

54 Meadow Street, 9th Floor • New Haven, Connecticut 06519 • 203-946-6999

Justin Elicker, Mayor • Maritza Bond, MPH, Director of Health

**Board of Health Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2022**

Present: Dr. James Hadler, Chair; Dr. Frank Mongillo, Dr. Darnell Young, Gregg Gonsalves, Dr. Alice Forrester

Absent: Heather Reynolds

Staff: Maritza Bond, Director of Health

Call to Order:

Commission Chair Hadler called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Commission Chair Hadler moved to approve the minutes for the February 12th meeting. Dr. Mongillo seconded; minutes were approved with no objections.

Public Comments or Statements:

No members of the public

Updates:

Director Bond presented the following status updates:

COVID-19 Situational Awareness & Response Efforts

Current response efforts are mass vaccination, communication efforts, contact tracing, compliance, sustainability, outreach, and technical support in the community.

The CDC has updated their metrics, New Haven County is currently at low. New Haven is currently at a 2% positivity rate. The Department continues to monitor and access the weekly

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rate. Hospitalization rates and wastewater are still being monitored locally. The Department is looking into possible partnerships to ensure funding to continue wastewater testing. One of the issues with tracking cases is that many people were relying on rapid Covid-19 testing because PCR testing was not readily available. During Omnicron the severity of the disease changed where a high case rate was seen with milder cases. Even with milder cases the number of people who have the disease makes it overwhelming for our hospitals. The Department continues daily monitoring of cases in the school system. New Haven has one of the lowest vaccination rates in Connecticut for school age children. At this time The Department has decided to not lift the mask mandate in schools due to low vaccination rates, acuity levels, and about 40% of school district children in New Haven have a medical condition.

Director Bond provided an update on the temperature excursion. The department created a dashboard to track the progress in contacting all the affected individuals, number of contact attempts, letters mailed, and level of concern. Overall, the response from the community was positive. The vaccines were just too cold for too long. An internal review was conducted by the team and a corrective action plan dashboard has been developed that will be presented to the Mayor as updates. A number of issues are being addressed including the need to pay nurse's competitive wages to be able to retain them as part of the workforce rather than using temporary nursing agencies. The Department also recognizes and is addressing the need for vaccine coordinators to be fully staffed, aware of necessary information and not having a breakdown of communication, making sure that they all have proper training and sign off on proper training. This is now being completely documented to ensure everyone is on the same page. A number of trainings have been conducted with all staff, as well as making sure staff have technical support from the Department of Public Health. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed around vaccine transfers making sure there is a log for documenting everything and also making sure that inventory management is clearly laid out. Quality assurance around patient registration was also conducted. The Department retrained staff and ensured Epic technical support is available to staff, Epic training is ongoing as The Department continues to transition to electronic health records. A team will continue to work on quality assurance measures and standard operating procedures. A formal orientation has been developed to make sure that all external nurses that are being vetted through the temp agency are going to have formal orientation. A formal site visit from the Department of Public Health was solicited and was conducted. The external reviewer will be doing a site visit tomorrow, once her report is completed it will be shared with Board members.

The Board went into executive session.

A discussion ensued on the importance of testing wastewater as a method of tracking Covid-19.

Director Bond gave testimony on a Lead Bill, House Bill 5065, where New Haven was highlighted by the Governor as the best practice model. The Department will soon launch a



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public facing Lead dashboard available on the website soon. The public will be able to see the status on any lead case for a specific property.

Commissioner Dr. Forrester moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30pm.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Attest:

Damaris Velez

Damaris Velez
Office Manager

04/07/2022

Date

Approved:

James Hadler, Chair
Board of Health Commissioners

Date

