

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Board Meeting Date: May 11, 2020

Location: Webex Meeting

Members in Attendance: Anthony L. Schlaff, MD, MPH, Chair
Peter Moyer, MD MPH
Gretchen Stoddard, DrPH, MPH

Agenda Items	1. Update on COVID-19 2. Strategies and parameters for safely reopening
Call to Order	
1. Welcome	
2. Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● COVID-19 Update from Dr. Jett (as of Friday):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Brookline: 323 positive cases, 55 suspect cases, 278 quarantined, 190 released from quarantine, 150 released from isolation○ Average age of case (based on race): Asian, 55 years; Black, 63 years; White, 65 years; Unknown, 60 years○ Is Brookline bending the curve? There has not been much of a curve, but the biggest spike was around 4/13 – 4/14 before face coverings were required. Dr. Jett suggested two reasons for decrease: education and messaging for wearing face coverings and social distancing.○ Media about enforcement for wearing masks questioned Dr. Jett about enforcement for wearing masks. He challenged the media to go to other communities to assess the level of compliance for masks and social distancing. He also attributed the low number of cases to community○ Dr. Jett attributes decrease in cases to several departments reinforcing messaging (EOC, Fire and Police), contact tracing, and DPW/Parks placing signs around town.○ Dr. Schlaff asked if there is better understanding of lag time of infection exposure to positive testing period, but Dr. Jett says we are still learning more. Contact tracing will help provide more data.○ Dr. Moyer mentioned the majority of deaths among senior citizens and asked about mitigation for senior population in next wave of disease to prevent deaths.

- Dr. Jett said we need a step down approach ready to evacuate people with no exposure to COVID-19. Nursing homes do not have significant HVAC to isolate patients. These facilities need PPE and the ability to separate staff working with sick patients from those working with healthy patients, which is challenging with staff shortages.
- Dr. Moyer has found many CNAs have several contacts because they are working multiple places while contact tracing.
- Antibody testing happening tomorrow or the next day, waiting for MGH to verify FDA emergency approval. Abbott Labs approved for antibody testing, can purchase on your own.
- Dr. Jett is working with EOC, planning large scale testing of 4,000 – 6,000 in Brookline for virus, not antibodies. He would also like to have ongoing testing available.
- Antibody testing for 200 first responders will take place first earlier in the week. On Friday, 400 residents tested, providing a community sample using census data. Dr. Jett has created a handout to explain the IgM (current infection) and IgG (antibodies).
- **Strategies and parameters for safely reopening**
 - South Korea reopened baseball games and bars. One bar reopened, 27 people tested positive for COVID-19.
 - State closed until May 18.
 - Dr. Schlaff believes by the 18th, Brookline meet standards to begin Phase 1 reopening based on data shown. Dr. Jett agreed that Brookline Health Department has capacity to keep up with testing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine if there is a small increase in cases.
 - Dr. Schlaff suggested opening only non-essential businesses that can maintain social distancing within, places serving one person at a time while maintaining the 6 ft. distance. He is not in favor of opening nail shops and barbershops but if they are to open could use every other chair. He does not believe there is a way to safely reopen restaurants and bars.
 - Dr. Jett noted that staff will have to visit every business before reopening with instructions on operations, and this may be difficult to do with current staff.
 - State closed Scrub-a-Dub carwash. Department of Labor issued cease & desist to Scrub-a-Dub, but Dr. Jett and

Pat Maloney had to implement and fine. Limited staff in Health Department handles these actions.

- Dr. Schlaff suggested having staff possibly visit in 3-5 days of reopening a business. Dr. Jett does not have authority to loosen state regulations.
- Dr. Moyer suggested providing businesses interim license and 4 points the governor outlined then Health Department visit within a week.
- Environmental staff is providing contact tracing. Dr. Moyer and Dr. Schlaff discuss the challenge of moving people from contact tracing to inspections. Dr. Jett would only move three of six people. Dr. Schlaff stressed the need for contact tracing during reopen in case there is a surge.
- Dr. Schlaff suggested excluding restaurants and bars from the first step of re-opening. Dr. Jett unsure of number of non-essential businesses in town that would need inspection before reopening.
- Dr. Moyer cautioned nail salons and barbershops are very physical places. Dr Schlaff agreed but noted that people could at least use PPE in these facilities, which would not be possible in restaurants and bars.
- Dr. Jett mentioned his observation of place that have reopened. People continue to social distance from strangers, but not from familiar people. As we reopen, we will be at greater risk. People are leery right now, but will become more relaxed as things reopen.
- Dr. Schlaff stressed the need for clear, consistent messaging and community tolerance tested. They are becoming desperate for haircuts, etc.
- People in Florida are going to Georgia to get their haircut. Dr. Schlaff is concerned something similar could happen with lots of people coming into Brookline from bordering communities. We need to pay attention to what other communities are doing for this reason.
- Dr. Schlaff suggested reopening business that can maintain PPE and proper social distancing on premises. Business can reopen on paper, but if staff find any business out of compliance during visit they will be shut down, given adequate time to comply and fined. He factored in the need for additional Health staff to visit businesses as they reopen.
- **Discussion of restaurants and bars reopening:**

- Dr. Schlaff asked if everyone agrees about restaurants and bars reopening later. Dr. Stoddard agreed restaurants and bars should be part of second phase.
- Dr. Moyer mentioned restaurants in other places separating booths using transparent shower curtains. He felt there should be a separation between bars and restaurants. Bars are more social and liquor lowers social thresholds.
- Dr. Jett stated that bars in Florida were only allowed to reopen if they served 51% food.
- Dr. Schlaff brought attention to the physical set up. He voiced concern of ability to social distance and wear a mask in a restaurant where people will have to remove masks to eat.
- Dr. Moyer added limiting the number of patrons allowed in establishment.
- Dr. Stoddard questioned the ability of these businesses to maintain cleanliness between visitors. She also asked if businesses asked the Health Department about PPE, where to buy items and if the department has any to offer. Dr. Jett replied that many places contacted the Health Dept. about PPE during initial phase.
- Dr. Moyer reemphasized the need to have a reserve of contact tracers for possible surge, trained and ready to go. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, only four people in the Health Department trained on MAVEN. All environmental health have been trained as well as school nurses, Dr. Moyer and Pat Maher to assist with contact tracing.
- Dr. Jett has been using MAVEN to gather data for graphing and following nursing homes.
- Dr. Jett stated that MHOA granted Health Department \$48k that will help fund part-time contact tracing staff, probably closer to August.

3. Other Business

- **Exercise to reduce budget by 10%.** Health Department would reduce the budget by \$154,000. ACPH members, Dr. Schlaff offered to write a letter to support Dr. Jett. Dr. Moyer and Dr. Stoddard support Dr. Schlaff in drafting a letter to town administrator, Mel Kleckner stating budget should not be cut and the Health Commissioner's time should not be spent on budget cuts during a public health crisis.

- **Contact tracing.** Dr. Moyer has had good experience with people while doing contact tracing.
- **Meeting minutes.** ACPH minutes approved next week.

Meeting Adjourned