

**ERIE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH (BOH)**  
**APRIL 28, 2014**  
**5:00 P.M.**  
**ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**PRESENT:**

Richard A. Ortoski, D.O., Chair  
Carolynn Masters, Ph.D., Vice-Chair  
Richard Dreyfus, M.D.  
Carla Picardo, M.D.  
Reverend Nettie Smith

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Melissa Lyon  
Karen Tobin  
Charlotte Berringer  
Nicole Bolash  
Valerie Bukowski  
Pamela Brunner  
Phil Fatica, County Council  
David Bruce, Erie Times-  
News

**GUESTS:**

Gary N. Lee, Director of Administration  
County of Erie

- I. **Call To Order:** Chairperson, Richard A. Ortoski, D.O., called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Board of Health Minutes from October 28, 2013, February 18, 2014 (Special Meeting/Executive Session), and February 24, 2014, were approved on a motion by Richard A. Ortoski, D.O., and seconded by Reverend Nettie Smith. All in favor.

Dr. Ortoski asked everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of all present.

- II. **Public Comments:** None.

- III. **Director's Report:** Melissa Lyon, MPH, Director of the Erie County Department of Health (ECDH), thanked the Board of Health for approving her for the position of Public Health Director. Melissa discussed the following:

- County Executive's "listening sessions" at ECDH: Staff at ECDH are concerned about: department staffing, budget, morale, conserving/preserving programs, and state and federal funding impacts. Melissa is working towards addressing these concerns voiced by staff.
- Dr. Ali Khan, Director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will be visiting ECDH on 4/29/14 to learn how recent budget reductions have affected ECDH, in both staffing and programmatically. Dr. Khan will speak at Mercyhurst University, Taylor Little Theatre, on 4/29/14 at 7 PM, addressing the importance of public health. His presentation is free and open to the public.

- IV. **Accreditation Status:** Nicole Bolash, Acting Manager of Health Education, reviewed the Department's accreditation status. On 4/28/14, an email was received from e-PHAB (Public Health Accreditation Board) requesting additional documentation by the Site Visit Team for 19 Measures. The documentation will be uploaded into e-PHAB before the 30-day response time is met. Initially, over 200 documents were uploaded into e-PHAB. The PHAB Site Visit Team is tentatively scheduled to be at ECDH June 24-25; these dates will be confirmed by PHAB after the additional documentation is submitted in e-PHAB. Board of Health members will be requested to be available for the Site Visit Surveyors; date/time confirmation will be sent to Board members. Nicole is preparing an Accreditation summary page that will be sent to Board members in advance of the Site Visit.

- Carolynn Masters, Ph.D. stated that the Accreditation process is a team effort and commended the ECDH team for their good work.

- V. **Old Business:** None to report.

VI. **New Business:**

- Letters of Recognition: Board of Health members signed Letters of Recognition for two recently retired staff of ECDH: Janet Vogt, former Manager of Health Education and Promotion, and Richard Knecht, former Manager of Public Health Preparedness. Both Janet and Richard devoted their tenure at ECDH to keeping the public informed on health and safety matters and were very involved in community health/safety partnerships.

VII. **Board Updates**

- Environmental Division Updates (ENV): Karen Tobin, Director of Environmental Services, presented updates on:
  - **Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs):** Local task force met during the winter to develop a brochure for distribution throughout Erie County in spring 2014 to inform the public about the dangers of blue-green algae. Alert signs are being developed and will be posted when toxins are present in waterways. Agency listings will be made available to the public to contact regarding algae blooms.

- West Nile Virus (WNV) Grant received for FY 2014. A per diem will be hired to fulfill the grant funded limitation of seasonal spraying only. Grant funding of \$3,000 for public education will be used for: brochures, radio and TV spots, and billboards, to provide information on emptying standing water, use of repellants, and proper clothing.
  - Beach Grant for FY 2014 awarded for \$209,000. Funds will be used for beach monitoring at Presque Isle and North East beaches.
  - Food Safety Regulations – Pennsylvania adopted the standard Federal Food Code; revisions go into effect on May 12, 2014. The Dept. of Agriculture developed a PowerPoint summarizing all the code changes which will be sent to all food facilities.
  - Ticks are on the increase in Erie County; as of April 28<sup>th</sup>, 32 ticks were turned into ECDH; all were deer ticks. ECDH does not test for Lyme Disease; education is given to individuals about the signs of Lyme Disease. Dr. Keller, LECOM, is working with ECDH to develop a brochure for Erie County, only, on ticks and Lyme Disease.
- Community Health Services (CHS): Charlotte Berringer, Director of Community Health Services, discussed the following:
- A total of 696 Influenza cases have been reported as of Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>; the majority are Type A, only 10 were Type B. The case number indicates that vaccines are working.
  - Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Grant application received; flat funding for FY 2014.
  - Refugee Health Grant recently received for FY 2013-2014. Current Grant expired 9/30/2013; grant contract work has continued despite the late receipt of the contract. Coordinator of Refugee Grant leaving position at ECDH on May 2, 2014 to work in the Office of the Erie County Executive, effective May 5, 2014. Coordinator position is posted on the County website.
  - Tuberculosis Grant renewed for FY 2014 at flat-funding. Funds support half of the ECDH Outreach Workers salary and fringes; remaining minimal funds used for grant contractual specifications.
  - Health Impact Council of United Way – Charlotte Berringer is chair of this Council and was part of the review process of local agencies applying for funding from the United Way of Erie County to address health and poverty in the Erie region. Funding award announcements expected the beginning of May 2014.
  - Vacant positions in CHS include 2 Public Health Nurses and 1 Public Health Records Clerk; postings of positions forthcoming.
- Public Health Preparedness (PHP): Valerie Bukowski, Acting Manager of Public Health Preparedness, stated that the PHP Grant for FY 2014 was reduced by 10 percent equating to a \$25,000 cut in funding from the PA DOH. This funding cut may continue through 2017.
- Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) meetings to begin with community partners. The CHNA is a requirement for local hospitals every 3 years and for ECDH Accreditation every 5 years. ECDH is a main partner of the CHNA. The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is a component of the CHNA; the next CHIP meeting of community agencies will be held in May 2014.
  - Global Infectious Disease Issues: 1) MERS – There has been a spike in the cases reported with 45% of those cases occurring in April 2014, with 75% cases being secondary. Saudi Arabia reported 24 cases April 26-27, 2014 and identified camels as the carrier source. Of the 385 cases reported to date, 100 deaths have occurred. World Health Organization (WHO) has posted an alert. 2) CHIKUNGUNYA – This mosquito borne disease has been reported in the Dominican Republic and Caribbean; with a 20 percent increase in cases occurring in April 2014. The disease is expected to be in the USA within the next 12-24 months. Symptoms are flu-like. Cruise lines have not been forthcoming with information to passengers about this disease.
    - Dr. Richard Dreyfus stated that new cases of Polio have been reported in Africa, and asked Valerie Bukowski to research and provide information back to him. Additionally, approximately 30 cases of a Polio-like virus have been reported on the west coast of the USA. Valerie will research.
- Health Promotion and Quality Improvement (HED): Nicole Bolash, Acting Manager of Health Promotion and QI, reported on the following:
- Quality Improvement at ECDH: Funds were provided to local agency, Keystone Research Corp., to assist the QI Team at ECDH on improvement measures.
  - Grant award of \$250,000/year for the combined grants of Safety & Healthy Communities (SHC) and Injury Prevention (IP) has been received for FY 2014-17. Staff funding was reduced to 2.5 full-time Public Health Educators (PHEs). The combined grant narratives target education in health and safety topics, however, budgets remain separate. Funds will help support various programs of which two are: Medicine Return Units that are stationed throughout the city and county to assist the public in disposing of prescription and non-

prescription drugs. Falls Prevention for the elderly through a program at Joy Senior Center with information disseminated throughout the community.

- Carolynn Masters, Ph.D., stated that Gannon University is opening an analysis lab to monitor gait and motor skills of the elderly to improve balance; lab will be part of doctoral and graduate student studies. Offer of assistance given, if needed to support SHC & IP grant requirements.
- Highway Safety Grant renewal grant application narrative being written; due to PennDOT by mid-May 2014.
- GIS Grant awarded to ECDH to map chronic diseases in the region. The GIS Grant was written in partnership with three local health departments in Ohio. The University of Michigan will provide training on GIS mapping. There is not a monetary award. However, awardees will receive free software, training, and technical support. For more details visit: <http://www.chronicdisease.org/?page=CVHCAnnouncements>
  - Dr. Masters stated that Gannon University is utilizing a GIS mapping program which could support this grant if needed.
  - The Erie Water Authority also has a GIS program.
- American Lung Association (ALA) announced that Pennsylvania was awarded \$120 million in contested tobacco-lawsuit settlement funds. The original tobacco settlement in 2013 resulted in the loss of 1.5 full-time Public Health Educators at ECDH. The current ECDH Tobacco Grant is fully funded for FY 2014, pending release of the state budget.
  - Discussion on E-cigarettes: FDA has no regulations at this time on age restrictions, sales, advertising and promotion of E-cigarettes. Advocacy groups are lobbying FDA to set restrictions. Noteworthy: Poison Control calls have increased due to the amount of nicotine in E-cigarette vapors.
  - Local bar owner contacted ECDH Tobacco staff to inquire about E-cigarette restrictions; with no restrictions set, bar owners can allow E-cigarettes even if they are “smoke-free” establishments.
  - Dr. Carla Picardo forwarded info to BOH members and ECDH directors from the NEJM Journal Watch related to E-cigarettes.

**VIII. Other Business:** Dr. Richard Ortoski welcomed Melissa Lyon as the Director of the Erie County Department of Health, and noted that Melissa has good staff at ECDH to support her and the public.

Dr. Ortoski thanked Karen Tobin for her support of ECDH during her position as Acting Director of the Erie County Department of Health.

**IX. Adjournment:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m., on a motion by Carolynn Masters, Ph.D., and seconded by Richard A. Ortoski, D.O.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela K. Brunner, Recording Secretary

**The next Health Board meeting is scheduled for:**

**MONDAY, JULY 28, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.**  
**At the Erie County Dept. of Health, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**