

Moore County Board of Health
March 1, 2021

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

Members Absent: Louis Gregory

Call to Order and Introductions:

The meeting of the Board of Health was held via WebEx and dial in. Chair Leo Santowasso called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Health Department staff present were: Teresa Forrest, Administrative Officer; Melissa Fraley, Nursing Director; Matt Garner, Health Educator; Miriam King, Health Educator; and Jennifer Wallace, Administrative Officer. Seth Powers, Director for Student Support Services, Moore County Schools, was present.

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: There were no adjustments to the agenda.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments presented.

Presentations: Moore County Schools (MCS)

Seth Powers spoke to the Board. He stated that he appreciated the collaboration between MCS and the Moore County Health Department (MCHD). He stated that there has been some type of face to face contact throughout the school year and the protocols in place have worked well. For Plan B students, they are in class either Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday, with Wednesday as virtual only. For K-5, students came back Plan A, with five days a week face to face. Secondary students have not yet been allowed five days face to face by the Governor. If the State changes this, it would take the system about two weeks to implement. There is a lot of preparation involved and social distancing will be a challenge. Protocols remain in place for

wearing masks, sanitizing and hand washing. Quarantine numbers have been low. Staff have worked hard on data tracking and reporting related to COVID. Parents and the community have done what MCS asked in terms of protocols, which was key to their success. After many discussions with MCHD, it was decided that FirstHealth of the Carolinas would vaccinate MCS staff. By the end of the week, every MCS staff member who wants the vaccine would have received the first dose. By the end of spring break, all staff should have been fully vaccinated (2nd dose).

Paul Kuzma asked if all students would be able to go back if the option becomes available. Seth Powers stated that it would not be required that students go back and all virtual would still be an option. For students who had previously opted for all virtual, if they wished to return they could talk to their school principal. Staff have to be scheduled to accommodate students either face to face or 100 virtual so some questions would have to be addressed with that school's principal. For vaccination, it was stated that about 1200 out of 1600 staff were interested. Paul Kuzma stated that, if you have the vaccine, you don't have to quarantine if directly exposed.

Board of Health Education/Staff Reports:

Board of Health Committee Reports:

1.) Communications Committee Report: Tony Price stated that the Committee, and Matt Garner, met on Friday, February 24. There were no public comments. The Committee would like some kind of forum for long term care facilities (LTCF) to share best practices. The Committee had questions about how best to communicate with marginalized communities and, if necessary, take the vaccine to these communities. Across the country, minorities are less likely to take the vaccine. Tony Price noted that there is a Board of Health strike team that could vaccinate. He stated that there was a recommendation from a County Commissioner that the Board look at reporting not only State confirmed COVID deaths but also report unconfirmed deaths after the death certificates are signed. There was discussion about contact tracing and the fact that some patients have no contact from anyone after a positive COVID test. BJ Goodridge asked about questions on public comments to the Board of Health. She stated that the Board needs to have those questions, along with the answers from the Health Department.

2.) Vaccine Committee Report: Paul Kuzma stated that the Committee did not meet. A strike team has been arranged, of about 15-20 people, across a broad spectrum of backgrounds. The strike team is waiting for the Johnson and Johnson single-dose vaccine. When we know we will have supplies of that vaccine, we can make arrangements to get out to the community. Leo Santowasso asked about training for the team and Paul Kuzma stated that it was on hold pending information on the vaccine. He has forwarded all names to Matt Garner and Robert Wittmann. Robert Wittmann stated that it was unknown at this time if the Health Department would receive the Janssen vaccine. As soon as it is received, the Health Department will get the manufacturer information and the strike team will need to train on that vaccine. Strike team members can come to a Health Department vaccine clinic and shadow staff. Staff will need to be certified in the State's CVMS (COVID Vaccine Management System).

3.) COVID Committee Report: Ben Wacker stated that the Committee did not meet. COVID numbers have been coming down, which is a product of people getting the vaccine. Since those numbers are still relatively high, we should continue with the message to social distance, wear masks, and get vaccinated.

COVID-19 Update: Matt Garner gave an update on current data for the Health Department's response.

Nursing Director's Report: All information was to be covered in the Director's report.

Health Director's Report: Robert Wittmann stated that there are two vacant WIC Nutritionist positions. He shared the Regional Prevention Support Team coordinator's report on local LTCF visits. This had been emailed out to the full Board previously. NC will soon be receiving the Janssen vaccine but it is unknown which local providers will receive this vaccine. Although this vaccine has a lower overall effective rate, it is highly effective in preventing deaths and serious cases. To reach the minority and underserved communities, the Department has sent out news releases and social media notices encouraging anyone 65 and older to register online or by phone. The Department has reached out directly to local community leaders. An additional 200 equity doses have been provided by the State for this population for the next three weeks. Robert Wittmann has requested that community partners produce Youtube videos by local trusted community leaders to address vaccine hesitancy, especially in young adults. He stated that Tony Price and Sharon Harrell, dentist with FirstHealth and former Board of Health Chair, were both mentioned as trusted community leaders. In meetings with MCS and FirstHealth, it was agreed that FirstHealth would vaccinate all staff for MCS, as well as O'Neal private school. MCHD would vaccinate all other private schools, charter schools, day cares and preschools. MCHD will work on vaccinating this population and will continue vaccinating from the pre-registration list, until completed. Robert Wittmann noted that more local providers have been signed up with the State to receive vaccine. MCHD has plans, as the vaccine supply increases, to offer the vaccine in other locations and that could include independent living communities. This could possibly involve the Board's Strike Team. MCHD will be shifting from pre-registration to direct appointments for vaccine, after finishing with the pre-registration list and lists for minority populations, day cares and schools. After receiving doses for the week, appointments will be made on a first come, first served basis. Regarding contact tracing and case investigations, the State recommends limited efforts to respond to clusters, outbreaks, and cases living in congregate and healthcare settings.

Approval of Consent Agenda: The consent agenda contained the minutes for the February 1, 2021 meeting. Max Muse made a motion to approve the minutes. Mark Brenner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: Approve Addition of Unconfirmed COVID Deaths to Health Department Dashboard:

Robert Wittmann stated that the topic of the Health Department reporting COVID deaths after death certificates were received and reported by local media had been brought up at the last Board of Commissioners meeting. The Board of Commissioners Chair had tasked him with taking the item to the Board of Health for their consideration. The delay had been explained at prior Board of Health and Board of Commissioners meetings. Confirmation of the deaths through the State Communicable Disease Branch is a longer process than signing off on death certificates. The Health Department can start listing unconfirmed COVID deaths straight off the death certificates that are processed. This was discussed at the Board of Health Communications Committee meeting. If the Board of Health wants to go forward with this, then the Health Department recommends that only unconfirmed deaths are reported on the dashboard, straight off the death certificates. Robert Wittmann stated that he had spoken with the Department's chief deputy registrar for Vital Records, Jeanie Garcia, and she could pull all death certificates with COVID on them up to date for a total amount and then could report it each week and update on the dashboard. Leo Santowasso asked if HIPAA was a consideration and Robert Wittmann stated no, that numbers and not names would be reported. Leo Santowasso asked if there would be any explanation as to what the number means? Robert Wittmann stated that the Department would send out a news release telling the public about the change, reporting COVID deaths as listed on death certificates. Leo Santowasso asked if this would mention confirmed or unconfirmed. Robert Wittmann stated that it would say deaths as listed on Moore County death certificates. Kamron Monroe noted that the number of confirmed deaths are still available on the NC DHHS site. Leo Santowasso stated that the State and County data could still cause controversy because it won't match. BJ Goodridge stated that the whole idea was to be consistent with what other counties are doing. Robert Wittmann stated that there is a mix of what other counties are doing across the State. Robert Wittmann stated that the number of unconfirmed deaths is simplest because it is immediate. It might come back that a death listed as COVID is changed, but then the report could be amended to drop one off. Leo Santowasso asked how much extra work would be involved and Robert Wittmann stated that the task is do-able, with weekly reports, and the burden falls on Jeanie Garcia. Leo Santowasso asked for action by a motion to amend the Moore County Health Department death reports from the State Communicable Disease Branch confirmed reports to deaths that are recorded on our death certificates as they are filed with the County. Max Muse made the motion. Kamron Monroe seconded the motion, adding that weekly reports should be a minimum, noting that as often as possible is helpful. No one was opposed and the motion carried. Robert Wittmann stated that he would inform the Board of Commissioners and would implement the new process.

Clinical Fees for Services FY 2022: Robert Wittmann stated that the Department is required to furnish the County with a fee schedule. Staff recommend fees to the Health Director who then recommends to the Board of Health. The Board of Health passes on their recommended fees to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration in the budget process. Only the Commissioners can approve fees but they require the Board of Health to recommend them first. Robert Wittmann asked that the Board of Health recommend the current clinical fee schedule for the Department be adopted for FY 2022. If Medicaid fees change throughout the year, those will be automatically changed as they occur. Environmental Health fees are different, any changes to those fees would go back to the Board of Health and the Board of Commissioners for review. Tony Price made a motion to approve the clinical fee schedule, seconded by BJ Goodridge. No one was opposed and the motion carried.

Environmental Health Fees for Services FY 2022: Robert Wittmann stated that there are no changes from the fiscal year 2021 fees. Kamron Monroe made a motion to approve, seconded by Tony Price. No one was opposed and the motion carried.

Draft FY 22 Health Department Budget: Robert Wittmann reviewed the draft budget for the Health Department. He noted that the biggest expenses are the ones that are determined by the County: salaries/fringe and assessments for building maintenance, IT, etc. There were few proposed changes, which included an increase in professional services, due to COVID, and anticipated expenses due to Medicaid transformation. Janice Baker made a motion to recommend the draft FY 2022 Health Department budget to the Board of Commissioners for their review. The motion was seconded by BJ Goodridge. All approved and the motion carried.

Appoint Committee for Health Director's 2021 Evaluation and Job Description for October 2021: Leo Santowasso stated that wanted to appoint himself, Kamron Monroe, Paul Kuzma and Tony Price to this Committee. He had already spoken to these Board members and they agreed. Robert Wittmann noted that, as Chair of the Board, Leo Santowasso has the authority to appoint committees, without need for a motion or second. Robert Wittmann noted that the County Human Resources Office and the County Attorney's Office are available as a resource to the Committee. He stated that the evaluation and job description review needs to be done and voted on by the Board by the end of October. Leo Santowasso asked if, since this was a personnel issue, there was no need for open public meetings for this Committee. Robert Wittmann stated that that was his understanding but that he would check with the County Attorney's Office about the procedure. He stated that he could ask the question and have the Attorney's Office communicate directly with the Committee.

Robert Wittmann noted that the Health Department had just received an agreement addendum that weekend for COVID money to aid vaccinations. This has to go on the agenda for the Board of Commissioners, in order for their approval to accept the funds. At a future meeting, they will have to approve how the funds are expended. The Department has a proposal but the money must be completely expended and goods/services received by the end of May. The legal process for bids is lengthy and there may not be time for the proposal. In addition, any equipment purchased should be useful for other projects after the COVID pandemic is over. No action was needed by the Board of Health at this time.

Adjourn: With no other business, Mark Brenner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by BJ Goodridge. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.