

Northwest Suburban Health Alliance Community Health Network Area (CHNA) 15

Acton - Bedford - Boxborough - Burlington - Carlisle - Concord
Lexington - Lincoln - Littleton - Wilmington - Winchester - Woburn

Operating Principles

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health created the Community Health Network (CHNA), including the Northwest Suburban Health Alliance, also known as CHNA 15, in May, 1992. A Community Health Network is a local coalition of public, nonprofit, and private sectors. Continuous improvement of health status is the goal of this partnership between the Department, service providers, local health departments, consumers, and the general public in the 12 towns.

CHNA 15 Mission:

We pledge ourselves to working together to build healthier communities through
community-based prevention planning and health promotion.

To further its mission CHNA 15 will work together to:

- Build and maintain CHNA 15 participation, ensuring that it is representative of the diverse organizations and individuals within the 12 towns;
- Reduce health inequities in order to address the social determinates of health;
- Create opportunities for networking between public and private health providers, including individuals;
- Educate and raise awareness about health issues, focusing on effective program models and best practices;
- Assess current services offered in the 12 towns, including assets and gaps; and
- Develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives, events, and projects that address areas of common interest to CHNA 15 participants.

CHNA 15 Vision Statement:

***We envision every community will be safe, supportive and equitable for all
with area organizations collaborating to provide resources and information that empower residents to develop
self-esteem, personal responsibility, and healthy lifestyles.***

To ensure a consistent group effort,

CHNA 15 adopted the following Operating Principles on September 14, 2005.

Amended September 12, 2007, November 12, 2008, November 18, 2010, May 15, 2014, May 17, 2018, May 20, 2021 and December 9, 2021. Conflict of Interest Policy amended May 15, 2015, Disclaimer Statement added January 7, 2016. The Mission of CHNA 15 was adopted in the spring of 1992, and established a vision statement in May, 2020. Both the mission and the visions statement were amended spring of 2021.

Article I – Participation

Section 1 Eligibility: Participation is open to any person interested in furthering and supporting the purposes of CHNA 15.

Section 2 Types of Participation:

- A. Individual
 - Individual community residents within the CHNA 15 communities
 - Parents/ guardians whose children attend school in any of the CHNA 15 communities, and
 - Students attending school in the CHNA 15 communities

- B. Organizational
 - Resident organizations
 - Education organizations and institutions
 - Health care organizations
 - Human service organizations
 - Municipal government
 - Agencies or businesses located in and/or serving the CHNA 15 communities
 - Other institutions based within the CHNA 15 communities.

Organizations and individuals with an interest in our topics are welcome to join training and educational programs, but priority goes to those in the 12 CHNA towns. Grant funding is not available to organizations that do not serve one or more CHNA 15 town.

- C. Advisory
 - Representatives of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH)
 - Fiscal Sponsor
 - Representatives from funding organization(s)
 - Training and technical assistance providers

Article II- Meetings

Section 1 General Meetings: General Meetings in the form of Healthy Community Resource Forums will typically occur at least three times per year. Written notice of the meetings will be posted on our website and sent to our email list at least fourteen days in advance.

Section 2 Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting will typically be held in the spring of every year. Written notice of this meeting will be posted on our website and sent to our email list at least fourteen days in advance.

Section 3 Ad Hoc Committee/Action Team Meetings: The CHNA Chairperson will call Ad Hoc Committee/Action Team Meetings, as needed, to conduct business of a specific nature between General Meetings.

Section 4 Steering Committee Meetings: The Steering Committee is composed of a minimum of seven and a maximum of fifteen CHNA members. Representatives from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the funding organization and the CHNA 15 Coordinator are non-voting advisory members of the Steering Committee. Times and frequencies of all Steering Committee Meetings are determined by its members.

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Article III – GOVERNANCE

Section 1 Steering Committee: Governance of the CHNA is conducted through a Steering Committee, which reflects the views and needs of participants from CHNA 15 communities. The Steering Committee is charged with setting the program of the CHNA. The Steering Committee is vested with

- All administrative oversight of the organization,
- Dispersal of funds,
- Establishment of all contractual arrangements for the organization,
- Establishment of a schedule for decisions on funding requests, and
- Responsibility for the selection, evaluation and termination, if necessary, of the Coordinator and the Fiscal Sponsor.

Steering Committee members aim to represent the diversity of the CHNA 15 communities (cultural, linguistic, geographic, gender and economic). CHNA 15 seeks to involve a variety of public and private institutions and draw representation from a diverse range of ages. Annually the Steering Committee will review the composition of participating communities and strive to reflect that in CHNA 15 and Steering Committee membership composition.

Times and frequency of all Steering Committee Meetings are determined by its members. All business conducted by the Steering Committee will be reviewed at the next General Meeting of the CHNA and issues put to a decision-making process with participants, as appropriate. From time to time, decisions will need to be made between regularly scheduled Steering Committee meetings. Agreement of a majority of Steering Committee members is required for any between meeting decisions that need to be made.

Written notice of the slate of Steering Committee members and officers to be appointed will be posted on our website and sent to our email list at least 14 days prior to the Annual meeting. Written notice of the draft annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year will be made available upon request 14 days prior to the first Healthy Community Resource Forum in any given fiscal year.

Terms of Steering Committee members and of officers are two years with half of the Steering Committee members approved each year. Steering Committee members must be a representative of a CHNA 15 community.

New Steering Committee Members and Officers begin their terms at the end of the next Steering Committee Meeting following the Annual Meeting.

Quorum: A quorum for Steering Committee meetings is a majority of voting Steering Committee members.

Section 2 Removal of Steering Committee Members: A two-thirds majority of members present at a regularly scheduled Steering Committee Meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose, provided proper notification has been given and a quorum is present, may remove any Steering Committee member.

Section 3 Officers:

Chairperson: Prior to election as Chairperson, the nominee must have been on the Steering Committee for at least one year. Duties include the following:

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- *Set the agenda with Steering Committee members with CHNA 15 Coordinator input and designate facilitation or all Steering Committee Meetings and General Meetings.*
- *Represent the CHNA, as needed.*

Vice-Chair: Duties include the following:

- Conduct General Meetings and Steering Committee Meetings at the request of the Chairperson or in the Chairperson's absence.
- The Vice Chair will assist in the duties and functions of the Chairperson.

Treasurer: Duties include the following:

- Authorize payment of CHNA bills, as directed by the Steering Committee
- Work with the Coordinator and any designated Fiscal Sponsor to keep an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements.
- As the Steering Committee may require, present a monthly statement of the financial status of the CHNA at all General and/or Steering Committee Meetings.
- Work with the Coordinator and the designated Fiscal Sponsor to prepare an annual accounting of all fiscal activity for the preceding year.

Secretary: See Article VI - Administration

Section 4 Replacement of Officers *In the event that an officer resigns or fails to attend three consecutive General Meetings or Steering Committee Meetings, without notice, then the Steering Committee will elect an eligible participant as a replacement to serve until the next Annual Meeting.*

Article IV - Decision Making Process

Section 1 Consensus Model: CHNA 15 will use the consensus model to reach agreement at Meetings. In the event that consensus is not successful, formal voting procedures will be employed.

Section 2 Voting: Should the group not be able to reach a decision via consensus and formal voting is required, the motion will pass only if a majority of the committee votes to approve.

Affiliates and Advisors do not vote.

Section 3 Review: An individual or organization within the CHNA 15 communities may request a review of a decision made related to general policies of CHNA 15 by reference to at least one decision and requesting the Steering Committee to place the item on a General Meeting agenda.

Article V - Committees

Section 1 Composition: *Committees are composed of CHNA participants and Steering Committee members. No person may chair more than one Standing Committee at a time.*

Section 2 Nominating: **The Steering Committee Chairperson,** or designated Steering Committee member, will chair the Nominating Committee.

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Immediately following Annual Meeting, the CHNA Chairperson may recruit three or more participants to serve on the Nominating Committee for the next year. The Nominating Committee will include both Steering Committee members and representatives from the General population.

The Nominating Committee is charged with nominating a slate of active participants and officers to the Steering Committee. Its members determine times of their meetings. The CHNA Coordinator is a non-voting member of this committee. The CHNA Coordinator maintains a record of CHNA participants.

The Nominating Committee will:

- Accept and solicit nominations from participants for Steering Committee members who are reflective of the composition of the CHNA 15 communities.
- Present a slate of candidates, including Officers, for election to the Steering Committee. Written notice of the slate of candidates will be posted on our website and sent to our email list at least 14 days prior to Annual Meeting.
- Announce results of the election at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3 *Ad Hoc Committees/Action Teams*: Ad Hoc Committees are designated by the Steering Committee, as needed, to fulfill time-limited objectives. Chairpersons are appointed by the Steering Committee and report to the Steering Committee for the duration of their appointment.

Article VI – Administration

Section 1 CHNA Coordinator: The CHNA Coordinator is a paid employee of the CHNA, under the direction of the Steering Committee. The Coordinator is a non-voting member of the Steering Committee, is the project manager for all CHNA activities, and serves as the liaison to the communities. **CHNA coordinator serves as the CHNA 15 Steering Committee Secretary. The Secretary may be elected with other Steering Committee officers if the CHNA Coordinator is unable to fill this position.** Duties include the following:

- Keep and publish an accurate record of all General Meetings of the CHNA.
- Keep a record of all Steering Committee Meetings.
- Give legal notice of all meetings.
- In collaboration with the CHNA Coordinator, conduct all correspondence not otherwise provided for.
- Keep a file on all correspondence, official reports, and other valuable papers.
- Present a report of all meetings of the Steering Committee to the CHNA.

Section 2 Fiscal Sponsor: *The Fiscal Sponsor is responsible for administering all CHNA funds according to contract specifications including:*

- Receive monies on behalf of the CHNA and give receipt for them.
- Deposit monies in such depository as the Steering Committee shall direct.
- Review and forward all requests for payment to the Treasurer for approval.
- File all necessary Federal and State reports as the law requires.
- Keep all papers relating to the property of the CHNA.

Section 3 Emergency Succession Plan: *The Steering Committee will develop and maintain an Emergency Succession Plan in the event of an unplanned absence of the Coordinator to assure that CHNA activities continue with minimal disruption.*

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Section 4 Document Retention Policy: *The Steering Committee will develop and maintain a Document Retention Policy. The Coordinator will adhere to the policy and maintain CHNA documents accordingly.*

Article VII – General

Section 1 Conflict of Interest: *When funding becomes available, decisions on funding requests will follow a predetermined, well-documented, transparent process overseen by the Steering Committee. Examples of funding sources include DPH mini-grants, Determination of Need or "DoN" monies*, or private sources.*

In order to maintain an equitable process, representatives of organizations or individuals who request funding are expected to exempt themselves from voting on their own funding proposals. All Steering Committee members shall sign a conflict-of-interest form when reviewing proposed grant funding. The ultimate decision in funding allocation will rest with the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee shall disclose any conflict of interest on an annual basis. Steering Committee members exercise their authority in the interest of the organization and not for their own self-interest or the interest of another organization. Steering Committee members must comply with applicable Federal, state and local laws, adhere to organizations bylaws and remain guardians of the mission—Conflicts (real/perceived) in which public and private interest intersect should be managed.

All grant reviewers will be asked to disclose any conflict of interest and are expected to exempt themselves from reviewing proposals from organizations with whom they have a conflict.

Section 2 Contributions: Any capital contribution of money in any amount or any other property of value shall not be repaid to any participant (individual or organization) upon dissolution of the CHNA. Funds or property remaining in the holdings of the CHNA upon its dissolution will be donated to a charitable organization of the CHNA's choosing with the collaboration of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Community Health Engagement or its successor.

Section 3 Amending the Operating Principles: These Operating Principles will be reviewed every third year and may be altered, amended or repealed by the majority of CHNA 15 participants present at the Annual Meeting or at a general meeting. Any proposed changes to the Operating Principles will be posted on our website and sent to email list 14 days before the Annual Meeting or General Meeting.

Section 4 Disclaimer Statement: Resources, trainers and experts hired and shared by CHNA 15 are offered to provide a variety of perspectives, research findings and experience, and are meant to be informational. CHNA 15 and its Steering Committee do not endorse or recommend any specific organizations or services, and encourage participants to evaluate resources to ensure that they meet your specific needs.

*Determination of Need, or "DoN," is a DPH requirement for health care organizations that want to make certain improvements or upgrades of their facilities. These organizations must involve the local CHNA in how to spend 5% of the project's cost on improving health within the region.

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