

Boston Alliance *for* Community Health



“The support from BACH is allowing us to dig further into the ways that transportation impacts health. The experience of fair access to the city’s transit resources is not shared equitably across racial lines. People of color, especially, youth and low income seniors who rely heavily on public transportation, fare far worse when it comes to the current public transportation system, and we recognize that as a public health and racial justice issue.”

~Margaret Noce, Coordinator of the JPC: Tree of Life/Arbol de Vida, BACH Affiliated Coalition and Community Grant Recipient

BACH *Notes & News*

January 2015

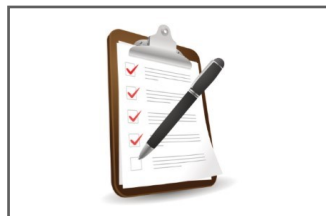
As we welcome in the New Year, BACH and its members reflect on the progress we've made and the excitement of moving forward to achieve our vision...

Since July, we strengthened existing partnerships with Brigham's and Woman's Hospital, through developing an innovative gaming tool, and with Healthier Roxbury Coalition and South Boston CAN, through collaborative community events. We also made new partnerships by offering almost \$150,000 in community grants to four initiatives that will impact our strategic issues. We are excited to be working with the Boston Public Health Commission on a newly-funded federal grant called, "Partnerships to Improve Community Health," which will bring \$1.8 million a year for three years to Boston for prevention of chronic diseases by changing policies, systems and environments. BACH is excited for what 2015 will bring us and look forward to engaging you all in the work ahead! Be sure to check us out on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#), where we discuss community health issues.

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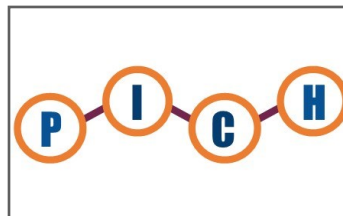
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- Resident Spotlight: Elaine Donovan, *Steering Committee member for BACH affiliated coalitions* Charlestown Substance Abuse Coalition (CSAC)

What's Happening in BACH?



2014 Annual Meeting

With the MAPP process coming to a close, BACH reflects on the past year's successes



PICH Grant Begins

BACH and BPHC partner on new federal grant around chronic disease prevention.



Resident Engagement

BACH and its partners continue to engage residents in diverse and new ways.

Resident Engagement

What Matters For Health

A gathering on Tuesday, December 9th at Whittier Street Health Center commemorated the finale of What Matters For Health—an online game that provided an opportunity for people who live and work in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Mission Hill, and Roxbury to share ideas about how to improve health and well-being in the community. Despite the torrential downpour, around 50 residents and community organizations arrived to review the game results and discuss strategies for future implementation.

Between September 29th and October 16th, almost 900 people signed up to play What Matters for Health. The game was first created because Brigham and Women's Hospital and its community planning partners will be funding programs to support health and well-being of the residents in the target neighborhoods.

Participants were asked 1) what would make Boston a healthier city to live in, 2) what changes would make their individual neighborhoods healthier to live in, and 3) what steps can be taken to make Boston a more racially equitable city.

What Matters For Health elicited a variety of responses:

- Game players felt that Boston could be a healthier place to live by focusing on integration across neighborhoods, support low income home buying programs, addressing neighborhood gentrification, investing in grassroots organizations and provide more resources for poor and homeless families
- Residents who specifically lived in the target neighborhood wanted increased access and opportunities to social determinants like healthy food, exercise, economic development, safe bike paths and public transportation. Increased community safety and cohesion, improved community and police officer relationships also came up in the game.
- Residents said that they felt Boston was "slightly equitable," and having more open dialogue, race explicit policies, equitable public transportation, and high quality public education would make Boston a more racially equitable.

BACH Annual Meeting 2014



Community leaders, residents and members at BACH Annual Meeting breakfast.

BACH has completed an extensive community health assessment process, Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP), with the Boston Public Health Commission and over 75 other community groups and organizations.

Boston Alliance for Community Health held its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 12, from 8 -10 am at the Reggie Lewis Athletic Center. Speakers at the Annual meeting included Dr. Huy, Nguyen, Interim Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission and Representative Jeffrey Sánchez, who touched on the achievements of BACH so far and the goals of BACH's future.

BACH has completed an extensive community health assessment process, Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP), with the Boston Public Health Commission and over 75 other community groups and organizations.

BPHC partnered with BACH in a newly-funded federal grant called "Partnerships Improving Community Health" which will bring \$1.8 million a year for three years to Boston for prevention of chronic diseases by changing policies, systems and environments by addressing tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke, physical activity and active transportation, and nutrition and access to healthy food.

BACH has built new partnerships over the past year with small and large organizations from all over the city which means that more people with diverse perspectives are engaged in improving the health of the city. Three of the essential public health services this diverse group prioritized were to inform, educate and empower people about health issues; mobilize community partnerships to

identify and solve health problems; and develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

BACH:

- Held a community education forum at Haley House on building community resilience in the face of trauma
- Created and distributed a questionnaire on community health to all Mayoral candidates, five of whom completed it, including Mayor Walsh.
- Sponsored the membership and attendance of two members of the Franklin Park/Franklin Field Dorchester Healthy Boston Coalition at the American Public Health Association annual meeting in Boston.
- Sponsored an educational forum in Fields Corner on the implementation of the medical marijuana law;
- Helped organize the new North Dorchester Coalition, which held "Speak Up," a two day cross neighborhood discussion about community health. The BACH staff and NDC has also helped coordinate the development of a chlamydia prevention and testing outreach program in North Dorchester and Roxbury funded by BPHC.
- Worked to reinvigorate the Allston Brighton Health Collaborative and the Healthy Chinatown Alliance;

(continued on following page)

Community Grants in Action

BACH has selected four community grantees to help stimulate collective action around the citywide strategic issues identified in MAPP.

In May 2014 BACH completed a comprehensive two year Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process, a citywide and neighborhood-level strategic planning process that engaged more than 2,000 residents and organization representatives. This Request for Proposals was designed to help stimulate collective action on these issues at a citywide level through collaborative initiatives that will build a solid foundation for continued work. The funding will be for a period of 11.5 months and grants ranged from \$25,200 to \$39,000.

1. [Jamaica Plain Tree of Life/Arbol de Vida Coalition](#) with its partners, the Jamaica Plain Justice and Equity Collaborative, Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) and the Center for Community Health Education Research and Services (CCHERS) will work to develop a unified transit justice policy and action agenda to be implemented with community health centers in Boston. Using a racial justice framework, collaborators will document the relationship between transit justice and increased access to opportunities, housing and preventative healthcare. This initiative will also pursue a clear mandate for the City of Boston to develop racial equitable goals in all areas of city governance that would be monitored by a newly created Racial Justice and Equity Commission.

2. [Neighbors Organizing Affordable Housing \(NOAH\)](#) in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and other organizations in East Boston will implement the Creative Placemaking for Public Health project to engage residents and empower them to drive the process of selecting sites, identifying short-term place interventions, and formulating creative, low-cost methods for implementation. NOAH believes that residents have a critical role to play in helping to find workable solutions for their neighborhoods. This grant will allow them to build their capacity to engage, educate and obtain meaningful input from diverse and non-English speaking, low and moderate income residents, whose voices are often not heard. This resiliency can influence determinants of health, such as access to open space and exposure to traffic injuries.

“This grant will allow [NOAH] to build their capacity to engage, educate and obtain meaningful input from diverse and non-English speaking, low and moderate income residents, whose voices are often not heard.”

3. [Center for Community Health Education Research and Services \(CCHERS\)](#) in partnership with many agencies including BACH-affiliated coalitions, community development corporations, community organizations and organizations from the African–American, Dominican, Cape Verdean, and Somali communities will provide training to neighborhood coalitions affiliated with BACH as well as 3 community development corporations, and 3 community based organizations utilizing their tested and applied curriculum, the *Critical MASS*



Community residents engaged in an activity during a CCHERS training for *Critical MASS Toolkit: Taking Community ACTION on Health Disparities*.

Toolkit: Taking Community ACTION on Health Disparities. The emphasis will be on promoting health equity in communities through increased understanding of the social, political and economic determinants of health such as education, employment, and transportation with the purpose of broadening and strengthening coalition efforts in these areas.

4. [Youth HUB](#) in partnership with The Boston Project Ministries, ABCD, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation, BOLD Teens, Codman Square Neighborhood Council, Tech Boston Academy and the Millennium Ten Initiative will develop Youth Cohorts which will focus on improving youth employment and health outcomes by building strong interpersonal supports starting in Codman Square, Dorchester and then replicated in Mattapan and Roxbury. Participants will receive education, exposure, practice, and coaching in job-seeking, career planning and overall professionalism in order to improve their employability in reaching career goals.

These Youth Cohorts will consist of 8 – 10 youths and 2-3 adult coaches to cultivate peer, adult, and community support for young people, as well as provide support for participation in

the “Youth HUB Community”— an ongoing social network that fosters youth development, employment, and overall health and well-being. 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.

Making Healthy Connections in Your Neighborhood

The Community Engagement and Membership Committee of BACH is changing the way we do business! Partnering organizations will be offering trainings and learning opportunities during the first hour of our monthly meetings.

The Community Engagement and Membership Committee (CEMC) was created by BACH to address strategic health issues facing Boston. CEMC's mission is to diversify community partnerships and increase resident involvement in BACH's advocacy and health planning through education, communication, and collaboration. Its members are actively working to create effective ways to share information on the successes, challenges, and resources of community members, coalitions, and BACH affiliates; provide educational opportunities for residents, coalitions, and organizations about community health, health equity, and systemic racism; and promote community engagement and strengthen relationships between neighborhoods throughout Boston to improve health outcomes, and empower residents to advocate for community wellness.

This year we are trying something new! Partnering organizations will be offering trainings and learning opportunities during the first hour of CEMC's monthly meetings, which will be followed by a community meetings where residents can find different ways to have a positive impact on their community and get involved with BACH. Attendees will have the chance to learn about systemic issues that impact the health of Boston residents in the context of barriers people have to accessing resources about the topic, the impact it can have on everyday life, and current ways residents can advocate for these issues.

“To generate excitement about our new training sessions, CEMC and partners will be hosting Making Healthy Connections, three resource fairs to give residents the opportunity to learn more about BACH, healthy behaviors, and systemic issues that impact Bostonians.”

At BACH we have a vision of “a Boston that is vibrant, just, and equitable, where all people who live, work, play pray, and learn here have optimal health and well-being and enjoy a supportive environment and a sense of safety and belonging – regardless of who they are, what neighborhood they live in, or where they come from.” We believe that educating residents about these issues is an important step to moving forward with our vision.

Topics covered at our monthly meetings can be found below:

Month	Topic
January 22	Navigating Healthcare
February 26	Stress Management
March 26	Financial Stability
April 23	Healthy Affordable Foods
May 28	Domestic Violence
June 25	Exercising in your Community
July 23	LGBTQ Issues
August 27	Immigrant Leadership
September 24	Tenant Rights
October 22	Women's Health

For each training that residents attend their name will be entered into a raffle to win prizes at the end of the year. Possible raffle prizes include but are not limited to store and restaurant gift cards, MBTA vouchers, gym or yoga studio membership, a garden plot, hubway passes, and a bike/helmet set. Be sure to check our web

site for up to date meeting locations.

To generate excitement about our new training sessions, CEMC and partners will be hosting Making Healthy Connections, three resource fairs to give residents the opportunity to learn more about BACH, healthy behaviors, and systemic issues that impact Bostonians. We want to give people an opportunity to get involved with their communities and feel connected to organizations and coalitions in their neighborhoods that can help them as a way to improve coordination and integration of healthcare and community based prevention activities and services. Making Healthy Connections is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4th, in East Boston, Monday, March 9th, in South End and Tuesday, March 17th, in Mattapan from 5:30pm to 8:00pm. We hope to reach residents in each of these different geographical regions. Stayed tuned and visit our website for updates!

Raffle prizes at the event may include but are not limited to gift cards, sports tickets, food from local restaurants, and gym or yoga studio membership. Food and childcare will be provided at each event!



Some of our community partners for “Making Healthy Connections.”

Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) Grant Begins in Boston



BACH and BPHC partner on new federal grant around chronic disease prevention.

In September, BACH received the good news from the Centers for Disease Control and Management (CDC) that the Boston Public Health Commission, in partnership with BACH, will provide \$1.8 million a year for three years to Boston for prevention of chronic diseases by changing policies, systems and environments by addressing

- tobacco use/exposure to second hand smoke by greatly increasing the number of multifamily housing developments that adopt and implement a smoke-free policy
- physical activity by increasing active transit (walking and biking opportunities) and
- nutrition and access to healthy food and beverages

In addition to many of the BACH affiliated coalitions, a broad range of partners will be working on this project ranging from the Liveable Streets Alliance, to the Boston Public Schools, to WalkBoston, to the Black Ministerial Alliance. The resources will also help BACH and its coalitions build a stronger network of resident ambassadors who will be able to advocate for change on the neighborhood level.

North Dorchester and Mattapan were also selected as target neighborhoods for this project. Community coalitions, organizations and other partners will receive additional funding toward the physical activity and nutrition PSE's.

We are proud of the working relationship between BPHC and BACH who worked together to complete the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships process the results of which will be part of Boston's Community Health Improvement Plan and positioned well to implement the PICH grant.

BACH Annual Meeting 2014 (continued)

- Sponsored a training series at Madison Park Housing Development by the Center for Community Health Research Education and Services (CCHERS) for community residents in Roxbury and Dorchester focused on a greater understanding of the social determinants of health and skills to address those issues.
- Actively helped design and do outreach for "What Matters for Health", an on-line game that was played for three weeks this fall to help prioritize the use of community health funding that will be available in a year or so from Brigham and Women's Hospital.
- Over 800 people registered to play the game.
- Organized a first-ever gathering of leaders from Massachusetts' Community Health Network areas and hospital community benefits staff
- Started a training and consultation process with BACH leadership to improve our ability to talk about and address race and racism;
- Worked with the Boston Public Health Commission to plan and submit the successful Partnerships Improving Community Health" federal grant Dr. Nguyen described which will be a lot of the work we do this coming year.

Resident Engagement

Roxbury Rising Against Diabetes

The Roxbury YMCA soccer field was the place for community celebration and great fun on Saturday, October 25th. The YMCA hosted "Celebrating The Fruits Of Our Ocean: Seafood Throwdown," the culminating event of Roxbury Rising Against Diabetes— a month long series of free events to raise awareness about the prevention and management of Type-2 Diabetes organized by the Healthier Roxbury Coalition.

The Seafood Throwdown featured a head to head cooking competition between two local chefs who presented dishes made with fresh, local fish. Event organizers wanted to give residents the opportunity to taste and learn about how to prepare local, sustainable seafood. Community spirit was in the air as attendees gathered to line dance and participate in Zumba sessions to get their bodies moving with the emcee, Boston City Councillor, Tito Jackson. Almost 300 residents and 50 volunteers were in attendance. Volunteers from UMass Boston played a game of soccer to help get kids active and by the end of the day parents and elders left with their arms full of community resources and raffle prizes.

Healthier Roxbury Coalition, a broad-based collaborative of community leaders, healthcare providers, social service agencies and the Boston Public Health Commission. Healthier Roxbury is supported by Massachusetts Health Quality Partners ' Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality Initiative with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



RRAD attendees line dancing with City Councillor Tito Jackson.

Resident Engagement

Post Traumatic Stress Management and Psychological First Aid

On Oct 14th and 15th the Boston Teacher's Union Hall was filled with Boston Public School Teachers, Healthcare Professionals, and residents from all over the city to participate in the Post Traumatic Stress Management and Psychological First Aid 2-day training session. South Boston Collaborative Advisory Network (SBCAN) and Boston Alliance for Community Health (BACH), and the MA Department of Mental Health presented a free, two day certificate course for school and community based responders on these important issues. Collaborators of the training sought to create a community based training in trauma-informed care to arm responders with the tools to assist young people in the aftermath of traumatic incidents such as suicide, overdoses, homicide, accidents, and violence.

Led by Dr Robert Macy and Courtney Grey, attendees learned about the PTSM model of group intervention and practiced scenarios to hone their skills at dealing with large scale trauma situations. They also discussed Psychological First Aid, which seeks to decrease the initial amount of stress caused by traumatic occurrences and help victims adopt coping mechanisms to build resiliency.

There is growing concern over the increased number of traumatized people in Boston, especially children, who are sometimes forced into a state of hypervigilance that can be triggered by benign stimuli. Walsh said, "This hypervigilance in communities makes it harder for them to nurture each other and tap into the natural healing processes, which include self-care." BACH and other community partners were excited to provide this training to the community once again.



PTSM Training at Boston Teacher's Union Hall.

Resident Spotlight: Elaine Donovan, Charlestown Substance Abuse Coalition (CSAC)



[A lot of the work Charlestown Substance Abuse Coalition does can be connected with Strategic Issue #2 around improving the coordination and integrating of healthcare and community-based prevention activities and services. How does this issue connect to the Charlestown neighborhood?](#)

I'm very aware of the strategic issues that are being worked on in Boston and Charlestown. I think Charlestown does and will continue to benefit greatly by the improvement and coordination and integration of healthcare and community based prevention activities and services. For far too long we've had an epidemic here with opiate overdose rates that have crippled our wonderful community. That is what prompted a group of people to get together to start our Substance Abuse Coalition.

[What are some other issues or concerns that are important for the Charlestown community?](#)

Besides substance abuse, there are many issues in Charlestown that are of great concern to its residents. Our community has expressed concern over our Autism rates, rates of cancer, and many smoking related health issues. Underage alcohol use and abuse as well as healthy eating habits are also areas of great concern that our community hopes to continue to address in the future.

[Can you talk about one of CSAC's events or projects of which you are most proud?](#)

Having been involved with CSAC for ten years, I've seen and been part of many projects and changes. The ones I'm most proud of however are some things that may seem simple to others, but coming from a small close knit community, these are quite large to us. The biggest thing back in the earlier days was simply getting people to the table to talk about our substance abuse issues. CSAC not only talked about it but moved forward to do whatever we could to reach out to users/abusers as well as loved ones of these people! We made a Recovery Guide of all of the services that Charlestown has to offer for families that we put in doorways and had local restaurants deliver with their food. About six years ago we started a vigil in Hayes Square to remember those whose lives have been lost due to substance abuse. CSAC pushed to have a Drug Court in Charlestown where people who are arrest-

ed for drug related (nonviolent crimes) have a chance to meet with the judge once a week to check in and get drug tested to hopefully get clean and move on to become productive members of society. We've had many speakers come to Charlestown to speak about different issues concerning our community, and every year we get together to plan activities for Recovery Month. CSAC is working now in groups on different subjects such as, family support, overdose prevention, and policing efforts as small task forces and will come together in a few months to bring all of our ideas together.

[If someone were thinking of moving to Charlestown, what would you say to encourage them to move?](#)

The great thing about our community is its ability to come together when faced with an issue. The feeling of togetherness and belonging is a comfort that can only be described as "being home". If I were to speak to someone who was thinking about moving here, I'd tell them that if they wanted to be a part of a community that is like a family, where residents look out for one another and come together through sports organizations, school and social activities and the like, then they would feel welcome by all. We're one square mile of small and large families, some third and fourth generation, who love this place so much that they could think of living nowhere else!

[What's the best thing about Charlestown this holiday season?](#)

The best thing about Charlestown this holiday season is the sense of community and the town's festive decorations from the wreaths on every light post, to the blow up Christmas Scenery in Thomson Square!

Elaine Donovan was born and raised in Charlestown, and is very proud to call it home. She has been a member of CSAC Steering Committee for approximately ten years, and is honored to be part of a group of residents, businesses, organizations and professionals who work together to reduce substance abuse in Charlestown. She goes above and beyond volunteering her time, attending community events, and supporting the youth and families in Charlestown.

Get Involved!

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