



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 Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2022 @ 9AM

Great Barrington Conference Room, 334 Main St., Great Barrington, MA

w/ Remote Option via Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/95602362119>

Present In Person: Pate Levine, Chair (Sheffield), Jim Wilusz (Lee), Ellie Lovejoy (Mt. Washington), Dianne Romeo (Lenox), Jayne Smith (Alford), Amy Hardt (PHN)

Present Remotely: Rebecca Jurczyk (Great Barrington), Brandi Page (Otis), Isiah Govey (SBVAS, joined @ 9:30), Michael Hugo (MAHB, joined @ 9:58)

1. Administrative Items

- a. **Review and Approve June 10, 2022 Minutes:** Jim made a suggestion to add the documents discussed at meetings to the meeting minutes in the future. Ellie L. made motion to accept minutes. Diane R. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. J&J Opioid Settlement Subcommittee Update

Subcommittee has met twice, comprised of Jim W., Rebecca J., Pat L, Ellie L. Invited town administrators/managers from South County towns plus Becket to a zoom meeting with Rep. Smitty Pignatelli. There was a good dialogue and feedback. The subcommittee met the following week to draft a more formal proposal that includes several options and information on other resources can then be submitted to town administrator to then present to town leadership. The goal of the Collaborative is to advocate and facilitate and create a solid ask so the towns understand their options and are empowered to move forward.

More information is needed on reporting requirements, time frame for spending, pending legislation allowing the creation of a special fund since town appropriations have already been made for FY23. **Action item: Jayne will pass along a MHOA PowerPoint that did a good job presenting a toolkit for the local boards of health plus information on the settlement process and requirements. Pat L. will meet with Gary Pratt to draft the ask for review by the subcommittee and the Collaborative board.**

3. New Topics for Discussion

- a. **Desired Fall Training Topics:** Jayne would like to start quarterly trainings for the Collaborative, attached to the meetings. Options include:
 - **BRIDGE:** Cultural Competencies
 - **Food Code:** Non-profit permit requirements
 - **Housing :** Hoarding training
 - **Opioids :** MHOA toolkit on opioids and local BOH

Ellie L. would like the trainings to be attached to a meeting, even if it means we stay until noon.

Action Item: Topic will be proposed at next meeting for September.

- b. **Needs Assessment:** The state DPH will be conducting a formal capacity assessment of all the PHE towns and so energy on the Collaborative end is focused on getting a general sense and helping towns prepare for the

larger assessment being done by DPH in the fall so we can have a fast turnaround. This capacity assessment will be very important for us because there may be significant dollars associated with the results.

Jim, Jill and Amy are meeting with Tyringham on Tuesday, July 12th @ 8AM. Sandisfield is working on their short-term and long-term goals. It is important that Sandisfield be sure that their long-term goals specify which PHE grant they want to be included in when they get evaluated so that resulting resources get appropriately allocated.

- c. **2023 NEHA/FDA Retail Standards Grant:** Jayne S. let the group know that the FDA grants will be opening in August and she will present some ideas that maximize impact while minimizing reporting efforts. **Action Item: Will present options for Towns at August meeting in preparation for next grant round.**

4. SBPHC Program Topics

- a. **IMA/Articles of Incorporation:** We are waiting for one more signature and then we can send the fully executed IMA to the Commonwealth. **Action Item: Articles of Incorporation that he will bring to the next meeting to start the discussion of how we will work as a group**
- b. **Opioid Work:** Jayne S. updated the Committee on the harm reduction document that we would like to be a guide for Boards of Health.
- c. **SBPHC URL options:** Jayne S. got feedback from SBPHC leadership and given that sbphc.org was not available, we decided on www.sb-phc.org
Pat L. made motion to adopt www.sb-phc.org as our web URL. Diane R. seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

5. Public Health Nursing Updates

COVID: Berkshire County has remained in green for several weeks but is expected to rise again in the fall. The public health nurses have exhausted their supply of state-supplied masks and another order has been placed as requests continue to come in, especially from the libraries. Box locations with pamphlets, masks and tests are in each town and individual BOHs are welcome to use these bins to distribute rapid tests received by DPH. Great Barrington also had a large shipment of masks that came in that could be distributed at some point to the SBPHC network at some point. We should be sure that regionally we replenish supplies of masks and tests in anticipation of a fall surge.

Camps: There have been some clusters of COVID at camps. Camps that required COVID immunization were able to manage clusters without complete disruption. This region has a lot of risk factors, including congregate care facilities, international visitors, second homeowners, large venues, etc.

Intern: The intern has been working on different projects. Amy asked the Collaborative whether there is interest on having the intern do a deep dive on different websites around the country. Amy also asked about the interest in having a way to track at-home tests as more variants/mutations cycle through our population, given that we do have some risk factors that differ from other parts of the county. There is some interest in having the intern look at having a method to capture at-home rapid test results, even if it is to give support and educate people who are looking for guidance. We would need to be sure that whatever reporting method we use is secure. Lots of other ideas were put forward, including looking at how to educate employers on how to keep their employees safe.

Action item: Will be placed on agenda for discussion at August meeting.

Flu Clinics: Planning for the flu clinics have started.

Car Seat Program: Car seat installation has been made available on an individual basis for now. There are plans to start clinics to ensure that properly fitting car seats are being distributed to the community. Marketing has been created in English and Spanish. Potential partners include community organizations, police, events, etc.

6. Community Partner Updates

Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Service: Isiah Gowey, advanced EMT and Sheffield resident, introduced himself as the newly appointed community outreach and engagement specialist for SBVAS. With

recent changes in management, SBVAS is moving in a different direction and increase activities in the communities, including things like blood pressure clinics, which is how Isiah had found information on the SBPHC. SBVAS would like to be a partner with SBPHC on their projects, especially as it pertains to prevention. Isiah met with Amy earlier in the week and they brainstormed some ways to support each other.

SBVAS is also looking at providing Narcan packets and may be interested in being involved in the warm handoff. The Commonwealth has a policy that EMS can have Narcan kits on the ambulances and they can leave behind a Narcan kit to give to the patient or patient's family, especially since not all people who have overdosed want to go to the hospital. There is support with other organizations dealing with SUD to create programs like this. **Action Items: Amy H. is going to connect Isiah G. with Jayne S. and we will also add Isiah to the distribution lists for ongoing meetings and has an open invitation to join community conversations.**

During the meeting with Amy, they also spoke about mental health support and being able to refer since SBVAS is called to transport patients who are seeking treatment for substance used disorder or mental health support.

Rebecca J. wondered if SBVAS had access to data that can tell the story of what is happening in South County for how many overdose calls SBVAS gets, how many Narcan kits are distributed, etc. Isiah G. confirmed that there is a mechanism for searching for that information. It was also suggested that money coming in from DPH could be spent to support the efforts for SBPHC.

There are opportunities to train others in the community to train and distribute Narcan kits outside of EMS and increase access to Narcan.

Mike Hugo, MHAB

Framingham has given out 3000 Narcan kits and Mike is on the Opioid Task Force in Hampshire County and about 1/3 of rescues in Lowell are from casual passersby who had Narcan in their pockets, which is a result of MOAPC grants and outreach. Everyone should have Narcan and get the training.

Jayne S. asked Mike H. what communities can expect from the capacity assessment that is happening this fall by DPH. Mike H. said a consultant will be physically coming to each town and determining what each community has for credentials and what they need. At the end, DPH will be able to identify what level of funding is needed for each town to bring them up to the standards. There is a "grandfather clause" that allows department directors to meet the qualifications even if they are not a RS if they have been in a managerial position in a health department for 7 years or more. DPH is setting up training pods to make it so local trainings will be available. Jayne S. wanted to be sure that the time of the inspectors to go to the trainings is a key point to consider in Berkshire County since there is no funding allocated to pay for the inspector's time.

The legislature sent out a report earlier in this week assessing the results of a joint committee on what the lessons learned are from COVID that accurately represents the Commonwealth's response to the pandemic. **Action Item: Mike H. will send the after-action report on the Commonwealth's COVID response to Jayne S. and Jim W., who will then distribute it to member towns.**

7. Upcoming Events/Trainings

- a. **MHOA Conference**, October 26th- 28th, 2022: Jayne mentioned that she is looking at updating the \$7500 FDA grant to pay for SBPHC inspectors to go through the Food Track at the MHOA conference. **Action Item: Any staff that are interested need to let Jayne know so we will be ready to propose a change to NEHA/FDA.**

8. Next Meeting Date: September 9, 2022, hybrid if allowed by legislature at that time.

9. Adjourn Meeting: Diane R. made motion to adjourn, Ellie L. seconded. Motion passed 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:12am.