How New Mexico Compares, 2018

This table lists New Mexico's ranking on 38 state health measures, where 1 is the best ranking and 50 is the worst among the 50 U.S. states. Rankings 1-17 are in the best third of states (yellow), 18-33 are in the middle third (turquoise), and rankings 34-50 are in the worst third (blue) of U.S. states.

	2008 Rank	2015 Rank	2016 Rank
BEST THIRD (2016 Rank 1-17)			
Cancer Death	6	7	5
Episodic heavy (binge) drinking (Adults Age 18+)	6	6	10
Chronic Heavy Drinking	12	5	10
Safety Belt Use (Adults Age 18+)	9	11	10
Alzheimer's Disease Death	8	7	12
Youth Alcohol Use (High School Students)	35	15	13
Physical Inactivity	19	15	14
Heart Disease Death	9	8	16
MIDDLE THIRD (2016 Rank 18-33)			
Adult Obesity	20	19	18
Stroke Death	13	11	19
Adult Smoking	29	25	21
Health Insurance Coverage (Adults Age 18-64)	48	28	24
Tuberculosis Incidence Rate	26	28	25
Influenza Immunization (Adults Age 65+)	12	46	26
Adult Depression	38	34	27
HIV Death	24	28	28
Infant (age 0 to 364 days) Mortality	13	13	30
All-cause Death Rate	29	27	31
Youth Smoking	49	32	32
Pneumonia Immunization (Adults Age 65+)	34	26	33
WORST THIRD (2016 Rank 34-50)			
Pneumonia and Influenza Death	25	13	34
GINI Index (Income Inequality)	32	40	34
Diabetes Prevalence (Adults Age 18+)	34	38	38
Drug Overdose Death	50	43	39
Infant Low Birth Weight	33	39	41
Firearm-related Death	41	44	43
Teen Births (Girls Age 15-19)	49	46	44
Self-rated Good or Better Health (Adults Age 18+)	40	42	44
Homicide	42	43	45
High School Diploma (Adults Age 25+)	40	46	45
Falls Death (Adults Age 65+)	50	47	45
Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Death	40	41	46
Diabetes Death	47	41	46
Mammogram in Last 2 Years (Women Age 50+)	44	44	46
Suicide Death	48	47	47
Children in Poverty (Under Age 18)	47	48	48
Unintentional Injury Death	50	49	48
Alcohol-induced Death	49	50	50

Rank is for all 50 U.S. states, where a rank of "1" is the best ranking and a rank of "50" is the worst.

Death rates have been age-adjusted to the U.S. 2000 standard population.

Where there were fewer than 50 states with valid data, rankings for states with valid data were normalized to range from 1 to 50. Where data were not available for the desired year, available data for the closest year were used.

In 2016, New Mexico had low rates for cancer and heart disease, ranking 5th and 16th, respectively. Cancer and heart disease are the two leading causes of death in New Mexico and nationally. The reasons for New Mexico's low cancer and heart disease deaths rates are not entirely clear. The highest death rates for cancer and heart disease were found among states with the highest rates of smoking, obesity and physical inactivity. New Mexico's performance on those risk factors was only average or slightly above average. Thus, other factors, such as genetics and diet, probably play complementary roles in New Mexico's low cancer and heart disease death rates. In 2016, there were 3,552 New Mexico deaths from cancer and 3,777 from heart disease.

In 2016, New Mexico had low rates of adult chronic heavy drinking and binge drinking, ranking 10th best among all 50 states on those two measures. Yet New Mexico had the worst ranking (50th) for alcohol-induced death. While this may seem incongruous, it can be explained by the specific pattern of heavy drinking found in New Mexico. New Mexico had fewer adults who drank to excess, but those who did drink to excess, did so in the extreme. New Mexico had 366 deaths in 2016 from alcoholic liver disease, the most common cause of death that is 100% attributable to alcohol.

New Mexico's ranking for youth alcohol use improved 22 spots (from 35th to 13th) over a six-year period, and for youth smoking it improved 17 spots (from 49th to 32nd). The ranking for health insurance coverage improved 24 spots (from 48th in 2008 to 24th in 2016). Rankings saw the largest decline for infant mortality, falling 17 spots from 2008-2016.

New Mexico ranked near the bottom (48th) for unintentional injury deaths, a category that includes deaths from drug overdose, motor vehicle traffic crashes, and falls. New Mexico's rank for drug overdose death improved 11 spots from 2008 to 2016 (from 50th to 39th) for two reasons: 1) New Mexico has had a strong overdose prevention policy agenda, and 2) death rates in selected other states have substantially increased.

While still in the bottom third among states for our rate of births to teen girls age 15-19, our ranking has improved 5 spots in the last decade (from 49th to 44th). Teen birth rates have seen dramatic declines in New Mexico and nationally, but New Mexico has out-performed other states.

New Mexico ranks near the bottom for key social determinants of health, including child poverty and high school completion. Social policies that foster quality early childhood and public education, and those that promote broad economic development continue to be priorities for New Mexico.

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Data sources for this report:

Births and Deaths: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System (NVSS). Accessed via https://wonder.cdc.gov/ and https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/.

Tuberculosis Incidence: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Online Tuberculosis Information System (OTIS). Accessed via https://wonder.cdc.gov/.

Adult Risk Factor Data: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Accessed via https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/, https://www.cdc.gov/flu/fluvaxview, https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines, and https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/.

Youth (High School Student) Risk Factor Data: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 1991-2015 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/.

High School Completion and GINI Index: United States Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey (ACS). Available at https://factfinder.census.gov.

Child Poverty: United States Bureau of the Census, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Data Interactive Tool. Available at http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/interactive.