For more information
Rhode Island Public Health Institute
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Web-based access to statewide health data
www.health.ri.gov/programs/assessment/initiativefordatadissemation
Comprehensive Southside Providence Neighborhood Health and Environmental Assessment
www.health.ri.gov/publichealth/about/communityassessments
Southside Project or the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant
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Rhode Island Department of Health
HEALTH Information Line, 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711, www.health.ri.gov

About this report
This report is based on two surveys completed from 2008 to 2010 in Upper and Lower South Providence, Elmwood, West End, and parts of Federal Hill. These neighborhoods have relatively low income and are racially and ethnically diverse.

The first survey was a walk through these five neighborhoods. We randomly chose 103 blocks and looked at how well they support physical activity, like walking or bicycling.1

In the second survey, we did in-person interviews with 547 Southside Providence adults 18 and older.2 Interviewing an adult in about one out of every nine households, we asked about their health, health behaviors, thoughts about their neighborhood, and specific diseases they may have.

Together, these survey findings represent five neighborhoods with 29,000 adults. Southside Providence is the first of three Rhode Island communities we will learn about. The other two communities are Woonsocket’s Constitution Hill and Central Falls.

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

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart disease and stroke
- 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.

Funding for this project was provided through a cooperative agreement with HEALTH and supported by the CDC Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HEALTH or CDC.
Most adults feel that the neighborhood is not safe from traffic (60%) or crime (57%) in order to walk or ride a bike. However, 72% feel the neighborhood is pleasant for physical activity, but safety is still a concern.

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.

Who we work with
Community partners working closely with HEALTH and the Institute include the African Alliance of Rhode Island, the Haffen Community Health Center, House, St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island, and the Urban League of Rhode Island. Progreso Latino, Inc. in Central Falls and the John Hope Settlement House, St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island, and the Rhode Island Public Health Institute (the Institute) work closely with HEALTH and the Institute.

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Who we talked to
We talked to 547 adult residents, age 18 and older, living on 49 blocks. The information they shared represents the 29,000 adults living in the five surveyed neighborhoods.

- Language: 32% of adults prefer to be interviewed in Spanish.
- Gender: 47% of adults are male, and 53% are female.
- Race/Ethnicity: 49% of adults are Hispanic, 21% are Black, 18% are White, and 13% identify with another race.
- Age: 62% of adults are 18-44 years old. 38% are 45 years or older.
- Income: 44% of adults have a household income of less than $25,000 per year. 18% make between $25,000 and $50,000 per year, and 13% make $50,000 or more per year. The household income of 25% of the population is unknown.
- Employment: 49% of adults are employed, and 51% are not.
- Education: 27% of adults have less than a high school education, and 30% have finished high school. 42% of adults have completed some college or are college graduates.

What people told us about their health
Many adults have poor health and serious health conditions.

- Two out of three adults report excellent, very good, or good health. One out of three reports fair or poor health.
- One out of three adults says they have been unable to carry out daily activities on some days because of poor mental or physical health.
- 39% of adults are overweight, and 26% are obese.
- 34% of adults have high blood pressure.
- 11% of adults have diabetes.
- 10% of adults have heart disease or have had a stroke.
- 8% of adults have a history of cancer.

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

- Seven out of ten adults do not eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- A little more than half (51%) of adults do not get recommended minimum amounts of physical activity.
- 19% of adults are current smokers, but eight out of ten smokers have tried to quit.

Most adults are screened for health conditions, but some still have trouble getting preventive care. The data suggest that:

- Women have more access to medical care that includes cancer screening than men.
- 82% of women have been screened for breast cancer.
- Only 47% of men have been screened for prostate cancer.
- Seven out of ten adults have been screened for high cholesterol.
- More screening for diabetes is needed to help identify this health condition before adults have symptoms.

What we saw in your neighborhoods
The neighborhoods need more safe areas for physical activity. Trained observers saw:

- Few green spaces (parks and playgrounds), gyms, and safe places.
- Poor sidewalk conditions.
- A lot of broken glass and litter.
- Few marked crosswalks.
- Few bicycle lanes.
- No traffic lane markings on most streets.

What we heard about your neighborhoods
Is the glass half empty or half full?

- A little more than half (55%) of adults feel that the neighborhood is well maintained.
- A little more than half (54%) of adults feel that the neighborhood is not free from garbage, litter, and broken glass.

Most adults feel that the neighborhood is not safe from traffic (60%) or crime (57%) in order to walk or ride a bike. However, 72% feel the neighborhood is pleasant for physical activity, but safety is still a concern.