



PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2022

Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Board Members – Present

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH
JoAnn Hill, RN
Kathleen Stillo, MBA, (Alt. 1)
Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison
Linda Schwimmer, JD

Rick Weiss, MS

Board Members - Absent

Katherine Taylor, JD, PhD (Alt. 2)
Mona Shah, PhD
Rick Strauss, MD

Staff

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS

Chair, Dr. George DiFerdinando, called the Regular meeting to order at 7:31 p.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

No comments were made.

Agenda

Chair DiFerdinando announced that former Vice-chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos submitted her resignation. He advised skipping Item #3 on the Agenda, the recognition of former Vice-chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos until she later joins the meeting.

Chair DiFerdinando acknowledged three student guests who joined the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves and express their interests in public health.

Minutes

Chair DiFerdinando addressed the minutes from the July 12, 2022, BOH Regular Meeting. Hearing no proposed changes, Board Members raised hands to show approval of the minutes. Seeing no objections, Chair DiFerdinando approved the minutes as presented and without opposition.

Monthly Report

Princeton Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser introduced Local Health Outreach Coordinator (LHOC), Gwendolyn Krol, at the meeting. LHOC Gwendolyn Krol was formerly the Vulnerable Population Outreach Coordinator, however, with the new grant cycle, the title has changed. Each year she completes a Community Health Assessment and for this grant cycle it is called the Rapid Public Health Assessment.

LHOC Gwendolyn Krol described her position in greater detail with its beginnings in 2020 with the Strengthening Local Public Health Grant. Her position is to boost the local public health department’s ability to conduct outreach and assist populations experiencing vulnerabilities, especially the elderly, undocumented, non-English speakers, unemployed, and under-resourced. She connects individuals to social support services when needed and liaisons with local organizations in Princeton. In completing Grant Deliverable #4, the LHOC and IDPG updated the Rapid Public Health Assessment, previously known as the Vulnerable Population Assessment. This new version emphasizes people-first language by replacing terminology that previously said “vulnerable populations” to now say “populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19.” Along with this, the assessment includes the addition of other infectious diseases beyond COVID-19 which are Campylobacteriosis and Monkeypox. To address the presence of these diseases in the Princeton community, Health Department staff will focus on education to increase awareness and prevention efforts as well as stigma.

Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser stated next steps for LHOC positions is to submit the Rapid Public Health Assessment to the state health department and Mercer County. He noted that the COVID-19 Generalist, now



known as the Infectious Disease Preparedness Generalist (IDPG), meets with LHOC Gwendolyn Krol weekly to review the assessment and share their best practices. Outside of the Assessment, LHOC works with all organizations and recently partnered with Princeton University's PACE Center in August. She was assigned 28 students who assisted with canvassing around Princeton to promote the Princeton Healthcare Roadmap and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Dental/Vision Program. Word of mouth is the best method for outreach.

Chair DiFerdinando encouraged the student guests to review the assessment to get a deeper understanding of Princeton. He noted that it fulfills previous ideas of describing the town from Mr. Rick Weiss. Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser confirmed that the Rapid Public Health Assessment can be shared with the community, and it is not an internal document. Chair DiFerdinando asked for questions on the LHOC's presentation to which nobody had any.

Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser began his monthly report and shared that the Princeton Health Department (PHD) has been utilizing the customer feedback survey which is part of the Workforce Development Plan. Staff created a QR code to be displayed at clinics and online links to the survey embedded in the email signatures of employees. At monthly staff meetings, feedback from residents is discussed and improvements are developed. Mr. Grosser read aloud recent feedback from a resident about their positive experience with Robert English, REHS, who helped them complete a septic application in an attentive and timely manner. Environmental health staff have been busy with the new kitchen and HVAC system at Princeton University.

Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser continues that the approved Board of Health ordinance from July went into effect in August so staff are now able to utilize it for property maintenance and high grass complaints.

All Environmental Health, Septic, and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) files have been scanned and saved digitally thanks to Summer Youth Employment Program participants. This was part of 2015 Strategic Plan and the PHD is proud to have completed it.

The month of August was busy for Animal Control Officer (ACO), James Ferry. There was a black bear traveling throughout town. ACO could not confirm whether it was the same or multiple bears. ACO James Ferry is not advised to do anything in the capacity of getting in the way of the bear, however, he can use audible sounds to get the bear moving as advised by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The most recent complaint of the bear was on August 18. The ACO emphasized bat education during the month of August and published information for residents to check their homes, eaves, and screens. ACO responded to 15 bat-in-house calls and the majority were during after-hours. In total, 7 bats and 1 raccoon were sent to New Jersey Public Health Environmental Laboratory. 0 tested positive. Mr. Grosser reminded the Board of Health that the PHD only sends animals to the state for testing if there is a confirmed or suspected exposure.

Regarding the images in the Monthly Report, Chair DiFerdinando urged the student guests to look at the report for the pictures of the bear, parakeet, raccoon, and PACE students.

Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser continued his update with final thoughts. The PHD continues Mayors Wellness Campaign efforts. LHOC Gwendolyn Krol and IDPG Julie Venema partnered with Princeton Public Library and Corner House to establish a book discussion series at the library that focuses on mental health and wellness for children, families, and Princeton residents of all ages. Last night Julie DeSimone, Program Officer of the Mayors Wellness Campaign re-awarded the 2021 Healthy Town Up and Coming Award in the first in-person Council meeting in 2 years. The application for the 2022 Mayors Wellness Campaign will be available soon for the 2022 programs.

Regarding the Mayors Wellness Campaign, Ms. Linda Schwimmer asked Mr. Grosser to send out information regarding the book discussion dates. Ms. Schwimmer emphasized the partnership with the Princeton Public Library is great.



Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser responded that Corner House advised the book topics on mental health. Mr. Grosser added that IDPG Julie Venema created Princeton's Mayors Wellness Campaign logo which is now featured on the Princeton Public Library's website.

Ms. Linda Schwimmer noted that Princeton took a topic that the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute started and put its own community-reads spin on it. If it is successful, the NJHCQI will share it for other communities to try.

Chair DiFerdinando asked Council President Leticia Fraga how the first in-person Council meeting went.

Council President Leticia Fraga responded that it went very well, but it was different. Council President Fraga highlighted that this was the first in-person meeting for at least one council member and Mayor Mark Freda. For most of the session, the hybrid component was successful. Council President Fraga looks forward to when BCCs can meet in person.

Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser noted that it was difficult to see who is in the audience participating virtually.

Chair DiFerdinando asked Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser for the upcoming Fall vaccination plans. Throughout August, the PHD has been planning for the release of the Bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine. It was received in early September. PHD vaccination staff started planning the locations, times, and dates of clinics to fulfill normal vaccine distribution. Mr. Grosser reported that today there was an infant clinic at Monument Hall for 6 months – 4 years old. Mr. Grosser requested an estimated number of vaccinations from the clinic.

LHOC Gwendolyn Krol reported an estimation of over 20 doses. This was a second-dose clinic, but there were still several first doses. PHD plans to schedule second doses and possibly another clinic to accommodate.

Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser continued that a Bivalent booster clinic will take place tomorrow and that most resident phone calls to the department are about the bivalent vaccine. Phone calls regarding the infant vaccine were slow during the Summer but there is now a surge for the vaccine most likely in response to schools starting and the flu season beginning. LHOC Ms. Krol and IDPG Ms. Venema are scheduling flu clinics which will be posted on the website. Continuing the tradition, PHD is partnering with Princeton Senior Resource Center for a larger flu clinic at their new building on Poor Farm Road per their request. PHD partnered with Wegmans Pharmacy to assist with the flu vaccinations, but COVID vaccinations will remain in-house.

Chair DiFerdinando stated that there is speculation whether what kind of flu season it will be. There was a report on H3N1 in Michigan. There is uncertainty on how many cases there will be. Chair DiFerdinando asked former Vice-chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos for her view on the pandemic as a guest.

Former Vice-chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos explained that she did not prepare a statement, but there is a lot on public health's plate with both vaccination seasons coming up. She quoted: "God gave us two arms, one for covid and one for flu shot." Former Vice-chair Hodach-Avalos advised getting the best protection you can.

Resolution 2022-06: Resolution of the Princeton Board of Health Recognizing Dr. Meredith Hodach Avalos' Dedicated Service

Chair DiFerdinando moved to the resolution and began reading Resolution 2022-06: Resolution of the Princeton Board of Health Recognizing Dr. Meredith Hodach Avalos' Dedicated Service. Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser continued and completed reading the resolution.

Board members expressed their best wishes to former Vice-chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos and how she will be greatly missed. She was thanked for her commitment and service to Princeton.



Former Vice-chair Hodach-Avalos discussed her new role at the New Jersey Department of Health as a Public Health Physician for the Communicable Disease Service in the Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Kathleen Stillo joined the meeting and thanked former Vice-chair Hodach-Avalos.

Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser presented and awarded the 2022 Dr. Charles Rojer Public Health Award to former Vice-chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos. A plaque of the award is being created. Chair DiFerdinando congratulated former Vice-chair Hodach-Avalos. She expressed her gratitude and how she is honored and appreciative of being able to be involved with the Board of Health.

Reports from Committees

Chair DiFerdinando opened the floor for reports from other Committees and other Boards and Commissions.

Ms. Linda Schwimmer, liaison to Princeton Senior Resource Center, reported that she and Drew Dyson meet once a month to discuss mutual priorities prior to the scheduled PSRC meeting. Ms. Schwimmer sent a memo to the Board of Health summarizing the meeting with Mr. Dyson. Ms. Schwimmer noted that PSRC will be having COVID-19 and flu clinics in partnership with the PHD. PSRC will also be having a health fair with different health services for residents. This is an opportunity for the Board of Health to discuss relevant issues and information since PSRC has an ongoing personal relationship with the community as a trusted partner since they have resources and social support services. Diseases of memory are one of the biggest concerns for PSRC as Princeton has an aging population. There is at least one social worker, possibly more than one, who is trained to do memory decline screenings. These are free and can be private, as well as they will be available at the health fair. PSRC also runs a monthly workshop for people who are suffering from memory diseases and their caregivers. Ms. Schwimmer emphasized that this is a growing issue as people are living longer and it may be something to think about for future community needs surveys. Social isolation is another big topic of concern. The Mayors Wellness Campaign is great, but also there needs to be other opportunities to connect seniors with the community. Mr. Dyson mentioned the equity issue with seniors who live in affordable housing who do not have free Wi-Fi available to them. This limits their ability to access citizen-type activities such as involvement in town meetings and web-based care such as telehealth. Ms. Schwimmer emphasized the need to look for grants and funds to support this, possibly through COVID pandemic funds. Ms. Schwimmer concluded that PSRC is a very important organization to connect and work with.

Council President Leticia Fraga mentioned that Princeton is working on a Wi-Fi solution, especially at affordable housing developments. Princeton is utilizing Community Development Block Grant funding to provide Wi-Fi but there have been some planning issues. Council President Fraga asked Health Officer Jeffrey Grosser for input.

Mr. Grosser responded the first contractor was not eligible to continue, but the current CDBG Consultant, Marc Leckington, is looking into this project to guide it.

Ms. Linda Schwimmer added that PSRC's concerns can be incorporated into strategic planning and PSRC is happy to be assigned a liaison this year.

Mr. Rick Weiss reported for Vision Zero. Request by Chair DiFerdinando, Mr. Weiss explained to the students that Vision Zero is to reduce traffic accidents with pedestrians and cyclists to zero. Mr. Weiss presented statistics regarding accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. Most accidents occur on Friday nights at non-intersections. Most bike crashes occur between 2 and 4 pm. This may be due to commuting. The rate of survival when involved in an accident with a car driving 20 mph is 0%. The rate of survival drops to 10% when the car is driving 40 mph. In response to this, the City of Hoboken changed all local streets to 25 mph to get to zero accidents. Princeton is an urban and rural area but may want to consider lowering some speed limits and increasing policing. Some crashes occur at Princeton Shopping Center, but it is private property, so it is not included in the town's statistics. Mr. Weiss noted that Princeton can only suggest changes for Princeton Shopping Center but cannot enact them.



New York City and Philadelphia started establishing cameras for safety enforcement. Overall, the committee is drafting a Vision Zero Resolution to put some of these ideas together and move toward implementation.

Chair DiFerdinando recalled anecdotal reports of people not wearing helmets as much as he used to see. Other Board of Health members reported similar experiences.

Ms. Kathleen Taylor, liaison with the Human Services Commission, had nothing to report because she could not attend the July meeting. Ms. Taylor confirmed with Council President Fraga of the Community Needs Assessment and its postponed presentation. Ms. Taylor may adopt Ms. Schwimmer's liaison meeting method.

Reports from other Boards and Commissions

Chair DiFerdinando shared that Princeton Alcohol and Drug Alliance (PADA) did not meet this month yet as there was no notification for a meeting, so there is no update. Council President Leticia Fraga that she did not receive a meeting notification either.

Regarding mental health and causes of death, Chair DiFerdinando stated how COVID-19 remains the 4th highest cause of death in the US in 2022. COVID-19 is still a problem that must be dealt with as much as the other leading causes of death such as heart disease, cancer, and accidents.

Chair DiFerdinando asks for any other comments. Former Vice-chair Hodach-Avalos mentioned that she was the PEC liaison, and she will reach out to Tammy to let her know and the Board of Health will need to discuss a replacement.

New Business

Chair DiFerdinando thanked former Vice-chair Meredith Hodach-Avalos and all Board Members for their service. Next time the Board of Health will consider whether to vote on a new Vice Chair for the rest of the year or wait. Chair DiFerdinando requested people to urge those interested in the position to complete an application on the municipal website.

Council President Fraga added that the Clerk's Office receives applications on a regular basis. They can go through the applications and see who applied in the past and see if they are still interested. This is how other BCCs have been responding to their vacancies. Chair DiFerdinando emphasized the importance of representation on the Board of Health.

Old Business

No discussion was held.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. was moved by Ms. Linda Schwimmer, seconded by Ms. JoAnn Hill, and affirmatively carried by all those present.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gwendolyn Krol

Local Health Outreach Coordinator
Princeton Health Department