

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Regular Meeting Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) Auditorium August 12, 2019

BOH Members Present: President Gregg Thomas, Vice President Olga Bermudez, and Board Members Jorge DeSantiago and McKenzie Rieder (in at 5:38 p.m.). Absent: Board Member Morgan McMillan.

Staff Members Present: Director of Health Divisions Heath Harmon; Director of Strategic Initiatives Susan Motika; Immunization Program Coordinator Teresa Luker; and Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden.

Meeting Called to Order.

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

ITEM 1. Public Comments (on unscheduled agenda items).

None.

ITEM 2. Consent Agenda.

The consent agenda included the following items:

- A. *Approval of July 22, 2019, Regular Board of Health Meeting Minutes.*
- B. *Approval of June-July Financial Reports.*

Board Member DeSantiago made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President Bermudez, to approve the consent agenda, as presented. With all board members present voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion approved. Absent: Board Members McMillan and Rieder.

ITEM 3. Approval of Resolution 2019-04, Recognizing August 2019 as National Immunization Awareness Month.

Director of Health Divisions Heath Harmon introduced Immunization Program Coordinator Teresa Luker, who presented Resolution 2019-04, designating August 2019 as National Immunization Awareness Month in Boulder County.

Ms. Luker said Colorado lagged the rest of the country in immunization rates – including the mumps, measles, and rubella (MMR) vaccine – making the state susceptible for a measles outbreak. She stressed the importance of “herd immunity,” wherein a high percentage of the population is appropriately vaccinated to protect vulnerable populations, including infants, seniors, immunocompromised, and ill patients (e.g. cancer patients), from contracting vaccine-preventable diseases. Herd immunity is roughly 95%; however, the MMR immunization rate for Boulder County kindergartners isn’t even 82%.

Ms. Luker said measles was officially declared eliminated in the United States in the year 2000, but the country is currently experiencing a measles outbreak, with more than 1,000 measles cases being reported since the beginning of the year.

In preparation for a potential measles outbreak in Boulder County, Ms. Luker said BCPH was working with Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) and St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD) to ensure that student immunization records are current and accurate. BVSD will be sending a letter to parents stating that students with outdated vaccinations or exemptions will be excluded from school at the end of November. Most likely because of that upcoming deadline, Ms. Luker said BCPH's weekly immunization clinics have experienced a noticeable increase in number of visits. She announced that the Immunization Program will be expanding evening hours for the Boulder immunization clinic to accommodate working parents; late clinics are already available at the Longmont immunization clinic.

Ms. Luker said BCPH was working with the Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition (CCIC) to pilot fact sheets that are specific to individual schools. The fact sheets will include the number of vaccinated children and the number of those at risk for infection to help school officials visualize the potential impact of an outbreak at their schools. She noted that school principals paid more attention when presented with data that demonstrated the potential impact that an outbreak would have on their schools. She said actual numbers also stress the importance and relevance of retaining students in school since high absenteeism levels can affect the level of funding schools receive from the State. Ms. Luker said she also presented vaccine information to the school officials in terms of "emergency response," which also helped to reiterate the importance of immunizations.

Board Member Rieder said she attended the recent measles tabletop exercise and learned that schools weren't required to provide education to children missing school due to personal exemptions, but they were for children who had medical exemptions. She said the importance of school employees being immunized was also emphasized at the exercise.

President Thomas asked if staff knew why parents were hesitant to immunize their children. Ms. Luker said parents in more educated communities, such as Boulder, often rely on the vaccination information they find on the internet, which is often inaccurate. She said affluent parents were also more readily able to remain home with their sick children than lower socio-economic parents who can't miss work. She said if a child in Boulder County becomes infected with measles, they'll need to be kept from school for 21 days, which isn't feasible for most working parents. Board Member DeSantiago asked about vaccination statistics for Boulder County Latino families. Ms. Luker said she didn't have actual numbers for that but said Latino parents were generally better about getting their children vaccinated.

Ms. Luker said the country was also battling a hepatitis A outbreak that originated in southern California and mainly affecting homeless and incarcerated populations. She said Boulder County began mitigation efforts in 2017 to prepare for a potential hepatitis A outbreak in Colorado. Staff is collaborating with community agencies that serve these vulnerable populations (e.g. Boulder County Jail, homeless shelters, etc.) to conduct hepatitis A vaccination clinics.

Director of Health Divisions Harmon said policy can impact immunization rates, so staff was working proactively on mechanisms that could improve immunization rates in Boulder County, such as strengthening partnerships with the two local school districts.

Board Member Rieder made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member DeSantiago, to approve Resolution 2019-04, Designating August 2019 as “National Immunization Awareness Month” in Boulder County. With all board members present voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion approved. Absent: Board Member McMillan.

ITEM 4. Recognizing Outgoing Board of Health (BOH) Member Olga Bermudez and Electing Interim BOH Vice President.

President Thomas thanked Vice President Olga Bermudez, who was attending her last Board of Health meeting. Her current term expires August 31, 2019, and President Thomas said she had decided not to apply for a second and final term. President Thomas thanked Vice President Bermudez for her service and said he appreciated the valuable perspectives that she shared with the board. He said Vice President Bermudez was very inquisitive and asked important questions that helped to ensure the board considered a variety of factors when making decisions. He also noted her excellent attendance record.

Vice President Bermudez thanked President Thomas and said she learned a great deal about public health while serving as a member of the Board of Health. She commended staff and her fellow board members for doing “fantastic work” and said it was an honor to serve on the board.

Director of Health Divisions Harmon said he appreciated Vice President Bermudez’s commitment to the agency and the Boulder County community. He said Public Health Director Jeff Zayach could not attend the meeting but wanted to convey his appreciation and best wishes to Vice President Bermudez. He said staff appreciated Vice President Bermudez’s passion and support for children, youth, and families, especially those in the Longmont community where Ms. Bermudez worked as a bilingual counselor for the City of Longmont Children, Youth, and Families Department. He said her leadership and support for health equity were extremely valuable to BCPH.

Director of Strategic Initiatives Susan Motika echoed Mr. Harmon’s sentiments and said she appreciated Vice President Bermudez’s flexibility, responsiveness, and willingness to learn about and impact public health, which included her participation during the recent Public Health Improvement Process (PHIP).

President Thomas read a letter of appreciation for Vice President Bermudez into the record and presented her with a farewell gift on behalf of the agency.

President Thomas asked for nominations for an interim Board of Health vice president to replace Ms. Bermudez until the regular BOH officer election is held in October. ***Board Member Rieder nominated Board Member DeSantiago to serve as interim Board of Health Vice President until the October 2019 Board of Health meeting. With all board members present voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion approved. Absent: Board Member McMillan.***

ITEM 5. Director’s Report.

New Health Equity Coordinator: Director of Strategic Initiatives Motika announced that Sheila Davis, M.D., was recently hired as the agency’s new health equity coordinator and begins later in August.

Vaping: Director of Health Divisions Harmon said the City of Boulder will be conducting public hearings on proposed tobacco ordinances that included vaping restrictions and restricted access by youth. He said staff will provide an update at the next Board of Health meeting.

Policy Discussion: Director of Strategic Initiatives Motika said she and Environmental Health Division Manager Joe Malinowski will schedule a policy discussion at an upcoming Board of Health meeting. She said there will be many opportunities for BCPH and the Board to comment on proposed policies at the state and federal levels. Vice President Bermudez said one example was staff's involvement in the City of Longmont's discussions about a proposed ordinance on the availability of sugar-sweetened beverages on children's menus in Longmont, which is similar to the ordinance adopted by the City of Lafayette with staff's guidance.

Food Safety: President Thomas asked about the discussions being conducted with food safety focus groups in Boulder County and other surrounding counties that may impact restaurant policies. Director of Health Divisions Harmon said staff would provide an update to the board but noted that Boulder County typically had stronger community response than surrounding counties with regard to food safety.

ITEM 6. Old & New Business and Announcements.

BOH Bylaws: President Thomas asked if the Boulder County Commissioners expressed any concerns or restrictions regarding a suggested revision to the Board of Health Bylaws that would allow board members to participate remotely if a quorum was in jeopardy. Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden said there wasn't such a restriction or objection from Boulder County, provided that remote participation was done infrequently and mainly on an as-needed basis. She said a proposed revision to the Board of Health bylaws to allow for remote participation would be scheduled for an upcoming Board of Health meeting.

ITEM 7. Adjournment.

There being nothing further to discuss, President Thomas declared the meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.



Gregg Thomas, President



Jeffrey J. Zayach, Public Health Director