Public Health
Emergency Preparedness
Massachusetts 4AB
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

General Committee Meeting
August 26, 2026
10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

Attendance
Penelope Funaiole & Susan Sama (Acton), Jessica Kerr & Kylee Foley (Arlington), Wesley Chin (Belmont), John Kleschinsky & Sara Schaffer (Brookline), Christine Mathis (Burlington), Dawn Baxter & Tracy Rose-Tynes (Cambridge), Jennine Blum (Carlisle), Melanie Dineen (Concord), Sam Menard (Dedham), Krista Costello (Everett), Bill Murphy & Robin Williams (Framingham), Nancy Funder & Will Barrett (Hanover), Shaun McAuliffe (Hopkinton), Lauren Antonelli & Eddie St. Louis (Hudson), Kelliann Coleman (Lexington), Kelli Calo (Littleton), Paige Ferriter (Marlborough), Casey Mellin (Maynard), Caroline Kinsella & Jessica Cliff (Natick), Ginnie Chacon-Lopez, Emily Conners & Julie McCarthy (Needham), Megan Howell (Norwell), Abbie Atkins (Norwood), Katelyn Kirby (Quincy), Adrienne Maguire (Revere), Linda Callan (Sharon), Sarah Lapin (Sherborn), Colin Zeigler (Somerville), Taylor West (Southborough), Katie Betts (Sudbury), Melissa Reniri (Walpole), Shuang Shen (Watertown), Julia Junghanns & Moira Carter (Wayland), Jhana Wallace (Wellesley), Kelly Pawluczonek (Weston), Alyson Roche (Woburn), Michaela Bucca, Jackson Lieb & Paul Martin (MRC), Matthew Osborne (MDPH), Kerry Clark & Teri Clover (MRPC), Garrett Simonsen (4AB PHEP)

Meeting Minutes
- Shaun McAuliffe (Hopkinton) opened the meeting at 10:04 am.

I. Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Spotlight "Beyond the Buzz: Strengthening Local Arbovirus Risk Messaging"
- Garrett (PHEP) presented findings from a survey conducted on August 3rd examining mosquito-borne disease risk messaging on 60 community websites. The survey found that 43 out of 60 communities had evergreen web pages with substantial information, though only 20 had comprehensive content including key information about source reduction, symptoms, and current seasonal updates. Based on the findings, the coalition developed improvement plans, a toolkit on building a comprehensive arbovirus webpage, and misinformation guidance for each community to strengthen their risk messaging. Garrett announced that individual reports and resources would be sent to local Board of Health contacts within the next two days.
- Matthew Osborne, the vector-borne disease coordinator at MDPH, presented on arboviral diseases including West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). He explained the transmission cycles, symptoms, and current prevalence of these diseases, noting that West Nile virus is particularly prevalent across the state while EEE cases are expected to be lower due to reduced vector populations. Matthew outlined the

notification process for local boards of health regarding disease findings and described prevention strategies including early season surveillance, awareness campaigns, and potential spraying methods. He also introduced available resources including weekly arbovirus reports and the arbovirus surveillance and response plan, which serves as important guidance for local health partners.

- Matthew presented the annual arbovirus surveillance plan and public communication strategies for mosquito-borne diseases. He discussed the current risk levels for West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), highlighting that EEE only has a small risk area in Plymouth County while West Nile risk is more widespread. Matthew explained the different risk categories and corresponding public health recommendations, including the use of mosquito repellent, avoidance strategies, and in severe cases, the potential cancellation or rescheduling of outdoor activities. He also addressed messaging gaps for high-risk groups, particularly older adults and outdoor workers, and emphasized the importance of age-related severity in disease impact.

II. Approval of June 24th GC Meeting Minutes

- Adrienne (Revere) made a motion, seconded by Melissa (Walpole), to accept the meeting minutes – motion approved.

III. HMCC Updates

- Kerry (MRPC) reported that quarter four reports were submitted to DPH for the PHEP program and MRCs, with unspent funds decreasing from $85,000 last year to $37,000 this year. The team has spent approximately 8% of BP3 funding, primarily on salaries and storage units, with budget modifications due Friday.
- Teri (MRPC) announced the first HMCC stakeholder meeting will be held on September 23rd at the Rosemary Recreation Center as an in-person event with lunch, and will include an HVA scoring workshop for the annual report, which is due at the end of October. The group discussed maintaining the previous year's approach of using discipline-specific small groups for scoring hazards, which received positive feedback.

IV. MDPH Updates

- The team discussed Felicia's updates from DPH, including an upcoming quarter one drill in September.

V. Planner Updates

- MDPH approved the use of PHEP funds for the MHOA Conference in October. Steven has reached out to those who expressed interest and began booking travel arrangements.
- Garrett concluded by announcing that the Cambridge Public Health Department will soon post a position for an emergency preparedness coordinator.

VI. MRC Updates

- Sara (Brookline) updated the group that her MRC unit is working on their deployment plan, vaccine clinics, and some specialized events for National Preparedness month, which is in September. Michaela (Middlefolk) updated that her unit is preparing for Narcan, Go Bag, and CPR training in September. Paul (MetroWest) updated that his unit has been participating at farmers markets, lining up training for September, and working with new members to individually promote them through training. Jackson (NC-8) updated that his unit is also preparing for flu season and becoming more involved with VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters). He stated the MetroEast is also busy with training and their deployment plans. Kerry mentioned that Lahey Hospital reached out to MRCs for participation in a zombie apocalypse exercise focused on family reunification plans.

VII. New Business

- No new business.

VIII. Vote and Adjourn

- Melissa (Walpole) motioned to adjourn; Kelly (Weston) seconded that motion. Motions to approve the minutes and to adjourn passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.