

TETON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

March 16, 2022

Present: Randy Morris, Sam Carlson, Ken Bassmann, Elaine Sedlack, Tim Sinton (via remote), Melissa Moyer, and Austin Moyer.

Absent: Lin Wright and Barb Shaffer.

Guests: Marcia Quillan, Brooke Richems (MSU student nurse working on a WIC project), and Melody Martinson (Choteau Acantha).

The meeting was called to order by Melissa Moyer at 8:05 am in the Teton County Courthouse Annex Conference Room in Choteau.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the December 15, 2021, meeting were reviewed. Sam moved the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Tim and approved unanimously.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Health Department Updates:

Staffing: Melissa reported that with the help of an Alliance for Youth grant she was able to hire Darlene Yeager Salmond as Prevention Specialist. She will be the coordinator for the CARES group working on behavioral health and substance abuse issues. She has a psychology background and will begin work on April 4, 2022.

Diabetes Prevention Program: Melissa reported Brianna Taylor is one month into her current Diabetes Prevention Program. She had 34 participants initially, but a few dropped out. She is offering noon and evening classes and the noon classes have been popular. It is also possible to attend the classes via zoom. The state is working on a platform that would allow residents of other counties to attend remotely as Teton County is the only county in the region offering the program.

Melissa also reported that Mandy Naylor can now do WIC and is studying to become a lactation consultant.

Board of Health Survey: Melissa said the survey will be closing soon and if we haven't completed it yet, she would appreciate it if we would. Ken commented he did not think it was a neutral survey. Melissa said a few years ago the state offered some classes for board of health members and wanted to know if there was a need and interest in having some training for new board members.

Board Policies: Elaine asked if there was any progress in rewriting the board of health policies to comply with the new laws passed by the last legislature. Melissa said the state health department is not offering any help, but the Montana Public Health Institute has prepared some guidelines. She will be working with Joe Coble, Teton County Attorney, on rewriting the policies. The main change will require the board to make recommendations and send them to the county commissioners for approval before implementation.

COVID -19 Updates:

Cases: Melissa reported that to date there have been 1,200 cases in Teton County of which 242 were considered fully vaccinated with 2 doses. There were 22 deaths with 3 of those being fully vaccinated with 2 doses. (Fully vaccinated does not include a booster dose.) Those fully vaccinated people who died had co-morbidities such as diabetes, or lung problems but not asthma. She showed a graph of cases which showed the Delta variant cases spread out over multiple weeks whereas the Omicron variant had a sharp peak and drop. A year-by-year comparison chart shows cases in older folks dropping each year while cases in the 20s and 30s age groups are increasing each year. The 10 to 19 years age group is showing the highest number of cases and remaining steady. Cases in the 0-to-9-year age group are increasing.

Vaccination Status: Concerning vaccination rates, only 8% of children in the 5 to 11 years age group and 22% of the 12 to 17 years age group are fully vaccinated. To achieve herd immunity 70% of all age groups would need to be fully vaccinated. Over all age groups in Teton County only 45% are fully vaccinated. Melissa said fewer people are coming each week to the weekly vaccination clinics and a few are still getting their first dose. They will continue to do weekly clinics and offer all 3 vaccines. The vaccine recommendation for ages 6 months to 4 years has been delayed. Melissa said they recently had a vaccination audit by the state health department which went well thanks to the great job Marcia has done.

Contact Tracing: Melissa said they have changed the way they do contact tracing and case management. They are concentrating on long term care facilities. For other people who test positive, they are notifying them by text message with a survey and then send them quarantine information. People seem to appreciate this method. They call those who don't text.

Testing: Melissa said a lot of people picked up home test kits and quite a few reported the positive results although there is no way to tell if someone tests positive and doesn't call. They still have home test kits available for anyone who wants one. They are still doing PCR tests and rapid tests. Marcia applied for a Rapid PCR Testing machine especially to help out travelers who are required to show proof of a negative test. She did not get one but may in the future as some

places who were offered them declined. The state is providing the machine, but TCHD would have to buy the supplies so would have to charge travelers for the test, possibly \$40 to \$50. Tim asked if the machine was specific for COVID or could be used for other viruses. Marcia responded it can also test for influenza, strep, and RSV if you buy specific materials for testing those viruses.

PHEP (Public Health Emergency Plans):

Specimen Transport Plan: No changes were made to this plan.

Sanitarian Updates: Austin reported things have been relatively quiet. There is a new subdivision outside Fairfield. The high nitrate levels in the water there is causing a problem for installing septic systems. Rather than a typical drainage type system, a specialized evaporative system is required. High nitrate levels can be a problem for infants.

He will be doing joint school kitchen inspections with the state. He still has a few more tourist homes to inspect. Most of them are good due to requirements of the organizations they belong to. He has found 8 tourist homes in Choteau.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 am. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, June 15, 2022, in the Teton County Courthouse Annex Conference Room in Choteau at 8:00 am or via ZOOM depending on the COVID-19 Pandemic situation.

Tim Sinton, P.A., Chairman

Elaine Sedlack, Secretary