H&SS INDICATORS

A Bi-Monthly Look at Health & Social Service Trends Shaping Solano County

OCTOBER 2005

Prior editions of H&SS INDICATORS have provided a snapshot of selected indicators for the department's own programs. This issue is different. The focus is on results from the California Health Interview Survey or CHIS. Results from the 2003 survey were released earlier this year. CHIS gives health planners, policy makers, county governments, advocacy groups, and communities a detailed picture of the health and health care needs facing California's diverse population.

The CHIS is a collaborative project of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the California Department of Health Services, and the Public Health Institute and is based at UCLA.

Funding for CHIS comes from state and federal agencies and from several private foundations.

While the focus of the CHIS is on physical health, a number of other areas pertinent to the role and mission of the Health & Social Services Department are also included in the survey. Besides physical health, CHIS questions also look at public assistance, alcohol and tobacco use, child care, health insurance and access, elder health, and disability among other topics.

Data are available by race and ethnicity and income level. Results are also available for all of California's counties. In order to obtain more accurate, valid data about Solano County, the County paid for an "oversampling" of Solano County residents as part of the 2001 CHIS survey. By surveying more persons than would normally be included in the statewide sample, the County was able to get statistically valid data about different demographic groups — especially by race/ethnicity, age, gender and income level. The County did not oversample in the 2003 survey and so while countywide results are generally valid, estimates for smaller groups are not as accurate. Solano County has paid for oversampling as part of the 2005 survey which began in July and is scheduled to run through December.

CHIS is the largest state health survey and one of the largest health surveys in the United States.

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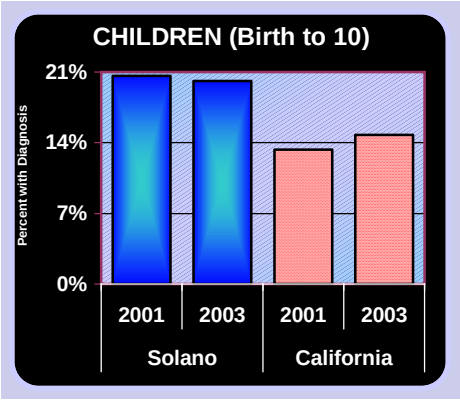
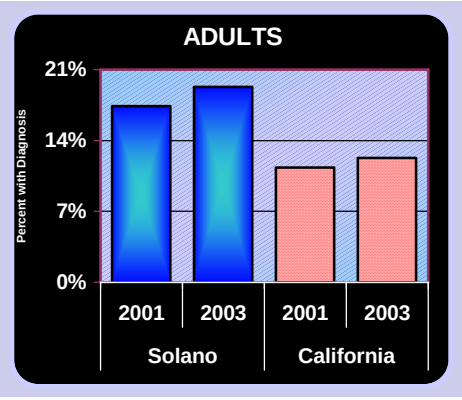
HEALTH CONDITIONS

Asthma

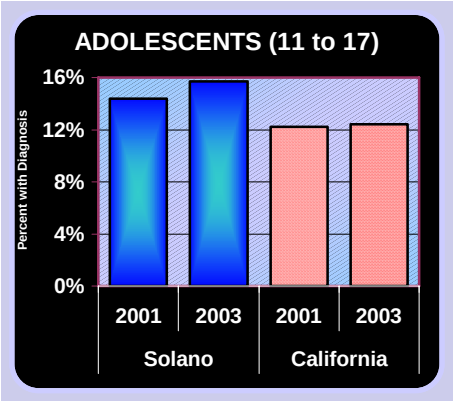


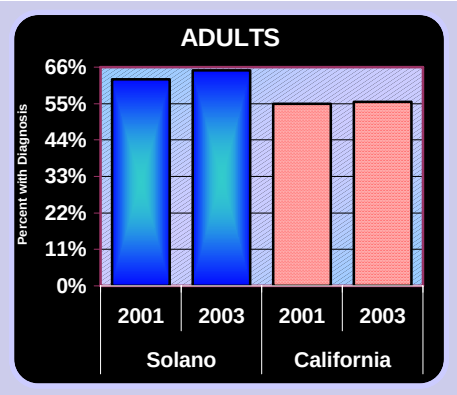


- Adult asthma rates in Solano County in 2003 were 57% higher than for the state as a whole. For children, rates were 36% higher than for the state.
- Between 2001 and 2003, the proportion of adults with asthma in Solano County increased from 17.4% to 19.3%. The proportion of children with asthma decreased slightly.

Ever told by a physician that they have asthma.

Overweight/Obesity

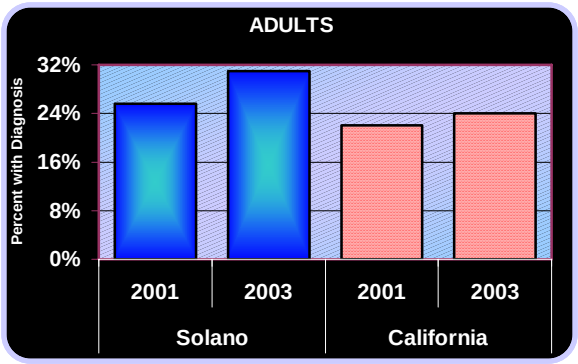




- 15.7% of Solano County teens were overweight or obese in 2003 — 27% higher than the 12.4% rate for the state as a whole.
- Over half of all adults in California are overweight or obese. The figure for Solano County is even higher — nearly two-thirds of all adults in the county are overweight or obese.

For adolescents, "Overweight or obese" is defined as a Body Mass Index (BMI) in the highest 95 percentile for their age and gender. For adults, "Overweight or obese" is defined as a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25 or greater.

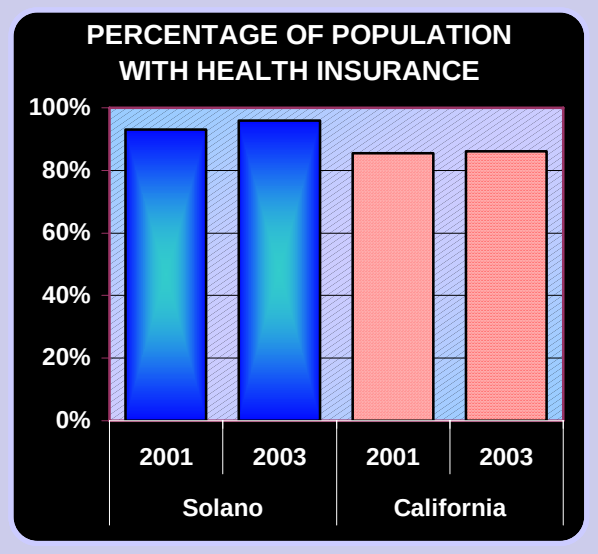
High Blood Pressure



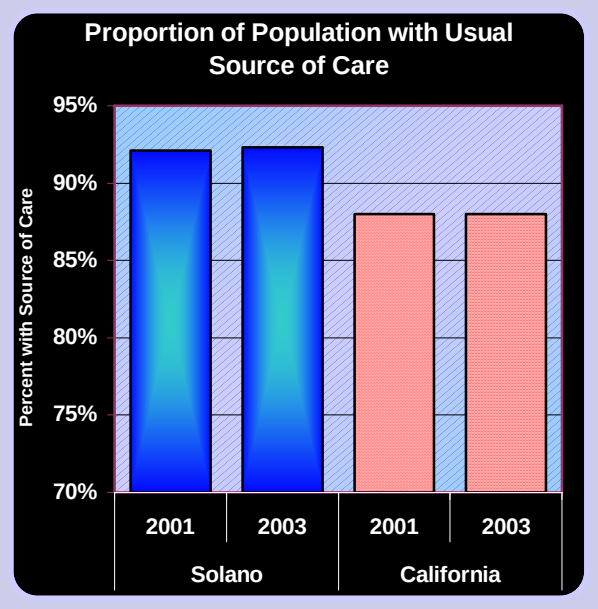
- Nearly one third of all adults in Solano County have high blood pressure. The proportion is higher for those with income below the poverty level — 38%.
- The proportion of adults with high blood pressure in Solano County increased 21% between 2001 and 2003.

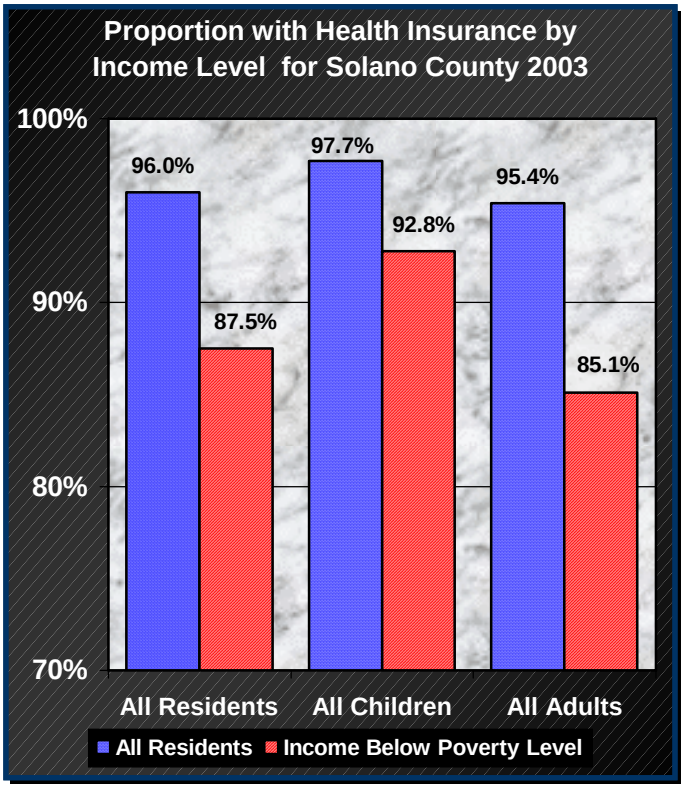
Respondents were asked: "Has a doctor ever told you that you have high blood pressure?" Asked of adults only.

HEALTH ACCESS



- Solano County has the highest rate of insured residents of any County in California.
- While insurance rates are also high for county residents with household incomes below the poverty line, there is a clear gap based on income.
- Over 92 percent of Solano County residents say they have a place to go when sick or in need of health advice compared to 88 percent statewide.



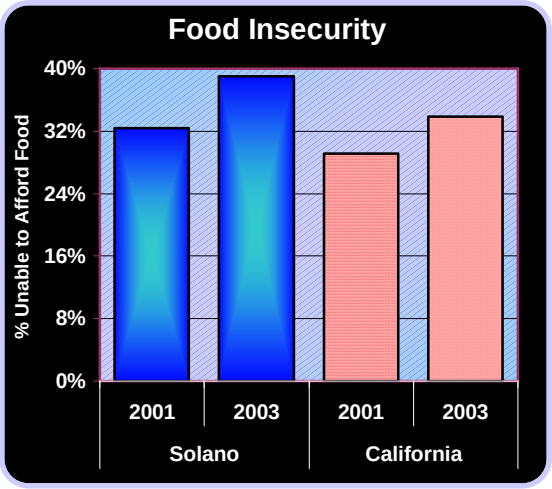


Insured at time of survey. Includes private, employer-provided, Medi-Cal, County Medical Services Program (CMSP), Medicare or other type of coverage.

Care: Asked whether they have a usual place to go to when sick or in need health advice. Variable was created by consolidating the multiple yes/no questions about usual source of care in the questionnaire items.

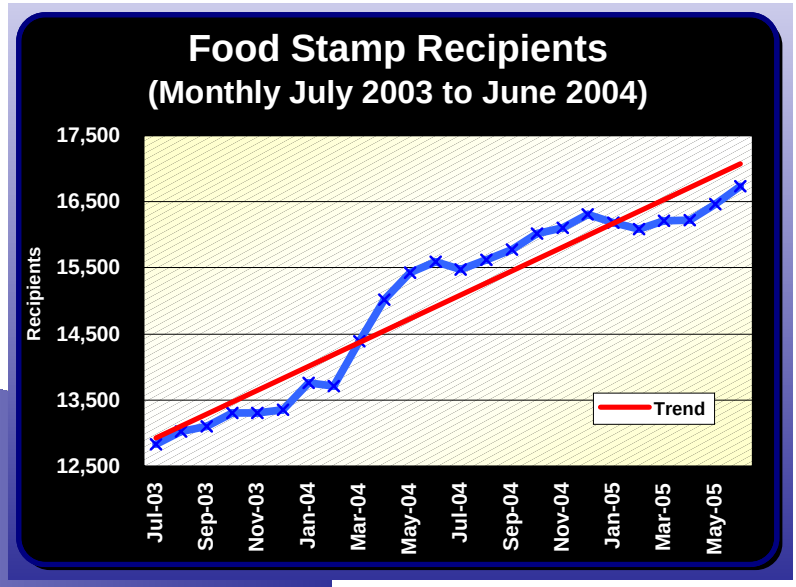
EMPLOYMENT & ELIGIBILITY

Food Insecurity

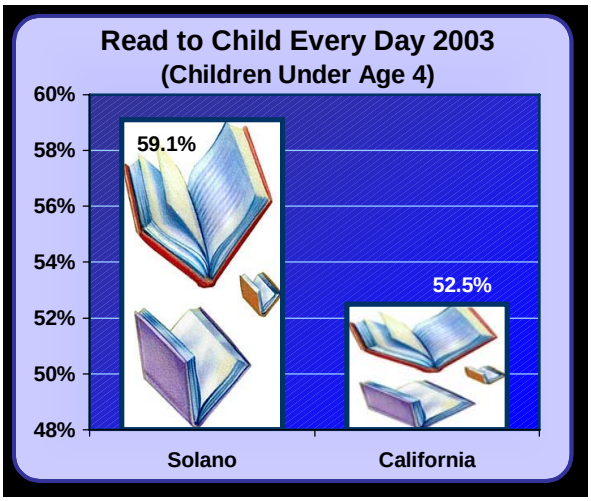


Asked whether or not they had the ability to consistently afford enough food. Asked only of adults whose income was less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. ($36,800 for a family of four in 2003.)

- 2 of every 5 low income adults said that they did not have the ability to consistently afford enough food. Solano County's proportion was 15% higher than for the state as a whole.
- The actual number of adults with "food insecurity" increased by 22 percent between 2001 and 2003 from 23,000 to 28,000. (By comparison, the US Census estimated that the County's overall population increased by 7,000 people or 1.8 percent during the same time period.)
- Interestingly, the proportion of those living below poverty who said that they did not have the ability to afford enough food fell slightly from 44.9% to 43.8% between 2001 and 2003. This suggests that most of the increase was due to growth in the "working poor" — households with low wages that may not qualify for — or be aware of — assistance programs.
- Between July 2003 and June 2005, the number of food stamp recipients increased by 30 percent.



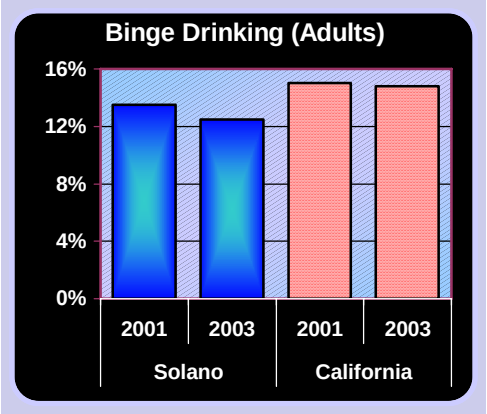
CHILD WELFARE



- Over 59 percent of parents/caregivers of small children said that they read to their children at least every day. Solano County's percentage was 12 percent higher than the statewide percentage. 6.3 percent said that they never read to their children — just above the statewide figure of 6.2 percent.

Respondents were asked, "In a usual week, about how many days did you or any other family member read stories or look at picture books with (CHILD)?" Asked of households with children under 4 years of age.

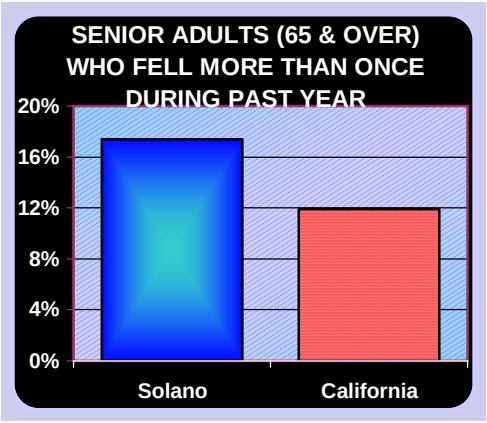
SUBSTANCE ABUSE



- One out of every eight adults in Solano County said that they had five or more drinks on at least one occasion during the previous month. The proportion decreased slightly between 2001 and 2003 from 13.5 percent to 12.5 percent. Solano County's rate is slightly below that of the state as a whole.

Persons having 5 or more drinks on at least 1 occasion during the past month. Note: Specific binge drinking question was asked only of those who reported drinking in the past month.

OLDER ADULTS



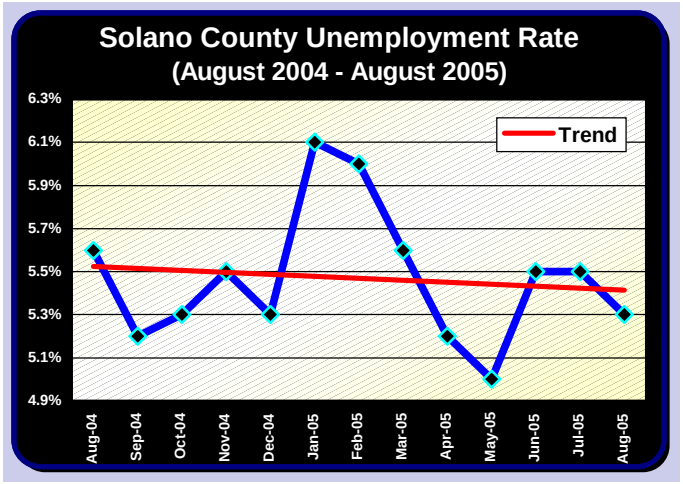
- 17.4 percent of senior adults (age 65 and over) said that they had fallen more than once during the previous year. For those between 65 and 75, the figure was less than 2 percent. For those over 75, nearly 30 percent fell more than once during the year. Findings such as this — less prevalence at lower ages for problems or infirmities associated with age — are common. "Younger" seniors are generally in better physical and financial shape than those in the upper age cohorts.

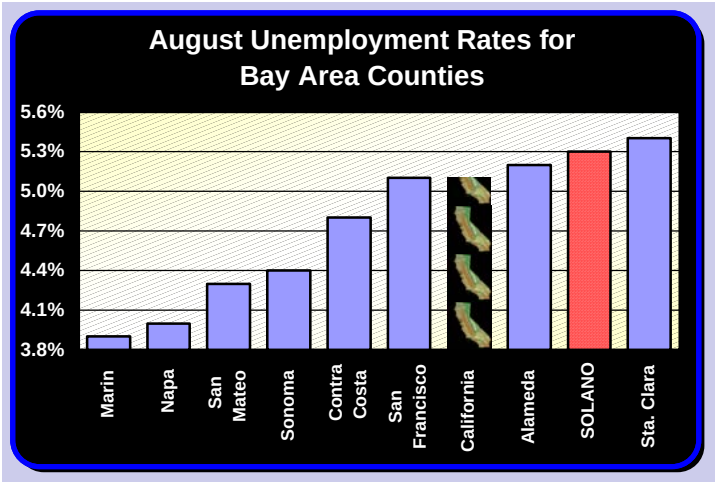
Asked only of persons 65 years of age and older.

ECONOMY

INDICATOR	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Labor Force	212,900	214,400	215,900
Number Employed	201,100	202,600	204,400
Number Unemployed	11,700	11,800	11,500
Unemployment Rate	5.5%	5.5%	5.3%

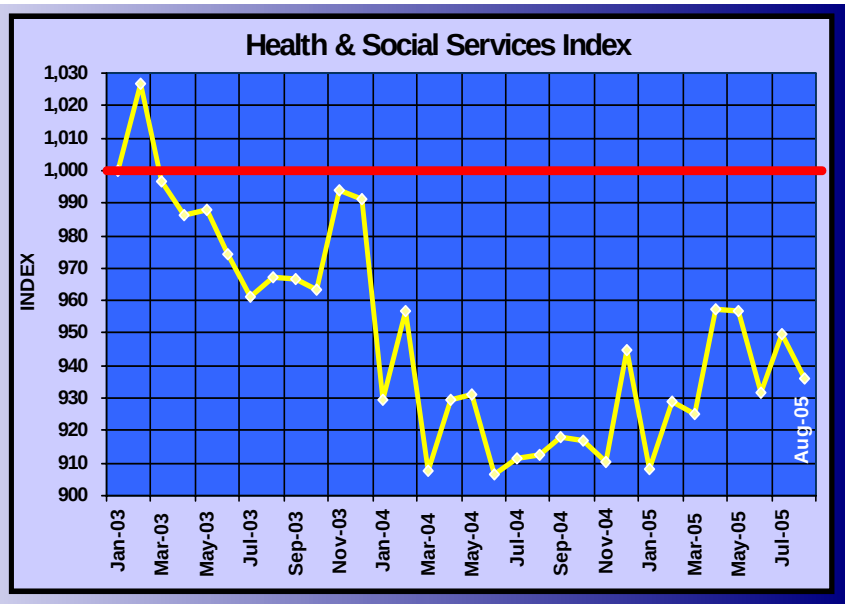
- Solano County's unemployment rate fell in September to 5.3%. Unemployment often falls in September as individuals leave the labor force to enter school.
- The County's unemployment rate remains the second highest in the Bay Area and slightly higher than for the state as a whole.





H&SS INDEX

The **Health & Social Services (H&SS) Index** fell August. Although the number of unemployed and the number of Medi-Cal recipients both decreased, nearly all of the other indicators went up. Overall, only 12 of the 16 indicators increased (although it should be noted that estimated numbers were used in July and August for most of the welfare –related indicators such as CalWORKs and Food Stamps because of the changeover to CalWIN on July 1st).

The index combines workload data from 15 key services provided by H&SS, along with data on unemployment in Solano County, to provide a monthly indicator of community demand for health and social services.

All of the monthly numbers are added together and converted into an index score with January 2003 as the index bench line figure of 1,000. Like the Dow Jones, higher scores suggest positive developments — fewer people looking for work or requiring the services that H&SS provides, for example. Falling numbers suggest increasing need for H&SS's services.