

# 2023 METROWEST COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

## Health Priorities



1,088 community survey respondents | 7 focus groups | 10 key informant interviews

Through primary data collection and publicly available health data, five health priorities were identified. In addition to the priorities listed, respondents identified chronic diseases and other illnesses of concern. Residents described barriers to accessing health care as well as difficulty in accessing resources conducive to a healthy lifestyle. Disparities were observed and data is shared in the report to highlight the effects of structural racism and discrimination on health outcomes.

### ACCESS TO CARE

Challenges include reliable transportation, cost, insurance limitations, and difficulty navigating the health care system.

### CHRONIC DISEASE & OTHER ILLNESS

Overweight and obesity, cancer, heart disease, and asthma and allergies were of particular concern to residents.

### HEALTH DISPARITIES

Trends were identified in how the experience of MetroWest residents may differ based on age, race/ethnic background, and language spoken.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work collaboratively, across agencies and municipalities and alongside community members, to develop actionable plans to address these health priorities.
  - Promote access to behavioral health services.
  - Encourage socializing and physical recreation among residents.
  - Develop affordable housing and support the housing insecure.
- Center principles of equity in all efforts to address health issues in the region. This includes ensuring equitable access to insurance coverage, primary care, behavioral health services, and preventative care.
- Strengthen local public health capacity and educate community members on their role in preventing the spread of illness and disease.
- Continue to monitor and address climate-related environmental factors that affect health.
- Raise awareness and advocate for change in the food system to address food insecurity.