



BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD OFFICE

OCTOBER 1, 2009

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH
Celia Weislo, Jack Cradock
Harold Cox

Board Members Absent:

Ruth Ellen Fitch, Elaine Ullian

Administration & Staff Present:

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.ED
Maia BrodyField, John Townsend,
Nakisha Skinner, Diane Cavaleri,
Maurice Myrie, Mark Campbell,
Ann Scales, Jim Imprescia, Jim
Hooley, Rich Serino, Lisa Conley,
Alexis Bevilacqua, Gerry Byrne,
Margaux Joffe, Tony O'Brien,
Rosaline Valcimond, James Orsino,
Julie Webster, Chuck Gagnon

Guests:

Scott Mason

Dr. Johnson MD, MPH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM on Thursday, October 1, 2009.

Chairman's Comments – Paula Johnson

Dr. Johnson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and advising attendees that the meetings will be audio recorded going forward to comply with recent amendments to the state open meetings law.

Executive Director's Comment's – Barbara Ferrer

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, started by introducing Lisa Conley who is the new Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Public Health Advocacy. Dr. Ferrer asked Ms. Conley to address the Board regarding a letter we would like to send to Governor Patrick regarding the special status of immigrants.

Ms. Conley proposed a letter to the Governor detailing the issue of special status of immigrants and the decision to cut health insurance benefits to that population. Under the Commonwealth plan, immigrants accessed medical care through the City's 26 community health centers and Boston Medical Center. While efforts are being made to restore insurance benefits to immigrants through the agreement with CultiCare, there are serious concerns regarding the impact that the reduction in funding will have. The plan cuts the services that immigrants currently have and also cuts the provider network. We are asking the Governor to implement the new plan to ensure that immigrants receive the best possible care and to make sure that the network expands to include providers who are already seeing these patients.

Board member Wcislo suggested the letter also be sent to the Connector Care Board as well as the Speaker and Senate President to see who made the cuts and asked that any complaints be sent to the Connector Care Board as well as herself for follow-up. Ms. Conley asked the Board to vote on the letter to Governor Patrick.

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to vote to approve the letter to Governor Patrick. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 4 Nay's 0 Absent 2

Dr. Ferrer gave a quick update regarding various awards received by Boston Public Health Commission. The first grant award is to the Bureau of Addictions and Recovery Program (Treatment and Recovery Support Services). The Bureau has just been awarded \$2.4 million dollars in two separate SAMSA grants. The Women's Reentry grant which enhances and supports substance abuse services for women returning to the community from incarceration which was awarded with these grant funds. The goal is to serve 65 women a year for 3 years. The second grant is to the Men's Health and Recovery Project to expand and enhance treatment services for Latino and African American men ages 18 and over.

The Commission also received two other SAMSA grants which will enable family support work. One grant is Project Launch which has a Boston launch learning collaborative for a pediatric primary care site. The other is an EOHHS grant called MY CHILD which identifies children at very early ages who might be at risk of certain developmental delays.

For the first time ever Homeless Services has also received the SAMSA grant totaling \$400,000.00 a year for 5 years to help with housing placement and stabilization services for chronically homeless adults who have both mental illness and substance abuse issues.

Another grant awarded was to support the Violence Intervention Program (VIP). For the first time the Commission received \$670,000.00 through the BURN grant, which is a competitive federal grant that funds violence prevention activities.

The Commission continues to receive grants around Emergency Preparedness and Infectious Disease. The federal government has sent a lot of money to the State and the State is required to send a significant amount of that money to the City to support our efforts around H1N1 and influenza. The Commission is looking to partner with the Community Health Centers in the vaccination process. The goal is to be able to vaccinate families.

Dr. Johnson suggested that hospitals be asked to use their EMR technology to push out messages regarding the public flu clinics to targeted individuals.

Dr. Ferrer also announced that Rich Serino, Chief of Department at EMS is in the process of going through a confirmation hearing and vote for his new position, Deputy Director of FEMA. Chief Serino will be retiring and the Commission will be honoring him on October 9, 2009 where he will be recognized for his tremendous 36 +years of service to the City of Boston.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to accept the June 4, June 23 and September 3 minutes. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Vote on Proposed EMS Regulation – Nakisha Skinner

Nakisha Skinner, General Counsel, gave a brief update on the Proposed EMS Regulation. Ms. Skinner said that in June of 2009 the Board was presented with a regulation entitled EMS Regulation which was a combination of the BPHCs existing EMS Regulations. Ms. Skinner reminded the Board that a letter was sent back in August 2009 informing members that the Commission had put the regulation out for public comment for a period of 30 days. Ms. Skinner stated that no comments were received whatsoever. The Commission is asking the Board to vote to pass the regulation as written with the exception of the language changes that is noted in the August 4, 2009 letter.

Vote on Proposed EMS Regulation – Nakisha Skinner

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to vote to approve the proposed EMS Regulation. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 4 Nay's 0 Absent 2

Burial Permit Fees – John Townsend

John Townsend, Director of Administration and Finance, presented a proposal to increase the burial permit fees and updated the Board regarding the fee increases in the past. In March of 2003 there was a \$10.00 increase which raised the fee to \$20.00. In February of 2008 the fee was again raised from \$20.00 to \$25.00.

Mr. Townsend reminded the Board that as the Board of Health for the City of Boston it is the duty and responsibility of the Commission to issue burial permits to anyone who wishes to be buried or cremated within the City of Boston.

Mr. Townsend stated that the Burial Permits Office is currently operating at a deficit of \$36,589.00. The reason for the increase is to cover the actual operating costs. Mr. Townsend asked the Board to increase the fees by \$6.00 bringing the permit fee to \$31.00 and for the increase to be effective immediately because permits are issued daily.

A question was posed by Dr. Johnson in regards to the fee increase, specifically, if the increase will be covered in the FY10 budget. Mr. Townsend confirmed that the fee will cover the FY10 budget.

Vote on Burial Permit Fees: Proposed Increase

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to vote to approve the proposed increase for Burial Permit Fees. The motion was made seconded and approved.

Yeas 4 Nay's 0 Absent 2

BPHC New Technologies – Ann Scales

Ann Scales, Director of Communications gave a presentation on Social Media. Ms. Scales reported that social media has changed the way people connect with one another, search for information, get their news. Social media platforms have now been incorporated into the overall communications strategy at the Commission.

Ms. Scales announced that social media is now a pretty busy instrument in the Commission's tool box. The Commission continues to use traditional media to promote our public health message. The goal is to meet people where they are and these days most people are on the internet. Some of the social media tools used are:

- Website;
- Blog;
- Podcasts;
- Facebook;
- YouTube;
- Twitter

Ms. Scales gave a brief overview regarding the STI Prevention Campaign and stated that it was the Commission's most effective social media platform and the campaign broke new ground for the City of Boston in its efforts to reach young people wherever they are whether on facebook or watching BET.

The Communications Office is in the process of developing a social media policy and will be looking at what other health departments and government agencies are doing, especially CDC and HHS.

BPHC New Technologies – Mark Campbell

Mark Campbell, Chief Information Officer, IT, presented on BPHC's new technologies. Mr. Campbell reported that the IT Department has been tracking the stats of folks logging onto the Commission's new website and the department can now see where all of the hits are coming from. As of 10/1/09, 102 countries have visited the Commission's website. Tracking hits are coming from different countries, states, cities and we can now even see how folks are accessing from the website through iphones. The most frequently visited site is the H1N1 site and the different language translations.

Mr. Campbell gave an overview of the completed, current and/or new IT projects, which include the following:

- Email storage and retention;
- Deployed multi-functional devices;
- Cell phone vendor replacement;
- BOSS (Boston Surveillance System);
- External website - has a new look and feel;
- Geographical Information system;
- New programs added to the Case Management.

Dr. Johnson inquired as to the Commission's ability to analyze the effectiveness of information between programs and asked whether or not it could be done. Mr. Campbell stated that it could be done.

Board member Cox commented on the privacy and security issues of data reporting. In response, Mr. Campbell informed the Board that there are encryption standards in place to help eliminate any privacy and security breaches.

Green Committee Initiatives – Maurice Myrie

Maurice Myrie, Policy Advisor, IT, updated the Board on the green initiatives taking place at the Commission. Mr. Myrie said that the green vision was created to change the way we do business to improve the health of our local environment. The things we do in our offices affect the health and environment in our local communities and beyond.

The Green Committee was formed in 2008 by Commission employees, has 29 members and is comprised of 3 subcommittees for areas of focus: consumption reduction, facilities and operations and education and outreach.

Mr. Myrie commented on the Green Committee's progress to date. There has been a Commission-wide purchasing policy as of September 2008 to purchase 30% recycled content paper. The Green Committee sponsored the Boston Shines Citywide Cleanup on April 24, 2009. Over 50 volunteers cleaned up the 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Newmarket Square, Proctor Street, Shirley Street, EW Eustis Playground, Northampton Square and 300 Frontage Road areas. Over 50 bags of trash (55 gallon size) were collected.

Challenges the Green Committee face are funding, or lack of, old habits are hard to change and how to create a movement that will last. The next steps for all three levels of "green vision" are to continue to identify and develop projects.

Dr. Johnson and Board member Cradock suggested that the Green Committee prepare an electronic handbook/guide on how organizations can start and maintain their own green committee.

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM.