

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 28, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Janet Karpiak, M.D.; Ken Lalime, R. Ph.; Theresa Quell, PhD, R.N.

STAFF: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Aniella Fignon, Project Coordinator, Brian Weeks, Program Director of Epidemiology and Informatics

This meeting was held via teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D'Amore called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. A quorum was present at 8:08 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

Ms. D'Amore deferred Approval of Minutes to the end of the agenda.

NORWALK COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING PROFILE

Mr. Weeks presented the dashboard of the new data collection system and described it as a work in progress that will be incorporated onto the City's Health Department website. He explained that the data is a collection of secondary data that will provide health measures by demographic, socio-economic, race/ethnicity, and geographical areas. He displayed the major sources involved in our city health assessments such as the Norwalk Hospital community health assessment report and DataHaven's equity profiles for Norwalk. He outlined applicable uses for this system including data research for programs, grant funding, and preventative services (2-1-1).

Ms. Quell asked how the data is collected, and Mr. Weeks replied that primarily telephone surveys are compiled. Ms. Quell noted the limited phone survey response percentage in view of low answer rates to 'unknown' numbers, fewer land lines, etc. Mr. Weeks indicated that this is a good question, and while the response rates are factored into the reliable data methods, it is statistically valid endorsed by CDC and reputable agencies.

RESPIRATORY VIRUS UPDATES

Mr. Weeks then gave an overview of the respiratory virus status. He displayed a COVID-19 hospital admissions map showing most of New England that were below 10%. There are sections of the Northeast that were experiencing a slight increase. He reviewed the details across the country for the variants. The flu and RSV have shown a slight increase. The forecasts are

produced by the CDC and often change quickly. With the holidays approaching, the CT Department of Health Department Syndromic Surveillance System closely monitors respiratory illness. Many of the cases of Influenza in Connecticut have been identified as class A and B, however, other Influenza cases in the state are classified as unspecified.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES • October 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes

**** MS. QUELL MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 24, 2023 MEETING AS PRESENTED.**

**** DR. KARPIAK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IMMUNIZATION UPDATES

Ms. D'Amore provided an update on vaccines of influenza and COVID-19 that are provided on the Health Department website. 631 flu vaccines have been administered, 486 from private inventory and 145 were doses from the state's Vaccine for Children program. She noted the future dates for flu clinics are being held on Thursdays between 1-3 pm, while supplies last. She added that 45 COVID-19 booster vaccines have been administered. In addition to the flu clinics, the Norwalk Health Department's Childhood Immunization clinics remain busy. She thanked the staff for all they are doing with clinics and community events.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Ms. Fignon presented charts on the Performance Management Dashboard used to collect data of performance measures, goals and objectives achieved by 6 divisions including Administration, Community Health, Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Health, Epidemiology and Informatics, and Preventable Diseases. She highlighted the successes that included 100% of childhood immunization and tuberculosis patients were reminded of appointment, the best IAP rates in the state, contact tracing 100% of COVID cases, community health screening events, executive summaries for all department emergency plans were created and new ERT members joined the team, and timely housing inspections. The barriers and opportunities for improvement included staff transitions, including the Project Coordinator role, trainings, FDA food code implementation impacted food establishment inspections, funding challenges, state reporting impacts, balance of administrative responsibilities as number of grants increased, streamline financial management system for accessibility improvements.

Ms. Quell commended the department on how much work they are all doing and cautioned on approaching 'burn-out'. She suggested a possible scale back on the many measures in place.

2024 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. D'Amore said she would email the meeting dates to the members to confirm availability, and she asked for input to whether evening meetings should be added to the schedule. It was the consensus of the members that the current schedule works.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. D'Amore reported in recognition of World Health Day they will be holding additional walk-in rapid HIV testing health clinics in December. HIV rapid testing clinics are scheduled for December 1, 8, 15, and 29. Positive cases will be forwarded on for care and treatment, and educational materials will be distributed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It is noted that statements are summarizations of comments made.

Ms. Diane Lauricella spoke on the initiatives presented and she is very impressed with the programs and accomplishments. She thanked the department for the vaccines and clinics, and noted there are missed opportunities on prevention of respiratory diseases. She liked the postcard that is bi-lingual, but she has ideas on how this can be improved for greater outreach. She would like to make an appointment with the Director of Health on how her ideas can be presented. She suggested the pamphlets and cards be updated with data on masking. She suggested posters at supermarkets, distributing hand sanitizers, masks, and the inclusion of data on asthma rates and developing greater tracking of rates of infection. Also, air quality is an important issue in light of traffic jams on I-95 and Merritt Parkway. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and acknowledged the positive work the staff is doing.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services