



Board of Health

Kathleen Ward Brown, ScD

Edward Cosgrove, PhD

Stephen Epstein, MD, MPP

Christina S. Mathews, MPH Robert Partridge, MD, MPH

Mission

The Needham Board of Health, founded in 1877, and its Public Health Division strive to prevent and control the spread of disease, to address environmental issues, to promote healthy lifestyles, and to protect the public health and social well-being of all Needham's residents, especially the most vulnerable. This work addresses the social determinants of health, or the conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks, as defined in Healthy People 2020.

Goals for 2021 and 2022

Cross-cutting Planning Considerations

Equity

Build upon the work of the HHS Racial Equity Committee to identify "what needs to change or to be put in place to ensure equity and anti-racism in Needham." How can this work be applied in all areas of public health?

Mental Health and Behavioral Health

Consider opportunities for collaboration and connection with mental and behavioral health programs that support Needham.

Health in All Policies

How can *Health in All Policies*, or the inclusion of health considerations into policy making across sectors, be applied in Needham to improve health outcomes and health equity?

Pandemic impact

What has the Covid-19 pandemic shown us about community public health needs and programs?

Administrative

Ensure the necessary infrastructure to effectively provide essential public health services.

- Develop processes and protocols for applications and management of all received grant funding within the Division.
 - Document necessary elements and responsibilities
 - Identify and address gaps
- Develop and implement schedule of Board review of one regulation per quarter.
- Review and revise website review to reflect current programming and resources.
- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy for the Public Health Division that increases community outreach and awareness of pertinent public health issues.

Ongoing

- Encourage continual gathering of qualitative and quantitative data to inform Public Health Division and Health & Human Services Department activities.
- Pursue grant funding opportunities to meet distinct community needs (i.e. concussion education and healthy aging initiatives).

Long-term

- Pursue Public Health Division accreditation and support the establishment of a culture of continuous quality improvement.
- Secure funding and support for a Director of Health position
- Develop capacity for data analysis and dissemination.

Community Health

Increase the quality, availability, and effectiveness of educational and community-based programs designed to prevent disease and injury, improve health, and enhance quality of life.

- Pursue collaborative development of physical activity projects with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Aging Services Division of HHS.
- Assess food security and nutrition needs across the Town of Needham and work with Town and School Departments, non-public education providers, community partners, and faith-based organizations to ensure food security and accessibility of

appropriate and healthy nutrition for all Needham residents regardless of circumstance.

- Advocate for resources to enhance community transportation options, especially for older adults and low-income populations.
- Identify financial resources to expand the Safety at Home Program, which prevents older adult falls through home visits, exercise programming, and referrals, to support more comprehensive home modifications.
- Develop a structure and pursue opportunities to collaborate with other Town departments regarding policies and programs which have an impact on health, such as with the accessory dwelling unit bylaw.
- Implement concussion regulation education for Needham youth sport coaches, including collaboration with Parks and Recreation Division, IT, and sport leagues.
- Support and expand upon existing community initiatives that address public health concerns including senior nutrition, elder isolation, mental health promotion, and domestic violence awareness.
- Continue developing Nourishing Needham campaign to encourage healthy eating in the community.
 - Collaborate with food establishments on highlighting healthy options on their menus.

Emergency Management/Emergency Preparedness

Improve the community's ability to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a major emergency.

- Implement recommendations from the August 2020 Covid-19 After Action report and Improvement Plan.
 - Identify barriers to implementation and work with staff to address these
- Revise and update the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) to include implementation of procedures for internal and external communications, Incident Command System (ICS), and workplace redundancy to improve the Town's Continuity of Operations.
- Manage ongoing Covid-19 response.
- Prepare for and support distribution and administration of eventual Covid-19 vaccines.
- Add two to three MRC volunteer training and educational events to develop an engaged volunteer corps.

Ongoing

- Conduct annual training and exercising of building-specific municipal safety and emergency guidelines and procedures to identify needed revisions to guidelines and procedures.
- Revise, educate, and test, by means of an annual drill or exercise, Emergency Dispensing Site protocols and plans, aligning with MA DPH and CDC requirements.
- Maintain full certification of the Needham Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

Long-term

- Conduct MRC call-down drills at least once per year to ascertain availability of MRC volunteers to deploy during emergencies in another community requesting assistance.
- Expand Needham's MRC membership so that volunteer resources are available during emergencies.

Environmental Health (EH)

Promote health for all through a healthy environment

- Implement Covid-19 response guidance through education and enforcement activities.
- Hire additional staff or provide additional resources to maintain EH Unit capacity for inspections, environmental health monitoring, training, and vendor and general public education.
- Work towards the achievement of all nine (9) FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards; pursue federal, state, and non-profit grant resources to offset the costs for achieving full compliance and apply for future FDA grants to make this possible.
- Continue to conduct a comprehensive assessment by the end of FY 2021 of regulations which require updates, revisions, or which should be rescinded.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment by the end of 2021 of regulations which require updates, revisions, or which should be rescinded.
- Develop a regular schedule for detailed review and revision of all regulations.
- Expand electronic inspection system and utilize for at least one other environmental health inspection (pools, septic, housing, etc.) by the end of 2021.

Continue to work on the development and implementation of food establishment inspection grading policies and gain additional feedback from Food Advisory Board.

Ongoing

- Prioritize positive communication and relationships with food service owners and staff and tobacco vendor owners and staff.

Long-term

- Consider conducting a six-month pilot of food establishment grading policies in last quarter of 2021/first quarter 2022, once our food establishments are not burdened by the pandemic.
- Research options for digital record keeping and options for electronic payment for permits and fees.
- Work with the Town's IT Department import the remainder of our permit applications and fees into our online permitting system and pursue joint online permit applications where applicable.
- Expand upon existing electronic payment system.

Public Health Nursing

Advance population health through quality community/ public health nursing education, research and service.

- Manage Covid-19 response.
- Evaluate the cost and capabilities of the Needham Public Health Division flu vaccination and education efforts.
- Monitor how the Town uses different outlets for flu vaccination to increase vaccination rates by 20%.
- Provide Covid-19 vaccination education
- Assist in promotion, distribution and administration of eventual Covid-19 vaccines.

Ongoing

- Annually examine community demographics and population needs to identify priorities for public health nursing staff activities.
- Address the needs of the aging population through prevention and education efforts including home safety visits, blood pressure and other wellness clinics, and mental health services and referrals.

- Engage with community resource providers, including Domestic Violence Action Committee (DVAC), Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT), Needham Coalition for Suicide Prevention (NCSP) and others, to help address needs of individuals and populations requiring assistance.

Substance Use Prevention

Reduce substance use and misuse to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for all, especially children.

Needham

- Conduct alcohol compliance checks quarterly in FY 2021.
- Research and develop regulations for Needham that will govern the use of recreational marijuana.
- Revise existing regulations governing medical marijuana to promote a safe and healthy environment for all of Needham's residents by: prioritizing safe and sanitary operation of marijuana dispensaries and recreational marijuana establishments; and providing community education about the dangers of chronic use and general misuse of marijuana.
- Continue to identify problem substance use among youth
- Promote substance use prevention programs and advocacy for policy change more broadly, expanding reach into populations not previously served by federal funding
- Engage the coalition in a health equity assessment, including but not limited to racial equity, of substance use programs to identify any needed changes and opportunities for improvement.
- Develop a health equity impact statement
- Provide education and training for coalition volunteers on health equity.

Ongoing

- Provide at least six (6) educational and/or informational events to the Needham community about adverse health impacts of substance use and misuse for the youth, adult, and senior populations annually.
- Host two (2) additional mobile take-backs per year, in addition to the spring and fall Take Back Days on Town Common
- After each event, administer a qualitative assessment of performance
- Leverage visibility to youth, parents and community where appropriate, with cohort coalitions in neighboring towns. Promote youth substance use prevention programs through outreach by SPAN volunteers;

- Sustain ongoing collaboration among coalition stakeholders in support of prevention work

Long-term

- Draft and implement a policy for Needham that outlines specific consequences for alcohol vendors who fail compliance checks in order to decrease youth access to alcohol by decreasing alcohol vendor compliance failures from 6 to 4 by 2021.
- Assess substance use among other populations, including but not limited to the older adult community;
- Evaluate community readiness for substance use prevention programs for other populations, including but not limited to the older adult community.
- Increase weight of semi-annual prescription medication disposal in Needham from all medication disposal locations by at least 5%
- Secure a second safe and secure location in Needham for a sharps disposal kiosk at another Town facility or a community partner agency (FY 2021 approximately)
- Decrease Needham High School's 30-day youth use rates for alcohol, misuse of prescription drugs, and marijuana, by 2%. This will be measured by comparing the 2016 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS) results with the 2018 and 2020 MWAHS results.

Regional Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative (SAPC) Cluster (Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood)

- Address parental attitudes favorable to alcohol use through a community awareness and education campaign in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood using messaging based on research. Include materials such as AD Council PSAs, SAMHSA Talk They Hear You, MADD Power of Parenting, Boston Children's Hospital Teen-Safe.org, and others.
- Address low perception of harm of alcohol use among high school grade 9 students by instituting a policy in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood school systems that 9th grade parents take an online education program (AlcoholEdu High School Parents).
- Conduct community awareness and education campaigns that encourage people to lock up alcohol in their homes in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood.

Ongoing

- Conduct Responsible Beverage Service training (TIPS) for retail licensees in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood to reduce ease of access to alcohol in the four communities.

- Police officers in Dedham, Needham, Norwood and Westwood will conduct alcohol compliance checks with under-age operatives in all licensed establishments on at least a semi-annual basis with the longer-term goal of doing so on a quarterly basis.
- Sustain regional prevention funding for FY22 through state and federal grant applications.