

Link2Health: Understanding the community health needs within the Rural Health Network

PURCH Population Health Clerkship 2022

Rosemary Cobb, Class 2025, UMass Chan - PURCH

Angie Kim, PharmD, WNEU

Hope Koene, Class of 2025, UMass Chan - PURCH

Nicholas Scuderi, Class of 2025, UMass Chan - PURCH



**Baystate
Health**

ADVANCING CARE.
ENHANCING LIVES.

Summary

- **Who are we?** We are three second-year PURCH medical students and a pharmacist from Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy and Western New England University
- **Where are we?** We worked with the Rural Health Network based at Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield and surrounding communities
- **Goal:** The goal was to better understand the health needs of rural counties in Western MA
- **Why addressing this issue is important?**
 - Franklin County is the **only** county in MA that is **completely rural**
 - Isolated rural communities face unique health challenges
 - Barriers to health care include provider **scarcity, lack of local health services, transportation, poor care coordination, geographical isolation**
 - **1 in 4 people** in Franklin County are **65 or older**
 - Among older adults: $\frac{2}{3}$ with hypertension, $\frac{1}{4}$ with depression, $\frac{1}{4}$ living alone, $\frac{1}{5}$ with diabetes

Experiential Learning

How?

- Visited various health and community organizations to better understand the local services available
 - Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Baker Pharmacy, South County EMS, Baystate Franklin ED, Hilltown Churches Food Pantry, Tapestry, NELCWIT, The Salisin Center, Moms Do Care.
- Engaged with community members to learn about barriers to health care
 - Charlemont Council on Aging, Ashfield Food Pantry, Greenfield Tapestry Community Outreach
- Considered how rural environments influence care coordination and access to healthcare

S.89: An Act allowing spouses to serve as caregivers

What is this bill?

- Introduced by Sen Joanne Comerford 2019-2020 as S.28 and 2021-2022 as S.89
- MassHealth Adult Family Care financially supports family members excluding spouses and parents who provide 24/7 care to adults requiring assistance with at least 1 activity of daily living. This bill removes the exclusion of spouses.

What is the impact?

- Increase access to caregiving services for eligible individuals in Franklin County will mitigate some of the effects of home care scarcity
- Any increased cost to the state is the result of eligible individuals accessing guaranteed services their families previously absorbed because of lack of access

Who supports this?

- LifePath

Acknowledgments

Community Preceptor: Cheryl Pascucci, NP

UMMS-Baystate Faculty Preceptor: Robert Baldor, MD

PURCH PCHC Organizers & Facilitators:

Lisa White, RN

Meg Ryan, RN

Rachel Lewis, RN

Zachary Barrieau, PharmD, RPh

Z. Smith, Paramedic

QR Code for Bill S.89

