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

Thursday, June 8, 2023

The Philadelphia Board of Health held a public meeting on Thursday, June 8, 2023. The meeting
was held virtually using the Zoom platform in order to facilitate access by the public via
computer or other device and toll-free phone number.

Board Members Present

Dr. Cheryl Bettigole, Dr. Usama Bilal, Dr. Tyra Bryant-Stephens, Dr. Ana Diez-Roux, Dr. Marla
Gold, Dr. Jennifer Ibrahim, Dr. Amid Ismail, Dr. Scott McNeal

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Health Commissioner and Board President Cheryl Bettigole, MD, MPH called the meeting to
order at 6:34 PM and performed a rollcall.

Dr. Bettigole provided Board with an update on the ongoing air quality issues in Philadelphia
and activities being taken by the City to protect staff.

Mr. Benjamin Hartung of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health reviewed the public
comment process and notice that this meeting is being recorded.

MINUTES

Dr. Bettigole asked if the Board had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.

Dr. Bettigole asked if there was a desire to approve the minutes.
Dr. Ibrahim moved; Dr. Ismail seconded.
Motion for approval of the minutes was approved unanimously.

**REGULATION REQUIRING A PERMIT FOR CREMATION, BURIAL AT SEA, BODY
DONATION, OR OTHER NON-BURIAL DISPOSITION METHODS RELATED TO
DECEASED PERSONS**

Dr. Constance DiAngelo, Chief Medical Examiner for the City of Philadelphia, presented on the
history of the Medical Examiner's Office and how the charter for the Office dictates the need for
this Regulation. The Office needs to, at minimum, review the death certificate prior to
disposition to ensure that no future studies or testing are needed and that the cause and/or
mechanism of death is appropriate for the situation.

Mr. Hartung then reviewed the Regulation. The Regulation forbids a person who is in charge of a
non-burial disposition from engaging or assisting in that act prior to receiving or learning of the

issuance of a Non-Burial Disposition Permit by the Medical Examiner's Office. The person seeking to engage or assist in a non-burial disposition must submit an application that is currently being developed by the Health Department. The Medical Examiner's Office will review the application and death certificate and may request additional information including, but not always, access to the body of the deceased for examination or autopsy. The permit shall be issued unless there is some need for further investigation. The fee for the permit is $50, and will go into effect on January 1, 2024.

Dr. DiAngelo continued with her presentation. She noted that this Regulation will bring Philadelphia into line with surrounding counties and rest of the state. It should not add any additional procedure to the vast majority of funeral homes, transport services, and crematoriums. Dr. DiAngelo also noted that found that in VA and DC a similar change resulted in an additional 1% to 5% of cases falling under MEO jurisdiction. She anticipates that Philadelphia may see 45 to 200 additional cases per year.

The fees would help cover the cost of increased staff workload, could help cover continuing education costs, will help identify unknown decedents through standard and enhance DNA technologies and genealogy, and could help provide a dedicated funding source to bury unknown decedents and cremains.

Dr. Gold asked if the Medical Examiner's Office has a feeling on increase in the cost of a cremation would place an undue burden on families. Dr. DiAngelo responded that this is essentially a standard fee in the state of Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic region, and is in fact, one of the lowest in the region. She noted that the state of Virginia charges $125, the District of Columbia charges $100, so this fee is reasonable.

Dr. Bryant-Stephens asked to confirm that there is currently no Regulation in Philadelphia that requires this type of permit, and Dr. DiAngelo confirmed that.

Dr. Bettigole noted to the Board that the City currently pays all fees for the cremation and burial of unclaimed bodies and this fee structure could help provide a dedicated funding stream that allows the City to provide respectful burial to the unclaimed and/or unknown dead. Dr. DiAngelo echoed this sentiment and highlighted that the Medical Examiner's Office is currently cremating up to 350 unclaimed bodies per year and expects that number to continue to rise.

Mr. Hartung announced that no public comments were received.

Dr. Bettigole asked if there was a desire to approve the Regulation as presented.
Dr. Gold moved; Dr. Ibrahim seconded.
Motion for approval of the Regulation was approved unanimously.

AMENDMENT TO THE REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND CONDITIONS

Mr. Hartung informed the Board that the two amendments to these Regulations have to do with name changes. The first seeks to change the name of the virus formerly known as monkeypox to

mpox, which is consistent with WHO's updated name. The second seeks to change name of the condition pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome to multisystem inflammatory syndrome and including the condition multisystem inflammatory syndrome in adults in the overall definition, which is consistent with the CDC's updated definition. The amendment also updates the naming of both in the reporting requirements.

The amendment also removes the 24-hour requirement for the newly renamed MIS and instead brings it in line with the current CDC reporting requirement.

Under the newly renamed mpox section, the Health Department is removing specific reference to isolation precautions regarding lesions, as the existing language referring to CDC isolation guidance provides suitable instruction.

Mr. Hartung announced that no public comments were received.

Dr. Bettigole asked if there was a desire to amend the Regulation as presented.
Dr. Ismail moved; Dr. Bryant-Stephens seconded.
Motion for amending the Regulation was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Bettigole adjourned the meeting at 7:14 PM.