

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

May 19, 2021
Regular Meeting
ALL-VIRTUAL MEETING

Present at the Meeting:

St. Joseph County Board of Health Members:

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
Jamie Shoemaker, M.D.	Member - Zoom

Also Present at the Meeting:

Robert M. Einterz, M.D.	Health Officer - Zoom
Mark D. Fox, M.D., Ph.D., MPH	Deputy Health Officer - Zoom
Jennifer S. Parcell	Executive Administrative Asst.
Amy Ruppe	Administrator - Zoom
Mark Espich	Director, Environmental Health - Zoom
Robin Vida	Health Outreach, Promotion and Education (HOPE) - Zoom
Niko Rust	Director of Nursing, Clinic - Zoom
Carolyn Smith	Director, Food Services - Zoom
Cassy White	Director, Health Equity, Epidemiology and Data (HEED) – Zoom
Karen Flanigan	Asst. Director of Food Services - Zoom
Marcellus Lebbin	Attorney for Board of Health - Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Board President, Dr. Beidinger-Burnett, called the May 19, 2021 regular Board of Health meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. All board members and members of the public participated via audio/visual Zoom with all members confirming they could hear each other.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

On motion made by Dr. Marker, seconded by Dr. Shoemaker, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the May 19, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion made by Dr. Marker, seconded by Ms. Dean, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the April 21, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health were approved.

IV. HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION AND REPORT

The Board received reports from Dr. Einterz. It was noted that the rates of tuberculosis are on the decline, but that we should be prepared for an uptick as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Immunizations are still down as a result of the immunization clinic in the county-city building being closed as the staff continues to immunize for COVID-19.

Dr. Marker asked about protocols for the 4-H Fair. Dr. Fox responded that the Fair Board is open to changes and the protocols are evolving with the guidance from the CDC. Ms. Smith noted that the preliminary food vendor list is much smaller than the number of vendors in years past and the fair is attempting to get more vendors.

V. DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION

COVID-19 Update

Dr. Fox stated that vaccination sites are open, including sites for higher education, and that those sites have been successful. He noted that testing rates are decreasing and that going forward it seems likely that only individuals with an illness will be tested. Dr. Fox said positive cases are the lowest they have been since the start of the pandemic, with the seven-day average moving to level five.

Dr. Kirsch asked if people without identification can get vaccinated and Dr. Fox responded they could. Dr. Fox noted that people from Michigan and Illinois are being vaccinated in St. Joseph County.

Dr. Kirsch asked what the guidance was for camps and other summer activities. Dr. Fox responded that outdoor activities are permissible and that for indoor activities it is likely the majority of people will be vaccinated. Masks are still recommended for the elderly and school corporations are individually working on plans.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett asked why some of the matrix numbers were still so high. Dr. Fox was uncertain, but thought we should see them come into line with the other numbers in the coming weeks. Dr. Beidinger-Burnett said we will need to continue to follow the community transmission rate. Dr. Fox said they are continuing to track the numbers and noted that 30% of the county is vaccinated. If immunity from those who tested positive for the virus lasts for 90 days then an additional 7,400 individuals are protected and if immunity from the virus lasts for 120 days we can count an additional 21,000 individuals if we count the last 120 days as immune. This equates to a countywide immunity of between 44.9% (natural immunity of 90 days) and 55.7% (natural immunity of 120 days).

Dr. Kirsch asked if there was a process in place for temperature checks. Dr. Fox responded that early in the school year smaller private schools were doing temperature checks, but it is unclear if the practice has continued. Dr. Einterz noted that temperature checks are not recommended for summer camps and Dr. Fox noted that many schools are screening with questions, which is also effective. Dr. Shoemaker stated that there are very few cases of children with COVID-19 in the emergency room. The CDC guidance says that heightened measures are

not required for children as they are having an adverse impact. Dr. Einterz said mortality in COVID-19 among children is similar to influenza, children do fall ill and pass away from influenza and this will also happen with COVID-19. Dr. Einterz continued stating death from COVID-19 is tragic, just as it is from influenza, but all of the factors need to be weighed and a risk benefit analysis needs to be undertaken. A mask is still recommended for unvaccinated children if social distancing is impossible, but it is just a recommendation. Dr. Shoemaker agreed that there is some risk, similar to influenza. Dr. Shoemaker said the CDC guidance is out and measures should be similar to those for influenza.

Ms. Dean noted that she has two children who wear masks, her concern is that her children will spread the virus to older adults who do not have the same level of protection as children. Dr. Shoemaker responded that the people that are now being seen in the emergency room with COVID-19 are people who have chosen not to get the vaccine.

After the discussion concluded Dr. Beidinger-Burnett asked for clarification on the Department of Health's requirements. Dr. Einterz stated that masks are not required for children at summer camps.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett called for new business and inquired as to the status of the wastewater and water quality boards. Mrs. Parcell responded that meetings have been set.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then moved to the status of third-party payer systems. Mrs. Ruppe responded that the Department is working with the State and billing could start as soon as the end of the month. Ms. Dean asked if other types of testing were an option after billing was in place. Mrs. Ruppe responded that it would be.

2022 Budget Request

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett asked for a discussion and vote on the 2022 budget request. Mrs. Ruppe gave a presentation on the 2022 request including that the request was for a 5.8% overall increase, 5% without health insurance. Dr. Marker stated that the committee has met and moves the budget to a vote by the Board.

Dr. Kirsch moved that the 2022 budget request be sent on as presented by the committee. Dr. Marker seconded the motion and the votes were as follows: Dr. Kirsch, yes; Dr. Marker, yes; Dr. Shoemaker, yes; Ms. Dean, yes; Dr. Beidinger-Burnett, yes.

Burden of Disease Report

Mary Wachira and Mrs. White then presented a burden of disease report. Dr. Marker asked if there were any known problems with the data. Ms. Wachira noted that data is not available for the top fifteen diseases in the County by demographics, but with other diseases the demographic differences were so small that they were statistically insignificant. Dr. Marker asked if data was segregated for the rural and urban parts of the County. Ms. White stated that obtaining geographical data from locations within the County is very difficult, but the goal is to

identify the populations that are suffering from the various diseases and then deploy the appropriate resources to those areas.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Update

Dr. Einterz stated that the number of vaccines given daily continues to decrease. The northern part of the County has a 75% vaccination rate, which is even higher in the northeast part of the County. The vaccination rate in the southern part of the County is below 25%. A pop-up clinic will be placed in Walkerton to try and increase the numbers in the southern part of the County.

Technology Update

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then asked about the status of the technology update for the Department of Health. Mrs. Ruppe said it was well underway and new computers were being deployed.

IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS

1. Hirings: None
2. Resignations: A number of individuals resigned from the COVID-19 vaccination clinic. This is due to the decrease in demand and other employment opportunities available for these individuals. Dr. Einterz thanked them for their service and assistance in helping vaccinate the public.
3. Retirements: None
4. Terminations: None

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Amy Drake commented on immunity levels, mask requirements, and schools.

Maureen Goetz commented on the impact of COVID-19 on children.

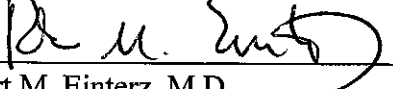
XI. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next regular meeting of the St. Joseph County Board of Health is scheduled for Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 4:30 p.m., at the St. Joseph County Department of Health, 8th Floor Board Room.

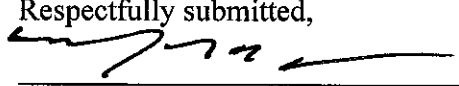
XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

ATTEST:



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

Respectfully submitted,


Marcellus Lebbin, Esq.
Health Department Attorney