

Cayuga County Board of Health Meeting
Tuesday, March 24, 2020
Digital Meeting

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
Dr. Gioia- Medical Director
Megan Bell

Meeting was called to order at 12:15pm.

Minutes of January 28, 2020 & Special Meeting March 3, 2020:

With no questions or corrections, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Tim Fessenden and seconded by Mr. Ralph Battista the minutes of the January 28, 2020 Board of Health and March 3, 2020 Special Board of Health meeting were approved as written.

Director of Environmental Health: Eileen O'Connor, PE

Eileen reviewed the Hearing and Consent Orders:
Town of Owasco-Owasco (T)
Whitson's Culinary Group-Auburn (C)
Goody's Lake Como Inn- Summerhill (T)
Devaney's Riverside Grill- Brutus (T)

A motion to approve the Hearing and Consent orders was made by Dr. Archer and seconded by Dr. Brian Brundage with all other members in attendance in favor.

Public Health Director: Kathleen Cuddy, MPH & Director of Community Health Services: Nancy Purdy, RN, BSN

Kathleen and Nancy provided the Board members with an update regarding the Covid-19 virus and what the Health Department has been doing as part of their response to the virus.

Kathleen shared that staff has been working with community agencies and services including: physicians from the Board of Health, County officials, City of Auburn officials, Auburn Community Hospital administrators, Director of County Emergency Management, Sheriff, E911 and Mental Health Director. They have been meeting routinely, most recently on Sunday 3/22

and via phone and video conferencing. They have established the Emergency Operations Center and given the public health threat, the Chair of County Legislature declared a State of Emergency, which allowed for schools in the county to close. Also the County has closed all their buildings to the public and any workers who have the capability have been working from home. IT Department has been incredibly supportive and vital in allowing everyone the access they need to be successful working at home.

We have a large need for supplies in this county. Mainly in terms of personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing kits. We have some expired supplies and after discussion with the manufacturer, it has been permitted to use as long as it has not been expired for longer than 5 years.

The other issue we are currently facing is the turn-around time for testing results. The Hospital Lab and LapCorp are currently waiting 5-7 days for results. Kathleen and Nancy have a call with Dr. Riccio from the hospital this afternoon to discuss testing and alternative testing options. Elane asked Kathleen and Nancy if we have been getting requests from the public to be tested and Kathleen and Nancy shared that requests are coming in daily and we are working through the patient's primary care and are doing our best to test those that are symptomatic, have had contact with a positive or have travel history. We have 3 positives as of today and those three individuals are in isolation with their contacts in mandatory quarantine.

Elane asked how we would proceed if supply of testing kits and PPE were not an issue and Nancy shared that we have to remind the public that the test is not the only answer. Dr. Archer stated that the public needs to be informed that the test is not the end all be all and we still need to be practicing social distancing even with a negative test result.

Dr. Brundage asked how many test kits we have. Nancy share that the hospital is sharing what they have with the Health Department and they had about 300 at the start.

Kathleen shared that Department staff have been having routine calls with Hospital staff and administration. We are currently working on a joint project to develop the former Cayuga County Nursing Home, where the Health Department is currently performing swabbing, into a respiratory clinic operated by the Hospital. The building has great space and has been maintained by the County since its closure. The plan is still in its early stages, but both the Hospital and the Health Department are hoping to get it up and running very soon.

Dr. Brundage asked about PPE for staff who is doing the swabbing. Kathleen shared that we are running low on PPE for this function.

ACH is still conducting elective surgery, which also utilize PPE. Dr. Archer shared that they are going to be stopping those by Wednesday March 25th. Elane asked what is considered an elective surgery in this circumstance. Dr. Gioia shared that it would be anything that could wait and not cause harm to the individual, such as screening procedures. (i.e. colonoscopies)

Dr. Gioia shared that the request has gone out to retired nurses and doctors and encouraged them to sign up for the medical reserve corps.

Kathleen shared that Health Department staff has stopped all face-to-face contact with the public in regards to our typical duties. Most staff have been re-deployed to working directly on the Covid-19 efforts.

Dr. Archer asked in regards to the shortage of PPE has anyone reached out to the dental practices in the community since most have ceased all typical practices and screenings and are just conducting emergency services. Nancy shared that she thought she had read somewhere that the National Dental Association was spearheading that effort.

Dr. Brundage asked if we have been reaching out to other County Health Departments to discuss what they are doing. Kathleen shared that NYSACHO, which is New York Stated Association of County Health Officials has been having weekly calls and are offering up great resources and best practices that have been developed across the state.

Ralph asked about what advice is being given to individuals who consider themselves part of the vulnerable population, but are still being required to report to work. Kathleen shared that the County resource line has been taking information from callers on that subject and working to find additional information for commonly asked questions and concerns. The County Attorney is assisting with this effort as we have been getting a lot of calls regarding essential versus non-essential businesses. Nancy shared that several people are requesting letters and/or testing results in order to return to work and we are working on that one case at a time. Concerned that as the number of people we test rises this could be a task that staff cannot keep up with. Kathleen shared that as more guidance comes from the County Attorney she will share.

Kathleen asked the Board about mask covers and have any of them particularly the physicians used them before. She is unsure of their value, but we have received calls from members of the public wanting to help with the lack of masks and offering to sew these mask covers. Dr. Gioia shared that recently the CDC went on record saying use the best that is available to you. We are asking for more supplies every day and there is a State stockpile, but much of it is going to downstate.

Dr. Brundage asked if we are seeing other county residents coming here to seek treatment or testing. Kathleen shared that hospital surge is a very real concern, but in regards to testing we have been able to control that as we are doing appointment based testing with order from patient's primary care doctor.

Ralph asked if the Health Department is planning on conducting a drive thru testing like Onondaga or Tompkins County. Kathleen shared that we are doing drive-thru in the sense that patients are remaining in their vehicles and staff conducting the swabbing that way, but a drive-thru in the sense of anyone can come and get tested with no symptom criteria or no appointment, the Health Department does not currently have the resources to conduct something like that. Elane asked if the Health Department is getting notified of all test results for county residents even if they are not tested by the Health Department. Kathleen shared that yes, the results will populate in the state communicable disease reporting system based on the patients county of residence.

County staff experienced issues with its virtual meeting software and lost contact with the members of the Board.

As a result of this a motion was made by Dr. Archer to adjourn the meeting and a second by Dr. Cosachov with all members in attendance in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm.