HEALTH BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE (BRC) MEETING MINUTES
9MARCH2021

Voting members present: Kathie Lynch (Chair), Ann Birner (Minutes), Kim McNamara, Richard DiPentima, James Petersen
Non-voting city staff present: Stephanie Seacord, Kristin Shaw, Toni McLellan

Action items below identify name of responsible party in bold font.

Kathie read the approved waiver for remote meeting participation during the pandemic and participants identified location and any others present at that location. The resignation of Bianca Monteiro from this committee was announced with regret and deep appreciation for her contributions. A motion to approve the minutes of March 2nd was made by James and seconded by Ann. The minutes were approved without comment or discussion.

The dashboard was reviewed in preparation for **Kathie's** presentation to the Reopen BRC. Cases are down in Portsmouth and statewide since last week, but a few new hotspots were noted in the NH map. Hospitalizations are down in NH. Statewide positivity registered a concerning bump over 5% on March 8 and is slightly up in Rockingham County. Will continue to follow these results. Kim noted that while deaths are down in NH, the deaths that do occur are generally the result of community transmission rather than occurring in long term care settings, where vaccination efforts were rolled out earlier. Deaths are still mostly among individuals over the age of 60 years.

Kim reported that progress continues with vaccination clinics. Doses administered during the mass vaccination program at NH Speedway this past weekend do not seem to be evident on the dashboard yet. If these results are incorporated into state data today, **Stephanie** will update the dashboard before tomorrow's presentation. Vaccine doses received by the state still exceed doses administered, reportedly due to allocation for forthcoming clinics.

The Testing FAQs are being updated to reflect the availability of a new home test product. The NH DHHS alert regarding availability of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. NH DHHS information about the J&J/Janssen vaccine was added to the Vaccine FAQs.

Kathie walked the committee through proposed revisions to the "I've Been Vaccinated – Now What?" FAQs. Changes to the document were made in real time as the group reviewed, and will be refined by **Kathie and formatted by Stephanie** prior to posting. Substantial discussion with resultant revisions were centered on guidance on the safety of outdoor spaces relative to indoor spaces (igloos, etc.) removing references to "well ventilated" indoor areas, defining low-risk scenarios where it might be possible for unvaccinated individuals and vaccinated individuals to gather in relative safety. The FAQs will include more detail on COVID-19 risk factors. To support pro-vaccination messaging, a link to this document outlining the benefits of "life after vaccination" will be inserted in the Vaccination FAQs in the "why get vaccinated?" section. A motion was made by Ann, seconded by Kim, and approved unanimously to incorporate the revisions as discussed and post the document on the City website.

Kim summarized the current status and outlook from a Health Department perspective. We are making progress. Future efforts will need to prepare the public for the next phase with positive messaging, and the Reopen BRC will also drive some of this. We will need to watch the variants closely to determine their impact on vaccinated as well as unvaccinated populations. TBD: the duration of protection offered by vaccines and whether boosters will be needed. James reminded the group that any gatherings that CAN be outdoors SHOULD be outdoors. The Reopen and Arts BRCs need to keep this in mind as well. It was just announced that there will not be a "PopUp NH" space this year. Local arts venues are working on their own outdoor spaces but the ultimate goal is to move back indoors for economic sustainability. One key to a successful summer season will be careful lessening of restrictions on outdoor distancing, to allow for larger gatherings.

There were no public comments. James made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by Rich, all agreed.