

**HEALTH ISSUES AND HEALTH CARE IN WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HEALTHY LIFESTYLES IN ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Advocacy Organizations	
What are some Local organizations that do advocacy work?	<p>Public School Principals - obtaining funding to extend the school day related to providing a third meal for students in need; reinstating or expanding the availability of health classes for students; physical education.</p> <p>United Way of Central Massachusetts – mental health and well-being programs for school children; Short-term Planning or Pilot Grants aimed at jumpstarting community-wide strategies in addressing critical areas of need among school-age youth in the community.</p> <p>YMCA of Central Massachusetts – weekly <i>On the Go</i> programs for boys and girls considered above healthy weight that features nutrition counseling and 60-minutes of coach-led physical exercise.</p> <p>Boys & Girls Club of Worcester – physical recreation and positive health and life skills among city youth.</p> <p>Worcester Mental Health Coalition – promotes empowerment through advocacy, education, training, and advancing consumer voice through public presentations, newsletters and community forums.</p>
What are some State level organizations that do advocacy work?	<p>NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts – support legislation which would make comprehensive health education part of the state’s core curriculum.</p> <p>Children’s Health Access Coalition – 50 organizations; ensuring comprehensive health services for children, including mental services up to age 21.</p> <p>Massachusetts School Nurse Organization – promotes and advances quality school health services and promotes rights, interest, and professional growth of members in the legislative, economic and education arenas.</p> <p>Massachusetts Public Health Association – advocating for legislation to eliminate high-calorie foods and beverages in the state’s schools; to ensure only healthy snacks and drinks are sold in schools.</p>
What are some National level organizations that do advocacy work?	<p>National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) – advocates national policies and programs to promote healthy eating and physical activity.</p> <p>CDC Active Community Environments Initiative – promotes walking, bicycling and accessible recreation facilities.</p> <p>Stonyfield Farms – promotes installation of vending machines carrying their healthy products in schools nationwide. Working with Connecticut state project Team Nutrition in concert Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders and Dept. of Public Health.</p>

	<p>American Medical Association and national Parent Teachers Association – supporting the Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act</p> <p>National Abstinence Education Association – supports federal legislation Title V funding for public school health education.</p> <p>Health Care for All; MSPCC – easier access to mental health services for children via legislative efforts.</p>
What are some International organizations that do advocacy work?	N/A
Advocacy Issue	
Looking at the State, National, and/or International level, at the Web sites or information from the organizations above, what is a major area of advocacy at this time? <i>Try to choose an advocacy issue that will in some way affect the local community.</i> Advocacy specifically refers to promoting legislation, policies or specific budgetary appropriations that positively affect a health issue. This may occur through decreasing barriers to accessing health services, providing an infrastructure conducive to effective health promotion programs, or directly increasing the resources and infrastructure of the public health system.	<p>Federal and state legislation to remove high calorie drinks and foods from the schools and replacing them with healthy lunches, snacks and drinks.</p> <p>State legislation promoting access to mental health services for children.</p> <p>Federal and state legislation that would make comprehensive health education part of the state’s core curriculum.</p>
What specific law, policy or appropriation is being advocated for?	<p>MA HB 4452 (2005-2006, proposed) Among other school nutrition standards, would have required that not more than 10 % of total calories or 2 grams maximum per packaged food be from saturated fat plus trans fat. These provisions would also have applied to non-prepackaged food items sold in a la carte food lines or any place in schools where non-prepackaged food items are sold.</p> <p>An Act Relative to Children’s Mental Health House Bill 1872 and Senate Bill 1133, aimed at strengthening and improving the system that delivers care, and at various services that directly benefit children with mental health needs and their families.</p> <p>An Act to Provide Health Education in Schools Senate Bill 1353 would make comprehensive health education – including sex education – part of the state’s core curriculum.</p> <p>Title V funding for abstinence education Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act</p>
Who is doing the advocating? (Which organizations?)	<p>MA HB 4452 (2005-2006, proposed) Massachusetts School Nurse Organization Massachusetts Public Health Association</p> <p>An Act Relative to Children’s Mental Health House Bill 1872 and Senate Bill 1133 Health Care for All MSPCC Children’s Health Access Coalition</p>

	<p>An Act to Provide Health Education in Schools Senate Bill 1353 NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts Title V funding for abstinence education National Abstinence Education Association Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act American Medical Association National Parent Teacher's Association</p>
Who is being lobbied?	State and/or federal legislators
Whom will this issue affect?	School children with regard to better nutrition that is easier to access in schools; mental health service access; and health education that includes sex education.
Were they or will they (in your opinion) be successful?	We doubt that these bills will be passed because of the current political climate on the national level, particularly with regard to the health education bill. Funding for health care reimbursement is also being cut at the provider level so additional mental health services, particular for children, seems doubtful at the moment.
Why or why not? What do they need to be more successful?	New leadership and people voting with their convictions. Local advocacy groups should also be more vocal in educating the community on the importance of wellness and prevention-type programs that are population-focused and being advocated for since this is the only way to save health care dollars and eventually improve the nation's overall health.
What are the consequences if they are not successful?	Continuing increases in obesity, diabetes and other chronic illnesses and the eventual decline in longevity among our youngest generation. It will also affect local, regional and national productivity, given that increasing mental health issues will not be addressed and the younger generation will not be able to support the aging population.
If they are not successful, what other strategies can be used to achieve the same goal?	Start with the children in our schools. Empower them to make healthy choices in all aspects of their individual, day-to-day activities. Promote mentoring among our high school and college students to provide a good example to those students coming up behind them. Also promote parent advocacy and encourage those who have a voice to give a voice to those who don't.
How can physicians and/or nurses be involved in this advocacy issue?	By joining groups or associations that drive health policy initiation and volunteering to support grassroots initiatives in the local community.