City of Gloucester

Health Department

2013 Annual Report

This report has been prepared by the Board of Health of the City of Gloucester. It describes the activities of its agent: The Gloucester Health Department headed by Director, Noreen Burke.

Our Vision

Healthy people living in safe and healthy environments

Our Mission

To promote, protect, support, and improve the health of Gloucester through leadership, education and services

Our Values

1. **Cohesive, Trained and Competent Workforce**: we are united in our vision and mission.
2. **Collaborative and Partnership-Based:** we strive to build and maintain strong partnerships within Gloucester.
3. **Evidence-Based**: we act based upon science and strive to use best practices.
4. **Social Justice:** we respect and advocate for vulnerable populations.
5. **Responsive**: we provide leadership on health-related issues and concerns raised by the community, population data and by the Board of Health and the MA Dept of Public Health
6. **Effective, Efficient and Sustainable:** we strive to deliver services in a cost effective and efficient manner that address the health priorities of Gloucester and that will stand the test of time.

The Gloucester Health Department is located at City Hall Annex, 3 Pond Rd, and it is open: Mon-Wed : 8 am - 4 pm; Thurs: 8 am - 6:30 pm and Fri: 8 am - 12:30 pm.

Tel: 978 281-9771; Email: healthdept@gloucester-ma.gov.

This Report is available online at the City's website: www.gloucester-ma.gov

Board of Health

Richard Sagall, MD, Chairperson
Robert Harris, Vice-Chairperson
Frederick Cowan; Joseph Rosa; Claudia Schweitzer
Recorder: Bobbi Orlando

Health Department Staff 2013

Health Department
Noreen M. Burke, M.P.P., Director of Public Health
C. Max Schenk, Title 5 Insp., Mgr, Envir Health Services
Lianne Cook, R.N., M.P.H., Public Health Nurse
Chassea Robinson, R.N., M.P.H., Public Health Nurse †
Christopher Sargent, Housing Inspector
Rosalie Nicastro, Food Inspector
Jason Dustin, B.S., Sanitarian/Title 5 Inspector †
Erin Kirchner, B.A., Sanitarian/Title 5 Inspector
Terry O'Hanley, Principal Clerk †
Jaimie Corliss, Principal Clerk
Diane Corliss, Animal Inspector

Children's Dental Center
Jill Marston, B.A., Administrator
Kim M. Cabral, Dental Assistant
Paula Cary, R.D.H., Hygienist
Benjamin Polan, D.M.D., Dentist
Jay Schwab, D.M.D., Dentist †

Healthy Gloucester Collaborative
Joan A. Whitney, M.S.W., M.A., Director
Kathy Day, B.A. †
Caitlin Kreitman, M.P.H., Youth Coordinator
Anastasia Saterfield, B.A., Principal Clerk

North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Preparedness
Karin Carroll, M.P.H., Director
Joanne Christopher, Principal Clerk
Jade Langley, B.S., Med. Reserve Corps, Coordinator †

† Individuals resigned, retired or laid off during 2013

Essential Service

Environmental Health Services

Septic Systems

Much of Gloucester is now on a sanitary sewer system. However, approximately 3000 septic systems remain. Their design approval, installation and operational maintenance remain under the regulation of the Department.

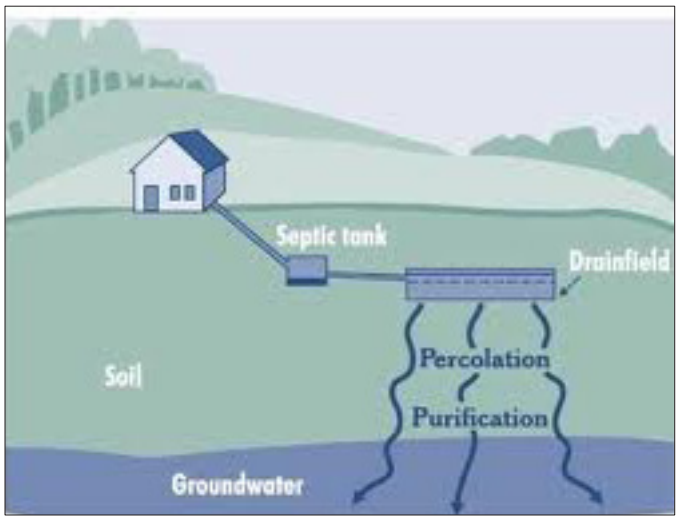
During the most recent 12 months:

26 soil evaluations were performed or witnessed
96 system or site variances were addressed
33 systems are undergoing improvement to meet Title 5 standards

Many of these systems are in the environmentally sensitive areas of West Gloucester, an area that also has many private wells often used for potable water supply. Since upgrading these septic systems can be expensive, the City, through funding from the Mass Dept of Environmental Protection, offers interest-free, 15-year, transferable loans to eligible homeowners that can cover the full cost of an upgrade. In 2013, 12 contracts have been put in place for a total of approximately $196,000.

Beaches: Water Quality Testing

Gloucester has several beaches that provide enjoyment to many thousands every summer. In accordance with MDPH regulations, all Gloucester public beaches are regularly tested from June through September for compliance with state safety standards. The Health Department pays for additional water quality testing when a beach fails a test. During 2013, 60 beach inspections and tests were performed. Plum Cove Beach was temporarily closed for failure to meet safe water quality standards.



Essential Service

Inspectional Health Services

Food: Preparation and Sale

Sanitary regulations are especially important to protect the public from food-borne illness. The Department inspects and licenses food stores, restaurants, caterers, mobile food vendors and temporary events serving food.

In the most recent 12 month period:

700 site inspections were performed, resulting in 30 citations
407 facilities were permitted (162 stores; 13 caterers; 68 restaurants; 14 residential; 68 mobile food; 73 temporary; 9 ice cream stands)

Housing: Rentals, Hotels & Motels and Campgrounds

The Department ensures the safety and sanitary requirements for all rental housing units, recreational campgrounds and Gloucester hotels, motels and inns.

Over the past 12 months:
328 occupancy permits were issued
38 lodging/hotel/motel permits were issued
6 campgrounds were permitted

Tobacco Sales

In 2013, the Gloucester Board of Health strengthened its existing youth tobacco access regulations by adding nicotine delivery products. The Department in partnership with the North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Alcohol Prevention Program conducts regular compliance checks of all establishments permitted to sell tobacco products in Gloucester. In 2013, 58 establishments were checked and seven were found in violation of regulations. The Board of Health conducted public hearings and issued the appropriate fines and suspensions consistent with its regulations.

Other Permits

The Board of Health through the Health Department protects the public health by conducting inspections and responding to complaints about 14 commercial swimming pools, two tanning salons and two tattoo parlors.

Complaint Investigations

Approximately 780 complaints were received, either by phone or in person, and investigated. These include, but are not limited to, complaints related to housing, food service establishments, as well as environmental complaints associated with water quality, odors, trash, rodents, chemicals, drainage, demolitions, property use perceived as being inappropriate, presence of lead, asbestos, mold/moisture, and concerns re: respiratory, skin or internal conditions, hoarding, bed bugs and other pests.

Essential Service

Communicable Diseases

Communicable Disease Surveillance

The Health Department, through its Public Health Nurse, is responsible for reporting and investigating 77 communicable diseases including: streptococcus, hepatitis B and C, influenza, Lyme disease and staphylococcus.

During 2013, 167 cases were reported and 136 were either confirmed or found probable; cases were investigated and the appropriate referrals provided.

These cases do not include many other instances of illness reported to the Department ranging from norovirus infections to animal bites and potential rabies.

Vaccination Clinics

For a number of years, the Health Department has provided public flu vaccination clinics to anyone over 6 months of age. Through partnerships that included Gloucester School Nurses, local businesses, not-for-profit agencies and Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, over 2,300 residents received influenza vaccinations in the 28 clinics that were provided.

In addition, with funding from the City of Gloucester, 165 eligible residents received the shingles vaccine.

HIV/Hepatitis C

HIV and hepatitis C can be acquired by coming into contact with infected blood or bodily fluids. Both are preventable diseases and effective behavioral interventions have been demonstrated to reduce transmission. The Health Department, in collaboration with community partners, is committed to ensuring that all residents at risk for HIV or hepatitis C infection as well as those living with these diseases have access to information, education, screening and treatment.

Animal Inspections

The Animal Inspector of the Health Department implements measures to protect against the spread of disease in animal populations so as to limit the possible spread to the human population. No cases of rabies were confirmed in 2013. In the last year, the Animal Inspector, in cooperation with the Animal Control Officer at the Gloucester Police Department, investigated reports of bites/scratches from cats, dogs, bats, skunks and raccoons that resulted in seven tests for rabies (all were negative). Fifty-seven quarantine orders were issued to animal owners. All quarantine orders are followed up on for compliance and to ensure the public's safety.

Routine inspections are made of all hoofed animals and suspect disease cases are investigated. Permitting and annual inspections are performed at all horse stables to ensure compliance with regulations. Over the last year, 13 stable permits were issued.

Essential Service

Student and Adult Health Needs Surveys

Every two years a Student Health Survey based on a national Youth Risk Behavior Survey is administered to middle and high school students in Gloucester. The survey is funded by substance abuse prevention grants. The survey is created by Social Science Research Inc. and administered in partnership with the Gloucester Public Schools and Healthy Gloucester Collaborative.

In 2012, Addison Gilbert Hospital, a member of Lahey Health, conducted an adult health needs survey of its primary service communities including Gloucester. That survey highlighted concern for:

- *Access to Care*, especially mental and behavioral health and adult dental care
- *Overweight/Obesity* and the associated prevalence of diabetes
- *Substance Abuse*, especially alcohol and controlled substances

The 2012-13 Student Health Survey highlighted two successes:

+ Alcohol use by high school teens decreased from 56% (2007) to 42% (2013), and
+ Alcohol provided by an adult friend decreased from 66% (2011) to 53% (2013),

but raised several concerns:

- *Binge drinking* is widespread (71% of those who drink)
- *Marijuana use* has increased due to a low perception of harm

Both of these surveys are critical to understanding the health needs of Gloucester and securing the grant funding to address them.

Essential Service **GRANT FUNDED**

Substance Abuse Prevention

Healthy Gloucester Collaborative

The Student Health Survey of 2012-13 not only identified alcohol and other substance abuse as a prime health concern for Gloucester's youth but this and previous surveys also suggested that a broadly-based, community-driven approach would best address the issues of:

- perceived ease of access and availability of alcohol
- low perception of harm for marijuana
- an accepting social norm for alcohol and marijuana

The Healthy Gloucester Collaborative (HGC) exists in response. It is funded primarily by the Massachusetts Dept of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Abuse Services ($80,000), a MA Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative grant ($100,000) shared with Danvers and Beverly and a "Drug Free Communities" grant ($125,000) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The grants are managed by the Gloucester Health Department through the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative which uses a broadly based community approach with community leaders, families and youth working together to prevent youth use and reduce misuse and abuse at all ages.

In 2013:

- HGC promoted the expansion of SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) for alcohol and drug abuse from the Gloucester Family Health Center to the Emergency Dept of Addison Gilbert Hospital: ~ 1000 individuals have been screened.
- Continued the 2008 City of Gloucester Medication Disposal Program which is a collaboration of physicians, pharmacists, law and drug enforcement officials and community leaders promoting a safe clean-out of medicine cabinets. This has also promoted safe disposal methods that ensure clean ground water and a drug-free discharge from the wastewater treatment plant. Most recently 150 lbs of unwanted drugs were safely and confidentially disposed.
- Continued the High-Risk Task Force, initiated by the Collaborative in 2012 to coordinate the care and treatment of the most vulnerable citizens in the City.
- The Collaborative held numerous community educational events, produced many public service announcements and started to provide leadership to our partner communities of Beverly and Danvers.

Essential Service
GRANT FUNDED

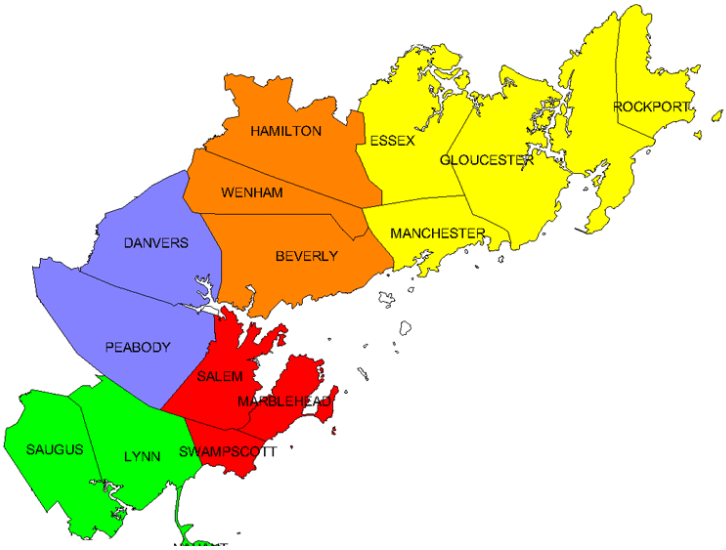
Public Health Emergency Preparedness

The Gloucester Health Department is the host organization for the North Shore-Cape Ann Emergency Preparedness (EP) Coalition. The North Shore-Cape Ann EP Coalition comprises representatives from 15 North Shore Health Departments and Boards of Health from Saugus to Rockport.

The North Shore-Cape Ann EP Coalition is developing a regional approach to Public Health Emergency Preparedness by designing and evaluating plans and exercises that define specific public health roles and plans for infectious disease and other public health emergencies. The MA Dept of Public Health 2013 funding for the North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant was $170,644.

The Preparedness Grant has benefited Gloucester and the surrounding Cape Ann communities of Essex, Manchester-by-the-Sea and Rockport in the following ways:

- Recruited and trained Medical Reserve Corps volunteers to support nine local flu clinics;
- Created several Public Service Announcements and press releases on extreme heat, ticks and mosquitoes, influenza and severe winter weather storms;
- Developed an extreme heat response plan in partnership with the Mayor's Office, Gloucester Fire, Police, CERT Volunteer Program and the Council on Aging;
- Provided 12 preparedness, professional development training opportunities on the North Shore including Emergency Dispensing Site, Risk Communication, an online Emergency Operations Center (WebEOC) and sheltering trainings;
- Conducted eight preparedness drills on the North Shore including communication drills, influenza set-up and Emergency Dispensing Site drills;
- Updated local emergency plans and tested components of those plans;
- Gloucester's Mayor and City Council adopted a regional public health mutual aid agreement;
- Provided communication tools (iPhones and iPads) to the health directors and public health nurses of the Cape Ann communities;
- 305 medical and non-medical volunteers were activated throughout the North Shore communities for various public health events, totaling 617 hours of volunteer time, equaling an in-kind total of $12,950;
- 88 medical and non-medical volunteers were CORied and credentialed in the MA Responds Database.



Essential Service
FEE FUNDED

Children's Dental Center

The Children's Dental Center is overseen by the Health Department Director and the Board of Health. It provides oral health services and hygiene education to underserved children from one year of age to age 20. All who have Mass Health (Medicaid) or Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) insurance are welcomed. Bus transportation is made available from the public schools to the Center which has served the children of Cape Ann since 2002. The Center is located at the Curtis Clark Senior Building in affordable space provided through the generous support of the Gloucester Housing Authority.

During 2013, over 1300 children's visits were scheduled. The Children's Dental Center provided a total of 4196 procedures. These included: 946 cleanings, 889 fluoride treatments, 927 exams, 396 fillings, 416 sealant treatments, 502 x-rays, 6 space maintainers and 114 extractions.

The Children's Dental Center is exclusively funded by Mass Health (Medicaid) and Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) reimbursements.

Essential Service

Hoarding Task Force

In 2009, the Gloucester Health Department Director and Public Health Nurse initiated a Cape Ann Hoarding Task Force to address the emergence of a relatively new public health phenomenon known as hoarding and to address its underlying causes. In partnership with the Gloucester Housing Authority, the Task Force identifies potential hoarders and seeks to link them to resources and appropriate referrals. Police, Fire, Building Inspector, PACE, Mental Health and Social Service providers, Action Inc and Faith groups are active Task Force members. They have drafted a Hoarding Response Protocol to assess and respond appropriately and cooperatively to various hoarding situations that emerge in Gloucester and impact surrounding Cape Ann communities.

Essential Service
GRANT FUNDED

Get Fit Gloucester

Since 2009 Gloucester has been one of 10 MA communities to participate in the "Mass in Motion" program funded by MA DPH as well as by Blue Cross/ Blue Shield and others. The Gloucester project is "Get Fit Gloucester".

The program is managed by Stephen Winslow and is a partnership of the Health and Community Development Departments.

It promotes wellness and seeks to encourage an active lifestyle and limit obesity through environmental changes e.g. the **Harborwalk** and **sidewalk improvements** by working cooperatively with developers and the City. The program has also increased the availability of healthy, affordable foods, e.g. by promoting **school gardens** and discounts for seniors at the Cape Ann Farmer's Market.

Annual Report 2013 Health Department Budget
(Fiscal Year)

Expenses
$393,701

- Personnel: $386,853 (98.3%)
- Maintenance: $6,848.00 (1.7%)

Revenues
$120,000

The Health Department relies upon the city's accounting system for revenue information. This is a best estimate of our annual revenues.

Grants
$194,984 - *Public Health Emergency Preparedness*

- $170,644 - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Funds staff, planners, communications equipment, fiscal support, training exercises and drills.
- $7,500 - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Preparedness. Grant originates with FEMA through MEMA a Citizen Corps Program for the purpose of building the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) capacity during public health emergencies throughout the North Shore and Cape Ann.
- $13,340 - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Grant for the purpose of assisting the North Shore-Cape Ann Emergency Preparedness Coalition in preparing for public health emergencies by enhancing the capacity of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- $3,500 - North Shore-Cape Ann Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Grant originates with National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) to provide training, skill building and educational materials to best prepare Medical Reserve Corps volunteers to support local public health during an emergency.

$305,000 - Substance Abuse Prevention Grants

- $80,000 - Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, Underage Drinking Grant. Prevention of underage drinking among Gloucester youth.
- $100,000 - Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative. Addresses the issue of opioid misuse and abuse, and unintentional deaths and non-fatal hospital events associated with opioid poisonings in the communities of Gloucester, Beverly and Danvers.
- $125,000 - Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, Drug-Free Communities Grant. The funding organizes the Gloucester community around substance abuse prevention through visible enforcement of existing laws, social norming, further training of professionals who come in contact with youth, and limiting access to drug and alcohol substances.

$60,000 - Obesity Prevention

Get Fit Gloucester, a Mass in Motion initiative in partnership with the Community Development Department, seeks to create a Fit Friendly Gloucester. Grant funds staff who facilitate opportunities for Gloucester residents to be more active and access healthier foods. Gloucester is among 52 cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth that are part of the MA Department of Public Health's Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness and Leadership Program. Get Fit Gloucester works to reconstruct and connect sidewalks provide bicycle accommodations and improve parks and open space. Get Fit Gloucester partners provide mobile fresh food markets and develop school, backyard and community gardens. These initiatives all help make the healthy choice the easy choice for Gloucester residents and advance the goal of creating a Fit Friendly Gloucester.

Health Department Revolving Funds

- ***Children's Dental Center Revolving Fund*** supports the Children's Dental Center staff and operating expenses. The current spending limit approved by City Council is $ 300,000.

- ***Vaccine Revolving Fund*** supports public health vaccination goals to prevent the spread of diseases such as influenza. The current spending limit approved by City Council is $ 45,000.

- ***Tobacco Revolving Account*** supports a contract employee to conduct compliance checks at establishments permitted to sell tobacco products in Gloucester. The remaining balance in this account is approximately $2,000.

THE GLOUCESTER FUND

The funds are contributed by the non-profit Needy Meds organization (NeedyMeds.org) as part of a community give-back program. The Needy Meds funds are earmarked by the Health Department Director to support public health initiatives where gaps currently exist. In recent years rapid testing for hepatitis C and shingles vaccinations were identified as community needs. The current balance is approximately $2,000.