



## **JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**

**Wednesday, November 9, 2022 - 5:00 p.m.**

**5<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room**

**PRESENT:** Hernando Carter, MD, Kenny Murray, MD, and Iris Fancher, MD

**ABSENT:** Jeffrey Dobyms, DO, Michele Kong, MD, and Commissioner Jimmie Stephens

### **OTHERS**

**PRESENT:** Wesley Willeford, MD, Kimberly Cason, Bryn Manzella, Senitra Blackburn, David Hicks, DO, Rodney Holmes, Mark Wilson, MD, and Terrie Hartley

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Murray, Chair. Dr. Murray noted that a quorum was not present for the Board of Health to conduct official business.

### **Sexual Health and Monkeypox Update**

Wesley Willeford, MD, Medical Director of Disease Control, provided an overview of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Monkeypox in Jefferson County. Dr. Willeford reviewed data obtained from the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) that revealed increases for Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and Chlamydia in Alabama for the past five years. Data revealed HIV numbers increased significantly between 2020 and 2021, which may include cases not detected early in the COVID-19 pandemic when access to HIV testing was limited. Dr. Willeford noted Congenital Syphilis increased significantly in 2021 and JCDH has made this a priority. For all patients who are pregnant and testing positive for Syphilis, Dr. Willeford is notified by the Disease Intervention Specialist staff and involved in the process of ensuring treatment for these patients.

Dr. Willeford said the Sexual Health Clinic is working to address the increase of STIs by improved access to care which includes self-scheduling for Fast Track Visits, expanded services for Eastern and Western Health Centers, forming a Community Advisory Board for Clinical Services, and through Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). He explained Fast Track allows a patient who is asymptomatic to schedule comprehensive STI testing at JCDH. An STI nurse does a screening assessment, and if no symptoms are present, the patient is scheduled. A Disease Intervention Specialist will see the patient at their appointment and provide instructions for the patient to self-collect sexual site-specific nucleic acid amplification testing. Patients with positive results are notified and given priority treatment.

Dr. Willeford reported monkeypox is on the downtrend. As of November 6, the total number of monkeypox cases in Alabama was 169, with 75 cases reported in Jefferson County. JCDH offers TPOXX therapy for individuals needing treatment and has created a self-scheduling portal for patients wanting the monkeypox vaccine. We have engaged in various media markets to promote the vaccine and have participated in multiple community events. He reported a total number of 938 monkeypox vaccines have been given.

### **September 2022 Financial Statements**

Rodney Holmes, CPA, Director of Finance & Administration, reviewed the September 2022 Financial Statements. There were no questions from the Board.

### **Health Officer Report**

#### **Influenza Update**

Dr. Wilson reported influenza is a big concern due to the early and rapid rise in flu cases this year. Jefferson County's influenza-like illnesses, as a percent of outpatient visits, was 13.9% last week. The statewide average was 11.5%. Last year the statewide average peaked briefly at just over 5% and never went above 3% the season before that.

Dr. Wilson stated JCDH and Children's of Alabama pediatricians and other area pediatricians have reported that flu is hitting children especially hard. He said official reports are that Alabama has had one child death. JCDH has done a fair amount of media encouraging people to get vaccinated. Despite increased messaging from JCDH, Children's of Alabama and the University of Alabama Hospital, a lot of people are not getting vaccinated.

Dr. Wilson noted JCDH has provided flu vaccine at several community events and has added it to the COVID-19 vaccine clinic at the Guy Tate building for those that request it. The vaccine is also provided to homebound patients whom JCDH has been vaccinating for COVID-19.

#### **COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Wilson said COVID-19 numbers are still hovering in a relatively low plateau.

#### **County Rabies Officer**

Dr. Wilson stated after the county rabies officer was approached about resuming community rabies vaccination clinics, he decided to step down from this role. Jeff Swinney, Program Manager in Community Environmental Protection, has reached out to the State Veterinarian and the Jefferson County Veterinary Medical Association (JCVMA) to help get word out that a replacement is needed. JCVMA will discuss this with their members at a meeting being held this week.

In response to a question from a Board member about compensation, Dr. Wilson explained Alabama law states the compensation of the rabies officer shall be limited to the fees collected from rabies vaccination clinics, therefore, JCDH is not able to offer a stipend or compensation.

#### **Hospital-linked Violence Intervention Program**

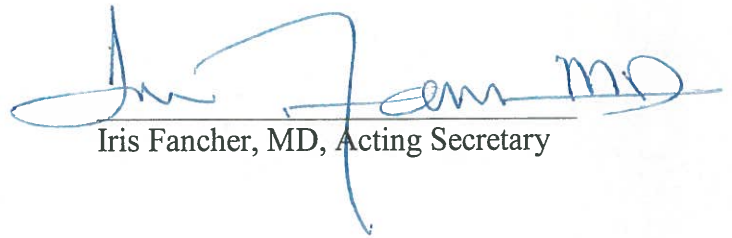
Dr. Wilson said staff have completed training with the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) and work is continuing on policies and procedures. Interviews were conducted for the Social Worker position but the position has not been filled.

Dr. Wilson noted he was invited to participate on a panel discussion, "Perspectives on Gun Violence", at the Birmingham Rotary Club next week. United States Attorney Prim Escalona and Jefferson County District Attorney Danny Carr will also participate.

**Jefferson County Greenways Commission**

Dr. Wilson shared late-breaking information that Red Mountain Park, Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, and Turkey Creek Nature Preserve plan to combine efforts under a single operational entity to be known as the Jefferson County Greenways Commission. He said the three parks have subsisted mostly on private donations and without regular designated funding from county government. The Jefferson County Commission passed a resolution last week to hold \$2 million in American Rescue Plan money until October 2023, which they would grant to the parks contingent upon the following: 1) the Red Mountain Greenway and Recreational Area Commission getting the state legislature to approve its new legal designation as the Jefferson County Greenways Commission, and 2) raising another \$1.6 million from other sources before October 2023. Dr. Wilson would like to offer some funding from the Public Health Advised Fund, with Board approval, as a show of commitment to encourage private funders to participate. Dr. Wilson said he believes preserving and maintaining these outdoor recreational areas serves a public health purpose.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m. The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room.



Iris Fancher, MD, Acting Secretary

Approved:



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Kenny Murray, MD, Chair