



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
July 8, 2020

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

Staff: Maritza Bond, Director of Health

Absent: Reid Davis

Guests: Jordan Peccia, Doug Brackney, Allesandro Zulli

Call to Order:

Dr. Hadler called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Mongillo moved to approve the June 10, 2020 minutes as presented. Dr. Hadler seconded the motion; minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments or Statements:

There were no members of the public present.

Director of Health Updates:

COVID-19 – Yale University Sludge Surveillance Report

Commissioners welcomed the Yale University team to the meeting. The team introduced themselves: Jordan Peccia, Professor of Environmental Engineering at Yale University; Doug Brackney, an Associate Scientist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station currently studying SARS Coronavirus but normally studies vector-borne viruses, i.e. mosquitoes and ticks; and Allesandro Zulli, an Environmental Engineering PhD student currently working with Dr. Peccia on SARS COVID monitoring.

Dr. Peccia shared a screen of the team's study on COVID-19 Monitoring of New Haven Wastewater, which began in mid-March 2020. He noted there are many Engineers and

Epidemiologists on the team and gave background on program. It was noted that additional tools are necessary to track and survey the epidemic's progression and can be logistically challenging. Sewage represents a composite sample of a populations' viral infections. The hypothesis is that "the occurrence and concentrations of SARS-CoV-2 in domestic sewage can be used to monitor and interpret the COVID-19 outbreaks."

The team is working with Gary Zrelak of the Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority (GNHWPCA) who has collected samples since March 19th. The GNHWPCA serves about 200,000 people. The team analyzes sludge and evaluates concentrations of SARS-CoV-2, which shows rises and falls in the outbreak. Dr. Mongillo asked how long people shed the virus. Dr. Peccia noted about 14 days. The virus is still detectable in sludge even though there are less than ten cases per day.

In the future, the study will expand to five more Connecticut cities. This was no cost to the City of New Haven. Discussion ensued regarding commercial testing of sludge. The company doing this work uses a different approach by sampling sewage instead of sludge. Dr. Peccia noted that there's much more involved in the process, so it makes sense they charge more money to do it. However, he noted that sludge provides much more consistent, reliable information

Dr. Hadler asked how many samples are taken per day and the time of day. Samples are collected between 8-10 a.m. every day. Also, Dr. Hadler asked Doug Brackney about sequencing the viruses. They are trying to optimize the sequencing protocols. A lot of the RNA in the sludge is degraded, and they're trying two new approaches.

Dr. Mongillo asked how long will study continue. Dr. Peccia responded the study will continue at least through December.

The Board and Director Bond thanks Dr. Peccia and the team for their impressive work.

Department Program Reports

Director Bond shared a Health Department Status Report. She's requested supervisors to join monthly Board meetings. She noted that Dr. Jennifer Vazquez, Director of Nursing, was not available for today's meeting, but will be included on the August agenda to talk about clinic services. Director Bond gave an update on Vital Statistics with Registrar Lisa Wilson present at the meeting to answer questions.

Operational Updates:

- Staffing updates:
 - Vacancies: HUD Program Manager; Project Director for Environmental Health, Senior Sanitarian, Clinic Nurse (four applicants), Health Assistant, Community Health Worker, Deputy Director of Public Health (awaiting union review/approval), Part-time Accounting Clerk; Lead Inspectors - two requests to appoint submitted to Human Resources

-Retirements/Other:

One Sanitarian on emergency paid sick leave, anticipate return August 12, 2020

School Public Health Nurse retirement

Asthma Coordinator on short-term leave anticipated return July 21, 2020

School Public Health Nurse on extended medical leave

Senior Sanitarian, Emergency Response Coordinator and Executive Administrative

Assistant placed on paid administrative leave.

Director Bond reviewed the FY2020-21 Health Department budget approved by Board of Alders. The budget is a little more than \$4 million. Cuts made to the budget were not significant.

There was discussion about a grant that was not approved by the Board of Alders. Director Bond is working to get the decision reversed. The Board talked about the Board of Alders grant approval process. Director Bond wants to create a COVID-19 Task Force to address the gaps that were so prevalent during our response and come up with a resolution. Will help with quality assurance to have two additional nurses.

Director Bond noted that the Board of Health Commissioners is recruiting for new members. Dr. Hadler will speak with the Yale School of Public Health to help with recruitment. There are no specific requirements to be a member, but a health profession or health-related work is helpful, and the individual must be a New Haven resident.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12th, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Attest:

Brenda Pantelis

Brenda Pantelis
Executive Administrative Assistant

8/3/2020

Date

Approved:

James Hadler

James Hadler, Chair
Board of Health Commissioners

8/12/2020

Date