America’s Health Rankings: Georgia

According to the most recent report by the United Health Foundation, “America’s Health Rankings 2008,” Georgia’s overall health ranking as a state fell one place. Georgia is 41st this year; it was 40th in 2007. The most significant findings of the report are:

- **Strengths** – Strengths include a low prevalence of binge drinking at 12.3 percent of the population and high immunization coverage with 80.8 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving complete immunizations.

- **Challenges** – Challenges include a low high school graduation rate with 61.7 percent of incoming ninth graders who graduate within four years, a high incidence of infectious disease at 29.4 cases per 100,000 population, high levels of air pollution at 15.9 micrograms of fine particulate per cubic meter and a high rate of uninsured population at 17.6 percent. Georgia ranks lower for health determinants than for health outcomes, indicating that overall healthiness may decline over time.

- **Significant Changes** –
  - In the past year, public health funding decreased from $96 to $75 per person
  - In the past year, immunization coverage declined from 83.3 to 80.8 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving complete immunizations
Since 1990, the prevalence of smoking decreased from 31.8 percent to 19.4 percent of the population.

Since 1990, the prevalence of obesity increased from 10.8 percent to 28.7 percent of the population.

Health Disparities – In Georgia, low birth weight babies are more common among non-Hispanic blacks at 13.8 percent than non-Hispanic whites at 7.4 percent. Cardiovascular death rates vary by race in the state, with all races experiencing 325.9 deaths per 100,000 population in contrast to blacks who experience 394.7 deaths per 100,000 population.

For more information regarding the United Health Foundation report “America’s Health Rankings 2008” please see www.americashealthrankings.org For more information regarding prevention efforts in the state of Georgia, please contact Karen Kuehn Howell, Ph.D., at the Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development Project, Emory University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 1256 Briarcliff Road, N.E., Suite 309W, Atlanta, Georgia, 30306. You can also phone us at 404-712-9800 or visit our website at http://www.emory.edu/MSACD

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