

HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES August 18, 2020 1:00 pm

Members Present:

Dr. Robert Hawley, DDS
Mr. Jaime Correa
Mr. James McCoy
Dr. Lynn Robinson

Staff Present:

Ms. Veronica Escalona
Ms. Annette Lerma
Ms. Julia Agawu
Dr. Annie Drachenberg
Mr. Chace Craig, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Hawley called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and Ms. Veronica recorded the minutes. A quorum of members was present, and the meeting proceeded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Hawley asked the board to review the minutes from the last meeting on March 24, 2020. Dr. Hawley asked if any members objected to minute approval; No objections. Minutes approved.

The Board approved the minutes.

AGENDA ITEMS & PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. **Update:** Introduction of new Health Advisory Board member Mr. Jaime Correa, AbiMar Foods Chief Executive Officer (Annette Lerma, Health Services Director)

- Ms. Lerma introduced Mr. Correa as the replacement for Mr. Tom Perini as a representative for the food industry according to the Health Advisory Board bylaws. Mr. Correa is the Chief Executive Officer for AbiMar Food and Production. He's been involved in public health and an excellent partner with the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District (ATCPHD). She spoke highly about how quickly he and his AbiMar team responded to the COVID-19 outbreak at AbiMar. Mr. Correa stated it's an honor to be a part of this board and the key to success is collaboration. He stated it was easy for him to accept the invitation to become a board member. He has 600 people working at AbiMar. He has a good understanding of the population of the City. He also thanked Annette and the health department for their support.

3. **Update:** Introduction of new Data Analyst Asitha Mudiyansele (Annette Lerma, Health Services Director)

- Ms. Lerma gave some background for the reason we have a Data Analyst. The amount of data that the health department was trying to collect and turnaround to report on was challenging as the events of the pandemic unfolded. Julia Agawu (Epidemiologist) carried the burden of managing all of this data building worksheets and google sheets. The health department did not have the tools needed to do this job right. Ms. Lerma stated that she wanted to bring a data analyst with intimate knowledge of the software that it takes to automate a lot of this data. Mr. Mudiyansele has been on board for about a month. He's from Oklahoma attending Oklahoma State University for his Master's degree in Applied Mathematics and Statistics. In addition, he has three years of experience in the apparel manufacturing company from Sri Lanka working with analytics.

4. Update and Discussion: New Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) data analysis dashboard (Asitha Mudiyansele, Data Analyst)

- Mr. Mudiyansele talked about the dashboard snapshots of COVID-19 data showing the Polymerase Chain Reaction or PCR test data, antigen data, and then total showing PCR and antigen. Ms. Lerma stated this new data will be released next Monday, August 24, 2020.

5. Update: Presentation of the new Contact Tracer Program describing the required training, job duties, and the reporting system TX TRACE (Julia Agawu, Epidemiologist)

- Ms. Agawu back in early July or late June it was decided that it was time to hire contact tracers to help take care of positive COVID-19 investigations. The health department was reporting 40 to 50 cases per day, 11 contact tracers, John Hopkins Contact Tracing course 5-6 hours web-based, they come onsite for orientation on epidemiology and reporting that has been done until now and what COVID-19 reporting looks like now, the process from getting tested to when that test reaches our fax machine and what happens to that information; listen in on contact tracing calls, until they are comfortable doing their own calls, while she listens in to provide support; 2 weeks and the 3rd week they take calls on their own. The state provided the system TX TRACE to help with investigation and data collection cloud-based, we can create close contact records and update easily if that contact becomes a COVID-19 positive case, replaces the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System or NEDSS that has been used for reportable diseases. Ms. Lerma informed that in addition to the 11 Contact Tracers we have 9 library staff members that are also helping with just COVID-19 activities.

6. Update and Discussion: Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District response to COVID-19 testing, types of testing being utilized, school openings, current and future coordination with schools (Dr. Annie Drachenberg, Medical Director/Health Authority)

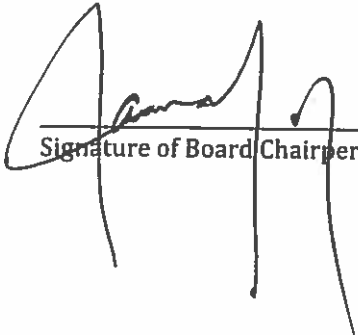
- Dr. Drachenberg discussed the history of Taylor County's positive COVID-19 case counts and our response. The test to confirm that a person had COVID-19 is a PCR swab. The state and the public health department were the only places providing this test. Shortly after that multiple commercial labs began getting PCR testing available to the community. PCR remains the gold standard as far as testing for this virus. The rapid serology test was developed due to the long turnaround time for PCR test results. These blood tests look for either an Immunoglobulin or IgG response or an Immunoglobulin M or IgM response to COVID-19. The rapid test is not considered the gold standard of testing but it gives clues on what's happening in the person's body. PCR test is a lab confirmed case and rapid serology test is a probable case. She stated that she agrees with the many medical professionals that opening schools is a better idea than not opening schools depending on what it looks like in the community. There was waiting on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to give the school districts their guidance as far as funding. TEA left it up to the Public Health Authority to determine the COVID-19 situation in our community. The Attorney General made it clear that the Public Health Authority cannot close schools as a preventive measure. That decision lies on the school district. She met with the superintendent and the school's physician of the two school districts to discuss the options, get advice, and feedback to make the decision together. She reviewed the two school district's strategies to provide guidance and feedback. She stated that open communication such as weekly call in sessions with school principals and school nurses, scenario exercises, and her availability to answer questions will be implemented.

7. Consideration & Possible Action: 2020 Health Advisory Board final meeting date and time November 17, 2020. All meetings are scheduled for 1:00 p.m. (Annette Lerma, Health Services Director)

- Ms. Lerma provided the last scheduled meeting date for this year. Members agreed to scheduled date.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Hawley adjourned the meeting at 1:51 p.m. The next Board of Health meeting will be November 17, 2020 at 1:00 PM

 11/17/2020
Signature of Board Chairperson/Date