

Minutes of the  
Chicago Board of Health Meeting  
December 15, 2021 at 9:00 am  
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.

**I. Roll Call**

Quorum was established based upon the following:

**Present:** Carmen Vergara, MPH, RN-BSN  
Carolyn C. Lopez, MD, President  
Janet Lin, MD, MPH, MBA  
Joel Johnson, M.Ed  
Rosa E. Martínez Colón, MS  
Steve Rothschild, MD  
Debra Wesley, MSW

**Absent:** Horace E. Smith, MD  
Matthew M. Davis, MD, MPP

For the Department

Allison Arwady, MD, Commissioner,  
Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)

**II. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Carolyn C. Lopez, M.D., President

**III. Approval of Minutes**

The Board voted and approved the October meeting minutes with corrections. Rosa E. Martínez Colón abstained from voting due to being absent at the meeting.

**IV. Commissioner's Update**

- On World AIDS Day (12.01.2021), CDPH hosted a screening of Crystal Clear, a new docu-article focused on methamphetamine use among Black gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. The docu-article raises concerns about possible increases in meth use, the consequences of use, and limitations in the existing service delivery system. To respond, CDPH re-launched its crystal meth task force, which originated in the early 2000's to respond to meth use among gay men. The task force is co-led by CDPH and community members.
- CDPH was invited to present at 3 conferences in the last 2 weeks to showcase its HIV Services Portfolio (which we'll present to the board next year), including the U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS, the nation's preeminent HIV-focused research/practice conference; CDC Turning Research into Prevention, an all-staff event of CDC's Division of HIV Prevention; and the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors HIV/Hepatitis Technical Assistance Meeting, attended by hundreds of health department staff across the country.

Minutes of the  
Chicago Board of Health Meeting  
December 15, 2021 at 9:00 am  
Virtual Meeting  
By Remote Means

- The department's Federal funding allows for support of services to people already infected with HIV. The department has used some City funding to make sure that people who are at the highest risk for HIV infections can also access services.
- In October CDPH began distributing fentanyl test kits to MAR providers, community organizations, outreach providers, and individuals. CDPH has distributed over 7,000 strips (over 1,400 test kits) over the last 6 weeks. In early December, CDPH launch a mini social media campaign to raise awareness about fentanyl, opioid overdose, and the availability of these test kits. Fentanyl is a very strong synthetically made opioid that is made in a laboratory. It has driven a major increase in overdoses. We are not just seeing Fentanyl in Heroin but also contaminating Cocaine, Meth, and some counterfeit Xanax prescription pills. The test strips help identify whether Fentanyl is in a substance that someone might be planning on using.
- CDPH continues to convene a monthly meeting of West Side substance use disorder providers, outreach organizations, and community stakeholders to discuss hyper-local data and maps and facilitate coordination around MAR induction, outreach activities, and other interventions to address the overdose crisis on the West Side. Internally, CDPH is moving forward with plans to create a GIS Hub website that will house all of this data and improve our ability to facilitate coordination around dynamic (rather than static) data products. This is primarily the kind of work the department wants to do, providing data creating the space to bring people together, and connecting people to resources.
- CDPH will launch public health vending machines at 5 locations across the City in early 2022. These machines will offer free substance use harm reduction items as well as general health/hygiene products to people with substance use disorders, at risk of overdose, and/or experiencing homelessness or other social vulnerabilities.
- CDPH is working with Chicago Public Libraries to get Narcan at over 20 library branches across the city in neighborhoods most heavily affected by overdose. This Narcan will be freely available to library patrons beginning January 1, 2022 at the first 14 branches involved in this initiative. CDPH is now training library staff at participating branches on harm reduction and Narcan specifically so that they are well-placed to address patron questions and concerns.
- In the Behavioral Health space, we continue to coordinate shelter-based services for people experiencing homelessness, lead coordinating organizations, and community support team providers. There is also a focus on creating priority placement for people in encampments and those experiencing complex mental health issues. The goal is to create opportunities for placement in permanent supportive housing. The department's outpatient work in the mental health space continues to improve. The trauma informed centers have been increasing every quarter.
- In Lead Prevention, we have resumed our school-based services. The department provides oral health exams, dental work, eye exams, and eye glasses. These services were on hold due to COVID-19. We have received additional funding that allows us to not only screen but abate. We can accommodate another 1500 homes.

Minutes of the  
Chicago Board of Health Meeting  
December 15, 2021 at 9:00 am  
Virtual Meeting  
By Remote Means

- The Family Connects program, we have received ARP funding at the City level to help scale the MICAH (Maternal, Infants, Child, and Adolescent health) program to citywide.
- In December the City reached its' one year anniversary for vaccinating people in the City of Chicago. The department prioritized vaccine for hardest hit neighborhoods. Chicago served as the only City doing At Home vaccinations. The program is going well and as many as 1300 or 1400 (multiple vaccines) are being done per week. Services have been expanded to seven days a week with evening appointments.
- Dr. Arwady introduced Megan Cunningham, Managing Deputy Commissioner of the Community Health Services & Strategy Bureau.
- Commissioner Cunningham provided an update on CDPH's review of the proposed South Side Recycling permit application. The applicant seeks to bring a shredding operation to the South East Side.
- Commissioner Cunningham also reported that the applicant has been under review by the City for several years, with originally being approved by Zoning and then receiving further permits from the Department of Buildings, the Illinois EPA (evaluated emissions and pollution control), and now in the last step of the process CDPH is evaluating, among other items, whether the company can operate consistent with a large recycling company rule and the values associated with Healthy Chicago 2025.
- CDPH is conducting a Health Impact Assessment in collaboration with the United States EPA to examine the application. The department is using both quantitative data and qualitative data in their decision-making process.
- Community engagement has been a central part of the process. Over the past eighteen months that CDPH has been evaluating the application, the department has held two large public Town Halls to solicit input from South East Side residents and other stakeholders. Additionally, CDPH held an extended public comment period and received over 4000 comments about the consequences and benefits of this type of facility. A report will be issued in January to help address the issues that have been raised by Public Health stakeholders. CPDH plans to be transparent about their findings and how those findings are being used in the decision making process.

**Board Member Comments & Questions:**

- 1) Dr. Lin - How can we be more proactive when it comes to staffing in health care?

Minutes of the  
Chicago Board of Health Meeting  
December 15, 2021 at 9:00 am  
Virtual Meeting  
By Remote Means

- 2) Dr. Rothschild – Noted that the proposed site for the recycling facility is one of the biggest, if not, the biggest. He pointed out that this selected community already has a high respiratory illness rate and even under the best scenario the company is still likely to increase rates. Therefore, he encouraged CDPH to reject the General Iron application and consider our environmental justice values.
- 3) Carmen Vergara – Agreed with Dr. Rothschild and also highlighted the importance of public trust in public health. She expressed her concern that allowing this permit would be a setback considering all the work and accomplishments during COVID over the past two years. She also believes the application she not be approved.

**V. Board President's Comments**

- Dr. Lopez highlighted that many of the observations from the meeting commented on the tremendous effort and positive movement that the department has been making across multiple areas. She agree that the department's progress has been remarkable particularly through a time that has been very challenging. Dr. Lopez recognized how difficult it can be to press on and do the work of saving lives particularly when others may not stand in solidarity. Additionally, she took the opportunity to personally convey her thanks and gratitude to Dr. Arwady and the department's staff for the great work and high level professionalism.

**VI. Presentation**

Marlita White, BSW, MSW, LCSW, Director

Office of Violence Prevention and Behavioral Health (CDPH)

- Marlita White's presentation, titled Survey of CDPH Violence Prevention Investments. It provided an overview of Chicago's Approach to Violence Reduction and detailed current stats and programs. She also provided information about the Community Safety Coordination Center that was established to coordinate violence prevention programs and rapidly respond to community needs.

**Board Member Comments & Questions**

- 1) Carmen Vergara – Do any of the Violence Prevention programs overlap with the Crisis Intervention Team?
- 2) Dr. Lopez commented that the Violence Reduction Dashboard could be very helpful for communities. Is there a way for people to know that certain concerns that are violence related (i.e. gun violence) are contained in one of the categories? Also, how are we making people aware that this tool is available?

Minutes of the  
Chicago Board of Health Meeting  
December 15, 2021 at 9:00 am  
Virtual Meeting  
By Remote Means

**VII. Public Comments**

The Board of Health receive public comment requests.

- Victoria Persky - is an Internist and Professor of Epidemiology at the School of Public Health at UIC, she urged CDPH to deny the permit for the recycling facility.
- Jeni Hebert-Beirne – Associate Dean for Community Engagement, Associate Professor, School of Public Health, commented on the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) conducted on the South East Side. Specifically, she distinguished between the kinds of input and qualitative data needed from the kinds of data that are being used the HIA. She urged that CDPH listen to the residents of the South East Side and the Public Health Community and deny the permit.
- Dr. Serap Erdal, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, School of Public Health, University of Illinois-Chicago – Not in attendance.

**VIII. New Business**

There was no new business.

**IX. Old Business**

There was no old business.

**X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 by Dr. Carolyn C. Lopez.