

CHAPTER 33

UNINTENTIONAL INJURY PREVENTION

BOARD OF HEALTH ROLE AT A GLANCE

- Provide leadership or participate in injury prevention collaborations involving law enforcement, fire departments, EMS personnel, park and recreation department staff, hospital and health center staff, school officials, and community residents.
- Stay up to date on Massachusetts injury statistics. Use resources provided by the MA Department of Public Health to help to identify local injury priorities through data assessment and to consider proven or promising preventive measures and community interest.
- Work with home visitors (e.g. visiting nurse associations, home health aides, community health workers, etc.) to incorporate home safety measures into the routines of families with young children and the elderly.
- Educate the community about existing laws such as those regarding child safety seats and booster seats, seat belts, and bicycle helmets, and existing resources such as the Massachusetts Poison Control System's toll-free 24/7 hot line.
- Focus on elder injury prevention, such as falls and unintentional poisoning due to medication errors.
- Sponsor seasonal injury prevention awareness campaigns.

OVERVIEW

Injury is a major public health problem that is largely preventable. Injury is the leading cause of death and disability for children and adults, ages 1 – 44. Every day in Massachusetts 7 people die, 129 are admitted to a hospital and 1,918 seek hospital emergency department treatment because of an injury. In 2003, the annual result was 2,726 deaths, 54,323 hospitalizations, 9,534 observation stays and 751,187 emergency department visits.

The financial burden of injuries is tremendous. The national cost of injuries, including medical care, rehabilitation, and lost wages and productivity is estimated at more than \$224 billion each year. While the total economic cost of injuries in Massachusetts is unknown, the hospital charges alone are over \$1 billion per year.

Like many health problems, injuries result from many factors. These include behavior (for

example, whether bicycle riders use helmets), the design of the products we use (whether bicycles have good brakes), and the environment in which the injuries occur (whether there are bicycle paths or well-paved roads). There are many strategies that have been proven effective in preventing or reducing injuries - seat belts, child automobile restraint devices, smoke detectors and sprinkler systems, fencing of swimming pools, and child resistant safety caps on prescription drugs and other substances are just a few. The three general approaches to preventing injuries are engineering, (modification of the product or environment), enforcement, (laws, rules, and regulations), and education. Combining these approaches is generally much more effective than using one approach alone. Because injuries are multicausal, injury prevention requires coordination of community resources and collaboration among many agencies to successfully promote change.

BOARD OF HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES

The BOH conducts inspections to ensure compliance with the State Sanitary Code and other relevant regulations and guidelines at child care centers, summer camps, restaurants with indoor playgrounds, private homes, schools, playgrounds and businesses to improve injury prevention measures and enhance public safety.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES FOR THE BOARD OF HEALTH

- Act as the focal point for injury prevention or coordinate with other agencies in the city/town (e.g. Recreation and Park Department, Public Safety, Economic Development, School Department) to design and implement injury prevention measures and programs.
- Work in close collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). There are two programs within MDPH that can be especially helpful:
 1. The Injury Surveillance Program has up-to-date statistics and data analysis on injuries in Massachusetts, including the frequency of injuries and their cost to society.
 2. The Injury Prevention and Control Program has ongoing initiatives in
 - fire and burn prevention
 - child passenger safety
 - bicycle safety
 - elder injury prevention
 - poison prevention
 - suicide prevention across the life span
 - home safety
- Educate the community about injury prevention-related laws, regulations and guidelines (e.g. bicycle helmet law, child passenger safety law, seat belt law, smoke alarm and carbon monoxide monitor laws).
- Educate the community about home pool safety, including proper fencing, latches and adequate drain covers.

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Department of Public Health is responsible for:

- Assessment of injury priorities based on analysis of injury mortality and morbidity data. Community-specific data can be provided.
- Educational activities which include trainings, technical assistance, dissemination of information, program development and conducting special studies.
- Enforcement-related activities including supporting legislation and regulations designed to enhance safety such as the child passenger safety law, the seat belt law, and the bicycle helmet law.
- Engineering approaches to injury prevention by conducting such activities as developing indoor playground safety guidelines, providing comment to federal agencies on proposed requirements regarding air bag design, and participating with the Consumer Product Safety Commission on product recalls.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary federal agencies involved in injury prevention include the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Center for Injury Prevention and Control, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. These agencies are responsible for a range of activities including research, financial support of state and local injury prevention efforts, regulation and standard setting and technical assistance.

RESOURCES

The Injury Prevention and Control Program, Division of Prevention of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health can provide local health departments with **the Injury Prevention Yellow Pages**, a directory of local, regional, state and federal agencies involved in injury prevention. This directory is offered free of charge. A sample of these from the 2006 edition includes:

▪ CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM (CLPPP)

MDPH, 250 Washington Street, 7th fl, Boston, MA 02108

☎ (617) 624-5757

(800) 532-9571

Web: <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/clppp>

Contact: Paul Hunter, Director, paul.hunter@state.ma.us

CLPPP provides a range of both primary and secondary prevention services to Massachusetts children, their families and others with an interest in the prevention of lead poisoning.

- **ELDER HEALTH PROGRAMS, KEEP MOVING**

MDPH, Office of Healthy Aging
250 Washington Street, 4th fl, Boston, MA 02108
☎ (617) 624-5965
Contact: Jan Marble, jan.marble@state.ma.us

Keep Moving promotes physical activity for persons over age 50 through a community-based network of more than 183 walking clubs with more than 3000 senior participants across the Commonwealth.

INJURY PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM (IPCP)

MDPH, Division of Violence and Injury Prevention
250 Washington Street, 4th floor
Boston, MA 02108
☎ (617) 624-5413 and (800) CAR-SAFE (child safety seat telephone line)
Website: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/injury/index.htm>
Contact: Cindy Rodgers, Program Director cindy.rodgers@state.ma.us

The IPCP, one of the oldest and one of the most comprehensive injury prevention programs located within a state health department, promotes unintentional and intentional injury prevention and reduction strategies throughout Massachusetts.

The IPCP sends out quarterly mailings of injury prevention materials that are new and/or appropriate to the season. Any board of health that would like to receive the quarterly mailing can request it by contacting Cindy Rodgers.

- **INJURY SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM (ISP)**

MDPH, Center for Health Information, Statistics, Research and Evaluation
250 Washington Street, 6th fl, Boston, MA 02108
☎ (617) 624-5648
Website: <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/bhsre/isp/isp.htm>
Contact: Beth Hume, Project Director, beth.hume@state.ma.us

The Injury Surveillance Program (ISP) collects, analyzes, interprets and disseminates information on injuries in the state of Massachusetts.

- **MA RESIDENTIAL FIRE INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM**

MDPH, Injury Prevention and Control Program
250 Washington Street, 4th fl, Boston, MA 02108
☎ (617) 624-6076
Contact: Christine M. Farrell-O'Reilly, christine.farrell-o'reilly@state.ma.us

The Smoke Alarm Project aims to decrease injuries due to residential fires in at-risk households (e.g. elders, immigrants, refugees, and low-income families with young

children) by increasing the presence of working smoke alarms in these households and by increasing residents' knowledge of fire safety.

- **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM (OHSP)**
MDPH, Center for Health Information, Statistics, Research and Evaluation
250 Washington St., Boston, MA 02108
☎ (617) 624-5632
Website: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/bhsre/ohsp/ohsp.htm>
Contact: Letitia Davis, Sc.D., Director, letitia.davis@state.ma.us

OHSP conducts surveillance of a variety of occupational conditions, including fatalities, injuries to teens, acute chemical poisonings, and sharps injuries among hospital workers.

- **MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF CHILD CARE SERVICES, LICENSING DIVISION**
Department of Early Education and Care
600 Washington Street, Suite 6100, Boston, MA 02101
☎ (617) 988-6600
Website: <http://www.eec.state.ma.us/>
Contact: David E. McGrath

In addition to its child care provider licensing function, the Office provides advice on safety and injury prevention to child care centers, private nursery schools and kindergartens, family day care homes, school-age child care programs, certain residential programs, and foster care/adoption placement agencies.

- **GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY BUREAU (GHSB)**
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3720
Boston, MA 02116
☎ (617) 725-3301
FAX: (617) 725-0260
Website: <http://www.mass.gov/ghsb>
Contact: Brook W. Chipman, Senior Program Manager

The GHSB addresses issues such as the dangers of aggressive, distracted, drowsy, and impaired driving; the hazards of speeding; the benefits of safety belt, child safety seat, and booster seat use; and bicycle, motorcycle and pedestrian safety.

- **REGIONAL CENTER FOR POISON CONTROL AND PREVENTION**
Serving Massachusetts and Rhode Island
Children's Hospital, 300 Longwood Ave., Boston, MA 02115
☎ (617) 355-6690
TTY: (888) 244-5313
Hotline: (800) 222-1222
Website: <http://www.maripoisoncenter.com>

Contact: Michele Burns Ewald, MD, Medical Director

The Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention provides assistance and expertise in the medical diagnosis, management and prevention of poisonings involving the people of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Services include a 24-hour hotline.

- **AMERICAN RED CROSS OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY**

285 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02116

☎ (617) 375-0700 Ext. 239

Website: <http://www.bostonredcross.org>

Contact: Mary Kelley, Chief Academic Officer

- The Red Cross offers a variety of courses and programs in the community, including First Aid and CPR; Automated External Defibrillators (AED); Aquatics, Lifeguarding, Chokesaver/restaurant emergencies; Citizenship & Legalization; English as a second language (ESL); Nurses Assistant/Home Health Aide; Babysitting training.
- Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association, 508-650-1126. Provides information and training on selection, installation and maintenance of public playground equipment in keeping with national recommendations, guidelines and standards.

- **MASSACHUSETTS STATE POLICE**

470 Worcester Rd., Framingham, MA 01702

Contacts: Sgt. Michael Crosby

☎ (508) 988-7020

(E-mail: crosby@pol.state.ma.us)

Sgt. Ross Panacopoulos

☎ 508-820-2662

(E-mail: ross.panacopoulos@pol.state.ma.us)

The Massachusetts State Police provide speakers and demonstrations on seat belt use, child restraint use, driver safety, teen dating violence, bicycle safety, OUI (Operating Under the Influence) awareness and abuse prevention.

- **DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES/OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

P.O. Box 1025, State Rd., Stow, MA 01775

☎ (978) 567-3381

Hotline: (877) 966-3473

Website: <http://www.mass.gov/dfs/osfm/fireprevention/ust/>

Contact: Jennifer Mieth, Public Education Manager

The Office supports public fire education by providing technical assistance and training, developing free brochures and topical information sheets, maintaining a resource library, and sponsoring an annual conference for fire and life safety educators. It also administers the Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) Program that is conducted in the schools.

- **SAFE KIDS GREATER BOSTON**

Boston Public Health Commission 774 Albany Street, Finland Bldg.
Boston, MA 02118

☎ (617) 534-5197

Website: http://www.bphc.org/bphc/cipp_safekids.asp

Contact: Erin Christiansen, Coalition Coordinator, erin_christiansen@bphc.org

- **SAFE KIDS OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

Baystate Children's Hospital
759 Chestnut Street, Springfield, MA 01199

☎ (413) 794-5434

Website: <http://www.baystatehealth.com/safekids>

Contact: Mandi Summers, MPH, SAFE KIDS Coordinator,

Email: mandi.summers@bhs.org or Magda Rodriguez, magda.rodriguez@bhs.org

The Safe Kids Coalition, which includes private and voluntary organizations, works to reduce unintentional injuries to children ages 14 and under through increasing awareness of prevention strategies and implementing safety campaigns. Both chapters offer programs on bicycle safety, motor vehicle passenger safety, home safety, and several other programs on the prevention of unintentional injury.