

Attachment #

# Cambridge, MA

## 2014 Community Health Assessment:

### *Understanding the Health Issues within the Community*

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# What is a Community Health Assessment?

- Provides a portrait of the health-related needs and strengths of a community
- Examines issues of the community overall as well as those most underserved
- Provides a foundation for a data-driven planning process





# Community-Based Approach

- Assessment and planning process is using a community-based, participatory approach –
  - Led by Cambridge Public Health Department with engagement from a cross-section of partners
    - Center for Families
    - Inflectional Services Department
    - Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House
    - Transition House
    - Cambridge Chamber of Commerce
    - Healthy Children Task Force
    - Food and Fitness Policy Council
    - Fire Department
    - Harvard Square Business Association
    - CASPAR
    - Cambridge Public Schools
  - Involvement of residents, stakeholders, organizations, and agencies to engage a range of community members and leaders

# Community Health Assessment Methods

- Reviewed existing data on social, economic, and health issues
  - Data from local and state sources
- Conducted community health survey with 1,627 respondents who live or work in Cambridge
  - Explored health concerns, health care access, & priorities for services and programming
  - About 20% of survey respondents speak language other than English at home



## Methods - Focus Groups and Interviews

- Focus groups and interviews conducted with over 70 people
  - Outreach workers and community organizations were critical to focus group efforts
- Example focus groups
  - American-born Black adults, immigrant women and families, low-income residents, seniors, youth
- Example interviews
  - City councilors, health care providers, police department, leaders from faith-based and disabilities communities



# Data Limitations

## ➤ Quantitative Data

- Most recent year available differ by data source
- Secondary data not always current
- Survey data self-reported and used convenience (non-random) sampling method

## ➤ Qualitative Data

- Non-random and small samples, so may not be representative of all points of view



Health  
Prenatal  
Suicide  
Alcohol  
Obesity  
Poverty  
Healthcare  
Environment  
Poisoning  
Homicide  
Mental  
Diet  
Disease  
Birthweight  
Hospitalization  
Overweight  
Diabetes  
Tobacco  
STIs  
Race  
Exercise  
Income  
Falls  
HIV  
Lead  
Stroke  
Cancer  
Injuries  
Diabetes  
Tobacco  
Race  
Heart  
Drugs  
Asthma  
HIV  
Disease

# Who Lives in Cambridge?

## Diversity Viewed as a Major Strength

*“Cambridge is a unique and wonderful city because of its diversity. As a minority, the open-mindedness, political access, the way we interact with one another are the qualities that attract me the most living here.” — Survey respondent*

- Greater diversity among Cambridge youth
- 1/3 of Cambridge residents speak language other than English at home



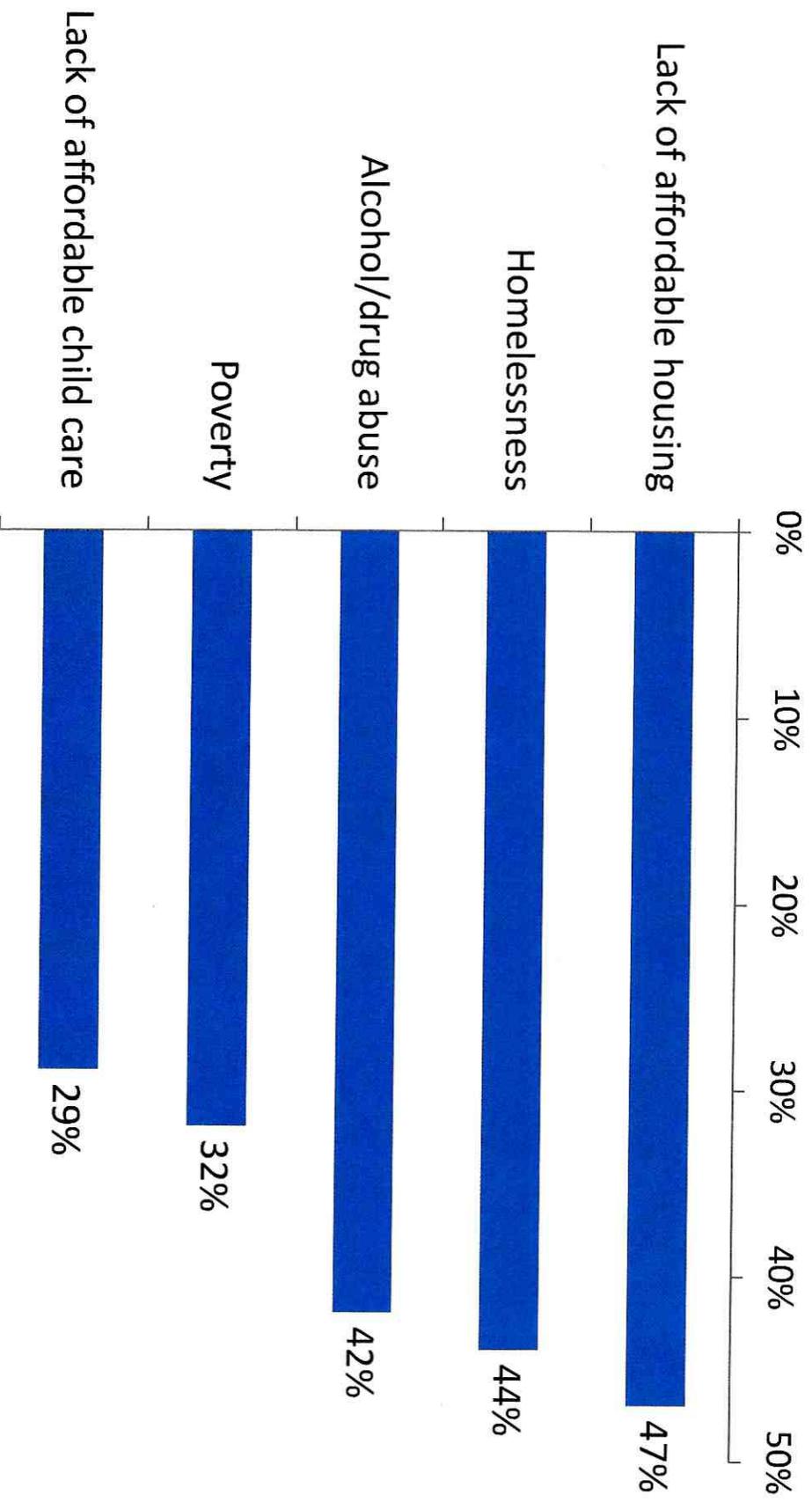
# Affordability a Concern

- Focus group and interview participants described Cambridge as a city of both affluence and poverty

*“It’s a city of haves and have-nots.”* —Focus group participant

- 21% of Cambridge households earn under \$25,000, while 35% earn \$100,000 or more

# Survey: What are the Top Social/Economic Concerns that Affect Health in Cambridge?



DATA SOURCE: Cambridge Community Health Assessment Survey, 2013

## Survey: What are the Top Social/Economic Concerns that Affect Health in Cambridge?

- Top 3 issues the same among respondents regardless race or ethnicity, yet other issues were different
- Nearly 30% of African American respondents said
  - Discrimination
  - Lack of employment opportunities
- Nearly 20% of Hispanic respondents said
  - Hunger
  - Lack of affordable and healthy food choices

# Immigrant Populations: Social/Economic Concerns

- Immigrant women and families in focus groups discussed several social and economic issues:
  - Employment
  - Neighborhood safety
  - Language barriers to accessing information on services
  - Importance of having a support system

*“Adolescents, adults, and elderly are all potentially at risk. Without a social network like volunteering or jobs, people are at greater risk of becoming depressed.”—Focus group participant*

*“We need additional educational workshops that focus on learning English. Language is a big barrier that can make people feel very isolated.”—Focus group participant*

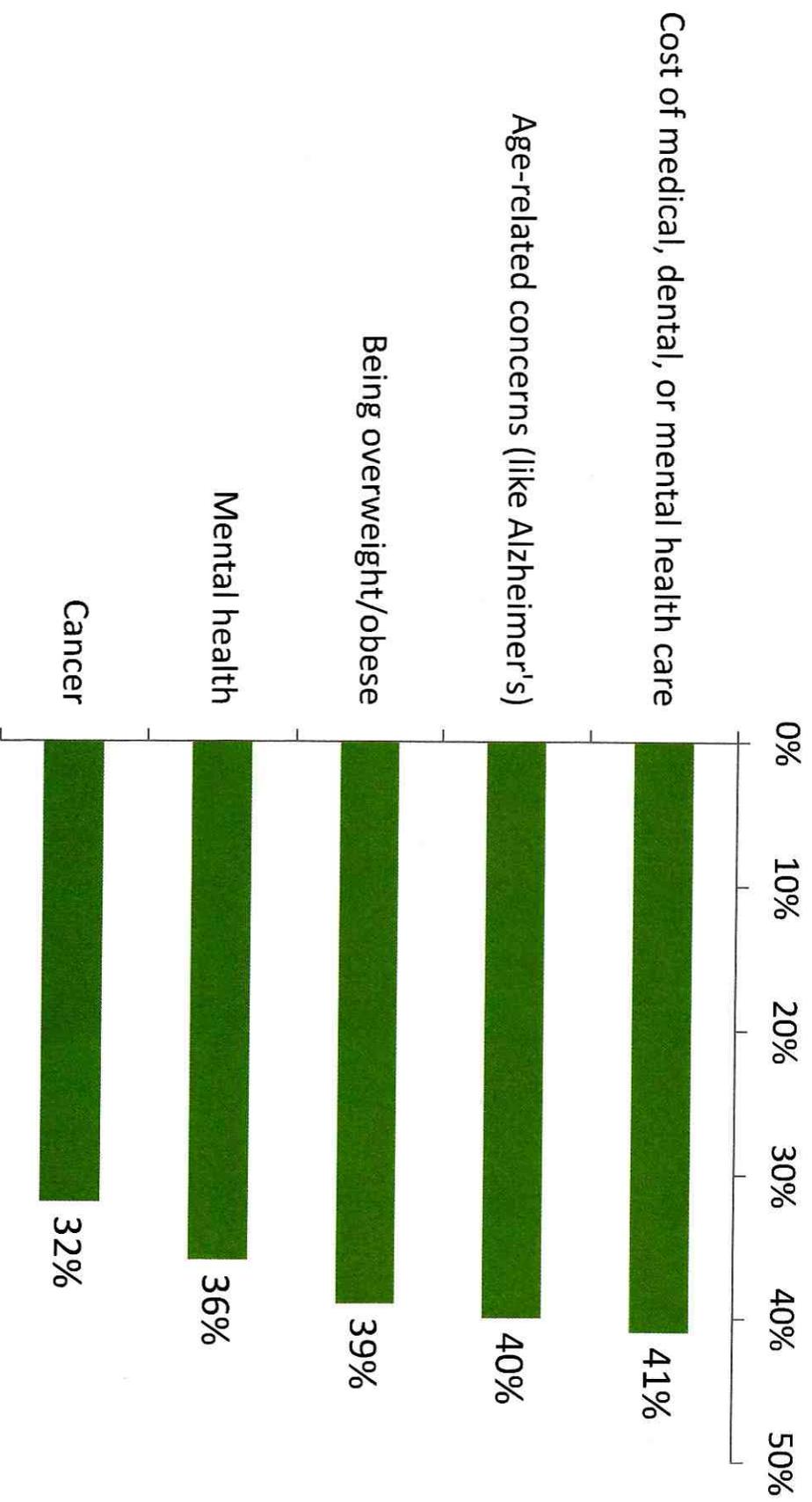
# Identified Strengths of the Community

- The City of Cambridge was viewed as having numerous strengths, including:
  - An array of community and social service organizations
  - Effective local government
  - Quality and quantity of local health care services
  - Community cohesion and activism
  
- *“The City is blessed with great resources and great people. There is nothing the City can’t do.”*
  - Key informant interview participant



# What is the Health of Cambridge Residents?

# Survey: What are Top Health Concerns for You, Your Family, or Close Social Circle?



Data Source: Community Health Assessment Survey, 2013

# Survey: What are Top Health Concerns for You, Your Family, or Close Social Circle?

	African American Respondents	Hispanic Respondents	Asian Respondents
1	Cancer	Being overweight/obese	Dental and oral health
2	Being overweight/obese	Cost of medical care	Cost of medical care
3	Cost of medical care	Age-related conditions	Diabetes
4	Diabetes	Alcohol/drug abuse	Age-related conditions
5	Age-related conditions	Cancer	Cancer
6	Mental health	Mental health	Mental health

# Focus Groups with Immigrant Communities

- Immigrant women and families discussed their health concerns for the City of Cambridge:
  - Obesity and chronic conditions (heart disease, diabetes)
  - Mental health and substance abuse – and stigma in seeking care
  - Access to health care

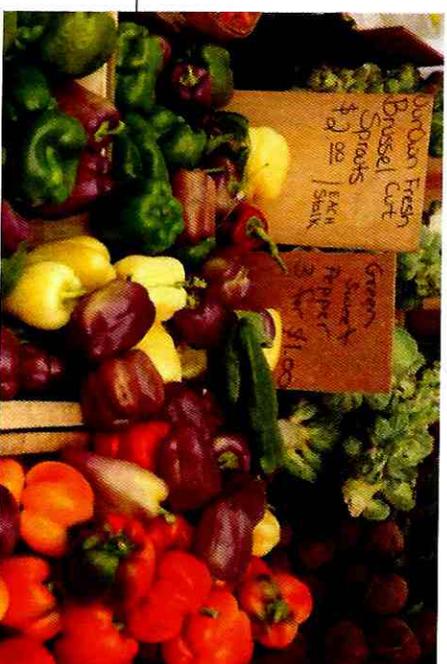
*“There are high rates of disease among the black community—blood pressure, heart disease. For black immigrants like Haitians and Africans, there is plenty of food, but we don’t know what to eat to be the most healthy.” — Focus group participant*

*“Domestic violence in many communities is a hidden issue.” —Focus group participant*

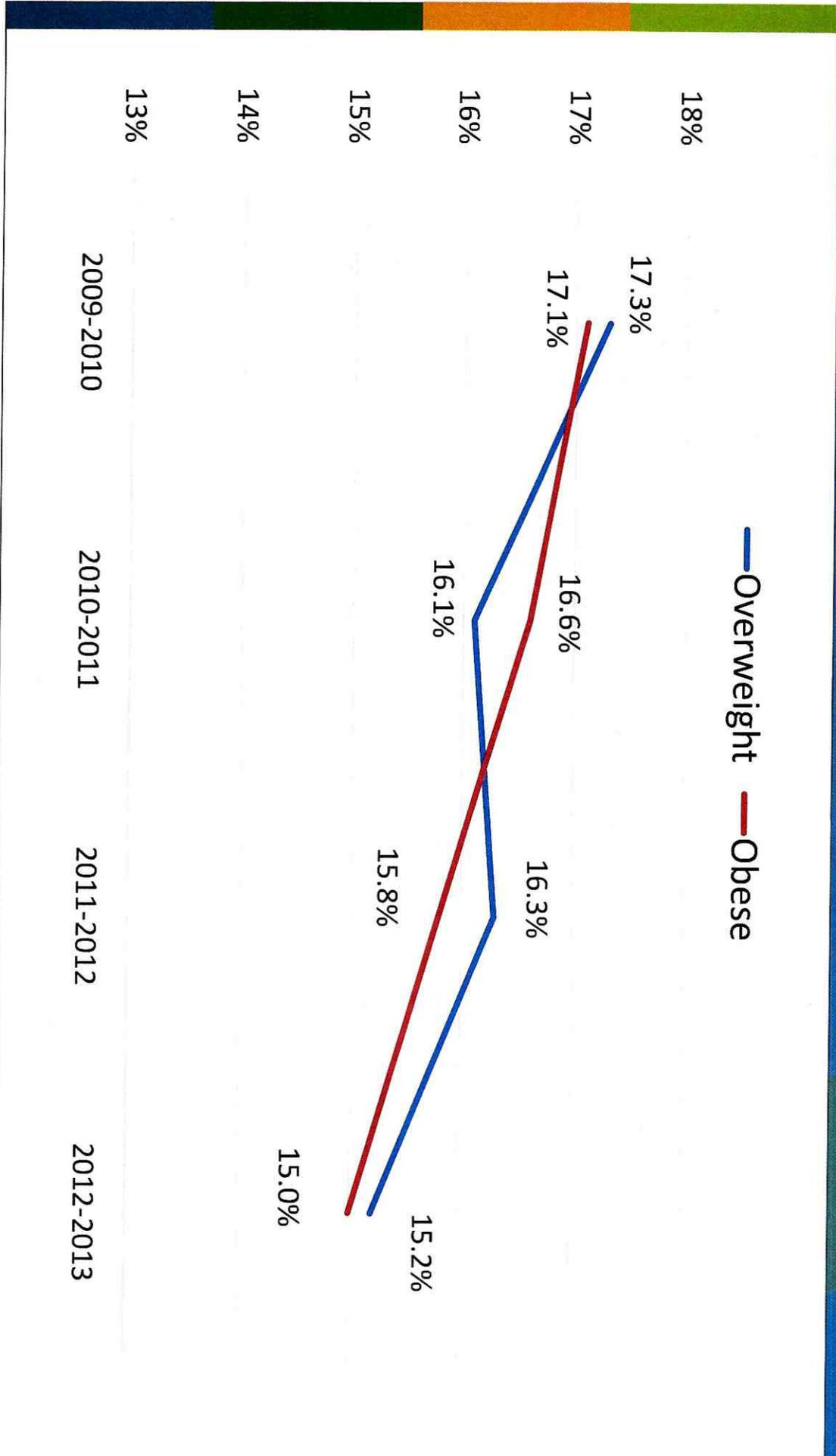
# Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

- Cambridge considered a city that has embraced healthy eating and physical activity

*“Cambridge generally feels like a very active city, but I do think that more could always be done in this area, particularly for those of lower socioeconomic status such as around affordability of healthy foods and exercise options.”—Survey respondent*



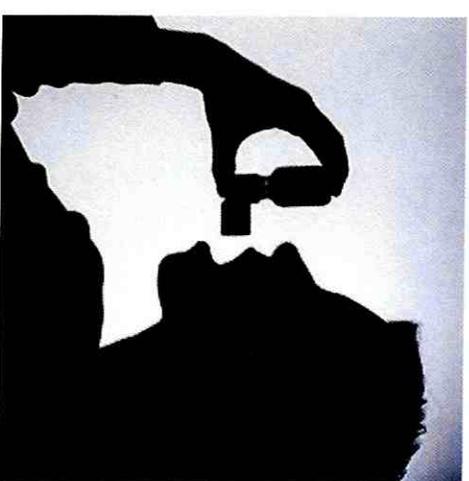
# % Overweight or Obese Youth in Cambridge Public Schools, 2009-2013



# Heart Disease, Diabetes, and Asthma

- Heart disease, diabetes, and asthma viewed as concerns, particularly discussed in relation to obesity or housing conditions
  - Heart disease & diabetes rates lower in Cambridge than MA
  - Asthma a particular concern among public housing residents

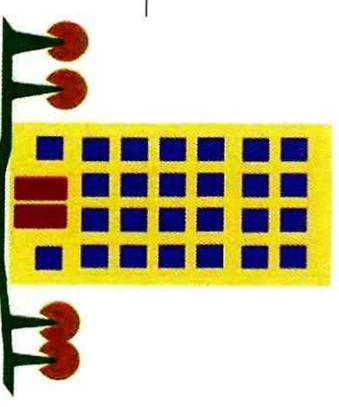
**About 1 in 10  
Cambridge K-8  
students have  
asthma**



# Housing and Health

*"[In public housing, we see] Mold. Air quality. People who have asthma or respiratory or heart issues have health problems."*—Focus group participant

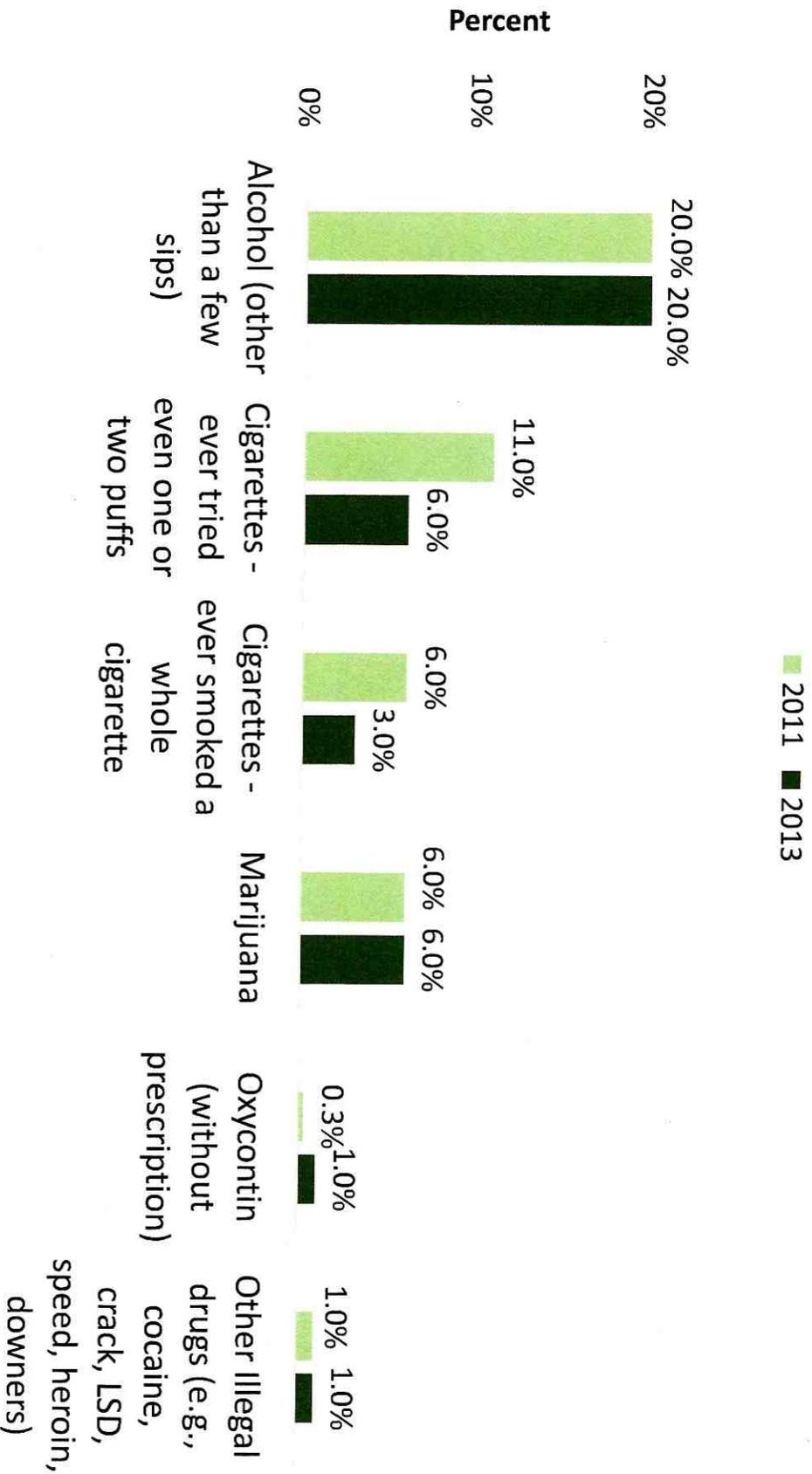
*"I put plastic on my windows because it's freezing but they [maintenance staff] tell me it's a fire hazard."*—Focus group participant



# Substance Abuse

- Concerns in particular for youth, homeless population, and lower-income adult men
- Substance abuse rates generally lower in Cambridge than MA, yet:
  - About 6 in 10 Cambridge high school students ever used alcohol
  - And 4 in 10 Cambridge high school students ever used marijuana

# Substance Use among Cambridge Middle School Students (Grades 6-8)



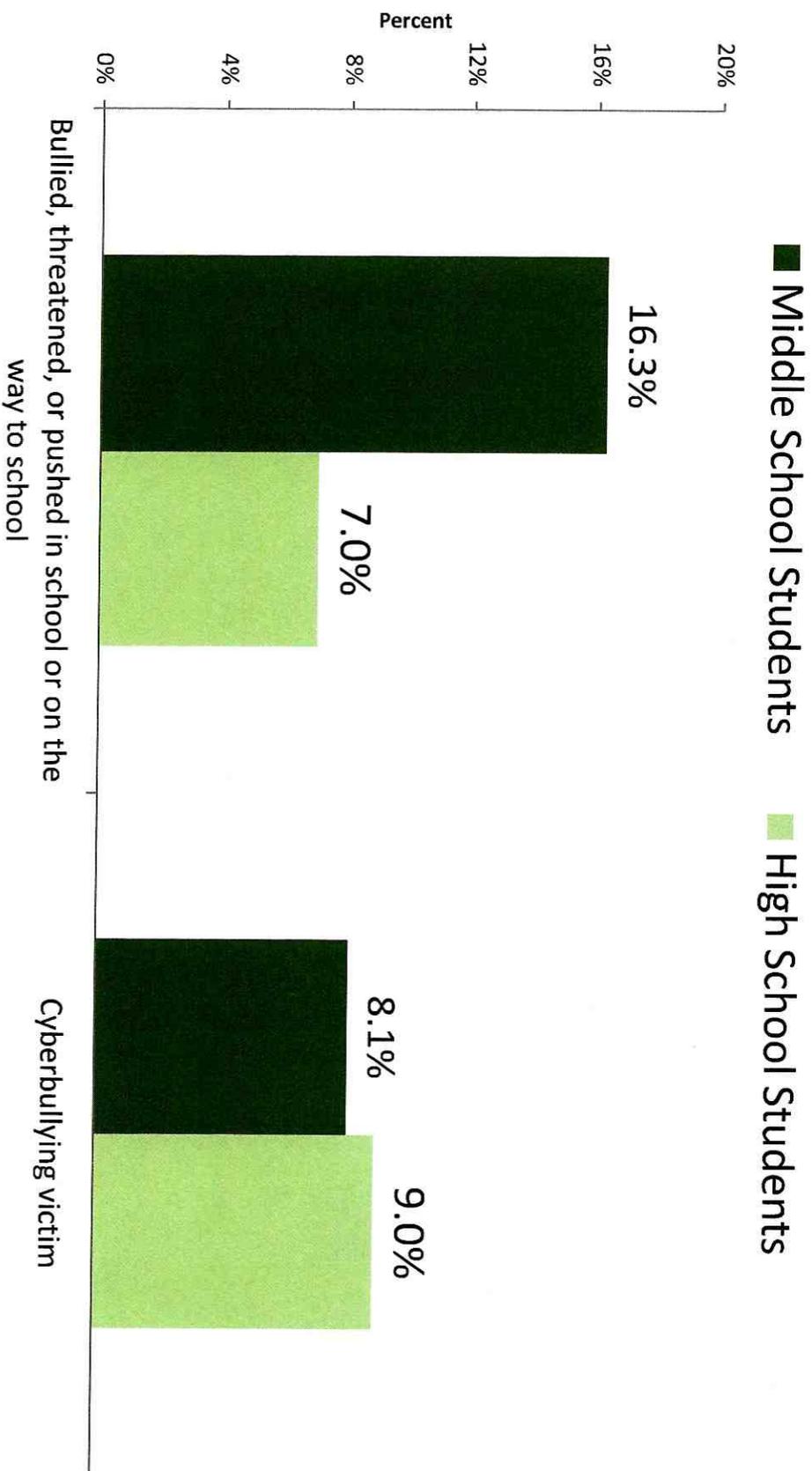
# Mental Health

- Mental health an important concern among assessment participants
  - Depression and anxiety
  - Mental health disorders among the homeless
  - Stigma and cultural concerns around seeking care, especially for immigrant families

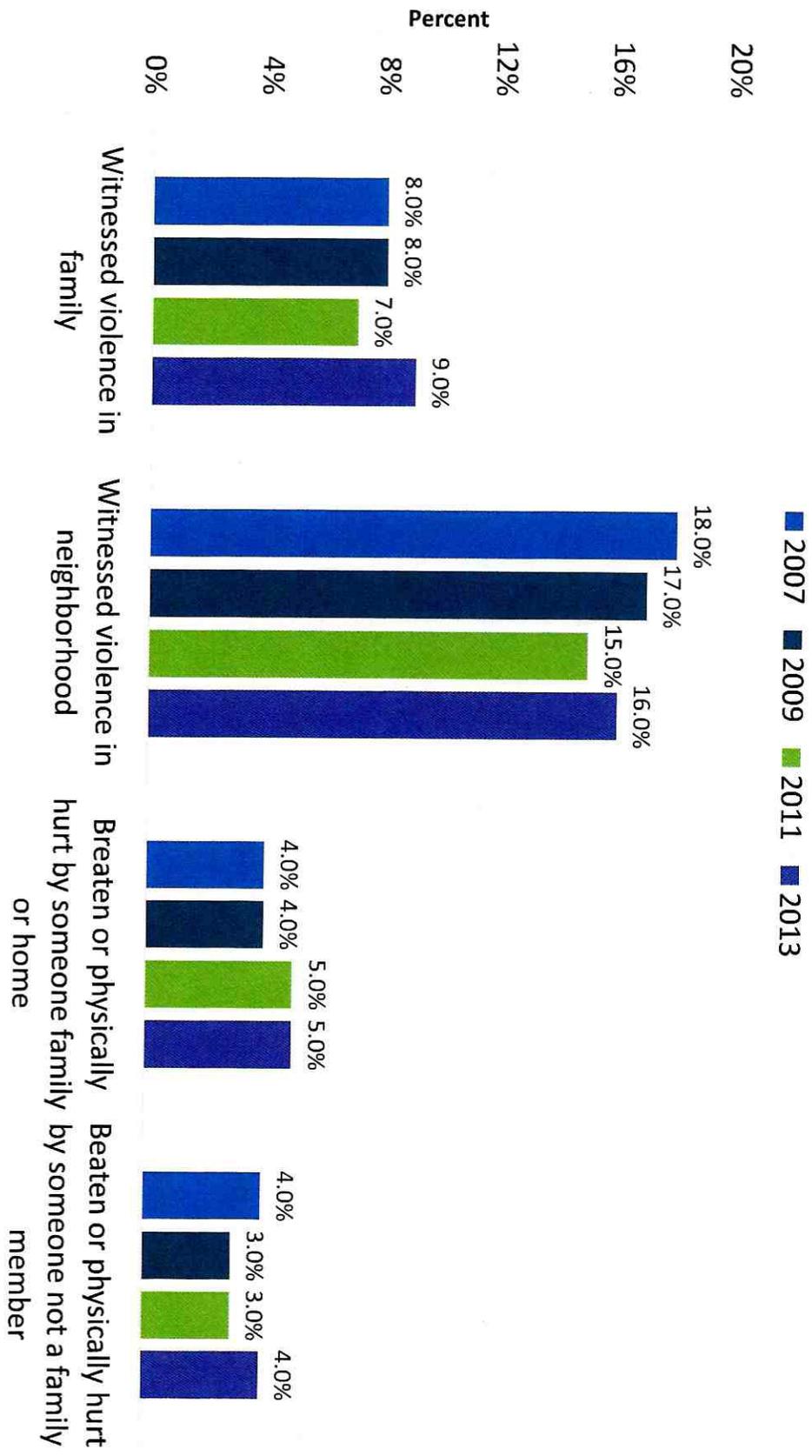
*“Different cultures view mental health issues differently than here.” — Focus group participant*

*“There is a lack of knowledge about mental health and a reluctance to use mental health services and seek mental health treatment, especially among new immigrants.” —Key informant interview participant*

# Bullying, Harassment, and Violence among Cambridge Youth



# % Cambridge Youth who Had Violence-Related Experiences in Past 12 Months

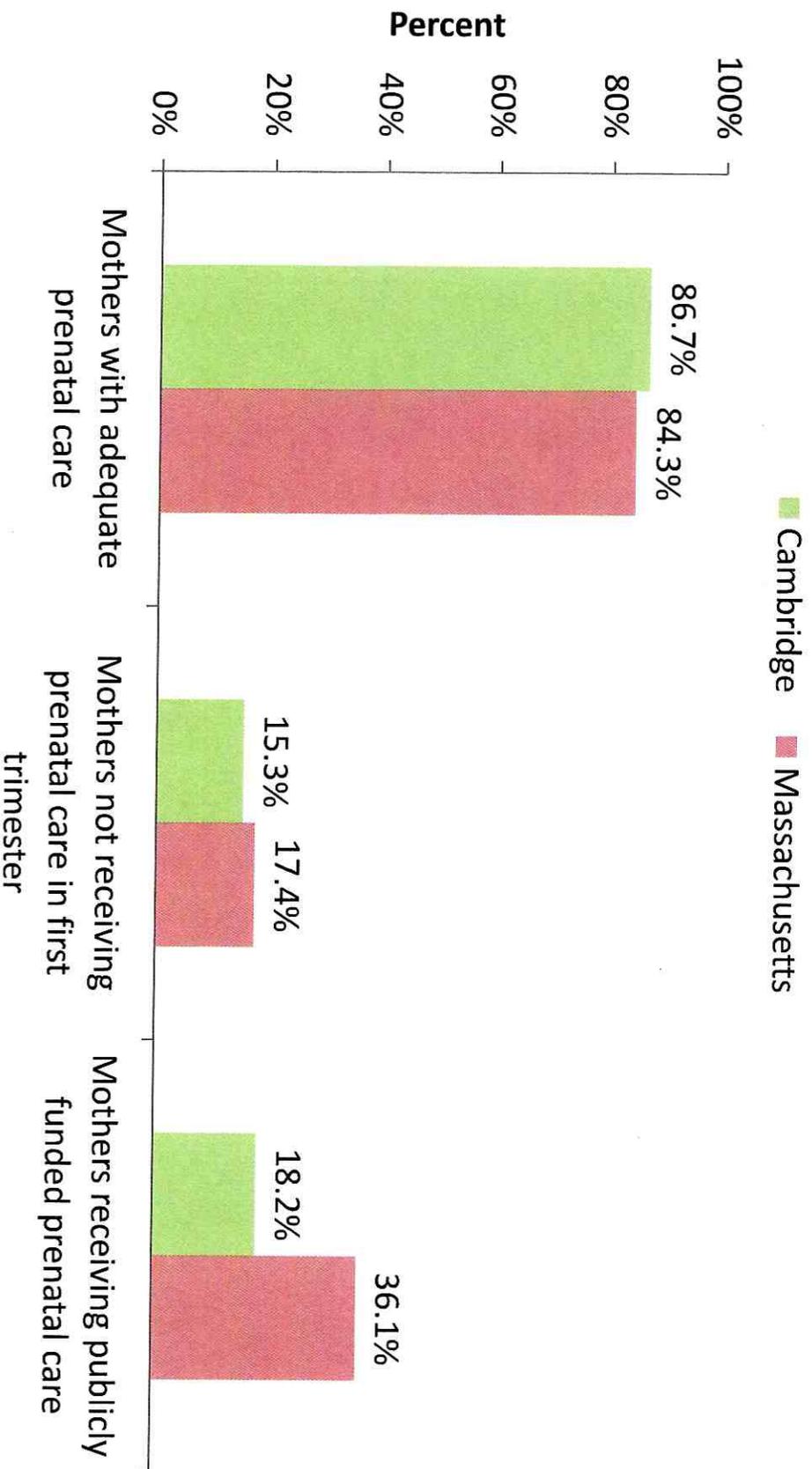


# Oral Health

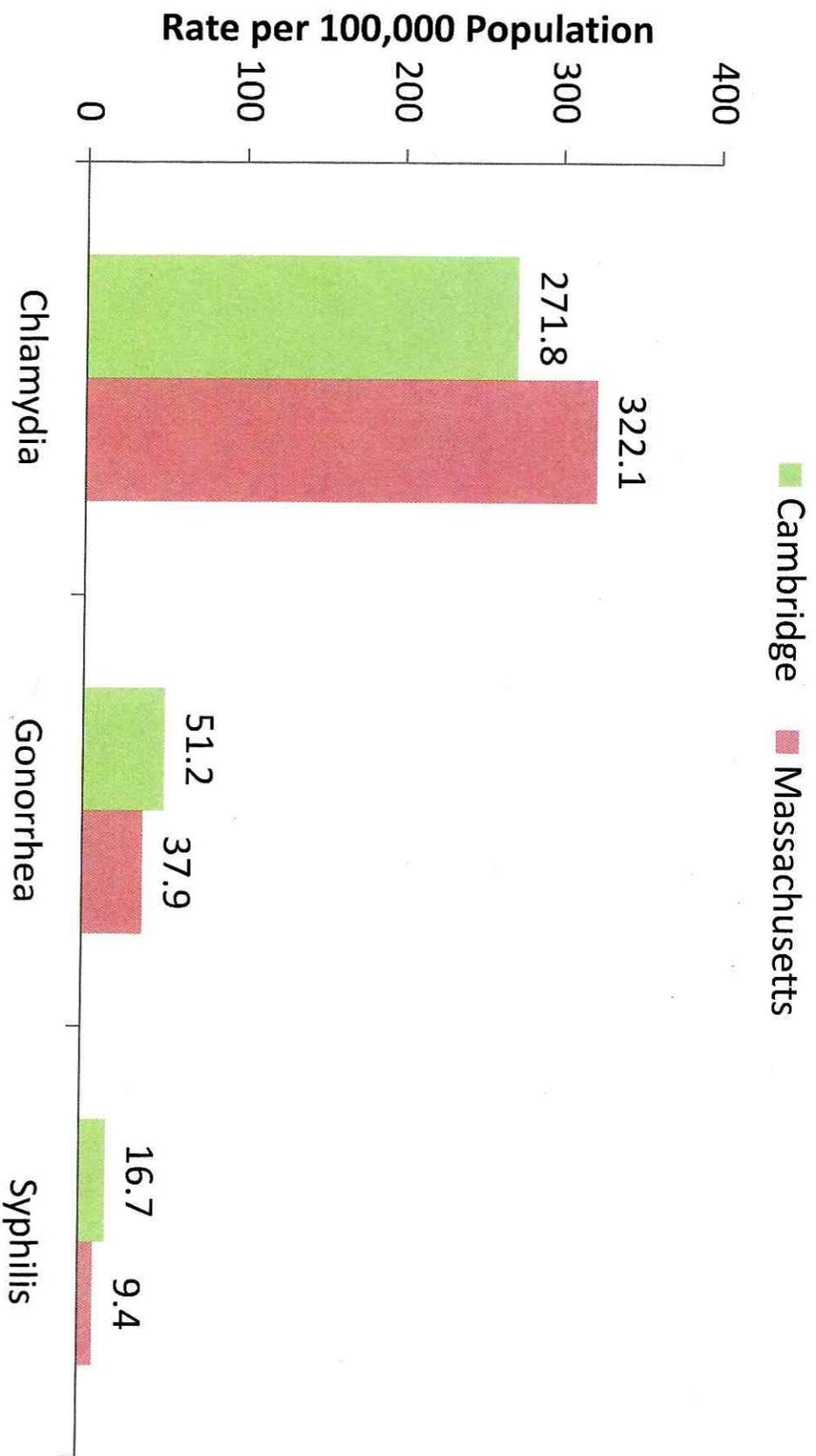
- Seniors and immigrants, especially, reported challenges to obtaining dental care
  - Difficulty finding dentists who will take new patients or accept Medicaid or Medicare
  - Long wait times for appointments
  - Charged substantial out-of-pocket costs

*“I see access to mental health services and dental healthcare services as issues that span socioeconomic lines. These services are still not accessible or affordable enough for many, and are issues that I experience and see in my social circles.”—Survey respondent*

# Maternal and Child Health Issues



# Sexual Health: Rate of STIs per 100,000 Population, 2010





# How do Cambridge Residents View their Health Care?

# Satisfaction with Availability of Services

## Percent Respondents Extremely or Very Satisfied with the Availability of Health Care Services in Cambridge, 2013

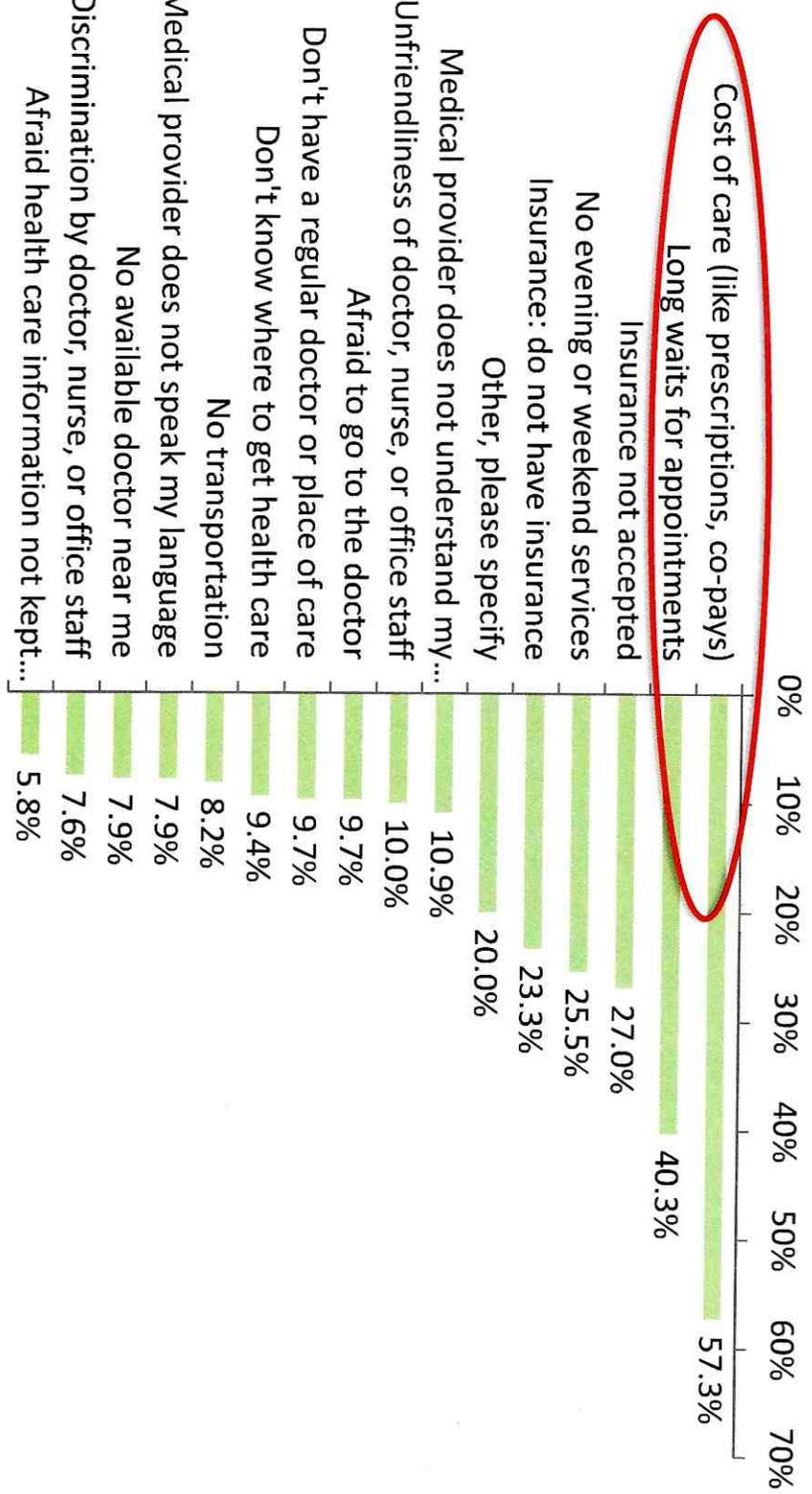
	Extremely or Very satisfied with Availability
Health care providers who take your insurance	54.0%
Health or medical services for adults (ages 19-64)	53.1%
Health or medical services for children and youth <18	44.3%
Medical specialists	38.3%
Dental or oral health services	42.3%
Public transportation to area health services	39.1%
Health or medical services for seniors (ages 65+)	24.0%
Birth control or sexual health services	23.8%
Counseling or mental health services	23.4%
Interpreters during medical visits or when receiving health information	14.2%
Alcohol or drug treatment services	6.5%

# Challenges to Accessing Care

- *“Even if you have health insurance, even paying the co-payment is an issue. It deters people from doing follow up.”—Focus group participant*
- *“I’m not poor enough to get a hearing aid but don’t make enough to afford it myself. I’m legally deaf. I can afford it if I don’t pay for my kid’s college.”—Focus group participant*
- *“[We need] a more trained workforce to overcome cultural and language barriers.”—Key informant interview participant*

# 22% of survey respondents had difficulty getting health care in past 2 years

## Specific Health Care Challenges in Past 2 Years among Respondents who Had Difficulty Getting Care (n=330)



DATA SOURCE: Cambridge Community Health Assessment Survey, 2013

# Health Care Challenges in Past 2 Years

- Specific survey responses by race/ethnicity among those who said they had difficulty getting care:
  - 30% of Asian survey respondents said provider does not understand my culture
  - 23% of African American respondents said discrimination by provider
  - 26% of Hispanic respondents said afraid to go to the doctor

- Immigrants in focus groups noted:

- Hard to figure out the U.S. health care system
- Availability and quality of interpreter services
- Health care providers who understand cultural norms

*“It’s difficult to understand the system... where to go for a specialist.”—Focus group participant*

# Overarching Themes

- Assist all Cambridge residents, workers, and visitors to live healthy and fulfilling lives
  - Cambridge is a **progressive, diverse, educated community with excellent amenities and services**, although not all benefit similarly.
  - **Immigrants, seniors, and low-income individuals** were identified as particularly vulnerable to health concerns.
  
- Strengthen the focus on healthy living and disease prevention
  - Cambridge is a health conscious community, but there are **concerns about obesity** and a need for more efforts to enhance healthy living

# Overarching Themes

- Enhance efforts to address substance abuse and mental health issues
  - **Substance use and mental health** were concerns for the community and a need for more services was identified.
- Promote and maintain access to quality healthcare
  - City residents overall enjoy **good health and access to high quality** health care, although barriers still exist in accessing services.
- Engage all sectors of the Cambridge community in efforts to promote a healthy community environment
  - **Collaboration across organizations was viewed as strong**, but strengthened partnerships and continued engagement was seen as key to continuing to address community concerns.

Thank you!

**Q&A**

