



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



Public Health
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Matilde Castiel, MD
Health & Human Services
Commissioner

Karyn E. Clark
Public Health
Director

DATE: October 15, 2018
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 6:30pm.

Members present: David Fort, Chair, Edith Claros, PhD, Vice Chair and Abigail Averbach

Absent: Jerry Gurwitz, MD

WDPH Staff: Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director, Karyn Clark, Director of DPH and Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner of HHS

Approval of the July 30, 2018 Minutes:

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of July 30, 2018 made by Edith Claros, PhD,
Second – Abigail Averbach - Approved

Review and act on discussion relative to Hepatitis A Advisory:

Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner of HHS: Briefed the BOH members on a Hepatitis A outbreak in the City (also occurring in Boston) and how the WDPH and other partners, including AIDS Project Worcester and Community Healthlink have agreed to vaccinate individuals experiencing homelessness and substance use. The majority of individuals have insurance; those individuals that do not are supplied vaccine by the WDPH.

Review and act on discussion on comprehensive evidenced based sexual education:

Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner of HHS: **(presentation)** Comprehensive Sex Education teaches about abstinence as the best method for avoiding sexually transmitted infections (STI's) and unintended pregnancy, but also teaches about condom and contraception to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and of infection with STI's including HIV. It also teaches interpersonal and communication skills and helps young people explore their own values, goals, and options. Sex education is not mandated in the state of Massachusetts. If young people were getting the proper education, the numbers of sexual diseases would decrease. Teen birth rates are higher in Worcester than any other city in Massachusetts. Briefed the BOH regarding the "Regional Youth Health Survey" that was distributed to Middle and High School students. Want to get information of



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what the students are saying in the schools. 92% of randomly surveyed Worcester voters believe that students should receive Sex Ed in high school.

Jaqui Morales, Senior at University Park Campus School: I believe there should be comprehensive sex education in schools starting at a young age, including gender identity, sexuality, consent, STI's and contraceptive methods. Students need to learn how to maintain their health at all stages of life.

Ziray Dejesus, Junior at North High School: I believe that youth should have access to comprehensive sex education. I have never received this in school. If students were taught that LGBTQ is normal, that consent is important for all relationships and that abstinence is always a choice and ways to practice safe sex, I wouldn't see my peers being abused emotionally, physically and mentally.

Jose Medina, resident of Worcester: As a youth I attended Seven Hills School and Worcester Vocational High School. We only had anatomy class which teaches parts of the male and female. There were no classes on healthy relationships or gender identity. Youth are not getting enough sex education. There should be comprehensive sex education in all schools.

Jeremy Golding, MD: Individuals become sexually active regardless of their religion and family background. It is the responsibility of parents to teach family values at home and it's the responsibility of our educational institution, BOH and our community to support safe and healthy scientific based curriculum. It is very difficult to teach my patients in a 20 minute visit about healthy sexual relationships. Schools in today's society need to include a comprehensive approach involving relationships, negotiations and consent. These topics that have been ignored for so long and are yet so crucial to the health and safety of our students. I applaud the BOH for bringing this to the public's attention. I and my colleagues strongly support this measure.

Antonella Lisanti-Park, Project Manager HHS: Read a couple of written statements from Rabbi Aviva Fellman, Congregation Beth Israel and Reverend Aaron Payson, Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester, regarding their reasons to have comprehensive sex education in the schools.

Edith Claros, PhD: Why do you think Worcester has the highest rates of teen births?

Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner of HHS: We have a lot of poverty in our community and we lack education.

Abigail Averbach: We didn't talk about gender identity. When I was growing up, we focused on birth control and STI's. The topics today are more complex and broader. Most striking is that this is an evidence based program. Many interventions that we try to do in Public Health have very long term outcomes. We do know that comprehensive sex education makes healthier people. I would like to take whatever action we can to promote this in schools.

David Fort, Chair: I am in full support of having the Board help in this cause. Maybe consider having a workshop with the parents regarding sex education would also help families learn how to approach issues of sexual health with their children at home.

Abigail Averbach made a motion to vote on the BOH's endorsement of a position statement in support of comprehensive sex education in the Worcester Public Schools. This was seconded by Edith Claros, PhD. The motion was passed unanimously.

Review and act on discussion relative to Board's consideration of tobacco retailer association presentation at future meeting:

The Board has agreed that no more further discussion is needed regarding the New Tobacco Regulations that will take effect on January 1, 2019. New regulations have been mailed to all retailers.

Motion to adjourn; Edith Claros, PhD, Second by Abigail Averbach

Adjourn: 7:40pm

Next Meeting

November 5, 2018 at 6:30pm

Next Meeting Topics:

Prime Wellness and Mission Massachusetts for a medical marijuana dispensary license

Window Guards

Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester CHIP work plan discussion

Unclaimed Remains