

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Emergency Board Meeting Online & Teleconference May 2, 2020

BOH Members Present: President Gregg Thomas; Vice President Jorge DeSantiago; and Board Members McKenzie Rieder and Landrey Fagan, M.D. Absent: Board Member Morgan McMillan.

Staff Members Present: Public Health Director Jeff Zayach; Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) Medical Officer Chris Urbina, M.D.; Communicable Disease Control/Emergency Preparedness Division Manager Indira Gujral; Health Equity Coordinator (and Public Health COVID-19 Testing Branch Director) Sheila Davis, M.D.; and Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden.

Boulder County: Assistant County Attorney/BOH Legal Counsel Trina Ruhland.

Public: None.

Meeting Called to Order.

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 2:17 p.m. and asked all participants to identify themselves for the record (see above). He declared a quorum was present and stated this was an emergency Boulder County Board of Health meeting scheduled at the discretion of Public Health Director Jeff Zayach. Notice of the meeting was posted on the Board of Health website, as required by law, and included login information for the public to participate. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the need for social distancing, and a local public health order in place, President Thomas said the meeting was being conducted online and telephonically, as allowed by the board's bylaws.

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach thanked the board members and staff for attending. He gave an update on the current COVID-19 pandemic and said the number of positive cases in Boulder County continued to increase, but hospitalizations had stabilized. COVID-19 testing conducted in Boulder County and statewide also had increased, and Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) was working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Clinica Family Health, and other community and public health partners to increase the availability of community testing. Mr. Zayach said the number of epidemiology staffing for conducting testing and contact tracing was being bolstered too.

Mr. Zayach said Boulder County would start transitioning from the current stay-at-home order to the new "safer-at-home" phase beginning May 9. He said Boulder County was currently at 70-75% social distancing, and as the county moved to safer-at-home, the percentage would be more like 60-65%.

Mr. Zayach emphasized the need for everyone to continue practicing six-foot social distancing during the safer-at-home phase to prevent a surge in cases that could potentially overwhelm the local health care system and hospitals. He said staff was collaborating with community partners and local businesses to develop and implement specific guidelines for a successful transition to safer-at-home.

Mr. Zayach said he was seeking Board of Health support and approval of a facial covering public health order in Boulder County to complement current social distancing requirements. The effective dates of the masking order would be May 8-26 in alignment with the county's move to the safer-at-home phase. The new order would require everyone over 12 years of age in Boulder County to wear facial coverings anytime 6-foot social distancing was not possible. Mr. Zayach said it was a proven fact that COVID-19 was able to spread asymptotically (i.e. infected people spreading the virus without having symptoms). Mr. Zayach said cloth masks were effective in reducing the spread of large droplets of infection, as he stressed the need to save N95 masks for first responders and health care workers because those masks were in short supply throughout the state and country.

Mr. Zayach said he was very aware that many people in the community didn't support the masking order, especially since masking wasn't a consistent requirement throughout the metro area. Mr. Zayach said he had decided to proceed with a facial covering order in Boulder County to prevent overwhelming the local health care system and hospitals with the county beginning to relax stay-at-home requirements. He said the focus was educating people about the importance of the order, not enforcement unless there are egregious violations. Some local municipalities asked BCPH to adopt a countywide facial covering order, and he said the City of Boulder already adopted a citywide masking order. Mr. Zayach said local public health agencies would evaluate the effectiveness of facial coverings at the end of the month to determine differences between cities/counties requiring masking and those that did not.

Assistant County Attorney Trina Ruhland said State Statutes provided for public health authority and adoption of public health orders and reiterated that Boulder County would first push for education. She did say the county had authority to impose fines or jail time via summons from local law enforcement, which had the discretion to issue summonses for blatant disregard of the public health order.

The State of Colorado supported the Colorado Mask Project, which was working to link Coloradans with masks; provide instructions for DIY masks; and share masking information, resources, and partners. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also provided information about masking.

Mr. Zayach reiterated the importance of social distancing since the virus can't spread if people aren't in close proximity to each other. He said masking was a valuable tool, especially when used in conjunction with proper hand washing, social distancing, and disinfecting of surfaces.

Mr. Zayach said some treatment options being identified showed promise, but until there was widespread availability of testing or a vaccine, people would need to diligently continue practicing adequate social distancing, wearing face coverings, properly handwashing and sanitizing surfaces, as well as not touching their faces unless their hands were clean.

Mr. Zayach reviewed the proposed public health order and answered questions of the board. He emphasized that anyone whose health would be compromised if wearing a mask should avoid doing so, as should children under the age of three years due to the risk of suffocation. He said anyone with underlying health conditions should also stay at home to the greatest extent possible.

Board Member Fagan made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President DeSantiago, to approve the facial covering public health order being recommended by Public Health Director Jeff Zayach for Boulder County effective May 9-26. With all members present voting aye, President Thomas declared the motion approved. Absent: Board Member McMillan.

Mr. Zayach thanked the board for its support and said staff would present another update at the next Board of Health meeting, which was tentatively scheduled for May 21, 2020.

ITEM 6. Adjournment.

There being nothing further to discuss, President Thomas declared the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.



Gregg Thomas, President



Jeffrey J. Zayach, Public Health Director