



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Boston Public Health Commission

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Commissioner.....	1
Mission Statement.....	3
Board of Health.....	4
1. Strengthening the Public Health Workforce.....	5
2. Promoting Greater Health Equity and Advancing Life Expectancy.....	7
3. Supporting and Sheltering the Unhoused.....	11
4. Providing a Continuum of Substance Use and Harm Reduction Services.....	13
5. Improving Mental Health Capacity.....	15
6. Monitoring and Responding to Infectious Disease.....	17
7. Providing Essential Public Health Core Services.....	19
8. BPHC and Staff Achievements and Recognition.....	21





LETTER FROM THE **COMMISSIONER**

Bisola Ojikutu MD MPH FIDSA

Commissioner of Public Health, the City of Boston

Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission

Reflecting on nearly three years as the Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston, I am deeply moved by the unwavering dedication demonstrated by our public health workforce. In summarizing our collective efforts, one word resonates: “intentionality.”

Throughout 2023, the Executive Team of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) and the Office of Racial Equity and Community Engagement led a process with all staff to revise our Mission Statement. The result reflects our intention to be a health department that advances health equity and promotes racial justice. Our new mission statement: “to work in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities” clearly reflects that intention.

This past year, investments in partnerships and collaborations, focused on addressing health inequities, have significantly impacted public health in Boston. For example, The Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness has worked to expand our city’s culturally responsive behavioral health workforce and establish a trauma-informed school system in collaboration with Boston Public Schools. Internally, an innovative collaboration between the Homeless Services and Recovery Services Bureaus led to the successful establishment of a temporary space at 727 Mass Ave, offering essential services like housing case management and 24-hour nursing support. This effort challenged stereotypes associated with homeless shelters and showcased our targeted efforts to move individuals from tent encampments to safer spaces.

To further advance health equity, Chief Hooley and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team successfully launched the EMS cadet program, emphasizing diversity and inclusion among EMS personnel and promoting a representative public health system. The Child, Adolescent and Family Health (CAFH) Bureau’s “Love for Latch” breastfeeding campaign has promoted a culturally responsive approach to increasing breastfeeding rates among birthing individuals in Boston. The Mayor’s Health Line has played a crucial role in ensuring access to Mass Health, while the Community Health Education Center celebrated its 30th-year anniversary, underscoring the vital role of community health workers in Boston. Furthermore, the Infectious Disease Bureau has established an innovative collaboration with dating applications to promote STI and HIV testing and thereby reduce significant inequities in the burden of these diseases in our city.

As we celebrate our accomplishments, we are excited to present the 2023-2024 Health of Boston reports, which provide trends in life expectancy and chronic diseases and highlight persistent challenges affecting the health of our residents. The SciTech team’s dedication is evident in the numerous reports already posted, with more to come. The community engagement work led by the Boston Community Health Collaborative team has been pivotal in extending our reach and disseminating these data across the city.



Lastly, but importantly, we have sought to build morale among our staff and become a more people-centered organization. Our workforce is our most valuable asset. Therefore, the Workplace Improvement Initiative (WIIN), has continued to engage, invest in, and celebrate our public health workforce. In 2023, we built a WIIN project team supported by our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded Public Health Infrastructure Grant. Through this grant, we have hired our first ever Chief People Officer, supported 15 interns, completed a cohort of emerging leaders and begun developing training curricula focused on quality improvement, leadership and management, and career coaching. I am committed to building our staff, operationalizing our core value of people-centeredness and making BPHC a great place to work in years to come.

In conclusion, I express my gratitude for the collective efforts that have shaped the public health landscape in Boston. Working together to improve health and reduce inequities, we have achieved remarkable milestones, and I am confident that our intentional, innovative, and collaborative approach will continue to drive positive change in the years ahead.

Bisola Ojikutu MD MPH FIDSA



MISSION STATEMENT

In 2023, the BPHC Executive Office and Office of Racial Equity and Community engagement (ORECE) led an all-staff engagement process to explore revising our mission statement to better reflect our commitment as a health department to work with the community to advance health equity and promote racial justice.

This process included over 275 staff, our external Racial Health Equity Advisory Committee (RHEAC), our internal Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC), and our Board of Health.

Our Revised Statement

The mission of the Boston Public Health Commission is to work in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly those impacted by racism and systemic inequity.



Board of Health

The Boston Public Health Commission has a governing board of seven members. The Boston Public Health Act of 1995 set the following guidelines for the governing board of the Commission:

The Mayor of Boston appoints six members subject to city council's approval. The seventh member is the chief executive officer of Boston Medical Center and serves ex-officio.

Of the six members appointed by the Mayor:

- Two members must be trustees, officers, or medical directors of neighborhood health centers affiliated with Boston Medical Center.
- The Mayor appoints one member from a list of at least three nominees recommended by a nominating committee. The committee is made of representatives of organized labor appointed by the mayor.

The Mayor appoints the Chairperson of the Commission.

- The six appointed members serve staggered three year terms.

Current Members

Alastair Bell

President and CEO
Boston Medical Center Health System

Sandro Galea

Chairperson of the Board of Health
Dean and Robert A. Knox Professor
Boston University School of Public Health

Rebecca Gutman

Vice President
Homecare 1199 SEIU
United Healthcare Workers East

Phillomin Laptiste

Chief People Officer
Community Care Cooperative

Elsie Taveras

Chief Community Health & Health Equity Officer
Executive Director
Kraft Center for Community Health

Guale Valdez

President and CEO
Mattapan Community Health Center

Gregory Wilmot

President and Chief Executive Officer
NeighborHealth

Strengthening the Public Health Workforce

The Boston Public Health Commission remains steadfast in our commitment to strengthening the public health workforce, fostering a culture of excellence and inclusivity, and working with partners to build a healthier, more resilient Boston.

Investment in Workforce Development

Recognizing our staff as its most valuable asset, BPHC has dedicated substantial efforts to promote staff well-being, increase morale, and foster a pipeline for future public health leaders. With support from the transformative \$9 million Public Health Infrastructure Grant from the CDC, BPHC developed a comprehensive Workforce Development Plan. This plan focuses on strengthening professional development, performance management, informatics, and employee benefits, ensuring that retention and recruitment strategies are robust for the next five years.



Fostering Organizational Culture Improvement

At BPHC, fostering a people-centered organizational culture is paramount. The Workplace Improvement Initiative (WIIN) serves as a cornerstone in engaging, investing in, and celebrating the public health workforce. In 2023, a dedicated project team was established, supporting interns, completing a cohort of Emerging Leaders, and crafting training curricula on quality improvement, leadership, management, and career coaching. This initiative ensures that every staff member of the BPHC thrives, propelling the organization toward its goals.





Enhancing Boston EMS Staffing

Collaborating with partners across the city, Boston EMS witnessed important enhancements in staffing to meet the surging demand for services. Through innovative initiatives like the Cadet Program and the “Hired in a Day” concept, the hiring process was streamlined, and more vacancies were filled. Boston EMS hosted two recruit graduations for 26 individuals making the transition from Recruit to badged EMT. Additionally, the promotion of three department members to the rank of Captain in August 2023 strengthened its capacity to train new and current personnel.

Strategic Planning and Accreditation

In 2023, BPHC began crafting its 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, outlining key strategic priority areas including workforce and infrastructure, equity and anti-racism, data and innovation, and community engagement and partnerships. Additionally, BPHC submitted its application for public health reaccreditation, a testament to its commitment to continuous improvement. Supported by partners like the CDC and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this accreditation process ensures that BPHC continuously enhances its quality, accountability, and performance to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Promoting Racial Equity and Community Engagement

Through visioning, strategy, and relationship building, the Office of Racial Equity and Community Engagement (ORECE) collaborates with BPHC staff, community residents, and partners to establish and sustain racial and health equity as core principles in BPHC’s policies, operations, and decision-making. ORECE established the Generational Health Scholarship, offering support to Boston-area first-year college students pursuing health careers. Training sessions equipped city employees with tools to address social determinants of health, fostering a more inclusive and equitable Boston.

12345678

Promoting Greater Health Equity and Advancing Life Expectancy

Through strategic partnerships and innovative programs, BPHC continued its commitment to promoting health equity and improving outcomes for all residents of Boston.

Health Research Initiatives

For all data visit boston.gov/bphc-data

The BPHC SciTech team produces reports and surveys addressing the city's most pressing health issues, including:

Health of Boston Report Series

BPHC [published reports](#) focusing on Diabetes, Asthma, Cancer, Heart Disease, Mortality and Life Expectancy, and Maternal Health. These reports assessed health trends, informed policy interventions, and promoted health equity across communities. Notably, the Mortality and Life Expectancy report introduced provisional estimates of Life Expectancy at the census tract level, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of place-based health disparities.



Unhoused and Uncounted Survey

BPHC conducted a comprehensive [health and risk factor survey](#) of unhoused individuals within the Mass and Cass area, providing insights to guide resource allocation and policy development tailored to the needs of Boston's unhoused population.

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BBRFSS)

The biennial health survey of adult Boston residents offered data on health determinants and upstream factors influencing residents' well-being. These findings helped to shape health equity-related public health policies and practices.

Boston Overdose Linkage to Treatment Study (BOLTS)

BOLTS is a qualitative investigation of factors impacting racial/ethnic inequities in access to substance use disorder treatment following an opioid overdose. Findings are being used to elevate survivors' voices in consideration of policy and practice aimed at promoting equitable pathways to long-term recovery.

Respiratory Illness Dashboard

The launch of an [interactive dashboard](#) tracking COVID-19, influenza, and RSV prevalence provided timely updates to residents, healthcare providers, and policymakers, facilitating informed decision-making and response efforts.

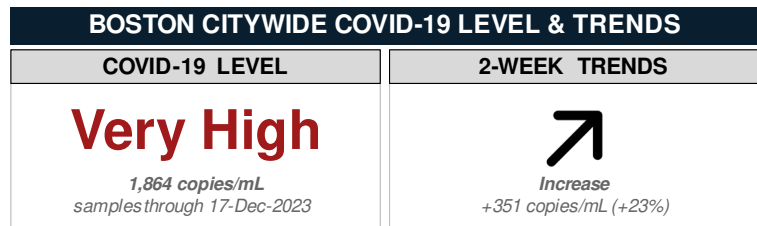
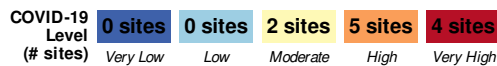
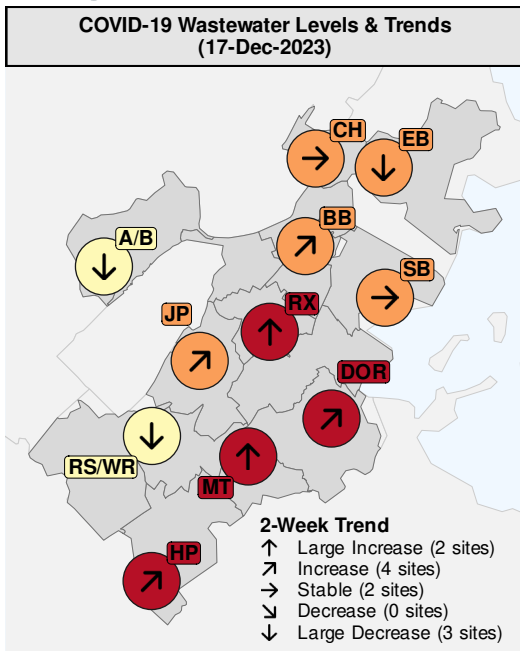
LGBTQ+ Health Equity Assessment

BPHC conducted a comprehensive community-driven LGBTQ+ Health Equity Assessment. Findings highlighted the need for targeted interventions to address disparities faced by LGBTQ+ residents, including the establishment of centralized hubs, culturally responsive mental healthcare, and safe housing options.

Wastewater Surveillance Program

BPHC expanded its [wastewater monitoring](#) program to include respiratory viruses such as Flu and RSV, enhancing the city's capacity for rapid response interventions and substance use treatment strategies.

Neighborhood Levels and Trends

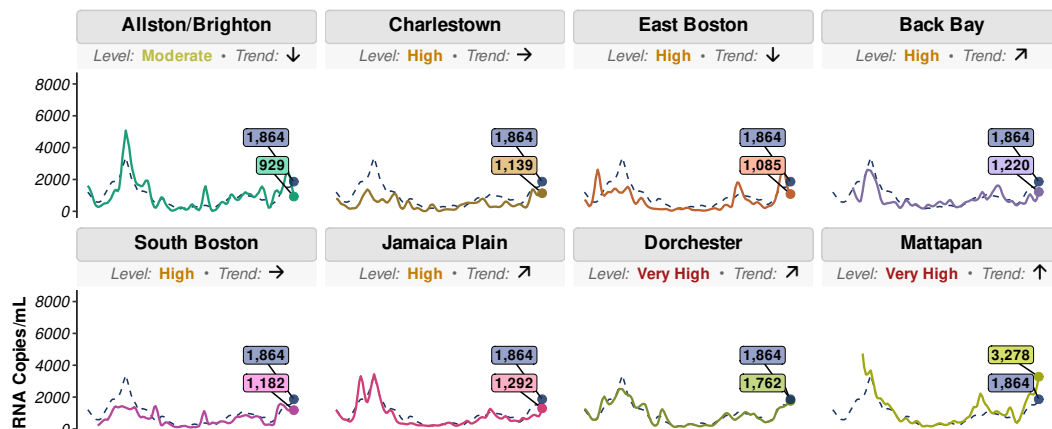


NEIGHBORHOOD SITES COVID-19 LEVEL & TRENDS

Level	Neighborhood/Site	Trend
Very High	Mattapan (MT)	↑ Large Increase
	Roxbury (RX)	↑ Large Increase
	Dorchester (DOR)	↗ Increase
	Hyde Park (HP)	↗ Increase
High	Jamaica Plain (JP)	↗ Increase
	Back Bay (BB)	↗ Increase
	South Boston (SB)	→ Stable
	Charlestown (CH)	→ Stable
Moderate	East Boston (EB)	↘ Large Decrease
	Allston/Brighton (A/B)	↘ Large Decrease
	Roslindale/West Roxbury (RS/WR)	↘ Large Decrease

- For additional details see:
- [Results by Neighborhood](#)
 - [Detailed Neighborhood Levels and Trends Table](#)
 - [Trend and Level Category Definitions](#)

BPHC Trend Overview by Neighborhood



For each neighborhood, colored line and textbox shows the smoothed trend and most recent value in that neighborhood;

The dotted blue line and dark blue text box in each panel shows the trend and most recent value across all Boston sites weighted by population.

Key Health Equity Initiatives

Among the initiatives that BPHC pursued in 2023 were:

CDC Recovery Services Grant

BPHC received a \$6.5 million grant over five years from the CDC to reduce overdoses in Boston and address opioid health disparities. This project focuses on increasing substance use navigation in health centers and expanding capacity for overdose rescue training. Mobile outreach services were re-launched in November to provide direct engagement with the population, distribute harm reduction supplies, and encourage individuals to seek substance use treatment.

Expanded Maternal Health Equity Work

Building on existing initiatives, BPHC's Healthy Start Systems launched a new breastfeeding communications campaign. The Love for Latch initiative aims to create an inclusive environment for breastfeeding women, particularly Black women. It also established the Community-Based Perinatal Health Project, which seeks to increase access to doula care, supporting families and improving outcomes.





Chronic Disease Health Equity Focus

BPHC received a Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant from the CDC to address health disparities. This five-year project focuses on increasing access to healthy food, promoting safe active transportation, and enhancing family childcare programs with healthy policies. The project prioritizes health and racial equity in East Boston and Mattapan. Furthermore, a new Colon Cancer Public Awareness Campaign targets Black and Latino residents to encourage colon cancer screening discussions with healthcare providers.

Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Support

The Healthy Homes and Community Supports Division was awarded \$2.5 million over five years from the CDC to expand support for residents impacted by ADRD. This funding supports policy change, program development, and improved access to dementia resources and care. Key priorities include finding support services, enhancing care partner support, improving workforce capacity, promoting risk reduction and early detection, and expanding data collection to address racial and ethnic disparities.

Community Health Equity Empowerment (CHEE) Fund

Mayor Michelle Wu and BPHC, in partnership with Mass General Brigham, established the CHEE Fund to address health equity in underserved neighborhoods. Ten organizations received a total of \$1.2 million in grants to increase healthcare access and services. These organizations will collaborate with BPHC to empower residents across Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Roxbury, and Mattapan, addressing social determinants of health and advancing community well-being.

Community Health Planning Coordination

BPHC continues to serve as the central coordinating entity for the Boston Community Health Collaborative, formerly known as the CHNA-CHIP Collaborative. This collaborative effort brings together health centers, community-based organizations, hospitals, and residents to achieve positive health outcomes by addressing root causes of health inequities and aligning resources effectively.

Supporting and Sheltering the Unhoused

For all data visit boston.gov/bphc-data

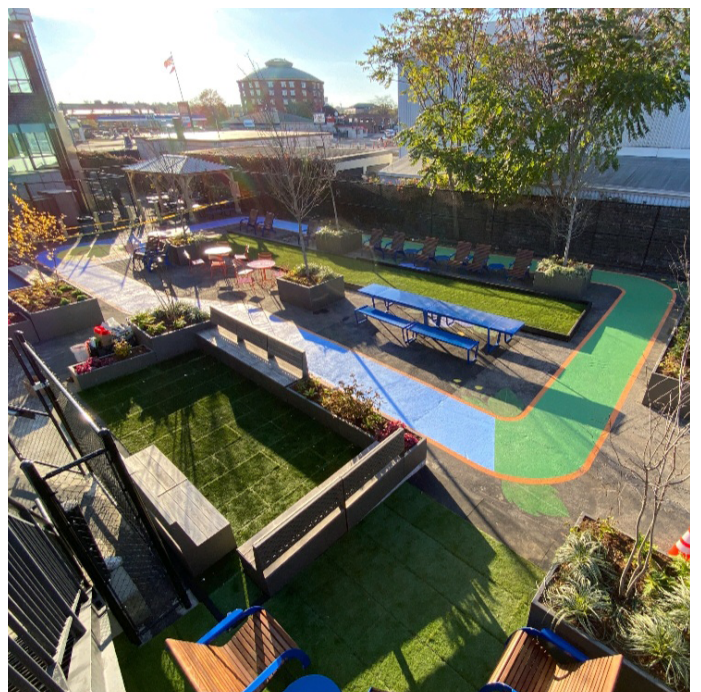
The initiatives undertaken by the Homeless Services Bureau (HSB) in partnership with the Recovery Services Bureau (RSB) reflect a commitment to addressing the complex challenges of homelessness and substance addiction. By transforming shelter services, enhancing supportive programs, and leveraging partnerships, BPHC staff strives to provide the kind of support to the unhoused population that can lead to change and recovery. Recent initiatives to more effectively address the challenges faced by the unhoused population include:

Surveying the Unhoused: Informed Action

The BPHC conducted a comprehensive health and risk factor survey of unhoused individuals within the Mass and Cass area. The survey, titled [Unhoused and Uncounted: Health of Boston Survey of People Experiencing Homelessness](#), provided invaluable insights into the health and needs of Boston's unhoused population, guiding the provision of resources and the formulation of policy.

Shelter Transformation and Expansion

Recognizing the urgent need for innovative solutions, HSB transformed shelter services and expanded capacity to accommodate individuals living with substance addiction. This involved establishing new shelters and implementing low-threshold programs designed to encourage unhoused individuals to seek refuge and engage with supportive services. In 2023 the Homeless Services Bureau (HSB) achievements included placing 305 individuals in housing, dedicating 75 beds for those living with active substance use disorder, launching a 30 bed low threshold shelter, distributing 2,625 safer use kits, distributing 526 units of naloxone and reversing 109 overdoses.





Low-Threshold Shelter Program

A New Approach: In response to the unsheltered homelessness crisis in the area known as “Mass and Cass” HSB established its first dedicated, low-threshold program for individuals living with substance addiction. Low-threshold programs create alternatives to traditional shelter by creating practices and policies that encourage persons who may otherwise sleep outside, to begin residing in shelter and engaging with supportive services. These practices include increased flexibility around when and how people access shelter, and the addition of harm reduction supports to the occurrence of fatal overdoses and reduce the stigma related to substance use.

Beginning with 25 beds in 2022, HSB expanded low threshold programming to a total of 75 beds in its men’s shelter in January 2023.

Enhancing Supportive Services

To address the complex needs of individuals struggling with substance addiction and reduce the associated stigma, HSB significantly enhanced its harm reduction programming. This included the addition of harm reduction case management services, providing personalized consultation and treatment options to those grappling with addiction. Furthermore, HSB introduced shelter-based medical supports to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol, while also minimizing the reliance on emergency room visits for non-urgent care.

In partnership with the Recovery Services Bureau, HSB launched a stand-alone low-threshold site dedicated to 30 unsheltered individuals residing in the encampment. This site, named “727”, follows the same model as our previous low-threshold site, with the addition of dedicated staff specially trained on the issues of substance addiction and increased harm reduction clinical supports via partnership with the Recovery Services Bureau.

By embracing these innovative and compassionate strategies, the Homeless Services Bureau is making significant strides in supporting and sheltering the unhoused, paving the way for meaningful change and recovery.

12345678

Providing a Continuum of Substance Use and Harm Reduction Services

The BPHC undertook a comprehensive approach to address the city's opioid crisis. This included prevention, residential treatment programs, mobile outreach, housing case management, overdose response, and community engagement.

Response to Encampments

Recovery Services Outreach played a crucial role and provided unwavering support during the response to the closure of Atkinson Street and the response to the encampments there, ensuring that each individual was moved to a safe location. In November 2023 mobile outreach was re-launched, and the outreach team directly engaged with the population to provide access to services, distributed harm reduction supplies, responded to overdoses, and encouraged individuals to seek substance use treatment and related services.

The Recovery Services Bureau coordinated and placed individuals into the six low-threshold transitional housing sites, now in their second year of operation since the system's launch in January 2022. These sites have served 571 people and moved 185 clients into permanent housing. Additional initiatives include:



Access, Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention and Education (AHOPE)

AHOPE is a harm reduction and needle exchange site providing a range of service to active injection drug users. These include Integrated HIV, Hepatitis, and STI testing and referrals, free legal, and anonymous needle exchange, overdose prevention education and training, risk reduction supplies to reduce the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C infection, risk reduction counseling, and supported referrals to all types of substance abuse treatment. AHOPE services are available at the walk-in center at 774 Albany Street and through mobile van and outreach sites around Boston.

The program reaches a large number of Boston residents every year. In 2023, AHOPE engaged 7,850 unique program participants in CY 2023—averaging 9 interactions for each participant. In addition, staff distributed over 30,000 doses of naloxone (which can rapidly reverse overdose) to people who are substance user as well as family members and other potential bystanders, conducted over 200 community-based trainings on overdose prevention and harm reduction, and made over 700 supported referrals to medical care, addiction treatment, HIV/HCV/STI treatment, PEP/Prep, behavioral health and social services.



Overdose Data to Action: Limiting Overdose through Collaborative Actions in Localities

The Centers for Disease Control awarded Boston a grant that expands evidence-based interventions and seeks to reduce overdoses and use data to better serve communities at high risk. Boston OD2A is comprised of multiple interventions; funding substance use navigators in community health centers, increasing naloxone distribution, expanding professional training, and boosting City data operations. The project focuses on serving people experiencing homelessness, Black and Latinx residents, and the re-entry population.

Community Engagement Around the Use of Boston Opioid Settlement Funds

Between May and October 13, 2023, Recovery Services gathered feedback from hundreds of community members impacted by opioid overdose on the use of settlement funds through community and provider listening sessions and surveys released in multiple languages. Priorities for the use of these funds were announced in early 2024.

Boston EMS

Boston EMS now offers an alternative destination transport option for patients experiencing substance use disorder. Starting with Boston Medical Center's (BMC) Stabilization Care Center in early 2023, and now transitioning to BMC's Faster Paths program, Boston EMS provides patients the option to be transported directly to a substance use disorder urgent care facility.

In 2023 Boston EMS equipped all ambulances with Leave Behind Narcan. This allows EMTs and Paramedics to provide patients, family or friends with Narcan, making this lifesaving treatment more accessible. Leave Behind Narcan is part of EMS statewide treatment protocols with the state coordinating procurement. In addition, EMS piloted the distribution of Fentanyl Test Strip Kit as a harm reduction strategy that allows individuals to test the presence of Fentanyl, a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses.

Improving Mental Health Capacity

BPHC recognizes that mental health is influenced by individual characteristics, behaviors, experiences, and life circumstances. Social and economic factors—such as prolonged exposure to racism, discrimination, oppression, or exclusion—can lead to sustained stress, further affecting mental health outcomes. Across our programming, we envision a city where all residents can achieve ideal behavioral health and wellness through just, trauma-informed, and intersectional approaches. To better understand Boston’s behavioral health needs, the BPHC Research Office will include trauma in the next citywide Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey.

The BPHC’s Center for Behavioral Health & Wellness was established in 2022 in response to the growing need for evidence-based, effective, and meaningful behavioral health resources. The Center aims to promote and coordinate behavioral health and wellness programming across Boston, utilizing ARPA funds to expand equity-focused behavioral health programming with priorities in workforce pathways development, communications, and capacity building.

In 2023 its efforts include allocating \$1 million in ARPA funds to implement a youth-focused behavioral health communications campaign. This comprehensive, culturally inclusive, and racially just campaign addresses stigma, the availability of services and resources, and the general understanding of mental health versus illness. It also incorporates an understanding of how situational factors (such as housing, childcare, transportation issues, poverty, and community violence) impact behavioral health. The Center allocated \$100,000 for the Cope Code Club’s 8-week media campaign, featuring live board/digital coverage on 50 screens at four MBTA stations. This campaign highlights Cope Code Club, a youth prevention program sponsored by the BPHC Office of Recovery Services’ Youth Prevention Program, supporting Boston youth in identifying healthy ways to cope with difficult feelings and stressful situations.

The Child, Adolescent, and Family Health (CAFH) Bureau placed additional mental health clinicians at six BPS school sites, augmenting the longstanding work of BPHC’s school-based mental health clinicians who provide individual therapeutic counseling throughout the school year at eight BPS high schools.



The CAFH Healthy Start Systems Division

received a four-year, \$4 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support early childhood mental health. This project serves Black and Latinx families involved with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families or connected to family support services through BPHC's (Healthy Baby Healthy Child home visiting program and the federal funded Boston Healthy Start Initiative, with the goal of improving access to evidence-based and culturally competent behavioral health services.

Additional BPHC Behavioral Health initiatives address the need for diverse, culturally competent behavioral health clinicians. BPHC distributed \$5 million to organizations to increase enrollment in behavioral health programs, promote diversity, and address workforce shortages. In partnership with UMass Boston, BPHC supported the enrollment of master's-level students in mental health counseling programs and undergrad students in therapeutic mentoring programs by offering reduced fees and stipends, with the expectation that students will work in Boston upon graduation.



Boston EMS has implemented several initiatives to support behavioral health efforts. This includes expanding Boston EMS TeleBEST to 24/7 service, allowing individuals experiencing low-acuity behavioral health emergencies to be directly transferred to a behavioral health clinician at Boston Emergency Services Team's (BEST) call center. Common issues for patients transferred to TeleBEST include panic attacks, anxiety, depression, grief, and loneliness. In addition to phone consultations, callers receive referral services, mobile crisis team home visits, linkages to behavioral health urgent care centers, and in-home therapy.

In July 2023, Boston EMS launched the Alternative Response Model (ARM) behavioral health unit, a staffed with an EMT and a Behavioral Health clinician. Responding to 9-1-1 behavioral health emergencies, this unit provides on-scene medical and behavioral health care, makes referrals, and transports patients to alternative facilities rather than hospital emergency departments. The ARM unit resolves many concerns on scene, providing direct care and referral services without the need for transport to the hospital. Patients regularly express relief knowing they are being routed to the care they need.

12345678

Monitoring and Responding to Infectious Disease

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the central role that local public health departments play in responding to outbreaks of infectious disease. They conduct investigations, collect and analyze data, advise local officials on actions, mobilize community partners, communicate with the public, and ensure equitable access to information, interventions, and services.

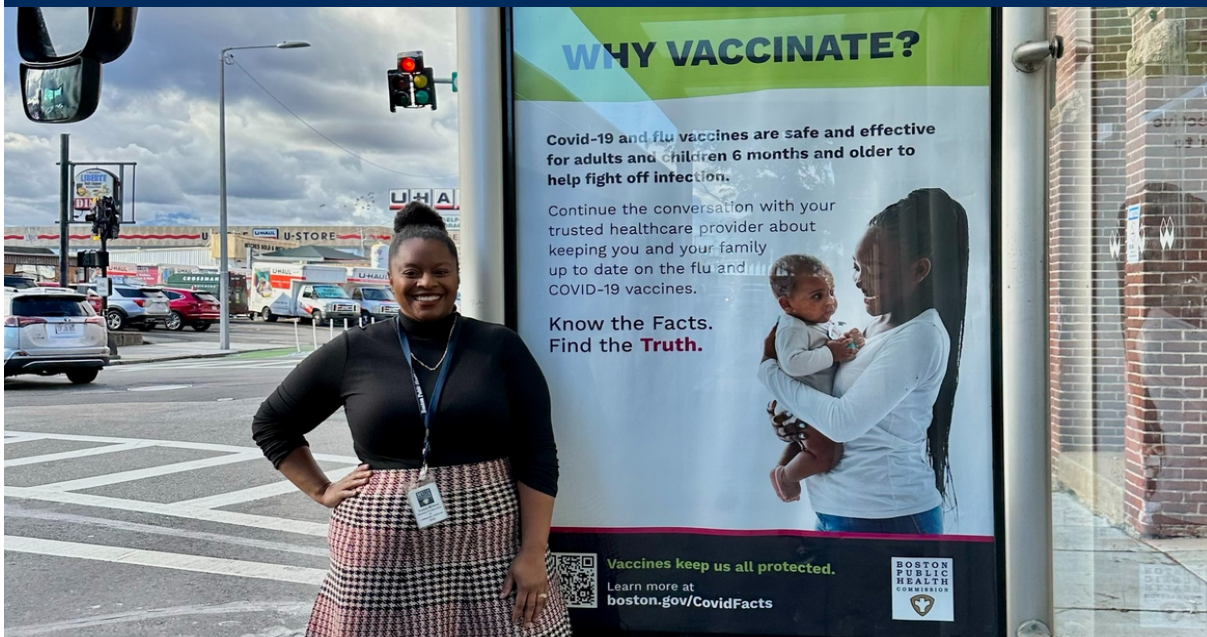
The Infectious Disease Bureau conducts disease surveillance investigates cases and outbreaks, funds HIV/AIDS-related education and care through the Ryan White Act and provides community and provider education on communicable diseases such as Hepatitis C, sexually transmitted diseases, and tuberculosis.



In 2023, IDB designed and implemented a **STI/HIV and MPOX Vaccination Campaign**, including dating app ads promoting “Talking to your partner, getting Tested, Treated, and Vaccinated.” An easy-to-use website/platform was developed, linking residents to local testing locations and co-branded with Boston Pride for the People to amplify messaging during Boston Pride. During the spring and summer of 2023, ECE distributed over 10,000 educational materials promoting STI testing and awareness to community partners and businesses.

The Office of Minority Health Advancing Health Literacy grant was awarded to IDB to address COVID-19 related health disparities and advance health equity. The goal of the grant was to increase and evaluate the acceptability and use of COVID-19 related outreach, service delivery, education, and media messaging that reduce inequities in access to prevention and treatment. Additionally, the grant aimed to develop more effective, culturally competent, and replicable outreach and service delivery models for future public health efforts to reduce health inequities for immigrant Black and Latino populations in Boston. Through June 2023, the OMH grant helped BPHC partner with six community-based organizations and coalitions in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Hyde Park, and East Boston to identify and implement grant activities, serving diverse black and Latino residents and multiple immigrant communities, including residents from Somalia, Haiti, and Brazil.





In the fall of 2023, IDB created the **Child and Maternal Health Multi-lingual COVID-19 and Flu Vaccine Campaign**. This campaign featured 12 families and community influencers from various backgrounds sharing their stories about the importance of vaccinating themselves and their children. New materials focused on the safety and effectiveness of vaccination before, during, after pregnancy, and in early childhood. Messages were distributed via social media (Facebook, Instagram, X), bus shelters across the city, and videos developed in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, and Portuguese, with printed brochures available in the 12 most spoken languages in Boston. This campaign led to a 300% increase in traffic to our COVID-19 [“Know the Facts” landing page](#).

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Part A of the program supports the provision of medical care, medication assistance, and other essential services to income-eligible People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH), with the goal of improving HIV-related health outcomes and reducing HIV transmission. BPHC has been the Boston EMA recipient administering this program since the Ryan White Program began 34 years ago in 1990. BPHC received approximately \$15 million in FY23 to fund 13 core medical and support services in the region.

In FY23, RWHAP funded 31 subrecipients to provide core medical and support services to more than 5000 PLWH in the Boston EMA, a service area that spans the Boston Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA), which includes seven counties in Massachusetts (Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester) and three in New Hampshire (Hillsborough, Rockingham, and Strafford).

BPHC received approximately \$3 million in federal Ending the HIV Epidemic funding to reduce new HIV infections, supplementing our yearly Ryan White funding. These funds help identify individuals newly diagnosed with HIV and connect them to services, as well as assist those living with HIV but may have fallen out of care or struggle to stay in care.

The Ryan White Services Division of the Infectious Disease Bureau issued funding to seven agencies in Boston, totaling just under \$700,000. Services funded include Emergency Financial Assistance, Food Bank and Home Delivered Meals, Medical Case Management, Legal Services, Initiative Services, and Outreach Services.

Providing Essential Public Health Core Services

Essential public health services provide a framework for the BPHC's mission to work in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities. These services are sometimes overlooked, yet they are crucial for keeping residents safe and protected. Highlights include:

Tuberculosis Clinic

The clinic is a collaboration between the BPHC's Infectious Disease Bureau and Boston Medical Center's Pulmonary and Infectious Disease departments. The TB clinic is the largest in Massachusetts. Clinic volume averages between 5200-5500 visits a year, and staff care for over a thousand new patients annually, including on average 40 cases of active tuberculosis. The staff of the clinic is comprised of physicians, nurses and outreach workers from the BPHC's and a variety of language interpreters.

Lead Poisoning

Under an agreement with the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, the Environmental Health Division of the Community Initiatives Bureau is conducting joint outreach to Boston residents to promote lead service line replacement, which aims to permanently remove lead water supply lines. In addition, the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program partnered with Suffolk University Law School to develop outreach presentations on Tenants' Rights and Anti-Discrimination Housing Regulations. This initiative focuses on educating tenants about housing discrimination due to lead paint and their rights under the law.

Disseminating Critical Health Information to Residents

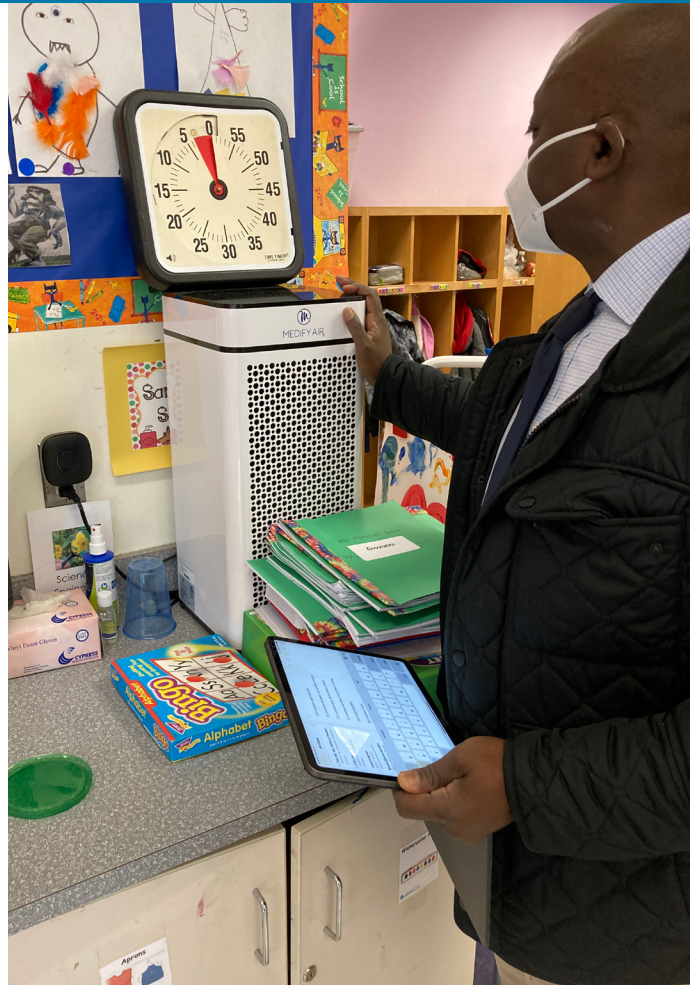
For example, throughout 2023, the BPHC Communications Department notified Boston residents about serious lead exposure risks from household products identified by local health departments and federal regulatory agencies, including the Consumer Product Safety Commission, CDC, and FDA. Recalls this year included Diep Bao Skin Cream, Afghan Pressure Cookers, Cupkin stainless steel children's cups, and WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree snack pouches.

Vehicle Safety

The Environmental Health Division partnered with the Boston Transportation Department and the Vision Zero Boston Coalition to produce a report, published by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, titled "Boston Blind Zone Safety Initiative: Current Fleet Analysis, Market Scan, and Proposed Direct Vision Rating Framework." This report analyzes and rates the safety of the city's large vehicle fleet.

Partnership for Healthy Cities

Boston is part of a global network of 73 cities committed to saving lives by preventing noncommunicable diseases and injuries. Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the 2023-2024 project supports the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Division in partnership with Boston Vision Zero and the Boston Transportation Department. The goal is to develop and implement policies to increase the safety of the city's vehicle and truck fleet for all road users.



Boston Inspectional Services (ISD)

The BPHC collaborates with Boston Inspectional Services on joint training regarding housing issues and provides training to the Boston Police Crisis Intervention Team about hoarding response. The Hazards Program within the Division participates in the Investigations & Enforcement Team with ISD and the Boston Fire and Police Departments to tackle complex cases, such as hoarding, and provides expertise on asbestos, mold, and bedbugs.

Office of Public Health Preparedness (OPHP)

In Boston, we experience rising sea-levels, flooding from increasingly intense storms, and extreme heat. As a mayoral priority, the BPHC is working in partnership across the city and responding to these challenges with creative solutions that will protect our communities today and for generations to come.

OPHP is helping to implement the city's heat resilience plan, which provides a citywide framework to prepare Boston for hotter summers, with particular focus on Boston's environmental justice neighborhoods. Supported by the Barr Foundation, OPHP has enhanced its capabilities significantly. The funding has helped establish the Community Resilience Network comprising over 200 partners, the delivery of "Get Ready, Be Safe, Stay Healthy" trainings focused on personal, household and community preparedness, and the fortification of its community preparedness network to over 11,000 recipients for emergency notifications and preparedness guidance.

12345678

BPHC and Staff Achievements and Recognition

Boston EMS

Matthew McSweeney, EMT of the year award

Regina Suprin, EMT Telecommunicator of the year award

Kiamesha Quarles, Chief of Department award

Benjamin Crowe, Paramedic of the year award

Due to COVID award ceremonies were suspended for three years. During those years staff members continued to go above and beyond to serve the residents of Boston. Here is the link to the 2023 award ceremony honoring staff achievements for 2019-2022 [Boston EMS awards banquet booklet](#).





Center for Behavioral Health & Wellness

Samara Grossman was accepted into the competitive [National Council for Mental Wellbeing's 2024 Behavioral Health Training Institute \(BHTI\) for Health Officials](#) program.

Child Adolescent & Family Health Bureau

Lisa White received an award in Recognition of her Meritorious Service Award presented to her by the Commonwealth of Dominica for her unequivocal patriotism and Cultural Representation.

Community Initiatives Bureau

CIB staff received the following awards and recognition:

Fantazia Hinds, Program Supervisor - Adult Learning Certificate, ATD

Josephine Santana, Program Coordinator, Governor's Citation in recognition of 32 years serving the residents of Boston through work at the BPHC, the Boston School Committee, the WIC Program, and the City of Boston's Youth Initiatives

Thomas Plant, Director of Special Projects, 20 Year Service Award recognition for his work at the BPHC and certificate of completion of training in the US EPA's Data Management Tools for Emergency Response

Simon Muchohi, Biosafety Director – Certified Biological Safety Professional (CBSP) and Registered Biosafety Professional (RBP) by American Biological Safety Association and recertified as a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) by the Board for Global EHS Credentialing

Paul Shoemaker, Division Director, Innovation Award issued by the Massachusetts Environmental Health Association at their 75th Annual Seminar

Sonia Amado, Director of Health Access & Wellness Services, Civic Hero recognition during the State of the City



Consortium for Professional Development

Tia Williams, Fiscal Coordinator received the Boston Public Health Commission's People Centered Award presented at the annual staff appreciation event.

Recovery Services

Kenny Washington, Assistant Director AHOPE Needle Exchange, traveled to Washington DC was presented with an Award for Best Workshop, for his presentation to the Association of Multidisciplinary Education and Research in Substance Use and Addiction (AMERSA).

Angel Rosario, Assistant Director, Recovery Services Outreach from the Engagement Center, was a speaker at the 2023 National Conference on Ending Homelessness in Washington DC.

Mima Fatumata Kaba, Administrative Assistant, Mattapan Campus, was selected as a 2023 Johns Hopkins Bloomberg Fellow MPH candidate in the Addiction and Overdose focus area.

Christian Arthur, Senior Policy and Strategy Specialist, Office of Recovery Services received the 2023 Recovery Community Impact Award from the Gavin Foundation.

Thirty-seven staff members received awards from BPHC at staff appreciation day in 2023.



It takes a dedicated public health workforce and staff members working diligently every day to fulfill our mission. The BPHC has achieved notable milestones in 2023, and as we continue our innovative and collaborative approach, we will continue to drive positive change in the upcoming year.





The 2023 Annual Report of the Boston Public Health Commission was produced by the Boston Public Health Commission's Executive Office and Communications Office.

All materials in this document are in the public domain and may be reproduced and copied without permission.

Recommended citation:

The 2023 Annual Report of the Boston Public Health Commission
Boston Public Health Commission, Published August 2024

For inquiries, please contact:

Boston Public Health Commission
1010 Massachusetts Avenue
6th Floor
Boston, MA 02118
Phone: 617-534-5395
Email: info@bphc.org
boston.gov/bphc

Please consider the environment before printing this report.



@healthyboston