



Wellesley, MA

NC-8 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



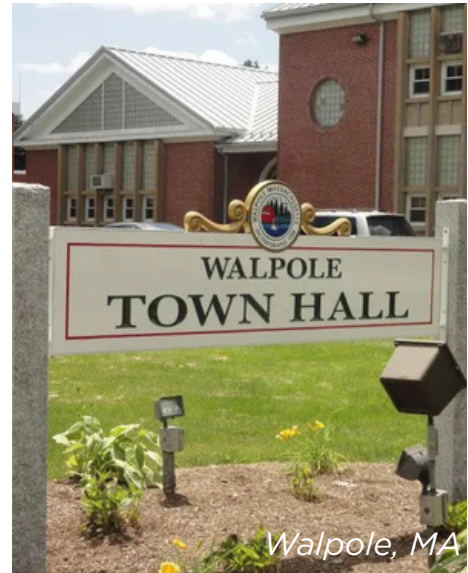
JANUARY - MARCH 2026



Dedham, MA



Canton, MA



Walpole, MA



Norwood, MA



Milton, MA



Westwood, MA

Bringing together the Health Departments of Canton, Dedham, Milton, Norwood, Walpole, Wellesley, and Westwood

About the NC-8 Public Health Coalition

The Norfolk County-8 Coalition (NC-8) brings together the health departments of Canton, Dedham, Milton, Norwood, Walpole, Wellesley, and Westwood to promote wellness, prevent disease, and protect the environment. Through regional collaboration, we work to improve our residents' health and quality of life. Visit our website nc8coalition.com for more!

This quarterly newsletter serves as a window into our collective impact, highlighting key successes and project milestones from January through March 2026. Inside, you'll find essential community resources, a preview of upcoming events, and the strategic initiatives we're moving forward to keep our neighborhoods healthy.

Coalition Updates

Take our NC-8 Community Survey!

We are conducting a community health assessment to gain a greater understanding of the priorities and challenges facing residents. [Click here to participate](#). Let's improve the health of our community together!

Meet NC-8's Regional Epidemiologist!

Sarah Lavari joined the NC-8 team in December 2025. She applies her MPH from George Washington University to lead our infectious disease surveillance and data analysis. Her background in vaccine management and HIV research is key to our evidence-based public health interventions.

NC-8 is hiring a Regional Public Health Nurse!

We are looking for a community-minded RN to join our team in a role focused on maternal, child, and family health. This is a unique opportunity to move beyond the clinic walls and work directly with families across seven neighboring suburban towns. [Click here for more details](#). To apply, send your CV to careers@bmestrategies.com.

Epidemiology Updates

Introducing: Resources from Regional Epidemiologist, Sarah Lavari.

NORFOLK COUNTY-8 PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION

What's Circulating?

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Measles Alert: Two cases of measles have been confirmed in Massachusetts residents—one linked to international travel and one to out-of-state exposure. While there's no evidence of ongoing spread in the state, MMR vaccination is the best protection — confirm your status with your provider.

AT A GLANCE — CURRENT MASSACHUSETTS STATE TRENDS

INFLUENZA High Trending slightly upward after sharp decline	COVID-19 Very Low Hospitalizations remain very low	RSV Low ED visits low and declining	NOROVIRUS Circulating Foodborne illness continues statewide
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STATE & COMMUNITY LEVEL DATA — MASSACHUSETTS

Last week's influenza-like illness activity by Massachusetts region

Influenza Cases — NC-8 Communities
Sept 2025 — Feb 2026 | Source: MAVEN Influenza Report 3/2/2026

Influenza-like illness (ILI) activity is classified as "High" across Eastern Massachusetts, with Norfolk County among the most affected regions, despite a sharp decline over the past two months.

As temperatures warm into spring, cases are expected to continue declining. This drop follows a peak in December 2025 — the highest ILI rate since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic — driven primarily by Influenza A, Subclade K.

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NORFOLK COUNTY-8 PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION

FACT SHEET

2025-2026 FLU SEASON

February 3, 2026

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is reporting high levels of influenza-like illness activity, with 187 deaths statewide, including six pediatric deaths to date. Laboratory data indicate that Influenza A is the primary strain currently circulating.

What is Influenza A?

Influenza A is a strain of the flu virus that can cause more severe symptoms and spreads more easily than Influenza B. The World Health Organization has detected a new flu strain, known as Subclade K, which may be contributing to the increased influenza activity observed this season.

Who is at risk?

While anyone can get the flu, some people are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications. This includes adults aged 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, and children younger than 5 years, especially those under 2 years old.

Tips From Your Local Board of Health (LBOH)

- Get vaccinated - It's not too late to protect yourself and others
- Pick up a free Flu/COVID-19 test kit at your LBOH
- Make sure to wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water

WHAT'S CIRCULATING REPORTS

Sarah is developing monthly reports on infectious disease data across NC-8 communities. These reports highlight which diseases are circulating and provide comparative data on state trends—and when relevant, national trends. This information will be especially useful as residents begin traveling for spring and summer vacations.

INFORMATIONAL FLYERS

Sarah is developing health communications tools to be disseminated across NC-8 communities this quarter. These materials will be tailored to community health issues throughout the year and will provide information from seasonal infectious disease data to food safety information.

Resource and Services Spotlight



Join the Medical Reserve Corps

Local health, safety, and preparedness begins with you

What is the NC-8 Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)?

- The NC-8 MRC is part of the national MRC network which comprises 800 community-based units and over 300,000 volunteers throughout the US.
- MRC volunteers nationwide contributed >3 million hours to the COVID-19 response effort.
- MRC volunteers include medical & public health professionals, as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds.
- NC-8 MRC towns include: Canton, Dedham, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Walpole, Wellesley, and Westwood.

What can you expect from volunteering with the MRC?

- Free training and educational opportunities
- Networking opportunities with volunteers and professionals
- Valuable experience in public health preparedness & response

What activities are MRC volunteers involved in?

- Emergency Preparedness & Response Efforts
- Disaster Medical Support
- Vaccination Clinics
- Emergency Sheltering Operations
- Mass Casualty Incidents
- Health Fairs/Community Events

CONTACT US:



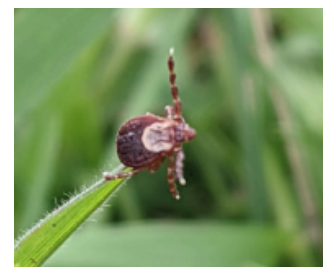
norfolkcounty8@gmail.com

<http://region4ab.org/mrc/norfolk-county-8-mrc/>



Community Events

Join us virtually on Tuesday, April 28th, at 6 PM for an informative session on ticks and effective ways to prevent tick bites. [Register here!](#)



Success Stories & Ongoing Initiatives

NC-8 is hard at work on several major initiatives designed to build a more resilient and connected community.

Community Health Assessment (CHA)

We are launching a deep dive into the specific health needs of our region. This equity-centered assessment focuses on identifying health trends and disparities in the region and ensuring all residents have access to timely, culturally appropriate care.



Regional Communications Project

To ensure we are ready for any emergency, we are developing a new Regional Communications Standard Operating Procedure. This project includes specialized workshops and "tabletop" exercises to streamline how our health departments share critical information during public health incidents.

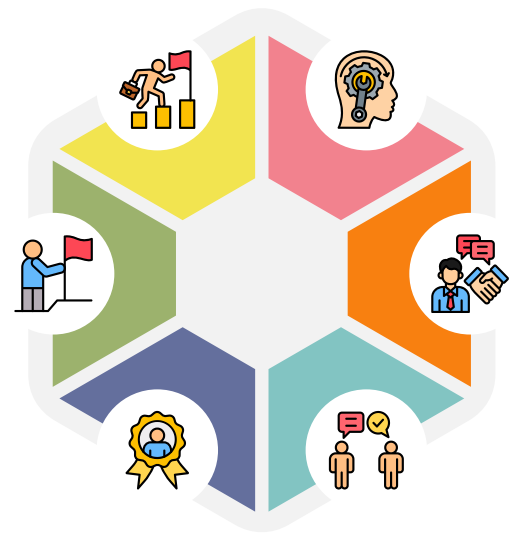


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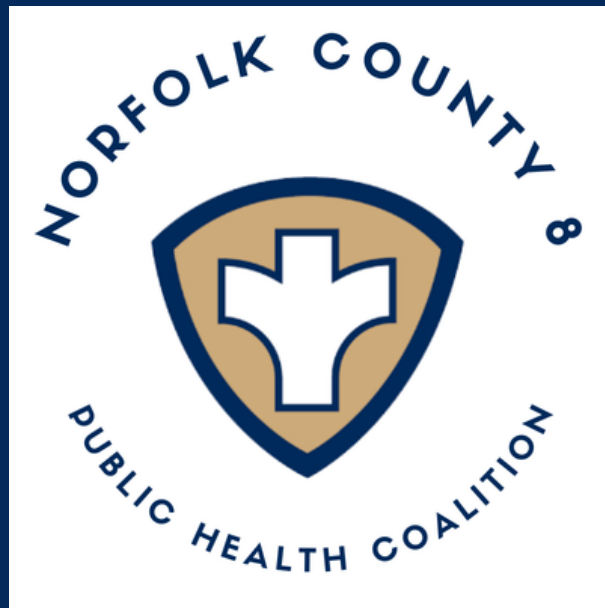
Workforce Development

Since joining our team in December as our Regional Epidemiologist, Sarah Lavari has completed all onboarding training and provided 100% MAVEN coverage to our communities. Sarah is collaborating in-person with our member towns as she integrates into our team, establishing connections and developing projects using epidemiologic data. Her role is a key part of our effort to evaluate and sustain the infrastructure and workforce needed for effective disease control.



Strategic Planning Project

We're in the midst of a strategic planning process to set long-term priorities for regional public health. As part of this effort, we're evaluating Regional Staff capacity, looking at how we work together, strengthening partnerships, and planning for the future to ensure our coalition remains sustainable and continues to provide high-quality public health services across all communities.



Additional information and resources are available through the **Norfolk County-8 Public Health Coalition.**

nc8coalition.com

