

Department:

Health and Human Services

Name of Department Head:

Anthony Chui

Department Overview:

The Melrose HHS Department is part of a regional agreement shared with the Town of Wakefield and the Town of Stoneham. The department consists of shared staff positions and collaborative programming. The Melrose Board of Health, consisting of three members, meets monthly and as needed. Their role is to set policy, adopt regulations, and enforce local/state laws.

A large portion of the work the Melrose HHS Department performed in FY25 centered around improving access to social services, integrating the different branches of service, and better understanding the needs of the community. Mental health needs, behavioral health needs, and social services access were identified as priority areas that needed to be addressed. The HHS Department worked closely with many city departments as well as community partners and volunteers to effectively support the residents of Melrose.

FY 25 Accomplishments:

The Melrose Board of Health became only the third Board of Health in the nation to adopt the innovative Nicotine Free Generation (NFG) policy, marking a significant public health milestone. In addition to policy leadership, the department actively engaged the community through a variety of health promotion initiatives, including organizing a Social Services luncheon, hosting Dementia Friends and CPR training sessions, and conducting public Narcan trainings to increase overdose prevention and response. Public Health Nurses also held a regional meeting for all summer camp leadership to educate them about Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) camp regulations and enforcement requirements. Regular blood pressure clinics were held to support preventive health measures, and the department contributed to workforce development by serving as a preceptor for nursing students, helping to train and mentor future public health professionals. As a result of serving as the fiscal agent for the Public Health Excellence grant for six communities, the department has been able to maintain professional development and continued education opportunities for health inspection staff. School Nurses have continued to serve students, families, and school staff in a number of areas, including physical health, mental health, behavioral health, and chronic disease management.

What has been reduced and/or eliminated from the Budget for FY 26? As a result, what are the corresponding service delivery impacts?

The department is seeing a reduction in pest control services due to the reduction in the budget for FY26. Additionally, there will be a reduction in Prevention and Wellness services related to grant applications, community health initiatives, gambling harm mitigation, and youth programming.

What Remains in the Budget for FY 26:

The health inspectors, public health nurses, substance use prevention staff, and administrative staff are remaining in the budget for FY26.