

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA  
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

March 17, 2021  
Regular Meeting  
ALL-VIRTUAL MEETING

Present at the Meeting:

St. Joseph County Board of Health Members:

Heidi Beidinger-Burnett, Ph.D., MPH	President – Zoom
Emily Dean	Member – Zoom
Ilana T. Kirsch, M.D., FACOG	Member – Zoom
Michelle Migliore, D.O.	Member – Zoom
John Linn	Member – Zoom
James Shoemaker, Jr., MD	Member – Zoom

Also Present at the Meeting:

Robert M. Einterz, M.D.	Health Officer
Mark Fox, MD, PhD, MPH	Deputy Health Officer - Zoom
Jennifer S. Parcell	Executive Administrative Asst.
Amy Ruppe	Administrator - Zoom
Jamie Woods	Attorney for Dept. Of Health -Zoom
Brett Davis	Asst. Director Environmental Health - Zoom
Robin Vida	Director Health Outreach Promotion and Education (HOPE) - Zoom
Carolyn Smith	Director Food Services - Zoom
Sally Dixon	FIMR Coordinator – Zoom
Mark Espich	Director - Environmental Health – Zoom
Cassy White	Director – Health Equity, Epidemiology, and Data (HEED) – Zoom
Karen Flanigan	Asst. Director Food Services – Zoom

**I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Board President, Dr. Beidinger-Burnett, called the March 17, 2021 regular Board of Health Meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. All board members and members of the public participated via audio/visual Zoom.

**II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

On motion made by Emily Dean, seconded by John Linn, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the March 17, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion made by Dr. Kirsch, seconded by John Linn, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the February 17, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health were approved.

#### **IV. BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Dr. Beidinger-Burnett offered congratulations to the Hedwig Memorial Center crew for increasing vaccinations from 500 to over 1,100 today. Congratulations were offered to the whole team.

#### **V. HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION AND REPORT**

##### **21-11 Discussion and Vote on February 2021 Health Officer's Report**

Dr. Einterz congratulated the Hedwig Memorial Center team and added that the Department of Health relies on a larger number of volunteers from all walks of life. He reported that there has not been a single serious adverse reaction. He does not anticipate ramping up to more than 1,100 per day.

Nothing out of the ordinary occurred during the month for the Department of Health, business went as usual. The Department of Health is in the process of transitioning from the Moderna vaccine to Pfizer and will be giving only the Pfizer vaccine by April. Dr. Einterz commented that this will make the process easier for everyone. He noted that anyone who got a 1<sup>st</sup> vaccine of Moderna will be scheduled back in March to avoid problems and will all have their 2<sup>nd</sup> shots in by the end of March. If someone who received the 1<sup>st</sup> shot from Moderna is late or misses their March appointment, the Department of Health will assist them in getting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Moderna shot at a different facility.

There was a Board question about an increase of complaints, especially regarding the follow up of complaints, the Healthy Homes initiative. Mr. Espich said the complaints are citizen driven and more people are watching neighbors and calling in complaints.

The Board asked about a vital statistics backlog. Dr. Einterz responded that the backlog is being cleared up and is moving forward.

The Board asked about technology. Dr. Einterz said the Department still awaits a tech refresh. He noted that the Department of Health has enough tablets now to do some of its work remotely. The tech refresh process is moving forward.

#### **VI. DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION**

##### **21-07 COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Fox stated the most prominent COVID-19 related activity is immunization now. Cases have relatively plateaued, but there has been a slight uptick in cases over the last couple of days.

St. Joseph County is now at 200 cases per 100,000 people per week. The general goal and the state's goal is 100 per 100,000 people. College cases have leveled off. They have dropped from 35-40% of cases to 15-20%.

Dr. Fox reported that the B.1.1.7 variant has been found in St. Joseph County. The testing for variants is rather modest. People that test positive after vaccination are screened. Some second positives are screened as well as those that have traveled from certain countries. Still, testing capacity for the variant is modest. When a variant case is identified we are 2-3

weeks behind. It is likely far more prevalent here than we know. Thus far, the B.1.1.7 variant is the only variant identified in St. Joseph County.

Dr. Fox noted that the Department's testing capacity is reasonable, about 3,000 surveillance tests a day. Notre Dame is doing about 2,500 tests per day. The County does have a need for asymptomatic testing for people that travel. More are done outside of the University setting.

The percent positivity is down to 2.54 or less. With increased capacity in school, they continue to monitor data. The Department has seen no dramatic increases from schools reopening. Most of the transmission is from teachers to students, so vaccinating teachers has helped.

The Board asked about guidance for commencements and proms, messaging about variants, and if the Department of Health is telling people the vaccine is effective regarding variants.

Dr. Fox said they have been informing people that the vaccine is effective against variants. Dr. Fox said they have not finalized guidance about commencement or proms. Dr. Fox has meetings with superintendents later this week so he will discuss it with them. Outdoor, weather permitting, would be ideal for commencements.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **21-12 Department of Health 2020 Annual Report**

Dr. Einterz said the Board was given the 2020 Annual Report and he can answer any questions. Dr. Beidinger-Burnett stated the report is very well laid out and easy to understand and read.

The 2020 Annual Report was approved unanimously on motion of Dr. Migliore, seconded by Emily Dean.

### **21-13 Presentation by Sally Dixon, FIMR Coordinator**

Ms. Dixon stated 60 mothers have shared stories of loss of infants with them. FIMR gets state and federal grant funds as well as hospital support to collect this information and modeling care of infants. The causes of infant mortality were prematurity (53), SIDS (19), Miscellaneous (14), congenital defects (14), and assault (1).

2020 was a significant drop. Five years ago, the disparity between white population and black populations was significant; black populations had 4-5x the infant mortality rates. This gap has closed some, but much work remains to be done.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett asked what the Board can do support FIMR. Ms. Dixon stated that declaring infant mortality a public health issue was important.

The Board asked who the new fellow is. Ms. Dixon stated Alicia Fullenkamp will be with them for at least a year.

Dr. Einterz asked what are 1 or 2 policy initiatives FIMR would want the Department of Health to get behind. Ms. Dixon stated pregnancy workplace accommodations is one; also extending medical coverage from 60 days to 1 year for post-partem coverage.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **21-04 COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Update**

There were no more clinic updates.

## **IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS**

1. Hirings: The Board was provided with a list of vaccinators and registrars at Hedwig Memorial Center. The CARES Act money provided pay for these employees. They are working between 20 – 40 hours for the COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Hedwig Memorial Center.

2. Resignations: None
3. Retirements: None
4. Terminations: None

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Amy Drake: Amy Drake stated that she has significant concerns regarding the Department of Health.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett addressed issues raised by Ms. Drake.

There was no further public comment.

## **XI. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

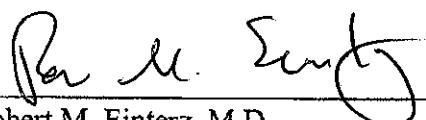
The next regular meeting of the St. Joseph County Board of Health is scheduled for Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 4:30 p.m., at the St. Joseph County Department of Health, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

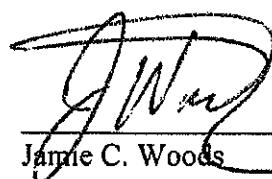
The meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

ATTEST:

Respectfully submitted,



Robert M. Einterz, M.D.  
St. Joseph County Health Officer



Jamie C. Woods  
St. Joseph County Attorney