

Inter-Island Public Health Collaborative



Regular Meeting

Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative Advisory Board

MINUTES

Friday, 21 February 2025

09:15 PM

REMOTE

OPEN SESSION:

Present: Drew Belsky, Health Agent, Town of Tisbury (Chair); Marina Lent, Health Agent, Town of Aquinnah; Anna McCaffrey, Health Agent, Town of Chilmark; Brice Boutot, Health Agent, Town of Edgartown; Jericho Mele, Town of Nantucket; Alexa Arieta, Health Agent, Town of Oak Bluffs; Alex Lam, Health Agent, Town of West Tisbury; Sarah Toste, Assistant Health Agent, Town of West Tisbury;

Call to Order 09:20

Shared Service Coordination (SSC), Third Position, and Future Direction for IIPHEC:

Drew opened the meeting. Mike's announcement of changes in his SSC role requires the group to address our responsibility to manage the grant, including SSC requirements. He noted that this board had neither been involved in Lenore's hiring process, nor in her onboarding or orientation to the 10 hour per week share of her position devoted to IIPHEC coordination, since it was essentially envisioned to cover SSC functions hitherto fulfilled by County Manager Martina Thornton, and to provide additional capacity to SSC Mike Hugo following an increase in time-consuming State requirements.

Sarah Toste summarized her view that this group must address what is clearly not working and additionally take a stronger role in determining how this group is run, including ensuring that meetings do not take significantly longer than one hour. She encouraged members of the group to delegate tasks or functions as needed, and suggested rewriting the [FY25 workplan](#) to reflect buy-in of the group and realistic goals as required by the state. She stated that we need to have Mike's announcement in writing, and that he should bill the grant for his time, and provide a detailed description of the SSC duties. Alexa noted that the transition to Lenore's role in SSC was supposed to be handled by Mike and Martina, but that it had clearly not worked well that way. She supported the call for a detailed description of the SSC requirements. Drew noted that he would hesitate to shift more SSC responsibilities to Lenore, as some of the requests made of her by the group had been unnecessarily difficult in execution, while others (website) were being done by other employees. Alexa acknowledged comments made by members that a

fully dedicated position, addressing all SSC responsibilities, might work better than blended roles and divided responsibilities, especially when these were not clearly separated and not specifically assigned between the people sharing the position. There was consensus in the group that the current SSC configuration was not working and should not be pursued.

Jericho felt that a central coordinator, who could field all inquiries and inputs and act as the spider in the web with comprehensive oversight over all aspects of the IIPHEC, could be more efficient and effective, and would simplify member towns' interaction with the IIPHEC grant. He then asked whether we have the option of hiring someone separately, and what were the implications for the structure of the grant.

This led to discussion of the **Third Position**, which has been open and undefined since Fernando left the IIPHEC to join the Edgartown Health Department soon after the beginning of FY25.

Complicating the consideration of a third position under the grant is the question of whether the MV towns might want to pool their public nursing contract funding to create a public nursing program under County auspices. Sarah Toste and Anna McCaffrey have been making inquiries, and have raised the question whether this program could be supplemented (not supplanting the existing municipal contract funding) to make a full-time public health nursing position which could potentially take on IIPHEC-related functions such as public education. While Drew pointed out that the group did not want to make an investment that would not benefit Nantucket, who already has a functioning public nursing program, Jericho Mele noted that this should not be an insuperable barrier, and that Nantucket was supplementing their public health nurse through VNA-CC, which might also be a consideration for MV. In any case, the cost of a nursing program through the County is quite high, and Sarah Toste suggested that reworking the existing contract with IHC was also an option that the MV towns may need to consider.

Considerations for the Third Position included options to focus on the Epidemiologist skill set, or bringing in a Public Health Educator/Communicator, who would ensure ongoing public profile for PHE and the municipal departments including by being involved in some of the main community and non-profit groups meeting regularly on the island. While these are not mutually exclusive, they represent different emphasis.

Drew mentioned the possibility that the grant could offer a short-term contract to a MPH-Epidemiology intern that Lea has been working with to bridge the remaining months of FY25, focusing on the upcoming challenge of HPAI, and addressing features of Performance Standard 2 in the IIPHEC FY25 workplan. He also reminded the group that Betsy's work in fulfilling the MAVEN-based Case Investigation and Contact Tracing will sunset at the end of FY26, and that this will leave a significant area of responsibility to be filled, which is also something to take into consideration in crafting the Third Position.

The Board also briefly discussed how to address Board officer positions, whether and how often they should rotate. In general, members felt that continuity was important, especially at a time

when the IIPHEC is undergoing changes. Rotating with the Fiscal Year would make the most sense, to start new officers with a new budget and a new work plan. Drew will provide members with a description of the duties of the Chair.

Next steps:

- Drew will get the SSC job description from Martina;
- Brice will ask Mike to provide his announcement re: SSC in writing, and provide a timeline as to when it goes into force;
- Anna suggested it would be valuable to have a self-evaluation of SSC position from both Mike and Lenore, and will get the County's self-evaluation form from Martina to be provided to them at the upcoming IIPHEC meeting on 2/26.

Next Meeting: February 26th, 2pm

Adjournment 10:22, Unanimous.