

METROWEST SHARED PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

May 2023



Mental Health Month

Check out some resources Mental Health resources below!

- To access Mental Health America's 2023 Mental Health Month toolkit, click [here](#).
 - **Includes:** information about how an individual's environment impacts their mental health, suggestions for making changes to improve and maintain mental well-being, and how to seek help for mental health challenges.
- Access Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Mental Health Awareness Month Toolkit [here](#).
 - **Includes:** social media content, best practices for engaging in healthy discussions about mental health, and promotional materials for mental health awareness in May and beyond.
- For the 31 days of the month, here are 31 ways to make the world around you work for YOUR mental health. Download the [Mental Health Month 2023 Calendar](#).
- Want to take a Mental Health [quiz](#)? Take the quiz and see if you can separate Mental Health myths from the facts.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

Mental health is wealth, especially during Mental Health Awareness Month!

Mental health is an important part of overall health and well-being and includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

The stigma around mental health and treatment has long existed, even though this has started to change. Still, people hesitate to seek help or even talk about it with their loved ones for fear of being judged and facing unnecessary backlash.

This Mental Health month, let's talk about mental health, spread awareness, and take action to better our own health and the health of those around us.



Important Information

SNAP Benefits Update

Did you hear?! The state is providing extra food funds for 3 months!

Massachusetts is providing extra SNAP benefits in the beginning of April, May, and June as an off-ramp to make the ending of the federal payments feel less abrupt. The amount of additional SNAP dollars are dependent on household size, but a minimum of \$38/month will be added to residents' SNAP benefits for these three months.

State Funded Extra SNAP

April - June 2023



Learn more

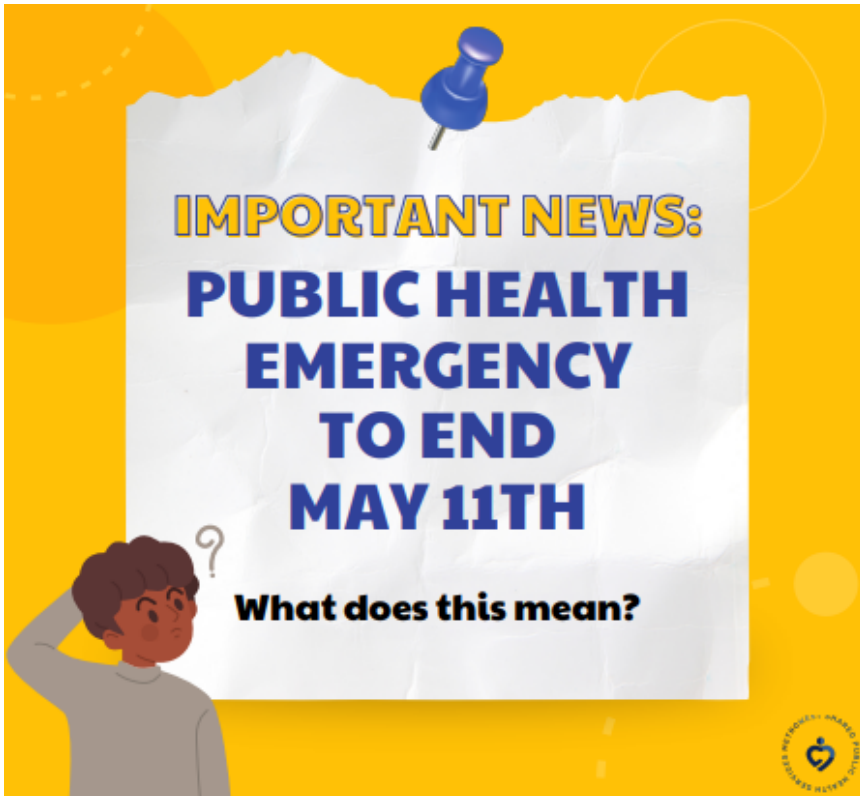
[Mass.gov/ExtraCOVIDSNAP](https://www.mass.gov/ExtraCOVIDSNAP)

Help spread the word about the state-funded extra SNAP benefits!

- Outreach materials are available in 16 languages - including flyers, text/email/robocall templates and social media posts
- Videos are available in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language (ASL)
- Encourage households to visit [Mass.gov/ExtraCOVIDSNAP](https://www.mass.gov/ExtraCOVIDSNAP) to learn about the state-funded extra SNAP, how they can get the most out of their regular monthly SNAP benefits, and be connected with other resources

In the News...

Public Health Emergency to End May 11th



On May 11, 2023, the public health emergency (PHE) will expire and many will see changes in COVID-19 healthcare costs, insurance coverage and renewals, and food benefits. These changes will affect individuals differently.

Important things to remember to communicate to the community:

- COVID-19 is still a dangerous illness.
- It's still important to get vaccinated.
- You may have to pay for COVID-19 tests and vaccines.
- If you have Medicaid, you will have to prove you are eligible every year.
- If you use SNAP, you may receive less money for food.
- Stock up on at home COVID tests – provided by your local Health Department OR the government.

*Click [here](#) for a series of social media posts that can be used to explain what this means to the public.

*Find Resources for supporting refugees, immigrants, & migrants on the end of the public health emergency [here](#).

Infectious Disease Trends Happening Now

Outbreak of Drug Resistant Bacteria in Artificial Tears

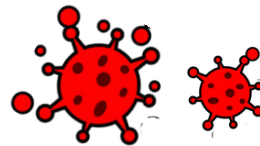
Several eye drops were linked to a drug-resistant strain of the bacteria *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Infections from this bacteria strain have caused at least three deaths, vision loss in eight others, and the surgical removal of four people's eyeballs.

The outbreak is associated with multiple types of infections, most common being eye infections. The investigation to date has identified artificial tears as a common exposure for many patients. At this time, the CDC and FDA recommend clinicians and patients to stop using the following products pending additional guidance.

- **EzriCare Artificial Tears Lubricant Eye Drops**
- **Delsam Pharma Artificial Tears Lubricant Eye Drops**
- **Delsam Pharma Artificial Eye Ointment**
- **Clear Eyes Once Daily, Eye Allergy Itch Relief**
- **Purely Soothing 15% MSM Drops**
- **Brimonidine Tartrate Ophthalmic Solution, 0.15%**



New COVID-19 Strain Identified

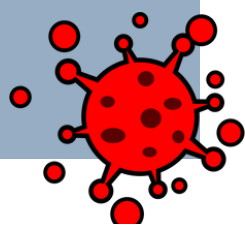


Another COVID-19 variant has been identified in the United States. The “Arcturus” or XBB.1.16 strain is an omicron subvariant. Although this strain is currently making up a large number of current cases, this variant does not appear to be any more dangerous than the previous strains.

Patients testing positive for this variant exhibit new symptoms of conjunctivitis (pink eye) and high fevers. Most people also experience the same symptoms as other variants (sore throat, cough, body aches, runny nose, etc.) as well.

AS HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF WE SHOULD...

- Inform the public of the new variant.
- Educate the community on the new symptoms of this variant so they know what to look out for.
- Continue to encourage people to get vaccinated and boosted.



Training & Webinar Opportunities

Mental Health First Aid Training

About: The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training is available for those who want to participate OR become a certified trainer for the course. This training helps you assist someone experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis. During the training you will learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help.

- ◆ To sign up for the MHFA training, click [here](#).
- ◆ Interested in becoming a certified trainer for the MHFA course? Click [here](#)



Public Health

THE HUDSON HEALTH DEPARTMENT INVITES YOU TO ATTEND A VIRTUAL

Mental Health First Aid Training

MONDAY, MAY 22ND
9AM - 2PM (+ AT-HOME PRE-WORK)
VIRTUAL - LINK WILL BE EMAILED

IDENTIFY. UNDERSTAND. RESPOND.

Mental Health First Aid is a course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.

TO REGISTER, COMPLETE THE FORM AT THE LINK BELOW OR SCAN CODE TO LEFT:
[HTTPS://RB.GY/32U1S](https://rb.gy/32U1S)

Questions? Email Alex at AOHare@townofhudson.org

MEHA Seminar

Registration is now open for the Massachusetts Environmental Health Association's 75th Annual Seminar!



MASSACHUSETTS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

- **When:** May 24 @ 8:30 am - 4:00 pm
- **Location:** Renaissance Boston Patriot Place Hotel, 28 Patriot Place, Foxborough, MA 02035
- **Time:** 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- **Cost:** MEHA members is \$100. Non-members is \$135.

→ To register click [here](#).



Training & Webinar Opportunities Continued


2023 MAHB Certificate Program: Public Health Law Topics for Boards of Health and Health Departments

Want to learn about the law and jurisdictional authority of Boards of Health? The Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) will be hosting an in-person event at the Holiday Inn in Marlborough on May 6th. This event is open to all BOH members and staff.

Interested? Click [here](#) to register or learn more.



Mental Health Training for Parents & Caregivers

Mental Health Essentials 
for Parents & Caregivers

with Mental Health Collaborative

Parents & caregivers will learn strategies to include mental health as part of their parenting, how to identify when loved ones need support for mental health, how and where to get professional support, how to use strategies for self-care for themselves and their loved ones, and much more!

Wednesday, May 31st 2023, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Zoom Registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/join?from=addon#/registration>

Sponsored Hudson Health Department • For questions, contact Julie Zieff (jzieff@townofhudson.org) or Lauren Antonelli (lantonelli@townofhudson.org)

- Learn strategies to include mental health as part of parenting
- How to identify when loved ones need support
- How and where to get professional support and more!

PLEASE SHARE!
This event is open to community members!

Interested? Zoom link registration can be found [here](#).



The 2023 Community Health Assessment survey is now open! This survey is part of a multi-tiered data-gathering process where MetroWest residents share their feedback on health issues and services in the region.

The data collected here will be shared back with the MetroWest community and can be used by agencies for making policy, programmatic, and funding decisions.

The 10-minute, anonymous survey can be completed online in three different languages. Please share widely with folks who live in MetroWest!

- **IN ENGLISH**
- **EN ESPAÑOL**
- **EM PORTUGUÊS**

Other Important links:

- [2023 CHA Outreach Toolkit](#) (key messages, flyers, and social media images in English, Spanish, and Portuguese to promote the survey)
- [2023 CHA Resources page](#)

MetroWest Food Collaborative

Launched in 2021, the MetroWest Food Collaborative (MWFC) brings together organizations and community partners who are committed to addressing food justice in our MetroWest communities.



The MWFC participates in local events, connects community members to food resources, and participates in advocacy for healthy and accessible food for our communities.

- Check out the MWFC food access calendar to view food pantries and free meals in your community.
 - Do you know of food resources in your community that aren't listed in the calendar? Email the food collaborative and they can add it to the food access calendar!
- Interested in getting involved with the collaborative? Send an email to MetrowestFoodCollaborative@gmail.com to be added to their email list and you will receive monthly updates and other additional information

Please note that In some instances, PHE grant funds could cover the cost of these trainings.

Email Deanna to discuss!

All available communication materials and campaigns can be found [here](#).

Materials may be used on social media and can be updated upon request.

Please reach out to dwu@townofhudson.org for any additional communications requests, questions or needs.

