



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
May 13, 2010

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Boston Public Health Commission was held on Thursday, May 13, 2010 in the Hayes Conference Room at the offices of the Boston Public Health Commission, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118.

Director's Present:

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Chair
Celia Wcislo
Harold Cox
Kathleen Walsh

Director's Absent:

Ruth Ellen Fitch, JD
Jack Cradock
Joseph Betancourt, MD, MPH

Also Present Were:

Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd, John Townsend, Maia BrodyField, Nancy Norman, Rebecca Phillips, Brad Cohen, Tiffany Skogstrom, Nancie Nguyen, Nikysha Harding, Gerry Thomas, Lisa Conley, Timothy Harrington, Gerry Byrne, Leon Bethune, John Shea, Pam Jones, Ryan Cunningham, Margaret Reid, Jim Hooley, Jack Tracy, Odessa Ortiz, Chuck Gagnon

Guests:

Cynthia Loesch, Maya Copeland, Lisa Dunderdale, Jessica Sang, Bill Loesch, Ashley Deleon, Lindsey Butler, Nicole Davis, Sadie Ramsey, Edith Ayuso, Alexis Coleman, Dexter Rowell, Sachia Debrosse, Seira White, R. Nalls, Lydia Emmons, Tracy Desovich, Steve Pridini, Deborah Doherty

Counsel Present:

Nakisha L. Skinner, General Counsel

Call to Order

Dr. Paula Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM. A quorum of directors was present and the meeting, having been duly convened, proceeded with business.

Executive Director's Report

Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd

Dr. Ferrer congratulated Board member Harold Cox for receiving the Paul Revere Award from the Massachusetts Public Health Association. Board member Cox is a strong advocate for the State.

The CPPW Leadership Team is in the process of building staff and implementing activities to facilitate its grant projects. The Leadership team met last week to discuss policy issues related to obesity prevention and tobacco control. The role of the Leadership Team is to recommend policy action items. The Leadership Team will keep the Board updated on the activities of the grant.

The CPPW Leadership Team will meet quarterly and all meetings will be open meetings. All interested members of the Board as well as other sectors of the community are encouraged to attend the meetings.

The Commission is scheduled to have its proposed FY11 budget hearing at the City Council on May 21, 2010 at City Hall and is waiting for final notification. All members of the Board are invited to attend the FY11 budget hearing.

Presentations and Updates

Home Emergency Preparedness

Brad Cohen, Director, Professional Staff Development, DelValle Institute for Emergency Preparedness
Rebecca Phillips, Associate Director, DelValle Institute for Emergency Preparedness

Planning ahead for an emergency will give you peace of mind and can keep your family and friends safe. Local and state officials are preparing for a range of possible emergencies, from hurricanes and blizzards to a flu pandemic and acts of terrorism. Brad and Rebecca presented simple steps to prepare for emergency preparedness, for example, family communication, food, water and first aid kits.

Brad and Rebecca reminded everyone that an important aspect of home emergency planning is review and recommended that every 6 months individuals should remember to review plans/supplies with family members, replace expired food and to update communication plans.

In an emergency, call the Mayor's 24 Hour Hotline at 617-635-4500.

A Community's Approach to Fighting Tobacco

Odessa Ortiz, Project Director, Tobacco Control
Sachia Debrosse, Education Coordinator, Project RIGHT, Inc.
Edith Ayuso, Youth Leader, Sociedad Latina
Maya Copeland and Ashley DeLeon, B.O.L.D. TEENS

The Tobacco Control Department has received the CPPW grant to explore policy options designed to prevent tobacco use among youth. The Tobacco Control Department is working towards changing the environmental

policy systems around tobacco use and to change the environment for which youth are addicted to tobacco.

The Tobacco Control Department will focus much of its policy around tobacco products, otherwise known as OTPS. Other tobacco products are identified as snus, dissolvables, smokeless, blung cigars, spit tobacco and electric cigarettes.

Data on youth shows that smokeless tobacco use rose in 2007 especially amongst males, and cigar use increased from 2003-2007. The data also showed that youth are not educated on the health impact of other tobacco products.

Project RIGHT is a non-profit organization that promotes involvement in the neighborhood stabilization and economic development within the community of Roxbury and North Dorchester.

Project RIGHT has been advocating for tougher regulations regarding the sale of other tobacco products in the community and has been educating the community about the dangers that youth face when using other tobacco products. Other tobacco products can be bought cheaply at most local convenience stores.

Ninety percent of stores with active tobacco permits sell other tobacco products. Other tobacco products are available in a wide variety of flavors and targets youth through mainstream advertisements.

Sociedad Latina is an organization providing a comprehensive community responsive array of programs designed to empower Latino youth and their families. Sociedad Latina educates other youth and elected officials on the prevalence of other tobacco products in the Mission Hill and Jamaica Plain areas.

Sociedad Latina has been working to educate community members on the dangers of using other tobacco products. Youth members found that other tobacco products were sold at most of the stores they surveyed. Findings also revealed that in most stores the other tobacco products were located further away from the traditional tobacco products and closer to the candy.

B.O.L.D. Teens stand for Breath of Life Dorchester and is a youth-led organization focused on environmental and social justice by addressing the health and safety concerns of the community. B.O.L.D. Teens are working hard to increase the excise tax on cigarettes and surveying stores in the community to see where other tobacco products are sold and advertised.

B.O.L.D. Teens found that 43 of 53 stores surveyed sold and advertised other tobacco products. Flavored cigarettes have been banned by the FDA but “little cigars” and smokeless tobacco are still available in candy and fruit flavors. Findings also revealed that youth are turning to other tobacco products because they are discrete and affordable. Other tobacco products are growing in popularity and merchants are responding to the demand.

Some recommendations to stop the sale of other tobacco products are to restrict the sale of flavored and sweetened cigars to adult only establishments, to toughen tobacco products placement regulations and to support a tax on other tobacco products that mirrors cigarette taxes.

Boston Nail Salon Hazards

Paul Shoemaker, Associate Director, Office of Environmental Health
Tiffany Skogstrom, Coordinator III, Environmental Hazards
Nancie Nguyen, Public Advocate II, Safe Shops

Currently there are an estimated 173 nail salons in operation in the City of Boston, however, accurate lists of the nail salons are difficult to keep due to their transient nature. Most nail salons have less than 5 employees and those employees are often paid under the table on a per-job basis. Many employees of nail salons are treated as independent contractors rather than employees and have no health insurance or paid time off.

Most nail salon workers are Vietnamese women of child-bearing age, are recent immigrants to the country and have limited education and English language skills. Most operate out of store front locations that have poor or no ventilation. Workers are constantly exposed to a low-level mixture of chemicals and odors from the salons. Chemicals and odors from the salons impact neighboring apartments and businesses.

In 2009 the Office of Environmental Hazards received an average of 2 complaints per year regarding the odors from poorly ventilated shops. To date there have been 5 complaints, 2 for chemical odors and 3 for cleanliness and infections due to poor work practices and sanitation. In response to the complaints, the Commission initiated the Safe Nail Salon Project. Goals for the project are to recognize and resolve workplace hazards, to train workers in the proper use and storage of chemicals and personal protective equipment and to educate workers in proper sanitation practices to prevent infections.

There are chemical hazards as well as infection hazards connected with nail salons. Some chemical hazards are occupational asthma, skin and eye irritation, reproductive health effects, neurological damage, cancer and fire/explosion hazard. Infection hazards are described as fungal infections, athlete's foot, staph infections and MRSA, mycobacterium fortium warts, finger herpes and blood borne pathogens.

To date the Environmental Hazards Department has inspected 43 salons. A total of 69 salons received an outreach visit, video, MSDS packet and offer of training. Two hundred eighty-four workers from 56 salons were trained.

Mr. Shoemaker, Ms. Skogstrom and Ms. Nguyen identified several opportunities for improved health and safety in connection with nail salons and sought the Boards approval to continue to explore other options.

The Environmental Hazards Department will continue to work to resolve issues concerning registration/permitting/training, certification programs, English –only exams/regulations and client education.

The Board suggested that the Communications Department consider making a video around licensing and that the Commission implement a set of recommendations around regulations. The Board would like to see more client education being done and recommends that the Commission further its work with the Vietnamese population.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Paula Johnson, Chair, presented to the Board the minutes of the April 1, 2010 meeting of the Board for approval, whereupon a motion was duly submitted, seconded and unanimously adopted.

Vote to Adjourn Meeting and Reconvene in Executive Session

Dr. Johnson invited a motion to vote to adjourn the meeting and reconvene in executive session. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Yeas 4 Nays 0 Absent 3

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Webster, Recording Secretary

