



American  
Heart  
Association.

# PUGET SOUND

## COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



puget.sound@heart.org  
heart.org/pugetsound  
@AmericanHeartWA



# 2020

# INTRODUCTION

## WHY ASSESS

The 2020 Community Needs Update presents a snapshot of the current state of issues impacting health as experienced by the people living in the Puget Sound Market. We re-examined our priority areas to identify new barriers, solutions, and partners. It also gave us the opportunity to modify or confirm the previously identified priority issues to ensure we can remain focused on the needs that are most critical to the community's well-being and develop strategic partnerships and projects to work toward solutions.

## PROCESS

We began by reviewing data with a focus on health equity, chronic disease, nutrition security, tobacco use, and women's health. We compiled the most compelling quantitative data to share with four focus groups. Twenty-five participants, including leaders in community and faith-based organizations, corporations, public health, civic leadership, individual funders, foundations, and local board members represented the broad interests of the Puget Sound region and brought unique knowledge of issues most important in our communities during the focus groups. The discussion was designed to gather input on barriers, solutions and potential partners.

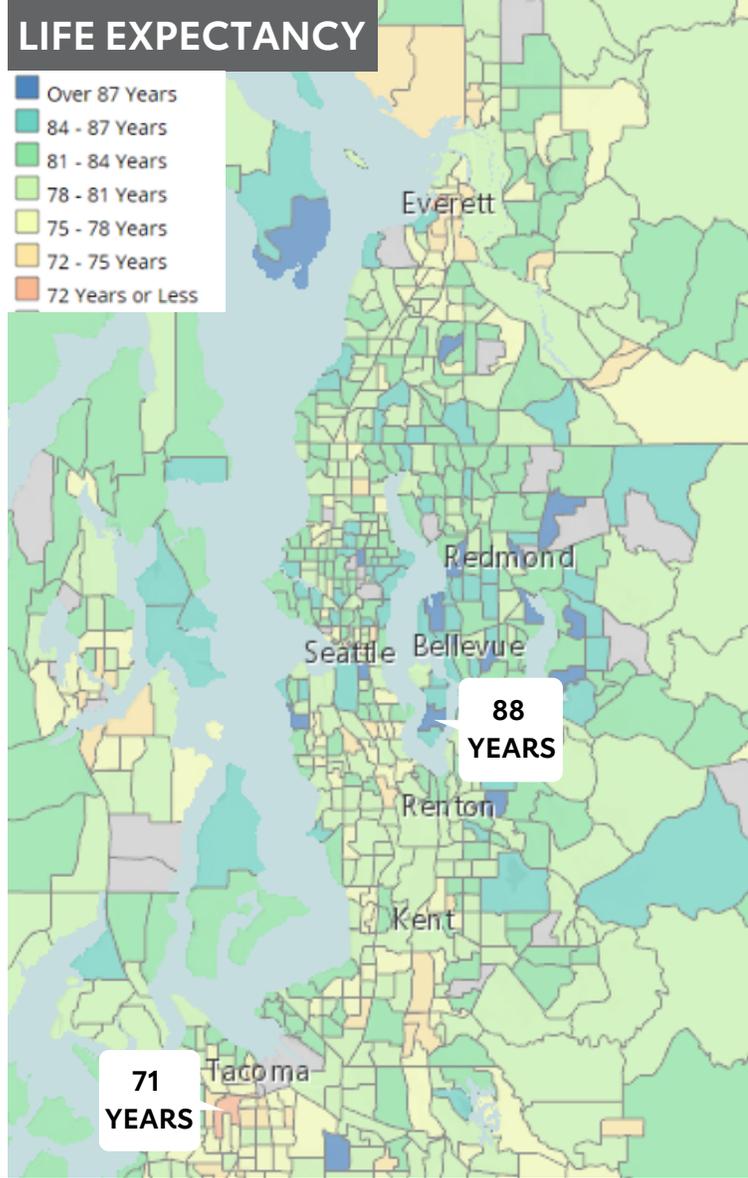


# WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT PUGET SOUND

## EMERGING TRENDS AND THREATS

COVID-19 is a threat to all; it increases health stress for those who are already burdened with pre-existing conditions and highlights long-term inequities in underserved communities. Lack of quality health care access, housing, jobs, and healthy food perpetuate health inequities in many Puget Sound communities. Generally areas of the Puget Sound with lower life expectancy also have reduced access to healthy food and physical activity layered on to social and economic barriers.

Across the Puget Sound life expectancy can vary as much as 21 years and sometimes just a few miles of distance equates to years of expected life.



## PUGET SOUND MARKET PRIORITIES, GOALS AND PARTNERS

To continue to make progress in our priority areas, American Heart Association has reaffirmed our focus and has developed a list of policy, system, and environmental change opportunities. In addition, the AHA has identified partners that we will collaborate with to drive a shared agenda.

Based on the assessment, our community impact priority issues are:



**Blood Pressure Control:** Advancing identification and management of high blood pressure through community and clinical strategies.



**Nutrition Security:** Connecting direct food service delivery and culturally relevant nutrition education through a shared vision and investing in the most innovative community solutions.



**Stop Youth Vaping:** Preventing the start and building equitable approaches to stopping use of tobacco and e-cigarettes to decrease the downstream effects of preventable deaths from tobacco use.

# PRIORITY: BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WE ARE TRYING TO SOLVE?

1.65 million adults in the Puget Sound likely have high blood pressure. In the Puget Sound only 1 in 4 are diagnosed, leaving many unaware they have high blood pressure. Nearly one third of people prescribed medication do not take it. Deaths and hospitalizations due to hypertension are highest among Black residents and in the South Sound.

In the Puget Sound Region, the percentage of adults with high blood pressure not taking blood pressure medication is 29%, higher than Washington State (28%) and the United States (21.7%).



Monique Shields of Tacoma developed pre-eclampsia when she was pregnant with her first son and her journey with high blood pressure began.

Hypertension and heart disease run in Monique's family, her father died of congenital heart disease 1 week before his 60th birthday and her mother is a heart survivor having had 4 heart surgeries and most recently receiving a pace maker. Monique knew she needed to take action.

Monique is on a mission to reduce her risk of developing heart disease by incorporating 30+ minutes of exercise everyday, making healthy eating choices and consistently taking her blood pressure medication. Monique's goal is to maintain her blood pressure by diet and exercise to reduce or eliminate her medication.

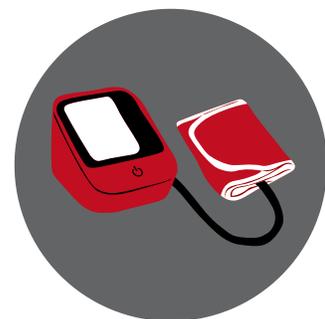
Monique volunteers for the American Heart Association to inspire others to take charge of their health and learn their key health numbers, including blood pressure.

## IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Support clinical system changes to improve blood pressure control to include use of self-monitoring programs, more accurate screening, and adoption of guideline-based treatment protocols.
2. Increase community linkages and systematic collaboration to reduce barriers to BP management and increase identification.
3. Increase availability of BP self-monitoring devices through payors adopting coverage policies.

## KEY PARTNERS

- Washington State Department of Health and Health Care Authority
- Community Health Centers
- Reducing Cardiovascular Disease Inequities project in Pierce County

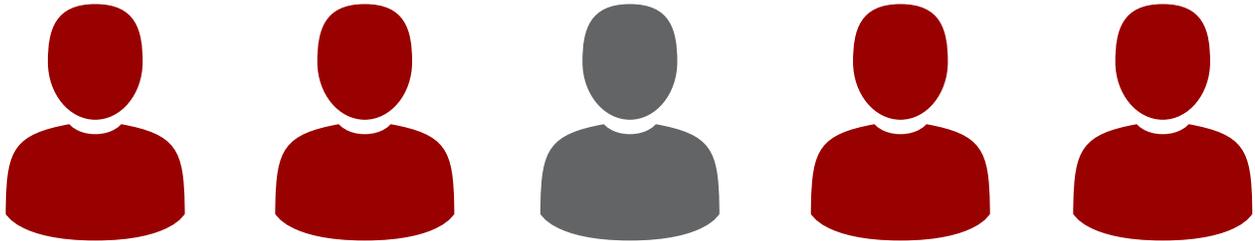


# PRIORITY: NUTRITION SECURITY

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WE ARE TRYING TO SOLVE?

1 in 10 people in Puget Sound are food insecure and those who do have access often are faced with less healthy options. There are many well-intentioned organizations doing fantastic work to deliver food to community members, however their efforts are often siloed and focus on the immediate rather than the opportunity to build systemic change.

1 in 5 Puget Sound individuals that live in *poverty* also have low or no access to healthy food near their home.



- In 2016, 453,410 people in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties were food insecure and over 1/3 of those were over the income thresholds for food programs like SNAP.
- A lot has changed since the most current 2016 data. Data from March to June 2020 in King County shows an increase for Basic Food assistance (federal SNAP) and the state Food Assistance Program—increasing by 20,000 households.

## IMPACT OPPORTUNITES

1. Support adoption and implementation of dinner programs for youth.
2. Increase availability of healthy and culturally appropriate food at pantries through adoption of nutrition policies.
3. Expand state and local funding for healthy food access programs.
4. Work with community and clinical organizations to adopt food insecurity screening and referral protocols.
5. Collaborate with farmer's markets to increase EBT use.
6. Pass policies to support healthy beverages for kids.

## KEY PARTNERS

- NW Harvest, Food Lifeline, Food Banks
- Healthy King County Coalition
- United Way
- Food Innovation Network



# PRIORITY: STOP YOUTH VAPING



## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WE ARE TRYING TO SOLVE?

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. 1 in 5 deaths in King County are caused by smoking. The number of youth using electronic cigarettes has skyrocketed, exposing them to high levels of nicotine.



Vaping by 10th graders increased 82% in just 2 years in King County, and 1 in 4 Washington State 10th graders reported vaping in the past 30 days.

## IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Pass legislation to strengthen state laws to remove all flavored tobacco products from market.
2. Strengthen school tobacco policies and ensure they reinforce health rather than deepen inequities.

## KEY PARTNERS

- Washington Poison Center
- Auburn Blue Ribbon Commission
- Auburn Tobacco Coalition
- Center for Multicultural Health

## NEXT STEPS

In addition to our policy, system, and environment change strategies we will continue to collaborate with our partners on supportive programs and initiatives. We also aim to evolve our efforts as we learn more from volunteers, supporters, and community stakeholders.

Please contact Cherish Hart to collaborate and let us know your feedback.

Cherish Hart  
Vice President, Health Strategies  
Cherish.Hart@heart.org



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