

2016 Greater Worcester Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

What is a CHIP?

A CHIP is a long-term, systematic plan to address public health issues on the basis of community health assessment results and a community-wide health improvement planning process that engages residents and stakeholders. The plan is then used by health departments, government agencies, hospitals, schools, higher education institutions, human service providers, businesses, and other community partners, to set priorities and coordinate and target resources.

Building upon the key findings and themes identified in the Community Health Assessment (CHA), the CHIP aims to identify priority issues for action to improve community health and guide future community decision-making and resource allocation to improve population health.

A CHIP is developed to provide guidance to the health department, city government, hospitals, community health centers, philanthropists, third-party payers, social and community-based organizations, coalitions, and other stakeholders in improving the health of the population. The plan is critical for developing policies and defining actions to target efforts that promote health. A CHIP is designed to be a broad, strategic framework for improving community health and should be modified and adjusted as conditions, resources, and external environmental factors change. It is developed and written in a way that engages multiple perspectives so that all community groups and sectors — private and nonprofit organizations, government agencies, academic institutions, community and faith-based organizations, and community residents — can unite to improve the health and quality of life for all people who live, learn, work, and play in the region.

Who is a CHIP for?

A CHIP is written for all agencies and organizations in a community to come together with community members to improve health for all residents. This CHIP is written for the municipalities of the Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance: Grafton, Holden, Leicester, Millbury, Shrewsbury, and West Boylston.



Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester

Who is involved?

The Worcester Division of Public Health/ Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance and the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester are responsible for the implementation of the 2016 Greater Worcester CHIP. The Division and the Coalition will work to leverage resources, galvanize organizations and individuals to work together, and continually measure progress and report back to the community. UMass Memorial Health Care and Fallon Health are also critical partners in the planning and implementation of the CHA-CHIP process.

What is the plan and what is its framework?

At the outset of the 2015-2016 CHA-CHIP process, health equity was discussed as being central to the work of all partners, and not one goal among many as was highlighted in the 2012 CHIP, but rather the central goal under which all other strategic direction falls. The Worcester Division of Public Health adopts the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation definition that “health equity means that all people, regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex or age, have equal opportunity to develop and maintain health through equal access to resources.” For the purpose of Community Health Improvement, we define success as achieving health equity.

Additionally, CHIP partners demonstrated in their planning a dedication to addressing health at its most foundational level—to address the social and environmental determinants of health. Understanding that to eliminate health inequity and health disparities, the social and physical environments in which residents live, work, learn and play must be addressed, CHIP planning participants outlined a framework for health improvement that seeks to improve health for all residents.

Three core principles

Between the thousands of participants that contributed their voice to the development of the 2015 CHA and the development of the nine priority areas, 31 objectives, and 100 strategies and policies that follow, a few trends emerged. Partners agreed to highlight these trends as “core principles,” both to focus energy and resources and to guide implementation of this CHIP :

- o *Invest first in the community*
- o *Empower, listen to, and respect community voice*
- o *Eliminate gaps between services*

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9 Priority Areas

Racism & Discrimination. Aim: Improve population health by systematically eliminating institutional racism and the pathology of oppression and discrimination by promoting equitable access to, and use of, health promoting resources in the community, and significantly reduce the structural and environmental factors that contribute to health inequities.

Substance Use. Aim: Create a regional community that prevents and reduces substance use disorder and associated stigma for all populations.

Access to Care. Aim: Create a well-coordinated, respectful, and culturally-responsive environment that encourages prevention of chronic disease, reduction of infant mortality, and access to quality comprehensive care for all.

Mental Health. Aim: Foster a community responsive to the mental health needs of all populations, considerate of all ages and cultures, and resilient to changing environments and demographics.

Economic Opportunity. Aim: Improve population health by providing all residents with opportunities to engage in meaningful work with living wages and healthy, safe, and family-friendly working conditions.

Cultural Responsiveness. Aim: Enhance the capacity of health and social services agencies to provide culturally-responsive and culturally-appropriate services to CMRPHA residents to improve health equity.

Access to Healthy Food. Aim: Ensure all people have equal access to healthful foods by building and sustaining communities that support health through investment in the growth, sale, and preparation of healthy foods.

Physical Activity. Aim: Improve health for those who live, work, learn and play in the region through safe, equitable access to opportunities for physical activity, with special emphasis on youth, vulnerable, and underserved populations.

Safety. Aim: Ensure that all residents regardless of age, race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing situation, family status, or religion will feel safe, secure, respected and live a life free from violence.

How do I CHIP in?

Every individual and organization in the Greater Worcester region has a role to play to make us the healthiest city and region in New England! To learn how you can get involved, visit www.healthycentralma.com, email chip@healthycentralma.com, or call 508-799-8131.

