

Town of Wellesley  
Board of Health Meeting (online remote)  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 9:00 AM

**Present**

Board of Health:

Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, MPhil, PhD, Chair  
Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Vice Chair  
Shira Doron, MD, FIDSA FSHEA, Secretary  
Shepard Cohen, MPA, Associate Member

Staff:

Lenny Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Health Department Director  
Deadra Doku-Gardner, MS, Administrator  
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nursing Supervisor  
Jhana Wallace, MPH, Community Health Coordinator  
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator (Retired)  
Ashley Denton, R.N., Public Health Nurse  
Nora Faulkner, MPH, Environmental Health Specialist  
Molly Graham, MPH, Environmental Health Specialist

Guests:

Trendline Analysis  
Penny Rossano, Advisory  
Beth Sullivan Woods, Select Board

1. Call to Order 9:04
2. Citizen Speak. No Citizens requested to speak.
3. Chair Report
  - a. Board of Health meeting with Advisory Committee January 7, 2026: Dr. Simonson discussed the presentation to Advisory and described key topics. Dr. Simonson noted the meeting is recorded for viewing.
4. Director Report (Includes Environment, Social Work and Community Health Departments)
  - a. Community Health Needs Assessment Results: Presentation from Trendline Analysis. Trendline Analysis (Kendall Bennett and Michael Russo) provided a

review of the recently completed Community Health Needs Assessment and took questions from attendees.

- i. Ms. Oliver Grape inquired about participation in college-age groups. Ms. Bennett noted that Trendline spoke with administrators from local colleges.
- ii. Ms. Oliver Grape inquired if the school interviews occurred in public or private schools. Ms. Bennett noted that the student cohort only included public school students but administrators at several private schools were interviewed.
- iii. Ms. Doron noted appreciation for the reporting on drivers of substance misuse and inquired about drivers of poor mental health. Ms. Bennett noted that school administrators primarily discussed screen usage and concern about overcommitment and high expectations for students. Ms. Bennett suggested that running cross tabs to further assess this kind of information using YRBS data for multiple communities would be useful.
- iv. Ms. McCauley noted that communicating information to residents is challenging. Mr. Izzo mentioned previous mailings and various digital newsletters which can result in information overload for stakeholders and suggests challenges with mission inclusiveness.

Attendees discussed processes for distribution of the report, noting the need to reach all key constituents.

Next Steps: The Board of Health will review the report by the next BOH meeting on 1/22, after which the Health Department and Trendline will develop a distribution plan. Dr. Doron suggested the need for a BOH executive summary.

- v. Dr. Simonson suggested a deeper dive survey to collect further information since the Community Health Needs Assessment results align with questions that came up at the recent Advisory meeting. Mr. Russo suggested more data compilation would be interesting for the school surveys.

## 5. Nurse Supervisor Report

- a. Dr. Simonson noted that Wellesley has higher flu vaccine rates than MA overall. Ms. McCauley noted a Flu surge starting with December reports, which is unusually early. Dr. Doron noted this may be a normal curve and drop off, or a longer than normal season. Ms. McCauley noted that Flu reports show many

pediatric cases. Ms. McCauley noted that the Health Department still has high dose and regular Flu vaccine available.

Dr. Doron noted that the new flu strain doesn't match the current vaccine well, and that last year's bad Flu season would normally offer some immunity and protection. Dr. Doron added that this year's strain subclade K mutation has prevented prior immunity support.

Dr. Doron highlighted a new study from UPenn that this year's vaccine still offers some protection. Dr. Doron also noted a Tamiflu shortage across the US and to remind residents that a test is only needed if you need treatment

- b. Ms. Oliver Grape inquired about Covid and RSV. Ms. McCauley noted that Covid numbers are low and the Department does not get RSV reports. Dr. Doron noted that RSV is low statewide and Covid isn't peaking as it usually does at this time.
6. Administration (Includes meeting planning, minute approval, other motions not associated with other items).
- a. Dr. Simonson made a motion to approve the minutes from 11/20/25. Dr. Doron seconded the motion. Dr. Simonson voted yes. Ms. Oliver Grape voted yes. Dr. Doron voted yes. The motion passed.
  - b. Next meeting: 1/22/26 at 9:00 AM. This meeting will be focused on presentation of the new Parent and Newborn Support Services program.
7. Adjournment 10:08