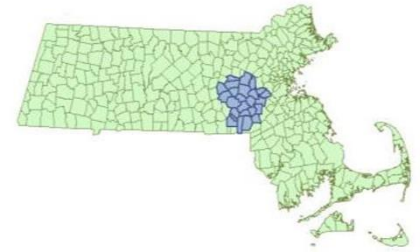


The MetroWest Health Foundation recently conducted a Community Health Assessment in the region. The MetroWest Health Foundation currently serves 25 communities in Massachusetts, including Northborough, Southborough, and Westborough. Click [here](#) to view all of the towns.



Across the region, there were 1,088 total survey respondents, as well as 7 focus groups, and 10 key informant interviews. There were 192 responses from the residents in Northborough, Southborough, and Westborough, which is approximately 17.6% of the total respondents.

The MetroWest Health Foundation identified **five** health priorities through their primary data collection and publicly available health data. The health priorities include **mental health, substance use, built and natural environment, housing insecurity and homelessness, and food insecurity**. In addition, residents described barriers to access health care and significant challenges with chronic diseases and other illness, including overweight and obesity, cancer, heart disease, asthma, and allergies. In addition, the data highlighted health disparities and the efforts of structural racism and discrimination on health outcomes.



Some data points of particular interest:

- Of the people who needed mental health services (both non-emergency and emergency mental health care), one in three (33.27%) were not able to access it. The top three reasons residents were unable to access mental health services were a lack of mental health providers/therapists, long wait times for an appointment, and no insurance coverage for mental health services.
- Alcohol and substance use was the second highest health priority identified by residents who responded to the community survey (n=226) and smoking/vaping was identified separately as the 9th highest priority health issue (n=51).
- Over 76% of all survey respondents felt they have opportunities to socialize with others all or most of the time.
- Less than 58% of survey respondents are able to access good quality, affordable housing all of the time.
- In the MetroWest region nearly 60% of those who are likely to qualify for SNAP benefits are not enrolled. Some reasons for this gap include stigma, time to complete the application process, not knowing if they qualify, and fear that it will impact immigration status.

All of the data is available on MetroWest Health Foundation's website, as well as displayed in an [interactive dashboard](#), which contains data for the community, county, and regional levels.

The Foundation listed several recommendations, including working collaboratively, across agencies and municipalities, alongside community members to develop actional plans to address these five health priorities. Some other recommendations include ensuring equitable access to health services (i.e. access to insurance coverage, primary care, behavioral health services, and preventive care) and strengthen local public health capacity.

Click [here](#) to read the Executive Summary and click [here](#) to read the full community health assessment.