

KNOX COUNTY ADVISORY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES
December 22, 2021 5:30 PM
Knox County Health Department

Present:

John Adams, MD
Martha Buchanan, MD, PHO, KCHD Representative
Jack E. Gotcher, Jr., DDS, Chair
Maria Hurt, DNP
Katharine Killen, KCHD Co-Interim Dir, Secretary
Ms. Ani Roma, Citizen Representative
James Shamiyeh, MD
Marcy Souza, DVM
Lisa Wagoner, RN, representing Superintendent Bob Thomas, Knox County Schools

Absent:

John Duncan, PharmD
Mayor Glenn Jacobs

Others Attending:

Dwight Van de Vate, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
KCHD: Chrissy Gilmore, KCHD, Exec Asst
Melinda Goodman, KCHD, Exec Asst (recorder)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Jack Gotcher called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Dr. Jack Gotcher requested Ms. Goodman take roll call to confirm establishment of the quorum. All but two Board members were in attendance. Quorum was met.

III. SET THE AGENDA

Motion made by Dr. Martha Buchanan and seconded by Dr. John Adams to set the agenda. The motion passed and was adopted unanimously by all present.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 22, 2021 MEETING

Dr. Marcy Souza moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Dr. James Shamiyeh. The motion passed and was adopted unanimously by all present with Katharine Killen abstaining.

V. HEALTH DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP UPDATE BY MR. DWIGHT VAN DE VATE

Mr. Dwight Van de Vate, Chief of Staff for the Mayor's Office, provided an update on the executive search firm, Baker Tilly, contracted to conduct a national search for both the Senior Director and Public Health Officer roles at the Knox County Health Department.

VI. KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION BY ROBERTA STURM

Ms. Sturm presented data from the Knox County Health Department.

Vaccine Update:

We are continuing to vaccinate at the Health Department five days per week as well as at community events lending our support in making vaccine more accessible to the public.

One Dose

% of Total Knox County Population = 61.23

% of Knox County Population \geq 5 Years of Age = 64.83

% of Knox County Population \geq 65 Years of Age = 89.53

Fully Vaccinated

% of Total Knox County Population = 57.06

% of Knox County Population \geq 5 Years of Age = 60.42

% of Knox County Population \geq 65 Years of Age = 85.88

Current COVID-19 Data:

Cases

- We have weathered two significant surges to date, one in December 2020 and the Delta variant surge in late August to early September 2021. Cases have increased slightly over the last several weeks, although we are not seeing a surge at this time.
- The 14-28 day trends have evened out to stable levels with small increases around holidays. CDC estimates that new cases of COVID-19 in the Southeast region of the United States are the Omicron variant.

Testing Data

- We continue to outsource testing for the uninsured, to free up staff for other public health activities, like COVID and Flu vaccination.
- With at-home tests more widely available, some people report their outcomes while others do not. Although there may be a number of at-home tests that go unreported, we feel our data is representative of what is happening in the community.

Trends

- COVID cases by age indicate an even mix of cases within the age brackets in our community. The 5-17 year old age category has decreased to more relatively low counts in the last several weeks. This is encouraging now that we are into winter break.
- Hospitalizations are following very similarly what we have seen in cases through the last two surges. ICU bed use and patients requiring ventilators numbers have matched this trend. December shows upward movement in hospitalizations; however, this is still lower than previous increases.

Death Data

- The majority of our COVID related mortalities occurred in the winter of last year with a sharp rise occurring between November 2020 through January 2021.
Oct 2020 = 21 Nov 2020 = 83 Dec 2020 = 156 Jan 2021 = 180
Oct 2021 = 61 Nov 2021 = 27
- According to the TN Department of Health, mortality data stemming from the Delta surge in September 2021 is still being assessed. Numbers for August through December 2021 are likely to increase as that data is entered.

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

Dr. Shamiyeh presented data from the University of Tennessee Medical Center and regional data on COVID vaccinations and hospitalizations.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Announcement

- Private citizen, Cynthia J. Finch, residing at 201 Delta Rd, Knoxville, TN, addressed the Advisory Board of Health, regarding a "Save the Date" for the MEGA Children's Vaccine Clinic, being offered on January 7-8, 2022, from 3:00pm-8:00pm on Friday and 10:00am-3:00pm on Saturday at the Jacob Building, 3301 Magnolia Avenue, Knoxville, TN.
- Additional information can be obtained through New Direction Health Care Solutions, Inc. at (865)274-4793 or (865)851-8055. Flyer provided.

Health Department Cluster Update

- Communicable and Environmental Disease and Emergency Preparedness Director at the Knox County Health Department, Roberta Sturm, addressed the Advisory Board of Health, regarding a HIV Cluster in Knox County.
- We are seeing an increase in HIV numbers with a change in area of transmission around persons who inject drugs and intravenous drug use. We are working with our community partners to offer services, and many individuals have been connected to care.
- A THAN was sent to health care providers on Tuesday, December 21, 2021. We will be sending additional information next week to our community partners and health care leaders.

Omicron Perspective

- Omicron is very different from other variants in transmissibility, severity and protections offered from prior immunity.
- While we are still learning about Omicron, the good news is that the basics have not changed. Vaccines, mask wearing, handwashing and staying home when you are sick are all still very effective mitigation methods. Even though it is harder to predict new variants, the methods of protecting ourselves are the same.
- It is important to take advantage of the proven methods of easing transmission available to us.

2022 Meeting Schedule

- 2022 meeting schedule provided for review. All meeting dates and conference rooms were approved.

Acknowledgement and Thank you

- Dr. Jack Gotcher, the board chair, acknowledged and thanked Dr. Buchanan for her years of service to Knox County and surrounding counties.
- Dr. Buchanan thanked Dr. Gotcher, the board and the health department professionals making a difference in the community.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:18 PM. The next ABOH meeting will occur on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 5:30 PM in the Small Assembly Room at the City County Building.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Parton, Interim Senior Director and Chief Administrative Officer
Knox County Health Department
Secretary, Knox County Advisory Board of Health

List of Presentations:

- Knox County Health Department Presentation by Roberta Sturm
- University of Tennessee Medical Center Knoxville - Data Update Presentation by Dr. James Shamiyeh
- Announcement of Save the Date flyer
- 2022 Meeting Schedule