

**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

Thursday, September 14, 2010

A meeting of the Philadelphia Board of Health was held on Thursday, September 14, 2010, in the Municipal Services Building, 1401 J.F.K. Boulevard, Room 1450.

Board Members Present: Jose A. Benitez, MSW; MD; Shannon P. Marquez, MEng.PhD; Scott McNeal, DO; Susan Schewel, CRNP, PhD; Donald F. Schwarz, MD, MPH; Robert G. Sharrar, MD, MSc; Yolanda A. Slaughter, DDS, MPH

Attendees: Sam P. Gulino, MD; Giridhar Mallya, MD, MSHP; Jeff Moran; Elaine M. Strunk; Kevin Vaughan

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Board President Donald F. Schwarz, Health Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM. He welcomed the members of the Board as well as departmental staff.

The Commissioner asked for corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of July 8, 2010. Hearing none, he entertained a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. It was moved and seconded. **Motion passed.**

“GET HEALTHY PHILLY”: CDC-FUNDED NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND TOBACCO CONTROL INITIATIVES

Dr. Schwarz introduced Giridhar Mallya, MD, MSHP, Department of Public Health Director of Policy and Planning, to present the Board with an update (Attachment A) on the “Communities Putting Prevention to Work” initiatives that were announced in March 2010. These tobacco control and obesity prevention initiatives have a new name and tag line:

Get Healthy Philly

Working together for a healthy, active, and smoke-free city

In response to a question from the Board, Dr. Mallya reported that the survey of 500 Philadelphia smokers was conducted in partnership with the Annenberg School of Communication utilizing a representative sample of smokers 18 years and older who were contacted using landline and cell phone numbers.

HPV IMMUNIZATION

At the last meeting, the Board of Health asked the department to explore alternatives to a regulation requiring HPV immunization.

Dr. Schwarz provided the Board with a document entitled **Options for improving HPV vaccine uptake among Philadelphia adolescents without requiring vaccination for school entry via regulation.** (Attachment B) He said that these options offered ways to encourage immunization by raising awareness of the vaccine and removing barriers to immunization. He said that consideration of the option might require extended discussion to determine which the Board might undertake and which might be pursued by the department.

Following a brief preliminary discussion the Board agreed to review the recommendations and discuss a specific course of action at a later date.

Dr. Schwarz said that the department will prepare a draft letter as described in section 1 B of the recommendations. He said a similar letter for parochial schools should be discussed with the Archdiocese

The Board asked about efforts to include information in the packet handed out at the beginning of the year in public schools. Dr. Schwarz said that the idea arose too late for inclusion in this year's packet, but the School District is amenable to distributing information in the future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Schwarz updated the Board on three recent outbreaks.

Syphilis

Philadelphia and other major cities are in the midst of a syphilis epidemic. The health department has redirected some of its resources to outreach and partner contact tracing. It has strengthened the collaborative working relationship between ACCO and Disease Control to improve and coordinate education, prevention, and counseling effort targeted to those at risk for sexually transmitted disease.

The current outbreak is not comparable in scale to the outbreak seen in the early '90's, when the federal government de-funded outreach. At that time, rates of congenital syphilis were also rising. Today, we are mainly seeing increases in adult cases largely among the poor and the same populations that are disproportionately affected by HIV.

Dr. Schwarz said that no action by the Board is required at this time

Pertussis

There is a regional increase in cases of pertussis, particularly in the counties to the north of Philadelphia. The increase in Philadelphia, where immunization rates are higher than the nearby counties, is a small one.

West Nile Virus

Philadelphia has not had a case of West Nile virus since 2008. In 2003, Philadelphia saw its highest number of cases. Three cases have been report thus far this season and more are expected as we have detected high levels of infection in the mosquito population. Active surveillance continues.

An aerial surveillance program that detected potential mosquito breeding sites in standing water lost funding this year, and the State reduced funding for mosquito spraying.

Dr. Schwarz thanked the Board. He adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.