



Macon County
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
1/26/2021**

Members: Mitchell Bishop, Engineer and Chair; Ross Dodge, General Public and Vice-Chair; Melissa Bell, Pharmacist, Nathan Brenner, Dentist, Teresa Murray, General Public; Jeff Todd, Veterinarian; Paul Higdon, County Commissioner; Gosia Tiger, General Public; Vacant, Physician, Ellen Shope; Nurse Representative; Vacant, General Public

Members Absent: Gosia Tiger, Paul Higdon and Melissa Bell

Staff Present: Kathy McGaha, Melissa Setzer, Jennifer Garrett, Carrie Pazcoguin, Kristina Loughborough and Tammy Keezer

Guests: None

Media: None

Public Comment: Tamara Zwinak sent in a written public comment. Jennifer Garrett read the written comment to all board members and staff present on the Zoom meeting.

Ms. Zwinak has concerns with the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Her concerns are in regards to the registration process. She and other residents find the state registration system to be very confusing. She stated that the online registration through the state is not working rapidly and causing long delays. Individuals who spoke with someone at the Health Department were being registered and given an appointment quickly. She believes there should be a registration system that is fully automated and include appointment times to decrease face-to-face exposure.

Call to Order: Mitchell Bishop called the meeting to order at 6:22 pm.

Welcome/Intro: None

Agenda Approval: Nathan Brenner made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of adding fees to New Business. Dr. Jeff Todd seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Presentations: None

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Ross Dodge made a motion to accept the minutes. Dr. Jeff Todd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

COVID-19 Update

Mrs. McGaha opened by stated that many things have changed in the last several weeks. The department has went from only testing COVID patients to testing and vaccinations clinics running 5 days a week. She explained to the board that if anyone of them had the chance to work with the individuals at MCPH, they would be extremely proud of the staff. She stated that the staff has worked extremely hard for months now and continues to work hard for the community.

Since the state has rolled out the vaccine, they have required the providers to use a new vaccine management system called CVMS. At the end of December, many members of staff were involved in training to learn this new system; this has happened very quickly. MCPH has no control over this system at county level. The state set this system up to track all vaccines that come into the HD, those administered, who has registered and who is eligible. When it comes to registering with the state there are a few different options. Mitchell Bishop wanted to verify that the lag time is with the state and MCPH has no control over that. Mrs. Garrett confirmed that MCPH has no control over the lag time. She explains that MCPH can take the person's name, email address and upload in bulk to the state each day. Once MCPH submits that bulk upload, the state then enters them into the system. (MCPH does not enter those the state completes that process). The lag time is between the upload to the state and download into the state system.

Once HD started receiving the vaccines, the number of phone call department started receiving was overwhelming. The first couple of vaccination clinics that were held were for group 1a, once that group was complete, the clinic was open to 1b, which was 75 years or older. During this time the state revised the different phases and groups to allow vaccines to be given to anyone over 65 years of age. Due to the massive number of calls coming in the departments phone system crashed and not only took down the Health Department but the county system as a whole. Mrs. McGaha met with Warren Cabe, Robbie Holland, Derek Roland and others to see how they could handle the amount of calls that are trying to come into the department. Robbie Holland reached out to Phil Drake to see if it would be possible to utilize some of his phones and space to expand the call center too. Since that time the Vaccination Call Center has moved to Drake's Education building. A huge "Thank You" goes out to Phil Drake for helping with the call center, without him allowing us to do this; we could not be able to accommodate these calls. Balsam West has also gave MCPH 10 lines to use.

The Negative Call Center, Positive Call Centers and Testing Call Center are still operating out of the Health Department. We have hired 5 temporary staff, assigned to the call center and we are looking to hire 5 more for the call center to handle the call volume. We have many of MCPH staff members and staff from other departments helping in the call center at this time. Tammy Keezer is also organizing volunteers from the community to work the call center. The call center is processing many different calls. When the call center was first activated, they were receiving somewhere 600 calls and hour, since the first days it has slowed to 600 a day. The call center has received 3500 calls last week, 477 yesterday, and 424 today. This number of calls does not count the number of calls coming into the testing call nor the calls from the negative and positive call centers.

Dr. Todd asked if there no guidelines sent from the state on how to handle these calls. Mrs. McGaha stated that from speaking with other Health Directors in surrounding counties they are having the same issues that MCPH is having. These counties are experiencing problems with the phone system as well. Dr. Todd asked if the county would be receiving additional funds from the state. Mrs. McGaha stated that at this time they are unaware of any additional funds.

Due to the nurses having to start doing vaccination clinics, it limited our staff to do testing. Warren Cabe, Emergency Management stepped up and has coordinated using his staff and some of our staff to do testing 5 days a week, which would also allow MCPH to do vaccination clinics 5 days a week. In order for MCPH to have done both we would have had to do 2 days testing and 2 days vaccines. Mr. Cabe has established a testing site out in front of the jail. Depending on what the patients' needs are as to where they are to drive, either the testing line or the vaccination line. Dr. Todd asked if MCPH would do rapid tests. Mrs. McGaha stated that MCPH is only doing PCR test and they are taking about 48 hours. Even though Emergency Management is working the testing site, the MCPH call center is still makes the appointments and the lab still processes the tests.

The drive through is now being used for vaccine clinic. We have recently received approval from the state and have received 2 National Guard teams.

Dr. Todd asked what guarantee does the individuals that received the 1st vaccine will have vaccine when it is time for their 2nd dose. Mrs. McGaha explained that once the patient receives the 1st vaccine and it is then entered into the state system and the 2nd vaccine is automatically ordered for that person.

Dr. Todd asked if we would know the difference in who is getting the 1st and who is getting the 2nd vaccine. Mrs. McGaha stated that they know who is scheduled and who will be getting what. Mrs. McGaha explained that the first tent will register the person in the system and that will tell them what that person is here for.

Dr. Todd stated that the staff done a fantastic job in the vaccination clinic when he came through.

Mr. Bishop stated that to his understanding that MCPH has scheduled based upon the amount of vaccine that the state said the department would be getting. Many vaccines were diverted to Mecklenburg County. Mrs. McGaha had requested 2250 shots and only approved to receive 200. We will have to cancel and shuffle some appointments for Friday and on Monday. Highlands Cashiers Hospital, MCPH along with others done two clinics in Highlands which vaccinated 430 individuals at one and 480 individuals at the second one.

Dr. Todd asked if there would be a mass clinic at the Carpenter building. Mrs. McGaha stated that there were no plans for a mass clinic at this time, that they can do approx. 300 a day at the Health Department.

Mrs. McGaha explained that there are several counties that are not getting any vaccines this week and the only thing they have been told is that they will get 200 doses for the next three weeks. Legislature is fighting for us in getting vaccines, but at this time there is no guarantee of anymore that what they are getting. The department could be administering many more vaccinations, but the supply of vaccine is not coming in. Mrs. McGaha stated that Jennifer Garrett has worked extremely hard working to organize the vaccination clinic. Once again, Dr. Todd thanked the MCPH for what they have been doing.

COVID numbers from Jennifer Garrett as of today 2577 cases, 519 active, 2040 recovered and 18 deaths. As of today, Tuesday, January 26th there were 95 vaccinations administered. 230 vaccines are in house and 2273 doses given. As fast as we are receiving the vaccine, we are scheduling it to be giving. When shipments come in they are marked as 1st doses and 2nd doses. Friday will be the first time we will be administering the 2nd doses to patients. Question from the board as to how MCPH will know if the patient is here for their 1st or 2nd vaccine.

Mrs. Garrett explained that when a patient checks in out front, the worker will pull them up in the system and that will tell them if they are here for the 1st dose or 2nd dose. Labels are placed on the paperwork (immunization card) that indicates if the patient is here for the 1st or 2nd dose. Once the patient entered in the system as having their first doses, then the system automatically orders their second dose. If a patient are on blood thinners, there are extra protocols that must take place for the safety of the patient, which takes a few minutes longer to get through the process. Depending on if patient had an allergic reaction to the vaccine determines if they are observed by EMS for 15 or 30 minutes. As of today, 2273 patients have received the vaccine, only 2 or 3 patients has been transported to Angel Medical Center to be evaluated in the ER. Those individuals had minimum reactions such as light-headedness and hot flashes.

There are a lot of moving parts and a lot of education that goes into the vaccine clinics. We have a National Guard Strike Team here, which two are medics. They are able to administer shots, and data entry. The plan as of now with the vaccine clinic is to see 12 patients every 15 minutes.

As of today staff has started making a wait list due to the limited availability of the vaccine.

New Business:

COVID-19 Vaccine Admin Fee

Carrie Pazcoguin stated that the new business item added to the agenda is the COVID-19 vaccination admin fee of \$14.00 for the 1st and 2nd vaccine. This is the only fee that is charged in connection with the COVID-19 vaccine. Patients will never be billed for the fee; it is only billed to the insurance company. Examples: Medicaid, Medicare and other health care insurance. The vaccine and the process rolled out so quickly they were unable to get this fee brought to the board before vaccinations began. This fee is retroactive meaning they will be able to go back and collect this fee for vaccines already given. Question from the board is “How do you know they will pay this fee?” Mrs. Pazcoguin stated that this is an agreed up on fee across the board.

Ross Dodge made a motion to approve the additional fees and add them to the fee plan. Dr. Jeff Todd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FY21 Budget Preparation

This will be a very challenging year for budget. There will have to be a lot of discussion putting this budget together due to the unique year they have had and this next year will be just as difficult. Following is a timeline for the budget preparation. Once budget is complete and ready for review, Mrs. Pazcoguin will bring the proposed budget back to the board.

February 1st – MCPH Finance Officer prompts beginning of internal processes

February 4th – County Budget Kickoff Meeting

February 8th – March 5th – Internal document submissions & working sessions

March 8th – March 12th – MCPH Finance Team consolidates info for completion

March 15th – Tentative County Budget Submission Deadline

INFORMATION GATHERING

February 1st – Packets sent to Section Admins for support document completion
Section Administrators will be divided up into 2 groups:

Group 1

Quote Requests due to Purchasing Officer by 2/8, to be returned by 2/12

Completed support document packets due 2/15- 2/19

Finalization meetings 2/22-2/26

Group 2

Quote Requests due to Purchasing Officer by 2/15, to be returned by 2/19

Completed support document packets due 2/22- 2/26

Finalization meetings 3/1-3/5

*During the weeks of 2/22-3/5 MCPH Finance Team will also be preparing the agency's FY22 requests for computers/technology purchases, requests for personnel additions, requests for vehicles, and COVID-related support items.

FINALIZATION PROCESS

The week of 3/8-3/15 will be set aside for the MCPH Finance Team to tie up any loose ends and consolidate all budgetary information for the agency.

Budget Narrative and Summary will be a collaborative effort between the Finance Officer and Health Director.

This FY was quite unique with Covid-19 impacting many financial functions (amongst everything else) so preparing for next year will also be unique in approach due to availability of key personnel, time limitations, social distance measures, and restrictions on meeting spaces.

Discussion: None

Closed Session: None

Announcements: None

Next Meeting Date: 2/23/2021

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Nathan Brenner. Ross Dodge seconded that motion. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 7:46 pm.

Minutes Recorded by: Melissa Setzer, MCPH Administration Assistant