

Moore County Board of Health
November 2, 2020

Members Present: Leo Santowasso, PE, PLS, Chair
Janice Baker, DVM, MS, DACVPM
Mark Brenner, MD
Louis Gregory
Paul Kuzma, MD
Max Muse, RN, ME, Vice Chair
Kamron Monroe, DDS
Tony Price
Benjamin Wacker, OD
Robert R. Wittmann, MPH, Secretary to the Board

Members Absent: Betty J. Goodridge, MHA, CMA; William Mang, PharmD;

Call to Order and Introductions:

The meeting of the Board of Health was held at the Rick Rhyne Public Safety Center in Carthage. Chair Leo Santowasso called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Health Department staff present were: Lora Denning, Administrative Assistant; Teresa Forrest, Administrative Officer; Melissa Fraley, Nursing Director; Matt Garner, Health Educator; Miriam King, Health Educator; and Jennifer Wallace, Administrative Officer. Ward Medlin, Deputy County Attorney, was present for the meeting. Board members and staff introduced themselves.

Invocation: Robert Wittmann gave the invocation.

Secretary to the Board: Robert Wittmann read the following statement: *Does any Board Member have a conflict of interest concerning agenda items the Board will address in this meeting?* None were noted.

Approval of, and/or Adjustments to, Agenda: Robert Wittmann asked that the agenda be amended to add a closed session at the end. Paul Kuzma made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Max Muse. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Presentations: COVID-19 Update:

Matt Garner reviewed information updates regarding the COVID-19 pandemic with the Board. Members discussed the numbers, specifically numbers and outbreaks in nursing homes. It was noted that all local nursing homes have had an outbreak at this point. Board members questioned why Peak Resources – Pinelake has had more cases than other long-term care facilities (LTCF). Melissa Fraley stated that, with the facility setup and design, the ability to isolate is difficult. For example, some rooms were constructed to allow up to four residents to

share one bathroom. Melissa Fraley stated that a lot of older facilities aren't set up for private rooms. Robert Wittmann stated that he has had conversations with representatives at the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)/Division of Health Service Regulation/ Nursing Home Licensure and Certification Section about his concerns regarding this. He has asked that future plans for construction and future amendments to operating procedures focus on the ability to effectively isolate and quarantine in a LTCF. In addition, the air handling systems need HEPA filters, or other approved method, for effective air filtration. All LTCF staff should be annually trained and fit tested to wear N95 respirators. Robert Wittmann stated that these changes could go a long way to preventing infectious disease outbreaks in the future. Also, any facility requesting permission for remodeling would have to come up to the new State standards. Board members discussed concerns with nursing home numbers and with the design and setup of the older facilities. Robert Wittmann stated that the regional inspection team has a standardized tool for inspection and they can educate the facilities on infectious disease prevention. Board members asked if information from the regional inspection team is readily available to the public. Robert Wittmann stated that the information could be posted on the Health Department dashboard. He noted that the State sends a team out to address outbreaks, as well as their ongoing inspections, and that information is posted on the State website. Matt Garner said that the Health Department could post a link to this information. There was concern that the public might not understand the information in the reports. Robert Wittmann answered that the regional inspection team could summarize and simplify information for the public. Board members questioned whether local LTCF are safe. Robert Wittmann replied that all local LTCF are following State guidelines and are permitted to operate. Robert Wittmann stated that design changes should be required at the State level and it would not be helpful to pass a local ordinance. He stated that the regional team will be going in to inspect and advise local LTCF. Paul Kuzma said that it is a complicated situation with social isolation because depression due to the isolation is also a problem. People need to interact with others although that is not ideal for infectious disease situations. Robert Wittmann stated that LTCF are required to have a plan approved by the State, NC DHHS, Division of Health Service Regulation. The facilities are inspected on a regular basis by the State. The new regional team is led by a trained epidemiologist, who has a background in infectious disease prevention. LTCF are a business and all of them want to do a good job. Louis Gregory asked guest Jaymie Baxley, reporter with The Pilot, his thoughts. Jaymie Baxley said we need to ask what is it that we can do. He noted that sometimes something really simple can reduce the rate, even without completely fixing the problem. Robert Wittmann reiterated that the State does not consider the LTCF unsafe or they would not have a permit to operate. Teams have been sent in to inspect. Leo Santowasso asked that the committee look at this – study ways to slow the spread and bring back recommendations to the full Board for discussion. Robert Wittmann stated that the LTCF are as safe as they can be, given this novel virus and the facility design that they have to work with, and they meet all State standards. Jaymie Baxley stated that Pinelake previously had an outbreak and contained it, this is their second outbreak. With their history of being able to control an outbreak, what is different this time? Melissa Fraley stated that staffing is an issue normally with all of the LTCF and may be a problem with this outbreak. With an outbreak, the State requires testing of staff and residents weekly. Matt Garner said that the new regional prevention support team had already contacted all local LTCF and they have scheduled some

visits. The team will share their findings with the local health directors of the region and the Moore County Health Department will share this with the public. Matt Garner emphasized the need for public adherence to the 3Ws.

Board of Health Education/Staff Reports:

Board of Health Duties and Responsibilities: Robert Wittmann stated that an in-person presentation through the UNC Gillings School of Public Health is not available at this time. However, the School shared the training information in the powerpoint presentation. Matt Garner reviewed the information with the Board.

Department's FY 21 First Quarter Activity Report: Robert Wittmann presented the information to the Board.

Board of Health Committee Reports:

- 1.) **Communication:** Kamron Monroe stated that she, B.J. Goodridge and Tony Price met on October 28. The Committee wrote their mission statement: The mission of the Moore County Board of Health Communications Committee is to establish better lines of communication between the Board and the Health Director; from the Board to the Moore County Commissioners; and to our community partners and the community at large. Tony Price was elected Chair of the Committee. Robert Wittmann noted that Matt Garner is the Health Department's PIO (Public Information Officer) and could be a resource to the Committee.
- 2.) **Vaccine:** Paul Kuzma stated that the Committee had received a copy of the Department's Vaccine Plan but they had not yet met. Robert Wittmann noted that, as the Department receives new information, the Plan is updated by staff and our contractor – OTP (On Target Preparedness). The Health Department will continue to update the Committee with Plan changes. Paul Kuzma noted that vaccine delivery has not been decided, on a federal level, and may bypass health departments.
- 3.) **COVID-19:** Leo Santowasso stated that he would appreciate the group getting together as soon as possible to produce some guidelines to control the spread in a more efficient manner than is being done currently. Leo Santowasso is talking to the Public Works Director about testing wastewater streams, to pinpoint particular areas of infection.

COVID Mouthwash Study: Robert Wittmann stated that, at the last Board of Commissioner meeting, they had instructed him to comment on a study about mouthwash for control of COVID-19. He asked Paul Kuzma for his input. Paul Kuzma stated that he pulled the original article. The study was fairly unimpressive and does not translate to a real-world environment. He asked Kamron Monroe if her office required patients to gargle before a visit. Kamron Monroe stated no, because currently there is no data to support that and it was dropped from recommendations. She noted that original Listerine has a high alcohol content and alcohol can contribute to oral cancer. Paul Kuzma stated that there is some suggestion that zinc lozenges do inhibit infection and vitamin D deficiency may predispose patients to a worse disease.

Nursing Director's Report: Melissa Fraley stated that there was nothing additional to report.

Health Director's Report: Robert Wittmann noted that the Board of Commissioners had placed a resolution to support the 3Ws on their agenda for their meeting the next day. There is still a Public Health Nurse vacancy in the Department, open since January. The Department has only received one application since August. He will discuss the situation with Leo Santowasso, Wayne Vest, Dawn Gilbert, Louis Gregory and Frank Quis. Press releases are available on our website. The Health Department continues to focus on slowing the spread of COVID-19, focusing on hospitalizations and deaths. A letter to the community supporting the 3Ws will be discussed with New Business. Also, a letter is being prepared to send to the NC Association of County Commissioners and the NC League of Municipalities. NC DHHS wanted local governments to consider passing local ordinances/rules, with fines attached, for areas with a higher incidence of cases. The letter will respectfully request that this be done by the Governor's office or the legislature.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Consent agenda contained the minutes for the October 5, 2020 meeting. Max Muse made a motion to approve the minutes. Janice Baker seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business:

COVID-19 Open Letter: A draft letter was emailed to all Board of Health members for their review. This letter, to be signed by the Board of Health Chair and Board of Commissioners Chair, would be sent out to the community supporting the 3Ws. If the Board of Health approves this, it will be taken to the Board of Commissioners Clerk, for consideration by the Board of Commissioners. If adopted, it will be widely distributed. Kamron Monroe made a motion to approve the resolution supporting the letter, seconded by Tony Price. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Robert Wittmann noted that the Board would go into closed session, with the following statement: Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to preserve the attorney-client privilege and (a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, and conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee. Max Muse made a motion to go into closed session, seconded by Tony Price. All were in favor and the motion carried. The closed session began at 8:04 pm and ended at 8:15 pm. Leo Santowasso stated that no action was taken during the closed meeting.

Ben Wacker stated that, for the COVID-19 Committee, they have a very broad topic. He asked for any specifics that the Board would like the Committee to address. Paul Kuzma stated that the Board should set a goal and make a statement that it is our goal to get kids back in school full time by 2021. Robert Wittmann stated that he could assure the Board that Robert Grimesey and the School Board are working toward that goal. Grades K through 5 are expected to return full time on January 5, 2021. The Health Department is working with Moore County Schools to

oversee their plans, which are looking at the logistics (buses, meals, etc.). Janice Baker asked about guidelines for Committee meetings. Ward Medlin stated that for the Committees, without a set schedule, all meetings would be considered special and would need to be announced, with a 48-hour notice. Committees can prepare a notice and send to Robert Wittmann. The notice can be posted on the Health Department website and on the door to the usual meeting room. Robert Wittmann noted that Committees could meet in the Department's Board Room. Ward Medlin stated that a virtual meeting would be difficult, since the meetings require public accessibility. With a committee of three members, a meeting of two or more has to be accessible to the public. Committee members can discuss their availability and schedule but cannot conduct any business without public accessibility.

Adjourn: Max Muse made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ben Wacker. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.