

**Board of Health Report: JAN. 2026**  
**Substance Abuse and Prevention Division**

**Lowell Health Department**

The Substance Abuse Prevention Division, under the leadership of Maura Fitzpatrick, continues to strengthen community-based prevention and outreach efforts across the City of Lowell. The team has hired a new Youth Outreach Specialist for the CO-OP program, who will begin in February. This position will support expanded youth engagement, prevention education, and early intervention efforts citywide.

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

The CO-OP team continued to strengthen its citywide prevention, outreach, and crisis response efforts. Staff remained actively involved in overdose response, client stabilization, case management, and housing coordination, while maintaining strong collaboration with community partners and public safety agencies.

During this reporting period, CO-OP expanded direct client support through seasonal harm-reduction and wellness efforts. Hand and foot warmers were distributed at the Transitional Living Center, Eliot Day Center, and Project Compass, and hygiene care supplies were provided to Project Compass. CO-OP also distributed Narcan kits to school nurses in three cases, supporting overdose preparedness within the school community.

Internal capacity-building continued as the Youth Outreach Specialist position was filled, with the candidate accepting the offer and preparing to begin onboarding. CO-OP also met with the Director of Homelessness Services in Manchester, NH, to explore opportunities for regional collaboration and shared strategies.

### **Meetings & Collaboration**

- Meeting with Manchester, NH Homelessness Director regarding the Lowell CO-OP Program (01/09)
- VINFEN Zoom Meeting (01/12)
- Weekly Non-Profit Update at Project Compass (01/13)
- Weekly CO-OP Staff Meeting (01/14)

### **Client Support & Service Coordination**

- Syringe collection assistance and environmental safety response across multiple locations, including Middlesex Street, Bridge Street, Dutton Street, Pearl Street, Thorndike Street, Favor Street, Hastings Street, Steadman Street, Robinson Street Encampment, and Charter School (01/12–01/15)
- Client transportation and housing support, including rides for services and placement at CTI Hotel (01/12–01/15)
- Inpatient detox referrals and follow-up support for clients (01/12–01/15)

### **Overdose Response & Follow-Ups**

- Response to LPD/Trinity medical incidents, including overdose intervention and follow-up care coordination (01/12–01/15)

## **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 across Lowell. During this reporting period, Anjali also conducted active, near-daily outreach within Lowell Public Schools to introduce prevention programs directly to students and build awareness, relationships, and engagement at the school level.

Butler Middle School has been identified as the pilot site for the Positive Community Norms (PCN) campaign. Anjali has continued implementation planning with school leadership and Lowell Community School Managers and previously facilitated an initial student meeting to gather youth input. Based on student feedback, the PCN campaign at Butler Middle School will focus on cyberbullying. Butler Middle School is now preparing to enter the second phase of the PCN campaign, during which students will begin designing campaign materials. As the YWCA of Lowell does not currently have sufficient student interest to support this initiative, PCN planning and implementation efforts will move forward in close collaboration with Lowell Public Schools.

Project Wayfinder remains active districtwide, providing a social-emotional learning framework for K–12 students that promotes belonging, purpose, and resilience. Anjali previously completed iDECIDE facilitator training; however, implementation support has been paused as Lowell Public Schools has decided to prioritize administration of the program by their own staff.

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 ongoing scheduling challenges, Mill City Prevention Network (MCPN) availability has been limited. To support continued cross-sector collaboration, MCPN will be merged with the monthly Community Health Task Force meetings moving forward.

This reporting period focused on setting systems and timelines in motion ahead of Anjali's planned absence in February. Program continuity has been ensured with support from the Regional Community Health Coordinator, Srey Neang, allowing grant activities and partnerships to continue uninterrupted.

### **Events & Trainings**

YMHFA Planning Committee - 01/7

MC3 Check In BSAS – 01/8, 01/20

School Outreach – 01/13, 01/14, 01/15, 01/21, 01/22, 01/23

