



DELAWARE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

99 MAIN STREET, DELHI, NEW YORK 13753

Amanda Walsh, MPH Public Health Director

607-832-5200 Fax 607-832-6021

Early Intervention & Preschool Fax: 607-832-6022

Health Services Advisory Board Minutes

Meeting Date/Time:	September 16, 2021 10:15am	
Attendees/Title:		
Joseph Cetta, Town of Walton Supervisor	Arthur Merrill, Town of Colchester Supervisor	
Dr. Rohan Jayasena, Medical Director	Wayne Marshfield, Town of Hamden Supervisor	
Terry Whitney, Office of the Aging	Edward Bartos, District Office	
Amanda Walsh, Public Health Director	Christina Gardner, Accounting Supervisor	

Topic:	Discussion:	Action:
Environmental Health Update	Environmental staff are still involved in COVID response but not nearly as much as prior to the NYS executive orders being retired. Still providing a lot of COVID guidance but not as much COVID compliance enforcement. This summer brought some camp COVID outbreaks but there were zero additional non-covid outbreaks at Delaware County camps this summer. The Ononta District office has a couple of positions they are trying to fill including one principal sanitarian and two sanitarians. Once these positions can be filled the Lead program staff person can focus entirely on the Lead program which will help to close out and catch up many Lead cases. A new clerical support staff member was hired. The District Office is working with the water supply program and new state mandates regarding water supply sampling. This program is always evolving. A junior engineer who was hired in April 2020 just left a couple of weeks ago. Hoping to hire more engineers for this program soon. In response to Wayne, Ed stated that their telecommuting policy ended as of September 7 th but some staff can telecommute 50% of the time upon request.	
Approval of Minutes	The June 17, 2021 minutes were approved as written.	
Staffing/Authorization to Fill	We currently have approximately 4x as many cases as this we did this time last year. In 2020, we hired per diem RNs to assist with the COVID caseload but some of these per diems have returned to full-time work and have less hours available to work with us. The NYS	



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	<p>contact tracing staff have been downsized and can only complete 15 cases each day when we are receiving 40-45 cases each day. Currently our programs that were on hold during the majority of 2020 are operational again and our full time staff have less time to work on COVID activities. We are in need of additional staff to complete all of the required work. We have advertised for more per diem RN positions but have not received any applications. We would like to hire 3 per diem LPNs to help with COVID activities. We have received additional grants that will cover new staff salaries. Committee approved Authorization to Fill for 3 per diem LPN positions.</p> <p>NYS has provided local health departments fellowship funding to hire staff to increase Public Health infrastructure. Delaware County has received funds to hire three undergraduate fellows and one graduate fellow but has not received any applications for these fellow positions to date. NYS is also asking that we hire a coordinator for these fellow positions. We plan to use a vacant position, revise the position description and duties statement to a Health Education Coordinator to meet some of our current needs and accommodate the fellowship coordinator requirement for the grant funds. Committee approved the resolution to accept the fellowship grant funding.</p> <p>Our Speech Language Pathologist resigned in August. A permanent part-time position is being promoted both locally and to outside areas. We have not received any applications to date.</p> <p>One of our largest concerns is preventing burnout within our current staff.</p>	
<p>COVID Update</p>	<p>Positivity rate is currently 9.98%. From Monday to Wednesday this week we received 59 new cases. Currently there are 369 people in quarantine. Currently 85% of active cases are unvaccinated people. Previous variants of COVID trended wth one positive case typically infecting 1-2 people and the newer variants of COVID are highly transmissible with a single positive case infecting far more individuals in a short time. Vaccine is preventing severe illness. Fully vaccinated, asymptomatic people are not subject to quarantine under the new guidelines.</p>	



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New school guidelines regarding masks and spacing are allowing schools to remain open and cutting down on number of students requiring quarantine. Schools will begin to test unvaccinated staff per the NYS requirement. Schools have been provided with guidelines and a rubric related to quarantine criteria and have been doing a great job with completing contact tracing.

In public settings, worksites, businesses, schools, etc., the layered approach is still recommended for limiting disease transmission. This includes, distancing, masking, illness policies, vaccination. It is all of these layers that prevents the spread of COVID and other illnesses.

Art Merrill inquired about vaccination percentages by age groups. The state only separates out vaccination percentages by 18+ and 65+. Art commented that without the state mandate requiring masks people unvaccinated or not are taking advantage of not wearing their mask. The local health department recommends wearing masks in indoor public settings, but they cannot mandate this themselves. A mandate would need to come from Delaware County. Wayne inquired about getting pneumonia (bacterial) from wearing masks. This can happen from wearing the same mask without properly cleaning or disposing of masks. Some people are experiencing skin issues from wearing masks as they hold in humidity.

Delaware County has not yet reached a 50% vaccination rate. This is concerning as we enter into the fall/winter season.

Social media and the spread of misinformation has created many challenges to local health departments and scientific and medical based resource agencies to getting correct information out to the public. Political discourse has not helped.

Currently we are sending our local dashboard of statistical information out to the public three times weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



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	<p>The NYS campaign to promote COVID booster vaccinations starts next week. Immunocompromised individuals can receive a full 3rd dose of vaccine, now. These vaccinations are typically happening at pharmacies and physician offices which is the best setting for this population as bringing vulnerable, immunocompromised individuals to a larger clinic setting is not ideal in limiting potential exposure. There are a lot of seniors who are anxiously awaiting their booster shots. We are waiting for the NYS campaign and official eligibility criteria for booster vaccinations. As the eligibility criteria is released we will update our vaccination information line and provide the information on social media, our website and other local media. We will be holding vaccination clinics beginning in October. The majority of the public will be eligible for the booster dose between October and March which is also our busiest time for COVID case investigations and contact tracing.</p>	
<p>Public Health Program Updates</p>	<p>We held limited rabies clinics this year and anticipate that next year will be similar as we have very few veterinarians who serve Delaware County and even fewer who are willing to contract to work at rabies clinics. Even with the limited clinics we provided a decent number of vaccinations for the 2021 clinic season. There were 246 bite reports this year to date. There has been an increase in bat exposures (77), most of these were in Walton/Delhi/Sidney/Franklin. 30 individuals received PEP treatment to date.</p> <p>Early Intervention received 79 referrals this year to date. Currently there are 78 children enrolled in EI, this is low for EI and may be partially due to backlogged evaluations and some families nervous regarding COVID protocols. and waiting to start services. EI currently has 13 children who are waiting for services.</p> <p>The Preschool program has 53 children, 27 of whom are receiving center-based services. We have more parents opting to transport their children to preschool centers as opposed to utilizing public transportation and this is largely due to COVID concerns. Preschool currently has 8 children who are waiting for services.</p>	



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	<p>Communicable Disease - Excluding COVID, we have seen a lot of tick borne illness as there have been a high number of ticks this year. The typical GI illness were reported without any major outbreaks. Flu reports overall were lower.</p> <p>Lead case management continues to be provided. Coordination with the Oneonta District Office occurs routinely, lead risk assessments are conducted and families are provided with information about nutrition, cleaning and other lead resources.</p> <p>The Opioid grant program is circulating harm reduction kits. Local EMS agencies will assist with obtaining definitive local data regarding EMS calls. The program has been working to create videos highlighting local substance use prevention and treatment resources and promote to the community.</p>	
Quality Assurance / Incident Reports	Mandy reviewed the 2 nd quarter 2021 incident reports and QA report. Report approved by committee.	
Approval of Policies	Policies will be sent to Dr. Jayasena and approved via email at later date.	This will occur in December 2021
Fiscal Report	Fiscal report has not been prepared. Fiscal reporting remains back logged and are working on April-June grants and state aid. 2022	
Resolutions/Equipment Authorization	<p>The following resolutions and equipment authorization were approved by committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolution to receive COVID vaccine response grant funds.• Resolution to transfer funds into Substance Abuse Outreach and Education.• Resolution to transfer funds into Children with Special Healthcare Needs Outreach and Education.• Resolution to transfer funds into Immunization supplies medical.• Resolution and equipment authorization to transfer funds and purchase ultra-cold vaccine freezer.	
Billing/Compliance	We have a contracted provider who has been delinquent with submitting her billing through the CPSE Portal software for the Preschool program. We began using this new Portal	



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	<p>software last year. The software will not allow any billing to be submitted that is NOT signed within 45 days of service. This follows Medicaid billing standards. Specific billing requirements are listed in all preschool provider contracts. This provider has not submitted her billing from January-June. This person did not contact the Agency during January – June with billing concerns or delays and this person has asked for payment but acknowledges delinquent billing. Committee agreed that we should not pay for these delinquent services.</p>	
Recognition of Staff	The recognition of staff and partners at the September board meeting will need to be postponed to a later date.	
Meeting Adjourned at: 11:59am		

Respectfully Submitted By,

Amanda Walsh, MPH
Public Health Director