

Tompkins County Board of Health
April 23, 2024
12:00 Noon
Rice Conference Room and via Zoom

Minutes Approved
June 25, 2024

Present: Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President; Melissa Dhundale, MD, Vice-President; Edward Koppel, MD; Shawna Black; Susan Merkel; Samara Touchton; and Ravinder Kingra.

Staff: Frank Kruppa, Commissioner; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Deputy Public Health Director; Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health Services; Adriel Shae, Senior Environmental Health Specialist; Rachel Buckwalter, Director of Community Health; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; Jessica Clark Mandeville, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; Zoe Lincoln, Whole Health Planner; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant.

Excused: Andreia de Lima, MD

Guests: Jimmy Jordan, Ithaca Voice; Trung Vu, Ithaca College Physician Assistant student

Call to Order: Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at noon.

Privilege of the Floor: None

Approval of March 25, 2024, Minutes: Ms. Merkel moved to approve March 25, 2024, minutes; second by Mr. Ravinder. The vote to approve the March 25, 2024, meeting minutes as written was unanimous; the motion carried.

Financial Summary: Mr. Kruppa reported on behalf of Mr. Porter who is out on medical leave. The staff is working on finalizing the 2023 budget.

Medical Director's Report and Discussion: Dr. Klepack had nothing to add to his written report.

Administration Report: Mr. Kruppa reported that the County is updating the webpage which includes Whole Health and should be fully launched by the end of the calendar year without interruption in accessing the BOH public documents. County Finance is updating the process of purchasing requirements for Request For Proposals (RFP).

Division for Community Health (DCH) Report: Ms. Buckwalter had nothing to add to her written report. DCH is looking to fill the senior nurse position and asked for referrals or recommendations.

Health Promotion Program Report: Ms. Hillson reported that community visioning boards have been displayed throughout the County for community residents to provide input to the Tompkins County Community Health Improvement Process (CHI Tompkins). Virtual and live events are being held for more engagement and input from the community with a focus on the two questions below.

1. What is their ideal vision for the vision for the health of our community?
2. What do they feel are the overlapping identities that make up our community?

The summary of input and ideas collected will shape the one vision statement to guide the CHI Tompkins process.

Children with Special Care Needs (CSCN) Report: Ms. Clark Manderville reported they are interviewing for a speech-language therapist in-house position. The new billing platform the state is launching (Early Intervention Hub) will launch on October 15th of this year. Mr. Kruppa added that they are looking to submit an alternative proposal to County Administration that would allow the hiring of more needed speech therapists for the County through other funding or a stipend due to insufficient State funding, despite a 5% rate increase from the State budget.

Environmental Health Report: Mr. Shea had nothing to add to the written report. Ms. Black asked to explain fees regarding a fee to a homeowner. He described the standard fees and noted that it is uncommon to see replacement system plans from an outside engineer to do the work that the Health Department requires unless EH needs to make a referral to an outside engineer due to extreme complexity. Mr. Shea is unsure how the homeowner found out there was a problem with their sewage system and there are no reduced fees for an outside engineer.

Ms. Black moved to refund the homeowner the permit \$190 fee; seconded by Mr. Ravinder.

Discussion: The homeowner has the option to use an outside engineer/contractor. The EH fee schedules, processes, and contract information have always been listed on the website. Mr. Kruppa added that EH thoroughly explained the process to the homeowner and they were receptive but the EH team will look further into the matter. He feels it may have been a misunderstanding between the homeowner and the contracted engineer.

Four were opposed to refunding the permit fee, and three were in favor; the motion failed to pass.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH Enforcement Actions:

Draft Resolution #EH-ENF-24-0002 – Ithaca Press, Violations of Subpart 14-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Food Service) – Ms. Merkel moved to accept the motion as written; seconded by Dr. Koppel.

No discussion.

All were in favor; the vote to approve the resolution as written was unanimous.

Draft Resolution #EH-ENF-24-0006 – Brew 22 Coffee, Violations of Subpart 5-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Public Water) – Ms. Black moved to accept the motion as written; seconded by Ms. Touchton.

Discussion: Ms. Merkel asked for an explanation of the fees. Mr. Kruppa could not fully explain all the fines totaling \$8,700 in significant multiple violations that include unverifiable water sample reports and many other missed reports.

It was decided that this matter be tabled and heard again at next month's meeting.

OTHER ACTIONS

Encampment Notice of Violation Update:

Mr. Kruppa shared an update on the encampment situation that resulted in the issuance of a Notice of Violation to the City of Ithaca and the railroad in the area bordering Tabor Street and the railroad tracks which negatively impacts the waterways. The City and the railroad responded well and agreed to develop a plan and clean up the affected area. The notice of violation gave both entities 30 days to submit the plan to Environmental Health from the issuance of the violation. He added that the City recently posted keep-out signs, and some cleanup has begun and looks forward to a sustainable proposal from the City for the land to be sanitarily maintained.

Whole Health's Overdose Follow-Up Presentation:

Mr. Kruppa provided a follow-up and update on Whole Health's response, data collection, and communication strategies related to opioid overdoses.

Tompkins County opioid information, data, and resources can be found on the Whole Health webpage at [Opioid Use and Resources | Tompkins County NY](#).

Communication strategies include issuing press releases on topics of mental health and substance use disorder issues in the community, alerting the community of fentanyl being laced in drug supplies, updating the community, informing about available resources, avenues of support, community initiatives, Requests for Proposals (RFPs), data on opioid-related overdose deaths regularly, via TV, radio, and newspapers.

Data is posted regularly on the website with a recent posting around demographics on unintentional overdose deaths.

911 Call for Overdose Emergency - The 911 Center provides overdose/poisoning call data based on the type of emergency. The Community Justice Center, which is involved in public safety reform, recently put out a data page that has more information about the 911 Call Center. The Sheriff's Office and the Ithaca Police Department also have data on their web pages.

Drug-Related Deaths Data - Based on records filed by the Tompkins County Medical Examiner. The data is an aggregate of the last five years (2019 – 2023) identified by a variety of demographics.

Unintentional Fatal Overdoses – Includes those for which the manner of death is classified as an accident and substance identified in a toxicology screening is ruled as the immediate cause of death. The data was broken down into several categories. He noted that individuals working in food service under the occupation category were higher than expected and this identified population group will be investigated and addressed differently as they are disproportionately affected.

They are looking at non-fatal overdoses with conversations with Cayuga Health Partners to get their data on individuals entering the emergency room.

Drug-Related Deaths – Includes all deaths in which drugs are involved. In these cases, the immediate cause of death is not or not solely drugs, and drugs are often listed under “Other significant contributions.” These also include those in which the manner of death is not ruled as an accident.

Opioid Quarterly Reports - The summary of Tompkins County Data Published April 2024 is slightly behind as it comes from New York State quarterly but helps in how resources are targeted.

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) – Mr. Kruppa reviewed the community plan areas of CHIP which focused on Promoting Well-Being and Preventing Substance Use Disorders and Mental and Substance Use Disorders Prevention and their goals.

The community plan is designed to be a road map of how the community addresses issues and how we can help improve them. CHIP 2022 – 2024 can be found on the webpage at [CHACHIP2022-TompCo-TOC-CHIP.pdf \(tompkinscountyny.gov\)](#).

The Tompkins Mental Hygiene Local Services Plan for 2024-2028 was developed by a workgroup composed of the Chair of the Community Services Board, the Chair and Co-Chairs of the Mental Health, Substance Use and Developmental Disabilities Subcommittees, and the Director of Community Services. The workgroup solicited feedback from community members, local provider agencies, and the Community Service Board and subcommittee members through a Local Services Plan Priority Needs Survey conducted in May and June 2023. The Local Services Plan can be found at [Tompkins County Whole Health Local Services Plan \(tompkinscountyny.gov\)](#)

Local Services Plan Goal Areas:

1. Workforce
2. Housing
3. Crisis Services
4. Cross System Services
5. Non-Clinical Supports
6. Adverse Childhood Experiences
7. Transition Age Services

The biggest challenge is the shortage of available workers including social workers, psychiatrists, peers, etc. from the research and work of Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, and Substance Use subcommittees. Housing is a primary problem.

New Initiatives

- Expanded Opioid Overdose Prevention Program from Green Street to Brown Road
- Launched Dual response CARE Team program with the Sheriff's Office and Ithaca Police Department
- Received pilot funds from OMH to Outreach Worker program to rural parts of the county
- Advocate for and received funds from TC legislature to continue the program
- Facilitate an RFP process to find a vendor to administer the program
- Facilitated County Opioid Settlement Funds Task Force distribution of \$725,000 to community organizations
- Led the Community Services Board to create a rapid housing and crisis services program using Opioid Settlement Funds

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 28th, 2024 @ noon.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm