



MINUTES OF THE BOSTON BOARD OF HEALTH

A meeting of the Boston Board of Health (“Board”) was held on Wednesday, July 15, 2020 by remote participation pursuant to Governor Charles D. Baker’s *Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, s. 20*.

Board Members Present

Manny Lopes, Chair, Philomin Laptiste, Jennifer Childs-Roshak, Rebecca Gutman, Kate Walsh, John Fernandez

Also Present

PJ McCann, Taylor Jolly, Paul Shoemaker, Stacey Kokaram, Tierney Flaherty, Katia Duarte, Sheila Lee, Debra Paul, Caitlin McLaughlin, Steve Simmons, Christina Moulin, Devin Larkin, Agathe Hoffer-Schaefer, Mark Scott, Christine Vu, Shaina Aubourg, Julien Farland, Catherine Fine, Chief James Hooley, Gerry Thomas, Grace Connolly, Chief Marty Martinez, Dan Dooley, Velvet Butler, Simon Muchohi, Jennifer Lo, Puneet Sharma, Anne McHugh, Laura Baker, Leon Bethune, Luisa Tavares, David Gallagher, Dashea Thornton, Jennifer Tracey, Uchenna Ndulue, Lynn Turner, Kayla Douglas Blake, Frederick Gary, Brad Cohen, Nestor Rijo-Figueroa, Gerald James

Chairperson’s Opening Remarks

At approximately 4:10 p.m., Chairperson Lopes welcomed Board members, staff, and members of the public and gave an overview of the agenda. He stated: this meeting is being conducted by remote participation as authorized by Governor Baker’s Emergency Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. In keeping with our usual practice, members of the public and BPHC staff will be allowed to observe the proceedings and we will use the moderating features on the Microsoft Teams application to keep all on mute other than Board members and BPHC presenters. We will have the ability to unmute if needed to allow others to answer questions or provide comment, in the Chair’s discretion. Please join me in welcoming members of the public that are joining us remotely this afternoon. Since we are deliberating remotely, any votes will be taken by a roll call of the members. Please also note that this meeting is being recorded.

A lot has happened since our last meeting. On June 11th, our Mayor Martin Walsh declared Racism to be a Public Health Crisis and announced an 8-point agenda, with resources and responsibility for the Boston Public Health Commission. I know the Board of Health members DRAFT - PENDING BOARD APPROVAL

will be interested in hearing about planning related to the declaration and how we can be involved in planning and action. As a member of the COVID-19 Health Inequities Task Force I see the data which makes it very clear that while overall numbers in Boston are still low, the racial and ethnic inequities in case numbers are continuing.

Acceptance and Approval of June 10th Meeting Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and taken unanimously by roll call to approve the minutes for the June Board meeting.

Executive Office Report

Rita Nieves, Interim Executive Director

Rita Nieves gave the following report:

As Manny mentioned, Boston's overall COVID+ numbers remain acceptable and we continue to see the racial and ethnic disparities in cases. Governor Baker announced that the state was moving to level 3 of reopening. Our Mayor Martin Walsh, chose to delay Boston's reopening for one week – and Boston went to level 3 this past Monday with gyms, sports, outdoor venues, movie theaters, and arts organizations being able to operate. This gave us more time to monitor Case # against our goals and to prepare our sectors to move safely to the next level. BPHC infectious disease bureau and environmental health division have provided public health recommendations on dozens of guidance documents, reopening plans and sector webinars to support a safe reopening. Despite acceptable case numbers, we need to continue to be vigilant as our City reopens.

As we reopen, we need to maintain our focus on protecting those most at risk, like workers in front line jobs who are returning to work and workers who depend on public transportation.

A month ago, on June 11th, Mayor Walsh declared Racism as a Public Health Crisis and BPHC is receiving funds to support our role in the 8-point strategy.

Soon after Mayor Walsh announced the formation of a new Equity and Inclusion Cabinet, with Dr. Karilyn Crockett as Cabinet Chief. As you can see, Dr. Crockett's scope includes issues BPHC has been very involved in for a number of years and we look forward to working with her.

I have asked Tierney Flaherty, our Director of Intergovernmental Relations to give an IGR update Ms. Flaherty gave the following report:

BPHC has provided testimony on: listening session on equitable recovery in Boston, City Council hearing regarding reopening plans for colleges and universities.

H.4448/S.2697, "An Act to reduce racial disparities in maternal health" was approved by the House and is now moving to the Senate; H.4445, "An Act relative to conducting fetal and infant mortality review" has failed to advance DRAFT - PENDING BOARD APPROVAL

Ms. Walsh asked whether BPHC has a formal oversight role in approving college and university reopening plans, including how often they test, considering the potential for competition for testing supplies. Ms. Nieves noted that the state does not have authority for approving. The state is issuing the official guidance and recommendations. Dr. Lo and I have had conversations with the universities, and some have more ambitious testing plans than others. We appreciate the concern that you have raised and will work to ensure that there are not testing supply issues. Our hope is that most colleges have a model that allows for fewer students returning for in-person classes. Dr. Lo added that we are planning to hold a session with universities to address this issue. Some universities are looking to creating their own capacity and plan for appropriate testing cadence.

Chair Lopes echoed Ms. Walsh's concern, and reiterated need for more information about testing plans. Ms. Nieves said, even where we do not have formal authority, we will continue to advise universities and seek more information about the specifics of their plans. Thank you.

Ms. Nieves said: Communications has been critical to our COVID-19 response. I asked Caitlin McLaughlin, Media Relations Director to give a brief update.

Ms. McLaughlin gave the following Report:

We have had another busy month, as you can imagine. BPHC/EMS appeared in more than 215 articles and stories & contributed content to dozens more; 365 Tweets & 52 posts, 5.8K engagements, we gained 500 followers, and we created public information guidance on many topics, including face covering posters, all in multiple languages.

FY 2021 Budget Update and New Funding

Grace Connolly, Director of Administration and Finance

Margaret Reid, for the Office of Health Equity

Jen Tracey, Director, Mayor's Office of Recovery Services

Mark Scott, Child, Adolescent, and Family Health Bureau

Chief James Hooley, Boston EMS

Dan Dooley, Director, Research and Evaluation

Ms. Connolly and co-presenters delivered the posted slides highlighting uses of additional funding to address Racism as a Public Health Crisis through the City budgeting process.

Chair Lopes asked if we had looked at the state's public health system as a way to get at hospital and health center data issue. Mr. Dooley said that in past years we have looked into MDPHnet, which is somewhat analogous, though we have identified some aspects of the system that would limit the utility of the data, including the fact that it is sample data, from aggregated data that institutions provide. So while informative, it would have much less analytical and statistical utility than case-level data. That said, we are planning to meet with the state to learn more about the system's capabilities, to inform our efforts. We are mindful of the potential burden for institutions. We are working to focus on information that is already being collected by providers. DRAFT - PENDING

BOARD APPROVAL

Chair Lopes thanked the panel and, hearing no further questions, and given the time, we will move on to the next agenda item.

COVID-19 Response Updates and Recovery Planning and Program Adaptations

Rita Nieves

Stacey Kokaram, Director of Public Health Preparedness

Margaret Reid, Interim Chief of Staff

Ms. Nieves, Ms. Kokaram, and Ms. Reid delivered the posted slides outlining COVID-19 response updates, recovery planning, and associated BPHC programmatic adaptations.

The Chair and Ms. Gutman thanked Ms. Nieves, Ms. Kokaram, and Ms. Reid. Hearing not questions, the floor was turned back to Ms. Nieves for the final presentation.

Racism as a Public Health Crisis Executive Order Implementation

Rita Nieves

Ms. Nieves delivered the posted slides outlining implementation plans for the eight strategies set forth in Mayor Walsh's *Executive Order Declaring Racism an Emergency and Public Health Crisis*.

Ms. Nieves noted that we may ask the Board to host an additional session to allow for public engagement and participation in these efforts.

The Chair said thank you, this is a significant amount of work. We appreciate the stance that Mayor Walsh has taken, and we appreciate the authority that has been placed in us to lead this effort. After discussion with Rita and Chief Martinez, we all agreed that it is important to engage the public in this work and to hear their thoughts, concerns, and ideas. I'd like to open it up to other members to hear their thoughts and open an invitation to join.

Dr. Childs-Roshak said I am happy that this is happening. I am sorry that it took COVID to shine this light, but think it presents a terrific opportunity. I applaud the Commission's plan to involve the public. One of the best things we can do is be a convener and bring expertise to the table. It highlights the work of the commission and strengthens the connections and commitment to the community. I would be happy to be involve, but I know my voice may not be as important as others. I am happy to support in any way that would be helpful.

Ms. Gutman echoed this support for the work and listening session, saying I'm happy to support this work that the Commission is taking on.

Ms. Laptiste also thanked the Commission and Chair for undertaking this work and for the work that preceded it looking at what we do through a racial equity lens, and that will improve the work we are about to embark on. I would be happy to support these efforts. DRAFT - PENDING BOARD APPROVAL

Hearing no further comments, the Chair remarked that this is truly a journey and to see seismic change to a systemic problem will not happen overnight. I appreciate the Commission, HHS, and Mayor Walsh for their commitment here, not only in dollars and resources, but in leadership commitment from Mayor Walsh personally. Our goal is to hold us up as a model. I look forward to hearing from the residents of Boston. Thank you, Rita.

The Chair added that it would be great if we could extend an invitation to Dr. Crockett to join our next meeting. Ms. Nieves agreed to extend the invitation.

Motion to Adjourn

Hearing no further discussion, at approximately 5:30pm, a motion to adjourn was made and approved unanimously.