

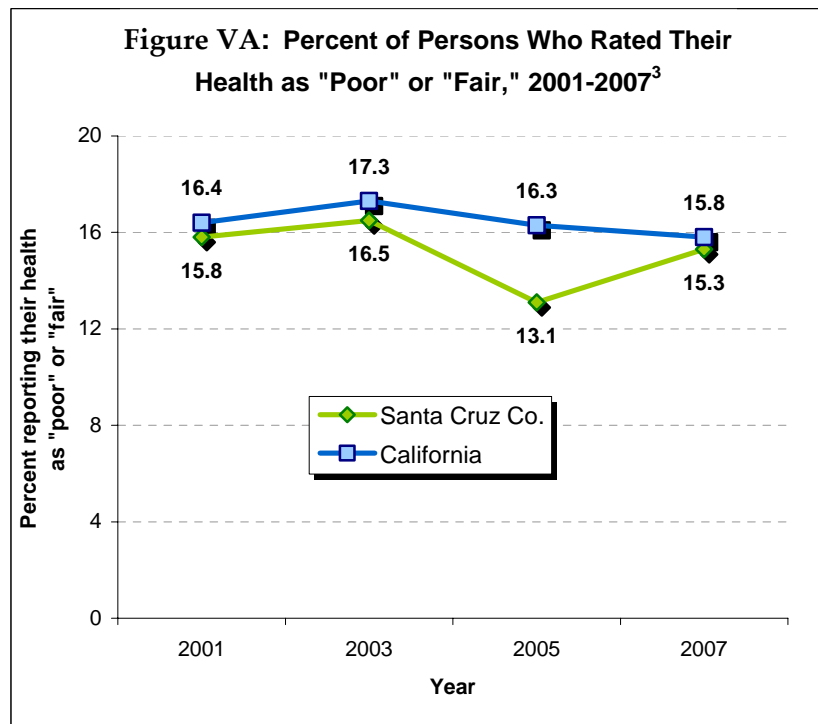
## A-C. HEALTHY DAYS

<b>Importance</b>	Quality of life refers to a person's perception of their own physical and mental well-being. Increasing understanding of quality of life issues will hopefully help people live more meaningful and enjoyable lives.
<b>Definitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Health:</b> a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 1948).<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

### A. POOR (OR FAIR) OVERALL HEALTH DAYS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducts the nationwide survey known as the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Due to small sampling sizes in Santa Cruz County, data for the years 2002 through 2008 were combined. According to the 2010 MATCH Report, **16%** of Santa Cruz County adults and **18%** of state residents (age-adjusted) said their health was only “poor” or “fair” when asked, “In general, would you say that your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”<sup>2</sup>

The figure below provides another look at this question over a few years, 2001 through 2007, using data collected via the statewide California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). This data can often be unstable at the county level, due to small sampling sizes. However, the range of values is similar to the BRFSS data cited in the MATCH report, and Santa Cruz County remains consistently better than California. There is an effort to get this question added to the Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project (CAP) *Telephone Survey* in upcoming years.



## B. POOR (OR FAIR) PHYSICAL HEALTH DAYS

People's reports of days when their physical health was not good are a reliable estimate of their recent health. BRFSS includes the following question, "Thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good?" In Santa Cruz County between 2002 and 2008, the average adult (adjusted for age) said **3 days**, while the average California adult said **3.6 days**.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately no similar question is asked by either CHIS or the CAP *Telephone Survey*.

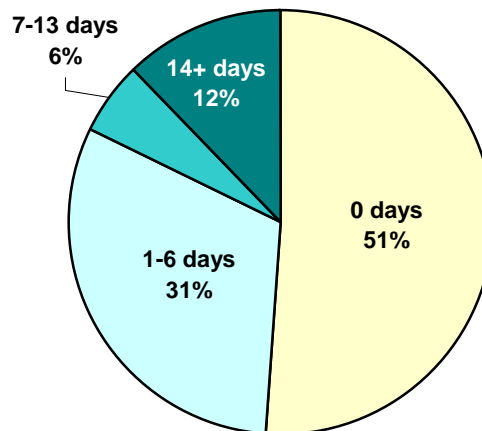
## C. POOR (OR FAIR) MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

Overall health depends on both physical and mental well-being. The number of days when people report they had poor mental health represents an important facet of health-related quality of life. BRFSS asks the question similarly to physical health, "Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?" In Santa Cruz County between 2002 and 2008, the average adult (adjusted for age) said **3.6 days**, and the average California adult also said **3.6 days**.<sup>2</sup>

CHIS asked a similar question in 2005, "Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?" The figure below shows nearly half (49%) of Santa Cruz County residents answering 1 or more days—which is slightly higher than the entire state, with 46% answering 1 or more days. In addition, **12.2%** respondents said there were 14 or more days of the past 30 when mental health (including stress, depression and problems with emotions) was perceived to be not good—this is the definition of a condition known as frequent mental distress (FMD).<sup>3</sup>

CAP also collected data on mental health; however, they asked with regard to the previous year. CAP asked, "During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?" Overall, **13%** of residents answered, "yes" to the question in 2009. However, when looking at race/ethnicity separately, **11.3%** of White residents said yes, while nearly twice as many Latinos (or **21.7%**) said yes.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure VC: Number of Days in Poor Mental Health During Past Month, Santa Cruz County Residents, 2005<sup>3</sup>**



### Sources

1. Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.
2. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. *County Health Rankings 2010*. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>.
3. University of California, Los Angeles. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). <http://www.chis.ucla.edu>.
4. Applied Survey Research, Community Assessment Project Report. Year 15. 2009. <http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/projects/cap.html>.