

Louisiana Service Worker Wellness Report: Results from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2013-2014

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The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a cross-sectional annual health-related telephone survey of civilian, non-institutionalized state residents aged 18 years and older. It is coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and conducted by all US states, Washington D.C. and several US territories. The BRFSS uses a multistage sampling design to select a representative sample of the adult population in each state, allowing for state-to-state and national comparisons.

Beginning in 2013, Louisiana added an optional industry and occupation module to collect information from employed respondents about their “type of business/industry” and the “type of work/occupation.” Verbatim responses were collected, coded by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health certified coders into three-digit census occupation codes and then aggregated into broader occupational categories. Using a combined 2013/2014 data set, population-based estimates on the health and well-being of service workers in Louisiana were calculated. For Louisiana and many other states, the BRFSS is the only available data source of timely and accurate data on health-related behaviors.

Service workers represent a broadly defined group that includes: healthcare support, protective service, food service, cleaning and maintenance and personal care and service occupations. Together, these workers make up about 17 percent of Louisiana’s workforce, with food service workers making up almost one-third of all service workers, followed by personal care and service workers at 21 percent. Although there is variation among service occupations, many of the jobs are held by women and minorities and involve shift work, low wages and minimum job security.

These jobs, especially service jobs that pay below \$20 per hour and require only a high school education or less, are predicted to grow far more quickly than higher-wage jobs over the next decade. Between 2010 and 2014, the number of food service workers increased approximately 12 percent. The other service occupations also experienced growth during this time period, excluding protective service workers.

Methods

Prevalence estimates for 19 survey responses were calculated to compare Louisiana service workers with all other workers. The questions were grouped into six main categories: health care access; health status; chronic health conditions; housing and food insecurity; risk factors and behaviors and immunization. The BRFSS criteria for publicly reporting data results are that: 1) each cell size must have a count of at least 50 and 2) the coefficient of variation (CV) of the prevalent estimate must be less than 0.30 to indicate stability. Unreliable estimates are not included in the report. SAS® 9.3 was used for all data analyses, and Microsoft® Excel was used to create all figures and tables. Rao-Scott chi-squared tests were calculated for all prevalence estimates to determine differences between occupation groups. Statistical significance for all tests was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Table 1 shows the annual average distribution of 2013 and 2014 LA BRFSS Service worker respondents grouped by 2010 US Census Bureau Occupation Codes compared to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of approximately 60,000 randomly sampled US households representative of the civilian non-institutional population. It includes demographic and labor force and employment data for each household member at least 15 years-old. The five service workers’ occupational categories were combined to create a service group, and all other occupation groups were combined to form the all other workers group for comparison.

Table 1: Average Workforce Distribution of BRFSS Service Worker Respondents by Major Occupation Group - Louisiana, 2013 and 2014

Occupation Group/Service	Example Occupations	Workforce Distribution (percent)	
		BRFSS	Current Population Survey
Healthcare Support	massage therapist, dental assistant, phlebotomist, pharmacy aides	3.1	2.5
Protective Service	detective, fish and game warden, firefighter, police officer, correctional officer, security guard	3.6	2.5
Food Prep and Serving Related	chef, bartender, dishwasher, counter attendant, host and hostess, waiter and waitress	6.7	5.5
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	janitor, housekeeper, pest control worker, groundskeeper, lawn service worker	4.3	3.1
Personal Care and Service	barber, animal trainer, hairdresser, usher, mortician, baggage porter, tour guide, childcare attendant	3.8	3.7

Table 2 shows the distribution of socio-demographic characteristics among Louisiana service workers and all other workers combined for Louisiana’s BRFSS 2013 and 2014 data. Service workers in Louisiana were more likely to be female, younger than 45 years-old, African-American, not have a high school education, and have an annual income less than \$50,000 in comparison with other workers.

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(Pesticide ... continued from page 2)

ment accounted for 36%, or 767, of the cases. The most common pesticide type involved in reported incidents was insecticides (47%, 1,018 cases).

For more information on LDH’s Pesticide Surveillance Program, visit the website at <http://dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/836>, call 1-888-293-7020 (toll free), or send an email to oph.seetweb@la.gov.

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Table 2: Distribution of Demographic Data Among Service Workers and All Other Workers - BRFSS - Louisiana, 2013 and 2014

Characteristic	Service Occupation Group (N=913)	All Other Workers (N=4,270)
	%	%
Sex		
Male	41.1	56.5
Female	58.9	43.5
Age Group (years)		
18-44	68.4	54.9
45-54	17.9	23.8
55-64	10.6	15.7
≥65	3.2	5.6
Race/ethnicity		
White Non-Hispanic	47.0	66.5
Black Non-Hispanic	44.1	26.3
Hispanic	5.7	4.0
Other	3.2	3.3
Education		
Some high school	21.4	11.6
High School graduate	41.9	29.8
Some college	28.4	29.8
College Graduate	8.2	28.8
Household Income		
Less than \$50,000	77.3	44.1
≥\$50,000	22.7	55.9

Table 3 shows that service workers reported significantly greater prevalences of poor health, chronic health conditions, food and housing insecurity, and risk behaviors than other workers.

Table 3: Significant Prevalence Estimates - BRFSS - Louisiana, 2013 and 2014

BRFSS Variable	Significant Prevalence Estimates (%)		
	Service Workers	All Other Workers	p-value
Health Care Access			
No Health care coverage	38.5	18.7	<0.0001
Unable to see doctor due to medical costs	29.5	14.9	<0.0001
Health Status			
Poor total health (physical and/or mental health poor 11-30 days)	20.9	14.9	0.003
Chronic Health Conditions			
Current Asthma	7.4	5.0	0.04
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	6.0	3.5	0.008
Depressive Disorder	17.7	13.2	0.01
Diabetes	8.4	6.3	0.01
Insecurities			
Food insecurity	34.2	19.2	0.0001
Housing/Shelter insecurity	17.0	14.3	0.007
Risk Factors and Behaviors			
Current smoking	32.1	23.8	0.0004

Conclusion

This report provides critical information on the health and well-being of service workers in Louisiana that can be used by policymakers, community leaders, and business leaders to better understand the economic hardships, chronic health conditions, and other quality of life issues faced by this growing occupational sector. This information, in turn, can better inform policy and legislation and health intervention and prevention programs.

Data in this report pre-date Medicaid expansion which, as pointed out in the recently released Louisiana State Health Assessment and Improvement plan, is the single greatest action our

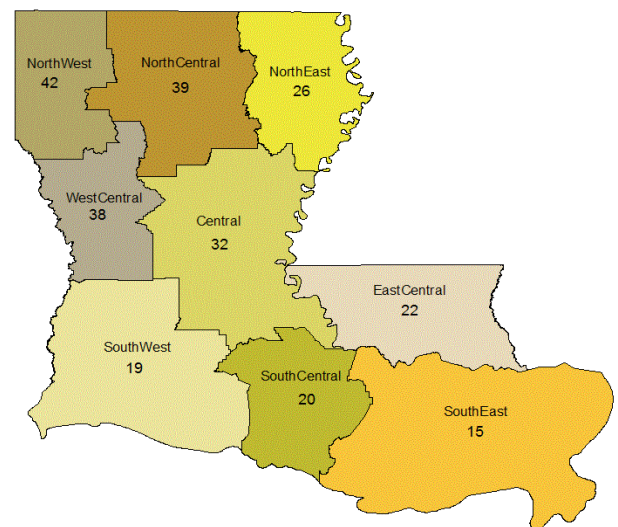
state can take to ensure that every working Louisianan has access to health care.

Lastly, for the purposes of presenting data that meet minimum reporting standards, data for the five service occupations were aggregated, which may have resulted in masking occupation-specific issues. As additional years of data are received, a similar analysis can be done for each of the five service sectors. This analysis sets the important foundation for that work.

The full Louisiana Service Worker BRFSS Report can be accessed at http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/assets/oph/Center-EH/envepi/occ_health/Documents/LA_Service_Worker_Wellness_Report_BRFSS_2016_FINAL.pdf. For more information, please contact Dr. Jocelyn Lewis at Jocelyn.lewis@la.gov.

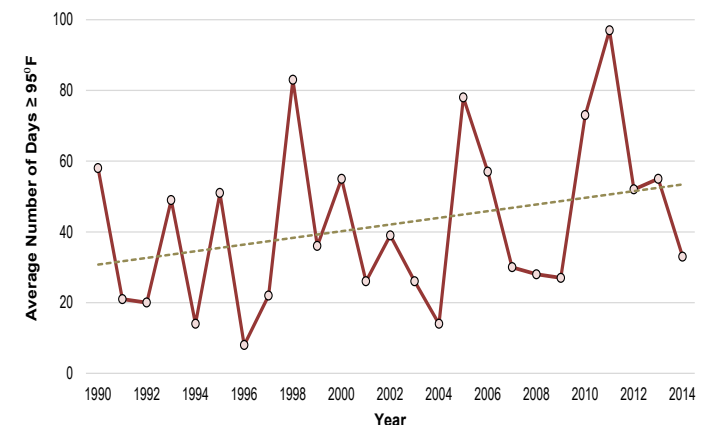
(Tracking Climate ... continued from page 1)

Figure 1: Annual Average Number of Days ≥ 95°F by Climate Division Louisiana, 1990-2014



Focusing on the Northwest climate division, in 2011 there were 97 days where the temperature was greater than or equal to 95°F, higher than any other area of the state. There was a non-significant increasing trend in the number of days greater than or equal to 95°F (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of Days ≥ 95°F - Northwest Louisiana, 2009-2014



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