



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: March 25, 2020
RE: WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
START TIME: 6:30 PM
LOCATION: WEB EX CONFERENCE CALL

Welcome & Introductions:

Meeting was called to order at 6:40pm.

Members on call: Edith Claros, PhD, Chair, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair, Chareese Allen, Frances Anthes and David Fort WDPH Staff: Karyn Clark, Director of DPH, Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH and Michael Traynor, City Solicitor

Approval of the March 2, 2020 Meeting:

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of March 2, 2020 made by Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair, Second –David Fort– Approved

Approval of the March 25, 2020 Agenda:

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting agenda of March 25, 2020 made by Frances Anthes, Second – David Fort – Approved

Update on coronavirus (Covid-19):

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: The collaboration between the State, City and all medical providers have been amazing. Briefed the BOH how companies have been donating gloves, masks, etc. and lots of volunteers have been helping. As of now, there are 27 cases in Worcester, 1838 cases in the State and 129 cases in Worcester County. Less than half of the patients in the Commonwealth are in the over 60 age group. If you have symptoms of COVID19, it is recommended by the CDC that you self-quarantine for 14 days. Healthcare workers are required to have a test before going back to work. We are using 40% of our ICU capabilities and 30% of ventilator capabilities. 80% of people who get this virus, don't know they have it. 20% get symptoms. Half of those have very mild flu and cold symptoms (upper respiratory congestion, sneezing, coughing, headache and low grade fever). Half of the symptomatic patients are much more serious (high fever, difficulty breathing, and pneumonia symptoms) half end up in ICU and half die. Trying to reduce the spread by quarantine and social distancing.

Edith Claros, PhD, Chair: Do we have a particular place that is doing testing?



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Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: We have testing capabilities at both Med Centers and both Community Health Centers. There is a tent testing site at CVS, Shrewsbury, which is dedicated to testing first responders and healthcare providers.

Frances Anthes: Do we have enough PPE supplies to last?

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: Briefed the BOH how companies have been donating supplies.

David Fort: How many ICU beds and respirators do we have?

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: At UMass University Campus we have approximately 100 ICU beds available and UMass Memorial another 20 beds. We have ventilator capacity at every bed. Both UMass and St. Vincent have prepared step down units where extra ventilator patients would be cared for.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair: Is DPH doing contact tracing?

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: Worcester Public School Nurses have been helping with the COVID19 phone calls and emails. All information is being put into a tracking log. They will also assist our 3 Public Health Nurses with contact investigation.

Discussion on isolation & quarantine procedures:

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: Distributed was the procedures for issuing and enforcing orders for isolation and quarantine. This is to provide guidance to the WBOH. The travelers that the nurses are monitoring have been compliant. The nurses check in with the individual twice a day for their temperature and symptoms. If for some reason we have a non-compliant individual, we want to make sure we are ahead of it and understand what our authority through the BOH and Medical Director is to be able to issue enforcement orders for isolation and quarantine so that we can ensure that we are protecting the public's health.

Michael Traynor, City Solicitor: You should have someone isolate and quarantine at home but if it's not practical to quarantine at home, the BOH has authority through the general laws to quarantine elsewhere.

Discussion on emergency meeting criteria:

Discussion on BOH role/responsibility during public health emergency:

Michael Traynor, City Solicitor: An emergency meeting is sudden unexpected events that requires immediate action. In order to hold an emergency meeting, there must be some immediate action that the BOH needs to make. Under our ordinance, emergency situations are addressed by giving Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director, all the powers to act and issue orders and regulations in emergency situations.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair: It would be helpful for your guidance as how this BOH in this health emergency can maintain updated on a regular basis. In case there is a situation, what is described as a health crisis/emergency?

Michael Traynor, City Solicitor: If there had to be an order issued for isolation and quarantine, the BOH would have to convene and issue that order. If we know someone is violating the order to quarantine, Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director, is empowered to issue immediate orders.

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director: Any emergency ordinance that I would invoke, the BOH would be notified and if they choose to discuss, we would set up a meeting.

Michael Traynor, City Solicitor: The BOH would have to vote to ratify or revise an emergency regulation that is issued.

Motion to adjourn; David Fort, seconded by Chareese Allen

Adjourn: 8:10pm

Next Meeting -- April 13, 2020 at 6:30pm

Potential Future Meeting Topics:

Coronavirus update