

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2021
12:00 PM

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, LSW, Community Social Worker
Jessica Cliff, MHA, Environmental Health Specialist
Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nurse Supervisor
Joyce Saret, LICSW, Senior Community Social Worker
Vivian Zeng, REHS, RS, CP-FS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

In attendance:

Linda Corridan, Director of Nursing, Wellesley Public Schools

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 PM

The following meeting minutes were approved: May 3, 2021

1. Community Health

a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley reported that since last Monday, there have been nine new cases; one from Babson College and eight in the community. Ms. McCauley noted that one of the cases was a fully vaccinated senior. The individual reported mild illness (and did not require hospitalization). This was thought to be a result from the protection value of the vaccination against severe illness and hospitalization.

Ms. McCauley referenced a recent Boston Globe article, [At nursing homes, fears of a viral rebound as workers decline COVID vaccine and new residents struggle to get shots.](#)

Ms. McCauley will contact the two local, long-term care facilities to check on the status of COVID-19 vaccinations among staff and residents/patients. Should they have difficulty obtaining vaccine for staff or residents, Health Department staff will assist in facilitating a mechanism for vaccination. They will also support efforts to combat vaccine hesitancy.

b) Babson College – COVID-19 Update

Leonard Izzo reported that he will have his regular weekly call with Babson College administration on Thursday. They will discuss the COVID-19 case (from last week), as it was thought to have resulted from sports activities. Students engaging in sports will remain on campus for an additional week. Mr. Izzo noted that three COVID cases were identified by screening, prior to graduation. They did not go on campus and did not attend the graduation ceremonies.

c) COVID-19 – Wellesley Public Schools (WPS)

Linda Corridan reported that there were three cases in the WPS last week; one in a vaccinated teacher and two students. The cases occurred through family transmission; it was noted that the family had traveled. The student was identified as positive via the screening process. Ms. Corridan noted the importance of screening, and that it should continue, in order to identify cases like this, where the teacher had been vaccinated.

Ms. Corridan reported that 828 staff (87%) have been vaccinated – 806 are fully vaccinated and 22 have received their first dose.

d) Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH) – Local Health Meeting

Leonard Izzo and Shepard Cohen reported on a recent meeting with NWH staff Dr. Jonathan Snider and Lauren Lele, as well as health department directors from Natick, Newton and Wellesley. Dr. Snider summarized vaccine efforts at the hospital and State. There is now a surplus of vaccine, and efforts will transition from large-scale vaccination sites to smaller, local and regional locations (with a walk-in option), primary care physicians and pediatric practices that will offer vaccine to children 12-15+, when the vaccine has received authorization for that population. It is anticipated this authorization will be granted this week.

e) New Sector Specific Standards and EEA Guidance

Leonard Izzo reported that the Department of Labor Standards has released new sector-specific safety standards for indoor/outdoor events, large capacity venues, restaurants, retail and theater/performance venues. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) has released guidance on youth and adult amateur sports, pools, outdoor recreational and educational activities, boating and zoos, botanical gardens and wildlife preserves. These standards/guidance are in effect today.

f) Recreation Camps

Leonard Izzo reported that Recreation Department camps including both summer camps at Morses Pond, Linx, and 10 Acres will be operating for residents only. Vivian Zeng noted this policy was made a year ago when case counts were higher and capacity limitations were in place to mitigate risks. Mr. Izzo said the Recreation director will be on a regional recreation call tomorrow and will report on any policy changes.

Mr. Izzo noted that camp packets were due last week and plan reviews will commence tomorrow.

g) Babson College Camps

Leonard Izzo provided a summary of Babson College's initial intent to offer their campus to external camps such as those from Curry College; this would have included Nike football and soccer programs and an indoor basketball camp for up to 150 kids. Mr. Izzo conferred with administration about the issues raised and Babson decided to run only their own camps; they will hold off running external camps. Mr. Izzo is waiting for the messaging associated with this decision, as they may have blamed the Health Department for it.

h) Memorial Day (weekend) Soccer Tournament - Needham

Leonard Izzo reported on a three-day soccer tournament based in Needham, with some teams participating on the Babson College campus, thus impacting Wellesley. It is anticipated that 300 teams will participate over the Memorial Day weekend. Mr. Izzo will confer with Needham Health Department staff regarding strategies to address the large number of visitors at the tournament sites, as well as the host communities.

i) Social Services/Mental Health

Joyce Saret reported on the concerns faced during the summer and beyond including the need for additional counseling hours, as well as outreach. One pressing issue remains that the Resident Services Coordinator position at Wellesley Housing Authority (WHA) has yet to be filled. Ms. Saret noted that the salary is low. WHA director Sean Barnicle has resumes for the position, and the Health Department social workers will encourage him to review them and expedite the hiring process. Mr. Izzo will contact him.

2. Environmental Health

a) PFAS

Leonard Izzo reported on elevated levels of PFAS6 (human made chemicals) found in the Morses Pond Wellfield treatment facility, one of three facilities that provides water in Wellesley. As a precaution, this plant was taken off-line. The Town will be provided with supplemental water from the MWRA and the other aquifers in Town. Mr. Izzo said staff from DPW, and Water and Sewer will confer with the Health Department on long-term treatment solutions. He noted there will most likely be water restrictions on lawn and garden watering this summer. Public notification has already begun and there are dedicated pages on this topic on the Town's website.

b) Tobacco Regulations

At the last meeting, Leonard Izzo reported that a legal posting will be provided to the Townsman notifying the public of the Board of Health meeting at which a vote will be taken to accept the draft regulations as permanent; this notification has taken place.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on May 17, 2021, 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lefman, Community Health Coordinator