

BOARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEETING
Meeting Minutes for July 12, 2022

Members Present:

Mitch Rodriguez, M.D., Secretary
Kathryn Cheek, M.D., F.A.A.P.
Cynthia A. Mercer, M.D.
Tai Valliere-White, M.D., F.A.C. S

Members Absent:

Major General Thomas M. Carden, Jr.
James Curran, M.D., M.P.H., Chair
John Hauptert, F.A.C.H.E., Vice Chair
Sangmin Ryan Shin, M.D., M.A., F.A.A.O.S.

The Board of Public Health held its monthly meeting on July 12, 2022. The meeting was virtual and led by Dr. Mitch Rodriguez. The list of attendees is attached hereto and made official parts of these minutes.

I. & II. Call to Order and Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Dr. Rodriguez. The following members were absent: Major General Thomas Carden, Dr. James Curran, John Hauptert and Dr. Sangmin Ryan Shin. There is not a quorum with four members.

III. Approval/Adoption of Minutes:

Due to the lack of quorum, the approval of the minutes of June 14, 2022, had been postponed to the next Board meeting.

IV. New Business:

A. Introduction - Commissioner Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Toomey opened the meeting reporting that we have an increase in community spread of COVID, even though the numbers are not particularly high. Congratulations are in order to all the Board members who had been reappointed and our gratitude for their commitment to Public Health. Public Health continues and probably will never stop the work on COVID, while working simultaneously on critical issues like child vaccination, maternal health, and multitasking with the core public health activities and new ones like monkeypox.

B. Epidemiology Updates –COVID-19, Monkeypox -Cherie L. Drenzek, D.V.M., M.S.

- COVID case numbers have been mostly flat even though the BA.5 subvariant has risen rapidly and is now the predominant virus (58% of total). The BA.2 wave has receded.
- Hospitalizations are steadily up by about 20% in the last two weeks, but deaths are down by about the same percentage.

- Since May, a monkeypox outbreak has exploded to almost 9,600 (up from 1,500 4 weeks ago) cases in 57 countries. No deaths from monkeypox have been reported.
- In the US, there are now about 900 cases in 41 states, including 41 in Georgia.
- All cases are among adults, vast majority identify as MSM.
- In GA, median age 33 years (range 23-57 years), 57% Black, 35% White, 92% non-Hispanic ethnicity, primarily from metro Atlanta.
- Many have co-infections with STIs like *Chlamydia*, Syphilis, HSV.

- In this monkeypox outbreak, there are a few notable clinical differences: no fever or prodrome, no lymphadenopathy, very few lesions, and beginning often in the genital and perianal region and progressing rapidly through the stages

QUESTIONS:

Dr. Rodriguez asked that since monkeypox is associated with sexually transmitted diseases, is there any risk to newborns? Dr. Drenzek answered that monkeypox is not a traditional sexually transmitted infection in the sense that we have virus in body fluids, it is more a direct close physical contact to the lesions. We have not seen that type of transmission here or in other parts of the world.

Dr. Rodriguez asked if the demographic of the people who are at more risk has changed with BA5 for hospitalization and death? Dr. Drenzek confirmed that data shows the population more at risk are the unvaccinated, aging, and immunocompromised.

A. Monkey pox vaccination – Alexander Millman, M.D.

Monkeypox Vaccination

- Two vaccines licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are available for preventing monkeypox infection – JYNNEOS and ACAM2000.
- Jynneos is for use in the prevention of smallpox or monkeypox in people 18 years and older.
- ACAM2000 is for use against smallpox; allowed for use against monkeypox under an Expanded Access IND, which requires informed consent along with submission of additional forms.

Vaccine Supply

- HHS made 296,000 doses of Jynneos available in phase 1 and phase 2a
 - Georgia phase 1 allocation: 1248
 - Georgia phase 2a allocation: 4695
- Phase 2a allocation available for ordering on July 11
- HHS anticipates that 750,000 doses of Jynneos will be made available over the summer, but the exact timing of availability is unknown.

Current MPV Vaccine Priorities

- Postexposure Prophylaxis (PEP)
 - For high-risk exposure to a confirmed MPV case
 - Most beneficial when within 4 days of exposure but some may benefit up to 14 days following exposure
- Expanded Postexposure Prophylaxis (PEP++)
 - For people with certain risk factors that might make them likely to have had high-risk exposure to MPV
 - Used for response to outbreaks in areas where MPV spread is occurring

Upcoming Vaccine Activities

- Coordinating with epidemiology and public health districts to ensure that PEP is offered to the eligible individuals

- Coordinating with public health districts to conduct community vaccination events (PEP++) for populations that may have more likelihood to have exposure to MPV cases.
- Identifying opportunities to vaccinate at risk individuals for whom ACAM2000 is contraindicated.
- Respond to changes in outbreak epidemiology that may require re-evaluating vaccination priorities in the context of the currently limited supply of vaccine.

MPV Treatment

- Most people with MPV have a self-limiting disease course and recover in 2 to 4 weeks without the need for treatment.
- Treatment may be considered for some people such as those with immunocompromising conditions.
- The antiviral drug tecovirimat (also known as TPOXX) was developed to fight smallpox, but the U.S. Food and Drug Administration allows its use to treat monkeypox during the current outbreak.
- The effectiveness of tecovirimat in treating MPV is unknown, but animal studies have shown it to be effective in treating disease caused by orthopoxvirus.
- Clinicians considering using tecovirimat should consult with DPH since the drug must be released from SNS.

Dr. Rodriguez asked if DPH is going to have ACAM2000 available in Georgia. Dr. Millman informed that will be offering only Jynneos because the favorably safety profile. Also, there are logistical considerations.

B. Communications, New COVID campaign – Nancy Nydam

Nancy Nydam announced the launch of a statewide campaign called "It's That Simple", reminding people about some of the important things they missed in the last couple of years due to COVID and that vaccination can make those things possible again. The campaign includes buses, bus shelters, billboards, social media channels, radio, and TV. Ms. Nydam presented the images of the campaign "It's That Simple" to motivate Covid vaccination.

The communications team is currently working on other videos focusing on vaccination for children.

Additionally, they have other videos in the works. One is with Blake Bargatze, the young gentleman who contracted COVID last year (he was not eligible for the COVID vaccine at the time) and ended up needing a double lung transplant. His family is grateful for the care he received and the fact that somebody donated lungs, so the team will be doing a COVID vaccination PSA and a separate spot with him to promote organ donation.

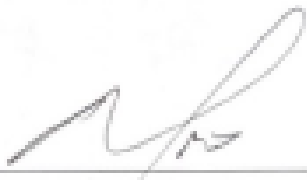
C. Closing remarks

Dr. Toomey asked board members to email any ideas or questions that they would like to be addressed at the next meeting.

V. Board Comments
There are no board comments at this time.

VI. Adjournment:
There being no further business to be brought before the board, Dr. Rodriguez motioned for adjournment of the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Rodriguez adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

THESE MINUTES ARE HEREBY APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS THE 12th DAY OF JULY 2022.



Misael Rodriguez, M.D.
Secretary

Official Attachments:

1. List of Attendees
2. Agenda

July 12, 2022
Board of Public Health Meeting Attendees

Board Members

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Kathryn Cheek, M.D., F.A.A.P.
Cynthia A. Mercer, M.D.
Tai Valliere-White, M.D., F.A.C.S

Attendees

Public virtual meeting.