

Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative Meeting Minutes



Date: Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Time: 2-4PM

Location: Virtual

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82562814239?jst=2>

Meeting ID: 825 6281 4239

Voting members present:

- Alexa Arieta, Health Agent (Oak Bluffs) - Y
- Marina Lent, Health Agent (Aquinnah) - Y
- Jerico Mele, Human Services Director (Nantucket) -
- Anna McCaffrey, Health Agent (Chilmark) - N
- Sarah Toste, Assistant Health Agent (West Tisbury) - Y
- Brice Boutot, Health Agent (Edgartown) - Y
- Drew Belsky, Health Agent (Tisbury) - Y
- Stewart Young, Finance Committee Chairman (Gosnold) - N

Non-voting members present:

Akeyah Lucas, Administrative Assistant, Chilmark

Lea Hamner, Contract Epidemiologist, Barnstable County

Fernando Lana, Assistant Health Agent, Edgartown

Juliet Mulinare, Treasurer, Dukes County

Martina Thornton, County Manager, Dukes County

Stephanie Barth, Communicable Disease Investigator & Health Educator,
VNA

Alexa Arieta called the meeting to order. Marina Lent seconded.

6/8 voting communities present, quorum met.

Attendance Roll Call

Aquinnah: Y

Chilmark: Y

Edgartown: Y

Gosnold: Not present

Oak Bluffs: Y

Nantucket: Not present

Tisbury: Y
West Tisbury: Y

The meeting was called to order at 2:08PM.

Administrative

Approval of 12/22/25 Minutes

Marina motioned to approve the minutes. Alexa seconded.

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

Communications Round-Up

The SSC shared that the translated tickborne illness and disease prevention and education videos that were made in collaboration with Communication Action Partnership (CAP) of Martha's Vineyard are now on the MV Tick Program Youtube Channel and embedded in the IIPHEC website's tick borne illness page. They also shared that a respiratory illness page on the website has been developed and that all dashboards mentioned by Lea Hamner are embedded in the page, along with a variety of resources for the public and for healthcare professionals.

Lea highlighted her upcoming tick talks that will be hosted at the MV Museum and requested that they be shared on the IIPHEC website. She has requested that the transcriptions for these videos also be translated into Brazilian Portuguese by CAP and shared on the IIPHEC website when they become available.

Brice Boutot requested that a handful of avian influenza resources be added to the IIPHEC website, which the SSC confirmed they will add this week.

IMA Status

The SSC shared with the group that all participating towns except for Nantucket have signed the IMA and confirmed that the IMA is on Nantucket's Select Board agenda and will be up for a final confirmation vote on January 21. The SSC will inform the group when they receive the final signature and share the complete document with OLRH.

Vote on PFAS Application

Jerico Mele motioned to approve the application. Sarah Toste seconded.

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

Alexa motioned to move the CT/CI agenda item to be reviewed prior to the PHN/VNA Discussion item.
Marina seconded.

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

PHN/VNA Discussion

Shared Expenses & Community Announcement

Health agents discussed the need for clearer understanding and documentation of how shared public health nursing expenses are calculated and billed across Martha's Vineyard towns. Board members emphasized aligning expectations, confirming the longevity of the current approach, and explicitly defining which services count as shared, particularly support groups and wellness clinics, to avoid past confusion. Updates were provided on the

first all-island invoice, plans for monthly billing using an agreed-upon formula, and steps to improve transparency, including attaching detailed invoices, using consistent account numbers, and maintaining a “living document” that towns can reference year over year. There was general agreement that clarifying shared services in writing and finalizing a short, agreed-upon list would streamline administration.

The group also discussed coordinated communication to the broader community about public health nursing services and referral pathways. Sarah supported proactively notifying the hospital, councils on aging, health and human service partners, and public safety departments to ensure awareness of available services and how to refer residents. Ideas included working with the hospital’s communications director to disseminate information island-wide and collaborating with the Visiting Nurse Association to finalize referral methods. Fire and police departments were highlighted as important partners due to their direct insight into residents who may need additional support.

CT/CI FY26 Grant Budget Modification

Switch to Marina’s Slides

Health agents discussed a needed budget modification for the Contact Tracing and Case Investigation (CT/CI) grant, which ends in June, noting that unspent funds remain due to staffing changes and unused hours from a contracted position. The scope of work for FY25 and FY26 is already defined, and the group agreed that submitting a midyear report and budget modification by the January 28 deadline was necessary to avoid delays. Several participants characterized the modification as straightforward and largely administrative, formalizing how remaining funds will be used, while also emphasizing the importance of clear communication so it is not confused with longer-term planning for FY27.

The discussion also highlighted Lea’s ongoing and expanding collaboration with the hospital, particularly around tick-borne illness and alpha-gal syndrome, which has become a growing priority in the hospital’s Community Health Assessment process. Lea described active involvement in hospital advisory and working groups, development of protocols, and coordination with experts, underscoring the value of these partnerships as the Island confronts emerging public health challenges. Some health agents expressed a desire for the scope of work to more explicitly reflect this hospital-based collaboration and the time invested, while others noted that the existing language intentionally allows flexibility. The group ultimately favored moving forward without reopening contracts, focusing on maximizing impact during the remaining five months of the grant, and treating any formal vote as a procedural step rather than a substantive barrier.

Drew Belsky motioned to approve the budget modification and support specific mention of the hospital working group in the semi-annual report. Alexa seconded.

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

Nantucket Yard Survey Proposal

The group discussed a proposal from Nantucket's Health and Human Services Department to fund a \$3,000 yard survey initiative aimed at early outreach and education in anticipation of increased Lone Star tick activity and rising Alpha-gal cases. The project would support 100 hours of work at \$30 per hour, resulting in approximately 50 yard surveys along with reporting, communication, and community education, and was viewed as well-timed given expectations for a significant tick season and the FY spend-down timeline. Jerico noted the strong qualifications and motivation of the individual identified to conduct the work, existing connections to regional tick experts, and the potential for collaboration with a new Nantucket nonprofit, framing the effort as a logical step toward an ongoing program. Support was expressed for using available funds in this way, both to advance prevention and education and to reinforce that tick-related health risks affect both islands, not just one. Lea reemphasized her offer to assist Nantucket with logistical support for tickborne disease and illness prevention education work on the island.

Sarah motioned to approve \$3000. Alexa seconded.

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

Deer Legislation Support Letter

The group discussed efforts to build coordinated support for pending state legislation aimed at limiting the deer population, with a focus on practical strategies for submitting formal comments and letters before the close of

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the public comment period. Discussion centered on whether to submit a single consolidated letter or multiple letters on official letterhead, with consensus leaning toward separate letters from each town—signed by boards of health and health agents—and an additional county-level letter to maximize impact and support future legislative efforts. Participants agreed to prioritize less controversial provisions, such as setback limits and universal crossbow access, rather than more divisive issues like Sunday hunting, while emphasizing the group’s unique public health perspective in the messaging. Next steps include finalizing the draft letter, coordinating signatures and distribution, participating in upcoming public listening sessions, and engaging town officials to reinforce support ahead of the February deadlines.

Budget Modification - SSC & Additional Public Health Staff

The group discussed potential uses for approximately \$13,333 in funds made available through a budget modification, with proposed investments including a Nantucket yard survey initiative, additional support for Nantucket public health nursing (PHN), and an IIPHEC strategic alignment retreat. Significant attention focused on a request from Nantucket’s Health and Human Services Department to cover the \$10,000 PHN contract with the Visiting Nurse Association for the current fiscal year, the final year the contract will be held directly by the department before transitioning to town grant funding. Jerico emphasized the VNA’s critical role as a frontline provider of maternal and child health services, prenatal and postnatal care, home-based case management, vaccinations, and outreach in a setting with limited pediatric and clinical capacity, noting that no other entity is positioned to fill this gap. The discussion also acknowledged how PHE funds have historically supported this work, the importance of sustaining essential services during the transition year, and the potential value of investing remaining funds in organizational cohesion through a facilitated retreat to strengthen collaboration and strategic clarity.

Jerico will work closely with the Nantucket HHS to get a more accurate figure on the proposed MCH work and bring it back to the group for further discussion before a formal vote.

Adjournment

Brice motioned to adjourn the meeting. Jerico seconded.

Aquinnah: Y
Chilmark: Y
Edgartown: Y
Gosnold:
Oak Bluffs: Y
Nantucket: Y

Tisbury: Y

West Tisbury: Y

Documents Referenced:

- 1.14.26 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Deck
- 1.14.26 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Agenda_FINAL
- 12.22.25 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
- Edey Foundation 2026 PFAS Application
- CT/CI Grant FY26 Budget Modification
- Nantucket Yard Survey Proposal
- Deer Legislation Support Letter_DRAFT