



PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2021

Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Board Members – Present

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH
Meredith Hodach–Avalos, MD
Darrell Penn, ALT II
Mona Shah, PhD
Kathleen Stillo, MBA, ALT I
Rick Strauss, MD
Leticia Fraga, Council

Liaison

Board Members – Absent

JoAnn Hill, RN
Rick Weiss, MS
Linda Schwimmer

Staff

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS

Gwendolyn Krol, Vulnerable
Population Coordinator

Minutes submitted by:

Debra Mercantini, Interim Board Secretary

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos, called the Regular meeting to order at 7:34 pm. She recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: *“This is to affirm that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Princeton Board of Health have been duly advertised and are being conducted in compliance with all provision of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”*

Roll Call was completed.

Guest Speaker:

Nitya Agrawal and Linda McNulty Perez spoke about the Vaccine Navigator Program. They discussed the background of Princeton Mutual Aid and the Health Team advocates for health equity who assist the underserved population with vaccine registration and transportation and also assisting with health insurance enrollment. The program began on March 19, 2021 and since then it has 144 participants and scheduled 83 appointments for vaccines. Equity is a priority to the program and 77% of the people who signed up are Hispanic/Latino; 41% live in households with 5+ members; 51% have requested transportation and 58% cannot work from home. There are gaps in the vaccine equity, gaps in the vaccine registration process, gaps in vaccine education and gaps in access to the vaccine. Princeton Mutual Aid is trying to fill the equity gaps for Covid information and advocate for non-insured and non-documented residents. They also spoke about health equity and how people feel powerless, have income and wealth gaps, lack of opportunities for upward mobility, lack access to healthcare and suffer language barriers.

Monthly Report:

Dr. DiFerdinando gave an update on the pause of the Johnson & Johnson Covid vaccine. The recommendation to halt the vaccine came after 6 people (1 person dead and 1 in serious condition) developed a very rare blood clot in the brain and it has been compared to the AstraZeneca vaccine being used in Europe and the FDA is taking these cases very seriously. The blood clot occurs within 2-6 weeks after the vaccine has been administered and the FDA and CDC are waiting to see if more clots are reported in other areas of the body. There will be an emergency meeting tomorrow by the FDA to look over the data and come up with immediate guidelines and how to communicate the risks to patients – a new protocol should be in place by the end of the week.

Mr. Jeff Grosser stated that the Health Department received an emergency email with clear instructions not to distribute the J&J vaccine until further notice. The Health Department has about 110 doses that will be stored according to the FDA guidelines. Those doses were earmarked for home-bound individuals and they have been notified that it has been cancelled and they will be given the Moderna



shot when it becomes available. He reported that the Mercer Public Health Department announced that the Cure Arena will not be giving waitlist vaccines, those doses will be allocated to local Health Departments. He noted that vaccine clinics were recently held at Holly House, Redding Circle and Spruce Circle and the average age of the recipients were in their early 80's. Finally, he discussed the on-going funding from the stimulus packages.

Gwen Krol discussed outreach and the vaccine outreach initiatives noting that she is hoping to have a clinic next week, outdoors in the parking lot of the Mt. Pisgah Ame Church for the 25 people on the local waitlist for the vaccine. She also discussed how she is working with restaurant workers who need vaccines; helping people to register on the NJSVSS; working with Human Services to get people registered for the vaccine; working on homebound vaccines; and how she has helped 25 people get vaccinated so far. She also discussed handing out fliers in Spanish that contained a Covid Vaccine Fact Sheet and the Covid-19 Art Campaign. There was a brief discussion about administering the vaccine at Princeton University especially for people who do not have transportation and whether or not students should be vaccinated prior to returning to campus in the fall. An update on the launch of the Capital Health Community Center and it was also noted that the Penn Medicine clinic will be expanding to an FQHC so they can also see adults.

Sophie Graham inquired about getting information out to the population of residents who do not speak English or Spanish and also how the Princeton Health Department is going to counteract the concerns over the J&J vaccine and Health Director Jeff Grosser addressed those comments.

Liaison Report:

Council President Leticia Fraga noted that the HillTop Park project has been put on hold and the Cannabis Task Force had its first meeting and she was very impressed with the level of expertise the Task Force has.

Old Business

There was no discussion held.

New Business

There was no discussion held.

Reports from Committees

Structural Racism Committee:

Mr. Darrell Penn gave a report about the Structural Racism Committee. He reported that there are 2 action items: develop a resolution that is meaningful and actionable and engaging in a Privatization exercise (what is realistic and what resources are available for that). He proposed getting the Board of Health together to dedicate time to look at what has been proposed and how to move forward. He stated that he looks forward to working with the Board of Health to carry this work forward. He made a motion that was seconded by Kathy Stillo and affirmatively carried by all those present to create an effort between the Board of Health and the Princeton Health Department to provide guidelines around racism.

Planning Committee

No report given



Reports from other Boards/Commissions/Task Forces

Mr. Rick Weiss reported on the Vision Zero Task Force and how he represented the Board of Health at the Vision Zero introductory meeting. The focus will be to make the streets of Princeton safer and they group will hold quarterly meetings.

Ms. Kathy Stillo reported on the Cannabis Task Force stating Princeton can acquire a 2% tax on the sale of Cannabis and noted that they also discussed who would be eligible to operate a cannabis sales business in town. The Board of Health can put together some written materials and send it to the Task Force regarding the marketing. She also noted that PADA is very concerned about the cannabis regulations.

Chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos reported on the Princeton Environmental Commission regarding the HillTop Park project which has now been put on hold. She discussed the issues that were brought up by the residents such as the concerns of toxicity of the artificial turf fields; the effect of artificial turf on climate change; the effect of artificial turf on the water supply; heat island and greenhouse gas effect of the artificial turf fields; and how the fields are currently used and what can be expected in the future.

Minutes:

February 2021 minutes: Comments were made to edit the new business section. A motion was made by George DiFerdinando and seconded by Rick Strauss and affirmatively carried by those present.

Chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos asked if anyone would be interested in attending the next Princeton Environmental Commission meeting. Hearing none, she stated that she would attend the meeting.

Dr. George DiFerdinando thanked Julie Moy for her service as the Board of Health Recording Secretary and wished her the best.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 9:27 pm was moved by Dr. Strauss seconded by Dr. DiFerdinando and affirmatively carried by all those present.

Respectfully submitted by:

Debra Mercantini
Interim Recording Secretary