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# Lung illnesses more likely near Logan Airport

Study doesn't find higher rates of heart disease, hearing loss



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

**Winthrop, a town under a flight path to Logan Airport, is one of 17 communities cited in a Health Department report.**

By **David Abel** and **Zachary T. Sampson** | GLOBE STAFF | GLOBE

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Children who live in neighborhoods bordering Logan International Airport are as much as four times more likely to wheeze, experience shortness of breath, and exhibit other signs of undiagnosed asthma compared with children who live farther away, according to a long-awaited state report released Wednesday night.

The study, commissioned by the Legislature 14 years ago and only now finished, also found that adults who have lived near the airport for three or more years — in parts of East Boston, South Boston, Chelsea, and Winthrop — are nearly twice as likely to experience chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than those living in communities with less exposure to air pollution from planes taking off and landing.

But the \$1.8 million study by the state Department of Public Health, which was delayed after going years without funding and after five revisions to its complicated statistical models, found that those living close to the airport had no higher rates of heart disease or hearing loss.

“The chief takeaways are that we do see some respiratory effects associated with living in the areas of highest impact, but Logan itself represents a smaller contribution to the overall urban air pollution picture than expected,” said Suzanne K. Condon, director of the health department’s Bureau of Environmental Health, who oversaw the study.

The authors said that the findings on asthma and lung disease are “statistically significant” — meaning they are unlikely to be due to chance — and that they took into account the emissions from greater vehicle traffic in the congested areas near the airport and socioeconomic factors such as smoking rates and poverty, which are known to contribute to the rates of respiratory illnesses.