

Sudbury Board of Health Virtual Meeting

September 28, 2021

Attendees: Carol Bradford-BoH Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton-BoH Member, Susan Sama-BoH Member, Bill Murphy-Health Director, Patty Moran-PH Nurse, Robert Lazo-Health Inspector, Beth Porter-Health Admin. Janie Dretler-Select Board, Jen Roberts-Select Board, Kay Bell-Disabilities Comm. Lillian Eden-MW Daily News, Stephanie Lombardi-Resident, Nikki Bettenhauser-Resident, Kevin Bettenhauser-Resident, Theresa Mahoney-Resident, Christie Bigelow-Resident

Meeting Commenced at 4:00 PM

Public Comment: None

Patty Moran: Public Health Nurse Update:

Preschools/Daycares: The mask mandate has generated concerns on both sides of the issue. Some parents are considering pulling their children out of school. A large percentage of parents and children are complying with the mandate with no complaints. Colds are starting to surface in the schools. Stephanie Lombardi feels that masks have a negative impact on daycare and preschool aged children and that the negatives outweigh the benefits. She claims that a percentage of parents at her preschool are pulling their children out and hiring in home daycare. Christie Bigelow asked if there was data on the number of hospitalizations of this age group. Ms. Bigelow's concerns primarily addressed the social and emotional development of these children, where facial expression play a big role in this area of growth. Patty's input from the majority of staff at the Sudbury preschools and daycares has been positive to the mask mandate. There were a few staffers who were adamantly against the mask mandate.

COVID: There were 69 positive cases in September. Middlesex County incidence rates are rising from 15.9 to 16.9. Sudbury's incidence rates are trending down from 13.6 to 11.1. Most of the school cases are identified through pool testing or symptomatic kids. Parents will test positive but are asymptomatic. Ages 6 – 9 make up the majority of positives. Linda Huet-Clayton asked if the preschools and daycares are reporting positives or seeing clusters? Patty said there are positives but because of the way that DESE and EEC guidelines are worded, many children would not be considered close contacts avoiding a cluster classification.

Home Testing: The prescription test, Binax is administered by the user and then sent out to a lab for testing. The results are reported to the state and CDC. The home tests do not require a prescription nor are the results reported to the state or CDC. Because these tests are administered at home and the results are immediate (no lab) residents are not reporting positives and not isolating or quarantining.

Pool Testing: The SPS schools began Pool testing September 23rd. Over 90% of families are participating in the testing. The "Test and Stay" program may contribute to the willingness to take part in testing.

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Mask Mandate:

Instated on September 1, 2021. Numbers are trending down in Sudbury but Middlesex County is still considered “High Risk” for community transmission by the CDC. The Board reiterated utilizing the CDC risk level for Middlesex County as their only metric. Two consecutive weeks at “low” risk would change the mandate to an advisory. Because we are still “High Risk” the board did not allow children aged 2 to 5 to be exempt from the mandate. Ken Bettenhauser argued that the mask mandate does not make sense because surrounding communities do not have the mandates and you wear a mask to walk thru a restaurant but not while seated. Susan Sama replied that the goal of the Board is to keep the schools and businesses open and functioning. The mandate is one component of mitigating risk in the community. There are many variables that contribute to transmission and trends of COVID infections.

VOTE: Linda Huet-Clayton motioned to sustain the Mask Mandate as is, based on evaluation of CDC metrics/data of the last 2 weeks. Susan Sama Seconded the motion. Motion Passed 3-0-0.

Mosquito Control: No human or mammal cases of EEE this year. The mosquito population is trending down. Flood water species numbers were up due to wet weather but they typically do not carry EEE. We are currently in the last year of a 3 year cycle for EEE. The first frost eliminates mosquito concerns.

VOTE: Susan Sama motioned to publish BoH Meeting minutes from August 24th and September 14th as edited. Linda Huet-Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Meeting adjourned 4:56 PM