

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 25, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Ken Lalime, R.Ph.; Theresa Quell, Ph.D., R.N.; Norman Weinberger, M.D.

OTHERS: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Aniella Fignon, Project Coordinator; Megan Faugno, Special Projects Manager; Brian Weeks, Program Director of Epidemiology & Informatics; Bill Mooney, Assistant Director of Health, Environmental Health

This meeting was held via teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D'Amore called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

• September 28, 2022 Meeting Minutes

**** MR. LALIME MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2022 MEETING.**

**** DR. WEINBERGER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2022 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. D'Amore said that the health department is continuing to monitor the drought situation. They have been tracking recent rainfall and levels have stabilized somewhat. There is no timeframe for discontinuing the water emergency at this time.

Staff have been meeting in workgroups to develop a workplan to integrate into the 2023-2024 Strategic Plan, which will be presented to the Board soon.

Ms. D'Amore updated the Board regarding recent changes in the staffing positions, including Ms. Fignon's promotion to Project Coordinator.

The Community Services Department will be requesting Common Council approval of the software system Veoci to provide support for Human Services, such as logging calls and triaging needs. Discussion followed about how they could utilize the information with Public Works and Emergency Services.

Ms. D'Amore also updated the Board regarding the State's recent assessment of the Department's SFY2021 Local Health Annual Report, which identified two practices as model practices for other Health Departments.

SURVEILLANCE UPDATES

Mr. Weeks presented an epidemiological surveillance update regarding Norwalk, which is currently ranked as having "medium" levels of COVID-19 in the community. He displayed a table comparing Norwalk to six other municipalities and explained that there has been a slow but steady increase in the number of COVID cases across the board. As of October 22nd, there are 402 cases in Connecticut. With the onset of the colder winter weather, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in cases. There have been a number of new variants of Omnicron identified, which is more infectious.

Mr. Weeks then gave a brief overview of the current influenza cases. New York is registering in the high category and New Jersey in the medium category, while Connecticut is in the lower category. He spoke about a recent article in the Hartford Courant about the increase in hospitalizations for childhood respiratory illnesses. There are a number of recommended precautions for the upcoming Halloween events.

There are presently 139 cases of monkeypox cases in Connecticut. There has been a clear decrease in the number of cases, but Fairfield County has had the largest number of cases with 46 cases.

The West Nile Virus is also being tracked and there is a graph available in the PowerPoint presentation.

IMMUNIZATION UPDATES

Ms. Faugno then reviewed current community immunizations. 136 individuals recently received COVID-19 immunizations through Health Department community clinics. The Department used their own electronic health records system, which interfaces with the State's immunization registry system.

They recently held two clinics at senior living facilities, where 75 COVID-19 immunizations were administered. Another worksite clinic is anticipated in the coming weeks.

The Health Department also hosted flu clinics at the Senior Center, where 91 people were vaccinated, and worksites. Another will be held on November 3rd at Brien McMahon High School. They are also holding clinics at the Health Department on Tuesday afternoons by appointment. Ms. Faugno thanked all of the volunteer staff assisting to support these clinics.

HEAT SENSOR PROJECT UPDATES

Ms. Fignon then narrated a PowerPoint presentation on climate change in Norwalk. The Yale Center on Climate Change and Health issued a report about the variations in climate, which include a variety of indicators, such as annual average temperatures, heat stress, frost days and extreme heat days. All of these factors can contribute to heat-related illness, which can pose a variety of health risks. This would likely affect those working outdoors, such as in construction or farm labor.

The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) and the City of Norwalk partnered to install 13 heat sensors across Norwalk to gather data (i.e., temperature, relative humidity, and dew point) to better understand the kind of heat individuals on the ground are experiencing in different kinds of environments, such as at the beach, library, or school baseball diamond. Ms. Fignon explained that the dew point is the temperature the air must be cooled to at a constant pressure for it to become saturated with water vapor, such that the vapor must be released as precipitate. A high dew point is associated with the condition that people refer to as being “muggy.”

Ms. Fignon thanked CIRCA all their work and those involved in installing the heat sensors. She then displayed sample data for July 21, 2022, which demonstrated the variations of temperature across the 13 Norwalk locations and highlighted the need for targeted extreme heat interventions.

SPOTLIGHT: FALL INTERN

Ms. Fignon then spoke about the MPH student from New York Medical College who is interning with the Department during the Fall 2022 semester. He will be working on projects to develop educational materials about the harms and benefits of rodenticide for residents, as well as a provider-perspective evaluation of the Community Health division’s Know Your Numbers program. He will be with the Department until the first week in December.

Ms. D’Amore thanked Ms. Fignon for her hard work.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Lauricella greeted the Board Members. She thanked the Department and volunteers who went to the Senior Center to administer flu shots. She got her flu shot there and it was a seamless program. She went looking to see if the Health Department would be providing information

about COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. There was a table with flyers available in Spanish and English, but not many people visited the table. She suggested that before the holidays and cold weather settles in, they put up posters with preventive measures about mask wearing and ventilation and that the State, the Federal government, and Norwalk are not addressing this enough. She said that the MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) prominently displays posters with pictures about proper mask wearing, which reduces the number of flu cases.

Ms. Lauricella said that she had gotten her COVID shot on Saturday. She suggested that Council Members or other well-known local individuals be onsite and that there also need to be posters to encourage people. This is the City's responsibility to make the residents aware. It would be important to have smaller posters at locations like the library and other public buildings to remind people. She said that they need to come up with more creativity for programs to remind laymen about how to wear mask.

Ms. Lauricella said it was sad and frustrating that the Health Department has not implemented her previous suggestions. She said that they should put their heads together to come up with creative ways to reach out to the public.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service