

# Rhode Island Adult Health Risks and Employment Status (2009)



## Rhode Island Department of Health, November 2011 Center for Health Data and Analysis

**Introduction:** This report presents data on healthcare access, health status, and risky health behaviors for all Rhode Island adults, with additional breakdowns by sex and employment status. Data are from the 2009 RI Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

**About the BRFSS:** The BRFSS is a telephone survey administered in all 50 states and 4 U.S. territories with funding and specifications from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The BRFSS monitors the prevalence of health risks that contribute to the leading causes of disease and death among adults 18 years and older in the United States. Rhode Island has participated in the BRFSS since 1984.

**Rhode Island's BRFSS:** From January – December 2009, the RI BRFSS conducted random-digit dialed telephone interviews with 6,296 non-institutionalized RI adults. A professional survey firm implemented the survey under contract to the RI Department of Health.

Respondents were asked the following: “Are you currently...? 1) Employed for wages 2) Self-employed 3) Out of work for more than 1 year 4) Out of work for less than 1 year 5) A Homemaker 6) A Student 7) Retired or 8) Unable to work.” Responses 1 or 2 were considered “Employed” and 3 or 4 “Unemployed.” Responses 5 to 8 were excluded from the analysis as the respondents were considered to be out of the workforce.

**Reading Statistics:** This report presents bar graphs showing percentages and 95% confidence intervals (CI). Since percentages from survey data are estimates, the 95% CI indicates the range of values within which the “true” value lies 95% of the time. When two groups have 95% CI that overlap, it indicates that the “true” values are likely to be similar in both groups. If the 95% CI do not overlap, it indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

**Further information:** For the BRFSS go to <http://www.health.ri.gov/data/behaviorriskfactorsurvey/>, [www.cdc.gov/brfss](http://www.cdc.gov/brfss), or contact the Center for Health Data and Analysis, RI Department of Health (401-222-2550).

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### 2009 Summary

- ❖ In 2009, Rhode Island adults had the following health risk rates: obesity (1 in 4 adults), hypertension (1 in 4), high cholesterol (1 in 3), current alcohol drinking (nearly 3 in 4), and no flu immunization (3 in 5). Undoubtedly contributing to the obesity were the insufficient fruit and vegetable consumption (3 in 4 adults) and inadequate physical activity (1 in 2). (Fig. 1)
- ❖ Adult males were statistically more likely than adult females to be uninsured (1.5 times the female rate), have no regular health care provider (2.1 times), consume an insufficient quantity of fruits and vegetables (1.1 times), have had hypertension (1.3 times) or high cholesterol (1.3 times), be current drinkers (1.2 times), and have no flu immunization (1.2 times). Females were more likely to have asthma (1.9 times the male rate) and engage in insufficient physical activity (1.2 times). (Fig. 2)

**Unemployed adults were at statistically higher risk than employed adults for 6 of the 14 indicators examined, and at lower risk for only 1 indicator. (Fig 3)**

- ❖ Unemployed adults were five times more likely than employed adults to be dissatisfied with their lives, 5.1 times more likely to be uninsured, and 2.5 times more likely to have no routine healthcare provider.
- ❖ Unemployed adults were also 2.6 times more likely to have a disability, 1.6 times more likely to be current cigarette smokers, and 1.2 times more likely to have no flu immunization.
- ❖ In contrast, employed adults were 1.1 times more likely to be current alcohol drinkers. The remaining indicators showed no statistical differences by employment status.

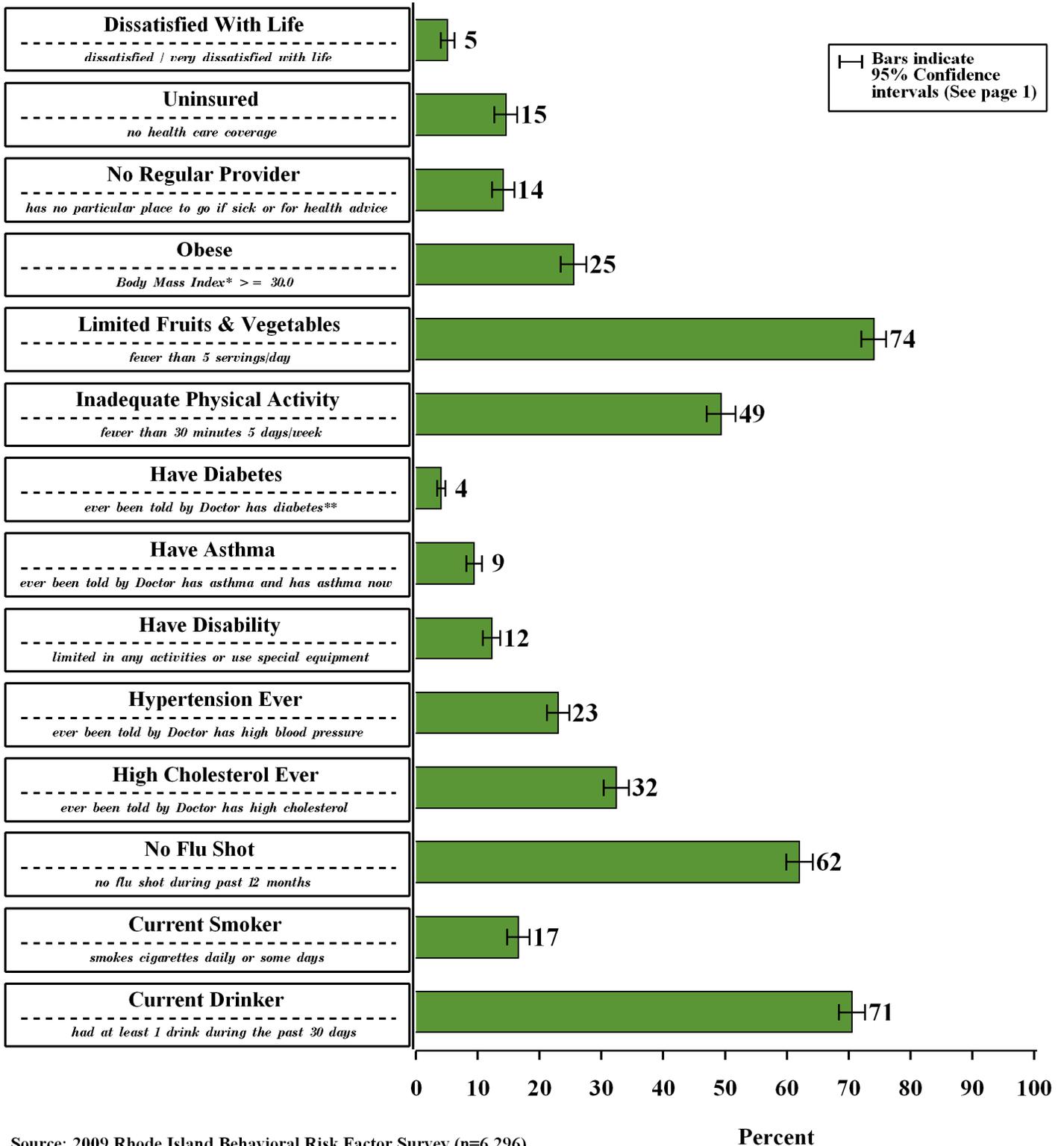
### Implications

The data support the widespread belief that being unemployed, which restricts access to health insurance and ongoing healthcare, can have adverse effects on health status and risk behaviors. Expanding business and educational opportunities with the purpose of creating new jobs should be both an economic and a public health priority for government leaders.

# Figure 1

## Health Risks Among Rhode Island Adults

### Ages 18 and older -- 2009



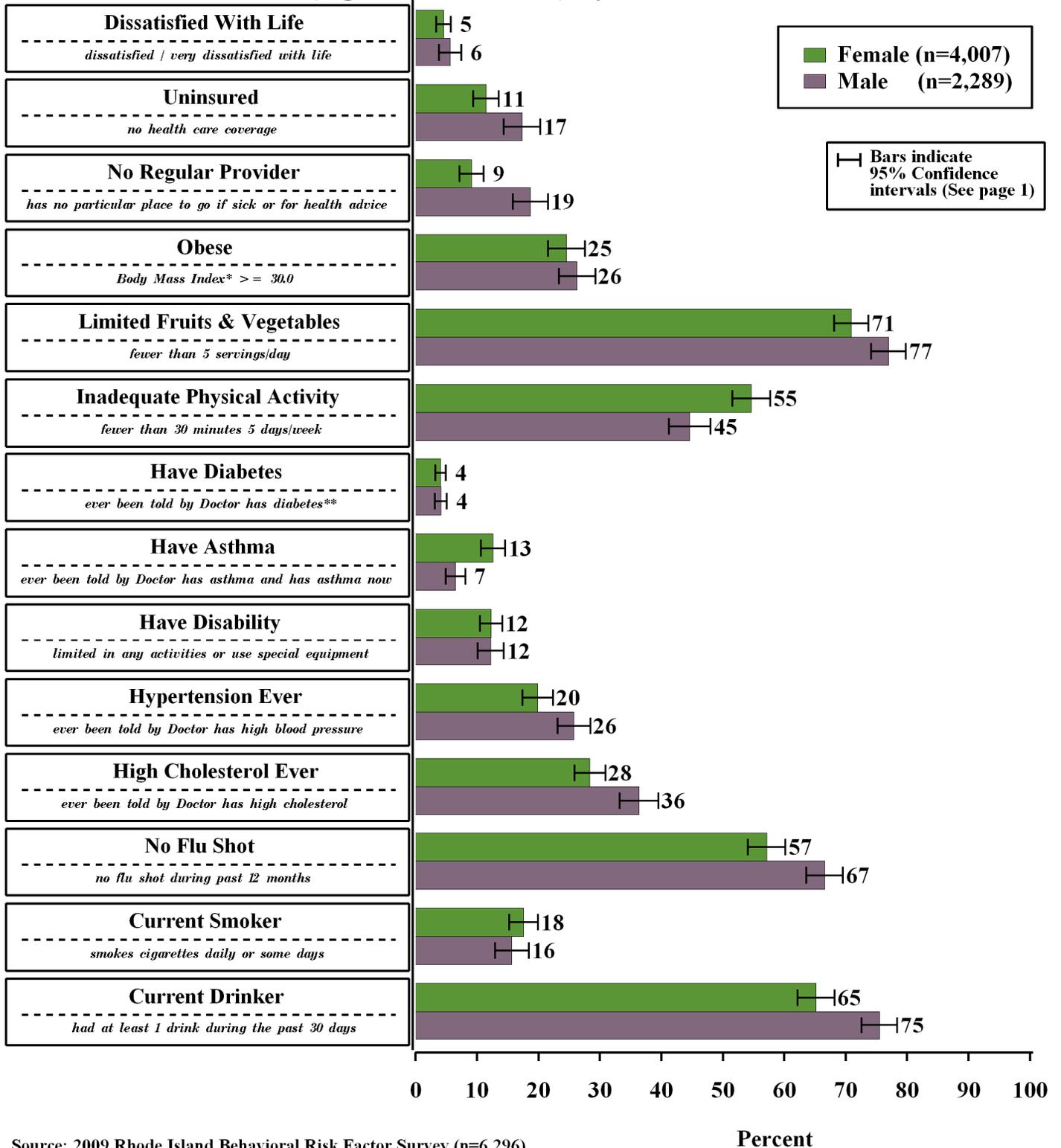
Source: 2009 Rhode Island Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (n=6,296)

\* Body Mass Index = weight in kilograms / (height in meters)<sup>2</sup>

\*\* Diabetes: Adults who have ever been told by a health professional they have diabetes, other than during pregnancy

# Figure 2

## Health Risks Among Rhode Island Adults (Ages 18 and older) by sex -- 2009

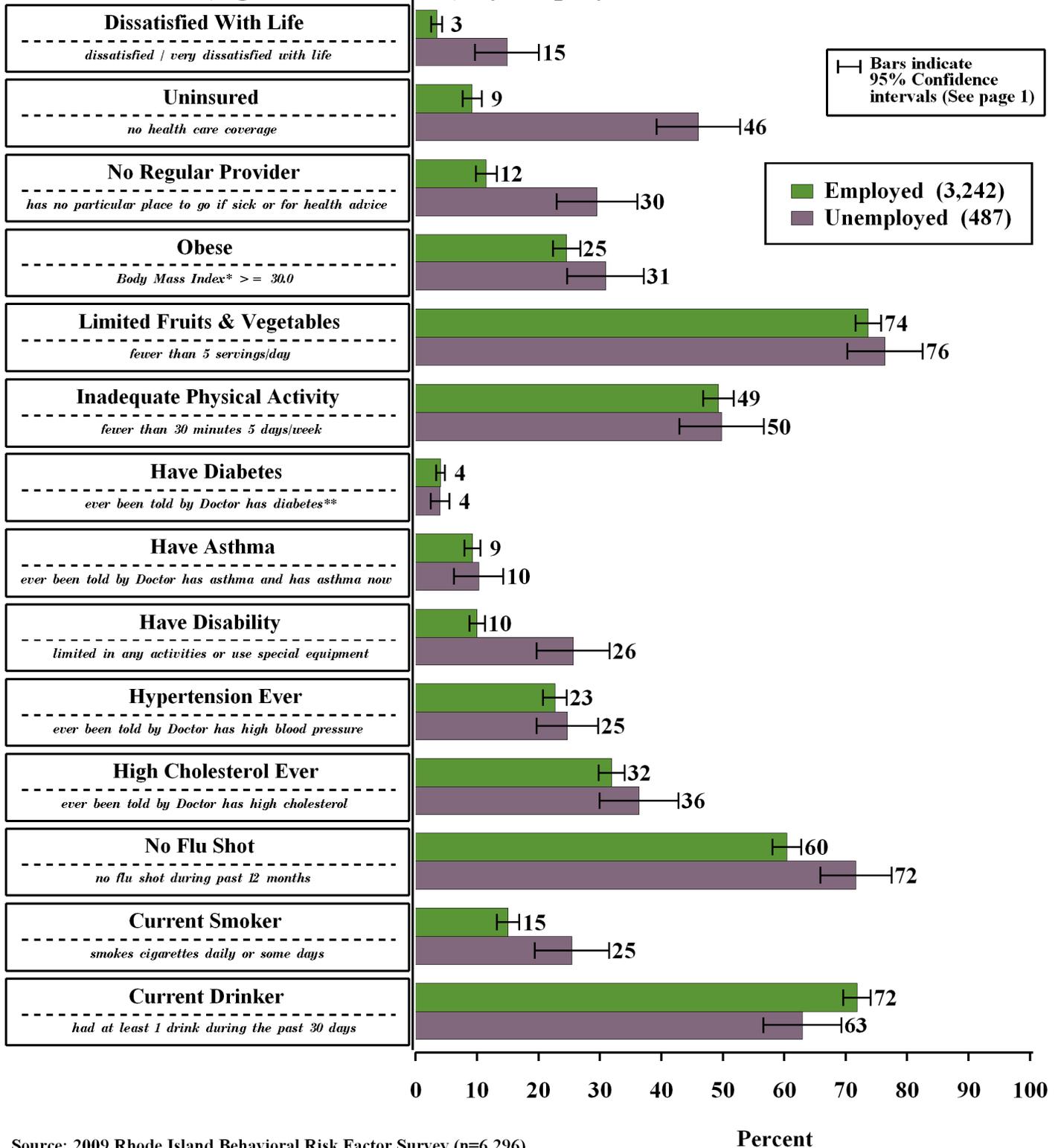


Source: 2009 Rhode Island Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (n=6,296)

\* Body Mass Index = weight in kilograms / (height in meters)<sup>2</sup>

\*\* Diabetes: Adults who have ever been told by a health professional they have diabetes, other than during pregnancy

**Figure 3**  
**Health Risks Among Rhode Island Adults**  
**(Ages 18 and older) by employment status -- 2009**



Source: 2009 Rhode Island Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (n=6,296)

\* Body Mass Index = weight in kilograms / (height in meters)<sup>2</sup>

\*\* Diabetes: Adults who have ever been told by a health professional they have diabetes, other than during pregnancy