



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: June 3, 2019
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: Edith Claros, PhD, Chair, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair, Abigail Averbach and Chareese Allen WDPH Staff: Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner of HHS, Karyn Clark, Director of DPH, Joshan Niroula, Public Health Prevention Specialist

Approval of the agenda:

Motion to approve the WBOH agenda made by Abigail Averbach; this was seconded by – Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair - approved

Approval of the May 6, 2019 Minutes:

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of May 6, 2019 made by Abigail Averbach, this was seconded by – Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair – Approved

Review and discuss presentation regarding City Administration's efforts on diversity on Boards and Commissions:

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: Reviewed with the BOH their discussions about the CHIP and about looking at increasing diversity across city boards and commissions. Asked Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer, to come and give an overview and how we might be able to support each other's work.

Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer: We have worked diligently to achieve the first deliverable, which is the Affirmative Action Policy, to update the 1996 version, which has been updated in February 2019. We are now in the implement phase. Along with our policies, we're not just looking at hiring; we're trying to redefine what Affirmative Action means (also recruitment and retention). We're working to expand our efforts on all three areas to make sure our workforce resembles our community. We have Diversity Officers; Sgt. Lee Boykin, Police Dept. and Lt William Mosley, Fire Dept. Our next segment of training is on cultural understanding. Training every Department and Division on what the process is and how it applies to our standardized hiring process. Exit

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interviews help us understand what the City needs to be competitive compared to the private sector.

Chareese Allen: What areas are you looking at when hiring in the city?

Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer: We look at demographics within all of our Departments using data analysis.

Abigail Averbach: Are their reasons why people of color don't stay once they have been recruited?

Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer: We have to create programming that supports diverse multicultural backgrounds. There's a lot more to diversity than race, gender and ethnicity. There's a whole realm of diversity to think about.

Review and discuss presentation on status of veteran's health:

Edward O'Connor, Director of Veteran Services: Combination of city and state benefits. 75% funded by the state, 25% funded by the city. We assist with financial assistance and make sure they understand what benefits and education benefits are available. Health care is one of the biggest challenges. If an individual is enrolled in healthcare through the Dept. of Veteran Affairs, eligibilities are established though a number of different things i.e.; years of service, metal of honor or Purple Heart recipient, economic factors or service connected disability. If they're not eligible for VA healthcare, the biggest issue is access to long term inpatient treatment.

Abigail Averbach: What are the major needs for veterans?

Edward O'Connor, Director of Veteran Services: Prescription costs, lack of access to managed care and long term inpatient behavioral health treatment services.

Review and discuss presentation on status of teen vaping:

Joshan Niroula, Public Health Prevention Specialist: Amongst middle school students, 83% reported never trying any nicotine products, 16% have tried nicotine products, and 5% have tried e-cigarettes. 3% of middle school students have reported they would still use nicotine products, if flavors were not available. High School data shows e-cigarette use has decreased 10% in 2017; State average is 41% National average is 42%. In terms of perception of harm of using e-cigarettes – 60% of high school students and 71% of middle school students stated that they thought it was moderate or a great risk to their health. MDPH has launched a youth vaping campaign in April, passing out posters and handouts. We have circulated them to schools and youth service organizations. We do compliance checks in all retail stores and smoke shops to make sure they are not selling to minors.

Review and discuss presentation on status of opioid epidemic and City's prevention and treatment efforts:

Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner of HHS: In Massachusetts overall there has been a 4% decrease in overdose mentality. Worcester had a 15.5 % increase. We are one of the highest in the Commonwealth. Working with schools and youth services to implement social and emotional learning and trauma informed care, that way all school staff and teachers have the ability to understand. The *Stigma Free Worcester* app has added a demonstration on how to use Narcan. It will also let you know the places in Worcester for treatment, housing and food. Briefed the BOH on

different ways HHS have helped with trainings, programs, treatment, reducing stigma and policy and advocacy.

Review and discuss proposed increase of funeral home license fee:

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: DPH issues Tobacco and Burial Permit Fees and Funeral Home licenses. These fees have not been raised since 2002. The Tobacco and Burial Permit Fee can be set administratively by the City Manager. As for the Funeral Home Fee, the BOH sets that fee. Asking the BOH to consider an increase the Funeral Home License fee from \$75.00 to \$100.00 and vote to advertise for a public hearing at our next meeting.

Motion to adjourn; Chareese Allen, second by Abigail Averbach

Adjourn: 7:58pm

Next Meeting -- June 24, 2019 at 6:30pm

Potential Future Meeting Topics:

Review the CHIP cross walk

Public Hearing – Proposal to increase Funeral Home License Fee

Review and discuss water safety

Review and discuss youth vaping data

Review and discuss May opioid overdose data