



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION ON HEALTH
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
February 17, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jonathan Arias, Brent Berger, Dr. James Bridgers, Elliott Brown, Christopher Burt, Marcela Campoli, Desiree de la Torre, Crystal DeVance-Wilson, Cara Grant, Kendra Harris, Jessica Kronstadt, Linda McMillan, Rosemary Payne

Members Absent: Alana Aronin, Sarah Emami, Amy Gyau-Moyer, Nadia Hashimi, Lenna Israbian-Jamgochian, Terri McGuire, Fabienne Santel

Staff Present: Felicia Hugee, and Christopher Rogers

Guests: Susan Emery, Essie McGuire

AGENDA ITEMS/PRESENTER	ACTION ITEMS /RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<p>Meeting call to Order and Officer Report – Jessica Kronstadt and Crystal DeVance-Wilson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. The COH Chair welcomed members • The Chair announced that Nadia Hashimi had decided to step down from her position with the Commission. She noted that the reasons for her decision were how busy she was with both advocacy work as well as some direct services to support refugees from Afghanistan that have come to the County. The Chair mentioned that while she will be missed, they understand the importance of the work she is doing • The Chair announced that the names of four new members were submitted for approval and noted that it could potentially be five because of Nadia Hashimi's resignation (that is still under review). She also thanked Marcela Campoli and Kendra Harris for serving as the nominating committee. • Upcoming meetings are March 17th and April 17th. These meetings will take place virtually via Zoom. • The Chair provided an update regarding the vaccine passport requirement. She noted that D.C. had announced they were ending their vaccine passport and it is now unlikely that this will advance in Montgomery County. Linda McMillan agreed and noted that when the Council President was talking to the media, he said that he doesn't expect it to come before the County Council anytime soon. She explained that it wasn't voted down but there is no plan to bring it before the Council. • The Chair noted that the mask mandate was set to expire February 21st unless it was extended, and asked Linda McMillan for updates. Linda McMillan stated that the indoor mask mandate, which does not apply to schools, was in fact schedule to expire on the 21st. • The Chair asked Linda McMillan for any updates regarding the County employees vaccination requirements. Linda McMillan noted that from what she had seen, nothing was scheduled before the Council regarding the County employees vaccine 	<p>Add February's minutes to March's agenda for approval- <i>COH Staff</i></p>

<p>requirements. She explained that it hasn't been voted down, but it hasn't been scheduled either.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonathan Arias asked Linda McMillan if the County had put anything in place regarding surveillance and response for future pandemics. Linda McMillan explained that the Council had asked that the Executive branch and Montgomery County Public Schools begin engaging with them on what it means to move to an endemic state. She noted that there are questions around how to be prepared in the event of a surge as well as what infrastructure needs to be in place. She pointed out that the Council had asked the Executive branch and Montgomery County Public Schools to discuss this on March 1st when they provide their update to the board of health. The Chair mentioned that at the federal level there is funding that will be available for workforce and data modernization. She further noted that is her understanding that some of the funding coming from the CDC will go directly to some Counties the size of Montgomery County. The Vice-Chair agreed that there is room for improvement and noted that one of the main areas she sees is the public health workforce. She asked Linda McMillan if she had any information on whether the Council had talked about or had a plan for re-establishing and/or increasing human resources capacity. Linda McMillan explained that at the moment there are several vacant positions. Brent Berger wanted to know if there were any updates on the Health Officer position. Linda McMillan mentioned that the last she heard the interviews process was underway but noted that to her knowledge, no name has gone over to the Council, she also noted that Dr. Crowel would be the one to provide additional updates <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Crystal DeVance-Wilson to approve the December 16, 2021 minutes. The motion was seconded by Christopher Burt. The minutes were unanimously approved</p> <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Desiree de la Torre to approve the January 20, 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded by Crystal DeVance-Wilson. The minutes were unanimously approved</p>	
<p>MCDHHS Health Officer's Report –Dr. James Bridgers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Bridgers shared some points regarding how resourceful the County has been as we move through the OMICRON variant on the heels of the DELTA variant over the past 2-3 months. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case rate fell below 100 per 100k residents for the first time since December 15 He noted that the County is currently in the Substantial transmission category, but it is expected that it will move to the moderate category by next week Dr. Bridgers noted that they are working very close with the health advisory committee. He also pointed out that testing has slowed down Regarding hospitalizations, Dr. Bridgers mentioned that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 122 hospitalized COVID-19 patients as of 2/15/2022 and noted that both acute care and ICU bed usage have declined. 7.2 % of hospital beds in the community are occupied by patients with a COVID diagnosis 	N/A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Bridgers pointed out that Mary's Center had received antivirals that were recently FDA approved. He also noted that he has not seen them in any other clinical setting • There is an event called "boosterama" schedule for Saturday at Wheaton Mall in conjunction with Salud y Bienestar community partner that will take place from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm. He noted that while the vaccination rate for the County is high, the booster rate is at about 50% of the population and so, they are making a strong effort to not only increase it but also to use the quality framework to identify the spaces in the County where under vaccination rates are usually seen • Dr. Bridgers informed the members of the vaccination rates as of 2/14/2022 and noted that ≥95% of total population had received at least one dose, 85% of total population had received two doses, and 52% of fully vaccinated population received a booster/additional dose • He mentioned that the County had planned for the 6 Months – 4-year-old pediatric vaccine strategy and were prepared to receive the doses from Pfizer, however, the FDA decided that additional data was needed for the approval. He pointed out that almost 60% of the 5–11-year-old population have been fully vaccinated. • Dr. Bridgers also pointed out that 2,144,000 test kits were ordered by the County. 2, 074,000 have been received, and more than 1.22M kits have been distributed • Dr. Bridgers announced that a "quarantine and isolation" calculator will be available in both English and Spanish as well as other languages and it will be posted on the County's website. He shared the prototype with the members • The Co-Chair Crystal DeVance-Wilson wanted to know how the County was handling the hard-to-reach population for getting the booster vaccine. Dr. Bridgers mentioned they routinely review available data, they did a booster campaign, they have been working with the office of emergency management/homeland security, an alert blast via the Montgomery County notification system was sent, and direct phone calls are being made as well. He noted that there has been an active follow-up at the request of the County Executive, and they are looking not only at the zip code data but also the census data • Brent Berger wanted to know if schools could be used as vaccination sites and if so, why they haven't. Dr. Bridgers explained that this is due to challenges with clinical controls 	
<p>Vote on Sexually Transmitted Infection Letter – Chair/ Vice Chair/ All Members</p> <p>A MOTION was made by Brent Berger to approve the letter crafted by Crystal DeVance-Wilson and discussed at the two previous meetings to be sent to County Council. The motion was seconded by Kendra Harris. The motion was unanimously approved.</p>	
<p>Vote on State Legislature and recent County Council Proposals – Chair/Vice Chair/ All Members</p> <p>A MOTION was made by Jonathan Arias to affirm the testimony letter in support of the State Bill that would have penalties for the harassment and threatening of public health officials and hospital workers. The letter was previously voted on and approved via email. The motion was seconded by Crystal DeVance-Wilson. The motion was unanimously approved.</p>	
<p>Violence as a Public Health Issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair asked Dr. Bridgers at the end of his report if the rise in crime rate has been an area of concern from DHHS' perspective. Dr. Bridgers noted that they have been working with the behavioral health, crisis service center, and children 	<p>Ad hoc groups will discuss potential COH steps related to violence as a public health issue,</p>

<p>youth and family departments. He also mentioned that discussions have taken place regarding short-term interventions vs. long-term. He also noted that they are still working on opiates and substance abuse issues and pointed out that education is the key.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair reported on data shared with the County Council and noted that when looking at data trends, there was an increase in 2021 in some particular areas like homicide and carjacking. She pointed out that there was a dip during the early days of the pandemic but not only have the numbers rebound, they have increased. She mentioned that there are issues around firearms and those arms coming from other jurisdictions. She also pointed out the issues with ghost guns and how the County Council is looking into options related to it. • The Chair asked the members for their interest on having someone attend a meeting to speak about this issue. Members expressed interest on having a speaker oriented on what the data shows and what that looks like for Montgomery County. • Brent Berger expressed his concerns over school safety and noted that children not feeling safe at school is a mental health crisis. • The Chair noted that the next step would be to have a better data overview and understanding of the data landscape followed by a discussion on which piece(s) the COH wants to tackle as the second step. The Co-Chair agreed with the steps and suggested to get additional information on what is already being done to improve the current situation. The Chair suggested having a representative from the Police Department as a speaker at a future COH meeting. Linda McMillan pointed that the Police Department would be the ones that could provide the data but noted that representatives from other programs could provide more specific information on the different efforts depending on the type of violence/safety issue the commission wanted to tackle. Linda McMillan offered to work on this with the Chair. Chris Burt suggested a roundtable with experts on the field looking at Social, Justice, Public Health, and Education. • The Chair asked members to volunteer for these tasks if it was decided that there were issues the COH wanted to pursue. Chris Burt volunteered as well as Rosemary Payne and Desiree de la Torre. • Jonathan Arias volunteered to participate in the group that will look at future responses. 	<p>and future public health infrastructure needs</p>
<p>Special Announcement –Linda McMillan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda McMillan announced her retirement and noted that this was her last meeting with the COH. She noted that Essie would be the liaison for the next few months. She explained that there is recruitment taking place, but she is unsure if Essie McGuire would be the permanent replacement. She pointed out that Essie McGuire had worked with the Council and HHS before, she noted that she has a background on social work and explained that she had left the Council to work for MCPS and is now back with the Council • The Chair welcomed Ms. McGuire and expressed her gratitude to Linda McMillan for all her work. She pointed out what a great resource she had been and wished her good luck on her future endeavors as did all other members present 	
<p>Workgroup Updates – Chair/Workgroup Leads</p> <p>Communicable Diseases Workgroup – Rosemary Payne No update</p>	<p>NA</p>

<p>School Health Workgroup – Desiree de la Torre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Cara Grant mentioned that she wanted to affirm all the work that is being done by the different offices within MCPS to keep kids safe, to report and follow appropriate protocols. She also noted that the health education curriculum development for High School is now a full year of Health is still in development and plan to provide professional training over the summer <p>Equity Workgroup – Marcela Campoli No update</p> <p>Governance Workgroup –Jessica Kronstadt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jessica Kronstadt informed the members that a request had been sent to PHS staff regarding the information needed for the group to be able to complete their functions. Some of the requests are around having a better understanding of the programs, the strategic plan and reporting, and any performance management data that can be shared A request for budget information to be made available at the next meeting was made, specifically about what is in the budget for Public Health Services and what are the proposed increases and/or decreases. The request also asked for a speaker to join the COH at the March meeting to go over this information 	
<p>COH Liaison Updates – Chair · BCC Liaisons Updates</p> <p>African American Health Program – Crystal DeVance-Wilson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crystal DeVance-Wilson informed the members that the program continues to provide vaccines and boosters around the County. She also pointed out that they had launched the holistic health program working with residents from HOC Communities and they are distributing masks and kits via that initiative She mentioned that the Black Physicians health network will be doing a mental health forum and asked that any members who were interested in attending let her know In addition, she informed members that her along with Rosemary Payne had talked to the Chair of the African American Coalition and the Chair of the Executive Council about what the COH could do to support the work they are doing. She pointed out that they have not formally met, but they did invite them to join a coalition meeting in June to talk about what the COH does and how it can help <p>Latino Health Initiative Steering Committee – Marcela Campoli</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marcela Campoli mentioned that the steering committee had requested that she join them because if you want to be a liaison, you need to be a part of the team. She noted that she had interviewed with them, and she is awaiting their final decision <p>Veterans Administration – Rosemary Payne No report</p>	<p>NA</p>

<p>School Health Council – Alana Aronin</p> <p>No report</p> <p>The chair Jessica Kronstadt pointed out that there was an opening on the Mental Health Advisory Council and noted that many of the issues discussed during the COH’s meetings are related to mental health. She pointed out that they meet the first Thursday of each month</p>	
<p>Announcements</p> <p>The Society of Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) has awarded Dr. Cara Grant with the SHAPE Maryland Presidential Citation. This award honors individuals for their work serving the Maryland SHAPE and SHAPE organization and the field of education.</p>	N/A
<p>Adjournment</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.</p>	N/A