

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 2, 2008

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair
Ruth Ellen Fitch, Jack Cradock, Harold Cox

Board Members Absent:

Hortensia Amaro, PhD., Vice Chair
Elaine Ullian, Celia Wcislo

Administration & Staff Present:

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed,
John Townsend, Maia BrodyField,
Nancy Norman, MD, MPH, Rita Nieves,
Mark Campbell, Kate Sullivan, Jim
Montgomery, Erin Christiansen, Margaret
Reid, Christine Hayes, Jim Hooley, Pam
Jones, Steven Belec, Fatema Fazendeiro,
Dan Dooley, Dianne Cavaleri, Ann Scales,
Nakisha Skinner, Nicole Charon Schmitt,
Snehal Shah, Maddie Ribble, Roger Swartz,
Gerry Thomas, Thomas Ryan, Anh
Bungcayao, Julie Webster, Chuck Gagnon

Guests:

Ellen Hatch, Lindsay Weinstein

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM on Thursday, October 2, 2008.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair invited a motion to accept the September minutes. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Executive Director's Report – Barbara Ferrer

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, spoke regarding the issue of trans fat and reported that the City of Boston is now a trans fat free city. Dr. Ferrer said that 600 inspections were done and that ten (10) probable violations were sent to the Commission. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Inspectional Services Department is informing the restaurant owners what they need to do in order to come into compliance with the regulation. Dr. Ferrer commended the Commission staff and thanked the Inspectional Services Department for their hard work.

Dr. Ferrer announced that the Public Hearing regarding the proposed tobacco control regulation will be held on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 at 35 Northampton Street in the Carter Auditorium. Dr. Ferrer stated that in order to accommodate Yom Kipper there would be two sessions, one from 10-11 AM and the other from 5-7 PM. Dr. Ferrer said that she would serve as the hearing officer and that Attorney Fatema Fazendeiro would give a summary of the testimony to the Board at the next board meeting.

Dr. Ferrer commented on the impact of the national financial crisis on the Commission as an institution. Dr. Ferrer informed the Board that the Commission is working with the City on a banking strategy in order to limit financial risk. Dr. Ferrer stated that, generally, revenue in the City is down.

Dr. Ferrer also spoke regarding the hiring freeze and said that programs have been asked to adhere to 3 restrictions:

- Hiring freeze on non-essential personnel;
- All out of state travel not required by grants;
- Reduce spending on materials and food not directly linked to client services.

Dr. Ferrer lastly spoke regarding the budget and said that the Commission is adjusting the budget process. FY09 budgets are to be justified by projects to get a sense of what services are essential. The Commission will no longer be rolling over budgets and will be preserving what is essential.

Dr. Johnson asked that the Board revisit the financial situation at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Nancy Norman, MD, MPH announced the resignation of Richard Stevens, Director of the AIDS program. Dr. Norman stated that Mr. Stevens is retiring due to medical reasons.

Board member Cox suggested that a note of thanks be sent out to Mr. Stevens from the Board. The Board agreed.

Substance Abuse Mortality & Response – Dan Dooley

Dan Dooley of the Research Office gave a brief presentation on substance abuse mortality. Mr. Dooley stated that there was a 72% increase in 2006 which resulted in 84-137 drug deaths among ages 35-54. Drug abuse deaths have also increased in males and whites. Mr. Dooley said that some neighborhoods have more elevated rates of deaths: South Boston, Charlestown and South End, with the South End (which includes many shelters) experiencing the highest rate. Mr. Dooley reported that most of the deaths were due to accidental and intentional poisonings.

Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment – Rita Nieves

Rita Nieves, Director, Substance Abuse Services Bureau, spoke about new substance abuse prevention and treatment initiatives. Ms. Nieves said that the substance abuse bureau is tremendously active in prevention and treatment activities for individuals and families struggling with substance abuse issues.

Ms. Nieves reported on new specialized substance abuse services and gave a list of the new services:

- Implementation of MORE program, Intensive Outpatient Treatment for women;
- Implementation of new consortium of services for PPW women and their families;
- Implementation of men's health and recovery program.

Ms. Nieves said that in order to continue to support community mobilization around substance abuse prevention, the Commission has obtained state funding that will allow the Commission to enhance and expand ongoing substance abuse prevention efforts within the city neighborhoods.

Dr. Ferrer said lots of credit goes to Ms. Nieves and the team for months of hard work and research and for strategically looking at ways to provide essential services.

Dr. Ferrer introduced Mark Campbell who is the new Chief Information Officer to the Commission and stated that Mr. Campbell is doing a tremendous job. Dr. Ferrer said that Mr. Campbell is well qualified and joins the Senior Leadership Team.

EMS Update – Jim Hooley

Jim Hooley, Director of Operations, Boston EMS, spoke regarding the analysis of emergency medical service expansion and its effects and stated that the Mayor has approved expansion of EMS's FTE to 389. Mr. Hooley said that between July of 2007 and July of 2008 the service went from 275 to 330 total FTE's. All EMT, paramedic and lieutenant staffing have increased.

Mr. Hooley listed the limiting factors and said it would be a long process. The limiting factors are as follows:

- Additional Units;
- Deciding what shift to deploy added units;
- Determining where to deploy added units.

Mr. Hooley spoke regarding the cuts and said that this fiscal year EMS saw a reduction in the free care funding and a cut of \$850,000 from the city budget.

Mr. Hooley spoke on the budget for Boston EMS and said that city and state subsidies are down and transport revenue is up. There is a need for a system wide increase in units on the street, uniformed personnel and a decrease in overtime.

Dr. Johnson asked if the Narcan program falls under Boston EMS. Mr. Hooley replied, yes, under the Needle Exchange Program. Mr. Hooley said that all EMT's carry Narcan and that BLS can also carry Narcan.

Proposed Regulation to Window Falls Prevention – Erin Christiansen

Erin Christiansen, Director, Childhood Injury Prevention, gave a brief presentation on childhood injury due to window falls. Ms. Christiansen said that the childhood injury prevention program was established in 1986 to help reduce the risk to children of window falls through education, technology and legislation.

Ms. Christiansen stated that window falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries to children and that each year approximately 103 children die from fall-related injuries. Ms. Christiansen spoke regarding the Kids Can't Fly program structure and said it is a public education campaign and the program structure offers window guard recommendation/advocacy, access to low-cost guards, technical assistance and home visits.

Ms. Christiansen stated that 500 window guards have been purchased through Kids Can't Fly and were distributed through partnerships with health centers, community organizations, property owners and retailers.

Ms. Christiansen stated that a regulation which requires installation in homes with children 10 and under would serve to further reduce morbidity and mortality among young children.

Dr. Ferrer commented that the Mayor asked if there was a way to strengthen requirements for landlords to provide window guards and whether or not the cost to the landlords could be subsidized. The Commission is prepared to look at the issue. The Commission is also looking at suggestions for ways to tighten up regulations and to solicit partner participation.

Dr. Ferrer informed the Board that we will report back before the spring.

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.