

Board of Health AGENDA

NOTICE REGARDING COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus): To adhere to COVID-19 social distancing precautions, all on-site public Board of Health meetings are postponed until further notice. To allow access to this meeting, and future Board of Health meetings, call 719-583-4513 for more information. The public may make any public comments by email to Executive Assistant Ramona Chisman-Ewing, at mona.ewing@pueblocounty.us.

The Board of Health meeting will be held **Friday, February 25, 2022, at 9:00 AM by Zoom**

- A. 9:00 - 9:03 a.m. – Call to Order and Approval / Changes to Agenda **(Action Required)**
- B. 9:03 - 9:05 a.m. – Approval of Board of Health Meeting Minutes held **January 26, 2022 (Action Required)**
- C. 9:10 – 9:20 a.m. – **Public Forum**
- D. 9:20 – 9:25 a.m. – **Election of Officers (Action Item)**
- E. 9:25 - 9:40 a.m.- **Budget and Finance- Georgia Alfonso**
 - Monthly Financial Report **(Action Item)**
 - Contracts **(Action Item)**
- F. 9:40 – 10:00 a.m. – **COVID RESPONSE**
 - Public Health Order- Data Review and Recommendations
 - Testing and Vaccine Updates
- G. 10:00 -10:30 a.m. – **BOH Updates/ Reports**
 - Public Health Director Report – Randy Evetts
 - Countywide Substance Use Planning Process – Shylo Dennison

ADJOURN



The Board of Health meeting was held by Zoom January 26, 2022, at 12:00 noon.

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: Marci Day, Assistant County Attorney

Administrative Staff

Members Present: Randy Evetts, Public Health Director
Katie Davis, Deputy Director
Georgia Alfonso, Budget and Finance Director
Jody Carrillo, Environmental Health and Emergency Preparedness Division Director
Denise DeNardo, Human Resources
Maria Telfer, Community Health Services Division Director
Ramona Chisman-Ewing, Executive Assistant

Medical Officer: Christopher Urbina, MD

Staff Members: Vicki Carlton, Eleanor Cassio, Brian Comfort, Denise DeNardo, Justin Gage, Chelsea Hollowell, Sarah Joseph, Aaron Martinez, Toni Ousley, Alicia Solis, Kim Sugar, Zak Van Ooyen, Chad Wolgram, Hannah Kochen

Guests: Michael Bayer, Carolyn Bedingfield, Rhonda Berry, Andy Burns, J. Christenson, Cindy Compton, Matthew Cranswick, Phillip Davis, Chris DeLuca, Collette Ferguson, Stephanie Garcia Adrienne Graham, Siu Grant, Valerie Harrington, Cathy Howland, Beth Lancaster, Joy and Ryan Lundquist, Tanya Mcclintok, Joshua Miller, Guy Monighetti, Anne Ochs, Sean Rice, KRDO, Debra Ross, Meral Sarper, Todd Seip, Carrie West, Mary Wietzke, A.J. Wilson, and Tim Yates

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 as presented.

MOVED by Garrison Ortiz , seconded by Michael Nerenberg, to approve the Agenda.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. **Approval of Minutes**

MOVED by Eileen Dennis, seconded by Michael Nerenberg, to approve the December 22, 2021, BOH meeting minutes as submitted.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

C. **Public Forum Summary**

Name	Topic of Discussion
Matthew Cranswick, PhD	Revised Public Health Order for K-12
<p>Comments: Matthew Cranswick responded to some arguments stated at the December 22, 2021, BOH meeting. Matthew stated data presented at the meeting highlighted the fact disruption to school attendance was lessened thanks to the current PHO thereby reducing negative impact to our economy. Some argue masks don't stop an increase in cases, yet they do reduce the spread of the virus and minimizes the number of cases which lessens the burden on the public health care system. KKTV reported on January 24, 2022, Colorado is currently seeing the highest rate of pediatrics hospitalizations, due to COVID-19 since the pandemic began. Many cases are children too young to be vaccinated. It is critical to protect this population by ensuring the current PHO continues. How can an organization (PDPHE) that has a mask mandate in place for staff members in good conscience recommend pre-K – 12 students be given the option to wear a mask? This population has a low vaccination rate. Matthew urged the Board to critically evaluate all information to make ethical and evidence-based decisions, not political ones and be proactive in the projected increases in cases and not celebrate short-lived decreases. He implored the Board to rely on the data and act with sound judgement to protect the health of those they serve.</p>	
Tanya McClintock	Masks, Mandates
<p>Comments: Tanya thanked the Board of honoring our constitutional right to freedom of speech. Mask wearing has little to no effect of stopping the transmission of the virus. Mask mandates for our children and our communities are based on false science. There are many debilitating factors that come from mask wearing on a consistent daily basis. According to child psychologists, masks are one of the most intrusive, dehumanizing and neurologically damaging actions we've put into place. Continual mask wearing is absolutely destructive to the development of an adolescent's brain. The only way to develop empathy, facial recognition, emotional expression, word production is from listening to others and reading their faces. When speaking with masks on, voices are muffled, and you can't hear well. The ability to develop language acquisition, the ability to put words with emotions is completely blocked if your mouth is covered. How are children supposed to learn if we are always teaching and communicating with masks on? We are transferring the fear and anxiety in adults to our children. This is irresponsible and child abuse. Our government is taking control of our children. This is unethical and an intrusion on the parent/child relationship. I propose we chose love and freedom and not fear and control.</p>	
Meral Sarper	Mask mandates
<p>Comments: Meral noted as a teacher she is seeing the impact of the mask mandate on children. Younger children are not wearing masks effectively. She asked the Board to consider an amendment to remove the mandate for younger children. Masks can cause bacterial pneumonia and much more. In May 2021, CDC did a study of COVID transmission in American schools and reported masking unvaccinated teachers and improving ventilation, resulted in a lower incident of the virus in schools. These are common sense measures. Classroom barriers and further distancing and requiring student masking, were not found to have a statistically significant benefit. This whole issue is so heated, it is hard to have a coherent, balanced conversation. If I am sick, it might make sense for me to wear a mask, if I am actively coughing, have symptoms and have to go out for some reason. The last two years have been a blessing because students are staying home when they are sick. I hope you consider having shorter quarantine times in your vote today just based on symptoms clearing up because students know when they are well enough to come back.</p>	
Joy Lundquist	Masks in school
<p>Comments: Today I would like to set the record straight. Contrary to what you claim, your mask mandate and COVID protocols, have kept kids out of school, sports, libraries, family functions and out of society. You claim this is to protect and benefit our kids. I hold you responsible for soaring levels of depression, anxiety, teacher burnout and endless job openings. You are responsible for staff shortages, closing our schools down, and for this war on our kids. You formed your protocol based largely on the senior population; you have burdened kids to protect our society from a virus that poses almost zero threat to them. You now have an obligation to prove the last two years of mandates have worked. You are obliged to give us facts that masking our children has protected them. The time has come to stop the intense mitigation policies that haven't and won't work. You are also burdened to prove your quarantining success. You have held my children hostage, dictating they bow to your wishes or forfeit their education. You have tied the hands of doctors, districts, teachers, parents, and students. You social distancing, quarantining, and masking have caused far greater harm to kids than COVID ever could. Give kids back their freedom to live.</p>	

Beth Lancaster, DC	How masks affect a child's neurological development
Comments: I have quite a few patients who have withdrawn their kids from school because of the mask mandate, and I know we've had some decrease in enrollment. I've researched several sources and the neurological changes when you put a child in a mask. When you put a child in a mask, they know something is wrong, so it puts them into a state of fight or flight. Our state of fight or flight doesn't know the difference between a pandemic and a tiger or a gunman; we bathe the brain in adrenaline and cortisol. Kids IQ's, ability to learn, and immune system are diminished when they are in the fight or flight stage. New research states this also increases inflammation throughout the entire body. Masks decrease a child's ability to learn, literally lowering their IQ, causing inflammation in the entire body, and shutting down the immune system. Kids cognitive ability to learn is decreased. We are doing the opposite of increasing kids' ability to learn.	

D. **COVID Response**

Current COVID Updates and Public Health Order (PHO)

Public Health Director Randy Evetts gave a brief overview to the Board of the current PHO- Masks in Schools. The goal of the PHO is to keep children in school, reduce transmission, and protect capacity of hospitals. At the December 22, 2022, Board meeting, the Board voted to table the discussion of a revised order to see what would happen with the Omicron surge.

Director Evetts reviewed what has changed since the order was first put into place in August 2021:

- Vaccines are approved for children 5 and older and boosters are available for children aged 12 and up
- Children aged 5 to 11 who are moderately immunocompromised can get a third dose of vaccine
- Vaccine for children 6 months to 5 years expected to be approved in February (Pfizer)
- CDC guidance for isolation and quarantine has been reduced to 5 days at home and then 5 days at school with a mask requirement. This reduced isolation and quarantine period signals a change in philosophy and level of concern

Randy also updated the Board about COVID-19 data today:

- Colorado has reached its peak in Omicron and numbers are improving daily
- Transmission is still at a severe level, but Pueblo County appears to be in a plateau
- Hospitalizations also appear to be at a plateau and are beginning to decrease across the state

Director Evetts presented his proposed revisions to the current PHO. He proposed to keep the current mask mandate, but within the order to give school districts options if they would like to manage mitigation differently from the mask requirements. These options would only be available if their respective Boards of Education or governing body choose the option by an official vote. The two options are:

- Option 1: Masks optional with mandatory symptom checking put into place for each student each day
- Option 2: The district, assumes responsibility and liability for mitigating and managing the COVID pandemic within their respective schools
- If the respective Board of Education does not vote to implement one of the two options presented, they are required to continue to implement the mask mandate as ordered

Randy explained with Option 2, the school district assumes responsibility for the following:

- Isolation of positive cases is still required; quarantine is still required for students who have exposure
- Regular data reporting to PDPHE required
- If 5% or more of the student body and/or staff at any school in the most recent 7-day period is COVID-19 positive, PDPHE may close the school for 14 days
- District is required to provide case and outbreak monitoring reporting required by CDPHE
- Vaccination, masking, and symptom checking strongly recommended especially for students and staff with special needs or chronic health conditions
- School District not precluded from future Public Health Orders or participation in other communicable disease prevention, investigation, isolation, or response (e.g. measles, flu, TB, etc.)

Director Evetts' final recommendation to the BOH:

- Revised order will set end date of May 30, 2022, and establishes the Board Of Health will review data monthly

- Order will maintain a mask mandate for all schools, but provides options within the PHO to either implement daily symptom checking or to assume responsibility and liability for mitigation and management of COVID in the schools
- School Districts must actively choose, by vote of their respective Boards of Education, to opt into either option
- PDPHE retains authority and responsibility to adopt rules consistent with the state, enforce isolation and quarantine, and close schools if necessary to protect public health
- Add benchmark of 80% vaccination for staff and students - school may then request exemption from the PHO
- The Health Department still retains its statutory responsibility and authority to take additional action or implement closures if transmission levels continue to increase and there is a threat to public health.
- If approved, the revised order will go into effect on January 27, 2022, and end no later than May 30, 2022

Director Evetts presented two communications from Districts 60 and 70. The first was a letter from the D60 Board of Education requesting to keep the Mask Mandate in place. The second communication from D70 was a draft plan for how they will develop a mitigation plan moving forward if the Board of Health approves the revised PHO. Director Evetts read the plan for developing a mitigation process to the Board of Health; some of the highlights are as follows:

- District 70 proposed it would convene a working committee to draft and present recommendations regarding COVID-19 policies and safeguards to the Pueblo D70 Board of Directors
- Committee would be appointed by the Board of Education and D70 Superintendent
- Committee would consist of teachers, staff, parents, administrators, and Board members
- The working committee will include members representative of each of the geographic regions of the District
- The working committee will meet immediately upon notice that the District's plan has been approved by the local public health authority

The working committee is tasked with the following:

- Understanding what safeguards and procedures the District currently uses in schools
- Soliciting input from key stakeholders
- Making a formal written recommendation to the Board regarding the District's response to COVID-19 no later than February 28, 2022
- If the recommendations are approved, the District will enter into a monitoring process to evaluate the success of the enacted policies
- The District will regularly communicate with the Board of Health regarding the plan's effectiveness.

Board members were asked for their input. Michael Nerenberg stated case rates have decreased, but he would have liked a few more days of data; he likes D70's proposal. He also stated as rates decrease and/or schools have zero cases, the opt out option could be considered. Nerenberg also stated this proposal requires close monitoring and trusting D70 to do the right thing. President Moore stated D70 represented to Director Evetts and him they would take care to protect students and staff members if the Board of Education chooses to opt out of the mask requirement. In the meetings with D70 officials, conversations have been earnest and frank, and the District seemed to be acting in good faith. Eileen Dennis stated she appreciates the work Randy put into the recommendation and that D70 stepped up to take on the responsibility and liability for the work they will be doing; a lot of progress has been made. Ed Brown concurred with the efforts made by everyone and he wants to be as safe as possible. Board President Donald Moore noted the Department has been served very well by Medical Officer Dr. Urbina and asked for his input. Dr. Urbina stated he also appreciates the hard work Director Evetts, and his team did to present the two options to the PHO. He believes there is solid science pertaining to the effectiveness of vaccines, masks, social distancing, handwashing, quarantine, and isolation processes to reduce the spread in the schools and the community. Dr. Urbina recommended leaving the PHO in place as is, with some modifications. He recommended not give schools the option to opt out stating the mask mandate is still important to give protection indoors. He agrees with the benchmark of 80 percent and vaccination for staff members and students, but he is concerned D70's School Board will not follow through with their proposal and the risks posed with making masks optional.

MOVED by Eileen Dennis, seconded by Michael Nerenberg to approve the revised PHO as presented by Director Evetts.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Roll call vote:

Donald Moore - Yes
Garrison Ortiz - Yes
Ed Brown - Yes
Eileen Dennis - Yes
Michael Nerenberg - Yes

E. **Other Action Items**

Financial and Contract Cost Reports

Financial reports for the end of December 2021, were presented to the Board. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$752,363.64, due to additional funding received and position vacancies.

MOVED by Michael Nerenberg, seconded by Eileen Dennis, to accept the financials as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CONTRACTS:

Office of Justice Programs (OJP) 10/01/2021 – 9/30/2024 \$899,280

A grant from the Office of Justice Programs has been awarded to PDPHE. This grant supports continued data collection, analysis, and disseminate to partners working to reduce the substance use burden in Pueblo County. Legal review has been completed and Board of Health approval is required. Even though the contract was scheduled to start October 1, 2021, the Department did not receive the award letter until December 23, 2021. The anticipated start date of the program is February 1, 2022. (Award Number 15PBJA-21-GG-04561-COAP).

President Moore asked if the grant provides indirect funding; Budget and Finance Director Georgia Alfonso replied yes.

MOVED by Michael Nerenberg, seconded by Ed Brown, to accept the above contract as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

INFORMATION ON OTHER CONTRACTS OR FUNDING. NO BOH ACTION REQUIRED:

Caring for Colorado Foundation 12/21/2021 – 06/20/2022 \$10,060

This is a contract between Caring for Colorado Foundation and PDPHE. This program is to provide education for youth regarding receiving a COVID vaccine. This is an award letter, so no legal review or Board of Health action is required. (Grant # R-11197-21)

C.R.S. 24-6-402 (2) (c)-Sunshine Law -Designation of Notice for BOH Meetings

Public Health Director Randy Evetts requested the 1st floor vestibule and the Department's website: pueblohealth.org be designated sites to post notices for the Board of Health meetings for 2022.

Board President Donald Moore requested the BOH information tab to be more visible on the Department's website and easily accessible. Director Evetts will work with the Department's Public Information Officer and Pueblo County IT to ensure this request is fulfilled.

MOVED by Michael Nerenberg, seconded by Ed Brown, to approve the 1st floor vestibule and the Department's website for the public place of notice for the Board of Health 2020 meetings.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

F. **BOH Updates/Reports**

Public Health Director Report

Director Evetts included a written report in the packet to the Board.

February Work Session

Director Evetts recommended the Board cancel the Friday, February 11, 2022, work session as currently there are no topics for discussion. Board members were in agreement to cancel the February work session.

G. **Old Business**

Proxy Voting

Board member Garrison Ortiz would like to revisit the BOH Bylaws and discuss proxy voting for Board members in the near future.

H. **Executive Session**

MOVED by Eileen Dennis, seconded by Michael Nerenberg, to convene into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of a personnel matter under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(f) and not involving: any specific employees who have requested discussion of the matter in open session; any member of the Board; the appointment of any person to fill an office of the Board; or personnel policies that do not require the discussion of matters personal to particular employees.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Michael Nerenberg, seconded by Eileen Dennis, to reconvene into the Board of Health meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The next regular BOH meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 12:00 noon by Zoom.

MOVED by Michael Nerenberg, seconded by Eileen Dennis, to adjourn the Board of Health meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Donald Moore, Board of Health President



Randy Evetts, MPA, Public Health Director