

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

March 16, 2021

The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter known as SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, March 16, 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; Shannon Beldock, Administrative Assistant; Alivia Sheffield, PH Sanitarian; Jenesse Watson, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator; Joseph Lightfoot, Legislator

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Andrew Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

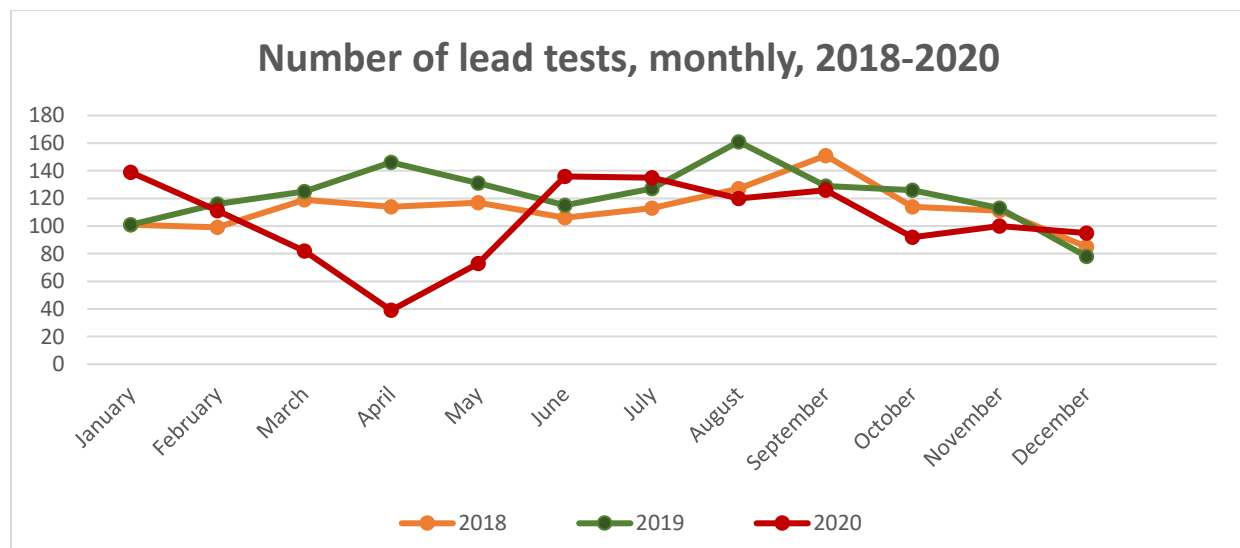
Upon motion by K Acres, and seconded by N Potter, the minutes from the February 16, 2021 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment.

Lead Update: Alivia Sheffield

There were (98) lead tests performed this from 2/16/21 – 3/15/21. Of these tests, (5) were considered elevated, but all were less than 10 $\mu\text{g/dL}$ (9.3, 8.8, 8.0, 6.0, 5.3). The 5.3 was a finger stick and we are awaiting results. Alivia shared the graph below to show the comparison of the number of lead tests performed in 2018, 2019, 2020 and first couple months of 2021 (not on graph).



Dana noted November, December and January we saw the highest number of cases this year for the response, so if you look at the number of lead testing in those months it really doesn't show a decrease, when individuals may have not been going out as much. While it did show a decrease in the spring, it did not do it in the fall when we had a much higher number of cases. Dr. Williams asked about trends, in terms of higher elevated numbers. Alivia will look at the trends for the next meeting. Noted wellness checks are performed for children ages 1 and 2 years, but we encourage, and with state regulations they should be doing a lead screening for children under the age of 6 years, and if they answer yes to any of the lead questions they should be testing at that point as well. Dr. Williams noted SLHS was trying to get more Point of Care lead testing devices like Dr. Terrence's office, and hopefully increase the number of lead tests performed and reduce the number of lap slips given for testing.

Kevin asked what happens once the family is notified of the high lead level, are the living arrangements monitored. Alivia noted this depends on the level. For the very high numbers we do work with Upstate Medical to do chelation to get the lead out when it is extremely high. Education is provided regarding nutrition that is higher in iron, calcium and vitamin C which will help lower the level. Some families are living in older homes (prior to 1978). A check for lead paint could be done and a possible abatement of the home. Alivia noted lead levels can decrease in the body. Dr. Williams noted depending on the levels, there could be damage to neurological development, healthy bone formation and/or renal issues at the higher levels.

Sanitarian Update: Alivia Sheffield

There are currently no open investigations.

Complaints:

- Landlord complaint about a tenant's garbage, but it would just be a landlord issue.
- There was an issue with manholes backing up in a trailer park. This is not something the Public Health Department covers – we are working with the DEC to get this issue fixed.
- One water test was sent out and another test was done.
- Another cat complaint in Ogdensburg that we are looking into.

COVID-19: Jolene Munger

Vaccine:

- 3025 first doses have been administered.
- 1047 second doses have been administered.

Regional Dashboard was updated this evening:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/adkaco#!/vizhome/Covid-Draft/Dashboard>

- 34.47% of estimated eligible individuals have had at least one vaccine.
- 21.27% have completed their 2-dose series (Pfizer/Moderna) or the 1-dose Johnson & Johnson.
- As a region of (7) counties we are at 33.3% for first doses.

Vaccination PODs have been set up in various locations around the County. There is one scheduled today (March 16, 2021) in Clifton Fine at the Star Lake Fire Department. On Friday, March 19, 2021, our largest clinic thus far is scheduled at SLU (975 slots available). The newly eligible group begins tomorrow (March 17, 2021). We are currently working with the St. Lawrence Centre Mall in Massena to have a larger vaccination location. We will be back to provide 2nd doses next week in Gouverneur (March 26, 2021) and Massena (March 27, 2021).

Kevin asked about the new eligibility category. Jolene shared as of March 17, 2021, the 1B eligibility category will be expanded to include public-facing and public employees, not-for-profit workers who provide public-facing services, and essential in-person public-facing building service workers, etc. There was a discussion regarding the eligible population that has been vaccinated and the demographic categories. Are there individuals who are still not interested or are we not hitting all demographics and need to do additional outreach? Dr. Williams noted some individuals are age eligible, but they don't currently meet an eligibility category to be vaccinated.

Case counts:

- Total positive cases today was (17) – this is the highest total for the last week.
- Total positive cases to date is (6488).
- We currently have (6) individuals hospitalized.

There has been a decline in cases at schools and colleges for January and February. A lot of the teachers have been vaccinated and Nursing Home workers are being vaccinated.

Updated DOH guidelines for travelers: if you are 2 weeks post your 2nd vaccine you do not have to quarantine. If you have been positive for COVID-19 within 90 days and not symptomatic you do not have to quarantine. The Governor has announced as of April 1, 2021 the current travel restrictions will end – we have no guidelines yet for the Local Health Department (LHD). We are hoping to get information out prior to April 1, 2021.

Restaurants are now able to utilize 75% capacity. Weddings are added in the venue of 100 people or 75% capacity. There are still questions regarding proms and graduations.

At this point there has been no determination on changing the guidance on the 6 feet separation rule to 3 feet separation in schools. Dana noted some schools are choosing to do this with barriers – this will mean more students will be quarantined if there is a positive case in the classroom – this is not current guidance right now. Dana noted we are working with the schools on putting out accurate guidance to the families. Dr. Williams is hoping this will not be a county by county guideline. Kevin noted there doesn't seem to be significant research on the 6 feet separation and the science on infection rate and fatality seems to be low. Noted Public Health is fighting more than one issue – there have been 8-9 suicides since January and mental health cases have increased 80-90%. This pandemic is clearly damaging to the health of individuals.

There was a discussion on the advertising of available vaccination clinics and help for individuals who do not have internet and/or computer access. Scheduled clinics are shared with the media outlets, posted on the St. Lawrence County Government and Public Health Department websites, and on the Public Health Department Facebook page. Registration help is being provided by Office for the Aging, Public Health staff and staff helping in the call center.

Dr. Healey noted the nursing homes and assisted living facilities have been vaccinated. He is hoping at some point to have the vaccine in his office to provide it to his patients or be able to give it in the home. Feels the vaccines are amazing. Dr. Williams noted patients are being vaccinated – thought some may be hesitant – there is a high rate being vaccinated. People should be encouraged to receive the vaccine. Kevin noted, as with the flu vaccine, there is the possibility of a reaction and we still encourage people to receive it.

Joe mentioned Office for the Aging (OFA) and their meal delivery program for the homebound/elderly. Asked if there is a plan for outreach to OFA for a list of these individuals to ensure they have been, if they want to, or can be vaccinated. Jolene shared the Public Health

Department is working with OFA – as of March 5, 2021 OFA had 1207 individuals scheduled for vaccination. There are 24,000 seniors in St. Lawrence County and 600 individuals involved in the meal program. We are working on getting lists from the home care agencies. The Public Health Department only has a few Registered Nurses and they are assisting with the vaccination PODs right now. We are being told the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will not be available until the end of March. The state sites have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, we have not. This vaccine will be provided to individuals who are age 60+, homebound or getting out of the hospital. Joe thanked Jolene for the outreach.

Jolene noted they are working on the 2020 Annual Report for the Public Health Department – this will be presented at the April 20, 2021 BOH meeting.

Dr. Williams thanked Dana for her unbelievable job at the Public Health Department. As a community, a lot of people look up to you. Noted the good news is she is living with the COVID-19 numbers going down.

Dana shared with members she had wanted to work on a pandemic and was going to Africa during the Ebola pandemic. Told Jolene she did a fantastic job presenting at this meeting. Thanked the Board for the support given on all topics and taking an interest in what the Public Health Department does. Thanked Jessica S and Dr. Terrence for the help they provided during the COVID-19 response. Told Dr. Williams she didn't know where she would be without him. Noted her last day is Friday, March 26, 2021, but she will be available until the end of April if anyone needs her. She has taken a teaching position in the Physical Therapy field at Clarkson University.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2021 at 6:00 pm.
(via teleconference)

ACTIONS ITEMS FOR FOLLOW UP

1. Alivia will look at the trends in lead testing for the next meeting.
2. Presentation of the 2020 Annual Report for the Public Health Department.