

Chicago Board of Health Meeting
August 19, 2020
Remote Meeting

Pursuant to applicable law, the President determined that an in-person meeting was not practical or prudent. Accordingly, attendance at this meeting was via remote means only.

Roll Call

Board Members Present

Adele Joy Cobbs, M.D
Carolyn C. Lopez, M.D., President
Joseph B. Starshak
Steven K. Rothschild, M.D.
Horace E. Smith, M.D.
Victor M. Gonzalez
Melanie Dreher, RN, PhD.
Juan M. Calderon

Board Members Absent

Caswell A. Evans, Jr., D.D.S., M.P.H.

For the Department

Jennifer Layden, M.D., Deputy Commissioner

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Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:02am by Board President, Dr. Carolyn Lopez.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the July 2020 meeting were approved by the Board.

Commissioner's Update: Dr. Jennider Layden, Deputy Commissioner, and Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Public Health, presented Board members with a detailed data report on the Novel Coronavirus and provided an update on the status of COVID-19 in Chicago. Dr. Layden provided an overview to board members on the new COVID bureau that was established at the Department of Public Health, and provided an update on contact tracing efforts in partnership with the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. Dr. Layden also provided an overview to board members on the Department of Public Health's testing efforts in vulnerable minority communities. Dr. Layden shared an update on the Department of Public Health's continued collaboration with Chicago Public Schools. Dr. Layden informed board members that the City is meeting the target of 5,000 tests per day. Dr. Layden shared with board members that all testing and case information was publicly available, and updated daily, via the City's COVID dashboard at chi.gov/coronavirus.

Board President Comments: Dr. Lopez deferred her comments.

Board Member Comments: Member Gonzalez inquired about the City's emergency travel order. Dr. Layden provided an overview to board members on the quarantine requirements of the emergency travel order. Dr. Smith inquired on the Department of Public Health's efforts on vaccine trial outreach to minority communities. Dr. Lopez informed the board that she will contact Dr. Arwady directly to schedule a meeting with Dr. Smith and herself to discuss this further. Dr. Lopez will also ask Dr. Arwady to provide an update to the Board at the next meeting. Member Calderon spoke about his personal experience with COVID-19, and aired concerns about issues with contact tracing. Member Calderon also provided information to the Board about Illinois Unidos, a Latino COVID-19 consortium, and suggested a meeting with the group be scheduled. Dr. Rothschild reminded board members about the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Member Calderon also informed the board that Dr. Arwady, the Department of Public Health, and the City have not been responsive to the group's request for a meeting. Dr. Lopez informed board members that the reason Dr. Arwady was unable to join today's meeting was because she was meeting with this group at the Mayor's Office.

New Business: Board members engaged in a lively dialogue about the proposed closure of Mercy Hospital. Board members reviewed a draft press release prepared by member Calderon, and in place of this, voted to approve a formal statement. Six (6) members voted in the affirmative, two members (2) abstained (Dr. Cobbs and Starshak) and one (1) member was not present (Dr. Evans). The statement will be posted on the Board of Health website.

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Statement of the Chicago Board of Health Regarding Mercy Hospital

The Chicago Board of Health voices its concern about the proposed closure of Mercy Hospital in causing a health care desert impacting persons on the south and southwest side of Chicago. We call upon Governor Pritzker, Mayor Lightfoot, and the Illinois Health Facilities Board to halt the closure of Mercy until a study has been conducted to develop a short and long-term action plan for the health of the community and a permanent solution is found. Failure to act promptly will adversely impact the health and wellbeing of residents of Chicago.

Old Business: Dr. Lopez deferred the discussion on live markets.

Public Comments: Mr. Grillo, a representative of Slaughter Free Chicago, a group advocating to ban live markets and make Chicago a slaughter free city, requested that the organization's concerns be aired by the board at the September meeting. Dr. Lopez committed to allow sufficient time for live markets to be aired by the board at next month's meeting.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 10:33 AM.