

Pima County Board of Health Minutes
June 22, 2022
In-Person / MS Teams Meeting
Sheriff's Department 3rd Floor
Special Operations Center (SOC)
1750 E. Benson Highway
Tucson, Arizona 85714

1. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Horwitz called meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE:

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

A quorum was established (10)

Non-Board Members

Dr. Theresa Cullen, Pima County Health Department Director
Ms. Paula Mandel, Pima County Health Department, Deputy Director
Ms. Kimberly Van Pelt, Pima County Health Department, Deputy Director

Presenters

Mr. Michael Lopez, Pima County Health, HIV/STD Program Manager

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Rojas led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. MINUTES ADOPTION

- Adopted Board of Health May 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes.
The motion was made and seconded (Mr. Rojas/Ms. Trowbridge) that the May 25, 2022 Board of Health Meeting Minutes be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. CALL TO AUDIENCE

- Ms. Ann Rose Dichov spoke to the Board of Health (BOH) about her concerns about the issues surrounding COVID-19 injections. Ms. Dichov requested that the BOH consider adding a standing agenda item to monitor the ongoing statistics regarding injury and death as the clinical trial progresses, to see how the trial is affecting Pima County residents.

5. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

- Pima County COVID-19 as of 06/21/2022:
 - Pima County has a medium transmission level with 230 cases/100K.
 - 12,330 tests performed, and test positivity rate is at 10-30%
 - Omicron Ba.2.12.1 variant is most prevalent at 99%.
 - Test to Treat (TTT) program began 06/22/2022; FEMA has committed a team for 30 days

- Situated on-site at the East Clinic office, includes free access to testing, evaluation by a Nurse Practitioner, and access to antivirals Paxlovid and Molnupiravir.
- Vaccination data:
 - 76% of residents ages 5+ are fully vaccinated as of 06/14/2022.
 - Vaccinations for age 6 mo. – 5 yrs. started 06/21/2022; estimates are that 90K are eligible in that age range and expect to get about 50% of those vaccinated.
 - Low rate of boosters administered to the 80+ age range is concerning as more deaths are happening in this group.
- COVID-19 mitigation supplies are available for Health Department staff, and Pima County Health Department (PCHD) can order supplies from the state for other Pima County departments.
- Monkeypox has increased globally since May 2022, and anyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or background is at risk, although it is rare and the overall risk to the public is low.
 - The United States has over 100 cases, and Maricopa County in Arizona has one confirmed case.
 - The PCHD Epidemiology department is following up on all reported monkeypox concerns in Pima County:
 - Four individuals are under investigation; one person has been vaccinated.
 - Pima County will provide coverage for vaccination in Cochise County.
 - Refer callers to PCHD webpage: Monkeypox – Pima County.
- Heat Respite Centers have been established in conjunction with Pima County Community and Workforce Development out of their OneStop resource centers.
 - The centers will provide water, sunscreen, and COVID-19 care kits.
 - Individuals will be offered the opportunity to complete housing assessments and job training.
 - Progress on the 5 YR BRACE Grant to coordinate extreme heat response includes:
 - Collaboration with the Pima Association of Government to clone their Heat Response Network website to one for Pima County using ArcGIS;
 - Initiating collaboration with the City of Tucson to identify the location and needs of the homeless;
 - Assessing the existing cooling center;
 - Integrating the EPA's initiative "Schools as Community Cleaner Air and Cooling Centers" for Sunnyside Unified School District. It is one of four sites in the country and will get technical assistance from the EPA.
- Pima County hired John Stuckey to evaluate County facilities from a safety perspective, and he will provide staff with safety training.

6. INCIDENCE (TRENDS) OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Mr. Geoffrion spoke about the significant increase of STDs, specifically gonorrhea and syphilis, particularly in the underserved populations and among people aged 15-20, during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Mr. Michael Lopez, PCHD HIV/STD program manager, provided an update on recent state trends for syphilis:
 - 222 cases in 2018;
 - 373 cases in 2019, an increase of 60%, and an increase in congenital syphilis with 7 cases in Pima County;
 - a 4% decrease in syphilis cases 2020 due to COVID-19 closures;
 - an 18% increase in syphilis in 2021, and a 127% increase in congenital syphilis to 25 cases;
 - 2022 to date is seeing similar syphilis case numbers as in 2021.

- Dr. Cullen discussed that the State is planning to write up guidance to give to healthcare providers to allow pregnant women to be tested for congenital syphilis in any healthcare setting, and that ACHHHS intends to modify their payment system to cover that testing.
- Mr. Lopez confirmed that PCHD has relaunched the syphilis campaign in areas where the highest cases are coming from. The campaign information was also shared nationally in Ohio, as well as with Tribal partners. Additionally, PCHD is working with Commando, an ad company from Los Angeles, using social platforms and dating apps, to push out both the STI and the PrEP campaigns.
- Mr. Lopez provided an update on the PrEP services, noting that 62 clients have been initiated since early February 2022, with 83% of those clients linked to long-term care.
- Mr. Lopez noted that HIV incident cases have seen a downward trend of 13-18% since 2018.

7. HEALTH DEPARTMENT SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE REGARDING RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES

- Dr. Horwitz, Dr. Kohler, Dr. Smith and Ms. Trowbridge met with Nancy Johnson from El Rio, and Judy Rich from TMC, to discuss recruiting and retaining employees. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Rich indicated that salary is not the main issue, that it is equally important for an employee to feel valued, and to have a relationship with their supervisor.
- Dr. Horwitz is reviewing a way to collaborate with the University Of Arizona Zuckerman School Of Public Health on employee recruitment and retention.
- Dr. Kohler suggested working towards a loan forgiveness program for new graduates.
- Ms. Trowbridge suggested initiating a public awareness campaign to elevate both the Health Department and public health awareness in the community.

8. BOARD OF HEALTH OFFICERS' NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Dr. Horwitz appointed Dr. Gail Smith to head the nominating committee, and she accepted.

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. SUMMATION OF ACTION ITEMS AND PROPOSAL OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Dr. Horwitz is including a discussion of the laws requiring TV stations to devote time to public awareness.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made and seconded (Mr. Rojas/Ms. Trowbridge) that the June 22, 2022 meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2022 at 3:00 P.M.