**MINUTES OF THE**

**BOARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEETING**

**February 11, 2020 (pending approval)**

**Members Present:** **Members Absent:**

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| Misael Rodriguez, M.D., Secretary  Kathryn Cheek, M.D., F.A.A.P.  Cynthia A. Mercer, M.D.  Sangmin Ryan Shin, M.D., M.A., F.A.A.O.S.  Tamica Valliere-White, M.D., F.A.C.S.  Phillip L. Williams, Ph.D. | James Curran, M.D., M.P.H., Chair  Major General Thomas M. Carden, Jr.  John Haupert, F.A.C.H.E., Vice Chair |
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The Board of Public Health held its monthly board meeting Feb. 11, 2020 at 2 Peachtree Street Northwest, Atlanta, Georgia 30303. The meeting was held in the 5th Floor Board Room of the Georgia Department of Community Health. An agenda and a list of attendees are attached hereto and made official parts of these minutes.

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m. following a roll call by Dr. Mitch Rodriguez, M.D., Secretary. The following members were absent: Dr. Curran, Major General Thomas M. Carden, Jr. and Mr. John Haupert.

1. **Approval/Adoption of Minutes:**

Dr. Rodriguez presented the minutes of January 14, 2020 meeting for discussion and approval. There was no discussion. The minutes passed unanimously.

1. **New Business:**
2. **Commissioner’s Report:**

**Commissioner’s Report by Commissioner Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.**

During the last month, Commissioner Toomey has been engaged in the legislative session, budget hearings, the introduction of bills of interest to DPH and coronavirus.

One of the highlights was Public Health Day at the Capitol, where the district health directors were introduced on the floor of the GA House.  The Public Health Day proclamation was read in the Senate and the legislators were able to have a quick checkup with the “Doctor of the Day.” It was a wonderful opportunity to champion the work that Public Health does in the communities, network with legislators, talk about public health issues and reflect on the fact that Public Health is working well together as a team (state and county health departments.)

Regarding coronavirus, Commissioner Toomey has been in communication with the Governor’s office to provide updates.

1. **Epidemiology Updates- Cherie L. Drenzek, D.V.M., M.S.**

Cherie Drenzek, State Epidemiologist and Chief Science Officer presented information and stats about COVID-19 and the self-monitoring that is occurring among individuals who have recently returned to Georgia from mainland China (outside of the hot zones of Wuhan and Hubei Province). **Self-monitoring with public health supervision**means public health establish initial communication with these people, provide a plan for self-monitoring and clear instructions for notifying the health department before the person seeks health care if they develop fever, cough or difficulty breathing and as resources allow, check in intermittently with these people over the course of the self-monitoring period. These individuals are considered medium risk. To date, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Georgia and no one is quarantined due to travel in Wuhan or Hubei Province. Do not forget about the influenza activity in the Georgia that remains high and widespread throughout the state. Flu has killed at least 10,000 people this season in the U.S. with many more to come.  Georgia has reported 40 flu-related deaths.  Everyday prevention measures are necessary to prevent all respiratory diseases including social distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand-washing and flu shots. These prevention measures apply for influenza as well for coronavirus.

**Questions from the Board Members:**

* Dr. Cheek asked about the preventive measures taken at the border countries- Mexico and Canada- and at the US Ports.
  + Dr. Drenzek informed that Mexico and Canada did not implement the exact same measures that are being implemented in the U.S. as part of the Presidential Proclamation, but they are taking their own measures to detect COVID-19 early. DPH works with federal authorities at the ports for potential detection of the virus among crew and passengers. Usually, the amount of time the ships are traveling encompass the entire incubation period and the incubation period of 14 days has already expired by the time they reach port.
* Dr. Williams asked how many people currently are in mandatory or volunteer quarantine in Georgia?
  + Georgia doesn’t have anyone in quarantine.
* Dr. Williams asked about the fatality rate of coronavirus
  + The fatality rate for coronavirus is difficult to assess with certainty right now because we do not have good denominators, but the fatality rate by most estimates is somewhere between to 1% and 2%, which is pretty low.
* Dr. Cheek asked how many people are doing self-monitoring in Georgia?
  + The number changes a little day by day, but an estimated number is around 200 individuals.
* Dr. Rodriguez asked if the patients who will be admitted to a hospital and would test positive for coronavirus will remain at the hospital where they were admitted or moved to a centralized or academic location for special management.
  + Any hospital can care for coronavirus patients following infectious disease protocols. Patients only need a negative pressure room, which all hospitals have.

1. **Low THC oil program update – R. Chris Rustin, Dr.PH, M.S., R.E.H.S. and Karl Soetebier, M.A.P.W**

Dr. Rustin and Mr. Soetebier provided updates pm on the Low THC Oil registry, including new ID cards and their security measures.

**Questions from the Board Members:**

* Dr. Mercer asked how much low THC oil patients can legally carry in GA with the card.
  + Dr. Rustin informed that the maximum quantity allowed is up to 20 fluid oz., the oil can’t be purchased legally in the State of Georgia,
* Dr. Rodriguez: Is the report to the GA Composite Board to let them know the list of physicians are enrolled in the program?
  + Yes, it is a very basic report and includes physicians’ names, the conditions that are being issued the cards for, numbers of patients and dosages. The law requires that the composite board reviews the requirements placed on physicians that are issuing the card.
* Dr. Rodriguez: In the future, could driver’s licenses be used to identify THC oil users and eliminate the need of the card altogether?
  + It will require a change in the legislation that currently requires a card, and not all individuals have a driver’s license. The dialog with the Department of Driver Services is still open.

1. Board Comments:
2. 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 1.59 p.m.

THESE MINUTES ARE HEREBY APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS THE 10th DAY OF MARCH 2020.

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James Curran, M.D., M.P.H., Chair Misael Rodriguez, M.D. Secretary

Official Attachments:

1. List of Attendees
2. Agenda

**Feb. 11, 2020**

**Board of Public Health Meeting Attendees**

**Board Members**

Misael Rodriguez, M.D., Secretary

Kathryn Cheek, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Cynthia A. Mercer, M.D.

Phillip L. Williams, Ph.D.

Sangmin Ryan Shin, M.D., M.A., F.A.A.O.S.

Tamica Valliere-White, M.D., F.A.C.S.

**Guest Attendees**

Melisa Downs, OPB

Ryan Moss, Mathews & Maxwell

Shawn Smith, Sanofi Pasteur

Becca Halle, GHA

Zephrea Kilgore, GCW

Mike Chaney

**Department of Public Health Attendees**

Yvette Daniels

Kristine Pham

Carmen Daniel

Meshell McCloud

Adam Barefoot

Melissa Downs

Karl Soetebier

Valeria Newton-Lamb

Rick Keheley

John M. Cross

Shimia Colter

Chris Rustin

Meredith Gant

Paula Brown

Kimberly Ross

Tammy Jenkins

Fanny Vazquez

Cherie Drenzek

Nancy Nydam

Karl Soetebier