

Primary Care in Massachusetts

A high-functioning primary care system leads to better patient outcomes, lower costs, and more equitable care. Tracking the health of primary care in Massachusetts is essential for identifying areas that need strengthening and monitoring the impact of investments.



FINANCE

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON SPENDING FOR
PRIMARY CARE
SERVICES**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

In 2023, MassHealth had the highest percentage of spending on primary care (7.5%), as well as the highest use of alternative payment methods, which can be used to support primary care activities.

Commercial health plan spending on primary care represented 6.7% of total commercial spending in 2023, a slight decline from 6.9% in 2022.



CAPACITY

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON THE PRIMARY
CARE WORKFORCE
AND PIPELINE**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

Between 2022 and 2023, physicians working in primary care decreased slightly from 138 to 137 per 100,000 MA residents.

The percentage of Massachusetts physicians practicing primary care 6 to 8 years after graduation declined from 22% in 2023 to 19.2% in 2024.



ACCESS

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON ACCESS TO
PRIMARY CARE**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

In 2023, 41.2% of residents reported difficulty obtaining necessary health care in the past 12 months, an increase from 33.0% in 2021.

In 2022, 10.1% of Massachusetts residents received medical care at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), a slight increase from 10.0% in 2021.



CARE

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON UTILIZATION AND
QUALITY OF PRIMARY
CARE**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

Between 2022 and 2023, the rates of childhood combined immunizations and adult influenza vaccinations declined 1.4 percentage points and 3.2 percentage points, respectively.

Among patients ages 18-85 who were diagnosed with hypertension, the percentage with recent blood pressure adequately controlled increased 6.6 percentage points to 76.8% in 2023.



EQUITY

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON ASSESSING
INEQUITIES IN THE
SYSTEM**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

From 2021 to 2023, the percentage of residents of other/multiple races who reported difficulty obtaining necessary health care grew to 48.3%, the highest rate of any group.

In 2023, compared with other racial and ethnic groups, Hispanic residents reported lower rates of having a preventive care visit and higher rates of avoidable emergency department visits.

CONTEXT

**NOTES ON THE MASSACHUSETTS PRIMARY
CARE MARKET AND AT-A-GLANCE HEALTH
OUTCOMES MEASURES**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

Metrics included in this dashboard have been collected from various data sources. The Primary Care Dashboard databook includes multi-year trends where data is available. For additional information see the Primary Care [interactive workbook](#), [databook](#), and [technical appendix](#).



FINANCE



CAPACITY



ACCESS



CARE



EQUITY

CONTEXT ON THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

At-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts and market notes

High-quality primary care is “the provision of whole-person, integrated, accessible, and equitable health care by interprofessional teams who are accountable for addressing the majority of an individual’s health and wellness needs across settings and through sustained relationships with patients, families, and communities.”¹

Recently, the Massachusetts legislature passed a bill to strengthen and invest in primary care.² The Health Policy Commission issued recommendations to improve primary care in the Commonwealth in January 2025.³ Nationally, the Milbank Primary Care Scorecard reports a decline in primary care spending, dropping below 5% of total health care expenditures in 2022.⁴

Metrics in this dashboard are sourced from various publicly available datasets and reflect the most recent data available. Additional data stratified by race/ethnicity for these health outcome measures are included in the [databook](#).

Residents With a PCP

Percentage of Massachusetts residents who have a primary care practitioner (PCP) as part of plan design.

46.5%
2022

45.7%
2023

Infant and Child Mortality

Number of deaths of children ages 0-8 in Massachusetts.

Infants (per 1,000)

3.3

2021
(ages 0-1)

3.3

2022
(ages 0-1)

Children (per 100,000)

7.9

2021
(ages 1-8)

12.0

2022
(ages 1-8)

Maternal Mortality

Number of pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 Massachusetts resident live births.

10.5

2020

26.0

2021

Adult Life Expectancy

Average expected life span in Massachusetts, at birth.

All Males

77.2

2021

77.5

2022

All Females

83.0

2021

82.7

2022

Low Birth Weight

Percentage of all newborns in Massachusetts who have low birth weight (below 5.5 lbs).

7.5%

2021

7.9%

2022

Avoidable Emergency Department (ED) Use

Of Massachusetts residents who had at least one ED visit in the past 12 months, percentage who reported that their most recent visit could have been treated by a general doctor if one had been available.

34.6%

2021

36.2%

2023



FINANCE

Metrics focused on spending for primary care services

Primary Care Spending

Spending on primary care services as a percentage of total medical spending by insurance category and on a per member per month (PMPM) basis.

COMMERCIAL

2022 **6.9%** | \$1.74B | \$43.0 PMPM

2023 **6.7%** | \$1.83B | \$46.1 PMPM

MASSHEALTH

2022 **5.3%** | \$524M | \$31.3 PMPM

2023 **7.5%** | \$832M | \$48.3 PMPM

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

2022 **4.2%** | \$185M | \$48.2 PMPM

2023 **4.2%** | \$215M | \$52.3 PMPM

Managed Member Months Under an APM

The share of Massachusetts resident member months whose care is paid for under an alternative payment method (APM), which provide incentives to reduce overall costs (e.g., reduce unnecessary services and provide care in the most appropriate setting) while maintaining or improving quality.

COMMERCIAL

2021 **42.5%**

2022 **40.8%**

2023 **40.5%**

MASSHEALTH

2021 **87.4%**

2022 **87.4%**

2023 **89.0%**

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

2021 **47.2%**

2022 **47.4%**

2023 **51.2%**

For at-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts, see the [context page](#). For additional information on the metrics displayed above, including data sources, see the [technical appendix](#) and [databook](#).

Notes: Analysis represents nearly 100% of Massachusetts residents with private commercial insurance, 93.4% of MassHealth members, and 30.3% of Medicare members. Spending for MassHealth members with FFS coverage and Medicare beneficiaries with Original Medicare are not included in these results. For commercial partial-claim data where payers reported behavioral health and pharmacy carve-outs, CHIA estimated spending by service type. MassHealth included facility claims in primary care definition for CY 2022 and CY 2023. Due to payer exclusions from prior years, data may not tie to previously published data points. Data does not reflect aggregate statewide spending, and findings should not be extrapolated for that purpose. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

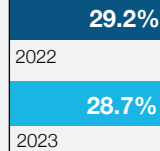


CAPACITY

Metrics focused on the primary care workforce and pipeline

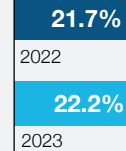
Percentage of Primary Care Physicians

Percentage of Massachusetts-based physicians who practice in primary care.



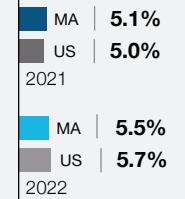
Percentage of Primary Care Physicians Age 65 or Older

Percentage of Massachusetts-based physicians who practice in primary care and are age 65 or older.



Percentage of Primary Care Physicians Leaving Primary Care

Percentage of primary care physicians in Massachusetts who no longer provide primary care services.



Primary Care Physicians per Population

Number of physicians working in primary care per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.



Primary Care Physician Assistants per Population

Number of physician assistants (PAs) working in primary care per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.



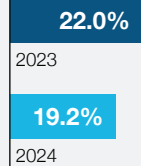
Primary Care Nurse Practitioners

Total number of nurse practitioners (NPs) working in primary care in Massachusetts.



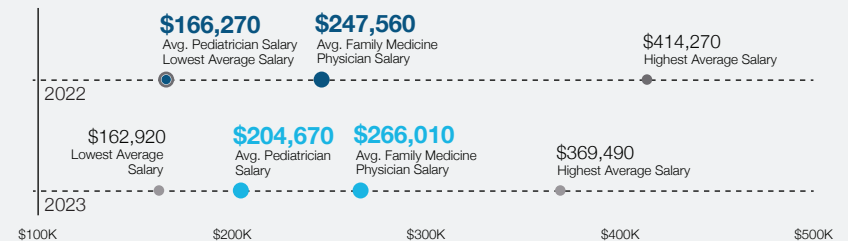
Percentage of Massachusetts Medical School Graduates Entering Primary Care

Percentage of Massachusetts medical and osteopathic physicians practicing in primary care 6 to 8 years after graduation.

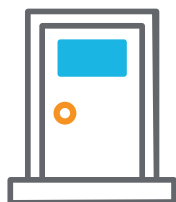


Primary Care Physician Salary

Estimated average annual salary for a family medicine physician and a pediatrician in Massachusetts compared with the average salary range across all Massachusetts physicians.



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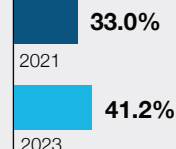


ACCESS

Metrics focused on access to primary care

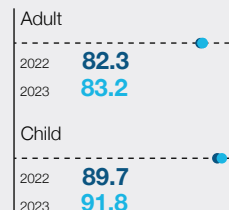
Difficulty Obtaining Necessary Health Care

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they had difficulty obtaining necessary health care in the past 12 months.



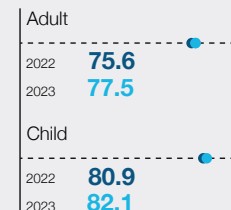
Primary Care Access (Commercial)

MA patient-reported experiences of primary care access for commercially insured members, based on aggregate survey responses on a 0-100 scale.



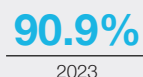
Primary Care Access (MassHealth)

MA patient-reported experiences of primary care access for MassHealth members, based on aggregate survey responses on a 0-100 scale.



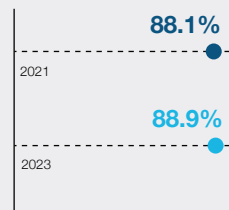
Residents With a Primary Care Provider

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they have a primary care provider.



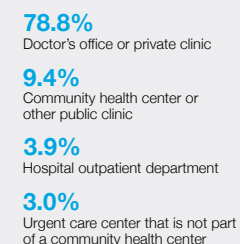
Usual Source of Care

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they have a usual source of care.



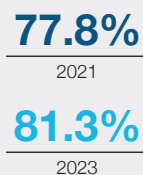
Usual Source of Care by Setting

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they have a usual source of care, by type of care setting.



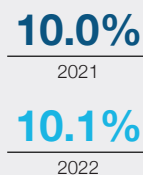
Preventive Care Visit

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they had a visit to a general doctor, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or midwife for preventive care in the past 12 months.



FQHC Patients Served

Percentage of MA residents who received medical care at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).



For at-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts, see the [context page](#). For additional information on the metrics displayed above, including data sources, see the [technical appendix](#) and [databook](#).

Note: Residents who have a primary care provider and usual source of care: patient-reported setting type were new Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey (MHIS) questions as of 2023.



CARE

Metrics focused on utilization and quality of primary care

Screenings (Adult, Commercial)

Colorectal cancer
Members 45-75 years of age.



Breast cancer
Women 50-74 years of age.

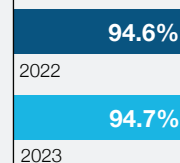


Cervical cancer
Women 21-64 years of age.



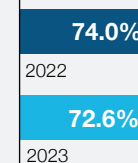
Well-Child Visits, First 15 Months

Percentage of commercially insured children in MA who had 6 or more well-child visits on or before their 15-month birthday.



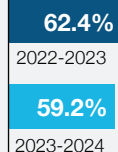
Childhood Immunization Status (Combination 10)

Percentage of children 2 years of age who received all recommended doses of the HEDIS combination 10 vaccinations by their 2nd birthday.



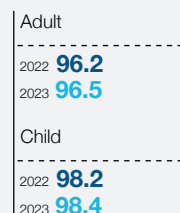
Adult Influenza Vaccinations

Percentage of MA adults (18+) who received the seasonal influenza vaccination in the past 12 months.



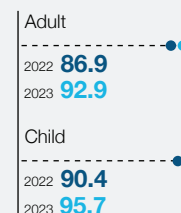
Patient-Provider Communication (Commercial)

MA patient-reported experiences of patient-provider communication in primary care visits in MA for commercially insured members, based on aggregate survey responses on a 0-100 scale.



Patient-Provider Communication (MassHealth)

MA patient-reported experiences of patient-provider communication in primary care visits in MA for MassHealth members, based on aggregate survey responses on a 0-100 scale.

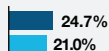


Chronic Disease Control (Commercial)

Controlling High Blood Pressure
Members 18-85 with hypertension, whose blood pressure is controlled (higher is better).

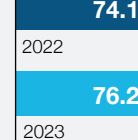


Diabetes-HbA1c Poor Control
Members 18-75 with diabetes whose most recent HbA1c level was >9% (lower is better).



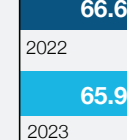
Behavioral Health Screening (Adult, Commercial)

MA patient-reported experiences of being screened for depression and anxiety during a primary care visit for commercially insured members, based on aggregate survey responses on a 0-100 scale.



Behavioral Health Screening (Adult, MassHealth)

MA patient-reported experiences of being screened for depression and anxiety during a primary care visit for MassHealth members based on aggregate survey responses, on a 0-100 scale.



For at-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts, see the [context page](#). For additional information on the metrics displayed above, including data sources, see the [technical appendix](#) and [databook](#).

Notes: Age range for colorectal cancer screening changed in 2022, so scores for this measure may reflect some adaptation to new specification. Childhood immunization status (combination 10) data was available as of 2023. For more information on HEDIS Clinical Quality Metrics, see the [HEDIS website](#) and CHIA's [Select Clinical Quality and Patient Experience Measures Report](#).



FINANCE



CAPACITY



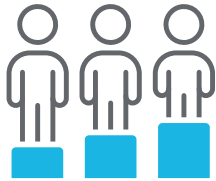
ACCESS



CARE



EQUITY



EQUITY

Metrics focused on assessing inequities in the system

Difficulty Obtaining Necessary Health Care

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they had difficulty obtaining necessary health care in the past 12 months, stratified by race and ethnicity (lower is better).

Usual Source of Care

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they have a usual source of care, stratified by race and ethnicity (higher is better).

Residents With a Primary Care Provider

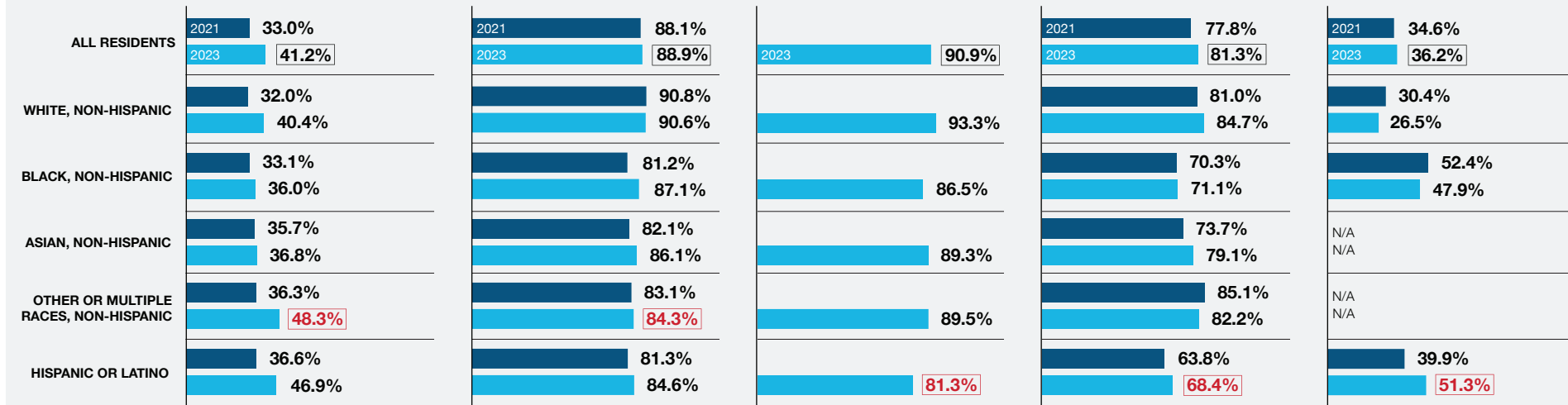
Percentage of MA residents who reported that they have a primary care provider, stratified by race and ethnicity (higher is better).

Preventive Care Visit

Percentage of MA residents who reported that they had a visit to a general doctor, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or midwife for preventive care in the past 12 months, stratified by race and ethnicity (higher is better).

Avoidable Emergency Department (ED) Use

Of MA residents who had at least one ED visit in the past 12 months, the percentage who reported that their most recent visit could have been treated by a general doctor if one had been available, stratified by race and ethnicity (lower is better).



For at-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts, see the [context page](#). For additional information on the metrics displayed above, including data sources, see the [technical appendix](#) and [databook](#).

Notes: Red boxes identify worst performing percentage compared with percentages for all residents (gray boxes) for each metric in 2023. Residents who have a primary care provider is available as of 2023. Regional stratifications are included in the primary care [interactive workbook](#). N/A = Suppressed due to cell size.



NOTES

1. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), *Implementing High-Quality Primary Care: Rebuilding the Foundation of Health Care* (Washington, D.C., 2021), <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/25983/implementing-high-quality-primary-care-rebuilding-the-foundation-of-health>.
2. General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, “An Act Enhancing the Market Review Process,” last accessed March 18, 2025, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter343>.
3. Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, *A Dire Diagnosis: The Declining Health of Primary Care in Massachusetts and the Urgent Need for Action* (Boston, January 2025), <https://masshpc.gov/publications/policyresearch-brief/dire-diagnosis-declining-health-primary-care-massachusetts-and>.
4. Milbank Memorial Fund, *The Cost of Neglect: How Chronic Underinvestment in Primary Care Is Failing US Patients* (New York, February 2025), <https://www.milbank.org/publications/the-health-of-us-primary-care-2025-scorecard-report-the-cost-of-neglect/>.