



## Health Promotion in Fall River, MA




Lowering Risk  
Improving Lives

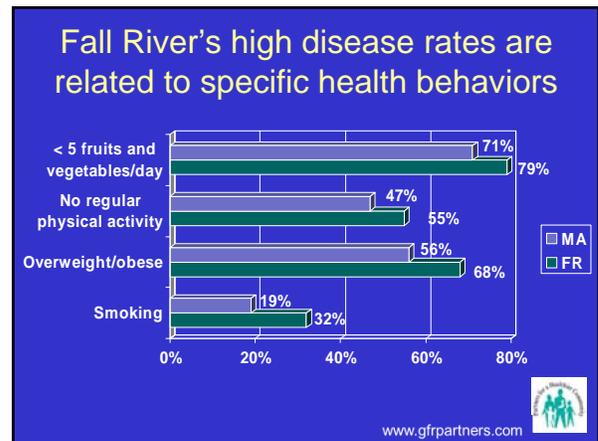
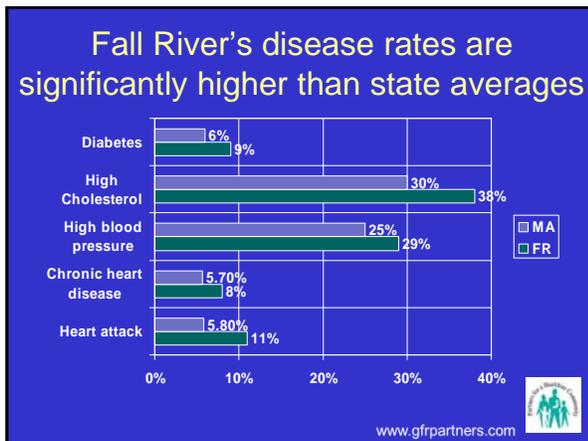
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## Where is Fall River?

- Bristol County, MA
- Part of the South Coast



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### Health challenges are related to a number of population factors

- Second highest rate of premature deaths statewide
- Higher percentage of families w/children in poverty
- High rates of unemployment
- Higher life stress levels related to economic status
- Lower rates of school completion
- Steady high rates of immigration and resultant language and cultural barriers that decrease the comprehension of health promotion messages.

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### Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc.

- The Fall River Community Health Network Area (CHNA) is one of 27 statewide established in 1994 by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Responsible for the assessment and planning of health initiatives for Fall River and three surrounding communities in Bristol County

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## How we are organized

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graph TD
    SC[Steering Committee  
20-25 members  
Elected biennially by general membership]
    AHC[Access to Health Care]
    HCFR[Healthy City Fall River]
    CHOICES[CHOICES (Health)]
    SA[Substance Abuse]
    LC[Larger Community]

    SC --- AHC
    SC --- HCFR
    SC --- CHOICES
    SC --- SA
    AHC --- LC
    HCFR --- LC
    CHOICES --- LC
    SA --- LC
    
```

- Four full-time staff members
- Total annual budget under \$160,000

- A 501(c)(3) directed by a 25-Member Steering Committee that directs projects of four Task Forces
- Work with, but not for, the City Health and School Health Departments
- Funded by DoN support from two hospitals

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## Design Team plans, assesses and evaluates

- Organizes surveys, collects data and analyzes it every five years to establish goals & benchmarks
- Works with all sectors of the community to create a five-year Action Plan with specific objectives
- Meets quarterly to share information on problems & progress and annually to review goals

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## How we began

We asked over 1,000 people: "What would make Fall River a healthier place to live and work?"

Community residents voted for top five priorities:

- Safety and Substance Abuse
- Environment and Recreation
- Health Education
- Adult Education, Job Training & Employment
- Community Planning & Housing

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## Action Planning

- Following a second community-wide survey in 2009, the Design Team revised the goals for the next five-year period
- We modified the original five Priority Areas and added a focus on system, policy and environmental changes.

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## Action Planning

To the original five goals, we added work on:

- Food supply and nutrition
- Built environment and transit
- Worksite and medical settings

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## Policy, System & Environment Change

PS&E changes occur in the context of programs and activities that involve and educate people on the need to make changes in their personal and collective environment

Some policies change as the result of changes in individual and collective behavior, and some behaviors change in the context of altered policies, systems and environments

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## Some of our ongoing projects

- Tobacco & drug laws (e.g., pharmacy sales)
- Alcohol laws (e.g., social host & server laws)
- Reduction of crime and youth violence
- Improved school meals & wellness policies
- Improved food supply
- Youth and adult physical fitness
- Improving access to healthcare
- Integration of health with health care
- Park and open space development
- Walking & bicycle route development



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## Enforcing Tobacco & Drug Laws



- Reduced smoking by 14%
- Youth led pharmacy ban
- Tobacco sales to minors
- Drug paraphernalia sales
- Store owner and staff education
- Prescription drug use
- Opioid overdose prevention



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## Changing Alcohol Sales/Use Laws



- Projects are led by youth
- Alcohol sales education and warnings with the Sticker Shock program
- Social host ordinance passed by City Government
- Beverage server training now required



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## Reducing crime & youth violence



- Instituted community policing city-wide
- Targeted gang suppression among youth
- Reduced youth violence 37% over four years through education, jobs and social support
- Engaged youth in prevention



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## Improving school meals & wellness



- Work with new school cafeteria vendor
- Elimination of soda sales
- Physical education teacher support
- Walk & bike to school
- Playground education
- Family Fun Nights



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## Improving the local food supply



- Farmers' markets and veggie-mobiles
- Healthy restaurants and markets
- School and community gardens
- Hunger network



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## Improving after-school youth fitness



- Summer Olympics
- Summer park recreation program
- Year round recreation program

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## Increasing adult physical fitness



- Ten walking routes city-wide
- Walking events
- Worksite walks
- Staircase gallery
- Walks with a hospital doctor
- Hikes in the Fall River forest

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## Increasing adult physical fitness



- Fitness Challenge brings in 1,000 people each year, now at five sites
- Includes healthy nutrition classes
- Cycling groups now very active

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## Improving access to healthcare



- Two new health clinics
- Work with immigrant populations
- Dental care access for children
- Healthcare enrollment

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## Park & open space development



- City-wide clean-ups
- Park advocates
- Playground improvements
- Tree inventory & planting

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## Walking & bicycle route planning



- Walking routes
- Bicycle lane striping
- Street construction
- South Coast Bikeway development

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## Integrating health into healthcare



- Physicians advising patients on primary prevention
- Physicians writing prescriptions for walking
- Prescribing nutritious foods and issuing farmers' market tokens
- Offering CSA in the hospital
- Running farmers' markets outside the hospital
- Recruiting and training community health workers to do first-line prevention in churches

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## Throughout the process we made news!

The Herald News, Tuesday, December 28, 2004

### Citizens are getting and staying healthy

New state reports shows Fall River residents taking their health more seriously

By WILL RICHMOND  
Herald News Staff Reporter

FALL RIVER — A recent report completed by the state Department of Public Health shows a number of health indicators are rising and it's a sign of things both good and bad.

The report, "A Profile of Health Among Massachusetts Adults," includes results from the 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System that is based on a telephone survey of more than 1,000 Massachusetts residents over the age of 18. The report looks into topics such as obesity, flu vaccination, tobacco use, binge drinking, breast cancer screening and HIV/AIDS.

Numbers that show increases in poor health indicators include the number of adults reporting they are obese rising to 79 percent since 1990.

It also shows a greater percentage of adults getting tested for HIV and that binge drinking in the state has also remained higher than the national average.

Not everything is bad though. The survey shows more people vaccinating themselves against influenza and that the adult smoking rate has remained stable. More insured women have also reported getting a mammogram in the past two years, making detection and recovery chances better.

While the report does not focus on individual cities and towns in the commonwealth, local health officials say some of the numbers from the report detail in line with Fall River.

Michael Coughlin, director of health and human services, said a number of health indicators related to Fall River fell in line with other cities of similar

size, such as New Bedford and Lowell.

He said that factors such as economic indicators for cities, which often include a high percentage of low income residents, also tend to effect health indicators.

"It can be expensive to live healthy," Coughlin said, pointing out the costliness of buying fresh produce and maintaining a healthy diet.

But Coughlin also said he believes the citizens of Fall River are doing more to take care of themselves.

"I do think the community here is more aware than many communities of their options," Coughlin said. "That has led to a higher rate of health screenings taking place and the older population, to a higher degree, is seeing more health professionals."

Anna Ferreira, a spokeswoman for St. Anna's Hospital, said the hospital sees a higher number of uninsured women receiving mammograms than the state report revealed.

The survey found that the percentage of uninsured women getting a mammogram has declined from 79 percent in 2000 to 67 percent in 2003. At St. Anna's, however, the results have been just the opposite.

"Contrary to the declining statewide percentage of uninsured women receiving mammograms from 2000 to 2003, our Women's Health Network program for uninsured residents in southeastern Massachusetts has provided these services to an overall growing number of women," Ferreira said.

In fact, the number of uninsured women receiving mammograms has increased by more than 100 women since 2000, an increase of about 17

percent.

As Coughlin and Ferreira pointed out city residents may be taking better care of themselves. Coughlin said he also believes things can get better thanks to the implementation of the Healthy City Fall River plan.

The plan advocates establishing community groups to improve city services, to increasing health awareness as a way to improve the overall health of the city and its residents.

"Over time, if you give this plan the full five years, I am quite convinced that some of the health indicators will swing in a more positive direction," Coughlin said. "We're already seeing some positive trends."

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Program to educators Thursday at a conference in Shrewsbury. dentists, principals, guidance counselors and curriculum directors in attendance

## The Roadmaps Prize confirmed our approach to our own community



## The next 20 years in Fall River



- Building new infrastructure
- Health impact assessment as part of planning
- Changing policies and laws for future generations

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## What makes this work?

- Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration!
- Cross-sector unified planning & assessment
- We are not an agency, we are a structure that is open to all to use to improve health
- We see every problem in the larger context
- Develop buy-in from community groups
- Discover resources everywhere
- Keep everyone informed of what's happening
- Try everything — keep only what works
- Continue to recruit new players

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