



# 2024

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**Boston Public Health Commission**  
January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024



## COMMISSIONER

### **Dr. Bisola Ojikutu**

Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission

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## 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.

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## LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

I want to take a moment to reflect on 2024, a year marked by both extraordinary challenges and remarkable progress. Working with city departments, community organizations, and institutional partners, we advanced our mission to protect and promote the health of all Bostonians—especially those most affected by racism and systemic inequities. Guided by the foundational functions of public health, we worked to strengthen systems, center equity, and advance community well-being.

We continued to monitor health trends and investigate pressing issues affecting our neighborhoods, using timely, actionable data to guide decisions. We informed and educated residents about the factors that shape health and mobilized cross-sector partnerships to create community-driven solutions.

Recognizing that health is shaped by more than biology, we addressed the social determinants of health—like housing, economic stability, and access to care—through collaborative policy and planning. We linked individuals to essential services, expanded behavioral health supports, and reinforced emergency and recovery systems across the city.

Our approach in 2024 centered on prevention, inclusion, and empowerment, with a continued focus on reducing disparities and supporting those most impacted by systemic inequities. This work is made possible by Boston's dedicated public health workforce—the backbone of a healthy city. Their efforts span community engagement, workforce development, disease prevention, health education, emergency response, and more. Often working behind the scenes, they bring compassion, expertise, and equity to everything they do, ensuring that every resident—regardless of background or circumstance—has the opportunity to live a long, healthy, and fulfilling life.

In 2025, we will have renewed energy and deep appreciation for the work you do every day to make Boston a healthier, more equitable city for all. Thank you for your dedication, partnership, and service.

With appreciation,

*Bisola Ojikutu*

Bisola Ojikutu MD MPH FIDSA  
Commissioner of Public Health, City of Boston  
Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission

# Introduction: Advancing Health Equity and Community Well-being in 2024



This past year, the Commission continued our unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of all Boston residents, marked by significant milestones and impactful initiatives. Our efforts were strategically focused on addressing long-standing health disparities, strengthening public health infrastructure, and fostering resilient communities.

A cornerstone of our work in 2024 was the introduction of **Live Long and Well**, Boston's first population health equity agenda. This initiative aims to ensure every resident has the opportunity to live a healthier life. This endeavor was bolstered by a catalytic investment from the Atrius Health Equity Foundation, in collaboration with the Boston Community Health Collaborative, which is fueling crucial efforts to increase economic mobility in neighborhoods that have historically faced low life expectancy. By convening partners across sectors we will address the three primary causes of premature mortality in Boston: drug overdoses, preventable cancers and cardiometabolic disease. This agenda recognizes that health outcomes are

highly dependent upon the conditions in the communities where we live, work and play. Social determinants of health, like economic mobility, housing, and transportation, significantly impact our overall life expectancy. To address these health drivers, our solutions must be community-driven; our data must be timely and actionable; and our partnerships across public and private sectors, communities, hospitals, health centers, investors, and advocates must be strengthened.

Building on our commitment to comprehensive well-being, the Commission also recognized the urgent need to support the emotional health of our youngest residents. We prioritized **youth mental health**, significantly expanding training programs for a diverse mental health workforce. We also enhanced critical support systems for Boston Public Schools staff and proudly launched "Heads Up Boston," a citywide campaign designed to destigmatize mental health challenges among youth. This campaign is for all Boston youth, but especially youth of color, those who are marginalized, and those that identify as





female or LGBTQ+. BPHC's Health of Boston [Mental Health Report](#) shows that more than 40% of Boston Public School students report feeling persistent sadness and hopelessness, but the data are even more severe for these groups. The campaign has a tag line of "Because our mental health matters." It features videos of Boston students talking about their day and the importance of giving each other a "heads up." The campaign can be found on social media, streaming video and audio platforms, radio ads, and bus shelters in Boston. Others are encouraged to join the movement to destigmatize youth mental health by posting content of their own and using #HeadsUpBoston.

Simultaneously, in our ongoing efforts to address the **opioid crisis**, our team continued to deploy vital harm reduction resources, including naloxone and public health vending machines, strategically placed throughout the city. Beyond immediate intervention, we awarded crucial funding to community organizations, enabling them to connect individuals with much-needed treatment, and sustained a full continuum of care through dedicated outreach, comprehensive harm reduction strategies, and robust recovery programs.



Boston's commitment to its most vulnerable residents was further evident as our shelters provided **record levels of care and support**. Concurrently, to strengthen emergency services, Boston EMS bolstered its workforce through impactful initiatives. These included introducing scholarships to diversify its ranks, opening new ambulance stations and a state-of-the-art training facility, and proudly graduating the first Cadet Program cohort in more than two decades.

Beyond these critical emergency and support services, **maternal and child health** remained a critical focus for the Commission. The Boston Community Perinatal Health Initiative (COPHI) officially launched, successfully connecting families with essential doula services during both pregnancy and postpartum periods. Additional investments were directed towards expanding home visiting programs and advancing infant mortality research, all with the explicit goal of closing persistent disparities in birth outcomes, particularly among Black and Latina women.

A powerful demonstration of community empowerment and health equity advancement occurred in March with the inaugural





**EmpowerHer Black Women's Health Conference.** More than 200 participants joined this pivotal event, which issued a powerful call to action to eliminate longstanding health inequities and support holistic wellness among Black women in Boston.

Reflecting a deeper, city-wide commitment to addressing community violence, the newly established Office of Violence Prevention now reports directly to the Executive Office. This strategic realignment not only underscores a public health approach to violence prevention but also allows for expanded strategic capacity in this vital area.

And in response to the challenging **Carney Hospital closure in Dorchester**, the Commission swiftly activated the Mayor's Health Line to help residents find alternative care. Demonstrating proactive community engagement, we also formed a Dorchester-area working group, collaborating with the Massachusetts League of Community

Health Centers and state officials, to maintain service access and promote health equity in the affected community.

Looking ahead and laying the groundwork for future health initiatives, 2024 also saw the launch of the [Community Health Needs Assessment \(CHNA\)](#) through the Boston Community Health Collaborative. Insights gathered from this comprehensive process will be instrumental in informing the city's next Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in 2025.

This report highlights these major accomplishments, along with the Commission's vital, ongoing work to limit the spread of respiratory illnesses, prevent sexually transmitted infections, reduce environmental hazards, create career pathways in STEM and behavioral health for youth, prevent chronic disease, and much more, all contributing to a healthier, more equitable Boston.



# BUREAUS, PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICES, AND CENTERS

The Boston Public Health Commission's 2024 Annual Report highlights major accomplishments across our bureaus, public health offices, and centers. From expanding behavioral health workforce programs and harm reduction efforts, to leading data innovation and equity-centered community engagement, our work reflects our commitment to protecting and promoting the health and well-being of all Boston residents. This report provides a snapshot of key programs, strategic initiatives and partnerships implemented in 2024.





# Recovery Services Bureau (RSB)

RSB is committed to eliminating barriers to treatment and ensuring people have access to the treatment and resources they need to begin their recovery journey. Through outreach, engagement, advocacy, referrals, harm reduction, and recovery services, the Recovery Services Bureau helps people access the support they need.

The Commission is at the forefront of the City's response to the substance use crisis, and the Recovery Services Bureau operates a continuum of care, spanning outreach, harm reduction, treatment, youth prevention, and community-based programs.

RSB placed 2,389 individuals into substance use treatment programs in 2024 and managed a range of harm reduction programs, including our syringe exchange efforts. These efforts are crucial in reducing needle-sharing and the spread of infectious diseases, including HIV and Hepatitis C, and they highlight our commitment to protecting public health.

Low-threshold shelter and permanent housing have been vital to providing safe, stabilizing spaces for people who have been chronically unsheltered with substance use disorder. Our Mattapan Recovery Campus served over 890 people through our two programs: Entre Familia, reaching pregnant and postpartum women and children, and Transitions residential treatment program with 65 beds. In 2024 we strengthened our partnerships to provide support to low-threshold shelters, ensuring that people have access to the care and support they need on their recovery journey. These partners include Boston Medical Center, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, Eliot Community Human Services, Victory Programs, Pine Street Inn, and HomeStart.



Staff from the Access, Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention and Education (AHOPE) and Street Outreach programs focused on meeting people where they are, ensuring individuals have the resources they need to stay safe and offering harm reduction supplies. Our outreach work is a fundamental part of how we connect with the community and build trust with those we serve. And to raise awareness about opioid overdoses in our community, RSB conducted overdose prevention trainings, teaching participants how to use naloxone and respond to overdoses.

In 2024 RSB worked with the Center for Public Health Science and Innovation to publish the [Boston Opioid Settlements Community Engagement Report](#), grounding investments in the voices of those impacted by the opioid epidemic. BPHC selected five community organizations to receive grant funding to distribute naloxone and also an administrator for the Family Overdose Support Fund. In July BPHC began funding the Newmarket BID Back2Work

program, providing workforce development for people in early recovery, and also a medical clinic operated by the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program.

We continued to focus on using data to drive decisions and improve our services in 2024. This includes initiatives like Boston Overdose Data to Action (OD2A), a CDC-funded program that expanded RSB's surveillance capacity through a publicly available data dashboard, placed substance use navigators at three community health centers, supported clinician training on best practices for addiction treatment and pain management, and provided overdose response training and naloxone distribution. This also includes RSB's efforts to place naloxone kiosks and public health vending machines in communities that have been hit hardest by the overdose epidemic according to city data. By collecting and analyzing data, we've been able to pinpoint areas of improvement in our programs, make smarter decisions about resource allocation, and better meet the needs of those we serve.

## PROGRAMS

- Youth Prevention
- Providing Access to Addictions Treatment, Hope and Support (PAATHS)
- Street Outreach
- Safe & Sound Recovery Center
- Access, Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention and Education (AHOPE)
- Engagement Center
- Mattapan Recovery Campus: Entre Familia and Transitions
- Outpatient Treatment Partnership
- Strategic Partnerships (including Opioid Settlement Funds, Community Engagement, and Overdose Data to Action)

## BY THE NUMBERS

**2,389**

individuals placed into substance use treatment programs

**890**

people served by our Mattapan Recovery Campus

**23,441**

naloxone kits distributed at community events and to community members

**25,715**

individuals engaged by AHOPE and Street Outreach staff

**210**

overdose prevention trainings provided, reaching more than 3,100 people



# Child Adolescent and Family Health Bureau (CAFHB)

With 90 staff and 12 programs, CAFHB focuses on perinatal, early childhood, and adolescent health equity. Through our Child Adolescent Health Division and Healthy Start Systems Division, we support children, youth, and families—especially those impacted by racism—with services, partnerships, and advocacy. This includes clinical and client services, case management, health education and promotion, and organizational capacity-building in homes, health centers, and school-based clinics.

In 2024 CAFHB launched the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program, making progress in staffing, creating protocols, and networking nationally. Highlights include hiring a Senior Program Manager, conducting a landscape analysis with the Office of Public Health Innovation, and mentoring with Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The Boston Healthy Start Initiative collaborated with the Little Cocoa Bean Company and Fettle and Feast to pilot an 8-week postpartum meal delivery service for 15 families. The program aimed to provide nutritional and emotional support to new mothers and families, addressing a critical gap in postpartum care. The Community-Based Perinatal Health Initiative received a \$3.5 million, 3-year grant to enhance doula support and training. In 2024, the fully staffed team integrated services with Healthy Start and handled 132 family referrals.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**551**

individuals enrolled into Boston Healthy Start Initiative case management and care coordination services, including 149 pregnant women, 168 women between pregnancies, and 234 infants/children

**110**

students, of which 60% of were multilingual and 100% were students of color, enrolled in the Boston Area Healthy Education Center

**102**

youth successfully completed the 7-week the Summer Enrichment Program, with an 86% completion rate

**1,083**

families served by Healthy Baby Healthy Child, of those families 309 had live births and 268 birthing families decided to breastfeed

**171**

doulas trained in culturally responsive care, in partnership with 11 community organizations through the Community-Based Perinatal Health Initiative





To support youth, the Boston Area Health Education Center (BAHEC) developed a behavioral health career pipeline. In 2024 they hosted seasonal afterschool programs and redesigned their summer enrichment program to focus on mental health. The Start Strong program, which seeks to give youth the tools to create a healthy social environment, experienced major growth in its social media campaign, reaching millions of young people and significantly increasing engagement across platforms. Instagram impressions hit 12.3 million, while TikTok saw over 2 million views and 313,000 likes through youth-focused content.

In Summer 2024, CAFHB's enrichment program provided 100 Boston youth with paid jobs via Successlink and hosted activities at UMass Boston. Youth participated in individualized and collaborative programming, including creative electives and field trips. The program also awarded scholarships to alumni, supporting their post-high school ambitions.

## DIVISIONS & PROGRAMS

### Child Adolescent Health Division

- Boston Area Health Education Center (BAHEC)
- Health Resource Center (HRC)
- Peer Leadership Institute (PLI)
- School Based Health Centers (SBHC)
- Start Strong
- Youth Development Network (YDN)

### Healthy Start Systems Division

- Boston Healthy Start Initiative
- Community-Based Perinatal Health Initiative (COPHI)
- Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH)
- Healthy Baby Healthy Child (HBHC)
- Healthy Start in Housing (HSiH)
- Father Friendly
- Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)
- Welcome Family



# Infectious Disease Bureau (IDB)

From sexually transmitted infections to tuberculosis to new emerging diseases, IDB addresses a range of issues related to preventing and treating infectious diseases to reduce their impact, prevent morbidity and create healthier lives for Boston residents.

In 2024, IDB prioritized approaches and initiatives that aimed to combat stigma and discrimination, provide trustworthy and accurate education, and increase access to care and supportive services for Boston residents, particularly those disproportionately impacted by infectious diseases due to racism, xenophobia, transphobia, homophobia, and other systems of oppression.

Education and Outreach staff launched an award-winning media campaign, Safe is Sexy, and the team provided outreach at 40 community events across Boston and ran 11 trainings on various infectious disease topics across diverse audiences. The team also marched in the City's Pride Parade and led BPHC colleagues in giving out 800 bags of educational and sexual wellness materials. IDB had two successful tuberculosis (TB) screening events and several TB trainings across high-risk settings.

The Ryan White Planning Council successfully completed its first year of Ending the HIV Epidemic funding for the Someone You Know and Love Campaign, including the management of a successful Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority advertising campaign with over seven million impressions across digital liveboards, subway interior posters, and a mobile network of advertisements. The campaign also included a film screening and panel discussion at Suffolk University for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day with over 100 attendees.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**11**

trainings across diverse communities on various infectious diseases

**5,218**

total clients engaged through the Ryan White Part A HIV/AIDS program

**3,600+**

Boston residents provided group and individual level interventions, 18% were unhoused and 70% were from communities of color

**538**

new clients enrolled into the Ryan White Dental program and paid for over 4,135 dental claims

**6,100**

visits by registered nurses and doctors to provide care to patients in tuberculosis clinics





The Ryan White Prevention and Early Intervention Services program provided \$1.4 million in funding to 11 agencies within Boston for community-based prevention of HIV, Hepatitis C and Sexually Transmitted Infections.

The Ryan White Dental Program experienced higher client engagement than in previous years, thanks to strengthened partnerships with case managers. the program enrolled 16% more clients and paid 10% more dental claims than in 2023.

Finally, IDB's Communicable Disease Control Division supported 61 individuals with TB disease in accessing appropriate medical care and social supports, conducted case and contact investigations associated with hepatitis A, pertussis, varicella, and other communicable diseases.

## PROGRAMS

- HIV/STI Prevention
- Early Intervention Services
- Communicable Disease Control (CDC)
- Tuberculosis (TB) Case Management and Clinical Support
- Ending the HIV Epidemic
- Education and Community Engagement
- HIV/STI Services, including Ryan White Part A Services
- Ryan White Part A Case Management Training Program
- Ryan White Part A Planning Council Support
- Ryan White Dental





# Community Initiatives Bureau (CIB)

The Community Initiatives Bureau implements policies and services that prevent illness and promote health, with a focus on the social determinants of health. CIB staff work with community members and organizations, other city agencies, landlords, academic and health care institutions, small businesses, families, and preschool- to college-aged students to make a healthier Boston.

In 2024, the Mayor's Health Line (MHL) advanced its mission to promote health equity by strengthening partnerships and expanding culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach. In response to the Carney Hospital closure, MHL staff worked closely with stakeholders to help affected patients and staff transition to new health insurance coverage and find new providers.

Through the CDC's Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure Public Health Program grant, 92 Boston residents living with dementia and their caregivers were connected to free care planning services, and 130 medical providers were trained in dementia screening, diagnosing, and making treatment referrals for Alzheimer's and other dementias.

The Boston Healthy Child Care Initiative developed two new Learning Collaboratives: Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) and Nutrition in the First 5 Years. We worked closely with family childcare educators, parents, community partners, farmers, universities, the City's Office of Early Childhood, and state partners on development. The Five-Session Farm to ECE collaborative was piloted in June with eight educators serving 66 children.

The Environmental and Occupational Health Division continues to play an active role in supporting environmental public health policy efforts, particularly in representing public

## BY THE NUMBERS

**1,434**

applicants enrolled  
into Health Connector or MassHealth  
coverage, including 630 head of households  
who speak a language other than English

**7,018**

free fitness classes hosted  
in partnership with Boston Parks and  
Recreation, taking place in Boston parks  
and online

**375**

home visits for inspections  
and asthma education completed by the  
Asthma Prevention and Control and  
Breathe Easy at Home Program

**487**

cases responded to by the Environmental  
and Occupational Health Division about  
potential health hazards in homes,  
businesses, and public spaces



health in wider city climate change mitigation and adaptation/preparation activities. The most recent of these is participation in the city's Climate Council and work on the updated Boston Climate Action Plan as well as being part of the steering committee of Boston's Cross-Agency Climate Resilience Workgroup. The Division also made significant progress in 2024 on records management and data modernization to improve services to the public and boost staff performance, converting 30 file cabinets of lead case management records into digital files.

## DIVISIONS & PROGRAMS

- Chronic Disease Division
- Healthy Homes and Community Support Division
- Environmental and Occupational Health Division
- Mayor's Health Line
- South End Fitness Center



# Homeless Services Bureau (HSB)

The Homeless Services Bureau provides emergency shelter services and related ancillary support to homeless individuals in Boston. Emergency shelter services are at the core of HSB, providing low-barrier shelter access to any homeless individual with no restrictions related to substance addiction or mental health acuity. The goal of our work is to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Operating two 24/7 emergency shelters, we provide dignity, care, and a path forward with clean accommodations, hot meals, and essential services. Demand for shelter has increased steadily since the COVID-19 pandemic, with 2024 seeing nightly shelter census operating at 16% over bed capacity. The urgent demand for these resources underscores the importance of our team's innovative approaches to homelessness in Boston.

To support our guests HSB provides an array of services including: workforce development to help guests learn employment skills and find employment within the community; food and nutrition services which provide three meals per day and teach basic kitchen skills; triage supports to individuals to avoid becoming homeless by reconnecting with family/community networks and explore alternatives to shelter; and housing services to find permanent housing and provide follow-up services to ensure that individuals do not return to homelessness.

In 2024 HSB successfully concluded its low-threshold shelter collaboration with the Recovery Services Bureau providing temporary, low-threshold shelter to 28 individuals previously residing in the encampment at "Mass and Cass." At the time of program closure, approximately 69% of these guests were successfully placed on pathways out of shelter, including 31% to permanent housing destinations.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**4,267**

individuals served  
across all programs

**4,028**

individuals provided  
shelter placement

**159**

individuals diverted  
from shelter

**336**

individuals placed  
into permanent housing

**299**

placements  
via family reunification





HSB's efforts to provide shelter triage and diversion services continue to be a fixture since successful family and community reunification is the most successful housing outcome and pathway out of shelter. Additionally, these services prevented the homelessness of 159 individuals who were successfully diverted from entering shelter at all.

## PROGRAMS

- Emergency Shelter Operations
- Housing
- Front Door Triage
- Behavioral Health
- Workforce Development/Serving Ourselves
- Food and Nutrition Services/Quincy Street Kitchen



# Boston Emergency Medical Services (Boston EMS)

Boston Emergency Medical Services (Boston EMS), the primary emergency medical services provider for the city, is a nationally recognized leader in the field of pre-hospital emergency medicine. Boston EMS leverages the latest advances in both medicine and technology to bring high-quality, compassionate care to the people of Boston. Boston EMS plays a key role in the City's emergency preparedness efforts and provides community programming designed to educate the public about important health and safety topics.

Boston EMS is the city's primary pre-hospital emergency care provider, covering 48 square miles and supporting a daytime population of 1.2 million. Peak operations included 21 Basic Life Support and five Advanced Life Support ambulances deployed from 17 stations. As the City's municipal ambulance service, we respond to 9-1-1 clinical incidents across all neighborhoods, 365 days a year.

In 2024 we expanded our ability to serve individuals experiencing a behavioral health emergency by doubling the number of staffed squad units from two to four. Each unit is comprised of an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and a Behavioral Health Clinician. The program has also expanded from 4 days a week to 7 days a week from 8 in the morning to midnight. Boston EMS was the first ambulance service in Massachusetts to secure approval from the State Office of EMS to implement Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Emergency Department Avoidance programs.

Our Community Assistance Team, comprised of two EMTs in a squad unit providing on scene treatment and referral, are now able to administer Suboxone and transport individuals directly to substance use disorder urgent care programs.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**140,701**

clinical incidents responded to

**166,422**

ambulance responses  
(multiple ambulances responding  
to single incidents)

**93,774**

patient transports

**1,158**

Alternative Response Model  
Patient Encounters

**98**

new uniformed members hired, including  
Cadets and EMT-Recruits, a 36% increase  
compared to 2023



Boston EMS deployed an additional 24-hour ambulance to the Dorchester neighborhood to mitigate the impact of the Carney Hospital closure. This ensured residents received uncompromised access to pre-hospital care. The added ambulance allowed us to ensure response times for Dorchester were not impacted.



In March of 2024, the city officially opened the newly renovated Boston EMS Training Center, which includes the addition of a two-bay ambulance station at 201 Rivermoor Street in West Roxbury. This new, state-of-the-art educational complex allows Boston EMS to continue to recruit and develop highly trained EMTs and Paramedics. The new station also enhances emergency medical coverage for residents. Boston EMS graduated its first Cadet program in nearly two decades, creating a pipeline to employment as EMTs.

## PROGRAMS

- Special Operations and Emergency Preparedness
- Professional Development and Community Initiatives
- Support Services
- Operations





# Public Health Offices and Centers

Delivering effective public health planning, dependable daily operations, and timely responses to emerging challenges requires a dedicated and skilled workforce. Boston Public Health Commission staff—across bureaus, frontline services, and essential administrative functions such as human resources, legal counsel, information technology, operations, finance, and public safety—work tirelessly to advance our mission. Throughout the year, we undertake special projects and system enhancements to strengthen our workforce and enhance our capacity to serve Boston’s residents. From advocacy by our policy and intergovernmental relations teams, to increased media attention and public health campaigns by our communications team, to new funding awards secured by our grants development office, our teams were hard at work.

To foster a diverse, inclusive, and high-performing workforce the **Human Resources Office** led the design and rollout of the Commission’s first-ever performance management pilot. This effort established a foundation for how we define, discuss, and support performance across the Commission. Additionally, the **Consortium for Professional Development** developed the inaugural People Leaders Training Series. Examples of infrastructure enhancements include the launching of six real-time dashboards, led by **Information Technology Services** in collaboration with programmatic teams. And through our Data Modernization Initiative and the development of a cloud-based Data Lake, we have enhanced our ability to manage and analyze public health data.



# Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

The Office of Violence Prevention, launched in November 2024, was created to strengthen collaboration with the Mayor's Office to provide a healing response when gun violence occurs, work with the most impacted, engage residents in prevention, train workers on violence prevention, and address gender-based violence.

For many years, BPHC has directly worked with residents aged 17- to 24-years old who are most impacted by and involved in community gun violence. New state and city investments have allowed us to serve residents of all ages, resulting in the creation of our Life Course Health Unit. In 2024, we developed a new program, the Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative. This was created based on Boston's ongoing violence prevention planning and community engagement efforts, including 16 listening sessions and over 300 adult and youth survey respondents, and planning work with Family Justice Center Leadership Council. The new initiative focuses on providing a holistic, equity-centered prevention of and response to domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence.

The Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Initiative engaged 3,000 residents through relationships with 10 partnerships: Mattapan Teen Center, Project RIGHT, Madison Park Development Corporation, Teen Empowerment, Boston Ministries, Speak Up & Speak Out, We Better Together, Transformational Prison Project, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, and BPD Districts C11, B2, B3, and C6. And the Capacity Building and Training Initiative, in partnership with the Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness, launched the City Learning Collaborative for seven youth- and family-serving programs to deliver trauma-informed and equitable services and strengthen workforce well-being.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**261**

residents most impacted  
by or most involved in gun violence served  
by the Life Course Health Unit

**284**

service providers  
trained in trauma-informed  
and equitable approaches

**97**

youth and young adults  
and 166 parents/caregivers trained in  
substance use prevention

**156**

incidents of community gun violence where  
the Community Healing Response Network  
provided trauma and healing support

## PROGRAMS

- Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-based Violence Prevention Initiative
- Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative
- Community Healing Response Network
- Life Course Health Unit
- Capacity Building and Training Initiative



## Office of Public Health Preparedness (OPHP)

The Office of Public Health Preparedness works to enhance community, public health, and healthcare system resilience to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies that impact health and access to healthcare.

OPHP activated the Medical Intelligence Center (MIC) in the City of Boston for the 2024 Boston Marathon. OPHP provided ongoing situational awareness in support of public health and healthcare operations and provided technical assistance for Emergency Tracking System (ETS) operations at hospitals, ensuring mental health, behavioral health, and human services resources are monitored and deployed appropriately.

OPHP led a virtual tabletop exercise with the Boston Healthcare Preparedness Coalition (HPC) to strengthen regional mass casualty incident response. Participants reviewed multidisciplinary

### BY THE NUMBERS

**2,842**

encounters at medical tents, 131 patient encounters at 10 hospitals, and 16 admitted patients for the Boston Marathon

**2,300**

small space heaters and warming blankets distributed to 60 community partners in Roxbury, Mattapan, East Boston, and Dorchester

**345,567**

pieces of personal protective equipment distributed across the city



response strategies, defined essential information for a shared operating picture, assessed mass notification systems, pinpointed gaps, and set training priorities. The exercise tested Boston's public health and healthcare response capabilities while building stronger collaboration among HPC members. Fifty-eight professionals from community health centers, EMS, hospitals, long-term care, state and local public health, emergency management, home health, and healthcare coalitions actively engaged in the session.



## Office of Racial Equity and Community Engagement (ORECE)

The Office of Racial Equity and Community Engagement's purpose is to establish and sustain racial and health equity as core principles in the BPHC policies, operations, and decision-making. We do this through strategic planning, visioning, and relationship building.

ORECE launched several key initiatives internally and externally over the past year in alignment with our mission to establish and sustain racial and health equity as core principles in the BPHC policies, operations, and decision-making.

In partnership with two nonprofit organizations, ORECE launched the Generational Health Scholarship Program which supports approximately 70 Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color Boston students pursuing careers in STEM, public health, behavioral health and the health sciences--helping to advance educational equity and cultivate a more inclusive workforce

### BY THE NUMBERS

**10**

cultural events were planned and hosted by the Office of Racial Equity and Community Engagement

**21**

technical assistance training requests were received by ORECE from external organizations and Boston City Hall

**25**

BPHC managers and directors per session received training on understanding their role in supporting an anti-racist culture at the Commission

pipeline. We also started training sessions with 91 City of Boston staff, focused on educating City leaders with tools to address social determinants of health through a racial equity lens.

At BPHC, ORECE hosted its inaugural Women's History Month Breakfast in March, bringing together approximately 60 employees to celebrate and honor the contributions of women across our workforce. Additionally, in collaboration with BPHC's Consortium for Professional Development, ORECE contributed to the inaugural People Leaders Training Series.



## Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness (CBHW)

The Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness builds a more equitable, trauma-informed system in Boston by strengthening the workforce, reducing stigma, and supporting communities—ensuring all residents, especially youth, have access to culturally responsive behavioral health care.

CBHW's priorities are to: recruit, expand, and train a diverse, culturally competent, trauma-informed behavioral health workforce that reflects Boston's communities; deliver public communications that promote wellness, address stigma, build skills to respond to behavioral health and substance use issues; and confront historic and ongoing barriers to care—initially focusing on youth behavioral health— and strengthen capacity and deliver training programs in behavioral health citywide through collaboration with community partners.

In 2024, CBHW advanced workforce development to strengthen Boston's behavioral health capacity. The UMass Boston Access to Mental Health

program launched in the spring, enrolling students to support behavioral health workforce diversification. Two Boston Public Schools were added to the Children's Wellness Initiative through the expanded Behavioral Health Workforce Project in partnership with Franciscan Children's Hospital, now reaching eight schools and 115 students.

Youth programming expanded through BPHC-BPS partnerships. We worked with Flourish Agenda to pilot Trauma-Informed School System Transformation at 10 schools using Healing-Centered Engagement to improve school climate. Eight Boston Public Schools actively participated in Flourish Agenda's Trauma-Informed School



## BY THE NUMBERS

**11.5 million**

impressions on the “Heads Up” campaign  
across digital and public platforms citywide

**60+**

youth and caregivers reached  
by the Family Van's youth focused arts and  
wellness communication  
and outreach initiative

**27**

Therapeutic Mentor and  
27 Mental Health Counselor students  
accepted at the University of Massachusetts  
Boston's Access to Mental Health program

System Transformation Healing-Centered Engagement (HCE) training. The Family Van engaged 60+ youth and caregivers in arts and wellness culturally resonant workshops, ending with public exhibits and panels.

CBHW launched the “Heads Up Boston” campaign with diverse youth to reduce stigma and promote peer support, and the CopeCode Club, run by the Recovery Services Bureau and supported by CBHW, fostered youth leadership and early substance use intervention to build a more inclusive behavioral health environment citywide.



# Center for Public Health Science and Innovation (PHSI)

The Center for Public Health Science and Innovation uses state-of-the-art methodologies in research, surveillance, evaluation, and reporting to inform evidence-based decision making across BPHC and to support community data needs with an antiracist health equity lens.

PHSI produced high impact reports and publications, including four Health of Boston reports focused on mental health, substance use, access to care, and community assets. These reports highlighted critical trends across specific Boston populations. For example, the inaugural Mental Health Report revealed a sharp rise in sadness, hopelessness, and anxiety among youth,

particularly youth of color, helping to catalyze a \$21 million investment in behavioral health services for youth and families across the city. We produced more than 240 analytic reports to support surveillance and operational needs. PHSI staff also elevated critical health equity themes and presented at 14 public health conferences and publishing three peer-reviewed publications.



Finally, the Center advanced public health science through innovative methods and strong cross sector data partnerships. For example, it revealed disparities in overdose, cancer, and COVID-19 mortality often hidden within broader racial categories by linking census and vital records data to produce disaggregated, age adjusted mortality rates. These data were foundational in informing Live Long and Well, Boston's first population health equity agenda. PHSI also collaborated with Boston teaching hospitals to guide new, community-informed data collection for the 2025 Boston Community Health Needs Assessment, uncovering previously unmeasured concerns about resident health barriers.

# Spotlight: Community Health Needs Assessment & Improvement Planning

The Community Health Needs Assessment is conducted by the Boston Community Health Collaborative, a partnership of health institutions, community organizations, and the Boston Public Health Commission to improve the health and well-being of Boston residents by aligning community health assessment requirements and improvement planning efforts.

In 2024, in collaboration with the Boston Community Health Collaborative (BCHC), our office successfully planned and implemented a citywide community health survey to better understand the top health needs, challenges, strengths, and priorities of Boston residents. The survey was translated into nine languages. Through in-person outreach at over 40 community events we gathered valuable input from residents across the city. These insights directly informed the 2025 Boston Community Health Needs Assessment Report and will guide future health planning efforts.

We also convened cross-sector partners through the BCHC Steering Committee and three issue-focused work groups. These groups worked together to strengthen connections, align strategies, and use data more effectively in their efforts to improve community health. This collaborative structure has helped partners identify shared priorities, advocate more effectively, and advance health equity in Boston.

Lastly, we leveraged public health data to inform the Community Health Assessment and improvement planning process. Project staff led the development of a comprehensive indicator set—over 60 health measures—used to analyze trends in health outcomes, disparities, and social

## BY THE NUMBERS

### 1,900+

responses were collected for the Boston Community Health Assessment survey, offered in English and eight additional languages

### 60+

health measures were selected to analyze trends in health outcomes, disparities, and social determinants of Boston residents' health

determinants of health. These data-driven insights are foundational to our efforts to understand community needs and develop targeted, impactful strategies for improving health in Boston.







**The 2024 Annual Report of the Boston Public Health Commission** was produced by the Boston Public Health Commission's Executive Office and Communications Office.

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**Recommended citation:** The 2024 Annual Report of the Boston Public Health Commission  
Boston Public Health Commission

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