

Tompkins County Board of Health
April 26, 2022
12:00 Noon
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Approved 6.28.22

Present: Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President; Susan Merkel; Melissa Dhundale, MD and Ravinder Kingra

Staff: Deb Thomas, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; Claire Espey, Director of Community Health; William Klepack, MD, Medical Director; William Troy, County Attorney; Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director; Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, Deputy Commissioner; Skip Parr, EH; Ted Schiele, HPP; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

Excused: Edward Koppel, MD; David Evelyn, MD; Shawna Black; Samara Touchton.

Guests: None

Call to Order: Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at 12:00 p.m.

Privilege of the Floor: None.

Approval of the March 22, 2022 Minutes: The March 22, 2022 minutes could not be approved as a quorum was not met.

Financial Summary: Ms. Grinnell Crosby was not present. Mr. Kruppa was available to respond to questions of the financial report included in the packet. He said that the 2021 closing out with the county finance office will be finalized next month.

Administration Report: Mr. Kruppa referred to his report included in the package. He added that case numbers are up in our community and the region; hospitalizations are on an uptick; moving to the high designation based on the CDC metrics of hospitalizations per hundred thousand over the last seven days; preparing press releases to the community about issuing a mask advisory.

Health Promotion Program Report: Ms. Hillson is out on maternity leave and Mr. Schiele will be reporting until her return in July. He provided the link in the chat for to the KN95 mask video which can also be found on the TCHD website. The Community Health Assessment work group will begin to circulate the community survey in June. He said two community health workers have been hired and will start in May.

Medical Director's Report and Discussion: Dr. Klepack reported that:

- CDC predicts 92% national increase in COVID cases by the end of April
- BA2 variant is very contagious (even more that the earlier omicron variants) but case, hospitalization and death rates reflect vaccination accomplishments, immunity gained from prior infections, and the extent to which the public is using preventive measures. Predominantly the unvaccinated are

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the ones encountering serious and life threatening disease. I urge all who are not vaccinated and boosted to become up to date with vaccination.

- Precautions are still necessary. The public is encouraged to wear masks, social distance and hand sanitize in a prudent manner.
- Medication therapy for COVID is available when someone is positive. They should contact their practitioner for advice. For persons who have qualifying conditions (such as immune compromise) pre exposure Covid therapy is available. Persons should discuss this possible option with their personal practitioner.
- Positive COVID cases are occurring regardless of age, occupation, and at all levels of education and employment status

Dr. Klepack shared his screen of PCR tests, 7-day average of new positive cases (all of which have risen) which can be found on the TCHD website. Dr. Klepack added that parents interested in getting a child under the age of two tested should opt for a PCR test as no antigen tests have been approved for this age group and, thus, should not be relied upon.

Ms. Merkel asked about the increase in drug overdose deaths. Dr. Klepack said the numbers are rising and have reached new and distressing levels. The concerns are several: individuals not having access to NARCAN, and fentanyl laced drugs on the street causing quick deaths. Many are not aware that drugs cannot be adequately tested with test kits to detect fentanyl. TCHD is encouraging individuals at risk of overdoses to reach out for supportive care and help. According to the ME summary spreadsheet, we had 23 deaths in 2021 attributed to polydrug overdoses (22 accidental, 1 suicide).

Mr. Kruppa updated that figure stating that Tompkins County had 25 drug overdose deaths in 2021, previous numbers were around 18 since 2016. There were a couple of months in 2021 where there were significant overdoses.

Public messaging will be going out about fentanyl laced drugs aimed at informing the public of the risks of using illicit drugs (even those that are purported to be diverted prescription drugs and even those that are not supposed to be opioids). These products are highly likely to have synthetic fentanyl like substances in them.

Dr. Dhundale asked about the availability of antivirals for COVID. Dr. Klepack said it was initially Kinney's and CVS pharmacies offering them but there are federal initiatives to increase the number of pharmacies to offer them. He stressed that it is very important to use the antiviral medicines as soon as possible after becoming positive and preferably within a day or two of becoming positive. Dr. Dhundale added that people should discuss with their doctors regarding their risk factors, including obesity.

Dr. Dhundale asked about the availability of NARCAN for the public. Dr. Klepack said TCHD does not dispense NARCAN to the public. Mr. Kruppa added there are multiple providers in the community that can train and distribute NARCAN including the Alcohol and Drug Council and Southern Tier Aids Program (STAP) and pharmacies, to name a few.

Dr. Dhundale asked about THC packaging for kids. Dr. Klepack said so far, the focus of the Office of Cannabis Management has been on rules and regulations regarding the growth of cannabis and how to obtain a license to grow THC. Marketing and packaging has not been addressed at this time but will in the near future.

Division for Community Health (DCH) Report: Ms. Espey had nothing to add to her written report. She referred to Mr. Kruppa's and Dr. Klepack's update on COVID and DCH is responding to those changes. DCH continues to monitor severe illness in the hospitals, high risks and congregate living and providing support to any organization that needs it. There have been increased calls from the public which coincides with the end of the virtual call center from the State Department of Health. The newly hired community health nurse is responsible for communicable disease and will respond to support the community for COVID, supported by our public health fellows.

Ms. Espey reported that DCH was awarded the Perinatal and Infant Community Health Collaborative grant which will begin on July 1st. This award was a joint effort between HPP and CHS with support from community partners including Cayuga Health Partners, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Human Services Coalition among others. The goal is to improve perinatal and infant health outcomes and eliminate racial, ethnic, and economic disparities.

Ms. Espey reported that the "Peace of Mind Meeting" on May 23rd will discuss sexually transmitted infection prevalence in Tompkins County and coordinate messaging education to the community and the response.

Children with Special Care Needs Report: Ms. Thomas had nothing to add to her written report.

County Attorney's Report: Mr. Troy complimented the testing center on quick efficient service during a recent visit. He and his family are doing fine.

Environmental Health Report: Ms. Cameron was not present, and Mr. Parr reported on her behalf. He reported that EH will be at full staff with a new EH technician starting on Monday. He reported on giving a presentation to Health and Human Services on tobacco and vaping enforcement.

Mr. Parr said most stores know that they are not supposed to be selling flavored nicotine products.

Community Mental Health Services Board (CSB) Report: Ms. Ayers-Friedlander reported that the CSB's April meeting continued the discussion on fentanyl-laced drugs in the community. They identified the need to further explore ensuring that mental health and substance use treatment can be provided together if a person is struggling with their mental health and also going to a substance use provider. Rich Shaw, TC Dual Recovery Coordinator will speak at next month's meeting about supporting and improving the coordinated care approach in our community. The CSB also discussed the bylaws in more detail.

Dr. Moylan said the March minutes and enforcement actions will be moved to next month's meeting.

Administration: Merger Updates

Mr. Kruppa reported:

- The Cross functional team working on branding had their first discovery meeting with consultant Iron Design and are reviewing his summation from that meeting
- Another cross functional team working around understanding more about what each other does throughout the joint departments is analyzing the completed network survey

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- Exploring how to better integrate our children and youth services with the creation of another cross functional team.
- Senior leadership is creating the framework for a charter and scope for another potential cross functional team to work on
- Bylaw work continues and the linking from the bylaws to public health law will be shared for the broader group to review

Dr. Moylan asked the Board to expect the edits to the bylaws and thanked Ms. Merkel and Dr. Evelyn for their comments.

Dr. Moylan referred to a recent email sent to BOH members and asked for their feedback or concerns on a request for a letter of support for a new hiking trail. The Board had no concerns, and all were in favor of the letter of support for a new hiking trail.

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 24th, 2022 @ Noon.

Adjournment: Adjourned at 12:45 p.m.