

Chicago Board of Health
October 21, 2020
Virtual Meeting
By Remote Means

Pursuant to applicable law, the President determined that an in-person meeting was not practical or prudent. Accordingly, attendance at this meeting was via remote means only.

Roll Call

Board Members Present

Adele Joy Cobbs, M.D
Carolyn C. Lopez, M.D., President
Joseph B. Starshak
Horace E. Smith, M.D.
Victor M. Gonzalez
Melanie Dreher, RN, PhD.
Caswell A. Evans, Jr., D.D.S., M.P.H.
Steven K. Rothschild, M.D.

Board Members Absent

Juan M. Calderon

For the Department

Allison Arwady, M.D., Commissioner

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Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:03am by Board President, Dr. Carolyn Lopez.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the September 2020 meeting were approved by the Board.

Commissioner's Update: Dr. Arwady presented board members with a detailed data report on the Novel Coronavirus, and provided an update on the status of COVID-19 in Chicago. Dr. Arwady also provided board members with an update on the Chicago Department of Public Health's (CDPH) budget proposal in advance of the Mayor's 2021 budget announcement.

Board Member Comments: Mr. Starshak inquired about CDPH's budget cuts for 2021, and offered support to help fundraise if helpful. Dr. Arwady informed the board the cuts in CDPH's budget were primarily in the corporate, not grants budget, and thanked Mr. Strashak for his offer of support. Mr. Gonzalez inquired about the plan for the COVID vaccine distribution. Dr. Arwady provided an overview of CDPH's plan for administering the 2-dose vaccine, and indicated she is very confident in the department's Emergency Preparedness team. Dr. Evans inquired about the COVID vaccine prioritization. Dr. Arwady informed board members priority will be determined both at the federal as well as local level. Dr. Arwady also informed board members the City will have a more direct role during the first several months of the COVID vaccine distribution, and one more vaccine was available would have a coordinating role. Dr. Smith inquired about who was responsible for determining the prioritization of eligibility for the COVID vaccine. Dr. Arwady informed the board the prioritization for vaccines is traditionally determined by the Centers for Disease Control. Dr. Arwady also informed board members the City is also working on a plan for a local scientific advisory committee that would help guide a more localized priority plan for the COVID vaccine. Dr. Cobbs inquired about the City's response on Mercy Hospital. Dr. Arwady informed board members CDPH has had multiple conversations with the Mercy team. Dr. Arwady also reminded the board that the City has no direct role, as the State of Illinois is the lead governmental body with oversight of Mercy hospital. Dr. Dreher provided comments about her time serving on the Trinity board of directors several years ago, and briefly highlighted some very difficult financial challenges Mercy hospital was facing at that time.

Board President Comments: Dr. Lopez reminded board members, while the closure of Mercy Hospital is outside the scope of the Board of Health, they should feel free to personally organize.

Old Business: Dr. Dreher provided an update to the board on live market regulations, and also summarized recent legislative prohibitions in New York. Dr. Dreher indicated that New York was not the best comparison case study because of various differences in regulations and inspections. Dr. Rothschild indicated animals were not under the purview of the board, however recognized the public health implications could be. Dr. Rothschild indicated he is concerned that there is not a lot of data on zoonotic conditions. Dr. Lopez asked board members if any formal action is to be taken regarding live markets. The board decided not to take any formal action on live markets.

Public Comments: Five representatives of Slaughter Free Chicago, an organization advocating to ban live markets and make Chicago a slaughter free city, provided testimony about their advocacy efforts, and urged the Board of Health to help their group's efforts to ban live markets, and emphasize the urgent need to do this during the pandemic.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 10:35 AM.