



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION ON HEALTH
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
June 16, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Alana Aronin, Brent Berger, Dr. James Bridgers, Elliott Brown, Marcela Campoli, Desiree de la Torre, Crystal DeVance-Wilson, Susan Emery, Jessica Kronstadt, Gabriela Lemus, Adam Lustig

Members Absent: Jonathan Arias, Christopher Burt, Sarah Emami, Cara Grant, Kendra Harris, Rosemary Payne

County Council Staff: Tara Clemons, Essie McGuire

DHHS Staff: Felicia Huges, Dr. Christopher Rogers, Robyn Simmons

Liaisons: Betsy Carrier

Guests: Dr. Raymond L. Crowel, DHHS Director

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 6:06 p.m. The COH Chair welcomed members and reminded all that reimbursement is provided for childcare and asked that questions be sent to Robyn Simmons The Chair announced that the vacancies have been posted and encouraged all to help spread the word. She also noted that there are some individuals whose term is up for renewal, and she encourages them to reapply The Chair asked for volunteers for the COH Membership Committee to assist with interviewing new applicants. Adam Lustig volunteered for the Committee The Chair reminded all to complete the Open Meetings Training, and to forward their completion certificate to Robyn Simmons The Chair announced that Gabriela Lemus and Susan Emery had volunteered for the retreat committee to help plan the September retreat The Chair reminded all that the Annual report is coming up. She noted that Robyn Simmons had sent emails to all Committee Chairs asking for a summary of the work done throughout the year. She asked that they be turned in to Robyn Simmons by June 21st Upcoming meetings are July 21st and September 15th . <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Gabriela Lemus to approve the May 19, 2022 with a revision of attendees for accuracy. The motion was seconded by Adam Lustig. The minutes were unanimously approved</p>	<p>Add June's minutes to July's agenda for approval- <i>COH Staff</i></p>
<p>MCDHHS Director—FY24 Priorities and Lessons learned from COVID-19 followed by Q&A – Dr. Raymond L. Crowel</p>	

- Dr. Raymond L. Crowel wanted to thank the Commission for the support shown to the department, in particular the public health team over the past 2 ½ years
- He noted he was pleased that the COH had taken up the challenge of looking at the FY24 budget now. He mentioned that the goal is to gather information, data, input, and opinions from all parties around the needs for FY24 to be ready to begin the official budget process. He noted that in previous years, board and commissions have often not weighed in until either the end of the year, or January/February of the budget cycle and by that time the work has been done and the budgets have been submitted to the County Executive for review
- Dr. Crowel provided a summary of the FY23 budget and noted that:
 - The County Executive's proposed operating budget for HHS reflected an increase just shy of 58Mil, a 16% increase above the FY22 level. 54Mil were general funds and 4Mil were grant funds from other sources. It also included about 70 FTEs for the department, a 4% increase. In addition, the County Executive recommended a 6% inflationary adjustment for all the non-profit providers the County works with and has contracts with (this was across the entire County), and County Council added a 2% for a total of an 8% inflationary adjustment
- Dr. Crowel noted that after all adjustments were made by the County Council, the increase came out to about 18% over the previous fiscal year. He emphasized the significance of the increase and mentioned that it is one of the largest anyone can remember, and it comes after a decade of cuts and flat funded budgets and reductions
- Dr. Crowel highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic helped demonstrate how central HHS is to promoting and maintaining the health of the County
- Dr. Crowel noted that several priorities that were set for FY23 will be put in place. The following are included:
 - Increased support for individuals with developmental disabilities, the DD provider community, and providers of adult day care
 - Strengthened both child and adult protective services
 - Strengthened school based mental health services several times and there is another expansion on the horizon
 - Thanks to Nancy Navarro, the high school wellness centers are expanding to all MCPS high schools starting this year, and mental health and case management services are being added to all high schools this year
 - Minority health initiatives and programs budgets doubled to help address some of the healthcare disparities that were made abundantly apparent during the pandemic
 - There is a stronger "Newcomers Program" designed to engage people who are coming into the County who do not have the resources needed to keep them housed and/or off the streets and engaged in the community. He highlighted that Executive Order 42 is being watched closely
 - The capacity of the consolidated service hubs has been increased as well as the funding for food services
 - Additional healthcare and mental health care support services were added to shelters
 - Expanded support for suicide prevention and for substance abuse and overdose prevention. He noted that there were some successes pre-covid, but opioid overdoses have spiked over the last 2 years
 - Expansion the mobile mental health crisis response teams
 - Fully funded by the State with 17Mil to plan and build a restoration center that will serve as a diversion process for people who are on the streets, to

- keep them out of the emergency departments unnecessarily and out of detention to stop them from getting involved in the justice system
 - A mobile HHS vehicle will be purchased and staffed to conduct mobile outreach in the community

- Dr. Crowel discussed Recovery 2.0 and noted that HHS is in the early stages of launching it. He noted that part of Recovery 2.0 is looking across the social determinants of health in all the programs and services and figuring out how to continue providing these services despite the virus. He highlighted that Dr. James Bridgers and Sean O'Donnell put together a program called SHOTS which is the first part of prepping for the reality of COVID still being with us and of getting the public health team ready for the fall
- Dr. Crowel mentioned that while attending an APHA meeting, it was highlighted that given the under-testing that is taking place and the lack of testing, they estimate that they are undercounting the number of positive cases. They estimate that 600,000 cases per day is closer to the reality which is about 1 – 2% of the population at any given time
- He also noted that Congress has a request for 22.5 billion dollars to fund the CDC and the federal COVID relief effort. If Congress approves that request, funds will be used to prep for fall and winter by purchasing tests, vaccines, and treatment to make them available to the public. If the funding does not come through, vaccine purchases will be prioritized
- Youth violence is another priority, and the department is currently working with MCPS, the police, and the recreation department in identifying programs that can help with dealing with the situation on an emergency basis for the summer but also planning for the fall and into the future years, thinking of violence as a healthcare issue
- Dr. Crowel discussed the need for Montgomery Cares to expand its coverage beyond the uninsured to the underinsured

Discussion:

- The Chair asked for Dr. Crowel's guidance in identifying 1 or 2 topics for the COH to focus on. Dr. Crowel noted that "Health in all Policies" is something that needs to be pushed for in the County. He noted the importance of learning to promote health and wellbeing rather than just providing treatment. He also made emphasis on Dental Services, HIV, and STD. He also added that violence as a health issue is something the COH can weigh in for policy recommendations and guidance
- Crystal DeVance-Wilson wanted to know if there are any reports or resources the COH should look to help guide the work. Dr. Crowel noted that Dr. Bridgers and Dr. Rogers have most of the information. The health disparities outcomes report, the data on health care disparities and the data on health outcomes and wellbeing in the County are the two documents that best look into the health of Montgomery County
- Brent Berger noted that in primary care, they are finding a shortage of mental health providers and wanted to know if there were any suggestions to getting more mental health providers. Dr. Crowel explained that the data show there will be a continuous reduction of mental health providers possibly until 2030. He noted that he has asked his team find out what can be done differently. Providing basic training in basic levels of behavioral health intervention to individuals who are already trusted in the community was one of the examples given
- Elliott Brown wanted to know what the County's epidemiology infrastructure looked like and if the County has enough budgeted resources in the epidemiologist

<p>space and data support to be able to respond to any future events in addition to the standard health issues. Dr. Crowel noted that staff had been increased for the epidemiology team and highlighted that data are being collected by two separate teams and his goal is to come up with a way to integrate them both to ensure the capacity to analyze, track, understand, and disseminate the data. He also noted that the department is looking at growing the epidemiology department in FY24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crystal DeVance-Wilson wanted to know about the strategic planning process. Dr. Crowel explained that the pandemic has caused several delays to this plan. He noted that recovery 2.0 is the start of what will be the strategic planning process. He has asked the teams to look for key areas that need to be worked on and need to develop planning. The second part of the process is to conduct outreach and engage the community, which includes reaching out to board and commissions to get a sense of the priorities and the issues that need to be addressed • Adam Lustig asked Dr. Crowel what would be most helpful for him and his staff as the COH thinks about making recommendations to County Council and County Executive as it relates to addressing the social determinants of health. Dr. Crowel highlighted the affordability of transportation as an issue, as well as nutrition. He mentioned that health in all policies translates into figuring out how to turn social determinants of health into actions that fit other departments 	
<p>MCDHHS Health Officer's Report – Dr. James C. Bridgers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. James C. Bridgers shared updated information on data on COVID transmission, vaccine, and death rates in the County; and efforts in the County to expand access to vaccines and testing (rapid and PCR). He noted that hospital rates continue to decline • Dr. Bridgers noted some of the issues he would like to work on with the COH which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reproductive health ○ Chronic disease management ○ Mental health/substance use disorder ○ Family resiliency, violence and gun control, and partner violence • Dr. Bridgers mentioned that the community health needs assessment shows several data points that need to be addressed • Staff and community partners have been trained and access has been increased for the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine • He noted that the access and equity strategy include providing clinics along transportation routes and bike routes • Dr. Bridgers shared news from the Maryland Department of Health regarding a presumed case of monkeypox, he noted that they are currently waiting for confirmation. In addition, he mentioned that the department has been working diligently with the CDC and the Maryland Department of Health to be ready to identify, isolate, and notify any cases that may come up • Dr. Bridgers mentioned that Dr. Rogers and his team have worked with the Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids clinics to bring more Paxlovid in the County • He noted that the unvaccinated population continues to be the population at greatest risk, with higher exposures and hospitalization as well as deaths <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabriela Lemus wanted to know if there was a timeframe for when the long COVID report would be available. Dr. Bridgers explained that it is currently being 	

<p>worked on and he doesn't have a specific date. He shared that approximately 1 in 5 adults ages 18+ have a health condition that might be related to their previous COVID-19 illness, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Neurologic and mental health conditions ○ Kidney failure ○ Musculoskeletal conditions ○ Cardiovascular conditions ○ Respiratory conditions ○ Blood clots and vascular issues 	
<p>FY24 Budget Priorities Discussion – Commissioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair asked all commissioners to reflect on Dr. Crowel's and Dr. Bridgers' presentations to help guide the discussion on what the COH's priorities should be for FY24 • Crystal DeVance-Wilson mentioned that she would like the opportunity to review the 2 reports mentioned by Dr. Crowel before choosing what to focus on. Gabriela Lemus agreed and added that the idea of health in all policies is a very important step to addressing social determinants of health. Desiree de la Torre agreed as well • Brent Berger mentioned that transportation access is important and added that all resources need to be used • The Chair shared her observation on what she felt were the top 3 points made by Dr. Crowel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health in all policies ○ Violence as a public health issue ○ Access to care • Susan Emery wanted clarification on what Dr. Crowel meant by cross-departmental work and if this was just within the County. Dr. Bridgers explained that it would include other jurisdictions as well. He mentioned that many of the clients Montgomery County serves come from other jurisdictions. He noted that DC clients come to Montgomery County for their HIV/STD treatments • Susan mentioned that she would like information on how suicide and violence are connected. Dr. Bridgers explained that there is some correlation between the two. He noted that he would share information from the suicide and violence prevention workgroup. He will also try to connect the COH with the workgroup 	
<p>Officers Elections – Nominating Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desiree de la Torre announced that she and Marcela Campoli have asked to be part of the nominating committee and thanked the Chair for her leadership over the last year • She noted that one nomination for the Chair position had been made and asked if anyone wanted to self-nominate for the Chair or Vice-Chair positions • Desiree de la Torre proposed to extend the nominations for an additional week • The Chair explained that the voting will take place electronically by next week • Gabriela Lemus wanted to know what the time commitment for either position looked like as this could help people in making their decision • The Chair explained that in addition to the monthly meeting that everyone attends, there is a planning meeting that usually runs for 1 hour the week before the monthly meeting. She encouraged the future Chair and Vice-Chair to not be liaisons or participate in workgroups. In addition, there are some ad hoc things that come 	

<p>up, meeting minutes review as well as various opportunities to speak to County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crystal DeVance-Wilson mentioned that most of the work is done by the Chair and while some responsibilities are shared, the workload as Vice-Chair is not overbearing. She noted that she helped with writing advocacy as well as any other issues that came up <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Desiree de la Torre to extend the nomination for Chair and Vice-Chair for an additional week. The motion was seconded by Marcela Campoli. The motion was approved</p>	
<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair Jessica Kronstadt expressed her appreciation for the time served with the COH particularly the past year as she served as Chair. She noted that she plans to join some of the meetings in the future 	N/A
<p>Adjournment</p> <p><u>A MOTION</u> was made by Crystal DeVance-Wilson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Gabriela Lemus. The motion was approved</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.</p>	N/A