



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

Matilde Castiel, MD  
Health & Human Services  
Commissioner

Karyn E. Clark  
Public Health  
Director

**DATE:** March 6, 2016  
**RE:** WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES  
**START TIME:** 6:30 P.M.  
**LOCATION:** WORCESTER DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
25 MEADE STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM 109  
WORCESTER, MA 01610

<p>1. Welcome &amp; Introductions</p>	<p>Meeting called to order 6:31 pm. Members present: David Fort, Chair, Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair, Abigail Averbach, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Joanne Calista. WDPH Staff: Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director, Karyn Clark, Director of Public Health, Alexis Travis, PhD, Chief of Community Health, Jackie Ewuoso, Public Health Prevention Specialist, Michele Williams, Principal Clerk</p>
<p>2. Approval of the January 9, 2017 Minutes</p>	<p>Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of January 9, 2017 made by Edith Claros, PhD. Second -Abigail Averbach. Approved.</p>
<p>3. Review and Act on Report from AIDS Project Worcester on Syringe Services</p>	<p>Martha Akstin, Director, Prevention and Screening: The Syringe Services Program started on 3/1/16. We have enrolled 768 unduplicated clients / 4,161 encounters. These are people who return for syringes, bleach kits, wound care kits, etc. Referred approximately 75 clients to a detox or rehabilitation program. Make them feel welcome - food, coffee and tea in our lobby. We talk with them about housing, and ask when they have last seen a Physician. We would like to invite members of the Board of Health to visit AIDS Project Worcester. We are open 8am - 5:30pm Monday - Thursday, 8am -</p>



5pm Friday, noon – 5pm on Saturday

Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair: Do you test for Hep C?

Martha Akstin, Director, Prevention and Screenings: I'm happy to report that we have a Phlebotomist on staff that can do testing for Hep C, HIV, Chlamydia and Gonorrhea.

Joanne Calista: How many syringes have been returned? Do you do rapid testing?

Martha Akstin: We have collected 19,497 syringes to date; this does not include the yellow boxes. Since July 2015 we have not done rapid testing.

Joanne Calista: Thank you for your work.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD: Is the information you collect prescribed?

Martha Akstin: No, they just want the numbers:  
Ages 20 – 24; 52 or 8%  
Ages 25 – 34; 292 or 45%  
Ages 35 – 44; 160 or 25%  
Ages 45 – 54; 92 or 14%  
Ages 55 – 64; 36 or 6%  
Ages over 65; 7 or 1%

David Fort, Chair: What ages are they getting hooked on heroin?

Martha Akstin: It's usually prescription pills that they start on between the ages of 16 – 21.

David Fort, Chair: Where are they coming from?

Martha Akstin: Privacy concerns - We do have information by zip code. I can get you that information. Possibly 90% are from Worcester.

David Fort, Chair: How do they seem when it comes to HIV infection?

Martha Akstin: It's a chronic disease. They are not worried about it. It's more of fatalism than a

4. Review and Act on Draft Regulation to Ensure Safe Access to Medical Marijuana Dispensaries.

fear.

Abigail Averbach: I strongly appreciate the training last year for the Naloxone kits.

Martha Akstin: In the last 6 months we enrolled 1,041 people in the Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution site and refilled 393 Naloxone kits. Approximately 98 of them were used to reverse an overdose in the city of Worcester.

Karyn Clark, Director DPH: Thank you Martha and Michelle. I appreciate all that you do. It's a very good program.

David Fort, Chair: Thank you for your work.

Karyn Clark, Director DPH: A Regulation to Ensure Safe Access to Medical Marijuana Dispensaries draft was distributed. Karyn went on to read the summary written by the Law Department.

Abigail Averbach: Can you clarify what you think about licensing medical and recreational marijuana and what's the thinking behind it.

Karyn Clark, Director DPH: Governor Baker extended recreational by 6 months to have more time to develop what state regulations will look like.

Abigail Averbach: Will we license the pharmacies?

Karyn Clark, Director, DPH: The State licenses pharmacies. Medical Marijuana dispensaries are not considered pharmacies.

Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair: Will multiple departments determine this?

Karyn Clark, Director, DPH: Division of Public Health, Dept. of Inspectional Services, Police Dept. and the Fire Dept. Each of these

<p>5. Review and Act on Draft Regulation to Promote Safe Access to Locally Grown Produce and Crops</p>	<p>departments has participated in the development of the local regulations before you.</p> <p>Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair: Will there be a cap on how many dispensaries?</p> <p>Karyn Clark, Director, DPH: I have not heard of a cap. Only have heard of 4 dispensaries that have Host Agreements.</p> <p>Jerry Gurwitz, MD: Since the BOH are the one's licensing, I need to think more carefully about this and try to understand their role. Think of a policy and how much time is involved.</p> <p>Karyn Clark, Director, DPH: We are proposing a review team. We would review the documentation, in advance as a team, and schedule the people to come in front of the Board. We want to make sure that these places are running smoothly.</p> <p>David Fort, Chair: I suggest that we read the draft. I'm concerned about the political part and time commitment. The DPH does a lot of the heavy lifting and would like us to manage this as a Board and stay within the Health Division.</p> <p>Karyn Clark, Director, DPH: This is new for everyone and I appreciate your feedback. Will bring questions and concerns back to appropriate departments for discussion.</p> <p>Karyn Clark, Director, DPH: There have been a number of people from the community that would like to be allowed to have an on-site sale of produce and crops through farm stands. A Promote Safe Access to Locally Grown Produce and Crops draft regulation was distributed. In 1991 Arnold Gurwitz, MD had set public health regulations which include the Keeping or Exhibition of Animals. Two asks: 1) delete the word "bees" from the old regulation which does not allow for beekeeping so that the newly revised urban ag ordinance will allow for bee keeping. 2) we would like to consider issuing farm stand permits. Also we would like to make</p>
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