



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION ON HEALTH
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
April 21, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jonathan Arias, Alana Aronin, Brent Berger, Elliott Brown, Christopher Burt, Marcela Campoli, Desiree de la Torre, Crystal DeVance-Wilson, Sarah Emami, Susan Emery, Cara Grant, Jessica Kronstadt, Gabriela Lemus, Adam Lustig, Essie McGuire,

Members Absent: Dr. James Bridgers, Kendra Harris, Rosemary Payne

Staff Present: Felicia Hugee, and Christopher Rogers

Guests: Sean O'Donnell, and Beth Shuman

AGENDA ITEMS/PRESENTER	ACTION ITEMS /RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<p>Meeting call to Order and Officer Report – Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. The COH Chair welcomed members and announced there were two guests joining the meeting. She introduced Beth Shuman from the Office of County Council President Gabe Albornoz as the first guest.	
<p>Conversation with Beth Shuman, Senior Legislative Aide, Office of County Council President Gabe Albornoz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Beth Shuman highlighted that Public Health is a priority for County Council President Gabe Albornoz. She explained that he is interested in focusing on data and he understands how critical it is to have the right information to make informed decisions. She also noted that he wants to prioritize equity and noted that it needs to be a regional approachBeth also mentioned that the proposal for a Senior Planning Specialist makes sense and wanted to show support for the work the COH is doing and for what is being identified as a critical need <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Chair provided a summary behind the proposal for a Senior Planning Specialist. She explained that currently there is not adequate capacity for collecting, compiling, and analyzing data on a regular basis, resulting in loss opportunity of understanding the needs for the most vulnerable populationShe noted that the COH feels strongly that this is an important and very practical first step and would appreciate the Council's consideration on adding it to the budgetThe Chair discussed the infrastructure breakdown needs and noted that in addition to investing in technology, there is also a need for a sufficient and skilled workforce. She explained that like Beth Shuman's comment about lessons learned	

<p>from COVID, there are some very strong relationships that the County was able to leverage and need to continue investing in them and building on them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair pointed out that there is a large focus on data modernization and noted that large amounts of money will temporarily go to public health. She explained that the goal is to help the County take advantage of those opportunities • Jonathan Arias disagreed with some of the strategic points presented by the Chair. He pointed out that he has a long history of working with the County in various functions and he's learned that incremental may work in some situations but not all. He expressed his concerns over the idea of asking for a modest increase in FTEs for someone to provide data analytics when the problem the problem needs a unit. He feels that the ask should be for exactly what is needed to make a functioning data analytics department within HHS • Jonathan Arias also agreed with the Chair in that it would be great if various entities like NIH, the County's HHS, and many others would communicate, but he is not sure how this would happen and asked Beth Shuman if she had any ideas • Beth Shuman thanked Jonathan for his comments, she stated that a specific critical need has been identified that is very reasonable. She pointed out the impact to the public health systems and the infrastructure, and expressed her understanding about the system itself needing work but noted that this piece will take more time and focus • Beth Shuman talked about food insecurity and stated that this was something revealed during the pandemic. She explained that the initiative is looking to end childhood hunger within the next few years. She noted that one of the proposals is to set up an office of food system resilience • Essie McGuire mentioned that Beth Shuman had brought up a very important point regarding the current fiscal condition and noted that on the one hand revenues are potentially good and on the other hand there are several warning signs • Marcela Campoli agreed with both the Chair and Jonathan Arias and noted that the positive aspects of what's been done during the pandemic need to be sustained and built upon. She also pointed out that the measurements that need to be taken need to be data driven to be sustainable and for that to happen, more than one person is needed • Brent Berger wanted to know why Montgomery County did not have a mobile vaccination van similar to what Medstar has in Baltimore. He also asked about the County partnering with private companies since the Government is limited by the budgetary process. Beth Shuman announced that the County had just funded with Casa Ruben and the Shatner foundation a pediatric van; she also noted that there is another effort and appropriation for another mobile van to go into the community • The Chair thanked Beth Shuman for joining the COH's meeting. She noted that the Commission looks forward to partnering with her office to see how the COH can most effectively support their work 	
<p>MCDHHS Health Officer's Report – Sean O'Donnell <i>See presentation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sean O'Donnell provided an update on the County's COVID-19 status and noted that based on CDC's community level indicators, Montgomery County's community level status is low • There are 139 cases per 100k residents in the past seven days • The Covid-19 hospital admissions per 100k residents is 2.1 (7-day total) • The percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients is at 2.3% (7-day average) 	<p>N/A</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positivity rate is at 5.40% and the utilization rate is at 2.6% • Most cases in Montgomery County are BA2 or other sub lineage within BA2 • The prediction models show that the BA2 peak may take place in early May • He highlighted the availability of the Test-to-Treat program and noted that there about 13 sites within a 10–12-mile radius of downtown Rockville • There are currently 6 locations where PCR tests can be picked-up and dropped-off • They are working on implementing a partnership with the University of Maryland and other partners to do waste-water surveillance. He cautioned that the science is in the early stages and he's not sure how much can be obtained from it right now but hopes that it will become an early detection tool soon <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonathan Arias stated that many of the public health entities across the nation are having difficulty with tabulating the number of COVID positive cases, partly because some cases are so mild that they do not get reported or even tested and wanted to know if there was a possibility that the County was underreporting the actual number of cases. Sean stated that yes, this has been happening since COVID began. He explained that there are many asymptomatic COVID transmissions and in absence of people doing routine asymptomatic testing, those cases are sometimes not caught even if tested; he also added that some of the milder cases can escape detection depending on when and how the testing was done • Jonathan Arias also wanted to know if herd immunity had been reached in the County. Sean O'Donnell explained that he's not an epidemiologist and offered his opinion that herd immunity has been reached several times against different variants of COVID • Brent Berger wanted to know if any information was available on why some people have not received the 3rd shot. He wanted to know what could be done to try to bring the rates up among people who might not be accessing the vaccinations especially if they already received 2 vaccines. Sean O'Donnell explained that from what he's seen, there are populations within the community that have an urgency to do whatever they can to protect themselves and others who may be hesitant 	
<p>Officer Report – Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming meetings are May 19th and June 16th. • The Chair reminded all about the email Robyn Simmons sent out about the open meetings training requirement. She asked for the training to be completed by May 6th and explained that the email had all the details. She suggested to contact Robyn Simmons or Felicia Huges if there were any questions • The Chair also announced that this is her last term, and it will end in June. She would like to take this opportunity for the COH to start thinking of the succession plan and mentioned that a nominating committee needs to be created. <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Adam Lustig to approve the March 17, 2022 minutes with the proposed edits to clarify the language related to the age friendly and wellness group by removing “the emphasis of all efforts is focused on mental health” and replacing it with “a major emphasis of the group is mental health”. The motion was seconded by Gabriela Lemus. The minutes were unanimously approved</p>	<p>Add April's minutes to May's agenda for approval- <i>COH Staff</i></p>
<p>Vote: 1) In Person Meeting; 2) Budget Letter; 3) Meeting with Council President Alborno – Chair/Vice Chair</p>	

<p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Gabriela Lemus to ratify the online vote to hold the May 19th meeting in person with a virtual component where at least half of the meeting attendees will attend in person. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Arias. The Chair clarified that the meeting can still be accessed remotely via Zoom. The motion was approved</p> <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Gabriela Lemus to ratify the online vote to approve the letter that was sent to the County Council about the COH's budget request. The motion was seconded by Crystal DeVance-Wilson. The motion was approved</p> <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Crystal DeVance-Wilson to ratify the online vote for the Chair to obtain the COH's approval to schedule a meeting with the Council President. The motion was seconded by Gabriela Lemus.</p> <p>*Jonathan Arias wanted to know what the intent and purpose of the meeting is. The Chair explained that it would be to discuss both the short and the long-term budget requests and expand on the conversation that was started with Beth Shuman about the need for longer-term investment and public health infrastructure</p> <p>The motion was approved</p>	
<p>Violence as a Public Health Issue – All Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desiree informed that a small group had met and communicated via email and wanted the focus of the discussion to be around youth violence. She noted that there are many factors that impact youth violence, such as hunger, social determinants of health, food insecurity, and unemployment among others The group would like to work on identifying the gaps and opportunities around education in schools or within DHHS She asked the group for suggestions on who to invite to future meetings to speak on youth violence and provide data to help understand the gaps and opportunities <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cara Grant wanted to know what outcomes the group was looking for in the presentation. Desiree de la Torre stated that the group is open, she noted that she'd like to see what some of the interventions that are currently occurring are, the gaps that have been identified in those interventions, the resources needed, and any areas that the COH can be advocate for Jonathan Arias stated that he would welcome information about the scope on the focus on youth violence. He noted that there are many sub-categories within the larger heading and wanted to know which ones would have the most priority. Desiree de la Torre explained that there was a focus on the student resource officers and their pros and cons; she also mentioned that behavioral/mental health was another area of focus; youth violence and social determinants of health; food insecurities and unemployment Alana Aronin stated that it would be helpful to have an assessment of what other BCCs are working on around this topic. Desiree de la Torre agreed with Alana and will work with Robyn Simmons and Felicia Hugee to determine what the other BCCs are doing The Vice-Chair noted that MCPS has the most data regarding the most frequent kinds of violence in schools. Jonathan agreed and added that it would also be helpful to have quantitative data on the number of violent cases Marcela Campoli suggested connecting with grassroots organizations working with youth that are in or out of MCPS or in another school system that may help in understanding the root cause(s) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desiree de la Torre pointed out the next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Cara Grant to determine who within the education system to talk to about data, programs, and program needs. Follow up with Robyn Simmons and Felicia Hugee on connecting with other BCCs to determine the work they are currently doing Extending an invitation to one of the people the group connects with to present to the COH Susan Emery stated that she wanted to understand how violence increases and what can be done to help. Desiree de la Torre explained that some of the questions for the speaker(s) who will join the COH's meetings are centered around what they are currently doing to address violence and what are some gaps and opportunities that can help support the work Marcela Campoli reminded Desiree de la Torre that there is a commission against hate and violence and suggested connecting with them to work together 	
<p>Workgroup Updates – Chair/Workgroup Leads</p> <p>Equity Workgroup – Marcela Campoli No update</p> <p>School Health Workgroup – Desiree de la Torre No update</p> <p>Communicable Diseases Workgroup – Rosemary Payne No update</p> <p>Governance Workgroup –Sarah Emami</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Emami mentioned that the workgroup had met to review several documents that had been requested from the County. She stated that the workgroup had some concerns about the lack of capacity to have the data that is needed to evaluate progress. The workgroup hopes to meet again before the May meeting The Chair also discussed extending an invitation to Dr. Crowel to help figure out the best way for the COH to be most effective and to hear his perspective on the priorities 	NA
<p>COH Liaison Updates – Chair · BCC Liaisons Updates</p> <p>Latino Health Initiative Steering Committee – Marcela Campoli</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marcela Campoli mentioned that she had met with the Latino Health Initiative Steering Committee and informed the Commissioners that in the past month they were meeting with each Council Member trying to consolidate the budget. She highlighted that they had received positive feedback from Council members and noted that the key word that came out of these meetings was “sustainability”. She explained that a lot of funding went to minorities during the pandemic, and they are trying to revert to pre-pandemic. <p>School Health Council – Alana Aronin</p>	NA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alana Aronin stated that the School Health Council had met and there were two important items noted. The first is around lead reporting in the schools and the second one is about the school nurses situation. She explained that the school health nurses are fully funded but they are not fully staffed. Regarding the lead reporting, she explained that a comprehensive report of all the school facilities and lead rates had been created and her takeaway is that there are some schools with elevated levels of lead that need to have a resolution <p>Montgomery Cares Advisory Board – Sarah Emami</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Emami reported that the Board’s conversation has been focused on the eligibility process. She explained that there was a suggestion from the County that to access the Montgomery Cares program, which is a safety net for un- or underinsured individuals, that they should go through the office of eligibility and support services. She also explained that as a committee, a lot of time has been spent talking about this and some of the drawbacks associated with it. She noted that there are concerns over individuals not wanting to complete an application due to it being a government agency, difficulty with follow up, and administrative burdens on the clinics. They are leaning to recommending a hybrid approach where eligibility is not entirely administered by OESS and not entirely done by the clinics <p>African American Health Program – Crystal DeVance-Wilson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crystal DeVance-Wilson annual Community Day event planning is going great and the programs has made a lot of progress. It is scheduled to take place May 7th from 8:00 am – 2:00 pm 	
<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desiree de la Torre wanted to make a request from Dr. Rogers for a draft or an update on the CHNA. Felicia will follow up with Dr. Rogers to email the update The Chair wanted to remind all about the Public Health Services Town Hall scheduled for next month 	N/A
<p>Adjournment</p> <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Brent Berger to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Gabriela Lemus. The motion was approved</p>	N/A