

## Fact Sheet: 2007 Big Cities Health Inventory: The Health of Urban U.S.A.

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- Large cities bear a disproportionate share of the nation's poor health conditions. Nearly 1/2 of the AIDS and Syphilis cases, 29% of the Gonorrhea, and 26% of the Chlamydia cases resided in these large cities. Homicide and HIV/AIDS mortality also are more likely to affect large cities. More than half of the 54 cities had an HIV/AIDS mortality rate that was twice that of the US, and one quarter had a rate at least three times that of the country overall.
- Over 46 million people live in the 54 largest cities in the United States, representing nearly 16% of the US population. These large cities range in population size from just over 300,000 to over 8 million.
- Despite their size and poor health conditions, there is no national report that tracks the health of urban America. The Big Cities Health Inventory is a collaborative effort of these cities themselves, under the leadership of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), to provide an understanding of key health conditions in the nation's largest urban areas. The Inventory, first issued in 1992, documents current status and trends for 26 health status indicators in a report card format for the 54 largest cities.
- Racial disparities in health remains a major national concern and are of particular concern for large cities which often have higher concentrations of African American and Hispanic populations. For big city African Americans, the Lung Cancer rate is 24% higher than for whites, breast cancer 34% higher, and the homicide rate is five times higher. Infant mortality is also the highest for big city Blacks.
- While big city death rates remain relatively high, progress has been made towards reaching national public health goals, with most cities experiencing declining death rates from most causes in the last 15 years. However, progress has been uneven with some cities showing little change despite overall national progress in declining death rates. For some conditions like diabetes and certain sexually transmitted diseases, rates have actually increased within most big cities over this same period.
- Infant mortality continues to be a public health challenge. While all but 5 cities have experienced declines in infant mortality rates in the last 14 years, only 7 cities have reached the year 2010 Goal.
- The Big Cities Inventory is unique as the only comprehensive single source of big city health information. Drawing on advances in computer technology, especially increasing use of the internet as a repository of health data, the Inventory pulls together data from federal agencies with disease data collected by the 54 big city health departments.
- Big City Health Departments are the first line of defense in the fight to control communicable disease and protect against possible threats from bioterrorism, pandemic flu, and other global hazards. Most have built sophisticated disease detection, tracking and reporting mechanisms which have been tapped in producing this report.