

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Dr. Frank Ehrlich, MD, Janet Karpiak, MD, Joan McNeil, DNP, Norman Weinberger, MD, Ken Lalime, RPh (8:30 a.m.)

STAFF: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Aniella Fignon, Project Coordinator; Brian Weeks, Program Director of Epidemiology and Informatics, Kelley Tomlinson, Health Educator, Theresa Argondezzi, Assistant Director of Health, Community Health

OTHERS:

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D'Amore called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Ms. D'Amore said that during August, they had not had a quorum present, so they would not be voting on the notes that were taken at that time.

• June 25, 2024 Meeting

**** DR. EHRLICH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 25, 2024 MEETING.**

**** DR. WEINBERGER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 25, 2024 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. D'Amore said that the Health Department had received a Suicide Prevention grant and Ms. Tomlinson, the Health Educator, would present a report. Ms. Tomlinson greeted everyone and narrated a Power Point slide deck. The CT DPH contacted the Norwalk Health Department about the grant based on data between 2015-2019.

In the first year, the Department took part in the State and regional efforts along with a number of other Norwalk organizations. There were clinical teams, the Fire Department, the Police Department and EMS along with a variety of other public organizations such as Family & Children's Agency, the VFW and Norwalk Senior Center.

Ms. Tomlinson said that the Department had been collecting information on current programs, services, and resources for suicide prevention, intervention and response. The inventory was then used to identify gaps and areas of improvement.

She explained that the studies indicate that 115- 135 people were impacted by 1 suicide death. The Crisis Response Team is focused on reducing the impact of those who are affected by suicide. Having a strong prevention plan can reduce suicides.

There is ongoing data analysis and surveillance by the State. Mr. Weeks has been monitoring the various data portals about those who are receiving treatment for attempts and suicide deaths. Ms. Tomlinson displayed a list of various data sources.

Norwalk had a Mental Health Day on May 11, 2024 called “Check In Day”. Also copies of Gizmo Pawesome Guide to Mental Health books were placed in waiting rooms along with guides about Zero Suicide prevention at various Health Care providers. In addition, there was an ASIST Workshop for Behavioral Healthcare Providers on August 21st and 22nd that focused on Suicide Warning Signs for Adults.

One of the prevention initiatives was making the public aware of ways to reduce lethal means, such as removing old prescriptions from the home or storing current prescriptions in locked bags. Efforts in Communicating and Message Dissemination to the public are underway.

Dr. Weinberg said that it was an excellent report. Ms. McNeil said that she had seen a table by NCC and that the students were very receptive.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Ms. D’Amore then narrated a Power Point slide deck on the Strategic Plan, which started in 2023. Ms. D’Amore said that the Department had updated the plan and focused on Health Equity and Climate Change. She also reviewed the Goal Statements and the Implementation Plan. The current plan is from January 2023 to December 2024.

Ms. D’Amore displayed a pie chart and a bar graph showing where the Department was on target and those areas where they still need to work. She gave a brief overview of the Workforce Development activities including Recruitment, Onboarding, Supportive Work Environment and Climate and Health Equity Training.

Mr. Lalime joined the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

The Department continues to work on Community Awareness and Trust through communication, community engagement and visibility. Ms. D’Amore listed a number of different community partners such as the Library that the Department works with to provide information to the community.

The Department continues to evaluate the programs and services through partnerships and working with consultants to enhance clinical programs and services provided. The team participated in the Strategic Scholars Program, a national program that supports public health workforce capacity in eight strategic skill areas. The department was able to improve services and evaluate revenue outcome for the Travel Immunization Clinic.

There have been a number of Foundational Infrastructure Improvements in a variety of areas including Accreditation, Quality Improvement, Community Health Improvement, Grant Organization, Policies and Plans, Peer Learning & Sharing, and Climate Change.

Ms. D'Amore spoke about the Technology work including security and infrastructure. She said that she would like to update the plan and adjust some of the goals to provide the Department with more time to implement the various programs.

Dr. Ehrlich said that the plan and presentation were on point. He suggested that if the presentation was made to a lay audience, it would be important to explain the reasoning behind the staff training. Ms. D'Amore made a note of this.

Ms. McNeil supports extending the timeframe of the Strategic Plan. She wished to know how far out the timeframe would be extended. Ms. D'Amore said that she was considering extending it for two years. Discussion followed and Board members agreed to extend the plan by two years.

EPIDEMIOLOGY UPDATES

Mr. Weeks then spoke about Respiratory Virus (RSV), mosquitoes and mpox. He displayed a number of screens from the CDC. He said that RSV wastewater analysis indicated that that CT was currently low, while the COVID 19 activity was high. He also displayed a Wastewater map, showing the breakout by regions (New England, Pacific Northwest, etc.). He noted that the flu was starting and there are people who are shedding the virus.

Mr. Weeks gave a brief overview of the various RSV guidelines for prevention and precautions along with a CT municipality map showing the West Nile Virus activity. Fairfield County is showing a great deal of activity, along with one that shows the Eastern Equine Encephalitis cases which have been mostly in the eastern area of the State.

Mpox was the next item Mr. Weeks covered. He said that the disease was not limited to central and eastern Africa, but added that there was a travel warning for the area. He added that there was a vaccine available and it was transmitted via sexual exposure and contact. There is substantial activity for clade II Mpox recorded in New York City. The CDC updated their Mpox vaccine locator, which is currently in its very early stages.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. D'Amore said that the first flu clinic would be held on October 10, 2024.

Ms. D'Amore said that Ms. Quell was stepping down from the Board. Ms. D'Amore said that she had participated in many different areas and expressed her appreciation of all the work Ms. Quell has done.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one present from the public at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services