

Greater Nashua Public Health Network, Quarterly Update

(July - October, 2013)

November, 2013 - Issue 1



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. We will also include a seasonal highlight on varying public health topics. We are very excited to share this first quarterly newsletter and hope that it helps our partners keep up-to-date with public health initiatives throughout the region.

Public Health Advisory Council

The GNPH team has been working on a process to develop a Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) for the region. The role of the PHAC is to advise and identify regional public health priorities based on assessments of community health; guiding the implementation of programs, practices, and policies to meet improved health outcomes; and advancing the coordination of services among partners.

The PHAC development process will take time and effort, but it will be instrumental in fostering the development and coordination of appropriate community and public health services.

Emergency Preparedness

This summer and fall have been quite busy for the Greater Nashua Public Health (GNPH) team. With the help of local and regional partners, GNPH successfully completed a public health and healthcare Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA) and work plan for the region. An HVA identifies potential hazardous situations and measures our ability to respond to them. As a result, the proposed plan will work to address improved communications on regional activities, events, and trainings.

The full report is available on the GNPH google website: <http://bit.ly/HLM8sN>.

In addition to this work, the team has also been developing regional plans for providing low flow oxygen at an Alternate Care Site (ACS). The ACS is an inpatient healthcare facility that would open up during a public health emergency, such as a flu pandemic. The ACS would assist

healthcare facilities by providing care to patients that would normally require admission to an acute care hospital.

When individuals have breathing problems, possibly due to respiratory disease, they may need extra oxygen to improve their lung function. Providing low flow oxygen at the ACS can relieve the hospitals during a public health emergency so they can take care of our most vulnerable populations.

A low flow oxygen workshop, held in July, highlighted the well-developed partnerships that currently exist within our region. A strength that will be an asset throughout the planning process. The Healthcare Emergency Response Coalition along with the GNPH team are currently in the planning stages to test the low flow oxygen plan in early May of 2014.

Substance Misuse

Beginning in FY14, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) and the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services (BDAS) have established a strategic partnership to align multiple public health priorities into one integrated system. The partnership aims to increase efficiency through single contracts to public health regions, as appropriate, in order to integrate multiple public

health initiatives into existing networks of stakeholders and community partners.

As a result of this alignment of public health services, Beyond Influence, the Greater Nashua Substance Misuse Prevention (SMP) coalition, has transitioned to the Nashua Division of Public Health and Community Services (DPHCS) and is included in the regional Public Health Network Services.



SMP is a part of a continuum of care involving a range of efforts and services to reduce the misuse of substances, such as alcohol or prescription drugs, among individuals and within communities.

Nashua DPHCS is happy to announce Lisa Vasquez, BA as the SMP coordinator for GNPH, starting in December.

Community Health Improvement Plan

The 2012 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) identified three priority health issues for the greater Nashua region and organized three corresponding workgroups to implement strategies that would bring positive change in the areas of access to healthcare, mental health, and obesity. CHIP workgroups have cross sector representation including members from medical providers, non profit organizations, schools, and government.

Over the past several months the **Access to Healthcare** group

has been assessing data they collected during four community forums held earlier this spring. In addition to creating a detailed report of their findings about gaps in health services, the group is engaged in several initiatives to improve availability of health service information. In September, they distributed information kits to over 25 welfare offices, food pantries, and school district offices in the region.

The **Mental Health** workgroup is also working to improve communication and education around mental health and the services available for individuals managing mental illness. They promoted the NH 2-1-1 resource by distributing 2-1-1 fliers at schools and offices.

Over 600 2-1-1 magnets were distributed at the Merrimack 4th of July parade.

The **Obesity** workgroup is making connections with local schools and child care centers to promote the nationally recognized WE CAN! fitness and nutrition programs aimed at preschoolers, elementary students and their parents. They have organized an introductory training for early childhood professionals. The Obesity workgroup also organized a free community event to celebrate the many healthy activities and nutrition opportunities in the area. On October 5th, the first "Walk a Mile with Our Mayor" took place on the Heritage Rail Trail and ended with activities, games and healthy snacks at the Veterans Park fields and Boys and Girls Club facilities on Grand Avenue.



Division of Public Health and Community Services pitching in to assemble information kits for the Access to Healthcare workgroup.

Stay Flu Free this Season

The flu is an illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu **vaccine** each year.

How flu spreads

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person

might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

City of Nashua Health Department Walk-In Immunization Clinic

Tuesdays, 3:30 -7pm

Fridays, 8:30 -11am

(603) 589-4500

Please call for more information on these services and the associated fees.

Signs and symptoms of flu:

- Fever, feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)



www.CDC.gov

Healthy Homes

“A safe and healthy home environment for every resident in the Nashua region”

Daylight savings time has come and gone, did you change the batteries on your smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors? Your batteries should be changed every six months and daylight savings time is a great way to remind yourself to perform this important home safety measure.

Fresh batteries allow smoke and CO alarms to do their jobs of saving lives by alerting families of a fire or buildup of deadly carbon monoxide in their homes.

More than 3,000 people die each year in the U.S. and Canada in structure fires. Remember, change your clocks, and change your batteries.

The City of Nashua, Division of Public Health and Community Services and its partners have been engaged in lead poisoning prevention activities in the greater Nashua region for the past four decades. Our activities include lead screenings, bed bug educational trainings and various community outreach events.

The Greater Nashua Healthy Homes group has recently finished our strategic plan and we're hitting the road to bring the message of healthy housing to the community. Contact us if you would like us to give a presentation highlighting health and housing issues, healthy homes data and/or resources.



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

Our committee meets on the second Tuesday of every month at the Division of Public Health and Community Services located at 18 Mulberry Street in Nashua. If you want to learn more or be part of our team, please contact: Amy Moutenot.

MoutenotA@NashuaNH.gov
603-568-6987.



Handle and Prepare your Holiday Meals Safely this Season



As you prepare holiday meals, and any meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illness. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature. Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours. (www.cdc.gov)

Contact Us

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Greater Nashua
Public Health



@NashuaPHealth

Upcoming Events

January

CERT Training (1/17/14 - 1/19/14)

Point of Dispensing (POD) Training

March

Social Media Training

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

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