



Serving the Towns of Alford, Great Barrington, Lee,
Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington,
New Marlborough, Otis, Sheffield and Stockbridge

"The mission of the Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative is to leverage partnerships in order to provide quality public health services that directly improve the health and well-being of the entire community."

SBPHC Approved Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2022 @ 9AM

Via ZOOM REMOTE MEETING

Members Representatives Present (Zoom): Rebecca Jurczyk (GTB), Pat Levine (SHF), Ellie Lovejoy (MTW) Dianne Romeo (LNX), Jayne Smith (ALF), Jim Wilusz (MNT)

Guests: Rep. Smitty Pignatelli, Marybeth Mitts (LEE), Amy Hardt (PHN), Jill Sweet (PHN), Steve Rubenstein (SND), Deb Phillips (SB Rural Health), Clarence Fanto (Berk Eagle)

1. Administrative Items

- a. **Review and Approve May 13, 2022 Minutes:** Ellie Lovejoy made motion to approve the 5/13/22 minutes. Diane Romeo seconded. Motion approved unanimously by role call vote.

2. **J&J Opioid Settlement Subcommittee Update:** At last month's SBPHC meeting, a discussion was facilitated by Deb Phillips to explore whether there was an opportunity for south County towns to pool opioid settlement resources to make the most impact by those affected by the opioid epidemic. The outcome was for SBPHC to form a small working group comprised of members Rebecca Jurczyk, Pat Levine, Ellie Lovejoy (working group chair) and Jim Wilusz and was joined by guests Rep. Smitty Pignatelli, Deb Phillips and Gary Pratt (Rural Recovery). The first meeting was focused on determining an approach and method for forming and advocating for a specific ask on what the money would be used for. The second subcommittee meeting (6/09/22) included a discussion on expanding the scope of towns to include additional Smitty Pignatelli's district (for a total of 15 towns). It was decided to invite all the town administrators/or rep from each town to have a discussion about collaborating with each other to accept and spend this settlement money.

Jim W. volunteered to craft and send correspondence to all representatives from each town to at least let towns know what we are thinking and see if they are interested in meeting on June 24th via Zoom. SBPHC has not approached selectboards yet because they first want to have an ask. Priorities voiced by the SBPHC board/working group included (1) Making sure that the money has greatest impact on South County; (2) Making sure that the process of collecting and distributing fees is streamlined and makes it easy on towns; (3) Educating towns what the time frames are for receiving, spending and reporting money, especially since the first payment will be coming in June during FY22; and (4) clarification on what would be required for final recipients of the money and what the money would actually be spent on. (Smitty Pignatelli joined Zoom at 9:10AM)

3. New Topics for Discussion

- a. **PHE Training Hub:** The DPH announced that they are forming 10 trainings hubs throughout MA shortly before this agenda was formed. It was placed on the agenda to be sure the Collaborative was aware of the formation of the training hubs and allow us to respond if appropriate. Ultimately, we want to have a voice to advocate as a Collaborative to have access to resources to provide internal training/mentoring resources to mentor since we have internal capacity and skill across our 10-town collaborative to strengthen each other.

4. SBPHC Program Updates

- a. **IMA/ Articles of Incorporation:** Great Barrington BOH is expected to sign off on the IMA next Thursday and then the IMA process will be complete for all 10 Collaborative towns. Once we get a final signed version of the IMA, we will get the document to the Town Clerks of participating towns to be properly registered.
- b. **Opioid Work:**

45 Railroad Street * Lee, MA 01238 * (413) 243-5540

<https://www.facebook.com/Southern-Berkshire-Public-Health-Collaborative-102895775457684>

- **Sharps containers:** We are ordering three and saving quite a bit on shipping and have found a vendor. We are also working on signage;
 - **Harm Reduction:** South County Opioid Working Group (SCOWG) is working on an information letter to introduce harm reduction which will be a good resource for BOH and others when we are talking about harm reduction initiatives in our communities.
 - **SCOWG:** It was agreed that the SBPHC members like to receive notes from the SCOWG so that they would be aware of what is going on South County and provide support when appropriate.
- c. **SBPHC URL options:** Jayne Smith asked to work with the leadership of SBPHC to decide on an URL. Ellie L. made motion for the leadership to decide on a URL and get it. Pat L. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by role call vote.
- d. **New membership towns update:** Jim reported that he has had a lot of dialogue with the Sandisfield Selectboard Chair about what the process may look like for SBPHC to provide PHN nursing in Sandisfield. No decisions have been made but talking to the PHN it makes a lot of sense for the Collaborative to eventually pick up some of the geographically South County towns (Sandisfield and maybe Tyringham) to keep school districts together. There will be more information on funding after the state-wide needs assessment has been done in the fall, which may be a good time to plan future steps. Steve Rubenstein (Sandisfield BOH), was greeted and invited to attend future meetings.

5. Public Health Nursing Updates

COVID:

- COVID cases are down by 1/3 in both Berkshire and South Berkshire County. We are still in yellow.
- Masks and test kits continue to be distributed around the County. More test kits are coming to individual towns through the state.
- Access to test kits at pharmacies has encouraged the situation where people have been asked to pay upfront for test kits vs. having the pharmacy run it through insurance.
- Expecting announcement that COVID vaccine will be approved for 6months- 4 years to be announced next Wednesday. CHP has indicated that they will be holding clinics. Fairview has appointments for 5-11 year olds to get their booster shot.

CAR SEATS: Jill had identified early on that there were no car seat clinics available in South County. She underwent a 3-day training and applied to two grants to provide properly fitted car seats to families at no cost, when needed.

- Has started to install car seats by appointment.
- Working to get together a flyer and podcast to get word out to organizations (CHP, Fairview, etc.) that serve families.
- SBPHC will send out the flyers to individual towns as soon as it is ready.

6. Community Partner Updates

- Jim shared things are going well and that he feels blessed to have a great team and that things are going well in South County.
- Jayne share that HVA has been testing the Housatonic River watershed every other week in past years but there was a delay in towns receiving the results (plus it was only done every other week). Alford plans on testing Alford Brook and the Green River on alternate weeks and hopes that the partnership with HVA will provide a more complete picture of what is happening with the smaller streams that are used by residents. Jayne will start sending out test results as they are provided by HVA. Ellie L. expressed frustration that the State still has not tested the pond in Mt. Washington State Forest which is used as a swimming area (unofficial). Jayne offered to mention adding the pond to the testing cycle.

7. Upcoming Events/Trainings

- a. **MHOA Conference,** October 26th- 28th, 2022 (Same location, early bird starting in June)

8. Next Meeting Date: July 8th, 2022 at Great Barrington Meeting Room

9. Adjourn Meeting: Motion made to adjourn by Ellie L., seconded by Jim W. Accepted unanimously. Meeting adjourned @ 9:48 AM