



## **Boston Partnerships to Improve**

## **PICH)**

## **Community Health (Boston**

### **Background:**

Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) is a three-year **\$5.4 million** citywide initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support implementation of voluntary policy and systems changes to encourage healthy choices in physical activity, nutrition and smoke-free housing. The initiative will use evidence-based strategies to reduce the prevalence of obesity, tobacco use and exposure, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

The national CDC PICH initiative includes approximately 39 communities throughout the United States, and funds population-wide strategies to change the environments in which people live, work, learn, play and pray. The program seeks to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease by working with organizations across many sectors to “make the healthy choice the easy choice” for residents.

Boston Public Health Commission will lead Boston PICH in partnership with [Boston Alliance for Community Health \(BACH\)](#), a multi-sector citywide coalition that unites public, private, and non-profit partners in neighborhood-based, data-driven health planning and improvement. The Commission and BACH share the highest priority and commitment to support racial justice and achieve health equity by closing the gaps in health status experienced by Black, Latino, low-income and other residents compared to White and higher-income residents. [The Harvard School of Public Health Prevention Research Center](#) will serve as project evaluator.

Boston PICH builds on Boston’s strong record of collaborative initiatives over the last decade to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes addressing chronic disease risk factors. It includes strategies that operate at multiple levels: citywide; focused approaches that reach low-income residents and public school students; and neighborhood-specific initiatives in Mattapan and North Dorchester.

### **Related Data:**

#### Obesity & Chronic Disease in Boston

- 34% of Boston adults are overweight, and an additional 22% are obese.
- Obesity rates among Black (33%) and Latino (27%) adults are almost double that of Whites (16%).
- Almost a quarter (24%) of Boston adults have hypertension, with higher rates among Black adults (37%).
- Diabetes rates among Black (14%) and Latino (13%) adults are over double the diabetes rate for White (5%) adults.
- 18% of Boston adults and 9% of Boston youth smoke.

- Slightly more than half (57%) of Boston adults get regular physical activity.
- 38% of adults do not consume fruit everyday and 25% of adults do not eat vegetables every day.

### **Initiative Components:**

1. Increase supply of and demand for smoke-free housing
  - Work with community development corporations and management companies to increase the availability of smoke-free housing units
  - Work with city agencies to make information about smoke-free housing options easily accessible
  - Increase public knowledge of the benefits of smoke-free housing and build demand through public awareness and communications strategies
2. Increase the availability of breastfeeding-friendly environments in workplaces, childcare programs and public places such as malls, large stores, faith organizations, and other venues
3. Increase the availability and affordability of fresh and local fruits and vegetables
  - Maintain and increase availability of local produce through farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, and institutional settings
  - Maintain and increase strategies to make fresh produce more affordable for low-income residents
4. Increase demand for and availability of healthier beverages at retail stores
  - Work with neighborhood retail stores on promoting healthy beverage availability and decreasing purchases of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs)
  - Increase public knowledge about the negative health impacts of SSBs and build demand for healthier beverages through public awareness and communications strategies
5. Increase access to environments that allow walking/biking safely
  - Partner with Boston Public Schools and public charter schools to support the Safe Routes to Schools initiative, which works to improve walking and biking options for BPS students to safely get to and from school
  - Expand biking opportunities for low-income residents in partnership with Boston Bikes
  - Work with residents and coalitions, including in North Dorchester and Mattapan, to improve safe walking and biking options to increase active transport and to provide more residents with physical activity opportunities

For more information, visit [www.bphc.org](http://www.bphc.org)

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