THANK YOU TO OUR 2011-2012 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

NORMAND DESCHENE, Chair
Lowell General Hospital

CRAIG SLATIN, Chair
University of Massachusetts Lowell

MICHELLE B. DAVIS
Interim Executive Director
Director of Marketing Operations & Community Development
Lowell General Hospital

RASY AN
Executive Director
Cambodian Mutual Assistance

NORMAND DESCHENE, Chair
Greater Lowell Health Alliance

THERE IS A GREAT HONOR AND GREAT RESPONSIBILITY TO BE A PART OF THE GROWTH AND CHANGES HAPPENING IN THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES. WE ARE LUCKY TO BE IN A POSITION TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH ORGANIZATIONS ON THE EVIDENCE-BASED TRAININGS, LOCAL HEALTH AND OTHER SAFETY DEPARTMENTS, AND THE TEAM AT THE CITY OF LOWELL. THE FOLLOWING ARE A FEW OF THE MANY LEVELS OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE REGION. OUR VISION FORWARD IS TO STRIVE FOR GREATER Visibility AND ENHANCE THE TRUST AMONG ALL OUR PARTNERS.

AS THE COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK AREA (CHNA) 10, A COALITION OF PUBLIC, NON-PROFIT, AND PRIVATE SECTORS, WE SPONSORED THE FIRST ANNUAL NEASTERN REGIONAL CHNA FORUM IN MAY 2012. THIS FORUM HELPED US ESTABLISH STRONGER TIES AMONG THE FIVE REGIONAL CHNAs AND RESOURCE SHARING. WE PARTNERED WITH PLANET MassCONNECT OF THE Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard University to coordinate evidence-based trainings for the GLHA coalition members. We also strengthened our collaborations with local health and other safety departments, especially in the Towns of Chelmsford, Billerica and Tewksbury. This coming year, the GLHA will strive to gain greater visibility and enhance the trust among all our region’s businesses and public leaders.

OUR SUCCESS IN 2012 HAS BEEN BUILT FROM THOSE WHO WORKED TIRELESSLY TO IMPROVE THE MANY LEVELS OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE REGION. OUR VISION FORWARD WILL BUILD ON THIS SUCCESS WITH MORE PROACTIVE EMPHASIS ON “WELLNESS” THROUGHOUT OUR TASK FORCE INITIATIVES. TOGETHER WE CAN CONTINUE TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE HEALTH OF OUR LOVED ONES, OUR FRIENDS, AND OUR REGION.

THANK YOU TO THE MANY INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE WORKING PART OF THE GLHA. WITH YOUR ONGOING DEDICATION AND SUPPORT, WE WILL CONTINUE IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF EACH COMMUNITY IN OUR REGION. OUR MISSION OF SUSTAINING A “COLLABORATIVE COALITION” WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE REGION’S LONGSTANDING PUBLIC COMMITMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM. THE OUTCOMES FROM THESE UNITED EFFORTS WILL LEAD TO NEW AND MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. THESE EFFORTS ARE REFLECTED IN OUR FIRST STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT, OUR UPDATED VISION AND MISSION, AND THE FORMATION OF OUR NEW STEERING COMMITTEE.

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Joining as the new Executive Director of the Greater Lowell Health Alliance (GLHA) is a great honor and great responsibility. We are fortunate to build on the work that was initiated in 2005 when the Greater Lowell Health Alliance was established. The year ahead holds many exciting opportunities to strengthen our organization in the midst of great changes in the health care environment. Working collaboratively with our Executive Board, our Task Forces, our regional community leaders, and the public will make us successful in influencing healthier lifestyles.

Thank you to the many individuals, businesses, and community organizations that are part of the GLHA. With your ongoing dedication and support, we will continue improving the health of each community in our region. Our mission of sustaining a “collaborative coalition” would not be possible without the region’s longstanding public commitment and volunteerism. The outcomes from these united efforts will lead to new and more effective programs and services. These efforts are reflected in our first Strategic Planning Retreat, our updated Vision and Mission, and the formation of our new Steering Committee.

As the Community Health Network Area (CHNA) 10, a coalition of public, non-profit, and private sectors, we sponsored the first Annual Northeast Regional CHNA Forum in May of 2012. This forum helped us establish stronger ties among the five regional CHNAs and resource sharing. We partnered with PLANET MassCONNECT of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard University to coordinate evidence-based trainings for the GLHA coalition members. We also strengthened our collaborations with local health and other safety departments, especially in the Towns of Chelmsford, Billerica and Tewksbury. This coming year, the GLHA will strive to gain greater visibility and enhance the trust among all our region’s businesses and public leaders.

Our success in 2012 has been built from those who worked tirelessly to improve the many levels of public health in the region. Our vision forward will build upon this success with more proactive emphasis on “wellness” throughout our Task Force initiatives. Together we can continue to make a positive difference in the health of our loved ones, our friends, and our region. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kevin Coughlin
Executive Director
Greater Lowell Health Alliance

CULTURAL COMPETENCY TASK FORCE

• Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Questioning (LGBTQ) created an Organizational Self-Assessment survey for businesses, agencies, and organizations in Greater Lowell and the Merrimack Valley that will help assess readiness and sensitivity toward working with LGBTQ identified clients, members, and/or patients.

• We held the first Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR); sponsored two film screenings followed by open discussion to bring awareness about LGBTQ communities.

• Reintroduced CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services) National Standards discussions with Task Force members to formulate ways to integrate standards in organizations and communities served.

• The Bridging the Gap (BTG) medical interpreter training classes trained a total of 33 participants (compared to 25 in the previous year) in November 2011 and May 2012 for the following languages: Khmer, Portuguese, Lao, Spanish, Kiswahili, Russian, Indonesian, and French.

HEALTHY WEIGHT TASK FORCE

• Completed Community Health Assessment/CHANGE tool to gather baseline data around Healthy Eating and Active Living strategies

• Monthly health articles have been written for electronic distribution in the Greater Lowell region on nutrition and physical activity

• Participated as an Act Fresh Environments Support Health Campaign (Act FRESH) representative with a current focus on statewide public policy involving school nutrition standards

• Created and distributed a Physical Activity and Nutrition Resource guide (also available on the GLHA’s website)

• Representatives from the task force joined the Chelmsford Wellness Advisory Committee

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

• Built a strong active membership comprising of over 15 organizations representing primary health care, behavioral health services, community based

• Successfully conducted a strategic planning process, in alignment with Healthy People 2020 Objectives, to identify the priority areas of increasing access to treatment and improving overall systems of care for persons with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

• Collected baseline data regarding the demand for services impacted by having a dual diagnosis of mental health and substance abuse/use.

• Identified two priority needs related to mental health and substance abuse/use for future action: advocacy and education for the Greater Lowell region

MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH TASK FORCE

• Launched a toll free number with resources on Early and Adequate Prenatal Care to help gather data in order to define our next steps in addressing adequate care for pregnant women

• Coordinated our first community-wide Car Seat Safety Check-Up Event in April 2012 and collected car seats to benefit over 50 local families

• Teen Pregnancy Prevention sub-committee has distributed Parent Surveys in Portuguese, Spanish and Khmer, as well as completing a Community Mapping of Teen Pregnancy and community resource tool to determine our future focus and direction

SUBSTANCE USE & PREVENTION TASK FORCE

• Changed Task Force name from ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs) to Substance Use & Prevention in order to clarify the focus of the Task Force

• Expansion of partnership to include UMass Lowell, Teekubs, and Dracut Police, as well as the Health Departments of Chelmsford, Lowell, Tewksbury and Westford

• Promotion of Unwanted Medical Disposal Days

• Promoted community efforts on dangers of tobacco, alcohol and other substances

• Supported passing of Tobacco Sale Ban in pharmacies throughout Lowell