

Ingham County Board of Health (BOH)
Ingham County Health Department (ICHD) – Conference Room D/E
Tuesday, February 1, 2021

Minutes

ACTION ITEMS FOR FEBRUARY:

In attendance for meeting: Denise Chrysler, Barbara Worgess, Garry Rowe, Alexander Woods, Felicia Eshragh, Jenn Granning, Abby Schwartz, A'Lynne Dukes, Linda Vail (virtual), Dr. Adenike Shoyinka (virtual), Brittany Moore (virtual)

The meeting was called to order at 12:09 pm by Board Chair- Alexander Woods

Additions to Agenda: None

Limited Public Comment:

None

Approval of December Minutes- December minutes approved

Announcements: none

1. Introductions/Opening Comments – Alexander Woods

Alexander welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. ICHD Public Health Update- Linda Vail

Linda shared that Omicron variant cases are making a steep decline. Linda stated that Ingham County is not far behind Detroit, by the end of this week Ingham County numbers will be where they were before the Omicron surge. Linda stated that Ingham County has 173 people hospitalized with COVID-19 and the number of hospitalizations are starting to stabilize. Linda noted that Ingham County Health Department (ICHD) continues to host vaccination events. Currently, ICHD is distributing KN95 masks to the public. Linda stated that a cloth mask still works but KN-95 masks do offer the greatest amount of protection followed by surgical masks and then high thread count cloth masks. Linda stated that people need to wear the masks that they have access to. Linda explained that cloth masks should be cone shaped and not have any gaps. With Omicron being so transmissible, we need to protect the wearer. Linda stated that the Washington Post had an op-ed that stated that cloth masks should be optional. Linda noted that the headline and story were misleading. The article stated that schools can make masks optional with the new CDC guidelines, and this is not true people still need to wear masks that protect the wearer and the CDC still recommends universal masking in schools.

Linda announced that Ingham County also had a Meningococcal exposure at MSU. ICHD offered prophylaxis to everyone who was at the party where the exposure happened. ICHD received medication from Sparrow and McLaren after ICHD found out that the medication they had ordered would not arrive in time.

Denise stated that she has tried many different KN95 and KF94 masks and stated that it really comes down to what is comfortable for people to wear. Linda stated that she is a big fan of the KF94 masks because of how comfortable they are.

Linda stated that Ingham County encouraged employees to remote work this week and last week if they were able. She anticipates staff being back in the office next week. Linda noted that county services were not disrupted during that time.

Linda stated that lots of vaccinated people are contracting COVID-19 and these cases tend to be mild. Linda explained that the message needs to be that being vaccinated will help prevent serious illness instead of preventing COVID-19.

Linda stated that Ingham County is encountering some staffing challenges and is working on a policy that would allow for a hybrid work schedule. Alexander asked if there was hesitancy towards moving toward a hybrid work situation. Linda stated that there is not any hesitancy regarding the creation of a hybrid policy. Linda stated that she does not see it as a problem.

Denise shared that there is a lawsuit going forward in regards to the open meetings act and the requirement that members must attend in person. Alexander stated that the BOH members need to attend if possible, but flexibility is needed due to the pandemic.

3. Survey Results and 2022 BOH objectives Discussion

Alexander re-introduced the survey that was conducted in May 2021 regarding BOH objectives. Alexander stated that revising policies that adversely affect health/population was voted as the top priority. Alexander stated that the BOH should start reviewing policies. Alexander stated that they could ask Linda to look at policies that are adversely affecting health/population either before COVID-19 or because of COVID-19.

Alexander stated that most BOH members joined the BOH because they wanted to help their community. In terms of how they can improve the BOH, the BOH members indicated that the creation of workgroups could be helpful; Alexander noted that workgroups could be difficult because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Alexander suggested that members could work in groups through a combination of emails and ZOOM calls.

Garry stated that he thought that the comment highlighting that the BOH is an advisory board but do not advise the Health Department was interesting. Denise stated that comment is because they are an advisory board to the Board of Commissioners, not the Health Department. Garry stated that in the past, the BOH also serves as the Sanitary Board of Appeals and in those instances, they are advising Environmental Health. Barbara shared that she has served as a Health Officer and noted that the BOH did advise the department regarding issues that they should look into. Barbara stated that the BOH does advise the Health Department but that the final decision is left to the department and the Board of Commissioners. A'Lynne stated that the BOH needs to provide a pulse regarding the community. Alexander stated that the BOH and ICHD have had a lot of turn over. Barbara stated that public information can be gathered from lots of

different areas. Barbara stated that the BOH needs to be involved in that process and see what the community is doing. Barbara stated that the BOH should use the Community Health Assessment (CHA) to help determine priorities.

Alexander stated that he would like to reach out to the community and hear about issues and policies that are adversely affecting health. Alexander stated that he spoke with Jan Bidwell regarding homelessness. Jan had shared that the jail would have busses filled with released inmates and they would drop them off without any assistance or follow up. Alexander stated that he needs to contact J. Merkel to gather more information. Garry stated that in situations where the BOH have recognized a problem, the BOH needs to identify which area would be best to address those needs. Garry asked if the issue regarding released inmates would be better addressed by the department of social services. Abby stated that the BOH can go directly to the Board of Commissioners with these concerns. Alexander stated that this issue would affect Health in All Policies. Garry stated that they can do non-binding resolutions and they could draft one to direct the Board of Commissioners to look at this matter. Denise stated that this issue deals with the Department of Corrections. Denise stated many areas have services to help with released inmates. Denise wondered where these inmates are coming from and asked if there is a lack of programs or are these people falling through the cracks. Alexander stated that Lansing has a lot of programs that people do not know about. Alexander explained that his sister works with people to expunge their records, but she has a hard time recruiting people into the program and they could lose funding due to lack of enrollment. Felicia asked what policies BOH members had in mind when they took the survey.

Barbara stated that the last CHA was in 2021 and that the assessment will dive into who is getting services and what services are available. Barbara stated that there is data from the tri-county health departments and the major medical centers. Barbara explained that this assessment leads to a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Barbara stated that the BOH should use that document to determine the current community needs and what populations there are. Garry stated that he agreed with Barbara and the BOH should learn more about the CHA. Garry asked if they should focus on one item or split it up into the two highest areas. Alexander stated that he wanted to be efficient and not split into too many groups. He thought that focusing on one area would allow them to have a completed project by December 2022 and it would contribute to improving the quality of life of those in Ingham County.

Alexander stated that they had discussed the salting of the roads and some parts of Michigan has moved to using beet juice. Abby stated that she would like to read through the CHA and determine an area to work on from there. Garry stated that they also need to identify policies negatively impacting the community's health. Denise stated that the CHA and CHIP divvies up the findings and helps determine who should lead those improvement efforts. Alexander encouraged BOH members to familiarize themselves with the CHA and Jenn will organize a presentation of the Health Assessment.

4. BOC update- Derrell

Not in attendance

6. Racial Equity Taskforce Update- Alexander

Matter not discussed due to time.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm

Next Board of Health Meeting: March 1, 2022

