



# Washtenaw County Board of Health

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## Minutes

February 26, 2021, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
555 Towner St., Room 2102B, Ypsilanti, MI 48198  
Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Morghan Boydston, James Carty, Gina Dahlem, Leon Golson, Neel Hajra, Justin Hodge, Carrie Rheingans, Katie Scott, Kathleen Stroud, Elisabeth Vanderpool

**Absent:**

**Staff:** Jimena Loveluck, Briana Tetsch, Ebony Curry, Russell O'Brien

**Guests:** Jo Ann McCollum

### 1. Call to Order

Justin Hodge called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

Roll-call check-in.

### 2. Public Comment

Zach Damon – Spoke about making vaccines immediately accessible to people with disabilities.

Desirae Simmons, Ypsilanti – Spoke about getting vaccines to the people in Ypsilanti most likely to die or be hospitalized if they get COVID-19.

Natasha Abner – Spoke about how the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected people with disabilities and asked for prioritization of people with disabilities to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

WeThePeopleMI4, Ann Arbor – Spoke about including people with disabilities in the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan.

Jeffrey Nolish, Detroit – Asked that Washtenaw County make people with disabilities an immediate high priority in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

Kaci Messeder, Saline – Spoke about prioritizing people with disabilities for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Alex Gossage, Ann Arbor – Asked the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) to prioritize people with disabilities and increase their access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

Lavada Weathers, Ypsilanti Township – Spoke about increasing information distribution about the COVID-19 vaccine to the southside of Ypsilanti.

Lisa Schramm – Spoke about closing indoor dining and moving restaurant workers up the list to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Solomon Medintz – Spoke about prioritizing people with disabilities immediately for the COVID-19 vaccine like they did in Detroit.



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Kathy Homan – Asked that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) be prioritized on the COVID-19 vaccine distribution list.

Renee Echols – Asked that citizens of Washtenaw County with disabilities be prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccine.

### 3. Board Member Response to Public Comment

Carrie Rheingans – Asked about the process for setting prioritization criteria for Washtenaw County and if there is flexibility to alter the priority groups. Jimena Loveluck replied that the prioritization guidance set by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) was established because there would be a limited supply of vaccine. WCHD is following MDHHS guidance and there is some flexibility. Detroit has been able to expand their eligibility because they have a much larger supply of vaccine. Washtenaw County has not seen enough of an increase in vaccine to expand eligibility, so we continue to follow MDHHS guidance. The most flexibility is in sub prioritizing. For example, when people 65 and older were able to get the vaccine, some health departments started with 75 and older before working their way down to 65 and older.

Kathleen Stroud – Recognized Lavada Weathers and Lisa Schramm’s comments as good reasons for prioritization and said we will continue to try to get these groups vaccinated.

Katie Scott – Thanked community members for attending and offering their voice for advocacy. She is hopeful the Johnson and Johnson vaccine can offer a huge hope of getting more people vaccinated.

Neel Hajra – Wanted to make sure the question about vaccine awareness efforts was answered. Jimena said the Health Department (HD) has been working to share information about the process of accessing vaccination in collaboration with the hospital systems and community partners. The HD has expanded phone capacity to help answer questions about the vaccines as well as the registration process. 211 is another resource people can call to get information and connected to register for an appointment. Materials are developed in multiple languages and the HD works with trusted community messengers that help share the information.

Carrie Rheingans – Thanked community members for joining the meeting to advocate for themselves and others.

Justin Hodge – Said he has been working closely with the HD on plans coming out and will continue to work to get accurate information out to people through a variety of methods.

### 4. Approval of Agenda (Action)

*Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by C. Rheingans, to approve the agenda.*

*Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.*

### 5. Approval of January 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Action)

*Motion by J. Carty, seconded by G. Dahlem, to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2021 meeting.*

*Motion approved unanimously with a roll-call vote.*

### 6. Executive Committee Report from January 18, 2021 and December 16, 2020

Board members received the Executive Committee minutes.

No discussion about the report.



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### 7. Community Voices and Health for All Report – Marta Larson, Jennifer Green, Carla Pretto-Kernahan

- **Community Voices**

Marta Larson, Community Voices member, gave a brief history of the Community Voices group. It started with a series of community conversations in 4 priority areas identified as underserved, Southside Ypsilanti, West Willow, Whitmore Lake, and the Latinx Community county-wide. That effort has now expanded to include several new communities. The Community Voices team includes leaders from each of these communities that work together and in collaboration with the HD to learn about, share, plan, and implement remedies to health inequities.

Jennifer Green, Community Voices and Health for All, represents the group from Southside Ypsilanti on the Community Voices team. She shared a list of activities done by the group during the COVID-19 pandemic which includes: mask distribution, cleaning supplies distribution, participated in pop-up testing sites and food distributions, helped with paying rent and bills, helped with temporary housing, helped create a new messaging strategy with community leaders sharing videos about how they are protecting themselves from COVID-19, reviewed and gave feedback on prevention materials to the HD, and continue to regularly share information with various grassroots communities and networks.

Marta shared that the Community Voices team is now interested in working with the HD to start an evaluation effort to look at service data over time to understand trends and to see if the efforts are resulting in measurable changes in the community. They would like to propose additional elements for data collection which currently relies on zip code as a data source. Community Voices would like to see data for services in the community by event and over time including location of residence, health insurance status, age, and race. They would like to see demographic information aggregated by zip code, municipal jurisdiction, and census tract.

Questions and comments:

Carrie Rheingans mentioned the Community Voices team could discuss the possibility of having a voting position on the Board of Health (BOH). The BOH has discussed changing the by-laws to add additional members for different constituencies. Jennifer replied that the group will discuss this further.

Jimena Loveluck said she had an initial conversation with Marta Larson, and it was very helpful to understand what Community Voices is thinking and discuss their request around data collection. Resources and capacity are challenges right now and antiquated public health data systems need to be improved. There will be more conversations with Community Voices in the future about this.

- **Health for All**

Carla Pretto-Kernahan, co-chair for the Health for All Steering Committee, talked about the makeup, history, and current situation of the committee. It is made up of community members that represent groups most impacted by health inequities and was organized originally to provide leadership and direction in the strategic planning process. They saw the impacts of health inequities during the pandemic and wanted to have a role in shaping what was going on in the response to a vaccine rollout and the health inequities. The committee is working to redefine what the charge of the committee is and identify the scope in which they have the power to influence. They want to be a voice of the most impacted communities within the county. They are discussing ways to open up and have interactions with communities and be able to share what is important to the community in the BOH meetings.



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Carla asked if there is current or ongoing data collection to continue to prioritize the way that we are and if there is no data available on disabled communities, how does that come in to play in prioritizing? Jimena Loveluck replied that a lot of the reviewing of data is happening at the state level and informing their prioritization. The state is regularly reviewing the data and adjusting their guidance.

Moving forward there will be a formal report from Health for All at BOH meetings.

Questions and comments:

Morghan Boydston asked if there are any populations that are primed, and they are ready to focus on. Carla said that still must be decided because they are redefining what their charge is. It is very important to all the members on the committee.

Katie Scott commented that the Health for All website is a fantastic repository of data.

### 8. CMH Mental Health and Public Safety Millage Update – Lisa Gentz

Lisa Gentz presented on the Public Safety and Mental Health Preservation Millage. The funds were split into two primary buckets. Funds from Communities who had police services through Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office were split to cover the Sheriff's Office side and into a community mental health bucket. Communities who had their own police services received a rebate and could determine how to use the funds.

Eleven different strategies with 3 goals were put together by the Community Mental Health Advisory Committee in 2018. The goals include 1) Comprehensive, Integrated System of Care, 2) Expand Services, 3) Evaluate and Communicate. The strategies for each goal were shared and discussed. Funds were first received in January 2019 and they were able to move forward with some of the plans related to the strategies. Lisa went over each strategy and shared what has been and is being done in the community to achieve the goal.

Questions and comments:

Carrie Rheingans asked if CARES data is being shared with the state in helping them further rollout the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) model? Lisa said yes, along with other demonstration sites around the state that are doing similar things.

Jimena Loveluck mentioned the HD worked with Community Mental Health (CMH) to be an approved vaccine provider so their nurses will be able to vaccinate clients as they are providing services.

Gina Dahlem asked how CMH modified their services, responded to the pandemic, and what have the numbers been like for increase in services during this time. Lisa replied that CMH saw a significant decrease in request for services during the Stay Home Stay Safe Order, but that quickly rebounded over the summer and back to where it was pre-COVID. Services were pivoted to a telehealth format, the mobile crisis team continued to be out in the community providing services, and the requests through the 24/7 phone number have continued to grow.

### 9. Rapid Response Initiative Report – Ebony Curry, Maria Militzer, Briana Tetsch

Postponed to a future meeting.



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## 10. BOC Liaison Report

Katie Scott shared the Board of Commissioners have talked with the service workers about their concerns about being vaccinated. Gelman continues to be unresolved and there is continued discussion about moving to an EPA superfund site. There are continued discussions about what a public health millage would look like and how it might be framed.

Justin Hodge thanked the HD staff for the most recent mask distribution event which he attended.

## 11. Old Business

- **Gelman Updates**  
Covered in BOC liaison report.
- **Commissioner Liaisons and By-Laws**  
There will not be another commissioner added to the BOH.

## 12. New Business

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Strategy**  
Jimena Loveluck shared a document with the board that outlines the vaccine strategy. It clarifies who is getting the vaccine in Washtenaw County and how the HD is allocating vaccine and particularly strengthening the equity framework around that distribution. There are more community pop-up clinics and nurse on the run efforts are being increased. Vaccine data is now available on the HD website. The HD is going to be applying for a pilot project through MDHHS working with the Racial Equity Office, hospital partners, and a group of African American pastors to plan some additional vaccination efforts.

## 13. Adjournment

*Motion by N. Hajra, seconded by C. Rheingans, to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion approved unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 11:01 AM.

Minutes taken by Russell O'Brien