

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Horwitz called meeting to order at 3:05 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Bin An - Absent  
Supervisor Matt Heinz - Absent  
Mr. Rene Gastelum - Absent  
Mr. Charles Geoffrion, Vice President  
Ms. Mary Lou Gonzales  
Dr. Paul Horwitz, President  
Mr. Mike Humphrey  
Dr. Kathryn Kohler - Absent  
Mr. Miguel Rojas  
Dr. Gail Smith  
Ms. Carolyn Trowbridge

**A quorum was established (7)**

**Non-Board Members**

Dr. Theresa Cullen, Pima County Health, Director  
Ms. Paula Mandel, Pima County Health, Deputy Director  
Mr. Vic Pereira, Pima County Health, Deputy Director

**Presenters**

Mr. Alan Bergen, Pima County Health, Program Manager Senior  
Ms. Amanda Monroy, Pima County Health, Health Policy Manager

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Due to Teleconference Meeting the Pledge of Allegiance was not conducted.

**3. MINUTES ADOPTION**

- Adopted Board of Health September 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes.  
The motion was made and seconded (Mr. Rojas/Dr. Smith) that the September 15, 2021, Board of Health Meeting Minutes be adopted. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. CALL TO AUDIENCE**

- Mr. David Higuera, Chief of Staff for Dr. Matt Heinz, Supervisor, District 2, updated the Board of Health (BOH) members on the October 19, 2021 Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting discussion covering Pima County employee vaccination mandate plan options. Mr. Higuera advised that at the October 5, 2021 BOS meeting, Supervisor Heinz requested that Administrator Huckelberry provide a workable COVID vaccination mandate plan at the October 19, 2021 BOS meeting that included specific terms of consequences for non-compliance. That request passed with a 4-1 vote.
- Mr. Higuera advised that Administrator Huckelberry presented an employee vaccination plan at the October 19 meeting that outlined 5 vaccination options, with religious and medical exemptions remaining in place:
  - Option 1:
    - Mandatory vaccination for all employees before November 30, 2021.

- For those not vaccinated, employee will receive disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- Option 2:
  - Mandatory vaccination for only employees who work with vulnerable populations.
  - Employee must be fully vaccinated by January 1, 2022.
  - For those not vaccinated, employee will receive disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- Option 3:
  - Incentive \$300.00 one-time payment plus 3 days Annual Leave.
  - Disincentive \$45.51 per pay period medical insurance premium.
  - Must be vaccinated for promotion or transfer/change in position at a higher rate of pay.
  - All new hires must be vaccinated.
- Option 4:
  - All of Option 3.
  - Outside employment and off-duty employment disallowed for unvaccinated employees.
- Option 5:
  - All of Option 3 and 4.
  - Pay increases and pay adjustments deferred for unvaccinated employees.

The BOS recommended adoption of Option 2, along with Option 5, at the meeting.

- Mr. Higuera explained that the Option 3 had previously been adopted by the BOS, with the employee vaccination incentives plan put into effect at the August 16, 2021 meeting and the disincentives plan being adopted at the September 7, 2021 meeting.
- Mr. Higuera noted that he believes that vaccination mandates for employees working with vulnerable populations as a term of employment represents forward progress, and that the term “vulnerable populations” is currently being defined. He mentioned that Supervisor Grijalva raised the point about how anyone would be able to determine who in the community is considered vulnerable, and wouldn’t that encompass all County employees in one way or another. Mr. Higuera said that Administrator Huckelberry is going to issue a memo within the week noting exactly which job classifications the Option 2 mandate will apply to, and the rationale for that; classifications may include everyone who works in corrections, as well as those working with the elderly and children.
- Mr. Higuera noted that if other organizations are an indicator, those employees holding out will be inclined to be vaccinated if their job is on the line. He noted that if this means 99% of those holdouts get vaccinated and Pima County does not need to lay off 10% of the workforce, this can be considered forward progress.
- Mr. Higuera noted that the vote regarding a straight vaccination mandate for Pima County employees was a political issue because it did not have 3 votes to pass, and reminded the board members that the BOS can always take up this discussion again and enact further guidelines, mandates, regulations, restrictions, etc. He also mentioned that this is a great opportunity for members of the public to continue to talk to the BOS about this issue.
- Dr. Horwitz stated that he believes this matter is a health issue, not a political issue. He noted that he expects all the BOH members to read the BOS meeting minutes then reach out their Supervisor to learn all they can about this issue, and he intends to put this discussion back on the agenda so that the BOH can take a stance on the matter.

## **5. DIRECTOR’S UPDATE**

- Dr. Cullen provided the Pima County COVID-19 update:
  - Pima County continues to have high transmission.
  - Arizona has fully vaccinated 69% of the eligible population; in Pima County, 59% are fully vaccinated.

- 1.3 million+ vaccines have been administered.
  - The Epi curve data shows that number of COVID-19 cases is not going down, and seeing no indication that cases will drop.
- Dr. Cullen provided an update on COVID-19 vaccinations:
  - Vaccine uptake by census tract shows that multiple census tracts are at 100%, and very few census tracts are less than 40% due to focused vaccination efforts in those areas.
  - COVID-19 booster shots of Pfizer-BioNTech are being administered currently, as well as 3rd doses of all three vaccinations for individuals that meet the immunocompromised definition. FDA and CDC approval is pending very soon for the Moderna and Johnson&Johnson (J&J) booster vaccines. Mix and match approval for booster shots is also pending, as well as the J&J vaccination for ages 18 and over. Most pharmacies and clinics are already providing Pfizer boosters and 3rd doses, and Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is providing all three vaccinations at the Abrams building, our clinic locations and mobile sites.
  - Vaccinations for children ages 5-11 will probably be approved very soon. PCHD was asked by the State to put in a request for an initial amount of dosing for the pediatric population, and is in the process of doing that now. Unsure of the logistics of administering the vaccination to this age group, but the hope is that the vast majority of pediatric shots will be given by pediatricians because children will do better if they go somewhere they are comfortable with.
  - The Abrams building will continue to be a large vaccination site, as will the PCHD clinics, for initial doses, 3rd doses, booster shots and children ages 5-11. If additional vaccination capacity is needed there is a plan in place to do that.
- Dr. Cullen provided an update on COVID-19 testing:
  - PCHD is providing antigen testing through Paradigm labs at various sites in the Tucson area.
  - PCHD no longer provides PCR testing at our sites due to the high cost of the test; over \$50 million has been spent, primarily federal dollars, not County revenue.
  - Pima County partners with two locations to offer PCR testing: Tucson International Airport offers a nasal swab test, and ASU does a saliva test at the Ellie Towne Center; both locations are funded by the State and are free to the public.
  - PCR tests can also be obtained through a referral from a primary care physician's office, or by going to CVS or Walgreens pharmacy or other partners.
  - There is a limit placed on PCR testing by insurance providers, and may require a doctor's referral. Dr. Cullen believes that insurance will cover a PCR tests if a person is symptomatic, but will not cover repeat testing.
  - Home testing is also available. If an individual is tested at a Paradigm site that PCHD pays for, and the test result is negative but the individual feels sick or thinks they may have COVID, a free home test can be provided for the individual to retake the test.
  - PCHD encourages everyone to follow the established guidelines for testing, and does not allow repeat testing at the sites we fund less 14 days apart. If you are a positive COVID case, you do not need another test. If you are a contact, you should test on day 5 to 7 after contact.
- Dr. Cullen discussed the Pima County Pandemic Response:
  - An after-action evaluation for the vaccination roll-out will be updated tomorrow, and she will make sure that gets shared with the board members.
  - Lessons learned:
    - Need better data.
    - The impact on public health departments, specifically employee wellness and support, and the response to it.

- Local public health authority is under threat. The Health Department lost some traditional local health authority because of decisions that were made by the State.
- Partnerships remain really important.
- The essentials of recovery and resilience are to acknowledge community and individual grief and loss; maintaining community partnerships; using innovative models; centering on health equity; clear communication and transparency; and honoring cultural traditions.
- Dr. Cullen spoke about the increased surge of West Nile Virus almost everywhere in the County due to the water flow from monsoons in the City. PCHD traps and tests for West Nile, but have not yet identified any mosquitoes. A health alert has been put out, and there has been increased testing. Pinal and Maricopa counties are in a much worse situation than Pima County.
- Dr. Cullen advised that congenital syphilis remains a concern. PCHD is now working with San Diego, who has had a really successful identification campaign to prevent the transmission of congenital syphilis. PCHD is trying to incorporate the lessons learned there, and will send a letter out to providers once all the data is reviewed.
- Dr. Cullen reported on Casa Alitas regarding the COVID-19 testing and vaccination process there. She noted that a large amount of the people coming through Casa Alitas are tested, and are encouraged to test if they have not yet. Negative vaccination rates have increased in that population, but they must be vaccinated before their first year in the country is up. And Mexico is doing an amazing job of vaccinating eligible people (age 12 and older) coming through, about 35% on average.
- Dr. Horwitz asked Dr. Cullen to give a brief synopsis on the October 19, 2021 BOS meeting and how the vaccine mandate options presented will affect what PCHD is doing. Dr. Cullen noted that she was not on the BOS call, but provided the information on what was decided on at the meeting:
  - Mandatory vaccination for employees who work with vulnerable populations by January 1, 2022; if unvaccinated, those employees will face disciplinary action. PCHD believes that Administration will ask for a list defining which PCHD employees work with vulnerable populations.
  - Incentives for vaccinated employees of up to \$300 dollars and 3 days annual leave.
  - Disincentives for unvaccinated employees including an additional charge to their paycheck of \$45.51 per pay period for medical insurance premiums. Dr. Cullen noted that the County is self-insured, so the cost of providing care comes from the County itself, not from Aetna, who is the fiscal intermediary and not the insurer.
- Dr. Horwitz asked Dr. Cullen if she knew why the County did not institute mandatory vaccinations for all employees, and what the definition of “vulnerable” is because it has a wide definition, and also what may happen with grants due to this decision.
- Dr. Cullen replied that Administration has been asked for a definition of what vulnerable population is. She again stated that she believes that the Health Department will be asked to provide a definition to Administration of what roles require employees to interface with vulnerable populations, such as any employee who does clinical work.

## **6. HEALTH POLICY UPDATE**

- Ms. Amanda Monroy presented on three topics for the Health Policy update: a proposed legislative ask for the 2022 legislative session; the uninsured in Pima County; and the OSHA Heat Standard.
- Ms. Monroy noted that four proposals were sent to the County Administration for approval. These proposals take the lessons learned from the pandemic response and try to identify the legislative solutions that may be available to improving the current, and future, response. The four proposals are:

- A request for the Arizona Department of Health Services to support communities with dedicated resources for early awareness to emerging public health threats.
- A request for a minim pass-through of public health funds to county public health agencies, making sure increased federal funding makes it back to the county level where direct community service is occurring.

Mr. Geoffrion asked for clarification on federal funds being specifically designated to be used at the local level, and how vulnerable are those funds to manipulation at the State level?

Ms. Monroy noted that it is typical, or common practice, for federal funds to go directly to the State and then be further allocated to localities. Pima County was fortunate to get a direct allocation through the CARES Act, but other localities were not so lucky and had to go through a formal waiting period and then get a grant for a State allocation. This request is asking to place a formal rule on direct awards to make sure that 50% of the federal funding be reattributed to localities and not just maintained at the State administrative level.

- A request that funding is available for school nurses in schools with 500 or more in attendance. School nurses have been important resources during the pandemic, helping with distance learning, contact tracing assistance, testing and assisting their districts to prepare for potential outbreaks.
- A request to protect the local public health authority. There is a nationwide trend to make sure to maintain a separation of powers and protect the ability of public health leaders to follow science and best practice in being able to respond swiftly to public health emergencies current and emergent.
- Ms. Monroy provided an update on uninsured in Pima County, as well as those insured individuals who may not be accessing care due to the increase in high-deductible health care plans in our nation. Barriers to health care, beyond coverage, include linguistics, transportation and monetary issues, even for those who are insured. One of the biggest issues is access to specialty care and inpatient care, where the gap begins to present for those who are uninsured. Ms. Monroy noted that the data tends to look at individuals under 65 years of age, since the over-65 populations starts getting access to Medicare. The data reviewed from 2019 in Pima County indicates that 13.3% of those under 65 years old lacked health insurance – a decrease from 18.2% in 2010. Some success was seen from the Affordable Care Act, but there is still a significant percentage of community members who are without insurance.
- Ms. Monroy advised that OSHA will be making and setting a heat standard as part of President Biden’s climate agenda, and the public comment period is open now. The heat standard creates rules that protect employees who work outdoors, and is especially pertinent to southern Arizona, and would apply to anyone who has to abide by OSHA rules. OSHA will also be looking into an enforcement initiative on heat-related hazards, and also doing a national emphasis program which will prioritize inspecting for heat-related hazards.

## **7. CHNA AND STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

- Mr. Alan Bergen outlined the 4 main steps to the Strategic Planning framework:
  - Step 1: Assess where we are (October-December 2020)
    - Information was compiled from key stakeholder surveys – staff, community level and public surveys.
    - Over 30 local, state and national public health subject matter experts were interviewed.
    - An environmental scan was conducted to provide more information on the policy, demographic and funding trends that is facing public health.
  - Step 2: Refresh our foundation (March-April 2021)

- Reviewed our vision, mission, and values, and determined if need to update, change or keep them.
- Identify Strategic Priorities (April-May 2021)
  - Reviewed collected data
  - Conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis.
  - Created a list of priorities, voted on those, and sent that list to senior leadership to identify the top 5 priority areas to focus on.
- Step 4: Chart our future (June-September 2021)
  - Developed goals and objects for each priority area, as well as a Year One implementation plan to guide the work moving forward.
- Mr. Bergen noted the two teams assembled to elevate this work:
  - Strategic Planning Foundation Team, which included 31 staff from all divisions. This team participated in virtual meetings from March through May 2021, where they reviewed the vision, mission and values, as well as information about our current environment, and helped analyze the results and determine priorities.
  - Strategic Planning Development Team, comprised of 34 staff from all divisions. This team met from June through September 2021, and developed goals, objectives and implementation plans for the 5 priority areas.
- Mr. Geoffrion asked if all the goals established in last year's strategic plan have been accomplished. Mr. Bergen advised that progress on those previous goals and objects had been monitored and some items had been met, some had not. Mr. Bergen that the previous Strategic Plan was put on hold until a new Health Department Director was in place. At this time there is a push to do a lot more, and better, types of work, as well as monitoring and evaluating the Strategic Plan to assure that we are being successful. One change being made is to have completion dates for activities both short- and long-range.
- Mr. Humphrey inquired as to the BOH role in this process. Mr. Bergen advised that there should be quarterly, or periodic, updates made to the BOH on the progress made, which will be an opportunity for the BOH to provide any input or suggestions, or to make any comments at that time. Mr. Bergen also noted that it would awesome if a member of the BOH were willing to sit in and participate in the Strategic Planning process and provide input during the live planning. Dr. Horwitz appointed Mr. Mike Humphrey to be the BOH representative for the Strategic Planning process. Mr. Bergen advised that anyone can attend the public forums, and if additional BOH members are interested in sitting on one of the advisory committee meetings which are held the first Tuesday of every month from 1p.m. to 2p.m., please contact Mr. Bergen via email. Additionally, Mr. Bergen invited the BOH to participate in the community-level strategic planning that will begin in 2022.
- Next, Mr. Bergen provided the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) progress update. The CHNA is a requirement for the public health reaccreditation work being done currently. A report generated from this process, along with the Community Health Improvement Planning process, with be used for reaccreditation.
- Mr. Bergen defined what the purpose of the CHNA is:
  - It is a report, a tool, an assessment that provides an overall understanding of the health status of the community, looking at a number of variables across different elements such as morbidity, mortality, environmental issues, policy issues, etc.
  - It allows the health department to begin increasing communication and collaboration with community partners to find out who else is working in certain areas, and figure out how to develop strategies to address health priorities identified in the report.
  - It helps to identify areas that need to be addressed. Community forums will be held to begin identifying the top-level priorities for implementation. The next public forum is October 21, 2021, where some of the preliminary data will be presented.

- It provides some context to help determine social determinants and key drivers of health issues in the community.
- Mr. Bergen noted that public health accreditation requirements require a public health department to complete the health assessment every 5 year. The Affordable Care Act requires not-for-profit hospitals to complete one of these assessments every 3 years. Rather than doing two separate reports, Pima County does one report every 3 years as a collaborative effort which will result in one published assessment that addresses the requirements the hospitals need for the Affordable Care Act, as well as what PCHD needs for public health accreditation. This effort also allows PCHD to work with the hospitals and other community partners to develop strategies, and implement activities, programs and policies around the identified priority areas. The 2021 Advisory Committee List was provided to the BOH members, and has all the major hospitals, major federally qualified health centers, the Tribes and Nations participating, the VA Medical Center and the Tucson Indian Center who are new this year and have been active participants, as well as our neighboring friends at Santa Cruz Valley Regional Hospital.
- Mr. Bergen provided the CHNA timeline:
  - May-June 2021: Design and planning of CHNA activities.
  - June-August 2021: Conduct primary data collection including key stakeholder interviews and focus groups through surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups and community forums; and conduct secondary data collection focused on reviewing the health status of the community. Consultants review all data collected and do a triangulation to determine common themes to select the top priorities for consideration.
  - October 2021: Hold community forums.
  - October-November 2021: Arizona Prevention Resource Center will be preparing the assessment report.
  - December 2021-January 2022: Complete final edits and format the report with a tentative release date in early 2022.

## **8. GUN VIOLENCE UPDATE**

- Mr. Humphrey advised that he and the group Citizens for a Safer Pima County met with Pima County Attorney Laura Conover and her Chief Civil Deputy, Sam Brown, on September 20, 2021 to discuss issues related to the Pima County Fairgrounds gun show, specifically what could be done to encourage the sale of firearms with background checks only. The County Attorney's office is very interested, and requested one month to research the issues and get back to Mr. Humphrey and the group with recommendations.
- Mr. Humphrey confirmed that he had a phone conversation today with Mr. Brown, who is scheduling a work session on November 3, 2021 to review the legal issues that will need to be overcome for the County to reclaim control of the Pima County Fairgrounds. Mr. Humphrey noted that, because of the way the system is set up, Pima County has no control over what is sold on the Fairgrounds as it relates to guns. The County Attorney's office wants to be able to prepare a recommendation to the BOS on this matter. Mr. Humphrey will provide an update on the November 3 meeting at the next BOH meeting.
- Dr. Horwitz inquired as to the nature of the current gun show contracts, and the legality of changing those. Mr. Humphrey advised that the contract between the Southwest Fair Commission and the Crossroads of the West gun show is event to event, not a long term contract.
- Mr. Humphrey indicated that the County Attorney's office also wants to take a very hard look at why the Southwest Fair Commission is operating independently of the Pima County BOS. The Southwest Fair Commission currently has a 35 year lease from Pima County but does not report directly to the BOS. The County Attorney's office is going to be looking at the structure of the Southwest Fair Commission to see what changes need to be made to return

to a situation where the BOS directly appoints the Southwest Fair Commission members, who would then report directly back to the BOS about Pima County property.

- Mr. Humphrey made a motion to request that the BOS support the establishment of a gun violence prevention review task force to gather data about the effects of gun violence in Pima County – the causes, the effects, the vulnerable populations – and what the community can do to reduce the number of gun deaths. The motion was seconded by Mr. Geoffrion, and the vote carried unanimously. Dr. Horwitz indicated that the establishment of a gun violence prevention review task force would be discussed at the next BOH meeting.

**9. ETHICS COMMITTEE UPDATE – STANDING ITEM**

- No report.

**10. DECLARING RACIAL & ETHNIC INEQUITIES & INCOME INEQUALITY IN PIMA COUNTY TO BE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS – STANDING ITEM**

- No report.

**11. HOLIDAY MEETING SCHEDULE**

- Dr. Horwitz suggested that the BOH meet in both November and December 2021. Mr. Geoffrion agreed that, as there is so much continuing to happen currently, the BOH needs to stay in touch. It was agreed that BOH meetings will be held in November and December 2021.

**12. SUMMATION OF ACTION ITEMS & PROPOSAL OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Dr. Horwitz suggested that all BOH members educate themselves as best they can on vaccine mandate information that was discussed at the October 19, 2021 BOS meeting.
- Dr. Horwitz reminded the board members to send him an email and ask to have the item put on the agenda.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made and seconded (Mr. Rojas/Mr. Geoffrion) that the October 20, 2021 meeting adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:54 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2021, at 3:00 P.M.