The El Paso County Board of Health met at 1675 West Garden of the Gods Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado, on March 25, 2020. One Board of Health member and five El Paso County staff members were physically present. The remaining Board members and other attendees were present via conference call.

Dr. James Terbush, President, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Board of Health Members:**
Dr. James Terbush, President – in person  
Victoria Broerman, Vice President - conference call  
Yolanda Avila – conference call  
Cami Bremer - conference call  
Dr. Robert Bux - conference call  
Sam Gieck - conference call  
Longinos Gonzalez, Jr. - conference call  
Kari Kilroy - conference call  
Doris Ralston - conference call

**Directors Present:**
Susan Wheelan, Director – in person  
DeAnn Ryberg, Deputy Director – in person  
Dr. Robin Johnson, Medical Director – in person  
Brenda Heimbach, Health Services Division Director – conference call  
Michelle Hewitt, Public Health Information Officer – conference call

**Others Present at Regular Session:**
Vicki Bennett (in person)  
Steve Brown  
Tom Butts  
Meredith Casciato  
Timothy Kaetz  
Leon Kelly  
Ralph LoCascio  
Marla Luckey  
Kat McGarvy  
Lori Seago  
Nikki Simmons (in person)  
Adrian Stanley  
Jessi Summers

**Approval of Agenda**
Dr. James Terbush asked for approval of the agenda.

MOVED: by Doris Ralston seconded by Yolanda Avila to approve the agenda for the March 25, 2020 meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Board of Health Comments**
Board members commended Susan Wheelan’s leadership and the combined efforts of City, County and community staff, in combating the spread of COVID-19 in El Paso County.

**Approval of Board of Health Minutes**

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MOVED: by Yolanda Avila seconded by Kari Kilroy to ratify the minutes from the February 26, 2020 Board of Health meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED: by Longinos Gonzalez seconded by Vicki Broerman to ratify the minutes from the March 3, 2020 Board of Health meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Resolutions
Resolution of the El Paso County Board of Health Declaring a Public Health Emergency in El Paso County (COVID-19)

The resolution was read into record by Dr. Terbush.

Susan Wheelan stated that EPCPH has been monitoring the COVID-19 situation since late 2019. The agency has been planning and preparing on a routine basis for all types of emergencies, including pandemics. Continuity of operations plans (COOPs) had recently been reviewed by leadership and all managers and executed on March 16. EPCPH is leading community response efforts and has implemented an incident command structure and opened an Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) in conjunction with the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency management (PPROEM). Dr. Leon Kelly is serving as EPCPH Deputy Medical Officer to assist Dr. Robin Johnson, EPCPH Medical Director. Susan stated EPCPH and partners are prepared to work on this for an extended period of time.

The majority of EPCPH staff have been mobilized for incident command response. Other EPCPH programs that provide essential services (and are not found elsewhere in the community) implemented COOP that balance providing these essential services with staff and client safety. Services deemed essential and still occurring are Women, Infants, Children (WIC) food vouchers and assistance; Vital Records (birth and death certificates); some Environmental Health inspections and administration; water quality testing; tuberculosis and other communicable disease treatment and testing; and a few other programs that must continue to meet grant-funding requirements such as nurse Family Partnership and Maternal Child Health. Almost all face to face client interactions have ceased and alternative business is being conducted through mail, email and over the phone. El Paso County leadership and information technology (IT) have worked hard to provide staff with the equipment and accessibility to telework. In fact, all County offices implemented teleworking for staff prior to the release of Governor Polis’ order to reduce in-person workforce presence by fifty percent.

Board members asked for current counts of cases and deaths in El Paso County in the resolution be updated to reflect data available on March 25, 2020. Two other grammatical errors were identified as needing to be corrected.

MOVED: by Yolanda Avila seconded by Vicki Broerman to approve the resolution declaring a public health emergency in El Paso County, Colorado, with the changes mentioned above.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution to Appropriate Expenditures in the Amount of $500,000 From Fund Balance for Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
Dr. Terbush read the resolution into record.

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Nikki Simmons, Controller for El Paso County, explained this amount was specifically set aside in the fund balance in case of a public health emergency. It will support the hiring of three additional positions in the Communicable Disease program (epidemiologists or other) to assist with the ongoing local response, as well as anticipate the overtime and increased operating costs for existing staff. While these funds will not cover everything that is necessary in responding to this outbreak, they do allow for flexibility in the budget for the next few months.

MOVED: by Doris Ralston seconded by Cami Bremer to approve the resolution appropriating expenditures from fund balance to COVID-19 emergency response.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution of the El Paso County Board of Health Approving an OWTS Variance for 8330 Chipita Park Road

Lori Seago, El Paso County Attorney, explained any variance of onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) from the regulations set forth by the Board must be approved. The homeowners, Timothy Kaetz and Meredith Casciato, were on the conference line, along with Ralph LoCascio from Alpine Engineering Group. They are requesting variance from regulations on two design criteria. Environmental Health Manager Kat McGarvy reviewed the request and determined the variance is justified and will pose no risk to public health and the environment. Adjacent property owners were notified of today’s hearing and Kat received letters from two neighbors who are in support of the redesign and installation. No other neighbors were present at the meeting.

MOVED: by Kari Kilroy seconded by Dr. Robert Bux to approve the OWTS variance for 8330 Chipita Park Road.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Director’s Report – Susan Wheelan**

DeAnn Ryberg, EPCPH Deputy Director and Director of the Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) provided a situation update. The positive cases seen to date are unlikely to represent the full spread of disease. Our epidemiologists continue to model and forecast what is happening in our community. A team of staff are working with all cases who test positive to trace places that were frequented and reach out to close contacts. Another team is working closely with the Office of Emergency Management to receive and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies received from the Strategic National Stockpile. Communication is key, especially messaging around staying home if sick, the importance of physical distancing, and resilience and self-care. United Way is staffing a call center dedicated to COVID-19 and assistance calls. They can respond to caller needs, provide them with instructions and connect them to resources.

Michelle Hewitt was selected as EPCPH Public Health Information Officer on March 16. Michelle has been working with EPCPH and leading the Joint Information Center (JIC). Dr. Benight from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) has extensive background on trauma informed resilience and is leading efforts with the JIC to develop positive messaging and created GRIT: Greater Resilience Intervention Teams. Virtual resources are going to be critical in helping people maintain
resiliency, take care of their mental and physical health and seek out social connectedness in a time when physical distancing is important to follow.

Dr. Robin Johnson, Medical Director for EPCPH, provided an update that she has been working with community partners (county agencies, Springs Rescue Mission, Catholic Charities - the Marion House, local restaurants) to establish a homeless care facility and isolation shelter, so homeless individuals can get symptomatic care without risk of continued exposure to the community. The Colorado School of Medicine has developed an algorithm to screen symptoms and not allow symptomatic individuals to enter the campus. Providers will be on site. She also stated they are looking at alternative care facilities for hospitals to assure we are meeting their needs and recognizing surge capacity, and alternative shelters for front line workers (EMTs, healthcare providers, etc.) who believe they may have been exposed to the virus and do not want to go home and risk exposing members of their families. UCHealth is developing testing sites for El Paso and surrounding counties specifically for healthcare workers and front-line staff (EMS, law enforcement, AMR, firefighters) who are symptomatic and can be tested and provided with personal protective equipment (PPE).

Dr. Leon Kelly, El Paso County Coroner and EPCPH Deputy Medical Director, stated that he has been working with the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office to ensure the safety of staff and inmates at the Criminal Justice Center (CJC). Anyone entering the CJC is being screened for symptoms and protocols have been put into place to limit the amount of traffic entering the CJC. Right now the CJC has the capacity to isolate any symptomatic inmates in the medical ward but if the number increases, they will need to deploy an isolation wing in a building adjacent to the jail. Physical distancing is serving as a challenge in the CJC and addressing it is priority. Gov. Polis issued guidelines for law enforcement and jails today that mirrors what El Paso County has already put in place. Dr. Kelly also stated that simple and easy to understand videos are being created for the community to explain why we are doing what we are doing, why the instructions work, and validate the changes we are asking of everyone. He encouraged Board members to share those videos.

**Public Comments**

None.

**Next Board of Health meeting**

April 22, 2020 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., located in the John Snow conference room.

25 March 2020-BOH/VBennett