

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2008

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

**Board Members Present:**

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

**Board Members Absent:**

Hortensia Amaro, PhD., Vice Chair  
Jack Cradock

**Administration & Staff Present:**

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed,  
John Townsend, Maia BrodyField,  
Nancy Norman, MD, MPH, Ian  
Newton, Christine Hayes, Ann  
Scales, Maddie Ribble, Cheryl  
Overs, Gerry Thomas, Jonathan  
Sherman, Ava Bastiur, Anita Barry,  
Julia Gunn, Paul Shoemaker, Sharyn  
Imonti, Emily Lo, Jenny Ridge, Kim  
Martin, Jin Zhu, Justin Pendarvis,  
Sage Skog, Pam Jones, Nakisha  
Harding, Maurice Myrie, Kate  
Sullivan, Nashira Baril, Meghan  
Patterson, Nakisha Skinner, Julie  
Webster, Chuck Gagnon

**Guests:**

Shalisha Crouch, Shaneka Davis,  
Janelle Murphy, Devone Baroufky

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:12 PM on Thursday, June 12, 2008.

**Executive Director's Report – Barbara Ferrer**

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, gave an update on the Budget hearing. Dr. Ferrer said that the budget process hearing has been scheduled for Thursday, June 19, 2008 and a preparation meeting was held on June 12, 2008. Dr. Ferrer stated that the City Council has voted down the Mayors budget proposal and the Mayor will be re-submitting the proposal on June 18, 2008.

Dr. Ferrer congratulated Maddie Ribble and Pam Jones on the house bill and said the bill passed in the house and the bill is now law.

Dr. Ferrer spoke regarding summer planning and said that the focus will be on preventing mosquito born illnesses, the Kid's Can Fly campaign and safety in the home. Dr. Ferrer said that the Commission will be working with city agencies around violence prevention for kids at risk and the hope is to create partnerships with youth centers. Summer programs will be 100% free.

Dr. Ferrer also reported on the Youth Development Program and stated that Courtney Grey, Director, Youth Development Program, will be working with the Boston Police Department and city street workers in order to obtain summer employment for the youths.

Dr. Ferrer said that door knocking will begin one week from today's date and the focus will be in Dorchester in the Grove Hall area. The emphasis will be on young children and what's available for families to have fun in the city.

Dr. Ferrer announced that Dr. Allen who is a former employee of Boston University has accepted the position of Bureau Director for the Child, Adolescent, Family Health Program and she is thrilled that Dr. Allen has accepted the position.

**Salmonella in Boston – Anita Barry/Ann Scales**

Dr. Anita Barry, Director, Communicable Disease Control, gave a presentation on salmonella cases in the City of Boston. Dr. Barry said that salmonella is a bacteria that causes an intestinal illness in people and animals and people exposed to the bacteria may experience stomach cramps, diarrhea, fever, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Dr. Barry stated that salmonella is contracted by eating contaminated food that was not cooked or prepared properly.

Dr. Barry said that salmonella is a reportable condition with over a hundred cases a year and it is a summer time disease with the highest cases in the Chinatown community. Dr. Barry stated that salmonella is more common in children less than four years old. Dr. Barry said that salmonella can be prevented by doing the following:

- Clean hands and surfaces;
- Separate, don't cross contaminate;
- Cook food to proper temperatures;
- Chill.

Dr. Barry said that on October 4, 2007 the Commission formed a food safety summit and the goals of the summit were to:

- Gain cultural perspective on illness;
- Learn about cultural foods and practices;
- Determine risk factors to help reduce risk.

The food safety summit recommended education and outreach at healthcare sites and to seniors in the community, repeated and reinforced education through flyers and education to families at healthcare visits.

Ann Scales, Director of Communications, also spoke regarding salmonella in Boston and said that the salmonella public awareness campaign will be held on Wednesday, July 2, 2008 at Dorchester House. Ms. Scales stated that the target will be on all Boston residents with particular focus on the Asian community. Ms. Scales said the main focus will be on chilling, cleaning, separating and cooking food properly.

Ms. Scales showed an educational video on the proper and improper ways to prevent salmonella. The video was produced in Chinese with English subtitles.

### **Environmental Justice – Leon Bethune**

Leon Bethune, Director of Environmental Health, gave a brief update on environmental justice in Boston neighborhoods. Mr. Bethune stated that neighborhoods with large low-income and/or communities of color are more exposed and affected by environmental health issues compared to other communities. Mr. Bethune said that hazardous waste junkyards, auto body repair shops, lead paint and poor air quality contribute to disparities in health for communities of color.

Mr. Bethune said that in 1998 the Board of Health promulgated regulations for junk yard sites and a criteria was set. Junk yard sites are to be 500 feet set back from the population. Mr. Bethune said that many sites went out of business because they couldn't meet the criteria.

Board member Wcislo asked where all the waste has gone. Mr. Bethune replied that the junk was recycled and cleaned up.

Mr. Bethune spoke regarding the auto body repair shops sites and said that in 2004 a grant was received and awarded from CDC. Mr. Bethune said that there are 550 repair shops located in Boston neighborhoods and they are disproportionately located in minority neighborhoods. Mr. Bethune spoke briefly regarding environmental concerns and stated that workers are being exposed to flammable solvents. Mr. Bethune also spoke regarding safe shops intervention and said the Commission will be developing a collaborative partnership with key stakeholders. Mr. Bethune stated that a new city ordinance was passed to regulate auto shops and the program will be expanded citywide.

Board member Fitch asked whether the focus has ever been on the customers. Paul Shoemaker, replied, no, that most customers want the best deal and there has been no advocacy with the customers.

Board member Wcislo stated that the population we are targeting probably does not have health insurance and asked if there is any way in which they can obtain health insurance if they are not legal residents. Mr. Shoemaker replied that they cannot get health insurance if they are not legal residents.

Lastly, Mr. Bethune spoke regarding childhood lead poisoning and stated that lead poisoning is at its highest percentage in minority neighborhoods. Mr. Bethune said that the childhood lead poisoning prevention program was established in 1971 and the program enforces the Massachusetts Lead Law and brings housing units into compliance. Mr. Bethune said the

emerging environmental health issues are climate change (the earth is heating up) and occupational health.

Dr. Johnson congratulated Mr. Bethune on his presentation and asked whether there have been similar problems in other cities. Mr. Shoemaker said, no, there is no model program and that the hope is to get other cities to adapt.

Dr. Johnson inquired about nail salons and the exposure to residents. Dr. Johnson stated that there was an outbreak from acrylic nails in Brighton and asked whether we should be doing acrylic nails period. Dr. Johnson said that we need to look at the safety of the industry.

Board member Wcislo said that nail technicians are licensed by the state but asked if it would be possible to do an educational piece into licensure. Mr. Shoemaker replied that the content of the educational program is very tightly prescribed by the state and that one of the biggest problems is there aren't a lot of professional nail products.

### **Tobacco Control Ordinance and Regulation – John Townsend**

John Townsend, General Counsel, spoke briefly regarding the tobacco control ordinance and regulation. Mr. Townsend said that that Mayor has asked the Commission to look at existing ordinances and regulations regarding tobacco control and recommend new initiatives to reduce the exposure of youth to tobacco products and second hand smoke. Mr. Townsend said that with the existing authority tobacco sales to minors are a prohibited ordinance.

Mr. Townsend reported on several potential initiatives and said there are three areas of the initiative:

#### **Initiative 1 - Enhanced enforcement – amendments to City ordinance**

- Increase age to show ID from 27 to 40;
- Increase permit fees and fines;
- Include complete ban for repeat offenses;
- Automatic ban if in non-compliance with any other City ordinance or Commission regulation;
- Increase signage requirements for tobacco retail establishments;
- Require lock out devices on cash registers requiring the inputting of the date of birth for sale of tobacco.

#### **Initiative 2 - Limiting vendors**

- Ban the sale of tobacco products in the City of Boston;
- Make permit issuance discretionary;
- Limit the number of permits issued;
- Establish a quota system.
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#### **Initiative 3 - Further restrict smoking and exposure to second hand smoke**

- Ban the sale of tobacco products within a certain radius;
- Ban smoking in public parks;
- Ban smoking within 75 feet of the entrance of a public building;
- Ban smoking bars;
- Voluntary smoke free housing initiative.

Dr. Ferrer asked where are we seeing the most violations. Nakisha Harding, Director of Tobacco Control replied, in Dorchester and Roxbury in small mom and pop shops.

Board member Wcislo asked if most of the violations are in the mom and pop shops what percentage of the sales are tobacco products. Ms. Harding replied that the percentage is 20-40% of their business income.

Board member Fitch asked whether the bars have any kind of air ducts or special ventilation. Mr. Townsend replied, yes, some do and others don't and we may need some kind of regulation to address this issue.

Board member Cox asked whether banning smoking in public parks does more than make people think they are doing more. Dr. Ferrer answered that it models bad behavior and there are places with lots of kids playing. Depending on the proximity, it is also a litter issue.

Mr. Townsend stated that on July 10, 2008 the Commission will be promoting the introduction of a smoke free housing initiative.

Dr. Johnson asked where do we go from here. Mr. Townsend said that we will be looking at statistics and also what the Board is interested in pursuing.

Dr. Ferrer stated that the Mayor wants to restrict smoking in areas where there are kids.

Dr. Johnson gave a couple of ideas regarding the smoking bars:

- Similar type of mapping of environmental justice;
- For certain neighborhoods it's about smoking with other risks;
- Partnership with private institutions and businesses;
- Begin to attack and educate.

Board member Fitch asked whether we are compelled to have smoking bars and said that quite a few municipalities have banned smoking bars altogether.

#### **Acceptance and Approval of Minutes**

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

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.