

## Wakefield Health Department Metrics – Presentation Script

### Introduction

Good evening, Mr. Chairman, Council members, and members of the community. Thank you for the opportunity to present an overview of the work being done by the Wakefield Health Department. I'm Anthony Chui, the Health Director, and I'm pleased to share updates on our department's key initiatives, ongoing public health efforts, and the impact of our work over the past year.

Tonight, I'll be highlighting the work of our **Prevention, Outreach, and Youth Services team, our Tobacco Control efforts, our Inspectional Services, and our Public Health Nursing team**—all of whom play essential roles in ensuring the health and well-being of Wakefield residents.

---

### Prevention, Outreach, and Youth Services

One of our key priorities is youth substance use prevention, and I want to acknowledge the work of **Liz Parsons**, our Prevention, Outreach, and Youth Services Manager, who joined us in July. Liz brings a strong background in alcohol policy, substance use prevention, and community engagement, and she has quickly built relationships with key stakeholders across the town.

Liz leads the **Wake-UP Coalition**, a collaborative group dedicated to reducing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among youth. She also serves as the **adult advisor to the Youth Council**, where Wakefield's young leaders advocate for policies and programs that support their peers. **Parker Hamlin**, the Youth Council liaison to the Board of Health, has already made valuable contributions in bringing youth perspectives into our discussions.

Over the past year, the Wake-UP Coalition has facilitated several major community events, including:

- **The Recovery & Remembrance Event**, which works to break the stigma of addiction and support individuals in recovery and their families.
- **Parent University**, a half-day conference in collaboration with the school district and community partners to provide education and resources for parents and caregivers.

- **Youth-Senior Programming**, a partnership with the Senior Center to create intergenerational activities promoting social connection and mental health.

Additionally, we have secured multiple **mini-grants** in 2024 to support these efforts, including:

- **The 84.org Youth Tobacco Use and Vaping Prevention Grant**, in partnership with our regional tobacco control coordinator, **Maureen Buzby**.
- Grants supporting **at-risk youth mental health and substance use prevention programs**.
- Funding for a **substance use violation diversion program** to provide education and intervention rather than punitive measures.

We have also applied for a **Partnership for Success federal grant** from the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** to expand youth prevention initiatives and mental health programming. Additionally, we are reapplying for the **STOP School Violence Grant** in partnership with Melrose and Stoneham to further support bullying prevention efforts.

Furthermore, we recently hired **Madhu Mohanraj** as our new **Prevention & Wellness Coordinator**. Madhu oversees the **Youth Action Team**, the youth-led arm of the Wake-UP Coalition, and manages several of our grant-funded initiatives. In the coming weeks, she will take **eight Wakefield High School students to the Massachusetts Statehouse**, where they will educate legislators on vaping trends and advocate for stronger youth tobacco control policies.

---

## **Tobacco Control and Compliance**

Our regional tobacco control program, led by **Maureen Buzby**, plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with state and local tobacco regulations. Now in the seventh year of a ten-year grant funded by the **Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program (MTCP)**, Maureen conducts:

- **Annual inspections** of all tobacco-permitted establishments.
- **Youth compliance checks** to prevent sales of nicotine products to underage youth.
- **Education and technical assistance** for Boards of Health and retailers on emerging tobacco products and new public health regulations.

Beyond local enforcement, Maureen serves as a **Field Trainer for new Tobacco Program Managers across Massachusetts**, sharing best practices and compliance strategies. She also regularly presents to organizations such as the **Northeast Public Health Nurses Association, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Cancer Coalition, and the Berkshire Public Health Alliance**, providing critical updates on nicotine addiction prevention and policy advancements.

Later this week, Maureen will be at **Northeast Metro Tech's Substance Use Prevention Awareness Night**, continuing her outreach and education efforts.

---

## **Inspectional Services**

Our **Inspectional Services team**, led by **Dan Thompson and Erin Carleo**, plays a vital role in ensuring public health and safety in Wakefield. Their work includes **routine food safety inspections, permit reviews, and enforcement of sanitary codes** across a variety of establishments.

In **2024**, our inspectors conducted:

- **190 routine food inspections**
- **45 follow-up re-inspections** to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations

Additionally, our department processed a significant number of permits and plan reviews, generating important revenue for the town:

- **132 Food Establishment Permits**, generating **\$17,605** in revenue
- **10 Food Establishment Plan Reviews**, generating **\$1,000**
- **339 Dumpster Permits**, generating **\$28,905**
- **6 Swimming Pool Permits**, generating **\$900**

These inspections and permits **ensure compliance with state and local health codes**, protect **residents from foodborne illnesses**, and support **businesses in maintaining proper health and safety standards**.

Our inspectors also work closely with businesses and property owners to **address violations, provide education on best practices, and ensure corrective actions are implemented promptly**.

---

## Public Health Nursing

Our Public Health Nursing team, led by our **Senior Public Health Nurse and Assistant Public Health Nurse**, provides core health services focused on **health promotion, communicable disease monitoring, vaccination programs, and summer camp safety**.

### 1. Health Promotion

- Our nurses provide **public health education** through the **Wakefield Daily Item**, town website, and community events like **Town Day, the Farmers Market, and Festival by the Lake**.
- They offer direct support to the **Senior Center**, including weekly **blood pressure screenings** and educational sessions. This May, they will present "**Over-the-Counter Medication Safety for Seniors**."

### 2. Opioid Overdose Prevention

- Since **Narcan (Naloxone) Nasal Spray** was removed from the state's controlled substances list, our nurses have expanded efforts to prevent overdose deaths.
- They successfully enrolled Wakefield in the **Harm Reduction and Community Narcan Program (CNP)**, allowing them to:
  - Train town employees and residents on overdose prevention.
  - Distribute **free Narcan** to those in need.
  - Install **Narcan boxes in public buildings** for emergency use.

### 3. Summer Camps and Recreational Safety

- Our nurses conduct **pre-season training for camp directors** to ensure compliance with state regulations.
- This year, we introduced **mandatory training** on medication storage, administration, and staff competency requirements.

### 4. Flu Vaccination Program

- **699 flu vaccinations** were administered this season across public clinics, employee clinics, and homebound visits.

- New clinic locations were added, including **Wakefield Library** and an evening clinic for English Language Learners at **Galvin Middle School**.
- Future expansion plans include partnering with **Wakefield Housing Authority** to improve vaccine access for underserved populations.

## 5. Communicable Disease Monitoring

- Our nurses **investigate and track** cases of tuberculosis, hepatitis, foodborne illnesses, Lyme disease, pertussis, influenza, and COVID-19.
  - They collaborate with **MDPH, local hospitals, school nurses, and congregate living facilities** to control outbreaks and minimize public health risks.
  - They continue to monitor the **ongoing measles outbreak in other states** and are prepared to respond if necessary.
- 

## Closing

The work of the Wakefield Health Department spans a broad range of public health priorities, from **youth substance use prevention and tobacco control** to **food safety, infectious disease monitoring, and emergency response**. Our team remains dedicated to ensuring that Wakefield remains a healthy, safe, and thriving community.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.