

East Longmeadow Board of Health Agenda

Thursday, January 6, 2022; 6:00p.m. at East Longmeadow - Zoom

Board of Health Members Present: Christine Johnston, MPH, Dr. Kathryn Jobbins, DO, MS, FACP, and Rebecca Torcia, RN,BSN

Health Department Staff Present: Tammy Spencer & Mary McNally

Visitor: Cheri Brady

Topic	Discussion/Action Taken/Decision Made
Call to order and Chair Announcements	Meeting called to order by Chair, Christine Johnston at 6:00 p.m.
Public Comment	<p>East Longmeadow Town Manager, Mary McNally, wishes everyone a happy new year and thanks the board for all they do. Mary stresses she supports the board in the decisions they make.</p> <p>Cheri Brady, nurse practitioner, spoke in favor of recommending an indoor mask mandate</p>
New Business: a) Adoption of Governor Baker's December 21, 2021 Mask Advisory Vote	Christine spoke to adoption of the 12/21/2021 mask advisory put out by Governor Baker for the town of East Longmeadow. Dr. Jobbins voiced this should be the minimum set forth due to the number of cases in the hospital and at a local and statewide level. Motion to adopt Governor Baker's advisory for masking in East Longmeadow made by Dr. Kathryn Jobbins and seconded by Christine Johnston. Motion passed 3-0.
Old Business a) Covid-19 Update: Including by not limited to: 1. Cases 2. Vaccination Rates 3. Mask Mandate Discussion	<p>Tammy gave an update on covid numbers in East Longmeadow. In the last 14 days (12/19/2021-1/1/2022), 401 positive cases were reported with a positivity rate of 16.31%. Hampden County's positivity rate is currently 18.05%. In East Longmeadow, 2,600 people took tests with 401 positive and out of those 218 were vaccinated with average age 36. There is not currently data on boosters and positive test rates. Dr. Jobbins says those who are not boosted do not have same level of immunity as someone with a booster. Dr. Jobbins shared with the board that Baystate is testing 2,000 people/day and they are seeing 2 out of every 4 people test positive. They currently have 27 in the ICU and 283 admitted with covid and the average age is 50 years old. More children are testing positive and in the Pediatric ICU along with 100 kids treated in ER per day. A third of the hospital beds are people with covid. The Hospitals are over capacity with no bed availability. People without Covid coming into hospital are sicker due to waiting longer to be seen.</p> <p>The National Guard is currently assisting in hospitals. Tammy states that currently the town has 68% fully vaccinated with 31% boosted. The age breakdown for pediatric vaccinations is 5-11yo 28% vaccinated, 65% ages 12-15 and 75% 16-19 ages. The schools are looking to schedule a Covid-19 clinic in the next few weeks. Tammy is trying to procure test kits through the state, which will take approximately 7-10 days to come in once ordered. East Longmeadow is not eligible to receive free kits due to town being above poverty level. CDC is now recommending boosters for Pfizer at 5month post second dose and a 3rd shot for 5-11 ages</p>

with severe to moderate immunocompromised 28 days after second shot. The additional shot for immunocompromised is a full additional dose, not a booster. The CDC also updated their booster recommendations to include 12-17 year olds now being eligible per Pfizer to receive a booster. The CDC also updated their language of up to date being someone who has received all the shots they are eligible for and fully vaccinated is someone who has only received the primary series. Tammy discussed the new isolation and quarantines guidelines per CDC. She states people testing positive regardless of vaccination status with onset of positive test remain home 5 days and continue to wear mask after 5 days and may go out if symptoms have resolved. Dr. Jobbins made the point that if you have symptoms need to remain in isolation and quarantine starts from day 1 and follow the guidelines. People with increased or prolonged symptoms have a higher viral load and if someone is testing negative but symptomatic, it is important to retest in 2-3 days due to virus not being at highest level on an at home antigen test. As the symptoms subside, the virus is shedding. PCR tests are far more sensitive than rapid tests. Dr. Jobbins discusses with the board that the omicron variant is much more contagious and more easily transmissible with less exposure, but the duration of infection is less. People generally are contagious with covid 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and 3 days after, hence the reason for new CDC guidelines of quarantine for 5 days. She spoke to a good resource on epidemiology and explanation of virus by Dr. Katelyn Jetelina at mylocalepidemiologist.substat.com

Dr. Jobbins asked Mary McNally when the board can declare an emergency related to Robert's Rules. Mary deferred to the town legal counsel, Jesse Belcher-Timme on this question. Mary states Jesse recommended the board issue a 14 day notice and public hearing for this. Mary said she issued an emergency declaration back in March 2020, which came on the heels of Governor issuing his declaration of emergency, which he has rescinded. She states the town's emergency declaration was never rescinded and is still in place. Mary going to talk to the town council and see if local emergency declaration is sufficient. Mary also states Jesse told her the Attorney General has not declared a declaration of emergency. Dr. Jobbins mentioned that surrounding towns including; Longmeadow, Westfield and Agawam, as well as Springfield, have put in an indoor mask mandate in public spaces. Dr. Jobbins states she wanted to discuss the mask mandate. Mary states a legal notice would need to be put into the reminder. Tammy states she will look into posting an agenda for a possible meeting on Tuesday of next week. Dr. Jobbins and Christine both discussed the mental health effects and impact of covid for individuals and importance of reaching out for support and to post on social media site for board suicide hotlines, counseling sites for individuals of color as well as services for LBGTQ. Dr. Jobbins also mentions increased need for blood donations due to shortage and rationing currently. People can contact Red Cross to see where can donate and possibly in near future can have a local mobile blood drive.

Next Meeting Date

Motion to adjourn made by Rebecca Torcia and seconded by Dr. Kathryn Jobbins at 6:55 p.m. **Motion passed 3-0.**

This listing is reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Rebecca Torcia 02/10/2022
 Rebecca Torcia, Secretary