

The Fayette County Board of Health met on Tuesday, July 11, 2006, in the Public Meeting Room of the Fayette County Administrative Complex, 140 Stonewall Avenue, Fayetteville, Georgia.

Board of Health Members Present:

Robert Horgan
Thomas Faulkner, MD
Lyn Redwood, RN, MSN
Judi-ann Rutherford, RN
Michael Strain, MD

Staff Members Present:

Michael Brackett, MD
Carolyn Callison, RN, BSN
Merle Crowe
Rick Fehr
Rodney Hilley
Joe Vitale
Dennis Davenport, Attorney

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Strain called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM March 14, 2006: Motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Ms. Rutherford, seconded by Mr. Faulkner. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS / PUBLIC COMMENT:

Environmental Health Fees: Mr. Fehr reported that most of the environmental fee increases approved by the Board of Health were also approved by the Board of Commissioners as required by law. He explained that the commissioners did not approve increases in the Residential Individual Onsite Sewage Permit and the Repair Permit because the commissioners were uncomfortable with those increases, which were set higher than those of surrounding counties. He felt that if the County Finance Director had been able to present information he had planned to present, those fees might have been approved. He expressed appreciation for the increases and felt that increased fees would support an additional staff member and would help alleviate staffing issues. Next budget year the denied fees would probably be presented again.

Environmental Health Food Service Regulations: Mr. Fehr updated the board on proposed changes in Food Service Regulations, scheduled to be gradually implemented over this year, beginning in November. He said there would be a public hearing at the end of this month to address concerns brought up by an industry association. A state committee was formed to come up with changes in the proposed regulations. It is hoped that the consequence of the committee meetings would be finalized regulations.

Millbrook Subdivision Sewage Disposal System (Tyrone): Mr. Fehr deferred this discussion to Attorney Davenport. Mr. Davenport said that on May 25th he had sent a letter concerning the Millbrook sewage system to the state, as requested by the board. A visit to the site to inspect all the system's components was made on June 5th in response to that letter. The system was found to have four 15,000 gallon septic tanks, designed for as much as 3 days retention; two 15,000 dosing tanks; 4.63 acres of drip fields; two groundwater monitoring wells and an onsite generator, none of which were in violation of state regulations. A recommendation was made to report on sludge removal, which was apparently being done but not reported. The odor problem

was found to be due to underutilization of the system; another problem was that this system sat on top of part of a storm water infrastructure, which would cause ground liquid in the area. The question became: was the visible liquid effluent, or storm water being handled by the system? Testing would be necessary to make that determination. The system was designed for a 65 home subdivision, plus flow from a commercial strip center and a movie theater across the road, and it was therefore underutilized, since only 40% of the homes and none of the commercial buildings were built at the time the problems began. The state requires a quarterly or monthly report on the system, and there seemed to be enough monitoring in place such that the state can state that the system is working properly. Individual systems only have odor when they fail, but the state determined that this system is working correctly and that the odor is from underutilization.

The board expressed concern that storm water disposal infrastructure was too close to the septic system; Mr. Davenport clarified that the system components were not close enough to be a problem, and thought that the storm water was handled correctly. Dr. Strain thanked Mr. Davenport for sending the letter. There was no further old business or public comment.

NEW BUSINESS: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Mr. Joe Vitale, District 4 Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, gave a PowerPoint presentation on this issue, and a brief presentation on the Cities Readiness Initiative, which was expanded to cover all of Metro Atlanta rather than just Atlanta/Fulton County (GEMA Area 7).

Mr. Vitale said the Strategic National Stockpile Program's (SNP) purpose was to maintain a national repository of life-saving pharmaceuticals and medical materiel that would be delivered to the site of a disaster, for a chemical or biological terrorism event or one naturally occurring, in order to reduce morbidity and mortality in civilian populations. It consists of a two tiered response: 12-Hour Push Packages, pre-configured for rapid identification and ease of distribution, pre-positioned in environmentally controlled and secured facilities, and ready for deployment to reach designated area within 12 hours of the Federal decision to deploy; and Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) Packages that are tailored to provide specific materiel, depending upon the suspected or confirmed agent. These are comprised of pharmaceuticals and supplies that are delivered from one or more VMI source. The NSP consists of various pharmaceuticals and medical supplies that would support emergency needs for a short time.

Public Health is responsible for the plan for receipt, storage and staging of the SNS inventory; to coordinate and plan with support agencies for SNS dispensing activities (Law Enforcement, EMS, Red Cross, School District, Pharmacists); recruiting volunteers to assist with dispensing activities; dispensing medication/vaccinations to the general public at various dispensing sites; and to develop plans and train personnel to conduct dispensing site activities. The community is asked to work with the county public health office to develop plans to protect the community (identify dispensing locations); identifying transportation assets to pick up and deliver necessary medicines or vaccines to the county, and identifying personnel (clinical, administrative, etc.) that can support public health with Point of Distribution (POD) activities. To date four PODs have been selected in Fayette County: McIntosh, Sandy Creek, Starr's Mill, and Fayette County High Schools. A warehouse has been selected to receive the SNS in the event it is called down, and only awaits final approval by the CDC.

All first responders must be identified; *i.e.* Public safety, medical workers, city infrastructure workers and county leadership. The community is also asked to provide security for all dispensing sites, and insure that leaders are aware and supportive of the plan. Fayette County Health Department has worked extensively with Mr. Vitale and all local law enforcement in this

endeavor and they are very aware of ongoing emergency preparedness efforts. Local law enforcement should also be aware that a large-scale public health emergency will likely produce widespread anxiety, fear and panic. The arrival of SNS assets will be newsworthy, which might make it a focus point for impatient individuals unwilling to wait for medications or treatment. Plans must provide for adequate security to protect the SNS assets, from arrival to distribution to the general public. Security should be able to prevent unauthorized access to locations that support SNS operations; facilitate the movement of vehicles that support the SNS assets and personnel; control crowds that might interfere with dispensing operations, and protect personnel and equipment performing operations from injury, theft or damage.

The Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) is a program to aid cities in increasing their capacity to deliver medicines and medical supplies during a large-scale public health emergency. The CRI ensures that a community's entire population will be reached within 48 hours. Metro Atlanta is one of the cities included in the CRI plan, and Henry and Fayette Counties are considered part of Metro Atlanta, so both are included in the CRI plan. The CRI currently is working on development of resource requests, identifying proper locations, building community relationships, and development of plans and processes to increase the throughput of the public at dispensing sites. The next steps will be to continue to develop and to refine plans, to identify adequate locations and resources, to continue to seek support from all affected personnel and to test capabilities through exercises. Surrounding counties also have an Emergency Preparedness Coordinators and regular communication between them is ongoing. One big concern being addressed was that "worried well" would show up if there was an event.

Ms. Redwood asked about the FEMA online courses the board was required to take by August 31st and requested the websites be emailed again. Ms. Callison said she would re-send it.

STAFF REPORTS: Ms. Callison thanked the board for its assistance in increasing the budget for FY 2007. She informed the board that a new LPN was hired July 3rd, which should help the RNs with the back-to-school rush. She informed the board of the purchase of new personal computers (PCs) for each nurse's clinic room, which should be a real time-saver for them.

Mr. Fehr mentioned that Dr. Stuart Brown, head of Public Health in Georgia, had recently sent a letter which mandated that soil scientist reports for sewage systems must be accepted without question. EH staff may request re-evaluation of the situation if there are concerns, which may be denied, nor can the sewage permit be denied due to EH staff concerns or questions. He defined what a soil scientist was and who pays for the service, and said that there is a list of certified individuals available.

Mr. Rodney Hilley clarified that Dr. Brown had given this direction to staff, and although this made EH's job easier, homeowners may suffer for it if the certified soil scientist gets it wrong. Consensus of the board was that a failing system was not just a concern of the homeowner but of the Board of Health, who would be answering the questions of the concerned homeowner, and of all the surrounding property owners. Mr. Hilley said systems do fail frequently. Mr. Davenport commented that this was the same thought process that took the county from oversight of 10,000-gallon-a-day systems and gave it to the state, like the situation at the Millbrook Subdivision. The board asked Mr. Davenport to look over Dr. Brown's directive letter to see if a response was necessary; Mr. Davenport said he would have a report by the next board meeting. Mr. Hilley commented that legislation was expected to pass in the next session which would address this issue. Ms. Rutherford felt that the board should contact their legislators.

Mr. Fehr also updated the board that as of December, EH staff reviewed all house plans and walked through the buildings to ensure that the number of bedrooms matched the septic system permitted.

Mr. Fehr addressed the odor problem issue in a facility owned by Phillips Services Corporation, a privately-owned waste water treatment facility in Fulton County situated about a half-mile over the county line close to Milam Road. He said the EPD and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at the CDC had been contacted, as well as Captain Pete Nelms (Fayette County Emergency Management Coordinator), who had been in contact with his counterpart in Fulton County concerning this issue. The odor emanates from *N-propyl mercaptan*, a highly odorous and volatile gas given off as a degradation product of a pesticide. The very unpleasant odor resembles wild onions or garlic and has grown steadily worse. Increasing complaints led to the facility rejecting further material. This gas is heavier than air and accumulates in low-lying areas until a strong wind blows it away. It is toxic at strong levels; at low levels it can cause upper respiratory illness. It is an unregulated material that originated in Alabama. Local residents have started a petition to eliminate this odor, but no easy solution is available. The board was informed that this product was stream-discharged and at least one stream feeds into Fayette County. CDC staff determined that levels were not high enough to be toxic to fish at current levels of 10:100 part per million. The board was expressed concern that the EPD closely monitor the situation.

There were no further staff reports.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Redwood, seconded by Ms. Rutherford. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 am.

Michael Strain, MD, Chair

Merle Crowe, Secretary