



TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MEETING MINUTES March 21, 2024

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (All Attended In Person):

T. Hills, DVM, President
W. Simmons, Vice President
T. Nytych, DVM
R. Kapur-Pado, DO
W. Standinger III, Legislator (Arrived at 7:34 a.m.)

ABSENT:

J. Raftis, DO, FACEP
T. Leary, FNP

OTHER(S) PRESENT:

H. Vroman, Public Health Director
A. Reigelman, Secretary
P. DeWind Esq., County Attorney

GUESTS: Susan Medina, Deputy Director of Public Health (Departed at 8:53 a.m.)
Denis McCann, Director of Administrative Services (Departed at 8:53 a.m.)
Todd Kopalek, Supervising Public Health Sanitarian (Departed at 8:53 a.m.)
Melanie Miller, Director of Patient Services (Departed at 8:53 a.m.)
Nicole Whitmore, Director of Dental Health Services (Departed at 7:43 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER: at 7:32 a.m. by Dr. Hills.

PRESENTATION: Highlights/Updates from Public Health Management Staff.

N. Whitmore:

Ms. Whitmore shared dental van numbers from September 2023 through March 2024. The dental van saw 542 school aged children for preventative services. Of those children, 410 have had or currently have some form of decay. And of the 410 children, 298 have active decay. Ms. Whitmore shared charts showing decay examples.

- Dr. Hills inquired if there was a way to make a comparison of how many total children are seen in the County to these current numbers and also asked what we are doing wrong in the County to be seeing this. Ms. Whitmore stated that she can put together these numbers and expressed that there needs to be a focus on education for children as well as parents.
 - Ms. Vroman added that it does not seem that families put a focus on dental education. Have discussed providing dental education for younger children in schools heading into next school year.
 - Discussion of fluoride in water and the elimination of giving children fluoride tablets in school, and cooperation with school districts.
 - Ms. Vroman noted that part of the Strategic Plan is to reestablish partnerships, and with that we have been successful in scheduling an upcoming meeting with all Tioga County superintendents to be able to reestablish a connection. Hope to do the same thing with school nurses.
- Ms. Whitmore shared additionally that February was Dental Health Month, and to celebrate, hosted a photo contest for children to participate in to be able to receive a spin brush. She noted that the dental van sees a wide range of ages, from 1 years old to their oldest client who just turned 100 years old.
 - Ms. Vroman stated that if the Board has not been out to see the van that they should stop in at any time.

TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

- Dr. Nytch asked Mr. Simmons on the progress of attaining information for the hookup ability for the dental van in Richford. Mr. Simmons stated that he still needed to check on this.
 - Ms. Vroman requested Ms. Whitmore connect with Mr. Simmons to provide any necessary information. However, the van struggled to fill appointments while in Newark Valley. Filling times in Richford may be difficult.

M. Miller:

- Working with Emergency Preparedness Team for potential for Measles outbreak, have been training, discussing POD operations, etc.
 - Further discussion of potential for Measles clinic. Would need to look at logistics, where to host clinic, who would vaccinate (only have 2 nurses), look at staff to make sure they have documented immunity. Main risk would be for anyone unvaccinated (looking at younger populations). Ms. Medina noted that timeframe must be a quick turnaround, as post exposure must be completed within 72 hours.
- Working on building up our Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), looking at completing our own background checks for these volunteers and how to keep our current MRC volunteers engaged.
- In April our Public Health Nurse will be going with an Environmental Health staff member to a Tabletop foodborne illness training, also attending immunization conference and further training on measles.
- We have now officially taken over all of our communicable disease investigations, including Hepatitis C.
 - Discussion of investigation process for Hepatitis C. Dr. Kapur-Pado requested Ms. Miller share NYS generated Communicable Disease investigation form for Hepatitis C.
 - Also noted that select staff are now in Guthrie Epic Portal which is effective for directly messaging providers.
- In Early Intervention program there is still a provider shortage. There is a new application program coming out in June (EI Hub) which helps to document. We are concerned providers will not like working with this new system. There is talk that the opening date of this system will be extended to October.

T. Kopalek:

- Noted rabies investigation that occurred recently. Cat was in fight with raccoon and was bitten. The cat's rabies vaccine had lapsed by 8 months and the raccoon ran away, so have to assume exposure. Per New York State guidance, cat would have to quarantine for 45 days. The owner called a local veterinary practice who wanted to initiate the Texas Protocol for post exposure treatment/quarantine (90 days). Not a lot of information found on Texas Protocol, involved Dr. Hills on this matter who called the practice and recommended using New York State protocol instead. Found out later that the owner was scratched by the cat as well, so had to receive post exposure treatment.
 - Board members discussed rabies exposure animal quarantine guidance and pre-exposure treatment versus post exposure treatment for humans.
- Purchase new XRF machine to be able to test paint in homes for lead. It is a portable unit that tests for lead dust in paint chips (does not test clothing).
 - Discussed current lead program caseload (current numbers can be found on the Monthly Agency Report that is sent to the Board). Public Health focus is on education to parents.
 - Dr. Nytch inquired if informational pamphlets could be distributed in workplaces with high lead exposure (that could be brought home to expose children). Ms. Vroman stated that could be accommodated.

D. McCann:

- Upgrade made to all Public Health staff computers, provided by our own funding as well as County-issued staff cell phones. Will be replacing tablets for field staff for Early Intervention and Environmental Health to help get signatures out in the field.
- As a result of Strategic Planning have found an electronic payment system that will cover all bases for us, have final demo on it soon.

TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

- We will be having Wi-Fi routers upgraded in Public Health areas of Health & Human Services Building and Conference Rooms. This is occurring with Public Health funding.
- Have started preparation for installing fobs on 3 doors in our clinic area (to assist in tracking entry).
- Vehicle fleet upgrades- will be adding 4 new vehicles which are to be in soon. Our oldest vehicle is now a 2018. Vehicles are purchased off of a state contract. The County's rule is to only purchase American-made vehicles. Seven of our twelve vehicles will be All-Wheel.
 - Discussion if there is local push for the County using electric vehicles.
- New trailer will be getting new wrap for "Public Health On-The-Go" and will be used at the next rabies clinic. Staff will be trained in hauling it.
- There is a new Chief Accountant for the County and will have a new Budget Officer (included in duties of the new County Administrator). Relationship with the new Chief Account is good.
- Waiting on final 2023 numbers, but do expect a return for the County.
- All grant and State Aid claims have been maximized with very little adjustment.
- Had promotion within Admin Services to recognize employee for his work and succession plan (Confidential Assistant promoted to Assistant Director of Administrative Services).
 - Mr. Standinger commended Mr. McCann stating that he is the gold standard for his occupation, forward thinking.

S. Medina:

- Applied and received \$3000 grant for climate change with a focus on outreach for tickborne disease illnesses. Pulled data from last few years and identified men and older adults as target populations for outreach activities, educating on permethrin use, self-checks, and distributing tick kits.
 - Discussion of rise in not commonly seen tick-borne diseases (Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever) (numbers displayed in distributed Communicable Disease Report), laboratory processes for tickborne disease testing in animals versus humans. Ms. Medina was requested to check with her lab source to see what the tickborne panel includes.
- We are increasing our outreach efforts for parents of young children.
 - (1) Welcome baby outreach. (2) Now have trained safe sleep educators so that we can educate on safe sleep practices and distribute pack'n'plays to those in need. (3) Have been providing education at Family Resource Center on dental health and have a session scheduled for nutritional health. (4) Have connected with WIC program to be able to talk about lead, dental and nutrition.
- The Quality Assurance Team is very involved in updating audit tools and revising policies. Working on our first Quality Improvement Project to review and update our Rabies Investigation forms. Have also done a lot with revamping the Lead program.
- Ms. Wait, our Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator completed the Covid After Action Report and presented to staff. Would like to present to Board of Health.
- Preparing a Drug Take-Back Day on 4/27 at Health and Human Services Building. Partnering with Sheriff's Office. Anyone will be able to drop off unwanted medications or used sharps.
 - Dr. Hills inquired if there was a future plan for disposal of unwanted sharps. Ms. Medina stated that this has been found to be an issue within the community as people are being turned away from drop-off locations that claim to take them. This is something we are looking at with ASAP Coalition. Discussion of other locations that may work with Tioga County, Public Health's own process for disposal of sharps.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Meeting Minutes: No discussion; motion to approve prior minutes made by Mr. Simmons; seconded by Dr. Kapur-Pado, all were in favor, none opposed, motion approved.
- Enforcements: Dr. Nytych inquired who pays for the schools when they receive an enforcement. Ms. Vroman stated that the school pays and explained the scenario surrounding this enforcement.



TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

NEW BUSINESS:

- Annual Report 2023-Ms. Vroman asked the Board to glance it over and stated that it is a culmination of all Public Health activities for 2023.
- Communicable Disease Report is new to us this year. It will be going out to Tioga County providers. We plan to distribute this annually.

INFORMATIONAL: Ms. Vroman shared updates.

- Public Health News:
 - The legislation on the composition of Board of Health to allow mid-entry level providers is expected to move forward by the end of year. This will allow us more flexibility moving forward.
 - Dr. Kapur-Pado noted that now there is a Doctorate of Nursing program (DNP) which may help.
 - NYSACHO is writing a letter of support for Emergency Services being an essential service.
- Accomplished Tasks:
 - Tobacco violation update (referenced at last meeting) -currently we are establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with a new hearing officer and will be offering this individual training. By next Board of Health meeting will hopefully have had hearing or have scheduled.
 - Child Fatality Review Team-Letter to Railroad Update- Individuals from the railroad company responded quickly to the letter and set up a meeting to discuss last month. They were not supportive of barrier methods, more supportive of education and considering vegetation barriers. Next week, have another meeting. We will be completing an in-depth assessment of rail tracks in one area from each County (Tioga and Broome).
- In Progress Tasks:
 - Strategic Plan-Staff have broken into groups and are working on assessment/surveys for Quarter 1 milestone. Trying to get staff vested.
 - Submitted our CLIA (laboratory license) application. This will allow Public Health to complete basic lab services in the clinic. Will have to make sure we have policies and procedures in place and working with County Attorney DeWind on this to discuss potential liabilities.
 - Found that not having our own licensure was a roadblock during Covid. This will allow more flexibility and will be able to add more tests down the road.
 - Dr. Nytych inquired if examination is required prior to licensing. Ms. Vroman stated that it is dependent on the type of service offered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The five Board of Health members present were in attendance. Ms. Vroman, County Attorney DeWind and Ms. Reigelman remained in attendance. Motion made by Dr. Hills, seconded by Mr. Simmons, to move to Executive session to discuss a personnel matter at 9:13 a.m. Motion carried. Motion made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Dr. Nytych to adjourn Executive session at 9:38 a.m. Motion carried.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

- Ms. Vroman requested that Board of Health members begin reviewing the Tioga County Sanitary Code (located in their reference binders), then form Subcommittee to review and assist in revising. Would like to update and revise by end of summer.
- Next month Mr. McCann will be back to provide a fiscal update. Tentatively schedule Ms. Wait to attend the May meeting to present COVID After Action Report.
- Mr. Simmons added [to Ms. Vroman's comment on EMS becoming an essential service] that this will have to fall on the County's responsibility as townships lack the necessary funding.

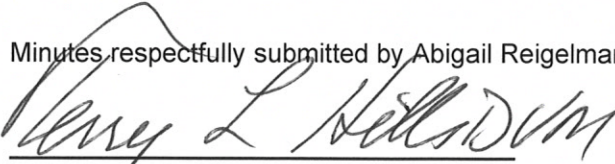


TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

- Ms. Vroman asked if Board members would prefer completing the annual County trainings in another format (virtual meeting) in the future to assist in completion. Members agreed that they prefer to complete on their own time.

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Reigelman.



Terry Hills, DVM, President



Abigail Reigelman, Secretary

Minutes approved April 18, 2024

