



MOVING TO BOSTON? CIR MAY BE ABLE TO HELP!

Spring 2010

Dear Incoming House Officers and Fellows:

Welcome to Boston Medical Center! The Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR—your union, representing all interns, residents and fellows) would like to help you get off on the right foot with your search for Boston-area housing.


We have enclosed a general description of the different neighborhoods of Boston in addition to the towns and cities in the Greater Boston area. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Boston, these thumbnail sketches may be quite useful. We're often asked, "Do the housestaff all live in one area?" The answer is no – people live all over, depending on whether they want to live in the city or in a quieter location, how much they want to spend, how long they want to commute (by car or public transportation), whether they have school-age children, etc.


We highly recommend you visit the **Boston University School of Medicine Housing Office**. They can be found at www.bumc.bu.edu/ohr; email: ohr@bu.edu; phone: 617-638-5125. Also highly valuable is the on-line bulletin board, Craigslist at www.boston.craigslist.org. Other websites some residents have found helpful include: ApartmentSource.com, JustRentals.com, Boston.com (The Boston Globe's website), Apartments.com, and BostonApartments.com.

As Boston remains one of the most expensive cities in the country, you are likely to find your search for affordable housing challenging. The good news is that rents have stabilized (and even gone down!) and the vacancy rate is higher than it has been in quite a while. Still, in many Boston neighborhoods you can expect to pay on average \$900-\$1200/month for a studio, \$1200-\$1600/month for a one-bedroom apartment, and \$1800+/month for a two-bedroom.

We suggest you start looking early in May or June. The first week of each month is generally when vacancies are more abundant. We look forward to meeting you at Orientation!

Sincerely,


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Internal Medicine
CIR Co-President


Dr. Nadia Huancahuari
Emergency Medicine
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WHERE SHOULD I LIVE?

A Look at Boston's Neighborhoods & Surrounding Cities & Towns

South End (where BMC is located) is a multiracial area that is home to a large gay community as well. Tucked between South Boston and Fenway/Kenmore, most of the housing stock has been gentrified and features many beautiful restored townhouses from the Victorian era. The South End draws culture seekers, artists, and restaurant-goers. It is generally priced in the moderate to expensive range. Many residents choose to live here, however, because they can walk to work (saves the cost of hospital parking) and free on-street residential parking is easily available.

Another option in the South End is **the South Block**, a complex built by the City of Boston that is attached to the hospital. It is very convenient for harried house officers, although some who have lived there have complained about the proximity to the hospital and the dorm-like character of the place. All apartments are air-conditioned and parking is available at an additional fee. A big plus is the recreation center located in the complex (inexpensive, if not so pretty) with gym, swimming pool, squash courts and weight room. If you have questions about these units, or would like to check on availability, call the South Block management at (617) 534-5800. The South Block gym facilities are available to all housestaff, not just those who choose to live there.

Roxbury is located in the geographical center of Boston, is close to the hospital, and is filled with historical landmarks, beautiful old homes, and points of interest. Considered to be the center of Boston's Black community, its residents have a strong civic pride in their neighborhood, which is currently undergoing strong economic development. It is easy to reach BMC from here on public transportation or by car. This area is quickly becoming gentrified, but some comparatively lower rents are still available.

Mission Hill is situated between the Huntington Avenue section of Boston (where you find the Museum of Fine Arts and many Harvard-affiliated hospitals) and Jamaica Plain; the Boston VA is located in Mission Hill. There is relatively good access to public transportation, and it's a quick drive to BMC from this area of town. Mission Hill is diverse ethnically and socio-economically. Comparatively lower rents are available.

Dorchester (North and South) is a large section of Boston composed of many different, constantly growing and changing neighborhoods--some with rows of inexpensive triple-deckers, others with stately Victorian houses. It is close to the hospital and comparatively lower rents are available. Within its boundaries exist the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, the University of Massachusetts/Boston, and the beautiful Dorchester Bay. Public transportation is generally fast and convenient to the hospital.

Back Bay and Beacon Hill are full of elegant old apartments that reflect "Old Boston." Located just off the Boston Common and Public Garden, this community is rich in landscape and architecture and its residents enjoy a mix of commercial and residential

districts. Apartments tend to be expensive and on the small side, but are close to the hospital and border downtown. Public transportation is good. Parking can be difficult.

South Boston is a predominantly Irish-American neighborhood that is becoming increasingly gentrified and is easily accessible to the hospital by both car and public transportation. It has houses ranging from multi-unit apartment buildings to lovely single-family Victorians. Located on a Boston Harbor peninsula, “Southie” features beaches, islands, hills, and water views. Gentrification over the last few years has driven up rents, which used to be comparatively lower than other neighborhoods in the city.

Allston-Brighton is a former industrial district along Charles River that is separated from the rest of Boston by the town of Brookline. It is Boston’s most densely populated neighborhood, with over 65,000 residents living within its 4.5 miles. The housing in this community is relatively less expensive and the area is home to many college students, young families, and professionals. Lots of funky restaurants and stores. Public transportation is fair, and the drive to BMC is pretty quick (especially early in the morning).

Jamaica Plain (known as **JP**) is a popular, ethnically diverse neighborhood, with a sizeable lesbian community. There is a great variety of housing options, but prices have gone up over the last few years. It is home to “The Pond” and the Arnold Arboretum, which are impressive portions of the famed Emerald Necklace park system. It offers many restaurants, bakeries, and shops. The commute to the hospital is easy both by car and public transportation. Rents range from moderate to expensive.

Central Boston is the oldest section of Boston. Within its boundaries are Boston’s Financial District, Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market, Government Center, the Waterfront and the ethnic neighborhoods of the North and West Ends, Chinatown, and South Cove. Housing prices are on the pricey side. Parking can be a problem, but public transportation is good.

Fenway/Kenmore is home to the Fens (a lovely stretch of parks and community gardens), Fenway Park (if you’re not sure what this is, you’d better bone up on your baseball before you come!), the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Museum of Fine Arts. This continually evolving neighborhood attracts many students, artists, and professionals with its mixture of cultural and educational activities. Close to the hospital and on public transportation routes. Prices tend to be comparatively lower, and most of the Fenway is within walking distance of BMC. On-street residential parking is available, but not always easy.

East Boston is widely known as a strong, family-oriented (largely Italian and Latino) neighborhood, which shares a peninsula with Logan Airport. The population has decreased over time with the expansion of transportation facilities, but there is still a strong civic pride in this urban community, and the beautiful waterfront Piers Park includes is filled with families in the summer, as well as housing the Piers Park Sailing Center. Rents tend to be relatively less expensive than in other parts of the city and there

are a large number of two- and three-family houses--some with views of the Boston Harbor. The commute through the harbor tunnels can be difficult due to airport traffic.

The **North End** is very picturesque, near Haymarket, the open fruit and vegetable market, and Faneuil Hall, bordering the waterfront. It is predominantly an Italian neighborhood boasting good food and many cafes. Renovated apartments are very fashionable, expensive, and hard to get. Parking can be a headache but public transportation is good and relatively quick to the hospital. The North End was also in the heart of the "Big Dig," Boston's massive 15 year+ public works project (It's finally done!)

Over the bridge from the North End is **Charlestown**, the smallest neighborhood in the city with some 14,000 residents. Home to "Old Ironsides" (the U.S.S. Constitution), and the site of the Battle of Bunker Hill ("don't fire 'til you see the whites of their eyes"), this neighborhood used to be a predominantly Italian community, but urban professional gentrification has made an impact. Public transportation is good. Prices vary from moderate to high end with a good number of gorgeous townhouses, condominiums and triple-deckers.

West Roxbury and Roslindale are the city's southwestern-most communities. They are suburb-like residential areas with lots of single-family homes for rent. Rents are generally more moderate. Commuting by car during rush hour can be a problem (as it can from most areas). Public transportation is decent.

Mattapan and Hyde Park are also less urban parts of the city, with many single- and two-family houses with yards. Rents are reasonable. Mattapan is currently experiencing a strong economic revitalization in both the residential and business areas of this family-oriented community. It has historically been home to many immigrants, currently with a sizeable Haitian community. Hyde Park is eight miles from downtown Boston, and about a 20-minute drive to BMC. Mattapan is closer to the hospital.

As you investigate the attributes and amenities of each neighborhood, just remember that it is better to determine the character of a community from your own opinions and personal experiences than by the opinions of others.

Neighboring Communities Popular with Boston Medical Center House Officers

Brookline is a suburban-style residential community that is surrounded by Boston neighborhoods. It is also home to many Boston College students during the academic year. It has many beautiful Victorian homes and many parks. Brookline is about 15 minutes away from the hospital by car and is on some major subway lines into the city. Schools and public services are very good. The rents are on the high side. There is no on-street parking allowed from 1:00 am to 5:00 am, so paid parking (as high as \$100+/mo) adds to the expensive of living in this community.

Newton is a “metro-west,” affluent suburb with relatively easy access to the hospital via the Massachusetts Turnpike. It has many one-, two-, and three-family homes. Schools and public services are very good. Parking tends to be much easier than in the city. Prices are on the moderate to high side, depending on the neighborhood. Public transportation can take some time; driving to BMC takes about 20 minutes, if you don’t hit traffic.

Cambridge is on the other side of the Charles River from Boston and home to Harvard University and MIT. Busy Harvard Square is the center of activity in Cambridge, with shops, historic buildings, clubs, sidewalk entertainers, and restaurants. Wonderful ethnic restaurants are also located in Central and Inman Squares. Apartments are available in two- and three-family houses and in apartment buildings. Since the repeal of rent control in 1996, rents have skyrocketed. They vary by neighborhood with West Cambridge (near Harvard) somewhat expensive, and north and East Cambridge more moderately priced. Public transportation is decent; buses go directly to BMC (a 25-minute ride).

Somerville lies on Cambridge’s northern border. One of the most densely populated cities in the United States, there are plenty of apartments for rent in two- and three-family homes. Apartments tend to be good-sized and moderate to expensive in price. The Davis Square area has seen a recent increase in cultural activity, and now has an atmosphere similar to that of Harvard Square. Commuting by car or public transportation can take up to 45 minutes on a bad traffic day.

Malden/Medford are ethnically diverse communities located northeast of Boston. Medford is home to Tufts University (although Tuft’s residency program is in Boston). Formerly textile manufacturing centers, these cities are now primarily residential communities. These communities have many two-family homes, parks, and shopping centers. Parking is easier and the commute is about 30 minutes, depending on traffic. Public transportation is good but it can take some time.

Watertown/Belmont are two suburbs west of Cambridge. They offer a large number of single- and two- family houses with yards. Watertown also has a number of apartment complexes. Schools and services are good. Rents are on the high side with Watertown’s being slightly less than Belmont’s, depending on the area of town. Public transportation is fairly complicated if you go by subway; by bus, it involves one transfer. Driving takes 30 minutes or more, depending on how far west in these communities you may live.

Quincy/Milton are communities south of the city and home to many diverse residential neighborhoods. There are many recreational activities along Quincy’s shoreline. The commute into the city isn’t too bad (though it can be difficult during rush hour). Public transportation is good.

Other surrounding communities include to the:

South: Braintree, Norwood, Westwood, and Weymouth

West: Needham, Wellesley, and Waltham

Northwest: Lexington and Arlington

*North: Winchester, Woburn, Stoneham, Melrose, Saugus, Everett,
Chelsea and Revere*

PARKING

A parking space is a rare commodity within the city limits, and parking regulations are strictly enforced. Pay attention to towing signs, street cleaning restrictions, meters, permit requirements, and time limitations. Soon it will become natural never to assume you are legally parked--for if it seems too good to be true, watch out! Many neighborhoods provide parking stickers to residents, which enable you to park within that neighborhood's restricted area. This is NOT, however, a guarantee of a parking space. In an outlying suburb, parking may be provided for your apartment. Many high-rise and apartment towers have assigned parking spaces for an additional fee.

Parking at the hospital is subsidized thanks to our union contract. However, if you're thinking of living in the neighborhood and parking your car in the Hospital lot – think again, as you will likely be towed.

A word about car registration and insurance – Massachusetts rates are on the high side, but it is well worth making the switch, because out-of-state plates are sitting ducks for car thieves.

Voter Registration – can be done when you get your Massachusetts' license.

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