



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the Public Health Commission Board records

including Trustees of Boston City Hospital, Board of Health, Health Commissioner and Health & Hospitals Department records

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Repository:	City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division
Title:	Public Health Commission Board records
Collection No.:	7000.001
Dates:	1865-2007 (Bulk, 1968-2007)
Quantity:	25.0 Cubic feet
Abstract	<p>The history of the Boston Public Health Commission, whose mission is to protect, preserve and promote the health and well-being of all Boston's residents, particularly the underserved, began in 1799 when an ordinance was passed to create a Board of Health for the City of Boston. The Public Health Commission was formed in 1996 as a result of the merger between the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Boston University Health Center. Both the Department of Health and Department of Hospitals were city departments and functioned as separate entities from the time of their creation until 1965, when they merged in order to provide a more efficient health care system. The Department of Hospitals included Boston City Hospital, the Boston Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital (Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospital), and the Long Island Hospital. From 1970 through the early 1990s, great effort was made to reorganize and modernize Boston City Hospital's physical plant, including building a new Boston City Hospital. However, in 1996, the Mayor's Special Commission on Health Care was formed to study the challenges of health care provision and administration in the twenty-first century and the Commission recommended that the Department of Health and Hospitals merge with Boston University Medical Center. This collection documents the history of the Boston Public Health Commission from 1865-2007 (with gaps) including the history of the Board of Health and the Board of Hospitals, Trustees of Boston City Hospital, and the Board of Health and Hospitals. The consolidation of the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Boston University Medical Center created the Boston Medical Center, which subsumed the former Boston City Hospital. The collection documents the restructuring of Boston City Hospital and Boston Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital (Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospital) from the 1970s-1996; the reasons, recommendations, and logistics for the merger between Boston University Medical</p>

Center Hospital and the Department of Health and Hospitals; and the creation of the Boston Public Health Commission. In addition, the activism of city residents regarding hospital closings, the building of facilities producing hazardous materials, the city wide smoking ban and health care reform is documented. Other issues include women's health programs, community health programs, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse treatment, the role of Boston City Hospital in the City of Boston, sanitation, disease prevention and treatment, communicable diseases, and the role of community health centers. Records consist of meeting minutes, by-laws, board votes, annual reports, statistics, correspondence, reports, budgets, agreements, public hearing transcripts, newspaper clippings, press releases, photographs, and audio cassettes.

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Historical note

The history of the Boston Public Health Commission dates back to 1799 when an ordinance was passed to establish a Board of Health to "examine into all causes of sickness, nuisances, and sources of filth that may be injurious to the health of the inhabitants of the town of Boston." Included in the history of the Commission is the history of the Department of Hospitals, particularly Boston City Hospital, which opened in the South End in 1864 and was established to provide quality medical care to the city's residents regardless of their ability to pay. Both of these institutions functioned as separate entities until 1965, when the Hamlin Report recommended the merger between the Department of Health and the Department of Hospitals, which would respond to the rapidly growing health care reform movement in the country and improve the quality of care in the city.

From its beginning, the mission of the Boston Public Health Commission has been to promote and preserve the health and well-being of the city's residents. Examples of early programs and services include establishing neighborhood health centers, instituting school inspections, setting up the first diabetic clinic in the country, and providing nurses' visits. In order to expand its effectiveness, it became affiliated with Harvard, Tufts, and Boston University, instituted a field service program, and collaborated with other health and social welfare agencies throughout Boston. At the time of the 1965 merger, the Department of Health and Hospitals was organized into four categories: General Services, Medical Services, Environmental Sanitation, and Local Health Services.

Throughout its history, Boston City Hospital sought to provide quality health care to residents regardless of their socioeconomic status through its strong residency programs, the depth of its medical research especially in the field of Pediatric AIDS, and its emergency medical services. At the time of the merger with the Department of Health, the City Hospital was made up of 28 buildings all of which were built between 1864 and 1940. These buildings also included the Boston Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital and Long Island Hospital. In addition, Boston City Hospital was the primary teaching hospital in the city

and was affiliated with Harvard, Tufts, and Boston University Medical Schools. By 1972, the combination of the condition of the hospital's physical plant, the City's financial problems, the changes in health care delivery, and the innovations in medical technology made it clear that re-evaluation was necessary. In response to these problems, the hospital became solely affiliated with Boston University Medical School, began reducing its licensed capacity of 1,200 beds, and started developing plans to replace its buildings. In 1977, as part of its plan for change, the hospital opened the Ambulatory Care Center. However, it was unable to replace other buildings because of financial constraints.

During the early 1990s, several attempts were made to improve and modernize the health care system in Boston while keeping Boston City Hospital and the Boston Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital from permanently closing their doors. Regardless of these efforts, economic considerations, further advances in medical technology and health care delivery, and the changing needs of the communities served by the Department of Health and Hospitals required an in-depth study. In 1994, the Mayor's Special Commission on Health Care (McGovern Commission) was created. The culmination of this study was its recommendation in 1995, which proposed the merger between Boston City Hospital and Boston University Medical Center. By consolidating these two institutions, the original mission of Boston City Hospital to provide quality health care to residents regardless of their financial status was assured of continuing through the Boston Medical Center. Also in 1996, Mayor Thomas Menino established the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), an independent public agency that is responsible for both responding to the city's health problems and serving as the City's Board of Health.

As the city agency whose responsibility it is to make Boston a healthier place in which to live and work, the Commission was successful in instituting a city-wide ban on smoking in public buildings, and held meetings that were specifically designed to respond to health concerns of every neighborhood in the city. In 2007, it launched campaigns to increase awareness of both health and safety issues including cancer, the continuing risk of AIDS, and violence prevention; and it began making efforts to close the gap in racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic health disparities.

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Scope and Contents note

This collection documents the history of the Boston Public Health Commission, which was formed in 1996 as a result of the merger between the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals and Boston University Medical Center. The consolidation of these two institutions also created the Boston Medical Center, which subsumed the former Boston City Hospital. In addition, the histories of the Department of Health and Boston City Hospital from 1865-1965 (with gaps), the history of the Department of Health and Hospitals from 1965-1996, and the restructuring of Boston City Hospital and Boston Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital (Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospitals) from the 1970s-1996 is documented. This collection also records the community activism of city residents, including those in the South End and Mattapan, regarding hospital closings, building facilities producing hazardous materials, and the smoking ban. Topics such as racial disparities in public health, community health centers, HIV/AIDS, women's health services, program development, and health care reform are also documented. Records include board, trustee, and committee meeting minutes, correspondence, reports, budgets, financial statements, agreements, public hearing transcripts, newspaper clippings, press releases, photographs, and audio cassettes. Statistics, agendas, by-laws, memoranda, meeting notes, personal manuals, and brochures are also included. The collection is divided into four series: Series I. Minutes; Series II. Annual reports and publications; Series III. Records; and Series IV. Audio-visual materials.

Series I includes the minute books of the predecessor boards and departments including Trustees of Boston City Hospital, Board of Health, Health Commissioner, Trustees of Health and Hospitals, Board of Health

and Hospitals as well as the Public Health Commission. There are gaps in the date spans for each department/board. Series II includes annual reports of predecessor boards/departments including Trustees of Boston City Hospital, Board of Health and Department of Health and Hospitals as well as publications on health units and health statistics. There are gaps in the date spans for the annual reports in this collection. However, annual reports can also be found in the Boston City Documents published by the Boston City Council. Series III includes primarily administrative records including correspondence, subject files, committee records, budgets, etc. Board of Directors meeting packets which include minutes and supporting documents for the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Boston Public Health Commission for the years 1977-1985 and 1991-2007 can be found in this series. Series IV includes audio-visual material removed from Series III. One item of significance is a photograph of the hospital building in Mattapan.

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Series I: Minutes, 1873-2000 with gaps

Subseries A: Trustees of Boston City Hospital, 1880-1954 with gaps (27 volumes)

Volumes

IA-1-2	1880 May 3-1892 April 22
IA-3-13	1919 January 3-1934 April 27
IA-14-27	1940 July 31-1954 November 15

Subseries B: Board of Health, 1873-1915 with gaps (21 volumes)

Volumes

IB-1-2	1873 January 15-1880 March 29
IB-3	1889 September 3-1890 December 20
IB-4-21	1895 January 3-1915 December 31

Subseries C: Health Commissioner, 1919-1939 with gaps (19 volumes)

Volumes

IC-1-8	1919-1926
IC-9-15	1928-1934
IC-16-19	1936-1939

Subseries D: Trustees of Health and Hospitals, 1969-1996 (5 volumes)

Volumes

ID-1-5	1969 November 26-1996 January 2 (5 volumes)
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Subseries E: Board of Health and Hospitals, 1968-1996 (17 volumes)

Volumes

IE-1-17	1968 July 11-1996 May 1
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Subseries F: Public Health Commission Board, 1996-2000 (2 volumes)

Volumes

IF-1-2	1996 June 28-2000 November 8
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Series II: Annual reports and publications, 1864-1971 with gaps

Annual reports can also be found in the City Documents Collection.

Subseries A: Trustees of Boston City Hospital annual reports, 1864-1941 with gaps (35 volumes)

Volumes

IIA-1-26	1864-1893
IIA-27	1924
IIA-28-33	1931-1936
IIA-34	1939
IIA-35	1941

Subseries B: Department of Health annual reports, 1873-1965 with gaps (22 volumes)

Volumes

IIB-1	1873-1876
IIB-2	1879-1885
IIB-3-4	1892-1900
IIB-5	1907-1910
IIB-6-11	1927-1946
IIB-12-13	1948-1949
IIB-14	1951
IIB-15-22	1956-1965

Subseries C: Board of Health and Hospitals annual reports, 1967, 1971 (2 volumes)

Volumes

IIC-1	1967
IIC-2	1971

Subseries D: Publications

Volumes

IID-1	Boston's Health Units, Established from the Income of the George Robert White Fund 1924-1944, 1945 (1 volume)
IID-2-6	Boston's Health: Statistical Summary, 1948-1950, 1952-1953 (5 volumes)

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Series III: Records

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1	6	Fleet National Bank

1	7	Annual Hospital Statistical Report, 1990 November 18 <u>Board of Directors</u>
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12	9	Boston Public Health Commission: Description, 1999 March 29 <u>Boston Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital, undated, 1993-1999 June 21</u>
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12	27	Budget Town Meeting: Department reports
12	28	Finance briefing: City Hall
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14	21	Boston City Hospital Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research: a 12 year audit
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14	24	Description and Guidelines
14	25	HIV Testing and Counseling Subcommittee Meeting minutes
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14	27	Protocol #88-36 a Multi-Center Trail to Evaluate the Safety, Pharmacokinetics and Efficacy of Intravenous and Oral AZT in Infants with Perinatal Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Exposure
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17	19	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection: correspondence
17	20	Mass Campaign to Clean Up Hazardous Waste/Coalition against the Asphalt Plant: Fugitive Emissions from the Asphalt Plant: an Approach to Quantification and Content - a work in progress
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- 1 Board of Directors meeting, 1996 February 27 (1 cassette)
- 2-5 Asphalt Plant hearings, 1996 January 4, 1995 May 1 (4 cassettes)

Subseries B: Video cassettes

Cassette

- 6-7 Public Hearing: Smoking Ban, 2002 November 18 (2 cassettes)

Subseries C: 3 1/2" floppy disks

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- 1-2 Proposed Asphalt Plant hearing transcript, 1996 January 4, 1996 May 1 (2
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Subseries D: Compact disks

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- 3 Incident Command System for Public Health: a Practical Understanding -
Courses and booklet, 2003 August-2004 August (1 disk)
Public Hearing transcripts

Disk

- 4 Research Laboratory Regulations, 2005 December 13 (1 disk)
- 5 Data Collection Regulation Hearing, 2006 June 13 (1 disk)
- 6 Biological Laboratory Regulations, 2006 July 24 (1 disk)

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1 Kouns and Clifford: Rebuttal of the OEA Recommendations: Hampton and Norfolk Streets, 1985

Subseries F: Photographs

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4 Coalition against the Asphalt Plant, 1996

5 Kouns and Clifford: Rebuttal against the OEA Recommendation, 1985

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