

KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
September 16, 2020; from 5:00 p.m. to 8:12 p.m.
Knox County Health Department
Via Zoom Meeting

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
James Shamiyeh, MD
Marcy Souza, DVM
Lisa Wagoner, RN; representing Superintendent Bob Thomas, Knox County Schools

Absent: None

Others Attending:

KCHD: Katharine Killen, Danielle Davis (zoom host), Narda Cappuccilli (recorder)
Knox County: David Sanders, Esq. representing Knox County Law Department
University of Tennessee Knoxville: Chancellor Donde Lee Plowman and Dr. Spencer Gregg
City of Knoxville: Mayor Indya Kincannon and Knoxville Police Chief Eve Thomas

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, all nine Board members were in attendance, therefore there was a quorum.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 MEETING

Motion made by Dr. Shamiyeh and seconded by Mayor Jacobs, to accept the minutes as written. The motion passed via roll call, 8 to 0 to 1, with one abstention by Dr. Souza, as she was unable to attend the 9/9/20 meeting.

IV. SET THE AGENDA

Motion to pass made by Dr. Drake, seconded by Dr. O'Brien.

Dr. O'Brien requested our guests, City of Knoxville-Mayor Indya Kincannon and Knoxville Police Chief Eve Thomas, be allowed to speak at the time in the agenda allotted for Educational Institution Updates, passed with above stated addition via roll call vote unanimously, 9 to 0.

V. BENCHMARK PRESENTATION

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

- 66 new confirmed cases since yesterday's report.
- 8,656 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Knox County since March 2020.
- 327 probable cases.
- 6,892 of our cases are inactive, giving us 2,024 active cases.

- 315 individuals have been hospitalized at some point in their illness.
- 29 Knox County residents are currently hospitalized.
- 67 deaths in Knox County.

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

Last week we saw five consecutive ‘red’ flags, this week we have seen only two ‘red’ flags, all of which indicates strategically significant increase in cases.

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

Over the 14-day evaluation period, we did have a three-day red trend in lab turnaround time; but since September 4, it has remained around a two-day average.

Regarding testing, we saw some consecutive ‘red’ flags for the number of tests conducted, but overall week to week, this continues to trend up.

We believe the increase in turnaround time and the decrease in testing were related to Labor Day weekend, but continued concern that folks are not getting tested when they should be.

Benchmark 3: Sustained or increased public health capability / Green

KCHD has initiated 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.

We have added a few new team members to our Epi Support team from last week, we will be able to continue to initiate investigations within the desired time frame.

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

During this time frame we have seen ‘red’ and ‘yellow’ flags, noted for ICU beds and ventilators, two ‘yellow’ flags were also noted for positive inpatients, but they were not consecutive days. After speaking with our hospital partners, they stated their benchmark should be represented as yellow.

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

Over the past two weeks, Knox County has seen eleven deaths.

Dr. Buchanan then showed 2 slides of COVID data related to recent new cases and age distribution, see attached PowerPoint.

Slide #1 – COVID-19 Cases by Date and Age Category

Last week’s discussion of who are our new cases and where are we seeing those increases continues, as we see most of the increases in school-aged children and into college-age young adults. The 18 to 22-year-old age group, having the largest growth over the recent past; with 656 cases between August 30 and September 5, and 335 cases between September 6 to the 12, is a significant increase, followed by high school-aged children and then middle schoolers.

Slide #2- COVID 29-Cases by Date and Age Category: 5 to 10, 11 to 13 and 14 to 17 years

Evident that most of cases are from high school aged children, in Knox County. The 14 to 22-year-old age group is where most cases are confirmed, in our community.

Dr. Buchanan pointed out in the current Tennessee Department of Health’s information discussing the doubling time across the state, Knox County is currently represented at 39.6 days, which is the highest doubling time of any county in the state, with the next closest county registering at 50.2 days doubling time.

Doubling time means how long does it take us to double the number of cases we have. This is concerning as Knox County is doubling at quite rapidly, especially in the younger age range.

Dr. Buchanan believes during the Labor Day holiday weekend, testing labs were not working at full capacity, holding some specimens, and batching them after the holiday, creating delays in turnaround times noticed around the county, although the KCHD was not impacted.

VI. UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE MEDICAL CENTER AT KNOXVILLE DATA UPDATE

- a. Dr. Shamiyeh presented data from the University of Tennessee Medical Center and some regional data on COVID hospitalizations, see attached PowerPoint.
 - Pace of New Cases – 8 days is the lowest Knox County has ever been for the number of days to add cases, with the THA Knoxville District at 4 days, to add the next thousand cases.
 - This week Knox County added 935 new cases, which is our highest for a week, last week was 778, we are on pace to exceed July and August
 - Anticipate concerns for sicker patients and more hospitalizations, if the spikes in the current new cases for 11 to 20 and the 21 to 30 year, impact the older demographics
 - THA Knoxville District has an increased proportion of the entire state's new cases
- b. Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, met with a representative group yesterday on UTK campus, including both mayors, several board of health members, Chancellor Plowman, etc.
 - Dr. Birx prefers to review the positivity rate, emphasizing the importance of testing volume, which would indicate how well the community is managing the disease. By increasing testing, it would dilute the positives with negatives
 - Dr. Buchanan has had concerns in the past, that we are capturing most of the positive tests, but not capturing all the negatives. Dr. Shamiyeh hopes the trends are more reliable and helpful.

Key data points from PowerPoint Presentation:

 - 3 weeks of increase case growth
 - Highest weekly total of new cases since the beginning of the pandemic, driven by 11 to 30 years age group
 - 0 to 10 years age group shows little to no signs of new case growth acceleration
 - 30+ years age group still being diagnosed with COVID-19 at a stable rate (36% of all COVID-19 daily new infections in September)
 - District hospitalizations trending in the same direction as case growth, but Knox County hospitalizations remain level and manageable
- c. Dr. Buchanan stated after meeting with Dr. Birx, discussed with her staff, we will be utilizing the State's percent positivity rate to follow Knox County trends.
- d. Tennessee's testing volume has decreased by 50%, which is a substantial recent trend statewide and one of our main challenges, as that would reflect the disease burden in our community.
- e. Dr. Buchanan mentioned the system West Virginia is utilizing with the red, green, yellow traffic light indicators to talk about how things are going in the community and connect that to community activities, such as high school football games; thereby motivating people to take responsibility to reduce risks and change human behavior.

VII. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PRESENTATIONS

- a. Chancellor Plowman and Dr. Gregg from the University of Tennessee Knoxville (UTK) spoke about the situation at UTK and their plans. See attached PowerPoint.
 - i. Discussed case campus case rates
 - ii. Discussed visit by Dr. Birx
 - iii. Expanding surveillance testing on campus
 - iv. Considering research to look at length of quarantine
 - v. Will continue to review and update plans
 - vi. Goal is to keep University open and community safe
- b. Lisa Wagoner presented information about Knox County Schools' COVID data and their process. See attached PowerPoint.
- c. Knoxville Mayor Kincannon was appreciative of the commitment, communication and community service from all entities involved and committed to facial coverings.
- d. KPD Chief Thomas looks forward to meeting with various law enforcement colleagues on 9/17/20, to discuss local situation. The Beer Board has been contacted to gain a clearer definition of "bars". Education is the preferred approach to law intervention.

VIII. COVID-19 FACE COVERING REGULATION, NO. 2020-1, REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- a. Brief update on complaints
- b. Dr. Gotcher asked what Williamson County used to decide to lift their mask mandate, the Health department will follow-up
- c. Dr. Buchanan will present to the Board a recommendation for how we will decide to lift the mask mandate at the next meeting.

IX. COVID-19 SUPPRESSION IN BARS REGULATION, NO. 2020-4, REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- a. No action was taken on this item
- b. The Board agreed to revisit this item depending on the outcome of the vote on Regulation 2020-5

X. COVID-19 CURFEW ON ALL ALCOHOL SALES REGULATION, NO. 2020-5

- a. Motion was made by Dr. O'Brien and second by Dr. Souza.
- b. It was noted that the White House Taskforce has consistently recommended closure of bars and that Dr. Birx stated that full closure or early closure both helped bring COVID cases down in other parts of the country.
- c. Motion to amend Regulation 2020-5 by changing the time of closure from 10 pm to 11 pm was made by Dr. Gotcher and seconded by Dr. Shamiyeh
- d. After some discussion and vote, the Amendment passed 6 to 3.
- e. Motion was made by Dr. O'Brien and seconded by Dr. Souza to replace the following language in Paragraph 4 from "suspend offering food and drink, including both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, for on-premises consumption, or "permitting the on-premises consumption of the same" to "close".
Motion passed 8 to 1.
- f. Several friendly amendments were made by Dr. Buchanan
 - i. Page 1, in the third Whereas statement change "August 20, 2020" to "September 13, 2020" and "Yellow" to "Red".

- ii. Page 2, in the sixth Whereas statement change “July 28, 2020” to “September 16, 2020”.

XI. COVID-19 SOCIAL GROUP TRANSMISSION SUPPRESSION REGULATION, NO. 2020-6

- a. Motion to adopt by Dr. O’Brien with a second by Dr. Drake.
- b. Friendly amendments as follows:
 - i. Adding “weddings and funerals” to b. under paragraph 6.
 - ii. Page one in the second Whereas statement changing “July 20, 2020” to “September 13, 2020”
 - iii. Page one third Whereas statement changing “August 2, 2020” to “September 16, 2020”.
 - iv. Page two sixth Whereas statement, changing “July 28, 2020” to “September 16, 2020”.
- c. Motion passed with amendments 8 to 1.

XII. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Dr. Shamiyeh asked for clarification on enforcement of the Tennessee Pledge Restaurant Guidelines and Executive Order #38 regarding not allowing bar service in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs except to people who are seated at a table. Dr. Buchanan responded that for the most part this regulation is being followed, and for the few who are not following, enforcement is limited to education.
- b. Dr. Buchanan further explained that the community’s frustration over COVID is being directed at KCHD staff on a regular basis and leadership tries to limit adding to the frustration in the community.

XIII. ANNOUCEMENTS

Next Zoom meeting: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 5 pm.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Dr. O’Brien moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Mayor Jacobs. Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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

List of Attachments:

- COVID-19 Cases by Date and Age Category; Two slides by Dr. Buchanan
- COVID-19 Update-September 16, 2020; PowerPoint Presentation by Dr. Shamiyeh
- University of Tennessee Knoxville Update- September 16, 2020; PowerPoint Presentation by Chancellor Plowman
- Knox County Schools Update-September 16, 2020; PowerPoint Presentation by Lisa Wagoner

- Table-Single Slide by Dr. Shamiyeh
- COVID-19 Face Covering Regulation, No. 2020-1
- COVID-19 Suppression in Bars Regulation, No. 2020-4
- COVID-19 Draft Regulation, No. 2020-5
- COVID-19 Draft Resolution, No. 2020-6
- Knox County Board of Health Rules – Final
- Executive Order #38 by Governor Lee
- Tennessee Pledge
- White House Task Force, 9/13/20 TN State Report