

# The Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area



## Community Health Needs Assessment for the Greater Brockton CHNA

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Prepared by the Stoughton Youth Commission

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*Abington / Avon / Bridgewater / Brockton / East  
Bridgewater / Easton / Holbrook / Stoughton / West  
Bridgewater / Whitman*

# Acknowledgements

The completion of this assessment would not have been possible without the enthusiastic participation of community organizations and residents within each CHNA city and town. We would like to thank the residents who shared their thoughts on our four focus areas in their communities and the key informants who graciously provided their time and expertise.

# Introduction

**Community Health Network Areas (CHNAs)** are coalitions of agencies in the public, non-profit, and private sectors working together to build healthier communities in Massachusetts through community-based prevention, planning, and health promotion. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health established the Community Health Network Area (CHNA) effort in 1992. Today this initiative involves all 351 towns and cities through 27 Community Health Networks. The Greater Brockton CHNA (CHNA 22) serves the towns of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, Easton, Holbrook, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman. When the term “CHNA” is used in this report, it refers to the Greater Brockton CHNA unless otherwise specified.

The mission of CHNA 22 is to work toward healthier communities by promoting collaboration between CHNA 22 partners, providing support to local health initiatives and prevention programs, and educating and increasing awareness of local identified health issues throughout the communities it serves.

*The guiding principles of the CHNA 22 include:*

- Diversity Awareness
- Collaboration
- Continuity of CHNA 22
- Decrease duplication of services
- Prevention focus
- Support for all 10 CHNA 22 communities
- Meet community needs
- Communication



With the mission and CHNA 22 guiding principles in mind, the Stoughton Youth Commission conducted this Community Health Needs Assessment to uncover community health needs and issues and determine gaps in community health programming. This assessment was developed as a follow up to the CHNA 22 assessment that was completed in 2010. In 2011, following that assessment, the CHNA 22 Steering Committee prioritized four health priorities for action in the CHNA 22 area: Asthma; Nutrition and Fitness; Oral Health and Substance Abuse. This report represents a more focused look at those four areas.

# Social Determinants of Health

The Healthy People 2020 Report defines Social Determinants of Health as: “conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that affect a wide range of health functioning and quality of life outcomes and risks.” Our health is influenced, in part social and physical factors in the environment.<sup>1</sup>

In this report you find data related to some of the social determinants of health.

Below is a table that links the data in this report that is related to some of the Social Determinants of Health.

**Table of Selected Indicators of Social Determinants of Health<sup>2</sup>**

Social Determinant	Data	Location in Report
Socioeconomic Conditions	-Individuals below the poverty line	Demographics
Language / Literacy	-Percentage of those that speak a language other than English -Percentage of those that speak a language other than English that “speak English less than very well”	Demographics
Access to educational, economic and job opportunities	-Percentage of population with a high school education or higher	Demographics
Housing and community design	-Percentage of houses built prior to 1939, CHNA 22 by community	Asthma
Exposure to toxins or other hazards in the environment	-Environmental Justice Blocks -Focus Group Themes	Asthma
“Built Environment” (road, bicycle lanes, sidewalks)	-Focus Group Themes	Nutrition & Fitness
Availability of community-based resources for recreational activities	-Gyms and Fitness Centers	Nutrition & Fitness
Availability of resources necessary to meet basic needs (safe places to live, local access to healthy food)	-Food Deserts -Farmer’s Markets -Key Informants -Focus Group Themese	Nutrition & Fitness

# Policy, Systems, and Environmental Changes

CHNA 22's aim is to support groups and organizations that endeavor to promote sustainable changes through policy, systems change, and environmental strategies. Such changes are expected to have a positive and enduring impact on one or more of CHNA 22's Health Priorities for Action.

## Policy Change

- Changes in laws, local ordinances, mandates, regulations, etc.
- Can be formal or informal
- Can happen at state, organizational, or community level

## Systems Change

- Changes that impact all elements of an institution, organization, or system
- Systems may include: transportation, hospitals, etc.

## Environmental Change

- Changes to economic, social, or physical environment
- Addressing community norms, social changes

*For additional definitions and examples related to Policy, Systems and Environmental Changes please visit the [CHNA 22 website](#).*

# Methodology

From February to December of 2013, The Stoughton Youth Commission conducted this Community Health Needs Assessment for CHNA 22 with the goal of identifying unmet community health needs, vulnerable populations, and gaps in existing community health services. In this version of the Community Health Needs Assessment, CHNA 22 focused upon the following four priority areas - those identified to be of greatest concern in 2011 based on a prior community health assessment. Those four areas of need are:

- Asthma
- Nutrition and Fitness
- Oral Health
- Substance Abuse

This update of the Community Health Needs Assessment utilized a three-pronged approach to uncover the state of the health of Brockton and its surrounding towns:

1. Conducting key informant interviews with people who work within the CHNA cities and towns (including Brockton) to determine how the needs of residents are met both in and out of the city.
2. Analyzing and updating existing data (MassCHIP, Census data and other resources) to determine how health outcomes in the City of Brockton and surrounding towns differ from each other and the state overall, as well as changes from the previous Community Health Needs Assessment to begin to develop a baseline for trend data in the future.
3. Conducting focus groups within and outside of Brockton to examine their perceptions regarding the four aforementioned health topics and their impact in the service area.

## Key Informant Interviews:

- At least one key informant was interviewed in every CHNA 22 community.
- A total of **23 key informant interviews** were conducted.
- Key informants were identified by the Community Health Assessment Subcommittee and were selected based on their likelihood to have information on one or more of the four priority areas for this report.
- Organizations targeted for interviews included local substance abuse and violence coalitions, visiting nurses associations, school personnel, boards of health, YMCA, Councils on Aging, and others.

# Methodology

## Focus Groups

- A total of four focus groups were conducted between September 2013 and December 2013.
- At least one focus group was held on each priority area.
- In two cases several topics were included in the focus group discussion as the groups interviewed were intended to represent the broader community.
- The substance abuse focus group was conducted with a group of men in recovery, as the intention was to interview a group with deep knowledge of a sensitive issue who were willing to talk about it.
- The asthma focus group was conducted with a group of individuals related to the Greater Brockton Asthma coalition, as not everyone in the general public is affected by asthma.
- Due to the fact that nutrition/fitness and oral health are relevant to all community members, those focus groups were intend to draw from the general population and were therefore held at a YMCA in East Bridgewater and a Church in Brockton to attempt to draw from a diverse group both geographically and otherwise.

Topic	Substance Abuse	Nutrition/Fitness & Oral Health	Asthma	Asthma, Nutrition/ Fitness, & Oral Health
Date of Group	Sept. 16, 2013	Sept. 27, 2013	October 23, 2013	December 10, 2013
Host Venue	Men's Sober House, Brockton	East Bridgewater YMCA	Self-Help, Inc., Brockton	Trinity Baptist Church, Brockton
Number of Attendees	11	5	4	10

# Report Sections

Findings from each section of the assessment contribute to the overall picture of area health needs in different ways. Examining results of key informant interviews can offer the CHNA a perspective on how the residents of the CHNA towns (including Brockton) perceive local challenges and assets related to the four priority health areas. Analyzing archival data will allow the CHNA to determine whether hospitalization, emergency department utilization, or mortality in this region for conditions such as diabetes, asthma, or substance abuse are comparable to state levels. Reviewing focus group responses can give the CHNA an indication of how community residents experience health care services, perceptions about these largest health problems, risk behaviors in these communities, and problems with health care access. The CHNA will also be able to examine which issues related to asthma, nutrition and fitness, oral health, and substance abuse cut across communities and which matters may be community-specific.

The report is divided into five sections, plus an appendix. The first section is selected demographic information for the the communities in the Greater Brockton CHNA. The following 4 sections are focused on each of the four priority areas: **asthma, nutrition and fitness, oral health and substance abuse.**

Each of the four priority area sections are divided into several parts:

- 1) Introduction to the section, including the rationale in 2011 for its inclusion as a priority area
- 2) Definitions of terms and acronyms that may be unfamiliar to the reader
- 3) Graphs and tables representing the most recent data available collected through MassChip and other data sources
- 4) Quotes and summary statements from key informants relating to the topic
- 5) Summaries and quotes from findings related to the focus groups
- 6) Examples of local policy, systems and environmental strategies to address the issue (where known)
- 7) Conclusions about the findings and areas of need for further assessment
- 8) Endnotes with the references for citations included in that section

# Endnotes

1-2. Healthy People 2020 (2014). Social Determinants of Health. Retrieved 2014.  
<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx>