



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
54 Meadow Street, 9<sup>TH</sup> Floor • New Haven, Connecticut 06519



**Board of Health Commissioners**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**November 10, 2021**

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

**Absent:** Dr. Frank Mongillo

**Staff:** Maritza Bond, Director of Health

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**Call to Order:**

Commission Chair Hadler called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Commissioner Gonsalves moved to approve the October 13, 2021 minutes; Commissioner Chair Hadler seconded; minutes were approved with no objections.

**Public Comments or Statements:**

No members of the public attended the meeting.

**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.

New Haven's Covid-19 cases are still predominantly Delta variant. Locally there are 8 cases per 100,000 with a 1% positivity rate. As a county New Haven is still being viewed as substantial risk for exposure with cases predominantly in younger age groups. Nursing home cases are being tracked, no major concerns with nursing

homes. Right now, New Haven schools have 22 active cases among 14 schools and 7 staff cases. The Health Department continues to work closely with the schools and Board of Education around interventions.

The risk communication committee continues to convene weekly meetings and develop educational materials. The focus is currently on vaccinating 5-11 year olds and the booster vaccine. Other efforts such as contact tracing, working with schools and grants are ongoing. SDI data is being reported weekly to partners to get a visual of where New Haven is as a city. Currently New Haven has 75.1 percent vaccination rate for first dose and 68.5 percent for second dose. This data does not yet include 5-11 year old age eligible group. Numbers will be lower next time this data is reported out because New Haven has about 22,000 children that will now be added to the population of age eligible residents. New Haven now has about 122,000 residents age eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine. The Health Department is very proud of the current percentages because 80% vaccination rate is the goal for community immunity.

Director Bond has recommended to the Mayor that the mask mandate not be lifted at this time. Director Bond is recommending a gradual approach using a tiered system where restrictions will be looser with certain criteria. The criteria are not yet finalized. Director Bond is proposing an exception database that will be created where businesses and different sectors can upload and select vaccine verification or testing policy or a combination of the two to be exempt. This will be reviewed, approved, and certified by the Health Department. There will be a caveat that if the cases were to increase and meet the high-risk threshold the Health Department will reverse the certification and revert to full mask indoor policy. Director Bond is trying to project out a date in Mid-January to lift the executive order completely if the numbers meet a certain threshold. Director Bond is still working through the metrics to ensure CDC mitigation strategies are being adhered to and certain criteria considered before putting the language into the executive order. The Health Department is being very cautious to lift the mask mandate because of increased Covid-19 cases in New England and other parts of the world. A discussion ensued and all agree that a cautious approach is best.

### Department Programs

The Department participated in the medication take back day and has been providing Narcan training for the staff and the community. An overdose community response workflow has been created. It has not been made public yet. Director Bond shared data on suspected drug emergency department visits for New Haven and Quinnipiac Valley Health District. RSV continues to be tracked. Director Bond shared data on emergency department visits to Yale New Haven Hospital related to mental health in 2019, 2020 and currently working on 2021. The visits were broken down by zip code specifically for the city of New Haven, gender, age group, race, ethnicity

### Board of Education

Director Bond shared a memo that was sent out to parents to help clarify some of the confusion around Covid-19 symptoms in children and to give some guidance on being on the buses. The Department also created a quarantine tracking system. The form tracks number of students quarantined weekly by school and number who tested positive.

Screen and Stay

Screen and Stay guidance was issued by the Department of Public Health to enable students and staff who would otherwise have to quarantine due to some level of exposure to be able to continue reporting for in-person learning and work. Director Bond has some concerns because the initiative is not approved by the CDC it is something that was developed at the state level. Director Bond has asked the team to assess the transmission level by school and the detection of secondary cases in progress. The data is still being assessed before a recommendation is made. The Health Department has not approved a workflow assessment. The Department has recommended that data is collected on how many students are participating with the pilot program Covid DeteCT, that remote learning be an option and ramping up the vaccination campaign in schools. A discussion ensued on doing a tiered approach to Screen and Stay where schools with lower number of Covid cases can pilot Screen and Stay and schools with higher number of cases can pilot in school Covid testing.

A discussion ensued regarding a Covid pill that is currently being evaluated and in clinical trials.

Commissioner Reynolds asked a question about how The Department is planning to disseminate information and bring awareness to behavioral health issues that can ravage our communities during and after the pandemic. The Health Department is studying and dissecting the data recently received about mental health and is looking forward to partnering with mental health professionals in the area to come up with solutions.

Director Bond shared data that is being mapped about shootings in New Haven. The Health Department is starting to work with police departments to track and have conversations around violence prevention with CSA.

Commissioner Chair Hadler moved to adjourn; Commissioner Young seconded; meeting adjourned unanimously at 6:49p.m.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Attest:

*Damaris Velez*

Damaris Velez  
Office Manager

12/08/21

Date

Approved:

*James Hadler*

James Hadler, Chair  
Board of Health Commissioners

12/08/21

Date