

# OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

**Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Regular Meeting**  
**Online/Telephonic Meeting**  
**January 11, 2021**

**BOH Members:** President Gregg Thomas; Vice President Jorge DeSantiago; and Board Members Morgan McMillan, Brooke Harrison, and Landrey Fagan (in at 5:40 p.m.).

**BCPH Staff:** Public Health Director Jeff Zayach; Deputy Public Health Director Lexi Nolen; Interim Director of Administration & Finance Maryel Barron; Environmental Health Division Manager Joe Malinowski; Communicable Disease & Emergency Management Division Manager Indira Gujral; Emergency Management Coordinator Chris Campbell; Health Equity Coordinator Sheila Davis; Health Planning & Evaluation Manager Kelli Hintch; Air Quality Program Coordinator Bill Hayes, Medical Officer Chris Urbina; Administrative Assistant Rita Mangeyn; and Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden.

**Boulder County Staff:** Deputy County Attorney Trina Ruhland; Senior Assistant County Attorney Kate Haywood; County Administrator Jana Petersen; Policy Analyst Mark Ruzzin; and Director of Sustainability, Climate Action, & Resilience Susie Strife.

## **Meeting Called to Order.**

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and asked all participants to identify themselves for the record (see above). He declared that a quorum was present, that notice of the meeting was posted on the Board of Health website, and that call-in information was included to allow for public participation. Due to COVID-19, President Thomas said the meeting was being conducted virtually.

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

None.

## **ITEM 2. Approval of December 14, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes.**

***Board Member McMillan made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President DeSantiago, to approve the December 14, 2020, Board of Health minutes, as presented. With all members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.***

## **ITEM 3. Approval of Transition of Boulder County Public Health Positions to Boulder County Policy Team and Office of Sustainability, Climate Action, and Resilience (OSCAR).**

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach said Boulder County Public Health's (BCPH) Air Quality Program worked closely with Boulder County's Policy Team and now also worked closely with the County's new Office of Sustainability, Climate Action, and Resilience (OSCAR). BCPH staff support and advance statewide policies and strategies that address local, state, and national climate priorities. Mr. Zayach said staff was requesting approval to transition Air Quality Air/Climate Team Lead Collin Tomb to OSCAR and Air & Climate Policy Specialist Cindy Copeland to the County's Policy Team.

Mr. Zayach and Environmental Health Division Manager Joe Malinowski said the proposed staff moves would further integrate and streamline air quality work in Boulder County. It would help to support and advance BCPH's newest Strategic Plan priority, climate action. Mr. Zayach said policy work required close collaboration with the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and other local governments and

public health departments, and demand for that type of collaboration was increasing significantly. The Air Quality Program staff provide key testimony at State legislative and commission meetings and provide oversight and collaboration to build and support statewide air quality policy groups, advance air quality policies, and collaborate with stakeholders to advance air quality work across the state.

Mr. Joe Malinowski introduced BCPH Air Quality Program Coordinator Bill Hayes; Director of Sustainability, Climate Action, & Resilience Susie Strife; and County Policy Analyst Mark Ruzzin and said they were available to answer questions from the Board.

President Thomas asked if any air quality work would remain at BCPH. Mr. Hayes said BCPH would continue to maintain air monitoring equipment and collect and share air quality data with the State. He said BCPH would also retain the Radon Program and continue to supervise the oil and gas inspector.

Director of Sustainability, Climate Action, & Resilience Susie Strife said she looked forward to having a more active role in supporting and enhancing air quality policy, quality, climate, and health work in the county. County Policy Analyst Mark Ruzzin agreed and said the changes would further enrich air quality work already being done locally and statewide.

***Board Member McMillan made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President DeSantiago, to approve the following staff transitions, as recommended by staff:***

- 1. Transfer the current Air and Climate Policy Analyst (EH 2) position from BCPH to the BOCC and provide adequate compensation.***
- 2. Transfer the current Air and Climate Team Lead (EH 5) position from BCPH to OSCAR and provide adequate compensation, with the position continuing to work halftime for BCPH for the next six months.***
- 3. Create a new County-funded BCPH 1.0 FTE (EH 2) position to continue working on public health climate change priorities.***

***With all members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.***

#### **ITEM 4. Update on Current COVID-19 Pandemic.**

##### **A. Request to Approve Public Health Order 2021-1, Renewing a Ban on Spectators at Adult, High School, Collegiate, and Professional Sporting Events in Boulder County.**

Public Health Director Jeff Zayach presented Public Health Order (PHO) 2021-1, which renewed a ban on spectators at adult, high school, collegiate, and professional sporting events in Boulder County that originated as part of PHO 2020-10-1. Mr. Zayach said PHO-2020-10-1 expired on January 4, when Governor Jared Polis moved all Colorado counties from Level Red to Level Orange on the State's COVID-19 Dial. He said while BCPH agreed with most changes stemming from the move to Level Orange, staff recommended renewing restrictions banning spectators at local adult and high school sporting events. He noted that both local school districts and the University of Colorado (CU) supported that recommendation. Deputy County Attorney Trina Ruhland said if approved, the renewed restriction would remain in effect until Boulder County was solidly in Level Orange for at least two weeks with stable or declining COVID-19 numbers.

Board Member Fagan asked if BCPH monitored local sporting organizations that traveled to out-of-state sporting events. Mr. Zayach said staff worked closely with CU and the school district athletic directors to follow protocols to keep students safe, in school, and compliant with Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) guidance. Ms. Ruhland said it would be very difficult to enforce travel bans for private and independent groups that travel out of state, although they would still be required to comply with restrictions limiting group sizes, gyms, indoor and outdoor gatherings, etc. when practicing or competing in Colorado.

Board Member Harrison asked if there has been any pushback from locals. Mr. Zayach said parents had initially voiced concern, but the ban on spectators doesn't apply to youth sports; it affects high school and adult sporting events. He reiterated that CU and both local school districts supported the ban.

***After further discussion, Board Member Landrey made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member Harrison, to approve Public Health Order 2021-1, renewing a ban on spectators at adult, high school, collegiate, and professional sporting events in Boulder County. With all members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried.***

#### **B. Update on COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution in Boulder County.**

Emergency Management Coordinator Chris Campbell gave an update on COVID-19 vaccination distribution in Boulder County. He said Colorado was working to vaccinate those identified in Phases 1A and 1B. He said 187,641 Coloradans have received one dose of vaccine so far, and 35,798 have received both doses. In Boulder County, 10,162 community members have the first dose, and 1,735 have both doses. He then reviewed the following vaccination plan that was developed by the State of Colorado:

##### **PHASE 1 – WINTER**

- **Phase 1A:** Highest-risk health care workers and individuals, including health care workers with direct contact with COVID-19 patients for 15+ minutes over a 24-hour period and all long-term care facility (LTCF) staff and residents.
  - Approximately 5,000 health care workers were still waiting to receive vaccinations.
- **Phase 1B:** Coloradans aged 70+ years; moderate-risk health care workers; frontline essential workers; and continuity of state government workers, which includes home health, hospice, dental, pharmacy, and emergency medical service (EMS) workers; first responders (e.g. police, fire); correctional workers; and employees providing funeral services.
  - About 30,000 community members aged 70+ years, roughly 11%, have been vaccinated.
  - The secondary Phase 1B group includes frontline essential workers in education, food and agriculture, manufacturing, postal services, groceries, public transit, public health, and providers for residents experiencing homelessness; essential state government officials; and essential frontline journalists.

##### **PHASE 2 – SPRING**

- **Phase 2:** Higher-risk individuals and other essential workers, including people aged 60-69 years, people 16-59 who are immunocompromised or have significant health issues (e.g. obesity, diabetes, chronic lung or kidney disease, cancer, significant heart disease, etc.), and adults who had received a placebo during COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials.

##### **PHASE 3 – SUMMER**

- **Phase 3:** General public between the ages of 16-59 years.

Board Member McMillan asked for an update on LTCF staff/resident vaccinations. Mr. Campbell said he didn't have actual numbers, but this population was beginning to get vaccinated. He said there were initial hiccups with the national pharmacy plan for LTCF vaccinations, but local facilities have reported the process has improved, and they're beginning to do vaccination clinics. Mr. Campbell said the State of Colorado has committed to getting the vulnerable LTCF population vaccinated as soon as possible. Communicable Disease & Emergency Management Division Manager Indira Gujral noted that LTCF vaccinations didn't start until December 28, 2020; and hospitals staff vaccinations started in mid-December.

Board Member Fagan asked about teachers, who are part of the secondary 1B group. Mr. Campbell said BCPH was collaborating with schools to help them prepare and develop plans for rapid vaccination of teachers when vaccine becomes available for schools. Dr. Gujral said there was some initial confusion, but she said teacher vaccinations would begin soon.

Board Member Fagan said medical providers were having problems with patients not able to arrive for vaccine appointments in a timely manner if contacted on short notice. She suggested the creation and distribution of call-down lists of readily available teachers who could be available on short notice for vaccinations to prevent the expiration and loss of open vials of vaccine. She also said many patients, especially elderly Latinx patients, were very leery about the vaccine, had many questions, and/or lacked ready access to transportation or computers to register for online appointments.

Board Member Harrison asked when Phase 1B would be completed, and Mr. Campbell said that would likely happen in late February or March. Vaccine rollout was based on availability and distribution of vaccine from the federal government to the states, then to locals. Colorado's current allocation was about 60,000 doses per week. Mr. Campbell said lack of vaccine supply was challenging since the county had much greater capacity to vaccinate people through 25 providers enrolled in the local vaccination program, including BCPH, all local hospitals, CU, federally qualified health care providers, and Safeway and King Soopers pharmacies.

Mr. Campbell said he hoped more vaccine would be available soon with increased vaccine distribution from the federal government and emergency use authorization (EUA) of additional vaccines, including a single dose vaccine from Johnson & Johnson. Dr. Gujral said 20,000 doses are currently earmarked for LTCF. Once that population is fully vaccinated, that allotment will be targeted for other population groups starting in mid-February.

Mr. Campbell said staff was working with CU and the Boulder County and City of Longmont Offices of Emergency Management to coordinate community and regional vaccination events, including a large-scale point of dispensing (POD) community vaccination event. He announced a vaccination cultural broker has been hired to work with Health Equity Coordinator Sheila Davis to ensure that vaccination barriers are removed for community members.

Mr. Campbell said staff was working to pinpoint and obtain detailed lists from the State on specific employee groups that are included in the secondary group of Phase 1B. These large groups include front-line, essential workers in education, food and agriculture, manufacturing, postal services, groceries, public transit, public health, and providers for residents experiencing homelessness; essential state government officials; and essential frontline journalists.

Mr. Campbell said BCPH conducted weekly vaccine clinics in Boulder and Longmont and planned to add a second weekly clinic date at the Boulder location.

Board Member McMillan asked about outreach to older and Latinx community members who were hesitant to get vaccinations or needed help making online appointments. Board Member Fagan confirmed that many clinic patients were tying up front office staff with long conversations about vaccine concerns or assistance registering for appointments. Health Equity Coordinator Sheila Davis said she was working with the Boulder County Community Task Force to address those issues. She said vaccine literature was not always available in Spanish, and people were uncomfortable using computers or lacked internet savvy to do online scheduling. Ideally, Dr. Davis said Spanish language information needed to be more widely and readily available and shared more routinely through news media outlets, churches, newspapers, bulletin boards, etc. to increase vaccine messaging.

Board Member Harrison asked if there's been any pushback from vaccine groups. Dr. Gujral said many people questioned the vaccine because it's a new vaccine that was developed and approved very quickly. She said cultural brokers were available and have been stationed at vaccine registration sites to help answer questions. She said Salud recently partnered with UC Health to do vaccine outreach at a

church in Aurora, and she has contacted UC Health for guidance to replicate the outreach in Boulder County. She also said CDPHE posted information in a variety of languages on its website. Deputy Director Lexi Nolen said in addition to State resources, a local team was working on community engagement and resource coordination with a heavy focus on the Latinx community. She said the team had a strong partnership with Spanish cultural brokers and was collaborating with a communications firm to train cultural brokers on basic COVID-19 testing, isolation guidance, and vaccine information.

Vice President DeSantiago said Amistad provided education for community members on the vaccine and would be hosting sessions with some local physicians who would be available to provide medical information in Spanish. He said the best way to reach the Latinx population, however, was through individual contact. Dr. Davis said she would make sure BCPH's new vaccination cultural broker connects with Vice President DeSantiago to help distribute Spanish information in the community.

President Thomas asked if Boulder County was assured required second doses would be available when needed, and Mr. Campbell said they would be. Dr. Gujral said people need to ensure they receive their second doses on schedule. First doses are 50% effective, while second doses raised protection levels to 95%.

The Board thanked staff for the update.

### **C. Update on Current COVID-19 Trends.**

Public Health Director Zayach presented the following data, saying overall COVID-19 numbers were okay considering recent increases after the holidays:

- Two-week cumulative incidence rate was 366.5, which was in Level Red on the Colorado COVID-19 Dial. The county's average positivity rate and stable/declining hospitalization rates were in Level Yellow. To move down a level on the Dial, a county needs to be in the lower level at least two weeks.
- Cases were rising in the Metro Denver Area; Denver had the steepest spike in the seven-day moving average rate. Boulder County's five-day average of new cases increased from 83 to 119.6 the past week, which Mr. Zayach said he hoped was only a temporary spike.
- The two-week incidence rate was either stable or increasing slightly for most age groups.
- The positivity rate has remained stable since mid-December.
- Hospitalizations were down, and deaths were also on a downward trend. Dr. Gujral said 14 deaths were reported one 1 day, but that was because of reporting delays due to the holidays.

Mr. Zayach said the Metro Denver Partnership for Health (MDPH) and CDPHE reported that young children were less susceptible to COVID-19. In-person learning seemed to have minimal impact on community transmission of the disease, and schools weren't the primary driver of community spread. He said COVID-19 transmission at CU was greater from communal housing and group gatherings than in-classroom learning. Experts felt schools provided a safer environment since masks and other public health measures were enforced, and school days were more structured.

Mr. Zayach said key messages for schools were that K-5 students should be doing in-person learning, and grades 6-12 should be a hybrid of in-person and online schooling. He said both local school districts agreed with that, and CU planned to resume in-classroom learning the third week of February.

Mr. Zayach said 1 in 105 were estimated to be infectious. With 50% unaware they are infectious, he recommended everyone should continue practicing public health recommendations and sign up for the State's notification system ([www.addyourphone.com](http://www.addyourphone.com)) to receive alerts when they came into close contact with an infected person also registered in the notification system.

Board Member McMillan applauded local testing sites. She said she has used the Boulder testing site several times, and her experience was much better than other parts of the country. Local wait times were short, and turnaround time to receive test results was shorter and shorter. Mr. Zayach said the City of Boulder did a great job managing the Boulder testing site. He and Mr. Campbell strongly encouraged people to get COVID-19 testing since testing was free, easily accessible, and would help to stop the spread of disease.

Board Member McMillan asked if hospitalizations and cases were decreasing in the Latinx population. Mr. Zayach said numbers have decreased, but he wasn't aware of specific reasons for the decline. Deputy Public Health Director Lexi Nolen said patterns had decreased the past month. They recently started to rise again but not to the extent previously. Dr. Davis added that data show a disproportionate impact in the number of deaths now that was not seen eight months ago.

Dr. Davis said staff was discussing the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Latinx communities and factors underlying disparities. They are working to develop a public health response with a focus on culturally sensitive planning and policies, improved access to testing, prioritization of COVID-19-positive Hispanic and Latinx residents, provision of culturally relevant communications, and coordinated resources. She said they will work to engage the community and have culturally and linguistically responsive case investigators and contact tracers available. The document will also outline the agency's strategy in response to concerns and the need to address the underlying issue of structural racism.

**ITEM 6. Director's Report.**

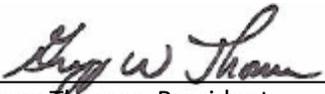
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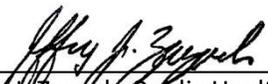
**ITEM 7. Old & New Business / Announcements.**

None.

**ITEM 8. Adjournment.**

**There being nothing further to discuss, Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President DeSantiago, to adjourn into Executive Session pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §24-6-402(4)(f), for purposes of discussing the public health director recruitment process. With all members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.**

  
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Gregg Thomas, President

  
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Jeffrey J. Zayach, Public Health Director