

Memo to the Commissioners

December 19, 2025

From: Liz Blackwell-Moore

Subject: Sole source contract to Health Resources in Action

Recently, a staff member hired under the Maine Prevention Network grant left the Public Health Department. Another staff member hired under the same grant is going on FLMA for the birth of a child. Given the recently loss of staff capacity, the public health department has to pivot quickly to ensure we meet the deliverables of the Maine Prevention Network grant by June 30, 2025. To meet the deliverables, we are undertaking a “Community Based Participatory Research and Action Project” in which we work with immigrant-led community-based organizations to co-design population specific prevention strategies with a focus on youth who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and/or live in immigrant families. Without the additional staff members, the Public Health Department needs to hire a consultant to make substance use data findings accessible to non-public health professionals, and then plan and facilitate three in-person engagement sessions with the community-based organizations to identify and prioritize the most effective prevention strategies for the populations of focus. The project must be completed by June 30, 2025. The consultant must be able to lead in-person engagement sessions in February and March and must have expertise in community engagement related to tobacco and substance use within immigrant communities.

In 2023, Health Resources in Action (HRiA) was awarded a contract through a competitive RFP process to provide the Cumberland County Public Health Department training and technical assistance on community engagement and addressing health inequities in support of the development of prevention workplans that will positively impact communities with the greatest barriers to health. Through that initial project, HRiA gained a deep understanding of the Public Health Department’s complex prevention work and our workplans. They also have the staff experience to lead a community based participatory action project within communities of color. They are really the only organization equipped to provide the type of consultation we need in the short timeframe. Given the narrow scope of the work and the urgent timing of the project, we are asking for the authorization of a sole source contract of \$30,000 to Health Resources in Action.

This project would be funded by the Maine Prevention Network Grant.