

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2008

1010 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

HAYES CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair
Jack Cradock, Ruth Ellen Fitch, JD,
Celia Wcislo

Board Members Absent:

Hortensia Amaro, PhD, Vice Chair
Harold Cox, Elaine Ullian

Administration & Staff Present:

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed,
John Townsend, Maia Brodyfield,
Dr. Snehal Shah, Pam Jones, Maddie
Ribble, Fatema Fazendeiro, Diane
Cavaleri, Katrina Chesrolaitch,
Denise Dodds, Phyllis Sims, Kate
Sullivan, Margaret Pless-Hunter,
Christine Hayes, Jim Montgomery,
Jim Hooley, Rita Nieves, Gerlinde
Munshi, Cheryl Overs, Melissa
Fuster, Ann Scales, Anita Barry,
Erin Christiansen, Samatha Panati,
Margaret Reid, Tara Agrawal,
Heavenly Mitchell, Richard DeRosa,
Rosie Munoz-Lopez, Patricia
Whitworth, Maurice Myrie, Robert
Morley, James Orsino, Angela
Camille Smauldon, Julie Webster,
Chuck Gagnon, Robert Abromson

Guests:

Stephanie Chan, Sharon Higgins,
Lisa Fernandes, Shalini Louptz,
Ellen Hatch, Arlene Delany, Chanthai
Pena, Sims A. Moti-Zsok

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:08 PM on Thursday, April 10, 2008.

Executive Director's Report – Barbara Ferrer

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, reported that an excellent substance abuse testing policy was recently agreed upon between the BPHC and the BPPA, the union that represents the EMT's at Boston EMS. The testing policy is modeled after the Boston Police Department's Policy. Dr. Ferrer was pleased to report that the BPHC made an addition to the policy which allows for rehabilitative services to be provided to those individuals who test positive as a first offense.

Dr. Ferrer honored Erin Christiansen and Kim Antonellis for their accomplishments of achievement in regards to the passage of the Booster Seat bill for children under the age of eight. Dr. Ferrer stated that the Boston Public Health Commission has been working on this since 2001 and the bill will finally be passed next week.

Health of Boston – Dr. Snehal Shah

Dr. Snehal Shah, Director of Research, gave a brief presentation on selected findings from the Health of Boston 2008 report. Dr. Shah said the data sources collected were from birth/death files, emergency department visit databases and hospitalizations.

Dr. Shah stated that there were challenges in terms of the data limitations as the data was not collected by BPHC and that the data is actually from 2006 (2 years behind). Dr. Shah presented data regarding health indicators for the general population and, in particular, data for the rates of Infant Mortality; Child and Adolescent Health; and, Adult Health. The full report of the Health of Boston for 2008 was distributed to the Board.

Board Member Weislo inquired as to why there is such a big drop off in the deaths. Dr. Shah replied that the major cause of death in 2006 was perinatal.

Dr. Johnson stated that we need to look at the analysis purely in the black population, and then stratify by ethnicity.

Unnatural Causes "Is Inequity Making Us Sick" – Pam Jones

Pam Jones, Director of Policy and Planning, spoke regarding the Boston premiere of *Unnatural Causes*, the documentary film series exploring America's racial and socioeconomic inequities in health. Ms. Jones thanked Meghan Patterson and Tara Agrawal for all of their hard work with the project.

Ms. Jones stated that 500 people attended the viewing including Mayor Menino. Fourteen organizations participated at the event. DVD's are available of each of the different film episodes. Ms. Jones said that the next steps are as follows:

- Neighborhood viewings and dialogues in all neighborhoods in Boston;
- Viewings and dialogues at City Hall and at the State House;
- DVD's of the films and additional resources made available;
- Curriculum development;
- Legislative campaigns;
- Building REACH coalition membership;
- Identifying outcome and process measures for hospitals to use and,
- Funding for community-based projects.

EMS Response Times (Neighborhood Demand for Services – Jim Hooley/James Orsino

Jim Hooley, Superintendent and Chief for EMS, gave a brief description on EMS's response times and neighborhood demand for services. Mr. Hooley reported that the total number of incidents and transports have increased. Mr. Hooley stated that in order to manage the demand for services there have been numerous changes internally including call tracking and dispatch policy changes as well as the organization of a demand working group.

Mr. Hooley proceeded to speak regarding the statistics and standards with regards to the work load comparison, median response times, priority of calls and the effect on the people of Boston. Mr. Hooley said that benchmarks will be established to determine response times by call type and by time of day. Mr. Hooley stated that Boston EMS will be meeting with approximately twenty-five different medical facilities that regularly use Boston EMS to explain Boston EMS' resources. Boston EMS will discuss the demands on the 911 EMS System, action plans, and how to work as partners to improve services.

James Orsino, EMT and President of Boston EMS' division of the BPPA, spoke about the establishment and purpose of the Ambulance Demand Work Group. Mr. Orsino explained that the Work Group, comprised of approximately twenty-five members of the field and supervisory staff, is dedicated to improving the efficiency of emergency medical services provided by Boston EMS. Mr. Orsino reported that the Work Group is focused on:

- Better understanding call volume and response data, to identify benchmarks and goals;
- Managing appropriate use of services by other institutions; and
- Improvement of the training process to maximize resources and minimize costs, while ensuring high quality education.

Dr. Ferrer thanked Mr. Orsino and the Union for their dedication and work towards improving the services provided by Boston EMS. Mr. Orsino thanked Dr. Ferrer for her role in listening to and addressing their concerns.

Dr. Johnson asked whether calls have increased overall. Mr. Hooley replied, yes they have. Mr. Hooley said that in terms of an action plan, Boston EMS will be meeting with the Boston Police Department to minimize delays at police stations, meeting with shelters to explore the idea of a centralized "sober" facility to manage the homeless and meeting with MBTA, Massport and Universities regarding their service demands and its impact.

Legislative Update – Maddie Ribble

Maddie Ribble, Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Public Health Advocacy, gave a brief legislative update. Mr. Ribble stated that the signing of the Booster Seat Bill will be held on April 11, 2008 at 10:00 AM.

Mr. Ribble spoke regarding Nutrition/Chronic Disease Prevention and said that a food policy working group has been formed and the goal is to develop a consensus on language to create a statewide food policy council.

Mr. Ribble also spoke regarding the Violence Intervention and Prevention project appropriation. Mr. Ribble stated that the City of Boston/Boston Public Health Commission is seeking a one million dollar appropriation in the Department of Justice budget to support the VIP project.

Acceptance and Approval of Minutes

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair, invited a motion to accept the March minutes. The Motion was made, seconded and approved.

Amendment to Regulation Regarding Bathing Establishments – Fatema Fazendeiro

Fatema Fazendeiro, Assistant General Counsel, presented on an amendment to the Board of Health regulation regarding massage therapists and bathing establishments. The amendment to the regulation was necessitated by the passage of state regulation regarding massage therapists. Massage therapists are now licensed by the DPH and therefore they are no longer required to obtain licenses from the City.

Ms. Fazendeiro said that the purpose of the amended regulation was to delete the provision regarding massage therapists and to establish application and licensing requirements and rules and regulations for the operation of a bathing establishment. Ms. Fazendeiro said that licenses are valid for one year, are renewable and cover the operations requirements for various baths (pool baths, vapor baths and vapor baths and showers). The Inspectional Services Department for the City of Boston will continue to be the primary enforcement agency for the regulation.

Vote to Amend A PH Regulation Regarding Bathing Establishments

Dr. Johnson invited a motion for a vote to approve the amendment to the Public Health Regulation regarding bathing establishments. The Motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 4 No's 0 Absent 3

Budget Update – John Townsend

John Townsend, Interim Director of Administration and Finance, presented the FY09 budget for final vote and approval. Mr. Townsend gave a brief update on the budget and stated that the total proposed budget for FY09 is \$69,850,000.

Mr. Townsend reported on the following challenges:

- Family Justice Center will not be funded by the City of Boston;
- Private/parochial schools;
- Homeless – Long Island farm funded until 11/09;
- Long Island bridge; and,
- EMS – appropriation reduced by \$850,000.00

The capital budget included the following projects:

- Ambulance station rehabilitation;
- Finland building – upgrade of elevators;
- Long Island Shelter – Nichols roof

Board member Fitch asked whether the Boston Public Health Commission is dipping into reserves every year. Dr. Ferrer replied that BPHC has used reserve funds to carry grants that have capital but the BPHC tries not to hit the reserves, unless absolutely necessary.

Dr. Johnson asked if there were any plans to do fundraising for the FJC. Mr. Townsend answered yes, there was a 501(c)(3) set up for that as part of the initial grant. Dr. Ferrer said that the Public Health would make program adjustments.

Board member Cradock stated that using reserves to fund a whole project sets a precedent.

Dr. Johnson said that the EMS appropriation is not a welcome decrease.

Final Vote to Approve the PH Services Budget for Fiscal Year 2009

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to vote for the final approval of the Public Health Services budget for fiscal year 2009. The Motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 4 No's 0 Absent 3

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:08 PM.