

SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES
October 1, 2020
7:00 a.m.
Zoom Meeting

PRESENT:

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS

Bryon Reed, Commissioner, Chairman
Bill Leake, Teton County, Trustee
Lee Miller, Commissioner
Ken Miner, Commissioner
Shayne Young, Commissioner
Barbara Nelson, MD, Vice Chair
Greg Shenton, Commissioner
Brent Mendenhall, Commissioner

STAFF MEMBERS

Geri Rackow
James Corbett
Angy Harwood
Cheryl O'Connell
Amy Gamett
Kellye Johnson

1. Call Board Meeting to Order

Chairman Reed called the meeting order at 7:00 a.m. Commissioner Butts is absent from today's meeting and has given his proxy to Commissioner Shenton. Board members are attending this meeting virtually and it is being streamed live through EIPH's YouTube channel. EIPH staff is present at the Idaho Falls office where there is also a space for the public to view in person.

2. Approval of September 24, 2020 Board of Health Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Commissioner Miner made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2020 meeting.

SECOND: Commissioner Shenton

ACTION: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Review of Public Comment

Chairman Reed reviewed and responded to the public comments received. Topics included opposition to the and restrictions, support of the restrictions and masks, concern over the high number of cases in Madison and Jefferson Counties, hospitalization rates, rapid testing and challenges with continued lack of testing supplies, and an analysis and prediction on the COVID infection. Discussion followed.

4. Reports from Hospitals re: ICU and Overall Capacity

a. Idaho Falls Community Hospital (IFCH)

Casey Jackman, Chief Operating Officer, reports a continued uptick in the number and severity of COVID patients. IFCH currently has 6 COVID patients in the ICU, 4 on ventilators, and 7 COVID patients on the Med/Surg unit. They had 2 COVID deaths this past week. The ICU is currently on divert and the Med/Surg unit is almost full. They have received patients from Bannock and Bingham Counties. As a startup hospital, IFCH is not yet fully staffed, so even though the hospital is at 55% capacity they have met their capacity due to staffing limitations.

b. Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center (EIRMC)

David Hoffenberg, Chief Operating Officer, reports 6 ICU COVID patients and 10 COVID patients on the Med/Surg unit. They have experienced multiple COVID deaths and report seeing a longer stay for COVID patients. Staffing is also their biggest challenge right now. They have not reached a divert status yet but always assess each admission to make sure they have the capability to care for the patient based on the level of resources they have at the time. EIRMC advocates for keeping all the mitigation measures we have in place in order to keep the situation manageable as it could change very quickly. Mr. Hoffenberg reports the hospitals are keeping in close contact to make sure they can manage the situation.

c. Madison Memorial Hospital

- Dr. Rachael Gonzales reports their inpatient status is similar to that of EIRMC and IFCH, as well as their outpatient visits for COVID are increasing. Dr. Gonzales agrees that the measures being taken are protecting the hospital resources we have in our communities and the measures should be continued. Coordination between the hospitals and the health department is important in order to educate people in our communities.

5. COVID-19 Update and review of Data

- Ms. Rackow and Mr. Corbett reviewed the COVID data, including active case rates, which are high in all of our counties. This information is located on the EIPH website. There are currently no orders in Clark, Lemhi, Custer or Teton Counties.
- Data shows there is physical capacity for hospital beds (including ICU beds); however, the data does not take into consideration the staffing challenges the hospitals are facing. She will be discussing this in more depth with them.
- The average testing turning around time is increasing and is now 3-4 days to get results. Ms. Rackow would like to have input from the hospitals regarding how to encourage testing of symptomatic patients and provide information to physicians in our area as EIPH is receiving reports that physicians are choosing to not test symptomatic patients, even though testing is available.
- Ms. Rackow reviewed the State of Idaho's testing data. Statewide the positivity rate has increased; our region is consistently the highest. We went from 12.4% to 16% over the past week.
- Chairman Reed ask if there is a nursing shortage to which Mr. Hoffenberg responded that experienced ICU nurses are hard to find and local hospitals are competing with other regions/states who have been hit harder with COVID and offered higher pay rates to experienced people. They do anticipate to have additional staffing in place within the next few months.

6. Discussion and Vote regarding potential actions to protect life, health, and safety within the District as to the COVID-19 pandemic, to include consideration of orders that include, but are not limited to, mandating face coverings and limiting social events and gatherings in Bonneville, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton Counties

- Public Health is asking people, regardless of what risk level we are in, to follow the basic mitigation strategies, which includes: staying home when you are sick, washing your hands, maintaining six feet of physical space between people outside of your household, and wearing a face covering when physical distancing is not possible. Ms. Rackow stated that the Public Health Orders have no impact if they are not being followed and is discouraged that we have no ability to enforce these measures. EIPH continues to educate people on mitigations strategies.
- Ms. Rackow reviewed information and recommendations from Harvard Global Health Institute, noting that their risk categorizations of counties within our health district are at a higher level than what our plan designates them. This is due to our plan being based primarily on our region's hospital capacity.
- According to the EIPH Response Plan Lemhi, Custer and Teton could be moved to the Moderate Risk Level. Discussion followed.

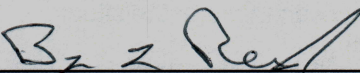
MOTION: Dr. Nelson made a motion to move Lemhi, Custer, and Teton Counties to the Moderate Risk Level.

SECOND: Commissioner Shenton

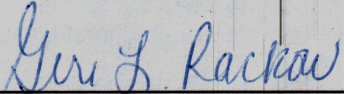
ACTION: MOTION CARRIED

The Board members agreed to review the EIPH COVID-19 Regional Response plan next week to evaluate changes that may be needed. The next meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2020. Chairman Reed asked that Board members come prepared and to plan on at least a 2-hour meeting.

Commissioner Reed adjourned the meeting at 8:05 a.m.



Commissioner Bryon Reed, Chairman



Geri L. Rackow, Secretary