



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## CPHS Oversight Board – 10/28/21, 5-7:00 PM Online Meeting (Zoom ID 851 6793 6495) - Minutes

### Member Attendance:

Ashfield-	absent	Gill-	Jeff Blomstedt
Bernardston-	Jean Page	Hawley-	absent
Buckland-	Marti Taft-Ferguson, Peggy Hart	Heath-	Barbara Gordon
Charlemont-	Rob Lingle	Leyden-	Beth Kuzdeba
Colrain-	Nina Martin-Anzuoni	Monroe-	absent
Conway-	absent	Northfield-	Karen Boudreau, Ali Wahlstrom
Deerfield-	absent	Rowe-	Maggie Rice
Erving-	Bryan Smith	Shelburne-	Ron Kelter, Jody Stetson, Fritz Vohr

### Staff Attendance:

Phoebe Walker, Lisa Danek Burke, Randy Crochier, Maureen O'Reilly, Meg Ryan, Kurt Schellenberg, Lisa White, Liz Jacobson-Carroll

**Guest Attendance:** Tim Bohonowicz, Buckland resident.

**Meeting Minutes:** *Page moved to accept the August 26, 2021 meeting minutes as amended, Gordon seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.*

### New Hire Update and Introductions:

Crochier introduced new staff members: Community Health Educator / Epidemiologist Maureen O'Reilly, and Regional Health Agent Kurt Schellenberg. Walker referenced a recent article in The Recorder about Meg Ryan joining the CPHS staff. She thanked members for their hard work which resulted in CPHS's receipt of the Public Health Excellence Grant (from the MA Office of Local and Regional Health), thus enabling CPHS to expand. Attendees introduced themselves, described their work backgrounds, and representatives indicated the composition of their Boards of Health, and how often they meet.

### Public Health Nursing Report

- **COVID Case Data:** White thanked CPHS contact tracers – Jeannette Voas, Melanie Zamojski, Danek Burke and Crochier -- for their many months of outstanding work. Referencing Voas' report, she summarized case data trends in recent months; currently declining, there are 9 active cases. She cautioned against complacency, as things change weekly, and reminded members that each Board needs to identify a singular point person for the BOH for CPHS staff to come to with any issues or concerns about cases. There was discussion regarding the impact of increased home-testing options on regional data, since they are not reported to the state lab. Gordon indicated that Heath has had a sudden spike of cases across multiple households. White referenced the [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#) statistics regarding Franklin County MA, and the guideline accompanying the "substantial spread" rating for both vaccinated and unvaccinated

individuals to continue wearing masks indoors. In response to a question from Wahlstrom, White indicated that either CPHS public health nurse would be happy to meet with the Northfield BOH to discuss masking guidelines.

- **Flu Clinic Report:** White announced the final regional flu clinic taking place at Pioneer Valley Regional on Saturday, and encouraged members to direct people to the FRCOG website to sign up for vaccine appointments. She thanked FRCOG staff, MRC volunteers, local committees, Wahlstrom, Page, Crochier, Ray Purington and Michelle Giarusso for their efforts. White indicated that CPHS has already administered 660 flu vaccines this season, including many at the Erving Senior Center, Deerfield town garage, Mohawk Trail School, Senior Center in Shelburne, and Conway Town Hall. She thanked Ryan, Matthew Marchese and Bridget Licata. Additional local clinics will take place at the Bernardston Senior Center, Stoughton Place in Gill, Northfield Senior Center, Stratton Manor, and Squakheag Village. A location in Colrain and the Rowe Elementary School are possible clinic sites, too; White is open to suggestions for others.
- **COVID Vaccine for Kids and Boosters in the Region:** Walker reported that after her informal survey of local providers/pediatricians indicated little capacity for administering COVID vaccines to children throughout the county, she contacted Senator Jo Comerford to request that the region be served by the state's mobile COVID-19 vaccination clinic, known as the "vax bus." As a result, the bus will begin visiting area elementary schools on 11/15. All three types of vaccines, and any available boosters, will be administered from the mobile clinic to whomever registers in advance. Schools and providers will be encouraging parents to sign up for initial/secondary/booster shots along with their children, as appropriate. Assistance will be available to anyone having difficulty with online registration, which will begin once the school sites and schedule have been determined, possibly as early as next week. Plans are underway to transport students from schools not chosen as sites to those that are. (She noted that the vax bus will not be stocked with flu vaccines.) Further, Walker and Comerford are working to ensure that local pharmacies and providers will receive appropriately-sized allocations of vaccine, less than the 300-minimum initially announced. Finally, Walker suggested that members thank Comerford for her advocacy. White reminded attendees that individuals looking for COVID boosters can utilize <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/> to search by type and location, and that those without internet access can call 211. Members who know of individuals requiring home visits for COVID or influenza shots should contact her or Ryan.

**Health Agents Report:** Crochier indicated that both he and Danek Burke recently attended a MA Health Officers Association conference on Cape Cod, and found their "tracks" pertaining to food and wastewater, respectively, to be valuable. Crochier announced that FRCOG will be sponsoring another 3-in-1 Food Safety Training class in early December; he will be teaching the ServSafe and Allergen Awareness portions, and has re-hired Nicole Roma Thurrell to provide Choke Saver/First Aid/Narcan instruction. He recommended a virtual training class, on de-escalation, to be offered by the state on 11/5 and 12/7, and will forward information soon.

Danek Burke reported on a busy permitting season since July, showing two graphs indicating the number of permit applications by town. (The first indicated numbers of soil/perc, T5, disposal system construction, local upgrade, and well applications; the second tallied food establishment, temporary food vending, short term lodging, recreational camp and beach/pool applications.) She noted that each of these inspections requires an agent in the field for up to 6 hours, and that she and Crochier often conduct multiple inspections per day – together and independently. She is in the process of becoming a certified swimming beach/pool inspector, and reiterated the value, to both staff and clients, of conducting inspections of recreational camps with White. Regarding food permitting, Danek Burke noted that Crochier has conducted most of the 29 inspections of temporary vendors on weekends, and that while there have been only 5 applications for new regular

establishments, the existing 106 are due for renewal in January 2022. Regarding short-term rental permitting begun this year, Danek Burke indicated progress toward identifying and inspecting properties, and toward teaching owners what is now expected of them. Going forward, she will provide a similar overview of permit activity semi-annually. Finally, she encouraged members to contact CPHS for training on the online permit application tracking system. Crochier indicated that a feature of the new software, WimWam, which allows staff to print reports by permit expiration date, is proving useful.

**Age-Friendly Community Planning Overview:** Ryan described the Age-Friendly Franklin County & North Quabbin initiative, which she is undertaking with her LifePath collaborator (Nour Elkhattaby-Strauch) who covers the region beyond CPHS towns. She shared data regarding the unprecedented rapid aging 2010-2030 in the state, even more so in Franklin County, and *especially* in CPHS towns. She summarized the genesis (WHO) and administration (AARP) of the program, and her current work to engage community stakeholders (including those representing people of color and immigrants), form a project steering committee, enlist COAs and Select Boards to sign commitment letters, offer workshops, and plan/launch individual community needs assessments this fall. She mentioned a recent conversation with stakeholders in Heath, and encouraged those in other towns to contact her directly, and to invite her and Elkhattaby-Strauch to a BOH meeting. [In chat room, Walker indicated CPHS towns current level of involvement with the program: Leyden, Conway, and Deerfield have joined the national network, and Colrain, Bernardston, Northfield and Erving are all in the process of joining ] Ryan indicated that Elkhattaby-Strauch will soon share the community needs assessment survey to all towns, and CPHS will be hoping BOH members can help get local residents to fill it out.

**Mask Mandates:** Crochier is referring many BOH-member callers to the CDC tracker (map with risk assessment categories) for information as they consider maintaining/rescinding mask mandates. Franklin County continues to warrant a substantial-risk rating, he said, but may move into the moderate-risk category soon. Ryan indicated that even if/when a community's rating shifts to moderate, unvaccinated people should continue to mask. Kuzdeba cautioned against using vaccination rates as a metric, noting that vaccinated people can spread the virus, perhaps especially the highly-transmissible variants. Blomstedt opined that the most important consideration regarding the mask mandate is the protection of kids and elders, and that there is no logical reason to rescind the mandate until the risk rating falls well below the moderate level. Gordon cautioned against making decisions based on county-wide data, as an outbreak in an individual CPHS town may warrant continued masking throughout the district. Taft-Ferguson expressed wariness regarding the efficacy of continuing mandates that may be both distracting and un-enforceable. Lingle noted that increasing vaccination rates may lead to further spread, as infected individuals who are vaccinated and asymptomatic may be less likely to get tested. Vohr -- noting that Shelburne residents needn't wear a mask into the local USPO, but must do so when entering the local grocery store -- does not want to burden store clerks with enforcement responsibilities, though he is personally inclined to maintain the mandate. Walker directed attendees to an on-line survey asking which CDC designation should trigger CPHS BOHs to rescind the mandate. Responses included 1 *Substantial (rescind now)*, 3 *Moderate*, 2 *Moderate for one week*, 5 *Low* and 4 *Other*. Blomstedt opined that BOHs have an obligation to protect elders and children, and that to avoid taking a stand is wrong. Crochier re-iterated that each BOH has the authority to enforce its own policies. O'Reilly noted that BOHs may not find out about case clusters in families unless the virus spreads beyond the family. White replied that extra-family containment efforts have been very successful, that families have been cooperative, and that there has been no significant transmission post-isolation. O'Reilly asked if BOHs are promoting ideas pertaining to enhanced ventilation, CO2 monitors, and other mitigation tools; Crochier expressed enthusiasm for a staff discussion on the topic next week.

**Wrap Up and Adjournment**

Taft-Ferguson reminded participants that CPHS staff is available to attend town BOH meetings. Gordon promised information regarding changing federal guidelines on testing. Walker invited budget and funding questions. The next meeting will be held on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

**Meeting materials:**

- CPHSOvBrd Agenda\_2021.10.28
- CPHSOvBrd Minutes\_2021.08.26 DRAFT
- Meg Ryan Hire Article
- Age Friendly Presentation
- CDC COVID Tracker: [https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view|Risk|community\\_transmission\\_level](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view|Risk|community_transmission_level)
- CPHS weekly COVID case count July\_October
- Food Safety Training flyer 2021.12
- Survey results
- Permit Apps by town – T5&Wells 7.2021 to 10.2021
- Permit Apps by town Food\_Camps\_Pools 7.2021 to 10.2021