

**Minutes of the  
Chicago Board of Health  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024  
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  
Damen Building  
1340 S. Damen Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Training Room (4024)**

**I. Roll Call**

Quorum was established based upon the following:

**Present In-Person:** Joel Johnson, MEd  
Óscar Iván Zambrano, MPH, MBA, CDM  
Debra Wesley, MSW  
Horace E. Smith, MD  
Carmen Vergara, MPH, RN-BSN  
Steven Rothschild, MD

**Absent:** Janet Lin, MD, MPH, MBA  
Rosa Martínez Colón, MS

**For the Department:** Fikirte Wagaw, First Deputy Commissioner  
Chicago Department of Public Health

**II. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:13 am by Steven Rothschild, M.D. Acting president.

**III. Approval of the Minutes**

The Board voted and approved the January minutes with an amendment reflecting Horace Smith's absence.

**IV. Commissioner's Update**

First Deputy Commissioner Fikirte Wagaw provided the following department wide COVID and non-COVID updates:

- **Big Cities Health Coalition Event in Washington, D.C.**
  - Commissioner Ige is in Washington, D.C., in partnership with the Big Cities Health Coalition, a group of public health commissioners in larger cities nationwide. Commissioner Ige is meeting CDC leaders to discuss sustainable, flexible funding for public health, workforce, and infrastructure support, health equity, and racial justice.
- **CDPH Funding Cliff**
  - An update provided on CDPH Funding Cliff is expected to smooth out the predicted drop. CDPH continues to work with the Office of Budget Management to determine the needs of public health workers. The department continues to advocate for federal funding for public health work.
- **New Arrivals**
  - CDPH Incident Commander Dr. Funk provided updates on the department's involvement and efforts in responding to the new

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arrivals. Current Bureaus are leveraged to support the new arrivals population through existing CDPH programming:

- Infection Control
- Vaccination
- Tuberculosis
- Food Protection
- Promotores
- Healthcare Coordination
- Medical Reserve Core
- Hospital Preparedness
- Behavioral Health
- Maternal, Infant, and Child Health
- Public Information Office
- Data Management

**Board Member Comments and Questions:**

**Funding Cliff**

- Question on how the City Council’s recent budget proposal factored into CDPH’s funding cliff, and the percentage funded by the State.
- Question regarding budgeting constraints for essential services and how to bridge gaps.
- Question on what the Board can do to advocate for additional CDPH funding.
- Question regarding the Board’s scope as it relates to legislator advocacy.
- Question on convening resources from the private sector to cover gaps in public health funding.
- Comment on continuing the private sector funding conversation in CDPH’s funding component.
- Comment on an educational component to level-set new policymakers on the importance of public health work.

**New Arrivals**

- Question regarding Medicaid access for New Arrivals.
- Question on connections to medical services beyond the initial touchpoint for New Arrivals and how to leverage volunteer organizations and their services.
- Question about the number of New Arrivals who received a medical touchpoint and healthcare services.
- Question regarding current strategies for available resources offered to New Arrivals for local Chicagoans.

**V. Board President’s Comments:**

Reiteration of the board’s role, which is to serve as an advisory board to the mayor on public health related issues.

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**VI. Presentations:**

Democratic National Convention  
Christopher Shields, Assistant Commissioner  
Bureau of Health Protection, Chicago Department of Public Health

**Board Member Comments and Questions:**

- Comment highlighting the great example of interdepartmental coordination.
- Question regarding funding for the DNC initiatives.

**VII. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**VIII. Standing Business**

There was no standing business.

**IX. New Business**

- **Policy Update**
  - Human Service Labor Agreement.
- **Finance Update**
  - Monitoring amendment to public health funding.
- Motion for advocacy in education to support scientific-based policy and the process to propose board recommendations to the Mayor's Office regarding public health recommendations.

**X. Old Business**

There was no old business.

**XI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 am by Dr. Steven Rothschild.