



Board of Health

January 10, 2024
 Room 208
 229 Main Street,
 Nashua, NH 03060
 12:30 PM

Our **mission** is to promote, protect, and preserve the health and well-being of the Greater Nashua Region through leadership and community collaboration. Our **vision** is to have an informed, safe, healthy, and resilient community where all people can thrive and prosper. We subscribe to the following **values**: integrity, leadership, adaptability, and respect.

Facilitator: Board Chair, Dr. Storace

Note Taker: Foqia Ijaz

Minutes

Attendees
Board of Health (BOH): Dr. Storace, Dr. Stephanie Wolf-Rosenblum, (Via Zoom) Dr. Charles Cappetta
Board of Alderman: Alderwoman Gloria Timmons
City Employees: Bobbie Bagley, Lyndsey Bond, Ren Bedouin, Bob Mack, Kim Bernard, Foqia Ijaz, Ebram Aziz, Chris McCarthy

Updates and Announcements

Meeting Called to Order	Chair, Dr. Storace called the meeting to order at 12: 30 p.m. Board of Health members were sworn in for the year 2024 by Attorney Steve Bolton.
Approval of December 2023 Minutes	Minutes moved by Dr. Storace. Minutes 2 nd by Dr. Rosenblum. The minutes were approved.
Comments by BOH	We would like to thank all the members of the DPHCS team for a great year. They worked hard.
Director's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director would like to thank the BOH members for their services and the support of our team's work. • DPHCS vision and mission statement was read. • An Amendment has been made to the RPHN Grants with additional funding provided to the PHEP Program to support liability Insurance for Medical and Emergency Response Volunteers. The amount is \$100,00.00 and will be added to the original grant. It will go to the Board of Alderman for approval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director and the Chief Public Health nurse went to the State House to testify in favor of a Senate Bill (SB) focused on workforce development. A portion of the bill was directed toward Community Health Workers for their certification and to help fund their positions. Some of the COVID-19 relief funds that don't expire till 2026 will be reallocated for that purpose. • The Annual Legislative Breakfast hosted by the Mayor's Task Force on Substance Misuse led by the Behavioral Health Team is scheduled for January 22, 2024. The theme is Housing as a Foundation for Health. • The Mayor is hosting his Legislative Breakfast on January 29th at the City Hall. Staff heads will present major legislation to the Mayor. • The Behavioral Health Specialist and Behavioral Health Strategist have worked shifts with the Nashua Police Department as part of the Nashua Police/Public Health Mental Health Response Team Collaboration project. • Two open positions have been filled. We hired The Housing Specialist Officer and a Portuguese-speaking Community Health Worker.
<p>Situational Update- Epidemiologist Lyndsey Bond</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a notable rise in hospitalizations in NH, particularly attributed to COVID-19 through January 2023. The current count of individuals hospitalized for COVID-19 stands at 72. • Wastewater surveillance has identified significant upticks in COVID-19, with the highest detection levels recorded at the Merrimack Wastewater Facility. A surge in cases is anticipated in the coming weeks. • Thankfully, there hasn't been an increase in COVID-19-related deaths, although reporting on deaths is often delayed. • On a national scale, CDC RESP NET indicates a stabilization in RSV cases for this season, a steady state in COVID-19, and an uptick in flu hospitalizations. It's worth noting that NH is not part of RESP NET, as it comprises 15 reporting states.
<p>CH Department Report provided by Chief PH Nurse Kim Bernard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program data is available in the report presented to BOH. • During the recent division staff meeting, positive feedback was received following its hosting. • New full-time RN, Ebram Aziz was introduced. • Attended the hearing of Senate Bill 115. The concern is that several staff members are grant-funded. We hope that the bill's passage will secure continued services. The funding is particularly vital as it addresses the challenge of vaccinating specific individuals, such as Medicaid recipients due to barriers related to their connection to Primary Care Physicians, online scheduling difficulties, and delays in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. We secured \$10,000 for the purchase of vaccines. Notably, the state provides children's vaccines. We aim to make vaccines accessible to all. • We are collaborating with SJH Mobile Health to address barriers related to immunizations, with the initiative set to begin at the end of January. • A bi-monthly outreach program at the NSKS Spring St. shelter is scheduled to begin in January. • Responding to an increase in HIV cases in Manchester, an incentive program was launched at the end of December to boost HCV/HIV screening at both outreach sessions and clinics.

- In light of an increase in hepatitis A cases reported in Massachusetts, strategic efforts are underway to enhance access to hepatitis A vaccines.
- Plans are being developed for a Valentine’s Day Event, demonstrating a proactive approach to community engagement.
- A collaboration is in progress with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) to develop effective messaging regarding RSV.

Questions and Comments:

- Q: Is there a consideration for private funding sources? A: We have not thought of that as this need has arisen recently. A BOH member will look into private donors and will get back to the CH department.

Environmental Health (EH) Department report provided by the Health Officer

- We are very busy with the food service industry with routine inspections. The failure rate is on par for now.
- We were busy with septic system activities. The reason is the construction of new homes on the outskirts of Nashua.
- There is an increase in housing complaints for sanitation and mold.
- Dog bites were up last month.
- We did pre-holiday site visits for facilities that were open on holidays.
- DPHCS Staff attended the PHAB Reaccreditation virtual site visit in December. The site visit went well and only a handful of reaccreditation measures were reopened for resubmission. All required items opened during the site visit were resubmitted. A report of the site visit findings is expected in January recommendations on accreditation status. Will share the report with BOH once received.
- The Hb-1565 and 1685 related to food redefining "homestead foods" as "artisan foods," creating an artisan food operations exemption, establishing artisan food products sales venues, and allowing the production and sale of artisan food products requiring refrigeration. This bill is attempting to change and allow people to make food without a license or inspection. This is very risky. City and State partners are to testify against the bill.
- Potential high-risk septic tank changes are underway. Currently, the required separation distance of the bed bottom to the seasonal high water table is four feet. They want to reduce that to two feet because it is cheaper. This could be dangerous in the rainy season. Water can get into drinking water. A lot of studies have not been done so we don’t have enough information for safety measures.

Welfare Department report provided by Welfare Officer Bob Mack

- There is an increase in expenditures. Shelter is the largest line item.
- Welfare staff will be participating with partner agencies in the annual Point-In-Time (PIT) count for homeless households in our community, which is coordinated statewide and will take place.
- Department staff continues to work with community partner agencies to refer them to resources and to provide direct assistance as needed to those who are in need and unable to sustain themselves.
- Outreach efforts continue to engage the homeless to connect to services.
- Nashua Soup Kitchen opened winter overflow beds starting December 1, 2023.
- The Welfare Department has expended \$355,204.60 for General Assistance through December 2023, which is approximately 76% of the FY2024 General Assistance budget.

The Shelter Assistance category continues to be our largest expense. We will likely tap into the trust fund.

- There is an increase in the number of homeless individuals. There are talks underway between the City officials to open up a warming station soon. The director will send the details to the BOH.
- There is a legislation on the docket to improve housing stability.

Questions and Comments:

- Q: did the opening of Monahan Manor make a difference in the housing shortage? A: no, because families who were living previously in it moved back.

Other Updates	BOH will have a special meeting on January 17, 2024, at 11:45 AM. The agenda item will be the discussion on the Ethics Committee document.
Public Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No public comments

** Full departmental reports can be found on the City Website under January 2024 BOH Meeting Minutes and reports.*

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM. Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Storace. Second by Dr. Rosenblum.

Please join us for our Next Meeting:

January 17, 2024 at 12:30 PM