



2023 Year-In-Review

Dear Community Members y Colegas,

We are incredibly grateful for your camaraderie and partnership that moves so much of our efforts forward. We are proud of the trabajo colaborativo and the new relationships we have built with organizations and residents over the past year. It makes the strategies richer y más fuerte, enhancing our ability to maximize assets and impact in our communities. Together, we have made strides in reducing asthma rates, supporting youth mental health, and working on innovative ways to address fundamental human needs for all. We invite you to explore the details of our work in this annual report.

Gracias!

Jessica Collins, Executive Director & Luz Lopez, Board President



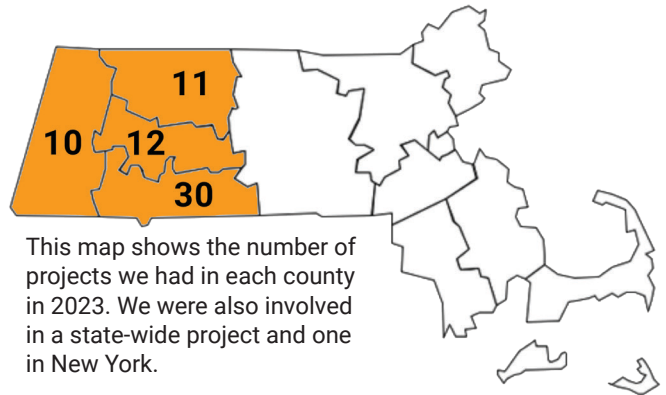
**PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE
OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**
PARTNERS FOR HEALTH EQUITY

Our vision is for all people within our region to have access to what they need to lead healthy lives.

What We Do

The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts builds measurably healthier and more equitable communities through community engagement, collaborative partnerships, research and evaluation, and policy advocacy. We are committed to continuous learning, fostering collaboration, and amplifying the voices of those we serve.

Our Service Area



Coalition Building

As a backbone organization, our work is not always easy to see. We specialize in bringing together diverse stakeholders to work towards a common goal. Our role is nuanced and includes facilitation, coordination, logistical support, strategic planning, relationship management, and other “behind the scenes” work. Successful collaborations are the bedrock upon which sustainable, community-driven change is built.

8

Convened eight coalition initiatives.

80

Brought together 80 organizations through our coalition work (64 in 2022).

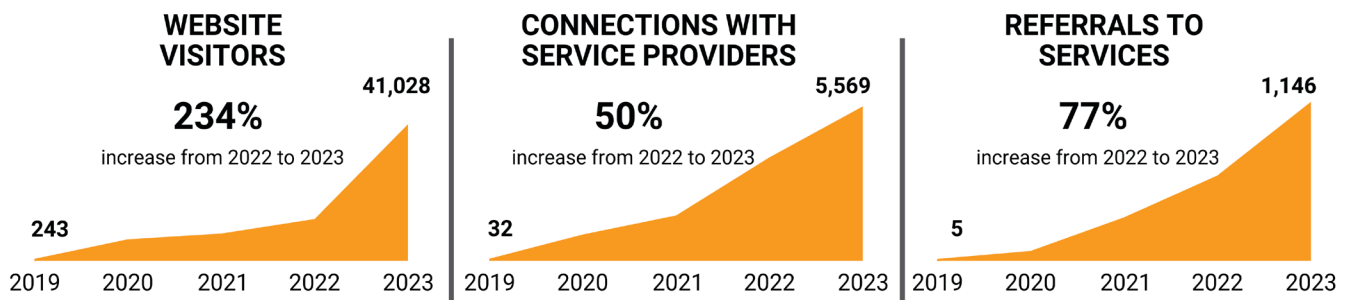
22

Stipended 22 Resident Advisors to work with our coalitions.



In May Live Well Springfield, in collaboration with the Springfield Department of Elder Affairs, hosted an Age-Friendly Health and Tech Showcase. L-R: Sarita Hudson, Jessica Collins, Samantha Hamilton, State Rep. Bud Williams, Springfield Public Health Commissioner Helen Caulton-Harris, and Springfield Mayor Dominic Sarno.

Since its inception in March 2020, [413Cares.org](https://www.413Cares.org) has witnessed substantial growth, including a tremendous surge in use of the site from 2022 to 2023. With over 100,000 searches performed and 3,550 programs added, it is evident that a growing number of individuals are accessing the assistance they need. This growth would not have been possible without the 413Cares Advisory Board and strategic community partnerships with local initiatives and coalitions that have looked to 413Cares as a collaborative space for information and resource sharing. These partners have helped us develop key resource pages on Substance Use, Food, Reentry, Digital, Mental Health, and Housing.



In November 413Cares program coordinator Francheska Bermudez and policy director Andrea Freeman spoke with The Fabulous 413 from New England Public Media.

Capacity Building and Training

We view every project as an opportunity to build community capacity. For some of our work, building capacity is our primary goal. We host webinars, provide technical assistance, and offer trainings. In 2023, our trainings reached diverse audiences, including public health professionals and other professionals attending conferences (Ounce of Prevention, [Equity in the 413: Western Massachusetts Racial Equity Summit](#)), youth (Baystate Student Education Partnership, Beat the Odds Youth Advisors to the Youth Mental Health Coalition), and resident advisors.

2

Hosted two webinars about Long COVID and Policies to Support Youth Mental Health.

7

Conducted seven trainings covering topics including a Data to Action Framework centering equity, health equity, policy 101, environmental justice, and water quality.

27

Provided technical assistance to 27 organizations about how to develop logic models, project plans, and evaluation tools, collect outcome data, and measure progress.



Resident Advisors Sonia Mendez, Albert Hubert (Brother Al), Mary Anne Babinski, and Antonio Delesline attended a training in September about water quality.

Research and Evaluation

4

We evaluate programs and initiatives, provide technical assistance, conduct assessments, and design, collect, analyze, and disseminate population-level data (e.g., [Springfield Youth Health Surveys](#)). We strive to embed health equity into our work. This commitment translates into partnering with organizations and residents throughout the process of designing and conducting our projects, creating opportunities for community voices in our processes, using data to understand health inequities and their root causes, practicing cultural humility, and designing dissemination processes and products that support action and change. This past year, we co-developed a Data to Action framework with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health that centers many of our core principles.

Conducted four regional assessments covering topics including gender equity and youth mental health.

13

Engaged in 13 external evaluation projects, ranging from designing and conducting a full evaluation to providing technical assistance and thought partnership. Our clients have included healthcare, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, coalitions, and state agencies.

13

Conducted 13 community presentations to share findings from various assessments including [Community Health Needs Assessments for the Coalition of Western Massachusetts Hospitals/Insurer](#), [Gender Equity in Western Massachusetts \(prepared for Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts\)](#), and the [Youth Mental Health Roadmap for Western Massachusetts](#).



Dr. Kathleen Szegda and Victoria Hill facilitated a workshop about fostering equity through data to action at the inaugural Equity in the 413: Western Massachusetts Racial Equity Summit in October.



Lisa Ranghelli (L) and Leela Ramachandran (R) presented results from *Gender Equity in Western Massachusetts: The Status of Women, Girls, Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Diverse Adults and Youth*, a report commissioned by the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts (WFWM). They are pictured here with Kelley Bryant, Sarah Monson, Amihan Matias from the WFWM.

There is a national youth mental health crisis, and in 2023, youth mental health was a major theme of our work. Regional leaders have long recognized youth mental health as a critical public health issue. Since we began implementing youth health surveys in Springfield Public Schools in 2015, we have observed high rates of depressive symptoms and mental health inequities. The COVID-19 pandemic, and measures to stop the spread of the virus, further exacerbated the situation. Recognizing this, the Coalition of Western Massachusetts Hospitals/Insurer chose to make youth mental health a regional focus area for their 2022-23 Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA). As part of this effort, we created a complementary [summary of youth mental health data from the CHNAs](#) to help make the case for coordinated action.

“I have seen parents and teens start conversations that they never would have had without [being] prompted by this campaign.”

– YMHC Coalition Member, Coalition Feedback Survey

The Coalition Building team also worked to address youth mental health through the Springfield Youth Mental Health Coalition (YMHC). In 2023, the YMHC employed several strategies, including a media campaign called [“I Am More Than My Mood”](#) to encourage discussions about mental health and connect youth and families to resources. Since the site was launched, over 2,500 people have visited the website, including **31 individuals who accessed a crisis hotline from the platform.**

The YMHC also offered professional development and community education to increase knowledge about mental health in greater Springfield. Over the year, YMHC sponsored **21 trainings for youth, parents/guardians, the general community, and behavioral health professionals** on topics such as “Navigating Microaggressions and Implicit Bias”, “Mental Health 101”, “The Impact of Trauma and Toxic Stress Across Settings”, “Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships”, “Gun Violence and Mental Health”, “Ways to Build Mental Health Resiliency in Youth”.



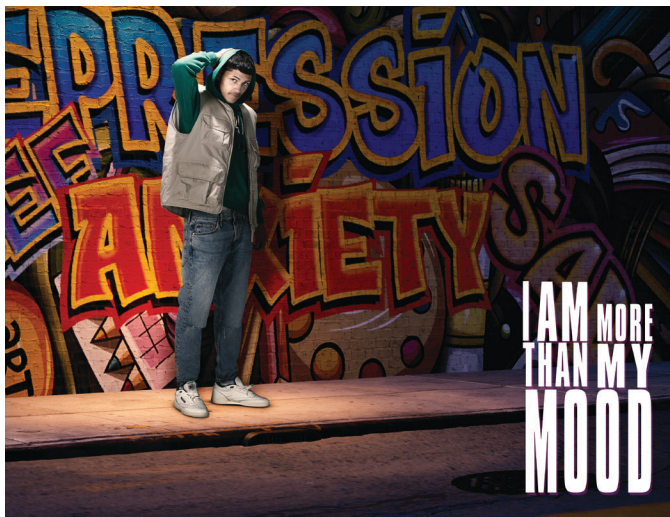
In October the YMHC sponsored a training for parents and guardians called “Mental Health for the Culture” about inter-generational trauma within the Black and Latinx community and how it affects our children.

Recognizing the need for more mental health promotion and prevention, we developed a [Youth Mental Health Roadmap for Western Massachusetts](#) with extensive input from a regional advisory board and numerous stakeholders from across Western Massachusetts. The Roadmap built off existing efforts in the region that identified needs and opportunities to support promotion and prevention. This comprehensive process involved research on emerging and best practices, interviews, and focus groups. The Roadmap was unveiled at a Massachusetts Health Policy Forum in November, and in December, we hosted a [policy-focused webinar](#) to discuss bills that would support youth mental health. The Roadmap is already being used by regional organizations.



Dr. Kathleen Szegda presented the Youth Mental Health Roadmap for Western Massachusetts at a Massachusetts Health Policy Forum at in November.

Like most public health issues, addressing youth mental health is a marathon, not a sprint. It requires sustained, collaborative efforts over the long haul. We are committed to supporting the use of data and research to take action through coalition efforts and policy advocacy to improve our youth’s mental health.



Images from the “I Am More Than My Mood” mental health awareness campaign.

Policy Advocacy

Our [policy priorities](#) stem from findings and recommendations of our research and coalition work, rooted in data and stories from people with lived experience.

13

Submitted 13 testimonies in support of state legislation to improve housing security, local public health, criminal justice, climate and transportation justice, youth mental health, and more.

9

Advocated for nine budget amendments related to housing security, regional transit authorities, and local public health.

8

Participated in eight statewide coalitions to help advance shared policy priorities.

2

Collaborated with two statewide coalitions to help get the SAPHE 2.0 and Cover All Kids bills reported favorably out of committee.

1

Secured one earmark in the state's FY24 budget to support 413Cares.

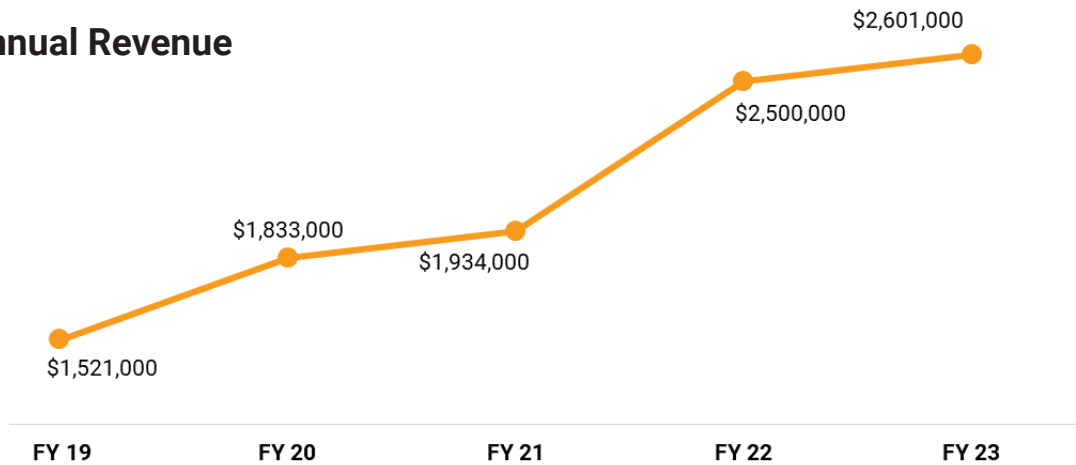


PHIWM Staff, State Reps Michael Finn and Carlos Gonzalez, Senator Adam Gomez, a representative from Senator John Velis' office, and regional partners from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Community Action Pioneer Valley, Hilltown Community Health Centers, and Quaboag Hills Community Coalition gathered in December to celebrate the 413Cares legislative earmark.

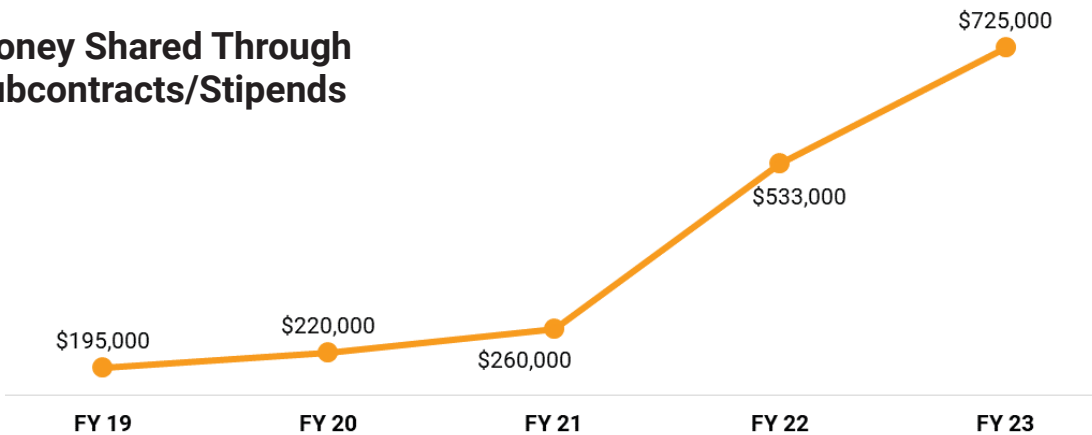
Sharing Resources for a Greater Impact

As our revenue grows, we're able to support more individuals and organizations across the region who work on important issues like climate justice, air quality, age-friendly environments, youth mental health, housing, and opioid harm reduction. Our funding sources are diverse and include contributions, competitive grants, and service contracts. We are grateful for the generous unrestricted funding we've received from Baystate Health and Health New England.

Annual Revenue



Money Shared Through Subcontracts/Stipends



Meet Our Board and Staff

2024 Board of Directors



L-R: Johnetta Baymon, Gloria Caballero Roca, Rachel Gordon, Kim Lee

Amanda Lesnick, Luz Lopez (President), Sarah Morgan (Vice President), Geoff Naunheim



Amale Neary (Treasurer), Lizzy Ortiz, Kimberly Robinson (Clerk), Edna Rodriguez

Doug Salvador, Ilana Steinhauer, Linda Thompson, Anni Zhu



Staff



Jessica Collins, Executive Director; Alisa Ainbinder, Sr. Evaluation Manager; Francheska Bermudez, 413Cares Program Coordinator,

Eli Crespo, Youth Mental Health Coordinator; Andrea Freeman, Policy Director; Samantha Hamilton, Director of Coalition Building and Community Engagement



Victoria Hill, Manager of Data and Equity; Liv Anna Homstead, Coalition Building Manager; Sarita Hudson, Sr. Director of Programs and Development

Amy Khalil, Sr. Finance and Contracts Manager; Jen Ludwin Senior Research Associate; Kate O'Brien, Administrative and Contracts Coordinator



Maddie Press, Research Associate; Leela Ramachandran, Research Associate; Lisa Ranghelli, Director of Assessment and Capacity Building

Tiffany Rufino, Youth Mental Health Coalition Manager; Kathleen Szegda, Sr. Director of Community Research & Eval.; Beyonca Twiggs, Project Coordinator



Jacqueline Velez Community Project Coordinator; Keleigh Waldner, Sr. Manager of Communications and Research

Not pictured: Kim Murphy, Finance Coordinator

Thank you for choosing to work with us!

Grants and service contracts From July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023.

Bay Path University

Baystate Health

Berkshire Health Systems, Inc.

The Beveridge Family Foundation, Inc.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA Foundation

Care Alliance of Western Massachusetts

City of Springfield

Clean Slate Initiative

Coalition of Western MA Hospitals/Insurer

The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation

Eastern Research Group

Environmental Protection Agency

Gándara Center

Healing Racism Institute

Health New England

Health Resources in Action, Inc.

The Kresge Foundation

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Network of Public Health Institutes

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Pioneer Valley Transit Authority

Point32Health Foundation

Revitalize CDC

Safe Passage

SMC Partners, LLC

Town of South Hadley

Springfield WORKS

Transhealth

Trinity Health of New England (Mercy Medical Center)

UMass Chan Medical School

Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires

Way Finders, Inc.

Westfield State University

WestMass ElderCare

The Richard and Barbara Whitcomb Foundation

Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts

YWCA of Western Massachusetts



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