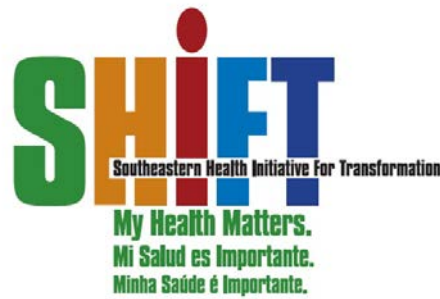




City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor



City of New Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Contact: Elizabeth Treadup Pio
(508) 979-1410
etreadup@newbedford-ma.gov

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

New Bedford Partners with Clinical and Community Partners to Make Free Health Services Available to Local Residents Through SHIFT (Southeastern Health Initiative for Transformation) Program

New Bedford, Massachusetts – Local residents can improve their wellness by accessing a FREE program offered by the Southeastern Health Initiative For Transformation (SHIFT). SHIFT is a community partnership aimed at helping New Bedford residents learn to manage three important health conditions: childhood asthma, falls by older adults, and chronic illness like hypertension in adults.

SHIFT is administered by the New Bedford Health Department with participation by a coalition of clinical and community partners. Residents can access the help they need to deal with common health issues through this free program. The program includes evaluations, counseling, and workshops on how to improve health and prevent illness.

“Good health is the foundation for living well,” said Brenda Weis, Director of Public Health for New Bedford. “SHIFT is a free wellness program designed specifically for New Bedford residents. The goal of the SHIFT program is to provide residents with services and education to improve their health and, in turn, lower their costs of medical care through prevention strategies that are proven to work.”

“The City’s Health Department is working together with a coalition of clinical and community partners to help residents take control of their own health and wellness,” added Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I urge New Bedford residents to consider the programs offered and encourage them to participate to improve their overall health and wellbeing.”

SHIFT programs are designed to improve health by empowering residents to take control of factors that affect their wellness. The three areas of focus include:

A Matter of Balance – An 8-session workshop to help older adults increase their activity by developing strategies to prevent falls. This is achieved by learning about the causes of falls, managing falls risks and practicing gentle exercises to help increase balance and strength.

You Can Control Asthma – A workshop where parents learn how to manage their child’s

asthma. Medical experts explain what causes attacks in children, how to reduce triggers, and which medicines are proven to control symptoms.

My Life, My Health – A workshop where coaches guide adults in living better with chronic illnesses, including hypertension. In this 6-week program, coaches and adults explore different aspects of chronic illness and decide on small steps towards making lifestyle changes.

These programs are free to residents of New Bedford. Participants are referred to SHIFT by their doctors or through community-based organizations. Community health workers who are bilingual in English and/or Spanish and Portuguese are available to help participants get enrolled and attend classes that are offered at multiple times during the year and at various community venues throughout the city including local parks and recreation centers, churches, and other locations. For more information about where to find a class near you, contact the New Bedford Health Department at (508) 991-6199, ext. 67515.

The Southeastern Health Initiative for Transformation is a community-based partnership to improve the lives of the people of New Bedford. SHIFT helps people live better lives by teaching them about the factors that impact their health.

SHIFT is supported by a coalition of health partners that includes the New Bedford Health Department; UMASS Dartmouth; Greater New Bedford Community Health Center; Boston Medical Center; Community Nurse and Hospice; New Bedford Housing Authority; New Bedford Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches; and other organizations. It is funded by the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

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