

# PROFILE

## Location

Worcester, Massachusetts

## Populations of Focus

Populations facing health disparities; patients with uncontrolled hypertension; youth and families

## Topic Areas

Prioritizing social determinants of health:

- Food access
- Built environment
- Chronic diseases
- Critical and emerging issues



Keep The Door Open for Future Discussion

Health promotion is a key component of the PRC at UMass Chan's vision to ensure the well-being of the populations they serve.

The [Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School \(PRC at UMass Chan\)](#) is one of 26 Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the 2019–2024 funding cycle. Each PRC is funded to establish and maintain their center and to conduct a core research project. PRCs may receive supplemental funding to conduct additional research projects and activities.

The PRC at UMass Chan conducts research that promotes the health and well-being of the populations it serves through evidence-based programs and strategies based in real-world settings. The vision of the PRC at UMass Chan is for optimal health of communities, families, and individuals. The mission is to prevent disease, promote health, and advance health equity through the integration of community-engaged research, practice, policy, and education.

Guided by an active Community Advisory Board, the PRC at UMass Chan is a fundamental partner in the collaborative public health ecosystem in Greater Worcester and is a national model for research that connects academia, public health, community, and health care systems.

# CORE RESEARCH

Each PRC uses a community-engaged approach to conduct one primary applied public health prevention research project called a core research project. Project activities include design, development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. PRCs use at least 50% of their CDC funding to conduct the project in partnership with communities.

## BP Control

The PRC at UMass Chan's core research project for the 2019–2024 funding cycle is an applied research project called [BP Control: Economic Analysis of a Community Health Worker-Delivered Intervention to Enhance Antihypertensive Medication Adherence in Accountable Care Organizations](#).

Previous research has shown that taking blood pressure medicine consistently protects a person's heart, brain, and kidneys. Controlling blood pressure is important to both individual and population health.

Participants in the BP Control project are referred to a community health worker for coaching to take their blood pressure medication as prescribed. The PRC at UMass Chan researchers are studying the costs and return on investment of the project, and blood pressure control among people with high rates of uncontrolled blood pressure.

As a quality improvement program, the project has created systems to track quality indicators, such as the percentage of patients who have their blood pressure measured and their medications reconciled.



Learn how PRCs are helping their communities get vaccinated against COVID-19

## ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

PRCs may receive supplemental funding to work on additional research projects each funding cycle. These Special Interest Projects (SIPs) focus on a variety of health topics or gaps in scientific evidence. PRCs can also conduct additional research as part of SIP [Thematic Research Networks](#), which are groups of PRCs working together on related health topics.

## 2022

### **Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE): Enhancing Practical Guidance to Support Climate and Health Adaptation Planning**

[BRACE 3.0](#) is a SIP consisting of a comprehensive framework and e-learning system, to support public health departments and their partners across the country in addressing climate change in a manner aligned with the [Public Health 3.0](#) vision of public health. Project outcomes will be the revised framework and a suite of technical guidance and capacity-building materials and tools for public health practitioners to plan and implement climate and health adaptation and mitigation interventions.

BP Control is an applied research project being implemented by the PRC at UMass Chan.

## HIGHLIGHTED PUBLICATION

[The Healthy Kids & Families study: Outcomes of a 24-month childhood obesity prevention intervention](#)

[Development and Beta-Testing of the CONFIDENCE Intervention to Increase Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccination hypertension](#)

[High Prevalence and Lack of Parental Awareness of Pediatric Hypertension Among a Low-income Sample in Worcester, MA in community physical activity policy](#)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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For more information on the PRC at UMass Chan and ways to get involved, visit [PRC at UMass Chan](#)

Twitter – [@PRCUMassChan](#)

Facebook – [PRC at UMassChan](#)

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## 2021

### PRC Vaccine Confidence Network (PRC VCN)

In April 2021, CDC funded a 12-month award to all 26 PRCs to form the PRC VCN in support of the agency's [Vaccinate with Confidence](#) strategy for COVID-19. As part of this network, the PRC at UMass Chan is examining vaccine hesitancy to find ways to promote vaccine confidence and increase vaccine uptake among youth and families. The goal is to reduce the incidence and burden of COVID-19 in the United States.

The PRC's strategy includes a focus on promoting the vaccination of young people and families in partnership with the City of Worcester, agencies that serve young people, and health care providers (including pediatricians). This work is focused on populations that face higher rates of COVID-19 and lower rates of vaccination in Worcester, MA.

### Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs: Evaluating Patient-, Provider-, and Program-Level Outcomes Across the US

Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs offer education, consultation, resources, and referrals to build the capacity of perinatal care providers. This SIP study seeks to develop a feasible, scalable approach to evaluating and improving access programs in diverse real-world settings.

## 2020

### Development and Implementation of a Community Health Worker-Delivered Intervention to Improve Health and Social Outcomes for Adults with Epilepsy

This study provides a model framework for integrating community health workers (CHWs) into epilepsy care teams. It will also conduct a randomized controlled trial to show the efficacy of a specialized epilepsy intervention using CHWs. Researchers hypothesize that a CHW-delivered intervention will improve quality of life, increase patient confidence and knowledge, promote enrollment into self-management programs, and link patients with community and clinical services.

## 2019

### Physical Activity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (PAPREN) Coordinating Center

[PAPREN](#) is a five-year SIP that seeks to increase physical activity in communities by working across sectors, focusing on factors that affect the built environment (such as land use and transportation policies), and integrating health equity into all policy efforts. As part of this network, the PRC at UMass Chan works to help local health departments play a larger role in making decisions in their communities. PAPREN addresses key evidence gaps and implementation research that identifies evidence-based strategies for improving practitioner capabilities and the translation of research to practice.

CDC Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) conduct innovative public health research at the community level. The PRC Program is a network of academic research centers in the United States that work with their communities to identify public health problems and develop, test, and evaluate solutions that can be widely shared and applied within the public health system. PRCs research a wide range of health topics and focus on populations experiencing health disparities.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRC PROGRAM

Visit [www.cdc.gov/prc](http://www.cdc.gov/prc) or contact [prcprogram@cdc.gov](mailto:prcprogram@cdc.gov).



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