

**THE FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY-THIRD REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF HEALTH OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023**

The Five Hundred Sixty-Third meeting of the Baltimore County Board of Health was held January 27 at 9:30 a.m. via WebEx.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Adelsberger, Katie McElroy, Dr. Samuel Havrilak, Judy Kistner, Winona Matthews and Camille Smith.

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch; Health Officer and Secretary to the Board, Della Leister; Deputy Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Chen; Chief, Division of Communicable Diseases, and Kathy Wynn, Executive Secretary.

Dr. Havrilak opened the meeting. Should it be necessary to close the meeting, the Chair will conduct a recorded vote on a motion to close. A closing statement will also be prepared that cites the part of the Open Meetings Act that contains the applicable exception, lists the topics to be discussed in the closed session and give the public body's reason for excluding the public.

I. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

To approve the minutes of December 2, 2022.

Motion: Ms. Matthews
Second: Ms. Kistner
Decision: Unanimous Approval

II. COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Dr. Chen presented on "What's New in Vaccines" (see attached presentation).

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)

Usually thought of as a disease of young children (particularly premature infants), but in reality is bimodal, with frequent reinfection

CDC estimates:

- Hospitalizations
 - 58,000 - 80,000/year in children
 - 60,000 - 120,000/year in adults over age 65
- Deaths
 - 100 - 300/year in children
 - 6,000 - 10,000/year in adults 65+
- Testing

Antigen testing (only approved in children 6 and under; less sensitive in older age groups); PCR (all ages)

Current treatment and prevention options:

Palivizumab (Synagis)- monoclonal Ab targeting F (fusion) protein

- Approved for high-risk infants and children only;
- Reduced hospitalization risk by about 5% in trials
- Dose: 5 IM injections monthly over course of RSV season (usually Nov-April)

Ribavirin- antiviral treatment, usually given by nebulizer.

Dr Havrilak inquired as to the incidence of RSV in Maryland and especially in Baltimore County? Numbers are not reportable or broken down by Counties. The CDC just introduced a website which shows all major respiratory viruses call Res-Net. The site address is cdc.gov/surveillance/resp-net/dashboard.html.

COVID

There was a FDA advisory committee meeting yesterday, Future plans likely yearly selection of dominant strain, similar to the flu. Likely will still require 2 doses for initial immunization, and possibly 2 doses for immunocompromised persons.

New Vaccine- P. falciparum malaria

- 247 million cases and 600,000 yearly deaths by WHO estimate- mostly children
- Vaccine RTS,S/AS01E (Mosquirix) now recommended by WHO, also protects against Hepatitis B
- (RTS- fusion protein of Repeat and T-cell antigens from malaria + Surface antigen from Hep B. AS=Adjuvant system- similar to Shingrix.)
- 30% reduction in deaths; trial included 900,00 children. 3 monthly doses from age 5 mos-17 mos; fourth dose at 18 months after third dose

Future Vaccines - Tuberculosis

- Still one of the leading causes of death worldwide (1.6 million per WHO)
 - Investigational candidate M72/AS01E- includes fusion protein derived from 2 TB antigens + adjuvant
 - Found to be 50% efficacious over 3 year follow-up; trial included 3573 adults

III. ACCREDITATION

The PHAB site visit report has not been received. We expect to hear something in February.

IV. DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION BY THE SECRETARY

Program Updates

- We continue to be involved in COVID, RSV, Mpox and flu. Vaccines for all are available at our health centers.
- Continue to monitor COVID as a threat.

- The County is in the process of 2024 budget presentations. We will ask for a letter of support from the Board.
- The department will receive funds from a state infrastructure grant to expand public health. No details at this time, we are waiting to hear what the funds can be used for.
- We are in the beginning phases of acquiring a new electronic health record. Bid information is on the County website. Seven national companies were represented on a meeting yesterday regarding the bid.
- Leadership met with the legislative liaison from Government Affairs and provided our input/information.
- Since the Maryland Department of Health's security breach, they are requiring a data agreement. The department receives its support from Baltimore County OIT. The agreement is ready to route for signatures.
- Ms. Leister attended a meeting on Monday with area hospitals. The department will collaborate with hospitals on the community health needs assessment (CHNA) starting process.
- We are in legislative session, House Bill 214 presented "establishes a Commission on Public Health to make recommendations to improve the delivery of foundational public health services in the State; requiring the Commission, by October 1, 2024, to conduct an assessment of the capability of the Maryland Department of Health and local health departments to provide foundational public health services; and requiring the assessment to consider the State's response to COVID-19 and overdose deaths, and to racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality and birth outcomes in the State". No more details at this time.
- Animal Services has a year in review report for 2022. The report will be forwarded to the Board. If you have any questions, we can cover at the February meeting.
- Wilbur the rooster has resided in northern Baltimore County since August. Wilbur's neighbors did not like his crowing and filed a complaint with the Animal Hearing Board (AHB). Anyone can file a complaint related to animals in the County, which goes to the AHB. In this case, the neighbors that filed the complaint withdrew the complaint due to publicity in support of Wilbur.
- Communicable disease is working with the Department of Aging on a vaccine grant for the fall for additional staff to do more home visits for high risk individuals.
- Environmental Health Services (EHS) received an inquiry from the Baltimore Banner as to why the County does not post food establishment closings on the website. We are working with the County Executive's BCSTAT team to put our website closures in

addition to when closed facilities reopen. Currently we are sending a weekly report to The Baltimore Banner on restaurants closed and status on restaurants closed.

- BCSTAT is working on a water dashboard for EHS for recreation and bathing beaches. Individuals will be able to view a map to see which beaches have an advisory.
- This year we will start administering vaccines early for schools.
- The Baltimore Sun had an article on our partnership with Police, 911 and Affiliated Sante. A behavioral health clinician is staffed at the 911 Center. The goal is to deescalate/divert calls that come to 911. Individuals are informed of services available to them. The article will be sent to board members.
- The hoarding taskforce is being reestablished. This is a multi-agency endeavor to coordinate resources as to what each county agency can do in these situations. The Department of Social Services will have a social worker who will be able to assist these individuals.

Site Visits

- We had a virtual Ryan White A site visit last week. It was completed within one day. Exit conference was brief and everything went well.
- We are waiting for the report on the ACCU site visit held the middle of December.
- The Animal Services Commission has put out an annual 2022 report. The report is being posted on the Baltimore County website. There is a link to the report from our website. The report lists specific recommendations. We encourage the board to review once they are public.

Personnel

- Vicki Keller, tobacco coordinator and prior to that worked in WIC, has retired after 38 years of service.
- The search continues for a physician for Clinical Services Bureau Chief.
- Interviews are in process for the Behavioral Health chief position. We hope to be done interviews by the end of next week and select a candidate.
- Renee Youngfellow is the acting chief for Quality Improvement. We hope to have the position posted next week.

- Elisabeth Sachs has been named Deputy Administrative Officer for the Department of Health and Human Services, Aging, Recs and Parks and Housing and Community Development.
- The County is having a classification and compensation study done. It has been difficult to hire due to lower salaries compared to the private sector.
- Kevin Reed, formerly Deputy Director of Health and Human Services Finance and Administration has been interim Director of the Office of Budget and Finance. He is expected to be appointed Director within two weeks.
- Dr. Branch was unanimously reappointed as Director for Health and Human Services.

Facilities

- We had an intruder at the Liberty Health Center after hours. Locks are being changed and additional security cameras installed.
- At the Towson Health Center, an individual has been coming into the WIC office asking to use the scale. We are working to obtain security guards for that location.

Trainings/Events

- Dr. Branch presented at the Winter Maryland Association of Counties meeting, and along with two other health officers, educated them on the role of local public health. They were informed the Department of Health is prepared every day to deal with mitigating and possible diseases.
- Ms. Leister attended a national forum on overdose fatality review. She brings back from that conference a number of good ideas and hopes to implement soon.
- The department will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year. A planning committee will be formed and we will ask for board members participation.

First Amendment Audit

Ms. Leister thanked those board members who sent their comments to Ms. Youngfellow and Ms. Allen on the First Amendment audit training. The report is ready for review.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Havrilak thanked Ms. Leister for answering the question related to pre-school vaccinations.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

VII. REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN

Dr. Havrilak congratulated Dr. Branch on his reappointment. The next meeting of the Board will be February 24.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 10:11am

Motion: Ms. Kistner
Second: Ms. Matthews
Decision: Unanimous Approval



Gregory Wm. Branch, M.D., MBA, CPE, FACP