

## BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

### Summary of Meeting

August 17, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was held by conference call (Dial in Phone Number (312) 626-6799, Access Code: 817 3459 5171#, Password: 549397#) and was called to order by Dr. Michael W. Meshad, Chairman, at 7:03 a.m. Roll was called and the following attended:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doctors Michael W. Meshad, Michael C. Chang, Stacey W. Wing, Joseph Ewing Bornstein, Desiree A. Soter-Pearsall, and Commissioner Merceria L. Ludgood

MEMBERS ABSENT: C.M.A. (Max) Rogers IV

STAFF PRESENT: Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr.P.H., F.A.C.P., Health Officer; Laura Cepeda, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.M.S., F.A.A.D., Chief Medical Officer; Paul M. Betros, Jr., M.B.A, Director, Administrative Services; Kelly Warren, M.S.W., M.P.H., Director, Family Health Clinical Services; Stephanie Crawford, M.P.H., D.H.Sc., Director, Prevention & Wellness; and Ruth Guess, Transcriber

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 18, 2021 (Attachment A): The minutes for the meeting held on May 18, 2021, were briefly reviewed since the minutes had been distributed to the Board members prior to the meeting.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ludgood and seconded by Dr. Bornstein that the minutes of the meeting held on May 18, 2021, be approved as written. The motion passed unanimously.

### III. HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT

Dr. Eichold informed the Board that he withdrew his letter of intent to retire and stated that now is not the time to have a change in leadership in the middle of a battle. Item VIII Health Officer Nominating Committee Report by Dr. Pearsall is no longer necessary.

a. Report from State Health Officer (Attachment B): Dr. Eichold presented to the Board for their information, a summary report for the months of May, June, and July 2021 from the State Health Officer sent monthly to county Boards of Health describing actions taken by the State Committee of Public Health.

b. Informational Items:

- o Alabama's Health – June 2021 (Attachment C): Dr. Eichold presented to the Board for their information, the June 2021 issue of ALABAMA'S HEALTH, a publication of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

c. Status of Mobile County Board of Health, et al vs. Mitchell "Chip" Fisher; Richard Sackler, et al Resolution for Action by the Mobile County Board of Health Chartering the Addiction Treatment Council of the Mobile County Board of Health (Attachment D): Dr. Eichold informed the board that there is civil action pending with Mobile County Board of Health versus various defendants on opioid addiction and we have a draft of a resolution for the Mobile County Board of Health. He requested each Board Member review the draft Resolution prepared by Irving Silver creating a COUNCIL which will then become a 501(c)3 Trust if any significant amount of dollars are received from the opioid or any other addicting product litigation. This keeps it separate from the General Fund of the agency and will be a separate entity. Trustees will be named by title and then serve a certain period of time. Dr. Nina Ford Johnson has agreed that the Past President of the Medical Society of Mobile County would be appropriate

to be a member of the council. We will put in on the agenda for next month's meeting for adoption. Please look at it and send comments and input to Ms. Guess in the next week so we can have it prepared in final format for the next meeting. Please give us any information you have.

d. Holiday Schedule FY 2021-2022 (Attachment E)

Dr. Eichold presented to the Board for their review and approval the 2021-2022 Holiday Schedule for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Four personal days are included in lieu of certain holidays taken by the State. The governor added Juneteenth as a holiday this year and it has been added to the MCHD Holiday Schedule. The Friday after Thanksgiving which the governor traditionally allows is on the schedule and is officially on the schedule adding it as "Bert Day" and has been traditionally given to employees. He informed the Board that Clinical services will open after Thanksgiving and those employees who have to work will receive overtime pay.

MOTION was made by Dr. Bornstein and seconded by Dr. Wing that the Holiday Schedule FY 2021-2022 be approved as presented. The motion passed without objection.

#### IV. CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

a. COVID-19 Hospital Update: Dr. Cepeda informed the Board that COVID has taken a toll on all local hospitals and on regional hospitals as well. Mobile County Hospitals set a new high yesterday of 480 patients hospitalized with COVID which is much higher than the 276 maximum that was seen in January. Only forty-nine of those patients were vaccinated. Ninety percent of those hospitalized are unvaccinated. This is consistent across the country. Dr. Scott Harris stated yesterday that Mobile was the area that saw it this bad first. There were two ICU beds available in the state yesterday and there is now nowhere available to take patients. The ERs and the ICUs are full.

b. COVID-19 Vaccine Update: Dr. Cepeda informed the Board that MCHD had been working to set up monoclonal antibody injections and hoped to have that at our mall site as the segue to COVID testing where we had opened the site last week. With the Delta wave and the spike, we have seen an increase in vaccination and testing. The Mall site was open for ten days and we vaccinated over 1,000 people and tested over 4,000 people in that short time. Due to the conflict with the site, we had to close the location. This will delay our ability to do monoclonal antibodies immediately after testing on high-risk patients. The goal was to help support the hospitals to keep people from ever reaching the hospital doors. We are trying to find a new site to set up. Yesterday USA was low on high-flow devices, and all hospitals are all short on staff. A lot of hospital staff are out due to being exposed to or sick with COVID and many of their staff have left to travel for higher salaries. Last week MCHD requested a Disaster Medical Assistance Team from the Governor to provide staff assistance in Mobile County. We are waiting to hear back on that. With the increased interest in vaccination, we have gone to about 35% vaccinated which is a small increase and we are seeing the interest taper off. The nationwide average for vaccinations is 50%.

#### V. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

a. General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Reports – May and June 2021 (Attachment F): Mr. Betros presented to the Board the General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Report for the month of May 2021. May is typically a slow month between winter and summer months which brings in more Food and Lodging revenue. May was an unfavorable month of \$53,725.00. Year to date there is a favorable balance of a little over \$1.6 million. Birth Certificates have been lower than anticipated for the year and we are bringing in less money in Vital Records. Environmental fees typically pick up in summer months and are

a little less than projected for the year-to-date balance. Overall, it is fairly typical and not unusual for May to be a slow month.

Mr. Betros presented to the Board the General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Report for the month of June 2021. June was a favorable month with \$334,161.00 which gave us a favorable balance of year to date of a little over \$2 million. Birth Certificates are behind projections for the year. Food and Lodging revenues for the year began to increase and is the reason for the increases for the month of June. The June COVID activities summary show that since inception of the pandemic roughly \$6 million dollars has been spent on COVID-19 activities. The July statement will be presented at the next meeting.

MOTION was made by Dr. Pearsall and seconded by Dr. Bornstein that the General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Report for the months of May and June be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Ad Valorem Tax FY 2021-2022: Mr. Betros presented to the Board and informed them he will speak to both the Ad Valorem Tax and Budget FY 2021-2022 together and come back and ask for approval on those items separately. He informed the Board that in 1986 the Legislature approved the Health Department to use half of the money it received for Ad Valorem Taxes for general health care activities. Half the money received is budgeted for Ad Valorem for Vector Control which is rodents, mosquito spraying, etc. and half for the general fund which is Other Medical Activities.

c. Budget FY 2021-2022 (Attachment G): Mr. Betros presented to the Board the budget for fiscal year 2021 – 2022 for their approval. Total anticipated revenues are \$17,999,239.00. The General Fund and other funds are little over \$69,000,000.00. The estimated One Mill Ad Valorem Tax \$5.4 million is split between the General Fund and Vector which is \$2.7 million each. The budget contains a lot of COVID grants. Under Federal Funds \$36,000,000.00 is budgeted compared to \$24,000,000.00 last year. Total expenditures budgeted for the year are a little over \$17,000,000.00 general fund and approximately \$68,000,000.00 for the total estimate of a \$655,000 surplus for the General Fund and a little over \$1,000,000.00 for the rest of the agency. A 5% COLA and employee bonuses of \$500.00 for full-time employees and \$250.00 for part-time employees are included in the budget. Capital improvements are budgeted in addition to federal money received for capital projects. Flight Physicals are now budgeted under the Family Health Fund. Environmental Fees were budgeted for less this year due to current year experience. Ad Valorem tax increased due to additional county revenue. Federal dollars have increased, and the budget was increased. There is an approximate 14% General Fund Revenue increase from last year. Last year \$56,000,000.00 was budgeted compared to \$69,000,000.00 this year. A breakdown showing the three areas in the agency with budget increases expense-wise are mostly due to capital improvements for Administrative Services and mostly COVID-related activities for Prevention and Wellness. Last year 460 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees were budgeted with 506 FTE's budgeted this year. Of the \$69,000,000.00 budgeted expenses, roughly \$42,000,000.00 is personnel (salaries, fringe, and indirect cost). A brief discussion was held.

MOTION was made by Dr. Bornstein and seconded by Dr. Pearsall that the Budget FY 2021-2022 be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION was made by Dr. Bornstein and seconded by Dr. Pearsall that and for use of up to 50% of Ad Valorem Tax Revenue for the General Fund during FY 2021-2022. The motion passed unanimously.

## VI. FAMILY HEALTH CLINICAL SERVICES

a. FOPHCC Governing Council Minutes – May, June & July 2021 (Attachment H): Ms. Warren presented to the Board, for their information, copies of the minutes for the FOPHCC Governing Council Meetings held in May, June, and July 2021.

b. Primary Care Clinic Productivity Report – May, June & July 2021: Ms. Warren informed the Board that for May 2021, Family Health saw 5,613 unduplicated patients over 8,430 visits. In June, 5,943 unduplicated patients were seen over 9,534 visits. In July, 5,924 unduplicated patients were seen over 9,555 visits. Family Health is starting to see a small increase in visits due to back to school for children who have not received well child visits in probably 18 months. They are coming in to get caught up and be vaccinated. Family Health hopes to sustain the increase in visits and have patients returning to routine care.

c. Family Health COVID-19 Response: Ms. Warren informed the Board that Family Health continues to respond to COVID-19 and offer vaccinations and testing. COVID vaccine and testing is offered at all Family Health sites. Help is appreciated from Prevention and Wellness in meeting the demand if our clinics are unable to provide the testing demanded.

d. Eight Mile Health Center Generator: Ms. Warren informed the Board that the Family Health Eight Mile Health Center now has a large-scale generator which was part of a capital improvement project with funds received from HRSA and it arrived in time for storm season. This site did experience significant vaccine loss during Hurricane Sally and Hurricane Zeta. Family Health is happy to have the generator at that site.

## VII. PREVENTION & WELLNESS

a. Review Inspection Services Exemption Requests FY 2021-2022 (Attachment I): Dr. Crawford presented for the Board's review and approval the Inspection Services Exemption Request FY 2021-2022. Dr. Crawford informed the Board that fifteen establishments filed the necessary documents to request an exemption for the services they provide. The second page is a breakdown of services they provide.

MOTION was made by Dr. Pearsall and seconded by Dr. Bornstein that the Inspection Services Exemption Request FY 2021-2022 be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Influenza & Hepatitis A Update: Dr. Crawford informed the Board that Influenza continues to below the baseline which is 3.25%. We were around 1% or a little over 1% and anticipate that will start to increase as we get closer into the fall season. Under the Hepatitis A update, the county is still holding at 197 cases. For outbreaks, the state is holding at 1,487. There was an increase by two in the month of July. In June there were no reported cases. There was a 73% decrease between January and July. The highest peak was in August of last year when there were 28 cases reported.

### c. COVID-19

1. Schools: Dr. Crawford informed the Board that ADPH released their Back-to-School Guidance. MCHD held several meetings with the school superintendents, principals, as well as school nurses working with them to make sure they are reporting all cases to us. The schools are just getting back in session. The State reported 5,058 cases within the school system and of those 511 were from Mobile County. MCHD continues to work with the schools to provide guidance and assistance as well as answering any questions they have. The Department of Education was asked by ADPH if they had to guess how many of the teachers had been vaccinated and they said about 50% across the state.
2. Restaurants: Dr. Crawford informed the Board that several of our restaurants have been closing for two weeks, and some have closed until they see that the cases are getting better in the community. They have elected to do this on their own because they don't have the staff available.

If they continue to stay open, when one or two people working on their team contracts the virus, then they end up having it widespread and close in order to sanitize, clean up, and allow their team members to quarantine for the proper amount of time.

3. Supplies: Dr. Crawford informed the Board that MCHD has been told that some of our nursing homes are having trouble getting supplies due to shipping delays across the nation. MCHD is trying to help them as much as possible with supplies. Reports are received from the AIMS system. Emergency Preparedness is trying to assist us as much as possible. The nursing homes are asking for assistance from area nursing homes and the hospitals.

d. New Funding Stream: Dr. Crawford informed the Board that they continue to look for opportunities to increase funding and programs. Prevention and Wellness was awarded the Hepatitis and Surveillance Prevention grant. They also were awarded the Health Disparities Grant which looks at high risk populations and we are developing a Health Equity Office under Prevention and Wellness. They were awarded a Public Health grant from the CDC which will provide an individual to work with Environmental Health. CDC has also notified Prevention and Wellness that they will be approved for a Community Health Worker for the COVID response team. That position will be in partnership with USA.

VIII. Health Officer Nominating Committee Report – Dr. Desiree Soter-Pearsall: Dr. Meshad informed the Board that since Dr. Eichold has withdrawn his retirement that it was no longer necessary for a meeting. It is postponed until needed.

#### IX. Other Business

a. Dr. Eichold thanked the Board Members and stated this has been a hard time for all of our employees. He is very proud of the Mobile County Health Department team for working hard, moving the mall clinic back to the Newburn building, expanding services, getting monoclonal antibodies in the community, and working with the hospitals. We still have several more weeks of anticipated COVID crisis. He encouraged getting people vaccinated so we can put an end to COVID in Mobile County, Alabama.

b. Dr. Meshad inquired about the Bel Air Mall incident. Dr. Eichold informed the Board that MCHD had a contract with them in order to vaccinate and test. We were there for ten days, as you heard from the report of the success of the operation. We received communication about our presence at the Mall. A brief discussion was held.

c. Dr. Meshad thanked Commissioner Ludgood and Dr. Pearsall for helping on the Nominating Committee.

d. Next meeting September 21, 2021

#### X. ADJOURNMENT:

Dr. Meshad adjourned the meeting at 7:43 a.m.

---

Michael W. Meshad, M.D.  
Chairman

---

Michael C. Chang, M.D., F.A.C.S.  
Secretary