

Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

MINUTES

January 8, 2023 – 12pm

Attendees: Connor Robichaud, Mishel Caisapanta – CMRPC; Colleen Strapponi – Blackstone; Jack McLellan – Mendon; Jeanne Gniadek – Northbridge; Trish Parent and Diane Tiernan – Upton; Erin Hightower and Dr. David Tapscott – Uxbridge; Agnieszka Podstawka and Kristin Harris– Douglas; Deb Vescera, Dan Markman, Jack Sullivan – BVPPH

1. Approval of Minutes

Jeanne made a motion, seconded by Colleen, to approve the minutes of the October 18 and November 27, 2023, BVPPH meeting. The motion minutes passed unanimously.

2. Inspection Staff Update

Inspections are continuing as usual. Housing inspections have picked up. Dan had a question about hemp products that have gone to the state, and we are awaiting their response.

3. Public Health Nurse Update

Deb finished a fall prevention course presentation. Some materials are also useful for other programs, such as hoarding. She is working to finalize printed materials with the BVPPH logo. Deb plans presentations in Mendon on Feb 22 and Blackstone in February. The Uxbridge Hoarding Force is up and running. Whitin Community Center is very interested in presentations from the PHN. Will develop SOPs for mailing maternal health program materials.

4. Epidemiologist Updates

Gov cutting \$375M from the discretionary budget. A good portion will come from health programs. It seems that Opiate wastewater surveillance and BVPPH grants will be unaffected. Vaccination statuses have been sent to the towns, but there are more incidents of infectious diseases such as chicken pox and mumps. With tick-borne disease, the big concern has been an increase in Lyme disease – Jack recommends that educational materials be put out in early spring. Foodborne illnesses seem to be down. The uptick of COVID seems to have stayed roughly at this level for some time. The positivity rate is near the 15% level, a level not seen since 2020 and 2021.

5. Shared Service Coordinator Update

- Possible extension of the Contact Tracing grant through March 2026.
- Two applicants for the Community Health Worker position. Interviews will be scheduled. There are no applicants for the inspection position yet.

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- Douglas MHOA hotel reimbursement – They went through PHEP for one night, but BVPPH will reimburse the other night.
- Opioid settlement funds. Milford and Uxbridge are presenting a regional option with caseworkers at Milford Hospital. Towns are interested but are still discussing it.
- Original IMA signed 9/1/21, and the three-year renewal is coming up. The group should consider any revisions before we send them to respective BOSs
- Jeanne provided a proposed update to Northbridge's travel stipend for the regional inspector. It would be an increase to \$167.50. Colleen made a motion to approve this update, Diane seconded it, and it passed unanimously.

6. Unanticipated business

The state is still giving out COVID tests for local public health.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:41 pm

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY THE BVPPH ON FEBRUARY 8, 2024.