



HEALing Communities Study

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# HEALing Communities Study

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# Goals for Today

- Provide an overview of the HEALing Communities Study (HCS)
- Describe the HCS community-engaged, data-driven approach to reduce OD deaths
- Share examples of coalition strategies in MA
- Answer your questions

# HEALing Communities Study (HCS)

**April 2019 – NIH and SAMHSA funded MA, NY, OH, KY** to work with 67 highly affected rural and urban communities to reduce opioid overdose (OD) deaths by implementing a *process* to deliver evidence-based practices in healthcare, behavioral health, criminal legal settings

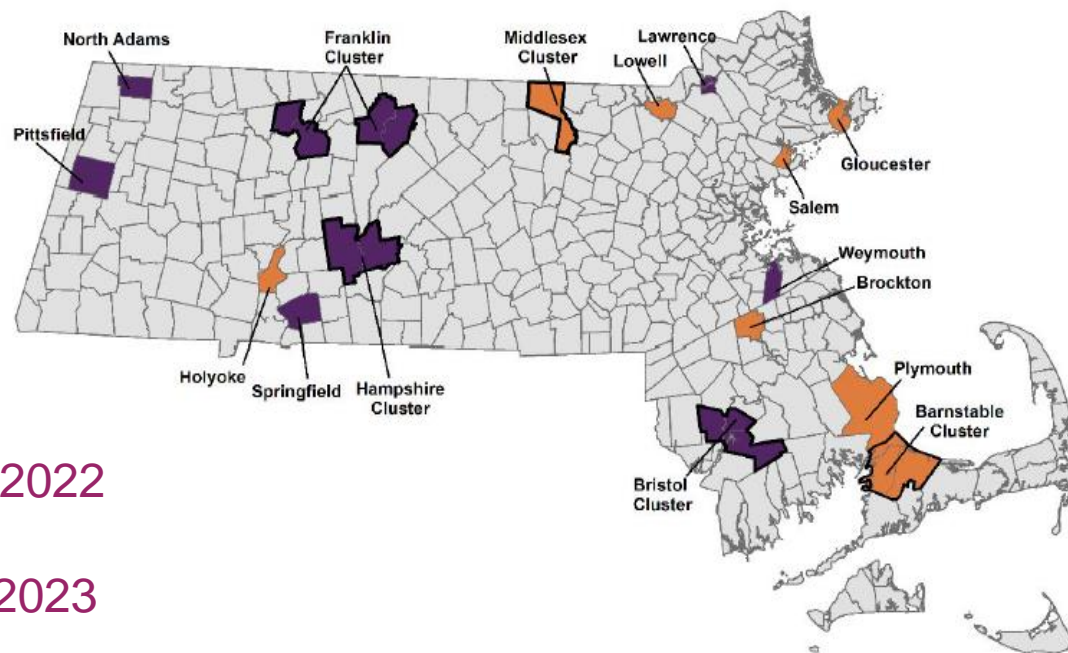
**In MA, 16 communities were randomized into two groups**



Wave 1: Jan 2020 – Jun 2022



Wave 2: Jul 2022 – Dec 2023



# Goals of HCS: To implement the Communities that HEAL (CTH) *process*

**To reduce opioid overdose deaths by implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs)**

- Increase overdose education & naloxone distribution (OEND)
- Increase access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD)
- Increase safer opioid prescribing & dispensing practices

# What makes the CTH *process* unique?

- Communities work in partnership with medical and public health professionals
- Coalition members engage in data driven decision making
- Local organizations build capacity to reduce OD deaths

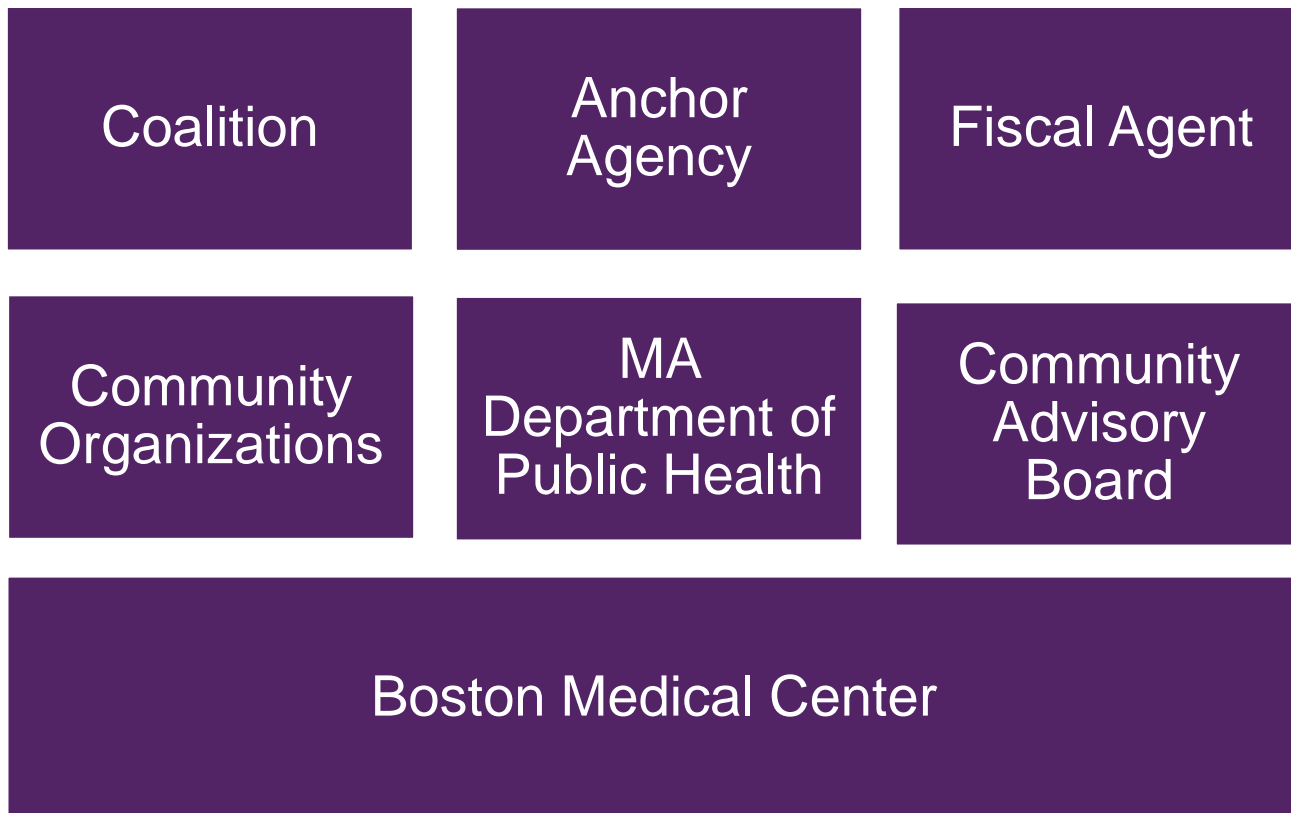
# CTH Phased Planning *Process*



# Resources for MA Communities

- Boston Medical Center (BMC) personnel: facilitator, data manager, addiction expert
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Communications campaigns
- Funding (\$800,000 per year-each community):
  - Community coordinator
  - EBP strategies: Access to MOUD and OEND; Safer Prescribing

# Key participating groups in MA





# Examples of EBP Strategies in MA

# Hospital Based Addiction Consult Services

## Brockton, Gloucester, Holyoke, Lowell, Salem

- Strategy to initiate MOUD for inpatients and link to MOUD upon discharge
- HCS typically supported 2 full time staff (e.g., nurse practitioner [NP], nurse [RN], recovery coach)
- Success of treatment model:
  - Increase in MOUD initiations, admission to OTPs, referral to buprenorphine providers
  - Recovery Coaches key to willingness to initiate MOUD
  - Catalyze culture change in hospital re: OUD and MOUD
  - Sustainable through billable services

Recovery coach - Salem Hospital



Credit: Jesse Costa/WBUR

Addiction Consult Service Team  
Holyoke Medical Center



Credit: George O'Brien  
BusinessWest.com

# Hospital Bridge Clinic in Lowell

- Strategy to initiate MOUD treatment on demand (“same day care”)
- Prescriber writes short-term prescription and team connects patient to MOUD care in the community.
- HCS Supported a part-time psych NP, RN care manager, social worker, 2 recovery coaches, part-time project manager
- Clinic walking distance from Downtown



### Outpatient Bridge Clinic Care Team




**Ashley Tobey, PMHNP-BC**  
*Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioner*



**Mary Silva, RN-BC**  
*Behavioral Health Nurse Manager*



**Danielle Czekanski, LICSW**  
*Social Worker, Bridge Clinic*



**Deborah Ryan**  
*Recovery Coach*

**Wendy Mitchell, MD, Medical Director, Bridge Clinic**  
**Neelam Sihag, MD, Chief of Psychiatry, Medical Director of the Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Program**



**The Circle Health Bridge Clinic**

# Provider on the Pier: Direct care to the fishing community in Gloucester

- New clinic in harbormaster's office offers harm reduction, link to primary care, insurance & MOUD initiation
- Innovative way to reach a high risk population. Transient, largely immigrant dock workers
- Collaboration with ONESTOP mobile van and four other community organizations
- HCS supported part-time Physician Assistant from local hospital and SUD Navigator support





# OEND Outreach via Stipends to Peers in Holyoke and Gloucester

- Compensated people with opioid use disorder for their work to collect syringes, distribute naloxone and other harm reduction supplies
- Peers have established relationship with harm reduction center
- Expands outreach to previously unreached people who do not otherwise access services
- Opportunity to show success in employment history



# Brockton Mobile Medical Unit – Clinic on Wheels

- MOUD for hard to reach populations
- Harm reduction services
- Link to health center services (e.g., recovery coaching, counseling)
- Street outreach, outreach at the correctional facility, library, local drop-in centers
- HCS supported NP, LPN, and Cape Verdean Creole speaking outreach worker, pick up truck, IT, supplies



Credit: Jesse Costa/WBUR

# Opioid Treatment Program in Holyoke

- Strategy to address a treatment desert
- Located in downtown Holyoke, drastically decreased travel time to access methadone
- Referral partnerships with two local medical centers, recovery center, and court
- HCS funded NP, RN, Care Coordinator, Recovery Coach





# Communication Campaign Products

## Marketing for EBPs at Community Organizations



## Media buys (e.g., billboards, bus ads)



## Available in multiple languages

El uso de metadona  
y buprenorfina  
**NO**  
sustituye una  
adicción por otra.



NIH  
**HEAL**  
INITIATIVE  
HEALing Communities Study  
Massachusetts

## Local community images





# Haitian and Cape Verdean Radio Shows in Brockton

Check out this Haitian Creole radio show: An Introduction to Addiction and Opioids. Hosted by Patricia Sanon with special guest and Brockton Coalition member, Jeanie Jeudy, on Radio Tele Planet Compas.



- 4-part series featuring community guests and spoken in Haitian Creole and Cape Verdean Creole
- Premiered on social media
- Topics covered
  - Addiction 101
  - Stigma
  - Overdose prevention
  - Treatment and Recovery



# MA Lessons Learned

- Communities know best
- Coalition members strengthen relationships between community organizations
- Data can identify health disparities
- Low cost, high impact strategies are possible
- Insights from people with lived experience are critical
- Coalitions can develop culturally impactful strategies
- Smaller communities can effectively collaborate for greater regional impact
- Funds, focused goal & timeline yielded coalition action

# Thank you!

Contact us at [HEAL@bmc.org](mailto:HEAL@bmc.org)  
<https://healingcommunitiesstudy.org>

