

The Cleveland County Public Health Board met on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., at the Cleveland County Public Health Center and via teleconference call.

Board members present: Sara Karner, Ronnie Whetstine, Robert Miller, Kale Meade, Patti Alexander, Tom Spurling, and Randy Sweeting.

Health Department staff present: Tiffany Hansen, DeShay Oliver, Leslie McSwain, Alisa Leonard, Anne Short, Nathan McNeilly, and Holly Thornburg.

Tim Moore, County Attorney was present.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:

Chair Spurling called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

CITIZEN RECOGNITION:

No citizens requested to appear before the Board.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 13, 2020 PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD MEETING:

Chair Spurling presented the proposed agenda for the October 13, 2020 Public Health Board meeting for consideration of adoption.

Motion: A motion was made by Patti Alexander, with a second by Kale Meade to adopt the agenda for the October 13, 2020 Public Health Board meeting as presented.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2020 PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

Chair Spurling presented the September 8, 2020 Public Health Board meeting minutes for consideration of approval.

Motion: Robert Miller moved that the minutes of the September 8, 2020 Public Health Board meeting be approved as presented. Kale Meade seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

COVID-19 UPDATE:

Mrs. Oliver provided a COVID-19 update to the Public Health Board. As of today, October 13, 2020 we have a total of 2706 confirmed cases in Cleveland County. Of those total cases, 208 are currently active with 19 hospitalized and 74 deaths.

As of October 13, 2020, 58% of confirmed cases were female and 42% were male. Percentages by age group were as follows; 10% ages 0-17, 13% ages 18-24, 33% ages 25-49, 23% ages 50-64, 10% ages 65-74 and 12% were 75 and older. 9% of confirmed cases were Hispanic.

There are no reported deaths under the age of 25 in Cleveland County. Ages 25-49 contain 3% of deaths, ages 50-64 contain 14% of deaths, ages 65-74 contain 23% of deaths and 61% of deaths fall into the age of 75 and up. 3% were Hispanic, 38% male and 62% of deaths were female.

Of the confirmed cases, 1.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.4% Asian, 19.9% Black or African American, 64.6% were White, 7.8% were Other and 6.2% Unknown. The deaths broken down by race are as follows; 0% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0% Asian, 26.4% Black or African American, 68.1% were White, 4.2% Other and 1.4% were Unknown. These numbers indicate a slight disparity in the number of deaths seen in our Black or African American populations.

Mrs. Oliver shared a graph that outlined the percent of positive tests as a proportion of the total tests in Cleveland County. This graph indicates since early September we are seeing an increase in positivity rates. Cleveland County is at 9.5% positivity rate compared to the State of North Carolina, which is at 6%. Average turn around time for lab tests are two days with the North Carolina State Laboratory.

Mrs. Oliver provided an update on COVID19 testing locations within the County. Currently, testing is available at Cleveland County Health Department, Atrium Health Urgent Care in Shelby and Kings Mountain, NextCare Urgent Care in Shelby and Gastonia, and CVS in Boiling Springs and Kings Mountain. Patients are still encouraged to call their primary care providers to determine if they need to be tested. There is also additional testing available at other provider locations within the County, such as Shelby Medical Associates, CLECO or Shelby Children's Clinic.

She provided an update on what phase of reopening we are currently in for North Carolina. We are in Safer at Home Phase 3 of the Executive Order 169, which went into effect on October 2, 2020. This is in effect until October 23, 2020, at which time the State will be reviewing data, and determining extensions or further restrictions necessary.

Beginning October 5, 2020, Schools in North Carolina were allowed the opportunity for K-5 grades to open up to in person instruction. In Cleveland County, we have not elected to do this at this time. Tiffany presented to the Board of Education and they have decided to review the data again at their next meeting and determine action following that meeting.

Questions were asked regarding the Long-Term Care Outbreaks that we have currently experienced and their status. White Oak Manor - Kings Mountain has not had any new reported cases identified at this time. The recommendations provided by the CDC team have been provided to other Long-Term Care Facilities as well, to be proactive in preventing the spread of COVID19 within their facilities. At this time, the facility has made changes and appears to be stable. In addition, the continued vigilance of the community and partners to reduce social gatherings, social distance, handwashing and mask wearing is a focus. The Health Department continues to perform case investigations, contact tracing and messaging within the community in response.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT 2019:

Holly Thornburg provided the 2019 Communicable Disease Report. The table provided in the Board members packets outlined the list of Communicable Diseases that are reported to the State of North Carolina. There has been increases in Hepatitis B cases and Pertussis cases from 2018 to 2019. The total number of pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations provided in 2019-2020 season decreased from the previous season. Within Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Cleveland County Chlamydia cases decreased for 2019, included were the rates per 100,000 broken down by age groups. Within the ages 20-29-year-olds, no decrease was seen. Mrs. Thornburg explained this is a hard to reach population and difficult for us to provide education to. For Gonorrhea cases, there was a decrease in overall cases throughout all age groups. Cleveland County HIV cases are averaging 10 cases each year over the last 3 years. Overall rates decreased except for 10-29-year-olds. Mrs. Thornburg attributed much of the cases in this age group to IV drug use. Syphilis cases totaled 11 cases for 2019; rates remained the same with the exception of the 30-39-year-olds.

2020 COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS:

Anne Short provided the data on the 2020 County Health Rankings. The County Health Rankings were released in April 2020. Health Outcomes are measured based on two measures, length of life and quality of life. Ms. Short explained that length of life is based on years of life lost before 75 years old and the connection to chronic disease prevention methods. Quality of life measurement data points utilize the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS), which is self-reported. Low Birthweight is also a measure, which for Cleveland County is 10%, which is high. The Health Factors ranking is based on measurements in health behaviors, clinical care, social & economic factors and physical environment. Health behaviors are areas that we work to target with education, and we have seen decreases in some of these areas including adult smoking and teen birth rates. In the clinical care area, we continue to have 12% of our community uninsured. Social and Economic factors are those that we impact and create workplans to address but need the assistance of community partners. Physical Environment includes drinking water violations, and any municipal systems that receive a violation are captured on this data point. The most current Cleveland County data can also be found in the Community Health Assessment and the State of the County Health Report.

TRANSITION OF SOLID WASTE:

Tiffany Hansen shared that the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners voted at their meeting on Tuesday last week to revise the County Ordinance related to Solid Waste. The update to the ordinance allows for Solid Waste to be a stand-alone department with a dedicated Department Head that reports to the County Manager. Mrs. Hansen explained that as she has spent time with Solid Waste it became evident that they were in need of a dedicated leader. This transition allows for both departments to be more strategic with planning and growing both departments.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Tiffany Hansen presented that the Dental Team, School Health and Cleveland County Schools were the recipients of the 2020 GlaxoSmithKline Child Health Recognition Award. This was in response to school staff and the school nurse at Graham Elementary School facing challenges with keeping students who have pain or poor nutrition due to dental decay and dental abscesses in school. When conducting dental screenings on students, 70% of students were found to be in need of dental care. The dental team worked with school staff to notify parents, obtain paperwork and talk through treatment options and transportation barriers. As a recipient of this award, they received \$10,000 to continue their work and expand their collaboration efforts.

Mrs. Hansen mentioned that Public Health Board packets have traditionally been provided in paper format to the Board and wanted to consider electronically providing these materials by e-mail. The Public Health Board was open to the idea of electronically receiving their materials and we will begin trialing this for the November Public Health Board Meeting.

The Christmas Breakfast in December, with the current COVID19 numbers increasing, is a concern that was raised by Mrs. Hansen. We want to consider how we are approaching the breakfast and are looking for Public Health Board feedback. Historically, all of the Health Department staff, Public Health Board members, Department Heads, and retirees are invited to this event. With the number of people invited, we would not be able to social distance within the spaces allocated. Our Health Department leadership team talked about wanting to do something for our staff within the COVID19 precautions. Public Health members want to provide a “thank you” video for the Health Department staff in addition to handing out meals to staff in order to be in alignment with COVID19 safety measures.

Mrs. Hansen also provided an update regarding the DSS Relocation. She shared that the Health Department leadership team, along with the DSS leadership team continue to meet bi-weekly with the architect on the building. We have decided that in order to optimize space within our building, we will utilize one single entrance into the building. We continue to analyze all components in the process.

Chair Spurling shared how appreciative he is to the Public Health Board and all their participation in the meetings and the work of public health. He asked that our Health Department utilize Board Members in any way they can to capitalize on their expertise and insights.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chair Spurling called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Sara Karner moved, with a second by Patti Alexander that the Cleveland County Public Health Board meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Tiffany Hansen, Secretary
Cleveland County Public Health Board