

Montgomery County Office of Public Health
Montgomery County Board of Health Meeting

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

1430 DeKalb St. Norristown, PA 19404-0311

Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022, 10 a.m.

Virtual meeting platform: Zoom webinar and Facebook Live Stream

Board of Health (BOH) Members

Michael B. Laign, Chair

Francis Jeyaraj, MD

Steve Katz

Martin Trichtinger, MD

Barbara A. Wadsworth, DNP

Montgomery County Office of Public Health (OPH)

Christina N. Miller, Health Administrator

Janet Panning, Interim Deputy Administrator

Feba Cherian, Epidemiologist Research Associate

Ruth Cole, Director, Clinical Services

David Genova, Director, Health Promotion

Pam Lawn, Director, Environmental Field Services (EFS)

Richard Lorraine, MD, Medical Director

Michel Masters, Director, Communicable Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Kyle Schmeck, Director, Water Quality Management (WQM)

Toyca Williams, Health Program Office Coordinator

Megan Young, Coordinator, Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

Health and Human Services (HHS)

Brandon Alexander, Digital Media Coordinator, Office of Community Information & Education

Denise Wallin, Deputy Health Administrator

Montgomery County

Thomas Bonner, Director, Department of Assets & Infrastructure

Teresa Harris, Public Affairs Manager, Board of Commissioners

Lauren Hughes, Senior Assistant Solicitor, Solicitor's Office

Meeting Minutes

Welcome/Chairman's Remarks

Mr. Laign called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. He welcomed all in attendance and read the OPH mission and vision statements.

Mission -- To provide public health services and foster collaboration actions that empower our community to improve its health and safety.

Vision -- To optimize the health and wellness of individuals and families through innovative practices.

The minutes for Nov. 3 were approved.

Motion: Dr. Trichtinger made a motion to approve the Nov. 3 minutes with a second by Ms. Wadsworth. The motion passed.

Health Administrator's Report

Ms. Miller welcomed all in attendance and acknowledged her staff for continuing excellent service on behalf of our community during very difficult times, most recently during the Omicron surge. MCOPH remains at the forefront in guiding its residents through an unprecedented and challenging public health event. MCOPH will continue to evaluate how to respond to potential surges and determine when and how to scale up resources when those surges arise. The team is assessing its public health work force capacity and modernizing systems to adequately respond to emergent public health matters. Mr. Laign said he appreciated the county's collaboration with the county health systems, especially during surges when hospital resources are strained.

Pandemic Data Analytics

Ms. Cheriyan provided pandemic data analytics. The first COVID-19 case was identified almost two years ago, March 7, 2020. As of Feb. 1, there have been 116,679 confirmed cases in Montgomery County. Due to the format of data collection by age ranges, Ms. Cheriyan could not provide pediatric case counts. Data shows there is an increase in case counts during colder months and when new variants emerge. During the most recent Omicron surge, there was a high level of transmission in the county and case counts were up. However, the severity of the illness was lower and death counts were down. She shared data and several graphs illustrating the COVID-19 probable and confirmed case counts since the first case, 14-day average of hospitalizations and ventilator use and 14-day positivity and incidence rates over an almost two-year period.

COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing Landscape

Ms. Young gave an update on the county's COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics. Currently, OPH is managing five testing sites and four vaccination clinics. Plans are underway to open a Lansdale testing site. During the Omicron surge, testing capacity doubled at the Willow Grove site. Between Jan. 3 and 17, 12,940 tests were given, the largest increase in testing demand during this response. Since July 2020, the county-based testing sites have administered 155,263 COVID-19 tests. Dr. Jeyaraj commented that the county needs to enhance partnerships with trusted community and ethnic coalitions. Residents will go to places they trust, he said. Mr. Katz shared that his testing experience at the Willow Grove site was cordial, simple and efficient. As for vaccines, the demand for boosters remains low. Since January 2021, the county has

administered 219,792 vaccines. By summer 2022, the county plans to shift vaccine operations to a community-based model and move from the mass site distribution model.

Medical Director's Report: Vaccines, Monoclonal Antibodies and COVID-19 Therapeutics

Dr. Lorraine gave an overview of medications available to treat patients with confirmed COVID-19. The disease severity is used to determine which medical treatment to use. For example, corticosteroids are strongly recommended for severe or critical cases. He also shared which medications are no longer used or recommended. He emphasized that the best treatment against severe illness or hospitalization is the vaccine. Dr. Jeyaraj said that the oral treatments are not widely used by physicians. He asked whether OPH can publicize the availability of the oral medications. Dr. Trichtinger pointed out that there were very few pharmacies in Montgomery County that carry the oral medications.

Special Presentation

Montgomery County Recovery Office-American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

Tom Bonner gave an overview of the Recovery Office and its charge to oversee the management and allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA). Montgomery County received \$161,395,498 in funding. The funds will support projects and initiatives that address the health, social and economic well-being of all residents, especially those hardest hit by COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the office is spearheading a community engagement process with internal and external stakeholders. Mr. Bonner emphasized that the projects are meant to be transformative and should promote economic recovery and rebuilding. Next steps include finalizing a new web site and conducting town hall presentations to address the submission process. A final plan is expected in June.

New Business-- None

Motion: Mr. Katz motioned to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Ms. Wadsworth. Motion passed and meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

The next BOH meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 4.