

STATE HEALTH COUNCIL

November 18, 2020

A meeting of the State Health Council was called to order by Chairman Duane Pool at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 via videoconference.

Members present:

Duane Pool, Bismarck, Chairman
Dennis Wolf, Dickinson, Vice Chairman
Darrold Bertsch, Secretary
Jim Brosseau, Grand Forks
Genny Dienstmann, Bismarck
Tyler Lannoye, Churchs Ferry
Kristin Roers, Fargo
Torey Saylor, Bismarck

Members absent:

Mike Fedorchak, Bismarck

Staff members present:

Dirk Wilke, Interim State Health Officer
Nicole Brunelle, Research & Response Section
Kirby Kruger, Disease Control & Forensic Pathology Section
Christie Massen, Laboratory Services Section
Kim Mertz, Healthy & Safe Communities Section
Londa Rodahl, Recording Secretary Pro Tern
Tim Wiedrich, Health Resources & Response Section
Bobbie Will, Primary Care Office

Others present:

Stephen McDonough, MD, Bismarck

Minutes

Chairman Pool asked for an addition to the agenda to allow Dr. Stephen McDonough to present a brief statement at 9:00 a.m.

Darrold Bertsch moved to approve the agenda with the addition of allowing Dr. Stephen McDonough to present, second by Dennis Wolf and carried.

Genny Dienstmann moved the approval of the August 12, 2020 minutes as distributed. Second by Jim Brosseau and carried.

Jim Brosseau moved approval of the October 16, 2020 special meeting minutes as distributed. Second by Kristin Roers and carried.

Election of Officers

The following were elected for the coming year: Duane Pool, Chairman; James Brosseau, Vice Chairman; and Darrold Bertsch, Secretary.

Presentation

Dr. Stephen McDonough, a Bismarck pediatrician and former State Health Department employee, presented on where we are now and for the future of the COVID-19 pandemic. He made the following points: 1) Support the Governor's mask mandate issued 11-13-20; 2) Request the Governor and ND Department of Health to change the county risk categorization to one based on the 7-day average of new cases per 100,000 and the percentage of mask-wearing in each county; 3) Direct the ND Department of Health to release the results of the October 2020 mask-wearing survey and to conduct monthly surveys of mask-wearing and social-distancing and release those results to the public; 4) Direct the ND Department of Health to realize the current public education efforts for wearing masks and the importance of social distancing; and 5) Support the Governor's order to require counties and cities to enforce social distancing as indicated in the risk categorization.

Budget Update

Brenda Weisz, Chief Financial Officer, presented an update of the proposed 2021-2023 budget. (See ATTACHMENT A).

COVID-19 Update

An update on the Department's COVID-19 pandemic response was provided by: Kirby Kruger, Tim Wiedrich, Christie Massen, Kim Mertz, Dirk Wilke and Nicole Brunelle.

Research & Response Section

Nicole Brunelle, section chief, presented an overview on the work of the Research & Response Section.

ND Primary Care Office

Bobbie Will, director, questioned the Council on the possibility of clarifying the definition of "physician" in the ND Century Code. The Council decided to leave it as it is now.

She reviewed ATTACHMENT B. She asked if the Council wished to add a behavioral analyst to the list of those allowed to apply under the Behavioral Health Loan Repayment Program. She also asked if there should be another policy change on increasing the telehealth percentage from 50% to 100% but specifying a percentage of time for serving our rural communities. The Council asked for further information to be presented at the next meeting.

Interim State Health Officer Update

Dirk Wilke reported: 1) On Friday (11-13-20), the issuance of a statewide mask mandate and social distancing for a month with several exemptions; 2) A previous State Health Officer order was revised to allow COVID-positive healthcare providers to provide healthcare services to COVID-positive patients; and 3) the possibility that the Governor may appoint a state health officer by the end of December 2020.

The Council questioned if there was anything they could do to support the pandemic efforts. After discussion, a memo/email will be sent by Duane to the Governor indicating the Council's support of the mask mandate.

The Council felt the need to schedule a special Health Council meeting in December for the purpose of: 1) receiving the requested information on the behavioral health analyst discipline and North Dakota telehealth data; 2) an update briefing from Dirk on the Department's COVID response; 3) possible legislation for the 2021 session; and 4) abuse and neglect allegations in nursing facilities. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2020 from 8:30-9:30.

The meeting adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

Submitted,

Darrold Bertsch, Secretary