



Cambridge  
Public Health  
Department



**FY2022**  
Annual Report

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MESSAGE

## Chief Public Health Officer



### HELLO, CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY!

I'm Derrick Neal, Chief Public Health Officer at the Cambridge Public Health Department. I'm honored to have been selected as the leader of your health department and look forward to getting to know you better.

This has been a year of transition. I arrived in December of 2021, taking over from Interim Chief Public Health Officer Susan Breen, who came out of retirement to serve her city. It was halfway through the fiscal year and the beginning of the Omicron surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. My introduction to the staff at CPHD was witnessing their work to keep Cambridge residents informed and safe in the face of the

ongoing COVID threat. I've since developed a hearty appreciation for their expertise and commitment.

As I arrived in Cambridge, the City Council was embarking on a search for a new City Manager in anticipation of the retirement of Louis DePasquale. I had the opportunity to collaborate with Louis in his final months and then to work with Owen O'Riordan as he guided the city in an interim role. Yi-An Huang was ultimately chosen to assume his City Manager role in FY23. I am very enthusiastic about Yi-An's leadership.

CPHD is a proud member of Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA). This relationship gives us insight into the local healthcare landscape and important regional perspective; our CHA affiliation makes us a stronger and more knowledgeable health department. I appreciate Dr. Assaad Sayah, CHA's Chief Executive Officer, for welcoming me into the CHA fold and for his ongoing support.

Throughout the leadership changes of the past year, CPHD staff remained focused on their public health mission, protecting the health of the people who live, work, and study in Cambridge. Their work involved promoting healthy lifestyles; collecting and monitoring data; planning for emergencies; providing care in the schools; and offering programming in such areas

as substance use prevention, literacy, and healthy eating. CPHD also welcomed a new Commissioner of Laboratory Animals, Erin Bryant Hall, a licensed veterinarian whose role is to review the care and use of laboratory animals in Cambridge.

I remind CPHD staff regularly that while we're ready to be finished with the pandemic, this virus is not yet finished with us. Fortunately, knowledge of mitigation strategies and the availability of vaccines, boosters, and improved treatment for COVID-19 have put us in a far better position to manage the challenges that COVID presents. Strong relationships with other departments and our nonprofit partners continue to fortify our efforts to manage the impact of the pandemic.

I'm optimistic about the future of public health in our community. We'll stay focused on promoting and protecting the people of Cambridge as we think ahead to brighter times.

Yours in public health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derrick S. Neal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Derrick Neal  
Chief Public Health Officer

MESSAGE

## Public Health Commissioner



### GREETINGS.

As I reflect on FY22, I recall the many ups and downs that we experienced as a community. It was quite a year.

The summer of 2021 provided a welcome respite from intense COVID-19 activity, allowing us to take a collective breath. The Board of Trustees approved CHA's 2027 Strategic Plan and our vision for the future: **Equity and Excellence for Everyone, Every Time.**

The plan underscores CHA's ongoing commitment to health equity in all of our programming and delivery of care. In September, CHA received a federal Mental Health Awareness Training Grant, allowing us to expand mental health education for youth

and provide an additional layer of behavioral health support for the community.

Headed into fall, we saw an increase in COVID-19 cases across our service area. In anticipation of a difficult season, CHA instituted a COVID-19 vaccination mandate for all staff. I was not surprised by the response of CHA employees: 99.5% were vaccinated by the target date.

Chief Public Health Officer Derrick Neal arrived in December, taking the helm at the department as COVID activity heated up. The strain from COVID on the healthcare system led CHA to activate the Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) in early January; we operated in this fashion through the height of the surge. Public health staff stood up vaccine clinics across the city and worked to educate the weary public about the ongoing threats of COVID-19.

By February, the COVID situation had subsided enough to allow us to deactivate the HICS. Other stressors, unfortunately, affected both patients and staff: Russia's invasion of Ukraine; a spate of mass shootings across the country; and the overturning of federal protections of reproductive rights. CHA was proud to offer a range of behavioral health supports for those struggling under the pressures

of the day and to reaffirm our strong commitment to equitable access to reproductive care and rights. Mindful of our mission to serve as a safety net for the most vulnerable in our communities, we will not relent in honoring our patients' decisions regarding their health and the rights of our staff to provide the highest-quality care.

It gives me great pride and hope to witness CHA staff stand resolutely in the face of challenges of all varieties. We are united in our focus on health equity and unafraid to advocate in the strongest of voices for the most vulnerable in our community. My thanks to all of you on the front lines, including our committed public health department staff, who lift your voices on behalf of our neighbors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Assaad J. Sayah".

Assaad J. Sayah, MD  
CEO, Cambridge Health Alliance  
Commissioner of Public Health  
City of Cambridge

# Who We Are

## **PUBLIC HEALTH IS ABOUT PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF AN ENTIRE POPULATION.**

For us, that means all people who live, learn, work, play, or spend time in Cambridge. The Cambridge Public Health Department provides services, analyzes and shares information, implements policies, and enforces regulations in ways that support healthier lives and benefit everyone in our diverse community. Health equity is a guiding principle, and addressing the social determinants of health is fundamental to our approach. We know that better health for everyone begins with challenging beliefs and structures that perpetuate inequality, discrimination, and racism. We use an equity lens as we undertake all of our public health work, including continuing efforts to protect the Cambridge community against COVID-19. After all, improving quality of life is what we do!



### **VISION**

The Cambridge Public Health Department is a leading, innovative, and model agency that facilitates optimal health and well-being for all who live, learn, work, and play in Cambridge.

### **MISSION**

The Cambridge Public Health Department improves the quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the city by preventing illness and injury; encouraging healthy behaviors; and ensuring safe and healthy environments.

### **VALUES**

- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Professionalism and Excellence
- Social Justice and Equity

# Cambridge Pandemic Response FY22

The Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD) started fiscal year 2022 (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022) tackling the new COVID-19 Delta variant. COVID-19 cases (among vaccinated and unvaccinated people) began to rise again and Delta quickly became the dominant strain in the United States. CPHD and the City of Cambridge responded by reinstating the city's indoor mask mandate, expanding both mobile city testing and on-site testing for areas in need, running more COVID-19 vaccine clinics, providing education and community outreach, working with Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) to develop a more robust testing program, and advising and supporting the CPS Superintendent with establishing a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for eligible CPS students.

Research into vaccine efficacy indicated that immunity to COVID-19 waned over time, and booster shots were recommended. CPHD began providing booster vaccines at their annual flu vaccine clinics in fall 2021. In October, vaccines were approved for children ages 5 - 11, and CPHD hosted a pediatric-tailored vaccine clinic.

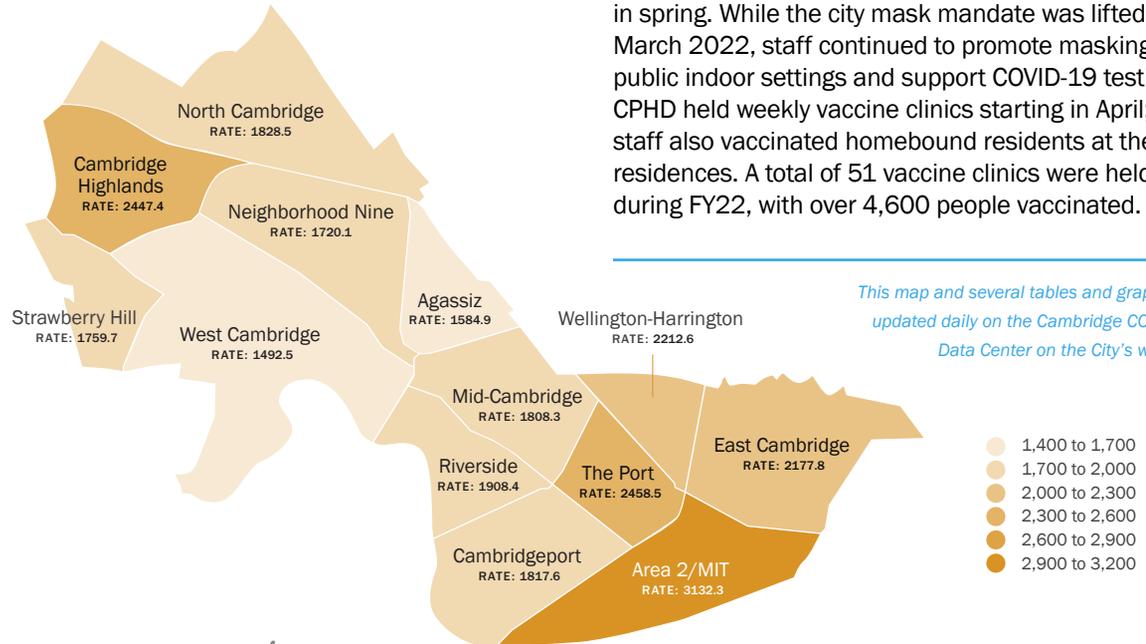
In early December 2021, the Omicron variant was first reported in Massachusetts. CPHD held more large-scale vaccine clinics starting in early January. CPHD's Chief Public Health Officer, Derrick Neal,

was a panelist in the virtual event called "Variants, Breakthroughs, and Boosters: Understanding Omicron and the Future of the COVID-19 Pandemic." The event was a partnership with CPHD, Cambridge Public Library, CHA, and the Ragon Institute. Meanwhile, the Cambridge Community Corps (C3) distributed care



CPHD staff and Police Cadets assembled care packages containing test kits and masks for delivery to residents with COVID-19.

## COVID-19 Cases per 10,000 Residents in Cambridge, MA for FY22



This map and several tables and graphs are updated daily on the Cambridge COVID-19 Data Center on the City's website.

packages with at-home tests, high-quality masks, and educational materials to residents. Cases began to rapidly increase throughout the winter and decreased in spring. While the city mask mandate was lifted in March 2022, staff continued to promote masking in public indoor settings and support COVID-19 testing. CPHD held weekly vaccine clinics starting in April; staff also vaccinated homebound residents at their residences. A total of 51 vaccine clinics were held during FY22, with over 4,600 people vaccinated.

# Cambridge Pandemic Response FY22

2,250 flu vaccines and 3,872 COVID-19 vaccines were administered.

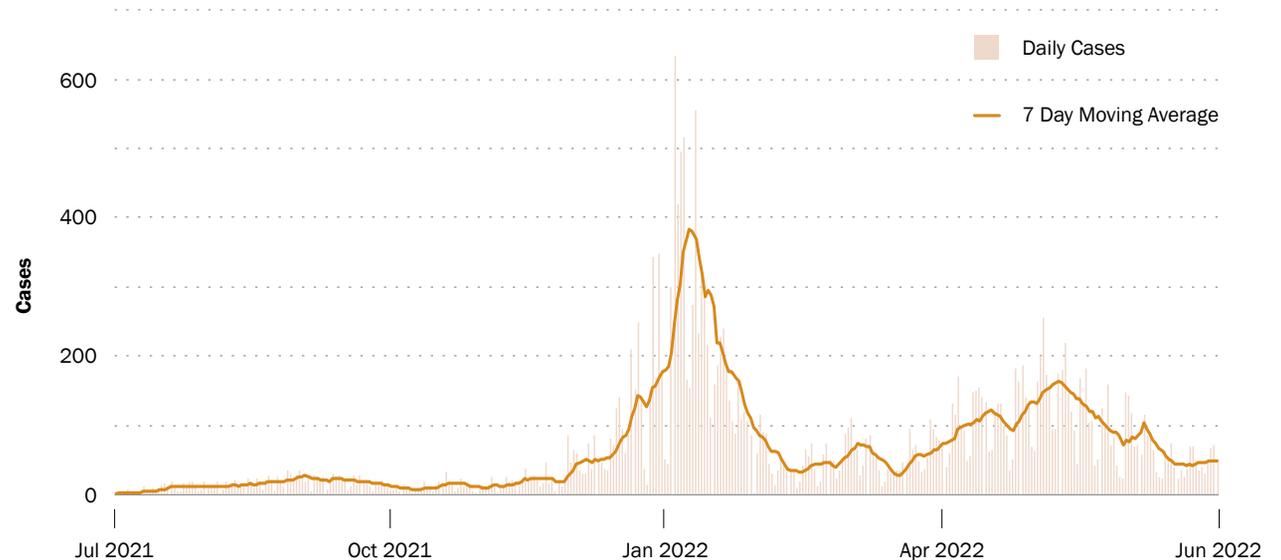
Throughout FY22 CPHD staff faced many obstacles, including the ever-changing environment, staffing challenges, misinformation about COVID-19 and the vaccines, and COVID-19 fatigue. Many felt that the light at the end of the tunnel that appeared with the new vaccines was dimmed by the advent of the Delta and Omicron variants. Despite the challenges, staff took pride in the work of the department.

## Case Investigation and Contact Tracing

Public health staff reached out to people who tested positive for COVID-19 to ensure they had what they needed to isolate and to identify “close contacts” whom they may have infected. Close contacts were subsequently notified of possible exposure and encouraged to get tested.

CPHD staff were aided by the Community Tracing Collaborative, a state-funded initiative that lasted until December 2021. In the spring 2022, this work transitioned to the Cambridge Chelsea Revere and Winthrop Case Investigation Team, a team of CPHD staffers hired to undertake case investigation and contact tracing for all four cities. CPHD Public Health Nurses continued to be available to answer medical

## Daily COVID-19 Cases in Cambridge for FY22



questions and give guidance to people who tested positive for COVID-19. When cases were in need of COVID-19 supplies, such as masks and at-home tests, the investigation team coordinated with the Cambridge Community Corps to deliver supplies to Cambridge cases and worked with other local

groups in partnering cities. In addition, the team connected cases to organizations that provided financial support and made referrals for treatment and primary care.

# Cambridge Pandemic Response FY22

## School Testing

CPHD and the Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) provided a comprehensive COVID-19 testing program for students and staff. During the 2021-2022 school year, over 169,180 tests were conducted by school health staff.

The school health staff undertook three different categories of COVID-19 testing:

- **Symptomatic:** If a student presented potential symptoms while at school, the student was assessed by a school nurse. A nurse or health aide then administered a rapid antigen test. If a student tested negative, the nurse evaluated whether symptoms were mild enough for the student to stay at school.
- **Routine COVID Safety Checks (formerly referred to as pool testing):** This surveillance testing was done once weekly to detect asymptomatic cases among students, staff, and any program staff operating in CPS buildings. Individual samples were collected and then grouped together before being sent to a lab for PCR testing. If a pool tested positive, follow-up rapid antigen testing of each individual was performed to identify the specific individual(s) infected with the coronavirus.
- **Test and Stay:** Rapid antigen testing was performed by school health staff for any unvaccinated student considered to be a close contact of a positive case. The testing was done for at least five days in lieu of a quarantine period at home, allowing a student to stay in school if each test was negative. Fully vaccinated students who were deemed a close



Staff partnered with the Cambridge Fire Department to provide COVID-19 vaccines to homebound residents.

contact were allowed to continue attending school and were recommended to obtain a PCR test five days after exposure.

## Responding to the Public

CPHD responded to over 400 questions from people who live and work in Cambridge about COVID-19. This included COVID-19 inquiries made directly to CPHD and/or the City of Cambridge. Staff answered calls, emails, and social media posts on a range of topics including isolation and quarantine guidance, workplace exposures, travel requirements, vaccine clinics, and missing vaccine cards.

A school health nurse administers a vaccine at the King Open School.



# Our Work

Throughout FY22, the Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD) balanced its response to the pandemic with its other public health work. In this section, we provide an overview of the activities we undertook across the department to continue serving the Cambridge community.

## Communicable Disease Prevention

CPHD's public health nursing team and epidemiology staff continued their COVID-19 work in addition to monitoring other communicable diseases and foodborne illnesses, organizing vaccine clinics, and running Cambridge Hospital's Tuberculosis (TB) clinic.

Public health nursing and epidemiology staff prepare for a vaccine clinic at CPHD.



Staff provided updated information and education about COVID-19 to the general public, businesses, City of Cambridge departments, and other local organizations. Public health nurses and other staff also performed case investigation and contact tracing with support from the state's Community Tracing Collaborative and later the Cambridge Chelsea Revere and Winthrop Case Investigation Team. Throughout the year, the team worked with the entire CPHD staff to organize and run nearly 51 COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics held throughout Cambridge, vaccinating over 4,600 people.

Public health nurses, in collaboration with the city's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) and the state, monitored cases of foodborne illnesses, such as Salmonella and Campylobacter. The team also tracked other communicable diseases such as tick-borne disease cases. With the advent of a new monkeypox (later known as mpox) outbreak in 2022, the team developed protocols to prepare for and monitor cases in Cambridge.

Managing TB cases is a major focus of the work of CPHD's public health nurses. The TB clinic operated this year with a hybrid model of telehealth and in-person visits. Public health nurses performed a case management role, managing all

aspects of TB care for Cambridge residents who have active or suspect TB, including home visits for directly observed therapy. During FY22, the TB clinic, staffed by CPHD nurses and CHA physicians, handled 1,252 patient visits.

## Epidemiology

Epidemiology and Data Services staff dedicated most of their time to COVID-19 efforts this fiscal year. Data needs and COVID-19 cluster investigations continued to be priorities in addition to reporting and clinic responsibilities. Staff provided guidance to city staff, Cambridge businesses, and other facilities experiencing clusters of COVID-19. They also monitored COVID-19 cases, testing activity, and vaccination numbers to help inform public health priorities.

The team updated data sets daily, enabling updates to the Cambridge COVID-19 Data Center. Municipal decision-makers were able to consult timely data when considering policy decisions related to COVID-19 mitigation strategies. The data also allowed for targeted outreach, siting of testing locations, and vaccine planning and communications. The Data Center continues to display a range of data elements by age, gender, and race/ethnicity, and also presents neighborhood-level information about COVID-19 cases and case rates.

# Our Work

Epidemiology and Data Services staff helped organize and manage registration and data collection at CPHD's vaccine clinics. They also worked on case investigation and contact tracing alongside CPHD's Public Health Nurses. The team collaborated with the Community Tracing Collaborative until December 2021. The Epidemiology and Data Services staff then helped develop the Cambridge Chelsea Revere and Winthrop Case Investigation Team in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the health departments in these three municipalities.

Epidemiology and Data Services staff also monitored other communicable diseases, assisted in data collection and analysis for various CPHD programs, and chaired the Data and Evaluation committee to support internal strategy at CPHD.

A social media image promoting StoryWalks in summer 2021.



## Population Health Initiatives (PHI)

In FY2022, the PHI Division continued to support COVID-19 work, while also returning to their regular work. Programming was delivered to the Cambridge community mostly virtually during the colder seasons, and outside, in-person during the warmer months. Below are highlights from each PHI unit.

**Early Literacy.** The Early Literacy team's fiscal year 2022 work included both outdoor and virtual activities promoting literacy, family activities, and parent and caregiver support.

- *Let's Talk!*, a literacy program of the Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative, held outdoor book distribution events for children living in public housing, providing books and activity kits. They, along with their partners, also hosted Book Bike events and story times, virtual and in-person parent-child playgroups, and placed 8 StoryWalks throughout City parks for the summer. They held workshops for parents, including a discussion about race that was designed for white families. Let's Talk! also created activity calendars for families to stay connected with their children. For Family Literacy Month, Let's Talk! and partners held an



Literacy staff with Literacy Ambassadors. The ambassadors distributed books at a vaccine clinic at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

outdoor Bilingual Book Event and created fun activities such as Family Literacy Bingo where children could win a book.

- *Cambridge Dads*, a program to support fathers, held in-person and virtual events. Events included Dad & Kids at the Park, Dad & Kids at Home, online dads discussion groups, and a workshop series, 24/7 Dads. Cambridge Dads, along with Cambridge in Motion, held its second annual Dads & Kids Bike Ride at Danehy Park. Cambridge Police officers distributed free bike helmets and participated in the bike ride. Several Cambridge Community Corps members were also present to provide support for the event. The Cambridge Community Development Department, through a partnership with Bluebikes, provided free day bike passes to any dad in need of a bike. For Father's Day, Cambridge Dads held a Fatherhood Buzz, where

## Our Work

dads and their kids got haircuts, had dinner, and hung out together.

- *The Pathways to Family Success* program developed programming goals based on direct feedback from parents. Activities this year included family events, parent workshops and discussion groups, and material and book pickups for families. Pathways completed a round of mini-grants through the Curiosity Fund: eligible parents had the opportunity to request funding for something that would help their family

**A HEAL staffer at a food pantry event with CEOC, a Cambridge anti-poverty agency. Patrons learned about sodium intake, nutrition labels, and how to plan balanced meals.**



learn and grow. Pathways allocated \$8,600 on behalf of 15 families and a total of 35 children. Families used funds for museum memberships, taekwondo lessons, activity supplies, and more.

**Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL).** The HEAL team continued to coordinate and share information about food security resources available in Cambridge. This included information about food pantries, free meal programs, school meals, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and farmers markets that accepted SNAP, and nutrition assistance for families through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program.

In 2021, CPHD and the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC) set out to improve operations of CEOC's Cambridge Food Pantry Network. The network currently includes seven Cambridge pantries that serve several thousand residents every year. In FY22, HEAL staff trained pantry managers on ordering healthy and culturally relevant foods and shared nutrition and wellness information with pantry patrons.

The Cambridge SNAP Match Coalition, led by the HEAL team, helps SNAP shoppers access fresh, local food by increasing their purchasing power



**A Safe Routes to School bike training. HEAL participated in many virtual and in-person outside events that promoted childhood physical activity, bike riding, and safety.**

through a match of up to \$15 per visit at participating Cambridge farmers markets. The coalition gave out \$35,175 in matching funds in FY22, the highest amount ever distributed. HEAL staff also assisted Mass Farmers Markets in developing and piloting outreach materials for SNAP shoppers explaining how to maximize benefits from local and state farmers market incentive programs.

In May 2022, HEAL awarded \$12,500 in Cambridge in Motion Mini-Grants to 13 local organizations to develop

## Our Work

activities that promote healthy eating and active living in Cambridge. The program is a partnership of the health department, the Cambridge Food and Fitness Policy Council, and the City of Cambridge.

The HEAL team, in partnership with the Cambridge Food and Fitness Policy Council and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, completed the Cambridge Food Action Plan in January 2022. The plan assesses the Cambridge food system and makes recommendations for creating healthier and more equitable food systems. It covers the neighborhood food environment, the emergency food system, and food programs for youth and those for older adults. With city and community partners, staff also developed the annual action plan for the healthy eating and active living priority area of the Cambridge Community Health Improvement.

Staff participated in numerous virtual and outdoor events. Some examples include promoting Bluebikes reduced-price memberships at community events and enrolling eligible residents; participating in a Cambridge Public Schools cooking event for families attended by over 80 families; and offering nutrition education to families of preschoolers and parents in English as second language classes.

### **The Mental and Behavioral Health Promotion Unit.**

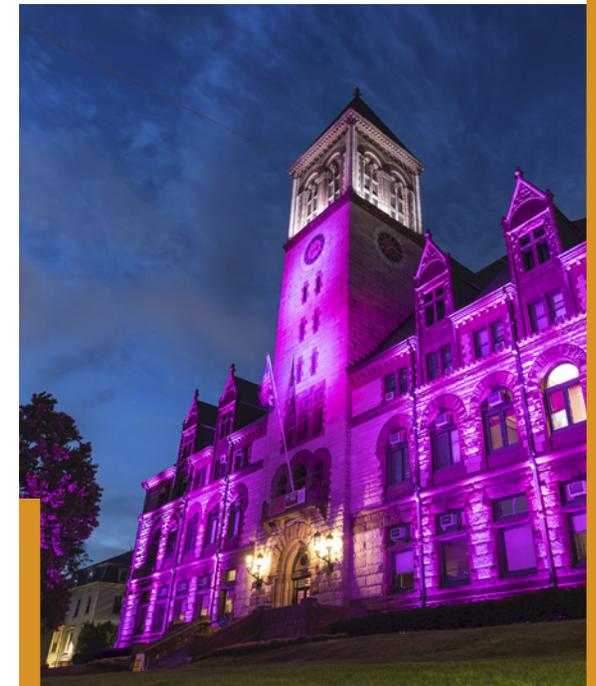
The Mental and Behavioral Health Promotion Unit team continued its work to provide mental health and substance use prevention support to the Cambridge community. In summer 2022, the team awarded its second annual Youth Mental Health and Wellness mini-grants and gave a total of \$12,000 (double the amount given in 2021) to six local organizations.

The Substance Use Advisory Committee, co-chaired by Cambridge Police Department Commissioner Christine Elow and Cambridge Commissioner of Public Health Assaad Sayah, created three subcommittees to focus on high-priority community issues: public safety, the establishment of an engagement center, and coordinated treatment and care.

The Mental and Behavioral Health Promotion team promoted mental health and recovery throughout the year, including a social media campaign for Mental Health Awareness Month; a recovery-themed booklist with the Cambridge Public Library; yoga on the lawn of City Hall; and lighting City Hall green for mental health month and purple for National Recovery Month. In collaboration with the City of Somerville, the unit also provided free virtual overdose prevention training sessions in both cities.

The unit also piloted Care Calls through the Cambridge Public Library, a program where registrants receive a call every week from a member of the library's social work team for community connection and referrals to resources.

**Cambridge City Hall was lit purple for Recovery Month in September 2021.**



## Our Work



A photo of Naloxone, a medication administered to help prevent opioid overdose.

Staff completed a qualitative needs assessment in partnership with the cities of Somerville, Medford, and Framingham that examined current stimulant misuse and how it should be addressed. In the last five years, stimulant use has been increasing significantly locally, especially among populations that had previously not used stimulants.

Regarding youth initiatives, staff have been working to collect information about youth substance misuse by organizing focus groups, analyzing data from the 2021 Cambridge Middle Grades and Teen Health

Survey, and gathering feedback from various groups. This needs assessment will inform future youth substance and wellness initiatives. The work is funded through a Massachusetts Collaborative for Action, Leadership, and Learning 3 (MassCALL3) grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS). The goal is to prevent and/or reduce misuse of substances of first use (e.g., alcohol, nicotine, cannabis) among youth.

### Environmental Health

During FY22, the Environmental Health (EH) team resumed all regulatory duties and programs in addition to their COVID-19 work. As more was learned about how the coronavirus is transmitted, safety concerns shifted away from cleaning surfaces to evaluating air flow quality and ventilation. The team collaborated with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) for requests for indoor air quality inspections. Staff monitored COVID-19 data along with the Director of Epidemiology and Data Services. Staff provided education and resources to the Cambridge Community Corps (C3) members so they could keep residents up-to-date about COVID-19 and how to stay safe. EH staff also responded to CPHD and City staff on questions related to arboviral risk

(e.g. West Nile), chemicals in drinking water and artificial turf, and data about biotech labs in support of new citywide zoning ordinance amendments.

Staff continued the critical partnership with ISD to serve the dual roles as enforcers and advisers of the City's mask mandate that was first lifted in the summer 2021 and then reinstated in early September 2021. To help promote mask usage and provide more protection to frontline workers, Environmental Health staff worked with the Director of Equity, Resilience and Preparedness to provide KN95 masks to restaurant workers in the community, and continued to promote masking in public indoor settings even after the mandate was again lifted in March 2022. Requests for approval of COVID-safe public events and guidance to specific sectors on protecting their patrons or residents was ongoing.

Environmental Health staff resumed most pre-pandemic regulatory obligations, inspections, and investigations. During FY22, the following permits were issued:

**178** biosafety permits. The team recruited three residents to the Cambridge Biosafety Committee which issues these permits.

## Our Work

**2** indoor ice rinks permits for safe indoor air quality.

**50** tattoo and body art practitioner permits and 10 tattoo and body art establishment permits.

**11** permits for beekeeping in collaboration with other CPHD staff.

**10** bodywork therapy practitioner permits and 3 bodywork therapy establishment permits.

Environmental health also monitored tick- and mosquito-borne diseases and collaborated with ISD on rodent control efforts.

C3 members helped at Cambridge's Safer Homes, Safer Community Gun Buyback event.



### Equity, Community Resilience, Emergency Preparedness

The Equity, Resilience and Preparedness unit played an important role in the operations of dispensing COVID-19 vaccines. In collaboration with CPHD staff and city partners, Equity, Resilience and Preparedness staff managed the logistics of vaccine clinics for shelter staff and people experiencing homelessness; seniors; residents in high risk areas for COVID-19; youth; and finally, children ages 5-11. During one of CPHD's vaccine clinics in October, the unit led a drill with the purpose of evaluating CPHD's capability for rapidly dispensing emergency vaccines and medications.

The Equity, Resilience and Preparedness unit also organized and managed outreach activities with the Cambridge Community Corps (C3) such as promoting the CPHD's vaccine clinics and distributing masks and at-home COVID-19 tests. During heat emergencies, the group worked with the city to set up cooling centers and with the C3 to distribute materials to the general public.

For National Preparedness Month, a social media campaign for the general public was developed to raise awareness and promote important safety tips for preparing for disasters and emergencies. In



C3 members welcomed guests to a vaccine clinic at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

addition, Equity, Resilience and Preparedness staff worked to secure funding for emergency response and other public health endeavors; the unit received approximately \$700,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act 2021.

### Cambridge Community Corps (C3)

July 2021 marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of the C3. The C3 was developed by the health department in collaboration with the City Manager's Office. Initially, the C3 served as a friendly COVID-19 information resource for residents in outdoor public spaces.

Throughout FY22, the C3 went door-to-door in neighborhoods with high rates of COVID-19. The team promoted the department's many vaccine clinics and distributed at-home rapid tests, high-quality masks, and educational materials to residents. The C3 also supported CPHD vaccine clinics. When

## Our Work



A school health nurse administers a vaccine at a clinic at King Open School.

the indoor mask mandate was implemented in September 2021, members helped the Inspectional Services Department distribute mask signage to establishments in Central Square.

Over time, C3's role expanded beyond COVID-19. During heat waves, C3 members distributed water bottles, popsicles, and other heat safety materials to residents in Cambridge parks. Members also helped support many local events and initiatives. These included inviting resident participation in the City's Participatory Budgeting and the Department of Public

Works' The Port Infrastructure Project, advertising CPHD's monthly Virtual Overdose Prevention and Response Trainings, and working at CPHD's Dads & Kids Bike Ride and Cambridge's Safer Homes, Safety Community Gun Buyback.

The C3 continues to be an agile resource for the Cambridge community, responding to the needs of those who are most vulnerable and in turn working to make Cambridge more resilient and prepared for potential emergencies.

### School Health

School health staff faced many challenges and worked tirelessly to keep Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) students and school staff safe. As schools reopened full-time in the fall 2021, school health staff prepared for the return of students and CPS staff, including learning and implementing new Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Covid-19 testing protocols. This was in addition to their regular preparation, which entailed ensuring that students' vaccinations were up to date, organizing medications, documenting allergies, and managing chronic illnesses. School nurses also cared for students whose mental health needs and issues were heightened during the pandemic.

School health staff's main COVID-19 mitigation tasks were administering testing, promoting the COVID-19 vaccine for those who were eligible, and being part of the school's infection control team determining who could remain in school and who needed to stay at home. School nurses also kept up-to-date on COVID-19 information as the designated experts in their schools, providing education to students, parents, and staff. School nurses administered many of the COVID-19 and flu vaccines at CPHD's vaccine clinics and provided education to families about the importance of receiving the COVID-19 and flu vaccines.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the school health staff at CPS performed:

**28,980** student visits for illness, injury, medication administration, and medical procedures.

**3,559** vision screenings and made **533** referrals.

**2,681** hearing screenings to CPS students and made **39** referrals.

**1,426** postural screenings to CPS students and made **130** referrals.

## Our Work

**2022 Cambridge Middle Grades and Teen Health Survey.** Following the pandemic “pulse check” survey that took place in May 2021, CPHD and Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) conducted the Cambridge Middle Grades and Teen Health Survey among students in grades 6-12 in its regular long format this year. A total of 918 middle grades students participated in the voluntary survey, representing a 76% participation rate. At the high school, 1,282 (69%) of students participated. The survey results showed that, while there was improvement in many areas, the pandemic may continue to impact young people.

Sleep is emerging as a major concern, with only 8% of high school students reporting sleeping 8 or more hours on a regular school night. The percentage of middle grades students who get enough sleep has decreased dramatically since 2017 and currently only 26% report sleeping 8 or more hours. 40% of middle school students and 38% of high school students report checking their phone after they go to bed.

Mental health remains an issue, with reported increases in anxiety. Other indicators are mixed; for example, a higher percentage of middle school students described their mental health as not good, but high school students reported a slight decrease

in this area. Rates of depression decreased among middle grade students but increased at the high school level. Social connections improved but did not recover to pre-pandemic levels.

The percentage of Cambridge middle grades students who report currently using substances has remained relatively unchanged since 2013, while the percentage of high school students who report current use of alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes has declined steadily since 2012. Physical activity and nutrition indicators have remained stable since 2013.

CPHD will continue to work with CPS as they seek ways to respond to these findings and support students, with a particular eye toward sleep and mental health.

**Healthy Smiles.** The Cambridge Healthy Smiles Program aims to improve students’ dental health by providing oral health education and free dental screenings for all first, third, sixth, and ninth graders in the Cambridge Public Schools (CPS). During the pandemic, the dental hygienists focused on providing classroom oral health education for all first and third graders. Each classroom was given an oral health-related book and poster to encourage oral health awareness. The sixth and ninth grade wellness

teachers were provided oral health lesson materials for their students. All 2,400 students in the program were given oral health toothbrush kits including an education booklet that encouraged talking about oral health at home.

During the 2021-2022 school year, thanks to funding from the Charles Bullock Trust Fund, the Cambridge Healthy Smiles Water Bottle Initiative continued to provide water bottles to CPS students. The Sip, Swish, Swallow campaign encouraged students to use their new water bottles at school, reminding students of the importance of drinking water in keeping their teeth, mouth, and body healthy. Approximately 2,600 water bottles were distributed. School nurses and the CHA Teen Health Center also received water bottles to provide to students.

# Our Work

## Support Units

CPHD has several divisions that keep the department running and support the department's many functions and services.

- The Division of Financial and Contractual Operations worked on the department's FY22 budget and contractual planning, preparation, and monitoring. See the Financial Overview near the end of this report.
- The Division of Operations and Administrative Services worked tirelessly on day-to-day operations and the department's numerous vaccine clinics. In addition, it managed the city's burial permits and permits for funeral directors. During FY22, the unit processed 735 burial permits and 8 permits for funeral directors.
- The Communications and Marketing division undertook a variety of activities ranging from responding to media inquiries to advertising vaccine clinics to promoting CPHD programs and community events.



The department's office in Cambridge.

# Community Health Improvement Plan

The City of Cambridge's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is a five-year roadmap that guides the health department and its partners in addressing the biggest health concerns in the city. Currently in its third year, the CHIP's priority area workgroups are providing much-needed services and information to the Cambridge community. A sampling of activities is listed below.

## Community and Social Resilience

- Secured funding for emergency response and other public health endeavors. The unit received approximately \$700,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act 2021, which helped fund the Cambridge Community Corps (C3).

## Healthy Eating and Active Living

- Published the Cambridge Food Action Plan, which includes a review of Cambridge programs that serve food, food stores, and garden/farm programs and made recommendations for action steps to improve access to affordable, healthy food.
- Implemented recommendations from the Food Pantry Assessment, such as working in partnership with the Cambridge Economic

Opportunity Committee to support food pantry managers through nutrition education and community engagement.

- Provided education and outreach, and participated in events related to local food, tap water, cooking, and healthy eating.

## Mental Health

- Piloted Care Calls through the Cambridge Public Library, a program where registrants receive a call every week from a member of the library's social work team for community connection and referrals to resources.
- Partnered with organizations providing mental health education and services to Cambridge youth, including the Family Policy Council and the Cambridge Youth Council.

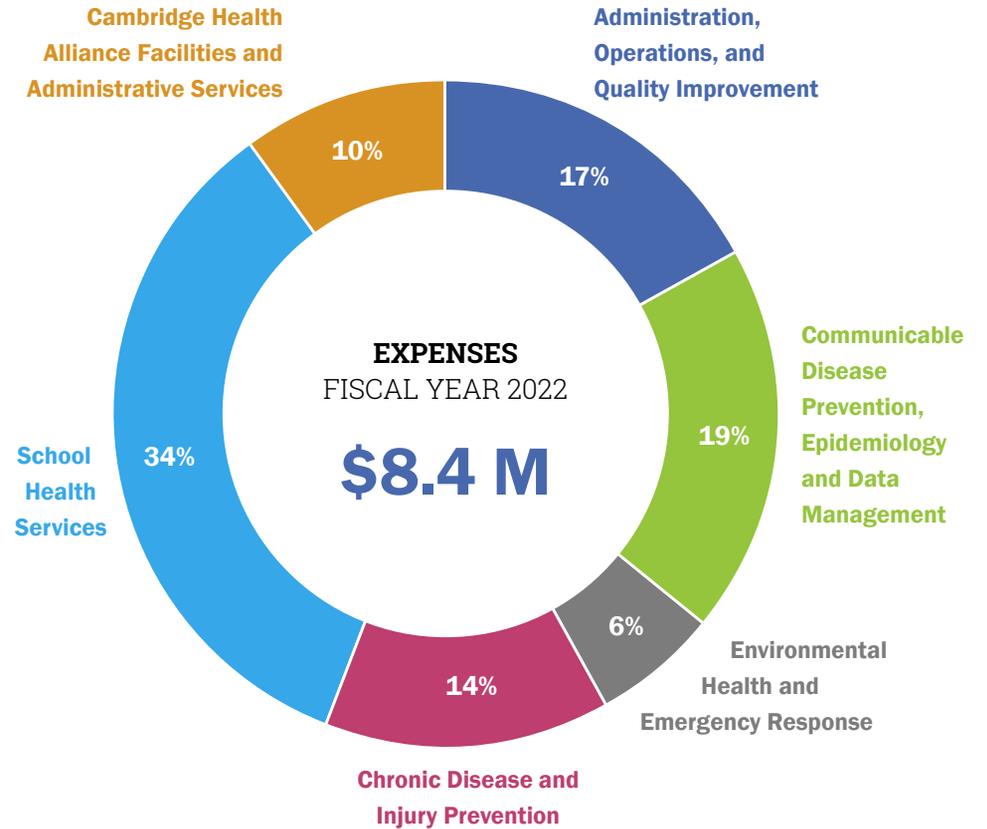
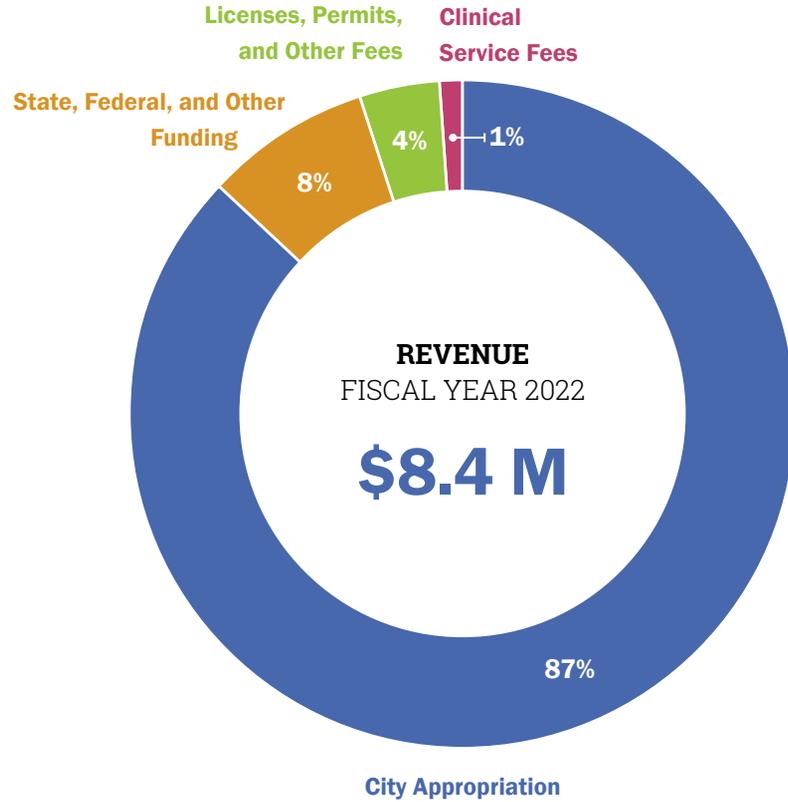
Additionally, the health department continued its collaboration with the Cambridge Arts Council and local artists to creatively engage residents in the CHIP priority areas. Residents were invited to participate in a Brazilian celebration with Isaura de Oliveira and Akili James; flamenco dance for seniors with Yosi Karahashi; and Chinese calligraphy and tai chi with Yung-Chi Sung.

The CHIP is supported in part through a five-year grant from the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds. Technical assistance is provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

Dancers perform at the Brazilian Dance and Drum Show in Greene-Rose Heritage Park.



# Financial Overview



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

# Thank You to Our Partners

We are grateful for the many exceptional partners who have continued to stand with us in the fight against COVID-19. We would also like to thank our many municipal partners. We appreciate their ongoing commitment to the health of Cambridge residents, their creativity, and their collaborative spirit.

## **CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

Birth to 3rd Grade Partnership  
Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities  
Cambridge Multi-Service Center  
Cambridge Public Schools  
City Manager's Office  
Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship  
Community Development Department  
Conservation Commission  
Department of Human Service Programs  
Department of Public Works  
Domestic and Gender-Based  
Violence Prevention Initiative  
Fire Department  
Food and Fitness Policy Council  
Find It Cambridge  
Human Rights Commission  
Inspectional Services Department  
Law Department  
License Commission

LGBTQ+ Commission  
Participatory Budgeting  
Peace Commission  
Police Department  
Public Library  
Substance Use Advisory Council  
Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department  
Water Department  
Women's Commission

## **CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE**

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Access: Drug User Health Program  
(AIDS Action Committee/Fenway Health)  
Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps  
Agassiz Baldwin Community  
CASPAR/Bay Cove Human Services  
Cambridge Black Pastors Alliance  
Cambridge Community Center  
Cambridge Housing Authority  
Cambridge Volunteer Clearinghouse  
Cambridge YWCA  
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee  
Community Tracing Collaborative  
East End House  
Fenway Health: AIDS Action

Food For Free  
Just-A-Start  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House  
Mount Auburn Hospital  
Pro EMS  
Ragon Institute  
Reservoir Church  
St. John the Evangelist Church  
Spaulding Hospital Cambridge  
Y2Y

## **UNIVERSITIES/AFFILIATES**

Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard  
Harvard University  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Lesley University

## **BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

CambridgeSide  
Central Square Business Improvement District  
Cambridge Chamber of Commerce  
East Cambridge Business Association  
Harvard Square Business Association  
Kendall Square Business Association  
Trinity Property Management

# Acknowledgments

## **Louis A. DePasquale**

City Manager  
City of Cambridge

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## **Assaad J. Sayah, MD**

Chief Executive Officer, Cambridge Health Alliance &  
Commissioner of Public Health  
City of Cambridge

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## **Derrick Neal, MPA**

Chief Public Health Officer  
Cambridge Public Health Department  
Cambridge Health Alliance  
City of Cambridge

## **CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL**

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Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon

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Assaad J. Sayah, MD, ex officio

Ellen Semonoff

## **CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF**

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Klein, Dawn Olcott, David Oziel, Brad Pillen

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### **DESIGN**

Fenway Group

**Please Note:** The officials and members listed above were in  
office during FY22, the time this publication covers.



Cambridge  
Public Health  
Department

 **CHA**  
Cambridge  
Health Alliance



Cambridge Public Health Department is a city department administered by Cambridge Health Alliance, a regional health care delivery system.

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