

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

May 17, 2022

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, in the Large Conference Room, Human Services Center, (via teleconference) Canton, New York 13617.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Acres, Mark Deavers, Nancy Potter, Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith, Dr. Kathleen Terrence, (via teleconference)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Gregory Healey, Dr. Andrew Williams

OTHERS PRESENT: Jolene Munger, Director; Carly Zimmermann, Deputy Director; Shannon Beldock, Administrative Assistant; Renae Johnson, SCHN; Miranda Corbine, PHS; Anne Marie Snell, Health Initiative; Justin/Potsdam, Community Member.

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by N. Potter, and seconded by Dr. Terrence, the minutes from the April 19, 2022 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment.

Jolene took a couple minutes prior to the start of the meeting to introduce Carly Zimmermann, our new Deputy Director. This is Carly's 3rd week at the department and her first Board of Health meeting. Carly thanked Jolene for the warm introduction and shared she is happy to be here to serve the residents of St. Lawrence County. Carly comes from Jefferson County and most recently New Hampshire.

COVID-19: Jolene Munger – slide presentation

Case Update: As of May 17, 2022

- 31,191 cases to date
- Current hospitalizations: 10
- 235 active cases and 31,485 completed isolation
- 191 cumulative deaths

Hospitalizations:

- Dropped a little in March
- Seems to be fluctuating a bit
- Admission about half & half – hospitalized for COVID-19/hospitalized with COVID-19

Weekly Cases:

- This past week – 374 cases, which is down a bit.

Daily Home Tests: May, 2022

- Individuals are still reporting home tests.
- For May, approximately half of test results have been home tests.

Average New Daily Cases per Week:

- This week was 53.43 cases per day.
- Down from 63 and 65 cases per day last week.
- March we got down to 41 per day.
- Hopefully with nicer weather cases will continue to decline.

Monthly Cases by Age Group:

- **April** – total of 1,429
- 15.19% of cases in 0-19 age range
- 40.43% of cases in 20-44 age range
- 12.88% of cases in 45-54 age range
- 14.28% of cases in 55-64 age range
- **May to date** – total of 978
- 20.65% of cases in 0-19 age range
- 37.01% of cases in 20-44 age range
- 14.21% of cases in 45-54 age range
- 13.29% of cases in 55-64 age range

Hospitalizations by Age Group:

- **April** – 96 total with 44 for COVID-19
- 13.04% of cases in 20-44 age range
- 10.87% of cases in 55-64 age range
- 26.09% of cases in 65-74 age range
- 26.09% of cases in 75-84 age range
- 15.22% of cases in 85+ age range
- **May to date** – 36 total with 20 for COVID-19
- 19.44% of cases in 55-64 age range
- 27.78% of cases in 65-74 age range
- 22.22% of cases in 75-84 age range
- 16.67% of cases in 85+ age range

Vaccination Status of Hospitalizations: May

- 55 total hospitalizations
- 16 not vaccinated (44.44%)
- 20 vaccinated (55.56%)

St. Lawrence County Statistics: As of May 17, 2022 (per CDC)

- Medium Community Level
- Positivity rate – 6.36 %
- Total Population Fully Vaccinated – 61.2%
- Total Population at Least 1 Dose – 64.8%
- Total Population \geq 5 years of age *Eligible Population – 68.2 %
- 65+ Fully Vaccinated – 86.4 %

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics: Public Health Department – May, 2022

- Mondays 8:30 am – 2:30 pm
 - Moderna (18+): 1st, 2nd, and booster; **50+ can receive additional booster**
 - Pfizer (12+): 1st, 2nd, and booster; **50+ can receive additional booster**
 - Pediatric Pfizer (5-11 year olds): 1st and 2nd dose

- Thursdays, 12:00 pm – 3:30 pm
 - Pfizer (12+): 1st, 2nd, and booster; **50+ can receive additional booster**
 - Pediatric Pfizer (5-11 year olds): 1st and 2nd dose
 - Janssen (18+): Single dose and booster

Update to COVID-19 Work:

- NYSDOH ended the COVID-19 virtual contact tracing program on April 28, 2022.
- A press release was sent out regarding this change. Individuals will be notified of their test results from the facility where the testing was done, but our department would not automatically be contacting them for case investigation. This was similar to the press release sent out in January, 2022 regarding the discontinuation of contact tracing.
- SLCPH still has some state contracted nurses through June 30, 2022 who will continue working on case investigations. These nurses are temps, and if they are offered other positions prior to June 30, 2022, there is the potential we could lose them sooner.
- The state contracted nurses are handling most of our data work with the exception of the information coming from ECLRS, because they don't have access. They are managing all home tests reported, incoming calls, follow up with hospitalizations and calling 65+ and under 5 positive cases (priority cases). Individuals calling who are symptomatic will be contacted by the nurses.
- We will begin discussion with County Administration on what will take place going forward – we will continue to report data twice weekly until the end of June. Unsure of what we will do in-house, because we will not have state support.
- FDA approved booster for 5-11 year olds, 5 months after 2nd dose. This may possibly go to the ACIP on Thursday, and from there the state will give us the approval, which they typically do the same or next day. We will prepare to provide boosters for this age group.

Jolene shared the state put out a press release regarding masking and at this point they are not enforcing any type of mask mandate. The information is for community awareness, if you are in a high community level area you should be masking indoors. We continue to remind individuals if you are sick, stay home – whether you may or may not have COVID-19, you could potentially have something else – flu is still prevalent.

Jolene noted she has received a no-cost extension on the Schools COVID-19 Grant – to provide testing in schools. We will reserve some of this funding in case a testing requirement is required next year. She is working with the school superintendents and state to identify what we can purchase for the schools (ie. Filtration system/air circulation, etc.) that is covered under the specific guidelines of the grant.

Sanitarian Update: Jolene Munger/Miranda Corbine

Calls for April:

Jessica mentioned a phone call she received last week and hopes there is some information on this issue/complaint regarding animals. Miranda noted the original complaint was from neighbors regarding possible contamination of their well water. She did do a site visit, but did not observe any issues while there. It does seem there is a history of the neighbors not getting along. State Troopers are now responding due to animal welfare complaints.

Sewage/Septic – (2) calls – both referred to Code Enforcement and DEC.

Housing issues – (4) calls – all referred to Code Enforcement.

Water calls – (3) – requesting information for water tests – referred to area labs.

Jolene shared she will attend Vacancy Committee next month to abolish the sanitarian position – the state has agreed to take it back. In doing so, we will no longer be the only county in NYS as a partial services county with a sanitarian. Noted most calls over the past year have not been for our department. Our Public Health Specialist currently oversees the lead management program and will provide environmental health education. The current education provided under the sanitarian will be enhanced and will continue to be State Aid able. Jolene noted recently NYS, in conjunction with NYSACHO, has been providing various trainings. One recent training provided information on putting different things in place, in particular, a Sanitary Code. She noted according to NYS, our sanitary code is not a legal document, as it was not submitted to the State for approval. It was passed by resolution by the Board of Health and Board of Legislators, but never sent to the state for approval to be sure it did not conflict with the state sanitary code. So, when requesting to abolish the sanitarian position, per the county attorney, both Boards would we need to do a resolution to rescind the sanitary code, as it is currently not a valid document. The Public Health Department will continue to provide most of the same services, but we will be able to focus on various environmental topics. Noted monthly press releases are going out to help educate the community on different environmental ideas/tips, we have not been able to do this before.

Jessica asked if Jolene was looking for the Board of Health to pass this today. Noted next month would be better, as it will give time to draft any paperwork needed to go through all required committees/boards in the same month. Abolishing this position has been discussed since December, but due to her being out of the office for a bit, she didn't want this to fall on someone else in the department. Jessica noted she would like Dr. Williams to be part of this decision as well. Jolene noted either way, something needs to be done regarding the sanitary code. Miranda has been going through it, and if for some reason the decision was to keep it, there are issues with it that would need to be fixed – it doesn't reference any laws in it.

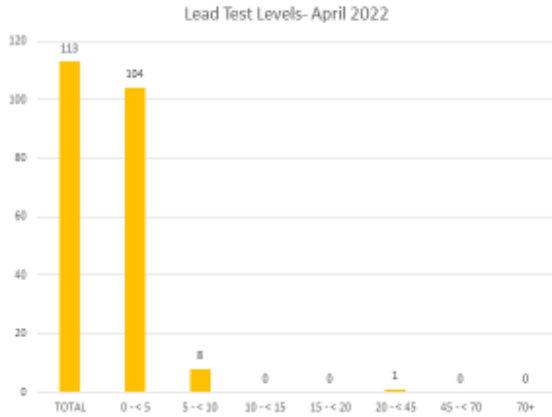
Jessica asked if there was a document Miranda has been working on noting the particular points that are problematic, and could this be sent to the Board members. Miranda shared a few areas in the code state “the full force of law,” without actually referencing a law. Jolene noted to keep in mind if this position is abolished, we will not be receiving these calls any longer, and the state would follow their state code. This information will be sent to members. It was noted Alivia had noted some issues prior to leaving and Miranda is building off of those.

Lead Update: Jolene Munger/Miranda Corbine

- April, 2022 there were (113) lead tests performed
- Of the (113) there were (9) elevated, which is 7% elevated
- (1) discharge
- (2) new admissions
- (83) on caseload as of May 9, 2022.
- 20 ug/dL and 45 ug/dL (3 total)

Jolene noted a slight increase in the Lead Grant – no increase in 2019 when the lead levels changed. There is discussion of potentially aligning with CDC and going down to 3 ug/dL – saying no lead level is safe. This is true, but there has been no discussion on providing additional funding for the increase in that case management, which could mean a larger caseload (3 ug/dL to 4.9 ug/dL range). We will continue to monitor what the state decides to see how this will affect our caseload.

Lead Update April 2022



113 lead tests were conducted during the month of April – of those 9 were considered elevated (7%)

1 Discharge

2 New cases

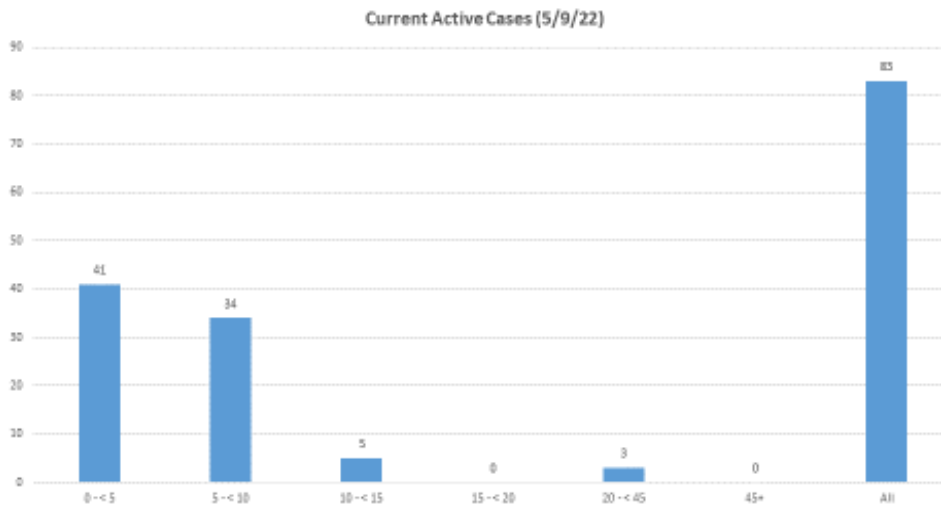
83 Active cases as of 5/9/2022

Percent Elevated		
2022		
Post-2019, $\geq 5 \mu\text{g/dL}$	9	7%
Pre-2019, $\geq 10 \mu\text{g/dL}$	1	.88%

*The above graph represents children tested for the month of April – it is only a snapshot of children in the LPPP who were re-tested or tested for the first time during April.

*The graph below shows the active caseload of children enrolled in the LPPP – not all children in the program are tested monthly.

Current Active Cases



OTHER ITEMS AND QUESTIONS

Jolene shared we are currently monitoring Hepatitis in children. No identified cases in St. Lawrence County – the closest county up north to us is Warren County. There have been (14) individuals under investigation around the state. An issue the state is finding is children are being transferred from one hospital to another and not all the data, labs and diagnoses are being sent with each transfer. Another advisory will be sent to providers and the health department as a reminder to collect data of symptoms and discharge data to help find potential cases. They are also working on a more specific case definition and surveillance through the CDC.

Rabies: we received results back today that a bat has tested positive for rabies. It was caught by a cat, who was UTD on shots and was given a booster (no human exposure). This is the first specimen in our county in quite some time. Jessica shared she has this data somewhere (county/species/years) and it has been a couple of years back – there was a positive horse in Hammond a couple years ago.

The Vaccine Equity Group has some funding available for PSAs (vaccine hesitancy). Some counties are looking to do them with providers on why they vaccinated their child. Looking for the Board's thought about the Public Health Department doing PSAs with providers. We would like to have a provider from each health care system and a private provider. We have been advertising and providing information, but we will be updating/adding more information.

The 2021 Annual Report will be discussed at the next meeting.

Kevin asked about current vacancies in the Public Health Department.

- Sanitarian (vacant since December, 2021) – looking to abolish this position and shift our Public Health Specialist to cover environmental health education for the community.
- (2) Public Health Nurses – requires a BA and continuing education. (\$58,700)
- Community Health Nurse (vacant since December, 2020) – requires BA with less experience or 2 years of Registered Nurse clinical experience. (\$56,000)

Registered Nurse positions, without experience specifically, were eliminated due to starting salaries being \$49,000. Salaries seem to be our issue with these positions, as County employment has to start at the base pay. Mark noted individuals out of school will start at \$70-\$72,000, and with experience and ER/ICU Nurse will easily make \$80,000.

Kevin asked how the department is adapting to not having these positions filled and if there are services not being provided.

- We have (2) retired Registered Nurses (2) working part time and will help with the immunizations clinics for back-to-school season.
- Currently (1 of 4) positions on the prevent side is filled - Public Health Nurse/Kindra.

Jolene noted some responsibilities have been shifted.

- The Emergency Preparedness Coordinator is helping with the rabies program.
- Public Health Specialist hired specifically for COVID-19 is now taking care of the lead program and environmental.
- Public Health Specialist hired specifically for COVID-19, but is able to work on anything vaccine related, is helping out with all of our vaccine stuff. She will be leaving the department May, 2023.
- We are working around things and doing the minimum to meet State standards. We have passed all of our audits – the work is getting done for the grant in a timely manner. We

have not missed any submissions. At this point, we may not be providing all that we could be providing to the community.

- New Service Coordinator will begin on May 30th.
- Deputy Director - Carly started on May 3rd.
- Currently non-medical staff is helping out with On-Call rotation.
- Community Health Educator has submitted her resignation effective August 5th.

Different options/ideas regarding recruitment were discussed. Also the Civil Service process and the long length of time to receive exam results.

Nancy thanked Jolene for the thorough annual report. Asked if a 1st quarterly report on the financial health of public health could be provided at the next meeting. Jolene said Pam Charleston/Principal Fiscal Officer will provide an update to members. Nancy noted she would like to meet with Jolene at some point to discuss questions she has regarding the annual report.

Jolene shared a positive for next year's annual report is we were able to claim 100% reimbursement for AVLs (annual vouchers) for the Preschool Program – this is the first time this has ever happened. Tari Burnett/Principal Account Clerk for the Preschool Program made daily contact requesting what was needed.

OLD BUSINESS

Public Health Annual Trainings:

Jolene reminded members the annual trainings are required by compliance. They are slightly different than the ones the Board of Legislators complete, as we have some that are more departmental specific. Please complete and send back to Shannon by May 31st. An email reminder will be sent. We can mail you a hard copy if needed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

ACTIONS ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP

N/A