

**Minutes of the
Chicago Board of Health
Wednesday, September 27th
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
DePaul Center
333 S. State Street, 2nd Floor Boardroom (Room 2002)**

I. Roll Call

Quorum was established based upon the following:

Present In-Person: Janet Lin, MD, MPH, MBA
Joel Johnson, MEd
Óscar Iván Zambrano, MPH, MBA, CDM
Debra Wesley, MSW
Carmen Vergara, MPH, RN-BSN
Steven Rothschild, MD

For the Department: Fikirte Wagaw, MPH, Acting Commissioner
Chicago Department of Public Health

Absent: Rosa Martínez Colón, MS
Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP
Horace E. Smith, MD

II. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am by Janet Lin, M.D. President.

III. Approval of the Minutes

The Board voted and approved the August minutes.

IV. Commissioner's Update

Acting Commissioner Fikirte Wagaw provided the following department wide COVID and non-COVID updates:

- **Bureau of Community Health**
 - Healthy Chicago Symposium
 - On August 18, CDPH hosted the Healthy Chicago 2025 Symposium and Health Chicago Equity Zones (HCEZ) Showcase at the Chicago Cultural Center to celebrate the efforts supporting the Healthy Chicago movement.
 - The event commemorated the mid-way point of the five-year implementation period of Healthy Chicago and advocated the Healthy Chicago 2025 goal of closing the City's racial life expectancy gap.
 - Cumulative Impact Assessment
 - On September 19, 2023, the City of Chicago and community leaders released findings and recommendations from a 15-month process to develop the first citywide Cumulative Impact Assessment, which identifies neighborhoods that experience the most significant

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- cumulative impacts and is a critical step in promoting environmental justice in Chicago.
- Key next steps from this report include the development of a public-facing data dashboard and the implementing of proposed policies and practice changes.
 - **Regionwide Community Information Exchange Pilot**
 - CDPH, DFSS, and Cook County’s Bureau of Economic Development partnered to launch the initial planning and development of a Regionwide Community Information Exchange (CIE).
 - The platform will serve as a data bridge between healthcare and social service providers centered on people experiencing homelessness.
 - It is a multi-year effort, which builds a system that leverages 211 Metro Chicago infrastructure to improve care coordination and data sharing between Chicago and Cook County residents.
 - CDPH selected and awarded funds to the Illinois Public Health Institute for leading and planning initiatives.
 - **Bureau of Maternal, Infant, Child and Adolescent Health (MICAH)**
 - CDPH-CPS Mental Health Planning
 - CDPH and CPS (the Office of School Health and the Bureau of Behavioral Health) engaged with Lurie Children’s Hospital Center for Childhood Resilience to support student access to behavioral health services.
 - The mission is to support schools, young people, and caregivers with knowledge and access to behavioral health interventions.
 - **Bureau of Disease Control and Health Protection**
 - 25th annual Disease Control Conference at Malcom X College
 - On 9/19, the Disease Control Bureau hosted a one-day conference with state and local public health leaders and subject matter experts in disease control trending topics.
 - Topics included lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of scientific communication, the Mpox resurgence, tackling the opioid crisis, Family Connects, and HCEZs.
 - Salmonella Outbreak at Carniceria Guanajuato between 8/19 and 9/6
 - The Communicable Disease and Food Protection staff responded to the Salmonella outbreak, a bacterium that is a common cause of food poisoning.
 - As of 9/26, 80 individuals reported ill after eating food from the California Avenue location.
 - The taqueria reopened on 9/23/23, and CDPH continues to investigate the exposure occurrence and monitoring additional sick patrons.
 - Center for Disease Control’s First Respiratory Disease Season Outlook

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- On 9/14, the CDC’s Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics published the upcoming fall and winter respiratory disease season forecast.
- CDC experts expect the upcoming fall and winter respiratory disease season to have similar hospitalizations compared to last year.
- Cook County’s COVID-19 hospital admission level is low.
- Updated COVID-19 2023-2024 vaccine.
 - The CDC recommends that everyone six months and older get the updated COVID-19 vaccine, which is available now at select clinics and pharmacies in Chicago.
 - The new COVID-19 vaccine is free from private insurance companies, and uninsured/underinsured adults can get the vaccines under the new Bridge Program. Uninsured/underinsured kids can be covered under the Vaccines for Children program.
 - Free at-home COVID-19 tests can be ordered through USPS on 9/25.
- Disease Control staff will present Water Surveillance in Chicago, on October 1st – 3rd at McCormick Pl.
- **Bureau of People, Policy & Process Improvement**
 - Policy Updates
 - Treatment Not Trauma: on 9/26 CDPH appeared before the Committee of Health and Human Relations to support the Treatment Not Trauma Working Group Ordinance. The ordinance establishes a working group to develop a framework to expand mental health clinical services in the City.
 - Cumulative Impact Assessment: On 9/18, CDPH, OCEE, and Community leaders released recommendations from Chicago’s first Cumulative Impact Assessment. On 10/3, CDPH will present findings and recommendations to the Joint Committees of Environmental Protection and Energy Committee on Health and Human Relations.

Board Member Comments and Questions:

- **Dr. Steven Rothschild:** Regarding CDPH’s involvement in the Office of Climate and Environment – Is there a roadmap or analysis on staffing requirements to focus on the Treatment Not Trauma initiative?
 - Yes, staffing growth implications are indicated, along with support from Federally Qualified Health Centers, which received funding from the ordinance.
- **Dr. Janet Lin:** Regarding CDPH and the City – how to ensure intersection with city initiatives and CDPH programs?
 - There is a collaboration with City departments and internal efforts to help de-silo work and leverage intersection in the City’s efforts.
- **Carmen Vergara:** Are there any updates on New Arrivals?

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- As the pace of new arrivals increases, CDPH’s role remains the same. It financially supports FQHCs that serve shelters, helps with the MRCs that visit police districts, participates in regular City calls for new arrivals and public health support, and coordinates with Cook County Health for care.
- CDPH will continue to support from a Public Health lens as the issue continues.

V. Board President’s Comments:

- Dr. Lin gave thanks to Acting Commissioner, Fikirte, for her work and support to the Board of Health. Dr. Lin reminded the Board that all members are composed of voluntary appointees, service reflects the workplace and offers diverse contributions in the public health space. The Board serves as an independent advisory board to the Chicago Department of Public Health and the Mayor’s Office, whose focus is to provide feedback on policies and request patience while navigating through change.
- Dr. Lin addressed a letter of resignation submitted by board member Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP, effective 9/25/2023. Dr. Davis has served the board since 2021 and is pursuing a new professional role in a multi-hospital pediatric health system outside of Illinois.

VI. Presentations:

Department:

Chicago Department of Public Health

Title:

Family Connects: Supporting Birthing People and Newborns

Speakers:

Jessica Wilkerson, Director of Program Operations

Board Member Comments and Questions:

- **Dr. Steven Rothschild:** Highlights the importance of supporting birthing people and newborns as this is a critical time when mental health issues may arise. Asked how many nurses are employed by the program.
 - Program employment varies as larger hospitals have dedicated FTE under contract. CDPH has a dedicated FTE pool of 22, which the smaller hospitals often use.
- **Dr. Steven Rothschild:** Is there a plan to fold in free-standing birth centers into the Family Connects program?
 - Yes, and there is a plan to develop a call center to connect individuals with Family Connects services.

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- **Carmen Vergara:** Are RSV vaccines being given at hospitals or administered by nurses, and is there opportunity to expand into other services?
 - While older children are not the focal point in Family Connects, the nurses survey the family and can connect them to other CDPH services and spaces.
- **Debra Wesley:** Regarding referrals in Unite Us – acknowledges the capacity restraints in waitlists and asks about how Family Connects understands those issues.
 - Advocates for a streamlined process to collect information from the Unite Us platform to leverage understanding and reaction to systemic issues.
- **Dr. Janet Lin:** What are the program’s most significant pain points or challenges, and what are the success rates to any obstacles?
 - Continuous connection with family after delivery is a barrier. The program seeks to understand and evaluate what keeps families from connecting to resources.
 - Chicago has the highest contact rate in the country, which is credited to using technical advantages like text notifications to reach families for follow-up.
- **Dr. Oscar Zambrano:** Are there cultural barriers to providing care services?
 - The program actively recruits bilingual nursing staff to diversify the linguistic portfolio and leverages internal interpretation services.
- **Debra Wesley:** Comments that there should be a way to hold conversations regarding existing contracts with partners and linking within the program.
 - Data sharing is an issue, and there are transparency constraints in data availability while preserving HIPAA guidelines.

VII. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VIII. Standing Business

There was no standing business.

IX. New Business

- **Dr. Janet Lin and Debra Wesley:** Proposes the Board’s recognition for retiring nurse Iris Shannon and her years of service. Dr. Lin read a statement in honor of Iris to be approved by the Board. Motion approved.
- **Joel Johnson:** Comments on an expose from ABC News regarding fees for privately contracted nurses in new arrivals response.
 - Recommendations made to evaluate the Board’s role regarding comments on labor costs for health care in the new arrival population. Additional information also needed to report accurately.
- **Dr. Oscar Zambrano:** Comments that CDPH should have a role in advocating a pipeline to provide services in the city to circumvent the labor market trends.
 - Discussion around shifting the labor response to the healthcare workforce.

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X. Old Business

- **Dr. Janet Lin:** Addresses the role of the Board and offered to invite the Office of Ethics or Legal to distinguish board member roles at a future date.
 - Motion to request a representative from the Office of Ethics or Legal. Motion approved.
- **Joel Johnson:** Requests follow up to Judy King’s public comments regarding HIPAA violations at the Martin Luther King Center.
 - Fikirte mentioned no HIPAA violations were identified, but further information and confirmation is needed.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 am by Dr. Janet Lin.