Every state improved in at least five of 42 specific health indicators used by The Commonwealth Fund to measure state health system performance. In the fund’s most recent scorecard, which looked at data from 2014, Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont received the highest scores, while Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Tennessee improved on the most indicators.

The report looks at statistics grouped under five broad health care areas: access and affordability, prevention and treatment, hospital use and costs, healthy lives, and equity issues. Among the highlights:

- Forty-five states lowered the rate of patients dying within 30 days of being discharged from the hospital following heart attacks, heart failure and pneumonia.
- Thirty-nine states lowered the rate of adults without insurance.
- Twenty-two states increased childhood vaccination rates by at least 3 percentage points.
- And 15 states and the District of Columbia decreased smoking rates among adults by 2 or 3 percentage points.

Still, challenges remain. Several states showed declines in preventive care, and every state experienced higher average premiums in employer-sponsored health insurance plans.

—Ashley Noble

Go to ncsl.org/magazine GO TO SL ONLINE to find the full report “Aiming Higher: Results from a Scorecard on State Health System Performance, 2015 Edition.”