



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Wednesday, February 10, 2021 - 5:00 p.m.
Via Telephone Conference

Present on call: Sylvie Stacy, MD, Hernando Carter, MD, Kenny Murray, MD, Susan Walley, MD, Iris Fancher, MD, and Commissioner Jimmie Stephens

Others Present

On Call: Mark Wilson, MD, David Hicks, DO, Senitra Blackburn, Kim Cason, Rodney Holmes, Bryn Manzella, David Maxey, Esq., Denisa Pridmore, and Terrie Hartley

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Carter, Chair.

Minutes of the January 13, 2021 meeting were approved as distributed.

December 2020 and January 2021 Financial Statements

Dr. Carter noted that the December 2020 and January 2021 Financial Statements were included in the Board package. Rodney Holmes, CPA, Director of Finance, answered questions from the Board.

Board of Health Self-Evaluation Summary

Bryn Manzella, MPH, Quality Improvement Officer, reviewed the results of the Board's Self-Evaluation for 2020. Four out of six evaluations were returned. The survey was based on a seven-point scale with an overall mean score of 6.69% or 95.6%, which is slightly down from 2019 in all categories. Ms. Manzella thanked the Board for their feedback.

Contracts

On the motion of Dr. Walley, and seconded by Dr. Fancher, the following contracts were approved:

A new contract with Environmental Biological Services, LLC (payee) to provide leak resistant containers to dispose of infectious waste. Contractor will also collect and dispose of medical waste from COVID-19 testing site located at Legion Field for a cost of \$30.10 per COVID-19 box from September 30, 2020 through March 31, 2021.

A new contract with HHH Sanitation, Inc. (payee) to provide fresh water and holding tanks for mobile unit at the Guy M. Tate building for an amount not to exceed \$14,000 from December 22, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Renewal of a contract with Alton Harville (payee) to provide security services to JCDH for a rate of \$28 per hour or not to exceed \$56,000 from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

A new contract with Fikes of Alabama, LLC (payee) to provide air freshener and sanitizing drip services to JCDH facilities for a cost not to exceed \$6,500 from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

Renewal of a contract with Spain-Gillon, LLC (payee) to provide legal services to JCDH at a rate of \$160 to \$225 per hour for legal services and \$95 per hour for paralegal services from March 1, 2021 through February 28, 2022.

A new contract with The Bloom Group, Inc. (payee) to provide consulting and government relations services to JCDH for a rate not to exceed \$41,000 from February 1, 2021 through January 31, 2022.

A new contract with Harvard University Center for AIDS Research (payor) to build the foundation for Electronic Health Record (EHR) based decision support for Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) that incorporates an HIV prediction model to improve PrEP use and to scale up PrEP in the south for a rate not to exceed \$30,886 from February 1, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

An amendment to the Harvard University Center for AIDS Research (payor) listed above to extend the terms and reimbursement for an amount not to exceed \$30,544.95 from August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021.

A new contract with the Jefferson County Commission (payor) whereby Contractor will donate funds to support the Household Hazardous Waste Day Event sponsored by JCDH, Storm Water Management Authority, Inc., City of Bessemer Storm Water Program, and the Jefferson County Storm Water Program for an amount not to exceed \$7,500 from January 20, 2021 through April 24, 2021.

Renewal of a contract with Lamar Outdoor Advertising (payor) whereby Contractor will provide three poster billboards and production of promotion for the Household Hazardous Waste Day Event on April 24, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$1,550 from April 12, 2021 through April 25, 2021.

Renewal of a contract with the Alabama Department of Public Health/Bureau of Family Health Services (payor) to provide Maternal and Child Health Services to JCDH clients at a rate not to exceed \$217,544.50 from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

Racism as a Public Health Problem

Dr. Wilson stated the discussion surrounding the Racism as a Public Health Problem resolution started with conversation among the Board of Health members in August 2020. Since that time, at the suggestion of Commissioner Stephens, Dr. Wilson and two Board of Health members had a meeting with representatives of the Birmingham Business Alliance, County Manager Tony Petelos, and Deputy County Manager Walter Jackson, to discuss concerns about an initial draft resolution focusing too much on negative aspects of the county's history rather than the progress

that has been made by our local government and business community to mitigate racial inequities. Revisions were made to the resolution to make it more positive in terms of the progress that has been made in Birmingham and Jefferson County, while removing some of the negative language from the resolution. The revised resolution was emailed to the Board of Health members on February 1, 2021 for comment.

Commissioner Stephens has expressed concerns to Dr. Wilson about racism in relation to Birmingham and the images that may conjure up from the past and how that could negatively impact the business community.

After further discussion, a motion to table the resolution and continue to work on the language was made by Commissioner Stephens. No member seconded the motion so it failed.

A motion was made by Dr. Fancher to adopt the current resolution and Dr. Walley seconded the motion. Voting yes were Dr. Fancher, Dr. Walley, and Dr. Murray. Commissioner Stephens and Dr. Stacy were opposed. The resolution passed:

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis (1); and

WHEREAS, racism is a system of assigning value to people and structuring opportunity for people based on phenotype (“race”), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities while giving advantages to others, and thereby undermines realization of the full potential of the whole society (2); and

WHEREAS, racial health disparities have been created through unequal access to health care, and unequal care within the health care system (2); and

WHEREAS, racism has been institutionalized through structures, policies, practices, and norms resulting in differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by “race,” and its manifestations are often inherited (2); and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including several social determinants of health, including housing, education, employment and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health (3) (4); and

WHEREAS, Birmingham and other parts of Jefferson County, along with other communities throughout the United States, have a legacy of racially discriminatory policies and actions which have had long term impacts on social determinants of health and resulting health disparities (5) (6) (7); and

WHEREAS, Birmingham and Jefferson County have embraced and celebrated the legacy of local citizens who played a pivotal role in the Civil Rights Movement, and have in many ways taken steps to confront and mitigate the vestiges of racial discrimination, positioning itself to further advance the cause of racial justice and equity, including health equity; and

WHEREAS, a review of hundreds of published studies has shown racial and ethnic differences in access to and use of healthcare services including the use of diagnostic and therapeutic technologies, even when controlling for income, age, health conditions, and insurance status (8); and

WHEREAS, personal experiences of racism have been associated with increased biomarkers of stress, which can in turn lead to a variety of health problems (9); and

WHEREAS, the United States has persistent racial disparities in health coverage, chronic health conditions, mental health, and mortality (10);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Jefferson County Board of Health declares that racism is a public health problem.

FURTHERMORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health:

1. Reaffirms the Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) “Health Equity Guidelines” approved by the Executive Management Team on September 25, 2018 (see ATTACHMENT), and urges the leadership and staff of the JCDH to maintain its commitment to put these guidelines into practice; and
2. Reaffirms JCDH’s commitment to health equity in its strategic plan; and
3. Urges the Department to maintain its emphasis on health equity in future strategic plans; and
4. Reaffirms the priority given to Advancing Health Equity in the current Jefferson County Community Health Improvement Plan; and
5. Values and encourages diversity and inclusion among the staff and leadership of JCDH, and among its own members; and
6. Encourages the JCDH Executive Management Team to assure that JCDH management and staff receive training in equity, diversity and inclusion; and
7. Affirms existing efforts and encourages future efforts by other organizations and individuals to confront racism and its adverse effects on health, and to promote equity in health care and in the various social determinants of health.

References:

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9. Gee, Gilbert C. (UCLA Fielding School of Public Health). Racism as a Social Determinant of Health Inequities. Presented at a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Convening titled “Leveraging the Social Determinants to Build a Culture of Health,” Philadelphia, PA, June 1-2, 2016. Accessed at <https://healthequity.globalpolicysolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RacismasSDOH.pdf>
10. Carratala, S., Maxwell C., Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity. Center for American Progress, May 7, 2020. Accessed at

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2020/05/07/484742/health-disparities-race-ethnicity/>

See Attachment

Report of the Health Officer

ABC Coke Settlement

Dr. Wilson noted there was legal action taken by JCDH, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Justice against Drummond/ABC Coke for violations of the Clean Air Act at the byproducts recovery process at ABC Coke's facility in Tarrant, Alabama. A settlement agreement was reached one year ago which included a monetary penalty to be divided equally between JCDH and the EPA. Dr. Wilson made a public statement at that time that he intended to use JCDH's portion of the proceeds for the public health benefit of the surrounding community, subject to approval of the Board of Health. Then, the environmental group Greater-Birmingham Alliance to Stop Pollution (GASP) asked to enter into the lawsuit. A final settlement agreement was recently reached to include some of GASP's demands, which include a requirement that JCDH transfer its portion of the monetary penalty into the Public Health Advised Fund managed by the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham (CFGB), and a requirement that JCDH form a community advisory committee that will offer input and advice to the Health Officer regarding CFGB's grants from the ABC Coke fund.

Forestdale Fire

Dr. Wilson said a settlement agreement has been reached with responsible parties over the fire in an illegal dump in the Forestdale area that burned for several months in 2020. The monetary settlement will help to offset a portion of the Jefferson County Commission's cost in digging up the fire, putting it out, and removing debris.

Fultondale and Center Point Tornado

Dr. Wilson reported that JCDH Environmental Health staff are addressing environmental issues and open burning of debris in the tornado-affected areas of Fultondale and Center Point.

JCDH COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

Dr. Wilson noted JCDH gave a lot of first dose vaccinations during the month of January and mobilized a lot of its staff toward those efforts. Two mass vaccination events took place simultaneously on Monday, January 18, 2021 at the Gardendale High School parking lot and the Guy M. Tate building lobby. All other vaccination clinics have been at the Guy M. Tate building lower parking deck. Numerous providers have requested Moderna vaccine from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH); as a result, JCDH is being allocated much less vaccine than requested going forward. JCDH has only enough vaccine to administer second doses during the month of February. JCDH is working to inform ADPH of where the needs are in Jefferson County, especially making sure we have vaccine access points in our underserved communities.

JCDH is doing a lot of work in vaccine education, targeting certain groups that have vaccine hesitancy to make sure they have the information they need to make a good decision about getting vaccinated. These efforts will continue for as long as necessary. Two federally qualified health

centers (FQHC) in Jefferson County, Christ Health Center and Cahaba Medical Care, will be receiving vaccine which will serve the Woodlawn, West End, Ensley, Fairfield, and Bessemer communities. JCDH has been in constant communication with University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Health System regarding equitable administration of vaccine. UAB has also agreed to help vaccinate K-12 teachers in the community.

Dr. Wilson acknowledged Kim Cason, Planning Section Chief, Shila McKinney, Incident Manager, and other JCDH staff who have worked long hours and weekends toward the vaccination efforts. The public has been very complimentary on how smoothly JCDH vaccination clinics have run. The demand for vaccine has far exceeded the supply, which has made it difficult for people to get appointments. The Jefferson County Unified Command Call Center that has been operating with Emergency Management Agency staff, JCDH staff, and volunteers is not a sustainable model; therefore, JCDH has contracted with the Bruno Event Team to manage call center operations through June 2021.

Alabama Legislative Session

Dr. Wilson stated the Alabama Legislative Session began February 2, 2021. There are several bills that could impact public health.

House Bill 278, introduced by Representatives Ritchie Whorton and James Hanes, would repeal existing law authorizing municipalities to adopt and enforce ordinances to compel vaccinations in order to prevent the introduction or spread of contagious, infectious, or pestilential diseases. The bill would provide that if a specific immunization is ever required by law, exemptions from the mandatory immunization shall be provided based not only for individuals who oppose immunization based on religious beliefs but also for individuals who oppose based on sincerely held personal beliefs.

Three bills introduced into the legislature are specifically related to county health officers. House Bill 168, introduced by Representative Danny Garrett of Trussville, would prohibit a county health officer, during the state of emergency, from issuing an order or directive that relates to the control of a pandemic or outbreak of a disease unless the State Health Officer provides written approval of the order or directive. David Maxey, Esq., stated one clarification that should be considered in this bill is that Dr. Wilson issues quarantine orders which would be in compliance with Disease Control statute and regulation.

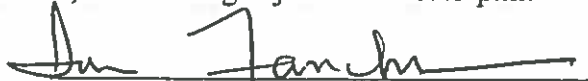
Senate Bill 184, introduced by Senator Shay Shelnut, would prohibit a county health officer, during a state of emergency, from issuing an order or directive that relates to the control of an epidemic or outbreak of a disease if the State Health Officer has issued a statewide order or directive to control, prevent, or minimize the epidemic or outbreak.

House Bill 108, introduced by Representative David Wheeler of Vestavia Hills, would establish a 9-member advisory board and which states, "Before issuing any resolution, order, or other directive encouraging or mandating county wide compliance, the Jefferson County Health Officer shall provide a copy of the proposed resolution, order, or directive to the Jefferson County Citizens Health Advisory Board and submit a written request to the advisory board to solicit recommendations regarding the subject and content of the resolution, order, or directive. The

Jefferson County Health Officer may not issue the resolution, order, or directive until after he or she receives and considers any recommendations from the advisory board, provided the advisory board responds within 10 calendar days of receiving the health officer's written request."

Some of the concerns expressed by the Board about this bill is that it restricts the County Health Officer to act in an emergency situation which usually requires immediate action. Waiting 10 days on recommendations from an advisory board could be detrimental to public health. The Board of Health already has measures in place to allow the public to express input, making this bill unnecessary. After further discussion the Board was in agreement that they are unable to support Senate Bill 184 and House Bill 108.

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in Conference Room A/B or via telephone conference (announcement will be made prior to the meeting date.) There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.


Iris Fancher, MD, Secretary

Approved:


Hernando Carter, MD, Chair

Attachment

ATTACHMENT:



Serving Jefferson County Since 1917

**Jefferson County Department of Health
Health Equity Guidelines**

Approved by the Executive Management Team on September 25, 2018

Definition of Health Equity:

Everyone has the opportunities needed to attain their highest level of health.

Staff Education

JCDH staff and Board of Health members will be educated on health equity as follows:

- 1) How efforts to achieve health equity assure that all people in Jefferson County have the opportunity to achieve optimal health and improve the health status of the overall community so that everyone benefits.
- 2) How health is determined by a variety of factors, including socioeconomic status, health behaviors, genetics, environment, and access to health care.
- 3) How various forms of oppression have had and continue to have an impact on health.
- 4) How health equity should be considered in various educational activities, presentations, and topics of discussion within the Department and at Board meetings.

Programs, Services and Grants

The work of JCDH will be guided by the following health equity principles and practices:

- 1) Staff shall examine existing programs and services to assure these are accessible and sensitive to the needs of populations experiencing barriers to attaining optimal health. Staff shall seek input from those populations as needed.
- 2) When planning or implementing new programs, initiatives, or public health information campaigns, staff should consider seeking input from the various populations to be served.
- 3) When pursuing grants or when funding community public health projects, look for opportunities to promote health equity among communities or populations that experience barriers to attaining optimal health.

Community Education and Outreach

JCDH will incorporate health equity into its health promotion messages and outreach efforts as follows:

- 1) Information campaigns and community outreach efforts shall include activities designed to promote health equity.
- 2) Staff will tailor health messages and means of communication for various audiences across the life course to optimize effectiveness.
- 3) Where possible, staff will incorporate health equity messages into external presentations and publications.

Collaborations and Partnerships

JCDH, as an organization, will seek and develop collaborations and partnerships with individuals and organizations involved in the following work to promote health equity:

- 1) Social services, human rights, civil rights, social advocacy and environmental justice.
- 2) Other social determinants of health such as education, economic development, healthy food access, public health policy, natural and built environment, transportation, and public safety.

Monitoring, Surveillance and Evaluation

JCDH will use data to promote health equity:

- 1) Staff will utilize local, state, and national data to increase awareness of health disparities.
- 2) Data will be used to help the Department identify opportunities to improve health equity.
- 3) Data will be used to plan, implement and evaluate the impact of efforts to improve health equity in Jefferson County.