

**MINUTES OF THE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**November 9, 2020**  
**Meeting held virtually**

**Present:** Councilmembers Litten, Kepple & Rader (5:37 p.m.)

**Also Present:** Cuyahoga County Health Commissioner Terry Allan, Mayor George, Human Services Director Gelsomino, Councilmember Bullock, members of the public, Deputy Clerk Lascu, Clerk Bach taking minutes

**Call to Order:** 5:34 p.m.

Approval of the minutes of the July 27, 2020 Health & Human Services Committee

A motion was made and seconded to approve of the minutes of the July 27, 2020 Health & Human Services Committee.

Yeas: Litten, Kepple

Nays: Absent

Motion adopted. Minutes approved.

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COVID-19 Situation Briefing

**Current Situation**

Commissioner Allan walked through the health department's most recent weekly report. Most of the data within the report pertains specifically to the Cuyahoga County Board of health (CCBH) jurisdiction, which excludes the City of Cleveland. Within the jurisdiction there have been over 15,000 cases and 600 deaths. For comparison, Commissioner Allan stated that the jurisdiction experienced 50 flu-related deaths last year. He underscored the size and scope of the pandemic's impact on the community.

He remarked on the current surge of cases. He stated that next week's report will reflect even higher case counts as there have been days this week with 400 cases per day. He remarked on the overall trends. In July there was a major surge followed by a decline and plateau in response to the Governor's mask mandate. The current surge is surpassing the July surge and numbers continue to climb.

He stated that deaths are climbing, and that deaths and hospitalizations usually lag cases by 2-3 weeks due to the progression of the illness. The Governor, health departments, and hospitals are all closely watching the hospitalization numbers. There is concern about the ability to provide care due to staffing shortages.

Walking through the report, Commissioner Allan discussed the demographics of the cases by age, sex, and race. He presented the color-coded zip code map which is produced in cooperation with the Cleveland Department of Health. Lakewood has experienced the highest case counts to date.

Finally, he discussed hospital utilization and the percent positivity rate of tests which has climbed to 10%.

### **Testing**

Commissioner Allan reported on the testing operation. Testing is done in cooperation with Metro through a grant. Metro has a call center and will schedule testing.

### **Flu Shots**

Commissioner Allan emphasized the message about getting a flu shot this year. CCBH has done flu shot clinics throughout fall and summer.

### **Vaccine**

Exciting news has been reported that Pfizer may have a viable vaccine with 90% efficacy. The government has issued guidance on the ethical distribution of any vaccine and includes first responders getting it first, followed by people in long-term care, teachers and other in critical infrastructure. It may not be widely available to the general public until summer 2021. Community partners will need to assist with vaccine distribution such as hospitals, pharmacies and EMS. The vaccine is supposed to be free for all.

### **Prevention**

Commissioner Allan spoke about the importance of wearing masks. He stated that residents are doing a good job of wearing masks in public places such as stores and at work but that privately they are not. Many chains of transmission have started from parties, sharing rides and playdates without masks.

Aside from masks the Commissioner recommended remote work when possible and keeping social circles small.

Chairman Litten noted that Lakewood has had the highest number of cases in the County and asked if Commissioner Allan had anything further to say on that.

Commissioner Allan pointed to the trends in the ages of the cases. Twenty to twenty-nine year olds are experiencing the highest proportion of cases, which could be in part due to the role of bars. He mentioned the role of the Ohio Investigative Unit in inspecting and citing bars for violations. He also noted that the map represents where people live, though a COVID positive person could travel throughout the county. He stated that diseases do not recognize borders. He asked the City to please echo the messages of prevention throughout the community.

In response to a question from Chairman Litten, Commissioner Allan spoke more about enforcement of the mask mandate. The County Emergency Operations Center has set up a

website and call center for people to make reports. CCBH receives data from the system and the Ohio Investigative Unit is called out to follow up. The leverage of the liquor license is used regarding bars.

In response to a question from Chairman Litten, Commissioner Allan spoke about the issue of schools. The Department has looked at the literature and issued guidance. School districts are not obligated to follow the guidance, but the department supports them and has calls with the superintendents weekly.

Councilmember Kepple asked if there is any kind of enforcement for mask violations on private properties, such as in common areas of residential buildings.

Commissioner Allan acknowledged that this is difficult and recommended strategies such as signage and working with building management.

Regarding schools, he further remarked that classroom transmission is low compared to transmission in social settings. The Board will provide new guidance as new science emerges. He discussed how the schools and the board will partner together for contact tracing.

In response to a question, Commissioner Allan remarked on what to expect in the next year. He projected that it will not be until late fall when a good chunk of the population is vaccinated and that mask wearing must continue up until that time and beyond. He stated that communities will need to create campaigns to promote vaccination.

In response to a councilmember's question, Commissioner Allan recommended that people wear masks and social distance when socializing outdoors. He pointed to clusters of cases in the county related to outdoor bonfires and clambakes.

Steve Eisenberg of 12900 Edgewater (The Carlyle) asked the City for help enforcing masking in common areas of the Carlyle. Commissioner Allan committed to following up.

Mayor George reported that she is continuing to work with regional and state leadership on response. The internal coronavirus task force is still meeting. She has directed departments to have as many employees work from home as possible to reduce exposures. She assured the committee that employees are continuing to work hard, and that City Hall is open by appointment.

In response to a question by Director Gelsomino, Commissioner Allan discussed the contact tracing operation and the protocols that people should follow when a close contact tests positive. He also answered questions about air filtration as a strategy to mitigate COVID.

Ellen Brzytwa, a former resident and former trustee of Lakewood Hospital thanked Commissioner Allan for his work. She suggested that the community determine who are the most trusted individuals to deliver health messaging around vaccination.

In response to Mr. Eisenberg's problems at the Carlyle, Mayor George clarified that the City's mask legislation allows the City to issue local citations when needed. If there are repeated issues and complaints, a building can be issued a nuisance violation.

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**RESOLUTION 2020-69** - A RESOLUTION to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least five members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the District Advisory Council of Cuyahoga County, Ohio General Health District for the provision of public health services within the City of Lakewood in an amount not to exceed \$284,114.00 for a one-year period commencing January 1, 2021.

Chairman Litten pointed to the previous COVID discussion as an example of all the expertise that CCBH brings and the hard work they do. He stated that given the pandemic, now would not be a good time to consider any changes in public health services. He expressed support for continuing the City's working relationship with CCBH.

Commissioner Allan remarked that the cost of services for 2021 will be the same as 2020. He discussed the Department's accreditation status. The Department achieved accreditation in 2018 and must be reaccredited every five years.

The Mayor acknowledged that residents have asked from time to time about restoring Lakewood's own health department. The Mayor had researched what this would require and explained why this was not feasible at this time. In short, there are state laws that incentivize the current regional structure and if Lakewood were to strike out on its own, the City would forfeit multiple streams of federal and state dollars such as those the county receives for lead prevention, etc.

Councilmember Litten pointed out that the cost to operate the Lakewood Health Department was more expensive than the City's contract with CCBH.

In response to a question, Commissioner Allan discussed CCBH's funding sources and structure. 50% of funding is from federal, state, and local grants that the department seeks out. 15% of funding is from contracts with member communities. The rates for all communities are the same per capita rate. The State also provides a per capita subsidy, but that rate has been declining.

Commissioner Allan pointed to the various services provided by CCBH to Lakewood residents such as lead poisoning intervention (fixing homes), HIV prevention, overdose prevention and more. There are about 40-50 services.

Councilmember Bullock remarked that the City has received excellent services from CCBH and that in the midst of our current crisis that the CCBH's expertise is much needed.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend adoption of Resolution 2020-69.

A roll call vote was conducted as follows:

Yeas: Litten, Kepple, Rader

Nays: none

Motion adopted. Resolution 2020-69 recommended for adoption.

Health & Human Services Committee adjourned at 6:51 p.m.