

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 11, 2008

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair
Hortensia Amaro, PhD., Vice Chair
Celia Wcislo, Harold Cox, Ruth
Ellen Fitch, Jack Cradock

Board Members Absent:

Elaine Ullian

Administration & Staff Present:

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed,
Nancy Norman, MD, MPH
John Townsend, Maia BrodyField, Pam
Jones, Nakisha Skinner, Anh Bungcayao,
Sharyn Imonti, Odessa Ortiz, Mary Ellen
Yankosky, Ann Scales, Jan Quiram, Devin
Larkin, Nikysha Harding, Dr. Snehal Shah,
Gerry Thomas, Susan Harrington, Rita
Nieves, Roger Swartz, Margaret Reid,
Samatha Panati, Maddie Ribble, Walter
Michalik, Rich Serino, Meghan Patterson,
Angela Camille Smauldon, Julie Webster,
Rob Abromson

Guests:

Patrick Huntington, Pooja Bachani, Sacha
Pfeiffer, Stephen Helfer, Greg St. Martin,
Michelle McGee, DJ Wilson, Alisha Bloom,
Sean Kelly, Tim Devlin, Christine
McGonville,

Dr. Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:08 PM on Thursday, December 11, 2008.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Johnson MD, MPH, Chair, invited a motion to accept the November minutes. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Final Consideration of Proposed Tobacco Regulation and Amendment – Nakisha Skinner

Nakisha Skinner, General Counsel, gave a brief presentation regarding the general breakdown of the comments received to the proposed tobacco regulation and amendment. Atty. Skinner stated that 298 written and oral comments were received in total and that there were favorable responses from different representatives. In total there were 235 unfavorable and 53 favorable responses and the majority of opposition came from tobacco trade associations.

Atty. Skinner reported that there are proven adverse health effects from environmental tobacco smoke and that 1 out of every 5 adult Massachusetts residents is a smoker. Atty. Skinner spoke regarding the proposed amendment that smoking bars currently in operation be permitted to operate for 10 years. Upon expiration of the initial 10- year period, smoking bars may petition for an additional 10 years and the petition shall be subject to review and approval by the Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission.

Atty. Skinner stated that the new regulation would restrict the sale of tobacco products in health care institutions, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, health centers and educational institutions in the City of Boston. The new regulation also restricts the sale of blunt wraps from all retail establishments or entities in the City of Boston. The sales restrictions are effective in 60 days.

Board Member Cox stated that he could appreciate giving smoking bars ten years to close, but asked for more clarification. Atty. Skinner responded that after the initial ten-year period any smoking bar seeking an extension would have to request it through a formal petition process.

Board Member Fitch also asked for clarification in regards to the petition and asked whether the bars should petition the Board or the Executive Director. Barbara Ferrer responded by stating the petitions would be directed to the Executive Director.

Vote to Amend the Regulation Clean Air Works Workplace Smoking Restrictions – Nakisha Skinner

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to amend the regulation clean air works workplace smoking restrictions. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 5 Nay's 0 Absent 2

Vote to Adopt the Regulation Restricting the Sale of Tobacco Products in the COB – Nakisha Skinner

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to adopt the regulation restricting the sale of tobacco products in the City of Boston. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 5 Nay's 0 Absent 2

Dr. Johnson thanked everyone for all of their hard work on the regulation.

Board Member Fitch spoke regarding the effects of smoking and stated that she sees the adverse effects every day. Board Member Fitch extended her appreciation to the Board and said that the regulation took an enormous amount of work.

Substance Abuse Update: No Drug Coalition/Opioid Prevention Projects – Rita Nieves

Rita Nieves, Director, Substance Abuse Services Bureau, spoke regarding the No Drug Coalitions. Ms. Nieves said that in 2004 the coalitions were launched as a city-wide approach to fund grassroots substance abuse prevention and advocacy efforts. In 2005, the coalition funded seven (7) additional groups to expand the coalition to 14 neighborhoods. Ms. Nieves stated that in 2007 two (2) communities received federal grant funding to support evidence-based prevention in school settings and in 2008 the Boston Public Health Commission received DPH funding to target underage drinking and opioid overdose prevention in eight (8) Boston neighborhoods.

Substance Abuse Update – Devin Larkin

Devin Larkin, Prevention Manager, Substance Abuse Services Bureau, spoke regarding the underage drinking grant. Ms. Larkin said that the grant will be used for environmental strategies to reduce underage drinking in four (4) Boston communities and environmental strategies to reduce demand, access and availability of alcohol for underage drinking. The four communities receiving the grants are Allston/Brighton, Chinatown, South Boston and Dorchester.

Ms. Larkin gave a breakdown of the assessment findings in the four communities which demonstrated that youth are accessing alcohol through older college students, siblings and families. Ms. Larkin spoke regarding the variables and strategies and said that the coalition will conduct a sticker shock campaign and will be partnering with local shops to put stickers on all alcoholic beverages. The coalition will also conduct a shoulder tap survey and a social host awareness program to inform college students about the consequences of providing alcohol to minors.

Ms. Larkin stated that the second phase of the grant is the opioid overdose prevention grant to reduce fatal and nonfatal opioid overdoses. The second phase will target four Boston communities with the highest rates of opioid overdose. These neighborhoods are the South End, Charlestown, South Boston and Jamaica Plain/Roxbury.

Ms. Larkin also gave a breakdown of the assessment findings for the four communities. Ms. Larkin reported that Jamaica Plain and Roxbury have the 3rd and 4th highest substance abuse age-adjusted mortality rate of Boston neighborhoods. Ms. Larkin said that in Roxbury fatal overdoses over a 3- year period were largely represented by older black and Hispanic men while in Jamaica Plain they were mostly white men of mid and older ages.

Ms. Larkin said that A-HOPE will develop a peer-driven education and training program for active users about opioid overdose prevention.

Substance Abuse Update – Jan Quiram

Jan Quiram, Associate Bureau Director, Substance Abuse Services Bureau, spoke regarding the opioid overdose prevention grant. Ms. Quiram said that this is the first time ever in the state where coalitions have funded an opioid overdose grant. The grant is being funded by the Department of Public Health.

Ms. Quiram spoke regarding the Boston Public Health Commission's support of the coalitions which are:

- Technical assistance for grant writing and contract management;
- Identify issues across communities and plan Commission response;
- Manage cross-coalition work groups on targeted issues;
- Facilitate collaboration with other city agencies, including data collection;
- Maintain communication with other No Drug communities;
- Identify and apply for new funding sources.

Ms. Quiram stated that lessons learned from funded neighborhoods can be applied to other communities improving substance abuse outcomes at the city level.

Program Overview of Oral Health – Mary Ellen Yankosky

Mary Ellen Yankosky, Director of Oral Health, gave a brief presentation on oral health. Ms. Yankosky said the vision of the office of oral health believes through changes in education, expectations, policies and systems, all Boston residents will have access to and utilization of quality, affordable oral health services leading to general well-being and sound total health.

Ms. Yankosky reported on the statistics of untreated tooth decay among children by race and ethnicity and stated that tooth decay is most common in lower income families with lower economic status. Ms. Yankosky said that tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease.

Ms. Yankosky also reported on the statistics of untreated tooth decay among elders. Ms. Yankosky said that in the data findings 54 elders needed new dentures and 47 needed denture extension. A comparison in Boston of medical and dental insurance showed that 79% of people had medical insurance and 6% of people have dental insurance.

Ms. Yankosky said that oral health has been linked to overall total health and that poor oral health can seriously impact systemic conditions such as respiratory infections, severe bone destruction, low birth weight babies, stroke, heart disease and diabetes.

Ms. Yankosky stated that the office of oral health now builds infrastructure and capacity, builds linkage with internal programs and external organizations to reduce oral diseases and enhances communication and education capacity. The key areas to prevention are: systems change, legislative action and policy change and city-wide community coalition and partnerships.

Lastly, Ms. Yankosky quoted: “You are not a healthy person unless you have good oral health. Oral health is part of general health and it can affect your overall health and your quality of life.”

Executive Director’s Report – Barbara Ferrer

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, reported on the 3 community meetings held in December. Dr. Ferrer said the meetings were great and reports will be prepared. Dr. Ferrer thanked Dr. Nancy Norman, Pam Jones and Maurice Myrie for all of their hard work and stated that it took an enormous effort but the payoff was rewarding in terms of getting information out.

Dr. Ferrer spoke regarding the influenza vaccination and said that many health centers were in participation. Dr. Ferrer said that at School Vaccination Day at Boston Latin Academy there were concerns around the pandemic flu.

Dr. Ferrer invited the Board to the Employee Recognition Holiday Celebration which is to be held on Wednesday, December 17, 2008 at the Westin Copley Hotel.

Dr. Ferrer then proceeded to speak regarding the budget and stated that there has been a 7% cut to the budget with very few exceptions. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Commission was originally prepared for only a 5% cut and the Commission is working to prioritize areas which are important. Dr. Ferrer said that the Commission will most likely receive an additional cut in January.

Dr. Johnson thanked Dr. Ferrer and everyone at the Boston Public Health Commission for all of the hard work that they do. Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:11 PM.

