

Mia Caldwell
End of Summer Report

This past summer I was given the opportunity to work with Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. This is a non-profit dedicated to preventing environmental causes of breast cancer through community education, research advocacy, and changes to public policy. My specific role was to serve as a policy and outreach intern, with a special focus on PFAS legislation and education. PFAS are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances that are man-made chemicals used in the production of a wide range of consumer products such as stain-resistant carpets, non-stick pans, waterproof jackets, and grease-proof food packaging. Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition works with a sister organization, the Silent Spring Institute who researches the impacts of PFAS on the environment and the human body. MBCC is especially concerned with how exposure can possibly alter mammary gland development and may increase the risk of breast cancer.

During my summer with MBCC, I spent time advocating for legislation to ban the use of PFAS in manufacturing. This included compiling testimony and research, conducting a webinar with leaders in the field as well as state legislators, and I was even given the opportunity to testify in favor of a piece of legislation. MBCC gave me a tremendous amount of responsibility this summer, and I was lucky enough to devote my time to the organization. As far as educational sources, I wrote several informational modules to be given to high schools, middle, and elementary schools. The mission of my work was to inform the public about the risk that PFAS creates in our drinking water and in our bodies.

Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition is a small, tight-knit team of individuals with a serious goal. I was fortunate to work with such hard workers and inspiring people. I also worked on the Against the Tide Annual Event. A fundraiser for the non-profit, who with only a team of about 10, managed to set up a major sporting event and raise a tremendous amount of money for breast cancer advocacy.

Being a part of this team has taught me leadership, dedication, and how to work with others even in high-pressure situations. I will continue to be a strong advocate and supporter for many years to come. I am honored to have been given the opportunity to volunteer with MBCC, and I can't thank the Harvard Club of Cape Cod enough. Thank you!