

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2025**

ATTENDANCE: Dr. Frank Ehrlich, Joan McNiel, DNP, Anthony Santella, DrPH
Ken Lalime, RPh (8:14 a.m.)

STAFF: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health, Theresa Argondezzi,
Assistant Director of Health, Community Health, Aniella Fignon, Project
Coordinator, Darleen Hoffler, Clinical Supervisor, Brian Weeks, Program
Director of Epidemiology and Informatics; Megan Faugno, Special Project
Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D'Amore called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

[1:13]

There was no one from the public who wished to comment at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[1:30]

• December 17, 2024 Regular Meeting

**** DR. EHRLICH MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2024 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** MR. SANTELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2025 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

EPIDEMIOLOGY UPDATES

[2:15]

Mr. Weeks greeted the Board members. He then gave a brief overview of the national status for COVID, RSV, and the flu along with the statistics for Connecticut. He noted that this is expected for this season and added that COVID may increase again in the spring. RSV may be the cause of bronchial pneumonia. Cases of Walking Pneumonia are increasing, particularly in the pediatric population. Norovirus rates remain high in the Northeast. H5N1 is being monitored in backyard bird flocks and dairy cows. He encouraged everyone to observe respiratory etiquette and displayed an infographic showing the various steps to take to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.

Dr. Ehrlich asked about the reports of the Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV), a respiratory virus circulating in China. Mr. Weeks said that this was included in the virus classification and that this isn't a new virus. The same prevention measures utilized for flu and COVID will help mitigate risk.

Mr. Lalime joined the meeting at 8:14 a.m.

There was a discussion about bird flu cases. Ms. D'Amore said that they have continued monitoring and have worked on planning for managing an outbreak, such as evaluating the department's Emergency Preparedness Plans and Incident Command Structure. She cautioned everyone about the process if they encounter a dead animal, particularly birds.

REACCREDITATION UPDATE

[15:50]

Ms. Fignon greeted the Board Members and narrated a PowerPoint slide deck about the Reaccreditation process. Ms. Fignon said that Norwalk was the first Health Department in Connecticut to receive accreditation in 2014. She then displayed a list of the various requirements and the spreadsheet showing the 10 domains with 93 requirements that the Public Health Accreditation Board will examine. She then showed some pie charts illustrating how the work was assigned and the documentation leads. This ensures that when the application packet is submitted, all the relevant documents are included.

The next slide outlined the documentation system and how it is stored on the server. There is a folder for all the completed documentation which helps with organization. There are regular meetings with the Project Coordinator and updates on the tracking tools and timelines. She displayed the charts showing the timelines and gave a brief description of the various issues.

CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES POLICY

[32:00]

Ms. D'Amore said that this policy had been on the books for some time and needed to be updated. Ms. Hoffler and others had worked on updating the policy and clarifying the language with more accurate terminology. She said that the staff wanted to bring this to the Board to show what they were working on.

Mr. Santella asked if they had been receiving any training on this. Ms. Hoffler said that they had brought in an outside group to provide training.

Mr. Santella asked if there were other languages such as Chinese and Korean included. Ms. Hoffler said that as the staff encounter different languages, they adjust it accordingly. There is also a translation service that is available for documentation.

Ms. McNiel asked what reading level the documents were written in. Ms. Hoffler said that they are targeting to have all the documentation at the fifth-grade level. Ms. Argondezzi commented that there are challenges in presenting medical terminology at a fifth-grade level.

Ms. D'Amore asked the Board members if the Board wished to adopt the revisions as discussed or if the staff should bring this item back to the Board after all the changes have been made. Discussion followed.

**** DR. EHRLICH MOVED TO APPROVE THE CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES POLICY.**

**** MS. MCNIEL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

BUDGET UPDATE

[42:36]

Ms. D'Amore then presented an update about the recent Budget presentation. She said that she had emphasized having the part-time environmental inspector become a full-time position in order to support the increased workload due to the increased mandates for lead inspections. She said that they are also asking that the grant-funded public health nurse be moved to the city operating budget to keep up with all the clinical demands and the lead case management.

She noted that the lead inspections were mandatory and said that it has been a challenge to balance out all of the other requirements. The recommended budget is expected to be released sometime next month.

PERSONNEL UPDATE

[45:52]

Ms. D'Amore said that the Medical Doctor will be retiring soon and that they will be working with Personnel to fill the position of Medical Director. The Board will be voting to confirm the new Medical Director and Dr. Reed has agreed to stay until his successor is chosen. The Medical Director is the one who holds the license for the Health Department to operate the clinical services. She thanked Dr. Reed for all of his years of service.

The department now has a part-time Advanced Practice Provider who has been supporting some of the tuberculosis work along with some of the other clinical services. Having the grant-funded public nurse has also been helpful.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

[48:00]

Ms. D'Amore said that the staff has been actively assessing roles within the department's Incident Command System (ICS). Emergency Preparedness and ICS plans play a crucial role in effectively managing and responding to significant health events, such as COVID or anthrax. Staff members have been diligently reviewing various tasks and positions, refining role

assignments to incorporate new hires and to strategically place individuals with specialized skills into key positions.

ADJOURNMENT

[49:50]

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services