

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2008

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair
Ruth Ellen Fitch, JD, Harold Cox
Celia Wcislo, Elaine Ullian

Board Members Absent:

Hortensia Amaro, PhD, Vice Chair
Jack Cradock

Administration & Staff Present:

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed,
Nancy Norman, MD, MPH, John
Townsend, Maia Brodyfield, Anne
McHugh, Fatema Fazendeiro, Kathy
Cunningham, Christine Hayes, Ann
Scales, Sandra Vazquez, Sharyn
Imonti, Debra Paul, Pam Jones, Dr.
Snehal Shah, Samatha Panati, Chery
Overs, Rich Serino, Dr. Peter Moyer,
Kathryn Brinsfield, Kate Sullivan,
Jim Montgomery, Susan Carpenter,
Julie Webster, Chuck Gagnon, Rob
Abromson

Guests:

Eileen Curran of WBZ TV,
Christina Wallace of Metro,
Pam Jacobs of NECN,
Trung Dang of WHDH – TV 7,
Kelley Tuthill of WCVB,
Steve Colvin of WCVB,
Nathan Isenor of WBZ TV,
Christopher Loh of Boston NOW,
Stan Cahill from the Boston Herald,
John Moroney of NECN
Christine McConville, Boston Herald,
Stephen Smith from the Boston Globe

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM on Thursday, March 13, 2008.

Executive Director's Report – Barbara Ferrer

Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, updated the Board regarding the delayed opening of Boston University's level 4 biological research laboratory. Dr. Ferrer reported that the National Institute of Health (NIH) had petitioned the court to do an addendum to the original study to address safety issues in Boston University's proposal. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Commonwealth had asked that the National Academy of Science review the NIH draft addendum to the report.

Dr. Ferrer stated that the National Academy of Science has reviewed the draft and there were a fair number of critiques to the report in response to the issues raised by the Academy itself and comments they received in the public comment period.

Dr. Ferrer thanked SEIU for their generous donation to the Violence Intervention Prevention campaign and commented on the Commission's wonderful collaboration with them. Dr. Ferrer stated that SEIU has agreed to fund the public education campaign for the City of Boston.

Dr. Ferrer commented on the Natality Report, a review of the 2006 birth data. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Commission's Research Department had received information from the 2006 file and that the publication is now available and will be distributed across the city. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Commission is required by law to complete a Health of Boston Report for the Mayor.

Dr. Ferrer also spoke regarding the Boston premiere of Unnatural Causes, a ground breaking documentary series exploring America's racial and socioeconomic inequities in health. Dr. Ferrer announced that the film will be shown on March 27, 2008 at the John F. Kennedy Library.

Dr. Ferrer briefly commented on the follow-up of the primary care meeting held with the Mayor. Dr. Ferrer stated that three committees have been set up and community meetings have been scheduled.

Dr. Ferrer gave an update on the CVS limited service clinics and stated that CVS has applied to the Department of Public Health for initial licenses to open thirteen clinics in Massachusetts. Dr. Ferrer stated that none of the clinics will be located in Boston. Dr. Ferrer reported that CVS is honoring the concerns of the Board and the Mayor and has not applied for any licenses in the City of Boston.

Dr. Ferrer reported that the Public Health Commission is working diligently with the city to address many of the budget challenges that were mentioned at last month's meeting and is looking forward to coming back at the April meeting with a final budget for approval and an update of how we have addressed some of the identified challenges.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, invited a motion to accept the February minutes. The Motion was made, seconded and approved.

Proposed Trans Fat Regulation – Fatema Fazendeiro

Fatema Fazendeiro, Assistant General Counsel, gave a brief update concerning the Trans Fat Public Hearing which was held before the meeting at 3:00 PM. Ms. Fazendeiro stated that there were four speakers at the hearing and was happy to report that we generally received positive

comments. Ms. Fazendeiro reported that over ninety written comments were received and all but three were also positive.

Ms. Fazendeiro gave a brief summary of the different comments which were received and reported on the entities which were on board in support of the proposed ban. These entities included:

- NYC Department of Health and Hygiene;
- Center for Science in the Public Research;
- Harvard School of Public Health;
- Harvard Medical School; and
- American Heart Association

Ms. Fazendeiro stated that most of the written comments were from individuals and that they were very much in favor of the proposed ban. Ms. Fazendeiro reported on the three negative comments received and said the negative comments were from the following:

- An anonymous member of the restaurant industry;
- Grocery Manufacturers Association;
- Retailers Association of Massachusetts

Board member Cox inquired as to the issues raised at the Public Hearing which included implementation, waiver and penalty per item versus penalty per inspection occurrence.

Board member Wcislo inquired about the guidelines and asked if the intent would be that no fines would be issued for the first visit and that the visit would include an educational piece instead of a fine. Ms. Fazendeiro replied that the guidelines would spell it out and that the intent was to educate the establishments rather than issue fines on the first visit. Dr. Ferrer stated that Inspectional Services Department has agreed that they will modify their inspection forms if the regulation is passed and will start working with owners of food establishments regarding the trans fat issue before the regulation goes into effect.

Board member Fitch asked if any thought had been given as to how inspections will be done and whether they would be random. Dr. Ferrer replied that the Public Health Commission will not be conducting the inspections. The inspections will be done by the Inspectional Services Department and that the inspections will be part of the licensing and permitting process for food establishments.

Dr. Johnson commented on the complexity of the ideology of obesity and emphasized that we need to recognize that obesity is a complex disorder and that what we are really talking about is that trans fat is tightly linked to cardiovascular disease as an outcome. Dr. Johnson reiterated that the educational piece about trans fat will be critical and can not be overstated. Dr. Johnson said that working with establishments to identify substitutes for trans fat will be a critical part of the success of the regulation.

Board member Wcislo inquired about the yearly inspections and asked whether restaurants are actually receiving information regarding guidelines and educational materials. Ms. Fazendeiro responded that restaurants are receiving materials and that information is on the BPHC web-site and brochures are available and being distributed. Dr. Ferrer also stated that there will be a mailing going out to everyone.

Dr. Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, invited a motion for a vote to approve the proposed trans fat regulation. The Motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 5 No's 0 Absent 2

Boston EMS & Cardiac Arrest – Dr. Peter Moyer

Dr. Peter Moyer, Medical Director, Boston EMS, gave a brief update regarding Boston EMS and cardiac arrests. Dr. Moyer reported that 1000 people die each year from cardiac arrest and that the average age is 69.

Dr. Moyer also reported on the City's median response times and gave percentage rates of responses by the following institutions:

- Boston Fire Department – 4.3 minutes
- Boston EMS – 6.3 minutes
- Boston EMS ALS – 9.2 minutes
- System – 4.1 minutes

Board member Fitch asked if there is a national average. Dr. Moyer replied that these averages are pretty good response times but he did not know the national average.

Dr. Moyer also spoke regarding citizen CPR and stated that 1500 students from Boston Public Schools were trained in 2006 and 2007. Dr. Moyer said that Boston EMS is attempting to train all 5000 Boston Public School freshman in 2008.

Dr. Moyer gave a summary concerning Therapeutic Hypothermia (TH) and stated that it is not difficult to perform, it is not expensive and that it will force hospitals to start TH earlier. Dr. Moyer said that TH should improve neurological outcomes and decrease mortality.

Dr. Johnson commented on the fact that although TH is a medical advancement, we still need to be address the issues of racial and gender disparities. Individuals in the highest risk category are subjected to disparate treatment which needs to continuously be dealt with. Dr. Johnson will provide us with a study on this issue.

Proposed Patient Tracking & Reporting Regulation – Kathryn Brinsfield

Richard Serino, Chief, Boston EMS, introduced Kathryn Brinsfield, Associate Medical Director of the Emergency Medical Services Division and Medical Director for Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness. Dr. Brinsfield gave a brief update of the proposed EMS patient tracking reporting regulation. Dr. Brinsfield stated that we should really be people tracking this information for various reasons which include:

- Health resource;
- Family reunification; and
- Registration

Ms. Brinsfield said that patient identifying information is all that they are looking for.

Dr. Ferrer asked John Townsend, Interim Director of Administration, to explain the Commission's patient tracking reporting regulations.

Mr. Townsend provided a brief overview of the Commission's Disease Surveillance and Reporting Regulation and EMS Sudden Cardiac Arrest Reporting Regulation.

Update on Capital Budget – John Townsend

John Townsend, Interim Director of Administration, gave a budget update regarding the on-going capital projects and reported the following:

- Northampton Square garage has been approved by the city, it will be put out to bid in August and construction will begin in the fall;
- Long Island Campus water tower upgrades have also been approved. The water tower will be patched and painted.

Mr. Townsend stated that the water tower project is a two million dollar project. A thirty-six gallon dry tank to operate the hydrants will also be installed.

Mr. Townsend said that the Finance team met with the City of Boston regarding the capital budget on February 27, 2008 and that the city is facing tight budget constraints.

Mr. Townsend also spoke of potential projects that the Commission faces which includes the renovations of two ambulance stations (one in Charlestown and the other in South Boston) and the Finland building elevators.

Dr. Johnson asked whether the projects were costed out. Mr. Townsend said they had not but that estimates had been provided to the city.

Mr. Townsend stated that the capital budget has always been a challenge and that the priority issue is the ambulance stations. Mr. Townsend said that by law the ambulances have to be garaged inside but some simply do not fit the stations. The BRA is looking into what we need and trying to figure out if we can tie into other development projects and/or form new partnerships. For example, as new police stations are built, we may be able to get ambulance bays in the new stations.

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 5:32 PM.