

BOARD OF HEALTH

Tony J. Van Goor, MD, President
Janna West Kowalski, MS, Vice President
Bernard Birnbaum, MD
Brian DelGrosso
Christy Bush, MHS

Mission:

Working to provide everyone in Larimer County the opportunity for a healthy life.

Vision:

Larimer County is a thriving, health-aware community where everyone has access to healthy choices and a healthy environment.

LARIMER COUNTY Joint Board of Health (BoH) / Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) Meeting - October 20, 2022

The Larimer County Board of Health (BoH) and Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) convened their annual joint meeting at 6:00 p.m, in-person, at 1525 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins, CO, 80524, and virtually through the Zoom platform.

Members Present: Dr Tony J. Van Goor
Janna West Kowalski
Christy Bush
Dr Bernard Birnbaum
Brian DelGrosso

Executive Secretary: Director Tom Gonzales

County Staff: Commissioner John Kefalas, Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally, Commissioner Kristin Stephens (virtually), Andrea Clement-Johnson, Kori Wilford, Kelsey Lyon, Chris Manley, Erika Cathey, Dr Paul Mayer, Talia Hirsch, Bron MacGregor, Olivia Kraus.

Call to Order - Dr Tony J. Van Goor, Board President, called the Joint BoH /BoCC meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Public Comment - No Public Comment was made.

Approval of September 15, 2022 Minutes

Action - Dr Bernie Birnbaum moved to approve the minutes. Ms Christy Bush seconded the motion.

Motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Conversation with Board of County Commissioners



Tom Gonzales, Public Health Director, introduced the department's Strategic Plan and three critical public health issues: Air Quality, Child Fatality Review and Substance-use, Abuse and Overdose. Director Gonzales thanked the BoCC for the financial support to expand our air quality efforts. There will be a focus on health in all policies in 2023. Commissioner Kefalas commended the department on a good job overall and supports the emphasis on hiring people with diverse skills from all sectors of the community.

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally agreed that the strategic goals and core strategies are good and especially appreciated the Invest in Our People initiative to support and strengthen the existing workforce. She outlined efforts that the BoCC is currently involved in, noting there is some overlap between the work of the BoCC & the BoH. Discussions would be helpful to assess what resources can be leveraged and suggested that both Boards should meet and/or talk more than annually. She noted that resiliency strengthening is a focus as well as rebuilding and restoration.

Commissioner Kristin Stephens thanked Director Gonzales for sharing the "What is Public Health?" video which helps to identify shared priorities. She appreciated the equity piece which addressed people who are struggling and the data that LCDHE collects, as it has an impact on BoCC decisions and budget allocations. Investing in staff is important and she anticipates increasing roles for public health within the community. The pandemic made some challenges more visible, and she believes LCDHE is on track with the work plan. She also asked how the BoCC could best support the work plan. Dr Bernard Birnbaum agreed that there are lots of overlapping issues and that the After-Action Report (AAR) was helpful in highlighting some things that need attention. Health in all policies is imperative but is difficult to integrate into policy. Dr Birnbaum said that local public health has the data but struggles with a lack of resources. Mr Brian DelGrosso commended LCDHE for stepping up and rising to the occasion during the pandemic. Mr DelGrosso thanked Director Gonzales for streamlining processes and congratulated the staff. Dr Tony Van Goor, Board President, agreed that LCDHE is a value-based organization that runs efficiently and economically. Ms Janna West Kowalski said there has been a significant impact of the pandemic on the public health workforce and noted that Colorado lost nearly 50% of local public health directors during the pandemic. Ms West Kowalski noted that counties which have implemented health in all policies have seen improved outcomes and decreased inequities. Ms Christy Bush said that as the newest member of the BoH who worked at LCDHE previously, she is very excited by the Strategic Plan. Commissioner Kefalas said governmental departments need to be more intentional in rebuilding trust within communities. Commissioner Kefalas also affirmed and honored the staff.

Commissioner Stephens stated the Workforce Development Board has hired someone who will be hiring nurses and they are investigating ways to affect the workforce. Commissioner Kefalas highlighted rural vs urban issues, transport, and limited access to public health.

Dr Van Goor said that LCDHE has been working with the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) and asked if there was anything else the department needed to be doing. Commissioner Kefalas responded that an overview will be discussed at the community conversation next week. Commissioner Stephens agreed that transportation is a big contributor to air quality and the impact is as important as the oil and

gas industries. The BoCC is looking at funding to help eliminate vehicle emissions and working on other various influencing factors.

Director Gonzales pointed out that funding for public health in Colorado is complex. Over 80% funding received from CDPHE grants and fees is mandated to be spent on specific activities and deliverables. This funding structure is an obstacle for LCDHE to easily pivot and to be nimble. Commissioner Shaddock-McNally suggested that local public health might offer perspective and partner with the Office of Aging, instead of starting new programs. Dr Van Goor commented that he agreed that LCDHE might do well to formally engage with the Office of Aging. Dr Birnbaum responded that LCDHE tries to be facilitators and create partnerships but that they must look at general fund dollars and they cannot address all issues. Commissioner Stephens agreed and said there is some money from the general fund which will be going towards air quality initiatives. She noted that the budget reflects the value that LCDHE has in the community. Dr Van Goor expressed his appreciation for the conversation and thanked the Commissioners for their participation.

Strategic Plan Objectives Update

Talia Hirsch, Strategic Planning & Health Equity Initiatives Program Supervisor, presented an update on the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. In the last two years, the Leadership and Management Teams have driven the Strategic Plan, but we are shifting more towards staff engagement and implementation. The new staff orientation has been a great success, with 75% of all staff having attended a session. Ms Hirsch shared data from both pre and post orientation program implementation which demonstrated a strong positive correlation. There has been a lot of work done on Investing In Our People (IIOP). Staff engagement activities are hosted monthly and there is a focus on creating a trauma-informed workplace. The implementation of new policy systems and processes, the technology roadmap, and fostering a culture of Quality Improvement (QI) are also activities. There have been three areas identified to implement QI into the Strategic Plan. The QI team begins their project in early November and work on the 2023 goals is in process. Ms Hirsch also highlighted LCDHE's equity initiatives and the equity goals that have been established for teams.

Commissioner Kefalas asked what was meant by "cultural humility" and Ms Hirsch responded that is the next level from cultural competence where we recognize bias, appreciate and respect different cultures. Ms Bush was impressed with how much work has gone into the Strategic Plan and how it has been implemented so well. Ms West Kowalski agreed that it was a powerful presentation, and she appreciated the pre and post data, complimenting the level of staff engagement. Commissioner Kefalas asked about preparations for serving persons with disabilities. Ms Hirsch explained the Language Access Plan, and that we are working with Risk Management to identify a Braille translator. One option we are exploring is through Voyance, our current on-call translation service, which offers ASL interpretation through video.

Public Health Director Goals Update

Director Gonzales gave an update on his annual goals which have been integrated into the Strategic Plan. Director Gonzales has been holding listening sessions with staff throughout the year. All feedback

is taken back to the Leadership Team to discuss changes and improvements. A goal-focused team building workshop is scheduled for Oct 26th and 28th for both Leadership and Management teams. Ms West Kowalski said all these goals help measure data on staff satisfaction and retention.

UPDATES

Director's Update

Kori Wilford, Office of Communications and Technology Manager, said the "Stay Healthy This Fall" media campaign has been launched and has been very successful. A larger "Make a Plan" campaign (both radio and video in English and Spanish) will be launched within the next few weeks.

Board Member Updates

Ms West Kowalski has developed a timeline and plan for the Public Health Director's Evaluation process which will be distributed by Human Resources on November 1, 2022. The BoH and senior staff will participate in the evaluation. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected. She has worked with Bron MacGregor, Executive Assistant to the Public Health Director, to create the BoH self-evaluation survey which will also be sent out on November 1, 2022.

Dr Van Goor attended a Legislative session with Northern Colorado Medical Society earlier in the month. Behavioral health was heavily discussed at the event, as well as what each candidate would do to address behavioral health issues.

Commissioner Kefalas highlighted the upcoming "Let's Talk About Mental Health Now" public campaign designed to raise awareness of the importance of mental health in communities. This event will be held October 28th from 5-7pm at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery.

Dr Van Goor found the first LCDHE newsletter to be very informative. He asked Dr Paul Mayer, Medical Officer, for information on new COVID-19 variants. Dr Mayer explained the challenges of tracking all variants as the virus continues to mutate and emphasized that what is important is that treatment remains the same. There is a great deal of media attention on the various sub-variants which is distracting from the core public health message - communities must continue to get vaccinated and boosted, test early if symptoms appear, and use therapeutics. In other words, we should focus on using the tools we have available to us.

Adjourn Meeting

Dr Birnbaum moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms West Kowalski seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.