

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Special Meeting Minutes
Mansfield Community Center, Community Room
Friday, March 13, 2020

Members present: E. Anderson (Andover), J. Carrington (Mansfield), J. Kelly (Bolton), T. Nuccio (Tolland), E. Paterson (Mansfield), B. Syme (Scotland) D. Walsh (Coventry), M. Walters (Columbia),

Staff present: R. Miller, C. Serazo, M. Brosseau, A. Gonzalez, K. Dardick (5:35 pm)

Others: E. Wiczenski (Willington), K. Zito (Andover), R. Dougherty (Andover), W. Hooper (Chaplin), G. Greenberg (Scotland), B. Derring (Columbia)

Call to Order: E. Paterson called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

R. Miller welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

R. Miller presented an overview of the COVID-19 outbreak. He noted that some of the information in the Powerpoint presentation, while updated today, is already outdated.

R. Miller informed the board that the State health department testing only hospitalized

Introduced Dr. Dardick, medical advisor for Eastern Highlands Health District.

R. Miller informed the board that a primary concern is the senior population and has compile a list of contacts for senior centers and programs. If you represent a senior program and are not on the list, tell Millie or Cecile.

T. Nuccio asked why schools are being closed for only 2 weeks when it is expected that in 6-8 weeks 20-25% of the population may be infected. R. Miller noted that this is a preemptive move with the intent of effecting the initial transmission. A reassessment will be done after 2 weeks. D. Dardick added that the 6-8 weeks is if we do nothing. The intention is to blunt the peak. And while the number of cases may be the same they may be spread further apart. W. Hooper noted that blunting the peak will aid in not overwhelming the health care system.

R. Miller noted that his office will support each municipality's decision regarding closures.

R. Miller encouraged planning for continuity of operations.

R. Miller noted that his office is compiling tactics and strategies other public buildings are using.

Tolland has declared Local Civil Preparedness & Public Health Emergency; Coventry may soon follow as will the town of Mansfield. The Town of Mansfield may be closing some buildings for an undetermined time.

G. Greenberg inquired as to whether there is any coordination between DPH and people in charge of FOIA regarding public hearings continuing. Legal task force has been activated by the State Health Department. R. Miller will forward the question to the legal task force.

R. Miller noted that schools are not closed, students are dismissed.

E. Anderson inquired about timelines for applications and protocols for hearings. R. Miller requested that he send the question in an email. That email will be forwarded to the legal task force.

R. Miller informed the board that everyone should be tracking expenses related to COVID-19.

R. Miller stated that the State has requested assets from Strategic National Stockpile.

E. Paterson questioned what Windham Hospital is doing. R. Miller informed the board that all acute care facilities are preparing their EDs, reviewing patient surge plan, setting up alternative places for screening and testing symptomatic patients; labs are trying to ramp up for testing.

W. Hooper asked what will happen when local hospitals are overwhelmed. Will EMTs be doing triage in the field?

D. Walsh inquired as to whether there has been any discussions at the hospitals to reopen closed wings. R. Miller noted that it is his understanding that it is part of the surge plan.

E. Anderson questioned whether town facilities would be used for sheltering. R. Miller responded not at this time.

T. Nuccio expressed concern that we are not aggressive enough in our efforts to protect the senior population. She wanted to know what could be done to be more proactive and encourage seniors to stay home and put plans in place to help make that happen. R. Miller noted that all ideas will be considered.

W. Hooper suggested the use of the reverse 911 system or setting up a non-emergency number for people to utilize.

R. Dougherty inquired about how to handle distribution of food from food pantries. R. Miller suggested employing tactics to encourage social distancing. E. Wiczenski noted that Willington is planning to set up appointments.

E. Paterson inquired about whether the community center rentals at her condominium complex should be ceased. R. Miller stated that any efforts for social distancing will be supported.

R. Miller noted that we all can model calming behavior to help allay the fears and concerns of the public. He further noted that there is an emotional risk to seniors as we discourage social gathering.

E. Paterson requested that contact information be added to the flyer "Plan Don't Panic", and redistribute flyer to senior programs.

M. Walter suggested that an Everbridge message be sent out regularly.

D. Walsh asked if Sars has a vaccine. Dr. Dardick responded no.

D. Walsh inquired as to the symptoms that people should be aware of. Dr. Dardick noted that there are no unique symptoms. The severity of the symptoms is the concern, such as high temp and difficulty in breathing.

R. Miller informed that board that the agency may need to support mass vaccination clinics and if that happens, he will need the full support of the board.

E. Anderson asked if there are specific guidelines for EMDs regarding personal protective gear. R. Miller noted that the CDC has guidelines and referred the board to that site.

T. Nuccio asked what is done to treat those that are ill. Dr. Dardick informed that it is supportive treatment.

B. Syme suggested EHHD share simple information on social media.

E. Anderson asked what increases someone's vulnerability. Dr. Dardick noted that we do not know.

R. Miller gave the closing message that our focus needs to be on protecting the elderly. This means coming up with tactics to support them, getting information to them and supporting their emotional, behavioral and physical needs. This also means protecting the healthcare system. R. Miller stated we need to remain calm do our part to model behavior. There will be life after COVID-10.

A listserv will be set up to distribute information to the elderly.

R. Miller invited all to attend the weekly conference calls that he participates in. These are Wednesdays at 1pm.

E. Paterson thanked everyone for coming and noted that he will keep everyone informed. She then **adjourned** the meeting at 10:10

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Miller
Secretary

