

Columbus Board of Health Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2020

Presiding: Rajinder Chhokar-MD

Attending Board Members: James Lopez-DMD, Devica Alappan-MD, Rebecca Covington (Mayor Office), Isaiah Hugley

Not Present: Yasmin Cathright, Sylvester McRae-MD

Others Present: Beverley Townsend-MD, Joanne Strickland, Tori Endres, Asante' Hilts, Pam Kirkland, Kimberly Fuller, Kristi Ludy, Steve Gunby-Atty, Dr. David Lewis, 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. Chhokar called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.	None	None
Approval of Minutes	Dr. Chhokar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged a quorum was present. Referred to minutes from the May meeting. With no questions or discussion from the members, Dr. Chhokar asked for a motion of approval. • Called for the Director's report. 	Motion made by Dr. Alappan, seconded by Dr. Lopez, and approved by all members present.	None
District Health Director's Report	Dr. Townsend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announced Health Department move to Veterans Parkway is in progress, as it has been for the last couple of weeks, with plans to open on July 1, 2020. The Department is still open for limited services at our current Comer Avenue location. We will have some things in place to move forward to provide our full services, such as screening and masks for anyone coming into the building; both for visitors and staff. • Stated that there have been some COVID-19 cluster outbreaks have occurred in our community, including the hospitals. 	None	None

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<p>Director's Report Cont'd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing continues daily from 7:00 am to 11:00 am. Pre-registration is preferred; however, we do not turn people away who are in line for testing but are not registered. We will register them on site. Test car lines are very long, wrapping around the blocks and out to Talbotton Road. We do have law enforcement on site for safety and to mark the end of line when time has run out to receive for the day. <p>We average 130 to over 200 tests per day and have test sites across the District, some of those also open on some Saturdays. We are utilizing temp workers for testing the next couple of weeks to give a reprieve to some of our staff and allow them to focus on the move.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the executive order to open businesses full, the DPH message remains the same – to screen for COVID symptoms, check temperatures, frequent handwashing, requiring face masks and practice social distance. • The hospitals have increased numbers, but do not have as many as they have in the past. <p>QUESTION: Dr. Chhokar – For clarification, are the increased numbers and clusters of COVID, are you speaking of in-town or for the whole of Public Health?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – The clusters have occurred in our own offices, as well as around town, but the numbers are increasing everywhere. Georgia is now in the red in terms of the numbers of increase with an 8.4 % positivity rate of those tested. That is across the state and certainly within our district.</p>		

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<p>Director's Report Cont'd</p>	<p>RESPONSE: Dr. Chhokar – For the Mayor’s discussion this evening, I hope we can request the Mayor to emphasize to the public the importance of wearing masks as people get out to businesses. With people getting out, it seems they are taking it easy and may think it is not a very big problem, but it is a still very big problem</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – I have required mask wearing for our staff within Public Health.</p> <p>QUESTION: Dr. Chhokar – Once the department move to Veterans Parkway is complete, will testing continue at the old facility?</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – Yes. Everything is already set up here. We are grateful to our landlord here at Comer Avenue for allowing us to continue to use space we need to continue testing here. We will continue here as long as we can, and the landlord will allow us. We will have to use temporary staff to run the test site. The move is great undertaking while at the same time keeping services available. We will eventually move that to the new location, but it will not be at the level we have here.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Chhokar – Yes, we see it would be difficult to set up at the new place and it may not have as much parking space for the set up.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Townsend – Yes. Veterans Parkway is a very busy fairway of the city, unlike here at Comer Avenue, as far as traffic.</p> <p>Our next in-person meeting will be at the new facility, though we do not yet know when that will be.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>		

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Financial Report	<p>Joanne Strickland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented financial overview through the end of May 2020, as emailed to members, stating that we started with an original budget of \$6,037,982; have had five revisions and are currently working under a budget of \$5,968,852. Total expenses as of the end of May are \$5,475,062, which is 92% of budget and on target for 11 months of operation. Line 4 shows the comparison to last year at the same time with an increase in expense of \$600,495, as stated before, salary increases accounting for the most that increase. Total fee income is \$992,437. Lines 6 through 17 show the comparison to last year, showing we are down due to COVID efforts preventing operation at full capacity with all services. The following two pages show the line item breakdown. Page 4 shows our grants, which are all on target for 11 months of operation. <p>There were no questions.</p>	None	None
Excused Absences	None	None	None
Old Business	None	None	None
New Business	None	None	None
Program Reports	<p>Public Information, Pam Kirkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have continued COVID-19 daily press releases during the month of June; conducted interviews on June 8th and 9th on WLTZ regarding our COVID-19 case numbers. 		

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd.</p>	<p>Public Information - Continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia State Representatives Calvin Smyre, Debbie Buckner, and Carolyn Hugley came by to thank Public Health, Dr. Townsend, Kim Fuller and the rest of the staff for the work we have been doing and our response to the pandemic, which was covered by channels 9 and 38. • Coverage on the progress to our move to the new location, media posts on pre-registration for testing, how contact tracing works, CDC recommendations all continue. • Announced the FDA warning on certain hand sanitizers. <p>RESPONSE: Dr. Chhokar – It is important to keep reminding the public of the importance of mask wearing and other CDC recommendations. We need to be reminded of the danger and not take this casually just because it is becoming old news.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>	<p>Program reports are attached and made a part of these minutes.</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>Environmental Health - Kristi Ludy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the Environmental Health report for the month of May which was emailed to you. May is when Environmental Health started to switch duties from assisting with COVID-19 efforts to prioritizing EH work. Priority EH duties were listed by the state office and include food service establishments that maintained a score of less than an A to receive inspection. • We continue to conduct plan reviews by conference call and email. Priority duties also consist of complaint investigation, well water testing and rabies control duties. All these are listed on the activity report. In July we start routine inspections. 		

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<p>Program Reports Cont'd.</p>	<p>Environmental Health – Continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EH is receiving calls with complaints of establishments in violation of the Governor’s executive order. We are managing to those with the assistance of Georgia State Patrol, when needed and help from state for interpreting how they apply to the complaints, using guidelines from the state for food establishments, tourist accommodations and tattoo parlors. <p>There were no questions.</p>		
	<p>Nursing Report – Kimberly Fuller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referring to the Nursing report emailed to you, we continue with COVID-19 response efforts, operating the Specimen Point of Collection (SPOC) from 7 am to 11 am Monday through Friday and from 9 am to 12 pm on Saturdays. • Usual community activities have been postponed or cancelled. Some have resumed by meetings online. We have been able to do some outreach providing PPE and have done that safely. • All other activities are focused on our relocation and those efforts are going really well. <p>There were no questions.</p>		
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>With no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Chhokar at 1:25 pm.</p>		

**NEXT BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING TO BE HELD:
AUGUST 26, 2020 1:00 PM (no meeting in July)
VIA CONFERENCE CALL**

Columbus Board of Health Minutes Respectfully submitted By Peggy Hallmark, Secretary