

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

ATTENDANCE: Frank Ehrlich, MD, Janet Karpiak, MD, Ken Lalime, RPh, Joan McNeil, DNP, Theresa Quell, PhD, RN; Norman Weinberger, MD

STAFF: Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health, Aniella Fignon, Project Coordinator, Megan Faugno, Special Projects Manager, Brian Weeks, Program Director of Epidemiology & Informatics, Theresa Argondezzi, Assistant Director of Health, Community Health, Kelley Tomlinson, Health Educator, Dr. David Reed, Medical Director

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

• February 27, 2024, Meeting Minutes

**** DR. WEINBERGER MOVED THE FEBRUARY 27, 2024 MEETING MINUTES.**

**** MS. MCNEIL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 27, 2024 MEETING MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

HEART MONTH INITIATIVES

Ms. D'Amore introduced Ms. Tomlinson, who is a Health Educator. Ms. Tomlinson said that February was National Heart Month, and she then narrated a PowerPoint slide deck about the various programs that the Health Department participated in, including:

- Wear Red Day to show support for heart disease;
- Know Your Numbers, a health screening program with a breakout of the number of participants and test results;
- Free HIV Screening and Testing Clinic;
- Live Well Program, a chronic disease self-management program, which is scheduled to start in April or May of 2024;
- AHA's Life Essential 8 program focused on improving and maintaining cardiovascular health;
- NorWALKer Walking route maps;
- Food Access Initiative, a collaboration with community service and food providers to help promote food access and reduce food insecurity for residents.

Ms. McNeil asked what kind of resources were shared with many of the participants of the Know Your Numbers program. Ms. Tomlinson explained that they have partnered with the Norwalk Community Health Center (NCHC) and often invite staff to these events to help assist individuals with enrollment. Information about other federally qualified health centers and other non-profit organizations are included in flyer handouts for individuals in need of locating a medical home.

Dr. Ehrlich asked about the follow-up phone calls. Ms. Tomlinson said that often the phone numbers are not in service, and they are working on using texts and email also. Dr. Ehrlich said that they should let the participants know there would be a follow-up call.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Ms. Argondezzi thanked everyone for reviewing the External Communications Policy, which is focused on getting information on the health department out to the public in the best manner possible.

Ms. Quell said that she felt that the policies were comprehensive, but she felt that they could be streamlined somewhat. She asked who the Public Information Officer (PIO) was. Ms. Argondezzi said that she was the PIO.

Ms. Quell said that she would like to see the accreditation logo always included in the communications materials. Ms. Argondezzi said that she would like to create a combination logo to include on printed materials. Discussion about the details about updating the appendices followed.

**** MS. QUELL MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY WITH THE STAFF CHANGES AS DISCUSSED.**

**** MS. MCNEIL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION DISCUSSION

Ms. D'Amore said that she had sent out copies of the New Employee Orientation policy which had been done several years ago. She said that in the past in another position, she had worked with the HR staff about onboarding new staff. She said that she had brought her previous experience to the Department and viewed New Employee Orientation as more of a tool kit rather than a policy. She asked the Board if they wished to keep it as a policy or tool kit.

Dr. Ehrlich asked if the City's HR department had a policy on this. Ms. D'Amore said that she did not think they did. Dr. Ehrlich said that if HR does not have a New Employee Orientation policy, then the Department should not have a policy. He felt that they should just keep New Employee Orientation as a tool kit.

It was the general consensus of the Board Members that New Employee Orientation should remain as a toolkit.

EPIDEMIOLOGY UPDATES

Mr. Weeks greeted the Board Members and said that the CDC had updated the Respiratory virus webpage. He displayed the page and noted that the page had the major three illnesses included, which is COVID, flu and RSV. A visitor can choose their state and see the current status.

Mr. Weeks said that Connecticut's illness trends were low and reviewed a number of health precautions, such as staying home if one is ill, washing one's hands and similar practices.

He also displayed a chart showing the viral respiratory illnesses for Connecticut, which also allows for the various county charts to be viewed separately. He said that the CDC has moved away from isolation to just remaining at home and maintaining good hygiene and steps for cleaner air. This is standardizing the strategies for all respiratory viruses, which are easier to communicate. Additional prevention strategies include masks, social distancing and taking a test. All the strategies help mitigate the spread of viral respiratory illnesses. He noted that this was the four-year anniversary of the start of COVID.

Dr. Ehrlich asked how they were accounting for unreported illnesses. Mr. Weeks said that there is a form on the website for self-reporting. However, the focus is on mitigating severe illness currently. Discussion followed.

Dr. Ehrlich asked about the recent outbreak of measles in Long Island. Mr. Weeks said that Fairfield County has a very high vaccination rate compared to the rest of the country. April is usually a rough month for such outbreaks and that local health care providers have been alerted to watch out for measles symptoms in order to contain it.

Ms. Quell asked if the links were available on the Health Department website. Mr. Weeks said that he believed they were available on the webpage. Ms. Argondezzi said that they were listed on the City website under the COVID tab.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. D'Amore said that she had followed up on Ms. Quell's suggestion that they have an event to showcase the examination room renovations, which she would like to have later in the spring. She added that they will notify everyone as soon in order to have as many people participate as possible.

Work is underway on the annual report for the Public Health Accreditation Board, which is due later in the week. Ms. D'Amore said that she would update the Board Members on the status next month.

Ms. D'Amore said that she had met with Mr. Lalime about financial reporting and reviewed the operational budget. Mr. Lalime had several suggestions, and this meeting was very valuable to Ms. D'Amore. She said that she would like to schedule a meeting with each of the Board Members twice a year to gather their suggestions and thoughts on issues. She asked the Board Members for their thoughts. Discussion followed.

The general consensus was that this type of meeting would be helpful.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Ms. Quell asked if the meetings were broadcasted on TV. Ms. D'Amore said that the meetings were posted to YouTube shortly after the meeting adjourns. Dr. Ehrlich said that he thought it might be YouTube TV, which would work on a normal TV. Ms. Argondezzi said that she gets some feedback from the educational videos.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services