

# PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS

A NEWSLETTER OF THE PUBLIC  
HEALTH MUSEUM



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## *Outbreak!* 2017 a Success with the Largest Class to Date

*Outbreak!* 2017 commenced on Monday, August 7th with an enthusiastic group of 26 students from a range of high schools including: Tewksbury HS, Melrose HS, Innovation Academy (Tyngsborough), Acton Boxborough HS, Worcester Technical HS, Bishop Fenwick HS (Peabody), Pioneer Charter School of Science II (Saugus), Lowell HS, Algonquin HS (Northborough), and St. Mark's School (Southborough), just to name a few.

Over the course of the week, *Outbreak!* participants were exposed to the many fields and careers within public health, from nursing to epidemiology, from global health to local public health departments. On Tuesday, students had the chance to visit the Lowell Community Health Center and learn about the care and treatment provided to Lowell area residents by CHW's and other staff at the health center.

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The Museum will hold its annual meeting on Saturday  
November 4, 2017

3:30 pm Annual Meeting

5:00 pm Guest Speaker (to be announced)

5:30 pm Dinner Buffet (RSVP for dinner please)

See the [Museum web site](#) for updates.

## Outbreak! 2017 continued

Thursday involved a bus ride down to the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory in Jamaica Plain where participants had a chance to hear from the Commissioner of Public Health about what led her to her current career. Students also were given a tour of the labs to understand the scientific work that goes into preventing and stopping outbreaks.

By the end of the week, the *Outbreak!* participants were able to more holistically define what public health is and we hope that this experience would help guide them into the area of public health in college and beyond. These students will be the future leaders of the field and we at the Public Health Museum are grateful to mold their young minds.

**“Outbreak was a true learning experience, but you have fun while you’re doing it, so it doesn’t seem like work.”**

*Jahnvi Patel, Lowell High School*



*Outbreak! 2017 participants tour the Public Health Museum.*



*“Outbreak! 2017 participants pose with Dr. Monica Bharel, the Commissioner of Public Health in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.”*

**“The staff at the health center enjoyed sharing their experience working in community health and how our work influences bigger public health issues. Students were engaged in the presentations and asked thought provoking questions.”**

*Melanie Priestly, Director of Specialty Care and Women’s Health, Lowell Community Health Center*



*Outbreak! 2017 participants identify mosquitoes at the Hinton State Laboratory Institute.*

## Did you know...

By receiving all recommended vaccinations throughout your lifetime, you are aiding in maintaining the “herd immunity” – if 95% of a community’s population is vaccinated against certain dangerous diseases like measles, those 5% of the community who cannot receive vaccines (newborns, pregnant women, and immunocompromised persons), are essentially protected from the disease. For more information on recommended vaccinations, visit the [CDC web site](#).

# Sun Safety as a Public Health Initiative

Today, the dangers of sun exposure, from burns to cancer, are well known. As such, experts now strongly recommend sunscreen (products which reflect, scatter, or absorb UV) to mitigate damage. Yet despite how ingrained the sunscreen message is, its entry into public health marks a major shift in US sun-product advertising.

Today's appreciation for sunscreen's importance arrived, ironically, in parallel with the mid-century vogue for "healthy tans." In the 1930s, L'Oreal founder Eugene Schueller and Swiss chemist Franz Greiter developed sunscreens; in 1944, US pharmacist Benjamin Greene made Red Veterinary Petroleum ("Red Pet Vet") to protect soldiers in the Pacific from sunburn. Cosmetic products like Pond's Vanishing Cream claimed to prevent the sun from "burning too deep" and roughening skin; suntan lotions, too, arrived in the 1950s. With the post-war rise of molecular biology, the impacts of UV beyond sunburn—including altered cellular DNA and cancer—became clear.

With increased medical awareness about the sun's dangers, and of effective sunscreens to block them, sun protection became a public health issue. Perhaps most importantly, the FDA stepped up to introduce sunscreen regulations which would help the public navigate among products announcing their sun-protectiveness. In 1978 the agency published an advanced notice about regulating the growing industry. It announced that tanning is "not good for the skin" and proposed to create standards of sunscreen safety and effectiveness and required labeling. Accordingly, the FDA in 1984 adopted the SPF system of UVB-blocking strength, initiating a now-universal labeling standard. Yet bigger change occurred with the publication of a Tentative Final Monograph for sunscreen products in the 1990s. Following the FDA pattern for over-the-counter (OTC) drug monographs, the document laid out standards for sunscreen labeling, like those for "minimal," "moderate," or "high" protection. Finalized in 2011, these regulations began to steer consumers through the new world of sun protection advertising.

Meanwhile, public health began to educate the public and promote awareness. In 1998 the Massachusetts Department of Public Health published "Ban the Burn," a guidebook advising communities on initiating "Safe Skin Projects." That "Ban the Burn" discusses links between UV and a range of health effects from aging to cataracts, as well as cancer risk. Fighting against the sun-worshipping pushed by prior sun-product companies, the "Ban the Burn" sample press release states that baby boomers' tans "come with a price". Soon after, the EPA developed the nation-wide "SunWise School Program"—a comprehensive project to mitigate the sun's "whole spectrum of health effects."

Of course, much change in the world of sun products has been due to the industry itself, with the production of ever gentler sunscreens and more protection with higher SPF values. But it is largely thanks to growing sun-safety awareness initiatives that this industry, and its public face in advertisements, has evolved so dramatically. What was once tanning lotion became sunscreen by the 1980s. Indeed, even the iconic Coppertone tanning lotion ("don't be a pale face!") was reformulated to a medicalized



## Sun Safety continued

product which, by the 1990s, advertised its SPF value in television commercials. This is testimony to how much American consumers attitudes to the sun and sun products have changed over the last half-century—and to how much of this change rested on the broader medicalization of sun protection, as well as the health promotion efforts of health officials who first delivered the sunscreen message to the public.

*Naomi Elliott, McGill University, PHM summer volunteer*

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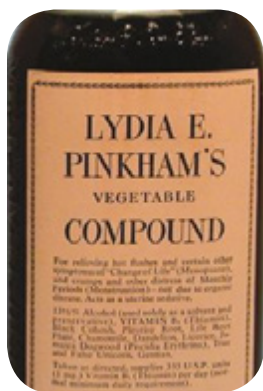
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*CDC Sun Safety Poster*



## Lydia Pinkham Today

You may remember a past newsletter piece from 2014 on Lydia Pinkham, the founder and face of Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound? The Lynn, MA native's company was later acquired by a pharmaceutical company once the FDA regulations became more stringent on patent medicines. Her product can still be found today, and is manufactured by Numark Laboratories, Inc.

Today, the original laboratory on Western Avenue in Lynn, where Lydia made and sold her natural remedies has been repurposed. Lydia Pinkham Labs now houses business space for artists, sculptors, glass blowers, leather workers, upholsterers, and yoga instructors to name a few. If you visit the [Lydia Pinkham web site](#) you can view a short video introduction into what has been done to Lydia's home and lab. What was once a focal point in history for community health, Lydia Pinkham Labs still serves as a place of creation and service to community.

*By Kate Donovan, Volunteer*



*Lydia Pinkham Laboratories in Lynn, MA.*

# 2017 Calendar of Events

## October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month!

The American Cancer Society has a number of fund raising events around Massachusetts for their Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. You can join the event by donating or signing up for the walk on the [Making Strides web site](#).

Event	Location	Date
Making Strides of Worcester	Institute Park	10/15/2017
Making Strides of Cape Code	Barnstable County Superior Courthouse	10/15/2017
Making Strides of Pioneer Valley	Stanley Park	10/29/2017
Real Men Wear Pink of Western MA	Stanley Park	10/29/2017

## October is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month

If you know of family/friends with a newborn, it may be good to know what recommendations have been updated in recent years . . .

1. Newborns should sleep on their backs in their own crib/bassinet
2. The mattresses should be firm with only a fitted sheet used for bedding.
3. Soft blankets, crib bumpers, and toys should not be in the crib with a newborn.
4. Warm one-piece clothes and sleep sacks help reduce overheating or suffocation

See the [CDC web site](#) for more information on SIDS.

## November is National Diabetes Awareness Month!

According to the American Diabetes Association, 86 million adults in the United States are at high risk of developing Type II diabetes. Reduce chances of developing Type II diabetes and prevent complications by making small lifestyle changes:

1. Eat healthier snacks and meals
2. Increase physical activity (take the stairs instead of the elevator)
3. Get blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked.

Ask your doctor about your diabetes risk. See the [CDC web site](#) for more information on diabetes

## Mark your calendars! Upcoming Events on the History of Medicine

*Click on the hyperlinks for description sand details of the events*

**Tuesday, October 17:** "Measuring Value in Healthcare," [42nd Annual Garland Lecture](#), by Peter J. Neumann, Sc.D.

**Thursday, October 19:** "Going Crazy at Work: The History of Carbon Disulfide," [Colloquium on the History of Psychiatry and Medicine](#), by Paul Blanc, M.D.

**Thursday, November 16:** "The Complexities of Medical Confidentiality with World Leaders," [Colloquium on the History of Psychiatry and Medicine](#), by David Steinberg, M.D.

**Thursday, December 21:** "Caring for the Diseased Nerves of Africa: The Evolution of Neurosurgery, Neurology, and an Egalitarian Thought Style on Neurological Diseases in Nigeria, 1962-1995," [Colloquium on the History of Psychiatry and Medicine](#), by Frank Blibo A.M., MTS, Th.M.



# THE PUBLIC HEALTH MUSEUM IN MASSACHUSETTS

## Our Mission

The Public Health Museum is a non-profit educational and cultural museum. The Museum strives to preserve records and artifacts from our nation's public health history; educate the public about the achievements and contributions of public health; and inspire people to build upon the past and continue to advance the future of public health. Our Museum provides a space to explore public health artifacts, inspire future public health professionals, and foster community involvement.

## Our History

Incorporated in 1990 and open to the public since 1994, the Museum has the distinction of being the first of its kind in the nation. Massachusetts has a rich history of leadership and notable firsts in the birth of our nation. In the field of public health, Massachusetts was the first to record vital statistics; the first to implement a sustained board of health; and the first to implement a communicable disease surveillance system, among many others.

## MUSEUM HOURS

Wednesdays, Thursdays and the first Saturday of each month 10:00am-2:00pm  
OR  
By Appointment

## WALKING TOURS

Seasonal (May through October, weather permitting)  
The third Thursday and first Saturday of each month 10:00am-2:00pm  
OR  
By Appointment

## ADMISSION

\$5.00 per person for museum  
\$10.00 per person for walking tour

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested in the Public Health Museum.

To subscribe to this newsletter, please reply with SUBSCRIBE to Newsletter in the subject line. To unsubscribe, please reply with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

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