

## 2024 Annual Report of the Quabbin Health District

### District Board of Directors:

Name	Title
Jennifer McMartin	Chair
William Pula	Vice Chair
Kenneth Elstein	Clerk
Leeanne Connolly	Member
Michael Juda	Member
Donna Rucki	Member
Colleen Duroshea	Member
Dr. David Gottsegen	Member
Jim Potter	Member
Melissa Nazzaro	Member
Richard Hall	Member

### District Personnel:

Name	Title
Andrea Crete; MPH, RS	Director of Public Health
John Prenosil	Code Enforcement Officer
Kirsten Krieger; RN, BSN	Public Health Nurse
Roger Bacon, PE	Title 5 Independent Contractor
Betty Barlow	Administrative Assistant/Treasurer
Mary-Jo Grenier	Senior Clerk
Desiree Vennert	Support Staff

### Background:

The Quabbin Health District is a comprehensive regional health department serving the communities of Belchertown, Pelham, and Ware. The district was established in 1980 by a Town meeting vote and was formed under the Section 27A of Chapter 111 of the MGL. It is a joint effort by the three communities' local boards of health to provide their towns with the public health professionals and services needed to create healthy communities. The District provides public health services for roughly 26,296 residents within these communities' 120 square mile radius. The district provides each town with the shared personnel, equipment, and other resources to carry out the required public health duties.

The Quabbin Health District employs one full time Director of Public Health, Andrea Crete; a full time Code Enforcement Officer, John Prenosil; a full time Public Health Nurse Kirsten Krieger; one full time Administrative Assistant, Betty Barlow who staffs the Ware Board of Health office Monday – Friday from 8:30AM – 4:30PM; a part time Senior Clerk who staffs the Belchertown Board of Health office Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8AM-3PM; a per diem Title 5 Independent Contractor, Roger Bacon; and a part time Support Staff, Desiree Vennert who has office hours in Pelham on Tuesdays from 12:30-4:30PM.

The Quabbin Health District is governed by a Board of Directors, which is composed of the elected Board of Health members from all three communities within the District. The Health Director, Health Inspector, and Public Health Nurse work in all three communities and maintain fully functional workplaces in both the Ware and Belchertown Town Halls. The District provides administrative / clerical personnel at both locations as well

The Quabbin Health District provides services to the member Towns including but not limited to communicable and reportable disease surveillance via an online epidemiological network (MAVEN), public health investigations, public health messaging, 24-7 public health emergency response, seasonal flu vaccination clinics, tobacco control, substance abuse prevention programs, and State mandated public health inspections and complaint management. You can visit the Quabbin Health District website for more information on services at <http://quabbinhealthdistrict.com>

The report below details the services the Quabbin Health District provided to the member Towns for the 2024 calendar year. Please contact the District office by phone at 413-967-9615 or email [bbarlow@townofware.com](mailto:bbarlow@townofware.com) with any questions, comments, requests for additional information, and to relay any specific public health concerns.

## **Public Health Programs:**

### **Community Naloxone Program (CNP):**

CNP allows many eligible programs to obtain naloxone (Narcan) through the State Office of Pharmacy (SOPS) for reduced / no cost. Local boards of health are eligible to receive naloxone at no cost with a requirement to submit training and dispensing data monthly to the state of Massachusetts. The Quabbin Health District has been providing education and training in opioids and opioid overdose response since being approved for the program in December 2022 as a naloxone distribution site. The PHN Kirsten Krieger RN, BSN, along with the Director of Public Health Andrea Crete, have developed and updated a training presentation for businesses and groups in the community to include understanding addiction, types of opiates, xylazine and other adulterants in the drug supply, reducing stigma, and recognizing, and responding to an overdose with naloxone. The PHN also developed a shorter version to be done with individuals that includes the above-listed items. Once training has been completed attendees or individuals are given naloxone for no cost.

In 2024 the QHD distributed 125 naloxone kits (250 individual doses) at no cost while providing Opioids and Opioid rescue training to everyone the kits were given to.

### **Emergency Preparedness:**

In 2022 the Quabbin Health District joined the Hampshire Public Health Preparedness Coalition. The HPHPC works collaboratively to enhance communities' collective capacity to share resources and respond to public health threats and emergencies, including terrorism and outbreaks of infectious diseases. It strives to improve local and regional public health emergency preparedness, and meet deliverables set forth by the Department of Public Health. HPHPC includes Boards of Health and Health Departments in the Massachusetts Preparedness Coalition Region 1C. Funding is provided through the Massachusetts Department of Public

Health with a grant from the Centers for Disease Control. Coalition activities and expenditures are overseen by an executive committee which includes members who represent the broad geographic diversity of the region. Ex-officio members include representatives from Cooley Dickinson Hospital and UMass Amherst. The HPHPC grant is managed by the Northampton Health Department as the Host Agency. The Coalition is closely aligned with other regional response partners including Hampshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee (HREPC), Western Regional Advisory Group (WAG), Western MA Medical Reserve Corps Advisory Group (MAG) and the Pandemic Flu Committee of the Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC).

*Member Communities in the HPHPC include Amherst, Belchertown, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Easthampton, Goshen, Granby, Hadley, Hatfield, Huntington, Middlefield, Northampton, Pelham, Plainfield, South Hadley, Southampton, Ware, Westhampton, and Worthington.*

**Public Health Excellence Grant:**

The Quabbin Health District is the grantee of the MA DPH’s Public Health Excellence Grant (PHE) which allows the District to provide a full time Public Health Nurse and the services provided through public health nursing which is summarized in this report under “Public Health Nursing Report,” a Title 5 Independent Contractor to handle all the soil testing, septic plan reviews and septic system inspections in the District; and a part time Administrative Support Staff. The grant also pays for a tablet based inspectional software program called Win Wam which allows all food inspection reports to now be done electronically. The Win Wam system stores the inspection reports and can generate data gathered using the reports to show where there are gaps in compliance with the Food Code that may need to be addressed in food establishments and what training may need to be provided to increase compliance and reduce food borne illness risk factors. Inspection reports are posted on the Quabbin Health District website for public access and viewing.

The grant funds the District’s monthly website hosting and maintenance fees; pays for inspectional supplies for health inspections as well as public health nursing; and staff membership and training fees. In FY24 the District was allotted a total of \$324,785.36 in grant funding. We are fortunate to receive these funds in order to increase essential public health services to the member towns.

**Public Health Inspections:**

Public Health Inspections	Belchertown	Ware	Pelham
PercTest / Deepholes and Soil Evaluations	57	22	9
Septic Application Review (New Construction)	34	10	2

Septic Application Review (Repair)	30	14	10
Septic Installation Inspections and Re-inspections	48	19	7
Well Application Review	41	N/A	1
Housing Inspections (upon complaint) And Re-inspections	11	81	0
Lead Paint Inspections	0	3	0
Condemnations (#of units)	0	1	0
Voucher Housing Inspections	0	4	1
Housing Court Appearances	0	0	0
Food Service Inspections (routine and complaint) Including School Cafeterias	48	109	2
New or Remodeled Food Plan review	1	0	0
Mobile/Temporary Food Inspections	43	14	0
Beaver Permits Applications	1	3	0
Nuisance Complaints Received and Investigated and Orders issued as warranted	4	16	3
Tanning Bed Licensure	1	0	N/A

Children Recreational Camp Inspections and Licensing	0	0	0
Tattoo/ Body Art Establishments	2	1	N/A
Public Pool and Sauna Inspections	2	0	N/A
Public Beaches	1	0	

**Public Health Nursing:**

**Public Health Nurse Wellness and Blood Pressure Clinics**

The Public Health Nurse provides wellness and blood pressure clinics to sites within the Quabbin Health District – offering blood pressure screening, blood sugar screening, health and wellness promotion and educational programs, connection to local health resources, harm reduction supplies including naloxone kits with 1:1 training, hygiene kits to unsheltered persons, and syringe exchange services, and helps answer questions about chronic health conditions to assist residents in understanding their health and increasing their health literacy.

These clinics are offered at – Belchertown Senior Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of every month from 10:00 am to 11:30 am, Ware Senior Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of every month from 10:00 am to 11:30 am, Quabbin Wire & Cable in Ware on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm, Christopher Heights in Belchertown on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm, Cornerstone Recovery Program in Ware on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of every month from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm, The Recovery Center of Hope in Ware on 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month from 10:30 am to 11:30 am, and at Pine Valley Plantation in Belchertown on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

**Health Education and Wellness Promotion Activities**

The Public Health Nurse has presented educational programs at the Ware and Belchertown public libraries, the Ware and Belchertown senior centers, the Pelham public library, Cornerstone Recovery Program in Ware, the Recovery Center of Hope in Ware, Pine Valley Plantation in Belchertown, and Country Bank in Ware on the topics of Nutrition Essentials, Healthy Eating on a Budget, Fat Diets vs. Healthy Lifestyle, Health Literacy, Summer Safety, Respiratory Health, Emergency Preparedness, Ticks and Mosquitos, Cold Weather Safety, Diabetes, Dementia Friends, Financial Concerns in Persons with Dementia, Signs and Symptoms of Concern for Older Adults for those doing community outreach

The Public Health Nurse is a certified CPR/First Aid/AED and choke saving instructor for the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross. In 2024, Adult and Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED with choke saving trainings were taught at the Education to Employment (E2E) office on Main Street in Ware, the Ware Town Hall PHN office, and Ware Senior Center,

partnering with Healthy Quaboag to help support the cost of training for the community. In 2024, **40** members of the community completed CPR/First Aid/AED with choke saving training successfully and received a certification valid for 2 years from the date of the completion of the course.

The Public Health Nurse set up health promotion tables at the following events in the district: The Umbrella of Wellness Fair in Belchertown, Food Truck Fridays in Belchertown, National Night Out in Ware, The Belchertown Senior Center resource fair and outdoor summer concerts, Ware Recovery Center of Hope 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Recovery Resources Fair, and the Overdose Awareness Vigil at Veteran’s Park in Ware.

The Public Health Nurse collaborated with Big Y Pharmacy to provide Influenza and COVID-19 vaccines at the following locations: in Ware at the Senior Center/COA, Cedarbrook Assisted Living, and All Saints Food Pantry; in Belchertown at Pine Valley Plantation and the Belchertown Town Hall. Total people vaccinated were approximately 207.

**Quabbin Health District 2024 Communicable Disease Report**

The Public Health Nurse is responsible for and has been conducting MAVEN infectious disease surveillance. This requires checking in daily for notifications of infectious diseases occurring in the District. It also requires doing case investigations for diseases other than Influenza or COVID-19 by contacting hospital infection preventionists if a person is hospitalized, contacting case and/or PCP office to determine potential means of exposure, contact tracing if applicable.

The types and numbers of communicable diseases reported in the District for 2024 are listed below. They are listed by the disease/illness and the number of cases (residents suspected (S), probable (P), and confirmed (C) to have an infectious illness/disease.

**Total event count by disease**

<b>Diseases Year 1/1/2024 to 12/31/2024</b>	<b>Belchertown</b>	<b>Pelham</b>	<b>Ware</b>
<b>Babesiosis</b>	<b>1S</b>	<b>1C, 1S</b>	<b>2C, 1S</b>
<b>Calicivirus/Norovirus</b>	<b>10C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4C</b>
<b>Campylobacteriosis</b>	<b>3C, 3P</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>1C, 1P</b>
<b>Cyclosporiasis</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Giardiasis</b>	<b>2P</b>	<b>1P</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Group A Streptococcus</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1C</b>
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	<b>2C, 1P, 5S</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2S</b>
<b>Hepatitis C</b>	<b>2C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2C, 2P, 2S</b>
<b>Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>1S</b>	<b>1C, 3S</b>
<b>Influenza</b>	<b>102C, 1S</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>133C</b>
<b>Legionellosis</b>	<b>2C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Lyme Disease</b>	<b>36P, 23S</b>	<b>1P, 6S</b>	<b>25P, 7S</b>
<b>Novel Coronavirus</b>	<b>175C, 31P</b>	<b>9C, 1P</b>	<b>175C, 21P</b>
<b>Pertussis</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>1C</b>
<b>Salmonellosis</b>	<b>2C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3C</b>

<b>Shiga toxin producing organism</b>	<b>1P</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1C</b>
<b>Tuberculosis</b>	<b>11C***</b>	<b>1C***</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Tularemia</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1S</b>
<b>Varicella</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Yersiniosis</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1C</b>

\*\*\*Tuberculosis cases managed by the MA Department of Public Health\*\*\*

I would like to thank the members of the District Board of Directors for their continued support in all the great work that the District staff do. I look forward to continuing to be a part of such a great organization and expanding its services to improve the health needs of the member Towns.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrea Crete, MPH, RS; Director of Public Health - Quabbin Health District