



BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 3, 2009

249 RIVER STREET, MATTAPAN

THE FOLEY BUILDING

MINUTES

**Board Members Present:**

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH  
Hortensia Amaro, Vice Chair,  
Ruth Ellen Fitch, Harold Cox

**Board Members Absent:**

Celia Wcislo, Elaine Ullian,  
Jack Cradock

**Administration & Staff Present:**

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed.,  
Nancy Norman, MD, MPH  
Maia Brodyfield, John Townsend,  
Nakisha Skinner, Tony O'Brien,  
John Bilofas, Gerry Byrne, Jim  
Hooley, Mark Campbell, Rosaline  
Valcimond, Timothy Harrington,  
Pam Jones, Anita Barry, Debra  
Paul, Sharyn Imonti, Catherine  
Fine, Natalie Grant, Nicole Sharon,  
Julie Webster, Chuck Gagnon

**Guests:**

Vince Drozer, Sadio Desmond,  
Mary Baker

Dr. Johnson MD, MPH, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:13 PM on Thursday, September 3, 2009.

The meeting began with a tour around the campus grounds of Boston Public Health Commission's Mattapan Campus. The tour was conducted by Vince Drozer of Trinity Financial.

**Executive Director's Comments – Barbara Ferrer**

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, introduced Vince Drozer, Vice President of Development at Trinity Financial. Dr. Ferrer thanked Mr. Drozer and Michael Baldwin for their efforts in coordinating and allowing the Commission's Board of Health the usage of the space at the Foley Building. Dr. Ferrer also thanked Mr. Drozer for the tour. Dr. Ferrer recognized Mary Baker, Co-Chair for the Mattapan Community Advisory Board. Dr. Ferrer acknowledged Ms. Baker's involvement with the development of the BPHC's Mattapan Redevelopment project from the first phase and said that Ms. Baker has helped to make the parcel of land become a thriving community. Dr. Ferrer thanked Ms. Baker for all of her hard work and contributions to the BPHC's Mattapan Redevelopment project.

**Mattapan Redevelopment Project: The Next Phase – Vince Drozer**

Vince Drozer, Vice President of Trinity Financial, gave an update regarding the Mattapan Redevelopment Project's next phase. Mr. Drozer outlined specific areas targeted for repair and/or restoration, including, but not limited to, the kitchen/chapel area, the power plant, the nurses building, BPHC's food pantry and the "doctor's" cottage.

Additionally, Mr. Drozer proposed to add a 60 unit-building with parking and restore the courtyard behind the Foley Building.

Financing for the project is primarily through Federal/State historic tax credits. The City of Boston has contributed finances to the campus renovations. Phase 1 of the project cost \$85 million and there are 272 units on the campus. Mr. Drozer reported that nine (9) historical buildings were maintained.

**Update: H1N1 Influenza – Anita Barry/Natalie Grant**

Anita Barry, Director, Infectious Diseases Bureau, gave a brief update on H1N1 Influenza. Dr. Barry stated that seasonal influenza occurs every year in Boston, usually from November to March. Different strains of the virus circulate and each year in the United States there are 36,000 influenza-related deaths. Dr. Barry stated that Novel H1N1 first appeared in Boston in April of 2009.

As of July 31, 2009, there have been 480 cases of confirmed Novel H1N1 influenza identified in Boston. The result is that people are very sick and 37% of the cases are being admitted to ICU units. Most cases identified were among the senior population.

Dr. Barry stated that from April 15<sup>th</sup> to June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009 there have been around 94,000 hospital visits and that 4% of the visits have been from influenza-like illness. As a result it has been a huge burden on emergency departments.

Dr. Barry reported that in schools there has been a sustained rate of absenteeism caused by influenza-like illness. School closures were recommended on a case-by-case basis and lasted an average of 7 days. Dr. Barry identified the challenges for Boston Public Schools as follows:

- Communication across all schools and with all staff, teachers, parents and students;
- Changing guidance on when to close schools;
- Taking care of students at school with influenza-like illness;
- Keeping sick students out of school;

- Addressing the needs of students/teachers/staff with chronic health conditions and who are medically fragile;
- Tracking influenza-like illness at schools.

Dr. Barry stated that the public health goal is to limit transmission and keep schools open and functional.

Novel H1N1 is currently being tested in clinical trials and is expected to be available in late fall. Initial vaccine target groups are:

- Pregnant women;
- All 6 month through 24 year olds;
- Close contacts of those <6 months old
- 25 through 64 years old with high risk conditions;
- Healthcare and EMS personnel.

The Commission will be developing an integrated plan with different sectors of education, business, unions, faith-based, community-based organizations, healthcare and residential care facilities in case of an H1N1 outbreak. An H1N1 outbreak consists of three levels. Level one (1) consists of a small number of cases on H1N1 or influenza-like illness. Level two (2) consists of a significant number of cases or clusters on H1N1 or Influenza-like illness and/or increasing severity of illness. Level three (3) consists of widespread illness related to flu in the City. The Commission will determine outbreak levels based on syndromic surveillance, case reporting, and absenteeism reports.

Natalie Grant, Director, Public Health Preparedness, also gave a brief overview on H1N1. Ms. Grant spoke regarding the Boston Influenza Preparedness Summit which was held on Friday, August 21, 2009 at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School. Ms. Grant reported that over 400 people were in attendance and that the goal for the summit was to limit transition, to set forth a series of strategies and to make sure that stakeholders are all on the same page.

Ms. Grant stated that the Commission will be gathering and translating all H1N1 data to organizations as well as addressing any technical medical questions that organizations may have. Information gathered will also be available in different languages. The Commission is hoping to gain a lot of partners in the process. Ms. Grant said that the big push is for a seasonal influenza vaccine.

Ms. Grant announced that the Commission will be partnering with Northeastern University as well as the community health centers to encourage the public to obtain the seasonal influenza vaccine. Ms. Grant said that she would like to utilize these partnerships as an opportunity to getting people vaccinated. The Office of Public Health Preparedness is waiting for federal guidance in regards to getting pharmacies involved with the vaccination process.

City of Boston employees will have available for use up to two (2) hours off to get vaccinated and the City will be relying on health centers to do the vaccinations. The Office of Public Health Preparedness will be looking to fill gaps with the Commission helping out in the vaccination process.

Dr. Ferrer asked Mark Campbell to speak a little regarding the Commission's internet site whereby the public may find information in regards to H1N1.

Mark Campbell, Chief Information Officer, IT, described the Commission's internet site. Mr. Campbell detailed that the site is the primary site which will enable the Commission to conduct surveys and facilitate public sign-up for alerts through ALERT Boston and access information in relation to H1N1. Mr. Campbell said that the site has now been active for 2 days and that 500 people have signed up thus far.

Dr. Ferrer acknowledged that the Commission is doing a great deal of work within the community but work still needs to be done with residential centers.

***Executive Director's Report – Barbara Ferrer***

Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, updated the Board on the nomination of Rich Serino, Chief of Department at Boston EMS. Chief Serino was nominated as Deputy Administrator for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Dr. Ferrer announced that the confirmation hearing of Chief Serino before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will be held on September 16, 2009 from 2-3 PM. The Commission is working on plans to honor Chief Serino sometime in October.

Dr. Ferrer recognized Boston EMS for the tremendous efforts they put forth for Senator Kennedy's funeral. Dr. Ferrer said that the command and field staff worked non-stop in order to make sure that everything was in order.

Dr. Ferrer announced that the Commission has taken back the core functions from Boston Medical Center in regards to all Commission grants. All administration grants management will now be done at the Commission. Dr. Ferrer announced that the department has hired 3 new employees to manage the Commission's total grants award, approximately \$40 million dollars.

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:58 PM.