

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA  
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

August 18, 2021  
Regular Meeting

Present at the Meeting:

St. Joseph County Board of Health Members:

Jason Marker, MD	Vice President
Ilana T. Kirsch, M.D., FACOG	Member
Emily Dean	Member
Michelle Migliore, D.O.	Member
Jamie Shoemaker, M.D.	Member
John Linn	Member

Also Present at the Meeting:

Robert M. Einterz, M.D.	Health Officer
Mark Fox, MD, PhD, MPH	Deputy Health Officer
Jennifer S. Parcell	Executive Administrative Asst.
Amy Ruppe	Administrator
Robin Vida	Director Health Outreach Promotion and Education (HOPE)
Carolyn Smith	Director Food Services
Mark Espich	Director - Environmental Health
Cassy White	Director – Health Equity, Epidemiology, and Data (HEED)
Brett Davis	Asst. Director – Environmental Health
Harry Gilbride	Congregate Living Outreach Coordinator
Marcellus Lebbin	Department of Health Attorney

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

Board Vice President, Dr. Marker, called the August 18, 2021 regular Board of Health meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. All board members and members of the public participated in person.

**II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

On motion made by Mr. Linn, seconded by Dr. Shoemaker, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the August 18, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion made by Mr. Linn, seconded by Ms. Dean, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the July 21, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health were approved.

**IV. BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements.

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

Dr. Einterz presented his report to the Board. After a general overview he focused the Board's attention on the mosquito section of the report and asked Mr. Davis if he would take questions on the vector control efforts initiated as a result of confirmed cases of West Nile Virus ("WNV"). Mr. Davis obliged and gave an overview of the efforts to control the confirmed cases of WNV in St. Joseph County. Mr. Davis also presented information on the Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus ("EEE") testing that has been done this year. In addition to our own testing the Department of Health has sent over 15,000 samples to the State to be tested. When State and local tests are combined St. Joseph County accounts for 24% of all tests done in the State of Indiana this year. These efforts will hopefully keep human infections of EEE from occurring. Mr. Davis then noted that WNV has been confirmed not only in St. Joseph County, but also surrounding Counties.

Dr. Marker then asked about the procedures for spraying. Mr. Davis responded with an overview of the requirements for spraying and noted that spraying is done in all impacted areas. Mr. Linn inquired about human cases and Mr. Davis confirmed there have been no human cases to date. Dr. Einterz then reported directed the Board's attention to the HEED report and a brief discussion followed. Mr. Linn asked about meetings of the Onsite Wastewater and Water Resources Advisory Boards and suggested that those groups should be involved in the County's study for sewer funding.

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

### **COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Fox gave the July COVID report. He noted that June/July were the lowest number of cases since the pandemic ramped up in the spring of 2020. He then went into the vaccination data with 960 new vaccinations at the Department of Health Clinic and 43 from the mobile clinic. Dr. Fox then stated that the Department of Health was working to transition how the County COVID data is reported by the Department of Health to match up better with how such data is reported by the State of Indiana and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Fox noted the Department of Health matrix is slightly different because it was created before the State and CDC created their reporting standards.

At 4:18 Dr. Migliore joined the meeting.

Dr. Fox then reported that the CDC is again recommending masking in schools. Dr. Marker asked if the University of Notre Dame will do regular testing. Dr. Fox responded that the University of Notre Dame will only do regular testing in unvaccinated individuals and that St. Mary's and Indiana University South Bend will also have regular testing protocols in place. Dr. Fox stated that over 90% of the University of Notre Dame's population is vaccinated. Dr. Shoemaker asked how the number of protected individuals increases when factoring in natural immunity. Dr. Fox responded that if one were to take the CDC estimate of natural immunity for 90 to 160 days then the numbers are probably similar to last month due to the decrease in cases. Dr. Kirsch asked prior infection lessons the severity of illness from the delta variant. Dr. Fox noted that there is insufficient data at this time to know. Dr. Einterz noted that the Department of

Health is working to acquire such data. Dr. Einterz continued that it clearly provides some level of protection, but the extent is unknown.

Dr. Shoemaker than asked what percentage of positive COVID patients are being hospitalized and asked if that can be included in the matrix. Dr. Kirsch said that information should be available. Dr. Fox noted that there is about a two-week lag in the data and that with the increase of delta infections there will be a corresponding increase in hospitalizations. Dr. Migliore asked if there was data on “long-haulers”. A discussion followed in which Dr. Einterz stated the goal was to keep children in school and Dr. Kirsch noted that good data on long-haulers does not seem to be available. Dr. Migliore then started a discussion on the availability of testing. A discussion followed on where citizens could obtain testing, the types of testing available, and the time in which results were returned.

Dr. Marker then turned the conversation to lead, and Dr. Fox reported that the Department of Health is emerging from the demands of the COVID vaccination clinic and is increasing lead testing. Dr. Marker asked about information on the number of individuals tested and Dr. Fox responded that each number is a unique individual. Dr. Kirsch asked about obtaining consent from parents of children at daycares. Ms. White responded on how the Department of Health’s gets parental consent and the success rate of obtaining such consent. A discussion on lead testing and the reported results ensued.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Marker opened the discussion of safety measures for staff in patient facing positions. Dr. Einterz recommended a vaccination against COVID be added to the list of vaccination requirements for Department of Health employees in patient facing positions. Mr. Linn asked if the emergency status of the vaccine is something to be considered. Dr. Einterz responded that this has been a topic of much consideration, but that the recommendation has been made to put the Department of Health in line with St. Joseph Regional Medical Center and Beacon who have also made such a requirement. Mr. Linn asked if there would be an ability for individuals to opt out. Dr. Einterz stated that the policy allows for an individual to provide religious or ethical objections. A discussion followed about the impact of such a policy. Dr. Marker recommended a copy of the existing policy be provided to the Board so they can review for next meeting.

Dr. Marker then turned the discussion to homeless outreach efforts. A presentation was given by Mr. Harrison on how to improve the health of individuals in these living arrangements. At the conclusion of the presentation Mr. Linn asked if the Regional Planning Committee was part of the Mayor’s Taskforce. Mr. Harrison responded that it was not, but that there was cooperation and a discussion followed about the programs available and the positive impact of Mr. Nufer’s efforts. Dr. Marker asked if there was an opportunity to provide primary care to these individuals through this this program and a discussion followed.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

A parental leave policy recommendation from the Board to the Council was discussed further. There was specific discussion with regards to the length of leave in the recommended policy. Mr. Linn asked if three or four weeks would be appropriate. Dr. Einterz noted that the twelve weeks came from the federal policy implemented by the Trump administration. Dr.

Shoemaker also expressed concern with the length of the federal policy and questioned the cost to the County. Ms. Dean felt a woman should have at least six weeks and Dr. Kirsch responded that the issue is paid leave and can an employee afford to take the time. Further discussion ensued. The item was tabled until the next meeting with a request for additional information on the cost of such a policy.

Dr. Marker then brought the virtual meeting policy to the floor. Mr. Linn asked questions with regard to the State Statute and discussion followed. A motion was then made by Dr. Migliore and seconded by Mr. Linn and the policy passed unanimously.

**IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS**

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

**X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Amy Drake commented that the vaccine status request as a bar to employment would be a violation of the anti-passport law. Ms. Drake then stated that there is substantial science on natural immunity and that it lasts longer than the CDC timeframe.

Steve Witmer gave a presentation on his personal health history and explained why COVID vaccinations should not be required because they are still experimental.

Cheryl Schlimport noted that the mask requirement is still on the website and asked that it be removed. She then stated that masks do not work according to science and that she has a right to refuse to get the vaccine.

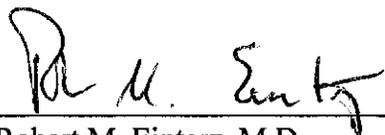
**XI. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the St. Joseph County Board of Health is scheduled for Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 4:30 p.m., at the St. Joseph County Department of Health, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

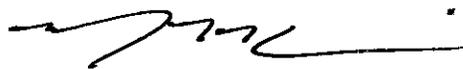
The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

ATTEST:



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

Respectfully submitted,



Marcellus Lebbin, Esq.  
Department of Health Attorney