

# Health-Related Work Among Massachusetts CDCs

~ **MACDC GOALS Report**

*November, 2020*

# Introduction

The MACDC GOALs Initiative - Growing Opportunities, Assets, and Leaders across the Commonwealth - measures our field's annual progress in strengthening neighborhoods, communities and families across Massachusetts. For almost 20 years, MACDC has surveyed its members on the breadth and impact of their programs, and published reports on their collective impact.

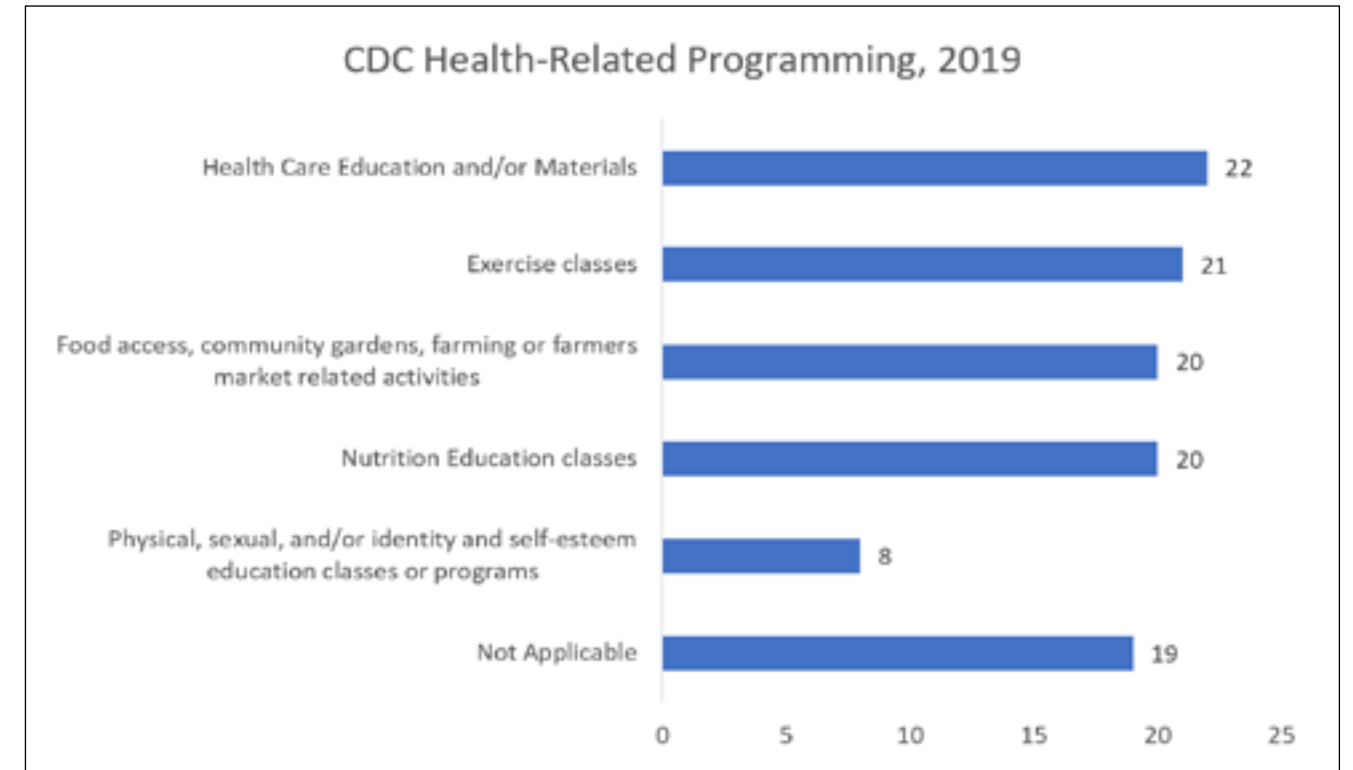
In January 2020, MACDC launched the 2020 MACDC GOALs Survey. The GOALs Survey, consisting of a series of smaller surveys specific to programs and projects, was sent to the 60 certified CDCs in Massachusetts, requesting data on these programs and projects in calendar year 2019. The CDCs responded to questions through an online platform, which was developed in recent years by MACDC. MACDC released the [GOALs Report](#) in July, and a detailed [Appendix](#) of our findings shortly thereafter.

The 2020 Survey contained a survey specific to CDCs' health-related work so that MACDC can understand the depth and breadth of CDCs' deepening engagement in this area. This report describes Massachusetts CDCs' engagement in the health space and creates a basis from which to deepen this engagement – as individual CDCs and as the Community Development movement as a whole. We'd like to acknowledge MACDC's Health Equity Committee, which was instrumental in designing the questions in the health portion of the 2020 GOALs survey.

Note: Because MACDC's 2020 GOALs Report, including these health-specific data, reflects data from 2019, it does not yet reflect CDCs' swift and comprehensive response to the COVID-19 crisis. Beginning in early 2020, Massachusetts CDCs, well-positioned at the heart of their communities, pivoted to address immediate challenges in their communities resulting from the health and economic hardships caused by this global pandemic. Devastating in so many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the inextricable convergence of health and community development, and presents an opportunity to further envision the ways in which health equity can be permanently embedded into the fabric of the Community Development Movement. In advance of seeing this data reflected in next year's GOALs report, you can learn more about CDCs immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic [here](#). In the meantime, the 2019 data presented in this report indicate the ways in which CDCs positioned themselves in the health space in advance of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# CDC Health Related Programming

Two-thirds of the fifty-seven Massachusetts CDCs that completed the 2020 GOALs survey reported at least one type of health-related programming. CDCs were equally likely to report programming related to food access, health care education, nutrition education, and exercise classes. Additionally, approximately one in seven CDCs surveyed reported physical, sexual and/or identity and self-esteem education classes or programs. The graph below illustrates the responses from fifty-seven MACDC members regarding their health-related programming.



Additionally, several respondents indicated programming that fell outside of the categories indicated in the survey. This programming included: social work services provided to parents in childcare programs, planning for a new Community Health Center, a population health clerkship with local medical students, asthma abatement work, and workshops about growing food and building hydroponic systems.

The GOALs Survey separately asks Massachusetts CDCs about their lead paint abatement work. Lead abatement is a significant public health issue, particularly for young children. Lead is a potent neurotoxin and exposure has been linked to a variety of health problems, including intellectual and behavioral disabilities, lowered IQ, stunted growth, hearing loss, and anemia. Lead was used in paint until 1978 and thousands of homes in Massachusetts still contain lead paint. In 2019 eight Massachusetts CDCs deleaded a total of 147 units. The lead abatement loans and grants for these units totaled \$3.6 million in 2019.

## CDC Health Related Programming



Revitalize CDC in Springfield improves housing conditions by performing assessments and interventions for adults and children with asthma and making home improvements that allow seniors to safely remain in their home. (Photo credit: Revitalize CDC)



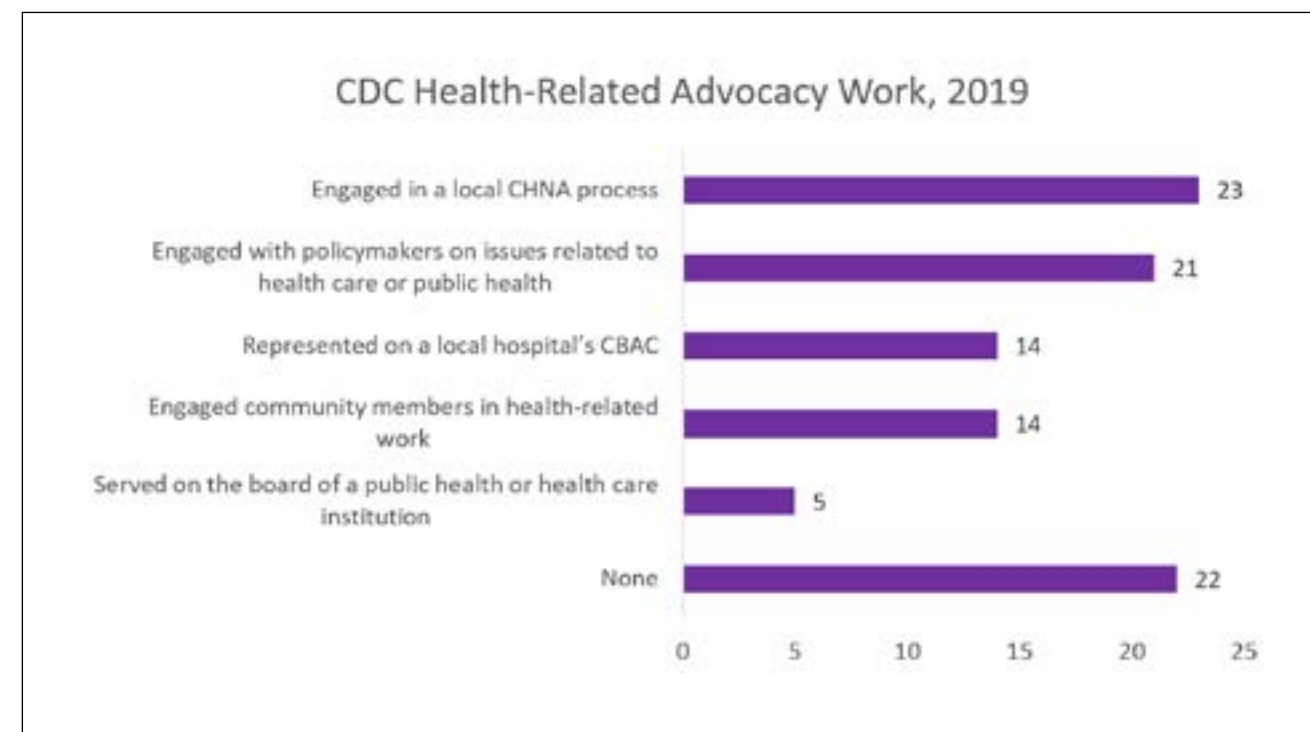
Valley Veggies, a program owned and operated by the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center (a program of the Franklin County CDC), provides season extension opportunities for farmers and access to local food year-round for consumers. Valley Veggies partners with local farms to source 150,000 lbs. of produce each season and freeze it at peak freshness. These products, packed into bulk and retail packs, are purchased by K-12 schools, colleges, hospitals and other entities seeking to participate in the Farm to Institution movement. (Photo Credit: Franklin County Community Development Corporation)

## Health-Related Advocacy Work

The responses to our GOALS Survey also indicated that about two-thirds of our members engaged in health-related advocacy work in 2019. Over a third of respondents engaged with policymakers on issues related to health care or public health and a third engaged in a local Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process. Approximately one in four CDCs surveyed indicated that they engaged community members in health-related work and one in four was represented on a local hospital's Community Benefits Advisory Committee (CBAC).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, five CDCs indicated that they had representation

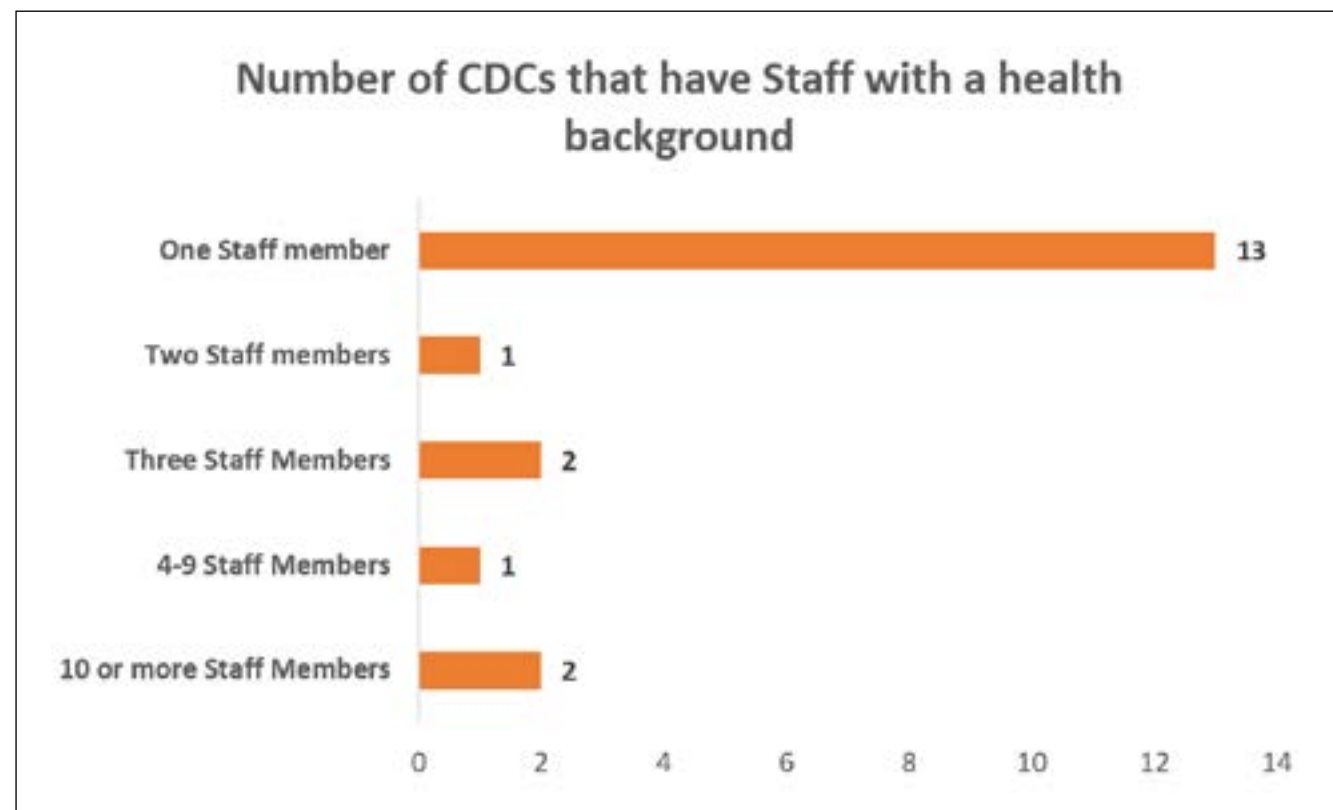


<sup>1</sup> Non-profit hospitals are required to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. A hospital's Community Benefits Advisory Committee uses the CHNA to make decisions about where to direct a hospital's community health funds.

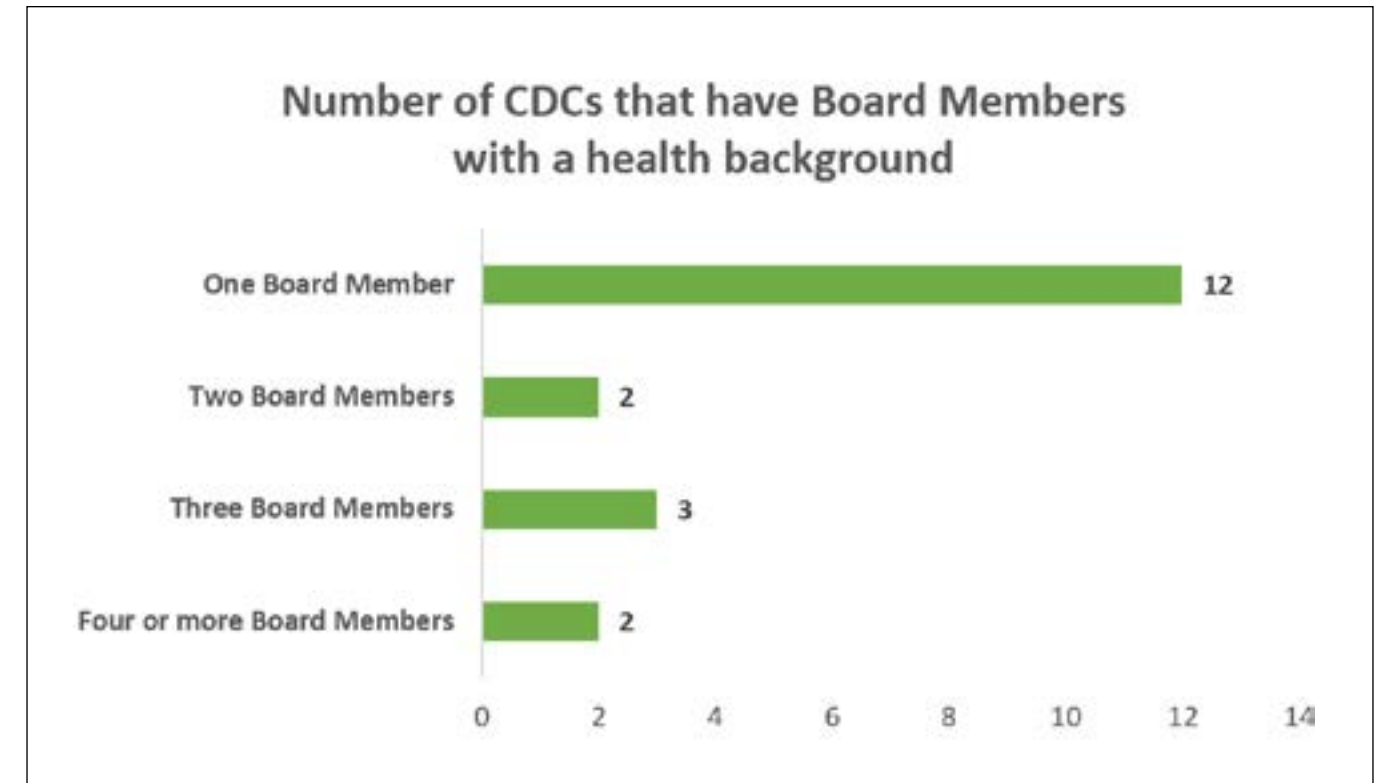


# Staff and Board Background and Engagement

In an effort to better understand engagement in health-related work, the 2020 GOALs Survey asked a number of questions about the extent that staff and board have training in public health and/or health care and the extent of staff time dedicated to this work. About a third of Massachusetts CDCs indicated that they have staff or board members with a formal health background. The following graphs illustrate the number of staff and board members that Massachusetts CDCs have dedicated to this important work.



# Staff and Board Background and Engagement

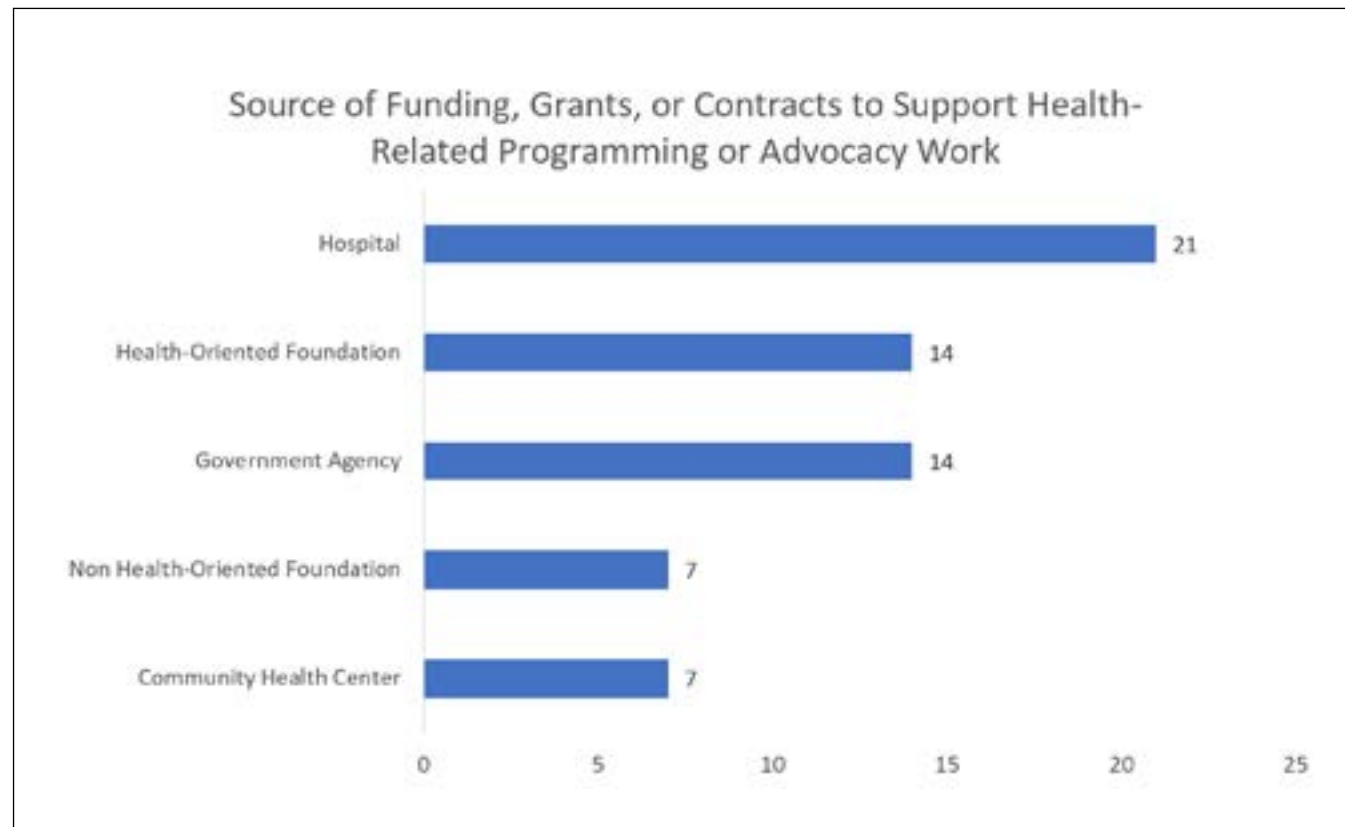


Among CDCs with staff time dedicated to health-related work, the amount of time ranged from 0.1 full-time equivalent employees to 12 full-time equivalent employees for all except for one CDC. The South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) which is a Community Action Agency serving 70,000 individuals annually, was the outlier with 59 of their 675 employees dedicate to health-related work. The vast majority of Massachusetts CDCs indicated that they have less than one full-time equivalent dedicated to health-related work.



# Funding and Relationships

Thirty-one of fifty-seven respondents indicated that they receive funding for their health-related work. The source of this funding varied considerably, with the most CDCs indicating that they received funding from a hospital partner. We also know that \$546,000 was raised in 2019 from donors in the Health Services industry through the Community Investment Tax Credit (CITC program). Additionally, one in four CDCs indicated that they received funding from a federal, state, or municipal level government agency. An equal number reported receiving funding from a health-oriented foundation. One out of eight CDCs said that they received funding from a Community Health Center. The same number reported receiving funding from a non-health-oriented foundation. About two-thirds of CDCs who reported that they received funding for health-related work indicated that they received funding from more than one source.



# Funding and Relationships

Respondents were also asked to list any organizations with whom they partner to engage in health-related programming apart from funding relationships. CDCs listed a range of local partners, including, but not limited to: Community Health Centers, community health collaboratives, municipal health commissions, senior centers, public schools, and police departments. CDCs also indicated partnerships with national agencies and organizations, such as Medicaid's Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the American Heart Association.



Madison Park Development Corporation partners with the Dana Farber Cancer Institute to Peer Health Leader Program partnership. (Photo credit: Madison Park Development Corporation)

# Conclusions and Future Directions

Overall, the majority of Massachusetts CDCs were engaged in some explicit type of health-related work in 2019, although the specific nature and scale of this work varied considerably by organization. The GOALs report gives MACDC a sense of what this work looks like across the state. The COVID-19 pandemic has further illustrated the ways in which health equity is woven into the fabric of the Community Development movement; look for more information about that in next year's GOALs Survey. MACDC supports CDCs to continue to strengthen their engagement in the health space in several ways:

- MACDC has a staff position devoted to supporting Massachusetts CDCs health-related work.
- We provide expert Technical Assistance to CDCs looking to deepen their health-related partnerships, including working with CDCs to secure funding for this work;
- MACDC's Health Equity Committee is an opportunity for CDC leaders to learn from one another and Subject Matter Experts about topics related to health equity, such as hospital-CDC partnerships, food distribution efforts, and serving senior residents;
- MACDC's Health Equity newsletter publicizes opportunities for funding, training, and advocacy in the health space;
- Through MACDC's Mel King Institute, we offer trainings, such as "The Convergence of Health Equity and Community Development," which will next be offered in November 2020; and
- We advocate for policies at the intersection of health and community development, such as increased funding for the Massachusetts Food Trust Program and for lead abatement loans and grants.

While this report focuses on CDC work with an explicit health focus, CDCs impact on health outcomes stretches far beyond what is covered in this report. Virtually all of the initiatives in which CDCs are engaged improve health outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health, such as housing, poverty and racism.

MACDC's partnerships in the health space help to mobilize the health sector to support Community Development goals, further strengthening the convergence between the fields.

MACDC looks forward to continuing to support our members in deepening their engagement in this important work.

You can learn more about individuals CDCs impact in the health space, as well as find data on other areas of impact by checking out the GOALs appendix on the [MACDC website](#).



