

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
January 19, 2022
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
Robin Vida	Director Health Outreach Promotion and Education (HOPE)
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 - Zoom
Neiko Rust	Nurse – Zoom
Nancy Pemberton	Nurse
Jodie Pairitz	Director of Nursing
Marcellus Lebbin	Department of Health Attorney

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, & NOMINATIONS

Board Attorney, Mr. Lebbin, called the January 19, 2022, regular Board of Health meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. and asked for officer nominations. Dr. Kirsch nominated Dr. Heidi Beidinger-Burnet for president and Dr. Jason Marker as vice president. Dr. Migliore seconded the nominations and they passed unanimously. Mr. Lebbin then turned the meeting over to Dr. Beidinger-Burnett.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

On motion made by Dr. Marker, seconded by Dr. Shoemaker, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the January 19, 2022, regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion made by Mr. Linn, seconded by Dr. Migliore, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the December 15, 2021, regular meeting of the Board of Health were approved.

IV. BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Beidinger stated she was happy to serve again and looked forward to the coming year.

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 he wanted to address, leadership training meetings. The Department of Health started leadership training meetings and they have been successful. Dr. Einterz wanted to thank the HEED unit for pursuing this valuable tool for employees.

Dr. Einterz moved on to the food services section of the report and noted that the applications for food service/store permits can now be applied for online and the Department of Health will mail the permits to the establishments. Dr. Marker asked if this was for pop-up vendors or just for restaurants. Ms. Smith responded that all vendors, even temporary vendors, can avail themselves to this service. Dr. Marker asked what the timeline was for a temporary vendor to submit an application. Ms. Smith said that it is required to be submitted no later than seven (7) days prior to the event.

Dr. Einterz then moved on to the financial health of the Department and noted that Ms. Ruppe's projections were only off by \$13,000 for 2021. The budget is no longer in deep red, and the fee revenue is the highest it has ever been. Dr. Kirsch asked if the fee revenue was increased as a result of grants. Dr. Einterz responded the grant awards have also increased, but those are not related to the fee revenue which comes from items such as permits and applications. Mr. Linn asked what the Covid fees in December related to. Ms. Ruppe responded that all the Covid fees hitting in December was the result of accounting. The work was done over the year, but the County Council approved the funds for the temporary staff in December. Mr. Linn then asked about the \$70,000 for health analytics. Dr. Einterz responded that six (6) units contracted with EnFocus for data analytics.

Dr. Beidinger then asked if there was any progress on getting an EMR system for the County. Dr. Einterz responded that we had received the go ahead for Athena and are working on getting the contract approved. Athena will integrate the County with IHIE and the hospitals, which will assist the County staff increase productivity.

Mr. Linn said he was glad to see the Department of Health was working on homicide, overdose, and suicide as that work is needed in the County.

Dr. Marker said he saw the Department of Health is helping settle refugees from Afghanistan. Dr. Kirsch then asked if the refugees have access to free healthcare and Medicaid. Dr. Einterz said that a new Federal Law allows them to be eligible for health care. He followed up saying sixty (60) individuals are being placed in coordination with the State of Indiana and will have Medicaid for a period. Agencies are looking for work placement and the expectation is those that can work will be helped to find employment. This process takes time but is being implemented successfully.

VI. DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

Dr. Fox noted that Omicron has the highest levels of confirmed cases in the history of the County. This is with a lack of tests. We know that we are not catching all the cases as a result of the testing shortages. Dr. Fox said the State was to open a test site in early January, but that due to staffing issues it has not opened yet. Dr. Fox said that for those that can test the turnaround time for the local labs is good.

Dr. Shoemaker asked if the testing was necessary, he said Omnicom was endemic and compared it to the flu which we do not test for because it does not help those who have symptoms. Dr. Fox responded that with a lack of treatment options it might be best to keep tests for those who are high risk and follow their physician's guidance on quarantining. Dr. Fox also noted that tests help with contact tracing, but said it looks like this will end when the State contract is up.

Dr. Shoemaker stated that there is no way for Medicare to pay for Covid testing. Dr. Kirsch said that she would like tests to make sure she was negative before meeting in groups of people. Dr. Shoemaker said he agreed this would be better, but that this was not how it was being rolled out to the general public.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Pemberton was then called upon to give the unit spotlight presentation for Public Health/Nursing. At the end the presentation Dr. Shoemaker asked if the Department works with the jail. Ms. Pemberton responded that it does. Dr. Marker asked if there was an increase in diseases due to the refugees from Afghanistan and if that would be tracked. Dr. Kirsch stated infectious diseases might be an issue. Dr. Einterz said the Department of Health is tracking and that tuberculosis is the largest disease we are seeing but noted that there is a language barrier that was impeding the process. Dr. Kirsch then entered the conversation and a discussion on how to treat tuberculosis followed.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then asked if the HIV rates were increasing along with the increase in hepatitis C. Ms. Pemberton responded that we are not seeing an increase in HIV, but there is an increase in sexually transmitted diseases. Ms. Pemberton also noted that fewer people are seeking treatment as the hospital waits are very long due to Covid. Dr. Kirsch asked why their doctors were not treating these individuals. Ms. Pemberton said that most of these individuals do not have doctors. Dr. Shoemaker asked if the Department of Health could write prescriptions. Dr. Einterz said the Department of Health no longer has a clinic, that it was closed years before Dr. Einterz arrived.

Dr. Beidinger-Burnett then noted that lead testing is down and asked if there are any plans to address this. Ms. Pemberton responded that the community outreach is starting to help with that, and Ms. White is helping put the procedures in place. Dr. Einterz also noted that some insurance companies are requesting preauthorization, which is causing complications and delay. Dr. Beidinger said there are two (2) health bills going through the State house and one is for mandatory lead testing, which might help if it gets passed.

Dr. Einterz then introduced the new Director of Nursing, Jodie Pairitz who began her employment with us on January 18, 2022.

Dr. Marker then stated that the Department of Health, jail, and local physicians all work on overdose review board which is a model for the State. The board works to review and tries to help address the issued that contribute to overdose risks.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Marker made a motion to keep the committee appointments the same as they were in 2021 and Mr. Linn seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the appointments are as follows:

Finance Committee:
Dr. Heidi Beidinger-Burnett
Dr. Jason Marker
Dr. Jamie Shoemaker, Jr.
Dr. Michelle Migliore
John Linn

Personnel Committee:
Dr. Heidi Beidinger-Burnett
Dr. Illana Kirsch
Dr. Jason Marker

Appeals Committee
Dr. Heidi Beidinger-Burnett
Dr. Jason Marker

Mr. Linn then asked if there were any issues with the Board composition. A discussion followed about the law change that were made in 2017.

IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS

There were no notifications.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no 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, February 16, 2022, at 4:30 p.m., 4th Floor Council Chambers.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

ATTEST:

Respectfully submitted,



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



Marcellus Lebbin, Esq.
Health Department Attorney