

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Regular Meeting
Online/Telephonic Meeting
May 10, 2021

BOH Members: President Gregg Thomas; Vice President Jorge De Santiago; and Board Members Landrey Fagan; and Brooke Harrison. Absent: Board Member Morgan McMillan.

BCPH Staff: Interim Public Health Director Lexi Nolen; Acting Director of Administration and Finance Maryel Barron; Acting Director of Strategic Initiatives Kelli Hintch; Environmental Health Division Manager Joe Malinowski; Community Health Division Manager Heather Crate; Acting Family Health Division Manager Melinda Morris; Communicable Disease Control/HIV Program Coordinator Carol Helwig; Consumer Protection Program Coordinator Lane Drager; Accounting Manager Susan Hiatt; Marketing and Communications Manager Angela Simental; Community Substance Abuse Program Coordinator Allison Bayley; Community Substance Abuse Program Planner Audrey Schroer; Administrative Assistant Rita Mangeyn; and Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden.

Boulder County Staff: County Administrator Jana Petersen and Senior Assistant County Attorney Kate Haywood.

Special Guest: Sam Hellwege, Auditor from CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP.

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, the need for social distancing, and the current public health order, President Thomas said the meeting was being conducted online and telephonically.

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

None.

ITEM 2. Approval of April 12, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President De Santiago, to approve the April 12, 2021, Board of Health minutes, as presented. With all Board Members present voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried. Absent: Board Member McMillan.

ITEM 3. Presentation of 2019 Financial Audit Report.

Acting Director of Administration and Finance Maryel Barron introduced Sam Hellwege from CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, who presented the 2019 BCPH Financial Audit Report. Mr. Hellwege said due to COVID-19, the audit was done completed remotely. He thanked staff for their support throughout the process and gave special recognition to Accounting Manager Susan Hiatt and Budget Analyst/Grants Accountant Melissa Golden. He reviewed the highlights of the audit, saying his firm identified no concerns and issued a clean audit finding for the 2019 BCPH Financial Audit Report.

President Thomas asked if Boulder County's transition to a new financial system presented any challenges, and Mr. Hellwege said it did not. Some extra procedures were required, but Mr. Hellwege said his team was able to complete the audit with no issues.

President Thomas and Interim Executive Director Lexi Nolen thanked Mr. Hellwege, as well as BCPH staff members Susan Hiatt, Melissa Golden, and Maryel Barron for preparing and facilitating the 2019 audit.

ITEM 4. Presentation on Public Health Implications of High THC Marijuana.

Community Substance Abuse Program Coordinator (CSAP) Allison Bayley and CSAP Planner Audrey Schroer summarized the marijuana use findings from the 2019 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS), administered every two years in Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) high schools. Overall, staff said marijuana use has been consistent in BVSD the past several years. Board Member Harrison asked if the latest findings differed from surveys conducted before the legalization of marijuana. Ms. Bayley said current survey administration methodology was different, so direct comparisons to prior years was difficult.

Staff said marijuana use hadn't necessarily increased, but the method favored by youth had. "Dabbing," a highly potent form of marijuana use from inhaling small quantities of a concentrated and vaporized drug (typically cannabis oil or resin), increased from 30% in 2015 to 40% in 2017 to 60% in 2019. The use of edibles and vaping among youth has been consistent, and staff was concerned about risks of physical dependence and addiction, which are shown to increase with exposure to high concentrations of THC because anxiety, agitation, paranoia, and psychosis are more likely. Youth who practiced "dabbing" reported feeling more sad or hopeless and had contemplated, planned, or attempted suicide at higher rates than youth who didn't practice dabbing. Ms. Schroer said direct causation could not be concluded from the report, but she said clear ties were evolving, which was concerning.

Board Member Harrison asked if the "do not use" group included youth who used other methods of marijuana or youth who didn't use any marijuana. Staff said the likely answer was youth using other methods of marijuana. The CSAP team was working to combat marijuana use in several ways, which included convening community coalitions and utilizing a variety of federal and state funding sources. Staff is working to increase youth leadership opportunities through grant funding and engage youth in the Healthy Futures Youth Coalition, Communities that Care (CTC), and provide paid hourly positions for youth staff. They are providing education in technical assistance and training on substance use data, substance use prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training (SAPST), Positive Youth Development (PYD), and engaging in local policy on marijuana use.

Staff said grant-funded staff may only work on local efforts due to funding restrictions. The team was working at the state level to cap THC levels at 15% for retail and medical marijuana products. They are also working to ban marijuana from being dispensed in vending machines; increase labeling requirements; require that medical marijuana "prescription" be identified as a therapeutic dose for each patient and involve additional tracking; require toxicology reports on autopsies of deaths by suicide, overdose, or accidental death; and require ER toxicology reports on any condition that might reflect marijuana use.

Ms. Bayley explained there was a data gap between reports received from community members and data being captured, so parents of youth struggling with mental health associations were asking for more consistency in reporting. CSAP was listening to community concerns, including youth 18 years old being able to legally purchase medical marijuana and potentially give/resell it to younger peers. BVSD nurses and the BVSD Board of Education were concerned about availability of high levels of THC, and Boulder County Commissioner Marta Loachamin has indicated she's heard similar concerns from community members.

Board Member Harrison asked if considerations were being made for non-industry groups, such as parents of children using marijuana to treat epilepsy and preferences for higher levels of THC for medicinal purposes. Staff said those considerations were being evaluated. Board Member Harrison also asked if other states instituted caps on THC, but staff was unaware of any such caps to date.

President Thomas asked if businesses that sold marijuana concentrates would be jeopardized if caps were lowered and if that would also encourage people to smoke more marijuana. Staff said adult “dab” use was lower – 20% versus 60% for youth, according to the 2019 HKCS Survey. President Thomas asked why the dabbing rate was so elevated for high school students. Staff said it could be that dabbing afforded an intense high, and that was appealing to thrill-seeking youth.

Board Member Harrison asked if there was increased pressure for local legislation since the State likely would act slowly. Staff said community partners and concerned parents wanted more local action, but that was challenging since there wasn’t consistency among metro counties, and youth could easily travel between counties to legally purchase substances with high levels of THC. Staff was working with local metro communities to address the issue. They said the City of Boulder was also looking at specific requirements on medical cards to potentially establish stricter limits on product access.

President Thomas thanked staff for the presentation.

ITEM 5. Update on Current COVID-19 Pandemic.

A. Update on Current COVID-19 Trends.

Dr. Nolen said the current virus incidence rate was 74.9, and current positivity rate was 3.1%; both rates improved from the previous month. Although the statistics provided positive news, Dr. Nolen cautioned that some Colorado counties remained at Level Red on the COVID Dial, and Colorado had the second highest incidence rate nationally behind Michigan due to high rates of the B.1.1.7 variant. President Thomas asked if the decreased demand for testing was contributing to the state’s higher positivity rate. Dr. Nolen said high case numbers often coincided with low vaccination rates, but the 7-day average of new cases was 42.9 per 100,000. She anticipated that rate would decline further with increased vaccinations. Boulder County was seeing similar patterns in other counties, but case numbers in Boulder County were lower than in other metro counties. Hospitalizations have increased in some nearby communities, but CDPHE (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment) and Colorado School of Public Health believed the peak for hospitalizations likely took place in mid- to late May. The reduction in cases has helped with inequities, and case rates by age groups have been decreasing for all groups except 0-9 years and 75+ years.

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

Statewide, 62% of eligible residents have been vaccinated, and that number was closer to 70% in Boulder County. Dr. Nolen said vaccinations have declined since mid-April, with about 2,500 doses being administered weekly in Boulder County. Half of people aged 20-29 years and two-thirds of people aged 30-70+ years have been vaccinated. For youth 10-19 years, more than half have received 1 dose, but those numbers were deceiving because some youth in that age group aren’t yet eligible for vaccinations.

In reviewing vaccination rates by race/ethnicity, Latinx/Hispanic and African American communities had the lowest vaccine rates, indicating that more work was needed to increase access and opportunities for vaccinations. East County and some low-density communities have had lower uptake rates, so efforts are taking place to mitigate vaccine access barriers, such as providing direct outreach through community influencers and utilizing community clinics like Clinica, Salud, Boulder Community Health, State-sponsored equity clinics, and mobile clinics. Starting in July, The Hub in Longmont will offer after-hour vaccinations on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Moving forward, key messages include wearing facial coverings when indoors in public areas; protecting children due to the recent spikes in youth cases; and getting vaccinated. Dr. Nolen said hospital admission rates would determine if Boulder County had to move to other levels on the COVID Dial. Boulder County was set to move to “Level Clear” on the local COVID Dial on May 16, 2021, when COVID-related requirements would basically be eliminated. Dr. Nolen said staff would continue closely monitoring incidence levels to ensure the county could remain at Level Clear, and the State had the ability to increase restrictions if cases began to increase in Colorado.

Dr. Nolen said Public Health Order 2021-06 established requirements for some indoor masking from May 10, 2021, through June 10, 2021. She said BCPH was updating guidance for summer camps and return to school in the fall, vaccination variances for non-public-facing indoor spaces, and the transition to Level Clear. She said BCPH would follow a phased recovery process during the next few months to transition out of COVID-19 response, which included: 1) retaining and stabilizing; 2) resting and restoring; and 3) reenergizing and recommitting.

President Thomas asked if the Pfizer vaccine would soon be available for youth 12-15 years old. Dr. Nolen said the vaccines should become available within the week. The vaccine dosage would be the same as for adults and would also be free to recipients.

President Thomas asked if staff anticipated any updates to federal masking guidance for airplanes and summer camps. Dr. Nolen said she didn’t anticipate any guidance changes, given anticipated seasonal surges. Communities will need to expect and manage COVID as part of daily life moving forward.

C. Authorize the Repeal of Boulder County Public Health Order 2020-09 Regarding Collegiate Group Homes in the City of Boulder.

Senior Assistant County Attorney Kate Haywood summarized the history of Public Health Order (PHO) 2020-09, which became effective October 13, 2020. She said staff recommended that the Board repeal the PHO as of May 16, 2021, to align with Boulder County moving to Level Clear on the local COVID Dial. She said the PHO required collegiate group homes (i.e. residences with five or more higher education residents living in a group arrangement) located in Boulder to submit ongoing assessments to BCPH outlining measures they were taking regarding COVID-19 mitigation, quarantine, and isolation; weekly check-in meetings with the City of Boulder were also required. Ms. Haywood said the rationale for repealing PHO 2020-09 included fewer students on campus during summer break, fewer students living in group homes following graduation, and the mass vaccination efforts taking place on campus.

Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Vice President De Santiago, to repeal Boulder County Public Health Order 2020-09, to remove restrictions for collegiate group homes in the city of Boulder. With all present members voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried. Absent: Board Member McMillan.

ITEM 6: Appointment of Camille Rodriguez as Boulder County Public Health Executive Director.

Dr. Nolen asked the Board to appoint Camille Rodriguez as BCPH’s next Executive Director following the retirement of former Executive Director Jeff Zayach. She summarized Ms. Rodriguez’s career and education background and said she was currently serving as County Administrator for McLean County, Illinois, home to 169,000 residents and Illinois State University.

Ms. Rodriguez was set to start at BCPH on June 7, 2021, coming to Boulder County with 20+ years of service in state and local government. Prior to serving as County Administrator for McLean County, she was the county’s Health Department Administrator. Ms. Rodriguez also worked for the State of Wisconsin’s Department of Health Services as its Director of the Bureau of Community Health Promotion in its Division of Public Health, where she managed 60 public health programs that included the Maternal/Child

Health Block Grant, Tobacco Control Program, Oral Health Program, and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Program.

President Thomas thanked the many BCPH and Boulder County staff members, community members who served on interview panels, CPS HR (recruitment firm), and his fellow board members for the tremendous amount of work involved to help facilitate the recruitment effort. He expressed appreciation for the emphasis on inclusion of people from all levels of the agency. He said he was pleased with the due diligence of the process. President Thomas noted that former Executive Director Jeff Zayach had returned on an hourly basis to help onboard Ms. Rodriguez to ensure a seamless and successful transition.

Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member Fagan, to appoint Camille Rodriguez as the new Boulder County Public Health Executive Director. With all present members present voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried. Absent: Board Member McMillan.

ITEM 7. Director's Report.

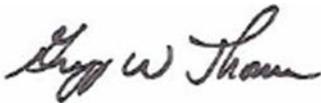
No discussion.

ITEM 8. Old & New Business / Announcements.

None.

ITEM 9. Adjournment.

There being nothing further to discuss, President Thomas declared the meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.



Gregg Thomas, President



Alexandra "Lexi" Nolen
Interim Executive Director