

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

**Waukesha County
Public Health Advisory Committee
Thursday, September 9, 2021
Health and Human Services Building, Room 114**

Present Committee Members: Andrew Dresang (Chair), Jessica Kadow (Vice Chair), Mary Reich, Sarah Butz, Betty Koepsel, Steven Andrews

Absent Committee Members:

HHS Board Liaisons: Mary Baer

Present HHS Staff Liaisons: Elizabeth Laatsch, Theresa Imp

Absent HHS Staff Liaisons: Ben Jones, Mary Smith, Bridget Gnadt, Mary Jo Hamman, Sarah Ward

Guests: Tristin Bruno, Caroline Gomez-Tom, Luann Ladwig, Ross Clay

1. Call to Order

Chair Dresang called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

Attendees recognized and thanked Dr. Clay for his many years of service to the Public Health Advisory Committee.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Andrews moved, second by Kadow, to approve the Public Health Advisory Committee minutes from August 12, 2021. Motion passed without negative vote.

3. Committee Business

A. Membership Reappointments (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2024)

i. Sixteenth Street Community Health Center

MOTION: Koepsel moved, second by Butz, to approve the re-appointment of Sixteenth Street Clinic to the clinic's second term as Public Health Advisory Committee Provider Member for the term of September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022. Motion passed without negative vote.

ii. Submittal of nomination of Citizen Membership

Luann Ladwig, NP, the Head of the Nurse Care Coordinator Group with General Electric, has been nominated to replace Dr. Clay as Citizen Member. The nomination will be submitted for review and approval from Dresang as well as the Waukesha County Executive.

4. Committee and Organizational Updates

A. Health and Human Services Board

Baer commenced with information on the steps being taken to allow virtual attendance of voting members to count toward quorum at all County Open Meetings. The Health and Human Services (HHS) Board will vote to update their bylaws at the September 2021 meeting. If the vote passes, the HHS Board will begin a three-month pilot for the virtual attendance option. There are challenges associated with offering a virtual attendance option, including the requirement for roll call on every vote, working video for all voting members throughout entire meeting, and potential digital disruptions; however, offering virtual attendance to meeting attendees has become an issue of safety as well as equity of meeting access. By offering a virtual attendance option, meetings may also be open to more people who are typically unable to be physically present. This may encourage more community involvement in Public Health in general, as well as all Open Meetings available through Waukesha County.

Changes in policies and departmental organization initiated by the new HHS Director, Elizabeth Aldred, have been received positively.

Baer has requested that Randy Setzer present at a future Public Health Advisory Committee meeting. Setzer is the Administrative Services Manager for the Health and Human Services Department. He recently provided the HHS Board with a comprehensive presentation regarding the roles that the Administrative Services division fulfills within the department.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is still in the process of recruiting for their advisory committee. Individuals with a background in disability are especially desirable as the 65+ demographic is already well represented. Koepsel added that interested parties with Hispanic or other diverse backgrounds are also highly encouraged to apply.

Baer requested the Public Health Advisory Committee schedule the ADRC presentation for dementia and Alzheimer's at a future meeting.

B. Environmental Health Division

There were no reports from the Environmental Health Division.

C. Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

There were no reports from the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

5. Public Health Division Reports

A. Public Health Coordinator

• **COVID-19 Updates**

Laatsch provided the latest COVID-19 updates. The confirmed COVID-19 cases in August (3,264 cases) were four times higher than what was reported in July (821 cases). In August, 23% of confirmed cases were under the age of 20, which is fairly comparable to the overall percentage for that age group for all of 2021 (22%). Children under 10 are making up a larger portion of those cases, most likely due to their inability to be vaccinated yet. There were no reports of children under age 10 hospitalized in July or August, and the numbers of hospitalized for those 10-19 are like what was seen in previous months.

While the numbers suggest that current infections do not appear to be more severe, it is important to note that in the first three days September 2021, the County saw the same number of children with COVID-19 as there were in the entire month of September 2020. As the new school year begins, Waukesha Public Health will continue to monitor these trends.

Waukesha County Public Health continues to recommend that schools follow CDC and DHS guidance around COVID-19 mitigation strategies. School Boards have the final say regarding mitigation efforts in their districts.

The Waukesha County Public Health Department continues to monitor contact tracing capabilities. In August, there were 13 rehires to the contact tracing team:

- 10 to school team
- 3 to Long Term Care team

Jones meets with public schools on a weekly basis and private schools on a monthly basis as Public Health continues to recommend that schools and districts include CDC best practices, recommendations by DHS, and DPI for stopping the spread of COVID-19 as they plan their mitigation strategies for the 2021/22 school year. Public Health has no plan to issue any COVID-19 mandates; however, the School Board would still be the final decision-maker in following any County-wide mandates. Laatsch stated there has been no data to suggest higher infection rates in schoolteachers thus far with the start of this school year.

Among everyone eligible for vaccination (12+), nearly 70% have started the process. Approximately 100,000 Waukesha County residents remain unvaccinated. At this time, more than 50% of children (ages 12-17) have started the vaccination series. Recent increases in people choosing to vaccinate appears to have been spurred by both the Delta variant and the eligibility to receive the \$100 gift card incentive. Continuing this trend will help contain the spread of COVID-19 in schools and the community.

Testing facilities at Summit Labs encountered a temporary reduction in availability from Friday to Tuesday due mainly to supply chain issues, Summerfest, and the Labor Day holiday. They have since resumed business as normal and are back to running at full capacity.

Clay added that there has not been a significant increase in infection rates from the Lambda variant yet. This most recent variant appears to be staying mostly in South America. It does not appear to be more infectious or cause more severe illness so far. He did note that infection with this variant is not widespread enough yet to know any specifics.

Dresang, Andrews, and Butz confirmed that hospitals are not promoting booster shots for anyone other than immunocompromised individuals at this time. This may change toward the end of September, depending on

infection rates and additional research on efficacy. More people have been getting tested lately which will allow hospitals to continue to monitor positive rate for Waukesha County with better accuracy. Most hospitalizations are unvaccinated individuals so there is not yet precedent for providing booster shots to vaccinated individuals.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has taken over data reporting for all Wisconsin counties. Kadow expressed that the DHS dashboard is less easy to navigate than the previous Waukesha County dashboard. Reich was able to share the following link with the group along with easy-to-use navigation and data filter instructions:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>

- **2021/22 Flu Season Updates**

As most people begin to emerge from COVID-19 lockdowns, a far more severe flu season is expected. Public Health has not discussed ramping up for flu vaccine campaigns due to the current COVID-19 focus but would be interested in partnering with healthcare providers and community groups to raise flu vaccination awareness and opportunities.

Butz mentioned that the Flu FUNdamentals Coalition has continued to meet but the focus has been geared more toward COVID-19. Kadow mentioned that the coalition has had discussions regarding how to coordinate flu vaccination clinics while keeping participants safe. They have considered suggesting vaccination for both COVID-19 and flu in the same appointments. Butz will discuss community outreach with partners in the non-profit sector and remind them that there are resources available to them to assist in these efforts. She will also arrange a presentation on flu vaccination resources and education with the Flu FUNdamentals Coalition at the October Public Health Advisory Committee meeting.

Ladwig shared that GE has an onsite employee vaccination clinic through VaxPro. They will have flu vaccine available for employees, but they are not combining with any COVID-19 vaccinations at this time. Clay added that GE has used their flu vaccine clinics as practice for their closed pods. Clay noted that there have been increases in individuals testing positive for COVID-19 but there has not been much transmission within their facilities due to mitigation efforts. GE's contact tracers have been finding that infection rates appear to be tied to activities outside of work.

Kadow mentioned that Oconomowoc schools are promoting mitigation efforts such as enhanced cleaning and improved air exchange, but they no longer have assigned seating for students. For classes that stay together the entire day, such as elementary school classes, contact tracing is not so difficult. Contact tracing becomes much more complicated for children in higher-level education such as junior high or

high school when children move around to different classrooms throughout the day.

6. Agency Reports

There were no agency reports.

7. Agency Announcements and Updates

Reich with the Lake Area Free Clinic shared their research showing that 47% of unvaccinated clients would get the COVID-19 vaccination if the client's healthcare provider recommended it. The clinic is focused on finding ways to encourage patients to get vaccinated. Their dental clinic is back to pre-COVID numbers at over 500 visits per month. The medical clinic still has reduced hours, but individual people are being served at about the same rate they were pre-COVID. Though the clinic is unable to offer walk-in appointments, they have been able to continue to serve their clients through same-day appointments.

Gomez-Tom with Sixteenth Street Clinic stated that the clinics are open to the public for vaccines by appointment only. COVID-19 testing is also available at the Waukesha clinic by appointment, but hours are limited.

Butz with ProHealth Care provided an update on the push to get all ProHealth Care employees vaccinated. The appointments available to employees directly through ProHealth Care have been filled so any remaining employees will need to go to other vaccination sites. These employees are eligible to receive the \$100 vaccination incentive. Pre-mandate, approximately 60-70% of hospital employees had been vaccinated. All Wisconsin hospital systems have mandated vaccination by October 15. Sixteenth Street Clinic has not mandated vaccination but about 90% of their employees have been vaccinated.

Kadow, Dresang, and Butz confirmed that some area hospitals and clinics have been experiencing protestors in front of the buildings. Most have stayed outside but there have been a few rare instances of protestors entering lobbies, at which point security must get involved.

Ladwig added that as an employer, it has been difficult to navigate how or what to require for their employees. Generally, GE views COVID-19 vaccination the same as they do any other vendor credentialing where flu and TDAPP vaccinations are required along with a TB skin test. It has been more challenging to mandate the COVID-19 vaccination for various reasons, including vaccination availability and differing rules in hospital systems around the country.

Butz also shared information on Bethany Recovery Center which is opening in Oconomowoc. ProHealth Care has a physician who will be serving as the center's Medical Director. This is a new, residential treatment center for women with alcohol dependency and drug misuse. This treatment center can accommodate women with children up to 5 years old as well. The center is currently looking for volunteers, supplies, and donations. Tours available for healthcare partners as well. Butz will arrange for a presentation at a future Public Health Advisory Committee meeting.

Regarding employees requesting a vaccine exemption for medical reasons, Clay stated that it is important for healthcare providers to remember that patients with conditions causing an intolerance to live vaccine may still be able to take the mRNA vaccines. Individuals that are concerned about taking any vaccine due to known health conditions should speak to a specialist for advice on different vaccination options. Primary care physicians may not know this off-hand.

8. Discuss Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Dr. Steven Andrews will provide the agency report for Aurora Medical Center
- Appointment of Ladwig as Citizen Member
- NowPow presentation by IMPACT 2-1-1
- Flu FUNdamentals Coalition and the work currently being done in Waukesha County to prepare for the 2021/22 flu season

9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Reich moved, second by Andrews to adjourn at 8:54 a.m. Motion passed without negative vote.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tristin Bruno.

Minutes Were Approved:



Date:

10/14/21