

Wellesley Board of Health

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Meeting Minutes June 29, 2022, 9:00 AM

Present

Board: Shepard Cohen, MPA, Chair; Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Vice Chair; Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Secretary

Staff: Emily Whittaker-Smith; Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator; Adam DiPersio, Environmental Health; Jhana Wallace, Community Health Coordinator; Vivian Zeng, Senior Environmental Health; Deadra Doku-Gardner, MS, Administrator; Lenny Izzo, Health Department Director

In attendance: Hollie Luber, The Babe Aesthetic; Shira Doron, MD, Resident.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM

VAPING Discussion Points

1. Regarding vaping in schools, the Wellesley Health Department (WHD) Director reported on a call with Wellesley School Department (WSD) staff two weeks prior that did not focus primarily on vaping, but this issue will be discussed in a follow-up call.
2. The FDA's rule banning the sale of Juul vaping pods could have a positive impact on youth (although the ban was stopped by an injunction this past Friday). Juul is the only company banned so far, leaving other pods available for sale.
3. Newton Wellesley Hospital (NWH) is willing to collaborate on an anti-vaping program targeting school-aged youth.
4. Laws and regulations were discussed:
 - a. Wellesley's regulations mirror the Commonwealth's: over 21 to purchase and higher concentration vape pods can only be sold at adult-only venues of which there are none on Wellesley.
 - b. Additionally, there are no flavored vape or tobacco products sold.
 - c. These laws aren't preventing youth vaping because possession is not illegal, only selling to minors is illegal.

Results/Next Steps

1. Follow-up call with School Department.
2. Identify collaboration opportunities with NWH.

COLLEGES AND IMMUNIZATIONS (INCLUDING COVID Discussion Points:

1. Colleges have summer students from overseas who might not be vaccinated for COVID and other diseases.
2. Immunization status at colleges with international students is not clear and does not fall under any college guidelines. This is a gray area with no regulations or standards, so solution is reliance on colleges to follow their own guidelines and policies.
3. Unvaccinated students need to be isolated upon arrival.
4. The main issue is NOT COVID, but other vaccines.

Results/Next Steps:

1. Investigate any agreements with colleges.
2. Reach out to all three campuses (Mass Bay, Babson, Wellesley) to assess plans for incoming Fall college students.

COVID UPDATE Discussion Points:

1. COVID data
 - a. COVID is lingering but numbers are steadily decreasing in Wellesley.
 - b. Most recent week (previous week) has an average case count of 4/day.
 - c. COVID levels in wastewater still show high levels, but hospitalizations are very low.
2. Fall planning
 - a. Predicting Fall case numbers is challenging due to a lot of uncertainty at all levels of government, but a Fall spike is possible.
 - b. The FDA voted to approve a Fall booster for Omicron. WHD messaging should advise residents not to wait for this booster but should stress getting as fully vaccinated as soon as possible.
 - c. Schools would like to reduce testing burden and move towards symptom mitigation to prevent spread (for example sending sick kids home).
 - d. Schools as a community hub are a good source of testing when test kit availability is low.
 - e. Director has talked to Wellesley School Department about PPE needs; reportedly supplies are now adequate.
 - f. WHD will connect with WSD in August to discuss school planning for Fall.
3. Test kits
 - a. Expiration dates on WHD supply of kits have been extended three months by FDA. WHD supply has labels for each box to indicate extension.
 - b. Newer test kits require several challenging steps-may be an issue for elderly.
 - c. WHD has 5,400 kits and plans to distribute to food pantry, public housing, Town departments, restaurants and others.

4. Fall messaging: What is the WHD messaging in COVID for Fall? Some ideas:
 - a. Omicron is still pervasive - Stay up to date on immunizations.
 - b. Do not wait for Fall to get a booster or use the newest FDA approved booster this Fall as a deciding factor-get boosted now.
 - c. Acknowledge uncertainty in any updates-there are not any hard predictions, but WHD is staying on top of the developing situation and will be prepared for any spikes.
 - d. Remind citizens to replenish test kits if needed and order free tests from the Federal government.
 - e. Remind people to test on multiple days of an illness, not just day one.
 - f. Director reminded BOH that any messaging from WHD includes COVID information with best practice safety measures (masking, immunizations, distance).
 - g. Residents who test positive should contact their primary care provider and consider use of Paxlovid.

Results/Next Steps:

1. Late July-send out general COVID brief that includes messaging from #4 above. Continue to push best practices in all messaging.
2. Connect with schools in August to review COVID plans.
3. Keep on top of data to be prepared for spikes.

VARIANCE REQUEST-THE BABE AESTHETIC Discussion Points:

1. The Babe Aesthetic is a permanent makeup provider. The owner, Hollie Luber, is requesting a variance for a code requirement (Chapter 19, Section 5A) requiring a mop sink on the premises. As there is no room for a mop sink in the establishment, the request is to use a mop sink in the building one floor down from the establishment.
2. The Babe Aesthetic has a hot water hand sink installed with no-touch handles.
3. The building owner allows easy access to a shared mop sink on the 1st floor (one floor down). The Babe Aesthetic has a cleaning service which can easily access the sink.
4. The Health Director supports the request.

Results/Next Steps:

1. The BOH voted to approve the variance with the recommendation that any additional sinks installed should include faucets with hand blades to reduce bacteria count.

FUTURE MEETINGS Discussion Points:

1. PFAS Levels: The Chair suggested water/PFAS levels are a priority concern and DPW should be invited to the next meeting to discuss.
 - a. PFAS levels were too high in Morses Pond water source according to Mass. DEP standards. However, federal EPA health advisory is significantly lower. Morses Pond now meets the DEP guidelines, with a temporary fix.
 - b. WHD staff visited the Morses Pond with DPW staff two weeks ago as they turned this source back on and are planning another site visit soon.

2. Biolabs should be on the agenda of a future BOH meeting.

Results/Next Steps:

1. Invite DPW to next BOH meeting

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for August 18,2002, at 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jhana Wallace, Community Health Coordinator