

Norwalk Health Department Board of Health Actions

Board of Health Monthly Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2007
8:00 AM Library

Call to order at 8:05 AM

Present: Board of Health – Ken Lalime, RPH, John McNamara, MD, Edward Tracey, MD and Theresa Quell, PhD, RN,

Staff – Tim Callahan, Director of Health, David Reed, MD, Medical Advisor, and Larry Cross, Executive Director Norwalk Community Health Center

Minutes of November 13, 2007 meeting – A motion to approve was made by Ms Quell, seconded by Mr. Lalime, and approved unanimously.

Norwalk Community Health Center Update

Mr. Cross provided utilization information for the most recently completed fiscal year. There were 9,000 unduplicated patients who accounted for 30,000 visits, 12,000 each in Adult Medicine and Pediatrics and 6,000 in Ob/Gyn. There were 400 births, which accounted for 25% of all births in Norwalk. Nearly 70% of the Ob patients were uninsured. Mr. Cross is applying for a section 330 grant from the federal government. The funding is for \$650,000 per year and the grant is renewed annually. These funds are intended to help community health centers offset the cost of free care. The center's policy is to care for all patients regardless of their ability to pay for services. One of the challenges NCHC faces is a competing proposal for federal funds from Community Health Center Inc, (CHC) the federally qualified health center currently providing dental services at a facility located on Day St., several blocks from NCHC's Water St location. Adele Gordon, a CHC manager, met with Mr. Callahan recently and told him of their plan to seek the approval of the federal government to expand their service offerings to include primary care. The Board discussed and questioned the rationale for adding another predominantly publicly funded provider to a system, which currently is limited to NCHC, the AmeriCare Clinic and a few private practitioners. The primary interest of the Board is to insure continuity of care and the wise expenditure of public funds. Dr McNamara suggested offering the CHC CEO an invitation to meet with the Board of Health to provide details on his plan. Mr. Callahan will ask Mark Masselli, President of CHC to meet with the Board at their January 8, 2008 meeting.

Health Department Software Purchase

The Health Department uses a custom designed software application for the environmental laboratory and administrative programs. The software is used to support the inspection and licensing/permitting of the various environmental program components, laboratory test results and the administrative support for these program areas.

The decision to replace the current software was made for the following reasons. Since coming on line in 1993, many changes have been made to the Health Department software program and several new versions of FoxPro have been issued. A major rewrite and upgrade to the most recent version of FoxPro is necessary to improve the software operating efficiency. Second, the currently process is primarily paper driven. Inspector's complete standardized forms in the field and the results are entered into the system by support staff. More recent products offer the option to use hand held computers in the field. Again, there is an opportunity to improve staff efficiency. Third, the software products reviewed offer options not included in the current FoxPro system, such as web based access to information on septic systems and development of distribution lists to various customers. Finally, grant funds are available for the acquisition of the software and hardware. The set up fee for these modules is \$48,837.50.

A work group dedicated to developing and a request for proposals (RFP), reviewing submissions and making a recommendation was formed. The members include Tim Callahan, Director of Health, Al Kao, Laboratory Director and IT Coordinator, Pat DiPietro, Business Manager, Tom Closter, Director of Environmental Health, Karen DelVecchio, IT Director and Frank Sarno, Deputy. Two responses to the RFP were received. Representatives made web demonstrations from Decade Software Co. and Garrison Enterprises. The work group found the Garrison Enterprises product to be desirable. Three references were contacted and all were satisfied with the Garrison Enterprises software. Mr. Callahan is seeking the necessary approvals to move forward with the purchase.

Lyme Disease Follow up

As reported last month the health directors in the region are willing, able and ready to participate in a regional educational effort. This sentiment was shared with Matt Carter, MD acting chief of infectious diseases at the state health department. Dr Carter said the plan is to fund one community in Windham and Fairfield counties. Mr. Callahan suggested the state health department consider working with all of the communities in the region and use the state funds to leverage a commitment of local dollars. Dr Carter has not responded to this proposal.

Other Business

Geese

Alexis Cherichetti, The City's Conservation Inspector and the Norwalk representative to the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative sent the following update.

"The Norwalk River Watershed Initiative (NRWI) has been a bit on hold in the absence of our paid Coordinator. We actually just sent out a contract to our newly hired Coordinator this morning.

Anyway, we did receive a 319 grant (EPA funds) to move our Goose Management Program along. It will mostly focus on egg oiling. We will be looking for assistance in locating problematic breeding areas and we will need to identify volunteers (or City staff's in-kind services) who would be trained to oil eggs during a one-week period in the

spring. I have not spoken to Mike Mocciae anymore about any adult goose population reduction program (culling).”

Obesity

The Recess Rocks dance program is scheduled for implementation in the next marking period. An update will be sent to the Board as soon as the details are finalized.

The 2007 BMI report on Kindergarten and 6th grade students is nearly complete and will be forwarded to the Board before the January 2008 meeting.

The Norwalk Public Schools administrators are working with the various after school program providers to enhance the programs. Hugh McKiernan, the Director of Elementary Education, is intent on including a physical activity component in the curriculum.

Accreditation

Mr. Callahan was appointed to the Public Health Accreditation Board Standards Development Workgroup. The group will begin their work in February 2008 and a July 2008 completion date is expected.

Adjourn 9:15 AM

