

PUBLIC HEALTH SOLUTIONS District Health Department

Board of Health

March 18, 2021

Board Members in Attendance:

Larry Cerny Dave Bruning Judy Henning Dave Norton
Don Schuller

Board Members in Virtual Attendance:

Janet Henning Dr. Bruce Kennedy Stephanie Knight Christy Lucking
Tim Pickering Mark Schoenrock

Board Members Absent:

Dr. Josue Gutierrez

Staff Members in Attendance:

Kim Buser, Director; Sonya Williamson, Fiscal Administration; Debra L. Wendelin, Office Administrator.

Introductions:

The Board of Health welcomes Don Schuller as our new Gage County Representative! Don was sworn in on January 7, 2021. Don was a prior civil engineer technician and owns/operates Anxiety Acres. Don's environmental knowledge will be a tremendous asset to our department.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by President Larry Cerny. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by posting required by law.

Approval of Agenda:

Meeting agenda was reviewed. Motion to approve the agenda by Dave Bruning, seconded by Dave Norton. All ayes, motion #1 carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Previous meeting minutes were emailed before the meeting. Motion to approve the minutes by Dave Norton, seconded by Judy Henning. All ayes, motion #2 carried.

Financial Reports: Acceptance:

Sonya Williamson presented on the Financial Reports. It's been a tough budget year with COVID-19. LB1060 funds have seen a little cost savings due to COVID-19. The home visitation budget is on track. Laura has lost a few new hires so her budget will incur costs due to having to train new employees. The budget is not as we originally had planned for this year but we are in really good shape despite everything the department has gone through. Many of our additional expenses related to pandemic response were absorbed through COVID-19 relief funds. We were concerned about one large invoice outstanding to the State but that has come through so we are right back up to a healthy status. One note to mention is that under "department infrastructure" we made our first big payout in the amount of \$146,350 on our new location. Mark Schoenrock questioned whether we have heard if our department will receive any funds through the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package signed by President Biden. Kim informed the Board that information she has received through the State's fiscal office is that there may be additional funds for each health department but not sure what that will look like at this time. Kim shared that the State Legislature allocated \$1.5 million in their budget this year for local public health departments. Next year an additional \$3.5 million will be added for over \$4.5 million the next three years. For PHS that means roughly \$200,000 over the next three legislative sessions. After that time period funding will be based on per capita which means an additional \$33-45,000 for our

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department added to the current \$88,000 now allocated. Our base funding has not changed since our inception. The State has rolled LB1008 funds into LB1060 funds. The only way these funds wouldn't come to us is if someone on the Legislative floor pulls the funding out of the budget or if something drastically happens at the State level. Dave Bruning wanted clarification on why PHS is over budget on Public Health-Education and Health Services. Sonya explained that a separate personnel line item was added due to COVID-19 per approved policy to compensate those salaried employees who have worked over 80 hours in a two-week pay period performing COVID-19-related activities. Meetings/workshops will take a little hit as Laura is rehiring for our home visitation program. Mileage expense is way down as no one is currently traveling to attend meetings, everything is being done virtually. A clarification of health services is, for example, hosting a CPR class and charging for our services. We haven't seen any income in this category but are not experiencing any expenses either as we haven't done anything lately. President Larry Cerny reminded the Board that our department has pretty well been self-funded since the beginning. Kim mentioned that we do receive financial support from Saline County for dental screenings within the school system and all five counties are financially supportive of our School Kids Immunization Program (SKIP). Motion to approve the financial reports by Dave Bruning, seconded by Dave Norton. All ayes, motion #3 carried.

Election of Officers:

President Larry Cerny and Director Kim Showalter presented to the Board that we retain the current officers for another year. It was the Board's decision to approve this request or continue with election of officers at this time. A motion to continue with our current officers for another term by Dave Bruning, seconded by Judy Henning. All ayes, motion #4 carried.

Directors Report:

Director Kim Showalter updated the Board on where our department is at with COVID-19 vaccinations and clinics. Kim shared that through this pandemic the work we have done with partnerships has really shown.

PHS provided vaccine to local healthcare providers who then vaccinated their own 65+ patients. PHS hosted clinics and vaccinated those individuals who did not have primary healthcare providers and those in the 1B priority group. By the end of this week, we estimate all healthcare providers to have vaccinated their 65+ patients. Our department is just about done with this age group. As a district on March 29, we will make the move to the 50-64 age group and those with pre-existing health conditions within that age group. All district providers will follow the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) guidance for a definition on pre-existing conditions. We are now transitioning from a provider model to a community model. Each healthcare provider will still receive 10-20 doses per week to vaccinate their most vulnerable patients.

Beginning April 1, we will offer weekly mass walk-in community vaccination clinics with 800-1,000 doses available in each of our counties. (April 1-Crete, April 6-Beatrice, April 15-Fairbury, April 22-Geneva, April 29-Hebron). By the end of April, we will have offered 4,000-5,000 vaccinations. Kim projects that once we are done with the 50-64 age group, that the younger people are less likely to want the vaccine. The caveat with that is the State's VRAS registry system. All local health departments are mandated through a Direct Health Measure (DHM) from Governor Ricketts to transition to this system effective April 1. Our department will have to make that transition before our April 1 mass community clinic in Crete. Kim will use the registry to send out registrations to qualifying individuals for their vaccination. For individuals who do not have internet access or are uncomfortable with the online system, paper copies will be available. We will know what our numbers look like after the first two big community clinics in Crete and Beatrice. Walmart Pharmacies, Weaver Pharmacy (Geneva) and Clabaugh Pharmacy (Beatrice) have all worked very well with us providing vaccinations. All healthcare providers are on board and we are in lock step moving together from the provider model to a community model.

We will be done with education on Friday (Doane College is scheduled for this Friday, March 19) and start meat-packing plants next week. Matrix Medical Network, a clinical service company, is

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administering vaccinations at Smithfield Foods (Crete), Clabaugh Pharmacy in Beatrice will vaccinate Landmark Snack employees (Beatrice), Jefferson Community Health & Life (JCHL) will be at Westin Packaged Meats (Fairbury), and we will provide vaccinations at Crete Cold Storage and Packers Sanitation Services (Crete). Grocers, transportation, and postal workers will be invited to our community clinics. We are finally at the beginning of the end!!

Tim Pickering wondered if our walk-in clinics would be for county-only residents. Kim said we hope a large number of people from Lincoln and Omaha don't show up but we will not require identification. We are not looking at identification heavily as we have plenty of vaccine.

Dave Bruning wanted to understand the reason why just a few pharmacies were able to provide the vaccine and not everyone. Kim explained that participating pharmacies had to sign up through a Federal program to give COVID-19 vaccinations and that none of our vaccine supply was allocated to them but provided from the Federal government. Dave inquired why Fillmore County had so much vaccine available compared to Thayer County. Kim indicated that Thayer County received as much as they asked for but for some providers it is about capacity versus vaccine. Fillmore County saved up their vaccine allotment and then in partnership with Weaver Pharmacy, who gave them their doses, set up large clinics to serve more people at one time.

Walmart is required to move to the State's VRAS database system with the rest of the health departments by April 1. Walmart received no guidance from the State and within an hour of their registry being open for appointments the system crashed. Walmart was told by March 1 they had to be back on the State's system but on March 5, when it was still not up and running, they activated their private Walmart registry again.

None of us could have prepared for a global pandemic. With the State's system and software changing daily, it led to 18 health departments doing things 18 different ways.

Kim foresees the COVID-19 vaccination being an annual renewal vaccine like the flu shot. Just like with the flu shot, there will probably be changes each year to the COVID-19 vaccine. We are required to report to the CDC vaccinated individuals who are hospitalized. The CDC will monitor over time how long the antibodies last.

Christy Lucking inquired how we are going to structure providing the second dose of the Moderna vaccine now that we are transitioning to community clinics. Kim shared that we will have a second community clinic in four weeks that they will have to come to. Our department received just enough of the J&J one-dose vaccine to vaccinate the first half of our education group. The J&J vaccine was really limited to specific groups. Hopefully by May 1 we will receive another supply of J&J vaccine but not sure. Those individuals vaccinated with the J&J one-dose vaccine experienced more severe side effects after the injection as compared to Moderna, which is a two-dose vaccine.

Kim is looking forward to getting back to strategic planning and our community health plan. Kim feels there will be isolation/mental health issues arising from COVID-19. It will be nice when we can get back to normal!

Mark Schoenrock informed the Board that revenue from President Biden's coronavirus relief package will be used to expand mental health resources in Jefferson County. As Chairman of the Blue River Area Agency on Aging (BRAAA), Mark said they are going to reach out to the elderly, disabled population who have been in isolation during the pandemic. Kim told Mark to keep PHS in mind as a partner in their endeavor.

President Larry Cerny said he has received several positive comments from people attending the COVID-19 vaccination clinic in Fillmore County. Kim attested to the fact that Kate, Sonya, Deb...everyone involved...has done a great job with clinic logistics.

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Open Forum:

Mark Schoenrock thanked Kim and the entire PHS staff and said he couldn't imagine what life has been like for us the last three months or so and is glad we are starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel. He also thanked President Trump, scientists, researchers, government and industry to get us where we are at in such a short time. It's truly a modern miracle! We can be grateful we live in the United States this year. We can do such miraculous things.

Christy Lucking reminded the Board that National Public Health week is April 5-11. She feels the Board needs to do something for PHS employees to show their appreciation. Christy will organize an email group to gather thoughts and ideas.

The next Board of Health Meeting is Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. in Crete, NE.

Being no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned.

Debra L. Wendelin
Office Administrator

PUBLIC HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Board Members Roll Call & Roll Call Votes

Meeting Date: 03-18-2021

		MOTIONS																			
Board Members		Roll Call		1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9	
	Present	Absent	Yea	Nay																	
Dave Bruning	X		X		X		X		X												
Larry Cerny	X		X		X		X		X												
Dr. Josue Gutierrez		X																			
Janet Henning	X		X		X		X		X												
Judy Henning	X		X		X		X		X												
Dr. Bruce Kennedy	X		X		X		X		X												
Stephanie Knight	X		X		X		X		X												
Christy Lucking	X		X		X		X		X												
Dave Norton	X		X		X		X		X												
Jim Rickering	X		X		X		X		X												
Mark Schoenrock	X		X		X		X		X												
Don Schuller	X		X		X		X		X												
Totals	11	1	11	0	11	0	11	0	11												