



Norfolk County-8 Coalition

September 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes



Time: 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
<u>Virtual Meeting</u> https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81707867739

Attendance Roll Call

Voting members present:

Meg Goldstein, Canton
Sam Menard, Dedham
Emily Conners, Milton
Stacey Lane, Norwood
Melissa Ranieri, Walpole
Jhana Wallace, Wellesley
Jared Orsini, Westwood

Non-voting members present:

Aine Studdert-Kennedy, BME Strategies
Cynthia Baker, BME Strategies
Beth Haefner, BME Strategies
Jenna Conroy, Canton
Trish Fisher, Walpole

Voting members absent:

Caroline Kinsella, Milton
Lenny Izzo, Wellesley

7/7 communities present, quorum met

Melissa Ranieri motioned to start the meeting. Stacey Lane second the motion.

Canton: Y
Dedham: Y
Milton: Y
Norwood: Y
Walpole: Y
Wellesley: Y
Westwood: Y



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The regular meeting of the Norfolk County-8 (NC-8) Local Public Health Coalition was called to order at 11:05 AM on September 8th, 2025.

I. Welcome

BME provided an overview of the agenda to start the meeting.

Melissa Ranieri made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 2025 Coalition Meeting and the minutes from the August 2025 Staffing Meeting. Meg Goldstein seconded the motion.

Canton: Y
Dedham: Y
Milton: Y
Norwood: Y
Walpole: Y
Wellesley: Y
Westwood: Y

II. Announcements and Reminders

a. Trainings & Conference Opportunities

- i. BME shared a virtual conference opportunity, the [2025 National Vaccine Law Conference Opportunity](#).

b. Public Health Excellence (PHE) Updates

- i. BME introduced a staff credentialing survey which will be disseminated to all staff within the Shared Services Arrangement (SSA) and participating municipalities as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) PHE Workplan, to facilitate targeted training opportunities for staff members to address gaps in meeting the Performance Standards for Local Public Health.
- ii. BME also provided an update on the tobacco inspections and compliance checks survey from last month, noting that the necessary information was submitted to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by the required deadline.

c. COVID-19 Contact Tracing Initiative (CTCI) Funding Updates

- i. The group discussed priorities for the procurement of at-home test kits and disease control supplies in FY26. The coalition agreed to begin these procurement processes immediately to prepare for the upcoming fall season when disease outbreaks are likely, and aligned on preferences for types of tests and supplies to purchase.

d. Procurement Updates

- i. The Strategic Planning Request for Proposals (RFP) closed on August 28th. A subcommittee has been formed to review vendor proposals.

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- ii. The contract for the Regional Communications Project with vendor Crawford & Associates has been finalized and signed, and the project will kick off this month.
- iii. The Community Health Assessment Scope of Work was finalized and approved last month, and the RFP will be posted soon.
- iv. Contracts with two vendors for Food Protection and Title 5 inspectional support remain in place, and the group shared updates on their experiences working with the vendors to conduct inspections, which have been overwhelmingly positive. Spending will continue to be monitored and BME will update the group on the amount of funds remaining under each contract.
- e. Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) Meeting Update
 - i. BME will facilitate an FPHS Review meeting in October with the coalition to ensure alignment of efforts with the data received in the assessment process. The meeting will include a discussion of the integration of the FPHS framework into the SSA's work, focusing on the foundational capabilities and how building capacities that support public health infrastructure can drive progress and support execution of Workplan activities.

III. Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Updates

- a. The Operational Readiness Awards (ORA) grant funds have been received and funds are being expended. Remaining funding will support the Stop the Bleed program in development, including the purchase of Stop the Bleed kits and tourniquets.
- b. The NC-8 Training Day is scheduled for this weekend, which will include 7 trainings from multiple organizations, and a keynote speaker from Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) who will discuss flooding resiliency and mitigation work.
- c. NC-8 is supporting vaccine clinics in Walpole, Canton, and potentially Wellesley. Any requests for volunteers for events should be put in through MA Responds.
- d. The NC-8 MRC will be joining the other 4AB units in a sheltering training day on October 18th in Natick.

IV. Regional Staff Updates

- a. BME provided an overview of the planned hiring process and timeline for regional staff. The hiring process will be largely conducted in subcommittees which are convening this week to kick off the process. Key updates throughout the hiring process will be brought to the group during monthly coalition meetings. The group aims to hire new regional staff by the end of the calendar year, though the exact timeline is tentative.

V. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Discussion & Review

- BME provided an overview of the FY26 budget, noting potential impacts of the regional staff rehiring process and timeline. The group discussed priorities for

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spending, including preferences around regional staff roles and potential other uses of funds, including training and capacity building, procurement of supplies, and additional project priorities.

- The group voted to move forward with hiring a full-time Regional Epidemiologist and a full-time Regional Public Health Nurse. Any other regional staff hiring options will be revisited later in the year. The group also discussed the impact regional staff hiring will have on the FY27 budget, and the need to plan for contingencies accordingly.
- The group discussed other priority areas for spending unallocated funds, which include social work or community outreach support and greater investment in the Community Health Assessment. These options will be revisited later in the year pending outcomes from regional staff hiring.

Melissa Ranieri made a motion to approve the reallocation of funds to hire a full-time (1.0 FTE) Regional Public Health Nurse for the remainder of FY26. Meg Goldstein seconded the motion.

Canton: Y
Dedham: Y
Milton: Y
Norwood: Y
Walpole: Y
Wellesley: abstained
Westwood: N

VI. COVID-19 Contact Tracing Initiative Project Updates

- a. The Regional Communications Project, which aims to strengthen regional communication and coordination across the coalition, will kick off this month and be completed by the end of FY26. Crawford & Associates is leading the project. BME provided an overview of the project phases, which include the development of a Regional Communications Strategy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), multiple seminars to introduce the Strategy and SOP to key stakeholders within the coalition, and a Tabletop Exercise and After Action Review.
- b. The group formed a planning team who will be engaged on a monthly basis throughout the duration of the project, and a kick-off meeting will be scheduled for next week with the planning team and Crawford & Associates to initiate the project.
- c. Crawford & Associates has requested the coalition's support with information gathering, which will include collecting existing Emergency Preparedness Plans, and disseminating a survey to key stakeholders within the region to collect more information about current communications and emergency preparedness practices and needs.



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VII. Community Updates

Coalition members discussed upcoming community activities and priorities.

- Westwood is conducting their annual flu clinic this weekend.
- Canton is working towards prohibiting the sale of Kratom, and coalition members shared interest in doing the same in all NC-8 communities. Meg Goldstein offered to share an update with the group after Canton's Board of Health (BOH) meeting.
- The group discussed approaches to permitting port-a-potties in their towns.

VIII. Meeting Closure

The next NC-8 Coalition meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2025, 11AM - 1PM.

The meeting adjourned at 12:42 PM.

Documents used and referenced during the meeting:

NC-8 September 2025 Meeting Presentation

FY26 Hiring Process and Timeline

Regional Communications SOP & Emergency Preparedness Workshop Scope of Work

Regional Communications SOP & Emergency Preparedness Workshop Proposal (Crawford & Associates)