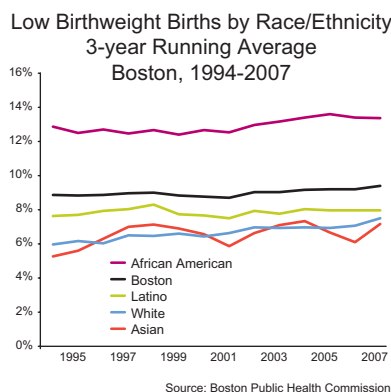
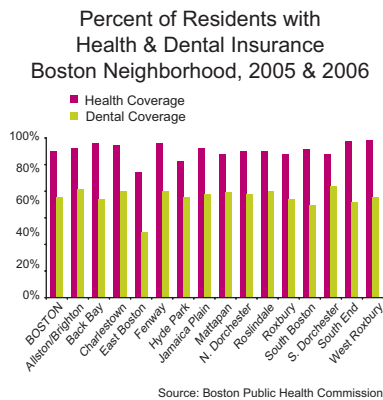
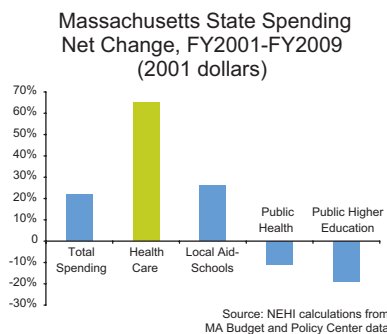
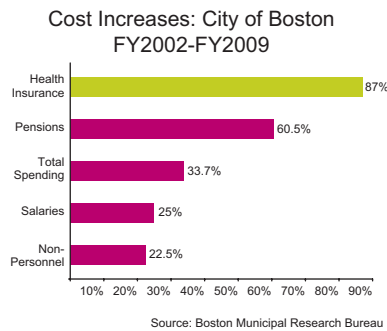


Health



Boston is ground zero for health reform—with state-mandated universal health insurance, world-class teaching hospitals and community health centers. Stubbornly high costs, quality concerns and persistent racial/ethnic disparities represent the next frontier.

Costs & Coverage

Health Care Costs: The rate of increase in Massachusetts state spending on health care continues to outpace all other areas of the state budget, rising by more than 65% between FY2001-2009. Health care costs are crowding out state spending on Local Aid, Public Health (programs to reduce smoking, obesity and exposure to environmental toxins) and Public Higher Education. In the City of Boston, health insurance costs for public employees increased by 87%—\$32.7 million—between FY2002-2009, dwarfing other increases.

Health Insurance Coverage: With 94% of residents covered by health insurance since passage of landmark health care reform in 2006, Massachusetts has the lowest rate of uninsured residents in the US, with 432,000 residents gaining coverage. However, the Families USA report on personal health care costs projects that in 2009, nearly 300,000 Massachusetts residents will pay more than 25% of their gross income for health insurance—a 47% increase since 2000. As of 2007, just 2.5%—85,000 tax filers—indicated they could have afforded insurance but chose not to obtain it, and are subject to a near \$1,000 penalty. In Boston, according to 2005/2006 data (most recent available), 92% of Bostonians reported having health insurance, but just 63% of residents had dental insurance, with the lowest rate in East Boston (41%).

Child Health

Birthweight: In 2007, 9.6% of babies born to Boston residents were born at a low weight—a risk factor for later cognitive and developmental delays—up from 4% in 1997 and 7% in 2006. The rate of low-weight births is persistently high for African American women.

Immunization: Boston's immunization rate—at 86.5% in 2006 (the most recent data available)—matched or exceeded that of other large cities in the nation with the exception of Cleveland. Massachusetts' rate has steadily increased to 91%.

Food Insecurity: From June 1998 to June 2007—well before the current economic downturn—researchers at Boston Medical Center found that almost 20% of study participants showed household food insecurity, including 9.1% of children. Among 10 zip codes surveyed, East Boston (25.4%) and Hyde Park (21.8%) showed the highest rates of childhood food insecurity. Research by Children’s Health Watch found a gap of \$2,250 in Boston between the cost of healthful, nutrient-rich foods and the annual Food Stamp Benefit for a family of four.

Healthy Behaviors

Teen Behaviors: The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System is a biennial survey of teens in the US administered and analyzed by the CDC since 1991 monitoring smoking, unprotected sex, drug use, violence, physical activity, eating habits and unwanted teen pregnancy, among other factors. In 2007, 46% of Boston’s high school students had tried cigarettes, 72% alcohol and 41% marijuana; 40% reported watching 3 or more hours of TV per day; 32% reported unprotected sex; and nearly 17% reported carrying a weapon (see Public Safety).

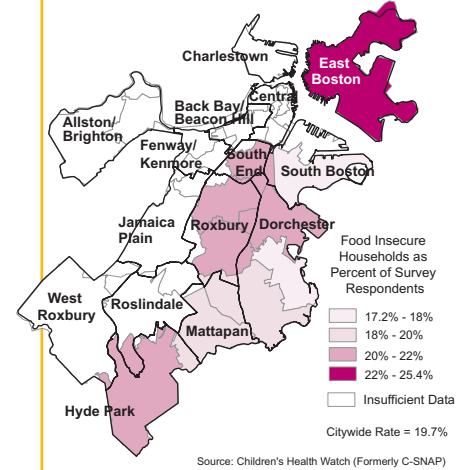
Physical Activity: According to the Boston Public Health Commission, in 2006, 56% of Boston’s adults and 30% of Boston’s teens reported regular physical activity. Boston’s white teens report the highest levels of physical activity at 40% compared to less than 30% of African Americans, Asians and Latinos; 15% of Boston adults and teens reported being obese.

Racial/Ethnic Disparities

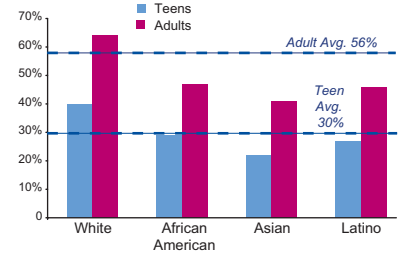
Chronic Disease: According to a report by the Boston Public Health Commission, chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease in Boston show stark racial/ethnic disparities. In 2006 (the most recent data available), rates of asthma and diabetes for African Americans were more than double that of whites and Asians. African Americans consistently have the highest rates of heart disease hospitalization (27 per 1,000) while rates among Latinos have increased the fastest. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for all Bostonians except Asians. In 2006, 17% of Latinos, 20% of whites and 27% of African Americans had high blood pressure, with Asians at 5%.

Mortality: In 2007, the leading causes of death in Boston were cancer, heart disease, injuries, stroke and substance abuse. Boston’s mortality rate declined from 888.4 per 100,000 in 2000 to 752.6 per 100,000 in 2007 overall. However, the mortality rate for African Americans was 33% higher than the rate for Asians, 53% higher than for Latinos and 38.8% higher than for whites.

Household Food Insecurity, Boston Zip Codes, 1999-2006

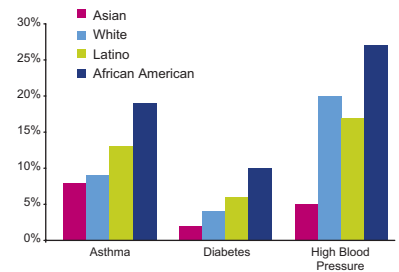


Percent of Teens and Adults Who Reported Regular Physical Activity, Boston, 2006 & 2007



Source: Boston Public Health Commission

Chronic Disease Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Boston, 2006



Source: Boston Public Health Commission