

Sudbury Board of Health Virtual Meeting

March 9, 2021

Attendees: Carol Bradford – Board Chair, Susan Sama – Board Member, Bill Murphy – Health Director, Patty Moran – Public Health Nurse, Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker, Beth Porter – Health Admin. Kay Bell – Comm on Disabilities.

Meeting Convened at 4:00 PM

Public Comments: None

Patty Moran – Public Health Nurse Update:

Cases: 118 positive cases in February. Positive cases declined after the February school vacation surge.

Gatherings: CDC guidelines were updated to allow gatherings with families/co-horts that have been fully vaccinated (14 days post vaccination) and those who have been infected (90 days post infection).

Variants: Remain a concern on many levels. Resistance to vaccines, limited testing to detect variants, escalating spread and unknowns about long term effects. There is no different treatment or change in how to handle COVID variants. Susan Sama noted that Denmark and the UK saw an immediate upward trend in transmission causing a reversal in re-opening.

Variant Testing: Less than 1% of tests check for variants. Low quality or low volume of COVID samples may cause diminished viability needed to support multiple tests. This would contribute to a low percentage of testing. Susan Sama questioned, how many tests must be run, on one sample, to get conclusive test results for all variants?

Re-Opening: The State is mandating full in person learning in April both Superintendents are proceeding with planning. Susan Sama believes that a roll back plan needs to be established to keep infection rates low. Once schools reopen, there will undoubtedly be surges and the nurses will see a noticeable increase in contact tracing.

Vaccinating Teachers: The state has added teachers to Phase 2 Group 3 of Vaccination eligibility. Susan Sama believes there will an increased risk of transmission because of concentrated exposure. She would like to see all teachers fully vaccinated prior to the full-time reopening of schools.

Vaccinations/General: Phase 2 Group 2 continues to experience difficulties in securing appointments. The supply of COVID vaccine is still a problem on both state and federal levels.

Home Bound Residents: Identifying and vaccinating residents, that satisfy the state’s definition of “home-bound, is a challenge. Fire, Police, Senior Center and Local Health are collaborating to create a master list of residents who fall into this category. The Health Department has applied to a state vaccination service program to assist with identifying home bound and coordinating with the State to get them vaccinated .

COVID Policies/Protocol: has been changing daily. It is difficult and time consuming for the Health staff to keep up with the updates and changes that are issued thru the state and CDC.

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Bethany Hadvab – Social Worker Update:

Resources: Bethany and SW interns spend a large amount of time keeping informed of new updates to services and resources that are available to residents. A significant amount of hours are spent attending meetings, providing and assessing follow-up information (post meeting) and messaging updates and new resources to residents. All information is published on the website.

Domestic Violence: Has been increasing. There are limited outside case management resources available.

Numbers: 15% increase in case management. 25% increase in referrals. 25% increase in residents who were served. Bethany and interns processed several MRC applications in February.

Interns: Bethany will begin the process of interviewing and onboarding new interns. The current Social Worker interns will rotate out of the program this coming April and August.

Depression, Suicidality and Irritability are escalating. Hyper vigilance is needed for prevention.

Returning to Work: Employers need to have an increased awareness of employees re-orienting to the work place. Lack of child care is proving to be a major obstacle for those who need to return to the work force. Susan Sama mentioned that countries that have opened up saw a big increase of transmission in poorly ventilated work areas. It is important to convey messaging to employers that ventilation is a high priority in providing safe working conditions and preventing spread.

Bill Murphy – Health Director Update:

Septics: Processing new septic plans, repairs and Title 5's is up to date. There has been an increase in home sales. Many lots that have remained undeveloped for years are being re-examined due to a lack of inventory of homes for sale. These lots have proven to be challenging to develop as there are problems with perc rates, lot size and conformance to regulations.

Office: COVID updates, Training for Prep Mod, hazardous waste disposal options were prioritized.

Sewer Systems: The Town of Sudbury is analyzing certain areas of town where installing a sewer system for densely populated areas would improve economic viability and resolve complicated septic failures.

COVID Vaccine Clinic Collaborative: Sudbury Health Dept. has, with several other communities, petitioned the state for vaccine to be dispersed at a multi community vaccination site. The collaborative would receive up to 750 doses per/day/week and be administered by town personnel on a rotating schedule. So far, the state has not granted the collaborative vaccine site.

Public Health Excellence Grant: The State is proposing that Health Departments collaborate by sharing services that can be handled by increased personnel. This would increase capacity and cut down on training and duplication of efforts by improving efficiency. Bill Murphy is looking into what would best serve the Sudbury community. Would working with like towns be advantageous or would working with municipalities that have strengths in areas that Sudbury is weakest to yield more substantial benefits? Writing this grant is challenging at this time with continued COVID caseload.

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Bill Murphy – Health Director Update:

Public Health Excellence Grant Continued: The deadline for submission is the end of the month. Susan and Carol like the idea of accepting assistance for camps and inspectional services. Bill is leaning toward getting help with camps and messaging.

Other Grant Proposals could address Food Insecurities, Mental Health, epidemiology, sharing access to training of staff, etc.

Reporting of 75+ Data: Kay Bell from the Commission on Disabilities inquired about the BoH reporting numbers of Sudbury residents over 75 for hospitalizations, ICU and deaths. Bill Murphy looked into these statistics and found that the numbers were relatively low and that the data was dependent on timely reporting. The data may not communicate the message of adhering to guidelines. Kay appreciated the follow-up on this matter.

Kay Bell: Comm on Disabilities. In researching and evaluating the Sudbury Emergency Evacuation Plan, Kay found that Deaf and Blind residents are not represented in the plan. She will send Bill an outline so that Bill can start addressing this omission in the plan.

VOTE: Sama Motioned to appoint Emily Amico Sudbury Representative to Region4A Emergency Preparedness Coalition. Carol Bradford seconded the motion. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:09 PM