



Board of Health

May 10, 2023
 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. Tony Storage

Note Taker: Foqia Ijaz

Minutes

Attendees

Board of Health (BOH): Dr. Tony Storage, Dr. Charles Cappetta, Dr. Stephanie Wolf-Rosenblum (via zoom)
Board of Alderman: Tom Lopez (via zoom) Gloria Timmons in person
City Employees: Bobbie Bagley, Heidi Peek, Bob Mack, Kim Bernard, Lyndsey Bond Foqia Ijaz

Updates and Announcements

Meeting Called to Order

Chair, Dr. Storage called the meeting to order at 12: 30 PM.

Minutes moved by Dr. Storage. Dr. Rosenblum suggested an addendum to the Minutes

Original Wording:

Q: Is there food safety for home delivery services? Are there any regulations for inspections, especially for grocery stores? A: This is an unregulated industry.

Grocery stores are doing a better job around food safety. There are no regulations for other establishments besides consumers.

Q: Where are the milk and other perishable food housed? A: we don't have any jurisdiction in that matter. Only consumers can be educated more.

Addendum for Clarity:

Q: Are there any guidelines, regulations, or inspections related to home delivery of groceries – both for the grocery store that assembles the order and drivers that deliver

Approval of April 2023 Minutes

these orders? The biggest concern is for milk and other perishables – both storage and transport.

A: While grocery stores are doing a better job around food safety, there are currently no regulations, and the BOH does not have any jurisdiction in the matter. Consumers should be educated to assess the temperature and integrity of perishables when their order is delivered.

All in favor. Minutes approved.

Situational Update

- COVID-19 Public Health Emergency is ending on May 11, 2023. Positive COVID-19 tests will not be reported to the state or CDC. CDC will no longer provide community-level data. Hospitals will continue to report positive admissions, although it will be voluntary. COVID-19 outbreaks in group living facilities will continue to be reported to the State. Vaccinations and treatments will become commercialized but will be provided to hospitals for free until the Federal government runs out of them. SNAP benefits will go back to the previous requirement standards.
- A child from Augusta, Maine has tested positive for measles. Received one dose of vaccine. The facilities that the child had visited were contacted to watch for symptoms.

Questions and Comments:

- Q: Is there any update on Monkey Pox? A: We are monitoring it but there is no update.
- Q: will Public Health promote the new guidelines from the CDC that all people over the age of 65 should get boosted? A: there will be a webinar from 2:00-3:00 PM on May 11th to cover this topic. PH continues to promote boosters for eligible individuals.
- Q: Is it okay if the Governor’s Center for Incarcerated Children drops the masking requirement? A: yes it is okay to drop the mask mandate. Children should wear masks if they are symptomatic.

Financial Update:

- City Budget Meeting with Aldermen scheduled for May 11, 2023. Budgets were already presented to the mayor and Chief Financial Officer. The NH Charitable Foundation awarded the City of Nashua DPHCS with \$13,000 for Podcast productions of Speaking Our Minds. Nashua received \$365 K from the Opioid Abatement Trust Fund. It was approved by the Board of Alderman on May 9th. We will ask the organizations to apply collectively for the funds. We will announce it at the next Mayor’s Opioid Task Force meeting.
- Community Services Regional Public Health Network Services Grants will be funded for FY 24 for all programs except CIVD-19 emergency assistance.

Director’s Report Provided by Director of DPHCS-Bobbie Bagley

Behavioral Health Team (BH): The team is working on the Strategic Plan with assistance from the Mayor's Opioid Task Force. They are distributing NOLAXON Boxes at different organizations to reduce fatalities.

PHEP Coordinator: Planning for Regional Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop for May.

PHAC/PHN Strategist: Facilitated the Bi-annual PHAC Meeting. The topic was The Healing Arts of Public Health. Data was collected for the Community Health Assessment.

Other: Two staff were awarded the Public Health Awardee of the Year awards by The Lions Club.

Questions and Comments:

- Q: Why do you think there is an increase in the population of rats? A: There are a lot of variables that play a part in that. One reason is COVID-19. People were home and there was a lot of food waste. There are a lot of construction sites and food is being disposed of there.
- Q: Are you including rabbits? No, we are concerned about mice and rats only. Q: Are there any public health concerns with the increase in rodents and rabbits? A: Rabbits carry the disease Tularemia and that is a concern. With the increase in rats and mice populations, the ticks also increase. Q: Can Public Health or hospitals issue alerts to the public, especially about Tularemia? Physicians might not have realized that they should look for tularemia. A: we regularly push messages around how to reduce rats and mice. We have not pushed messaging around diseases that can be caused by these rodents but we can do that in the next newsletter. This information can also be disseminated to the providers through a HAN or during the regularly scheduled calls.
- There is an increase in the high-risk/targeted cases at the Sexual Wellness clinic and an increase in treatment. This number has increased nationally also.
- In the SSANA program, the return percentage of syringes continues to be high. It was 97% in April.
- There is an increase in overdose reversals but there is an increase in overdose deaths also.
- April was Public Health Week.
- Masks are optional at the clinic.
- We discussed grants for FY 2024 with the State Bureau Chief.
- Met with our Medical Director Dr. Granok. Went over the initiatives at the Division.
- Quarter Three reports were sent to DHHS.
- The Intern nursing and medical students are wrapping up their internships. We have received excellent feedback from the students as well as the staff.
- COVID-19 vaccine is being commercialized but the State will provide it free for over 65 years of age populations. It is also a part of the pediatric schedule so the State will cover it for pediatric clients also.
- There is one open Public Health Nurse Position. A student from Rivier has applied for that.

**Community
Health
Department
report provided
by Chief Public
Health Nurse-
Kim Bernard**

- We are having a summer camp in partnership with Southern NH AHEC for middle school students. The camp will be geared towards science and nursing education. We have 15 slots available.
- State of NH Bureau of Infectious Disease Control will have a new electronic system in June 2024.
- We held a Sexual Wellness clinic at Rivier College.
- There is a decrease of 22.73% in the vaccination rate during the month of April.
- Lead screenings are being done. Nurse Kathryn did a Lead story time at the library. We did testing there and at the Community Baby Shower.
- Behavioral Health Team Provided NARCAN training to school nurses and administrators.
- The Fatherhood Group did a session at the Arlington Street Center. They are planning for a free fun family program in June.

Questions and Comments:

- Q: can lead testing strips be provided to the schools? Is there a cost involved with that? A: we can certainly look into that.
- Q: can the students and staff at the schools that were reported with high lead levels in drinking water be tested? A: the question will be answered by Environmental Health.
- We are in the busiest season due to summer events being planned. Many of the vendors are experienced and we are confident that the public will be safe.
- Did not suspend any licenses but there were three voluntary closures. Tickets are an effective way for correcting issues. We are proposing a language for establishments to keep the dumpsters organized to minimize the issue of rodents.
- The inspections of indoor pools have been completed. Outdoor pool inspections are coming up now.
- EH Staff participated in a 3-part Hoarding ECHO series hosted by Dartmouth and NH DHHS. There was an emphasis on behavioral health issues in hoarding.
- We collaborate with Fire Department in addressing unsanitary living conditions when notified for assistance.
- Ongoing participation in encampment meetings and discussions regarding the health and safety of unsheltered homeless individuals.
- We have a webpage for rodent information. Staff went to a virtual Rat Training. Ren was on Public Health Radio to talk about the increased rodent complaints and activity and talked about how people can correct this issue.
- We did a comprehensive inspection of the Temple Street rooming house in collaboration with other City departments to check if the housing standards are kept up to par.
- State has instituted the testing of lead levels in the water supply of schools and daycare centers. Schools did the second round of this testing recently but the PH department was not involved in that. Two schools had slightly higher levels of lead in the water. Those water sources were not being used and due to not being flushed had higher levels of lead. All parents were notified. Other three schools lead levels were normal the rest of the schools will test the water sources in the

**Environmental
Health (EH)
Department
report provided
by Health
Officer-Heidi
Peek**

summer. The tests were done by independent labs and the results came back fast. We have spoken to the superintendent of schools to keep us in the loop when they are doing the testing and about the results as it is a public health concern.

Questions and Comments:

- What are you doing to kill the rodents? A: restaurants have placed bait boxes and other traps to eradicate rodents.
- Communication between the City and the school offices is almost non-existent due to the cyber-attack on the school’s website. There are a few measures being taken by the City. The response was very fast all systems were plugged off quickly to stop the harm. Employees are not working off-site at this point.

**Welfare
Department
report provided
by Welfare
Officer-Bob Mack**

- There is an increase in expenditure due to an increase in rents and the ending of emergency rental assistance. Our major focus is on the prevention of homelessness. The number of actual cases we are seeing has gone up although the percentage we are giving assistance is leveled. We do temporary motel placements.
- The Welfare Department has expended \$394,511.36 for General Assistance, which is approximately 95% of our General Assistance Budget for FY2023. It looks like we will have to tap into the trust fund this year. We will need \$60,000.00 to cover the costs.
- The staff participated in various community meetings including the Greater Nashua Continuum of Care, Homeless Outreach Committee, Governor’s Council on Housing Stability, Homeless Encampment Response, and Elder Wrap-Around Services. The trash issue at the escapements has been discussed at various meetings and the City departments are trying to address it.

Questions and Comments:

- We have projected that when the pandemic assistance will end there will be a deficit in the budget. Is the Board of Alderman aware of this? A: The Welfare Department report goes to the Mayor and Board of Alderman every month and they are aware that we are about to run out of funds.
- BOA has not received the book of budget yet. They will have only one day to review it.

Public Comments

- Does water lead testing happen only in public schools? Water lead testing is done in all private and public schools and daycare centers.
- How would we know if there is a surge in COVID-19 cases if we are not required to report cases? Hospitals are going to be reporting admissions voluntarily which will be the only indicator of trends for now.
- Government is looking into providing home testing for influenza and other diseases.

Board of Health will take a recess in the month of August.

** Full departmental reports can be found on City Website under April 2023 BOH Meeting Minutes and*

reports.

The meeting adjourned at 1:51 PM. Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Storace. Second by Dr. Rosenblum.

Please join us for our Next Meeting:
June 14, 2023, at 12:30 PM

DRAFT