



**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Thursday, April 14, 2011**

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors (“Board”) of the Boston Public Health Commission (“Commission”) was held on Thursday, April 14, 2011 in the Hayes Conference Room at the offices of the Boston Public Health Commission, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118.

**Board Members Present:**

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair  
Harold Cox  
Celia Wcislo  
Ruth Ellen Fitch, JD  
Joseph Betancourt, MD, MPH

**Board Members Absent:**

Jack Cradock  
Kathleen Walsh

**Also Present Were:**

Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd, John Townsend, Nakisha Skinner, Maia Brodyfield, Chuck Gagnon, James Hooley, Jeanne Cannata, Ann Scales, Gerry Thomas, Margaret Reid, Jim Green, Lisa Conley, Tim Harrington, PJ McCann, Beth L’Heureux, Anne McHugh

**Visitors:**

Scott Mason, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers; Coleen Hanlon, UMass Boston; Nicole Freedman, Boston Bikes; James Kennedy, City of Boston; Bill Hodges

**Proceedings:**

***Chairwoman’s Comments***

*Paula Johnson, MD, MPH*

- The meeting was called to order at 4:07 P.M. The minutes of the board meeting held March 10, 2011 were approved.

## ***Executive Director's Report***

Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd

- A moment of silence was held for the passing of Ms. Betty Holt, the Commission's former Director of Adolescent Wellness. To honor Ms. Holt's dedication to the health of the City of Boston, the Commission's Lifetime Achievement Award will be renamed the Betty Holt Award.
- The Mayor recently signed an executive order prohibiting the sale of sugar sweetened beverages (SSB) in government and municipal buildings in the city of Boston. A time period of six months will allow for the process of phasing the SSBs out of vending machines and vendor contracts. Many hospitals and community health centers in Boston are also following this new beverage order voluntarily. Dr. Ferrer noted that while some discontent has been expressed, there has also been a great deal of support for the policy.
- The NeighborCare Initiative (NeighborCare) was launched. NeighborCare encourages Boston residents to utilize community health centers more extensively and appropriately. Initial focus will be on providing a unified message among health providers to the public. NeighborCare is looking for support from hospitals and insurance companies in the hopes of learning from their past experiences. Board Member Fitch expressed approval of this spirit of cooperation. Board Member Wcislo requested that materials related to the Initiative be provided.
- Dr. Ferrer recently traveled to Washington D.C. with the Mayor to attend the Department of Justice (DOJ) Youth Violence Prevention Forum. The DOJ is attempting to create a federal model of a youth violence prevention program. The forum ties in with a funding opportunity for the Commission's Defending Childhood Initiative through the DOJ. Board Member Fitch expressed a desire for the board to be kept informed on the Defending Childhood grant. Dr. Ferrer stated that Catherine Fine, Director of the Division of Violence Prevention, and Stephanie Doyle, Project Manager, will come before the board at the next meeting to provide more information on this grant. Board Member Fitch suggested community meetings be held to make sure a wider audience knows about the grant and the Defending Childhood Initiative.
- Dr. Ferrer announced to the board that Jeanne Cannata has accepted the position of Chief Information Officer.

## ***Legislative Priorities: Update***

Lisa Conley, Director, Intergovernmental Relations

- Ms. Conley introduced PJ McCann and noted Aliza Wasserman as Policy Analysts for Intergovernmental Relations.
- During the 2009-2010 session, many forms of legislation were passed, such as the Food Policy Council, a Conflict Resolution Curriculum, and the reformation of the Criminal Offender Record Information Law. This session's legislative priorities are influenced by the Commission's overarching goals, and include diversion to treatment for law-breakers who are substance abuse addicts, promotion of complete health education in schools, creation of vouchers for permanent housing through Homeless Services, breastfeeding promotion in hospitals, and a bill to eliminate legal obstacles relative to data sharing. Chairwoman Johnson suggested keeping track of how many mothers are still breastfeeding one month after the birth. Ms. Conley stated that support is available to mothers who need it, and that research indicates that a supportive health care provider can be helpful. Chairwoman Johnson asked if the state provides breast pumps and materials, and whether they are part of medical benefits.

Gerry Thomas, Acting Director, Community Initiatives, noted Mass Health has the best benefits regarding this issue, while other plans also provide coverage.

- Dr. Ferrer noted that if the board members feel strongly about one of the bills, they are welcome to testify at the public hearing when scheduled. Board Member Wcislo requested that language regarding this testimony be sent to her legal department.
- The largest FY12 State budget cuts were in the area of substance abuse with \$5.5 million cut. The Commission is hopeful this funding will be restored. Smaller cuts were made to areas such as smoking prevention and cessation. Ms. Conley noted the elimination of Commonwealth Care Bridge (Bridge), but added the possibility of it being moved to safety net funding. Bridge provides insurance coverage for legal immigrants. Board Member Wcislo noted that Bridge covers about 20,000 people.
- It was noted that cuts could be expected for the area's health education services. Chairwoman Johnson inquired as to what these services are, Ms. Conley explained that the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is a fund that comes to UMass and is dispersed to several health education centers in the area, that focus on youth summer workforce training, including Boston.
- Board Member Cox asked about the continuing resolution in terms of this year's funding and what it means in terms of programs cut. Ms. Conley stated that cuts and contract adjustments can be expected depending on where the specific cuts are made, since it is up to each agency's discretion. Cuts can be expected to increase for the following fiscal year as well.
- Board Member Wcislo requested a copy of the presentation and more information regarding the Commission's state legislative priorities.
- Board Member Betancourt asked if the Commission's lobbyist in Washington works with other organizations. Ms. Conley stated that the lobbyist does work with other cities, but would be happy to meet with any of the board members if they happened to be in Washington.

### ***Boston Bikes: An Overview of Bicycling Initiatives***

Anne McHugh, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Division

Nicole Freedman, Director, Boston Bikes

- Ms. McHugh introduced Ms. Freedman as the Director of Boston Bikes and Olympian athlete. In 2007, Mayor Menino hired Ms. Freedman to improve the bicycling situation in Boston. At that time Boston had been known as the worst biking city in the world. Since 2007 bicycling in the city has increased by 122%, growing at a rate that is 3 times the national average and rating Boston as a future best biking city.
- Over the past three years 35 miles have been added to the biking network, with a prospective twenty to be added this year. Board Member Wcislo noted that infrastructure for biking was built successfully using converted train tracks in Cambridge.
- The Boston Bike Share will launch this year, bringing over 600 bikes and 60 rental stations into the city for the use of its residents and visitors. Ms. Freedman used a map to detail the locations of rental stations, where bicycles can both be rented, and returned throughout the city. Board Member Wcislo asked why rental locations were missing in communities of color. Ms. Freedman responded that the Bike Share will not be expanding too far outside of the city right away, as the program requires densely populated areas.
- Board Member Betancourt asked about helmet use and availability. Ms. Freedman responded that they are working on a program that will provide free or discounted helmets in return for watching a bicycling safety video. Dr. Ferrer also noted that free helmets will most likely be provided to individuals with a subsidized Bike Share membership. Chairwoman Johnson suggested that a safety

video be made available for motorists as well to provide information relative to rules for driving with bicyclists on the street.

- Chairwoman Johnson asked if the Boston Bikes website tells where donations can be sent. Ms. Freedman confirmed that it does. Board Member Wcislo noted the strong positive impact bicycle donations have on the children who receive them.

### ***City of Boston Pension System***

James Kennedy, Executive Assistant, Office of Budget Management

- The State Board Retirement System (SBRS) is governed by MGL Chapter 32. Pension appropriation for each employee is determined by the total salary of the employee divided by the total salaries of all employees and multiplied by the SBRS appropriation.
- Massachusetts is a “defined benefit” system, meaning retirement benefits are based on a combination of years of service and age, and risk lies with the employer. Also, employee contribution rates vary by date of hire, and new employees pay a higher rate. Massachusetts State employees also do not participate in Social Security.
- Since 1990 the Commission has been using “normal cost”. This is when an actuary applies long term assumptions, such as salary growth and investment return, and decides how much money needs to be put aside for funding in the future. Currently payment is going towards a refund from previous years when the pension system was on a pay-as-you-go basis resulting in a lack of funded liability. Board Member Wcislo noted that at some point paying into the refund ends and that the pension is \$9,000 for unfunded employees. Mr. Kennedy confirmed this.
- Board Member Betancourt noted that it is impressive the Commission has been able to maintain the pension fund despite fluctuations in the economy.

### ***Continuum of Care for Boston’s Homeless: An Overview***

Jim Greene, Director, Emergency Shelter Commission

- The key findings from the annual homeless census were made available to the public. Currently these include a total of 7,278 homeless in Boston, equal to almost 1.4% of the population and the highest number of homeless adults in three years. Board Member Wcislo noted that this is partially resulting from nearby communities losing shelters. Also, a number of beds are taken by individuals in re-entry programs, as shelters are “the paths of least resistance” for these individuals.
- Board Member Fitch inquired about the difference between regular shelter beds and emergency shelter beds. Mr. Green responded that emergency beds are for homeless individuals who come to the shelter looking to stay for one night. Beth Grand L’Heureux, Co-Director, Homeless Services, noted that each day beds are provided on a first come first serve basis and efforts are made to find housing for long term clients, who make up an average of 50% of the population in shelters. Board Member Fitch noted that the Dimock Center provides shelter on the campus and is funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) through the rapid re-housing program. Board Member Fitch asked about funding for the Homeless Services programs. Ms. Grand L’Heureux responded that funding comes from both DHCD and the City of Boston.
- There has been a rise in the percentage of level 3 Sex offenders in the shelters. Dr. Ferrer noted that this is an unfair burden on the shelters as they are expected to find these individuals jobs when, after housing these individuals for a long period of time, prior facilities did not do so. Chairwoman Johnson asked if this issue has been discussed with the State. Mr. Greene acknowledged that there had been a

high level meeting with the Undersecretary from the Office of Public Safety, the Boston Police Commissioner, and others. Ms. Grand-L'Heureux noted that everyone at the meeting recognized that this is a higher level issue. Chairwoman Johnson noted that as we advocated restoring cuts in the past, the perception had been that we weren't getting people into housing, so the shelter budget needed to go elsewhere. These cuts were eventually restored, however it's clear that this is a state issue as well as a city issue.

- Homeless Services has identified 35 high users of Boston Medical Center services. Work is being done to provide resources for stabilization. Of the 35 high users, 19 have been engaged and 9 have been housed. Ms. Grand L'Heureux stated that when there is more information regarding this, Homeless Services will provide an update for the board.

### ***Adjournment***

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 P.M.

### **Submitted By:**

---

**Jamie L. Martin, Secretary**