



### **Contact Us about Partnering**

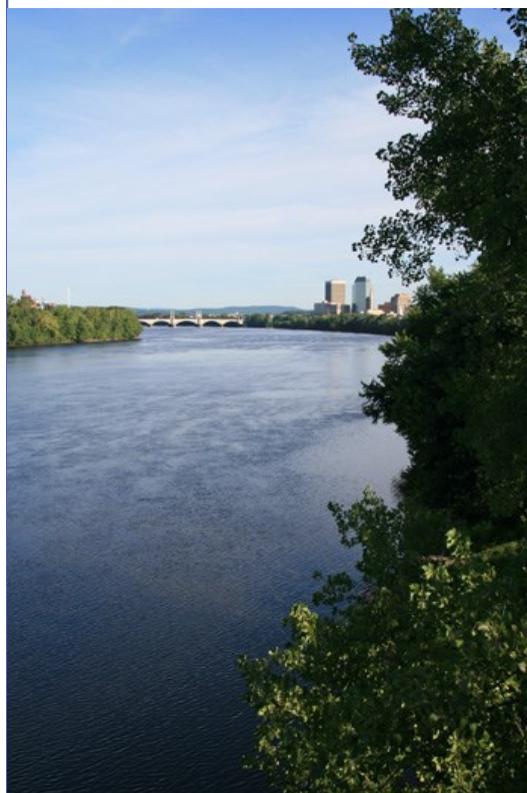
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## **Partners for a Healthier Community**



**The Public Health Institute  
of Western Massachusetts**  
*Member, NNPFI*



### ***Our Vision: All people have access to what they need to lead healthy lives.***

PHC provides skills, expertise and experience to create successful campaigns and systems to improve health and well-being in the Pioneer Valley. We focus on activities and policy changes that build on community assets while simultaneously increasing community capacity. Ensuring health equity and challenging institutional racism are core values integrated into all of our services.

Our specialty is to work with and on behalf of communities that experience health disparities. Our efforts highlight and address structures and institutions that cause these disparities, including the destructive racial hierarchy in our society. Together with community partners and residents, we design, test and implement solutions and policies that result in more equitable access to resources that impact community health.

### ***Our Work***

PHC has a strong track record of supporting coalitions, engaging community members and incorporating public policy advocacy in its work. As a Public Health Institute, PHC provides “backbone” infrastructure support to the region in a variety of areas, including convening of multi-sector partnerships; design and implementation of population-based health programs; and research and evaluation.

### ***Our Team***

Founded in 1996 and led by Executive Director Jessica Collins, PHC has 9 permanent staff with extensive public health experience in the Pioneer Valley, a cadre of program and research contractors and is governed by a 22-member Board of Directors.



## Our Services

**Research and Assessment**  
*implementing community-based research and assessments to understand gaps, needs and best practices.*

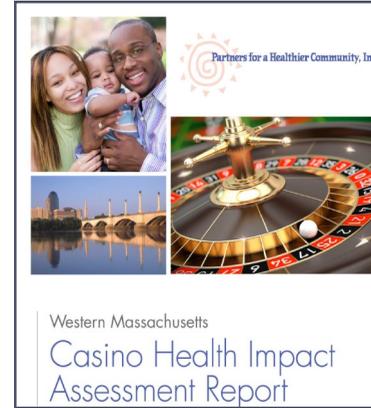
**Coalition-building**  
*supporting community, governmental and private sector stakeholders to address health challenges facing our communities.*

**Program Evaluation**  
*monitoring and evaluating outcomes of programs and community initiatives aimed at improving health and well-being.*

**Health Policy Development**  
*using data analysis, community participation and advocacy to forge policy changes that will sustain programming and lead to better health outcomes.*

## Our Successes

The **Health Impact Assessment on the Western Massachusetts Casino (2013)** highlighted health impact on vulnerable populations and increased community understanding of these potential impacts. Our data and policy recommendations informed the MA Gaming Commission policies and protocols for the gaming industry.



Our **Springfield Health Equity Report (2014)** highlighted alarming racial and ethnic health disparities in our region and built understanding of “social determinants of health.” It informed the City of Springfield’s proposal to HUD for the federal Natural Disaster Resiliency Competition submitted a year later in October 2015.

**Live Well Springfield**, a multi-sector coalition dedicated to improving access to healthy eating and physical activity to address chronic diseases, garnered successful local policy and systems changes including: the creation of the Springfield Food Policy Council (2010), a community gardening ordinance (2012), a mobile farmer’s market (2010-2015), and a Complete Streets Ordinance (2015). Between 2012-2014, the project showed increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in Mason Square neighborhoods.

**The YEAH! Network** gathered a multi-sector collaboration to address adolescent sexual health. Using the collective impact framework, policies in the Springfield and Holyoke Public Schools were passed allowing sexual education curriculum to be taught, and in Springfield, school nurses are allowed to distribute condoms. According to MA DPH data, teen pregnancy rates in Holyoke and Springfield (2013) have both decreased, and rates in Holyoke are now the lowest on record.

**The BEST Oral Health program** created a local system of education, screening and treatment for preschools to decrease oral health disease. It also contributed to changing changed MA state polices to require tooth-brushing in all preschools where children eat a meal or stay for more than four hours. The BEST Oral Health model was accepted as best practice and replicated nationally.



**The Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition** has worked with the Springfield Public Schools and the City of Springfield Department of Parks, Buildings and Recreation Management to implement policy and procedure changes to improve asthma management and indoor air quality. These efforts led to decreases in emergency room visits and increased class time for students with asthma.