



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

"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

February 10, 2023 @ 9AM

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

w/ Remote Option

Present In person: Pat Levine (SHF, Chair), Rebecca Jurczyk (GTB, Vice Chair), Dianne Romeo (LNX), Brandi Page (OTS), Tom Menzi (MNT), Ellie Lovejoy (MTW), Jordan Chretien (NMB), Jayne Smith (ALF), Jill Sweet (Public Health Nurse)

Present via Zoom: Steve Rubinstein (SND), Ivy Goodwin (TTHD), Michael Hugo (MAHB), Cheryl Sbarra (MAHB @ 10:02), Rich Mucci (MAHB @ 10:08)

Meeting Started @ 9:00 AM:

1. OLD BUSINESS

Public Health Nursing Update: Jill Sweet reported that a per-diem nurse, Stephanie Adler, will be covering Jill while she is away on vacation next week and assisting the program as needed. Jill has pre-booked private purchase flu vaccine for next year's vaccine program, including 600 of the normal dose, 450 high dose, and 10 egg-free doses. Remaining doses from this year will be returned April 1st, 2023 and we will get a credit for 10% of total doses. We have received the \$75 gift card incentives for COVID vaccines from the state Get Boosted program and people are pleasantly surprised with that incentive.

Jill will be attending the Community Baby Shower being held in Adams on April 15th and hopes to get people scheduled to do a car seat inspection. Thirteen car seats were distributed in the month of January. Pat added that Sheffield has a community outreach police officer who also is a licensed car seat installer. The Sheffield PD would like to do a community program in the spring and Sheffield will likely be reaching out to Jill soon to see if they can collaborate with us. Jill will be applying for additional car seats this coming year but will primarily be getting them from the state which has higher quality materials than those provided through the Toyota Buckle Up for Life grant program. Jill confirmed that she is required to destroy old car seats replaced as part of this program.

Jill has been contacted by some of the council on aging offices that report that their foot nurse is retiring soon. Jill is exploring what resources exist and what the next steps could be to help seniors continue to have access to foot-care services. Considerations for SBPHC nurses to provide foot care directly include potential liability, how/if we can bill for services, etc. It may be easier to subcontract out services. While foot care isn't a "core service" under the PHE umbrella, it is a service important to many of our seniors.

Jill reached out to Otis, Alford, and New Marlborough with an offer to extend wellness clinics to those towns and Otis and New Marlborough will start having regularly scheduled wellness clinics. It is still unclear whether Alford has enough seniors during the winter to host a clinic there.

Pat asked whether we could create an email list with all the town clerks which gets sent with a request to post the SBPHC meeting agendas to streamline the posting process. Jim said he will develop the list of clerks and will

email the agenda directly to the clerk to post each month. Jayne explained that all past approved meeting minutes are on the sb-phc.org website. Ellie asked if they could just post the link to the town website to post. Jayne replied that they would have to speak to their town clerks to see what the official posting location is for their town and whether that would be a proper posting, but that the agenda and approved minutes are posted on a static link and it would be good to have the link on each BOH site, even if it is just for informational purposes.

DPH Capacity Assessment Next Steps: DPH has scheduled a meeting with the SBPHC on March 17, 2023. We had hoped to have it on March 10th, the day of our normal collaborative meeting, but the date had already been taken by another collaborative when we went to reserve the date with DPH. We will post the meeting once we get the link from DPH.

DPH is asking for towns that are listed on two PHE grants to have a letter signed by both the BOH and another town official to indicate what PHE grant they will be participating in. Jim asked that towns go through that process and submit the letter to the DPH Office of Local Regional Health per the email that was forwarded to cross-over towns.

Jayne asked the group whether they wanted to schedule a follow up conversation after the after the DPH Capacity Assessment presentation. It was agreed that we will place a couple of other agenda items on the posting for the March 17th meeting that will allow for the members to choose whether they want to schedule a meeting to discuss the results prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting on April 14th. Jayne will try to coordinate with DPH to allow for us to have a follow up meeting. Mike mentioned if they are using Microsoft Teams, we may be able to be inserted into the meeting as a zoom group.

Sharps Campaign Update: Jayne reported that all the kiosks were in place and that there are temporary stickers on the kiosks and sharps containers until APHC provides additional signs. There are a lot of existing resources, including radio and print, to develop a public education campaign. We continue to work with community partners, including the BHS Harm Reduction Van and individual towns. This is something that has been on the radar for over 8 years that is finally coming to fruition. APHC is developing additional materials for us to distribute, including an informational flyer for public spaces. We may see a big backlog of sharps dropped off initially which is good because it is removing them from the waste stream.

One of the ideas we are looking into is to allow seniors to bring in their sharps packaged in proper containers to the public health nurse during wellness clinics. Ellie mentioned that we may want to also do education on needle clippers and will pass along information on the clippers to Jayne. There was discussion that there are some injection methods that are actually made of plastic and not technically sharps. There was also discussion that people should put in the entire syringe and not remove the needle since doing so could result in a needle stick.

Rebecca shared that the Claire Teague Senior Center will no longer be a site because the kiosk was bigger than the senior center was anticipating. Great Barrington will be purchasing their own sharps containers for distribution to their residents. Jayne will update the stickers to remove the senior center and will send Rebecca the updated information to include on the sticker.

There is some uncertainty about whether concern for loose needles being dropped off is warranted. Tri Town Health Department is going to have a wall-mounted unit next to the kiosk to hopefully avoid the problem of people simply dropping a bag of needles by the door. Rebecca suggested we may want to look into some sort of procedure if there is an issue of people dropping off loose needles at the any of the sites. There was discussion that we should ask other medical offices to host a kiosk since they are the major prescribers of medications requiring sharps.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- **2023 Priorities and Goals:** Jayne presented the SBPHC Priority Sheet to the group and asked for ideas on how to gather feedback from BOHs and COAs on what their priorities are for their own

populations, both for the public health nursing program and anticipated support as a result of the capacity assessment results being done by the DPH.

There is a column that identifies whether an activity is a core function that is required of the local board of health; there are also many important projects that are not core but still important to our community members. Jayne explained that there are three streams of funds that will be available to fund the work of the SBPHC: money from the town contracts, money from the PHE grants, and money from the vaccine reimbursements. Both the town funding and PHE money need to be used to support Core Services, which are mandated by the State. The reimbursement money can be used for materials and expenses for projects that are important to the member towns but aren't listed as Core Services. The purpose of this priority and goal document is to solicit feedback from the communities. Perhaps down the road we can formalize our priorities as a Collaborative, but the first step is to gather information

There was discussion about how to get community input without bogging down the process. Ellie would like to put a link out on the town website and there was discussion about how towns can get feedback from their towns. Jayne will clean it up and send it back to Members in a format that allows BOH to give feedback on what their priorities are.

- **Review Draft Articles of Organization:** Pat went over the draft articles from last summer and has made some edits. She proposed clarifying some things and then resending it to the larger group. Jim reminded the group that this document is just a general guide on how we function as a shared-services group. Members should send comments to Jim in next two weeks so that we have progress prior to the next meeting.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Sustainability Subcommittee:** Members had meeting notes from the sustainability subcommittee meeting in their packet. As a result of the meeting, Jim had quickly assembled a summary that listed the PHE dollars, town appropriations, and vaccine reimbursements so far. It will take at least one cycle of vaccine reimbursement to understand the scope of what we will receive back because of insurance input error, types of vaccine, etc.
- **Opioid Settlement Subcommittee:** Rural Recovery has put together their white paper on their program. Lenox has already sent out a recommendation letter to their Select Board and the Rural Recovery Center will be advocating at the Select Board meeting. Our roll is a warm handoff.

There are some outstanding questions on how money received in FY23 can be appropriated before it is certified as free cash sometime in FY24. There is still some ambiguity around that issue. Rebecca Jurczyk reported that the Great Barrington accountant feels we can't vote to appropriate the funds until it is certified as free cash. Brandi Page shared that Otis free cash won't be certified until next year but that the Towns can spend free cash on whatever they want. There was concern regarding if the Recovery Center can hold on until then since their 3-year grant is expiring in August.

Mike Hugo stated that MAHB has issued an opinion letter, which includes draft wording for a warrant. Mike was able to bring Cheryl Sbarra into the meeting. Cheryl joined the meeting at 10:02. Cheryl's opinion is that it must be appropriated in FY23 or it won't be designated as money that must be used for Opioid Recovery and it would instead be put into the tax levy in the General Fund.

This does not mean that the Town can't spend the money, but it won't be legally dedicated to the Opioid Settlement, which is how it is required to be spent. The issue is that the money came in directly from the pharmaceutical companies to the towns before there was a line item in the budget or a stabilization fund, which is unusual, and the money also did not come in as a grant. So, it needs to be appropriated to be used for its intended purpose since there is no current line item for this money. The proposed article would be a vote that the money is captured for opioid use once it is certified as free cash. Rich Mucci joined at 10:08am. This approach is what DLS is suggesting on how to capture this money to ensure it is used for its intended purpose, which is why the DLS links are included in the footnotes of the opinion document.

It was suggested that towns create a line be in their budgets for FY24 and future fiscal years, or create an opioid stabilization fund. The benefit of the opioid stabilization fund is that the money would not need to be spent the year it was received but it is a lot of work for communities that are receiving small amounts plus there needs to be a 2/3 majority vote to pull money out of the stabilization fund. There will continue to be additional moneys coming into the towns via settlements with 5 additional pharmacies. MAHB is happy to talk to individual Comptrollers to discuss this if needed.

4. MEMBER UPDATES

Jim introduced Tom Menzi, who is the new representative from the Monterey Board of Health, as well as Ivy Goodwin who is the new Mental Health Co-Responder for Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge.

Ellie Lovejoy reported that at a Special Town Meeting held in Mt. Washington on Tuesday it was voted to change the number of BOH members from three to five. She expressed that a priority for SBPHC is to get Board of Health members trained so that the BOH members can share the work in an informed way. Mike Hugo offered MAHB to set up a zoom program for BOH members in the SBPHC to help train our boards. The Members enthusiastically asked MAHB to do an evening Zoom meeting. Jim asked if having several members from a BOH attend is subject to open meeting law. Mike Hugo suggested that while training is allowed, it is a good idea to just post the meeting just in case a topic about a specific town is discussed. Jayne brought up that the proposed SAPHE act would require training for BOH members as a minimum standard.

Jayne mentioned for the Members to look for flyers highlighting the ongoing vaccination appointments available at the TTHD with the \$75 gift card benefit for COVID Boosters. Flu will also be made available.

5. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

Mike stated that MAHB has been working on supporting the Pittsfield BOH on the cell tower issue.

6. UPCOMING TRAININGS: BCBOHA sends out a comprehensive list of trainings and events.

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **March 10, 2023: In-person with remote option-** It was decided to cancel the March 10th meeting since the meeting with DPH is happening the following week.
- **March 17, 2023: Assessment Review Meeting with DPH**
(Note all towns must to have a least one representative attending this meeting). The agenda for this meeting will include an item that would allow the Members an opportunity to schedule an additional meeting, if desired. Mike Hugo reported that there will be a final report generated by the State in

May and it is unclear how quickly this report will go up the chain and back down again. The money will follow, likely in June or July. MAHB is not automatically going to attend all the assessment reviews but if we want MAHB present to we just have to ask.

Jim Wilusz made a motion to ask MAHB to attend the Assessment Meeting. Ellie Lovejoy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was decided to be fully remote and we will post the meeting with a separate link for our agenda items afterwards. Mike suggested asking DPH to have them insert the zoom group into the meeting so that we can address our additional agenda items after the formal presentation.

8. ADJOURN MEETING

Ellie Lovejoy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rebecca Jurczyk seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:32am.