

Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

MINUTES

September 12, 2023 – 1pm

This meeting was held remotely under the provisions allowed by Acts (2021) Chapter 20, An Act relative to extending specific COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>) approved on June 16, 2021

Attendees: Connor Robichaud, Mishel Caisapanta – CMRPC; Jack McLellan – Mendon; Jeanne Gniadek – Northbridge; Erin Hightower – Uxbridge; Trish Parent – Upton; David Tapscott – Uxbridge; Agnieszka Podstawka and Kristin Harris – Douglas; Bill Fisher – Hopedale; Deb Vescera, Danielle Edmands, Dan Markman, Jack Sullivan – BVPPH

1. Approval of Minutes

Erin made a motion, seconded by Agnieszka, to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2023, BVPPH meeting. The motion to include this adjustment and approve the minutes passed unanimously.

2. Inspection Staff Update

Slightly less busy than camp season but still busy with inspections. Housing has ramped up with some cases and is still catching up on food. SERV Safe course coming up Sept 25th – towns will promote to fill remaining open spots. Will have a draft of Animal regulations best management practices.

3. Public Health Nurse Update

First live Narcan training in Blackstone September 13th. Hoarding disorder resource list is being developed for all BVPPH. MAVEN meeting this morning gave an update on the new COVID boosters. Towns are advised not to use old bivalent vaccine or boosters. New vaccine is monovalent targeted at XBB.1.5 and we anticipate vaccines will be updated annually like flu vaccines. State is looking for help with migrant vaccination – concern about liability issues working outside of existing scope and capacity. Emergency order likely lifts liability issues but would rather lean on MRCs. Maternal visit home visits would be a major liability if there is a hands-on component. These should be informational visits only or mailings. Pivot to pamphlet with resources.

4. Epidemiologist Updates

It seems there is still the ability to request mobile vaccination clinics. Shared clinics might help open it up to more people. Jack can submit a request for mobile vaxx – he just needs a date and place, as well as some backup options. COVID is still on the rise. At some places in the state,

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there is an increase in deaths. Wastewater surveillance is showing very high levels of infection in Uxbridge and Douglas. Free tests are available here:

https://www.test2treat.org/s/?language=en_US. Jack sent a graphic about vaccine efficacy, and asked towns to post this on their web pages. Flu and RSV increases will also come in the fall and winter, so this messaging is important. Increase in deaths from overdoses has encouraged a western mass collaborative to ask the state for wastewater surveillance. Next opioid task force is Sept 28th. Jeanne made a motion, seconded by Erin, to have Jack Sullivan write a letter of support to the state for additional wastewater surveillance, especially concerning the increase of overdoses in the area.

5. Shared Service Coordinator Update

- Workplan, Budget were approved by DPH
- Updates to PHN Job Description to reflect focus on programs
 - Erin made a motion to adopt job descriptions for the Public Health Nurse, Community Health Worker, and Community Outreach worker, as presented by CMRPC. Jeanne seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- Open Meeting Law: vote upon adopting posting methods complying with 940 CMR 29.03(3)
 - Jeanne made a motion to adopt posting methods complying with 940 CMR 29.03(3), Erin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Towns were reminded to post a link to the Town of Northbridge BOH page so individuals can navigate to meeting agendas.
- CHEI Survey Promotion
- Shared Services Coordinator Waiver
 - Erin, Agnieszka
- Migrant Sheltering
 - Uxbridge mentioned best practices including their Incident Command Structure from COVID as well as a coalition of community groups called Uxbridge Helps.

6. Unanticipated business

Next meeting is October 18 at 1pm.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:36pm