

SPBHC Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2022 @ 9:00 AM
Via Remote Zoom

Present via Zoom: Pat Levine (Chair) and Martin Mitsoff (Sheffield), Rebecca Jurczyk (Great Barrington), Diane Romeo (Lenox), Jim Wilusz (TTHD), Ellie Lovejoy (Mt. Washington), Brandi Page (Otis), Kyle Pierce (Monterey), Jayne Smith, Jill Sweet (PHN), Amy Hardt (PHN), Michael Hugo and Cheryl Sbarra (MAHB), Rich Mucci (MAHB Consultant), Clarence Fanto (Berkshire Eagle)

1. Administrative Items

- a. **Minutes:** Ellie Lovejoy made motion to accept the January 11, 2022 minutes. Diane Romeo seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

2. Topics for Discussion

- a. **Intermunicipal agreement- Next Steps:** Lee has reviewed the IMA and has made small changes in liability. Jim emphasized that there is a lot of built in protection in the collaborative, including lee carrying liability for all staff, the medical professionals have liability insurance. The public health nurses are automatically considered agents of the BOH by default and are hence covered by Tort Law. Since the SBPHC is supporting BOHS and not setting policy, it reduces the liability of the SBPHC.

Lee has stepped forward to take on the responsibility to host the Collaborative so it is important that they are satisfied with the IMA. Once Lee signs off, Jim will send all the towns the final IMA. The IMA is very town friendly and is easy to exit. Pat asked if it would be appropriate to formally thank lee once the IMA is complete. Jim thought it would be after we get all signatures. Jim and Jayne are happy to attend selectboard and BOH meetings to explain.

Rich Mucci introduced himself as a MAHB contractor who will be providing technical assistance or IMA. He is happy to answer any questions that other town councils may have. Mentioned that KP Law has reviewed it twice.

Action Item: Share Rich Mucci's contact information with SBPHC representatives when we distribute the IMA

Mike Hugo mentioned that his roll will be to help design our program to be what we want and help design future sharing arrangements across the municipalities.

- b. **Budgeting:** Jim explained we are working outside of the IMA scope and asked VNA towns to appropriate funds to help initial building of program, using equalized valuation to share costs not covered by the grant in an equitable manner. In future years, flu administrative fees will go back into collaborative and be part of our long-term sustainability. We are now an authorized vaccine provider.

We are creating a sustainable program that expands programming to the towns.

Ellie, explained Mt. Washington is going to be looking at FY23 funds, and mentioned that requested talking points to share with selectboards and boards of health with the message of how

appropriating funds will help make it possible to support a program to serve the regional population.

We will be identifying gaps and accessibility to enhance public health.

Action Item: Prepare talking points and distribute to BOH to show how supporting the collaborative

- c. **BOH Training Inventory/Needs Assessment:** Jayne will be reaching out to individual boards of health to inventory their training capacity and areas that they need support.

Jim will be prepare an end of year report of what the value is of the services provided per town so that the towns start to get an idea of what public health actually costs, even though much of it will be actually covered by the grant. It is important that the actual costs of providing a comprehensive program are recognized over time. Jim asked the towns to start thinking about what they want to see in the SBPHC annual report. Ellie mentioned that we should also be thinking about incorporating that information in to our individual town annual reports.

Action Item: Members and SBPHC staff starting thinking about how to track and represent progress in a town report.

3. Public Health Nursing Updates

- a. **COVID Update:** Over half of the total cases to date have occurred in the past two months. State has changed the follow-up with priority cases, including elderly, folks in congregate settings, high risk and children, and about ½ of the cases are priority. The nurses are also following up with preschools, employers and contacts. Has been a sustained effort to support the community during this surge. Nurses are available to support BOHs to provide information and connect people who need to be talking. There has been a big shift in how people think about COVID and we need to remember that some people are inherently vulnerable. Our role of the collaborative is to continue to have the conversations around keeping vulnerable people safe.

The test positivity rate continues to go up and currently is over 6%.

Rebecca: What can we do now to protect the vulnerable? How do BOH assist nursing homes beyond who work with the state. Amy agreed that we should have a conversation around how we can support these settings. Jim agreed that maybe some agents can get together to discuss what mechanisms exist to ensure that the BOH can be aware of and support disease outbreaks for congregate care facilities.

Ellie: BOH could use input on how we should responding to mask with more and more people deciding not to wear masks.

- b. **Drive-thru COVID- 19 Clinic Report:** SBPHC filled the gap in testing during the holidays. Thank you to all the volunteers, especially Diane Romeo and Pat Levine and spoused, the MRC and community members that donated the heaters. The clinics tested 1180 people and had 103 positives.
- c. **Vaccine Provider Status:** We have completed the process to becoming a vaccine provider and are just waiting to finish reimbursement piece.

- d. **Other:** There will be no blood pressure clinics in February while we simmer down from COVID and set priorities for the coming months.

4. General Updates

- a. **School District Updates:** With the Governor removing mask mandate in schools, the BOH have been caught off guard. School Committees will be discussing what their masking policy will be have the choice on what they will be doing. Tri Town Health Department will be meeting in early March to discuss the masking directive.
- b. **FDA Grant Update:** Still waiting for final grant awards.
- c. **SB Opioid Working Group Update:** Updated group on projects of the SBOWG including:
- Handoffs/Referral Tree (ask for towns to help promote the referral tree)
 - Berkshire Harm Reduction Van: Am working with towns who need to take the next step to allow the Harm Reduction Van to come to different communities and provide many services, including needle exchange and drop off. We still have some work to do with harm reduction. We can support the effort to educate the public on harm reduction, including the benefits, what it is (and what it isn't).
 - First Responder/Outreach Training to help first responders understand how to connect people in crisis with resources to help.
 - Smash the Stigma event in September
 - Recovery Center opening in March
- d. **SB Vaccine Equity Grant Update:** SBPHC partnered with Deb Phillips in making sure the vaccine equity grant
- e. **Shared Folder Update:** Reaching out to computer IT professionals to get recommendation for platform. Perhaps whatever we come up with can be shared with MHOA since it is helpful to some health agents but is overwhelming to others.
- f. **Community Partner Updates:** None

5. Logo

Logo was unveiled. A big thank you to Pat and Rebecca for their work on this. Reflects working together and equity.



6. Upcoming Events/Trainings

- a. Young People and Anxiety, Depression and Stress Forum; 2/15/22- 6:30-8:30pm
tinyurl.com/anxietyforum
- b. CPO (pool) for Public Health Officials, March 29 & 30th - in Chicopee, 8am – 5pm \$240
<https://maeha.org/event/>

7. Next Meeting Date: March 11th, 2022 @ 9:00

8. **Adjourn Meeting:** Ellie made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 AM