

North East Public Health Alliance

January 11th, 2024 Meeting Minutes

11:00 am -1pm EST

In-person: 1009 Main Street, Tewksbury MA 01876

Voting members in attendance:

Kristel Bennett, Billerica

Donna Greenwood, Chelmsford

Shannon Gillis, Tewksbury

Kerri Oun, Tyngsborough

Non-voting members in attendance:

Shelagh Collins, Billerica

Cynthia Baker, BME Strategies

Darcy Beall, Chelmsford

Arielle Castro, NEPHA Regional Inspector

Opening

The regular meeting of the NorthEast Public Health Alliance was called to order by Cynthia Baker at 11:12AM on January 11th, 2024.

I. Welcome

Approval of October and December meeting minutes

Kristel Bennet made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. Shannon Gillis seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

Motion passes.

II. Announcements & Reminders

BME provided an overview of recent updates concerning Workforce Standards, the TRAIN MA platform transition, and upcoming training opportunities. The group also reviewed an invitation to meet with the Office of Local and Regional Health Workforce Development Unit to discuss the waiver process.

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III. **FY24 Hiring Updates**

The group shared updates about the Regional Public Health Specialist hiring process. Second round interviews are being scheduled for the week of January 22nd and the subcommittee will present their recommendation to the Advisory Board during the February meeting.

The group also discussed the Shared Services Coordinator hiring timeline. BME will connect with Tyngsborough to ensure Human Resources approves the job description.

IV. **Fiscal Overview**

The coalition reviewed year to date budget progress for the Public Health Excellence grant. BME summarized expenditures in each budget line item and shared estimates for anticipated consumption by end of year. The group discussed opportunities for use of unallocated and leftover funds. Coalition members expressed interest in funding training fees and additional employee certifications, printing durable copies of various health education information for municipal use, and exploring digitization of public health documents. The group also discussed use of PHE funds to support health communications planning, such as health fairs, and additional signage to promote health department training and events. Inspection supplies were also discussed. BME will follow up with individual requests to assess cost.

V. **FY24 Work Plan Deliverables**

The group broadly discussed alternatives to a regional food truck program, rollout and onboarding with Relavent software for inspections, outreach to DPH to work with a Subject Matter Expert on a documentation audit, and public health workforce standards such as completion of ICS 100 and NIMS 700, the Foundations course, and current ServSafe certification for food inspectors.

VI. **Community Updates**

Chelmsford shared upcoming events organized through the Greater Lowell Health Alliance related to mental health programming and support.

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VII. Regional Staff Updates

No updates were shared.

VIII. Next Steps

Tyngsborough will host the next coalition meeting on February 15th, 2024.

IX. Adjournment

Donna Greenwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kristel Bennett seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

Motion passes.

The meeting adjourned at 1:26 PM.

Documents and exhibits used by the public body in the meeting:

NEPHA January Coalition Meeting Presentation

NEPHA Coalition Meeting



January 11th, 2024

Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Announcements & Reminders
- III. FY24 Hiring Updates
- IV. Fiscal Overview
- V. FY24 Work Plan Deliverables
- VI. Community Updates
- VII. Regional Staff Updates
- VIII. Adjournment

Welcome!

Approval of October* and December 2023 meeting minutes

Announcements & Reminders

Workforce Development Unit Meeting: Possible Dates

Thursday 1/25/2024 @ 11am – 12pm

Tuesday 1/30/2024 @ 10am – 11am

MEHA Title 5 Seminar

February 21st, 8:30AM-4PM

Session details TBD

\$100 for members, \$150 for non-members

FDA National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards Self Assessment and Verification Audit (SAVA) Workshop

April 2-4, Waltham, MA (in person)

\$150 registration fee

Discounted lodging (\$139 per night) available

Registration deadline: February 16th, 2024

Announcements & Reminders

RS/CHO renewal requests are open until 1/15

- Submit renewal application through the Health Professions Licensing Portal
- Questions? Reach out to rs.cho@mass.gov

First Round MA PHIT Courses: Food Protection & Housing

- Have folks been able to sign up for these?

TRAIN MA

- Has everyone received login information & credentials?

Workforce Standards Tracker

- Please have your staff fill this out!

Regional Public Health Specialist Hiring Updates

Upcoming Panel Interviews

- 3 candidates
- Scheduling interviews for the week of January 22nd

Next Steps

- Conduct panel interviews
- Subcommittee makes final hiring recommendation to the coalition during February meeting

Hiring Process Timeline (current)

Review candidate resumes (BME)
Ongoing



Initial phone screen/1st interview (BME)
Completed 1st round



Full panel/2nd interview (BME & Subcommittee)
January



Subcommittee recommends final candidate(s) to
coalition for vote and approval
February

Shared Services Coordinator Transition

Revisiting the Job Description

- Any further thoughts or feedback on the JD following our last meeting?

Next Steps

- Approve to post the job opening
- Kickoff meeting with subcommittee and confirm timeline

Hiring Process Timeline (adjusted)

Review candidate resumes (BME)
Jan-February



Initial phone screen/1st interview (BME)
February-March



Full panel/2nd interview (BME & Subcommittee)
March



Subcommittee recommends final candidate(s) to
coalition for vote and approval
March-April

FY24 Fiscal Review

- PHE Grant Expenditure YTD
- PHE Grant Spending Risk: Staffing
- PHE Spending Opportunities

PHE Grant Expenditure YTD



Approximate YTD Spend	\$134,964.64
<i>By budget category</i>	
Shared Staff Payroll and Fringe	\$47,343.75
Consultant	\$23,360.00
Conference/Training	\$1,956.64
Technology Software	\$18,292.50
Admin	\$34,998.00

PHE Grant Expenditure YTD

Budget Line Items	Total Allocated	% Spent
Staffing and Fringe	\$ 222,533.63	21%
Consultant	\$ 62,400.00	37%
Health Communication	\$ 25,000.00	0
Inspection Supplies	\$ 12,000.00	0
Membership Fees	\$ 3,000.00	2.5%
Nursing Supplies	\$ 15,000.00	0
Technology Hardware	\$ 13,000.00	0.6%
Technology Software	\$ 21,000.00	87%
Travel	\$ 8,000.00	0
Training	\$ 14,724.16	13%

PHE Grant Spending Risk: Staffing

Public Health Specialist	Allotted: \$53,333.00
Hire in Q3 (February)	Estimated spend: \$33,333.33
Projected Remainder	\$19,997.67

Shared Services Coordinator	Allotted: \$13,333.33
Hire in Q4 (April or May)	Estimated spend: \$13,333.33
Projected Remainder	N/A



Total Estimated
FY24 Remainder
with Fringe
\$26,796.88

PHE Spending Opportunities

Anticipated Available Funds

Staffing and Fringe: \$26,796.88

Technology Hardware: \$7,000.00

Travel: \$8,000.00

Training: \$12,767.52

Nursing Supplies: \$15,000.00

Health Communication: \$25,000.00

Technology Software: \$2,707.50

Inspection Supplies: \$12,000.00

PHE Spending Opportunities

Nursing Supplies

- Vaccine Clinic Supplies
- Portable Vaccine Coolers (LabRepCo, \$7,653.86)
- Other ideas? Defibrillators?

Technology Hardware

- Laptops, tablets, etc for incoming Regional Staff (\$6k)

Health Communications Campaigns

- Updated Signage and Flyers with Tick- and Mosquito-borne Disease Education Info
- Safe Storage Infographics for Cannabis and Cannabis-Related Products

Inspection Supplies

- Laminated and translated food safety signage
- Test strips, thermometers

Training

- Housing Court Best Practices with Paul Halfmann (\$750-\$1,000)
- RS/REHS Prep Course (\$500) and Book (\$200)
- CHO application (\$118), CPH exam fees (\$385), CPH study guide (\$24.99)

PHE Spending Opportunities

Other (Big) Ideas - for this fiscal year or next

- Digitization of municipal records and older inspections (paper copies)
 - Currently exploring this with other groups with other grants - but this was mentioned by DPH as an acceptable strategy to spend down funds
 - Has anyone done this in their communities?
- Tabletop exercise focused on a topic of regional interest
 - Hone regional communication strategies and resource sharing to organize around a local health emergency or event
- Strategic planning engagement
 - Develop a cohesive vision and implementation framework for the coalition to work together, set goals, and achieve them
 - Also promoted by DPH to use unspent funds

FY24 Deliverables

NorthEast Public Health Alliance

Public Health Excellence Grant	FY24	Q2
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	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Next Steps	Due	Status
Hire Public Health Specialist				JD/Post Interview & Hire			Onboarding	Develop Community Resource Guide						Continue candidate screening and host panel interviews	2/1	Delayed
Launch Regional Food Truck Program				Review MFEs	Plan	Convene stakeholders		Develop Case Management SOPs						Regroup on program structure/opportunities	11/9	Overdue
Conduct Inspectional Audit							Consult HRIA			Conduct Audit	Violation QI Strategy			Regroup with HRIA to discuss audit process?	1/31	On track
Develop EH Training Calendar				Survey	Review		Develop Calendar			Facilitate EH Training				Continue collating Workforce Standards data; build out calendar format	1/31	On track
Hire FTE Shared Services Coordinator					Develop JD/Post			Interview & Hire			Onboarding			Approve and Post JD	1/31	On track



Risk	Mitigation	Next Steps	Due	Status
Food truck program is not a viable objective	Propose options to switch focus or tactics in January meeting	Review options as a group, update work plan	1/31/24	On track

Budget	\$ 466,656.23
Spent	\$134,964.64
Allocated	\$ 466,656.23

Regional Food Truck Program

Previously discussed **an opt in/opt out pilot proposal**:

- All-community annual food truck permit (\$525) with one annual inspection
 - *All communities keep current annual permit fees*
 - One inspection (for annual permit)
 - Adopt highest standards across the group

Implementation obstacle - the administration piece

Should we scrap this objective and amend our work plan?

- If so, what can we look to implement in its place?
 - Something that can add value to the group and ideally spend some of the previously allocated funds
 - What resources or services can we share regionally?

Regional Food Truck Program

Other FY24 Work Plan Ideas

- Regional Emergency Communications Plan
 - How will this group respond to emergencies?
 - Develop SOP and call down strategy
- Regional Health Communications Strategy
 - Develop a robust regional brand and identity
 - NEPHA regional events schedule and dedicated cadence for sharing information across social media platforms

Inspectional Documentation Audit

- How are communities liking Relavent? Has this streamlined your documentation and inspection process?
 - What does each community require in terms of how far back to keep records?
 - Would digitization of records create more operational efficiency for you?
- What do folks think about working with a SME through DPH to audit backup documentation?

Environmental Health Training Audit & Calendar

Baseline Training Opportunities for Workforce Standards Compliance

- ICS 100 or NIMS 700 for **all employees** hired for more than 1 year
- Completion of Foundations course for **all employees** hired for more than 18 months
 - Anyone who has not started this course already in LPHI should do so in the TRAIN MA interface
- Completion of Foundations for Clerical Workers for administrative employees hired for more than 1 year
- Up to date ServSafe for **all employees performing food inspections**

CART Review: Food Protection



- Does your BOH/HD appoint an inspector of milk AND a collector of milk samples?
- Does your BOH/HD inspect and license milk pasteurization establishments?



- Does your BOH/HD permit facilities manufacturing or bottling non-alcoholic beverages?
- Does your BOH/HD license establishments for breaking or canning eggs?
- Has your BOH/HD inspected all cold storage and refrigerating warehouses, and their entry/receiving procedures, in the past 5 years?
- Does your BOH/HD license establishments to manufacture frozen desserts and/or frozen dessert mixes annually every February?
- Does your BOH/HD inspect seafood retail dealers in your municipality?



- Does your BOH/HD enforce statutes and regulations regarding adulterated or misbranded food?
- Does your BOH/HD take samples of food believed to be adulterated or misbranded?

Community Updates

Regional Staff Updates

Meeting Adjournment

Next Meeting

- Scheduled for February 8th
- Who would like to host?