

Columbus Board of Health Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2021

Presiding: Rajinder Chhokar-MD
Attending Board Members: James Lopez-DDS, Devica Alappan-MD, Sylvester McRae-MD, Rebecca Covington (Mayor's Office, Crystal Farley (City Mgr Office), Yasmin Cathright
Not Present:
Others Present: Beverley Townsend-MD, Joanne Strickland, Tori Endres, Asante' Hiltz, Steve Gunby (Atty), Pam Kirkland, Kimberly Fuller, Joie Gosa, Jeannie Polhamus, (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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Chhokar called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm. • Secretary completed roll call. • Dr. Chhokar acknowledge a quorum was present. 	None	None
Approval of Agenda	<p>Dr. Chhokar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the August meeting agenda as delivered to all board members. With no questions or discussion from the members, asked for a motion for approval of the agenda. 	Motion made by Dr. Alappan, seconded by Dr. McRae, and approved by all members present.	None
Approval of Minutes	<p>Dr. Chhokar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to minutes from the June meeting as delivered to all board members. With no questions or discussion from the members, asked for a motion of approval. • Called for the Director's report. 	Motion made by Dr. Alappan, seconded by Dr. McRae, and approved by all members present.	None
Director's Report	<p>Dr. Townsend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pfizer COVID vaccine has received FDA approval for ages 16 and older with brand name 'Comirnaty', but we are still under the EUA for ages 12 to 16. We anticipate others will soon be approved by the FDA. 	None	None

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<p>Director’s Report Cont’d</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We lost another public health family member and want to extend our sympathy to the family of that young woman, the second we have lost this year. • The additional COVID-19 vaccine dose is now available for immunocompromised people. We recognize it as an “additional” or “third” dose as opposed to “booster” and want to be sure to make that distinction. • The booster will be for all fully vaccinated persons and should be available sometime in September. It is to be administered no sooner than 8 months after the 2nd dose. • COVID testing numbers have increased and we continue to do vaccinations. Vaccination rates for the state of Georgia are 42% fully vaccinated and 50% having received one dose. For Muscogee County, 40% have received one dose and 34% are fully vaccinated. We are partnering with whoever calls in need of help and support, including hospitals, to assist with the current surge. The state is helping with the increase in staffing needs. The Governor has called for National Guard support in some areas, but not in our district. • People are going to extreme levels to fight COVID, but not doing the basic things like getting vaccinated and staying healthy as they can with all the mitigation efforts. They are taking something called ivermectin. You have seen that name before. It has been used in cocktails, but people are going to Tractor Supply or some other place that sells it either in pill form or cream, but this is the one for animals and not for humans and people are dying from this. Let’s please spread the word that this is not the right thing to do. I would encourage those who are not vaccinated to get vaccinated; those that are vaccinated to stay safe; and those that are 		

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<p>Director's Report Cont'd</p>	<p>immunocompromised to go ahead and get their 3rd dose; and then to those that are fully vaccinated to wait at least 8 months from their 2nd dose to get their booster dose.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Chhokar – It is good to know you already have the third dose for the immunocompromised. At least we will tell the immunocompromised patients it is there. Do the hospitals know this?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – Yes, the hospitals do know. One other point to make is that most of our hospitals are at capacity and full. One in our district had to close their doors and went on full diversion Monday night. This is really a major crisis and is close to home. The hospitals do not have beds for non-COVID patients, including in our area. Heart attacks, strokes and other diseases are still going on and the beds are full.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Chhokar – I can speak about our two hospitals, at least for the cardiology program. Both hospitals have asked that we do no scheduled routine cases and only to take emergency procedures regarding cardiology. Anything that can be postponed the hospitals have asked to be postponed.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – In the healthcare arena we all are short staffed, and we have a tremendous demand. We are hiring hourly staff to help with the shortages. This is a public health crisis, but it is going to take the community, really all of us to get through this. This is a community responsibility.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Chhokar – I could not say it any more emphatically as Dr. Townsend. Yes, it will take the whole village to get this in control.</p>		

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<p>Financial Report</p>	<p>Joanne Strickland:</p> <p>You will have received two financial reports in your board of health packets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the final financial overview for FY21 ending June 30, 2021. We had an original budget of \$5,915,206. There were seven budget revisions throughout the year and ended on a final budget of \$6,621,963. We spent 100% of that budget for the 12 months of operation. Line 4 shows our expenses in comparison to the previous year and the increase in spending of \$820,081.78. As shared before, we are moving to a centralized accounting system which means the payroll is centralized and managed through the lead county (Columbus) for other counties within our district. During 2021 we had a total of 8 counties on the centralized system which explains the increases. We also have pass-thru spending for ordering in bulk for the centralized counties. Line 5 shows our total fee income of \$1,237,026.84. Lines 6 through 17 show the fund sources as well as the comparison to the previous year. Line 18 shows an overall increase in income of \$43,226.96. Admin Claiming Income had a decrease of \$47,731.14 having to do with the timing that the funding is sent down from the state. The following pages detail expenses and revenue by line item. Page 4 shows our current grants that fall under the lead county, and we spent out the required amounts of grant dollars for FY21 except for grants that are on the federal fiscal year, so those funds will roll forward into our next fiscal year and continue in their federal fiscal year. <p>There were no questions.</p>	<p>The Financial Reports for FY21 and FY22 are attached and made a part of these minutes.</p>	<p>None</p>

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Financial Report Cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the FY22 financial overview through the end of July 2021. We are operating on a budget of \$6,120,536. Expenses as of July were \$422,738.99 which is little below our target of 8.33% for one month of operation. In comparison, we have spent \$6,553 more than the same time last year. Line 5 our total fee income was \$134,901.19. Lines 6 through 17 show fund sources for fees and the comparison to last year, which is down overall by \$62,806. We have not received any Admin Claiming Income. Pages 2 and 3 show the detail for expense and income. Page 4 shows our grants for FY22 and thus far they are all on target for one month of operation. <p>There were no questions</p>		
Excused Absences	None	None	None
Old Business	None	None	None
New Business	None	None	None
Program Reports	<p>Epidemiology COVID 19 Update – Joie Gosa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented a snapshot of what’s happening in Muscogee County: As of August 23rd, we have 17,641 total confirmed cases. Comparing the previous 14-day period from 7/31 to 8/13 of positive cases, we are up from 8.14 per 100,000 to 8.20. The 14-day confirmed case rate was at 25% on 8/16 and at 23.8% on 8/23. The breakthrough cases (vaccinated) as of today are at 3%. The fully vaccinated in our county as of 8/25 is 34%. Hospitalizations are standing at 1,399 and we have a total of 449 confirmed deaths. 	Program reports are attached and made a part of these minutes	None

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>Epidemiology COVID 19 Update – Cont'd</p> <p>We are seeing an increase of cases in the pediatric population. We have 729 Muscogee cases in the age range of 0-17 from 7/10/21 to present in comparison to 79 cases from 5/1/21 to 6/30/21. The delta variant is responsible for 98.8% of all cases. The delta variant is highly contagious showing more than two times as contagious than previous variants. Unvaccinated individuals are at greatest risk of contracting and transmitting the virus. Breakthrough infections among fully vaccinated with the delta variant have shorter infectious periods than unvaccinated.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Chhokar – At the last meeting I believe there was a question of whether we are checking for the delta variant. At least now it is a good thing to know that we are checking.</p> <p>Public Information – Pam Kirkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases continue with weekly COVID-19 updates including number of cases, information on testing and vaccines schedules reported each Monday. • All interviews were pertaining to COVID-19, primarily vaccines, including on tv and radio. • Paid advertisements placed for the Family Planning program (LARC) as well as ads regarding vaccine hesitancy and awareness. • Social media posts and releases on vaccination sites, testing hours, Fatherhood Initiative, World Mosquito Day, Narcan administration (virtual event), and HIV home test kits and free testing at the health department. • You Tube Channel commercials and video interviews ongoing. 		

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<p>Program Reports Continued</p>	<p>Environmental Health – Asante’ Hilts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the Environmental Health report for June 1 through July 31, 2021. Details shown on pages 3-12. • Food Service Program - Currently has 683 establishments and 64 schools permitted. During this time, we reviewed 13 plans, conducted 118 routine inspections, 7 follow up inspections, 19 initial inspections and investigated 10 complaints. • Pools/Spas - Currently 38 pools and spas are permitted. We conducted 6 opening inspections, 11 routine inspections, and 2 re-inspections. • Tourist Accommodations - Currently have 54 establishments are permitted. Reviewed 1 plan, conducted 15 routine and 2 pre-operational inspections. Investigated 2 complaints during this time. • Tattoo Studios/Artists - Currently have 18 permitted studios and 53 permitted tattoo artists. Conducted 3 tattoo studio inspections and had no complaints to investigate in this time frame. • Rabies Control had a total of 84 human only exposure investigations, 1 animal only and 11 animal to human exposure investigations. A total of 51 animals were confined, 27 tested for rabies and 2 were positive. • Vector Control received 95 complaints for rodents, mosquitoes and roaches and conducted 93 complaint investigations. Onsite Sewage had 5 new system permits, 4 installation inspections, 7 repair permits issued, conducted 4 repair inspections, and permitted 8 sewage removal contractors. Evaluated 1 well water system and had 0 bacteria positive samples. <p>There were no questions.</p>	<p>Program reports are attached and made a part of these minutes.</p>	<p>None</p>

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>Nursing Report – Kimberly Fuller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the FY21 Final Nursing report emailed to board members and reported 8,220 initial visits, 2,529 return visits for a total of 10,749 visits from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Last year for the same time, the total visits were 9,231. <p>Community collaborations included MCAP, Child Fatality and CHINS. Continued rapid test for first responders, and clinical rotations for CSU students. COVID testing at the health department with MAKO was on Monday and Fridays, but we changed to Monday through Friday from 9am – 1pm since the surge of cases. The health department is vaccinating Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am – 12 pm, but is changing to Monday through Friday from 9am to 1pm. Testing is outside and vaccinations are inside. The Strike Team is vaccinating homebound patients here and across the district and CORE is vaccinating at many off campus community sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the FY22 Nursing report for the month of July 2021 and reported 1,305 initial visits, 113 return visits for a total of 1,418 visits from July 1 through July 31, 2021. Last year for the same time, the total visits were 412. <p>Community awareness continued with MCAP, Child Fatality Review and CHINS; as reported above. Relocated COVID SPOC testing to the Veterans Parkway lower lot on August 2nd.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>		

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Adjournment	Dr Chhokar announced next meeting date is September 22nd. With no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Chhokar at 1:44 pm.		

**NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
TO BE HELD ON**

September 22, 2021, at 1:00 PM

Columbus Board of Health Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Peggy Hallmark