What Philadelphia's Health of the City Report Told Us About Child Health in 200 Words

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Philadelphia's Department of Public Health published its Health of the City report for 2018, which provides a comprehensive look at health outcomes, health behaviors, access to and quality of clinical care, the state of the city's physical environment, and social and economic determinants of health. With more than 340,000 children under the age of 18 currently living in Philadelphia, I wanted to highlight a couple child-specific health facts from this report that relate closely to our work here at PolicyLab.

The most common chronic medical condition in children is asthma, particularly among children of color. According to the Health of the City report, non-Hispanic black and Hispanic children had the highest rates of asthma-related hospitalizations with five to six times higher rates than that of non-Hispanic white children in 2016. My colleagues at PolicyLab have been doing important work to reduce repeat hospital visits for high-risk Philadelphia children with asthma, which you can read about in our recent policy brief that outlines recommendations for policymakers and providers to address asthma in underserved communities.

The report also covers suicide ideation among adolescents, citing that nearly one out of seven Philadelphia high school students reported seriously considering suicide in 2017. A recent PolicyLab study found that 50% of parents were unaware of their adolescents' thoughts of suicide, which suggests many adolescents at risk for suicide may go undetected.

The report also addresses teen smoking, food access and more. Our researchers at PolicyLab are continuously working to address these and other issues that promote child health and well-being in our beloved city.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategy & Communications Manager Lauren Walens.