Dukes County Health Council

<https://www.dchcmv.com/>

Annual Report

The Dukes County Health Council is "a coalition of community members, public health officials, health practitioners, and health organizations working together to promote community-wide health and wellness and to advise Dukes County commissioners and Island residents concerning these issues." The Vision of the Dukes County Health Council is that "all Martha's Vineyard would be part of a healthy community with seamless complementary, coordinated and accessible health and wellness services."

The membership of the Health Council is intended to reflect the population of Dukes County. Diverse attitudes and backgrounds related to the delivery of care are desired. Members are appointed by the Dukes County Commissioners. There are up to 37 voting members. Members fall into one of five categories: Consumers, Public Officials, Healthcare Practitioners/Professionals, Representatives of Health Provider Organizations, and Ex Officio Members.

The Dukes County Health Council is responsible for:

* Identify community health needs, assess services and foster the development of programs to meet those needs in concert with appropriate town and county governments as well as other appropriate local resources.
* Identify the health education needs of the community and foster the development of programs to meet these needs.
* Review . . . health status indicators and recommend priorities to be addressed.
* Support community relations programs that will gather and distribute information and educate the public.

The Dukes County Health Council does its work through regular meetings of the full Council (approximately one per month), through standing committees for a specific purpose. These include: Substance Use Disorder Committee, Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard, Youth Taskforce, Rural Scholars Committee, Nominating Committee, Coordinating Committee, Health Data Committee, Communications Committee, Housing Committee and Cancer Committee Additionally, the Health Council commissions specific time-limited workgroups, organizes public meetings and forums, commissions studies and surveys and sponsors educational activities (e.g. U Mass Rural Scholars; Mass Dept. of Public Health Summer Interns).

Current Members:

Ellie Beth, Victor Capoccia, Kevin Carey, Tnisha Chandler, Leo Christian, Leslie Clapp, Betsy Corsiglia, Vanileze Cortez, Cynthia Doyle, Beka ElDeiry, Julie Fay, Lila Fischer, Alan Ganapol, Karen Gear, Victoria Haeselbarth, Tom Hallahan, Marcy Holmes, Judy Jones, Michael Joyce, Sarah Kuh, Robert Laskowski, Marina Lent, Karen MacPhail, Paddy Moore, Joanne Murphy, Megan Panek, Kathleen Perrota, Dan Pesch, Barbara Rush, Mark Saloio, Susan Sanford, Sheila Shapiro, Myra Stark, Joyce Stiles-Tucker, Karen Tewhey, Martina Thornton, Christine Todd, Berta Welch, Mary Jane Williams, Terry Young, Marie Zadeh

Health Council Officers:

Mary Jane Williams – Chair

Ellie Beth – Vice Chair

Robert Laskowski – Secretary

Kevin Carey – Treasurer

Committee Chairs:

Coordinating Committee – Mary Jane Williams

Nominating Committee – Alan Ganapol, Terry Young

Substance Use Disorder – Marina Lent

Healthy Aging MV – Paddy Moore <https://www.hamv.org/>

Rural Scholars – Dan Pesch

Health Data – Bob Laskowski

Communication – Victoria Haeselbarth

Youth Task Force – Michael Joyce, Cindy Doyle <https://www.mvyouthtaskforce.org/>

Oral Health Committee – Karen Gear

Cancer – Barbara Rush

Housing – Karen Tewhey

Meetings of the Health Council occur monthly on the 3rd Thursday of each month, with the exception of August and December. Meetings of the Health Council and its Committees are considered public meetings and are open to all.

Copies of the Agendas and Minutes are posted on the Health Council website. <https://www.dchcmv.com/agendas-and-minutes>

**Highlights of 2018-2019:**

The Health Council over the past year has discussed a wide variety of issues important to the health of our community.

***Healthcare Access:***  Access to healthcare has been a recurrent issue on meeting agendas. In particular, the Health Council has been concerned about the **recent loss of transportation** to medical appointments for Vineyard residents on Cape Cod because of the loss of grant funding. The recent service interruptions due to the VTA strike were also points of concern. Health Council Committees, in particular Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard, were active in attempting to find solutions be engaging the Cape Cod Transportation Authority in discussions.

***Access to oral health services*** is inadequate for our neighbors with limited income. Few dentists on the Vineyard accept MassHealth. Public programs sponsored by MV Hospital and Island Healthcare are inadequate to meet needs. The Oral Health Committee of the Health Council has this issue as its prime concern. Under Dr. Karen Gear's leadership, the Oral Health Committee has engaged Mary Traverse, Harvard Health for a site visit to offer advice on options the community may have to resolve this issue.

***Substance Use Disorders (SUD):***The Substance Use Disorder Coalition is well-represented by Health Council members. The Health Council has monitored progress in this area through frequent briefings by Coalition members. Additionally, the Substance Use Disorder Committee of the Health Council under the leadership of Marina Lent continues to collect public health data on our community to help evaluate the success of efforts in combating SUD.

***Support for Advance Care Planning:***Healthy Aging MV has initiated a community wide effort promoting advance care planning. Advance care planning consists of individuals considering how they want to be care for in the event that they are unable to make their own medical decisions. The process of advance care planning includes self-reflection on what is important in one's life, discernment of one's preferences, conversations with loved ones and family members and finally formalizing one's wishes by designating a healthcare agent and completing advance care directives. Sadly, only 10% of Vineyard residents have an advance care directive on record at our hospital. The Health Council has supported HAMV efforts with the goal of having 100% community participation. The Health Council as part of this effort sponsored a Rural Health Scholars project entitle "Laying the foundations for advance care planning." <https://www.dchcmv.com/rural-scholars>

***Coordination of Services:***The coordination of services has been a recurrent theme in Health Council meetings. The Health Council has considered how it can be an effective voice in encouraging collaboration and coordination. The Health Council hosted a presentation by Island Healthcare's Executive Director Cynthia Mitchell on the Integrated Island Public Health Collaborative (i2PHC) concept. i2PHC aims to enable the community to address important health issues through fostering collaborative action. The Health Council continues to work with i2PHC is discerning the most appropriate role for the Health Council in this effort. The Health Council has also had discussions on towns' concerns about the costs of funding health and social services programs. Healthy Aging MV commissioned a social service mapping study by the MV Commission. This study should form a basis to assess gaps in social services and potential areas of overlap.

***Health Data:***The Health Council believes that good public policy should be based on knowledge. The Health Council believes that it should be a source of reliable information about our community's health and health needs. To work toward this goal, the Health Council commissioned a workgroup to develop recommendations for the Council. This workgroup recommended that the Health Council have: a standing Committee on Health Data, that the Health Council post important statistics on the community's health on its website, and that the Health Council act as a data resource for elected leaders, the town, and the community. As result of this work, the Health Council website now has on online "health dashboard" managed by its Health Data and Communications committees. The Health Data Committee is developing recommendations for the resources required to sustain this effort. <https://www.dchcmv.com/choose-a-metric>

***Housing:***The Health Council recognized that inadequate housing is a public health issue. The public health aspects of our affordable housing crisis are often overlooked in the community's many discussions on this problem. The Health Council has established a standing Housing Committee under the leadership of Karen Tewhey to assure that the public health implications of housing are considered as we work toward community solutions.

Bylaws of the Dukes County Health Council <https://www.dchcmv.com/>

**Priorities for 2019-2020:**

The Health Council has identified the following topical areas as priorities for its work in 2019-2020: substance use disorders, health data, oral health, access to healthcare, aging, housing, and cancer.

This year the UMass Rural Scholars will assess community needs for recreational services for our disabled population.

For questions please contact:

Mary Jane Williams: rxwilliams43@aol.com

Ellie Beth: elliebethmv@yahoo.com

Bob Laskowski: laskowskiadvisors@gmail.com or (302) 584-3709