

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES

May 4, 2016

Present: Lee Harrison, MD, Chair
William Youngblood, Vice Chair
Karen Hacker, MD, Secretary
Edith Shapira, MD
Anthony Ferraro (via telephone)
Joylette Portlock, PhD
Caroline Mitchell
Ellen Stewart, MD
Donald Burke, MD

Absent: Kotayya Kondaveeti, MD

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was held at the ACHD Administrative Office, 542 Fourth Avenue. Dr. Harrison called the meeting to order. Dr. Harrison announced that an executive session was held before March's meeting to discuss personnel matters and US Steel litigation. An executive session was held prior to this month's [May] meeting to discuss personnel matters.

2. **Approval of Minutes from March 2, 2016**

Dr. Harrison asked if there were any questions about the minutes. There were none.

Action: Dr. Shapira moved to approve the minutes, Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.
Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on agenda items.

4. **Old Business**

A. Update on Live Well

Hannah Hardy stated that 23 municipalities are now Live Well communities. She met with CONNECT, and all CONNECT municipalities have joined Live Well. Six school districts have joined, as well as several restaurants. Live Well was also engaged in a student initiative, with funding from the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, to develop appropriate messages to assist Live Well with reaching an audience of young people.

Hannah is assisted in these efforts by Erica Bryson, a National Health Corps member. Erica explained that Live Well's student initiative includes a curriculum of Public Health 101, the definition of what health is and its social determinants, and quantitative and qualitative data. In developing the messaging, Live Well worked with a public relations firm and also engaged the Brookline Teen Outreach Center as a focus group.

Two of the students, Abby Walls and Marina Maripas, presented their messages. Abby's message was "Becoming a Better You" and focused on body image and overall wellness. Marina's message was "Breathe In, Breathe Out, Release" and focused on stress management.

Dr. Harrison thanked everyone for the information they presented. Dr. Hacker thanked the students for attending and noted that this was first foray Live Well had with working with young people, and noted that Live Well does need to be able to connect with youth. Dr. Harrison if this initiative would continue in the future. Dr. Hacker stated that it will continue for at least a year, thanks to funding from a grant but that it is hoped to continue.

At this time, Dr. Harrison acknowledged County Councilmember Cindy Kirk and thanked her for attending the Board meeting.

B. Update on Policy Committee

Abby Wilson stated that the Policy Committee identified several topics to focus on in 2016. These topics include HPV and increasing vaccination rates; e-cigarettes; Allegheny County Parks, to include ensuring that there are healthy options for food served there and addressing smoking in parks, and lead-related issues.

5. New Business

A. E-Cigarettes Discussion

Megan Tulikangas, of the University of Pittsburgh, gave a presentation to the Board regarding e-cigarettes. The appearance of e-cigarettes is varied, they can look like traditional cigarettes or like vape pens. Both e-cigarettes and vape pens use the same technology, only the cultural reference is different. E-cigarettes implies connection with big tobacco, while vaping is intended to imply connection to local businesses with quality ingredients. The term vaping is also intended to imply harmlessness.

The long term health effects of e-cigarettes are presently unknown due the lack of longitudinal, population-based studies. Information is available however about the components of e-cigarettes. The components include a base of either propylene glycol or vegetable glycerin, nicotine, and flavoring chemicals. The nicotine is highly concentrated and inconsistently labeled. The flavoring chemicals are unregulated and do not have labelling requirements. Studies have identified heavy metals, carcinogens, respiratory irritants, and drugs such as amino-cialis in flavoring chemicals.

Accidents have occurred due to e-cigarettes. At least 25 explosions and burns were reported between 2009 and 2014, at least 21 more occurred through March 2016, and 9 more also occurred through April 2016.

E-cigarettes are widely available. There are 881 licensed tobacco retailers in Allegheny County, and a Yelp search for Vape shops in and around Pittsburgh produced 77 results. Thus, there are potentially up to 950 locations selling e-cigarettes in Allegheny County. Regarding the prevalence of their usage, 13% of high school students and 4% of middle school students have reported using e-cigarettes at least once in the past 30 days. This usage rate exceeds that of traditional cigarettes, and the CDC reports that this usage rate has tripled from 2013 to 2014. Nearly 30% of college students reported ever trying e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes are regulated by other states and municipalities. They are included in comprehensive smoke-free laws in North Dakota, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Boston. Their purchase is restricted to those older than 18 in all states, except for Pennsylvania and Michigan. Purchase is restricted to those older than 21 in at least 140 localities. Other regulations include licensing and permits, price controls, and zoning restrictions. Policy options available to Allegheny County include prohibiting minor access, prohibiting use in public spaces and workplaces, banning use by food service workers, and the issuance of permits.

Mr. Youngblood asked what ACHD can do legally about e-cigarettes. He expressed concern that the advertisements for e-cigarettes were reminiscent of cigarette advertisements from the 1950s. Jeff Baily, an ACHD attorney, stated that the Board does have the power under the Local Health Administration Law to regulate e-cigarettes for public health. Ms. Wilson stated that there are bills pending in Harrisburg regarding minors' access to e-cigarettes, but that the Board could do something locally in the interim. Dr. Hacker stated that in regards to any potential permitting of e-cigarette vendors, an economic analysis would have to be done to see if the fees levied could cover the cost of additional ACHD personnel that would be necessary. Mr. Youngblood asked if it would be possible to see a draft regulation for e-cigarettes at the next Board meeting. Mr. Bailey stated this would be possible.

Dr. Burke pointed out that e-cigarettes do have a harm reduction benefit for current smokers and that the Clean Indoor Air Act focuses on reducing the harm to other individuals. Mr. Youngblood asked if any studies have been conducted yet on the second-hand effects of e-cigarettes. Ms. Tulikangas stated that no studies have been conducted about that yet. Dr. Hacker stated that the industry is currently unregulated and that it is difficult to know what is in the products. Dr. Portlock asked about the outcomes from policy restrictions in other localities. Ms. Tulikangas stated that the policy restrictions in other localities are very recent. Dr. Burke asked about the possibility of local taxation of e-cigarettes. Dr. Hacker stated that she believed that such taxation would have to go through Harrisburg. Michael Parker, ACHD Solicitor, confirmed that Harrisburg would have to approve such taxes. Dr. Shapira stated she is in favor of anything.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to request that ACHD staff prepare for the Board's approval policies prohibiting minor access to e-cigarettes, prohibiting e-cigarette use in public places and workplaces, and banning e-cigarette use by food service workers in accordance with the Clean Indoor Air act. Dr. Burke seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

B. HPV Vaccination

Sue Steele and Deborah Murdoch, both of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, gave the Board a presentation on HPV. The presentation stated that most males and females will get some form of mucosal HPV in their lives. An estimated 79 million Americans are currently infected with HPV, with 14 million new infections per year. HPV infection is most common in people in their late teens and early 20s. Most people will never know that they are infected. HPV can cause a variety of cancers, including cervical cancer and throat cancers.

HPV vaccination studies suggest that vaccine protection is long-lasting and there is no evidence of waning immunity. There is currently a low rate of vaccination in the United States. 33.4% of American girls have completed the vaccine's three doses, compared to 60.4% in the United Kingdom and 71.2% in Australia. The goals of JHF's HPV initiative include normalizing HPV vaccination in providers' offices, disseminating messages focusing on the singular opportunity the HPV presents to prevent certain types of cancer, tracking vaccination rates, and influencing policy change toward long-term sustainability. Locally, 16% of children in the Pittsburgh MSA turning 13 have received 3 doses of the HPV vaccine.

Other states have introduced mandates for HPV vaccination. Such states include Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Rhode Island. Vaccination itself is not mandated in Philadelphia, but a vaccine registry is mandatory.

Dr. Hacker stated that the results of the mandates have been mixed. She supported having HPV vaccination be reportable. Dr. Harrison asked if there were any comments. Dr. Burke asked about the total number of cancers per year in Allegheny County, in order to begin to determine how many cancers could be prevented by vaccination. Dr. Hacker pointed out that HPV can cause cervical dysplasia, which leads to costly procedures.

Dr. Burke asked if there was an option for Allegheny County to have a school mandate for HPV vaccination. Dr. Hacker stated that was an option. Dr. Burke asked how vigorously the Board wanted to address the issue. Dr. Harrison stated he was in favor of increasing the vaccination rate if the Board can mandate it. Dr. Stewart stated that a robust endorsement in pediatrician's offices would be less politically charged. Dr. Shapira asked if there were any school-based clinics in Allegheny County. Dr. Hacker stated there were none at the present time. Dr. Harrison stated that another barrier is the three dose administration schedule. Dr. Hacker responded that we do fine with hepatitis B vaccination.

Dr. Hacker stated there was not yet a good sense of the public's feelings about the issue. She suggested a public forum could be held. Dr. Portlock stated that the decision needs to be accompanied by effective messaging. Dr. Burke felt that the Board should be aggressive and take a strong position. Mr. Youngblood asked if there was any feedback from school nurses about a mandate. Dr. Hacker said that schools have been open to receiving information. Dr. Portlock stated that she is supportive of vaccination reporting.

Action: Dr. Burke moved that the Health Department should actively explore the possibility of mandating HPV vaccination before age 11 as a requirement for admission to Allegheny County schools. Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Life Expectancy in Allegheny County

Dr. Hacker gave a brief presentation about the median age at death and correlation with social risk factors in Allegheny County. Data presented showed an association with income and life expectancy. Municipal-level data showing the median age at death was significantly negatively correlated with municipal-level poverty rate data. Dr. Hacker stated that this spoke to the concept that where one lives does matter in terms of one's health. Dr. Harrison asked if there were any additional questions. There were none.

D. Asbestos Fees

Jim Thompson presented the Board with a proposal to increase the fees for asbestos permits in order to provide for an additional asbestos permit engineer in the Air Quality program. Mr. Thompson stated that ACHD has enforced all asbestos activity for over twenty years, and that the fees have been the same since the start of the program. Currently there are three personnel working with asbestos, and unpermitted asbestos activity does occur in the County. Mr. Thompson stated that the additional engineer will help enable more inspections during off-hours and on weekends. He projected that the increase in permit fees will generate \$85,000 and will also enable the program to issue more fines and collect more penalties. The cost of the additional engineer will be covered by this.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve the increase the fees for asbestos permits. Dr. Shapira seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

E. Clean Air Fund Request - Lawnmower Exchange Program

Jayne Graham stated that this request was for the renewal of a project that has been by the Board twice previously. The program encourages residents to exchange their gasoline-powered lawnmowers, leaf blowers, grass trimmers, and chainsaws for rebates good towards the purchase of battery or electrically powered equipment. Ms. Graham stated that the rebates can be accepted at any retailer, and that the program is a cost-effective way for emission reduction. Dr. Harrison asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Action: Mr. Youngblood moved to approve funding for the Lawnmower Exchange Program from the Clean Air Fund. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

F. Environmental Health Fund Request – Allegheny Cleanways

The Board received this Environmental Health Fund request from Joy Smallwood, ACHD Recycling Coordinator, and Myrna Newman, Executive Director of Allegheny Cleanways. Allegheny Cleanways would like to conduct a comprehensive assessment of illegal dumping sites in Allegheny County. This assessment will establish if illegal dumping problems exist, identify areas to prioritize for abatement, and establish a data baseline. Ms. Newman stated that her organization has been involved in cleaning up dump sites for 16 years, mostly focused on efforts within the City of Pittsburgh. Allegheny Cleanways would like to expand their efforts into the rest of Allegheny County.

Dr. Harrison asked if there were any questions. Dr. Burke asked if the illegal dump sites would be identified by using remote sensing or by driving. Ms. Newman stated they're identified mostly by driving. Dr. Burke asked if it was possible to use satellite imagery to identify the sites. Ms. Newman replied that large sites have been able to be seen via satellite imagery, but that it also depends on when the satellite image was taken. Ms. Mitchell suggested that municipal-level zoning enforcement officers would be a good resource to use to identify illegal dump sites, as they should have information on complaints received regarding illegal dumping. Dr. Portlock also expressed doubts about the efficiency of driving around to search for the sites. Ms. Newman stated that identification is a combination of driving and working with municipalities. Dr. Burke stated that he would like to see exploration of alternative methods of identification.

Action: Dr. Shapira moved to approve funding for the Allegheny Cleanways project from the Environmental Health Fund, Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. Director's Report

Dr. Hacker had nothing additional to report for the Director's Report.

7. Announcements

There were no announcements.

9. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

A. Angelo Taranto – Clairton Consent Agreement and follow-up to Shenango Closure

Mr. Taranto thanked the Board for hearing his comments. He stated that he is a member of ACCAN (Allegheny County Clean Air Now). He said that the full story of Shenango has not yet been fully told. He stated that comprehensive before and after studies were necessary to determine Shenango's full effect. He also expressed concerns

about the re-use of the site and stated that his organization will present a petition to DTE asking the company to remediate Shenango's site and build a solar array in its place. Mr. Taranto also stated that he appreciates the work that the Air Quality program's staff does, but that he is concerned about the lack of transparency with industry agreements. He contrasted this with the EPA's transparency. He stated that the EPA publishes and accepts public comments of its decrees, while ACHD does not. He stated that this creates the impression that ACHD is taking the side of industry.

9. **Adjournment**