

Sacramento County Public Health Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2020, 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Meeting Location

Zoom Meeting (Open to the Public)

Moderator:

Dr. Farla Kaufman

Scribes:

Steven Orkand

Board Attendees:

Jennifer Anderson, Jofil Borja, Paula Green, Steve Heath, Olivia Kasirye (ex-officio), Farla Kaufman, Steven Orkand, Sonal Patel, Jeff Rabinovitz, Christina Slee, Annie Tat, Kathleen Wright

Guests:

Peter Beilenson, Gail Brosnan, Carol Maytum, Danica Peters, Elisa Tong, Kim Vagador

Board Members Excused:

Sandy Damiano (ex-officio), Barbara Law, Emanuel Petrisor, Phil Summers, Jack Zwald

Meeting Opened:

12:03 PM

Welcome and Introductions:

Dr. Kaufman welcomed PHAB members and guests. There are no vacancies on PHAB.

Review of Minutes:

The Minutes of the June meeting were approved as submitted, with one abstention

Candidates for HIV Health Services Planning Council

Candidates for the HIV Health Services Planning Council were presented:

Ronnie Miranda to Seat Number 41
Steve Austin to Seat Number 42
Larry Dyer to Seat Number 44
Derek Purol to Seat Number 20

There was no discussion. The candidates were approved.

Health Services Update

Dr. Peter Beilenson, Director of Health Care Services, reported on recent updates. Beginning in August, in coordination with the Sacramento County Office of Education, there will be mental health providers in 11 schools. These will be Social Workers hired by the County and working with mental health staff from the Division of Behavioral Health. The goal is to eventually have mental health providers in each school.

Legislation to address problems with Geographic Managed Care (GMC), carried by Dr. Pan (SB 1029), is currently working its way through the State Senate, and will go to the Assembly and then the Governor. This legislation will establish a health authority that will be able to make binding recommendations to the State regarding whether individual health plans may serve as providers in the various counties. It will hold the plans responsible for quality and patient satisfaction. This will improve accountability and will make it possible to have 2-plan programs in some of the counties.

News about COVID-19: There have been 4776 cases in Sacramento County. There are currently 140 hospitalizations, 41 in ICUs, and there have been 78 deaths. 1000 cases have been reported in the last week. Why? There is a lot more testing than before, now about 18,000 per week. The positivity rate has increased, indicating that there are more new cases. To date, about 10% of the population has been tested. There are several testing venues, including the Cal Expo drive through. UC Davis has been very active as a testing partner, but the national supply chain has dried up. Several testing sites have had to close down. The National Guard will arrange some pop up testing sites. Many asymptomatic people have been tested, an important way to detect unexpected spreaders. Contact tracing was ramped up, but has been overwhelmed. The vast majority of cases are now younger than 40, and many are Latinx, soon to be the plurality of total cases. The source, formerly congregate care facilities, is often now family gatherings, migrant workers, day laborers, service jobs, etc.

The County is maintaining a dash board of COVID-19 cases, so data is available. The goal for the July 4 weekend was for people to forego large gatherings. We won't know the result of this for a couple of weeks.

Dr. Beilenson has been to huge numbers of Zoom and other meetings. He's met with owners of gyms, restaurants, and other small businesses. He and Dr. Kasirye have met with diverse population groups in an effort to communicate the message. Unfortunately, people are suffering message fatigue and have cabin fatigue, but they still need to curtail travel, continue limiting exposures. Masks should be used. Keep social distance and hand washing remain important.

Steve Orkand asked about the County's efforts to reach younger citizens. Dr. Beilenson has been interviewed by media, often 2-3 times per day. Steve asked about outreach to rock or rap radio stations, more often frequented by younger people and social groups. Dr. Kasirye added that social media have been utilized.

Jeff Rabinovitz wondered if we should present a more forceful, parental message. Dr. Beilenson noted that there is already a mask mandate, and that it has made a difference. Dr. Beilenson has been to many businesses, checking if they are following guidelines. He recently got Crunch Fitness to change their mask rule. Yolo County has done some enforcement of the mask mandate. It is difficult to enforce.

Jofil Borja noted that Yolo County will levy a \$10,000 fine against businesses that don't enforce the mask ordinance. Dr. Beilenson is considering financial fines, but feels that \$10,000 is excessive and unnecessary.

Dr. Beilenson mentioned that the County is hiring re-opening navigators, about 25 individuals, who will teach small and medium businesses how to re-open safely. They will focus on minority-owned businesses. The goal will be to educate first, then enforce. They will teach more practical detail than just masks and distancing. the County has also trained about 40 contract investigators as well as many contract tracers. They are being trained by the State and by Sierra Health Foundation. There should be over 100 in preparation for a significant increase in upcoming weeks.

All 13 school districts have been working closely with Public Health and the Sacramento County Office of Education to devise re-opening strategies. They plan to cohort the children, asking different groups to come at different times. With the lack of testing availability, it will be difficult to make testing available to the schools. This will hamper reopening plans. Even the commercial labs are unable to expand testing to appropriate levels.

Dr. Rabinovitz asked about the upcoming influenza season. Dr. Beilenson stressed the importance of having flu shots. This will decrease the numbers of people with COVID-like symptoms, and decrease the numbers of people who end up at the hospital for flu. There will be a massive campaign to convince people to have their shots.

Public Health Update: Dr. Kasirye reported on current activities in her Division. Public Health has been

busy trying to ramp up testing and maintaining the Public Health Lab. The drive-through site was at high capacity (300-400 appointments per day) and reservations were quickly taken. Testing at the Jail has supported efforts to control cases there. Several people have been identified on entry, which allowed them to be quarantined. There have also been efforts to screen the homeless when they are being housed. First responders, including law enforcement, have been tested. Another large area of work has been contact investigation and contact tracing. The former is done by a nurse, who contacts people who have tested positive, to establish where they may have contracted the infection, and to whom they may have spread the infection. Contact tracers will then try to contact those potentially infected. The recent surge has overwhelmed current resources, which has required some prioritization. There has been a focus on the Latinx population. Many are day laborers and are difficult to reach. They often live in large, cramped households, making isolation difficult. They also can't afford to take time off for quarantine. Public Health has been working with Environmental Management to make State guidelines more useful.

The State monitors each County and keeps a "watch list" of those that don't meet infection control criteria. Sacramento has had to close some businesses that had reopened. Dr. Kasirye issued a new order, and we're hoping this will turn the tide. Young adults, ages 18-49, and Hispanics constitute most of the new cases. Public Health has focused on high risk businesses and is considering enforcement efforts. This might include pulling the licenses of certain businesses.

School opening is the cause of anxiety. All the systems are considering hybrid models.

Steve Orkand suggested that there might be face mask contests. Or perhaps sports figures would be willing to sign designer masks. Farla suggested that other public leaders might be enrolled to spread the safety message.

Dr. Kasirye did express some concern, since there is more community spread, that cases be brought into the congregate care facilities again. The current lack of testing will make it very difficult to trace new cases. Dr. Beilenson discussed some of the problems with the testing supply line.

Jennifer Anderson asked about the hospitals' capacity to expand workforce. Dr. Kasirye stated that the hospitals feel comfortable with their surge capacity. They have been able to monitor their staff more closely. Improved treatment (remdesivir, higher flow oxygen, steroids) and decreased age of patients has helped keep the ICU census down.

Jofil Borja asked what PHAB can do to help. Dr. Beilenson asked if we could help reach the under-30 crowd.

PHAB Activity in the Time of COVID

Jeff Rabinovitz suggested that we change from a “Don’t, don’t, don’t” message.

Annie Tat would like to help broaden the public health message to the younger population cohort. She suggested that Instagram would be a more appropriate messaging platform than Facebook. Jofil volunteered to reach out to the Kings, cheerleaders, Sacramento Republic FC, etc. Annie will join him. There has been outreach to the Spanish-speaking media. Dr. Beilenson hopes that Jofil and Annie can come up with an event that reaches the younger public.

Tobacco Control Coalition Letter

Carol Maytum, Chair of the Tobacco Control Coalition, spoke about a letter addressed by the TCC to the Rancho Cordova City Council. The letter had been attached to our agenda. The TCC has been active for many years addressing tobacco control policy in the County and incorporated cities. She spoke about a teenager, age 14, who was apprehended and “roughed up” by the Rancho Cordova police because he possessed a Swisher Sweet, a small cigar. The State of California’s laws on tobacco control no longer criminalize possession by a minor, but Rancho Cordova’s regulations continue to include that language. Carol stressed that the enforcement focus should be on those who sell or give tobacco products to underage youth, not on the youth themselves who have typically been subject to intense illegal advertising from the tobacco industry. In response to this incident, the TCC composed a letter requesting that the RC City Council change their regulations. The wording of the letter has been modified to address concerns raised by Public Health. Carol hoped that PHAB would endorse the letter. At a later time, Carol would also like to raise the issue of whether the TCC should be “independent” from PHAB.

Kim Homer Vagadori, Vice-Chair of the TCC spoke. She works on Statewide tobacco control issues. She notes that multiple jurisdictions around the State have worked to modify the language of their tobacco control regulations regarding youth possession. Rancho Cordova had already started in the process of modifying their regulations regarding flavored tobacco products. The TCC would like the RC City Council to address the issue of criminalization for youth possession, advocating that they should bring their code into line with State regulations.

Steve Orkand moved that PHAB endorse the letter signed by the TCC. Annie Tat seconded the motion. Several members spoke in support or in opposition of the letter. The motion carried with ten ayes, one nay. Farla Kaufman will co-sign the letter.

Public Comment:

Elisa Tong noted that she added the following to the Zoom chat:

“FYI below is info from California Tobacco Control Program's media outreach about risks of smoking/vaping and COVID. Also, the California Smokers' Helpline has free nicotine patches mailed home to callers (limited time offer from my trdrp grant; maybe 3 more months) - Sac County has had 207 people benefit to date.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CTCB/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>”

Adjournment:

Dr. Kaufman adjourned the meeting at 1:33 pm.

Submitted by Steven Orkand, Scribe