



Board of Health

Edward Cosgrove, PhD
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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 2017 and 2018

Administrative

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

- Develop Public Health Division-wide communications strategy that incorporates a variety of methods (articles, videos, presentations to community groups, hosting of community forums) to ensure community outreach on pertinent public health issues.
- Pursue small grant funding opportunities to meet distinct community needs (similar to 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 the continual gathering of qualitative and quantitative data to inform the activities of the Public Health Division.
- Address the health and physical space challenges of the Public Health Division's office environment, and aggressively pursue an appropriate location for Public Health staff in the short, medium, and long-term.
- **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.

- 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).
- 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.
- 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.

Emergency Management/Emergency Preparedness

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

- Hire a part-time Emergency Management Coordinator to support achievement of Public Health Division and Town-wide emergency management goals.
- Revise and update Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA), and municipal safety and emergency guidelines.
- Establish a detailed calendar depicting assigned dates for training, exercises, and updates/revisions to existing emergency plans.
- Work towards full certification of the Needham Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), and state and federal recognition as such.

Environmental Health (EH)

Promote health for all through a healthy environment

- Hire additional staff 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.
- Develop regular schedule for detailed review and revision of all regulations
 - Review and revise Tobacco regulations (2017).
 - Review and revise Trash Haulers regulations (2017).
 - Review and revise Private Well regulations (2017-2018).
- Identify best practices and optimal platforms for electronic inspection reporting capacity.

Environmental Health (EH) continued

Promote health for all through a healthy environment

- **Long-term** - Research best practices and pursue regulatory standards for posting of calorie counts and nutritional information (FY 2018).
- **Long-term** - Develop and implement food establishment grading policies (FY 2020 approximately).

Public Health Nursing

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

- Prepare for 2017 staff transition.
- Examine community demographics and population needs to identify priorities for public health nursing staff capabilities.
- Review and assess Needham's public health nursing capabilities.
- Develop community outreach calendar of focused educational and training programs such as sunscreen, tick borne illnesses, and other timely public health nursing issues.

Substance Use Prevention

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

- Provide education and information to community about adverse health impacts of substance use and misuse for the youth, adult, and senior populations.
- Advocate for community level policy changes to impact access and availability of alcohol, akin to raising purchase age for tobacco and reducing sale outlet density.
- Expand community support for addressing alcohol compliance in the same fashion as tobacco compliance, with increased inspections (goal of semi-annual) and compliance checks (long-term goal of quarterly, interim goal of semi-annual).
- Increase awareness of proper prescription medication disposal options and secure storage practices within the Town of Needham.
- Research and develop regulations that will govern the use of recreational marijuana, and revise existing regulations that govern medical marijuana. The overall goal of such regulations should be to ensure the safe and sanitary operations of marijuana dispensaries and recreational marijuana establishments, while at the same time educating the community about the dangers of chronic use and general misuse of marijuana, and promoting a safe and healthy environment for all of Needham's residents.
- **Long-term** - Secure commitment for secondary safe and secure disposal locations for prescription medications, in addition to current medication disposal kiosk at the Police Station and the pair of sharps disposal kiosks at the RTS (FY 2020 approximately).