



# City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

## Seattle Women's Commission

### Status of Seattle Women's Health Report: Summary

The Seattle Women's Commission Health and Human Services Committee worked with Public Health – Seattle and King County to develop a current Status of Seattle Women's Health Profile that was released August, 2005.

***Overall, Seattle women enjoy good health compared to women in King County, Washington state and nationally.***

1. Life expectancy of Seattle women is 83.6 years, higher than the national average.
2. Seattle women have lower heart disease death rates than the county, state and national rates, and death rates from heart disease, cancer and stroke have been declining.
3. Despite the fact that Washington state has the highest rate of *breast cancer diagnosis* in the country, Seattle has a lower *death rate from breast cancer* than the county, state or national rate. This reflects the fact that even though Seattle women are more at risk of receiving a breast cancer diagnosis than other women, we are also doing a better job of treating the cancer and saving lives.
4. Seattle's (and King County's) teen birth rate is less than Washington states and half the rate of the national teen birth rate.
5. HIV/AIDS infection rate among King County and Seattle women is half that of other Washington counties and less than half that of the national rate – and is holding steady. Women comprise only 10% of all HIV/AIDS infections in King County.

### **Negative Health Trends**

1. Health status differs vastly depending on a woman's race/ethnic group, income level and neighborhood. For example:
  - a. White women are more frequently diagnosed with breast cancer; however African American women have a much higher death rate from the disease.
  - b. Women living at less than 250% of the poverty level are much more likely to be uninsured, obese and have higher teen birth rates.
  - c. Hispanic teens have a much higher teen birth rate than other teens.
  - d. African American and Native American women are more likely to die from diabetes than other women.
  - e. Years of potential life lost – a measure of premature death – shows that women who live in Downtown/First Hill, White Center/Blvd Park and Central Seattle are most likely to die prematurely before the age of 65.

2. Risk factors and chronic diseases remain prevalent in Seattle women, including cigarette smoking, not consuming enough fruits and vegetables, high blood pressure, arthritis, coronary heart disease and activity limitation.
3. Prevalence among women who are overweight and obese is increasing. 41% of Seattle women are overweight, and 17% are obese. While this rate is better than the state and national rate, it is still high and contributes to other health problems.
4. The age-adjusted rate of Alzheimer's disease has been increasing.
5. Seattle women are more likely to be without health insurance than women in Washington state or King County.
6. Seattle women have a significantly higher than average hospitalization rate for asthma than our neighbors in King County and Washington state.
7. Seattle women have much higher hospitalization rates for depression and psychosis than other Washington state women.

For more information, go to <http://www.seattle.gov/womenscommission>