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## MHOA Winter 2021 Newsletter

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### Message from Sigalle Reiss, MHOA President

It has been a year since we started to see the first travel cases of COVID-19 in our communities. It has been a tough year, and as someone in the trenches with you, I thank you for your hard work and dedication.

Norwood's police chief recently made a thoughtful comment that I think echoes the sentiments of most of our municipal colleagues: "Public Safety works hard to protect lives, but no one works harder than Public Health, and they are saving many lives with their work."

I know there are many residents and municipal colleagues that appreciate the effort, dedication and hard work all of us have put forth over the last year.

As for some of our challenges, MHOA and CLPH have been advocating over the last year to have a voice at the state level with policy development and program implementation. We are equally frustrated and driven to continue the effort, and advocate for local public health. I want to thank Jana Ferguson and the team at DPH for their partnership and assistance. While implementation of policy and programs has not always been what we hoped, I do believe DPH is advocating for local health to the best of their ability.

Meanwhile, we took a hit with Sam Wong leaving his position at Framingham and stepping away from local public health. Sam is a wonderful person and a credit to our profession, and our plan is to make sure he doesn't go too far away, remaining a key presence for us in some form.

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**Thank you for your hard work through these unprecedented times. I'm looking forward to a time when we can gather and swap pandemic stories.**

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### [Toolkit and Resources to Encourage COVID-19 Vaccination](#)

Visit [this site](#) for a toolkit of materials available in multiple languages to encourage vaccination in your communities.

- Materials include: a guide to hosting a forum on COVID-19 vaccination, fliers, post-vaccination information, and social media graphics
- Materials will continue to be updated!

Webinar available on Thursday, February 11th from 9-10 am or Tuesday, February 16th from 12-1 pm

- Learn how to encourage community-based organizations to conduct education sessions on the COVID-19 vaccine
- Find answers to FAQs and about other available materials on mass.gov
- Find out what a DPH "Vaccine Ambassador" is as well as how to request support from one

Register [here](#)

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**Click here for information  
on featured webinars for  
LBOH**

Check out the MHOA page for details and  
registration info

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# MASSDEP MHOA VIRTUAL SEMINAR

Topics include: DEP updates, drinking water, copper and lead testing in schools, Title 5 updates, Q&A with the Commissioner, and more!



Day 1 -- Feb 24th  
Day 2 -- March 3rd  
Sign up for day 1, day 2, or both

Click [here](#) to register

CEUs Earned:  
Day 1: RS, REHS and CHO – 3.5 CEUs  
Day 2: RS, REHS and CHO – 3.5 CEUs  
Day 2: SE/SI – 2 CEUs

## LPHI Offers Redesigned MA PHIT Housing Course

Read [this article](#) written by an APHVC volunteer for details about the new version of the course!

Formerly a blended course with in-person, online, and field elements, the MA Public Health Inspector Training (PHIT) Housing Course is now being redesigned as fully online and self-paced. The new version of the course will be available free-of-charge in spring 2021 by the Local Public Health Institute (LPHI) and funded by the MDPH. For more information, check out this interview with Kathleen MacVarish, principal investigator for the LPHI and former MHOA president, to learn about the PHIT Housing course and the importance of increasing the number of public health professionals that are adequately trained for home inspections.

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## Reopening Guide

Have questions about the reopening of businesses, current regulations, or the Governor's orders?

[Click here to check out the sector-specific reopening guide on the MHOA website for more info](#)

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### MHOA Blog Highlights

#### MHOA Member Spotlight on Amy Donovan-Palmer

Amy Donovan-Palmer serves as the Health Director for the town of Mansfield. In this spotlight on Dir. Donovan-Palmer, learn about her original affinity for environmental issues and how she was drawn to public health while working in a nutrition department laboratory at the T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Dir. Donovan-Palmer explains how, unsurprisingly, she has even more work on her plate than she was accustomed to before the pandemic. Read the full spotlight to learn about Mansfield's recent switch to the town Emergency Management Services for public health nursing, the importance of working with MHOA, and her hopes for increased visibility for public health as a result of the pandemic.

#### MHOA Member Spotlight on Rae Dick

In an interview with the Director of Environmental Services in the Westford Health Department, Rae Dick explains her additional COVID-19-related responsibilities. The department utilizes social media to spread important messages regarding COVID and relies on "community education" as their first line of defense. Dir. Dick commends everyone for working beyond the normal scope of their positions and lauds the public health nurses as heroes. Much of Dir. Dick's appreciation for public health nurses comes from her passion in nursing and public health. Read the full article to learn how this passion guided her path to her current career, how her background in community education serves as an asset, and working with the MHOA.

Read the full article [here](#).

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Check out the rest of the member and topic spotlights on the blog [here!](#)

## Do you have tobacco-related questions?

### Join three TA providers for policy development during their recurring office hours to have your questions answered!



Tobacco control office hours take place on the third Wednesday of every month from 1-3pm

Click [here](#) for information on adding the events to your calendar and for the Zoom info!



## Contact info for COVID-related questions



For assistance from the Isolation and Quarantine Food Security Program:

- Contact Jhana Wallace, Food Security Coordinator, at 617-230-4487 or email [MAfoodsecurity@mass.gov](mailto:MAfoodsecurity@mass.gov)

For info on vaccine planning updates:

- General comments and concerns:  
[covid-19-vaccine-plan-ma@mass.gov](mailto:covid-19-vaccine-plan-ma@mass.gov)
- Questions regarding vaccinations for senior housing settings and vaccine deployment options:  
[SeniorHousingVaccine@mass.gov](mailto:SeniorHousingVaccine@mass.gov)
- Questions related to operations of first responder vaccination clinics:

Lauren Ward at [lauren.ward@mass.gov](mailto:lauren.ward@mass.gov) and cc: Donna Quinn, [donna.quinn@mass.gov](mailto:donna.quinn@mass.gov)



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