

The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts  
**Health Care & Health Promotion Synergy Initiative**  
**Project Impact Summaries** (as of February 1, 2017)

**Oral Health**

- ❖ Central Massachusetts Oral Health Initiative (CMOHI) *Nov. 2000 – June 2011*
- ❖ Oral Health Initiative of North Central Massachusetts (OHINCM) *Jan. 2001 – June 2008*

The Health Foundation focused nearly \$6 million on the introduction and expansion of dental services for vulnerable populations in the Worcester area and North Central Massachusetts via the Central Mass Oral Health Initiative (CMOHI) and the Oral Health Initiative of North Central Mass (OHINCM).

- A partnership with Health Care For All’s statewide Oral Health Advocacy Task Force advocated for public policies which removed barriers that had prevented dentists in private practice from accepting Medicaid. At the outset of the projects, fewer than ten dentists in Central Massachusetts were accepting Medicaid; by the conclusion of the projects, nearly 200 dentists accepted Medicaid, boosting participation rates to 50%. In 2014 MassHealth reported that 95% of their members have access to at least two dental providers within five miles of their homes.
- Three regional community health centers (Edward M. Kennedy, Fitchburg and Family Health Center of Worcester) have implemented an Advanced Education in General Dentistry through Lutheran Medical Center (Brooklyn, NY) in conjunction with the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers.
- Dental capacity at the community health centers in Worcester was nearly doubled as a result of CMOHI. Over the years CMOHI was funded, the health centers provided more than 335,000 dental visits.
- A community health center opened dental clinics at three locations in North Central Massachusetts which provide over 25,000 visits per year and provide preventive dental care at 43 public schools.
- A fully accredited dental hygiene program was established at Mount Wachusett Community College, providing skills necessary to become a registered dental hygienist/certified dental assistant. Community Health Center in Fitchburg serves as a practicum site for the dental assisting students and since 2005 students have provided dental hygiene treatment to thousands of patients.

**Behavioral Health in Pre-Schools**

- ❖ Together For Kids (TFK) *May 2001 – June 2009*

The Health Foundation’s funding of Together For Kids (TFK) totaled \$1.8 million for the development of a mental health consultation model to aid the social-emotional development of preschoolers in child care settings who presented with challenging behaviors.

- The TFK model demonstrated that with an average of 24 hours of direct service, children’s behavior and developmental skills were improved; preschool expulsions were reduced to near zero; and parents reported greater satisfaction with their preschools.
- The United Way provided \$401,000 and The Daniels Foundation \$24,000 for TFK.
- TFK was one of six early childhood mental health programs chosen from around the country to be studied by Georgetown University’s Center for Child and Human Development.
- From FY’08 through FY’16, state funding for mental health consultation in pre-school settings totaled more than \$10 million. As of the 2017 state budget, this line item was consolidated with several other line items which means it can no longer be tracked.
- Under the CMS Section 1115 waiver that was approved for Massachusetts in November 2016, the Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) Community Service Agencies have been approved as community partners for the Accountable Care Organizations that are being established. This means that services will continue to be provided as they have been under the CBHI.

**Child Abuse**

- ❖ Child Abuse Prevention and Protection Collaborative *Jan. 2001 – Nov. 2007*

The Health Foundation provided nearly \$2 million in funding for this collaborative effort which advocated for legislative efforts to address shaken baby syndrome and provide for sexual assault nurse examiners.

- Massachusetts law now requires that all birthing parents receive education about shaken baby syndrome at the hospital.
- The state continues to fund sexual assault nurse examiners at child advocacy centers throughout Massachusetts, funding about \$3.4 million per year from FY’11 to FY’15. Funding averaged about \$4.5 million in FY’16 and FY’17, totaling almost \$25 million to date.

### **Ending Adult Chronic Homelessness**

#### **❖ Home Again *Jan. 2007 – June 2013***

Home Again received over \$2.2 million from The Health Foundation to end adult chronic homelessness in Worcester using the “housing first” approach.

- Home Again housed 108 individuals in scattered and clustered sites around Worcester.
- Central Mass Housing Alliance/Continuum of Care prioritized and secured housing subsidies for the adult chronic homeless population in Worcester.
- Home Again documented the efficacy of “housing first” approach and the state transitioned its housing supports from sheltering to “housing first.”
- In January 2011, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness recognized Worcester as the first city of its size to effectively end chronic adult homelessness.
- Ongoing funding for case management/community supports has been provided statewide by all Medicaid behavioral health providers since 2011.
- Massachusetts received a CMS Innovations planning grant in 2011 to address serving “dual eligibles” with Medicaid and Medicare funds for vulnerable populations, including 18 of the adult chronic homeless who were housed by Home Again. This implementation began October 1, 2013.
- Funding for occupancy costs through HUD has totaled over \$3.5 million, since FY’08.
- Under the CMS Section 1115 waiver that was approved for Massachusetts in November 2016, case management services will continue to be available to ‘dual eligibles’ and all MassHealth recipients will be eligible for the services from July 1, 2017-June 30, 2022.

### **Ending Hunger**

#### **❖ Hunger-Free & Healthy *Jan. 2007 – Dec. 2012***

Hunger-Free & Healthy received \$1.5 million in funding from The Health Foundation for a variety of approaches to improve local access to healthy food and to reduce hunger in Worcester.

- A partnership with the Worcester Public Schools improved the quality of meals offered to 25,000 students.
- Hunger-Free & Healthy participants worked for the passage of the School Nutrition Bill that initiated the creation of a statewide Food Policy Council.
- Project partner Project Bread hired a community outreach worker to visit various food pantries across Worcester, improving access to SNAP (food stamps) by enabling eligible individuals to enroll in the program. Between May 2009 and December 2011, the outreach worker conducted outreach at 38 different sites and submitted 552 SNAP applications on behalf of the clients.
- Through a partnership with the Regional Environmental Council, 22 community and school gardens were developed, bringing the total number of gardens in Worcester to 60.

### **Children’s Mental Health**

#### **❖ Choices *Jan. 2007 – Dec. 2011***

#### **❖ The Winchendon Project *Jan. 2007 – Dec. 2012***

The Health Foundation provided \$2.2 million in funding for Choices and The Winchendon Project. These projects focused on access to mental health services and the prevention of substance abuse among adolescents, and joined the statewide Children’s Mental Health Campaign (CMHC) to advocate for issues pertinent to children’s mental health.

- In 2001, The Children’s Mental Health Campaign (CMHC) was successful in advocating for the passing of Chapter 321 – An Act Relative to Children’s Mental Health. Major provisions of this legislation included early identification for children with mental health needs, the creation of a task force to assess the capacity of schools to deliver behavioral health services and make recommendations to promote effective delivery; improved insurance coverage for children with mental health needs; and the restructuring of the Commonwealth’s provision, coordination, and oversight of children’s behavioral health services.
- “An Act Relative to Safe and Supportive Schools” legislation was passed in July 2014. The law requires that schools develop action plans to create safe and supportive environments. The Winchendon Project staff participated in the Safe and Supportive Schools Coalition which played an important role in developing this legislation.
- The Winchendon Project integrated behavioral health services at Murdock Middle High School through the school-based health center.
- Under the CMS Section 1115 waiver that was approved for Massachusetts in November 2016, case management services will continue to be provided for MassHealth recipients which will mean additional support for many of these children from July 1, 2017-June 30, 2022.

## Economic Self-Sufficiency

### ❖ A Better Life *Jan. 2011 – Present*

The Health Foundation has provided more than \$2.8 million to The Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) to enable families to achieve economic self-sufficiency and eventually move out of public housing. WHA aims to break the persistent cycle of poverty and public housing reliance, as well as transform the lives of its residents with comprehensive wrap-around services that promote and sustain a strong and self-sufficient family unit. As of January 2017, ABL currently serves 247 participants (and their families).

- In July 2014 “An Act to Foster Economic Independence” was approved. It included a provision that required the Mass Dept. of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) to allow the WHA to operate A Better Life (ABL) in its state-subsidized housing properties, which represent about 20% (493) of its units. In April 2015, DHCD approved the administrative details to implement the work/education requirement.

Outcomes through November 2016 indicate that ABL is effectively helping residents move to self-sufficiency:

- In the past 18 months, WHA has placed 98 individuals in full employment, with a 76% retention rate for the first year.
- 43% were unemployed, compared to almost 65% at time of enrollment.
- Overall work hours increased by 73% since enrollment.
- Overall income increased by 85% since enrollment.
- Total amount saved in escrow and personal savings increased 10-fold since enrollment.
- Clients enrolled more than 2 years reduced their debt by more than 22%, overall debt has been reduced by 11%.
- 32% were enrolled in an educational program compared to 11% at time of enrollment.
- Of those currently enrolled in school, more than 37% are pursuing an associates or bachelor’s degree.
- DHCD has budgeted \$500,000 to support the first-year of statewide implementation of ABL beginning July 1, 2017.
- Recent advocacy efforts in December 2016 have resulted in support from Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) for legislation that would allow states that operate self-sufficiency programs in their state properties to operate these programs in their federal properties as well. It is expected that this legislation will be passed in the next several months, after which the WHA will be able to operate ABL in all of its housing units.
- Under the CMS Section 1115 waiver that was approved for Massachusetts in November 2016, case management services will continue to be provided for MassHealth recipients which will mean additional support for ABL participants.

## Prisoner Reentry

### ❖ Worcester Initiative For Supported Reentry (WISR); Wiser Men; Wiser Women *Jan. 2011 – Present*

The Health Foundation provided over \$2.3 million to Advocates, Inc. for WISR, Wiser Men and Wiser Women to reduce recidivism among men and women who were formerly incarcerated, thereby improving public safety and public health. Key elements in achieving this goal include access to social and health services, housing placement and employment readiness and job placement. Advocates is also doing extensive advocacy work with state officials to ensure the sustainability of reentry programming.

- In July 2016, Advocates secured a commitment from MassHealth / Mass Behavioral Health Partnership to provide healthcare and community support services (i.e., case management) as post-release reentry services. Approximately 97% of those incarcerated are eligible for MassHealth.
- WISR was successful in advocating for Senate Bill #2021, “An Act relative to motor vehicle licenses suspension,” which was signed into law in March 2016 thereby repealing the automatic suspension of drivers licenses and accompanying fine for people convicted of a drug crime.
- WISR has provided information for the Senate’s proposed criminal justice reform agenda and has worked with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to change the work done through the Community Corrections Centers and increase the focus on reentry. Governor Baker and the legislature are awaiting the release of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative report by the Council of State Governments anticipated in January 2017 before taking action.
- Work has also been done with sheriffs in Essex and Middlesex Counties to create reentry programs in those jurisdictions.

Findings from a November 2016 Three-Year Post-Release Evaluation Report from Brandeis University indicate:

- The recidivism rate among WISR participants three-years post-release was 20.8%, a reduction of 47% relative to a historical comparison group. This represents a savings of more than \$375,000 for a 59% return on investment based on one-year incarceration costs.
- 96% of participants were housed immediately upon release, and the remaining 4% were housed within one day of release.
- 97% of participants in need of MassHealth insurance were enrolled. 93% of participants referred to substance abuse treatment services accessed them and 75% of participants referred to mental health services accessed those services.
- Among the 152 participants, 62% were employed post-release and 71% were continuously employed for one year or longer.

WISR contracted for post-release reentry services with the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office who in 2014 received a \$750,000 grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance for Wiser Men, a region-wide reentry program, one of only seven awarded nationally. The Foundation provided \$375,000 for the cash match for this project. The goal is to reduce recidivism by 50% in five years. Under this grant, 80 participants were recruited and consented into the program from the Worcester County House of Correction. A region wide reentry strategic plan has been created and will support opportunities for resource sharing and local-level systems change initiatives that can be leveraged to reduce recidivism.

Advocates has adapted the WISR model for women and concluded testing “Wiser Women” in December 2016. It is anticipated that data will be helpful for statewide implementation.

## Healthcare Access

### ❖ Improving Access to Health *Jan. 2011 – Dec. 2015*

The Health Foundation provided over \$900,000 to improve access to health services. Milford Regional Medical Center (MRMC) identified concerns about access to primary care in their service area and the impact it was having on their emergency department. MRMC brought together a group of community organizations that determined that a community health center would improve local access. The Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center, already seeing several hundred patients from the Milford area at their Worcester and Framingham sites, agreed to construct a satellite in Milford.

- Funding from The Health Foundation and together with \$400,000 from the MetroWest Health Foundation enabled the construction of a satellite health center in Milford, which opened in March 2014. As of December 2015, more than 3,800 patients (over 13,000 visits) had been seen for primary care services. Of these, approximately 500 patients have transferred from the health centers in either Framingham or Worcester, freeing up access at those sites.

## Transition-Age Homelessness

### ❖ The Compass Project *Jan. 2011 – Dec. 2013*

### ❖ Unaccompanied Homeless Transition Age Youth (TAY) Pilot Project in Worcester *Sept. 2014 – Present*

The Health Foundation provided approximately \$1 million to fund The Compass Project to prevent youth and young adult homelessness. A network of providers in Worcester who serve youth and young people who are at risk of homelessness was created and is continuing.

- Under the CMS Section 1115 waiver that was approved for Massachusetts in November 2016, case management services will continue to be provided for MassHealth recipients which will mean additional support for many of these young people from July 1, 2017-June 30, 2022.

The Foundation also provided \$30,000 in seed funding to the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) to partner with the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) and the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) to pilot a project for 40 youth focused on housing, employment, primary care, behavioral health care and case management services.

- Support services from SMOC and MBHP is estimated at \$300,000 per year, including \$187,000 for 40 project-based housing vouchers (MRVPs).
- In May 2016, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development approved the release of 40 MRVPs.
- MHSA committed \$54,125 in 2014 to be used to support this pilot, including the evaluation component by Brandeis University.
- MBHP will be reimbursed by MassHealth for providing primary care, behavioral health care and case management services.
- SMOC began intake of TAY in July 2016 at the Triage Center and will rapidly house them and assist them in gaining employment through SMOC's Ready, Willing & Able employment arm.