

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

September 15, 2020

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, in the Large Conference Room (via teleconference), Human Services Center, Canton, New York 13617.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jessica Rafter

OTHERS PRESENT: Dana Olzenak McGuire, Director; Shannon Beldock, Administrative Assistant; Jolene Munger, Deputy Director of PH; Alivia Sheffield, PH Sanitarian; Ellie Schonberg; Senior/Colgate College.

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Andrew Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by N. Potter, and seconded by K. Acres, the minutes from the August 18, 2020 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment.

Lead Update: Alivia Sheffield

There were seven (7) elevated lead levels (all under 10 µg/dL), two (2) of which were finger sticks so we are waiting until we get a confirmatory venous sample. One (1) has been transferred to another county.

Sanitarian Update: Alivia Sheffield

Issue #1:

Waddington may have a potential feral cat issue. This has been happening for years and the community is expressing concerns about health and safety issues. These cats are defecating all over town and have gotten inside the church where they had a litter of kittens inside the piano – is this a true public health concern?

Dr. Williams asked about contacting the SPCA for assistance. Alivia noted they have been contacted and they would assist if someone else caught the cats. The complainant was upset over this knowing the cats would be euthanized when they are unsure which ones actually belong to the individual and which are feral. There has been an individual who has volunteered over the years to capture and take them to the SPCA – donations have been given to her for helping. The SPCA involvement is limited. Dr. Healey noted these feral cats should not be placed with other cats.

Dr. Terrence suggested capturing, spay/neuter/vaccinate and release. This would be the most human way to deal with the issue. Alivia noted she had spoken to Jessica prior. Jessica noted

there are lots of feral cats in the county and it's hard to claim there is a public health concern. There is no law that requires animals be spayed/neutered and no leash law for cats. Animal control is all "dog control officers" and they have no legal jurisdiction. Suggested Waddington change their "dog control officer" to "animal control officer." Alivia asked what we would do about it if it were a public health issue. She will touch base with Dana.

Issue #2:

Complaint of animal smells, specifically cats in apartment buildings. Is there a public health concern involved here and would this be something we would investigate and write a letter? There was a previous case with human urine in an apartment complex. At what level would this be a public health risk/nuisance? Tenants cannot be evicted even though they are breaking rules on leases. Dr. Williams noted this does not register as a public health risk. Animals not going outside would be a risk to the individual in the apartment. Suggested each case be assessed individually and we need to work with the building managers. Suggested possibly writing a letter from the Board of Health, but first having a discussion with Mr. Button to determine if what we say is within our grounds. Dr. Terrence asked if there were a policy on the State level. Alivia said there is, but nothing about odors other than trash. Dr. Healey noted there would be an issue if there were an abundance of pets and they are not properly being cared for.

Jessica noted the main worry would be ammonia build up in the lungs from breathing this in. Further said there would be a hygiene issue, animal welfare issue, and to possibly look at this from a hoarding perspective. She is hard pressed to say there is true disease concern. Dana suggested the possibility of getting DOSS involved if it is in fact a hoarding case.

Dana introduced Ellie Schonberg, a senior at Colgate College. Ellie has worked with the Public Health Department preparing some data management for COVID-19. She was in attendance to present her informational slideshow study.

There was a discussion on what variables would be used to prepare this study. Is an individual's race being used? Some felt race was irrelevant and others noted with testing individuals are self-identifying their race with the questions being asked. Another characteristic is obesity, which impacts clinical outcome and St. Lawrence County struggles with – this should be a variable. Ellie noted she was not sure of the exact finding regarding race, the information was collected from the census. Noted she is open to thinking of other variables that are important to look at. She is creating an overview of the study right now – choosing variables in relation to COVID-19. Dana shared race is not always found on a case investigation sheet so is not a variable we have. Noted the state wants the health department to look at race for variables to testing. There were some worries about the study's perspective being our population is so homogeneous, less interesting with fewer subsets of population. Others felt the subsets were remarkable with a big chunk being highly educated and not mobile, while others are educated and wealthy. How do we capture the data if the questions aren't asked? Dr. Williams asked members if there was any objection to Ellie pursuing looking at demographics as it relates to COVID-19. Jessica about identifying the county by name – see if the BOL have a differing and strong opinion. Ellie noted the county name could be removed at any point. Dr. Williams asked about objections from the county level. Jessica suggested a progress report and preview of your findings to show the BOL later on, noting Kevin would be there and could give a better assessment on what the BOL would think.

At this point Ellie is undecided on how long she will gather data for her study. She is at the point of statistical analysis. She will have regular contact with Dana.

2019 novel Coronavirus: Dana Olzenak McGuire

There are (307) cases – three (3) new this evening. Some rapid testing within the county is not reported into the State system, ECLRS. Noted Mountain Medical is just doing nasal swab testing. The last few have come through the state system. Jolene noted there was a new executive order – if not going to a lab, additional information needs to be submitted. Dr. Williams asked about the reporting of positive tests and number of tests done. Jolene noted every test run needs to be reported. It's important to know how many Mountain Medical is doing.

Dana shared the public health department completed gym inspections this month – (14) have been completed and (2) are pending. Inspections going well – there are still a lot of questions to be answered by the state.

Nursing home staff testing continues to be weekly. Some results have been odd – lots of questions on false positives. First test positive and then 2nd negative – we still isolation for these individuals and quarantine their contacts.

Our whole response of what we do is based on what people tell us. We have a good relationship with the colleges. There have been six (6) cases this month with staff/students and a few last month. Dr. Williams noted Clarkson University and St. Lawrence University will be doing waste water surveillance.

We are working with K12 schools. The guidance is unclear and we are still waiting for an update. There are lots of questions on what to do with different scenarios in a school setting. Should the school nurse or the provider decide if a case is a Person under Investigation (PUI)? Dr. Terrence noted providers are fielding calls where they don't have a clear answer – erring on the side of caution.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session.

OTHER BUSINESS

No Other Business.

ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2020 at 6:00 pm.
(via teleconference)

ACTIONS ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP

N/A