

# The Health of Young Workers in the United States

## Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities Sector



### IN THIS REPORT

## What do we know about young workers in the US?

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Young workers are a large segment of the US workforce.<sup>1</sup> Over one third of US high school students work during the school year, and even more work during the summer.<sup>2</sup> In fact, by the time they finish high school, 80% of US youth will have worked at some point in their lives. The US has the highest percentage of young workers in any developed nation!<sup>3</sup>

Some studies show that working during youth can be both beneficial and risky, in both the short and long term. Work can teach a young person responsibility and independence, and provide skills and increased self-esteem; however, young workers are at increased risk for injury, illness, and death compared to all other workers.<sup>1,2,4</sup>

The level of risk can vary considerably across occupations.

For example, young workers in transportation and material moving jobs (e.g. subway operators, delivery truck drivers) have three times higher odds of being risky drinkers compared to young protective service workers.<sup>5</sup>

Information related to chronic disease status and other non-injury related health information for young workers is limited. The objective of this report is to provide an overview of different aspects of the health of young US workers in the Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities (TWU) sector based on the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) industry sector groups (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/>).



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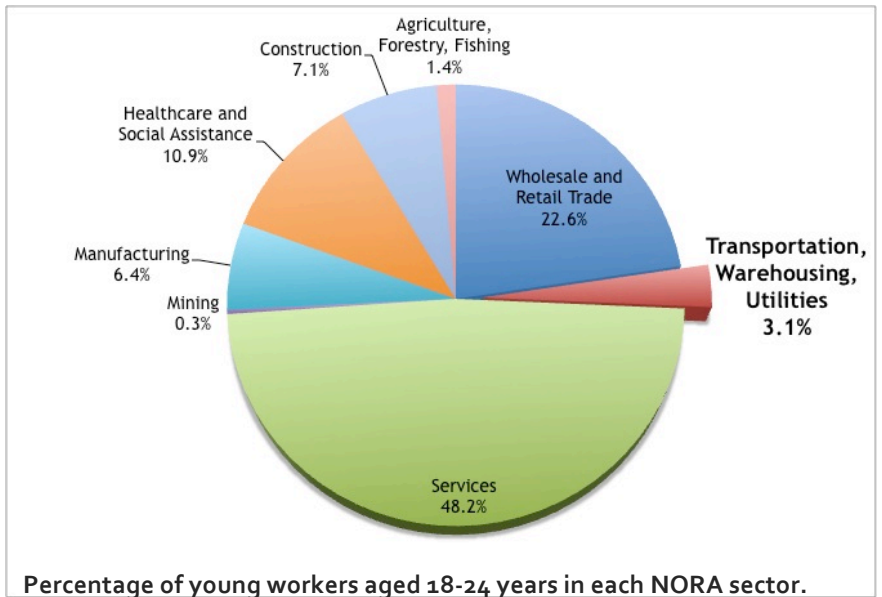
# Demographic Characteristics

From 2004-2010, there was on average 16.9 million young workers aged 18-24 years in the US workforce.

To the right is a pie chart showing how young workers are distributed by industry sector groups. Over 3% (about half a million) of young workers) are employed in the TWU sector, which includes many occupations, such as: utility meter readers, postal workers, waste disposal workers, and truck drivers.

The graph below shows the percentage of all young workers and those in the TWU sector across a number of demographic characteristics.

There is about an even amount of males and females among all



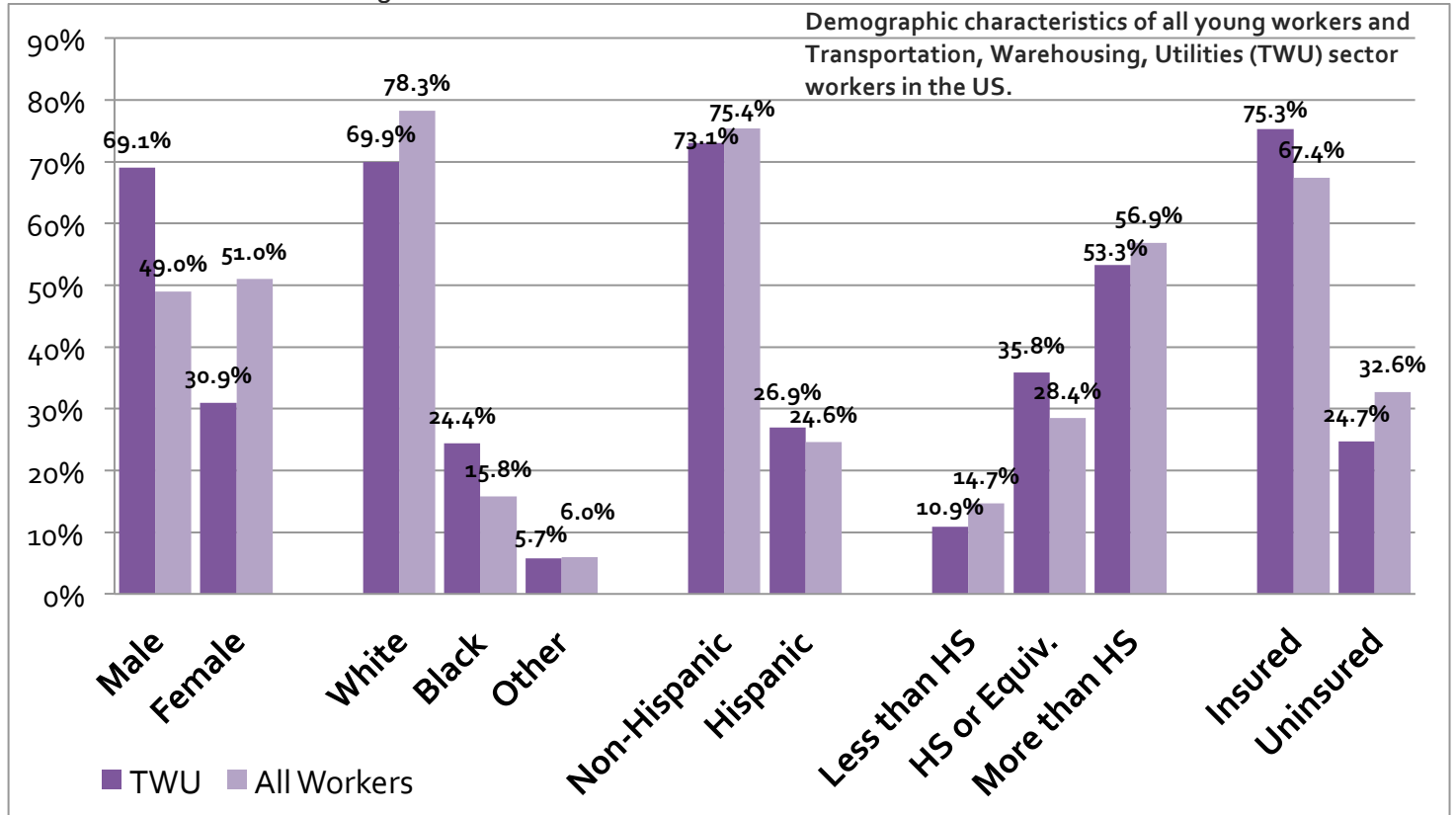
young workers, whereas the TWU sector is slightly less than one third female (30.9%).

Among all young workers, 15.8% are black compared to almost a quarter of young TWU workers.

Hispanics are similarly represented among all young workers (24.6%) and in the TWU

sector (26.9%). Compared to 56.9% of all young workers, 53.3% of young TWU workers have less than a high school education.

Lastly, a higher proportion of young TWU workers (75.3%) have insurance compared to all young workers (67.4%).

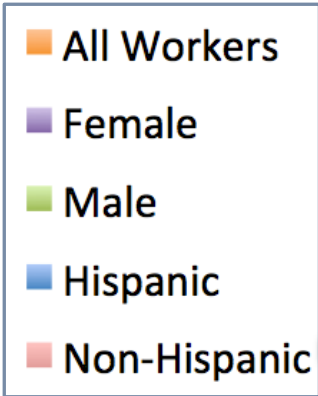


\*Please note HS=high school and Equiv=equivalent



### National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA)

Young workers are grouped by NORA industry sector. For more details on NORA, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/>



### FAST FACTS

25%

of female TWU workers have asthma.

55%

of Hispanic TWU sector workers did not go to a primary care provider within the past year.

23%

of all young TWU workers are obese.

## Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics

### Health Domains

We have grouped our findings into four broad categories:

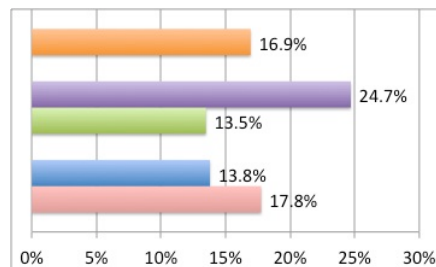
- Health Status
- Functional Health Capabilities
- Health Behavior
- Healthcare Utilization

Only certain measures from each health domain and comparisons between gender and ethnicity are shown in this report. You can find more information at the University of Miami Occupational Research Group (UMORG) website (see bottom of page 4).

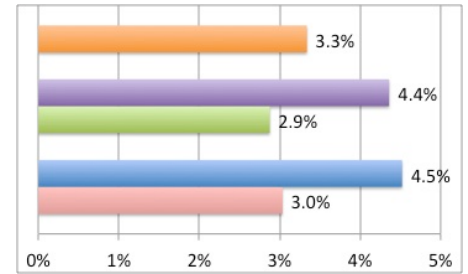
The box to the left describes the color that corresponds to each group for the following graphs.

### Health Status

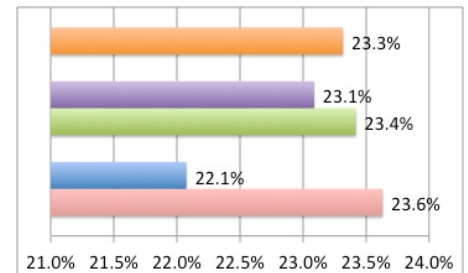
Young female TWU workers (24.7%) had almost twice as many asthma cases than males (13.5%), and Hispanic TWU workers (13.8%).



All listed groups had similar reports of having a non-HIV sexually transmitted disease (2.9%-4.5%).

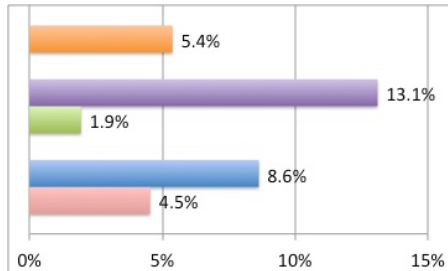


Overall, 23.3% of young TWU sector workers were obese with Hispanics having a slightly lower percentage (22.1%).



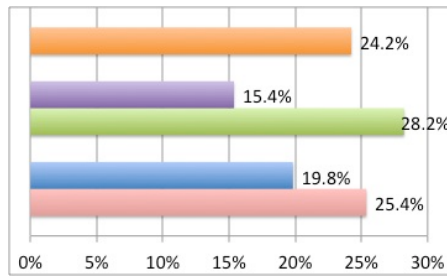
### Functional Health Capabilities

Among all young TWU workers, 5.4% reported having any functional limitation (e.g., difficulty walking, memory problems) with females having the highest percentage (13.1%).

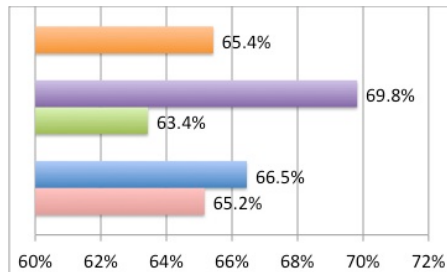


### Health Behavior

About 24.2% of young TWU workers are current smokers with males reporting the highest percentage (28.2%) among listed subgroups.

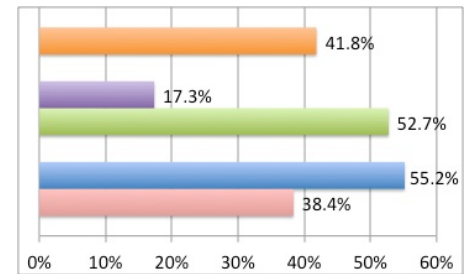


More female TWU workers (69.8%) reported not meeting recommended levels of physical activity compared to males (63.4%).



### Healthcare Utilization

More than three times as many males than females had not seen a primary care provider in the past year (52.7% vs. 17.3%).



### Conclusion

Young TWU workers may be at high risk for poor health. Furthermore, certain subgroups within this sector are disproportionate in their risk, such as the almost two-fold difference seen in asthma between males and females. Subgroup differences are important to consider in the development of tailored interventions in the TWU industry.

## How can I find more information?



The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/NHIS.htm>.

Florida Department of Health:  
<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/>

### References:

1. NRC. *Protecting Youth at Work: Health, Safety and Development of Working Children and Adolescents in the US*. 1999.
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5. Caban-Martinez AJ, Lee DJ, Goodman E, et al. Health indicators among unemployed and employed young adults. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine / American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. Feb 2011;53(2):196-203.



These data were prepared by the University of Miami Occupational Research Group (UMORG). We study a wide variety of health issues in the US workforce. Visit the UMORG website for more health information on US workers: [www.umiamiorg.com](http://www.umiamiorg.com) and our sister site for information specifically on young workers: [www.flye.co](http://www.flye.co).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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