



GLHA
GREATER LOWELL HEALTH ALLIANCE

Letter from the Board Chair



The Greater Lowell Health Alliance continues to grow stronger and more relevant every year. As a facilitator for decisive action and positive change to improve the health of our communities, the Alliance embraces a critical role in continuously assessing the community's most urgent needs, then serves as a catalyst to bring together community partners to develop and implement plans of action to address those needs.

Never has this role been more important than during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic persisted this past year, the Alliance continuously monitored the needs of the region and stepped up its leadership in ensuring equitable access to the COVID vaccines for those populations often impeded by racial, language, socioeconomic, and logistical barriers.

An important avenue through which we address unmet healthcare needs is the awarding of annual grants, delivering vital funding to those organizations on the front line of improving access to healthcare-related services and resources. This coming year we are excited to begin a strategic planning process that will define a path for organizational growth and a strong vision for the future to meet the growing needs of this organization and the community.

Our success is a result of true community collaboration, led by the dedicated members of our board, the outstanding GLHA task forces, our wonderful community partners, and our exceptional GLHA team under the leadership of Executive Director Kerrie D'Entremont. I thank you all for your time, energy, and commitment to this essential organization.

Working together, we will continue to grow stronger and continue to fulfill our critical mission to improve the overall health of Greater Lowell's communities and pursue health equity for all.

Sincerely,

Susan West Levine, Board Chair

GLHA: A Catalyst for Action During the Pandemic

The continuing COVID-19 pandemic has affected not only how we operate, but also where we are focusing our resources. This report reflects on just some of the initiatives we have undertaken and the progress we have made in identifying and addressing unmet healthcare needs created by the pandemic. Throughout this pandemic, we have continued to work tirelessly to fulfill our mission to serve as a catalyst for action and solutions to improve the health of the communities we serve.

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Public Health Director, Chelmsford Board of Health

Letter from the Executive Director



We are pleased to share with you the Greater Lowell Health Alliance 2022 annual report. It has been an exciting and challenging year, as the global pandemic continued to affect every facet of our organization, from how we operate, the areas on which we focus, and our vision for the future.

Although the severity of the pandemic eased over the past year, our efforts to ensure the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines did not, as we worked with our community partners to plan and staff vaccine clinics throughout Greater Lowell and enhance community outreach. We also dedicated countless hours to the distribution of personal protection equipment (PPE) to nearly 50 local community organizations.

While adjusting to a “new normal” hybrid operation, we forged ahead in the successful execution of the 2022 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment, which will guide the allocation of funding and resources for the Alliance and our community partners. Among our many other accomplishments this year were completing our role in Boston Medical Center’s HEALing study to reduce opioid use in Lowell; bringing the PRIDE Festival back to Lowell after a two-year hiatus; distributing the Age-Friendly Project survey; and committing to a leadership role in the Well-Being Movement initiative, in partnership with Tufts Medicine Lowell General Hospital.

This year the GLHA received an additional \$1.5 million in grant funding, primarily to address the pandemic and the opioid epidemic. As we continue to grow financially and strategically, so do our challenges and opportunities, including expanding our grant distribution program and our grant-funded initiatives in collaboration with other entities.

I am excited for the future of this great organization, and I thank all those who make it possible, including Board Chair Susan West Levine and our dedicated Board of Directors, steering committee, task force leaders and members, amazing GLHA staff, and hundreds of community partners.

Together, we are building a stronger and healthier future for Greater Lowell.

In good health,



Kerrie D'Entremont, Executive Director

Our mission is to sustain a strategic alliance of community organizations that improves the overall health and wellness of those living in the Greater Lowell region.

STEERING COMMITTEE

MATTHEW PAGE-SHELTON
The Front-Line Initiative

MIRANDA ALLAN
Community Teamwork Inc.

MERCY ANAMPIU
Lowell Community Health Center

KARRI GREENHALGE
YMCA of Greater Lowell

MICHAEL HALL
Casa Esperanza Inc.

DEBBIE HELMS
Samaritans of Merrimack Valley

AINAT KOREN
University of Massachusetts Lowell

NANDI MUNSON
AgeSpan

AMY PESSIA
Merrimack Valley Food Bank

MARIA RUGGIERO
The Front-Line Initiative

LISA TAYLOR-MONTMINY
Lowell General Hospital

**We thank the following for their
years of service:**

TAMI MARSHALL, Past Chair
HEATHER BEIDRZYCKI, MARY
SHANNON THOMAS, AMANDA SHAW

GLHA STAFF AND INTERNS

KERRIE D'ENTREMONT
Executive Director

AMANDA CLERMONT
Community Engagement Coordinator

HANNAH TELLO, PhD
Community Data Manager

DEVON GOLDBERG, MPH
Community Outreach and
Education Manager

INTERNS

Masters – DEYSHA MORROBEL

Undergraduate – CLARA CASALE,
OLIVIA MASSENA, KRISTA SAWYER,
DANAITECCEZGHI, SOLINA YEBIO



Left - GLHA Executive Director Kerrie D'Entremont accepts a PPE donation from Provision Ministry. Top Right - Amanda Clermont (left) and Kerrie D'Entremont (third from left), with GLHA Steering Committee members Mercy Anampiu, Lisa Taylor-Montminy, Miranda Allan, and Karri Greenhalge. Center - Devon Goldberg, Moise O'Rocha, Clara Casale, and Kerrie D'Entremont attend the Greater Lowell PRIDE celebration. Bottom right: GLHA staff - Amanda Clermont, Hannah Tello, Kerrie D'Entremont, and Devon Goldberg - attend the Women Working Wonders Power of the Purse.

Who We Are

The Greater Lowell Health Alliance (GLHA) of the Community Health Network Area 10 brings together healthcare providers, business leaders, educators, and civic and community leaders with a common goal to improve the overall health of our communities.

The GLHA serves as a catalyst in identifying and addressing unmet healthcare needs, raising awareness, and providing resources for community partners to take actions that will lead to significant change for all. Founded in 2006, the Alliance serves as an advocate for non-profits and community organizations, securing funding and sharing resources with the outstanding front-line agencies addressing the region's health priorities. Working collaboratively, the GLHA helps break down barriers that threaten our most vulnerable populations, linking them to available services and resources to address their needs.



Promoting Health Equity and Access: Collaborative Pandemic Response

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued into its third year, the Greater Lowell Health Alliance enhanced our leadership role in coordinating community resources and access for those highest at risk, working tirelessly to fulfill our mission to serve as a catalyst for action and solutions to improve the health of the communities we serve.

Collaborative Equitable Vaccine Distribution

Throughout 2021 and 2022, the GLHA led a coalition to coordinate community resources to work toward reducing the disproportionate effects of the virus for people of color, decreasing health disparities, and achieving population immunity through a vaccine. Partnering with Lowell Community Health Center, we continued to co-host monthly meetings with medical experts and community leaders from 50 organizations, providing updates on vaccine distribution, highlighting equity data, and engaging our community partners in the development of COVID-19 education materials specific for the cultures and languages of the populations they serve. We also collaborated with our many community partners to identify locations and plan culturally concordant vaccine clinics.

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic – Community Outreach Partners

In response to our COVID vaccine equity efforts, the Massachusetts Department of Health provided \$210,000 in funding to support a Community Outreach Partner collaboration through December 2022. With this funding, we hired 13 Community Outreach Workers and an outreach education supervisor to assist six organizations in their COVID outreach and education efforts: Lowell Community Health Center, AgeSpan, Center for Hope and Healing, Lowell Health Department, Coalition for a Better Acre, and Dwelling House of Hope.

Health Resources in Action (HIRA Grant)

In 2022 the GLHA received funding from Health Resources in Action (HIRA) to address inequities and increase vaccine distribution in Greater Lowell, particularly within the Latinx population. We received grants totaling more than \$110,000 to support these efforts, which include collaborating with multiple agencies on local vaccine efforts. A Hispanic/Latinx Advisory Group for Community Engagement, in coordination with Lowell Community Health Center, has focused efforts on the Latinx populations, coordinating outreach, vaccine clinics, and messaging.

Distribution of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

Throughout COVID, GLHA has stepped up to become a clearinghouse for hundreds of thousands of PPE supplies—masks, hand sanitizer, soap, wipes, thermometers, etc.—that we received as donations or purchased through grants and then distributed to nearly 50 local community nonprofit organizations, schools, local businesses, churches, and temples.



GLHA staff and Community Outreach Workers assist with COVID vaccine clinics and education at community events throughout the year.

The Well-Being Movement in Lowell: A Tufts Medicine and Blue Zones Collaboration

In 2022 the Greater Lowell Health Alliance stepped up to take a leadership role in a new multi-year initiative with a goal to close gaps in health equity and access, helping to make Lowell a healthier place to live, work, and thrive.

The GLHA, in partnership with Tufts Medicine Lowell General Hospital, is exploring a partnership with Blue Zones to accelerate the **Well-Being Movement in Lowell**. Blue Zones is a leading researcher and innovator regarding the “zip code effect,” which recognizes that where people live is often the biggest influence on their health. By focusing on the places where people live, work, learn, and play, Blue Zones has been able to move the needle in improving overall population health and happiness and reducing healthcare costs, through actionable strategies and tools that help mobilize and focus community resources.

The GLHA, with funding and increased staffing through Tufts Medicine Lowell General Hospital, has a lead role in mobilizing community advocates, including local public, non-profit, and private-sector leaders. The Well-Being Movement complements the Alliance’s ongoing work with the Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, which also work to identify and address unmet health needs in our communities.

The first step of the Well-Being Movement was to form a Steering Committee to work with Blue Zones to convene a multi-day in-depth community readiness and feasibility assessment in September. Over three days, Blue Zones conducted multiple focus groups of community members and leaders to learn more about Lowell and its strengths and opportunities in community health and well-being.

Working off this assessment, the Blue Zones team is assessing readiness and building a plan for change, seeking to identify and allocate critically needed resources to address our community’s health issues, reduce healthcare costs, and improve overall population health and happiness.



Top - GLHA Board Vice Chair Damian Folch and GLHA Community Data Manager Hannah Tello (center) at Blue Zones public kick-off event.



Bottom - GLHA Board Vice Chair Damian Folch and his wife Amparo Folch (center) with some of the Blue Zones team.

Community Health Needs Assessment

Every three years the Greater Lowell Health Alliance commissions a Community Health Needs Assessment to help determine the region's most urgent health care needs. In 2022 the GLHA, led by Community Health Data Manager Hannah Tello, commissioned researchers and students from University of Massachusetts Lowell to conduct the **2022 Community Health Needs Assessment**. The assessment comprised primary data collection from twenty-six focus groups (350 participants), thirty key informant interviews, and over 2,000 online and in-person surveys (in multiple languages), as well as secondary data sources, such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health MassCHIP database and the United States Census.

It is only through the Alliance's many partnerships throughout Greater Lowell that we are able to successfully engage such diverse participation and achieve such a comprehensive assessment.

Foundation for Action: Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

The community needs assessment, released to the public on September 30, 2022, provides a foundation for the GLHA and our partners on which to build ongoing consensus regarding the area's priority health needs, as well as develop a new Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). CHIPs serve as road maps for the GLHA and our partners, helping us turn data into action and improve health outcomes. The results of this year's needs assessment will help inform the 2023 CHIP, with a goal to address current and developing health issues through two key routes: GLHA task forces and GLHA grant funding, complementing other partner-focused efforts throughout the region.

GLHA Task Forces

The GLHA's six health-focused task forces have adopted the CHIP as the driving force behind their efforts, creating working groups to set goals and objectives targeting specific areas of focus identified in the CHIP process. Learn more about our GLHA Task Forces and their impact on the following pages.

GLHA Grant Funding

The CHIP also provides guidance on priority areas for grant funding, enabling the GLHA to allocate funds to frontline organizations addressing the unmet needs of the community. Meet this year's grant recipients on pages 10-11.

The Top 10 Priorities Identified by the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment

- » **Mental Health**
- » **Chronic Health and Wellness**
- » **Substance and Alcohol Use**
- » **COVID-19 & Other Infectious Diseases**
- » **Reproductive, Sexual and Pregnancy Health**
- » **Lung and Breathing Health**
- » **Cancer**
- » **Infant and Child Health**
- » **Environmental Health**
- » **Violence**



Priority Focus Areas for Greater Lowell

Priority Focus Areas for Greater Lowell

Through the needs assessment and CHIP process, hundreds of community members and organization helped identify the core priority focus areas for Greater Lowell (wheel) and actionable initiatives in each area (boxes).

Service Access, Workforce Development and Suicide	Maternal Mortality, Perinatal Mental Health, Teen Pregnancy and Infant Feeding
Prevention & Education and Services & Treatment	Affordable Housing and Transportation & Accessibility
Prevention & Education Community Resources and Advocacy	Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Bullying and Discrimination
Emergency Preparedness, HIV/ Hep C, Insect Illness and Vaccines	

GLHA Task Forces

The work of each of the GLHA's task forces, individually and collectively, is creating long-term improvements in specific health areas and the overall health of our community, with a focus on encouraging collaboration among member organizations. The GLHA's six health-focused task forces—**Health Equity, Wellness & Chronic Disease, Maternal Child Health, Behavioral Health, Housing and the Built Environment, and Substance Use and Prevention**—have adopted the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) as the driving force behind their efforts, creating working groups to set goals and develop action plans addressing specific areas of focus identified in the CHIP process.

These six task forces are made up entirely of community volunteers who take time from their full-time commitments to focus on the health of others. Even as the pandemic forced these groups to pivot to virtual or hybrid meetings, they did not ease up on their efforts.

These pages include just a glimpse of the profound impact these task forces and their leaders are making in our region.

Network Luncheons/Lunch and Learn Events

Addressing topics identified from CHIP goals and objectives, our educational forums included a **"Health Literacy"** training conducted by Ashley Hall from the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center; a **Substance Use & Mental Health Provider** networking event in collaboration with Casa Esperanza, the Substance Use and Prevention Task Force, and the Town of Billerica; **"Effectively Working with Diverse Cultures"** presented by Steering Committee member Mercy Anampiu, of Lowell Community Health Center; and a **Substance Use Prevention, Harm Reduction and Behavioral Health** networking event in collaboration with several organizations including Casa Esperanza, Front-Line Initiative, and The Pink Cloud.

Greater Lowell PRIDE 2022

For the past five years, GLHA has been a lead organization planning the Greater Lowell PRIDE events in Lowell. Working closely with the City of Lowell, Greater Lowell Community Foundation, and the Chamber of Commerce, we were excited to bring back the in-person **PRIDE flag raising at City Hall and the Festival at Kerouac Park** on June 4, raising over \$15,000 in support of this great event and attracting the largest attendance to date.

Merrimack Valley Substance Use Disorder Symposium

On December 10, 2021, we held a successful, all-day virtual event, with over **150 attendees and four workshops**. This is a coordinated planning effort among multiple towns and agencies in Greater Lowell, with the GLHA participating in the planning and execution of this event, as well as serving as the fiscal agent.

The 2022 Greater Lowell PRIDE flag raising.





Mercy Anampiu, from Lowell Community Health Center, facilitates the "Effectively Working with Diverse Cultures" training. Right: During World Breastfeeding Week in August, GLHA joined REACH LoWELL, Lowell Community Health Center, and other community partners to host a "Community Baby Shower."

Among the dozens of CHIP-driven accomplishments by GLHA task forces over the past year:

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

CO-CHAIRS: MATTHEW PAGE-SHELTON, DEBBIE HELMS

Highlight: In collaboration with the Substance Use and Prevention Task Force, the Behavioral Health task force helped make the 4th Annual Substance Use Disorder Symposium a huge success. This event took place virtually in order to keep all participants safe and to adhere to COVID-19 protocols.

HEALTH EQUITY TASK FORCE

TRI-CHAIRS: MERCY ANAMPIU, NANDI MUNSON, MIRANDA ALLAN

Highlight: Progress continues with the Healthcare Navigation Video, which will guide new immigrants in navigating the healthcare system. The GLHA, with the input of a community working group, has hired a videographer and communications consultant to complete the project.

HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT TASK FORCE

CHAIR: LISA TAYLOR-MONTMINY

Highlight: The City of Lowell Planning Department attended our October meeting to discuss the City's approach for Affordable Housing in the city of Lowell. Members of the Planning Department shared with the task force the barriers the city is facing, as well as some ideas to assist with the lack of affordable housing for families.

MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH TASK FORCE

CHAIR: AINAT KOREN

Highlight: The subcommittee worked closely with REACH LoWELL on the Community Survey for Infant Feeding, which entailed several presentations and status updates to the Maternal Child Health Task Force.

SUBSTANCE USE AND PREVENTION TASK FORCE

CO-CHAIRS: MICHAEL HALL, MARIA RUGGIERO

Highlight: On June 24 the Substance Use and Prevention Task Force hosted its first in-person networking event in over two years, welcoming a great turnout of community partners working within SUD and Behavioral Health to meet and share services. The 4th Annual Merrimack Valley Substance Use Disorder Symposium in December 2021 was a great success.

WELLNESS AND CHRONIC DISEASE TASK FORCE

CO-CHAIRS: AMY PESSIA, KARRI GREENHALGE

Highlight: The Wellness & Chronic Disease task force has provided vital support for the Community Food Assessment conducted by Mill City Grows—which was funded by a GLHA Community Health Initiatives Grant in 2021/2022—including sharing the survey with task force members, having Mill City Grows present at a number of meetings, and planning a Community Food Assessment dissemination breakfast in September.

To learn more about the impact of these task forces and subcommittees, visit greaterlowellhealthalliance.org.

GLHA Community Grants

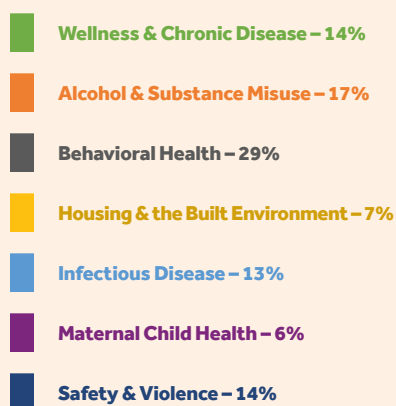
The Greater Lowell Health Alliance offers grants to support programs and services to improve the overall health of the Greater Lowell community. To date, we have distributed more than \$1.8 million in grants to organizations on the front lines of addressing unmet health needs. Over a 15-year period, the GLHA will distribute nearly \$5 million allocated by Lowell General Hospital through the hospital's Determination of Need process for its 2010 campus expansion.

Grants are awarded around the health priorities and programs that meet specific areas of focus identified by the GLHA's 2020 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) process:

- » Wellness & Chronic Disease
- » Infectious Disease
- » Health Equity
- » Maternal Child Health
- » Behavioral Health
- » Safety & Violence
- » Housing & the Built Environment
- » Substance Use and Prevention

To learn about the impact of these grants in our region, visit greaterlowellhealthalliance.org

**GLHA Community Health Initiative
Grant Funding by Priority Area (2022/2023)**





GLHA's 2021/2022 Community Health Initiatives Grants have helped fund (from left): Mill City Grows program to expand nutritious food access for lower-income residents. Dr. Brownie McSnuggles, who is training to become Front-Line Initiative's co-response and therapy dog. Meals at the Eliot Church Day Center.

2022/2023 Community Health Initiative Grants

- » **Casa Esperanza**
Conexiones Transportation Project - \$59,309
- » **Chelmsford Senior Center**
Stay at Home - \$50,000
- » **Community Teamwork Inc.**
Youth Services Family Foundations Program - \$20,000
- » **Eliot Church**
Day Center - \$25,600
- » **Ellie Fund**
Equitable Pathways to Breast Cancer Care - \$25,000
- » **International Institute of New England**
Greater Lowell Refugee Mental Health and Wellness Initiative - \$15,000
- » **Ironstone Farm**
Home Base-Two Day Overnight Retreats - \$15,000
- » **Lowell Community Health Center**
Let's Talk about Health Relationships Project - \$50,000
- » **Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)**
Greater Lowell Portuguese-Language Short Term Mental Health Counseling- \$23,371
- » **Merrimack Valley Food Bank**
Gryphon Market After-School Culinary Program at GLTHS - \$15,000
- » **Mill City Grows**
Food Policy Council: Community-Led Improvements to Nutritious Food Access- \$9,450
- » **THRIVE Communities**
Reentry Housing Services - \$25,000
- » **YWCA**
Spanish Speaking Women's Health Connections- \$22,270

Grants Received by GLHA

The GLHA engaged in three additional grant-funded projects to address unmet healthcare needs in Greater Lowell.

Boston Medical Center's HEALing Communities Study

GLHA's role in this study, which ended on June 30, 2022, included serving as the fiscal agent, as well as providing two staff positions: Hannah Tello, a part-time project manager, and Devon Goldberg, the Lowell Coalition Community Coordinator. The nearly \$1.5 million in funding supported direct service delivery to people with substance use disorders, increased community distribution of Naloxone, and expanded service access through transportation and in-community outreach. Through the HEALing Communities Study Lowell Coalition work, 2,598 individuals with SUD received services, 834 individuals began medication to treat OUD/AUD, and 1,172 Naloxone kits were distributed.

Tufts Age Friendly Grant

In September 2020, University of Massachusetts Lowell was awarded a three-year, \$300,000 grant from Tufts Health Plan

Foundation to create a citywide, age-friendly initiative that builds community capacity to promote health, independence, and quality of life for older residents in Lowell. The effort is a partnership with the city of Lowell, Greater Lowell Health Alliance, and other local organizations, with the GLHA's Hannah Tello serving as Project Manager. In year two the GLHA worked to distribute the survey and conduct key informant interviews and focus groups. In year three, our goal is to develop a plan of action to address the issues identified, coordinating with efforts of the new Blue Zones initiative, as the projects are closely aligned in goals and processes.

Health Resources in Action (HIRA Grant)

In 2022 the GLHA received more than \$110,000 in additional funding from Health Resources in Action (HIRA) to address inequities in distribution of the COVID vaccine, particularly within the Latinx populations.

Building a Healthier Future

The GLHA Needs You

The success of the Greater Lowell Health Alliance relies on the collaboration and engagement of our communities. There are many ways you can become involved and support the GLHA.

Join a task force.

The GLHA is always looking for new community members to join task forces and to collaborate on addressing the issues our community faces. All task force meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

“CHIP” in.

The GLHA is embarking on the creation of the new 2023 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which will guide our region’s investment of resources over the next few years—but we need you to make it happen! Participate in a community forum. Participate in or lead a task force work group. Promote within your organization. However you choose to “CHIP in,” you will be an integral part of this important community initiative!

Donate.

As the GLHA grows in both scope and impact, so does our need for resources. As a nonprofit 501(c)(3), we rely on donations from organizations and individuals to sustain our mission, grow our programs, and keep our events free and accessible to everyone. Please consider donating to the Greater Lowell Health Alliance at greaterlowellhealthalliance.org/donate.

For more information on these initiatives and other ways to get involved with the Greater Lowell Health Alliance, visit greaterlowellhealthalliance.org.



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