



Board of Health

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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.

Goals FY 2019 and 2020

Administrative

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

- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy Public Health Division-wide that increases community outreach and awareness for pertinent public health issues.
- Pursue small grant funding opportunities to meet distinct community needs (i.e. concussion education and healthy aging initiatives).
- Enhance and refine financial tracking mechanisms to ensure complete and appropriate use of municipal, grant, and donated financial resources.
- Develop processes and accrue resources to support continual qualitative and quantitative data gathering to inform Public Health Division and Health & Human Services Department activities.

- Build capacity to conduct a community needs assessment, including a town-wide complete health survey.

Long-term

- Pursue Public Health Division accreditation and support the establishment of a culture of continuous quality improvement.

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.

- Emphasize the importance of affordable and accessible housing as a public health issue for all Needham's residents and especially for the Town's senior citizens
 - Explore an accessory dwelling unit bylaw change.
- Advocate for resources to support and enhance Healthy Aging in the community, such as accessible senior housing and more frequent forms of town or community-run transportation programs.
- 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 addresses older adult falls through home visits, exercise programming, and referrals, to support more comprehensive home modifications, and
- Use assessment results to identify specific health and education needs of vulnerable populations, such as Housing Authority residents.
- 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 education for Needham youth sport coaches regulation, including collaboration with Parks and Recreation Division, IT, and sport leagues.
- Support existing community initiatives that address public health concerns including senior nutrition, elder isolation, mental health promotion, and domestic violence awareness.
- Sustain multi-disciplinary work to assist families and community members in need of mental health, domestic violence, and substance use support through the Needham Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT).

Emergency Management/Emergency Preparedness

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

- Increase the operating budget funding devoted to Emergency Management such that it will support a full-time professional along with expense costs for publications, trainings, and drills and exercises without relying on fluctuating external funding sources.
- 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.
- Update municipal safety and emergency guidelines by implementing building specific emergency procedures and train and drill employees annually on those 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.
- Emphasize community outreach to inform residents about the importance of personal preparedness and helping your neighbor - especially those with access and functional needs, and to promote Town communications and emergency notification systems.
- Increase participation in Needham's Medical Reserve Corps through volunteer recruitment, training, and retention activities.
- Achieve full certification of the Needham Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency's State Emergency Response Commission.

Long-term

- Deploy volunteers during emergencies in another community requesting assistance at least once per year.
- Expand Needham's coverage for volunteers during emergencies in a manner that allows for the most effective use of those volunteer resources.

Environmental Health (EH)

Promote health for all through a healthy environment

- Hire additional staff or provide additional resources to maintain EH Unit capacity for inspections, environmental health monitoring, training, and vendor and general public education.

- Prioritize positive communication and relationships with food service owners and staff and tobacco vendor owners and staff.
- 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.
- Implement FDA Standard 9 through categorization of Needham food establishments and use of risk-based inspections
- Research best practices and pursue regulatory standards for posting of calorie counts and nutritional information by Needham food establishments.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment by the end of FY 2019 of regulations which require updates, revisions, or which should be rescinded.
- Develop a regular schedule for detailed review and revision of all regulations.
- Fully implement electronic food inspection technology, and utilize capabilities for advanced analysis of food service establishment compliance and violations to identify topics for education and vendor education.
- Expand electronic inspection system and utilize for at least one other environmental health inspection (pools, septic, housing, etc.) by the end of FY 2020.

Long-term

- Develop and implement food establishment grading policies.
- Research options for digital record keeping and options for electronic payment for permits and fees.
- Pursue a joint online permit application and permit granting system in conjunction with the Town's IT Department and other partners.
- Implement an electronic payment system.

Public Health Nursing

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

- 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.

- Evaluate implementation of summer camp regulations.
- 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.
- Develop processes and protocols in collaboration with community partners to increase ease of access to Needham Public Health Division's DVAC resources.
- Develop processes and protocols for Community Crisis Intervention Team in collaboration with the Needham Police Department and the Aging Services Division and the Youth & Family Services Division.
- Create a community outreach schedule of focused educational and training programs such as sunscreen, tick borne illnesses, summer camps, and other timely public health issues.
- Operationalize new Massachusetts Department of Public Health's guidance for Emergency Dispensing Sites by end of FY 2019.

Substance Use Prevention

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

Needham

- Identify and acquire stable local funding to support Needham's substance use prevention activities and the Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN) beyond the 2020 expiration of a 10 year federal Drug Free Communities grant.
- 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/or senior populations by June of 2020.
 - After each event, administer a qualitative assessment of performance
- Formalize alcohol compliance checks cooperatively with the Needham Police Department and public health and law enforcement partner agencies in Dedham, Norwood, and Westwood.
- Conduct alcohol compliance checks semi-annually in FY 2019 and FY 2020 with the eventual goal of quarterly inspections in FY 2021.
- 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 2020.
- Research and develop regulations for Needham that will govern the use of recreational marijuana.

- Revise existing regulations governing medical marijuana, prioritizing safe and sanitary operation of marijuana dispensaries and recreational marijuana establishments, and community education about the dangers of chronic use and general misuse of marijuana to promote a safe and healthy environment for all of Needham’s residents.

Long-term

- Increase availability of proper prescription medication disposal options and secure storage practices within the Town of Needham.
 - Establish a third safe and secure disposal location in Needham for prescription medications (in addition to current medication disposal kiosks at the Police Station and at Beth Israel Deaconess-Needham Hospital).
 - Host two (2) additional mobile take backs per year, in addition to the spring and fall Take Back Days on Town Common
 - 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 SAPC Cluster (Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood)

- Address parental attitudes favorable to use through a community awareness and education campaign in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood using messaging based on research including 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 among high school grade 9 students by instituting a policy in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood school systems that 9th grade parents take AlcoholEdu High School Parents 30-minute on-line course.
- Identify social and community norms by organizing a Photo Voice project with youth leaders from each community to monitor collect, and track the number of Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood alcohol related examples of social, athletic and fundraising events and media advertising depicting active promotion of a normative drinking culture, visible to youth.

- Conduct Retail TIPS- Responsible Beverage Service training for licensees in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood to reduce ease of access to alcohol in the four communities.
- Conduct community awareness & education campaigns that encourage people to lock up alcohol in their homes in Needham, Dedham, Norwood and Westwood.