

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Regular Meeting
Online/Telephonic Meeting
June 14, 2021

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

BCPH Staff: Executive Director Camille Rodriguez; Deputy Director Lexi Nolen; Acting Director of Administration and Finance Maryel Barron; Environmental Health Division Manager Joe Malinowski; Family Health Division Manager Daphne McCabe; Marketing and Communications Manager Angela Simental; Emergency Management Coordinator Chris Campbell; Administrative Assistant Rita Mangeyn; and Business Operations Manager Tammy Golden.

Boulder County Staff: Senior Assistant County Attorney Kate Haywood and Deputy County Attorney Trina Ruhland.

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. Introduction of Boulder County Public Health Executive Director Camille Rodriguez.

Dr. Nolen summarized Ms. Rodriguez's professional background including her more than 20 years' experience in public service that includes her preceding role as the County Administrator for McLean County, Illinois; her extensive expertise and public health knowledge creating systems that reflect the diversity of the community and promoting equity and inclusion. Ms. Rodriguez also served as Administrator of the McLean County Health Department, the Wisconsin State Government in Public Health in the Division of Long-Term Care, as well as ten years in the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services as an investigator.

In Wisconsin and Illinois, she lent her expertise to lead areas of long-term care and public health and was a key planner and leader in implementing the first ever health plan for children in foster care. Ms. Rodriguez has assumed leadership roles in the administration of maternal and child health programs, long-term care, housing and health plans for children, adults and the elderly, and tobacco and chronic disease prevention programs. Dr. Nolen added that Ms. Rodriguez holds a bachelor's degree in Anthropology, a Master of Health Administration, and a Master of Jurisprudence in Health Law.

Ms. Rodriguez thanked everyone for the warm welcome especially from staff and the community. She is excited to roll up her sleeves and learn as much as she can to serve the community and lead the agency. Ms. Rodriguez is looking forward to meeting with the BCPH leadership teams and learning as much as she can while also lending her expertise where it's needed. She thanked Dr. Nolen for her excellent leadership throughout the onboarding and transition process.

ITEM 2. Public Comments (on unscheduled agenda items).

None.

ITEM 3. Approval of May 10, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Dr. Nolen noted two corrections to the May 10, 2021 minutes. The first is the vaccination rate is 74.9% and the second is the seven-day average is 42.9 per 100,000.

Board Member Harrison made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member McMillan, to approve the May 10, 2021, Board of Health minutes, with the two corrections noted by Dr. Nolen. With all Board Members present voting in favor of the motion, President Thomas declared the motion carried. Absent: Vice President Jorge De Santiago.

ITEM 4. Update on Current COVID-19 Pandemic.

A. Update on Current COVID-19 Trends/Vaccinations and Expiration of Boulder County Public Health Order 2021-06, Which Required Facial Coverings in Certain Public Health Spaces.

Dr. Nolen began with positive news that the county is moving in a good direction with 74.5% of the eligible population of people 12 years of age and older are now vaccinated with at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose. This is close to 216,000 people out of a county population of 335,000. Board Member Harrison asked if the vaccination numbers include those who were vaccinated outside of the county. Dr. Nolen explained that yes, it is tracked by one's home location. Dr. Nolen said that the county is doing well as compared with the neighboring metro counties. While vaccination rates are declining, the county is administering about 1000 vaccinations a day which is a solid rate. BCPH vaccination clinics will resume and will offer weekend and evening clinics to allow greater access to community members who have barriers. Emergency Management Coordinator Chris Campbell added that these clinics will begin later in June at the Longmont HUB. He said that the Moderna vaccine will be available at these clinics soon. Community ambassadors and cultural brokers will provide education about the vaccine in order to increase rates among families; and partner clinics Salud and Clinica will extend their hours of operation to support greater access to the community. Equity clinics provided by the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) in the city of Boulder have been supporting the unhoused population with 100 people already vaccinated. The community ambassadors and cultural brokers will continue to work with families to provide culturally appropriate education. President Thomas asked if there are reasons that community members, namely youth, are getting their first dose at this time. Mr. Campbell did not have specific data on this but surmised that incentive programs such as youth scholarships may be a reason along with the timing of doses.

By geographic distribution, most of Boulder County shows vaccination rates greater than 25% for the eligible population. A few area outliers remain, but these have lower population density overall. Board Member McMillan asked about why a city of Boulder area is showing a 27% rate. Dr. Nolen explained that this area houses the University campus where students most likely put their home locations (i.e. outside the county/region) so this skews the rates lower.

By age groups, Dr. Nolen noted that the 12-19 group has a 50% vaccination rate which is especially promising given this group has been eligible for vaccination for a short amount of time. For the 70+ age group, the rate is 96%; and everyone over 50 years old, shows an 82% rate. By race/ethnicity, the vaccination disparities are declining. More targeted outreach is still needed to include all members in communities of color.

For case rates, the last week showed 13 cases a day on average which is 4.1 people per 100,000. The positivity rate is at .9% and there are four COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Dr. Nolen said that these trends put the county on track to let the current *Boulder County Public Health Order (PHO) 2021-06* expire, which required facial coverings in certain public health spaces.

Allowing the current PHO to lapse is the result of excellent vaccination rates and low hospitalization numbers. These factors also align with the state and neighboring counties who have stood down their masking orders. Clear messaging will be provided to have strong recommendations for schools and day care centers on masking for children who have not been vaccinated. Board Member McMillan asked about case information for the 0-12 age group and the disparity around Latinx youth in the 12-19 age group. Dr. Nolen said that cases are not high or concerning with the 0-12 age group, but indoor masking is highly encouraged to protect children who are not vaccinated or have health concerns. In terms of the disparities, BCPH is launching culturally responsive outreach activities and communications for Latinx and LGBTQ youth as well as partnering with community ambassadors to build strong and targeted campaigns. Dr. Nolen added that there is a drive to support summer vaccination clinics for children in sports camps to boost vaccine rates especially among ages 12-18. Board Member Harrison asked if there are data on positive cases seen in people who have been vaccinated. While Dr. Nolen was not able to confirm data in Boulder County, she said that most cases statewide and nationally involve those who are not vaccinated. Board Member Harrison also asked if any incidence of mask stigmatization has been documented in Boulder County. Dr. Nolen does not know of any specific cases in the county.

B. Presentation of the BCPH COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

Mr. Campbell shared an overview of the internal recovery plan. The emergency management team conducted some historical research that looked at other national and local disaster recoveries that used a recovery phasing framework approach. This same approach is being adopted for the COVID-19 recovery. Mr. Campbell noted that the response phase is ongoing and due to the length of the current pandemic, the phases will be longer. He outlined the plan's assumptions which will cover three recovery areas including recovery for staff, clients, and the continuation of transition core COVID-19 response functions (e.g. mitigation, containment) into day-to-day BCPH responsibilities. All work will continue to be done through a health equity lens.

Shorter-term plan goals include giving staff some respite with vacations/time off, long-term staffing of teams, and rightsizing of teams. Longer term goals will serve to align with the greater county. These goals include continuing to work on policy to support systemic changes; and focusing on agency priorities such as mental health, climate action, and health equity. The emergency operations plan, and pandemic response plan are incorporating the lessons learned through an after-action process. Another important goal is the planning of a recovery structure for staff. Mr. Campbell thanked the board and greater community for the continuing support and partnership.

Board Member Harrison asked if there is a priority vaccination list to use in the future to help identify populations more quickly in order to provide support. Mr. Campbell said yes and acknowledged that the lessons learned around gathering such information will inform future planning. Dr. Nolen added that the agency's goal is to be in a better place after the pandemic so that there is a robust preparedness plan in place. Board Member McMillan emphasized that it is vital to capture health equity lessons learned for future disasters. She asked how the board can honor and provide meaningful appreciation for the work that BCPH staff has contributed during the pandemic. She said the board is open to recommendations on how to communicate their gratitude to staff. Dr. Nolen said that she and Ms. Rodriguez will consult with the members of the BCPH Management Team to determine some ideas and will follow up. Board Member Harrison asked about returning to in-person board meetings. Dr. Nolen said that it may be reasonable to plan a return in July. She added that Ms. Rodriguez has just approved the policy for in-person client services; and the return to office planning is in process along with the telework policy that is being finalized. Consequently, some staff will be allowed to start returning to the office in July. President Thomas recommended to support remote participation at meetings and hybrid staff work. Dr. Nolen agreed that these are important ideas to consider. She added that the public now has more options for accessing online services such as vital records and permit licenses.

C. Update on Broader Agency Recovery.

The agency is adapting to ongoing public health pandemic response needs and understanding how to properly support and resource that need given best projections not only for future pandemics but for any surges that may occur with the current one. Efforts such as moving some longer-term temporary response staff to lower cost term positions to save agency funds; consolidating some teams as starring needs lessen; and returning many employees to their regular work. Moving staff back to their regular work is especially vital in areas such as restaurant and childcare inspections.

BCPH is also continuing its partnerships with six community-based organizations that serve priority communities such as Latinx, LGBTQ, mountain residents, and people with disabilities. These partners serve as community ambassadors who have been instrumental in helping with the vaccination efforts. The agency aims to build on these partner relationships to advance racial and health equity.

Other activities include working on programmatic staffing and resourcing adjustments; identifying urgent community needs around mental health and behavioral health supports especially for LGBTQ youth and lower income families. There is also increased demand for clean syringes. The community mental health need is great, and a robust highly trained clinical workforce is unlikely to emerge soon, so innovative solutions are being determined. The community also faces high levels of food insecurity so direct support is needed as is support for local agriculture.

In order to accomplish these efforts, staff is working on several budgets. The June 28, 2021 budget study session will address the 2022 draft budget that will inform the county's larger budgeting process in August. The agency will also request ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding from the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to support urgent community needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. Depending on the BOCC's response, there may be adjustments made to the 2022 budget later which could also affect the 2021 amended budget. To avoid multiple board meetings and save time, staff will work through the various funding streams and request board approval one time in September.

Finally, public health is thinking about where the transformational opportunities are to advance health and racial equity through public health action that address root causes. Through partnerships with the county, community-based organizations, other county agencies, and thought leaders, BCPH will work for the next several months to build out strategies and innovative programming; and identify opportunities for alignment, scale, funding, and sustainability. BCPH will hire some key positions; and work on advancing the climate change strategic plan and collaborate with the county, and work to embed the work across division programs. President Thomas acknowledged that there is a lot of work being done. He commented that it will be interesting to see community behaviors in the next few months around masking and how the flu season will pan out. He asked if there was an after-action report (AAR) for the pandemic response. Mr. Campbell said that that an initial report was conducted with 100 response staff in November 2020. Staff is working on a comprehensive plan that will involve conducting surveys of all internal staff, evaluating data gathering from community and response partners; compiling AARs from other agencies; and including an improvement plan. Mr. Campbell acknowledged that this is a long-term project, but some of the data will be available this summer. A more comprehensive plan will be completed later.

ITEM 5. Director's Report.

President Thomas addressed the news that Ms. Golden will be retiring after serving the agency for 28 years. He praised her excellent record of service in supporting the board throughout his tenure; and wished her well on her retirement. Dr. Nolen added that Ms. Golden delayed her retirement in order to help provide support during the staffing transitions; and thanked her as well.

Ms. Golden expressed her gratitude for the well wishes and said that it was an honor and privilege to work with the Board. She added that BCPH is fortunate to have such a supportive Board of Health.

Board Member Harrison asked about the syringe litter walks. Dr. Nolen explained that these are community gathering efforts for used syringes, but also recommended contacting Harm Reduction Coordinator Georgia Babatsikos for more detailed information.

Board Member McMillan responded to the news that Health Equity Coordinator Dr. Sheila Davis is moving on to a new role. She stressed how vital it is to continue the health equity work that Dr. Davis helped build. Dr. Nolen agreed and said health equity work is a priority for BCPH and as such, the team will take a few months to carefully and thoughtfully determine what the leadership needs will be for the long-term. In the meantime, Special Initiatives Coordinator Marcy Campbell will step in to co-lead the agency's Health Equity Coordinating Committee (HECC) that Dr. Davis co-led. Ms. Campbell is also working with the Gemini Group to facilitate their work in helping to advance racial equity in the agency as well as bringing in national public speakers to discuss narrative and framing equity issues. Additional internal training opportunities will be provided soon. The Vaccine Equity Coordinating Committee (VECC) work that Dr. Davis was leading will now be co-led by Carmen Ramirez and Lizbeth Mendoza. To provide more leadership opportunities especially for BCPH employees of color, HECC is recruiting for a co-lead position. Board Member McMillan requested to have a formal presentation shared on the BCPH health equity efforts at some point later.

President Thomas gave kudos to Joe Malinowski, Erin Dodge and the Water Quality team for moving the Onsite Wastewater permit applications process online; and to the Stormwater Quality permit team for their permitting efforts. Dr. Nolen also recognized the IT team, led by Dina Reavis, who facilitated the move to an online platform.

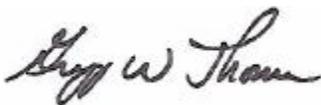
President Thomas closed the meeting by thanking BCPH staff for their tremendous work and encouraging them to take some time this summer to relax and rest. He also reminded everyone to carefully approach the transition to in-person operations as it can be a complex task to move a large staff back to the office.

ITEM 6. Old & New Business / Announcements.

None.

ITEM 7. Adjournment.

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



Gregg Thomas, President



Camille Rodriguez, Executive Director