

# North East Public Health Alliance



April 9th, 2026 Meeting Minutes

11:00 am - 1:00 pm EST

Hybrid Meeting

In-Person: Chelmsford Health Department

Virtual:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83751528885?pwd=ZrcVPD6NZ6t1OizXN2GrbDWRW19LV4.1>

## **Voting members in attendance:**

Shannon Gillis, Tewksbury

Donna Greenwood, Chelmsford

Kerri Oun, Tyngsborough

## **Non-voting members in attendance:**

Manizeh Afridi, BME Strategies

Elise Pierce, Chelmsford

Bethany Slack, Regional Public Health Specialist

Ashley Pavlakos, Regional Public Health Nurse

Phavy Pheng, Billerica

## **Voting members absent:**

Kristel Bennett, Billerica

## **I. Opening**

3/4 voting members present, quorum was met.

### **Motion to start the meeting**

Shannon Gillis made a motion to start the meeting. Kerri Oun seconded the motion.

Billerica: Y

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

Manizeh Afridi called the meeting to order at 11:09AM.

## **II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

### **Motion to approve March meeting minutes**

Donna Greenwood motioned to approve March meeting minutes. Shannon Gillis seconded the motion.

Chelmsford: Y  
Tewksbury: Y  
Tyngsborough: Y  
**All in favor.**

### III. Announcements

- FY26 SAPHE 2.0 Reporting for Local Public Health

**Workforce Standards Survey due Friday, April 10th, 2026.**

**Link:** <https://redcap.ehs.mass.gov/redcap/surveys/?s=94RREL78PTFL7JEM>

**Performance Standards Survey due April 30th, 2026.**

- **Technical Support Available:**
  - Office hours and 1-1 support

**Questions?**

- For questions, please reach out to [performancestandards@mass.gov](mailto:performancestandards@mass.gov)

### **SAPHE 2.0 Reporting Overview**

Why SAPHE 2.0 Reporting Matters:

- a. Annual reporting is required under SAPHE 2.0
- b. The data collected will allow ongoing monitoring to improve understanding of local public health capacity
- c. The annual data collection process will provide a consistent, standardized, and integrated reporting system
- d. The reporting surveys and results have been designed to support system improvement

- **Upcoming Training Opportunities:**

- **DPH Annual Spring Seminars – Camps, Pools, and Beaches**

April 14, 9am-12:30pm (Virtual)

April 15, 1-4:30pm (Virtual)

This is a refresher series on camps, pools, and bathing beaches. One in-person and two virtual options are available. Each option offers the same program.

- **Retail Program Standards Symposium (Food)**

April 20-22, 12-5pm (Virtual)

NEHA's Symposium supports and educates retail food safety jurisdictions at state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) levels, whether just beginning with the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards) or maintaining

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conformance with them. This year's Symposium focuses on “Progress in Motion”, providing practical, FDA-aligned insights on advancing Retail Food Program Standards through sessions with national experts and peers.

- **Personal Safety and Security in the Workplace**

April 23, 10am-12pm (In person; Randolph)

Join the town of Randolph and Metro South Public Health Alliance for a training on personal safety strategies for travel, parking, entering, and exiting buildings, along with workplace safety and hazard assessments for job duties.

- **Animal Control Report Writing (\$\$\$)**

April 28, 9:30am-12pm (In person; Chicopee, MA)

Clear, professional reports are one of the most important tools an Animal Control Officer has. Join Assistant District Attorney Erin Aiello for a focused training designed to strengthen report writing skills and highlight the legal impact of your documentation. \$10 registration fee.

- **FDA Training FD215: Managing Retail Food Safety**

May 11-15 (Virtual)

July 13-17 (Virtual)

This course explores how risk-based inspections can be applied in retail and food service establishments. Topics include the “process approach” to HACCP, applications of HACCP principles in routine inspection work, and assessing active managerial control of risk factors by operators through a HACCP system or other established food safety systems. While the process approach is new to many regulators, it is better designed for use in retail and food service settings than traditional HACCP approaches because it eliminates lengthy flow charting and hazard analysis for every type of food product.

- **FDA Training FD 218: Risk Based Inspection Methods in Retail**

May 4-8 (Virtual)

June 22-26 (Virtual)

This workshop builds upon concepts learned in FD215 Managing Retail Food Safety and is designed to further enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of food safety inspection officers in conducting risk-based inspections.

- **Navigating the FDA Food Code: A Course for Industry Professionals (\$\$\$)**

May 19-21, 10am-6pm

Learn directly from instructors with both industry and regulatory experience in this standardized FDA curriculum. Build your knowledge of the Food Code, Good Retail Practices, and compliance essentials through interactive lessons and group exercises designed to strengthen your food safety operations.

- **MEHA's 78th Annual Seminar (\$\$\$)**

May 20, 8:30am-3:30pm (In-person; Marlborough, MA)

This year's educational seminar and awards ceremony will be held at the Courtyard Marriott

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in Marlborough. Attendees can look forward to presentations on food safety, asbestos abatement, Lyme disease, kratom, health equity data and more.

- **MHOA Quarterly Meeting: Cannabis Control (\$\$\$)**  
May 28, 10am-12pm (In-person; Plymouth, MA)  
This training will provide an overview of the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission and its role in regulating cannabis in Massachusetts. It will explore the expected role of local public health, including where responsibilities may overlap. The session will address social consumption sites and discuss what they are and what may be expected of local public health moving forward. Registration opens in April.
- **Title 5 System Inspector (SI) Certification Class (\$\$\$)**  
July 2026; Dates/location TBD  
Title 5 System Inspectors ensure your septic system is running efficiently and verify your system has been properly maintained. Title 5 inspections are required each time ownership is transferred. To receive notifications about upcoming classes, please email [title5@neiwpc.org](mailto:title5@neiwpc.org).
- **MetroWest Shared Public Health Services - Maternal Health Symposium**
  - a. 2 Virtual Sessions:
    - i. May 6th: 10-11:30 AM
    - ii. May 12th: 5-8:30 PMRegistration link here:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMzxu-JSOU0WpJEq00BZGlsGPMGwz8WpJuaKLFLzQj4G8BjQ/viewform?usp=send\\_form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMzxu-JSOU0WpJEq00BZGlsGPMGwz8WpJuaKLFLzQj4G8BjQ/viewform?usp=send_form)

## IV. NEPHA Updates

### 1. Regional Inspector Position:

An offer letter has been sent. The official start date is expected to be April 27th.

### 2. NEPHA Budget Discussion:

Due to difficulty filling the Regional Inspector position, there is approximately \$80,000 of unspent funds leftover. The group discussed spend down ideas which included:

- A. Increasing the budget for MoJin Solutions by \$20,000 to cover food inspections for the rest of this fiscal year.

**Motion to move forward with increasing the MoJin Solutions budget.**

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Kerri Oun motioned to approve to move forward with increasing MoJin Solutions budget. Donna Greenwood seconded the motion.

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

B. Adding on to the Strategic Planning Engagement by moving forward with a 8-hour In-Person Retreat costing \$9,339.38. This in-person session cuts down on the amount of virtual sessions required from May - June 30th and will include:

1. First Session of the Day: Review of trust survey results, facilitated team- and trust-building exercises, and brainstorming of Communication Charter ideas.
2. Second Session of the Day: Brainstorming of foundational principles to guide the group's work, and a Release and Renew activity - a retrospective on the team's recent successes and friction points. Discussion of personal commitments to the team moving forward.
3. Third Session of the Day: Challenge the team to look beyond current tasks and deadlines to collaboratively define the fundamental identity and strategic direction of the SSA through mission and vision brainstorming, plus a SWOT-IE analysis, which identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and inclusion and equity issues facing the SSA.
4. Fourth Session of the Day: Draft foundational statements and strategic priorities.

**Motion to move forward with the 8-Hour In-Person Retreat for Strategic Planning.**

Shannon Gillis motioned to approve to move forward with the 8-Hour In-Person Retreat for Strategic Planning. Kerri Oun seconded the motion.

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

C. The group then discussed additional spend down and training ideas that included:

- PR Training for Public Health Officials
- Data Project
- Communications Project

- Paid - Internship Project
- Improv Asylum - Team Building Program
- Health Leadership College 6 month summer program for health leadership.

### 3. **NEPHA Workplan Discussion:**

The group engaged in a discussion regarding the NEPHA Workplan, acknowledging the need to incorporate additional activities. These new additions should reflect current regional work, specifically addressing topics such as hoarding, mental health, substance-use prevention, and cross-departmental coordination. The coalition plans to refine and update the workplan activities at the next meeting as part of the preparation for FY27 planning.

## V. **Strategic Planning Sessions - Logistics and Background Materials**

The group discussed scheduling logistics and additional background materials needed for the Strategic Planning process.

- **Stakeholder Engagement**

The group initiated a discussion about potential partners, community members, and other stakeholders who should be included in the Strategic Planning process's stakeholder engagement phase.

- **Scheduling**

The 8-hour, in-person retreat is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 7th, 2026, as this date was mutually agreed upon. Subsequent virtual Strategic Planning sessions will be scheduled between May 7th and June 30th, after the retreat has concluded.

- **Brand Kit and Logo**

Discussions centered on brainstorming NEPHA's new branding and logo design. Initial ideas included using more appealing colors, incorporating the name of each community around the logo, and possibly changing the cross shape to hands to symbolize partnership. The group requested that the BME Strategies Strategic Planning team develop potential design options based on these concepts to provide a better understanding of what can be implemented.

## VI. **Community Baby Shower Updates**

Discussion focused on the immediate next steps and timeline for planning the NEPHA Community Baby Shower, scheduled for June 13th. In addition, the group reviewed the newly developed pre-registration form. This form now incorporates survey questions designed to assess the needs of attendees (such as language assistance or health insurance status), allowing the group to ensure relevant resources are available at the event.

## VII. **Community Updates**

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- **Billerica:** Held a community informational session with Buried in Treasures and had a great turnout. Additional sessions are being planned to provide community members with continued support.
- **Chelmsford:** The Chelmsford Health and Wellness Fair, also known as Fall Fest, is set for September 26, 2026, running from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
- **Tewksbury:** Tewksbury Health Fair at Senior Center had great turnout.
- **Tyngsborough:** Held first cross-departmental meeting to align on work being done and increase collaboration.

## VIII. Adjournment

The next regular coalition meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14th, from 11AM-12PM virtually via Zoom.

### **Motion to adjourn the meeting**

Kerri Oun motioned to adjourn the meeting. Shannon Gillis seconded the motion.

Chelmsford: Y

Tewksbury: Y

Tyngsborough: Y

**All in favor.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:08PM.

### **Documents used by the public body during the meeting:**

- NEPHA April 9th Meeting Slides