

Inter-Island Public Health Excellence Collaborative Meeting Minutes



Date: Thursday, December 11th, 2025

Time: 2PM-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) - Y
- Anna McCaffrey, Health Agent (Chilmark) - Y
- 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:

- Cynthia Baker, BME Strategies
- Patrick Roden-Reynolds, Tick Biologist, IIPHEC
- Marinta Thornton, Manager, Dukes County
- Betsy Van Landingham, Public Health Nurse/Infectious Disease Investigator, Dukes County
- Carrie Welch, Regional Health Inspector, IIPHEC
- Caitlyn Winders, BME Strategies

Drew Belsky called the meeting to order. Brice Boutot seconded.

7/8 voting communities present, quorum met.

Attendance Roll Call

Aquinnah: Y

Chilmark: Y

Edgartown: Y

Gosnold: N

Oak Bluffs: Y

Nantucket: Y

Tisbury: Y
West Tisbury: Y

The meeting was called to order at 2:06PM.

Administrative

Approval of 11/20/25 Minutes

Anna McCaffrey motioned to approve the minutes. Alexa Arieta seconded.

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

The SSC will circulate minutes from this meeting to the Advisory Board by the end of Monday, December 15th at the latest.

Communications Round-Up

Patrick Roden-Reynolds shared updates on recent conferences, public presentations, and ongoing seasonal work. He reported on his attendance at the MHOA and mosquito control conferences, multiple local outreach presentations, and management of the deer cooler, which is on track to surpass last year's donation record and will remain open through January. He also noted an upcoming museum talk on the history of ticks and updates from Fish and Wildlife regarding proposed hunting season extensions. Discussion followed about engaging tribal leadership and epidemiology resources, with several members expressing interest in exploring collaborative opportunities related to tick surveillance with the tribe in Aquinnah.

Carrie Welch shared that she has completed Tier 1 Housing training and is on track to complete Tier 1 Food training shortly, with ongoing operational inspections and planning for coverage during staff vacation periods. Carrie remains available to assist other towns as new restaurants prepare to open.

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Additional updates included praise for Edgartown Assistant Health Agent Fernando Lana's leadership in managing a complex lead investigation involving a non-English-speaking household, as well as efforts to secure a donated vaccine refrigerator. Patrick also shared that Portuguese translations of tick education videos are now available through the Vineyard Haven Public Library website, enhancing accessibility. Anna closed by noting that Nantucket would be holding a public PFAS presentation later that evening.

IMA Status Update & Discussion

Advisory Board members provided updates on the status of their Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) reviews, with most municipalities still awaiting legal feedback or confirmation from their respective town counsel. Several towns have placed—or are working to place—the provisional vote on upcoming Select Board agendas, though some expressed uncertainty about the specific language to use or the support needed at those meetings. Updates varied: some communities reported progress, such as West Tisbury's Select Board approval and others scheduling December meetings, while a few noted delays, difficulty reaching staff, or concerns about legal timelines. Questions were also raised about proxy voting within the Commonwealth's IMAs and the feasibility of including such language. Additional discussion touched on financial considerations, including administrative fee allocations and the county's plan for full reimbursement next year.

FY26 Workplan Review

The SSC provided the Advisory Board with an overview of all workplan objectives, including those under Grant Administration, Governance, FPHS Review, SAPHE 2.0 Reporting, Metrik, Sustainability, Performance Standards, and Electives.

The group further discussed the Diversification of Funding: Grants objective, which included detailing plans for Patrick to attend the Rural Health Grant Writing Institute in the spring. Anna also expressed an interest in attending the institute, which was met with support by the group.

The group also discussed the Performance Standards objectives, highlighting the ongoing meetings on MAVEN protocol standardization and the development of a regional support plan to address tickborne disease case investigation and follow-up.

Lastly, the SSC shared that a Staff Credentialing Survey will be sent to all Advisory Board representatives and shared staff members, with the goal of collecting data on trainings taken and certifications held by all municipal public health staff.

Hiring, Supervision, Performance Management, & Reporting Draft SOP Review



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The group discussed the draft standard operating procedure for hiring and supervision, noting that its final form will likely need adjustment once a new hire is brought on and real-world needs become clearer. Several members emphasized ensuring full board participation in interviews, while others raised concerns about who should lead hiring, expressing a preference for keeping the Shared Services Coordinator (SSC) role under BME as the contracted third-party rather than hiring a new municipal-level employee under the county. Questions also emerged about whether town HR staff should be involved and whether it makes sense to hire a new employee given the uncertainty of future grant funding, the steep learning curve, and the substantial workload already being carried effectively by existing staff.

Many participants favored maintaining the current arrangement with BME, citing cost considerations and added value provided by the contractor. They noted that bringing a new employee onboard could be more expensive and less efficient, particularly if funding structures or fiscal agents change. Martina Thornton added that while hiring procedures should exist regardless of the model used, the administrative section should include a clear statement indicating that the outlined process applies to municipal hires, fiscal-agent hires, or contractor arrangements.

The group decided to approve the draft once the addition of language which indicates that any roles that are included in the SOP can also be filled with contractors, in addition to municipal-level hires, is completed.

Marina Lent motioned to approve the SOP. Jerico Mele seconded.

Aquinnah: Y

Chilmark: Y

Edgartown: Y

Gosnold: Not present

Oak Bluffs: Y

Nantucket: Y

Tisbury: Y

West Tisbury: Y

Nantucket Yard Survey Proposal

Jerico presented a proposal to support expanded tick yard surveys on Nantucket by providing funding to a volunteer who has been conducting work that is similar to the work that Patrick, IIPHEC's Shared Tick Biologist, currently performs on Martha's Vineyard. The goal is to ensure her continued involvement while exploring a transition to a freestanding 501(c) organization that could eventually take over support for this work. The proposal emphasizes that while the research value of yard surveys may be higher on Martha's

Vineyard, the primary benefit on Nantucket would be strengthened direct outreach, which is particularly important given shifting lone star tick patterns and an anticipated rise in alpha-gal cases. This short-term funding request of roughly \$5,000 is framed as a stopgap measure to replicate Martha's Vineyard's effective community engagement model and begin closing outreach gaps on Nantucket.

During the brief Q&A, Drew asked whether the work would continue if the 501(c) structure does not materialize, and Jerico responded that continuation would depend on the volunteer's availability beyond next fall, making long-term commitment uncertain. Marina expressed strong support for the concept, noting it as clear proof of the value of current grant activities and emphasizing that Patrick and epidemiologist Lea Hamner stand to benefit scientifically.

Jerico will provide an updated version of the proposal, inclusive of exact funding amounts, to the SSC and the proposal will be reviewed and voted upon at the next Advisory Board meeting.

Adjournment

Brice motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sarah Toste seconded.

Aquinnah: Y

Chilmark: Y

Edgartown: Y

Gosnold: Not present

Oak Bluffs: Not present

Nantucket: Y

Tisbury: Y

West Tisbury: Y

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12.

Documents Referenced:

- 12.11.25 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Agenda
- 12.11.25 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Deck
- 11.20.25 IIPHEC Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
- IIPHEC IMA Final First Draft
- Tickborne Disease Case Investigation & Follow-Up Regional Support Plan Draft
- IIPHEC Credentialing Survey

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- Draft IIPHEC Hiring, Supervision, Reporting, & Performance Management SOP
- Nantucket Yard Survey Proposal