

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

The Board convened in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 6th Floor, Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. Board members Boldt, Stuart, and Morris, Chair, present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The board conducted the Flag Salute.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Commissioner Boldt to approve items 1 through 11. Board members Morris, Boldt, and Stuart voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 443)

POLICY REQUEST

Resolution on Public Health Funding

John Wiesman, Director, Clark County Public Health stated he is bringing forward a resolution for the Board to consider regarding public health funding. He stated at the June Board of Health meeting he gave the Board a briefing on the financial health of the Public Health Department. He stated across the State and the bottom line of that briefing was that Public Health Services are not sustainable beyond December. He said this is a problem that has been in the making for ten years and comes at a time when the larger economy is in crisis and when our citizens need our services the most. He said the problem is very basic, the money coming in for programs is flat and at worst is declining. He said the money going out for salaries, benefits, supplies and services is increasing just to sustain the existing services. He also stated what they know there is no business, household, church, non-profit or government program can continue to operate as usual under these kinds of conditions. He said during times like this, we have to scale back when possible without sacrificing the basic services. He stated Public Health has been doing that over the last ten years and in 2006, a joint committee of the State Legislature from both the House and the Senate, Republican and Democrat unanimous concluded that the lack of a stable source of funding provided specifically for public health services has eroded the ability of local health jurisdictions to maintain a reliable state wide system that protect the public's health. He also stated in June, he told the Board the department's leadership team was working on a budget for the next biennium that was 4.8 million dollars out of balance or about 15 percent of their budget. He stated they put in a request to the budget office for a one time funding of 1.7 million dollars to see if they can transition out six programs to the community.

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Wiesman stated the department's leadership team feels very strongly that all these programs are essential services that somehow have to be maintained in Clark County. He said the six programs that they are proposing to see if they can find community organizations to support are HIV counseling and testing, support for the medical reserve corp, home visiting nursing programs, research of medical histories and development of medical records for children in foster care, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and financial assistance services for over 15,000 women, infants, and children who get WIC services, and family planning education and pregnancy testing at our local community service organization. He said this proposal is still under consideration and has yet to be finalized. He said public health funding is unsustainable and this is just the beginning and without a stable source of public health funds that grows with inflation and population growth there is no end in sight for reduction of public health services. He stated he is hopeful and some community partners have already expressed interest in exploring this with Clark County.

He stated the Board has a resolution in front of them that asks them three things. First it asks the legislature to identify a stable, dedicated funding source to sustain public health services in this state. The second is a request that the legislature give you all local financing options to support public health services. The third requests cities and towns in Clark County to support this legislative request given the county is responsible for providing public health services to both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county.

Stuart stated this resolution is excellent and spells out the need for public health funding. He stated he was gravely concerned with the movement to shed children and family services program. He stated his general philosophy going into this budget period is to maintain the most needed services for the population and the services to those most in need. He stated when looking at those programs, these are things that have down stream consequences if we don't do it right and that he will be very critical of anything that attempts to shed our responsibility to those that are most in need.

Wiesman stated the leadership team has spent about three months looking at all the programs that we provide. He stated they have looked at the mandated services / non-mandated services and looked at the revenues that come in for these programs. He stated most of our programs don't cover their own costs and have to be supplemented with local funding or this state flexible funding. He said they have also looked at what overhead does to these programs. He stated at the session they did in June on the budget, they gave the Board a history of programs that over the years have left the department.

He stated they have retained a number of programs that are directed towards children and families for which they could not be sustain in the community because there is no funding source to go with that. He also stated they carefully looked at all of these things and they were very difficult choices because their preference is not to transition any of them. He

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

said the fact is they do have a 4.8 million shortfall, so they are happy to sit down with the Board and look at the list. He also stated they have ranked the 26 programs which was also reviewed by the Public Health Advisory Council at their meeting in June and they felt from their perspective as citizens given the choices that they had to make it was in line with where public health needed to go.

Stuart stated he would like to setup a meeting so that he can feel as comfortable as the public health advisory committee.

Boldt stated he would echo that. He also said if they aren't involved sooner in the process then it becomes political which it shouldn't be and they have to stay away from that. He commented on the medical records and the home visiting nursing programs, he stated that was essential passed down to the Department of Health because DHS didn't have the courage to do it on their own.

Wiesman stated he thinks they are essential programs and the leadership team is struggling. He stated the tax payers expect them to perform services as efficiently as they can and that Commissioner Boldt hit on a key where the State is contracting with public health to provide services for their clients and DSHS who have essential services that they need to provide - foster records are very important. He stated what is happening is they are paying overhead from DSHS and overhead in Clark County Public Health. He stated that is part of why they are pushing this with them, at the moment at least for some of these programs, they seemed more inclined to either want to see if they can find another partner or continue to contract with the county but cover our costs, which means increasing the resources.

Boldt stated it was a policy bill. He also stated we should ask the state if they going to contract with a public health agency such as ours, either the money would come directly from the state and bypass DSHS or mandate DSHS could not take an indirect out of that. He references page two, line eight on the resolution, "calls on all cities and towns in Clark County to pass legislation", he said he doesn't think the cities and towns will get that.

Wiesman stated that was a good point. He said they didn't intend that they pass legislation but rather that they support legislation getting introduced.

Stuart clarified it should say support instead of pass.

Wiesman stated that was correct. He said to support public health financing as a top priority.

Morris stated she had a question about #3. She stated she doesn't like the wording of local options, she stated that is the way for the state to tell us what to do and not provide the money for it and giving us options so we can be politically at risk for raising the

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

money to do something that they are suppose to be doing. She moved to strike that provision in the language, referencing line five, stopping after “statewide”.

MOVED by Commissioner Morris to amend #3 and #4. Board members Morris, Boldt, and Stuart voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 443)

MOVED by Commissioner Boldt to approve resolution 2008-09-27 as amended. Board members Morris, Boldt, and Stuart voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 443)

Board of Health and Department to sign onto Healthiest Nation Alliance

Wiesman stated he gave the board information on a Washington State Nursing Association campaign. They are running billboards in the Puget Sound, Whatcom, and Spokane area. The campaign will be from September 16 thru October 19.

Stuart commented about the billboard and wondered if the people would get the message from the display.

Boldt inquired if we could get a similar message out in our own way.

Wiesman stated we could certainly do that as we talk about programs and services and why do we do them.

Wiesman said this is a new effort that is occurring and it’s a movement that began with three organizations coming together for the first time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO) came together to address what is embarrassingly poor health outcomes for the United States.

He stated we are tied for 30th in the world in terms of life expectancy, 50 years ago we were in the top five. He said another measure to look at is infant mortality, we are 34th in the world. He stated it is clear that spending money alone on health care is not the answer. He said this alliance is committed to rebalancing our nation’s health system and making sure our investments prioritize health promotion, prevention of poor health, and preparation for new threats – just as much as they prioritize access to affordable quality medical care for those conditions once they do occur. He stated they are trying to change the healthcare reform debate to talk about health system and when we talk health care / reform, what we are really talking about is reforming medical care when people are ill or need medical services. He said the alliance is geared at trying to change that discussion with businesses, government, non-profits, and citizens and trying to start a grass roots effort here.

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

He stated there are three things that are asked of them, the first that we **Speak Out**– we talk about the need for America to become the Healthiest Nation and to improve the value of our health investments. The second that we **Walk the Talk** – we take at least one specific action to improve health and model positive health behavior and that we support actions in our organization. He stated we have already done this by implementing a healthy food policy in the county, supporting the fit pick in the vending machines, waiving food inspections fees for schools that implement nutrition guidelines, and leading walks at lunch as Commissioner Morris recently did. The third thing is that we **Share Our Successes** by joining the alliance, telling others about our efforts. He asked if the Board of Health would be interested in this program.

Stuart asked if it costs anything.

Wiesman stated it doesn't cost anything; we just have to do those three things.

Boldt stated the infant mortality rate is alarming and inquired what were the causes related to that – violence, drug abuse, premature births?

Wiesman stated it was all of those factors. He stated the department has been discussing the social determinants of health. He stated an African American woman who are college educated have a higher infant mortality rate than white women who have less than a high school education. He stated the researchers are coming to the conclusion that racism in it's self actually affects African American women's health in such of a way that they deliver babies earlier and low birth weight. He said they are looking at those kinds of things and thinking about what is Public Health's role in keeping people healthy. He also mentioned while individual behavior is important they also know it is much more than that.

Morris stated that was interesting. She mentioned she was listening to OPB last night where they were having a discussion about health care costs and health care reform at the federal level. She said they were interviewing some of the emergency room personnel at a big hospital in Los Angeles, where the emergency room wait could easily be six to eight hours. She stated the doctor on the program stated they could cut the healthcare costs in half in this nation if people would quit smoking, quit eating so much, and would exercise more. She said your body behaves in predictable ways, no different than a computer, junk in / junk out. She said you have to do some of the right stuff it was intended to do.

Wiesman stated that was correct. He stated part of this whole piece is also looking at how for some folks that is easier than others to do. He said if you have a community that you don't have a grocery store nearby that has fresh fruits and vegetables, it's easy to say that what we should do. He stated if it's not readily accessible it's another barrier to folks who might not have transportation.

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Morris stated that somehow cigarettes are available no matter where you are and people buy them.

Wiesman stated that is why increasing tax on cigarettes has been one of the most effective intervention to actually getting people to quit. He stated they also have to look at the underlying causes on what get people hooked and keeps them hooked.

Morris mentioned that Craig Pridemore finally quit smoking and if he was able to do it, anyone can do it. She stated as a reformed smoker herself, there are some things still within our control.

Wiesman said he would like to have a work session next year with the Board around social determinant of health and what that means for public health work.

Boldt mentioned while he was at the WSAC Conference they had a couple meetings about pharmaceutical collection. He stated King County had discussion about the high amount of pharmaceuticals they are collecting and how it is going in the water. He mentioned King County was going to pursue some state action and asked if he knew anything about this?

Wiesman stated he wasn't sure what is being proposed for legislation but could look into it. He said pharmaceuticals in drinking water is on the radar screen these days.

Bob Williamson, Deputy Director, Public Health, gave an update on the Sea Mar Clinic which opened a new, primary health care clinic on September 2. He said this clinic was established with Board support, to address the acute lack of access to primary care for the under-insured and uninsured in Clark County. He said in four weeks of operation, Sea Mar has conducted 250 nurse visits, 12 labs visits and 369 provider visits. He stated Shanon Hardie, VP of Operations for Sea Mar Corporate office commented "We've never seen a clinic so busy so soon after opening as this one". He discussed the services and staffing at this new clinic. He also discussed some challenges that arose from closing the public health clinic while transitioning to the new clinic. He stated despite these challenges, they are impressed in what they have seen in just four weeks of operation and look forward to working with Sea Mar to help meet the need for primary care access in Clark County.

Boldt stated he appreciated their willingness to work with the Children's Justice Center for investigations.

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Strategic Initiative 1 – Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure

Williamson gave an update on where they are with our contract transition with Skamania County. He stated through a contract amendment, Clark County transferred all environmental public health services to Skamania County effective September 29. He stated this is the first, formal step in completing the transition of all public health services from Clark to Skamania by the end of the year, with the exception of health officer services which are still under contract to provide. He discussed the new staffing at Skamania County. He stated Clark County will provide support to Skamania County environmental public health services by continuing to provide 20 hours a week of Environmental Health Specialist services and training / technical support to the new staff through the end of October. He also stated since Clark County is still under contract to provide communicable disease services, this new contract with Skamania requires their environmental staff to work with our CD staff during outbreaks with an environmental source, such as food borne illness.

Strategic Initiative 2 – Responding to health threats

Marni Storey, Public Health Services Manager, Public Health reported about a recent outbreak of Pertussis, or whooping cough at a large church and the investigation.

Jonnie Hyde, Public Health Services Manager, Public Health reported on the Melamine warning. She stated on September 12, the FDA issued an advisory related to Chinese infant formula suspected of melamine contamination. The dairy product artificially increases the protein profile of milk and can cause kidney disease in infants. She stated our food staff immediately inspected 11 Asian markets and while they did not find any of the suspect formula, they did find illegal formula from Mexico that the FDA asked them to send for testing. She said they have not heard the results yet. She also mentioned the FDA issued another alert about Melamine being in White Rabbit Candy which is also sold in Asian markets, but in this instance the manufacturer is known and in charge of the recall.

Strategic Initiative 3 – Promoting health environments


Hyde said as the weather is changing toward cooler temperatures, West Nile Virus (WNV) “season” is coming to a close, and per Department of Health they will cease collection of dead bird sampling on October 1. She stated Mosquito Control District treated 23% percent more catch basins this year than last because of the water conditions. She also stated there were five Washington counties with WNV activity (Yakima, Benton, Grant, King, and Thurston) with a total of 45 exposures, primarily to horses and birds but also two human cases, both exposed while in Yakima or Benton Counties in mid-August.

BOARD OF HEALTH PROCEEDINGS
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Hyde stated the food program saw an increase from 270 to 340 temporary event inspections in the past year, a 25% increase in this category alone. She said most of these involve evenings or weekend work by our staff and all serve to protect the public, as attendance at these events was high.

Dr. Alan Melnick, Health Officer, Public Health introduced the Deputy Health Officer, *Dr. Jennifer Vines*. He discussed the training she went through and her outstanding qualifications. He also discussed her work schedule.


BOARD OF HEALTH


Betty Sue Morris, Chair

Marc Boldt, Board Member


Steve Stuart, Board Member

ATTEST:


Clerk of the Board

jc