

TETON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

September 15, 2021

Present: Austin Moyer, Sam Carlson, and Elaine Sedlack.

Absent: Tim Sinton, Randy Morris, Lin Wright, Barb Shaffer, Ken Bassmann, and Melissa Moyer.

Guests: Melody Martinson (Choteau Acantha), Lucas Rodriguez (AmeriCorps Volunteer), Aden Vermeersch (AmeriCorps Volunteer), Lora Wier, and Marcia Kelly.

The meeting was called to order by Austin Moyer at 8:06 am in the Choteau County Courthouse Annex Conference Room and via remote access due to the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present in person or via remote.

Approval of Minutes: Approval of the June 16, 2021, minutes was postponed due to the lack of a quorum.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Health Department Updates:

COVID-19 Update: Austin reported Teton County has seen a spike in COVID cases since early August due in part to summer travel and the beginning of fall school sports practice and then the start of school. Active cases are isolated for 10 days or until fever free. Some people are getting symptoms but not getting tested and some may be asymptomatic. The health department can do the PCR test and send it to the state lab. The hospital is also doing PCR testing. Neither are doing PCR testing for travelers due to the high volume of tests needing to be processed by the state lab. Breakthrough cases in those already vaccinated have occurred in 20 Teton County residents with a mean age of 60. There have been 199 cases in unvaccinated Teton County residents with a median age of 37. One breakthrough case has been hospitalized while 11 unvaccinated people have been hospitalized. Within the county 90.9% of cases are in unvaccinated individuals. Austin provided multiple graphs to illustrate these statistics. Lora felt it would be helpful to publish the graphs for the general public as the visual picture may be more meaningful for people to understand the situation. Most cases now are occurring in the 10- to 19-year-old age group and some school sports events have been cancelled due to active cases and quarantine. For the past month, the health department has only been giving the Pfizer Vaccine which can be given to children ages 12 and up. The Pfizer Vaccine can now be kept in a normal freezer for 2 months and in the refrigerator for 30 days which has reduced wastage.

COVID-19 Vaccination Update: Aden reported some people are not returning for their 2nd dose. Forty percent of Teton County residents are now fully vaccinated, up from 35% in May. The health department will continue to do COVID-19 vaccination clinics weekly on Thursdays in September and Fridays in October for anyone age 12 and up. Influenza vaccination clinics will begin in October. Although both the flu and COVID-19 vaccinations can be given at the same time the health department will only be doing flu vaccinations at the community clinics which will begin in Choteau on October 5th. Getting vaccinated may be a problem for people who must take time off from work. Aden brought copies of a graph showing the percent of people in each group that are vaccinated. From seventy-three to eighty- two percent of people aged 60 and up have had at least one dose of vaccine while only 30 to 49 percent of people aged 18 to 59 have had at least one dose. Only 18% of people aged 12 to 17 have had at least one dose although approval for that age group came later.

Marcia reported approximately 6 out of 40 people request a specific vaccine with most requesting Pfizer vaccine since it received full approval by the FDA. Some request the Moderna and a few the Johnson vaccine. She said the health department is getting calls about booster doses but so far are only giving them to immunocompromised individuals. If a vaccinated person is exposed to a COVID-19 case, they are instructed to watch for symptoms for 3 to 5 days. If an unvaccinated person is exposed, it is 14 days. Lora said the last legislature put limits on the powers of boards of health which included that we cannot treat vaccinated and unvaccinated people differently. The Montana Governor said if a person gets sick due to exposure to a known COVID-19 case who is not quarantining they can't sue them.

PHEP (Public Health Emergency Preparedness Plans) Update:

CHEMPACK: Lora said there are no changes to this plan which provides a system for obtaining drugs needed to treat individuals exposed to chemicals during a mass event when local drug supplies are inadequate to meet the needs.

Board of Health By-laws: Lora said our board of health by-laws need to be rewritten since the last legislature stripped much of the authority from boards of health. She is waiting for more direction from larger county health departments, the county attorney, or the Montana Public Health Association.

Sanitarian Updates: Austin noted there was a lot of new home construction in the spring and now it is mostly remodeling. He inspected all the pools and said most were doing a fantastic job. He said the last legislature expanded the food bill to allow what people can cook at home without approval to just about anything except meat. The cottage food law was not changed and sometimes conflicts with the new bill. Austin said he sometimes uses the cottage food law if he has concerns. The "raw" milk bill was amended by the last legislature to allow selling of raw milk without records of where it came from thereby

limiting tracing back to the source in case of a foodborne illness. He does not know of anyone selling “raw” milk in the county.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 am. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, December 15, 2021, in the Teton County Courthouse Annex Conference Room at 8:00 am or via ZOOM depending on the COVID-19 Pandemic situation.

Tim Sinton, P.A., Chairman

Elaine Sedlack, Secretary