

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Regular Meeting Online/Telephonic Meeting May 21, 2020

BOH Members: President Gregg Thomas; Vice President Jorge DeSantiago; and Board Members McKenzie Rieder (arrived at 5:24 p.m.); Morgan McMillan; and Landrey Fagan, M.D.

BCPH Staff: Public Health Director/Public Health (PH) Policy Group Jeff Zayach; Boulder County Medical Officer Chris Urbina, M.D.; Director of Administrative Services/PH Incident Commander (IC) Megan Hatten; Director of Strategic Initiatives/PH Policy Group Susan Motika; Communicable Disease and Emergency Preparedness Division Manager Indira Gujral, Ph.D.; Consumer Protection Program Coordinator/Office of Emergency Management Liaison Lane Drager; Family Health Division Manager/PH Hospital Surge Liaison/Boulder County Recovery Team Member Andrea Pruetz; Health Equity Coordinator/PH Testing Branch Director Sheila Davis, M.D.; Health Planner Megan Noel; and Business Operations Manager/PH Situation Unit Leader Tammy Golden.

Boulder County: Assistant County Attorneys/BOH Legal Counsel Kate Haywood and Trina Ruhland.

Meeting Called to Order.

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and asked all participants to identify themselves for the record (see above). He declared a quorum was present and said the meeting was 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.

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

None.

ITEM 2. Consent Agenda.

The consent agenda included the following items:

- A. *Approval of February 10, 2020, Regular Board of Health Meeting Minutes.*
- B. *Approval of April 13, 2020, Regular Board of Health Meeting Minutes.*
- C. *Approval of May 2, 2020, Emergency Board of Health Meeting Minutes.*

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

ITEM 3. Update on COVID-19 Pandemic.

A. Latest Data and Projected Forecast.

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach said the Board of Health adopted a facial covering public health order (#2020-02) on May 2, 2020, that was set to expire on May 26. Mr. Zayach commended the efforts of the community to heed the safer-at-home order and abide by the masking order, which has helped to "bend

the curve” and protect the local health care system/hospitals from a surge of COVID-19 cases.

Mr. Zayach said as Colorado and Boulder County begin lifting safer-at-home restrictions and allowing more businesses to reopen, it will be important for everyone to continue wearing facial coverings when six-foot social distancing could not be maintained. He said these precautions will be necessary until there is appropriate treatment and a vaccine becomes available. Mr. Zayach said people in Boulder County, for the most part, have been adhering to social distancing and masking requirements; however, there have been some challenges, including recent overcrowding along the banks of Boulder Creek prompting the City of Boulder to close the creek banks to the public.

Mr. Zayach said testing has increased throughout the county, but more – including increased community testing – was needed. He said Boulder County has implemented a new testing plan and placed an order for additional tests from the State of Colorado. When considering the five-day average for new cases, Mr. Zayach said it seemed as though the peak occurred about May 1, and the number of hospitalizations due to COVID-19 has continued to decline. BCPH worked with the local hospitals and other state and local public health professionals to develop a hospitalization early warning system that will prevent a surge and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. Increased testing will identify more cases. Enhanced testing and monitoring capacity will be required for isolation, quarantine, and contact tracing.

B. Assessment of Social Distancing and Current Masking Order.

Consumer Protection Program Coordinator/Office of Emergency Management Liaison Lane Drager said he was serving as lead liaison for a variety of businesses and community partners, and Kelli Hintch was serving as the deputy lead liaison.

Mr. Drager said the incident command structure includes several liaisons working with a variety of community sectors, including education, early childhood education, businesses/events, and the local call center. The liaisons provide guidance, resources, checklists, and webinars to the community partners; process their requests; and answer questions to help them understand and abide by local public health orders. He said educational webinars are offered in both English and Spanish. As necessary, the liaisons work with the County Attorney’s Office on enforcement issues and to draft closure or cease-and-desist orders. Mr. Drager said the relationships being formed with community members will serve as a good model for future collaborations.

Health Planner Megan Noel said she recently conducted an online masking survey and also did onsite observations to determine masking compliance within local communities. Onsite observations were done as people entered stores to view compliance with the local masking order with the following results:

- *Boulder*: 100% compliance
- *Longmont*: 85% average compliance
- *Lafayette*: 98-100% compliance
- *Louisville/Superior*: 73% compliance at 1 store and 100% at another

Ms. Noel said the parking lots and some stores were pretty crowded, sometimes making it difficult to maintain six-foot social distancing even with social distancing controls in place (e.g. signs posted in the stores, markers on the floor spaced six feet apart, etc.). She said she noted more facial coverings than social distancing.

Assistant County Attorney Kate Haywood reported local law enforcement feedback on public health order compliance in the following communities:

- *Nederland*: Stark difference between locals and visitors, with locals being 90-95% compliant and visitors 20% compliant at best.
- *University of Colorado (CU)*: Adults (75%) were much more compliant than students, and compliance was dramatically less noticeable in The Hill area (10-15%).
- *Lafayette*: 80% of residents wore face coverings, and 75% observed social distancing (the percentage dropped to 55% inside stores).
- *Louisville*: 90% wore facial coverings, and 85% observed social distancing.
- *Boulder County (as reported by the Sheriff's Office)*: 75-90% wore masks, but there was less social distancing compliance.
- *Erie*: 90-98% masking inside businesses and 50% social distancing, which wasn't as high as other communities. There was also a noted difference in compliance between the areas of Erie within Boulder County vs. Weld County (i.e. Erie is located in both counties).
- *Boulder*: 85-90% wore masks inside stores (Boulder also has a local masking ordinance), and about 70% observed social distancing.

Ms. Noel said she was happy to see more people were now wearing masks than when she conducted an earlier in-store masking survey. She agreed with Mr. Drager that a combination of facial coverings and social distancing was needed to protect people from infection as the community starts reopening and more restrictions are relaxed.

Director of Strategic Initiatives Susan Motika said masking research has evolved with the advent of COVID-19. Earlier research was mixed, and some was potentially negative, but recent articles indicate that the widespread wearing of masks, in combination with other public health measures (i.e. social distancing, washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes), has been effective in reducing community transmission of COVID-19. She said masking helps to reduce or prevent larger infected droplets in the air. She said there has been more universal acceptance and adoption of facial coverings throughout the U.S., although the majority of people routinely wear masks in other countries, especially in Asia. She said the continued use of masks will help to protect the local health care system and vulnerable populations by reducing transmission of the virus.

Medical Officer Chis Urbina, M.D., added he wasn't aware of any evidence indicating that mask wearing caused major health problems. He said the belief that masks trapped carbon monoxide and deprived wearers from oxygen was unfounded. He emphasized that mask wearing was one component of the complete suite of recommendations, which includes frequently washing hands and surfaces, staying home when sick, and practicing six-foot social distancing. He said communities have been shown to be more successful when all components of the disease prevention toolbox are implemented together.

Mr. Zayach said there is a lot of debate about masks, but public health orders will continue to include facial covering requirements during the pandemic. He said most public health experts agree that it will help to prevent the spread of infected droplets in the air, and 33 states currently required masks when inside businesses; 20 required masks outside when social distancing wasn't possible. Mr. Zayach also stressed the importance of practicing social distancing whenever six-foot spacing wasn't possible, thoroughly washing hands with soap and water (or using hand sanitizer), and disinfecting surfaces.

Mr. Zayach said some local municipalities asked Boulder County to extend the local masking order, which he said would likely be extended through June – or beyond – to provide protection as businesses begin reopening.

President Thomas said he visited Vietnam last year, and at least 90% of the population wore masks, not

only for protection against air pollution but to hydrate their skin. He said the wearing of masks was a cultural change that's slowing starting to gain acceptance in the U.S.

C. Recovery Efforts.

Mr. Drager said a local call center was opened so members of the public and businesses could receive current information on COVID-19 guidelines and requirements, report violations, etc. Call center hours were 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Mr. Zayach announced Boulder County offices will reopen on June 1 in limited capacity. He introduced Family Health Division Manager/PH Hospital Surge Liaison/Boulder County Recovery Team Member Andrea Pruetz, who presented the County's COVID-19 reopening plan, "Forward Together Safely." Ms. Pruetz outlined the Forward Together Safety organizational chart and recovery plan activities, which she said were in alignment with the County Commissioners' strategic priorities of Affordable Living, Equity & Justice, Climate Action, Land & Water Stewardship, and Organizational & Financial Stewardship. She said the recovery program will clearly prioritize activities related to recovery and core work in Boulder County and direct staff accordingly in help prevent confusion and burnout. She said the program will feature "Two in a Box," a staffing model for key positions that involves assigning two people in identified leadership roles and activities to ensure continuity and scalability.

Ms. Pruetz said racial equity and social equity are essential factors being considered to guide formation of Forward Together Safely. She said Health Equity Coordinator/PH Testing Branch Director Sheila Davis, M.D., was the team lead for Boulder County's Enterprise Team, which is working to ensure equitable practices are utilized in the identification and implementation of COVID-19 recovery activities.

Boulder County's Forward Together Safely will utilize the following 4-tier plan to reopen Boulder County services starting June 1 (i.e. Tier 2):

- *Tier 1:* Services and functions that must be done in person and have continued throughout COVID-19 response (e.g. fire, sheriff, life and safety, etc.).
- *Tier 2:* Services and functions that must be done in person but were delayed or significantly reduced during the onset of COVID-19 (e.g. immunization, human services, services with statutory requirements, etc.). Tier 2 services will be reinstated in some capacity on June 1.
- *Tier 3:* Services and functions that are best done in person, but in-person provision of these operations isn't required urgently, and services could continue to be provided remotely through July.
- *Tier 4:* Services and functions that may be provided remotely for an indefinite amount of time and in-person operations were only necessary on a limited basis. Ms. Pruetz said Tier 4 could also be a silver lining towards the County's climate action goals since fewer people would be commuting.

Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) was providing equity-centered, best practice guidance and expertise on up-to-date health and safety recommendations to mitigate the ongoing transmission of COVID-19. The BCPH Recovery Team members include:

- Andrea Pruetz & Megan Hatten (Team Leads)
- Sheila Davis & Vicky Borrego-Gordillo (Health & Racial Equity)
- Megan Noel, Bill Hayes, Betty Tovar (Operations)
- Alchishe (Lalo) Shash, Amelia Hulbert (Economic Vitality)
- Melinda Morris, Liza Patrick, Megan Hale (Human Services)

The board members thanked staff for the update and their work during the COVID-19 pandemic, and Mr. Zayach acknowledged and thanked the County Attorney's Office for the support of Assistant County Attorneys Trina Ruhland and Kate Haywood. They are providing legal counsel to help decipher and

clarify State public health orders, create local public health orders, develop guidance for community mitigation, and draft closure and cease-and-desist orders. Assistant County Attorney Haywood thanked the board and said the State of Colorado would soon be announcing an update to the current Safer-at-Home Order to outline restrictions after May 27 when the first Safer-at-Home was set to expire.

Mr. Zayach also acknowledged and expressed extreme gratitude for the work of Director of Administrative Services Megan Hatten, who was serving as BCPH’s COVID-19 Incident Commander.

Board Member McMillan made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member Fagan, to support Mr. Zayach’s recommendation for extension of the local facial covering public health originally set to expire on May 26, 2020, and authorizing the new expiration date to be set by Mr. Zayach. With all board members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion approved.

Mr. Zayach and staff thanked the Board of Health for its support during this pandemic crisis, and the board members expressed their appreciation to Mr. Zayach and BCPH staff for their diligence in working to control the spread of COVID-19 in Boulder County.

ITEM 4. 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