

EST



2022

Southern Plymouth County

PUBLIC HEALTH EXCELLENCE COLLABORATIVE

CARVER • DUXBURY • KINGSTON • PLYMOUTH • PLYMPTON • WAREHAM

Bridging the Gap: Aligning Local Public Health and School Health

How Shared Service Arrangements and School Nurses Can Collaborate Effectively

Devon Donovan, MMSc

Regional Epidemiologist

Southern Plymouth County Public Health Excellence Collaborative



Questions we'll answer

1

What is a Shared Service Arrangement?

2

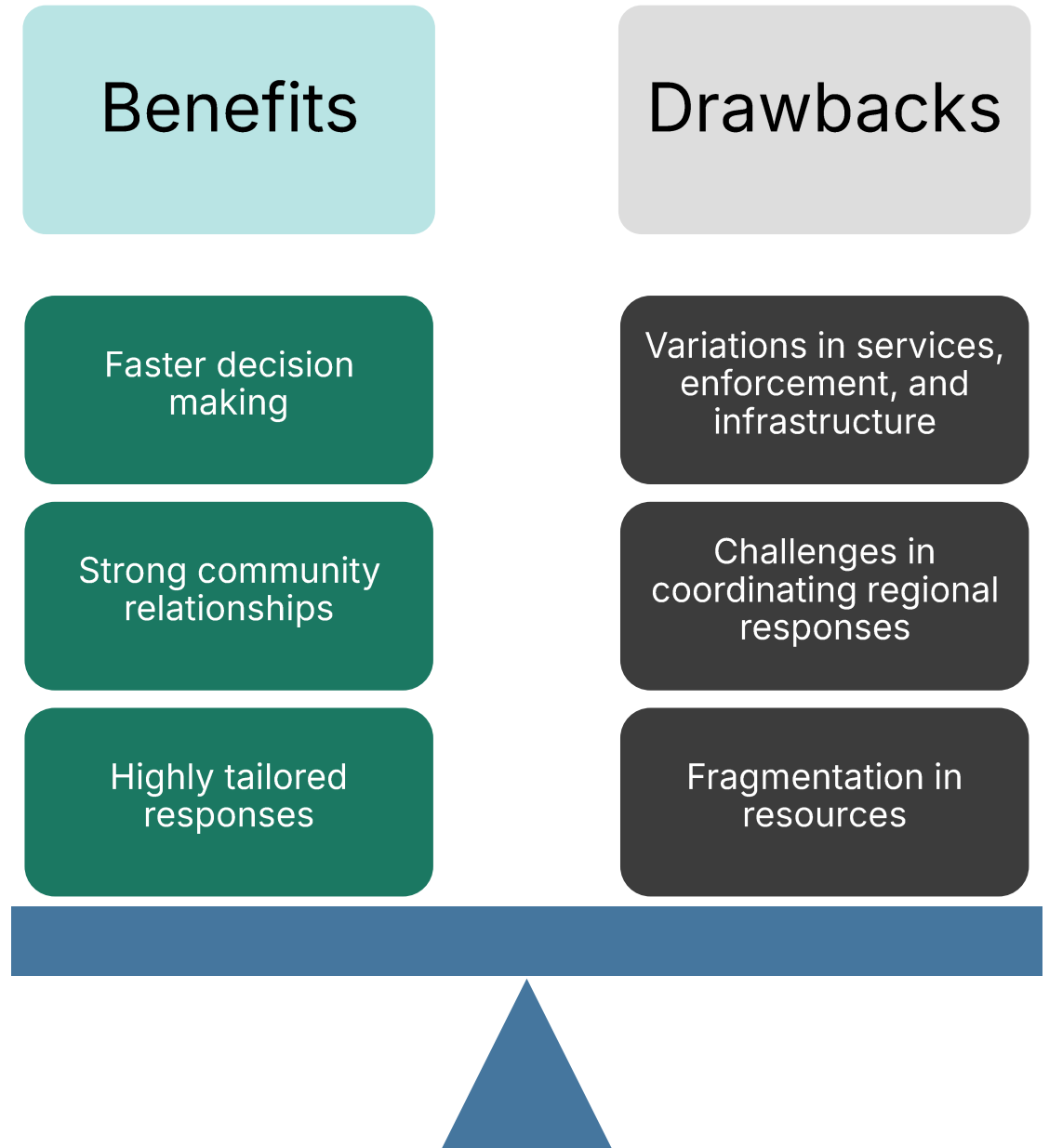
How do SSAs collaborate with school nurses?

3

How do I know if I am in an SSA & how do I find them?

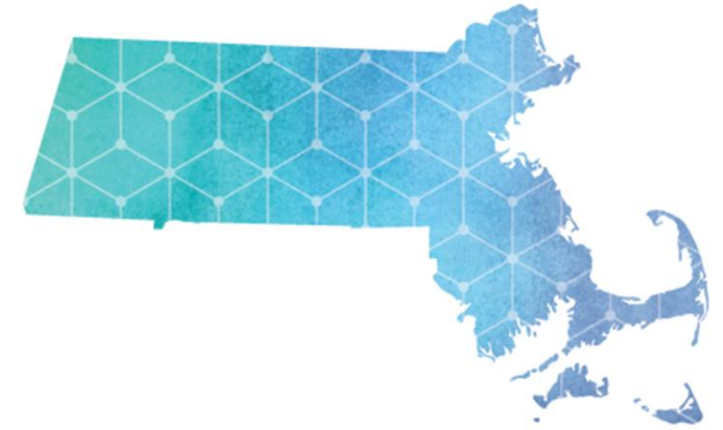
Some context: Home Rule in the Commonwealth

- Most states use county health departments as the primary local public health authority.
- **Massachusetts relies on 351 municipal Boards of Health** instead of counties.



How can we improve?

- In 2016, the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health is established
- 2 years of statewide study by a 25-member multidisciplinary commission
- Identified major system gaps and used national frameworks to guide solutions
- Developed 6 core recommendation areas for a modernized public health system
- **Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant created as the primary vehicle to implement the Blueprint**
- PHE drives modernization toward an equitable and coordinated statewide system



Blueprint for Public Health Excellence

Recommendations for Improved
Effectiveness and Efficiency of
Local Public Health Protections

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON
LOCAL AND REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUNE 2019

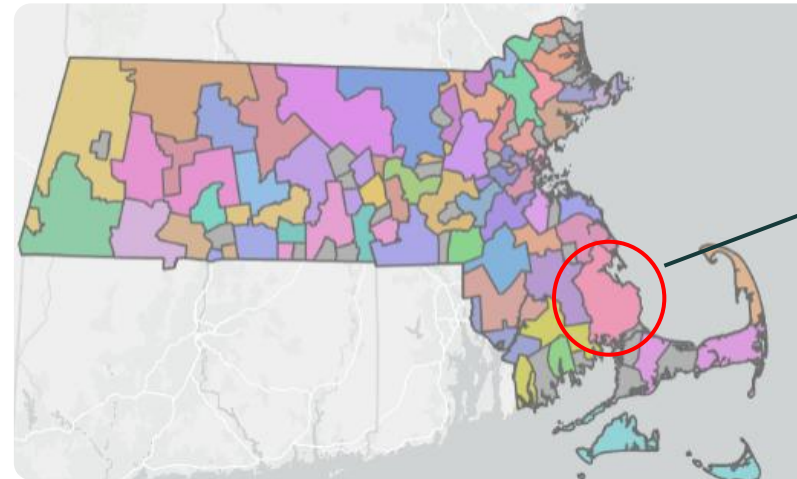


What is a Shared Service Arrangement?

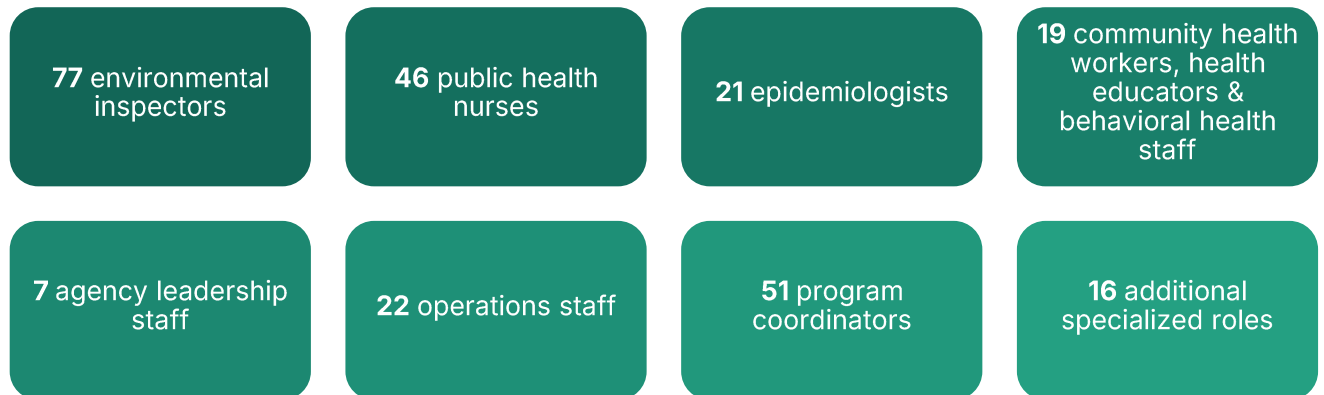


Shared Service Arrangements

- Participating municipalities pool staff, resources, and services to strengthen local health systems regardless of community size or budget.
- Since FY2021, the program has grown to 54 Shared Service Arrangements, representing 322 cities and towns statewide.
- **Nearly 92% of municipalities** are in a Shared Service Arrangement



Southern Plymouth County PHEC 😊



A national Framework tailored for every municipality

The Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) define a minimum package of public health capabilities and programs that no jurisdiction can be without.

Foundational Areas

- Communicable Disease Control
- Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention
- Environmental Public Health
- Maternal, Child, & Family Health
- Access to & Linkage with Clinical Care

Foundational Capabilities

- Assessment & Surveillance
- Community Partnership Development
- Equity
- Organizational Competencies
- Policy Development & Support
- Accountability & Performance Management
- Emergency Preparedness & Response
- Communications

What we're doing as an SSA

- ✓ Increased inspectional services capacity
- ✓ Lead data modernization initiatives
- ✓ Increased communicable disease surveillance and assessment
- ✓ Expanded health education & trainings to community members
- ✓ Joined community-focused events to share resources and supports
- ✓ Connected with key community partners, organizations, and groups
- ✓ And more!



Southern Plymouth County

PUBLIC HEALTH EXCELLENCE COLLABORATIVE

CARVER • DUXBURY • KINGSTON • PLYMOUTH • PLYMPTON • WAREHAM

PUBLIC HEALTH EXCELLENCE SPOTLIGHT: Bristol Norfolk Public Health Partners



Easton, Foxborough,
Mansfield, Norton,
Plainville, and Sharon

Shared Concessions, Shared Responsibility

Public Health Excellence (PHE) funds have helped public health workers to **increase inspection capacity** in small communities that host big events at stadium, concert, and recreational venues. These communities have small budgets and limited staff capacity, which makes the task of ensuring food safety for customers at venues like Gillette Stadium challenging. With these funds, communities have **gained the support of a regional support staff, which lend capacity for food inspections, disease monitoring, and more.**

More Shared Service Arrangements in action!

05/12/2026

Gillette's Food Vendor Capacity

Gillette Stadium is New England's premier sports, entertainment and event venue, and home to the Patriots Football Team. Gillette hosts several food vendors that the board of health is responsible for inspecting, including:

1	main kitchen that serves most people in the stadium	6	big events kitchens that host 3,300+ people	12	pantry kitchens for the suites	1	players kitchen
50	concession stands	5	vending kitchens for hawkers and peddlers	13	mobile food set-ups	56	beverage stations

DID YOU KNOW?



Health inspectors **prevent future foodborne illnesses** in the community by:

- **inspecting** the safety of restaurants and other food vendors
- **tracking cases** of food-related illness
- **communicating with the public** so they know what foods or vendors to avoid.



Partnerships are key.

How do we build them?



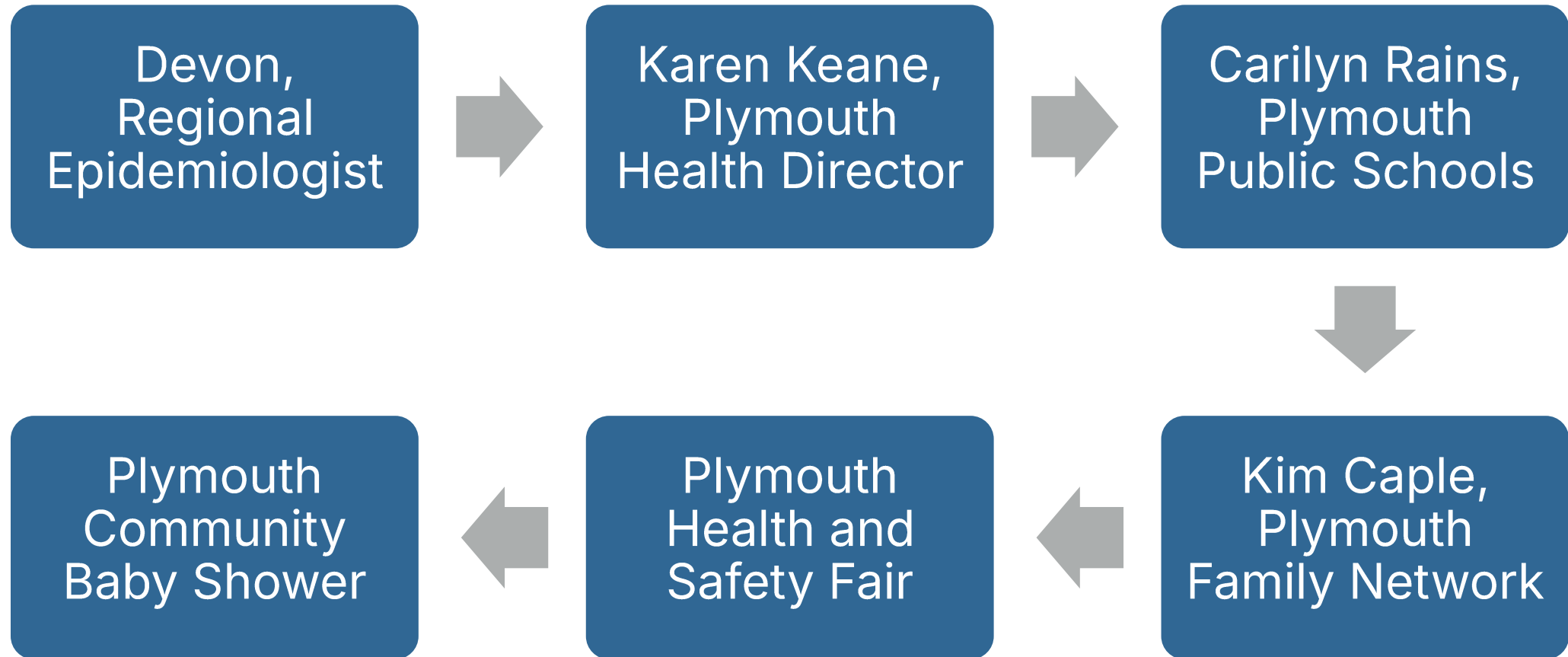
A quick story: How do you throw a community baby shower?

- In late 2025, I was tasked with expanding maternal & child health outcomes within our collaborative.
- **Community Baby Showers** are becoming increasingly popular across SSAs within the Commonwealth
 - Maternal & child health focused
 - Tangible impact with limited resources
- But where do you start?

A community baby shower is an event organized by local community groups to distribute essential maternal and baby supplies to expecting parents, and to celebrate the miracle of new life. It provides a village for those who may not necessarily have one. It may also be an opportunity to share maternal health resources and to collect donations.

[Brooklyn NBP | Guide to Planning Your Community Baby Shower](#)

A roadmap to success





Plymouth Community Baby Shower



- 121 visitors in 3 hours
- Supported entirely through community donations
- Hundreds of items given away
- A celebration of cross-collaboration

How you can collaborate

(In case you aren't throwing a Community Baby Shower)



Find your nearest SSA

- Connect with their staff
- Ask about their foundational areas
- Seek partnership opportunities



Possible questions

What foundational areas are you focusing on?

What programs or supports do you have available?

Are there any upcoming events I should know about?

How school nurses & SSAs can collaborate

Coordinate on infectious disease cases for rapid guidance, reporting, and response

Tap into community-level data trends to inform school health planning

Access broader public health expertise beyond what exists within the school system

Connect to community partners (behavioral health, violence prevention, housing, etc.) through SSA networks

Strengthen outbreak preparedness with shared protocols, communication channels, and surge support

Leverage SSA epidemiologists' state-level connections to obtain specialized data or subject-matter experts

Stay informed about resources available through MA DPH that can support school health initiatives



Final thoughts

1. Find out if your town(s) are part of an SSA
2. Connect with relevant SSA staff
3. Build connections to prepare for all-seasons
4. Public health is a team sport

[Public Health Excellence Grant Program | Mass.gov](#)

Devon Donovan, MMSc
Regional Epidemiologist, SPCPHEC
ddonovan@plymouth-ma.gov

