



## City of Cambridge Community Health Improvement Plan, May 2015

### Executive Summary

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Where and how we live, learn, work, and play affects our health. Understanding how these factors influence health is critical for developing the best strategies to address them. To accomplish these goals, the Cambridge Public Health Department led a comprehensive community health planning effort to measurably improve the health of Cambridge residents. This effort included two major phases:

1. A community health assessment (CHA) to identify the health-related needs and strengths of Cambridge
2. A community health improvement plan (CHIP) to determine major health priorities, overarching goals, and specific objectives and strategies that can be implemented in a coordinated way across Cambridge

In addition to guiding future services, programs, and policies for community agencies and organizations, the CHA and CHIP are also required for the health department to earn accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), a distinction which indicates that the agency is meeting national standards for public health system performance.

The *2015 City of Cambridge Community Health Improvement Plan* was developed over the period December 2013–May 2015, using the key findings from the CHA, which included qualitative data from focus groups, key informant interviews and community forums that were conducted locally; as well as quantitative data from local, state and national indicators to inform discussions and determine health priority areas. The CHA is accessible at [www.cambridgepublichealth.org/publications/FinalCambridgeCHAreport.pdf](http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/publications/FinalCambridgeCHAreport.pdf).

To develop a shared vision, plan for improved community health, and help sustain implementation efforts, the Cambridge assessment and planning process engaged community members and local public health partners through different avenues:

- a. The Accreditation Steering Committee, comprised of health department leadership, was responsible for overseeing the community health assessment, and overseeing the development of the community health improvement plan
- b. The Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD) Management Team and staff were responsible for reviewing documents and providing subject matter expertise and data for defined priorities
- c. The CHIP Workgroups, representing broad and diverse sectors of the community and organized around each health priority area, were responsible for developing the goals, objectives and strategies for the CHIP
- d. The Community Health Advisory Group, comprised of diverse leaders from Cambridge, representing sectors such as government, non-profit organizations and coalitions,

business and industry, health, education, and community services, was responsible for ensuring buy in from key stakeholders as well as alignment with the city's strategic goals and priorities.

CPHD staff and community partners used common criteria and a multi-voting process to identify the following priority health issues that would be addressed in the CHIP:

- Priority Area 1:*     **Mental/Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse**  
Goal 1:            Support and enhance the mental, behavioral, and emotional health of all, and reduce the impact of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Priority Area 2:*     **Violence**  
Goal 2:            Establish a new community norm that strives for peace and justice, and provides a comprehensive approach to address all forms of violence.
- Priority Area 3:*     **Healthy, Safe and Affordable Housing**  
Goal 3:            Ensure a socioeconomically diverse community through the preservation and expansion of high quality, healthy, and safe housing that is affordable across income levels.
- Priority Area 4:*     **Healthy Eating and Active Living**  
Goal 4:            Make it easy for people to improve health and well-being through healthy eating and active living.

Initially **health equity/social justice** and **health access** were identified as priority areas for the CHIP, but they are now presented in the plan as **cross-cutting strategies** similar to other communities pursuing national accreditation who have adopted this approach. These issues have been identified as key focal points for integration across all the priority areas in the plan and are incorporated into each priority area as a cluster of related strategies.