

MINUTES

Tompkins County Board of Health

February 27, 2018

12:00 Noon

Rice Conference Room

Present: Shawna Black; David Evelyn, MD, MPH; Edward Koppel, MD; James Macmillan, MD, President; Susan Merkel; Janet Morgan, PhD; and Christina Moylan, PhD

Staff: Karen Bishop, Director of Community Health; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Public Health Administrator; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director; Skip Parr, Senior Public Health Sanitarian; Deb Thomas, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; and Shelley Comisi, Administrative Assistant II

Excused: Liz Cameron, Director of Environmental Health; William Klepack, MD, Medical Director; Michael McLaughlin, Jr., Board of Health Member; and Jonathan Wood, County Attorney

Call to Order: Dr. Macmillan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at 12:02 p.m.

Privilege of the Floor: No one was present for Privilege of the Floor.

Welcome to New BOH Member: Mr. Kruppa introduced Shawna Black who was recently appointed to represent the County Legislature on the BOH. She chairs the Health and Human Services Committee and also serves as liaison to the Community Services Board for Mental Health. BOH members and Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD) staff introduced themselves to Ms. Black.

Approval of January 23, 2018 Minutes: Ms. Merkel moved to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2018 meeting as written; seconded by Dr. Evelyn. The vote to approve the minutes as written: Ayes – 4; Abstention – 3 (Ms. Black, Dr. Koppel, Dr. Morgan).

Financial Summary: Ms. Grinnell Crosby commented on two financial summary reports in the packet. The December 2017 report includes a 13th period for the County's year-end adjustments. Since the report was printed, the 4th quarter state aid claim has been filed. Financial books for 2017 should be closing soon; however, there is a large preschool account claim that splits over the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018. Due to timing for filing the claim, staff submitted some estimates to the Finance Department. As for January 2018, there is little to report. Payroll for January has now been posted.

Administration Report: Mr. Kruppa had nothing to add to his written report.

Questions/comments regarding Mr. Kruppa's visit to the Borger Compressor Station:

- Ms. Merkel wondered about the next steps for the Mothers Out Front group. After touring the station, Mr. Kruppa believes the group has an understanding of the facility's operation. There are three generators; a new one and two older ones. Upgrading the two older units would improve on gas releases which is a concern of the group. Mothers Out Front may decide to advocate for scrubbers to be installed. Although it is expensive, the energy company has installed scrubbers in other places. Management at the plant is extremely engaged in the system and wants it to be successful. They maintain a spotless facility and report major gas releases to the 911 dispatch center for alerts to be sent to the people living near the facility.
- Dr. Morgan heard this project referred to as an expansion. She was interested in the specifics of that reference. Mr. Kruppa reported it is not technically an expansion. The company made improvements by adding a large bank of cooling fans in order to move gas more efficiently. It also inserted bends in the piping located above the ground to control the flow of gas. Any new generators would not be an increase in capacity but would be an upgrade to the newest technology.
- Dr. Morgan and Dr. Macmillan thanked Mr. Kruppa for taking the time to visit the facility with the Mothers Out Front group. Mr. Kruppa felt it was a good visit for everyone interested in learning more about the operation of the facility.

Health Promotion Program Report: Ms. Hillson highlighted the Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP). This worthwhile program reaches residents throughout the county with one full-time employee and one half-time employee. In 2017, staff completed over 400 home visits.

Mr. Kruppa informed the Board that HNP is among a group of programs slated for cuts in the state budget. Governor Cuomo has suggested pooling monies for some public health programs and then cutting another 20 percent off that amount. Furthermore, there is a proposal to eliminate COLA (cost of living adjustment) for those programs which would result in a larger cut in funding. It is a significant issue. Mr. Kruppa will be traveling to Albany to participate in legislative meetings to advocate against those cost-cutting measures.

Medical Director's Report: Dr. Klepack was not present for the meeting.

Division for Community Health Report: Ms. Bishop reported:

- A check from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Community Health Improvement grant was received. The first year's activity will be to use the funding to purchase lead testing equipment for two family practice offices. The goal is to improve lead testing of children.
- Staff participated in the second round of vendor demonstrations of electronic health record software. Hopefully a decision on the software will be made by next month's BOH meeting.
- The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program is partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) on an exciting initiative. A WIC nutritionist and a CCE staff member will conduct grocery store tours with WIC participants and assist them with cashing their checks in an effort to improve check redemption. In another collaborative effort, Ms. Hillson mentioned WIC is working with CCE to raise awareness about nutrition throughout March which is National Nutrition Month.

Ms. Bishop answered questions from the Board:

- The WIC Program Report noted one reason participants do not cash their checks is due to the shopping experience. Since the WIC program issues checks for specific food items, participants must separate WIC eligible items from the remaining items they are purchasing. Later this year, a new system utilizing debit cards will be implemented statewide to make it easier for participants to redeem their benefits at the grocery store. Mr. Kruppa pointed out items will no longer be separated at the checkout register. Once the debit card is swiped, it pays for those items covered by WIC and the remaining items not covered by WIC are owed by the client. This new payment system will reduce any stigma some participants currently may feel.
- As mentioned at the January meeting, our Communicable Disease (CD) team has been busy investigating suspect mumps cases. There has been a cluster of parotitis cases. Individuals who are symptomatic with parotitis may not meet the case definition of mumps. So far, most test results have come back negative. At this time there are two probable cases of mumps; staff is awaiting the confirmatory lab work. The CD team is working with community partners at different sites to keep an eye on this disease and to ensure the appropriate isolation measures are taken to interrupt the transmission to others. In the case of mumps, the person is isolated at home for five days.

Children with Special Care Needs Report: Ms. Thomas recognized Mary Ellen Meade who is retiring from the program after 17 years. In all, she has been a nurse for 40 years. Her experience working with families has been an invaluable asset to the division. Staff is happy for her future plans; nevertheless, she will be missed.

County Attorney's Report: Mr. Wood was not present for the meeting.

Environmental Health Report: Mr. Parr, representing the division on behalf of Ms. Cameron, had nothing to add to the written report.

Report on the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting: Several members of the BOH attended the meeting on February 5th to hear the Supervised Injection Facilities (SIFs) presentation by John Barry of the Southern Tier AIDS Program (STAP). Ms. Merkel pointed to Dr. Klepack's monthly report in the packet as a good summary of the meeting's discussion.

Mr. Kruppa expressed interest in hearing from Board members about the direction or next steps to be taken regarding SIFs. The County Legislature also would be interested in hearing the Board's point of view.

- Ms. Black described two possibilities for opening SIFs: (1) Governor Cuomo could designate pilot sites through executive order or regulation or (2) the New York State Assembly bill [A8534] providing for the establishment of SIFs could move forward through the legislative process. She does not see that happening in an election year but perhaps sometime after the election. Philadelphia, Seattle, New York City, San Francisco and other places are looking to establish SIFs.
- Dr. Moylan mentioned there was a *New York Times* editorial published over the weekend on the subject of letting cities open safe injection sites.
- Ms. Black mentioned she works with STAP; one of the organizations interested in operating the SIF. In her position, she has learned from research and evidence-based information that SIFs are not the only solution. A detox facility and treatment center are also needed. The Vancouver site has been a great model but it is situated in a large city. Her group is looking at models for smaller communities.
- Although attendees at the meeting did not seem to oppose a SIF in the community, Ms. Merkel commented there was concern about protecting the people working in the facility from legal liability. It seems those concerns need to be addressed before opening a SIF. Ms. Black agreed there is some legal liability.
- Dr. Macmillan referred to a report from the Massachusetts Medical Society about establishing a pilot SIF in Massachusetts. The report includes an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in establishing a SIF. He will share the report with Board members.

Resolution #EH-ENF-17-0047 – Leisure Living Estates, V-Trumansburg, Operating without a Permit (Mobile Home Park): Mr. Parr explained the owner was operating a mobile home park without a permit. TCHD could not issue the permit because the owner did not provide updated disability insurance information. A temporary permit was issued for a month to allow the owner to produce a copy of the insurance form. Proof of insurance was submitted after the temporary permit expired.

Ms. Merkel moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. Morgan; and carried unanimously.

Resolution #EH-ENF-18-0001 – Glenwood Apartments, T-Ulysses, Violation of Subpart 5-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Water): Mr. Parr noted Glenwood Apartments has a small public water system that supplies water to eight units. Violations include the modifications made to the treatment system without approval from TCHD and some operational issues. TCHD staff suggests suspending the penalties so the owners will put that money towards improvements to the water system. They are currently working with an engineer to develop plans.

Dr. Evelyn moved to accept the resolution as written; seconded by Dr. Macmillan; and carried unanimously.

Nate's Floral Estates: Mr. Kruppa described the situation involving Nate's Floral Estates mobile home park that is located on top of the old city landfill. There has been media coverage as the owner seeks to expand the number of lots. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) previously conducted testing at the site and had no concerns about contamination of the surrounding water bodies. TCHD's concern is the public health of residents so staff members are working closely with DEC staff as DEC conducts additional testing. It will take time to get the results and to go through the review process for public release. To date, the owner of the park has been responsive. Residents have been notified of the situation. They know their water comes from the City of Ithaca public water system and they are aware of the requirements to maintain the soil barrier.

Mr. Parr added DEC held meetings with residents of the park to communicate directly with them. He noted Ms. Cameron attended those meetings.

Medical Examiner Program Discussion: Referring to the packet, Mr. Kruppa drew attention to the written description of the proposal for restructuring the Medical Examiner Program. The County Legislature has approved moving forward with the proposal. In addition, the Board is asked to consider adopting a resolution recognizing Dr. Howard Silcoff's years of service as Medical Examiner.

Mr. Kruppa answered questions from Board members:

- Staff anticipates a small number of autopsies, not more than a half dozen, will be referred to the forensic pathologists at Lourdes or Onondaga. Complicated cases and suspected homicide cases will be transferred to those experts.
- The on-scene death investigator may be the doctors themselves. It is more likely a staff member in the group would be trained to go to the scene with access to the doctors if necessary. Dr. Evelyn interjected there is a Physician Assistant on staff who is interested in this work.
- Ms. Grinnell Crosby is in the process of setting up a meeting with local law enforcement agencies to meet the new medical examiners and to discuss the changes in the process. Previously, law enforcement personnel would conduct the investigation and then call when they were ready to leave the scene.
- County law states the Medical Examiner upon notification of a suspicious or unattended death will immediately go to the scene and take control of the body. Unattended means no one was there to see the cause of death. In some situations, law enforcement will make a determination and communicate over the telephone with the medical examiner. In many instances, it would be better to have a medical examiner on scene.
- Dr. Daniel Sudilovsky and Dr. Elizabeth Plocharczyk, the Medical Examiners from Pathology Associates of Ithaca, are enthusiastic and have been working on policies. Those policies will define when there needs to be an on-scene death investigator.

- The Medical Examiner piece will take effect April 1st. Dr. Silcoff will be under contract through the end of April to ensure there is a smooth transition. This will be an annual contract.

Resolution Honoring Dr. Silcoff: Dr. Koppel moved to adopt the resolution recognizing Dr. Howard Silcoff for his years of distinguished service as Tompkins County Medical Examiner; seconded by Dr. Evelyn; and carried unanimously.

Adjournment: At 12:49 p.m. Dr. Macmillan adjourned the meeting.