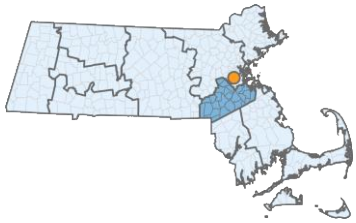
Brookline (Norfolk)

Brookline is a town in Norfolk County with 9,931 residents aged 65 and older. Compared to state average rates, older residents have lower rates of tooth loss, asthma, atrial fibrillation, chronic kidney disease, COPD, CHF, diabetes, heart attack, hypertension, liver disease, peripheral vascular disease, stroke, substance and tobacco use disorders, and high cholesterol. However, they have higher rates of hip fracture, Alzheimer's disease, benign prostatic hyperplasia, breast cancer, cataract, fibromyalgia, glaucoma, migraine, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, and depression. They are more likely to engage in physical activity, meet CDC guidelines for strength and aerobic activity, receive flu shots and shingles vaccines, have a regular doctor, and annual dental exam. Community resources to support healthy aging include a COA, two home health agencies, two assisted living facilities, two hospice agencies, two hospitals, 101 primary care providers, one skilled nursing facility, and three public libraries. Brookline is a designated AARP Age-Friendly Community and a Dementia-Friendly Community.



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS	Significantly different than state rate	Community estimate	State estimate
Total population (all ages)		62,698	6,984,205
Population 60 years or older as % of total population		20.4%	23.8%
Total population 60 years and older		12,785	1,661,076
Population 65 years or older as % of total population		15.8%	17.1%
Total population 65 years and older		9,931	1,195,589
% 65-74 years		55.4%	58.4%
% 75-84 years		31.6%	28.1%
% 85 years or older		13.0%	13.4%
% 65+ population who are female		60.0%	56.2%
% 85+ population who are female	*	58.0%	66.6%
Race and ethnicity of the population 65+			
% White		83.5%	86.3%
% African American	*	2.2%	4.4%
% Asian	*	9.5%	4.0%
% Other race(s)		4.8%	5.3%
% Hispanic	*	3.1%	4.8%
# 55+ who are Native American / Alaskan		55	3,537
Marital status of the population 65+			
% married		53.7%	54.0%
% divorced/separated		13.5%	15.8%
% widowed		18.5%	21.1%
% never married	*	14.2%	9.0%
Education of the population 65+			
% with less than high school education	*	4.0%	12.7%
% with high school or some college	*	22.6%	50.3%
% with college degree		21.3%	18.1%
% with graduate or professional degree	*	52.1%	18.9%
% 65+ population who speak only English at home	*	72.8%	83.1%
% 65+ population who are veterans of military service	*	7.0%	12.7%
% 60+ LGBT		2.9%	3.5%

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS	Significantly different than state rate	Community estimate	State estimate
HOUSING			
% 65+ population who live alone	*	36.2%	28.1%
Average household size (all ages)	*	2.3	2.5
Median house value (all ages)	*	$1,181,200	$483,900
% 60+ own home	*	65.9%	72.9%
% 60+ homeowners who have mortgage		39.5%	46.8%
% 65+ households (renter) spend >35% of income on housing	*	32.3%	43.6%
% 65+ households (owner) spend >35% of income on housing		22.4%	27.3%
% grandparents who live with grandchildren	*	0.9%	2.8%
# of assisted living sites		2	275
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH			
COST OF LIVING			
Elder Index			
Single, homeowner without mortgage, good health (County)	1.06	$32,352	$30,552
Single, renter, good health (County)	1.15	$44,208	$38,580
Couple, homeowner without mortgage, good health (County)	1.03	$45,960	$44,520
Couple, renter, good health (County)	1.06	$57,816	$54,548
ECONOMIC			
% 60+ receiving food stamps in past year		12.2%	13.3%
% 65+ employed in past year	*	32.4%	22.0%
% 65+ with income below the poverty line in past year		11.7%	9.9%
Median annual income for households with a householder age 65+	*	$96,643	$61,624
% 65+ households with annual income < $20,000		17.5%	17.1%
% 65+ households with annual income $20,000-$49,999	*	13.5%	25.3%
% 65+ households with annual income $50,000-$99,999	*	21.0%	26.7%
% 65+ households with annual income $100,000+	*	48.1%	31.0%
WELLNESS			
% 60+ getting the recommended hours of sleep		68.7%	63.1%
% 60+ doing any physical activity in past month	B	87.2%	72.8%
% 60+ met CDC guidelines for muscle-strengthening activity	B	42.6%	25.8%
% 60+ met CDC guidelines for aerobic physical activity	B	68.8%	53.9%
% 60+ with fair or poor self-reported health status	B	10.6%	18.5%
% 60+ with 15+ physically unhealthy days in past month		9.3%	13.1%
COMMUNITY			
Annual # unhealthy days due to air pollution for 65+ (County)		3	NA
AARP Age-Friendly Communities		Yes	Yes
Dementia Friendly Communities		Yes	Yes
# of public universities and community colleges		0	124
# of public libraries		3	455
# of Councils of Aging (COAs)		1	350
# of Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLI)		0	4
% households with a smartphone (all ages)	*	93.9%	87.6%
% households with only a smartphone to access the Internet (all ages)	*	2.1%	6.4%

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH	Significantly different than state rate	Community estimate	State estimate
COMMUNITY			
% households without a computer (all ages)	*	2.5%	5.7%
% households with access to Broadband (all ages)	*	95.2%	90.7%
% households without access to the Internet (all ages)	*	4.6%	9.2%
% 60+ who used Internet in past month	*	83.8%	70.6%
Voter participation rate in 2020 election (age 18+)		77.6%	80.8%
Homicide rate/100,000 persons (County)		1.3	2.3
# firearm fatalities (all ages) (County)		72	1267
# 65+ deaths by suicide (County)		54	527
Age-sex adjusted 1-year mortality rate	B	3.0%	3.9%
TRANSPORTATION			
% householders 65+ who own a motor vehicle	*	70.0%	84.2%
% 60+ who always drive or ride wearing a seatbelt		90.9%	85.9%
% 60+ drove under influence		NA	1.3%
# fatal crashes involving adult age 60+ (County)		66	545
AllTransit Score		9.30	2.93
HEALTH OUTCOMES			
FALLS			
% 60+ who fell in past year		23.8%	26.6%
% 60+ who were injured by a fall in past year		6.7%	10.1%
% 65+ with hip fracture	W	3.7%	3.2%
PREVENTION			
% 60+ with physical exam/check-up in past year		88.7%	89.8%
% 60+ flu shot in past year	B	75.8%	67.6%
% 60+ with pneumonia vaccine		63.5%	61.7%
% 60+ with shingles vaccine	B	63.9%	46.3%
% 60+ women with mammogram in past 2 years		80.9%	79.9%
% 60+ had colorectal cancer screening		68.2%	62.4%
% 60+ with optimal preventive health		30.9%	26.1%
NUTRITION & DIET			
% 60+ with 5 or more servings of fruit or vegetables per day		18.9%	16.3%
% 60+ self-reported obese	B	19.1%	27.8%
% 65+ with high cholesterol	B	71.0%	75.9%
% 60+ with high cholesterol screening		96.5%	96.3%
ORAL HEALTH			
% 60+ with annual dental exam	B	88.4%	74.9%
# dentists per 100,000 persons (all ages) (County)		104.8	69.0
% 60+ with loss of 6+ teeth	B	12.8%	28.2%

HEALTH OUTCOMES	Significantly different than state rate	Community estimate	State estimate
CHRONIC DISEASE			
% 65+ with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias	W	15.7%	12.9%
% 65+ with anemia		43.6%	43.1%
% 65+ with asthma	B	11.3%	13.9%
% 65+ with atrial fibrillation	B	14.2%	15.2%
% 65+ with benign prostatic hyperplasia (men)	W	48.0%	42.6%
% 65+ with breast cancer (women)	W	14.8%	11.6%
% 65+ with cataract	W	68.9%	64.3%
% 65+ with chronic kidney disease	B	30.2%	34.3%
% 65+ with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	B	11.7%	19.1%
% 65+ with colon cancer		2.3%	2.4%
% 65+ with congestive heart failure	B	16.9%	19.6%
% 65+ with diabetes	B	22.9%	28.6%
% 65+ with endometrial cancer (women)		2.5%	2.2%
% 65+ with fibromyalgia, chronic pain, and fatigue	W	39.3%	37.2%
% 65+ with glaucoma	W	31.5%	25.3%
% 65+ ever had a heart attack	B	3.8%	4.6%
% 65+ with HIV/AIDS		0.16%	0.30%
% 65+ with hypertension	B	65.2%	72.9%
% 65+ with ischemic heart disease		37.7%	37.1%
% 65+ with liver disease	B	10.5%	12.2%
% 65+ with lung cancer		2.0%	2.1%
% 65+ with migraine and other chronic headache	W	9.1%	8.0%
% 65+ with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis		55.7%	55.5%
% 65+ with osteoporosis	W	28.0%	20.1%
% 65+ with peripheral vascular disease	B	13.1%	18.1%
% 65+ with pressure ulcer or chronic ulcer		7.1%	7.8%
% 65+ with prostate cancer (men)	W	16.5%	13.6%
% 65+ with stroke	B	10.2%	11.2%
% 65+ with 4+ (out of 15) chronic conditions	B	57.5%	60.4%
% 65+ with 0 chronic conditions		7.2%	7.2%
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH			
# drug overdose deaths (all ages) (County)		961	11,845
% 65+ with substance use disorder	B	5.6%	9.4%
% 60+ excessive drinking		10.8%	10.9%
% 65+ with tobacco use disorder	B	5.7%	12.3%
% 60+ current smokers	B	2.5%	8.9%
MENTAL HEALTH			
% 60+ with 15+ days poor mental health in past month	B	4.5%	8.4%
% 65+ with depression	W	37.8%	34.6%
% 65+ with anxiety disorder		32.6%	33.0%
% 65+ with post-traumatic stress disorder		2.7%	3.0%
% 65+ with schizophrenia & other psychotic disorder		4.0%	4.0%

HEALTH OUTCOMES	Significantly different than state rate	Community estimate	State estimate
LIVING WITH DISABILITY			
% 65+ with self-reported hearing difficulty		11.7%	12.3%
% 65+ with self-reported vision difficulty	*	2.6%	4.8%
% 65+ with self-reported cognition difficulty		5.7%	7.5%
% 65+ with self-reported ambulatory difficulty		16.1%	18.6%
% 65+ with self-reported self-care difficulty		6.3%	7.3%
% 65+ with self-reported independent living difficulty		12.7%	13.2%
CAREGIVING			
# of Alzheimer's support groups		0	25
% grandparents raising grandchildren	*	0.11%	0.66%
ACCESS TO CARE			
% 65+ dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid	*	11.4%	17.1%
% 65+ Medicare managed care enrollees	*	20.5%	30.5%
% 60+ with a regular doctor	B	98.7%	96.5%
% 60+ who did not see a doctor when needed due to cost		2.9%	3.9%
# of primary care providers		101	8,899
# of hospitals		2	79
# of home health agencies		2	269
# of skilled nursing facilities		1	352
# of hospice agencies		2	76
# of community health centers		0	215
# of adult day health centers		0	143
SERVICE UTILIZATION			
# physician visits per year	*	8.5	7.3
# emergency room visits/1000 persons 65+ years annually	*	482.1	558.8
# Part D monthly prescription fills per person annually	*	48.9	53.5
# home health visits annually		2.9	2.9
# durable medical equipment claims annually	*	1.7	1.9
# inpatient hospital stays/1000 persons 65+ years annually	*	216.7	251.7
% Medicare inpatient hospital readmissions (as % of admissions)		18.9%	18.2%
# skilled nursing facility stays/1000 persons 65+ years annually	*	61.3	72.9
# skilled nursing home Medicare beds/1000 persons 65+ years		10.6	33.7
% 65+ getting Medicaid long term services and supports	*	2.3%	3.4%
% 65+ hospice users	*	2.2%	2.8%
% 65+ hospice users as % of decedents		39.4%	44.0%

NOTES

TECHNICAL NOTES

*For more information on data sources, measures, and methodology used in the 2025 Massachusetts Healthy Aging Data Report see our technical documentation at (healthyagingdatareports.org). For most indicators, the community and state values are estimates derived from sample data. Thus, it is possible that some of the differences between state and community estimates may be due to chance associated with population sampling. We use the terms “Better” and “Worse” to highlight differences between community and state estimates that we are confident are not due to chance. We balance two goals. First, we aim to report data at very local levels because we believe change is often locally driven. Second, we vowed to protect the privacy of the people providing the information reported. Thus, given the constraints of the data analyzed, we used a hierarchical approach to reporting.

Data Sources:

- *Population Characteristics: The U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey (ACS)) 2018-2022; Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS)), 2010-2022.*
- *Housing: ACS, 2018-2022; Mass.gov, 2023.*
- *Cost of Living: Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging at the University of Massachusetts Boston, 2023.*
- *Economic: ACS, 2018-2022.*
- *Wellness: BRFSS, 2010-2022.*
- *Community: AARP, 2023; ACS, 2018-2022; BRFSS, 2010-2022; CDC WONDER, 2016-2020; The CMS Master Beneficiary Summary File ABCD/Other (CMS), 2020-2021; Dementia Friendly Massachusetts, 2023; Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA), 2023; NECHE, 2023; OLLI, 2023; MA State Library, 2023; MA Secretary of State, 2023; U.S. EPA Air Compare, 2023.*
- *Transportation: ACS, 2018-2022; AllTransit™, 2023; BRFSS, 2010-2022; NHTSA, 2018-2022.*
- *Falls: CMS, 2020-2021; BRFSS, 2010-2022.*
- *Prevention: BRFSS, 2010-2022.*
- *Nutrition/Diet: BRFSS, 2010-2022; CMS, 2020-2021.*
- *Oral Health: BRFSS, 2010-2022; HRSA, 2023.*
- *Chronic Disease: CMS, 2020-2021.*
- *Behavioral Health: BRFSS, 2010-2022; CDC WONDER 2016-2020; CMS, 2020-2021.*
- *Mental Health: BRFSS, 2010-2022; CMS, 2020-2021.*
- *Living with Disability: ACS, 2018-2022.*
- *Caregiving: ACS, 2018-2022; Alzheimer’s Association, 2023.*
- *Access to Care: BRFSS, 2010-2022; CMS, 2020-2021; HRSA, 2023; Medicare.gov, 2023; Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (HHS), 2023.*
- *Service Utilization: CMS, 2020-2021.*

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