

Sudbury Board of Health

Virtual Meeting Minutes November 16, 2021

Attendees: Carol Bradford-Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton-Board Member, Susan Sama-Board Member, Bill Murphy-Health Director, Patty Moran-Health Nurse, Bethany Hadvab-Social Worker, Robert Lazo-Health Inspector, Stephanie Lombardi-Resident

4:00 PM – Meeting called to order

Open Comments: None

Patty Moran- Public Health Nurse Update:

COVID: Positive cases doubled in October. Pool testing at the schools caught a large percentage of asymptomatic positives. Most cases spread thru families, regardless of vaccination status. All cases tested positive for the Delta variant. We are starting to see an increase in breakthrough cases. Vaccinations, including booster shots, is a strong mitigation strategy from contracting COVID and preventing serious illness. We saw a downward trend in cases in October only to see an increase in November. This can be attributed to activities moving indoors. It is expected that holidays gatherings will bring a significant increase in positives. CDC incident rates trended down briefly in October and have been trending back up since Halloween. Local positivity rates are also trending up from 1.8% to over 2%.

Schools: There have been an increase of positives and clusters in the schools. Pool testing has identified many of these cases. Most cases remain asymptomatic. For cases that have been contracted out of school, quarantining is enforced. For those who contract cases at school, test and stay protocol has been instituted.

School Activities: As winter approaches indoor activities start to increase at the schools. The school would like to start an alternative program to remove masks. The board discussed an option for vaccinated students using the Binax test 24- 48 hours prior to each event. Negative tests will allow participation without masks. The students are then encouraged to join the school's pool testing program to test after participating in an event to be sure that there was no spread during or after the event. The Health Director will draft a proposal/procedure for the pilot program. Stephanie Lombardi asked if this same program could be instated for day cares and preschools. This would be for the purpose of eliminating mask wearing for ages 2 – 4. The Health Director said he would review proposals submitted from these private institutions. DESE has extended the mask mandate to January 15th 2022.

VOTE: Carol Bradford Motioned for the Board to approve the Pilot Program at LSRHS for indoor activities to test 24 – 72 hours prior to events, be screened for symptoms nightly and to do follow-up screening 3-5 days after the event. Linda Huet-Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Contact Tracing: As cases increase so does contact tracing. Most cases involve school aged children making contact tracing more extensive with many exposures. The staff can only work with the information that is given. Collecting information has been challenging.

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COVID Vaccines for SPS: The Curtis Middle School, utilizing the State Program, is holding a clinic on November 18th to vaccinated children aged 5 – 12. Many families quickly registered and took advantage of the clinic.

Sudbury Mask Mandate: Stephanie Lombardi wanted to know why the Board chooses to use the American Academy of Pediatrics and not the World Health Organization and Unicef? Susan Sama explained that the CDC and AAP are national American agencies and that WHO and UNICEF are international agencies that had data that is wide spread and not specific to just the United States. The Board reiterated the goal of the mask mandate is to keep businesses and schools open and to allow boosters and vaccines for the 5-11 year old children to be rolled out. It is important to note that there are schools, businesses and organizations that are currently closed because of clusters and outbreaks in surrounding towns without mask mandates. Sudbury has thus far has avoided any close downs since the mandate has been instated. Linda Huet-Clayton suggested that for those parents who are concerned for the mental wellbeing of their children due to mask wearing, that the closure of schools have been identified as being at the center of social emotional health problems.

Bethany Hadvab-Social Worker Update:

Meeting Resident's Needs: As the holidays approach, residents with food, shelter, and utility insecurities are starting to rise. Bethany is working with Hope Sudbury and their Holiday Program to help satisfy these basic needs.

Camp Sewataro Camp Applications: Bethany is working with residents to screen for eligibility.

Federal and State Eviction Moratorium has ended: Now that the moratorium has been lifted, it has left many residents housing insecure. For residents that have used Hope Sudbury or other programs multiple times or they find that they have very few options. Should they move to another dwelling, the utilities companies will not turn on utilities until all encumbrances in arrears have been paid up for their previous residence. The Emergency Rental Program disbanded when the eviction moratorium was instated, so this is one less agency that is out there to help.

Racial Equities: What is the Board of Health's role in ensuring racial equity when it comes to providing health related services to those who have limited accessibility?

Rob Lazo Health Inspector Update:

Food Inspections: All school in section are complete. Liquor Stores and convenience stores have been inspected. The larger food establishments are planned for the next round of inspections.

Septic Inspections: many of the septic repairs have been inspected by Rob.

Training: the following trainings and certifications have been completed: OSHA, ServeSafe, and MEHA seminars. Rob is currently working on certifications for emergency preparedness.

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Bill Murphy Health Director Update:

Flu Clinics: 3 Flu Clinics were held by the Health Department. The COLOR software platform adopted by MDPH for registering and processing patients thru clinics proved to be successful. The process of planning, setting up and taking down the clinic continues to be time consuming and a challenge. There are many man hours dedicated to this process. It is becoming increasingly important to bring MRC (Medical Reserve Corp) volunteers onboard to help with the clinics and many more departmental processes. This will become a focus of the Health Department to on board MRC and to train them. The prospect of hiring a part-time position dedicated to coordinating these activities may be available through ARPA funds.

Preparing for Shelters: COVID has presented new questions/protocols in safely navigating clinics. Do we ask for vaccination cards? Do we screen? How do we incorporate MRC and CERT volunteers into the process? ARPA funds may provide funding to assist in coordination of the shelters.

Sewataro: Many questions have come up in the maintenance and use of this facility. Many residents are requesting use of the beach and the pools. The pond must be tested and maintained regularly. There are many regulations that will need to be enforced for safety purposes. The Health Director is currently working with DEP, MDPH and Lori Capone (Conservation Director) to navigate requirements.

Shared Services Grant: All Towns that are participating in the Shared Services Grant have been approved and have signed off. Mr. Murphy has drafted and submitted a job posting for a Grant Coordinator to keep track of hours and where to allocate resources. Sudbury is the lead town in handling the grant. It will be a challenge finding a coordinator who can facilitate the grant requirements and deliverables. Susan Sama expressed concerns about the amount of time that the Health Director has dedicated to COVID and the amount of time dedicated to applying for the grant, meeting with participating Health Departments, drafting the needs that this grant will meet for these communities and hiring and training a coordinator.

VOTE: Susan Sama motioned to approve Minutes as edited for the October 12th and October 26th meetings. Linda Huet-Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Next Meeting: December 7th, 2021.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:08 PM