DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Short Distances to Large Gaps in Health

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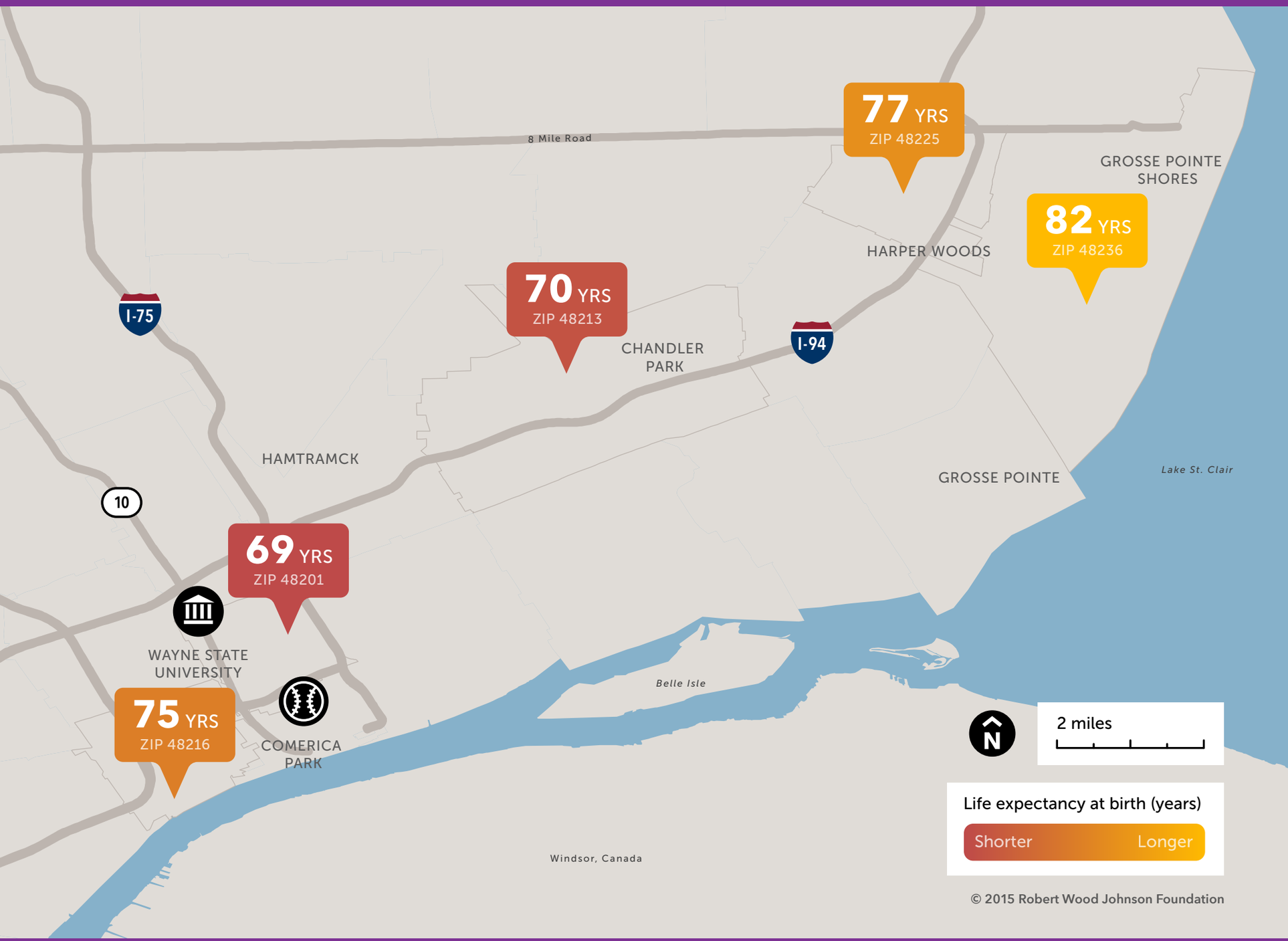

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Gaps in Health Across Neighborhoods Stem from Multiple Factors

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Babies born just a few miles apart can face vastly different chances of living a long and healthy life. This isn't a problem unique to big cities, small towns or rural areas—in fact, it's a pattern across America as a result of the varying conditions in our neighborhoods:

- **Education and income** are directly linked to health: Communities with weak tax bases cannot support high-quality schools and jobs are often scarce in neighborhoods with struggling economies.
- **Unsafe or unhealthy housing** exposes residents to allergens and other hazards like overcrowding.
- **Stores and restaurants selling unhealthy food** may outnumber markets with fresh produce or restaurants with nutritious food.
- **Opportunities for residents to exercise, walk, or cycle** may be limited and some neighborhoods are unsafe for children to play outside.
- **Proximity to highways, factories, or other sources of toxic agents** expose residents to pollutants.
- **Access to primary care doctors and good hospitals** may be limited.
- **Unreliable or expensive public transit** can isolate residents from good jobs, health and child care, and social services.
- **Residential segregation and features that isolate communities** (e.g., highways) can limit social cohesion, stifle economic growth, and perpetuate cycles of poverty.

To build a Culture of Health—where every person, no matter who they are or where they live, has the opportunity to be as healthy as they can be—we must improve people's opportunities to be healthy in the places where they live, learn, work and play.

This map was produced by the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Society and Health with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It is among 20 maps developed under an initiative to raise public awareness about the importance of geographic disparities in health outcomes and the social and environmental factors that shape health. The 20 locations include large and smaller cities and rural areas across the United States. Please visit societyhealth.vcu.edu/maps to view the full collection of maps and to read more about the project and the methodology used to calculate the data.

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