



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH - 6-4-24

Hybrid Meeting Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Joanne Miller, Helaine Hazlett

AGENDA

Marblehead HS Survey of Substance Use and Related Risk Factors

Gina Hart, CSW, at MHS and Julia Ferrer, assistant superintendent, presented the results from the survey of MGH Substance Abuse and Risk Factors (SURF) as well as additional questions developed by MHS. This has been done each year for the past three years so provides longitudinal comparisons. The survey was administered on 10/11/23 to 14-18 years olds for a total 743 students with 85% response rate. (There is a provision for students to opt out of taking the survey.) Supplemental questions were completed by 677 students. The results have been shared with faculty, school committee, students, etc. As noted by the presenters one can't be sure of 100% honesty, but the survey is anonymous and can be opted out of. Numerous questions were asked: connection with others; self-harm and suicide ideation or attempt; body image; experience of discrimination by gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, social economic status; use of nicotine, cannabis, alcohol; age of first use; impaired driving; texting, etc. In addition to the quantitative data there were focus groups to get more qualitative data.

The result showed often stable patterns with very little change over the past few years. Some of the finding were as follows (2022 to 2023); anxiety 34->24%, depression 27->15%; suicidal thought 17->16%; discrimination experience same with sexual orientation 7.9%, religion 7.5%; at risk for depression - 64% GLBQ, 73% transgender, 30% Asian, 23% Haitian, Black and **48% seniors**; lifetime use alcohol 40%, cannabis 23%, nicotine 34->38%; age of first use 29->32% 15 year olds, 24% 16 year olds; 62% planned to decrease or quit nicotine.

After the presentation of the data Gina and Julia discussed interventions and programs that are ongoing or planned to address these risk factors.

Mental Health Task Force

Ms. Miller presented the most recent news from the MHTF. Mark Lebon previously the co-chair is now the chair. On 6/3 the NAN project (a project to promote mental health awareness and suicide prevention which uses a peer-to-peer model) was presented. The project involves a peer who shares their story of mental health issues and who has recovered. This is very profound, moving, and gives hope to recovery. There are a number of storytellers who can go into the schools to talk. So far 75 schools in Massachusetts have taken part in the NAN project. This project is FREE to schools. The speakers are diverse - old/young, different languages, etc.

Other programs that are planned are ones involving speakers to talk to students, parents, and families. One would be in the fall and the other spring.

On 6/22/24 MHD Counseling Center is to have field day 1-4 pm at Hobbs Field. There will be a number of tables, games, etc. The MHTF's Marblehead Cares will have a table there.

The next meeting is on 8/5/24 and Ms. Miller will be stepping down as co-chair and will continue on in administrative role.

Review of Mission Statement and Role of Board of Health and Department of Health

The Board and HD reviewed the mission statement for each entity so that the public knows what each does as well as the role of each. Mr. Petty read the current mission statement from the Annual Report and had suggested additions that included wording regarding regulating and enforcement. After much discussion including comments from the next BOH member that the HD is the "operative" arm and the BOH is the policy arm - "the HD shouldn't be telling the BOH of what to do", the mission statement for now will remain unchanged.

Website Development

Changes to the HD website are for the most part on hold as the town of MHD is going to be revamping the entire system. Mr. Petty hopes that there will be a general calendar of all the recurring meetings and events. Hopefully there will be a separation of health from the waste issues. The new website is a high priority for the town manager and will be done by an outside consultant.

Substance Abuse Talks/Speakers

The plan is to perhaps have joint programs with the school. The high school space offers a more "intimate" one for speakers.

Transfer Station Updates

Mr. Petty reported sending 22 letters to contractors regarding the project and has gotten 5 letters back suggesting interest. Each contractor was provided with all the architectural, etc. plans. A consulting engineer is reviewing the bid document to see if there are ways to save and speed construction. Installing the new scale and pit will be the biggest delay. As far as the kiosk a 10x10 booth could be rented and its use could be quickly implemented. Given all the steps ahead the project is likely to go out to bid in the fall and then construction will depend on the contractor. Fortunately, much of the material is on site (e.g. compactor).

Directors Report

- Bathing beach water testing is to start the week of 6/10 and will occur on Wednesdays.
- There is a pertussis advisory out especially for teens 15-19 who might have lost immunity. The advisory is being sent to the schools.
- Budgets are beginning to be developed for FY26 with one for a 1% increase and the other for a reduced budget.
- There was vandalism at the transfer station (broken bottles) on 5/31 and 6/1. The tapes from the cameras are being reviewed.
- 100 veterans have come to the HD for free facility stickers as per the warrant passed at Town Meeting.

Finally, Ms. Hazlett listed the accomplishments of the BOH over the past year