

# **Southeastern MA (SEMA) Public Health Collaborative**

## **FY26 Q3 Impact Report**

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## Background: The Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant Program

In 2021, the New Bedford Health Department applied and was awarded grant funding by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to lead a shared services arrangement of the Acushnet, Fairhaven, and New Bedford Health Departments following the recommendations of the [Blueprint for Public Health Excellence](#). In the 2019 Blueprint report, cross-jurisdictional sharing of public health services was named as an evidence-based strategy to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of local public health in Massachusetts. An intermunicipal agreement was established to share health services among the communities and the partnership became known as the Southeastern Massachusetts Public Health Collaborative, or SEMA Public Health.

SEMA Public Health is now in its third year and is fully staffed with 4.25 FTE grant-funded public health professionals who facilitate and provide services in Acushnet, Fairhaven, and New Bedford. The goals of the PHE shared services grant program have been codified into Massachusetts state law via the [SAPHE Act](#) of 2020, and further in the [SAPHE 2.0 Act](#) of 2024. The following report summarizes the activities conducted during the first three quarters of FY26 to demonstrate the value and shared benefits of the SEMA Public Health collaborative to the communities of Acushnet, Fairhaven, and New Bedford.

**With the SEMA Public Health partnership**, nursing services have been established where none previously existed. Two full-time public health nurses and one part-time community health worker conduct infectious disease control activities, and a myriad of public health nursing services have been developed and implemented. Public Health Excellence-funded shared staff provide language capacity in Portuguese and Cape Verdean Creole; Support and backup for environmental health inspections that was once severely needed now exists with a regional shared inspector. The collaborative's coordinator/data analyst facilitates the execution of the shared services program, liaising with municipal health leadership, MDPH, and an ever-increasing number of community partners.

Thanks to the Public Health Excellence grant program, this group effectively strengthens the quality and capacity of public health protections in Acushnet, Fairhaven, and New Bedford without utilizing municipal budgets and local taxpayer dollars. The work of SEMA Public Health falls into three major categories that inform the organization of this report: Public Health Nursing, Environmental Health, and Health Communications.



## Public Health Nursing

The public health nursing team includes two registered nurses and one community health worker. Together, their services include clinics (community wellness, vaccine, and tuberculosis skin testing), lifesaving skills trainings, car seat safety checks and distribution, in-home vaccinations, infectious disease case investigation, tuberculosis case management, and community outreach. All materials promoting these services are advertised in each municipality and when a service is offered in another language, translated.

### Public Health Nursing Clinics

Three types of clinics are offered by the public health nursing division:

- **Community Wellness Clinics** – Conducted on-site in community spaces, these clinics offer blood pressure screening, health education, naloxone training and distribution, car seat safety checks, and community resource distribution. For the full list of resources available for distribution, see page 7.
- **Vaccine Clinics** – Public health nurses administer seasonal influenza vaccines, both standard and high-dose, for insured and uninsured individuals age 18 and over, as well as tetanus vaccines for uninsured individuals via community clinics and in-home for homebound individuals.
- **Tuberculosis (TB) Skin Test Clinics**- Individuals may need a TB skin test for screening purposes, such as for work, school enrollment, or immigration requirements. Weekly TB clinics are offered at the New Bedford Health Department with subsequent reporting/referral taking place for any individual with a positive skin test result.

Nursing Clinic Totals				
Clinic Type	Q3 Attendance	Q3 Clinic Count	FY26 Total Attendance	FY26 Total Clinic Count
Flu Vaccine	7	2	234	20
Community Wellness	107	13	193	26
Tuberculosis Skin Test	28	5	125	30



## In-Home Vaccination Program

SEMA Public Health advertises and offers no-cost, in-home flu vaccinations for adults in New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Acushnet who may otherwise have difficulty getting to a community vaccination location.

In-Home Vaccination Totals	
Q3	FY26 Total
7	48

## Lifesaving Skills Trainings

Lifesaving skills training courses offered by SEMA Public Health include:

- Heartsaver CPR, AED, & First Aid with Narcan: Hands-on, in-person training with certification provided through the American Heart Association. Narcan training is included with all Heartsaver courses taught by SEMA.
- Narcan (naloxone): Equips individuals to recognize the signs of an overdose and to administer Narcan (naloxone) effectively during emergencies.
- Stop the Bleed – Prepares anyone with little or no medical training to recognize and control life-threatening bleeding before professional help arrives.
- Safe Start Baby Safety Classes – Prepares caregivers with education about safe sleep and hands-on training for infant CPR, choking, and car seat safety.
- **New!** Youth Mental Health First Aid – Empowers adults with skills to recognize, understand, and confidently respond to mental health and substance use challenges in youth age 12-18.
- **New!** Safe@Home by SafeSitter® – Prepares youth age 9-12 to care for themselves when parents are away for a short period of time. Students learn basic first aid, how to practice safe habits, how to prevent unsafe situations, and what to do when faced with dangers such as power outages and weather emergencies.

Lifesaving Skills Training Totals		
Training	Individuals Trained in Q3	Total Trained FY2026
Heartsaver CPR, AED, First Aid & Narcan	13	77
Narcan	27	130
Stop the Bleed	13	51
Safe Start (Baby Safety)	9	25
Youth Mental Health First Aid	38	38
Safe@Home by SafeSitter®	6	6

## Car Seat Safety Checks & Distribution Program

The SEMA Public Health nursing team are certified Child Passenger Safety technicians with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and provide hands-on, educational car seat safety checks to encourage proper use and adherence to state and national safety standards.

The New Bedford Health Department holds a state grant that provides car seats to families in need in the region. The SEMA Public Health nursing team thus provides caregivers with car seats as well as education on proper installation and usage.

Car Seat Safety Program Summary		
Service	Q3	FY26 Total
Car Seat Safety Checks	25	102
Car Seats Distributed	24	88



## Community Outreach

Community outreach involves bringing education and resources directly to communities to improve overall population health and is often done in partnership with other community-serving organizations. In the summary below, individual touchpoints refer to the approximate number of individual engagements made by the SEMA Public Health team at community outreach events.

Community Outreach Totals			
Q3 Touchpoints	Q3 Events	FY26 Total Touchpoints	FY26 Total Events
108	5	2,313	31

## Infectious Disease Case Investigation

The SEMA Public Health nursing team provides daily monitoring of the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiological Network (MAVEN) in New Bedford and provides backup coverage in Acushnet and Fairhaven. Infectious disease case investigation is mandated by state law in the Massachusetts Code of Regulations 105 CMR 300.

## Tuberculosis Case Management

SEMA Public Health's registered nurses provide tuberculosis case management for individuals with active cases of the disease in New Bedford and backup case management in Acushnet and Fairhaven. Tuberculosis case management is mandated by state law in the Massachusetts Code of Regulations 105 CMR 365.

## Community Resources Available for Distribution

The following health promotion resources have been made available to community members in New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Acushnet by the SEMA Public Health partnership. The following items were either donated or purchased with grant funds and are distributed to community members with information about SEMA Public Health and its services:

- Tick removal kits
- Bleeding emergency kits
- Drug deactivation and disposal pouches
- Medication organizers (in English & Spanish)
- Sharps containers
- SPF 30 individual sunscreen
- SPF 30 lip balm
- UV400 sunglasses
- Hand sanitizer
- CPR face shields



Additionally, Narcan (naloxone) kits are distributed to every individual who completes Narcan training. SEMA Public Health has increased community access to Narcan by expanding the reach of the New Bedford Health Department's existing Narcan distribution program into the towns of Acushnet and Fairhaven.



## Community Sunscreen Dispensers

SEMA Public Health’s community sunscreen dispensers are accessible during the summer months in key locations across New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Acushnet and provide free SPF 30, reef-safe, sport sunscreen to community members. An additional mobile sunscreen dispenser unit is brought to SEMA outreach events during the spring and summer months.



West Beach, New Bedford



West Island, Fairhaven



Noah's Place Playground, Pope's Island



Fort Taber, New Bedford



Monte Park, New Bedford



Acushnet Sawmill

## Environmental Health

The PHE Inspector is responsible for the following in each SEMA Public Health municipality:

- **Acushnet:** Conduct food inspections on a risk-based inspection schedule; conduct other environmental ad-hoc inspections as needed.
- **Fairhaven:** Conduct food inspections on risk-based inspection schedule; assist Health Department staff with transition to OpenGov; conduct other environmental ad-hoc inspections as needed.
- **New Bedford:** Train new employees; assist with internal operations including SOP creation, permitting, and process improvements; provide OpenGov technical support.

### Environmental Health Inspection FY26 Totals

Municipality	Number of Inspections	Time to Complete (Hours)
Acushnet	31	38
Fairhaven	11	15

If a food establishment is facing possible shutdown due to repeated violations, the PHE Inspector conducts on-site restaurant employee training for risk mitigation.



### Health Communications

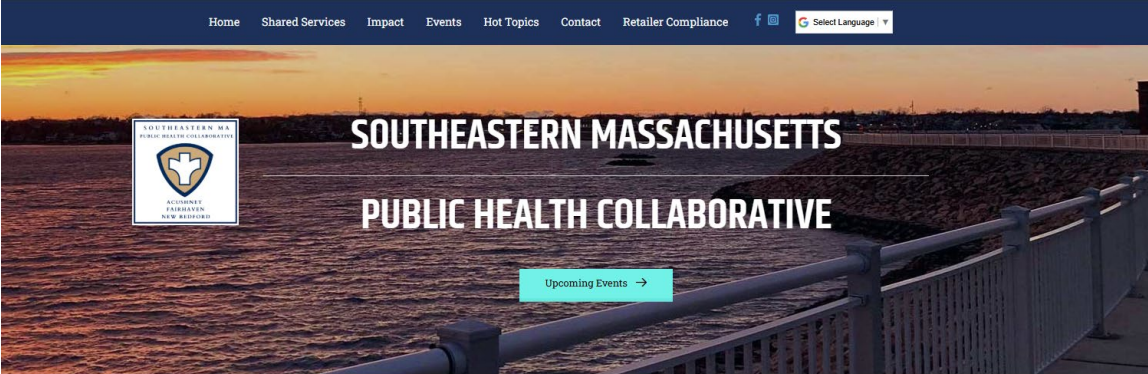
#### Car Seat Safety Campaign

During Summer 2025, SEMA Public Health launched a mass media campaign to promote car seat safety and advertise its car seat safety check service. The campaign included a billboard on Route 195 W in New Bedford and advertisements on 13 SRTA buses in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.



### Website and Social Media

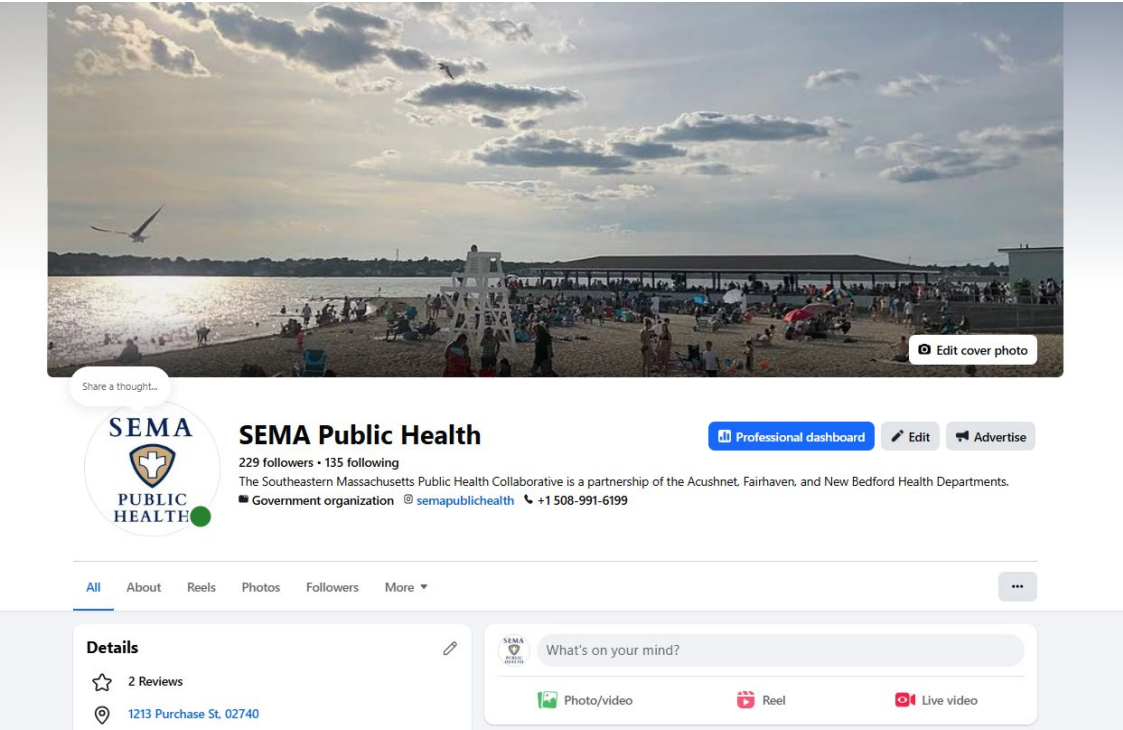
SEMA Public Health has a website, Facebook, and Instagram account that are regularly updated and monitored by the shared services coordinator. These outlets promote services and events put on by the collaborative and its partners and share messaging that aims to promote and protect health. Occasionally, SEMA pays to advertise content to reach additional people in the region.



**WHO WE ARE**

The Southeastern Massachusetts Public Health Collaborative (SEMA Public Health) is a partnership of the New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Acushnet Health Departments.

We are funded by the Massachusetts Public Health Excellence grant, which provides local health departments with funding for shared staff and resources, with a focus on adopting recommendations from the Blueprint for Public Health Excellence.



## Conclusion

The SEMA Public Health partnership has established nursing services where none previously existed and offers a myriad of services that promote health and prevent harm. A shared environmental health inspector provides needed support, backup, and language capacity for environmental health inspections, and the shared services coordinator/data analyst keeps the work driving forward by identifying gaps and coordinating needed services.

### During the first three quarters of FY2026, SEMA Public Health:

- Brought resources & health information to 2,313 people at 31 community outreach events
- Hosted 76 clinics, providing tuberculosis skin testing, blood pressure screenings, flu vaccines, & health education to 552 people
- Trained 327 community members in lifesaving skills
- Distributed & installed 88 car seats to families in need & performed 14 independent car seat safety checks
- Vaccinated 282 adults for influenza, including 48 vaccines administered in-home
- Provided direct community access to SPF 30 sunscreen at 17 recreational sites during the summer months
- Collaborated with 45 community partner organizations to provide services
- Launched a multilingual mass media campaign
- Increased capacity for environmental public health protections in Acushnet & Fairhaven
- Provided expert-level training & mentorship for three new municipal health inspectors
- Provided food safety education for restaurant staff facing repeated violations

*Thanks to the Public Health Excellence grant, SEMA Public Health works with municipal health leadership and community partners to strengthen local public health service delivery in Acushnet, Fairhaven, and New Bedford efficiently and effectively without utilizing municipal budgets.*



## Appendix A: Staffing Chart

Staff Name & Title	FTE	Responsibilities
Gina Mucciardi, MPH Shared Services Coordinator & Data Analyst	1.0	Provide data-driven recommendations and support the design and implementation of program initiatives and special projects to improve health outcomes; Coordinate, promote, track, and report on shared public health services and staff time; Convene regular meetings with municipal public health department leads and staff to advance the goals of the grant program; Support management of the grant budget; Conduct community outreach; Disseminate health communication messaging and manage the SEMA Public Health website and social media.
Kristy MacMillen, BSN, RN, CLC PHE Nurse	1.0	Support the design and implementation of program initiatives and special projects to improve health outcomes; Conduct trainings including Heartsaver CPR & AED, Narcan, Stop the Bleed, and Safe Start baby safety classes; Provide blood pressure screenings, tuberculosis skin tests, and car seat safety checks; Administer vaccines for home-bound individuals and at community clinics; Conduct community outreach; Create health messaging to be used in health communication initiatives; Provide case management for individuals with active tuberculosis (TB) and conduct backup infectious disease case investigation via MAVEN as necessary; Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) and a Diabetes Prevention Program provider.
Ashley Correia, BSN, RN PHE Nurse	1.0	Support the design and implementation of program initiatives and special projects to improve health outcomes; Conduct trainings including Heartsaver CPR & AED, Narcan, Stop the Bleed, Mental Health First Aid, and Safe Start baby safety classes; Provide blood pressure screenings, tuberculosis skin tests, and car seat safety checks; Administer vaccines for home-bound individuals and at community clinics; Conduct community outreach; Create health messaging to be used in health communication initiatives; Provide case management for individuals with active tuberculosis (TB) and conduct backup infectious disease case investigation via MAVEN as necessary.
Sofia DaCosta, RS PHE Inspector	1.0	<b>Acushnet &amp; Fairhaven:</b> Conduct environmental health inspections; standardize forms and processes; train new municipal staff; prepare regulations for presentation to respective boards of health; conduct risk-mitigation education outreach. <b>New Bedford:</b> Assist with internal operations including process improvements and SOP creation, standardization of forms, and technology support for OpenGov; Train new employees.
Rosa Matos, CCHW Community Health Worker	0.25	<b>Acushnet &amp; Fairhaven:</b> Conduct community outreach; Provide car seat safety checks and blood pressure screenings. <b>New Bedford:</b> Monitor MAVEN and conduct infectious disease case investigations as necessary ; Provide Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) for patients with active tuberculosis; Conduct community outreach; Provide car seat safety checks and blood pressure screenings.

## Appendix B: Community Partners

During the first three quarters of FY26, SEMA Public Health collaborated with 45 community partners:

Acushnet Board of Health	Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Acushnet Council on Aging	Millicent Library
Acushnet Housing Authority	New Bedford Community Health
Apple-Peach Festival	New Bedford Farmer's Market
Buttonwood Park Zoo	New Bedford Free Public Library
Buttonwood Senior Center	New Bedford Health Department
Cape Verdean Recognition Committee of New Bedford	New Bedford Parks, Recreation, & Beaches Department
Casey Miller Apartments	New Bedford Public Schools
Discover Fairhaven	New Beginnings Moms Do Care Program
Fairhaven Council on Aging	Normandin Middle School
Fairhaven Fire Department	Northstar Learning Centers
Fairhaven Health Department	Olympia Towers
Fairhaven High School	PAACA
Fairhaven Housing Authority	Project Independence
Fairhaven Police Department	Rise up for Homes
Fairhaven Recreation Center	Southcoast Health (including St. Luke's Hospital and Southcoast Obstetrics & Gynecology)
Fairhaven Village Apartments	Southeast Network of Community Health Workers
Fishing Partnership Support Services	St. Anthony of Padua Church
Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness	United Way Family Resource Center
Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force	United Way of Greater New Bedford
Hand-Up Mattress Company	Whaling City Festival
Little Explorers Day Care	YMCA Southcoast
Massachusetts Department of Children & Families	