

**BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT
SPECIAL BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Wednesday, April 22, 2020 2:00 p.m.
Via Microsoft Teams**

Chairperson Gary Sauer called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

Members Present:

Gary Sauer - Benzie County Board of Commissioners
Tony Ansonge - Leelanau County Board of Commissioners
Carolyn Rentenbach – Leelanau County Board of Commissioners
Linda Farrell – Benzie County Board of Commissioners
Dr. Barbara Conley – Leelanau County Member at Large
Dr. Mark Kuiper – Benzie County Member at Large

Members Excused:

Staff Present:

Lisa Peacock – Health Officer
Dr. Joshua Meyerson – Medical Director
Dodie Putney – Director of Administrative Services
Eric Johnston – Director of Environmental Health
Michelle Klein - Director of Personal Health

Guests Present: Ken Talsma, Anderson, Tackman & Company, PLC

Pledge of Allegiance It was agreed to dispense with the pledge of alliance today due to the meeting being held via video conference.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve the Regular Board of Health Meeting of January 23, 2020 as presented.

Seconded By: Conley

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea, Ansonge-Yea, Kuiper-Yea **Motion Carried**

Approval of Minutes:

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve the Special Board of Health Meeting of February 26, 2020, as presented.

Seconded By: Conley

Roll Call Vote: Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea, Ansonge-Yea, Kuiper-Yea, Sauer-Yea. **Motion Carried**

Approval of Minutes:

Motion By: Farrell to approve the Special Board of Health Meeting of March 18, 2020, as presented.

Seconded By: Rentenbach

Roll Call Vote: Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea, Ansonge-Yea, Kuiper-Yea, Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea. **Motion Carried**

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion By: Rentenbach to approve agenda as presented

Seconded By: Conley

Roll Call Vote: Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Conley-Yea, Ansonge-Yea,
Kuiper-Yea. **Motion carried**

Public Comment – None

Audit Report: Ken Talsma from Anderson Tackman reviewed the audit report for fiscal year 2018/2019. The audit has been given an unmodified opinion which means that financial statements have been presented, in all material respects, in accordance with the financial reporting framework.

Motion By: Rentenbach to accept the Fiscal Year 2018/2019 audit report as presented.

Seconded By: Conley

Roll Call Vote: Kuiper-Yea, Ansonge-Yea, Conley-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea,
Sauer-Yea **Motion Carried.**

Health Officer Update – Lisa Peacock

Lisa Peacock read the below public health statement that she shared on the community partners call earlier in the day in regard to the COVID-19 response of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department.

Monday, our Governor stressed the importance of our continued commitment to the stay home stay safe executive order, specifically calling out to Northern Michigan she reiterated that we cannot handle a surge in our local healthcare systems. We cannot stress enough that you can be carrying COVID-19 and not even know it. Individuals can be asymptomatic and infecting others. The stay home stay safe order has significantly reduced the number of physical contacts that our contact tracing team discusses with COVID-19 positive and probable cases.

As of Monday, in Michigan we had 32,000 cases and 2,468 deaths from the disease. It was also reported that 3,237 residents had recovered from the illness. We also saw our first COVID death in a young child in Michigan. Although we are seeing a plateau in cases in some areas of the State, there are also cases continuing to increase in some areas, including areas in rural northern Michigan. These points remind us that this virus is highly contagious, unpredictable and can be deadly in people of all ages. While we are still learning about this novel coronavirus, what we do know is that the most powerful tool that we have in slowing the spread of COVID-19 continues to be social distancing. Our most important goal from the start has been to ensure our health care system has capacity to care for those who need it and so far, this is holding steady in northern Michigan.

Over the past couple of weeks, we have been especially focused on the needs of those living in congregate settings, including long term care facilities. These settings typically serve a vulnerable and high-risk population and often in close quarters, which increases the risk for transmission of a disease such as COVID-19. Across the state there have been outbreaks in congregate living facilities and northern Michigan is no exception. Our health department has established a dedicated team to work with the leadership of these facilities to protect their vulnerable residents as well as their staff. This team is focused on assisting them with important protective measures such as enhanced and timely reporting of cases, PPE supplies and training, as well as prompt support and assistance for testing and critical infection control measures.

MDHHS also announced that starting today, April 21st, testing eligibility criteria has expanded again to include asymptomatic healthcare workers, EMS personnel, first responders, and all essential workers still reporting to work in person with potential

COVID-19 exposure. These individuals are now able to get tested if testing supplies, personnel with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), and lab capacity allow. Along with increased testing capacity, this expansion in testing eligibility is an important step that will help identify asymptomatic cases who may be at risk for spreading the virus without knowing it. We are encouraged by the availability of more testing and expedited results because it helps us to quickly implement measures that prevent further spread. The testing data also tells us more about who may be most vulnerable, how many people have recovered, as well as helps us to monitor whether cases are increasing or decreasing. This information will be critical as we move toward re-engagement of our communities. We know that relaxing restrictions too soon could result in a 2nd wave of this pandemic that could set us back and could potentially be even worse than the 1st.

This is precisely why the actions our residents have taken are so important, and we are asking people to continue making the sacrifice. The Governor shared that mapping data has indicated that Michigan has experienced a 35% decrease in mobility under the stay at home order. I know it is not easy. However, there are encouraging signs that it is working to flatten the curve! We know that it is likely the more compliant we can be, the more likely we will be able to enjoy each other's physical presence again soon. We must stay strong together and believe that this is working. The most important protection we can each provide for ourselves, our families and those working hard to battle COVID-19 is to: stay home, stay safe, and save lives!

At this time, it is reported that there are now eight positive cases in Leelanau County and four in Benzie County. The Health Department continues to provide critical services via telehealth and in person when necessary including providing necessary immunizations, Healthy Futures home visits for high-risk newborns with proper screening and PPE, tele-visits with young families and pregnant mothers, and Community Connections is accepting many referrals and reaching out to high risk groups such as isolated seniors. We are working with community partners in both counties to ensure that correct and reliable information is being distributed. Environmental health sanitarians have been working with Northern Michigan Health Services, Inc. on their drive through testing facilities in Leelanau County (M-72). Dr. Meyerson has been working with local medical providers by hosting conference calls to answer their questions and concerns. We have been working with the migrant population and educating the migrants as well as the farmers to provide them education, support and resources. The Health Department is working with long term care and adult foster care facilities by making sure they have the resources needed to keep their residents safe. In addition to keeping the public informed, the Health Department also has weekly employee meetings to keep in touch with them and answer their concerns and questions. The Health Department has media briefings by Peacock and Dr. Meyerson every Tuesday and Thursday at 11:30 am. This has been an important tool to get public health information out in the community and be able to control some information.

Conley questioned the proficiency programs for the labs. All the tests are being used through an emergency use authorization. The concern is that the test be done correctly. Positive tests tend to be pretty sensitive but not specific, meaning there are a significant number of false negatives. The bigger concern would be not the correct swabbing method. The State Bureau of Labs has brought up the whole issue of proficiency and validity. Conley questioned if there has been any modeling of case numbers in Northern Michigan counties vs. modeling for the entire State. She had heard that there were some regional modeling projections being done. Peacock stated that hospitals are using modeling data that is specific to hospitals. Conley commented that the Health Department has been doing a great job at getting out why social distancing is so important. She would like to see the Health Department get the message out to encourage people who are really sick to feel free to go to emergency rooms when needed. Dr. Meyerson did say that is an important point and a message we have been thinking as well. As we move forward and work with our medical partners, we will work to get that message out as well.

Farrell stated she was happy about reporting COVID-19 include those recovered cases but wondered how those were being reported. Peacock stated that cases are reported as recovered 30 days after the diagnosis (positive test). Farrell stated that in Benzie County it was reported that a person died suddenly on Monday after having shortness of breath. What is being done about people who are dying with symptoms but have not been tested. Peacock stated that people can be tested after death, but the Health Department will not know unless we are notified. At this time, the Health Department has not been notified of a death related to COVID.

Rentenbach questioned that anyone who is asymptomatic can be tested as capacity allows for critical, infrastructure essential workers. Dr. Meyerson stated that testing on asymptomatic people needs more guidance on who to test, in what situation, how often to test. Currently we do not have the capacity to do widespread asymptomatic testing at this time. It was questioned about antibody testing. Dr. Meyerson stated that antibody testing will be an important part of our recovery efforts. There is still a lot to be figured out yet in that regard. People who have had a confirmed case of COVID, can register with the two area blood donors and if eligible, they can donate plasma to be used in life saving measures. Rentenbach questioned if there was anything that board of health members can do to help with patient contact tracing. Peacock stated that she will keep that in mind. As of right now, it is mostly staffed by nurses and there have been a couple of capable people who have reached out to the Health Department. People are asking that because there has been community contact, can information be released where a positive case has been documented. This is done on a case by case basis when we cannot identify where the person may have picked up the virus.

Kuiper had a question on enforcement of the Governor's Executive Order and local public health emergency order. He wondered if people could refuse with the case investigation that the Health Department performs. Peacock stated if people refuse to help with the investigation, the Health Department can get a court order to compel participation. It is really important for the public to know that cooperating with the Health Department is in their best interest of public health. The sheriffs and county prosecutors in both counties have been very helpful when asked. Kuiper also stated that he heard a message today that there is a need to increase the volume of testing. Peacock agreed and are working with community partners to indeed increase the testing capability.

Accounts Payable

Motion By: Conley to approve accounts payable and pay the bills.

Seconded By: Farrell

Roll Call Vote: Conley-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Kuiper-Yea, Sauer-Yea, Ansorge-Yea, Farrell-Yea. **Motion Carried**

March 2020 Financial Statements

Putney stated that a large part of the deficit is due to accrued revenue not being recorded. This is where the expenses are recognized but the revenue is invoiced and comes in at a later time. There will be a significant impact on the budget as a result of the COVID-19 response. We are in the process of shifting expenditures and revenues. We will see a loss of billable services for personal health and depending on the economy, may see losses in environmental health. We are working with the CARES Act to apply for grant funding to help cover some of the response costs as well as applying for a telecommunication grant to purchase tablets for staff to increase our capacity out in the field.

Motion By: Rentenbach to accept the financial statements as presented.

Seconded By: Conley

Roll Call Vote: Farrell-Yea, Ansorge-Yea, Conley-Yea, Sauer-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Kuiper-Yea
Motion Carried.

Revised Freedom of Information Policy

Motion By: Sauer to approve the revised Freedom of Information Policy Resolution 2020-1.

Seconded By: Rentenbach

Discussion: Conley questioned clarification on Page 3, Section 3 (g) on the cost of the public record. Seems to conflict with Page 13, ii (j) of discounted fees. Putney agreed to reach out to attorney Bryan Graham who wrote the resolution, for some clarification and bring back to the next meeting for approval. Based on the discussion, Sauer withdrew his motion and Rentenbach withdrew her support.

Staff Reports:

Medical Director – Dr. Joshua Meyerson

Dr. Meyerson echoed Lisa's comments and thanked the Board of Health for all the support. Staff is doing amazing work in roles that they normally do. Staff is adapting and finding different ways to provide services that our citizens need.

Personal Health – Michelle Klein

Personal Health Division has been doing a lot of the response which includes cross training staff on duties they normally do not do. There have been over 150 tests; with about 25 pending and 12 positives. There are about 30 contacts we are keeping an eye on which is very time consuming. We continue to support our regular operations and keeping track of our most vulnerable population. We are also trying to support our staff with counseling and coping services. Externally we are meeting with our community partners and coordinating with all of them. The Health Department has been managing a COVID-19 hotline and working with people regarding specific questions and concerns.

Environmental Health – Eric Johnston

Environmental Health Division update.

1. EH Program Status – COVID 19

Since March 19th, our Department has made changes in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the resulting Governor Executive Orders, the guidance by State regulatory agencies, and duties related to BLDHD public health efforts. The following is a timeline of changes made to the EH Department:

March 19th thru March 24th

- Staff travel outside of our district is restricted
- All in-person meetings, conferences, etc. of > 100 individuals are restricted, teleconferencing or on-line meetings are encouraged
- Suspended all routine inspections for public swimming pools, campgrounds, body art facilities, non-community water supply surveys, and nuisance complaints.
- All other routine land use fieldwork can continue to be performed; however, social distancing must be implemented
- All requested meetings should be conducted via phone call or on-line whenever possible. If that is not possible, staff are to ask the client health screening questions and are instructed NOT TO MEET if the client is feeling less than 100%. All meetings are to be kept as brief as possible.
- Land use field staff are to assess their current workload and prioritize those activities that need to be completed and that can be completed with no in person interaction with the public.
- On-site food service inspections will continue, with high-risk facilities being prioritized over lower-risk facilities.
- Both office's service windows are not to be open any more than 1" wide and staff are to speak with clients with the window in that position or closed.
- Any client who is not feeling well are instructed to place their applications in a drop box and to call from their vehicles if they need to speak with someone.
- All staff are to assist with the BLDHD COVID-19 "Flattening the Curve" efforts whenever possible.

March 25th (E.O. 2020-21 issued) to Present

- Both offices are closed for all non-emergency activities but are still accepting applications via email or placed in a drop box. Emergency activities (failed septic systems, out of water, septage spills, well/septic evaluations for situations where buyer and/or seller may be homeless if sale does not close) are handled on a case by case basis and prioritized by those activities necessary to sustain or protect life.
- All applicants are asked to submit a written explanation as to the reason for their application. This is to assist our department with prioritization.
- A letter and email were sent to all routine EH clients informing them of the status of our office
- Staff is asked to do as much work from home as possible
- Land use field staff are on-call for any emergency work. All application and final report/permit documentation are to be completed electronically whenever possible.
- Staff are instructed to review BLDHD emergency preparedness plans and the FEMA Incident Command Structure
- Staff are to be ready to help with the COVID-19 response at any moment

April 1st to Present

- Routine food establishment inspections are suspended
- Food staff will contact food establishments via phone and have conversations with the person in charge to discuss food safety and COVID-19 restrictions. If the inspector feels that the facility is lacking in food safety knowledge, an in person routine inspection may be completed utilizing social distancing practices.
- Follow up inspections for required corrections are to be completed in the office as much as possible with the facility's person in charge sending pictures of the corrected items. All required in person follow ups will be conducted after COVID-19 restriction are lifted whenever possible.
- All food related complaints will be assessed for their health risk and will be handled by a phone call to the facility's person in charge or a site visit if warranted (two or more persons submit similar complaints)
- An email and letter are sent to all campground owners on April 2nd, informing them of the E.O. 2020-21 restrictions related to campground operations and provided them with the BLDHD COVID-19 Public Health Advisory and links to CDC, MDHHS, and BLDHD COVID-19 educational material.

2. Food Licensing Fees

Currently, 2019 food licenses are due to expire, and the 2020 food license fee is to be paid on April 30th, 2020. If payment of the fee is not received by our office on May 1st (or the payment envelope is date stamped on or before April 30th) we charge a late fee (50% of the license fee). At this time, we have received approximately 40% of the required 2020 food license fees. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, a request to extend the license fee due date has been sent to the Governor's office by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). The date of the requested extension has not been shared by MDARD.

Food License Fees:

Motion By: Ansonge to waive the food license late fees until May 31st and at which time the Board will revisit the issue at the next board meeting.

Seconded By: Rentenbach

Roll Call Vote: Ansonge-Yea, Rentenbach-Yea, Sauer-Yea, Farrell-Yea, Kuiper-Yea, Conley-Yea **Motion Carried.**

3. COVID-19 Restriction Complaint Response

All complaints received and which are related to violations of the Governor's COVID-19 Executive Orders are evaluated on a case by case basis and investigated. Valid complaints are addressed by staff

with a phone call to the violator(s) to resolve the complaint prior to escalating enforcement action. Complaints that cannot be resolved in this manner will be referred to the Sheriff's Department of the respective county, per request of the Benzie and Leelanau Prosecuting Attorney's office.

4. NMHSI Testing Site

As part of my role as COVID-19 Incident Command Team - Planning Chief, I and my Planning Deputy (Xavier Gagne') developed and executed a plan for the Northern Michigan Health Service Inc. (NMHSI) COVID-19 drive thru testing site in Traverse City (M-72). We worked with the medical team of NMHSI to determine the on-site traffic flow pattern, signage, testing area needs, and staff PPE requirements. Xavier took the lead on this effort and put an excellent plan together. He worked with our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator (Chloe Willets), our IC Team – Logistics Chief (Nick Dow), and NMHSI's Logistics Chief to acquire all the items necessary and have the drive thru site ready for testing in one week. The Environmental Health field staff was divided into 3 teams of two, with each team consisting of one staff member from the Leelanau Office and one from the Benzie Office. The team members are stationed at the initial patient screening check point and the exit to prevent traffic issues related to patients entering the wrong way. Each team staffs the drive thru site once every three days. Staff that are not working at the testing site, will cover any emergency calls or permit applications for the team members who are at the testing site. As of April 21, 2020, there have been 61 tests conducted at the site. I commend my entire staff for being so willing to adjust their schedules, their positive attitudes, and the teamwork they have displayed throughout this process. I especially want to thank Xavier Gagne' and Nick Dow for their exemplary efforts to make this testing site a reality and make it function so smoothly.


Administrative – Dodie Putney

Administration's role through this response has been here to support the needs of personal and environmental health.

Public Comment - None

Board Comments -Rentenbach stated that she is super impressed with the coordination and sharing of information. Staff has been great from the top down. Farrell agreed with Rentenbach's comments. Farrell did want to know what other environmental fees District Health Department #4 have waived. Johnston explained there are other late fees for permit and evaluations, but we rarely charge those as we work hard to get compliance.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm



Gary Sauer, Chair



Dodie Putney, Recording Secretary