

Wellesley Board of Health
Remote Meeting via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2021
11:30 AM

Present:

Board:

Shepard Cohen, MPA, Chair
Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Vice Chair
Linda Oliver Grape, PA-C, MPH, Secretary
Carol Hannenberg, MD, Associate Member

Staff:

Wanda Alvarez, Community Social Worker
Jessica Cliff, MHA, Environmental Health Specialist
Deadra Doku Gardner, MS, Administrator
Leonard Izzo, MS, RS, CHO, Director
Cheryl Lefman, MA, Community Health Coordinator
Ann Marie McCauley, RN, Public Health Nurse Supervisor
Joyce Saret, LICSW, Senior Community Social Worker
Vivian Zeng, REHS, RS, CP-FS, Senior Environmental Health Specialist

In attendance:

Shira Doron, MD, Resident
Beth Sullivan Woods, Member, Select Board

The Board of Health approved the minutes of February 1, 2021.

1. Community Health
 - a) COVID-19 Update

Ann Marie McCauley provided a COVID-19 update. Cases from Babson College, as well as the general community continue to be reported. Ms. McCauley and the nurses are sending some cases to the Contact Tracing Collaborative, as well conducting in-house contact tracing. Leonard Izzo noted that Babson College may request support from the Health Department as regards mitigation and contract tracing.

Ms. McCauley cited the need for messaging to the community, urging them to stay home and watch the Super Bowl with their immediate household members, or COVID pod; they should not host parties.

b) COVID-19 – Masks

Dr. Shira Doron reported that the subject of whether one should wear a double mask has been in the media. She said it is unrealistic for everyone to wear N-95 masks and it is irresponsible to advocate for that, as medical grade masks are needed for hospital staff and other healthcare professionals. Her recommendation to the public is to don a cloth mask with two-three layers, one that fits well over the nose and mouth.

c) COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

Shepard Cohen reported on his conversation with Dr. Jodi Larson and Dr. Jonathan Snider from Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH). NWH in partnership with Massachusetts General Brigham (MGB) has opened a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at TripAdvisor Headquarters in Needham. This site is designated for those eligible patients in the MGB healthcare system. NWH/MGB are reaching out to eligible patients in their system to schedule appointments. Dr. Snider, medical director of the site, reported that all is going well thus far.

Dr. Doron reported Tufts Medical Center (TMC) is operating a similar type of clinic operation for eligible patients in the TMC system. Currently, their clinics are running in the Atrium of their building, as well as at the nearby Red Cross building, but they will consolidate their clinic locations to the Marriott Hotel across the street from the medical center.

Dr. Doron said if Johnson and Johnson receive emergency authorization approval for its single dose vaccine, it will be a gamechanger. The vaccine may not require a 30-minute observation period and may be more feasible for use with those that are homebound.

Leonard Izzo reported on the complexities of requesting and receiving vaccine allocations for local health departments. After allocated second doses for first responders/front-line workers have been administered, Mr. Izzo hopes to receive weekly allocations of up to 100 doses of vaccine for clinics for eligible groups.

Mr. Izzo reported on an upcoming clinic for those 75+ in Needham. Needham Health Department received a surplus of allocation and have offered 20 doses to each community in the regional emergency preparedness coalition Norfolk County 8/NC8 (Wellesley is part of NC8). Doses are to be administered (at the Needham clinic) to those identified as being 75+ and high-risk. Mr. Izzo will consult with Council on Aging (COA) Director Heather Munroe to identify those high-risk, 75+ individuals.

Leonard Izzo provided an update on the collaboration between COA, Health and the Town's Communication and Project Manager, Stephanie Hawkinson, to help seniors 75+ navigate the State's complicated system to obtain appointments. The call center at the COA, staffed by volunteers, as well as staff to help seniors make appointments for vaccination, has been a great success. Cheryl Lefman said there are now approximately 60 volunteers that have been on-boarded and trained to assist seniors. Thus far, volunteers have been successful in scheduling appointments for 52 residents 75+. In addition, they have assisted family members and residents themselves. Mr. Izzo requested that COA maintain a list of home-bound residents, or those otherwise needing assistance to obtain a vaccination. Mr. Izzo reported the State will provide guidance about home bound individuals. They are still exploring options for transportation, as this has been identified as a barrier for some seniors.

The collaborative group will provide educational resources to help seniors understand what to expect before and after receiving their vaccination. There may be products available (shelf-stable food, drinks, thermometer, etc.) for those living by themselves or those that may not have access to items should they feel unwell after their vaccination. There may also be a suggestion that couples (or others 75+ living in the same home) schedule their vaccinations on different days in case the person who has obtained a vaccination experiences a reaction and feels unwell.

Shepard Cohen reported he contacted the COA director on behalf of his Temple. They are considering hosting a similar call center/resource line to assist congregants, especially those who do not reside in Wellesley and cannot avail themselves of the COA call center. The COA director agreed to allow temple volunteers to attend the training offered to COA volunteers. Mr. Cohen stated Wellesley is far ahead of neighboring communities in offering this type of assistance.

Leonard Izzo reported the Health Department is not maintaining a list of residents wishing to obtain a vaccination at a local clinic. Mr. Izzo detailed why this is not a viable option for the Health Department. Mr. Izzo said the PrepMod system has a waiting list feature, and there are many questions that haven't yet been answered about its functionality.

d) COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics – Age Restricted, Low Income, Congregate Housing

Leonard Izzo reported on his conversations with Wellesley Housing Authority (WHA) Director Sean Barnacle and WHA Board Chair Maura Renzella about a State program to offer age-restricted clinics to those in low income, senior housing. Housing authorities may partner with a healthcare facility or their local health department to offer clinics. Mr. Izzo relayed willingness of the Health Department to partner with them. Mr. Izzo noted the request must be brought forth from both the WHA and Health Department and signed by WHA. It will go into effect when those 65+ become eligible, possibly by the end of February or more likely in March. Mr. Izzo said corresponding paperwork to partner with WHA was released and will be completed. Proposed clinics for this population will be scheduled at Washington Street, River Street and Weston Road housing sites. Approximately 141 people will be eligible. WHA will conduct outreach to residents and schedule appointments, and the Health Department will host the clinics.

e) Social Work

Joyce Saret reported the social workers would like to offer another virtual support group to specific populations. The next target group are parents of teenagers.

Leonard Izzo and Beth Sullivan Woods reported on gift cards to local grocery stores that the town's social workers will be able to distribute to their clients in need.

2 Environmental Health

Vivian Zeng reported they are gearing up for camps and have received two requests thus far. She and other environmental health specialists, as well as nurses, must review COVID-19 policies and other plan documents.

Ms. Zeng reported she has discovered four new microblading establishments that are operating without a permit. She will reach out to them to ensure they apply for a permit and comply with corresponding plan review requisites.

3. Administration

Shepard Cohen reported he has scheduled a call with Advisory Committee liaison John Lanza tomorrow to clarify what types of the information the Advisory Committee would like presented by the Board of Health at their meeting on February 24, 2021.

This meeting was adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled on February 8, 2021, 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lefman

Community Health Coordinator