

Allegheny County Board of Health
July 14, 2021
Minutes

Present: Lee Harrison, M.D., Chair
William Youngblood, Vice Chair
Debra Bogen, M.D, Secretary
Donald Burke, M.D.
Anthony Ferraro
Caroline Mitchell
Joylette Portluck
Edith Shapira, M.D.
Ellen Stewart, M.D.

Absent: Kotayya Kondaveeti, M.D.

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Dr. Harrison welcomed everyone to the first in-person meeting of the Allegheny County Board of Health since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 12:31PM in the Gold Room (Room 410) of the Allegheny County Courthouse.

Dr. Harrison announced that the Board of Health held an executive session to discuss matters of personnel and litigation.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Dr. Harrison asked members if they had any comments regarding the minutes for the May 5, 2021 meeting of the Board of Health. There were none.

Action: Dr. Shapira moved and Dr. Stewart seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Mr. Dowd reported that members of the Board of Health had received one written comment on the agenda items. That comment was in support of the proposed formulation of Article XXIV: Paid Sick Time. The commenter requested that employers with fewer than 24 employees be covered by the proposed regulations.

Dr. Harrison invited those who registered to provide public comment on agenda items to do so within the required three-minute time period.

Jay Ting Walker, Matthew Nemeth, David Bertenthal, Rachel Filipini and Myron Arnowitt spoke to the proposed Mon Valley Air Pollution Episode Rule.

4. Director's report

Dr. Bogen began her report with an update on Covid-19. As of this date, Allegheny County has had 102,059 cases of Covid-19, with 7,278 hospitalizations and 1,983 deaths. Since the beginning of the pandemic 584,421 people have been tested for the virus. Vaccinations rates vary by age and race but overall 66.1% of residents of Allegheny County have been partially vaccinated and 60.4% fully vaccinated. Dr. Bogen explained that the state had recently cleaned up its data to better match individual records and eliminate duplicates. The result led to the more accurate rates she presented. She explained that the Delta variant is present in the Commonwealth and the County and talked about the importance of the vaccines. She describe ongoing monitoring and vaccinating efforts.

Dr. Bogen turned to the non-Covid-19 related work of the Allegheny County Health Department. She announced that the Department is looking for a new Deputy Director for the Bureau of Environmental Health. This is an exciting time for environmental health work and she encouraged board members to share the recently published job posting far and wide.

Dr. Bogen highlighted the exciting work of Dr. Rod Harris's Bureau, Community and Family Health. The bureau recently hired James Weeden, Ph.D. to lead the Asthma Program. She talked about the important work and success of the Office of Violence Prevention as well as the various grants the bureau has successfully received and completed.

Kim Joyce, the Deputy of the Bureau of Administration, has brought in as well as elevated talent for the Bureau. Dr. Bogen welcomed Chris Cavendish, the new Human Resources Manger and Maura Jacobs, who had previously been a health policy fellow and has joined the Department as the Policy Specialist

Dr. Bogen turned the presentation over to Otis Pitts, the Deputy Director for the Bureau of Food, Housing and Policy, who provided an update on 2020 overdose data, which the ACHD recently released in on ACHD's overdose prevention work.

Mr. Pitts informed the board that after a year of decrease in overdose in 2018, the last two years have seen increases.

Mr. Pitts shared information that characterize substances involved. Prescriptions drugs then heroin, fentanyl introduced in to heroin and now other substances.

Mr. Pitts turned his attention to the impacted communities and pointed out rates death for different populations. He called attention to the fact that the death rate for Black males continues to climb and out pace other populations. He also made it clear that the age group most at risk are those age 55 -64. He provided information on communities with the highest number of deaths, highest death rates and the largest percentage increase in death from 2019 to 2020.

ACHD overdose prevention team, surveillance team and more than 30 partners use the data to hone in on the communities that are at the highest risk and to get resources, including NALOXONE into the hands of individuals who will most likely be in a position to best utilize it. He reminded the board members that ACHD is the authorized distributor of NALOXONE.

Board members expressed appreciation for the report and update as well as concern for the increase in deaths, particularly among black males.

Mr. Pitts also shared that ACHD has partnered with DHS to produce a dashboard to share the data and to see it through a variety of filters. The goal is to provide better data to the public so that people and most effectively react as quickly as possible.

ACHD will continue to partner with large region wide organizations as well as groups working “on the ground” close to the needs of individuals. ACHD is also partnering with healthcare centers to build out Medication for Opioid Use Disorder programs to support communities.

5. Action Items

a. Revisions to Article XXI: Mon Valley Air Pollution Episode Rule

Jayne Graham, a program manager of the Air Quality Program presented proposed changes to Article XXI explaining that the goal is to protect public health by reducing the number of exceedances for PM_{2.5}. She reminded the board that the proposed changes had gone the public for a 30 day comment period and that a public hearing had been held. The team prepared a comment response document which was provided to the board. Nearly every comment was in support of the regulation, and some asked for changes. The

Air Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed changes and recommended them for approval by the Board of Health.

Action: Dr. Stewart moved to approve the proposed changes to Article XXI as present. Dr. Portlock seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

b. Proposed Formulation of Article XXIV: Paid Sick Time

Otis Pitts, the Deputy Director for the Bureau of Food, Housing and Policy, presented the proposed formulation of Article XXIV: Paid Sick Time. The goal of the proposed regulation is to protect public health by ensuring employees in the county have the ability to accrue paid sick time. He reminded the Board of Health that the public had both a 30-day public comment period as well as a public hearing to provide comments on the proposed regulations. The team prepared a comment response document which the board received.

Board members expressed their support for the regulation and the need to evaluate the coverage provided by the proposed regulations and the impact on public health. They encouraged ACHD to make sure such reports were generated by the agency implementing the regulations and that such reports be provide to the Board of Health.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the proposed regulations as presented. Dr. Portlock seconded the motion.

The motion passed with seven votes in favor and Mr. Ferraro abstaining citing a possible conflict of interest as a business owner in Allegheny County.

c. Approval of Certified Food Protection Manager Training Fees

Otis Pitts presented proposed changes in the fees for training for Certified Food Protection Managers. The goal of the proposed fee changes is to meet demands of a modern workforce. He presented a table showing the fee increases and explained that current pricing does not meet the cost of the services currently being provide for the training or anticipated costs for the coming years.

Board members asked when the fees were last established and Mr. Pitts explained that they last increase was in 2016.

Action: Mr. Ferraro moved to approve the changes to the fees as presented. Mr. Youngblood seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- d. Environmental Health Fund Request: Lead (Pb) Community Outreach Coordinator

Mr. Pitts explained that the Housing and Community Environment Program was requesting funds from the Environmental Health Fund to support a new, one-year position, a lead (Pb) community outreach coordinator. As a result of the a settlement agreement between the commonwealth and the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority funds were available to support a community coordinator position serving the City of Pittsburgh. In order to ensure that work covered all of Allegheny County, the program request funds sufficient to support 50% of the position. The remaining funds would come from the settlement agreement.

Board members expressed support for the request and encouraged outreach to child care providers and Kindergarten programs.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the Environmental Health Fund request. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- e. Revisions to Article XXI: Stage II Vapor Recovery

Ms. Graham presented the proposed amendments to the Stage II Vapor Recovery section of Article XXI. The proposed amendments would update the tanker unloading rules, remove installation requirements and test procedures, add new test procedures and decommission outdated instructions.

Board members asked if the regulations applied only to commercial gas stations of any gas facilities. Ms. Graham was not sure it covered private facilities and said she would look into the matter further.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to send the proposed regulations to the public for comment. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

The motion passed 7-0-1 with Dr. Shapira abstaining.

6. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Dr. Harrison asked for a summary of comments received electronically in advance of the board meeting. Mr. Dowd reported that members of the Board of Health received 9 comments from individuals who opposed the proposed changes to the Site Work section of Article XV: Plumbing and Building Drainage. There was one comment opposed to requiring students to quarantine during the school year.

Dr. Harrison invited those who registered to provide public comment to do so within the required three-minute time period.

Louis Oliverio spoke in opposition to the requirements that students quarantine. Loraine Starsky spoke in favor of ACHD retaining the WIC contract. Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis spoke regarding the importance of lead (Pb) prevention work. Barbara Lee Pace and Thaddeus Popovich spoke out against Metallico and encouraged ACHD to take the lead on communications related to fire emergencies. Gabrielle Monroe spoke in opposition to ACHD's overdose prevention program.

7. Adjournment

Action: Dr. Portlock moved to adjourn and Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously and Dr. Harrison adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:38PM.