

Pima County Board of Health Minutes  
May 22, 2019  
Abrams Building, Room 1108  
3950 S. Country Club Road  
Tucson, Arizona 85714

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Horwitz called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

Attendance was as follows:

Board Members:

Mr. Bin An – Absent

Mr. Richard Elías – Absent

Mr. Rene Gastelum

Mr. Charles Geoffrion, Vice President

Ms. Mary Lou Gonzales

Dr. Paul Horwitz, President

Mr. Mike Humphrey

Mr. Miguel Rojas

Dr. Gail Smith

Ms. Carolyn Trowbridge – Absent

**A quorum was established (7)**

Non-Board Members:

Dr. Francisco García, Assistant County Administrator, Pima County

Dr. Marcy Flanagan, Pima County Health Department Director

Ms. Paula Mandel, Pima County Health Department, Deputy Director

Presenters:

Ernestina Limon, Program Coordinator, Pima County Health Department

Mark Person, Program Manager, Pima County Health Department

Kim Tham, Special Staff Assistant Senior, Pima County Health Department

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Rene Gastelum led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. MINUTES ADOPTION**

- Adopted Board of Health April 24, 2019.

The motion was made and seconded (Mr. Rojas / Mr. Gastelum) that the April 24, 2019, minutes be adopted with revision. Motion carried 7-0.

**4. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

- Dr. Flanagan introduced Dr. García who updated the Board on the transition process of the Health Department's director position. Dr. García indicated that the reaccreditation process of the Health Department is underway and leadership needs to focus on this task.

Dr. García with his current responsibilities, would not be able to provide the bandwidth the department needs during this transition. Therefore, Dr. García began reaching out to colleagues in the community to see if there was some interest in an interim role. Dr. Bob England, who was the Maricopa County Health Department Director for approximately 13 years is interested. Dr. England began his public health career in Pima County and has become a nationally recognized public health leader. Dr. England will take the helm of this department with three main goals: 1) continue operations without interruption, 2) reassess our program strengths and opportunities, 3) assist with identifying a permanent replacement.

While Director of Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Dr. England served in numerous roles at the Arizona Department of Health Services, including medical epidemiologist for HIV and STD services, chief medical officer for the Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control, TB control officer, and state epidemiologist. He previously served as a local health director in Connecticut. He has worked in public health for his entire career, including Maricopa County, Pima County and Milford, Connecticut. His degrees come from University of Arizona College of Medicine and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Mr. Geoffrion inquired if the accreditation process is an annual process. Dr. Flanagan indicated that the reaccreditation process occurs every five years. Preparation, documentation, and application processes can take several years.

- Dr. Flanagan updated the Board on County and City collaboration with assisting the asylum seeking migrant families. Mr. Huckelberry has reached out to Senator's Sinema and McSally offices with concerns of the lack of federal funding and support in addressing this issue. In turn the CDC and partners with the ADHS are allowing proposals to redirect some of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) funding which will provide assistance to our faith-based organizations partners. Dr. Smith inquired if there are any long term arrangements in the form of housing, jobs, or legal fees for these families. Dr. Flanagan indicated that the PHEP funding is only available for a short term basis to assist the Catholic Community Services. As for long term, there are still discussions happening at the local, state, and federal level. Dr. García shared that most of these migrants have a destination outside of Arizona. These funds are short term for logistics in assisting these migrants to get to their final destinations. Additionally, the Board of Supervisors recently approved the Operation Stonegarden grant and are working to propose to the federal government ways to redirect some funds to our partners. Mr. Rojas suggested an empty army reserve location on Silverlake to house migrants after the monastery closes in August. Dr. García indicated that the County is working on getting access to this building to determine if this location is ideal to house migrants. The County is also looking into the Hohokam Middle School to see if it is a viable location.

- Dr. Flanagan introduced Paula Mandel who gave an update on the Hepatitis A outbreak. Since November 2018 the Epidemiology Division has investigated over 200 cases. 186 cases are confirmed and are homeless and use illicit drugs. There have been over 4,220 encounters at 134 locations. Over 2,000 doses of vaccine have been administered. The demographics are 75% of the cases have been hospital admissions. The median age range is 36 years old, 68% are male, 32% female, 68% are illicit substance users, 25% are street homeless, 22% are both illicit substance users and street homeless.

There are six counties in Arizona that are reporting Hepatitis A cases with the most cases in Maricopa and Pima. Community partnerships continue with our hospitals, behavioral health institutions, correctional system, and methadone clinics. Our community outreach continues on the streets and the treatment and residential centers. Mr. Geoffrion inquired if the numbers are static in the summer months. Ms. Mandel indicated that the Epidemiology team have seen a decrease in the number of cases consistently over the last three weeks however the largest number of cases remain the illicit substance users.

- Mr. Humphrey inquired on the measles outbreak. Ms. Mandel indicated that both Pima County cases have been investigated and are related to travel. The county remains on constant surveillance and observation for both cases. Dr. Flanagan shared that the Governor recently proclaimed that Arizona is a pro-immunization state.

- Mr. Humphrey inquired if there are any bills that would impact abortion services. Dr. García indicated there are no bills that have been put through legislation at this time but does expect a bill in future sessions.

- Mr. Humphrey inquired on the status of the Tobacco bills. Dr. García indicated that both bills are essentially frozen until the budget clears legislation.

5. **SUMMER SCHEDULE:**

- Dr. Horwitz inquired if the Board would like to keep monthly meetings during the summer months. Dr. Smith indicated that the Board should continue to meet monthly.

The motion was made and seconded (Dr. Smith / Mr. Rojas) to keep monthly Board of Health meetings during the summer months. Motion carried 7-0.

6. **SUICIDE PREVENTION:**

- Dr. Flanagan introduced Ernestina Limon and Mark Person who are over the Community Mental Health and Addiction Program. Ms. Limon began the presentation indicating that every 40 seconds someone in the world dies by suicide which equates to approximately 800,000 people per year. By 2020 the World Health Organization predicts that someone will commit suicide every 20 seconds. In the United States depression is the 10th leading cause of death, and the second leading cause of death among 15-24 year-olds. There is one death by suicide in the United States every 12 minutes which equates to 105 deaths every day. Nearly 20% of teens consider suicide and 1 in 12 attempt suicide. Approximately 19% of young adults contemplate or attempt suicide each year. 22 veterans die by suicide each day. The LGBT community are three times more likely to experience a mental health condition. In 2017 there were 7,982 deaths by suicide in the elderly community. In Arizona suicide is the 8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death. According to the recent Community Health Needs Assessment suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in Pima County with 223 deaths in 2017 with the largest age range between 20-29 years-old, 77% male, 23% female with the highest cause being firearms. At this time the Indian Nations are not included in these figures.

The Pima County Health Department has launched the Community Mental Health and Addiction Program to bring new emphasis and greater awareness to issues surrounding addiction, mental health, and suicide prevention and to combat the stigma that accompanies these afflictions. The message of this program is that there is a productive

life to live. This program's action items include raising awareness, link citizens to organizations that offer support, work with community partners and stakeholders to promote the need for suicide prevention, promote best practices, reduce the stigma around suicide and train the PCHD staff on suicide prevention.

Community partners include the Arizona Complete Health, National Alliance on Mental Health Southern Arizona (NAMI), USA Mental Health First Aid, and NAMI Ending the Silence. The Health Department has a presence at these conferences/locations to provide information on signs and symptoms of suicide: Annual Youth and Peace Conference, Redefining Safe 2019 Conference, South Tucson, University High School, Sabino High School, Greater Faith Church, and Cholla High School.

Ms. Limon shared that she attempted suicide at 10 years-old, as a teenager, and as an adult. Ms. Limon shares her story when she goes into the community because she knows what one is going through when they are contemplating suicide and encourages open conversation in schools or any venue to prevent others from contemplating suicide and understanding that there is a life to live.

7. **HOMELESS IN TUCSON'S SUMMER HEAT:**

- Dr. Flanagan introduced Kim Tham who presented Homeless in Pima County's Summer Heat. There are metrics from hospital discharge data on heat related illnesses and is incorporated in this presentation. The 2018 heat season was the hottest on record for Arizona. These factors are exaggerating health inequalities in those from lower social economic status, those without access to care, and those already vulnerable. Heat also changes in vector/food-borne illness risk. These changes increase the need for early warning systems, health care that can adapt to increasing needs, and multi-sector partnerships. Factors related to heat illnesses are recreational/occupational exposure, age, medications that impair ability to regulate body temperature, and substance/health conditions that impair heat coping. Hospital discharge data show vulnerabilities include homelessness, substance misuse, and mental illness. 50-60% present to the emergency room with alcohol or illegal drugs, and 30% take anti-psychotic medications.

The heat-related deaths are the highest in the hottest months which are June, July, and August. Pima County accounts for 38% of deaths from excessive heat across the state. The number of heat-related deaths among homeless is unknown. Heat-related deaths do not include all migrant remains found in the desert. That may be why there is an over-representation of deaths related to heat in Pima County. These remains are not included because there is not a way to identify the cause of death in late stages of decomposition. The number of heat-related emergency department visits returns to expected values in trends at the end of the summer. The number of people coming into our emergency departments shows the age adjusted rate per 100,000 is lower than Maricopa County. In Pima County in 2017 there were 193 emergency department visits with 26 inpatient admissions. This data could be translated to costs associated to homelessness.

The Tucson Pima Collaboration to end Homelessness (TPCH) is a city / federal initiative that bring together service providers, civic organizations, faith-based organization, municipal entities, and individuals to strategize ways to end different types of homelessness that include veterans, chronic, family, and youth. TPCH has 11 sites that provide respite from the sun. Every site will have varying services but each site is a safe,

air conditioned area that may provide water, bug repellent, flip flops, sunglasses, sunscreen, hats, and backpacks. The flagship respite location is the main library on Stone. This site has nursing staff available to perform health evaluations. Donations are collected at this site. If a homeless individual owns a dog, the dog will only be allowed if it is a service animal due to liabilities. Dr. Smith, who is a member of the PACC Board, provided information on sites that do allow homeless with dogs such as Gospel Rescue Mission, Prima Vera Foundation, Old Pueblo Community Center, Salvation Army, and Esperanza. Community Outreach will also provide supplies for the dog including booties, water bottles, collapsible bowls, and information on heat-stroke in pets.

The communication campaigns include Beat the Heat that provides information on summer in Arizona that include ways to stay safe and cool while in the desert. This information is available on the Health Department's website and brochures are provided to surrounding resorts/hotels and posted at several trailheads. May 28 through June 1, 2019, is Arizona Heat Awareness Week which is statewide campaign that promotes heat awareness with different messaging each day of the week.

The Health Department is building climate readiness, adaptation, and resiliency which is an Environmental Public Health Initiative where graduate level interns utilized to engage Health Department leaders to identify opportunities to integrate resilience activities in programs, build staff capacity and knowledge, and demonstrate successes and needs for additional funding. The Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) model is supported by the CDC. The ADHS is a grant recipient that provides funding for Pima County and three other Arizona counties for heating and cooling centers.

**8. CALL TO AUDIENCE:**

There was a speaker from the audience. This speaker did not complete a form, nor provide a name. This speaker asked about the rate of suicides increasing dramatically by 2020. Ms. Limon provided additional information to this individual.

**9. SUMMATION OF ACTION ITEMS AND PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Dr. Horwitz reminded the Board to email him with items for the agenda.
- Dr. Horwitz requested that any presentations available be provided to the Board prior to the meetings to review before the meeting.

**10. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 P.M.