



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
November 18, 2020

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

Staff: Maritza Bond, Director of Health

Call to Order:

Commission Chair Hadler called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Mongillo moved to approve the October 14, 2020 minutes; Commissioner Young seconded; minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comments or Statements:

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

Director of Health Updates:

COVID-19

Director Bond reported that currently New Haven is in Red Alert as is most of the State. However, New Haven has 19 cases per 100,000, which is much lower than every urban city in Connecticut. Cumulative cases to date are 4,232; 119 fatalities; 46% of cases are in the 25- to 49-year-old age range; there is a significant increase in 18- to 24-year-old age group. There are issues with collection of ethnic backgrounds; getting residential information but not race and ethnic background. Department is working with providers to get better data.

Currently, Connecticut School Learning Model Indicators show New Haven, Fairfield and Hartford counties are in the high-risk category for cases. Commissioner Mongillo asked if every student is being tested or testing exposure in symptomatic children. Director Bond stated that school children are not being screened or tested at this point. Schools remain closed, and special needs students will be taken out of school on Friday. Everyone is doing remote learning. A discussion regarding testing ensued.

The issue is not necessarily with the children but with the adults who need to be there. Other school districts are challenged because the adults are testing positive and at a higher rate than the children. Teachers, maintenance, cafeteria workers are being affected.

There is continuing monitoring and surveillance of college students (Yale University, Southern Connecticut State University and Albertus Magnus College). This is the last week of classes, so students will be leaving. The major clusters have been at Yale. There was a discussion concerning next semester's plans for in-person and online classes and which students will be allowed on campus. Director Bond noted that although there were some clusters, Yale's contact tracing and testing efforts are overall a great model operationally.

In the event that a quarantine order needs to be issued, Director Bond met with Yale University officials to discuss procedures and modification of their protocols. They wanted to know how that process worked for compliance issues. Director Bond has issued only one quarantine order since the pandemic started (homeless man). Usually, a warning is enough. A quarantine order is used in extreme cases, usually when an individual is non-compliant.

Nursing homes are back to weekly testing. As long as the facility has a consecutive 14-day negative test, nursing indoor visitations will continue. Recently, Director Bond made a formal announcement about Regal Care, which is problematic. They are working on a corrective action plan with the State Department of Public Health.

The current fatality rate is at 119; majority of cases are still in the over 65 age group and African Americans. Commissioner Mongillo gave an update on the current number of hospitalizations at 183, with 27 in ICU. This is a significant increase from November 12th with 137 hospitalizations and 15 ICU patients.

Director Bond reviewed heat map – although there is community-wide spread, Fair Haven has a high density, so that's been a primary focus. It has the most positive cases with 24% in the Hispanic Latinx communities in the last two weeks. On November 12th, Governor announced there was a cluster contact tracing report of 69 cases with primary results showing restaurants, social gatherings and places of worship as the top three indicators for people testing positive. Director Bond did a press conference on issuing

infractions per the Governor's Executive Order. There is a two-tier approach: first, issue warning and second is \$100 fine for employees who do not adhere to wearing masks; and a \$500 fine to businesses that do not adhere to over capacity or representing themselves as a restaurant but holding parties.

Director Bond gave update on COVID-19 Mass Vaccination planning. A Planning Committee was formed consisting of the Fire Department, Police Department, Department of Disabilities Services, Office of Emergency Management and the Chief Administrator's Office. The group is seeking to identify external partners to join the Committee; need community representation. Director Bond invited Commissioners to join if they're interested. Meetings are held every Friday for about 45 minutes.

So far, the Committee has worked on identifying point of vaccination, location will vary on the vaccine that is approved. Two are up for approval. Draft working plan on how vaccine will be stored. Phase 1 will have potentially limited supply. Will prioritize those who are at most risk. Fire and Police Chiefs are surveying their staff about receiving vaccine. There is some pushback from first responders and their concerns about receiving vaccine. Anticipate no more than 100 doses available for the first phase.

Department Program Reports

Director Bond gave updates:

Administration:

- There is a pool of candidates for Environmental Health Program Director, Deputy Director and Vital Statistics Registrar. Director Bond will be looking for the Board's assistance with the interview process.

Epidemiology:

- Health Department continues to monitor COVID cases. There have been many cases in daycare centers. Since October, nine daycare centers were closed. Director Bond has contacted the State Commissioner of Health and will do a co-presentation to daycare providers; State is working on a draft guide.
- Continuing to monitor cases and using Veoci platform to do tracking with first responders. Tracking hospitalizations and ventilator usage. There was discussion concerning surge capacity.
- Director Bond reported that the Department received an Emergency Preparedness Grant.

- To date, the Health Department has given out about 600 flu vaccines. No flu cases reported as yet.
- Created dashboard to track opioids; working closely with Community Services Administration (CSA). Predominant overdoses are happening in Fair Haven, Downtown and Dixwell Avenue neighborhoods. Dr. Dalal is activating the Harm Reduction Task Force, which will be working closely with the Police Department.
- Mosquito Surveillance is wrapping up; had mosquito positive but no human cases.

Bureau of Nursing:

- Bureau of Nursing is still working on trying to increase Medicare/Medicaid billing and restructuring increase in hours of service. Department is hiring and has been interviewing nurses. Updating job descriptions to be aligned with current public health skills. The HR team has been very helpful and supportive.

Nurses continue to help with the hotline; they are being reactivated and will not be furloughed. Currently, school nurses are undergoing training for contact tracing. The ones who are not currently actively working in the 11 schools will be pulled as of Monday. They have and will assist with school reopening planning, first responder testing and follow up, test site management, PPE inventory, mass vaccination planning, and the Flu Clinic.

- New Medical Advisor is on board. Dr. Sikand is actively engaged in helping with standard operating procedures and responding to the pandemic.
- Tuberculosis – two active cases of TB; one completed treatment. There is a vacancy for the TB Specialist position, but a temporary person has been assigned.
- Immunization Program is still up and ongoing. Employees are working semi-remote, so they've been provided with laptops and cell phones.

Health Programs Division:

- Looking to hire and train three community health care workers
- Establish new partnerships for the Hepatitis C project
- Working on opioid use disorder in conjunction with CSA
- Child Passenger Safety
- Hepatitis C Prevention and Treatment

Dr. Hadler asked about the new Board members. Director Bond informed the Board that the two new members go before the Board of Alders at its November 23rd meeting for approval.

Commissioner Hadler moved to adjourn the meeting; meeting unanimously adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2020 at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Attest:

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| <i>Brenda Pantelis</i> | 12/8/20 |
| _____ Brenda Pantelis Executive Administrative Assistant | _____ Date/9 |

Approved:

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| <i>James Hadler/bp</i> | 12/9/20 |
| _____ James Hadler, Chair Board of Health Commissioners | _____ Date |