



North Shore Health Department – Board of Health Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2021

The Board of Health Meeting was called to order on Thursday, August 19th at 7:04 pm by Kathleen S Platt RN

- 1) Roll Call: Present- Gary Lewis, Christopher Simenz, Kristine Peterka. Christopher Okunseri, Debesh Mazumdar, Kathleen Platt Absent- Rosalyn McFarland, Chelsea Holtz, Ellen Schupper

A quorum was present

- 2) Persons Desiring to be Heard

- 3) Minutes of March 18th were reviewed by members, motion to approve made by Gary Lewis, seconded by Christopher Simenz and passed

- 4) Minutes of May 21st were reviewed by members, motion to approve made by Kris Peterka and seconded by Gary Lewis and passed.

- 5) Health Department Administrative Items

- Health Director/Officer Transition, discussion regarding downgrading to Level II Health Department. Position was re-posted last week, and we are back to the first steps in the recruitment process. Previous applicants were found to be needing additional investigation as to their qualifications for Health Officer position in a Level III Health Department; one was found to not be qualified and the other withdrew her application by the time it was determined that she did meet these qualifications. There have been questions from Brown Deer as to the consequences of returning to Level II status to more easily find an applicant who will meet qualifications for the position. Level II status would affect consolidated grant allocations and potentially competitive grant applications as well. Board of Health members indicated reluctance to consider returning to Level II as a good option to facilitate Health Officer recruitment.
- Welcome Dr. Chelsea Holtz to Board of Health (Fox Point)
- Welcome Dr. Christopher Okunseri to Board of Health (River Hills)

- 6) Mutual Aid Agreement HERC region 7- Discussed purpose of mutual aid agreement between HERC public health departments, and that this essentially replaces previous CRI collaborative protocols. Motion to approve the MAA was made by Kris Peterka and seconded by Gary Lewis, was passed.

- 7) North Shore COVID-19 Update

- a) Situational Awareness: reviewed data provided from our website and DHS website showing increase in cases, increased number of children and vaccinated/ unvaccinated cases. Discussed that data sources are changing frequently, with DHS adding maps for transmission rate data as well as equalized vaccinated vs unvaccinated case data today. Extended discussion regarding continued sharing of data related to case counts, case trends, vaccine trends and other epidemiological data as it becomes available and validated.
- b) Grant funding and continued COVID response and recovery- we learned last week of additional funding available to the Health Department for continued COVID response and recovery, including Public Health Workforce Development fund, Immunization supplement #4 and ARPA fund. Each has a different end date and has different requirements for use. Total of approximately \$850,000 from these additional grants, specifically for COVID related work and recovery. The workforce development grant is to “expand, train, and sustain a response

ready public health workforce”, and in verbal conferences with DHS representatives, this fund can be used for retention and hiring incentives. As a result, the NSHD has provided a retention incentive or hiring incentive to all current staff, based on number of hours worked, and hire date. Four previous staff members have been brought back to the extent of their availability to assist with case management, contact investigations. All members of the board agreed with hiring and retention incentives as an appropriate way to ensure the availability of our current staff.

- c) Vaccine Planning: Discussed the two recent recommendations that have come out regarding COVID 19 vaccines- Third dose vaccines for immunosuppressed individuals, as people with moderate to severe immunosuppression were found to need a third dose 28 days after the second dose for full vaccine efficacy. These are currently approved under the emergency use authorization, however we are recommending that people discuss the need for this vaccine with their health care provider. Health systems are in the process of clarifying who meets the criteria for “moderate to severe” immunosuppression, and in the meantime we are being given guidance to provide the vaccine to people who self-identify as moderately to severely immunosuppressed. NSHD has not done vaccine clinics for several weeks, as we were having trouble filling our appointment slots, and there were many other public options for people who wanted to receive vaccine. The North Shore is among the highest vaccinated areas in the area, including children, according to the WIR benchmark report. This report is not perfect, but is the report that we use for our immunization grant and gives a generally good picture of vaccine status among children. We are planning to again provide both Third dose and Booster doses of COVID vaccine in the future, likely concurrent with flu vaccine clinics as we are planning those as well.
- d) Mitigation Strategies: We continue to provide guidance and updates to businesses, including day cares and some health care providers, as well as schools and camps as changes are made to CDC and DHS guidance. The current focus is on vaccines, in combination with “layered protection”, meaning that a vaccine alone is not going to provide full protection from COVID infection, especially in areas or groups of unvaccinated people. Masks, handwashing, testing when symptomatic and isolation/ quarantine measures are all necessary in addition to vaccination to manage the spread of COVID.
- e) School re-opening; Noted that most of our schools are in the process of finalizing reopening plans and most have signed up for at least one of the testing options offered through DHS. Our vaccine eligible school aged children (ages 12-18) have a vaccination rate of approximately 57% overall, per a benchmark report in WIR. The masking issues for schools remain a controversial topic, however most of the schools are following guidance for masks required for all, especially given our continued high case numbers.
- f) Flu vaccine: We are in the process of planning community flu vaccine clinics, mass flu clinics and municipal employee clinics.
- g) Other items: there was a question about our testing program, and it was explained that we have not been a major testing site throughout the pandemic- we have partnered with many other testing entities, including Wisconsin National Guard, long term care on site testing and employer based testing programs, and have done individual testing at the health department, primarily for employees, families and NSFR staff to determine if symptoms are related to COVID infection. It was also noted that the funding for community based partners testing programs, scheduled to end 8/31/2021 has been extended until 12/31/2021.

8) Next meeting, November 18th, 2021

9) Adjournment Motion to adjourn made by Chris Simenz, seconded by Debesh Mazumdar and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Dated: August 19, 2021

Kathleen S Platt

North Shore Health Department Health Officer, Secretary