The St. Lawrence County Board of Health (hereafter typed SLCBOH) met on Tuesday, September 24, 2013 in the Public Health library in the Human Service Center, Canton, New York

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Bunstone, Benjamin Gruda, Dr. Gregory Healey, Victor Pisani, Dr. Jessica Scilleri Smith, Dr. Scott Spicer, and Dr. Andrew Williams

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF PRESENT: Lorraine Kouofsky, Interim Public Health Director; Laurie Maki, Prevent Supervising CHN; Myrna Barney, Public Health Sanitarian; Rosemary Brown, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

President Gregory Healey called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Healey introduced Lorraine Kouofsky as the new Interim Public Health Director. He asked that the members of the BOH introduce themselves.

Mr. Kouofsky was asked to tell the Board something about herself. Ms. Kouofsky explained that she has been in the Public Health arena for over 28 years. She had worked in the Long Term Home Health Care Program, as a Supervisor of Prevent and also as an Emergency Preparedness liaison. She acted as Interim Public Health Director for Franklin County and left there after nine months when a permanent Director was hired. She then went to the school system as a school nurse where her interests were directed toward childhood obesity and drug abuse. She left that position in January of this year.

There was a discussion regarding the hiring of a permanent Public Health Director. Dr. Healey stated that even though the search is ongoing it may take up to eight months. He told the Board that three applications had been received with one not meeting the necessary criteria. Dr. Healey told the Board that he felt during the interview process it
was the SLCBOH’s job to be involved. He felt that the Board as a whole should be included in the interviews and they should make their recommendation for the new Director to the Board of Legislators (BOL) to approve.

An ad hoc committee was set up for the Interim Director. The committee consisted of Mr. Gruda, Dr. Healey, the County Administrator, and three county legislators. Dr. Healey felt that when the interview process began for the permanent Director, the BOH should step up as a whole. Everyone was in agreement and felt that it was a duty of the BOH to hire the new Director of Public Health.

Ms. Kourofsky stated that the new Director should be someone who will carry on the fight to help eliminate obesity, improve the overall health of children in St. Lawrence County, and other important initiatives.

Dr. Healey asked the BOH if they would like him to draft a letter to the County Administrator requesting the BOH’s involvement in the interviewing and hiring of the new Public Health Director. Everyone present felt that was an excellent idea.

**APPROVAL OF JULY 16, 2013 MINUTES**

Dr. Healey asked if there were any corrections or additions to the July 16, 2013 minutes. There were none. He made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Dr. Scilleri Smith accepted the motion and Mr. Gruda seconded.

**COMMUNICATION**

An email from Donald Hassig dated 9/11/13 was included in the BOH packets for the Board’s review.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Donald Hassig from Cancer Action New York expressed his desire that the Board of Health work with his organization to spread the word regarding the dangers of exposure to persistent organic pollutants (POPS). He also distributed a pamphlet for the member’s review.
REPORTS

Pertussis Outbreak Update – Kindra Cousineau

Ms. Cousineau told the Board members that she had included a handout in their packets regarding Whooping Cough (Pertussis) from the CDC. The physicians on the Board also received copies of Pertussis Outbreak Control Guidelines and other pertinent information regarding Pertussis and Lyme disease.

We have had eleven cases of Pertussis from August through September. At the end of August the cases were a cluster of children who were out in the community in the Massena area. Their ages ranged from 1 month to three years of age.

Ms. Cousineau stated that when she was sending out notification of a positive case of Pertussis, she emailed Dr. David Dunn and formerly Mr. Gruda as President of the BOH. She asked Dr. Healey if he would like to receive the notification as the new President. Dr. Healey asked who was notified of an outbreak. Ms. Cousineau stated that the Infection Control nurses at the hospitals were her best source of spreading the word to physicians associated with the hospital. Dr. Healey suggested a creation of an email master list of all providers so that an email could be sent to the providers directly. Ms. Cousineau felt that this was a good ideal and said she would work on the list.

A question was raised as to what the percentage of positive cases involved unvaccinated people. Ms. Cousineau stated that 3 of the 11 were unvaccinated. A question was asked about people being uninsured and receiving medical treatment for the diagnoses and Ms. Cousineau stated that she was referring many of them to the after-hour clinics for care rather than sending them to the emergency room. Dr. Williams volunteered to accept uninsured patients at his clinic. He stated that was what the clinic was about and that he or the Medical Director could be contacted directly.

Mr. Pisani brought up the issue of public awareness regarding the need for adults to have a booster of the Pertussis in the form of Tdap. He felt that it would be a great time to do a public campaign regarding the outbreak and the need for boosters. He stated that as a grandparent, he was unaware of the danger. Ms. Cousineau stated that a press release was sent out regarding the need for a booster.
St. Lawrence County has had 150 cases of Lyme disease this year. Dr. Scillieri Smith stated that this is also a large problem in animals. About 10% of pets tested are positive. There is a vaccine available which is 75% - 80% effective. It was suggested that something official be done by the BOH to inform and update providers of the problem. Dr. Healey felt it would be appropriate.

Ms. Cousineau told the committee that a rabies map was included in their packet. We have had 20 positive raccoons, 5 bats, 1 woodchuck, and 2 skunks. We have seen a huge increase in positive animals this year.

Forty-four people have been vaccinated for post exposure and costs have gone up. Treatment costs approximately $3000 per person.

There have been 234 dog bite reports this year. Due to the letters sent to the towns and police departments from the BOH, many towns have called us and the Sheriff’s Department has been much better about working with us.

We are being including in the testing of ONRAB bait for our bait drop. This type of bait has been used in Canada and where rabies has been nearly eradicated. All areas included in the bait drop will be using ONRAB except for the Gouverneur area which will be using the fishmeal polymer.

We have received additional funding from Senator Ritchie to fund three additional rabies clinics. Their office chose the location of these clinics. The chosen locations were Gouverneur, Louisville, and Oswegatchie.

**Lead Poisoning Prevention – Myrna Barney**

Ms. Barney stated that she has now been given the duty of Lead Program Coordinator. In the State of New York only 45% of 1-year olds and 27% of 2-year olds are tested for lead. We are lagging behind the national average.

About 72% of the houses in our county were built prior to 1980. Ms. Barney asked the Board to write a letter to assist her in encouraging providers to do lead testing. Dr. Spicer voiced his concern regarding parents not allowing or following through with the testing. A suggestion was made that if equipment for testing was available at the point of care to provide, possible the compliance rate would improve dramatically. Dr. Healey broached the question as to whether or not the hospitals would be willing to provide the equipment for lead testing to be
available in pediatricians’ offices. The necessary testing could be done and the hospital providing the equipment would get the bragging rights.

Changes as to what is being provided to the family at different levels of lead were discussed. Ms. Barney stated that if a lead level was at 10, Public Health was offering a nursing assessment, home testing, and education. If a lead level was between the ranges of 5 – 9, a letter is sent to remind patients to have the testing done.

Mr. Pisani stated that when he was working in Albany, they were trying to rewrite the policy regarding procedures to be followed in the event lead was found in the home. They were looking to ease the regulation for abatement on the house because it was very expensive causing people to shy away from having their homes tested.

Dr. Healey felt that if the equipment was available for testing at the point of care, it would be a great benefit and increase compliance to about 90%. Again the master list of providers would be helpful in distributing information on this subject.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**CHHA/LTHHCP Closure – Laurie Maki**

Ms. Maki stated that the State was called yesterday regarding the Medicaid rate for Health Services of Northern New York (HSNNY) and were told there were many agencies waiting for their rates and they were working on them. The Medicaid rate may be available by December. As of June 2014, Long Term Care will go to Managed Medicaid and a Medicaid rate will no longer be necessary to take on Long Term Care clients

We currently have 34 Long Term Care patients on caseload and as of October 1st, we will be left with 33. Until HSNNY receives their rate, we are providing care with a very limited staff.

It was suggested by Mr. Pisani that a letter be sent to the Commissioner of Health regarding the Medicaid rate and perhaps it may receive more action once it is sent down from his office. Usually a request from his office is handled differently than if received from an agency.
STRATEGIC PLAN – DR. HEALEY

Dr. Healey asked if everyone had seen the Strategic Plan. The only members who have not were the newest members – Dr. Scilleri Smith and Dr. Williams. We will ensure that Dr. Scilleri Smith and Dr. Williams receive a copy of the Strategic Plan. Dr. Healey asked that everyone read it as it will be our blueprint for the future of Public Health.

NEW BUSINESS

Immunization Sliding Fee Scale – Laurie Maki

With the new regulations on immunizations we need to be sure that we are billing for all of our immunizations. We must have a sliding fee scale in place. In the packets, the proposed sliding fee scale has been provided for the Board’s review. We are supposed to charge an administration fee for every vaccination, including Vaccine for Children (VFC) immunizations. Our administration fee is $20.00, but with the sliding fee scale the fee will be -0- for anyone with Medicaid.

We would like to move forward with this. There are certain vaccines we are not including on our sliding fee scale such as travel clinic vaccines, flu vaccine, and pneumonia vaccine. We feel that most insurance will pay for these. If anyone has a problem paying for the flu shot, we are referring them to the pharmacies where they can bill. We would like the blessing of the Board to move forward with the sliding fee scale.

PERSONNEL

None

OTHER

Mr. Pisani asked how the Board members would be contacted regarding applications for the Director of Public Health. Mr. Bunstone stated that they had received three applications, with one not meeting the necessary criteria. He felt that they should wait for a couple more applications and then set up a meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None necessary.
ADJOURNEMENT

Dr. Healey made a motion to adjourn at 7:25 p.m. The motion was accepted by Dr. Scilleri Smith and seconded by Dr. Williams.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosemary A. Brown
Administrative Assistant