

**Columbus Board of Health Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2021**

Presiding: Rajinder Chhokar-MD
Attending Board Members: James Lopez-DDS, Crystal Farley (City Mgr office), Yasmin Cathright
Not Present: Mayor Office, Devica Alappan, MD
Others Present: Beverley Townsend-MD, Gwen Cunningham, Tori Endres, Asante' Hilts, Atty Gunby, Pam Kirkland, Kimberly Fuller, Kristi Ludy, Brandi Nelson, Patrick Peck, Peggy Hallmark (secretary)

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 1:05 pm. • Secretary completed roll call. • Dr. Chhokar acknowledged a quorum was present. 	None	None
Approval of Agenda	<p>Dr. Chhokar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to the December 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 Yasmin Cathright and seconded by Dr. Lopez 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 October meeting as delivered to all board members. With no questions or discussion from the members, asked for a motion of approval. 	Motion made by Dr. Lopez, seconded by Yasmin Cathright, and approved by all members present.	None
Director's Report	<p>Dr. Chhokar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called for the Director's report <p>Dr. Townsend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeted the group with gratitude for the Thanksgiving holiday break and well wishes for the upcoming season. 	None	None

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<p>Director's Report Cont'd.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscogee County has a fully vaccinated rate of 40% in comparison to the state of Georgia, which is at 51%. We have a way to go before reaching the 75-80% desired rate for full vaccination. The Omicron variant is around the world and though not here yet, it is only a matter of time. We do have other entities to support testing and vaccination efforts, so we are not the only provider. Our main focus is to get more people vaccinated. • We have high staff turnover in Public Health due to low salaries. Board of health members are encouraged to advocate to legislature on our behalf to look closely at Public Health for consideration of salary increase so that we can gain retention and sustainability for our staff. • Announced Dr. Chhokar's December 31, 2021, end of term as a board of health member and that today will be her last meeting in that capacity. With many thanks, Dr. Townsend presented Dr. Chhokar a certificate of appreciation for nine years of outstanding performance and lasting contributions to Public Health. <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Chhokar - Thanked the board for the opportunity and stated it has been her pleasure to serve.</p>		
<p>Financial Report</p>	<p>Gwen Cunningham: Presented the FY22 financial overview, through the end of October 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We began FY22 with an original budget of \$6,120,536; had two revisions and are currently working with a budget of \$6,265,237. Total expenses through the end of October are \$2,080,423.26, which is 33% of budget and on target for 4 months of operations. Line 4 shows the comparison to last year with an increase of \$264,717.54. 	<p>The Financial Report is 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"> • Line 5 shows total fee income is \$429,920.88 and lines 6 through 17 show the fund sources and their comparison to last year. Line 18 shows we are down overall by \$122,601.75 due to outpatient client fees we no longer receive for COVID testing. Prior year Admin Claiming Income remains down due to timing of receipts from the state. Details of the summary are on pages 2 and 3. Page 4 shows our grants, which were all on target for 4 months of operation. <p>There were no questions.</p>		
Excused Absences	Devica Alappan, MD	None	None
Old Business	None	None	None
New Business	None	None	None
Program Reports	<p>Epidemiology COVID 19 Update – Brandi Nelson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Omicron variant was detected in South Africa and is known as B1.1.529. It is currently unclear what the transmissibility and severity might be in comparison to the other variants. The CDC did classify the variant as a variant of concern. We will keep you updated as more information becomes available. • Muscogee County has 21,160 confirmed cases to date; the recent 14-day period shows 98 cases per 100,000. Probable cases are 3,427. Current PCR positivity rate is 7.2% compared to the previous 7-day rate of 5.7%, meaning we are in a period of significant community spread. Total hospitalizations are at 1,795, with 583 confirmed deaths. We are at 7.1% with breakthrough cases. Our fully vaccinated percentage is 40%. 	Program reports are attached and made a part of these minutes	None

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>Epidemiology – Continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed the board of a non-COVID update. In October there was one pediatric case of E. coli linked to the Georgia State Fair, in Perry, Georgia. Three other cases were also pediatric cases. We are waiting on the state to give an update on the investigation. The North Central Health District is following that investigation. 		
	<p>Public Information – Cont'd - Pam Kirkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed the board of continued weekly press release updates on COVID case numbers and vaccinations and the media advisory about our new mobile Public Health unit. The unit will be going out next week, which is National Influenza Vaccination Week, to do flu and COVID vaccines around the city, targeting people who may not have transportation or are underserved. The campaign for that will start Friday with commercials. Interviews (tv, radio, newspaper) pertaining to COVID-19, vaccinations, pediatric vaccinations, holiday COVID safety, the Omicron variant, the upcoming rabies clinic, and World AIDS Day testing event were all completed. Information by social media posts and advertisements covered breast cancer exams, vaccine clinics & locations, free Uber rides, pediatric vaccines holiday closings, a 6-month campaign for Linkage to Care (HIV support), the mobile vaccine unit and the rabies clinic which will be held tomorrow at our Veterans Parkway location. <p>QUESTION: Dr. Chhokar – How many people have used the Uber rides?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Asante' Hilts – I can get that number and report back.</p>		

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>Environmental Health – Kristi Ludy</p> <p>Referred members to the Environmental Health report of activities covering the month of October, emailed to all members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Food Service Program conducted 66 routine inspections, 1 follow up inspection, 2 initial inspections and 2 plan reviews. There were 4 complaints which were investigated • There was no pool and spa activity for the period reported, but we are gearing up for season to open in January. • Tourist accommodations conducted 10 routine inspections and 2 complaint investigations. • The Body Art program had 1 complaint which was investigated. • Rabies Control had no rabies exposures, 11 confinements with animal tested, which was negative. We had 1 rabies clinic at the Civic Center in October, but rain kept many from coming out. It cleared enough for about 2 hours of clinic time. There were 500 pre-registrations but only 176 showed. The next clinic will be tomorrow at the Veterans Parkway location using the COVID clinic area that Kim Fuller has so graciously allowed us to use. One other difference with this clinic is that it will all be pre-paid, and we will not be collecting money on site. • Vector Control conducted 30 complaint investigations. • On-Site Sewage issued 1 new system permit and 1 repair permit, conducted 3 installation inspections and 1 repair inspection. There was no activity for the Well Water program. <p>There were no questions.</p>		

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd</p>	<p>Nursing Report – Kimberly Fuller</p> <p>Referred to the FY22 Nursing report for the period of July 1 through October 31, 2021, (emailed to board members).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients who received services during the period include 5,232 initial visits; 1,520 return visits for a total of 6,752 visits compared to 1,950 total visits for the same period last year. • Community collaborations continue with monthly meetings and include MCAP, Child Fatality Review and CHINS. Community awareness activities continue with rapid COVID testing for first responders Columbus Consolidated Government staff, as well as clinical rotations for CSU nursing students. • Activities for this time frame include continued COVID SPOC testing in partnership with MAKO, weekly COVID conference calls, daily vaccination clinics, Strike Team and CORE clinics and planning meetings (calendar attached), flu vaccine outreach with Flournoy Development, breast cancer awareness exams and continue with regular Nurse Manager meetings. • Total COVID vaccines administered by us in Muscogee County including homebound visits since December 23, 2020, is 27,500. Our outside drive through vaccine is for 12 and older with the pediatric vaccines inside the department. <p>There were no questions.</p>		

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Adjournment	<p>Dr Chhokar thanked everyone and paid compliments to the members of the board and to the Public Health staff.</p> <p>Expressions of appreciation for Dr. Chhokar's service followed.</p> <p>With no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Chhokar at 1:32 pm.</p>		

Columbus Board of Health minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Peggy Hallmark

**NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
TO BE HELD ON
January 26, 2022, at 1:00 PM**