

**Board of Health Meeting
April 7, 2005**

PRESENT: David Osler, M.D., Chairman
Babette Mello, Member
Cecilia Sosa-Patterson
Noreen Burke, Director
Rita VanSteensburg, Administrative Assistant

Dr. Osler called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Accept Minutes – January 20, 2005:

Upon review of the January 20, 2005 board minutes Ms. Mello made a motion to accept minutes as presented and Dr. Osler seconded the motion. Motion passed two to zero - one abstention.

Massage Regulation Amendment & Set Hearing Date:

Current regulation Section 600.00 (2) requires a statement in writing from a licensed physician in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that he or she has examined the applicant within the past thirty (30) day period preceding the application and believes the applicant to be free from all communicable diseases transmissible by the practice of massage or the close physical contact ordinarily associated with massage. This regulation does not include apprentice students. A public hearing will be scheduled for May 5, 2005 to receive public comments concerning the proposed amendments to regulations. The new amendment calls for all **students** and institutions licensed to teach massage therapy to provide a statement in writing from a licensed physician that he or she has been examined within the last thirty days prior to the student conducting any hands on massage therapy and believes the student to be free of all communicable diseases transmissible by the practice of massage. Ms. Burke noted that a letter has been sent out to owners of the two establishments relative to students being required to have physical exams.

Cimex Update:

Ms. Burke reported that the Cimex work group has been meeting every two weeks and that a “Letter of Alert” to medical providers has been drafted along with a brochure informing landlords and tenants as to steps to help with Cimex eradication. Also noted was that a letter will be distributed to community based agencies and health centers to raise awareness that bed bugs are an emerging issue in Somerville and to refer concerned citizens to the Health Department.

Budget Submission – Somerstat:

The mission of Somerstat was explained by Ms. Burke detailing it as an activity based budget program that measures outputs, and measures the work that municipalities do. It is an accountability tool that determines exactly how much time and money is spent on tasks performed in each domain of every department. This will help establish specific goals and outcomes for policy development for the Health Department. It forces us to be really specific and focused on the work that is being done. An example of a goal for the Health Dept. would be to review and make recommendations about rodent control detailing specific objectives associated with it.

Ms. Sosa-Patterson shared information relative to Local Boards of Health training she attended that creates a specific account for Boards of Health that would bring a percentage of monies directly back to the Department. Ms. Sosa-Patterson agreed to forward the package from Local Boards of Health training to Ms. Burke so that she can investigate this, and bring it back to the Board at a later date. Ms. Burke also stated that City's Auditing Department would also be involved as appropriate in such discussions.

Departmental Strategic Plan:

Ms. Burke presented a draft of a three-year strategic plan for the Health Department, and the narrative with departmental strategic goals that accompanied the budget during the submission process. Ms. Burke listed the critical issues – Board of Health, Administration, Health and Human services, School Nursing and a number of emerging Public Health issues.

The emerging Public Health issues will continue to be Cimex and rodent control, substance abuse, mental health including suicide, obesity, oral health and environmental health. Other critical issues for the department are emergency preparedness and public health nursing.

She noted that Dr. Osler is transitioning out as Chairman of the Board of Health and listed strategies to replace him. She would also like to review with Ms. Sosa-Patterson and Ms. Melo where they are with continuing on the Board. Also in the plan is the exploration of a charter change to increase the membership of the board to five members.

Dr. Osler stated that the inclusion of representation of persons of minority and ethnic groups should not fall off the agenda and should be included in the strategic plan.

Ms. Burke noted that the move to the Powderhouse School will take place next year and at that time we will be losing Donna Pickett who works out of the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning. We will need to look at the structure of the office and address the loss of a clerical person. Denise Holland who is quasi grants and administrative does not work five days a week. Therefore, we will be in need of more administrative support when the move happens. She also stated that she is responsible for giving commentary as to how the new working relationship between the Board of Health and the Health Inspectors who now work out of ISD is functioning. She is requesting a clear memorandum of understanding between the Board of Health and the inspectors. She raises concerns around reporting and the fact that the Board of Health is the regulatory authority. Ms. Burke is networking with other communities to find out how they function with the exclusion of inspectors under the direct supervision of the Health Department. She also stated that all inspections along with other departmental tasks are tracked in the monthly report to the Joint Public Health Board.

Ms Sosa-Patterson suggested that the memorandum of understanding be part of the strategic plan and also include any changes the Board may institute. She also mentioned her concern for the Human Services component of the Health Department. She would like to look at systems in place to help people in crisis and strategize about how to increase resources for human services programs.

Dr. Osler's suggested the following for the long-term agenda, Statewide advocacy - where do you see Public Health beyond the city? And human resource issues including (a) diversity within the staff and (b) job satisfaction surveys (Noreen noted that Somerstat had recently distributed a survey, which we can use). Dr. Osler also advised that under finances an achievable goal is that we come in within budget.

Human Services: Broad goal of protecting and supporting family and individual health by sustaining public health nursing.

Grants: Ms. Burke mentioned the completion of a five-year grant for Somerville Cares About Prevention. A Tobacco Control grant is forthcoming and Cesar Pungirum will be the lead writer with support from Noreen.

Database for communicable diseases: With the help of the Cambridge Public Health Dept. we just instituted a database for communicable diseases. She also noted that the Institute for Community Health has been a great help to the Public Health Nurse. All communicable disease information will be on computer.

Unfinished Business:

Miss Burke noted that Christine Henebury was appointed School Nurse Leader and that she is a real asset to the Somerville School Nursing Program.

Noreen mentioned that we have hired an Emergency Preparedness consultant, Bryan Murphy-Eustis, to work on the Massachusetts Local Boards of Health Emergency Operations Plan for the Somerville Health Department.

Ms. Sosa-Patterson asked about minority hires. Ms. Burke mentioned that one of our latest hires to the School Nursing Program is a person of color.

Tobacco Suspension:

A memo was presented to the Board written by Cesar Pungirum stating that Central Variety (whose tobacco permit was suspended for a month last board meeting) sold tobacco on 4/5/05, while still under suspension. In the memo he states that the situation is unprecedented and that another \$200.00 fine will be issued under the suspension. He noted that the regulation defines no further steps for the violation but that the Board may review the situation and require the owner to come before them.

Some of the questions raised were do we need to redraft regulations and has anyone in the State had to deal with this issue? It was decided to seek advice from the Tobacco Control Director and the City Solicitor. Ms. Burke will report back to the Board at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20p.m.

The next meeting will take place on May 5, 2005 @ 5:00 p.m. at the Somerville Health Department, Conference Room located at 50 Evergreen Avenue, Somerville, MA
Respectfully submitted,

Rita VanSteensburg
Administrative Assistant