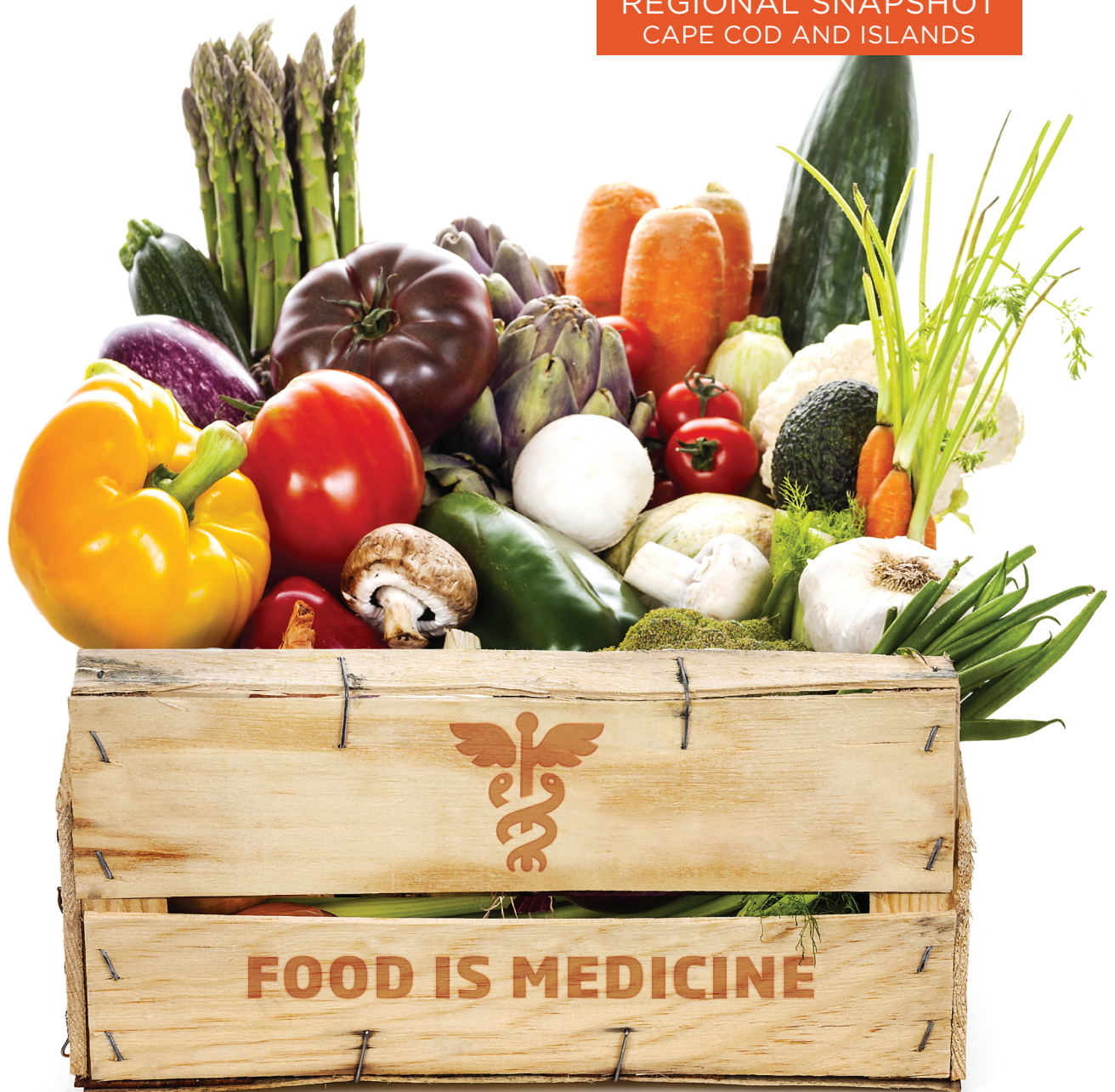


MASSACHUSETTS

Food is Medicine

STATE PLAN

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT
CAPE COD AND ISLANDS



JUNE 2019

Regional Snapshot

CAPE COD AND ISLANDS

BARNSTABLE, NANTUCKET, AND DUKES COUNTIES

Massachusetts' Cape Cod and Islands region encompasses the 23 cities and towns of Barnstable, Nantucket, and Dukes Counties. Within this region, Barnstable and Yarmouth have the highest Food is Medicine priority level due to their high rates of food insecurity, low rates of vehicle access, and elevated chronic disease burden. Tourism drives the local economy, which contributes to high housing costs and a high rate of seasonal employment. Year-round residents tend to be older. Together, these factors contribute to, and exacerbate, the rates and risk of food insecurity and chronic disease. While numerous organizations like Sustainable Cape and Lower Cape Outreach Council are working diligently to advance nutrition-focused health care and food access, our data illustrate ample opportunity to enrich the program diversity on the Cape and improve access on the islands.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Seasonal Employment

In 2017, seasonal employment on the Cape and the Islands was approximately four times

higher than the rest of the state. The number of employees working within the leisure and hospitality sector increased 277% from February to July compared to the state average seasonal change of 65%.¹ In the summer, a quarter of jobs in Barnstable fall within the leisure and hospitality sector, an industry that offers the lowest hourly wages in the country and the town.² With an economy dependent on seasonal employment and tourism, residents experience fluctuations in resource availability. Public transportation, for example, is very limited in the off-season.

Aging Population

Barnstable County is the oldest county in Massachusetts, with 29.9% of its population aged 65 and over, compared to the state average of 16.2%.³ While seniors are likely to have access to health insurance, such as Medicare, they still face barriers to care due to lack of transportation and lack of funds to pay out-of-pocket costs.

FOOD IS MEDICINE CBO:

“Although the population is older overall, many households contain children living with grandparents. Also, seniors are frequently ‘house-rich’ but ‘cash-poor’.”

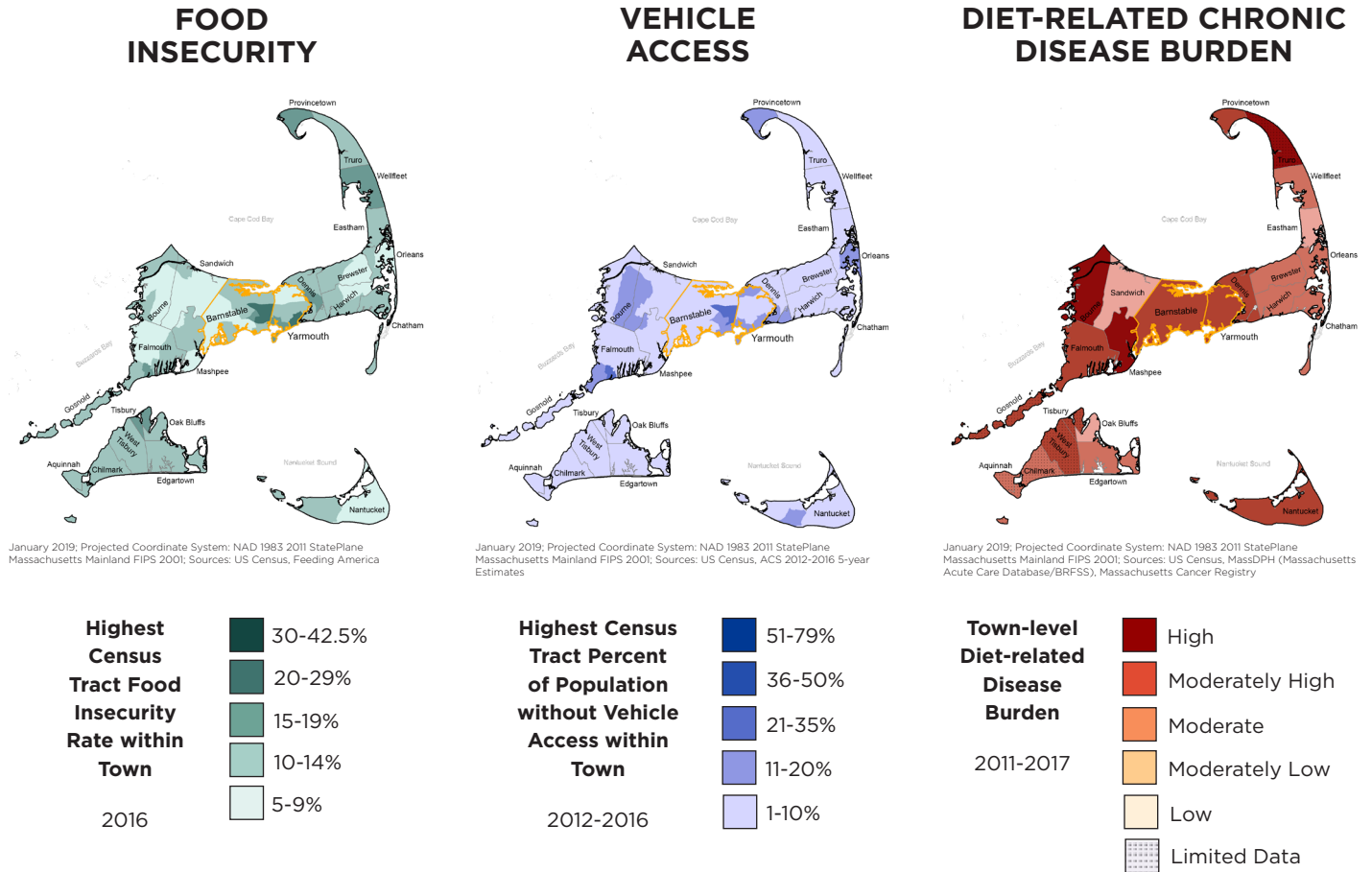
Regional Listening Session Themes: *June 19, 2018, Cape Cod and Islands*

- High housing costs drive younger residents away and contribute to senior isolation.
- Communities with a high number of Brazilian, Portuguese, and Creole speakers face language barriers when accessing health care and food resources.
- Transportation is a challenge, especially for seniors and especially during the “off-season.”
- Mental health issues are undiagnosed and the need for these services is unaddressed. These needs are often connected to a senior’s ability to shop and cook for themselves.

FOOD IS MEDICINE INDICATORS OF NEED

CAPE COD AND ISLANDS SNAPSHOT

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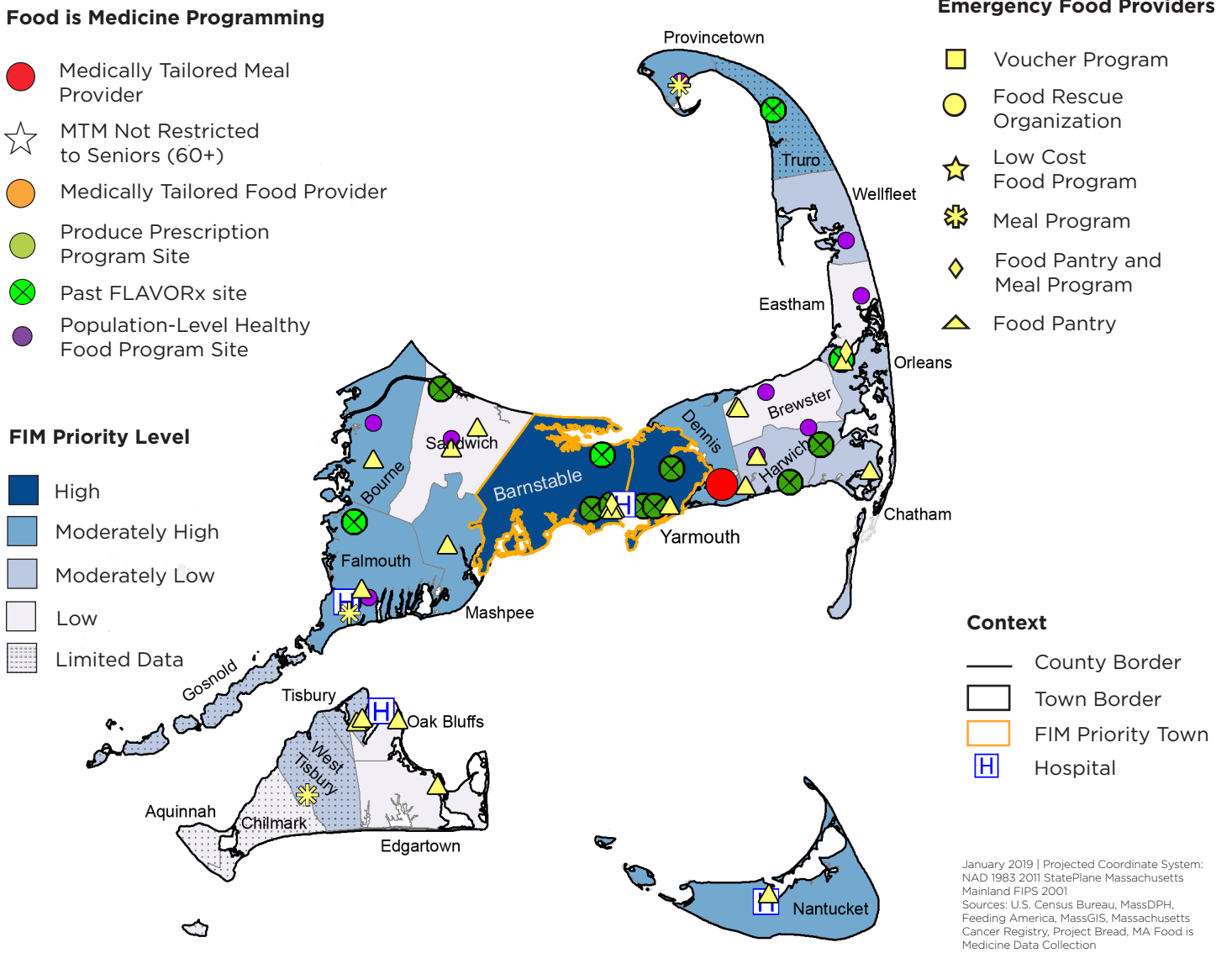
Appendix Table 7: Food is Medicine Factors of Need, Cape Cod and Islands

Food is Medicine Indicators of Need	Regional Data
Food Insecurity	Twelve of the region's 69 census tracts have food insecurity rates higher than the state average (10.9%). The most concerning rates of food insecurity in the region are found in Barnstable (21.7%) and Yarmouth (16.8%). ⁴
Vehicle Access	Pockets of low vehicle access rates are found in Barnstable, Falmouth, and Provincetown. In one area of Barnstable, approximately one fifth of households lack access to a vehicle. ⁵ Both the lack of public transportation and the seasonality of the limited public transportation available can exacerbate senior isolation and health care access.
Chronic Disease	The region's rates of chronic disease are consistently higher than state averages. Provincetown has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the state. ⁶ Eleven out of the 17 towns in the region that have available diabetes data have adult prevalence rates above the state average; in Chatham, 10.92% of adults suffer from diabetes compared to the state average of 7.64%. ⁷ The Cape and Islands have notably higher cancer rates than the rest of the state, and are home to the worst breast cancer, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer and leukemia rates in Massachusetts. ⁸

FOOD IS MEDICINE PRIORITY ANALYSIS

CAPE COD AND ISLANDS SNAPSHOT

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INNOVATION ON THE CAPE

The Cape is home to FLAVORx, a grant-funded produce prescription pilot program led by Food is Medicine Planning Council members Dr. Kumara Sidhartha and Sustainable CAPE. Launched on Cape Cod in 2016 through a partnership between six Emerald Physician offices and the Sustainable CAPE's Farmers' Market Coalition, the program provided eligible patients with either a weekly prescription of fruits and vegetables worth \$30 or an equivalent amount in gas gift cards for 12 weeks. The study aimed to test if fruit and vegetable vouchers were more powerful than cash in influencing healthy eating behaviors. All patients were at risk for diet-related chronic diseases, attended weekly cooking classes, and received additional check-up visits. Compared to the patients who received the gas cards, individuals who redeemed the FLAVORx produce prescriptions at farmers' markets or farm stands saw better outcomes in body mass index, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, and patient wellbeing.⁹ Ensuring that these services continue through sustainable funding streams should be a priority for the Commonwealth.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Labor Market Information, All Towns 202 Data. Table: Total Annual Average Employment and Wages by Town all Ownership*, THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, <http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/town202data.asp> (last visited Jan. 11, 2019).
- ² *Labor Market Information, All Towns 202 Data. Table: Total Annual Average Employment and Wages by Town all Ownership*. THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE, <http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/town202data.asp> (last visited Jan. 11, 2019).
- ³ *Selected Demographics Table: Age and Sex*, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2013-2017 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.
- ⁴ Craig Gundersen et al., *Map the Meal Gap 2018: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2016*, FEEDING AMERICA, (2018).
- ⁵ *Household Size by Vehicle Available [Percent no Vehicle]*, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2012-2016 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.
- ⁶ *2017 Massachusetts HIV/AIDS Epidemiologic Profile (Table 2)*, HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM-MDPH. (2017).
- ⁷ *Massachusetts Town-level Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTIONS-MDPH, (2018).
- ⁸ *The Massachusetts Cancer Registry Query Tool*, MASSACHUSETTS CANCER REGISTRY-MDPH, <https://www.cancer-rates.info/ma/> (last visited April 16, 2019).
- ⁹ *FlavoRx Program for Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions*, SUSTAINABLE CAPE, <https://www.sustainablecape.org/programs/flavorx/> (last visited Mar. 6, 2019).

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