Communities that Care

Community Action Plan

2016
The Communities That Care (CTC) Coalition started in 2002 as a community-wide effort to address alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among youth. In 2011 the Coalition expanded to also address youth nutrition and physical activity.

The CTC Coalition’s **Community Action Plan** identifies priority risk factors for Franklin County and the North Quabbin, and outlines the programs, policies and practices that will most effectively address these risk factors, thereby improving youth health and well-being.

This action plan has been developed and refined over fourteen years through a data-driven, researched-based community planning process. It is the result of the combined effort of many different coalition members representing various community agencies and sectors. The Communities That Care Coalition workgroups continually adjust strategies based on the needs of the community, current scientific research, and the availability of resources.

The Communities That Care Coalition considers this Community Action Plan to be a dynamic work in progress, with specific strategies and programs changing to respond to the evolving needs of the community.

Since the Coalition’s inception, this collaboration and Action Plan has helped to mobilize nearly seven million dollars, spread throughout the community, toward youth development strategies in the Community Action Plan.

The Communities That Care Coalition of Franklin County and the North Quabbin is not a legal entity, but a collection of organizations and individuals joining forces for a common cause. It has developed and follows **Principles of Operation** that can be found at: [www.tinyurl.com/CTCPrinciplesofOperation](http://www.tinyurl.com/CTCPrinciplesofOperation)
Our Vision and Mission

The Communities That Care Coalition’s vision is that Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region be a place where young people are able to reach their full potential and thrive with ongoing and coordinated support from schools, families, and the community.

The Communities That Care Coalition’s mission is to bring together schools, families, youth, and the community to promote protective factors, reduce risk factors, prevent substance use and other risky behaviors, and increase healthy eating and active living to improve young people’s ability to reach their full potential and thrive.

Our Values

- We strive to build connections in and among families, schools, and communities to decrease substance abuse and violence and improve academic success, mental health, and general well-being.

- We think beyond preventing harmful behaviors to promoting positive youth development: we focus on building resilience in young people and increasing the protective factors that support them.

- We use approaches that are tested by research and nationally recognized as effective. We choose strategies appropriate to Franklin County, based on current local data.

- We do not use blaming and fear-based approaches, which research has shown to be ineffective in preventing harmful behaviors.

- We involve all sectors of the community and build our collective capacity to support sustainable, long term changes.

- We work to create a socially and economically just, safe, inclusive place for all members of our community, understanding that intolerance, injustice, and inequity are public health issues that affect all people.

- We recognize that young people make choices in an environment shaped by their families, peers, schools, and communities; we work for positive change in individuals and their local environment and we advocate for change at the state and national level.
Our Approach

Public health is “what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions for people to be healthy” (Institute of Medicine). The Communities That Care Coalition uses a public health approach in that:

- The Coalition recognizes that the causes of health are diffuse and that efforts to improve the health of young people are more effective when addressed collectively by organizations from many sectors across family, school, peer and community environments.
- The Coalition’s work is data-driven: we use data about local conditions in assessment, planning, and evaluation.
- The Coalition uses evidence-based strategies, that is, strategies that have been demonstrated by research to foster real, sustained change.
- Because we seek to improve the health and well-being of all local youth, addressing health equity is central to the Coalition’s work.

Collective Impact:
The Communities That Care Coalition has been recognized nationally and internationally as a model of a successful “Collective Impact” initiative, where various organizations from different sectors agree on common goals and shared measurement.

Each individual organization involved implements programs, policies, and practices from the collectively agreed upon Community Action Plan, and a “backbone” structure holds the collaboration together and ensures effective and timely communication and evaluation.

Data-driven:
The Coalition collects high-quality local data in order to understand community needs, resources, and culture. Through an annual Teen Health Survey, the Coalition measures prevalence of health attitudes and behaviors, and assesses the underlying factors that contribute to those behaviors.

The Coalition also conducts interviews and focus groups to enrich the information collected in surveys, most recently in fall 2015 through winter 2016 to inform this Community Action Plan. In addition to using data for assessment and planning, the Coalition strives to integrate evaluation into its strategies, using the information collected to improve programs.

A series of high-profile articles published in the Stanford Social Innovation Review beginning in Winter 2011 coined the term “Collective Impact” and held up the Communities That Care Coalition of Franklin County and the North Quabbin as a successful model.
Evidence-Based Prevention:
Central to the Coalition’s approach is the use of evidence-based practices. Whenever possible, we choose to use strategies that have been empirically researched and found to be effective at changing the behaviors we are seeking to change with populations similar to ours.

In practical terms, this entails addressing risk factors rather than specific behaviors. For example, research has demonstrated that “Just say No” is not effective prevention; improving school climate is. Moreover, by targeting risk and protective factors that are common to a wide variety of outcomes, the Coalition’s youth substance abuse prevention efforts can also have a positive impact on youth violence, sexual risk-taking, school dropout, mental and physical health, and overall healthy youth development.

Many of the Coalition’s strategies seek to change policies, norms, systems, and the environment in which young people make choices about their health. These strategies have not only been proven effective; they are key to sustaining positive change.

Health Equity:
Health Equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. It requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities (Healthy People 2020).

The Coalition strives to ensure that our work contributes to decreasing the systemic inequities that discriminate against groups that have historically been economically or socially disadvantaged.

Positive Youth Development:
The Coalition is committed to taking a positive youth development approach in its work. The Social Development Model (the model that Communities That Care was founded on) states that young people are most likely to make healthy decisions when they have the opportunity to be involved in family, school, peers, and community; when they are given the skills they need for this involvement; and when they are rewarded for positive behavior in these arenas.

The Communities That Care Model:
The CTC model is not unique to Franklin County. It is a proven community change process based on more than 20 years of research by J. David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington Social Development Research Group. In randomized controlled trials, CTC has produced results both in achieving high-functioning coalitions and in reducing risky youth behaviors. It is highly rated in SAMHSA’s National Registry of Effective Programs and Practices and has been used by communities across the nation.

http://www.communitysthatcare.net/about/

Our local coalition has been a featured community on the national CTC website, and has represented CTC on national panels.
Organizational Structure:
The Communities That Care Coalition is a collaboration between many institutions, agencies, and individuals in Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region. The CTC Organizational Structure is as follows:

- **Franklin County & North Quabbin Communities, including:**
  - Human Services, Youth Services, Schools, Higher Education, Municipal and State Government, Municipal and State Services, Law Enforcement, District Attorney, the Court System, Hospital, Health Care, Mental Health, Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Businesses, Economic Development, Media, Faith-Based Organizations, the Recovery Community, Parents, Youth, Community Members

- **Host:** Community Action
- **Host:** Partnership for Youth

- **Coordinating Council**
  - Comprised of key leaders from many different sectors of the community; functions as governing body and assists in networking

- **Regional School Health Task Force**
- **Policy and Practice Change Workgroup**
- **Youth Involvement Initiative**
- **Mass in Motion Steering Committee**
- **Parent Education Workgroup**

The Coordinating Council & workgroups meet approximately monthly. The Full Coalition (all workgroups, the Coordinating Council and any interested community members) meets twice annually.

The Youth Involvement Initiative is currently under development.
Partner Coalitions:
Among the Coalition’s many important partners are a variety of partner coalitions.

The initiatives above form a network of independent but coordinated efforts that share many common goals.

The Communities That Care Coalition has had mentoring relationships (through the federal Drug Free Communities Mentoring program) with the Greenfield Safe Schools Smart Schools Coalition, Gill Montague Community School Partnership, and the North Quabbin Community Coalition’s Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. All of these coalitions share similar missions with CTC, but each of these coalitions serve specific geographic regions within CTC’s service area.

The Opioid Task Force, Franklin/Hampshire Substance and Tobacco Prevention Partnership, and Franklin County Food Council also share overlapping missions with CTC, but each of these coalitions focus on specific topics within the range of issues that CTC addresses.
Focus Groups & Key Stakeholder Interviews: In late 2015 and early 2016 the Coalition’s Coordinating Council and young people from Community Action Youth Programs conducted a series of focus groups and key stakeholder interviews with youth, parents, school staff, law enforcement officials, substance abuse treatment providers, people in recovery, and more. The results are available on the Coalition’s website.

Based on a review of survey data, interviews, and focus groups, the Coalition identified 4 priority risk factors on which to focus its efforts:

- Community Laws and Norms Favorable to Substance Use
- Parental Attitudes Favorable to Substance Use
- Family Management Problems
- Perceived Risk of Harm from Substance Use

2015 Teen Health Survey data show that:

**Most local teens are choosing NOT to use!**

- **7 out of 10** don’t drink
- **8 out of 10** don’t use marijuana
- **9 out of 10** don’t smoke cigarettes
- **9 out of 10** don’t misuse prescription drugs

Percent of students with each risk factor, 2015. Colors indicate risk factor domain: community, family, school, and peer/individual. The red stars ★ show a national point of comparison.
As part of its community assessment process, the Coalition is preparing maps that show where grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers markets, food pantries, health clinics, schools, libraries, public transportation, and other community resources are located with respect to where people live. The maps help assess equity of access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity, and highlight Environmental Justice Areas, federally defined as neighborhoods with concentrations of people of color or people who live in poverty.

Maps like the sample here will be used to help target areas for improvements to roadways to make them safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Coalition has used this local data and national research to develop the plans or logic models on the following 2 pages. The plans show the outcomes we are trying to achieve, the risk factors we are addressing in order to achieve these outcomes, and the strategies we will use to address these outcomes.
Our Plan for Youth Substance Use Prevention

Implement these strategies...

- Decrease youth alcohol use and binge drinking
- Decrease youth cigarette use and vaping
- Decrease youth marijuana use
- Decrease youth misuse of prescription drugs

...to address these risk factors...

- Decrease laws and norms favorable to drug and alcohol use
- Decrease low perception of harm from drug use
- Decrease parental attitudes favorable to drug and alcohol use
- Decrease family management problems

...in order to change these behaviors.

- Decrease youth alcohol use and binge drinking
- Decrease youth cigarette use and vaping
- Decrease youth marijuana use
- Decrease youth misuse of prescription drugs

Improvements in physical & mental health, youth violence, risky sexual behavior, school success and overall healthy youth development and health equity.

Policy and Practice Change Workgroup

- Provide education on effects of substances on developing brain and local policy implications (including Physiology of Addiction video)
- Conduct alcohol compliance checks, coordinate with tobacco, paraphernalia and other checks
- Provide alcohol beverage server training
- Promote Rx drug drop boxes and Take-Back Days
- Strengthen partnership with Recover Project & work to become a sober-friendly community

Youth Involvement Initiative

- Build a strong youth involvement component to CTC
- Identify and connect existing youth groups throughout the region
- Provide training and leadership development
- Lead social norms marketing and social marketing campaigns
- Lead youth advocacy for municipal policies that support substance use prevention, healthy eating and active living

Regional School Health Task Force

- Conduct the annual Teen Health Survey
- Support evidence-based prevention education (LifeSkills for all MS students)
- Support Screening, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment (SBIRT for all HS students)
- Support best practices in school policies relating to student substance use
- Support the work of the other CTC workgroups

Parent Education Workgroup

- Support and promote evidence-based parent education programs
- Promote the importance of family dinners & family connection
- Provide positive, educational, evidence-based messaging for parents
Communities that Care
Our Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living

**Healthy Eating**
- Implement Healthy Retail initiatives
- Promote Farm to Institution activities
- Facilitate improvements in hospital nutrition standards

**Active Living**
- Map and promote walking trails and paths
- Promote Complete Streets
- Promote community use of public spaces
- Promote walking, biking and public transportation for recreation and utilitarian uses
- Promote physical activity strategies in schools
- Promote workplace wellness

**Clinical and Community Connections**
- Provide health care services
- Provide health insurance navigation services
- Provide Community Health Worker services
- Make referrals to community-based behavior change programs and basic needs services
- Screen for pre-diabetes and hypertension
- Ensure two-way communication between clinical and community services

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**...to address these factors...**
- Increase access to and demand for healthy, local foods
- Increase availability of healthy, local foods through institutions
- Improve connection between clinical and community-based behavior change programs and basic needs services

**...in order to change these behaviors...and create these outcomes.**
- Consumption of fruits and vegetables increases
- Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages decreases
- Physical activity increases
- Improved use of Community Health Center and Community-based programs and services

**...Improved health equity**
- Reduced rates of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke
- Improved school success
- Decrease in preventable hospitalizations

Our Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living
Implement these strategies...
Our Workgroups

The Communities That Care Coalition has several action-oriented workgroups, each one made up of a variety of individuals and organizations.

The Coalition’s strategies have been selected by the workgroups to address our priority risk and protective factors as effectively as possible based on local data, national research, and community resources, with sustainability and cultural competence in mind.

Each of the “bullseyes” on the following pages shows the core and allied strategies of one of the Coalition’s workgroups or initiatives.

**KEY:**

The inner circle in each bullseye shows the programs & practices that directly support the workgroup or initiative’s goals, and are core to that group’s work. Many of these strategies are organized or coordinated by the workgroup members.

The outer circle in each bullseye shows some of the programs & practices that are most closely allied with the workgroup or initiative’s goals, and are supported by that group’s work. Many of these strategies are led by schools or other CTC partner members.

This Community Action Plan, like any active strategic plan, is constantly evolving based on new information we receive, what resources are available, etc. For the most current information, please contact the coalition directly (contact information on final page).
The Regional School Health Task Force is comprised of representatives from each of the 9 school districts in Franklin County and the North Quabbin. Each representative is designated by their school district and serves as the liaison between the Communities That Care Coalition and their district. The group meets monthly and addresses healthy eating and active living as well as youth substance use prevention, including all of the coalition’s priority risk factors.
The Parent Education Workgroup is hosted by Clinical and Support Options, and brings together many different agencies that work with parents and families, as well as parents themselves, on a monthly basis. The group works to address healthy eating and active living as well as youth substance use prevention with a focus on reducing the risk factors family management problems, parental attitudes favorable to substance use, and perception of harm from drug use. The Parent Education Workgroup is interested in expanding representation from parents-at-large with a range of experiences and perspectives at the workgroup meetings.
The Coalition is interested in developing the level of youth involvement in its work, and coordinating more closely and consistently with the many fabulous youth groups that already exist in Franklin County and the North Quabbin. This youth involvement initiative would add a youth leadership development component to CTC with the dual goals of benefitting the youth involved and expanding the reach and efficacy of the Coalition. The Coalition is currently seeking funding for this exciting and fledgling initiative, which will be spearheaded by Coalition co-host Community Action Youth Programs.
The Policy and Practice Change Workgroup (formerly the Community Laws and Norms Workgroup) brings together public health officials, town officials, law enforcement, the courts, and partners who wish to create policy-level change for substance abuse prevention. The group focuses on the risk factors community laws and norms favorable to substance use and perceived risk of harm from substance use.
The Mass in Motion Steering Committee brings together public health officials, town officials, law enforcement, the courts, and partners who wish to create policy-level change for substance abuse prevention. The group focuses on the risk factors community laws and norms favorable to substance use and perceived risk of harm from substance use.
Since the Coalition’s launch in 2002, Franklin County and the North Quabbin region have seen significant reductions in substance use by local youth. According to the anonymous self-reports of past month use by ~1,800 eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade students annually on the Teen Health Survey:

- Alcohol use has dropped by 36 percent
- Binge drinking has dropped by 35 percent
- Cigarette smoking has dropped by 52 percent
- Marijuana use has dropped by 24 percent

These two charts illustrate the reductions in youth substance use, as well as the parallel reductions in the coalition’s priority risk factors.

Prevention Works. It’s working Here.
Our Progress

The Coalition launched its Healthy Eating & Active Living initiative in 2011, and first received funding for this work in 2012 with the goals:

• Increase the % of young people who exercise for an hour or more each day
• Increase the % of young people who eat 3 or more fruits and vegetables each day

The chart to the right shows data for these two measures since 2012.

Our Milestones

Coalition Kick-Off Meeting August 2002
Coalition completed 5 Trainings on Communities That Care Model October 2002-April 2004
Teen Health Survey first administered in five school districts April 2003
Coalition Principles of Operation adopted November 2004
Workgroups formed March 2005
Original Community Action Plan approved September 2005
Coalition mentors GMCSP October 2006-2008
**Coalition selected as CADCA national “Coalition of the Year”** September 2007
Community Action Plan Updated January 2008
Mike Fritz Community Builder Award Established May 2008
Coalition mentors NQCC October 2008-2010
Sara Cummings Coalition Leadership Award Established January 2009
**Coalition received state “Healthy Communities” Award** June 2009
All 9 FC/NQ school districts participate in Teen Health Survey March 2009
Coalition mentors Greenfield’s 4SC October 2010-2012
Healthy Youth Initiative Kickoff Meeting December 2011
**Coalition featured in SSIR’s Collective Impact articles** January 2012-2015
**Coalition presents at White House Summit on prevention in education** June 2014
**Institute of Medicine publishes paper on CTC & BFMC collaboration** May 2016
Coalition Membership

The Coalition gains its strength from its membership. Hundreds of individuals from numerous organizations participated in the development of the original Community Action Plan published in 2005, the updates in 2008 and 2010, and this 2016 update. Hundreds more have been involved in carrying out and supporting the strategies in the plan. Their time and dedication is greatly appreciated. The following organizations are currently active in the Communities That Care Coalition:

30 Towns of Franklin County & North Quabbin • All of our elected officials • Athol Area YMCA • Athol-Royalston Regional School District • Baystate Franklin Medical Center • Behavioral Health Network • Big Brothers Big Sisters of Franklin County • Center for Human Development • Clinical & Support Options • Collaborative for Educational Services • Community Action of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions • Center for Community Resilience after Trauma • Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts • Community Health Center of Franklin County • Department of Mental Health • Department of Public Health • Department of Youth Services • DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services • Four Rivers Charter Public School • Franklin County Chamber of Commerce • Franklin County Community Development Corporation • Franklin County Food Council • Franklin County Probate and Family Court • Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority • Franklin County Sherriff’s Office • Franklin County Technical School • Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board • Franklin Regional Council of Governments • Franklin/Hampshire Substance and Tobacco Prevention Partnership • Frontier Regional School District • Gill Montague Community School Partnership • Gill Montague Regional School District • Greenfield City Council • Greenfield Community College • Greenfield Community Television • Greenfield Health Department • Greenfield Housing Authority • Greenfield Parks & Recreation Department • Greenfield Police Department • Greenfield Public School District • Greenfield Safe Schools Safe Streets Coalition • Healthy Families of Franklin County and North Quabbin • Heywood Hospital • Institute for Health and Recovery • Interfaith Council of Franklin County • Just Roots • Learn to Cope • LifePath • Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission • Massachusetts Trial Court • Mohawk Trail Regional School District • Montague Catholic Social Ministries • Montague Parks & Recreation Department • New England Learning Center for Women in Transition • North Quabbin Community Coalition • Office of District Attorney David Sullivan • Olive Street Development LLC • The Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region • Orange Board of Health • Partners for a Healthier Community • Partnership for Youth • Pioneer Valley Regional School District • Quabbin Mediation • Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District • RECOVER Project • Reinventing Justice • Second Congregational Church of Greenfield • The Brick House Community Learning Center • The Family Center • The Garden • The Literacy Project • The Salasin Center • Tobacco Free Community Partnership • Tobacco Free Mass • United Arc • United Way of Franklin County • University of Massachusetts College of Nursing • University of Massachusetts School of Public Health • Valuing Our Children • Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center • Western Mass Recovery Learning Community • Western Massachusetts Training Consortium • Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts • YMCA in Greenfield • Sincere apologies to those we have left off this list inadvertently. Special thanks to Baystate Franklin Medical Center for their generous support of this Community Action Plan.

In addition to the many organizations listed above, we are grateful to the numerous youth, parents, community members, elected & town officials, funders & organizations who have supported the Coalition in countless ways from attending workshops and focus groups, to participating in programs, awarding grants, and integrating priorities from the action plan into their daily work & lives.

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