

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

January 19, 2021

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, 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, Jessica Rafter, Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith, Dr. Andrew Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Kathleen Terrence

OTHERS PRESENT: Dana Olzenak McGuire, Director; Jolene Munger, Deputy Director of PH; Alivia Sheffield, PH Sanitarian; Jenesse Watson, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator; Rita Curran, Legislator

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Andrew Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion by J. Scillieri Smith, and seconded by N. Potter, the minutes from the December 15, 2021 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment.

Lead Update: Alivia Sheffield

There were (109) lead tests performed this month. Of these tests there were (7) elevated and (5) were repeat tests. Both the new cases are between 5 µg/dL and 6 µg/dL.

Sanitarian Update: Alivia Sheffield

There have been calls in the past month regarding black mold in our county (mostly rentals). There is only one licensed mold contractor near us and it is expensive. One renter whose significant other has cancer was asked by his medical provider if he had exposure and another incident where a child lived in household with black mold. There has been no rat complaints.

Dr. Williams noted this is a controversial subject. There are different types of black mold. He has a Nurse Practitioner, Donna, who did environmental toxicology testing for the State. He will touch base with her.

COVID-19: Dana Olzenak McGuire

Week of January 13 – today 586 cases

Last week – 595 cases

Prior week – 581 cases

December 23 – 329 cases

December 16 – 334 cases

Numbers have jumped since the holidays and through the first year. They do seem to have plateaued in the past three weeks. Daily average of about 80-85 per day.

Our processes have changed on for Case Investigations and Contact Tracing –we have been more dependent on the state virtual contact center (VCC). They are adding 12-18 more Case Investigators. They do not do workplace exposures or individuals who are symptomatic. They are doing all initial cases and if someone is symptomatic they are converted back to us. Individuals in quarantine that become symptomatic are also converted back to us. It was noted testing is being recommended to individuals. We have been back logged about 10 days – we are making sure that anyone connected to a positive case is contacted and required documentation is given.

There has been no new news of the designation of micro cluster. We have been working with area schools to make sure they are ready for testing if needed.

The SUNY Potsdam vaccine site is going well. Local Health Departments (LHD) began with 1b Essential Workers; pharmacies had age 65+ and the hospitals had 1a. Public Health received their first 200 doses today – individuals will receive an email with the registration link this evening. There are two more school districts also coming on board. We have two clinics scheduled for January 21 and January 22 at the SLC Jail – dry run tomorrow. Jenesse noted there has been lots of planning and the time is finally here and we are ready.

Dr. Williams noted the state operated vaccination sites are located at SUNY Potsdam and Plattsburgh. SLHS has partnered with the state and has developed a system to vaccinate 100 people per day and is providing 25 staff members to assist. They can vaccinate 1000 per day, but have started out at 500 per day this week – 12 hours/day, 7 days/week. They are provide the Pfizer vaccine at this site. This system seems to be running smoothly. They have a plan in place for left over vaccine that will be given to a prepopulated standby list of individuals – EMS, Law Enforcement, etc. with the flexibility to show up for a 6:30 pm appointment if needed. These sites are open to anyone in the region – technically anyone in New York State. There are EMS personnel on site, a Physician Assistant from SLHS is there throughout the day and the National Guard helps with assisting individuals with mobility needs to get from their vehicle into the building. A concern is having one site in our large county – transportation issues for some. The State website only lists their clinics. We will focus on decentralized PODs in the weeks to come.

The Pfizer vaccine needs to be in a specific freezer. SLHS has two freezers and a pharmacist is managing the vaccine. It was shared that Plattsburgh stores vaccine and then sends it to the Potsdam site as needed. This is correct – the vaccine is shipped in freezer boxes and thawed onsite.

There was a discussion surrounding getting the most vulnerable individuals vaccinated and why area physicians were not able to receive vaccine in their offices. Some individuals have family members who can advocate for them and get them scheduled. Office for the Aging is also helping by interviewing individuals when they deliver meals and assisting in getting individuals to the sites. A big concern is for those who do not have internet or family to assist.

Regarding pharmacies and vaccinations, they are to receive more inventory. It was noted that when Kinney Drugs received their allocation and opened up the online appointment process they filled up quite quickly. Their first 100 vaccine appointments filled up in about 20 minutes and then their second 100 vaccine appointments filled up within 30 minutes. They keep a very small standby list. With the online process we may not be benefitting the individuals who really need the vaccine due to availability of internet/computer.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion of the Governor's intent on legalizing marijuana and Public Health's role in that decree. The counties legislative bodies will have to decide if it will be sold in the county. It was noted that NYSACHO took a position which was contrary to recreational legalization and it is supposed that will be the Board of Health's position as well.

Dr. Williams noted we are doing quite well as a county with the COVID response. It has been relatively organized thanks to the Public Health Department staff.

There was discussion of the capacity of individuals that are hospitalized (38). Dr. Williams noted it did reach a concerning level – CPH is comfortably at 20-30 inpatient. It started to approach that level and they were prepared to activate their plan to move some patients to Adirondack or CHMC (10 their limit) if needed. If other places were to fill up, their 3rd level of surge would be to use their 4th floor, cancel surgeries and clinics and bring that staff in to assist. Their biggest concern is a variant strain that is not vaccine responsive, not easy to test for, and more contagious. This would turn things around.

There was a discussion on allergic reactions from the COVID vaccine. Most common with the initial shot is passing out (typically men). One anaphylactic reaction has occurred, 85% experience a sore arm, some don't feel well for a day and the second day they feel better. On the other end, some have a little bit of sore arm and nothing else. About 25-30% of people don't feel well for a couple of days. Very tiny bit who have experienced rash/hives – injection site redness/hot. Some with slightly odd things. No irreversible serious things. CDC data showed the first 2 million vaccinated had 22 serious reactions. The CDC Be Safe app, with 12 million people vaccinated only has 1/3 to 1/4 participation in the program. This data has not been made public as of yet – will be interesting to see.

The second vaccine dose will be available if you have had the first dose. A delayed second shot is just as effective. SUNY Potsdam site is giving the second appointment at the time of your first vaccine appointment. A concern is individuals showing for their second shot. It was noted CDMS does not have a clinical documentation section where reactions to the first shot could be documented.

Dr. Williams noted communication is important. It is important to get information out to the community.

Kevin noted constituent complaints regarding quarantine have dropped right off. Seems they are scrambling to get vaccinated so their focus has changed.

ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2021 at 6:00 pm. (via teleconference)

ACTIONS ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP

N/A