

**Board of Health Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2020**

Virtual/Telephonic Meeting held via Zoom

Board Members & Liaisons Present:

Joan Cagginello, MS, RN, Chairperson
Holly Mulrenan, BSN, RN, MS, Vice Chairperson
Atty. Christine M. Gonillo, Secretary
Ernest Judson
Mitchell Quintner, DMD
Ellen Beatty, Board of Alderman Liaison
Ray Vitali, Board of Alderman Liaison

Board Members & Liaisons not present:

Joan M. Costello, BSN, RN
Constance Young, EdD, RN
Cindy Wolfe Boynton, Board of Education Liaison
Cynthia Twiss, Board of Education Liaison

Others Present: None

Health Department Staff Present:

Deepa Joseph, MPH, Director of Health
Carol Soulier, Recording Secretary

J. Cagginello called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – February 18, 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on February 18, 2020 were approved unanimously on a motion by E. Judson and seconded by H. Mulrenan.

Public Session: *None*

Environmental Health Report – Laura M. Miller, REHS/RS

COVID-19 Response: The Environmental Health Division continues in our coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 18, 2020 Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7PP modified section 19-13-B1 of the Regulations of CT State Agencies to include violations of the Reopen CT Sector Rules in the definition of a public nuisance. As of the date of this report, the MEHD received and responded to 65 complaints from the community reporting non-compliance of the Sector Rules.

On June 7, 2020 Governor Lamont released new Sector Rules that will be applied to many identified businesses during Phase 2 of the Reopen CT Plan. In preparation, MHD released guidance documents and checklists for food establishments and nail salons to aid them as they plan and redesign their indoor spaces to comply with social distancing protocols, enhanced

cleaning and disinfecting practices and employee training. In addition to working to assist in reopening indoor dining at the food establishments, hotels and motels, public pools, nail salons, waxing studios, spas, and a host of other public facilities will be reopening on June 17 as well; youth camps and sports will resume at the end of the month. Sanitarians have been fielding lots of questions conducting inspections and site-visits and providing guidance and information to ensure the health and safety of the public as they patronize these establishments moving forward.

Environmental Health Division: Outside of emergency response to the pandemic, the MEHD continues to review plans for new food establishments, itinerant food vending trucks, witness and document soil testing data and conducting inspections of new and replacement septic systems, inspect septic system abandonments, and respond to healthy homes, housing and blight complaints. As of the week ending June 12, 2020 the Health Department received 371 general complaints from Milford residents for the 2019/2020 fiscal year thus far; of those 371 complaints, 92 were complaints of blight.

Beach Monitoring: Beach monitoring and seawater sampling at Milford beaches began on June 1, 2020. Recreational waters are tested weekly for specific indicator bacteria. It should be noted, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of recreational waters. As such, the CT Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention do not recommend testing these waters for COVID-19 at this time. Every week between Memorial Day and Labor Day, Sanitarians collect water samples and conduct sanitary surveys at 17 strategic locations along the Milford coastline; status of the beaches can be found on our website

Logistics: On Tuesday June 9, 2020 the Milford Health Department held a routine adult and child immunization clinic. The clinic was set-up as a drive-through to test the drive-through mass vaccination clinic model. The MEHD is in charge of logistics for all MHD clinics; staff worked in conjunction with the Director of Nursing to develop and deploy clinic signage and worked to set-up and break down the clinic.

Comments:

- *D. Joseph reported that the Environmental Division has been in planning, response, and recovery modes simultaneously relative to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Environmental Division developed MHD guidelines in line with Reopen CT Sector Rules and has been in touch with all relevant entities. For outdoor dining, in coordination with the Milford Police Department and Planning and Zoning, the Environmental Division orchestrated the approval process for those dining establishments that did not have existing outdoor seating.*
- *D. Joseph explained that, in line with governor Lamont's Executive Order 7PP, responsibility for enforcement relative to complaints regarding COVID-19 guideline violations is shared in Milford by the Health and Police Departments. The Health Department responds to complaints and enforces rules relative to Public Health Facilities, and the MPD responds to violations pertaining to Non-Public Health Facilities. The MHD is working closely with the MPD in referring complaints as appropriate.*

Nursing Division Report – Joan Campbell, MSN, RN

Seasonal Flu and Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Campaign: For the week ending June 6, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that flu activity is minimal in Connecticut and across most of the country. There is no current data available from the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

The Milford Health Department has concluded its seasonal influenza campaign. Approximately 800 influenza vaccinations were administered.

We have begun planning for the 2020-2021 influenza season. The Health Department will continue to purchase influenza vaccine through the Connecticut Department of Public Health contract. We plan to order both seasonal vaccine for adults and children and also the high dose influenza vaccine that is indicated for individuals over 65 years of age.

Per the CDC, three component (trivalent) egg-based vaccines are recommended to contain:

- A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (updated)
- A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus (updated)
- B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus (updated)

Four-component (quadrivalent) egg-based vaccines, which protect against a second lineage of B viruses, are recommended to contain:

- the three recommended viruses above, plus B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus.

School Health Services: The school nurses completed their school year on June 11, 2020. They will be returning to work on August 20th.

One of the 10 month nurses, Debbie Smith, will be retiring at the end of the month after many years of service. In addition, the 12 month nurse, Mary Fowler, has resigned from her position but has requested to go back to a 10 month position. The resulting nursing vacancy was recently posted on the city website with a closing date for applications of July 6th.

The Connecticut State Department of Education Health Services Survey will be submitted to the CSDE. This data collection process is designed to assist the CT State Department of Education to understand the status of school health services in Connecticut school districts, the needs of school districts and students in the area of school health services, and progress being made in these areas over time. The survey addresses several areas in school health services such as student health care needs, concussion data, health care procedures performed, screenings and referrals, staffing and health coordination. The survey is a requirement for all school districts in CT.

Prior to their last day, the school nurses also conducted the transferring of health records to new school levels. This is an end of year activity that requires preparation of records and a discussion with the receiving school nurse to exchange important medical information as the students move

from the elementary grades to middle school and on to high school.

Monthly Immunization Clinics: The Milford Health Department conducted another drive through immunization clinic on June 9 that the Department of Human Services, 150 Gulf Street. Similar to our first drive through clinic held in May, this clinic was by appointment only and we had six individuals receive vaccinations. Two public health nurses assisted at the clinic and it went very well. Another drive through clinic is scheduled for July 14th.

COVID-19: As of 6/15/20, the city of Milford has 659 positive COVID-19 cases. 228 of those positive cases originated from long term care or assisted living facilities in Milford. We have had 84 deaths to date in Milford. All but ten of those were residents of Milford's long term care and assisted living facilities.

The health department continues to contact positive cases and do contact tracing.

Comments:

- *D. Joseph stated that the Department is holding drive-through immunization clinics to enable students and community members to stay on track with their immunizations. Each month, staff is looking at ways to improve upon the logistics involved in serving attendees safely and efficiently. The July Clinic will be held again at the Department of Human Services, 150 Gulf Street. Each of the drive through clinics is being utilized as an opportunity to exercise plans for future mass vaccination clinics.*
- *J. Cagginello asked if planning efforts for the drive-through clinics has taken infants into consideration. D. Joseph responded that the MHD will refer infants to their medical home but will also make appropriate plans as necessary. The MHD recognizes that there are some individuals for whom the drive-through model may not be appropriate based on either age and/or other conditions.*
- *J. Cagginello also asked about having a waiting area for those who have received a vaccine and must stay behind to make sure they do not have an adverse reaction. D. Joseph said an area for cars to pull over and wait is part of the logistics plan.*
- *J. Cagginello asked if the MHD has noticed a change of attitude toward routine immunizations. D. Joseph responded that the Department has not.*
- *D. Joseph reported that, when schools went to distance learning in March, school nurses began contract tracing over the phone from the MHD. The State has adopted ContaCT, a web-based contact tracing system, which MHD nursing staff is learning and is using for cases of COVID-19 that are reported at this time.*
- *R. Vitali asked how many layers of people are contacted in tracing a case of COVID-19. D. Joseph said that the MHD is contacting the case and their close contacts, only further if a close contact is positive. R. Vitali asked if D. Joseph is expecting an increase in cases given recent events (i.e. protest on the Green and gatherings at the beach). D. Joseph responded that the MHD will be watching data to be able to make evidence-based decisions going forward.*
- *J. Cagginello asked if Bridgeport Hospital-Milford Campus has been seeing a lot of COVID-19 activity. D. Joseph indicated that early on in the pandemic, the Milford Campus Emergency Department was diverting COVID-19 patients to Bridgeport Hospital.*

- *D. Joseph reported that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MHD does not anticipate being able to run the dental hygiene program in elementary schools in the fall.*
- *M. Quintner asked about the status of Milford Public Schools in the fall. D. Joseph said that MPS is planning for three scenarios: full-time in-person, full-time distance learning, and a hybrid of the two. J. Cagginello commented that due to certain chronic illnesses, some acute conditions and some special needs conditions, not all children will be able to wear masks in school. D. Joseph acknowledged such and noted that it is being considered in the return to school planning.*

Emergency Preparedness Report - Tara Mustakos Wassmer, REHS/RS, CHES

The Milford Health Department (MHD) continues to be on the front lines of response to COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to maintain calls with state and local health department partners to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interaction with State Public Health Partners: DPH continues holding twice weekly conference calls; one with local, regional, and state partners and one for local health departments and districts only. DPH is currently focusing efforts around epidemiology of cases statewide, and working to conduct point prevalence surveys of long term care and assisted living facilities. The purpose of the point prevalence is to get a snap shot of how many positive cases are in these facilities at any given time. The state is working to incorporate Local Health subject matter expertise. Six Local Health Directors have been selected to serve on the state workgroup to provide feedback on guidance documents and memos prior to release for enforcement.

Regional Partnerships: The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) weekly call is hosted by the Regional Coordinator and Milford's Director of Health who continues to be the Public Health Lead for New Haven County. MHD continues to participate in regular zoom meetings/conference calls with Region 2 Local Health Directors and response partners as scheduled. Regional public health response efforts surround meeting community provider needs for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and completing the required grant deliverable progress reports.

Local Emergency Preparedness Coordination: Local efforts to meet the demand of an effective response are ongoing. MHD Director of Health, designated as the Incident Commander, continues to be the point person for all issues City-wide related to COVID-19 and the Public Information Officer in coordination with Mayor's office

Specific concerns & challenges highlighted in response include:

- Risk communication around re-opening guidance, fielding questions from local medical providers on which PPE is appropriate for staff, how to get fit testing for N95 respirators and guidance around developing Respiratory Protection Programs
- Continue support and advisement to Milford Public Schools on end of school year operations and celebrations, advisement on appropriate means to safely hold gatherings and in person graduation ceremonies
- Advise Milford Police Department to safely execute candidate physical agility testing

- Advisement on re-opening of city buildings: the Health Department advised on the construction of barriers and rearranging of city offices to protect employee health and allow for appropriate social distancing and protections
- Continued support to Beth El Center including Emergency Response Plan review, best practices for social distancing in congregate living settings and ensuring guidance for this vulnerable population aligns with the facility protocols and procedures
- Advise little league, Boys & Girls Club, YMCA on operating camps, after hours and community events

Local Health Special Response & Successes:

- Kinsa Smart Thermometers received by MHD from National Guard; already several hundred thermometers have been distributed to Milford residents through use of Milford Public School meal drive through pickups and in coordination with the Fire Department Propane Collection Day held 6/13/20
- Milford Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers continue to help with food delivery to vulnerable populations locally using
- PPE inventory control and distribution to primary care providers, hospice, home care and dental/oral care, ophthalmology medical providers
- Successful testing of drive through vaccination clinics as practice for mass vaccination clinic

Comments:

- *D. Joseph stated that Tara Mustakos Wassmer has been doing an amazing job as Preparedness Coordinator, including documenting the MHD's COVID-19 response for later analysis.*
- *D. Joseph reported that the MHD has been distributing PPE from the State to local community health partners including but not limited to dentists, home care agencies, and hospice facilities. The State is encouraging local providers to find their own supply of PPE as distribution via the State will cease shortly.*

Community Health Division Report - Jennifer Clarke-Lofters, MPA

Disease Surveillance: There were 134 cases of disease reported for the month of May: 0 cases of Influenza and 123 cases of COVID-19.

Putting on AIRS Asthma Program: The Putting on AIRS asthma program has not received any referrals for the month of May, providing a total of 88 referrals received this program year, September 2019 through August 2020. As you know, POA is our regional asthma home visiting program. Visits are conducted to teach families how to manage their asthma at home along with recognizing any environmental hazards that put them at risk for triggering asthma flare ups. Follow up visits are conducted to see whether individuals and/or families have implemented the recommended control measures, to determine outcomes as a result of the home visit, and to discuss any challenges/barriers/etc. Due to COVID 19 this program now conducts telehealth visits verses face to face home visits. An updated provider letter and referral form has been created for providers to continue to submit referrals. Information can be mailed to participants or

they can access our website which also has been updated with new materials. We are also set to conduct our bi annual Regional Asthma Coalition Meeting at the end of June via zoom.

Community Events: Since COVID 19 started there has been a series of community events for food drives and donations along with food distribution events from many points between New Haven and Bridgeport. These resources are shared with staff and on our website for the community to access.

PHAB (Public Health Accreditation Board): The Milford Health Department is still preparing itself to submit an application to become accredited. Currently many of these meetings with regional partners are being conducted through zoom. We are currently working on updating our Community Health Assessment (CHA) to share with the community. We hope in the near future for Milford to have its own community health task force groups such as healthy lifestyles, access to care and behavioral and mental health.

Grants/Program Reports: We are working with Qualidigm on our grant: Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) in Connecticut Communities to conduct a community needs assessment that describes Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in Milford. Our contract officially starts in September and our partnership will allow us to implement drug overdose data surveillance and prevention activities within Milford. We hope to improve capacity to respond to overdoses, initiate and strengthen public health system interventions.

Our Healthy Homes grant will have a budget revision to assist with education and mailings to the community since visits to the home will not be scheduled.

Comments:

- *D. Joseph reported that Jennifer Clarke-Lofters, Community Health Coordinator, has been maintaining the Health Department website as part of the Department's COVID-19 response.*

Old Business: None

Director's Report: Deepa Joseph, MPH

- *D. Joseph reported that the CDC has shared that a COVID-19 vaccine may possibly be expected in late 2020 or early 2021. Distribution will likely be done in two tiers: Tier 1 will be critical infrastructure, and Tier 2 will be the remainder of the population.*
- *E. Beatty asked D. Joseph if she is concerned about the lack of social distancing at the beach. D. Joseph responded that she is concerned about masking and social distancing everywhere. Specific to the beach, the MHD has done a lot of work with the Recreation Department to empower Beach Monitors, providing them with concrete actions they can take (e.g. checking IDs). The Mayor issued another Emergency Order on 6/13/2020 in order to provide additional tools to enforce COVID-19 related rules.*
- *E. Beatty also asked about the MHD's seasonal response to mosquitoes and ticks. D. Joseph stated that the Department's mosquito control program is presently treating for mosquitoes, and the MHD continues to send ticks to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for testing. D. Joseph reports an increase in the number of ticks*

being tested but a decrease in the number testing positive for disease relative to previous years.

- *J. Cagginello asked about communication challenges between state and local health departments during the pandemic. D. Joseph said that the local health departments were getting new sector rules during the Governor's briefings, at the same time as the general public, but that communications are getting better.*

New Business:*None*

Adjournment:

J. Cagginello thanked D. Joseph for organizing and holding this virtual/telephonic meeting and extended wishes for continued strength to the Director of Health and the MHD Staff.

M. Quintner motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by E. Judson and was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol Soulier
Recorder