

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA  
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

May 20, 2020  
Regular Meeting

Present at the Meeting:

Heidi Beidinger-Burnett, Ph.D, MPH	President - Zoom
Jason Marker, MD	Vice President - Zoom
Emily Dean	Member - Zoom
Ilana T. Kirsch, M.D., FACOG	Member - Zoom
Michelle Migliore, D. O.	Member - Zoom
Amy Murray, MSN, RNC	Member - Zoom
John Linn	Member - Zoom

Also Present at the Meeting:

Robert M. Einterz, M.D.	Health Officer
Mark Fox, MD, PhD, MPH	Deputy Health Officer - Zoom
Jennifer S. Parcell	Executive Administrative Asst.
Robin Vida	Director Health Outreach, Promotion and Education
Brett Davis	Asst. Dir. Environmental Health
Mark Espich	Director, Environmental Health
Carolyn Smith	Director, Food Services - Zoom
Neiko Rust	Asst. Director of Nursing - Zoom
J. David Keckley	Attorney for Dept. Of Health
Spaulding	South Bend Tribune - Zoom
Amy Drake	Citizen of SJC – Zoom
Jane Greenwood	Citizen of SJC – Zoom
Jen Towers	Citizen of SJC - Zoom

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Board President, Dr. Beidinger-Burnett called the May 20, 2020 Regular Health Board Meeting to Order at 4:34 p.m. The meeting was held at the Department of Health, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room. All board members and press participated via audio/visual Zoom. Necessary precautions and directives were recognized as it relates to the number of persons present for the meeting and social distancing.

**II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

On motion made by Emily Dean, seconded by Dr. Marker, and unanimously approved, the agenda for the May 20, 2020 regular meeting of the Board of Health was adopted.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On motion made by Dr. Migliore, seconded by Dr. Marker, and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the April 15, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Health Board were approved as presented.

#### **IV. BOARD PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

##### **20-22 Board Members Role during COVID-19**

Board President, Dr. Beidinger-Burnett, noted that the response of Board Members in this time of COVID-19 pandemic includes:

##### **1. Advocacy**

Board members are acting as the eyes and ears of the health officer delivering to Dr. Einterz and Dr. Fox community concerns.

##### **2. Assisting with the operation of the Department of Health.**

The initial process for the preparation of a strategic plan continues as a result of the survey of Board Members will now be prepared. At issue will be sources of funding for the department; new partnerships; assistance to Aids Ministry; and the formation of the St. Joseph County Department of Health Foundation.

##### **3. Maintain the funding for salaries of Department of Health staff.**

Board Members will advocate and recommend to county officials the proposed budget for 2021. It was noted that the Department of Health was excepted from the directive that all departments cut their budget by 5% for 2021. The Board is prepared to present its basis and justification to request a modest increase in the Department of Health's 2021 budget.

#### **V. HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION AND REPORT**

##### **20-23 Discussion and Vote on April 2020 Health Officer's Report**

Dr. Einterz distributed for Board Members review and approval his April 2020 report of activities which included the monthly information regarding the work of each of the departments.

He noted that more data is becoming available with regard the spread of COVID-19 and the continuing efforts being made to slow the transmission of this infection.

He highlighted the activities of various departments to include Environmental Health's inspections and assistance to educate the public to avoid activities and places that would constitute risk of contracting the virus; that Epidemiology/Emergency preparedness continues to be very active in the receipt and distribution of PPE; involvement in the preparation and presentation of the department's proposed 2021 budget to the Finance Committee; that Food Services continues to see an increase in their inspections which are related to the COVID-19 situation; that Nursing continues to see a drop in immunizations which follows a nationwide trend - - this issue is being addressed to include having evening and weekend hours and emphasizing access to the Mishawaka Clinic location; the nurses are addressing and responding to a recent increase in Hepatitis A cases.

Discussion between Board Members and Dr. Einterz included suggestions that Environmental should reach out and advocate lead testing in homes in high risk zip codes due to the number of children spending more time at home; the utilization of the mobile clinic to assist the South Bend School Corporation to implement their new lead testing policy and perhaps utilize a Public Service Announcement through Notre Dame communications regarding the importance of childhood

immunizations; utilize the format of the unified command to emphasize access to immunizations and a safe protocol in place to address the COVID-19 fear; how to identify gaps in immunization coverage - - schools are the best resource - - Navarre school was the model project in that consent forms were sent home for parents to sign and immunizations were available during the school day - - and continue to emphasize the safety of the Department of Health clinics through Facebook and response to telephone calls. All Board Members agree that childhood immunization will continue to be a priority issue for the Board and Department of Health.

Board Members approved the April 2020 Health Officer's report of unit activities.

## **VI. DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER PRESENTATION**

### **20-24 COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Fox confirmed that he seen a decrease in lead testing and immunizations from mid-April through the end of April.

Dr. Fox expects to see an increase in COVID-19 cases as a result of increased commercial activity and public activity. That factored into the decision to enter the Public Health Order requiring masks under certain circumstances and hand sanitizers. St. Joseph County has recorded 1,040 cases to-date. A month ago, there were 36 daily cases reported. Two weeks ago, the number had dropped to 12 daily cases. Today the number has increased to 25 daily cases. There are currently 55 individuals hospitalized with the COVID-19 virus. That number has remained steady with a range of 48-60 hospitalizations during the past several weeks. Elkhart County is currently seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases.

There have been 36 deaths recorded in St. Joseph County to-date attributable to the COVID-19 virus. Of that number, only two individuals were not residing in a healthcare facility.

Access to testing has increased on the west side of the county. The ISDH established a testing facility at the National Guard Armory but the number of tests at that location was not too high. Dr Fox has recommended other locations to the ISDH. The local health systems have increased their testing within the county.

Contact tracing continues to include implementing a plan utilizing technology to increase capacity.

Dr. Fox is expecting to receive guidance from the ISDH with regards to the opening of recreational sport leagues in the community; opening of schools; drop-off and pick-up procedures; graduation ceremonies; Notre Dame summer activity and the fall semester class schedule.

The response to the COVID-19 virus is a continuing effort as we integrate back to a normal work schedule.

Dr. Einterz and Dr. Fox responded to Board Members concerns and questions related to the adequacy of testing sites and turn around times for the results; the emphasis and enforcement of the mask requirement; and how best to communicate the information regarding reducing the risk of contracting the virus.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **20-25 Unit Spotlight: Health Outreach, Promotion & Education (HOPE) – Robin Vida**

Robin Vida, Director of the HOPE Division of the Department of Health, introduced herself and noted that she has been an employee of the Department of Health for the past 12 years. She supervises two health promotion specialists in her division and has funding for one additional position that is currently unfilled.

She delivered to Board Members a power point presentation which included information on the following areas:

- Overview
- Focus areas to include mental health, maternal/infant health, lead poison prevention, obesity, and wellness
- Activities
- Metrics and information in HO report
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Goals

The power point materials are attached and made a part of these Minutes for more detailed Information.

### **20-26 Board of Health Strategic Planning**

Dr. Marker continues to work on this project and plans to propose a process by which Board Members can participate and contribute to the completion of a strategic planning document to include the goals of the Department of Health and how best to monitor and objectively measure to determine whether the goals have been attained.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **20-24 Establishment of a SJCDoH 501(c) 3 Update**

Dr. Einterz reported that the final draft has been completed for the Articles of Incorporation and the By-Laws of the foundation. The initial Board of Directors will be Dr. Einterz, Dr. Beidinger-Burnett and Dr. Sam Milligan. The process of appointing additional majority directors is set forth in the Code of By-laws. The timeline to seek approval from the IRS is between two and eight months.

### **20-08 Water Resources Advisory Board Update**

Mr. Linn and Dr. Einterz reported that a letter has been sent to the individuals identified as previous members or prospective members for the various positions required for the On-Site Wastewater Advisory Board and the Water Resource Advisory Board. Efforts will continue to fill the various positions and the scheduling of a meeting of the respective boards.

## **IX. BOARD NOTIFICATIONS**

There were no notifications to be presented to the Board at this meeting.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Amy Drake, residing in Granger, IN, introduced herself and commented on the recent public Health Officer Order requiring the wearing of masks. She considers the Order as an infringement on liberty and an overreach of the power of the Health Officer since, in her opinion, we are out of immediate emergency phase of the pandemic. She considers this a violation of her constitutional rights. She does not believe it has been proven that masks are effective and notes that the governor of Ohio backed down when objections were noted. She thinks the masks could be a hazard in the workplace and that dirty masks may in fact promote the disease.

Jane Greenwood of Granger, Indiana, introduced herself and objected to the mask order. She stated that we are old enough, and individuals can make the decision themselves on wearing masks. She also believes masks could be a danger to the person wearing the mask and that they are not effective. She also believes the Health Officer was overreaching his authority when issuing the Order.

South Bend Tribune reporter Mary Beth Spaulding noted that the friction between public health orders and individual freedom has been an ongoing battle for the past 100 years.

Board member Dr. Kirsch responded to correct the misconception that the purpose of wearing a mask was to protect yourself from the virus. She explained that the primary purpose of wearing a mask is to protect others in the event you are infected with the virus. It is recognized that you may have the virus and not have any symptoms. She explains that she and her staff wear masks at her medical office as a courtesy to her patients, as the risk of spreading the virus is reduced through mask wearing.

**XI. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

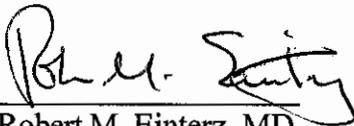
The next regular meeting of the St. Joseph County Health Board is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 4:30 p.m., at the St. Joseph County Department of Health, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room.

**XII. ADJOURMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

ATTEST:

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Robert M. Einterz, MD  
St. Joseph County



J. David Keckley  
Attorney for St Joseph County Dept. Of  
Health Board