

Princeton Board Of Public Health Minutes

Monthly Meeting

June 17, 2014

Monument Hall – East Meeting Room

One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542

Present:

Board Members:

Lauren Babcock-Dunning
George DiFerdinando, M.D.
JoAnn Hill, RN
Laura Kahn, M.D.
Steven Miller, PhD
Charles Rojer, M.D., Chairman
Linda Steiner-Sichel, MPH
Rick Weiss, MS

Staff:

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, MHO
V Bea Snowdon

Liaisons and Guests:

Elizabeth Bidwell Bates, PHSC Liaison
Heather Howard, J.D., Town Council
Elisa Neira, MSW, Dir. Human Services
Phillip S. Curran, The Princeton Packet

Absent:

Janet Heroux, MHS

I. Open Public Meeting Statement

At 7:30PM, Dr. Charles Rojer called the meeting of the Princeton Board of Public Health to order by reading: "Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required by the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice was provided of the date, time, and location of this regular meeting by posting a copy of the adopted schedule of the regular meetings with the Clerk's office and by mailing copies to the Trenton Times and Princeton Packet."

II. Roll Call

The absence of Janet Heroux was noted during role call. All other members were present.

III. Public Comment & Guest

A public comment period was announced. There was no response from those present.

Dr. Rojer welcomed Elisa Neira, Executive Director of the Princeton Human Services Commission (HSC). The HSC newsletter was distributed, to illustrate HSC activities and services offered. Ms. Neira noted that the HSC provides emergency cash, utility assistance, food, clothing, and shelter to those in

need. HSC's Send Hunger Packing Program also addresses food insecurity, as a service to elementary school aged children. To identify service gaps and new service needs, HSC recently conducted a formal needs assessment of over 200 households. The findings of this survey are expected by summer's end.

Ms. Neira's presentation highlighted Princeton's federally funded Women Infants and Children's Program (WIC). Princeton WIC offers bi-lingual family health education and health care referrals, while working closely with the Children's Home Society. A decline of local enrollment in WIC, from 600 to 150 enrollees, now threatens the provision of WIC services in Princeton.

Mr. Grosser and Ms. Neira are working as a team to boost participation. Rumors that the Princeton WIC program has closed are being dispelled, to support this goal. Local distribution of WIC brochures is ongoing. Qualifying local families are being notified directly. To encourage more referrals to the Princeton WIC program, Mr. Grosser contacted the health officers in neighboring health departments.

Mr. Grosser and Ms. Neira remain confident that enrollment levels will soon increase. The future of Princeton's WIC program will be decided in December.

Support for Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurance registration is another shared project of Princeton's Public Health and Human Services departments. HSC hosted two ACA enrollment events during the first public offering. One event included representatives from three of the participating health plans. Attendance was very good, with participant questions being answered by trained bi-lingual application counselors.

HSC will offer a general information session, before the next ACA enrollment period. Two enrollment events will also be offered, during the open enrollment period in November. Ms. Neira and Mr. Grosser are working closely with ENROLL AMERICA and the Princeton Public Library (PPL), to stage and staff these events.

The Public Health and Human Services Commissions now work together to fully support Medicaid enrollment needs. Translation is provided to prospective enrollees as needed. Joann Hill emphasized that a personal connection is helpful and reassuring to applicants.

To protect the rights of all immigrants, HSC's Immigration Subcommittee provides wage recovery assistance. HSC has proposed amendments, to the work ordinances governing local landscaping businesses, restaurants, and other businesses. Dr. Howard explained that Princeton is harmonizing all

work ordinances, to include more supportive wage protection laws. She added that revising ordinances is a two-step process that will ultimately strengthen our enforcement capabilities.

Dr. Kahn asked if local students could volunteer to assist with HSC initiatives. Ms. Neira explained that the summer youth employment program and intern programs engage interested students.

The Board Members present expressed appreciation for the impressive forward momentum and great results generated, by the teamwork of Ms. Neira and Mr. Grosser.

IV. Minutes

The minutes of the May 20, 2014 Board meeting were reviewed. Dr. DiFerdinando noted the omission of a number in one report. He requested its inclusion. Dr. DiFernandino's proposal to accept the corrected minutes was seconded by Dr. Kahn, with all members present in favor.

V. Monthly Reports

Health Officer's Report:

Mr. Grosser reports that Health Department inspections of the community pool and youth camp have begun, for the summer season.

Princeton's Registered Environmental Specialist, Keith Levine, and NJ Department of Health Commissioner, Mary O'Dowd, are featured in a NJ Environmental Lead Inspection "How To" video. Mr. Grosser will provide copies of this video to interested Board Members. Lead poisoning cases in Princeton are remedied with screening and detection provided by a shared service agreement with the City of Trenton. Princeton's Health Department addresses all environmental aspects of lead poisoning cases.

During the Special Olympics this week, Randy Carter and Keith Levine will be supporting the public health desk of the Mercer County Emergency Operations Center. They were volunteered and are the only REHS', from the local health department in Mercer County, to be working the event.

Mr. Grosser recently attended the Inaugural Conference of the Rutgers Institute for Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security (IEPHS). He was joined by REHS, Keith Levine. Many public health, law enforcement officials, and office of emergency management personnel, from the State of NJ, were also present.

Mr. Grosser responded to a question posed by Dr. Kahn, regarding a reported cat bite. The cat was quarantined and found to be healthy.

Responding to further inquiry, Mr. Grosser is working on new format for the health inspector report. It will include more data tracking.

VI. Old Business

Hospital Site

Mr. Grosser shared updates on the hospital site demolition. On June 2nd, the Mayor, Mr. Grosser, and other local officials met with the community. Questions, and concerns, expressed by those living and working near the site, were addressed. The majority of community concerns relate to lead abatement and asbestos testing.

Mr. Grosser reports that asbestos abatement HEPA filters are successfully removing airborne particles and contaminants from all worksite exhaust. Environmental tests and soil sample tests are ongoing. These test results are satisfactory thus far. Safe asbestos removal is an ongoing process and may continue for seven weeks.

Testing of on site underground storage tank locations reveal one area with contamination readings of .33 mg/kg, with .2 mg/kg being the acceptable standard. The area has been re-excavated for construction of required testing wells.

Once the date is set for demolition, there will likely be another public "neighborhood" meeting.

Mr. Grosser meets every Tuesday morning with demolition supervisors at the site.

MERS-CoV

A worldwide slowdown in the spread of the MERS virus is noted. Case contacts, for the confirmed US cases, have all tested negative. These include family members and healthcare workers. New Jersey regional hospitals are preparing for any future outbreaks. Anyone in contact with a MERS confirmed case becomes "a person under investigation" for 14 days.

At the request of Dr. Kahn and others, Nicole Mazur, Central-West Regional Epidemiologist, will be invited to speak to the Board about MERS-CoV and her job responsibilities.

VII. New Business

Dr. Kahn reports outbreaks of the mosquito borne Chikungunya virus, in the Caribbean. While no limits have been imposed on travel, Caribbean exposure has led to two US cases in Tennessee.

Princeton's mosquito population is predicted to be high this year. Weather patterns and reductions in the local bat population are influencing factors.

To create personnel links for the Health Department website, Mr. Grosser requested the bios of all Board Members.

VIII. Report From Committees

The Alcohol Committee will provide a report in September.

Dr. Miller delivered the report of the Princeton Environmental Commission (PEC). He noted that Princeton's waste ordinance is under discussion in areas involving recycling. Group discussion of the environmental impact of plastic bags and other non-biodegradable plastics ensued. Dr. Rojer shared that fragments of plastic are now commonly ingested by sea life and also enter the food chain.

A Princeton initiative to encourage the use of alternatives to plastic bags, on a voluntary basis, was suggested. The Board asks that Dr. Miller relay their concern about plastics and their support to PEC.

Food and Water Watch continues to campaign for a ban on fracking. Dr. Miller displayed an area map indicating the location of our large natural gas aquifer. Drilling into this could harm the quality of our groundwater. This area of concern also received support from the Board of Health.

Dr. Rojer shared concerns about reports of the negative health effects of e-cigarettes.

Dr. Kahn asked for details of mosquito surveillance and mosquito control measures at the County level. She then requested a report to the Board from regional mosquito control experts. Dr. DiFerdinando noted that while the state posts dated mosquito reports on the Rutgers website, Pennsylvania's website posts provide helpful real-time reports and data.

VII. Reports From Other Boards and Commissions

There were no reports from other Boards or Commissions.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the request to adjourn was motioned by Dr. Kahn. Joann Hill seconded, with all voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:41PM.

Respectfully submitted, V Bea Snowdon