

# Skin Cancer Rates In Massachusetts Among Highest In Nation

## New findings show diagnoses are on the rise; Cape Cod rates are double the national average

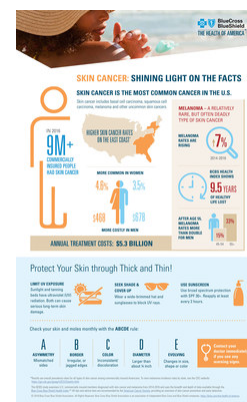
BOSTON, June 1, 2018 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Diagnoses of skin cancers are higher in Massachusetts than the national average and are even higher on Cape Cod, which has the third highest rate of diagnosis in the nation. Skin cancers are diagnosed at a rate of 4.3 percent nationally. In Massachusetts, the rate of diagnosis is 5 percent - tied for sixth highest in the country. In the Barnstable-Yarmouth Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) the rate of diagnosis is 8.6 percent - double the national average. The data comes from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's (BCBSA) [Health of America Report](#) and is for 2016 (see charts below).

"These numbers are obviously alarming," said Dr. Bruce Nash, chief physician executive at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "We're often ranked as one of the healthiest states in the nation, but we clearly have more work to do to educate residents about the risk of skin cancer, especially on the Cape. We encourage our members to get outside, be active and enjoy the nice weather, but we also want to stress the importance of sun protection, including UV-blocking sunglasses, hats with a brim, and broad spectrum sunscreens with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher."

Experts also recommend sunscreens that protect against both UV-A and UV-B rays and do not contain oxybenzone, which has been linked to hormone disruption and allergic skin reactions.

Nationwide, the prevalence of the most dangerous form of skin cancer, melanoma, increased 7 percent over a four-year span. Findings show that the rate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield members living with melanoma more than doubled for men ages 55 through 64. Women 54 and younger have a higher prevalence of diagnosed melanoma than men.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States: Nearly 9,500 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with it each day, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. By taking the skin cancer diagnosis rate of 4.3 percent of Blue Cross members found in the study and extrapolating it to 216 million privately insured people counted by the U.S. Census Bureau, the BCBSA estimates that nine million privately insured people in the U.S. have skin cancer.



Rank	State	Skin cancer diagnosis rate
1	Florida	7.1%
2	Washington, D.C.	5.8%
3	Connecticut	5.6%
4	Rhode Island	5.3%
4	Vermont	5.3%
4	Maryland	5.3%
5	North Carolina	5.2%
6	Massachusetts	5.0%
6	New York	5.0%

Rank	MSA	Skin cancer diagnosis rate
1	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	10.0%
2	Fort Pierce-Port St. Lucie, FL	9.5%
3	West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	9.5%
4	Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay, FL	8.6%
5	Barnstable-Yarmouth, MA	8.6%

The findings are based on medical claims data from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index<sup>SM</sup> ([BCBS Health Index<sup>SM</sup>](#)), a first-of-its-kind measurement of health for nearly every county in America. It encompasses more than 200 health conditions and identifies those conditions with the greatest impact on the commercially insured population. The BCBS Health Index is powered by de-identified medical claims data from more than 41 million commercially insured members of BCBS companies. The interactive website allows people to view the overall health and top 10 conditions that negatively impact the health of these members at the state and county levels.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield: The Health of America Report<sup>®</sup> is a collaboration between BCBSA and Blue Health Intelligence, which uses a market-leading claims database to uncover key trends and insights into health care affordability and access to care.

### About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through [The Health of America Report](#) series and the national [BCBS Health Index<sup>SM</sup>](#). For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit [BCBS.com](#). We also encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#),

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### **About BHI**

Blue Health Intelligence (BHI) is the nation's premier resource for data-driven insights about healthcare trends and best practices, promoting healthier lives and more affordable access to safe and effective care. BHI leverages a team of analytics experts and advanced technology, coupled with access to the greatest number of healthcare claims—172 million lives—gathered over 10 years in a safe, HIPAA-compliant, secure database. The resulting conformed, reliable data set has the broadest, deepest pool of integrated medical and pharmacy claims, reflecting medical utilization in every ZIP code. Blue Health Intelligence (BHI) is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. BHI is a trade name of Health Intelligence Company, LLC. [www.bluehealthintelligence.com](http://www.bluehealthintelligence.com).

### **About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts**

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ([bluecrossma.com](http://bluecrossma.com)) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We're the trusted health plan for more than 25,000 Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million members first, we're rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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