



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



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Matilde Castiel, MD  
Health & Human Services  
Commissioner

Karyn E. Clark  
Public Health  
Director

**DATE:** March 2, 2020  
**RE:** WORCESTER BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING  
**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: Edith Claros, PhD, Chair, Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair, Chareese Allen, Frances Anthes and David Fort WDPH Staff: Karyn Clark, Director of DPH, Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH, Alissa Errede, Chief, Office of Medical Preparedness and Patricia Bruchmann, Chief Public Health Nurse, City of Worcester and the Alliance

**Approval of the February 3, 2020 Meeting:**

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting minutes of February 3, 2020 made by Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair, Second –Chareese Allen– Approved

**Approval of the March 2, 2020 Agenda:**

Motion to approve the WBOH meeting agenda of March 2, 2020 made by Frances Anthes, Second – Jerry Gurwitz, MD – Approved

***Vote on Amendment to the Regulations to Ensure Safe Access to Medical Marijuana Dispensaries:***

**Edith Claros, PhD, Chair, made a motion to vote on amendment to the Regulations to Ensure Safe Access to Medical Marijuana Dispensaries, adopted June 5, 2017 and effective August 1, 2017. RMD's shall close no later than 11:00 pm daily and shall not be open for business before 8:00 am Monday through Saturday and before 10:00 am on Sunday. First made by Frances Anthes seconded by Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.**

Edith Claros, PhD, Chair: This will take effect on March 2, 2020

**Update on coronavirus (Covid-19):**

Karyn Clark, Director of DPH: Encourages the public to go on the CDC website because there is a lot of information and is updated constantly.



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Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: Coronavirus is a virus that seems to be spreading in the community without any evidence of contacts that we know have been exposed to the virus or have come from areas where it's been very prevalent. The virus has been in the community for a while. 80% of people who get this virus, don't know they have it. 20% get symptoms. Half of those have very mild flu and cold symptoms (upper respiratory congestion, sneezing, coughing, headache and low grade fever). Half of the symptomatic patients are much more serious (high fever, difficulty breathing, and pneumonia symptoms) half end up in ICU and half die. The mortality rate is still coming in at 2.3%. There's about 90,000 cases world wide and 3,000 deaths. Here in the United States there are 89 cases and 6 deaths. This virus spreads preferentially in the elderly, patients with preexisting lung conditions, cancer conditions and immune incompetence. Travelers that come from China, Northern Italy, South Korea, Japan and Iran will all be on travelers watch system. This virus can live on surfaces up to 9 days. Ways to protect yourself are: wash your hands, cover your cough or sneeze, stay home if not feeling well, clean and disinfect touched surfaces and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Edith Claros, PhD, Chair: What does one have to do when they self-quarantine?

Patricia Bruchmann, Chief Public Health Nurse, City of Worcester and the Alliance: Some businesses are asking employees that have traveled to the five different areas, to work from home for 2 weeks. However we do not currently have any quarantine guidelines. Right now the only travelers that are being rerouted through the quarantine stations and being reported to the local BOH are people returning from China. Briefed the BOH on the quarantine steps that are taken when people get off the plane from China. The CDC will then take that information and disperses to State Departments of Public Health. The State DPH will then notify the local Public Health Department's about the traveler, then we will do our follow up.

Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director of DPH: Travelers from Italy and Japan will have their temperature monitored. If they have a temperature they will not be allowed to board the planes and if they have a temperature coming off, they will be sent to quarantine stations.

Frances Anthes: Concerned about the 14 days where you don't have any symptoms. People in the community are exposed.

Patricia Bruchmann, Chief Public Health Nurse, City of Worcester and the Alliance: During the 14 day period we are in contact with these individuals every day. They provide us with their morning and evening temperature and whether or not they are having symptoms.

Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair: How does the Division work with providing directives or actions? Does that direction come from the State? Does the BOH have a role in Public Health emergencies?

Karyn Clark, Director DPH: We receive our guidance and directives from CDC to the MDPH. Our role as the Division of Public Health is to keep the BOH informed and if we were to get to that point, we would have to make decisions to protect the public's health. Briefed the BOH of their role.

Alissa Errede, Chief, Office of Medical Preparedness: Because the information is changing so rapidly, we'll be sending out links and directing people to the CDC website. We are on weekly calls with the CDC, speaking with MDPH daily and keeping in touch with the healthcare facilities. We

have also put out information on social media. Each year we do a drill on emergency dispensing sites.

**Discussion on 2016 community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) interpreters' strategy:**  
Agenda item has been moved to the April BOH meeting.

Motion to adjourn; Chareese Allen, seconded by Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Vice Chair

**Adjourn:** 7:34pm

**Next Meeting -- April 13, 2020 at 6:30pm**

**Potential Future Meeting Topics:**

Syringe Services update

Overdose hotspots

UMass – interpreters off CHIP report

Coronavirus update