

Minutes of the
Chicago Board of Health Meeting
January 19, 2021 at 9:00 am
Virtual Meeting
By Remote Means

Pursuant to applicable law, the President determined that an in-person meeting was not practical or prudent. Accordingly, attendance at this meeting was via remote means only.

I. Roll Call

Quorum was established based upon the following:

Present: Carmen Vergara, MPH, RN-BSN Carolyn C. Lopez, MD, President Horace E. Smith, MD Janet Lin, MD, MPH, MBA Joel Johnson, M.Ed Matthew M. Davis, MD, MPP Rosa E. Martínez Colón, MS Steve Rothschild, MD Debra Wesley, MSW	Absent: N/A
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For the Department
Allison Arwady, MD, Commissioner,
Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)

II. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Carolyn C. Lopez, M.D., President

III. Approval of Minutes

The Board voted and approved the December meeting minutes with corrections.

IV. Commissioner's Update

Commissioner Arwady provided both non COVID and COVID updates:

- The department's strategic plan has three top priorities: increasing racial equity (internally and externally), investing in the CDPH workforce, and administration and systems improvement. Action teams will begin meeting in February around each priority area.
- Due to reorganization, as of January 1st, the department no longer has a COVID bureau. The staff now supports other expanded areas such as immunization, Healthy Chicago, Healthy Equity Zones, and communicable disease.
- COVID update Chicago has passed the peak of the Omicron surge. You can visit Chi.gov to follow any trends. Data will show that all the tracked trends are coming down. January 4th, there were approximately 8000 cases of COVID, and within the first fourteen-day period, the numbers decreased to 3000. There were two hundred Chicagoans hospitalized, with the majority being unvaccinated people.

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- The department continues to encourage people to get vaccinated. Overall there has been an uptick in children receiving vaccinations. Chicago is far above the national average in 5-11-year-olds and 12-17-year-olds. However, the city is seeing the most lagging in the older population and Black Chicagoans. Latinx adults are now as likely as White adults to have received the vaccination.

Board Member Comments & Questions:

1. **Debra Wesley** – Is there a communication strategy that ensures that people properly use the test kits and get accurate results?
2. **Debra Wesley** – How involved is the City with ensuring that testing centers are quality?
3. **Dr. Lin** – Can you talk about the therapeutic supply, monoclonal antibodies, and antiviral and what we should expect because things are limited?

V. Board President's Comments

- Dr. Lopez referenced emails shared with Board members before the meeting. The emails were informational only. The Board was not required to respond. Dr. Lopez believes the emails were of interest because they underscored the conundrum of Public Health with people taking opposite views on the issues of mask mandate. The emails were also reflective of a separate communication received from a very passionate and industrious person who expressed the challenges associated with social distancing on public transportation, especially in times of high usage where people are shoulder to shoulder on the bus or train.
- Dr. Lopez introduced a new business item from a doctoral student who would like to interview the Board of Health members. She will contact the student to request more information about the survey and the IRB. She will share follow-up with the Board. There is no obligation for the Board member to participate.

Board Member Comments & Questions:

- 1) **Dr. Smith** – Noted the difficulty of social distancing on crowded buses. He also commented that people could become upset after waiting for the bus and then possibly be passed by due to overcrowding.
- 2) **Dr. Davis** – Added that any participation would be at the individual level despite being contacted due to expertise. Additionally, he noted that the primary area of concern is whether or not the Board member's contact information is shared
- 3) **Dr. Rothschild** – Recommended confirming the person's identity. He referenced that Health departments have been under threat across the country; therefore, identity verification is an important step.

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VI. Presentation

Dave Kern, Deputy Commissioner

Bureau of Syndemic Infectious Disease (CDPH)

Title: HIV Services Portfolio: A Status-neutral System to End the Epidemic

- The presentation provided information about the current services, a foundational component of the Bureau’s work. Chicago’s HIV Services program is unique because it is integrated and uses a status-neutral approach. The portfolio serves as a collection of all HIV services working together to reduce new HIV infections and increase the quality of life for those living with and vulnerable to HIV. The purpose of this approach is to progress toward getting to functional zero HIV infections by 2030, with expected outcomes being an increase in the number of PLWH who are virally suppressed and an increase in the number of persons vulnerable to HIV who use PrEp.

- **Board Member Comments & Questions**
 - 1) **Steven Rothschild** – What are the lessons learned from HIV over the last forty years and this restructuring of services that we can take to the COVID fight?
 - 2) **Rosa E. Martínez Colón** – Who is in the community planning group?
 - 3) **Rosa E. Martínez Colón** – How are these services getting to the communities that need them the most?
 - 4) **Horace E. Smith, MD** – Is there a list of the people part of the HIV Planning Council? And, who chooses who that council is?

VII. Public Comments

There were no requests for public comments.

VIII. New Business

Dr. Lopez presented a request from a doctoral student to have Board members participate in a survey. Dr. Lopez will follow up with the student to request more information on the data collection tool and the IRB. She will also take steps to verify the identity.

IX. Old Business

There was no old business.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 am by Dr. Carolyn C. Lopez.