



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION ON HEALTH**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**  
**January 21, 2021**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Jonathan Arias, Alana Aronin, Brent Berger, Christopher Burt, Marcela Campoli, Marla Caplon, Desiree de la Torre, Crystal DeVance-Wilson, Sarah Emami, Travis Gayles, Amy Gyau-Moyer, Lenna Israbian-Jamgochian, Brittne Jackson, Jessica Kronstadt, Terri McGuire, Linda McMillan, Jelani Murrain, Rosemary Payne, and Fabienne Santel.

Members Absent: Elliott Brown, Kendra Harris, and Nadia Hashimi.

Staff Present: Vanessa Kachipande, and Karen Thompkins.

Guests: Susan Emery, Cindy Edwards, Brittany Foushee, and Chris Rogers.

AGENDA ITEMS/PRESENTER	ACTION ITEMS /RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<p><b>Meeting call to Order and Welcome - <i>Desiree de la Torre</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.</li> <li>• Upcoming meetings are on February 18<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup>. These meetings will take place virtually via Zoom.</li> <li>• The COH Chair welcomed members, engaged members in an ice breaker and provided an update on the goals for the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>A <u>MOTION</u> was made by Crystal DeVance-Wilson to approve the December 17, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Brent Berger. The minutes were unanimously approved by voiced consent.</p>	<p>Finalize December meeting minutes on COH webpage- <i>COH Staff</i></p>
<p><b>Health Officer’s Report –<i>Dr. Travis Gayles</i></b></p> <p>COVID Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been an increase in COVID-19 cases following the holidays and there has been an increase in hospitalizations from 7100 patients to 7400 patients. Approximately, one third of the hospitalizations are COVID-19 related. Currently, there is an 80 percent utilization of acute care and ICU beds. Hospitalization rates are being monitored closely and are beginning to stabilize.</li> <li>• <i>Testing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Testing continues to operate at high volumes. Variants of COVID-19 are present in the state of Maryland. Public health labs are working towards more efficient testing for the variant strains.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Vaccinations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vaccinations teams are being deployed. New vaccine supplies and doses (approximately 7,900 doses) are delivered to the County weekly. Of the approximate 19,800 doses received to-date, 99.6 percent of doses have been administered.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The County is still in process of administering phase 1A. The State will be moving forward with 1B vaccination categories beginning next week. Phase 1B in the County would open vaccinations to include approximately 24,000 MCPS staff, 29,000 independent educators and 80,000 residents in the 75+ age category.</li> <li>○ There is a broad campaign to publicize COVID-19 vaccinations to the community. The County is working hard to create a fair and equitable distribution system. There is also a dedicated phone line set up for individuals who are unable to register online.</li> <li>○ People are encouraged to get vaccinated through their employer if they can do so.</li> <li>○ The County is working directly with the State and other partners to understand how many County residents are getting vaccinated through other avenues such as employers, hospitals or retail pharmacies.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Immunizations Discussion and Update</b> - <i>Cindy Edwards, Senior Administrator for Communicable Disease &amp; Epidemiology</i></p> <p>Ms. Edwards provided an update regarding immunizations amongst youth and the status of the vaccination clinics within the County. The follow updates were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is an abundance of vaccine available, but it will take some effort to get these vaccines out to children in the community. The hope is to get children in the County caught up on their vaccines as many are behind.</li> <li>● The International Students Office will be opening in 2-3 weeks to administer vaccines. The County is also getting ready to reopen the Rocking House Center.</li> <li>● School health nurses will be brought back into schools to begin administering vaccines. The County is also looking into staffing outside agency nurses to assist with vaccination efforts.</li> <li>● The Governor hopes to get children back in school by the beginning of March.</li> <li>● Flu vaccines were underutilized for the 2020/2021 flu season but there have been few cases of flu present most likely due to COVID-19 prevention guidelines.</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Edwards solicited any suggestions from Commissioners on promoting vaccinations. Some suggestions from members included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mobile vaccination services.</li> <li>● Outreach to parents with prescheduled appointment times for them to bring in their children.</li> <li>● Social media campaigns.</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Edwards recommended a letter of support from the Commission to the County Executive and County Council to advocate for funding allocations towards a mobile vaccination clinic. Additionally, she encouraged members to contact her via email (<a href="mailto:Cindy.Edwards@montgomerycountymd.gov">Cindy.Edwards@montgomerycountymd.gov</a>) with ideas on how to increase vaccination engagement in school age children.</p> <p>The Communicable Disease and School Health workgroups will plan to summarize some ideas to share with Cindy.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>COVID-19 Vaccine Letter – COH Chair</b></p> <p>Members took the opportunity to develop a timely response to the COVID-19 vaccine distribution, education and outreach. The letter was discussed during the meeting prior to initiating a motion for approval.</p>	<p>Finalize and send letter to County Council and County Executive – <i>COH Staff and COH Chair</i></p>

<p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Chris Burt approving letter to be sent. Jessica Kronstandt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by voiced consent</p>	
<p><b>Legislative Advocacy Update - Chair/Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst, County Council</b></p> <p>Some COH members have been engaged in legislative advocacy in order to provide a timely response to information on emerging and critical public health issues.</p> <p>Ms. McMillan provided an update on the legislative advocacy process from the County Council's purview and welcomed members to contact her via email if there are any bills they would like to discuss.</p>	N/A
<p><b>Liaisons Update</b></p> <p><b>African American Health Program (AAHP) - Dr. DeVance Wilson</b> Over the past few weeks the AAHP has been focused on COVID-19 testing efforts and outreach. They continue to work with community partners to coordinate testing events and have started discussions on vaccinations. The group is also working to create a database of Black physicians to connect directly with Black patients.</p> <p><b>Montgomery County Medical Society – Dr. Brent Berger</b> The Montgomery County Medical Society met to discuss plans to engage subject matter experts who would facilitate discussions to encourage vaccine engagement and efficacy.</p> <p><b>Montgomery Cares Advisory Board (MCAB) – Ms. Sarah Emami</b> MCAB is working on drafting their own COVID-19 vaccine letter in support of the COVID-19 Vaccine letter drafted by the COH.</p>	N/A
<p><b>CHNA Advisory Committee Update - Committee Members</b></p> <p>Healthy Montgomery staff and CHNA Advisory Committee members provided an update on the CHNA progress.</p>	N/A
<p><b>Workgroup Group Updates</b></p> <p>Workgroup leads have been assigned by the Chair and can be viewed in the Workgroup document hosted on the COH Teams workspace. Brittany Foushee, Healthy Montgomery program staff, was introduced to the Commissioner. Ms. Foushee is available to facilitate workgroup operations as needed and her contact information will be shared with members.</p>	<p>Meet with Workgroup Prior to Next COH Meeting- <i>All Members</i></p> <p>Share workgroup document with members- <i>COH Staff</i></p>
<p><b>Adjournment</b></p> <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Crystal DeVance-Wilson to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. The motion was seconded by Jelani Murrain. The motion to adjourn was passed unanimously by voice consent.</p>	N/A