



**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:** February 3, 2020  
**RE:** WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING / HEARING 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, Chareese Allen, David Fort and Frances Anthes WDPH Staff: Karyn Clark, Director of DPH, Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH, Alissa Errede, Chief, Office of Medical Preparedness, Cassandra Andersen, Chief of Community Health and Patricia Bruchmann, Chief Public Health Nurse, City of Worcester and the Alliance

Public Hearing opens at 6:30pm

Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair – Reads information to the attendees on the purpose of the hearing and rules relating to 2 minute testimony, and stating name and residence

Scott Regan, ESQ, Represents Good Chemistry - Seeking uniform hours of operation for all of its operational purposes. Patients should have an equal opportunity to buy at the same hours as recreational facilities. Medical dispensaries currently lose the opportunity to treat patients for several hours whereas adult use are allowed to remain open.

Kyle Moon, Manager, Summit Lounge - We have medical patient members that come into our club and complain about not being able to purchase after 7pm, when the adult use is open till 11pm. Seems to be a clear contradiction of regulations that I think would benefit the medical patient and the consumer to clear up the discrepancy and allow them access to the medicine they need.

Nichole Snow, Executive Director, MPAA – I'm also on the Cannabis Advisory Board. We are a statewide organization. We have patients who need safe access to their medication. Would like hours of operation to be the same as adult use.

**Edith Claros, PhD, Chair, made a motion to close the hearing. This was seconded by David Fort. The motion passed unanimously.**

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**Edith Claros, PhD, Chair, made a motion to vote on amendment to the Regulations to Ensure Safe Access to Medical Marijuana Dispensaries, adopted June 5, 2017 and effective August 1, 2017, subsection (e) (15), to extend the hours of operation to 11:00 pm daily and to limit sales before 10:00 am on Sunday at our next BOH meeting on March 2, 2020. This was seconded by Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Approval of the January 6, 2020 Meeting:**

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of January 6, 2020 made by David Fort, Second – Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair – Approved

**Approval of the February 3, 2020 Agenda:**

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting agenda of February 3, 2020 made by Frances Anthes, Second – Chareese Allen – Approved

**Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) updates:**

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: Our Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans are on a continuing cycle. Our current CHIP covers 2016 – 2020. There was a CHA that we worked on with Fallon, UMass Memorial and Coalition for Healthy Greater Worcester that we unveiled in October 2018. The information that comes out of that around priority health conditions and specific populations will help inform what our next CHIP will look like, which is coming out probably by the end of this year.

Cassandra Andersen, Chief of Community Health: We are in the process of planning for our next CHIP. We have a planning group that's meeting every month and we are working on looking at the data from the last CHA and try to see a cross of different data points. Pulling out all those pieces with a planning committee, we'll be taking that to the community and having some conversations with people around what did that data tell us and what we need to do in the next iteration of our next CHIP. The tremendous number of strategies and objectives that are in the current CHIP, we've done well at achieving many of them. Briefed the BOH on the strategies and objectives on the 2018 Annual CHIP Report (distributed). A new workgroup has formed as part of the Coalition, which works specifically on advancing these areas of the CHIP. The Coalition had received funding to bring in a consultant to help facilitate meetings and move the process forward. We have held two trainings in the last six months around health equity, racism, trauma and resiliency within the community. We saw a decrease in the number of staff at UMass Memorial Healthcare that are interpreters employed at the site. We are doing well around the mental health collaborative work. The Mayor has established a Mental Health Task Force, which has merged with the Coalition. The Shine Initiative has reached over 30,000 youths so far with a campaign around mental health and reducing stigma in youth to go and talk to someone about their mental health.

David Fort: I see that the increase on the capacity of leader's throughout the region to engage in anti-racism work has plateaued. Why do you think it has plateaued and how can we get more leaders to take on this kind of work?

Cassandra Andersen, Chief of Community Health: I think we will see in the 2019 report that we've increased the numbers because of the changes that we made.

Chareese Allen: I'm noticing that from 2016 – 2018 no changes have been made with cultural responsiveness (6.1)

Cassandra Andersen, Chief of Community Health: As part of the cultural responsiveness group, we have not been able to find agencies that will sign onto this adoption. That would be something that we would like to have support around.

**Communicable Disease Report:**

Patricia Bruchmann, Chief Public Health Nurse, City of Worcester and the Alliance: Briefed the BOH on the 2019 Communicable Disease Surveillance Report (distributed). We have investigated 1,781 reports of different cases of communicable diseases. We have had less than 600 reports of the flu in Worcester for 2019. Hepatitis A has decreased, administered over 550 doses of vaccine and are continuing to vaccinate. We have had a recent conference call with MDPH, statewide the outbreak continues however to a lesser degree. Currently there is more of an outbreak of Hepatitis A in the Hamden County area and as such we are continuing immunization efforts here in Worcester County because we have a mobile population. There is an uptick in HIV over the past couple of years, individuals have been contacted and given the proper care.

Frances Anthes: Seems to me that you had a big push for flu vaccine in the last year. Just wondered if there was an impact on that.

Patricia Bruchmann, Chief Public Health Nurse, City of Worcester and the Alliance: We have had increased numbers of flu vaccines given in the schools. Plus much better access at the pharmacies, now that they are able to vaccinate children 9 years old and above. Flu vaccine is for everyone. You can still get a flu vaccine, we have not peaked for the season.

**Coronavirus Update:**

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: This virus is in the family of SARS and MERS which were two viruses that spread through Asia in the late aught and caused a lot of concern. Unfortunately this “cousin” of those viruses seems to be more easily spread. Spread by respiratory droplet mode, produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It has effected 17,000 people around the world of which 16,000 are in China. There has been 11 cases reported, 1 in Boston. CDC has set up special screening procedures for all flights that are coming from China. Usually have mild symptoms of fever, cough and upper respiratory symptoms. CDC recommends that if you have gone go China within the past 2 weeks, you need to be self-quarantined (at home) for at least 2 weeks. Ways to protect yourself are: wash your hands, cover your cough or sneeze, stay home if not feeling well, clean and disinfect touched surfaces and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Motion to adjourn; Frances Anthes, seconded by Chareese Allen

**Adjourn:** 7:45pm

**Next Meeting -- March 2, 2020 at 6:30pm**

**Potential Future Meeting Topics:**

Vote on amendment for hours of operation for medical vs. recreational dispensaries

Hot Spots for OD off police report (invite facilities)

UMass – interpreters off CHIP report

Coronavirus update