

MEETING MINUTES Approved 9-22-2020

Tompkins County Board of Health

August 25, 2020

12:00 Noon

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Melissa Dhundale, MD; David Evelyn, MD; Ravinder Kingra; Edward Koppel, MD; Susan Merkel; Janet Morgan, Ph.D.; and Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President

Staff: Liz Cameron, Director of Environmental Health; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Public Health Administrator; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; William Klepack, MD, Medical Director; Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director; Skip Parr, Senior Public Health Sanitarian; Deb Thomas, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; Jonathan Wood, County Attorney; Shelley Comisi, Administrative Assistant; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

Excused: Shawna Black

Call to Order: Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at 12:04 p.m.

Privilege of the Floor: None

Welcome: Dr. Moylan welcomed the new Board of Health member Ravinder Kingra. Dr. Moylan read thank you notes from recently retired staff Karen Bishop and Melissa Gatch.

Approval of July 28, 2020 Minutes: Dr. Evelyn moved to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2020 meeting as written, seconded by Dr. Morgan. The vote to approve the minutes as written was unanimous; motion carried.

Financial Summary: Ms. Grinnell Crosby referred to the 2020/7th month financial report summary included in the packet. Ms. Grinnell Crosby reported they continue to monitor the budget based on the pandemic. Federal funds have started coming in at 100%, and she continues to work on two COVID grants that are CDC funding. Legislative activity recently placed three hundred thousand dollars in our budget for community-wide testing. The department continues to support the nursing division.

Administration Report: Mr. Kruppa welcomed new board member Ravinder Kingra who Mayor Myrick approved for the city representative seat and was appointed by the legislature. Mr. Kingra stated he is a faculty member at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, teaching in the Food and

Beverage area, and he also runs a Cornell campus restaurant. Mr. Kingra holds a Master of Management degree in Hospitality from Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration. He is excited about serving on the Board of Health.

Mr. Kruppa reported that Melissa Gatch is filling in for retired Karen Bishop until she retires at the end of this month to lead the communicable disease approach but will be returning two days a week to help train the new staff and support the transition. Ms. Crosby will provide leadership for the division in the interim. Mr. Kruppa reported applicants will meet with the hiring committee to interview next week.

COVID: Mr. Kruppa reported we continue with a low incidence of disease in the community

Higher Education:

Ithaca College: Mr. Kruppa reported Ithaca College classes would be fully remote for the fall semester. Mr. Kruppa said Dr. Moylan was appointed into an official role with Ithaca College for COVID activities. Dr. Moylan described her new role with Ithaca College, Director of Public Health Emergency Preparedness; the position was created to recognize the complexities of COVID, how to respond and effectively coordinate and collaborate to assure compliance with the New York Forward Plan.

Cornell University: Mr. Kruppa reported that Cornell first brought back on-campus students from high incidence states, and only a couple tested positive. The students from the non-high incidence states followed with also only a couple testing positive. Mr. Kruppa noted there were concerns about importing disease into the community with the return of the students, which fortunately it does not appear to be so. Cornell is also doing ongoing surveillance testing, which also shows a low incidence of the disease. Today Cornell launched a dashboard on its COVID page. Mr. Kruppa reported he meets with Cornell's Provost and President weekly to review data. Cornell's behavioral compact is out as well as Ithaca College. Mr. Kruppa stated that the behavioral compact and full-scale surveillance testing mimics an official full-scale kickoff on September 2nd with Cornell.

Mr. Kruppa reported that the Environmental Health team distributed door-hangers in cooperation with law enforcement (regarding mass gatherings where social distancing or mask-wearing is not practiced). The complaint response component takes an educational approach.

Question from Mr. Kingra regarding the observance of large gatherings, not social distancing or wearing masks. Mr. Kruppa responded, yes, if there is a concern, call the dispatch number.

TC3: Mr. Kruppa reported TC3 is offering testing on campus to faculty and staff with a focus on their residence halls.

Legislature: Mr. Kruppa reported County Administrator, Mr. Molina presented a resolution to the legislature to fund testing in Tompkins County. The legislature agreed that the county would pay for the non-medically necessary testing done by Cayuga Medical Centers for Tompkins County residents. Reimbursement will be sought from FEMA, and the county will cover the remaining percentage. Mr. Kruppa clarified that the \$99 Cayuga Medical Center started charging was for individuals who traveled up to the site for testing and did not meet the criteria. Testing will continue with the new funding.

Grades K-12: Mr. Kruppa reported:

- Ithaca City Schools will begin virtual schooling on September 14th until October 5th. The workforce issue was the reason for virtual schooling and to see what higher education looked like with the disease. Mr. Kruppa noted no knowledge of change of plans with any other school district.

Dr. Dhundale added that Jeff Snedeker, who is a pediatric infectious disease doctor, will answer questions at tonight's board meeting. Doctors are writing an op-ed to discuss why we chose to send our kids in person. The school nurses and staff are getting more training with more time to focus on immunizations and physicals. We are also getting the uninsured onto insurance in working with Cayuga Health Partners.

Mr. Kruppa stated that pre-COVID, there were public health issues that needed attention and are now magnified because of COVID. However, we continue to look at it from a totality perspective, as Dr. Dhundale referenced, they are committed to continuing to address those issues. Dr. Dhundale responded to Mr. Kruppa, adding that pediatricians are seeing the effects of COVID and the increase in mental health issues and are willing to help.

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding additional campaigning for the upcoming Labor Day weekend to avoid possible spikes. Mr. Kruppa responded, yes, messaging will go out and hopes for conversations of the low incidence of the disease, what we are good at, such as practicing social distancing and wearing masks as we have proven over the summer. Dr. Morgan asked that messages include what happened over the July 4th weekend.

Health Promotion Program Report: Ms. Hillson, Director of Health Promotions, reported no updates to her report but added recent activity around COVID. Ms. Hillson said that press releases have gone out, including a Simeon's employee testing positive; gyms and fitness centers openings; and as of yesterday, eight active cases in the community. Ms. Hillson noted that their data would continue to include higher education testing data.

Question from Dr. Dhundale regarding an active case. Ms. Hillson responded that an active case is a positive test in isolation, and the nurses have completed the contact investigation are monitoring daily. Mr. Kruppa added that once the individual is released from isolation, they are no longer considered an active case and no longer contagious.

Medical Director's Report: Dr. Klepack spoke on the vaccine clinics held at the Health Department and the impact the Coronavirus has had on immunizations. Dr. Klepack stated he has reached out to local primary care and pediatrician practices, and some have agreed to take our referrals. Dr. Klepack discussed the concept of higher education as a business with its customers being students are community members as well as consumers. In working with students, the same basic concepts of pandemic control apply as they would to any other community member. Dr. Klepack spoke on the concept of the reproduction number, which is the number of susceptible people who are going to be infected by an index case who has active Coronavirus. Dr. Klepack said their mission is to catch that person in the limited window of opportunity promptly and quickly to reduce the number of people who are infected by them and, thus, reduce the reproduction number. Dr. Klepack stated that laboratory testing and quick turnaround is crucial in lowering the reproduction number as well as new testing. It is also important to identify trends and target groups for intervention. Dr. Klepack encourages the nurses during case

investigation to keep in mind the big picture as they interview clients and look for trends. Dr. Klepack reported a change in isolation criteria from the CDC, normal persons now may be released after ten days of isolation to control communicability. For severely ill people or immunocompromised people, twenty days of isolation should be considered.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding Tompkins County adjusting isolation times.

Dr. Klepack responded, yes, they have adjusted isolation criteria, although it is not official with the New York State Department of Health recommendation at this point. Dr. Koppel stated providers should be made aware not to bring mild cases into their offices of COVID but conducted via telehealth and ordering people to go to the sampling site to reduce risk to medical staff.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding the Department of Health contact tracing for the county and colleges. Dr. Klepack responded that TCHD takes charge over any positive cases and after their contacts are identified and interviewed, they are taken over by Cornell Health as mandatory quarantine clients. Cornell Health is following those students and maintaining contact with them right up to their release from quarantine. Should they become symptomatic and COVID positive, we (TCHD) assume their management. We manage all other quarantine individuals for higher education and the community but not Cornell's. TCHD handles travelers in mandatory quarantine.

Question from Dr. Morgan regarding out of county people working in Tompkins County turning up positive. Mr. Kruppa responded that the county of residence is where the positive result is reported to.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding Cornell contact tracing. Mr. Kruppa responded that as long as we have the capacity, TCHD is making the first call, case investigation, and first contact tracing calls to gather information in order that the investigations come from a non-authoritarian entity and to ensure the most frank and honest information be gleaned from the individual. Cornell will do the daily check-ins for individuals in quarantine.

Division for Community Health Report: Reported by Dr. Klepack and Mr. Kruppa.

Children with Special Care Needs Report: Ms. Thomas reported that the Children with Special Care Needs is back up to normal for the past two months; the CSCN staff continues to attend the morning briefings, support during the week as needed and provide weekend coverage. Ms. Thomas stated she is assisting with the managers retiring and helping out with weekend coverage for the managers for COVID work.

County Attorney's Report: Mr. Wood had nothing to report but introduced himself to Mr. Kingra.

Environmental Health Report: Ms. Cameron reported that things are nowhere near normal as they continue to handle gym facility inspections and numerous complaints about student and people gatherings; activities which take away from regular inspections. Environment Health continues to make COVID the priority. Ms. Cameron had nothing to add to her report.

Dr. Morgan, Dr. Evelyn, Skip Parr, Shelley Comisi and Karan Palazzo all introduced themselves and welcomed Mr. Kingra.

Adjournment: Ms. Merkel moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Dhundale; meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.