

## HEALTH BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE (BRC) MEETING MINUTES 23MARCH2021

**Voting members present:** Kathie Lynch (Chair), Ann Birner (Minutes), Kim McNamara, Richard DiPentima, James Petersen

**Non-voting city staff present:** Stephanie Seacord, Kristin Shaw, Toni McLellan

**Action items below identify name of responsible party in bold font.**

Kathie read the approved waiver for remote meeting participation during the pandemic and participants identified location and any others present at that location. A motion to approve the minutes of March 17th was made Ann and seconded by James. The minutes were approved without comment or discussion.

The dashboard was reviewed by **Kathie**, who will present it at the next Reopen BRC meeting. Cases are up, positivity is up, hospitalizations are somewhat stable. Rockingham and Strafford Counties are of particular concern. Most deaths are still in the 60 year and older age group but community transmission now accounts for 80% of deaths and Long Term Care Facilities just 20% -- which is a reversal of prior trends. On a positive note, the vaccination program continues to progress and may be the reason for that shift. However, the plateau in cases and rising positivity may be the result of loosening restrictions. Easing restrictions would ideally and more safely take place when cases are declining. Possible factors in the current disappointing situation may include vaccine apprehension, variant spread (38 cases of the B.1.1.7 variant have been identified in NH to date), travel including but not limited to spring breaks, and increasing pedestrian traffic during spring weather.

The Post Covid FAQs content was revised by Kathie and with a few typos to be corrected, the update is approved for posting. The Daily Life FAQs content was revised by Ann and her updated sections are approved for posting. Prior to posting Daily Life, **Stephanie** will cross-check the testing section to the Testing FAQs. In addition, **Kathie** will review the Vaccine FAQs and revise as needed. A recommendation that individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 infection are eligible for vaccination as soon as 10 days later rather than 90 days as previously recommended will be added upon confirmation. Vaccine and Testing FAQs revisions will then be incorporated into Daily Life by **Ann** as needed.

Kathie has drafted a "Kids and Covid" FAQs but not all have reviewed. Kathie noted that a huge amount of information is available and questioned the need to include much detail vs relying on a link or links. Consensus was for a relatively brief and simple FAQs cross-referenced to information sources such as the CDC and the Daily Life FAQs. **All members** should review content of this new FAQs and make suggestions, including any additional questions to be addressed, prior to the next meeting. Public Health colleagues are asked to include common questions they may have had from the public on this topic.

Kim reported on Health Department activities including network vaccine outreach efforts spanning 23 towns.

The Arts and Nonprofits BRC is circulating a survey on attitudes toward reopening. Results will be of interest to Health BRC. The survey can be found on the City website.

Stephanie reported that as of last Tuesday over 68% of residents in public housing in Portsmouth received at least one dose of COVID vaccine and all of these individuals are scheduled for a second dose as appropriate.

James described a video of airflow modeling published by the Washington Post, relevant to semi-enclosed structures that may be used for outdoor dining. All agreed it would be a fitting addition to the Ventilation FAQs. **James** will send to the group, **Stephanie** will incorporate a link into the FAQs and accompanying language will be determined. A distinction should be made based on use by those who have/ have not been vaccinated.

There were no public comments. Kim made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by James, all agreed.