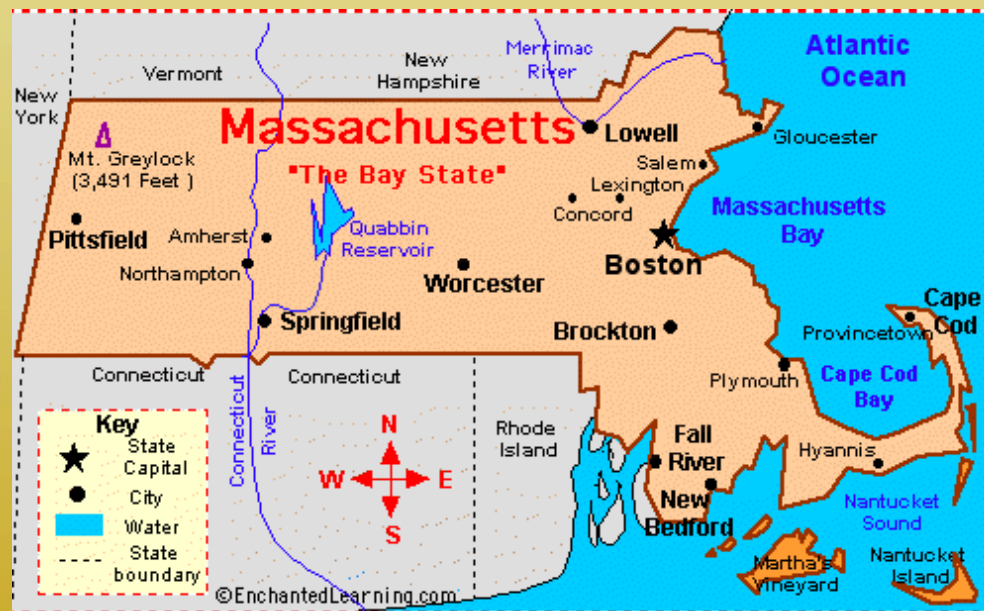


Massachusetts Public Health Practice-Based Research Network



Public Health Regionalization Working Group

Goal of Working Group:

To strengthen the Massachusetts public health system by creating a sustainable regional structure for equitable delivery of local public health services across the Commonwealth

Focus of PBRN:

Steering committee from the Working Group that is responsible for research associated with regionalization of public health services

Public Health Regionalization Project Working Group

- Local Public Health Officials
- Coalition for Local Public Health
(Professional & Advocacy Organizations):
 - MA Health Officers Assoc.
 - MA Environmental Health Assoc.
 - MA Assoc. of Health Boards
 - MA Assoc. of Public Health Nurses
 - MA Public Health Assoc.
- Legislators (Public Health and Health Care Financing)
- State Agencies (EOHHS, MDPH, MDEP)
- Academics



The Case for Regionalization: Massachusetts



- 1st in nation for number of local public health depts. (351)
- No county system
- No state financial support
- No statewide PH mutual aid system
- Budgets vary dramatically
- Regional disparities in services
- Workforce shortage looming; uneven workforce qualifications
- Increased financial pressures

Demands Outstrip Capacities for Local Boards of Health

- 70% of towns reported inadequate staffing to meet basic regulatory and statutory responsibilities.
- 67% of reporting cities & towns failed to meet food inspection requirements in 2006.
- 17% of western MA towns kept no records of reportable diseases (2004).

Primary Research Question

Will the regionalization of public health services and/or departments improve the capacity of local health authorities to provide essential public health services to local citizens?

Initial Goals of MA PBRN

- Develop and evaluate a data-informed strategy for LPHDs to use for making decisions about the need for regionalization and the appropriate regional service model
- Tools of interest:
 - National Performance Standards for Local Public Health
 - Service provision assessment
 - Quality Improvement Tools for Public Health

General Plan

- Discuss appropriate tools for assessment and decision-making
 - TA provided by PBRN on tool selection and conceptualization of how to integrate data on essential services with everyday practice
- Identify 3-4 pilot “regions” (i.e., groups of communities interested in working together)
- Use tools for assessment
- Planning meetings with each group
- Evaluate process

