

ERIE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MEETING MINUTES

JULY 6, 2021

PRESENT VIA VIRTUAL MEETING:

Dennis Galluzzo, RPh.

Rob Free, Vice President, Food & Beverage, Buffalo Bisons
Baseball/Canalside/Outer Harbor

Diane Loomis, DNP, FNP

Dolores Funke, P.E.

Marilyn Tuberdyck

Maureen Montgomery, M.D.

Jonathan Daniels, M.D.

EXCUSED:

Legislator Lisa Chimera

GUESTS;

Sara Herbst, Food Policy Council

Allison Dehonney, Food Policy Council

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Gale Burstein, M.D., Commissioner of Health

I. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 14, 2020 MEETING

The meeting was called to order. The minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting were reviewed, Dolores Funke made a motion to approve them as written, all were in favor and the motion was passed.

II. COVID-19 UPDATE

Dr. Burstein gave the Board an update on Covid-19. She went on to say that there has been a slight uptick in the past couple of weeks. For the week ending July 3 there were 76 total cases reported among Erie County residents, this was up 20 cases from the previous week which only had 48 total cases. This is a 58% increase; however, the numbers are still relatively small. Also, for the week ending July 3, the cases the case rate for the total number of cases in the past 7 days per 100,000 population was 8.3, that is up from, 5.2 from the previous week. Anything under 10 is considered a low transmission risk. About 34% of the new cases this week were among City of Buffalo residents. Last week these same residents comprised about 25% of the new cases. This is still a good trend to compare with where we have been. Among EC residents about 28% live in the City of Buffalo, earlier in the last couple of months 50% of the cases came from the City of Buffalo; the trend is overall decreasing. This week there were 4 zip codes that had 5 or more cases. 14218, 14227, 14206, 14215. The previous week there was only 1 zip code that had 5 or more cases. The weekly positivity rate to the proportion of tests reported that were positive was 0.6, that is slightly higher than the previous week of 0.3. Overall our diagnostic testing numbers continue to decrease, so the total number of tests that we are seeing reporting both positive and negative over the weeks is decreasing. There were only about 13,500 Covid-19 tests done among EC residents this past week, which is lower than the previous week where 15,500 tests done. The only age category with a 7-day case rate of over 10 cases per 100,000 population were people in the 30-39 age group, they had 16.8 cases per 100,000. This has increased slightly, however the total positivity is under 1%. Looking at the mortality there were only 2 deaths associated with Covid-19 reported in the past 7 days. So far, we have had, since the beginning of the pandemic 1,921 deaths in total; there were 1,276 in 2020 and 645 in 2021. Since April we have been looking at the number of deaths among people and their vaccine status. For the months of April through June of the people that died with Covid-19 related illness, among those 96% were not fully immunized. That means the vaccine is working. Of those fully immunized, were immunocompromised, or had many health conditions going on that would make them very susceptible. Looking at our vaccination status, we have reached 70% of adults 18 and over who had at least one vaccine dose. The age range that had the highest percentage vaccinated are those 65 to 74 with an almost 91% vaccination rate. The lowest percentage are kids aged 12 to 15, however the vaccine for that age group has only been available about a month and a half, 39%

have had at least one dose. Of the 16 to 25-year olds about 55% are immunized. We need to get more people vaccinated. Looking at hospital admissions, we have been kind of stable. We had a big decrease in June, at the end of June it started to increase slightly. There is still a relatively low number of Covid-19 hospitalizations in EC. Yesterday we were at 20. This is a big decline from earlier in the pandemic. Our low was on June 25 and 26th, we had 4 total hospital admissions in EC for Covid. We are trending up slightly, we think these small trends of reported cases is really part of the national trend. We think it is primarily due to the Delta variant, where people were not fully immunized and getting infected.

Dr Burstein asked if anyone had any questions. Dennis Galluzzo asked what the flu status was in EC regarding 2019 and 2020 and the projection for 2021. Dr. Burstein responded that we had almost no flu in 2020, due to the protective measures being used for Covid-19 were working for flu. She assumed that in 2021 we would see more flu, as mask usage is declining. We should still emphasize that people get vaccinated for flu.

III. FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Rob Free told the group that Sara Herbst and Allison Dehonney would give the BOH a presentation on the FPC. Rob Free told the BOH that the FPC had a slow beginning, however they have been having numerous meetings and have buckled down with Allison's leadership as well as Sara's input and the entire council have made some very good inroads. Allison gave a short presentation, she went on to say that they have been working diligently in trying to get into a position where they can be forward facing and engaging with the community which is what the FPC is set up to do, we are here to educate and serve the community and make sure that we have a strong local food system. They have spent years putting their infrastructure together and getting a strong team. She went on to say that they have an amazing, racially diverse council with skills, and an industry for the first time since the council started in 2013. They are excited that their infrastructure is together, their government is strong, and they are ready to engage with the community to find out what they are interested in. Sara Herbst told the group about the Greater Buffalo Urban Growers farmer soil safety pledge, as they keep an eye out for more community output like that, she would like to hold themselves accountable based on the publishing of their action plan to look forward to social media posts, she thanked the BOH for their continued support. Dennis Galluzzo asked them to give a full presentation at the next meeting of their food action and

strategic plan. Allison commented that they would send this information to the BOH members.

IV. BOH VACANCIES AND DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Dennis Galluzzo said that a synopsis of the BOH duties and responsibilities would be sent out to the BOH members. Regarding BOH membership there should be a vice-chair and a secretary. There was ensuing conversation regarding BOH membership. The Board is required to have 3 physicians on it according to the EC charter, currently there are two, Dr. Montgomery and Dr. Daniels, another physician is required. Dennis stated that the Erie County Medical Society can suggest physicians to be appointed to the board, since Dr. Burstein belongs to the Medical Society, she will look into this matter. Dennis Galluzzo was voted to Chairman instead of president of the BOH. Rob Free was voted to vice-chairman, and Dolores Funke was voted to secretary, all were in favor, the motion passed.

Dennis Galluzzo discussed some of the duties and responsibilities of the BOH. He also discussed the Sanitary Code, a copy of such was sent out to the BOH members electronically. He asked the members to review the Sanitary Code before the next scheduled meeting. He said that over the next couple of months he would be discussing issues regarding the code with Dr. Burstein. Dr. Burstein suggested that perhaps the Director of Environmental Health could also be involved. Dolores Funke mentioned that care should be taken in making any changes to the Sanitary Code, as these changes would need to be submitted to the NYSDOH for approval. Dennis discussed nuisances as part of the Sanitary Code.

V. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Rob Free suggested going over policy and procedures to make sure there is current information and at the present time, everything is being done correctly and nothing has fallen through the gaps. Dolores Funke agreed with this issue.

Dennis Galluzzo asked Rob Free if the MAP Farmhouse (Massachusetts Avenue Project) has been rolled out. Rob said that he would check on this.

Dennis also mentioned at the prior BOH meeting there was talk of the ECDOH putting out messages on social media. He asked if this information could be sent out to the BOH. Dr. Burstein suggested that everyone could follow us. Cara our public information officer could send out the information.

Dennis Galluzzo asked Dr. Burstein about opioid deaths during the pandemic. Dr. Burstein said that there was a significant increase. In 2019 there were about 150 overdoses, in 2020 it increased to 254. The next meeting of the Opioid Task Force is on the first Monday in August, she will get more information at that point.

Dennis asked Dr. Burstein if the CDC conducted a site visit at the Health Dept. She responded that the last site visit was the National Health and Examination in Nutrition Survey, that is a national population-based survey that ask people questions about their health, and in a certain percentage they do physical exams, and in another certain percentage they collect biological specimens. Erie County was going to be an NHANES collection site. Unfortunately, this was postponed as our Covid numbers were too high, and it has not yet been rescheduled. The CDC project was concerning hepatitis C among women and children working through the NYSDOH, this was also put on hold with the pandemic.

Dr. Daniels asked if the BOH has any priority regarding Covid protocols in schools. Dr. Burstein said that the Board has no jurisdiction over this matter. School policy is dictated by the State.

There was no other business. The next meeting was scheduled for October 19, 2021 at 3:30 PM. The meeting was then adjourned.

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