



**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Thursday, March 8, 2012**

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors (“Board”) of the Boston Public Health Commission (“Commission”) was held on Thursday, March 8, 2012 in the Hayes Conference Room at the Commission’s offices at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd floor, Boston, MA 02118

Board Members Present:

Jack Cradock
Kathleen Walsh
Celia Wcislo
Harold Cox

Board Members Absent:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair
Joseph Betancourt, MD, MPH
Ruth Ellen Fitch, JD

Also Present Were:

Barbara Ferrer, Dr. Huy Nguyen, John Townsend, Nakisha Skinner, Chuck Gagnon, David Pia, Jim Hooley, Lourdes Ordinola, David Susich, Aliza Wasserman, William Kibaja, Katinka Podmaniczky, Gerry Thomas, Leon Bethune, Damon Chaplin, Debbie Allen, PJ McCann, Lisa Conley, Rita Nieves, Danielle Seaton (Northeastern University Intern)

Visitors:

Kelli O’Brien, Mary Cullen, Julie Cadugan, Regis College; Scott Mason, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers; Ellen Hatch, City of Boston

Proceedings:

Chair’s Comments

Jack Cradock

- The meeting was called to order by Jack Cradock, Acting Chair, at 4:06 P.M.

Executive Director's Report

Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd

- Dr. Ferrer announced that Dr. Huy Nguyen, Medical Director, is going to be featured on Channel 5 at 7:30 P.M. on March 8, 2012 to talk about community health centers and the NeighborCare Initiative.
- The Commission has received official notice that it will be among the New England recipients of Ryan White funding in the amount of \$14 million. Dr. Ferrer noted this is in part thanks to Michael Goldrosen, Director of HIV/AIDS Services, and his team maintaining a high level of service.
- Dr. Ferrer expressed appreciation to Board Members Cradock, Fitch, and Walsh for their attendance at the NeighborCare Initiative event on March 6, 2012.
- Dr. Ferrer announced the hiring of a new Director of Communications, Nick Martin. Mr. Martin is currently working in the Mayor's office and will start working for the Commission in April of 2012. Dr. Ferrer expressed her thanks to Katinka Podmaniczky, Assistant Director, and the entire Communications team for their hard work throughout this transition.

Boston Public Schools ("BPS") Partnership (continued)

Leon Bethune, Director, Office of Environmental Health Division

Damon Chaplin, Health Inspector, Office of Environmental Health Division

- The Commission has inspected every school in the City of Boston for environmental issues. Mr. Chaplin introduced the Indoor Air Quality Ordinance ("Ordinance") as being the first of its kind in inspecting and monitoring a school's air quality, as well as visually inspecting the area for health hazards such as pests, mold, and leaks. Two reports are generated from the data collected, a principal report is sent to the principal of the school, and a summary report generated by the Commission.
- Board Member Wcislo asked when problems are directly addressed and fixed. Mr. Chaplin responded that this occurs throughout the process, as there is continuous communication between the Commission and BPS.
- Acting Chair Cradock asked if there are any other entities that perform inspections at BPS. Mr. Chaplin stated that several other entities do, such as the fire department or the Inspectional Services Department, however these inspections are not as comprehensive as inspections done by the Commission

FY13 State Budget Advocacy: Public Health Taxes

Lisa Conley, Director, Intergovernmental Relations

- State funds constitute for roughly 10% of the Commission's budget, an expected \$16.5 million.
- Governor Patrick has proposed the Massachusetts FY13 Budget, which includes recommendations to remove the sales tax exemption from candy and soda, increase the cigarette tax, and close the loophole that taxes "other tobacco products" differently than cigarettes. The board agreed to support the Governor's proposed budget.

FY13 Budget

John Townsend, Director, Administration and Finance

William Kibaja, Budget Director, Administration and Finance

- The FY 13 budget for the Commission is \$155,525,741. Mr. Townsend outlined the budget timeline, including plans to submit the timeline to the Mayor and return to the board at the March 29, 2012 meeting. Mr. Townsend also outlined the FY13 budget for each bureau, noting that funding for the most part has remained level.
- Dr. Ferrer discussed highlights for the FY13 budget. These highlights include the continuance of the Commission's Overarching Goals on low birth weights, obesity, and sexually transmitted infections (STI). Dr. Ferrer noted that in addition to Chlamydia, some of the focus on STI will be on lowering rates of Hepatitis C. Other highlights include support for the healthy development of Boston's youth and residents struggling with substance abuse or poor mental health and the integration of public health initiatives with primary care practices. Dr. Ferrer also noted that the Boston Moves for Health Initiative will launch on April 23rd, 2012.
- Efforts to support the healthy development of Boston's youth include helping with some of the costs child care providers face, such as paying for refrigerators or play equipment, and working with neighborhood restaurants to offer healthy children's meals. Board Member Walsh asked if the Commission is considering posting calorie counts in Boston restaurants. Dr. Ferrer responded that we are waiting to collaborate with State legislation on this. Additional efforts to support healthy lifestyles in Boston include the healthy workplace initiative, and the use of bounty bucks at farmers markets. Board Member Cradock noted that East Boston Health Center is currently working with Women Infants and Children through the use of vouchers at small grocery stores and restaurants. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Commission can support East Boston in this effort.
- Dr. Ferrer discussed efforts made by the Mayor's Health Line to foster an environment of informed consumers, keeping in mind residents who have low income and low literacy rates as more information becomes available online. Board Members Walsh and Wcislo noted that improvements on the Mass Health Connector website could be made to make it more consumer friendly.
- Board Member Cradock mentioned the waiver the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center has from the state that allows Emergency Medical Technicians to bring patients to health centers. Dr. Ferrer noted it would be good if the Commission could do this as well but is unable to. Board Member Walsh suggested the going to the State to request a waiver for specific conditions in which having this ability would make sense.
- Dr. Ferrer discussed pilot work with accountable care organizations (ACO). The Commission will be meeting with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ACO to discuss the possibility of creating a more integrated model. Board Member Walsh expressed an interest in hearing more about this regardless of whether ACO are involved.
- Board Member Walsh asked if any line items in the budget are "soft". Mr. Townsend responded that the Commission does have some risk associated with several line items. Mr. Kibaja added that grant numbers represent amounts that the Commission will most likely receive.
- Board Member Wcislo asked why the pension amount has increased. Dr. Ferrer responded that the city holds the Commission harmless for pension increases for employees on the city budget, however this does not cover grant funded employees. Because of this, when pension costs go up the Commission has to re-negotiate federal and direct rates. Mr. Kibaja added that while health insurance costs have decreased, it does not completely cover pension costs for grant funded employees. Dr.

Ferrer noted that all Commission employees are city workers even though the city doesn't fund grant positions.

- Board Member Wcislo noted the increase of full time employees in the Child, Adolescent, and Family Health Bureau. Mr. Kibaja stated that these were employees who needed to be relocated due to the end of grant funding. Dr. Ferrer added that a loss of grant funding does not necessarily mean that a grant-funded employee will lose his or her job.
- Mr. Townsend outlined challenges and strategies for FY13. Challenges included a loss of federal and state funding and strategies included plans to apply for more grants and perform a cost benefit analysis.
- Mr. Townsend discussed the Boston Medical Center Assistance Grant ("Grant"). The Grant began as a transfer of funds from Boston City Hospitals to the Boston Medical Center ("BMC") to cover costs of the \$162 million in bond payments for improvements on the BMC campus. The bonds were transferred to the Commission. The city has been including money in the Commission's budget, which was then passed to BMC, who used it to pay rent to the Commission. The Commission then used these funds to make the bond payments. The City of Boston will take over the bond obligation from the Commission, and make a \$10 million payment. This will not result in a loss of program funding.

VOTE

- The board voted in favor of the Refunding of City of Boston Special Obligation Refunding Bonds Boston City Hospital Issue.

The votes were as follows: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent.

VOTE

- The board voted to approve the FY13 Budget for submission to the Mayor of the City of Boston.

The votes were as follows: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:09 P.M.

Submitted By:

Jamie L. Martin, Secretary