



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

# Stress in America

Mind/Body Health: For a Healthy Mind and Body, Talk to a Psychologist

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE  
NOVEMBER 3, 2009, 9 A.M. EST**

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## **Stress in America Chicago Report**

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Prepared For:  
**The American Psychological Association**

Prepared By:  
**Harris Interactive Inc.  
Public Affairs and Policy**

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## **Background and Objectives**

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The American Psychological Association (APA) commissioned Harris Interactive Inc. to conduct a survey to understand the perceptions of stress and its impact among the general public.

The goal of this research is to draw attention to the implications of stress and foster appreciation of the mind/body link as a key component of good overall health. This research is intended for public release to generate media interest in overall health and well-being and specifically on mental health.

## **Methodology and Sample**

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The Stress in America survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the APA between July 20, 2009, and August 4, 2009, among 1,568 adults aged 18 and older who reside in the U.S., including an oversample of 208 adults aged 18 and older who reside in Chicago. In the 2008 research, 231 Chicago residents were included in the oversample.

Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income among the entire population and within the specific Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSAs) for each city as designated by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error, which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100 percent response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. population aged 18 and older. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

## Notes on Reading This Report

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This report focuses only on the views of residents within the Chicago MSA and the general population. For a review of the full topline results for additional cities please refer to the previously prepared Interview Schedule.

“Metropolitan Statistical Areas” (MSAs) are a formal definition of metropolitan areas produced by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These geographic areas are delineated on the basis of central urbanized areas — contiguous counties of relatively high population density. Counties containing the core urbanized area are known as the central counties of the MSA. Additional surrounding counties (known as outlying counties) can be included in the MSA if these counties have strong social and economic ties to the central counties as measured by commuting and employment. Note that some areas within these outlying counties may actually be rural in nature.

## Key Survey Findings

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### **A higher percentage of Chicago residents this year report that they are doing enough to manage their stress.**

- Money, work and the economy continue to be the most commonly cited causes of stress among Chicago residents, though the percentage indicating work and job stability as significant sources of stress increased since last year.
- A somewhat higher percentage of Chicago residents feel they are doing enough to manage their stress compared to last year's findings (57 percent vs. 52 percent in 2008) and they seem to be moving toward healthier ways to manage their stress.
  - When compared to last year's findings, this year Chicago residents are more likely to rely on methods of stress management such as exercising, walking and reading and are less likely to say they drink alcohol, eat, shop or smoke to manage stress.

### **Although Chicago residents are less satisfied with their jobs compared to last year, fewer adults report they typically feel tense or stressed during the day.**

- Two-thirds of employed Chicago residents (66 percent) agree with the statement, "All in all, I am satisfied with my job" in 2009 compared to 74 percent in 2008.
  - Chicago workers are also more likely to be satisfied with the ways their employers recognize the contributions of employees and the involvement initiatives offered by their employers compared to last year.
  - They are also less likely to indicate they intend to seek employment outside of the workplace within the next year (39 percent vs. 30 percent in 2009).
- Last year, more than one-third (35 percent) of Chicago residents agreed that they typically felt tense or stressed out during their workday and this year the percentage declined to 28 percent.
- While a similar proportion of Chicago adults reported that their job demands had interfered with family responsibilities, adults in Chicago reported less interference of home and family responsibilities with their job performance. The percentage experiencing this kind of interference in the last three months fell from 43 percent in 2008 to 33 percent in 2009.

### **Chicago residents rate their health similarly to Americans overall but they are less likely to have been diagnosed with a chronic condition. Chicago residents are more likely than adults nationally to view lack of willpower as a barrier to making lifestyle changes.**

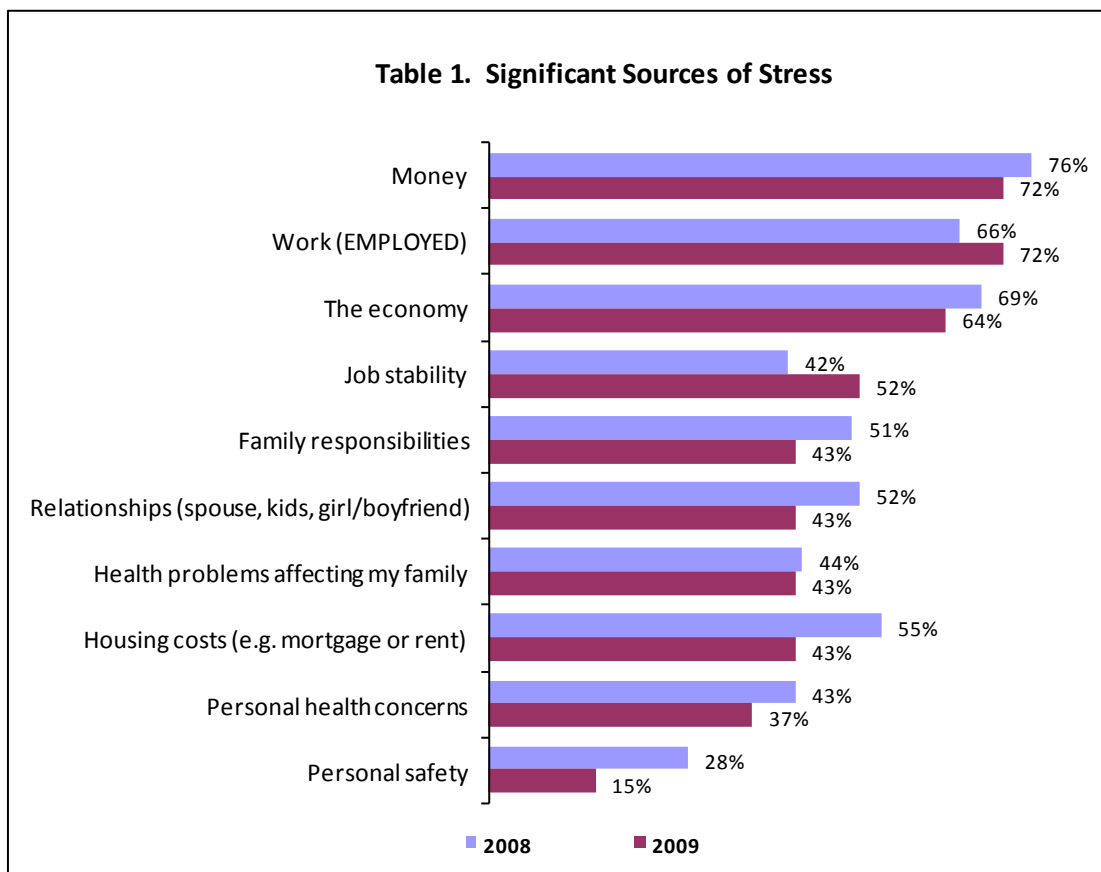
- More than four in 10 Chicago residents (41 percent) view their health as excellent or very good, which is consistent with Americans overall (40 percent).
- Chicago residents are less likely than adults nationally to report that they have been told by a provider that they have a chronic condition (54 percent vs. 66 percent nationally).
- Nearly half of Chicago residents (46 percent) say they were prevented from following through with lifestyle change recommendations due to lack of willpower, higher than the 33 percent who report this nationally.
  - Other barriers preventing adults in Chicago from following their health care providers' recommendations include lack of time, effort or confidence in their ability to successfully change their behavior.

## Detailed Survey Findings

### Perception of Personal Stress

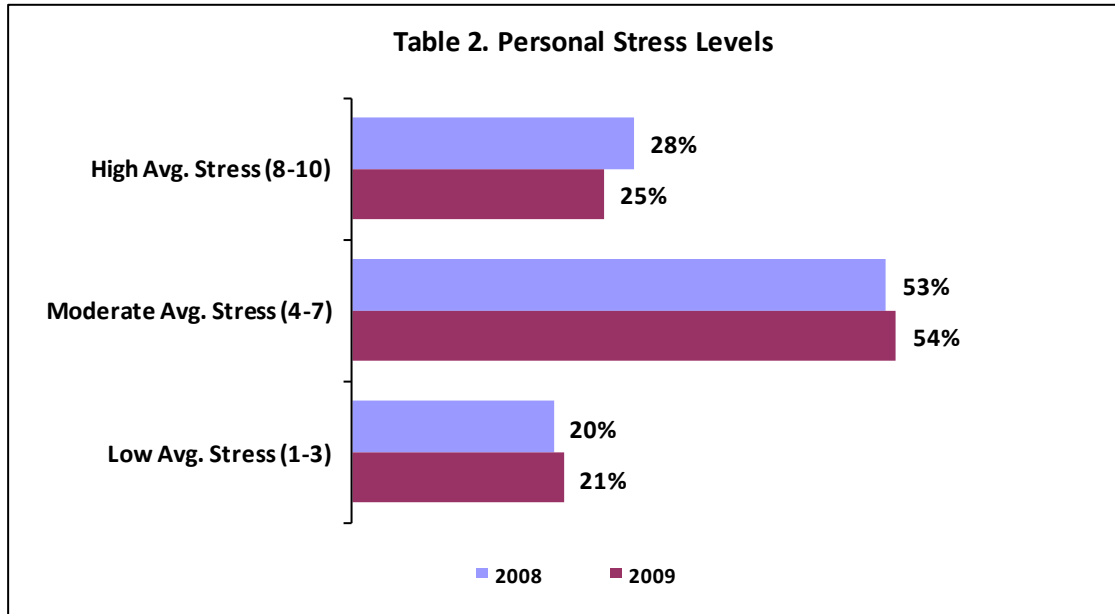
The most common stressors among Chicago residents have remained the same in 2009, but compared to last year, an increased percentage of adults in Chicago are concerned about work and job stability.

- Money, work and the economy continue to be the most commonly cited causes of stress among Chicago residents. (See Table 1.)
  - The percentage indicating work as a significant source of stress grew from 66 percent in 2008 to 72 percent in 2009.
  - Additionally, the percentage of Chicago residents indicating job stability as a significant source of stress grew from 42 percent in 2008 to 52 percent in 2009.
  - Fewer Chicago residents mentioned relationships (43 percent vs. 52 percent in 2008) and family responsibilities (43 percent vs. 51 percent in 2008) as a significant source of stress when compared to last year.
  - The percentage of Chicago residents citing housing costs as a significant source of stress declined since last year's survey (43 percent vs. 55 percent in 2008).



**A higher percentage of Chicago residents this year report they are doing enough to manage their stress.**

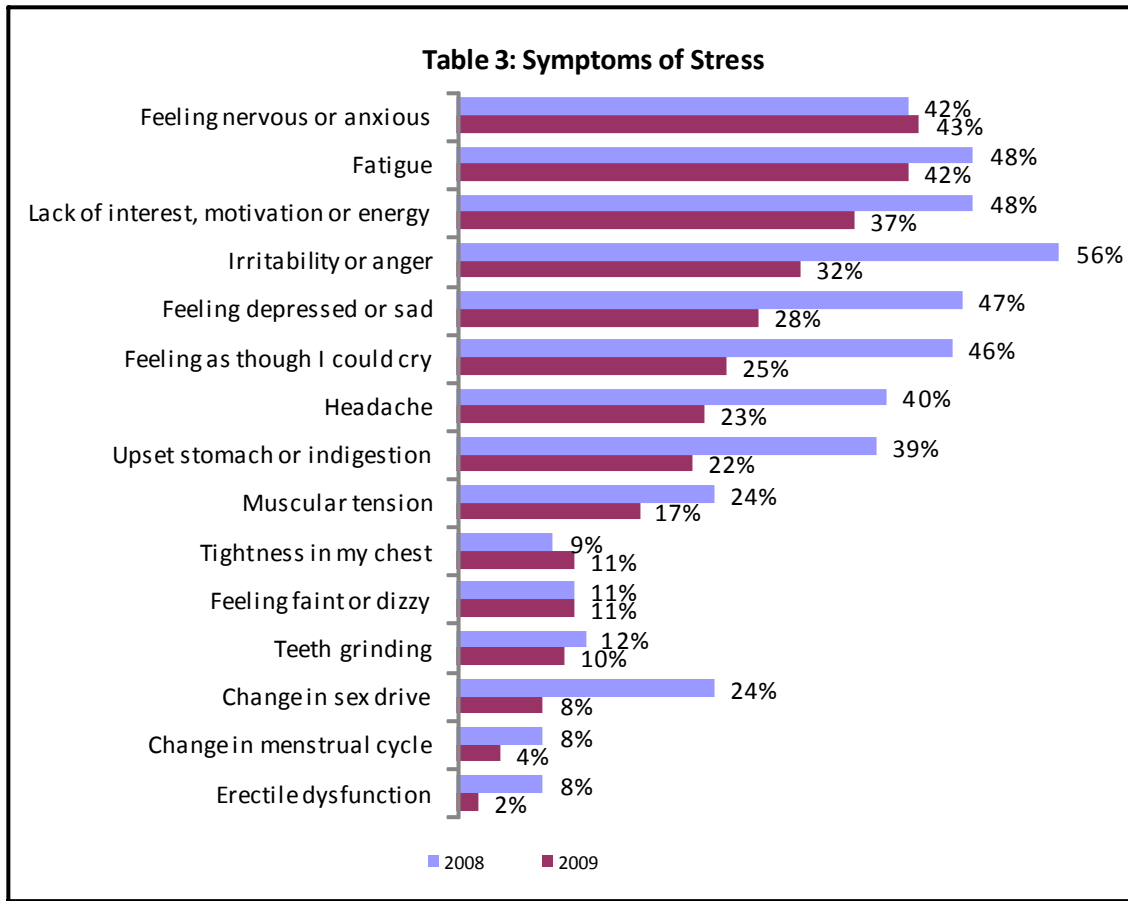
- A higher percentage of Chicago residents feel they are doing enough to manage their stress compared to last year’s findings (57 percent vs. 52 percent in 2008).
- In addition, fewer Chicago residents report their stress level has increased over the past year compared to the findings from the 2008 report (41 percent vs. 50 percent in 2008).



***Impact of Stress***

**Adults in Chicago are reporting fewer physical symptoms of stress than last year. The most frequently mentioned symptom of stress also has changed since the 2008 study.**

- The percentage of Chicago residents reporting they have lain awake at night because they were feeling stressed fell from 51 percent in 2008 to 45 percent in 2009.
- Fewer Chicago residents compared to last year reported that in the past month they ate too much or ate unhealthy foods because they were feeling stressed. The percentage decreased from 52 percent to 43 percent in 2009. The percentage of adults in Chicago reporting overeating or eating unhealthy foods is comparable to that seen with Americans overall.
  - There was a large decline in the percentage of Chicago residents this year reporting they have skipped a meal in the past month due to stress. The decline in percentage was from 46 percent in 2008 to 30 percent in the 2009.
- There was also a sizeable decline in the percentage of Chicago residents experiencing other physical symptoms of stress. (See Table 3.)
  - Although the percentage for many of the physical symptoms listed declined since last year, nervousness/anxiety increased slightly and replaced irritability/anger as the most commonly experienced symptom of stress.

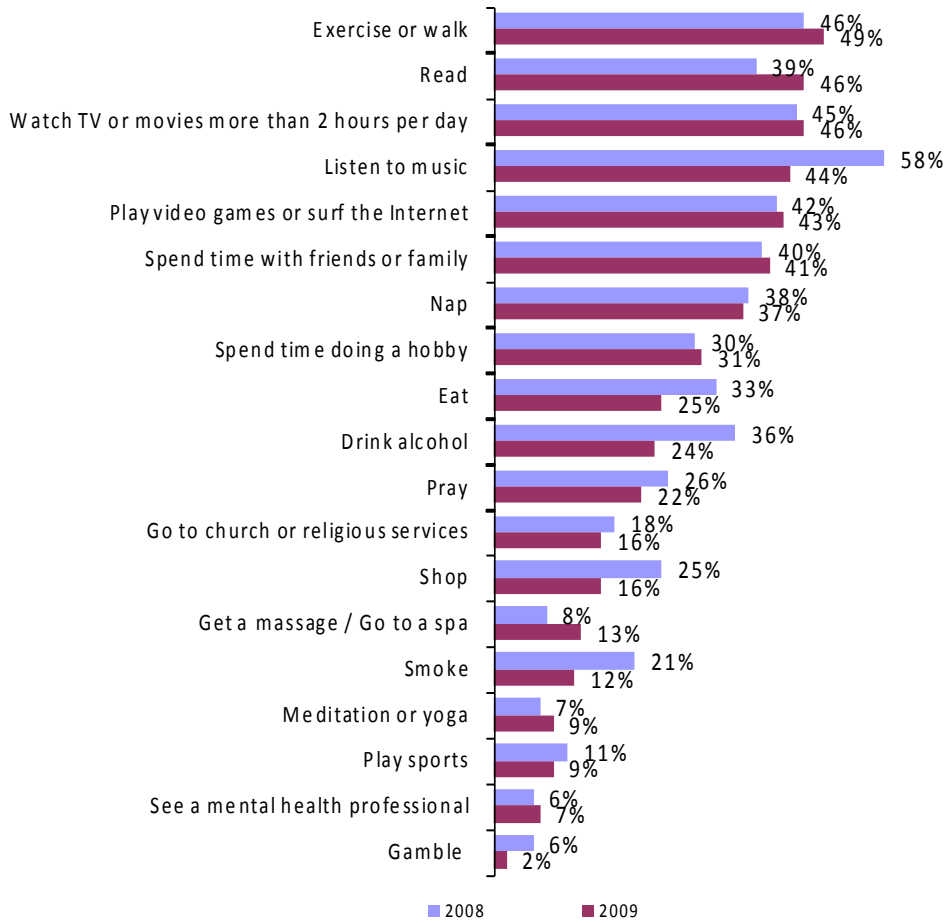


**Managing Stress**

**Chicago residents seem to be moving toward healthier ways to manage their stress.**

- When compared to last year’s findings, this year Chicago residents are more likely to rely on methods of stress management such as exercising, walking and reading and are less likely to say they drink alcohol, eat, shop or smoke to manage stress. (See Table 4.)
- The most frequently mentioned ways Chicago residents manage stress are exercising or walking (49 percent), reading (46 percent) and watching television (46 percent).
  - Last year, the most common method of stress management was listening to music (58 percent vs. 44 percent in 2009).

**Table 4: Stress Management**

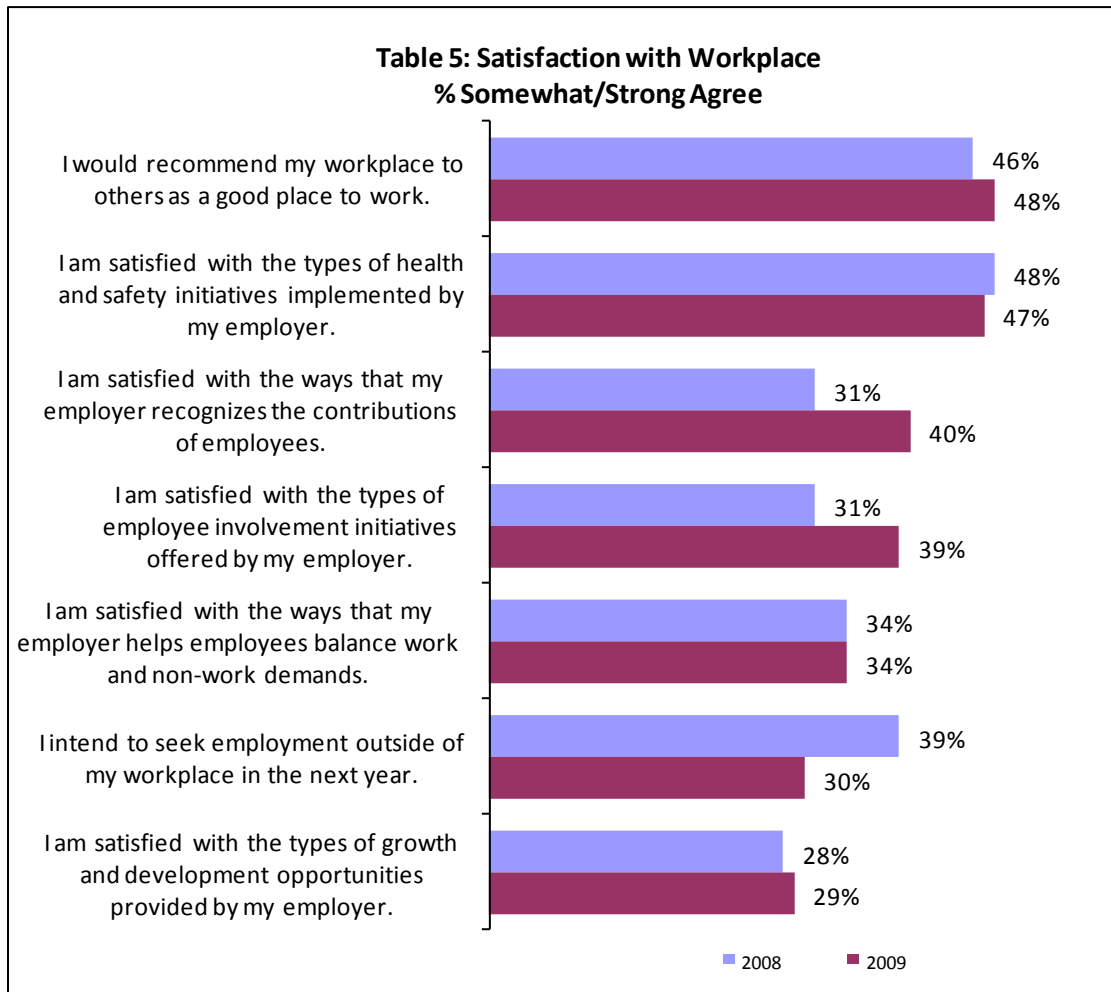


## Stress in the Workplace

### Workplace Environment

Although fewer Chicago residents report they are satisfied with their job compared to last year, fewer adults report they typically feel tense or stressed during the day.

- Two-thirds of employed Chicago residents (66 percent) agree with the statement, “All in all, I am satisfied with my job.” Last year, 74 percent agreed with this statement.
  - The percentages of Chicago workers satisfied with the ways their employer recognizes the contributions of employees and the involvement initiatives offered by their employer has increased since last wave. (See Table 5.)
  - Chicago residents are less likely than last year to indicate they intend to seek employment outside of their workplace within the next year (39 percent vs. 30 percent in 2009).
- Last year, more than one-third (35 percent) of Chicago residents agreed they typically felt tense or stressed out during their workday. This year, the percentage decreased to 28 percent.



### ***Managing Workplace Stress***

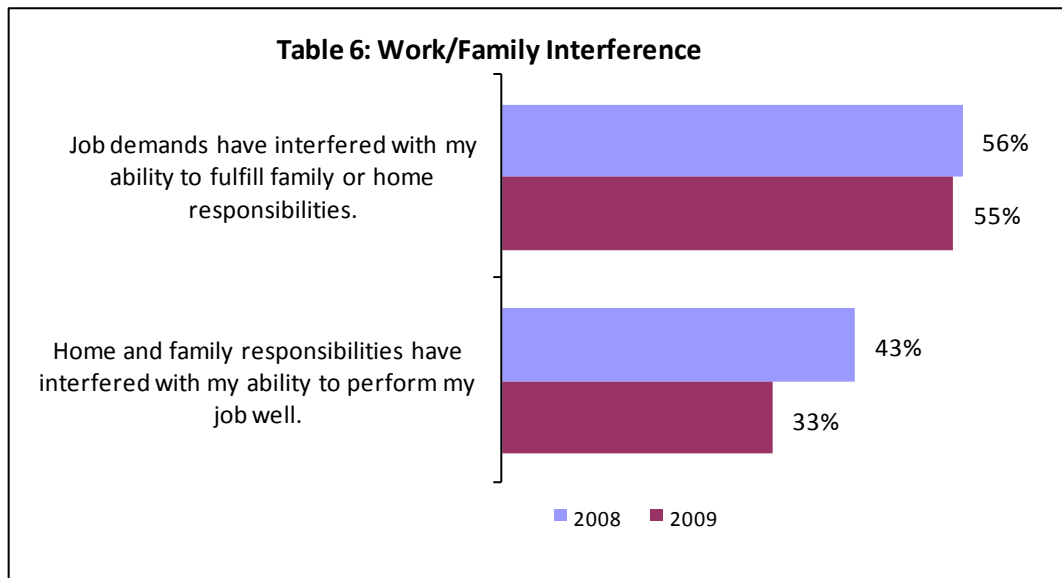
**Compared to 2008, fewer Chicago workers report missing work due to stress and fewer indicate they are losing work productivity due to stress during the workday.**

- The percentage of employed Chicago residents reporting they missed at least one day of work due to stress in the past year has decreased since last year's survey (14 percent vs. 27 percent in 2008).
- Fewer Chicago workers report losing some work productivity due to stress than in 2008 (47 percent vs. 68 percent in 2008).

### ***Balancing Work and Family***

**Adults in Chicago report home and family responsibilities interfering with their job performance less than they did last year.**

- The percentage of adults in Chicago reporting that home and family responsibilities have interfered with their ability to perform their job well at some point in the past three months has fallen from 43 percent in 2008 to 33 percent in 2009. (See Table 6.)
- More than half of Chicago residents (55 percent) report that job demands have interfered with their ability to fulfill family or home responsibilities in the past three months. This percentage is consistent with last year's findings.

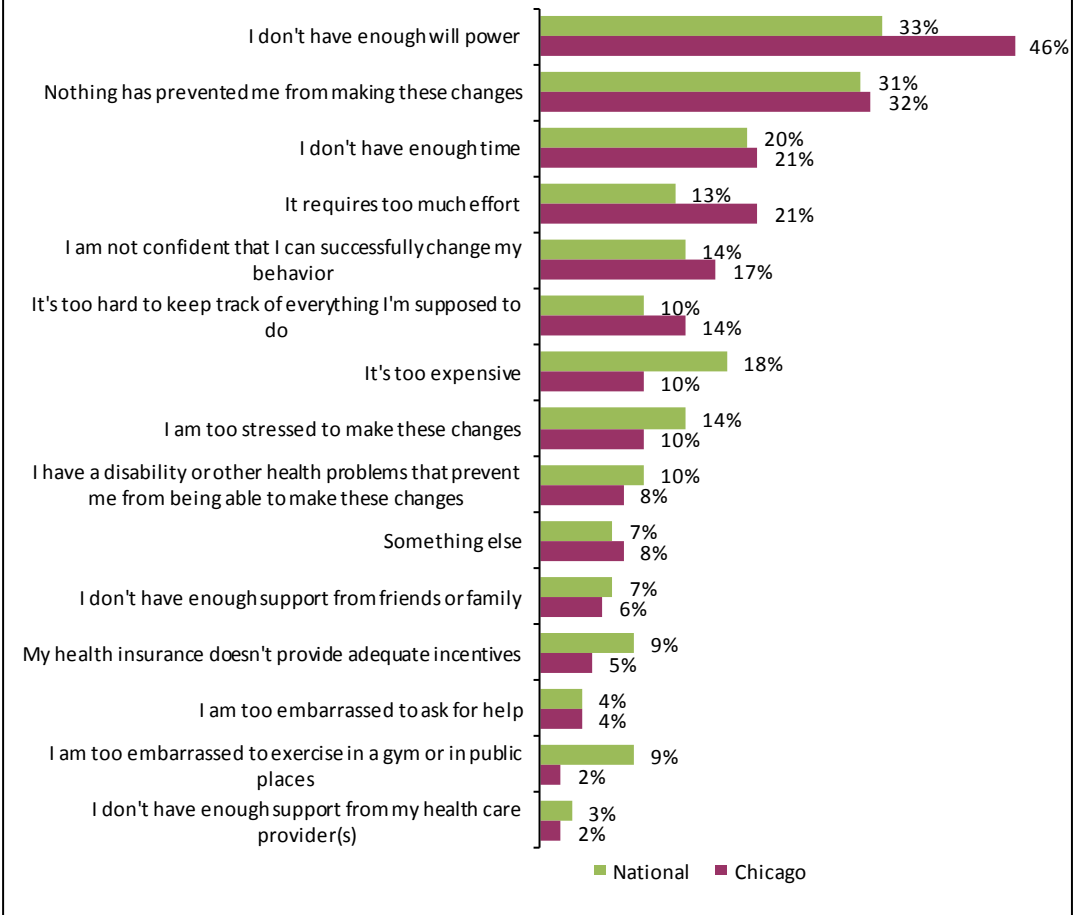


## ***Health Behaviors and Provider Intervention***

**Although Chicago residents rate their health similarly to Americans overall, they are less likely to have been diagnosed with a chronic condition.**

- About four in 10 Chicago residents (41 percent) view their health as excellent or very good. This is consistent with Americans overall (40 percent).
- Chicago residents are less likely to report that they have been told by a provider that they have a chronic condition compared to adults nationally (54 percent in Chicago vs. 66 percent nationally).
  - Fewer Chicago residents say they have high blood pressure (19 percent vs. 30 percent nationally), high cholesterol (24 percent vs. 28 percent nationally) and chronic pain (5 percent vs. 11 percent nationally) than Americans overall.
- More than six in 10 Chicago residents (62 percent) who have been told they have a chronic condition have had a health care provider recommend both prescription medications and lifestyle changes. These findings are consistent with the 57 percent for Americans overall who indicated a health care provider recommend both prescription medications and lifestyle changes.
  - When it comes to lifestyle change recommendations from health care providers, most Chicago residents have been advised by a provider to make one or more lifestyle changes (71 percent vs. 70 percent nationally).
- Nearly two-thirds of Chicago residents (63 percent) reported that their health care provider explained the reason for the recommendation and 41 percent said they were offered advice or techniques to help make the changes. Fewer Americans nationally were given an explanation (46 percent) or were offered advice by their health care provider (35 percent) when a health care provider made recommendations.
  - More than three-quarters of Chicago residents (76 percent) whose health care providers gave them advice on lifestyle changes found the recommendation somewhat or very helpful. This is consistent with the findings for Americans overall.
  - Chicago residents were less likely than Americans overall to have a health care provider recommend they reduce stress (18 percent vs. 23 percent nationally) but more were told to quit smoking (19 percent vs. 15 percent nationally).
    - Fewer than half of Chicago residents (43 percent) reported that after the recommendation was given, their health care provider followed up or checked in on their progress. This percentage is lower than for Americans nationally (48 percent).
- Nearly half of Chicago residents (46 percent) say they were prevented from following through with lifestyle change recommendation(s) by a lack of willpower. This represents a higher percentage than what is noted for the national sample (33 percent).
  - Other top reasons cited for not following through with recommendations include the lack of time, effort or confidence in their ability to successfully change their behavior. (See Table 7.)
  - Chicago residents are more likely than Americans overall to report that making the recommended changes requires too much effort (21 percent vs. 13 percent nationally) but are less likely than Americans overall to report expense (10 percent vs. 18 percent nationally) or inadequate insurance incentives as barriers (5 percent vs. 9 percent nationally).

Table 7: Barriers to Lifestyle Changes, National vs. Chicago



## American Psychological Association Contact Information

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Luana Bossolo  
Tel: 202 336 5899  
E-mail: [lbossolo@apa.org](mailto:lbossolo@apa.org)

Angel Brownawell  
Tel: 202 336 5955  
E-mail: [abrownawell@apa.org](mailto:abrownawell@apa.org)