

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
FEBRUARY 25, 2009
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

The Board convened in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 6th Floor, Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. Board members Mielke, Stuart, and Boldt, Chair, present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The board conducted the Flag Salute.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Boldt asked for more information about consent item #2.

Marni Storey, Public Health Services Manager, Public Health explained the grant funding allowed for a part time position. She said this person will help coordinate the community work groups.

Boldt inquired about the amount listed for a half time position.

Mielke and *Stuart* stated the supporting documentation was in their binders.

Stuart asked what specific services they were contracting out as it seems like a lot of money for contractual services.

Storey said they are hoping to bring the hospitals and the healthcare providers together to form work groups. She said they may need to pay for some short time legal consultation to move this process forward.

Boldt asked if they are creating a program that Clark County will be responsible for after the funding goes away.

Storey stated no and that a big piece of the grant application is sustainability. She stated they will be working closely with the hospitals and health care plans at the local and state level to ensure sustainability. She said recent research of similar models has shown cost savings for them to support concepts like the patient navigator because they can create an avenue of one stop shopping for clients helping initiate problem solving early and preventing severe costly problems.

John Wiesman, Director, Public Health asked if they are calling it a pilot.

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Storey said this innovation grant is from United Way which will be used to lay the foundation. She stated in a couple years they could apply for the actual dollars to provide the services. She clarified this would pay for the consulting that they need and help bring the groups together to develop a financial and sustainability plan. She stated in the future the possibility of forming a 501(c) 3 or having one of the large health plans or providers take this on as a community project, as it is not something that public health can solve alone.

Boldt said he was glad to see the health care plans were going to be involved.

Storey said the recommendations they put forth in this grant came from a community group which has been involved with it from the beginning.

Mielke said he had some concern taking on another project due to the current economy and the current cuts they already made.

Storey said that was a great point and noted this was a project they have been working on for two years but they haven't had funding specifically to work on it. She said a lot of people have been working on their time to get this grant and help it move forward. She added it would support an ongoing project the community really feels is essential.

Mielke asked if it was a workload issue. He stated his concerns with the amount of illegal citizens using healthcare services.

Storey said in the Medicaid program there is federal requirements that they serve undocumented citizens, some of which are here illegally, but in Clark County that is less than one percent of the Medicaid population seeking pregnancy care. She stated the biggest population is women on TANF. She stated they are having the largest struggle getting them into first trimester prenatal care and those women do have to document citizenship.

Mielke asked for further information from her after the meeting.

Storey agreed.

Boldt asked for more information about consent item #1.

Jonnie Hyde, Public Health Services Manager, Public Health. She stated this request is for approval to submit an application to Department of Ecology for the Terry Husseman Account Grant in the amount of \$47,500 to cover the costs of Geographic Information System (GIS) staff to complete the septic data reconciliation project. She said this project was previously approved by the Information Services Project Review Committee prior to the loss of funding.

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Hyde said the project would have the GIS staff compare data from sewer providers and the tax assessor's database in order to find properties that have homes on them that are not listed as either being on septic or on sewer. She described the advantages of the project.

Mielke asked if this would be an addition to the current GIS system.

Hyde stated that was correct, it is currently working through our GIS system and all of the funding would go to the GIS Department for their services.

Mielke inquired about consent items #3 - #8 in regards to each county and the HIV prevention and intervention services.

Wiesman said the state, in terms of HIV services, is broken up into six regions, Clark County is the largest health department in the region therefore is the lead agency. He said they have an eleven county region which is all of western Washington, except Pierce, Kitsap, and King and their role is to coordinate the planning and contracting of services for those counties.

There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Stuart to approve items 1 through 9. Board members Boldt, Stuart, and Mielke voted aye. Motion carried.

POLICY: UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE VISITS AND STATE BUDGET

John Wiesman stated last Wednesday, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO) met with the local legislators in Olympia. He said the two main messages they presented to the legislators were to support the Governor's Public Health budget and that counties need their help. He said the legislators were receptive to the flexible funding message and mixed reaction on the county support. He said the mixed reaction is based off the timing of the discussion of raising taxes.

Boldt inquired if they would be seeing something from the President's stimulus package.

Wiesman said he thinks one billion dollars was discussed for Public Health, part of that going to fund immunization programs and the vaccines for children for those who primarily don't have insurance, some prevention dollars, and the WIC / Food Stamp program. He said he would forward the information on to the Board.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Strategic Initiative 2 - Responding to health threats

Marni Storey, Public Health Services Manager, introduced Catherine Kroll and provided her background to the Board.

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Catherine Kroll, Epidemiologist, Public Health presented on the school outbreaks. She said over a three week period starting early February fourteen schools in Clark County reported absenteeism ranging from 12% to 34% for influenza like respiratory symptoms. She said the absentees were from Vancouver, Evergreen, Ridgefield school districts and the Washington State School for the Blind. She stated upon initial notification of the increase in absentees, Clark County Public Health conducted 171 telephone interviews with parents/guardians of the ill to determine symptoms and severity of illness. She stated over the course of the outbreak, there were at least 2,250 students absent due to respiratory illness. She said they did education with the school districts in relation to cleaning and prevention methods.

Stuart asked if there was a program setup with the schools for students to flu shot at school.

Storey stated there is not. She stated the lack of school nurses contributes to there not being a consistent program being offered at school.

Stuart stated he would like to have conversation with the school districts to assist working parents in getting their children the flu shot.

Alan Melnick, Health Officer, Public Health stated some of the incidents were something other than influenza. He stated he is not opposed to a flu vaccination, however, even if they were able to institute a whole school influenza vaccination policy; they would still see a lot of respiratory illness and absenteeism this time of year.

Mielke asked if public health has authority and / or influence in putting nurses rather than psychologists back into the schools.

Storey said no. She stated the main reason there is a loss of school nurses is the loss of funding for school health programs.

Boldt stated he hopes even with the school budget cuts, he hopes that they realize the need for their janitors and their cleanliness during these kinds of outbreaks.

Strategic Initiative 3 – Promoting health environments

Jonnie Hyde, Public Health, presented on the Salmonella outbreak. She said there are over 2,000 strains of salmonella, bacteria that infect the intestinal tract and occasionally the blood. These infections generally become symptomatic one-three days after exposure, cause severe gastrointestinal symptoms, and can be life threatening, especially in the very young or elderly.

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Hyde stated as of yesterday the data shows it has caused 666 illnesses in 45 states, including 21 in Washington with 23% of persons infected had to hospitalized, with 9 deaths attributed to the outbreak. She said over 2,591 products were affected, from crackers and salad dressing to jar peanut butter to pet food. She said a complete, searchable list of products is on-line at www.cdc.gov/salmonella. She said locally, even though store operators had been alerted and there had been lots of media coverage about recalled products, our Clark county food safety staff responded proactively. She stated they were particularly concerned about convenience stores, liquidators, and small vendors other than major grocers who have had less experience with recalls. She said they spent over 190 hours making 133 site visits and over 80 phone calls to verify product recall. She mentioned they removed and destroyed 939 recalled products that were still on the shelves of 27 facilities. She said the food safety staff's proactive response effectively protected Clark County citizens from exposure to these potentially toxic foods.

Melnick went into further detail on how salmonella can get into peanut butter.

Wiesman said food protection and safety is a concern nationally and it reinforces the importance of locally grown foods.

Mielke asked if there is more of a problem from the products that are coming outside of the United States.

Wiesman said there could be something to that but the most recent incidents occurring has been in the United States. He stated at the last year's National Association meeting he attended a work session with the FDA in which they mentioned they are putting inspectors in foreign countries for those concerns. He stated the importance in the chain of events from the product being grown, produced, and processed to making its way to the table. He said the more steps you have in between, the more places you have for possible things to go wrong.

Melnick also mentioned the more the product gets combined with multiple organizations, the more investigative work takes place.

Boldt mentioned Snohomish County Health District recently acquired a mobile USDA processor and thinks that Clark County should look into obtaining one since Southwest Washington does not currently have one.


Storey presented on facility outbreaks. She stated three facilities (assisted living and long term care) reported gastrointestinal (GI) outbreaks between February 10th to 16th. She stated all facilities were visited and control measures were implemented. She said a total of 57 residents and 44 staff who were ill and at least four emergency department visits and two people were hospitalized due to GI illness during this time. She stated they have laboratory confirmation that one of those outbreaks was (at least in part) due Norovirus.

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Storey offered some helpful tips in preventing spreading illness; she reminded everyone it is not too late for influenza vaccination, to practice hand hygiene, to cover your coughs and sneezes, and to stay home if you sick with respiratory symptoms or vomiting and diarrhea.

Wiesman / Storey stated they received the state award for the best educational practices in the State of Washington in regards to the immunization program.

BOARD OF HEALTH



Marc Boldt, Chair

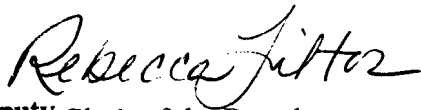


Steve Stuart, Board Member



Tom Mielke, Board Member

ATTEST:



Deputy Clerk of the Board

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