

# How Ready Is Providence?

## CHILDREN WITH UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

October 2008

### Why is it important?

In 1989, appearing before the U.S. Senate, Surgeon General Everett Koop stated, “If some infectious disease came along that affected children [in the proportion that injuries do], there would be a huge public outcry and we would be told to spare no expense to find a cure and to be quick about it.”<sup>1</sup>

Since that time the national fatality rate among children ages 14 and under has declined by a remarkable 45% from 15.4 per 100,000 in

1987 to 8.5 per 100,000 in 2005.<sup>2</sup> Still, unintentional injury remains the number-one killer of children from birth to age 14,<sup>3</sup> and many in the child safety field believe that 90% of all unintentional injuries could be prevented.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 2.6 million children from birth through 5 years received medical treatment for unintentional injuries in 2006.<sup>5</sup> More than 45% of these injuries were from unintentional falls.

### What did we report in 2004?

At the time of our previous report, available baseline data were hospital discharge data collected by the Rhode Island Department of Health. These data represent only the most serious injuries that required hospitalization, not those that resulted only in a visit to the emergency department.

In calendar year 2002, a total of 57 Provi-

dence children ages birth to five were hospitalized as a result of unintentional injuries. This represents 31% of all unintentional injuries in children statewide (182 injuries). The rate of hospitalization for children in Providence was 3.74 per 1,000 children, higher than that of children living elsewhere in Rhode Island, at 2.11 per 1,000.<sup>6</sup>

### What is happening now?

The most recently available data from the Rhode Island Department of Health indicate that fewer children, both in Providence and statewide, required hospitalization as a result of unintentional injuries in 2005 than in 2002. A total of 120 Rhode Island children were hospitalized in 2005, a rate of 1.54 per 1,000 children.<sup>7</sup> Of these children, 44 were from Providence, representing 2.89 per 1,000 children in the city.<sup>8</sup> The largest number of hospitalizations were a result of accidental falls (42% statewide, 36% in Providence) followed by

poisonings (17% statewide, 24% in Providence). It is important to note that, consistent with 2002 data, Providence children represent just 19% of the statewide population under the age of six, but 30% of the young children hospitalized for unintentional injuries.

The Health Department now maintains a database of all emergency department visits, previously unavailable, including the many visits that do not require hospitalization.

Statewide in 2005, more than 7,500 young

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## What is happening now?

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children visited the emergency room as the result of an unintentional injury. This is a rate of 98 per 1,000 children. Nearly 1,800 or 24% of the injured children were from Providence, a rate of 118 per 1,000.

Table 1 displays the types of unintentional injuries that required an emergency department visit for both the state and city in 2005. In Rhode Island and Providence, 40% of all

unintentional injuries resulted from falls. An equal number of cases were identified as “other,” including dozens of unspecified accidental causes such as injury from falling objects, fireworks, and power tools.<sup>9</sup>

In Providence, emergency department data were analyzed at the census tract level to allow for better understanding of variations across the city. Figure 1 depicts these data as a rate for each of the 38 census tracts in Providence. Neighborhood boundaries are overlain for geographic reference and

ease of comparison. As portrayed, rates vary significantly, from fewer than 75 per 1,000 children in seven census tracts to rates more than twice that in four tracts.

Sixteen census tracts comprise R2LP’s target area and injury rates vary considerably within these tracts. For example, in the Smith Hill and Valley neighborhoods, the rate is 64 per 1,000. In Upper and Lower South Providence it is a rate of 159 per 1,000. Exactly eight of the R2LP tracts are below the citywide rate and eight are above.

Table 1

### Unintentional Injuries among Children under Age 6 in Rhode Island and Providence, 2005

	Rhode Island	%	Providence	%
Motor Vehicle	188	2%	66	4%
Other Vehicle	69	1%	17	1%
Poisoning	217	3%	50	3%
Fall	3010	40%	698	39%
Fire	18	0%	4	0%
Natural, Environmental	346	5%	61	3%
Submersion, Suffocation	372	5%	92	5%
Other	3035	40%	673	38%
No Emergency Code	316	4%	130	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,571</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,791</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Health Statistics

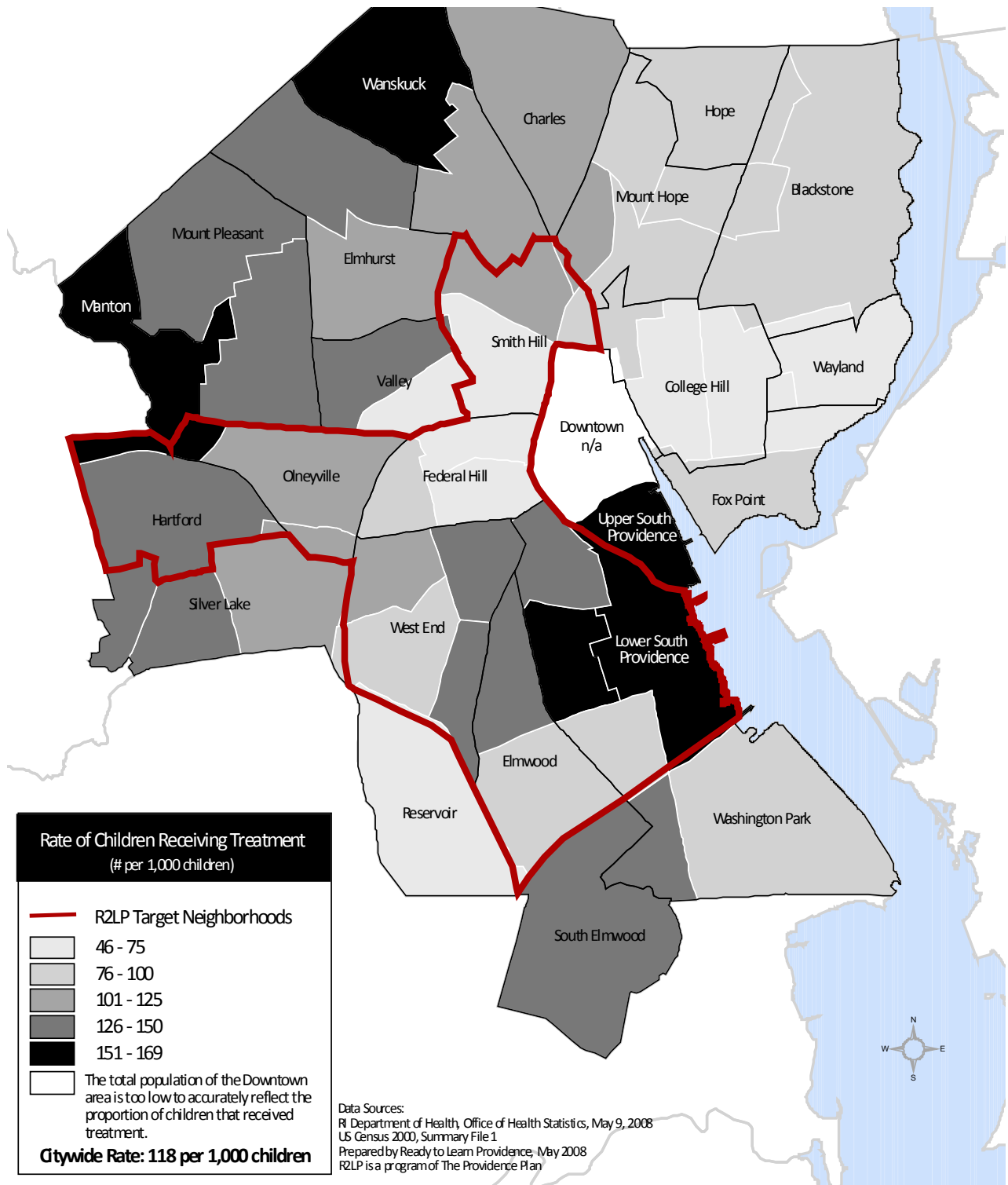
#### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup>The Davide and Lucile Packard Foundation. (2000). Unintentional injuries in childhood. *The Future of Children*, 10, Number 1. Retrieved May 5, 2008 from [http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr\\_doc/Unintentional\\_Injuries.pdf](http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/Unintentional_Injuries.pdf) <sup>2</sup>Safe Kids USA. (2008, April). *Report to the nation: Trends in unintentional childhood injury mortality and parental views on child safety*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved May 20, 2008 from <http://www.usa.safekids.org>. <sup>3</sup>Ibid. <sup>4</sup>Cole, K. (2004). *Protecting children from unintentional injuries*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri-Columbia, MU Extension <sup>5</sup>Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2001). *WISQARS Nonfatal injuries: Leading causes of nonfatal injuries reports* [Data file]. Available from the Centers for Disease Control website, <http://www.cdc.gov/>. <sup>6</sup>U.S. Census Bureau (2000). *United States Census 2000 Summary File 1* [Data file]. Available from <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>. *The United States 2000 Census Bureau Summary File 1* reported a total 15,210 children under the age of six residing in Providence. In 2004 Ready to Learn Providence reported this as a rate of 374 per 100,000. <sup>7</sup>Current injury rates are calculated using the same U.S. Census Bureau, *United States Census 2000*, figure of 77,628 children under the age of six in Rhode Island. While dated, this is the only 100% count available for rate estimation. <sup>8</sup>Providence injury rates use the U.S. Census Bureau, *United States Census 2000*, figure of 15,210 children under the age of six in Providence. <sup>9</sup>Hospitals code injuries in accordance with ICD-9CM, which states “other unintentional injuries” may include injuries from falling objects, fireworks, power tools, ultraviolet light, and dozens of other sources. (Practical Management Information Corporation. (2007). *International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems, 9<sup>th</sup> revision, clinical modification* [ICD-9CM]. Los Angeles: Author.)

Figure 1

## Emergency Department Visits Resulting from Unintentional Injuries among Children under Age 5, 2005

(Calculated at the rate per 1,000 children residing in the census tract)





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Ready to Learn Providence is a program of The Providence Plan

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