



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor



City of New Bedford
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PRESS RELEASE

New Bedford Health and Wellness Leaders Launch New Effort to Give Residents a Daily Dose of Exercise, Fruits and Veggies

New Bedford, Massachusetts- Mass in Motion New Bedford and the City's Parks Recreation & Beaches Department have been working with local health and wellness leaders to develop creative ways to encourage residents to eat healthy and exercise regularly. Through the Parks Rx & Farmers Market Rx Program New Bedford area physicians can now "prescribe" for their patients a daily dose of exercise and fruits and vegetables, which can be "filled" at farmers markets and in public parks and recreation areas.

"We know that a daily dose of fruits, vegetables and exercise will lead to improved wellness so we want residents to enjoy our city parks and eat fresh, local food as often as possible," said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

"Study after study is confirming what many of us have known, that spending time in green spaces exercising is good for overall physical and mental health," says Mary Rapoza, Director of the New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches Department. "The National Recreation & Parks Association has a campaign this year to formalize doctor referrals to parks with the Park Rx Program. We are very excited by the positive reception this program has received from New Bedford area healthcare professionals."

According to health experts, proximity to public spaces for exercise and access to fresh produce are critical factors for long-term health. "Food is medicine, and if we treat farmers markets like a "farmacy", we can avoid the pharmacy," says Dr. Michael Rocha who founded the New Bedford Wellness Initiative and is participating in this new program.

The image shows a prescription pad for the New Bedford Farmers Market. It includes the market's logo at the top, followed by fields for 'FOR:' and 'DATE:'. Below these is a large 'Rx' symbol. To the right of the 'Rx' is a box with 'Dosage:' and 'Refills:' fields, with '5 servings Daily' and 'Fruits & Veggies' written below. A paragraph states: 'Aim to include fruits and vegetables daily. To access local produce, visit the locations below:'. It then lists two market locations: 'New Bedford Farmers Markets: June- October*' with specific days and times, and 'New Bedford Well Pop-up Market: July - October' with specific days and times. It also mentions 'Southcoast Hospital: July - October'. At the bottom, there is a line for 'Signature'.

FOR: _____ DATE: _____

Rx

Dosage: _____ **Refills:** _____
5 servings Daily
Fruits & Veggies

Aim to include fruits and vegetables daily. To access local produce, visit the locations below:

New Bedford Farmers Markets: June- October*
-Monday: Brooklawn Park (Acushnet Ave) 2-6pm
-Thursday: Downtown - Custom House Square 2-6pm
-Saturday: Clasky Common Park 10am-2pm
* Accepts SNAP, Debit/Credit. Redeem this Rx for a FREE tote bag!
Visit www.massinmotionnewbedford.org/ for more information

New Bedford Well Pop-up Market: July - October
Sundays 11 a-3pm at the New Bedford Boys & Girls Club (Jenney St.)
Visit www.nbevel.com for scheduling

Southcoast Hospital: July - October
Visit for their rotating Farmers Market schedule:
www.southcoast.org/farmersmarket/

Signature

"Prescription pad "local physicians will use to "prescribe" for patients a daily dose of exercise, fruits and vegetables that can be "filled" at farmers markets and in public parks.

Through this program, doctors will not only advise their patients to eat healthy and exercise regularly, they can provide patients with a list of local places that offer free or low-cost recreational activities. “Often times, people are unaware of the great programs offered by the parks or that the New Bedford Farmers Market accepts SNAP benefits and credit cards,” says Kim Ferreira, Director of Mass in Motion New Bedford.

Currently, Dr. Rocha and several physicians at Hawthorn Medical Associates have agreed to participate in the program, as well as pediatric physicians at the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center. In addition, Southcoast Health also has plans to roll out the program. Patients are encouraged to ask their doctors about the program, and physicians who are interested in participating in the program may contact Mass in Motion Director Kim Ferreira at (508) 979-1500.

About City of New Bedford Parks, Recreation & Beaches

New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches is dedicated to planning, implementing, and supervising recreational, educational and cultural activities designed to enhance and improve the quality of life for all city residents. Our office promotes the engagement in and constructive use of all open and recreational spaces by the residents of the City of New Bedford and provides safe, well-maintained, and aesthetically pleasing parks, playgrounds, and outdoor recreation facilities. The department works in collaboration with other city departments to accomplish this mission while preserving our natural resources, promoting conservation, and educating city residents on our natural environment.

The department provides year-round recreational and educational programs for New Bedford residents in an environment that is safe and supportive for both youth and adults to explore their talents, build self-esteem and empower healthy decision making. The health and wellness of people in New Bedford is dependent upon our recreational facilities, natural resources, and opportunities. The positive experience of this engagement enriches and strengthens the fabric of our community for today and the future.

Learn more about Parks Recreation & Beaches by visiting their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/NewBedfordParksRecreationandBeaches>.

About Mass in Motion

Mass in Motion is a statewide movement led by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and supported locally by the Office of Mayor Jon Mitchell, that helps local communities increase opportunities for residents to eat better and move more in the places they live, learn, work, and play.

Learn more about MiM NB by visiting their website at www.massinmotionnewbedford.org or like their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/massinmotionnewbedford>

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