

**CECIL COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
November 12, 2019**

PRESENT: Council Members: Council Vice President Jackie Gregory, Councilman William Coutz, Councilman Al Miller, and Councilman George Patchell. Also, James Massey, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant.

Alan McCarthy, County Executive.

Health Official: Lauren Levy, Health Officer; Laurie Humphries, Deputy Health Officer; Allison Borzymowski, Director of Administration; Ken Collins, Director of Division of Addiction Services; Mike Massuli, Deputy Director, Division of Addiction Services; Judi Rodemich, Director of Community Health Services; Gwen Parrack, Director, Division of Special Populations Services; Fred VonStaden, retiring Director of Environmental Health Services; Ed Arellano, Deputy Director of Environmental Health Services; Dan Coulter, Director of Health Planning; and Jennifer Padgett, Community Health Educator, Division of Health Promotion.

Members of the press and members of the public.

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room

9:00 a.m. – Council Vice President Gregory called the meeting of the Board of Health to order at 9:00 a.m.

NOTE: Audio recording of this meeting is available on the County website www.ccgov.org.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Health of May 28, 2019 was made by Councilman Coutz, seconded by Councilman Miller and approved unanimously.

Recognition – Fred VonStaden

The County Executive and County Council presented a proclamation to Fred VonStaden to congratulate him on his retirement from the Cecil County Health Department.

Vaping Related Illness Update

Lauren Levy, Health Officer, led discussion on the vaping related illnesses that are being reported nationwide. She provided statistics on the average vaping user. She described the new Tobacco 21 law that prohibits the sale of vaping products to anyone under 21, except active military personnel. She stated that the new law focuses on the retailer who sells vaping products to a minor. She stated that there is a misconception among the population, including students, that vaping is safer than tobacco smoking. She stated that the Health department is working closely with the school system to education students.

Jennifer Padgett, Community Health Education, stated that the Tobacco 21 law makes the retailer accountable if they sell vaping products to minors. She stated that the Health Department has developed preventative presentations to use with students. Ms. Padgett also stated that prevention clubs are being established at high schools and being developed in middle schools.

Homelessness Study Update

Gwen Parrack, Director, Division of Special Populations Services, reviewed the county's homelessness study that was conducted by the Pandit Group. She described how the survey was conducted and its purpose. She stated that they estimate that there is a population of 300 homeless in a year. She stated that the average homeless person was a white adult male, not a Veteran, who has health insurance and access to a telephone. She further stated that the homeless tend to have experienced mental health, drug usage, and trauma in their lives.

She stated that the survey found that the greatest obstacle for the homeless is the lack of affordable housing and jobs. She stated that the Mary Randall Center and Paris Foundation are the largest providers to the homeless in Cecil County. She stated that the survey found that the homeless are not coming to Cecil County because of services available and they are not homeless by choice. She stated that the nonprofit organizations that serve the homeless lack staffing and depend on private donations for their funding.

She stated that the consultant submitted a list of recommendations, which she summarized as follows:

1. Develop and coordinate a single entry for services for intake and screening.
2. Create a county homeless eviction policy
3. Develop and coordinate body to diversity funding
4. Redistribute services to reflect population
5. Expand rapid rehousing program

Ms. Parrack agreed that the concentration of homeless was in the Elkton area. She clarified that the number of homeless includes those who are in the process of applying for benefits. She stated that some homeless persons have criminal records that discourages their employment. She stated that there are employers who agree to hire those with non-violent records.

Harmony Program Update

Mike Massuli, Deputy Director, Division of Addiction Services, provided an update for the Harmony program. He stated that the Harmony program began in April 2019 to reduce the consequences of risky behavior. He stated that this program is based on a continuum of care, which includes prevention, treatment, recovery and enforcement. He stated that the Harmony program meets people where they are and offers the best next steps. He stated that the outcomes of the Harmony program include: reduction in the incidence of disease transmission, fatal overdoses and injuries while increasing the incidence of substance treatment. Access to the Harmony program is offered at the Health Department office, partnerships, and home visits. The program develops a personal relationship with the clients. Since inception, participation in the Harmony program has grown from 192 to 419. He stated that the program has included 1,292 encounters with participants, which builds a trusting relationship.

He stated that the syringe return program has been effective in collecting used syringes. Their return rate has risen to 84% for September 2019. He stated that the program strives to refer participants for testing and substance disorders. He stated that 75 participants have been referred since April 2019.

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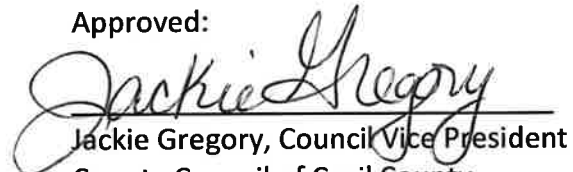
Ms. Massuli clarified that the overdose rate in Cecil County since the Harmony program was implemented may not have been reduced because of the increase in fentanyl and methamphetamine usage. He also explained that participants in the needle exchange are penalized if they do not return used needles. He also clarified that the Harmony program has reissued new laminated participation cards that validate the participant's identify so that law enforcement can verify that the cardholder is registered in the Harmony program and permitted to transport syringes and certain other drug-related paraphernalia. Mr. Massuli stated that the future of this program will be based on its success and the evolution of policies related to prevention and treatment.

Adjournment

Council Vice President Gregory thanked Lauren Levy and the staff of the Cecil County Health Department for their presentations.

The Board of Health meeting was adjourned by motion made by Councilman Coutz and seconded by Councilman Miller. Council Vice President Gregory concluded the meeting at 9:58 a.m.

Approved:


Jackie Gregory, Council Vice President
County Council of Cecil County

Attest:


James Massey
Council Manager