



## Chronic Disease and Climate Change

Neighborhoods are a more telling predictor of community health than any other factor. Where you live can dictate the quality of the air you breathe, your housing and healthy food options, and your access to jobs, social networks, and quality health care. Often, because of discriminatory policies that have led to disparate neighborhood conditions, low-income communities and people of color have a disproportionately high chronic disease burden.

One way to understand how place affects health is with MAPC’s chronic disease index, which classifies each municipality in the region on its prevalence of six chronic diseases influenced by the physical,

environmental, and social features of one’s neighborhood. The index includes hospitalization rates for asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); and prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, adult obesity, and probable depression.

Interestingly, seven of the nine MAPC municipalities with high chronic disease burden are coastal. In the event of climate-related flooding and storm events, people with chronic diseases may require unique support services, such as transportation and stable electricity. Each city and town must consider the health needs of at-risk residents and develop health-conscious climate preparedness strategies.