



OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

Knox County Health Department • 140 Dameron Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917-6413

KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
Special Called Meeting, July 1, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.
City County Building
Main Assembly Room

Present:

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

Absent:

None

Others Attending:

KCHD: Charity Menefee, Director of Communicable and Environmental Disease and Emergency Preparedness; Kelsey Wilson, Communications Division Director; and Danielle Davis, Executive Secretary
Knox County Law Department: Myers Morton, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Jack Gotcher called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Dr. Gotcher announced the presence of a quorum, following roll call by Kelsey Wilson.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SPECIAL MEETING, JUNE 17, 2020

Corrections were discussed.

Dr. O'Brien made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected by the board. Dr. Drake seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

IV. BENCHMARK PRESENTATION

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

As of the official update to the website today:

- *We have 977 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Knox County.*
- *Additionally, we have 29 probable cases.*
- *701 of our cases have recovered, giving us 271 active cases.*
- *78 individuals have been hospitalized at some point in their illness.*
- *13 Knox County residents are currently hospitalized.*
- *We have no additional deaths due to complications from COVID-19.*

Additionally, Dr. Buchanan reported that since the data update on the website at 11 a.m. today, 30 more cases have been reported. She also reported that:

- *56% are 18-44*
- *26% are 21-30*
- *18% are 31-40*
- *21% of cases have been received in the last 7 days*
- *36% of cases have been received in the last 14 days*
- *55% growth rate for Knox County since 6/25*

Benchmark 1: Sustained reduction or stability in new cases for 14 days - Red

To illustrate this benchmark, the health department has a bar graph that shows previous cases, new cases and the growth rate over time. They have seen several consecutive days of red flags and a significant, continuous increase in new cases. This causes the health department to classify this benchmark as red.

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

For this benchmark, the health department utilizes two bar graphs. One that shows a sample of the tests conducted for Knox County residents and another for average time between specimen collection and lab report data.

For the first graph, the health department detected red flags, but they were not on consecutive days. Anecdotally, through what the health department understands from hospitals and private providers, and their own testing – testing looks to be in good shape and consistent with previous weeks.

For the second graph, the health department wants to see this number stabilize or decrease (i.e., lab results come in at the same pace or more quickly). This week, the time it takes to receive results from the lab has stabilized – and is not increasing in the same manner it was in previous weeks. Of note, because this timeframe is low to begin with, even a small increase could register as statistically significant. This week, this benchmark is represented as yellow, per both graphs.

Benchmark 3: Sustained or increased public health capability - Green

For this benchmark, the health department aims to reach out to cases within 24 hours and close contacts within 48 hours. To date, since the beginning of the pandemic, they have accomplished that for all the cases and contacts. Because of that, this benchmark continues to be represented as green.

The health department is training more individuals to assist their Epi Support Team and build out the local contact tracing capacity beyond the KCHD internal team. This is to be able to respond to the growing case load. While there are 70 team members listed in today's information, it's important to note that not all of them are working all day, every day. Since this team's work is required seven days a week, the increase in response team members allows the health department to even out the staffing responsibilities.

Benchmark 4: Health care system capabilities remain within current and forecasted surge capacity - Green

These graphs show the availability of regional hospital beds, ICU beds and ventilators from area hospitals. It also shows the additional surge capacity for these categories, as well as the COVID-positive patients and the patients with pending test results in the hospital. These data are gathered from the information hospitals put into the Tennessee Healthcare Resource Tracking System (HRTS). It may reflect Knox County, East Region or patients from other jurisdictions.

It's important to note there were days of statistically significant increases regarding positive patients, ICU patients and ventilated patients. However, the health department spoke with local hospitals who believed their benchmark should be represented as green because they are still well within their capacity to safely respond in their hospitals. The hospital systems continue to meet weekly, assess the situation, and plan their response together. They are watching the situation very closely and communicating with the health department regularly.

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

For this benchmark, the health department shows the chart that details cases, hospitalizations and deaths. This benchmark remains green because, thankfully, the County has not had an increase in deaths.

V. DISCUSSION OF BENCHMARKS AND NEXT STEPS

The benchmarks, other data points and the current local situation were discussed. The data-related discussion included:

- Total tests conducted in Knox County and why KCHD uses a sample of tests in reporting data
- Percentage of positives and increases in testing; the growth rate still outpaces the increase in testing
- Average stay in the hospital: approximately 7 days
- Age range of those hospitalized
- The hospital surge plans

The discussion moved to the local phase two plan compared to the state's plan, the TN Pledge.

Dr. O'Brien proposed a public health order that mandates face coverings in most indoor public spaces. Dr. O'Brien made a motion that the proposed public health order be adopted by board. Dr. Drake seconded the motion.

Discussion revolved around several topics including the science, legality, enforcement and timing of the order.

Ms. Wagoner requested an edit to remove "public and" from 3. g. "Indoor public place" on page 3, thus removing public schools from the order.

Dr. O'Brien offered an amendment removing "public and" from page three, item G.

The amended motion was put to a vote. The motion passed with the votes recorded below.

Dr. Drake – yes

Dr. Gotcher, Chair – yes

Dr. Hurt – yes

Mayor Jacobs – no

Dr. O'Brien – yes

Dr. Souza – yes

Ms. Wagoner – yes

Dr. Shamiyeh – yes

Discussion followed and included:

- The intent of the order is to review it at every BOH meeting.
- Knox County will follow the TN Pledge, but may amend the plan per local data.
- Public health capacity to continue contact tracing.

VI. DISCUSSION REGARDING SCHEDULING OF FUTURE KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETINGS

The decision was made to meet in two weeks virtually, per the Governor's new order, with details to be determined at a later date upon discussion between Dr. Buchanan and the Law Department.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Dr. Drake moved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting ended at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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