

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
Summary of Meeting
September 21, 2021

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was held by Zoom conference call (Dial in Phone Number 1 (312) 626-6799, Access Code: 852 4705 1433#, Password: 352215#) and was called to order by Dr. Michael W. Meshad, Chairman, at 7:02 a.m. Roll was called and the following attended:

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

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

STAFF PRESENT: Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr.P.H., F.A.C.P., Health 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 – August 17, 2021** (Attachment A): The minutes for the meeting held on August 17, 2021, were briefly reviewed since the minutes had been distributed to the Board members prior to the meeting.

MOTION was made by Dr. Stacey Wing and seconded by Dr. Desi Soter-Pearsall that the minutes of the meeting held on August 17, 2021, be approved as distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

III. **HEALTH OFFICER'S REPORT:**

a. **Report from State Health Officer** (Attachment B): Dr. Eichold presented to the Board for their information, the summary report for the month of August 2021 from Dr. Scott Harris, State Health Officer, sent monthly to county Boards of Health describing actions taken by the State Committee of Public Health.

b. **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 C): Dr. Eichold updated the Board on the status of Defendants Fisher and Sackler in the opioid litigation. There have been discussions about possible settlement. This litigation is the Mobile County Health Department in State Court in Mobile County where opioids are menacing public health. There is statutory authority which puts on the Board of Health how to resolve menaces of public health. We anticipate there will be some opportunity for economic compensation and on the advice of legal counsel we have a Resolution for the Board to consider. It creates a Council for the purposes of receiving any money the courts may designate. With the Resolution is an opportunity to create a 501(c)(3) as the Court may direct dollars for the purpose of treating persons with addiction. Copies of those draft resolutions were presented last month for review. Irving Silver is the attorney of record in helping the Health Department draft these documents. The members reviewed the items. Dr. Meshad asked if there was any discussion.

MOTION was made by Dr. Joseph Bornstein and seconded by Dr. Desi Soter-Pearsall that the following resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS, the Mobile County Board of Health (hereinafter referred to as MCBOH) is a plaintiff in one or more matters of civil litigation seeking damages from various perpetrators of wrongful activities that left in their wake a staggering large number of persons in the Mobile area who became addicted to products, to include, but not limited to opiates, methamphetamines, certain prescription medications, or other substances that are severely injurious to human mental and physical health; and

WHEREAS, if and when there shall be paid to the Mobile County Board of Health one or more awards emanating from such cases, the Mobile County Board of Health wishes, in preparation therefore, to develop a systemized approach to applying such funds to facilitate for persons in its public health jurisdictional area their care, treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery of those suffering from addiction to opiates, methamphetamine, prescription medication, alcohol, and other ingested addictive substances deleterious to human health; and

WHEREAS, to provide for a Council of distinguished and accomplished Physicians with extensive public health experience the Mobile County Board of Health, also sometimes referred to the Mobile County Health Department (hereinafter the MCHD) after consideration, is best suited to establish, appoint, and constitute the Addiction Treatment Council of the Mobile County Board of Health (hereinafter the Council) of which Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr. P.H., F.A.C.P. (Health Officer) shall serve as Chair of the Council for a term of three years and Michael W. Meshad, M.D. shall serve as Vice Chair during his current term as Chairman of the Mobile County Board of Health (MCBOH) in addition to serving one additional year. In addition to the Health Officer and the Chairperson of the MCBOH, the following individuals shall serve as members of the Council, to wit, the immediate past chairperson of the MCBOH, the President of the Mobile County Medical Society and the immediate past Health Officer or the current Medical Director/Chief Medical Officer, who will serve a term of no more than two years. The term shall be based on the physical year, January – December.

WHEREAS, the Mobile County Board of Health has this ____ day of _____, ____ at its regularly scheduled Board Meeting reviewed prospective documents including the Action by the Mobile County Board of Health Chartering the Addiction Treatment Council of the Mobile County Board Of Health does hereby certify that it approves the necessary actions by Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr. P.H., F.A.C.P., Health Officer of Mobile County, or his successor, to include but not be limited to the following; execute on its behalf all necessary documents including non material revisions, but not limited to those listed above, to establish and manage the Charter and create a charitable trust to be known as Mobile County Board of Health Addiction Treatment Trust to qualify as an entity described in Code Sec. 501(c)3, 170(c)(2), 2055(a) and 2522(a), should significant funds become available from awards emanating from such cases referenced herein, and as directed by the Court.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mobile County Board of Health does hereby authorize Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr. P.H., F.A.C.P., Health Officer, or his successor, as the representative, to execute on its behalf all necessary documents to establish the Action by The Mobile County Board of Health Chartering the Addiction Treatment Council of the Mobile County Board of Health and create a charitable trust to be known as Mobile County Board of Health Addiction Treatment Trust to qualify as an entity described in Code Sec. 501(c)3, 170(c)(2), 2055(a) and 2522(a), should significant funds become available from awards emanating from such cases referenced herein to help remedy the above public health nuisances.

All were in favor with one abstention. The motion passed.

- c. **COVID-19 Hospital Update:** Dr. Eichold informed the Board that Mobile County was at a high of 486 persons hospitalized on August 17. The number was down to 180 hospitalized COVID patients as of yesterday. There was a significant reduction in persons with COVID and requiring hospitalization.
- d. **COVID-19 Vaccine Update:** Dr. Eichold informed the Board that the percent of persons who have received at least one dose of COVID vaccine is 47.6% in Mobile County. There are 38.31% of fully COVID vaccinated persons in Mobile County. The decrease in hospitalizations is across the country, and we hope it is due to people

masking. Something is going on with COVID-19 whether the virus has slightly changed its format again or whether the Delta variant is no longer as potent as it was; he could not say, but was happy to have a significant reduction in COVID cases. The death rate has continued to be fairly high. We know the death rate usually follows about two to three weeks as the hospital admission rate declines and those who are still hospitalized have bad outcomes. Ninety percent of the over 600,000 COVID patients in the United States who have died of COVID were not fully vaccinated. The data is still overwhelmingly supportive of vaccination and the agency will continue to push that information out.

Dr. Eichold reported that we have Monoclonal Antibodies at this time. Ms. Warren will speak on that. We are now being directed to the State to procure Monoclonal Antibody therapy. We have to place orders to make sure those are being used and not hoarded. We don't know what will happen with supply and demand. We loaned some Monoclonal Antibodies to the University of South Alabama last week as they had exhausted. They have ordered more and will replenish ours when their shipment is received.

- e. **Health Officer Search:** Dr. Eichold informed the Board that the agency is advertising in multiple places for the Health Officer search. Dr. Laura Cepeda left the Health Department family to be full-time with the Cepeda family. She is no longer the Chief Medical Officer or a candidate to be the Health Officer of Mobile County. Dr. George Koulianos is the representative for the agency along with a member of our team on the CMO call which is held on Thursdays. We appreciate Dr. Koulianos volunteering. We have advertised in multiple places for a potential Health Officer. Our team talked to one person who has indicated an interest in the position, and we have another person we will be talking to at the end of the month. If they appear to be qualified and interested in the position, we will open the position with the Mobile County Personnel Board. This is a civil service job and has to meet the criteria at the Personnel Board which determines starting salaries.
- f. **Culture – April-June 2021 (Attachment D):** Dr. Eichold brought the Board's attention to the April-June 2021 issue of the Health Department newsletter, Culture, for their information.
- g. **2020 Annual Report (Attachment E):** Dr. Eichold brought the Board's attention to the Mobile County Health Department's 2020 Annual Report for their information. The report is well done, and we commend the staff. The photo on the front cover was taken in front of the Health Department building and includes Major Stallworth who was an imbedded Alabama National Guard soldier for over a year with the agency. He did a tremendous job in helping us going door to door getting people vaccinated who were unable to get vaccinated. He coordinated the transfer of materials and was an outstanding member of our team for COVID-19.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

- a. ***General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Reports – July and August 2021 (Attachment F):** Dr. Eichold reported for Mr. Betros due to technical difficulties. Dr. Eichold reported that on the July and August reports, revenue exceeded expenditures for both months. Revenue for July shows revenue exceeded expenditures by \$76,177.50. For the month of August, revenue exceeded expenditures by \$105,445.79. We are operating within the budgets. Attached to each of those reports are the current COVID funding for the Board's review of COVID dollars which are coming to the agency.

MOTION was made by Dr. Desi Soter-Pearsall and seconded by Dr. Stacey Wing that the General Fund Revenue & Expenditure Reports for the months of July and August 2021 be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. ***Community Foundation of South Alabama Resolution (Attachment G):** Mr. Betros requested the Board's approval of a resolution that is done once a year to transfer funds from the Community Foundation to provide

employee morale, employee training, and other types of activities. The agency is requesting a withdrawal of \$4,000.00 from the Mobile County Health Department Fund this year.

MOTION was made by Dr. Joseph Bornstein and seconded by Dr. Stacey Wing that the following resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS, the Mobile County Health Department seeks ways to convey its appreciation to the many employees who promote, improve and protect the health of Mobile County on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, the Mobile County Board of Health realizes the importance of trained, competent and committed staff to the execution of public health duties;

WHEREAS, the Mobile County Health Department plans to show appreciation to public health employees for their dedication and hard work throughout the year;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mobile County Board of Health does hereby approve the withdrawal of \$4,000 from the Mobile County Health Department Fund housed at the Community Foundation of South Alabama to purchase appreciation items to be distributed to all employees of the agency during the 2022 fiscal year, which runs from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. A copy of this resolution shall be included in the minutes of the regular meeting of the Mobile County Board of Health and noted that they have been adopted as signified herein below.

The motion passed unanimously.

- c. ***Banking Resolution:** Mr. Betros requested the Board's approval of a Resolution removing Dr. Cepeda as a signer on the bank statements. A list of all banks we are eligible to use under the Safe Program are listed with no changes.

MOTION was made by Dr. Bornstein and seconded by Dr. Pearsall that the following resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Mobile County Board of Health to annually appoint banking institutions to serve as depositories for official Mobile County Board of Health funds; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary that the Mobile County Board of Health designate personnel to conduct business with such institutions in the fiscal operation of the Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Health of Mobile County, Alabama appoints the 22nd State Bank (formerly First Exchange Bank); BancorpSouth Bank; Synovus – Bank of Tuscaloosa; BBVA USA Bank; Synovus – CB&T Bank; Century Bank; Commonwealth National Bank; Community Bank of Mississippi (formerly Community Bank, Coast); First Federal Bank; Hancock Whitney Bank; First Horizon Bank; Merchants Bank of Alabama; PNC Bank; Regions Bank; Renasant Bank; ServisFirst Bank; State Bank & Trust; Synovus Bank; The First, ANBA; Truist (formerly Branch Bank & Trust and SunTrust Bank); Trustmark National Bank; US Bank; and Wells Fargo Bank as depositories for the official funds of the Board of Health by Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr.P.H., F.A.C.P., Health Officer, to be authorized depositories for County Health Funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health of Mobile County, Alabama, will abide by all state and federal regulations in regard to collateralization of account funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health of Mobile County, Alabama, hereby designates the following personnel to sign checks and/or savings withdrawals and to transact other business with the above banks necessary to the fiscal operation of the Board of Health, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health of Mobile County, Alabama, hereby stipulates that payment by checks in the amount of \$300,000.00 or more must be signed by two of the persons herein designated as being authorized to sign:

Bernard H. Eichold II, M.D., Dr.P.H., F.A.C.P., Health Officer
Paul M. Betros, Jr., M.B.A., Public Health Director
Kelly R. Warren, M.S.W., M.P.H., Public Health Director
Stephanie Crawford, M.P.H., D.H.Sc., Public Health Director

The motion passed unanimously.

- d. **Mobile Festival Centre Lease:** Mr. Betros informed the Board we moved from the Shoppes at Bel Air and the agency is now looking for a space with the Mobile Festival Centre and is in negotiation for space there. We hope to test, vaccinate, and do some Monoclonal Antibody treatments in the space.

V. **FAMILY HEALTH CLINICAL SERVICES**

- a. **FOPHCC Governing Council Minutes – August 2021** (Attachment I): Ms. Warren presented to the Board, for their information and review, a copy of the minutes for the FOPHCC Governing Council Meeting held in August 2021.
- b. **Primary Care Clinic Productivity Report – August 2021:** Ms. Warren stated that during the month of August 2021 Primary Care saw 6,018 unduplicated patients across 7,924 visits. Family Health continues to see an increase in patients coming to the clinics.
- c. **Family Health COVID-19 Response and Staffing Challenges:** Ms. Warren reported that Family Health is still offering testing at all sites. There is rapid PCR testing available at the Eight Mile and Semmes sites. Vaccinations are offered to interested persons. As Dr. Eichold mentioned we took our Dauphin Island Parkway Health Center site and moved a Nurse Practitioner to the Women's Center site, and another went to the Eight Mile Health Center site. A provider was moved from the Women's Center to DIP to make it a Monoclonal Antibodies administration site. We had an uptake on that therapy. We began slowly but are now looking to accept outside referrals. We had Monoclonal Antibodies that were procured through the federal government when that was the process. Family Health is registering to obtain those through the State now. Family Health has some Monoclonal Antibodies available and loaned 25 treatments to USA last week. They will return those to us upon receipt of their shipment. Family Health will continue to offer this therapy and provide it as long as there is a supply. There have been challenges with staffing not necessarily from COVID infections, but from competition from other employers and from traveling nurse associations. Last month three RNs left us. It has been difficult to manage, and we are looking at changing staffing models to accommodate the change and the scarcity of nurses.
- d. **FCC Telehealth Funding:** Ms. Warren informed the Board that over \$800,000.00 was received in funding for Telehealth through a Federal Communications Commission grant. Family Health is using that to bolster the remote blood pressure monitoring program that is in place through AccuHealth. Hypertensive patients or patients who need blood pressure monitoring use the devices at home and the readings go directly into their medical record. It is monitored 24/7, 365 by nurses with AccuHealth and there are mechanisms in place to alert us if there is concern and when immediate action is needed. If critical need is indicated, they are referred to the emergency room. Family Health is purchasing Epion tablets with grant funds. It is a great way for patients to

register for their appointments, complete documents, and any screenings they may have either on their cell phone or computer or on an Epion tablet.

- e. **Service Area Competition Notice of Funding Opportunity Released:** Ms. Warren reported that Family Health is soon due to re-apply for the Service Area Competition for the Health Center grant. This is the main grant which assists with the operational costs of the Health Center. The funding opportunity was announced, and Family Health will complete the two-part application process prior to the November 1 and December 1 due dates.

Dr. Meshad inquired about the parameters of the blood pressure program that would send someone to the emergency room. Ms. Warren stated that she would get the information to him.

Dr. Eichold informed the Board that we are due for our Joint Commission site visit. It is pending but we don't know if they will make site visits or if they will administratively extend the time period. If Joint Commission arrives, they may have some communications with Board Members.

VI. PREVENTION & WELLNESS

- a. **Influenza & Hepatitis A Update:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that the Alabama Department of Public Health is having problems with their reporting system. The numbers available are rough numbers and the numbers that the agency's Infectious Disease team have pulled show that we are still below the reported baseline. There was an update from CDC about Influenza for the 2021-2022 season. It is noted that there were fewer tests last season so the match for this year may or may not match and may be off.

b. **COVID-19**

1. **Schools:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that the University of Alabama at Birmingham announced that they will provide some collaborative services with the Alabama Department of Public Health for asymptomatic testing in schools ages K through 12 for students, faculty, and staff. They are to look at vendors and provide a contact for the schools. They are working to collect the nasal swabs from the kindergarten through twelfth graders. The agency will be working with the vendors to obtain the results for them. The CDC released an update to their K-12 toolkit this week which responds to cases, quarantine, and isolation guidance. It also provides a close contact decision tree for the schools and customizable letters for their use. The schools here continue to see cases. The first two weeks of this month there were two middle schools showing larger numbers of cases in their students and faculty.
 2. **Shots at the Shops – White House Representatives Visit:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that White House representatives visited Mobile to review the vaccination efforts for the City of Mobile. The Biden Administration had announced in June their initiative for Shots at the Shops which is funding for barber shops and beauty salons to support their outreach and education of COVID and vaccinations for the community. The selected location was Cut Zone Barber Shop located at 2663 Springhill Avenue where our agency's COVID Response Team provided vaccines to the community. They also viewed the City of Mobile and University of South Alabama site at the Civic Center. They met with local leaders, school representatives and local school parents to hear from them about what challenges we have locally.
- c. **Hurricane Ida Update:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that the agency responded to Hurricane Ida and provided assistance along with Red Cross by co-locating our Medical Needs Shelter in connection with the Red Cross Mass Care Shelter at Theodore High School. The agency continued to provide assistance to the Red Cross and to the shelter by providing nurses to check on individuals staying there. The shelter closed last week when Red Cross put individuals in hotels.
 - d. **The New Republic Publication Interview – Fall Edition:** Dr. Crawford informed the Board that Marion Renault, science and health journalist for The New Republic Publication interviewed Dr. Eichold, Dr. Cepeda, Dr.

Murphree and Dr. Crawford about what it means to be vaccinated in a place facing a surge for COVID-19 in addition to vaccine skepticism, hesitancy, and resistance. The article will be in their fall edition and is expected to be released in October.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Next meeting October 19, 2021. Dr. Meshad reported that we do not know whether the meeting will be in person or by Zoom but it will be communicated to everyone.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION was made by Dr. Wing and seconded by Dr. Soter-Pearsall to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 a.m.

Michael W. Meshad, M.D.
Chairman

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

Approved October 19, 2021