

The Fayette County Board of Health met on Tuesday, September 10, 2002, in the Public Meeting Room in the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

Board of Health Members Present:

Dr. John DeCotis
Lynette Peterson
Tom Bowman
Lyn Redwood
Dr. Michael Strain, Chair
A. G. VanLandingham

Staff Members Present:

Michael Brackett, MD
Laurie Cook
Merle Crowe
Cynthia Grant
Jeff Kilgore
Dennis Davenport, Attorney

Call to Order:

Dr. Strain called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2002:

Motion made by Ms. Redwood to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Ms. Peterson. The minutes were unanimously approved. There was no discussion.

Old / Unfinished Business:

Mr. . Gary Davis: Mr. Gary Davis introduced himself to the board and stated that he was there to represent Steve Brown, Mayor of Peachtree City. The board welcomed Mr. Davis.

New Business / Public Comment:

Plaque Presentation:

Ms. Carol Fritz was presented with a plaque in appreciation for her service to the Board of Health.

Metropolitan Atlanta Surveillance Task Force Resolution (MASTF) Resolution:

Dr. Brackett explained that MASTF was developed a couple of years ago in response to perceived potential issues that might arise from West Nile Virus. He went on to state that MASTIF was a multi-county, multi-district loose association that met on a fairly regular basis at different levels, across a broad spectrum of the health community. He said it met to generate a balanced, scientific approach to what could become a media event, rather

than a science. He said the reason for the resolution was to add some clout to the information presented to the public, and that having board of health endorsement might add credence to such information. He added that board endorsement might also allow MASTF to apply for grant monies.

He said MASTF meetings were in part to decide what responses were appropriate in the event of positive West Nile cases, whether in animals or humans. He continued that MASTF had also been instrumental in helping to develop surveillance systems that are in place. He mentioned that they participated in mosquito surveillance during the summer, and they deal with inappropriate responses to West Nile scares. He said the resolution was not a blanket endorsement of what MASTF says; but was a commitment to the attempt to deal with this issue in an organized manner. Dr. Brackett said he felt that approval of the resolution would provide MASTF with a useful tool.

Ms. Redwood complimented the health department on its handling of West Nile virus information. She said she was impressed with the volumes of information put out by the health department and District IV.

Mr. Bowman said he had attended MASTF meetings and that it was a very professional group that had done a lot of good things over the last two years.

Dr. Strain asked how MASTF disseminated information to the public regarding West Nile Virus. He commented that the board frequently received inquiries from the public on this subject.

Dr. Brackett replied that the role of MASTF was still evolving, and that nothing was set in concrete at this point. He said that for giving out general information it would be best to turn to the local health department. He said most necessary information was available there, and if not persons could be referred to him at district office. He said the MASTF group was more a think tank and science group.

Mr. VanLandingham asked if Fayette County was involved with information dissemination. He said several different people had called the commissioner's offices stating that the health department had told them to call and ask the county to spray for mosquitoes.

Dr. Brackett replied that Fayette County was involved with MASTF, and that he doubted that the public had been told such a thing. He said that MASTF would not be the best entity to answer this question, that it would be a local issue.

Mr. VanLandingham felt that all entities should be giving the same information. He said he had attended a national conference and that the information he received was the same as that on the local level. He felt that periodic articles in the paper would provide public information as to the best way to control mosquitoes, which was not spraying.

Dr. Brackett informed the board of a generalized press release he had created and made available to local health departments. He said he had sent out multiple releases in the past and would be glad to do so again, using the board's name or his.

Ms. Redwood said that it sounded like an education problem; that people need to be informed that spraying was not the best way to deal with a mosquito situation. She asked if these were the type of calls physical health was receiving.

Ms. Grant replied that calls referred to her usually involved physical ailments. She said that it was usual for people to call Environmental Health for mosquito problems. She mentioned that she submitted articles to the local paper on a monthly basis, and that last summer she had sent in two articles on West Nile virus. She said that both articles had been published. She said that she had not done one this summer because of Dr. Brackett's press release. She said she had left the second article with Mr. Fehr and believed that he had put it in the paper. She mentioned that Ms. Duffy had called from Fayette Community Hospital to see if she felt that another Public Health Forum would be of use. She said she had not been able to contact Ms. Duffy yet despite several attempts and would follow up further.

Mr. Kilgore discussed the public being referred to the county commissioner's offices regarding mosquito control. He said that when the public calls asking about a visible mosquito control program, they are told that there is no active mosquito control program that environmental health is aware of and if that person would like to lend their support to a program they could contact the county office. He felt that staff could do a better job of communication and that issue would be addressed by better education.

Dr. Brackett mentioned some information he had made available as to why spraying was not an effective control mechanism.

Ms. Cook said she would send that out to Mr. Kilgore and the board.

Ms. Redwood felt that a Fayette County-specific handout was needed, to provide this information.

Ms. Grant said the CDC pamphlet was available in the health department and had been shared with environmental health. She said it addressed protecting oneself while outdoors and dealing with standing water, etc.

Ms. Peterson asked what procedure was followed when a dead bird was brought in.

Mr. Kilgore explained the protocol for this situation: generally a phone call is received, staff goes out to collect the bird if it falls within the listed birds, and it is sent in for testing. He said the public is instructed on safe disposal methods if the bird is not on the affected list. He said an average of two to three birds a week are sent for testing.

Mr. Bowman commented that several thousand of the pamphlets that Ms. Grant referred to had been distributed in various areas of Peachtree City within the last couple of weeks.

Dr. Strain said that this issue needed to be addressed next May or June as mosquito season would be just starting then; he said it is winding down now. He said it would be a good idea to be proactive and ahead of the curve.

Motion was made by Mr. VanLandingham to approve the signing of the resolution; seconded by Mr. Bowman. There was no further discussion. The motion carried unanimously. (See Attachment #1)

Dr. Brackett informed the board that there had been a positive case of West Nile virus in the district, but not in Fayette County. He said that the 55 year-old-patient had been properly treated, never hospitalized, and was doing fine.

Enforcement of School Immunization Policy / Rules:

Ms. Grant commended the School Health Nurse Clinical Coordinator Debbie King. She felt that Ms. King was a phenomenal nurse and she congratulated the system on hiring her. She mentioned that she and Ms. King worked closely together and that Ms. King had been very impressive in organizing procedures and policies. She said it was a joy to work with Ms. King.

She said that upon audit some students entering sixth grade were found to be deficient in immunizations since kindergarten, and that school staff's attempts to correct this were generally unsuccessful. She said that parents were given letters informing them of their children's immunization deficiencies and that parents had been allowed thirty days after registration to remedy the deficiency and return the record. She said letters and phone calls by administrative staff was producing little or no response. She said proof of proper immunization was now required upon registration. She said that parents can make an appointment and physical health will provide a letter of proof of an immunization appointment for the school's records, since appointments fill up very quickly upon the start of school. She said that this letter will state dates and immunizations to be given, which will allow the child to be admitted to school, and it would also serve as a tickler to school personnel for follow up purposes. She said that this system would not be well-received by people who put off immunizations until the last minute, nor was it perfect. She said that it would be better received as people become accustomed to these new requirements. She said she wanted to alert the board in case of any possible complaints.

She mentioned that all immunizations which had been on deferment are now off; so those children who were deferred had a one-year expiration date; so as long as they are within the expiration date that record is acceptable for school admission.

Dr. DeCotis mentioned that previously each school hired its own clinic worker or nurse and enforcement of immunizations had been inconsistent across the system. He said Ms. King had done an outstanding job in helping get a handle on this issue. He said there were

hundreds of children on the list to be put out of school due to lack of proof of proper immunization and the health department could expect to be inundated.

Ms. Grant mentioned that health department staff had to adjust their thinking as well; the law states that the school *may* give thirty days grace period, but this is not a requirement. She said that these immunization-deficient children included those who transfer in from out of county and out of state, as well as long time residents.

Dr. DeCotis said that religious deferments are allowed. He said there is a process that is followed in these cases, but these are very few cases.

Ms. Grant stated that medical exemptions were also acceptable, and must be renewed each year.

Administrative Claiming Funds:

Ms. Crowe discussed this fund source with the board, giving an explanation as to how the district office had taken the lead in finding necessary new funding. She informed the board that Fayette County Health Department's first two quarters would amount to some \$30,493. She provided the board with a list of the amounts received throughout the district. She asked the board to recall that these funds were in payment for services that have always been provided by the health department, but for which no previous payment had been made.

Dr. Strain had a question regarding the timeline for the Septic Information packet that was to be prepared.

Ms. Cook replied that they had been developed and estimates for printing were in process of being bid.

Dr. DeCotis asked where the Administrative Funding would be spent.

Ms. Crowe replied it would go into the general fund.

Mr. VanLandingham questioned the consultant fee listed on the second page of the Administrative Claiming Funds handout.

Dr. Brackett explained that the state contracted out this operation to a private company and that in order to receive the funds the consulting fee had to be paid. He said he was bothered by the amount as well but that was the way the state contract was written.

Ms. Redwood asked if any communication had been received regarding Lake Edith from the state or Environmental Protection Division.

Dr. DeCotis said that the chemical that was being put into Lake Edith had been successful and the treatment program was ongoing. He said the lake was usable for canoeing and fishing, but not for swimming.

Ms. Redwood said she would follow up with the EPD to see how compliant it has been with requirements for the last few months.

Staff Reports:

Merle Crowe: Ms. Crowe said she had a couple of items for Staff Reports, the first being the request received late yesterday from McIntosh Trail Community Service Board for a nomination to replace Fred Scarborough with ex-officio Michael Starr.

Motion was made to nominate Mr. Starr by Dr. DeCotis, seconded by Lynette Peterson. The motion carried unanimously. (See Attachment # 2) There was no discussion.

Ms. Crowe mentioned that Linda Faye Johnson had applied for and been given Administrative Leave for one year due to her move out of the area. She said Ms. Johnson would attempt to find another job with the state and that her position had been filled by promoting Secretary Cheryl Uhr. She said that Ms. Uhr's vacant position was filled by a new hire, Kathy Flematti, who was bi-lingual in Spanish and who was both Secretary and Translanstor for Hispanic clients.

Cynthia Grant: Ms. Grant informed the board that Paula Evans, Licensed Dietitian, was hired through the district office. She said that she would see physician-referred patients, particularly diabetics and cholesterol problem patients. She mentioned that dietitians who come in periodically are not Registered Dietitians and therefore cannot bill for their services whereas Ms. Evans can. She said the hope is that Ms. Evan will generate more patients into the health department, as well as add to the fund balance. She said that Ms. Evans was new to Public Health but that she was very astute and learning very quickly. She said that Ms. Evans was going out to make home visits and was expected to be a big asset to the health department.

She said that a Spanish Mass was given at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Peachtree City, and that a Health Fair was planned, to which Ms. Flematti would go along to help. She mentioned that Ms. Flematti was also a Licensed Medical Technician. She said clinical breast exams could be preformed. She said it was hoped that a mobile unit would be present, which would allow qualified persons to be referred to the BreasTEST and More Program or the State's Breast Program and have mammograms on site. She said March was the anticipated time for the Health Fair.

Jeff Kilgore: Mr. Kilgore said he was reporting on environmental health in the absence of Mr. Rick Fehr. He informed the board that the individual hired to fill the vacancy had backed out and therefore the position was again vacant. He said advertisement would begin again to fill this position.

Ms. Redwood questioned the Residential Failed portion of the Environmental Health Activity Report.

Mr. Kilgore replied that contributing factors were that many systems in Fayette County are in excess of twenty-plus years, and that better reporting was catching failing systems.

Dr. Brackett: Dr. Brackett informed the board that three new positions had been added to district staff, and that two of those were directly related to bioterrorism. He said John Dorling had returned to District IV from the state offices and he would be the Bioterrorism Coordinator for District IV. He said Jan Culbreth came from the state EMS office, and that she had been state trainer until she retired. He said she was motivated by the terrorist attacks to come out of retirement and would be district Bioterrorism Training Coordinator. He said she was recommended by Richard Treat, who was an outstanding trauma surgeon.

He mentioned that District IV had been selected to have one of the thirty-two yearly CDC graduate interns work in the district office. He said it was a national competition to get a CDC Intern and that District IV was fortunate to secure Kelli Hooper for two years. He said District IV was the only district in Georgia to receive an Intern from the CDC. He said her background was outstanding and that she would bring a wonderful understanding of statistics; both interpretation and application. He said part of her emphasis would be on chronic disease such as asthma, hypertension and arthritis.

He said that Oasis is a system in development by the state to pull statistics from the web and that he had recently seen a prototype of this program. He said about ten of the staff would go to Atlanta to learn the system. He said it would be added to and updated each year.

Adjournment: Motion was made to adjourn by Mr. VanLandingham, seconded by Mr. Bowman. The meeting adjourned at 8:24 a.m.

Michael Strain, MD

Merle Crowe, Admin. Ops. Coord. II

