



2024

ANNUAL REPORT



Nashoba Associated Boards of Health
Your COMMUNITY, Your CHOICE since 1931



Nashoba Associated Boards of Health

ABOUT US:

Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH) serves as the Board of Health Agent for 16 member towns, providing environmental and public health services to the district. We are proud to be one of the first regional public health departments in Massachusetts. Member communities include: Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Berlin, Bolton, Boxborough, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley, Stow, Townsend, and the community of Devens.

NABH'S MISSION

Nashoba Associated Boards of Health provides public health services to member communities in North Central Massachusetts, in partnership with each community's local Board of Health. We are dedicated to serving all our community residents of any age, particularly the underserved and at-risk. Our goal is to promote healthy people, healthy families, and a healthy environment through compassionate care, education, enforcement, and prevention.



WHO WE ARE

Alicia Lepardo • Community Health Nurse

Annette Campbell • Environmental Health

Bridgette Braley • Health Agent

Cara Olejarz • Health Agent

Ginny Scharff • Environmental Health

Glen Glatfelter • Maintenance

James Garreffii • Director of Public Health

Jenna Montgomery • Public Health Educator/Communications Specialist

Kalene Gendron • Health Agent

Karen Campbell • Grief Counselor

Kelli Calo • Shared Services Coordinator

Kolby Beauvais • Health Agent

Meghan O'Neil • Food Inspector

Maureen Scott • Community Health Nurse

Rick Metcalf • Health Agent

Sharon Veasie • Director of Administration & Technology

Tamara Bedard • Community Health Manager

Terri Counihan • CFO & HR

William Brookings • Health Agent

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



The Environmental Division enforces State Sanitary and Environmental Codes, Massachusetts General Laws, and local regulations in partnership with state agencies like the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Our services include housing inspections, sewage disposal systems, restaurant inspections, public pools, bathing beaches, rabies control, wells, and rubbish haulers.

Our staff collaborates with local Boards of Health and the general public to address environmental and public health concerns across the sixteen towns in the Nashoba region. Additionally, our health agents are available in the Town Hall of member communities and at the office in Ayer to assist the public with questions or concerns they may have.

Inspectional Time by Topic by By Nashoba Public Health Inspectors in 2024



PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES



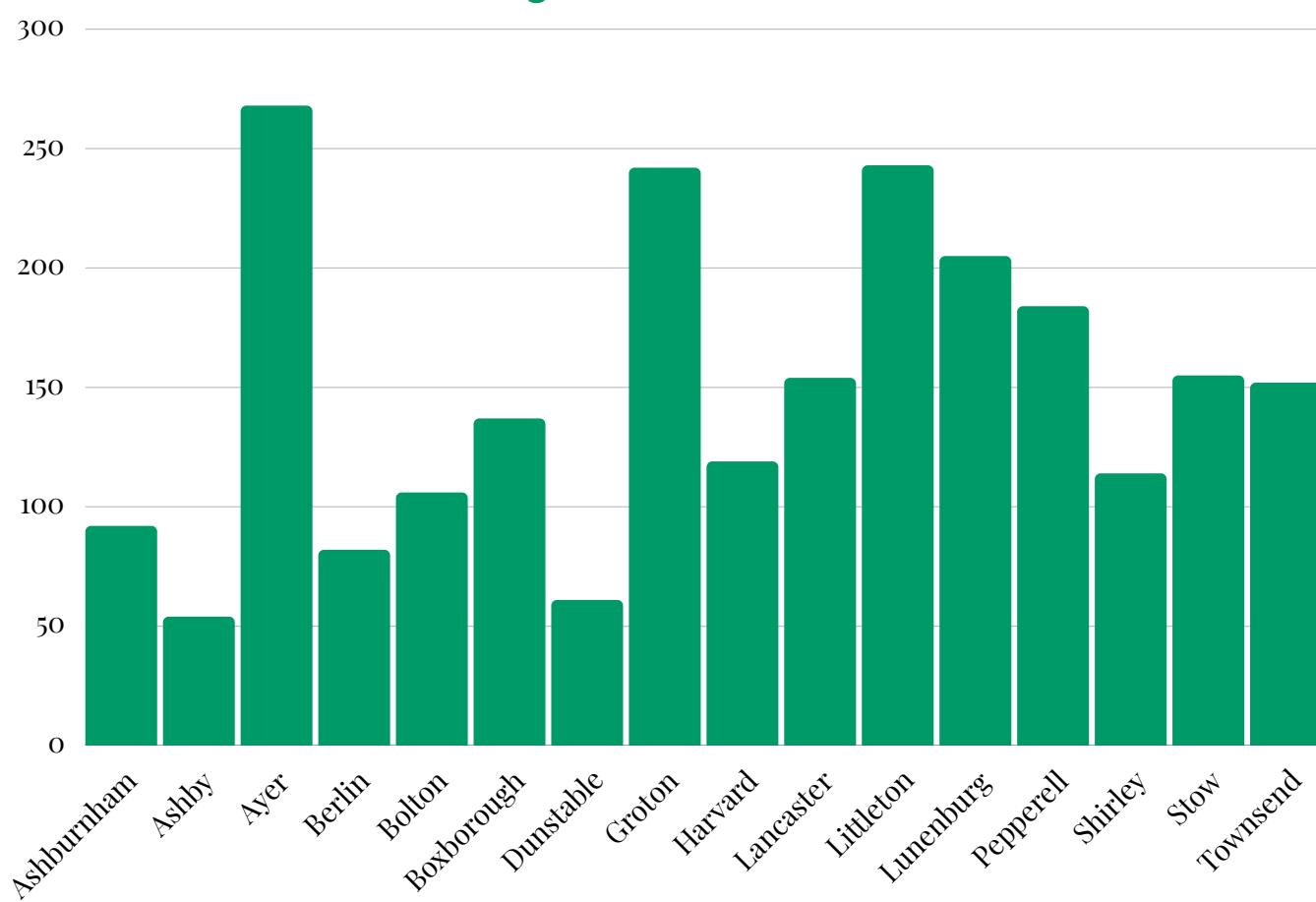
The Public Health Nursing team at Nashoba Associated Boards of Health aims to promote wellness across all ages in our sixteen member communities following the Scope and Standards of Public Health Nursing as outlined by the American Nurses Association.

Core Services Provided:

- We hosted 17 flu clinics throughout the year, providing community members with accessible flu shots. These clinics played a key role in reducing the spread of influenza and safeguarding the health of our neighbors.
- Investigated Communicable Diseases:
 - We worked closely with the Mass. Department of Public Health to investigate and manage communicable diseases.
- Town Nurse Hours:
 - We held regular “town nurse hours” across the district, offering guidance, advice, and care to local residents.
- Information & Resource Referrals:
 - We provided clear health information and connected individuals with essential community resources.
- Consultation, Education & Outreach:
 - We conducted personalized consultations and community education sessions to empower residents to make informed health decisions.
- Outbreak Response:
 - When health emergencies arose, we responded promptly to contain and manage outbreaks.
- Home Visits:
 - We carried out home visits to ensure that those who could not visit our clinics still received the care they needed.

Communicable Disease Investigations Completed By Nashoba in 2024

Region Total: 2368

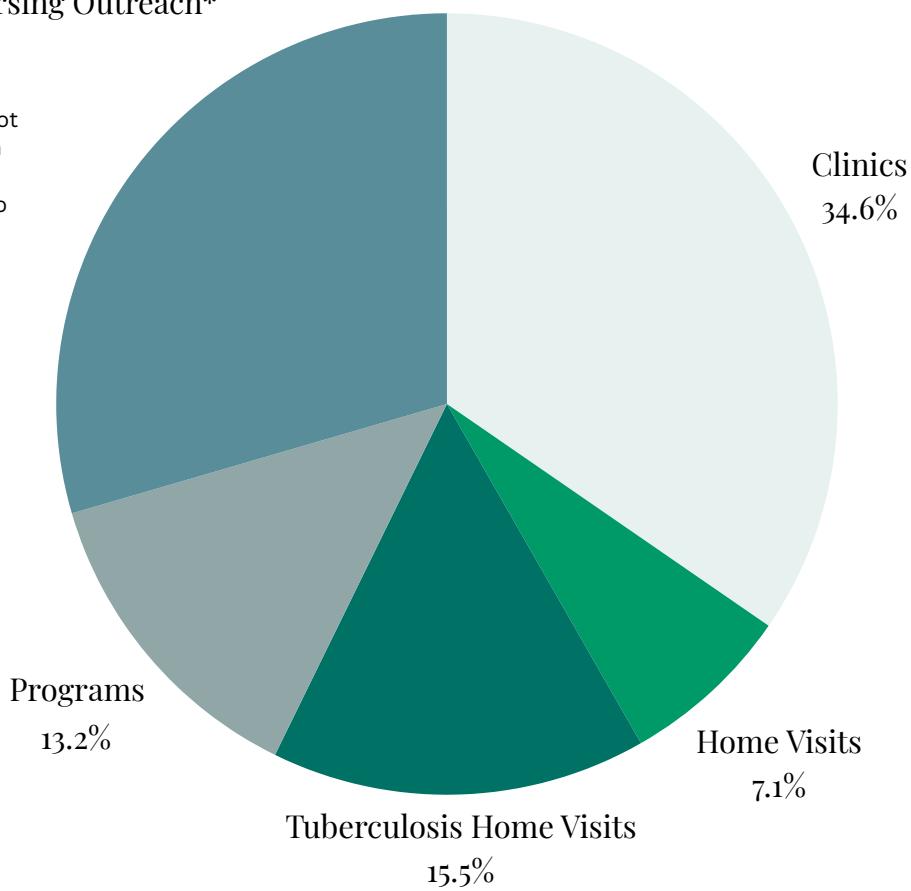


Other Public Health Nursing Services Conducted in 2024

Other Public Health Nursing Outreach*

29.5%

*'Other outreach' includes activities that are not formally organized but help our public health nurses maintain a 'finger on the pulse' of the community. Examples include drop-in visits to community centers, shelters, housing authorities, and food pantries and meetings with community stakeholders.



HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS

The Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH) developed a variety of health education materials aimed at raising awareness, educating the community, promoting events, and providing valuable information to the public.

HEALTH HAPPENINGS

A quarterly newsletter brought to you by Nashoba Associated Boards of Health

Serving the public health needs of Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Berlin, Bolton, Boxborough, Devens, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley, Stow, Townsend, and the community of Devens

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Fall 2024

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-10 Reasons to get Vaccinated & Respiratory Illness Symptom Chart: pg. 3

-Managing Grief During the Holidays: pg. 4-5

-Breathe Easy This Holiday Season- Why

Staying Smoke-Free Matters: pg. 7

-Town Nurse Hours: pg. 8

 November is National Lung Cancer & Smoking Cessation Awareness Month!



Issue: Fall (November) 2024

Above photo: A classic Nashoba region fall scene through the window- by Bridgette Braley, RS- NABH Sanitarian & Senior Food Inspector

November arrives once again in New England! Our area is currently in a Level 3- Critical drought due to unusually dry conditions. Pay attention to local regulations related to outdoor fires and water conservation; everyone has a part to play in keeping fire danger to a minimum! Each November, we observe National Lung Cancer & Smoking Cessation Awareness month. Know your lung cancer risks, get screened if necessary, and if you smoke, consider quitting! We finished up our annual flu clinic season in late October! Visit page 6 for some flu clinic stats, if numbers are your thing. Consider getting your flu shot if you haven't already. It'll help protect you and your loved ones against the flu, which can be a pretty nasty bug! And don't forget to know your *personal risk profile* for respiratory illness and act accordingly. The holidays are almost here- and what better time to brush up on food safety? Keep your family and guests safe this holiday season with the tips on page 2. Stay healthy and be well!

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Find us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/NashobaBoardsofHealth

HEALTHY HABITS

Help protect yourself and your family from illnesses this respiratory season by **getting your updated vaccines and following healthy habits.**



Get your updated flu and COVID-19 vaccines



Stay home if you're sick



Cover coughs and sneezes



Wash your hands regularly



Wear a mask if you have mild symptoms or are recovering

10 REASONS TO GET VACCINATED!



Vaccine-preventable diseases have not gone away.

Young and healthy people can get very sick, too.

Vaccines will help keep you healthy.

Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive.

Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise.

Vaccines are safe.

Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death.

When you get sick, your children, grandchildren, and parents may also be at risk.

Vaccines cannot cause the diseases they are designed to prevent.

Your family, friends, and co-workers need you!

NASHOBIA ASSOCIATED BOARDS OF HEALTH

PREVENT MOSQUITO BITES

USE THESE SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM MOSQUITO BITES!



Use insect repellent (DEET, picaridin)



Wear long-sleeved clothing



Avoid outside hours from dusk to dawn



Remove standing water



Repair window and door screens



Make your aroma less appealing

Additional communication materials can be found [here](#).

Newsletter Archives

[Health Happenings Newsletter- August 2024](#)

[Health Happenings Newsletter- May 2024](#)

[Health Happenings Newsletter- February 2024](#)

EVENTS AND TRAINING

In 2024, Nashoba actively hosted and participated in numerous events and training sessions across the region, fostering community engagement and professional development.



Narcan training was held at the Littleton Health Department on November 19th.



Grief support groups offered by the NABH Grief Counselor. There were a total of 170 grief support groups and 8 grief support programs & presentations were held throughout district.



STORYTIME

Children's Storytime at local libraries.

FLU VACCINE CLINICS

Flu clinics were hosted throughout the region late Sept. through October - 17 total!



Mental Health FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

Adult Mental Health First Aid training was conducted at the Groton and Lancaster Community Centers.

TickTalk

A talk all about **ticks** in Groton.

Heart Health



Heart Health session at the Stow COA for Heart month in February.



First Aid basics workshop at Stone Soup Kitchen in Ayer in January.



Celebrated **Earth Day** in Townsend with a table at their annual event.



Attended and tabled at various **health fairs** throughout the region, including Pepperell, Ashburnham, and Harvard.

A full list of events can be found here: www.nashoba.org/news-events

Grants

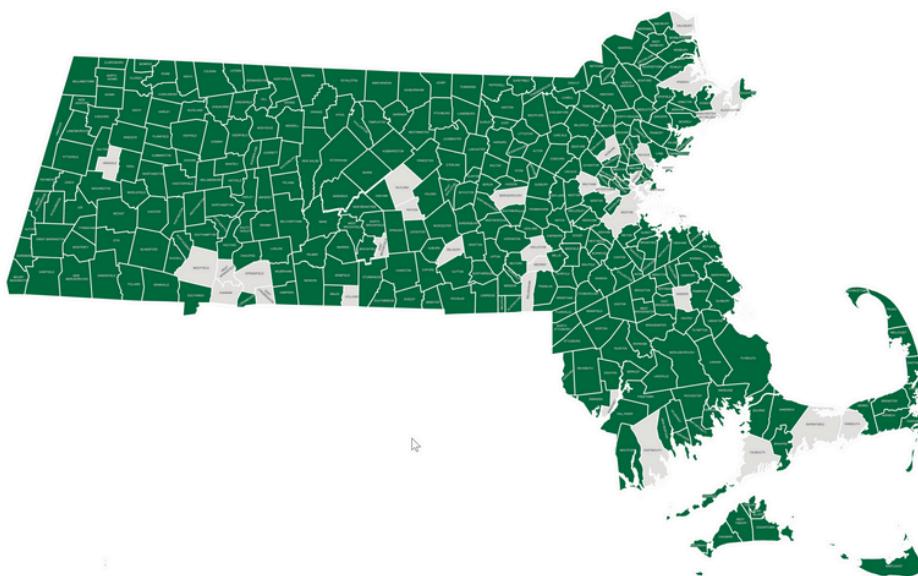
Public Health Excellence Grant and Contact Tracing/Case Investigation Grant

In 2024, the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH) continued to advance regional public health through the ongoing support of two key grants: the Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant and the Contact Tracing and Case Investigation (CT/CI) Grant. Awarded in 2022, these grants have supported the gradual expansion of NABH's staff, strengthening its capacity to deliver critical public health services.

Since 2022, the PHE Grant has enabled the onboarding of staff over time, including Kelli M. Calo, Shared Services Coordinator (part-time); Kolby Beauvais and Cara Olejarz, Health Agents (full-time); Jenna Montgomery, Public Health Educator/Communications Specialist (full-time); and Meghan O'Neil, Food Inspector (part-time). This growing team has enhanced NABH's ability to provide inspections, community outreach, and health education, fostering a more robust and adaptable public health infrastructure across participating municipalities.

The CT/CI Grant has further supported NABH by funding a full-time Public Health Nurse, Alicia Lepardo, and enabling enhancements to the regional public health database, incorporating advanced analytical tools to improve data tracking and reporting.

Together, these grants have strengthened NABH's ability to meet evolving community needs, improving disease surveillance, emergency preparedness, and equitable access to high-quality public health services. Through a collaborative and resource-sharing approach, NABH has built a resilient and modern public health system that continues to effectively serve all member communities.



319 municipalities are supported across 51 cross-jurisdictional partnerships, or 91% of the State participating in a PHE.



2024 Highlights

Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH) achieved significant milestones in 2024, emphasizing public health innovation, community engagement, and regional collaboration.

Mental Health and Grief Support

- Certified 1 staff as a Mental Health First Aid Instructor, leading two Adult Mental Health First Aid certification classes to strengthen mental health awareness and response capacity.
- Secured funding for a pilot grief support program through the Haley Cremer Foundation, Emerson Health, and the Community Foundation of North Central MA.
- Delivered a Grief & Healing presentation at the MA Women of Color Coalition North Central MA Chapter Regional Meeting.

Community Health Engagement

- Hosted Community Health Focus Groups across eight municipalities, gathering critical insights on local health priorities.
- Co-organized the Bridges to Health: Building Thriving Community Partnerships conference, in collaboration with CHNA9, MPHA, MAHB, and OLRH, to advance regional collaboration and health equity.
- Participated in transportation planning for North Central MA through the “Future of Mobility” initiative.
- Worked with CHNA9 and the Healthy Aging Collaborative on age and dementia-friendly initiatives in the region.

Health Care Access and Advocacy

- Advocated against the proposed closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center through public hearings, local meetings, and attended a press conference, highlighting its critical role in regional healthcare.
- Launched the Nashoba Valley Health Care Access Visioning Project in partnership with CHNA9, ASNCM, and HCFA, including visioning sessions focused on older adults, veterans, and the general public.

Public Health Capacity Building

- Conducted three opioid abatement funding technical assistance sessions for NABH municipalities, supporting their efforts to utilize opioid settlement funds effectively.
- Joined the State’s Community Naloxone Program (CNP) to improve regional access to life-saving overdose reversal tools.
- Participated in HRIA Overdose Rescue Training-of-Trainers to expand overdose prevention and response capabilities.
- Coordinated a State-sponsored flu and COVID vaccine clinic to increase vaccination rates.

Regional Collaboration and Leadership

- Participated in the inaugural Nashoba Valley Health Planning Working Group to advance long-term health planning efforts.
- Initiated a virtual regional monthly meeting for Council on Aging (COA) leaders to enhance communication and collaboration across municipalities.
- Hosted the Annual COA & Outreach Appreciation Luncheon to recognize and celebrate the contributions of local outreach teams.
- Participated in key statewide public health conferences, including the Massachusetts Health Officers Association (MHOA) and Massachusetts Public Health Alliance (MPHA) annual conferences.



As we look back on 2024, Nashoba Associated Boards of Health extends our sincere appreciation to our member communities for their trust, collaboration, and dedication. Through our collective efforts, we tackled key public health challenges, strengthened local resources, and laid the foundation for future initiatives that will continue to benefit the region.

As we move into 2025, we remain committed to serving our municipalities and fostering strong partnerships. With a shared focus on health equity, innovation, and community well-being, we are eager to build on this momentum and create lasting impact.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together toward a healthier, stronger future for public health!