



FEBRUARY 2026

Celebrating Black History Month

In recognition of Black History Month, the focus of our history piece this month is on Mary Mahoney. Her achievement stands with a rich history of Black nurses who advanced the practice of nursing and championed social justice and health equity long before and alongside her. To learn more about the many known and often overlooked contributions of Black nurses, we invite you to read Hidden figures of nursing: The historical contributions of Black nurses and a narrative for those who are unnamed, undocumented and underrepresented by DL Baptiste, et al. (J Adv Nurs . 2021 April ; 77(4): 1627–1632. doi:10.1111/jan.14791.)

A look back in time ...



Mary Eliza Mahoney
1845- 1926

Mary Mahoney was born in Boston, MA in 1845 to freed slaves who had moved to Massachusetts from North Carolina. She graduated from the New England Hospital for Women and Children's professional graduate school for nursing in 1879 and is recognized as the first African American in the United States to earn a professional nursing license.

In 1908 Mary Mahoney cofounded the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) in response to discrimination within the American Nurses Association (ANA). She was an advocate for social justice, equality, and women's rights and recognized for her advocacy and leadership by the NACGN and the integrated ANA.

The Mary Mahoney Award is given annually by the ANA to recognize a nurse or nurses who have made significant contributions to integration within the nursing professions as well as contributions to social justice, equity, and inclusion.

American Nurses Association. (n.d.). National Awards Program <https://www.nursingworld.org/ana/national-awards-program/>
Spring, K. (2017). Mary Mahoney. National Women's History Museum. <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-mahoney>

Announcements

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is in the design phase of the expansion of the Welcome Family program to serve all families across Massachusetts as part of the comprehensive maternal health law signed by Governor Healy in 2024 “An Act promoting access to midwifery care and out-of-hospital birth options.” To inform our planning, we are excited to share a Request for Information (RFI) to inform the design of a statewide system of Welcome Family programs. The statewide Welcome Family program will be comprised of a network of service providers, each running the program in their designated catchment areas to ensure availability in all 351 cities and towns.

Responses to the RFI are **due by Tuesday, February 27th**. Please note, a subsequent Request for Responses (RFR) will be released when DPH is seeking to procure and contract with agencies to initiate the service.

Please reach out to your Public Health Nurse Consultant for assistance thinking through a program or response.

Public Health Nursing Spotlight

Marion Public Health Nurse / Health Director and Southeast MAPHN Co-President, Lori Desmarais.

Lori leads a robust Community EMS program known as Marion Cares. Through this program, multiple community stakeholders, including Fire, Police, Council on Aging, and others, meet regularly to coordinate support for residents.

As part of Marion Cares, Lori works with the Fire Department to conduct hundreds of home visits each year, primarily serving older adults. These visits include in home safety assessments that focus on fall risk, outdated smoke detectors, and other potential safety concerns. During visits, they check vital signs and connect residents with additional support services as needed. The program also provides home visits for individuals recently discharged from hospitals or long-term care facilities.

This unique collaborative, multidisciplinary approach helps ensure the most vulnerable community members receive timely support and resources. Such efforts reduce the risk of re-hospitalization and decrease strain on the healthcare system as well as costs.



Save the dates! Upcoming Webinars and Meetings

Communities of Practice & Networking Meetings

Monthly Maternal Child Health Workgroup – First Tuesday of the month

Please reach out for more information or additional resources.

The workgroup meeting is open to all local Public Health partners!

- Chassea Robinson, Northeast Region PHN Consultant
- Anne Mistivar, Western Region PHN Consultant

New Nurse Network Quarterly Meeting ~ Tuesday February 17th 10:00 - 11:00

This virtual meeting is open to all new public health nurses in Massachusetts

Please reach out for more information or additional resources.

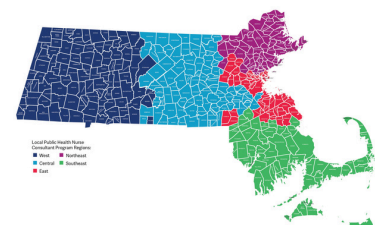
- Alyssa Kaiser, Southeast Region PHN Consultant

PHN Training Opportunities

Coming Soon: We are launching a Grand Rounds series to highlight and focus on clinical areas of Foundational Public Health Services. Stayed tuned for more information on our first Grand Rounds Webinar focused on Maternal Child Health. The program will include best practices, information and resources to support local Public Health services, as well as a case study presentation from a local PHN.

Tier I Training: We are pleased to announce that the Tier I self-paced course on Public Health Nursing is in the final development stage. We anticipate that the course will go live on the Massachusetts TRAIN site by the end of March.

Please reach out for more information about meetings or other activities : LPHNC-program@umass.edu



Resources

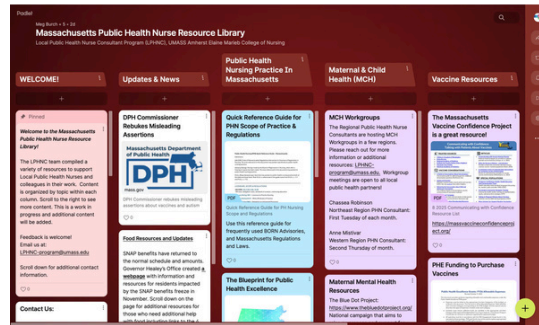
Public Health Nurse Resource Library (Padlet)

This PHN Resource Library is a compilation of resources to support you and your colleagues in your work. Content is organized by topics including resources for Maternal Child Health, Vaccination, Public Health Nurse Practice, and more!

To explore the Padlet double click [HERE](#)

We welcome your feedback!

Email us at: lpnhc-program@umass.edu



If you are not on our email list and would like to be added please fill out this [FORM](#)

Contact us:

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