

***Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting
Minutes of July 7, 2021***

Mr. Bechen called the July 7, 2021, Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

Roll Call:

Members Present:	Tom Bechen, Diane Pape-Freiberger, Adam Hoffman, Amy Crow Sunleaf, Sandra Larson, Hendrik Schultz
Members Absent:	Katie Jones
Others Present:	Patrice Lambert, Dubuque County Health Department; Samantha Kloft, Dubuque County Health Department; Stacey Killian, VNA; Ben Fischer; TH; Ann McDonough, Chair to Dubuque County Supervisors; Kevin Dragotto, Dubuque County Auditor; Wayne Kenniker; April White

Additional Notes:

1. Roll Call

2. Public Comments

Wayne Kenniker – Wayne shares that a petition has been developed and signed by approximately 125 individuals to oppose the use of vaccination incentives in Dubuque County.

Ann McDonough – Ann thanks Wayne for leading this effort and adds that last checked, there were over 200 signatures. Ann hopes for an open conversation about vaccine incentives at tonight's meeting.

April White – April brings attention to the poverty rate in Dubuque County. She adds that incentives or bribery is like a form of manipulation for people experiencing poverty.

3. Approval of Agenda

Diane Pape-Freiberger made the motion to approve the Agenda for July 7, 2021. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to approve the Minutes for June 16, 2021. Adam Hoffman seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.

5. COVID-19 Update

Samantha Kloft shares her screen to display a presentation led by Patrice Lambert. Patrice gives the BOH a brief update on COVID-19 vaccinations in Dubuque County. She shares that vaccination rates are the lowest among those 12-29 years old. Patrice also shares the following updates:

- Kennedy Mall POD is closed. Total cost ~ \$109,230.96
- As of July 1, IDPH will shift COVID-19 case investigation focus to outbreaks and vulnerable settings such as long-term care facilities. IDPH will also end routine COVID-19 case investigation calls for positive tests. The VNA will follow IDPH guidance at this time.
- On July 16, 2021 Test Iowa will cease operations and begin offering free at-home test kits starting July 19, 2021.
- By late summer IDPH plans to transition reports to the IDPH website and decommission and archive coronavirus.iowa.gov. this will be more like regular flu reports.

As it relates to the proposed incentives program, Patrice shares that Polk County and Black Hawk County are the only counties in Iowa currently implementing incentives. Dubuque County is one of the top four counties for total vaccinations behind, Johnson, Linn, and Polk. Only one of the top four counties has started an incentives program, being Polk County.

6. Reports

a. VNA Annual Report – Stacey Killian

Stacey shares a PowerPoint presentation provided to the BOH in advance in the Agenda Packet. The report highlights the VNA's work over the past year, both with COVID-19 and with through community programming. Stacey also thanks the BOH for their support throughout 2020.

The BOH shares their appreciation for the VNA and their staff throughout the past COVID-19 year, and prior.

b. Grants to Counties Update – Collin Dolphin

Collin shares a PowerPoint presentation provided to the BOH in advance in the Agenda Packet. The report highlights the Grants to Counties work this year and plans for next fiscal year.

Diane Pape-Freiberger asks if GTC could cover the cost of mitigation for bad septic systems and wells. Collin responds that there currently is not. Diane suggests the Health Department seek funding for mitigation efforts in the future to increase testing.

7. COVID-19 Immunization Incentive – Recommendation/Action

The IMT proposal for a vaccine incentives program was provided to the BOH in advance through the Agenda Packet.

Supervisor Ann McDonough starts the conversation by stating that incentives are an approved use of funds through the American Rescue Plan Act. Therefore, it is important to at least explore the idea of such a program. Ann believes that an incentive is no more coercive than the Iowa State Lottery. She also looks forward to a meaningful discussion on this by the BOH. However, Ann also adds that the decision to implement such a program is political and will ultimately be voted on by the BOS.

Hendrik Shultz explains that it is important to increase our vaccination rates as the Delta variant continues to increase across the US and Iowa. This variant is twice as transmissible and can potentially affect younger people more. No one has to die from COVID-19 anymore; there are enough vaccines for everyone who wants one. Vaccines will save not only your life, but the life of others. Those college age and younger are the least vaccinated and a group that needs to be focused on. Hendrik believes that we have 6 weeks to get this group vaccinated, before school starts again. There are many studies and literature on incentives for vaccinations that show it is not a game changer in behavior change.

Sandra Larson asks what the goal percentage is for vaccinations in Dubuque County. She also asks if the IMT knows who is not vaccinated and where they are. Hendrik responds that herd immunity is between 70-80%, but the higher the better. Patrice Lambert also responds that the IMT is able to see vaccination rates by age, race, ethnicity, and zip code.

Diane Pape-Freiburger also adds that the higher the rate of transmission, the more individuals are needed to be to reach herd immunity.

Hendrik shares his disapproval of the proposed program but adds that there are other ways to incentivize vaccinations. One suggestion he has is to conduct random COVID-19 testing in schools for students and staff that are not fully vaccinated.

Sandra Larson also suggests a program in which organizations or NGOs could receive cash incentives for vaccine referrals in the community.

Some BOH concerns with the IMT proposal include, but are not limited to:

- Cash incentives cannot be given to individual under 18
- Studies have shown cash incentives are not all that effective for vaccinations
- Lack of resources to implement program

Tom Bechen feels that we have reached a saturation number in Dubuque County for vaccinations and an incentive program may not help that. Diane Pape-Freiberger does not agree that Dubuque County is saturated but does agree that the incentives program may not be the best way. Amy Crow Sunleaf asks if providers are going to individual homes to provide vaccines. Patrice Lambert and Stacey Killian respond that the VNA does provide at-home vaccinations as needed.

The BOH agrees that urgency is here in terms of vaccinating the community. However, they do not believe that the proposed incentive program is the solution.

Diane Pape-Freiberger made the motion to reject the immunization incentives program proposal from the IMT. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

This will now go to the BOS for final discussion.

8. Immunizations where Alcohol is the Primary Focus – Recommendation/Action

Hendrik Schultz shares his medically opinion that mixing alcohol with vaccinations creates a high-risk situation. Amy Crow Sunleaf adds that consent for a vaccine cannot be given if they have been consuming alcohol. The BOH agrees.

Hendrik Schultz made the motion to formally discourage immunizations where alcohol is the primary focus. Amy Crow Sunleaf seconded the motion. 6 Aye, motion carried.

9. American Rescue Plan Act Funding Proposal – Discussion

Patrice Lambert discusses a proposal for restructuring the Health Department. This proposal was provided to the BOH in advance through the Agenda Packet.

Tom Bechen adds that this proposal will not be acted on tonight. The BOH will have time to look over the proposal and develop questions/vote at the next BOH meeting.

10. BOS/BOH Liaison Comments

Supervisor McDonough comments that proposals requesting new/additional staff may not be approved by her as funding for ARPA funding ends in 2024.

Ann also shares her support for Hendrik's and Sandra's alternative incentive proposals.

She then asks if vaccinations will be offered at the Dubuque County Fair. Diane Pape-Freiberger responds that yes, there will be providers at the fair.

11. Future Meetings – Frequency, date, time, format, location

Meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of every month at 6pm. Meetings will continue with the hybrid model, with BOH members meeting in the BOS Chambers.

12. Next Meeting Date – August 18, 2021

13. Public Comment

April White comments on school vaccinations and incentives, which is an agenda item.

14. Adjournment

Amy Crow Sunleaf made the motion to adjourn at 7:05pm. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 5 Aye, motion carried.