

Pima County Board of Health Minutes  
May 25, 2022  
**In-Person / MS Teams Meeting**  
Sheriff's Department 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Special Operations Center (SOC)  
1750 E. Benson Highway  
Tucson, Arizona 85714

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Horwitz called meeting to order at 3:04 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE:**

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

**A quorum was established (8)**

**Non-Board Members**

Ms. Paula Mandel, Pima County Health, Deputy Director

**Presenters**

Dr. Gregory Hess, Pima County Chief Medical Examiner

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**3. MINUTES ADOPTION**

- Adopted Board of Health April 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes.
- Adopted Board of Health April 27, 2022 Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.
- Adopted Board of Health May 5, 2022 Emergency Meeting Minutes.
- Adopted Board of Health May 12, 2022 Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

The motion was made and seconded (Ms. Trowbridge/Mr. Rojas) that the above listed Board of Health Meeting Minutes be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBER**

- Dr. Horwitz introduced Dr. Rebecca Franzi-Osborne who is representing District 4.
- Dr. Franzi-Osborne grew up in Tucson, AZ, graduated from the University of Arizona Medical School, and is a general internist in the area. Dr. Franzi-Osborne is excited to participate on the Board of Health (BOH) and give back to the community.

**5. CALL TO AUDIENCE**

- Ms. Ann Rose Dechov spoke to the BOH about her concerns regarding heavy metal toxicity in the environment caused by the combination of the chemical release of aluminum particles used for geoengineering and weather modification with the turning on of 5G in the area, and having that combination in the air that we breathe.

**6. DR. HESS, DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF MEDICAL EXAMINER**

- Dr. Gregory Hess, Director of the Office of the Medical Examiner (ME) for Pima County, provided an overview of the ME's office.
  - The office is the medical examiner for Pima County, Santa Cruz County, Cochise County, Graham County and La Paz County; works with a number of different Native American communities to do postmortem examinations; and has a fee-for-service arrangement with multiple other counties to do postmortem examinations for them.
  - Natural death makes up 80% of the causes of mortality and is certified by the medical provider in the community; the remaining 20% of deaths considered unnatural are sent to the ME office for a county death investigation and can include motor vehicle accidents, hangings, suspected overdoses, shootings or an unknown cause for someone with no medical provider.
  - A death in Arizona is coded at Vital Statistics using cause, not the non-specific mechanism of death.
    - Cause of death is the underlying reason why someone may have died.
    - Manner of death is a medical determination that is predetermined and cannot be written in, with five choices available: natural, accidental, homicide, suicide, and undetermined.
    - Medical providers may only certify a death as natural; only medical examiners may code a death by another manner of death.
  - There are two sets of numbers connected to deaths recorded in Pima County:
    - The state of Arizona reports by the county of residence, so anyone who lives in Pima County that died is included in the count regardless of where their death occurred;
    - The ME's office reports actual deaths in Pima County, regardless of where the person is from.
  - The ME's office does not accept jurisdiction of every death reported to them; on average, 60% are accepted and 40% are declined. The office will help facilitate the conversation with law enforcement and hospital or care facilities to help determine a cause of death based on circumstances, and whether or not the ME's office needs to get legally involved.
  - Death certification involves either a full postmortem examination (autopsy) that includes an external and internal examination to document findings; an external examination only; or a review of medical records without seeing the body at all.
- Dr. Hess noted that the criteria for certifying a COVID-19 cause of death is unknown. Community providers certified 95% of the COVID-19 certified deaths in Pima County; the 5% of COVID-19 certified deaths done by the ME's office used positive laboratory confirmation that COVID-19 was present in conjunction with the inciting cause of death such as obesity, traumatic injury, etc.
- The ME's office had the capacity to serve as overflow storage for the remains of the mass fatality event caused by COVID-19, using a code of COVID MF (COVID Mass Fatality) on those remains, but did not directly certify those deaths on behalf of funeral homes or hospitals that had run out of space.

**7. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

- Pima County COVID-19 as of 05/23/2022:
  - Pima County is in low transmission of 148/100K, using the CDC range of 200/100K
    - Test rate is low, and test positivity has increased to 16.51%.
  - Vaccination data:
    - 74% of residents ages 5+ are fully vaccinated as of 05/25/2022.
  - Booster vaccinations data:
    - 200 boosters have been given to ages 5-9.

- The CDC booster intervals update is 5 months for a 1<sup>st</sup> booster; 4 months for a 2<sup>nd</sup> booster; and a 2<sup>nd</sup> booster is recommended for age 50+ and those who are immunocompromised.
- As of 5/23/2022, individuals are considered up-to-date on vaccinations when all primary series doses and all recommended booster doses have been administered.
- FDA endorsement for a 3-dose Pfizer vaccination and Moderna vaccination series for those aged 6-months to 5-years is expected by June 12 or 13.
- AHCCS Re-enrollment push:
  - Pima County Health Department (PCHD) coordinating a plan with State and local partners to inform and assist residents with re-enrollment and links to navigation resources.
  - Pima County estimates 100K enrollee's, or ~10% of the population, will be impacted when the emergency declaration expires if they do not re-enroll.
  - Also affects the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS).
- Title 42 Potential Recision:
  - PCHD is working with Casa Alitas and other organizations to plan for the impact of increased asylum seekers when Title 42 lifts, which may be 1000/day.
  - PCHD provides testing for border crossers, arranges for housing at a hotel if COVID-19 positive, and provides medical care for acute medical issues developed while in the PCHD care system.
  - PCHD assists Santa Cruz and Cochise counties by holding COVID-19 positive individuals.
- Responding to Gun Violence and Trauma:
  - PCHD is procuring gunlocks and developing a distribution plan to make them available using a Healthy Families funding grant.
  - Community resources for Gun Violence Trauma are posted on social media channels for easy access.
  - Mike Humphrey reported the Gun Violence Prevention Committee is working on a proposal to provide mental health training for staff at places that sell firearms as well as make it available online, and hope to set up public trainings at area libraries in hot spots in the County that have increased firearm-related fatalities.
- Youth Mental Health Update:
  - A Youth Mental Health First Aid 3-session summer training opportunity was emailed to local schools and all sessions were fully booked within 36 hours with a significant waiting list, with schools requesting that all bus drivers receive training to recognize at-risk kids.
  - The program is using a school-based grant fund that will expire in May 2023. Moving forward the hope is to utilize the ~\$.5M annual State medical marijuana tax dollars that is specifically targeted for public health use to continue the program with a focus on youth dual diagnosis for substance abuse, behavioral health, and alcohol. The proposal will go to the Board of Supervisors at an upcoming meeting.
- Mini-Grant Opportunity for Youth Engagement:
  - PCHD has \$80,000 available from two separate grant sources to fund eight \$10K mini-grant opportunities for community partners and individuals to improve youth access to services, resources, and support, as well as build youth health and well-being and community resilience against future public threats. The mini-grants will be announced June 15, 2022.

## 8. POLICY UPDATE

- Ms. Amanda Monroy spoke on the policy analysis report "Happy Youth, Healthy Pima," which was written by graduate students Julia Rohrer and Lindsey Wang.

- The report articulates a process for PCHD to strategically identify and prioritize health issues, and develop collaborative, evidence-based, inclusive solutions to public health challenges.
- Recommendations for PCHD actions are to pilot a care navigation program in schools or the community; increase partnerships with providers; and partner to implement school-based navigators.
- This analysis is being linked to the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) so community priorities can be incorporated into the strategic planning process.

**9. HEALTH DEPARTMENT SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE REGARDING RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES**

- Dr. Horwitz advised that the subcommittee has not yet met pending responses from several community leaders that he has invited to discuss best practices in recruiting and retaining employees at large organizations, but that they intend to meet soon.

**10. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE**

- Mr. Geoffrion discussed concerns regarding the \$40M in grant money that will expire in FY24. The Budget Subcommittee will meet again later in the summer, and in the fall, to plan for justification of any budget increases that the BOH asks for, specifically, the \$6M that has been requested for the next budget cycle (FY23-24).

**11. SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE**

- The Board agreed to keep the same BOH meeting schedule for the summer months and will consider a remote meeting as needed.

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

- Ms. Jennie Mullins gave an overview of the recent meeting:
  - no ethical deliberations were done;
  - an update was given on Healthy Pima, the health improvement planning initiative, and the AHCCCS re-enrollment push;
  - Mr. Andres Portella presented how the Health Equity plan encompasses the work of the Ethics Committee.

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

- There was not enough time to review this item

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

- Dr. Horwitz reminded Board members to email him with any proposed future agenda items.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made and seconded (Mr. Rojas/Ms. Trowbridge) that the May 25, 2022 meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2022 at 3:00 P.M.