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State Board of Health

March 9, 2023

11:00AM-1:30PM

Minutes

Call in # 312-535-8110

Code: 2461 848 0510

Meeting can be viewed here:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/ldr.php?RCID=57717331698fd1b704268bc843c20db7>

Minutes

1. Call to Order – 11am
 - a. Present: Rashmi Chugh, Jack Herrmann, Angela Oberreiter, Joseph O'Connor, Karen Phelan, Julie Pryde, Erica Salem, Esther Sciammarella, Susan Swider
 - b. Absent: Damon Arnold, Pilar Guerrero, Nathan Hoffmann
 - c. IDPH staff: Michael Claffey, Omayra Giachello, Allison Nickrent, Mark Stevens, Amaal Tokars, Tracey Trigillo,
 - d. Guests: Lynne Bergero, Tim Stumm, Betty Wendford, Ryan Voyles
2. Public Comment—n/a
3. Old Business
 - a. Review of 12/8/22 State Board of Health Minutes—Karen Phelan, State Board of Health Chair--approved
 - b. Review of 2/16/23 Rules Committee Minutes—Karen Phelan, Rules Committee Chair—approved, with corrections
 - c. Review of 2/23/23 Policy Committee Minutes—Damon Arnold, Policy Committee Chair—approved
4. New Business
 - a. Communications Presentation—Lauri Sanders

Ms. Sanders presented on what staff is doing to improve the image of the Department. There was focus on communicating with various audiences across Illinois with new ways to develop an effective communications strategy and finding effective communication methods to reach said audiences. There were questions regarding volunteer ambassadors. Another question posed was about the languages used in different communications; English, Spanish, Chinese, Polish, German, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, and Swahili. Also asked was the number of staff in the communications department, and it is a small department. There was also discussion regarding the new infrastructure grant, the website, and engaging downstate Illinoisians in the volunteer ambassador program to encourage residents to be active in keeping their community healthy.

b. Lunch and Learn update—Jack Herrmann

Members were satisfied with the last Lunch and Learn and expressed their thanks.

5. Updates

a. IDPH State of the Department—Director Sameer Vohra

Being seven months into his position as Director, Director Vohra provided updates from his office. Director Vohra reflected on the lack of preparedness to address COVID-19 and lessons learned three years later, including:

- the usage of telehealth and its benefits
- health equity legislation that passed the General Assembly
- a CDC grant to assist the Department in modernizing its practices
- updating communications and technology tools
- reforming the Department's work culture
- evidence-based policy making
- educating other agencies and organizations on public health and its intersectional relevancy to other issues (i.e. gun violence, transportation), and
- overall, a unified and equitable approach to public health

Ms. Sanders inquired about reaching constituents in areas where people do not believe the pandemic exists, along with rural areas. Director Vohra shared his personal experiences relevant to this question and shared that an updated communications plan is necessary. Joseph O'Connor asked the Director about loan forgiveness for public health careers at the Federal level. Director Vohra stated that he has been in discussions that have mentioned the idea, but there needs to be a broader definition of how we define our health workforce. Erica Salem expressed interest the SBOH of becoming more vocal on climate. Esther Sciammarella talked about resources for community health workers. Ms. Susan Swider asked about training public health workers on what public health is.

6. Proposed 2023 Meetings

a. **STATE BOARD OF HEALTH 11:00 - 1:30 PM**

- i. March 9
- ii. June 8
- iii. September 7
- iv. December 7

b. **STATE BOARD OF HEALTH RULES COMMITTEE 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

- i. May 11
- ii. August 17
- iii. November 9

c. **STATE BOARD OF HEALTH POLICY COMMITTEE 1:00 - 3:00 PM**

- i. May 18
- ii. August 24

iii. November 16

7. Adjournment—1:21pm