

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission
Meeting (Bridgewater Township Municipal Building)
October 17, 2022

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission was held on the above date at the Bridgewater Township Municipal Building and called to order by Mr. Greg Riley by reading the Sunshine Law Notice at 7:05 pm.

2. Roll Call

Green Brook: Mr. Atul Shah

Warren: Mr. Greg Riley, Ms. Angela Valerio, Mr. Malcolm Plager

Watchung: Dr. Bruce Ruck

Bridgewater: Mr. Wells Winegar, Ms. Christine Madrid

Others in attendance: Mr. Kevin Sumner, Health Officer, Ms. Diana Swiderski, Administrative Assistant

Members of the Public: No members of the public present

3. Meeting open to the public – public recognized – public portion of meeting closed

There were no members of the public present.

4. Acceptance of meeting minutes – April 4, 2022, June 6, 2022

G. Riley requested minor revisions to be made to the April 4th minutes in the COVID-19 Update section and to rename the title of the meeting from Reorganization Meeting to Meeting.

W. Winegar moved to adopt the minutes of the April 4, 2022, minutes, second by A. Shah. All in favor

G. Riley requested minor revisions to be made to the June 6th minutes in the Monkeypox and R.J. Reynolds vs. Los Angeles sections.

A. Shah moved to adopt the minutes of the June 6, 2022 minutes, second by G. Riley. All in favor

5. Treasurer's Reports – June 2022, July 2022, August 2022, September 2022

June 2022

A query was made regarding payments to GovConnections and Amazon Capital Services, which were applied towards our annual contract for computer software services, electronic whiteboards, and a trailer for storing emergency response supplies.

W. Winegar moved to adopt the Treasurer's reports for June 2022, second by B. Ruck. All in favor

July 2022

A query was made regarding a \$10,000 check payable to the Commission by Dr. Frank from Green Brook Family Medicine. Dr. Frank and the Commission have partnered to offer COVID-19 and influenza vaccine clinics to the community. He provides the vaccines and we provide the administrative staff, for which he reimburses us.

M. Plager moved to adopt the Treasurer's reports for July 2022, second by A. Shah. All in favor

August 2022

A payment made to GovConnections in the amount of \$3,300 paid for Office 365 and Microsoft, as well for as our website provider, Spatial Data Logic, for their annual maintenance fee.

W. Winegar moved to adopt the Treasurer's reports for August 2022, second by C. Madrid. All in favor

September 2022

No comments were made.

M. Plager moved to adopt the Treasurer's reports for September 2022, second by W. Winegar. All in favor

6. Unfinished Business:

A. COVID-19 Update

The most up to date information shows there have been a total of 15,588 positive COVID-19 cases within Green Brook, Warren, Watchung and Bridgewater, with approximately 110 new cases occurring per week. The virus caused 218 deaths, predominantly in the 85 and older age group. Small outbreaks have occurred in long term care facilities brought on by visiting outsiders. There is a new sub-variant of Omicron, but it is too early to provide detailed information. New Jersey is currently at moderate to low community levels but transmission levels are still high

among healthcare workers. Overall, numbers dropped throughout the spring and summertime during which people spent time outdoors.

Schools have seen a decrease in COVID-19 numbers, however other illnesses are spreading now due to the return of colder weather and people heading indoors. Due to this, Watchung Hills High School is experiencing 100-150 sick students visiting the nurses office per day.

Mandatory masking was rescinded in March, but doctor's offices and other healthcare facilities, such as dental offices are still required to have masks in place. Universities have also rescinded mask wearing but there are some teachers' unions that are continuing to request it.

B. Monkeypox Update

The process for verifying a monkeypox case is lengthy. It may take up to two weeks for a person to suspect their symptoms could be monkeypox-related, followed by a possible additional two weeks to receive lab results. There were several confirmed cases in our area but numbers have decreased across the country.

C. Somerville Proposal

Somerville approached K. Sumner earlier this year seeking possible health services from the Commission. A proposal was offered but they have not communicated back. W. Winegar stated that he would contact Kevin Sluka, Somerville Administrator, for a definitive answer.

7. New Business:

A. Ronald Cohen, PhD – Resolution 2022-07, Donation?

Dr. Cohen was the original founder of the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission and its first Health Officer. He hired K. Sumner in 1985 and mentored him throughout his education and training as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist, and further while working on his master's degree in Public Health. M. Plager also worked closely with Dr. Cohen sharing discussions on local Board of Health laws. Dr. Cohen retired in 2000 and moved to South Carolina with his family. He is remembered fondly as a well-respected and dedicated colleague. The Commission members agree to offer a \$100 donation in his memory.

M. Plager made a motion to adopt the Resolution for 2022-07, second by A. Shah. All in favor

B. Frances Ellis, RN – Resolution 2022-08, Donation?

G. Riley and K. Sumner remember Ms. Ellis as a positive, do it all kind of person who was dedicated to her church and public health. She started as a contract Visiting Nurse, followed by employment with the Commission, and was then appointed as a representative of the Commission. In addition, she served as a member on the Watchung Board of Health since the 1970's. The Commission members agree to offer a \$100 donation to Wilson Memorial Church in her memory.

B. Ruck made a motion to adopt the Resolution for 2022-07, second by M. Plager.
All in favor

C. NJDOH Grants – Effective July 1, 2022

a. Strengthening Local Health - \$274,735.00

The Strengthening grant is used to fund the position of Local Health Outreach Coordinator, filled by Eze Udensi, MD, who is responsible for researching the needs of the community and connecting residents with the appropriate services, as well as advocating vaccinations and testing. The grant also funds the Infectious Disease Preparedness Generalist position, filled by Megan Romanovich, who focuses on communicable disease investigation and reporting.

b. Vaccination Support - \$100,000.00

The Vaccination grant is used to fund nursing services, and vaccine clinics, storage and transport.

D. Polio

There was a recent case of polio that occurred in Rockland County, NY that was derived from polio vaccination. Polio DNA was also found in the wastewater outside the area where the individual resided. There were no other cases identified.

E. Clinics – Flu and COVID

As of July this year, the Commission has provided 17 clinics for the community which offered residents vaccinations for COVID-19, as well as for influenza beginning in September. The clinics were held at schools, municipal buildings, a pediatric office, and at a faith-based location.

F. Clinics – Rabies

The Commission has three upcoming Rabies clinics: November 5th at the Green Brook Municipal Building from 9-10 am, November 19th in Bridgewater at the Finderne Firehouse from 9-10:30 am, and December 3rd in Watchung at the Watchung Firehouse from 9-10 am.

G. Newsletter Articles

In response to community requests, K. Sumner had written several fall newsletters covering the topics of communicable diseases, our upcoming rabies clinics, flu season and flu shots, emergency preparedness, and young children and cannabis. The Commission members agreed that the newsletters were very well written.

H. Massage Therapy – Subpoena to Testify

K. Sumner testified before the New Jersey State Commission of Investigation on the connection between human trafficking, prostitution and massage therapy. The NJSCI's purpose is to conduct investigations, refer data to appropriate law enforcement agencies, and make recommendations to state government for improvements in laws. In an attempt to prevent the illegal activities mentioned, the State has implemented educational requirements and background checks for licensing but does not enforce them, thus K. Sumner's involvement with the NJSCI.

I. New Lead Law

The new law requires inspection for lead paint in one and two-family rental properties during the time a property is unoccupied, or by July 24, 2024, if there is no tenant turnover. Screenings include visual inspections such as peeling paint, or samples taken to a lab for testing.

J. Liability Case Discussion – G. Riley briefly discussed the case heard in the NJ Supreme Court regarding medical malpractice. He advised that it probably does not have any direct bearing on public health, but was an interesting case nonetheless as it concluded the healthcare provider could not be held liable for punitive damages for not disclosing certain risks of the surgical procedure.

8. Addenda to Agenda

Monmouth County Regional Health Commission achieved national accreditation.

The Commission was notified that residents had travelled to an area with cases of Ebola and therefore require regular monitoring for 21 days. These individuals are at very low risk, but

are still required to report to the health department on a regular basis to assure no possibility of Ebola.

We are currently seeking new finance Commission members from Green Brook and Watchung.

Paul Roman, past-President of Monmouth County Regional Health Commission and President of New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association, applied for a federal grant from the American Rescue Plan Act. His request was denied because he is not part of a municipality, and not recognized as a government entity. As a result, they have contracted with a lobbying firm to see if they can become eligible to apply and are looking for support for this action from other Commissions in the state. Middle-Brook members advised they support the action and are willing to send a letter of support, pending more information, but are not willing to financially support the effort at this time.

Healthcare costs are rising 20-24% in 2023. In order to save money, local municipal employees have the option of choosing the Omnia Health Plan which is a cheaper alternative to the other health plans. In addition to a lower monthly premium, employees may, if the Commission approves, receive a one-time \$1,000 incentive for choosing and staying with the Omnia plan for 1 year.

W. Winegar made a motion to approve the Resolution authorizing offering an incentive to employees related to state health benefits, second by C. Madrid. All in favor (see attached Resolution)

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, M. Plager made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm, seconded by W. Winegar Vote: All in favor.

Respectfully,

Diana Swiderski, Administrative Assistant



State of New Jersey • Division of Pensions & Benefits (NJDPB)

STATE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM**P.O. BOX 299 TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0299****RESOLUTION****A RESOLUTION** for Local Employers to offer a modified incentive under the State Health Benefits Program.**BE IT RESOLVED:**The Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission
Corporate Name of Employer154500
SHBP Employer Location Number

We agree to voluntarily participate in the modified Financial Incentive Program granting financial incentives to subscribers who select enrollment into tiered-network medical plan otherwise known as Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey's OMNIA Plan. We agree that the management and administration of this incentive program shall be solely our responsibility.

The terms of the Incentive Program described above shall include:

- The Incentive Program shall be available to subscribers who are first time enrollees in a tiered-network medical plan beginning Plan Year 2023 and continuing for one plan year through December 31, 2023;
- The Incentive Program does not extend to participants enrolled under P.L. 2005, c. 375 (certain over-age adult children) and COBRA;
- Participation is voluntary at the option of the employer;
- The financial incentive for eligible employees shall be: \$1,000 at any level of coverage (Single, Member/Spouse, Family, Parent/Child) when changing to a tiered-network plan.
- The incentive amount shall be paid within the first quarter of Plan Year 2023 and is reportable income; and
- The incentive shall be forfeited and returned to the employer if the subscriber fails to remain enrolled for at least one plan year, except that if a subscriber is made ineligible for healthcare through layoff, involuntary separation, reduction to part-time status, or classification into an ineligible position. If a subscriber voluntarily retires or changes health plans due to a catastrophic or emergency health need as determined by the employer within the year, then the incentive shall be forfeited on a pro-rata basis.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by

the: Middle-Brook Regional Health Comm. on the 3rd day of October, 2022.
Corporate Name of Employer

Signature

Director/Secretary
Official Title

Street Address

City

State

Zip Code

Area Code

Telephone Number

Employer's State Social Security Identification Number

Number of Employees