

Tompkins County Board of Health
April 25, 2023
12:00 Noon
Rice Conference Room and via Zoom

Approved
5.23.23

Present: Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President; Melissa Dhundale, MD, Vice-President; Susan Merkel; Shawna Black; Samara Touchton; Ravinder Kingra; and Andreia De Lima, MD

Staff: Elizabeth Cameron, Director of Environmental Health; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Public Health Administrator; Rachel Buckwalter, Director of Community Health; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; Dr. William Klepack, Medical Director; Deb Thomas, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; William Troy, County Attorney; Holly Mosher, Deputy County Attorney; Frank Kruppa, Whole Health Commissioner; Zoe Lincoln, Whole Health Planner; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant.

Excused: Edward Koppel, MD

Guests: Anthony Pitts, Holiday Inn

Call to Order: Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at noon.

Privilege of the Floor: Mr. Pitts explained that when the March 2022 inspection found the pool low on chlorine it was shut down but was under the assumption that when the chlorine levels were normal it could be reopened. He was confused when he received communication from EH about the pool's closure. Mr. Pitts said they maintain appropriate chlorine levels, submit monthly logs to EH, and agreed to pay the \$400 fine.

Approval of March 28, 2023, Minutes: Ms. Merkel moved to approve the March 28, 2023, minutes; second by Mr. Kingra; all were in favor as written.

Financial Summary: Ms. Grinnell Crosby referred to the report included in the packet. The report includes payroll through March 18th and reflects lower costs due to vacancies. Two nurses were hired and will start in May leaving one vacancy in Community Health Services. She said that they are reviewing the 2022 year-end books to do transfers to make sure the lines balance out to meet finance rules. There are some COVID grants still active with related expenses.

Administration Report: Mr. Kruppa reported that an internal team met to discuss the BOH agenda packet and believes it aligns with the BOH's interests. He anticipates an updated BOH agenda packet in July.

Health Promotion Program Report: Ms. Hillson shared that the internal team is looking to highlight shared issues and topics across the departments at the beginning of the reports by creating a template that would put interested data in an appendix of the updated BOH agenda packet.

An opening for a community health worker position has been posted on the Tompkins County website to add to the team. She anticipates providing caseload data and the needs addressed through the Perinatal and Infant Community Health Collaboratives (PICH) program.

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Ms. Hillson said that The New York State People’s Health Partnership Conference is being held April 26 – 28th and Mr. Kruppa, Ms. Alvord (Communications Coordinator), public health fellows, and Ms. Hillson will be in attendance. They will make a presentation on “Navigating Public Health Communication Channels to Reach All Corners of Our County”. The presentation will be regarding the work that was done during COVID in Tompkins County(TC) around communication and how TC would continue to leverage those strategies for other public health issues.

They will also make a presentation as part of a panel discussion on public health workforce development called “Community Health Workers and Public Health Fellows - A Case Study in Public Health Training and Career Pathway Development.”

Medical Director’s Report and Discussion: Dr. Klepack reported that recent FDA and CDC actions have removed monovalent vaccines from use and that from now on Bivalent vaccines are the only vaccines available. The bivalent booster is the most recent version of the COVID-19 vaccine. It contains both the original vaccine strain [of the virus] and a strain derived from the BA.5 omicron variant. Bivalent keeps people out of the hospital; Bivalent prevents people from getting severe COVID; and helps prevent long-term COVID. 30 – 40% of eligible people 65 years of age and older and even fewer in the younger age groups have gotten the Bivalent vaccine and he strongly encourages everyone eligible to get the Bivalent vaccine.

Eligibles:

The FDA and CDC actions have also changed the indications for booster doses. Individuals over the age of 65 can now receive a second bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster if at least four months have passed since their last booster dose; aged 5 years and older if it has been at least two months since their last dose; and people ages 6 months of age and older who are moderately or severely [immunocompromised](#) can receive an additional updated COVID-19 vaccine if at least two months have passed since their last dose and their healthcare practitioner recommends it.

The actions by the FDA and the CDC confirm the safety of the Bivalent vaccine. It is in one’s best interest to be vaccinated. Dr. Klepack predicts there will be further refinements in the Covid vaccine in the coming year. This fall there will likely be the opportunity to receive a COVID vaccination along with the flu vaccination at the same visit. However, he urged people not to wait for these future vaccines since science shows that becoming boosted now is important for a person’s protection.

Dr. Klepack reported that (as expected) a new variant is rising and is currently at 7% nationally and is expected to rise further. The Bivalent vaccine is expected to protect us just as it has in the past.

It is important to note that of those who die from Covid, the vast majority are unvaccinated. If one has not received the Bivalent vaccine, they are unvaccinated and are not adequately protected. The Bivalent vaccine is so important to receive and is available free of charge in pharmacies and physicians’ offices. Students attending a university should contact their health service.

Division for Community Health (DCH) Report: Ms. Buckwalter had nothing to add to her written report included in the packet. The nurse newly hired will start on May 15th.

Children with Special Care Needs Report: Ms. Thomas had nothing to add to her written report included in the packet. She reported that two of their nurses are out on medical leave and they have had their highest number of referrals ever. She is not sure why the high referrals, but it might be COVID related.

DRAFT MINUTES

County Attorney's Report: Ms. Mosher, Deputy County Attorney reported meeting with Ms. Cameron and Mr. Parr to discuss the violations of establishments throughout the county selling flavored vapes. She found that NY State Law allows establishments in violation of revoked or suspended licenses to register a certificate under a different name and continue to do business. She will do more research to see if more can be done at the local level to hold the establishments accountable for violating the vaping laws.

Ms. Cameron added that EH is meeting with the Health and Human Services Committee on May 15th to further discuss this issue.

Environmental Health Report: Ms. Cameron reported a successful rabies clinic was held and 150 cats, dogs, and parrots were vaccinated.

Community Mental Health Services Board (CSB) Report: Ms. Ayers-Friedlander reported that April's CSB meeting included a presentation from CEO, Allan Connolly and Business Operations Vice President of Challenge/Mosaic, Ashley Burke, speaking about their new licensure to operate a marijuana dispensary in Tompkins County.

They explained that this is an opportunity to provide competitive jobs with benefits and will use the profits to support their other vocational services in the community. Their Article 16 clinic located at Challenges location on Danby Road, provides vocational and rehabilitative counseling services for people with developmental disabilities.

Resolution #EH-ENF-22-0055 – Holiday Inn Express Ithaca, C-Ithaca, Repeat Critical Violations of Subpart 6-1 of New York State Sanitary Code (Pool) – Ms. Black moved to accept the motion as written; seconded by Dr. Dhundale.

Ms. Cameron explained that this is a case of failing to maintain minimum chlorine levels. The pool is open and in compliance with the actions of the order. EH proposes a penalty of \$400.

Ms. Cameron explained that EH does not go back to any operator who has a problem until the operator/business notifies EH that all is corrected. The March 10th inspection report noted the details of the closure of the pool which the operator signed. EH was not notified of any corrective actions from March to December 2022 and no logs were submitted via email or mail during that time.

The vote to approve the resolution as written was unanimous.

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 23rd, 2023 @ Noon.

Adjournment: Adjourned at 12:38 p.m.