

City-County Board of Health for Lincoln County – Special Meeting

Ponderosa Room

6:00 PM, December 16, 2020

1. Call to Order (6:00 pm)

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call – Jan Ivers, Jim Seifert, Sara Mertes (by phone), Josh Letcher (by phone), Deb Armstrong (by phone)

2. Presentations

- Jan Ivers gave a welcome and introduction. Explained that this meeting is meant to be educational in response to requests from the public. The meeting is limited to one hour. Jan provided a brief explanation of viruses and pandemics.
- **Organizational Structure** – Mark Peck presented information on the organizational structure and authorities of the BOH. 50-2-106 gives options for types of health boards. Lincoln County chose the city-county health board option so that cities have representation. Commissioners appoint four members, and each city appoints one member. BOH has authorities that commissioners and cities do not have (50-2-116). Commissioners appoint health board and BOH appoints health officer. BOH can replace health officer but this would be a drastic move. Commissioners and mayors can exert indirect influence.
- **Finances** – Kathi Hooper presented information on budgets. The BOH budget is approved annually by commissioners. BOH expenditures in FY20 totaled \$15,790, including approximately \$9400 for legal services and \$6300 for health officer. The BOH does not receive any direct funding and has not received any COVID funding. The Health Department budget is also approved annually by commissioners. Health Department funding is primarily grants, cooperative agreements and fees. The Health Department has received two COVID related grants of \$83,500 each.
- **Testing** – Lyn Thompson presented on COVID testing. Lyn is a clinical laboratory biologist at CPMC. Lyn described 3 basic tests. 1. Molecular diagnostic PCR is accurate, timely, sensitive, and specific. PCR is the gold standard and has been around for many years. PCR does not tell you if a patient is contagious or infectious. 2. Antigen tests look for a protein on the virus. It is less specific and less sensitive, but quicker than PCR. Sample must be taken when patient is shedding virus. 3. Antibody tests look for antibodies that were produced in response to an infection.
- **Collaborative Medical Care** – Dr. Sara Mertes explained that Covid patients are being tested at all 3 Libby clinics, hospital, Health Department and CARD. Providers evaluate symptomatic patients for Covid and other conditions including influenza and strep. If a person tests positive for Covid, the Health Department does significant follow up. The provider gives the patient info on how to manage symptoms and follows up by phone, Telemed, or in clinic. CPMC tries to keep Covid patients in Libby but transports to Kalispell as necessary. CPMC is hoping to make monoclonal antibody infusion available in Libby, but currently it is available in Kalispell. Dr. Mertes reported that Dr. Carvey in North Lincoln County reports a similar process for testing and seeing patients. Dr. Carvey also provides handouts for patients about staying healthy and recommending supplements. It is not the Health

Department's role to recommend treatments or supplements, that should be left to providers.

- **Contact Tracing** – Jennifer McCully presented on contact tracing. The Health Department is notified of a positive case through a number of channels. The Health Department calls the positive person and looks 48 hours before symptom onset or positive test to identify close contacts. The positive person must isolate in the home away from other people for 10 days and at least 24 hours without symptoms. The positive person is connected to resources. Close contacts are quarantined for 14 days, but early release is possible on day 8 if the quarantined individual remains asymptomatic and tests negative on days 5-7 or on day 11 if they remain asymptomatic for 10 days without testing. Fourteen days is still most protective.
- **Vaccination** – Dr. Kelli Jarrett presented on the Covid vaccine. She gave a summary on how vaccines work. The Covid vaccine is mRNA technology that has been around for a decade or so. Pfizer vaccines have received FDA emergency use approval and Moderna vaccines will be reviewed next week. Both have completed phase 3 testing, which is the gold standard. The incidence of any adverse reaction was 27% in those vaccinated and 12% in those who received placebo. Most reactions are mild to moderate including fever or pain at injection site. Both vaccines are two doses and provide 95% efficacy after two doses.

3. **Public Comment** – Jan Ivers stated that the meeting had gone over time. She provided the Covid website and Covid info line and Kathi's e-mail for questions or comments. Kathi can forward questions to the presenters.

- Jim Seifert proposed a grading system for public places excluding churches and schools. He believes this would be enforced by the citizens of Lincoln County and could be a guide for citizens to decide if a business is safe. He also stated that vaccine documentation is transparent, and discussion of mandatory vaccines is gaslighting.

4. **Adjourn** (7:16pm)

Next Board of Health Meeting is January 13th

Janet Leber 1/13/2021

Sam Jett 1-13-2021