

Inter-Island Public Health Collaborative



Special Meeting Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative Advisory Board

MINUTES

Wednesday, 5 March 2025

14:00

REMOTE

OPEN SESSION:

Present: Drew Belsky, Town of Tisbury (Chair); Marina Lent Town of Aquinnah; Anna McCaffrey, Town of Chilmark; Brice Boutot, Town of Edgartown; Jericho Mele, Town of Nantucket; Alex Lam, Town of West Tisbury; Sarah Toste, Town of West Tisbury; Mike Hugo, SSC.

Call to Order 14:07

All-Island Board of Health Meeting, March 18th, 3pm: The meeting will be held in the Selectboard meeting room of the Oak Bluffs Town Hall. It will have a remote option, with in-person participation strongly encouraged. The main topic of the meeting will be to showcase what we have accomplished through the Public Health Excellence grant, and to familiarize Board of Health members with the grant and with State efforts to upgrade public health throughout the Commonwealth, with equal quality of service in all locations.

Patrick will speak to work around tick borne illness prevention, Fernando will summarize the broad scope of the Public Health Educator position, and Drew, Brice and Carrie can speak to the value of providing much-needed extra inspectional capacity which can be flexibly deployed where it is most needed, while assisting efforts of health departments in island-wide standardization of licensing and inspection practices and processes.

The group also discussed other possible topics. Agents felt it was premature to speak to considerations about changes to the public nursing program, but felt it was important for Board members to understand the work that Betsy VanLandingham is doing in coordinating case investigation of communicable diseases, and asked Marina Lent to provide a brief description of work undertaken under the contact tracing grant from the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Lab Sciences (BIDLS), which will sunset at the close of FY26. The great improvement in disease investigation and reporting will need to be maintained beyond the grant and is a concern for the medium term. Another topic of interest to members which was specifically brought to the IIPHC's attention by the Oak Bluffs Board of Health is the question of enforcement of the plastic bottle ban, adopted by MV towns as town bylaws. Another public health topic of interest is the

Opioid Settlement Fund, which is under consideration to be pooled for island-wide, rather than town-by-town efforts, since substance and alcohol use disorder are more effectively addressed through an island-wide approach, rather than duplicating efforts in each town. Brice and Alexa report some resistance to the concept of a collaborative approach, which appears to be rooted in objections having little to do with the dire need to address the damage caused by substance and alcohol use disorder. Cheryl Sbarra, Director of MAHB, can address the importance of the opioid settlement.

Mike Hugo and Sheryl Sbarra will also bring BOH members up to date on the recent adoption of SAPHE 2.0, and outline Mass State plans around big changes in local public health, including the incorporation of the Federal Public Health Standards, which is currently the subject of a detailed survey being completed by all Health Departments.

Mike Hugo also encouraged agents to urge members to attend the upcoming MAHB certification sessions, which go into greater depths on legal authority and responsibility of Health Boards in the Commonwealth. The grant will support board member participation, including ferry and hotel if needed. Certification sessions will be held in Plymouth on April 5th, Marlborough on May 10th, and Northampton on April 26th.

Next Steps:

- Sarah Toste will collect the topics to be covered in an organized outline with time limits and Q&A that will form the basis of a detailed agenda that we can bring to our Board members to encourage their in-person participation at the meeting.
- Presenters at the meeting will collaborate with the group to prepare their topic for presentation to BOH members.

Adjournment, 15:09 Unanimous.