

# Southside Providence, Rhode Island

## NEXT STEPS

The Institute is available to help communities and community-based organizations use the data from the Southside neighborhood surveys. Contact the Institute at [info@riphi.org](mailto:info@riphi.org) to discuss your needs.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Two out of three adults report excellent, very good, or good health. One out of three reports fair or poor health.
- Many adults report health behaviors that put them at risk of poor health or disease.
- Most adults have been screened for cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol, but some still have trouble getting preventive care.
- The neighborhoods need more safe areas for physical activity.

Community partners are planning forums and other activities to address the findings of these surveys. To learn more or get involved, contact:

COMMUNITY PARTNER	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
African Alliance of Rhode Island	Julius Kolawole and Susan Rezendes	401-331-5535
St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island	Adrienne Nicoloro	401-456-3027
Urban League of Rhode Island	Lynn August	401-351-5000 x140

## For more information

Rhode Island Public Health Institute  
Patricia A. Nolan, MD, MPH, 401-863-6416, [info@riphi.org](mailto:info@riphi.org), [www.riphi.org](http://www.riphi.org)

Web-based access to statewide health data  
[www.health.ri.gov/programs/assessmentinitiativefordatadissemination](http://www.health.ri.gov/programs/assessmentinitiativefordatadissemination)

Comprehensive Southside Providence Neighborhood Health and Environmental Assessment  
[www.health.ri.gov/publichealth/about/communityassessments](http://www.health.ri.gov/publichealth/about/communityassessments)

Southside Project or the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant  
Carol Hall-Walker, MPA, 401-222-5935, [carol.hall-walker@health.ri.gov](mailto:carol.hall-walker@health.ri.gov)

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

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.



## 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.<sup>1</sup>

In the second survey, we did in-person interviews with 547 Southside Providence adults 18 and older.<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 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



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 Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy, John Hope Settlement House, St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island, and the Urban League of Rhode Island. Progreso Latino, Inc. in Central Falls and YWCA Northern Rhode Island in Woonsocket advised on this work and on work in their own communities. Many other organizations and residents helped.

## 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 employed.
- **Education:** 27% of adults have less than a high school education, and 30% have finished high school only. 42% have completed some college or are college graduates.

## What people told us about their health

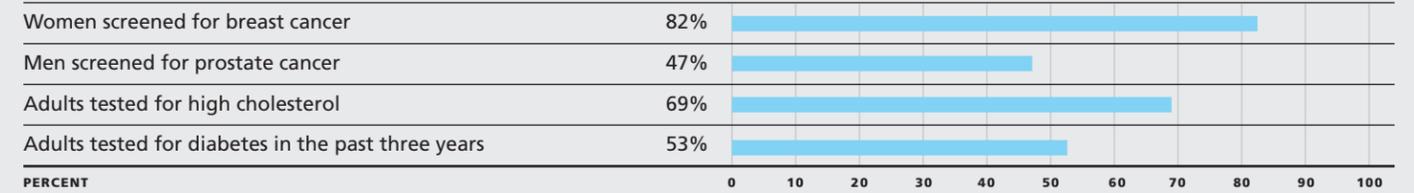
Many adults have poor health and serious health conditions.

- 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.

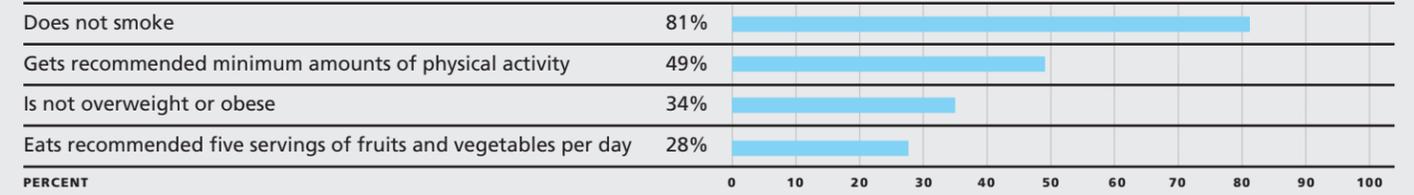
Many adults report health behaviors that put them at risk of poor health or disease.

- 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.

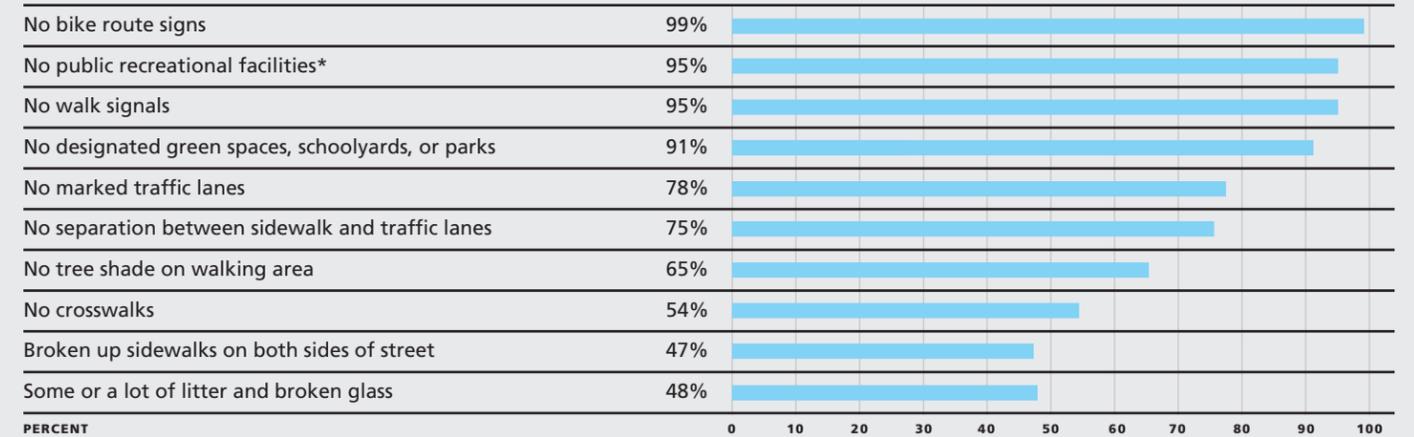
### 1. HEALTH SCREENING BEHAVIORS OF SOUTHSIDE PROVIDENCE ADULTS



### 2. HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND CONDITIONS OF SOUTHSIDE PROVIDENCE ADULTS



### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUTHSIDE PROVIDENCE 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, 2009. Chart 3 source: Active Neighborhood Checklist, 2008

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 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.

- Nearly three out of four adults (72%) feel the neighborhood is pleasant for physical activity, but safety is still a concern.

## 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
- Little shade
- A lot of broken glass and litter
- Few marked crosswalks
- Few bicycle lanes
- No traffic lane markings on most streets