

PEOPLE

OPPORTUNITY

NATURE

BELONGING

# The Statewide Health Assessment

Environmental Health | Lecture 1: People

# In this Lecture

- Introduction
- People and environmental health
- Race & Ethnicity
- Disabilities
- Homelessness
- Incarceration

By the end of the lecture you will:  
Understand how environmental health is connected to who we are and where we come from by looking across different groups of people and their experiences

# Introduction

- “Who we are, where we come from, and our real or perceived differences play a role in shaping our health.”
- Overall, the state of Minnesota is healthy, but the data mask significant inequities which impact some populations more than others.
- Inequitable health outcomes—that is, when different groups are more or less healthy in a way that’s unjust, avoidable, unnecessary and unfair—occur when systems do not distribute the benefits and resources communities need to be healthy in an equitable manner.
- Which means our different identities and experiences impact our health in different ways



# People and Environmental Health

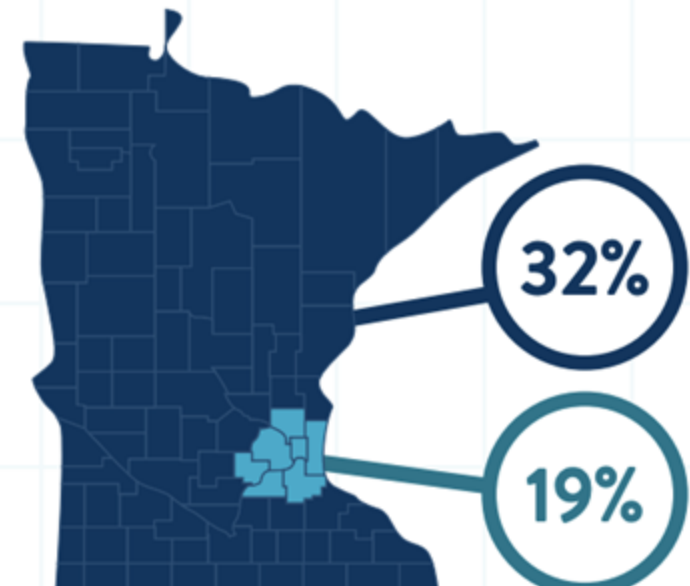
Where we come from impacts where we live and the actions that we take

In Minnesota health looks different depending on where you live

2.6 million living in Greater MN and  
3.2 million in the twin cities area (Minnesota  
State Demographic Center, 2021)

## IN 2033...

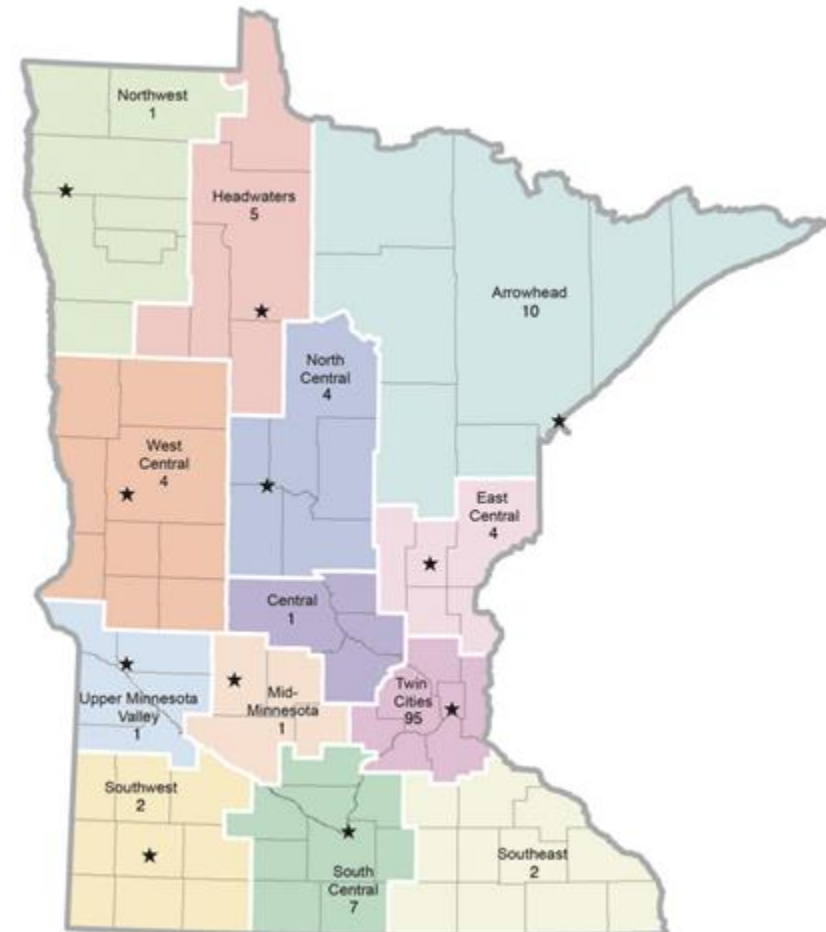
**32%** of residents of Greater Minnesota counties are projected to be older than 65 years, compared to **19%** for urban counties.<sup>53</sup>



# Race & Ethnicity

- Systematic racism and generational structural inequities influence health outcomes
- Uneven diversity distribution across the state
- Communities of color are estimated to increase significantly in the next 10 years (Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2020)

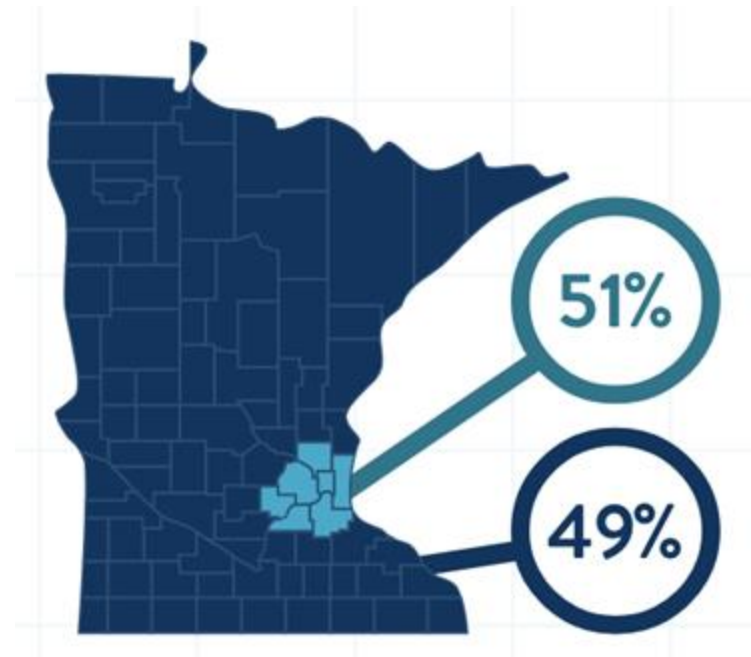
Number of Community Health Workers who serve in each of MN Economic Regions



(WellShare International, 2014)

# People With Disabilities

- Increased challenges in accessing basic needs such as transportation, housing etc.
- Structures impact full participation such as unequal access to programs
- Rural vs. urban living present it's challenges for people with disabilities



# People Experiencing Homelessness

- The rate of people experiencing homelessness has decreased in MN 7% since 2018 with 10,522 reported (MN Homeless Study, 2024)
- Communities of color are disproportionately impacted.
  - In 2019, American Indians are 30 times more likely to experience homelessness than their white non-Hispanic counterparts.<sup>105</sup>
  - People in Minnesota who experience homelessness and who also identify as American Indian have a rate of death that is 1.5 times higher than other people experiencing homelessness and five times higher than the Minnesota average.<sup>109</sup>
  - In 2019, Black or African American people were 12 times more likely to experience homelessness than their white non-Hispanic counterparts.<sup>106</sup>
- Unhoused people are more often exposed to diseases, toxins, etc.
- 7,917 people reported they were unhoused in January 2022 presenting its own challenges and risks to health (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023)



# People Experiencing Incarceration

PEOPLE

High incarceration rates harm communities by increasing family and neighborhood instability

Policing in low-income communities leads to higher incarceration rates for people of color.

- In 2022, people who identify as white makeup 83% of the state's population but represent only 51% of the prison population in Minnesota. People who identify as Black make up 7% of Minnesota's population but represent 37% of the prison population. 114,115
- In 2021, youth from communities of color were twice as likely to have experienced having a parent who was incarcerated. (Department of Education, 2019)
- Youth in Greater Minnesota were 1.2 times more likely to have experienced having a parent incarcerated or to have experienced homelessness compared to youth in the seven-county Twin Cities metro area. (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019)

**As of  
January 2023...**

Slightly more than

**8,000**  
adults were  
in prison in  
Minnesota.<sup>113</sup>



# Conclusion

- Our environments affect all people whether we realize it or not
- Structural change is necessary to improve people's health

- Q: What changes do you think need to happen in our systems and structures to improve environmental health in MN?





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Healthy Minnesota  
Partnership

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# For any addition questions ask:

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