

Cayuga County Board of Health Meeting
Tuesday, April 28, 2020
Digital Meeting @ 12:15pm

Members Present: Mr. Tim Fessenden
Dr. John Cosachov
Dr. Cassandra Archer
Dr. Brian Brundage
Mr. Ralph Battista
Ms. Elane Daly
Mr. Keith Batman

Staff Present: Kathleen Cuddy, MPH
Eileen O'Connor, PE
Nancy Purdy, RN, BSN
Janine Clifford
Lorie Fischer, BS Ed
Tania Young, RD
Dr. Gioia- Medical Director
Megan Bell

Meeting called to order at 12:15pm.

Minutes of March 24, 2020:

With no questions or corrections, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Keith Batman and seconded by Ms. Elane Daly the minutes of the March 24, 2020 Board of Health meeting were approved as written.

Director of Administrative Services: Janine Clifford

Janine reviewed the claims with warrant dates of 4/7/2020 and 4/21/2020 and the credit card statements with a date of 3/30/2020 and 4/15/2020. Janine also shared that the language line has been a huge help to staff during this COVID-19 response and she herself had to use it to converse with a Spanish-speaking patient and found it very easy to use. With no questions or concerns, a motion to approve the claims was made by Dr. Cassie Archer and seconded by Ralph Battista. All others in attendance in favor.

Janine shared with the Board what her division's operations have looked like throughout the Health Department's COVID-19 response. Staff have been alternating days working in the office and from home. They have only one or two staff in the office at one time. They still have to meet the deadlines for payroll and the many grants managed by the Health Department. Staff are also participating in various roles in the COVID-19 response as well as maintaining their current job responsibilities

Director of Environmental Health: Eileen O'Connor, PE

Eileen shared what her division's operations have looked like throughout the COVID-19 response. They have a rotating schedule put in place that ensures approximately half of the staff is in the office on any given day and the other half are working from home. They are still maintaining those required program areas such as rabies, public water supplies, following up on any nuisance complaints that come in to the office and site visits for installations/modifications of septic systems. All staff members have roles in the COVID-19 response as well as their typical duties. Some staff are assisting with purchasing and managing supplies and others are assisting with required compliance checks on persons under isolation or quarantine. The Department has set up the incident command system and some staff have roles in that structure.

Eileen shared that after discussion campground permits were issued in Cayuga County only for their seasonal sites, those sites that are utilized as a second home, with several conditions listed.

Dr. Archer asked if they will have a considerable back log once things begin to open up again. Eileen shared that as things begin to open up, we will have to prioritize the work load and focus on the programs that are the most important. Eileen shared that children's camps, if allowed to open, will be a significant priority for staff as they are very involved and take a significant amount of staff time on a typical year.

Elane asked if Eileen has seen a decrease in lead since COVID-19. Eileen shared that they have seen a reduction in children being referred to Environmental, most likely because parents are rescheduling children's well checks. Nancy shared that they are still following up with current cases and carrying out requirements for any child that may come forth.

Coordinator of Programs for Children with Special Needs: Lorie Fischer, BS Ed

Lorie shared that on March 16th face-to-face visits ended for service coordinators as well as therapists. NYSDOH issues guidance on continuing programming on April 2nd that included authorizing tele-therapy for families as deemed appropriate by the therapist and the family. Service coordinators have still been responsible for arranging tele-therapy for those families and providers that desire it. They have been maintaining their required monthly contact with families and processing individualized family service plans as typical via video and/or teleconference.

Lorie has also reduced the number of staff working in the office and has some staff that have been set up to work remotely from home. Staff members also have responsibilities in regards to Departments response to COVID-19 on top of their typical duties. One of the service coordinators is also an RN so she has been assisting other Department RN's with the isolation and quarantine portion of the response. One billing staff member is working from home and one has been assisting with answering the phones and other assigned duties.

Intakes have been on pause and will have a large backlog once face-to-face visitation is allowed again. To stay in compliance with the State mandated 45 day timeline, Lorie has been putting new referrals into Child Find which is a surveillance program managed through mailings to families. Once face-to-face visitations are allowed again those children who are eligible will be moved from Child Find to Early Intervention at which point the 45 day timeline would begin.

Preschool services have also been authorized to conduct tele-therapy if the family wishes. The County is still responsible for paying the tuition based programs, but not fee for service providers unless tele-therapy is being conducted. IEP meetings are also being conducted virtually and year-end review meetings have begun to get started.

Elane asked if the State has relaxed the 45 day timeline's associated with enrollment into the Early Intervention program. Lorie shared that they have not issued any formal guidance on that, but that she participates in the S2AY rural health network and the counties affiliated with that have discussed that and will be interesting to see once counties undergo their IPRO reviews.

Coordinator for WIC Program: Tania Young, RD

Tania shared that WIC is open and offering services via phone appointments. On March 23rd the State waived the requirement for physical presence at a recertification appointment. Since our County utilizes the E-WIC system loading new benefits on to participant's cards can be done electronically. Tania also shared that five of their seven staff have been working remotely from home. The County's IT department was very helpful and instrumental in making this a very streamlined and efficient process. They are still also offering some late night appointments for those participants who are still working. They have been able to determine eligibility electronically as well mail new benefit cards.

Breastfeeding support is still happening remotely. They are going to hold their first Zoom meeting for their WIC participants.

Tania also shared that WIC participants still have some regulations when shopping including having to physically go into the store and utilize a lane with a cashier no self-check out. Staff have been sharing a lot of information on how to shop safely during these times. They also had a lot of participants reach out in the beginning with concerns about finding formula and they were able to assist them by connecting them directly with the vendor. They also posted information about the dangers of home-made formula.

Staff have been utilizing the county website to connect participants with other resources they may need during this time that they have never had to utilize before. Tania shared that since going phone-based for appointments their no-show rate has dropped significantly and they have enrolled 120 new participants, which is almost double their typical enrollment for a months' time period.

Staff have also been assisting with the Department's COVID-19 response by answering the phones and participating in the on-call rotation.

Director for Community Health Services: Nancy Purdy, RN, BSN

Nancy shared that she is pleased with how each division has been working together during the COVID-19 response.

Dr. Cosachov asked how the Department was doing with supplies. Nancy shared that we do have a limited source of the PPE and they have been looking at alternatives in regards to testing that could limit the person-to-person contact thus limiting the amount of required PPE. Some places

have created “stalls” that limit the direct interaction with the patient. New testing guidance was issued recently by NYSDOH. We are in the process of reviewing and updating our forms and sharing information with the local healthcare providers.

Dr. Cosachov asked if a healthcare worker is exposed should they wait a few days before being tested as this may increase the likelihood of a positive test. Nancy shared that is why we would still like even the healthcare workers and first responders to consult with their physician before swabbing so that those types of questions and discussions can take place.

Elane asked if the availability of PPE and testing swabs was not an issue would the Department be testing everyone. Nancy shared that we are still following the State’s guidance on who should be tested which is symptom based with the exception of first responders and healthcare workers.

Elane asked if we were seeing a lot of the positive cases coming from contacts of a known positive. Nancy shared that we are seeing that.

Dr. Archer asked what the Health Department is doing if someone is tested and the result is negative, but there are still not feeling well. Nancy shared that we are referring them to East Hill, the Respiratory Clinic or back to their primary doctor. If a person is on mandatory quarantine and they develop symptoms then we are extending their quarantine timeline.

Nancy shared that her and Kevin have done some outreach to businesses and other county departments on best practices for protecting employees and the public.

Nancy also shared that we have created our database for tracking cases and their contacts. Some counties have purchased software and others were looking to the State to assist with tracking options.

Public Health Director: Kathleen Cuddy, MPH

Kathleen shared that the County’s IT Department has been very helpful in getting the Department everything they need to be successful in our response to COVID-19. She also praised the Health Department staff for all their hard work and flexibility during this uncertain time.

She has been having weekly calls with both NYSACHO and NYSDOH and they have been helpful to hear how other counties have been tackling a similar issue.

Kathleen also discussed working with the Hospital and the Community Cares clinic to provide an option for transportation for those individuals who may need it. They have not had to utilize it yet, but is glad to have it, as Health Department staff were transporting people prior.

Dr. Archer sent Kathleen a great article regarding antibody testing that Kathleen will share with the Board. A lot of questions still surrounding the antibody testing and the Department is getting a lot of calls from the public looking for the antibody test. The State has done some surprise antibody testing in surrounding counties, but nothing in Cayuga County yet. Some local

providers have expressed interest in offering the antibody test, but nothing formal has been developed.

Kathleen shared that the most labor intensive portion of our response has been the isolation and quarantine, but people have been very compliant and we have received a lot of positive feedback.

Local Health Directors and County leaders have been participating in regional groups discussing plans for re-opening. Kathleen shared that she is not certain their specific requests will be honored, as proposed, but it was an opportunity for them to share their input. The Board asked if schools, day cares or children's camps were part of the discussion and she said they were not it was more economic based.

Ralph asked if we have had success in communicating and sharing information with the NYS Department of Corrections. Kathleen said that they have developed a relationship with the infectious disease nurses from the facilities in our counties and they have been coordinating with our nursing staff. Kathleen also stated she has communicated directly with superintendents of facilities and at the state. Nancy added that they have collaborated on a more effective process to get things accomplished more efficiently.

Kathleen shared that she is having multiple coordinated calls with county and city leaders as well as Health staff are participating in first responders calls each week.

Dr. Archer asked if it appears the May 15th date will remain or if it is going to get pushed back again. Kathleen was not sure on that as it would depend largely on the governor and county officials and disease data.

Medical Director's Report: Dr. Gioia

Dr. Gioia shared some information on antibody testing and re-opening.

Kathleen also shared that she reached out to Town Supervisors and will have a virtual meeting to address any concerns they may be having.

With nothing further to discuss Dr. Cosachov made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Archer seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 1:27pm.