

Public Health Council

STATE OF WISCONSIN

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JUNE 12, 2009

WISCONSIN MEDICAL SOCIETY, 330 E. LAKESIDE ST., MADISON, WI

Council Members Present: Dr. Julie Willems Van Dijk (Chair); Dr. Gary Gilmore (Vice-Chair); Mary Jo Baisch; Bevan Baker; John Bartkowski; Amy Bremel; Bridget Clementi; Catherine Frey; Susan Garcia Franz; Terri Kramolis; Dr. Corazon Loteyro; Dr. John Meurer; Douglas Nelson; and Thai Vue.

Council Members Absent: Deborah Miller; Dr. A. Charles Post; Dr. Ayaz Samadani; Dr. James Sanders; Dr. Lynn Sheets; and Mark Villalpando.

Division of Public Health (DPH) Staff: DPH Administrator Dr. Seth Foldy; Jane Conner; Patricia Guhleman; and Kevin Wymore.

Guests: Kristine Freundlich, DHS; Rachel Currans-Sheehan, DHS; Ed Rabotski; Francisco Nava; Alice Xiong; and Dona Wininsky.

Call to Order

Council Chair Dr. Julie Willems Van Dijk convened the meeting at about 10:05 a.m.

New Member Introduction

Amy Bremel, the newest Council member, introduced herself. Bremel, from Fish Creek, will represent the public safety agency membership. The newest member brings the Council's membership to 20.

State Legislative/Federal Stimulus Update

Rachel Currans-Sheehan, DHS legislative liaison, provided a legislative update. She summarized the current status of public health-related items in the Legislature's biennial budget. Currans-Sheehan also passed out a document summarizing the Governor's budget items as amended by the Joint Finance Committee through May 28.

She noted that the state has had to deal with a severe fiscal situation caused by the national economic downturn. She added that the Governor's priorities have been to preserve the health care safety net, in programs such as Medicaid.

Regarding the federal stimulus funding, Division Administrator Dr. Seth Foldy reported few new developments, except for those in the National Institutes of Health, and in workforce development.

Minutes

The Council reviewed the draft minutes of the April 17, 2009 meeting. They were approved without correction. Dr. Gary Gilmore provided the motion, and Doug Nelson seconded.

Meeting Evaluation

The Council heard the meeting evaluation results from the April meeting. The Chair linked the lower overall evaluation score of 3.5 to low attendance, which was so low that the Council lacked a voting quorum. The average "overall effectiveness" score for the past year was 3.8.

Pandemic Public Health Resolution Funding

The Council heard comments from Dr. Seth Foldy, DPH Administrator, about the Division's response to H1N1 flu in Wisconsin; heard comments from Bevan Baker about the City of Milwaukee response to H1N1, in which the city of Milwaukee was particularly affected; and heard comments from Dr. Willems Van Dijk about the Marathon County Health Department response to H1N1. The Council also considered potential financing implications arising from the statewide costs of the flu strain, which now has been officially classified as a pandemic. Dr. Foldy said that, overall, Americans' perceptions of the public health response have been very positive.

More discussion occurred after lunch, in which members weighed the policy implications of the outbreak. Noting that schools and communities would see the renewed transmission of H1N1 in the fall, Bevan Baker said the biggest challenge regarding the issue will be sustainability: "Will our Legislature understand that we need secure funding for public health?"

In the course of the discussion, the Council identified these themes:

1. Communicating the threat (via public service announcements, automated phone systems, or other media);
2. Developing information systems to inform doctor/hospital systems;
3. Addressing health disparity issues (what type of disparities was not discussed, although the Council did say that large health departments/small health department is one "disparity" that is quite relevant to the discussion);
4. The need for "infrastructure" to deal with the problem (a related issue was the need for a pandemic plan -- in small counties, only local health departments had a plan);
5. The need for "sustainability."

One person suggested that the Ad Hoc Finance Committee take up the issues, and another suggested to Bevan Baker that the Emergency Preparedness Committee take up the issues.

However, there was no motion, and one of the final comments was that it would be discussed again at the next Council meeting.

Statewide Workplace Smoking Ban

The Council heard a PowerPoint presentation from Dona Wininsky, of the American Lung Association, about the statewide workplace smoking ban. The landmark law, which takes effect in July, 2010, culminates years of public health lobbying to reduce the consequences of second-hand smoke. Though proponents of the new law were not pleased with the implementation delay crafted in the legislation, they stressed that it will improve working environments for all workplaces, not just bars and taverns.

Open Forum

Dr. Gary Gilmore provided a preview of his upcoming study tour. In 2010, the study tour will visit Great Britain and review and discuss the nation's national health services approach. He said that Great Britain's health care expenditures are 7.7 percent of gross domestic product, compared with 16.5 percent for the United States.

Unfinished Business

The Council approved several items of unfinished business from the April meeting. The action was necessary because of the lack of a voting quorum in that meeting. The Council:

- Approved a motion to revise the re-structuring of the Emergency Preparedness Committee.
- Approved four of the five mental health report recommendations from the February meeting. The Council decided a proposed task force staffed by the public health and mental health divisions may not be necessary, because of current cooperative efforts.
- Accepted a report and recommendations from the State Health Plan Committee on the access to primary and preventive services priority from the 2010 State Health Plan.
- Approved the February meeting minutes, without correction.

Complete Evaluations

The Council membership completed evaluation forms for today's meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at about 2:25 p.m.

Mary Jo Baisch, Secretary

Date