



Washtenaw County Board of Health

Minutes

April 22, 2022, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Learning Resource Center LRC

4135 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Superior Room

Present: James Carty, Gina Dahlem, Justin Hodge, Maria Militzer, Carla Pretto-Kernahan, Katie Scott, Kathleen Stroud, Elisabeth Vanderpool

Absent: Leon Golson, Carrie Rheingans, Morghan Williams Boydston

Staff: Jimena Loveluck, Russell O'Brien

Guests:

1. Call to Order

Gina Dahlem called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Board Member Response to Public Comment

None

4. Approval of Agenda (Action)

Motion by J. Carty, seconded by K. Scott, to approve the agenda.

Motion approved unanimously.

5. Approval of March 25, 2022, Meeting Minutes (Action)

Motion by J. Hodge, seconded by K. Scott, to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2022, meeting.

Motion approved unanimously.

6. Executive Committee Report from March 17, 2022

No Executive Committee meeting in March due to the transition in Board leadership and the change in by-laws.

7. Community Voices Report

Maria Militzer reported that Community Voices members continue their collaboration with the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) to hold community based COVID-19 vaccine clinics. A clinic will be held May 7th at St Francis of Assisi Church with bilingual nurses and Spanish interpreters.

Community Voices members are identifying community priorities to address together. One priority is gang and neighborhood violence. They reached out to violence prevention researchers at the University of Michigan (UofM) School of Public Health to assist with the identification of community-based interventions that may be helpful.

8. Tobacco Policy Work – Amanda Ng

Amanda Ng presented an update on menthol and flavored tobacco products. She discussed what is going on nationally and the progress of what is happening in Washtenaw County (WC). The WC smoking rate is 10.7%, lower than the state rate of 19% and national rate of 16%. Dangerous and predatory marketing from the tobacco industry





Washtenaw County Board of Health

resulted in high use rates among targeted populations of menthol and flavored tobacco products. African Americans suffer the greatest burden of tobacco related death of any racial or ethnic group. Youth and young adults prefer mint/menthol and all flavors of tobacco products. A comprehensive flavor ban is the recommended approach. The FDA made their menthol ban announcement last April and recently reaffirmed their intent to publish 2 proposed tobacco product standards this spring. A bill was recently signed into law granting authority to the FDA to regulate synthetic nicotine products.

Amanda provided some local updates. WC will be receiving additional funding from MDHHS which will allow for hiring a new health educator. One of their main activities will be doing community education at meetings and events this spring and summer. Amanda will be presenting about the Washtenaw County work on a state webinar for medical professionals and school personnel on May 18th. They will also be highlighting some of the work happening in Wayne County and Grand Rapids as well as providing education on why these communities are doing this work. A pre-survey was done in March to determine placement and target audiences for the media campaign. The media plan will be finalized in the next few weeks and a post-survey will be done to determine how impactful it was. That information will also be used to help guide local materials and messages. The results of the pre-survey were discussed. Overall, there was good support for a menthol flavor ban. Menthol cigarettes may be the most used tobacco product in WC.

Questions and comments:

Carla Pretto-Kernahan asked if there was accompanying support for those that do want to quit smoking. Amanda replied that there is support available. WC updated the resource list of what is available locally.

Kathleen Stroud asked if UofM still has their cessation program available. Amanda said that they do through their tobacco consultation services. Services are provided remotely, are available to everyone, and they are the best local resource available. Elisabeth Vanderpool said that St Joe also has a smoking cessation program available.

Maria Militzer asked if insurance, specifically those for low-income populations, cover the cost for treatment to quit smoking. Amanda said it will vary by insurance, but most insurances have some type of benefit covered. Every Medicaid plan has services covered for quitting smoking.

Jimena Loveluck asked what role the Board of Health (BOH) can play. Amanda said they can share any ideas or recommendations they have. Further down the line, they can be spokespeople to help support the menthol ban when WC drafts their own language.

9. Environmental Health Initiatives – Kristen Schweighoefer

- **Vector Surveillance**
- **Harmful Algal Bloom Surveillance**
- **COVID Wastewater Surveillance**

Kristen Schweighoefer presented on arboviral surveillance, harmful algal blooms, and COVID wastewater surveillance. Board members received the PowerPoint presentation.

Environmental Health (EH) will be participating in arboviral surveillance efforts for the first time since 2019. Arboviruses are any group of viruses that are transmitted by mosquitos, ticks, or other arthropods. EH will be looking for ticks that carry Lyme disease and mosquitos that carry Zika and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Tick



Washtenaw County Board of Health

drugs and mosquito traps will be used to collect specimens to be submitted for testing. EH has tick kits available for individuals to submit ticks to MDHHS for testing. They can also send pictures of ticks for identification. WC didn't participate in 2020 arbovirus surveillance, but EEE positive animals were found in Jackson County and Livingston County.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) occur when there is a rapid increase in cyanobacteria, a natural part of lakes, rivers, and streams. Some cyanobacteria produce a toxin that can be harmful to humans and pets. WC is participating in a pilot program with MDHHS to identify and test potential HABs. Staff will be trained to identify the visual cues, test the waters, and work with EGLE and MDHHS on further identification to quickly identify and communicate possible HABs in WC.

Both the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Wastewater Treatment Plants participate in COVID surveillance, along with some individual UofM campus-area buildings. Links were provided to the various surveillance dashboards. The laboratory confirmed clinical COVID cases and the local wastewater data trend very similarly over time. It is best to look at trends and not a single data point. Other pathogens are being considered for future wastewater surveillance. UofM is already running Norovirus data and it will be up on their dashboard soon. Kristen shared a graph showing the similarity between recent COVID case data and local wastewater data.

Questions and comments:

Kathleen Stroud asked if it was true that bird flu can pass easily to humans. Kristen replied that she would not say easily but there is a possibility and a risk.

Maria Militzer asked if there was any data on social demographics of the populations affected by HABs. Kristen replied that she does not have human data or cases. It is more of an anecdotal respiratory illness. The message is more on prevention.

10. BOC Liaison Report

Katie Scott reported that the meeting this week was canceled. There was a presentation scheduled on food insecurity mapping. Justin Hodge said the next meeting will focus on public safety budget. Jimena Loveluck added that Jeremy Lapedis, Director Washtenaw Health Plan, will be presenting at the next working session.

11. Old Business

- **Public Health Nurse Recruitment and Retention**

Gina Dahlem reported that she will be meeting with Jane Nickert and the Dean of Undergrad Admission at UofM this afternoon to discuss how they can get the school involved and possible solutions to nurse recruitment and retention. Jimena Loveluck shared that the Health Department continues to meet with county administration and human resources about this issue. They are reviewing the job description and thinking about connecting with an agency Community Mental Health has used to fill difficult job positions. Board members mentioned meeting with EMU and Washtenaw Community College as well.

12. New Business

- **Hometown Health Hero Award Resolution**

A resolution recognizing Maria Militzer as the winner of the 2022 Hometown Health Hero Award.



Washtenaw County Board of Health

*Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by J. Carty, to approve the resolution.
Motion approved unanimously.*

- **Sanitarian of the Year Resolution**

A resolution recognizing Jaclyn Bates as the 2022 Samuel M. Stephenson Sanitarian of the Year.

Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by J. Carty, to approve the resolution.

Motion approved unanimously.

- **PHWINS Survey**

Jimena Loveluck shared that the Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey is a national survey done with staff from local health departments. If the HD had over 70% of staff complete the survey, the department would have access to the results. Washtenaw County reached 65%. There is a lot of discussion about public health workforce at the state level and nationally. Hopefully there will be additional resources that focus on strengthening the public health workforce in the federal budget.

13. Adjournment

Motion by K. Scott, seconded by J. Hodge, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Minutes taken by Russell O'Brien

