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Tufts Medical
Center

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**FY19
Community
Benefits
Report**



**“I SIMPLY
DREW HOW
DANGEROUS
CIGARETTES
CAN BE AND
HOW NOT
SMOKING CAN
HELP YOU.”**

Jason Liang, 11 years old, won the magnet design challenge at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) last year.

Through BCNC’s Smoke Free Chinatown project (one of six Chinatown projects that made up Tufts Medical Center’s Asian Health Initiative), children, teens, and adults learn about the health risks of smoking, vaping, secondhand smoke, and vapor. The younger children then submit drawings with anti-tobacco messages. The winning design is turned into a magnet and distributed throughout the community to help raise awareness of the challenges of tobacco and nicotine use.

Photo courtesy of Valerie Li, Sampan Newspaper

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.

In 2019, Tufts Medical Center conducted a rigorous Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in our partner communities — Chinatown, Dorchester, South Boston, South End, and Quincy — and worked with community stakeholders to prioritize their most pressing needs.

Among the top priorities identified as current problematic health issues to address were behavioral health, tobacco and nicotine control, and chronic disease management. Other issues, including economic opportunity, access to care and social services, and housing, address social determinants of health. Across all these issues, we emphasize prevention, working with community members to boost and maintain their health and quality of life before challenges arise.

Our efforts to address our communities' needs — undertaken in partnership and consultation with community members — form the basis of this report, covering the period October 2018 through September 2019. The following pages reflect some highlights of our work and do not represent all activities undertaken during the year to improve community health.

OUR REACH IN 2019

2,806 

children and youth were engaged in behavioral health programs, both preventive and treatment-focused, along with nearly 400 adults.

67,000 

people benefited from Tufts-MC-supported programs aimed at improving access to quality care and services; 73% were people of color and 54% primarily spoke a language other than English.

2,580 

people participated in Tufts MC-organized workshops related to chronic diseases; many were also screened for common conditions like hypertension and referred to follow-up care if necessary.

1,862 

Tobacco and nicotine prevention efforts engaged 1,862 people directly — including 539 children and youth — in 2019, in addition to tens of thousands of Sampan Newspaper readers.

71% 

of the community members who took part in workforce development and other education- and career-focused programs in 2019 were women.

39% 

of community members who took part in programs aimed at improving housing quality were seniors over age 65 and 93% were people of color.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Issues of mental health, community violence, and substance misuse are growing concerns city-wide, including in our partner communities. Thirty percent (30%) of Chinatown teens report persistent depression and 15% have contemplated suicide. Community violence was the top community health concern among 470 Dorchester residents surveyed in 2019. The most recent available data show that South Boston had the highest rate of any Boston neighborhood of death due to substance misuse.

Community stakeholders explained that these issues are interconnected and must be considered and addressed holistically; therefore, we call these three issues, collectively, Behavioral Health. With a focus on youth, we take a preventive approach, working to create supportive environments with access to resources that will foster youth's physical and mental health and reduce their risk of engaging in violence or substance misuse.

Tufts MC supports numerous community partners working with youth:

1 Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester (BGCD) and DotHouse Health help youth to meet their immediate needs for food, physical activity, safe and supportive spaces, nurturing relationships, and creative outlets.

90% Of BGCD youth feel safe in their neighborhood, compared to 55% of Dorchester community members at large.

2 Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center (STEC) and South Boston Community Health Center (SBCHC) challenge youth to think about and plan for their future through career experiences, college tours, and workshops with working professionals.

89% Of SBCHC's Youth Ambassadors reported feeling greater power over their lives after taking part in the program.

3 Harbor Health Services and The Salvation Army Kroc Center work with youth to confront and discuss the issues related to behavioral health; share their stories; support one another; develop skills related to leadership, communication, and conflict management; and share what they learn with their friends, families, and communities.

40 Student athletes discussed healthy relationships and social-emotional wellness as part of their sports training regimen last year.



When someone loses the supportive environment and network around them, they are at much higher risk of exposure to violence and becoming addicted to substances like alcohol, opioids, and other drugs. When this happens, we and our partners work hard to provide compassionate care and to rebuild the connections that will help our clients on their recovery journey.



Tufts MC supports behavioral health programs at South Boston Community Health Center, Gavin Foundation's Cushing House, and Codman Square Health Center (CSHC).

1

These programs provide patients with access to Medication Assisted Treatment for substance misuse, mental health counseling, and connections to housing, education, and employment to put them on a path to recovery.

115

People with substance use issues were connected with counseling, housing, and medication therapy by CSHC's community health worker.

125

Substance users received care at SBCHC, including counseling and medication. Flexible appointments helped boost attendance rates.

41%

Of Cushing House patients completed their six-month program without relapse; 90% reconnected with family members.

Psychiatrists from Tufts Medical Center also donate their services to community-based organizations — including Josiah Quincy Elementary School and Communities for People — to make behavioral health care more accessible to members of our priority communities.

2

370

Staff donated 370 hours of their time through consultations, trainings, and direct client support at partner agencies.

75

Teens were able to receive mental health care in their community through our partnership with Communities for People.

TOBACCO and NICOTINE CONTROL

Heart disease and lung cancer have long been among the leading causes of death in Boston's Chinatown neighborhood, and both are strongly linked with tobacco use. Through a community health needs assessment in 2019, Chinatown community members reiterated that tobacco use continues to be one of the biggest health concerns in the community, with the added challenge of vaping's meteoric rise in prevalence in recent years, particularly among youth.

We work with community partners in Chinatown to educate the public and prevent the next generation of young people from becoming addicted to tobacco and nicotine.

379

Third, fourth, and fifth graders at Josiah Quincy Elementary School learned about the health risks of smoking and secondhand smoke, and how to protect themselves from secondhand smoke.

25

Youth Leaders from Chinatown spent months learning about smoking and vaping's health risks and the marketing tactics that producers use to target young people. The teens took what they learned and developed public health campaigns to educate their peers, families, and communities about these dangers, reaching hundreds of community members with their messages.

74,000

Sampan Newspaper published 64 articles about smoking, vaping, and other health issues in both Chinese and English throughout the year, reaching tens of thousands of readers with each biweekly issue.

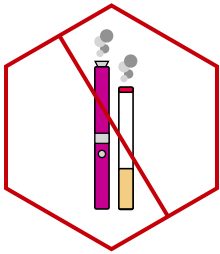


A focus on prevention is complemented by cessation efforts to help smokers quit.

The needs of every tobacco and nicotine user are unique. Our partners — the Asian American Civic Association and the Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center — leverage their linguistic and cultural expertise to provide tailored support to community members who smoke and/or vape. Cessation specialists help clients set goals, access resources like nicotine replacement therapy, and address the underlying issues that lead them to use tobacco and nicotine products.

Because of our partners' dedicated work:

97% of community members agree or strongly agree that smoking is bad for their health



96% of community members agree or strongly agree that secondhand smoke is bad for their health

39

Chinatown community members enrolled in one of our partners' cessation support programs in 2019, joining 30 others from prior years.

24.3%

Since cessation programs began in 2017, 29 of the 119 clients who have received support have quit - a success rate of 24.3%. This is three times the national average of about 7% reported by the US Food and Drug Administration.

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ACCESS TO CARE and

There is a wealth of social service resources in Boston; however, many people in our partner communities cannot access them. Language, culture, time, money, and distance all pose barriers to accessing the resources people need to live healthy, fulfilling lives.



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

The Interpreter Services department helped **22,565** patients access care in their preferred language. On average, patients waited less than 15 minutes to be matched with an interpreter. Bilingual Patient Navigators supported Chinese-speaking patients with cancer as they navigated the care system, offering social-emotional support, and bridging communication gaps.

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

Tufts MC staff volunteered **thousands of hours** to agencies helping improve community members' food security, access to care, and physical activity. The Tufts MC Pharmacy's specialty drug co-pay assistance program, among others, helped community members save more than **\$350K** on health care costs.



and SOCIAL SERVICES

Last year, we continued to strengthen and improve access to health care and other services by making them available in more convenient places, for free or at low cost, and in a language and cultural context that respects community members' needs and preferences.



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

Tufts MC clinicians provided free care to over **1,000** low-income community members and men and women incarcerated at county jails.

With support from Tufts MC, South End Community Health Center helped families of newborns and young children to connect with housing, education, and food assistance, and practice parenting skills in nurturing environments.



Improve the capacity of health and social service providers to serve vulnerable populations.

Working with community partners, our Workforce Development team engaged **817** community members in job readiness programs to boost healthcare workforce diversity and linguistic and cultural competency. Forty-six (**46**) current Tufts MC employees took part in English classes to improve access to internal career advancement opportunities.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Improving a person's economic well-being is one of the surest ways to support their long-term prosperity while improving their social, economic, and physical health. We create pathways to economic opportunity for community members through education, training, and good jobs.

43

Students from Boston public high schools spent seven weeks in summer 2019 working in diverse departments at Tufts MC. With the mentorship of experienced staff, the students completed invaluable work while earning a wage, making connections, practicing professional skills, and learning about the many opportunities in the health care field.

69

Students from colleges, universities, and training programs city-wide completed externships at Tufts MC last year in phlebotomy, medical assistance, health information management, medical engineering, and other disciplines. Twenty-one (21) of the students were hired full-time at Tufts MC after completing their externships.

31

Members of the Medical Center's partner communities — many of whom faced barriers to education and employment in the past — launched new careers in the health care sector through our Workforce Development programs. Seventeen (17) trained to be Pharmacy Technicians or Certified Nursing Assistants, and among them, fourteen (14) have been hired full-time at Tufts MC. Fourteen (14) others completed a skills-building program to earn Certificates in Healthcare Service, increasing their opportunities for career advancement.

CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Chronic diseases significantly impact quality of life for tens of thousands of residents in our partner communities. While Tufts MC providers help individual patients to manage their conditions, they also venture into communities to educate people about common conditions, provide screenings and follow up, and help people adopt healthy practices that will prevent chronic diseases before they become a problem. In 2019, our providers led workshops, screenings, and events related to kidney disease, skin cancer, nutrition, injury, and more.



53 patients with Hepatitis C completed treatment at SBCHC last year. Among the 29 eligible for testing, 98% were cured of the disease.



Staff led sexual health programs for **43** underserved teens in Chinatown, including students with intellectual disabilities.



376 students at Josiah Quincy Elementary School learned about stress management and maintaining a nutritional diet.

HOUSING

Local and state governments and many private agencies are investing heavily in building and preserving affordable housing in the Boston area, so we focus our efforts on strengthening housing quality and creating the conditions to keep people in their homes.

In 2019, the Aging Strong program visited senior housing complexes to help residents learn about the risks of fall injuries and to identify and remove hazards in the home. A community health worker conducted home visits with children with asthma to help families reduce asthma triggers like dust and pests. Tufts MC's support for a Multi-Service Counselor at the Asian American Civic Association connected **more than 200 community members** with housing and heating assistance, among other critical needs.

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