



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# Hampden County Public Health Nurse Assistance

An innovative public health service delivery effort that strengthens local public health



Catalyst for Regional Progress

**PVPC**

**Pioneer Valley Planning Commission**

Community Development Department

Municipal Collaboration / Shared Service program

[www.pvpc.org](http://www.pvpc.org)

## Introduction

The focus of the Hampden County Shared Public Health Nurse Assistance Program is to assist municipalities in improving local public health by maximizing efficiency through providing shared public health nursing service opportunity. The initial goal of this program is to utilize the skill-sets of one local public health nurse to provide supplemental services to participating communities in the most efficient and cost effective way possible and build the capacity of local health departments to engage in cross-sector work and improve community health. Through the development of this program within the last two (2) years, a total of twelve (12) Hampden County municipalities opt into the program and signed Memorandums of Agreements to receive a series of Public Health Nursing services in which in some cases may have not otherwise have been able to provide. As we move forward with sustainability beyond the grant funds that helped put this program together, this plan provides the operating breakdown and cost for services per community for local governments to consider for Fiscal Year 2016.

## Organizational Design and Governance

### **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) responsibilities:**

The PVPC will be the lead for the financial management of all funds and invoices related to the operations of the Shared Public Health Nurse Assistance program, including ensuring that financial management and expenditures meet state and federal statutes as well as PVPC's

financial policies and practices. Lastly, the PVPC will provide technical assistance and facilitation throughout the shared service program which will include convening communities and fostering cross-sector collaboration.

### **Ludlow Board of Health:**

The Shared Public Health Nurse will be an employee through the Town of Ludlow and supervised by Ludlow's Director of Nurses. It will be the responsibility of the Ludlow Board of Health Department to provide administrative oversight and also be responsible for the retention and supervision of the Shared Public Health Nurse with input from the Oversight Committee and the PVPC.

### **Oversight Committee:**

The Oversight Committee will be consisted of local health department representatives and town officials. Representatives that will service on the Oversight Committee will be appointed by officials that oversee the local public health functions within their municipality's. The Oversight Committee is responsible for overseeing the overall direction of the shared service program and serve as an advisory working group towards the further development and implementation of the program. This includes but is not limited to: developing goals and setting priorities; adopting regulations; drafting operating budgets, etc.

See **Appendix A** to review the organizational chart that illustrates the structure of the program.



## Shared Public Health Nurse Services

Under the advisory direction of the Oversight Committee and the supervision of Director of Nurses in Ludlow, the Shared Public Health Nurse will provide supplemental public health nursing assistance to the participating municipalities which will include but not limited to: public health education; disease surveillance and reporting on MAVEN; assistance with setting up, administering and billing of flu clinics and flu vaccines; and establishing blood pressure screening clinics.

## Recognized Challenges and Solutions

The formation of any new regional service is inherently a challenge especially in Massachusetts where local control is illustrated by the people's strong sense of independence and self-reliant fortitude. Some of the challenges include the complexity of fostering cross-collaboration between municipalities, the different level of funding and service delivery for local public health services, and the fear of losing local control. The following highlights these challenges and further describes what has been done to overcome these challenges.

**Cross-Collaboration:** One of the greatest challenges is working collaboratively across town and city borders in order to maximize capacity and resources in meeting the basic function of a public health department. The development and implementation of the Shared Public Health Nurse Assistance program benefited deeply from the many years of coordination of the 19-member (cities and towns) Hampden County Public Health Coalition. The success of the Coalition's collaborative efforts for the last eight (8) years focusing on emergency preparedness and response had greatly helped the further collaboration through this program since the relationship has been strongly established since 2006. And with funding through the Executive Office of Administration and Finance's Community Innovation Challenge Grant, we have been able to build a pilot program that has been put into practice for the last two (2) years.

**Public Health Differences across the Region:** **Table 1** on the next page illustrates the participating communities that represent the range of urban, suburban, and rural communities in Hampden County. This is a unique but challenging opportunity for regionalization, because these cities and towns fund public health service delivery at different levels. There are small towns with local public health services provided by all-volunteer boards of health, some with only part-time health agents, and larger communities with full-time staff, yet under-resourced health departments.

**Table 1**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Population</b>
Blandford	1,233
Granville	1,566
East Longmeadow	15,720
Ludlow	21,103
Palmer	12,140
Southwick	9,502
Brimfield	3,609
Monson	8,560
Hampden	5,139
Montgomery	838
Tolland	485

Many of the area's smaller communities have no staff or rely upon contract personnel to provide services. Larger municipalities may have more full-time staff, but still face challenges associated with limited staff time and budgets. This existing demographic is unique to the Hampden County and affects the efficiency of public health. Realizing these constraints that contribute to our County's poor health, this innovative shared public health nurse service program allows communities to pull in resources and defeat some of these challenges.

**Skepticism:** It has been PVPC's experience recognizing that any shared municipal service project faces skepticism about potentially losing local control that may result from regionalizing and/or of sharing services or professional staff. There is also skepticism of professional staff losing their jobs through regional efforts. To overcome this challenge, it's apparent to ensure that Board of Health staff and public health professionals stay involved through the planning and decision making process of the program through the Oversight Committee. Overall however, the sole mission of the

program is to assist municipalities with the Hampden County in improving the service delivery of local public health by ensuring that they have the support necessary to effectively provide nursing services.

### **The Benefit**

The implementation of this cost-effective local public health service delivery effort utilizes and strengthens some of Hampden County's local public health existing capacities. This program offers Hampden County's local public health departments with assistance on a regional basis that are otherwise not provided. Building on the noted success of this project and the realization of the continued need in the local communities for public health nursing services, this cost effective and efficient delivery of service program is available and ready to contribute to improving the overall health in the County for an annual fee.

*Hampden County ranks lowest among Massachusetts' Counties in both health factors and subsequent health outcomes according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings*

## Fee Structure

### Budget of the Program

Item	Salary	Mileage
Shared Public Health Nurse	Annually - \$17,304.38	Average Monthly - \$210.00 Average Annually - \$2,520
Ludlow Host Fee	\$4,000	
PVPC Admin Oversight	\$4,800	
<b>OVERALL SHARED COST TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$28,624.35</u></b>	

### Fee per Municipality

The graph below shows what the total cost is per community to participate in the Shared Public Health Nurse program, totaling \$28,624.35. The total cost per community was identified through a formula using the individual community's Equalized Valuation. An EQV is the determination of an estimate of the full and fair cash value of all property.

**Note:** These fees are subject to change every year pending on the total number of municipalities that opt in to participate and the cost for services.

### Fee Structure by Municipality

Municipality	Cost
Granville	\$962.35
Tolland	\$876.48
Blandford	\$804.92
Montgomery	\$501.49
Southwick	\$4,697.83
East Longmeadow	\$8,530.64
Hampden	\$2,645.46
Monson	\$3,572.89
Palmer	\$4,185.45
Brimfield	\$1,846.84
<b>*Ludlow (lead community)</b>	<b>\$12,521.76</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28,624.35</b>



\*This cost is **not** included in the total. This is the benefit cost for the shared nurse and is covered by the Town of Ludlow.

## Appendix A

### Hampden County Shared Public Health Nurse Assistance Program Organizational Chart

