

Student Health and Academic Success: What's the Connection?



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Education and Health: The Miracle Elixir

More education → Better health

Better health → Academic Success

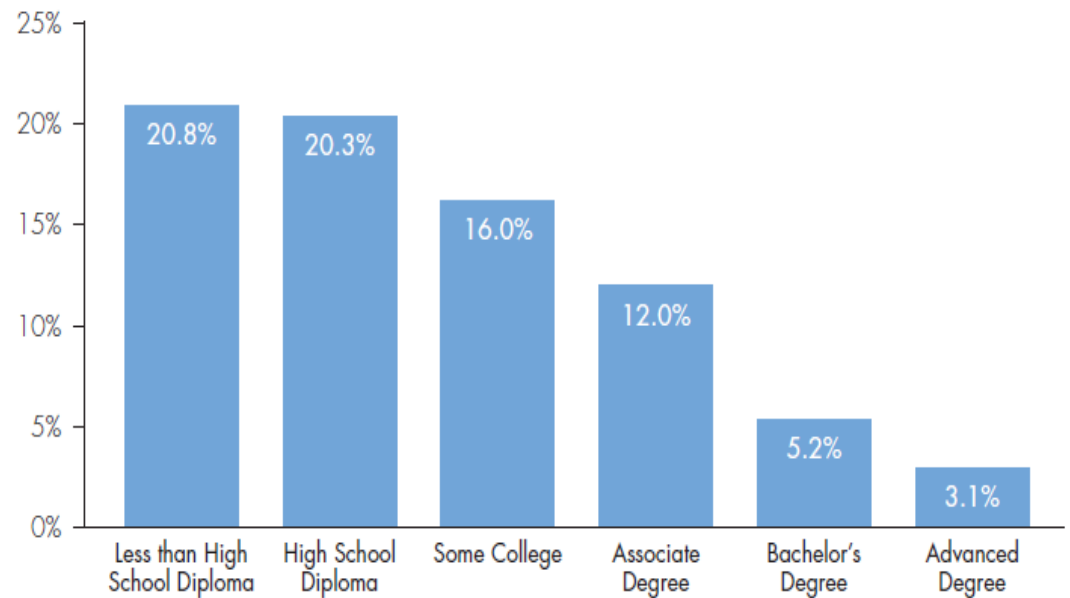
People with more education live longer; have fewer illnesses, hospitalizations, better quality of life, healthier habits, and more social support; and are happier

The Health Benefits of Education

- In 2010, 554,525 deaths could be attributed to having less than a bachelors degree rather than having this degree (Krueger et al, PLOS One, 2015)
- Life expectancy (at age 25) for those with at least some college was 7 years longer than for those who never attended: 81.6 compared to 74.6 years

Meara, Richards and Cutler, 2008

Figure 20
Smoke Daily

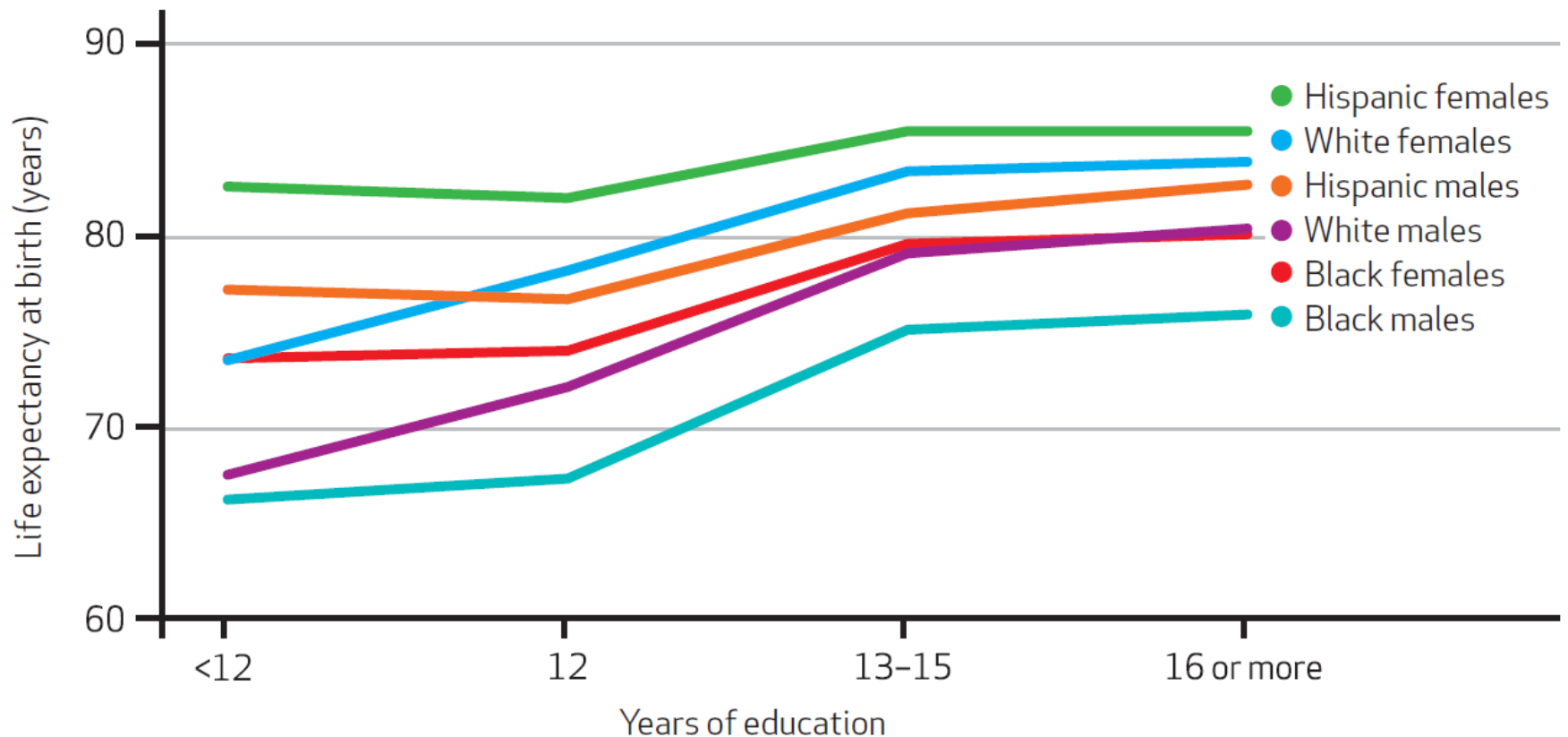


Source: Author's calculations using the January 2011 Tobacco Use Supplement of the Current Population Survey, ages 27-66 and not enrolled in college, N = 57,135.

DISPARITIES

EXHIBIT 1

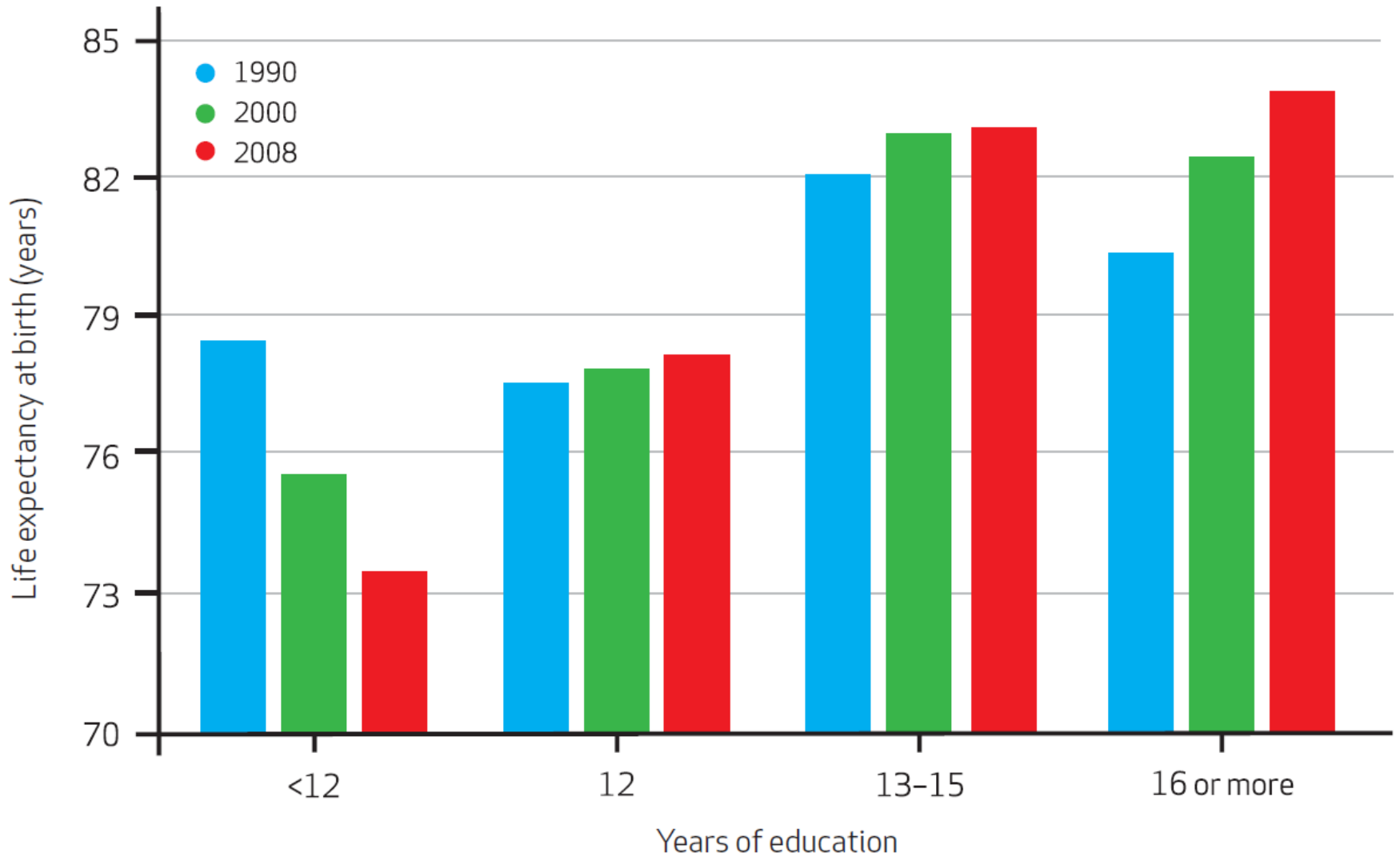
Life Expectancy At Birth, By Years Of Education At Age 25, By Race And Sex, 2008



Olshansky et al, *Health Affairs*, 2012

EXHIBIT 2

Life Expectancy At Birth, By Years Of Education At Age 25 For White Females, 1990-2008



Olshansky et al, *Health Affairs*, 2012

EXHIBIT 3

US Male Population, By Race And Years Of Education At Age 25, 2008

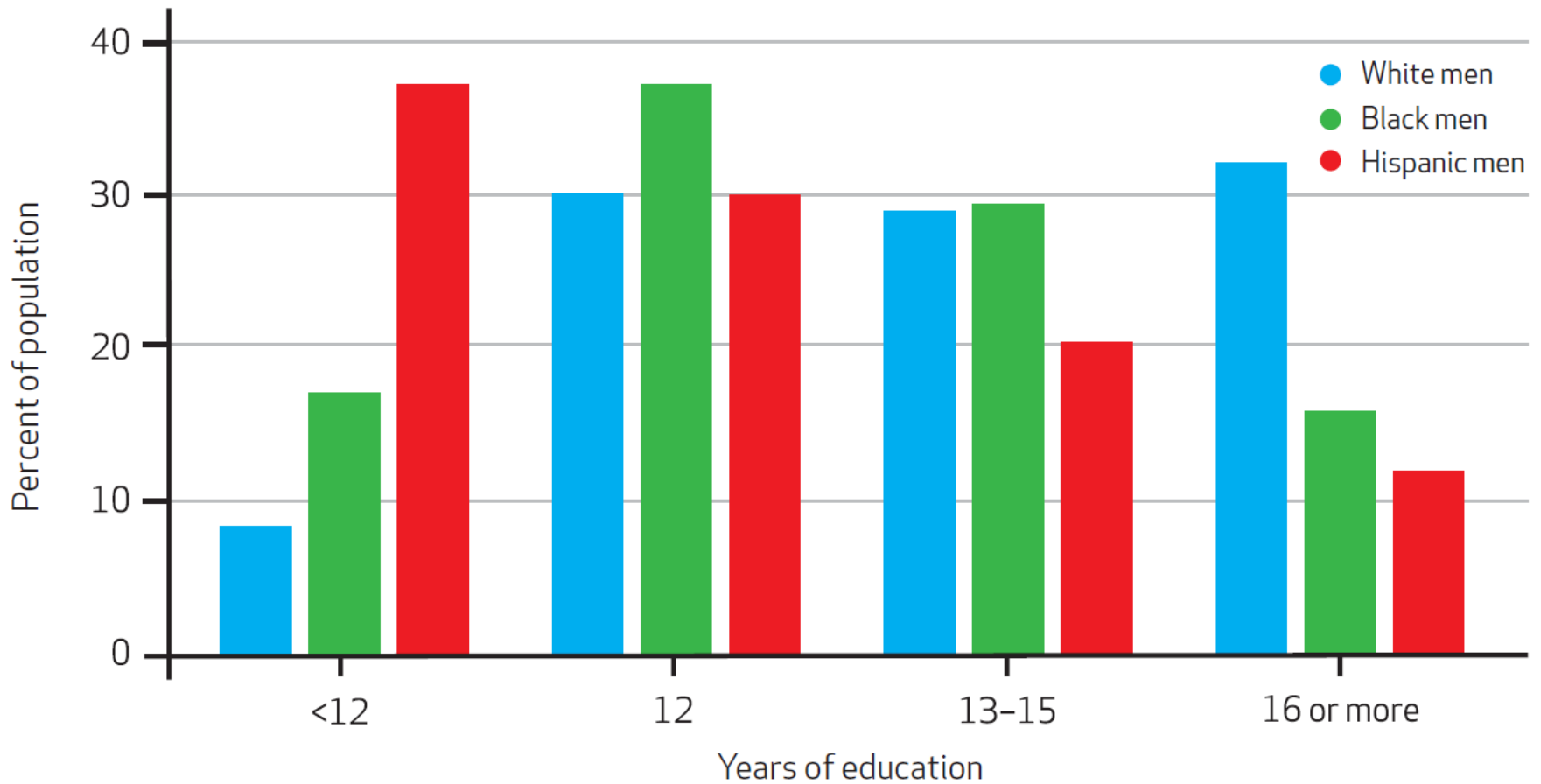
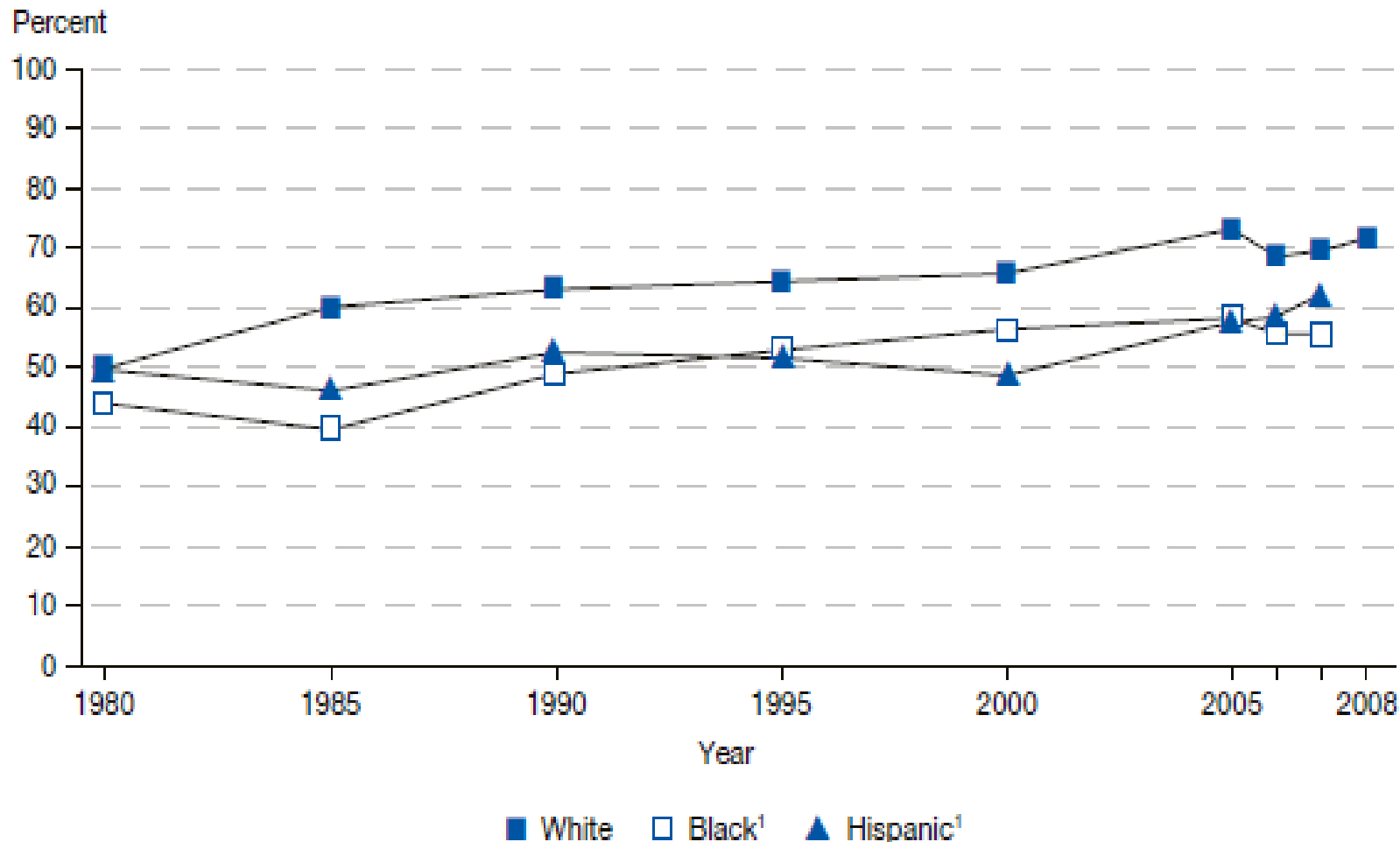


Figure 23.1. Percentage of high school completers who were enrolled in 2- or 4-year colleges the October immediately following high school completion, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1980–2008



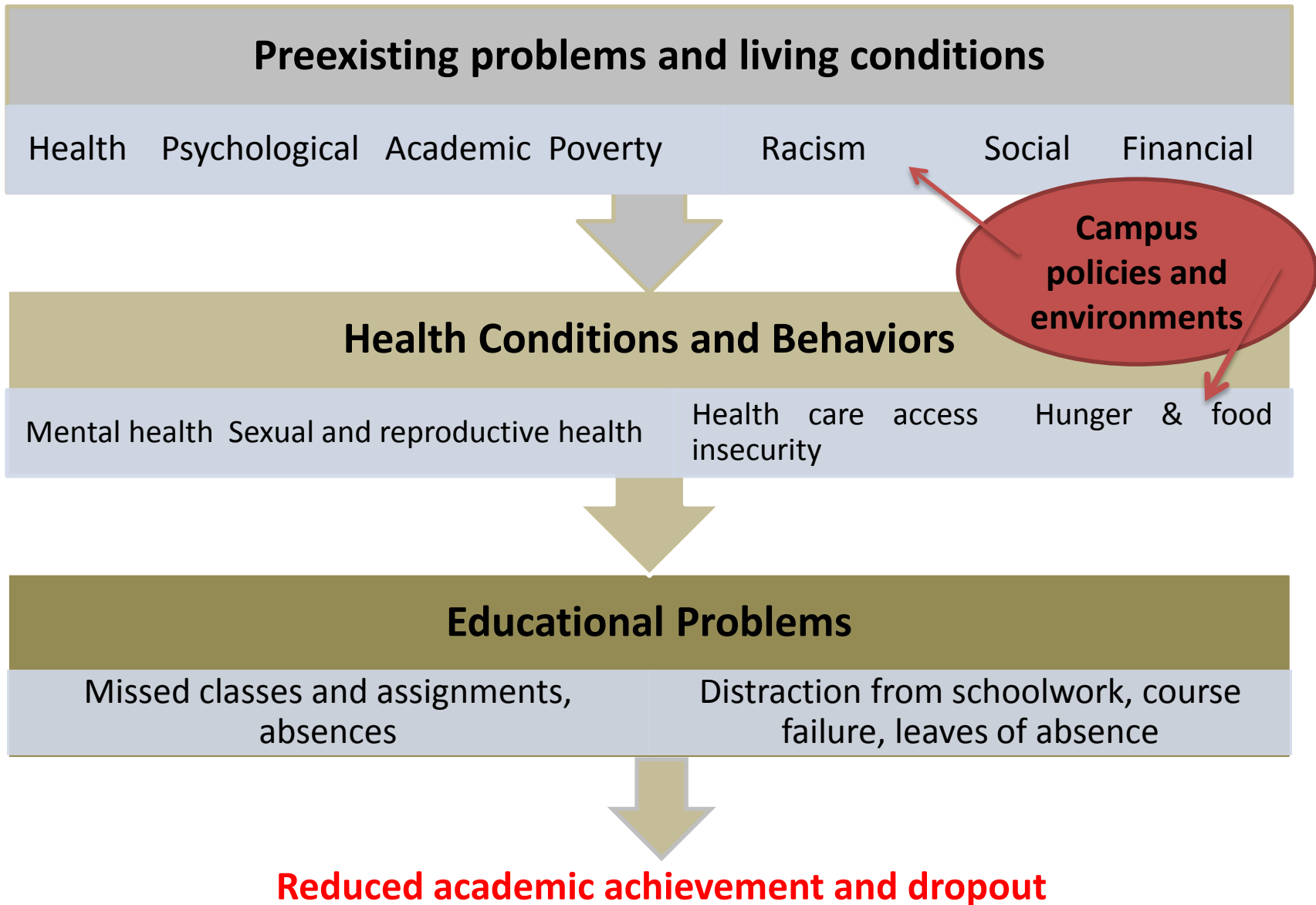
Source: US Dept of Education, 2010


“From a public policy standpoint, it makes little sense to promote greater college access if students are failing once they get there . . . *The United States has seen no progress on this measure* since the advent of statistics on it and is losing ground to other nations in the share of the adult population with college degrees.”




Source: Brock T. Young adults and higher education: barriers and breakthroughs to success. *Future Children*. 2010;20:109–132.

The Impact of Health on Educational Achievement



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- Reductions in DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, UNWANTED PREGNANCIES, UNSUPPORTED EARLY PARENTING, PARTNER VIOLENCE, LACK OF HEALTH INSURANCE, LACK OF REGULAR DOCTOR, AND FOOD INSECURITY

- 
- Improvements in ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOL, COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS, GPAs, and PROGRESS TO DEGREE

- 
- Improvement in RETENTION RATES, GRADUATION RATES, REDUCED SOCIOECONOMIC AND RACIAL/ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND REDUCED INEQUITIES IN LIFETIME HEALTH

Our surveys

- In 2011, 2015 and again this month, we have conducted email and telephone surveys of representative samples of CUNY undergraduates
- 2010: Surveys of food insecurity, housing instability and psychological problems among 1086 CUNY students (2011)
- 2015: survey of 2,800 CUNY students 18-30
- 2017 goal: 1000 follow up and 2000 new

Who are CUNY Undergraduate Students?

- 45% are first generation to attend college
- 44% speak a native language other than English
- 36% were born outside the US mainland
- 57% are female
- 31% are Hispanic, 26% are Black, 20% are Asian and 22% are White



- 52% live in households that earn less than \$25,000 per year
- 47% work while they study and 19% work for pay more than 20 hours a week)
- 27% are age 25 or older
- 12% are supporting children

Prevalence and Estimated Number of CUNY Undergrads Aged 18-30 with Selected Characteristics

Outcomes in Last 12 months	Prevalence from 2015 Survey	Estimated Number of CUNY Undergraduates Fall 2015
1. Depression (PHQ4 positive)	18.3%	35,392
2. Anxiety(PHQ 4 positive)	20.4%	39,453
3. a. Any pregnancy in last 12 months (reported by all genders) b. Parenting/living with children <18	6.7% 6.3%	12,958 12184
4. Fearful for safety because of threats from intimate partner or intimate partner forced you to do sexual things you did not want to do	6.7%	12,958
5. Lacked health insurance	10.1%	19,533
6. No doctor or regular source of health care	15.6%	30,170
7. Hungry often or sometimes in the last year due to lack of access to food	14.7%	28,430
One or more health problems	47.4%	91,671
Two or more health problems	21.8%	42,161

Depression and Anxiety

- 18% of CUNY students 18-30 years old suffer from depression and 20% from anxiety.
- More than 9% students 18-25 and 6% of those 26 to 30 had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year.
- Multiple stressors impose a bigger burden on Black and Latino students, women, and community college students than their respective peers
- A third of CUNY students report mental health issue had interfered with their schoolwork in the past 12 months.

Sometimes I would get stuck in my emotions and sleep or binge eat, or I'd miss deadlines for assignments. I'd also have difficulty waking up with the motivation to attend class. I'd find myself overwhelmed, stressed, or waiting until the last minute to complete assignments. I wouldn't be as involved with student life or other campus events as I'd normally be and that would deepen my depression.

College mental health counselors know what college students are dealing with. They understand the diversity of the students and ideas we have about what we need. They are able to direct me to other things-like doing things that I love. Student life is a big way to find things you love and build a community that is relevant. And when I am connected to a community it makes me feel stronger.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- About 7% of CUNY undergraduates became pregnant or got someone pregnant in the past year—about 13,000 students, 71% were unintended.
- Students who reported their own or a partner's pregnancy in last year were more likely to be from community colleges than senior colleges, older(26-30) and Hispanic, Black or 'Other' than White or Asian
- 25,000 students financially support children under 18 years old, of whom more than 12,000 are under five
- Nearly 7% of students report violence from or fear of intimate partner. Those who report this were 1.6 times more likely to have ever taken a leave of absence from school than those who had not experienced either form of abuse

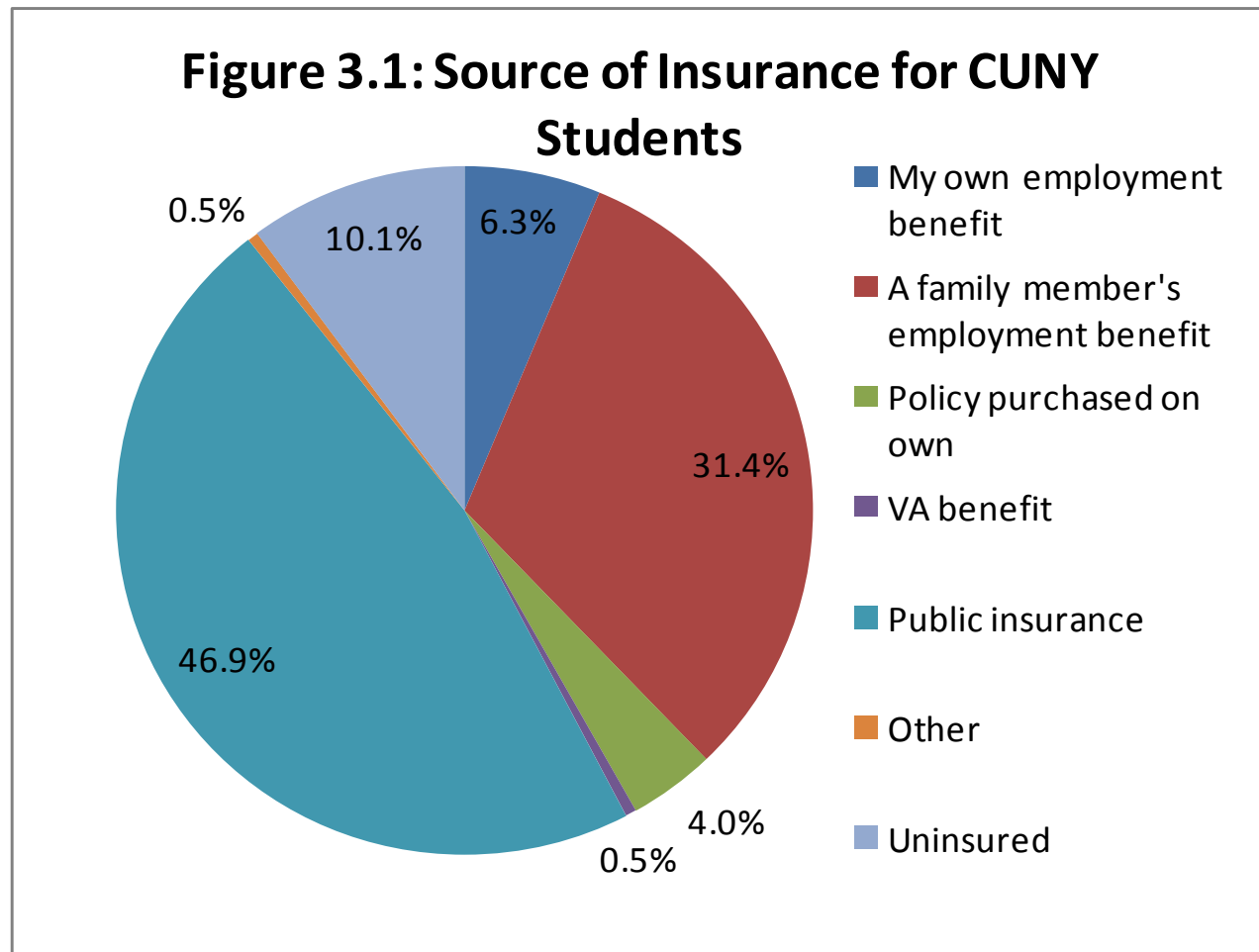
I had a pre-term baby right before finals. I was so new and I didn't know I had to tell someone. I didn't realize there were so many consequences. I thought it was just like high school and thought you could just come back. I got like a zero GPA. When I went back to school, they said I was not eligible for financial aid because my GPA was too low. I feel like the financial aid office should have told me the repercussions. Especially because I was a freshman, fresh outta high school. I had to appeal twice to get back into the school and explain the circumstances of why I had to drop out.

Elisha, a CUNY student

Health Care Access

- Students born outside the United States have less coverage than those born in the country (85% vs. 94%)
- Students from households with annual incomes of \$30,000 to \$50,000, compared to those from household incomes of \$50,000+ (88% vs. 93%)
- Older (26-30 yrs) compared to younger students (18-25 yrs) less likely to have insurance (82% vs. 92%).
- Nearly 85% of students have a regular doctor or other provider, a pattern of care associated with higher use of preventive services and fewer health problems.

I went to the [campus counseling center] during my freshman year but they only do crisis sessions or screening for off-site places. At the place they sent me they asked for an insurance card or else, I had to get it myself. So I was forced to get a job to get visits.



I feel a huge relief knowing that I have my own insurance and full coverage. With my mom, it was a huge fight every time I wanted to get something-or if I really needed therapy. And she told me she wouldn't pay for it, that I didn't need it enough. That was an additional stress. In addition to pay for school, I also had to pay for my copay every visit. Now I feel like I am more secure and don't have to worry about convincing someone I need the healthcare. And I have money to get my metro card to get to school. Carley, a CUNY student

Health Care Access(continued)

Insured students had better academic success than their uninsured peers:

- Compared to insured students, those without health insurance were 1.9 times more likely to fail out of a degree program (15% vs. 8%)
- 1.3 times more likely to take a leave of absence (37% vs. 27%)
- Students without a regular provider of care were 1.2 times more likely to report some interruption to their academic progress than those with a provider (50% vs. 41%).

Hunger and Food Insecurity

- 15% of students report they had gone hungry sometimes or often in the past year because they lacked resources to buy food
- 24% reported any food insecurity .
- 9% of CUNY undergraduates used food assistance resources in past 12 months.
- 17% of food insecure students utilized food assistance in the past 12 months.

Food security and academic success

- Food insecure students had on average lower GPAs than food secure students.
- Food insecure students were more likely than their food secure peers to take a leave of absence (48% vs. 32%).
- Students who reported experiencing hunger were more likely to take a leave of absence (51% vs. 34%).
- Students who used food assistance resources in the past 12 months were more likely to have lower GPAs and to take a leave of absence (47% of those who used compared with 36% of those who did not).

CUNY Health and Social Services

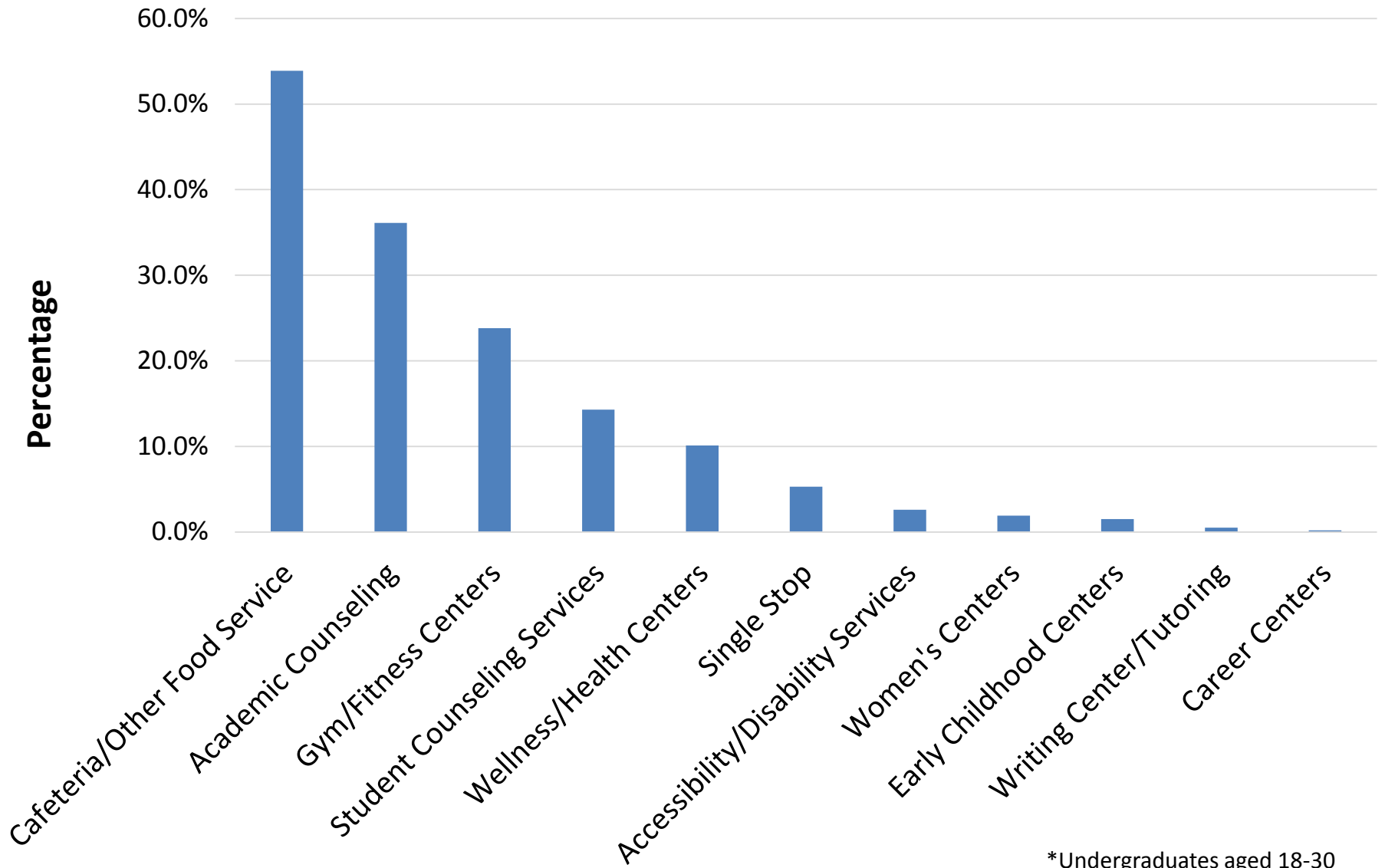
1. Academic Advising
2. ASAP
3. CUNY Central Office of Student Affairs
 - Campus Mental Health Centers
 - Campus Wellness Programs
5. Single Stop
6. Food Pantries
7. Child Care Centers
8. Women's Centers
9. Peer Programs



CUNY Partnerships

- Northwell Health Systems (mental health)
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (tobacco, contraception, immunizations, mental health)
- Planned Parenthood of NYC (contraception)
- Food Bank of New York City (food security)

Use of CUNY Services in past 12 months*



*Undergraduates aged 18-30

Use of Mental Health Services

- 17% of CUNY students reported using a CUNY counseling center in the past 12 months.
- One in four of students who thought they needed help or had someone else suggest they needed help used student counseling services
- 3 in 4 of those students indicated in need of help by themselves or some else did **NOT** get such help.
- About 4 in 5 CUNY students who met the criteria for depression or anxiety did **NOT** use the student counseling services in the past 12 months.
- 11% of students indicated that they did not know if their college had mental health professionals on staff
- 20% of students reported that they had received information about mental health services on campus in the past 12 months.

CUNY campuses whose students, faculty or staff have participated in Healthy CUNY activities, 2014-17

Senior Colleges

The City College of New York
Hunter College
Brooklyn College
Queens College
New York City College of Technology
College of Staten Island
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Baruch College
Lehman College
Medgar Evers College
York College

Community Colleges

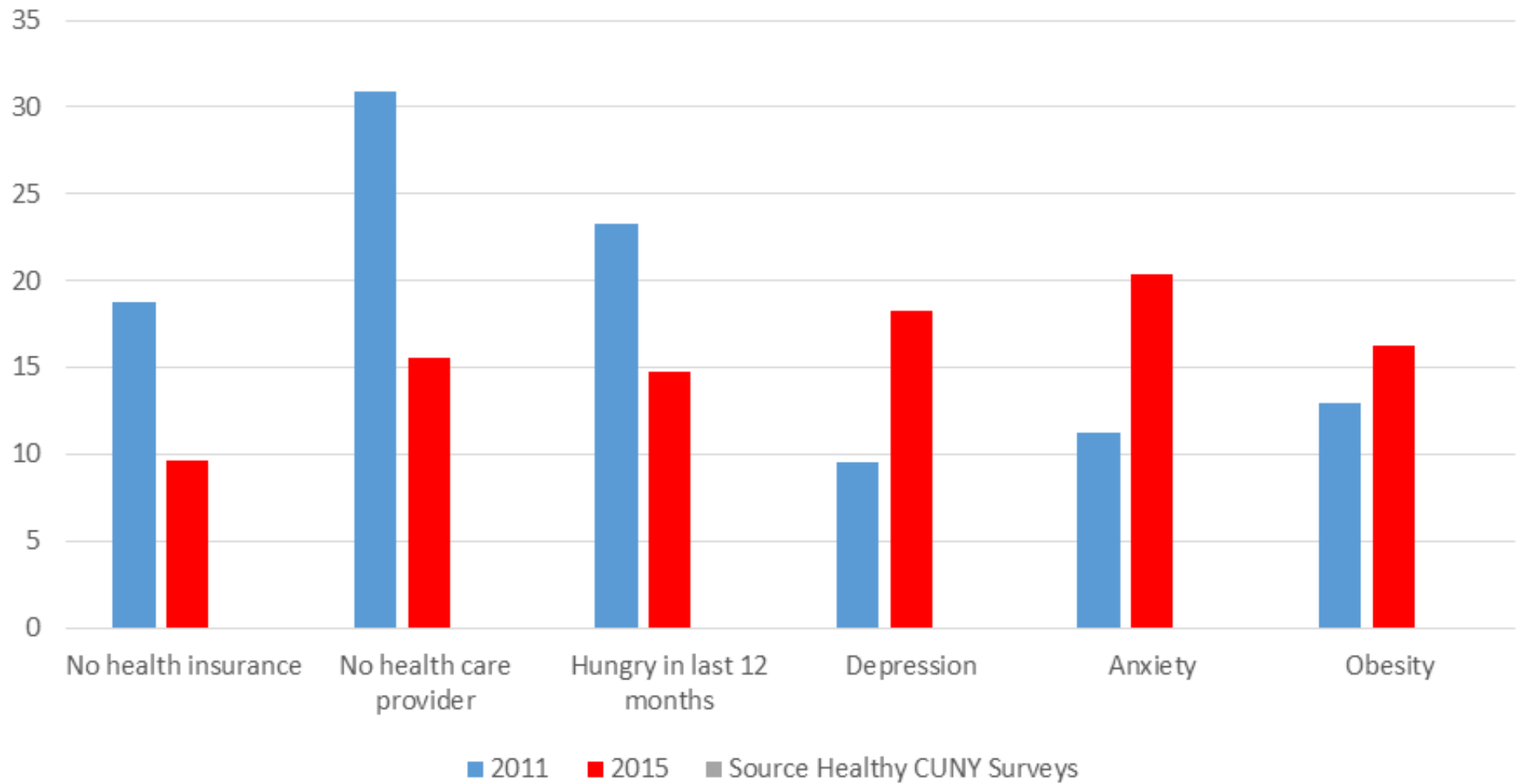
Bronx Community College
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Kingsborough Community College
LaGuardia Community College
Hostos Community College
Queensborough Community College

Professional Schools

CUNY Graduate Center
CUNY Graduate School of Journalism
CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy
CUNY School of Law
Macaulay Honors College



Changes In Health Conditons Among CUNY Students, 2011 to 2015



Six Cross-Cutting Problems

1. Insufficient efforts to leverage linkages between health and education
2. Limited coordination of services within and across campuses
3. Under-utilization of faculty and students as a resource for promoting health
4. Too much focus on reducing costs and liability
5. Limited attention to evaluation, quality improvement and implementation research
6. Missed opportunities of robust and sustainable partnerships

Recommendations

1. Affirm CUNY's commitment to promoting health for academic success
2. Improve coordination and focus of CUNY Student Services, including health and mental health centers
3. Fully engage CUNY faculty as resources for promoting health
4. Sponsor research, evaluation and quality improvement studies to provide evidence to improve services
5. Establish partnerships with health and social service providers
6. Make CUNY a leader in charting new paths to helping students overcome health and social problems that undermine academic success

Talking Points for a National Conversation

- Colleges that make it easy for students to get help to overcome food insecurity, housing problems and lack of access to health care help their students stay healthy, stay in school, achieve life goals and contribute more to society.
- To achieve their goals of increasing retention and graduation rates, colleges need to reduce the health and social problems that undermine academic success.
- Students who feel disrespected because of their race, gender, sexual orientation or immigration status will have trouble succeeding in college. Colleges that are committed to academic success will need to act to reduce this disrespect.
- Reducing disparate class and racial/ethnic college graduation rates can contribute significantly to reducing inequalities in health.

For more information

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