

A Special Board of Health meeting was held by Zoom April 19, 2021, at 11:00 a.m.

Board Members

Present: Donald Moore, Board President
Michael J. Nerenberg, Board Vice President
Ed Brown, City Council Member
Eileen Dennis, Board Member
Garrison Ortiz, County Commissioner

Legal Counsel: Cynthia Mitchell and Peter Blood, Assistant County Attorneys

Administrative Staff

Members Present: Randy Evetts, Public Health Director
Katie Davis, Deputy Director
Georgia Alfonso, Budget and Finance Director
Maria Telfer, Community Health Services Division

Staff Members: Vicki Carlton, Justin Gage, Sarah Joseph, Audra LeTurgez, Aaron Martinez, Alicia Solis, Dee Speier, Chad Wolgram

Guests:

- Mike Cafasso, *CEO St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center*
- Eppie Griego, *Pueblo County Commissioner*
- Zach Hillstrom, *The Pueblo Chieftain*
- Adam Uhernik, *Pueblo County Public Information Officer*
- Carl Winder, *KOAA News*

A. **Call to Order and Approve or Make Changes to the Agenda**

Board President, Donald Moore, called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the Agenda.

MOVED by Eileen Dennis, seconded by Garrison Ortiz, to approve the Agenda.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. **Public Health Order (PHO) - Local COVID-19 Restrictions**

Board President Donald Moore provided a summary of the current vaccination rates in Pueblo County compared to national statistics and a brief history of the PHO adopted by the Board of Health last week and the subsequent updates to the state PHO on April 15, 2021. The new state PHO 20-38 made changes that were not in alignment with the PHO the Board adopted and therefore the Pueblo County PHO has been amended along with a simplified dial for discussion.

Assistant county attorney Cynthia Mitchell reviewed the necessary amendments to the PHO adopted by the Board April 13, 2021. Cynthia noted Pueblo County's metrics are currently aligned with level yellow on the dial. Public Health Director Randy Evetts reviewed the proposed simplified dial framework. Randy noted the dial framework is meant as a guideline and the most important metric is hospitalizations. Randy also noted as immunization percentages increase across the county, the metrics can be revised. He stated there are five levels to the dial; red, orange, yellow, blue, and clear/monitoring. Randy did state 5-Star certified businesses do have increased capacity and are not as restricted as other businesses on the 'yellow' dial.

Board member Garrison Ortiz noted there has been misinformation in the media lately about Pueblo County. Pueblo County is starting to open up; in fact, more 5-Star certified businesses are opening up at 100 percent capacity while adhering to the 5-Star regulations. Pueblo County is no longer 'an island by ourselves in a category.' Pueblo is similar to other counties across the state, that has some local framework or structure in place. This structure has been simplified for the general public to understand and also be enforceable. Hospitalization rates will drive decision making at the local level. Garrison gave an example stating back In September, as Pueblo County's numbers increased severely, hospital capacity was very limited and other healthcare needs outside of COVID-19 could not be addressed. The County continues to adjust based on the state orders and mandates. The County does and does not have full control over local restrictions. For example, the state mask mandate has been extended until the month of May, 2021. The state also has a 'snap back' provision in place meaning, if things get critical,

the state can take back full control at any given time. Garrison stated it is important this is a very measured and balanced approach at a local level, and everyone needs to ensure the local healthcare system is not overburdened. Garrison stated it is important to encourage people to get vaccinated in Pueblo County, as COVID-19 rates are increasing.

Mike Nerenberg stated last week Parkview Medical Center had approximately 25 COVID-19 patients in house, but the hospital was full overall with patients who had other medical needs. He also cautioned to be careful about 'opening up' to avoid overwhelming local hospitals. Donald Moore stated this sentiment was included in the discussion and planning for this recommended revised and simplified dial. Mike Nerenberg commented it will become increasingly difficult to persuade people to get their COVID-19 shot, if they have not already done so. He suggested we must all work within our respective circles to encourage people to get receive the COVID-19 shot.

Eileen Dennis emphasized the need to make a positive statement to the community about receiving the COVID-19 shot. She stated people need to be encouraged to get their shot in a positive way.

Randy Evetts noted with FEMA manning the mass vaccination site in Pueblo County, Pueblo could be the first community in the state to reach the 70 percent vaccination mark. Eileen Dennis stated people love competition and this could be a good goal to make public. Donald Moore commended FEMA on its efforts and its collaborative spirit. Board member Ed Brown also commented on FEMA and the good work they are doing to try to get people vaccinated.

Board President Donald Moore asked for any additional comments from those in attendance.

Mike Cafasso, CEO at St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center stated Centura is providing 50 percent of the support behind the scenes at the FEMA site. FEMA is also gathering good data in the process. Michael Nerenberg asked if Centura can break down the data by neighborhood to help identify areas where vaccination participation is low; Mike Cafasso agreed to look into this.

MOVED by Michael Nerenberg, seconded by Ed Brown, to approve the amended Pueblo County Public Health Order and COVID-19 Dial as recommended by Public Health Director Randy Evetts.

The next regular BOH meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28, 2021, at 12:00 noon by Zoom.

MOVED by Eileen Dennis, seconded by Ed Brown, to adjourn the Special Board of Health meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Donald Moore, Board of Health President



Randy Evetts, MPA, Public Health Director