Greater Nashua Public Health Network, Quarterly Update

(November – January, 2014)

February 2014 - Issue 2

This newsletter is a publication of the Greater Nashua Public Health Network. There are five programs that serve this area that will be highlighted each quarter, including, the Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC), Emergency Preparedness (EP), Substance Misuse Prevention (SMP), the Community Health Improvement Program (CHIP) and Healthy Homes.

Emergency Preparedness

Medical surge is the ability to provide adequate medical evaluation and care during events that exceed healthcare system capacity, such as a pandemic, biological or chemical event. Typically, medical surge can be alleviated by activation of hospital or healthcare facility surge plans, which allow the facility to absorb surge internally or in collaboration with partner facilities. In Greater Nashua, the Healthcare Emergency Response Coalition has been working to develop operational plans to respond. These plans include opening an Alternate Care Site (ACS), a community-based facility that provides limited inpatient healthcare services during an emergency. In Greater Nashua, our Medical Surge Appendix outlines plans for the activation and operation of an ACS that could provide low-acuity care to 150 people.

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is working to develop regional low-flow oxygen capacity through the expansion of the NH Critical Care and Supplemental Oxygen Program (CCSOP). The purpose of CCSOP is to build medical surge capacity through the purchase of supplemental oxygen equipment and supplies for use during public health emergencies.

NH DHHS has set a goal that each region will be capable of providing low-flow oxygen to at least 50% of planned ACS beds, which, for our region, would be **75** beds. ACSs may provide low-flow oxygen at 1 – 5 liters per minute, IV hydration, and medication management. ACSs will not provide ventilator care, critical care or care for individuals who are at high-risk for rapid decompensation.

In order for our region to be prepared to provide low-flow oxygen at our ACS, we will be hosting a functional exercise on May 2, 2014 to work with partners to fine tune plans to:

- Assess capacity of site to provide low-flow O2 to 50% of ACS beds;
- Safely store, transport, set up, operate, and demobilize oxygen equipment;
- Evaluate site layout for 5- and 8-bed low-flow oxygen ACS;
- Access oxygen and related supplies, including oxygen-related medications;
- Access appropriately licensed staff to administer low-flow oxygen and provide simple respiratory treatments; and,
- Determine oxygen supply requirements for the ACS.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK 2014

April 7 - 11th

Join us as we celebrate our 6th Annual National Public Health Week!

"Public Health: Start Here"

This year we will again work to include all of our community partners in order to recognize how much is being done related to public health in our region. Past events have included herb gardening classes with the Holistic Self Care Center, Zumba with the YMCA, and bike safety and raffles with the Nashua Police Department and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua.

It is fun, it is healthy, and of course the real message is showing how public health is present in our everyday lives and how every organization can connect in some way to improve the health of the community.

For more information, or to contribute to this year's events, please contact Melissa Whalen (contact information on page 5).

Substance Misuse and Prevention

Coordination and Leadership

Substance Misuse has been identified as a major problem in New Hampshire by the Governor's Commission with a priority focus on alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drug misuse. There are certain populations that are at higher risk, and are therefore considered a priority for interventions, such as the youth, young adults, pregnant and parenting women, military personnel and their families, justice involved youth and adults, individuals needing but not receiving treatment, and individuals with co-occurring disorders. The goal is to reduce the percentage of residents misusing substances and to increase the number of residents receiving treatment.

What does that mean for the Greater Nashua Region?

The Division of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) goals for Substance Misuse are based on the Regional Public Health Network System as its method of prevention delivery. The Substance Misuse Prevention Leadership Team is part of the Public Health Advisory Committee, partnering with five local Substance Misuse coalitions within the region. These coalitions are: Merrimack Safeguard, Nashua Prevention Coalition, Hudson/Litchfield Coalition, Community Action for Safe Teens (CAST) and Pelham Community Coalition. All committees should have representation from the six sectors of the community: business, education, health, safety, government, community and family supports.

Each Public Health Regions has a Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinator, whose responsibilities include:

- building membership and support from communities within the region in support of its mission;
- continually collecting and sharing data on the scope of substance use and consequences through interviews, surveys, data collection and focus groups;
- using the gathered information to form a strategic plan that will address consumption and consequence patterns in our communities;
- implementing a plan that supports evidence-based prevention strategies;
- conducting ongoing, comprehensive evaluation and refinement of all prevention efforts;
- ensuring culturally sensitive processes and effective sustainability planning for all coalition efforts.

Over the past year, local coalitions in the GNPHR have participated in several events including Red Ribbon Week, Rx Drug Drop Boxes for Take-Back events, Buyer's Beware campaign and the Life of an Athlete Program.

On April 27, 2013, a drug take back event was held in the State of New Hampshire. This take back event collected over 5,600 pounds of expired or unused medications. The 2014 Take Back Event, scheduled for April 26th, is just around the corner. We hope the GNPHR will take advantage of this great opportunity to participate.

In addition to these events, the past year has had success in program implementation and policy development in both educational and safety settings.

Substance Misuse Prevention needs the support of passionate individuals to help with its events and programs. Is Substance Misuse Prevention an issue that you are care about? If it is, please contact your Regional Misuse Prevention Coordinator to discuss the possibility of joining their leadership team or to get more information regarding the local coalitions and their activities. The individual coalition contact information is provided in the table below.

Coalition Name	Area Served	Contact Person	Email
Community Action for Safe Teens (CAST)	Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Milford, Mont Vernon, Lyndeborough, Wilton	Monica Gallant	Mgallant4@aol.com
Hudson/ Litchfield Coalition	Hudson, Litchfield		
Merrimack Safeguard	Merrimack	Tom Prentice	
Nashua Prevention Coalition	Nashua	Janet Valuk	janvaluk@gmail.com
Pelham Community Coalition	Pelham	Hal Lynde	hal@rocketmail.com

Community Health Improvement

Obesity

WE CAN! is an evidence based obesity prevention program currently being piloted in one Nashua elementary school, Amherst Street School, and one Merrimack Early Childhood Education Center, Lisa's Tippy Toes Daycare and Learning Center. With funding support from the United Way of Greater Nashua, the *CHIP obesity workgroup* is working with the two sites to assist them in using the CATCH Kids Club curriculum and to introduce the parent education materials supported by WE CAN! Through this initiative, the workgroup seeks to support their goal of increasing access to healthy eating and active living options for children in schools and in their home environments. As a kick off to the program at Amherst Street, the school hosted a Health and Wellness night for families on **January 16th**.

Along with sharing information about CATCH and WE CAN!, this event included local organizations that provided health information tables and mini-workshops for parents.

Amherst Street teachers and staff who participated in the CATCH training had a great time learning games, group management techniques, and healthy snack ideas to use with their students.

Mental Health

Collaborative efforts require participating organizations to understand the values and operational requirements of their partners. For work to run smoothly, collaborators need to explain their own strengths and limits, learn about the practices and environment of their partners, and determine the best path and tools required to work together effectively.

A survey of 28 individuals, working with students who have mental health issues, validated this thought. Sixty-two percent indicated interest in increasing inter-organizational collaboration.

As a first step in bringing together mental health professionals in schools and provider organizations, the *CHIP mental health workgroup* is hosting a roundtable discussion event for the two groups. The roundtable event is planned for May 14,2014 at the Greater Nashua Mental Health Center.

Access To Healthcare

While many residents in our health region have successfully managed to meet the new requirements for obtaining health insurance coverage, we know there are still many individuals that have not obtained health insurance coverage now required by law for all citizens. The *CHIP access to healthcare workgroup* has met with representatives from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as local navigators and certified application counselors to determine ways to help connect individuals who need to enroll with the assistance they need to understand the options. Navigators and certified application counselors do not recommend a particular plan, but they can help explain coverage differences, answer questions, and help with online application.

For those who may not need 1:1 assistance but want to learn more about their options, there is a new free website for NH residents www.coveringnewhampshire.org

Covering New Hampshire
Your Gateway to the Health Insurance Marketplace

Healthy Homes

"Winter is not a season, it's an occupation" – Sinclair Lewis

It's snow season in New Hampshire and that could mean added dangers, especially for seniors.

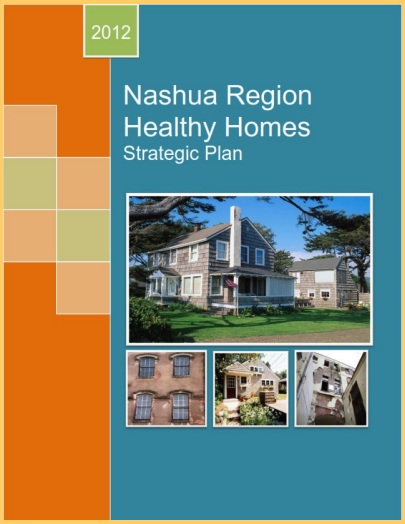
Six out of every 10 senior falls happen at home, where most time is spent and there is a tendency to move around without thinking about safety. Many falls could be prevented by making simple changes in living and walking areas.

Common locations for falls to occur include doorways, ramps, cluttered hallways, uneven surfaces and areas prone to wetness, spills or freezing.

Many seniors could be hospitalized following a slip and fall. Here are some tips to keep yourself and seniors safe during and after winter weather.

- Spread sand or salt on icy surfaces
- Be sure to wear boots with good traction
- Don't take chances walking on icy or slippery surfaces.
- Keep areas clear of clutter
- Mop up spills and puddles as soon as they occur

Many towns, including Nashua, offer free salt and sand to melt snow and increase traction. Contact your town hall for availability.



Greater Nashua Healthy Homes Committee Update

This committee has recently finished their strategic plan and they're currently hitting the road to bring the message of healthy housing to the community.

Over the past year they've conducted educational trainings on bed bugs, lead poisoning, tenant rights and head lice.

Meet Susan Myers, RN, MEd

Susan Myers, RN, MEd is the new Manager of the Community Health Department at the Nashua Division of Public Health and Community Services. Sue recently retired from the Manchester Health Department, after thirty years of service. A graduate of St. Anselm College, Sue received a Masters Degree in Education from Plymouth State College and has completed courses at the NH Institute of Local Public Health Practice. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and has received other awards from the American Cancer Society, the NH Immunization Program, the National Center for Preparedness, Detection and Control of Infectious Diseases and the NH Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program. In her new role, Sue looks forward to implementing evidence-based interventions to the meet the public health needs of the Greater Nashua Region.

National Public Health Week 2014 ~ Daily Themes "Public Health: Start Here"				
Monday, 4/7	**Tuesday, 4/8**	**Wednesday, 4/9**	**Thursday, 4/10**	**Friday, 4/11**
Be healthy from the start. *From maternal health and school nutrition to emergency preparedness, public health starts at home.*	***Don't panic.*** *Disaster preparedness starts with community-wide commitment and action.*	***Get out ahead.*** *Prevention is now a nationwide priority. Let us show you where you fit in.*	***Eat well.*** *The system that keeps our nation's food safe and healthy is complex.*	***Be the healthiest nation in one generation.*** *Best practices for community health come from around the globe.*

For more information or to contribute to this year's national public health week, please contact Melissa Whalen at whalenm2@nashuanh.gov or at 603-589-4543

Contact Us

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follow us on twitter @NashuaPHealth

Upcoming Events

February

2/20/14 - Introductory Training on PODs, Rivier University

March

3/11/14 - Social Media Training, Rivier University

April

4/7 - 4/11 - National Public Health Week

4/16/14 - NHPHA Annual Meeting - Concord, NH

4/26/14 - National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Let us know if your organization would like us to promote your upcoming events here!

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