WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES
Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We are pleased to share with you this annual report highlighting the Greater Lowell Health Alliance achievements over the past year.

With the departure in May of longtime Board Chair Michelle Davis, I was honored to assume the role as the new chair, acknowledging that I have significant shoes to fill. Michelle’s leadership, vision, and commitment to the GLHA from day one was a driving force in transforming this organization into the successful and influential coalition it is today. We extend to her our deepest gratitude and appreciation for her years of distinguished service.

The primary focus of the GLHA over the past year has been addressing the strategies and objectives identified in the Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), a health needs “road map” released in October 2017. The CHIP has helped to identify many areas of opportunity for our region and has generated a tremendous and impressive level of engagement across the Greater Lowell region, truly putting us on the road to reducing the health disparities facing our communities.

Much of the work of the GLHA is done by our health-focused, community-led task forces — each targeting a unique health need in the community. To our task force chairs and members, thank you for your volunteerism and dedication. To our Executive Director, Kerrie D’Entremont, thank you for your tireless commitment to improving the overall health of Greater Lowell’s communities.

Our continued impact on this region relies on the participation and collaboration among the countless individuals, businesses, and organizations whose efforts enable the GLHA to sustain this collaborative coalition. We thank you all. Moving forward, we will continue to grow stronger and fulfill our critical mission to improve the overall health of Greater Lowell’s communities.

Sincerely,

Kerrie D’Entremont
Executive Director

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

It was a year filled with great change and great progress as we welcomed a new board chair and launched an exciting health improvement plan that sets this region’s healthcare strategy on a potential groundbreaking course.

Words can’t express my appreciation and admiration for Michelle Davis, who was instrumental in the inception of the GLHA in 2006 and served as its board chair from day one, playing a vital role in making the GLHA what it is today. With her departure, we were incredibly fortunate to have an exceptional leader in Kerrie Murphy to step seamlessly into that role. In a few short months, Kerrie has demonstrated the energy, wisdom, and leadership essential to drive this coalition forward into the future.

Over the past year, our focus on the Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) revealed the need and opportunity to create a sixth task force in our coalition—Social Determinants of Health—which are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. It is a topic woven throughout the work of all task forces and subcommittees and will be a significant addition to our areas of focus.

This year, as we proudly supported our community through another successful RFP/grant distribution cycle of $150,000, we are excited to report that we have increased the future grant funding level to $185,000, putting more dollars into the hands of the frontline organizations.

Looking forward, the GLHA will join again with Lowell General Hospital and the University of Massachusetts Lowell to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment, along with the CHIP this assessment will guide the GLHA and our partners in building consensus on the area’s priority health needs and forming a long-term agenda and strategy.

Our continuing success would not be possible without the leadership of our dedicated Board of Directors, Steering Committee, task force leaders and members, and hundreds of community partners who join with us to fulfill the mission and vision of the Greater Lowell Health Alliance. I extend special thanks to Amanda Clermont, who joined our team this year as our Community Engagement Coordinator. I am honored to lead such a compassionate and caring community organization and am excited for the years ahead, as we work together to reduce health disparities and achieve a healthier community for us all.

Sincerely,

Kerrie D’Entremont
Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DELPHIA A. MURPHY, PT, DPT, MA, CHA Chair
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Student Success
University of Massachusetts Lowell

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Circle Home

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Family Practice

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Chief Executive Officer
Community Teamwork, Inc.

SUSAN WEST LEVINE
Chief Executive Officer
Lowell Community Health Center

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DNP, RN, MS, NHA-BC, FACHE
VP Patient Care Services & Chief Nursing Executive
Lowell General Hospital

SOVANNA POLY
Executive Director
Carcinoid and Mixed Assistance Association

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Public Health Director
Definite Border of Health

JEFFREY F. STEPHENS, R.N., C.P.S.
Health Director
Westford Health Department

KERRIE WAGNER
Health and Human Services Director
Lowell Health Department

STEERING COMMITTEE

MERCY ANANYU
Lowell Community Health Center

MCKENZIE COLLINS
Community Teamwork Inc.

KATHRINE ELKINS
Lowell Health Department

MARTHA GRAHAM
Lowell Med

MICHAEL HALL
Lowell Health Department

HEATHER HILBERT
Lowell General Hospital

IVY HO
University of Massachusetts Lowell

ANG KOREN
University of Massachusetts Lowell

MARA LUCO
Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery

DOROTHY MARSHALL
ThomsonAreaSuffolkCenter

NANDI MUNSON (as of August 2018)
Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley

SHEILA OCH
Lowell Community Health Center

AMY PESSIA
Merrimack Valley Food Bank

MARIA RUGGIERO
Merrimack Valley Food Bank

DAVID RUGGERO
Television Police Department

JENNIFER SHAWIT (through August 2018)
Lowell Community Health Center

GLHA STAFF

KERRIE D’ENTREMONT
Executive Director

ANNA M. CLERMONT
Community Engagement Coordinator

INTERNS

Becky McGue

JACQUELINE MURPHY

LAUREN MURPHY

GOLDEN LEONG

HEATHER HILBERT

KERRIE D’ENTREMONT
Executive Director
A CHIP’s value and significance stems from the involvement of the community. Over the past year the CHIP process brought together over 150 community members and leaders and sixty community agencies and businesses to evaluate community health needs and develop action plans for improvements.

Through this collaborative process, we have developed SMART goals and objectives—those that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound—to leverage and maximize community resources to fill gaps and avoid duplication of efforts in priority areas identified by the CHIP process. Access to Healthy Eating, Asthma, Mental Health, Physical Activity, Social Determinants of Health, and Substance Use Prevention.

Working Together to Improve the Health of Our Communities

The Greater Lowell Health Alliance (GLHA) of the Community Health Network Area 10 brings together healthcare providers, business leaders, educators, and civic and community leaders to improve the health of our communities. The GLHA serves as a catalyst in identifying and addressing unmet healthcare needs, particularly those that threaten our most vulnerable populations. Working collaboratively, the GLHA breaks down barriers, raises awareness, and provides funding and resources for community partners to facilitate change.

CHIP: A ROADMAP FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

In 2017 the GLHA released the Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), a roadmap that guides the investment of resources by organizations with a stake in improving health for Greater Lowell residents.

The CHIP mission: to turn data into action to address our community’s top health priorities. The plan was launched in fall of the 2016 Greater Lowell Community Health Assessment, which identified unmet medical and public health needs within the Greater Lowell community.

A PLAN IN ACTION

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Foundation for Action

The process has two key objectives. The first is 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 is to provide a foundation for the GLHA and its partners, including Lowell General, to build ongoing consensus on the area’s priority health needs and develop future Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) to improve the health of the area’s residents.

The 2019 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment will be released to the public in October of 2019. (See the back cover for information on how to participate in the needs assessment process.)

ASSESSING AND ADDRESSING FUTURE NEEDS: 2019 GREATER LOWELL COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Greater Lowell Health Alliance continuously seeks input in determining the region’s most urgent health care needs.

In partnership with the GLHA, Lowell General Hospital in 2019 will commission researchers and students from the University of Massachusetts Lowell to conduct a community health needs assessment. This assessment will involve primary data collection using focus groups, key informant interviews, and online and in-person surveys, as well as secondary data sources, such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health MassCHIP database and the United States Census. Similar analyses were conducted in 2010, 2013, and 2016.

FOUNDATION FOR ACTION

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OUR CHIP MISSION:
TO TURN DATA INTO ACTION AND WORKING INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS OUR COMMUNITY’S TOP HEALTH PRIORITIES.
GLHA TASK FORCES

The work of each of the GLHA’s task forces, individually and collectively, has set the stage for long-term improvements in specific health areas and the overall health of our community, with a focus on encouraging collaboration among member organizations. These task forces are made up entirely of community volunteers who take time from their full-time commitments to focus on the health of others. In 2018 we established a sixth task force—Social Determinants of Health—which, the Cultural Competency, is both a separate area of focus and also a concern addressed within the other task forces. Below is a brief description of the task forces and some of the initiatives they have undertaken to address specific health needs in our region.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY TASK FORCE

TRI-CHAIRS: MERCY AHWALLI, IVY HO, NANDI MUNSON, JENNIFER SHUART* (THROUGH AUGUST 2018)

We seek to increase the capacity of healthcare and human service providers to achieve positive outcomes with all patients/clients. We do this by increasing provider awareness of cultural diversity and skills related to working with diverse client bases to better serve all persons.

Over the past year we:

• Hosted a “Bridging the Gap (BTG) Medical Interpreter Training Program” at Lowell Community Health Center, with 33 participants attending the 40-hour program held over five days, representing the following languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Khmer, Kiswahili, and Thai.

• Held a CLAS Standards Training, facilitated by Middlesex Community College and attended by 30 community members and representatives from local agencies. This training—which includes action steps to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities—educated agencies about incorporating CLAS into their organization models.

• Hosted a successful GLHA Training, “Effectively Working with Diverse Cultures,” for local providers, with over 40 attendees at Lowell General Hospital.

• Launched an initiative with University of Massachusetts Lowell to create Healthcare Navigation videos for the many cultures in our community helping those unfamiliar with the health care system feel more confident and aware of the services and rights available to them.

• Developed three working groups under the auspices of the Cultural Competency Task Force, including: 
  - Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity Training
  - Collaborative Relations with Local Communities
  - Addressing Health Disparities

LGBTQ SUBCOMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS: MARA BROOKER (THROUGH JULY 2018), ALAN FLAGG

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

Over the past year we:

• Hosted the 4th Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance, which included a march and vigil from Lowell City Hall to Middlesex Community College, with more than 60 people in attendance.

• In collaboration with History UnErased and other community partners, led the first Greater Lowell PRIDE Month, featuring events throughout June, including:
  - The first Lowell PRIDE flag raising on June 1 at City Hall in Lowell, including participation from Mayor William Samaras and City Councilor Karen Gillis.
  - The Greater Lowell PRIDE Parade and Festival at JFK Plaza in Lowell on June 2. Hundreds of people came out to celebrate, making this Pride the most successful yet, with participation from over 20 local agencies and businesses offering a wide variety of services.
  - An LGBTQ in History Networking Lunch and Learn event on June 29. Attendees gained a richer, more contextual understanding of our shared historical narrative. This multi-media, interactive presentation included an LGBTQ visual history exhibit and never-heard-before voices of LGBTQ champions.

• Hosted an eCPR Workshop in July on the eCPR model, a program that would complement the many who are trained in Mental Health First Aid.

• Developed a Workforce Advocacy survey to be distributed to local providers. The findings of this survey will allow this working group to better understand the working conditions of clinicians in our area as well as how we can best support them moving forward.

• Completed a policy scan, reviewing proposed legislation for Massachusetts as it pertains to mental health.

• Worked with a local creative advertising agency on the beginning stages of a community-wide mental health education and awareness campaign.

• Developed a workshop for the general public, titled “Understanding Care Coordination,” planned for early 2019.

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

CO-CHAIRS: KATHERINE ELKING, SHAILA OCH

We bring together mental health providers to share resources, examine and develop best practices, and identify service gaps that we can collaboratively address. We are made up of dozens of mental health providers and social service agencies with the goal to foster a supportive and mindful community that has an equally shared, respectful, and holistic understanding of mental and physical health.

Over the past year we:

• Created three working groups under the Mental Health Task Force, including Care Coordination, Workforce Advocacy and Workforce/Community Training.

• Developed a workshop for the general public, titled “Understanding Care Coordination,” planned for early 2019.

HEALTHY EATING & ACTIVE LIVING TASK FORCE

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

The mission of the Healthy Eating & Active Living Task Force is to develop and improve partnerships that are committed to leading Greater Lowell area residents to a healthier community. 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.

Over the past year we:

• Created two working groups to address the objectives identified in the Community Health Improvement Plan: Physical Activity and Access to Healthy Foods.

• Hosted a meeting with numerous community partners who will contribute to and participate in a project focusing on nutrition among the Cambodian American population.

• Developed a Blue Zones Steering Committee consisting of local leaders in our community, tasked with writing Blue Zones and helping the GLHA determine if this model would be a good fit for our community.

Read more about the work of these task forces by visiting greaterlowellhealthalliance.org.
We bring together key stakeholders to address the most pressing health issues related to mothers and their families.

Over the past year we:
- Hosted a Transportation Justice and Health Equity: What’s the Connection? networking luncheon on April 25 at the Lowell Five Headquarters in Tewksbury, presented by the Massachusetts Public Health Association.
- Launched an initiative with partners from Massachusetts Public Health Association and Transportation for Massachusetts to develop a plan to identify and address transportation issues in Greater Lowell.
- Completed the Logic Model in collaboration with MOHPC and have begun working to prevent and reduce underage drinking and other drug use among youth. Collaborating with Massachusetts Opioid Prevention Collaborative (MOHPC), this initiative focuses on increasing the capacity of communities working to prevent and reduce underage drinking and other drug use among youth.
- Continued work on the Sticker Shock Campaign throughout Greater Lowell.
- Continued to provide resources to implement Life Skills and social-emotional learning tools in schools throughout the region.
- Created a database of youth mental health resources.

The Substance Use and Prevention (SAP) 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.

Over the past year we:
- Created three working groups as part of the task force to address the objectives identified in the Substance Use and Prevention section of the Community Health Improvement Plan: early intervention, increased access and awareness of treatment services and resources, and strategies that emphasize treatment over punishment.
- Hosted the “Opioid Epidemic and HIV Transmission” Networking Luncheon on February 23, presented by the Carino Institute at the Department of Public Health Lowell Community Health Center.
- Worked with University of Massachusetts Lowell and River University, assisted the Objective 1 working group (early intervention) in completing focus groups with middle and high school students on social media platforms and how students get their information. The findings of these three groups will be used to create a media plan moving forward.
- Hosted September National Recovery Month and October National Substance Abuse Prevention Month press conferences in collaboration with the District Attorney’s office, Westford Health Department, Westford Public Schools, and Westford Police Department on September 18 at Westford Town Hall.
- Updated and distributed the Substance Abuse and Prevention Resource Guide developed by the task force in 2016.
- Worked with Professor Lslud Anderson and University of Massachusetts Lowell students as they conducted a survey to help us identify first responders training needs around the opioid epidemic, organizations utilizing recovery coaches in the area, and locations that offer jail diversion options.
- Worked with the Massachusetts Opioid Prevention Collaborative (RODAC) 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, including: Successfully training two facilitators for Life Skills—an evidence-based curriculum that teaches children and teenagers coping skills—to provide certification training throughout Greater Lowell. Communities trained to date include Billerica, Dracut, Lowell, Tyngsboro, Westford, Wilmington, and Tewksbury, as well as area charter schools, mental health agencies, and youth support staff. Maintaining drugfreegreaterlowell.org, a website that provides resources on substance use and prevention.

The Social Determinants of Health Task Force was created as a result of findings in the Community Health Improvement Plan showing a need for the area to be addressed. Social determinants are the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work, and age, which are shaped by a set of factors beyond the control of the individual. The goal of this task force is to help create a culture that provides equitable access to education, employment opportunities, housing, transportation, positive social environments, and health care to achieve improved positive health outcomes. This task force kicked off in January 2018, with initial focus areas of transportation, workforce development, and housing.

Over the past year we:
- Developed a monthly task force meeting with growing membership.
- Actively participated in CIT’s Youth Homelessness Summit on June 18.
- Hosted a “Transportation, Justice and Health Equity: What’s the Connection?” networking luncheon on April 25 at the Lowell Five Headquarters in Tewksbury, presented by the Massachusetts Public Health Association.
- Updated the resources and information included on our www.Mom2Be.info website, providing expecting mothers access to contact information for local providers.

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GLHA COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Greater Lowell Health Alliance offers grants to support programs and services to improve the overall health of the Greater Lowell community. To date, we have distributed nearly $1.5 million in grants to organizations on the front lines of addressing unmet health needs.

Over a 15-year period, the GLHA 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 nonprofit and tax-exempt hospitals are providing a measurable community benefit to the communities they serve.

GLHA COMMUNITY GRANT DISTRIBUTION

Grants are awarded around the 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 see the impact these grants are having in our region, visit our website at greaterlowellhealthalliance.org

GLHA GRANT FUNDING BY PRIORITY AREA (2014-2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Area</th>
<th>Funding Amount</th>
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<td>Asthma</td>
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<td>Substance Use &amp; Prevention</td>
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<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>$175,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance Use and Prevention</td>
<td>$235,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2017/2018 COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES GRANTS

- Boys & 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 the 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 Coordinator - $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

2018/2019 COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES GRANTS

- Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell
  - Emotional CPR (eCPR Training) Project - $10,000
- Claremont Early Education Services
  - Farm to Table Educational Program for Family Childcare Educators - $13,750
- Ellet Community Human Services / The NAN Project
  - Mental Health Awareness for Lowell’s Youth - $15,000
- Greater Lowell Technical High School
  - The Rise (Resilience in Student Effort) Program - $19,000
- Lowell Community Health Center
  - Training Frontline Workers to Improve the Health of Our Community: Northeast Region Community Health Education Center (CHEC) - $30,000
- Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery
  - Family Resource Coaching - A Program for Loved Ones of People in Recovery - $34,250
- Middlesex Community College Law Center
  - Fostering Healthy Behavior through Mediation in Juvenile Court, Lowell - $5,000
- Mill City Grows
  - Local Foods, Greener Meals Initiative - $20,000
- Merrimack Valley Food Bank
  - Operation Nourish - $5,000
- Tewksbury Police Department
  - BRIDGE/FOO Pilot Transportation Initiative - $10,000
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
  - Access Friendly Lowell: A Planning Grant - $23,000
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.

GREATER LOWELL COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT NEEDS YOU

The GLHA, Lowell General Hospital, and the University of Massachusetts Lowell will partner in 2019 to conduct a community health needs assessment—a vital tool used by the GLHA and other community organizations to determine how to allocate resources where they are most needed. It is important for you as individuals and organizations to have your voices heard.

Learn how you can participate in this important process at greaterlowellhealthalliance.org