

Public Health Council

STATE OF WISCONSIN

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 11, 2009

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

Council Members Present: Dr. Julie Willems Van Dijk (Chair); Dr. Gary Gilmore (Vice Chair); Dr. Mary Jo Baisch; Mr. Bevan Baker; Mr. John Bartkowski; Ms. Amy Bremel; Ms. Catherine Frey; Ms. Susan Garcia Franz; Ms. Terri Kramolis; Dr. Corazon Loteyro; Dr. John Meurer; Ms. Deborah Miller, Dr. James Sanders; Dr. Lynn Sheets; and Mr. Mark Villalpando.

Council Members Absent: Mr. Douglas Nelson; Dr. A. Charles Post; Dr. Ayaz Samadani; and Mr. Thai Vue.

Division of Public Health (DPH) Staff: Deputy Administrator Mr. Tom Sieger; Ms. Jane Conner; Ms. Patricia Guhleman; Ms. Kathy Jones; Ms. Stephanie Schauer; Ms. Margaret Schmelzer; and Mr. Kevin Wymore.

Guests: Ms. Rachel Currans-Sheehan and Mr. Ed Rabotski, DHS; and Mr. Bo Nilsen.

Call to Order

The meeting was convened shortly after 10 a.m. by the Chair, Dr. Julie Willems Van Dijk.

Minutes

The Council approved the October 9 Council meeting minutes, without correction. Dr. Gary Gilmore moved approval, and Ms. Terri Kramolis seconded.

Evaluation

The Council heard the meeting evaluation results from the October Council meeting, with a summary from staff. The overall evaluation score of the meeting was 4.0 on a 4.0 scale. All individual topic evaluation scores were 3.9 or higher. Dr. Willems Van Dijk asked Council members to suggest an additional evaluation element for the meeting evaluation form.

Nominating Committee

The Council heard a report about the Nominating Committee process for the Annual Meeting officer elections in 2010. In the absence of Mr. Doug Nelson, the Committee chair, staff said the formal call for nominations would be distributed to the full Council on Dec. 14. Dr. Willems Van Dijk offered more details, and asked eligible members to consider the officer nominations process. The Council Chair had appointed Dr. John Meurer and Ms. Terri Kramolis as committee members, in addition to Mr. Nelson.

Open Forum

No topics were introduced in the Open Forum section of the meeting by parties outside the Council, but members received from Dr. Gilmore a brochure on "public health educational opportunities in Wisconsin." He had limited numbers of brochures, so staff will scan and distribute the document to the full Council.

H1N1 Influenza Update

Stephanie Schauer, of the DPH staff, offered the Council on the influenza situation in the state, now that the focus has shifted to immunization, rather than surveillance of new cases. Staff said they would send to the Council information about different types of vaccinations in the state.

Council Priorities for 2010

Dr. Willems Van Dijk asked Council members to indicate via a "straw poll" ballot their preferences for Council prioritization in calendar 2010. Council members were given four votes with which to register their choices in the 21 health and infrastructure focus areas of the 2020 State Health Plan. (Overarching goals are not to be voted for.) Straw ballots will be sent to Council members not at the December meeting in person, in hopes that 100 percent polling participation may be achieved.

Beer Tax Hearing

Dr. Gary Gilmore briefed the group on the October legislative hearing on raising the state beer tax as proposed in Assembly Bill 287. Dr. Gilmore, the Council's Vice Chair, attended the bill's public hearing October 13 in Madison to convey the Council's resolution on the matter. Dr. Gilmore took vacation time to testify at the hearing, which is to be the first such legislative hearing on raising the beer tax in decades. . Dr. Gilmore read the resolution verbatim at the legislative hearing. Currently, the state tax per 12-ounce bottle of beer is less than a penny, but the Council's resolution advocates raising the beer tax to help ameliorate the alcohol-related crashes, injuries and deaths caused by excessive drinking. Gilmore described a package of legislative changes that is expected to become law by year's end. The Council lauded Dr. Gilmore for his service at the hearing.

State Legislative Update

The Council heard a legislative update from Ms. Rachel Currans-Sheehan, DHS legislative liaison. She summarized the current status of public health-related bills, including one on improvements in expedited partner therapy and the HIV consent issue. Expedited Partner Therapy treats partners of patients diagnosed with sexually transmitted

diseases. The EPT concept allows the patient to deliver oral medication or prescriptions to the patient's sexual partner, without a doctor evaluating the partner. The HIV testing consent bill would eliminate the requirement for written informed consent for HIV testing. It would also institute a consent process that requires patients to be notified they will be tested for HIV unless they decline to be tested. The Department supports both bills in the current legislative session.

National Health Systems Reform

The Council entertained two related issues on the subject of national health systems reform legislation in the nation's capital. First, the Council heard an update on national legislation to reform the nation's health care systems, and the public health implications of those bills. Ms. Christine Evans, government relations director for ASTHO, Washington, D.C., provided the update and answered questions. She complimented the Council on its draft letter advising the state's congressional delegation to preserve provisions dealing with public health financing and other priorities. Ms. Evans noted that the Council's priorities in its draft letter coincided with those of ASTHO. Those priorities included: increasing funding for public health departments; strengthening workforce incentives; facilitating vaccination of children; and improving birth outcomes.

Second, the Council discussed a legislative letter on the matter intended to be sent to the Wisconsin congressional delegation. In particular, the letter advocated for: increasing funding for public health departments; strengthening workforce incentives; facilitating vaccination of children; and improving birth outcomes. Both bills pending in the House of Representatives and in the Senate would provide Wisconsin with substantial infrastructure funding for public health purposes, as well as for more categorical purposes, Ms. Evans said. The Senate bill is regarded as offering governmental public health more flexibility in funding. Mr. Bevan Baker said the Council had a chance to weigh in on an historic piece of legislation. Dr. Lynn Sheets said the letter was excellent, but asked that child safety be mentioned in the letter as well. Dr. Willems Van Dijk asked that a "preamble" explaining the Council's role should be added to the draft.

With a motion by Dr. Gilmore, and a second by Ms. Terri Kramolis, the Council unanimously decided to send the letter to both of Wisconsin's U.S. Senators and to all eight members of the House of Representatives in the state. The letter will be communicated via both electronic and regular mail.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at about 1:30 p.m.