

Erie County Board of Health

Monday, March 7, 2022

Zoom Conference Call

5:00 pm

Present:

Laura Lewis, PhD, LSW
Fred Mirarchi, DO
Richard A. Ortoski, DO, Chair
Carla Picardo, MD, MPH
Mary Jean Taylor, PhD
Timothy Zieziula, JD

Also In Attendance:

Breanna Adams
Char Berringer
Nicole Bolash
Mark Matlock
Erin Mrenak
Ellen Schauerman
Tony Snow, MD
Tina Burling

Absent:

Bishop Clifton McNair, III

- I. Call to Order - Dr. Ortoski, Board Chairperson, called a meeting of the Board of Health to order at 5:03 p.m.
 - a. Introduction of new member - Fred Mirarchi, DO has been the Medical Director of the UPMC Hamot Emergency Department for 15 years.
- II. Public Comments - None
- III. Presentations - None
- IV. Approval of Minutes - The Board of Health meeting minutes and division reports from October 25, 2021 and February 9, 2022 were approved on a motion from T. Zieziula and seconded by Dr. Picardo. All in favor.
- V. Board Updates
 - a. Division Reports - Formal Written Reports Provided in Advance of Board Meeting
 1. Clarified that ECDH does not prescribe PrEP for partners of those positive with HIV, but Adagio and Community Health Net do provide this service.
 2. Clarified that the Baby & Me: Tobacco Free national office has not yet discussed moving the program from virtual back to in-person. All providers would need recertified before providing services and the earliest opportunity is in the fall.
 3. It has been challenging to fill vacant clerical and nursing positions due to low pay rates and the nursing shortage.
 4. The county safety officer and team assessed the security of ECDH locations in October. No threats or protests have been experienced since then.

- VI. Director's Report - Erin Mrenak
 - a. E. Mrenak has been appointed to the position of public health director. N. Bolash is serving as acting deputy director.
 - b. COVID-19 cases continue to decrease. Hospitals report that COVID-related admissions are decreasing and infections are less severe.
 - c. Wastewater data shows an increased amount of COVID virus which does not match the number of reported cases. This is likely due to individuals not getting tested or using at-home testing.
 - d. The CDC has developed new metrics for measuring the level of community transmission of COVID.
 - e. Erie County school districts are now mask-optional. New guidance will be coming from the CDC regarding contact tracing in schools.
 - f. Vaccination rates for Erie County are still under 60% and only about 30% of those eligible for boosters have received one.
 - g. COVID funds from PADOH are extended through mid-2024.
 - h. The COVID response is currently focusing on mobile vaccine and testing clinics.

- VII. Financial Report - Mark Matlock
 - a. Discussed public health budget changes that occurred during 2021.
 - b. Presented the 2022 public health budget that was approved by county council. Noted that the Data Analysis & Dissemination bureau was terminated as of December 31, 2021 due to lack of staffing to perform the work, and also noted that the Blue Zones agreement ends in April 2022 with no indication that the contract will be extended.

- VIII. Old Business - None

- IX. New Business
 - a. Annual election of officers
 - 1. Dr. Ortoski was elected to another year as the chairperson on a motion by MJ Taylor and seconded by T. Zieziula. All in favor.
 - 2. Dr. Picardo was elected to another year as the vice chair on a motion by Dr. Ortoski and seconded by MJ Taylor. All in favor.
 - b. Ethics Review Process Exercise - Nicole Bolash
 - 1. The Board of Health functions as the Ethics Advisory Committee for ECDH. Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) reaccreditation standards require demonstration of an ethical review process. Today's exercise will be included in the annual report to the PHAB.
 - 2. A meeting of the Ethics Advisory Committee was called to order by Dr. Ortoski.

3. B. Adams presented an ethical issue for discussion regarding the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals (NRFSP) Food Manager Certification exam.
 4. The concern involves language access and literacy level of the exam as a potential barrier to inclusion.
 5. The board determined that general inquiries about the structure of the exam should not raise any confidentiality concerns.
 6. B. Adams will follow up on her complaint submission, get feedback from other health departments, suggest to the NRFSP that health departments play a role in constructing the exam questions, and provide updates at the next board meeting.
 7. The meeting of the Ethics Advisory Committee was adjourned on a motion by T. Zieziula and seconded by Dr. Picardo. All in favor.
- c. National Public Health Week - April 4-10, 2022 - Breanna Adams
 1. Board members will reach out to community partners to coordinate efforts to promote and recognize ECDH staff.
 - d. Public Health Champion Award nominations - Erin Mrenak
 1. Nominations for Public Health Champion Awards were presented for Dr. Howard Nadworny, who has served voluntarily as a consultant to ECDH for COVID-19, and for the Minority Community Investment Coalition, who has been an integral partner in fighting the pandemic.
 2. A motion to accept both nominations for Public Health Champion Awards was made by MJ Taylor and seconded by Dr. Picardo. There was no further discussion. All in favor.
- X. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m. on a motion by MJ Taylor and seconded by T. Zieziula. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Burling, Recording Secretary