



North Quabbin Health Collaborative

Public Health Newsletter
COVERING: August 17th – August 23rd, 2026
PUBLISHED August 28, 2026



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Upcoming Events:

Next Collaborative Meeting

Monday September 28th at 6pm
Location: OIC, 131 West Main St, Orange

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UPDATES:

OLD HOME DAYS

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.



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.

Calendar of Events

WARWICK HIKE September 20 at 1 p.m. Where to meet: At the beach parking area at Moores Pond (the intersection of Wendell Road and South Holden Road). The Hike: This out-and-back hike (approximately 3.4 miles with a change in elevation of about 360 feet) follows the original Holden Road. We will start at Moores Pond, travel east for a short distance on South Holden Road, enter the woods, and hike north to the Warwick Cemetery. Then, we will retrace our steps back to the pond. Please bring hiking poles if you have them, proper footwear, bug spray, and a water bottle. You may also want to bring your bathing suit for a dip in the pond after the hike. We will have maps and a trail description available.

WARWICK LIBRARY Non-Fiction Discussion group - Thursday, Sept. 10th @ 7 pm (new time - 2nd Thursdays): This discussion group is wide open. It is not tied to any specific reading or topic. Come to share/discuss or just to listen and build your reading list.

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Saturday, September 19 Hazardous waste collection day

Franklin County Solid Waste District will hold the 2026 household hazardous waste collection on Saturday, September 19, at Greenfield Community College and the Orange Transfer Station. Residents and businesses must register by September 9. Online registration and mail-in registration forms at the transfer station will be available in mid-August and in local newspapers. An appointment time and instructions will be provided by mail after registration is processed. Businesses may participate but must pay for disposal costs. This event provides households with a free opportunity to dispose of hazardous items that should not be put in the trash, such as leftover oil-based paints, stains, thinners, pesticides, pool chemicals, motor oil, antifreeze, household cleaners, and other household chemicals. Batteries and mercury-containing items such as fluorescent light bulbs, thermometers, and thermostats are not accepted at this collection. However, these items, which may contain mercury or heavy metals, should not be put in trash or recycling. Bring them to the transfer station and hand them to the attendant. In addition, fluorescent light bulbs are accepted free of charge at Lowe's stores. For more information, including a complete list of what items are accepted, visit franklincountywastedistrict.org or contact the district at info@franklincountywastedistrict.org, (413) 772-2438.

Calendar of Events Continued

WARWICK LIBRARY Monthly Short Story Hour - Sarah Oren Jewett, Sept. 24th @ 7:30 pm: We'll read selections from Jewett's Selected Stories and Sketches. Jewett (1849-1909), a novelist, short story writer and poet, was born and died in South Berwick, Maine. She devoted her career to capturing, in nuanced and sharply edged fiction, the inner drama in the outwardly quiet life of New England coastal towns. Her stories have a very modern resonance. Come to read or just to listen.

WARWICK LIBRARY Tick Talk with a Nurse - Tuesday, September 29th @ 7pm: Public health nurse Samantha Piragis returns for another free presentation about ticks, tick-borne illnesses and tick bite prevention. NOTE: Samantha will again offer free Permethrin spraying to hiking/outdoor boots and shoes at these events (Please bring a spare pair to wear).

State Health Officials Announce Additional Human Cases of West Nile Virus in Massachusetts

WNV risk levels high in 7 communities, moderate in 206 others

BOSTON (August 31, 2026) – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced two additional human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in Massachusetts this year. One is a man in his 80s who was exposed in Middlesex County, and the other is a man in his 70s with likely exposure in Suffolk County.

This marks the third human case of West Nile virus exposure in Middlesex County; the other two cases were also men, one in his 60s and the other in his 90s. This is also the second exposure in Suffolk County; previously, a man in his 50s was exposed there.

“As we all try to enjoy the last days of summer, we have to recognize the ongoing risk from WNV,” said Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein, MD, PhD. “People who are older or have compromised immune systems are especially at risk from this disease. I want to remind everyone to continue to use repellent, cover up with clothing when the weather permits, consider moving indoors during dusk to dawn hours when mosquitoes are biting, and make sure to empty anything that may be collecting water outside your home. The mosquitoes will be with us until the first hard frost.”

The first WNV-positive mosquitoes in the state this season were announced on June 16. So far, there have been 232 WNV-positive mosquito samples detected this year from Barnstable, Berkshire, Bristol, Dukes, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester counties. Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) has been detected in seven mosquito samples this year from two locations in Plymouth County. No human or animal cases of EEE infection have been reported so far this year.

“Massachusetts has been responding to the threat of WNV for over 25 years now,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Catherine M. Brown. “Our first infected mosquitoes were identified in 2000, and human infections started in 2001. WNV can be a devastating disease, and over 275 Massachusetts residents are known to have been infected since then, most of them with the severe form of the disease, which affects the central nervous system. Taking steps to prevent mosquito bites can help keep you healthy for the rest of the season.”

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 Councilon 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 Wednesdayof Month 1:30pm-2:30pm	413-419-0079
Orange Food Pantry	81 East River St, Orange	Thursdays 10am-3pm (If it's a holidaythen 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 Ladyof 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 Fridayof the Month, doors open at 5pm, dinner at 5:30pm (Must RSVP byTuesdayfor a mealon Friday)	978-249-6202
Meals on Wheels	AtholSenior Center & Orange Councilon 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

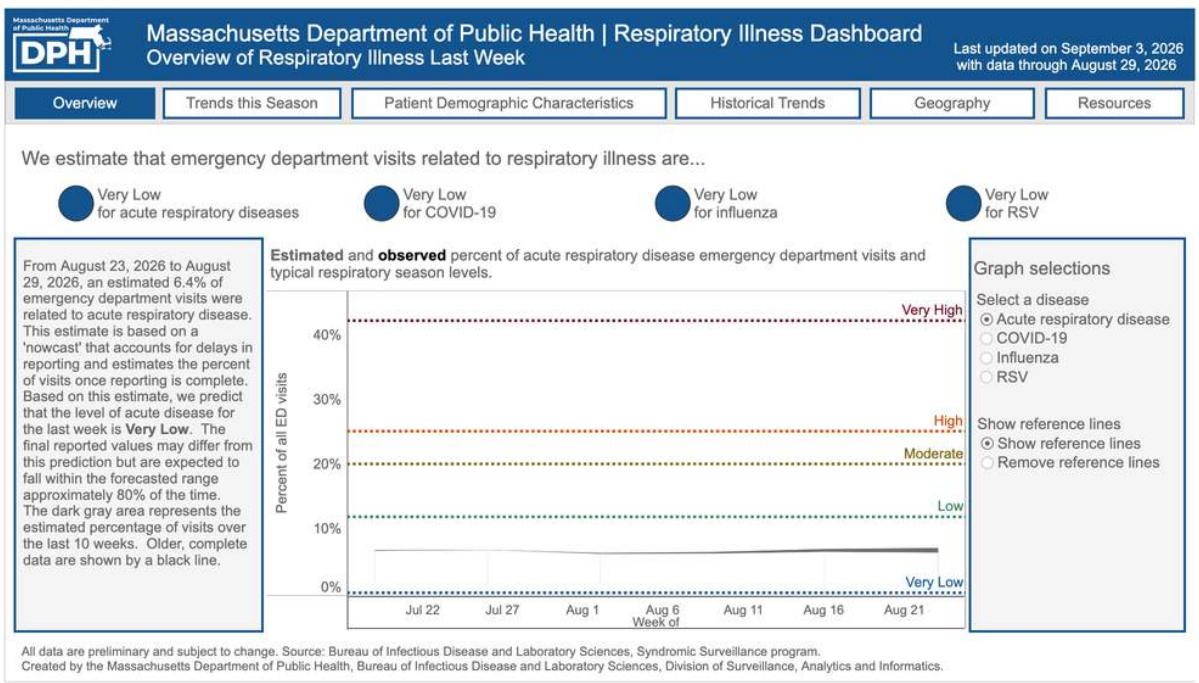
Location	Schedule	Contact
Athol Senior Center 82 Freedom St Athol, MA 01331	Tuesday and Wednesday Congregate	(978) 249-9001
New Salem Luncheon Club Central Congregational Church 22 South Main St New Salem, MA 01355	2 nd & 4 th Friday of the month Congregate Dine-in	(413) 687-8089
Petersham Luncheon Club Town Hall Petersham, MA 01366	Wednesday Congregate <i>and</i> Grab and Go	(978) 821-5549
Phillipston Luncheon Club 1 st Congregational Church The Common Phillipston, MA 01331	1 st & 3 rd 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

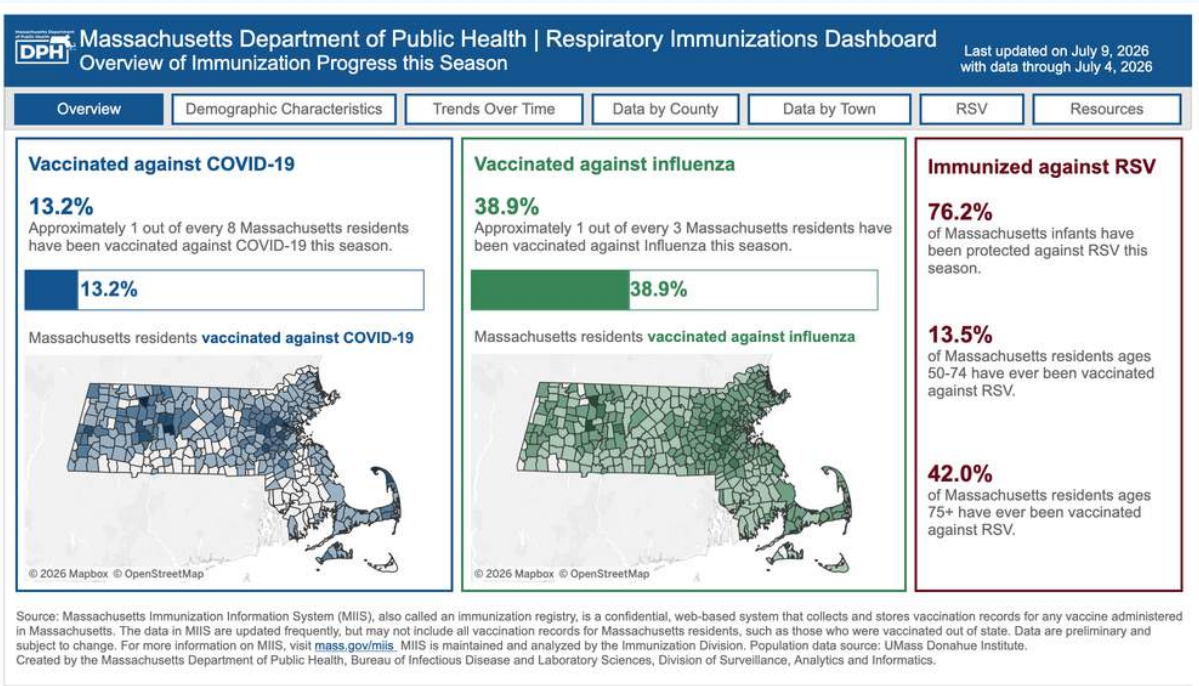
In the the one-week period of August 24th through August 30th, 2026:

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

Respiratory Illness Reporting

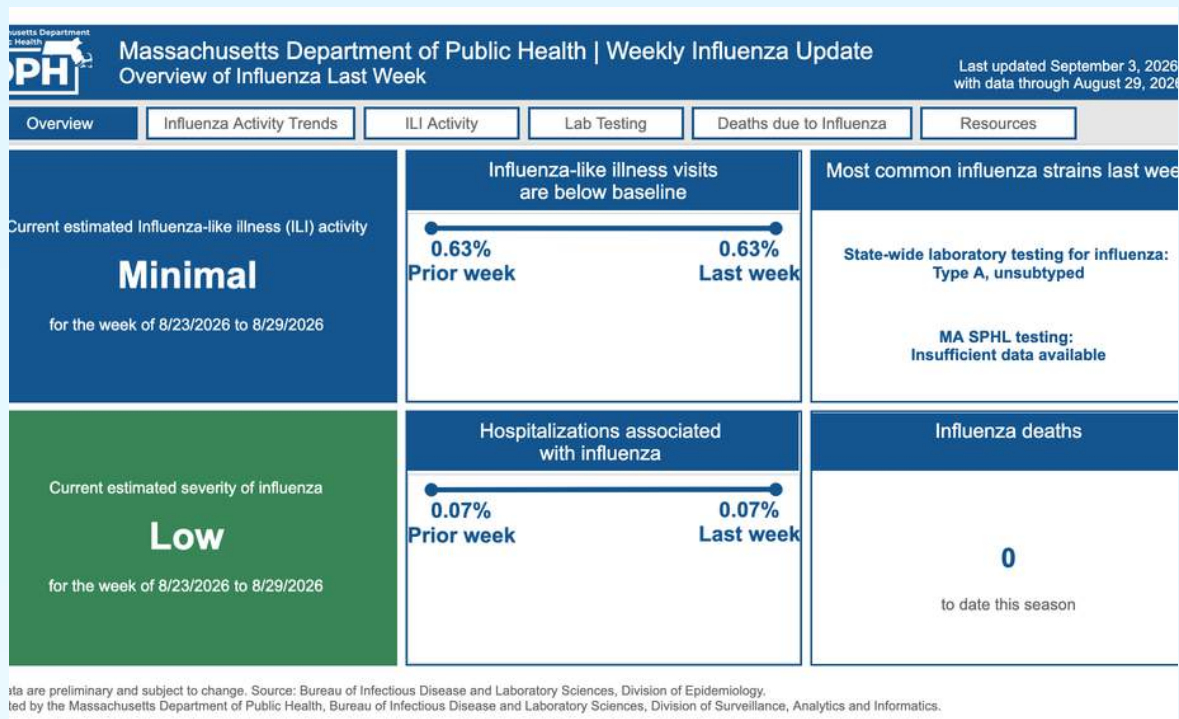


Here is the overall percentages if individuals in Massachusetts immunized against Covid-19 and Influenza

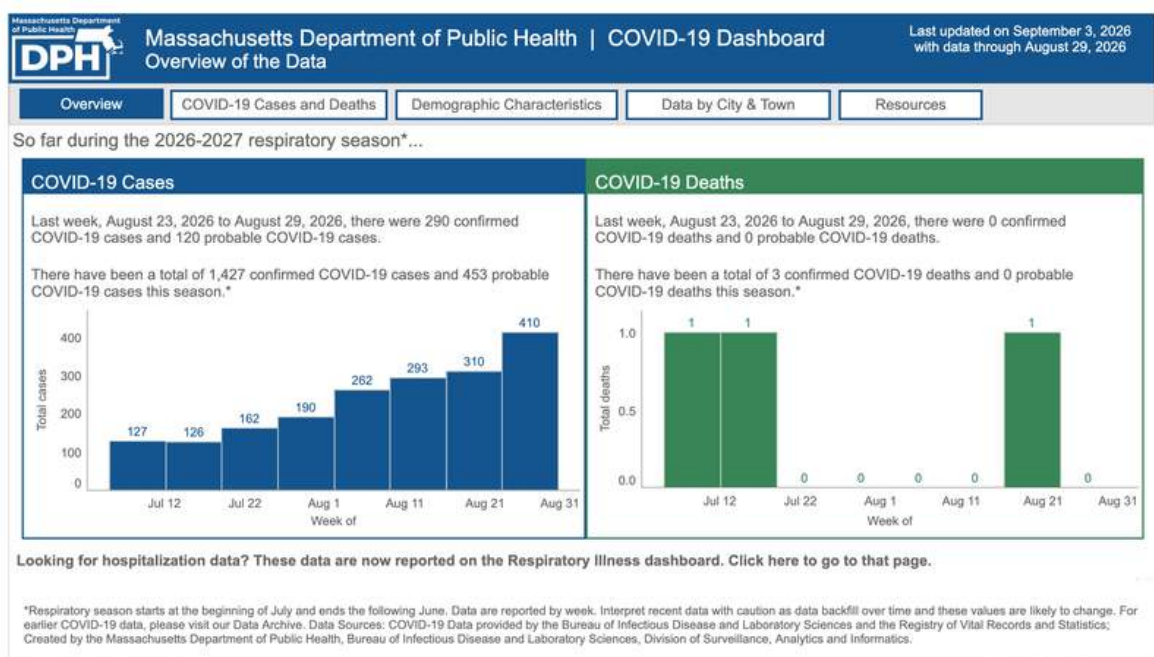


The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

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



COVID-19 Reporting – Number of cases is very low



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 September 11, 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

Public Health Nurse DropIn:

September 9th 2:30-4:30
September 23rd 2:30-4:30
October 7th 2:30-4:30
October 21 2:30-4:30
November 4 2:30-4:30
November 18 2:30-4:30
Dec 2 2:30-4:30
Dec 16th 2:30-4:30

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)



North Quabbin Health Collaborative



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Services:

- Preventative health screenings and blood pressure checks
- Individualized help managing chronic health conditions & tools for medication self-management
- Sharps disposal and container exchange
- Social worker can answer questions and connect you to available community resources including but not limited to: food security, housing/home repair, transportation, employment, healthcare/mental healthcare, substance use/harm reduction, support for families caring for children or elders, & more

Public Health Nurse & Social Worker Drop In Hours

Warwick Town Hall Dates:

September 15th 11:30 am - 1pm
October 13th 11:30 am - 1pm
November 10th 11:30 am - 1pm
December 8th 11:30am - 1pm

Petersham Town Hall Dates:

September 14th 3 pm - 5pm
October 26th 3pm - 5pm
November 23rd 3pm- 5pm
December 21st 3pm - 5pm

Orange Food Pantry Dates:

September 24th 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
October 22nd 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
November 19th 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Public Health Nurse Only Drop In Hours

New Salem Public Library Dates:

September 18th 1pm - 2pm
October 16th 1pm - 2pm
November 20th 1pm - 2pm
December 18th 1pm - 2pm

Wendell Town Hall Dates:

September 1st 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
October 13th 2:00pm - 3:00 pm
November 10th 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
December 8th 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Contacts:

Samantha Piragis, RN

Call or Text : 978-985-9709

spiragis@townoforange.org

Rachel Purinton, MSW

978-804-3345

rpurinton@townoforange.org





Motherhood & More

Supporting women through pregnancy, postpartum, and the first two years of motherhood. Find comfort. Find community. Light snacks provided. Children under 2 welcome to attend.

5:30 - 6:30 pm
Sept. 15th
Oct. 13th
Nov. 10th
Dec. 8th

All groups held at the
Orange Innovation
Center in suite 211
Except Nov. 10th at
Swift River School

Call or text to register:

978-985-9709



SENIOR DINING CLUB

Good Food • Good Friends • Good Conversation

**Join us for lunch and fellowship at
Mahar Regional School Cafeteria!**

Whether you're looking to enjoy a delicious meal, reconnect with friends,
or meet someone new, the Senior Dining Club offers a warm
and welcoming place to gather.



When

**Tuesdays,
Wednesdays & Thursdays
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**



Where

**Mahar Regional School Cafeteria
507 South Main Street
Grange, MA**

WHAT TO EXPECT



Fresh, nutritious main meals
prepared just for you with care
and great taste!

Good food to enjoy and nourish.



Prefer something different?
Alternative meals are available
for purchase. *You have options!*



Friendly conversation
in a welcoming
environment



A comfortable space to relax,
socialize, and enjoy lunch together

Starting

SEPTEMBER 15, 2026!

We can't wait to see you there!



QUESTIONS?

Please contact:

**Orange Council on Aging
☎ 978-544-3481**



*Everyone is Welcome!
Come for the meal... Stay for the friendships!*



**MAHAR
REGIONAL SCHOOL**



LifePath
options for independence

Proudly partnering to support our senior community!



Children's Advocacy Center
of Franklin County & North Quabbin
Help, Hope, and Healing
www.cacfranklinnq.org Phone: 413-475-3401

Lunch and Learn Event

"Safe Kids Thrive"

Inviting schools and youth serving organizations to a
lunch and learn event - at no cost.

Join Laura Banks, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
Coordinator, to learn how to create a safer space for
children and teens using a child safety framework.



Friday, September 18th, 2026



11:00 am - 2:00 pm



Greenfield Public Library, 412 Main Street
Community Meeting Room



Complimentary lunch will be provided



For questions, contact Laura Banks

413-772-9069, LBanks@CACFranklinNQ.org





Build safer programs. Strengthen prevention.

Help youth thrive.

At the lunch and learn event
you will:

- * Learn key components of effective child sexual abuse prevention and how to implement them.
- * Take the materials and work through the framework independently, *or*
- * If interested, sign up for free direct support to help your school or organization implement the framework, complete with a comprehensive assessment and follow-on support.



Register with this link by 09/04:

bit.ly/4fbqb4e

or by scanning the QR Code:



Let's Talk **TICKS**

Join our local Public Health Nurse for a free presentation about ticks, tickborne illnesses and tick bite prevention.



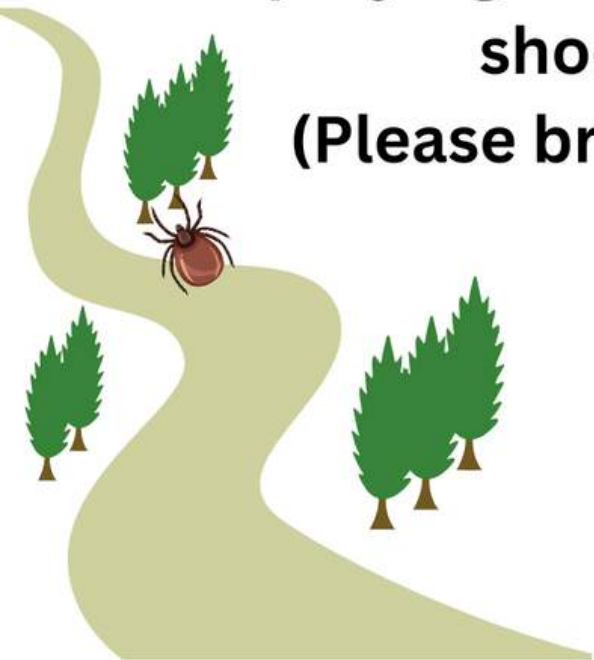
September 29, 2026

7:00 pm

**Warwick Free Public Library
4 Hotel Rd. Warwick, MA**



**We will be offering free Permethrin spraying to hiking/outdoor boots and shoes at these events
(Please bring a spare pair to wear)**





Mini-Makers Family Crafting

Apple Stamping!



Wheeler Memorial Library
49 East Main St. Orange, MA

Thursday, September 17th

3:00pm-4:00pm

Registration is not required!

Everyone is welcome!

(Dress for a mess!)



Safe Sleep

Questions about safe sleep? We're here to help



DROP IN HOURS

September 10, 2026 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Wheeler Memorial Library: Community Room
49 East Main Street, Orange MA 01364



Safe Sleep Drop-In Hours provide an opportunity for expectant parents, new parents, grandparents, and caregivers to learn about current safe sleep recommendations, ask questions, and receive one-on-one education from a Registered Nurse. Whether you're preparing for a new baby or simply looking for a refresher, you're welcome to stop by anytime during our scheduled drop-in hours.

TOPICS MAY INCLUDE:

- The ABCs of Safe Sleep
- Reducing the risk of SIDS
- Safe Sleep Products and creating a safe sleep space
- Swaddling, sleep sacks and common questions
- Room sharing vs. bed sharing
- Feeding, soothing, and nighttime routines
- Community resources and support



WHAT TO EXPECT

- ♥ NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED
- ♥ ONE ON ONE CONVERSATION
- ♥ SAFE SLEEP DEMONSTRATIONS
- ♥ EDUCATION MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
- ♥ QUESTIONS ENCOURAGED!

CAN'T MAKE IT?

Safesleep education is also available as needed, during prenatal and postpartum home visits, and by phone

CONTACT US



978-985-9709



WWW.NORTHQUABBINHC.ORG



Family Movie Night Featuring:

The Super Mario Galaxy Movie!



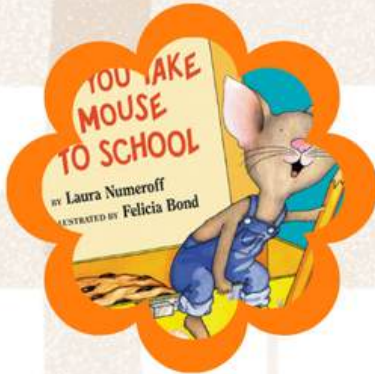
**Wheeler Memorial Library,
Community Room.**

**Thursday, September, 17th
5:00pm-7:30pm**

**Registration not required.
Everyone welcome!**

WHY STORYTIME IS IMPORTANT!

Visit us for **Little Bookworms Storytime**
every Monday, 10:30am-11:15am &
Baby and Toddler Storytime & Playgroup
every Tuesday, 10:30am-11:15am!
@Wheeler Memorial Library: 49 E Main St, Orange MA



EARLY LITERACY BOOSTS

Hearing stories develops listening skills, vocabulary, and narrative understanding! Crafts tied to the story reinforce comprehension by helping children retell or remember the story through hands-on activities.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Storytime followed by a craft encourages sharing, waiting turns, and cooperative play in a group setting. Children also learn to follow simple directions in a fun and relaxed way! Library programs are a great way to encourage your children to build and be a part of a community, make new friends, and explore!



JOY IN LIFELONG LEARNING

Kids associate reading with fun and creativity, making them more excited to return for books and Storytime! Attending library programs and visiting the library regularly is generational - you will bring your children, your children will one day bring their children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends... the library is a space for everyone!

