

# **New Bedford Public Schools curtails outdoor evening activities due to EEE threat**

Due to the threat of exposure to the mosquito-borne illness, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), and in response to the City of New Bedford's closure at dusk of parks and other open public spaces as of August 16, 2019, New Bedford Public Schools is curtailing its outdoor evening activities.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has classified the risk level in Greater New Bedford as 'critical' for EEE.

Use of school playgrounds near or after dusk is strongly discouraged, and daytime use should include clothing aimed at reducing mosquito bites, along with the use of insect repellent which include "DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin," according to the city's press release.

Sports practice sessions and outdoor rehearsals will be impacted.

Thomas Tarpey, NBPS Director of Physical Education, Health & Athletics, issued the following statement: "All coaches at New Bedford High School have been notified that all practices have to be completed by dusk. All schedules will be altered to accommodate this request. All athletes and parents will be notified of these changes as soon as possible."

Lynn Souza, NBPS Director of Fine Arts, noted that Band Camp is being conducted indoors.

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## **New Bedford City Council goes on record to oppose safe injection sites**

In a 10-0 vote, the New Bedford City Council voted to oppose a “safe injection site center” anywhere in the city. The motion was presented to the city council on Thursday by Councilor Brian Gomes. Councilor Coelho was absent.

**Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone has pledged to open a supervised consumption site** where doctors and nurses would monitor illegal drug use and could reverse an overdose in 2020.

Here is the text of the motion:

*WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting that the City Council go on record in opposition to locating anywhere in the City a Safe Injection Site Center; and further, that communications be sent to our City Department Heads and Commissioners including the Health Department, Planning Department and Inspectional Services notifying them that this Council is in opposition to a Safe Injection Site Center and that no permits be issued.*

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# Massachusetts Public Health Officials Announce First Human Case of EEE

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced on Saturday that laboratory testing confirmed the first case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus infection, in a male over 60 from southern Plymouth County. This is the first human case of EEE in Massachusetts since 2013. The risk level in nine communities has been raised to critical as a result.

“Today’s news is evidence of the significant risk from EEE and we are asking residents to take this risk very seriously,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “We will continue to monitor this situation and the impacted communities.”

The nine communities now at critical risk are Carver, Lakeville, Marion, Middleborough, Rochester, and Wareham in Plymouth County and Acushnet, Freetown, and New Bedford in Bristol County.

This week DPH and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) announced they would be conducting and monitoring aerial spraying in specific areas of Bristol and Plymouth counties to reduce the mosquito population and public health risk. Aerial spraying began August 8 and is expected to continue throughout the weekend during evening and overnight hours.

Although the scheduled aerial spray is designed to help reduce the risk of EEE throughout the area, residents are reminded that they should use mosquito repellent and consider staying indoors during the dusk to dawn hours to reduce exposure to mosquitoes.

In addition to the nine communities now at critical risk, 15 communities in southeastern Massachusetts have been determined by DPH to be at high risk for the EEE virus and 18 at moderate risk.

DPH is collaborating with MDAR on the aerial spray, with local communities to educate the public on their risk and risk-reduction strategies, and the Mosquito Control Projects to coordinate surveillance and response activities.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth Counties.

EEE virus has been found in 227 mosquito samples this year, many of them from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

### **Avoid Mosquito Bites**

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or

early morning in areas of high risk.

**Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

### **Mosquito-Proof Your Home**

**Drain Standing Water.** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

**Install or Repair Screens.** Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

### **Protect Your Animals**

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

For the most up-to-date information available on spraying locations, visit the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Aerial Spraying Map <https://massnrc.org/spray-map/>

For other updates, Q&As, and downloadable fact sheets in multiple languages visit the DPH webpage [www.mass.gov/guides/aerial-mosquito-control-summer-2019](http://www.mass.gov/guides/aerial-mosquito-control-summer-2019)

Information including all West Nile virus and EEE positive results can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

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## **Southcoast Health urges residents to participate in first ever Community Health Survey**

In an effort to better understand how the environment in which people live, work, play and age shapes overall health, and as part of the organization's unwavering commitment to the patients and communities they serve, Southcoast Health has launched an online community health survey to run during the month of August.

The short survey, which does not collect any personal information, examines challenges in the South Coast community associated with housing, food security, substance abuse, mental health, transportation and more. The information gathered will be analyzed by the UMass Dartmouth Center for Public Policy, one of the many community collaborations through which Southcoast ensures world-class healthcare for local residents, and will become part of the 2019 Southcoast Health Community Needs Assessment.

“Our community members are the leading experts on the day to day of life in the South Coast region.” said Rachel Davis, Director of the Southcoast Health Community Benefits Program. “That’s why it is so important for everyone to participate in this survey and have their voice heard. Southcoast Health is about much more than healthcare – it’s about community care, and the results of the survey will help us to identify solutions to these challenges for residents and for the region.”

The Southcoast Health Needs Assessment is used widely across the community to plan programs and services that meet the region’s most pressing needs while identifying their root causes. To support these efforts, Southcoast proudly collaborates with local health providers, human services agencies, advocacy groups and others that are also dedicated to progress in the community.

“There is increasing evidence that the health of neighborhoods and communities is strongly related to personal health and wellbeing,” said Davis. “We want the broadest possible representation so together we can make the best possible decisions for future investment in our community.”

To participate in Southcoast’s 2019 Community Health Survey, please visit [www.southcoast.org/southcoastcares](http://www.southcoast.org/southcoastcares).

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## **About Southcoast Health**

*Southcoast Health is a not-for-profit, charitable organization and the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region, serving communities in Rhode Island and across Southeastern Massachusetts. Southcoast Health was named to Newsweek’s World’s Best Hospitals 2019 inaugural list. Out of the 2,743 considered hospitals in the US, only 250 earned this recognition. Southcoast Hospitals Group ranked 162.*

With a network of more than 600 physicians, hospitalists and mid-level practitioners, Southcoast Health is comprised of three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River, St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, and Tobey Hospital in Wareham, and also provides behavioral health services in partnership with Acadia at Southcoast Behavioral Health in Dartmouth. Southcoast Health's seven Urgent Care Centers, two Centers for Cancer Care, visiting nurse association and numerous additional ambulatory facilities offer convenience and access to services for more than 724,000 residents in 33 communities covering over 900 square miles in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. With more than 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in Southeastern Mass., and the 18th largest employer in the Commonwealth according to the Boston Business Journal.

Southcoast Health is proud of our mission of providing high quality affordable healthcare to our patients and proud of our tradition of eliminating the barriers that prevent access to care. More information is available online at [www.southcoast.org](http://www.southcoast.org). Connect to Southcoast Health through social media on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Southcoast® is a registered trademark of Southcoast Health System.

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**Aerial spraying for mosquitoes in Bristol and Plymouth counties starts Aug.**



# 8

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) today announced that aerial spraying for mosquitoes will take place in specific areas of southeastern Massachusetts beginning Thursday, August 8. So far this year, 22 communities in southeastern Massachusetts have been found by DPH to be at high risk for the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. No human cases of EEE have been detected so far this year.

MDAR will conduct and monitor aerial spraying in specific areas of Bristol and Plymouth counties which are anticipated to begin on Thursday, August 8, and continue over several evenings. The ability to spray is weather dependent and may change. Not every community in Bristol and Plymouth County will be sprayed, please see a comprehensive list below. We are encouraging residents to visit DPH's website (<http://www.mass.gov/guides/aerial-mosquitocontrol-summer-2019>) for the latest updates on spraying in their specific communities.

Communities entirely within the spray zone:

- Bristol County: Raynham, Taunton, Dighton, Berkley, Freetown, Acushnet
- Plymouth County: Whitman, East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, Hanson Bridgewater, Halifax, Plympton, Kingston, Carver, Middleborough, Lakeville, Rochester

Communities partially in the spray zone:

- Bristol County: Easton, Norton, Rehoboth, Swansea, Fall River, Dartmouth, New Bedford, Fairhaven
- Plymouth County: Brockton, Rockland, Hanover, Pembroke, Duxbury, Plymouth, Wareham, Marion, Mattapoisett

Aerial spraying is conducted by airplane in areas of concern during early evening and nighttime hours. There are no health risks expected during or after spraying. While no special precautions are recommended, residents can reduce exposure by staying indoors during spraying.

Owners should cover small ornamental fishponds during the night of spraying. While it is not necessary to bring animals indoors during spraying, keeping pets inside will minimize the risk of exposure.

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## **Health officials raise risk level for EEE to high in 9 more southeastern MA communities**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that 9 additional communities in southeastern Massachusetts are now at high risk from the eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus. Those communities are Berkley, Bridgewater, Dighton, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Plympton, Rehoboth, West Bridgewater, and Whitman in Bristol and Plymouth counties, bringing the total number of communities at high risk to 22.

No human or animal EEE cases have been detected so far this year.

“The month of August is when we typically see the highest chance of EEE infection in humans,” said DPH State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine Brown. “We are asking people to

know their risk and take appropriate precautions.”

DPH is working with the local communities, local Mosquito Control Projects and other mosquito control experts to coordinate surveillance and discuss appropriate public health response activities.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006 and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth Counties. The last human case of EEE in Massachusetts occurred in 2013.

In addition to the risk level being raised to high in the nine communities, the risk level was elevated to moderate in eight communities. Those communities are Abington, Attleboro, Brockton, Duxbury, Hanover, Marshfield, Norwell and Seekonk in Bristol and Plymouth counties.

EEE virus has been found in 164 mosquito samples this year and half of them are from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

### Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

### Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

### Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all West Nile virus and EEE

positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at 617-983-6800.

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## **Acushnet, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester and Taunton at high risk for EEE**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced that six additional communities in southeastern Massachusetts are at high risk from the eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus. Those communities are Acushnet, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester and Taunton in Bristol and Plymouth counties, bringing the total number of communities at high risk to 13. No human or animal cases of EEE have been detected so far this year.

“We are using the mosquito surveillance data to continue to define the area at risk,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “As we receive more information, we will continue to update the areas of high risk as indicated by the data.”

DPH is working with the local communities, local Mosquito Control Projects and other mosquito control experts to coordinate surveillance and discuss appropriate public health response activities.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. EEE occurs sporadically in Massachusetts with the most recent outbreak years occurring from 2004-2006, and 2010-2012. There were 22 human cases of

EEE infection during those two outbreak periods with 14 cases occurring among residents of Bristol and Plymouth Counties. The last human case of EEE in Massachusetts occurred in 2013.

EEE virus has been found in 140 mosquito samples this year and more than half of them are from species of mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus to people. On Wednesday, DPH announced seven communities were elevated to high risk – Carver, Easton, Freetown, Lakeville, Middleboro, New Bedford, and Raynham in Bristol and Plymouth counties.

In addition to the risk level now raised to high in 13 communities, eight more communities are now at moderate risk. Those communities are Fall River, Foxborough, Mansfield, Plymouth, Sharon, Somerset, Swansea, and Wareham in Plymouth, Bristol, and Norfolk counties.

“DPH is working to ensure people are aware of these elevated risk levels and of all the tools that residents and communities can use to help reduce that risk,” said DPH State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine Brown.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

### Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient (DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider

rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

**Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

### Mosquito-Proof Your Home

**Drain Standing Water.** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

**Install or Repair Screens.** Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

### Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

More information, including all West Nile virus and EEE positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page or by calling the DPH Epidemiology

Program at 617-983-6800.

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# **Spraying for mosquitoes planned in New Bedford for Friday, August 2**

The New Bedford Health Department, working closely with the Bristol County Mosquito Control Project and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, is again this year conducting an annual monitoring program to track the potential threat from EEE and WNV carrying mosquitoes. Under the program, mosquito traps are put in place to collect pools of mosquitoes and mosquito populations are monitored throughout the summer months.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has notified the New Bedford Health Department of the finding of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in seven samples obtained in New Bedford last week. The mosquitoes in the samples were of the *Culiseta Melanura* species, which is primarily bird-biting, as well as the *Coquilleltidia Perturbens* and *Aedes Vexans* species, which are mammal-biting.

As part of the mosquito tracking program, the New Bedford Health Department will request that the BCMCP target key areas of the New Bedford for spraying, including public parks and locations that host large public events.

As such, the Bristol County Mosquito Control Project will conduct targeted ground spraying for mosquitoes early on the morning of Friday, August 2, 2019. This round of spraying will target areas including Buttonwood Park, Brooklawn Park, Fort



Taber, Hazelwood Park, Riverside Park, Clasky Common Park, Ashley Park, the Poor Farm area, Custom House Square and the downtown area. Spraying will take place between 2:00 am and sunrise on Friday morning, weather permitting. Residents in the vicinity of the targeted areas may wish to close their windows this evening prior to the spraying.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has notified the New Bedford Health Department of the finding of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in samples obtained in the area of the New Bedford Business (Industrial) Park, located off of Phillips Road in the far north end of New Bedford. Surrounding towns have also had positive results.

Seven samples in the area of the New Bedford Business Park tested positive for EEE. The mosquitoes in the samples were of the *Culiseta Melanura* species, which is primarily bird-biting, as well as the *Coquillettidia Perturbens* and *Aedes Vexans* species, which are mammal-biting.

The same precautionary measures are advised for EEE, WNV, and the Zika virus. These include the following:

### **Avoid Mosquito Bites**

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours – While mosquitoes are out at all hours of the day, their peak biting times are from dusk to dawn. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during the evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing, especially if you work or spend a lot of time outdoors.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin

(KBR 3023), IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to the skin.

### **Mosquito-Proof Your Home**

**Drain Standing Water** – Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change the water in birdbaths frequently.

**Install or Repair Screens** – Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

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## **New Bedford beaches closed to swimming today**

The New Bedford Health Department has announced the city's beaches have closed to swimming today, Wednesday, July 24, 2019, due to elevated bacteria levels.

The Health Department has closed all of the city's beaches sections to swimming to protect public health, after yesterday's heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding in areas of the city.

The water at all New Bedford beaches will be tested daily until acceptable water quality levels are obtained and swimming can resume at all sections. Further updates regarding openings and closures will be made as water quality results are received.

Additional information is available by calling the New Bedford Health Department at (508) 991-6199.

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## **Southcoast Health's approved AGO Community Benefits report shows investment of \$22 million in community initiatives**

Southcoast Health released their latest annual Community Benefits Report outlining almost \$22.2 million worth of investments in community health initiatives to improve health and wellness across the South Coast region.

Southcoast Health's Community Benefit report was filed with the Attorney General's Office in March 2019, and approved to be published on July 1, 2019. As a not-for-profit health system, community benefit activities are essential to the overall mission of Southcoast Health to provide high-quality, compassionate care that serves the specific needs of the community and improves the factors that can lead to better health.

"Understanding the social environment in which we live, work,

play, and age reveals the leading factors that impact health on the South Coast and is integral to our mission of providing healthcare that extends beyond direct patient care,” explained Keith Hovan, President and CEO of Southcoast Health. “By working together with our community partners in neighborhoods, schools, centers of worship, businesses, and non-profit agencies, we strengthen and build upon the work that continues to transform the South Coast into a healthier and more prosperous region.”

Each year, Southcoast collaborates with more than a hundred community partners to implement programs that focus on reducing high rates of chronic disease, improving access to care; and increasing access to safe and affordable housing, transportation, healthy and affordable food, and education and employment opportunities. Additional community benefit activities include:

### **Community Health Needs Assessment**

An ongoing process consisting of secondary data analysis, stakeholder interviews, focus groups and community surveys to identify the pressing health and social conditions that influence health and inform health promotion initiatives in the community.

### **Community Impact Opportunity Grants**

An annual, competitive grant program that supports local organizations and their innovative initiatives that focus on addressing the unmet health and social needs in the South Coast. In the past four years, the program has awarded over 100 grants totaling more than half a million dollars.

### **Collaboration & Coalition Building**

Coalition building is an important activity that promotes coordination and collaboration through the effective use of limited community resources. In FY18, Southcoast staff led and participated in more than 30 community coalitions across the region. These coalitions are comprised of various stakeholders

from the community including health providers, teachers, law enforcement, businesses, religious leaders and others who come together with a shared goal to make the community safer, healthier and drug-free.

The Southcoast Health Community Benefits Program is under the overall direction of the Community Benefits Advisory Council (CBAC) that meets six times annually to review and advise on all community benefit activities and expenditures. The 2018 Community Benefits report details activities from October 1, 2017, to September 30, 2018. To learn more about community benefits at Southcoast Health or to read the full report visit <https://www.southcoast.org/community-benefits/>.

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### **About Southcoast Health**

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Out of the 2,743 considered hospitals in the US, only 250 earned this recognition. Southcoast Hospitals Group ranked 162. With a network of more than 600 physicians, hospitalists and mid-level practitioners, Southcoast Health is comprised of three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River, St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, and Tobey Hospital in Wareham, and also provides behavioral health services in partnership with Acadia at Southcoast Behavioral Health in Dartmouth.

Southcoast Health's seven Urgent Care Centers, two Centers for Cancer Care, visiting nurse association and numerous additional ambulatory facilities offer convenience and access to services for more than 724,000 residents in 33 communities

covering over 900 square miles in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. With more than 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in Southeastern Mass., and the 18th largest employer in the Commonwealth according to the Boston Business Journal. Southcoast Health is proud of our mission of providing high-quality affordable healthcare to our patients and proud of our tradition of eliminating the barriers that prevent access to care.

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