



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

By now, most of you know that the communities of Chelsea, Revere and Everett – where Mass General has had a long-term presence – were disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with similar hotspots in Boston neighborhoods. The high rates of COVID-19 laid bare the inequities in our communities based on race, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Even today, Chelsea's rate of infection is 623 per 10,000, one of the highest in the country. Revere's rate is 291 and Everett's 316/10,000, both significantly higher than the state average.

What contributes to these high rates? Chelsea is a low-income, densely populated community, 65% Latinx, with a large number of immigrants, some of whom are fearful to present for health care. People work in essential jobs – food service, retail, construction – are more likely to use public transportation, and don't have the option of working from home. Families double and triple up in overcrowded apartments making it impossible to isolate safely at home. These factors conspired to create the perfect storm for rapid transmission of the virus.

Mass General is proud of our longstanding partnerships in these communities, a pre-condition for rapid response. Both Mass General and Partners integrated *Equity and Community Health* efforts into our emergency responses. I had the privilege of co-leading, along **Dr. Joseph Betancourt**, Vice President and Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer, Mass General's response. With senior leadership support from **Joy Rosen**, Vice President, Psychiatry, Pediatrics and OB/GYN, **Dr. Dean Xerras**, MGH Chelsea Medical Director, and others, we put in place a four-part plan - identification, mitigation, isolation and communication.

We are at an important moment as we pivot to the future. Working with our community partners, we will evaluate what worked, lessons learned and what we would do differently in the future. In particular, we will look to three periods of time: the immediate (screening in real time for social determinants), the intermediate (should there be another surge), and the long term to address the root causes and prevent the disproportionate impact we saw

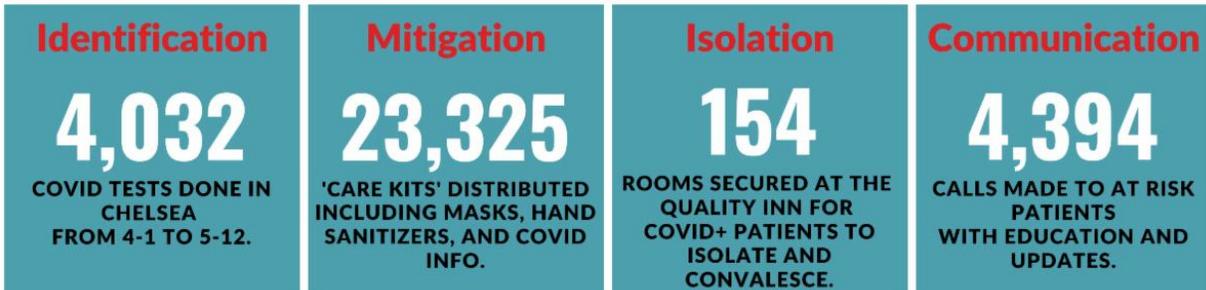
this spring (anchor strategies).

Thank you for your support and engagement during this challenging time. We know we will need your partnership as we move forward. We hope you are able to get some rest and relaxation as the weather improves.

Best,

Joan Quinlan, MPA
Vice President for Community Health

Leslie Aldrich, MPH
Executive Director, CCHI



Addressing the Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19



Marcia Burgos, community health worker from the Healthy Families America Program (l) redeployed to Adult Medicine during COVID peak to answer patient calls. Community Health Associates' Sonia Burgos (r) volunteering to help out with food distribution in Chelsea.

The *Center for Community Health Improvement (CCHI)* is working closely with community partners to address the social determinants of health, which intensified during this pandemic. Here are some of the highlights:

The *Healthy Chelsea Coalition* is assisting with the emergency food response for the city of Chelsea, making sure that residents know about the daily distribution of boxed meals for school children and their families. We are also collaborating with community partners to increase access to food pantries and deliver food to the doors of those who are isolated. Healthy Chelsea is also working to mitigate the growing trauma and mental health effects of COVID-19, both for residents and the vicarious trauma experienced by frontline staff.

The Charlestown Coalition is connecting those in recovery with online Alcoholic Anonymous meetings and coordinating virtual visits with recovery coaches and physicians. Coalition staff are keeping in close contact with youth group members and their families, monitoring their needs and holding regular meetings remotely.

The *Revere CARES Coalition* is assisting the city of Revere in reaching residents who are fearful of receiving services and in developing a more robust system to field calls from residents most in need. With the help of Union Capital Boston, the coalition sent out gift cards to residents who need help with food and other essential services.

MGH Youth Programs (jobs and career exposure along with college prep) are conducting virtual yoga classes to help the Boston, Chelsea and Revere high school students cope with stress. They are also conducting college trivia games. Our staff continues to work with these young people around college acceptances, financial aid issues, and plans for the fall. A virtual graduation celebration for our MGH Youth Scholars along with graduates from community youth groups, featuring keynote speaker Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins, is scheduled for June 16th, from 3 to 4 pm.

CCHI staff have met the challenges of COVID-19 with perseverance, resilience and creativity. Their stories and those of our community partners are remarkable and reinforce our shared dedication to improving the health and well-being of everyone in our communities. In the upcoming weeks, we will be posting these stories from the field in a series of CCHI special reports. Stay tuned!

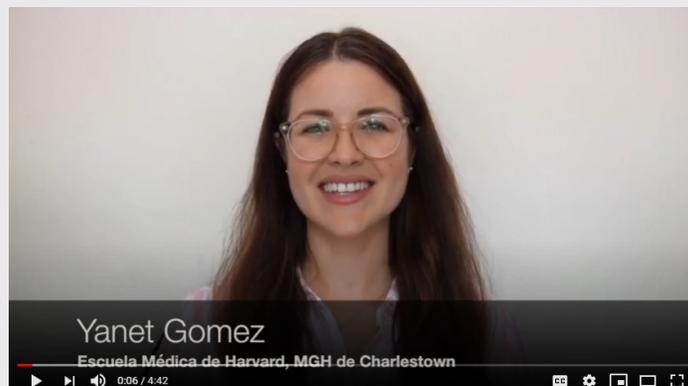
Chelsea Receives Generous Donation from the Kraft Family



Patriots truck and volunteers roll up to PORT Park in Chelsea to distribute much needed food.

The City of Chelsea ordinarily distributes food to 1,500 people daily, and community-based organizations and food pantries, including our own, provide additional food. But, recent events have forced thousands of people to stand in line to get food. Along with the **Healthy Chelsea Coalition**, we are working with the city to address this issue. Many thanks to **Jonathan Kraft** (Chairman of the Mass General Board of Trustees) the **Kraft family**, and the **Massachusetts Military Support Foundation** who recently brought 28,000 meals to help feed Chelsea residents.

Community Focused Public Service Announcements



Yanet Gomez of the MGH Charlestown HealthCare Center and the Harvard Medical School talks about shopping safely at the grocery store.

In collaboration with the **MGH HealthCare Centers** in Chelsea and Charlestown, we developed a series of short videos, in both English and Spanish, on topics such as what to do if you are sick, how to shop safely during COVID-19, what to expect at the MGH Chelsea Respiratory Illness Clinic, and more. We will be adding to our library regularly, including an upcoming series on mental health and trauma, so subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) today get the latest videos.



OUR MISSION

To improve the health and well-being of the diverse communities we serve.

OUR VISION

Healthy, safe and thriving communities where all people have equitable access to employment, food, education, housing and a high-quality health care system that addresses these and other social determinants of health.

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Header Photo: Rachel Wenzlaff preparing bags of food to be distributed at MGH Chelsea HealthCare Center's food pantry.