



# Norfolk County-8 Coalition January 5, 2026 Meeting Minutes



<b>Time:</b> 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
<b>Virtual Meeting</b> <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86277008938">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86277008938</a>

## **Attendance Roll Call**

### Voting members present:

Sam Menard, Dedham  
Meg Goldstein, Canton  
Stacey Lane, Norwood (*joined late*)  
Caroline Kinsella, Milton  
Melissa Ranieri, Walpole  
Lenny Izzo, Wellesley (*joined late*)  
Jared Orsini, Westwood

### Non-voting members present:

Aine Studdert-Kennedy, BME Strategies  
Cynthia Baker, BME Strategies  
Beth Haefner, BME Strategies  
Sarah Lavari, Norwood  
Abbie Atkins, Norwood (*voted to begin the meeting*)  
Jenna Conroy, Canton  
Jhana Wallace, Wellesley (*voted to begin the meeting*)  
Trish Fisher, Walpole  
Katie Paciorkowski, Dedham  
Ginnie Chacon-Lopez, Needham

### Voting members absent:

Melissa Ranieri motioned to start the meeting. Jhana Wallace seconded the motion.

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



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Westwood: Y

The regular meeting of the Norfolk County-8 (NC-8) Local Public Health Coalition was called to order at 11:10 AM on January 5, 2026.

### I. Welcome

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

Melissa Ranieri made a motion to approve the December 2025 Coalition Meeting minutes and the December 2025 Strategic Planning Kickoff Meeting Summary. Meg Goldstein seconded the motion.

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

Minutes were approved.

### II. Announcements and Reminders

#### a. Welcomes

- i. BME welcomed participants back from the New Year, and welcomed the new Regional Epidemiologist, Sarah Lavari, as well as BME Consultant, Beth Haefner, returning from leave.

#### b. Public Health Excellence (PHE) Updates

##### i. Regional Vaccine Access Discussion

1. BME provided a reminder about the Regional Vaccine Access Discussion meeting, which will be held on January 6th from 3-4pm. This meeting will include the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Vaccine Management Unit Operations Coordinator, Dylan Kirby, and will focus on discussing considerations related to a potential NC-8 regional vaccine access program initiative.

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ii. Massachusetts Public Health Alliance (MPHA) Local Public Health (LPH) Email Campaign

1. BME provided an overview of the MPHA Local Public Health Email Campaign, and shared a link to sign up: [Sign up to participate in MPHA's "Send an Email, Educate a Legislator" campaign!](#)
2. The campaign, being held from September 2025 through September 2026, is designed to give legislators across the Commonwealth a peek into the daily lives of public health workers. Participation in the campaign is optional and can be used as an opportunity to highlight local public health work.
3. A QR code was shared to facilitate identification of MA House Representatives and State Senators.



4. Any questions related to this email campaign can be sent to Kate Forrest, [kforrest@mapublichealth.org](mailto:kforrest@mapublichealth.org).

iii. SAPHE 2.0 Reporting

1. BME provided reminders about the **Workforce Standards Survey**, expected in Winter 2025/26, which will assess current workforce expertise and identify future training needs, and the **Performance Standards Survey**, planned for Early Spring 2026, which will assess each health department's capacity to meet the Performance Standards.

iv. Staff Credentialing Survey Results & Next Steps

1. BME finalized and shared the NC-8 Training Resource Guide with the coalition before the holidays and plans to provide individualized staff training plans and trackers by the end of the month. These individualized plans will be based on results from the Staff Credentialing Survey, and can be used as an optional resource for staff training.

v. Upcoming Training Dates

1. The Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH) shared Tier 2 dates for both the Massachusetts Retail Food Inspection Training Program and the Massachusetts Housing Inspection Training Program for Spring 2026. Tier 2

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is the instructor-led classroom portion of the training programs and is facilitated in a hybrid format, requiring attendance in both virtual and in-person sessions.

2. To qualify for Tier 2, you must be registered for Tier 1 on TRAIN and have **completed all Tier 1 coursework by January 31, 2026**. All qualified participants will be contacted by email with instructions on how to enroll in Tier 2 in **February**. If there are more qualified participants than seats available, a lottery system will be used to select Tier 2 seat placement. Coalition members can check if they're enrolled in Tier 1 and their completion status, using the following links: [Tier 1: Massachusetts Housing Inspection Training Program](#); [Tier 1: Massachusetts Retail Food Inspection Training Program](#)

vi. Contractor Support Spending Update

1. BME provided an update on contractor support spending to date for Food Projection and Title 5. BME will continue to monitor spending and will work with Norwood procurement, as needed, to ensure continuation of services.

### III. Procurement Updates

a. Regional Communications Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Project

- i. Phase 1 of the Regional Communications project has concluded and the vendor, Crawford & Associates, has shared a final Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) with the dedicated planning team.
- ii. As the project moves into Phase Two, key next steps include:
  1. **A seminar series** in late February or early March, consisting of three virtual sessions for SOP review and a focus on trigger events.
  2. **A tabletop exercise** in early April with internal participants, building on the seminars and testing the SOP for the first time.
  3. **SOP enhancement**, which may include optional guidance on engaging with external communities.

b. Community Health Assessment

- i. Multiple proposals were received for the upcoming Community Health Assessment project, with plans to select a vendor in the coming weeks.

c. Hygiene Supplies / Test Kits / Tick Removal Kits

- i. Hygiene Supplies/Test Kits/Tick Removal Kits

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1. All hygiene supply purchasing has been completed, and supplies are arriving in Norwood for pickup.
2. All communities are interested in purchasing additional COVID/flu test kits due to increased demand and the uptick in flu cases this year. BME will analyze the COVID-19 Contract Tracing Initiative (CTCI) budget and reach out to communities with options for ordering additional test kits.
3. 100 Rescue Essential tick removal kits per community will be ordered in Term 2 (T2). Members of the coalition also expressed interest in hiring a tick biologist to provide a health education presentation on ticks and tick-borne diseases.

#### d. Digitization

- i. Three NC-8 communities (Canton, Westwood, and Norwood) are participating in the upcoming digitization project. The coalition reviewed the Request for Quotes (RFQ) Scope of Work (SOW) sent prior to the holidays, as well as quotes from two potential vendors.
- ii. The group discussed prior experiences with document scanning vendors, noting quality, billing, and file organization issues. Participants emphasized the importance of carefully reviewing vendor sample scans, especially for color accuracy, labeling, and grouping, as poor organization led to significant staff time spent reorganizing files after scanning in the past. Several attendees stressed the need to review and clean files before scanning to remove outdated or unnecessary documents and to develop clear SOPs for file naming, organization, and long-term digital record management.
- iii. The discussion also highlighted ongoing uncertainty around records retention requirements, particularly for materials not clearly addressed in state retention schedules, and differing practices regarding whether paper records must be kept after scanning. Participants shared examples of records typically retained indefinitely and noted the need to consult the state when guidance is unclear. Lenny Izzo agreed to identify and share a state contact with the group. Finally, the group agreed that Canton, Westwood, and Norwood would take additional time to review scanning quotes and organizational needs, meet separately, and report back, with Aine Studdert-Kennedy coordinating follow-up discussions.

#### IV. **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Updates**

- a. BME provided an update on the Advisory Group meeting cadence, with the decision being made to move to an every-other-month schedule.



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- b. At the December Advisory Group meeting, the participants voted to approve spending on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training in 2026, to fund up to 4 classes for 15 participants.
- c. January 15th is the Region 4AB Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) tabletop exercise, which will focus on extreme weather.

### V. Regional Staff Updates

- a. Regional Public Health Nurse Hiring Updates & Next Steps
  - i. BME provided an update on the status of hiring for the Regional Public Health Nurse, which is still ongoing. BME will continue to work with the subcommittee to move forward with selected candidates.
- b. Regional Epidemiologist Updates
  - i. NC-8 successfully hired a Regional Epidemiologist, Sarah Lavari, in December. She is currently working through her onboarding process and initial foundational trainings.
- c. Regional Epidemiologist Report-Out
  - i. Sarah Lavari provided a high-level update on her onboarding progress and shared an overview of potential projects that could be undertaken both regionally for NC-8, aligned with the coalition's workplan, and individually at the community level using existing data. The project menu included:
    1. Infectious Disease Investigations and Trend Analysis
    2. Immunization Data Analysis
    3. Community Health Surveys
    4. Inspectional Services Analysis
      - a. Tracking violation patterns
      - b. Identifying types of establishments with the most violations
    5. Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Initiatives Analysis
    6. Health Communications & Education
  - ii. Coalition members discussed several priority areas for epidemiology support:
    1. **Vaccination Needs:** Meg Goldstein expressed interest in better understanding populations most in need of free adult vaccines, particularly uninsured groups, and suggested that regional data could help support a coordinated vaccine program.
    2. **Tick-Borne Illnesses:** Jared Orsini raised concerns about tick-borne illnesses, specifically Lone Star ticks, and requested clearer analyses of current threats and potential interventions. Sarah Lavari noted that existing regional projects on Cape Cod could be adapted for NC-8 and highlighted that she could leverage support from other regional epidemiologists in that area.

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- iii. Additional discussion points included:
  - 1. **Epidemiology Products for Public Communication:** Meg Goldstein suggested producing regular epidemiology outputs, such as infographics or monthly/quarterly data snapshots, suitable for social media or individual town websites.
  - 2. **Regional Updates:** Aine Studdert-Kennedy recommended posting regional updates on the NC-8 website to reach a broader audience.
  - 3. **Regulatory Support:** Sam Mendard highlighted the need for data and research support to inform revisions and development of local public health regulations.
- iv. Sarah responded that these requests could be explored further in one-on-one meetings and noted that state epidemiologists are often available to provide relevant datasets.

### VI. Fiscal Year 2026 Term 1 Reporting Analysis & Discussion

- a. A key focus for Shared Services Arrangements (SSA) across the state this fiscal year has been sustainability. Planning ahead ensures that collaboration and progress continue beyond current funding cycles. This includes exploring alternative funding strategies and building long-term support from local leaders and stakeholders.
- b. Communicating the value of the SSA's work is central to this effort. Clear, concise reporting helps town officials, finance boards, and community members understand the impact and benefits of regional collaboration. The SSA is already integrating sustainability into its operations through ongoing Strategic Planning, which sets future-focused goals and priorities.
- c. Several reporting strategies are being considered:
  - i. **Annual or tri-annual reports:** Highlighting financial summaries, governance structure, key accomplishments, operational improvements, inspections support, and strategic planning updates.
  - ii. **Short impact reports or one-page summaries:** Using stories, data, and visuals to provide an accessible, high-level overview of SSA accomplishments.
  - iii. **Regular website updates:** Sharing timely news and project highlights to keep communities informed.
- d. **Discussion Highlights:** The group emphasized the importance of keeping reports simple, concise, and accessible. High-level overviews that communicate services, partnerships, and accomplishments were preferred over detailed technical data. Stakeholders noted that even brief summaries or small visual snapshots can effectively demonstrate impact to community members and local leaders. There was strong support for materials that highlight how the SSA collaborates across communities and the tangible benefits provided to towns.
- e. Moving forward, the SSA will continue to refine reporting approaches to clearly showcase



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achievements, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and support the long-term sustainability of regional public health collaboration.

### IX. Community Updates

- a. Members discussed opportunities for mental health awareness training for nurses across the region. A grant that supports “train-the-trainer” programs is available through September, and communities could collaborate to participate. Once trained, nurses would be able to conduct three trainings per year in their own communities or neighboring towns, allowing regional collaboration and credit for the sessions.
- b. Dedham and Walpole expressed interest in participating, and members noted that training could be supported as a regional project if there is sufficient interest. The discussion highlighted the potential for leveraging the grant to strengthen behavioral health education and awareness across multiple communities.

### X. Meeting Closure

The next regular NC-8 Coalition meeting (virtual) is scheduled for February 2, 2026, 11AM - 1PM.

The meeting adjourned at 12:46 PM.

#### **Documents used and referenced during the meeting:**

NC-8 January 2026 Meeting Presentation

NC-8 Training Resource Guide

NC-8 Records Management Storing & Archives RFQ SOW

NC-8 Records Management Storing & Archives SOW (MetaSource Quote)

NC-8 Records Management Storing & Archives SOW (New England Archives Center Quote)