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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION Wednesday, May 15th, 2019

A meeting of the Board of the Boston Public Health Commission (“Commission”) was held on Wednesday, May 15th, 2019 in the Hayes Conference Room, 2nd floor, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118.

Board Members Present

Manny Lopes, Chair, Phillomin Laptiste, Kate Walsh, Myechia Minter-Jordan, Jennifer Childs-Roshak (participating remotely).

Also Present

Susan Belvis, Brad Cohen, Rob Goldstein, Tim Harrington, Batool Raza, Katie Donovan, James Hooley, Debra Paul, Heather Gasper, Shannon McEaney, Gerry James, Dan Dooley, Jennifer Lo, Taylor Jolly, Nancy Kasen, Regine Charlot, PJ McCann, Marie Etheart, Anne McHugh, Vanessa Quadia, Suelleu Digne, Margaret Reid, Shekeima Dockery, Scott Minkoni, Brad Cohen, Sheila Lee, Catherine Cairns, Caitlin McLaughlin, Leon Bethune, Maya Saunders, Lisa Wolff, Steve Ridini, Devin Larkin, Neelesh Batra, Regine Thevenin

Proceedings

Chairperson’s Comments

At 4:09 p.m., Chairperson Lopes welcomed Board members, staff, guest presenter, and attendees and gave an overview of the agenda. He noted that Jennifer Childs-Roshak will be joining the meeting remotely via telephone, and that all votes will be taken by roll call as required by the Open Meeting Law.

Acceptance and Approval of April 24th, 2019 Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously by roll call to approve the minutes for the April 24th, 2019 meeting.

Executive Office Report: Monica Valdes Lupi, JD, MPH

Ms. Valdes Lupi made the following remarks:

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The Boston Public Health Commission appeared in many articles over the last month, covering topics from overdose prevention and other harm reduction efforts to responses to infectious disease in Boston.

The Boston Guardian followed our Mobile Sharps Team on a patrol in the South End. The article described the effective ways in which residents and community members are working collaboratively with the city to address one of the more visible symptoms of the opioid epidemic in Boston. The reporter noted that this article has been one that resulted in more social media engagement for their publication than many others recently.

Similarly, the University of Massachusetts radio station (WUMB) conducted a long-form interview with Devin Larkin on BPHC's community-based overdose prevention training. In 2018, more than 400 such trainings took place. The online podcast was published by WUMB and has received considerable attention for their channel.

The Boston Herald's Alexi Cohan, published a two-page spread describing the heroic work of Boston EMS following nearly 10 hours of shadowing time. The article includes interviews and comments from several members of the Boston EMS team and statistics for 2018, highlighting the effectiveness of the Community Assistance Team (Squad 80). This team was created about a year ago to address specific calls for assistance in the Downtown Crossing and Mass/Cass areas of Boston that may require medical response, but not transport.

Our Infectious Disease Bureau and Boston EMS responded to reports of illness about a flight landing at Logan on which dozens of passengers were reported to be sick. The passengers were mostly local high school students returning from a trip to Ecuador. The Communications Office worked in close collaboration with the Mayor's Press Office and Boston EMS to ensure that the media reported the most accurate information possible, including successfully releasing a press release summarizing the situation and placing stories through many channels, including Boston.com, Boston Globe, and WCVB.

The following Intergovernmental Relations Updates were delivered by Heather Gasper, Director of Intergovernmental Relations.

Last month, the Massachusetts House of Representatives passed its budget. In total, the House Committee on Ways and Means proposed a base budget of \$46.6 billion. The Senate is in the middle of its own process. The initial Senate proposal contains some really exciting proposals that will positively impact public health.

The proposal calls for a 3.1% increase in spending over last year's budget, including what lawmakers describe as a historic boost in public education funding, new initiatives to improve mental health and a University of Massachusetts tuition freeze. Those efforts are buoyed by new taxes on opioid manufacturers and vaping products, two ideas backed by Gov. Charlie Baker but not included in the House budget.

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Matching projections in the House budget, Senate leaders anticipate about \$133 million in revenue from marijuana sales and \$294 million in revenue from casino and slots gaming. The Senate budget does impose a 15% tax on opioid manufacturers for sales dispensed in Massachusetts and a 75% tax on wholesale prices of e-cigarettes and related products.

Senate leaders also called for a new \$10 million mental health trust fund, which would both launch a public awareness campaign aimed at reducing stigma and create a program to forgive student-loan debt for behavioral health care workers.

An outside section to the budget proposal imposes a one-year time limit on clawbacks, limiting the ability of insurance companies to retroactively deny mental health claims.

We continue to work with City Hall and check in with advocacy groups to make sure we are best advocating for funding. We are hopeful the conference committee process will yield continued support for important initiatives.

Anjali Nath, our Director of Asthma Prevention & Control, represented BPHC at the State House this month. She testified in front of the Joint Committee on Public Health in support of the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund (PWTF). Anjali highlighted the important work BPHC led in the Boston Partnership with our incredible partners in the areas of hypertension, asthma and elder falls.

BPHC will be before the City Council May 16th and 23rd for its yearly budget hearing.

Last month, the Mayor's Office of Recovery Services and the Bureau of Recovery Services joined City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George and the Boston Delegation of Community Health Centers in executing the City's first-ever needle take back day.

Presentation and Vote: BPHC FY2020 Budget

Grace Connolly presented slides outlining the BPHC FY2020 Budget.

A question was raised for more information about the Boston EMS Community Assistance Team (Squad 80). Chief James Hooley gave background regarding the service, noting that the goals are to provide rapid response in geographic areas with statistically high numbers of calls that historically have not resulted in transport. The unit, which includes EMTs in an SUV, allows for all treatment needed except for the ability to transport. New FTEs for this initiative will allow for expanded hours.

Ms. Walsh asked how the squad knows to dispatch. Chief Hooley clarified that dispatch will still send the required personnel, but the Squad 80 arriving onsite with, or before, other first

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responders allows other vehicles to be freed up for other response and more time-intensive follow up to help get individuals placements into recovery or other needed services.

Chief Hooley also gave background for the investment for a dedicated Diversity Officer to Boston EMS to build on efforts with Office of Workforce Development and others to address barriers to equitable participation in EMS academy, hiring, and promotion.

Ms. Walsh asked a question about investments for the pool in the Miranda-Creamer South End Fitness Center capital budget line item. Ms. Connolly responded that this line is for needed repairs for the roof.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously by roll call to approve the budget for the March 6th, 2019 meeting.

Boston CHNA-CHIP Collaborative Prioritization

Margaret Reid, BPHC, Director of Health Equity Office and Nancy Kasen, of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center presented slides *2019 Community Health Needs Assessment: Preliminary Key Findings*.

Ms. Valdes Lupi introduced the presentation and noted that we are also engaging with sister city agencies to ensure that the prioritization includes their perspectives.

Ms. Reid recognized BPHC staff and partners for their work on the initiative, including Dan Dooley, Taylor Jolly, Steve Ridini, Nancy Kasen, and Lisa Wolff.

Ms. Laptiste asked a question about “the long wait for the appointment” response. Ms. Kasen answered that it referred to the time to get an appointment scheduled.

Ms. Walsh asked a question about the sample size. Ms. Reid answered that there were 2,400 responses, and efforts were taken to oversample in our priority neighborhoods. A breakdown by neighborhood and race and ethnicity is in the Board’s packets.

Ms. Walsh noted that Boston Medical Center, through its Thrive screener, tracks similar questions but for many of these answers, has results that are twice as good. Ms. Reid noted that this is a convenience sample. Ms. Wolff shared that the survey was long and time intensive, real effort to truly outreach individuals who may not have been reached and represented in previous data. We found in a lot of areas the BBRFSS probability sample yield similar numbers.

Dr. Jordan asked whether we should be cross checking this with work that’s already being done in terms of the social determinants of health work that is already being completed. Ms. Wolff noted that as a part of the collaborative, Partners and BMC shared data collected on their own screening data.

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Dr. Jordan also noted that as we talk about housing, it is important to talk about home ownership, and challenging the assumption that low-income residents can't be homeowners. We know that rental programs will not solve root inequities.

Ms. Wolff noted that there was analysis of ownership data from the American Community Survey, but it did not come up into focus groups in terms of affordability

Dr. Jordan noted that we should keep ownership as a forefront solution to solve the housing crisis, and as we think about equity, we need to think about empowerment and sustainability. “

Ms. Reid noted that these comments get to the goal of prioritization. We need to consider how is this affecting Boston versus how hard it is affecting people that are most hard hit, as well as opportunities to do cross-sector work.

Ms. Walsh recommended weighing equity relative to the other prioritization factors.

Dr. Jordan agreed and suggested that we should be reframing how we define equity, not just in terms of benefit, but in terms of leveling the playing field.

Chairperson Lopes noted that things like workforce development and employment that will create generational change. Even in a near-zero-unemployment environment, how are people still not accessing jobs, and jobs are not being filled.

Ms. Valdes Lupi noted that the strange irony of almost half of Bostonians having a bachelor's degree and yet still have this level of unemployment

Ms. Laptiste noted that we have to rethink how we offer resources and think upstream about needs, using the example of bike sharing and bike safety. She noted that when we look at equity in terms of empowerment. Communities are homeowners but are bought out, or who wants to stay in the community but are priced out, which gets back to the empowerment and sustainability piece.

Chairperson Lopes noted that we're proud of our universities and hospitals and the access we have, but how disappointing is it that we still have issues with access to healthcare and have these health issues; still a challenge even though it's an asset. There are several jobs within the healthcare systems and infrastructure at these institutions. Why don't our communities have access to these jobs? Why do we have health disparities and inequities despite these strengths?

Ms. Valdes Lupi noted what an achievement it is for all of these hospitals to do this CHNA-CHIP work collectively. This is an opportunity to take a broad view and create something innovative and new for the city.

Ms. Kasen asked: “Who else do we need at this table?”

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Chairperson Lopes offered that we should bring in the “haves” people that can see the divide that has been created and how we can call to action solving some of these issues. Think about the Federal Reserve, Chamber of Commerce and other institutions and organizations. I can’t imagine any CEO that would not be interested in this.

Ms. Valdes Lupi noted that this idea came out of the Health of Boston report reinvisioning and noting that these are persistent issues. Other jurisdictions have worked toward specific goals. Our goal is to have bold goals to work for.

Adjournment

At or around 5:40pm, a motion and vote to adjourn were taken and approved.

Attest

// Susan Belvis

Board Secretary, Boston Public Health Commission