



The Culture of Poverty

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Associates

Learning Objectives

- ▶ Understand the definition and impact of poverty in both the national and local contexts.
- ▶ Understand the impact of poverty on health and behavioral health disparities.
- ▶ Learn how stigma contributes to the perpetuation of the “Culture of Poverty”.
- ▶ Learn about different programs or policies that show promise in reducing poverty.





The Definition of Poverty

What is poverty?

- ▶ Definition: *The state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions.*
- ▶ How is poverty measured?
 - Income
 - Household Size

2013 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia

Persons in family/household	Poverty Threshold
1	\$11,490
2	\$15,510
3	\$19,530
4	\$23,550
5	\$27,570
6	\$31,590
7	\$35,610
8	\$39,630

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,020 for each additional person.

What is poverty?

- ▶ How is income or Poverty Threshold determined?
 - The definition of income levels that correspond to Poverty Thresholds was first developed in 1963, and then adjusted in 1969.
 - It is based on the average proportion of income that is spent on food to feed a family of four.
 - In 1963, on average, families spent 1/3 of their income on food.
 - Therefore:

**Poverty Threshold = 3 x Average \$ spent on food
(adjusted for household size)**

- Thresholds are adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index of food.





Poverty in the US & Lake County

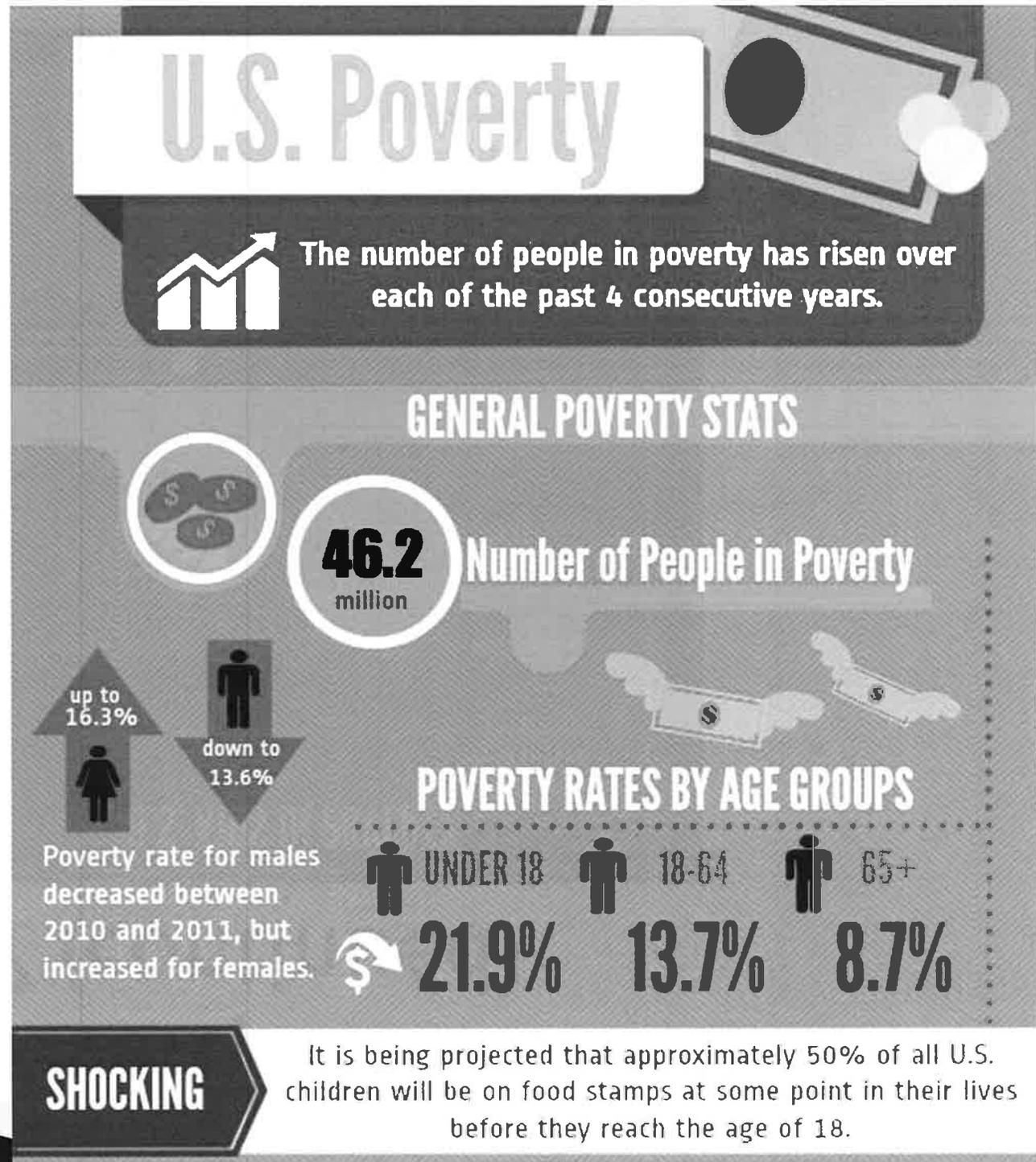
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What does poverty look like in the US?

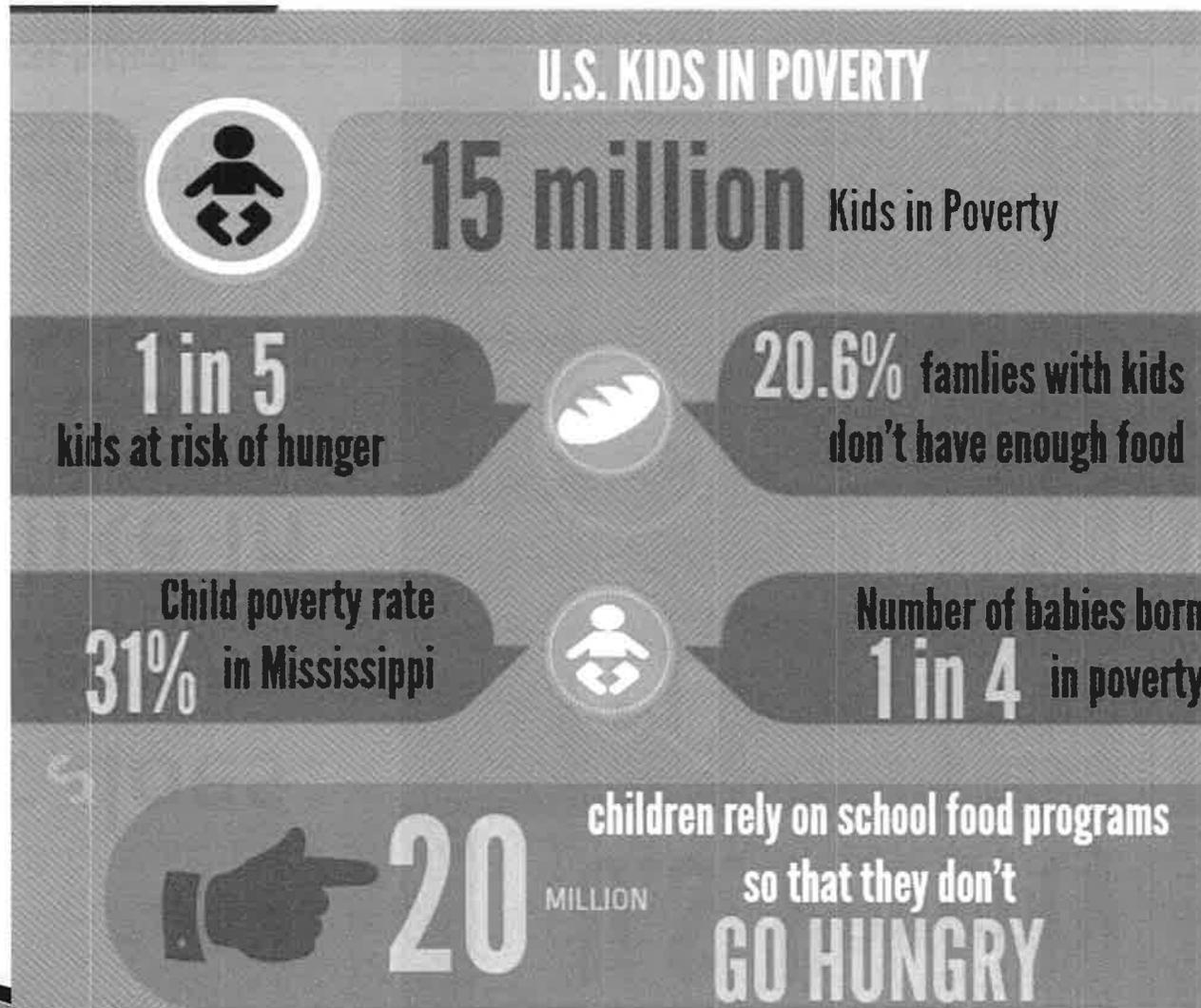
*Created by the *Monkey Do Project*,
www.monkeydoproject.com

Based on 2011 sources including:

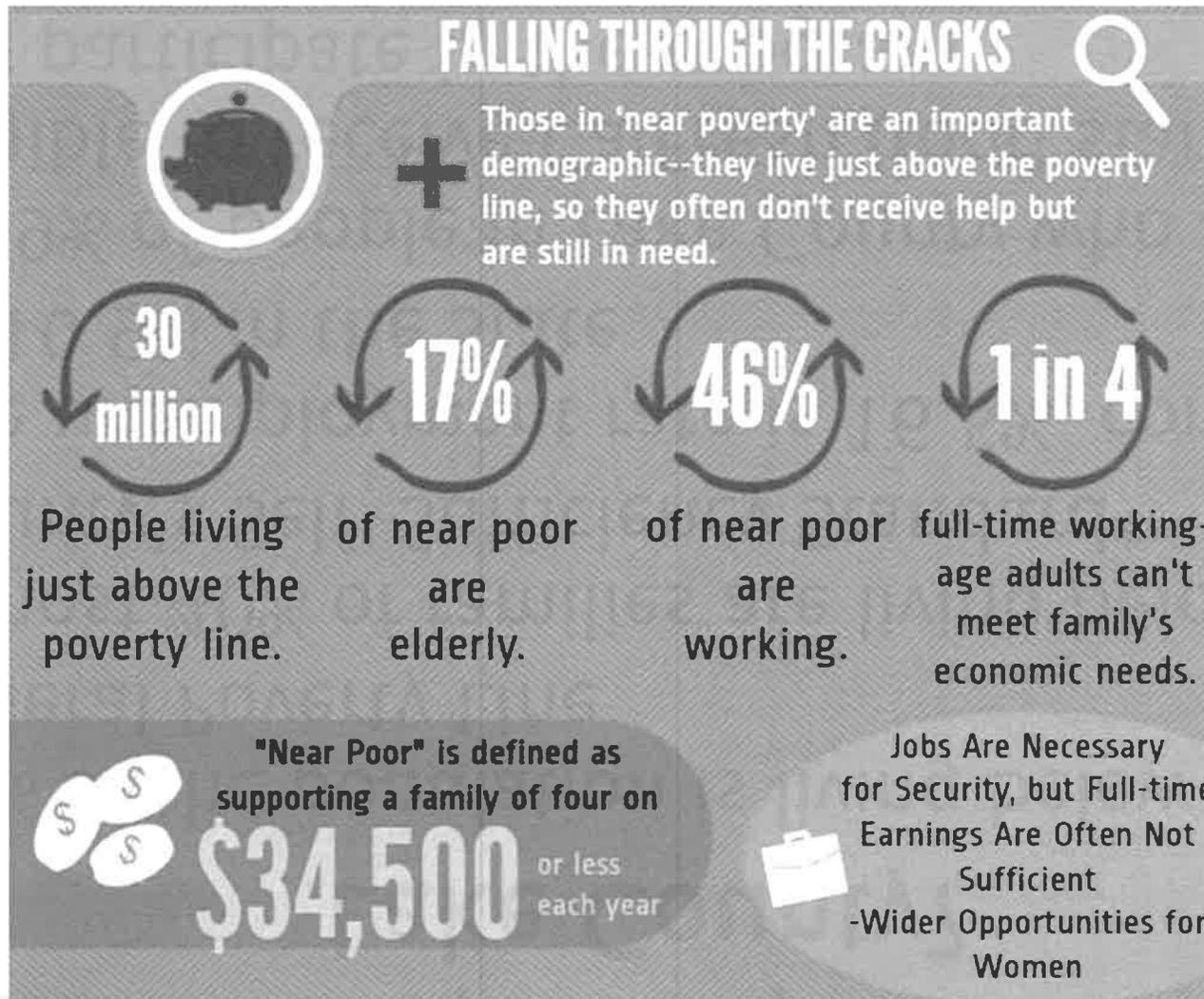
- Census.gov
- Feedingamerica.org
- CNN.com
- WOWonline.org



What does poverty look like in the US? (continued)



What does poverty look like in the US? (continued)



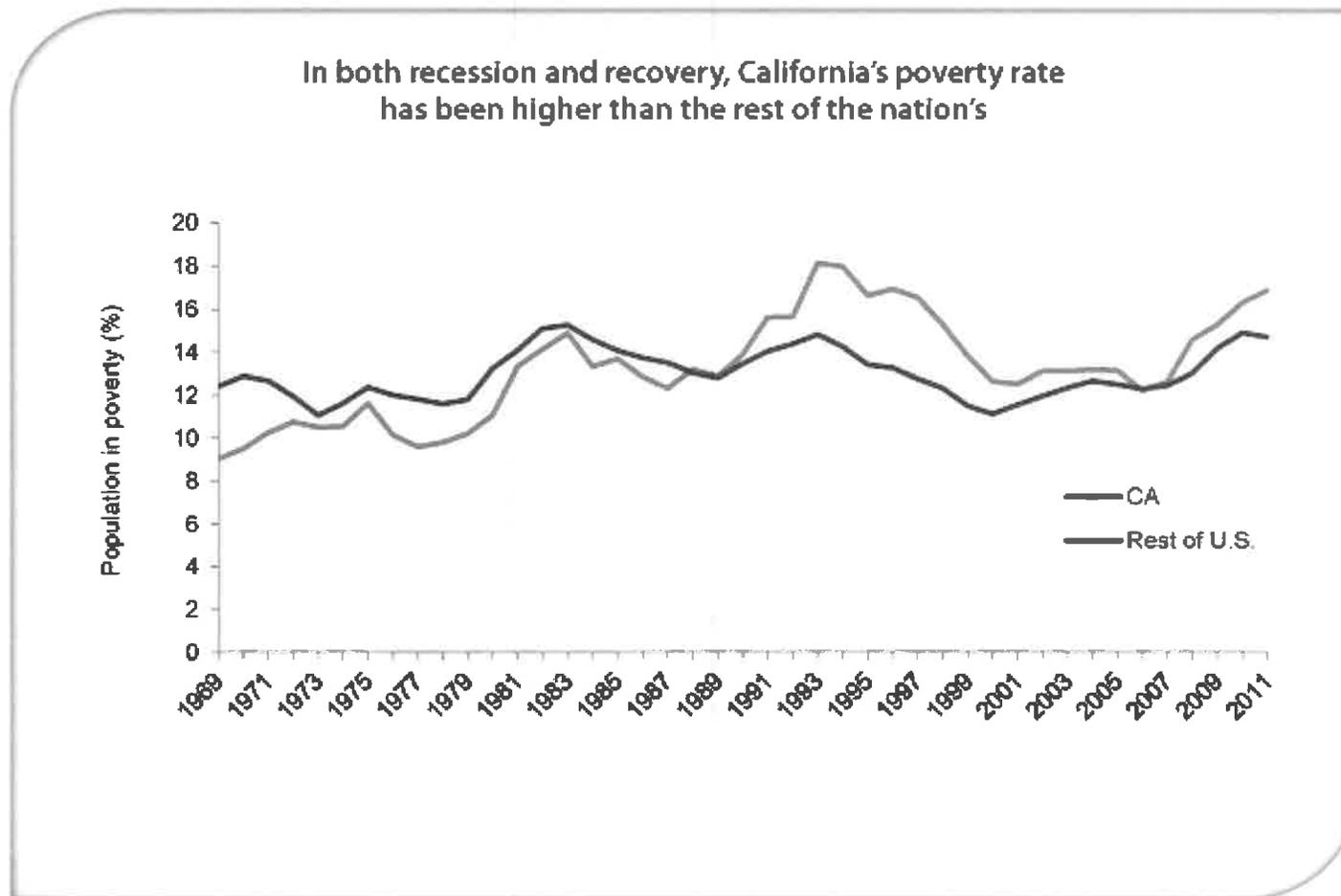
What does poverty look like in Lake County?

- ▶ 21% of the population is living below the Federal Poverty Line
- ▶ Almost 40% of families are living below the County's Self-Sufficiency Standard*
- ▶ The unemployment rate is 16.5%, compared to 10.9% in the State
- ▶ 50.9% of people in Lake County who are eligible to receive CalFresh (food stamps) do not participate in the program

*The self-sufficiency standard is a county-by-county measure of the cost of living – households who live below this standard do not have sufficient income to cover expenses like childcare, transportation, health, care, etc.



How many people are in poverty now?

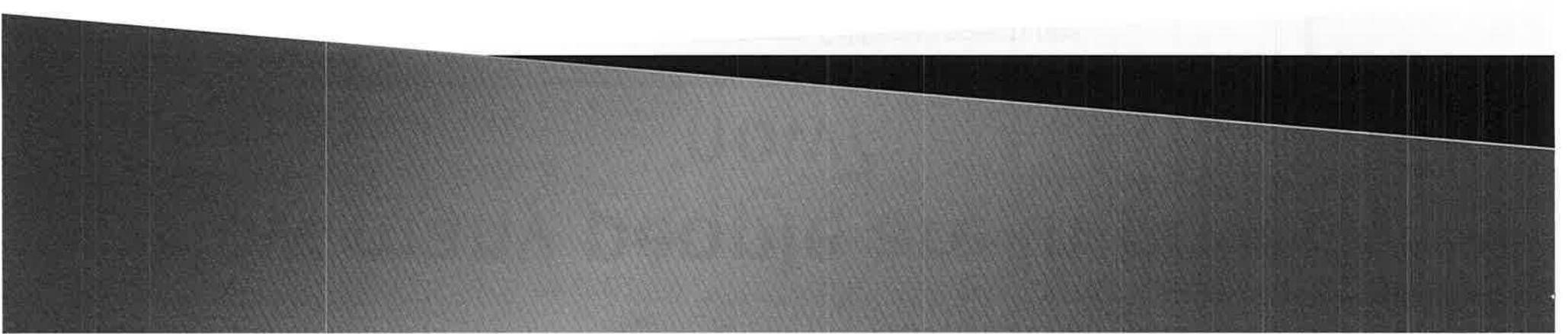


Source: Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (March).

From: Just the Facts: Poverty in California, PPIC, 2013.



Poverty & Health Disparities



How does poverty impact health?

- ▶ Health is impacted by a variety of factors – age, health care access, where you live, and your income. These are considered to be *social determinants* of health.

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at the global, national, and local levels.

World Health Organization (WHO), “Social Determinants of Health,” http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/.



How does poverty impact health?

- ▶ Poverty (or income) is a strong social determinant for a person's health.

Healthy Behaviors, by Income Group

Annual income

	<\$24K (low income)	\$24K-<\$90K (middle class)	\$90K+ (high income)	Gap, low vs. high income (pct. pts.)
% Eat five servings of fruits and veggies, four or more days per week	55.2	57.3	59.0	3.8
% Exercise 30 minutes, three or more days per week	48.8	51.3	56.3	7.5
% Smoke	31.9	20.2	11.9	20.1

Jan. 1-Sept. 28, 2010

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How does poverty impact health?

Physical Health Indicators, by Income Group

Annual income

	<\$24K (low income)	\$24K-<\$90K (middle class)	\$90K+ (high income)	Gap, low vs. high income (pct. pts.)
% Obese	32.0	27.9	21.7	10.3
% Diabetes	16.1	10.1	6.7	9.4
% High blood pressure	36.4	29.0	23.6	12.8
% High cholesterol	29.3	26.4	25.3	4.0
% Heart attack	7.2	3.5	2.2	4.9
% Asthma	15.9	10.5	9.2	6.7
% Cancer	7.7	6.9	6.0	1.7
% Diagnosed with depression	29.0	15.2	10.2	18.7
% Headache	18.7	10.2	7.5	11.1
% Flu	2.7	1.2	1.0	1.8
% Cold	7.0	4.7	4.3	2.7

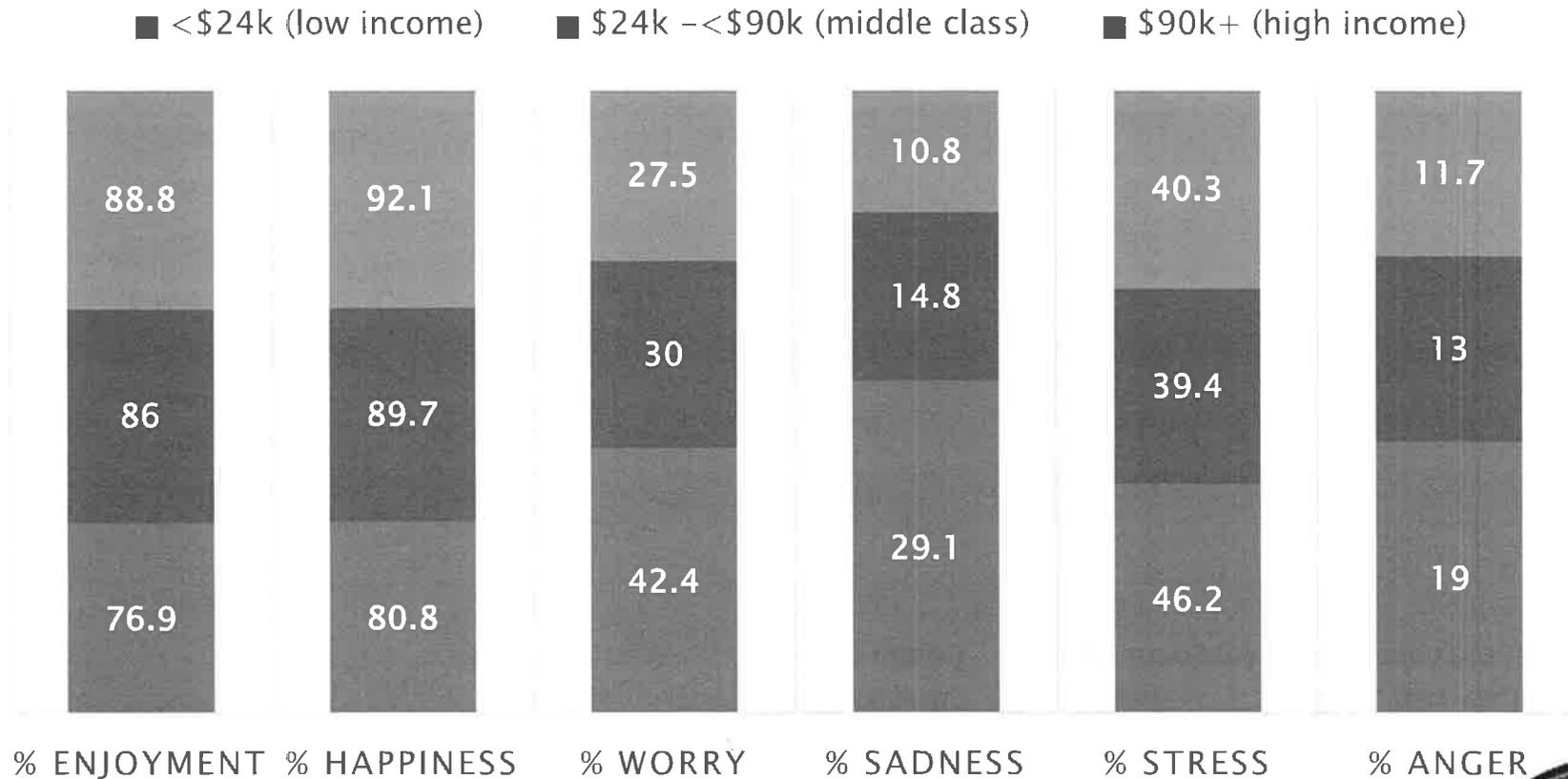
Jan.1-Sept. 28, 2010

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How does poverty impact health?

Emotional Health Indicators, by Annual Income Group



Jan. 1 – Sept. 28, 2010
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The “Culture of Poverty”

What is the “culture of poverty”?

▶ Brief discussion:

Why are people living in poverty more likely to have poorer physical and emotional health outcomes?



What is the “culture of poverty”?

- ▶ Culture: How people behave and their values, beliefs, lifestyles, and worldviews.

- ▶ Two ways to define the “culture of poverty:”
 1. Poor peoples’ behavior, values, beliefs, lifestyles, and worldviews undermine their own ability to lead healthier lives.
 2. Society’s continued collective behavior, values, beliefs, lifestyles, and worldviews limit opportunities for poor people to lead healthier lives.



What is the “culture of poverty”?

- ▶ How does society’s culture limit opportunities for poor people to lead healthier lives?

- ▶ Stigma of the Poor:
 - *Single moms and absent dads are the problem.*
 - *Poor people are lazy.*
 - *The homeless are drunk street people.*
 - *If you’re not ‘officially’ poor, you’re doing okay.*
 - *Go to college, get out of poverty.*
 - *We’re winning the war on poverty.*
 - *Handouts are bankrupting this country.*

Erika Eichelberger, “10 Poverty Myths, Busted,”
Mother Jones, March/April 2014,
<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/03/10-poverty-myths-busted>.





Promising Practices to Reduce Poverty

How can we reduce disparities in health outcomes for the poor?

Building Healthy Communities by the California Endowment



Making Health Happen by Building Healthy Communities

Building Healthy Communities is a ten-year, comprehensive community initiative that is creating a revolution in the way Californians think about and support health in their communities. In 14 places across California, residents are proving that they have the power to make health happen in their neighborhoods, schools and with prevention—and in doing so, they're creating a brighter future for their children and for our state.

- ▶ Aims to provide a health home for all children, increase school attendance, reverse childhood obesity, and reduce youth violence.
- ▶ Initial reports show promising gains, but evaluation of progress is still underway.

<http://calendow.org/communities/building-healthy-communities/>



How can we reduce the disparities in health outcomes for the poor?

Moving to Opportunity (MTO) for Fair Housing Demonstration Program

- ▶ MTO provided 4,600 low-income families with children living in public housing the chance to move to private-market housing in much less distressed communities.
 - MTO improved physical health
 - MTO improved mental health in areas such as depression and psychological distress
 - MTO had little to no effect on economic self-sufficiency.

<http://www.nber.org/mtopublic/>



How can we reduce the disparities in health outcomes for the poor?

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH), Centers for Disease Control

- ▶ REACH partners use community-based, participatory approaches to identify, develop, and disseminate effective strategies for addressing health disparities across a wide range of health priority areas.
 - Cholesterol screening increased among African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians in REACH communities
 - The percentage of Hispanics who reported having hypertension and were taking medication for it increased.
 - Pneumonia vaccination rates increased in black, Hispanic, Alaskan/Pacific Islander, and in Native American communities.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/reach/index.htm>



How can we reduce the disparities in health outcomes for the poor?

- ▶ Policy Considerations:
 - Redefine both the indicator and measure of the Poverty Threshold.
 - Identify benchmarks against comparable countries from which to measure progress towards reducing poverty.
 - Identify a Federal agency to oversee and implement policies/programs related to reducing poverty.



Questions?



Other References

- ▶ Merriam–Webster Online Dictionary, “Poverty”,
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/poverty>.
- ▶ The United States Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce, “How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty,”
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html>.
- ▶ Barbara Aved Associates, “Identifying Priority Health Needs: Lake County Community Health Needs Assessment,” September 2013,
<http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Assets/Health/Lake+County+Needs+Assessment+September+2013.pdf>.
- ▶ Catholic Charities of California, “Poverty Data by County within California,” March 2012,
http://catholiccharitiescentralcoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/California_Poverty_Data_by_County_05-04-2012.pdf.

Contact Information

Thank you!!

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