

Health Update: November 3

MetroWest Health Foundation: Community Health Assessment 2023

The MetroWest Health Foundation released its 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment. The report provides health and demographic data that can be used to inform local government, community health, and social service programs within the 25- MetroWest communities served by the foundation, which includes Northborough, Southborough, and Westborough.



The full report (available at www.mwhealth.org) includes an analysis of over 1,000 resident respondents, several key informant interviews and focus groups, and demographic data for the region. The 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment identified five specific need areas:

- Mental Health - the need to improve access to outpatient mental health care as the demand for services has increased post-COVID, particularly for children and adolescents.
- Substance Use - the need to address continued high use of vaping products by teens and alcohol and opioid use among adults.
- Built & Natural Environment – the need for greater opportunities for recreation and socialization to combat isolation and loneliness, especially among older adults; and the need to address climate-related changes that further threaten health and social well-being.
- Housing Insecurity & Homelessness – The need to address the high cost of housing which can make it difficult for families and individuals to balance housing, medical, and food expenses, and places more families and individuals at risk of being homeless.
- Food Insecurity – The need to improve access to nutritious foods and information about food-related supports available to low-income individuals and families in the region.

I look forward to looking through the data and presenting some local data points in the next few weeks!

Behavioral Health Help Line

The Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL) is a service of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, operated by the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) and is available to anyone in Massachusetts. This helpline connects individuals and families to a range of treatment services for mental health and substance use offered in MA, including outpatient, urgent, and immediate crisis care.

This service is free, confidential, and no health insurance is required, available in more than 200 languages, and is available 24/7, 365 days per year. Residents can call or text 833-773-2445 or visit the website to chat online. Please visit masshelpline.com for more information and access to the chat feature.



Please email me at icaruso@town.northborough.ma.us with any questions! Have a great weekend!