

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF HEALTH
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Janet Karpiak, M.D.; Ken Lalime, R. Ph.; Theresa Quell, PhD, R.N.; Joan McNeil, D.N.P.;

OTHERS: Deanna D’Amore, Director of Health; Megan Faugno, Special Projects Manager; Brian Weeks, Program Director of Epidemiology and Informatics; Pam Bates, RN, Immunization Action Plan Coordinator; Bill Mooney, Assistant Director of Health, Environmental Health; Aniella Fignon, Project Coordinator

This meeting was held via teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. D’Amore called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

• August 22, 2023

**** MS. QUELL MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 22, 2023 MEETING.**

**** MS. MCNEIL SECONDED.**

Ms. D’Amore noted that Ms. Quell was on the phone at the beginning of the meeting so a quorum was present. Please delete the following statement. “A quorum was not present.”

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 22, 2023 MEETING MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IMMUNIZATION ACTION PLAN/CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATIONS

Ms. Pam Bates of the Immunization Action Plan Program (IAP) was introduced. She then narrated a PowerPoint slide deck about IAP Program highlights. She then gave a brief overview of the CT Immunization Information System (CT WiZ) update, which is a statewide database that maintains complete, accurate, and secure immunization records for both children and adults in CT. All vaccine providers are mandated by law to report the vaccines that they administer. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the state only recorded pre-school immunizations in the

previous Immunization database formerly known as the Connecticut Immunization Registry and Tracking System (CIRTS).

Ms. Bates then displayed several grids showing numerous Connecticut cities and towns with immunization percentages for children born in 2019 and their vaccination status by age two. The Norwalk/Danbury IAP is the highest among all the reporting municipalities. Mr. Weeks highlighted a map showing the census tracts and the numbers of up-to-date (UTD) immunization status for children born in 2019 in Norwalk. Overall, the city of Norwalk's immunization rates for children born in 2019 and 2020 is above 80% in all census tracts.

Ms. Bates explained that the clinicians had done an excellent job providing vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is some duplication of data and some inactive records in CT WiZ for children who have moved out of state, which can impact the immunization rates. The Norwalk/Danbury IAP Program staff help improve immunization rates by working with providers to ensure all immunization reports are up to date, provide educational trainings about CT WiZ, and provide outreach for children late on the recommended vaccine schedule or who have transferred to an unknown medical home.

Ms. Quell asked how Danbury had ended up pairing with Norwalk. Ms. Bates said that Danbury had lost their IAP Coordinator and had reached out to Norwalk for assistance. The partnership has worked out well.

FLU CLINICS

Ms. Faugno displayed a flyer that had been developed for the flu season with the various locations for the clinics and the times. Registration is required for all those sites. They are able to vaccinate children 3 years and older. The Health Department offers a vaccine assistance phone line for individuals that are unable to schedule an online appointment. Younger infants should be taken to their health providers. She reviewed the cost and noted that most insurance providers would cover it.

EPIDEMIOLOGY UPDATES

Mr. Weeks said that the respiratory season has arrived and spoke about the Wastewater Surveillance System, a tool to track the spread of diseases, specifically COVID-19. He displayed graphs showing five of the local counties (Fairfield, Hartford, Middlesex, New Haven and New London). There was also a chart showing the country and areas where the hospitalizations were spiking, due to COVID-19. There is a spike in northeast areas such as Vermont and upstate NY, but CT remains at a low level. Mr. Weeks encouraged people to take precautions. The new subvariants are present and spreading, but prevention measures will help mitigate it.

Influenza and RSV are slowly growing. The national map showed the number of influenza cases across the country. According to the CDC Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics, a moderate COVID-19 wave is expected during the season. They do not anticipate a severe RSV wave like last year. However, they are monitoring this so it does not overwhelm the hospitals.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES- PUBLIC POOLS

Ms. D'Amore said that this policy had been in the works for some time. She said that Mr. Mooney and Ms. Fignon had been working on it. Ms. Quell had a few suggestions regarding the policy. Ms. Quell suggested that they add an addendum that can be changed in case the city changes the software system or other procedural steps. Discussion followed about the details.

**** MS. QUELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE POLICY WITH CHANGES AS DISCUSSED.**

**** DR. KARPIAK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The staff has been working on the clinics and preparing for COVID-19 vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccines have moved to the private market, so it will require a special appropriation for the Department to purchase. COVID-19 test kits are being distributed via numerous partners, such as Mary Oster, from Norwalk's Early Childhood office. In addition, the Federal government will be providing COVID-19 test kits via mail to all U.S. households upon request.

Ms. D'Amore updated the Board Members regarding the open positions for the Department.

The Supportive Work Environment Policy is underway and there have been some excellent discussions about improvements for workplace mental health and well-being.

Ms. D'Amore looks forward to supporting these efforts in the new policy with the Workforce Development funding.

Ms. Quell asked Ms. D'Amore about a recent 40 Under 40 honor award from the de Beaumont Foundation she had received. Ms. D'Amore said that Ms. Fignon and Ms. Faugno had nominated Ms. D'Amore for the program. This program was established in 2019 and she was accepted in the 2023 class. It is a professional development opportunity, which includes training and other opportunities to develop more skills.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. D'Amore said that someone had submitted a statement via email. She read the following comment into the record:

City of Norwalk
Board of Health
Regular Meeting
September 26, 2023

“I have a lot of faith in the health department. I come each year for my flu shot and I know if I come to the health department I will get the right dose and right vaccine. In the news, they are encouraging people to get the flu shot and COVID booster together. I would like for the Norwalk Health Department to carry the booster vaccine.”

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D’Amore adjourned the meeting at 8:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service