



Public Health & Menstrual Supply Update

February 24, 2025

Liz Quaratiello, Director of School Health Services/Nursing

- Twenty one years in Somerville, including 7 as Public Health Nurse Manager, 10 as the School Nurse at West, 4 as Director of School Health
- Supervise 19 staff and all aspects of school health services, ensuring compliance with state guidelines for immunization, medication administration and management of chronic and acute health conditions

Nicole Viele, Supervisor of Health & Physical Education

- Twenty years in Somerville
 - 2005-2006- HEPE Educator
 - 2006-2019-Director of Athletics and Intramural Sports, District Wide
 - 2019-2021-Assistant Principal Beacon Community, SHS
 - 2021-present-Supervisor for Health and Physical Education, K-12 - currently supervise 17 staff district wide and teach in the HEPE department at the HS

Public Health Update

- Strep Throat
 - Flu and Flu-like illness
 - Norovirus/other gastroenteritis
- To a lesser extent, COVID-19

SY 25 Winter Absences - Although this year has seen a lot of flu and norovirus, absences are similar to last year. Illness usually peaks Jan/Feb.



AFAS		Brown		Capuano		East Somerville		Healey	
Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024
647	492	231	181	401	306	934	708	883	542
Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025
835	450	248	120	386	206	1,107	466	709	383
Kennedy		Next Wave/Full Circle	Somerville High School		West Somerville		Winter Hill		
Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024	Jan. 2024	Feb. 2024
484	435	332	276	2,477	1,552	452	430	519	453
Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025	Jan. 2025	Feb. 2025
677	317	380	179	2,630	1,093	834	229	607	247
TOTAL 2024		12,735							
TOTAL 2025		12,103							

Equity and Access

- This project is grounded in a key pillar of the strategic plan - equity and access.
- We received concerns and requests from students and we are making an effort to provide our menstruators with basic human needs.
- Easy access to menstrual supplies should be the districts priority.

Menstrual Supply Timeline of Concerns

- When the High School opened in 2021, there was no access or supply in the 40+ restrooms.
 - Time on learning was an issue as students had to go to the nurses office on the first floor from the fifth to get access.
- SY 22, DPW installed ten dispensers in 7 community female restrooms and three gender neutral restrooms, the dispensers and supplies were purchased from Aunt Flow/Citron through the facilities budget. SY 24 supply was purchased from the facilities budget. SY 25 supply was purchased from the High School Budget.
 - When we made access available we made students aware in their x block slides and through the communities.
- In SY 24, West Somerville was having an access issue and had supply donated.

Menstrual Supply Timeline of Concerns

- In SY 25, it was brought to the HEPE departments attention that many students in the K-8 schools did not have access to supplies and a survey was sent to all school administration in October 2024.
 - The results indicated that there may have been a machine in the schools but there was no supply in them and access to supply was either unknown or through the nurses' office, again impacting time on learning. Nurses traditionally maintained a small supply for emergencies.
 - Additionally there was a concern on who would re-supply the machines.
- In November 2024, a small group of eighth grade students at the Healey School presented to District Administration, the Director of School Health Services and the Supervisor for Health and Physical Education their concerns over the physical plant of the bathrooms at the Healey School, the time away from learning, and issues with access to menstrual supplies .

What's in the schools now?

- Menstrual supplies are in all schools and working dispensers are filled.
- Ten dispensers are at the high school (installed 2021).
- Next Wave/Full Circle is on order.
- There are dispensers at all K-8 (installed pre-pandemic).
- East Somerville dispenser is broken, on order.
- Dispensers ordered for K-8 gender neutral bathrooms.

Types of Dispensers...

SHS and Winter Hill



Most K-8 Schools



Types of Dispensers...

Improvised access to supplies at Argenziano - supplies are now added to machines



Soon to be in nurses office and some gender neutral bathrooms at K-8



Moving Forward...

- Met with Director of Health & Human Services, exploring ways to collaborate as they have a pilot program in certain city-owned buildings. Economies of scale if we join resources.
- We all want a sustainable solution that ensures access for all.
- Consider that this is primarily a facilities issue. Would it make more sense to contribute to the facilities budget?
- Menstruation is not a “health issue.”
- Menstrual supplies have been ordered for all schools. We will monitor usage to see if we need to adjust amounts.
- Special considerations for K-8 schools.

Q&A