

Executive Committee Meeting

August 25, 2026

10:00 am to 11:30 am

Zoom Meeting

Attendance

Kelly Pawluczzonek (Weston); Shaun McAuliffe (Hopkinton); Sara Schaffer (Brookline); Alicia McCartin (Lexington); Taylor West (Southborough); Kerry Clark, Terri Clover (MRPC/HMCC); Garrett Simonsen, Steven Mauzy (Regional Planners)

Meeting Minutes

- Shaun McAuliffe (Hopkinton) opened the meeting at 10:02 am.

I. Approval of the June 23rd PHEP EC Meeting Minutes

- Alicia (Lexington) made a motion, seconded by Kelly (Weston), to accept the June EC meeting minutes.

II. HMCC Updates

- Kerry (HMCC) provided a recap of BP2 closeout, noting Q4 reports have been approved by OPEM for all MRCs and the PHEP program. In Region 4AB, approximately \$37,000 will be returned to the state, about \$40,000 less than the prior year, indicative of improved spending. Of the \$37,000, \$20,000 came from the PHEP program, and \$17,000 from supplemental funds provided to MRCs.
- Kerry presented the current BP3 budget status, and proposed a budget modification to increase BME Strategies' contract for NC8 and MetroEast unit coordinators, funded by a savings from a reduction in fringe rates. The initial BP3 budget was based on a 32% fringe rate; CHA subsequently confirmed the fringe rate was reduced to 29.7%, generating savings of approximately \$3,000 for Eric's position and \$4,700 for Steven's position. BME Strategies (covering NC8 and Metro East) had requested a contract increase of approximately 2.5–3% (~\$3,000–\$4,000), which was not submitted in time for the initial budget. The fringe savings are sufficient to cover this increase — NC8 would receive an increase of \$4,700 and Metro East \$3,500. A motion to reallocate funds to BME Strategies to cover their additional contract request was made by Taylor (Southborough) and seconded by Sara (Brookline).
- Teri (HMCC) provided an update on the annual Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA), which will be conducted at the Q1 Stakeholder Meeting. A training request form has been submitted to MDPH, and will take place at the Rosemary Recreation Building on September 23rd.

III. MDPH Updates

- MDPH representative is out of the office, and LSAC did not meet during the summer.

IV. Planner Updates

- Garrett (PHEP) provided an update on the Q1 24/7 contact list collection effort. The 24/7 update request was sent out earlier in the month, and three communities have not yet responded despite multiple follow-ups via email and phone. One community has not updated its 24/7 information since 2024, posing a risk of missed emergency notifications. The team is considering how to escalate in a thoughtful manner.
- Steven (PHEP) provided an update on PHEP-funded attendance at the MHOA conference. MDPH approved the use of funds the prior Friday, and outreach to the individuals who expressed interest has begun. Eligibility is more stringent this year to avoid the logistical issues experienced in past years. To be eligible for funding, you must not be funded by another grant or organization for parts of the conference, and you may not be funded if you have already registered. These new additions are added to the requirements that communities be in good standing and participate in the PHEP coalition and PHEP deliverables.
- Garrett presented a detailed overview of a regional initiative focused on strengthening risk communication for arboviral/mosquito-borne diseases at the local level, to be featured at the following day's General Committee meeting alongside DPH zoonotic epidemiologist Matthew Osborne.
- An AI-assisted survey (using ChatGPT) was conducted of all 60 communities' Board of Health or Health Department webpages, searching for dedicated information on mosquito-borne diseases (West Nile virus, Triple E, etc.). If no dedicated page was found, the municipality's search function was used with relevant keywords. Garrett then manually validated all AI findings. Communities were classified into four categories: (1) Comprehensive evergreen page (20 communities), (2) Basic evergreen page (23 communities), (3) Alerts/updates only (9 communities), (4) Legacy or external-only content (3 communities), and (5) No local information found (5 communities).
- Common gaps identified included: lack of current local risk status updates, limited information on higher-risk populations, minimal translated/accessible materials, and outdated lead content. Approximately half of communities had strong plain-language materials. Individual community-level reports have been generated for each of the 60 communities, highlighting strengths and providing specific recommendations for improvement. A web toolkit was developed to guide local public health through building a resident-facing evergreen page, including copy-ready language for each content area and guidance on working with local IT departments. A companion Misinformation and Disinformation Guide was also developed, covering categories of potential misinformation (risk/surveillance, transmission, vaccines/treatments, etc.), guidance on when and how to respond (monitor, respond, or escalate), and copy-ready press statement language.
- Taylor (Southborough) asked whether social media pages were included in the survey. Garrett clarified that social media was considered in the context of the misinformation guide, but it was not part of the website survey; an evergreen webpage is intended to serve as a stable reference point that social media posts can link back to for more complete information. Taylor noted that she primarily uses social media to push out current arboviral information, as residents tend not to visit the website.

V. MRC Updates

- Eric is completing an ICS training series and will not be at this month's meetings, but he continues to work with unit coordinators on planning ahead, developing training schedules, and ensuring timely approvals and funding distribution.

VI. New Business

- No new business

VII. Vote/Adjourn

- Taylor made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kelly- motion approved. Motions to approve the minutes and to adjourn passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:24 am.