**TRAFFIC ALERT**

Mass Pike overnight ramp closures to begin

The westbound off-ramp at Exit 12 will be closed overnight beginning at 10 p.m. on July 12 and July 13. Detours will use Exit 13 to I-90 north to the Mass Pike.

Drivers can still get on the Mass Pike from those exits. Only the off-ramps will be closed. The schedule is subject to change depending on the weather.

**LEGAL SMOKESCREEN ON POT**

Communities, activists and businesses in holding pattern while Legislature debates

By Alison Beena

As state lawmakers continue to argue over how to resuscitate the state marijuana law, local officials agree on one point: It’s time to get something on the books.

“I understand it’s kind of a third-rail issue, but just put the rules in place and then we can deal with it,” Marlborough Mayor Arthur Vigeant said. People have been “knocking on his door” asking about medical and recreational marijuana for the past five and a half years.

“IT’s obviously something we’re going to be addressing shortly, we just want to know what the rules are before we start going down that path,” he said.

Massachusetts voters legalized recreational marijuana by approving a statewide ballot question in November, and state law-makers have struggled ever since to revise the original language.

“The way Question Four was written, they should have left it alone,” said Cara Crus-Belbow, the communications manager of the Red Cross Massachusetts Blood Services Region. The shortfall is equivalent to the Red Cross blood collection efforts across the country for five days, she said.

“there’s always a little bit of a drop, but this year is significant,” said Belbow.

Blood and platelet donations are needed, she said. To make an appointment, call 1-800-227-4364 or visit.

**REGION**

**A call for donors**

The facts

THE ISSUE: State legislators have not yet come to a decision on a revised recreational marijuana bill. Debate seems to focus around the facelift and local edging control. Why it Matters: The state’s recreational marijuana laws, including regulations and penalties, are in a holding pattern until the next medical ballot question. Several local communities have moratoriums on recreational marijuana businesses, and are still waiting to see if those measures will ultimately be legal.

The facts

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**CLIMATE CHANGE**

Locals moving forward for environment

By Brian Benson

Voters legalized recreational marijuana in November, but local residents, business owners, offi cials and environmental advocates remain committed to combating climate change.

After all, the state is a win-win by saving money and improving health, they say. And, the growth of green energy creates jobs. “It’s our future and cities and states are gumming up,” said Ellen Tohn, co-chairwoman of the Water, Energy and Climate Committee. “The responsibility falls to us and Wayland is embracing it. Whatever the federal government does or doesn’t do, we’re moving forward,” Wayland officials are among those in a variety of municipalities working to reduce their electricity use, take advantage of renewable energy, such as solar power, and encourage residents to do the same.

But, those actions come

SEE CLIMATE, A2

**WHY IT MATTERS:**

- Local officials and environmental advocates say they remain committed to combating climate change by pursuing renewable energy, building energy efficiency projects, and other means.

**SUMMER MIGHT BE THE HUNGERIEST SEASON**

Weak that are provided at school are suddenly gone and for children of low-income families it can mean a summer of hunger-filled days.

A donation of $50 will help us provide emergency food for these local families this summer.

**Pearl Street Cupboard & Cafe at Park**

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health care starts when we eat, work, and play. Health depends on many factors, including a stable home, ability to purchase nutritious foods, access to transportation and being able to see a doctor when necessary. Unfortunately, throughout the country (and the world) there are many economic and social influences that influence and contribute to differences in health status. These “social determinants of health” mean that while one group of people can be concerned with buying organic, GMO-free foods, another group is most concerned with simply getting past any food of any kind on the table. The most basic human needs must be met before addressing health issues. If we are unable to get food to eat or a safe place to sleep and we have no health care, we can suffer, and chronic disease management, for example, may not be at the top of the list.

Social determinants of health play an important role in how people take care of themselves, mentally and health-care needs. Factors include availability of resources to meet daily needs, such as safe housing, safe places to work and a food supply, access to transportation, family and community support, and access to education, quality, access to educational and occupational opportunities, public safety, safety and security, economic conditions, including discrimination and institutional stigma, access to technology, language barriers, and lack of mental health counseling and access to physical disabilities.

Residents, particularly only experience one or two of these factors for many, social determinants of health can act like a domino effect. The challenges of these sociospatial situations are likely to be experienced differently at the same time. This is why it is so important for those who work in health care, must strive to "meet patients where they are," using a collaborative and holistic approach, health outreach workers and holistic nurses, for example, are specialists are able to identify and work with these barriers to a patient’s overall well-being. By working with the patient to address one issue at a time, these specialists can build trust, relationship and help patients feel more secure in their overall situation. Once the most basic needs are met, patients are generally more open to addressing other health-care concerns.

What can a care provider spend time with a patient in his or her residence or preferred location, they are better equipped to understand the full picture of what is going on in that person’s

BRIANNA KIERNAN

Meeting patients where they’re at

BRIANNA KIERNAN

Meeting patients where they’re at
life. A quick trip to a doctor’s office or emergency room is much less likely to have the immediate and full view of a patient’s health record now. A redefined approach allows care teams to make more realistic, holistic, achievable long- and short-term goals as a part of a patient-centered care plan. Alternatively, those living with mental and/or behavioral health complexities or patients with a greater consumption of health-care services can be better served through this titional medical settings, which ultimately can lead to an aversion to seeking treatment.

In my experience, the most successful health outcomes occur when care providers understand and listen to the priorities of the patient, work collaboratively within a continuum of care to support system care, and utilize a holistic treatment approach and expands on inter- nal health services/supports with primary care. This way, care plans are driven by the patient’s readiness for change, and there is desire to improve their social, psychiatric, and/or physical situation. Each care plan is reviewed and adjusted as needed to ensure a successful change. While a person might not have full control of their external environment, since the social determinants of health are identified, the care team can work to increase the patient’s chances of successful health outcomes. In the end, the goal of patient care is to improve overall well-being, provide better access to care and truly empower individuals to make changes themselves by supporting them along the way. 

—Irene Kierman of Hospiland is a family nurse practitioner and clinical manager with Commonwealth Care Alliance, a Boston-based nonprofit care delivery system committed to providing integrated health care and related social support services. She can be reached at ikierman@commonwealthcare.org.