



Needham Public Health Division



Board of Health Meeting Minutes DRAFT

Date: December 16, 2022

Location: Rosemary Recreation Complex – Multi-Purpose Room, 178 Rosemary St., Needham MA 02494 OR via Zoom

Members: Edward Cosgrove, PhD, Chair; Kathleen Ward Brown, ScD, Member; Tejal K. Gandhi, MD, MPH, Member; Robert A. Partridge, MD, MPH, Member; Stephen Epstein, MD, MPP, Member

Staff Present: Timothy Muir McDonald, Director of Health, and Human Services; Tara Gurge, Assistant Director of Public Health; Tiffany Zike, Assistant Director of Public Health; Hannah Burnett; Lynn Schoeff; Ally Littlefield; Diana Acosta; Carol Read; Julie McCarthy; Taleb Abdelrahim; Michael Lethin; Rebecca Hall; Cindi Melanson; and Karen Mullen.

Welcome and Public Comment Period

Dr. Cosgrove called the meeting to order at 9:00AM and initiated a roll call. Present were Dr. Brown – Y, Dr. Cosgrove - Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, Dr. Partridge – Y, and Dr. Gandhi-Y.

According to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, as an act relative to extending certain states of emergency accommodations, as passed by the General Court, and signed into law, Acting Governor Karyn Polito, on July 16 2022, revised Section 20 of Chapter 20, the Acts of 2001. In so doing, provided modifications to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, which allow for flexibility to hold remote only, and hybrid meetings, while preserving public access and, where appropriate, public participation. Currently, that additional flexibility will expire on March 31, 2023, unless additional legislative action occurs. As part of today's hybrid meeting, all votes will occur via a roll call.

There was no public comment at this time.

Review of Minutes – November 22, 2022

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Brown and seconded by Dr. Partridge, it was voted to approve the minutes of November 22, 2022. Dr. Brown – Y, Dr. Cosgrove - Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, Dr. Partridge – Y, and Dr. Gandhi-Y. Motion passed 5-0-0.

Staff Reports and COVID update



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Traveling Meals Program – Rebecca Hall

Rebecca Hall stated that 785 meals were delivered to 48 clients in November. One new client from Springwell signed up for the program, and three clients cancelled the program. Ten COVID-19 testing kits were delivered to five clients. There were no 911 calls to report.

Accreditation – Lynn Schoeff

Lynn Schoeff stated that the team continues to work hard on the associated projects.

Environmental Health – Tara Gurge

Tara Gurge explained that Sira Naturals sent a revised 'Wicked' product label, which has been reworked again to take out the paint splatter background. The third-party marijuana infused product (MIP) labels also have a more prominent FDA warning, with a sticker added to those products which states, 'This product has not been analyzed or approved by the FDA. Not safe for Kids.'

Ally Littlefield stated that a follow-up housing inspection for a property on Gage Street was carried out to verify that all housing order letter items have been addressed. Permit renewals are approximately 7% complete at this time. Ms. Littlefield continues work on this item. Staff continues to work with Needham Housing Authority to close out a number of property concerns in Town.

Mr. McDonald asked the Board about the priority violations packet. He asked if the Board would like to see the total packet with all associated photos, or a more condensed amount of information. It was agreed that some egregious cases should be specially highlighted. The summary provided is appropriate to submit to the Board.

In response to a question from Dr. Brown, Ms. Gurge noted that there were four trainings previously completed regarding temperature violations. There are also more trainings available on YouTube. Mr. McDonald stated that staff needs to consider how to best reemphasize these trainings and associated information for restaurant owners. Temperature issues could be due to financial burdens.

Shared Services Grants – Diana Acosta

Diana Acosta explained that the team has been helping with the 2023 permit renewals and many types of inspections. The Baseline Capacity Assessment continued. Phase 2, the workforce survey, officially closed. Phase 3, the document request, for Needham was completed on November 4th. This request required various inspection reports of food establishments, housing, tobacco, pools and more to be uploaded to a website. Dover and Medfield are still in process of submitting their documents. The document request was due on December 9, 2022.



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There was discussion regarding joint work with Medford and Dover.

Epidemiology – Julie McCarthy

Julie McCarthy stated that an increase in cases and hospitalizations is being seen at this time. Vaccination rates also continue to increase. She explained that there is a new interactive wastewater data dashboard and a new interactive influenza-like illness activity dashboard.

Public Health Nursing – Hanna Burnett

Hanna Burnett stated that a Lunch & Learn: Diabetes 101 program was held at the Center at the Heights. This was a productive program. One case of Salmonellosis was reported in early November and was put onto October's numbers due to timing of symptom onset.

Emergency Preparedness – Tiffany Zike & Taleb Abdelrahim

Mr. Abdelrahim explained that staff completed MRC Unit Leader Training provided by NACCHO regarding developing unit training plans and volunteer management. Staff reviewed and edited the Town Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan revision. Staff also reviewed an MRC Deployment Policy. Staff coordinated and assisted the nurse unit with vaccination clinic tasks. Also, MEMA provided Basic Shelter Training to volunteers.

Emergency Management – Michael Lethin

Michael Lethin stated that the draft of the Needham Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan was completed in November and sent out to key stakeholders for review and input. This should be finalized within the next couple of weeks.

Substance Use Prevention – Karen Mullen

Karen Mullen, reporting for Karen Shannon, stated that the Prevention Team hosted the third in-person TIPS training for 2022 on November 7th. 18 staff from Needham and Dedham were in attendance. On November 15th SPAN hosted a presentation of the 2022 Needham Parent Survey data. This data includes attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of parents of grade 6 through 12 children around substance and wellness items. The data is used to complement the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey data. The first mobile drug takeback day was hosted on November 29th. Unfortunately, no residents turned in medications during those visits. The Salsa Youth Prevention Advocates team attended the Norfolk County DA Peer Leadership Conference at the end of November.

Substance Use Prevention MassCALL3 grant Dedham, Needham, Walpole, Westwood – Carol Read

Carol Read stated that Medford continues to hold vaccination clinics. There will be further discussion regarding alcohol information and prevention in the future.



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Review Progress on 2021 and 2022 BOH Goals – *The Board tabled discussion on this item to later in the meeting.*

Brainstorming 2023 and 2024 BOH Goals - *The Board tabled discussion on this item to later in the meeting.*

Updated Food Code Policy

Ally Littlefield stated that the Environmental Health Team conducted four mandatory food safety trainings via Zoom using Berger Food Safety Consulting. Participants were provided with the draft of the Food Code Enforcement Policy and were educated about it during the training period. There were approximately 130 participants including restaurant owners, managers, chefs, and food employees. There were 16 respondents to a post-training survey. In addition, a Food Advisory Board meeting was held, and the Food Code Enforcement Policy was reviewed with nine community stakeholders. There were no negative comments received on the policy.

Dr. Brown stated that there have been many suggestions and concerns raised regarding the Town's inspection process and policy. Ms. Littlefield stated that education was a key piece of these concerns. This can always be improved upon, especially during inspections and with additional communications with restaurants.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Partridge and seconded by Dr. Gandhi, it was voted to approve the updated Food Code Enforcement Policy, as written. Dr. Brown – Y, Dr. Cosgrove - Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, Dr. Partridge – Y, and Dr. Gandhi-Y. Motion passed 5-0-0.

Biosafety Regulations

Tiffany Zike presented a rough draft of the Biosafety Regulations. She asked if the Board would like three members of the community involved on the Biosafety Committee, in addition to the other proposed members. Dr. Cosgrove stated that he believes the biotech segment in Needham will likely continue to grow. He stated that he was in favor of three community representatives. The Board agreed that the Committee could include up-to three community representatives.

It was noted that these regulations will be reviewed by the Cambridge Biotechnology Officer, to seek additional comments or concerns. There will be a public hearing on the BSL-3 issue next month. The Board stated that it would be more comfortable moving forward with BSL-1 and BSL-2 at this time, and to continue to push the regulation forward. There may need to be a private Board discussion first as to whether BSL-3 will be allowed in Town at all. The Board agreed that it would like to seek feedback from the Economic Development Department. It agreed that it would like to allow for BSL-3 by variance. This could be pointed out during the public hearing in February.

FY 2022 Health and Human Services Department Annual Report



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Mr. McDonald presented the annual report to the Board.

Standing Order for Emergency Contraception

Mr. McDonald explained that the Governor signed a law that expanded protection for reproductive and gender-affirming care. One element of that was a standing order from the Department of Public Health authorizing pharmacies to distribute contraception. A concern was received from a member of the public asking the Board to make pharmacists aware of this order.

Dr. Epstein stated that this is a perfectly good policy as is. He does not believe the Board needs to do more than the State Department of Public Health has already done. Residents may make the Board aware if they are having a problem obtaining emergency contraception. It is unclear at this time if there is an issue to address on this matter. He is concerned with setting precedence for future concerns. He stated that he is unsure if this is a message the Board wants to send.

Note: At the Board of Health meeting on January 17, 2023, Dr. Epstein clarified his intent to state that sending notice to pharmacies would be duplicative of the effort by the state.

Dr. Partridge stated that this constituent is only asking the Board to reaffirm this order to pharmacists. This is in the realm of public health education and not a precedent setting message. Dr. Cosgrove and Dr. Brown agreed.

The Board agreed to allow the Public Health Division to send a reminder of this standing order as a piece of educational information.

Brief Updates

- **Claxton Field**

Mr. McDonald stated that the developer has agreed to install a barrier and additional fill on top of it. The status of long-term plans is still unclear at this time.

- **Regional Training Hub Grant**

Mr. McDonald stated that the Needham Public Health Division received a large grant from the State, \$549,700 a year for the next few years, to host a regional training hub. Staff will be hired for this program. Needham will be responsible for 5-6 Public Health Excellence Regions, including itself.

Other Items

None at this time.

Next BOH Meeting



Needham Public Health Division



The next regular Board meetings will be held on January 17, 2023, at 9am; February 16, 2023, at 6pm; at a date to be determined in March; and on April 14, 2023, at a time to be determined.

Review Progress on 2021 and 2022 BOH Goals – *The Board retook this item at this time*
The Board reviewed its progress on the 2021 and 2022 goals.

Brainstorming 2023 and 2024 BOH Goals - *The Board retook this item at this time*

Lynn Schoeff stated that the Board's goals are broad and do not fit neatly into specific programs. Each goal begins with a goal statement, followed by responsible parties, and an attempt to develop measures. The Board identified community health as a goal. As community health is so much of what the Board does, it seemed to make more sense to incorporate it into each goal as a subset.

Dr. Epstein stated that he reviewed this against the Annual Report. He stated that the Board has a goal of health promotion and wellness. The structure of the Division may be disallowing some of these goals to be accomplished, as it is being cross-referenced across subsections. The internal structure of the Division could be altered in order to attempt to reach some of these longstanding goals.

Ms. Schoeff stated that there are many ways to define community health. The Division could review its structure and consider assigning some of the goal work to existing units.

Dr. Cosgrove asked how progress will be measured on these proposed goals. It was stated that this will need to be looked at quantitatively next, to determine how best to measure progress.

Dr. Brown stated that she believes a couple of goals may be missing. Ms. Zike stated that these items were mentioned by the Board at a previous meeting. Additional goals can be added.

The Board mentioned that it would also like to have goals for each of the programs, as in the past. This would include the Board's core responsibilities.

It was noted that Dr. Gandhi previously exited the meeting.

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Epstein and seconded by Dr. Partridge, it was voted to adjourn. Dr. Brown – Y, Dr. Cosgrove - Y, Dr. Epstein – Y, and Dr. Partridge – Y. Motion passed 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Attachment:

December 16, 2022 meeting packet