**Porter County Board of Health**

Tuesday August 4, 2020

Room 102A

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

**Not in Attendance:** Kathy Lemmon

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

A motion to accept the minutes of the July 7, 2020 meeting was made by Elizabeth Forbes and seconded by Donna Werner. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**Announcements:**

Next meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2020.

**New business:**

**Septic Appeal:** This is regarding the lot in Beverly Shores that was previously discussed at the July meeting. Jordan Snittjer the Architect that is working on the project provided an update. Per our request, additional soil borings were done on the move over area. Environmental has reviewed the data from the borings, and there is sufficient depth of the water indicator. The move over area will have to regraded, which we allow if water indicator is deep enough, which it is. Environmental recommends approval based on three contingencies. We would like the move over area recorded as a septic easement, we would like them to sign a release hold harmless agreement, and we would require a bedroom affidavit stating that the house is a one bedroom. Prior approval from the Health Department in writing is required in order to increase the number of bedrooms in the house. A motion to approve was made by Dr. Patrick Fleming, seconded by Suzanne Phelps. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Nursing Fee changes:** We try to keep our costs down so all can afford to come for services.

**TB testing** - we would like to leave the cost of this test at $15.00. Some patients may be required to do the two-step process and we do not want to increase the cost. We also recently started offering QFT, which is a blood test. The tests come from ISDH and the charge is $20.00 per test. We would like to increase the cost from $20.00 to $30.00. Results from the QFT can be mailed to the client, eliminating the need for them to return to the office to have the area checked. We have also done TB tests at the schools for high school students at no charge. The cost for the PPD solution was $1.76 a dose when we first started. The cost has gone up to $7.91, and the number of students has increased from about twenty to just under one hundred students. We would like to charge a fee of $10.00 to recoup the cost of the solution.

**HIV/STD testing -** we would like to increase the fee from $10.00 to $20.00. The cost for the G/C test from ISDH is $20.00 per test so this would cover the cost testing. If someone comes in that truly cannot afford it we would always reduce or waive the fee. We do not want cost to hinder them from getting tested.

**317 vaccine** – we currently charge $15.00 per vaccine. The patient does not pay for the cost of the shot. We would like to raise it to $20.00. This is for underinsured or uninsured and the must be eligible to qualify for the 317 vaccine from the state. These are for important vaccines for adults.

**Lab fees** – we would like to attach a $10.00 fee for labs. Also talked about bundling the cost for multiple tests.

**Duplicate shot records** – Most other Health Departments charge a fee for shot records. Currently there is no charge. We would like to charge $2.00 for duplicate records only. We will continue to provide shot records to all patients after their immunizations at no charge.

We are asking for approval from the Board to go in front of the Commissioners to recommend the above changes. We want to charge legitimate prices to cover our costs. Cost compared to other clinics is still low. Only worry is for those who cannot afford the services. The nurses do a good job in working with the patients and offering to work with those that cannot afford. A motion to request approval from the Commissions was made by Dr. Derek Gasper and seconded by Dr. Patrick Fleming. All in favor. Motion carries.

**COVID-19 update**: Dr. Stamp has provided the latest monthly update. A lot has happened within the last month. Last month we discussed an opportunity that ISDH offered for us to participate in COVID testing for the county. OptumServ has a rolling contract. Counties got together to discuss how much it is going to cost each county. A representative went back to the state and was able to procure additional funding. Funding was doubled to $100,000 per site. We would be allowed 2 testing sites with evening hours twice a week and Saturday hours offered. This would start on 9/1/20 and continue through 6/30/21. We have looked at staffing options, will use existing staff and will hire additional staff. Approval from the Council was received to hire additional staff at the test sites. OptumServ moved from the Armory to the old North Shore Clinic on Scottsdale in Portage. They doubled their test capacity two weeks ago. They can test a maximum of 264 people a day. Dr. Stamp went by to get tested since she has been seeing sick patients. She went Friday at 8:05 there were 5 people already leaving and in the 10 minutes she was there 10 others arrived. She received her an email and a test 48 hours later with her negative test result. The number and the website are still the same. You can schedule your appointment online. There is no restriction on where you live. Registration is the longest part of the process. We will have big shoes to fill and we hope to get additional information on training in the next week. We are still solidifying locations to use. We have been offered the Expo Center, but we would like two sites. One in Valparaiso and one in Portage. The Expo may still need to use the building where we would be testing, so will have to work around scheduled events. We have also reached out to the city and others to see if someone can commit for the entire period. Staff has also been out to speak to the current OptumServ employees to see if they are willing to stay on. We are also looking into partnering with Healthlink to use their mobile site that may be a nice addition to be able to go through other areas in the county that may need it.

In the past month, since the Fourth of July we have had a lot of celebrations and social events that happened. Our number of COVID positive test cases did climb. We did see a large increase in the 20 – 30 year olds. We also had outbreaks due to social events. Most were very good about working with us on the contract tracing, which we pulled from the state for follow up. One parent was very proactive and set up an excel spreadsheet on all the contacts for her son and who tested positive. The number in that age group are slowing down. Mask wear has gone up. Dr. Stamp addressed the Commissioners regarding mask wear and on our cases on July 14. A week later Governor Holcomb announced the mask mandate. While it is not enforceable it has gone a long way getting people to wear masks. We hope this will curb the spread of COVID. We are working closely with the school systems and nurses on how to decrease the risk at school. Went through the flow on how to identify those in close contacts, and to notify the Health Department with the information. Will work together to get the information out to close contacts and isolating those exposed quickly. Also spoke to the Athletic Directors from across the Duneland area conference. Talked about risk and benefit. Discussed what is considered close contact when playing sports. Risk increases when face to face. Some concerned about doing sports and some concerned about not allowing kids to participate. If we don’t allow sports in schools than kids will travel around country doing club sports. Questions regarding how many spectators should be allowed in stadiums. They have to look at their space and figure out how to social distance people. They will need to monitor and keeps spaces safe.

Dr. Stamp is putting together numbers looking at positively rates and the state data. How are we looking at schools when cases occur? What do we consider an outbreak? We are reviewing and will get it out to the public.

Sheila and her team have been working so hard. With the latest steps the Health Department has been tasked with reviewing all events with over 250 attendees, to make sure they are taking appropriate measures to keep people safe from COVID. This is a daunting task. People still want to have large events. Sheila has been looking at these very closely. Some don’t have a lot of plans and other do, but they are a high risk group. We are working with the Expo Center to see what is appropriate for our current climate. We could be missing some events as they include family events and graduation parties. For the most part, most of our normal venues are advising that they need to contact the Health Department. May want to send a press release to advise that this is required. One event wanted 10,000 people per day and we got then down to 4,000. We just got word today that the Commissioners did not approve. What about school events and their concession stands? IHSAA is looking into this is it 50 percent or 250 people per event. To minimize risk should have prepackaged food and need to control the line to distance those waiting. Valpo Events handles the events at the amphitheater. They have a formula they use for the number of people that may attend. They had a good plan for the July Fourth holiday, but they need a way to section off areas to keep social distancing in place. School is getting ready to start and we feel that school is a priority. Counties around us are not starting in person. If school cannot start, then we should not be having events. Even if they have a good plan, we do not know if they are following through with plan. We are not always out there to check. Compliance is an issue. Organizers are nervous about enforcement. We go out on all complaints about restaurants and employees not wearing masks. We have a warning system. The first one is verbal, then it is a written, and then possible closure. We also have a log where we keep track of these. Some restaurants that are closing to do deep cleaning. We are aware of some, but not all. Some are still getting the rapid antibody rest – restaurants closed but no positive cases. Less are getting the antibody test.

A motion to accept the claims and receipts was made by Elizabeth Forbes and seconded by Suzanne Phelps. All in Favor. Motion carries.

Water testing finally received around the 49er landfill. Results were delayed due to COVID. No issues related to the landfill.

The Portage office has moved to their new location last week.

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