Survey Sheds Light on Community Health

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Earlier this summer a number of Kodiak health professionals attempted to take the pulse of the community by conducting an online health survey. It asked a number of questions about participants’ current health and experiences with local services. Karen Leatherman, the communications and public relations coordinator for Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center, told KMXT in June that the goal was to determine where gaps in health services may be and how to fill them.

The results of that survey came in this week and listed lack of insurance and substance abuse as issues that need to be prioritized in the Kodiak community. About 28 percent of survey respondents were uninsured and over half of those said it was because it is too expensive. Twenty-six of those uninsured did not receive health care in the last 12 months.

For substance abuse, 23 percent of respondents admitted to binge drinking at least once within the past month, a figure that is up 20 percent from previous data gathered in 2008. About 37 percent of survey takers said it is acceptable to use marijuana recreationally and 23 percent said the same for prescription drugs.

Other survey results included a drop in mammography screening rates from 57 percent in 2011 to 51 percent now. Lack of certain health services was another concern in survey results. Almost 24 percent of respondents said they have had to leave the island for healthcare reasons and 22 percent left two or more times. More than 47 percent of survey respondents listed more specialists as a top health care need for Kodiak.