

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**HEALTH COMMISSION**

Minutes of Meeting

Monday, August 14, 2017 (County Board of Supervisors Chambers)

Members Present: Mary Jean Sage (Chair), Jinah Byram, Kris Kington-Barker, Robert Campbell, David Clous, Claire Grantham, Jean Raymond, Susan Warren

Members Absent: Tamar Sekayan, Candace Winstead

Staff Present: Dr. Christy Mulkerin, Jean White

Speakers: Dr. Christy Mulkerin, Deputy Health Officer; Tara Kennon, Communications Coordinator

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who/When</b>
<b>1. Call to Order</b>	Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Sage.	<i>Call to Order</i>	<i>Chair Sage</i>
<b>2. Approval of Minutes</b>	Minutes of June 12, 2017 and July 10, 2017 approved as drafted.	<i>June &amp; July 2017 minutes approved</i>	<i>All</i>
<b>3. Public Comment</b>	<p><b>Rachelle Toti, Nipomo resident and Concerned Citizens for Clean Air</b>, referred to the letter she emailed to the commission reiterating her concerns about Nipomo Mesa residents who continue to be exposed to fine particulate matter air pollution. She referred to the Health Commission’s letter to the Board of Supervisors sent earlier this year that recommended a rigorous annual review and forecast based on shorter periods of exposure. She is not aware of any action taken by the Board of Supervisors and is requesting that the following actions be taken by the Health Commission based on new information gathered in the past five years:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Issue a new letter to local physicians advising them of the air pollution problem;</li> <li>2) Work with the APCD to send out a new letter to all residents in the path of the plume advising them of the exposure levels and potential health impacts;</li> <li>3) Notify the schools in the impacted area of the exposure levels and potential health impacts to students; and</li> <li>4) Determine whether students in the impacted schools have a higher rate of breathing or respiratory problems as compared to students in non-impacted schools.</li> </ol> <p>Ms. Toti included “a link” in her email to the <i>Support Senate Bill 249 Petition</i>, noting it includes 677 signatures and comments about the dust issue and health impacts. She also commented that the levels of exposure on the Nipomo Mesa and health risks associated merit being prominently displayed on the Public Health website.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Warren</b> suggested that Ms. Toti also speak to the school boards.</p>		
<b>4. Presentation: Valley Fever in San Luis Obispo County</b>	<p><b>Christy Mulkerin, MD, Deputy Health Officer</b>, presented a Power Point overview of Valley Fever in SLO County, talking about what Valley Fever is, symptoms of Valley Fever, risks and prevention, testing, treatment, and statistics in SLO County. She explained that Valley Fever is an illness caused by a fungus (<i>Coccidioides</i>) that lives in the soil and that when there is any type of soil disturbing activity, the cocci spores get into the air and people can contract Valley Fever when they inhale the fungal spores. It is difficult to prevent exposure to <i>Coccidioides</i> in areas where it is common in the environment. SLO County is considered an endemic area. Valley Fever is not passed from person-to-person. 60% of people who get sick with Valley Fever do not experience any symptoms; another</p>	<i>A copy of the Power Point presentation is filed with the official record of the meeting.</i>	

30-40% will develop flu-like symptoms. Most people will get well on their own within weeks. A small percentage experience a more serious form of the disease in which the infection spreads throughout the body. Diagnosis is important because it reduces the chance a person may get a wrong treatment and also allows the patient & clinician to watch for problems that may develop down the line. The best way to test a person for Valley Fever is via a culture (but it can be difficult to get a sputum); the second & most common way to diagnose is by testing the blood to see if there are antibodies. Dr. Mulkerin displayed graphs showing that rates of Valley Fever are increasing in California and SLO County. In 2016, approximately 200 people in SLO County had a new diagnosis of Valley Fever. She explained how the climate has an impact on the rates of Valley Fever, with rates increasing about 1-2 years after a big rain event particularly after a prolonged period of drought. Public Health's role is investigation, prevention, and communication.

**Tara Kennon, Communications Coordinator**, talked about how the Public Health Department is working to raise awareness of Valley Fever among the public and the medical community via media outreach, social media, the Public Health website and distribution of information kits. With Valley Fever, knowledge is power. The Public Health Department wants everyone to be aware of Valley Fever and understand how to reduce the risk of becoming sick. Two big messages: Avoid breathing dust & dirt; and if you have flu-like symptoms that last more than two weeks, talk to your doctor and ask to be tested for Valley Fever.

Ms. Kennon urged everyone to talk about Valley Fever and share information within their networks. Information kits are available from the Public Health Department. Dr. Borenstein will be presenting a resolution recognizing August as Valley Fever Awareness Month at next week's Board of Supervisors meeting.

**Commissioner Sage** asked if they were doing outreach to farmworkers. *(Ms. Kennon advised that this is one of the main groups they have been targeting for education; by reaching out to associations, unions, and groups that represent workers.)*

**Commissioner Warren** suggested they also work with the Farm Bureau who distributes a monthly newsletter and have monthly/quarterly regional meetings with their members.

**Commissioner Campbell** referred to the slide in the presentation showing rates of infection by county and asked if the concentrations of fungus in the soil correlates with the rate of infection. *(Dr. Mulkerin explained the difficulties in testing soil, in that that you cannot extrapolate data from the results of testing in one small area to a fuller larger area. She noted that the fungus likes dry desert-like soil and explained how the climate impacts the rates of Valley Fever.)*

**Commissioner Raymond** referred to the Solar Farm outbreak in SLO County in 2011-2013 and asked if the soil was tested as part of the investigation. *(Dr. Mulkerin explained that the investigation was more about looking at what characteristics in the workers were either protective or put them more at risk for getting Valley Fever.)*

**Commissioner Raymond** asked if dust masks are worn and easily accessible. *(Dr. Mulkerin referred to a site she recently visited and noted that all workers were required to carry an N95 mask, but not*

	<p><i>required to wear it. Wearing a mask can be a challenge in hot dry climates; they can be rather suffocating and create a higher risk of heat-related illness and dehydration.)</i></p> <p><b>Commissioner Byram</b> asked about accuracy of IgM and IgG vs. culture for testing patients for Valley Fever. <i>(Dr. Mulkerin advised that in an area such as SLO County with a high prevalence of Valley Fever, there is a very low rate of false positive blood test results. If you have a patient that has clinical symptoms and you have a positive blood test result, you have your diagnosis. Culture is preferred if you have a sick hospitalized patient or if there is an easy way to get sputum.)</i></p> <p><b>Commissioner Clous</b> asked about types of soils where the fungus is more prevalent and if there is treatment for the soil. <i>(Dr. Mulkerin explained that the fungus is prevalent anywhere that the soil is very dry and it is very hot weather. The reason it is seen in areas of construction is because it becomes airborne. Wetting the soil is protective for construction workers. The construction industry is changing their technology to limit soil-disturbing activities. It is not dangerous to you in your yard unless you start digging and making a lot of dust.)</i></p> <p><b>Chair Sage</b> referred to the graph showing the relationship between rainfall and incidence and asked if the rain in 2017 will create higher incidence in 2019. <i>(Dr. Mulkerin explained that we will probably see more cases this year and then it will start to go down next year. If we have another drought, we will see low numbers until the next rain and then around a year after the numbers will go up again.)</i></p>		
<p><b>5. Health Agency/Public Health Report</b></p>	<p><b>Dr. Christy Mulkerin, Deputy Health Officer</b>, reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Vaccinations:</b> Public Health clinics have been busy giving students their school vaccinations. A law was passed last January that eliminated the personal belief exemption for vaccinations for school. You now either have to be caught up on your vaccines, getting caught on your vaccinations with a defined schedule in place, or have a medical exemption from a physician. SLO County has seen great rates for vaccinations since this law was implemented.</li> <li>• <b>Flu Shots:</b> Reminded everyone that it is almost time for flu shots. Flu vaccine should be available in September.</li> <li>• <b>Electronic Health Records (EHR) Phase II Rollout:</b> Phase II EHR rollout for Jail Medical Care and some of the other PH clinics will be in October.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commissioner Campbell</b> asked how many students in our county are getting medical exemptions. <i>(Dr. Mulkerin answered that 96% of students are fully vaccinated, another 3.5% are getting caught up, and .5 to 1 percent fall into the range of medical exemption.)</i></p>		
<p><b>6. Health Commissioner Updates</b></p>	<p><b>Commissioner Grantham</b> attended PHEPAC in July where there was a training from the FBI on the Victim Assistance Program. Also, there was a review of the Hill Fire that included discussion about Reverse 911 and the evacuations they had to do. Commissioner Grantham advised that the Medical Reserve Corps is holding a new orientation on August 30<sup>th</sup> for new volunteers. Volunteers include retired nurses, doctors, and auxiliary staff to assist local public health efforts in times of need. Volunteers also participate in drills and flu clinics, with an upcoming statewide drill in November. If interested in volunteering, contact Denise Yi at the Public Health Department Emergency Preparedness office.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Raymond</b> attended the Adult Services Policy Council where Joyce Ellen Lippman provided an overview of the Area Agency on Aging and also talked about the Senior Information</p>		

	<p>Guide that is available to anyone, including medical offices, senior centers. The Guide will be updated within the next 6 months. Any agency that would like to be featured in the Guide should call the Area Agency on Aging. Also, at the meeting it was announced that SLO COG is currently conducting an online survey to gather information on transportation needs in the county.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Campbell</b> commented on Ms. Toti’s letter, noting that her recommendations are worthy of discussion. He suggested this as an agenda item at next month’s meeting. <i>(Chair Sage agreed to formalize this as an agenda item for an upcoming meeting; but uncertain about timeline for next month.)</i></p> <p><b>Commissioner Warren</b> advised of two upcoming events:  Friday, 8/18, 10-12 noon: Area Agency on Aging meeting at the SLO Vets Hall with People’s Self Help Housing speaking about their new <i>Seniors Aging in Place Program</i>.  Thursday, 8/31, 1:30-3:30 pm: <i>Community Connection for Aging in Place: A Free Event</i>, with a presentation “Extending Elder Independence” by Linda Beck, Esq, Long Term Care Patient Advocate, and a panel discussion with SLO Village &amp; HomeShareSLO.</p> <p><b>Chair Sage</b> attended the Oral Health Coalition <i>(noting she is filling in as liaison to this committee until another commissioner becomes available)</i>. The Coalition is still working on trying to put together a virtual dental office clinic. Tolosa was unable to provide staff for the clinic and they are now waiting to hear back from CHC about whether they are able to participate. HEAL SLO did not meet this month and will meet again in November. The Healthy Communities Workgroup continues to meet and is putting together a letter of response for the Las Pilitas Quarry Project in Santa Margarita.</p>		
<b>7. Committee Reports</b>	Nominating Committee: Commissioner Grantham announced that there is currently one vacancy on the Commission in the direct provider category.		
<b>8. Prospective Future Items</b>	<b><u>September 11, 2017</u></b> Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health (MCAH) Presentation		
<b>9. Adjournment</b>	Meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm.	<i>Adjournment</i>	<i>All</i>