

2024

**GREATER WORCESTER
COMMUNITY
HEALTH
ASSESSMENT**



The City of
WORCESTER



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UMass Memorial Health
UMASS MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER



**Coalition
for a Healthy
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CONNECTING HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE
BUILDING COMMUNITY



2024 Greater Worcester Community Health Assessment Published

Town of Shrewsbury – The Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA) and its lead agency, the Worcester Division of Public Health (WDPH), this month published the 2024 Greater Worcester Regional Community Health Assessment (CHA) in partnership with UMass Memorial Health, the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester, and Fallon Health.

The CHA identified six priority areas to concentrate efforts, drive collective impact, and focus discussions on the region’s health improvement and health equity efforts: built environment, affordable and safe housing, access to quality and reliable broadband, navigating public benefits, healthcare workforce, and culturally representative healthcare.

“The CHA is a living document that highlights our critical public health challenges, focusing on upstream systemic inequities and drivers to negative health outcomes,” said Soloe Dennis, Director of WDPH and the CMRPHA. “We are very grateful for the Alliance and healthcare partnerships, along with community participation, as we collectively work to improve the lives of all residents within the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance.”

The findings of the 2024 CHA will guide much of the region’s community health work over the next three years in addition to the CMRPHA’s own programming, including:

- Updating the strategies of the 2021-2026 Greater Worcester Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), as well as providing an early foundation for the following CHIP, which is facilitated by the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester
- Serving as the foundation for UMass Memorial Health’s Determination of Needs funding opportunities for local non-profit organizations and Fallon Health’s community benefits funding program
- Providing publicly accessible data for use in grant proposals, academic coursework, and policy development “I’m very proud that the 2024 CHA process was locally led, leveraging existing partnerships and efforts that have been vetted and proven effective in engaging communities,” said Nikki Nixon, WDPH Chief of Data, Research, and Epidemiology and Lead Author of the CHA. “I’m excited for the release of our 2024 e-CHA, initiating the modernization of public health data.”

Conducted every three years, the CHA aims to identify community health issues, barriers to care, disparities in health outcomes, vulnerable populations, and gaps in the health service system across the CMRPHA, which currently consists of Worcester, Grafton, Shrewsbury, and West Boylston.

Development of the 2024 CHA took place from January – September 2023. Throughout the process, WDPH, the CMRPHA, and their partners engaged with the regional community to determine shared priorities, goals, objectives, and strategies for moving forward in a cohesive and coordinated way.

In March, an advisory committee made up of about 50 community partners was assembled to develop the CHA's scope based on the most impactful information and data that would shape community health programming and planning. The committee recommended which questions to include in public surveys, as well as which health outcomes and indicators to incorporate.

Subsequent assessment and research included 19 interviews and 13 health equity population conversations with 72 participants from throughout the region, 1,000 responses to the public survey, and data collection from multiple secondary sources to describe the socio-demographic and health profiles for the region.

According to the public survey results, the top seven indicators of a healthy CMRPHA were access to good healthcare, safe neighborhoods, access to healthy food, good schools and education, public parks/green space, stabilized housing, and livable wages/workforce development opportunities.

The full 2024 CHA can be found on worcesterma.gov/building-a-healthy-community/cha. In the coming weeks, the published document will be supplemented with interactive dashboards unique to each CMRPHA municipality and will be updated periodically with the latest findings.