



*Power of culture*

# CultureRx

## IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN MASSACHUSETTS THROUGH THE POWER OF CULTURE

### **Vision**

We envision a Commonwealth where culture is understood as an essential investment in health, both for individuals and for the community.

### **Mission**

To build a public infrastructure that supports the role of cultural experiences as a protective factor in the health and well-being of all people in the Commonwealth.

### **The Approach**

We can improve health and wellbeing, lower health care costs and strengthen the cultural sector through unrivaled access and partnerships in social prescription.

**Unrivaled Access** - Hundreds of thousands of people, who could never afford a family outing at a children's museum, an evening of extraordinary music, the thrill of discovery in a science program or the laughter and mystery of theater, are now experiencing all of these. Our first-in-the nation EBT, WIC, and ConnectorCare Card to Culture partnerships have made this possible by placing access to arts and culture spaces in their hands. Cultural organizations also will increase their listening and understanding of local cultural ecologies in order to co-create places that serve the needs articulated by those who will use them.

**Partnerships in Social Prescription** - We are working with partners across sectors to reach people where they are. Social workers, community health workers, and therapists connect clients with cultural experiences in their own communities. We use the term [social prescribing](#) to describe when these health providers refer a patient to a partnered arts and cultural organization in the community for the benefit of alleviating social isolation, providing support, connection, inspiration and/or well-being. While social prescription is common in other countries, Massachusetts is leading the practice in the nation by prescribing cultural engagement as a protective, healthy habit, while also strengthening the cultural sector and their communities.

**Learn more at [MassCulturalCouncil.org/communities/CultureRx-initiative](https://MassCulturalCouncil.org/communities/CultureRx-initiative)**

## The Research

- Arts and cultural participation are significantly associated with good health and low anxiety and depression scores according to [a Norwegian study](#) of 50,000 adults.
- Arts and cultural participation are both *effective* and *cost-effective* according to the [World Health Organization's scoping review](#) of over 3,000 studies in 2019.
- [Social prescribing](#) in the UK has been shown to help reduce anxiety and lead to improved health with [strong evidence](#) that arts engagement can enhance aspects of social cohesion, including reducing individual loneliness and isolation.

## CultureRx Snapshot

### Unrivaled Access



ConnectorCare  
Card to Culture  
130+ sites



EBT Card to Culture  
250+ sites  
370,000 Served



WIC Card to Culture  
100 sites

### Berkshires:

Social prescriptions written by MACONY Pediatrics, Community Health Programs, & social workers:

- Norman Rockwell Museum
- MASS MoCA
- Berkshire Theatre Group
- Mass Audubon
- Community Access to the Arts
- Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute

### Partners in Social Prescription

#### Springfield:

Bringing cultural programming to Caring Health Center, in Springfield

- Enchanted Circle Theatre, Holyoke
- Community Music School of Springfield

### Greater Boston:

Individual Community Health Partners prescribing for:

- Museum of Fine Arts Boston
- Urbanity Dance
- Community Music Center of Boston
- Zoo New England

6. Patient/client reports on experience and health benefits are tracked

1. Cultural organization partners with professional care provider

2. Care providers educate staff and the cultural organization prepares for new audiences

5. Patient/client takes prescription to cultural organizations

4. Care provider discusses options with patient/client and writes prescription

3. Common language is established with effective systems of communication

### Social Prescription