

Chicago Board of Health
November 18, 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.
Juan M. Calderon

For the Department

Allison Arwady, M.D., Commissioner

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:01am by Board President, Dr. Carolyn Lopez.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the October 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) contact tracing efforts, the City's new Protect Chicago initiative, testing, vaccine planning, and on the Chicago Public Schools' reopening plan.

Board Member Comments: Mr. Calderon referenced a personal account he had experienced about hospital capacity at various hospitals because of COVID. Dr. Arwady provided a brief update on Chicago hospital capacity, and referenced the main concern in the second wave is with staffing levels. Dr. Smith shared concerns about vaccine outreach. Dr. Arwady informed the board that a local scientist advisory committee is being formed and organized by University of Illinois at Chicago, which board members may be invited to participate in, to help review recommendations that come from the Food and Drug Administration and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the goal of which is to have trusted community partners help promote the vaccine. Mr. Starshak asked about how serious the second wave is. Dr. Arwady provided an update on cases and indicated staffing levels is the area of most concern, as most parts of the nation are experiencing similar surges, and locally hospitals have been unable to tap into healthcare workers from other areas to help, as they were able to do during the first wave. Mr. Gonzalez inquired about vaccine outreach to non-English speaking communities. Dr. Arwady informed board members the City would be launching a culturally sensitive vaccine messaging campaign, and will be partnering with trusted community leaders to help with outreach.

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Dr. Dreher inquired if the City had any plans to develop a rapid testing program for travelers, similar to some that are already in place at other cities on the East coast. Dr. Arwady informed board members the City has been looking into a testing program for travelers at Chicago airports, and more information may be announced soon about this. Dr. Arwady also informed board member the City was announcing an update on the City's testing program later today, in preparation for the winter months. Dr. Rotschild inquired about the City's contact tracing efforts. Dr. Arwady provided an update on CDPH's role with case investigations, and with community based organizations that were conducting initial contact tracing. Dr. Arwady also informed board members the City was looking into new technologies, like direct text messaging, with link to additional resources. Dr. Evans inquired about the possibility that McCormick Place would need to be used as an alternate facility again. Dr. Arwady informed board members that resources purchased for McCormick Place have been transferred to the former Metro South Hospital, which has been designated as an overflow facility, should the State of Illinois authorize, however reminded the board the main concern in the second wave is with staffing, as opposed to bed capacity. Dr. Lopez inquired about vaccine storage. Dr. Arwady informed board members that currently four hospitals have ultra -cold storage capacity, as required by the Pfizer vaccine. Dr. Arwady also informed board members CDPH has built, and expanded storage, and is able to house 135,000 vaccines in ultra-cold. Dr. Arwady indicated the main issue with ultra-cold for CDPH is not storage, rather transport of the vaccine, as not all sites have the ability to store at ultra-cold.

Public Comments: Various representatives of Slaughter Free Chicago, an organization advocating to ban live markets and make Chicago a slaughter free city, shared remarks on the group's review of CDPH inspections, and urged the Board of Health to help them ban live markets, and emphasized the urgent need to do so during the current pandemic.

Board President Comments: Dr. Lopez provided brief words of encouragement to the board on progress in the fight against the pandemic. Dr. Lopez also informed board members that she had invited CDPH's behavioral health team to provide an update at next month's meeting.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 10:29 AM.