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**MEETING MINUTES** Approved 7-28-2020

**Tompkins County Board of Health**

**June 23, 2020**

**12:00 Noon**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Present:** Shawna Black; Melissa Dhundale, MD; David Evelyn, MD; Edward Koppel, MD; Susan Merkel; Janet Morgan, Ph.D.; and Christina Moylan, Ph.D., President

**Staff:** Karen Bishop, Director of Community Health; Liz Cameron, Director of Environmental Health; Brenda Grinnell Crosby, Public Health Administrator; Samantha Hillson, Director of Health Promotion Program; William Klepack, MD, Medical Director; Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director; Skip Parr, Senior Public Health Sanitarian; Deb Thomas, Director of Children with Special Care Needs; Jonathan Wood, County Attorney; Shelley Comisi, Administrative Assistant; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

**Call to Order:** Dr. Moylan called the regular meeting of the Board of Health (BOH) to order at 12:03 p.m.

**Privilege of the Floor:** Tony Busse from TOSA Apartments was present. Mr. Busse spoke about property at 1289 Ellis Hollow Road, and of his dissatisfaction of with his tenants immediately calling the Board of Health before contacting him. He believes this is not how the system was designed to work. He stated he is a not an absentee landlord and remedies problems as soon as possible. Dr. Moylan asked Mr. Busse if he any comments on the enforcement action against him today related to chlorine residuals and the boiled water order, which are not related to phone calls he referenced. Mr. Busse responded that the boiled water issue comes from tenants calling that they do not have water and the Board of Health immediately issuing orders, turning it into a bigger situation. Mr. Busse stated the water has never failed any tests and mentioned several corrective actions taken. Ms. Black asked for a discussion later in the meeting on how violations are issued as she does not see the connection and believes Mr. Busse maybe referring to something else and not the violation at hand. Mr. Busse stated he understands the violations are due to the boil water order and reiterated that his tenants are never without water for an extended amount of time.

Mr. Simon St. Laurent, a resident of Dryden was present. Mr. St. Laurent addressed the Board of Health of his concerns of Cornell's recently published reactivation plans of intense testing of the Cornell community which will weigh heavy on Tompkins County reporting approach making it very hard to tell the incidences of infection. Mr. St. Laurent requests Tompkins County update their reporting practices to include and identify on-campus/off-campus students vs. the surrounding communities but ideally

more detailed information about the cases. He referred to Steuben County's reporting practices as an excellent example to explore. Ms. Black thanked Mr. St. Laurent as she stated she has looked at the Cornell's reactivation plan and agreed with some of his thoughts and noted it was eye opening for the legislature to see the numbers of positives for the age ranges 20-29, which accounted for a third of our positive cases. Ms. Black stated that the three higher educational institutions are working on a message that is concise as well as shared. Dr. Moylan confirmed with Mr. St. Laurent that his concerns were of how the numbers are being reported. Mr. St. Laurent replied yes, but with more details without revealing the person as Steuben County has reported. Dr. Moylan asked why is having detailed information important. Mr. St. Laurent responded that it would give a stronger sense of where the infection might be rather than just having an infection temperature of the county that Tompkins County reports.

**Approval of May 26, 2020 Minutes:** Dr. Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2020 meeting as written; seconded by Ms. Merkel. The vote to approve the minutes as written; unanimous approval; motion carried.

**Financial Summary:** Ms. Grinnell-Crosby referred to the 2020/5<sup>th</sup> month financial report included in the packet. Ms. Grinnell-Crosby didn't have more to add to the written report She added they are in the midst of developing the 2021 budget to be submitted to the county by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Merkel asked a question regarding the county guidelines for 2021. Ms. Grinnell-Crosby stated the county requested submission of two budgets; a flat budget based on our current target and a second budget with a 12% reduction in local share dollars. Ms. Grinnell-Crosby stated that after conversations with Mr. Kruppa, other iterations will probably be submitted throughout the summer. Mr. Kruppa added that nothing has been considered for what the state might do or in any changes in the county's assessments as multiple changes maybe necessary because much hinges on federal stimulus and sales tax revenues, they anticipate huge reductions compared to last year. Mr. Kruppa noted that the Board will receive information, if there are any program changes that must occur due to budget cuts affecting programming as the Board of Health's role is around policy.

**Administration Report:** Mr. Kruppa reported not much time has been spent on contact tracing and case investigations as there are only two active cases and no hospitalizations. Mr. Kruppa stated that international travelers are arriving, and they are receiving the daily lists again as in the beginning of COVID, giving work to Ms. Bishop's team in Community Health Services with precautionary quarantining of those individuals. Mr. Kruppa reported that from a disease perspective, things are going very well coupled with reopening and protests, as people take the guidance seriously as the disease incidence is reflective of that. Much of the response activity is centered around reopening and as each phase opens it comes with new state guidelines and Ms. Cameron's team in Environmental Health answer questions from the community on reopening plans, education and/or enforcement. Mr. Kruppa stated Environmental Health has done an amazing job communicating the information out and dealing with any issues that may arise.

**Higher Education:** In addition to business reopening plans, the local higher education institutions have provided information on their reopening but since TC3 is part of SUNY their plan must go to the state for approval before making any announcements. Mr. Kruppa stated that all higher educational institutions are working together as he has weekly calls with all of them sharing ideas and being uniform in communication and approach in requested behaviors of students and faculty as they return. Multiple meetings are had each week with the leadership from the Cornell Health Center and Ithaca College's Hammond Health Center in their approach to inform their campus students and faculty's return in a safe

manner which includes the community. Mr. Kruppa spoke further on communication where Ms. Hillson is part of the communications group which also includes Dominick Recckio, Communications Manager and Katie Borgella, Planning Director. They are communicating clearly to the students, faculty, and staff as they return of the expectations and what reopening is going to look like which also includes the community. Mr. Kruppa noted that there is a separate workgroup working on the public information component. He also stated that Cayuga Health Systems and Dr. Evelyn have been doing pilot work with Cornell University on large-scale sampling and feels confident in supporting Ithaca College, Cornell University and TC3 in any testing efforts they have related to returning. Cayuga Health Systems is greatly appreciated in the county providing testing services.

Grades K-12: Mr. Kruppa reported that since our last meeting, K-12 is more up in the air as the governor expressed an extended school year. Special Education could be conducted in person this summer but noted that TST BOCES who provides those services for all the districts except Ithaca City School District, has chosen not to do those services in person. Special Education services will remain virtual for all the districts in the county (except Ithaca City School District, who is doing a hybrid model with some face-to-face but still virtual as their main concern) implementing all necessary protections to bring students back into the schools and focusing on reopening in the fall for all students. Planning but no direct guidance has been received from the state on school districts and we are not sure if the school districts will require state approval before reopening. In summary, grades K-12 is still being worked on.

Travel limits: Mr. Kruppa noted the governor mentioned limiting travel with states that are seeing increases in COVID cases.

Question from Mr. Wood regarding travel quarantined countries.

- Mr. Kruppa responded that we receive a daily state generated list of the level 2 and 3 countries on the CDC website but does not include the country of origin that the person traveled from, only of the outbreak regions in the world without identifying what region that is. Ms. Bishop had no additional information to add. Still unclear to Mr. Wood, Mr. Kruppa referred Mr. Wood to the CDC website to look under countries that are listed under level 2 or 3 as they should assume they will be quarantined for fourteen days upon return. Dr. Evelyn noted on his review of the CDC website, it is the rest of the world with exceptions of New Zealand and one or 2 countries now at level one.

Question from Dr. Morgan regarding Cayuga Health Systems handling testing of college campuses and follow-up.

- Mr. Kruppa responded that is up to the higher education institutions on who they use but the Health Department is encouraging the use of Cayuga Health Systems because of their connection to us and all the good work they have already done. Testing experience is that Cayuga Health Systems notifies people of negative test results and the Health Department is notifying, case investigating and contact tracing for positives. Mr. Kruppa stated as we work with both institutions about contact tracing, each will likely call their quarantined or isolated students and probably make contact tracing calls as well. Mr. Kruppa stated that much of the institutions' staff have taken the John Hopkins training, that the state made available and are being prepped with access to the Newcome Care System to do contact tracing in that system for us if needed.

Non-COVID Update: Mr. Kruppa reported that the Public Health/Mental Health departments and the county have been in conversation regarding the George Floyd murder and structural racism. The county has taken a strong position to do better as an employer provider of services and as leaders in our community. The county has tasked the departments heads and departments to begin work around structural racism and what it means to us as individuals, as a department to us and as a member of the larger community. County Administrator, Mr. Molino has spoken to staff, held town hall meetings, and gave a presentation outlining some steps to be taken from a countywide perspective. Mr. Kruppa stated he has held all staff meetings with both departments speaking of the commitment, acknowledging there will be challenging conversations with questions of what we're doing as an employer, but also someone who's providing services in our community. The strategic planning process (restarting in August) will be looked at again and will address equity and how structural racism can be fully integrated into the process as well. Mr. Kruppa noted that Ms. Hillson is exploring ways to incorporate more of this conversation into the community health improvement plan.

**Health Promotion Program Report:** Ms. Hillson reiterated that they are committed to revisiting, rethinking or creating new lines in a health and equity lens to make sure structural racism is addressed as a public health issue and to identify areas and policies that we need to work on to get community engagement and input to make a change. Ms. Hillson stated she hopes to draw more expertise to get feedback as she works closely with Communications Director, Dominick Recckio who is revamping our public information advisory board. Ms. Hillson gave an update on COVID communications as the team continues to work daily in responding to public inquiries and social media, working with our news outlets and making downloadable informational posters available on the website.

Question from Dr. Moylan regarding reporting numbers in a different way.

- Ms. Hillson responded that yes, we are open to suggestions and ideas moving forward and believes that the higher education communications subcommittee will be a consideration for that group as we move forward.

**Medical Director's Report:** Dr. Klepack commented he was impressed with a Steuben County report that he had seen and believes that you could probably identify a person based on their data reporting but that is not what we want to do. We don't want to violate an individual's privacy. Moving in a direction to inform the community and inform the university community about testing on the campuses can be considered but not to the level of Steuben County. Dr. Klepack stated he is concerned that domestic travel looks as risky as international travel. In terms of testing, there is another category that states in the opinion of the Health Department, an individual should be tested and that the department can make that happen, if we come across an individual whose travel was domestic and looks pertinent to be tested. Dr. Klepack stated in his capacity or a member of the Public Health department they could choose to authorize a test. Dr. Klepack stated he has been working on the website with Ms. Hillson, Mr. Kruppa and Mr. Recckio to craft a variety of topics/important issues to communicate and inform people and update practitioner's bulletins. Dr. Klepack believes domestic travels should be on our radars. Dr. Klepack referred to his submission of practitioner's bulletins reporting primary care surveillance data and noted that it is consistently low with what we are seeing in terms of case reports.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding the criteria for being tested without needing a reason.

- Mr. Kruppa responded that it is not true as there are still criteria for testing, with the most recent addition of protestors. The challenges are around reopening testing to anyone that wants a test

and who's paying for it. Cayuga Health System has taken on a huge burden to make testing available, but the insurance companies are pushing back claiming medical necessity is not a government order, so the concern of who will pay for all the testing that Cayuga Health Systems is/has been putting out with lack of uncertainty and even more so outside the states criteria that that wouldn't be reimbursed either and that's why we have not expanded beyond the state criteria. There is no clarity on who is paying for all these tests being done. New York State has the taxpayers to fall back on whereas Cayuga Health Systems does not.

Dr. Klepack reiterated to continue wearing masks and social distancing.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding testing for domestic travelers and is the local Health Department allowed to go beyond the guidelines of NYS Department of Health and is testing reimbursable?

- Dr. Klepack responded that it would be by a case-by-case basis.
- Dr. Evelyn responded that what is being seen is if a person had symptoms as with a cough/fever, insurances will pay but will not necessarily pay for an essential provider because of their business, or those mandated to get tested twice a week, which is a big issue for New York State, the Country and Tompkins County. As far as testing for travelers potentially being exposed, that is also not being covered under insurance. Dr. Moylan commented that it would probably have implications for higher education as they would be doing surveillance testing and not symptom testing. Drs. Evelyn and Koppel agreed that the universities would probably have to cover the funding for the testing.

**Division for Community Health Report:** Ms. Bishop added that their team consisting of the community health nurses from Community Health and Children with Special Care Needs continue to work seven days a week in response to cases and complimented the team on amazing work. Ms. Bishop had nothing more to add and will continue to support Dr. Klepack in his surveillance study of local practitioners.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding any changes in immunizations restarting.

- Ms. Bishop responded that they are in preliminary planning stages to bring up the immunization clinics on a very limited basis later in July with the primary focus on children who have not completed the primary vaccination series and secondarily on children who need vaccinations for school and adults are on the back burner. Ms. Merkel asked will school districts require employees to get flu immunizations in the fall. Mr. Kruppa responded that there will be conversations on flu vaccinations this fall as we have already started educating about the getting the flu shot. Mr. Kruppa noted it is challenging for the Health Department as it is unknown when flu vaccinations will be available but there will be a change in the language this year, coupled with COVID as the symptoms are the same. Mr. Kruppa highly encourages people to get a flu vaccination.

**Children with Special Care Needs Report:** Ms. Thomas reported that the nurses are doing less COVID work but still cover on the weekends and on-call. Ms. Thomas reported that the governor issued an executive order giving permission for special education classrooms to reopen which included pre-school. Ms. Thomas stated she has been working closely with the Racker Center and Ithaca City School District to get more guidance from New York Stated Education as they plan to open small classrooms

July 20 and July 6 respectively. Guidance was received on June 18<sup>th</sup> from the Bureau of Early Intervention to restart face-to-face visits if public health officials approve. Ms. Thomas stated they will start slowly and only with the children that could not participate in teletherapy.

**County Attorney's Report:** Mr. Wood had nothing to report.

**Environmental Health Report:** Ms. Cameron had nothing additional to report.

Question from Ms. Merkel regarding Hydrilla signs in Cass Park.

- Ms. Cameron responded the Hydrilla patches identified from last year are being treated. Treatment is also starting at the Finger Lakes Marina.

Question from Dr. Morgan regarding the COVID waste water surveillance study.

- Ms. Cameron stated since funding is an issue and that Mr. Kruppa recently signed a letter supporting expanding the scope of the project state-wide. Public Health Engineer, Scott Freyburger has been working with local wastewater treatment plants and submitting samples, although that may stop due to funding limitations. There are HIPAA related concerns with releasing correlating case information.

Question from Dr. Koppel regarding decrease in food service inspections during COVID.

- Ms. Cameron responded that New York State Department of Health stopped doing field inspections when COVID hit and Environmental Health followed suit. Staff are getting back into the field more, but inspections will generally be limited to COVID compliance. Ms. Cameron noted Environmental Health is responding to complaints as well as inspecting campgrounds and pools.

Dr. Morgan commented that the new activity summary in the packet this month was helpful.

- Ms. Cameron responded that the new format was created to present more data.

**Report on the Community Services Board (CSB) Meeting:** Mr. Kruppa reported that the Community Services Board Meeting heard presentations from staff regarding single point of entry, housing and how the mobile crisis team has been implemented during COVID. Strategic planning was discussed as it will be restarting in August.

**Revised Resolution #EH-ENF-20-0016 – TOSA Apartments, T-Dryden, Violations of BOH Orders #EH-ENF-20-0001 and Subpart 5-1 of the New York State Sanitary Code (Water):** Ms. Cameron explained that this is an issue that has been continuing since we became aware that bulk water was being added to their water system. The water was added without confirming if chlorine was present, which resulted in a boil water order until TOSA Apartments could certify their system was safe. TOSA Apartments has not submitted water samples and has not hired an engineer to evaluate their system. Ms. Cameron stated monthly operating reports were received but missing necessary information.

There was discussion about the proposed and past penalties. Dr. Koppel asked if there were communication issues as Mr. Busse did not address the lack of chlorine. Ms. Cameron believes there are communication issues but they are not due to the Health Department. Mr. Busse was able to attend today's Zoom meeting but he still did not seem familiar with the requirements of the Order that was included with the meeting notification. Ms. Cameron stated that the same happened with the boiled water order as the information was provided and there was difficulty in obtaining Mr. Busse's response.

Dr. Moylan moved to approve the resolution as written. All in favor; motion carried unanimously.

**Administration Report:** Mr. Kruppa reported on the status of the Board of Health vacancy. Mr. Kruppa reached out to the potential candidate that he was in conversation with prior to COVID but has not been able to connect with yet. He will reach out again.

**Adjournment:** Dr. Moylan adjourned the meeting at 1:28 p.m.