# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2019 BPHC HIGHLIGHTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2019 STRATEGIC PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2019 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>CHILD, ADOLESCENT AND FAMILY HEALTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>COMMUNITY INITIATIVES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BOSTON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>HOMELESS SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>INFECTIOUS DISEASE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>RECOVERY SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>BPHC BY THE NUMBERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Readers,

I'm pleased to present the 2019 Annual Report of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC). This report provides a brief summary of all the wonderful work that our programs and services accomplished this year to carry out our mission to protect, preserve and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

As the city's health department, we work to provide quality services to address the needs of Boston residents. We also work with a broad coalition of stakeholders to drive public health policy, create strategic place-based and people-based investments, and engage in meaningful partnerships with the communities we serve.

BPHC has a team of 1,100 dedicated staff that live, work, and play in the City of Boston. Thank you to those whose work we are reporting on and those who contributed their time to compile this report to demonstrate the value, strength and courage of public health professionals in Boston.

Together we are working to address the biggest factors of our community’s health, including racism, other systems of oppression, and social determinants of health.

In the next year, I hope to continue advancing our mission and vision and to work with all BPHC staff, residents, and the City of Boston to create a thriving, healthy and innovative Boston.

Rita Nieves, RN, MPH, LICSW
Interim Executive Director

**Mission:** The mission of the Boston Public Health Commission is to protect, preserve, and promote the health and well-being of all Boston Residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

**Vision:** The Boston Public Health Commission envisions a thriving Boston where all residents live healthy, fulfilling lives free of racism, poverty, violence, and other systems of oppression.
2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Great work was completed across the Boston Public Health Commission this year. This report highlights projects and accomplishments that exemplify BPHC’s internal and external collaboration, innovation, and general excellence.

NEW TOBACCO REGULATIONS

On November 25, 2019, the Board of Health adopted amendments to Boston's Youth Access Regulations to include mint, menthol and wintergreen tobacco and nicotine products in the Board's existing flavor restrictions. The vote also expands identification checking to customers of all ages and requires ID checks at the front door for all 21+ adult-only retailers. Additionally, it restricts the sale of products that attract young people to adult-only stores.

This policy success was made possible through collaboration between BPHC’s Community Initiative Bureau’s Division of Healthy Homes & Community Supports and General Counsel's Office as well as community partnerships and support from Mayor Martin J. Walsh and the Health and Human Services Cabinet.

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAUMA TEAM EXPANSION

In 2016, Mayor Walsh launched the Neighborhood Trauma Team Network (NTTN), which supports healing for residents and communities impacted by the trauma of gun violence. The NTTN includes a 24/7 hotline for all residents, with placed-based services in Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, East Boston, and Jamaica Plain anchored by a neighborhood team.

In 2019, Mayor Walsh launched a neighborhood team in Grove Hall, anchored by Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center and Project RIGHT.

The NTTN now includes a partnership of 19 healthcare and community-based organizations, and this year NTTN provided 372 residents with psychological first aid immediately following an incident of community violence.

RIZE GRANT TO STUDY RACIAL INEQUITIES

BPHC’s Research and Evaluation Office partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to assess racial differences in accessing treatment for substance use disorders following an opioid overdose. The quantitative study found a lower likelihood of treatment access for Black and Latino residents compared with White residents in Massachusetts and Boston.

BPHC, in collaboration with the Institute for Community Health, Boston University School of Public Health, and Boston Medical Center, received RIZE Massachusetts grant funding to conduct a qualitative study to build understanding of the factors impacting these racial/ethnic inequities in Boston.

The research team will conduct interviews with residents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds who recently had an opioid overdose to better understand their experience. The team will also interview members of the prevention and treatment provider community to gain additional understanding of why these racial inequities exist. These interviews of lived experience will inform policy recommendations to improve access to treatment for substance use disorders.
2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Great work was completed across the Boston Public Health Commission this year. This report highlights projects and accomplishments that exemplify BPHC’s internal and external collaboration, innovation, and general excellence.

BPHC CHNA-CHIP COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Boston CHNA-CHIP Collaborative is an initiative created by several stakeholders including community organizations, health centers, community development corporations, hospitals, and the BPHC. It is Boston’s first large-scale, city-wide Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) process. In 2019, BPHC led the two working groups, which included community engagement and secondary data.

The Office of Health Equity (OHE) led the community engagement working group and held four of the seven prioritization meetings with residents in collaboration with several community partners and City departments. Participants in the meetings were able to vote on the issues that mattered to them. The final four priority areas in Boston are: housing, financial security and mobility, behavioral health, and accessing services, with an overarching focus of achieving racial justice and health equity.

POST OVERDOSE RESPONSE TEAM

Boston’s Post Overdose Response Team, a partnership between Harm Reductionists at Recovery Services and the Boston Fire Department’s Employee Assistance Program, had a very productive year. The team, working under the State Opioid Response and FD-CARA grants, made 446 visits to Boston residences that had experienced an overdose.

The team engaged with people at 160 residences to offer support, information about harm reduction, overdose recognition and response, Narcan/naloxone, and connection to treatment. The team completed 53 family support sessions, made 18 direct placements into care, and trained 152 Boston residents in how to respond to an overdose and use Narcan. The team continues to reach out to Boston residents, make personal connections and help communities access the many resources available to support recovery for themselves and/or their friends and family.

EXTREME WEATHER AND CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS

In the last year, the Office of Public Health Preparedness (OPHP) received a grant for $465,000 from the Barr Foundation to support climate resilience work with a human-centered, people-focused approach.

Preparing the City’s residents to respond and recover from extreme weather and climate emergencies is the focal point for increasing neighborhood resiliency and establishing a Community Resilience Network.

The extreme heat and cold events of 2019 created opportunities for OPHP to build awareness skills among the priority populations that need these skills, while continuing to coordinate BPHC, city, public health and healthcare partner response and recovery and resilience efforts.
STRATEGIC PLAN

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In April of 2019, BPHC initiated its new three-year Strategic Plan with support from the Office of Accreditation and Quality Improvement. The four priority areas of the Strategic Plan are 1. Racial Justice and Health Equity 2. Workforce Development 3. Informatics and Data and 4. Collaborative Partnerships. Listed below are just a few of the accomplishments that show progress towards our four priorities from 2019.

12 Health Equity Champions recruited across the Commission

Launch of the Professional Development Steering Committee

BPHC's first Privacy Officer hired by General Counsel

Ongoing partnerships with 5 Accountable Care Organizations

RACIAL JUSTICE AND HEALTH EQUITY

EQUITABLE PROCUREMENT

In July 2019, BPHC’s Equitable Procurement working group launched an equitable procurement policy to increase the Commission’s contracting/purchasing with certified unrepresented businesses (CUBES), including minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, disability-owned, and LGBT-owned local businesses.

BPHC is partnering with the City of Boston’s Economic Development Office to share best practices, attend community events, and present to other City of Boston departments. BPHC is also a member of the City’s Inclusive Procurement Council.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

RACIAL JUSTICE FACILITATORS

12 new staff joined the Racial Justice & Health Equity Professional Development Series (PDS) Facilitation Team, which conducts BPHC’s 22 hours of required Racial Justice and Health Equity learning.

Facilitators guide staff to integrate health equity and racial justice principles and practices into all Commission work, both internal and external, to measurably reduce inequities in Boston.
CityHealth has offered the third assessment of how our nation's 40 largest cities fare with policies that impact quality of life and health. In the inaugural rating in 2017, Boston earned an overall Gold Medal Rating from CityHealth and has maintained this rating for the third consecutive year in 2019.

BPHC is proud of the work that programs and staff do every day. In 2019, this hard work resulted in various national and local awards recognizing BPHC's practices, programs, and individual staff going above and beyond to serve Boston residents.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**CITYHEALTH**

CityHealth has offered the third assessment of how our nation's 40 largest cities fare with policies that impact quality of life and health. In the inaugural rating in 2017, Boston earned an overall Gold Medal Rating from CityHealth and has maintained this rating for the third consecutive year in 2019.

**NACCHO MODEL PRACTICE**

BPHC’s Quality Improvement program was awarded the 2019 Model Practice Award by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), an award which recognizes local health practices and shares them nationally.

**SHATTUCK PUBLIC SERVICE**

The Shattuck Awards honor extraordinary City of Boston employees who go the extra distance and have committed themselves to excellence in public service. In 2019, Deborah Samuels, Operations Assistant Coordinator at Woods Mullen Shelter, was a recipient of a Henry L. Shattuck Public Service Award for her 23 years of public service.

**APHA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE**

In 2019, Helene Bednarsh, Director of the Ryan White Dental Program, received the APHA Oral Health Section John W. Knutson Distinguished Service Award. This award has been presented each year since 1982 to honor an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to improve oral health in the United States. Recipients of the award demonstrate sustained and exemplary accomplishments in the field of dental public health.

**BSL PROVIDERS OF THE YEAR**

Each year, the Metropolitan Boston EMS Council Region IV presents awards to EMS providers who have been nominated by their peers for outstanding service. In 2019, EMTs Matthew Beck and David Sirois were chosen to receive the BLS provider award, which is presented to an individual(s) functioning in the capacity of an EMT-Basic who performs meritorious service above and beyond the expectations of the profession.
The Summer Enrichment Program provides young people experiential learning opportunities designed to increase their knowledge of health and health equity.

Each year, BPHC staff teach more than 200 high school students about healthy relationships, health careers, community organizing, dropout prevention, violence prevention, and health education.

This is accomplished through internal and external partnerships with organizations such as Boston University, Boston Medical Center and Simmons University.

YOUTH MEDIA LITERACY CURRICULUM FOR SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MEDIA

Adolescents are exposed to sexually explicit media and pornography at young ages and often do not have the resources to analyze this content. This year, Start Strong, a peer leadership program focused on healthy relationships, developed a nine-session curriculum titled The Truth about Pornography with other Boston partners.

It is intended to foster conversations about critical consumption of media, increase healthy communication, and emphasize the value of consent. The curriculum is disseminated through local and national trainings. In 2019, 110 high school students and 175 adults received training in this pornography literacy curriculum.

TRAUMA RESPONSE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Boston Neighborhood Trauma Team Network (NTTN) works with community partners to support healing in families and communities impacted by community violence.

In 2019, in response to resident requests, the NTTN developed and disseminated a public health awareness campaign that has received more than seven million views. NTTN advertisements are in 12 spots at five train stations, 17 MBTA bus shelters and on Facebook.
The Community Initiatives Bureau (CIB) addresses health issues affecting every Boston resident through its neighborhood-level and home-based services. The bureau executes programming to address environmental concerns, chronic disease prevention and management, access to health care, and enforcement of citywide health regulations.

The Parent Asthma Network (PAN) engages parents of children with asthma in regular training sessions. The goal is to create a support network of parents around asthma prevention and management, where they can act as resources, or Parent Asthma Leaders (PALs), in their communities. In 2019, 70 residents participated in PAN.

The BPHC team collaborated with Health Resource in Action (HRiA) and worked closely with PALs who provide support to parents in the group and contribute to the PAN meetings.

ASTHMA PREVENTION & CONTROL

The Parent Asthma Network (PAN) engages parents of children with asthma in regular training sessions. The goal is to create a support network of parents around asthma prevention and management, where they can act as resources, or Parent Asthma Leaders (PALs), in their communities. In 2019, 70 residents participated in PAN.

The BPHC team collaborated with Health Resource in Action (HRiA) and worked closely with PALs who provide support to parents in the group and contribute to the PAN meetings.

GREEN & CLEAN CAMPAIGN

With Aetna Foundation support, the Environmental & Occupational Health Division's Safe Shops Program promoted their 50 Green & Clean-recognized businesses to encourage Bostonians to choose Green & Clean businesses and businesses to participate in Green & Clean.

In 2019, the promotional campaign generated roughly 34,364,280 impressions through ads on social media, billboards, public transportation, local newspapers, and solar bins.

In 2019, Safe Shops provided 3,413 outreach visits to business, and trained 470 workers in reducing chemical exposure and pollution.

BPHC BABY SHOWERS

Since 2016, BPHC's Injury Prevention Program, in partnership with the East Boston Community Health Center, hosted monthly "baby showers" for new and expecting parents and other caregivers.

These "baby showers" provide families with information, resources and supplies to prevent childhood home injury. In 2019, 53 people attended the baby showers. Since its inception, the program has served more than 320 families with small children.

"I have asthma, and I also have seven grandchildren who have asthma. There are a lot of children in this site that have asthma their parents should have come to this meeting.”

- PAN participant
CITY ACADEMY AND DIVERSITY INCLUSION

To increase the size and diversity of certified EMTs in the City, residents were offered City Academy scholarships for both EMT courses offered by Boston EMS in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development.

The City Academy program includes active recruitment, pre-screening, mentorship and a scholarship for the EMT course.

This year was the second round of City Academy scholarships. The program has offered 62 scholarships to Boston residents to take the EMT Training Course, which is a pre-requisite to EMT certification.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE TEAM - SQUAD 80

The Community Assistance Team, also known as Squad 80, is a two-person team that travels in an SUV and answers calls where patients have a low frequency of being transported to the emergency room. In 2019 Squad 80 responded to 2,617 incidents.

Through a City of Boston investment, Boston EMS extended the hours of operation for the Squad 80, a non-transport unit, to seven days per week.

Squad 80 frees up city ambulances, making more ambulances available for priority calls that need to get patients to the hospital. It also connects people to BPHC recovery and homeless services and other city programs.

NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Boston EMS partnered with the National Medical Education & Training Program Center Inc. to support the professional development of personnel. Boston EMTs and Paramedics are on the frontlines of keeping the City safe and healthy. This partnership is an exciting step to advance their skills and needs.
The Homeless Services Bureau provides emergency shelter, workforce development, and housing services to individuals experiencing homelessness in Boston with the goal of making homelessness stays rare, brief and one-time.

**Interim Bureau Director:**

Stephanie Acker
617-534-2554

---

**HOUSING FIRST INITIATIVE**

Building on years of work and new funding, Homeless Services launched a housing first initiative to give guests clear pathways to housing and services.

The plan was formulated through all-staff listening sessions, meetings with guests and spearheaded by a cross-functional team. This initiative will ensure fewer first-time guests at BPHC shelters, shorter guest stays in shelters, and lower rates of guests returning from housing back to homelessness.

---

**HOUSINGSAVINGS ACCOUNTS**

In partnership with Friends of Boston’s Homeless and MassBay Credit Union and with new funding from Mayor Walsh, Homeless Services launched a Housing Savings Account pilot program.

The program allows individuals who are experiencing homelessness to enroll in a low barrier savings account. Once individuals find permanent housing, they receive a $2 match for every $3 saved during the program.

In the first 3 months of the pilot, 33 individuals opened savings accounts.

---

**EMERGENCY SHELTER ADVISORY GROUPS**

In 2019, Consumer Advisory Groups were relaunched at Woods Mullen and 112 Southampton Street Shelters.

Every week, 6 to 8 shelter guests gather to tackle tough problems and work with staff to identify solutions to improve the shelter.

The advisory groups know how overwhelming it can be to arrive at the shelter for the first time, so they created “Welcome Books” in English and Spanish to give new guests an overview of shelter life.
The Infectious Disease Control Bureau works with diverse populations to reduce the impact of infectious diseases, prevent morbidity associated with these diseases, and create healthier lives for the residents of Boston. Work within the Infectious Disease Bureau includes disease surveillance, investigation of cases and outbreaks, funding a continuum of HIV/AIDS-related education and care through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act, and community and provider education related to communicable diseases.

**COMMUNITY BASED PREVENTION FUNDING**

The Education and Community Engagement Division awarded $1,450,000 to eleven community agencies to provide education about and prevent human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Hepatitis C (HCV) and sexually transmitted infections (STI).

Agencies with strong community ties provide culturally competent programming to decrease rates of infection, increase testing, and promote overall wellness.

In the first three months of funding, agencies provided a total of 758 interventions.

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MINI GRANTS**

The Ryan White Clinical Quality Management program awarded $152,000 in Quality Improvement (QI) Mini Grants to 17 sub-recipient agencies that receive Ryan White funding to serve people living with HIV.

The QI Mini Grant initiative, supporting quality improvement projects geared to improve health outcomes, was piloted to address barriers that sub-recipients encounter with initiating and completing QI projects. Seven agencies have already completed 20 QI projects.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASE RESPONSE**

In October 2019, the Communicable Disease Control Division investigated two confirmed cases of meningococcal disease, which occurred in children. Both children attended different childcare programs that provide services for families who are experiencing homelessness.

Meningococcal disease prevention activities included coordinating post exposure prophylaxis for 76 close contacts, expanding meningococcal vaccine recommendations and educating residents and childcare providers.

BPHC, in collaboration with multiple clinical providers, the childcare programs and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), offered a meningococcal vaccine clinic for high-risk individuals.

**Interim Bureau Director:**

Jennifer Lo, MD

617-534-5395
NARCAN IN CITY BUILDINGS

In July 2019, Mayor Walsh announced that the City of Boston would be installing opioid overdose rescue kits in municipal buildings.

Thanks to a donation from Aetna and a partnership with Boston Fire Department, the Overdose Prevention team at Recovery Services, was able to equip Boston Public Library branches, City Hall buildings and locations across the BPHC campus with rescue kits and overdose prevention trainings.

These efforts have also included local businesses, City departments and community partners. As of January 2020, Recovery services has provided more than 80 kits across the city and counting.

MASS CASS 2.0
PUBLIC HEALTH EFFORTS AND EXPANSION OF OUTREACH

In October 2019, Mayor Walsh launched the Mass/Cass 2.0 Strategic Plan, which works to address public health, public safety, and quality-of-life issues in the Massachusetts Ave/Melnea Cass neighborhood.

This Plan brings together over a dozen City departments, including Recovery Services, EMS, and the Homeless Services Bureau, as well as a task force of community stakeholders, to better coordinate the City's efforts in the area.

Since the launch of the plan, Recovery Services has doubled their Street Outreach Team, expanded hours at the Engagement Center, added staff to the Mobile Sharps Team, and launched a program to develop housing plans for chronically homeless individuals.
BPHC BY THE NUMBERS

**Accreditation and Quality Improvement**
- 70% of new staff introduced to Quality Improvement
- 91% of participants met all learning objectives
- 94% satisfaction with training

**Administration and Finance**
- 4,311 help desk tickets resolved
- 309 people hired
- 921 contracts processed
- 14 new grants
- $3,786,770 distributed to Community Health Centers

**Child, Adolescent & Family Health Services**
- 150 students exposed to health careers through the Boston Area Health Education Center
- 900 mothers, children, and families provided services to support infant and maternal health by Healthy Baby Healthy Child
- 188 students provided dropout prevention case management by the Youth Development Network
- 19,745 residents engaged in Villages in Progress, violence prevention events and activities
- 7,454 clients offered services by partner agencies of the Family Justice Center

**Community Initiatives**
- 973 permits issued to tobacco regulated businesses
- 90 Property Owners Trained in Moderate Risk Deleading Techniques
- 2,411 permits issued to regulated businesses
- 6,000 Summer Fitness Series attendees
- 13,540 taxi vouchers distributed through the Cancer Ride Program
- 3,275 new smoke free housing units
- 1,185 Community Events through Mayor’s Health Line

**Consortium for Professional Development and Community Health Education Center**
- 92 Community Health Workers completed core competency training
- Placed 59 interns from 17 schools in BPHC programs to introduce them to on-the-ground public health work
- 226 opportunities listed on the Learning Calendar
- 52.5% of staff surveyed attended a professional development activity
BPHC BY THE NUMBERS

**Boston Emergency Medical Services**
- 86,570 patient transports
- 840 special events where EMS provided medical coverage
- 127,802 responses to clinical incidents
- 159,346 ambulance responses
- 97% Patient satisfaction rating
- 336 referrals to homeless and recovery services

**Homeless Services**
- 135 individuals participated in workforce development job experience program
- 668 individuals sheltered each night
- 359 individuals permanently housed, including 73 individuals who were chronically homeless
- 264 individuals provided with in home case management services to prevent a return to homelessness
- 691,170 meals provided through the Serving Ourselves Kitchen
- 3,139 hours of service and $49,225 in donations through our volunteer program

**Homeless Services**
- 234,376 shelter nights provided
- 4,900 individuals provided emergency shelter, housing services, and workforce development
- 41 individuals secured competitive job placements through the Serving Ourselves Career Center
- 14,950 patient visits for on-site medical, recovery and behavioral health services

**Infectious Disease**
- 65 community events across Boston
- 482 residents attended presentations or workshops on infectious disease
- 3,983 cases of flu tracked
- 5,451 clients served by Ryan White Program providers
- 17,127 infectious disease brochures distributed in Boston's top six languages on influenza, STI, Food Safety, Mosquito and Tick Bite, and Recreational Water Illness
- $13,204,973 of Ryan White funds distributed to 32 organizations in the Boston EMA
- 13,176 investigations of reports of communicable diseases, exposures, and outbreaks
- 88% of Ryan White clients demonstrated viral suppression of HIV

**Office of Health Equity**
- 12 Health Equity Champions
- Three Equity Change Projects completed
- Three Stand Against Racism Events
- Four Community Meetings held

**Public Health Preparedness**
- 476 hours of activation in the Medical Intelligence Center
- 1132 volunteers in the Medical Reserve Corp
- 4,266 community members reached across 51 events

**Recovery Services**
- 10,000 individuals served by AHOPE Drug User Health program
- 14,930 walk-in visits at PAATHs for individuals seeking to overcome SUD
- 18,852 Naloxone Kits distributed resulting in 2,437 reports of reversals
- 446 home visits by the Post-Overdose Prevention Team
- 584,831 syringes returned at a 119% collection rate
- 813 clients admitted to BPHC residential treatment programs

**Research and Evaluation**
- 111 data requests from internal and external partners
- 12 publications
- 39 presentations
The 2019 Annual Report of the Boston Public Health Commission was produced by the Boston Public Health Commission's Executive Office. All materials in this document are in the public domain and may be reproduced and copied without permission. However, citation to their source is appreciated:

*Boston Public Health Commission, Published February 2020*

Inquiries regarding facts and figures can be directed to:

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

*Please consider the environment before printing this report.*

BPHC would like to recognize Brianne Gilkes and Taylor Jolly for their significant contributions to the writing, editing, and design of this report.

@HEALTHYBOSTON