

Chicago Board of Health  
May 19, 2021  
Virtual Meeting  
By Remote Means

Pursuant to applicable law, the President determined that an in-person meeting was not practical or prudent. Accordingly, attendance at this meeting was via remote means only.

**Roll Call**

Board Members Present

Carolyn C. Lopez, MD, President  
Matthew Davis, MD, MPP  
Joel Johnson, MEd  
Janet Lin, MPH, MBA  
Rosa E. Martinez Colon, MS  
Steven K. Rothschild, MD  
Horace E. Smith, MD  
Carmen Vergara, MPH, RN-BSN  
Debra Wesley, MSW

For the Department

Allison Arwady, MD, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:02 am by Board President, Dr. Carolyn Lopez.

**Overview of the Chicago Department of Public Health and the Board of Health:** Dr. Arwady welcomed new BOH members and provided an overview of the CDPH, including many program areas: communicable disease control, HIV/STI, public health emergencies, behavioral health, environment, chronic disease, and parents and children (maternal, infant, child and adolescent health-MICAH). Dr. Arwady shared that in September, 2020, CDPH, along with our many partners, released our community health improvement plan, [Healthy Chicago 2025](#). The primary goal of this plan is to reduce the 8.8-year racial life expectancy gap between Black and White Chicagoans.

Dr. Arwady shared information about the Board of Health (BOH), which was first formed in 1834, even prior to Chicago being incorporated as a city in 1837. In February 2021, the City ordinance for the BOH was updated to add standards related to diversity, public input and expertise to strengthen its advisory role to the Mayor and CDPH. The BOH meets the third Wednesday of each month and is required to adhere to the Open Meetings Act. As part of this, BOH members were reminded to not discuss Board business with more than one other person outside of Board meetings.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the April 2021 meeting were approved by the Board members who were Board members for this meeting.

**Commissioner's Update:** CDPH executive leadership introduced themselves to the BOH, providing a quick overview of the work of their bureau. Dr. Arwady provided a update on COVID cases (300/day, with 3.3% positivity), the work of Protect Chicago Plus to prioritize vaccine efforts in the 13 zip codes with the lowest vaccination rates and the "At Home" program for people over 65 years of age or anyone with a disability. Dr. Arwady announced the release of the Healthy Chicago Equity Zones (HCEZ) RRP,

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which will provide funding and set up a structure to strengthen the work of hyper-local community organizations. HCEZ organizes Chicago into six regions; the Regional Leads will work with community area leads to first promote vaccines adoption and then engage communities in working on social determinants which will reduce the Black-White life expectancy gap.

**Board Comments:** Dr. Lin inquired about youth involvement in City COVID efforts. Dr. Arwady shared that youth are involved through the Mayor's Youth Commission, which engages youth representing all areas of the city. These youth developed a youth-focused agenda for Chicago and have helped with messaging for youth and families related to COVID. In addition, Malcolm X College is offering a short online program (English, Spanish) for anyone who wants to become a Vaccine Ambassador.

Ms. Vergara asked how communities request at home services or wanting a vaccination station effort in their communities. Dr. Arwady shared that people can call 312-746-4835 to request vaccines at home, suggest locations and find local events.

Dr. Davis acknowledged the work to reach seniors in congregate settings and seniors staying mostly at home. To reach more active seniors, he suggested the City align efforts with the restaurant industry and retail organizations.

Dr. Smith expressed his concern about the violence in Chicago and requested a presentation on CDPH's efforts. Dr. Smith also requested a presentation about maternal mortality, especially for Black women.

Ms. Wesley shared her concerns for children during this past year in handling the trauma, anxiety and the grief, including possible loss of family members. Dr. Arwady indicated that CDPH's Behavioral Health efforts will be the presentation for the June BOH meeting and will share efforts related to children.

**Board President Comments:** Dr. Lopez reiterated that BOH members need to be cognizant of Open Meeting Act rules, including those relating to electronic communications. Given this, BOH members were reminded not to "reply all" on emails.

**Future Meetings:** Sheri Cohen shared that the June meeting will feature CDPH's Behavioral Health program. Members were asked to share the programs they want us to prioritize for meeting presentations.

**Public Comments:** No public comments were submitted.

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 10:21 AM.