

2021 Annual Report



Serving Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham,
Wakefield & Winchester

The Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition is a collaborative serving Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield and Winchester. Our prevention coalitions work together to build the collective responsibility to protect youth from harmful substances like alcohol, nicotine and other drugs. We collaborate with local, regional, and statewide partners to build and sustain environments where our youth grow up in supportive and healthy communities.

Regional Substance Use Prevention Highlights

- Hosted an **educational forum** for legislators and coalition/community members to increase awareness and understanding of alcohol policies that protect youth from alcohol harms
- Continued to engage in state and national discussions to **assess alcohol policy changes** related to COVID-19
- **Created a social media campaign** to increase awareness about underage alcohol use reaching 65,599 individuals on Facebook, including a campaign for Alcohol Awareness month
- Hosted **author Ann Dowsett Johnston** for Alcohol Awareness Month
- Supported schools to adopt **Positive Youth Development and Social Emotional Learning best practices**
- **HUB meetings** were held in multiple MVPHC towns to support and enhance post-overdose response systems in communities and hospitals
- Implemented a **relationship mapping partnership** in order to document strengths and gaps in MVPHC relationships.
- Wrote **successful grant application** for continued funding

Regional Tobacco Prevention Program Highlights

- Provided **retailer education** (in-person, via email and USPS mail) about the state's new comprehensive tobacco law
- Conducted **in-person inspections of all retail stores** that have a tobacco permit following a more aggressive inspection protocol that was adopted following reports, and subsequent discovery, of banned products
- **Resumed regular compliance checks in June** which had been suspended due to the pandemic
- Conducted **targeted tobacco compliance checks** as a result of specific complaints

Community Highlights



Malden

Malden celebrated the opening of The Bridge Recovery Center (BRC) this year! The mission of BRC is to create positive changes in our community by bridging the gap between the stigma of substance abuse and those who suffer with the disease. Volunteers and members of the BRC provide peer to peer recovery support for anyone 18+ in the Eastern Middlesex County region of

Massachusetts.

Medford

The City of Medford is expanding its clinical workforce by hiring 3 social workers to support the Medford Police Department, the Somerville-Medford Court and the community at large. A new part-time Recovery Coach will also be hired and will support a weekly recovery-oriented community meeting. The City also hired 5 community liaisons to raise the voices and support marginalized community members.



M E L R O S E
S U B S T A N C E A B U S E
P R E V E N T I O N C O A L I T I O N

Melrose

In 2020, Melrose coalition staff supported the COVID response along with other health department staff. City-funded prevention program underwent reorganization and is now looking to hire staff and reignite the prevention coalition in Fall 2021.

Reading

The Reading Coalition conducted 114 coalition activities which reached 1,762 individuals. Eighty-three percent of staff time was expended on coalition activities and 17% on professional development. Two activities included:



Reading
Coalition
Against
Substance
Abuse

Coalition staff working with the school resource officers provided an in-person skill-building workshop on substance misuse prevention for students in grade 8 at one middle school in Reading in June. 80 students were served.

The Reading Coalition's Community Connections TV series was created by an Advisory Board member and Coalition staff to bring awareness to local resources utilized during the pandemic. Twelve interviews were recorded by an Advisory Board member by RCTV.



Stoneham Coalition
For a Safe & Healthy Community

Stoneham

The Stoneham Coalition created a Health and Safety Guide that included information on substance use prevention, mental health resources, and overall health promotion. The guide was mailed to residents and the information is currently being updated and printed for community events and schools.

The Coalition hosted a live virtual musical performance with a popular local band in the spring to remind people of the Coalition's mission, continued presence and to offer a positive evening for the community during COVID. The Coalition also provided prevention

Wakefield

A Wakefield Alcohol Compliance liaison was trained by the ABCC and conducted alcohol checks and licensee visits. The officer delivered Serve-Safe Packets and reminded staff of the agreements made with town in the fall of 2019 to curb issues with problem alcohol consumption.



Youth Action Team leaders launched a pizza box campaign. The youth recruited five local pizza shops to participate and 3,000 stickers were placed. The youth worked with a designer to spread these same messages on 1,000 bookmarks distributed by the Wakefield public library. And, Youth Action Team Leaders created an Instagram campaign to remind their peers about the risks of driving under the influence of marijuana.

74.3%
of WMHS students have not used alcohol in the past 30 days

Kids who learn the risks of using drugs & alcohol from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use.

Talk early & often.

Visit www.wakefieldwakeup.org for more info

The logo for the Wakefield Youth Action Team is circular. It features the text "WAKEFIELD YOUTH ACTION TEAM" around the perimeter. In the center, the word "WAKE" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with "UP" below it in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. Below "UP" is a stylized illustration of a town skyline with buildings and a bridge.

#YouAreNotAlone
Contact Interface!
A free helpline service that connects Wakefield residents to available providers that meet your needs & accept your insurance.

Call 1-888-244-6843 (toll free)
Monday-Friday ~ 9am-5pm
<https://interface.williamjames.edu>

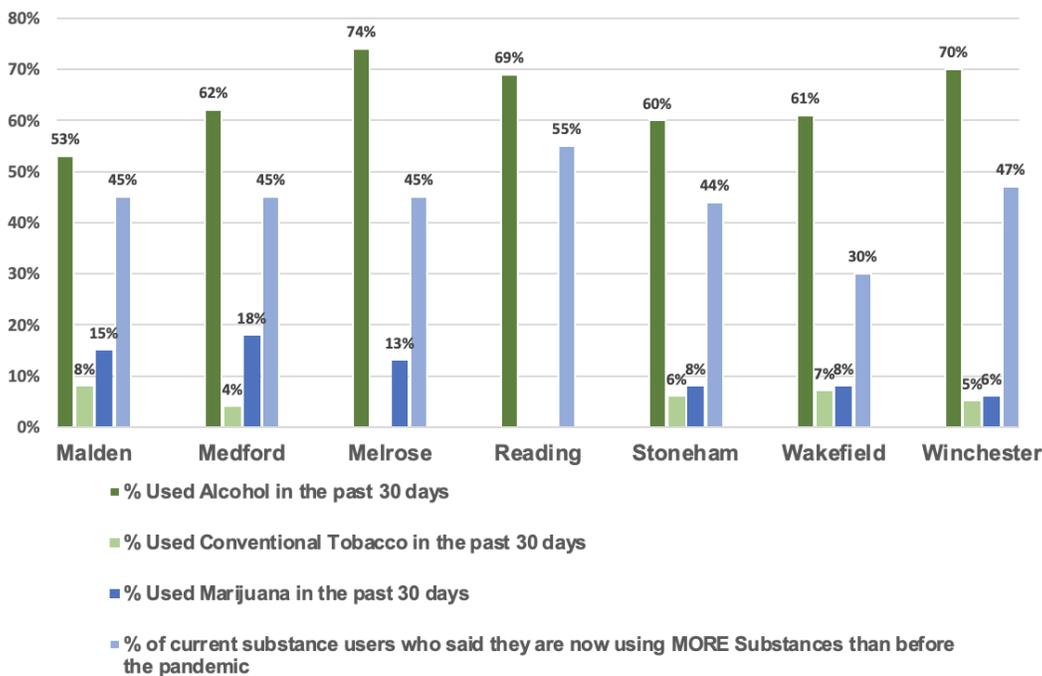
The logo for the Wakefield Youth Action Team is circular. It features the text "WAKEFIELD YOUTH ACTION TEAM" around the perimeter. In the center, the word "WAKE" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with "UP" below it in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. Below "UP" is a stylized illustration of a town skyline with buildings and a bridge.

Winchester

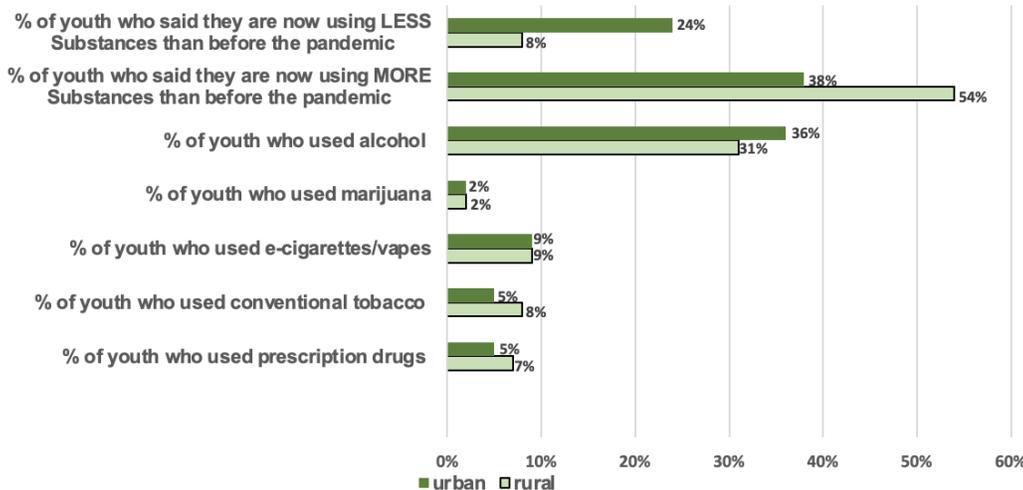
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a large number of community members struggled with their mental health. The Winchester Coalition focused on bettering the mental health of the community. Our goal was to help community members recognize and address their mental health challenges before the challenges resulted in substance use.

The Winchester Coalition presented virtual programming to address issues regarding racial equity and inclusion. The Coalition also worked closely with the Winchester Health Department and Select Board to educate the community about COVID mitigation strategies and vaccine promotion.

Massachusetts COVID Community Impact Survey- Adults



Massachusetts COVID Community Impact Survey- Youth



Exciting News!

The MVPHC received a Public Health Excellence grant from the Department of Public Health to build regional capacity of several public health initiatives, to bolster equity and inclusion, and to assess environmental health. Our new team is excited to support our communities! Stay tuned for more information!

Our Team

Health Directors/Agents: Chris Webb (Malden), Maryann O'Connor (Medford), Anthony Chui (Melrose and Wakefield), Erin Hull (Stoneham), Jen Murphy (Winchester)

Staff: Elizabeth Parsons, *Regional Prevention Coordinator*; Maureen Buzby, *Regional Tobacco Control Coordinator*; Melanie Dineen, *Grant Coordinator*; Hayes Hart-Thompson, *Health Communications Specialist*; Abbey Myers, *Health*

Community Coalition Partners: Penny Funaiole (Medford), Elizabeth Valett & Carol O'Loughlin (Stoneham), Erica McNamara & Krystal Mellonakos-Garay (Reading), Catherine Dhingra and Kara Showers (Wakefield), Dot Butler (Winchester)

The Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition is a coalition serving the communities of Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield, and Winchester. This report was created as a part of this collaboration with the help of the local substance abuse prevention coalitions and health departments.

Contact Us

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Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition