

## Board of Health

### Meeting Minutes for December 14, 2021

#### **\*Unapproved\***

The following board members were present: Dr. Leo Cusumano MD, Dr. Willard Simons DDS, Dr. Joseph Felsen MD, Timothy LaFever, Dr. Zahi Kassas MD., Legislative Representative Judy Hopkins

Others present: Tyler Shaw, April Worth, Jami D'Arcy, Charles White, Breeyan Barnes, County Administrator Carissa Knapp, Keith Hooker, Deb Reed, Lisa Knorowski

Members absent: Dr. David Brubaker MD

Medical Director absent: Dr. Christopher Depner

The meeting was called to order by Tyler Shaw at 7:06 pm.

A motion was made by Dr. Cusumano to approve the September 14, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Judy Hopkins. **All in Favor, Motion Carried.**

Privilege of the floor was granted to Deb Reed and Lisa Knorowski, to discuss vaccines and health education. Ms. Reed presented a list of questions to the Board of Health, to which the Board agreed to review and respond. Ms. Knorowski presented concerns regarding vaccination to the Board, general discussion followed.

Tyler Shaw, Public Health Director reported COVID-19 updates as follows:

- Mask requirements are now in place for indoor public spaces until January 15, 2022.
- 46.3% of Allegany County residents have received at least 1 dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- 42.5% of Allegany County residents have a completed series of COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Allegany County remains the county with the lowest rate of vaccinated residents, statewide.
- The 7-day positivity rate average is 10.9%.
  - The positivity rate for yesterday, 12.13.21, was 15.3%, placing the county in the high community transmission category. This number does not include positive at-home COVID testing kits.

Mr. Shaw reported personnel changes, as follows: Director of Patient Services has been filled by April Worth, Director of Environmental Health has been filled by Charles White, Reproductive & Sexual Health Registered Nurse has been filled by Sara Johnson, and the MRCO position in the Children's Services Department has been filled by Sheri Abbey.

Mr. Shaw presented Judy Hopkins, Human Services Legislative Representative, with a Certificate of Service for her dedication and service to the Board of Health and community, as she will be retiring from the legislature. Mr. Shaw recognized Judy as a champion for the Health Department and thanked her for her support throughout the pandemic.

Judy Hopkins removed her mask to address the BOH and ACDOH, as the meeting was being recorded. Ms. Hopkins thanked the Board members and Health Department staff. Ms. Hopkins expressed her gratitude toward the HD staff, Doctors, Nurses, EMTs, First Responders, Technicians. Etc., who have been working long hours throughout the pandemic, stating that it has been an honor and a privilege to work with all.

Deb Reed questioned why it was acceptable for a Board member to remove their mask to address the Board, since Ms. Reed is not permitted to do so in the classroom. The conversation was tabled for the moment.

April Worth, Director of Patient Services, reported that in her communications with other counties in NYS, many of these counties have either reduced or halted programs/services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Worth reported that ACDOH has continued to provide all programs and services, throughout the pandemic.

The Immunization Program provided 143 immunizations and there has been a total of 491 COVID vaccines (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> doses) provided through the Health Department, in the last quarter.

Reproductive and Sexual Health Clinics have continued to be held throughout the pandemic. A total of 5.5 clinics were held last quarter, 58 patients were seen and 30 STI investigations were conducted through the Health Department. Recent surveys of clinic patients reflected excellent ratings and positive comments.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program nursing staff is currently monitoring 47 children. Ms. Worth stated that reminder mailings for 1-year and 2-year lead testing continue to be mailed out; 85 letters were mailed for 1-year-old children and 81 lead testing reminder letters for 2-year-old children, last quarter.

Ms. Worth reported that in the last quarter there was a total of 198 communicable disease reports conducted, to include Lyme Disease, Hep B & C, Giardia, Campylobacter, and Legionella. This number does not include COVID-19 positive cases.

Dr. Simons questioned the prevalence of Lyme Disease in 2021. Ms. Worth stated that there has been an increase in cases since 2020 and this may, in part, be due to an increase in testing, in addition to an increase in tick activity.

Accidents/Incidents/Complaints – There have been no accidents, incidents, or complaints in the last quarter.

Dr. Kassas requested to clarify the mask requirement for teachers, in response to Deb Reed's earlier question. Dr. Kassas stated that last year, during the pandemic, students were attending school on a limited schedule and social distancing of 6 feet could be implemented. This year, due to an effort to keep schools open for students to attend fulltime, social distancing in schools was reduced to 3 feet apart with a mask requirement in place.

Carissa Knapp, County Administrator, stated that there is NYS guidance for individuals that are appearing on camera that they may remove their mask while speaking, if they are distanced 6 feet or more from any other individual. This is the practice during Board meetings and/or other meetings that are being recorded/televised.

Jami D'Arcy, Deputy Public Health Director, reported that lead cases continue to climb, 20 new lead cases have been reported and 12 cases have been closed in 2021. These numbers have doubled since 2020. Environmental Health is currently following a total of 39 lead cases.

Ms. D'Arcy reported that 4 rabies vaccination clinics were held in 2021, resulting in a total of 757 rabies vaccinations administered. Ms. D'Arcy stated that there has been a total of 154 animal bites in 2021, 33 have been sent out for testing and 0 have come back positive for rabies. 11 individuals have received post exposure treatment, this number is significantly lower than last year.

Dr. Kassas questioned what actions are being taken to ensure that parents are taking their children to hospital laboratories for lead testing. Ms. D'Arcy responded that the ACDOH lead nurse contacts the parents/guardians to provide education and guidance however there have been some challenges in convincing the parents/guardians to take their children for venous testing.

Dr. Simons questioned what sources are tested for lead. Ms. D'Arcy responded that, in Environmental Health, soil and water samples are tested as well as use of an x-ray gun to test all painted surfaces inside and outside of the home.

A motion was made to move into executive session to discuss the medical history of a particular individual at 8:09pm by Dr. Kassas. Motion seconded by Judy Hopkins. **All in Favor, Motion Carried.**

A motion was made to move out of executive session at 8:19pm by Dr. Felsen. Motion seconded by Dr. Kassas. **All in Favor, Motion Carried.**

Old Business – Officer nominations were discussed.

A motion to appoint Dr. Kassas as Board of Health President was made by Dr. Simons. Motion seconded by Dr. Cusumano. **All in Favor, Motion Carried.**

A motion to appoint Dr. Simons as Board of Health Vice President was made by Tim LaFever. Motion seconded by Judy Hopkins. **All in Favor, Motion Carried.**

New Business – Jami D’Arcy stated that there has been conversation with KSL Laboratory in Buffalo regarding PCR testing in schools. KSL is currently reaching out to local pharmacies in Allegany County to partner for COVID testing purposes. KSL states that they will be able to provide results within 24 hours. Tyler Shaw stated that currently many of Allegany County schools are partnering with Quadrant to test students and/or staff.

General Discussion – Dr. Kassas inquired if negative rapid antigen tests are being accepted for symptomatic students to return to school. Mr. Shaw stated that NYS has loosened their guidelines and they are now allowing this as a return to school option. Mr. Shaw stated that, at this time, it has been left to the school physician to decide if they will honor this. Dr. Kassas questioned if any schools were allowing “testing to stay”. Mr. Shaw stated that this is not in place at this time because it would have to be adopted as a county, it is not currently an option for individual schools to adopt this practice. Dr. Kassas asked if schools were allowing testing out of quarantine after 5 days. Mr. Shaw explained that this is currently practice only for fully vaccinated individuals. It was then asked if it is required for symptomatic individuals that test positive on rapid antigen tests to get PCR testing for confirmation of positive status. Mr. Shaw said that the ACDOH is recommending follow-up PCR testing but not requiring it.

Dr. Felsen inquired if the schools were seeing increased rates of positive students. Dr. Kassas replied that the schools are all seeing increased positive rates and he feels they are doing a great job of isolating students quickly and following CDC guidelines. Mr. Shaw agreed that the schools are all doing very well in COVID response and working with the ACDOH. Mr. Shaw stated that social gatherings, as opposed to school, continue to be the largest source of exposure.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Dr. Cusumano, motion seconded by Dr. Simons. **All in Favor, Motion Carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Breeyan Barnes

Confidential Secretary to the Public Health Director