

Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative Meeting Minutes



Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Time: 2-4PM

Location: In-Person, Oak Bluffs Town Hall Meeting Room & Hybrid via [Zoom](#)

Voting members present:

- Alexa Arieta, Health Agent (Oak Bluffs) - Present
- Marina Lent, Health Agent (Aquinnah) - Present
- Jerico Mele, Human Services Director (Nantucket) - Not present
- Anna McCaffrey, Health Agent (Chilmark) - Present
- Sarah Toste, Assistant Health Agent (West Tisbury) - Present
- Brice Boutot, Health Agent (Edgartown) - Present
- Drew Belsky, Health Agent (Tisbury) - Present
- Sarah Smith, Treasurer (Gosnold) - Present

Non-voting members present:

In-Person Attendees:

Dion Alley, Select Board, Oak Bluffs

Cynthia Baker, BME Strategies

Kristin Black, Director of Shared Services, OLRH

John Cahill, Select Board, Tisbury

Christopher Edwards, Board of Health, Edgartown

Gerry Greene, Board of Health, Aquinnah

Lea Hamner, Contract Epidemiologist, Barnstable County

Fred Hehre, Assistant Health Agent, Tisbury

Mike Hugo, Director of Policy & Government Affairs, MAHB

Joseph LaCivita, Town Manager, Tisbury

Alex Lam, Health Agent, West Tisbury

Fernando Lana, Assistant Health Agent, Edgartown

Matt Poole, Select Board, Chilmark

Deborah Potter, Town Manager, Oak Bluffs

Patrick Roden-Reynolds, Tick Biologist, IIPHEC

Martin Thornton, Manager, Dukes County

Betsy Van Landingham, Public Health Nurse/Infectious Disease Investigator, Dukes County

Carrie Welch, Shared Inspector, IIPHEC

Lorna Welch, Assistant Health Agent, Oak Bluffs

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William White, Board of Health, Oak Bluffs
Caitlyn Winders, BME Strategies
Sam Wong, Director, OLRH
Tom Zinno, Board of Health, Oak Bluffs

Virtual Attendees:

James Butterick, Board of Health, Oak Bluffs
Rich Mucci, Legal Consultant, MAHB

Anna McCaffrey called the meeting to order. Alexa Arieta seconded.

7/8 voting communities present, quorum met.

Attendance Roll Call

Aquinnah: Y
Chilmark: Y
Edgartown: Y
Gosnold: Y
Oak Bluffs: Y
Nantucket: Not present
Tisbury: Y
West Tisbury: Y

The meeting was called to order at 2:07PM.

Administrative

Approval of Minutes from May 2025 & October 8, 2025

Alexa Arieta motioned to approve the minutes. Drew Belsky seconded.
All board members voted in favor. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Review of Current Advisory Board Meeting & YTD Expenditure Report Review SOP

Anna McCaffrey motioned to approve the SOP. Brice Boutot seconded.
All board members voted in favor. The motion to approve the SOP passed.

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The SSC will circulate the finalized language with the minutes, and will also share a link to the document's location in the shared drive.

IMA Discussion

Q&A Session with Municipal Leadership, BME, & MAHB

The SSC and MAHB provided municipal stakeholders with an overview of the Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) required for participation in the Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative (IIPHEC), which is funded through the Massachusetts Office of Local and Regional Health's Public Health Excellence (PHE) program. The SSC reviewed the purpose of the IMA, explained its necessity under PHE grant requirements, and described key updates to the draft agreement approved by the advisory board, including provisions for staff supervision and a tiebreaking vote for Dukes County. Attendees were reminded that all participating municipalities must execute the IMA—signed by both Boards of Health and Select Boards—by December 31, 2025, to ensure compliance and maintain access to state funding. The session also highlighted the collaborative's successes, including regional staffing, shared public health service delivery, and workforce development, before opening the floor for questions and discussion supported by representatives from MAHB and OLRH.

The highlights from the Q&A and discussion that followed are below:

During the discussion that followed the IMA overview, municipal stakeholders and public health representatives focused on financial obligations, sustainability, and local control. Gerry Green confirmed that towns would not incur additional financial obligations beyond current commitments, while Matt Poole and Tom Zeeland raised questions about future funding and county involvement. Mike Hugo and Rich Mucci explained that towns could continue shared services locally if grant funding ended, with no obligation for additional spending. Sarah Toste and Alexa Arieta emphasized that shared staffing and training, such as the island-wide public health nurse and inspector roles, make services more sustainable and cost-effective across towns.

John Cahill asked whether towns could manage services independently; Rich Mucci clarified that the IMA is the only legal mechanism enabling collaboration and equal municipal voting authority. Kristin Black of OLRH discussed the state's requirement for IMAs across all PHE collaboratives, with a December 31, 2025, deadline tied to continued funding and designed to ensure fairness and transparency. Additional questions and discussion from Marina Lent and Matt Poole explored insurance and mutual aid; Rich Mucci confirmed shared employees are covered under Dukes County policies, though mutual aid agreements could be added for clarity. The discussion closed with consensus that regional coordination strengthens capacity and equity in meeting statewide public health requirements while maintaining local autonomy.

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Public Health Nursing Discussion

Current VNA Model for Clinical Services

The SSC began the public health nursing portion of the meeting by indicating that they would like to provide space in this meeting to continue the ongoing discussion of public health nursing capacity on the island, as the participating communities in this collaborative are currently undergoing a transition of public health nursing services while simultaneously discussing formalization of the intermunicipal agreement.

Next, the SSC provided an overview of the current public health nursing capacity, which includes case investigation and communicable disease surveillance capacity, both of which are funded by Contact Tracing/Case Investigation (CT/CI) funds.

The group discussed the urgent need to sustain nursing capacity on Martha's Vineyard once existing DPH grant funding sunsets. Marina Lent described how pandemic-era grants that supported Betsy Vanlandingham and Lea Hamner significantly strengthened local disease response, contact tracing, and tick-borne disease epidemiologic functions, and emphasized the importance of preserving both traditional home health services and these newer public health capacities. Lea stressed the need to retain on-island clinical expertise, noting that case investigation cannot fall to health agents who are not trained clinicians. Alexa Arieta and Sarah Toste agreed, highlighting that the work being done behind the scenes by Betsy is essential and that health agents cannot absorb these duties. Sarah T further outlined the broad range of PHN responsibilities—including case management in MAVEN, vaccine and dental clinics, well-baby visits, and outreach to uninsured and unhoused residents—and noted that the differing municipal budgets make it challenging to fund these services equitably. Mike Hugo questioned the pending decision to contract with the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), to which Sarah T responded that prior agencies had failed to recruit staff and that the island's housing shortage made retention of essential workers difficult. Drew Belsky and Matt Poole discussed the possibility of a shared, islandwide contract for nursing services under the Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA), suggesting this could provide a more sustainable and efficient structure. Sam Wong reminded the group that CT/CI funds were temporary federal COVID-19 response dollars not intended to cover core PHN services. Participants agreed on the need to find a long-term solution—potentially through increased municipal contributions and shared contracts—to retain Betsy and Lea and preserve the hard-won public health infrastructure and expertise developed during the pandemic.

Adjournment

Alexa Arieta motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sarah Toste seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58PM.

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Documents Referenced During Meeting

- 10/22/25 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Presentation Deck
- 10/8/25 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
- IIPHEC YTD FY Expenditure Review SOP Draft
- IIPHEC IMA Draft
- IIPHEC IMA FAQ Draft
- IIPHEC PHE Successes Draft