

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 26, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Dr. Frank Ehrlich, MD, Joan McNeil, DNP, Ken Lalime, RPh

STAFF: Deanna D’Amore, Director of Health, Megan Faugno, Special Projects Manager, Aniella Fignon, Project Coordinator, Brian Weeks, Program Director of Epidemiology and Informatics, Theresa Argondezzi, Assistant Director of Health, Community Health

OTHERS: Diane Lauricella

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D’Amore called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

• October 22, 2024

**** DR. EHRLICH MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 22, 2024 MEETING.**

**** MR. LALIME SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 22, 2024 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Diane Lauricella requested more holistic and creative ways to reach out to the community about infectious diseases. She said that she would like to put something out about how to reduce COVID exposure including ventilation during Thanksgiving. She said that there were those who believed that enough outreach was being done but Ms. Lauricella felt that it was not enough and that others would agree. There is a new Board of Health member joining soon who will be presented to the Council later in the day for approval. This new board member has an extensive educational background, which will be helpful. Regarding the 2025 schedule, she suggested that they hold a community update meeting once a quarter that is held later in the day. It needs to be marketed, and she is willing to help with this.

COMMUNITY HEALTH UPDATES

Ms. Argondezzi then narrated a Community Health Update slide deck including photos from the Rapid Community Assessment and Community Partnerships for Disease Prevention presentations. Both presentations were held at the Connecticut Public Health Association event.

The Medicaid Redesign discussion was included in the Community Health Update. Ms. Argondezzi provided a background about Health Enhancement Communities. It was an initiative prior to the pandemic that included a multisector partnership of agencies that provide community improvement work. The purpose of the initiative was to collaborate and identify community health needs and areas of improvement. The funding for the initiative has depleted in the Norwalk area over the years, however, there are few that remain throughout the state. Although the proposals are conceptual currently, the Connecticut Hospital Association is advocating for a redesign of Medicaid and a restructuring of funding sources that may help fund Health Enhancement Communities throughout the state. In addition, the funding would help local health departments address social determinants of health within communities.

Ms. Argondezzi spoke about the concept of Regional Communications Campaign which will be linked together through Get VaccinatedCT.org. They are looking at three to four phases, some of which will be back to school vaccinations, RSV vaccinations and travel vaccinations. The outreach is being done through multiple methods and channels. They are monitoring the effectiveness of the communications in terms of click through rates and campaign awareness. She displayed several photos of the vaccination posters and images.

Dr. Ehrlich said that state hospital associations and state medical associations don't always see eye to eye regarding Medicaid. Ms. Argondezzi said that it would be important to have as many partners involved as possible because there are often implications that need to be discussed so they complement each other. Mr. Lalime spoke about the federally qualified community health centers, who handle about a third of the patients. Discussion followed about concerns that it would take funding away from current Husky patients and future steps. Board members spoke about the importance of being engaged in these discussions.

EPIDEMIOLOGY UPDATES

Mr. Weeks greeted the board members. He then presented on respiratory illnesses and gave a brief overview of the data maps for RSV, COVID and Influenza Epidemic Trends. He also encouraged everyone to order COVID-19 test kits.

Mr. Weeks then spoke about M-pox and said that the U.S. had their first Clade 1 case in California, which is more contagious than Clade 2. This case was related to travel in Africa and not community related. He encouraged people to be alert and seek testing as soon as symptoms appear.

There have been some air quality issues in the area related to a fire in Massachusetts. Norwalkct.gov/air does have active air quality and smoke index and alerts.

Mr. Lalime said that Mr. Weeks presents a tremendous amount of information in a very short time. He suggested possibly have some type of public presentation. Dr. Ehrlich said that he noted that CT sometimes has the worst data indicators than surrounding states and asked if anyone was

looking into this. Ms. D'Amore noted that other health departments were asking the same type of questions that are being asked by our Board and epidemiology team.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. D'Amore said that the Mayor's Office and the water utilities announced that there were drought conditions recently. There was about 2 inches of rain last week. The Department will be meeting with the utilities to discuss the current updates.

A new Board Member will be presented for approval at the Common Council later in the day.

The Department is now working on budget proposal requests. Ms. D'Amore has requested that the full-time grant funded Public Health Nurse be city funded. In addition, she has requested for the current part-time Environmental Health professional staff to be in a city funded full time position in order to keep up with the increasing mandates for lead. In addition, the full-time Environmental Health professional would provide support for local level ordinances for health and safety standards. A number of grants will be ending and the Department wishes to maintain the services needed within the community.

• Board of Health Meeting Dates.

Ms. D'Amore said that she had sent out a calendar to the Board Members and noted that the fourth Tuesday had some conflicts with holiday. Ms. D'Amore said that there had been some regular evening meetings in the past but there was no additional community participation. She spoke about having some scheduled evening convenings and presentations as special meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services