

July 2025



Quabbin Health District Public Health Nurse Newsletter

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Serving the towns of Belchertown, Pelham, and Ware

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Quabbin Health District News and Happenings:

Harm Reduction Services!

- Naloxone & Overdose Response Training
- FREE Naloxone and Fentanyl Test Strips
- Syringe Exchange
- Hygiene Kits for Unsheltered Individuals
- Connection to resources for treatment and recovery

Call or text Kirsten (Public Health Nurse) at: 413-387-3122 (cell) or email: kkrieger@townofware.com.

Come visit the Public Health Nurse health and wellness sessions at the following locations:

- *Pelham Public Library*: 1st Friday of each month from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm
- *Clapp Memorial Library*: 3rd Friday each month from 2 pm to 3:30 pm.
- *Ware Public Library YMLA*: 1st Thursday of each month from 2 pm - 3:30 pm

For more information, see the attached flyer!

Quaboag Valley Food Policy Council Presents:

Ware Community Garden Forum – Join us July 30, 2025 from 5pm – 7pm, at the Ware Senior Center, 1 Robbins Road, Ware, to learn about Ware's upcoming community garden and how to participate! Dinner will be provided to attendees! All from the community are welcome, but please register in advance using the QR code on the attached flyer to ensure there is enough food!

The community needs YOU! Your input is needed for the Community Health Improvement Project working groups – please lend your voice to help improve access to health, mental health, transportation, and housing in your community! Contact apalano@townofware.com for info!

Did you know?

The National US Bird was almost a turkey!

Benjamin Franklin argued that the turkey would make a better national bird than the bald eagle, because the turkey was "A much more respectable bird and a true native of America".

What is extreme heat?

Extreme heat is a period of high heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two to three days. In extreme heat your body works extra hard to maintain a normal temperature, which can lead to death. Extreme heat is responsible for the highest number of annual deaths among all weather-related hazards.

Why is it so important to prepare for extreme heat?

- It can be dangerous and even deadly.
- Staying hydrated, cool, and connected is crucial.
- Vulnerable groups like children and the elderly are at higher risk.
- Climate change leads to record-breaking temperatures.
- Taking measures to protect your health before the heat arrives is essential

Staying Safe in the H.E.A.T.

Hydrate. Whether you feel thirsty or not, drink water to avoid getting dehydrated, especially when you're working or exercising outside. Sip water throughout the day rather than drinking a lot at once – limit or avoid alcoholic beverages as they increase your risk of heat-related illness.

Educate yourself. Keep up with the latest temperature and heat index forecasts and current readings (take actions to stay cool and safe when the temperatures hits 85 degrees or the heat index hits 90 degrees). Know the warning signs of a heat illness, and how you can stay cool.

Act quickly when a heat illness is suspected. Seek medical attention immediately for any of these warning signs: cramping, rapid pulse, heavy sweating, hot red skin, dizziness, confusion, nausea, vomiting.

Take it easy. Anyone working or exercising outdoors should avoid overexertion, especially between the hours of 11 am and 6 pm. Take hourly breaks in the shade or in air conditioning.

Call 911 if you suspect a heat-related illness and any heat-related medical emergency!

For Local Emergency Information, Contact:

- 911 for any medical emergencies
- Call 2-1-1 for the location of open shelters, transportation or other restrictions due to a state of emergency, post disaster assistance, or other services you or your family may need. Online at: <https://mass211.org/>
- Visit your town's website for emergency information and to sign up for local emergency alerts.
 - Ware: [Emergency Management](#)
 - Belchertown: [Alerts & Notifications](#) • [CivicPlus Portal](#)
 - Pelham: [Emergency Management - Town of Pelham, MA](#)

Extreme Heat Planning Timeline

Pre-Season

Start planning before hot weather arrives.

- ✓ Build an emergency kit
- ✓ Make a plan for power outages
- ✓ Become trained in first aid for heat-related emergencies
- ✓ Check that your A/C and fans are in working order

A Few Days Out

If the forecast calls for extreme heat, be ready.

- ✓ Gather food, water, and medication
- ✓ Make a list of friends and family to check on & help them prepare
- ✓ Know your local cooling shelters or other cool locations
- ✓ Reschedule outdoor events

During and After

Remain vigilant and stay informed.

- ✓ Stay in air conditioning and out of the sun if possible
- ✓ Check on friends, family, neighbors, and pets
- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Take breaks and use a buddy system if working outdoors

weather.gov

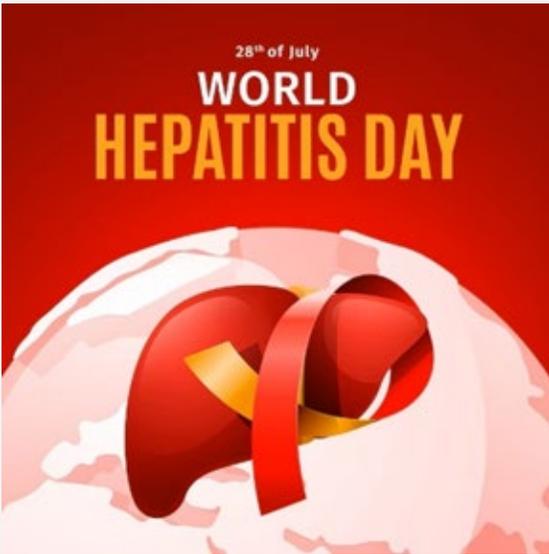


To learn more about building an emergency kit, visit: [Build A Kit | Ready.gov](#)

Types of Heat-related Illnesses



- **Heat cramps:** muscular pains and spasms caused by heavy sweating.
 - *Symptoms:* Muscular pains and spasms that usually occur in the legs or abdomen
 - *Treatment:* Get the person to rest in a cooler place. Give them water or fluids with electrolytes help them rehydrate.
- **Heat exhaustion:** Body fluids lost through heavy sweating and blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to vital organs to decrease. This results in a form of mild shock.
 - *Symptoms:* Cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, nausea, dizziness, headache, weakness, and/or exhaustion
 - *Treatment:* Get the person to a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing, apply cool, wet cloths (towels or sheets). If conscious, give half a glass of cool water or fluids with electrolytes every 15 minutes, making sure they drink slowly. Watch carefully for changes and call 9-1-1 if they don't improve.
- **Heat stroke:** Most serious and life-threatening. Systems in the body begin to stop functioning due to extreme heat and may cause brain damage or death if the body is not cooled quickly. **This is a medical emergency – call 911 right away!**
 - *Symptoms:* Extremely high body temperature, hot, red skin (dry or moist), loss of consciousness, changes in level of responsiveness, rapid and weak pulse, rapid and shallow breathing, vomiting, confusion, and/or seizures
 - *Treatment:* Get the person to a cool place, remove/loosen tight clothes, apply cool, wet cloths (can be towels or sheets), or apply ice (wrapped in something) to the underarms or groin area. Do not give anything to eat or drink, keep them as cool and comfortable as possible, and CALL 911 right away!



World Hepatitis Day is observed each year on July 28th raise awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes severe liver disease and liver cancer.

Chronic hepatitis B and C silently cause liver damage and cancer – despite them being preventable, treatable, and, in the case of hepatitis C, is completely curable.

Get the facts.
Take action.

Hepatitis is the **leading cause** of liver cancer.

2m
There are more than 2 million **new** cases of hepatitis every year.

Get the facts.
Get tested.

1.3m

30s
Every 30 seconds someone loses their life to a hepatitis related illness.

Every year, more than 1.3 million lives are lost to hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Get the facts.
Protect your health.

57% **46%**

Recent research found that 57% of people affected by hepatitis C and 46% of people living with hepatitis B found it difficult to tell people they were living with hepatitis.

#WorldHepatitisDay worldhepatitisday.org

Let's break it down. 

To learn more about Hepatitis and testing options, you can:

1. Visit: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/hepatitis>
2. Contact your primary care provider.
3. Contact Tapestry Community Health Outreach: (413) 309-2151

More than 95% of those with hepatitis C can be cured with 8-12 weeks of oral medication.

The ABCs of Hepatitis Fact Sheet

HEPATITIS A	HEPATITIS B	HEPATITIS C
What is it?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A virus that causes damage to the liver ▶ Goes away after a few weeks to several months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A virus that causes damage to the liver ▶ USUALLY goes away after several months ▶ If it does not go away, it can cause liver cell damage, leading to cirrhosis (scarring) and liver cancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A virus that causes damage to the liver ▶ USUALLY does NOT go away unless treated with medication ▶ It can cause liver cell damage, leading to cirrhosis (scarring) and liver cancer
How is it spread?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated with infected feces ▶ Close contact with an infected person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact with infected blood or sexual fluids ▶ Sharing injection drug equipment, or tattoo and body-piercing ▶ Needlestick from an infected person ▶ Passed from infected mother to newborn during childbirth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sharing injection drug equipment, or tattoo and body-piercing tools ▶ Contact with infected blood ▶ Sharing razors and toothbrushes ▶ Passed from infected mother to newborn during childbirth ▶ Spread through sex (rare with long-term partner)
Symptoms		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ For hepatitis A or hepatitis B, some may have light stools, dark urine, fatigue, fever, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, stomachache, and yellow skin or eyes (jaundice) ▶ Some people don't experience any symptoms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Most people have no symptoms ▶ Some may feel tired and experience nausea and loss of appetite
Treatment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lots of rest and fluids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Oral anti-viral medication or rarely, interferon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Oral anti-viral medication
Prevention		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Washing hands with soap and water after using the toilet ▶ Wear protective gloves and use 1 part bleach to 9 parts water to clean surfaces contaminated with feces, such as changing tables. Soak spill area for 1-2 minutes ▶ Avoid contaminated food and water ▶ Vaccination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wear protective gloves and clean up spilled blood with 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. Soak spill area for 10-30 minutes ▶ Do not share razors, toothbrushes, or needles ▶ Practice safe sex: use a latex condom or barrier ▶ Vaccination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wear protective gloves and clean up spilled blood with 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. Soak spill area for 10-30 minutes ▶ Do not share razors, toothbrushes, or needles ▶ Practice safe sex: use a latex condom or barrier ▶ No vaccine exists ▶ Can get re-infected after being cured

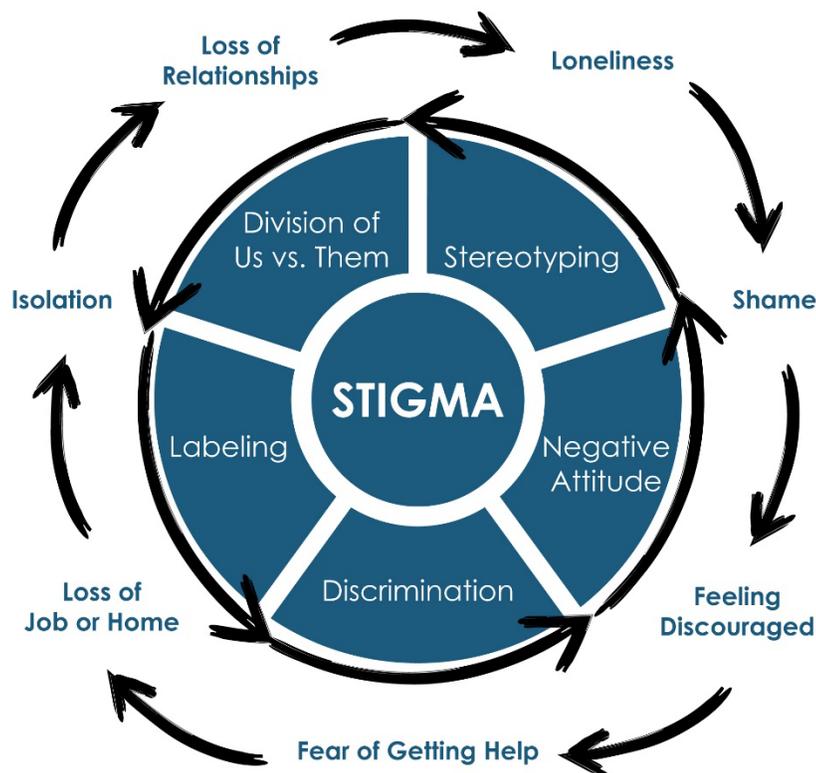


July 21st is Zero HIV Stigma Day

Stigma is defined by the American Psychological Association as: “the negative social attitude attached to a characteristic of an individual that may be regarded as a mental, physical, or social deficiency.”



#ZEROHIVSTIGMADAY



Source: [#MentalHealthMonday: Addressing Food Bank Stigma - The Nourish and Develop Foundation](#)

The effects of stigma can significantly impact the individual, their family, and their community. It may affect the availability of programs to assist those with a stigmatizing condition, or influence a family’s willingness or ability to help their family member.

Stigma isolates and harms people, impacts communities, and can prevent policymakers from creating laws that avoid discriminating against stigmatized groups. It can affect how a person is treated when seeking care, or their ability to seek medical, mental health, or substance use treatment.

Types of stigma:

- **Public stigma** involves the negative or discriminatory attitudes that others may have about mental illness.
- **Self-stigma** refers to the negative attitudes, including internalized shame, that people with mental illness may have about their own condition.
- **Structural stigma** is more systemic, involving policies of government and private organizations that intentionally or unintentionally limit opportunities for those with a stigmatized condition or trait. Examples include lower funding for clinical research, fewer services for mental health, substance use, or infectious diseases, or preventing individuals from civil liberties.

The Role of Each Individual in Stigma Reduction

Everyone has a role to play in reducing stigma. Whether through small daily actions or larger advocacy efforts, change starts with awareness and compassion.

- **Challenge Stereotypes:** Speak up when you hear misinformation or discriminatory remarks.
- **Educate Yourself and Others:** Learn about stigmatized conditions and identities and share that knowledge.
- **Support Inclusive Policies:** Advocate for policies that promote fairness and equity.
- **Practice Empathy:** Treat individuals with dignity and without judgment, regardless of their background or struggles.
- **Words Matter:** Make the effort to use person-first language. For example, instead of saying “she’s schizophrenic” say “She is a person with schizophrenia”. Someone isn’t a diabetic, but rather a person with diabetes. By using person-first language, we avoid identifying a person by a specific characteristic to reduce the harm, discrimination, or other impacts associated with being labeled as something other than a person.

To learn more about stopping the stigma of HIV, please use this QR code or visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/stophivtogether/hiv-stigma/index.html>



QUABBIN HEALTH DISTRICT

HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM



Harm Reduction
Saves Lives

WE PROVIDE (AT NO COST)

- Syringe Exchange Services
- Naloxone Distribution
- Opioids & Overdose Response Training
- Community Resources Connection



CONTACT:

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Public Health Nurse

413-387-3122 (Call or text)

kkrieger@townofware.com

www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com





Do you want a community garden in Ware?

Come to our Forum to learn more!

Hosted by the Quaboag
Valley Food Policy Council

Dinner will be provided

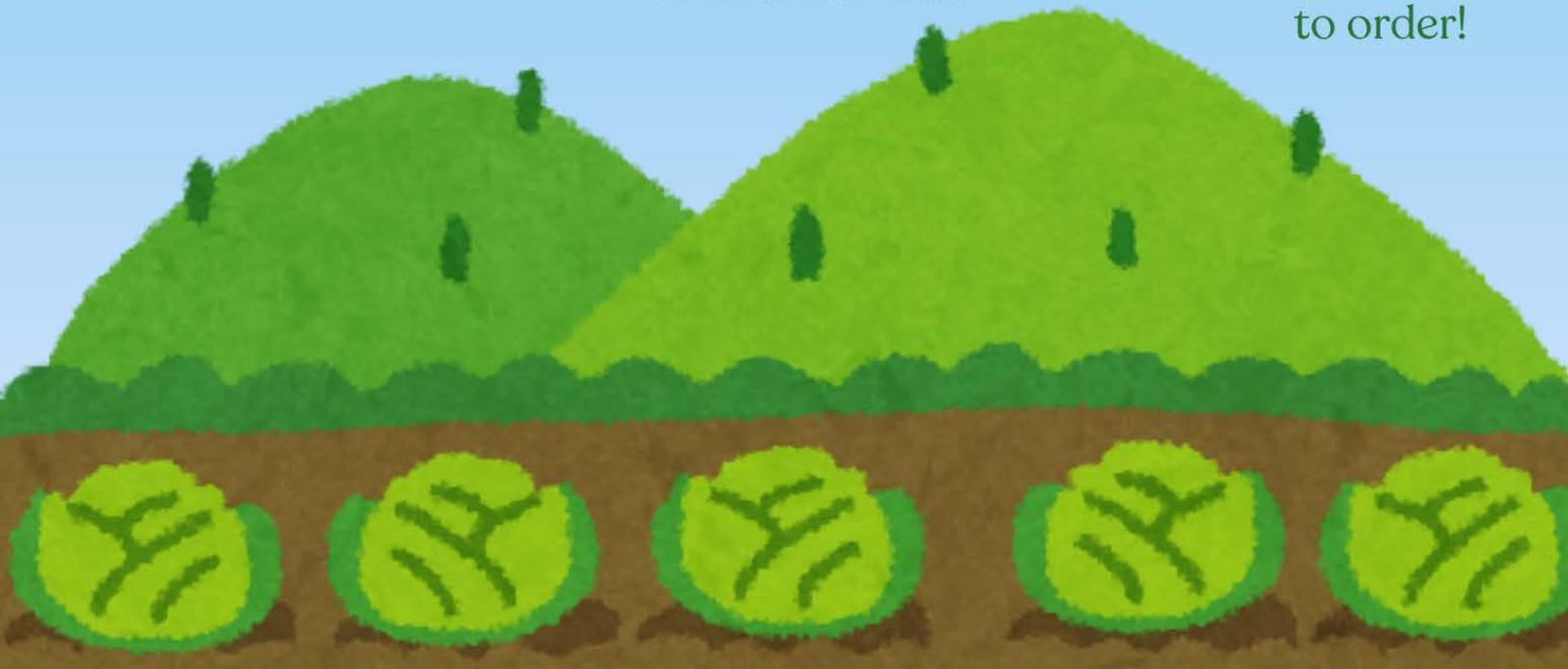


July 30th from 5-7pm

Location: Ware Senior Center
1 Robbins Rd



Please register
ahead of time
so we know
how much food
to order!





HEALTHY QUABOAG & THE TOWN OF WARE

QUABOAG VALLEY

Food Policy Council

COMMUNITY GARDEN TASK FORCE

**1st Tuesday of the Month
12-1pm**

The Community Garden Task Force is responsible for the planning, implementation, and upkeep of a community garden(s) in our region. Initial steps for this are: researching potential sites, determining upfront costs, and gauging interest within our communities. Long-term work on this task force would include creating garden regulations and creating a system for longevity including garden maintenance and member support.



[Click Here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)

GLEANING & FARMER SUPPORT GROUP TASK FORCE

**2nd Monday of the Month
1-2pm**

The Gleaning & Farmer Support Group is responsible for coordinating gleaning events including outreach to farmers, managing distribution to pantries and food distributions, and being liaisons for farmers. Other projects include finding ways to support the farmers in our region through assistance with the HIP Program and connecting farmers to financial assistance resources.



[Click Here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)

NUTRITION EDUCATION TASK FORCE

**3rd Monday of the Month
2-3pm**

The Nutrition Education Task Force is responsible for managing and distributing nutrition resources, coordinating cooking demonstrations and classes, and providing support to our local food pantries. Additional projects include providing support and education to participants of benefit programs such as SNAP and WIC.



[Click Here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Serving the towns of: Barre, Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holland, Ludlow, Monson, North Brookfield, New Braintree, Palmer, Spencer, Wales, Ware, Warren, West Brookfield & Wilbraham

For more information, email Sawyer, at sblake@townofware.com