

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2021
11:30 AM

Present:

Board:

Shepard Cohen, MPA, Chair
Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Vice Chair
Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Secretary
Carol Hannenberg, MD, Associate Member

Staff:

Wanda Alvarez, Community Social Worker
Jessica Cliff, Environmental Health Specialist
Leonard Izzo, Director
Cheryl Lefman, Community Health Coordinator
Ann Marie McCauley, Public Health Nurse Supervisor
Joyce Saret, Senior Community Social Worker
Vivian Zeng, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

In attendance:

Shira Doron, MD, Resident
Beth Sullivan Woods, Member, Select Board

The meeting was called to order at 11:34 AM.

The Board of Health approved the following set of minutes:

1-13-2021

Citizen Speak:

No one was in attendance who wished to participate in Citizen Speak.

1. Administration
2. Community Health
 - a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley provided a case update. She continues to receive many new cases per day, mainly from those college age and younger, through household/family spread. Babson College in particular had a

burgeoning number of cases, due to testing of students returning to campus. Leonard Izzo previously had a conversation with the Babson College President, offering a recommendation to delay the return of students until February (using a phased in approach); however, they decided to stay with their original plan, and several hundred students returned in January, which resulted in the current surge in cases.

Ann Marie McCauley said some individuals are in the hospital, but doesn't know the reason for hospitalization.

Ms. McCauley stated the volume of cases has overwhelmed the capacity of the nurses and volunteers to conduct contact tracing, and therefore, some cases were sent to the State's Contact Tracing Collaborative (CTC). Leonard Izzo reiterated that local contact tracing cannot continue, especially with a shift to planning for COVID-19 vaccination clinics. The Board of Health (BOH) agreed that cases should be sent to the CTC.

Dr. Shira Doron reported on the new virus variant. She noted concern about new mutations and how they affect transmissibility. Dr. Doron said that less virus is needed to infect and therefore, people need to be meticulous with mask wearing, social distancing and hand hygiene protocols. She noted in Germany, everyone must now wear a medical mask.

b) COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

Ann Marie McCauley reported that six COVID-19 vaccination clinics for first responders were held last week. The first allocation of 100 doses of Moderna vaccine were dispensed at these clinics. Additional doses have been ordered for administration at clinics (scheduled today and tomorrow) to first responders, police at local colleges and private schools, as well as some school nurses conducting testing.

Ms. McCauley provided an update on COVID-19 vaccinations in local congregate care settings. Charles River ARC contracted with PelMeds Pharmacy (based in Waltham) to provide vaccinations. Linda Oliver Grape and Leonard Izzo cited locations of additional group homes for Ms. McCauley to follow-up with.

There was discussion regarding the definition of "congregate care settings" including, whether vaccine could be administered to those in the independent living side of a facility, or just in assisted living.

Mr. Izzo provided an update of vaccine clinic planning efforts. He had a conversation with Ron O' Connor, director of the Office of Local and Regional Health about clinic logistics. Mr. Izzo is still considering using the hallway outside the Health Department office. The Commonwealth has provided a [map with COVID-19 clinic locations](#).

Mr. Izzo said that he, Ann Marie McCauley and Cheryl Lefman attended a training webinar on PrepMod. This is the system that will be used for scheduling clinics and appointments, providing screening and vaccine information and more. Marcia Testa Simonson noted that it is a supply chain management program.

Leonard Izzo reported that in the future, the Health Department will order vaccine directly from the State, and will not have to go through a regional ordering process. The vaccine will be shipped directly to the Health Department. Ann Marie McCauley noted that once logistics have been determined and are in place, including an adjustment of the freezer temperature, then clinics will be planned and operationalized. Leonard Izzo reported it would be best to start at the end of Phase 1. He said he will collaborate with the Council on Aging (COA), Wellesley Housing Authority, social workers and others to address vaccine administration and messaging for their populations.

Beth Sullivan Woods requested that Health Department staff connect with the local Veterans Service office to advance awareness of vaccine options. She noted the Veterans Administration has a separate vaccine program through the federal government.

Linda Oliver Grape requested that Health Department staff reach out to Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers to survey their willingness to volunteer in the COVID vaccine clinics and to poll those interested as to the status of their receiving COVID vaccinations.

Cheryl Lefman said many medical professionals have reached out to inquire if they could assist with vaccinations and other activities at COVID-19 clinics. Ms. Lefman provided them with information on joining the Wellesley MRC (part of the regional – Norfolk County 8 - NC8 MRC) through the statewide system MA Responds. NC8 MRC unit leader Karen

Contador informed NC8 MRC administrators that an update regarding local and regional vaccine clinics and corresponding roles is being drafted.

Shepard Cohen reported that Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH) will offer COVID-19 vaccinations to physician practices and their patients initially to those in the Partners system, but may extend them to those outside of their network. Mr. Cohen said NWH is looking for large sites, potentially to vaccinate seniors and others in Phase 2 and beyond.

Marcia Testa Simonson said MA Medical Society is coordinating vaccine for physicians in independent practices.

Linda Oliver Grape said supply to hospitals is so significant, they are now vaccinating non-COVID facing staff. She noted that other hospital networks including Atrius are providing vaccinations similarly.

There was discussion regarding others groups in Phase 1 (including behavioral health providers, home-based health care workers and others) and their ability to obtain vaccinations. Linda Oliver Grape said that Patient Care Attendants (PCA) have a union, and their representatives would notify PCA's about vaccination opportunities.

c) Social Work

Joyce Saret provided an update on the virtual chat on self-care with Health Department social workers next Thursday, January 28, 2021 from 1:00-2:00 PM.

Ms. Saret reported that issues related to food and food insecurity have reemerged. She noted funding is available from the Wellesley Chamber of Commerce, which has recently entered into a partnership with the (merged) Newton and Needham Chambers of Commerce. Beth Sullivan Woods provided details; there is \$40,000 available to local restaurants that will participate in assisting those identified as having food insecurity concerns. The funding will help the restaurants as well.

Wanda Alvarez reported she has provided support to those affected by being at home.

d) Communication

Cheryl Lefman shared a draft of a vaccine information document that can be shared with COA, the Library and other town departments that are receiving inquiries about local vaccine efforts.

e) Environmental Health

Vivian Zeng reported she has followed-up on complaints and rumors related to non-compliance of mask and capacity orders. Ms. Zeng reported on volleyball at Babson College and the emergence of a positive case, which ended up as a case from Brookline.

Ms. Zeng reported she is stopping by BSI weekly; they are meeting capacity guidelines, and are in fact under capacity.

Jessica Cliff reported she is working on tobacco regulations, a new database for permits and inspections, and communicating with landlords about the local mask order in common areas of condominiums.

This meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on January 25, 2021, 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lefman

Community Health Coordinator