

Pima County Board of Health Minutes
February 26, 2020
Abrams Building, Room 1108
3950 S. Country Club Road
Tucson, Arizona 85714

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. 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 – Absent
Mr. Charles Geoffrion, Vice President
Ms. Mary Lou Gonzales
Dr. Paul Horwitz, President
Mr. Mike Humphrey
Dr. Kathryn Kohler
Mr. Miguel Rojas – Absent
Dr. Gail Smith
Ms. Carolyn Trowbridge

A quorum was established (7)

Non-Board Members:

Dr. Francisco García, Deputy County Administrator, Pima County – Absent
Dr. Bob England, Pima County Health Department Interim Director
Ms. Paula Mandel, Pima County Health Department, Deputy Director

Presenters:

Dr. Don Gates, Pima County Health Department, Budget Manager
Dr. Paloma Beamer, Associate Professor with the College of Public Health, University of Arizona
Dr. Marc Verhougstraete, Assistant Professor with the College of Public Health, University of Arizona

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Humphrey led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. MINUTES ADOPTION

- Adopted Board of Health Minutes January 22, 2020.
- Adopted Board of Health Budget Subcommittee Minutes January 30, 2020

The motion was made and seconded (Ms. Trowbridge / Dr. Kohler) that the January 22, 2020, Board of Health Minutes be adopted. Motion carried 7-0.

The motion was made and seconded (Ms. Gonzales / Mr. Humphrey) that the January 30, 2020, Board of Health Budget Subcommittee Minutes be adopted. Motion carried 7-0.

4. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

- Dr. England shared that second interviews for the Health Department Director applicants are scheduled for March.
- Dr. England updated the Board on the coronavirus. All jurisdictions are following CDC guidelines for those returning travelers from China. This guideline will change as it spreads. 79 travelers have been interviewed, placed in risk category (low, med, high), and quarantined (at home) if in high risk. There are no cases in Pima County.

The coronavirus is contagious, the infection is usually mild, asymptomatic infection exists, those who are asymptomatic can transfer the infection. Due to the potential of community spread the CDC guidelines are likely to fail. The number of infections will be higher than the reported cases. The mortality rate is likely approximate to what is seen in influenza. Earlier this week, the CDC was reporting that it may be time to close schools, businesses, transit, and cancel public events. Dr. England stated that this coronavirus will feel like a bad flu season and based on Dr. England's experience public events, businesses, and schools don't close for the flu. If this is done, more harm can occur due to economic consequences than the disease may cause.

Dr. Horwitz inquired who has the authority to close schools. Dr. England stated that each State has Public Health authority and delegates that down to the local level. Dr. England has the authority in Pima County to close schools, as do individual school districts and schools.

Dr. Horwitz inquired how the HD is handling the community panic factor. Dr. England stated that the HD continues to communicate with health care partners, hospitals, and urgent cares and use community notices via press releases, news and radio interviews, and social media. The Public Health message is the same as the flu season; wash hands, don't touch face, don't shake hands, stay home if sick, stay home if immune suppressed, get plenty of rest, and drink lots of water.

Ms. Mandel stated that the Pima County HD's website is updated daily to keep those visiting the site informed on any cases in Pima County and what should be done to mitigate the chances of acquiring the virus.

There are not yet test kits available from the CDC, however, test reagents are being released soon to state labs. Once the reagents are provided it will take the labs approximately a week to get approved for testing. How much testing a lab performs depends on capacity of the lab and the quantity of reagent provided. Currently, all tests are being done in Atlanta and the turnaround time can be up to a week-and-a-half. Based on CDC's criteria, early community spread may not be identified.

Dr. England's plan is to not inflate public concern and suggests the Board Members reinforce this message to their Board of Supervisor if an opportunity arises.

Dr. Kohler inquired if there is a spontaneous development of COVID-19 or if the development is created. Dr. England responded that this is a spontaneous mutation, as this happens frequently with Coronaviruses.

5. BOARD OF HEALTH BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

- Dr. Horwitz acknowledged and thanked Ms. Gonzales, Ms. Trowbridge, Mr. Geoffrion and Dr. Gates for their efforts with the budget subcommittee. Dr. Gates shared with the Board that the committee met three times discussing the status of the Health Fund Budget. Potential project opportunities include suicide prevention, suicide mortality review, and studies on the effects of gun violence in Pima County. These projects can be funded independent of the HD Health Fund.
- Dr. Horwitz shared that he's been assured that the Health Fund balance will be maintained and that Pima County Human Resources will revisit all nursing salary studies due to the difficulty of retaining Public Health Nurses (PHN). Dr. Gates shared that a pay increase could be \$250,000-\$500,000.
- Dr. Gates shared that an accounting change, loss of a \$600,000 credit occurred that improves the optics of the budget. Further, with the funding of the Golden Pin property build-out and the possible PHN pay increase the HD budget will be able to fund these project opportunities.
- Dr. Gates shared that in June, the Board of Supervisors are expected to adopt the County budget.
- Ms. Trowbridge inquired if the HD is moving forward with making feminine menstrual products more available. Dr. Gates shared that the HD will promote and partner this project with other agencies. This will not have an impact on the budget.

6. PRESENTATION OF PER- AND POLYFLUORALKYL SUBSTANCE REPORT FOR ACCEPTANCE

- Dr. England introduced Dr. Beamer and Dr. Verhougstraete who are among the writers of this report. Dr. England shared that the Board of Health needs to accept receipt of this report so that it can be made public.

Dr. Beamer shared that she and Dr. Verhougstraete presented the preliminary findings for the Per- and Polyfluoralkyl (PFAS) in Pima County report in April 2019. Since then the report was changed to add the table of the health effects and the addition of data that local water agencies, Pima County Department of Environmental Quality, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department provided as of August 2019. There are 99 studies that show significant associations between PFAS and disease. Due to PFAS issues changing day-by-day additional findings have been released since this report was finalized. The conclusions are the same; there are high levels of PFAS in certain parts of the ground water but not in drinking water supplies, with the exception of Marana which has slightly elevated levels.

Dr. Verhougstraete shared that part of the PFAS report is focused on interventions to prevent exposure from drinking water. A three-to-four step reverse osmosis system generally include a granular activated carbon filtration system. These filtration systems should be approved by the National Scientific Foundation that is the agency that sets the standards for removal.

Due to many products that have PFAS chemicals, Dr. Beamer stated that eating less fast food / processed food, cooking with a cast iron pan, and not using REACH dental floss will limit exposure to PFAS.

Ms. Trowbridge inquired on the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base water and that TCE has been used there in the 1970's. Dr. Beamer stated that Tucson Water blends wells, so a person's water does not come from the nearest well. Dr. Beamer shared that the CDC has been monitoring the general population and it is expected that approximately 98% of us have PFAS in blood. It would be difficult to determine where PFAS originated from. An individual concerned that they have been drinking water with PFAS can contact the Poison Control Center to be added to their registry. Dr. Beamer added that there is a research program that studies the impact of stress that arises from hearing that there's PFAS in water.

Ms. Gonzales inquired if private wells are being tested. Ms. Marie Light from the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) responded indicating that letters were mailed to 90 well owners notifying them that their wells could be impacted by emerging contaminants and if DEQ could monitor the well. Nine responded allowing their wells to be monitored, four had higher concentrations of contaminants. Solutions are being identified on for each of these wells.

The motion was made and seconded (Dr. Horwitz / Ms. Trowbridge) to accept the PFAS report. Motion carried 7-0.

7. **CALL TO AUDIENCE**

- There were no speakers from the audience.

8. **SUMMATION OF ACTION ITEMS & PROPOSAL OF FUTURE ITEMS**

- Dr. Horwitz reminded the Board to email him with items for the agenda.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:38 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2020 at 3:00PM