



CITY OF NEW HAVEN
COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

54 Meadow Street, 9TH Floor • New Haven, Connecticut 06519



Board of Health Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2021

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

Staff: Maritza Bond, Director of Health

Call to Order:

Commission Chair Hadler called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Hadler moved to approve the December 9, 2020 minutes; Commissioner Reynolds seconded; minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comments or Statements:

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

Updates:

COVID-19 Situational Awareness & Response Efforts

Director Bond reported that New Haven has 8,213 cases to date cumulatively with 156 case fatalities. Most of the population impacted is primarily Hispanic Latinx and Black African American communities second, and White third. About 26% are unknown cases. Approximately seven percent of the cases are between ages zero to nine; however, this age group is usually less than five percent. Cases are almost equal for ages between 20 and 39; the rate drops a bit in the other age groups.

For the period December 27 to January 9 there were a total of 1,008 cases with an estimated 42 hospitalized, and there were two case fatalities. Majority of cases are within the 25- to 49-year-

old group. Fatalities are still in the elderly, over 65 population. Department is still monitoring the Connecticut School Learning Model Indicators looking at primary and secondary indicators. There continues to be high risk categories per county for both case rates as well as hospitalizations. However, there's been a downward trend and almost flattening of the curve of hospitalizations.

Currently, there hasn't been any major activity within colleges and universities as most have been on vacation. However, many of the students will begin moving back on campus between January 23rd – January 28th and resume full activity in February. Continuing to monitor nursing homes; only about one case per site. Most sites have already completed their first doses of vaccine with CVS and Walgreens as the vaccine administrators. Director Bond is expecting an updated report tomorrow and will share the latest numbers of vaccinations. She noted that the current number of COVID patients hospitalized in ICU is 47.

Director Bond shared a case heat map showing impact on East Shore, Fair Haven, Fair Haven Heights as well as the Hill. Fair Haven continues to be the most impacted section of the city. Working with communications team to continue to increase outreach, and the team, especially the Mayor, has been proactive doing mass distribution of masks, going to different communities.

Sewage surveillance report shows second highest upswing of cases post holidays. An increase was anticipated and is being closely monitored. Hoping to see cases decrease in the next week.

Health Administration Update

Staffing:

- Financial Administrative Assistant retired.
- Due to the holidays and a glitch in the HR system, there was a delay in filling several remaining vacancies. Department has been working closely with Human Resources.
- Director Bond will meet with HR this week to finalize testing for the Vital Statistics Registrar and will reach out to Dr. Young, who will serve on the interview panel along with a vital statistics registrar from another city and Acting Deputy Director Brooke Logan.
- New Lead Inspector and a Sanitarian hired

Department Program Reports

- **Family Check up Program** - 56 home visits were conducted with one new family enrolled. Submitting the renewal grant application for this program on January 29th.
- **Child Passenger Safety Program** – Updated website with current information and resources
- **Hepatitis C** – Working on Gilead and State grants. There are four newly diagnosed Hep C cases; two were successfully linked to care. 84 individuals were contacted. No cost

extension in place until June 30, 2021. Continuing to work close with epidemiologist and outreach workers.

- **Substance Abuse Disorder** – Offer for community health workers has been extended. Working through monthly harm reduction meetings. Six sites have been identified through the Daisy Project for syringe disposal. Providing sharps disposal and Narcan training for hotels housing homeless. Opioid overdose dashboard has been developed.
- **COVID-19** – Working closely with risk communications; developed a risk communication plan with risk communication committee which encompasses a number of stakeholders and partners addressing response as well as feedback to the content the department developed. The State received a copy of the plan. Director Bond invited Commissioners to join weekly meetings held on Thursdays at four o'clock to get a sense of what's being done. Developed myth and fact sheets, which were translated into Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin (three top languages in the City), as well as an infographic for New Year's Eve to prevent social gatherings. Also, pins were designed, which AT&T donated. Director Bond shared the banner that's been designed and being posted on various social media outlets.
- **Ryan White** – To date, Program Manager continues to monitor programmatic fiscal and quality assurances. Aimed to achieve HIV viral suppression rate of 90% or higher, and they achieved benchmark of 93%. Generating data reports to guide work of the office as well as the Planning Council and resource allocation. Annual report on two regions is submitted to Federal Government. Working with local teams within the four cities and two counties to build capacity to eliminate HIV (Getting to Zero). Monitoring expenditures with the CARES Act for COVID-19 funds for HIV specific populations. Fiscal Year 2020 ends February 28th – grant renewal submitted for refunding.
- **Environmental Health** – Continuing with food service inspections. Received 33 complaints for the month so far with 31 resolved. Most of the complaints are COVID-19 related. Issue first, second warnings and then an infraction if mask use isn't adhered to.
- **Weights & Measures** – Inspected 195 gas stations to date. 120 scales have been inspected; received five complaints with four resolved.
- **Lead Program** – 12 new cases received with seven inspections conducted. Have had to do a staggered schedule and assess risk levels before conducting inspections. Have done phone interviews with parents. Less time spent on site. Outreach and education include two new newsletters and two presentations. Topics included identifying potential sources of lead, effect of lead in children and general lead poisoning prevention. Social media posts have been ramped up (Facebook, Twitter) concerning basic lead information that will dispersed throughout the month. Continue to process lead abatement applications, but there was a delay since housing code inspectors that play a role in residential licensing were not in the field. Inspections will resume next week, so Health Department will make sure that lead abatement applications are processed in a timely fashion.
- **Bureau of Nursing** – Responsible for School Nursing, Tuberculosis, Clinic and Immunization Action Program. Most of the focus and effort has been around manning the COVID vaccinations. To date, 2,190 have been vaccinated. Considering the campaign was launched December 28th, and from a local health department in Phase 1A,

Director Bond noted that she is very proud of her team. Continuing to monitor the hotline and support contact tracing efforts with school reopening planning. Been doing first responder contact tracing, test site management, mass vaccination planning as well as PPE inventory. Flu vaccinations continuing with a little more than 1,500 given. Also, working on increasing billing for nursing services.

Working closely with School Medical Advisor, Dr. Sikand, and he's been participating in webinars for different sectors. He provides support around Q&A on vaccine.

Commissioner Forrester asked about the electronic health record system the Department uses (DocuTAP). A discussion ensued regarding the use of Epic. Director Bond has reached out to Yale to consider becoming formal partners to be able to interchange data. Commissioner Forrester will discuss with Director Bond.

Commissioner Hadler asked about eligibility for Phase 1B for New Haven when it starts next week. Will clinics be expanded? Director Bond said there have been meetings with Connecticut advisory group and the Commissioner giving updates several times a week. CDC changed the guidance for ages 65 and over, but initially they were talking about ages 75 and over; 75 and over can contact their providers to ask if the provider is enrolled and has the vaccine. If so, they can get their vaccine from their primary care physician. If not, there's another way for people to enroll. Frontline essential workers (healthcare, first responders, municipal and education employees, manufacturing, food, retail, and agricultural including farm workers, US Postal Service, food service, grocery workers) will be fully covered. Vaccination logistics team is comprised of Yale-New Haven Hospital, Yale Health, community health centers and the Health Department. The New Haven Health Department received more vaccine than the community health centers. Phase 1B is going to be massive group of people. Anticipating a vast number of vaccines released from the Federal level, distributed to the State and then to locals. Will partner with providers, e.g. Yale-New Haven Hospital, at larger sites with Health Department and Yale staff administering vaccinations to as many people as possible. Those who are age 75 and over without a provider and enroll themselves online. If they do have access to internet, they can call either 211 or the 1-877 number (goes live January 14th) for vaccine appointment assistance. Employers who fall under the frontline category can start uploading rosters on Monday.

Epidemiology – New Epidemiologist will start next week; two Epidemiologists on staff. Will focus on COVID-19 allowing the other to focus on other areas. The Epidemiologists work closely on making sure that dashboard is maintained to provide timely information. Contact tracing platform designed. Only two Flu cases in Connecticut (one in New Haven region) so far. There was discussion about Harm Reduction – impact of COVID-19 on overdoses in the country and the increase in overdoses in New Haven.

It was noted that schools will open in-person for grades Pre-K through Five on January 19th. Director Bond reported that there will be testing seven days a week at 60 Sargent Drive – no insurance required since State will pay. This was part of the expansion to support school reopening. Pre-K through Grade Five Teachers will be prioritized to receive the vaccine. Discussion ensued about mandating the vaccine.

The Commissioners and Director Bond agreed to schedule weekly update meetings on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. If Commissioners are unavailable, Director Bond will provide email updates.

Commissioner Mongillo moved to adjourn, Commissioner Hadler seconded; meeting adjourned unanimously at 6:33 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Attest:

Brenda Pantelis

Brenda Pantelis
Executive Administrative Assistant

1/22/2021

Date

Approved:

James Hadler

James Hadler, Chair
Board of Health Commissioners

2/10/2021

Date