



Norfolk County-8 Coalition

March 6, 2026



Community Health Assessment Kickoff Meeting Minutes

Time: 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Virtual Meeting https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88414524542?jst=2

Attendees:

Health Resources in Action:

Hannah Carliner
Allyson Auerbach
Julia Taylor
Priyokti Rana
Victoria Tran
Mithila Farin

NC-8 Representatives:

Meg Goldstein, Canton Health Director
Samantha Menard, Dedham Health Director
Sarah Lavari, NC-8 Regional Epidemiologist
Stacey Lane, Norwood Health Director
Patricia Fisher, Walpole Public Health Nurse
Jared Orsini, Westwood Health Director

BME Strategies:

Aine Studdert-Kennedy
Beth Haefner

I. Health Resources in Action (HRiA) and NC-8 Introductions

HRiA introduced their project team and provided an overview of their health equity framework, which centers racial equity to maximize community impact. The primary objectives of this meeting were to launch the 2026 NC-8 Community Health Assessment (CHA) process, align on project timelines, and identify key community topics and populations for engagement.

II. Overview of Project Work Plan and Timeline

HRiA outlined a mixed-methods study to examine the health status and social determinants of health (SDoH) of NC-8 residents. The goal is to identify community strengths, resource gaps, and 2-4 strategic priorities.

- a. **Data Components:** The assessment will include secondary data analysis (existing



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health and economic data), qualitative data (10 stakeholder interviews and 5 focus groups), and a brief community resident survey.

- b. **Timeline:** The project launched in February 2026. Secondary data compilation is currently underway in coordination with the Regional Epidemiologist. Qualitative data collection begins shortly, followed by the community survey in April 2026. A first draft of the CHA report is expected by June 2026.
- c. **Roles:** HRiA will conduct the assessment and coordinate with BME and the Regional Epidemiologist. The NC-8 Coalition acts as the overseeing body, making final decisions on implementation and serving as community champions for the work.

III. Key Topics and Populations Discussion

The Coalition discussed priority areas to ensure the CHA provides actionable data for upcoming funding opportunities, particularly regarding opioid abatement funds.

- a. **Substance Use & Opioid Abatement:** The group expressed a strong need for primary data to guide the spending of opioid abatement funds. Key areas of interest include community perceptions, service gaps, and recovery resources.
- b. **Healthcare Access & Maternal Health:** There is a significant concern regarding the loss of acute healthcare services in the region. The Coalition wants to track where residents are currently going for acute care as well as birth care and follow-up.
- c. **Social Services Integration:** The group discussed the integration of social services in health departments, and highlighted social work needs across towns. Members are interested in public sentiment on this model and the potential for sharing a regional social worker.
- d. **Cultural & Language Access:** The group discussed the need to determine if language barriers are preventing residents from accessing existing resources, emphasizing the need to identify translation gaps.

IV. Community Engagement Discussion

A. Community Leaders, Organizations, and Populations

HRiA presented a framework for identifying who should be interviewed or included in focus groups.

- a. **Geographic Focus:** The group confirmed that the assessment will cover Norwood, Canton, Dedham, Westwood, and Walpole.
- b. **Focus Group Refinement:** HRiA proposed 5 focus groups. The group reviewed a list of community organizations by topic area, and the coalition made recommendations to support the identification of organizations to prioritize for participation in focus groups.



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- c. **Stakeholder Interviews:** HRiA will conduct 10 interviews organized primarily by town and topic area (e.g., elder services, public safety, education). HRiA will follow up with individual towns by email to confirm priority organizations for interviews.

V. Community Health Survey Planning Discussion

HRiA will lead the distribution of a community survey, focusing on actionable health data.

- a. **Distribution:** The survey will be digitally distributed. Strategies include partnering with schools and Senior Centers. NC-8's Regional Epidemiologist will conduct on-the-ground survey collection at community events and locations across towns.
- b. **Languages:** The Coalition identified Spanish, Portuguese, and Farsi as potential priority languages for translation, and recommended reviewing census data and school data to make decisions about priority languages for translation.
- c. **Data Integration:** The Coalition discussed how to best funnel survey data into a regional dashboard managed by the Regional Epidemiologist to ensure long-term utility.
- d. **Next Steps:** HRiA will circulate a draft survey for Coalition feedback in the coming week. Bi-weekly meetings will be set up with the group throughout the duration of the project.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30PM.

Materials Referenced:

Kickoff Meeting Presentation