



North Quabbin Health Collaborative

Public Health Newsletter
COVERING: March 2nd – March 8th, 2026
PUBLISHED March 13, 2026



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Upcoming Events:

Next Collaborative Meeting

Monday March 30th at 6pm
Location: OIC, 131 West Main St, Orange

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UPDATES:

New Salem News

Art unveiling and concert

Celebrate the unveiling of a portrait by Ami Fagin honoring acclaimed pipa artist Minqi Wang, followed by a live performance by Minqi. The pipa is a four-stringed pear shaped traditional Chinese lute with a 2000 year history. Mary George of Nuneo Entertainment writes, "Minqi's music bridges worlds -- ancient strings, modern beats, and a rare depth of feeling." The program will be at the New Salem Public Library, Saturday, March 14, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. A light brunch will be served. Free and open to the public. Join us for an inspiring hour of art, music, and community. For information, contact Ami at amifagin@gmail.com.

Reminders

- **Saturday March 14th is National Write Down Your Story Day** - Preserve your story for future generations and write it all down now
- **Sunday March 15th is National Shoe the World Day** - Everyone should have a pair of shoes

Visit the North Quabbin Health Collaborative website to download materials and see additional information at: <https://www.northquabbinhc.org/>

Don't forget to send your area news and activities to cpage@townoforange.org to be included in the next newsletter.

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

[Read the press release online](#)

Massachusetts' flavored tobacco product restriction projected to save more than \$70 million in smoking-related health care costs since 2020 implementation

BOSTON (March 9, 2025) – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) released a [report](#) yesterday on the impact of An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control, the historic legislation that restricts the sale of all flavored tobacco products—including menthol cigarettes—exclusively to licensed smoking bars, where these products may be sold only for onsite consumption. The report analyzed the impact of the legislation on smoking-related health care costs in the Commonwealth.

The report, conducted by DPH's Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program in collaboration with economists John Tauras, PhD, and Frank Chaloupka, PhD at the University of Illinois at Chicago, concluded that restricting menthol cigarette sales reduced the smoking prevalence in Massachusetts by 1.37 percentage points between June 2020 and January 2023.

As a result of reduced smoking prevalence, the economists projected reductions in chronic diseases and resulting health care costs for lung cancer, heart attack, and stroke; and reductions in smoking-related birth/pregnancy complications and related health care costs for the children of these pregnancies during their first year of life. Adjusted for inflation, the projected 10-year cost savings were close to \$200 million.

With the menthol cigarette restriction of An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control taking effect July 1, 2020, 2025 marked the five-year anniversary of the full enactment of the legislation. Economists projected total five-year cost savings to be just over \$70 million.

“Commemorating five years since the enactment of this historic legislation with the knowledge that this law is saving lives and money is one more way to highlight the transformative impact thoughtful policy can have on improving lives and reducing long-term health costs,” said Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein, MD, PhD.

While An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control restricted the sale of all flavored tobacco products, this analysis only looked at menthol cigarettes. In addition, projected cost savings do not account for savings from other conditions that may be affected by smoking, such as asthma. Therefore, the projected cost savings are likely underestimated.

A separate analysis showed the law has not had a negative effect on the number of tobacco stores, convenience stores, and convenience stores with gas stations that sell tobacco products, the number of employees of these stores, and the wages paid to employees.

More details about the models and analysis used for the cost-savings estimates and impact on tobacco retailers are available in the full [reports](#). Additional law evaluation data is also available via the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program's [Statewide Evaluation Dashboard](#).

Calendar of Events

NEW SALEM Art and music event March 14 You're invited! Celebrate the unveiling of a portrait by Ami Fagin honoring acclaimed pipa artist Minqi Wang, followed by a live performance by Minqi. Mary George of Nuneo Entertainment writes, "Minqi's music bridges worlds -- ancient strings, modern beats, and a rare depth of feeling." A light brunch will be served at the event, March 14 at the New Salem Public Library, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Join us for an inspiring hour of art, music, and community.

WARWICK LIBRARY Non-Fiction Discussion Group - Thursday, March 19th @ 7 pm: This discussion group is wide open: Could be something you're reading now or from long ago; science, history, memoirs, biographies; articles, books, newsletters, journals. It's all up for discussion at the new non-fiction discussion group. Designed for independent, asynchronous reading, we'll get together to share our favorite non-fiction reads and make recommendations. Come to share/discuss or just to listen and build your reading list.

WARWICK LIBRARY "Humanism" discussion group - 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, March 24th @ 7 pm: Humanism is a value-system that prefers human beings - their political rights and cultural creations - to anything else in the universe. It arose in the tolerant climate of ancient Rome in the writings of Cicero. Humanism has been a source of tolerance and liberalism in the modern Western world, including the secular framework of the United States. Discussion will be facilitated by Jesse Lopes of Warwick, who teaches Philosophy at Boston College. Readings may be suggested but are not required.

WARWICK LIBRARY Monthly Short Story Hour - Rip van Winkle, March 26th @ 7:30 pm: Washington Irving's classic short story, published in 1819, follows a Dutch villager in the British colony of New York who, after an encounter with some unusual folk, falls asleep in the wooded Catskills and awakens 20 years later to a very changed world, having missed the American Revolution. Irving had filed for bankruptcy in 1818 after a failed family business venture, and wrote the story in one night after being inspired by a nostalgic conversation with his brother. The next morning he presented the first draft to his family over breakfast. Come to read or just to listen.

WENDELL Library Saturday March 28 1-4 p.m. Silk Magic Colors & Flowers: Silk painting Workshop with Lidia of SimpleArtForms: Explore your creative side and experiment with colors without fear of making a mistake. Come join this easy, magical, and relaxing adventure into the world of freedom and creativity, after which you will get a masterpiece created by your own hands. During this master class, you will tap into your creativity and grow your unique flower. Funded by a grant from the Wendell Cultural Council. 12 spots available, please register.

Calendar of Events continued

NEW SALEM Old Home Day September 12 is looking to be better than ever this year. Music! Food cooked by firefighters! Crafts! A town-wide tag sale on the Common -- declutter your house or find a treasure! Win a cash prize for your excellent cake, or maybe even better, win a cake! March in a parade, play minigolf, volleyball, or kickball, take a tree tour. The focus this year is history -- learn about New Salem at the time of the Declaration of Independence, and learn about the people who lived here a thousand years ago. You can help organize any of these events -- sign up at Jeanneclayton27@gmail.com -- but whatever you do, open up your calendar now to September and mark Old Home Day September 12.

Community Food Access Resource List

Resource Name	Location	Days/Times	Contact
CommunityAction Center for Self Reliance Food Pantry	156 Main Street, Greenfield	Monday, Thursday, Friday: 11am-4pm (closed between 1-1:30pm each of these days), Tuesday: 11am-6pm (closed between 1-1:30pm), Closed on Wednesdays	413-773-5029
Good Neighbor Food Pantry	Old Town HallWendell, 6 Center St, Wendell	Sundays 11am-noon, Last Name A-K 1st and 3rd Sunday, Last Name L-Z 2nd and 4th Sunday	978-544-3775
The Salvation Army	107 Ridge Ave, Athol	Tuesday9am-noon, Everyother Tuesday delivery	978-249-8111
The Salvation Army	72 Chapman St, Greenfield	Monday9am-11am, Closed on Holidays	413-773-3154
Our LadyImmaculate Church	192 SchoolSt, Athol	Tuesdays 10am-1:30pm	978-249-6790
Greenfield Pop Pantry	2nd Congregation Church, 16 Court Sq, Greenfield	Tuesdays 4:30pm-5:30pm	413-774-4355
CommunityFood Pantryat AtholHigh School	2363 Main St, Athol(Located in the back of AHS)	Wednesdays, Summer hours 11am-1pm, Schoolyear hours 3pm-5pm	978-249-2435 ext 314
AtholSenior Center	82 Freedom St, Athol	Wednesdays 11am-11:45am	978-249-8986
Orange Council on Aging	St Mary's, 20 West Myrtle St, Orange	Wednesdays 10am-11am	978-544-3481
Turners Falls Mobile Food Bank	62 5th St, Turners Falls	3rd Wednesday of Month 1:30pm-2:30pm	413-419-0079
Orange Food Pantry	81 East River St, Orange	Thursdays 10am-3pm (If it's a holiday then it will be open on Wednesday. Deliveries on Fridayfor Athol/Orange)	978-544-2149 (call for deliveries)
St Vincent De Paul/St Mary's Food Pantry	19 Congress St, Orange	Open by appointment only	978-544-6814
Marion's Food Pantry	On the Royalston Common	Open by appointment only	978-895-7887
The Salvation Army	72 Chapman St, Greenfield	Monday-Friday8:30am-9:30am (Breakfast) 11am-12:30pm (Lunch)	413-773-3154
Our Lady of Peace Church	90 7th St, Turners Falls	Mondays 4pm-5:30pm (Distributing hot meals and gorcerybags to go from the sidewalk in front of the church)	413-863-2585
The Salvation Army	107 Ridge Ave, Athol	Tuesdays 4:30pm-5:30pm (Dine in/Delivery)	978-249-8111
Second Congregational Church	16 Court Square, Greenfield	Tuesdays and Wednesdays 4:45pm-5:45pm, hot meals to go Tuesdays and Wednesdays on the side driveway	413-774-4355
AtholSenior Center	82 Freedom St, Athol	Tuesdays and Wednesdays at noon (Must RSVP the daybefore). For individuals 60 and over and/or disabled. Senior Dining at Lynn's Luncheonette. Enjoylunch with others. A \$3.50 donation is welcome	978-249-8986 Reserve your mealby9am the daybefore you dine
St Frances Church Hall	101 Main St, Athol	Wednesdays (September-May) doors open at 5pm	978-249-7304
Orange United Methodist Church	104 S Main St, Orange	Thursdays 4:30pm-5:15pm (Distributing ready-made meals to heat up at home. We offer deliveries for meals and pantrybags by applications)	413-772-1033 https://www.fc cmp.org/comm unity-meals/orange/
Trinitarian Congregational Church	147 Main St, Northfield	Fourth Thursday4:30pm (Take out meals only. You must RSVP)	413-498-5839
AtholCongregational Church	1225 Chestnut St, Athol	First Friday of the Month, doors open at 5pm, dinner at 5:30pm (Must RSVP by Tuesdayfor a meal on Friday)	978-249-6202
Meals on Wheels	AtholSenior Center & Orange Council on Aging	LifePath Inc of Greenfield provides home delivered (noontime) meals to homebound seniors, age 60 and older and/or disabled, who are not able to prepare nutritious and balanced meals for themselves.	1-800-732-4636 (call to see if eligible)

Senior Dining Community Resource List

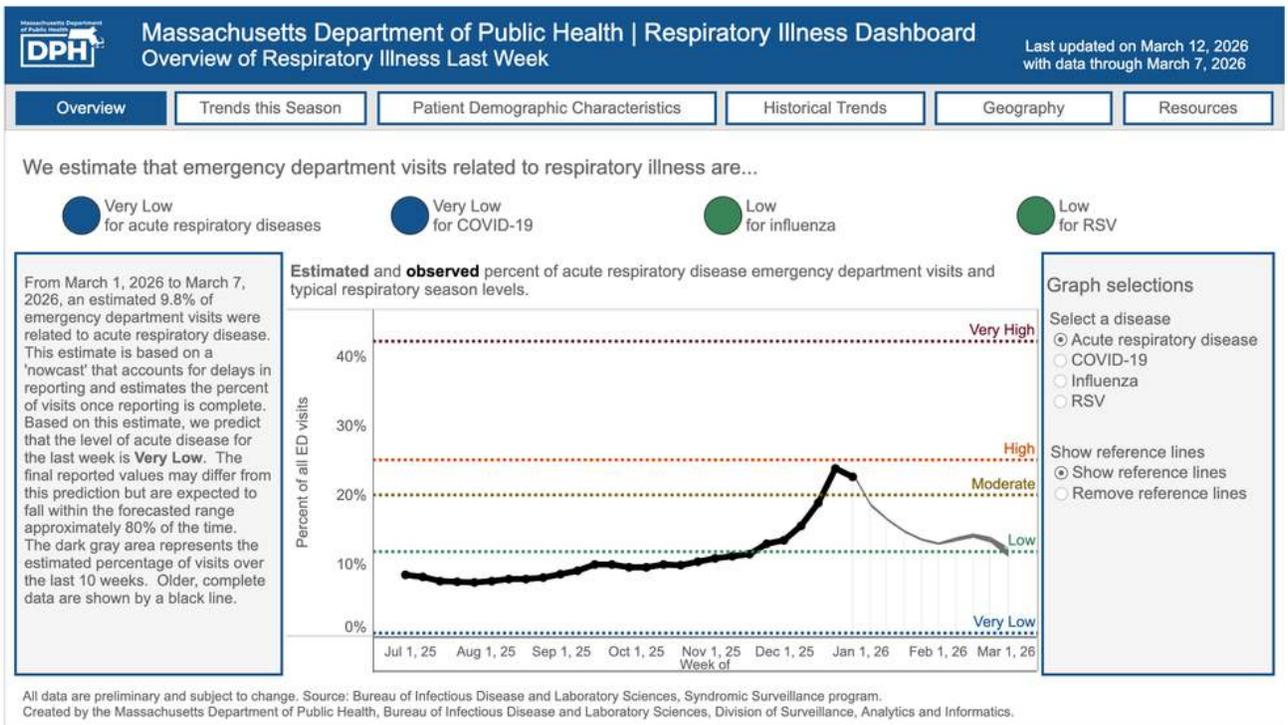
Senior Dining Center or Luncheon Club Location	Serving Days Schedule	Contact/Phone Reservations
Athol Senior Center 82 Freedom Street Athol, MA 01331	Tuesday & Wednesday Congregate	(978) 249-9001
New Salem Luncheon Club Central Congregational Church 22 South Main St. New Salem, MA 01355	2nd & 4th Friday of the month Congregate Dine-in	(978) 575-0116
Petersham Luncheon Club Town Hall Petersham, MA 01366	Wednesday Congregate and Grab and Go	978-821-5549
Phillipston Luncheon Club 1st Congregational Church The Common Phillipston, MA 01331	1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month Congregate Dine-in Closed December to March	(978) 407-9504
Royalston Luncheon Club Town Hall Royalston, MA 01368	Wednesday Congregate Dine-in	978-249-8957

NQHC COVID-19 and Other Reportable Diseases

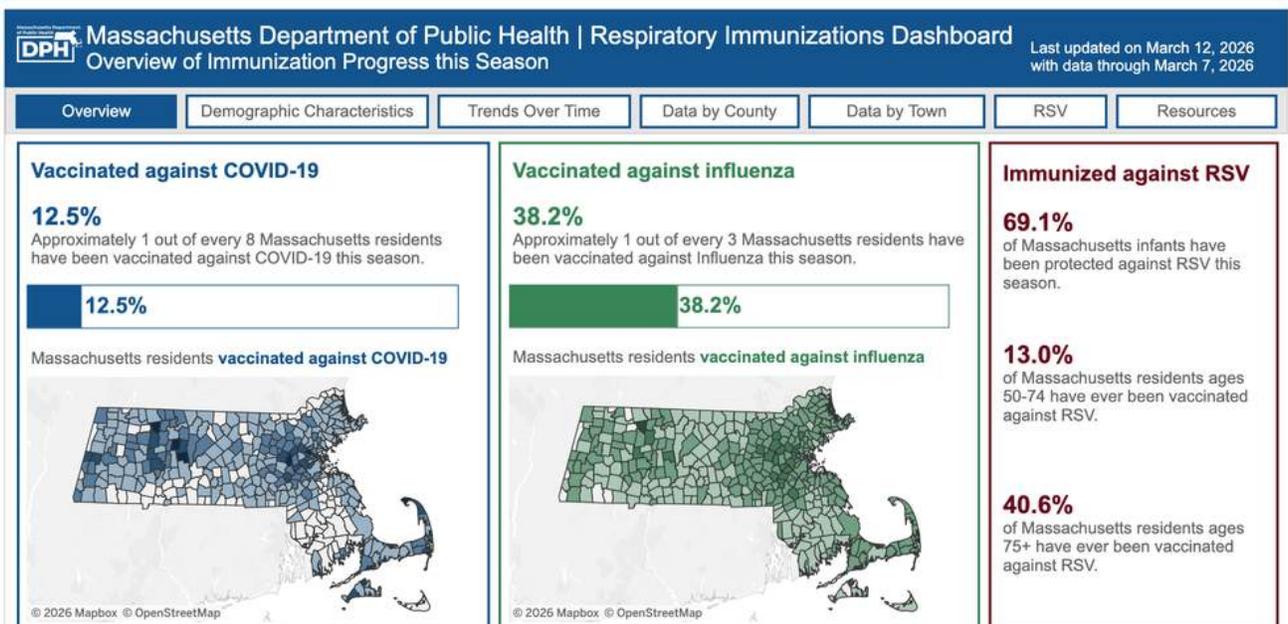
In the the one-week period of March 2nd through March 8th, 2026:

- 0 official cases of COVID-19 within the district
- 1 cases of influenza

Respiratory Illness Reporting

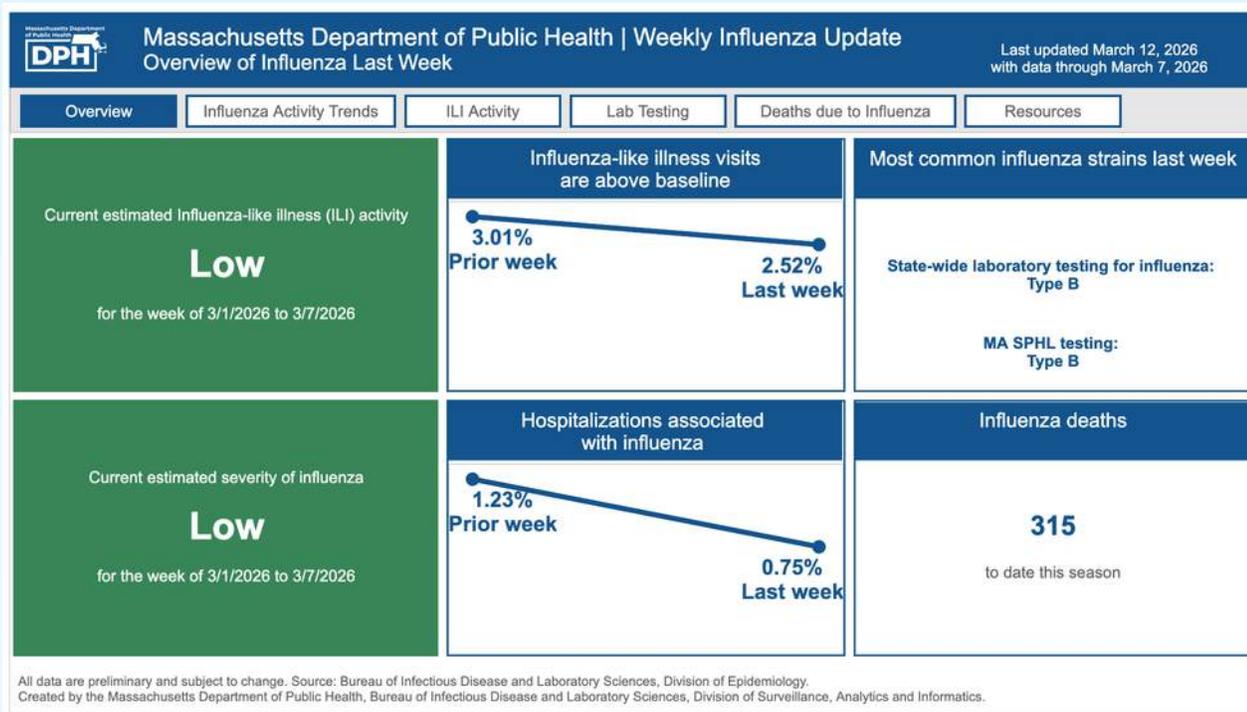


Here is the overall percentages if individuals in Massachusetts immunized against Covid-19 and Influenza

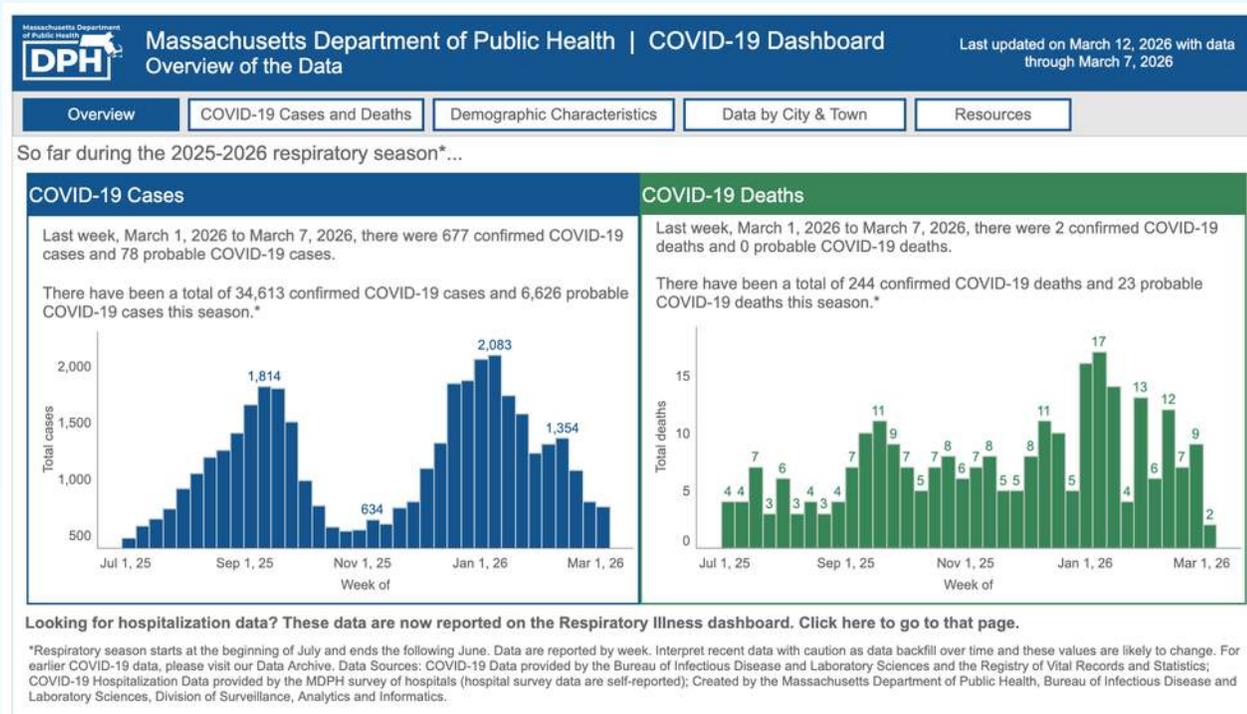


The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Influenza Reporting – Influenza rate is at Low and Severity is at Low



COVID-19 Reporting – Number of cases are decreasing



At this point in time there have been no additional updates to the Massachusetts Covid guidelines. The latest version can be seen at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/staying-home-to-prevent-the-spread-of-respiratory-viruses>

Report created by Christy Page: cpage@townoforange.org
Next newsletter will be Friday March 6th, 2026



NQHC Nurse Update



Post Partum Support

Our **FREE** Postpartum Visiting Program provides personalized care, whether you are adjusting to a new baby, coping with infant loss, or in recovery from substance use. **We connect you with local resources for ongoing support.**

What We Provide

- Prenatal and postpartum support and visits
- Education on health, safety, and wellness for you and your baby.
- Demonstrations and guidance from professionals.
- A free gift bag with essentials, educational resources, and helpful freebies.

Harm Reduction

Services/Program Includes:

- Naloxone and Overdose Response Trainings
- Free Naloxone and Fentanyl Test strip kits
- Syringe Exchange
- Connection to resources for treatment options and recovery

Upcoming events:

- 3/17/26** - Blood Pressure Clinic
Warwick Town Hall at Senior Lunch
- 4/1/26** - Tea and Topics at New Salem Library

Coming Soon:

We are going to be offering the following AHA CPR trainings. Dates will be scheduled with interest.

BLS \$80 cost

BLS Renewal \$70 cost

Heartcode: combines online eLearning with a required in-person, hands-on skills session (so we do the skills review and practice in person for certification)

Heartsaver with Narcan Training \$90 cost

CALL US: 413-500-6414

EMAIL: SPIRAGIS@TOWNOFORANGE.ORG

VISIT US AT: [HTTPS://WWW.NORTHQUABBINHC.ORG/NQHCPVP](https://www.northquabbinhc.org/nqhcpvp)



SERVING ORANGE, NEW SALEM, WENDELL, WARWICK, & PETERSHAM

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



MEET YOUR COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORKER

DURING DROP-IN HOURS AT:

**WHEELER MEMORIAL
LIBRARY, ORANGE**

**EVERY SECOND TUESDAY
OF THE MONTH FROM
2:30-4:30PM**

**NEW SALEM PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

**EVERY FOURTH TUESDAY
OF THE MONTH FROM
3:00-5:00PM**

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS AROUND ACCESSING HELP?

NORTH QUABBIN HEALTH COLLABORATIVE'S SOCIAL WORKER CAN ANSWER QUESTIONS AND CONNECT YOU TO AVAILABLE RESOURCES & BENEFITS TO MEET YOUR NEEDS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

FOOD
HOUSING & HOME REPAIR
TRANSPORTATION
HEALTHCARE & MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT FOR ELDERLY OR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN
SUPPORT GROUPS
& MUCH MORE

FREE &
CONFIDENTIAL
SUPPORT

RACHEL PURINTON, MSW
413-500-6414
RPURINTON@TOWNOFORANGE.ORG

Hearts & Threads –
Prom Dress Drive

We're excited to launch Hearts & Threads, a community initiative supporting students in Orange, New Salem, Petersham, Wendell and Warwick by providing prom dresses and accessories to those who may not otherwise be able to afford them.

Let's come together as a community to make prom night magical for every student

Questions? Contact: Tracy @786-269-4801

Hearts & Threads is proudly collaborating with the Town of Orange and the North Quabbin Health Collaborative to help make this initiative possible



Sharps Container Exchange Program



The North Quabbin Health Collaborative accepts sealed sharps containers for exchange at 131 W Main St Suite 211, Orange, MA 01364 (the OIC building)

You may receive a new sharps container, free of charge



**Please call 413-500-6414
to make an appointment**



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



CAMP WIYAKA

DAY CAMP

Entering Grade 1 through age 14

100 Sandy Pond Rd, Richmond, NH

Sports, Swimming, Boating, Arts & Crafts

Register before
March 1st and
receive a FREE
Camp T-shirt!

Free transportation
available to and from
Athol
7:30a-4:30pm

Early Bird Discount: Register before
March 1st and receive \$20 off/week

**Call the Athol YMCA at
978-249-3305 to register!**

June 29th - July 3rd
July 6th - July 10th
July 13th - July 17th
July 20th - July 24th
July 27th - July 31st

Free meals and
snacks provided

Y Members \$280
Community Members \$310
per week

Questions?
ekimball@ymcaathol.org





ATHOL YMCA CAMP SELAH

IN ORANGE, MA



**FUN & CREATIVE OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES FOR BOYS &
GIRLS**

AGE: ENTERING GRADES 1-6



**Weekly:
\$250
Y Member**

**Weekly:
\$290
Community
Member**

Activities

- ✓ Storytelling
- ✓ Sports & games
- ✓ Drawing & painting
- ✓ Swimming
- ✓ Nature hikes

Camp Selah runs for 8 weeks
Monday-Friday
starting June 29th through
August 21st
Camp Hours: 7:30am-5pm



More Information 978-249-3305 though@ymcaathol.org