

# North East Public Health Alliance

July 25th, 2024 Meeting Minutes

11:00 am -1 pm EST

In-person: 25 Bryant Lane, Tyngsborough MA 01879

**Voting members in attendance:**

Kristel Bennett, Billerica

Donna Greenwood, Chelmsford

Kerri Oun, Tyngsborough

**Non-voting members in attendance:**

Shelagh Collins, Billerica

Cynthia Baker, BME Strategies

Darcy Beall, Chelmsford

Arielle Castro, Regional Inspector

Siobhan LaFreniere, Regional Public Health Specialist

Ashley Pavlakos, Regional Public Health Nurse

**Voting members absent:**

Shannon Gillis, Tewksbury

## **I. Opening**

3/4 voting members present, quorum was met.

### **Motion to start the meeting**

Kristel Bennett made a motion to start the meeting. Kerri Oun seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Absent

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

Cynthia Baker called the meeting to order at 11:12AM.

### **Approval of previous meeting minutes**

Donna Greenwood motioned to approve the June 2024 Coalition Meeting minutes. Kristel Bennett seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Absent

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

## II. Announcements & Reminders

### A. Greater Lowell Health Alliance Perinatal Health Summit

The coalition reviewed an upcoming opportunity to attend a perinatal health summit hosted by the Greater Lowell Health Alliance. Cynthia Baker has already requested approval for use of PHE funds for registration and will confirm with the group once received. Request for all communities to please advise if they would like to send any municipal staff with PHE funds (contingent upon approval) and to please provide information by Friday, 8/2.

### B. FY24 Closeout and FY25 Payment Schedule

BME shared that NEPHA received official FY25 workplan and budget approval from DPH on 7/16. Final EOY reporting is due Wednesday, July 31st. Cynthia has been collaborating with Kerri Oun and Angela Lemire to complete the required paperwork. A list of participating municipalities is due to DPH on 7/31. Unspent funds are due to the state by 8/16.

FY25 payments will be disbursed in 3 installments. The first will be distributed late July - early August and consists of 50% of the total funding award. The second payment (25%) is to be distributed October-December and the third payment (remaining 25%) will be sent out in Spring 2025.

## III. FY24 Report Out

The coalition reviewed the final FY24 expenditure summary. NEPHA's total grant award totaled \$466,656.23 of which \$466,006.16 was spent (or 99.86% of the grant award). \$650.07 will be sent back to the state.

The group reviewed programmatic spending by category (following the budget amendment provided to DPH to reallocate funds for digitization).

## IV. FY25 Overview and Next Steps

### A. FY25 Workplan Objective Snapshot

The coalition reviewed the newly updated NEPHA FY25 Dashboard to kick off activities planned in the new fiscal year.

1. Performance Standard 1: Enhance staff capacity to effectively meet mandated inspectional requirements and enforce regulations in Food Protection
  - Racial Equity Consideration: **Workforce Diversity**
    - Create NEPHA SOP including procedures for securing approval at both the

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SSA and municipal levels, drafting and approving job descriptions, posting mechanics, selecting final candidates, salary expectations, incorporating workforce regulations, addressing future education and training needs, **and ensuring fair and equitable hiring practices.**

- Develop job description for a 0.5 FTE or contractor to support Food Protection, Recreational Camps, and Tobacco inspections across the SSA. **Ensure job posting leverages inclusive language.**
  - Advertise the job opening in diverse posting locations to attract a wide range of talents and backgrounds.
  - Carry out hiring plan following procedures, set timelines, budget limits, **and ensuring representative diversity.**
  - Onboard 0.5 FTE inspector to SSA including focus on completing Workforce Standard requirements and enrolling in applicable Training Hub courses as available. **Include foundational trainings in racial and health equity as part of the onboarding process.**
  - Organize mentorship and shadowing opportunities for incoming 0.5 FTE inspector with current Regional Inspector and other SSA inspectional staff to provide foundational training and familiarity with Food Protection, Recreational Camps, and Tobacco Control inspections.
  - Leverage existing and new Regional Inspection staff to ensure timely completion of all required Food Protection inspections in accordance with state requirements.
    - In progress: Draft formal hiring process SOP
    - Up next: Develop job description for 0.5 FTE health inspector
2. Performance Standard 2: Facilitate targeted training opportunities for staff members to address gaps in meeting Performance Standards for Local Public Health in Housing.
- Racial Equity Consideration: Linguistic Justice
    - Source housing court training support for SSA inspectional staff to increase confidence and competence in taking housing complaints to court.
    - Source and provide hoarding training with a SDOH focus for SSA inspectional and support staff to increase confidence and competence addressing hoarding and cluttering cases among community members.
    - Design regional SOP to provide individual case management, follow-up, and resource connection for community members with hoarding and cluttering behaviors. Work with individual community hoarding task forces to integrate best practices across the SSA.
    - **Integrate translation and interpretation SOP into the case management and resource referral plan to ensure service continuity to limited English-proficient residents in the SSA.**

- In progress: Source coalition hoarding training
- Up next: Source housing court training and resources
- 3. Performance Standards 3&4: Identify areas for improvement in inspection processes and provide targeted training to enhance the effectiveness and consistency of inspections across all participating municipalities in Food Protection & Housing.
  - Racial Equity Consideration: Linguistic Justice
    - Leverage results of FY24 SME documentation audit to review inspections and ensure use of the most up-to-date standardized Food Protection and Housing inspection templates and formats.
    - Review inspection forms and associated follow-up documentation for each member for municipality best practices and areas for improvement.
    - Work with inspection software platform vendors to update Food Protection and Housing inspection interfaces and checklists to meet best practice recommendations for inspection documentation.
    - Leverage internal file-sharing system to share updated checklists and supporting documentation with all member municipalities to assess for best practices.
    - **Develop supporting inspection follow-up and guidance documents for operators and residents in multiple languages as reflects the demographics of the SSA.**
  - Up next: Re-review audit results
- 4. Sustainability Objective 1: Communication and Engagement - Develop a framework for communication and engagement to optimize operational efficiency and effectiveness
  - Develop standardized protocols for inter-municipal communication and collaboration including document-sharing, guidelines for response times, and conflict resolution.
  - Initiative monthly meetings with SSA shared staff to check-in about workplan activity progress and collaborate on SSA communications plan deliverables.
  - Set up feedback mechanisms to gather input from municipalities and shared staff on the effectiveness of the communication and collaboration framework to identify best practices and areas for improvement.
  - Develop streamlined process for municipalities to access and request regional staff to enhance resource-sharing and programmatic support.
- In progress: Initiate monthly regional staff meetings to track progress and collaborate on communications plan development
- Up next: Develop additional draft SOP
- 5. Elective Objective 1: Maternal, Child and Family Health: Support caregivers and newborns
  - Racial Equity Consideration: Community Engagement

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- Participate in a Community of Practice meeting with OLRH and other DPH staff (including Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition Staff) once quarterly.
  - Work with community partners (Police, Fire, Community Health Centers, Schools) to learn about barriers, historical consideration, and other resources. Work with Greater Lowell Health Alliance Task Force to highlight existing community partners and collaborators.
  - Leverage an epidemiologist or other staff to assess needs including STI rates, infant mortality rates, monthly birth rates by community, birthing hospitals, and other local data.
  - Establish local partners to support this work.
  - **Create resource guides for pregnant people, new moms, and guardians in multiple languages as appropriate for NC-8 community demographics. Ensure materials are made available in multiple languages as applicable to the SSA's demographics, and multiple formats and locations for accessibility among different populations.**
- Up next: Attend Communities of Practices meetings, collect & assess NEPHA birth data.

## B. PS1: Hiring Process Outline

The coalition reviewed an overview of the hiring process utilized in FY24 and discussed its formalization. No suggestions were made in terms of editing the individual steps or responsible parties for each stage as referenced in the graphic on Slide 13. Darcy Beall asked if there could be adjustments made to shorten the process. Cynthia Baker suggested more targeted job postings with firm application deadlines to help drive more applicant volume for subcommittee review. The group also discussed the extra burden borne by the host community (Tyngsborough). Kerri Oun stated that between support from HR and BME, the additional administrative work is very manageable. No further feedback was provided.

## **Motion to approve current hiring process outline.**

Donna Greenwood motioned to approve the hiring process outline as the formal basis for official process documentation (to follow). Kristel Bennett seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Absent

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

## C. PS2: Training Opportunities

The coalition reviewed and discussed training opportunities to fulfill Performance Standard

## 2 Objective activities.

Hoarding training: the group indicated interest in booking 2 consecutive full day sessions with the Center for Hoarding and Cluttering on 10/22 and 10/29. BME will reach out to Marnie Matthews to coordinate.

Housing court training: the group indicated interest in working with Paul Halfmann on a regional housing court training to include additional support for administrative search warrants, condemnations, and guidance for cases that include Title 5 regulations.

The group also discussed the possibility of coordinating a Title 5 training. Donna Greenwood recommended their consultant, Mill River Consulting. BME will follow up with Chelmsford to coordinate initial outreach.

### D. FY25 Software Elections

The coalition reviewed current Relavent platform selections and discussed consolidation for Tewksbury and Tyngsborough in the event of possible duplication. BME will reach out to Michael Hicks for clarification.

The coalition also discussed FY25 Adobe product renewal and decided to keep Acrobat Pro only for all communities. The group also discussed exploring opportunities for Canva Pro support via the PHE grant. This will be an item for follow-up in the next meeting.

## **V. Regional Staff Updates**

Siobhan LaFreniere led a walkthrough of the in-progress Community Resource Guide. The resource guide will be updated in full 2x per year. The group discussed possible locations and formats for the document's publication, such as libraries, COAs, police and fire stations, food pantries, and churches with food permits. Siobhan shared several test options for bookmarks and magnets with QR codes to link directly to the pdf (to be hosted on the NEPHA website). Donna Greenwood requested that Siobhan send the soft copy to all health departments for their review to ensure relevant community partners or other resources are included. The group discussed solicitation of a quote to have the resource guide translated into Spanish and Portuguese, with the possibility of creating abridged versions if translation is cost-prohibitive.

Ashley Pavlakos shared that the Tewksbury community Narcan program is officially up and running, which consists of Naloxboxes in community buildings (that include resources) and free community trainings. Chelmsford shared that they are exploring incorporating similar supplies into public (but not municipal) spaces such as retail stores and are currently in discussion with MAHB regarding liability.

## VI. Community Updates

Chelmsford summarized upcoming activities and workshops, including: the fall festival in September, vigil for overdose awareness, YMHFA training, a plant positivity workshop bringing together youth and seniors, as well as regular Sober Karaoke convenings.

## VII. Adjournment

The next regular coalition meeting will be held in-person in Billerica on Thursday, September 12th. The coalition will skip the August meeting due to the scheduling changes made for the end of FY24.

### Motion to adjourn the meeting

Kristel Bennett motioned to adjourn the meeting. Kerri Oun seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Absent

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

**Meeting adjourned at 1:06PM.**

### Documents used by the public body during the meeting:

NEPHA July Coalition Meeting Slides

MY25 Relavent Planning Template

Draft: NEPHA Community Resource Guide

# NEPHA Coalition Meeting



**July 25th, 2024**



BME STRATEGIES



# Meeting Opening

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# Agenda

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- I. Opening**
- II. Announcements & Reminders**
- III. FY24 Report Out**
- IV. FY25 Overview and Next Steps**
- V. Software Elections**
- VI. Regional Staff Updates**
- VII. Community Updates**
- VIII. Adjournment**

Approval of June 2024 meeting  
minutes

# Announcements and Reminders

**Greater Lowell Health Alliance**  
**Perinatal Health Summit**  
August 15th 8:30AM-1PM  
Westford Regency Inn  
*219 Littleton Road, Westford MA*  
Registration fee: \$25



Greater Lowell  
Health Alliance

## 2024

### MERRIMACK VALLEY PERINATAL HEALTH SUMMIT

Thursday, August 15th, 2024

8 AM- 1:15 PM  
breakfast offered at 7:30

**WESTFORD  
REGENCY** 219 Littleton Rd,  
Westford MA

THE SPEAKER LINEUP

KEYNOTE

**Jamie Belsito**  
Founder and Director of Policy Maternal  
Mental Health Leadership Alliance

SPEAKER 1

**Michelle Visser**  
Psychotherapist, Educator, Perinatal Advocate  
• [Edinburgh Postnatal Depression  
Scale for Birth Professionals](#)

SPEAKER 2

**Beth Brown**  
LICSW, PMH-C  
Stillwater Counseling  
• [Understanding and Treating  
Perinatal OCD: An Integrated  
Trauma-Informed Approach](#)  
• [Elevating Perinatal Mental  
Health: Empowered Healing  
through Ketamine-Assisted  
Psychotherapy](#)

SPEAKER 3

**Chris White**  
Fatherhood Initiative Coordinator  
Massachusetts Children's Trust  
• [Bringing Fathers into the  
Perinatal Health Discussion](#)

SPEAKER 4

**Blair Evanosky**  
Physical Therapist  
Founder of Pregnancy and Postpartum  
PT  
• [Reducing Postpartum  
Depression: Exploring  
exercise and urinary  
incontinence treatment](#)

SPEAKER 5

**Shaun Bries**  
Director of Ambulatory Services  
LHI  
• [EMDR for Pregnant and  
Postpartum Women](#)

# Announcements and Reminders

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- **Received official FY25 workplan and budget approval from DPH on 7/16**
- Final EOY reporting due Wednesday 7/31
- List of participating municipalities due to DPH 7/31
- Unspent funds due back to the state 8/16
- FY25 Payment Schedule
  - 3 installments
    - 1st: late July-early August (50% of total award)
    - 2nd: October-December (25% of total award)
    - 3rd: Spring 2025 (25% of total award)

# FY24 Report Out

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# FY24 Summary

**Total FY24 Grant Award: \$466,656.23**

**Total FY24 Spent: \$466,006.16**

**Total to return to DPH: \$650.07**



**99.86% of FY24 Total**

# FY24 Programmatic Spending

Line Item	Budgeted	Spent
Consultant	\$195,738.233	\$194,733.09
Staffing & Fringe	\$150,862.80	\$148,088.35
Health Communication	\$13,000.00	\$13,757.02
Inspection Supplies	\$2,500.00	\$3,863.25
Membership Fees	\$2,000.00	\$844.83
Nursing Supplies	\$3,000.00	\$3,671.29
Technology Hardware	\$4,000.00	\$4,343.75
Technology Software	\$19,117.50	\$19,500.49
Training/Credentialing	\$4,724.16	\$5,834.41
Occupancy	\$1,215.00	\$1,215.00



# FY25 Overview and Next Steps

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# NorthEast Public Health Alliance



**NEPHA**  
NORTH EAST PUBLIC  
HEALTH ALLIANCE

<b>Public Health Excellence Grant</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>Q1</b>
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Budget	Spent	Allocated
\$ 466,656.23	\$0	\$ 466,656.23

	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Next Steps	Due	Status
<b>PS1: Enhance Food Protection staffing capacity</b>	SOP	Develop inspector JD	Post job		Hire	Onboard		Mentorship and shadowing for 0.5 FTE inspector					Draft formal hiring SOP and process guide	8/1	On track
<b>PS2: Facilitate training opportunities to strengthen Housing inspection capacity</b>	Source court training	Source hoarding training						Update housing inspection forms					Ensure Food Protection inspection requirements are met	9/15	On track
								Design hoarding case management SOP					Integrate translation & interpretation services		
<b>PS3&amp;4: Improve Food Protection and Housing inspection processes</b>	Re-review audit	Review inspection forms						Work with vendors to update software					Revisit audit results and create shortlist of recommendations for software updates	8/31	Not started
								Share updated checklists and best practices					Integrate translated guidance for operators		
<b>S1: Develop communications plan</b>	Develop standardized protocols							Initiate and hold monthly regional staff collaborative meetings to track workplan progress and co-design deliverables					Begin monthly regional staff meetings and outlining desired communications protocols	10/31	On track
								Design feedback mechanisms					Develop regional staff support request form and tracking		
<b>E1: Explore MCH opportunities</b>								Quarterly Community of Practice meetings with OLRH					Attend first OLRH Community of Practice meeting	9/30	Not started
								Assess NEPHA birth data					Create resource guide		
								Engage NEPHA partners					Outreach plan with translation and interpretation		

# FY25 Workplan Objective Snapshot

## Performance Standard 1

**In progress:** Formal hiring SOP & process outline

**Up next:** Job description for 0.5 FTE Health Inspector

## Performance Standard 2

**In progress:** Source hoarding training

**Up next:** Source housing court training and resources

## Performance Standards 3&4

**Up next:** Re-review audit results

## Sustainability 1

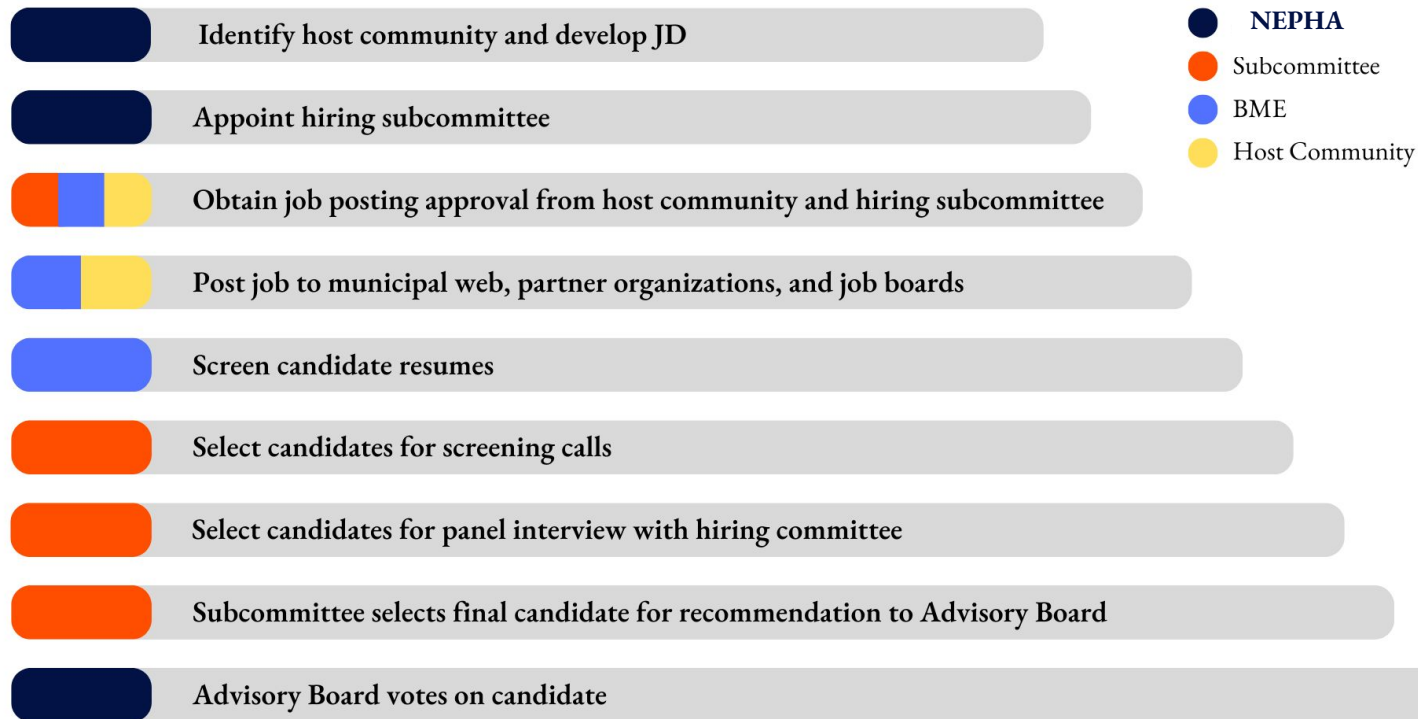
**In progress:** Initiate monthly regional staff meetings to track progress and collaborate on comms plan

**Up next:** Develop SOP

## Elective 1

**Up next:** Attend Communities of Practice meetings, collect & assess NEPHA birth data

# PS1: Hiring Process Outline



# PS2: Training Opportunities

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## Hoarding Training

Agency & Community Training by the Center for Hoarding and Cluttering  
Marnie Matthews, Hoarding Specialist, LICSW

### **Recommendation: Series I**

*Comprehensive training for agencies and communities wanting to establish a collaborative approach to compassionately and effectively address hoarding.*

- Hoarding (Part 1): Identifying, Assessing and Addressing - 6 contact hours
- Hoarding (Part 2): Collaborative Community Approaches to Hoarding - 6 contact hours  
*\*\*CEUs must be applied for/requested in advance\*\**
- Total cost: \$4,000 for 2 6-hour trainings (virtual) - 50 participant cap (ideal for bringing in other municipal partners!)

### **Available Dates (2024):**

Tuesday October 1st; Tuesday October 8th; Tuesday October 15th; Tuesday October 22; Tuesday October 29th

# PS2: Training Opportunities

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## Housing Court Training

Paul Halfmann, MPH, RS

*Comprehensive training for local boards of health to prepare for housing court and improve documentation methods.*

### Sample Topics

- How to prepare for housing court
- Documentation criteria
- Administrative search warrants
- Condemnations

**Format:** 2 hour session (in person or virtual)

**Cost:** Variable, charges per hour (est. \$750-\$1k)

**Available Dates:** TBD

# FY25 Software Elections

- Relevant Systems
  - *FY25 Planning template walkthrough*
- Adobe
  - Previous allocations:

	Adobe Acrobat Pro	Adobe InCopy	Adobe InDesign	Adobe Stock
<b>Community</b>				
Billerica	1	1	1	
Chelmsford	1	1	1	
Tyngsborough	2	1	1	
Tewksbury	1		1	
Regional			1	1
Total Licenses	5	3	5	1

# FY25 Next Steps

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## **At the August meeting:**

- Review and discuss audit results for process and/or inspectional software template updates where applicable
- Review draft of 0.5 FTE inspector job description
- Discuss SOP development for internal communications practices
- Recap other progress updates from regional staff



# Regional Staff Updates

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# Community Resource Guide Walkthrough

# Community Updates

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# Meeting Adjournment

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## **Next Meeting**

Currently scheduled for Thursday 8/8 11AM-1PM

Host TBD (if in person)

*Other options:*

Thursday, 8/22