



**CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS**  
Department of Health & Human Services  
Division of Public Health



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Matilde Castiel, MD  
Health & Human Services  
Commissioner

Karyn E. Clark  
Public Health  
Director

**DATE:** December 3, 2018  
**RE:** WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES  
**START TIME:** 6:30 PM  
**LOCATION:** WORCESTER DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
25 MEADE STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM 109  
WORCESTER, MA 01610

**Welcome & Introductions:**

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

Members present: David Fort, Chair, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Abigail Averbach

**Absent:** Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair WDPH Staff: Karyn Clark, Director of DPH, Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH

**Approval of the November 5, 2018 Minutes:**

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of November 5, 2018 made by Jerry Gurwitz, MD  
Second - Abigail Averbach - Approved

**Review and act on discussion relative to gun violence and buyback:**

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: This is the 17<sup>th</sup> year for our buyback program. We have been able to recruit multiple townships around the city. We now have 24 townships retrieving in 16 sites around the Central Mass region. We are retrieving guns at the Worcester Police Headquarters and the City Welding & Fabrication on 10 Ararat Street, Worcester. We also have Boston, Springfield, New Haven and Hartford participating in the East coast. Last year 241 guns were collected. Every gun that is unsecured in a home is another risk for suicide, homicide and accidental shooting. There will be a press conference on Goods for Guns on December 12<sup>th</sup> at 10am in the Noonan Family Concourse at UMass University Campus.

David Fort, Chair: If your gun is stolen, are you responsible if your gun was used in a shooting/robbery?

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: In Massachusetts it could be found that you have been reckless in the storage of your gun and if it ended up in a crime, you could be fined and lose your gun permit.



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**Review and act on discussion relative to window guards:**

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: A few months back, we have talked about trying to mandate landlords who have tenants less than 2 years old, living on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, to have window guards. We see a significant number of falls from windows every summer across the country.

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: Discussed with the BOH that Amanda Wilson, Director of Housing/Inspectional Services, Fire Department and landlord associations be part of the process and invite to our next meeting.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD: I think this is a good proof of concept for our Board to do something related to injury prevention. I don't think there is an inordinate amount of things to potentially do.

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: The landlords and other stakeholder have not yet been engaged. Strongly cautions pushing through a regulation as there is a process including engaging the law department to research and write a regulation. We need to talk with other departments to understand if they have concerns about the window guards. Then we can provide a comprehensive regulation for consideration.

Abigail Averbach: Feels it would be important to know what all the steps are in implementation of such a regulation. Doesn't have a sense whether or not some of the things we need to understand, i.e, the burden on landlords and the cost. I am asking to have a complete understanding before we write a regulation.

David Fort, Chair: As a Board, we would like to engage with the community and have a better understanding on what we need to know in terms of the problem, frequency and the issue.

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: With all of the planned new construction, this would be a great time to get an ordinance on "the books" so that the construction that moves forward knows that this is part of what they have to provide for these new affordable housing units that are going all around Worcester.

**Review and act on discussion regarding an act relative to the cremation of certain unclaimed bodies:**

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: The State passed a law this July that authorized municipalities to come up with a plan for unclaimed bodies in morgues. It has been a burden on hospitals and mortuaries that have been holding on to unclaimed bodies. If no one has come forward in 60 days to claim a body, local municipalities can come up with their own regulation. We would like to see all funeral homes to rotate and be involved.

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: Peter Stefan, Graham Putnam Funeral Home, has been kind for a number of years taking the unclaimed bodies. We will be having a meeting with some funeral home representatives to understand the cost. It is very concerning to us that there is no plan in place or any kind of rotation, commitment or policy from the State level down. Perhaps a certain amount of cremations should be done amongst funeral homes. The Law Department will look to see what is happening on the State level. What is our jurisdiction as the Worcester BOH to be able to mandate and require that other funeral homes have to help with this burden? We are happy to work with UMass and the funeral homes to come up with a solution.

David Fort, Chair: I would like to hear what comes out of the discussions regarding the rotations with all of the funeral homes.

Abigail Averbach: Are these Worcester residents?

Michael Hirsh, MD Medical Director of DPH: They are not always Worcester residents. Some of them end up in hospitals here in Worcester.

Motion to adjourn; David Fort, Chair, second by Abigail Averbach

**Adjourn:** 7:45pm

**Next Meeting -- January 7, 2019 at 6:30pm**

**Next Meeting Topics:**

Medical Marijuana License for Mission Massachusetts

Time line for window guards regulation

CHIP