**Porter County Board of Health**

Tuesday April 6, 2021

Room 102A

**In Attendance:** Health Officer Dr. Maria Stamp, Attorney Dave Hollenbeck, Chairman Martin Moeller, Dr. Patrick Fleming , Dr. Derek Gasper, Suzanne Phelps, Terry Wuletich and Administrator Letty Zepeda.

**Not in Attendance:** Kathy Lemmon, Donna Werner

Chairman Moeller called the meeting to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Derek Gasper made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 2, 2021 meeting, seconded by Suzanne Phelps. All were in favor. Motion carries.

**Announcements:**

Our next meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2021.

**New Business:**

We lost our vice chair when Elizabeth Forbes retired. We need to elect a new vice chair. Motion by Dr. Derek Gasper to elect Suzanne Phelps as vice chair, seconded by Dr. Patrick Fleming. All in favor. Motion carries.

**COVID 19 update:**

Cases are up; testing is up a little, positivity rate up a bit. However, average age of infected person has decreased significantly. Hospitalization rate remains low, long-term care cases are down substantially. Our long-term care count does include Opportunity Enterprises. They were not eligible to be vaccinated in the first wave. We are switching over to Pfizer. However, the state was flooded with Moderna so they asked us to do a mass vaccination clinic to use 2800 doses in two days. We will hold it on April 11 & 12 from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. We also started the Homebound Hoosier program using Johnson & Johnson. Portage and Valparaiso EMS are going out to vaccinate those that are eligible. They must submit a request for the vaccine through the Council of Aging, who in turns provides a list to Connie of eligible citizens. We then contact the individuals to get their address and set up schedule. After tomorrow, we will be up to 85 vaccinated by the EMS.

To accommodate a mass vaccination we decided to have a clinic on Sunday & Monday since we do not vaccinate on those days. We are going to shut down the Expo 4 H building on Thursday night. Facilities will clean once we are closed. We will set up for the vaccination event on Friday morning. Tuesday morning we will switch the building back over to a testing site. We will repeat this again one month later. We met with EMA, the Sherriff’s department and Highway to set up a plan for traffic flow. There will be two Sherriff’s vehicles there as well as EMA volunteers. Highway donated signs for the event. Northwest Health will also have an ambulance on site. We are scheduling 21 appointments every 10 minutes. Sunday is booked at 100% and Monday is 75% full already. We are starting to see appointments for out of state residents, since the residency requirement was lifted in Indiana. We applied for a FEMA public assistance grant, which has been approved. We are not sure of the amount, but they should reimburse us for some of the costs associated with the mass vaccination. Two managers were hired to relieve our staff who have been doing there work in the office and managing the vaccine sites.

Dave Hollenbeck updated us on the state legislator. The legislature filed fifteen bills to limit the power of the Governor and the local Health Departments. We resisted all but two of them. House Bill 11-23 passed the House and is currently in the Senate. Bill states that the Governor to call in general assembly to help him decide matters related to pandemic and public health.

Senate Bill 5 – Affects local health boards and local health officers. Originally, anyone could appeal any decision the Health Department made. It is now more targeted where appeal process only applies to a Governor executive order a declaring a public health emergency. It would allow them to appeal to board of county commissioners. Bill provides that no county can apply more stringent rules that the Governor. Provides that the Commissioners have veto authority over the employment of the county health officer. Board of Health would become an advisory board. The Current statues state that the health officer is elected by the Board of Health every five years. This would change to the Commissioners making the appointment, if approved.

Mask mandate: we will follow the Governor’s order and strongly encourage masks be worn, but it is not required.

Motion on the floor by Suzanne Phelps to accept claims and receipts of the previous month. Seconded by Terry Wuletich. All in favor. Motion carries.

A motion to adjourn made by Dr. Derek Gasper and seconded by Dr. Patrick Fleming. All were in favor. Motion carried.