**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL**

**Meeting of April 3, 2019**

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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**Henry I. Bowditch Public Health Council Room, 2nd Floor**

**250 Washington Street, Boston MA**

**Docket: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 - 9:00 AM**

1. **ROUTINE ITEMS**
   1. Introductions
   2. Updates from Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH.
   3. Record of the Public Health Council March 13, 2019 Meeting. **(Vote)**
2. **PRESENTATIONS**
3. Overview of peer recovery coaching in Massachusetts.
4. Update on the Lowell/Lawrence HIV outbreak and other Massachusetts outbreaks among people who inject drugs.
5. Connecting Youth to Tobacco Prevention Through a Racial Justice Lens.

*The Commissioner and the Public Health Council are defined by law as constituting the Department of Public Health. The Council has one regular meeting per month. These meetings are open to public attendance except when the Council meets in Executive Session. The Council’s meetings are not hearings, nor do members of the public have a right to speak or address the Council. The docket will indicate whether or not floor discussions are anticipated. For purposes of fairness since the regular meeting is not a hearing and is not advertised as such, presentations from the floor may require delaying a decision until a subsequent meeting.*

**Public Health Council**

Attendance and Summary of Votes:

Presented below is a summary of the meeting, including time-keeping, attendance and votes cast.

**Date of Meeting:** Wednesday, April 3, 2019

**Start Time:** 9:14am **Ending Time:** 10:57am

| **Board Member** | **Attended** | **Record of the Public Health Council March 13, 2019 Meeting (Vote)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Monica Bharel | Yes | Yes |
| Edward Bernstein | Yes | Yes |
| Lissette Blondet | Yes | Abstained |
| Derek Brindisi | Yes | Yes |
| Harold Cox | Absent | Absent |
| John Cunningham | Yes | Yes |
| Michele David | Absent | Absent |
| Meg Doherty | Absent | Absent |
| Michael Kneeland | Absent | Absent |
| Joanna Lambert | Yes | Abstained |
| Paul Lanzikos | Yes | Yes |
| Lucilia Prates-Ramos | Yes | Yes |
| Secretary Francisco Ureña | Absent | Absent |
| Alan Woodward | Yes | Yes |
| **Summary** | **9 members present, 5 members absent** | **7 members approved, 5 members absent, 2 member abstained** |

**PROCEEDINGS:**

A regular meeting of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Public Health Council (M.G.L. c. 17, §§ 1, 3) was held on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 250 Washington Street, Henry I. Bowditch Public Health Council Room, 2nd Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02108.

Members present were: Monica Bharel, MD, MPH; Edward Bernstein; John Cunningham, PhD; Derek Brindisi; Paul Lanzikos; Lucilia Prates-Ramos; Joanna Lambert; Lissette Blondet and Alan Woodward, MD.

Absent member(s) were: Harold Cox; Michael Kneeland, MD; Secretary Francisco Ureña; Meg Doherty and Michele David, MD.

Also in attendance was Margret Cooke, General Counsel at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Commissioner Bharel called the meeting to order at 9:14 AM and made opening remarks before reviewing the agenda.

**1. ROUTINE ITEMS**

**Updates from Commissioner Monica Bharel, M.D., MPH**

Commissioner Bharel began by highlighting some of the public health work that is taking place at the Department across the state. The Commissioner announced that it was Kick Butts Day and each year, more than 250 young people from across the state gather on Kick Butts Day at the state house to educate legislators about the tobacco and vaping industry tactics they see in their communities and to talk about what they are doing to address those tactics. This year’s event began at 1:15PM, after the youth march across Boston Common to the State House, where they will be joined by Lieutenant Governor Polito, Secretary Sudders, and myself. The Commissioner encouraged the council to attend this truly inspiring event. Later during the meeting, the Commissioner called attention to Patti Henley, our Tobacco Control Program director, will be presenting more on these amazing youth and their call to action.

The Commissioner announced that Governor Baker signed into law an emergency spending bill to offset federal changes to “Title X” funding, some of which will take effect in May. Title X supports family planning services and related preventive care to patients, many of whom are low-income. In Massachusetts alone, more than 67,000 people each year are served by Title X for birth control, cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and other preventive care. The spending package totaling $8 million includes $800k for the Department of Public Health to bridge any gaps in health care funding through the end of fiscal year 2020.

The Commissioner states that in February, our Registrar of Vital Records and Statistics Karin Barrett gave an informative overview of the many ways the Registry informs work of the Department and also elsewhere in the state. The Commissioner also stated that he council members wanted to be sure we got the word out about what a wealth of information the Registry is – and we’ve done just that. Karin and the Registry have been featured in a recent DPH blog post and encouraged the council members to take a look and share with others.

The Commissioner was recently invited to visit Fathers’ Uplift, a wonderful program that works to help fathe3rs become and remain emotionally stable so they can have a positive and present influence in their children’s lives. Through their youth enrichment program, Fathers Homecoming Program which uses social workers and recovery coaches to work with incarcerated fathers, and Fathers2Fathers coaching which connects trained participants with new fathers, Fathers Uplift truly works to build and support families.

The Commissioner announced that on April 2, 2019 DPH held their annual, sold out Ounce of Prevention conference which is designed to promote healthier communities through professional development. The theme "Working Together for Healthier and More Equitable Communities," during DPH's 150th year, was explored through 18 workshops addressing suicide prevention, access to sexual and domestic violence services, helping individuals with substance abuse disorders after incarceration, youth marijuana use, and challenges to the local public health system. The Commissioner was able to attend and speak with many of DPH’s public health colleagues on the critical role data plays in helping us target our prevention efforts. While there, the Commissioner was happy to be joined by Associate Commissioner Lindsey Tucker to present two awards:

* The **Peter R. Lee Healthy Communities Award**, which honors a coalition or partnership for their work to create healthier and more equitable communities, was presented to Codman Squared, the partnership between Codman Square Health Center and Codman Academy Charter Public School.
* This award recognizes their work creating this model which provides community members core services while also developing a community that is well physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and behaviorally.
* The **Commissioner’s Leadership Award**, which recognizes exceptional leadership in promoting healthier and more equitable communities, was presented to Deborah Hughes of Brookview House, a nonprofit for women and children experiencing homelessness that confronts the root causes of homelessness and transforms lives.
* This award recognizes Deborah’s work to expand Brookview into a multi-service agency that serves 370 women and children annually, 92% of which go on to maintain permanent housing.

The Commissioner announced that Deidre Calvert joined the Department this week as BSAS Director. She brings a deep clinical background to the role and more than 20 years of leadership in the prevention of substance use disorders and promotion of behavioral health. She has overseen clinical operations of medication assisted treatment clinics in Greater Boston and Lawrence, served as clinical director of a large Boston methadone clinic, and directed psychotherapy services at a treatment and recovery program for individuals faced with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders.

Mr. Lanzikos asked who attends the “Ounce of Prevention” Conference.

Commissioner Bharel responded that a wide range of people are in attendance from CEO’s to grassroots leaders and organizers.

With no further questions or comments, the Commissioner proceeded with the docket.

**1. ROUTINE ITEMS**

**c. Record of the Public Health Council March 13, 2019 Meeting (Vote)**

Commissioner Bharel asked if any members had any changes to be included in the March 13, 2019 meeting minutes.

Dr. Woodward requested that on the bottom of page 5 the term “legislature” be changed to “legislation”.

Commissioner Bharel asked for a motion to accept the amended minutes. Motion to accept minutes, Mr. Lanzikos made the motion and Dr. Woodward seconded it. Joanna Lambert and Lissette Blondet abstained. All other present members approved.

**1. Presentation**

**a. Overview of peer recovery coaching in Massachusetts.**

Commissioner Bharel invited Julia Ojeda, Recovery Support Services Coordinator within the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, to the table for a presentation on recovery coaching in Massachusetts. Julia received the 2018 Equity in Governance Award for her groundbreaking work with the deaf and hard of hearing community, through which she created a recovery coach training and adapted curriculum for this community.

Ms. Lambert asked if they are currently working with any homeless shelters or populations in housing transition.

Ms. Ojeda responded not directly but people who are hired are from the shelters as recovery coaches.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if any coaches work in correctional settings.

Ms. Ojeda responded yes there some working in correctional facilities with a program that is overseeing them.

CMR stated that the fathers uplift has recovery coaches in correctional facilities.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if current people incarcerated able to become peer coaches.

Ms. Ojeda stated not at this time.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if there is a need for it.

Ms. Ojeda stated they can consider it.

Mr. Lanzikos stated there is a significant part of the incarcerated population has a substance use issues.

Ms. Blondet asked how Certified Peer Specialists interact with one another.

Ms. Ojeda stated there are teams in clinical settings as peer specialists and work with a recovery coach and many have attended the Recovery Coach Academy.

Ms. Blondet asked if both are part of the same team.

Dr. Bernstein asked how to you recruit people who are currently on successful treatment/medication programs.

Ms. Ojeda responded that they have Dr. Wally working with them on MAT and are exploring the option of including people on medication and recognizing its importance and value.

No further comments/questions.

**1. Presentation**

**b. Update on the Lowell/Lawrence HIV outbreak and other Massachusetts outbreaks among people who inject drugs.**

Commissioner Bharel invited Assistant Commissioner Kevin Cranston, Director of the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, to the table for an update on the HIV outbreak first observed in the Lowell/Lawrence area. In October of last year, Kevin and Dr. DeMaria walked through the preliminary findings of our Epi Aid investigation with the CDC. The CDC published a paper in the March 15th MMWR authored by Kevin and other DPH authors, which discussed our investigation. Kevin is just coming back from the 2019 National HIV Prevention Conference, where he presented this update as well.

Upon the conclusion of the presentation, the Commissioner asked the Council if they had any questions or comments.

Mr. Lanzikos asked how the presentation was received at the National HIV conference.

Mr. Cranston stated there was a great deal of interest with a focus on rural regions that are considered vulnerable regions with limited resources as well as controversy on the use of molecular surveillance in terms of confidentiality and application to a cluster analysis as we had in Massachusetts.

Mr. Lanzikos asked about the density of Martha’s Vineyard.

Mr. Cranston stated there is one site with multiple mobile programs.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if there are any observations of measles this season.

Mr. Cranston stated they saw the first measles case of the calendar year, an individual recently traveled and sought treatment but unsure who was exposed due to the late onset of symptoms. Communication will be made with sites at risk of exposure such as stores and restaurants.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if there are concerns of immunity due to unvaccinated individuals.

Mr. Cranston stated that Massachusetts has one of the highest rates of MMR coverage compared to other parts of the world. Children starting school have herd immunity based on MMR coverage prior to entering kindergarten; we rely on herd immunity and rapid response for community and clinics. Measles was declared eliminated in the US over a decade ago and now there is an introduction to Measles again based on vaccination status.

Dr. Bernstein asked what the engagement rate for treatment within the 161cases.

Mr. Cranston stated they are getting better but there is sometimes a loss to treatment and tracking and need multiple attempts and there has been a significant effect on transmission through injection equipment sharing.

Dr. Bernstein asked if it influences outcomes and treatment.

Mr. Cranston stated that identifying people as part of a cluster helps to identify exposure and new infections.

Dr. Woodward asked if link to the MMR report be circulated to the council members.

Mr. Cranston stated he would.

Dr. Woodward asked if Nantucket would be included for the needle exchange program.

Mr. Cranston stated there are no programs currently available but conversations to engage the community but still in progress.

Dr. Woodward asked if the measles case was immunized.

Mr. Cranston stated that is confidential and cannot discuss details.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if there could be an update about the severity of the flu.

Mr. Cranston stated the flu severity is higher than normal due to this strain and peaked at mid-February and people should be aware and take precautions. There has been a more severe amount of pediatric flu related deaths, with flu being one factor.

CMR Bharel stated that this could be a reminder of the message of the importance of vaccinations in public health and thanked Mr. Cranston for all his hard work and recognized him as the longest Bureau Director at DPH.

**1. Presentation**

**c. Connecting Youth to Tobacco Prevention Through a Racial Justice Lens.**

Commissioner Bharel invited Patti Henley, Director of Tobacco Control Program within the Bureau of Community Health and Prevention, to the table for an overview of her work with the 84 Movement to engage Massachusetts youth in tobacco and vaping prevention efforts using a racial justice lens. Patti and several other DPH staff, including Sanori Ursprung who you heard from last month, Melody Kingsley with the Bureau, Glory Song with the Bureau, and Jenn Robertson with the Bureau of Environmental Health, recently published a paper in the journal Tobacco Control discussing the impact of flavored tobacco restriction policies on flavored product availability in Massachusetts. As some of you noted last month, the paper has already received positive press as the first to report statewide success of flavor product restriction policies.

Dr. Woodward asked Ms. Henley to discuss funding and how this movement is working at the local level for public health and policy, particularly with vaping.

Ms. Henley responded there is an increase in mini grants to young people for this program and empowering youth for championing this cause in a meaningful effective way by partnering with local agencies, community partnerships and political movements.

Dr. Woodward stated many communities are banning all flavors and increasing regulation, the highly addictive nature of vaping compared to cigarettes raises significant concern, specifically with the youth and students that have become addicted.

Ms. Lambert asked about the current nicotine rates.

Ms. Henley stated 20% in 2017, but 40% have tried vaping.

Ms. Lambert asked what the current vaping data for Massachusetts.

Ms. Henley stated that 20% of young people are current users for vaping from 2017 data.

Commissioner Bharel asked if 40% tried it.

Ms. Lambert asked about the current smoking rate.

Commissioner Bharel stated 8 or 9% and the percentage of youth who have tried is drastically increasing rate.

Ms. Henley stated they measure all tobacco product use data.

Commissioner Bharel stated that the numbers have changes very quickly from 2011at around 1.5% of high schoolers have tried vaping and went up to 40% for 2017

Dr. Cunningham stated high school data should be followed but there are lower grade levels starting to try vaping.

Ms. Henley stated 10-11% of middle schoolers have tried and 3% have continuous use.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if there is a positive downward trend in the delay of the young and if there is a concern about the casual response from parents for the dangers of vaping.

Ms. Henley stated the importance of educating parents on the dangers of vaping in order to relay information.

Commissioner Bharel stated a campaign launched last Fall for this message for teachers and parents.

Mr. Lanzikos asked if there is a positive change in the very young.

Ms. Henley stated there is not a positive change and there is enough data to truly see this yet.

Mr. Brindisi stated the concern of acceptance of vaping as a social norm and the prevalence of marijuana vaping. He is interested in preventing access through legislation.

Ms. Henley stated vaping is more prevalent.

Dr. Bernstein asked if there is any messaging around why young people are vaping.

Ms. Henley stated that they are having an internal conversation about how you frame the message of addiction for coping with stress. We do not currently have the tools but they are in development for alternatives for coping with stress.

Mr. Bernstein asked about how to convey the message of the risks early in life and not just the long term repercussions.

Ms. Henley stated that the young people asked for facts from a credible source with credible information.

Dr. Woodward asked about other things they are working on in their department.

Ms. Henley stated the 84 for works on federal and local levels to promote smoke free environments, cessation and preventions particularly in schools training and education providing on vaping, housing authorities and condos to implement a smoke/vape free property. They also work with provider referral program Quitworks to help medical providers conduct intervention on tobacco and behavioral health technical assistants to promote and support tobacco cessation with mental health populations as well as prevention for second hand smoke and cessation.

Dr. Woodward stated that this is a comprehensive approach and communities should support this movement on the local level.

With no further presentations, the Commissioner reminded the Council that the next meeting is Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at 9AM.

She then asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Bernstein made the motion, Ms. Blondet seconded it. All present members approved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:57AM.