

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Boulder County Board of Health (BOH) Regular Meeting Online/Telephonic Meeting

June 13, 2022

BOH Members:

President Gregg Thomas; *Vice President* Morgan McMillan; *Board Members* Landrey Fagan, M.D., Brooke Harrison, Ph.D., and Lindy Hinman. Absent: Landrey Fagan, M.D.

BCPH Staff:

Executive Director, Camille Rodriguez; *Deputy Public Health Director*, Lexi Nolen, Ph.D.; *Chief Medical Officer*, Dr. Bob Belknap; *Director of Administration and Finance*, Katherine Palmer; *Director of Strategic Initiatives Branch*, Kelli Hintch; *Environmental Health Division Director*, Joe Malinowski; *Communicable Disease & Emergency Management Division Director*, Indira Gujral, Ph.D.; *Climate Action Team Lead*, Grace Hood; *Air Quality and Health Homes Program Coordinator*, Bill Hayes; *Consumer Protection Program Coordinator*, Lane Drager; *OASOS Program Coordinator*, Jax Gonzalez; *Business Operations Coordinator*, Jorden Thomas; *Public Relations Specialist*, Shawn Hollister.

Boulder County Staff:

Senior Assistant County Attorney, Kate Haywood.

Members of the Public:

Dee Knapper

Charlie Winn

Cynthia Nevison

Carolyn Bninski

Marti Hopper

Meeting Called to Order.

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and asked all participants to identify themselves for the record (see above). He declared that a quorum was present, that notice of this meeting was posted on the Board of Health website, and that the call-in information was included to allow for public participation. Due to COVID-19, the need for social distancing, and the current public health order, President Thomas said the meeting was being conducted online and telephonically.



ITEM 1. Public Comments (on unscheduled agenda items).

Members of the public express concerns for BCPH's response to COVID-19, returning to normal activities amidst the pandemic, and concerns around vaccinations for children under five.

- President Thomas asks Executive Director Rodriguez and Indira Gujral if there was any mention of a vaccine mandate for children under five during the May Regularly Scheduled Board of Health Meeting?
 - Executive Director Rodriguez notes that there was no intention by Boulder County Public Health to mandate any vaccines for children.
 - Indira clarifies that BCPH is in preparation for the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval of guidance for vaccines for children under five. BCPH prepares for the guidance and rollout of these vaccines since the Immunization Team will provide vaccines to the public, but there is no mandate associated with the vaccines. Further, focus groups are ongoing, but no vaccine mandates will result from these focus groups. The focus groups are for the team to learn from parents regarding thoughts and concerns to better learn and appreciate all sides of how people feel about vaccines in Boulder County.
- President Thomas thanks Executive Director Rodriguez and Indira, and notes that parents have their own choice to make to vaccinate their children.

ITEM 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes.

Vice President McMillan made a motion, which was seconded by Board Member Harrison, to approve the May 9, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes, May 23, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes, and the June 7, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes. With all Board Members present in favor of the motion, President Thomas declares the motion unanimously carried.

ITEM 3. Marshall and Middlefork Situational Awareness and BCPH Response.

Executive Director Rodriguez introduces Joe Malinowski, Environmental Health Division Manager, to present the Marshall and Middlefork fire update. Joe begins the presentation by prefacing that the purpose is to provide an overview of BCPH's response overall, and to focus on the original goals and objectives of response efforts and to provide an updated timeline on achieving these goals and objectives.

In regard to food safety and consumer protection, the original goal was to ensure that food retail establishments (FRE) that were impacted by the fire mitigate food safety risks prior to reopening, and to ensure residents living in the impacted communities to have the guidance to safely discard spoiled and contaminated food. The team completed over 100 FRE inspections in Superior and Louisville. Out of the 100 facilities, 25 had direct impact from the fire, and of the 25, three may not reopen due to the severity of the damage, and a few are rebuilding to reopen. Most of this

response was completed by February of 2022, but the team will continue to work with the impacted FRE and will return to pre-fire programmatic work.

In hazardous waste, the focus was to ensure fire and ash impacted soils were remediated to mitigate health and environmental impacts. The team worked with CDPHE to determine the best approach to ensure that there would not be any hazardous waste after the fire. Based on data from California, the team determined that soil sample tests needed to be completed. The results from the soil testing helped determine the risk to the public and to coordinate resource conservation for the debris cleanup efforts. Further, the Environmental Health team in conjunction with the Communications Team from the Strategic Initiatives Branch developed multiple frequently asked questions guidance and other resources for the public. Through these initiatives, the team better understood the level of soil contamination and a sampling protocol was established by April 2022.

For water quality and wells in unincorporated places in Boulder County, the goal was to support homeowners with wells to have the information they need to ensure that their drinking water was safe after the fire. The team worked with the Communications Team to create guidance on well testing and used partnerships with CDPHE laboratories to interpret testing results. Further, the team worked with Purdue University to ensure that impacted residents had access to free Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) and heavy-metal well testing. The team found that there were not many impacts from VOCs, but there were systematic and infrastructure damages to wells. The majority of this work concluded in May 2022.

Further in water quality, the response goal for septic systems was to ensure regulatory requirements while supporting residents in the rebuilding process and returning to their homes. This work will be the response effort that will take the longest to complete. Over 150 homes were damaged during the fire that use septic systems. The team worked with the permitting body for Boulder County to develop the process for individuals impacted by the fire to gain expedited permits. Further, coordination with resource conservation was implemented to ensure that vehicles were not driving over damaged septic systems. The team also conducted reconnaissance visits to septic systems that were impacted to establish a level of damage assessment. The results of the damage assessment showed that most of the septic damage was from plastic well-heads that melted during the fire. This recovery effort will take the longest due to the navigation of gaining permits and rebuilding homes. The team expects this work to continue through the next five years and will be completed by January 2026.

The two goals for the stormwater response effort are to protect surface water quality from impacts resulting from the burn scar and to prevent stormwater runoff impacts in the burn area. BCPH serves as the regulatory authority for stormwater in unincorporated Boulder County and must maintain compliance with the Clean Water Act as mandated by CDPHE and the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Further, the team facilitated regulatory compliance and provided technical support to the Debris Removal Program to ensure that as debris removal was occurring that additional debris was not entering storm drains. The team is also collaborating on this response with partners in Superior and Louisville and plans that the debris removal will be completed by September 2022.

Regarding outdoor air quality the goal is to monitor and report air quality data to impacted residents of the burn area and to provide guidance to mitigate health impacts, as well as to assure that air quality impacts are minimized during debris removal. In previous presentations, the team highlighted efforts in working with other municipalities and schools to set up air quality monitors to track particulates on a web-based platform that would alert users to specific air quality information. This process also helped to inform the air quality requirements set during debris removal to minimize particulates in the air. Further research is being completed to monitor long-term impacts from exposure to the fire and VOCs. This project will follow the deadlines of completion of debris removal by September 2022.

The indoor air quality and Healthy Homes program goals are to ensure homeowners have the information they need to properly clean their home, mitigate risk, and self-monitor for negative health impacts. Further, the team is working to ensure guidance is developed for windblown ash for impacted homes and in public spaces. This work is through partnerships with researchers to ensure that information is communicated to the public via the BCPH Communications Team. The long-term objective is to work with manufacturers and retailers to ensure that residents have access to affordable and quality air purifier and monitoring equipment. This portion of the response is set to end in July 2022.

- Vice President McMillan thanks the Environmental Health division for their hard work in response to the fires and continued efforts in community recovery and asks for clarification regarding the 5-year timeframe for the permit process – noting that it is not the physical septic system work that would be the “bottleneck” of the process, but the addition of site cleanup, design process, hiring an architect, and gaining permits.
 - Joe confirms Vice President McMillan’s comment. It has been three years since the Pine Cliff fires and only a few homes have begun rebuilding due to the length of the process and in navigating insurance claims.
- Board Member Harrison asks when the first homes will be able to initiate the rebuilding process.
 - Joe notes that there are a few families who are working with the Boulder County Building Safety and Inspection Services department to gain building permits. The department has developed an expedited process for those individuals who were impacted by the fire. Further, the fees for the septic systems have been waived

for individuals who were previously connected to a septic system that has to be rebuilt.

ITEM 4. Heat Emergency Project Update.

Executive Director Rodriguez introduces the Climate Action Team Lead, Grace Hood and the Air Quality and Healthy Homes Program Coordinator, Bill Hayes, to present the information on the extreme heat emergency response plan.

Bill begins the presentation by noting that this work started last year after the Pacific-Northwest experienced a heat dome. The team realized that this was an area where improvements to emergency response could be made. The team met with the Emergency Management team within the Communicable Disease and Emergency Management (CDEM) division to begin discussions on updating the plan. The project did not gain much traction until October of 2021 when Grace Hood joined BCPH. Further, the team partnered with organizations outside of BCPH: Agency of Area Aging, BM Mobility, public library systems, and the Emergency Operations Management Center. The team fully expects that this plan will be tested and implemented this summer due to the increased temperature and will continue to make the plan more robust as responses are needed.

Grace thanks Bill for the introduction and context to this plan and notes that Grand Junction had an extreme heat warning over the weekend, and unfortunately had one death due to heat-related illness, which highlights the importance of this work over the summer. Extreme heat causes more deaths than any other weather-related hazard and thousands of individuals seek medical treatment each year due to heat-related illnesses.

During the heat dome over the Pacific Northwest in 2021, half of the 72 deaths in Multnomah County, Oregon, which includes the city of Portland, were older adults. Among those who died, none had central A/C. This speaks to the importance of focusing on this key demographic of people and on having access to central air conditioning during an extreme heat event. Further, climate change is also occurring, and climate projections show and increase up to 8 degrees Fahrenheit this summer, which would make the climate of Boulder County feel like northern New Mexico.

There are two National Weather Services (NWS) categories that require heat response: NWS Warning and NWS Advisory. The NWS Warning is for temperatures greater than 105 degrees Fahrenheit for two or more days in which everyone is at risk, and the NWS Advisory is for temperatures greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit for two or more days with specific groups of people at risk (i.e., older adults, outdoor workers, households without air conditioning, children under the age of 4, individuals with chronic medical conditions, and outdoor athletes). BCPH has also identified individuals living in manufactured homes and the unhoused population to be included in the at-risk group.

For this summer, the Boulder County Extreme Heat Response plan is to have those individuals with no central air conditioning to go to their local library, which acts as a heat relief site, during an extreme heat event (either a Warning or Advisory). Further, it is important that individuals know that fans do not prevent heat illness since they are unable to cool core body temperatures. Lastly, the team encourages individuals to check on neighbors throughout the summer in case of a heat emergency.

Outreach for this plan starts with an early summer information push that includes a press release in English and Spanish. The press release includes the [website](#) that lists out heat-related illness information and infographics that community members can use throughout the summer. The team also hosted a webinar for older adults and a separate one for outdoor businesses related to extreme heat. Further, a two-page flyer was created and circulated for community members to know the steps to stay safe during an extreme heat event. The team continues to work with the Boulder County Area Agency on Aging, Meals on Wheels, and other organizations to distribute the flyers to individuals seeking services. The team will be holding a webinar later in summer for those individuals that live in manufactured homes. Plans and solutions for the unhoused population is in collaboration with the Boulder County Outreach Collaborative who act as the main source of communication with the unhoused population. Lastly, there have been increased efforts to reach Spanish language speakers, which include media interviews that will be completed in the coming weeks.

In fall of 2022, the team will review the plan, outreach efforts, and determine lessons learned. Further, they will begin to map heat spots across the county which will lend to further heat adaptation strategies that can be applied in the future.

- Board Member Hinman thanked Grace and Bill for the work that they have been doing and asks about the viability of getting air conditioning systems into houses, particularly for older adults who may not be able to leave their homes to seek colder environments. Further, Board Member Hinman knows of organizations that could help provide these resources and notes that this should be a priority moving forward. Board Member Hinman also offers any assistance that she can provide in working with the team to move these priorities forward.
 - Grace thanks Board Member Hinman, and notes that there is not a large amount of detail in terms of getting air conditioners in these priority population homes and are having to rely on partners such as the Boulder County Area on Aging and Via Mobility. The responsibility of the plan falls on the individuals to seek transportation to the cooling sites and welcomes any insight on how the team can be more proactive in this space moving forward.

- Board Member Hinman would like to know what near-term opportunities exist and then determine other areas that can be built out programmatically.
 - Bill notes that in conversations with the Boulder County Area Agency on Aging, they have a robust response effort in protecting older adults in the county who could contact individuals that they know who live alone that could need help in these types of emergencies. For long-term responses, the team is further developing relationships to promote heat pumps as an energy efficient response to extreme heat for the lower-income population. Lastly, the team has traditionally had weatherization programs that focused on insulating and heating homes throughout the winter months, and this may be the time to add to the scope of that program to help cool homes in the summer.
- Vice President McMillan relates this to the state’s work on climate change and for everyone to do what they can to prevent the extreme weather we are experiencing. Vice President McMillan also noted that this work is important to focus on early childhood centers and in-home providers – asks if the team is working with this population on responses.
- Vice President McMillan notes that there are challenges in providing shelter for the unhoused population and asks what other locations, aside from the public libraries, the team are recommending this population utilize during a heat emergency.
 - Grace notes that Chris Campbell on the Emergency Management Team in the CDEM division has been responsible for outreach and communication about heat relief sites throughout the county, and the libraries are the main locations for this use. There was concern among library staff in preparing for a potential large influx of individuals using the building as a heat relief location, but research shows individuals do not fully utilize cooling centers. The team hopes that utilization of these centers increases as the community experiences these emergencies.
 - Vice President McMillan asks if there is an opportunity in working with faith communities who have a history of opening facilities for shelters in response to cold weather events for unhoused individuals.
 - Grace thanks Vice President McMillan and notes that she will explore those partnerships.
- Board Member Harrison asks if the heat emergency website is live, and notes that community members often mention that it is difficult finding information on the public health website, and that this topic should be pinned to the public health homepage so that it is more easily found.
 - Grace thanks Board Member Harrison for that idea and shares the website link in the Zoom Meeting chat.

- President Thomas notes that it is a high bar for the NWS to issue a heat warning in the Denver-Metro area due to the low humidity, so the notifications will not be triggered as much based on this criterion. Libraries are a good starting point since they are open during the day, but in the future, if there are rolling energy outages due to supply and demand, will this impact the response plan? What if the cooling centers must extend hours of operations due to the night-time increased heat?
 - Grace notes that there have only been 8 or 9 heat advisories or warnings in the state, but during research, the NWS is developing a new product called Heat Risk – which is triggering more heat advisories for the Denver-Metro Area. Further, Grace thanks President Thomas for the information on the supply and demand for potential blackouts and redundancy, which would require the cooling sites to have a back-up energy system to continue offering cooling.
 - Bill adds that colleagues in the City of Fort Collins are also developing their emergency heat response plan. Their plan is based on forecast models, which will increase the collaboration efforts after this summer to determine which approach works best. The ideal response would be to have communities along the front-range to implement a similar system for continuity efforts.
- Board Member Hinman notes that since the Marshall Fire in December 2021, there has been an uptick in “red flag” warnings from Twitter and other websites, and wonders if it is possible to determine whether increased communication with the public would ensure that the message is being better received, even if we are not in a true heat advisory for individuals to take precautions – the same way that the air quality notification system works.
 - Bill notes that Shawn Hollister from the BCPH Communications Team, is present at the meeting, and the team will discuss if a notification system like this is possible.
- President Thomas thanks the team for their work and offers to send the City and County of Denver’s Cooling Center Guidance which would pertain more to the emergency shelters that act as cooling sites beyond normal business hours.

ITEM 5. COVID-19 Data, Policy, and Program Update.

Executive Director Rodriguez introduces Indira Gujral, Ph.D., Communicable Disease and Emergency Management Division Manager to present the COVID-19 Update.

Indira begins the presentation by speaking to key messages regarding the pandemic response efforts. Boulder County is still in a pandemic state and there are internal plans to shift responses to align with grant scopes of work from federal and state guidance. There continues to be high levels of state community immunity through vaccinations and infections, and variants will continue to emerge if community transmission continues to be widespread. Vaccines and

therapeutics will support a future transition when the virus is present, but BCPH is in a better position to manage the disease. Therapeutics may start to be more difficult to access as federal funding cliffs will occur on June 30, 2022.

- Vice President McMillan asks if there has been any discussion on insurance coverage for therapeutics?
 - Indira notes that she is sure that insurance will cover therapeutics, but the problem would be the accessibility of therapeutics. One of the challenges is that individuals have to see a provider to be given therapeutics within five days of being symptomatic. There is a team within CDEM focusing on access to therapeutics since it is the way forward, but individuals have to understand the challenge of not being able to see a doctor to get a prescription within the symptomatic timeframe.

The three CDC Community Level indicators show Boulder County as a high level of transmission. There are 379.2 new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people in the past 7 days, which is over the 200 or more level which is a high-level indicator. There are 16.4 new COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100,000 for the 7-day total, which is a high-level indicator. Lastly, 2.8% of staffed inpatient beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients in the past 7 days which is a medium level indicator. There are currently 14 counties in Colorado that are in high levels, 27 in medium, and the rest are in low. Most of the low-level counties are rural and in Eastern-Colorado.

Indira presents a table that shows the Boulder County CDC Community Levels over time. Starting on April 14th through June 9th. Overtime, Boulder County moved from low, to medium, to high community levels. This data suggests that vaccines are holding up against severe disease. Compared to individuals who are unvaccinated, those who are boosted are less likely to be infected, three-times less likely to be hospitalized, and almost five-times less likely to die due to COVID-19. The data shows widespread community transmission but notes that community transmission could be higher due to individuals using at-home tests and not reporting results to the state.

Indira presents the case trends among age groups which shows the case trend in seven-day incidence of new COVID-19 cases among Boulder County residents. The highest trends are for those between the ages of 35 and 54, but the highest number of cases are for those in the 23-34 age group.

Community testing sites will be open on a month-to-month basis, with Stazio and SVVSD Innovation Center being open until September. Further, at-home rapid tests are more available for some but not all community members, and the majority of these results are not counted towards the total data. The epidemiology work has shifted the most over the last few months, since there is a move away from case investigation and contact tracing to prevention and

response, especially in priority settings such as jails, shelters, residential settings. General communication efforts will continue for the public, but the team will also focus on older adults, immunocompromised, those with chronic conditions, and those individuals who reside in priority settings. Data surveillance is shifting to CDC Community Levels and wastewater will serve to inform surges.

COVID-19 vaccinations serve as the number one protection against death, hospitalization, and critical illness. Boulder County vaccine uptake is high, with 78% of residents being fully vaccinated and 64% are up to date which includes the first booster. BCPH continues to have a vaccine mandate for staff, but do not require staff to also receive the booster. The focus groups among parents of children under 12 and teen/young adult communication campaigns continue and will help to inform public communications.

The therapeutics [website](#) launched, which will help to promote monoclonal antibody therapy and oral anti-viral medications that are to be administered within 5 days of symptoms. Indira notes that it is a challenge to see physicians within this timeframe, and that more telehealth options are coming soon.

- President Thomas asks if the state is collecting statistics on therapeutics, specifically how many are prescribed and the outcomes.
 - Indira is not sure of the data collection and defers the question to Dr. Belknap.
 - Dr. Belknap asked CDPHE this question previously, and the answer was no. CDPHE has not collected data on the rate of individuals receiving therapeutics, and there is limited data on the parties who are dispensing the therapeutics. Hospital systems have the ability to see the rates of therapeutics for patients who are in the system. Denver Health acts as a test-to-treat site, so individuals from outside of that hospital system can be referred into Denver Health and receive therapeutics.
 - Indira notes that there are no test-to-treat sites in Boulder County.
- Vice President McMillan asks if Medicare or Medicaid would cover therapeutics, and if Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) are able to administer therapeutics.
 - Indira notes that the FQHCs in Boulder County do not have the capacity to implement a test-to-treat model. The team has been trying to encourage the FQHCs to participate in the program but have to understand that the hospital systems have been overextended so it is difficult to transition into this model.
 - Vice President McMillan asks if an individual goes to a FQHC for treatment, where are they referred to?
 - Indira clarifies that people can still access therapeutics from a FQHC, but the facilities are not able to test the individual and then administer treatment at the same time. The state is working on telehealth options

that are low-cost, but due to the side-effects of therapeutics, it could be difficult to determine if the patient is eligible for treatment via telehealth.

- Dr. Belknap thinks that telehealth could be a reasonable option moving forward. The most common therapeutics are safe, but you have to be aware of drug interactions. Understanding and knowing patient's medications (both prescribed and over the counter) is important. The challenge with test-to-treat options is that currently testing and therapeutics are provided for free, but there is no mechanism for paying the provider costs or for the infrastructure to actually employ the model.

ITEM 6. Budget Study Session Update.

The Budget Study Session is scheduled for Tuesday, July 19th at 5:30 p.m.

ITEM 7. Legislative Session Update.

Executive Director Rodriguez introduces Lane Drager, Consumer Protection Program Coordinator, to present the 2022 Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials (CALPHO) Legislative Update.

Lane highlights a few bills that BCPH and CALPHO were very active on by providing legislative testimony, adding to fact sheets, or lending resources to efforts. The first was [HB22-1064](#), Prohibit Flavored Tobacco Regulate Synthetic Nicotine, which would place a ban on flavored nicotine vaping products as well as any tobacco products. This was a contentious bill that had multiple edits throughout the drafting period, but the bill was not passed. There have been conversations that regard this type of ban as a local municipality issue, and others where it should be a state-wide ban.

The second bill that CALPHO focused on was [HB22-1244](#), Public Protections from Toxic Air Contaminants. This bill passed but did have significant alterations. Instead of addressing toxins at a local level, the bill will monitor the state's air toxins with the hope that there will be additional legislation that will then regulate the toxin presence based on the monitoring data.

Bills that BCPH staff were active on include:

- [HB22-1064](#) – Prohibit Flavored Tobacco Regulate Synthetic Nicotine
- [HB22-1279](#) – Reproductive Health Equity Act
- [HB22-1153](#) – Affirming Parentage Adoption in Assisted Reproduction
- [HB22-1055](#) – Sales Tax Exemption Essential Hygiene Products
- [HB22-1157](#) – Utilization of Demographic Data by Colorado Department Public Health and Environment
- [HB22-1289](#) – Health Benefits for Colorado Children and Pregnant Persons

- [SB22-149](#) – Improve Marijuana Industry Regulation

- Vice President McMillan thanks Lane for the material presented and for the thoroughness of the documents. It is helpful to know the progression of bills from start to finish.
 - Lane asks if the rate and content of information and documentation that is sent to the Board of Health is appropriate or if they would like to see the information presented in other ways.
 - Board Member Harrison and Board Member Hinman appreciates the communication and wants it to continue in years to come.
 - Vice President McMillan adds that the Board Members are willing to testify or provide letters of support for bills if needed.

ITEM 8. Director’s Report.

No questions or comments.

ITEM 9. Old and New Business.

Board Member Hinman asks when the Board of Health is planning on meeting in-person or hybrid for regularly scheduled meetings.

- Executive Director Rodriguez has not received an update prior to this meeting for the technology updates at the Boulder Campus.

ITEM 10. Adjournment.

There being nothing further to discuss, President Thomas declared the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.



Gregg Thomas,
President



Alexandra (Lexi) Nolen,
Interim-Executive Director*

*At the time of Approval of Minutes, Alexandra (Lexi) Nolen was appointed by the Board of Health to act as Interim-Executive Director due to the resignation of Camille Rodriguez.