



FY20 Community Benefits Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tufts Medical Center conducted its most recent Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2019, focusing on Chinatown, Dorchester, South Boston, South End, and Quincy, and worked with community stakeholders to prioritize their most pressing health needs. In 2020, we worked to address health needs and disparities in the following neighborhood through a variety of programs. Overall, we were able to achieve many progresses in these neighborhoods.

● CHINATOWN ●

- Tobacco and Nicotine Use
- Pediatric asthma
- Mental Health
- Access to Social Service
- Perceptions of Safety

22.6% of community members enrolled in smoking cessation programs have successfully quit.

● DORCHESTER ●

- Behavioral Health:
 - Violence
 - Substance Use
 - Mental Health
- Chronic Disease
- Housing and Transportation

● SOUTH BOSTON ●

174 patients were treated in South Boston Community Health Center's Medication-Assisted Treatment (Suboxone) regimen.

- Substance use
- Food security
- Chronic disease

1,709 youth and 585 adults were engaged in behavioral health programs.

● SOUTH END ●

- Behavioral Health:
 - Violence
 - Substance Use
 - Mental Health
- Access to health care and other services
- Chronic Disease

75 community members were screened for kidney disease and referred to proper treatment.

● QUINCY ●

- Access to care and other services
- Chronic disease
- Behavioral health.

In the same year, we also responded rapidly to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through working with partner communities, we identified and addressed immediate and medium-term community social determinants of health needs. Within mind the necessity for wrap-around services in a time like this, we collaborated with community-based organizations on diverse programs to help our community respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes financial stability and economic opportunity; food security; social-emotional wellness; and access to resources so that community-based organizations can continue to provide services.

While we continue to improve the health of our partnering communities, we wanted to take a moment and share what our collaboration was able to accomplish in the past year. Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, we adapted quickly to ensure emerging needs were met while also ensuring existing programs continued to run. We are glad to share the highlights below, and we look forward to expanding our service and outreach in the next year.

OUR REACH IN 2020



62,000

Community members had their COVID-19 needs met through Tufts MC COVID-19 Mini Grants which were awarded to 23 community-based organizations. These needs included food security, financial assistance, computer equipment, and other needs.



988

Community members were engaged in tobacco and nicotine prevention efforts - including 604 children and youth - in 2020.



58.5%

Community members, who were women, participated in workforce development activities hosted by Tufts MC, which ranged from paid summer internships for BPS high school students to ESOL classes offered to working adults.



1,709

Children and youth, along with 585 adults, were engaged in behavioral health programs that addressed mental health, substance use, and/or violence prevention.



26,764

People benefitted from Tufts MC-supported programs aimed at improving access to quality care and social services. 69.9% primarily spoke a language other than English.



25,107

Individuals participated in Tufts MC organized activities that aimed to educate, manage, and/or screen for chronic disease and conditions; some participants were referred to follow up care if necessary.



"We are thrilled to have received funding for COVID-19 relief. I have said this before, but I will say it again, you and your team at Tufts are always so responsive to the needs of the community. You do a great job of keeping your finger on the pulse of the neighborhoods and we feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to work with you. Thank you."

**- Boys and Girls Clubs of
Dorchester**



OUR COMMUNITY BENEFITS MISSION

Tufts Medical Center is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of, and to reducing health disparities and inequities in, the communities we serve. We seek to identify current and emerging health needs, collaborate with community partners, provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health services and resources, and address community health needs through education, prevention, and treatment.

2020 COMMUNITY HEALTH PRIORITIES

Tufts Medical Center conducted its most recent Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2019, focusing on Chinatown, Dorchester, South Boston, South End, and Quincy, and worked with community stakeholders to prioritize their most pressing health needs.

Among the top priorities were behavioral health, tobacco and nicotine control, and chronic disease management. The social determinants of health were addressed via access to care and social services, economic opportunity, and housing. With an emphasis on prevention and education, we work with community members to boost and maintain their health, quality of life, and knowledge in order to prevent bigger challenges down the road.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led us to re-visit our community health needs to ensure that we are meeting emerging needs resulting from the pandemic. As a result, we conducted a mini-CHNA in our partner communities to identify immediate and medium-term community needs. Through these efforts we identified priorities that cut across all our partner communities, including: financial stability and economic opportunity; food security; social-emotional wellness; and access to resources so that community-based organizations can continue to provide services.

In partnership and consultation with community members, our efforts to address our communities' needs form the basis of this report, which covers the period October 2019 through September 2020. Included in this report are highlights of our work; it does not represent all of the activities undertaken during the year to improve community health.



COVID-19

By the end of September 2020, a total of 16,898 individuals in Boston had tested positive for COVID-19. There are disparities in the incidence rate of COVID-19 infections by Boston neighborhood, with higher rates in Dorchester and the South End compared to the rest of Boston. COVID-19 disproportionately affected Boston's communities of color, with 32.5% and 31.4% of reported COVID-19 cases - in which the individual's race was known - identifying as Black and Latinx/Hispanic, respectively.

Tufts Medical Center launched a concerted effort to support our priority communities directly through our COVID-19 Grants, meeting over 62,000 individuals' needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

55,497 individuals and families received groceries, meals, nonperishables foods, PPE, cleaning supplies, and toiletries

4,552 community members attended virtual job training, ESOL, and exercise classes as well as case management meetings made possible from computer hardware and software purchases

2,035 residents received cash and rental assistance as well as help with unemployment and SNAP applications

31 Boston public high school students were placed at 10 different community-based organizations for paid summer internships

"I am heartened by Tufts support during this time and this much needed financial support will enable ACDC to support residents and youth in our community." -
Asian Community Development Corporation



The pandemic forced many healthcare organizations to adapt their processes to keep their staff safe while continuing to provide safe and effective patient care. South Boston Community Health Center, with funding from Tufts MC, assembled a multi-disciplinary team to transform their practice to one that primarily utilizes telehealth. Newly developed screening protocols enabled nurses to effectively screen for COVID-19 infection. Between mid-March and late-September, SBCHC tested **2,433** Massachusetts residents for COVID.



"Dear Doctors, thank you for keeping us safe!! I hope you stay safe too!! I hope you have a wonderful day. I hope you take care of yourself and my grandpa." - Grandson of a patient enrolled in remdesivir program

Throughout the pandemic we have seen massive misinformation circling our communities. To combat this, Tufts MC faculty contributed to a wealth of peer-reviewed, scientific knowledge surrounding COVID-19, during a time when there was very little information. Our Community Benefits and Communications teams focused on dispelling misinformation and getting up-to-date information out to patients, employees, and community members as the situation continued to evolve over the months, while addressing other pressing community needs.



Tufts MC published **6 research articles** in a number of medical journals covering the severity of COVID-19, its outcomes in higher risk groups, and potential therapies and treatments. Tufts MC faculty also contributed time, resources, and data to research projects led by other institutions across the country.



We disseminated messages about the importance of mask wearing, social distancing, and testing through billboards, radio stations, social media, and local networks. We also published **15 online stories** about COVID-19 and **19 mental health videos** were produced for employees and community members.



Tufts MC distributed **500 "wellness" kits**, consisting of PPE, hand sanitizers, and COVID-19 information, to local residents and community organizations

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Interconnected behavioral health factors, including violence, mental health, and substance use continue to be priority health concerns in our communities served. The negative impact of violence and trauma on youths' mental health particularly resonated with our community members as a top health priority. Similar to trauma, substance abuse can also be intergenerational and community members are keenly aware that children whose parents use substances are more likely to use substances themselves.

The pandemic has unfortunately exacerbated preexisting violence, mental health, and substance use concerns across the country. Boston police departments saw a 27% year over year increase in the number of domestic violence reports a month after lockdown began, while studies have shown that symptoms of depression have significantly increased since the start of the pandemic. Many community-based organizations have shifted their services online in response to the pandemic and continue to address these growing needs and concerns.



Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center and Smart from the Start engaged **36 youth and 40 families**, respectively, in virtual workshops and discussions around social emotional wellness and coping with stressors during the pandemic.

Fathers' UpLift's Youth Enrichment Program engaged **46 youth** in producing a podcast about mental health where they were able to articulate their emotions during COVID-19.

23 adolescents aged 12-18 attended DotHouse Health's Generation Next Academy workshops on the interrelated topics of substance use, mental health, violence prevention, and healthy relationships.

South Boston Community Health Center's Youth Ambassadors program educated **24 adolescents** during weekly discussions around substance use prevention, violence prevention, teen mental health, and gender equality.

The connection between mental health and substance use often necessitates treatment for both conditions within the same facility via Medication-Assisted Treatment.

Tufts Medical Center's South Boston Behavioral Health Clinic and South Boston Community Health Center provided outpatient mental health and substance abuse services:

30

Patients were treated in SBBHC's Medication-Assisted Treatment (Suboxone) regimen.

144

Patients were treated in SBCHC's Medication-Assisted Treatment (Suboxone) with cognitive behavioral therapy in an integrated primary care setting to decrease stigma.

Gavin Foundation's Cushing House utilized funding from Tufts MC to acquire technology to enable their clients to safely connect with case workers virtually. As a result, all **31 clients** saw an improvement in well-being and completed the program's requirements.

Tufts MC's Psychiatry Department continued to provide mental health consultations at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School. They met with the school's mental health team and provided resources and training. All **36 students** served attended 100% of their appointments.

"I'm beyond grateful for you. You always go above and beyond for your patients...you have honestly made such a massive impact on my life."

-South Boston Community Health Center Client

TOBACCO & NICOTINE CONTROL

Tobacco use is a strong risk factor for both heart disease and lung cancer, which are two prominent causes of death in Chinatown. Chinatown community members continue to identify tobacco use as one of the community's biggest health concerns, along with the rising prevalence of vaping due to its perception as a quitting aide amongst current smokers and its colorful, youth-targeted advertisements.

Our partnerships with community-based organizations in Chinatown aim to educate youth and the general public to prevent the next generation from engaging in tobacco and nicotine use, while other partnerships focus on working with current smokers on cessation efforts.

PREVENTION EFFORTS

580 third, fourth, and fifth grade students at Josiah Quincy Elementary School and **140** sixth and seventh grade Josiah Quincy Upper School students received lessons on the health risks of tobacco/nicotine products, e-cigarettes and vaping, and secondhand smoke/vapor.

36 Youth Leaders from Chinatown community-based organizations learned about the dangers of smoking and vaping, youth-targeted marketing tactics, and the components of a successful anti-smoking campaign. They developed anti-smoking workshops and content for other youth.

172 community members participated in educational anti-smoking workshops hosted by our partners. A majority were Chinese-speaking adults with limited English proficiency.





CESSATION EFFORTS

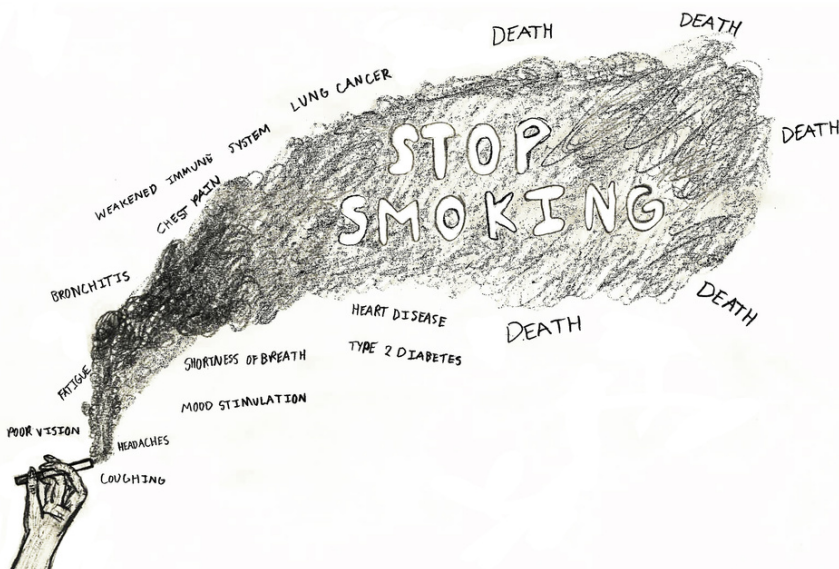
Our partners - the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center and the Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center - understand that the needs of every tobacco and nicotine user are unique and that every user is in a different stage in their cessation journey. Taking this into account, our partners leverage their linguistic and cultural expertise and meet smokers where they are at in their quitting journey in order to provide tailored, effective support.

27

Chinatown community members were enrolled in one of our partners' smoking cessation support programs in 2020. Only 6 of those smokers were hesitant to quit.

22.6%

Community members (i.e., 33 of 146), who have enrolled in cessation support services from 2017-2020, have successfully quit - almost three times the national average of 7.5% reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



94.5%
of community members think that smoking or vaping and secondhand smoke/vapor cause a lot or some harm.

ACCESS TO CARE

In Boston, many social services are available to community members, however, many people cannot access them. Language, culture, time, money, and distance have proven time and time again to be barriers to care. In 2020, COVID-19 stressed the importance of having reliable and sustained access to care and services.

We continued to strengthen and improve access to healthcare and other services, understanding that it was a necessity for our community members especially during the pandemic. We continued to address the cultural and linguistic gaps in our healthcare, leverage our community strengths, improve coordination of care, and educate community members on accessing health-promoting services and/or benefits.

Connect community members to health providers with diverse linguistic and cultural competencies

The Interpreter Services Department had a total of **110,745 patient visits** helping **16,704 patients** access care in their preferred language. In an effort to support patients, families, and providers during COVID-19, the Interpreter Services Department assigned a Chinese interpreter to the COVID testing center 7 days/week. Our bilingual Patient Navigators continued to provide quality cancer care and support to **109 Chinese-speaking cancer patients** through **437 patient encounters** as patients navigate the care system and manage their conditions by serving as essential bridges of information.



Leverage community strengths by supporting community based service providers and linking community members to available resources



Tufts MC staff volunteered **hundreds of hours** to agencies serving over **200 families** to improve community members' food security, access to care, and physical activity.

Coordinate the delivery of multiple health and social services in one setting and/or services in non-traditional settings

Tufts MC's Division of Trauma offered "Stop the Bleed" monthly trainings to a total of **200** Tufts MC, Medical Reserve Corps, MassDot, and Boston Public Schools staff members to recognize and stop life-threatening bleeds.



Assist community members in learning about and accessing health-promoting services and/or benefits



Our Patient Access Department's Financial Coordination program identified and assisted **9,100 uninsured and underinsured patients** with obtaining health insurance to access the healthcare they need to live a healthy life - more than half of whom were 65 and older.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Improving our community's health and well-being goes beyond their physical health and includes a person's economic well-being. It can have clear positive impacts on their social and economic health, while also having an impact on their physical health. We seek to create opportunities and pathways to economic opportunity and financial stability for community members through education and job training as a way to ensure their long-term and sustained prosperity.

11

Students from Boston public high schools spent seven weeks over the summer working on-site at Tufts MC in a number of diverse departments. With the mentorship of experienced staff, students contributed meaningful work and gained invaluable experiences while earning a wage, practicing professional skills, and learning about the opportunities available in healthcare. **90.9%** of our student interns were students of color, while **45.4%** were bilingual.

31

Additional students from Boston public high schools were hired through our COVID Grants to support community non-profits in: addressing rising pandemic-related needs; transitioning to virtual programming; and enforcing health and safety precautions. Students worked on unique projects including: grocery distribution programs, housing stabilization efforts for immigrant residents, development of needs assessments, community outreach related to the census and vote-by-mail, and much more.

29

Tufts MC employees completed free-of-cost ESOL classes with course content and training provided by the Asian American Civic Association as a way to invest in the career and professional development of our workforce and to strengthen the quality of patient services by improving communication skills.

2

Students enrolled in a college, university, and/or a phlebotomy training program completed a phlebotomy externship hosted annually by Tufts MC to gain clinical experience and improve their blood drawing skills. Each year a handful of externs are hired full-time at Tufts MC, however, due to COVID-19, that was not possible in 2020.

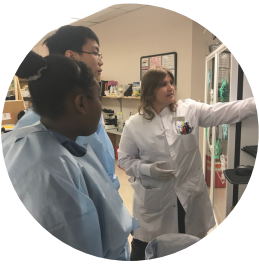
"This internship experience opened my eyes and now I know what I want my future to become. I learned so much in just a couple of weeks!"

-Tufts MC summer intern '20

CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Chronic diseases significantly impact quality of life for tens of thousands of residents in our partner communities. Tufts MC offers a variety of internal and external partner programs to screen for and educate the community about various types of chronic illness. Although some programs - such as free public screenings for high blood pressure and glaucoma - did not take place due to COVID-19, several other programs have transformed their work processes to continue serving the community during the pandemic.

531 Josiah Quincy Elementary School students learned about asthma management, stress management, nutrition, and oral health.



75 Community members were screened and identified as high risk of kidney disease and were referred to proper treatment.

43 Underserved adolescents in Chinatown received appropriate sexual health education.

HOUSING

The COVID-19 pandemic compounded Boston's existing affordable housing stressors by increasing the city's unemployment rate up to 19.3% in June 2020. In response, the Asian Community Development Corporation utilized their COVID-19 Grant to field **70 phone calls** from individuals and families requiring assistance with rent payments, mortgage relief, and inquiries for affordable housing.

365 Community members were connected to housing and heating assistance while **82 individuals** received homelessness prevention through the Asian American Civic Association's Multi-Service Center.

200 Older adults attended Tufts MC's Aging Strong program and learned to prevent unintentional falls to continue living independently.

"Debbie [with Aging Strong] was fabulous. My movements have been helped and my confidence has been helped."

-Aging Strong program participant

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Tufts MC community partnership to keep Chinatown clean of cigarette butts and educate on the harms of smoking