

Cayuga County Board of Health Meeting
Tuesday, September 28, 2021
In-Person & Virtual @ 12:15am

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

Staff Present: Eileen O'Connor, PE
Janine Clifford
Deanna Ryan
Kathleen Cuddy, MPH
Ani Fish
Megan Bell
Dr. Phillip Gioia, Medical Director

Guests Present: Robert Harding, The Citizen Newspaper
Aileen McNabb-Coleman, Chairperson Cayuga County Legislature

Meeting began at 12:19pm.

Minutes of August 24, 2021:

With no questions or corrections, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Dr. Cassandra Archer and seconded by Dr. Brian Brundage the minutes of the August 24, 2021 Board of Health Meeting were approved as written.

Supervising Public Health Administrator: Deanna Ryan, MCH

Deanna shared some statistics from the contact tracing program. Deanna reported that August was our third highest month for positive cases since the start of the pandemic and to date September is on track to be higher than August.

We are currently dealing with a delay in positive results reporting due to the availability of rapid PCR testing supplies in our community. More providers are having to send PCR samples out to Labs for analysis which increases the wait time for results.

Contact Tracers are currently caught up with the positive cases coming being processed within 24 hours of them being uploaded to Commcare. Our policy is to make school-aged children a priority so they are filtered out first then staff filters the remaining positives by specimen collection date.

Deanna has recently hired additional contact tracers and they are going through the training process but will hopefully be working independently in the near future. Contact tracers continue to work 7 days a week with at least 3 night shifts scheduled throughout the week, typically Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

The Board discussed where the delays are occurring and the need to advocate for more supplies. Dr. Cosachov requested if it was possible to include vaccination status in the reported deaths as well. Deanna was not sure if that was something that was currently being collected but she would look into that.

Director of Administrative Services: Janine Clifford

Janine reviewed the claims with warrant dates of 8/26/2021 and 9/9/2021 and the credit card statements with dates of 7/29/2021 and 8/14/2021. Dr. Brundage asked why the rabies bill appeared so much larger than we have seen before. Janine shared that sometimes it is the way the providers submit the bills. Health Department pays after all funds have been sought from third party insurances. Eileen shared sometimes we are paying bills that are a year old because the hospital or provider has been dealing with the insurance company. With no further questions or concerns, a motion to approve the claims was made by Mr. Ralph Battista and seconded by Ms. Elane Daly and all other members in attendance in favor.

Janine also shared some information regarding the Health Department's partnership with Medent a local electronic medical record company. The Health Department utilized the Medent software in conjunction with Auburn Community Hospital to carry out required COVID-19 vaccination administration fee insurance billing. In order to receive federal funding through FEMA the Health Department had to show proof that we were attempting to obtain payment first from any third party insurers. No out of pocket costs were ever collected or requested from patients. As a result of this partnership the Health Department has been able to recoup approximately \$164,488 in administration costs from third party insurers.

The Health Department has a resolution going before the Legislature this month to allow the Health Department to purchase their own version of the Medent software as their currently billing program is approximately 20 years old and no longer supported by the company. Janine shared that staff were able to trial the Medent software and have been very pleased with its functionality and ease of use.

Dr. Brundage asked rabies bill relatively high- sometimes just the way bill comes in

Coordinator for WIC Program: Tanya Young, DTR

Tanya was not able to attend today's meeting so Kathleen will be reporting out for her. Kathleen shared that WIC has settled into their new location on North Street. They are still seeing a majority of their clients remotely. The State oversight for the WIC program is still allowing programs to continue with virtual appointments.

The WIC Program is currently looking to fill a couple of vacancies: one being a full-time nutritionist and the other being a part-time lactation peer counselor.

Elane asked if the Board needed to send a letter of support allowing the program to continue with virtual appointments. Kathleen didn't think it was needed at this point since the State has extended the waiver allowing this for all programs, but if the time comes and the Board would like to send a letter we could draft something up.

Public Health Director: Kathleen Cuddy, MPH

Kathleen will be reporting out for her and Nancy. Our COVID vaccine clinics are being surveyed by the State Department of Health so Nancy is taking them through our operations and clinic proceedings as we have a clinic in Cato this afternoon. After this Cato clinic we will be taking a break from the mobile clinics and just be holding them at our stationery site at the We are still awaiting guidance from the State on the Pfizer boosters.

Nursing staff has been dealing with some frustrations surrounding our vaccine refrigeration/freezer on Dill Street and have been having to use our back up refrigerator and freezer at the County Office Building.

We have also been holding back-to-school vaccination clinics for students who are being excluded from school because they are not current on their required vaccinations.

The Health Department has received some additional funding to help promote COVID-19 vaccination so we are working on getting some media campaigns up and running. The State is also running a COVID-19 vaccination program targeting the 12-17 year old population called Vax-to-School. The Health Department will be promoting this campaign with the State on our social media and website.

Kathleen shared that we are looking to hire some non-clinical support staff to work our COVID-19 vaccination clinics as it grows increasingly difficult to find county staff to work our clinics as more and more staff return to normal working duties.

A new executive order came down from the Governor allowing EMTs to practice and assist in various settings including vaccination clinics and testing sites.

Kathleen also shared that the State has issued a mandate that will include public health workers be vaccinated and she anticipates a deadline for that will be coming soon.

Dr. Archer shared that in regards to symptomatic testing provider officer are significantly overburdened with the amount of testing and sick visits as a result of children needing a negative test to return to school following symptom onset.

All schools are performing surveillance testing using the Binax tests. Schools were offered an alternative testing option using the saliva testing that is processed in a lab in Syracuse. Moravia and another small private school will be trialing the saliva testing.

Director of Environmental Health: Eileen O'Connor, PE

Eileen introduced Ani Fish she is the Health Departments new engineer.

Eileen reviewed the hearing and consent orders:

Daphine's Diner- Sterling (T)

Hildreth Property- Genoa (T)

Mabry Property- Genoa (T)

Rosica Property- Genoa (T)

Leach Property- Victory (T)

A motion was made by Mr. Ralph Battista and seconded by Dr. Brian Brundage with all other members in attendance in favor of approving the hearing and consent orders as written.

Eileen reported that the State has adopted recent regulations requiring certain public water systems with their own source to test for PFOA/PFOS/Dioxane chemicals. In Cayuga County 41 sources were tested including the 3 lake sources and no PFOA/PFOS were present with the exception of one mobile home park in Moravia. The State will assist them with re-sampling. Of the 41 sources sampled, 12 systems did have low level hits of dioxane but nothing above the standard. Additional testing will take place through the course of this year and the next two years.

Our office received several complaints regarding a strong odor coming from a manure lagoon in the Town of Mentz. Eileen reached out to DEC as the farm involved is a CAFO and therefore regulated. The DEC reported that the farm takes waste from the digester on County House Rd which has been inoperable for a while. This was likely causing the stronger than typical odors. The DEC is working with the farm and is requiring that they provide a summary of the waste that was sent to the lagoon since April 2021 as well as a plan on how they will limit or mitigate odors in the future.

Eileen reported that toxins associated with HABs have been seen in the raw water since around mid-August in the Town of Owasco and City of Auburn water treatment plants. Levels in Auburn have been higher than typical, but treatment continues to work at keeping the toxins from appearing in the finished water.

Eileen discussed the 9E plan that the Planning Department is overseeing. After months of working with Cornell modeling the Owasco watershed, the contractor overseeing the plan gave a presentation last night. Both Keith and Elane attended the meeting. The plan focuses on identifying where the pollutants are coming from and what steps can be taken to reduce those pollutants. The presenters asked the attendees to review recommendations that were posted as potential action items. The meeting was recorded and is available for viewing on the Planning Department website, so the public can still submit their recommendations. Keith shared that there will be another public meeting to present the final plan which will include the recommended action items prior to submitting it to the State.

Medical Director's Report: Dr. Phillip Gioia

Dr. Gioia shared it will be challenging for the Health Department regarding booster administration. Currently Pfizer is the only authorized booster vaccine.

Dr. Gioia shared that in the next few weeks he expects Pfizer will seek approval for children aged 5-11 year olds. He shared that those children under age of 12 will get a 1/3 of the dose which still gives him good antibodies but less side effects.

Elane asked if the individuals who received the Moderna vaccination are eligible for boosters yes and Dr. Gioia shared that nothing official has come down regarding Moderna yet.

Kathleen also reminded everyone to get their flu shot as well this year and there are no contraindications to getting your flu shot at the same time as your COVID vaccine.

Ralph asked if the contact tracing staff has been experiencing difficult interactions and Deanna shared that most people although frustrated are understanding, but there is always a few who can be verbally confrontational.

With nothing further to discuss a motion was made by Dr. Cassandra Archer with a second by Mr. Ralph Battista and the meeting was adjourned at 1:18pm.