

Board of Health

**Regular Called Board Meeting Minutes**

**May 28, 2020, 3:00 p.m.**

**Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams**

**Board Members Present**

Clyde Watkins, Jr., M.D., Chairman

Mrs. Delphyne Lomax Taylor, Vice Chair

The Honorable Jeff Rader, Parliamentarian

Dr. Sonia Alvarez-Robinson

Dr. Vasanne Tinsley

Dr. Camara Jones

**District Health Director**

S. Elizabeth Ford, M.D., M.B.A.

**Staff and Guests were virtual via Teams**

**Actions**

**I. Call to Order**

The May 28, 2020, DeKalb County Board of Health meeting was called to order by Chairman Clyde Watkins, Jr., at 3:00 p.m.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Watkins asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2020, board meeting. Dr. Alvarez-Robinson moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Rader seconded. Chairman Watkins called for a vote. The motion to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2020, meeting passed unanimously.

**III. Approval of the FY2021 Budget**

Dr. Ford gave a presentation on the proposed FY2021 DeKalb County Board of Health budget. Chairman Watkins entertained a motion to approve the FY2021 budget.

Dr. Jones asked about funds for the COVID-19 response and about upgrading the patient care system. She wanted to know if there was money going towards setting up isolation areas for people who test positive to prevent an impact on those living in the same households. Dr. Jones asked whether there is an opportunity for funding from the county

**DeKalb County Board of Health**

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so that we have autonomy to do public health right during this pandemic that we are facing.

Dr. Ford responded that a significant proportion of the COVID-19 response funding will go to mobile testing sites throughout the county. We have been provided mobile units that will deliver testing to communities on a regular basis. We utilize ZIP code-level data to identify hotspots throughout the county. We have been testing community members at faith-based facilities and establishing pop-up testing sites throughout the county. Citizens can contact our call center to make an appointment and we also take walkups. However, we are not just about testing. We also provide resources for mental health needs, food banks and job support to tackle the social determinants that contribute to an overabundance of COVID cases in underserved communities.

Dr. Ford further stated that quarantine housing is in the planning stage, as we have a proposed initiative to house citizens who need to isolate because they tested positive for COVID-19 or quarantine because they are symptomatic and unable to stay at home. We recognize the need throughout the county, and we are establishing a partnership with hotels so that people can quarantine and isolate safely.

Dr. Jones asked if we are equipped to conduct probability sampling to estimate the prevalence of the virus. She also asked whether we are able to do testing in hot spots, prisons, nursing homes, etc. We need to see the probability sampling and the impact of policy changes on the progression of the virus' activity in the community.

In response to Dr. Jones' latter questions, Dr. Ford said she would need to meet with her team, which includes our district epidemiologist, to discuss the concerns regarding probability sampling and to see what kind of manpower is needed to address them. We are currently performing testing in both nursing homes and jails.

Dr. Tinsley asked Dr. Ford to touch on patient monitoring once a person tests positive for COVID-19 and on contact tracing.

Dr. Ford stated that DCBOH has already received several contract tracers from the state office. The goal is seven tracers per 100,000 population. The great thing is that we are getting 50 to 65 tracers which is more than the anticipated allotment. They are assigned to persons who have tested positive to assess their level of contact with others. Secondly, they give those who test positive a smartphone application that contacts the tracers twice a day. The "app" asks the person to enter any symptoms so that the tracers can identify those who remain asymptomatic and whether they need additional testing. We provide further guidance about monitoring symptoms and can determine when the person needs to be escalated to a medical facility.

Chairman Watkins asked for a motion to approve the FY2021 budget. Dr. Alvarez-Robinson moved to approve the FY2021 budget and Commissioner Rader seconded. Chairman Watkins called for a vote and the motion passed with one abstention. Dr. Jones abstained from voting because she was in and out during board meetings this year and had not carefully studied the budget.

Commissioner Rader also expressed his appreciation to Dr. Ford and the members of the budget committee for the FY2021 budget and the work that it reflects. He wanted the Board of Health to be assured that county funding will continue as we face the pandemic of COVID-19 together. He further mentioned that he wanted the board to consider making a proposal for a budget amendment as the situation develops.

Dr. Jones abstained from voting because she was in and out during board meetings this year and had not studied enough on the budget.

#### **IV. District Health Director's Board Report**

Dr Ford presented the Director's Report on the Board of Health's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **V. Financial Report**

Chief Financial Officer Brenda K. Smith presented the Financial Report.

#### **VI. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **VII. Board Comments**

Dr. Alvarez-Robinson thanked the team for their extraordinary work and for their commitment. She also thanked Dr. Ford for her heroic efforts while serving as District Health Director in Fulton and DeKalb counties simultaneously. She added that she was thankful to have Dr. Ford back in DeKalb County.

Dr. Ford graciously thanked her team and heralded their courageous efforts and tremendous leadership during this crisis. She also mentioned her gratitude for the help of Commissioner Rader, the Board of Commissioners and DeKalb County for their support of public health and their willingness to always help when there is a need.

Commissioner Rader thanked Dr. Ford and her team and continued to pledge county funding support for the cause of combating COVID-19 through testing, tracing and other activities associated with eradicating the coronavirus.

Chairman Watkins mentioned that he was excited to see how well the citizens of DeKalb County are being served and he is thankful to be a part of the Board of Health. He thanked Dr. Ford and her team for their tremendous efforts and an extraordinary job.

### VIII. Adjournment

Chairman Watkins called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rader moved to adjourn, and Dr. Alvarez-Robinson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Watkins adjourned the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Submitted by



India Dyer, Recording Secretary

Approved by



Dr. Clyde Watkins, Jr., Chairman