



Washtenaw County Board of Health

Minutes

January 22, 2021, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
555 Towner St., Room 2102B, Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Zoom Meeting

Present: Morghan Boydston, James Carty, Gina Dahlem, Leon Golson, Neel Hajra, Justin Hodge, Carrie Rheingans, Kathleen Stroud, Elisabeth Vanderpool

Absent: Katie Scott

Staff: Jimena Loveluck, Jane Nickert, Adam Paberzs, Ruth Kraut, Juan Marquez, Gabrielle Burgess-Smith, Kara Semanision, Alize Asberry-Payne, Russell O'Brien

Guests: Jo Ann McCollum

1. Call to Order

James Carty called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

Roll-call check-in.

2. Introductions

3. Public Comment

Jo Ann McCollum, Ypsilanti Township, community member involved with the Community Voices Committee, Road Commission, Habitat for Humanity Board, Community Action Board, and the Ypsilanti Area Community Foundation Board shared comments related to the vaccination efforts of the Health Department (HD).

Asad Kamal, Ypsilanti Township, asked about steps the HD is taking to deal with rising cases in the 48197 zip code.

4. Approval of Agenda (Action)

Motion by J. Hodge, seconded by N. Hajra, to approve the agenda.

Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

5. Approval of December 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes (Action)

Motion by N. Hajra, seconded by G. Dahlem, to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2020 meeting.

Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

6. Executive Committee Report from November 30, 2020 & December 16, 2020

No discussion about the report.

7. Election of Board Officers (Action)

- **Board Officers**

The Executive Committee recommended the following slate of board officers:

Justin Hodge – Chair

Neel Hajra – Vice Chair

Elisabeth Vanderpool – Secretary



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Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by L. Golson, to approve the slate of officers recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

- **Appeals Subcommittee**

James Carty – Chair

Leon Golson

Morghan Boydston

Gina Dahlem – Alternate

Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by C. Rheingans, to approve the Appeals Subcommittee.

Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

8. COVID-19 Vaccine Updates – Jane Nickert, Director of Nursing

Jane Nickert gave an update on COVID-19 vaccination distribution and clinic efforts. There is no cost to individuals for the COVID-19 vaccine. The initial vaccine distributors were national pharmacies vaccinating long term care facilities, health systems and large providers vaccinating their frontline workers and now their patients 65 and older, and health departments vaccinating health workers not affiliated, adults 65 and older without a provider, essential workers, and vulnerable settings not covered. MDHHS set an initial operational goal of vaccinating 70% of people age 16 years and older by the end of 2021. The HD has a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines, but that number should pick up after a few months of distribution.

Outreach was targeted at specific priority groups. A scheduling link was provided to the point person of an agency so that staff could schedule a vaccination appointment. Outreach strategies continue to change based on priority group. Jane discussed the amount of vaccines distributed in Washtenaw County (WC) so far. The HD has received 10,200 doses. From 12/14/20 through 1/20/21, 34,622 total doses were administered in Washtenaw County.

Jane went over the HD vaccination plans which include mass vaccination clinics, a mobile team, and pop-up sites with National Guard support. There is currently one site running on the east side of the county with a planned 1,000 shots per day. The clinic runs Tuesday-Friday but can change based on vaccine availability and expanded partnerships. There is a plan to open a clinic on the west side of the county. The equitable distribution of vaccine was discussed. Through a Rapid Response Grant, 35 people, mostly Black and Latino were interviewed about their thoughts on COVID-19 vaccine and identifying trusted advisors. The HD is planning a community-led forum that will address misinformation about the vaccine. Jimena shared that the HD is working with the Racial Equity Office on a Vaccine Ambassador Program.

Questions and comments:

Jo Ann McCollum asked what happens if there is not enough vaccine at the time someone is due for their second dose. Jane replied that the HD is keeping track of second dose vaccine and making sure the second dose is available before moving on to new first doses.

Justin Hodge asked about the effectiveness of the vaccine on the new strains and if either vaccine is more effective against the new strains. Jane replied that there is some protection for the new strains, but more research must be done.



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Morghan Boydston asked about the impacts on young people because of the age limit to receive the vaccine. Jane replied that more vaccine work must be done. Fortunately, the fewest numbers of cases are in those under 12 years old. Getting as many people vaccinated as possible protects those that cannot be vaccinated. Jimena Loveluck added that clinical trials have started for people under 16.

Morghan Boydston asked why long-term care facilities were listed as the hardest hit by COVID-19 when the data shows 48197/48198 were the hardest hit. Jane replied that some of the long-term care facilities are in those zip codes and people living in congregate care settings are at much greater risk because they are already compromised. They also tend to have the most negative outcomes related to the virus itself. Morghan would like to see data on the long-term care facilities versus the zip code numbers.

Carrie Rheingans said she fully supports showing the actual numbers. Absolute numbers are important to share and the general population hearing terms like “hardest hit” can be confusing. She suggested using epidemiological terms.

Gina Dahlem asked about the number of people declining the vaccine that do qualify for it. Jane replied that we do not have data yet on the number of people declining the vaccine. She also discussed how the HD addresses vaccine hesitancy, what the messaging says, and the equity group.

9. Wish You Knew Campaign – Gabrielle Burgess-Smith & Kara Semanision

Gabrielle and Kara gave an update to the Wish You Knew campaign funded by the Washtenaw County Public Safety and Mental Health Preservation Millage. Gabrielle gave a quick overview of the campaign history and campaign elements including artwork, video storytelling, informational materials, and campaign promotion. They reached out to WC residents and asked what they wished someone knew. There were more than 250 responses from adults over 25 (58%) and youth aged 11-24 (42%) from all over the county. The campaign has a presence on Spotify, television, billboards, bus ads, and online through the county website and Instagram. Kara discussed the plans moving forward. The plan is to increase age specificity to create new materials and curriculums specific to different age groups. New interactive content will be created because of the limited access to in-person gatherings. New video content will be created from existing footage for new advertisements, longer story-type pieces, and made available to be aired in online classroom settings. COVID-conscious materials will also be created.

www.washtenaw.org/wishyouknew

Leon Golson asked if we have any idea how prepared the schools are to deal with mental health issues of students. Kara replied that she is working with the WISD to see how to best get a stable curriculum out to teachers and counselors. Jimena said that CMH works closely with schools and that will be a good question for when they do their presentation.

Neel Hajra commented that there needs to be a more unified approach for dealing with youth mental health in WC.

10. BOC Liaison Report

Justin Hodge shared that the BOC began discussing the priorities for the term. Vaccine distribution was discussed and how to ensure everything goes well. The BOC passed a resolution to get the EPA involved with the Gelman cleanup.



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11. Old Business

- **Gelman Updates**

No update.

- **COVID-19 Response County Funding**

The BOC approved a one-time allocation of general funds to the HD to support ongoing COVID-19 response. The first request was approved for almost \$500,000 to support new positions for the vaccination efforts.

- **PHAB Reaccreditation**

The HD was due for reaccreditation in 2020 but that was postponed. The leadership team decided not to pursue reaccreditation at this time.

12. New Business

- **Board of Health By-laws**

The BOC is interested in appointing 2 commissioners as liaisons to the BOH but that would require a change to the by-laws. This would not take away any community representation but would be an additional member. Kathleen Stroud wants a thorough discussion on this topic. Carrie Rheingans said that all commissioners could observe the BOH meetings. More discussion at the February meeting.

- **MALPH**

Michigan Association of Local Public Health (MALPH) has a new executive director, Norm Hess.

13. Adjournment

Motion by N. Hajra, seconded by C. Rheingans, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 11:02 AM.

Minutes taken by Russell O'Brien