

**Marathon County Board of Health Minutes**

**Meeting Date/Time:** Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 7: 45 AM  
**Meeting Location:** Marathon County Courthouse  
Assembly Room  
500 Forest Street  
Wausau, WI 54403

Present - In Person: Tara Draeger, John Robinson, Mike Walters (Aspirus)

Present - Via WebEx: Dean Danner, Corrie Norrbom, Kue Her, Craig McEwen, Tiffany Rodriguez-Lee, Helen Luce

MCHD Staff: Jessa Bokhoven (Online), Eileen Eckardt, Dale Grosskurth, Rachel Klemp-North (Online), Becky Mroczenski (Online), Amanda Ostrowski, Aaron Ruff (Online), Jon Schmunk, Jenna Flynn (Online), Laura Scudiere, Kim Wieloch, Kang Chu Yang.

Others via WebEx: Keshani Bhushan (Marshfield Clinic), Chris Dickinson, Sarah Dowidat, Jean Maszk, Ryan Neville (Marshfield Clinic), Danielle Scoukley Laurie Solomon, Kim Trueblood, Becky Turpin

**Committee Members:** John Robinson, Chair; Craig McEwen, Vice-Chair; Kue Her, Secretary; Sandi Cihlar; Dean Danner; Tara Draeger; Tiffany Lee; Helen Luce; Corrie Norrbom

**1. Call to Order**  
**John Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:46 AM.**

**2. Public Comment Period (Limit to 15 Minutes)**  
The following members of the public provided comments. Comments voiced concerns regarding safety and efficacy of vaccination, vaccination mandates, masking mandates, health system practices, among other items.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Residence</b>
Steve Frazier	Schofield, Wisconsin
Tanya Riehle	Wausau, Wisconsin
Tim Sondelski	Mosinee, Wisconsin
Stacy Morache	Wausau, Wisconsin
Mark Groffin	Wausau, Wisconsin
Robin Baker	Wausau, Wisconsin
Joshua Wells	Wausau, Wisconsin
Michael Bautsch	Wausau, Wisconsin
Sandy Bautsch	Wausau, Wisconsin

Comments were limited to three minutes at the direction of the Chair and limited to the first 15 minutes. Additional time was allotted at the end of the meeting agenda for public comment.

3. **Approval of the Minutes**
  - A. **January 11, 2021, Board of Health Meeting**

**Motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2022, Board of Health meeting made by Craig McEwen. Second by Tiffany Rodriguez-Lee. Motion approved.**

4. **Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance, or Resolution**
  - A. None

5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action**

- A. Overview of changes to state licensing program contract from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

A working copy of the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection state licensing program contract was provided in the board packet. Dale Grosskurth, Environmental Health and Safety Director pointed out modifications on pages 4,5,6,10, and 11. The proposed changes are consistent with DATCP licensing programs. Licenses can also be transferred to an immediate family member. John Robinson, Chair, reiterated to the board that the modifications were made to stay consistent with state changes.

**Motion to approve changes to state licensing program contract from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection made by Tara Draeger. Second by Kue Her. Motion approved.**

6. **Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**

- A. Robinson formally welcomed Helen Luce, DO as a new Board of Health member. Helen Luce, DO was newly appointed by the Marathon County Board in January 2022. Dr. Luce gave her introduction and thanked the Board.

- B. Aspirus Wausau Health System COVID Overview

The Board welcomed Mike Walters, MD, Vice President and Senior System Physician, Executive of Specialty Care for Aspirus Health. Dr. Walters thanked the board and shared that the latest peak caused a rapid spike in hospitalizations within their system. Dr. Walters stated that as an emergency physician, the downstream affects have caused bed shortages and, as a result, has had impacts on outpatient and inpatient service availability. They have had to refer patients to external systems as far as Missouri and Duluth. Dr. Walters also mentioned that in the state of Wisconsin, 95% of ICU units are being utilized and are at capacity. This was the highest usage out of the 2 years of COVID. There were greater demands and volumes in outpatient care and lab testing. Their workforce has also been impacted. About 500 employees are out ill with influenza-like illness system-wide; about 1/3 have tested positive for COVID. For those in ICU, most are unvaccinated. Vaccinated individuals have less severe illness and generally do not require hospitalization. Aspirus continues their efforts in developing ways to bring back good practices, prevention methods, and retain their employees. As the COVID spike rose, Aspirus had to stop surgeries, but Aspirus has resumed this practice now.

### C. Marshfield Clinic Health System COVID Overview

The board welcomed Ryan Neville, Chief Administrative Officer of Marshfield Clinic Health System and Keshani Bhushan, MD MPH FACP, Vice President of Medical Affairs, Medical Director of Marshfield Clinic Health System. Neville indicated that Marshfield Clinic is experiencing similar health system impacts as Aspirus. COVID has caused Marshfield and other health systems to add COVID workload on existing systems, putting pressure on all systems. Each COVID spike affected their workforce psychologically and have caused talented individuals to leave employment. In response, Marshfield has a dedicated psychologist to support and alleviate the mental health of their workforce. Bhushan stressed that COVID has caused 900,000 more deaths than the Spanish flu. Low vaccine rates, masking, and social distancing continues to contribute to global ramifications. Dr. Bhushan shared that Marshfield is focusing on rebuilding.

Board members asked for insights to the following questions: 1) How will health systems move from a pandemic, back to previous health system practice patterns? 2) Why is data on vaccine deaths and side effects of COVID vaccines and treatments not shared with the public? 3) How are health systems making sure all data is accurate? 4) What steps are being taken to flatten the curve?

Dr. Bhushan responded that internally, Marshfield Clinic is working to better communicate data on vaccines. She also notes that health systems do not do anything without the consent of the individual. Dr. Walters pointed out that millions of vaccines have been administered. Dr. Walters indicated that during any spike or transmissible disease event, their systems are continuously responding to keep their patients and staff safe. Some steps taken include regulating air pressure, air circulation, patients having less contact with others, cohorting patient wards, providing PPE to staff, infection protection practices, and vaccination. Neville notes that Marshfield is taking similar actions to Aspirus. Neville also indicated that there has been continued dialog of how to build and restore the trust of the community. Discussion on VAERS data and accuracy of data occurred. Last month's CDC death rates for unvaccinated individuals was also shared; unvaccinated individuals are 68% more likely to die from COVID than the vaccinated. The Board thanked Aspirus and Marshfield Clinic for informing and sharing their health system experiences.

### D. Marathon County Health Department COVID Status Review

Health Officer Laura Scudiere shared that the data in the packet reflected the status of COVID one week prior, when the board packet was posted. Since the last board meeting, COVID numbers have decreased. Currently, Marathon County has a total of 108 cases, but the county case activity is still considered "critically high" according to DHS. B.A2 Omicron is a new variant, and its impacts are still unknown. The UW continues to provide rapid testing. Marathon County's current vaccine rate is 58% for individuals who have received at least 1 dose of the vaccine. The NTC vaccination site is also still being supported.

Question was asked regarding the spike in COVID cases and what the health department is doing to stop the spread. Concerns regarding masking and its ability to stop the spread of COVID were also mentioned. Scudiere stated that scientific studies regarding the efficacy of

masking are available for review and that there's scientific support for the safety and efficacy of vaccines and the impacts of masking.

E. Update on Community Health Improvement Plan Process

Amanda Ostrowski, Community Health Improvement Director gave an update addressing the key health priorities for 2022: substance use and mental health. Ostrowski reviewed the chosen framework of Results-Based Accountability (RBA). This framework will help connect outcomes and accountability for stakeholders and residents of Marathon County. Ostrowski also shared that the "Turn the Curve" process will take place between April and May of 2022. Implementation will begin in June 2022 and wrap up in September 2024. A list of partners contracted and invited to be a part of the mission will be provided in the next board packet. Score cards and updates will be provided to the Board as the process continues.

F. Report from the Health & Human Services Committee meeting on policy issues impacting public health

John Robinson shared that the HHS reviewed ADRC, the KATS program, and NCHC's multi-county contract information.

**7. Announcements**

A. None

**8. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location, Future Agenda Items:**

A. Confirm March 8, 2022 meeting date and determine agenda topics

**9. Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn made by Craig McEwen; second by Tara Draeger. Motion approved.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 9:24 AM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Kue Her, Secretary**

**Kang Chu Yang, Recorder**