

Skokie Board of Health
October 9, 2014

Present

Ms. Langguth
Mr. Nidetz
Mr. Pandya
Dr. Prince

Dr. Sood
Ms. Jones Thorne
Ms. Urbanus
Dr. Williams

Excused

Mr. Abbasi
Dr. Drachler
Dr. Luka
Ms. Varma
Dr. Polin

Absent

Ms. Nikitsch Dugan
Dr. Gaynes
Dr. Topouzian
Dr. Usman

Guests

Maria Alamo, Talking Farm
Tara Lamkin, Talking Farm
Dr. Edward McCarron, Commission on Family Services
Trista Gunderman, UIC
Lynn Tucker, UIC

Dr. Counard, Director of Health
David Clough, Staff

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m. by Dr. Williams, Acting Chairman.

Approval of Minutes –The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Dr. Williams informed the Board that e-mail updates on public health issues were available from the Department of Health and Human Services at www.hhs.gov. The updates include excellent information on late breaking issues such as the Affordable Care Act and Ebola. Dr. McCarron pointed out that at any time someone new could arrive in our community bringing one of these problems.

Dr. Counard announced that there are three openings on the Board of Health. Dr. Veis moved to Evanston, Dr. Herwitz took a new job on the East Coast and Dr. Plotkin retired. She encouraged Board of Health members to notify any colleagues who might be interested in serving on the Board.

Directors Monthly Report highlights – a copy is attached

- Community Flu Shot Clinics
The Department vaccinated 2,543 people during the annual community flu shot clinics.
- Drinking Water Lead and Copper Testing
Under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets safe levels for lead and copper in residential drinking water. Every three years Skokie is required to sample tap water at 30 residential properties. The samples, collected between June 1 and September 30, were well within safe levels.
- Continuing Education Units Approved for Medical Reserve Corps
We were notified that the Medical Reserve Corps training was approved for Continuing Education Units by the Wisconsin Nurse's Association. Kudos to Nurse Claudia Braden for achieving this goal!

- CDC/Chicago Dept of Public Health Ebola Presentation

Dr. Counard reported on the lack of economic resources and infrastructure in the affected Western African countries that has led to the inability to contain the Ebola outbreak. Protective equipment is prohibitively expensive with a protective suit costing \$2,000 for a single use. The affected areas lack roads, hospitals, and ambulances making them unable to isolate and contain infected individuals. The situation is very dire, with persons passing away on the street. The United States and other countries will be at risk of more cases until the outbreak is brought under control.

Mr. Nidetz pointed out that our own Department of Defense is leading the way in setting up field hospitals to contain the situation.

Maria Alamo, The Talking Farm

Ms. Alamo presented on the Talking Farm and how it aligns with the goals of the Skokie Community Health Plan. She was born in Madrid to Puerto Rican parents while her father was a medical student. She studied in Puerto Rico and then went to Tulane University in New Orleans where she got her Master's in Public Health. She has worked in clinical dietetics in hospitals and for Kraft foods on labeling. Her current interest is in food as medicine for the prevention of illness rather than treatment.

Facts regarding urban farming:

- 80% of American's live in urban areas as of 2010.
- Urban growth rate outpaces general growth rate by 2%
- Only between 3 and 5 percent of food consumed in Illinois is grown here.
- The primary crops in Illinois are corn and soy beans.

The Talking Farm wishes to support socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable food systems that promote health of individuals, communities, and the natural environment. One goal is to encourage the effective use of leftovers rather than allowing them to spoil or throwing them away. The CEO of Trader Joe's is planning to take food near it's sell by date and sell it in low income areas at a lower price. Dr. Williams noted that many cultures have specific recipes for leftovers and recommended the Talking Farm create leftover recipes to make available for the public.

Current rates of food related illness in the American population:

- Cardiovascular Disease, 41%.
- Hypertension, 34%
- Diabetes, 11%
- Impaired Glucose Tolerance, 35%

Ms. Alamo pointed out that impaired glucose tolerance is increasing due to high sugar intake, especially in youth with sweetened beverages. In 2009 63% of U.S. food consumed was processed and plant foods only accounted for 12% of the diet. The Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity estimates 31% of Illinois children are obese, a dramatic increase since 1990. However, lifestyle interventions can result in an 8 to 10% weight loss in six months.

In youth a low fruit and veggie intake is associated with resistance to trying new foods. Food patterns established in early childhood have been shown to track into adulthood. Increasing children's vegetable intake should be a priority for public health.

The Talking Farm's mission aligns with the Skokie Community Health Plan priorities of preventing obesity and protecting the environment. Heart disease and healthy eating were priorities for all age

groups surveyed for the Health Plan. Urban Farms build community, increase healthy eating habits, and educate people about where their food comes from. Additionally, they provide respite from the urban environment. Currently all food grown at the Talking Farm is sold to a wholesaler who supplies the Farmhouse, Peckish Pig, and Village Inn Pizzeria. They currently host educational programs with the Tots Learning Center, Evanston Township High School, and the Eagle Scouts and are hoping to build additional educational partnerships.

Ms. Alamo then showed pictures from the Talking Farm and passed out vegetables that were picked from their gardens earlier in the evening. Board of Health members sampled and enjoyed the food.

Mr. Pandya asked if people can grow their own foods at the garden. Ms. Alamo replied that currently all of the food grown there is distributed through the wholesaler. Ms. Lamkin reports that the demonstration garden is meant to teach people how to start their own gardens at home.

Mr. Nidetz suggested that some food be donated to the Niles Township Food Pantry. Ms. Lamkin reported that much of their food grown in the last two seasons had been donated to the Niles Food Pantry.

Ms. Lamkin pointed out that the farm is on the only piece of land in Skokie that has never been developed. For this reason, the soil tests revealed no contaminants. Dr. Prince asked if it was possible to test one's own backyard for soil quality. Ms. Lamkin reported that they were working with Emily Oaks Nature Center to develop soil testing classes.

Dr. Williams suggested that the next Board of Health Dinner be held at the Talking Farm and everyone agreed it was a great idea.

Community Health Plan

Dr. Counard reported that we have been authorized to work on language to include e-cigarettes in Skokie's Smoking in Public Places Ordinance. We are also going to be showing anti-tobacco ads at Regal Cinemas at Old Orchard and AMC Showplace at Village Crossing. The ads are CDC Tips from Former Smokers ads with a tagline for the Skokie Health Department and the Illinois Tobacco Quit Line at the end. Mr. Clough showed both ads to the Board of Health.

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

REMINDER: THE NOVEMBER 13TH MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE LIBRARY!!!