

**THE FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOURTH REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF HEALTH OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2022**

The Five Hundred Fifty-Fourth Meeting of the Baltimore County Board of Health was held January 28, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. via Webex.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Adelsberger, Dr. Havrilak, Judy Kistner, Katie McElroy, Winona Matthews, Dr. Barbara McLean and Camille Smith.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Alexander Chen; Chief, Division of Communicable Diseases, Della Leister; Deputy Health Officer/Secretary Pro Tem, Laura Culbertson; Chief, Quality Improvement, and Kathy Wynn, Executive Secretary to the Director. A constituent, Wanda who declined to provide her last name was also in attendance.

Dr. Havrilak opened the meeting. Should it be necessary to close the meeting, the Chair will conduct a recorded vote on a motion to close. A closing statement will also be prepared that cites the part of the Open Meetings Act that contains the applicable exception, lists the topics to be discussed in the closed session and give the public body's reason for excluding the public.

I. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

To approve the minutes of December 3, 2021 as presented.

Motion:	Ms. Matthews
Second:	Ms. McElroy
Decision:	Unanimous Approval

II. COVID VACCINES AND THERAPEUTICS

Dr. Chen provided a COVID-19 immunization update that summarized the research from the different companies. Dr. Chen's last update to the Board was at the January 2021 meeting. The number of COVID cases peaked the beginning of this month. Deaths continue to climb, exceeding the Delta peak. There are far more cases than number of deaths. Omicron went from first being discovered the end of November to becoming nearly 100% by the end of December.

One year ago:

Moderna and Pfizer vaccines received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). These vaccines were the very first mRNA vaccines in history. Trials showed the vaccines provided 95% protection against symptomatic disease. Johnson and Johnson were nearing the end of their trials. The first monoclonal antibody received EUA in 2020. No oral therapies available.

Today:

- **Pfizer:** Approved for ages 16 and up
 - EUA for 5-12 YO and 12-15 YO
- **Moderna:** EUA approved for ages 18 and up
- **Janssen:** EUA granted Feb. 27, 2021
 - Vaccine not preferred
- **Novavax:** Authorized by WHO in Dec. 2021
 - Not yet authorized in USA.
 - Scale manufacturing an issue

Current US COVID vaccines as of January 2022

Vaccine Company	Initial efficacy	EUA date	Adult dose	Pediatric dose available?
Pfizer (Comirnaty)	95%; 100% hosp	Dec 11, 2020 Full approval for 16+: Aug 23, 2021	Ages 12+: 30 mcg x 2 doses at least 21 days apart (+1 additional dose after 28 more days if immunocompromised) 1 booster dose 5 months after completing primary series	EUA for: 12-15 yo (30 mcg x 2 doses) 5-12 yo (10 mcg x 2 doses) 6 mo-5 yo: Study in progress (3 mcg, may need 3 rd dose)
Moderna (Spikevax)	94% Sx 100% hosp	Dec 18, 2020 FDA has not yet reviewed application for full approval 18+	Age 18+: 100 mcg x 2 doses at least 28 days apart (+1 additional dose after 28 more days if immunocompromised) 50 mcg booster dose 5 months after completing primary series	Study in progress
Janssen (J&J)	66% Sx; 100% hosp	Feb 27, 2021	1 initial dose + 1 additional dose 2 months later	Study in progress
Novavax	90%; 100% mod-sev	Application pending	5 mcg x 2 doses Booster study in progress	Study in progress

Pediatric doses are not yet available for children under five. One of the reasons we have not seen full approval of Moderna, and rapid approvals of pediatric vaccine is due to myocarditis. A study from Denmark overall showed very low rates. For Pfizer 1 in 69K and for Moderna 1 in 22K. Rates are higher in younger men. Cases occur within a few days after the first dose. Risks outweigh the benefit of the vaccine.

Over time, vaccines don't work as well. The New England Journal noted an increasing risk over time of COVID infection after a period of receiving the vaccine. All vaccines decrease over time.

The Israelis were the first to use boosters widely. Mix and match booster strategy is being used in this country. It does not matter what vaccine you received, you can get boosted by any other vaccine. The general conclusion is boosting works.

Deaths and cases

Unvaccinated vs. Vaccinated vs. Boosted

- There is a difference in terms of cases per unvaccinated vs. vaccinated and vaccinated with booster.
 - There is a large difference in cases between unvaccinated and individuals who received any vaccine. Early Omicron wave – Unvaxed vs. vaxed – 3.1 more cases and 19.4 more deaths. Unvaxed vs. boosted – 5x more cases
- Two oral therapies are available, Molnupiravir and Nirmatrelvir.

Are we nearing the end of the omicron wave? Denmark is nearing 50% of cases of a BA2 Omicron sub-variant. Slower in some other countries. England cases are leveling off.

III. ACCREDITATION

A gap analysis has been completed and provided to Ms. Leister as to where the department is challenged in accreditation in finding evidence of the standard. We are three quarters of the way through the process. All must be done and submitted by the end of April. Board members thanked Ms. Culbertson for her efforts on accreditation.

IV. DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION BY THE SECRETARY

Della Leister, Deputy Health Officer/Secretary Pro Tem, provided the remarks of the Secretary.

- The Baltimore County Council passed legislation that will allow chickens (hens) on certain properties of one acre or less. The department is working with Permits, Approvals and Inspections (PAI) as this is a zoning bill but may have implications for Animal Services.
- During the course of the pandemic and even before, hospitals have reported ongoing issues with their Emergency Departments being filled with individuals with behavioral health issues that don't need hospitalization but also cannot be discharged. Behavioral health issues are both substance use disorder and mental health disorders. The County has created an internal workgroup to review crisis services in Baltimore County and to make recommendations. The group will gather information from our hospital partners.
- Baltimore County is holding Town Hall budget meetings in every council district. These are currently virtual and the schedule is on the website. These are open to the public.
- The Maryland Department of Health experienced a network security issue at the beginning of December. It impacted certain state systems that our department uses. Most of what we use has been restored and what hasn't been we have developed work around processes.
- The Maryland Department of Health launched a youth suicide prevention toolkit to help address the issue of youth suicide. Data shows that emergency room visits for suspected suicide attempts increased during the pandemic among adolescents. Baltimore County recognized youth suicide as an issue before the pandemic and hired a suicide prevention coordinator to work on a plan and interventions.

- The department continues to provide smoking cessation classes, both virtual and in person. The department also provide Naloxone training and many of our other traditional public health services.

COVID report

When the Board last met, COVID-19 numbers had improved. Unfortunately, the numbers began surging right before the holiday and public health has been extremely busy over the past month. To address the surge we expanded testing operations and opened a walk up testing site at the lower level of the former Sears building in White Marsh. In addition, we continue testing at our other locations, including Liberty Family Resource Center, Dundalk Health Center and the trailer next to Drumcastle. We moved to appointment only testing at County testing clinics on January 10 so that residents are not waiting in the inclement weather.

In addition, the department continues vaccine clinics at four fixed sites: Former Sears at White Marsh, Randallstown Community Center, Sollers Point Community Center and Lansdowne Elementary School. All information is on our website.

In addition, the State of Maryland opened 20 sites across the state; two are in Baltimore County. A site opened in early January at Lifebridge Northwest Hospital and last week a testing site opened on the upper grounds of Greater Baltimore Medical Center.

Staff

HHS' own Baltimore County Public School nurse was featured in a Baltimore Sun picture of the year in the annual Baltimore Sun photos of the year, administering a vaccine to a 6 year old at the White Marsh location.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

HB 267, Criminal Law – Threats Against Public Health Official or Hospital Staff Member

Dr. Havrilak was in contact with the Chair of the Howard County Board of Health. He emailed a letter of support for HB 267 composed by their Board. The Howard County Board has agreed to promote this bill. Dr. Havrilak has asked board members to read this bill and provide feedback as to where members stand regarding this bill. Ms. Leister stated there is a companion senate bill to the house bill. The house bill was heard in the judiciary committee Tuesday of this week. The senate bill will be heard next week. The bill offers civil penalties to individuals that threaten a public health official. The department's legislative liaison is following both these bill. Ms. Wynn to forward links to the bills for members to review. Board members will send comments to Ms. Leister regarding a decision for a letter of support.

VII. REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN:

Dr. Havrilak thanked members for attending and to be looking for the link to the house bill. The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for February 25, 2022.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Motion: Ms. Kistner

Second: Dr. McLean

Decision: Unanimous Approval



Della J. Leister, R.N.