



## PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2023

Zoom Meeting \* Princeton, NJ 08540

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### Board Members---Present

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH  
Rick Weiss, MS  
Mona Shah, PhD  
Elizabeth Dyeovich, (Alt. 2)  
Katherine Taylor, JD, PhD (Alt. 1)  
Linda Schwimmer, JD  
Rick Strauss, MD

### Board Members---Absent

JoAnn Hill, RN  
Kathleen Stillo, MBA  
Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison

### Staff

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS

### Guests

Ari Meisel, Princeton Human Services

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Chair, Dr. George DiFerdinando, called the Regular meeting to order at 7:33p.m. He recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: *“This is to affirm that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Princeton Board of Health has been duly advertised and is being conducted in compliance with all provision of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”* Roll Call was completed.

### Public Comment /Guest Speaker

- Chair DiFerdinando welcomed Heather Howard, Director, State Health and Value Strategies, School of International Public and International Affairs, Princeton University and her class to the meeting. Ms. Howard noted that her class was attending the Board of Health meeting to observe local government and public health in action. The class expressed appreciation in hearing Dr. DiFerdinando’s messaging on COVID-19 and were impressed by the coordination with other departments. Health Officer Grosser spoke on the extreme weather tabletop exercise and noted he would connect one of the students with the municipal emergency management coordinator.
- Chair DiFerdinando introduced Ari Meisel who was just recently appointed to the Human Services Commission.

### Minutes



Chair DiFerdinando addressed the minutes from the January 10, 2023, BOH Meeting. Hearing no proposed changes, Rick Strauss motioned approval with Kathy Taylor providing a second to the motion.

## Monthly Reports

### *Health*

- Health Officer Grosser introduced new REHS Emmanuel Santos. He replaced Nancy Ugalde who had her last day on 1/27/23.
- New part-time nurse Vera LoBianco began 1/12/23. She will be supporting COVID-19 clinics and providing support to full-time nurse Kathy Korwin.
- Health Officer noted an emergency management tabletop exercise that was attended on 1/26/23. The exercise simulated a weather emergency.
- Health Officer gave an updated infectious disease report.
- Retail food inspectors are working to assure businesses comply with the new ordinance to obtain basic food handler training for all retail food workers. Basic training is 2 hours and \$10-25 per person.
- Staff is reviewing the Indoor Smoke-Free Air act in response to possible improper use of a rear “club” at Ends of the Earth Café on Spring Street. Until this point, it has been presented as only a tasting space, so staff is working to ensure it is under compliance as such.
- LHOC and IDPG participated in the NJACCHO Strike Team webinar to learn how to train Long Term Care centers on infectious disease prevention and mitigation.
- LHOC reached out to community partners to see whether they are interested in Cover All Kids (CAK) flyers. LHOC updated the website to include information on CAK in the news & announcements section and the health department webpage. CAK flyers have also been sent digitally to 37 community partners in her weekly update email.
- Health Officer reported that the outreach coordinators from Health, Human Services, and Corner House are increasing collaboration this year to improve outreach methods. They will be meeting regularly.
- Health Officer laid out annual goals for health department staff. Mayor and Council will be holding their annual goal retreat on 1/17/23.
- The Health Officer presented the 2022 Annual Report. Notes from his presentation can be found below.
  - The Health Officer is proud to present the 2022 Annual Report. A big shout out goes to our municipal staff that put together the data, pictures and compilations for the report. Specifically, Julie Venema and Gwen Krol, each put a substantial amount of time in recording our efforts and documenting throughout the year.
  - As part Strengthening Local Public Health grant that was initially applied for in 2020, it has changed to adapt to the ever changing field of public health. This year was no different where the grant was able to cover other infectious diseases beyond COVID-19 (which was the initial disease being covered by the grant). We have now have increased the focus on other prevalent diseases in Princeton.



- When Monkeypox cases rose in 2022, we chose to add this disease to our strengthening local public health grant to be able to provide the necessary resources, including education, for residents. As the attention around Monkeypox increased, we saw our work directly impact residents as we were able to provide them with Monkeypox vaccinations as well as the necessary knowledge to protect themselves. This included partnering with institutions that were hearing concerns from their constituents about their own risk level for monkeypox. I will get into more detail into this in a few slides.
- Before COVID-19, Lyme disease was Princeton's most prevalent reportable disease. Due to ongoing efforts and outreach for Lyme, our staff decided to go with the second most prevalent disease in Princeton, and a not as well-known one in Campylobacteriosis which a zoonosis, being a disease that is transmitted to humans from animals or animal products. We typically received report of campy by means of a foodborne illness. Since it gets much less attention, we chose to add this to our grant as well so that further educate residents and local food establishments on how to prevent foodborne illnesses. To educate on this disease, we've worked with our REHS team that does the food establishment inspections to ensure that employees learn about the disease and how to prevent it.
- Although these illnesses were added to our grant report, we are still working on COVID-19 has remained prevalent this past year, we have continue to support residents through targeted outreach, convenient vaccine clinics, and free COVID-19 test kits while monitoring for new variants and changes in levels of transmission.
- Between the strengthening local public health capacity and vaccinator supplemental grants the additional funding truly helps to enhance our workforce at the health department. Grants account for over 35% of our total funding and allows for 2 full- time positions, our Local Health Outreach Coordinator and our Infectious Disease Preparedness Generalist, and 4 part-time positions which includes 2 part-time nurses and 2 part-time outreach support staffers. The grant is provided by the NJ Department of Health through CDC funding. They are year-to-year grants and were originally applied for back in 2021. We recently found out from the state health department that they expect the strengthening local public health capacity grant to be extended through June of 2024.
- Two projects that the Health Department wanted to showcase this year is the Gold Star in Health which was awarded to the Health Department in November of 2022, as well as our Mayors Wellness Campaign.
  - In 2022 Princeton Health Department worked with Sustainable Princeton and Sustainable Jersey to achieve the Gold Star Award in health. This award is given to municipalities that incorporates health in all municipal decision making/ policies. Princeton was one of the first municipalities in NJ to receive the Gold Star Award.
  - Our staff also worked with Mayor Freda on the 2022 Mayors Wellness Campaign. The campaign for 2022 focused on improving mental health and wellbeing



through various wellness activities while also engaging those who may be socially isolated due to COVID-19 or other reasons. PHD worked with organizations like the Princeton Library, Princeton Senior Resource Center, Corner House, Princeton Arts Council, and others to provide activities like watercolor painting, book clubs, discussions around mental health, among other activities to engage participants in mental wellness. Staff applied for the Healthy Town designation in December and are expecting to hear results in March. Our staff continues to work with the Mayor in planning the campaign for 2023 which is looking to focus on nutrition and both mental and physical wellness.

- This past year, we worked toward increasing healthcare access to Princeton residents by expanding those organizations we typically partner with.
- During the monkeypox outbreak, we collaborated with Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice to host two monkeypox vaccine clinics. Their office space provided a familiar and trusted site for vaccine recipients and their strong social media presence helped spread the word throughout the community. These clinics were also an opportunity for health department staff to provide education on the disease and reduce stigma.
- We also coordinated with Human Services to establish Princeton's first community vision and dental care program. Thanks to a series of Community Development Block Grants, we partnered with two local providers to offer free vision and dental care services to low-moderate-income residents who were financially impacted by the pandemic. Thus far, we have received over 90 applications and have accepted 18 dental and 34 vision participants. We have seen great success with this program and will be continuing it into this year.
- In a year-long project, and one that was initially brainstormed through the Princeton Board of Health, we created the "Healthcare Roadmap" to strengthen health literacy and help residents understand the local health services that are available to them. This resource lists providers' names, hours, services provided, and cost so that under and uninsured residents can make informed decisions on where they can access care. The "Healthcare Roadmap" is available in paper and online formats in both English and Spanish along with a QR code link that is provided at all of our outreach events. The document goes through regular updates by staff to ensure it is up to date for residents.
- In 2018, the Health Department was accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board. Since then, we have worked diligently to maintain the standard of accreditation to best serve the community and uphold a culture of quality improvement. Every 5 years, PHAB requires health departments to resubmit many of these standards and measures through a reaccreditation process in order to remain accredited.
- This past year, staff began working to collect documentation and generate reports to support the standards and measures of reaccreditation, which will be due in late 2023. This has involved engaging various staff members within the department and gathering financial records, outreach assessments, inspection reports, and more. In the meantime, we've also submitted our 2022 Annual Report to PHAB, which details a few of the ways



- we have maintained activities described in our initial accreditation and how we will improve this for our reaccreditation.
- Going through the accreditation and now reaccreditation process has allowed the Health Department to build a greater capacity in administering public health services. Through this, we've also demonstrated a commitment to upholding health equity and utilizing evidence-based practices in our programming.
  - When 2022 began, our health department staff were still in the recovery phase from the pandemic. Many had taken little time off during the pandemic and internally we began to see some of the fallout from burnout and exhaustion. We made a dedicated effort in some of our first team meetings of the year to dedicate time to supporting one another. We did this through a series of team meetings, events and work functions and leaned heavily on updating our existing workforce development to adapt to these changing needs of the department.
  - One quality improvement initiative that the Health Department took on this year is the "Nailed It" Award. This award is given monthly to recognize staff who exemplify superior customer service and quality improvement efforts. The creation of this award is closely intertwined with accreditation, which calls on us to build a culture of quality amongst staff and motivate them to take ownership of quality improvement efforts. The actual trophy is on the slide and is presented by the previous months winner of the nailed it award to the next awardee at each monthly team meeting.
  - To increase staff morale and cohesiveness, events are held throughout the year to create a better sense of engagement amongst staff. This includes things like Officegiving (in place of Thanksgiving), cookie parties, super bowl party, as well as participating in the Municipal Halloween costume contest, which the health department has now won two years in a row.
  - It's no surprise that caring for our public health workforce will ultimately result in better community public health. I'm very proud of our team and how we have worked through tremendous adversity, both professionally and personally.

#### Reports from Committees

- Health Officer Grosser stated there are still available slots for attendance to the Princeton Environmental Commission meetings and to e-mail him with availability.
- Secretary Schwimmer discussed the Princeton Senior Resource Center's recent grant award for vaccination support expansion. It was also mentioned that PSRC is actively seeking speakers for their programming.

#### Reports from Other Boards and Commissions

- No discussion was held.

#### Adjournment



- Dr. DiFerdinando requested a motion for adjournment. Dr. Strauss made a motion followed by a second by Kathy Taylor. The meeting was closed at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jeffrey C. Grosser  
Health Officer  
Princeton Health Department