

Health

BOL Meeting Minutes - Final



Committee Chair: Jewel Williams-Johnson

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Thursday, September 15, 2022

1:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Catherine Borgia will be participating remotely from Clear View School and Day Treatment Center, 480 Albany Post Road, Briarcliff, NY, 10510

Please note: This meeting was held in person at the Michaelian Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York 10601 in the McPoland Conference Room # 824 and also remotely via WebEx. Legislators may participate in person or via video conferencing through WebEx. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting in person at any of its locations or view it online at the Westchester Legislators website:

<https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

With a quorum present, Chair Williams Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

Others in Attendance: NYS DOH: Dr. Emily Lutterloh (remote), Dr. Eugene Heslin (remote), Sam Miller (remote), Mischa Sogut (remote) and Brandon Lloyd (remote); DOH: Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler (remote); DCMH: Commissioner Michael Orth (remote); BOL: Dayana Gómez

Present: Committee Chair Williams Johnson, Legislator Barr and Committee Vice-Chair Pierce

Absent: Legislator Gashi, Legislator Shimsky and Legislator Smith

MINUTES APPROVAL

1. Tuesday, June 21, 2022 1:00pm
2. Wednesday, September 7, 2022 10:00am

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Discussion on monkey pox and polio viruses outbreaks

Guests:

Dr. Emily Lutterloh, Director
New York State Department of Health
Division of Epidemiology

Dr. Freda Chu
Scarsdale Medical Group & White Plains Hospital

Dr. Sherlita Amler, Commissioner
Department of Health

Michael Orth, Commissioner
Department of Community Mental Health

Chair Williams Johnson invited the guests to introduce themselves and provide insight on the topic. Dr. Lutterloh began by speaking about the polio virus. She mentioned that there was only one case detected in Rockland County and how even one case can begin an outbreak. Dr. Lutterloh added that most people will have the virus and be asymptomatic, however she also mentioned some of the symptoms that people may display based on the level of severity. Polio is very contagious and is transmitted "the fecal oral route," and provided an explanation as to how this term came to be. The State's Wadsworth Center and the CDC took a close look at the virus and found that it is a revertant polio virus from a vaccine given abroad – OPV (Oral Polio Virus). The virus in OPV itself is harmless, however if given in communities that do not have very good vaccination rates it can mutate as it spreads. The CDC thinks that this virus has been spreading for about a year now but they do not know how much of it is in which location; they do not think it all came from one individual. Dr. Lutterloh mentioned that this vaccine has not been given in the United States since the year 2000, instead they use IPV (Inactivated Polio Virus) which does not have an active virus, cannot cause polio and cannot mutate. They are hoping to increase the use of IPV in efforts to avoid paralytic cases as with OPV, for example. As a public health response, the NYS Department of Health has been looking at wastewater throughout the state and found positive samples of concerning virus in counties such as Rockland, Sullivan, Orange, Nassau and New York City. In New York State, although Wastewater testing conducted in the CDC's laboratory, they determine which locations to test by connecting with the State. They have been doing a lot of outreach with different Health Departments throughout the State to help them do vaccine outreach and education. Statewide the vaccine rates are at about 79%, of that the percentages vary by zip codes and they found that most people delay vaccination until their children actually start school. Westchester County has a 76% vaccination rate for children two years old and older, in recent years. They recommend IPV to be given as of the child being two months of age and vaccinating children is particularly important. Additionally, people who do not think they were vaccinated or those with particular risk factors can become vaccinated at any moment. If anyone was fully vaccinated as a child and they have no reason to believe that they were not vaccinated, then a booster would not be recommended. For an adult to check their vaccine records, one source is to check with the elementary school they went to and another source is NYSIIS (New York State Immunization Information System), which is an adult voluntary information system that can provide individuals with their vaccine details. Both Departments of Health (New York State's and Westchester County's) have requested that this be mandatory, to which Dr. Heslin clarified that this is a legislative issue. Dr. Amler added that the department offers vaccinations for people, regardless of their immigration status, and they do a lot of

outreach to different communities. Dr. Lutterloh also mentioned that a lot of immigrants are vaccinated in their home countries and Dr. Heslin reiterated the accessibility to vaccines as mentioned by Dr. Amler. Dr. Lutterloh emphasized that they are encouraging other Departments of Health throughout New York to buy the IPV vaccine to become more accessible to those who need and want it.

As of September 14, 2022, there were about 3,647 cases statewide, 3,356 in New York City and of the remaining, about 85 cases in Westchester County. Dr. Lutterloh provided an overview of the symptoms and how monkey pox develops and progresses. People usually get better in about two to four weeks. Dr. Lutterloh does not anticipate a high mortality rate within the United States. Monkey pox is transmitted through close contact. The vaccine is called JYNNEOS which offers pre-exposure protection and can possibly provide protection afterwards depending how soon after exposure the vaccine is given. This vaccine has to be specially ordered and is not readily available in pharmacies, for example. As of August 19th, there were 31,820 vials allocated to all of New York State with the exception of New York City since they have their own supply: despite this, they allocated 6,000 vials to New York City to help even out the allocation. They also allocated 1,000 vials to the AIDS Institute and about 500 have been used to vaccinate Wadsworth Center personnel as they are working with the virus. The State is also looking into intradermal version and they have also expanded eligibility for qualifying people who want to receive the vaccine. Although there is no FDA approved treatment for monkey pox, there is a smallpox treatment called Tecovirimat (TPOXX), which they want to have it moved from investigational status to emergency use status and in turn this could help treat patients faster. TPOXX is used for severe cases not all. Dr. Heslin reiterated that TPOXX is currently in the investigational stage. Regarding public health response, the State declared an imminent threat to public health (pertaining to State reimbursements to County DOHs) and a State disaster emergency (pertaining to medication distribution), and they also set up provider hubs in some hospitals. Westchester County is the second highest vaccination location in the State outside of New York City. Dr. Lutterloh also states some entities that are providing educational materials on the topic and where to seek services.

Dr. Amler emphasized the importance for people to reach out to the Department of Health if they have any questions as to where to go for help and resources, should they need it. Mr. Sogut spoke about the types of outreach that the State's Department of Health is doing to inform the public as well as having sent over resources to the committee members on the topic. Chair Williams Johnson thanked the guests and proceeded to conclude the meeting.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator Barr, seconded by Committee Vice-Chair Pierce, the Committee adjourned at 2:07pm.