

Allen County Department of Health Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting
July 20, 2020

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Allen County Department of Health was called to order in the Council Chambers located at 200 East Berry Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana, at 5:45 p.m., pursuant to the notice sent to all Directors in accordance with the bylaws.

The following Directors were present: Ted Sobol, Deb Lambert, Dr. Thomas Dykstra, Mary Hess, Dr. William Pond, Patti Hays and Dr. James Cameron.

Dr. Pond presided over the meeting. Jennifer Miller recorded the proceedings of the meeting.

Dr. Pond called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. The minutes from three previous meetings were approved.

Summary of Motions Passed at this Meeting:

- Motion was made to approve the January 27, March 12 and May 28, 2020 minutes by Dr. Dykstra. (MPU)
- Consent Agenda – motion was made by Dr. Cameron to approve the consent agenda. (MPU)

Board Appointment Reports:

Health Commissioner's Report – Matthew Sutter, MD

- Dr. Sutter said he has had a very busy first month as health commissioner. He thanked Mindy Waldron for setting up a very intentional educational process for him. "I want to thank Mindy for setting this up," he said. He continued, "Mindy focused great intention into how we get someone up to speed who has never done public health before. There was a lot I didn't know." He said he got to look at the practices of all nine divisions, he had some legal lectures and spent a lot of time shadowing and getting to know people. Dr. Sutter said he shadowed staff on inspections at hotels and grocery stores, mosquito and septic inspections and one bed bug complaint.
- During his first three weeks as health commissioner, Dr. Sutter said there was time to look at developing a strategy for dealing with COVID-19. "Obviously, there has been lots of strategy about our response to COVID-19," he said, "but what I wanted to do was come up with some clear concepts about where we focus. There is going to be the constant firefighting that goes on and there is going to be the constant crisis that goes on. But throughout that-- where are we going to pick our focus and how are we going to take our scarce resources and put them to their best use?"
- Dr. Sutter said he developed three main points on which to focus:
 - **Data-** A data team has been formed to monitor the disease activity in our community, the burden of disease, the hospital capacity.
 - **Case Investigation & Contact Tracing** – "This is meat and potatoes of public health," said Dr. Sutter. He continued, "It is a public health intervention that has been around for 100 years. It is what stopped Ebola in West Africa." Dr. Sutter said the state took over

contact tracing back in May, which was the best decision for the state. He said, “When you look at the state as whole, there were a lot of gaps. They made the best decision for the state to do this through a call center.” Dr. Sutter continued, “We felt we could do a better job by bringing that back. Not because we were better people, but we had a little bit different focus. We have the ability to do home visits. We are case investigators. So, we took back contact tracing at the end of June.”

- Dr. Sutter said, “What this gives us is really great situational awareness. What you don’t always get when you are trying to sift through data that is taken through the state and then brought back is that really close touch as to where our cases are happening. Which factories are we worried about? Which employers are we worried about? Which families are we worried about and how do we reach out and intervene? When do you send someone out to the home or workplace to make sure we have interventions in place to help stop these outbreaks? We are able to do this now.”
- **Testing-** “This is a work in progress,” said Dr. Sutter. Currently, he said the state has contracted with Optum. Optum is contracted through August with the state. “The move from there,” he said, “is to try and move the testing sites local.” Dr. Sutter said, “Mindy and the team are doing diligent work with trying to sort through how we do testing well in our community. How do we get the funnel open as wide as possible? And how do we help people who may not have the resources and ability to get tested otherwise? How do we help them?” Dr. Sutter said there have been supply issues with testing and by bringing the testing local, he hopes to mitigate many of those issues.
- Dr. Sutter shared statewide and Allen County data on positive test rates, hospital utilization and ICU bed usage.
- Board Discussion – Dr. Cameron asked if the measure of hospital capacity takes into account hospital staffing. Dr. Sutter replied, “To the best of my knowledge it does not.” Dr. Pond asked, “Although our case rates are going up, it seems as if our death rate is trending down. Why is it our cases are increasing, yet our ICU usage and death rates are not?” Dr. Sutter replied, “I think it demonstrates the timing of when bad disease happens with COVID-19. So, when we start to see a case, it is typically one week after when people start to develop more severe symptoms that would require hospitalization. Typically, admissions trail about a week behind. Many of these people will be sick for a very long time in the hospital. Death will typically trail three to five weeks behind. So, the death rates rise typically a month after we see the cases.”
- SEE ACTUAL COMMISSIONER’S REPORT FOR ALL OTHER ISSUES.

Administrator’s Report – Mindy Waldron

- Mindy Waldron gave the board an update on the operations or logistics for the department since the March 9th community planning meeting at the Coliseum. Mindy said for some of the staff, the pandemic occupies 100 percent of their time. In the beginning of the pandemic, education focused more on explaining what a pandemic looks like and how this is different than H1N1. Education efforts included daily updates to the website, producing algorithms to help businesses and schools and more. Mindy thanked Jana Sanders for her daily work on making sure data is available for the department’s use every morning. Mindy said Jana has been

working every morning to review data and convert it into graphs and other forms for staff use. “We have been able to use real time data because of Jana’s hard work,” said Mindy.

- Mindy explained that there have been many enforcement issues. She said anytime there is a change to any of the governor’s orders or directives, it sometimes results in complaints. She said to date, the department has received 256 facility complaints and 245 inspections were generated.
- Since the first week of the pandemic, Mindy said the department has been managing many personal protective equipment (PPE) deliveries. She said this is a service the department provides that really flies under the radar of most people. Some of the supplies came from the departments supplies, some were donated and some came from the national stockpile. Donations of PPE came from Ivy Tech, BAE Systems, Sister Cities, Three Rivers Distillery, City of Fort Wayne, Pro Fed Credit Union, FEMA, ISDH, and IDHS. Some facilities receiving PPE included: long term care facilities, shelters, EMS, police, fire, hospitals, physician offices, oral health offices, therapists, eye care, funeral homes, home health and more.
- Mindy thanked Dave Fiess, director of environmental services, and his staff for managing the inventory of PPE, delivering it and also educating recipients of the deliveries on proper methods for using the equipment. Mindy said to date, the total number of facilities the department has assisted is 256 and the department has made 655 deliveries.
- Mindy reported the following data to the board for the total number and type of PPE delivered:
 - Face covering/surgical masks 49,430
 - N95 respirators 48,875
 - Vinyl gloves 112,100
 - Latex gloves 4,600
 - Nitrile gloves 3,900
 - Gowns 2,486
 - Face shields 9,940
 - Hand sanitizer (gallons) 301
 - Safety glasses 137
- Mindy said to date, the COVID-19 hotline has received 4,300 calls. Between one and five staff the hotline every day. Mindy thanked Susie Cisney who has overseen the hotline since its beginning and said she is still fielding calls. Mindy said the staff have done a wonderful job fielding the same questions, day in and day out in a professional and caring manner.
- Mindy said to date, the staff has spent 9,319 regular hours and 1,603 overtime hours working on COVID-19. In total 10,921 staff hours have been dedicated to COVID-19.
- A brief update from Mindy on expenses included \$24,000 spent on supplies, equipment and services and \$87,000 spent on staffing costs and overtime. The total COVID-19 cost so far for the department is \$111,000. Mindy said she hopes to receive reimbursement for some of these expenses through federal COVID relief grants.

- Mindy said a major focus right now is working with schools. “It’s all about preparations and making plans,” she said. Erika Pitcher has been handling case investigations and has helped develop trainings. Mindy said so far three training sessions have been held for schools, an online resource toolkit has been created and an online case reporting portal (CROSS) is being developed. Jana Sanders and Erika Pitcher are working with Mindy to help develop this reporting portal.
- The Resource toolkit for schools provides schools with the opportunity to quiz staff on many different definitions, identify possible cases and decision-making algorithms to help guide schools through possible cases. Mindy said many other counties have begun using this tool as well.
- Mindy said that she and Dave Fiess are also currently reviewing plans for schools, sports leagues, fairs and festivals and venues and facilities. Mindy and Dave have reviewed at least 75 plans and more are being submitted. Currently, for any plan with over 250 attendees, the health department is required to review them.
- Looking forward, Mindy said that she is working on plans for local testing options and preparing for mass vaccinations. Mindy said more details on both will be coming.
- Mindy thanked Megan Hubartt for her efforts in working with the media and other groups to provide press releases and other information around the clock. Mindy said her contributions have been truly appreciated.
- Mary Hess said, “The health department has been wonderful to the schools. We have a lot of questions. There are very few health providers in the schools and many of them don’t work in the summers. But it is difficult to train those without a medical background how to get through this safely. I really don’t know if we would have a shot at opening safely without the support of the health department.” Mary commented that the resources created by the department inspired the schools to create some very robust and safe plans. “The plans are probably at a higher level than if we would have had to do this alone,” she said. Mary said, “I can’t say enough about how grateful we are for all you do.”
- Deb Lambert said that without the supplies of PPE the department provided early in the pandemic, her facility would not have had any PPE to offer staff. She said she knows many other long term care (LTC) facilities felt the same way. “On behalf of our residents, myself personally and the LTC community, we are grateful. You are top notch and I am proud to be associated with the organization. I hope our community understands and appreciates all you do.”
- Patti Hays asked, “Who is helping parents make decisions on whether they should have their children attend school in person or virtually?” Mary Hess replied that much is being done through Fort Wayne Community Schools to educate parents but that school nurses are a parent’s best resource. Mindy replied that many of the school systems are also surveying parents to see what their needs and questions are about returning to school. Mindy said she has not been getting many questions from parents. Mindy said most of the questions she receives are from facilities. The facilities then would communicate with parents.

- Dr. Cameron asked, “What is the Department of Health recommending the general public do to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19?” Dr. Sutter replied, “I don’t think this has changed very much but the recommendations are profound. When you are outside your house and near other people, you should wear a face covering. When you are able to, socially distance yourself six feet or more from others and maintain good hand hygiene. Those are simple things but they are highly effective.”
- SEE ACTUAL ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT FOR ALL INFORMATION SHARED (but not discussed).

Consent Agenda

- Personnel Report – (Mindy Waldron)
- Sewer Board Appointment Report – (Mindy Waldron)
- Motion was made by Ted Sobol to approve the Consent Agenda. Dr. Dykstra seconded the motion. (MPU)

Old Business

None

New Business

- Dr. Cameron asked Laura Maser, “Where do we stand in regards to updates from the department to the Board of Directors between now and the end of October when our next meeting is scheduled? Obviously, there is a high risk for things to go on the upswing and I would hate as a board member to not be up-to-date on what is going on. Is an executive session a possibility?” Laura replied, “There are many things that can be handled through executive session but with something of this nature, I would think communication to board members for the need for a special meeting or an interim meeting may need to come from the health Commissioner or Mindy. If there is a change in circumstances or an uptick in cases I think it would be best handled through an announced special meeting and not necessarily an executive session.” Patti Hays asked if a special meeting required 48 hours notification. Laura Maser replied, “Yes.” Patti Hays said, “I can envision a scenario where to wait 48 hours is negligent.”
- Laura Maser replied, “So with respect to epidemic control powers, the health commissioner is the individual who has most of the authority to take action. So, if the health commissioner feels something emergent needs to take place, under the epidemic control powers outlined by the statue, the health commissioner can act without the need for the board to vote or to add input to a decision. Most of the epidemic control powers are in the province of the health commissioner as an individual as opposed to the Board of Health.” Dr. Cameron said, “My understanding is that during a pandemic, our role is to make recommendations to the health commissioner?” Laura Maser replied, “Yes in many ways you serve as an advisory board. The state has set this up as a body to offer input, including requiring the input of various sectors of the population. In most situations where there is something of an epidemic nature or a serious communicable disease outbreak, the authority to take action in terms of orders and various other opportunities rests with the health commissioner.”

Adjournment: 6:30 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: October 19, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew Sutter, MD
Health Commissioner

William Pond, MD
Board President