

From "Office of Local & Regional Health"
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Subject The Pulse on Local Public Health: An Office of Local & Regional Health Bulletin

News, Events, Trainings, and Funding Opportunities for Local Public Health

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Tuesday, August 6, 2024

We want to hear from you!

[Submit questions or feedback](#)

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OLRH Website Improvements

Help Us Rethink Our Website and Build a Local Public Health Resource

Last year, the Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH) conducted a survey to better understand how our local public health (LPH) partners interact with us. While more than three out of every four of you attended a webinar to engage with us, less than half of survey respondents accessed the [Office's website](#) on Mass.gov. Only 43.7% of those taking the survey listed "accessing OLRH's website" as their most common form of engagement.

We want to do better.

That's why we're redesigning and rethinking OLRH's website and content. However, we need your help to build an accessible, user-friendly, trusted, and informative resource for LPH and the public.

OLRH is gathering insights from our LPH partners through **Friday, Aug. 16**. We value your input and want to ensure that the website meets your needs. [Please take our website survey now and let us know what you think.](#)

Limited Number of COVID-19 Test Kits Available for Local Boards of Health from Federal Government

As COVID-19 cases have increased over the last several weeks, DPH has been made aware of an opportunity from the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS)'s Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) for local health to request **free, at-home COVID-19 test kits**. This would be available for all local boards of health (LBOH) across the Commonwealth.

[To request at-home tests](#) as an LBOH, **each LBOH may complete one copy of the [attached form](#) and email it directly to Larry Blankenship at larry.blankenship@hhs.gov before Monday, August 19**. HHS will oversee test kit distribution and ship directly to LBOHs.

HHS has shared that the test kits will expire within 60-90 days. This does not change [current testing guidance](#) from the Department, which recommends testing done to support symptomatic and outbreak testing, but not routine surveillance.

As a reminder, you may continue to purchase testing supplies off the statewide contract (HSP41) at: [COVID-19 Statewide Contract Resources | Mass.gov](#)

DPH Announces Season's First Human Case of WNV and First Animal Case of EEE in Massachusetts

Earlier this week, DPH announced the first human case of West Nile virus (WNV) and the first animal case of Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) in the state this year. The individual is a male in his 40s who was exposed to WNV in Hampden County. The EEE infection was diagnosed in a horse exposed in Plymouth. Mosquito samples collected in Dedham also tested positive for EEE. These findings raise the EEE risk level to high in Plymouth and to low in Dedham.

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at [Mosquito-borne Diseases | Mass.gov](#), which is updated daily, or by calling the DPH Division of Epidemiology at (617) 983-6800.

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August Webinar

Each month, the Office of Local and Regional Health provides webinars on various topics relevant to local public health. The hour-long webinars are held from 3 to 4 p.m. This month's topics included an update on Steward Health Care, COVID-19 test kits, OLRH communication updates, and a Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) update.

[View slides](#) from the webinar, [answers to questions](#) asked during the webinar, and [related resources](#).

We Want to Hear From You!

Submit your questions and recommended topics for the next webinar, on **Tuesday, Sept. 10**, to us via email to localregionalpublichealth@mass.gov by **Wednesday, Sept. 4**. We value your input and welcome your suggestions for future webinar topics.

Accessibility

We want to ensure that our webinar is accessible to our audience. If you need accommodations, such as American Sign Language (ASL) or Closed Caption, please email us at localregionalpublichealth@mass.gov.

How to Register

- * If you have **not yet registered** for this webinar series, use this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_A8RODgL2QtabJlqdNTpV1g
- * Please note this is a recurring event. **You only need to register once.**
- * After registering, you will receive a confirmation email from Zoom with your unique link to attend the webinar and import the events into your calendar ([how-to guide](#)).

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Public Health Museum Family Movie Night: Osmosis Jones

Join the Public Health Museum for a screening of "Osmosis Jones" with popcorn and refreshments!

"Osmosis Jones" (2001) follows the misadventures of a zoo worker with an unknown malady he contracted after eating an egg contaminated with simian saliva. The responsibility of eradicating this lethal virus falls to a white blood cell cop and a fussy cold-cure pill.

Saturday, Aug. 10

11 a.m.

Public Health Museum, Tewksbury, Mass.

\$5 suggested donation

[Sign up to attend!](#)

NACCHO: Local Health Officials (LHO) Call

NACCHO is hosting their Monthly All-LHO Call, a standing meeting meant to build connections across the Local Health Official community and connect local health department leaders with federal decision-makers. Each month local health department leaders will discuss updates on guidance and initiatives from CDC, FDA, and other federal partners and hear timely updates to support your work in the community.

Thursday, Aug. 22

1 - 2 p.m.

Virtual (Zoom)

[Register online](#)

Color: Prepare for Flu Season

Join DPH Color for a one-hour training session to review the features available in the On-Site Tool. This training is for both **new** and **existing** users and is an opportunity to review the features in the platform.

Thursday, Sept. 5

2 - 3 p.m.

Virtual (Zoom)

[Register online](#)

Advance Registration Open Now

The conference will take place **November 13 - 15** at the MassMutual Center in Springfield, Mass. Visit [MHOA Conference 2024](#) for all the details, including hotel information, keynote speakers, agenda, exhibitors, sponsors, and more. The site will be updated as more details are finalized.

Take advantage of Advance Registration running until **Friday, Sept. 6!** To register a group of people on one invoice, please send a list of names, email addresses, food allergies for each person, and a point of contact for follow up to lpacella@mhoa.com.

Save the Date: 2024 Yankee Conference

The 2024 Yankee Conference will be held **October 16-18, 2024** in Mystic, Conn. More details coming soon!

Northeast Food and Drug Officials Association's (NEFDOA) Retail Food Protection Seminar

Registration is now open for the
Northeast Food and Drug Officials
Association's (NEFDOA) Retail Food

Save the Date! MPHA Conference

This year's Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) [conference](#) will be held virtually on **Tuesday, Dec. 10**, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us for this thought-provoking morning with health equity change-makers!

Two New National Certifications for Tobacco Treatment Providers

Two national certifications are now available to professionals specializing in nicotine and tobacco dependence assessment and treatment. These certifications **promote national standards** for evidence-based treatment and acknowledge the value that tobacco treatment experts provide. Each certified provider also commits to **maintaining the high ethical standards** of the profession. The hope is that the certification processes will lead to greater insurance reimbursement for care provided by qualified tobacco treatment providers. The two certifications are listed below, and you can visit the website of each for more information.

- * **American Heart Association: Certified Professional in Tobacco Treatment**
 - * Professional education hub help: (877) 340-9899 or intelligo.help@intelligohub.org
 - * For requirements and more information: www.heart.org/tobacco-treatment
- * **NAADAC, Association for Addiction Professionals: National Certification in Nicotine and Tobacco Treatment (NCNTT)**
 - * For requirements and more information: www.naadac.org/ncntt

Just Launched: FREE Training from the Public Health Collaborative Academy

The Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC) Academy is a new training hub to support public health communicators around the country. Join us for The PHCC Academy's first course, *Strengthening Public Health Communications through Community Engagement*. [Learn more](#) and [register online](#).

FREE Public Health Informatics & Technology Courses at Middlesex Community College

Thanks to generous grant funding, Middlesex Community College (MCC) is enrolling students for the Fall 2024 Public Health Informatics and Technology (PHIT) program. Students have the chance to earn **FREE college credits** and a micro-credential by participating in their **100% online** PHIT courses this fall.

Students who enroll can choose to complete all three courses in one semester, or take them one at a time, depending on schedule and preferences. Upon completion, students earn a FREE micro-credential that counts toward an Associates degree at MCC and transfers to the BS in Public Health at UMass Lowell.

- * Learn more about the program:
<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/phit/micro.aspx>
- * For more information please contact Kori Boeckeler, PHIT Program Coordinator:
Boeckelerk@middlesex.mass.edu

Save the Date: 2025 National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing and Media

Mark your calendars for the [2025 National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing and Media](#) (NCHCMM) to take place **July 29 - 31, 2025 in Atlanta, GA**. Now in its seventeenth year, NCHCMM continues to provide a unique opportunity for individuals representing academia, public health researchers and practitioners from federal and state government, as well as industry leaders and experts, to participate in collegial dialogue within and across these groups. For questions about the NCHCMM, please email nchcmm@nphic.org.

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Charles River Public Health District is Hiring!

The Charles River Public Health District, covering the towns of Needham, Dover, and Sherborn, is seeking a **Regional Public Health Nurse**. They will provide shared services and perform a variety of nursing, policy, and health education functions, creating community training based on individualized needs within each town. [Learn more about this position.](#)

Foothills Health District is Hiring!

The Foothills Health District, covering the towns of Goshen, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Whatley, is seeking a **Health Inspector**. The position offers an option of a four-day work week and is fully benefitted with paid training. Compensation commensurate with experience and education. [Learn more about the position.](#)

Medford is Hiring!

The City of Medford is looking to fill **TWO Registered Sanitarian** positions. Registration by the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Sanitarians is preferred or commitment to obtain within one year. [Learn more about the position.](#)

Find Your Future with the Commonwealth

[Find job opportunities](#) across industries including health and human services, transportation, IT, finance, housing and economic development, energy and environmental, public safety and security, and education. First consideration is given to those who apply within the first 14 days.

Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences (BIDLS):

- * [Field Epidemiologist](#) | Southeast Region

Bureau of Health Care Quality and Safety (BHCQS):

- * [Deputy Director](#) | Office of Emergency Medical Services

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR):

- * [Environmental Analyst III](#) | Quabbin
- * [Program Manager VI](#) | Sr. Dir. Environmental Justice

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Apply for the Municipal Master Services Agreement (MSA) RFR

The purpose of this [Request for Responses \(RFR\)](#) is to establish a pre-qualified list of approved vendors, namely **local and regional public health entities**, to be eligible for potential future funding from the Department of Public Health DPH.

All municipalities and/or regional health districts are strongly encouraged to apply as many future DPH grants will be distributed through this municipal master services agreement (MSA). **NOTE:** PHE lead grantees are already in the MSA and do not need to apply.

[Visit the RFR posting here](#) for the application and Confidentiality Agreement (can be found in the REQ zip file on COMMBUYS). Please return the completed forms to Brian.W.Sheehan@mass.gov along with any other questions.

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Just Launched: Your Sexual Health Toolkit for Youth with Disabilities

Too often, young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are left out of sex education conversations. [Your Sexual Health Toolkit](#) and [Our Stories, Our Journeys](#): A Sexual Health Game were created especially for teens and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities ages 16-24 and the people who support them. The toolkit is available in [Spanish](#) and English.

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Stay Tuned!

If you are interested in previous *Pulse* content, you can find all information related to FPHS shared in webinars and the *Pulse* newsletter [here](#).

Stay tuned for more details about the FPHS newsletter, coming in September! For questions, please contact Katie Roane at Kaitlin.Roane@mass.gov.

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Summer Safety Guidance

DPH's [Summer Safety Guidance](#) was recently translated into 12 different languages to share with your community:

[Albanian](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Cape Verdean](#) | [Haitian Creole](#) | [Khmer](#) | [Portuguese](#) | [Russian](#)
[Simplified Chinese](#) | [Somali](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Traditional Chinese](#) | [Vietnamese](#)

DPH Publishes Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report

DPH's Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences has published an updated Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report, containing data through 2022 on reported cases of hepatitis A, B, and C in Massachusetts. The report is available [online](#) and can also be [downloaded directly](#).

Registry of Vital Records and Statistics (RVRS) to Launch New Records Collection System - MAVRIC

In anticipation of the launch of The Registry of Vital Records' MAVRIC, electronic death registration system, training is available 24x7 to fit your busy schedule. [Training for burial agents](#) are available now through [TRAIN Massachusetts](#). Once enrolled, you can take full advantage of the videos, quick start guides and instructional guides available. A dedicated TRAIN help desk at [DPH-TrainHelp@mass.gov](#). can assist with any questions.

For regular updates and a [MAVRIC FAQ](#), please monitor [MAVRIC: Massachusetts Vital Records Information Collaborative | Mass.gov](#).

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ARBOVIRUS

- * [Massachusetts Arbovirus Update](#) | DPH
 - * View EEE & WNV risk maps by municipality
 - * [Mosquitoes](#) | DPH
-

AVIAN INFLUENZA

- * [Avian Flu / Avian Influenza](#) | DPH
 - * [Avian Influenza](#) | CDC
 - * [HPAI Detections in Mammals](#) | USDA
-

BATHING BEACHES / SWIMMING

- * [Interactive Beach Water Quality Dashboard](#)
 - * Check to see which beaches are open or closed
 - * [Swim Safe Massachusetts](#) | DPH
 - * [Healthy and Safe Swimming](#) | CDC
-

CBD/HEMP/THC/TOBACCO

- * [Frequently Asked Questions](#) | DPH
 - * [Advisory on Flavored Tobacco Products](#) | DPH
-

COLOR

- * [Color Vaccine Resources page](#)
 - * Questions related to billing can be emailed to vaccine@umassmed.edu.
 - * [ColorHelp@mass.gov](#).
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EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

- * Check out [Mass211](#) and [FindHelp.org](#) to search by ZIP code for resources.
 - * [Help Families in Crisis](#)
 - * Guidance for municipalities on [Shelter Requirements and Exemptions in the Housing Code](#)
-

EXTREME HEAT

- * [Cooling Centers Guidance](#) | DPH
- * [Special Webinar \(Extreme Heat\)](#) | DPH
- * [Heat & Health Tracker](#) | NEHC CDC
- * [HeatRisk Tool](#) | NWS CDC
- * [MassAir Online](#) | MassDEP
- * [AirNow](#) | EPA
- * [Extreme Heat Safety Tips](#) | MEMA
- * [Preparing for Extreme Heat](#) | Mass.gov
- * [Extreme Heat and Poor Air Quality](#) | DPH
- * [Cool Your Community Toolkit](#) | EPA
- * [Messaging Resources](#) | Public Health Communications Collaborative

FREE HEALTH PROMOTION MATERIALS

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