Pacific Islander Health Fact Sheet for Alameda County

Pacific Islanders are a relatively small, diverse, and fast-growing population in Alameda County. In socio-demographic and health indicators, Pacific Islanders are often grouped together with Asians and seen as being part of a “model minority” group that is universally healthy, wealthy, and highly educated.\(^1\) Due to API (Asian and Pacific Islander) data aggregation and this “model minority” myth, the health disparities/inequities faced by Pacific Islanders often go unrecognized and under-addressed. This fact sheet highlights the unique characteristics and health concerns of Pacific Islanders in Alameda County.

**Socio-demographics**

- Pacific Islanders are the fastest-growing population in Alameda County, with a 41% increase in Pacific Islander residents from 2000 to 2010.\(^2\)
- Pacific Islanders made up 0.8% of the Alameda County population in 2010, with just under 12,000 residents identifying as Pacific Islander.\(^2\)
- 13% of Pacific Islanders live in poverty, a rate similar to that of the total population in Alameda County.\(^3\) The poverty rate differs for different Pacific Islander groups, with 26% of Samoans living in poverty.\(^4\)

**Pacific Islanders in Alameda County**\(^6\)

- Fijian 3,630
- Tongan 2,861
- Samoan 2,022
- Guamanian or Chamorro 1,455
- Native Hawaiian 1,318
- Marshallese 27

**Alameda County Cities with the Most Pacific Islander Residents**\(^5\)

- Hayward 4,284
- Oakland 2,080
- Fremont 1,064
- Union City 838
- Newark 600
- San Leandro 595

- Hayward and Oakland have the largest number of Pacific Islander residents. Over half (53%) of Pacific Islanders live in Hayward (36%) or Oakland (17%).
- There are many Pacific Islands (see map on final page). In Alameda County, the majority of Pacific Islanders are Fijian, Tongan, Samoan, Guamanian/Chamorro and Hawaiian.
- 19% of Pacific Islanders have less than a high school degree. Demonstrating the differences within the Pacific Islander population, 12% of Samoans and 41% of Tongans have less than a high school degree.\(^4\)
- The unemployment rate is 29% for Tongans and 17% for Samoans in Alameda County. When all groups are combined, the Pacific Islander unemployment rate is 17%.\(^4\)
Overall Health

The five leading causes of death for Pacific Islanders in Alameda County are as follows:\(^8\)

1. Heart disease
2. Cancer
3. Diabetes
4. Stroke
5. Chronic lower respiratory disease

- The five leading causes of death among Pacific Islanders account for 67% of Pacific Islander deaths in Alameda County. These are all chronic diseases that are largely preventable.\(^9\)

- Pacific Islander children have the highest obesity rates in the county, with 31% of Pacific Islander 5th, 7th, and 9th graders being classified as obese.\(^10\)

- Pacific Islander men have the highest all-cause mortality rate in Alameda County.\(^8\)

- The average life expectancy for a Pacific Islander in Alameda County is 77.2 years, which is lower than the county average of 81.9 years.\(^8\)

Reproductive Health

- In 2013, there were 197 births to Pacific Islander mothers in Alameda County. Pacific Islanders have the highest birth rate in the county with 16.7 births per 1,000 people. The overall Alameda County birth rate is 12.3 births per 1,000 people.\(^11\)

- 9.1% of Pacific Islander babies are born premature, compared to 9.2% of all Alameda County births.\(^12\)

- 79.2% of Pacific Islander pregnant women receive prenatal care in the first trimester, the lowest rate in the county.\(^11\)

- 6.1% of Pacific Islander births are low birth weight babies, compared to 7.3% of all Alameda County births.\(^12\)
• In 2011, Pacific Islanders had the **highest infant mortality** rate in California compared to other race/ethnicities with 10.7 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The state rate was 4.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.¹³

• 36.1% of Pacific Islander births are to mothers receiving Medi-Cal, higher than the overall county rate of 26.4%.¹¹

• 4.7% of Pacific Islander births are to **teen mothers**, about the same as the county rate of 4.8%.¹²

• Pacific Islanders have the **lowest breastfeeding rates** in the county with 69.6% of Pacific Islander newborns being exclusively breastfed in the hospital. The Alameda County rate is 82.3%.¹⁴

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3. American Community Survey 2013 5-year files.
5. CAPE. Data from Esri and Census 2010.
7. Matt Beyers, CAPE.

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Prepared by the Pacific Islander Health Promotion Subcommittee of the Community Forum for Perinatal Health.
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