

**LEWIS AND CLARK CITY-COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH – MINUTES
1930 9th AVE, HELENA, MONTANA 59601
Zoom Meeting, 1:00 p.m.
May 7, 2020**

Members Present by Zoom

Justin Murgel, chair
Commissioner Andy Hunthausen, vice chair
Mayor Wilmot Collins
Kammy Johnson
Jenny Eck
Brie Oliver
Dr. Mikael Bedell
Tyler Ream
Raymond Berg

Staff Present by Zoom

Drenda Niemann
Jolene Helgerson
Jacqueline Isaly
Eric Merchant
Kathy Moore
Gayle Shirley

Guests Present by Zoom

Mary Ann Dunwell, State Representative

Members Absent

Justin Murgel, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was established. Introduction of board members was made.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were made.

BOARD DISCUSSION

COVID-19 Response Update: Drenda Niemann, Health Officer, reviewed the State of Montana Response COVID-19 Map and highlighted the number of cumulative confirmed cases, active cases, number of deaths, total testing within the state and in Lewis and Clark County. Ms. Niemann noted that it has been 4 consecutive weeks with no new cases in Lewis and Clark County. In answer to a question from Mr. Murgel, Ms. Niemann said the average testing has been around 300 a day but has increased up to 700 new tests due to testing being done through a private lab in Great Falls. The goal is to have more sentinel testing carried out in tiers with the high risk population being the first tested. Dr. Mikael Bedell said that health officials are gaining knowledge day by day regarding testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic folks. Ms. Niemann said that the health department is encouraging all providers to test with any of the possible COVID-19 symptoms. Dr. Bedell indicated that low threshold testing is being done and continued messaging to providers. Dr. Bedell also stated that St. Peter's Health is not completing antibody testing since there are no new cases in the county. Eric Merchant, Communicable Disease and Control Division Administrator, stated that at this time antibody testing for COVID-19 has provided unreliable testing results.

CARES Act:

Ms. Niemann discussed the federally funded CARES Act, which provides payments to State, Local, and Tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force was tasked on how he should prioritize leveraging of these funds. Local Public Health Departments are one of the nine programs that will see funding distribution. Lewis and Clark Public Health will receive \$218,797 for current and future COVID-19 response and preparedness activities, and public health operations and functions that have been disrupted by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

3-Phased Reopening Criteria:

Ms. Niemann discussed the criteria the Public Health COVID-19 Incident Command Team is using to decide when it is appropriate to move from one phase to another in Lewis and Clark County, which can be found on the Lewis and Clark Public Health web page. In answer to questions from Mr. Murgel, Ms. Niemann said that the department would look closely at our and the state's criteria to determine if the department needs to be more stringent than the Governor's orders. She said that the Board will be appraised of any non-compliance from a business that will result with staff working with the county attorney for compliance. Ms. Niemann also said that we have provided Jefferson and Broadwater Counties with information on how to contact Biobot Analytical. In answer to a question from Tyler Ream, Ms. Niemann said we have informed the public about our reopening criteria via a press release to the Independent Record and our Facebook page. In answer to a question from Ms. Eck, Ms. Niemann said the process for Phase II will be determined by the Governor and our criteria status.

PUBLIC COMMENT

State Representative Mary Ann Dunwell thanked the Board of Health and Public Health staff for their hard work.

The meeting adjourned at 2:17p.m.

Justin Murgel, Chair

Drenda Niemann, Secretary