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NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

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March 11, 2024
11:00 a.m.

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

APPEARANCES:

- PAUL ROMAN, CHAIRPERSON
- DENNIS SAN FILIPPO, VICE CHAIRPERSON
- DR. RICHARD CENSULLO, MPH
- MICHAEL GROSS, MPA
- CAROL A. CHAMBERLAIN
- STEPHANIE CAREY, MPH
- DR. SUFFIYAH WEBB
- GRETA ANSCHUETZ, DOH
- KELLY ANDERSON-THOMAS, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
- CAROLINE GARGIONE, DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL
- SIOBHAN PAPPAS
- ERLIN RIVERA

- - -

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CERTIFIED COURT REPORTERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS
23 Vreeland Road - Suite 204
Florham Park, New Jersey 07932
973-228-9100 Fax 973-228-2634

1 MS. RIVERA: Good morning. We're
2 going to call the meeting to order. For the
3 reporter, my name is Erlin Rivera.

4 This is a formal meeting of the
5 Public Health Council. Adequate notice of this
6 meeting has been published in accordance with the
7 provision of Chapter 231, Public Law 1975 C-10:4.10
8 of the State of New Jersey entitled Open Public
9 Meetings Act.

10 Notice was sent to the Secretary of
11 State who posted a notice in a public place. Notice
12 was also provided electronically on the department's
13 website.

14 I will now call the roll. Call Paul
15 Roman?

16 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yes.

17 MS. RIVERA: Dennis San Filippo?
18 Dr. Richard Censullo?

19 DR. CENSULLO: Present.

20 MS. RIVERA: Mr. Michael Gross?

21 MR. GROSS: Here.

22 MS. RIVERA: Ms. Carol Chamberlain?

23 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Present.

24 MS. RIVERA: Stephanie Carey?

25 MS. CAREY: Present.

1 MS. RIVERA: Dr. Suffiyah Webb?

2 We have five members of the council
3 members present, which does constitute a quorum.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay, here we go.

5 MS. RIVERA: Please announce your
6 name -- (indiscernible simultaneous cross talk.)

7 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Good morning. My
8 name is Paul Roman, Chair of the council. I'd like
9 to thank everybody for their well wishes --

10 MS. RIVERA: (Simultaneous cross
11 talk.)

12 THE REPORTER: One at a time.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: I want to make note of the fact
14 we do still have three vacant slots on the council,
15 two for physicians and one for a person with
16 expertise in terrorism.

17 I also want to make note of the
18 fact that I did contact an organization that I'm a
19 charter member of, the New Jersey Chapter
20 Association of EMS Physicians, and we had some
21 people express an interest, but I'm not sure who
22 has actually applied through the governor's office.

23

24

25

1 Unfortunately, we don't hear that right away.

2 So as far as I'm concerned, the
3 slots still exist. If you, Council Members, or
4 public, know of qualified physicians, people who
5 have expertise in public health and/or a person who
6 is a, so to speak, terrorism expert, we are looking
7 for persons to fill those slots.

8 Okay. You are all in receipt of the
9 minutes of February 12th. Are there any additions
10 or corrections to the minutes?

11 Hearing none, I'll entertain a
12 motion to approve the minutes.

13 DR. CONSELLO: So moved.

14 MR. GROSS: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Say again?

16 DR. CENSULLO: Richard --

17 MR. GROSS: Mickey Gross. Second.

18 DR. CENSULLO: I moved, Mickey
19 seconded it.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: I've got a problem
21 here. Stephanie, just speak for a second, okay,
22 just so I can see.

23 MS. CAREY: We have Richard Censullo
24 as the motion to accept the minutes, and we have
25 Mickey Gross to as seconding those.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Great, okay.

2 MS. CAREY: Shall we ask for a roll
3 call?

4 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: I had muted myself
5 and everybody else, apparently. We have a motion
6 and a second to approve the minutes. Roll call
7 vote.

8 MS. RIVERA: Mr. Paul Roman?

9 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yes.

10 MS. RIVERA: Dennis San Filippo?

11 DR. Richard Censullo?

12 DR. CENSULLO: Yes.

13 MS. RIVERA: Michael Gross?

14 MR. GROSS: Yes.

15 MS. RIVERA: Carol Chamberlain?

16 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes.

17 MS. RIVERA: Stephanie Carey?

18 MS. CAREY: Yes.

19 MS. RIVERA: You have five yeses.

20 Motion carries.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yes. As far as a
22 chairman's report, I have two items listed on the
23 agenda and two quick notes to precede that.

24 First of all, it was just announced
25 by the governor's office about an hour ago or hour

1 and a half ago that the report, the independent
2 review of the state's response to COVID 19 pandemic
3 (audio interruption) reached the house. It's 910
4 pages. The governor issued an announcement.

5 He followed that with a note about
6 the thing, 900 pages, independent review, yadda,
7 yadda, yadda, "authored by the firm of Montgomery
8 McCracken Walker and Rhoads under the leadership of
9 former federal and state prosecutor Paul Zoubek,
10 with assistance from Boston Consulting Group.

11 "Governor Murphy announced this
12 review in November of 2022 noting at the
13 time that it would include, but not be
14 limited to, the state of readiness in New
15 Jersey for a pandemic in early 2020;
16 prominent emergency policy decisions that
17 were made by the New Jersey government; the
18 pandemic response with respect to vulnerable
19 residents, including members of congregate
20 care settings; and the state government's
21 efforts to continue core functions,
22 including providing direct services to
23 residents. The review was also tasked with
24 examining the management of public health
25 aspects of the pandemic, including testing,

1 vaccinations, personal protective equipment
2 procurement and distribution, and
3 coordination of the health care system of
4 health information of around COVID-19."

5 The full report can be viewed by
6 clicking on the access from the governor's note.

7 He then followed up with a further
8 statement, which I will not read, because it
9 basically is the same statement once again.

10 That takes care of that. Okay, hold
11 on.

12 Next, I also wanted to make note,
13 the New Jersey Spotlight this morning, the number of
14 suspected drug overdoses in New Jersey declined from
15 2021 to 2022, according to preliminary figures from
16 the office of the chief state medical examiner.

17 The not-so-good news is that there
18 were significant racial gaps in drug-related deaths
19 between 2021 and 2022. Fatalities among black
20 residents increased by 4.7 and 8.7 among Hispanic,
21 according to the data.

22 Just wanted to make a note of that.
23 I think it's pertinent to what we are involved in
24 and what we are supposed to be overseeing.

25 Next, the first item on the agenda

1 I have under my report is a report called Digital
2 Safety Kit for public health. It is from the T.H.
3 Chan School of Public Health, Harvard University.

4 It's a wonderful document about
5 dealing with harassment in all of its aspects and
6 its ugliness and is well put together, and I would
7 recommend it to any of you.

8 You can go to Harvard University
9 School of Public Health. It's called the T.H. Chan
10 School of Public Health. It's called the Digital
11 Safety Kit for public health. Please take the time
12 to find it and take a look at it. It's a worthwhile
13 document for implementing at the local level and
14 elsewhere.

15 Next, I have a question. Is the
16 deputy, the acting deputy on call yet?

17 MS. ANSCHUETZ: Yes, I'm here.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Thank you, Greta.
19 I have a question for you, and it has to do with a
20 notice that was put out on January 5th.

21 I had inquired about this once
22 before through another channel, but it's called --
23 well, first of all:

24 "Two bills were favorably
25 released on the Senate Budget and

1 Appropriations Committee and created a
2 13-member Community Crisis Response Advisory
3 Council."

4 Are you familiar with that at all?

5 MS. ANSCHUETZ: I do have an update
6 here for you as well.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Great. Okay.

8 MS. ANSCHUETZ: So in January Phil
9 Murphy signed into law A-5326/S-4250, also known as
10 the Seabrooks-Washington Community-Led Crisis
11 Response Advisory Council, along with a companion
12 community crisis response pilot program, and it
13 appropriates \$12 million to support grant recipients
14 from six eligible counties for the pilot program --
15 Camden, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex and
16 Passaic -- in addition to supporting and
17 implementing of the law by the Department of Law and
18 Public Safety.

19 The bill is named for, and apologies
20 here, but Najee Seabrooks -- if I butchered that
21 name, I very much apologize -- who was killed in
22 Paterson in March 2023, and Andrew Washington, who
23 was killed in Jersey City in August 2023. Both were
24 shot by police during mental health crises.

25 The community crisis response

1 council will be comprised of 13 members, including:

2 The Attorney General, who will serve
3 as the chair, the Executive Director of the Division
4 of Violence Intervention and Victim Assistance, the
5 Department of Health's Deputy Commissioner of Public
6 Health Services, the Assistant Commissioner of DOH's
7 Division of HIV, STD and TB Services, the Department
8 of Health's Director of Emergency Medical Services,
9 and the Department of Community Affairs Director of
10 the Division of Fire and Safety, and their
11 respective designees.

12 Additionally, seven public members
13 will be appointed by the governor, with two
14 appointed upon the recommendation of the Senate
15 President and Assembly Speaker, respectively.

16 So the bill does not require NJDOH's
17 Deputy Commissioner for Public Health Services to
18 serve as Chair.

19 The final version passed by the
20 legislator requires the New Jersey Attorney General
21 to serve as Chairperson, as aforementioned.

22 Public members are appointed by the
23 governor, not by NJDOH. Questions regarding
24 appointments to the council should be directed to
25 the governor's office of appointments.

1 The chapter law is not yet
2 available, but there is an amended version of the
3 bill that was passed. And I can put that link into
4 the chat.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Thank you very
6 much. So anybody who is interested in serving on
7 the council needs to go through the governor's
8 office, is that correct?

9 MS. ANSCHUETZ: Correct.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Thank you very much
11 for the update. I appreciate it.

12 Anybody have any questions, from
13 council members, about that?

14 Okay. That's it for my report.

15 I'm now going to turn it back to
16 Acting Deputy Commissioner Greta Aschuetz and
17 introduce -- great.

18 MS. ANSHUETZ: Thank you all.

19 Sorry, I'm sorry, I'm not sure who's
20 not on mute, but there's somebody not on mute.

21 So I just wanted to take a moment to
22 say thank you to everyone. I, in the next month,
23 will be formally laying down the hat of Acting
24 Deputy Commissioner and moving back into my role as
25 Assistant Commissioner for HIV, STD and TB Services.

1 It is my great pleasure to introduce
2 you to Kelly Anderson-Thomas. Today is her first
3 day, so she is transitioning everything together.

4 And we will be working together to
5 make sure that she is ready as the Deputy
6 Commissioner for the Public Health Service branch.

7 So I wanted to give Kelly a moment
8 just to say hello, and recognizing today is her
9 first day. And so we will be bringing her up to
10 speed on all things that fall under her purview.

11 MS. THOMAS: Thank you, Greta. I
12 just want to take a chance to thank the committee
13 for -- I'm sorry, the advisory board for all the
14 hard work you guys do.

15 I'm very familiar with the advisory
16 board. This is not my first time in DOH. So,
17 looking forward to meeting with all of you, or not
18 meeting you, but working with all of you.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible.)

20 MS. ANSCHUETZ: Excellent.

21 I just trying to call out, I want
22 find out what the phone number is here, so let me
23 see if I can get this. There's a 609 phone number.
24 It sounds like there's a kid in the background. If
25 that is you, can you please mute your line?

1 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yeah, it's Carol.
2 Okay, thank you.

3 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: It's not Carol.
4 Carol has no children with her.

5 MS. ANSCHUETZ: It's the other 609
6 number, but I can't see the rest of it.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Me either.

8 MS. ANSCHUETZ: She just muted her
9 line, so we're good.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: So, new Acting
11 Deputy Commissioner Kelly Anderson-Thomas, I'd like
12 to welcome you to New Jersey. You're a little dot
13 on my screen. Could you sit at the other end of the
14 room?

15 MS. THOMAS: Of course. Give me one
16 second.

17 Is that a little bit better?

18 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: That's better,
19 thank you.

20 Would you mind just telling us a
21 couple of things about where you worked before or
22 what you were mostly involved in? Would you mind
23 doing that?

24 MS. THOMAS: Sure. So, originally
25 from New Jersey. So I started with the state, quasi

1 state almost 20 years ago, University of Medicine
2 and Dentistry.

3 Onboarded into the Department of
4 Treasury, Division of Purchase and Property. Worked
5 there for about seven, eight years before I came
6 over to the Department of Health in 2018.

7 As part of the original Department
8 of Health staff I was an executive assistant to the
9 deputy commissioner of the integrated health
10 services branch.

11 Anyone who doesn't know much about
12 service civil titles, an executive assistant serves
13 kind of like a deputy to the deputy or a chief of
14 staff to the Deputy Commissioner, their right hand.

15 So, in essence, in that position I
16 assisted with the oversight of the state psychiatric
17 hospitals, as well as the division of community
18 health services.

19 My background is in behavioral
20 health, community health services and public health.

21 Then we got this little pesky thing
22 called the pandemic COVID-19 hit, and I was still
23 doing my executive assistant duties, but
24 transitioned over to pandemic response.

25 Then, became the director of

1 COVID-19 testing for the State of New Jersey. I did
2 that for a little bit.

3 And then in 2021, I decided to make
4 another transition. And at that time the governor
5 had started the New Jersey cannabis regulatory
6 authority under the administration.

7 So I headed over there to become the
8 executive deputy director in charge of operations.

9 So at the cannabis regulatory
10 commission I was in charge of licensing, license
11 investigation, all administrative tasks, HR, fiscal,
12 quite a few things.

13 So, did that for a few years before
14 making my way back over to the Department of Health,
15 and it's like being back at home.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Well, number one,
17 you're not a new kid on the block, obviously.

18 MS. THOMAS: Not at all.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: We appreciate
20 somebody being inhouse, has been inhouse and knows
21 the system. That's wonderful.

22 We've had some folks been brought in
23 from different places and then took off. But it was
24 always interesting to have to try to start from
25 square one.

1 So, obviously, your well versed on
2 things all to do with the state Department of Health
3 and other aspects of government.

4 So, welcome aboard, and thank you.
5 I look forward personally to working with you. And
6 once I get my sea legs back I'd like to set up a
7 meeting and talk about public health and our primary
8 issues and stuff. So, again, welcome.

9 MS. THOMAS: Thank you, and I look
10 forward to it.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: And, Greta, thank
12 you very much for your, although short -- what
13 happened? Oh, there you are -- your short term of
14 service as the acting deputy. But I know you've
15 been there a long, long time doing the other stuff
16 that you do and a lot of folks speak highly of you
17 and know you and I know you from a number of years
18 of contact.

19 So, anyway, thank you very much for
20 all that you've done for the short time we have had
21 with you. Hope to still have contact with you in
22 the future for various issues and stuff.

23 MS. ANSCHUETZ: Thank you,
24 appreciate it.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: All right. So do

1 any of the council members have questions for either
2 the acting deputy or the new deputy? Okay, hearing
3 none --

4 DR. CENSULLO: I just --

5 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yeah.

6 DR. CENSULLO: I, of course, wanted
7 to welcome her onboard.

8 I just want to add the fact that you
9 look a little too young to have all that experience.
10 But, welcome onboard.

11 And you will find that the members
12 of the council are ready, willing and able to roll
13 up their sleeves and do what's necessary as a team
14 in working together.

15 Thank you and good luck and
16 congratulations.

17 MS. THOMAS: Thank you, and I really
18 look forward to the collaboration, definitely.
19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. SAN FILIPPO: Good morning,
21 everyone, it's Dennis San Filippo.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Go ahead. Somebody
23 else had their hand up, or trying to speak. Yes?
24 No? Okay.

25 MR. SAN FILIPPO: It's Dennis San

1 Filippo.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Oh, Dennis, are you
3 there?

4 MR. SAN FILIPPO: Yes. Good
5 morning, everyone.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: All right. So we
7 got Dennis. I'm trying to find a note here. Please
8 bear with me one second.

9 Okay. In conversations with --

10 DR. CENSULLO: Excuse me, Paul.
11 Paul? I see Suffiyah Webb has joined us as well.
12 Can we add her so that we have a unanimous voting.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Oh, yeah, Dr. Webb,
14 welcome.

15 DR. WEBB: Thank you. Sorry,
16 surgery went over.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay. That's my
18 phone ringing, folks. I'm gonna let it ring. Just
19 bear with it. One more ring to go, or two.

20 Okay, so we got a full boat now.

21 I wanted to make mention of the fact
22 that fellow Council Member Stephanie Carey has put
23 together some notes for me regarding things that she
24 has suggested we work on in the future. And she's
25 agreed to take the lead on one of two of them.

1 Actually, as you all know, we sent
2 an issue brief regarding the casino and the
3 what-do-you-call-it, the offtrack betting
4 facilities, for no smoking in those facilities. And
5 those bills were battled around in the last session
6 of the legislature.

7 They actually got a hearing. One of
8 them got a hearing in the Senate Health Committee,
9 Senator Vitale's committee, and was looked on
10 affirmatively to support the ban.

11 However, the bills did not move past
12 that. And even though we sent, I sent on behalf of
13 the council a mailing to every member of the
14 legislature and the governor our position paper that
15 Stephanie had put together that you all approved.

16 So what she has asked me to mention
17 is that if we're going to do things like that,
18 position papers, briefs and so on, should we not
19 have some kind of a standard procedure for either
20 developing or publishing these things.

21 And I've asked Steph to expand on
22 her comments for the next meeting, to submit some
23 ideas with regard to a standard procedure. And
24 she's has some expertise in that area. So she's
25 agreed to do that. Right, Steph? Did I say it

1 right?

2 You're on mute.

3 MS. CAREY: Yes. Yes, thank you,
4 Paul.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay, that's fine.

6 MS. CAREY: Yes, the intention is to
7 create a standardized procedure on how we distribute
8 and develop these position papers for both
9 transparency sake and to make sure the motion is
10 going to the right decision-makers.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: That's good.

12 You also mentioned about doing a
13 vision mission statement for the council, which I
14 think is also a very good idea. And you've agreed
15 to put some time into that. So we look forward to
16 working with you on that and see where that goes,
17 okay, so thank you.

18 Now, the other question you had
19 posed which I need to defer, actually, in one
20 respect has to do with the Public Health Practice
21 Standards.

22 They're up for review, apparently,
23 this year. And 8:52 is the reference, New Jersey
24 Administrative Code 8:52, our practice standards.

25 And the question is, what role will

1 we play or can we play in the review process?

2 And if I remember correctly, the
3 last time I was posed or someone, or I posed this
4 question to the staff through the acting deputy or
5 the previous acting deputy, it was told to us that
6 unless the state puts together a stakeholder notice,
7 which was like an open comment period, prior to it
8 being published in the New Jersey Register as a
9 proposal for readoption or amendment, that they
10 would be willing, they would take the lead in doing
11 something like that.

12 The only other comment period is the
13 one that then exists after something is published in
14 the state register for proposal.

15 And there's a time frame, 60, 90
16 days, or something, where people can send their
17 comments, and the state is obligated to review and
18 respond to all of the comments in the affirmative,
19 the negative or in adopting the comments, or what
20 have you.

21 So unless the state is willing to
22 put together a group, which I think would be a great
23 idea, since some of us served on previous reviews of
24 the practice standards many years ago.

25 As a matter of fact, there were

1 actually two groups that had been put together a few
2 years apart from members of the public health
3 community, and nothing ever came of those reviews.
4 And the practice standards were basically adopted
5 without change to keep them from being sunsetted.

6 So since they're going to be coming
7 up again, and since we all, everybody on this
8 council and many members of the public, obviously,
9 have an interest in seeing the practice standards
10 updated, reviewed appropriately with input from the
11 public health community outside of the department,
12 and to include the department, I would encourage, if
13 the new acting deputy is there, or the former acting
14 deputy is there, to consider having the council
15 either take the lead in setting up some kind of a
16 review process.

17 Greta or Kelly, are either one of
18 you there still?

19 MS. ANSCHUETZ: This is Greta. I
20 will jump in.

21 So rulemaking is a formal process.
22 We do have our opportunity for stakeholdering.
23 Stakeholdering is when comments are allowed to come
24 in. But until it is presented to Public Health
25 Council there is not a method of bringing in work

1 groups and such like that.

2 If a work group is brought in it
3 would only be to consult and provide input. It's
4 not a report back and say here's what's going on.

5 But like I said, in terms of
6 rulemaking, the stakeholdering is the time to put
7 forth opinions. And the open comment period after
8 rules are published are also the time to bring up
9 concerns so that they can be addressed.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Let me make sure I
11 understand what you just said. Forgive me if I'm a
12 little foggy.

13 The performable comment period is
14 once it is put in the register for proposal, that's
15 correct. But the stakeholder, a call for
16 stakeholder input can be done prior to publishing
17 for proposal. Is that correct?

18 MS. ANSCHUETZ: Yes. And, Paul, I
19 realize you missed the last meeting as well where we
20 addressed a lot of the stakeholdering that has been
21 done around 8:57 and all of the groups we have
22 reached out to, which I read a long, long, long,
23 long list of groups.

24 So it is the person who is
25 responsible or the service within the Public Health

1 Service branch that's responsible for the rule
2 writing will reach out to their stakeholdering
3 groups and will ask them for input. That is a
4 requirement to be put forth on all of our rules, and
5 it is not a step that can be skipped.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: And that brings me
7 to our next point. And I'm glad you brought it up.
8 Because I did read the minutes, as a good person
9 would do, and I read the long list that you put in
10 here.

11 And I personally want to make note
12 of the fact to you and to the rest of staff at the
13 department that I am shocked that that list only
14 contains one of the six state-recognized FACE
15 organizations.

16 The New Jersey public health nurses
17 association -- Public Health Nurse Administrators,
18 I'm sorry, that organization is in the list that you
19 enumerated. NJACCHO, the health officers
20 association, is not listed.

21 MS. ANSCHUETZ: It's there. It is
22 there. NJACCHO is there. Definitely, NJACCHO is
23 there.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Oh, I see it, yep.
25 Yep, I apologize.

1 MS. ANSCHUETZ: As well as all of
2 the health officers were also sent the same thing.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Right, I saw that.
4 However, New Jersey SOPHE is not in the list. New
5 Jersey Public Health Association, not in the list.
6 New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association, not
7 in the list. New Jersey Environmental Health
8 Association, not in the list.

9 I'll review those one more time.
10 New Jersey SOPHE, New Jersey Public health
11 Association, New Jersey Local Boards of Health
12 Association, New Jersey Environmental Health
13 Association.

14 And our PHACE administrator, Kevin
15 Sumner, representing the six organizations, which is
16 not a shortcut, but it's another way to get to the
17 six groups.

18 I would encourage the department, I
19 have asked for this repeatedly as Chairman and
20 before I was ever even on the council of the Office
21 of Local Public Health.

22 Sharina is a nice lady, good friend
23 and everything, but these organizations have not
24 been communicated with directly. And the list you
25 have is quite a daunting list, and a lot of

1 important organizations.

2 But these are the groups that are
3 the boots-on-the-ground groups every day in public
4 health. And the four that I mentioned, and PHACE
5 itself are not on that list. It's, I'm incredu --
6 it's incredible.

7 So I'm asking if you would include
8 those organizations. I can provide the contact
9 information for them, people to contact, and so on,
10 but I'm asking if you can do that. Is that
11 possible?

12 MS. ANSCHUETZ: I will take it under
13 advisement, and I do have the contact, I'm sure,
14 through our office of local public health. But
15 thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay, thank you
17 very much. Let me move this out and this out, okay.

18 That gets us to Old Business. Under
19 Old Business we have the update on the smoking ban
20 bills, which I already sort of mentioned as to
21 what's going on with them.

22 However, there is one update. And
23 that is that Senator Burzichelli in trying to
24 arrange a compromise, because the thing is so
25 contentious as to who's in favor and who is not in

1 favor of this smoking ban, has issued a bill.

2 I do not have the bill number in
3 front of me, but it's a bill that causes compromise
4 where the ban, would it only involve certain areas
5 of the casinos and would provide certain areas like
6 lounges where the smoking would still be authorized
7 and so on. It's a very strange bill. But that bill
8 may, may find its way because it's got some
9 political clout.

10 So I'm not sure what's gonna happen
11 in the next short-term, but we do have smoking bills
12 now dealing with this subject which is not to my
13 liking. And I know other members of the council
14 would express their concern about the ban itself,
15 not those particular, that new particular bill. But
16 please try to follow the action on this and see what
17 we can do to get the ban put through.

18 Anybody have questions on the
19 smoking ban bills? Okay, hearing none, hold on a
20 second. So there's nothing else under Old Business.

21 I'm gonna move to New Business now.

22 The first item we have is the
23 proposed readoption with amendments of the Childhood
24 Elevated Blood Lead Levels at N.J.A.C. 8:51 A. I
25 guess, who's gonna speak on that?

1 MS. PAPPAS: Hi, this is Siobhan
2 Pappas, coordinator for the council blood program.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay. Your first
4 name one more time?

5 MS. PAPPAS: Siobhan.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Siobhan, thank you,
7 Siobhan, the floor is yours to give us a quick brief
8 on the proposed readoption.

9 MS. PAPPAS: Thank you very much.
10 The department is proposing to
11 revise N.J.A.C. 8:51 Childhood Elevated Blood Lead
12 Levels.

13 The revision would include replacing
14 "Elevated Blood Lead Levels" with the term "At Or
15 Below The Blood Lead Reference Value," an amended
16 definition of case management by replacing the blood
17 lead level of five micrograms per deciliter with the
18 blood lead reference value of three and one half
19 micrograms per deciliter.

20 This would then require the local
21 health department to provide education on hazard
22 reduction and nutrition. Such changes would comport
23 with current recommendations from the Centers for
24 Disease Control and Prevention.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay, thank you.

1 Members of the council, questions? Comments?

2 Hearing none --

3 MR. GROSS: Mickey Gross here, hold
4 on one second.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Sure.

6 MR. GROSS: My question to you is,
7 this will put us at the same as the federal
8 standard, correct?

9 MS. PAPPAS: Correct. So this would
10 lower the blood lead reference value at three and a
11 half micrograms per deciliter, which is --

12 MR. GROSS: No, I get it, I can
13 read. But because of this, is there any available
14 funding available to local or county health
15 departments because of this?

16 This is certainly gonna impact both
17 both local and county health departments when you're
18 going from five to 3.5. Is there any available
19 funding --

20 MS. PAPPAS: There is.

21 MR. GROSS: -- that could be
22 provided? Okay.

23 MS. PAPPAS: So the local health
24 department --

25 MR. GROSS: And, number one, thank

1 you.

2 MS. PAPPAS: Yep. So the local
3 health departments have already, were already --
4 received an allocation. It was an increase of 4.6
5 million last budget period.

6 And what we did was, we had an
7 amendment in their RFA, actually, since this is now
8 finally getting to Public Health Council.

9 So we had an amendment in their RFA
10 to provide education, and, regarding hazard
11 reduction and nutrition, the 3.5 to 4.9 to cover
12 that gap. And, yeah, yes, so it's already in their
13 allocation.

14 MR. GROSS: Fantastic. And thank
15 you. Great job, thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay. Any other
17 comments, questions from members of the council?

18 Hearing none, I'll entertain a
19 motion to approve the proposed recommendation, from
20 the council.

21 MR. GROSS: Motion to approve.
22 Mickey Gross.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Mickey, okay. Is
24 there a second?

25 MR. SAN FILIPPO: I'll second.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Thank you, Dennis.
2 Moved and seconded to handle the proposed
3 readoption. Jess, we'll take a roll call vote.

4 MS. RIVERA: Mr. Roman?

5 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yes.

6 MS. RIVERA: Mr. Dennis San Filippo?

7 MR. SAN FILIPPO: Yes.

8 MS. RIVERA: Dr. Richard Censullo?

9 DR. CENSULLO: Yes.

10 MS. RIVERA: Mr. Michael Gross?

11 MR. GROSS: Yes.

12 MS. RIVERA: Ms. Carol Chamberlain?

13 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes.

14 MS. RIVERA: Ms. Stephanie Carey?

15 She's on mute.

16 MS. CAREY: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: She said "yes".

18 MS. RIVERA: Dr. Suffiyah?

19 DR. WEBB: Yes.

20 MS. RIVERA: We have seven yeses.

21 Motion carries.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Thank you. I just
23 have one more thing under New Business, not listed.
24 But the annual request for a proclamation to promote
25 National Public Health Week, which is April 1st

1 through 7th has been sent to the governor for his
2 signature.

3 I am privileged to have worked with
4 Don Weinbaum of the New Jersey Public Health
5 Association and a couple of other individuals who
6 had input into this each year to write this
7 proclamation.

8 I'm not going to read the whole
9 thing, but I do want to highlight it for the sake of
10 the council and those who are public members
11 listening, and staff:

12 "This is to inform the public
13 across the state about the important role of
14 public health and public health
15 professionals in our communities. Whereas,
16 public health organizations use National
17 Public Health Week to educate the public,
18 policymakers and public health professionals
19 about issues important to improving the
20 health of the people of the U.S., whereas
21 this year's theme is: 'Protecting
22 connecting and thriving. We are all public
23 health.'"

24 And, each day highlights a key
25 public health priority, and there's a different

1 topic each day.

2 "Whereas, across these health
3 priorities, equity, inaccess and outcomes is
4 paramount to achieving optimal public
5 health.

6 And, "Whereas, the value of a
7 strong public health system is in the air we
8 breathe the water we drink, the food we eat,
9 the places where we live, learn, work and
10 play and the decisions we make to protect
11 ourselves and community.

12 And, "Whereas, state, county
13 and local public health professionals health
14 communities prevent, prepare, withstand and
15 recover from the impact of full range of
16 health threats including disease outbreaks,
17 natural or man-made disasters by
18 collaborating with traditional partners," et
19 cetera, et cetera.

20 "Whereas, studies show that
21 sustained investments in necessary
22 foundational public health services result
23 in significant savings in healthcare costs
24 through prevention and informed response
25 strategies."

1 And, "Whereas, in communities
2 across New Jersey more people are changing
3 the way they care for their health by
4 avoiding tobacco use, eating healthier,
5 becoming more physically active and
6 preventing unintentional injuries at home or
7 in the workplace."

8 And, finally, "Whereas, by
9 adequately supporting health and prevention,
10 we can continue to transform a health system
11 focused on treating illness to one which
12 focuses on preventing disease and illness,
13 promoting wellness and ensuring health
14 equity and access to care for all
15 populations."

16 And we're hoping this is signed by
17 the governor in advance of the April 1st beginning
18 of Public Health Week. So I wanted to bring that to
19 everyone's attention.

20 At this point, will open to the
21 public for questions or comments. Remember you're
22 your comments must go through the Chair. The floor
23 is now open for comments from the public.

24 Yes, Rich?

25 DR. CENSULLO: Yes. One thing I

1 wanted to mention is, next month we are expecting a
2 solar eclipse. I believe it's going to take place
3 on April 8th between the hours of 2:30 and 3:30.

4 I would like the Public Health
5 Council to, if we could, or the DOH to notify the
6 board of ed, state board of ed, that I think the
7 schools should at least mention to the children the
8 importance of not looking at the solar eclipse,
9 because it can severely and permanently damage the
10 eye.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Good point.

12 DR. CENSULLO: I think it's a public
13 health issue, and I think the teachers, it should be
14 incumbent upon the teachers just to mention to the
15 children, please don't stare at the solar eclipse
16 'cause it could permanently injure and damage the
17 eye.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yep, it's a good
19 prevention thing. Acting Deputy, is that something
20 you could follow through with?

21 MS. ANSCHUETZ: Noted, and I'm not
22 sure, but I will -- I've heard the request. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay. Thank you
25 very much. Thanks, Rich.

1 MR. SAN FILIPPO: Paul, it's Dennis.
2 I just wanted to add when the
3 department does that, ensure that it goes out to the
4 list of health departments, that health and
5 readiness procedure.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Right, along with
7 the schools.

8 MR. SAN FILIPPO: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Thank you. Next
10 comment?

11 MR. MERKEL: It's Chris Merkel.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Hi, Chris.

13 MR. MERKEL: I hope you're feeling
14 better.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Trying, trying.

16 MR. MERKEL: Good. I have a couple
17 comments on behalf of the association NJACCHO.

18 First of all, I want to thank Acting
19 Commissioner Kaitlan Baston and our good friend,
20 Greta, for meeting with association officers last
21 week. I think it was we went to Trenton and met in
22 person I thought it was a really good meeting and we
23 look forward to future collaborations.

24 The commissioner is very interested
25 in what local public health does and, of course, one

1 of the top topics on the agenda was sustained
2 funding for local health departments, which is very
3 important, and the commissioner recognizes that.

4 Which leads me to my second comment,
5 which you've already mentioned, but I'm gonna
6 mention it again regarding the independent review
7 the COVID report that just came out.

8 We, the association officers, some
9 of our executive committee actually had the
10 opportunity to virtually speak with Paul Zoubek from
11 Montgomery McCracken Walker and Rhoads about local
12 health departments efforts during those dark days
13 during the pandemic.

14 And I'd like to personally thank him
15 and his firm for really listening to us and really
16 putting out -- not that I've read all 900 pages
17 already, that'd be pretty fast, but, you know, I
18 think a lot in the report we're not gonna be
19 surprised about.

20 But I think what really needs to be
21 brought out is next steps and really lessons
22 learned.

23 It's obvious from the report and
24 obvious to everybody on this call if you worked
25 during that time that we were not prepared. And I'm

1 not happy to say that we are not prepared for the
2 next pandemic. That's also very, very apparent and
3 obvious.

4 I think we need to continue to press
5 upon the legislature, you know, provide examples out
6 of this report. Hopefully, the legislators
7 understand the importance of sustained funding for
8 local public health.

9 We have up to this point been unable
10 to get some of our bills passed that provide
11 sustained funding through the state budget. I think
12 it's apparent that the state has to pitch in. And
13 they need to do it now.

14 The temporary unsustainable grant
15 funds, the COVID funds are disappearing rapidly,
16 which will put a lot of our local health departments
17 in a very precarious situation.

18 They will have to start laying off
19 staff, programs that the public and legislators and
20 constituents have come to, you know, count on, will
21 be gone.

22 And it's, you know, at a time where,
23 you know, our local health staff is depleted,
24 underfunded, understaffed, and when I have a
25 brand-new crop of local health department

1 professionals coming in that really need guidance
2 from our veteran staff here at the state that really
3 is retiring at a rapid rate. So we have the perfect
4 storm here.

5 The state has the opportunity to
6 learn from lessons learned. They just have to take
7 action. Inaction is unacceptable. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Chris, before you
9 go, before I became ill I was supposed to be
10 participating with you in a meeting that was
11 apparently set up with the sponsors of the PHPF
12 bills. Did that ever happen?

13 MR. MERKEL: Yeah. Yes, it did,
14 Paul. We met with the sponsors, Senator Vin Gopal,
15 Herb Conaway's office. And I can sort of update
16 offline.

17 We talked about how to move forward
18 and some next steps. But, yeah, that did happen
19 and, you know, we are hopeful that the legislature
20 will understand the importance of sustainable
21 funding.

22 We have a lot of new legislators on
23 the assembly side that we're looking to communicate
24 with and work with and help them understand the
25 importance of local public health.

1 One other thing that just came to
2 mind, Paul, if you don't mind?

3 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Sure.

4 MR. MERKEL: I just want to thank
5 Greta Anschuetz for stepping in as acting deputy
6 commissioner. We all know Greta. She's a great
7 friend to local public health and she does a
8 tremendous job.

9 And I know she's very excited to get
10 back to her love and compassion, which is the STD
11 program. And we also, as president, I wanted to
12 welcome Kelly Anderson-Thomas, and look forward to
13 working with the new acting deputy commissioner.

14 So, thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Just for
16 Catherine's sake, Chris is president of NJACCHO, New
17 Jersey Association of City and County Health
18 divisions, okay.

19 Other comments from the public?
20 Anybody? I don't see hands up so you have to speak
21 up. Other comments from the public, one more time?

22 Okay. Seeing none, I will close for
23 the public.

24 I don't have any closing comment.
25 Although, after all the stuff that we went through

1 just now, there's plenty of work to be done. And I
2 know our membership in the council is ready and
3 willing to assist the department in any way, as
4 we've said repeatedly.

5 But I want to thank Greta, thank,
6 welcome Kelly Anderson-Thomas, and look forward to
7 working with you.

8 Anybody else have anything for the
9 good of the order from the council?

10 No. Okay, I'll entertain a motion
11 to adjourn.

12 Oh, I'm sorry, next meeting is April
13 8th via Zoom, April 8th at 11 o'clock via Zoom.

14 Let's adjourn, somebody.

15 DR. CENSULLO: Paul, if you could, I
16 think that for the April meeting you may want to
17 appoint a nominating committee.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Oh.

19 DR. CENSULLO: And consistent with
20 the bylaws, please. You're the chairman so you
21 appoint the committee.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Well, you know, it
23 doesn't ask, call for a nominating committee in our
24 bylaws. It just calls for an election.

25 DR. CENSULLO: Okay, go ahead.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Do we need a
2 committee? We're kind of a small group, so.

3 DR. CENSULLO: We don't really, no.

4 All right. I would say, for the
5 April meeting, I would like it, again, it's only one
6 person, if you and Dennis would stay for this coming
7 year. I know this will be your final turn as the
8 chairman. Then we will seek -- oh, no, it wouldn't
9 be, okay.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: No.

11 DR. CENSULLO: I know it will
12 probably be Dennis and mine's final years on the
13 committee. Dennis, I don't hear you yelling in the
14 background.

15 MR. SAN FILIPPO: I'm not yelling.

16 DR. CENSULLO: If you and Dennis
17 could stay on while we get new members of the board,
18 and next year maybe we can do a change in the vice
19 chair, if Dennis so desires to leave.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay. Thank you
21 for the comment, Rich, appreciate it very much.
22 And, yes, there will be an election on the agenda at
23 the next meeting.

24 Motion to adjourn, somebody.

25 MR. GROSS: Motion.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Okay, Mickey,
2 moved. And who seconds?

3 DR. WEBB: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Second is Carol, I
5 think, right? Oh, Dr. Webb. Sorry.

6 Moved and seconded to adjourn. Roll
7 call the vote.

8 MS. RIVERA: Paul Roman?

9 CHAIRMAN ROMAN: Yeah.

10 MS. RIVERA: Dennis San Filippo?

11 MR. SAN FILIPPO: Yes.

12 MS. RIVERA: Dr. Richard Censullo?

13 DR. CENSULLO: Yes.

14 MS. RIVERA: Mr. Michael Gross?

15 MR. GROSS: Yes.

16 MS. RIVERA: Carol Chamberlain?

17 MS. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes.

18 MS. RIVERA: Stephanie Carey?

19 MS. CAREY: Yes.

20 MS. RIVERA: Dr. Suffiyah Webb?

21 DR. WEBB: Yes.

22 MS. RIVERA: Meeting adjourned.

23 Have a good day.

24 (Meeting concluded at 11:52 a.m.)

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Catherine McLaughlin, a Certified Court Reporter of the State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the preceding is a true and accurate computer-aided transcript of the proceedings as taken to the best of my ability stenographically by and before me remotely at the time and date hereinbefore set forth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative nor employee, nor attorney or council to any parties involved; that I am neither related to nor employed by any such attorney or council; and that I am not interested in the event nor outcome of this action.

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