



National Report Prepared for Feeding America

January 2010



**Chapter 15.4 – Changes in Client and Agency
Characteristics: Health Status**

(Excerpted from Hunger in America 2010)

www.feedingamerica.org

Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Mathematica Reference No.: 06251-600

15.4 HEALTH STATUS

Job loss can affect one's health through the loss of health insurance that was either provided through an employer or purchased privately. The associated decrease in earned income can also lead to changes in health through changes in the amount and quality of food consumed. Table 15.4.1 examines changes in health status and the ability to pay medical bills between 2005 and 2009.

TABLE 15.4.1
CHANGES IN HEALTH STATUS

	Adult Clients Who Pick Up Food at a Pantry		Adult Clients at a Kitchen		Adult Clients at a Shelter		Adult Clients at All Program Sites	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Percentage of clients that indicated their health was poor	17.4%	16.8%	12.8%	11.6%	15.0%	8.7%	16.4%	15.6%
Percentage of clients that indicated someone else in the household was in poor health								
Yes	19.9%	21.4%	9.8%	10.8%	3.7%	3.4%	17.1%	19.0%
No	46.6%	47.2%	28.9%	28.7%	13.0%	12.7%	41.3%	42.8%
Live alone	33.5%	31.4%	61.3%	60.5%	83.3%	84.0%	41.6%	38.2%
Households with at least one member reported to be in poor health	31.7%	32.3%	20.3%	20.0%	17.9%	11.5%	28.8%	29.5%
Percentage of clients that had unpaid medical bills	41.8%	46.9%	38.2%	42.8%	45.3%	49.7%	41.4%	46.5%
SAMPLE SIZE (N)	37,986	42,441	10,667	13,552	4,225	5,092	52,878	61,085

Source: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 20, 21, 22a-f, 23, and 24 of the client survey. The 2009 estimates in this table can be found in Tables 8.1.1 and 8.1.2.

Notes: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the FA National Network. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Between 2005 and 2009, the following changes took place:

- The percentage of clients at all program sites that are in poor health decreased from 16.4% to 15.6%; however, the percentage of clients that indicated someone else in the household was in poor health increased from 17.1% to 19.0%.
- The percentage of clients that had unpaid medical bills increased from 41.4% to 46.5%. The magnitude of the increase was similar for pantries, kitchens, and shelters.