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TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH BOARD OF HEALTH

Town Hall Offices • 63 Main Street • Northborough, MA 01532 • Phone & Fax 508-393-5009

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Glenn French, Esq
Dilip Jain, M.D.
Swati Sane, M.D.
Theresa Capobianco, Esq
Lisa Bennett Johnson, DHSc, MPH, RDH, CPH, MCHES

TOWN: Kristin Black, PhD, MS, Health Director
Angie Sowden, Administrative Assistant
Michael Seager, Health Agent

OTHER: NA

The Board of Health (BOH) met on **Tuesday, September 12, 2023**, in The Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room. The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by Chair, Glenn French.

1. **Substance Use Prevention – Updates Presented by Dr. Kristin Black**

The Northborough-Southborough Substance Use Prevention Coalition has been rebranded and is now called Encompass. It is a community coalition focused on preventing and reducing substance misuse in Northborough and Southborough.

a) **Drug Free Community Grant**

Encompass was awarded a 5-year grant for \$125,000 from the Center for Disease Control (CDC). There is a potential renewal for an additional 5 years. The Town of Northborough is the Fiscal Host. The primary purpose of the funding will go towards a full-time Substance Use Prevention Coordinator position. The primary goal of this coalition is to develop and implement comprehensive substance use prevention programs in both the middle and high schools in our community and to support families by providing resources and guidance on dealing with various substance abuse challenges.

The Town will be advertising to hire a Substance Use Prevention Coordinator. The Coalition is looking for someone that is already in a role like this or someone familiar with this type of work such as a therapist, educator, social worker, etc. We have observed that other communities have achieved measurable success in this grant program. For more information or volunteer opportunities, please visit our website at: encompasscoalition.org.

b) **Opioid Settlement Funds**

As of now, there has been no progress in allocating the funds. It is important to note that many communities are facing the same challenges allocating funds. The Department of Public Health announced, just today, that they will have consultants available to guide and clarify the process of utilizing these funds. Given the ongoing transition in town administration, it's a suitable time to take a brief pause, as there is

no immediate urgency. These funds remain accessible, and we can coordinate with DPH to schedule a consultation when the timing is most convenient.

2. Greater Boroughs Partnership for Health – Updates Presented by Dr. Kristin Black

There are no significant updates to report at this time. Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 20, 2023, and it will be recorded on Zoom. We are pleased to announce that the fiscal year 2024 budget has been approved, with additional funding allocated for Michael Seager (Health Agent) and Isabella Caruso (Epidemiologist). We will soon receive a shipment of CPR mannequins. Furthermore, we are actively working to launch the Maternal Child Health program and our Narcan training sessions will continue. We have received emails from the Collins Center regarding potential opportunities for more shared services.

3. Flu Clinics – Information Presented by Dr. Kristin Black

There will be a Flu-Clinic at the Senior Center on October 19th. On October 14th we will be conducting a drive-thru vaccination clinic at the High School. The layout will be adjusted to the front of high school due to construction at the rear of the property for the new athletic fields. Public Health Nurse, Isabella Caruso and the DPW have conducted a site visit to redo the layout. Our goal, in collaboration with Salmon VNA, is to administer 500 doses. To make the process efficient, we've recruited students as scribes. Everyone is required to pre-register, ensuring a streamlined experience. There will be no COVID vaccines offered. We are looking into offering the high dose of the flu vaccine at the Senior Center clinic.

4. Emergency Assistance Shelter – Updates Presented by Dr. Kristin Black

Massachusetts is a "right to shelter" state, which means that shelters can take various forms, from a gym with cots to condos or hotel rooms. Our local hotel is currently being used as a shelter. Communities with hotels are more likely to witness their use as shelters, and the number of families in the state's shelter system has doubled in the last year. This surge has pushed our shelter system to the brink, challenging the conventional roles of towns. Northborough was the first unsupported site opening in late June.

The latest development we received is that the National Guard will be deployed to our site. We had arranged buffet-style food to be delivered twice a day, but now pre-packaged meals will be arriving from Boston. The Town of Northborough is not incurring any charges. This week, we'll start providing bus services to ensure access to health, exercise, food, and shopping. Work permits can take 7-12 months. Legal immigration services to assist with filing work permits are scheduled for this Saturday at the Northborough Library. Additionally, the YMCA will offer memberships to all families. The location of the site has posed challenges due to transient populations, but efforts are being made to maintain safety. Our staff is on-site intermittently, and we are actively managing vaccination records, TB testing, and lead testing, which is mandatory. The presence of the National Guard will bring changes to the site, ensuring safety and addressing potential issues such as scams and human trafficking. Currently, we are assisting 28 families, totaling 97 people, and the state mandates 24/7 staffing for sites serving 50 or more families. We anticipate a decreased workload for town employees over time.

Our schools have been exceptional, they ensured that the school-aged kids started on the first day of the school year without any delays. With the strong support of the School's Nurse Leader Mary Ellen Duggan, all school aged children received new shoes, school supplies and

were provided snacks. Additionally, the Schools bussed all families the day prior to the start of school to each school so families and children could meet with administrators and see the schools prior to the first day. DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) has a reimbursement process in place for new arrivals and the schools.

We'd like to acknowledge Serge Prepetit, a local from Northborough, and his wife Guilene Prepetit for their outstanding volunteer assistance to families. Vudithe Amazan Moise, a nurse and local in Shrewsbury, has also been truly amazing and extremely supportive of these families and town staff. Isabella Caruso, Erin Coullard and Michael Seager have been instrumental as well! Our next initiative is to organize a volunteer-driven coat drive, aimed at providing coats, hats, mittens, snow pants, and boots to those in need.

5. Any Other Business to Come Before the Board

Theresa Capobianco inquired about the recent flooding in Leominster and whether Northborough has a plan in place to address a similar situation. Kristin Black responded by confirming that the Town of Northborough does indeed have a shelter plan in place. Chief Parenti of the Northborough Fire Department serves as the Emergency Management Director. Additionally, the DPW manages a shelter trailer, and our plan was reviewed by the Red Cross this past summer.

6. Approval of March 21st, April 11th, May 9th, and June 13th, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Motion: Lisa Bennett Johnson moved to approve the meeting minutes from 6/13/23, and Swati Sane seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as recorded.

Motion: Dilip Jain moved to approve the meeting minutes from 3/21/23 with discussed changes, and Lisa Bennett Johnson seconded the motion.

Motion: Theresa Capobianco moved to approve the meeting minutes from 4/11/23 with discussed changes, and Lisa Bennett Johnson seconded the motion.

Motion: Theresa Capobianco moved to approve the minutes from 5/9/23, and Glenn French seconded the motion, with a note to ensure consistency in names.

7. Establish a Tentative Future Meeting Date: October 10th, 2023

All board members unanimously agreed on scheduling a tentative future meeting date for October 10, 2023

MOTION: Glenn French made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06pm.
Dilip Jain Seconded, Motion Carried 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Angie Sowden
Administrative Assistant, Health Department