

Board of Health Report: DEC. 2025
Substance Abuse and Prevention Division

Lowell Health Department

The Substance Abuse Prevention Division, led by Maura Fitzpatrick, continues to strengthen community-based prevention and outreach efforts across the City of Lowell. The team is currently in the process of hiring a new Youth Outreach Specialist for the CO-OP program, with three finalists identified. This position will play a key role in expanding youth engagement, prevention education, and early intervention efforts across the city.

Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP) – Overview

The CO-OP team continued to strengthen its citywide prevention, outreach, and crisis response efforts, including sustained twice-weekly evening outreach to engage individuals during high-need hours. Staff remained actively involved in overdose response, client stabilization, case management, and housing coordination, while maintaining close collaboration with community partners and public safety agencies. During this reporting period, CO-OP also advanced internal capacity-building efforts. The Youth Outreach Specialist position has been filled, with the selected candidate currently completing onboarding and hiring requirements, expanding CO-OP's ability to engage and support at-risk youth. In addition, CO-OP utilized FRCARA grant funding to purchase 12-Step curricula, which offer a structured, recovery-focused framework that helps individuals build coping skills, accountability, and peer support to support long-term sobriety, further strengthening client services and program capacity.

Outreach & Encampment Engagement

- 178 total encampment visits conducted citywide (12/01–12/31)
- Outreach at Rogers Street sites including 803 Rogers Street and Rogers Street Bridge (tents observed; no individuals present)

Meetings & Collaboration

- Weekly VINFEN Zoom Meetings (12/01, 12/08)
- CO-OP Training at MCC Bedford Campus (12/03)
- Interagency Zoom Meeting with VINFEN, LPD, DMH, and CO-OP (12/04)
- Weekly Non-Profit Updates at EDC and Eliot Day Center (12/09, 12/23)
- Weekly CO-OP Staff Meeting (12/10)
- Coordination with Wilmington Health Department and Poughkeepsie, NY Health Department (12/10)
- Coordination with Hannaford's (Rogers Street) regarding encampment concerns (12/10)

Client Support & Service Coordination

- Assisted Stoklosa Middle School civics class at LDC Law Library (12/02)
- Assisted disabled client with safe sharps disposal at 53 Corbett Street (12/02)
- Met with parent regarding Section 35 application at LDC (12/05)
- Ongoing coordination with LPD and Trinity EMS on medical and overdose incidents

Transportation, Housing & Treatment

- 13 clients provided transportation
- 22 clients placed in CTI Hotel Program
- 6 clients connected to inpatient treatment

Overdose Response & Follow-Ups

- 18 opiate-related medical calls
- 4 overdoses resulting in 3 fatalities
- 9 follow-up visits related to LPD/Trinity medical incidents

Massachusetts Collaborative for Action, Leadership, and Learning 3 (MassCALL3) Anjali Bhagat, Substance Use Prevention Grant Coordinator

Anjali Bhagat continues to lead community engagement and program coordination under the MassCALL3 grant, advancing prevention strategies, strengthening school partnerships, and supporting coalition sustainability in Lowell.

Butler Middle School has been identified as the pilot site for the Positive Community Norms (PCN) campaign. Anjali has begun implementation planning with school leadership and Lowell Community School Managers and conducted an initial meeting with Butler students in early December to gather youth input. Based on student feedback, the PCN campaign at Butler Middle School will focus on cyberbullying. In partnership with the YWCA of Lowell, Anjali is organizing a youth focus group to inform campaign messaging.

Project Wayfinder remains active districtwide, providing a social-emotional learning framework for K–12 students that promotes belonging, purpose, and resilience. Anjali has also completed iDECIDE facilitator training to build capacity with Lowell Public Schools as they prepare to implement iDECIDE, an evidence-based Tier 2 substance use prevention program that supports at-risk students through structured education, reflection, and skill-building as an alternative to punitive discipline.

Anjali is coordinating with Lowell Public Schools to implement Youth Mental Health First Aid training for all teachers and staff, scheduled for March and April. Due to scheduling constraints, the next Mill City Prevention Network (MCPN) meeting has been rescheduled to January following winter break to continue cross-sector prevention planning.

Events & Trainings

Butler School PCN Onboarding – 12/10

IDecide Facilitator training – 12/11

YMHFA Planning Committee 12/31

**Syringe Collection Program
Andres Gonzalez, Syringe Collection Program Coordinator**

Thomas Callahan, Assistant Syring Collection Program Coordinator

Meetings & Planning

Individual Homeless Update – 12/02, 12/09, 12/16
 Hunger Homeless Commission – 12/03
 City Manager Encampment Meeting – 12/17

Syringe Collection Activity 2025

Total Number of...	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Discarded pick-up requests	13	7	17	19	15	14	21	20	23	18	13	7	188
Incoming calls for pick-up requests	12	7	34	19	24	18	31	28	38	39	26	10	286
Syringes picked-up while responding to <u>all</u> discarded pick-up requests	366	311	825	158	1,261	374	453	636	443	423	265	414	5,934
Community Events: proactive sweeps	0	1	3	5	3	4	3	6	5	6	4	5	50
Syringes proactively picked-up while in the community	724	364	1,177	902	816	1,001	947	1,345	1,318	1,095	655	942	11,479

2025 Disposal Days Annual Total