BIRTH DEFECTS REGISTRY

The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) maintains a birth defects surveillance system for Missouri resident live births based on linkage of defects reported on birth certificates, death certificates, and hospital patient abstracts. Cases include defects diagnosed and reported through the first year of life.

The surveillance system includes data for all births in the state, but is not complete for some counties in which a substantial proportion of residents use out-of-state hospitals. While birth and death certificates are available for Missouri residents using out-of-state hospitals, DHSS has limited access to patient abstract data from these hospitals.

Births since 1980 are included in the data set. Because of changes in access to data sets, and changes in data items included in each component data source, there are inconsistencies over time. For most investigations, DHSS prefers to limit studies to births since 1993. The data for a calendar year of births are generally available 20 months after the close of the year. The delay is necessary because cases are ascertained through the first year of life.

- **Years available:** 1980-2013

DEATHS

Missouri death records are compiled from death certificates which are filed with the Department of Health and Senior Services by state law (Missouri Revised Statute, Chapter 193). The death registration system has been in place in Missouri continuously since February 1, 1910, although changes in data items and definitions have taken place over the years.

Missouri cooperates with other states in the exchange of non-resident death records. Therefore, statistics on Missouri resident deaths also include those that occurred outside of Missouri.

Death certificate data can be used to assess the status of health, evaluate the effectiveness of programs and make population estimates.

- **Years available:** 1968-2016

DIVORCES (DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE)

Since 1949, the Department of Health and Senior Services has been the official state registrar for dissolution of marriage records (Missouri Revised Statute, Chapter 193, Section 205). “A record of each dissolution of marriage and annulment of marriage granted by any court in this state shall be filed by the clerk of the court with the department and shall be registered if it has been completed and filed in accordance with this section.” The court that issued the decree is responsible for forwarding reports to the department.

Reports of dissolution of marriage document some of the social characteristics of a population, such as number of previous marriages, number of minor children affected, level of education, type of decree, duration of marriage, etc.

- **Years available:** 1969-2017
FETAL DEATHS

Fetal death records are compiled from the Fetal Death Reports, which are filed with the Department of Health and Senior Services by 193.165.1, RSMo. The fetal death system has been in place in Missouri continuously since 1911, although changes in data items and definitions have taken place over the years.

Fetal death is defined by statute as a non-induced death prior to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a fetus, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, the death is indicated by fact that after such expulsion or extraction the fetus does not breathe or show any other evidence of life such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles. Each spontaneous fetal death of twenty completed weeks gestation or more, calculated from the date of last normal menstrual period began to the date of delivery, or a weight of three hundred fifty grams or more which occurs in this state shall be reported.

Missouri cooperates with other states in the exchange of non-resident fetal death records. Therefore statistics on Missouri resident fetal deaths also include those that occurred outside of Missouri.

Fetal death data is used to study maternal and perinatal health as well as pregnancy patterns.

- Years available: 1968-2017

LIVE BIRTHS (BIRTH CERTIFICATE DATA)

Live birth records are compiled from the live birth certificates, which are filed with the Department of Health and Senior Services by 193.085.1, RSMo. The birth certificate system has been in place in Missouri continuously since 1911, although changes in data items and definitions have taken place over the years.

Live birth is defined by statute (Missouri Revised Statutes, Chapter 193) as the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a child, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, which after such expulsion or extraction, breathes or shows any other evidence of life such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached. The definition is also irrespective of birth weight.

Missouri cooperates with other states in the exchange of non-resident live birth records. Therefore, statistics on Missouri resident live births also include those that occurred outside of Missouri.

Live birth certificate data are used in estimating population, for evaluation of maternal and perinatal health, for the study of fertility patterns, and to assist public health officials in the conduct and evaluation of programs.

- Years available: 1968-2017
MARRIAGES

Since 1949, the Department of Health and Senior Services has been the official state registrar for marriage records (MO Revised Statute, Chapter 193, Section 185, “A report of each marriage performed in this state shall be filed with the department and shall be registered if it has been completed and filed in accordance with this section.”). The county which issued the marriage license is responsible for forwarding reports of marriage to the department.

Reports of marriage document some of the social characteristics of a population, such as number of previous marriages, age at time of marriage, level of education, etc.

- Years available: 1969-2017

PATIENT ABSTRACT SYSTEM (AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTER VISITS, HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT PROCEDURES, & INPATIENT HOSPITALIZATIONS)

The Patient Abstract System includes outpatient data as well as inpatient data. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Bureau of Health Care Analysis and Data Dissemination (BHCADD) receives information abstracted from patient medical records of hospitalizations, emergency room visits, outpatient surgery, and selected outpatient services and procedures (CAT scan, MRI, endoscopy, lithotripsy, etc.). Inpatient records of Missouri residents hospitalized in several neighboring states are also included. The patient abstract data are reported to the department each calendar quarter by hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers.

- Years available: 1994-2016