



A Seat at the Table: Mapping the structural and social determinants of health for older adults living in the Bronx



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Introduction

Of the five New York City boroughs, the Bronx exhibits the **most severe health disparities** among **older adults**, including the **highest disability rate (46.7%)**, **lowest median household income (\$31,320)**, and **highest poverty rate (29.7%)** (Denapoli, 2024). These indicators reflect enduring **structural barriers to coordinated care**. This study examines community needs, maps existing resources, identifies critical service gaps, and proposes actionable workshop-based solutions.

Methods

Sample

- This study was conducted in two Bronx neighborhoods with high rates of adults over 65 racialized as Black or Latinx: **Eastchester-Edenwald-Baychester** and **Williamsbridge-Olinville**.

Procedure

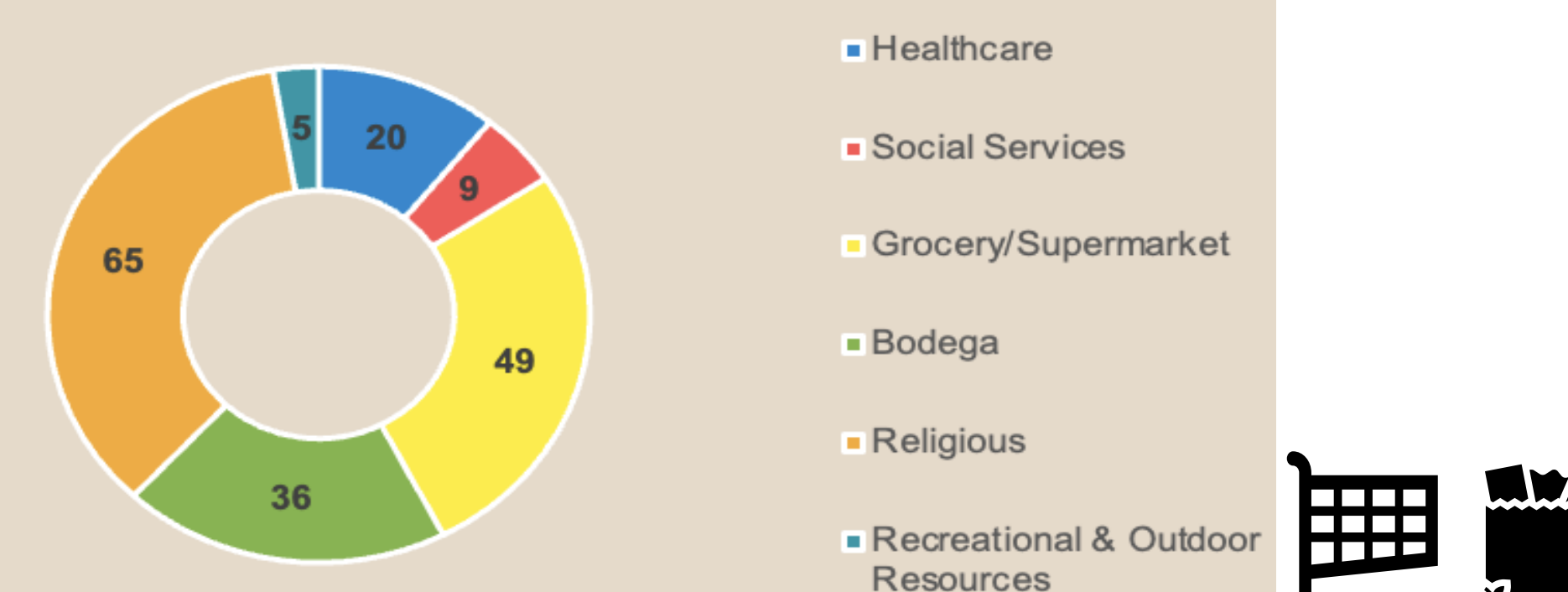
- A team of six graduate and undergraduate students mapped both Bronx neighborhoods and its resources.
- Documented the following categories of resources:
 - Healthcare (Primary, pharmacy, dental, etc.)*
 - Social Services (Tax offices, community centers, etc.)*
 - Grocery/Supermarket*
 - Bodegas/Delis*
 - Religious (Churches, Mosques, etc.)*
 - Recreational/ Outdoor (Parks, open green space, etc.)*

Proposals

- Developed pilot workshops and events to address gaps identified in during mapping.

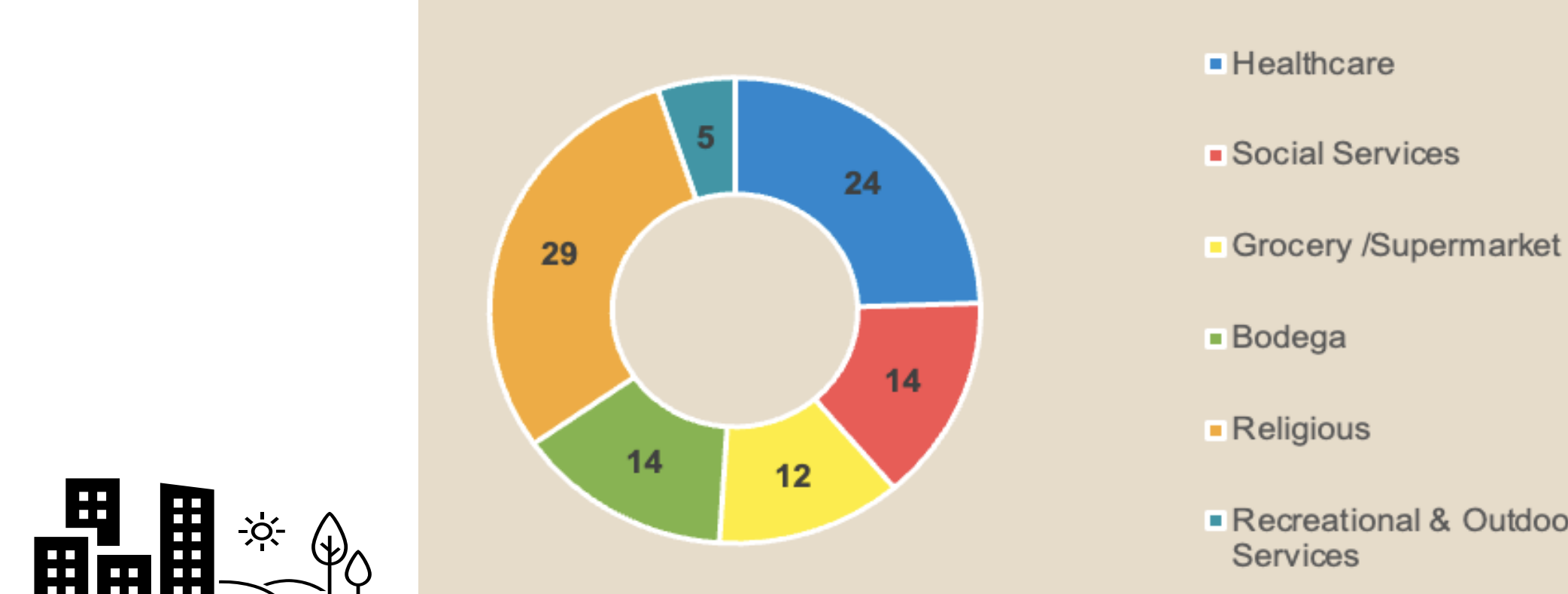
Results

Distribution of Local Service Providers in Williamsbridge-Olinville

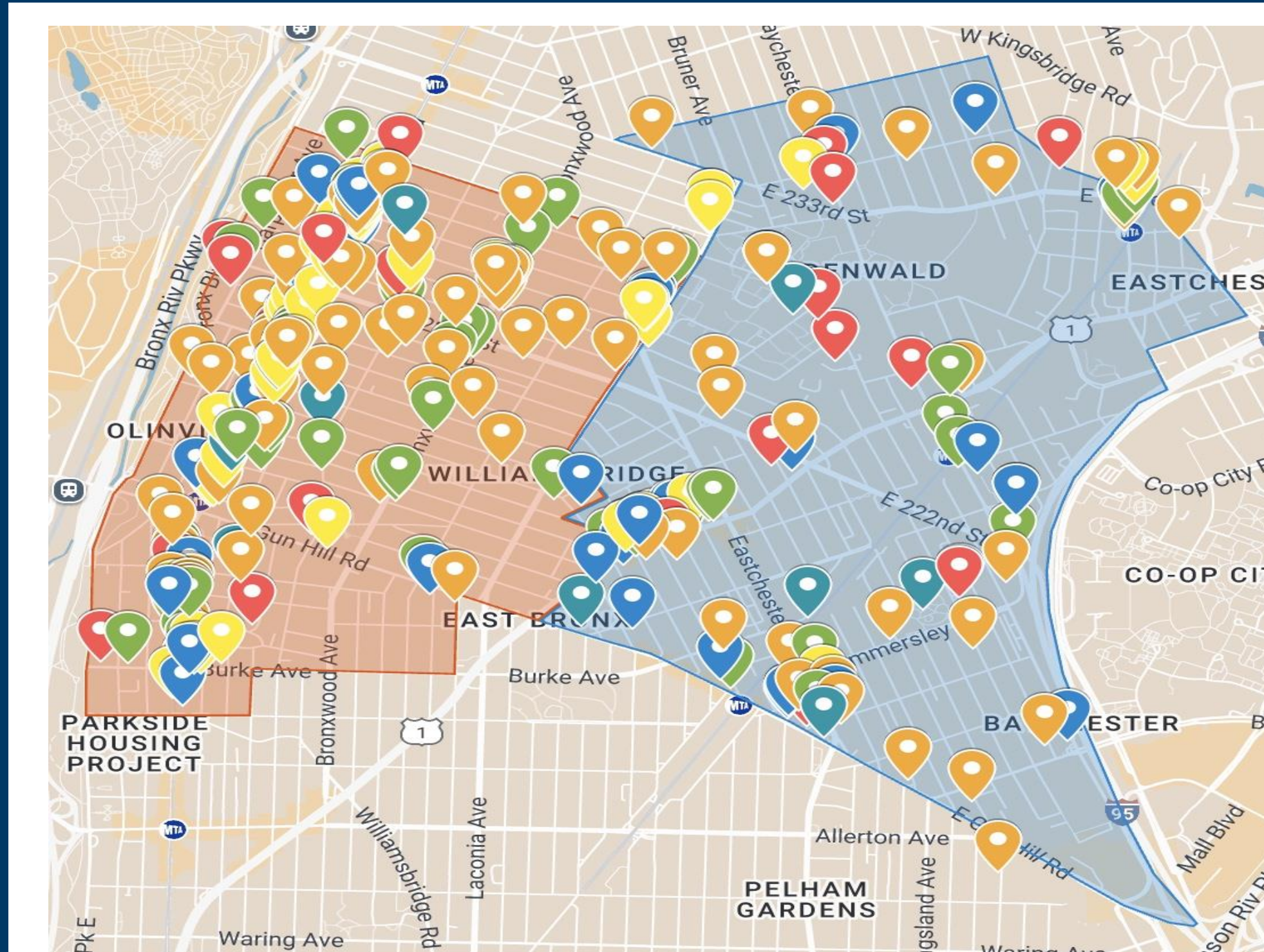


- Majority of supermarkets and social services are only located on White Plains Rd.**
- Religious institutions and bodegas are abundant in residential areas.**

Distribution of Local Service Providers in Eastchester-Edenwald-Baychester



- Massive residential area present in center of neighborhood, limiting access to resources.**
- Barbed wire, cracked sidewalks, and hilly roads were mapped in residential areas.**



- Essential services are disproportionately concentrated along major roadways, physically disconnected from residential areas.**
- Hilly terrain exacerbates mobility limitations, particularly for elder populations.**
- Residential zones lack basic amenities (benches) and residences have an abundance of stairs.**
- Limited availability of specialty medical services and elder-care facilities reflects systemic underservice.**

Discussion

Asset mapping provided a clear disparity in health access and resources in these two Bronx neighborhoods. Essential services were disproportionately concentrated along major roads and were physically disconnected from residential areas. Both neighborhoods also lacked healthy food options with bodegas often being the closest source to food for residents.

A Seat at the Table also aims to address these gaps by introducing **pilot workshop and events** that aim to improve health resource access. Research findings suggest that improving health outcomes is less about developing new services and more about strengthening coordination, visibility, and trust across systems (Rosen, 2018).

Further research should explore the effects of such limited accessibility to essential resources such as the lack of coordinated care and potential increased risk of social isolation. Possible solutions to such effects could include a collaborative care model that encourages integration of social programming and healthcare.

Pilot Workshops/Events

Bronx Bites

Goal:

To equip older adults in the Bronx with practical strategies to prepare healthy, affordable meals using deli groceries.

Key Activities:

- "Healthy Eating from the Deli" workshop (nutrition tips and meal planning)
- Interactive grocery label-reading and cook demos using low-cost foods

Sacred Care Coalition

Goal:

To test a two-way referral service for(4-6) physicians, community-based organizations (CBOs) (2-3), senior centers, and churches to better support older adults in the Bronx.

Key Activities

- "Know Your Care Circle" workshop (care mapping, referral role-plays)
- Live referral tracking via Community Health Workers between clinics and CBOs

Exercise & Connect

Goal:

To address intergenerational gaps and promote physical activity among older adults through monthly community-based events.

Key Activities:

- "Exercise & Connect" event
- High school students and older adult engage in light physical activities and fellowship together (i.e. stretching or dance)

Bronx Health Fair

Goal:

To triangulate health and community resources in an accessible location for the community

Key Activities:

- Rapid health assessments, educational workshops, community organization tabling
- Community building and recreation