

The Town of Waltham participated in a community health assessment which included Brookline, Dedham, Dover, Needham, Waltham, Waltham, Wellesley, Weston and Westwood. Led by a team from Healthy Waltham, interviews were conducted with residents and professionals in Waltham, yielding rich information about the health of Waltham residents.

	Population (2005)	Median Income (2000)	% Below Poverty Line (2000)	% of children getting free or reduced price lunch (2010-11)	Population per square mile (2011)
Waltham	59,564	\$54,010	7.0%	34.3%	4,772
CHNA 18	309,560	N/A	4.5%	N/A	2,783
Massachusetts	6,436,940	N/A	9.3%	34.2%	839

Summary Data

General Health Status

Waltham has lower rates of mortality, diabetes, hypertension and adult obesity than the state of Massachusetts overall.

Waltham has higher rates of HIV/AIDS than the rest of the CHNA, and higher rates of 1st and 10th graders who are overweight or obese than the State of Massachusetts.

Waltham has higher rates of motor vehicle-related Emergency Department visits than the State and a teen birthrate that is higher than the CHNA but still lower than the rest of the State.

A lower percentage of Waltham women receive pre-natal care than the rest of CHNA 18 or the State of Massachusetts.

Demographics

Waltham has the lowest median income of all CHNA 18 towns. Waltham has a much higher percentage of Hispanic residents than CHNA 18 and the State of Massachusetts

Community Strengths

The most important community strength identified in Waltham was “community involvement”.

Top Health Concerns

- Financial Strain
- Access to health care
- Housing prices

Summary

- Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts among high school students are higher in Waltham than in CHNA 18.
- 6% of Waltham High-School students did not go to school because they felt unsafe in the last month, higher than the rest of CHNA 18 and the State (4%).
- Waltham residents report a higher quality of life than the rest of CHNA 18 and the State.
- Waltham has a higher rate of Emergency Department visits related to alcohol and substance abuse by residents 19 and under than the rest of the state.
- While the percentage of unemployed Waltham residents has more than doubled since 1999-2001, it still remains lower than the state.

Selected Interviewee Comments

“Waltham is a friendly, diverse community. It has a small-town feeling”
school staff

“We have many residents with no access to primary health care”
mental health provider

“Waltham has a wonderful infrastructure of non-profits and social service organizations that work together and can be very effective”
citizen advocate

“Waltham residents are incredibly resilient”
mental health provider

“Waltham’s immigrant and low-income residents lack access to local decision-making...they don’t have a voice in how things are done”
low-income advocate

“Waltham was known as a great place to work...there are lots of business opportunities”
Community agency staff