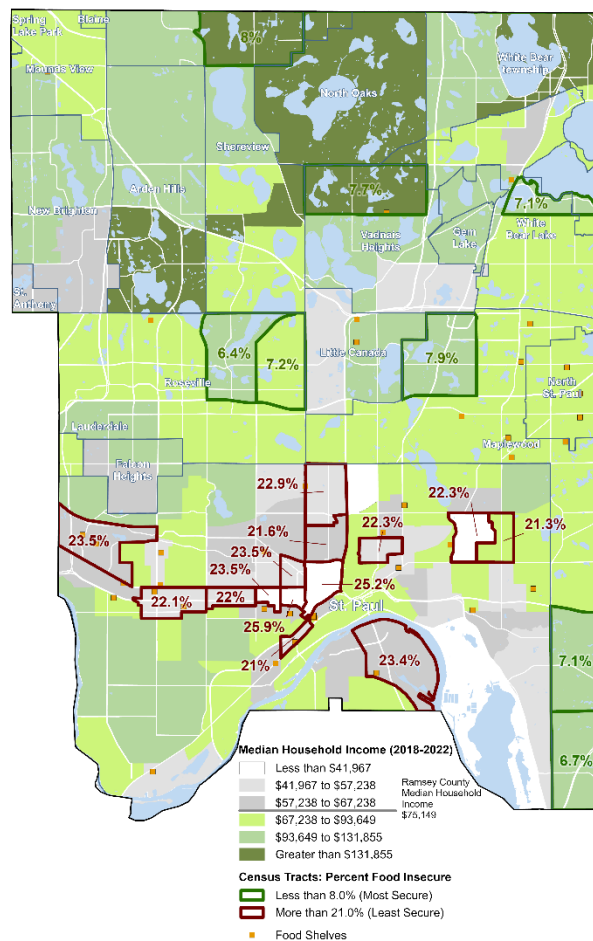
4. Food insecurity among all ages by race/ethnicity, Ramsey County



Source: Feeding America.⁵⁹

- Between 2018 and 2022, the most food insecure areas in Ramsey County were neighborhoods along the University corridor and near downtown St. Paul, as indicated by the geographies outlined in bold red.
- The neighborhoods along University corridor and near downtown St. Paul also have lower incomes, as indicated by the geographies filled with gray.

5. Food insecurity among all ages, Ramsey County, 2018-2022



Source: Ramsey County.⁵⁶

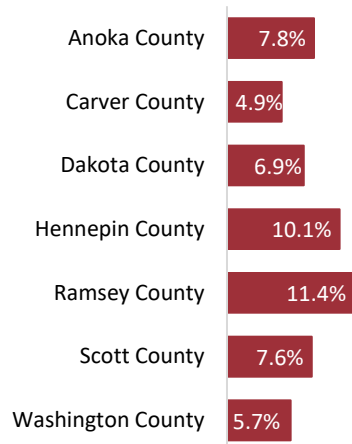
Food assistance

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; also known as food stamps) provides food assistance for low-income people and families, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) program is a breastfeeding/chestfeeding and nutrition program for birthing parents, babies, and young children.

In addition to these two county-administered food assistance programs, there are many other programs available to Ramsey County residents that can be found [on Ramsey County's Food Insecurity page](#).

- 82,912 residents in Ramsey County received SNAP benefits in 2021.⁵⁶
- The percentage of adults who received food stamps (i.e., SNAP benefits) in the past 12 months in 2022 was highest in Ramsey County compared to other metro-area counties.

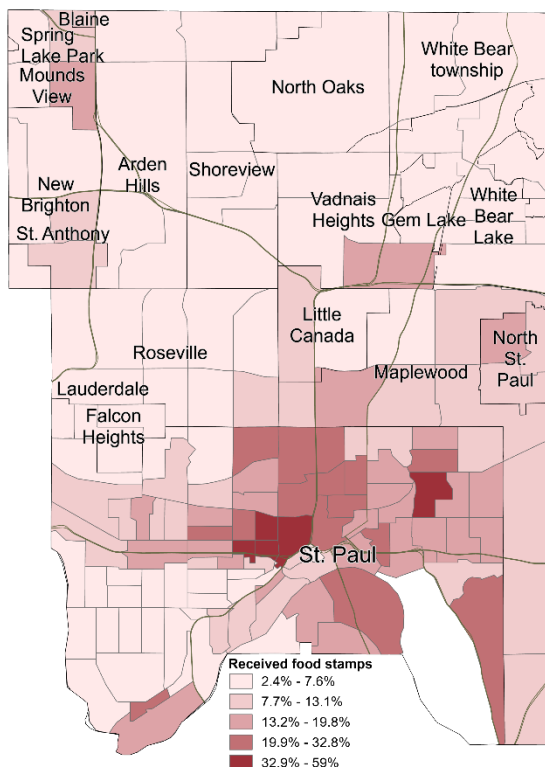
6. Adults who received food stamps in the past 12 months by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

- The percentage of adults who received food stamps in the past 12 months is most common in St. Paul compared to other cities in Ramsey County, particularly neighborhoods north of downtown St. Paul.

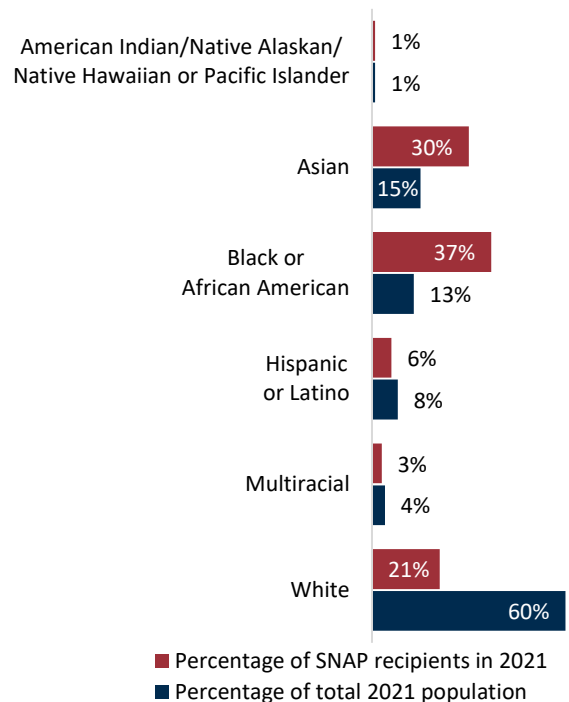
7. Adults who received food stamps in the past 12 months, Ramsey County, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

- Black or African American and Asian residents make up smaller percentages of Ramsey County's population but represent higher percentages of SNAP recipients.
- The percentage of racial/ethnic group populations that are SNAP recipients is highest among Black or African American people, followed by Asian and American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander people.

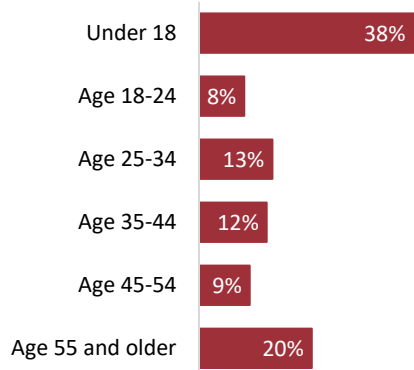
8. SNAP recipients by race/ethnicity, Ramsey County, 2021



Source: Ramsey County.¹⁵⁵

- Youth under age 18 comprise the largest percentage of people who receive SNAP benefits in Ramsey County, followed by residents age 55 and older.

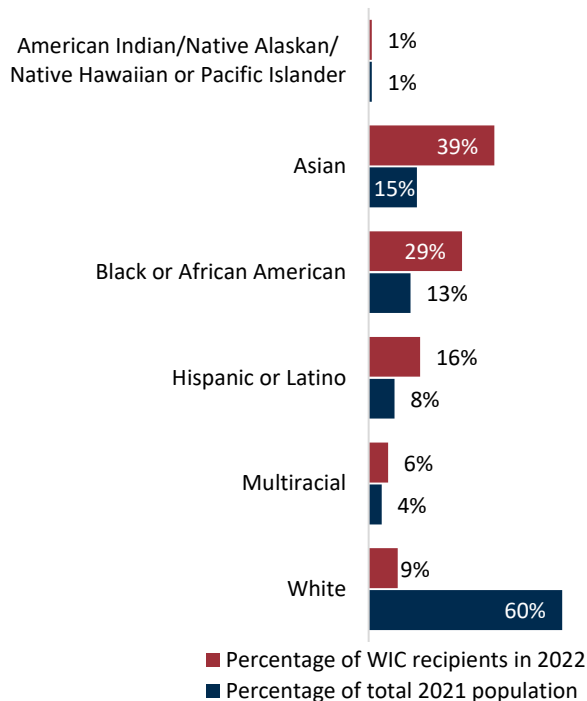
9. SNAP recipients, Ramsey County, 2021



Source: Ramsey County.¹⁵⁵

- Black and African American and Asian residents make up smaller percentages of Ramsey County's population but represent higher percentages of WIC recipients.
- The percentage of racial/ethnic group populations that are WIC recipients is highest among Asian people, followed by Black or African American people and Hispanic or Latino people.

10. WIC recipients by race/ethnicity, Ramsey County, 2022

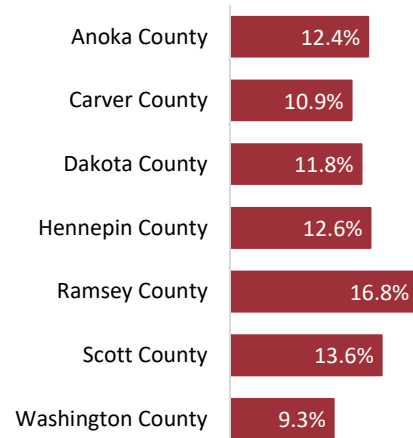


Source: Ramsey County.¹⁵⁵

Physical health

- Among metro-area counties, the percentage of adults who reported that they have fair or poor health is highest in Ramsey County.

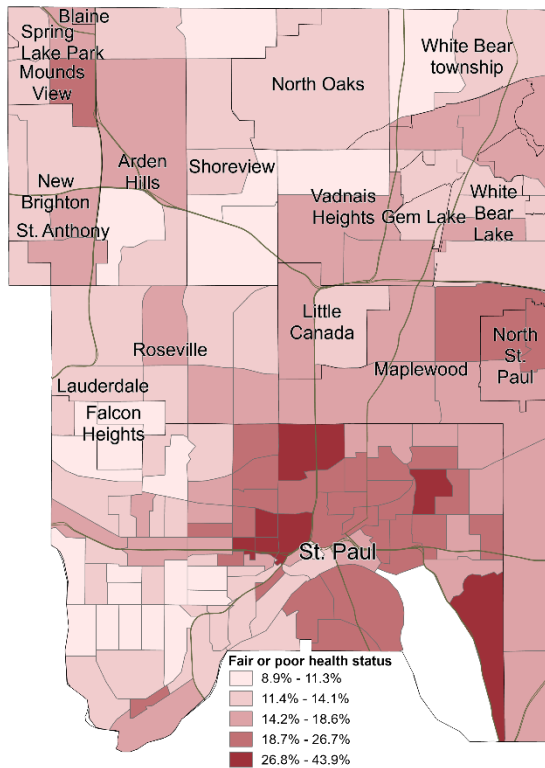
11. Fair or poor self-rated health status among adults by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

- Fair or poor self-rated health status is most common in neighborhoods closer to downtown St. Paul, Maplewood, and north St. Paul.

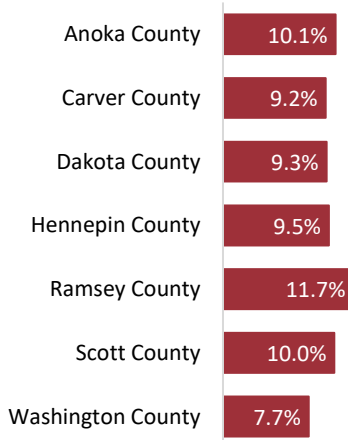
12. Fair or poor self-rated health status among adults, Ramsey County, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

- Frequent physical distress among adults was most common in Ramsey County in 2022 compared to other metro-area counties.

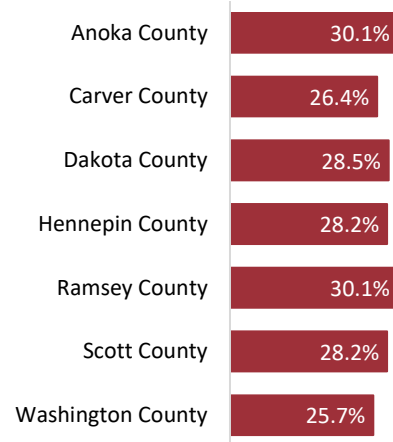
13. Frequent physical distress among adults by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted. Frequent physical distress is defined as 14 or more days people experienced poor physical health because of physical illness or injury in the past 30 days, and it is used to indicate people with more chronic or severe physical health concerns.

- Nearly one-third of Ramsey County residents report short sleep duration (i.e., less than seven hours in a 24-hour period).
- Ramsey County and Anoka County have the highest percentages of adults that reported short durations of sleep compared to other metro-area counties.

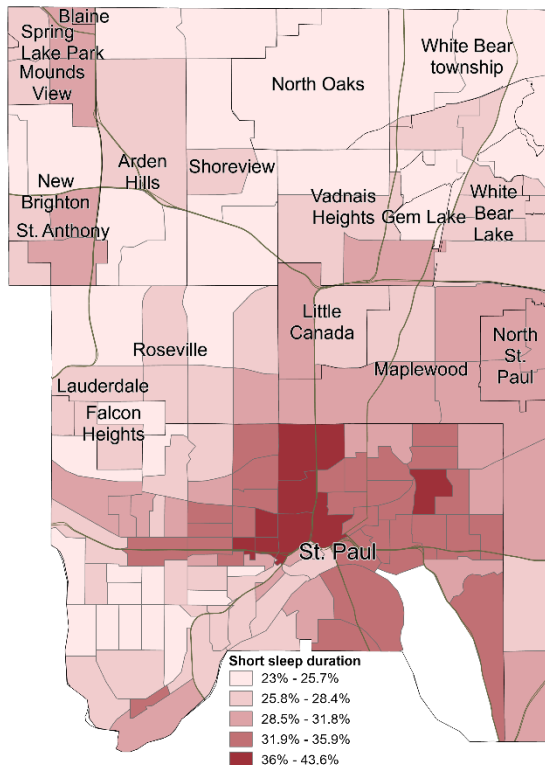
14. Short sleep duration among adults (less than seven hours) by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

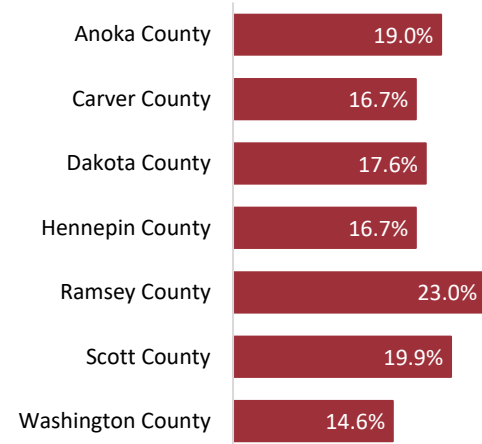
- Across Ramsey County, short sleep duration was reported by at least 23% of residents.
- Short sleep duration is most common among residents closer to downtown St. Paul.

15. Short sleep duration among adults (less than seven hours), Ramsey County, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

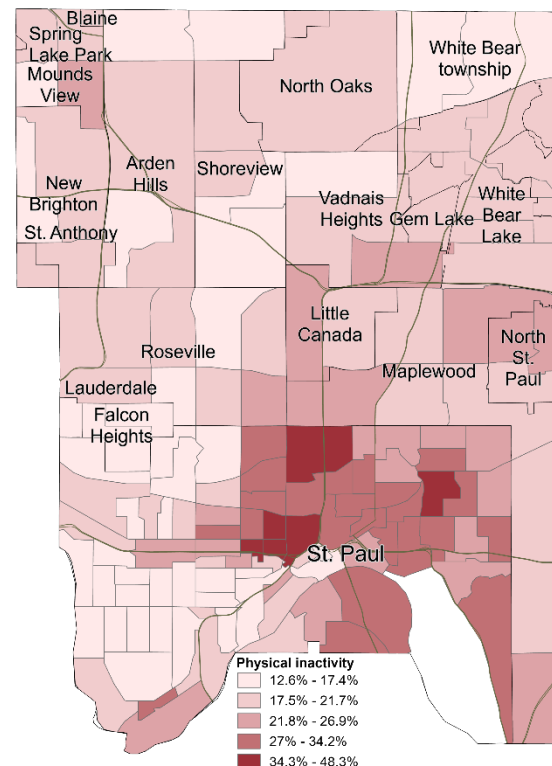
16. Adults with no leisure-time physical activity by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

- The percentages of adults with no leisure-time physical activity are highest in St. Paul neighborhoods, particularly areas north and east of downtown St. Paul.

17. Adults with no leisure-time physical activity, Ramsey County, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

Physical activity

Regular physical activity has physical and mental health benefits and contributes to quality of life and well-being.¹⁹³

! Risk Factors

Women, older adults, and people living with disabilities are less likely to report physical activity. Additionally, physical activity is associated with improved opportunities for walking and biking transportation and sports and other exercise spaces and programming.¹⁹³

- In 2022, Ramsey County had the highest percentage of adults that reported no leisure-time physical activity among metro-area counties.

Oral health

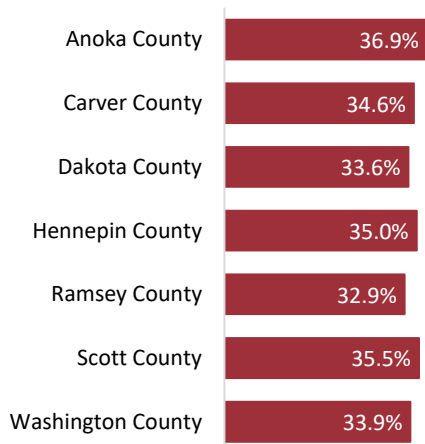
Oral health refers to the health of the entire mouth including the teeth, gums, tongue, lips, and surrounding muscles, and is essential to general health and well-being. Having poor oral health such as cavities or periodontal disease (i.e., gum disease) can be a sign of poor nutrition or diseases, such as lung diseases and diabetes.¹⁵

Risk Factors

Oral health concerns are more common among people who lack health insurance, have a history of smoking, earn lower incomes, have lower levels of education, and people who are older or identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC).^{117, 28}

- About a third of Medical Assistance (Minnesota's Medicaid program) enrollees in Ramsey County received a dental visit within the past year in 2022.
- Ramsey County had the lowest percentage of Medical Assistance enrollees who received a dental visit within the past year compared to other metro-area counties.

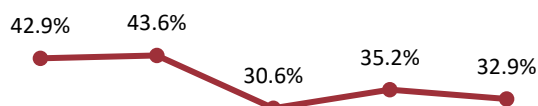
18. Dental visits among Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) enrollees of all ages by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services.¹²⁹

- The percentage of Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) enrollees who received a dental visit within the past year declined between 2018 and 2020 in Ramsey County, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The percentage increased between 2020 and 2021 but declined between 2021 and 2022.

19. Dental visits among Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) enrollees of all ages, Ramsey County

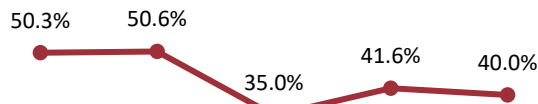


2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services.¹²⁹

- In 2022, 40.0% of children enrolled in Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) in Ramsey County received a dental visit within the past year.
- The percentage of children enrolled in Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) who received a dental visit within the past year also declined between 2018 and 2020 in Ramsey County. The percentage increased between 2020 and 2021 but declined between 2021 and 2022.

20. Child dental visits among Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) enrollees, Ramsey County

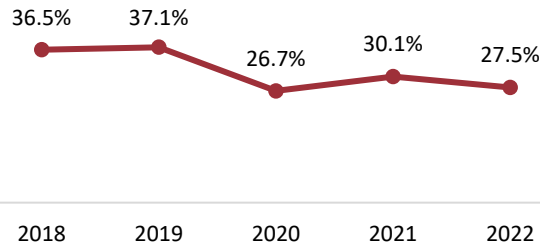


2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services.¹²⁹

- The percentage of adults enrolled in Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) who received a dental visit within the past year also declined between 2018 and 2020 in Ramsey County. The percentage increased between 2020 and 2021 but declined between 2021 and 2022.

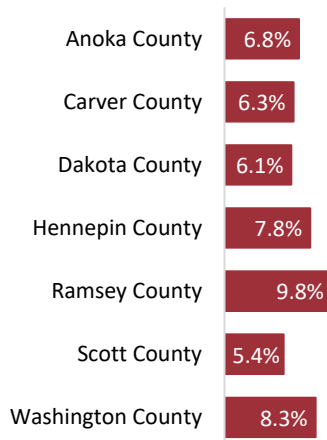
21. Adult dental visits Medical Assistance (i.e., Medicaid) enrollees, Ramsey County



Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services.¹²⁹

- In 2022, the percentage of adults age 65+ with complete tooth loss was highest in Ramsey County compared to other metro-area counties.

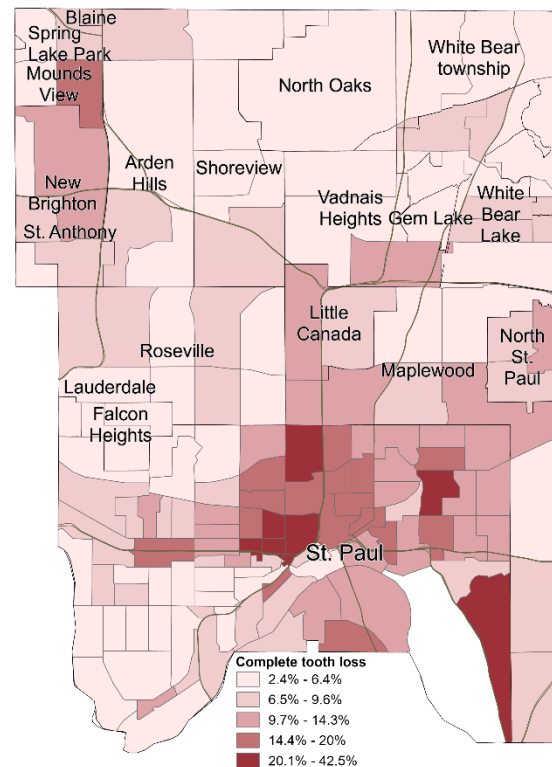
22. Complete tooth loss among adults age 65+ by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

- Complete tooth loss is most common in St. Paul compared to other cities in Ramsey County, particularly neighborhoods north and east of downtown St. Paul.

23. Complete tooth loss among adults age 65+, Ramsey County, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²
Note: Data are age-adjusted.

