Over the past ten years, Portland's number of fire incidents has declined 22 percent, but medical incidents have increased 40 percent — and accounted for two-thirds of incidents responded to by Portland Fire and Rescue in 2007.

Not only do Portlanders face rising rates of obesity, diabetes, chronic disease, cancer, and asthma, but we already exceed national targets for these conditions.

Even among people who are maintaining a healthy weight, fewer than half of us exercise the recommended amount.

How we build our city affects whether we have half a chance of being healthy. Are there places for us to run around and play safely, to walk and bike instead of driving everywhere? Obesity, asthma, diabetes and cancer all relate to where and how we live, and to the decisions we make as a city. Portland's rates of chronic disease are the same or better than other comparable cities, but they are also rising — and are inequitably distributed across populations and neighborhoods. Not only do many Portland neighborhoods lack continuous sidewalks, but half are further than one-half mile from a developed park.