



**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:** January 9, 2017  
**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>2. Approval of the November 14, 2016 Minutes</p> <p>3. Medical Marijuana Draft Regulations - Discussion</p>	<p>Meeting called to order 6:35 pm. Members present: Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair, Abigail Averbach, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Joanne Calista, David Fort, Chairman. WDPH Staff: Alexis Travis, Megan DeNubila, Karyn Clark, Zach Dyer, Michael Hirsh, MD, Nikki Nixon, Colleen Bolen,</p> <p>Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of November 14, 2016 made by Dr. Jerry Gurwitz. Second –Abigail Averbach. Approved.</p> <p>Karyn Clark: There have been brief conversations over the past year, been working with different city departments to draft regulations for board’s consideration. They are similar to Boston but tailored more to Worcester.</p> <p>We are close to having the draft completed. Recommend the board have that on the agenda for the February meeting, any questions can be answered and a public hearing can be scheduled. At this point, four entities have received a letter of non-opposition from the City.</p> <p>Jerry Gurwitz, MD: Is it the expectation that all</p>
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regulations of medical marijuana are under the purview of the board?

Karyn Clark: Yes, it would be under BOH purview or the commissioner and/or her designee. Once we get to the draft, the board can see what makes the most sense in terms of language.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD: Are any other communities doing this in conjunction with the state?

Karyn Clark: Many of our Alliance communities will be doing the same and looking to Worcester. Have been looking at Boston. And also Colorado. Health and code are not together so will need to create a system. We envision an application review team, Public Health, Inspectional Services, the Police Department, and the Fire Department. We will have comprehensive model regulations that many others will look to.

Abigail Averbach: Will this look like what a pharmacy does or more like what a liquor store does?

Karyn Clark: City does not regulate pharmacies but does regulate alcohol.

Abigail Averbach: Where do people go now if they have a card?

Dr. Hirsh: There are some places around the state including Boston.

Joanne Calista: My concern around a delay would be those who need it for medical conditions, but you and your team have done a lot of in depth work on this.

Edith Claros, PhD: Are there any other timelines for the state or for Worcester? For example I heard about delay.

Karyn Clark: The delay was for recreational marijuana. Once the medical marijuana facilities received the letter of non-opposition they were able to move forward in the process with the

<p>4. Recreational Marijuana – Discussion</p>	<p>state - no delay being created around Worcester drafting regulations.</p> <p>David Fort: How does Governor Baker’s signing the delay for the recreational marijuana effect things?</p> <p>Karyn Clark: The state will be creating a Cannabis Commission to deal with recreational marijuana commission – Governor Baker is giving them 6 additional months to create regulations.</p> <p>Abigail Averbach: As a board we were not in favor of this, but want to stay informed.</p>
<p>5. Racism and Discrimination Statement – Discussion</p>	<p>David Fort: We can move on to the next item which is the Racism and Discrimination statement.</p> <p>Megan DeNubila: Works with the Worcester Partnership for Racial and Ethnic Health Equity, which is the lead group around the priority of Racism and Discrimination. One of the strategies in the CHIP (CHIP) is to pull together common/shared language around this topic so that everyone is on the same page. Staff will bring this forward to the BOH who can also use this language, which would help to make it a very powerful statement.</p> <p>Zach Dyer: Nikki Nixon, our epidemiologist, is charged with writing a health disparities addendum to the Community Health Assessment (CHA), and this is very open right now. I was hoping Nikki could give an update and solicit information from board as to what would they like to see.</p> <p>Nikki Nixon: I have gathered some baseline data from different sources, mostly demographics. There are clear disparities.</p> <p>Dr. Hirsh: NHANES which came to Worcester over the summer collected a lot of data.</p> <p>Karyn Clark: In the CHIP the community identified this as an overarching concern. When</p>

we included institutional racism in the original CHIP, took months of meetings to convince people that this was not individual but institutional. Proud of Worcester that we have this partnership and community that is willing to bring this issue to light.

Joanne Calista: This is important point.

Abigail Averbach: Wasn't there a lot of data from the CHA that could help to inform this?

Zach Dyer: There was a lot of data pulled for the CHA but not all included in the report because it would have made it too long. But much of the work would just be going back and stratifying by race. The challenge would be containing the length of the report and being intentional in asking what we really need to be looking at.

Joanne Calista: Would like to see behavioral health indicators, premature death etc.

Karyn Clark: It is really encouraging what the city has done to address health equity and social justice, especially the city manager and the mayor. City Manager brought on new chief diversity officer, Dr. Carter, who has been great. She is looking at hiring practices and being equitable, how we post jobs, and the interview process. This is refreshing and she is very accessible.

David Fort: There is a history of health issues being side tracked with politics. There are many people on city council and in the manager's office that their actions show that they can get things done. It is great that we have a whole section on racism and discrimination, because when things get imbedded they tend to get lost. I also want to see information on access to care; I want to see it over the last five years with the affordable care act, if things changed. I would like to see three things, substance use (treatment), children in schools, (being active), if kids aren't doing anything what are they doing (gangs, violence etc.).

Karyn Clark: That is helpful; we can take a deeper look at that with the data. Helpful to have youth office give a presentation. A lot is being done, and the city manager is championing the youth agenda, especially with Recreation Worcester, youth development and opportunities. This program exists so that kids have opportunities and don't have involvement in violence etc.

Physical activity, arts and academics are the three areas. This program started with the Wheels to Water program. Would cover the second and third bullet. As far as substance use, that would be Cassandra and Nikki.

David Fort: Had a conversation with a young man that I used to coach. Asked how these people were doing and he said that person got murdered in 2015. Teammates got arrested. This was in Worcester, these kids need extracurricular activities.

Karyn Clark: There is a Worcester Youth Violence Initiative, Raquel Castro-Corazzini would be able to talk about both pieces. Much of this connects back to the CHIP.

Edith Claros, PhD: We talked about following up with items in the CHIP, addressing substance use and one of the things was the needle exchange and has been almost a year. Is there additional information on this project?

Karyn: December 2015 BOH voted to allow for a needle exchange program in the City, AIDS Project Worcester was awarded a grant by MDPH in March 2016. Could get Michelle Smith to come present.

Abigail Averbach: Does racism and discrimination include LGBTQ?

Zach Dyer: This has been an ongoing conversation. Mostly centered in race but work going on around LGBTQ issues and something we are addressing.

<p>6. 2016 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Substance Use – Discussion</p>	<p>Dr. Alexis Travis: There is a lot of intersectionality in the community we serve, and we want to make sure we are addressing the whole person.</p> <p>Karyn Clark: Suggest tabling this item because of a staff person not being able to attend tonight’s meeting who can speak best to this. I can share that we have opioid overdose prevention grant (MOAPC). There are a number of these clusters throughout commonwealth, and we were recently notified that we are receiving and additional \$70K to address things in the work plan. We will be doing more with the sheriff’s office, re-entry, schools etc.</p> <p>We appreciate that the state has awarded the funding to the local level. Dr. Castiel really champions the work. District Attorney’s panel on opioid use for parents tonight, and the city manager is there to present. Things like sports injuries and medicine in the cabinet are being addressed.</p>
<p>7. Topics for Next Meeting</p>	<p>Abigail Averbach: I know you share the opioid overdose stats with us, know that a lot of work has been done.</p> <p>Update on data on health disparities (Nikki) – March Meeting</p> <p>Medical Marijuana draft – February Meeting Syringe services update – February Meeting</p>
<p>8. Next Meeting Date</p>	<p>David Fort: We may have to double up meetings to get through some of the info.</p> <p>Next meeting → February 6<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 - 8</p> <p>Hold date for public hearing → March 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:30PM.</p> <p>March meeting → March 6<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 – 8PM.</p>
<p>9. Adjourn</p>	<p>7:40PM. Motion to adjourn; Joanne Calista, Second Edith Claros, PhD.</p>