



# 2015 Greater Milford Community Health Improvement Plan

Revised September 2020



## Introduction

In 2013, the Greater Milford Community Health Network: CHNA 6 undertook an 18-month process to create a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for the Greater Milford region. The 2015 CHIP prioritized the findings from the 2012 Community Health Assessment (CHA) and involved over 45 healthcare providers, municipal agencies, and community-based organizations in the process.

The CHIP provides a framework for organizations to work collaboratively to address the region's most pressing health issues. This "collective impact" strategy allows for larger-scale and more lasting social change than could be achieved by individual agencies working in isolation. It was used as a guide for the CHNA's 2016 grantmaking.

The steering committee of the CHNA was charged with revisiting the CHIP each year to "improve and further align expectations with outcomes." During the fall of 2020, the steering committee reviewed the CHIP with an eye towards how it could align with the needs that have emerged from the coronavirus pandemic.

What follows is a reimagined CHIP that continues to focus on the goals of the four priority areas identified through the CHA but that identifies ways to address health issues resulting from COVID-19.

## Priority Area 1: Chronic Disease and Health Promotion

According to Feeding America, one in eight residents in Eastern Massachusetts is expected to experience food insecurity as a result of coronavirus pandemic, representing a 59% increase from last year. The pandemic has also led to the closure of gyms and the cancelation of many indoor and outdoor sports, thereby limiting opportunities for physical activity.

<b>PRIORITY AREA 1: CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION</b>	
<b>Goal: Create healthier communities and prevent chronic disease by improving nutrition and increasing physical activity.</b>	
<b>Objective 1.1: Reduce food insecurity.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
1.1.1	Increase the amount of nutritious food distributed to food insecure individuals and families.
1.1.2	Create systems to coordinate food distribution efforts.
<b>Objective 1.2: Increase opportunities for safe physical activity.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
1.2.1	Offer remote exercise programs for isolated and/or high-risk individuals.
1.2.2	Expand offerings of “lower risk” sports and physical activities that do not involve physical contact, such as swimming, biking, running, tennis, pickleball and exercise classes.

## Priority Area 2: Mental Health and Substance Use

According to the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, numerous national surveys have found significant increases in psychological distress and clinically significant traumatic stress, anxiety and depression among people of all ages in the United States as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, there is scientific evidence of a linkage between rapid increases in unemployment rates, such as those experienced in 2020, and deaths by suicide and overdose, as well as increased rates of substance addiction.

<b>PRIORITY AREA 2: MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE</b>	
<b>Goal: Increase emotional health across the lifespan and build an accepting community for those who are affected by mental health and substance use issues.</b>	
<b>Objective 2.1: Improve the social, emotional and behavioral health of children and adults.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
2.1.1	Expand social-emotional learning opportunities for children, adolescents and young adults.
2.1.2	Offer resiliency and trauma education to residents, particularly those most affected by the pandemic.
2.1.3	Offer programs designed to reduce social isolation among older adults
<b>Objective 2.2: Reduce substance use/misuse.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
2.3.1	Provide relapse prevention activities and programs to those in recovery at risk of relapse due the pandemic and the related isolation and economic insecurity.
2.3.2	Offer support groups for individuals with substance use disorder and/or their parents and other loved ones.
2.3.3	Increase use of evidence-based substance use prevention and cessation programs in schools and community settings.

## Priority Area 3: Violence Prevention

Data from a spring 2020 study out of Brigham and Women’s Hospital found a significant year-over-year jump in intimate partner violence cases among patients -- nearly all women -- who sought emergency care during the COVID-19 pandemic's first few weeks. Stay at home orders created situations that both increased the opportunity for undetected violence and reduced the likelihood that a health care provider or family member might report the violence. Similarly, the closure of schools and cancelation of medical appointments resulted in a 50% decrease in reported cases of child abuse by mandated reporters. Child advocates across the state have voiced concern about increased parental stress and lack of monitoring and reporting during the pandemic.

<b>PRIORITY AREA 3: VIOLENCE PREVENTION</b>	
<b>Goal: Promote non-violent behaviors across the life span.</b>	
<b>Objective 3.1: Increase awareness and utilization of domestic violence prevention services for at risk populations.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
3.1.1	Increase awareness and educate community on the issue of dating abuse and sexual violence (i.e., <i>Know the Signs of Domestic &amp; Sexual Violence, Safe Dates, Shifting Boundaries, etc.</i> ).
3.1.2	Identify needs of non-English-speaking populations in Greater Milford for domestic violence and sexual assault services.
3.1.3	Increase screening of patients for domestic violence.
3.1.4	students
<b>Objective 3.2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
3.2.1	Develop and implement programs designed to identify potential victims of child abuse.
3.2.2	Provide organizational and community education around child abuse prevention.
3.2.3	Offer supportive programs for parents designed to increase their coping skills during the pandemic.
<b>Objective 3.3: Improve health and wellness of communities of color by addressing issues of overt, covert and systemic racism.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
3.3.1	Increase the awareness of the prevalence of racist practices and policies and the impact this has on health and wellness of communities of color.
3.3.2	Develop and implement programs designed to eliminate the impact of racism in health and wellness services within the CHNA6 area.

## Priority Area 4: Access

According to Families USA, 93% of Massachusetts workers who lost their jobs because of the pandemic are now without health insurance. That is twice the average around the country and other New England states. The rate of uninsured in Milford is 3.7%, which is higher than the state average of 2.7%.

PRIORITY AREA 4: ACCESS	
<b>Goal: Increase availability, knowledge, and use of services and resources that promote health, wellness, and access for vulnerable populations.</b>	
<b>Objective 4.1: Decrease rate of uninsured in the CHNA6 region.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
4.1.1	Increase awareness of programs that enroll residents in health insurance.
4.1.2	Increase the number of programs that can assist individuals in enrolling in health insurance.
<b>Objective 4.2: Improve access to primary care and behavioral health.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	
4.2.1	Decrease the barriers for low-income and other vulnerable populations seeking access to healthcare.
4.2.2	Educate the community about the importance of vaccinations and increase access to vaccinations.
4.2.3	Create linkages among organizations that facilitate the referral of vulnerable people to preventative and primary medical care.