

Sacramento County Public Health Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2020, 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Meeting Location

Zoom Meeting (Open to the Public)

Moderator:

Dr. Farla Kaufman

Scribes:

Steven Orkand

Board Attendees:

Jennifer Anderson, Sandy Damiano (Ex-officio), Paula Green, Steve Heath, Farla Kaufman, Steven Orkand, Sonal Patel, Jeff Rabinovitz, Christina Slee, Philip Summers, Annie Tat, Jack Zwald

Guests:

Jamie White (for Dr. Kasirye), Maudina Mensah-Kane, 2 others who were unidentified

Board Members Absent:

Olivia Kasirye (Ex-officio), Kathleen Wright

Board Members Excused:

Jofil Borja, Barbara Law, Emanuel Petrisor

Meeting Opened:

12:05 PM

Welcome and Introductions:

Dr. Kaufman welcomed our newest member, Sonal Patel. She also welcomed other PHAB members and guests. Introductions were made. There are no vacancies on PHAB.

Review of Minutes:

There was no meeting in April. Minutes of the March, 2020 meeting were approved as submitted.

Candidates for HIV Health

Health Services Planning Council

This was inadvertently omitted.

Letter of Support:

On behalf of PHAB, Dr. Kaufman submitted a letter supporting the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department's proposed fee schedule to the Board of Supervisors. This letter will be posted and distributed to PHAB members, as requested.

Public Health Update:

Jamie White, Epidemiology Program Manager for the Department of Health Services, provided an update for Dr. Kasirye.

Governor Newsom has announced that the State will be moving into Phase 2 of its re-opening beginning on May 8. Local Health Departments cannot move faster than the State. It will be a gradual re-opening. Retail will be open for curbside pickup, but there will be no sit-in restaurants. Offices that can work remotely are encouraged to continue. However, some counties will be able to move at an accelerated rate into Phase 2. County Health Officers and the Boards of Supervisors must certify that there is stability in the numbers of new cases of COVID 19, that there is testing capacity and surge capacity. They should also be able to do contract tracing on new cases as they emerge. In Sacramento County, new cases have stabilized, there is protective gear in stock, and there is capacity for isolation and for housing. However, our death rate is not zero, but we may seek an exemption based on our level of readiness. We can't realistically expect a zero death rate given the fact that there are still a few cases in a very vulnerable population. Dr. Kasirye is planning to request an exemption. Given changes in the State's Order, Dr. Kasirye will modify her County Order on May 8.

The coronavirus testing facility at Cal Expo is now open for all comers, but a reservation is necessary. There is capacity to test 350 per day. Unfortunately, there is a high rate of no-shows, 15-20 %. Reservations are necessary to control traffic; we don't want people waiting in the summer heat. We plan to open 3 additional sites in the near future, each with capacity for 100-150 tests. We hope these sites will reach more vulnerable and diverse populations. We expect to ramp up to 3000 tests per week at County facilities. There will also be private and commercial sites for testing, such as Kaiser. There is currently no antibody testing available. The County is awaiting recommendations from the CDC regarding this.

There has been a focus on contact tracing capacity. The State has recently released a new contract tracing software which will be available next week. The County has several nurses who currently do this on a full

time basis, and they are being joined by other nurses from within the Public Health program. They are also being joined by 6 investigators from environmental management. They will take the State's 20-hour training course. There are also student nurses who will come at the end of May. A number of volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corps are also interested. Dr. Kasirye estimates we will need 30 contract tracers, and that's within the capacity of the County. We're trying to pick people who are tech savvy, who can handle the software. We'd prefer people who can volunteer for at least a month, since there is so much time involved with training and they require so much support. A supervisor and an epidemiologist are also necessary. An experienced investigator can handle 4 cases per day, which includes about 40 calls. A trainee can only do ¼ that. There are currently 10 new cases per day. They feel they can increase to 30 new cases per day.

Dr. Kaufman reported that the Sacramento metro area has done an extremely good job in containing the infection so far. Dr. Orkand asked about how the County has handled "hot spots." There have been no significant problems with the jails or with Folsom Prison, though there have been staff cases. The nursing homes have been an area of intense focus by the PH nurses. They are in regular communication, and the nurses try to relay information on best infection control practices. The nursing facilities are able to isolate infected patients. There is also the capacity to create COVID wings or even entire facilities. There has been discussion of how to mainstream patients who have recovered from isolation. They are also planning to test everyone in the nursing home if there is a single case. The Mobile Integrated Health units (MIH) have been going to the nursing homes to do the testing.

Dr. Orkand asked about the outreach efforts to the homeless community and to immigrants, both legal and undocumented. Jamie responded that PH has not been directly involved. This has been handled by the Department of Human Assistance (DHA). There are over 200 hotel rooms as well as recreational vehicles intended for this population. Stacey Kennedy is the liaison from PH to DHA regarding this area. To her knowledge, there have been few homeless who have contracted COVID. Because there are so few, some of the housing facilities have been assigned to other vulnerable homeless, even without COVID infection. Dr. Summers reported that the MIH staff have been doing testing in that population, but not in a rigorous way.

Ms. White briefly discussed the use of masks. There are State recommendations, but not a mandate. Dr. Kasirye has been considering this, pros and cons. The biggest concern is the most vulnerable population, the elderly. There is also concern about the discrepancies in case rate and deaths in the minority community. We haven't seen that problem so much in Sacramento County, but we must remain vigilant.

The County wants to make sure that testing is available in the minority communities. Another area of concern is the easy availability of resources, especially if there is a surge.

Dr. Kaufman expressed concern for how people are dealing with the continued stress. Most difficult was the containment phase. As orders are loosened and we get back to containment, work may increase. Currently, volunteers are being used in multiple areas. Members of the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) are working at Cal Expo. There are also lots of volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), working at Cal Expo, at the Lab, doing courier services, answering phones, etc. There are UC Davis Medical Students who are helpful, as well. The County would like to avoid exposing the volunteers directly to patients. To date, the case count is 1142, with 47 deaths. Dr. Summers asked if there was evidence that we had very early cases, undiscovered. The County Coroner's report no cases prior to those already reported.

Dr. Orkand asked if the County will be fully prepared for other illnesses that emerge this time of year. Jamie confirms that we will be prepared, though there may be some prioritizing. This concern is about mosquito- and tick-borne illnesses, and food borne illnesses.

Jamie was unable to weigh in regarding budget requests and financial concerns.

Primary Health Update: Dr. Damiano provided a summary of the activities of her programs.

The Mobile Integrated Health Units (MIH) are a joint collaboration between the hospital systems and the local fire entities. Metro Fire has taken the lead, along with the Hospital Association. Their intention was to provide services to Medi-Cal high utilizers. They paired a mid-level provider with a Medic in specially designed rigs for outreach to that population. They have been diverted to COVID-related functions. Four rigs have been deployed to do testing in chronic care facilities.

COVID has been a focus for Correctional Health. The Sheriff's Department has been very cooperative. As of this report, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19. Part of the early effort was to reduce the jail population. This was done in conjunction with the Court and Probation. Normally census is 3,500-3,700 inmates per day. Now they're at 2,400. There were bulk releases, based on specific criteria. There have also been decreases in arrests, going to cite-and-release when possible. This decreases the inflow into the jail. A number of COVID guidance documents were prepared, and these have been updated. Correctional Health keeps an eye on high-risk inmates. The jail has decreased transfers between facilities and stopped

social visitation. They also test all inmates coming into the jail. There has been enhanced cleaning. Anyone with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 is masked and isolated. Staff are masked or placed in PPE if necessary. If inmates have complex presentations, Dr. Kasirye is consulted. They have done over 100 COVID tests per day. Unfortunately, there have also been cases of false allegation of COVID, inmates who feign illness in an attempt to get out of jail, and those must be sorted out. All medical staff use masks and PPE. They are actually making masks at the Rio Consumnes Correctional Facility.

Emergency Medical Services is the medical health operations coordinator for the County, and they have been distributing PPEs. They get supplies from the State. They've issued over 5.9 million pieces of PPE to 250 different agencies. They also have mobile medical shelters and two have been deployed. One is used for screening. Kaiser is also using one, possibly as an extension of its emergency department. At the Emergency Operations Center, EMS has staffed several full time employees. Dr. Kasirye is the Incident Commander for this emergency.

The Women, Infant and Children Clinics (WIC) have been doing telephone appointments. They have actually increased their caseload from 76% to over 90%, primarily because of job losses and because people like the telephone contact. There has been some difficulty with breast feeding advice. People are provided nutritional information and other services. The EBT cards can be used at grocery stores.

There are 200 hotel rooms and additional Cal Expo trailers available for homeless individuals, especially those who are COVID positive, but because there are so few, the facilities are also offered to those who are very vulnerable with co-morbid conditions. Dr. Damiano is uncertain how many of the rooms have been used.

Other PHAB Items: We will continue to do Zoom meetings. Dr. Kaufman asked for suggestions regarding this platform.

Tina Slee expressed concern about Sacramento County's approach to masking. She is most concerned about all those people performing essential job functions, frontline workers in grocery stores, pharmacies, and elsewhere. LA County has issued a masking rule regarding its citizens. Jamie White clarified that this would be a cloth-based covering. She states that Dr. Kasirye has been in consultation with Health Officers around the State regarding this. Steve Orkand also wondered whether a more aggressive masking policy would be in order when businesses open up. He mentioned that there is currently a lackadaisical approach

to this in retail around the County. Dr. Kaufman is also concerned about protection of the most vulnerable as things open up.

Dr. Phil Summers was supposed to go to Vancouver for an addiction medicine rotation, but needed to rush home when the border was closing. He was recently in the Emergency Department at South Sacramento Kaiser. He has also been volunteering with a Mobile Integrated Health Unit, doing COVID testing. He reports that the ER at UC Davis responded robustly, but never experienced an overwhelming problem.

Jeff Rabinovitz wonders how Sacramento will develop “herd immunity.” One approach would be to allow low-risk individuals to venture out, exposing themselves to the virus, while protecting high risk individuals. This was the approach taken in Sweden. Jamie White said that the County would never endorse a “chicken pox party” approach, but does anticipate more exposure as businesses open up. We must be cautious since we don’t yet know if people can have this disease more than once. Jeff also wondered if we need to have testing available in every hospital and clinic, etc. Jamie responded that most clinics would be doing swabs, but not necessarily the full test.

Public Comment: There was none.

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM

Submitted by Steven Orkand, Scribe