

KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
December 2, 2020; from 5:00 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.
Knox County Health Department
Via Zoom Meeting and Public Forum

Present:

Martha Buchanan, MD, Secretary
Dianna Drake, PharmD
Maria Hurt, DNP
Jack E. Gotcher, Jr., DDS, Chair
Glenn Jacobs, Knox County Mayor
Patrick O'Brien, MD
Ani Roma, Citizen Representative
James Shamiyeh, MD
Marcy Souza, DVM
Lisa Wagoner, RN; Representing Superintendent Bob Thomas, Knox County Schools

Absent: none

Others Attending:

KCHD: Katharine Killen, Charity Menefee (zoom host), Narda Cappuccilli (recorder)
Knox County: David Sanders, Esq. representing Knox County Law Department
University of Tennessee Medical Center Knoxville: Dr. Keith Britt, Data Analyst
Community Health Systems: Dr. Frank Beuerlein, CMO, Quality; Pathologist

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Gotcher called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Dr. Gotcher requested Ms. Cappuccilli take roll call, to confirm the establishment of the quorum, as all ten Board members were in attendance, therefore there was a quorum.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

- Sherri Garrett – Gathering limitation
- Anastasia Juneau – PCR Testing, played recorded conversation
- Vernon Henry – Regulations
- Christine Cruz – Oppose BOH additional restrictions
- Richard Cunningham – Testing, contact tracing, credibility, same day testing

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOV. 10 AND SPECIAL CALLED NOV. 23, 2020 MEETINGS

Dr. O'Brien noted a misspelling in the Nov. 23, 2020 minutes.

Motion made by Dr. O'Brien and seconded by Dr. Souza, to accept the minutes with the noted revision. The motion passed unanimously, via roll call vote, 10 to 0.

V. SET THE AGENDA

Dr. Shamiyeh requested to add Dr. Keith Britt, Data Analyst at UTMCK to the agenda, following his presentation of UTMCK Data Update.

A motion to set the agenda with the addition of Dr. Keith Britt, was made by Dr. Souza, seconded by Dr. Buchanan, which passed via roll call vote, unanimously, 10 to 0.

VI. KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT BENCHMARK PRESENTATION by DR. BUCHANAN

Dr. Buchanan reviewed the current local situation and the five benchmarks, available on the health department's website as follows:

- 437 new confirmed cases since yesterday's report, which is a new daily high record
- 19,315 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Knox County since March 2020
- 1,106 probable cases
- 17,645 of our cases are inactive, giving us 2,597 active cases
- 609 individuals have been hospitalized at some point in their illness
- 130 Knox County residents are currently hospitalized
- 179 deaths in Knox County, with seven additional deaths today

Benchmark 1: Sustained reduction of stability in new cases for 14 days / Red

Over the past 14 days, we have hit a new record high in case volume. We've detected five 'red' flags, of which three were on consecutive days, and two 'yellow' flags.

Our average of 243 new cases a day over the past seven days, and an average of 208 new cases per day, over the past 14 days.

Benchmark 2: Community-wide sustained and increased diagnostic testing with consistent or decreased test result reporting turnaround time / Red

Regarding testing there were four 'red' flags and two 'yellow' flags, in the last 14 days; there were consecutive days of flags. The total number of tests has increased over recent weeks, attributed to folks testing and traveling over the Thanksgiving holidays.

Regarding lab turnaround time, there have been seven 'red' flags and two 'yellow' flags, all of these occurred on consecutive days. Turnaround time has increased since September, currently the average is between five and six days, although during this period it has been noted slightly higher, at seven days. This is true statewide, the increase turnaround time, is not unique to Knox County, due to both process and volume.

Benchmark 3: Sustained or increased public health capability / Red

The goal remains for KCHD to initiate investigations of all new cases within 24 hours and close contacts within 48 hours, which is a hard-fast goal of KCHD's and has been consistent since March 16, 2020. However, due to the recent process changes and volume of cases, the way we previously represented this benchmark, has undergone changes. The traffic light changes will be based on KCHD's internal assessment of our current ability.

Dr. Buchanan reminded everyone to take personal responsibility and to quarantine themselves at the first sign of exposure; one should not wait for a call from KCHD, nor anyone in healthcare, to begin taking action; isolate if you begin having symptoms or have been exposed, call your close contacts to make them aware, so they can begin quarantining. If you have been tested, regardless or not if you have symptoms, you need to quarantine until you receive your test results, this is imperative.

Benchmark 4: Health care system capabilities remain within current and forecasted surge capability / Red

During this time, we have noted eleven 'red' flags and two 'yellow' flags, for inpatients with COVID-19, of which there were several three-day trends. Additionally, we noted eleven 'red' flags and two 'yellow' flags for COVID-19 patients in the ICU, some of which occurred on consecutive days. There were six 'red' flags and one 'yellow' flag on consecutive days, noted for patients requiring ventilators. After speaking with our hospital partners, they stated their benchmark should be represented as red.

Benchmark 5: Sustained or decreased COVID-19 related death rate for identified positive or probable cases / Red

We have seen 26 deaths, related to COVID-19, in the past seven days; and 36 deaths in the last fourteen days; which are very sobering numbers.

Supplemental Data:

Chart 1: New COVID-19 Daily Cases per 100,000 Population

This chart will show the seven and fourteen-day trend line. As of today, our fourteen-day trend line shows 47 new cases per 100,000 and our seven-day trend lines shows 16 new cases per 100,000; both are well above our metrics for both measurements.

Chart 2: COVID-19 Percent Positive Test

This data is directly from the TDH-Tennessee Department of Health. The seven-day average for percent positive in Knox County is 20.17%, which is an increase from previous reports and above our acceptable metrics.

Dr. Buchanan noted the fatalities are matching up to the increase in case counts.

VII. UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE MEDICAL CENTER AT KNOXVILLE DATA UPDATE by DR. SHAMIYEH

Dr. Shamiyeh presented data from the University of Tennessee Medical Center and regional data on COVID hospitalizations, see attached PowerPoint.

Dr. Shamiyeh addressed the issues discussed by hospital partners, prior to deciding to move to 'red' for Benchmark #4- Health care system capabilities remain within current and forecasted surge capability; including patient wait times in Emergency Room for placement into room assignments, critical status-the redirection of ambulances to diverted healthcare facilities, placement of COVID-19 patients, ambulance wait times, and placement of post-surgical patients into room assignments.

He clearly stated hospitals, from an infection prevention perspective, are one of the safest environments in the community and encouraged people to come to Emergency Departments and hospital services, as needed, not to delay treatments. The hospitals are managing this as a team and are extremely measured in their response, as there are many sick people that do not have COVID-19.

Dr. Keith Britt, UTMCK Data Analyst, presented mobility data and correlated it to previous holidays spikes and trends. See the attached PowerPoint presentation, dated 12/2/2020 – Knox County COVID-19 Mobility Data.

The Google data set explored six sectors including workplace, residential, retail/recreation, grocery/pharmacy, transit stations and parks; noting more emphasis on the workplace and residential sectors.

Summary:

- Good evidence that previous two surges were triggered by Memorial Day and Labor Day mobility anomalies, the former exacerbated by an Independence Day mobility anomaly
- Same surge mobility signature detected on November 26th and 27th
- Current surge ostensibly driven by seasonal temperatures
- Unprecedented surge multiplier expected to begin in a matter of days

Hospital partners spoke, including:

- Dr. Mark Browne, Chief Medical Officer with Covenant Health System. Health systems are strained as never before, but safe and critically important for sick people to seek treatment at hospitals, they are very concerned for the community, stressed the 5 Core Actions are more important than ever, not to give in to the "COVID-fatigue". The ability to work

closely together with the regional healthcare leaders is unprecedented and the shared goal to assure the healthcare needs of our community are met, both COVID and Non-COVID.

- Dr. Frank Beuerlein, Chief Medical Officer for Quality with Tennova, at both Turkey Creek and North Knoxville campus.

Working with colleagues, hopes for lesser flu cases, hopes to reverse current trends, and provide for our community.

Dr. Shamiyeh stated the greatest current issue is staffing, a much greater concern than last week, with the anticipation of upcoming challenges and his expression of gratitude for the efforts of everyone working in the healthcare field.

Dr. Gotcher noted that the entire country is impacted now, whereby in the spring healthcare staff traveled to NYC to volunteer assistance during their early surge, now there is no longer a pool to draw from and our own pool is fatigued, burnt out or possibly ill themselves.

Mayor Jacobs also thanked those working in the healthcare field for their exemplary job, expressing how grateful and thankful we are for them.

VIII. QUESTIONS for EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (presentations sent previously)

A. UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE

Dr. Marcy Souza noted that undergraduates have departed campus until mid-January 2021, generally only international students remain on campus; final exams are all virtual.

B. KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

Lisa Wagoner updated today's active cases data to include 130 students and 60 staff. Also, both Powell Middle and Halls Elementary, were adjusted to 'red' status yesterday.

Knox County Schools' COVID-19 data and information is available on the KCS website.

Dr. Buchanan added that KCS is working closely with KCHD, observing very carefully who needs to be quarantined to minimize those numbers; she applauds the extra measures they are investigating prior to decisions made, striving to keep as many staff and students in school, as possible. She noted the KCHD will be adopting the new CDC guidelines, with shorter quarantine time requirements. Currently discussions of how to inform and present the updated information to the public are being implemented by KCHD leadership.

IX. REVIEW and DISCUSSION:

A. COVID-19 FACE COVERING REGULATION, NO. 2020-1

This regulation is in place until no longer needed, there is no sunset date and it is to be discussed at every meeting.

Dr. Buchanan reported that complaints regarding face masks have diminished and have noted the many signs in the community inspiring compliance.

Dr. Hurt encouraged the public to assume the best of each other rather than harshly judging, to support our fellow citizens to fight the virus, together.

B. COVID-19 SOCIAL GATHERING LIMITATION REGULATION, NO. 2020-8

Dr. Buchanan made a motion to discuss the revised Regulation No. 2020-8, Dr. O'Brien second. Revisions to Paragraph 3 included changing the number of people gathering from eight to ten and the space limitations. Paragraph 5-i. was added to address gatherings for the purpose of providing therapeutic support.

Mayor Jacobs would prefer this regulation be passed as a recommendation, with more concise language, noting the difficulty of enforcement also. He compared the space limitations to a basketball court and agreed with the premise and great intentions of physical distancing, but is concerned about pushback and reactions from the public.

Dr. Buchanan stated that both Shelby and Davidson counties have current regulations, public health orders written by their public health officers. She clarified her intent to temp down social

gatherings and to keep people from spreading the virus at social celebrations, as we continue to encourage the public to follow the Five Core Actions.

Dr. O'Brien noted Paragraph 5-d., should read 'City of Knoxville and Town of Farragut'.

Ms. Roma noted on page 5-#11., should read 'not more than 10 persons' and 'COVID-19'.

Dr. Buchanan and Dr. O'Brien both approved a friendly amendment to set the expiration date of Regulation No. 2020-8 to January 1, 2021.

The motion passed, via roll call vote, 7 to 3, with three dissenting votes by Dr. Gotcher, Mayor Jacobs and Dr. O'Brien.

X. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH RULES by DR. O'BRIEN

Dr. O'Brien proposed adding a '*15 minutes of Board comment period*', to the end of the monthly public forum section of the Board of Health meeting, for Board members to respond to questions or concerns expressed by the public forum participants. Dr. O'Brien proposed the motion, Dr. Hurt second and the motion passed unanimously, via roll call 10 to 0.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Gotcher asked if there were areas of discussion where the Board needs provide information transfer which would be beneficial to the community.

Dr. O'Brien highly encouraged the public to review a recent BBC news video by Dr. Renie, intubating a patient, to provide critical care ventilation via respiratory therapy; to experience the raw emotion involved in performing this procedure. He also warned of 'information silos' and encouraged the public to broaden their sources of truthful information.

Dr. Gotcher mentioned the prospect of speakers to address the psychiatric and psychological aspects of the pandemic, as well as laboratory testing.

Dr. Shamiyeh encouraged additional information related to the topic of vaccines. Mayor Jacobs noted the fascination of the technology involved in the development of the new COVID-19 vaccines, a testament to both modern medicine and technology.

Dr. Buchanan verified that information about the vaccines is fluctuating, constantly updating, and challenging. She encouraged Board members to add topics to the proposed agenda distributed prior to meetings, to address their concerns.

Dr. Buchanan noted in the latest White House Task Force, very strong language, and statewide recommendations from the Tennessee State report, especially specific to people over the age of 65 years, continuing to be the most vulnerable age bracket.

Dr. Buchanan also announced this would be Narda Cappuccilli's last Board meeting, due to her upcoming retirement from the Knox County Health Department.

XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Zoom meeting: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 5 p.m.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Dr. O'Brien moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Dr. Drake. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Martha Buchanan, MD, Senior Director and Public Health Officer
Knox County Health Department
Secretary, Knox County Board of Health