

COMMUNITY IN  
**ACTION**



**GLHA**  
GREATER LOWELL HEALTH ALLIANCE

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City of Lowell, Health Department

\* *Through October 2017*

## A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We are very pleased to share this year's annual report, highlighting a remarkable year of growth and achievements for the Greater Lowell Health Alliance (GLHA).

Among the many accomplishments we are celebrating in this report, the GLHA this year launched a new initiative that has the potential to change the face of healthcare in our communities: The Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). A forward-looking roadmap setting our health improvement agenda for the next three years, the CHIP has been a true collaboration, involving hundreds of individuals from dozens of organizations within our region.

We are pleased to report that the GLHA this year surpassed the \$1 million mark in grants distributed to the deserving frontline organizations addressing the many unmet health needs in Greater Lowell communities. The Alliance's five health-focused, community-led task forces — each targeting an individual healthcare need in the community — also continued this year to grow in size and scope, tackling serious health issues at all levels to serve as a catalyst for lasting change in the health of the region.

I would like to express my sincerest admiration and gratitude to these task force leaders and members, as well as our GLHA Board of Directors and Steering Committee, for their passion and commitment to this organization. I extend a special thank you to Executive Director Kerrie D'Entremont and Administrative Assistant Christine Soundara, whose talent and dedication are a driving force behind the success of the Greater Lowell Health Alliance.

Our continued growth and impact are possible only through the active engagement and spirit of collaboration among our community partners. We extend our deepest appreciation to all who give of their time and services to sustain this collaborative coalition, with special thanks to the hundreds of organizations and individuals whose efforts made the CHIP initiative a reality.

Working together, we will continue to grow stronger and continue to fulfill our critical mission to improve the overall health of Greater Lowell's communities.

Sincerely,



Michelle B. Davis  
Chair, Board of Directors



GLHA Board of Directors: Front Row — Andrea Saunders Batchelder, Michelle Davis, Kerrie D'Entremont, Jayne Andrews. Back Row — Sovanna Pouv, Deirdra Murphy, Kerran Vigroux, Susan Rosa, Karen Frederick, Rachel Chaddock, Jeannine Durkin, Sonith Peou. Not pictured: Susan West Levine.

## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Through a truly collaborative effort, the Greater Lowell Health Alliance (GLHA) has taken major steps this year in addressing the unmet health needs identified in last year's 2016 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment. The primary focus and major achievement this year has been the exciting development of our Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP has taken the findings of the needs assessment and further defined the vision for our region's health — and then created measurable goals and objectives to help get us there. Paving the way for our future, the CHIP is turning data into action and measurable working initiatives to justify how and where resources should be allocated to best meet community needs.

With the release of the CHIP, we aligned this year's grant distribution process to its goals and objectives, enabling us to allocate funding to the organizations directly involved with addressing our communities' top health priorities. We are continuing to work to improve and enhance our grant request for proposal (RFP) process, evaluating the distribution methods, timing, and outcomes to ensure we are maximizing the impact of our funding. To that end, we offered a grant information session in June specific to the GLHA RFP and goals and objectives of the CHIP, and we are engaging in supporting lead agencies in their work.

This past year alone, we supported our community through another successful RFP/grant distribution cycle of \$150,000 — part of more than \$1 million in grants and community support distributed by GLHA to date.

Looking forward, we see the opportunity and responsibility to be a catalyst in addressing social determinants affecting the health of our residents. By engaging community partners and experts in fields from public transportation and housing to education and work environments, we can seek to collaborate with leaders in those fields to bring health goals into their overall mission.

I am so appreciative of the outstanding leadership of our dedicated Board of Directors, Steering Committee, task force leaders and members, and the hundreds of community partners. And our success would not be possible without our wonderful GLHA Administrative Assistant, Christine Soundara.

I am so proud and honored to be part of this truly collaborative community organization and am excited about the future ahead as we continue to improve the overall health of this great region.

Sincerely,



Kerrie D'Entremont  
Executive Director



## STEERING COMMITTEE

MERCY ANAMPIU  
Lowell Community Health Center

KATHERINE ELKINS (as of September 2017)  
Lowell General Hospital

MARILYN GRAHAM  
Lowell WIC

MICHAEL HALL (as of October 2017)  
City of Lowell Health Department

HEATHER HILBERT  
Lowell General Hospital

IVY HO  
University of Massachusetts Lowell

AINAT KOREN  
University of Massachusetts Lowell

MARIA LUCCI (as of October 2017)  
Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery

TAMI MARSHALL (as of October 2017)  
Thom Anne Sullivan Center

SHEILA OCH  
Lowell Community Health Center

AMY PESSIA (as of January 2017)  
Merrimack Valley Food Bank

KELLY PETRAVICZ (through August 2017)  
South Bay Community Services

SUSAN PULIDO (through August 2017)  
The Center for Hope and Healing

MARIA RUGGIERO  
Tewksbury Police Department

JENNIFER SHUART  
Lowell Community Health Center

JENNIE WELCH (through October 2017)  
Tewksbury Police Department

## GLHA STAFF

KERRIE D'ENTREMONT  
Executive Director

CHRISTINE SOUNDARA  
Administrative Assistant

## INTERNS

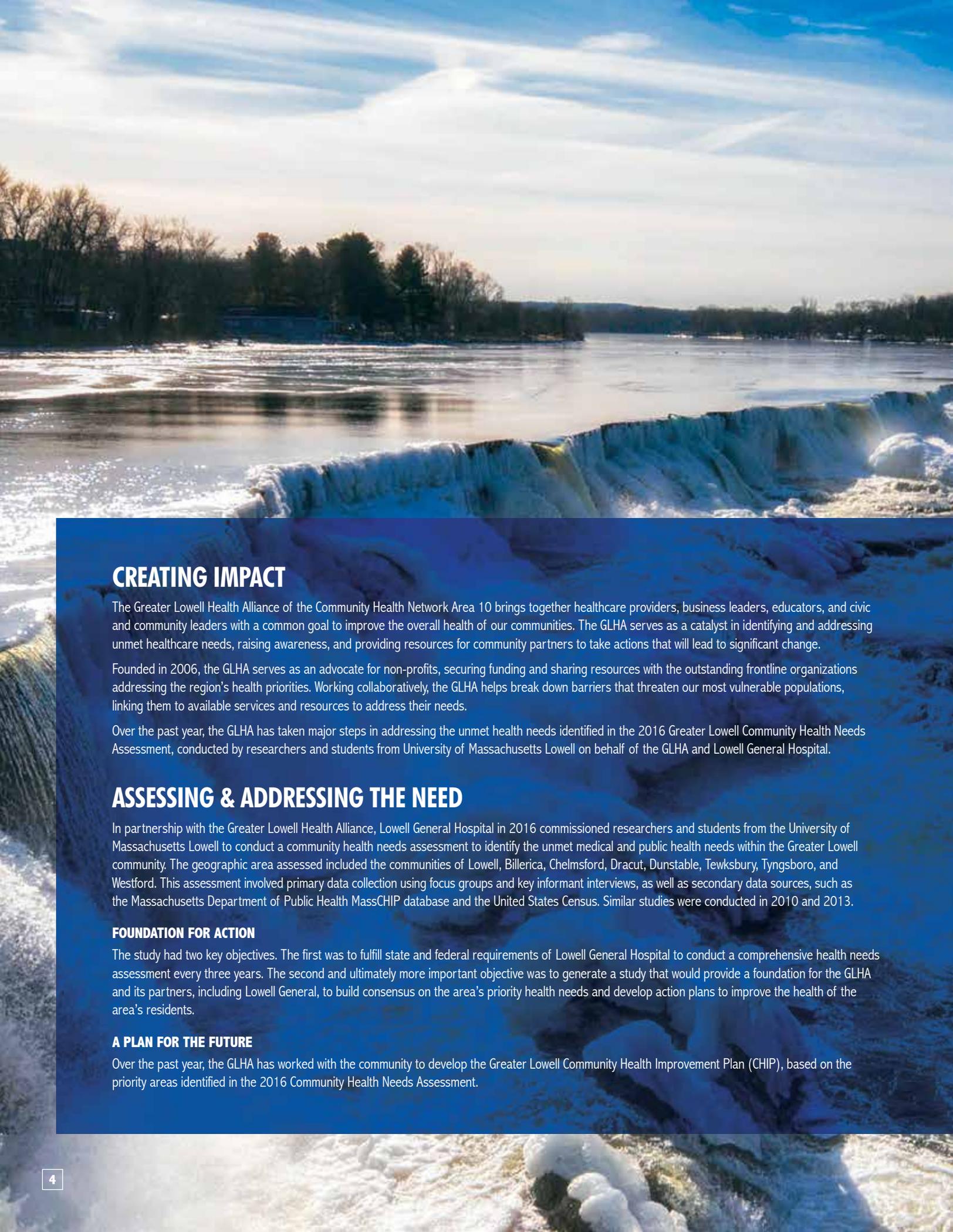
GRADUATE STUDENTS  
Linda Am, Nicoletta de Rege, Cassandra Harding, Matthew Pelletier

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS  
Samantha Balbierz, Caroline Burke, Cristiele de Almeida, Kathryn Gonzalez, Megan Grant, Kristen Hoffman, Christian Nowicki, Randy Peterson, Vanessa Vazquez

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
Clara Casale, Edith Collins, Samaia Moore, Kathleen Mungai



**OUR MISSION IS TO SUSTAIN A  
STRATEGIC ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS THAT IMPROVES  
THE OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLNESS  
OF THOSE LIVING IN THE GREATER  
LOWELL REGION.**



## CREATING IMPACT

The Greater Lowell Health Alliance of the Community Health Network Area 10 brings together healthcare providers, business leaders, educators, and civic and community leaders with a common goal to improve the overall health of our communities. The GLHA serves as a catalyst in identifying and addressing unmet healthcare needs, raising awareness, and providing resources for community partners to take actions that will lead to significant change.

Founded in 2006, the GLHA serves as an advocate for non-profits, securing funding and sharing resources with the outstanding frontline organizations addressing the region's health priorities. Working collaboratively, the GLHA helps break down barriers that threaten our most vulnerable populations, linking them to available services and resources to address their needs.

Over the past year, the GLHA has taken major steps in addressing the unmet health needs identified in the 2016 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment, conducted by researchers and students from University of Massachusetts Lowell on behalf of the GLHA and Lowell General Hospital.

## ASSESSING & ADDRESSING THE NEED

In partnership with the Greater Lowell Health Alliance, Lowell General Hospital in 2016 commissioned researchers and students from the University of Massachusetts Lowell to conduct a community health needs assessment to identify the unmet medical and public health needs within the Greater Lowell community. The geographic area assessed included the communities of Lowell, Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Westford. This assessment involved primary data collection using focus groups and key informant interviews, as well as secondary data sources, such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health MassCHIP database and the United States Census. Similar studies were conducted in 2010 and 2013.

### FOUNDATION FOR ACTION

The study had two key objectives. The first was to fulfill state and federal requirements of Lowell General Hospital to conduct a comprehensive health needs assessment every three years. The second and ultimately more important objective was to generate a study that would provide a foundation for the GLHA and its partners, including Lowell General, to build consensus on the area's priority health needs and develop action plans to improve the health of the area's residents.

### A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Over the past year, the GLHA has worked with the community to develop the Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), based on the priority areas identified in the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment.



## COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN: A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems in a community. The plan is based on the results of community health assessment activities, and is part of a community health improvement process, helping to set priorities, coordinate efforts, and target resources. It should define the vision for the health of the community through a collaborative process and should address the gamut of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that exist in the community to improve the health status of that community. (Source: Public Health Accreditation Board)

### A CHIP FOR GREATER LOWELL

With a goal to create a long-term strategy to strengthen the area's health systems, our CHIP will be used as roadmap for health improvement over a three-year period, guiding the investment of resources of organizations with a stake in improving health for the residents of Lowell and the surrounding communities. Our CHIP mission: to turn data into action and working initiatives to address our community's top health priorities. While addressing specific health priorities, the overarching goal is always one of health equity, meeting the health needs not just for some, but for all.

### WHO IS INVOLVED

A CHIP's value and significance stems from the involvement of the community. Over this past year, the GLHA has engaged more than 100 people from more than fifty community organizations to develop our first Community Health Improvement Plan, with many more partner agencies and organizations expected to join in the coming year.

### OUR PLAN IN ACTION

In 2016 and 2017 the GLHA held two high-energy CHIP planning process meetings that enabled us to join with community members and leaders to further identify our community's top health priorities by drilling deeper into our health needs assessment.

Through those meetings, we are working to develop SMART goals and objectives — those that are specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound — to leverage and maximize community resources to fill gaps and avoid duplication of efforts in these priority areas. The GLHA task forces and the CHIP steering committee, comprising a small group of interested partners in each area of expertise, will continually measure health progress and indicators that will then be reported back to the community.

### CREATING IMPACT

Although our CHIP is a working document in its early stages, it is already creating impact. The CHIP process helped determine priority areas for grants, enabling the GLHA to distribute funds to the organizations on the front line of addressing our area's unmet health needs. Our 2017 Community Health Initiatives Grants were awarded around health priorities and programs that met the specific areas of focus identified by the CHIP process: Access to Healthy Food, Asthma, Mental Health, Physical Activity, Social Determinants of Health, and Substance Use and Prevention. (*Learn more about GLHA grants on pages 10-11*).

**OUR CHIP MISSION: TO TURN DATA INTO ACTION AND WORKING INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS OUR COMMUNITY'S TOP HEALTH PRIORITIES. TURN TO THE BACK COVER TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN "CHIP IN" TO MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

## GLHA TASK FORCES

The work of each of the GLHA's five task forces, individually and collectively, has set the stage for long-term improvements in the health of our community, with a focus on encouraging collaboration among member organizations. The members of these task forces are all community volunteers who take time from their full-time commitments to focus on the health of others. Their vision, creativity, and resiliency have led to significant improvements in our healthcare landscape. This past year, these tireless health champions dedicated countless hours to collaborate on the GLHA's first Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), a long-term strategy to strengthen the area's health systems. (See Page 5 for more on CHIP). Below is a brief description of the task forces and some of the initiatives they have undertaken over the past year to address specific health concerns in each of their target areas.

### CULTURAL COMPETENCY TASK FORCE

TRI-CHAIRS: MERCY ANAMPIU, IVY HO, JENNIFER SHUART

The Cultural Competency Task Force seeks to increase the capacity of healthcare and human service providers to achieve positive outcomes with all patients and clients. This is achieved by increasing provider awareness of cultural diversity and skills needed to meet the varied needs of diverse populations of Greater Lowell.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Facilitated the nationally recognized **Bridging the Gap (BTG) Medical Interpreter Training Program** at the Community Health Education Center (CHEC), with 18 participants completing the 40-hour program, representing the following language groups: Khmer, Portuguese (Portugal), Spanish, Swahili, Portuguese (Brazil), Arabic, and Mandarin. The GLHA provides annual scholarships to five participants from agencies with small budgets, helping us to meet our goal of increasing capacity of service providers to meet national Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS) for all patients.
- Worked in collaboration with GLHA partners to ensure that the national CLAS are reflected throughout the **Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)**.
- Hosted a successful GLHA Networking Luncheon in November 2016 called **"The Refugee Journey"** presented by Gregg Detwiler, Director, Intercultural Ministries of the Emmanuel Gospel Center, and Torli Krua, Co-Director, Greater Boston Refugee Ministry.
- Supported the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence and community partners with a mini-grant to create a three-day interactive **Domestic Violence Gallery of Hope and Sharing Space** in Lowell during Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.
- Reviewed and began working with Lowell Telecommunications to update multi-lingual videos on **"Access to Care"** and **"Getting Around Lowell General Hospital"** to reflect current health care services and promote access. The new videos will be produced in English, Khmer, and Spanish and will be available to agencies for display in waiting areas and other venues.

### LGBTQ SUBCOMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS: MARIA CROOKER, ALAN FLAGG

This subcommittee addresses the potential risk facing members of the LGBTQ community by educating local businesses, community organizations, and health providers in the region so that they are better able to serve the LGBTQ community. The 2013 and 2016 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessments revealed that members who are isolated or without family support are at risk of developing mental health, substance abuse,



The LGBTQ flag flies proudly over Utopia Park during Pride Month.

and other issues. There is a lack of sensitivity to this community by many healthcare professionals, a lack of outreach, as well as a lack of awareness of transgender individuals.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Hosted the 5th Annual **Transgender Day of Remembrance** with a march from Lowell Community Health Center to Lowell City Hall for a candlelight vigil and a program with guest speaker Kelly Jenkins. There were more than 75 people in attendance.
- Hosted the 2nd Annual **Greater Lowell Family-Friendly Pride** in June at Utopia Park in Lowell. Hundreds of people, including special guest Mayor Edward Kennedy, joined in the celebration, with wonderful support from History UnErased, a youth group that canvassed businesses throughout the city of Lowell, asking them to show their support by hanging rainbow flags during Pride Month. More than 30 businesses sported rainbow flags or offered discounts to those who wore or produced anything Pride related.

## HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING TASK FORCE

TRI-CHAIRS: MARILYN GRAHAM, HEATHER HILBERT, AMY PESSIA

The Healthy Eating and Active Living task force develops and improves partnerships that are committed to leading Greater Lowell area residents to better health. Cross-cultural and intergenerational collaborations build on strengths of the community to improve active living and nutrition for healthy minds and healthy bodies for all.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Supported the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) on the Massachusetts Food Trust, closing the SNAP Gap, and Mass in Motion.
  - The **Massachusetts Food Trust** supports new and expanded healthy food retailers and local food enterprises in low- and moderate-income communities throughout Massachusetts.
  - **Closing the SNAP Gap** seeks to create a common application process for MassHealth; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Program for Emergency Aid to Elders, Disabled and Children; and the Program for Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children.
  - **Mass in Motion** is a statewide movement that promotes opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the places people live, learn, work, and play. Language in the 2018 budget protects Mass in Motion funding at level funding of 2017.
- Participated in Tewksbury's 7th Annual **Bike Safety Rodeo** in June 2017.
- Hosted a "**Massachusetts Sugar Tax**" presentation by Allyson Perron Drag of the American Heart Association in July 2017.
- Worked with the **Greater Lowell Asthma Coalition (GLAC)** to merge their goals with the asthma goals and objectives of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).
- Organized a community meeting exploring the **Blue Zones Project** for Greater Lowell, presented by Tony Buettner, and sponsored by Circle Health, in collaboration with a steering committee led by Dr. Damian Folch. More than 100

## MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

The Mental Health Task Force brings together more than 20 mental health providers and social service agencies to share resources, examine and develop best practices, and identify service gaps that we can collaboratively address, seeking to reduce stigma associated with mental health issues, increase awareness of mental health issues and available services, improve access to mental health care, and identify and address mental health issues that face our community.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Hosted a successful Networking Luncheon: "**Behavioral Health Integration**" in March 2017, with a panel discussion on how organizations have integrated behavioral health services in their practices. Participants included Lowell General Hospital, Lowell Community Health Center, Greater Lowell Pediatrics, and Element Care.
- Participated in a GLHA-sponsored bus trip to the Massachusetts State House for the Northeast Area Citizens **Legislative Breakfast** on March 29, with 45 attendees ranging from student interns, MH task force members, and community partners. Representatives from GLHA and the Boys and Girls Club



The Mill City Grows mobile markets offer fresh fruits and vegetables.

people attended and expressed interest in a Greater Lowell-based Blue Zones Project, which is a community-wide well-being initiative designed to make healthier choices easier. A steering committee was created to continue the discussion.

### CORNER STORE INITIATIVE WORKING GROUP

CO-CHAIRS: MILL CITY GROWS REPRESENTATIVE AND SIDNEY LIANG

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Joined the City of Lowell, Lowell Community Health Center, Mill City Grows, and others on the **Mass in Motion: Corner Store Initiative**, with a goal to work with local convenience stores to provide healthier food and drink choices. Communities that have participated in Mass in Motion since its 2009 inception have shown a statistically significant drop in the percentage of overweight and obese school children compared to the state as a whole.
- Worked closely with the Massachusetts Public Health Association and the Massachusetts Food Trust to push for support of a **Healthy Incentives Program** bill to provide SNAP participants financial incentive (30 cents per dollar) for purchasing fruits and vegetables.
- Worked on a **Food Day Celebration and Community Resource Fair** to be held on October 24 at the Lowell Senior Center.

CO-CHAIRS: KATHERINE ELKINS, SHEILA OCH, SUSAN PULIDO\* (\*THROUGH AUGUST 2017)



Graduates of the 2017 Comprehensive Outreach Education Certificate Program at the Lowell Community Health Center.

of Greater Lowell directly addressed our legislators on the mental health component of the GLHA Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

- Successfully supported and advocated for \$500,000 in **elder behavioral health services** funding by the state legislature. Learn more at [www.eldermentalhealth.org/mass-aging-and-mental-health-coalition](http://www.eldermentalhealth.org/mass-aging-and-mental-health-coalition).

## MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH TASK FORCE

CO-CHAIRS: AINAT KOREN, TAMI MARSHALL, KELLY PETRAVICZ\* (\*THROUGH AUGUST 2017)



GLHA members attend Advanced Leadership Training: The Community-Based Perinatal Support Model, sponsored by MotherWoman Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership.

The Maternal Child Health Task Force brings together key stakeholders to address the most pressing health issues related to mothers and their families.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Continued with raising awareness of the **Mom2Be website** (Mom2Be.info), placing ads on buses and printing flyers. Mom2Be offers information and resources about the services available to promote early and adequate prenatal care to at-risk populations.
- Hosted a **Car Seat Safety** event on May 7 at Stadium Plaza, Tewksbury in collaboration with Lowell General Hospital, Tewksbury Police Department, Lowell Police Department, Salem Five Charitable Foundation, Boston Children's Hospital, and Dominos.
- Hosted a three-day **Child Passenger Safety & Training** at the Tewksbury Police Department, with a goal to help prevent misuse of car seats.
- Participated in another successful **World Breastfeeding Week** celebration in August, raising awareness of the Mom2Be website with promotional items distributed to more than 50 new and expecting moms and their families.

### DELAYING THE SECOND PREGNANCY IN TEEN MOTHERS PROJECT SUBCOMMITTEE

CHAIR: AINAT KOREN

The program, with funding from GLHA and AT&T, models the Illinois Subsequent Pregnancy Program (ISPP) that has shown success in delaying second pregnancies and helping young mothers to complete their high school education, with outcomes consistent across diverse ethnic backgrounds. The program has two main components: participation in bi-monthly Advisory Group meetings and ongoing, individual support and guidance provided by a home visitor.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Enrolled eleven teen mothers in the **home visit program** through referrals from Lowell High School, the Charter School, and South Bay Community Services.

- Trained home-visitors, supervisors, and program directors who utilized the **evidence-based curriculum** to teach mothers about self-care, contraceptives, sexually transmitted diseases/sexually transmitted infections, and financial planning/management.
- Created **“Google Hangouts”** as an online video chat and visibility tool for mothers who could not meet in person, particularly if they lacked transportation. The virtual groups will be implemented in the coming year.
- Began following up with surveys and group sessions to **evaluate the process, program, and outcomes** before the program ends in July 2018.

### PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

CHAIR: HEATHER BIEDRZYCKI

The Perinatal Mental Health Coalition addresses a wide range of perinatal emotional complications, with a mission to bring together medical and mental health providers and community members to improve the emotional well-being of pregnant and postpartum woman and their families through education, outreach, advocacy, and support.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Held **Moms Connected**, a free support group for pregnant and postpartum mothers.
- Created and distributed the **Merrimack Valley Resource and Referral Guide** to support mothers during the emotional experience of pregnancy and the postpartum period.
- Began development of a **resource guide** for families impacted by mental health and substance use.



Recipients of the 2016/2017 Community Health Initiatives grants are helping to drive many of the GLHA task force initiatives.

## SUBSTANCE USE & PREVENTION TASK FORCE

TRI-CHAIR: MICHAEL HALL, MARIA LUCCI, MARIA RUGGIERO, JENNIE WELCH\* (\*THROUGH OCTOBER 2017)

The Substance Use and Prevention (SUP) Task Force works to strengthen new and existing collaborations in the Greater Lowell community to prevent and reduce the use of substances among our community members. With a focus on environmental strategies, the task force employs efforts on policy making, substance use intervention, and prevention education.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Hosted a September **National Recovery Month** and October **National Substance Abuse Prevention Month** press conference with the Chelmsford Health Department, Chelmsford Police Department, and Tewksbury Police Department on September 18.
- Sponsored **“Drug Take Backs”** events by local police departments.
- Participated in multiple **National Night Out** events in August – an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships to make our neighborhoods safer, better places to live.
- Supported the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration’s **Partnership for Success** grant program to prevent prescription drug misuse and abuse among high school youth in Lowell.
- Worked with the **Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (MOAPC)**, led by the City of Lowell and including the towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Tewksbury, Westford, and Wilmington, to implement local policy, practice, systems, and environmental change to prevent the use/abuse of opioids.
- In collaboration with the Lowell Police Department, held quarterly **prescription medication and sharps take-back events**.
- Began implementing **Life Skills Prevention** curricula, grades 3-9 in all 7 towns in the MOAPC cluster, including training staff and providing materials for students.
- In collaboration with Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan, facilitated **opioid awareness** events for seniors throughout our cluster.
- Facilitated ongoing training in **evidenced-based community prevention** to MOAPC partners.

There are three dynamic subcommittees under the SUP umbrella:

### ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES WORKING GROUP (ESWG)

CHAIR: SOCHENDA UCH

Led by Lowell Community Health Center’s Teen BLOCK, ESGW works to inform and educate youth, parents, and members in the community about how substance abuse is affecting our neighborhoods, implementing strategies to reduce and prevent substance use, such as surveys, compliance checks, events, and training.

Among our accomplishments over the past year:

- Peer Leaders held after-school workshops at the Stoklosa Middle School, implementing the **Life Skills** curriculum, with topics from coping with anger to resolving conflicts.
- ESGW and LCHC Teen BLOCK chapter members attended **Kick Butts Day** at the State House.
- ESGW youth assisted the SAPC with **Sticker Shock Campaign**, using stickers in liquor stores to warn the public of the consequences of procuring alcohol for minors.



Members of the Merrimack Valley Project visit Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health & Human Services, to advocate for enhanced transportation services for substance abuse programs.

### MARIJUANA SUBCOMMITTEE

CHAIR: MARK KENNARD

This subcommittee convenes local leaders to discuss the concerns of enforcement and access of marijuana, as well as the potential impact on youth. We seek to educate ourselves and the community on the issues, offering resources to communities seeking to develop zoning laws ordinances and regulations.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Hosted **“The Impacts of Marijuana: Strategies to Address Related Health, Social, and Legal Issues”** at Lowell General Hospital on October 5.
- Consulted with Routt County (CO) Undersheriff Ray Birch regarding the **effect of legalization of marijuana in Colorado** and how Massachusetts can learn from Colorado’s experience.
- Worked to develop a **Marijuana Fact Sheet and Resource Guide**.

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE (SAPC)

CHAIR: MARIA RUGGIERO

Led by the Tewksbury Police Department, SAPC focuses on increasing the capacity of communities to prevent and reduce underage drinking and other drug use among youth. Collaborating with MOAPC, we focus on the communities of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Lowell, Tewksbury, Westford and Wilmington.

Among our accomplishments over the past year, we:

- Completed a **Logic Model** for our efforts to prevent and reduce underage drinking and use of other drugs within our teen population.
- Worked on the **Sticker Shock Campaign** — using stickers in liquor stores to warn the public of the consequences of procuring alcohol for minors — throughout Greater Lowell, with the help of LCHC Teen BLOCK youth and community teen representatives.
- Began implementing **Life Skills**, an evidence-based curriculum that teaches children and teenagers coping skills and social/emotional learning tools in schools.
- Created a database of **youth mental health resources**.
- Began working with the national campaign **“Above the Influence”** (abovetheinfluence.com) in our schools.
- Provided **“Mental Health For Youth Trainings”** for first responders and individuals working with youth to help them understand the complexity of dual-diagnosis with mental health and substance abuse.

# GLHA GRANT DISTRIBUTION

Over a 15-year period, the Greater Lowell Health Alliance will distribute nearly \$5 million allocated by Lowell General Hospital through the hospital's Determination of Need process for its 2010 campus expansion. This process through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health ensures that hospitals are providing a measurable community benefit to the communities they serve.

## 2016/2017 COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES GRANTS

The GLHA released a request for proposal in the fall of 2016 to support programs and services to improve the overall health of the Greater Lowell community. Grants were awarded around the following priority areas:

- Mental Health and Mental Disorders
- Substance Abuse (including tobacco use)
- Chronic Disease (e.g. asthma, obesity, and diabetes)
- Prevention and Screenings (e.g. cancer, children's nutrition)

### **Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.**

Greater Lowell Falls Talk Project – \$40,000

### **Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell**

Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative: Building Healthy Places – \$10,000

### **Lowell Community Health Center**

Youth Substance Use Prevention Project – \$39,000

### **Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery**

Community Opioid Outreach Program (COOP) – \$21,000

### **McCarthy Middle School, Chelmsford**

Strengthening Health of Middle School Students – \$16,000

### **Merrimack Valley Food Bank**

Operation Nourish – \$10,000

### **Mill City Grows**

Farm to School Partnership Expansion – \$25,000

### **Tewksbury Police Department**

Regional Jail Diversion Program – \$39,000



Volunteers from Lowell General Hospital and GLHA pack bags for the Merrimack Valley Food Bank Operation Nourish Project.

## 2017/2018 COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES GRANTS

The GLHA is proud to announce the grant awards for the fall of 2017 to support programs and services to improve the overall health of the Greater Lowell community. This year, grants were awarded around the following health priorities and programs that meet the specific areas of focus identified by the GLHA's Community Health Improvement Plan process:

- Access to Healthy Food
- Asthma
- Mental Health
- Physical Activity
- Social Determinants of Health
- Substance Use and Prevention

To qualify, all proposals needed to incorporate a plan to meet the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in health and health care to all individuals in order to reduce disparities and achieve health equity.

### **Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell**

Youth Mental Health Services – \$15,000

### **Family Services of the Merrimack Valley**

Samaritans of the Merrimack Valley – \$10,000

### **Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell**

Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative: Building Healthy Places – \$5,000

### **History UnErased**

On the Front Lines: Equipping Teachers to Improve the Educational and Wellness Outcome of LGBTQ Youth – \$13,500

### **Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery**

Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration & Addiction through Recovery Coaching – \$25,000

### **Lowell Transitional Living Center**

Recovery Coaching Program – \$25,000

### **Mill City Grows**

Food Access and Education Programs – \$15,000

### **Mental Health Association of Greater Lowell**

Behavioral Health Access Counselor - \$25,000

### **Merrimack Valley Food Bank**

Community Market – \$5,000

### **University of Massachusetts Lowell**

Dietary Quality, Food Access and Food Safety among Cambodian Adults at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes – \$11,500

## COMMUNITY IN ACTION: 2016/2017 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Through the GLHA's Community Health Initiatives Grants, deserving front-line organizations are addressing unmet health needs in top priority areas throughout Greater Lowell communities. Below are just a few highlights of the GLHA's 2016/2017 grants in action.

### **ELDER SERVICES OF THE MERRIMACK VALLEY, INC. (ESMV) GREATER LOWELL FALLS TALK PROJECT**

In the new Falls Intervention program, a coordinator completes a detailed screening with the participant to determine risk for falls and urges them to share their results with their doctor and family member or caregiver, along with a packet of information with evidence-based programs, exercise classes, screenings, and other resources offered in their community. The coordinator also offers a health and home safety assessment that assesses risk factors and gives recommendations on how to fix any issues. ESMV's four teams of care managers and registered nurses make referrals weekly to the coordinator, who also has offered falls screenings at a Lowell Family Health Center event and with the Billerica Council on Aging.



The Kawaya family in their new home, provided by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.

### **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF GREATER LOWELL NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE: BUILDING HEALTHY PLACES**

As part of a new Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative program (NRI) in the Centralville neighborhood of Lowell, Habitat for Humanity is working to provide the opportunity of homeownership to low-income families. This grant enabled Habitat to renovate a decrepit house that was a blight on Dalton Street in Centralville into an affordable, homeowner-occupied home. Over the course of 2016, 559



Children from McAvinue Elementary School in Lowell enjoy planting through the Mill City Grows Farm To School Partnership Expansion Project.

volunteers labored 5,401 hours to strip the blighted house down to its bones and rebuild a modern, energy-efficient home that improved the whole area. A week before Christmas, the Kawaya family became proud homeowners and moved in, escaping violence in Africa to achieving the American dream of owning a home.

### **MERRIMACK VALLEY FOOD BANK (MVFB) OPERATION NOURISH**

The Operation Nourish program provides supplemental food to children who are at risk of hunger and food insecurity on the weekends and school vacations, when they are unable to get the free school breakfast and lunch. During the 2016/2017 school year, MVFB partnered with 15 schools in Lowell with the largest percentages of low-income, high-need students. At eight schools, children received a bag of nutritious food twice a month that contained two days' worth of nutritious food. At six schools, MVFB delivered a box of healthy snacks monthly to the nurse or social worker, who then distributed them to students to help them through the day. During the school year, more than 850 students received bags of food once or twice a month, and many more benefited from the monthly boxes of food.

### **MILL CITY GROWS FARM TO SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP EXPANSION**

Through its Farm to School program, Mill City Grows has increased student access to fresh, healthy food, with school gardens, education programs, and a Farm to Table component with a goal to improve eating habits of all family members. Through the course of the grant year, Mill City Grows installed two new school gardens at the Morey and McAvinue Schools; worked with more than 7,700 Lowell Public School students in 14 schools, with emphasis on students in low-income neighborhoods; and trained 12 teachers to integrate gardens into academic programs. They introduced hundreds of students to new fruits and vegetables, and helped them try these foods in a safe, supportive and encouraging environment that created positive norms around healthful eating.

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## CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The success of the Greater Lowell Health Alliance is due to collaborative relationships with many diverse partner organizations. We are honored to partner with more than 200 energized organizations to help fulfill our mission to improve the overall health and wellness of those living in the Greater Lowell region.

**Find a list of these valued community partners at [greaterlowellhealthalliance.org](http://greaterlowellhealthalliance.org).**

## ARE YOU READY TO “CHIP IN”?

### HELP IMPLEMENT THE 2017 COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN!

The new Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), as you read about on page 5, will guide our region’s investment of resources over the next three years—but we need you to make it happen! Making Greater Lowell stronger and healthier is a huge initiative, but with your involvement and commitment, we can succeed. We are inviting individuals and organizations to please join us and CHIP In to help make our community the healthiest it can be. Go to our website today and tell us your areas of interest and how you would like to CHIP In! From participating or leading a work group to providing staffing or promoting within your own organization, you will be an integral part of this important community initiative!

**“Chip In” today at [greaterlowellhealthalliance.org/CHIP](http://greaterlowellhealthalliance.org/CHIP).**



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