



Private Well Program to Protect Public Health,
2021 – 2022

EVALUATION REPORT

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Table of Contents

- Introduction 2**
- Key Stakeholders 2**
- Program Elements 2**
- Main Questions 5**
- Data Collection 7**
- Analysis 8**
- Results 8**
- Implications 15**
- Citations 16**
- Appendices 17**
 - A. Private Well Program Stakeholders 17
 - B. Household Pre- and Post-Questionnaires 20
 - C. Additional Tables 31
 - 1. Number of Households by Town Interested and Participating in the Pilot Program 31
 - 2. Number and Percentage of Households Satisfied with Pilot Program, by Town 31
 - 3. Household Questionnaire Pre/Post Item Response 32
 - 4. Pre/Post Differences in Household Private Well Belief Scores by Item, 2021 34
 - 5. Pre/Post Differences in Household Private Well Belief Scores by Item, 2022 35
 - 6. Pre/Post Differences in Household Private Well Belief Scores by Item, 2021 – 2022 36

Introduction

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Evaluation Framework (CDC, 1999) guided the RCAP Solutions' evaluation of its Private Well Program to Protect Public Health. This framework outlines five critical steps in the evaluation process:

- 1. Involve key stakeholders** including those who will be implementing program elements; those served or affected by the program; and primary users of evaluation results.
- 2. Describe the program elements** including the need, expected effects, activities, resources, stage, context, and logic model.
- 3. Focus the evaluation design with key questions** to assess the issues of greatest concern to stakeholders while using time and resources as efficiently as possible.
- 4. Collect credible data**—keeping in mind quality, quantity, sources and limitations of available data—to strengthen evaluation judgments and the recommendations that follow.
- 5. Justify results** by linking them to the evidence gathered and judging them against agreed-upon values or standards set by the stakeholders.
- 6. Ensure use and share lessons learned** during all phases of the evaluation—from design to dissemination of results and consider implications for policy and scaling.

In addition to following the steps above, methods adhered to sets of standards that determined the quality of program evaluation efforts (CDC, 1999). Specifically, the evaluation: produced results that were useful to RCAP's various stakeholders, helping inform regulatory decisions about private well testing that has administrative, health, and economic impacts; was realistic to implement given the time constraints, data available, and budgetary requirements; was conducted with oversight from EDC's Human Protections Administrator to protect the rights and welfare of those involved in the evaluation and those affected by its results; and conveyed accurate and credible information about the merits of the Private Well Program.

Key Stakeholders Informed Program Development and Evaluation

To ensure that the Private Well Program and its evaluation were responsive to local needs and likely to be implemented with greater success, RCAP Solutions engaged multiple stakeholders who have different roles and interests in program implementation and evaluation. Many of these organizations and their representatives were involved during the planning, pilot, and implementation phases of the program. Appendix A provides a list of key stakeholders and describes how they helped inform program implementation and evaluation.

Program Elements Address Key Risk Factors and Local Needs

The Private Well Program and evaluation are informed by a logic model that depicts the shared relationships among the problem RCAP is trying to address; factors contributing to this problem; activities to address those factors; tangible products, capacities and deliverables that resulted from the activities; and changes that occurred because of the activities and outputs. The program's logic model also acknowledges contextual factors that are out of control of the program but may help or hinder achievement of the anticipated outcomes.

As shown in the logic model, RCAP designed the Private Well Program to address high rates of well-water contaminants in North Central Massachusetts (MA), where private well testing and remediation rates are relatively low (e.g., Flanagan et al, 2020). These low rates of testing and remediation are associated with multiple factors. First, evidence from other states shows that residents may not be aware of potential contaminants in their private wells, do not see themselves as likely to get sick if they drink the water, do not know how often they should test their well water or how they might go about doing that, and/or live in communities with low testing norms (e.g., Flanagan, Marvinney, & Sheng, 2015; Imgrund, Kreutzwiser, & de Loe, 2011; Munene et al, 2020). Second, while some homeowners in MA do have their well water tested, most of this testing is conducted by private companies at the homeowner's request; and information on such testing and results are not tracked in any systematic way. Therefore, MA does not have a complete picture of contaminants by town nor any understanding of how often such tests are completed in regions suspected to be at high risk for groundwater contamination. Moreover, many homeowners are not able to pay for remediation when their well water tests indicate that contaminants are present. Thus, it is possible that homeowners forgo testing knowing that they will not be able to afford to address any problems found.

Further complicating matters, private well testing regulations vary by town in MA. Evidence from New Jersey that, since 2002, has required arsenic testing during real estate transactions, shows that this testing requirement results in identification of significantly more wells with arsenic. The proportion of wells identified by respondents as having an arsenic problem was five times higher among those who faced requirements (20% vs. 4%), in an area where an estimated 21% of wells exceed MCL (Flanagan et al, 2016). Only two towns in North Central MA have model private well regulations such as those found in New Jersey. Statewide, only 47 (14%) of MA 350 towns have requirements to test private well water quality at time of property sale or transfer (SafeWell, 2020).

During the planning phase, RCAP Solutions and its partners designed a program to address the myriad factors that contribute to lack of private well testing and remediation in North Central MA. Education, that includes materials for homeowners, renters, buyers, and realtors on sound wellhead protection and well remediation as well as in-person outreach and well water assessment were designed to address resident health beliefs about the importance of sound well structure, well water testing and remediation. Sustained community engagement efforts to support private well testing and follow-up actions are necessary, particularly among socially and biologically vulnerable populations, as evidence indicates that, even when model regulations such as those in NJ are in place, only a fraction of wells are likely to be tested due to the slow pace of housing turnover (Zheng & Flanagan, 2017).

Still, development of and advocacy for model well regulations as well as testing, reporting, and data collection guidelines based on those implemented in other states such as New Jersey should address issues with sporadic testing and limited data sharing that currently is not supported by best practice in well water sanitation. For example, New Jersey maintains a database of over 35,000 private well tests for arsenic, geocoded at fine-scale, which serves as a significant resource for follow-up with residents whose water supply puts them at increased health risk (Zheng & Flanagan, 2017). To that end, RCAP Solutions worked with key stakeholders (see Appendix A) to develop and adopt new statewide private well regulations based on model guidelines as well as lessons learned from well testing activities. Finally, to address costs associated with remediation, RCAP Solutions offered intensive review of positive test results and their meaning as well as financial counseling on cost-effective ways to address contamination issues as well as advocated for provisions to support remediation in proposed statewide well testing legislation.

Figure 1. North Central MA Private Well Program Logic Model

Problem: Relatively high rates of well-water contaminants and low rates of testing and remediation in North Central MA

Contributing Factors	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Low perceived risk; lack of awareness about importance of testing or what to test for	Education that includes: Online curriculum & educational materials for homeowners, renters, buyers, realtors re: sound wellhead protection & well remediation; BOH Staff training on outreach and well water assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of educational materials distributed • # of homeowners, buyers, realtors, renters participating • # of staff trained to conduct outreach and assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in resident knowledge, beliefs, and practices related to well safety 	More educated private well owners in the state
Sporadic testing done by private companies & mainly at request of homeowner	Adopt state model well regulations which includes well testing guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % and location of well's tested • # of refusals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in # of wells tested for DEP-advised contaminants • Increase in # of positive tests for contaminants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in regular well-water testing by private well owners • Increased BOH knowledge of water quality in their town
Many are unable to afford remediation when well tests indicate contaminants are present	Education/guidance on payment options for remediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remediation costs for water contamination • Repair costs for structural problems 	Increase in # and % of remediated wells	Decrease in contaminants found in private drinking water in the region
Regulations vary by town; no statewide regulations requiring universal testing	Assist local BOH to adopt new private well regulations and support development and passage of statewide model regulations.	Written policy (common base regulation) that communities are likely to adopt to present to state legislature (with DEP)	Stricter statewide regulations requiring domestic wells be tested for contaminants during real estate and new construction transactions.	Less variation in private well-water testing policies by towns in Central MA

DEP = Department of Environmental Protection; BOH = Board of Health

RCAP Solutions expected these activities to result in a number of intermediate outcomes during the pilot and implementation phases, including changes in resident perceptions about the importance of well assessment and water testing, increase in the number of wells tested for DEP (Department of Environmental Protection)-advised and other contaminants, increase in the number of remediated wells, and, ultimately, stricter state regulations requiring domestic wells to be tested for multiple contaminants during real estate transactions and new construction. In turn, RCAP Solutions anticipated these intermediate outcomes to lead to better informed private well owners, increases in regular well water testing and board of health knowledge of water quality in their towns, decrease in contaminated drinking water, and less variation in private well water testing regulations by towns in MA.

Several contextual factors were anticipated to affect evaluation results. MassDEP was testing in North Central MA for polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in 2021/2022. While DEP focused first on public water systems and, then, drew a relatively small sample of private well owners, these efforts competed with RCAP Solutions' to encourage private well testing. Therefore, at the outset of the pilot phase in 2021, RCAP Solutions modified its efforts to focus on contaminants other than PFAS. Also during the pilot phase, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions delayed travel for well-water testing, sample retrieval, education and training. Other factors likely to affect outcomes included variation in town regulations (e.g., stricter regulations encourage more testing), number of private wells per capita (e.g., more private wells may affect numbers interested in participating), and presence of known contaminants (e.g., may be associated with testing norms such that if no contaminants are found, people will be less likely to test). RCAP Solutions aimed to adjust or control for these factors in its pilot study design by selecting communities with larger numbers of private wells per capita, less strict regulations, and greater known presence of contaminants.

In 2022, programmatic modifications were made to facilitate advocacy efforts for statewide model regulations and implementation of private well assessment at scale. First, RCAP solutions expanded participation criteria to include communities representing congressional districts outside of Central MA. Second, RCAP solutions conducted only well water quality assessments with participating households rather than both well water quality and structural assessments. Structural assessments were provided on an as-requested basis based on lab results.

The Evaluation Addressed Three Main Questions

The evaluation was guided by three questions that helped RCAP Solutions understand how the North Central MA Private Well Program is being implemented, whether it produces anticipated results, and what these results mean for state and local decision-makers:

1. Is the Private Well Program implemented as planned? If not, why not? What factors facilitated implementation? What factors hindered implementation? What modifications were made?
2. What intermediate outcomes are associated with program implementation? How much did outcome indicators change from before program implementation to afterward?
3. Can these outcomes be used to inform stricter private well regulations in the state of Massachusetts?

RCAP Solutions hypothesized that towns participating in the Private Well Program would show:

- Positive changes in resident knowledge and beliefs about well water safety after their participation in program activities
- Positive changes in resident practices and intentions regarding well and well water safety after their participation in program activities
- Proportion of wells tested in various towns with contaminants present, in addition to PFAS

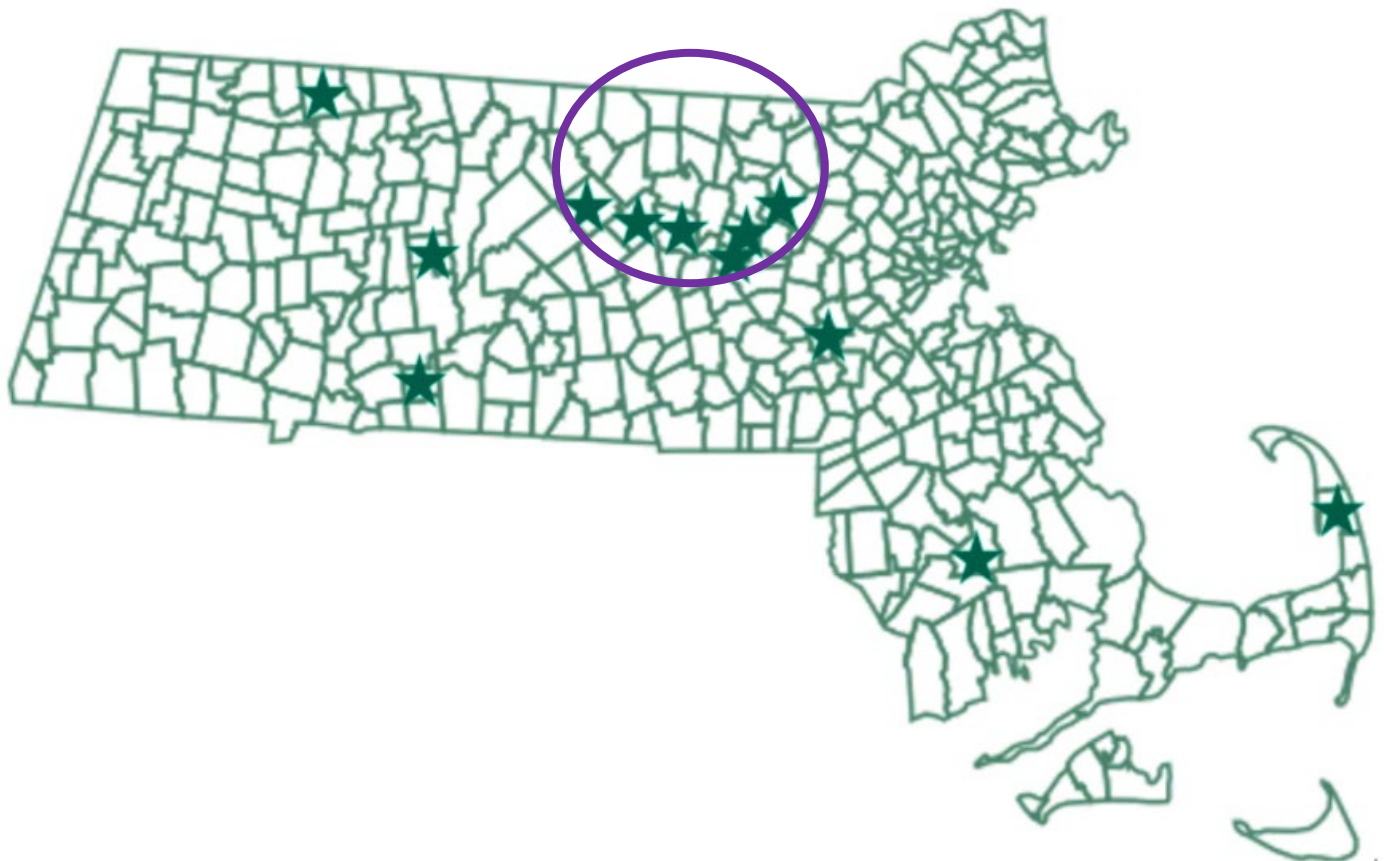
RCAP Solutions expected that well water testing would produce data that can be used to advocate for model state-wide regulations (i.e., requiring domestic wells to be tested for multiple contaminants during real estate transactions and new construction).

Participating Towns

Twenty-six communities in North Central MA were eligible to participate in the pilot of the Private Well Program. This area has some of the highest documented levels of groundwater contaminants in MA. From these 26 towns, RCAP Solutions selected a purposive sample of six to participate based on: total population size, number of private wells per capita, percentage of households with economic or biological vulnerabilities; and local health department interest. These towns included Berlin, Bolton, Boxborough, Hubbardston, Princeton, and Sterling; and are circled in Figure 2.

In 2022, six additional towns were selected to participate in the program with the goal of including towns from other parts of the state (i.e., to represent most or all congressional districts), having a relatively high number of private wells per capita, and with a mix of local policy governing private wells. So, for example, a couple of towns were included that had regulations requiring private well water testing at time of property sale or transfer. The six towns added in 2022 included Colrain, Lakeville, Pelham, Sherborn, Wellfleet, and Wilbraham.

Figure 2. Geographic Distribution of Participating Towns, 2021 - 2022



Evaluation Design

The evaluation design included a pre/post assessment of changes in household knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about well assessment and water testing prior to and after program participation. The evaluation design also included tracking well assessment and water testing results from Program activities and a review of town-specific private well policies based on data collected and provided by SafeWell ([Well Regulations Tool - SafeWell](#)).

Data Collected on Program Processes and Outcomes

RCAP Solutions and its partners, as appropriate, collected data on a number of indicators to determine whether and how RCAP implemented program elements. Table 1 presents these indicators and their sources.

Table 1. Implementation/Process Data Collection Indicators and Sources

Data Source	Key Indicators
RCAP client tracker	Number of requests for well-testing Number of well owners/households participating
Well assessment forms	Number of well assessments conducted (2021 only)
Household pre-questionnaire	How participants learned about the program Perceived barriers to well assessment and water testing
Household post-questionnaire	Participant satisfaction with program
SafeWell policy database	Local private well regulations
RCAP tracker	Testimonials submitted
Coalition formation	Number of coalition members

In addition to data on program implementation, RCAP and partners also collected information on anticipated program outcomes. To preserve confidentiality of well testing results, RCAP worked closely with local labs to obtain household data, but did not provide identifying information to EDC. Details on outcome data are included in the table below.

Table 2. Outcome Data Collection Indicators and Sources

Data Source	Indicators
Household pre- and post-questionnaire	Self-report knowledge, beliefs and practices related to well safety
Lab reports	Number and percent of wells with contaminants exceeding recommended limits
Household post-questionnaire	Number/percent of remediated and/or repaired wells and associated costs
Legislative records	Legislation drafted and submitted

Household Assessment. RCAP implemented a household questionnaire at two points in time. One representative from each household completed the pre-assessment shortly after registering and receiving notification that they were selected to participate in the program based on their pre-screen (to determine presence of private well and water usage) and the order in which they registered (as participation and

selection was on a first-come-first-served basis). After receiving results of their water lab tests, participants completed a post-assessment questionnaire. RCAP administered both questionnaires online. Participants took approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Both pre- and post-questionnaires included four items that assessed *well practices* (e.g., *frequency of well water tests*), 12 assessing *health beliefs about well safety* (e.g., *feel confident in understanding water well*), four assessing *knowledge about well safety* (e.g., *how often should homeowners test their well water*, *The water in most wells comes from rain/snow in the local area.*), and eight assessing perceived factors that facilitate well water testing (e.g., frequent reminders). The pre-questionnaire included items asking about household demographics (e.g., education and income), barriers to well assessment (e.g., *finding a lab or agency to do the test*), reasons for not having well water tested in the past (e.g., *testing is too expensive*) and how participants learned of the program. The post-questionnaire also asked about well water remediation and well structure repairs made or planned resulting from well water testing (2021 and 2022) and onsite structural analysis (2021 only) and asked about program satisfaction. Responses to items were either *yes* or *no* or used Likert scales. Complete copies of the pre and post-questionnaires are included in Appendix B.

Well Assessment. In 2021, RCAP used the Private Well/Spring Assessment instrument developed at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, to conduct well assessments. Well assessors use the tool to collect information on well location, water use, well structure and maintenance, water level and flow, household plumbing, septic, water quality, water treatment, and area geology. Well assessors also use the tool to guide onsite education of well owners. Key information extracted from the tool for evaluation purposes included information on water use, well construction, and well water disinfection and permanent treatment systems.

Lab Reports. Private regional labs analyzed water samples collected from each of the 481 households for contaminants that affect water quality including bacteria (coliform/*Escherichia coli*), nitrate, arsenic, lead, mercury, zinc, copper, iron, manganese, cadmium, sulfate, and fluoride. Analyses also assessed other indicators of water quality including PH, hardness, alkalinity, and turbidity. RCAP extracted the following key information from these reports for evaluation and reporting purposes: contaminants exceeding the MassDEP public drinking water health-based limit, and levels of contaminants exceeding primary or secondary standards (MassDEP, 2020).

Analyses Focused on Changes in Household Outcomes

Analyses were designed to determine whether towns participating in the Private Well Program showed improvements in outcomes of interest from pre-test to post-test. RCAP analyzed process data as counts, frequencies, rates, and descriptive statistics as appropriate and shared with partners on a quarterly basis to ensure continuous quality improvement. Using comparative tests (i.e., matched pairs t-tests and chi-square tests) we examined pre- and post-test findings from household questionnaires administered to participants before and following their participation in the program.

Results Provide Answers to the Three Main Evaluation Questions

In total, 480 households (of 481 enrolled) completed pre-questionnaires, and 416 of these same households (or 87%) completed post-assessment questionnaires (29 from Berlin, 31 from Bolton, 40 from Boxborough, 35 from Colrain, 39 from Hubbardston, 38 from Lakeville, 37 from Pelham, 28 from

Princeton, 35 from Sherborn, 30 from Sterling, 39 from Wellfleet, and 35 from Wilbraham). RCAP completed well assessments—water testing and onsite analysis of well structure—for each participating household in 2021 ($N = 240$) and water testing for each participating household in 2022 ($N = 241$). Lab reports, one for each participating household, were provided for all 480. No households requested a structural well assessment in 2022 based on findings from their water test. Below findings are organized according to three main questions.

Program Implemented As Planned

Households were interested in participating in the program. Results show that demand for well assessments exceeded the number RCAP Solutions was able to provide, especially in the towns of Princeton, Sherborn, Wellfleet, and Wilbraham (Appendix C). RCAP maintained waitlists for each of the 12 towns. Table 3 presents characteristics of the households enrolled in the program. Participants were, for the most part, highly educated with household incomes above the state average. Most participants use their well water for drinking and household purposes and know where their well is located. Moreover, the majority are aware of tests of water quality and have had their well water tested for contaminants at least once. Conversely, few households have *ever* had a well inspection/assessment onsite, had their well water tested in the *past year* for contaminants, or attended a workshop or educational program on water wells.

Table 3. Characteristics of Households Participating in the Program, N = 480

Characteristics	2021		2022	
	N = 240	%	N = 240	%
Use well water for drinking	229	95.4	229	95.4
Use well water for other household purposes	221	92.1	221	92.1
Know where well is located on property	235	97.9	235	97.9
Ever had a well inspection or site analysis	89	37.1	82	34.2
Had well inspection in the past year (out of 93)	11	4.6	17	7.1
Aware of water tests for bacteria or harmful chemicals and minerals	216	90.0	200	83.3
Had well water tested for bacteria or other chemicals and minerals	148	61.7	144	60.0
Had well water tested in the past year	13	5.4	48	20.0
Prior test found contaminants in well water	71	29.6	54	22.5
Attended workshop or educational program on water wells	11	4.6	18	7.5
Household member has bachelor's degree or higher	200	83.3	191	79.6
Household income below \$75,000/year*	35	14.6	42	17.5

*Note: 2022 median household income in MA is \$89,026, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MA/INC110221>.

All households received water quality tests. RCAP met its goal to conduct at least 40 well water tests in each of the 12 towns for a total of 481 assessments. As of December 31, 2022, 100% of enrolled households had received their water test results from the lab. In 2021, all 240 households enrolled in the private well program received an onsite well assessment. In 2022, no households requested an onsite assessment when their water test results indicated that an assessment was needed. See Appendix C for a town-by-town report of requests made, households enrolled, assessments conducted and water test results reported.

Most participants learned about the program from their towns. Given the widespread campaign to identify and recruit households for participation in the Private Well Program, RCAP wanted to know how households learned about the program. Answers to the question about sources of information varied

widely, with most common sources being a town employee or town outreach ($N = 101$; 21%), friends or relatives ($N = 87$; 18%). Other, less common responses included: the Department of Environmental Protections; the Department of Public Health; a neighbor; a general contractor, home builder, or plumber; health professional; RCAP Solutions; a well water contractor; and an internet search. A substantial percentage of participants indicated that they learned about the program from other sources ($N = 90$; 18.8%).

Low perceived risk and habituation, as well as high costs, affect participant well assessment and water testing behaviors. Of those households participating in 2021–22, the majority indicated that they had not had their well water tested in the past year. The most common reason cited (by 27.8% of the combined 187 respondents in 2021 and 2022): *We have lived here for a long time and no one in my household has gotten sick so the well water must be clean.* Given the latent nature of health effects associated with drinking contaminated water, it seems that this is an area requiring more education. Participants also reported barriers to having their well water tested. Most common reasons included the following: forgetting to do the testing ($N = 210$; 43.8%); worrying about the cost to have the sample analyzed ($N = 173$; 36.0%); and affording treatment if contaminants are found ($N = 166$; 34.6%).

Participants were satisfied with services provided. The majority of households participating in the pilot study indicated that they were satisfied with services that RCAP Solutions provided and would recommend to others in their community. Because RCAP delivered the program differently in 2022 than 2021, we provide satisfaction results separately by year in Figures 3a and 3b. In 2021, 92% were satisfied with the water test and 78% with the onsite well assessment, 86% would recommend the water test to others, and 85% the well assessment. In 2022, 93% were satisfied with the water test; and 88% indicated that they would recommend the water test to others. *Satisfied* = those indicating that they were *satisfied* (vs. *somewhat satisfied*, *neutral*, *somewhat dissatisfied* and *dissatisfied*); *Likely* = those indicating that they would *definitely* or *probably* recommend (vs. *neutral*, *probably not recommend*, and *definitely not recommend*). There was some variation in satisfaction by town with those in Hubbardston and Princeton reporting lower rates (albeit still relatively high) of satisfaction. See Appendix C for percentage of households satisfied with the Private Well Program by town.

Figure 3a. Percent of Households That Agree/Strongly Agree about Receipt of Program Services, 2021, N = 197

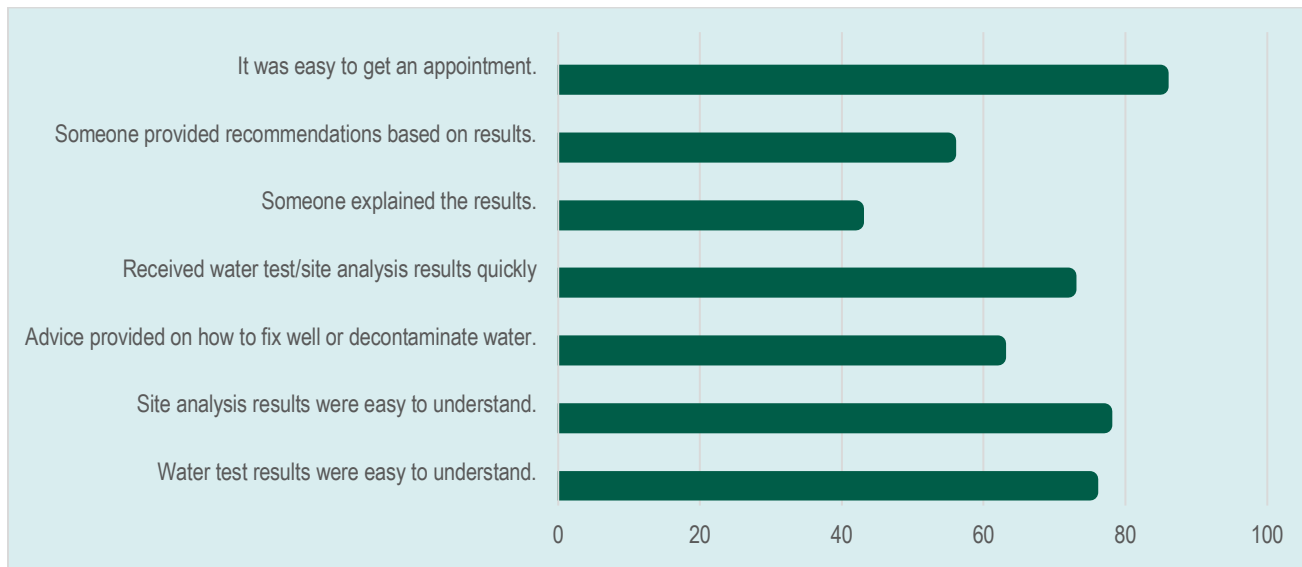
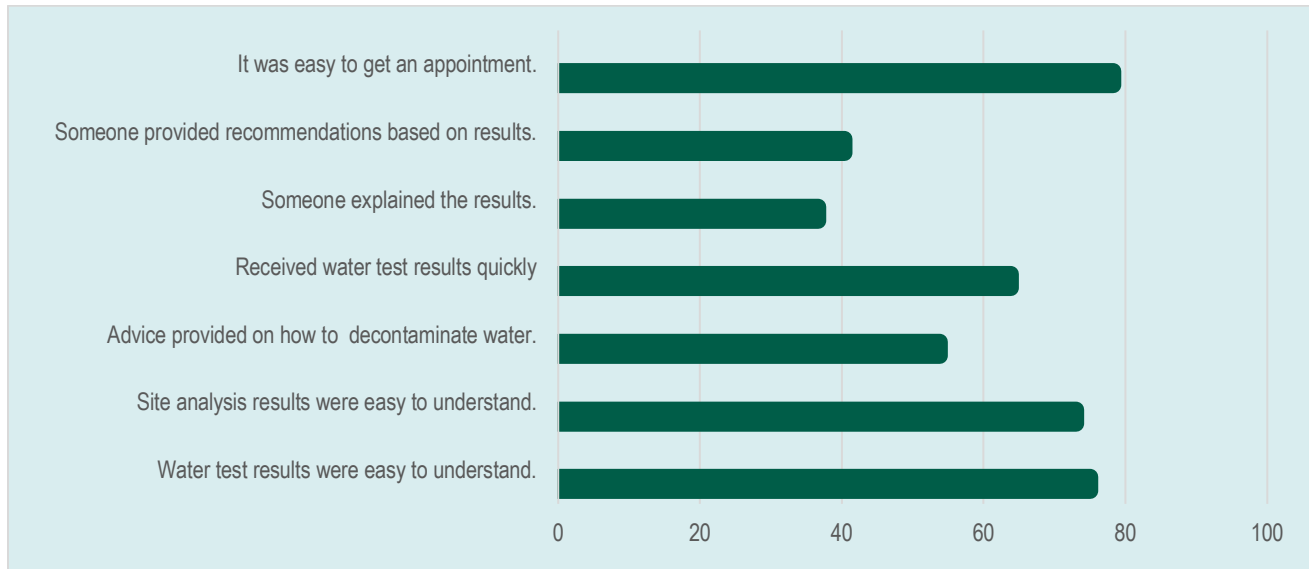


Figure 3b. Percent of Households That Agree/Strongly Agree about Receipt of Program Services, 2022, N = 219



On the post-questionnaire, participating households offered feedback on the specific services provided. Figures 3a and 3b present the percent of favorable responses and shows that participants were satisfied with multiple aspects of the program. Lower percentages, such as those related to having someone explain site analysis or water test results, may be affected by what those results showed. For example, those who received some indication of contaminants or well structure problems might have been more likely to engage, whereas someone who was notified that their well had no structural problems or water contamination, might have been less likely to want an explanation.

Change in Outcome Indicators

There were some changes in household well safety knowledge, beliefs, and practices after their program participation. Table C3 in Appendix C presents pre- and post-questionnaire responses to key items. Overall, there were few item-specific changes from pre- to post-assessment in terms of private well practices, beliefs, and efficacy. Yet, results do point to some notable differences—some anticipated and others surprising.

Well safety practices. Participants demonstrated improved knowledge of well safety with a significantly greater percentage of participants at post-assessment noting that well water tests should be conducted annually compared to other options, $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = 35.357, p = .000$. Interestingly, the percentage of households indicating that they were likely or very likely to test their well water in the next 12 months did not change in a statistically significant way between pre and post assessment, $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = .263, p = .608$. At pre-assessment, it is likely that participants were motivated to test their well water, thus their rationale for enrolling in the program. By post-assessment, participants had received results of their water test. It appears regardless of whether or not a household found contaminants in their well water their opinion had not changed post-assessment.

Well safety beliefs. Paired t-tests showed that participants agreed more emphatically that they know where to get water tested for health concerns at post-assessment ($M = 3.12, SD = 0.81$) compared to pre-assessment ($M = 2.45, SD = 1.09$), $t(409) = 10.23, p < .001$. Results from the pre-assessment ($M = 1.91,$













SD = 0.97) and post-assessment (*M* = 2.91, *SD* = 0.78) also show that participation is associated with improved confidence in understanding of water well, $t(406) = 16.41, p < .001$. Interestingly, when asked about belief that well contains dangerous levels of contaminants, participants agreement scores decreased significantly from pre-assessment (*M* = 1.28, *SD* = 0.76) to post-assessment (*M* = 0.92, *SD* = 0.86), $t(411) = -6.140, p < .001$. This decline may be due to the fact that households learned that their well water did not contain contaminants when they participated in the program. The response categories and score range for each belief item is: 0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree, 2 = neutral, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. When belief items are summed to create a total score that ranges from a low of 0 to a high of 48, paired t-test analyses find that **overall, there was a significant improvement in well water safety beliefs from pre-assessment** (*M* = 29.44, *SD* = 3.52) to post-assessment (*M* = 30.69, *SD* = 3.75), $t(175) = 13.65, p < .001$.

Well safety knowledge. All knowledge statements included in the pre- and post-questionnaires were true. Participants could respond to each statement by indicating that it was *absolutely false*, *likely false*, *likely true*, or *absolutely true*. At pre-assessment and post-assessment participants were more likely to know about the impact of well or property conditions on other wells in the vicinity. However, they were less knowledgeable about the source of their well water and how well depth effects water quality. To compare changes in knowledge from pre-assessment to post-assessment, false and true responses were combined to create a new dichotomous variable with a *true* or *false* response. Participants at post-assessment were more likely than those at pre-assessment to answer correctly that a poorly maintained well can impact the quality of water in other wells, $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = 8.884, p = .002$. However, knowledge did not significantly change from pre-test to post-test on knowing where most well water comes from, $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = .169, p = .375$; while participants at post-assessment were more likely to understand the influence of well depth on safe drinking water, $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = 7.05, p = .005$.

Program Outcomes Inform Stricter Well Regulations

Outcomes described above as well as additional information gathered on existing and local well regulations, well owner precautions or preventative behaviors, and well water quality point to the need for more substantial regulations that encourage testing of well water quality and well maintenance.

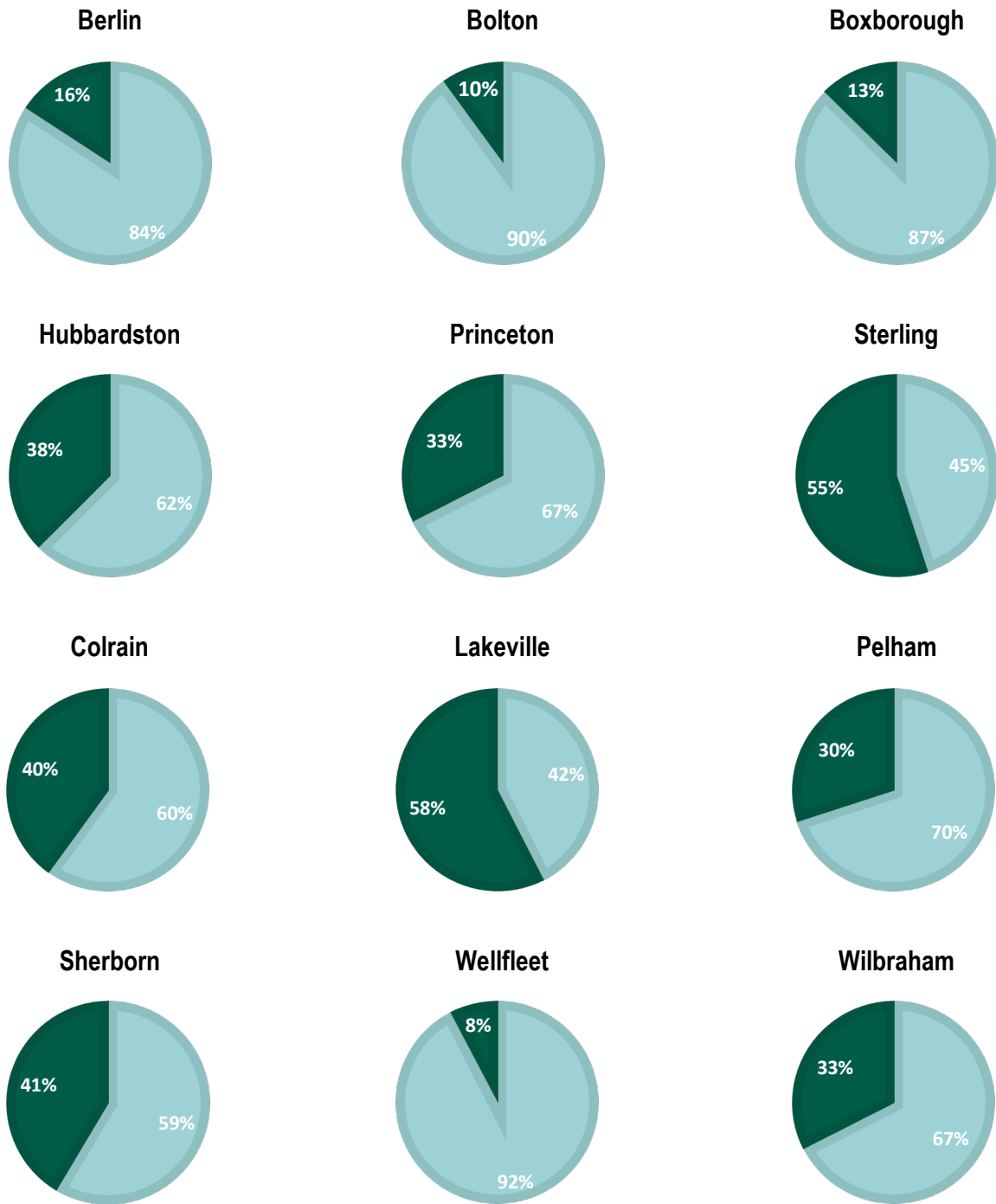
Table 4. Towns Requiring Private Well Water Testing at Time of Sale or Transfer

Town	Required	Town	Required
Berlin		Pelham	
Bolton		Princeton	
Boxborough		Sherborn	
Colrain		Sterling	
Hubbardston		Wellfleet	
Lakeville		Wilbraham	

Source: [Well Regulations Tool - SafeWell](#)

Current regulations offer neither positive nor negative incentives for well water testing and maintenance. Table 4 shows which towns have regulations in place requiring domestic well water testing at the time of property transfer or sale—a policy shown to increase well testing in other states. There are no stipulations related to regular testing of wells located on and serving domestic rental property when a new lease is signed.

Figure 4. Percent of Households that Have Levels of Contaminants Exceeding MassDEP Drinking Water Health-Based Limits by Town



Key for Figure 4:



Contaminants within limits/standards



Contaminants exceed limits/standards

Lab results find varying levels of contaminants in well water by town. Results of the water tests conducted with 481 households found that 149 (31%) households have levels of contaminants exceeding MassDEP public drinking water health-based limits. Most commonly found contaminants included the following: Total coliform bacteria ($N = 91$); arsenic ($N = 26$); radon ($N = 33$); manganese above .3mg/L ($N = 11$); uranium ($N = 9$); E. coli ($N = 8$); and nitrate ($N = 3$).¹ Figure 4 shows percentage of households with lab results showing contaminants exceeding MassDEP drinking water health-based limits by town.

Households implemented water quality remediation following participation in the program. In 2021 and 2022, 73 homeowners (18% of 416) indicated that they paid for well remediation after water tests found contaminants. Of these, 27 indicated that the repairs cost less than \$100; 16 that repairs cost between \$100 and \$1,000; and 18 that repairs cost \$1,000 or more. Two respondents indicated that there was no cost associated with their remediation. Another 147 (35% of 416) indicated that they plan to implement remedies to address contaminants found in their well water.

Data leveraged to inform advocacy for statewide model regulations. Using data from well water testing and onsite inspections, RCAP is mounted a case for statewide legislation to require testing of well water quality at the time of property sale or transfer. Given findings from the pilot evaluation and momentum for statewide legislation in Central MA, RCAP Solutions drafted and submitted legislation for model private well regulations, and obtained a legislative sponsor (Rep. Sena, 37th District Middlesex). This legislation, *An Act Promoting Drinking Water Quality for All*, was referred to the committee on House Rules in January 2022; and subsequently reported and referred to the House committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. Multiple testimonials were submitted in support of the legislation thanks to guidance provided in the Private Well Program to Protect Public Health Advocacy Toolkit (May 2022). However, in October 2022, a study order was issued, deferring a vote.

More than half of households participating in the Private Well Program support model regulations ($N = 215$; 52%); 28% ($N = 117$) were neutral on the subject—maybe because they did not understand the implications.

When legislation stalled, RCAP Solutions convened a coalition (Coalition for Safe Drinking Water) to advocate for model private well regulations—specifically to effect change by moving the state legislature to enable the MassDEP to enact sensible, health-based protections for private wells and to offer financial resources for homeowners who discover contaminants in their water. A meeting of the Coalition in August 2022 focused on lessons learned from implementing and evaluating the pilot program as well as information on the patchwork of private well policies across the state. Moreover, RCAP was able to leverage the household data collected in both 2021 and, to some extent, 2022 to help advocate for statewide model regulations. Hosting a [dashboard](#) sharing data collected during 2021 and 2022 implementation, RCAP Solutions provided easy access to evidence-based need for potential supporters.

¹ Note that the total adds up to more than 149 because some private wells tested positive for more than one type of contaminant.

Findings Have Implications for Model Scaling and Policy Change

Over two years, the Private Well Pilot Program was able to do the following:

- Select 12 towns to participate in the program based on factors such as proportion of households that rely on domestic well water for drinking and other household purposes, geographic location, and motivation to assist in household recruitment activities.
- Recruit and enroll 481 households, approximately 40 from each of the 12 towns selected, to participate in a pilot and implementation study.
- Conduct 240 onsite well inspections (in 2021), and collect and test water samples from 481 households.
- Provide all households participating with a report of well assessment and/or water test findings.
- Deliver services that yielded satisfaction from the vast majority of participants who also said they would recommend that their friends participate in this kind of program.
- Form a Coalition for Safe Drinking Water and secure testimonials / letters to support passage of statewide model regulations.

Program implementation was associated with the following outcomes:

- Overall significant improvement in beliefs favoring well safety
- Some significant improvements in well safety knowledge and practices, especially with regard to knowing that well water testing should occur annually
- Identification of additional households using well water with levels of contaminants exceeding MassDEP health-related limits
- Remediation and repair of household wells/well water supply subsequent to identification of contamination or structural defects
- Proposed legislation for model regulations introduced in state House of Representatives

The evaluation has a few limitations that affect confidence in outcomes reported here. First, households that selected into the program were mostly highly educated and had incomes exceeding the MA average. Therefore, we do not know whether this program would work for different populations such as households with lower incomes. Second, the non-experimental design limits our ability to rule out other factors that might have affected changes in knowledge, beliefs, and practices from pre-assessment to post-assessment.

Despite these limitations, programmatic and policy implications are apparent. We observed no differences in household reports of well safety knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs between 2021 and 2022, when implementing a less labor-intensive private well testing program in 2022 that omitted the onsite structural well assessment. Satisfaction levels also were relatively high in both 2021 and 2022. The lack of variation between years suggests that a more streamlined initiative is likely to produce the same results as one that is more complex.

Initial lobbying efforts and push to have statewide model regulations passed into law were unsuccessful in 2022. This may be due to the fact that RCAP Solutions did not focus on developing critical grass roots support for the bill among various constituencies in the state. Therefore, RCAP solutions turned its attention to coalition building in order to seed statewide momentum for a second submission. The next evaluation phase will focus on whether advocacy efforts are implemented as planned and effective in seeing model regulations passed into law. RCAP will be launching an awareness campaign, given that knowledge of private well safety is still limited, as well as targeted lobbying of invested parties.

Moreover, given limited data on number of well water tests conducted, any regulations or legislation should stipulate which entity will be responsible for tracking well water tests conducted at property transfer or sale. Finally, to collect representative statewide data on well water testing, consider adding a question to the MA Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System as is currently done in Maine.

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Appendix A. North Central MA Private Well Program Stakeholders

Stakeholder Group	Description of Group	Roles
Grant Management Team		
Health Foundation of Central MA <i>Contact: Amie Shei, Vice President for Programs</i>	Provides grants to non-profit organizations in support of its mission to use its resources to improve the health of those who live or work in the Central MA region, with particular emphasis on vulnerable populations and unmet needs. Major grant making occurs through the Health Promotion Synergy Initiative. The Synergy Initiative provides three to five years of funding for collaborative projects that target community-identified health issues in Central MA with integrated strategies designed to improve health.	Fund or authorize the continuation or expansion of the program; Provides overarching guidance program implementation and evaluation.
RCAP Solutions <i>Contact: Brian Scales, Vice President & Chief Capacity Officer</i>	RCAP advocates on behalf of rural communities for reasonable and fundable statewide regulations for private wells and assists local Boards of Health in establishing regulations for current contaminant protection and providing public education to private well owners and local communities.	Responsible for day-to-day implementation of the program activities that are being evaluated and will need to implement any changes; Responsible for data collection.
Education Development Center, Inc. <i>Contact: Kim Dash, Principal Health Evaluator</i>	Since 1958, has been a leader in designing, implementing, and evaluating powerful and innovative programs in more than 80 countries around the world. EDC's evaluators work with project teams and partners to design and conduct independent evaluations of federal, state, and community initiatives, inform product development, monitor progress, and document outcomes.	Design and oversee evaluation activities; Provide guidance to staff implementing evaluation activities; Obtain human protections approvals and oversight.
Stakeholder Group	Description of Group	Roles
Leadership Team		
MA Department of Environmental Protection <i>Contact: Joseph Cerutti, Program Coordinator</i>	Provides guidance on water quality testing for private wells and certifies laboratories that conduct well water tests for contaminants. DEP currently is conducting a statewide analysis of PFAS contamination in the public water supply as well as in private wells. North Central MA Well Water Program will align with these efforts such that our findings will inform those of the MA DEP and vice versa.	Help shape and advocate for model regulations, invited to attend regulation review meetings with local BOH.
Nashoba Associated Boards of Health <i>Contact: James Gareffi, Chair (2021 only)</i>	Regional Board of Health with 15 Member Towns: Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Berlin, Bolton, Boxborough, Dunstable, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley and Townsend. The Environmental Division enforces State Sanitary and Environmental Codes, Massachusetts General Laws and local regulations (including wells).	Assist with recruiting homeowners to participate in the pilot test; Provide education and outreach; Advocate for model regulations with local BOH members.
Montachusett Public Health Network <i>Contact: Steve Curry (2021 only)</i>	Regional health network that consists of the Cities of Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner and the towns of Athol, Clinton, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Sterling, Templeton, Westminster, and Winchendon. Services provided by the MPHN include but are not limited to inspectional services such as housing, food establishment, and Title 5 inspections.	Assist with recruiting homeowners to participate in the pilot test; Provide education and outreach; Advocate for model regulations with local BOH members

Stakeholder Group	Description of Group	Roles
Leadership Team, continued		
MA Department of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health <i>Contact: Jan Sullivan (2021 only)</i>	Responds to the environmental health concerns of Massachusetts residents by studying the impact of pollutants on communities and informing the public about how to prevent or minimize their exposure to harmful pollutants. Regulatory programs enforce laws and regulations related to minimum health and sanitation standards for housing.	Shape and advocate for model regulations
Massachusetts State Legislature <i>Contact: Rep. Danillo Sena</i>	Danillo Sena is the member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from the 37th Middlesex district. He was elected on June 2, 2020.	Advocate for model regulations and statewide funding program that the evaluation may recommend
Massachusetts State Legislature <i>Contact: Senator James Eldridge</i>	Jamie Eldridge has served as State Senator for the Middlesex and Worcester district since January 2009. Among other committee positions, he is the Senate Chair of the Clean Energy Caucus.	Advocate for model regulations and statewide funding program that the evaluation may recommend
University of Illinois <i>Contact: Steve Wilson, Groundwater Hydrologist</i>	Brings subject matter expertise in groundwater hydrology, extensive fieldwork and research on best practices in reaching out to and educating private well owners on benefits of well water testing; leads Illinois State Water Survey	Increase credibility and knowledge base of program and assist evaluation by providing expert guidance on well water issues and policy
SafeWell <i>Contact: Dan Gaffney</i>	Local company that provides well assessment and water testing services for households in Central MA as well as maintains database on private wells.	Help shape model regulations; Provide data on local private well regulations
Massachusetts Environmental Health Association <i>Contact: Bill Murphy, Vice President</i>	An affiliate of the National Environmental Health Association, provides quality training and educational programs while also providing the opportunity for members to meet and exchange ideas and information with other professionals in the field of Public and Environmental Health.	Shape and advocate for model regulations
Patriot Real Estate <i>Contact: Paul Yorkis</i>	Provides professional real estate services to buyers throughout MA and sellers in the Boston metro area.	Help develop model regulations related to real estate transactions.
Franklin Regional Council of Governments <i>Contact: Phoebe Walker (2022 only)</i>	Regional service organization serving 26 municipalities of Franklin County, MA, the most rural county in MA. Provides advocacy, planning, and cooperative services.	Provide guidance on coalition building and grassroots advocacy strategy to build support for model regulations
Stakeholder Group	Description of Group	Roles
Advisory Team		
Community Health Network of North Central MA <i>Contact: Chelsey Patriss, Executive Director</i>	One of 27 community health networks across Massachusetts, created by the Department of Public Health in 1992. CHNA 9 is a partnership between the Massachusetts DPH, the Central MA Center for Healthy Communities, residents, hospitals, local service agencies, schools, faith communities, businesses, boards of health, municipalities, and other concerned citizens working together to: identify the health needs of member communities, find ways to address those needs, and improve a broad scope of health in these communities.	Assist with recruiting homeowners to participate in the pilot test; Provide education and outreach; Advocate for model regulations

EVALUATION REPORT - Private Well Program Evaluation, 2021 – 2022

Stakeholder Group	Description of Group	Roles
Advisory Team, continued		
Northeastern University <i>Contact:</i> Kelsey Pieper, Assistant Professor	Brings subject matter expertise in environmental chemistry; corrosion; drinking water quality, treatment, and infrastructure; post-disaster drinking water recovery; and public health engineering.	Increase credibility and knowledge base of program and assists evaluation with expertise
U.S. Congress <i>Contact:</i> Congresswoman Lori Trahan (via Josselyn DeLeon)	Lori Ann Loureiro Trahan is an American businesswoman and politician who serves as the U.S. Representative for Massachusetts's 3rd congressional district, having been elected in November 2018.	Can advocate for federal program changes that allow for whole house filter remediation systems that the evaluation may recommend

Appendix B. Household Pre- and Post-Questionnaires

Household Pre-Questionnaire

[UNIQUE ID CODE] – ENTER

FIRST, A FEW QUESTIONS THAT ASK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH WELL WATER TESTING

1. Does the water in your home come from a private well on your property?

- Yes (go to next question)
- No (If “no”, then this message should appear: Thank you for your interest in our survey. We are mainly interested in hearing from renters and homeowners whose household water comes from a private well.)

2. Do you use your well water

		Yes	No
a.	For drinking?	1	0
b.	For other household purposes?	1	0

3. Do you know where your well is located on your property?

- Yes
- No

4. Do you have a copy of the drillers report (well log) for your household well?

- Yes
- No

5. Have you ever had a well inspection or site analysis?

- Yes (go to next question)
- No (go to Q7)

6. When did you have this inspection or site analysis?

- In the last 6 months
- About one year ago
- About 2 years ago
- About 3 years ago
- About 4 years ago
- About 5 years ago
- More than 5 years ago
- Can't remember

7. Did you know that you can test your well water for bacteria or harmful chemicals and minerals?

- Yes (go to next question)
- No (go to Q13)

Pre-Questionnaire, continued

8. I learned about private well water testing from:

	Yes	No
a. Department of Environmental Protections	1	0
b. Department of Public Health	1	0
c. Friends or relatives	1	0
d. General contractor, home builder or plumber	1	0
e. Health professional	1	0
f. Neighbor	1	0
g. RCAP	1	0
h. Search on the Internet	1	0
i. Town employee or town outreach	1	0
j. Water well contractor	1	0
k. Other: [open field]	1	0

9. Have you ever tested your private well for bacteria or other chemicals and minerals?

- Yes (go to next question)
- No (go to Q13)

10. When did you last test your well water?

- In the last 6 months
- About one year ago
- About 2 years ago
- About 3 years ago
- About 4 years ago
- About 5 years ago
- More than 5 years ago
- Can't remember

11. What contaminants were found?

- No contaminants
- Arsenic
- Bacteria (e.g., coliform)
- Nitrate/nitrite
- Perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- Radon
- Uranium
- Volatile organic compounds (e.g., benzene)
- Other [open field]

12. What were the reasons for not having your well water tested? Check all that apply.

- Water test results by previous owner were clean so I don't need to test again.
- We have lived here for a long time and no one in my household has gotten sick so the well water must be clean.
- I only drink bottled water so it doesn't matter whether or not my well water is contaminated.
- I filter my well water before I drink or cook with it so it doesn't matter whether or not my well water is contaminated.
- Testing is too expensive.
- My well water tastes good so it's probably not contaminated.
- Not a high enough priority for me.
- Land uses on surrounding properties are not likely to cause well water contamination.
- Other: [open field]

13. Have you ever attended a workshop or educational program on water wells?

- Yes
- No

14. How often do you think homeowners should test their well water for contaminants?

- Once is enough
- Every 6 months
- Every year
- Every 5 years
- Every 10 years

15. How likely are you to test your well water for bacteria or other chemicals and minerals in the next 12 months?

- Highly unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Highly likely

Pre-Questionnaire, continued

THESE NEXT QUESTIONS ASK FOR YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT WELL WATER CONTAMINANTS AND TESTING.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16.	I sometimes worry about the safety of my water.	0	1	2	3	4
17.	It's best to leave my well alone unless I have a problem with it.	0	1	2	3	4
18.	It's likely that my well contains dangerous levels of contaminants.	0	1	2	3	4
19.	My chances of getting sick from contaminated well water are high.	0	1	2	3	4
20.	I would feel safe drinking water straight out of my well without any form of treatment.	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Problems I would experience from drinking and bathing in contaminated well water would last a long time.	0	1	2	3	4
22.	If I had contaminated well water, I would have a hard time selling my house.	0	1	2	3	4
23.	I know where I could go to get my water tested for health concerns.	0	1	2	3	4
24.	I feel confident in my understanding of my water well.	0	1	2	3	4
25.	Testing my well water will help find bacteria, chemicals, and minerals that could make me and others in my household sick.	0	1	2	3	4
26.	If contaminants were found in my well water through testing, then I could have the contaminants removed with a treatment system.	0	1	2	3	4
27.	Having contaminants removed from my well water will decrease my chances of getting diseases linked to those contaminants.	0	1	2	3	4

28. Which of the following has presented or currently presents a difficulty in getting your water tested? Please check all that apply.

- Finding a laboratory or agency to do the testing
- Remembering to do the testing
- Collecting the water sample
- Paying the cost to have the sample analyzed
- Finding a contractor who will collect the sample and arrange to have it tested
- Understanding the results of the testing
- Knowing which contaminants to test for
- Being able to afford treatment if contaminants are found
- Other: [open field]
- I have had no difficulty getting my water tested.

Pre-Questionnaire, continued

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF WELL WATER

Please indicate the answer that reflects your best guess about the following statements.		Absolutely False	Likely False	Likely True	Absolutely True
		0	1	2	3
29.	The deeper a well is, the safer the water is to drink.	0	1	2	3
30.	The water in most wells comes from rain/snow in the local area.	0	1	2	3
31.	A poorly maintained well can impact the quality of water in other wells in the area.	0	1	2	3
32.	What happens on neighboring properties can impact the quality of groundwater in a well.	0	1	2	3

NOW, A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THINGS THAT MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO HAVE YOUR WELL WATER TESTED.

How likely would you be to conduct well-water testing if you:		Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely
		0	1	2	3	4
33.	Had a do-it-yourself home testing kit	0	1	2	3	4
34.	Were offered a home delivery sampling service	0	1	2	3	4
35.	Knew more about well water testing options	0	1	2	3	4
36.	Knew about well water treatment options	0	1	2	3	4
37.	Could get my well water tested for free	0	1	2	3	4
38.	Could get a loan to cover the cost of well-water treatment	0	1	2	3	4
39.	Knew that there were contaminants in my area	0	1	2	3	4
40.	Received well water testing reminders	0	1	2	3	4

FINALLY, WE WOULD APPRECIATE SOME INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HOUSEHOLD TO HELP US CATEGORIZE SURVEY RESPONSES.

41. In what town do you live?

- Berlin
- Bolton
- Boxborough
- Hubbardston
- Princeton
- Sterling

42. What are the highest levels of education that the adult members of the household have completed? Please check all that apply.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some formal schooling | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma or equivalent | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship or trades certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral or professional (e.g., MD, JD) degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completed some college | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree | |

43. What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months?

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$34,999
- \$35,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

THANK YOU!

Household Post-Questionnaire

[UNIQUE ID CODE] – ASSIGNED

FIRST, A FEW QUESTIONS THAT ASK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH WELL WATER TESTING

1. Do you use your well water

		Yes	No
a.	For drinking?	1	0
b.	For other household purposes?	1	0

2. Do you know where your well is located on your property?

- Yes
- No

3. How often do you think homeowners should test their well water for contaminants?

- Once is enough
- Every 6 months
- Every year
- Every 5 years
- Every 10 years

4. How likely are you to test your well water for bacteria or other chemicals and minerals in the next 12 months?

- Highly unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Highly likely

5. What contaminants surfaced in the recent well test that RCAP Solutions conducted?

- No contaminants
- Arsenic
- Bacteria (e.g., coliform)
- Nitrate/nitrite
- Perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- Radon
- Uranium
- Volatile organic compounds (e.g., benzene)
- Other [open field]

6. Have you implemented any remedies to address the contaminants found in your well water?

- Yes
- No [skip to question 8]

- No contaminants *[skip to question 9]*
- 7. How much did the remediation cost?**
 - Less than \$100
 - \$100 to \$499
 - \$500 to \$999
 - \$1,000 to \$5,000
 - \$5,000 to \$9,999
 - \$10,000 to \$14,999
 - \$15,000 or more
- 8. Do you plan to implement any remedies to address contaminants found in your well water?**
 - Yes
 - No
- 9. Have you implemented any repairs to address problems with your well structure?**
 - Yes
 - No *[skip to question 11]*
 - No problems found *[skip to question 12]*
- 10. How much did the repairs cost?**
 - Less than \$100
 - \$100 to \$499
 - \$500 to \$999
 - \$1,000 to \$5,000
 - \$5,000 to \$9,999
 - \$10,000 to \$14,999
 - \$15,000 or more
- 11. Do you plan to implement any repairs to address problems found with your well structure?**
 - Yes
 - No

Post-Questionnaire, continued

THESE NEXT QUESTIONS ASK FOR YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT WELL WATER CONTAMINANTS AND TESTING.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
		0	1	2	3	4
12.	I sometimes worry about the safety of my water.	0	1	2	3	4
13.	It's best to leave my well alone unless I have a problem with it.	0	1	2	3	4
14.	It's likely that my well contains dangerous levels of contaminants.	0	1	2	3	4
15.	My chances of getting sick from contaminated well water are high.	0	1	2	3	4
16.	I would feel safe drinking water straight out of my well without any form of treatment.	0	1	2	3	4
17.	Problems I would experience from drinking and bathing in contaminated well water would last a long time.	0	1	2	3	4
18.	If I had contaminated well water, I would have a hard time selling my house.	0	1	2	3	4
19.	I know where I could go to get my water tested for health concerns.	0	1	2	3	4
20.	I feel confident in my understanding of my water well.	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Testing my well water will help find bacteria, chemicals, and minerals that could make me and others in my household sick.	0	1	2	3	4
22.	If contaminants were found in my well water through testing, then I could have the contaminants removed with a treatment system.	0	1	2	3	4
23.	Having contaminants removed from my well water will decrease my chances of getting diseases linked to those contaminants.	0	1	2	3	4

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF WELL WATER

Please indicate the answer that reflects your best guess about the following statements.		Absolutely False	Likely False	Likely True	Absolutely True
		0	1	2	3
24.	The deeper a well is, the safer the water is to drink.	0	1	2	3
25.	The water in most wells comes from rain/snow in the local area.	0	1	2	3
26.	A poorly maintained well can impact the quality of water in other wells in the area.	0	1	2	3
27.	What happens on neighboring properties can impact the quality of groundwater in a well.	0	1	2	3

Post-Questionnaire, continued

NOW, A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THINGS THAT MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO HAVE YOUR WELL WATER TESTED.

How likely would you be to conduct well-water testing EVERY YEAR if you:		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
28.	Had a do-it-yourself home testing kit	0	1	2	3	4
29.	Were offered a home delivery sampling service	0	1	2	3	4
30.	Knew more about well water testing options	0	1	2	3	4
31.	Knew about well water treatment options	0	1	2	3	4
32.	Could get my well water tested for free	0	1	2	3	4
32.	Could get a loan to cover the cost of well-water treatment	0	1	2	3	4
34.	Knew that there were contaminants in my area	0	1	2	3	4
35.	Received well water testing reminders	0	1	2	3	4

36. Would you be in favor of a state regulation that requires homeowners to test private well water prior to selling their house?

I would be very
much opposed

I would be
opposed

I would be
neutral

I would be in
favor

I would be very
much in favor

FINALLY, WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE WELL TESTING EXPERIENCE.

37. Overall, how satisfied were you with the well testing services that RCAP Solutions provided?

- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied

38. Overall, how satisfied were you with the well assessment/site analysis that RCAP Solutions provided?

- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied

Post-Questionnaire, continued

39. How likely are you to recommend private well water testing to your friends and neighbors?

- Definitely recommend
- Probably recommend
- Neutral on the subject
- Probably not recommend
- Definitely not recommend

40. How likely are you to recommend private well water assessment/site analysis to your friends and neighbors?

- Definitely recommend
- Probably recommend
- Neutral on the subject
- Probably not recommend
- Definitely not recommend

To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements:		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
41.	Water test results were easy to understand.	0	1	2	3	4
42.	Site analysis results were easy to understand	0	1	2	3	4
43.	Advice was provided on how to fix my well or de-contaminate it.	0	1	2	3	4
44.	I received water test and site analysis results quickly.	0	1	2	3	4
45.	Someone explained the water test and site analysis results to me.	0	1	2	3	4
46.	Someone provided recommendations to me based on my well water test and site analysis results.	0	1	2	3	4
47.	It was easy to get an appointment for a well water test and site analysis.	0	1	2	3	4

THANK YOU!

Appendix C. Additional Tables

Table C1. Number of Households by Town Interested and Participating in Pilot Program

Town	Households that Request Water Test	Households Registered for Test	Household Tests Conducted	Households w/Water Test Results from Lab
Berlin	54	40	40	40
Bolton	64	40	40	40
Boxborough	52	40	40	40
Colrain	78	40	40	40
Hubbardston	52	40	40	40
Lakeville	86	40	40	40
Pelham	54	40	40	40
Princeton	142	40	40	40
Sherborn	105	41	41	41
Sterling	68	40	40	40
Wellfleet	116	40	40	40
Wilbraham	103	40	40	40
TOTALS	974	481	481	481

Table C2. Number and Percentage of Households Satisfied with Pilot Program, by Town

TOWN	Total Post Respondents	Satisfied with Private Well Water Testing		Satisfied with On-site Well Assessment		Likely to Recommend Water Testing to Friend	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Berlin	29	29	100	27	93.0	27	93.0
Bolton	30	27	90.0	27	90.0	26	86.7
Boxborough	40	35	87.5	18	45.0	36	90.0
Colrain	35	35	100.0	34	97.1	30	85.7
Hubbardston	39	31	79.5	31	79.5	30	76.9
Lakeville	38	37	97.4	37	97.4	36	94.7
Pelham	37	36	97.3	36	97.3	31	83.8
Princeton	28	21	75.0	22	78.6	24	85.7
Sherborn	35	35	100.0	35	100.0	33	94.3
Sterling	28	27	96.4	27	96.4	24	85.7
Wellfleet	39	38	97.4	37	94.9	32	82.1
Wilbraham	35	34	97.1	32	91.4	30	85.7
TOTALS	413	385	93.2	363	87.9	359	86.9

Satisfied = those indicating that they were *satisfied* (vs. *somewhat satisfied*, *neutral*, *somewhat dissatisfied*, and *dissatisfied*) ; Likely = those indicating that they would *definitely* or *probably* recommend.

Table C3. Pre/Post Item Response, N = 480 (Pre-test); N = 413 (Post-test)

Item	Pre-Household Assessment 2021 (N = 240)		Post-Household Assessment 2021 (N = 197)		Pre-Household Assessment 2022 (N = 240)		Post-Household Assessment 2022 (N = 216)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Practices: Number and Percent Indicating YES								
Use well-water for drinking	229	95.4	181	91.9	226	94.2	198	90.4
Use well-water for other household purposes	221	92.1	171	86.8	227	94.6	202	92.2
Know where well is located	235	97.9	195	99.0	232	96.7	215	98.2
Know to test well water annually	84	35.0	100	50.8	70	29.2	124	56.6
Likely/very likely to test well water in next 12 months	165	68.7	111	56.3	147	61.3	129	58.9
Beliefs: Number and Percent Indicating That they Agree/Strongly Agree with the Following Statements								
Worry about safety of water	159	66.3	110	55.8	153	63.8	142	64.8
Believe it is best to leave well alone unless there is a problem	77	32.1	63	32.0	70	29.2	54	24.7
Believe that well contains dangerous levels of contaminants	13	5.4	12	6.1	11	4.6	13	5.9
Believe chances of getting sick from contaminated well water are high	62	25.8	54	27.4	57	23.8	58	26.5
Feel safe drinking untreated well water	100	41.7	95	48.2	127	52.9	127	58.0
Believe there are long-lasting effects of drinking/bathing in contaminated well water*	76	31.7	137	69.5	153	63.8	137	62.6
Believe they would have a hard time selling house if had contaminated well water	205	85.4	179	90.9	201	83.8	188	85.8
Know where to go to get water tested for health concerns.	145	60.5	178	90.4	136	56.7	175	79.9
Feel confident in understanding of water well.	69	28.8	157	79.7	74	30.8	169	77.2
Believe that testing well water will help find contaminants that could make household members sick.	227	94.6	193	98.0	230	95.8	212	96.8
Think that if contaminants are found in well water, then could be removed with a treatment system.	217	90.4	175	88.8	198	82.5	193	88.1
Believe that having contaminants removed from well water will decrease chances of getting diseases linked to contaminants.	226	94.1	191	97.0	225	93.8	208	95.0
Knowledge: Number and Percent Responding True/Absolutely True to the Following Statements								
The deeper the well is, the safer the water is to drink.	132	55.0	84	42.6	135	56.3	119	54.3
The water in most wells comes from rain/snow in the local area.	101	42.1	80	40.6	91	37.9	110	50.2

Table C3. Pre/Post Item Response, N = 480 (Pre-test); N = 413 (Post-test), continued

Item	Pre-Household Assessment 2021 (N = 240)		Post-Household Assessment 2021 (N = 197)		Pre-Household Assessment 2022 (N = 240)		Post-Household Assessment 2022 (N = 219)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A poorly maintained well can impact the quality of water in other wells in the area.	179	74.6	162	82.2	170	70.8	181	82.6
What happens on neighboring properties can impact the quality of groundwater in a well.	235	98.0	191	97.0	231	96.3	216	98.6
Number and Percent Indicating That They Are Likely /Very Likely to Test Well Water Every Year If:								
Had a do-it-yourself home testing kit	212	88.4	171	86.8	210	87.5	189	86.3
Were offered a home delivery sampling service	208	86.7	163	82.7	207	86.3	187	85.4
Knew more about well water testing options	194	80.8	138	70.0	191	79.6	148	67.6
Knew about well water treatment options	194	80.8	141	71.6	180	75.0	143	65.3
Could get my well water tested for free	232	96.7	179	90.9	230	95.8	206	94.1
Could get a loan to cover the cost of well-water treatment	109	45.5	84	42.6	109	45.4	95	43.4
Knew that there were contaminants in my area	224	93.4	185	93.9	221	92.1	199	90.9
Received well water testing reminders	188	78.4	135	68.5	182	75.8	151	68.9

*Note: This item was inadvertently removed from the pre-assessment for some towns so no comparison of means was conducted.

Table C4. Pre/Post Differences in Household Private Well Belief Scores by Item, 2021, N = 197

Variable	N	Pre-Assessment		Post-Assessment		t-test
		M	SD	M	SD	
Worry about safety of water	193	2.55	1.06	2.45	1.02	-1.404
Believe it is best to leave well alone unless there is a problem	195	2.00	.98	1.89	1.02	-1.260
Believe that well contains dangerous levels of contaminants	195	1.30	.76	.98	.90	-4.370 ***
Believe chances of getting sick from contaminated well water are high	193	1.81	1.05	1.64	1.2	-1.649
Feel safe drinking untreated well water	196	2.12	1.17	2.22	1.27	1.304
Believe there are long-lasting effects of drinking/bathing in contaminated well water	74	2.86	.689	2.80	.776	-0.760
Believe they would have a hard time selling house if had contaminated well water	195	3.24	.752	3.22	.778	-0.314
Know where to go to get water tested for health concerns.	193	2.52	1.05	3.23	.679	9.899 ***
Feel confident in understanding of water well.	191	1.90	1.02	2.94	.723	14.366 ***
Believe that testing well water will help find contaminants that could make household members sick.	195	3.31	.61	3.43	.573	2.136
Think that, if contaminants are found in well water, then they could be removed with a treatment system.	195	3.12	.570	3.16	.629	.776
Believe that having contaminants removed from well water will decrease chances of getting diseases linked to contaminants.	193	3.23	.513	3.33	.572	1.831

*** $p = .000$

Table C5. Pre/Post Differences in Household Private Well Belief Scores by Item, 2022, N = 219

Variable	N	Pre-Assessment		Post-Assessment		t-test
		M	SD	M	SD	
Worry about safety of water	219	2.64	0.879	2.53	1.046	-1.247
Believe it is best to leave well alone unless there is a problem	219	1.84	0.974	1.69	1.042	-1.542
Believe that well contains dangerous levels of contaminants	219	1.20	0.776	0.89	0.873	-3.9270 ***
Believe chances of getting sick from contaminated well water are high	219	1.67	1.023	1.53	1.216	-1.326
Feel safe drinking untreated well water	219	2.28	1.157	2.47	1.209	1.859
Believe there are long-lasting effects of drinking/bathing in contaminated well water	219	2.77	0.792	2.68	0.865	-1.088
Believe they would have a hard time selling house if had contaminated well water	219	3.12	0.804	3.15	0.723	0.456
Know where to go to get water tested for health concerns.	219	2.40	1.126	3.01	0.891	6.268 ***
Feel confident in understanding of water well.	219	1.98	0.924	2.87	0.831	10.819 ***
Believe that testing well water will help find contaminants that could make household members sick.	219	3.37	0.571	3.41	0.594	0.752
Think that, if contaminants are found in well water, then they could be removed with a treatment system.	219	3.00	0.653	3.14	0.663	2.456
Believe that having contaminants removed from well water will decrease chances of getting diseases linked to contaminants.	219	3.21	0.582	3.31	0.577	1.806

*** $p = .000$

Table C6. Pre/Post Differences in Household Private Well Belief Scores by Item, 2021 and 2022, N = 413

Variable	N	Pre-Assessment		Post-Assessment		t-test
		M	SD	M	SD	
Worry about safety of water	409	2.66	0.954	2.49	1.029	-2.507
Believe it is best to leave well alone unless there is a problem	411	1.86	0.971	1.78	1.034	-1.174
Believe that well contains dangerous levels of contaminants	412	1.28	0.775	0.92	0.869	-6.140 ***
Believe chances of getting sick from contaminated well water are high	411	1.76	1.041	1.58	1.204	-2.404
Feel safe drinking untreated well water	412	2.19	1.155	2.35	1.238	1.955
Believe there are long-lasting effects of drinking/bathing in contaminated well water	316	2.76	0.793	2.72	0.867	-0.489
Believe they would have a hard time selling house if had contaminated well water	411	3.15	0.802	3.18	0.750	0.594
Know where to go to get water tested for health concerns.	410	2.45	1.092	3.12	0.808	10.229 ***
Feel confident in understanding of water well.	407	1.91	0.973	2.91	0.779	16.405 ***
Believe that testing well water will help find contaminants that could make household members sick.	412	3.33	0.586	3.42	0.584	2.202
Think that, if contaminants are found in well water, then they could be removed with a treatment system.	411	3.02	0.612	3.15	0.646	3.035
Believe that having contaminants removed from well water will decrease chances of getting diseases linked to contaminants.	410	3.21	0.555	3.32	0.576	2.845

***p = .000