

# ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

## October 19, 2021

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, in the Large Conference Room, Human Services Center (via teleconference), Canton, New York 13617.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kevin Acres, Dr. Gregory Healey, Nancy Potter, Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith, Dr. Kathleen Terrence, Dr. Andrew Williams, (via teleconference)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jessica Rafter

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jolene Munger, Interim Director; Shannon Beldock, Administrative Assistant; Alivia Sheffield, PH Sanitarian; Jenesse Watson, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator; Renae Johnson, SCHN; Kindra Cousineau, PHN; Cassondra Caswell, Cornell Cooperative Extension

### CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Andrew Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Upon motion by K Acres, and seconded by N Potter, the minutes from the September 21, 2021 meeting were approved.**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment.

#### **Cassondra Caswell, Cornell Cooperative Extension:**

- Presentation on SNAP-Ed Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Initiative

This program is open to pediatrics, but it is aimed more towards age 13 years and up. We try to get the parent and child to attend together. If a child in the house is unable to attend, we are asking that a parent in that household be in attendance. Dairy is not currently a part of this initiative, the focus is on fruits and vegetables, but they do discuss dairy in the dietary recommendations. They have a separate initiative called "Farm to Community" which is connecting farmers to the community sites. The farmers come to the sites and bring their products (vegetables/meat/dairy).

Jolene noted a special time will be scheduled for Cassondra to share this information with the Public Health staff so any information she has can be given out to any of our programs.

#### **Sanitarian Update: Alivia Sheffield**

1. Continue to follow the complaint of the septic line discharging raw sewage (gray/black water) into the river. We are unsure of which house is currently hooked up to this pipe. The first dye test was performed today. Certified letters were sent out a week or so ago and only 3 of the 6 homes have voluntarily allowed us to schedule the dye testing. We will wait another week and send out another certified letter. Depending on what the issue is, it could fall under DEC, code enforcement or Public Health.
2. Complaint of smelly grey water discharging into individual's own yard that is causing a nuisance to neighbors. A certified letter was sent requesting they fix the issue or contact us to come up with some corrective actions. They did not contact the department so she

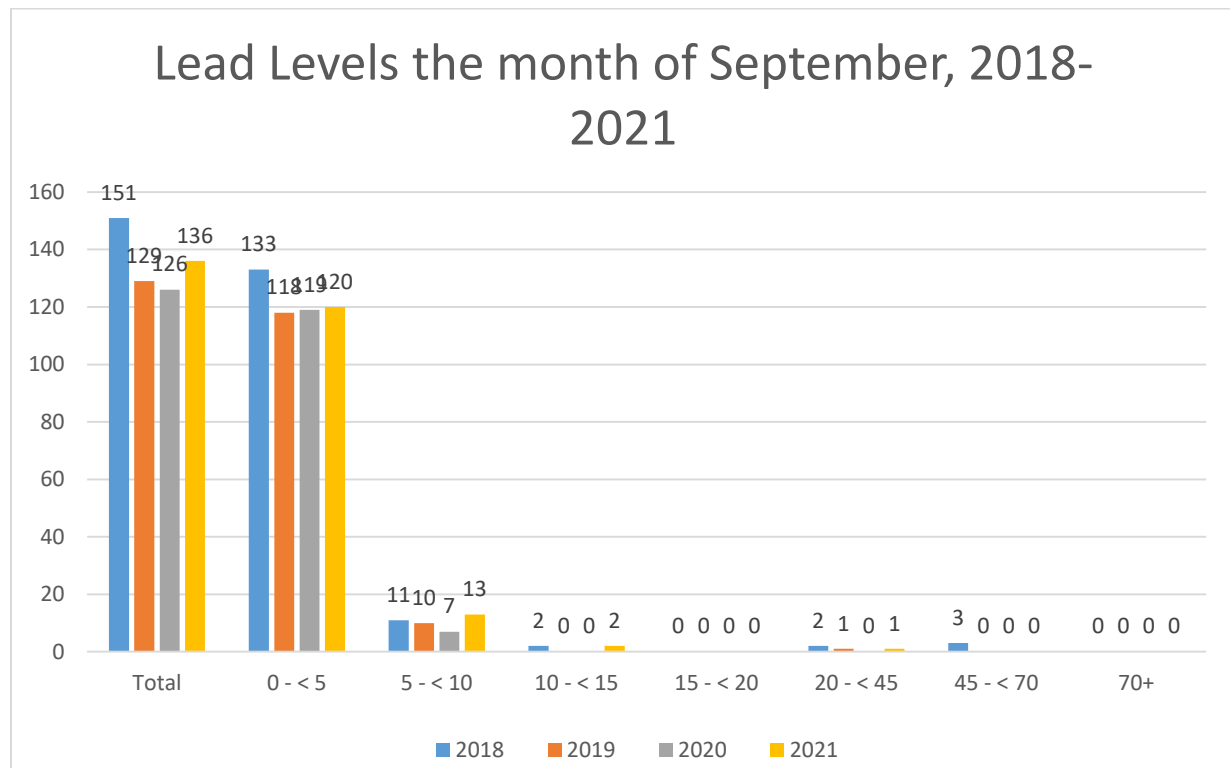
did go out to the property, the individuals were receptive and said they were waiting for me to come because the letter stated we would follow up if we didn't hear from them. We will ask for a time table of corrective action and what their plan is to fix the issue. It is a big undertaking, as it is a kitchen sink and it has been this way since the purchase of the house, (they are on municipal water) so we will put a 90 day stamp on it.

3. A water test done in the town of Macomb. Call from town supervisor regarding the Town Hall, Highway Department, as well as their Museum, stating the water is not good, it smells, and people haven't drank it for years. This is a well, they are not on municipal water. She assumes since it was used by the public that it would fall under the department of health, but it does not, because there needs to be (25) people there (60) days out of the year. We will be performing a water test to see if it is in fact a public health issue.

**Lead Update: Alivia Sheffield**

Lead level comparisons for September, 2021.

- September 2021 there were (136) lead tests performed
- Of the (136) there were (16) elevated, which is 12% elevated
- 5 ug/dL and 10 ug/dL (7 repeat, 5 new, 1 finger stick)
- 10 ug/dL and 15 ug/dL (1 new, 1 repeat)
- 15 ug/dL and 20 ug/dL (0)
- 20 ug/dL and 45 ug/dL (1 repeat)
- (3) cases discharged
- (78) on caseload as of end of September



<b>Percent elevated</b>				
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Post-2019, ≥ 5 µg/dL</b>	12%	9%	6%	12%
<b>Pre-2019, ≥ 10 µg/dL</b>	5%	1%	0%	2%

**Discussion of Bylaw Revisions:**

Dr. Terrence made a proposal to send an email to all Board of Health members regarding the extension of the current leadership of the Board of Health (President, Dr. Williams/Vice President Jessica Scillieri Smith).

Nancy and Dr. Healey agreed with Dr. Terrence and noted at this time, leadership extensions for both are needed. Dr. Healey noted an amendment to the bylaws should be made and either a special meeting scheduled before the end of October or wait until the December meeting to approve. Kevin agreed an amendment was needed regarding consecutive terms for officers.

Dr. Terrence will email members today regarding this matter to serve as notification. Dr. Williams asked that a special zoom meeting be scheduled for next week. Revisions will be made to the bylaws, be sent to Steve Button and Ruth Doyle for review, and then forwarded on to members for review prior to the special meeting. Dr. Terrence is hoping this will be completed by the end of the month.

**Upon motion by Dr. Terrence, seconded by N. Potter, and unanimously carried, members in attendance agreed to hold a special meeting in October to accept bylaw revisions and elect officers.**

**Election of President and Vice President:**

See discussion above.

**COVID-19: Jolene Munger**

**Case Update: As of October 19, 2021**

- 70 cases per day average. The state VCC helps with 45 cases per day and the rest are taken care of by the public health department.

**Weekly school cases:**

- K-12 there have been 253 cases so far this month – average of about 99 cases per week. This is down from 107 cases per week in September.

**Weekly college cases:**

- We are at 13 cases this week.

Jolene shared slides to show monthly cases and hospitalizations by age group.

- 53 current hospitalizations.

**COVID-19 Screening Testing for P-12 Schools**

Jolene noted the school testing program is going very well. There has been a lot of positive feedback from school superintendents and school nurses.

- 2976 tests (faculty/staff, etc.) – there have been 11 positives.
- 4000 Binax Now test kits coming.
- This testing is a mandate for any faculty, staff, contractor who is not vaccinated. This is optional for students. Some schools are allowing vaccinated staff to participate.

Public Health Department has started providing booster shots for Pfizer in the clinic. We are losing our temporary vaccinator the end of October and we are struggling to get volunteers again. We will be changing our schedule a little bit – Mondays will be clinics for Pfizer and Wednesdays we will alternate between Moderna and Johnson & Johnson once they are approved. We have pre-ordered 900 doses for Pfizer (5-11 year old) for when they become available. Anticipation of full approval by November 5, 2021. We have a tentative clinic scheduled for November 13, 2021 at SLU. We will be reaching out to pediatricians we had participate last time. We are going to have college mascots, canines, fire trucks, fire department flags for kids to take home, etc. to provide a distraction and entice them to want to come – we want to make this fun for kids.

Discussed the eligibility requirements for Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Dr. Williams noted the Moderna booster is a ½ dose and if you are immunocompromised and getting your 3<sup>rd</sup> dose, this is a full dose. These are not yet approved for Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. There may also be approval to mix and match vaccinations also, once the boosters are approved.

### **Presentation by Dr. Williams:**

Slideshow presentation on the COVID-19 National and Regional Update, and the SLC Update.

### **Discussion of Isolation and Quarantine Options:**

Dr. Williams shared if you look at the CDC and other states/counties are doing, there are other ways to do isolation and quarantine, in terms of duration, in terms of options to test out of quarantine in particular. He doesn't feel there is enough evidence one way or another to suggest that you can still control the pandemic with these truncated versions of quarantine, though believes there will be information coming out about these techniques. He thinks we can as a county and board of health essentially determine some of these things. Feels when we are in a circumstance where we are in the bottom five or ten counties, he really doesn't feel like it's a great time to start lightening up on anything along these lines. Dr. Terrence agreed and also think we have such low vaccinations rates that it would be fool hearty for that reason as well. Dr. Williams noted high prevalence and low vaccinate rate are the two things the CDC talks about. Availability for hospital admissions was discussed – Dr. Williams noted the hospitals are overwhelmed.

Jolene noted that some counties have implemented the test out option for quarantine. This creates a discord between the counties when one county does it and another does not. Lewis County has implemented the test out option strictly for asymptomatic individuals. If you report any symptoms, you are not eligible to test out of quarantine. This is just for quarantine – not isolation. Other counties moving towards this option are: Monroe, Fulton, Alleghany, Saratoga, Onondaga and Madison, based off conversations with directors and commissioners. She is not suggesting we go towards this or not, or wait for the state or the board of health, but wanted the board to know that these are some counties and with Lewis County doing it we are going to hear about it. It generates a higher call volume and we already have a high call volume as it is. Lewis County says it is not going very well, but they are still doing it. Individuals in their county heard it is available and an option through the CDC. Some counties are doing it through the schools because school guidance states to follow the CDC guidance and the CDC guidance has it in it. That's how they are getting around it and keeping kids in school. Just wanted to share this information as well. Dr. Williams' prediction is the NYSDOH, if cases continue to go down in

the state, may will introduce something innovative on a state level and that tends to be an easier thing for us to go along with. Feels if we make changes in this environment, you are stuck with the changes – worse possible thing is to say we are going to try this and then have to go back. It would destroy the whole system. Changes have to be thoughtful and you have to anticipate they will not be permanent. Dr. Williams noted there is a significant disconnect in the community in terms of indoor public mask wearing. Dr. Williams suggested maybe we revisit tracking how transmission is taking place.

Kindra shared the hardest part of indoor mask wearing issue is the fact we keep seeing all these activities happening (stadiums, concerts, etc.). When we try to talk to people about being socially distanced and wear a mask, nobody cares anymore. When we interview individuals they lie to us about going to weddings, they lie to us about where they've been. She doesn't know what the answer is or how we are going to fix it or get out of this mess, people just don't care anymore. It doesn't matter how hard we try to connect the dots and say you were sick, you really shouldn't have gone to school for four days and then not get tested for seven days, and not get the results for 10 days. It is mind boggling, you would think we would be able to put these things together, but they don't seem to care.

Dr. Williams noted the board of health appreciates all the public health department staff does, it's not easy, it's incredibly hard and it's been going on for months and months and months. The health department staff are such troopers and the board of health really appreciates what you do more than you can imagine.

## **OTHER ITEMS AND QUESTIONS**

N/A

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Drive-thru Flu Clinic was held on Friday, October 15, 2021 – in the pouring rain.

Drive-thru Rabies Clinic held on Saturday, October 16, 2021 – there were 119 pets vaccinated. Staff did this in the pouring rain as well. Year to date for rabies, we have vaccinated 1592 pets, which is up a little from last year (little over 1000), but still down from non-COVID years where we were averaging around 3000 rabies shots a year.

#### **Walk with a Doc Update: Jolene Munger**

Walks have been suspended. We are encouraging people to get out on their own – promoting healthy activities. The committee will be sharing information on the St. Lawrence Chamber website and they are working on sharing a hashtag for people to use on social media. Carolyn Zanta who was hosting the October walk is working on making a video with the speakers, the Clarkson PT Program, that will encourage people to get out and walk. Walk with a Doc will be shifting to a more virtual event for the remainder of 2021.

#### **Staffing Updates: Jolene Munger**

We filled a full time PHN position the beginning of October. We have one open nursing position – overall, we have (5) open full time positions we are struggling to fill. We are also losing our primary fiscal person – it will be rough for a few months until this position is filled.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

N/A

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Jolene asked Dr. Williams about a motion made in the previous meeting regarding the board of health writing a letter to the county – did he still want this on the agenda. This item can be removed.

## **ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2021 at 6:00 pm.**

## **ACTIONS ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP**

N/A