

Carolyn Edmonds, *Board of Health Chair*

BOH Members:

Richard Conlin
Dow Constantine
George W. Counts
Jan Drago
Carolyn Edmonds
Ava Frisinger
Larry Gossett
David Hutchinson
David Irons
Kathy Lambert
Frank T. Manning
Bud Nicola
Margaret Pageler
Alonzo Plough

BOH Staff:

Maggie Moran

KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING PROCEEDINGS

September 20, 2002
King County Council Chamber

Roll call

- Margaret Pageler, Vice-Chair
- Richard Conlin
- Dow Constantine
- Jan Drago
- Ava Frisinger
- David Hutchinson
- David Irons
- Joseph Pizzorno
- Karen Van Dusen

Members absent: Carolyn Edmonds, Larry Gossett, Kathy Lambert, Kent Pullen, Alvin Thompson

Call to order

Vice Chair Margaret Pageler called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. The roll was called.

Announcement of Alternates

No alternates in attendance.

General Public Comments

There were no public comments. Approval of the minutes was deferred due to lack of quorum.

Chair's Report - Margaret Pageler, Vice-Chair

State Board of Health:

Vice Chair Pageler announced that Chair Edmonds attended her first meeting of the State Board of Health as the representative for the Washington Association of Counties. Vice Chair Pageler recapped the September 11th State Board of Health meeting agenda which included the following items of interest: a draft rule regarding emergency powers of County Health officers and a briefing on the Premera Blue Cross proposed conversion to for profit status.

Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) Western District Conference:

Vice Chair Pageler indicated that WSAC has identified long-term stable funding for public health as one of their priorities for the coming legislative session. A number of funding options was discussed including a liquor tax proposal supported by Speaker of the House Chopp.

Joint Meeting with State Board of Health:

Chair Edmonds and Linda Lake, Chair of the State Board of Health have identified the three agenda items for the December 10th joint meeting - The implications for public health re: human genomics; legislative policy development; and public policy development in addressing health behaviors.

Vice Chair's Announcement:

Vice Chair Pageler described her participation in the United Nations World Summit held in Johannesburg. She stated that the focus of the Summit was sustainable development. She stated that her presentation described a Puget Sound public-private partnership between Metro King County and the City of Seattle that was designed to address the public health and environmental effects of diesel emissions. Specifically the program she described focused on retrofitting diesel engines in advance of federal directives and regulations.

Director's Report - Alonzo Plough

Bioterrorism planning and preparedness response update: Dr. Plough made the following announcements:

- The Department was about to hire an emergency manager who would have overall responsibility for coordinating and leading the Department's planning and preparedness efforts. The position is funded through the BT grant.
- The Department has completed the assessment phase of their regional plan for bioterrorism capacity.
- The Department reconvened hospital and health plan CEOs on September 12th for an update on the development of the outbreak response plan, that would eventually define designated capacity for quarantine and treatment of individuals with highly infectious diseases that might be related to bioterrorism.
- Dr. Plough stated that work was underway to develop a smallpox response plan and a plan for rapid distribution of vaccines. He noted that State and Local public health officials were still awaiting final guidance from the federal government related to pre-vaccination.

West Nile Virus:

The Department held a press conference on West Nile virus in which they outlined current activities including: surveillance, public education, and assessment of mitigation strategies. Dr. Plough informed the Board that information on West Nile was now available on the Department web site and that a hotline had been established to field questions from the public.

Discussion: Board Member Irons urged the Department to incorporate the lessons learned from other jurisdictions across the country in their response to West Nile and to advocate for pre-planning in advance of West Nile's appearance in Washington State. Board Member Irons also stated his concerns about the potential effect on the rodent population if West Nile virus decimates the populations of birds of prey.

Dr. Plough responded that he had met with the County Executive, his colleagues from the Department of Natural Resources, and city agencies and officials to discuss and develop a plan.

Board Member Van Dusen commented that the issue of West Nile illustrated the ongoing problem of loss of infrastructure and core programs, such as vector control, due to loss of funding. She suggested that at some point in the future the Board might be interested in learning more about mosquito control districts.

Approval of August 23, 2002 Minutes

Vice Chair Pageler noted that a quorum had been achieved and called for approval of the minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes.

Discussion: Board Member Van Dusen noted a correction on page 7 of the minutes. Correction noted. Ms. Kathy Uhlorn noted a correction to page 3. Correction noted. Board Member Pizzorno noted a correction to page 9. Correction noted.

The minutes of August 23rd passed unanimously.

Director's Report - Alonzo Plough (continued)

Budget Overview:

Dr. Plough introduced Ms. Kathy Uhlorn, Chief Financial Officer. Ms. Uhlorn provided highlights of the 2003 Public Health budget. She stated that the Seattle Mayor's office and the Executive's office had not yet transmitted their budgets to their respective councils and therefore she would only provide preliminary information to the Board.

Ms. Uhlorn's presentation included the following highlights:

- Ms. Uhlorn provided information related to a previously asked question about adjusted CX and general fund figures due to inflation. She noted that when adjusted for inflation, the budget showed a 12.4% reduction in CX support from 1993 to 2002 in real dollars; or a 20.6% reduction of per capita support in CX from 1993 to 2002 in real dollars. For general fund she noted that they had experienced a 7.9% reduction from 1993 to 2002 in real dollars and a 12.9% reduction in per capita from 1993 to 2002 in real dollars.

Discussion: Vice Chair Pageler described the corresponding adjustments in MVET support during that same time period. She stated that given the availability of MVET funds it might have been considered good public policy to not adjust for inflation. However, she added now that those tax-supported funds were to be eliminated it put the state, county and cities in a precarious financial position.

Board Member Irons observed that while inflation appeared to account for some of the difference, there had also been growth in the budget. He also noted that the County and the City of Seattle to some degree had also reduced their contribution to the Department's budget. He added that with the pending loss of MVET they needed to be looking at either old funding sources or new funding sources to offset the losses.

- In 2000, after the passage of I-695, the State only funded Public Health for half a year. In 2001 the State decreased their annual support by about 1 million dollars. Those

changes in state funding contributed to a change in per capita dollars spent on public health.

- Additional information was provided to Board members related to other state funds [\$54,173,406,000] in the 2002 budget which could be at risk in the 2003 legislative session. Some of that money is related to Medicaid reimbursements that could be particularly vulnerable in light of the Medicaid waiver that would create a co-payment for the first time for this vulnerable population.
- Major budget challenges included: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), lower flex benefit change, FICA, and retirement changes. Overall, the identified challenges tallied up to \$4.7 million dollars.

Discussion: Board Members Van Dusen and Irons asked specific questions about selected line items in the budget worksheet to which Ms. Uhlorn responded.

- Ms. Uhlorn's final point was that King County requested that the Department's 2003 budget reflect full cost recovery for permit-based activities in order to reduce CX subsidization of said programs.

Environmental Health Fee Proposals:

Dr. Plough stated that the policy mandate from the County Executive posed a significant challenge. He stated that the Department's response was designed to adhere to the policy directive without compromising the scientific integrity and effectiveness of programs which were evidence based and in many cases linked to national and State standards.

Dr. Plough introduced Mr. Greg Kipp, Chief Administrative Officer. Mr. Kipp provided the following highlights to Board members relative to proposed environmental health fees.

- He identified the list of programs that needed fee adjustments and the corresponding rationale for those fee adjustments.
- He identified the specific types of permits within each of the four major program categories.
- He described the methodology for setting fees and provided a specific example to illustrate that methodology.
- He described the challenges the Department encountered in moving to a 100% cost recovery model.
- He announced the schedule the Department had mapped out to work with Board members and stakeholders leading up to Board action in November, and;
- He described the statutory authority the Board of Health has related to fee setting.

Discussion: Board Member Van Dusen inquired about the current percentage of fee recovery experienced by the Department. She also requested that at a future meeting the Department again describe the full scope of services that each permit fee covered so as to ascertain what public health functions if any need to be funded through other means.

Vice Chair Pageler inquired as to what if any would be the impact to taxpayers, for example, when the full costs were borne by the schools - another public entity. She wondered if in fact it would simply result in shifting the cost to a different budget and therefore there would be no real savings to the taxpayer.

Board Member Van Dusen inquired whether any consideration had been given to incorporate standard services such as education, investigation of food borne outbreaks and

administrative overhead into the permit fee and then bill for services above and beyond the core service provided.

Mr. Kipp responded that he did not believe that the Department was positioned to do detailed hourly billing. He stated that the methodology was designed to spread the costs of the overall program across the industry.

Board Member Pizzorno recalled that the justification for spreading the costs was so as not to present a financial barrier to receipt of educational services. Board Member Pizzorno inquired about the hourly rate incorporated in the fee methodology.

Mr. Kipp responded that the rate included all the costs associated with the Environmental Health division - salaries, benefits, rent, and central administrative support. Mr. Kipp pointed out that the hourly rate was pretty comparable to other County hourly rates.

Board Member Irons inquired as to whether any consideration had been given to combine the routine inspection visit and the field education visit thereby reducing the number of trips but not necessarily reducing the amount of time spent on the visit. He encouraged the Department to be creative in exploring different alternatives and their associated costs.

Board Member Conlin inquired about whether there was a fine associated with code violations and whether it would be advantageous to institute a monetary fine. Dr. Oleru, Environmental Health chief, responded that some violations resulted in restaurant closures.

Board Member Drago commented on Mr. Kipp's reference to the Seattle general fund budget gap of 90,000. She asked if the fee proposals were part of the proposed budget to which Dr. Plough responded in the affirmative.

Board Member Van Dusen asked to address Board Member Iron's remarks related to a combined visit. She stated that her experience and that of her environmental health colleagues was that a considerable amount of education transpired during an inspection. However, she said that historically the practice has been to separate the code enforcement from a true educational visit because of how the user perceives the difference. She reflected on her own experience as recipient of a code enforcement visit from the Department of Labor and Industry in her capacity as the University of Washington, Director of Environmental Health and Safety.

Board Member Irons responded that while he acknowledged Board Member Van Dusen's comments, he also recognized that the Board and the Department were in a position where they would have to reduce the level of services. He stated that he was simply open to learning about ways to provide services in light of the financial constraints.

Vice Chair Pageler stated that the general thrust of the Board's discussion suggested that the Department should bring forward service options for the Board's consideration.

Following the comments made by Mr. Kipp relative to the school inspection fees, Vice Chair Pageler asked for an explanation as to what those inspections entailed.

Mr. Kipp responded that the school inspections were general health and safety inspections detailed on the back of one of the inspection forms provided to Board members in August. Dr. Oleru added that schools are inspected once every three years. Schools are also inspected upon re-certification, for specific health concerns, and to respond to complaints.

Board Member Conlin compared the proposed fee increases methodology to that of a utility model. He added that one principle used in Seattle was the concept of "gradualism" wherein major changes in utility rates, are gradually increased over time so as not to disproportionately impact some people who are used to the old allocation model. Board Member Conlin asked if, relative to the 501(c)(3) food establishments, the Department had considered applying the principle of gradualism. He suggested that the Department and the Board might want to consider that alternative in order to decrease the impact on some categories of users. Board Member Conlin also raised some concerns about the October meeting schedule.

Mr. Kipp concluded by stating that he and his Environmental Health colleagues were interested in meeting with individual Board members and/or groups of Board members preferably before the October meeting but certainly before the planned action on the proposals slated for the November meeting.

In concluding his Director's Report, Dr. Plough summarized his understanding of Board member' information requests. He stated that the Department would return next month with detailed fee proposals. Those proposals would include the type of information already presented by Mr. Kipp, as well the type of evidence or scientific standard that the Department based its' assessment as to the appropriate, effective and safe level of service needed for each service category. He added that the Department would also provide information that would demonstrate what a step-down from that recommended level of service would do in terms of effectiveness.

KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

Carolyn Edmonds, Chair