

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

March 19, 2024

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, in the Large Conference Room, Human Services Center, Canton, New York 13617.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rita Curran, Nancy Potter, Dr. Kathleen Terrence, Dr. Gregory Healey

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Deavers, Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith, Dr. Andrew Williams

OTHERS PRESENT: Carly Zimmermann, Interim Director; Samantha Bice, Administrative Assistant; McKenna Boula, St. Lawrence Health /Clinical Research Department/Clinical Research Coordinator; Autumn Thompson, St. Lawrence Health /Clinical Research Department/Clinical Research Assistant; McKailey Lyndaker, St. Lawrence Health /Clinical Research Department/Clinical Research Assistant;

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Kathleen Terrence, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by R Curran, and seconded by K Terrence, the minutes from the February 20, 2024 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment.

Slideshow Presentation (double click below): Carly Zimmermann



BOH 3_19_24.pdf

Countywide Smoking Policy: Members determined that [Cattaraugus County – 2023 local law](#) is to be adapted for St. Lawrence County. Carly will work on a draft.

Respiratory Illness Update: Respiratory Illness levels are classified as “low” according to the CDC national Influenza like Illness data. CDC COVID-19 recommendations have changed, and now align with guidance for other respiratory viruses such as flu and RSV, recommending individuals to stay home until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. Masks and frequent handwashing are also included as methods to prevent transmission. New York State Department of Health has adopted this guidance. New guidance for school settings has not yet been released.

Board of Health Bylaws Review/Update: Carly reviewed the SLCBOH bylaw suggestions from County Attorney, Stephen Button. Carly noted there were suggestions to add verbiage around how to proceed when a meeting is required to be virtual, such as during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were additions to the section explaining the process of public comment requiring declarations indicating any impact the outcome of any debate or vote may have on them or others that they identify as being in unity with. Additionally, there was discussion around adding a line indicating the need to advertise the public the changes that are expected to allow the public two opportunities to make comments if so desired. Carly will add the additional sentence for review at the next meeting and a formal vote.

OTHER ITEMS AND QUESTIONS

Board of Health Orientation: Members were asked to consider what topics and information may be helpful for future Board of Health member orientation. The group was asked to consider things they wish they knew as a new BOH member and/or things they want those who become BOH members to know about the group.

Healthcare for the Aging: Members discussed challenges related to availability of healthcare for the aging as well as staffing shortages in the field. It was suggested that the county could explore offering training for home health aides. Andrea Montgomery, Director, Office for the Aging, provided Carly with some of her thoughts on the matter via email as she was unable to attend the meeting, see below:

- With the large numbers of older adults turning 65, there is a huge influx of older adults into an already stressed and over taxed system. By 2027, there will be 29,000 older adults in the County – making up 1/3 of the total population.
- Currently, there are only 4 nursing homes in the county – all with waitlists. Our nursing homes struggle to keep adequate and safe levels of staffing. Due to the limited space in nursing homes, many residents are being placed out of county – which creates a huge strain emotionally and financially on their families. Often, families cannot afford to visit their loved ones when they are placed hours away.
- With UH closing their Assistive Living facility, this leaves no options for this level of care in the county. Many of those residents are attempting to return home – which is not always the safest situation. Our county desperately needed this type of facility for those who need a moderate level of care and support, but don't quite meet nursing home qualifications yet.
- There continues to be a lack of home health care aides in our county. The mandated NYS raise in pay has helped, but there continues to be high turnover. As most older adults want to age in their homes, it is very challenging for them to find the level of care they need in order to remain safe in their homes. A majority of clients receive less than 6 hours per week – which is not nearly enough. Clients and caretakers assume that they will be able to find an aide that can help out 8 hours a day/7 days a week. Or even 24/7 care. And unfortunately, this does not exist unless the client and/or caregiver can afford to private pay a high hourly wage.

Andrea may be able to attend the June meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session began at 6:40 pm – all Non-members were excused.

ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm. Next meeting will take place on April 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

ACTIONS ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP

N/A