

ECONOMIC & MATERIAL WELL-BEING

INDICATOR #40 Children & Youth Living in Low-income Households

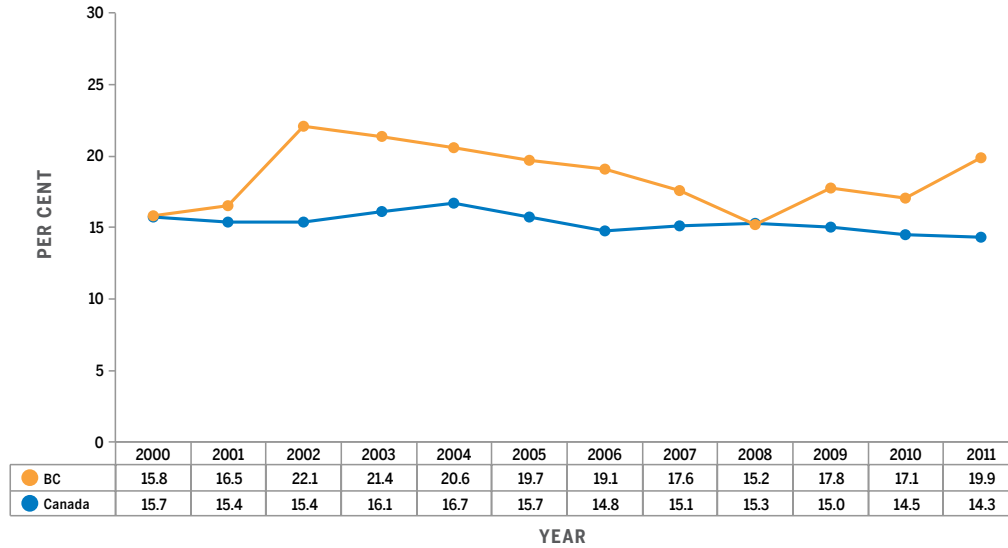
DEFINITION

INDICATOR #40 — Percentage of BC children and youth age 0–18 living in households that report an annual after-tax household income that is below the low-income cut-off, as defined by Statistics Canada.

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Family or household income is widely considered a social determinant of health. There is evidence that poverty is correlated with a wide variety of negative physical, emotional, and social outcomes in children and youth.¹
- ▶ The challenge of using household income as an indicator of health and well-being is that it does not always correspond accurately with disadvantage, since the cost of living can vary greatly between countries, provinces, and even cities. Depending on location, family structure, and other household arrangements, it is possible for households with relatively low incomes to live quite comfortably, and conversely, some households with higher incomes may struggle in a city with a higher cost of living. However, household income can generally be considered a general proxy measure for socio-economic advantage or disadvantage with related potential health effects.²
- ▶ As shown in Figure 40.1, after six years of decreasing rates, the prevalence of persons under age 18 living in low-income households in BC began to increase starting in 2008, following the economic downturn.
- ▶ The increasing rate of children and youth living in low-income households in BC contrasts with the decrease in the national rate over the post-2008 time period (see Figure 40.1). In fact, since 2000, in every year except 2008, BC has had a higher percentage of persons under age 18 living in low-income households than the overall Canadian percentage.
- ▶ Given the importance of low household income as a risk factor for a variety of physical, emotional, and social problems, the increasing rate in BC is a source of concern with respect to its impact on the health and well-being of children and youth in BC.
- ▶ Figure 40.2 shows that in 2011, BC had the second highest percentage among Canadian provinces of persons under age 18 living in low-income households. This high percentage was driven by high rates in the health service delivery areas of Richmond, Kootenay Boundary, Vancouver, North Vancouver Island, Central Vancouver Island, and Northwest (see Figure 40.4); more than 20 per cent of persons under age 18 in these areas were living in low-income households.

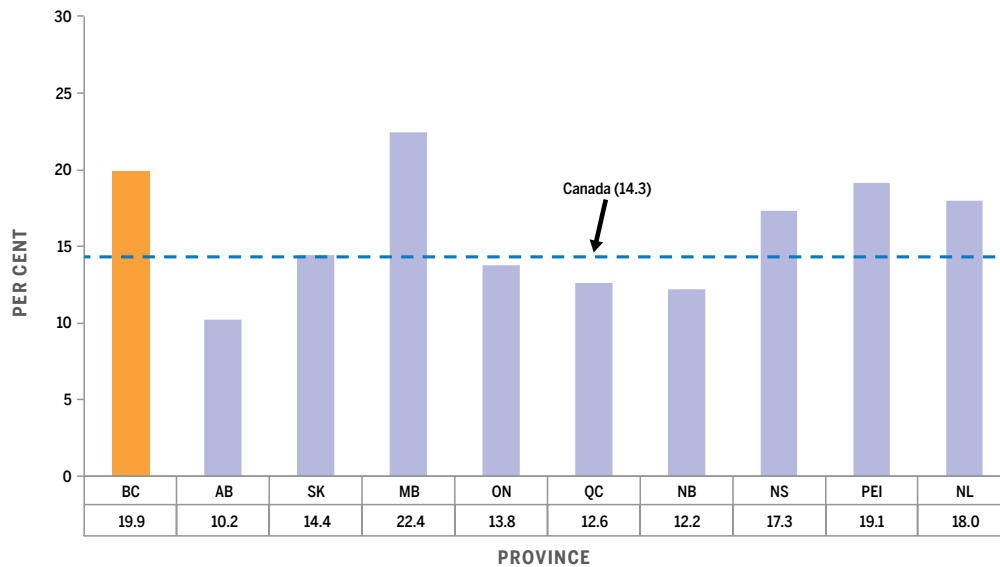
FIG 40.1 Percentage of Children and Youth Under Age 18 in Low-income Households, BC and Canada, 2000 to 2011



Notes: "Low-income households" means households that report an annual after-tax income below the low-income cut-off as defined and calculated by Statistics Canada. Estimates are derived from Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 202-0802, Persons in Low Income Families, CANSIM database. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

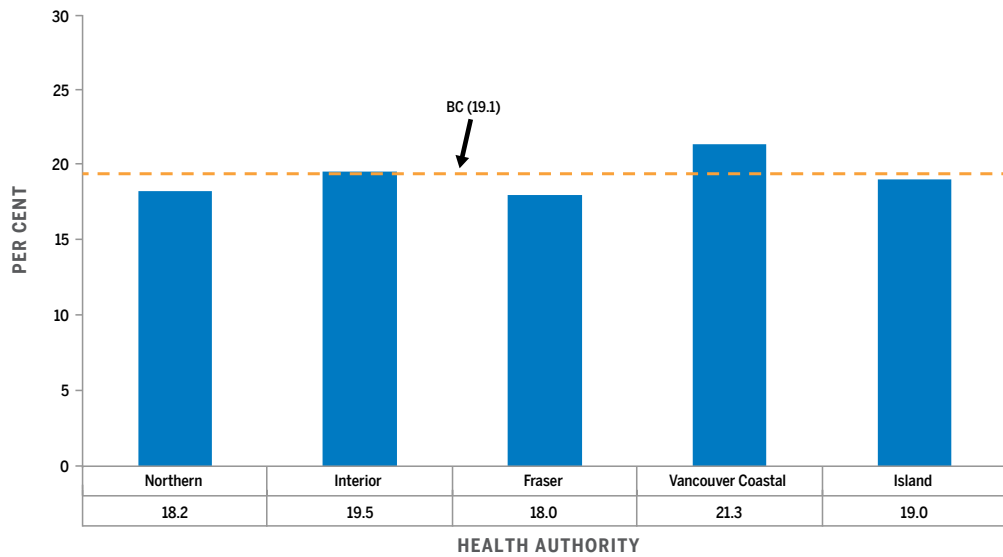
FIG 40.2 Percentage of Children and Youth Under Age 18 in Low-income Households, by Province, Canada, 2011



Notes: "Low-income households" means households that report an annual after-tax income below the low-income cut-off as defined and calculated by Statistics Canada. Estimates are derived from Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 202-0802, Persons in Low Income Families, CANSIM database. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

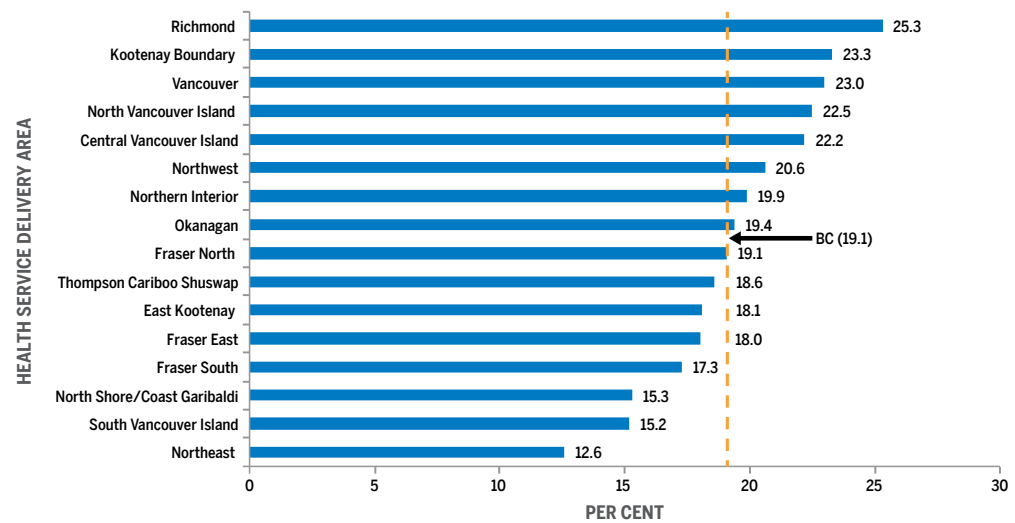
FIG 40.3 Percentage of Children and Youth Under Age 18 in Low-income Households, by Health Authority, BC, 2011



Notes: "Low-income households" means households that report an annual after-tax income below the low-income cut-off as defined and calculated by Statistics Canada. Health authority is based on the location of the household. Data are from Statistics Canada's National Household Survey, and may differ from provincial-level data provided elsewhere that are based on Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011; extracted from data tables provided by BC Stats. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

FIG 40.4 Percentage of Children and Youth Under Age 18 in Low-income Households, by Health Service Delivery Area, BC, 2011



Notes: "Low-income households" means households that report an annual after-tax income below the low-income cut-off as defined and calculated by Statistics Canada. Health service delivery area is based on the location of the household. Data are from Statistics Canada's National Household Survey, and may differ from provincial-level data provided elsewhere that are based on Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011; extracted from data tables provided by BC Stats. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

REFERENCES

- ¹Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario. Reducing poor health outcomes for children and youth: recommendations for the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy. Ottawa, ON: Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario; 2008 Apr [cited 2016 Mar 31]. Available from: http://www.cheo.on.ca/uploads/AboutUs/Files/poverty_submission_e.pdf.
- ²H. Krueger & Associates. Child and youth health and well-being indicators project: appendix I—economic and material well-being evidence review [prepared for the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Canadian Institute for Health Information]. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Institute for Health Information; 2011 [cited 2016 Apr 7]. Available from: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/special-reports/appendix_i_-_economic__material_well_being_evidence_review.pdf.