

STATE HEALTH COUNCIL

December 16, 2020

A special meeting of the State Health Council was called to order by Chairman Duane Pool at 8:30 AM on Wednesday, December 16, 2020 via videoconference.

Members present

Duane Pool, Bismarck, Chairman
Dennis Wolf, Dickinson, Vice Chairman
Darrold Bertsch, Secretary
Jim Brosseau, Grand Forks
Genny Dienstmann, Bismarck
Tyler Lannoye, Churchs Ferry
Kristin Roers, Fargo

Members absent:

Mike Fedorchak, Bismarck
Torey Sayler, Bismarck

Staff members present:

Dirk Wilke, Interim State Health Officer
Brenda Weiss, Chief Financial Officer
Nicole Brunelle, Research & Response Section
Bobbie Will, Primary Care Office
Krista Fremming, Department of Human Services
Holly Johnson, Department of Human Services
Bridget Weidner, Health Facilities
Kathy Laxdal, Health Facilities

Receiving Requested Information on the Behavioral Health Analyst Discipline and North Dakota Telehealth Data

Bobbie Will, Director, and Holly Johnson, BCBA, LBA, presented Attachment A to detail the geographical locations of each BCBA compared to HPSA's throughout the state as well as where the primary area of professional emphasis is for a BCBA from a national guideline's perspective.

Kristin Roers questioned where the state is in the demand for additional BCBA's. Holly Johnson reported that it takes 2-3 years to recruit a new BCBA. Adding them to the Loan Repayment Program would be an additional tool to assist with recruitment.

KRISTIN ROERS MOVED TO ADD A BEHAVIORAL ANALYST TO THE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.
SECOND BY DARROLD BERTSCH AND CARRIED.

Kristin Roers will sponsor the bill for the legislative session.

Telehealth Taskforce has decided not to move forward with the change to the Century Code at this time due to timing, budget and existing application priorities.

COVID-19 Response Update

Dirk Wilke reported: 1.) Extended the State Health Officer order regarding face coverings to be worn in indoor businesses, all indoor public settings as well as all outdoor public setting where social distancing is not possible to January 18th, 2020 to ensure we have at least one incubation cycle past the holidays. In addition, Governor Bergum extended his Executive Order until January 8th, 2020 limiting capacity for bars, restaurants and event venues. The four week pause on high school winter sports and competitions was allowed to expire on December 14, 2020. 2.) Vaccinations have been received by the state. Pfizer Vaccine was approved over the weekend. Allocation starting with referral hospitals, for direct patient care with COVID patients such as Critical Care, Emergency Room providers and primary care nursing. Moderna vaccine is up for review starting 12/17/2020. Expecting approval from the FDA. Expect to cover health care workers and long-term care staff with the first wave of vaccinations, moving on to the next group after January. 3.) Working on pilot projects for programs to utilize rapid test tests. Significant testing is still taking place.

Possible Legislation for the 2021 Session

There is nothing at this time.

Long Term Care Issues

Kristin Roers has been asked questions on the status of the investigative process in Long Term Care with allegations of abuse and neglect. Bridget Weidner and Kathy Laxdal reported that they are following CMS guidance. They have done 180 infection control surveys since April. Their office is taking complaints that center around visitation issues. Abuse and neglect complaints go through a triage process of severity and are addressed accordingly.

Duane Pool questions the mechanism on how families are coming forward with complaints. At this time there are no limits to the mechanism that the citizen has to come forward. Phone, email, mail etc.

Kristin Roers challenges the Health Facilities area to think creatively on how contact information is shared with families. Look at the processes on this fiscal year from past years on volume of investigations.

Duane Pool suggested creating a Sub Committee to assist in looking at the process on how families are able to communicate with the Health Department. Public perception of the process needs to be raised to alleviate their fears that concerns, and complaints are being addressed.

Volunteers for this:

Darrold Bertsch
Kristin Roers
Jim Brosseau

These members will work with Bridget Weidner to coordinate this. Bridget would like to start on an informational basis sharing the federal guidance with them.

Letter of Support

Duane Pool asked if council members wanted to issue a letter of support to for the State Health Departments budget request to the legislature.

Dirk Wilke and Brenda Weiss stated that support is always welcome.

Duane Pool questioned if the council should complete one letter or each person individually be responsible for their own. After discussion it was decided to be individually responsible for their own.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM