



Orientation Program for Massachusetts Boards of Health

History, Functions, Essential Services and
Duties of Local Board of Health Members

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Expectations

- What did you come here today hoping to learn?
- What local issues or problems are presenting challenges?

Orientation Objectives

- **Public Health Defined**
- **Historic Highlights**
- **Description of Public Health System**
- **Some important PH Terms**
- **BOH Responsibilities**
- **Assessment Tools & Resources**



Volunteer BOH members come from many walks of life and perform a valuable role of citizen oversight & community representation.

- Retired Judges
- Doctors, Veterinarians & Dentists
- Engineers & Lawyers

- Nurses
- Pharmacists and many others



The 351 Massachusetts cities and towns must have either BOH or Health Commission. 51 have a city form of government, 300 are in a town form. Majority (55%) have an elected BOH.

LBOH are dependent on local tax dollars

Home Rule authority allows the BOH to carry out functions without seeking legislative authority for each activity and enables the BOH to adopt local regulations

What is Public Health?

Public health is a multidisciplinary field whose goal is to prevent disease, promote health, and improve the quality of life in communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research. In the broadest sense, public health professionals study the complex determinants of health and disease and work to develop and implement programs that protect communities and promote health. The video below illustrates the diversity of activities embraced by public health.



The World Health Organization Defines Public Health as:

“A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

The Public's Perceptions

- Health is dependent on a complex interplay among an array of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. Public health is built on expertise and skills from many areas, including biology, environmental and earth science, sociology, psychology, government, medicine, statistics, communication, and many others. This complexity makes it difficult for the public to understand exactly what public health is.



Public Health in History

-Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. - George Santayana

With Climate Change and the resurgence of ancient diseases like Tb and new threats like MRSA, we cannot afford to forget the lessons of history.

Public Health in England

- **1796 Edward Jenner discovers small pox vaccination**
 - | **1837 - English Law first recognizes public health with the Establishment of a National Vaccination Board**
 - | **1847 - Edwin Chadwick publishes “Report on an Inquiry into Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain”**
 - | **Dr John Snow removes pump handle and stops cholera outbreak**
 - | **1848 - England establishes a General Board of Health**

Public Health in America

- | 1647 : Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a regulation to prevent pollution of Boston Harbor
- | 1692-1708 : Boston, Salem and Charleston passed acts dealing with nuisances and trades offensive and dangerous to the public health
- | 1799: Boston forms a Board of Health with patriot Paul Revere serving as Chairman



| **1850: Lemuel Shattuck completes “Report of the Sanitary Commission of Massachusetts”. It is virtually ignored.**

| **1869: Massachusetts finally responds to the Shattuck Report, creating the first state Board of Health.**

| **1979: DEQE (DEP) is separated from DPH creating a dichotomy between public and environmental health at the state level.**
President Nixon creates EPA from HHS

2000 - 2017

- **2000** - CDC and West Virginia University release *Women and Heart Disease: An Atlas of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mortality*, the first national atlas of heart disease death rates among U.S. women 35 and older. The new maps indicate a woman's risk of dying from heart disease depends in part on where she lives
- **2001** - World Trade Center Bombing - Health Department Role in Emergency Response and Post Event Threat Assessment
- 1st case of inhalational anthrax in the U.S. since 1976. A 63-year-old Florida man is the first of 22 victims of domestic terrorism infected by anthrax sent through the mail
- **2003** Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is first discovered in Asia. CDC responds by providing guidance for surveillance, clinical and laboratory evaluation, and reporting. SARS outbreak in Asia and Canada and response.
- MMWR reports the first identification of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States
- A package containing ricin and a note threatening to poison water supplies is discovered in a South Carolina postal facility, becoming the first potential chemical terrorism event involving ricin in the U.S.
- U.S. experiences an outbreak of monkeypox, the first time human monkeypox is reported outside of Africa.



2005 – Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

2007 For the first time since 1963, CDC issues federal order of isolation for a Tuberculosis (TB) patient.

2009 CDC identifies the novel H1N1 influenza virus. The H1N1 flu pandemic, **H1N1 flu** pandemic outbreak and response. Widespread asbestos contamination in Libby, Montana

2011 - multi-state outbreak of listeriosis which is linked to whole cantaloupes

2012 - largest healthcare-associated outbreak in United States history, the fungal meningitis outbreak

2014- largest Ebola outbreak in history

2016 -Zika Virus outbreak and Flint MI water contamination revealed

2017 – opioid crisis, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria

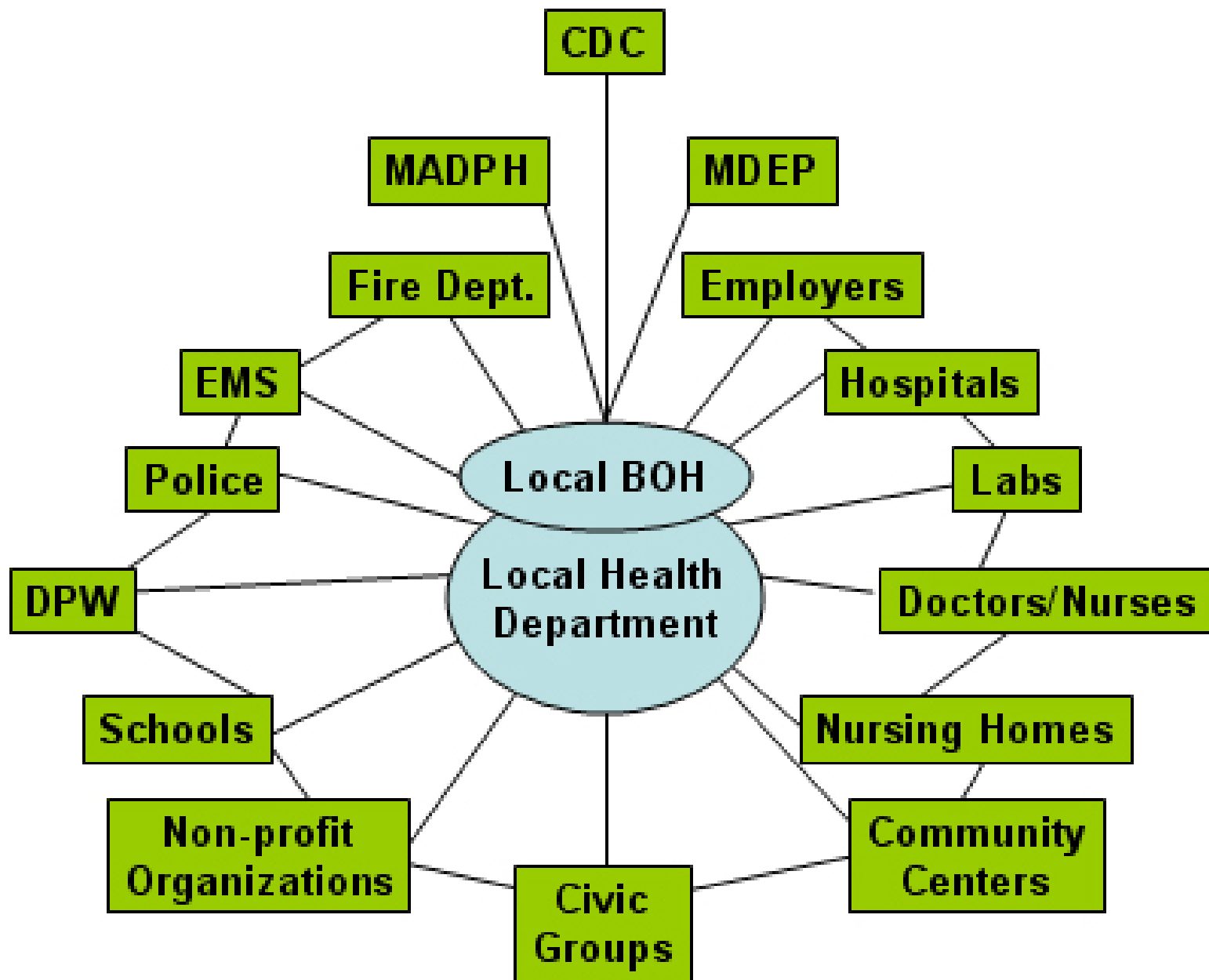
Present a prelude to future

- A record **65 million** people forced to flee homes. The number of refugees in the world has reached the highest level ever recorded, according to figures published by the United Nations (UN). More than after WWII
- Climate change could make much of South Asia - home to a fifth of the world's population - too hot for human survival by the end of this century, scientists warn.



The Board of Health is part of the Local Public Health System

Other partners include community groups,
HMO's, local hospitals and Visiting Nurses.



Public Health Systems

- Prevent epidemics and the spread of disease
- Protect against environmental hazards
- Prevent injuries
- Promotes and encourages healthy behaviors
- Emergency Response
 - Assures quality & accessibility of health services

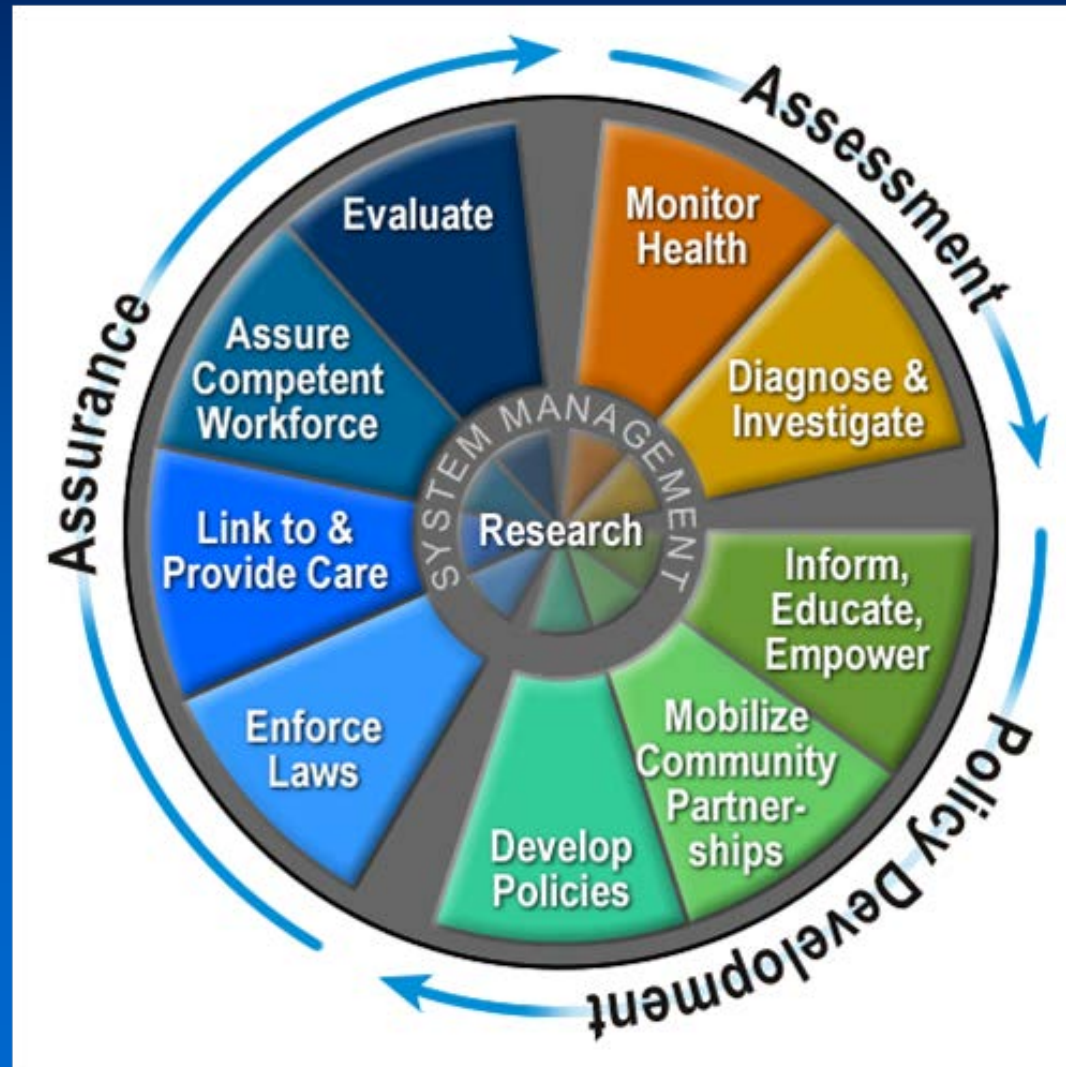
The Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH)

- Provides leadership in collaboration with internal and external public health stakeholders to build the capacity of Massachusetts local boards of health (BOH) to meet their legal responsibilities to protect the health of their communities and to deliver the ten essential public health services. The OLRH partners with the Massachusetts Coalition for Local Public Health and others to ensure that its resources are directed to strategic priorities.

Those priorities include:

1. Workforce development;
2. Technical assistance for improved local public health performance and service delivery
3. Regular, timely communication of news, information, and data from DPH
4. Resource materials for local public health in response to identified needs

CDC 10 Essential Public Health Services



3 Primary Functions of Board of Health/ Health Department

- | **Assessment**
- | **Policy development (Regulations)**
- | **Assurance**



The 6 Functions of Public Health Governance

- **Regulations**
- **Resource Stewardship**
- **Legal Authority**
- **Partner Engagement**
- **Continuous Improvement**
- **Oversight**
<http://www.nalboh.org/?page=GovernanceResources>



Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN)

Each local board of health shall utilize the secure electronic disease surveillance and case management system designated and maintained by the Department.

- DPH and LPH share disease reports, lab results, clinical data (TB, vaccine-preventable, foodborne, zoonotic diseases)

Training in MAVEN on-going



Compare Health Status Indicators to Assess Community Health

- Sociodemographic
- Perinatal and Child Health
- Infectious Disease
- Injury
- Chronic Disease
- Substance Abuse
- Preventable Hospital Discharge Data



Massachusetts Community Health Information Profiles (MassCHIP)

- Integrates 39 data bases online, including MDPH and other state agencies
- Critical resource for health assessments, planning, research, grant applications

Community Health Information Profile (Mass CHIP)

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/researcher/community-health/masschip/>

Instant Reports Custom Reports
Charts & Graphs

**Calculate basic statistics and measures on data you access,
including:**

Percentages and proportions

Crude rates

Age-adjusted rates

Age-specific rates

Standardized ratios



Evidence-Based Interventions – The Community Guide

Current Topic Areas

- Adolescent Health
- Alcohol
- Asthma
- Birth Defects
- Cancer
- Emergency Preparedness
- Excess alcohol Consumption
- HIV/AIDS, STIs & Pregnancy
- Mental Health
- Motor Vehicle
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Oral Health
- Physical Activity
- Social Environment
- Tobacco
- Vaccines
- Violence
- Worksite

www.thecommunityguide.org

Analyzing Staff Resources

- | Consider both the number of full time equivalents in each job position, and the allocation of time to these individuals.
- | Review Job Descriptions: The BOH should specify, in writing, the expected duties of staff.



Risk Communication

Designate a Public Information Officer (either a BOH member or agent)

The Public Information Officer should be trained in the art of Risk Communication - informed and practiced in proven risk communication techniques.

- 
- Challenge: To communicate the complexities and uncertainties of risk so it can be accepted, understood and managed.

- Know your public and speak to their concerns.

- **3 goals of risk communication:**
 1. Increase knowledge and understanding
 - 2. Enhance trust and credibility
 3. Resolve conflict

MESSAGE - What to Say

MESSENGER – Who to say it

MEDIA – How should it be presented



If you are a new board member:

Make sure that you are provided the information you will need to assume the responsibilities of your office.



New Board Member Orientation Information

Contact Information

Description of local health services

Description of on-going or recent legal issues

Budget for previous & present year

Minutes for past 2 years

Department finances, fees and other income sources



Challenges

- Insufficient local budgets
- Graying of PH workforce combined with inadequate educational and mentoring opportunities create an unsteady career ladder in local public health
- Distrust of government
- Separation of inspectional services from local boards of health via town charter changes
- Positive Trend -National accreditation and recognition of Local Boards of health



Resources

www.mahb.org - learn your board's login and password to obtain access to member services including Guidebook for Massachusetts Boards of Health, legal memos and other resources. Add to the growing knowledge base by completing your BOH profile and the BOH salary and staffing survey

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