

Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative

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

January 14, 2022 Monthly Meeting Minutes

Via Remote Zoom

9:00 AM

Members Present: Pat Levine (Chair/Sheffield); Rebecca Jurczyk (Great Barrington) Diane Romeo (Lenox); Ellie Lovejoy (Mount Washington); Scott McFarland (New Marlborough); Jim Wilusz (TTHD); Jayne Smith (Alford); Amy Hardt (PHN); Jill Sweet (PHN)

Other: Shari Israel Izikson, Mike Hugo joined at end of meeting

1. Administrative Items

- a. **Review and Approve December 10, 2021, Minutes (ACTION ITEM):** Diane Romeo moved to accept the 12/10/21 Minutes. Jim Wilusz seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

2. Updates

- a. **Intermunicipal Agreement-Next Steps** (Jim Wilusz): Monterey sent the IMA to KP Law which is the law firm involved in drafting of Collaborative's IMA. They had a few questions but generally it was fine. Jim did send out a revised IMA noting concerns that were raised. He also put the individual towns and selectboards on individual signature pages. The IMA will go before Town of Lee at its meeting on Feb 21st. Once Lee agrees to it, then Jim will formally send it to the member towns for approval. Towns should start thinking about having the individual town boards review now.
- b. **FDA Update:** Jayne contacted the FDA specialist; the grant panel is meeting on January 22nd to make a decision. They expressed general favorable awareness and excitement for the three applications we submitted which lay out individual goals for the towns.
- c. **List Serve Update-**Jayne Smith updated the group on the idea of having a shared folder that has resources organized by subject as a resource. She is looking at the main three platforms (Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox). Ellie Lovejoy uses Google Docs a lot but others have had a hard time using Google Docs. We may need to have more than one platform to make sure the information is accessible for everyone. Jim will contact his computer people to see if there are any other options.
- d. **Workplan Status-** Nothing to report. We are moving along with everything in the workplan and will provide updates as we complete items.

3. Community Collaboration

- a. **Report of from SBPHC and BPHA meeting:** Pat reported that it was a productive and informative meeting. Jim talked about how moving forward, this platform will be helpful to coordinate grants and projects.
- b. **Rural vaccine equity collaborative update:** Amy worked with Deb Phillips on the application submitted by Fairview and the Rural Health Network for the Vaccine Equity Collaborative grant for Southern Berkshire County. Fairview will be coordinating with recipients in Central and Northern Berkshire County.
- c. **SBRSD update:** Jim reported that public health representatives from towns that send kids to SBRSD have been meeting monthly to discuss COVID updates. It remains important to maintain the role of the SBPHC as one that is intended to build better public health nursing and to communicate with the schools to provide support and information, but we are not policy holders nor scapegoats for decisions that need to be made at the school district or town level. Mandates are a complicated issue, especially in regional schools where there are multiple towns involved and some don't even have a school physically in their town. Also, the BOH would be the enforcing authority and it is unclear how

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that would happen. We need to spend energy to continue to encourage vaccinations and continue to educate on vaccinations.

- d. **SB Opioid Working Group update:** Jayne reported that starting in February she will be facilitating meetings for the Southern Berkshire Opioid Task Force through a collaboration with Railroad Street Youth Project. The group is comprised of different community leaders who problem-solve gaps and needed services around the opioid crisis. Pat asked how the SBOWG intersects with the Harm Reduction request for Boards of Health. Jayne confirmed that it is one of the organizations in the group

Rebecca made the point that by having BOHs sign on to the Harm Reduction letter that the intention is to have a mobile van that can go from town to town and not necessarily to have a physical location. There have been varying responses in some of the communities and even though it is sometimes an uncomfortable initial reaction, it is important to realize that such a reaction is very normal and then it leaves space to push forward. Ellie had a question on whether the van can accept injector pens.

Jim says that it could be a goal to eventually have a more comprehensive sharps program in different towns and expand locations within our collaborative and see if by working together it is more feasible for us to provide these services, similar to the Southern Berkshire Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program, in the future.

4. Public Health Nursing Updates

- a. **Home Test Kits:** BRPC has decided not to purchase kits. It was a very confusing process and we are competing with our state governor. Pricing was uncertain and changing and there is not enough supply. Kits are very expensive and there is no coordinated plan on an equitable way to distribute them or information on when and why to use them. We want to get the people tested that really need to be tested.
- b. **Report out on results for Drive Through Testing:** Amy reported that for the first 9 clinics we tested 1080 people over 9 clinics (we have 4 to go) and have had 112 positive results. We have gotten great feedback for those who have attended. Thank you to towns who hosted, volunteers and the MA DPH who provided the large number of tests. MRC volunteers have been very helpful. Citizens donated their heaters to help deal with challenging winter temperatures. We do not expect to continue past January when hopefully cases will have peaked and the demand on PCR testing will be less.

5. Group Values

- a. **Logo review:** The group reviewed the different options and had discussion on the final versions of the logo. In the end it was decided to use the “people tree” with the words “public health collaborative” larger and reconfigured. Ellie made a motion for Pat, Rebecca, and Jim to work with the consultant to finalize logo based on feedback from the meeting. Diane seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commented [PL1]: Is this the task force group? The initials don't match the name.

Commented [PL2R1]:

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6. Member Discussion/ Updates

Equalized Valuation for Proposed Flu Program Funding: We are finalizing the flu program for this year and were caught off guard by the large expense of the initial purchase of private vaccine. We will get eventual reimbursement but there is a multiple month lag time. We are taking our best guess for what will be needed for clinics for schools, senior centers, etc. and we can take that information to grow our program.

By using the equalized valuation model to apportion costs among members, it takes into consideration property and land valuations to ensure equitability across the board. The method has worked really well for HHW day.

7. Next Meeting Date/Focus

- February 11, 2022: Pat asked that members who would like to add items to the agenda let her or Jim know.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:27am