

Progress against lung cancer drives down cancer mortality

WASHINGTON, DC — Cancer death rates fell for both men and women from 2019 to 2023, continuing a downward trend that has lasted more than 20 years, according to the 2026 Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer published in the journal *Cancer*. The continued decline in cancer deaths is driven largely by accelerated progress against lung cancer.

The special topic of the report focuses on changes in lung cancer risk factors and related outcomes during the first quarter of the 21st century. Despite significant progress, lung cancer remains the second most common cancer in both men and women and the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. Researchers noted that, beyond further reductions in cigarette smoking and supporting tobacco-free environments, sustaining progress against lung cancer may depend on access to early cancer detection, timely diagnosis, and state-of-the-art treatment.

The report also examines trends in new U.S. cancer cases from 2003 to 2022. Overall rates of new cancer cases rose slightly each year from 2018 to 2022, driven by increases in breast cancer among women and prostate cancer among men. Breast and prostate cancer remain the most common cancers among women and men, respectively. Despite the increase in prostate cancer, the overall rate of new cancer cases among men remained stable.

The *Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer* provides yearly updates on cancer rates and trends in the United States and each year includes a special topic of interest. The report is a collaborative effort among the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health; the American Cancer Society; and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR). This year the report examines trends in new U.S. cancer cases from 2003 to 2022 and deaths from 2004 to 2023. The report uses cancer registry data supported by CDC and NCI and compiled by NAACCR, as well as cancer death data from CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.

For more information and to read the full report, go to [Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, featuring 21st century progress against lung cancer-Henley-2026-Cancer-Wiley Online Library](#) ❖

CDC data show encouraging progress in youth health

WASHINGTON, DC — Recently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new data highlighting recent improvements in mental health and dietary behaviors among U.S. high school students. Youth Health in Focus, provides a snapshot of the health and well-being of high school students.

The report describes national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data from 2023 to 2025, as well as 10-year trends from 2015 to 2025. Data are presented across five focus areas: dietary behaviors, physical activity, sleep, digital behaviors, and mental health and suicide risk.

Key Improvements

- Many of the mental health and suicide risk indicators improved, including persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, which improved from 40% to 33%; poor mental health, which improved from 29% to 23%; and seriously considering suicide, which improved from 20% to 14%.
- Daily fruit consumption rose from 33% to 39%, daily vegetable consumption rose from 58% to 63%, and the share of students drinking plain water at least three times a day rose from 54% to 58%.
- Regarding improvements in youth physical activity, more students played on a sports team (52% to 58%).

"These are meaningful improvements, and they show that progress is possible when schools, families, and communities work together to support young people," said **JENNIFER SHUFORD, MD, MPH**, CDC's deputy director and chief medical officer. "At the same time, too many students are still struggling with daily health behaviors that can negatively affect their long-term health."

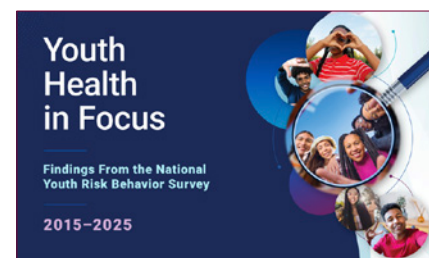
Barriers

Despite noted gains, the report highlights areas where youth continue to face barriers:

- Daily physical activity, muscle-strengthening activity, and meeting recommended activity guidelines remained unchanged, and fewer students attended physical education daily from 2023 to 2025.
- Only about 1 in 4 (24%) students got at least 8 hours of sleep on an average school night in 2025, similar to 23% in 2023. Insufficient sleep is linked to poor mental health, difficulty concentrating, and risky behaviors such as not wearing a seat belt or texting while driving.
- About 1 in 3 (36%) students reported social media use every hour or more in 2025, similar to 37% when measurement began in 2023. Nearly 1 in 2 (46%) students who drove in the past month texted or emailed while driving in 2025, similar to 42% reported in 2023. Digital behaviors can influence many aspects of health, including sleep, physical activity, nutrition, safety, and mental well-being.

For more than 35 years, the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey has provided nationally representative data that help schools, families, communities, and public health leaders identify emerging challenges, monitor long-term trends, and guide evidence-based action. These critical data inform prevention strategies, shape school health programs and highlight where support is needed most.

The report highlights select statistically significant differences. The full 2025 YRBS dataset, the Youth Health in Focus report, and supporting materials are available on CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/yrbs. ❖



Starr Foundation \$37M investment will create alliance to advance breakthroughs in aging research, clinical care

PROVIDENCE [BROWN UNIVERSITY] — With a \$37 million investment from the Starr Foundation, Brown University and Brown University Health will launch a new partnership to accelerate breakthroughs in aging research, clinical trials and patient treatments.

By integrating University research with the health system's clinical trial network, the Starr Healthspan Innovation Alliance aims to bridge the gap between scientific discovery and life-changing treatments for major age-related diseases of the modern era.

The funding will enable Brown University to build on and expand the work of the Center on the Biology of Aging, support groundbreaking laboratory research, and recruit leading researchers in the burgeoning field of geroscience, which is the study of the genetic, molecular and cellular mechanisms of aging. It will also expand clinical trials across Brown University Health, strengthening the ecosystem in which faculty-led research flows from laboratories to hospitals to patients.

"This alliance, made possible by the transformative philanthropic gift from the Starr Foundation, deepens our shared commitment to clinical excellence and academic innovation," said **JOHN FERNANDEZ**, president and CEO of Brown University Health, Rhode Island's largest healthcare system. "By combining our extensive clinical trial infrastructure with Brown's cutting-edge research on aging biology, we will bring novel treatments to patients faster than ever before. At its heart, this partnership is about helping people stay active, vibrant and present as they age for the moments that matter most with their families."

"Brown University's innovative scientists and the exceptional clinicians at Brown University Health are uniquely positioned to translate groundbreaking research into effective treatments for patients," said Starr Foundation Chair **JEFFREY W. GREENBERG**. "The Starr Foundation is proud to support this transformative alliance, with combined expertise that will accelerate breakthroughs for aging-related diseases to improve the human health span."

The alliance creates pathways for discoveries made in Brown University laboratories to be assessed in clinical trials in the health system's network, enabling the rapid flow of innovation to identify new medicines, devices and diagnostic tests, **MUKESH K. JAIN, MD**, senior associate provost for life sciences, senior vice president for health affairs and dean of medicine and biological sciences at Brown University.

"Our overarching vision has always been to build an integrated, comprehensive biomedical ecosystem that allows innovations to move seamlessly from discovery to real-life impact," Dr. Jain said. "With the Starr Healthspan Innovation Alliance, we are connecting our outstanding researchers at Brown's world-class Center on the Biology of Aging with the clinical trials unit at Brown University Health, ensuring science and research can flourish from the bench to bedside."

The Starr Foundation's investment will establish two new endowed faculty positions in geroscience at Brown University and support research activities at the Center on the Biology of Aging, which has long been at the leading edge of research in this area.

The Starr Foundation was established in 1955 by Cornelius Vander Starr, a global entrepreneur and humanitarian, and has been stewarded forward across generations by longtime foundation chair Maurice R. ("Hank") Greenberg, and now by his son Jeffrey. In addition to his role as Starr Foundation chair, Jeffrey Greenberg is a dedicated Class of 1973 Brown University alumnus and a former trustee of the Corporation of Brown University. He is a current member of Brown University Health's Board of Directors.

"What makes this alliance so compelling is the extraordinary opportunity to bridge laboratory research directly with clinical trials and patient care," Greenberg said. "By uniting the visionary scientists at Brown University's Center on the Biology of Aging with the dedicated healthcare and research teams across Brown University Health, the alliance is poised to dramatically speed up the progress from scientific discovery to life-transforming clinical trials." ♦

RI gets \$1M federal grant to strengthen 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

PROVIDENCE — U.S. Senators **JACK REED** and **SHELDON WHITEHOUSE** and U.S. Representatives **SETH MAGAZINER** and **GABE AMO** announced that Rhode Island is receiving \$1,057,919 in federal funds to help support the state's suicide prevention efforts, administer the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and ensure they have the tools, training, and staffing levels needed to effectively respond to suicide

risks and help save people in crisis.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides free, confidential support and crisis care referrals from trained counselors to anyone experiencing severe distress and/or suicidal thoughts. People can access the Lifeline by calling or texting 988.

Senator Reed co-authored the law creating the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline—the National Suicide Hotline Designation

Act (Public Law No: 116-172)—which directed the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to designate 988 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline, similar to the way 911 is set up as a free, three-digit number available 24/7 for urgent help. Prior to that, the hotline used a 10-digit number that was harder for people to remember.

Struggling Rhode Islanders in need or those seeking help for a loved one in crisis have called or texted Rhode Island's 988 Call Center more than 40,000 times over the last several years.

In Rhode Island, Horizon Healthcare Partners (HHP), along with its member agencies, is among the hundreds of organizations nationwide raising awareness about the importance of seeking help and prioritizing mental health. HHP staffs 988's call center and BHLINK with Community Care Alliance. BH Link has been answering these calls since the summer

of 2019, when the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), which funds BH Link, chose to take advantage of the fact that the center was already answering calls 24/7.

The members of the Congressional delegation noted that 988's text feature—which connects users to a live counselor—is especially helpful to younger people who may be less comfortable or overwhelmed speaking to someone over the phone. The text feature is part of a

nationwide strategy to reduce the incidence of suicidal ideation, behavior, and deaths by young people.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide was responsible for nearly 49,000 deaths in 2024, and the rate among men was nearly four times higher than women. The CDC also reports that suicide is one of the highest leading causes of death in the United States, ranking second for Americans aged 10 to 14, 15 to 24, and 25 to 36. ❖

Providence College Athletics, University Orthopedics announce new partnership focused on student-athlete care

PROVIDENCE — Providence College Athletics and Learfield announced a new, multi-year partnership with University Orthopedics, naming the regional sports medicine leader the Official Orthopedic Provider for 19 of Providence College's 21 Division I varsity teams, including men's and women's basketball.

University Orthopedics is a regional leader in orthopedic care, with more than 70 board-certified, fellowship-trained physicians specializing in sports medicine and a wide range of orthopedic conditions. The partnership—which also includes PC cross country, field hockey, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track, and volleyball—will provide the school's student-athletes with specialized orthopedic and sports medicine care, with a focus on injury prevention, treatment, and recovery.

"University Orthopedics has a long history of caring for athletes at every level, and we're proud to bring that experience to Providence College," said **JULIA KATARINCIC, MD**, University Orthopedics president. "These student-athletes put an incredible amount of work into competing at the highest level, and our goal is to provide the specialized care they need to stay healthy, recover from injuries, and get back to the sports they love. We're excited to become part of the Friars' community and look forward to building a strong partnership both on and off the field."

"University Orthopedics has a world-class sports medicine team, and we are excited to partner with Providence College," said **BRETT OWENS, MD**, Chief of Sports Medicine.

University Orthopedics will also host community-focused events featuring Providence College student-athletes and coaches, creating opportunities to connect with Friars fans and the broader Rhode Island community.

"We are excited to be partnering with one of the premier orthopedic care teams in the nation," Providence College Athletic Director **STEVE NAPOLILLO** said. "The health and welfare of our student-athletes is always our top priority. We are grateful for the support and generosity of University Orthopedics, which allows our athletes to compete at the highest level."

The partnership will provide University Orthopedics with visibility across Providence College men's and women's basketball and Olympic sports through in-venue signage, game sponsorships, digital content, radio integrations, and other branded initiatives.

"We're excited to welcome University Orthopedics to the Friars' family through a partnership that puts the health and well-being of our student-athletes at the forefront," said **JEFF GUARINO**, Vice President & General Manager of Providence Friars Sports Properties. "Their expertise in orthopedic and sports medicine care will be a valuable resource for our athletics program, while the partnership creates meaningful opportunities to connect with our fans and the Rhode Island community."

Providence Athletics and University Orthopedics worked closely to develop the partnership with Friars Sports Properties, the locally based team of Learfield, the media and technology company powering college athletics. ❖

VA awards \$8,720,113 in grants to fight Veteran homelessness

PROVIDENCE — The Department of Veterans Affairs awarded \$8,720,113 in grants to five community organizations to help Veterans in FY 2027 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, including in Rhode Island.

This funding is part of a record-high \$1.17 billion in grants awarded to 680 organizations across the country to fight Veteran homelessness. The grants follow VA's success in housing 51,936 homeless Veterans in Fiscal Year 2025, the highest number in seven years.

Resource and supportive services grants will be distributed through the agency's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program to:

- Prevent the imminent loss of a home.
- Identify new, more suitable housing situations for Veterans and families.
- Rapidly re-house Veterans and their families who are homeless and might remain homeless without assistance.

Funds for transitional housing and intensive supportive services will be distributed through the agency's Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program to:

- Fund transitional housing with supportive services or service centers.
- Support transition-in-place housing, where Veterans remain in their current housing unit while receiving services to help them move toward permanent, stable housing.
- Provide special housing designed to better serve women Veterans and those who are chronically mentally ill, frail, or elderly.

"VA medical centers across Rhode Island remain committed to ensuring Veterans have access to safe, stable housing and the supportive services they need to thrive," said **LAWRENCE CONNELL**, Director of VA Providence. "These grants strengthen our partnerships with community organizations and help us reach Veterans where they are, providing resources that make a meaningful difference in their lives." ❖

RIDOH launches new men's mental health campaign

PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is launching a new statewide campaign targeting working-age men to address the stigma surrounding mental health. Man Therapy, a research-based, nationally acclaimed campaign, takes a creative approach to reshaping the conversation about men's mental health in Rhode Island.

The campaign provides resources for men and the people in their lives on depression, divorce, and suicide, among other topics. The campaign resources are available at www.mantherapy.org. Rhode Island resources are available on the "Get Support Close to Home" tab on the main page.

This site and this new campaign are a way for people to learn more about men's mental health, examine their own challenges, and consider steps that can put them on the path to treatment and recovery, all within an easy-to-access online portal," said Director of Health **JERRY LARKIN, MD**. "With Man Therapy, people can learn about mental health and explore options to support their mental health wellness, ranging from personal approaches to professional therapy and other resources."

The campaign is running through April 2027 online, on social media, and through gas station ad platforms.

Upon visiting www.mantherapy.org, men and their loved ones will find they have a virtual appointment with Dr. Rich Mahogany—a character created to greet visitors, make them feel at ease, and provide an overview of what they will find and explore during their visit. Dr. Mahogany is dedicated to cutting through denial with a fresh approach, using a straightforward style and practical, useful advice for men. His tone debunks the age-old stigma that says mental health disorders are an unmanly sign of weakness.

The campaign is a part of broader work to prevent suicide and promote mental health among Rhode Island men. It builds on the success of the award-winning "You Good, Man?" campaign which provided an emotional appeal to encourage men to check in on the mental health of their friends and colleagues.

Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Grant team focuses on men ages 25–64, a population with a disproportionately high burden of suicide. From 2020 to 2024, the rate of suicide deaths among Rhode Island men was almost two times higher than the rate of suicide for the overall Rhode Island population. An average of 79 suicide fatalities was seen amongst Rhode Island men every year during this period. From 2020 to 2024, 61% of males ages 25–64 who died by suicide had a known circumstance of a current mental health problem at the time of death. Additionally, according to the 2024 Rhode Island Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, 10.9% of men reported that they usually or always feel lonely.

In addition to Man Therapy, RIDOH's suicide prevention efforts also extend to younger Rhode Islanders. The Department recently received the SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention grant, which empowers states and Tribes to implement youth suicide prevention and early intervention strategies for individuals up to age 24. Together, these initiatives support a comprehensive approach across the lifespan to suicide prevention while recognizing that different populations may benefit from different strategies and resources.

For more information and to explore the resources available through Man Therapy, visit www.mantherapy.org. Visit preventsuicideri.org for local resources, trainings, and data. ❖

Newport Hospital first in RI to implement da Vinci 5 Surgical System

NEWPORT — Newport Hospital is now first in Rhode Island to be using the da Vinci 5 surgical system, Intuitive's most advanced and integrated robotic-assisted surgical platform, to significantly enhance the hospital's minimally invasive surgical capabilities. The new equipment was fully funded by Newport Hospital's generous donor community following a year of fundraising and preparation by teams across the hospital.

The da Vinci 5 is an important advancement for Newport Hospital's surgical program, supporting the hospital's commitment to providing experienced specialists, advanced technology and compassionate care close to home. The system will be used for minimally invasive procedures in urology, gynecology, thoracic surgery and general surgery.

"This milestone for Newport Hospital would not have been possible without the extraordinary generosity of our donor community," said **TENNY THOMAS, MD**, President and Chief Medical Officer of Newport Hospital. "Their support allows us to continue investing in innovative technology that strengthens the care available to our patients and community. We are deeply grateful to every donor and member of our team who helped bring this advanced surgical system to Newport."

The surgeon-directed da Vinci 5 system translates a surgeon's hand movements into smaller, precise movements of instruments inside the patient's body. The surgeon remains fully in control throughout every procedure. The platform includes wristed instruments, enhanced 3D visualization, intuitive motion and an ergonomic design intended to support surgeons as they perform minimally invasive procedures.

The system is designed as a future-ready platform, with the capacity to incorporate continued technological advancements. Its addition further expands Newport Hospital's investments in contemporary, leading-edge surgical technology alongside the knowledge and skill of its experienced surgeons.

"Bringing the da Vinci 5 to Newport Hospital is an exciting step forward for surgical care in our community," said **JAMES D. VALENTE, MD**, Medical Director, Chair of Surgery. "This technology enhances the tools available to our surgeons and strengthens our ability to offer advanced minimally invasive surgical options in a convenient community hospital setting."

The addition of the da Vinci 5 complements Newport Hospital's growing surgical capabilities, which also include the Zimmer Biomet ROSA Knee System. The ROSA system provides real-time data and enhanced precision during total knee replacement procedures, supporting personalized orthopedic care. ❖

Saint Anne's Hospital receives state approval for EP lab

FALL RIVER — Saint Anne's Hospital has received approval from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for a new electrophysiology (EP) laboratory, which will expand access to specialized heart care for residents across Greater Fall River. The approval, granted on September 9, 2026, marks an important step in the hospital's ongoing efforts to strengthen cardiovascular services and meet the growing needs of the region.

The new EP lab will be developed within existing space on the Saint Anne's Hospital campus and will provide advanced diagnostic and treatment services for patients with heart rhythm disorders. The project includes the build-out of approximately 6,200 square feet of previously approved shell space to accommodate the lab and supporting clinical areas.

Cardiovascular disease remains one of the region's most significant health challenges. Fall River has the highest incidence of cardiac disease in Massachusetts and a coronary heart disease rate that is 24 percent higher than the state average, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"This investment reflects Brown Health's commitment to building a comprehensive cardiovascular program that delivers exceptional care across our communities," said **ATHENA POPPAS, MD**, Chief of Cardiology and Director of the Brown Health Cardiovascular Institute. "Expanding electrophysiology services at Saint Anne's Hospital will enhance access to leading-edge treatments and strengthen the continuum of cardiovascular care available to patients throughout southeastern Massachusetts."

The hospital is currently targeting a Fall 2027 opening for the new EP lab, pending final planning and construction timelines. ❖