

**Columbus Board of Health Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2020**

Presiding: James Lopez-DMD

Attending Board Members: Rajinder Chhokar-MD, Devica Alappan-MD, Isaiah Hugley, Yasmin Cathright, Sylvester McRae-MD

Not Present: Rebecca Covington (Mayor Office)

Others Present: Beverley Townsend-MD, Joanne Strickland, Tori Endres, Asante' Hilts, Steve Gunby-Atty, Jack Lockwood, Kimberly Fuller, Kristi Ludy, Brandi Nelson, Darrell Enfinger, Jeannie Polhamus (MCSD), Dr. David Lewis (MCSD), Peggy Hallmark

In keeping with CDC/GDPH COVID-19 Community Mitigation Recommendations this board of health meeting was held by conference call. All reports were emailed to all board members. Attendees verified by roll call.

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Decision	Responsibility
Call to order	Dr. Lopez called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.	None	None
Approval of Minutes	Dr. Lopez: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged a quorum was present. Referred to minutes from the August meeting. With no questions or discussion from the members, Dr. Lopez asked for a motion of approval. • Called for the Director's report. 	Motion made by Dr. McRae, seconded by Mr. Hugley, and approved by all members present.	None
District Health Director's Report	Dr. Townsend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated that COVID response continues to be the focus, however, the department is working hard to provide the usual public health services. This is true for Columbus Health Department and all counties in our district. • Announced upcoming event at the Civic Center on Saturday, October 2nd, which will be public health providing drive through free COVID testing and flu vaccines in partnership with the promotion for Census response. Census data is important to determine funding. Much appreciation to our city Manager for reaching out and inviting us to participate. 	None	None

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<p>Director's Report Cont'd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darrell Enfinger and Brandi Nelson will report on COVID but will say that testing numbers have decreased at our health department, largely due to testing being available at different facilities. • Flu shots are now available. State has asked us to be prepared for a COVID vaccine when it becomes available. We do not have a time frame for that yet. • We continue to work hard to keep our public informed and educate our community. Very appreciative to Dr. Lewis and other school superintendents for presenting questions and participating in discussions. We even have Resource Coordinator to work with people who have COVID and need resources. <p>RESPONSE: Dr. David Lewis – Expressed thanks and gratitude on behalf of school superintendents throughout the state for the support from public health and the medical community. From March onwards have had a panel of medical professionals to work with school officials and they have been so willing to share time and expertise. Thank you for doing what you do so we could know when to close, when to open, precautions to take, and reporting.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Isaiah Hugley – Thank you to Dr. Townsend for the quick positive response to the Fair Count Census opportunity. We called her at 9:30 Monday morning (9/21) about the Census partnership opportunity. She met with her team and by noon we had a deal to partner for COVID testing and flu shots while helping people respond to the Census at the Civic Center. Fair Count Census will be paying for tests and vaccines.</p> <p>No further responses or questions.</p>		

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Financial Report	<p>Joanne Strickland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented financial overview, as emailed to board members, through the end of August 2020, with a current budget of \$5,915,206. Total expenses for FY21 were \$877,817.88, which is just below our target of 16.67% for two months of operations and \$27,449.86 less than prior year at the same time. Total fee income was \$382,686. Lines 6 through 17 show fund sources for fee and comparison to last year, which is up overall by \$118,727 due to receiving Admin Fees for COVID testing and for PrEP services. You can see by line item that actual fees are down compared to last year. Page 4 shows our grants, which were all on target for 2 months of operation. <p>There were no questions.</p>	The Financial Report is attached and made a part of these minutes.	None
Excused Absences	None	None	None
Old Business	None	None	None
New Business	None	None	None
Program Reports	<p>COVID-19 Update – Brandi Nelson, Epidemiologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 overview for Muscogee County from February 1st until today, we have over 5,000 cases with a median age of 38 and 658 hospitalizations, and 167 deaths. To break that down, the age group affected most is 35-50 years of age, followed by the 55+ age group and age group of 11 years or younger is 4.42% of the cases. 	None	None

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among gender, females are impacted the most at 56% in comparison to males at 43%. The overall current positivity rate is 5.1%. • Schools will be reporting to the state each Friday through the state reporting system. All cases and clusters for the week are reported. <p>RESPONSE: Dr. David Lewis – Muscogee County School District will provide our case data to the school board, the media and post it on our website each Monday.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Alappan – In terms of the 4% of cases being children who tested positive, do you know how many are hospitalized?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Brandi Nelson – No. We do not have that information.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Lopez – Do you have any data on the positivity in pregnant females?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Brandi Nelson – Today’s information does not have the pregnancy data.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. McRae – 15-20% of our delivering mothers are positive is our experience. Most are young and asymptomatic. We have special rooms and protocols for them because we see them on a regular basis. I don’t know what is being reported. I hope you are getting the information from the hospitals. We test everyone that comes to our units at both hospitals.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Brandi Nelson – Our data comes from the surveillance system SENDSS and is real time data and the pregnancy information is not there. Any reporting facility reports positive cases should be reporting into that system. I can look into this further.</p>		

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>RESPONSE: Dr. Lopez – The point the Epidemiologist I spoke with was trying to make was that pregnant mothers are getting the virus at parties and baby showers.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. McRae – I’m glad Dr. Lopez brought this up. I would venture to say most do not get the virus at parties or baby showers, but that more get it from contact with people working in meat packing and chicken houses and males that are not getting tested. At least I don’t think it is baby showers but other contacts.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Alappan – Children are the most asymptomatic and carriers. Some of those pregnant women may have contracted the virus from their asymptomatic younger children.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – More and more parameters are being put into the system and as questions like these arise, we continue to work with what is collected. This is a notifiable disease, but we cannot guarantee that all is being reported into the system and we report what we have. We can only get out what has been put into the system. We are getting better reporting tools from DPH to make it easier to navigate and we continue to encourage people to report the demographics for cases.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Chhokar – Are the other facilities not reporting positives to the health department?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – We can only know who is reporting. The labs are reporting, but as for urgent cares and other facilities doing rapid testing, we cannot know.</p> <p>CROSS DISCUSSION on reporting COVID recovery rates and challenges of collecting data.</p>		

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd.</p>	<p>Emergency Preparedness: Darrell Enfinger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 million pieces of PPE distributed since February in our district alone; 550,000 pieces of PPE is Muscogee County distribution since March. Distribution is has really slowed as more avenues to agencies become available, which really helps because it was consuming a lot of our time. We have 3 people in our EP office and with over 950 hours of overtime for this pandemic response. • EP continues actively testing our critical infrastructure (LEO, EMS, FD). If they are negative on the rapid test, then they are sent to the SPOC for the confirmatory laboratory test. • EP transitioning to what may look like a vaccine campaign. We have spent years working on pandemic response from securing Point of Dispensing (POD) sites to working with hospitals and first responders in order to have what we need. We know the vaccine will be coming and just want to be prepared for that. <p>There were no questions.</p> <p>Public Information – Jack Lockwood on behalf of Pamela Kirkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated COVID-19 daily press releases continue as well as interviews on tv and social media postings • Health Promotions campaign for HIV testing and for diabetes and hypertension prevention. Digital signage going out to all county health departments to broadcast messages to the public. <p>There were no questions.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd.</p>	<p>Environmental Health – Kristi Ludy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pages 1 and 2 of the written report emailed to all board members show the summary of Environmental Health activity for the month of August, including Food Service, Pools & Spas, Tourist Accommodations, Tattoo Studios, Vector Control, Onsite Sewage and Well Water. • One animal to human rabies exposure was tested positive for rabies. A stray cat attacked man at the Midland post office. The victim still receiving post exposure treatment. • Environmental Health held annual Rabies Prevention Clinic at the Columbus Civic Center on September 8th. We gave 300 vaccinations in 2 hours. Many thanks to Dr. Hank Hall, veterinarian who has helped each year. <p>QUESTION: Dr. Lopez – Is it correct 45 animals go to the Humane Society every month. RESPONSE: Kristi Ludy – Yes, the average is 50 per month. There were no further questions.</p> <p>Nursing Report – Kimberly Fuller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the Nursing report emailed to board members and reported 863 initial visits, 116 return visits for a total of 979 visits from July 1 to August 31. Last year for the same time, total visits were 2,137. • Continued COVID-19 response efforts, operating the Specimen Point of Collection (SPOC) Monday through Saturday. 		

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Program Reports Cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most community activities are still on hold. Continued participation on the weekly Mayor's call, internal COVID related conference calls, and virtual meetings. • Held a virtual immunization event and conducted school-based flu discussion and planning for flu shot events. <p>There were no questions</p>	Program reports are attached and made a part of these minutes.	None
Adjournment	With no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Lopez at 1:49 pm.		

**NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
TO BE HELD VIA CONFERENCE CALL:
OCTOBER 28, 2020 1:00 PM**

Columbus Board of Health Minutes Respectfully submitted by Secretary Peggy Hallmark