

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA  
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH  
December 15, 2021  
Regular Meeting

Present at the Meeting:

Heidi Beidinger-Burnett, PhD, MPH	President
Jason Marker, M.D.	Vice President
Ilana T. Kirsch, M.D., FACOG	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 D. Fox, MD, PhD, MPH	Deputy Health Officer
Jennifer S. Parcell	Executive Administrative Asst.
Amy Ruppe	Administrator - Zoom
Robin Vida	Director Health Outreach Promotion and Education (HOPE) -Zoom
Carolyn Smith	Director Food Services - Zoom
Mark Espich	Director - Environmental Health
Cassy White	Director – Health Equity, Epidemiology, and Data (HEED)
Brett Davis	Asst. Director – Environmental Health
Harrison Gilbride	Congregate Living Outreach Coordinator
Ericka Tijerina	Director Vital Records
Neiko Rust	Director of Nursing – Immunizations – Zoom
Nancy Pemberton	Director of Nursing – PHN – Zoom
Karen Teague	Asst. Director Food Services - Zoom
Marcellus Lebbin	Department of Health Attorney

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

Board President, Dr. Beidinger, called the December 15, 2021 regular Board of Health meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

**II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

On motion made by Dr. Marker, seconded by Mr. Linn, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the December 15, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion made by Dr. Marker, seconded by Mr. Linn, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the November 17, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Health were approved.

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

There were no announcements.

#### **V. HEALTH OFFICER REPORT**

Dr. Einterz noted that the Board was provided with the Health Officer's written report and that there was one additional item, Narcan. The Department of Health met with local hospitals regarding dispensing Narcan and the Sheriff added a Narcan vending machine, free of charge, to the lobby of the jail. The Sheriff has seen high demand for the vending machine and the hospitals were receptive to working with the Department of Health to make Narcan available to at risk populations.

Dr. Kirsch inquired on the details of how the vending machine works in the jail. Ms. Vida said that it works just like a snack machine, except that money is not required. Ms. Vida then explained that the machine holds three hundred doses and that the jail needed to refill the machine after a week.

Dr. Marker asked about the Department's Mishawaka clinic. Dr. Einterz responded that the Department is working through staffing shortages and until new staff can be recruited only the clinic in the County-City Building will be open. Dr. Einterz then noted that the County funded mental health facility is moving forward.

#### **VI. DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER REPORT**

Dr. Fox noted the increase in Covid-19 cases in the last few weeks. He stated that testing is an issue as testing capacity has not increased and there simply are not enough tests available to meet demand. To help with this the State will put a testing center in St. Joseph County for three months starting in January. Dr. Fox then informed the Board that vaccine supplies for children were limited and parents were having difficulty finding places to vaccinate their children.

Dr. Fox went on to report that the Omicron variant has not yet been identified in the County, but testing to identify the variants is two to three weeks behind. There are still staffing issues at the local hospitals and this will continue to be an issue as the Omicron cases increase.

Dr. Shoemaker stated that the hospitals are seeing an increase in influenza even in individuals who have received the flu shot. The shot gives some protection, but does not seem to be as effective as in years past.

Dr. Fox said the University of Notre Dame and the University of Michigan are seeing an increase in influenza as well.

Mr. Linn asked when the hospital data was going to be included in the daily report. Dr. Fox responded that the hospital data is going to be sent weekly and that it should start this month.

Dr. Kirsch said that the increase in cases has resulted in an insufficient number of beds in hospitals for people with non-covid illnesses. Dr. Migliore noted the supply of monoclonal antibodies is insufficient. Dr. Fox responded that the State is low on its supply and it is trying to get

more. Dr. Kirsch noted that the monoclonal antibodies cost significantly more than the vaccine. Dr. Migliore noted the hospitals have an eight to ten hour wait in the emergency departments.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Beidinger asked about the meeting schedule for 2022. The Board agreed that the third Wednesday of every month was still a good schedule. The Board also agreed to continue to hold the meetings in the Council Chambers on the fourth floor of the County-City Building.

Mr. Davis was then called upon to give the unit spotlight presentation for Environmental Health. At the end the presentation Dr. Shoemaker asked if the Department makes sure wells are in areas that produce water that is safe for consumption. Mr. Davis responded in the affirmative and said that the Department works with the well drilling companies.

Dr. Migliore asked how much the new permit software would cost. Mr. Davis responded that the amount is about \$400,000, but this is software for the Department of Health, Building Department, Area Plan, and other departments. Dr. Migliore followed up by asking how much a new EHS employee would cost. Ms. Ruppe said the cost is about \$67,000 with benefits. Dr. Migliore then asked if there was enough work to keep an additional EHS employee busy. Mr. Davis responded there is sufficient work. Dr. Migliore then inquired as to grant opportunities to cover the cost of an additional employee and was informed that grant opportunities would be explored.

Dr. Shoemaker then inquired about inspectors and public testing for infestations. Mr. Davis and Dr. Einterz explained that these matters are investigated and handled by the Department of Health, but that there were not public facing resources as there is with vaccinations.

Dr. Kirsch then asked why new construction was allowed to be built with septic systems instead of municipal sewer and was informed that the City of South Bend has banned the extension of sewer and water lines. Thus, contributing to the drastic rise of septic systems and potential pollution of the aquifer. Mr. Linn noted that every developer would like sewer, but it is a political issue. Mr. Linn then thanked the EHS's for their hard work.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old Business.

## **IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS**

1. Hirings: One community health worker
2. Resignations: Two new resignations.
3. Retirements: None
4. Terminations: None

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Amy Drake of Granger commented on the composition of the Board.

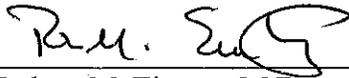
## **XI. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

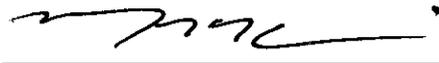
The next regular meeting of the St. Joseph County Board of Health is scheduled for Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 4:30 p.m., at the County-City Building.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

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

Respectfully submitted,  
  
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Marcellus Lebbin, Esq.  
Health Department Attorney