

Central Falls, Rhode Island

NEXT STEPS

The Institute is available to help neighborhoods and community-based organizations use the data from the Central Falls neighborhood surveys. Contact the Institute at info@riphi.org to discuss your needs. Progreso Latino, Inc. is planning a community forum and other activities to talk to neighborhood residents and others about how to address the survey findings. To learn more or get involved, contact Mario Bueno at 401-728-5920.

Community work under way

Civic pride and ways to connect with the community are resources in this part of Central Falls. Local organizations have taken several actions⁶ to help residents stay healthy. For example:

- The community recently cleaned up Jenks Park, making it a nicer and safer space to exercise and gather.
- Progreso Latino collaborates with the Women and Infants Family Van to hold a health clinic the first two Wednesdays of the month. At this clinic, uninsured residents can get glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, and HIV testing. They can also get vaccinated against Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and other diseases.
- Progreso Latino, Inc. has worked to boost the participation of small food stores in the state's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program⁷.

Residents and community leaders can build on the success of existing efforts. Opportunities to increase safe places for physical activity and access to affordable and healthy foods have the potential to improve community health.

For more information

Rhode Island Public Health Institute: Patricia A. Nolan, MD, MPH, 401-863-6416, info@riphi.org, www.riphi.org

Web-based access to statewide health data: Karine Monteiro, MPH, 401-222-3395

www.health.ri.gov/programs/assessmentinitiativefordatadissemination

Neighborhood Health✓Check and Environmental Assessment: Central Falls 2011 Final Report to the Community

www.health.ri.gov/publichealth/about/communityassessments

Central Falls Project or the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

Carol Hall-Walker, MPA, 401-222-5935, carol.hall-walker@health.ri.gov

Rhode Island Department of Health: HEALTH Information Line, 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711, www.health.ri.gov

Progreso Latino, Inc: Mario Bueno, MA, Executive Director, 401-728-5920; Vinnie Velazquez, MS, Wellness Director, 401-617-8489

⁶ The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant did not fund the activities described in this section.

⁷ Children's Friend and Service has helped link WIC clients to a winter farmers' market in nearby Pawtucket, but at this time, there are no farmers' markets in Central Falls.

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Observers found signs of civic pride and community organization support to help residents stay healthy.
- The adult smoking rate is relatively high, but nearly half of current smokers have tried to quit.
- Many adults report health behaviors that put them at risk of poor health or disease.
- Many adults report poor health and serious health conditions.
- The things we heard about residents' health suggest that many opportunities exist to improve community health.



About this report

This report is based on two surveys completed in 2011 in Central Falls neighborhoods. This lower-income community is racially and ethnically diverse. In the first survey, we walked through the neighborhoods to look at how well they support physical activity, like walking or bicycling¹. In the second survey, we did in-person interviews with 311 randomly-selected adults 18 and older² living in these neighborhoods. We asked about their health, their health behaviors, specific diseases they may have, and how their neighborhoods support healthy living.

Together, these survey findings represent about 3,876 adult residents living in a 40-block section of Central Falls. Central Falls is one of three Rhode Island communities we have learned about. The other two communities are Southside Providence and Woonsocket's Constitution Hill³.

¹ We used the Active Neighborhood Checklist developed by Ross Brownson and Christine Hoehner at Washington University in St. Louis to look at the neighborhoods.

² We used the Neighborhood Health✓Check Survey developed by the Rhode Island Public Health Institute to talk with residents. This survey is based on the statewide Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) conducted annually by the Department of Health.

³ See www.health.ri.gov/publichealth/about/communityassessments or www.riphi.org to view community health reports for Southside Providence and Constitution Hill.

What we do

We go door-to-door in neighborhoods, talking to people about their health. We ask about:

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Cholesterol
- Heart disease and stroke
- Neighborhood conditions
- Obesity
- Tobacco use

We also go street-by-street in neighborhoods to look at things like places to be physically active, types of buildings (e.g. houses, stores, boarded up buildings), safety of sidewalks, and whether or not there are walk signals and crosswalks.

Why we do it

The opportunities for better health begin where people live, learn, work, and play. National and state health data are important, but they can only tell us so much. By talking to people about their health and learning from them about their neighborhoods, we can build understanding of what affects health in their communities. Residents can use the information to work together to make changes. Community-based agencies and the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) can use the data to design programs and services and seek funding. Policy makers and advocates can develop new policies based on clearer understanding



of neighborhood issues. Working together and sharing data, we can build healthier neighborhoods and improve community health. We can also evaluate the impact of our efforts.

Who we are

HEALTH funds this effort through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant. The project's lead partner is the Rhode Island Public Health Institute (the Institute), an independent, not-for-profit organization established in 1993 to promote health and wellness by partnering with local community-based organizations, academic institutions, government agencies, and the business community. The Institute and HEALTH work together to support projects that improve the health of people and their communities.

What the health data suggest

The things we heard about residents' health suggest that opportunities exist to:

Keep adults from smoking or help them quit.

The health benefits of quitting tobacco begin immediately, even for people who have smoked for a long time. Non-smokers are more likely to live longer and prevent serious diseases than smokers. Neighborhoods may want to look at ways to keep young adults from starting to smoke or reduce exposure to second-hand smoke. By looking more closely at adults who have tried to quit, community organizations and policy-makers may be able to identify ways to help them succeed.

Help adults achieve a healthy weight and prevent chronic diseases.

Adults who eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day and who participate in moderate physical activity on most days can feel better and lower their risk of many diseases. Nutrition and physical activity levels in Central Falls are not very different from those of the rest of the state, but the reasons people struggle to stay healthy may vary. Looking at how neighborhoods support healthy choices or at the health behaviors of specific groups may offer clues to potential community health improvements.

Help more adults (especially men) get screened for health conditions before they start having symptoms.

- 74% of women have been screened for breast cancer, but only 40% of men age 50 or older have received a PSA test to screen for prostate cancer.
- 73% of adults have been screened for high cholesterol⁴.
- 59% of adults have been tested for diabetes in the past three years.

Who we work with

HEALTH and the Institute work closely with Progreso Latino, Inc. in Central Falls. Progreso Latino helped define the neighborhoods and recruit interviewers. YWCA Northern Rhode Island in Woonsocket and the African Alliance of Rhode Island, the Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy, John Hope Settlement House, St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island, and the Urban League of Rhode Island in Southside Providence advised on this work and on work in their own communities. Many other organizations and residents helped.

Who we talked to

We talked to 311 adult residents, age 18 and older, living on 40 blocks. The information they shared represents about 3,876 adults living in the surveyed neighborhoods.

- **Language:** 50% of adults prefer to be interviewed in Spanish.
- **Gender:** 46% of adults are male, and 54% are female.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** 67% of adults are Hispanic. 5% are Black, 20% are White, and 8% identify with another race.
- **Age:** 58% of adults are 18-44 years old. 42% are 45 years or older.
- **Income:** 43% of adults have a household income of less than \$25,000 per year. 23% make between \$25,000 and \$49,999 per year, and 13% make \$50,000 or more per year. The household income of 21% of the population is unknown.
- **Employment:** 50% of adults are employed, and 50% are not employed.
- **Education:** 39% of adults have less than a high school education, and 35% have finished high school only. 25% have completed some college or are college graduates. The education level of 1% of the population is unknown.

What people told us about their health

Key finding: The adult smoking rate is relatively high, but nearly half of current smokers have tried to quit.

- 20% of adults are current smokers, compared to 18% across Rhode Island's core cities⁵.
- 44% of current smokers have tried to quit for at least one day over the past 12 months.

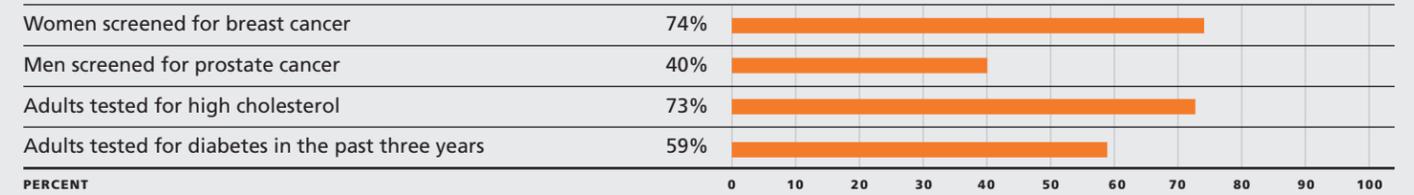
Key finding: Many adults report health behaviors that put them at risk of poor health or disease.

- 75% of adults do not eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- 52% of adults do not get recommended minimum amounts of physical activity.

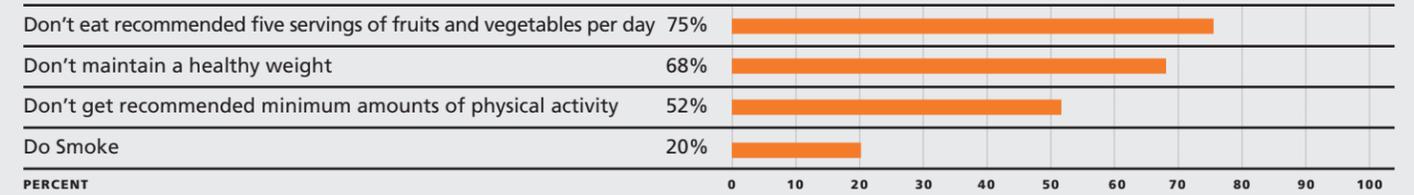
⁴ Among those screened, more than one third has been diagnosed with high cholesterol.

⁵ Core cities are those with more than 15% of children in families living below the federal poverty level. In Rhode Island, they include: Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

1. HEALTH SCREENING BEHAVIORS OF CENTRAL FALLS ADULTS



2. HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND CONDITIONS OF CENTRAL FALLS ADULTS



3. CHARACTERISTICS OF CENTRAL FALLS STREET SEGMENTS

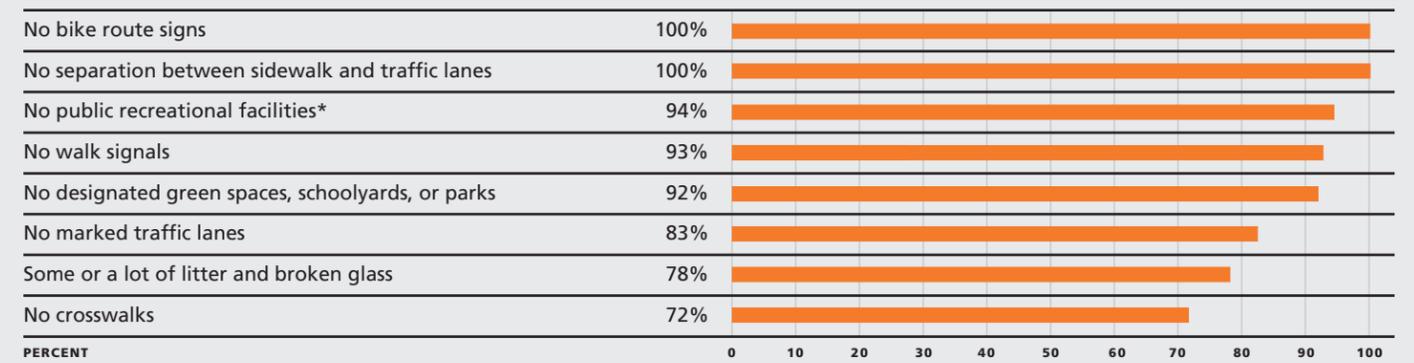


CHART NOTES

* Parks, off-road walking/biking trails, sports/playing fields, basketball/tennis/volleyball courts, playgrounds, outdoor pool
Charts 1-2 source: Neighborhood Health Check, 2011. Chart 3 source: Active Neighborhood Checklist, 2011

Key finding: Many adults report poor health and serious health conditions.

- 30% of adults report fair or poor health, compared to 11.5% across Rhode Island's core cities.
- 35% of adults have high blood pressure.
- 32% of adults have a healthy weight. 37% are overweight, and 31% are obese.
- 15% of adults have diabetes.
- 11% of adults have heart disease or have had a stroke.
- 5% of adults have a history of cancer.

What we heard about your neighborhoods

Is the glass half empty or half full?

- A little more than half (58%) of adults feel that the neighborhood is well maintained.
- About half (48%) of adults feel that the neighborhood is not free from garbage, litter, and broken glass.
- About half of adults feel that the neighborhood is not safe from traffic (50%) or crime (46%) in order to walk or ride a bike.
- Nearly two out of three adults (66%) feel the neighborhood is pleasant for physical activity, but safety is still a concern.



What we saw in your neighborhoods

Physical activity is one of the best ways to improve health and reduce stress. It can be inexpensive and available to everyone—provided that the environment supports safe and healthy physical activity. An opportunity exists to improve this support in the south central section of Central Falls. Its largely residential neighborhoods have few marked traffic lanes or crosswalks, but almost every street has sidewalks. While green spaces, playgrounds, and gyms are limited, a large park (Jenks Park) at the southern end of the community offers space for exercise and community events.