

March 24, 2021 Board of Health Meeting
Meeting held via WebEx Events

The Board of Health convened in open session at 5:15 pm
The meeting was called to order by Mery Price

Board Members Present Roll Call:

Don Bodeau
Mery Price
True Vue
Mark Kaeding
Terry Miskulin
Martha Nieman
Jennifer Eddy
Emily Berge

Staff Members Present:

Lieske Giese
Matt Steinback
Marisa Stanley
Gina Holt (recorder)

Order of Agenda Request to pull items from Consent Agenda

- None Requested

Public Comment:

- None Received

COVID-19 Update

- Case numbers reviewed: There have been 11,187 positive COVID-19 cases and 105 deaths in Eau Claire County. The spread of COVID-19 has slowed significantly. We continue to watch the variant strains and their impact.
- Vaccination discussion:
 - 28.5 % of Eau Claire County residents have received their first vaccine.
 - 20% of the Eau Claire County population are not eligible to receive vaccination due to age. (under 16)
 - 77% of Eau Claire County population in the age range of 65+ have received vaccination.
 - This week vaccination opened to anyone 16 or older with certain health conditions.
 - There is a strong interest that on or before May 1st everyone be eligible to be vaccinated.
 - Our goal is to have 75-80% of the population in Eau Claire County vaccinated.
 - Targeted mobile vaccination clinics continue to be a priority. (jail, Sojourner house, nursing homes, rural communities, etc.)
 - The health department will be working on managing and staffing the FEMA vaccination site at Zorn Arena. This site will operate Tuesday -Saturday's 11am-7pm. The state is committed to providing vaccine to this location. A lot of partners, including UWEC, will be coming together to make this happen.
 - The State registration system is being implemented as a way to schedule vaccination times for the FEMA clinic. <https://vaccinate.wi.gov/en-US/>
 - We continue to focus on partnering with those vulnerable populations to provide vaccinations.
- Policy at the State level:

- The federal government released a report for schools that indicated the physical distance parameter be 3ft instead of 6ft. This has engaged a lot of conversations at the state and local level. A close contact is still considered to be a person within 6ft for ten minutes or more.
- We continue to discuss and walk through what happens with gatherings and public spaces.
- We continue to track where disease spread is taking place when mitigation strategies are not followed.
- Question/Answer from the Board:
 - Q: How do you differentiate between the variants? A: This happens at the State Lab of Hygiene and other specific labs. The sample gets looked at in more detail to see what the strain is. This does not happen on every sample received.
 - Q: As people are vaccinated is outcome being tracked? A: This data is collected and will give a sense of how much vaccination is working. CDC feedback is that it is safer when you are vaccinated, and it is possible to gather in small gatherings when all have been vaccinated. If symptomatic you still need to be tested even after vaccination.
 - Q: Have there been any people who have been vaccinated turning up positive? A: There have been examples of this happening and we are enhancing surveillance and trying to do additional testing when we hear about these situations.
 - Q: Is there follow up being done regarding the confusion that people think they need health insurance to receive the vaccine? A: The vaccine is provided free of charge. Health care providers have the ability to bill private health insurance an administrative charge, but there should not be out-of-pocket expenses for the patient related to receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. There will be no administrative charge and clients will not be asked provide health insurance information at the FEMA site. You do not need to be insured to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Follow up is happening with all vaccinators.
 - Q: Are the recovery dollars coming from the federal level causing any challenges? A: The federal dollars are coming into the City and County of Eau Claire, Altoona, as well as other municipalities. The health department continues to have conversations with those entities and discuss the costs related to the pandemic that the health department is facing.
 - Q: Does current State legislation have any effect on the funding? A: It appears that some of the funding may be affected by the proposed legislation.
 - Q: How is the department reaching out to offer vaccine to vulnerable populations? A: We have an ongoing vulnerable populations group that meets regularly. This group applied for funding to help with this with such things as providing transportation, and mobile clinics.
 - Q: With the populations that have barriers are efforts being made to give Johnson and Johnson single dose instead of the multi dose options? A: We were fortunate to get a large amount of Johnson and Johnson, and this has helped tremendously for those types of situations. We did hear that the state has prioritized local health departments to receive Johnson and Johnson.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of minutes from February 24, 2021 meeting
- b. Approval of Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention funding
- c. Approval of Get Yourself Tested grant funding

Motion to approve Consent Agenda: Terry Miskulin

2nd Motion: Martha Nieman

Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

Business Item

- a. Review and receive COVID-19 Public Health Expectations
 - This is the same document that we have been operating under from January 2021.
 - We are moving from the place where we had a lot of cases to a spot that we are having fewer. We think that a basic expectations document continues to remain important. The public spaces and gathering sections we are looking at providing mirror some of the wording to that of Minnesota. If numbers remain low, we expect to move forward being able to increase occupancy and size limit of gatherings. Our current practice for those events is being worked on in active conversations for such things as Music in the Park, Country Jam, etc. We are hoping to have the recommendations updated next week.

Motion to review and receive COVID-19 Public Health Expectations as presented by Health Department staff: Jennifer Eddy
2nd Motion: Don Bodeau
Motion Carried: Yes (unanimous vote)

- b. Approval of Public Health Week Proclamation
 - This a yearly event that recognizes the work being done in Public Health.
 - This is a great time to celebrate all the community partners doing public health work.

Motion to approve Public Health Week Proclamation as presented by Health Department Staff: Martha Nieman
2nd Motion: Emily Berge

- c. Ground Water Advisory Committee Board of Health member reappointment
 - Jennifer Eddy has served on the Ground Water Advisory committee for three years and is recognized for her service.
 - The meetings are held every two to three months at 4pm. There is not a fixed date and time, it is flexible.
 - The health department serves as technical advisors to the committee.
 - Board members are going to take some time to think about the appointment and it will be brought back for discussion at the April BOH meeting.

Motion to appoint a board of health member to the Ground Water Advisory Committee: Jennifer Eddy
2nd Motion: Terry Miskulin

Emily Berge Motion to postpone this agenda item until the April 28th Board of Health Meeting:
2nd Motion: Jennifer Eddy
Motion Carried: This motion was tabled in order for board members to think about and the topic will be brought back to the board at the April meeting.

Other policy and informational items from staff for the Board

- a. Director/Health Officer Report

- Staffing update: We are re-recruiting for a Communicable Disease Management position, a federal funded two-year position related to COVID, and a Communicable Disease Specialist.
 - Board member expressed that at the last county board meeting there was a lot of discussion regarding Seven-Mile Creek and water quality.
- b. Correspondence/Media
- No discussion
- c. Service Recognition/Retirement
- Denise Wirth, Community Health Promotion Division Manager-32 years

Board member informational items

- a. Communicable Disease taskforce update-the group met for the first time to get acquainted and to lay out some groundwork. The upcoming meetings will go into more detail around purpose, input, and suggestions. Meetings will be taking place over the next several months. Dr. Bodeau from the Board of Health and Marissa Stanley from the Health Departments are members.
- b. Public Health Policy/Advocacy update
- WI Legislative update – LRB 0792 document reviewed and discussed. Thoughts were shared on LRB 0792 by Lieske with local representatives.
 - State Budget discussion: Joint finance committee has announced listening sessions. These will be held in person as well as virtual. Every year a member from the local health department participates in the listening sessions.
 - WPHA/WAHLDAB overview was reviewed. As more finalized advocacy pieces and talking points come forward around the state budget, they will be shared with board members. The state is on the bottom when it comes to funding public health.
 - Federal update-American Rescue plan act discussion
- c. Board Evaluation – A board evaluation survey will be sent out prior to the April meeting. Merrey Price will email last years evaluation for feedback to board members to get feedback on any additional questions/changes.

Requests from Board members for future agenda items to be given consideration

- a. Health disparities (the county is moving forward on a self-evaluation it would be nice to have a report on what the health department is working on)
- b. Discussion on what items have been on the wayside due to COVID.

Next scheduled BOH meeting is April 28, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.

Merrey Price adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.