

NEW BEDFORD 2019 CHIP

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

**NEW BEDFORD HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH'S COLLEGE OF NURSING**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
4	OVERVIEW OF PRIORITY AREAS
6	PRIORITY AREA: SUBSTANCE ABUSE
8	PRIORITY AREA: MENTAL HEALTH
11	PRIORITY AREA: ACCESS TO CARE
14	PRIORITY AREA: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
16	PRIORITY AREA: HOUSING
18	PRIORITY AREA: EDUCATION
20	PRIORITY AREA: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION
23	PRIORITY AREA: SAFETY
25	PRIORITY AREA: CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS
27	REFERENCES

The New Bedford Health Department proudly presents the New Bedford Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The foundation of the CHIP was formed through a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that presented city data based on health indicators along with social determinants of health. The CHIP identifies the current health priorities in New Bedford based on data from the CHNA as well as fifteen key community informant interviews and focus groups. As part of the final phase of the CHNA, the CHIP helps to reveal community needs in addition to defining priority areas to focus strategic action. Recommendations from the CHIP include interventions through education, policy implementation, and collaboration with local organizations for the promotion of health throughout the community. This CHIP will be an ongoing process for the residents of New Bedford and will provide realistic plans with achievable outcomes and goals for the betterment of the entire community.

We greatly appreciate the insights of many key informants in the New Bedford community that assisted us in this process. Community organizations that participated in interviews or focus groups include:

New Bedford Health Department Nursing Division

New Bedford Public School Department

New Bedford Waterfront Personnel

Economic Development Office

Immigration Services

New Bedford Housing Authority

Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force

Greater New Bedford Community Health Center

Coastline Elderly

People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE)

City of New Bedford's Human Resources Office

City of New Bedford's Mayor's Office

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Each day, more than 130 people in the United States die from an opioid overdose (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2019). The city of New Bedford has been significantly impacted by this national crisis. Massachusetts has enacted legislation to reduce opioid dependence in the state, and New Bedford has developed its own initiatives. The Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force has implemented multiple effective strategies along with other community partners. However, substance abuse remains a prevalent issue in New Bedford, and key community informants have voiced their concerns on the impact of this epidemic. Healthy People 2020 includes objectives not only to increase access to substance abuse treatment, but also to focus on upstream preventative interventions.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health has many negative impacts on individuals in every stage of life. The World Health Organization (2013) states, “Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time” (par. 4). Mental health is vital to the overall well-being of individuals. Socio-economic pressures, traumas such as violence, discrimination, unhealthy lifestyles, poor physical health, societal changes, and genetic factors are associated with poor mental health (WHO, 2013). Healthy People 2020 identifies mental health and mental disorders as a priority topic and includes multiple objectives for mental health status improvement and treatment expansion.

ACCESS TO CARE

People who do not have access to healthcare are at greater risk of having poor overall health and negative health outcomes (New Bedford CHNA). Access to healthcare has a direct impact on a person’s quality of life. Quality healthcare services include promoting and maintaining health, preventing and managing disease, reducing unnecessary disability and premature death, and achieving health equity for all (Healthy People 2020).

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Economic opportunities gravely impact the health status of a population. Individuals with less education and low skill levels are more likely to have job insecurity, little or no health benefits, low wages, and physically demanding jobs (Burgard & Lin, 2013). Healthy People 2020 identifies employment as a key issue in social determinants of health and has developed objectives to increase economic opportunities.

HOUSING

Housing instability significantly impacts the health of a population. Cost-burdened households are forced to forfeit basic needs and limited rental markets force people to live in substandard housing (Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2016). Healthy People 2020 identifies housing as a key social determinant of health in their Economic Stability area and provides objectives for improvement.

EDUCATION

Education has a profound impact on the health of a population. Educational status has been consistently identified as a major predictor of health outcomes (Zimmerman et al., 2015). Healthy People 2020 highlights education as a key social determinant of health and includes multiple objectives to increase educational attainment.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

Obesity has been linked to many serious diseases and health conditions including but not limited to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease, stroke, sleep apnea, mental health and many more (CDC, 2015). Overweight or obese children and adolescents are at a greater risk for the development of these diseases (Healthy People 2020). Data from the New Bedford CHNA found that the rate of obesity in New Bedford is 33.8% compared to 23.9% in the state of Massachusetts and 28.7% of adults nationally. Findings also showed that 36.4% of New Bedford residents reported no physical activity in their leisure time in the past month (NB CHNA). Regular physical activity, good nutrition, and maintaining a healthy body weight are noted to be the backbone of health in every stage of life (Healthy People 2020).

SAFETY

Crime rate in New Bedford is overall 28% higher than the national average, and out of 100,000 people, there are 9.65 crimes that occur daily (NB Area Vibes). The chances of becoming a victim of a violent crime in New Bedford are 1/150 compared to the state average of 1/279 (New Bedford CHNA). New Bedford community residents have a violent crime rate that is 86% higher than the Massachusetts average (NB Area Vibes). According to the surgeon general, “health and wellness are influenced by the places in which people live, learn, work, and play”. Supportive structures, such as violence free places to be active, are vital for the health and safety of a community.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States are at a disproportionate risk of lacking access to health care, being uninsured, and experiencing worse health outcomes (Healthy People 2020). Culturally competent care is a foundational step towards reducing these health disparities (AHRQ, 2016).

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“drugs have been an issue in our community”

“there is not enough substance abuse treatment or counseling available”

OVERVIEW

Each day, more than 130 people in the United States die from an opioid overdose (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2019). The city of New Bedford has been significantly impacted by this national crisis. Massachusetts has enacted legislation to reduce opioid dependence in the state, and New Bedford has developed its own initiatives. The Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force has implemented multiple effective strategies along with other community partners. However, substance abuse remains a prevalent issue in New Bedford, and key community informants have voiced their concerns on the impact of this epidemic. Healthy People 2020 includes objectives not only to increase access to substance abuse treatment, but also to focus on upstream preventative interventions.

AIM

Reduce substance abuse in New Bedford to create a safer and healthier community.

OBJECTIVE 1 Decrease the annual number of opioid overdose deaths in New Bedford by 15% (Healthy People 2020).

RATIONALE

Decrease the annual number of opioid overdose deaths in New Bedford by 15% (Healthy People 2020).

Fishing industry workers are at high-risk for work-related injuries that may put them at an increased risk of developing substance use disorders (Walter et al., 2018).

STRATEGIES

Collaborate with the Greater New Bedford Opioid Task force to increase the number of naloxone trainings in the community by 10%.

Partner with at least two neighborhood groups to provide overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND) programs (SAMHSA, 2018).

Establish a fully immersed health care provider in the fishing community who is able to respond to the specific needs of those in this community and their families.

OBJECTIVE 2 Increase the number of people who report needing substance abuse treatment and receiving this treatment by 10% (Healthy People 2020).

RATIONALE

In 2016, approximately 20 million people age 12 or older reported needing treatment for substance abuse, but only 3.8 million people actually received treatment (American Addiction Centers, 2018). There are many barriers to accessing substance abuse treatment such as reluctance to seek treatment, lack of health insurance, or lack of available treatment options. Multiple key community informants noted the lack of resources for substance abuse treatment in New Bedford compared to the growing need for these resources.

STRATEGIES

Train additional multilingual recovery coach(es) to support people recovering from substance addiction and prevent relapse.

Increase the number of mental health providers by funding tele-health consultation services (American Addiction Centers, 2018).

Increase access to medication (assisted) treatment in the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center.

Improve follow-up after inpatient or outpatient substance abuse treatment programs through the use of peer support workers (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018).

Advocate for state and federal legislation that will improve access to substance abuse treatment, such as insurance reimbursement incentives and insurance reform (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018).

OBJECTIVE 3 Focus on prevention of substance abuse through education and outreach to New Bedford youth.

RATIONALE

Alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco are substances most commonly used by adolescents. The National Youth Tobacco Survey (2018) showed a 78% increase in e-cigarettes use among high school students from 2017 to 2018. Key community informants are concerned at the sudden and alarming increase in e-cigarette use among students in New Bedford.

STRATEGIES

Support the initiation of mindfulness programs for students in New Bedford Public schools to reduce stress and promote healthy coping strategies. (Healthy People 2020)

Support and enforce policies that restrict the sale of e-cigarettes to minors.

Provide education on the dangers of e-cigarette use to New Bedford youth and parents through in-school class presentations, informational sessions or health fairs at schools.

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“Immigrants are living in constant fear and self-medicate”

“I’d say that mental illness is the core of the opioid problem”

“If they don’t fix the mental health crisis, they aren’t going to fix the opioid crisis”

“There’s not enough clinicians or recovery coaches”.

OVERVIEW

Mental health has many negative impacts on individuals in every stage of life. The World Health Organization (2013) states, “Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time” (par. 4). Mental health is vital to the overall well-being of individuals. Socio-economic pressures, traumas such as violence, discrimination, unhealthy lifestyles, poor physical health, societal changes, and genetic factors are associated with poor mental health (WHO, 2013). Healthy People 2020 identifies mental health and mental disorders as a priority topic and includes multiple objectives for mental health status improvement and treatment expansion.

AIM

Reduce substance abuse in New Bedford to create a safer and healthier community.

OBJECTIVE 1 Increase the number of culturally competent mental health providers and counselors by 10% by 2024.

RATIONALE

In 2015, 18.3% of New Bedford adults reported poor mental health for at least 14 days compared to the national average of 11.6% (New Bedford CHNA). A number of participants in key informant interviews revealed there are many barriers that limit access to mental health such as long waiting times, lack of mental health providers, and limited knowledge in mental health treatment. The World Health Organization's Mental Health Action Plan 2013 – 2020 includes one strategy that suggests preparing informal mental health providers and health professionals with the skills they need to better manage mental health illnesses (WHO, 2013).

STRATEGIES

Support and promote the New Bedford Education Department's trauma-informed school program to train more teachers and school nurses in helping students cope with trauma.

Partner with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center to develop training programs that integrate mental health services into primary care (SAMHSA; WHO, 2013).

Promote careers within the mental health field by partnering with community organizations to educate and train more local mental health counselors.

OBJECTIVE 2 By 2024, increase access to rapid and emergency mental health treatment that services 20,000 individuals.

RATIONALE

Participants in key informant interviews revealed there are not enough emergency response treatment programs in place for mental illness crisis. Key informants have said, "There are not enough behavioral and mental health services for students. Students are waiting up to three months on a waiting list to receive these services". "The fishing industry is in need of fully immersed health care providers".

STRATEGIES

Partner with Southcoast Hospitals Group to extend hours and expand the community sites of their mobile health van care delivery.

Devise a plan to increase prompt and professional response to mental illness crisis for workers on fishing boats by collaborating with Fishing Partnership Services.

Implement workplace mental health support programs by training employers and employees how to recognize employees in distress and react accordingly (National Prevention Council, 2010).

Collaborate with the New Bedford School Department to implement an evidence-based training for parents on how to recognize signs of mental health crisis in their children and how to provide support.

OBJECTIVE 3 Engage 20,000 residents in a training to reduce stigma surrounding mental health by 2024.**RATIONALE**

Key informants expressed many concerns regarding mental health stigma especially in the immigrant population and the workers in the fishing industry. The WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013 – 2020 suggests informational campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health.

STRATEGIES

Develop and implement a school-based evidence-based training targeting all young children and young adults in New Bedford public schools to increase knowledge of mental health and reduce stigma (Adapted from the Worcester CHIP)

Partner with community organizations to implement a public awareness campaign that focuses on reducing mental health stigma for the adult population (adapted from the Worcester CHIP)

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“We need accessibility to health when it is needed”

“Families need health access”

“Healthy students graduate”

“There are not enough nurses to go around”

“School-aged children do not have primary care physicians or get preventative care”

OVERVIEW

People who do not have access to healthcare are at greater risk of having poor overall health and negative health outcomes (New Bedford CHNA). Access to healthcare has a direct impact on a person’s quality of life. Quality healthcare services include promoting and maintaining health, preventing and managing disease, reducing unnecessary disability and premature death, and achieving health equity for all (Healthy People 2020).

AIM

Create an accessible environment in New Bedford that provides and promotes health services for all residents that are culturally responsive and adaptive to the needs of the community.

OBJECTIVE 1 Increase the capacity of the health department and the school system to provide comprehensive health services to New Bedford youth.

RATIONALE

Multiple key informants emphasized the need to establish a school-based health center in New Bedford. This school-based model can improve health equity among children and adolescents by reducing barriers to accessing preventative care and treatment (School-Based Health Alliance, 2018). Other key informants highlighted the ability of the health department to enhance the health of the community through provision of immunization services. According to the CDC (2019), local health departments are key resources for this essential preventative service.

STRATEGIES

Collaborate with the school system to advocate for and work towards establishing a school-based health center in New Bedford that will comprehensively address the needs of students by providing preventative care, screening services, mental health care, and referrals.

Increase the capacity and resources of the nursing division at the health department to allow for provision of vaccine clinics that will support the needs of the entire community.

OBJECTIVE 2 Increase multilingual primary care clinician availability for the residents of New Bedford.

RATIONALE

New Bedford is a culturally diverse city and is in need of culturally competent care. According to the Census Bureau, as of July 1, 2018, 20% of New Bedford residents are Hispanic or of Latino descent and 4% are a combination of two or more race categories. 37.4% of the population of New Bedford speaks a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau).

STRATEGIES

Develop initiatives that support the current workforce and develop strategies to enhance recruitment and promote retainment of primary care providers (SHRM, 2019).

Provide culturally competent education for the current and future healthcare workforce including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, dentists, and mental health clinicians based on the needs of New Bedford residents.

Promote culturally diverse awareness of free screening services throughout the community to encourage preventative care.

OBJECTIVE 3 Incorporate multilingual community health workers and patient advocates into the public health system for the residents of New Bedford.

STRATEGIES

Develop a formal cadre of culturally immersed and competent community health care workers in New Bedford to engage residents' participation in health care and education.

Provide health education and first aid training for the current and future front-line community health workers based on the health care trends and priority areas of New Bedford residents.

OBJECTIVE 4 Improve communication through the enhancement of health literacy for the residents of New Bedford and by attending to literacy level of all health education programs.

RATIONALE

The role health literacy plays within access to care is profound. Health literacy is defined as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, only 12% of adults are proficient in health literacy. One-third of adults in the United States have difficulty following directions on a prescription bottle or keeping up with an immunization chart. Key informants within the culturally diverse city of New Bedford cited several ideas for collaboration with programs in the community.

STRATEGIES

Improve cultural and linguistic competency of healthcare professionals to contribute to health literacy (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Build partnerships within the community to help develop and provide culturally diverse guidance and support.

Provide accurate and accessible health and safety information throughout the community to promote good health and life-long learning (National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy).

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“We need to get more people interested in a trade and get more people comfortable with preparing for work”

“Economic opportunity is the key to improving the community”

OVERVIEW

Economic opportunities gravely impact the health status of a population. Individuals with less education and low skill levels are more likely to have job insecurity, little or no health benefits, low wages, and physically demanding jobs (Burgard & Lin, 2013). Healthy People 2020 identifies employment as a key issue in social determinants of health and has developed objectives to increase economic opportunities.

AIM

Improve population health by providing residents with more job opportunities that include healthy and safe conditions and provide stable and livable working wages.

OBJECTIVE 1 Increase the number of employment resources to population of New Bedford.

RATIONALE

New Bedford lags behind the region as a whole in most socioeconomic metrics” (from the New Bedford CHNA). In 2017, Massachusetts had a 4.0 % unemployment rate, while New Bedford had an unemployment rate of 5.7% (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2018). Participants in key informant interviews said, “There are job opportunities and skill attainment programs out there, but people don’t know where to find them”.

STRATEGIES

Develop a formal cadre of culturally immersed and competent community health care workers in New Bedford to engage residents’ participation in health care and education.

Provide health education and first aid training for the current and future front-line community health workers based on the health care trends and priority areas of New Bedford residents.

OBJECTIVE 2 Increase the number of participants enrolled in English as Second Language educational opportunities by 25% by 2024.

RATIONALE

In 2017, New Bedford had the highest percent of residents in the region reporting limited English proficiency at 17.4 % (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2018). Participants in key informant interviews said, “There are many people here from other countries that want to work but can’t because of the language barrier”.

STRATEGIES

Partner with and support the New Bedford Economic Development Office and local community colleges in promoting more English as a Second Language programs to the public.

Distribute a translated resource guide of ESL classes to parents of children in public schools and to families and patients at local hospitals (adapted from Worcester CHIP).

OBJECTIVE 3 Increase support and services in transportation and childcare that allow New Bedford residents to stay employed.

RATIONALE

In 2017, 70.3% of New Bedford parents of children under 6 years old are in the labor force (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2018). Key informants have said that child care is a huge issue for working and single parents. “Some are eligible for free childcare for up to one year. After the year is up, they pay market value which is a huge expense”. “We need night time bus services”. “All long-term care and rehabilitation facilities have no bus services after 6”.

STRATEGIES

Encourage local businesses and employers to provide more on-site childcare (Gullekson, 2014).

Partner with the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority advisory board to develop a plan for transportation services for underserved populations (adapted from Worcester CHIP).

OBJECTIVE 4 Implement institutional and city-level policies to increase employment opportunities and retainment.

RATIONALE

In 2017, while the Massachusetts mean household income average was \$74,167, the median household income of New Bedford residents was \$40,626. Increasing livable wages can reduce reliance on government welfare programs. Many families rely on government assistance because employers don’t pay enough to sustain their family’s basic needs (Konigsburg, 2017). Key informants have said, “Many New Bedford residents are working two or three jobs to provide for their families.”

STRATEGIES

Lobby at the political level for the city councilors and the mayor to advocate for more livable wages.

Partner with local businesses to adopt policies that hire local residents (Anchor Institutions, 2018).

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“We have a waiting list of over 4,000 people to get housing. Waiting time could be anywhere between from six months to ten years.”

“People can’t afford their rent.”

“There aren’t enough homeless shelters and programs in place. It is really difficult to access shelters without having gone through the channels.”

OVERVIEW

Housing instability significantly impacts the health of a population. Cost-burdened households are forced to forfeit basic needs and limited rental markets force people to live in substandard housing (Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2016). Healthy People 2020 identifies housing as a key social determinant of health in their Economic Stability area and provides objectives for improvement.

AIM

To collaborate with more organizations that provide housing assistance to increase access to safe and affordable housing and enforce building codes of substandard housing.

OBJECTIVE 1 Improve substandard housing available to the New Bedford population.

RATIONALE

In 2017, 102 occupied housing units did not have complete plumbing facilities and 302 did not have complete kitchen facilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Participants in key informant interviews have said, “Some landlords do not comply with housing rules unless they are forced to by the courts and even then, they still don’t comply 100%”.

STRATEGIES

Collaborate with local landlord associations to educate landlords on the importance of complying with health codes to ensure a safe housing stock (adapted from New Bedford 2020 City Master Plan).

Promote the importance of safe lead removal and provide more resources to lead removal.

OBJECTIVE 2 Increase accessibility to more affordable housing in the New Bedford community by 2024.

RATIONALE

Key informants have said that New Bedford residents are living paycheck to paycheck to afford a roof over their heads. In 2017, 49.9% of New Bedford residents paying rent paid more than 30% of their household income on rent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Households are considered income burdened when they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs (Baily et al., 2015).

STRATEGIES

Support and promote the New Bedford YouthBuild Program and the City of New Bedford Office of Community Development to build more affordable housing units.

Create one resource center that provides information on community outreach programs (Mass.gov, 2018).

Partner with New Bedford PACE to provide financial assistance and housing search assistance through the Housing Services Program (adapted from PACE Strategic Plan).

OBJECTIVE 3 Decrease the rate of homelessness in New Bedford by 10% by 2024.

RATIONALE

“In 2015, in the New Bedford Continuum of Care, the total count of homeless people was 437” (Southcoast Urban Indicators Project, 2018). Key stakeholders have said, “You can’t access homeless shelters without calling the hotline. It gets people on list and helps find community resources to help, but that process can take a long time”.

STRATEGIES

Collaborate with community organizations, such as New Bedford PACE and Coastline Medical, to identify households that are at risk for losing their housing.

Support and promote homeless prevention programs such as the Continuum of Care developed by the New Bedford Homeless Service Provider Network (New Bedford Homeless Service Providers Network, 2019).

Collaborate with the New Bedford Housing Authority and other local organizations to transform and expand emergency response systems that provide rapid rehousing to people at risk for becoming homeless.

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“We need to change the way we deliver education. If there is a key out of poverty it is education, but it has to be across the board for every child regardless of race, neighborhood, or disabilities”.

OVERVIEW

Education has a profound impact on the health of a population. Educational status has been consistently identified as a major predictor of health outcomes (Zimmerman et al., 2015). Healthy People 2020 highlights education as a key social determinant of health and includes multiple objectives to increase educational attainment.

AIM

Support the efforts of the New Bedford Public School Department and other local organizations to promote student success and increase educational attainment for all members of the community.

OBJECTIVE 1 Increase the proportion of New Bedford students who graduate high school four years after starting 9th grade by 10%.

RATIONALE

New Bedford’s high school graduation rate was 76% in 2018, which is the highest it has been in 12 years (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019). However, this rate is still lower than the statewide average of 87.8% in 2018. The National Dropout Prevention Center encourages strategies such as family engagement, school and community collaboration, and alternative schooling to increase graduation rates.

STRATEGIES

Support and promote programs for family engagement, such as the Family Institute for Student Success.

Provide internships, vocational training, and career building opportunities for students to encourage the pursuit of higher education and earn certifications for employment (Siegel Robertson, Smith, & Rinka, 2017).

Increase access to after school programs that provide creative and engaging academic enrichment opportunities (Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2018).

OBJECTIVE 2 Increase the accessibility of higher education in the New Bedford community.

RATIONALE

New Bedford has an overall lower educational attainment level compared to surrounding towns and state averages. Approximately 73% of New Bedford residents age 25 and older have a high school diploma or GED equivalent, compared to 90% in Massachusetts overall. Approximately 17.1% of New Bedford residents age 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 42% in Massachusetts overall. (Data retrieved from U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2018)

STRATEGIES

Establish an academic health department partnership with the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth to enhance public health education and training.

Collaborate with New Bedford PACE to increase access to GED preparation classes and vouchers for certification programs and college courses.

OBJECTIVE 3 Increase the presence of nurses in the community and within the schools to promote wellness through health education.

RATIONALE

The knowledge and competencies of the public health nurse “allows them to take a leadership role to assess assets and needs of communities and populations and propose solutions in partnerships” (Kulbok et al., 2012).

STRATEGIES

Increase staff in the nursing division of the health department to allow time for community-wide health education.

Collaborate with New Bedford Public Schools to provide health information clinics to parents and students on topics relevant to the needs of the community.

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“We have an issue with obesity in the schools.”

“There is a lot of food insecurity, a better screening process is needed.”

“People don’t know about programs like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).”

“The only time some kids eat is while they are at school.”

OVERVIEW

Obesity has been linked to many serious diseases and health conditions including but not limited to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease, stroke, sleep apnea, mental health and many more (CDC, 2015). Overweight or obese children and adolescents are at a greater risk for the development of these diseases (Healthy People 2020). Data from the New Bedford CHNA found that the rate of obesity in New Bedford is 33.8% compared to 23.9% in the state of Massachusetts and 28.7% of adults nationally. Findings also showed that 36.4% of New Bedford residents reported no physical activity in their leisure time in the past month (NB CHNA). Regular physical activity, good nutrition, and maintaining a healthy body weight are noted to be the backbone of health in every stage of life (Healthy People 2020).

AIM

Ensure access to good nutrition and physical activity to promote and maintain healthy body weight to decrease the risk of developing serious health problems.

OBJECTIVE 1 Increase accessibility to healthy foods by promoting participation in programs such as SNAP, WIC, and the National School Lunch program.

RATIONALE

The provision of food security programs such as SNAP, WIC, and the National School Lunch program contribute to the decrease in food insecurity. According to Healthy People 2020, adolescents showed low vegetable and fruit intake averaging to less than 1.1 times a day (Healthy People 2020). Low fruit and vegetable consumption paired with little to no physical activity has led to an increase in obesity (Healthy People 2020). With alarming obesity percentages linked to New Bedford residents, the use of programs such as SNAP and WIC will provide healthier eating options to those with lower incomes.

STRATEGIES

Provide more enrollment opportunities for the residents of New Bedford in programs such as SNAP and WIC.

Increase access and affordability of fresh and healthy foods (Mass in Motion).

Promote the use of SNAP and WIC programs at New Bedford Farmers Markets (adapted from Worcester CHIP).

Strengthen food insecurity screening assessments at schools and primary care offices.

OBJECTIVE 2 Increase the daily consumption of fruits and vegetables by providing education on healthful benefits of good nutrition.

RATIONALE

Fast foods have been noted to have high fat and energy density along with low fiber, and they have been positively associated with obesity risk (NIH, 2017). Children and adolescents who eat a healthful diet maintain healthier weights, reach normal growth, and develop strong immune systems (Healthy People 2020). According to the CDC, a healthy eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salts, and added sugars (CDC, 2019). Improving access to fresh, healthy foods in the New Bedford community will enhance nutrition while improving the overall health of the community.

STRATEGIES

Increase access to fresh, healthy foods by providing strong incentives to both producers and consumers.

Build an environment that provides the New Bedford community with healthy food choices at lower costs.

Provide community education regarding portion control, what healthy eating options are, and the impact of caloric intake.

OBJECTIVE 3 Promote physical activity within the town of New Bedford by providing safe access opportunities for the community.**RATIONALE**

Physical activity can help people stay at a healthy weight or even lose weight if needed (Harvard T Chan School of Public Health). The recommended amount of physical activity for those ages 6-17 is 60 minutes daily. For adults, 150-300 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise weekly is recommended (Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans DPHP). Increased sedentary behavior has been linked to an increase in heart disease, therefore, the first guideline noted in the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans is “move more sit less” (DPHP). Promoting physical activity in New Bedford would bring overall benefits to the community, including a decrease in prevalence of obesity along with an improvement in diseases linked to sedentary lifestyles.

STRATEGIES

Develop a walkable community and ensure public safety (Southcoast Urban Indicators Project).

Enhance safety and access to outdoor activity by improving walking, biking, and traffic safety (Southcoast Urban Indicators Project).

Build an outdoor environment that promotes healthy activity throughout the community, such as walking and biking.

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“Middle school bullying is a particularly bad problem, no one does anything, we need a robust after school program.”

“Can’t call the police because they are afraid...”

OVERVIEW

Crime rate in New Bedford is overall 28% higher than the national average, and out of 100,000 people, there are 9.65 crimes that occur daily (NB Area Vibes). The chances of becoming a victim of a violent crime in New Bedford are 1/150 compared to the state average of 1/279 (New Bedford CHNA). New Bedford community residents have a violent crime rate that is 86% higher than the Massachusetts average (NB Area Vibes). According to the surgeon general, “health and wellness are influenced by the places in which people live, learn, work, and play”. Supportive structures, such as violence free places to be active, are vital for the health and safety of a community.

AIM

Establish a safe and crime-free community environment where all New Bedford residents, including school-aged residents, feel secure and respected.

OBJECTIVE 1 Decrease the violent crime rate by 10% by 2022 in the city of New Bedford.

RATIONALE

A team effort is required in order to keep a neighborhood safe. Neighborhood safety fosters a safe community (safehome.org). Decreasing violent crime in the community of New Bedford will start with modifiable improvements in the environment. According to Healthy People 2020, injury and violence prevention should focus on changing social norms regarding the acceptability of violence.

STRATEGIES

Implement a neighborhood watch by engaging the residents and collaborating with the local police department.

Execute recruiting practices for the police department to enhance community policing presence in the community.

Increase police participation in the community to establish trust and presence (NB Police Department Strategic Plan).

Create and build a positive community and law enforcement relationship for the residents of New Bedford (adapted from Worcester CHIP).

OBJECTIVE 2 Create violent-free places where the residents of New Bedford can be active and feel safe.

RATIONALE

Safe outdoor space within the community enhances livelihood and promotes safety. Lack of access to safe spaces for outdoor activities related to violence is linked to mental health problems and poor physical health (NEEFUSA). As noted in the City Master Plan of New Bedford 2020, “well-located and diverse open space and recreational systems are essential” to the success and sustainability of the community.

STRATEGIES

Increase safety and access to public parks for all residents in the city of New Bedford.

Promote the use of green space and public spaces to strengthen community connection and encourage unison for the residents of New Bedford.

Provide initiatives and funding efforts to support free activities that promote healthy and safe behaviors.

OBJECTIVE 3 Increase after-school programs to promote youth safety and encourage students to work together in safety issues.

RATIONALE

Empowerment of youth through after-school programs promotes safety, physical activity, and health. Decreasing the amount of unsupervised time youth have after school by providing after-school programs can provide shelter from unsafe environments and decrease the amount of time spent in unsupervised settings (crimesolutions.org). Safe and supervised public spaces like schools or parks allows for free time to be filled with constructive activities (adapted from Worcester CHIP).

STRATEGIES

Implement initiatives for after-school activities that promote youth development.

Enhance and promote street outreach and community engagement programs that encourage employment and education.

Continue work with the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) to promote public safety (SSYI United Way).

Promote education and support employment to under-resourced families to enhance opportunity and decrease crime (adapted from Worcester CHIP).

QUOTES FROM
KEY INFORMANTS

“New Bedford schools are culturally diverse and there are many barriers for these children.”

“Immigrants are living in fear of getting deported. It is causing increased stress.”

“Language is a huge barrier in New Bedford.”

“Cultural diversity exists and results in challenges to providing health care.”

“I believe there are around 10,000 to 12,000 undocumented immigrants living in New Bedford.”

OVERVIEW

Racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States are at a disproportionate risk of lacking access to health care, being uninsured, and experiencing worse health outcomes (Healthy People 2020). Culturally competent care is a foundational step towards reducing these health disparities (AHRQ, 2016).

AIM

Provide quality care and services that are “responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs” (National CLAS Standards, 2019).

OBJECTIVE 1 Increase the number of interpreters at community health organizations.

RATIONALE

Approximately 17.4% of New Bedford residents have limited English proficiency (New Bedford CHNA). The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) suggest that healthcare organizations offer language assistance to all individuals with limited English proficiency and promote these services effectively.

STRATEGIES

Obtain funding to train two additional multilingual community health workers.

Provide one multilingual health insurance coordinator to assist culturally diverse children and families in obtaining health insurance.

Continue work with the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) to promote public safety (SSYI United Way).

Increase access to interpreter training programs for members of the community who are multilingual and have interest in providing this service.

OBJECTIVE 2 Ensure immigrant residents of New Bedford have access to the community services they need (Chang, 2019).**RATIONALE**

Non-white residents of New Bedford account for more than one-third (34.8%) of the population (New Bedford CHNA). 12% of New Bedford residents are citizens by naturalization and 9% are not U.S. citizens (U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2017). This number may be underreported due to fear of disclosing citizenship status for legal reasons (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services). Multiple key informants expressed their concern that New Bedford has a large immigrant population that may not be able to access services due to fear or cultural barriers.

STRATEGIES

Collaborate with the Immigration Assistance Center to provide vaccinations for the parents and children who utilize their services.

Increase the number of people utilizing services offered by the Immigration Assistance Center by 10% by 2024.

Increase outreach to the immigrant population by collaborating with neighborhood group leaders to promote awareness of services offered by the health department (Chang, 2019).

Provide education on how to access preventative health services through ethnic media sources (American Press Institute, 2018).

- After School Programs. National Institute of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.crimesolutions.gov/PracticeDetails.aspx?ID=80>
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2016). Retrieved from <https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/topics/cultural-competence/research>
- American Addiction Centers. (2018). What are the barriers to accessing addiction treatment? Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/treatment-barriers>
- American Press Institute. (2018). Going Forward: How Ethnic and Mainstream Media Can Collaborate in Changing Communities. Retrieved from <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/strategy-studies/ethnic-and-mainstream-media-collaborations-in-changing-communities/>
- Anchor Institutions. (2018). Retrieved March 24, 2019, from <https://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/anchors/index.html>
- Bailey K., T., Cook J., T., Ettinger de Cuba S., Casey P., H., Chilton M., Coleman S., M., ... (2015). Development of an index of subsidized housing availability and its relationship to housing insecurity. *Housing Policy Debate*, 26(1):172-87. doi: 10.1080/10511482.2015.1015042.
- Burgard, S. A., & Lin, K. Y. (2013). Bad Jobs, Bad Health? How Work and Working Conditions Contribute to Health Disparities. *The American behavioral scientist*, 57(8), 10.1177/0002764213487347. doi:10.1177/0002764213487347
- Centers for Disease Control. (2015). The Health Effects of Overweight and Obesity. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/effects/index.html>
- Centers for Disease Control. (2019). Vaccine Information. Retrieved from <https://www.vaccines.gov/getting/pay>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Healthy Eating for a Lower Weight. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/index.html
- Center for Health Information and Analysis. Retrieved from <http://www.chiamass.gov/>
- Chang, C. D. (2019). Social determinants of health and health disparities among immigrants and their children. *Current Problems in Adolescent and Pediatric Healthcare*, 49(1), 23-30.
- City Master Plan New Bedford 2020. Retrieved from http://newbedford.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/46/NewBedford2020_ACityMasterPlan_2010.pdf
- Harvard T Chan School of Public Health. Obesity Prevention Source. Retrieved from <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/obesity-causes/physical-activity-and-obesity/>
- Healthy People 2020. (2019). Injury and Violence Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/injury-and-violence-prevention>
- Healthy People 2020. (2019). Mental Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/mental-health-and-mental-disorders/objectives>
- Healthy People 2020. (2019). Substance Abuse. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/substance-abuse/objectives>
- Healthy People 2020. (2019). Social Determinants of Health. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health/objectives>
- Joint Center for Housing Studies. (2016). The State of the Nation's Housing. Retrieved from http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/jchs_2016_state_of_the_nations_housing
- Konigsberg, J. (2017). The Economic and Ethical Implications of Living Wages. *Religions*, 8(4), 74. doi:10.3390/rel8040074
- Kulbok, P., Thatcher, E., Park, E., & Meszaros, P. (2012). Evolving Public Health Nursing Roles: Focus on Community Participatory Health Promotion and Prevention. *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*.
- Mass in Motion: Eating Better and Moving More. Retrieved from <https://www.mass.gov/mass-in-motion-eating-better-and-moving-more>

- Mass.gov. (2018). Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Prepared for: Secretary Marylou Sudders, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Chair of the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. Retrieved from: https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/05/01/Massachusetts%20State%20Plan%20to%20End%20Youth%20Homelessness%20-%202018.pdf?_ga=2.24888890.1043474117.15534-68576-2141775049.1486494461
- Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Centers. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/21cclc/>
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2019). Retrieved from http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/grad/grad_report.aspx?orgcode=02010505&orgtypecode=6&
- National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy. Retrieved from https://health.gov/communication/hlactionplan/pdf/Health_Literacy_Action_Plan.pdf
- National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2019). Opioid Overdose Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis#one>
- National Institute of Health. (2017). Personalized Nutrition and Obesity. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5330214/>
- National Prevention Council (2010). National prevention strategy: Mental and emotional well-being. Retrieved from: <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/mental-emotional-well-being.pdf>
- National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/cls>
- National Youth Tobacco Survey (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/PublicHealthEducation/ProtectingKidsfromTobacco/ucm405173.htm>
- New Bedford Homeless Service Providers Network. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.nbhspn.com/about-us/>
- New Bedford MA Crime. Area Vibes. Retrieved from <https://www.areavibes.com/new+bedford-ma/crime/>
- NEEFUSA. How Greening Communities Can Reduce Violence and Promote Health. Retrieved from <https://www.neefusa.org/health/outdoor-activity/how-greening-communities-can-reduce-violence-and-promote-health>
- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2019). Access to Health Services. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Access-to-Health-Services>
- Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Retrieved from https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf
- Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) United Way of New Bedford. Retrieved from <https://unitedwayofgnb.org/safe-and-successful-youth-initiative/>
- Safe Home. (2018). Keeping Your Community Safe: A Guide to Being a Vigilant Citizen. Retrieved from <https://www.safehome.org/resources/community-safety-guide/>
- School-Based Health Alliance. (2018). About School-Based Health Care. Retrieved from <https://www.sbh4all.org/school-health-care/aboutsbhcs/>
- Siegel Robertson, J., Smith, R., & Rinka, J. (2016). How did successful high schools improve their graduation rates? *The Journal of At-Risk Issues*, 19(1), 10-19.
- Society for Human Resources Management, Transforming the Workplace in 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/mlp/pages/transforming-the-workplace-in-2019.aspx>
- Southcoast Urban Indicators Project. (2018). Homelessness. Retrieved March 24, 2019 from: <http://southcoastindicators.org/housing/homelessness/>
- Southcoast Urban Indicators Project. (2018). Obesity, Cardiovascular Health, and Walkability. Retrieved from <http://southcoastindicators.org/health/walkability/>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Strategic Plan 2019-2023. Retrieved from https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/samhsa_strategic_plan_fy19-fy23_final-508.pdf

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma18-4742.pdf>
- Surgeon General. Healthy and Safe Community Environments. Retrieved from <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/healthy-and-safe-community-environments.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). American Community Survey 2017. Data Profiles. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2017/>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). New Bedford City Quick Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newbedfordcitymassachusetts/POP815217>
- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.uscis.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: Elements of Access to Healthcare. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/chartbooks/access/elements.html>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. American health literacy: Why we need accessible health information. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/communication/literacy/issuebrief/>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). State and local policy levers for increasing treatment and recovery capacity to address the opioid epidemic. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/state-and-local-policy-levers-increasing-treatment-and-recovery-capacity-address-opioid-epidemic-final-report#intervention>
- Walter, A. W., Morocho, C., King, L., Bartlett, J., Kelsey, D., DeSousa, M., ... Punnett, L. (2018). Preventing Opioid Use Disorders among Fishing Industry Workers. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 15(4), 648. doi:10.3390/ijerph15040648
- Worcester Community Health Improvement Plan. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/35/3a/353a24b43226a169doe5257e1013dc70/chip-report-2016.pdf>
- World Health Organization. (2013). Mental Health Action Plan 2013 – 2020. Retrieved from: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/89966/9789241506021_eng.pdf;jsessionid=oBE5743E31B2615AA82DAAF802AC498D?sequence=1
- World Health Organization. (2019). Mental health: strengthening our response. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>
- Young, C. A., & State House News Service. (2019). Voc-Tech investments pair needs of students, industry. Retrieved March 24, 2019, from <https://www.southcoasttoday.com/news/20190318/voc-tech-investments-pair-needs-of-students-industry>
- Zimmerman, E., Woolf, S., & Haley, A. (2015). Understanding the Relationship Between Education and Health. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/education/curriculum-tools/population-health/zimmerman.html>