

Does Where You Live Affect How Long You Live?

What a ZIP Code Means for Life Expectancy

As it turns out, your *ZIP Code* can have *more* impact on your life expectancy than your *genetic code*. Even a one-mile distance between two ZIP Codes can have a great effect on life expectancy. How can that be? Resources and opportunities in a particular area will affect how the people who live there behave. For example, health outcomes will be different between two ZIP Codes if one has access to healthy and diverse food options and the other does not. Access to resources such as parks, schools, transportation, and medical care also has a great impact on life expectancy.

The stress that may come with trying to figure out *how* to access needed resources, when they aren't as readily available, may build up over time and become a root cause for a number of poor health outcomes. The effects of chronic stress alone raise an individual's risk for heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and other serious health problems. The cycle continues when access to medical services that can help prevent or manage health problems is scarce, absent, or hard to access.

What Does This Mean for Aurora, Colorado?

Aurora is a rapidly growing city just east of Denver. Its geographical area covers three counties (Arapahoe, Adams and Douglas) and 17 ZIP Codes, all socially, economically and industrially diverse. In 2000, Aurora's total population was 276,393, and by 2010 that number had grown to 325,078. The estimated population as of July 2015 was 359,407. Aurora is also ethnically diverse with over 50% of the population being of non-Caucasian lineage.

Such a large and recent influx of people, has created unprecedented demands on infrastructure and resources such as housing, green spaces, groceries, and schools throughout Aurora. The attached map shows there are wide disparities in life expectancy across various Aurora ZIP Codes.

So, What Can We Do?

As a community service, Aurora Health Access (AHA) in partnership with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Tri-County Health Department, and the Piton Foundation (a part of Gary Community Investments)¹, constructed an analysis, map, and report outlining life expectancy by ZIP Code in Aurora, Colorado. This report was modeled after a similar project done by the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved for Denver's neighborhoods.

The purpose of this analysis, map, and report is to stimulate interest and action steps, which can lead to improved population health, well-being, and equity for all residents of Aurora. Whether you are in a high- or low-life expectancy ZIP Code, you can make a difference – for yourself, for your neighbors, for Aurora. We all benefit from an improved “health culture.” Together, we can create a community where all residents have an opportunity for health.

¹ The Piton Foundation, which is part of [Gary Community Investments](#), is a private, operating foundation established in 1976 by Denver oilman Sam Gary.

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Aurora, Colorado: Life Expectancy Methodology and Data Tables

Population data were sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau tract records and aggregated into 13 age groups.ⁱ The average difference between 2000 and 2010 population counts were then calculated for each age group in a given zip code to determine the average growth each year over the ten-year period. This number was added to the 2000 total population of each age group in a given zip code to determine the population in 2001 and so on until 2010, assuming consistent growth each year. (If the population in an age group had decreased between 2000 and 2010, the average difference was subtracted for each year). Finally, this data was aggregated to determine the population years at risk for each age group.

Death statistics from 2004 to 2013 were obtained from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and aggregated into the 13 age groups. Death counts and aggregated population data were entered into abridged life tables using the Chiang Methodology to calculate life expectancy at birth.ⁱⁱ

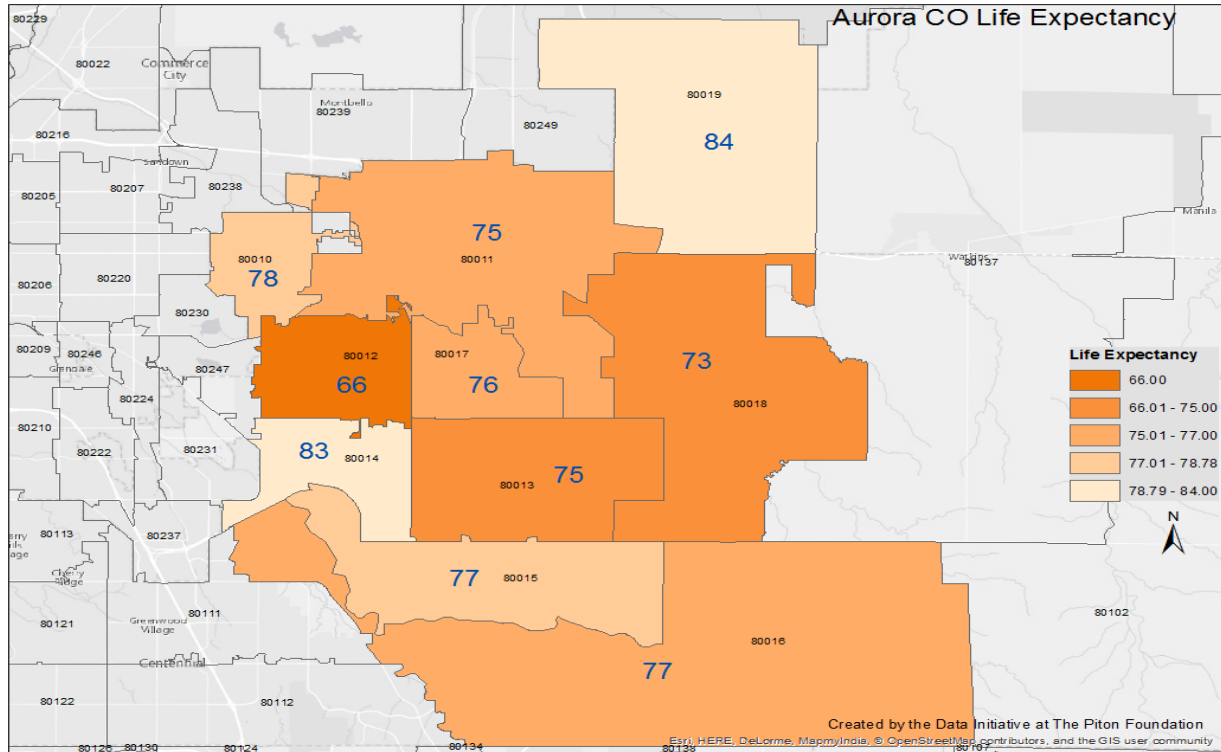
The following charts outline the age groups created by aggregating 2000 and 2010 census tract data, and the life expectancy at birth for each Aurora zip code. Not all of Aurora's zip codes are represented here because data were sourced at the Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) level. The United States Census Bureau uses ZCTAs to create boundaries which may encompass multiple zip codes (see below). The zip code 80045 was omitted due to a lack of appropriate population and death data.

Age Groups	Zip Code	Life Expectancy at Birth
0-4 Years	80010 (Includes 80040)	73.78
5-9 Years	80011 (Includes 80041, 80042, 80044)	75.58
10-14 Years	80012 (Includes 80047)	66
15-19 Years	80013	75
20-24 Years	80014	83.8
25-34 Years	80015 (Includes 80046)	77.75
35-44 Years	80016	77
45-54 Years	80017	76
55-59 Years	80018	73.7
60-64 Years	80019	84
65-74 Years		
75-84 Years		
85+ Years		

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau
[2000/2010](#)

ⁱⁱ New Mexico's Indicator-Based Information System (NM-IBIS).
<https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/resource/LifeExp.html>

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About Aurora Health Access:

Aurora Health Access (AHA) is a community alliance of healthcare organizations, public agencies, providers, civic and business leaders, and residents committed to creating a healthcare system in Aurora that meets the needs of all its residents. AHA offers an inclusive convening table where health and community leaders can come together to discuss and develop solutions to health access issues in their community. AHA has been working since 2010 toward three goals:

*Increasing Access! Expanding coverage!
Building collaboration!*

If you'd like to get involved in one of our work groups or task forces, please check out our website at www.aurorahealthaccess.org for more information, or email admin@aurorahealthaccess.org and request to be added to our outreach list.

Gratitude!

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- Tri-County Health Department; and
- The Piton Foundation (a part of Gary Community Investments)
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