

Boston Alliance *for* Community Health



“What I enjoyed the most at this training was the diversity, the group exercises, hands on exercises, the games and the opportunity to meet new people with the same desire of supporting our people/our community to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities.”

~ Sheylie Ramirez, Roxbury resident and participant in BACH's Leadership Training

BACH *Notes & News*

July 2014

BACH and its members continue to move towards achieving our vision of a vibrant, just, and equitable Boston...

Earlier this year, work groups developed and refined goals, strategies and activities for each of the strategic issues identified in Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP). We will complete the community health improvement plan by early Fall of this year. We have welcomed eight racially and organizationally diverse members to our Steering Committee with new health center, coalition and community group representation. We also partnered with community organizations to host three engagement activities, including a film screening for *Stand Against Racism*, a community dialogue in North Dorchester called *Speak Up*, and a leadership training for residents. Be sure to visit our website regularly for [updates](#) and check us out on [Facebook](#) where we discuss community health issues.

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- Resident Spotlight: Amy McCarthy, *Senior Intensive Care Coordinator at The Home for Little Wanderers Dorchester-South Boston Community Service Agency and coalition member of SBCAN.*

What's Happening in BACH?



Citywide MAPP Process

BACH is wrapping up the MAPP process by identifying goals, strategies and activities for each strategic issue



New Leadership

BACH welcomes a racially and organizationally diverse group of members to the 2014 Steering Committee.



Resident Engagement

BACH engages community residents by partnering with neighborhood groups to host events and leadership training.

Resident Engagement

Speak Up!

On March 6th and 8th, BACH partnered with the North Dorchester Coalition to host a community panel and dialogue with 10 other organizations from Bowdoin Geneva, Fields Corner, Grove Hall and Uphams Corner neighborhoods. The event provided a platform for over 100 residents of diverse backgrounds to offer their perspectives on subjects such as mental health, sexual health, community violence, and domestic violence.

Participants discussed health issues, offered solutions and brainstormed next steps that directly influenced the work of the coalition. Community resources were also made available. Translation was provided in Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Residents responded positively to the event, remarking “I would like to have more conversations like this” and “Can’t wait to follow up and work with some of the people I’ve met.”

“Speak Up” marks the first event for the newly formed North Dorchester Coalition, which is a diverse and inclusive cross-neighborhood collaboration working to address cycles of violence and community health and wellness. Using an intergenerational approach, the NDC seeks to educate and empower residents and organizations to make collective impact for systemic change.

Citywide MAPP Update



BACH and partners gather to discuss action steps for community health improvement plan.

For the past few years, BACH and its partners in Boston have been engaged in the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) community health assessment and community health improvement process.

MAPP has been widely used in other communities for health improvement planning, and has been endorsed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the Public Health Accreditation Board.

Based on an extensive assessment, which engaged nearly 2,000 individuals across Boston, the following five strategic issues arose as priorities that Boston needs to address in the coming years:

1. How can we achieve racial and ethnic health equity?
2. How can we improve coordination and integration of healthcare and community-based prevention activities/services?
3. How can we build and increase resilience in communities impacted by trauma?
4. How can we improve health outcomes by focusing on education, employment, and transportation policies and practices?
5. How can we increase the number of immigrants, people of color, and other under-represented residents in meaningful leadership roles and decision-making processes?

This spring, stakeholder work groups have developed and refined goals, strategies, and activities for each of the strategic issues to create a community health improvement plan. These goals include the following:

- Public and private institutions will adapt, implement, and enforce comprehensive poli-

cies and practices that achieve racial equity and justice

- Improve population health by better integration of health care delivery system with community-based prevention services
- Nurture the natural and existing strengths and resilience of the Boston community to ensure that all residents, regardless of background, have the skills to prevent traumatic events, when possible, and are prepared to cope with traumas and chronic stressors on any scale
- Enhance and build collaborations that consider health in all policies and practices, particularly in the sectors of education, employment, and transportation
- Increase the number of immigrants, people of color, and other underrepresented residents in meaningful and effective leadership roles and decision-making processes.

In late May, BACH and its partners from the five strategic issue work groups gathered to discuss the plan across all five of the issues, to look for convergence of activities and discuss a timeframe for implementation. The group also generated a list of additional agencies and organizations who have a stake in addressing the strategic issues. Currently, BACH and its partners are soliciting feedback on the plan.

BACH and its local public health system partners will continue working to develop and implement action plans for addressing the strategic issues over the next 3-5 years.



Dorchester residents engaged in data presentation by Boston Public Health Commission.

A Campus of Care Collaborative to Address Inequities in Education

Boston Children's Hospital supports initiative in JP to improve Pathways to Success for Bromley-Heath families.

What is the Campus of Care Collaborative?

The Campus of Care Collaborative aims to reduce racial and ethnic inequities in education and health by 1) increasing the number of formerly isolated families who make use of available services that can positively impact their children's health and education outcomes, and 2) enhancing the impact of available services through improved coordination, on the Bromley-Heath and South Street public housing campuses in Jamaica Plain. Once it is operational, parents and residents will have more of a one-stop-shopping experience when it comes to available services for their children and families than they may currently experience. Participants will also experience easier access and support to those services and resources, as well as improved support with follow-up.

Who are the Partners?

With support from Boston's Children's Hospital and Health Resources in Action, the partnership includes three Jamaica Plain organizations: *Nurtury, Inc.*, a school-readiness program in the process of opening a state-of-the-art early education and research facility on the Bromley-Heath campus; *Smart from the Start*, a family support, community engagement and school readiness program whose mission is to prevent the achievement gap among children living in public housing; and *Jamaica Plain Coalition: Tree of Life/Arbol de Vida*, a BACH affiliated coalition of health and human service providers, headquartered in Bromley-Heath, that focuses on public health issues, including overseeing a mentoring program for middle school-age youth.

How was the Campus of Care Formed?

In 2010, Boston Children's Hospital collaborated with MDPH and Boston Alliance for Community Health (BACH) on a Determination of Need (DoN) community planning process in connection with the construction of an extension to Children's main clinical building. This process resulted in an agreement to disburse DoN Community Health Initiative funds to 18 community-based organizations/

initiatives that would explore the benefits of an intentional, multi-sector approach to improving the health status of children and families.

Participating organizations were required to submit two progress reports a year and encouraged to participate in a Learning Collaborative that meets twice a year to share information and look for opportunities for cross-sector collaboration. As a result of these meetings, three participating organizations began exploring whether, by collaborating, they could improve the collective reach

"...Three participating organizations began exploring whether, by collaborating, they could improve the collective reach and impact that they were having in public housing developments that they had been serving independently."

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Their interest in coordinating services for children at the pre- and middle-school levels came about, in part, because all three agencies were aware that the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) and Boston Public Schools (BPS) had commissioned a study, Pathway to Success, that pointed out that children living in BHA developments do not perform as well academically as their non-public

housing peers. Shortly after the study was completed, however, cuts to BHA's budget greatly diminished its ability to respond to the findings.

This coincided with a second round of DoN funding resulting from changes to Children's original expansion project. Nurtury, Smart from the Start, and the JP Coalition collaborated on a proposal to make use of those funds to form a "Campus of Care Collaborative" to improve educational outcomes in the Bromley Health and South Street developments by, providing coordinated support and expanded care to pre-schoolers who are at risk of a delayed start and middle-schoolers who are at risk of being diverted

from their pathway to success.

Next Steps

This initiative is already under way and will receive \$340,000 from the Children's DoN over the next five years. The three organizations are currently working with Boston Children's Hospital and Health Resources in Action to determine how to measure the effectiveness of the Collaborative as well as the impact that the collaborative efforts have on participating children and families.



JPC: Tree of Life's Families Creating Together Puppet Making Workshop at a Smart from the Start Family Fun Night at BHA Bromley.

A Leadership Development Tool to Empower Women of African Descent

Resilient Sisterhood Project pilots a training around diseases of the reproductive system by using a cultural and social justice lens.

What is the Community Health Leader Training?

This pilot project aims to train women as health leaders in regard to reproductive health and diseases of the reproductive system that disproportionately affect women of African descent. The training exposes these health leaders to a new dimension in the public discourse about the health and social challenges that women face in dealing with these diseases and associated burden. Specific goals include:

1. foster a proactive learning environment that empowers these health leaders to advocate and organize for community-based health practices that address the diseases of reproductive system and social determinants of health and
2. start a transformative movement of well-informed women and community members who can articulate their reproductive health concerns and needs to the medical establishments, public health institutions, political representatives, religious/social leaders, and the food industry.

“Another important aspect of this training is to address the pervasive culture of silence and secrecy around these diseases.”

Through a small grant from Mass General Hospital, Lilly Marcelin, founding Director of the Resilient Sisterhood Project (RSP) and BACH Steering Committee member, partnered with Dr. Karen Winkfield, an Oncologist at MGH to pilot this training with 10 diverse women. These women represent a range of ethnicities and ages. This training gives women the opportunity to focus on the chronic under-diagnosed and under-treated diseases of the reproductive system in women of African descent, as well as internalized stereotypes, stigmas and social perceptions of reproductive health.

Another important aspect of this training



RSP Executive Director, Lilly Marcelin (left), with new community health leader.

is to address the pervasive culture of silence and secrecy around these diseases. Participants are eager to openly talk about these problems and after 18 hours of training these women can move on to be health leaders and advocates for community change.

What is included in the curriculum?

Topics covered include the basic anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system, basic information on the cell to the diseases of the reproductive system such as: uterine fibroids, endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, infertility, and the gynecological cancers—breast, cancer, endometrial, and ovarian. In addition to reproductive

ogy of the body.

Training is supported by readings and documentaries such as: Unnatural Causes, Soul Food Junkies, and a host of other health documentaries in regard to reproductive health and social justice matters. In addition, participants also visit various neighborhoods to explore environmental and food concerns.

Next Steps

After the pilot program is complete, RSP hopes to develop a curriculum with a plethora of resources for residents to continue training others as health leaders. Participants can then take the knowledge learned to their communities including churches, schools and social groups.

More about the Resilient Sisterhood Project

RSP is an emerging nonprofit based in Boston to raise awareness and empower women and young adults of African descent. Their mission is to inform these women about common but rarely discussed diseases of the reproductive system that disproportionately affect them. RSP approaches these diseases and associated issues through a cultural and social justice lens.

New Leadership

We are pleased to officially welcome are BACH's newest Steering Committee members. These eight accomplished and passionate health advocates add a broad and deep range of experiences and perspectives to the racially and ethnically diverse BACH leadership. They have already become important contributors to BACH's work of improving community health and achieving health equity.



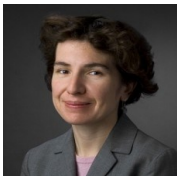
Arnesse Brown, of the South End Healthy Boston Coalition, is a native South Ender who has experienced the many changes in the neighborhood over the past decades. She works as the Corporate and Community Relations Manager at Tenants Development Corporation whose mission is to preserve and maintain safe and affordable housing for low and moderate income people of diverse backgrounds in the South End and Lower Roxbury.



Sara Coughlin is Director of the Charlestown Substance Abuse Coalition, a community-based coalition of residents, businesses, organizations, professionals, and advocates who work together to reduce substance abuse in Charlestown.



Denise De La Nueces, M.D. is Director of the Barbara McInnis House of the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Project, which provides 102 beds for 24 hour, cost-effective medical and recuperative services for patients with complex conditions like cancer, heart disease, pneumonia and high risk pregnancy.



Val Frias is on the Steering Committee of the Allston Brighton Health Collaborative which works to improve access to healthy foods, health care and prevention programs; youth opportunities; and access to open space; workforce training/jobs. Val is also the Associate Director of the Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation.



Chien-Chi Huang is the founder of the newly-formed Healthy Chinatown Alliance. Chien-Chi is also the founder and Executive Director of the Asian Women for Health, the one and only peer-led, community-based network in New England.



Cynthia Lewis is Lead Organizer at Mattapan United, a multi-year community engagement initiative for residents and allies pulling together to improve quality of life, unity, and community pride in Mattapan.



Lilly Marcelin is Founder and Executive Director of The Resilient Sisterhood Project, whose mission is to support and advocate for women of African descent who have a high rate of diseases of the reproductive system such as: uterine fibroids, endometriosis, infertility, polycystic ovary syndrome as well as breast, cervical, ovarian, and uterine cancers and to educate the health care system about these issues.



Ryan Ribiero is Director of Innovation and Community Health at Harbor Health Services, a community health agency committed to providing access to quality, comprehensive health care by reducing financial barriers and designing services and programs to strengthen the communities they serve. In Boston they operate a range of services in Mattapan and Dorchester.

Resident Engagement

Stand Against Racism Day

On April 25th, BACH participated in YWCA Boston's "Stand Against Racism" for the second year, which is a series of events to raise awareness around and work towards eliminating racism. The event was held in partnership with Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation, Fresh Food Generation and Boston Day and Evening Academy.

Over 50 people gathered at Dudley Library for a screening of *Soul Food Junkies*, a film that explores culture and the connection between food access and justice. This sparked discussion on how racism affects access to food in Boston communities and participants were able to learn from each other's' experiences.

The event showed community solidarity against racism and stimulated thought and dialogue that will help mobilize action and developing strategies to combat racism.

One strategy that came from the discussion was to host healthy eating events. Some participants are working with Healthier Roxbury Coalition to plan a series of health events in the fall focused on diabetes awareness.



Community residents engaged in discussion around *Soul Food Junkies*.

Resident Engagement

CCHERS Leadership Training

In May and April, BACH sponsored a training by Center for Community Health Education, Inc. CCHERS facilitated five trainings in which Roxbury and North Dorchester residents met to discuss community health needs and develop additional leadership skills.

The training provided a foundation for understating health inequities by covering social determinants of health, levels of racism, power structures and health data. Attendees discussed health issues specific to their community, and came up with both broad and specific ways to improve community health on a neighborhood and city-wide level.

Residents expressed a need for a community-wide, intergenerational sense of support and solidarity, improved access to opportunities for physical activity (e.g., green spaces, physical education), and improved relations with police.

Through their diversity of leadership positions, participants will spread the word throughout our communities and empower residents through knowledge and community coordination.

Resident Spotlight: Amy McCarthy, South Boston Collaborative Advisory Network (SBCAN)



SBCAN is one of our Champions for Strategic Issue #3 around trauma and resiliency. How does this issue connect to the South Boston neighborhood?

South Boston has high rates of overdoses and suicides, which can be traumatic for the families directly impacted, but also neighbors and other community members. There is also a deep history around busing and racism that people are still working through today. Trauma impacts every aspect of our lives and we tend to neglect the day-to-day aspect of it –there's a domino effect there. It can be influenced by socioeconomic factors too. For example, if I have a client that has a history of abuse, even going to look for a job can be difficult because he or she is unable to build trust and relationships. If you're not emotionally well or physically well in one area of your life, it can strongly affect other areas as well.

Something important to state is that the coalition is working to build a trauma response network. The goal is to streamline the community's response to a tragic event. More first responders would be trained to assist families in crisis, whether coordinating meals or identifying support for a therapeutic intervention.

What other issues are important for the community?

Gentrification is a big issue. There's been a lot of gentrification in the last 7-10 years. New people come into the neighborhood with the aim of making it more welcoming and they feel that they add value to the community, but it comes at a cost. People that have been in the neighborhood for a long time feel like they are being pushed out. It's also another way of looking at trauma and what it must be like for someone to be pushed from their home. There's a lot of work to be done on bridging the gap between residents (new and old) in order to live harmoniously and collaboratively as neighbors.

How does your work at The Home for Little Wanderers and South Boston families connect to SBCAN?

We are one of 32 community service agencies in the State funded by Mass Health to help children and families with mental health conditions. We use a wraparound approach, which means we bring friends, family members, neighbors and professionals together and creatively think about how to keep an individual safe. Part of that work is done with individual families and the other part is working to build connections within the community. The mission of SBCAN is related to our work and allows us to look at the connection between the mental health of our families and the well-being of the community. It's important to be part of SBCAN's effort to build a healthier community so that the families we serve have better outlets and supports.

If someone were thinking of moving to South Boston, what would you say to encourage them to move?

People in South Boston take care of one another and work to build a neighborhood atmosphere. It's like a village inside a city. It's a diverse neighborhood in many ways—racially, economically, religiously—and even with its history, there are people working together. Plus, it's great to have access to the beach and get the best of urban and suburban life.

Amy McCarthy is a Senior Intensive Care Coordinator at The Home for Little Wanderers Dorchester-South Boston Community Service Agency. Originally from Western Massachusetts, she moved to Boston to pursue a Master's Degree in Social Work from Wheelock College. Amy has lived in Dorchester for five years and one of her favorite things to do in the summer is to go to Castle Island and eat at Sullivan's in South Boston.



2014 BACH Leadership Training graduates.

Get Involved!

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