
CHRONIC DISEASE

Chronic diseases like heart disease, hypertension, and other cardiovascular disease are leading causes of illness, disability, and death as well as leading drivers of health care expenditures. Cancer is the second leading cause of death, and arthritis and diabetes are leading causes of disability. Commercial tobacco use, physical inactivity, and excess alcohol use are key risk factors for chronic disease. While physical inactivity and “unhealthy diet” can contribute to chronic disease, this is often due to lack of access to health-supporting foods, cultural foods, and safe and supportive physical activity opportunities.



Arthritis

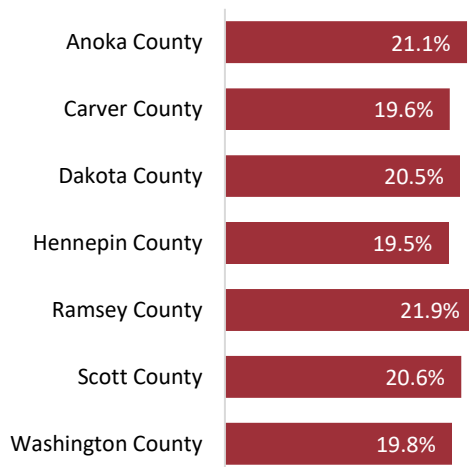
Arthritis is a term comprising over 100 diseases and conditions affecting the joints, tissue surrounding the joints, and connective tissue.⁹⁷ While one out of three Minnesota adults live with arthritis, only about one out of five have a diagnosis. Arthritis affects mobility, and is associated with difficulty with daily activities. Some forms of arthritis affect the immune system such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Risk Factors

Arthritis is more common among women, older adults, and lower income adults. A higher percentage of American Indian Minnesotans (30%) have been diagnosed with arthritis compared to other racial and ethnic groups, followed by non-Hispanic white Minnesotans (24%).⁹⁷ Occupational risk factors for osteoarthritis include heavy physical work load, regular kneeling, climbing, crawling, and bending, and repetitive motions.¹⁹⁷

- Rates of arthritis among adults were slightly higher in Ramsey County compared to other metro-area counties.

1. Arthritis among adults age 18 and older by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²

Note: Data are age-adjusted.

Asthma

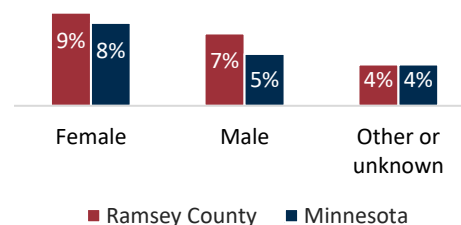
Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways that include mild to severe asthma, asthma attacks, and other related diagnoses. It causes inflammation and swelling that makes it difficult to breathe. Symptoms include wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness and pain.

Risk Factors

Family history of asthma, eczema, and allergies are risk factors. Pollutants in the air can trigger asthma such as pollen, wood smoke, chemicals, and scented products. Other triggers include dust mites, mold, pet allergies, and pests like mice and cockroaches.¹²⁵

- In 2022, about 9.7% of Ramsey County adults had asthma, which was very similar to other metro-area counties.
- Females in Ramsey County have higher rates of asthma diagnoses compared to males.

2. Asthma diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023

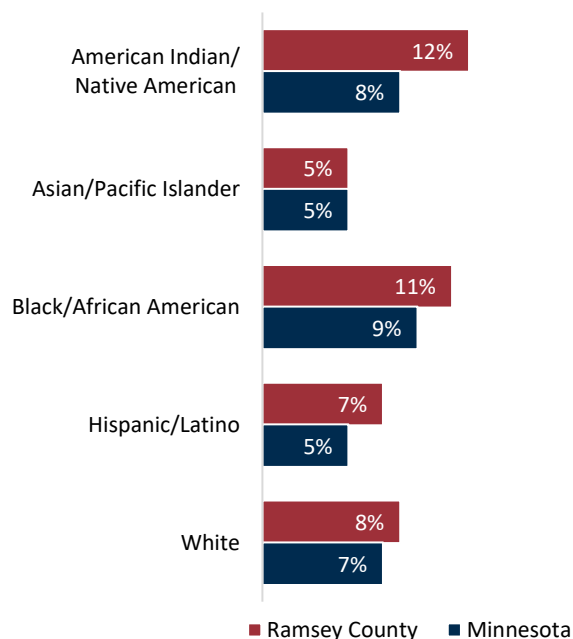


Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Note: Data are age-adjusted. Visit the [Health Trends Across Communities in Minnesota](#) dashboard for condition definitions.

- Ramsey County American Indians and African Americans are disproportionately affected by asthma.

3. Asthma diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023

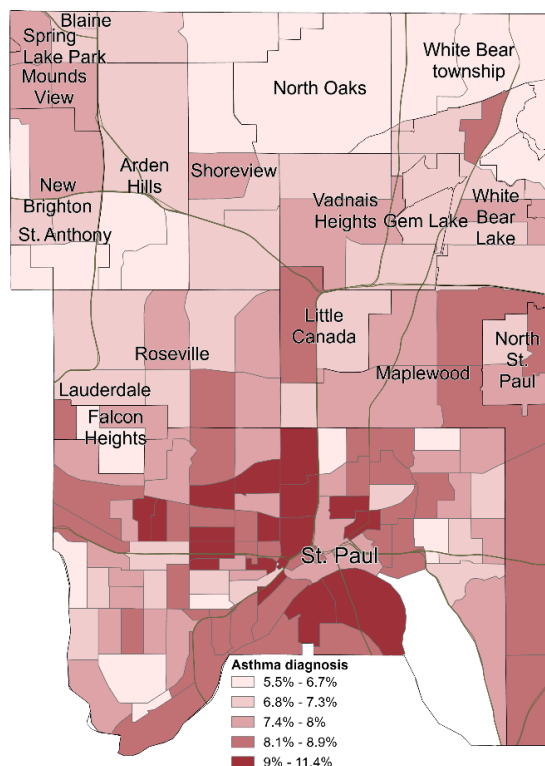


Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Note: Visit the [Health Trends Across Communities in Minnesota](#) dashboard for condition definitions.

- Within Ramsey County, rates of asthma diagnoses were highest in St. Paul.

4. Asthma diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023



Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Cancer

Cancer starts with the uncontrolled growth of cells – where in the body that growth happens identifies the type of cancer (e.g., lung cancer, breast cancer), though cancer cells are able to spread to other sites in the body. Cancer is relatively common; MDH estimates that 4 out of 10 people will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their life. The most common types of cancers diagnosed in Minnesota are prostate, breast, lung, colorectal, and skin melanomas.¹²²

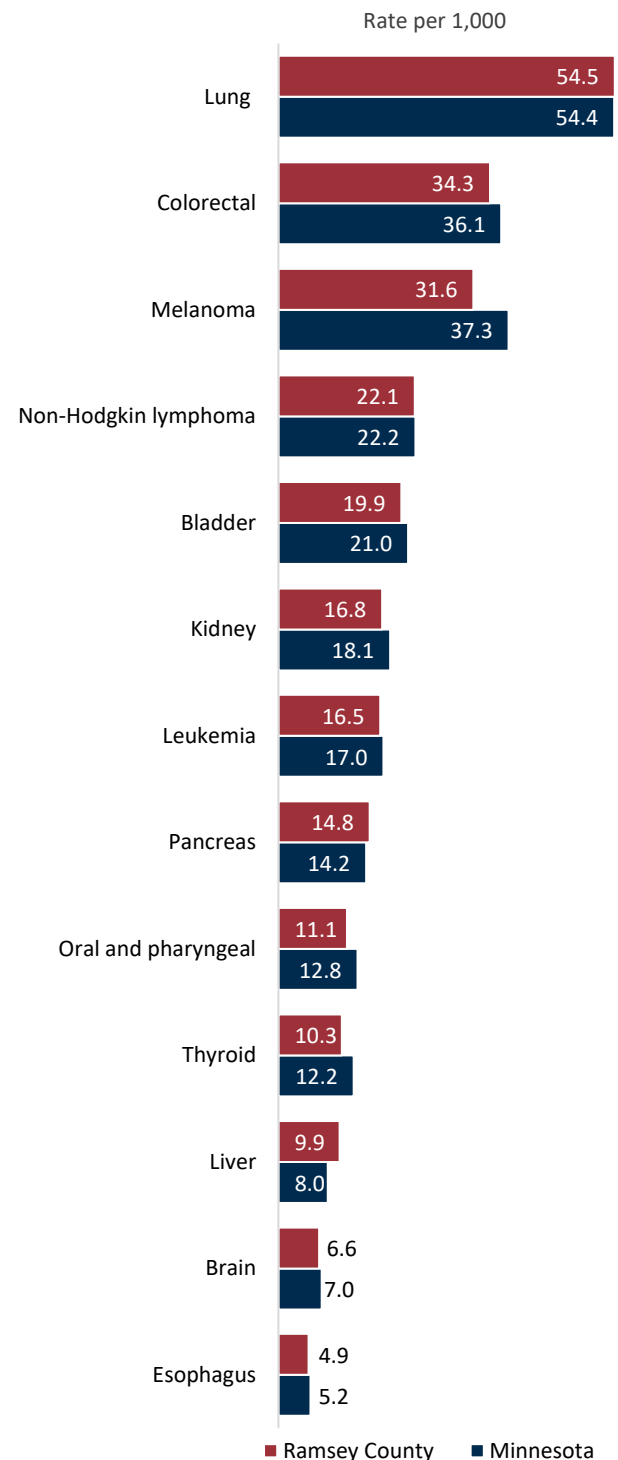
! Risk Factors

While new cancer diagnosis rates have generally been higher among males in Minnesota, rates for females have increased more steadily over the past 25 years. New cancer diagnosis rates have been highest for American Indians in Minnesota compared to other racial and ethnic groups. While some lifestyle factors such as tobacco use

contribute to cancer risk, non-modifiable factors like age, genetics, family history, and race play a role.¹²²

- In 2022, about 6.7% of Ramsey County residents had cancer, which was similar to other metro-area counties.
- After breast and prostate cancer, lung and bronchus cancer were the most common among both Ramsey County and Minnesota residents.
- Ramsey County lung cancer rates were about the same as the statewide average, while colorectal and melanoma rates were lower.
- Rates per 100,000 of breast cancer among women were slightly lower in Ramsey County compared to Minnesota: 137.3 versus 140.4.

5. Cancer cases, 2017-2021



Source: Minnesota Cancer Reporting System.¹²⁴

Diabetes

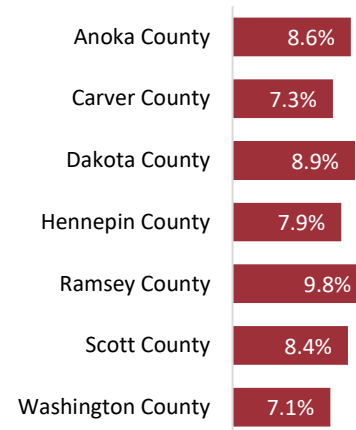
Diabetes is a disease that affects how the body turns food into energy. Type 1 diabetes is less common and is caused by an autoimmune reaction that stops the body from making insulin. Nine out of 10 people with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes which develops over the years as the body doesn't use insulin well to keep blood sugar levels normal. One in three people have prediabetes which involves blood sugar levels that are high, but not high enough to yet be diagnosed with diabetes. Gestational diabetes can develop in pregnant people—while it often goes away after the baby is born, it is a risk factor for Type 2 diabetes. Diabetes can lead to kidney disease, loss of vision, nerve damage. Prediabetes increases risk for heart disease and stroke.¹⁰⁸

Risk Factors

A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and fiber and regular exercise can reduce risk of developing prediabetes and Type 2 diabetes. While lifestyle factors contribute to Type 2 diabetes risk, factors such as genetics, food insecurity, adverse childhood experiences, adult trauma and discrimination play a role. Diabetes rates are higher among people with lower household income and lower levels of education. Disparities in diabetes rates are seen among American Indian, Hispanic/Latino/a/e and Hmong adults.¹⁰⁸

- Ramsey County has higher rates of adults with any type of diabetes compared to other metro-area counties.

6. Diabetes among adults by metro-area county, 2022

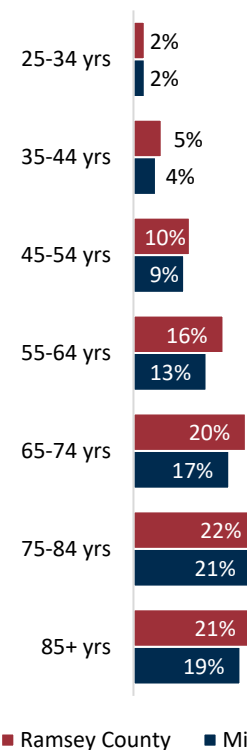


Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²

Note: Data are age-adjusted.

- Rates of Type 2 diabetes in Ramsey County were less than one percent among individuals under the age of 25. Rates increased steadily from age 25 to age 75 and older.

7. Type 2 diabetes diagnoses, 2020-2023



■ Ramsey County ■ Minnesota

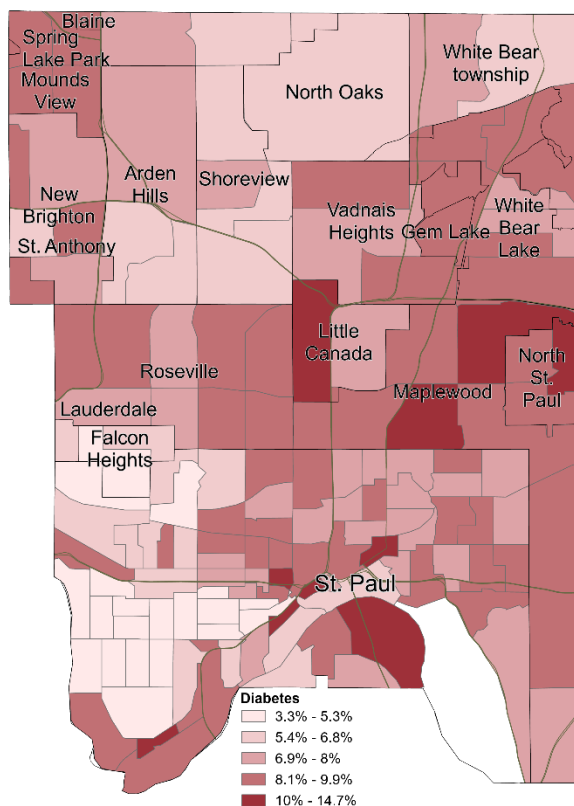
Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Note: Visit the [Health Trends Across Communities in Minnesota](#) dashboard for condition definitions.

- Rates of Type 2 diabetes were higher in pockets of Little Canada, Maplewood, North St. Paul, and St. Paul compared to other areas in Ramsey County.

cause of COPD in the United States, though long term exposure to air pollutants is also a risk factor.¹⁴⁴

8. Type 2 diabetes diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023



Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

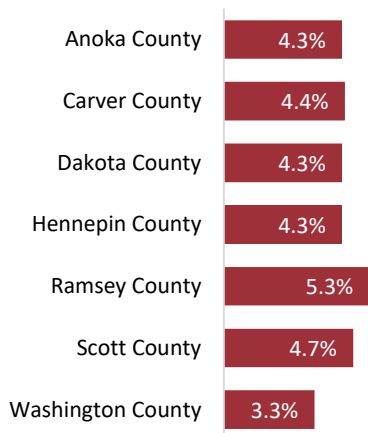
COPD is caused by damage to the lungs and airways causing inflammation, coughing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness which make it difficult to perform activities of daily living. COPD includes two primary conditions: emphysema and chronic bronchitis.¹²³

! Risk Factors

Rates of COPD are higher among older adults, people living in rural areas, and American Indian and Alaska Natives. Cigarette smoking is the leading

- Rates of COPD are somewhat higher in Ramsey County compared to other metro-area counties.

9. COPD among adults by metro-area county, 2022

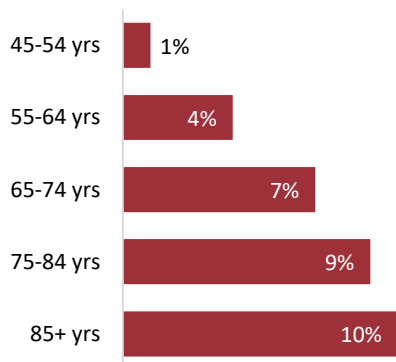


Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³²

Note: Data are age-adjusted. Visit the [Health Trends Across Communities in Minnesota](#) dashboard for condition definitions.

- Rates of COPD in Ramsey County were less than one percent among individuals under the age of 45. Rates increased steadily from age 45 to age 85 and older.

10. COPD diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023

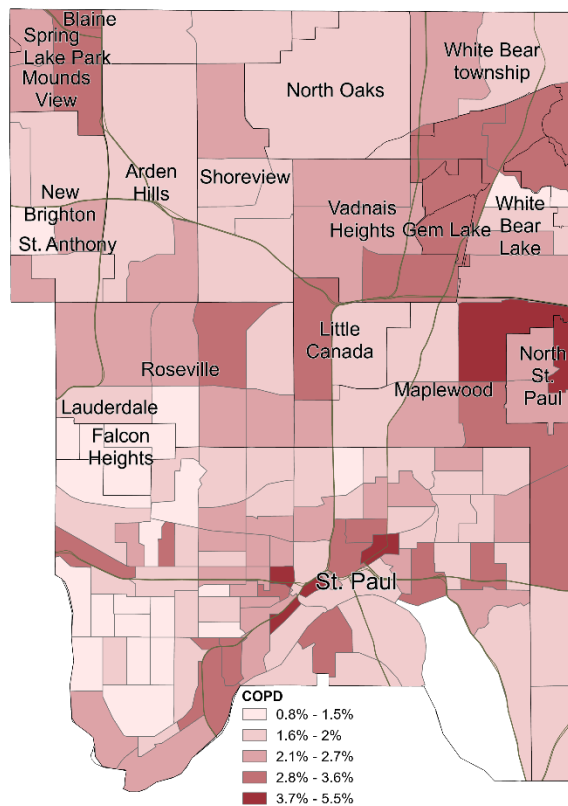


Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Note: Visit the [Health Trends Across Communities in Minnesota](#) dashboard for condition definitions.

- COPD rates were higher in pockets of North St. Paul and St. Paul compared to other areas in Ramsey County.

11. COPD diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023



Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Cardiovascular disease

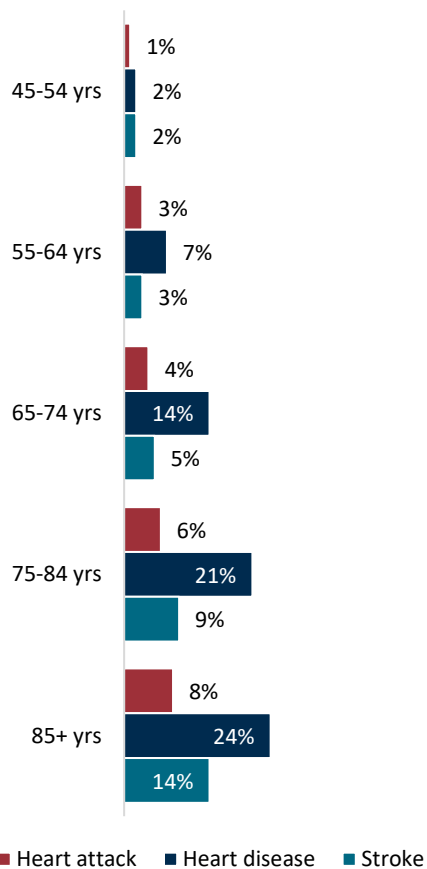
Cardiovascular disease, a leading cause of death, includes coronary heart disease, heart attack, stroke and other conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels.

! Risk Factors

High blood pressure, high cholesterol, cigarette smoking, diabetes, limited access to health-promoting foods and physical inactivity are all associated with higher rates of cardiovascular disease.¹²² Men have higher rates of cardiovascular disease than women. American Indians, black Hispanics, and individuals with lower income also experience higher rates.¹⁴⁶

- Ramsey County's rates of heart disease and stroke were slightly higher compared to other metro-area counties.
- Rates of cardiovascular disease in Ramsey County were less than one percent among individuals under the age of 45. Rates increased steadily from age 45 to age 85 and older.

12. Cardiovascular disease diagnoses, 2020-2023

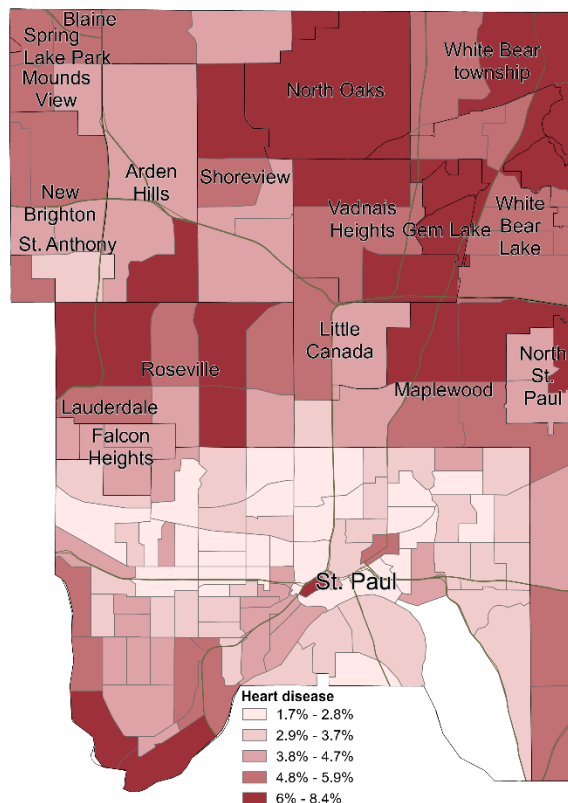


Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Note: Visit the [Health Trends Across Communities in Minnesota](#) dashboard for condition definitions.

- Rates of cardiovascular disease are generally higher in suburban Ramsey County compared to St. Paul.

13. Cardiovascular disease diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023

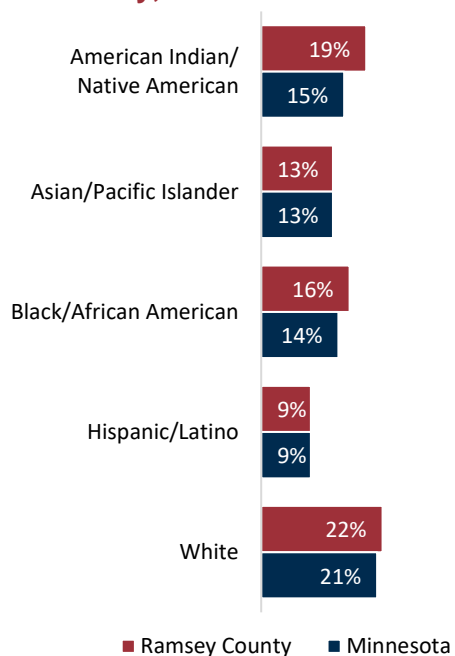


Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

High blood pressure (hypertension)

- Rates of high blood pressure were slightly higher in Ramsey and Anoka counties compared to other metro-area counties.
- The rate of high cholesterol among Ramsey County adults was also 27.8%, which was similar to other metro-area counties.
- Ramsey County rates of high blood pressure diagnoses were slightly higher than the state average for American Indian and Black residents.
- Overall, white residents had the highest rates of high blood pressure diagnoses.

14. High blood pressure diagnoses by race/ethnicity, 2020-2023

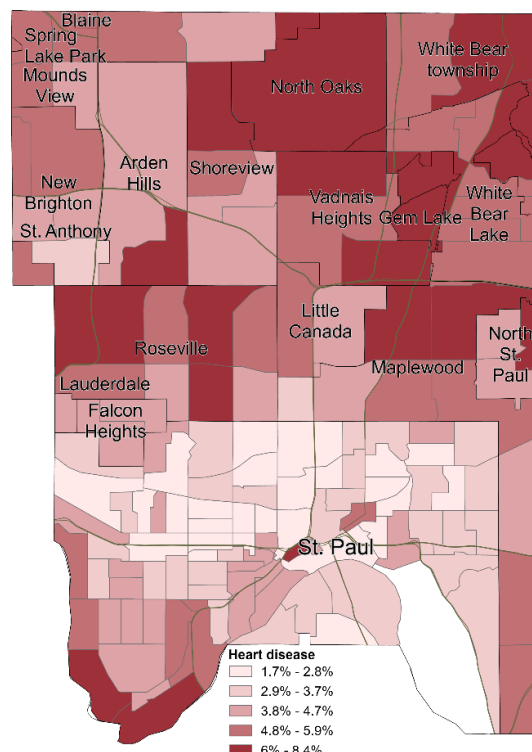


Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²

Note: Visit the [Health Trends Across Communities](#) in Minnesota dashboard for condition definitions.

- Rates of hypertension are generally higher in suburban Ramsey County compared to St. Paul.

15. Hypertension diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023



Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.¹³²