



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: June 4, 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 6:39pm.

Members present: David Fort, Chair, Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Abigail

Averbach absent: Joanne Calista WDPH Staff: Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director, Alexis Travis,
Chief of Community Health and Michele Williams, Principal Clerk

Approval of the May 7, 2018 Minutes:

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of May 7, 2018 made by Jerry Gurwitz, MD
Second – Edith Claros, PhD – Approved

Review and act on discussion for Community Health Assessment (CHA) status update:

Alexis Travis, Chief of Community Health: The CHA for 2018 began with a small group meeting in September. We've continued the collaboration with UMass Memorial Health Care, Fallon Health and the WDPH. Not only representing Worcester, but the six alliance towns that are part of the Central Mass Regional Public Health Alliance. Worcester Regional CHA Oversight presentation was distributed. This is composed of the members of the WDPH, Fallon Health and UMass Memorial. We have an Advisory Committee which encompasses the Coalition for Healthy Greater Worcester, many different community stakeholder organizations and individuals. The purpose is for us to gain a better understanding of how the community is experiencing health in both challenges and strengths in our system so we can use that information to fill the gaps. We have been looking at social determinants of health, basic health needs, existing service system and the final piece will be to do asset mapping to figure out what programs that are already offered and what services are here, from that we'll be able to find out what is missing. There are three phases to CHA; 1) identify health needs, 2) engage key stakeholders, 3) develop community health needs assessment and implementation plan. The CHA will be released in August 2018. Poverty, lack of affordable housing, food access and limited access to transportation are the leading social determinants. The lack of services for mental health in the community and looking at the opioid epidemic has been a huge



behavioral health issue in the community. We have received 2,200 responses to the community survey.

David Fort, Chair: It would be helpful for representatives from the different communities to come in and do a presentation.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD: Regarding the oversight committee and the involvement of UMass Memorial and Fallon Health; are those entities supporting these activities financially? The BOH would like to hear from those entities about how this process has influenced them and what they might be doing in relation to the specific populations.

Alexis Travis, Chief of CH: The relationship with UMass Memorial, Fallon Health and WDPH really stands out as a model throughout the state of Massachusetts. We pull our resources together and do an assessment on shared priorities and work together to implement a plan that comes out of the assessment that we do.

Review and act on discussion for Central MA Mosquito Control Project:

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director: The City of Worcester has joined the Central MA Mosquito Control Project to provide additional education and preventative measures to mitigate mosquito breeding grounds. They have detected the Asian Tiger mosquito which has the capability of carrying the Zika virus. This particular mosquito is out during the daytime. The mosquito control inspectors do a lot more than just spraying; they drain standing water and recycle old tires (this is where the lava like to live). They use the most effective methods, techniques, equipment and products to control the mosquito population. We are going to have a campaign called “Fight the Bite” and will educate the schools.

David Fort, Chair: Is the Zika virus still a threat?

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director: For pregnant women, it can cause neurological damage to the unborn child. We encourage women that are pregnant, to try and avoid the risk of being exposed. Permethrin spray is better than using DEET.

Review and act on Worcester Board of Health work plan:

Alexis Travis, Chief of CH: Been meeting with Casey Burns, Director of Coalition for Healthy Greater Worcester and Karyn Clark, Director of PH to discuss what we are proposing as a work plan for FY 19. We looked at the status of the CHIP strategies; what is moving, what is complete and where there is opportunity to make the most impact. Alexis briefed the BOH members on the proposed FY 19 Policy Work Plan (distributed).

Review and act on fracked gas letter to Governor Baker:

T. Stephen Jones, MD: I am concerned about the fact that natural gas has carcinogens, radioactive elements i.e., radon, heavy metals, micro particles and can also explode. We’re asking that you consider identifying the concerns of the potential health risks as a reason to write to the Governor and say “we need a comprehensive health impact assessment of natural gas infrastructure”. 67 towns/cities have signed on to a group letter or written their own letter to Governor Baker about the health risks of natural gas. Distributed was a map of gas leaks in Worcester. Also distributed was a cross-sectional study of the association between ventilation of gas stoves and chronic respiratory illness in children. The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) recognizes the potential

impact on human health associated with natural gas infrastructure. The MMS advocate to appropriate agencies and the Massachusetts state legislature to require ongoing independent Comprehensive health Impact Assessments to assess the human health risks of all existing and proposed new or expanded natural gas infrastructure in Massachusetts.

Motion to adjourn; Edith Claros, PhD. Vice Chair, Second by Abigail Averbach

Adjourn: 7:48pm

Next Meeting

July 9, 2018 at 6:30pm