

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

July 21, 2021
Regular Meeting

Present at the Meeting:

St. Joseph County Board of Health Members:

Heidi Beidinger-Burnett, Ph.D., MPH	President
Jason Marker, MD	Vice President
John Linn	Member
Ilana T. Kirsch, M.D., FACOG	Member
Emily Dean	Member – Attended via Zoom
Jamie Shoemaker, M.D.	Member – Attended via Zoom

Also Present at the Meeting:

Robert M. Einterz, M.D.	Health Officer
Mark D. Fox, M.D., Ph.D., MPH	Deputy Health Officer
Mark Espich	Director, Environmental Health
Robin Vida	Health Outreach, Promotion and Education (HOPE) - Zoom
Neiko 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
Amy Ruppe	Administrator
Nancy Pemberton	Director of Nursing, Immunization Clinic – Zoom
Brett Davis	Asst. Director – Environmental Health
Cameron Brice	Wabash College Intern - Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Board President, Dr. Beidinger-Burnett, called the July 21, 2021 regular Board of Health meeting to order at 4:39 p.m. Some 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. Kirsch, seconded by Mr. Linn, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the July 21, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion made by Dr. Marker, seconded by Mr. Linn, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the June 16, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health were approved.

IV. BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett thanked everyone for the cards and support received after the death of her father.

V. HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION AND REPORT

The Board received written reports from Dr. Einterz. The tuberculosis information in the report from the Nursing/Public Health Unit was highlighted as there are already six (6) cases in the County this calendar year. This is a largely a result of the bone graft contamination discussed at the last meeting, but the Department is seeing more tuberculosis in the County this year.

Dr. Einterz also reported that the Department of Health budget was presented to the Budget Committee. The Department will now wait to see if there is a request for additional information or if the proposed budget will work through the process with the information presented.

Dr. Einterz then noted that the Department of Health is still working on grant submissions. Dr. Marker inquired as to the Department of Health workload with Covid and if the immunization clinic is moving back into the County City Building. Dr. Einterz addressed Dr. Marker's questions and noted that immunizations are an area that there is a backlog to work through. A discussion followed and Ms. Smith noted that there has been an increase in events, but the Department of Health is current on all applications. Dr. Fox informed the Board that there is work for the lead team that has been building during the pandemic vaccination focus. More discussion followed and it was agreed that vaccination clinic moving back into the building will result in a reduction of backlogs.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then asked about the status of billing items such as lead risk assessments. Dr. Fox responded that assessments are conducted monthly and the June billings should be going out. Dr. Fox informed the Board that the new EMR system should help with the timeliness of billing. Dr. Beidinger-Burnett followed up by inquiring as to the status of the EMR system. Dr. Einterz stated that the contract has been signed and the system should be implemented in the next ten (10) to twelve (12) weeks. Dr. Marker then asked about integration with the new EMR system and the local health systems. A discussion followed where integration with both state and local health systems. It was noted that the new system has the capabilities to integrate, but that integration is dependent upon approval from our partners at the State and local health systems.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then turned the conversation to reporting categories on the lead report and asked if zero (0) could become its own category. Ms. White responded that she would check into this. Dr. Marker and Dr. Kirsch then joined the conversation, and a discussion was held on how this would improve the report if it was possible to report zero (0) as a category, lead tests, and redraws. It was noted that the CDC might be changing the guidelines and if the

categories are reorganized, they should be in line with the CDC guidelines. Ms. Dean then joined the conversation and discussed the importance of educating parents on the impact of positive lead tests that have results below actionable levels. Dr. Fox noted such outreach and education is the goal of the community health workers.

VI. DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION

COVID-19 Update

Dr. Fox stated that the vaccination clinic was moved to the County City Building lobby as the number of individuals seeking vaccinations has fallen. Dr. Fox noted that the vaccination clinic would eventually move up to the Department of Health Offices as the number of vaccinated individuals continues to increase. Dr. Fox followed this with information on a number of popup clinics that are planned.

Dr. Fox then reported that there has been a slight increase in the number of COVID cases in the County, with two (2) confirmed cases of the Delta variant. Those cases are from May and the June numbers on the Delta variant were not yet available as there is a time delay of at least two weeks.

Dr. Fox outlined the difficulties facing schools and presented the new CDC guidelines to the Board. Dr. Fox noted that the local school boards have the ultimate decision as to the policies their students will follow. Dr. Marker asked how close we were to a reduction in the eligible age for the vaccine. Dr. Fox said the six (6) to twelve (12) age group may be eligible in winter. Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then asked if school boards were asking for guidance. A conversation was held with Dr. Shoemaker and Dr. Einterz joining Dr. Fox, Dr. Marker and Dr. Beidinger-Burnett with regard to guidance for schools. The conversation ended with Dr. Fox recommending the CDC guidance be followed, Dr. Einterz stressing the importance of vaccination to stop mutation, and Dr. Shoemaker concerned about the possibility of losing nursing staff over mandates from the health systems.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett called for new business and asked if the Board would like a virtual meeting policy. A discussion was held and the Board asked that a policy be drafted for their review.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then asked Dr. Einterz to present on the parental leave policy that was distributed to the Board. Dr. Einterz outlined the goals of the policy as follows: to retain talent; improve the mental and physical health employees; improve the mental and physical health of children in the family. Ms. White and Dr. Einterz then explained the proposed policy in detail and answered questions. Dr. Kirsch and Dr. Marker then joined the conversation and were generally supportive. Mr. Linn asked if there was enough staff to support the policy and discussion followed. Ms. Dean entered the conversation and was in favor. The Board decided to wait until next meeting to give more time to read and review the proposed policy in detail.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then asked for the opioid use disorder presentation, which was given by Mr. Brice. Conversation and questions followed.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then called for the HEED presentation, which was given by Ms. White. Discussion followed and Dr. Beidinger-Burnett thanked Ms. White.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Update

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then asked about old business and Dr. Einterz noted stated that the vaccination clinic would be in the lobby of the County City Building through August due to the Delta variant. Dr. Einterz also notified the Board of the status of a dose issue with undiluted vaccine. The State and CDC were both notified.

IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS

1. Hirings: There was one (1) new addition to the Health Department and one (1) transfer of a volunteer from the COVID clinic to a regular position with the Health Department.
2. Resignations: None.
3. Retirements: None
4. Terminations: None

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Amy Drake commented that eliminating public comment from the meetings would be a mistake if the Board value's public opinion. She stated studies show masks are not effective to stop COVID and result in a lack of oxygen to those wearing them. Ms. Drake continued by noting studies show natural immunity is long lasting and those with natural immunity should be included in the heard immunity numbers.

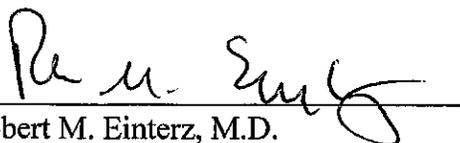
XI. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next regular meeting of the St. Joseph County Board of Health is scheduled for Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 4:30 p.m., at the St. Joseph County Department of Health, 8th Floor Board Room.

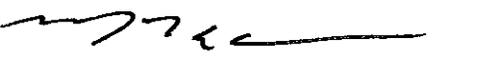
XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

ATTEST:


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

Respectfully submitted,


Marcellus Lebbin, Esq.
Health Department Attorney