



CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Public Health

Matilde Castiel, MD
Health & Human Services
Commissioner

Karyn E. Clark
Public Health
Director

DATE: September 11, 2017
RE: WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES
START TIME: 6:30 PM
LOCATION: WORCESTER DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
25 MEADE STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM 109
WORCESTER, MA 01610

Welcome & Introductions:

Meeting was called to order at 6:38pm.

Members present: David Fort, Chair, Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, and Joanne Calista. Abigail Averbach - absent WDPH Staff: Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director, Karyn Clark, Director of Public Health, and Michele Williams, Principal Clerk. General Public: Mukti Kulkarni and Jackie Coughlin-Strom

Approval of the July 17, 2017 Minutes:

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of July 17, 2017 made by Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Second – Joanne Calista. Approved

Review and act on discussion of what the BOH has accomplished and priorities moving forward:

Karyn Clark, Director Public Health: I would like to take this opportunity to review what the BOH had identified as priority items 2 years ago and talk about some of the policies and position statements that were adopted or spoken about. I would like to do a check in with you to see what the Board's thoughts are so far and think about where we would like to go. If we identify what the Board is interested in pursuing, we can tap into resources that we have available to so that you can make informed decisions on best practices around policy.

David Fort, Chair: There are things that we have accomplished and things that we need to really focus on, especially going into 2018.

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director: This is a good time to focus on, "what are we doing", "what do we want to accomplish"?



Karyn Clark, Director, Public Health: A review of the BOH's policies; tobacco use, opioid epidemic, mental health, increasing the age of tanning bed use and window guards. We spoke about the 2016 CHIP, which has 9 priority areas. There are 100 strategies and policy initiatives that are already identified by the community. A chronology of what the BOH has done: in December 2015 voted to allow for an agency to have syringe services program in the City of Worcester. In 2016 the BOH prohibited smoking in nursing homes or acute substance abuse treatment facilities, voted to increase minimum sales age to purchase tobacco products to age 21 and took a position statement to support sexual education in Worcester Public Schools. In the summer of 2017 BOH adopted local regulations to ensure safe access to medical marijuana facilities. It is important to look at all that has been accomplished. I am re-distributing a presentation from Dr. Alexis Travis, Chief of Community Health, on how the BOH can align their policies and positions with the CHIP. I would like you to review it and talk about priority policy initiatives at our next meeting.

David Fort, Chair: One City Councilor wanted data about what was going on, a year later, with the needle exchange program. Did we provide that information with the City Council and what was the result?

Karyn Clark, Director, Public Health: Staff and City Administration met with AIDS Project Worcester that has that contract as well as MDPH Infectious Disease Bureau. It's been a learning process for us as the local Health Department to understand the limitations of the data collection that the AIDS Project Worcester have, a lot of information is protected. However, there is some good and meaningful data that has been collected. That being said, the program is really about building relationships and creating an access point to get treatment when a person is ready.

Joanne Calista: I had an opportunity to sit in on a data presentation that they had. The data that they were able to deliver, I felt was very impressive. Not only around Narcan and the potential number of lives saved, but also the types of medical waste as well as referrals.

David Fort: One of the biggest issues is the opioid crisis. We have talked a lot about the care and treatment of opioid, but it would be helpful to get from the Police Department how they mitigate the flow of the drugs coming into the city.

Karyn Clark, Director, Public Health: We have been working closely with Captain Michael McKiernan, Worcester PD Vice Squad. We can ask him to come in and speak with us.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD: It would be good to have a consistent set of reports represented to us. If we were consistently looking at these reports, we could interpret the data, make some useful observations and develop some plans. We also need to open ourselves to community presenters. We should be up to date on the importance of Public Health issues.

Joanne Calista: I'm very excited about the potential structured relationship that we have with UMass and how that can also get us more data and different points of view. Related to what Jerry said around policy verses issues in general, I think the Board has focused on policy levers. However, there are some very urgent issues like opioids and mental health that may not have direct immediate policy lever that we should weigh in on.

Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair: I would like to see more information on how Worcester stands with availability and access to mental health services. There are patients waiting up to 1 year for services.

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director: The mayor has launched a mental health task force that Dr. Mattie Castiel has been involved with. We could have someone from the task force do a presentation. We could also consider having additional monthly BOH meetings.

David Fort, Chair: Having extra meetings would be helpful because there are a lot of issues that we have to address. As a Board, I want to make sure we understand the purpose of the data we receive and have a plan to do something about it.

Joanne Calista: Mental Health is a most significant problem. It needs to be integrated into the substance abuse disorder conversation and get some psychiatric input.

David Fort, Chair: Can our guests briefly explain how the relationship between the academic and research piece of it and how the Board could work with you on these different issues.

Mukti Kulkarni: We are hoping to take your priority issues and work on compiling evidence on those issues and present it back to you.

Jackie Coughlin-Strom: I'm interested in getting more information about what regulatory powers you have. How much of that is going to be driving the priorities? We want to be able to take action and do something to make a difference. Is the Board able to make regulations?

David Fort, Chair: We all work together to make a difference in the City. We will look over the WBOH CHIP Alignment that was distributed, choose the top 3 to 5 priorities and go over it at the next meeting.

Karyn Clark, Director Public Health: If we have a more integrated, coordinated approach and dialog about this and outline what it is that you want to accomplish, we can get the resources that we have outside of the department so you can make informed decisions.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD: We need to make the process efficient. How often can an opioid report be presented to us? Would also like to see a syringe services report. Those are two impactful things that I would like to see.

Karyn Clark, Director Public Health: Will have those reports available for the next meeting.

Next Meeting

October 2, 2017 at 6:30pm

Adjourn: 7:40pm