

# FALMOUTH COMMUNITY HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## SEPTEMBER 2016

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than 30 years, Falmouth taxpayers have supported approximately 17 non-profit agencies on the Cape through the operating budget of the Human Services Department. These non-profit agencies offer programs and services to assist Falmouth residents with a variety of human services related needs. Since the 1980's Falmouth's population has grown and the demographics and needs of citizens have changed significantly. The number of non-profit organizations has grown tremendously as well. In order to ensure that the town's current needs and trends are being addressed in the most effective manner, the Human Services Committee has conducted a year-long strategic review of current human service related needs and identified 5 key areas of **unmet needs** in our community.

- ❖ **Homeless Prevention** - Many Falmouth residents are "housing cost burdened", meaning they spend more than 30% of the household income on housing costs. This results in instability for household members, frequent housing transitions and episodes of homelessness for some.
- ❖ **Outmigration of Working Age Adults** - From 2000 – 2010, there has been a 26% decline in Barnstable County residents age 25 – 44 representing a net loss of nearly 15,000 young working age adults over a single decade. This trend creates an imbalance in the fabric of the community that could threaten the region's economy and its diverse and dynamic culture.
- ❖ **Mental Health** – Depression and anxiety among adults and children are of concern as evidenced by high rates of suicide and alcohol abuse in adults, and increasing numbers of children needing services. The stigma of mental illness, the shortage of psychiatric providers, and the lack of integration with primary care are key factors that hinder access to mental health care in Falmouth and on the Cape.
- ❖ **Substance Abuse** - The abuse of legal and illegal drugs is an area of concern for residents of Barnstable County. Alcohol abuse remains an endemic problem in our community. Prescription medication (opiate) dependence is on the rise, as well as the abuse of heroin and marijuana. Overdose and death rates are increasing at alarming rates with devastating impacts on families and our community. Numerous challenges include limited availability of detox and treatment options, limited detection of substance abuse in the primary care setting, difficulty navigating existing services, and the increased use of marijuana.
- ❖ **Other Support Services** - Additional challenges remain in our community that have an impact on the quality of life of Falmouth residents. Some examples include: affordable legal consultation and advocacy, domestic violence prevention, public transportation, racial and ethnic diversity and equality, isolation of elders, vulnerability of young adults age 15 – 24; systemic underemployment, and living wages.

As a result of these findings, the Human Services Committee proposes a revision to the human services funding policy for the Town so that tax dollars will be invested to effectively and strategically address the identified areas of need. The Committee will utilize a 3-year, cyclical, competitive, Request for Proposals process to solicit applications from non-profit entities and/or partnerships to address these needs. Ongoing progress will be monitored and the Needs Assessment will be updated every 5 years in order to keep abreast of changing demographics and trends.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Human Services Committee conducted a year-long strategic review of a variety of local and county data sources, key informant interviews, focus groups and community forums in the areas of basic needs, health, child and family services, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, affordable housing, homelessness, senior services, legal services, disability services and other support services.

While it is clear that significant challenges exist in the areas of senior services, affordable housing, public transportation and employment opportunities, there are other town committees specifically charged to address these problems (i.e. Council on Aging, Affordable Housing Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Transportation Management Commission and Economic Development and Industrial Corporation). Domestic violence and sexual assault continue to impact significant numbers of Falmouth residents and, consequently, the Town has contracted with Independence House to provide a Domestic Violence Specialist within the Falmouth Police Department.

Therefore, in order to have a meaningful impact on any given problem area, it was determined that funding efforts should focus on 5 key areas of unmet needs which have been identified as significantly impacting residents and the Falmouth community as a whole.

## **FINDINGS**

The Human Services Committee has identified 5 key areas of unmet human services related needs in the Falmouth community:

- ❖ *Homeless Prevention*
- ❖ *Reduce Outmigration of Working Age Adults*
- ❖ *Mental Health Services*
- ❖ *Substance Abuse Services*
- ❖ *Other Support Services*

### ❖ **Homeless Prevention**

The cost of housing on the Cape continues to be a major factor impacting individuals, families, businesses, municipalities and county-wide leaders. Falmouth's Affordable Housing Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Town Manager and Board of Selectmen are all exploring avenues to increase the local affordable housing stock – but this is a tedious and lengthy process.

In the meantime, many Falmouth residents are “housing cost burdened” – meaning they pay more than a third of their household income for housing costs.

- **Need:**
  - 1) To assist individuals and families with household income below 100% of area median income to maintain Falmouth residency during times of transition or crisis.
  - 2) To support persons with a history of chronic homelessness to transition to housing stability

➤ **Data Sources:**

1. *Cape and Islands Regional Network to Address Homelessness*
  - a) On January 27, 2016 there were 394 identified homeless persons on Cape Cod (287 adults, 5 unaccompanied youth, and 102 dependent children).
2. *Falmouth Housing Demand Study, September 2014*
  - a) About 40% of the households in Falmouth have incomes at or below the median family income for Barnstable County as a whole. 33% are homeowners and 65.6% are renters.
  - b) Almost 23% of owner households earned less than \$35,000 in 2010 and another 11% earned \$35,000 to \$50,000.
  - c) Over 51% of renter households earned less than \$35,000 and another 19.3% earned \$35,000 to \$50,000.
  - d) An income of \$35,000 would support a rent of \$860 to be considered “affordable”. The median gross rent in Falmouth is \$960. 45% of renters paid more than \$1000 in rent (20% of those paid more than \$1,500).
  - e) Falmouth has a shortage of housing for retirement age residents, frail elders and seniors needing subsidized housing options.
3. *Shaping the Cape’s Future: A Report and Analysis from the Dukakis Center, June 2014*
  - a) At least half of respondents to the STC survey are “housing cost burdened”
4. *American Community Survey, U.S. Census 2014*
  - a) 8% of individuals in Falmouth (or 2,428 individuals) have an income at or below the poverty level (\$14,293).
  - b) 31% of Falmouth families have a household income at or below the poverty level
  - c) 19.7% of Falmouth residents over age 65 have income less than 200% of poverty level.
  - d) 54.5% of renters in Falmouth spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs.
  - e) 39.5% of Falmouth homeowners with a mortgage spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs.
  - f) 21.7% of homeowners without a mortgage spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs.
5. *Key Informant and focus group input*
  - a) Financial and housing insecurity affect all aspects of people’s lives.
  - b) Daily choices are required about what bills to pay or postpone and what to purchase or go without.
  - c) Hopelessness follows recognition that the job market makes the financial struggle a permanent way of life.
  - d) High rates of depression, anxiety, suicide and addiction as people unfavorably compare their lives to that of second homeowners and vacationers
  - e) Those with transferable employment skills often leave the Cape
  - f) About 50% of the households receiving food assistance from the Falmouth Service Center also request help with housing costs.

## ❖ Outmigration of Working Age Adults

From 2000 – 2010, there has been a 26% decline in Barnstable County residents age 25 – 44 according to the U.S. Census. This represents a net loss of nearly 15,000 young working age adults over a single decade. The Falmouth School district has seen a decline in the number of school aged children of more than 15% in the last 10 years. This trend creates an imbalance in the fabric of the community that could threaten the region’s economy and its diverse and dynamic culture.

- **Need:** To reverse the outmigration of people 25-44 years old from Cape Cod by:
  1. Providing supports to family households whose income falls below 100% of the area median income in order to cover basic living expenses.
  2. Increasing training, mentoring and advancement opportunities within small businesses to positively impact long term employment
  3. Increasing housing opportunities for young families to remain on, or move to, the Cape
  4. Increasing the engagement of young people in civic opportunities and enhancing their knowledge of Cape-wide issues.

- **Data Sources:**

1. *Falmouth Housing Demand Study, September 2014*
  - a) The number of families in Falmouth declined by 3.8% between 2000 and 2010.
  - b) Homeowners younger than age 35 decreased to less than 4% of all Falmouth’s owner households in 2010.
  - c) Falmouth younger households (age 25 – 44 years) have incomes that tend to fall *below* the median income for the Town as a whole.
2. *Community Health Needs Assessment Report and Implementation Plan 2017-2019, Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital*
  - a) Barnstable County’s median age is over 50 years old, the highest of all counties in Massachusetts. Comparatively, Barnstable County’s median age is more than a decade older than the median ages for Massachusetts (39 years) or the United States (37 years).
  - b) More than 48% of Barnstable County residents who rent and 38% who own a housing unit are cost-burdened, spending 35% or more of their total income on housing.
  - c) 42% of Barnstable County residents receive publicly-funded health insurance coverage compared to 32% of residents in the MA overall.
  - d) Self-employed individuals and residents employed in part-time or seasonal positions are impacted by barriers to obtain and maintain health insurance.
3. *American Community Survey, U.S. Census 2010*
  - a) Extensive data re: demographics and trends
4. *Cape Cod Child Development, July 2016*
  - a) State Kinderwait list has 111 Falmouth families waiting for a subsidized day care slot.
5. *Falmouth Public Schools, 2015*
  - a) 31.3% of the district’s students qualify for free and reduced lunch

6. *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*
  - a) Falmouth Public School enrollment declined 15% in the last 10 years (from 4144 students in 2006 to 3515 students in 2016).
  
7. *Shaping the Cape's Future: A Report and Analysis from the Dukakis Center, June 2014*
  - a) 51% of respondents to STC survey report they need to supplement their primary income to cover basic living expenses.
  - b) Only a third (34%) responded that they strongly agreed or agreed that the salaries and wages they earned provided a livable wage on the Cape.
  - c) Only a little more than a third (35%) thought there are enough opportunities for promotion and advancement on the Cape in their chosen field.
  - d) Less than 37 percent believed there are enough jobs on the Cape that require their education or experience.
  - e) Less than 39 percent said that there are enough jobs available on the Cape in their chosen career field.
  - f) Less than 36 percent said that there are enough career development resources available.
  - g) Less than a third (32%) said that there are enough mentoring resources available.
  - h) 22 percent of respondents indicated they had been unemployed at some point during the last 12 months. The top three reasons for being unemployed were not being able to find a job (26%), having had only a seasonal job (25%), or having been a stay-at-home parent (24%).
  
8. Cape and Island Workforce Investment Board, David Augustinho, Executive Director, October 2016
  - a) The Cape and Islands' seeming inability to attract younger working age people translates into fewer people available to work in health, insurance, banking and technology...

### ❖ Mental Health Services

For Cape Cod residents, poor mental health is associated with age, income, and education. The stigma of mental illness, the shortage of psychiatric providers, and the lack of integration with primary care are key factors that hinder access to mental health care in Falmouth and on the Cape.

- **Need:**
- 1) Increase access to psychiatric care and medication assessment and management services.
  - 2) Reduce the stigma associated with mental illness in order to improve early intervention and access to treatment and other services.
  - 3) Improve early identification and initiation of treatment by integrating behavioral health assessment as part of routine health care in all primary care settings
  - 4) Enhance evidence based prevention strategies that increase protective factors and reduce risk factors for youth and young adults.
  - 5) Increase the availability of treatment services in Falmouth to address the needs of young children and adolescents.

➤ **Data Sources:**

1. *Community Health Needs Assessment Report and Implementation Plan 2017-2019, Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital*
  - a) Overwhelming consensus was shared across all phases of community input that behavioral health is one of the most pressing health issues facing Barnstable County.
  - b) Falmouth Hospital utilization data demonstrated increases in diagnosis of anxiety disorders and demand for inpatient and outpatient pharmacological and therapeutic services.
  - c) Falmouth exhibited one of the highest rates in the county for mental health related discharges from local emergency departments.
  - a) Suicide rates are increasing and are higher than the state as a whole, again with Falmouth exhibiting one of the highest rates. Youth ages 15 to 24 and males ages 35 to 64 as specific high-risk populations.
  - d) Barriers to care still exist despite state-mandated expansion of health insurance. Chief among these challenges are geographic gaps in behavioral health services, insurance barriers for low-income families and adults (out-of-pocket costs), and access to inpatient services for adolescents and geriatric patients.
  - e) Community stakeholders advocated strongly for expansion of mental health services, more accessible resources for families and caregivers of people with mental health disorders, and mental health education and training for law enforcement and emergency first responders.
2. *Falmouth Human Services*
  - a) Residents needing psychiatric assessment must routinely wait 2-4 months for an appointment with a psychiatrist on the Cape.
  - b) An estimated 40% of residents receiving counseling services at Falmouth Human Services would also benefit from psychotropic medication assessment and management.
  - c) Parents and school focus groups report that the number of child and adolescent treatment providers in the Falmouth area does not meet the need, resulting in frustrating access problems, lengthy wait lists and the need to travel to mid Cape or off Cape for services.
3. *Gosnold on Cape Cod, July 2016*
  - a) 1,073 Falmouth residents received inpatient and/or outpatient services in FY 2016.
  - b) The most active services included Individual counseling (69%), medication management (60%), and diagnostic evaluations (34%).
4. *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2008 to 2010 Barnstable County and Massachusetts, 2012, Barnstable County Department of Human Services*
  - a) 9% of respondents under 65 years reported poor mental health contrasted with 4% for 65 years and over
  - b) 17% of respondents with annual household income less than \$25,000 reported poor mental health contrasted with 5% of those with \$50,000 or more

- c) 13% of respondents who are high school graduates or less reported poor mental health contrasted with 5% with some college or greater
5. *Cape-wide Youth Action Plan, The Cape Cod Foundation, May 2014*
- a) All young people need safe places to learn, grow and thrive.
  - b) Increase the education and engagement of young people in civic opportunities.
  - c) Increase opportunities for youth to learn core life skills (social, financial, relationship, employment, etc.)
  - d) Expand career education and job opportunities for youth to enable them to have a positive vision for their future.

### ❖ **Substance Abuse Services**

Data indicates that the abuse of both legal and illegal drugs is an area of concern for residents of Barnstable County. Alcohol abuse is endemic, with 8% of the population estimated to be addicted. Prescription medication dependence is on the rise, with 3% of the population estimated to be addicted to heroin or opioids and an additional 3% are addicted to “other drugs” (not including marijuana). Numerous challenges include limited availability of detox and treatment options, limited detection of substance abuse in the primary care setting, difficulty navigating existing services, and the increased use of marijuana.

- **Need:**
  - 1) To expand evidence-based prevention efforts in the Falmouth community
  - 2) To integrate the assessment and treatment of substance abuse into medical clinics and primary care practices
  - 3) To expand treatment options and improve access for vulnerable residents and families
  - 4) To expand recovery support services in the community in order to reinforce long term recovery

- **Data Sources:**

1. *Analysis of Substance Abuse on Cape Cod: A Baseline Assessment, 2015, Barnstable County Department of Human Services*

- a) Alcohol abuse is endemic. The estimated number of persons addicted to alcohol on Cape Cod is 17,063, or 7.9% of the population.
- b) At least 3.1% of Barnstable County residents are addicted to, or dependent upon, heroin or prescription opioids and 3.1% are addicted to “other drugs” (not including marijuana).
- c) Approximately 27,000 adults (age 18+) and 3,000 children (17 and under) on Cape Cod use marijuana regularly. Approximately 9% of those users are addicted to marijuana (or 2,715 persons).
- d) Mortality rates attributable to alcohol dependence and drug dependence were roughly equal in 2013 (0.80 % and 0.90% respectively).
- e) The annual cost directly related to substance abuse activity in Barnstable County is estimated to be \$110,085,000. Approximately 47% is spent on treatment and rehabilitation, 52% spent on law enforcement and incarceration, and less than 1% spent on prevention.

1. *Community Health Needs Assessment Report and Implementation Plan 2017-2019, Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital*
  - a) Barnstable County had a higher rate per 100,000 persons of admissions to MA DPH-funded substance abuse treatment programs than MA overall.
  - b) Treatment admissions for alcohol as a primary substance were 14% higher in Barnstable County (46%) than MA (32%) in 2013.
  - c) At time of treatment enrollment, 46% of residents reported alcohol was their primary substance, and 34% reported injectable substances were their primary substance.
  - d) There has been a 450% increase in the annual rate of unintentional opioid overdose deaths from 2000 to 2015 in Barnstable County.
  - e) In FY2015, approximately 5% of the combined total births at Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital experienced prenatal substance exposure.
2. *Communities That Care Youth Survey, 2013, Falmouth Substance Abuse Commission*
  - a) 56.1% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders at Falmouth High School used alcohol in the last 30 days; 20.3% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders used alcohol in the last 30 days.
  - b) 38.6% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders at Falmouth High School used marijuana in the last 30 days; 16.8% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders used marijuana in the last 30 days.
3. *Cape-wide Youth Action Plan, The Cape Cod Foundation, May 2014*
  - a) All young people need safe places to learn, grow and thrive.
  - b) Increase the education and engagement of young people in civic opportunities.
  - c) Increase opportunities for youth to learn core life skills (social, financial, relationship, employment, etc.)
  - d) Expand career education and job opportunities for youth to enable them to have a positive vision for their future.
- e) *Gosnold on Cape Cod, July 2016*
  - a) Approximately 47% of individuals admitted to detox report heroin is their primary substance; another 29% report addiction to prescription pain medications.
  - b) About 30% of individuals admitted to detox are under age 24.

### ❖ **Other Support Services**

The Human Services Committee recognizes that additional challenges remain in our community that have an impact on the quality of life of Falmouth residents. Some identified examples are: affordable legal consultation and advocacy, domestic violence prevention, public transportation, racial and ethnic diversity and equality, isolation of elders, vulnerability of young adults age 15 – 24; systemic underemployment, and living wages. Therefore, the “Support Services” category will be available to respond to emergent needs/trends in these and other areas that may arise to support vulnerable citizens or enhance the community at large in a significant way.

- **Need:** To promote programs and services that support vulnerable citizens and enhance our community.
- **Data Sources:** Data sources will be added as the emergent need(s) is identified in FY2020.

## **FUTURE PLANNING**

It is the recommendation of the Falmouth Human Services Committee and the Human Services Department staff that these identified need areas provide a strategic framework to guide the investment of tax dollars in the human services operating budget for the Town of Falmouth. This will entail a policy and process change which is substantial, as the Town would no longer be providing small amounts of funding toward the operating costs of existing programs and agencies. Instead, it is suggested that larger funding amounts be made available on a competitive basis to address the 5 identified unmet needs and emerging trends in our community.

Once funds are appropriated by town meeting, the Human Services Committee and the Human Services Department staff will gradually implement a 3-year, competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Proposals will be sought from public and private non-profit entities and/or partnerships to address the identified unmet needs. Awardees of the competitive process will receive a one-year contract with the potential for non-competitive renewal for 2 additional years if previously identified outcomes are achieved and funds are appropriated by town meeting in the next fiscal year's operating budget.

The Falmouth Community Human Services Needs Assessment will be updated every 5 years in order to keep abreast of changing demographics, unmet needs and trends. The ultimate goal for these funds is to promote supports and services that bolster vulnerable citizens and enhance our community while ensuring an accountable, objective, and fair process.