



Washtenaw County Board of Health

Minutes

March 26, 2021, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
555 Towner St., Room 2102B, Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Zoom Meeting

Present: James Carty, Gina Dahlem, Leon Golson, Neel Hajra, Justin Hodge, Carrie Rheingans, Katie Scott, Kathleen Stroud, Elisabeth Vanderpool
Absent: Morghan Boydston
Staff: Jimena Loveluck, Briana Tetsch, Ebony Curry, Jane Nickert, Kristen Schweighofer, Susan Ringler-Cerniglia, Alize Asberry-Payne, Russell O'Brien
Guests: Jennifer Green, Maria Militzer, Crystal Campbell, Valdis Evans

1. Call to Order

Justin Hodge called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

Roll-call check-in.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Board Member Response to Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Agenda (Action)

Motion by N. Hajra, seconded by C. Rheingans, to approve the agenda.

Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

5. Approval of February 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Action)

Motion by K. Scott, seconded by G. Dahlem, to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2021 meeting with 1 addition to the public comment section.

Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.

6. Executive Committee Report from February 18, 2021

Board members received the Executive Committee minutes.

No discussion about the report.

7. Role of the Board of Health

Jimena Loveluck shared the by-laws and discussed the role of the Board of Health (BOH). The BOH is an advisory board for the Health Department (HD) on matters of public health services and polices as well as being educators and advocates for public health services in the county. One of the specific responsibilities of the BOH is reviewing and recommending the budget to the Board of Commissioners (BOC). The Appeals Subcommittee is very important for addressing any appeals related to Environmental Health services.

When the BOH was reformed in 2015, board members participated in a training series for members of boards of health developed by the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan and the Michigan Public Health



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Institute (MPHI). The training series has been updated and an additional module on emergency response was added. Once the new training series is ready, board members will be able to go through it again or for the first time. There was discussion on the best way to view the training, as a group or individually. Carrie Rheingans said she would like to see if there is a way to view the training series together as a group. James Carty seconded the idea of meeting together as a group especially with new board members and still getting to know each other.

Kathy Stroud asked why any changes to the by-laws only requires a simple majority vote and not two thirds vote. Neel Hajra commented that any changes to the by-laws must be approved by the BOC, so it is a two-step process.

Carrie Rheingans asked about and if anyone was a member of the National Association of Local Board of Health (NALBOH). Jimena responded that they have a lot of interesting resources and hold a lot of events but the BOH has not participated in the past. As a HD, we could investigate an organizational membership that would allow board members access to the resources. Carrie offered to join as an individual member for one year and report back whether it seems like it would be worth the collective investment. Everyone will investigate and decide at the next meeting.

8. Community Voices and Health for All Report – Jennifer Green and Maria Militzer

- **Community Voices and Health for All**

Jennifer Green reported on Community Voices. During their last meeting, they voted and approved Jimena Loveluck to attend their meetings on a bimonthly basis. She will be attending the meetings to strengthen the Community Voices and Health Officer connection, as well as making sure voices of advocates and leaders are being heard by HD leadership. There was also discussion about other commissioners attending the meetings but that was tabled for more deliberation.

Members of Community Voices worked with other community advocates to schedule 150 vaccine appointments, organized and did canvassing and street outreach, and made hundreds of phone calls for the pop-up vaccine clinic at West Willow earlier this week. Jennifer reported back to the Community Voices group about discussions from the last BOH meeting. They felt encouraged by the prospect of becoming a voting entity but still need to have a more in-depth discussion on what they hope to accomplish by having a seat at the BOH.

Maria Militzer talked about the success that they had with a pop-up vaccination clinic organized by the Latinx communities and the HD on March 16th. Around 190 people received their 1st dose of vaccine.

9. Rapid Response Initiative Report – Ebony Curry, Maria Militzer, Briana Tetsch

Briana Tetsch presented on the COVID-19 Rapid Response Initiative including key takeaways and new findings. This was based on the Rapid Response Initiative and specifically interview findings that happened between November and December. This grant was specifically to address inequities and improve outcomes for populations most impacted by COVID-19 by preparing and planning strategies for effective, equitable COVID-19 vaccine outreach. Washtenaw County focused on communities of color, particularly African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and people living in 48197/48198 zip codes. Thirty-five interviews focused on priority populations were conducted with community members identified by community health workers and the Community Voices core team. The analysis consisted of summaries the interviewers put together, analysis of closed and open-ended questions, and specific findings for priority groups. Some limitations include the sample size, data collection and analysis conducted before COVID-19 vaccines were available, and perceptions towards vaccines may have changed.





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Ebony Curry went over the general report findings including demographics, concerns related to Flu and COVID-19 vaccines, and health communication trusted sources. Board members received the presentation with the specific data.

Maria Militzer discussed key takeaways and next steps. The key takeaways include the impact of systemic racism in public health practices historical and current needs to be addressed, inclusive practices need to go beyond hiring persons of color here and there and requires working with community leaders and organizations, and there needs to be transparent and equitable distribution of resources. Next steps involve increased communication of outreach efforts and transparent & equitable resource distribution. Maria went over a diagram of the COVID-19 vaccine protocol created by Latinx community members to increase access to the vaccine. It takes into account language, technology, and transportation barriers. Maria mentioned Spring Quinones, Washtenaw Health Plan, as being a person to go to in the Spanish speaking community for questions about health insurance and other social services. A lot of the trust for the HD comes from her work. Jimena said that Spring has been a critical organizer and an important connection to the Latinx community. She was a great moderator of a Facebook live event the day before a vaccine clinic at St. Francis.

Neel Hajra said that slide 9 is very important for Jimena and the HD to look at for guidance on how to prioritize a lot of different factors. The slide showed concerns related to Flu and COVID-19 vaccines. He also highlighted the "Trusted sources of health information" slide that showed Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) at 74%.

Carrie Rheingans said it might be worth the HD having some sort of dedicated investment in texting technology because it is super important for Spanish speakers in this community.

10. Vaccine Distribution Update – Jane Nickert

Jane Nickert gave an update on WCHD COVID-19 vaccine distribution. To date, 41,259 doses of vaccine have been administered. 25,875 first doses and 15,384 second doses. 78% of the 65 and older population have received their 1st dose of vaccine. 32.4% of the 16 and older population that qualify have been vaccinated. Today is the 46th clinic being held at the Eastern Michigan University (EMU) Convocation Center. Between 1,200 and 1,400 people go through the EMU clinic 4 days per week. The Chelsea clinic site opened on March 9th and has held 3 vaccination days so far. Vaccination rates in the African American/Black population have increased from 6% to 9.7%. Vaccination rates in the Latinx population have increased from 2.5% to 3%.

WCHD is now managing 3 types of vaccine, Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson. The HD also distributes vaccine to community partners including community pharmacies, area physicians like Packard Health and Allergy Asthma & Clinical Immunology, and through Nurse on the Run. 7,788 doses of Pfizer vaccine, 9,420 doses of Moderna vaccine, and 730 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine have been distributed to community partners. 16.8% vaccinated in 48197, 15.3% vaccinated in 48103, 9% vaccinated in 48198, and 7% vaccinated in 48104/48105/48108.

There was a pilot project that ended Wednesday that included 2500 doses of Moderna vaccine that had to be distributed in 2 weeks. 400 doses were provided to Packard Health. 190 doses were administered at the pop-up clinic at St. Francis. 703 doses were given out at a drive-thru event located at Ypsilanti High School. 722 doses were given at a pop-up clinic at Covenant Missionary Church. 175 doses provided at Bethel Church. 229 doses administered at 2nd Baptist Church. The remaining doses were given out at a pop-up clinic at the Towner Building.



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Several strategies have been discussed for reaching the areas of the county that may be having issues of access, transportation, and technology. “Strike Teams” are an option to take vaccine out to smaller groups of people up to 800 or 1000 per day. The HD learns from every vaccine clinic. No-shows happen every day because people are registered through many different places and they do not always cancel their other appointments once they receive the vaccine. Strategies are being developed for no-shows so that the HD can get people into the clinics at the end of the day for unused vaccine.

Justin Hodge asked about the specifics around equity strategies. Jimena Loveluck replied that the HD is dedicating at least 10% of the weekly allocation to community pop-up clinic efforts. That is an important way of ensuring the HD reaches specific areas in the county where there is high social vulnerability index and communities of color who have had limited access to vaccine. Nurse on the Run is another element of the equity strategy, particularly in the older population, because not everyone can make it into a mass vaccination site. There is ongoing work being done to ensure vaccine appointment sign up by phone and not just online. Talking about the texting piece and thinking about communication tools to ensure the HD is reaching everyone that is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Jane Nickert added that the HD can mobilize into a community within 24 hours to do smaller clinics of 200-400 people at a time.

Katie Scott offered to help at clinics when available. She asked what the plans are to ramp up to try to reach the goal of 200 million doses by April 30th. Jane replied that this is a big part of discussions of the daily vaccine group meeting. Ideas include adding another day to the EMU clinic site, working on a partnership with St Joe, more “strike team” clinics, evening clinics, Sunday clinics, and more drive-thru/outdoor clinics as the weather gets warmer.

Carrie Rheingans asked if there was a way to do pop-up clinics at the ALANO Club, the West Arbor Housing Area in 48103, or specific mobile home parks where there are many Spanish speaking residents as well as offering to volunteer. She also asked how the decisions are made about what vaccine type to bring to which sites. Jimena replied that vaccine supply is still limited and inconsistent which hurts the ramping up effort. The HD was initially told they would get Pfizer vaccine only so that is what they prepared for. Jane replied that the EMU site is always Pfizer vaccine and Johnson & Johnson works better for certain populations that may not return for a 2nd dose. Availability mostly determines which vaccine type goes to which clinic site.

Jimena highlighted the collaboration with TheRide who is offering free transportation from the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti transit centers to the EMU clinic site.

Maria Militzer commented on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the hesitancy to receive this vaccine for people of color because it is considered the least effective. This should be considered for future clinics.

11. BOC Liaison Report

Katie Scott discussed the public meeting with the EPA, where they took questions from elected officials and tried to clarify some of the positions that they had. It seems there are 2 paths being followed simultaneously, continuing with the litigation going through circuit court and then the EPA Superfund process. Katie will share an MLive article about the meeting.

12. Old Business

- **Gelman Updates**
Covered in BOC Liaison Report section.



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13. New Business

- **NALBOH**

Discussed in Role of BOH section.

- **COVID Relief Funding**

Justin Hodge said the county will be receiving a large amount of money from the federal government. Katie Scott added that one of the things she asked for is public input and discussion about where this money might best be served. Justin mentioned a recently passed resolution that commits county departments to using the Opportunity Index to target decision making for programming and projects. Jimena shared a summary from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) with board members that gave an overview of the American Rescue Plan Act, specifically what was designated to support public health. Lots of funding to support ongoing COVID-19 response efforts as well as measures passed to extend Medicaid. There is a much longer timeframe for expending the funds compared with the CARES Act and the money will go to every county, city, and township. Washtenaw County is estimated to get a little over \$70 million.

14. Adjournment

Motion by C. Rheingans, seconded by K. Scott, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM.

Minutes taken by Russell O'Brien

