

**THE FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY-SECOND REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF HEALTH OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2022**

The Five Hundred Sixty-Second meeting of the Baltimore County Board of Health was held December 2 at 9:30 a.m. via WebEx.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch; Health Officer and Secretary to the Board, Della Leister; Deputy Health Officer, Laura Culbertson; Chief, Quality Improvement, Terry Sapp; Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, and Christina Bergman; Office Administrator.

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 October 28, 2022.

Motion: Dr. McLean
Second: Ms. Matthews
Decision: Unanimous Approval

II. ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW

Ms. Leister presented the annual report to the Board.

Department of Health programs assemble the annual report on a yearly basis. The goal is to have the report completed by October 31. The report distributed to members is noted as draft as we ask for the Boards' input prior to finalizing. The annual report highlights topical areas rather than programs. This annual report is for FY22, which ended June 30 of this year. The report does not include any COVID related items. There will be a separate report for COVID.

Ms. Leister asked board members for the FY23 report would the Board would like to see a different format, different numbers promoted or any other items in the annual report? Ms. McElroy inquired if there was a mechanism to identify a notable increase or decrease from the prior year. Ms. Leister commented that would be an excellent addition to the report.

Ms. Kistner commented to place in parenthesis underneath immunizations that the number does not include COVID vaccine numbers. There was also a suggestion that we include the types of immunizations provided. Another member also asked to include an explanation of the potential rabies exposures investigated.

III. PHEP

Terry Sapp, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, provided a review via Power Point on Emergency Operations in 2021-2022.

During the last 14 months, PHEP has responded to a variety of public health emergencies:

- On September 21, tropical depression Ida generated significant tornado outbreaks. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated as there were a significant number of tornado warnings in Baltimore County. Mr. Sapp does not recall in his career ever encountering that many tornados in that short period of time. There were more than six tornado warnings. PHEP was tracking the tropical depression throughout the day. Although it was never confirmed by the National Weather Service, property damage occurred on the east side of Baltimore County due to the storm.
- A fire occurred at St. Luke's Place, an independent living apartment complex with over 100 senior citizens. The single apartment fire occurred on the fourth floor. Smoke and water spread throughout the entire facility. Most of the seniors were relocated next door to a safe facility.
- A major flooding incident occurred from a storm that involved an emergency shelter activation on the east side of the County.
- The County experienced two back to back winter storms in January.
- E.coli contamination in Baltimore City – a boil water advisory extended into parts of Baltimore County. Water was distributed by the County in impacted areas.
- An additional boil water advisory due to a Montebello sinkhole contamination. No water distribution was required.
- PHEP also participated in a number of tabletop exercises. We are always preparing and training for the next event/emergency.

Ms. Smith inquired about a recent active shooter Uber incident and if the department is made aware of these instances. Mr. Sapp responded we pay attention to all of those types of instances as well as receiving alerts from the Maryland Coordination Center which is a fusion center with FBI and Police. We are always aware of criminal and terrorist activity. Active shooter incidents are predominantly a police department issue. The public health role in that type of preparedness would have to do with mobilizing a family assistance center, a location where individuals that were fleeing/evacuating from an active shooter incident would be directed. Very similar to St. Luke's; we would be doing accountability and assisting with reunification of families if needed.

Dr. Havrilak thanked Mr. Sapp for today's presentation and PHEP staff for all they do for the County.

IV. ACCREDITATION

Ms. Culbertson reported we are waiting for our interim report that is due to come in two weeks.

Ms. Culbertson informed the Board this is her last meeting. She is retiring. Dr. Havrilak thanked Ms. Culbertson on behalf of the Board for all she has done for Baltimore County and the Department of Health. Her reports have been very timely and informative.

Ms. Culbertson thanked the Board for their participation and close attention to all things required to support the health accreditation process and all our best practices.

V. DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION BY THE SECRETARY

COVID

We have seen an increase in numbers in the past week. There have been 1,000 new cases in the state of Maryland with the positivity rate increasing slightly. There has been a slight increase in the number of individuals in hospitals due to COVID in addition to an increase in COVID related deaths. We continue our COVID response with contact tracing for those high-risk populations to manage outbreaks. COVID testing is available at two of our sites although demand has decreased. COVID vaccinations are available at two standing clinics. Flu vaccine is also available at COVID vaccination clinics. We will be transitioning both flu and COVID to be routine vaccinations at our health centers.

Mpox (Monkeypox)

There are 69 active cases in Baltimore County, 731 in the State of Maryland with two deaths. The United States has 29,000 cases.

The department has given almost 2,700 Mpox vaccinations. We participated in a well-coordinated vaccine clinic with the Baltimore City Health Department at The Eagle, which is a popular LGBTQ bar located on North Charles Street in Baltimore City.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

We continue to monitor RSV, reminding the public about respiratory hygiene, e.g.; to seek care, don't send your kids to school sick or go to work sick.

Program Updates

As reported earlier in the PHEP presentation, a major sinkhole occurred in Baltimore City at Lake Montebello. The sinkhole exposed a major extremely large waterline that feeds a large part of Eastern Baltimore County. A number of meetings were held over the course of four days, including the weekend, planning for a boil water advisory to actions needed should there be no water. Fortunately, Baltimore City was able to secure the sinkhole and begin repairs on the line underneath to stabilize the waterline.

If you follow us on Facebook, you will see that we are asking people to let us know where they shop for food. We are working to develop food access maps to determine where food issues are in the County. Baltimore County has taken on food access as an initiative. The Department of

Social Services (DSS) has a full time staff member dedicated to food access issues. We are working on this initiative, in conjunction with our local health coalition, to determine where there are access issues for food in the County.

There have been two site visits since the last board meeting. One was a virtual behavioral health site visit during the week of Thanksgiving. There were no concerns noted. Animal Services had an unannounced site visit on November 17 by the Maryland Department of Agriculture to look at our medical facility located on Manor Road. Animal Services passed without any concerns. During the site visit, reviewers looked at the lobby, facility license; reviewed the surgical rooms, controlled substance logs and the veterinarian exam rooms. We have not yet received a written report but all went well with the visit. We expect them to visit the Dundalk spay/neuter site in the next few weeks.

Personnel

The County has hired a consultant to review all class and compensation positions to determine if the positions are properly classified and compensated. A review was done about twenty years. We have not heard personally from the consultant, we know that there are some positions missing in the public health structure. Compensation issues are paramount in trying to hire in this environment.

The County Executive has won the election for a second term. The inauguration is Monday. He has asked Dr Branch to continue as the director of Health and Human Services.

As Laura mentioned earlier, she is retiring after 20+ years at Baltimore County Department of Health. Her last business day is next Friday.

Michael Mintz, an Environmental Health Services employee, was recognized for his 40 years of service to the County.

Dr. Branch received his fifteen year certificate of service to Baltimore County.

Facilities

The search continues for a location for a Cockeysville health center. We are now looking at facilities available to lease.

We continue to work on relocation of the Reisterstown WIC office.

Trainings and Events

Dr. Branch spoke at the annual American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence conference. The conference theme was “the power of collaboration”. Dr. Branch spoke about HHS and how being the director of both health and social services benefits residents. He also discussed the department’s no wrong door framework.

National Animal Shelter Appreciation week was November 7. Animal Services staff were recognized in the classifieds.

First Amendment Audits

Some of the state's local health departments are being visited by individuals under the first Amendment protections.

Members of the public, amendment auditors, go to a public location of a government building to videotape the work of local government which could be the street, sidewalk, or lobby; wherever the public are allowed. These individuals have every right to be in a public setting. They are not permitted to be in a secure area.

We need to look at our sites to ensure the appropriate signage is posted, identifying public/common and employee only areas.. These visits are posted on YouTube, Facebook and other social media sites. They want to see if they can exercise their constitutional rights under the first amendment to go into a public setting and videotape.

These visits are being brought to the Board's attention as we are revising our policy. We would like one or two board members to review the revisions and provide input. We also need to educate our front line staff so that they are comfortable and familiar with what a first amendment audit is so that they do not turn someone away but also that they don't allow them in an area that is confidential. The public health accreditation board also would like to have Boards involved in policy.

Dr. Havrilak asked for volunteers from the Board. Ms. McElroy, Dr. McLean and Dr. Havrilak volunteered to review the policy revisions. Review of the policy can happen after the holiday.

For the last few years, we have selected topics and had PowerPoint presentations by a department content expert. Does the Board want to continue this process for next year? If yes, are there any specific public health issues board members would be interested in having a presentation?

Dr. Havrilak asked to email board members with this question for them to respond.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leister provided follow up on a question from last month's meeting. The question was children that are excluded from Baltimore County Public Schools because of vaccination status-, do they receive virtual learning? They do not as legally they are not enrolled in school because of their immunization status. Parents can sign them up for home school. This is why we work hard to get school age children vaccinated so they don't lose educational time. Dr. Havrilak inquired if parents are provided information on how to enroll in home schooling? Ms. Leister believes they are provided that information.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Smith shared the CDC is updating their designation of Moneypox which will now be referred to as Mpox. Ms. Leister thanked Ms. Smith for bringing that to the Board's attention. The department had someone monitoring as we heard that was coming and do want to make that change.

VIII. REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN

The next meeting of the Board will be January 27. Ms. Leister reminded members that January, February and March meetings will be virtual due to the high respiratory rate and colder weather. April's meeting will be in person.

Dr. Havrilak wished everyone a happy and safe holiday.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Motion: Dr. McLean
Second: Ms. McElroy
Decision: Unanimous Approval



Gregory Wm. Branch, M.D., MBA, CPE, FACP