

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 22, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Theresa Quell, Ph.D., R.N.; Norman Weinberger, M.D; Janet Karpiak, M.D. (8:20 a.m.)

OTHERS: Deanna D’Amore, Director of Health; Megan Faugno, Project Coordinator; Aniella Fignon, Public Health Program Associate; Brian Weeks, Epidemiologist; Diane Lauricella

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D’Amore called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. A quorum was not present.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. D’Amore said that the budget process was underway. There will be a budget public hearing on March 23rd. A request has been submitted to have the Epidemiologist as a City position.

The Health Department is partnering with Norwalk Hospital and other groups to establish priorities.

An update on child immunizations will be available in April.

De-escalation training updates are underway.

COVID-19 UPDATES

Mr. Weeks then presented his report and PowerPoint presentation on the screen, which displayed the current COVID levels nationwide. He also reviewed a chart displaying the COVID rates worldwide, a chart indicating the percentage of Connecticut hospitalizations, a grid displaying the case rates, and percentages and a bar graph showing positivity case activity.

Mr. Weeks encouraged everyone to be sure they are up to date on their vaccinations and boosters. He said that the City was offering COVID testing in partnership with the State Department of Public Health and listed the locations and times. The full PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the City website.

Dr. Karpiak joined the meeting at 8:20 a.m. A quorum was now present.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

• February 22 , 2022 Meeting Minutes

**** DR. WEINBERGER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2022 MEETING.**

**** MS. QUELL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2022 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REACCREDITATION UPDATE

Ms. Faugno stated that they had received notice that the Health Department has been reaccredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board. They met all 12 domains. The first 10 domains deal with meeting the 10 essential public health services. Receiving reaccreditation means that the Department is providing the highest level of service. The Department will be up for Reaccreditation again in five years.

Ms. Faugno said that it had been noted that the Department staff had been very dedicated to the reaccreditation in terms of assembling the information during the COVID pandemic. She thanked all the staff for their hard work.

Ms. D'Amore said that Ms. Faugno had been very supportive during this and leading the team through the Reaccreditation process. Mayor Rilling has been very supportive of the Department's Reaccreditation efforts.

Ms. Quell congratulated the staff on their hard work. Dr. Weinberger said that it takes a large number of staff to accomplish this reaccreditation.

CANNABIS AND HEALTH

Ms. D'Amore said that in the past few months, the question regarding providing public health in terms of cannabis.

Ms. Fignon presented a PowerPoint about recreational marijuana. She said that the City has to provide a public space where cannabis can be consumed. There are also questions regarding whether the City will permit retail dispensaries and where they will be located. She then reviewed the short and long-term negative health effects of cannabis use, particularly in terms of youth health.

Ms. Fignon said that there has not been enough time to gauge the overall impact of new cannabis laws and policies on public health. She reviewed public health priorities with the Board Members. Due to the fact that Norwalk is a city of over 50,000, the City is required to provide a public space for consumption. Regarding distribution by retail sale, there are a number of factors to consider, such as location of retailers and their proximity to high-risk facilities, density limits, and security. There are also considerations regarding advertising and enforcing whatever advertising rules, along with retail rules, are developed. This will involve compliance and surveillance of cannabis retailer practices. Surveillance over the next generation will provide the data to determine the impact of cannabis on public health.

Discussion followed about whether the Common Council had been given this information and what the other localities were doing. Ms. Fignon noted that the surrounding towns were not in favor of cannabis, so Norwalk may see an influx of cannabis consumers.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Lauricella greeted the Board and congratulated the Department on their reaccreditation. She asked where the public would be able to view the reaccreditation information. She added that she appreciated Ms. D'Amore's efforts to have evening meetings.

Ms. Lauricella asked what efforts were being made to convey to the public how they can reduce COVID transmission by means other than vaccination, such as ventilation, masking, and social distancing. She said that she feels that society has rewarded anti-vaxxers. She wished to know how the department could help promote boosters, such as ads on Channel 12 or on the radio.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D'Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service