



2015 Governance, Responsibilities & Budget

Cambridge Public Health Department

The Cambridge Public Health Commission, doing business as “Cambridge Health Alliance,” was established as a public authority on June 30, 1996 through a special act of the Massachusetts legislature, Chapter 147 of the Acts of 1996 (the Enabling Act). The Enabling Act charges Cambridge Health Alliance to “perform the duties conferred or imposed upon boards of health of cities in the commonwealth” by state law and provides that the City of Cambridge contract with Cambridge Health Alliance for the provision of public health services in and to the City. The current Health Services Agreement was signed in 2010 and runs through 2017.

Cambridge Health Alliance’s Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD) enforces existing laws and regulations pertaining to public health, and has the statutory authority to make and enforce new public health regulations within the City of Cambridge. The Cambridge Public Health Department exercises its statutory authority under the Enabling Act and Massachusetts General Laws, chapters 111, 112, and 114. The City’s Inspectional Services Department assumes responsibility for several major categories of public health code enforcement as provided in a 1983 memorandum of agreement.

Cambridge Public Health Department Governance

Patrick Wardell serves as the Chief Executive Officer for Cambridge Health Alliance and, pursuant to the Enabling Act, the Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Cambridge. Mr. Wardell has delegated the operation of the Cambridge Public Health Department to Claude-Alix Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer. However, Mr. Wardell is the signatory of record for all state-level contracts. In addition, Mr. Wardell serves as an ex-officio member of the Cambridge Public Health Subcommittee of the Cambridge Health Alliance Board of Trustees, which is the quasi-board of health for the City of Cambridge.

The Cambridge Public Health Department is advised by the Cambridge Public Health Subcommittee, the Community Health Advisory Council, and through designated committees of the Cambridge City Council such as the Community Health, Environment, and Human Services committees. The Cambridge Public Health Department works closely with the City Manager, City Council, the School Committee, and all city departments.

Communication with Governing Entities

In 2015, CPHD communicated with its governing entities through:

- Updates provided to the Cambridge Public Health Subcommittee on a variety of topics, including regulatory work around tobacco control, sports-related concussions among youth, and fluoride levels in the city’s drinking water; national accreditation; departmental activities and events, including the annual Hoops ‘N’ Health sports tournament and health fair, the Be All Right health

Fair at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, and National Public Health Week; and departmental responses to City Council policy orders. The Cambridge Public Health Subcommittee advises the Chief Public Health Officer about departmental priorities for health issues affecting Cambridge; serves as an advisory group to the Cambridge Health Alliance Board of Trustees; and enhances linkages between the public health department and the Cambridge Health Alliance health care delivery system.

- Information presented at the bimonthly meetings of the Community Health Advisory Council on a variety of topics, including overviews of population health initiatives, substance abuse, obesity, and immigrant health. The Community Health Advisory Council provides input and recommendations to the Committee on Community and Public Health, a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees. The members are a diverse group of community leaders representing a wide variety of health and human service organizations. The council reviews key community health problems and the role of Cambridge Health Alliance in addressing these problems through collaboration with community partners.

Local Health Department Responsibilities

There are approximately 2,800 health departments at the state, county, and local levels that are charged with addressing the public's health across the United States, according to the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). In 2005, NACCHO developed an "Operational Definition of a Functional Local Public Health Department" outlining ten fundamental responsibilities of local public health departments. These responsibilities (often referred to as the "ten essential public health services") were developed within nationally recognized frameworks and with input from public health professionals and elected officials across the country. They are linked to the three core functions of public health (assessment, policy development, assurance) established by the Institute of Medicine in 1988. The ten essential public health services are:

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate identified health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
9. Assess effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

The Cambridge Public Health Department, in partnership with Cambridge Health Alliance's Department of Community Health Improvement and the Institute for Community Health, ensures that these obligations are met by providing sophisticated public health and health promotion services to city residents, collecting and analyzing data, and developing programs in response to community-defined needs. In addition, Cambridge Health Alliance provides high quality health care to Cambridge residents of all backgrounds.

National Accreditation

The Cambridge Public Health Department is seeking voluntary national accreditation as part of its broader initiative to strengthen agency performance, assure the quality of departmental services, and assure that health department activities reflect the needs of the community. To receive national accreditation, state, local, and tribal health departments must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure they meet or exceed the public health quality standards and measures set by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

The Cambridge Public Health Department launched its accreditation initiative in 2013. As part of this effort, the management team conducted a self-assessment of the department's readiness for accreditation in February 2013. This process led to the identification of the department's strengths and gaps; and informed the development of the accreditation performance improvement plan.

The department has made steady progress in fulfilling the objectives of the accreditation performance improvement plan. CPHD produced the 2014 City of Cambridge Community Health Assessment, one of the prerequisites for accreditation. The remaining two prerequisites—the community health improvement plan and the departmental strategic plan—were completed in 2015. In July 2015, the department's statement of intent was officially registered into the Public Health Accreditation Board database. The complete application will be submitted to PHAB by June 2016.

Cambridge Public Health Department Budget

The national climate for public health funding has been turbulent in recent years. While many U.S. health departments are experiencing fiscal challenges, the Cambridge Public Health Department continues to receive strong support from city leadership. Cambridge Health Alliance received \$6.75 million from the City of Cambridge in fiscal year 2015 to support the Cambridge Public Health Department and other CHA public health services in Cambridge. In addition to the city appropriation, the department brought in \$1.8 million in state, federal, private foundation funding, and patient/regulatory fees. It should be noted that Cambridge Health Alliance provides substantial support to the Cambridge-Somerville HealthCare for the Homeless program, the Cambridge Teen Health Center, and the Cambridge-based Institute for Community Health. The City of Cambridge appropriation for fiscal year 2016 is \$7 million.