



**MINUTES OF HAMPDEN COUNTY HEALTH COALITION
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017**

LOCATION: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
60 Congress Street
Springfield, MA 01104

CALLED TO ORDER AT: 10:01 a.m.
MEETING ADJOURNED AT: 11:02 a.m.

ATTENDEES:

Stephanie Bozigian-Merrick	Public Health Emergency Preparedness Planner, PVPC
Soloe Dennis	Deputy Commissioner, Springfield Health & Human Services
Thomas FitzGerald	Health Director, Southwick
Jeanne Galloway	Co-Chair; Health Director, West Springfield
Tom Hibert	Westfield & Montgomery
Lorri McCool	Health Agent for Wilbraham, Monson & Hampden
Michael Nelson	Regional Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, MDPH
Deborah Schaier	Public Health Nurse, Holyoke
Tammy Spencer	Co-Chair; Sanitarian, Health Department, Chicopee

GUESTS:

Kathleen Auer	Health Agent, Agawam
Angela Kramer	Public Health Nurse, Ludlow Board of Health

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED AT THIS MEETING:

- Agenda
- Minutes of Hampden County Health Coalition, Thursday, September 7, 2017
- Hampden County Health Coalition FY 17 Financial Statement for the Month of September 2017
- Hampden County Health Coalition FY 18 Financial Statement for the Month of September 2017

1. Meeting Called to Order

Jeanne Galloway called the October 5, 2017 meeting of the Hampden County Health Coalition (HCHC) to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. Welcome & Introductions

Ms. Galloway welcomed HCHC members and guests and she asked everyone to introduce themselves.

3. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Galloway asked if there were any comments regarding the September 7, 2017 HCHC meeting minutes. There being no comments or questions, Ms. Galloway then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2017 HCHC meeting. LORRI MCCOOL MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 7, 2017 MINUTES; THOMAS FITZGERALD SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE HCHC MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED THE MOTION, WITH ONE HCHC MEMBER ABSTAINING FROM THE VOTE.

4. Financial Report

Ms. Galloway noted that two HCHC financial reports had been distributed for review and approval by Coalition members, namely, the FY 17 Financial Statement for the Month of September 2017 and the FY 18 Financial Statement for the Month of September 2017. Given that Erica Johnson was unable to attend today's HCHC meeting, Ms. Galloway felt that the Coalition could not move forward with this agenda item at this time. After conferring with Ms. Spencer, Ms. Galloway stated that the Coalition will postpone voting on the financial reports until the next HCHC meeting when Ms. Johnson is available to provide additional information about the reports. Ms. Galloway then moved to take up the next agenda item.

5. Business At Hand

a) Florida Deployment Experience

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick and Holyoke Public Health Nurse Deb Schaier provided a brief report on their recent deployment to the Florida Keys. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick explained that they were deployed after Hurricane Irma to conduct disaster response nursing care with the American Red Cross. She stated that they flew to Orlando where they were evaluated in terms of their fitness, experience and what they had to offer, and from there they were sent to the Florida Keys. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick noted that it is easy to forget how much a weather event can impact your community even with several days' notice to prepare. She noted that there were mounds of debris on the sides of the road throughout the Keys that contained a range of materials including chemicals, medical waste, dead animals and decaying vegetation which created a terrible odor and endangered the health of the residents and the volunteer responders. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that what they feared most in the shelter was respiratory disease and GI disease and she noted that as they were leaving, there appeared to be an outbreak of flu in the shelter where they had been working. Mr. FitzGerald asked about the cooperation between the various groups who were assisting in the disaster response. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that in addition to the services provided by the Red Cross, the Emergency Mutual Aid Compact (EMAC) sent teams of people from other states, including nurses, paramedics and emergency medical technicians who were providing health care services but she felt that there was a lack of good coordination. Ms. Schaier stated that they did what they could to help in the community although it took a few days to figure out what they would be doing. She noted that it was a challenging experience but she would do it again.

b) Local West Nile Case

Ms. Galloway reported that there was a human case of West Nile Virus in the City of Springfield and she expressed concern that Springfield did not share this information with the surrounding towns that might have been impacted, especially when efforts are being made to form a Mosquito Control District in the region. Mr. Dennis responded that he believed it was a very minor incident that Springfield worked out and it did not appear to be a case that they needed to share. He suggested that this is something that HCHC members could discuss as a Coalition. A brief conversation followed and Ms. Galloway then moved to take up agenda item 5 (c).

c) Update on EDS Events

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick reported that four HCHC communities have completed their Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) events. She added that seven communities are scheduled to conduct their EDS exercises in the near future and there are only two communities that are not yet scheduled. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick noted that the 4 EDS drill components are (1) facility set up; (2) site activation; (3) staff notification and assembly; and (4) utilization of Incident Command System (ICS). She pointed out that the deadline for this deliverable is March 31, 2018 and she stated that she is pleased that this project is being taken care of by HCHC in a timely manner.

d) Deliverables Update

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick reported that our first quarter is concluded and she thanked everyone for updating the ICS certificate and the 24/7 contact list. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick noted that there was a Health & Homeland Alert Network (HHAN) drill on September 6th and she believed that 80% of Hampden County communities responded, adding that Hampden County is once again ahead of our deliverable goal. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that with regard to the HMCC deliverable, there will be a full HMCC meeting on October 13th in Pittsfield but most of the meeting will be devoted to Jurisdictional Risk Assessment work. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that there is also a regional deliverable this year which focuses on how risk communication protocols and planning should be happening among Public Health providers. She stated that Franklin County and Hampden County are looking at all of the AARs from Massachusetts over the past few years and what is available for risk communication training and teaching and they are putting together the results of their research which will be completed in a couple of weeks.

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick next talked about an idea proposed by the Western MA Public Health Advisory Group (WAG). She reported that some of the WAG members are interested in standardizing our EDS plans so that they will look the same across the region and she asked HCHC members if they were interested in having plans that looked the same. A brief discussion followed and Ms. Bozigian-Merrick responded to several questions raised by HCHC members. As regards who might benefit from standardizing the plans, she pointed out that it would be easier for HMCC to find particular resources in everyone's plans if all the plans looked the same. She stated that the goal may be to have the same format, color, headings and layout for the different forms such as the job action sheets, however she noted that the needs of each community are very different. Mr. Nelson added that he understood that the reason for standardizing the plans is to reduce redundancy and to offer guidance to make everything easier. He noted that a standard plan would have some information that would be secondary to the primary plan and then it would be possible to build the more localized plan off of that. Ms. McCool agreed that there is generic information that we don't always think of which should be in all the plans.

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick pointed out that there is no regional requirement for everyone to have the same EDS plan. She added that hopefully by next year it may be possible to incorporate the EDS guidance from the state with the good features from everyone's plan into something that will benefit all of our planning and she stated that this may be a possible regional project for next year. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick again remarked that the decision to standardize

the plans is up to HCHC members and she noted that she would like to let the WAG know what the Coalition would prefer to do. Given that no HCHC members expressed an opinion on the idea to standardize the EDS plans, Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that she will listen to what the PHEP planners from the other 3 counties have to say on this subject and then she will report back to HCHC members at the next Coalition meeting.

e) DPH EDS Guidance

Mr. Nelson stated that DPH is working on an EDS guidance document that explains everything about EDS and what local Public Health should be doing regarding their EDS. Mr. Nelson stated that he previewed the document and there are no major changes. He noted that the document was expected to be ready in July however it has been delayed and hopefully it will be available sometime in October.

f) Closed POD Outreach Update

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick reported that HCHC has not yet begun to meet with the group homes on the Group Homes Outreach Project, however, she noted that the Closed POD component of our deliverables is going very well. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that she, along with Deb Schaier and Michael Nelson, recently met with six representatives from long-term care facilities (LTCF) in Holyoke and she believed that most of them will be signing up as Closed PODs. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick reported that HCHC has completed 6 of 10 of our outreach sessions. She noted that we still need to meet with 4 more potential Closed POD partners and we need to sign on 5 agencies as Closed PODs. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that if anyone else would like to schedule a meeting with the LTCF in their communities, she can attend and present information, and hopefully encourage some of them to sign on.

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick next reported that the Hard Knox exercise that was supposed to take place on October 20th in Franklin County has been cancelled because a lot of the people who would be working on this exercise are deployed to various events. She also noted that because she was deployed, the HCHC newsletter will be late. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that there is still space in the Family Reunification Training that will take place at Springfield College on October 25th and those who are interested should contact Raine Brown at raine@frcog.org. She added that there will be two other Family Reunification trainings, noting that one will be held on October 26th at Williams College and the other will take place on October 27th at UMass Amherst. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick also noted that there are still seats available for the SKYWARN presentation which will take place on October 16th at 6:45 p.m. in Monson and she suggested that HCHC members go to <http://wmmrc.org> if they would like to sign up for this event. Finally, Ms. Bozigian-Merrick announced that on November 3rd, the Mental Health First Aid Training for first responders will take place in Pittsfield and she asked HCHC members to contact raine@frcog.org for more info.

6. News and Updates

a) MRC & PV COAD Updates

Ms. Galloway noted that Tammy Spencer will be reporting on behalf of Lois Luniewicz who was unable to attend today's HCHC meeting. Ms. Spencer first announced that the communities of Chicopee, Agawam, Holyoke, and

West Springfield have merged and those four units are now officially the Central Hampden County MRC. Ms. Spencer also reported that East Longmeadow decided to withdraw from the merger. Ms. Spencer noted that an invitation was extended to all the current members of the four merged units to attend a meeting that recently took place in Chicopee. She stated that the meeting was not well attended but she noted that Ms. Luniewicz received a lot of response and interest. Ms. Spencer stated that currently Lois Luniewicz is the temporary Central Hampden County MRC Coordinator and Ms. Spencer is the temporary Secondary Coordinator. She reported that they are forming a search committee for a Central Hampden County MRC Coordinator and they are putting together a job description. Ms. Spencer believed that as of now only she and Ms. Luniewicz and West Springfield are on the search committee and she invited Agawam's Health Agent Cathy Auer to become involved if she would like to do so. Ms. Spencer also noted that the four units are transferring any unused funds to the PVPC. Ms. Galloway stated that she believed that the Towns of Ludlow and Palmer are currently not covered by an MRC unit and the potential for joining the Central Hampden County unit is still there. Mr. Nelson stated that he did not know if it is a state mandate for all Hampden County communities to be covered by our MRC but it is something that the state would like to see happen. With regard to the possibility of the Town of Ludlow joining the Central Hampden County MRC, Ms. Kramer stated that Dr. Elinor Killiher has been discussing this option with Ms. Luniewicz.

As regards the upcoming SKYWARN training, Ms. Spencer stated that if anyone would like to individually advertise the training, Ms. Luniewicz would be happy to send them the press release that she put together. Ms. Spencer stated that the MRC did not meet in September and she noted that there also wasn't a meeting of the Pioneer Valley Community Organizations Active in Disasters (PV COAD) Subcommittee that Ms. Luniewicz attends, however, there will be a large annual PV COAD meeting in Springfield in October.

b) HMCC Update

Ms. Galloway reported that they did not have a quorum for the last HMCC Steering Committee meeting so they could not conduct any business. She noted that there was a presentation from Merredith O'Leary, Northampton Director of Public Health, about opioid work and the potential for HMCC taking a more active role particularly regarding working with emergency medical services and hospitals. Ms. Galloway noted that the full HMCC meeting will take place on October 13th in Pittsfield from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. She stated that this meeting will not have the same format as previous meetings given that there will be a Jurisdiction Risk Assessment however she noted that it is just as important to attend this meeting. She added that the state will provide a report on the actions we need to take once they figure out the risk assessment. Ms. Galloway stated that HMCC now has a backup representative. She remarked that one of the important HMCC conversations among the four Public Health coalitions was how to maintain equal representation but during the last six months, 3 out of the 4 representatives have left and she noted that Franklin County does not have a representative at this time. Ms. Galloway stated that HMCC currently has two voting members, one backup representative and one vacancy, however, with all that said, she noted that Region 1 is still ahead of most of the HMCCs in the rest of the state.

c) MCD Update

Ms. Galloway stated that the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (MCD) proposal is expected to go before the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board (SRMCB) on October 18th however she noted that she hasn't seen the latest updates from Charlie Kaniecki and Greg Lewis who have been doing the work on that grant. Ms. Galloway stated that a letter was to be sent out to each elected official and every health agent in the Pioneer Valley region asking if the communities were interested in signing on. She noted that it was a non-binding request that would bolster the packet being presented to the SRMCB. Ms. Galloway stated that at our next Coalition meeting we should have some idea as to whether or not the Pioneer Valley MCD exists.

d) Western MA Public Health Advisory Group (WAG)

Mr. Nelson stated that he had nothing to add to the WAG updates that were provided earlier as part of today's meeting. Ms. Galloway noted that she is the Public Health representative for WRHSAC but she stated that Nicole Zabko is no longer the backup representative. It was suggested that Tracy Rogers, who is the FRCOG Regional Preparedness Program Manager and an HMCC staff member, be the alternate representative, however, this posed a problem with the State Ethics Commission because as Ms. Rogers' employer, FRCOG would not be able to accept any funds from WHRSAC to do any work. Ms. Galloway stated that at the last WAG meeting, Mary Kersell from Hampshire County was chosen by default to be the alternate representative and she will begin the vetting process.

e) LSAC Update

Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that she could not attend the last Local State Advisory Committee (LSAC) meeting because she was in Florida at the time. Mr. Nelson reported that there was a discussion about LSAC priorities and the biggest priority was re-engagement. He noted that LSAC had previously been a large group but participation has declined and he stated that there is a campaign to re-engage people with public health preparedness and LSAC. Mr. Nelson reported that there was also a discussion at the LSAC meeting about EDS guidance. In addition, he reported that there have been some leadership changes at the Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management (OPEM). He explained that in Region 3, two positions have merged into one which is now a combined Hospital and Public Health Regional Coordinator position and two positions were also combined into one in Region 4 AB, however on the Cape and in western Massachusetts they will continue to have two positions until further notice. Mr. Nelson also reported that Jeff Stevens, Westford Public Health Director, is the new LSAC Chair, replacing Tom Carbone who stepped down from that role. Finally, Mr. Nelson noted that the LSAC meetings will be every other month.

f) WRHSAC Updates

Ms. Galloway stated that she did not attend the September WRHSAC meeting and she had nothing new to report.

g) Upcoming Events, Trainings & Exercises

Ms. Galloway noted that *The Opioid Crisis: Strategies for Treatment & Recovery* will take place November 2-3 in Bedford, MA and she pointed out that Ms. Bozigian-Merrick had already provided a list of several other upcoming

events. As regards the MHOA conference that will take place in November, Mr. FitzGerald stated that an email was sent out that listed the MHOA workshops that HCHC members must attend in order to be reimbursed for the conference. He noted that there must be 100% attendance for those tracks whereas in the past it was 50%.

8. Other Business

Ms. Galloway reminded HCHC members that East Longmeadow is applying to be the host agency for the regional tobacco control grant and she stated that they are looking to find more *At Risk Communities*. She noted that this information is available on the COMBUYS website. Ms. Galloway stated that the more communities we include, the stronger the application will be and the more funding we could receive which means that more work could be accomplished. Ms. Galloway stated that interested HCHC members should talk to Ms. Petrosky who will put together the application. Mr. Dennis noted that the grant is due in December.

At this point, Ms. Bozigian-Merrick asked Angela Kramer to provide an update on MAVEN. Ms. Kramer reported that she has seen 3 cases of *Group A Streptococcus*. She stated that this is an infection that requires immediate action, noting that in one case, the infection progressed very quickly and unfortunately the gentleman lost his foot. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick explained that this is an organism that causes dreadful soft tissue infections that sometimes result in loss of limbs. Ms. Kramer also reported that there is still an incidence of tick-borne infectious disease and she stated that there was one fatality from *Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis*. In addition, she noted that she has seen a lot of cases of Lyme Disease. Ms. Kramer remarked that thus far there have been no cases of flu and she stated that they are just starting to provide flu shots. Ms. Galloway asked where HCHC stands with flu clinics. Ms. Kramer noted that Ludlow will have their flu clinic on October 18th. Mr. Hibert reported that Westfield held their senior flu clinic on October 3rd and 4th and he noted that they had 110 people during the two days. Ms. Bozigian-Merrick stated that East Longmeadow used the Northampton trailer for their flu clinic which was held on October 4th. Ms. Schaier reported that Holyoke conducted a flu clinic on October 4th and there will be a flu clinic for the Police Department on October 6th.

9. Meeting Adjourned

Ms. Galloway called for a motion to adjourn today's October 5, 2017 HCHC meeting at 11:02 a.m. LORRI MCCOOL MADE THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THIS OCTOBER 5, 2017 HCHC MEETING; THOMAS HIBERT SECONDED THE MOTION, AND ALL THE HCHC MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.