

# Public Health Threats and *Opportunities* at the Local Level:

## Case Study - Boston



Dr. Bisola Ojikutu,

Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston

Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission

March 5, 2025



**1799**

The Boston Board of Health is established with Paul Revere as its president

**1996**

The Boston Public Health Commission is formed, resulting from the merger of Boston City Hospital and Boston University Hospital

**2011**

Racial justice health equity initiative launches, and BPHC adopts racial justice and health equity framework

**2020**

Racism is declared a public health crisis by the Mayor of Boston

**1877**

The Boston City Ambulance Service is established, today known as Boston EMS

**2003**

BPHC's "Clean Air Works" Workplace Smoking Regulation bans smoking in Boston workplaces, bars, and restaurants

**2017**

BPHC is awarded national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board

**2022**

BPHC updates our mission statement to reflect our commitment to anti-racism





# Our Mission

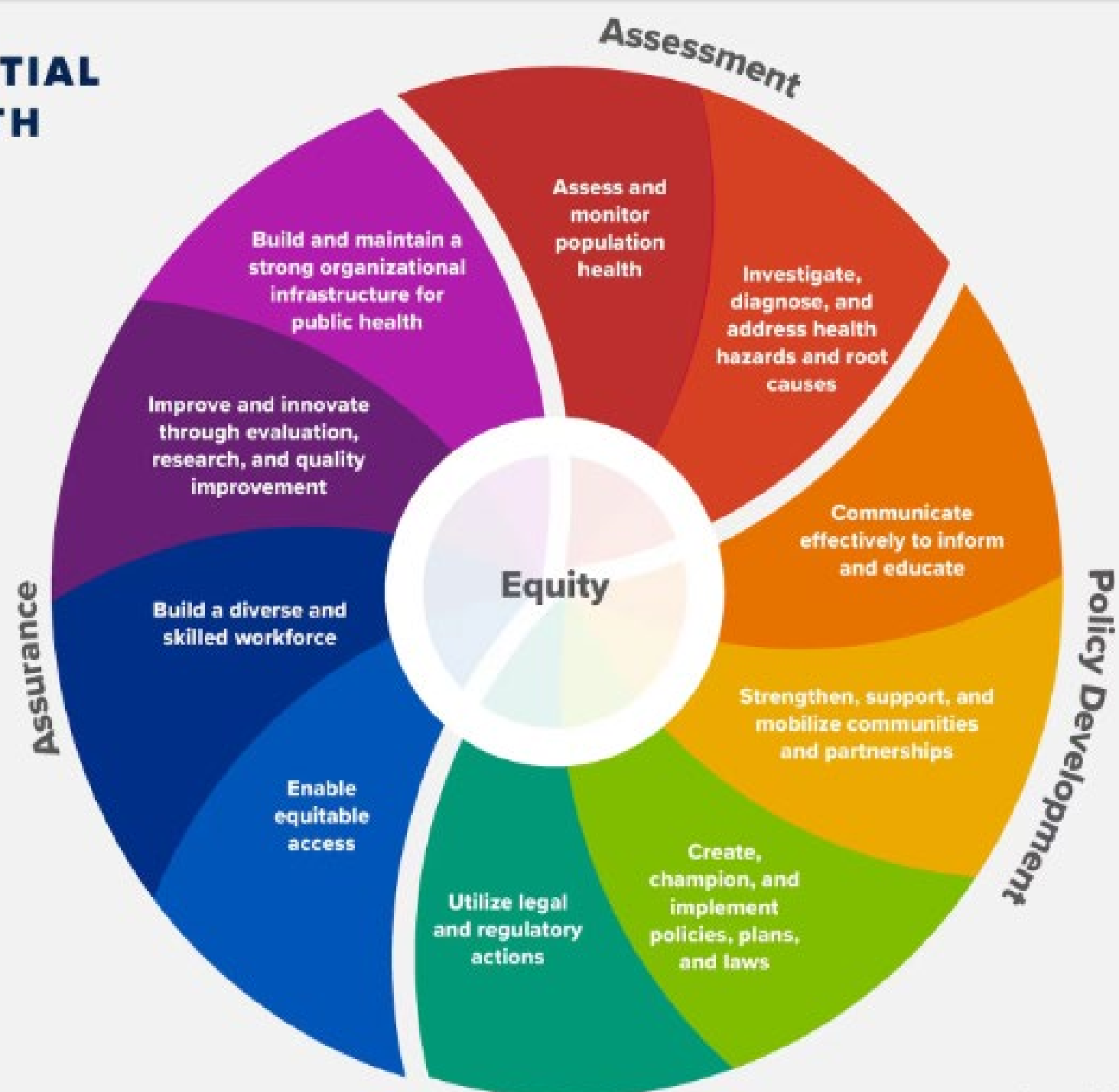
To work in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities.



# THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

*To protect and promote the health of all people in all communities*

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being.





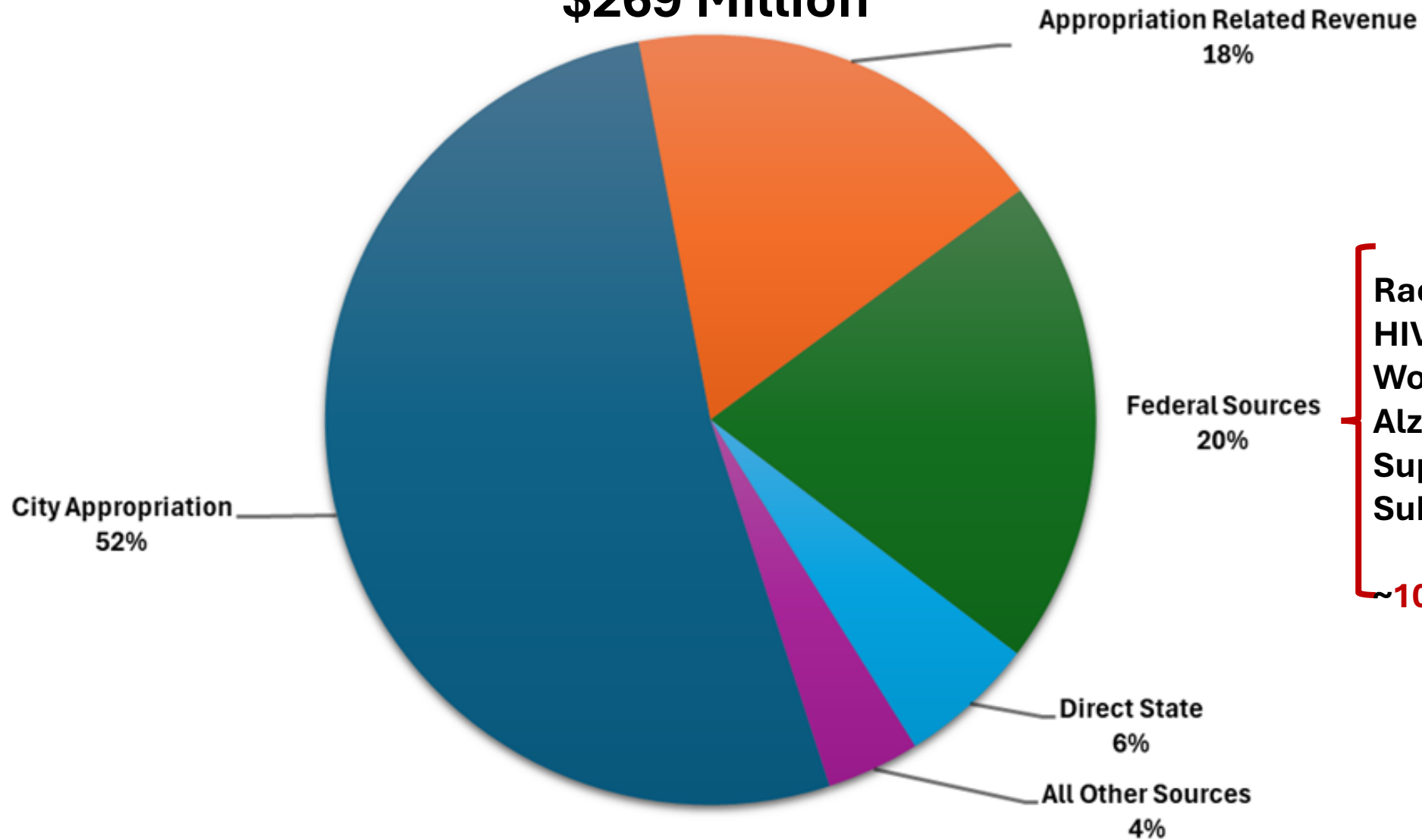


## This is Local Public Health



# BPHC FY25 BUDGETED REVENUE BREAKDOWN

**\$269 Million**



**Racial and Ethnic Disparities  
HIV Care & Treatment  
Workforce Development  
Alzheimer's Care  
Supportive Housing  
Substance Use Disorder**















**~100 Staff Members**



# Wu says cabinet will reflect city's diversity



## MEET THE CABINET HEADS

 <b>BRIANNA MILLOR</b> Chief of Community Engagement <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>DR. BISOLA OJIKUTU</b> Executive Director, Public Health Commission <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>JESSICAH PIERRE</b> Chief of Communications <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>SHUMEANE L. BENFORD</b> Chief, Emergency Management <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>MARY SKIPPER</b> Superintendent of Boston Public Schools <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>DION IRISH</b> Chief of Operations <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>ALEX LAWRENCE</b> Interim Chief Information Officer <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>
 <b>REV. MARIAMA WHITE-HAMMOND</b> Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>JASCHA FRANKLIN-HODGE</b> Chief of Streets <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>JAMES ARTHUR DEMISON</b> Chief of Planning and Director of Boston Planning and Development Agency <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>JOHN 'JACK' DEMPSEY</b> Fire Commissioner and Chief of Department <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>SHEILA A. DILLON</b> Chief of Housing and Director of Neighborhood Development 617-435-4353	 <b>KARA ELLIOTT-ORTEGA</b> Chief of Arts and Culture <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>	 <b>MIKE FIRESTONE</b> Chief of Policy and Strategic Planning <a href="#">SEND AN EMAIL</a>





# Advancing LGBTQ+ Health Equity in Boston

A Community-Driven Assessment of Health Needs



## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at BPHC

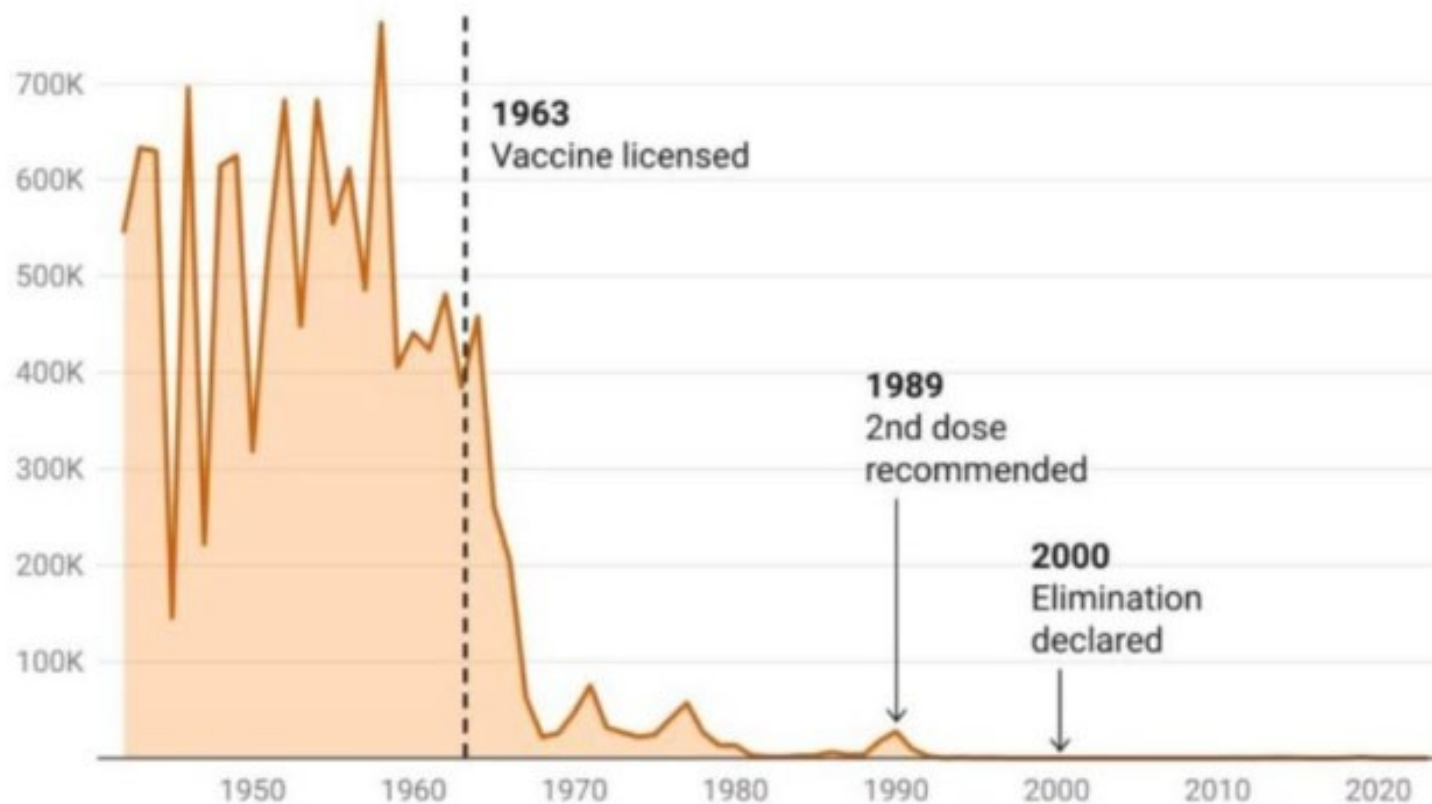
Bisola Ojikutu MD, MPH, FIDSA  
Commissioner of Public Health, City of Boston  
Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission  
June 2024





## The public health success of the measles vaccine

Reported number of measles cases in the United States, 1942–2023



*Hover or click to see values.*

*Note: Elimination is defined as the absence of endemic measles transmission in a region for at least 12 months.*

# Recent Measles Outbreaks

- 2019
  - 71 cases, 86% unvaccinated
  - Clark County, Washington State
- 2022
  - 85 cases, 94% unvaccinated
  - Central Ohio
- 2025
  - 159 cases as of March 4th, 1 death, most unvaccinated
  - South Plains Texas



# The Washington Post

“

Relying on vitamin A instead of the measles vaccine is not only dangerous and ineffective, but it puts children at serious risk.

AAP President  
Dr. Susan Kressly

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



## Misinformation, Disinformation and Partial Truths

- Emphasis on nutrition
- **Vitamin A** as prevention and treatment for measles
- Herd immunity and intentional infection



## Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Hearing

*Boston is the safest major city in America.*

- A welcoming home for everyone
- Investments in public safety AND public health
- Community engagement, collaborative partnerships, neighborhood-level relationships
- BPHC & the public health approach to violence





# RFK Jr. Calls Out Obese Americans: 'They Were Sent to the Circus'

Published Aug 23, 2024 at 4:55 PM EDT

Updated Aug 23, 2024 at 5:06 PM EDT



*The New York Times*

## *Why Kennedy Sees an 'Epidemic' of Chronic Disease Among Children*

Trends in child health are in fact worrisome, and scientists welcome a renewed focus on foods and environmental toxins. But vaccines and fluoride are not the cause.

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 **NBC NEWS**

**RFK Jr.'s insistence that the government ignores chronic disease is misguided**

# Life Expectancy in Boston by Census Tract, 2015-2021

## A Census Tract in Back Bay



**92 years**

Median Income: \$141,250

College Degree: 91%

White: 82%

Black/African-American: 1%

Latinx: 8%

## A Census Tract in Roxbury



**69 years**

Median Income: \$41,211

College Degree: 44%

White: 13%

Black/African-American: 50%

Latinx: 32%

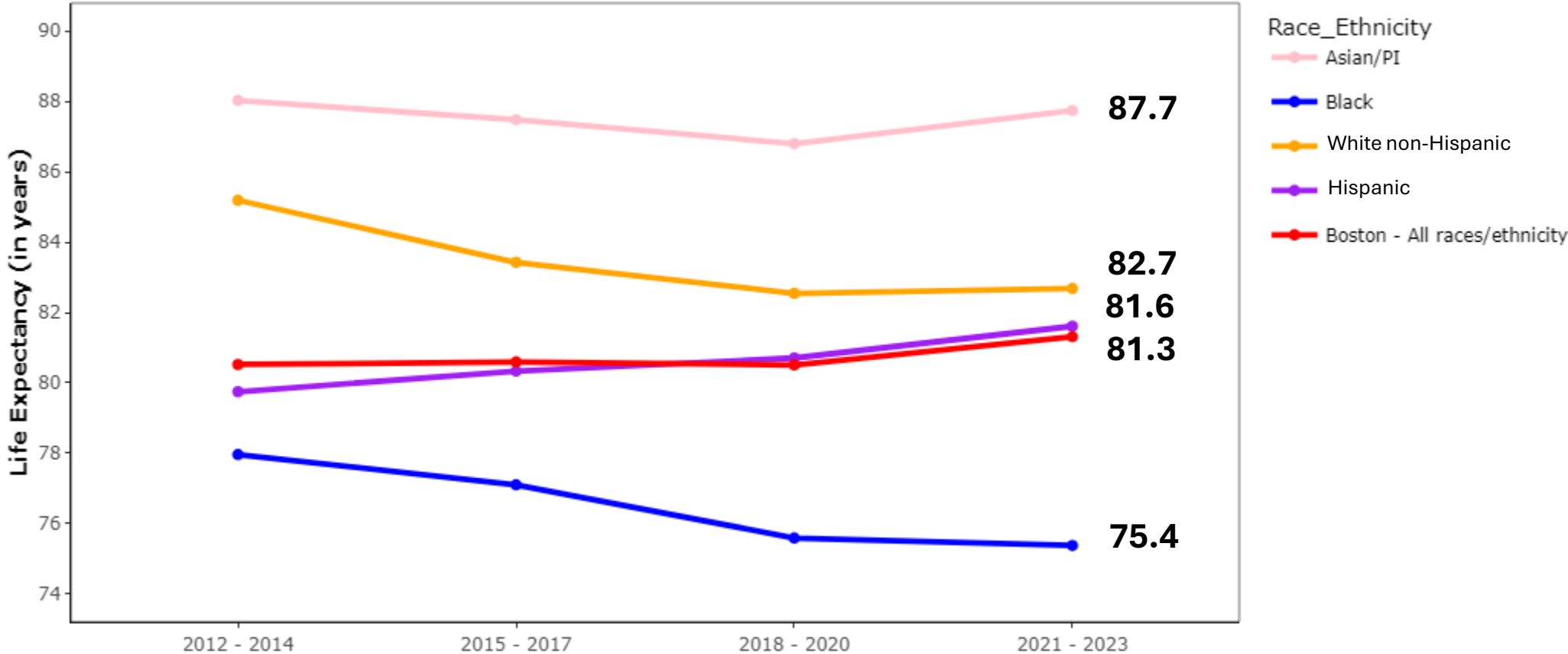
**23 years**







# Trends in Average Life Expectancy in Boston (2012-2023)



# Leading Causes of Premature Mortality Among Black Individuals in Boston, 2021-2023

	Top 3 Causes of Death
1	Drug Overdose
2	Cancer
3	Heart Disease

## Focus Areas:

### Leading Causes of Premature Mortality

- Drug Overdoses
- **Cardiometabolic Diseases**
- **Preventable Cancers**

### Health of Bostonians Across Lifespan

- Mental Health
- Infant and Maternal Health
- Older Adult Health



## Long Term Goal:

**To Close the Gap in Life Expectancy in Boston by 2035**



Health outcomes like life expectancy and premature mortality are primarily determined by social factors and conditions within our communities



# Addressing Upstream Drivers of Premature Mortality



**A multi-sector partnership that will** support efforts identified by community-led coalitions that improve health and well-being by **promoting economic mobility,** a key priority in the Boston CHIP

**How will this partnership achieve this?**

- **\$10M catalytic investment from Atrius Health Equity Foundation**

# Be an Advocate

- Mobilize, Speak Up
- Strong Communities are Healthy Communities
- Participate in Civic Engagement
- Join the Public Health Workforce
  - Job Opportunities at BPHC
  - Internships at BPHC
  - Student Opportunities at MPHA – Sign up for their newsletter!



# Thank You!

## *Acknowledgements:*

BPHC Communications, Exec Office and IGR

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