

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

July 15, 2020

Present: Lee Harrison, MD, Chair
William Youngblood, Vice Chair
Debra Bogen, MD, Secretary
Anthony Ferraro
Ellen Stewart, MD
Edith Shapira, MD
Donald Burke, MD
Caroline Mitchell
Joylette Portlock, PhD
Absent: Kotayya Kondaveeti, MD

1. **Call to Order**

Due to the emergency order issued by Governor Wolf in relation to COVID-19, the meeting was held virtually. The meeting was livestreamed online, in order to enable the public to observe the meeting. Public comments were submitted in writing in advance and were read during the meeting by Todd Bogdanovich.

Dr. Harrison called the meeting to order.

2. **Approval of Minutes from May 6, 2020**

Dr. Harrison asked if there were any comments or questions about the minutes. There were none.

Action: Dr. Shapira moved to approve the minutes, Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.
Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

A. Alayna Shannon, re: COVID-19 Update

Ms. Stambaugh wrote to request the Board recommend returning Allegheny County to the yellow phase due to a resurgence of new coronavirus cases.

B. Kimberlee Love, re: COVID-19 Update

Ms. Love wrote to ask if there is any coordinated plan between agencies regarding enforcement of the mask mandate. She wrote that its unfair to our grocery store clerks and restaurant managers to have to police the public, but it's also unfair to other customers who don't feel safe sharing indoor space with the unmasked.

C. Mehmet Ulus, MD, re: COVID-19 Update

Dr. Ulus wrote to thank Governor Wolf for his wise, competent, and empathic management of Pennsylvania during these unsettling times. Dr. Ulus also commended the Board for the great job it has been doing in keeping the residents safe and healthy.

D. Anonymous, re: COVID-19 Update

The anonymous commenter wrote that they work in a child care center in the area. They wrote of their disappointment regarding children aged two and over to wear masks all day in child care, as the commenter wrote that this is unnecessary and counterproductive.

E. Kathleen Kaemmerer, re: COVID-19 Update

Ms. Kaemmerer wrote to thank the Board for its advice and working with businesses to help find a data-driven COVID management health program. She wrote that the public eagerly awaits the Board's prognosis for Pennsylvania's Education System.

F. Joshua Miser, re: COVID-19 Update

Mr. Miser wrote to ask for clarification regarding COVID-19 data within Allegheny County. He asked why there are different numbers for daily testing reported by the County dashboard, the County's daily 11AM updates, and the state's daily release. He also sought how antibody tests are included in the reported numbers. He thanked the Board for the info that is provided and wrote that the more transparency that is offered in the data, the more trust the public can have.

G. Kelsey, re: COVID-19 Update

Kelsey (no last name provided) wrote that schools across the county are making plans to reopen in the fall despite Covid cases surging both nationally and in Allegheny County. She wrote that the County needs to mandate that schools remain closed until cases in the County have significantly decreased.

H. Briana Zagacki, re: COVID-19 Update

Ms. Zagacki wrote to request context and information be provided regarding the children diagnosed with COVID-19 in the County, such as how many were symptomatic, how many acquired the virus from group activities or from a family member, if any have shown radiographic lung changes, and if any have died.

I. Kristie, re: COVID-19 Update

Kristie (no last name provided) wrote to ask if there is a way for more restrictions to be set in place once more to stop the spread, most notably telework being mandatory at the moment rather than making people sit in a close quarters office setting and risk passing the virus unnecessarily.

J. Jane Chesin, re: COVID-19 Update

Ms. Chesin wrote that the new case number of COVID-19 is staying above 100 and the positive rate has been above 10% for several weeks. She wrote that the health and life of residents are threatened but noted that Allegheny County has allowed business re-openings instead of returning to the yellow or red phases. The economy should not be above the life of people.

K. Anna Fisher, re: COVID-19 Update

Ms. Fisher wrote that better strategic collaboration is needed among the Allegheny County Department of Health and related partners, including County Commissioner's Office and the Department of Human Services to understand and mitigate the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on cases, hospitalizations and deaths in the Black community. This partnership must also include Pittsburgh-based Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition, a group of public health researchers and elected officials working to ensure equitable health and economic outcomes for the black community during the pandemic.

L. Mark Lewis, Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition, re: COVID-19 Update

Mr. Lewis wrote on behalf of the COVID-19 Equity Coalition. Several requests were made to the Board by Mr. Lewis. His requests included the provision of further data and explanation to identify the reasons for COVID-19 spikes in the past few weeks, the reporting by race of data from contact tracing, additional attention and resources be put toward a better understanding of excess deaths, formal collaboration between ACHD and the Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition to accomplish community centered and engaged models for contact tracing and mitigation, and the coordination of testing efforts.

M. Michele Feingold, re: COVID-19 Update

Ms. Feingold wrote to respectfully demand that the Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition be brought into ACHD's discussions and decision-making regarding this crisis. She wrote that ACHD should formally collaborate with the Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition to plan, run, and improve community centered case investigation, contact tracing, and mitigation efforts tailored to those most affected: people of color. She also requested that ACHD take leadership roles in coordinating COVID testing across the County and in assisting school districts and sports teams in how to plan for the fall in ways that will minimize the risk of further spread.

N. Rebecca Shaffer, re: COVID Response

Ms. Shaffer wrote that daycares should not open until regular schools open.

4. Old Business

A. Surveillance Update (non-COVID-19)

Lynda Jones, of ACHD's Bureau of Assessment, Statistics, and Epidemiology gave the presentation as Chief Epidemiologist Dr. LuAnn Brink was unavailable. Ms. Jones noted a steep decline in the spring of children under the age of six who were being tested for lead in their blood. The number has begun to rebound in the last month, and BASE will continue to monitor this. She shared data comparing Emergency Department visits in the time periods of April-June 2019 and April-June 2020. Visits in 2020 were lower than in 2019. Visits for hypertension had a 47% decrease, visits for diabetes had a 45% decrease, visits for asthma had a 52% decrease, visits for strokes had a 41% decrease, and visits for heart attacks had a 55% decrease. These decreases reflect a national trend. Dr. Harrison asked if we yet know outcomes such as the number of excess deaths. Ms. Jones stated that BASE will be trying to answer that in the future. She stated that final death data is 1 to 1.5 years old. Emergency Department visits for falls and for motor vehicle accidents saw a similar decrease to the visits for chronic complaints, and a similar resurgence.

Dr. Harrison thanked Ms. Jones for her presentation. Dr. Burke asked if overdoses have increased. Ms. Jones and Dr. Bogen told Dr. Burke that topic will be addressed later in the meeting by Mr. Pitts.

B. COVID-19 Update

Dr. Bogen reminded the Board of the COVID timeline within Allegheny County. On March 14th, "non-essential" businesses were asked to close voluntarily. On March 23rd, Governor Wolf issued a stay at home order. On May 15th, Allegheny County entered the state's yellow phase. On June 5th, Allegheny County entered the state's green phase. On June 30th, restrictions were implemented for on-premises alcohol consumption at business establishments. On July 3rd, there was a one-week closure of bars, restaurants and casinos. Activities and events were limited to less than 25 people. On July 10th, there was a two-week closure of indoor dining. Indoor and outdoor gatherings were limited to 25 and 50 attendees respectively.

Dr. Bogen next informed the Board of the number of new COVID cases within the past week. She reminded the Board that the daily case count reflects what is entered into the NEDSS database that day and can be cases that were tested between one and seven days before. The total number of cases within the past week was 1,385. The daily breakdown was 230 on July 8th, 158 on July 9th, 180 on July 10th, 215 on July 11th, 200 on July 12th, 71 on July 13th, and 331 on July 14th. The current surge of cases reflects a rapid increase among younger adults. Both the median age of cases and the median age of hospitalized patients have declined over the last few weeks.

Dr. Bogen informed the Board that data is available via Allegheny County's COVID Dashboard. She noted that one challenge is limited data regarding race and ethnicity. She reported that now the race is known for approximately 75% of those who are tested, and the ethnicity is known for approximately 55% of those who are tested. There is no question that the data shows racial disparities. African-Americans comprise 13% of Allegheny County's population and 15% of the number of individuals who have been tested. However, the positivity rate for African-Americans is 11%, compared to 6% for whites. African-Americans also comprise 26% of the cases, 32% of the hospitalizations, 31% of ICU admissions, and 20% of deaths. ACHD and the Department of Human Services have formed a COVID-19 Equity Taskforce with the goal of eliminating these disparities. This will be done by increasing the availability of testing, targeted messaging and outreach to high-risk populations by leveraging existing partnerships through Live Well Allegheny and REACH partners; and by working with community groups to improve and amplify messaging.

Dr. Bogen shared a map of Allegheny County with the Board that showed the location of specimen collection sites for COVID-19 testing. She stated that EMS agencies have been helping those who have mobility issues. ACHD had been operating a testing site at its Clack location but is changing to rapid response teams instead. Dr. Bogen also informed the Board that specimen collection has been taking place at FQHCs across the County since the middle of May. ACHD has been purchasing PCR oral swab tests from a company named Curative and distributing the tests to the FQHCs. The tests are performed by the patient self-swabbing to obtain a sample. Testing appointments are available via both online scheduling and walk-up appointments. The tests do not require cold storage. The specimens are sent to a laboratory in Washington DC and results are obtained in two to three days. The results are emailed or texted to the patient and reported to the clinic ordering the test. Dr. Bogen did note some problems with reporting that were caused by communication problems with NEDSS. This caused a backlog that was reflected in yesterday's high case count. Patients were informed of their results, but ACHD was not and therefore could not conduct contact tracing. Dr. Bogen stated that the Curative testing was an effort to increase access to communities of color. She noted that African-Americans comprised 29.99% of those who checked in for their testing appointments.

Dr. Bogen stated that case investigation can take a long time. The time required can range from twenty minutes to more than an hour for each case. The process for case investigation is that the labs report test results via PA-NEDSS. A positive test result will trigger a call from a Case Investigator. The Case Investigator contacts the patient to gather additional information such as the symptoms onset, special circumstances, hospitalization data to include ICU admission and ventilator usage, exposure to Long Term Care Facilities, race and ethnicity data, recent travel, recent attendance at events and gatherings, and employment location. The Case Investigator provides the patient with isolation guidance and identifies psychosocial and physical needs during isolation. The Case Investigator also identifies contacts of the patient. When cases reached more than 200 per day, ACHD asked for assistance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Pennsylvania National Guard. The assistance from the state was very

helpful. ACHD also drew staff with NEDSS access from bureaus other than BASE to assist with Case Investigation.

Dr. Bogen provided the Board with a summary of patient's activities determined by Case Investigations. She thanked her assistant, Todd Bogdanovich, for compiling these summaries. The number of patients who reported attending a party was 2, out of a total of 100, during the week of 6/14-6/20; increased to 27, out of a total of 400, during the week of 6/21-6/27; and increased again to 45, out of 867, during the week of 6/28-7/4. The number of patients who reported being a patron or employee of a bar or restaurant was 1 during the week of 6/14-6/20, 27 during the week of 6/21-6/27, and 45 during the week of 6/28-7/4. Dr. Harrison asked about the relative contributions of bars versus restaurants. Dr. Bogen stated that it is sometimes hard to separate, noting that some establishments have an atmosphere more like a restaurant during the day but more like a bar at night. Mr. Ferraro suggested asking what time they were at the establishment, noting that this may be a helpful differentiator. Dr. Bogen stated that the data wouldn't be entered that way in NEDSS but can raise it as a possibility with the State. She asked what time Mr. Ferraro might suggest as a differentiator. Mr. Ferraro suggested using before and after 10 PM as the differentiator.

Dr. Bogen next spoke to the Board regarding contact tracing. She stated that there is a lot of confusion in the community regarding contact tracing. A contact is only those who are one degree of separation from a positive case, and that they were within six feet of the case for more than fifteen minutes while the case was symptomatic within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms, or the time of the test being performed. Contact tracing is on a separate system than Case Investigation, it does not use NEDSS.

The number of contact tracers who will be needed is contingent on the number of cases and the amount of contacts that each case has. Dr. Bogen stated that ACHD's plan was to onboard more personnel in July and August to assist with case investigation and contact tracing. The recent increase in case numbers has now put this plan on the fast-track for ACHD. ACHD has twenty contact tracers and has trained more than fifty members of the Medical Reserve Corps to assist with contact tracing. Universities will conduct their own contact tracing, with technical support from ACHD. Healthcare and Long-Term Care Facilities will also conduct their own contact tracing, except for personal outside-of-work contacts. ACHD has also utilized medical students to assist with tracing and is developing plans for other students and community agencies to assist.

Dr. Bogen have recognition and thanks to the Pittsburgh Foundation Emergency Fund, the Richard King Mellon, ARGO AI for delivering the Curative samples to Allegheny County's lab, PA Emergency Preparedness funding, CARES funding, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and Dr. Farley who is the Philadelphia Health Commissioner.

Dr. Harrison stated that these were very impressive efforts. He noted that Allegheny County seems to be stuck at approximately 200 cases per day, despite the issuance of more

stringent orders. He asked where the situation in the County is going. Dr. Bogen replied that was a great question. She noted that the cases were doubling but have now plateaued. She stated that it took a couple weeks last time to see cases decrease after mitigation efforts were implemented.

Dr. Portlock noted that schools will be re-opening in about a month and asked what those plans looked like. Dr. Bogen stated that mitigation has been in place for more than two weeks and that Allegheny County will hopefully see a decline in cases at the end of July. Flexibility is the name of the game as it has been very hard to predict what will happen. ACHD is giving science to craft decision but is not dictating them.

Dr. Burke thanked Dr. Bogen and asked what must be known about kids. Dr. Bogen stated that there have been nice studies in Europe about kids and noted that kids may transmit COVID-19 less than adults do but she noted that adults work in schools. She stated that she would love to see great studies if Dr. Burke has any. Dr. Burke concurred that most studies are coming from Europe, noting Iceland and the Netherlands, but stated that not so many studies are coming from the United States even though this topic is such an important question. Dr. Bogen stated that there were almost no kids infected at the beginning of the pandemic, but now kids as young as one month old have been infected. Dr. Burke stated that he would be glad to discuss with other Board members how to generate more information such as evaluating contact tracing, or the number of cases averted.

5. **New Business**

A. Tick Surveillance Efforts

Leah Lamonte, ACHD's Vector Control Program Coordinator, thanked the Board for the opportunity to give them a presentation about her program's tick surveillance efforts. She stated that the most common tick in Allegheny County is *Ixodes scapularis*, the Blacklegged tick. In 2109, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection announced a 5-year tick surveillance to reduce the number of tick bites to residents. Tick nymphs are the main culprit in spreading Lyme Disease to humans.

Ms. Lamonte stated that her program is focused on prevention, education, and field surveillance of vector-borne disease. This is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania DEP. She reported finding that 33% of ticks collected from Schenley Park and Highland Park had *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is the primary vector of Lyme Disease. The most dangerous time of the year for tick bites is between May and July.

The newest tick is the Asian Longhorned Tick, which is invasive to the Western Hemisphere. It was first reported in the US in 2017, and it now exists in pockets in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Franklin County. This tick is a major livestock pest that can transmit bovine theileriosis and babesiosis infection in animals. It is an aggressive biter that builds intense

infestations on domestic hosts, causing them great stress, reduced growth and production, and severe blood loss.

Ms. Lamonte also reported that her program conducts municipal trainings for public works and code enforcement staff. She thanked ACHD's local municipal partners.

Dr. Harrison stated that this is important work. Mr. Youngblood asked if any tick awareness presentations are conducted in County parks. Ms. Lamonte said that small groups are educated, but no large events are planned. Dr. Portlock stated that the range of ticks is increasing due to climate change. As parents may not be aware of this, she asked if ACHD is partnering with schools for education about this issue. Ms. Lamonte stated that her program works with the Bureau of Epidemiology, Statistics, and Assessment to send letters to school nurses for education.

B. Overdose Prevention

Otis Pitts, Deputy Director of ACHD's Public Policy and Community Relations Bureau, gave the Board an update about the Overdose Prevention Program. The program's priorities include monitoring trends with the overdose surveillance program, prioritizing outreach to populations facing greater burdens of overdose deaths, distributing naloxone strategically, building systematic linkages to care, promoting harm reduction strategies that reduce adverse effects of drug use, supporting evidence-based decision-making for providers and health systems, and increasing public awareness about overdose risks and risk reduction strategies.

The peak of overdose deaths in Allegheny County occurred in 2017. There were 343 overdose deaths in 2014, 456 in 2015, 734 in 2016, 835 in 2017, 492 in 2018, 564 in 2019, and 193 thus far in 2020. Mr. Pitts stated that there have been four waves of overdose death trends. The first wave was prescription opioids from 2018 to 2010. The second wave was heroin from 2010 to 2015. The third wave, which began in 2015, was fentanyl, as it is cheaper and stronger than heroin. The most recent wave is polysubstances, that is mixing an opioid with a non-opioid such as cocaine or benzodiazepines. Since 2015, cocaine and fentanyl have commonly been found together. This combination may be intentional or may be unintentional due to dealers cutting their cocaine with fentanyl. The most recent combination is meth and fentanyl. Regarding the changing demographics of overdose victims, Mr. Pitts stated that African-Americans are increasingly victims of overdoses. He also noted that while non-fatal overdoses had been declining since the end of summer 2019, they are spiking during this year's pandemic.

He reported that this program is currently working on building out year one of the CDC Overdose Data to Action grant. Such actions including partnering with the Pittsburgh Poison Center to establish processes for Emergency Departments to guide referrals and linkages to care such as warm handoffs. The program will soon be providing subgrants to promote innovative substance use and overdose prevention strategies at the local level. The subgrants will emphasize local partnerships and coordination of efforts, programs serving priority areas or

populations, addressing behavioral health disparities or underserved populations, and responding to unique challenges during COVID-19 for people with substance use disorders and in recovery.

C. Article XV (Plumbing) Regulation Update

Michael Parker, ACHD's Solicitor, and Ivo Miller, ACHD's Plumbing Program Manager gave the Board a presentation about updates to Article XV. The Article had not been amended since approximately 2009. A revision process began in January 2017 with internal review of the existing Article XV, and the Board of Health approved those changes to Article XV in 2018. However, County Council did not ratify the 2018 revisions due to the state's adoption of the 2015 International Plumbing Code as its uniform plumbing code. In 2019, the current proposed revisions to Article XV began with a line-by-line comparison of Article XV and the 2015 International Plumbing Code. The Plumbing Advisory Board was consulted on these proposed revisions and unanimously voted to recommend to the Board that the revisions be approved as the new Article XV. The Department will ask today that the Board vote to approve a 30-day public comment period for the revisions.

Mr. Parker and Mr. Miller provided the Board with a summary of the proposed changes. They emphasized that the proposed Chapter 13, regulating nonpotable water systems, will not regulate rain barrels. The proposed changes to Article XV are needed to stay consistent with the state.

Action: Dr. Stewart moved to approve the public comment period for the revisions to Article XV, Mr. Youngblood seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

D. PM2.5 SIP – MVEB Revision

Jayne Graham, ACHD's Air Quality Program Manager, gave the Board a presentation regarding the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budget PM2.5 SIP Revision. Ms. Graham stated that attainment plan SIP for Allegheny County for the 2012 PM2.5 standards was submitted to the EPA on September 12, 2019. On June 12, 2020 the EPA proposed to fully approve most elements of the SIP and proposed to conditionally approve two elements of the SIP. The conditional approvals will require additional SIP submittals for a Motor Vehicle Emissions Budget for transportation conformity, to be submitted by Sept 30, 2020; and contingency measures to be implemented if attainment is not achieved, to be submitted by mid/late 2021. Ms. Graham is requesting a 30-day public comment period for the PM2.5 SIP MVEB Revision. She expected the final SIP to be presented for adoption at the Board's September meeting.

Action: Dr. Shapira moved to approve the public comment period for the PM2.5 SIP MVEB Revision, Dr. Portlock seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

E. Environmental Health Fund Request: \$5,000 for iPads for Water Pollution Control Program

ACHD Deputy Director for Environmental Health Jim Kelly stated that this request is to purchase seven iPads for Water Pollution Control staff in order to gain access to the new Clean Water eInspection application created by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Action: Dr. Stewart moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$5,000 from the Environmental Health Fund for iPads for the Water Pollution Control Program, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

F. Environmental Health Fund Request: \$70,000 to Hold Household Hazardous Waste and E-Waste Collections in 2021

Mr. Kelly stated that is request is for holding a minimum of three Household Hazardous Waste collections and a minimum of five Hard to Recycle collections in 2021.

Action: Dr. Burke moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$70,000 from the Environmental Health Fund to hold Household Hazardous waste and E-Waste collections in 2021, Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

G. Environmental Health Fund Request: \$4,236 for Lead Based Paint Risk Assessor Refresher Training

Mr. Kelly stated that this is a request for eleven Housing and Community Environment program staff and one Water Pollution Control program staff to take the Lead Based Paint Risk Assessor refresher course in order to maintain their PA Lead Risk Assessor Certification.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$4,236 from the Environmental Health Fund for the Lead Based Paint Risk Assessor Refresher Training, Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

H. Environmental Health Fund Request: \$1,200 for Plumbing ICC Training

Mr. Kelly stated that this was for on-line training for 18 inspectors, supervisors and managers in the Plumbing Program as part of their continuing education requirements.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$1,200 from the Environmental Health Fund for the Plumbing ICC Training, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

I. Food Safety Fund Request: \$15,000 for Computer Hardware

Mr. Kelly stated this request is for hardware and warranties for seven managers and supervisors in the Food Safety Program.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the Food Safety Fund for computer hardware, Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

J. Clean Air Fund Request: \$99,995 for One Tree Per Child Pittsburgh Program

Ms. Graham stated that this program became part of Tree Pittsburgh in 2020 after functioning in the city for three years since 2017. This program was developed from the global One Tree Per Child initiative in Australia, to give every school-aged child in the region the opportunity to plant at least one tree during their time in school. The program is critical given Pittsburgh's reputation as having some of the worst air quality and the highest asthma rates in the country. This program empowers the future generation to contribute to air pollution mitigation while positively impacting the air quality in the region.

Mr. Ferraro asked how many trees will be purchased. Dr. Harrison replied that the application states that approximately 1,250 trees are budgeted for.

Action: Dr. Stewart moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$99,995 from the Clean Air Fund for the One Tree Per Child Pittsburgh Program, Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

A. Ravi Hughes, re: Air Pollution

Mr. Hughes wrote that living and breathing in Allegheny County is jeopardizing his health and noted that the County ranks in the top 2% of the nation for the highest cancer risk solely from air pollution. He wrote of his desire to put the health and safety of our world and our people above the interests of big industries that are content to sacrifice our health and wellbeing to improve their earnings. He wrote of the need to work on permits for polluters, monitoring of those facilities, and implementing meaningful enforcement when these polluters overstep their bounds.

B. Maylyn Torpey, re: Air Pollution

Ms. Torpey wrote that Allegheny County is in the top 2% of counties for cancer caused by air pollution. She wrote of the need to prioritize air quality, as it directly impacts health and decreases the body's ability to fight infectious diseases. She wants to live a long, healthy life and without climate action that won't be possible.

C. Angelo Taranto, re: Metalico

Mr. Taranto wrote that he is a member of Allegheny County Clean Air Now (ACCAN). He wrote that ACHD issued enforcement orders in 2018 and 2019 against Metalico but stated that residents are still being harmed by the air pollution coming from Metalico's operations. The explosions have, for the most part, stopped, but the emissions from the shredder and the dust from the materials handling continue, unabated. He wrote that communities cannot continue to be affected by poor air quality and the resulting health problems, particularly with the added impact of COVID-19.

D. Rachel Filippini, GASP, re: Edgar Thomson & Complaint System

Ms. Filippini wrote that she is the Executive Director of the Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP). She wrote that the community is running out of patience with ACHD because they've already waited for more than two and a half years for information addressing how U.S. Steel will bring Edgar Thomson back into compliance with County and Federal air pollution regulations. She noted that no report has been issued by ACHD or the EPA regarding the joint notice of violation issued in November 2017. GASP calls upon both agencies to provide more answers. She also wrote that GASP appreciates that ACHD has taken steps to upgrade the air quality complaint system to allow the ability to send videos and photos, as well as track complaints. She wrote that these aspects of the new system are definite improvements, but she believes that tweaks and verbiage additions could help the system be even more effective.

E. Tara Helper, re: Estheticians

Ms. Helper wrote to ask the Board to look at cosmetology restrictions. She wrote that she is a full-time esthetician and can only work one day per week due to the restrictions. She wrote that there are safe ways to perform facial services and requested these restrictions be revised.

F. Tara Couch, re: Probation

Ms. Couch wrote to complain that Allegheny County Probation is still doing their hotel stay for people on probation and noted that this program involves sharing a hotel room with strangers for an entire weekend. She wrote that the classes attended by these participants could instead be done online due to COVID-19.

G. Edith Abeyta, re: Environmental Justice & US Steel

Ms. Abeyta wrote that she lives in an environmental justice community which is in close proximity to one of the Mon Valley Works facilities owned by U.S. Steel. She asked how much evidence, data, and testimony needs to be collected for action. She asked when she gets to breathe air that doesn't harm her.

H. Ellen Conrad, re: Air Quality

Ms. Conrad wrote that she worries about her long-term health and the health of her neighbors as they breathe air polluted by particulate matter and industrial toxins. She wrote of her desire to have her government protect her from unrestrained business interests and to feel confident that we are headed in a direction as a County where our health is considered independently from economic forces.

I. April Clisura, re: Air Quality

Ms. Clisura wrote that during COVID-19 ACHD must be careful not to neglect things that are business as usual, and of concern to her is neighborhood and regional air quality. She wrote that during COVID-19, people must be protected from air quality that puts them more at risk for respiratory distress. She wrote of her hope that ACHD will take seriously the idea to reduce industrial production on days that are predicted to have hazardous air quality.

J. Dilla Mastrangelo, re: Air Quality

Ms. Mastrangelo wrote that air quality a longer standing and very serious threat to health in our region that requires equal mobilization and attention as the COVID-19 outbreak. She urged ACHD to continue the work of more strictly monitoring and holding these corporations accountable for livable, breathable emissions for the residents of our County. She requested that ACHD not stop short of requiring, through all means possible, compliance with the standards set forth in the Clean Air Act.

K. Molly Potts, re: Air Quality

Ms. Potts wrote to request that ACHD keep attention on air pollution and air quality because this is a huge health risk too. She stated that poor air quality only makes Pittsburgh residents more susceptible to complications from COVID-19, and that this is a further reason to put more focus on air quality and closely monitor major polluters in the area.

L. Todd Medema, re: Air Quality

Mr. Medema wrote that he bikes everywhere, and that Pittsburgh's bad air days make this hard on himself and his lungs. He requested that everything be done to clean up the air, so that he can enjoy going outside.

M. Mary Jo Valletta, re: Air Quality

Ms. Valletta wrote that air quality has diminished progressively since the current administration took office. She wrote that burning sulfur can be smelt daily and that there are times when the air is thick and hazy.

N. Grant Catton, re: Air Quality

Mr. Catton wrote to thank ACHD for all that it has done during the pandemic but noted that we can not turn our backs on air quality just because it is not a hot button issue right now.

O. Matthew Mehalik, Breathe Project, re: Air Quality

Dr. Mehalik wrote that since the last Board meeting on May 13th, air in our County has appeared in the EPA's Top-5, worst-air-in-the-country rankings 25 times out of 62 days, or 40% of the time. Air in our region has been #1 worst on this list 7 times, a little more than once every ten days. He wrote that as ACHD's leadership transition progresses, he is asking ACHD to improve dialogue with community members, especially environmental justice communities, to convey ACHD's commitment to air quality improvement as a top priority. He also asked ACHD to improve its community alerts about ongoing, frequent bad air episodes so that community members can protect themselves more effectively from pollution. He also wrote that there is consensus and clear communication from the country's top public health analysts and officials stating that reducing air pollution in the midst of SARS-CoV-2, which is known to cause tissue inflammation and organ damage, should be a top priority.

P. Michael Rhoads, US Steel, re: Settlement Agreement Projects Update

Mr. Rhoads wrote that he is the Plant Manager of the Mon Valley Works Clairton Plant. He wrote that U.S. Steel has submitted an Environmental Report detailing US Steel Clairton Plant's Continuous Improvement to the Environment (CITE) efforts and achievements to ACHD, an independent third party completed an environmental compliance audit at the Clairton Plant, and U.S. Steel submitted an air permit application for replacement of the pushing emissions controls baghouse for Batteries 13-15 and 19-20. He wrote that U.S. Steel is currently on target to complete replacements of all endflues on Batteries 1, 2, and 3 by September 2020 as per the June 2019 Settlement Agreement. He wrote that U.S. Steel is committed to supporting ACHD's development of a science-based model to better predict inversions and their intensity and has also committed to doing its fair share to mitigate the effects of inversions on air quality.

Q. Olivia Perfetti

Ms. Perfetti wrote that she is concerned about the quality of our air in Allegheny County, noting that this year the American Lung Association reported that the Pittsburgh metro area is tied for the eighth-most polluted city in the nation for fine particulates. She wrote that polluters aren't being held accountable to the law and that many polluters are operating without a permit, or under a permit that doesn't protect health. She wrote that County Executive Rich Fitzgerald should prioritize clean air and not allow these facilities to endanger the health and lives of residents.

R. Thaddeus Popovich, ACCAN, re: Shenango

Mr. Popovich wrote that he is the co-founder of Protect Franklin Park and Allegheny County Clean Air Now and a resident of Franklin Park. He wrote that with mixed emotions he must announce that he is leaving Pittsburgh and moving to Berkeley, California to get away from the noxious air and the lack of political and moral will to set things right. He will be living in a place that is better for his physical health and well-being. He wrote that the former Shenango Coke Works is now a 50-acre brownfield site.

S. Johnnie Perryman, re: Clairton Air Quality

Mr. Perryman wrote that he is from Clairton. He wrote that studies from Harvard University show that an increase of one micron per cubic meter of PM2.5 corresponds with a 15% increase in death from COVID-19. He wrote that the government is spending a lot of money on COVID-19 and that some of that money should go to providing air purifiers for people in Clairton.

T. Art Thomas, re: Clairton Air Quality

Mr. Thomas wrote that he retired from US Steel Irvin Works and has lived in Clairton for more than 70 years. He wrote that he would like an explanation as to why US Steel is an essential business, given that we are not at war and aren't building battleships. He wrote of his desire to see more communication between US Steel and the citizens of Clairton. Such communication should include electronic signs, like the sign at city hall, displaying what the condition of the air is. The signs should be connected directly to the monitoring equipment at US Steel. Such information should also be televised. He wrote that if he can get pollen numbers from Bethel Park on his tv, he should get air quality information from the most dangerous place in the Mon Valley.

U. Grace Johnston, re: Air Quality

Ms. Johnston wrote to ask that action to clean our County's air be taken immediately. She wrote that since climate change doesn't yield for pandemics, and since pollutants increase the health risks of COVID-19, that prioritizing environmental health at this time makes perfect sense. She wrote that people need to be prioritized over profit and that lives depend on polluters obeying the law.

V. Martina Jacobs, re: Air Quality

Dr. Jacobs wrote to urge ACHD to make public COVID's interaction with the increasingly poor air quality, and other environmental factors of fracking. She wrote that this combination takes a particularly heavy toll on African American residents. She urged ACHD to delve deeply into this situation and speak loudly about how citizens' lives are being sacrificed in order to increase profits for oil and gas conglomerates and those who enable them.

8. **Adjournment**

Dr. Shapira moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Youngblood seconded the adjournment.