



142 Main Street, Suite 410, Nashua, NH 03060

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

April 14, 2021

12:30 PM

Minutes

Attendees:

Board of Health: Dr. Charles Cappetta, Dr. Stephanie Wolf-Rosenblum

Board of Aldermen: Elizabeth Lu, Tom Lopez,

City Employees: Angela Consentino, Bob Mack.

Call to Order: By Board Member – Dr. Cappetta

Approval March 10, 2020 Minutes: Minutes approved by board members: Moved by Dr. Cappetta and 2nd by Dr. Rosenblum. All in favor.

Department of Public Health and Community Services (DPHCS) Director's Report.

Overview of report provided by Angela Consentino for the month of March. Highlights of ongoing activities included:

- FY 22 Budgets were completed for Division Program. All department were able to come in at 0% as requested by the Mayor.
- DPHCS submitted 4th year Annual Accreditation Report. PHAB reviewers commended Nashua DPHCS work in applying performance management and quality improvement to its COVID-19 response activities.
- DPHCS staff worked a total of 15,338.56 hours on COVID-19 response activity over a period of one year. Some of the COVID-19 related activities included weekly testing clinics, hotline coverage and messaging to mitigate the spread of virus.
- Ongoing vaccination clinics and vaccinations for homebound people in partnership with Convenient MD and Home Care agencies.
- DPHCS staff coordinated Community Health Improvement Plan with partner organizations.
- DPHCS staff continue to participate in personal and professional development trainings.
- Director presented at numerous committee meetings. Multiple press conferences and media coverage related to COVID-19 activities.
- Construction work on 18 Mulberry Street on target.
- DPHCS celebrated the 10th Annual Public Health Week. Staff was recognized.

Comments/questions:

- Q: What are homebound vaccinations? What are we doing for safety protocols?
- A: Nurses go to the residences of homebound people to administer vaccinations. Working closely with Home Health and Hospice, Convenient MD and other home health agencies.
- BOH member-phenomenal work done by DPHCS staff and commendable leadership provided.
- Q: How is Public Health dealing with pause on Johnson and Johnson vaccine?
- A: Department secured Moderna from the State in time to be administered at the vaccine clinics and notified people in time.
- Q: Have we been involved with the potential health impact from construction at the Alex building? Specifically in regards to pathogens or chemicals that may be stirred up by the construction and may be impacting public health.
- A: As far as the demolition going in in the old Alec's location, the approval process is initiated through Community Development, as they ultimately issue the permit. There are multiple entities that sign off on that approval form, to include Environmental Health. We ensure activities are in compliance with NH DES requirements regarding asbestos management. Link to DES site: <https://www.des.nh.gov/waste/asbestos/management>. We require an inspection for the presence of asbestos, and if none is found, they are free to demolish the building from our standpoint at that time. If asbestos is found, there are two options: one is to consider all materials as asbestos containing material, and be treated as such. This is the most expensive option. Second option is to abate all identified asbestos, to provide that documentation and evidence of the required clearance air sampling. Most inspections now reflect industry standards to include lead assessments, and presence of hazardous materials, both of which are then addressed. Another demolition industry standard is to keep building materials wet to keep dust down when encountering new areas or materials.

Department Summaries

Community Health Department:

- March continues to be busy due to COVID-19 cases trending up and intense COVID-19 vaccine administration response in the community.
- During the month of March, 31 COVID-19 vaccine clinics were held in the region.
- Hired 4 per diem nurses to assist at vaccination clinics.
- Coordination and vetting of approximately 150 vaccine clinic volunteers.
- Continue to provide services including clinics and outreach focusing on STD/HIV/HCV. Child and adult immunizations, SSANA services and lead poisoning awareness and testing.
- Weekly clinics at Lamprey Health.
- Resumed testing of chlamydia and gonorrhea.
- Disease Investigation team conducted case investigations and case monitoring per protocol.

Comments/questions:

- Q: What are the details regarding stipends given to public health staff for their response during the pandemic? Are staff receiving opportunities to work overtime?
- A: Hourly staff are getting paid for overtime and maybe getting more hours than they necessarily hope for. Salaried staff are working more hours than usual though. Significant number of volunteers are helping with the response including United Way volunteers.
- Q: In regards to non-COVID essential services, has there been any service that has dropped off? What can we do to prepare for the impact of services that have not been able to be continued?
- A: We have been holding our STD clinics and have our outreach services. They were welcomed back by the community. Home visiting services for lead and asthma may have been impacted.
- Q: Are we doing Lyme disease campaign?
- A: There is Lyme disease campaign in upcoming promotions.
- It is of concern that people are hesitant to seek medical attention for routine preventative measures due to COVID-19.
- As Chief Public Health Strategist DPHCS is maintaining community partnerships and continue to push put messaging to stay connected with their health care providers.

Report from Epidemiologist:

- Current COVID-19 situational update was given.
- Met with DHHS to discuss other variants in NH. Also discussed vaccine breakthrough. Three confirmed cases of vaccine breakthrough in NH. Full disease investigation will be conducted of those case.
- Number of fully vaccinated Greater Nashua residents is 9,101 till the end of March. 19,107 residents have received 1st dose of vaccine.
- Strategic initiatives include Performance Management and Quality Improvement and Community Health Improvement Plan. Five priority areas have been identified which include Maternal and Child Health, Behavioral Health, Communicable Disease, Chronic Disease, and Public Health Emergency Preparedness.

Comments/questions:

- Q: How were vaccine breakthrough cases found out? How will vaccine breakthrough cases be found out in Nashua?
- A: They sought COVID-19 testing after getting symptoms. Public Health Dept. will be notified and full disease investigation will be done.
- Q: Has DPHCS staff been vaccinated?
- A: All staff were offered vaccines. Most of the staff has been fully vaccinated.

Report from Public Health Emergency Preparedness Department (PHEP):

- PHEP continues to organize the weekly testing clinics and vaccination clinics including mass vaccination clinics at Fidelity site in Merrimack.

Report from Health Promotion and Communication Specialist:

- Updated Division's social media pages and website regarding Covid-19, including but not limited to: data, recommendations, and resources.

- Attended mass vaccination clinics on March 27 and 28 as the PIO to oversee communications and marketing.
- Worked with Community Health Workers to disseminate information to regional health care providers to promote Equity clinics.
- Messaging Priorities; STD awareness, Child Abuse Prevention, World Autism Month, lead poisoning prevention and tick/Lyme disease prevention.
- Hosted Public Health Week and held a ceremony to recognize contributions of DPHCS staff.

Report from Welfare Department:

- Slight uptick in shelter expenditures as compared to last year at this time.
- Primary focus is on keeping people housed.
- New Emergency Assistance Program was announced in mid-March and is operated by SNHS in our region.
- Demand is lower for emergency assistance due to tax return season and stimulus assistance.
- One staff member works primarily with Equity vaccine clinics.
- Spent approximately 57% of our budget.

**Full departmental reports can be found on City Website under April 2021 BOH Meeting Reports*

Other Discussions/Questions

- We need to identify criteria for lifting or reduction of mask ordinance. We need to look at low, medium and high risk situations and environmentally driven criteria. If we were to drop the mask mandate in summer then we need to make sure that we have reasoning and grounds for it to be reinstated in case of a surge.

Public Comment:

- Maryanne Knight-A Nashua resident of 24 years-Q: Do I have only two choices. One is to put my health at risk by wearing a mask or to move away from City of Nashua?
- A: The role of BOH is to educate and inform people. We follow the science and stats. BOH will be very interested in having you talk to a health care specialist regarding your concern.

Meeting adjourned at 1:41 PM. Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Cappetta. Moved by Dr. Wolf-Rosenblum and second by Dr. Cappetta.

Next Meeting: May 12, 2020