



# Health Improvement Alliance

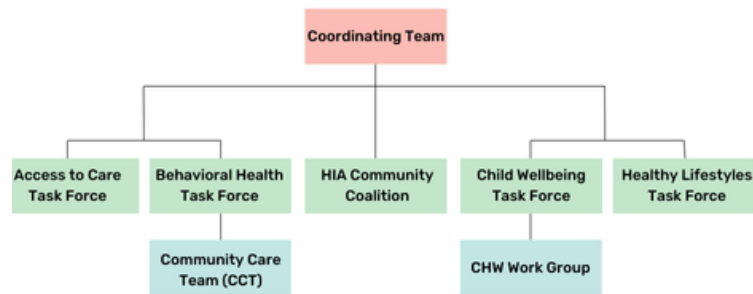
Partnering to Build Healthier Communities Since 2003

## 2023-2024 Annual Report

October 2024

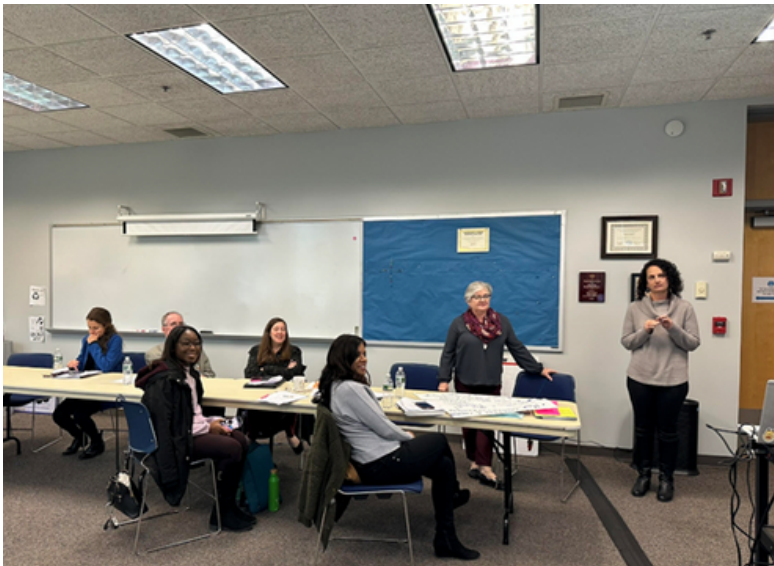
### New Improved Structure

Feedback from our 2023 Health Improvement Alliance (HIA) Partnership Survey revealed it was time to make important changes. The first step was a change in our structure, combining increased accountability with equitable oversight and work group consolidation among our CHNA funders in what is called the HIA Coordinating Team. We then renamed our Steering Committee as the Community Coalition, to better reflect the purpose and inclusiveness of this group. Other changes made to meet the evolving needs of HIA members included an ongoing commitment to hold in-person Community Coalition meetings every quarter, while being intentional about providing networking time to build a stronger sense of connection.



### 2025 CHNA Update

Recognizing the need for an improved process, HIA Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) funders gathered in late fall of 2023 to discuss findings from Yale New Haven Health’s CHNA Evaluation and Redesign project. Out of this session came important feedback and planning for our 2025 CHNA, with the aim of carrying out a more collaborative and robust process all with an earlier timeline. We are now working with Crescendo Consulting Group as primary data collection is underway with the use of DataHaven’s Community Wellbeing Survey, a newly implemented Community-Based Assets and Needs Survey, key stakeholder interviews, and Greater Bridgeport Focus Groups that are strategically done in each town of our region.



On February 16, 2024, the Health Improvement Alliance lost our dear friend and colleague, Bill Hoey, after a valiant battle with cancer. Bill served as Vice President of Mission Services at St. Vincent’s Medical Center for 14 years, sharing his passion for the hospital’s historic mission with everyone he encountered. During most of those years, Bill also co-led the Health Improvement Alliance. Bill cared deeply about our community, and drew on his profound faith and compassion to not only serve, but to inspire those around him to find meaningful ways to do so. His loving family, friends and colleagues will forever miss him. Our beloved Bill is home now, where we know he will eternally be “never better.”

# Supporting Each Other Through Action



Task force members continue to use their monthly meetings to network, share resources, and support each other in the community. Networking highlights include the support of *Wheel It Forward's Bridgeport Grand Opening* and LifeBridge's symposium, *The Courage to Understand: Nurturing a Trauma-Informed Community*.

Fourteen partner organizations across all four task forces collaborated to hold the 2nd Annual HIA Health Fair at *Make the Road CT* in May 2024. Fifty-three people participated in the *Know Your Numbers* screening that included blood pressure, HbA1c, pulse oximetry, BMI, waist circumference, and connection to follow-up care.



The Stratford and Milford Health Departments hosted several walk and talk events in their respective towns and one in partnership with each other. Walk 'n Talks bring together community members and health professionals for a walk with an opportunity to discuss various health-related topics. Milford hosted three walks with about 40 attendees each and Stratford hosted multigenerational walks that brought together grandparents, parents, and children with an average attendance of 28 people per event. A joint event between both health departments happened on May 28th at Silver Sands Beach. This multigenerational walk included sharing information around services available to families in both communities.

## HIA Partners with Fairfield University MPH Program

All four task forces provided professional mentors for Fairfield University Master of Public Health students enrolled in a Community-Engaged Learning Program Planning and Evaluation course. Through this process, students worked closely with the task forces while reinforcing their learning on how to conduct a community health assessment and planning and evaluating essential public health interventions.

Highlights include the Behavioral Health Task Force's template for developing mental health paraprofessionals and Child Wellbeing's template for a youth mentorship program. Both will be used to pursue future funding opportunities and/or serve as a template for new collaborative approaches to building the behavioral health workforce and enhancing youth engagement, respectively.

# Improving Cultural Awareness to Enhance Access, Healthy Lifestyles

About 40 members participated in two joint meetings between the Access to Care and Healthy Lifestyles Task Forces in November and December 2023 to network and find ways to collaborate on action steps. These meetings led to the two task forces co-hosting a Cultural Awareness Workshop series for HIA members. Workshop topics to date include an introduction to cultural awareness and defeating unconscious bias.



## Access to Care Gains New Co-Chair

Karitz Melendez, Clinic Director for Americares Free Clinic of Bridgeport, stepped into the role of co-chair to start off 2024. She brings with her a wealth of nursing experience serving diverse populations and a heart for our community that is evident in everything she does. We are grateful to have her help lead the Access to Care Task Force and hope for continued partnership with her for many years to come.

## Immunization Guide Receives a Refresh

Access to Care joined forces with the Child Wellbeing Task Force to update the regional immunization guide to help residents identify locations around Greater Bridgeport that offer childhood vaccinations. Some options for adults are included as well. To access the guide, visit [linktr.ee/BridgeportResources](http://linktr.ee/BridgeportResources), then select the Immunization Clinics tab.

**Immunization Clinics**  
Greater Bridgeport Area

**Milford Health Department**  
Location: 82 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT 06460  
Phone: 203-783-3314 (Call to make an appointment)  
Hours: The second Tuesday of each month from 2:30-4:30 pm  
Immunizations: DTaP, Influenza, Hep A, Hep B, Hib, HPV, MMR, Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, Polio, Tdap, Varicella, TB testing (PPD)  
\*Vaccines free of charge for children 18 years of age and younger, adults receiving MMR for college entry only, and adults receiving Tdap via the Cocoon program.  
\*Insurance not accepted  
Make an appointment at: <https://www.ci.milford.ct.us/adult-and-child-immunization-clinic>

**Fairfield Health Department**  
Location: 100 Mona Terrace, Fairfield, CT 06424  
Hours: Monday-Friday from 9:00 am-3:30 pm  
Phone: 203-256-3150 (Call to make appointment)  
Immunizations: Childhood immunizations for those under 19 years of age including MMR, Varicella, Hep A, Hep B, DTaP/Tdap, Meningococcal, & Polio  
\*Annual flu vaccines for adults and children ages 3 and up  
\*Bring previous vaccination records  
\*Please call for an appointment and for information regarding cost & insurance  
\*Only cash or check accepted

**City of Bridgeport Department of Health**  
Location: 752 East Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06608  
Hours: Monday- Friday from 8:30 am- 3:30 pm  
Phone: 203-576-7468 (Call to make an appointment)  
Immunizations: Influenza  
\*Bridgeport Residents Only  
\*No insurance required  
\*Bring valid photo ID

**Clinicas de Inmunización**  
Área metropolitana de Bridgeport

**Departamento de Salud de Milford**  
Ubicación: 82 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT 06460  
Teléfono: 203-783-3314 (Llame para hacer una cita)  
Horario: El segundo martes de cada mes de 2:30 a 4:30 pm  
Vacunas: DTaP, influenza, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Hib, VPH, MMR, meningococo, neumococo, polio, Tdap, varicela, pruebas de tuberculosis (PPD)  
\*Vacunas gratuitas para niños de 18 años o menos, adultos que reciben MMR solo para ingresar a la universidad y adultos que reciben Tdap a través del programa Cocoon.  
\*No se acepta seguro  
Haga una cita en: <https://www.ci.milford.ct.us/adult-and-child-immunization-clinic>

**Departamento de Salud de Fairfield**  
Ubicación: 100 Mona Terrace, Fairfield, CT 06424  
Horario: lunes a viernes de 9:00 am a 3:30 pm  
Teléfono: 203-256-3150 (Llame para hacer una cita)  
Vacunas: vacunas infantiles para menores de 19 años, incluidas MMR, varicela, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, DTaP/Tdap, meningococo y polio.  
\*Vacunas anuales contra la gripe para adultos y niños de 3 años en adelante  
\*Traer cartilla de vacunación previa  
\*Llame para hacer una cita y obtener información sobre costos y seguros.  
\*Solo se acepta efectivo o cheque

**Departamento de Salud de la ciudad de Bridgeport**  
Ubicación: 752 East Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06608  
Horario: Lunes a Viernes de 8:30 am a 3:30 pm  
Teléfono: 203-576-7468 (Llame para hacer una cita)  
Vacunas: influenza  
\*Solo residentes de Bridgeport  
\*No se requiere seguro  
\*Traer identificación con fotografía válida

## Behavioral Health Task Force Addresses Mental Health First Aid

The Behavioral Health Task Force embarked on a process over several months to train six Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) certified instructors, with two being dually certified in English and Spanish. Together with two certified instructors for Youth MHFA from The Hub, the group trained and certified 155 Mental Health First Aiders in Bridgeport: 119 Adult MHFA (44 Spanish) and 36 Youth MHFA. Prior to this program, the area had very few MHFA trainers and classes were sporadic and expensive, with no options in Spanish. The six newly certified instructors can maintain their certification by conducting three trainings per year and paying a \$100/year renewal fee. This program was funded in part by the State of Connecticut Social Equity Council and the United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut.

To expand the region's capacity for delivering Youth MHFA training, a program was developed with the Child Wellbeing Task Force, with a goal of certifying 18 YMHEFA instructors who will then train a minimum of 540 residents and professionals. Funding for these efforts is currently being pursued.

# Community Engagement Panel Discussion



With outreach being a huge component of HIA’s work, the Community Coalition gathered in March for an in-person meeting focused on learning from local professionals with expertise in community engagement strategies. Led by Katerina Vlahos, Executive Director of Bridgeport Prospers and Co-Chair of the Child Wellbeing Task Force, panelists represented the following organizations: Bridgeport Prospers, GBAPP Inc., Make the Road CT, and PT Partners.

# Child Wellbeing’s CHW Work Group Sees Growth in Second Year



Formed out of the Child Wellbeing Task Force in late 2022, The Community Health Worker (CHW) Work Group has grown from 12 members in June 2023 to a current roster of 41. In April 2024, St. Vincent’s Medical Center hosted a full-day meeting focused on training. Fourteen participants representing multiple organizations received training in QPR Suicide Prevention, Narcan Administration, Stop the Bleed and Hands-only CPR. As CHWs become more involved in the work of HIA than ever before, we look to continue promoting their expertise and supporting their professional development where possible.

# Raising Awareness of Trauma and ACEs

Screenings of the documentary *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope* have continued to help raise awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their effect on society. Child Wellbeing’s key screening and ACEs discussion this year was with Family Bridge, a free home visiting service for families with new babies. Additional screenings are planned for the CHW Work Group and LifeBridge Community Services’ Board of Directors.





## Partners Offer Screenings for Heart Month

Our 2024 Heart Month efforts saw nine partners participate in heart health events in Greater Bridgeport, with the help of 28 students and interns from local universities. All nine partners conducted heart health screenings, with blood pressure being the most common (100%), followed by pulse, HbA1C, and BMI (55% each). Other parts of the screenings included waist circumference, AED education, and Pulse4Pulse diagnostic testing. All partners involved indicated that they plan to do more in 2025, with a large desire for broader collaboration between HIA organizations for future heart health events.

## Know Your Numbers Reaches Milestone Anniversary



10 years



177 events



3,711 people screened



2,000+ nursing student volunteers



610 blood pressure cuffs distributed since 2019

## Healthy Lifestyles Helps with Farmers Market Expansion Pilot

Partners worked on a Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative expansion pilot project to include the Paradise Green Farmers Market in Stratford for the 2024 season. This expansion provided the Stratford market with the ability to accept and double SNAP/EBT payments, as well as \$2,000 worth of Bridgeport Bucks with a 100% redemption rate, to expand access to healthy food for those in need.



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QUESTIONS ?  
WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

[moreinfo@HIA-CT.org](mailto:moreinfo@HIA-CT.org)

[www.hia-ct.org](http://www.hia-ct.org)