



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## CPHS Oversight Board – 2/11/21 Online Meeting Minutes

### Member Attendance:

Bernardston-	Jean Page	Hawley-	Cass Nawrocki
Buckland-	Marti Taft-Ferguson	Heath-	Absent
Charlemont-	Doug Telling, Bill Harker	Leyden-	Beth Kuzdeba
Colrain-	Nina Martin-Anzouni	Monroe-	Absent
Conway-	Devon Whitney-Deal	Northfield-	Absent
Deerfield-	Trevor McDaniel, Carolyn Shores Ness	Rowe-	Maggie Rice
Erving-	Cyd Scott	Shelburne-	Ron Kelter
Gill-	Absent		

**Staff Attendance:** Phoebe Walker, Tracy Rogers, Lisa White, Randy Crochier, Melanie Zamojski, Liz Jacobson-Carroll

### Meeting Minutes

With a motion from Telling, seconded by McDaniels, the minutes of the January 21, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously, with Rice, Harker and Nawrocki abstaining.

### Vaccine Plan for Phase II

Walker explained that MA has prioritized dose distribution to its mass vaccination sites and private practices; as a result, public health entities statewide are receiving just 17,000/week. In that context, Greenfield and FRCOG are lucky to be receiving 1000-2000. Essentially, the two are being considered as one mass vaccination site, she said. Rogers, Incident Commander for the clinics, noted that her multi-agency team is distributing dosages as equitably (by population size) as possible across the area--barring Wendell, New Salem, and Orange, which are being served through a clinic run by the Town of Orange. With the goal of hosting clinics within 15 minutes driving time of targeted residents, sites include: Treehouse Brewing/Deerfield; Mohawk Trail Regional School/Buckland; Kringle Candle/Bernardston; Franklin Regional Technical School/Montague; and the John Zon Community Center/Greenfield, and will administer both first and second doses of the Moderna vaccine. These sites will be operational through Phase III, if needed, though by that time, private practices and pharmacies may be able to meet demand from the general public, she added. There was discussion regarding the potential re-distribution of doses based on usage, and attendees agreed to share accordingly, perhaps directing extra supply to Deerfield. Rogers indicated that exact allotments will not be known until Friday, and that specific clinic dates will be determined by and announced on Friday via her weekly situation report. The City of Greenfield continues its successful operation at the John Zon Community Center, currently vaccinating residents 75+ with their first doses, as well as first-responders with their second doses; LifePath continues to offer valuable support to the former group in scheduling appointments via the PrepMod software. White expressed her gratitude for the enormous endeavor undertaken by Rogers, as well as the work of the Medical Reserve Corps to ready volunteers, LifePath and other community organizations, and local government officials. She reviewed specifics regarding the availability, ordering and delivery of vaccine allocations to the region, as well as the logistics and timing of the appointment sign-up process for those 75+ and their accompanying caregivers.

### **Public Health Nursing Report & COVID Cases**

Zamojski reported a decline in COVID cases – currently 19 in the CPHS district – and a lessening of the contact tracing workload, but indicated that a particular cluster of new cases in Deerfield may prompt another increase in the coming days. Walker thanked Crochier and Danek Burke for joining in the contact tracing, which has allowed White and Wroblewski to focus on vaccination efforts. Martin-Anzuoni and others indicated that they have heard positive feedback from patients in their communities regarding the support provided by CPHS staff members.

### **Health Agents Report**

Crochier reported that he and Danek Burke continue to investigate occasional COVID-related complaints about local businesses; work with Buckland and Gill on their abandoned housing efforts; and perform Title 5 inspections. He reported that the new certification of short-term rental properties is progressing well, and that he hopes to offer food certification classes in 2021. Regarding contact tracing, he noted that many cases involve patients' employers, and that maintaining confidentiality is both tricky and important.

### **Co-Chair Selection for 2021**

Martin-Anzuoni made a motion to nominate and elect Taft-Ferguson and Telling as co-chairs for 2021; Kelter seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **FRCOG Fiscal and Grant Report**

Walker thanked members for returning CARES Act MOUs between CPHS and individual towns, and noted that FRCOG is working its way through the last of four rounds of Influenza and COVID vaccination planning funding, and is close to spending the last of what the state has provided for COVID response. She noted that CPHS is in good shape financially, however, especially if COVID cases continue to decline. A great deal of federal funding has come to the state, but has not yet reached local BOHs, she added, and mentioned that while FRCOG receives \$90 for every vaccine it administers, that reimbursement falls far short of the cost.

Walker announced a potential source of future funding from the state – from \$150,000 - \$300,000 annually – to develop, improve and professionalize public health districts. MA, one of the few states that doesn't fund or regulate local public health staff, has seen the effects of this paucity in addressing the pandemic, and is now eager to act. Brainstorming ways this funding might be used to improve CPHS, attendee suggestions included:

- Adding a second full-time public health nurse
- Hiring a community health worker dedicated to connecting residents with resources (addiction recovery support, fuel assistance programs, etc.)
- Employing a housing support officer
- Funding a Health Director position (Walker's work in this role is not covered in the CPHS budget, but is currently being subsidized by FRCOG; further, succession planning should be considered.)
- Adding additional staff/hours for all types of inspections, and investing in better permitting & inspection-tracking software
- Dedicating staff time to age-friendly planning and outreach
- Hiring a nurse-educator specialist to conduct programming, including support groups, pertaining to COPD, asthma, diabetes, emphysema, and other chronic diseases.
- Offer more ServSafe courses
- Increase involvement in insect-borne prevention efforts, possibly enrolling all towns in the existing mosquito control district, which has been effective in the southern part of the county
- Enhancing the training and professionalization of board of health members

- Advocating for access to healthcare in rural communities with older populations/supporting the recruitment of medical professionals to the region
- Facilitating the adoption of tele-health software and services
- Growing the vaccination program through the addition of programs for shingles, tetanus, pneumonia, etc.
- Enhancing the communication of public health messaging in the region

Walker asked attendees to consider whether or not they want to invite other area towns into the district. She will seek responses and additional ideas via an on-line survey, and will prepare and application for CPHS OB review (at a short meeting, most likely) prior to submitting it.

There was further discussion regarding access to care. Walker is hopeful that the medical-student residency program under development at Baystate Franklin will result in these (10/cohort) young professionals' active engagement in our communities. Kelter noted that CHCFC is actively growing and planning to meet this need. Page emphasized that BFMC should be leading the charge for increased access and recruitment. Martin-Anzuoni suggested educational loan forgiveness as a recruitment tool.

### **Member Updates**

Colrain is grateful for CPHS staff managing COVID cases; firefighters are delivering groceries to patients that are isolating and quarantined; the BOH seeks examples of policies pertaining to Town employee sickness.

Shelburne is focused on outreach to help 75+ year old residents sign up for vaccination appointments; BOH is working with the senior center to dispel confusion regarding vaccine access and eligibility.

Leyden is struggling to find effective ways to communicate with its vaccine-eligible residents; BOH members have been calling them individually.

Bernardston has begun weekly robo-call messaging, and is benefitting from the work of its pro-active Council on Aging. The BOH was grateful to be able to refer a mask-violation issue to Crochier.

Rowe's COVID task force continues to meet weekly, and has issued 54 robo-calls since last February. The town nurse is working with 75+ population to schedule vaccination appointments. Rowe's elementary school is the only one in the county to have remained open throughout the pandemic thus far; Crochier reported having observed great compliance during a recent site visit.

Heath BOH members are also calling senior citizens to offer help making vaccination appointments; most are interested.

Conway will be mailing a postcard with vaccine-related information and instruction to all households.

Erving's EMD has discouraged the BOH from using the Reverse 911 system, as non-emergency calls prompt many people to opt-out of the alert system; they are convening a weekly group to consider alternative means of communication.

Deerfield will be holding indoor vaccination clinics beginning next week, and hopes to switch to a drive-through site in six weeks.

Charlemont has been investigating complaints about a business' COVID precaution compliance, working with the emergency management team to identify shut-ins, and hoping to avoid the use of non-emergency robo-calls in order to preclude attrition.

Buckland addressed a couple of COVID cases at its weekly task force meeting Monday and BOH meeting Tuesday. The BOH continues to work on a growing list of abandoned housing.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.