

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

October 21, 2020
Regular Meeting

Present at the Meeting:

Heidi Beidinger-Burnett, Ph.D., MPH	President - Zoom
Jason Marker, MD.	Vice President - Zoom
Emily Dean	Member - Zoom
Ilana T. Kirsch, M.D., FACOG	Member - Zoom
Michelle Migliore, D.O.	Member - Zoom
John Linn	Member - Zoom

Also Present at the Meeting:

Robert M. Einterz, M.D.	Health Officer
Mark D. Fox, M.D., Ph.D., MPH	Deputy Health Officer - Zoom
Jennifer S. Parcell	Executive Administrative Asst.
Amy Ruppe	Finance Manager
Mark Espich	Director, Environmental Health - Zoom
Robin Vida	Health Outreach, Promotion and Education (HOPE) - Zoom
Brett Davis	Asst. Dir Environmental Services-Zoom
Neiko Rust	Director of Nursing – Immunization Clinic - Zoom
Carolyn Smith	Director, Food Services - Zoom
Cassy White	Director, Health Equity, Epidemiology And Data (HEED) - Zoom
Jael Jackson	Community Health Worker (HEED) - Zoom
J. David Keckley	Attorney for Board of Health

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board President, Dr. Beidinger-Burnett called the October 21, 2020 regular Board of Health meeting to Order at 4:31 p.m. The meeting was held at the Department of Health (DoH), 8th Floor Board Room. All board members, members of the public, and press, participated via audio/visual Zoom. Necessary precautions and directives were recognized as it relates to the number of persons actually present for the meeting and social distancing.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

On motion made by Dr. Migliore, seconded by Emily Dean, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the October 21, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion made by Dr. Migliore, seconded by John Linn, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the September 16, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Health were approved as presented.

IV. BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Dr. Beidinger-Burnett recognized the long hours, to include weekend and late night activity, by unit directors and staff.

2. She noted that Governor Holcomb held a press conference this date and indicated that COVID-19 is increasing significantly in many parts of the state, to include St. Joseph County. She supports the Governor's recommendations to include wearing of face coverings, washing your hands often, social distancing and avoiding crowded places.

V. HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION AND REPORT

20-47 Discussion and Vote on September 2020 Health Officer's Report

Board Members acknowledge receipt of Dr. Einterz's Report of Unit Activities for September 2020. Dr. Einterz indicated that it was business as usual - - - to a degree.

He welcomed the hiring of Emma Smith, Social Worker, together with Jael Jackson and Jonathan Carmona, Community Health Workers.

He noted that Vital Records has been very busy during the month of September, as well as Health Outreach, Promotion and Education (HOPE) which continued to provide updated information regarding COVID-19 and the risk factors.

He noted that the budget as submitted was approved.

He noted that the level of cooperation is improving with regard to the crowded bars, and the efforts being made to enforce the measures contained in the Public Health Order. He continues to be concerned with regard to the numbers and activities occurring at local churches and continues to advise that it is best to avoid social gatherings of 10 or more.

Food inspections are increasing as well as Environmental Health inspections.

Immunization clinic nurses report that immunizations are increasing, that the mobile clinic is in use, and that the focus will be on school age children.

Board Members approved the September report.

VI. DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION

20-48 COVID-19 Update

Dr. Fox reported that COVID-19 cases continue to rise in our county, and local hospitals are either at or near full capacity. ICU units still have beds available and the situation is being monitored very closely. Hospitals report that there is considerable stress affecting employees and personnel staffing concerns continue to be a daily issue. Hospitals are not only managing the coronavirus pandemic, but they are also dealing with patients that have been admitted with COVID-19.

Upon questioning by board members, Dr. Fox noted that he had no specific information as to whether hospitals are attempting to bring nurses out of retirement or asking for help by the National Guard. It is not likely that the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) will set up a field hospital but there is some discussion regarding a centrally located triage and transferring patients if necessary. It would also be difficult to transition nurses that are primarily working with out-patient clients to be engaged with in-patient clients. Some less critical medical procedures are being delayed due to the increase in COVID patients.

Board Members discussed and supported the efforts being made by Dr. Einterz and Dr. Fox to secure an Ordinance requiring mask wearing to include a penalty (fine) for violations. Efforts have been ongoing for several months and will continue with hopes the Ordinance will be passed as soon as possible. Both doctors continue to emphasize that the only way to slow the spread of the virus is to wear a mask, wash hands frequently, use hand sanitizer and maintain a 6-foot distance. They fear the positivity rate will continue to rise until a majority of the residents adopt these measures.

Board members also discussed with Dr. Fox the difficulty of determining exactly where an outbreak occurred. Although there is a greater risk with regard to specific social groups, community wide transmission is occurring. Following the recommended measures to stay safe is the best advice.

Board Members acknowledge it is a very stressful time for DoH staff, especially inspectors working in Environmental Health and Food Services. It was also noted that lead prevention week will occur the end of October. Cassy White, Director of HEED, is planning lead screening events and educational promotion events during that week.

With regard to testing, Dr. Fox believes it to be adequate and currently anyone who would like to obtain a COVID-19 test should be able to get one. He notes that there should be a rationale for obtaining the test, such as known contact with a person positive for COVID-19 or experiencing symptoms. He believes the current turn around time is approximately 48 hours. Dr. Marker confirmed this information and advice.

Also discussed with board members is ongoing preparation and planning with ISDH and federal representatives in anticipation of receiving a vaccine. There have been several meetings but there is no definite indication as to the quantity of the vaccine to be made available to Health Departments or whether the initial Phase I will primarily be with the pharmacies (CVS, Walgreens)

and the hospitals. However, the planning stage is in operation, refrigerators have been ordered, other supplies ordered, and identification of partners, as we wait for further clarification from ISDH.

Dr. Kirsch noted that her office is running low on flu vaccine. Dr. Fox acknowledged. Neiko from the Department of Health responded that their current supply of Influenza is robust and we have different types on hand.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS.

20-44 Update on FY 2021 Budget

Amy Ruppe reported that the 2021 budget for the DoH was passed. The requested cost of living increase was denied. However, the pay deferential for certain staff positions was addressed and approved as requested which was a priority item discussed during the budget meetings.

20-46 Discussion and Vote on the St. Joseph County Department of Health Strategic Plan

Dr. Einterz noted that input from elected officials during the discussion stage was incorporated into the St. Joseph County Department of Health Strategic Plan 2020-2024. There was very little feedback after this Strategic Plan document was distributed to them.

Board Members were presented with the Strategic Plan last month and there have been no changes. Dr. Marker noted that increase funding for the DoH budget may be necessary to meet the goals and it is hopeful that some of the funding that has been available to meet the challenges of COVID-19 will continue to be available for technology upgrades and other areas. Grants and private philanthropy will also be explored.

Notre Dame's Eck Institute has partnered with the DoH to be a resource to address items in the Strategic Plan. Health disparities, adverse childhood conditions, and lead poisoning are addressed. University of Notre Dame (UND) is helping to fund the three recently hired Public Health employees.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett highlighted the five goals to include:

1. St. Joseph County Department of Health will be data-driven: We will identify the metrics, the manner, have robust information systems and analytics, and inspire to be effective and efficient.
2. St. Joseph County Department of Health will be equity-focused: Using data, we will identify disparities and we will be leaders immobilizing resources (personnel, policies and partnerships) to address them.

3. St. Joseph Department of Health will address the social factors impacting health, most notably poverty, racism and trauma. We will do this through enhanced community engagement and education, and expanded personnel and services (Community Health Worker navigators, and social workers).

4. The St. Joseph County Department of Health will strengthen its infrastructure to meet all statutory requirements.

5. St. Joseph County Department of Health will control the spread of respiratory viral illnesses including SARS–CoV-2 and influenza.

On motion made by Dr. Migliore, seconded by Dr. Marker, and unanimously adopted, the St. Joseph County Department of Health Strategic Plan 2020-2024 was approved.

IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS

Board Members acknowledged the hiring of Renata Williams, Food Services Administrative Assistant; Emma Smith, Social Worker; Jael Jackson, Community Health Worker; and Jonathan Carmona, Community Health Worker.

Board Members acknowledged the resignation of Audrey Funk, Food Safety Inspection Officer.

Board Members acknowledged the retirement of John Engstrom, Environmental Health Specialist. John Linn noted that he did excellent work and was a dedicated employee of the DoH.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were 10 residents utilizing their 3-minute opportunity to provide public comment to board members.

The topics under discussion included the October 13, 2020 letter of recommendation from Dr. Einterz and Dr. Fox to Faith Community Leaders urging Faith Communities to pivot to on-line or virtual worship format through March, 2021; the Public Health Authority Order requiring mask wearing under certain circumstances; and the Health Department Strategic Plan.

Those residents voicing their objection to the October 13, letter of recommendation to Faith Community Leaders included:

Laura Send, South Bend
Amy Drake, Granger
Brandyn Baumbaugh, Granger
Jean Harding, Mishawaka
Maureen Goetz, South Bend
Rebecca Fitzmaurice, Granger

John Goetz, South Bend

Residents supporting the Strategic Plan included:

Kelly Havens, Granger

Residents noting that the Board and DoH are not sufficiently addressing mental health issues and addiction issues caused by COVID-19 include:

Jennifer Towers, Granger

Debora Hancock, South Bend, was unable to connect her audio feed and submitted written comments addressing mask efficiency, risk of death from COVID-19, and whether COVID-19 represents a health crisis. Her comments will be included with the materials provided to Board Members at this meeting.

XI. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

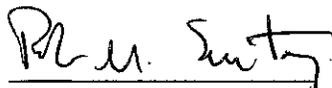
The next regular meeting of the St. Joseph County Board of Health is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18, 2020, at 4:30 p.m., at the St. Joseph County Health Department, 8th Floor Board Room.

XII. ADJOURMENT

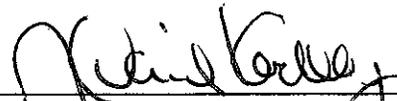
The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

Respectfully submitted,



Robert M. Einterz, M.D.
St. Joseph County
Health Officer



J. David Keckley
Attorney for St Joseph County Board of
Health