

CRTF HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING NOTES 1 DECEMBER 2020

Present (members and City staff): Kathie Lynch, Ann Birner, Kim McNamara, Stephanie Seacord, Toni McLellan, Kristin Shaw.

Members of the public: Hadley Barndollar, Rich DiPentima, Thomas Smart

Regarding the City Mask Ordinance, the HSC has already submitted a letter to the City Council recommending an open-ended approach to expiration, and that letter was ratified by the Task Force. Ann asked whether further action is needed, based on the subsequent announcement of a statewide mandate that is set to expire on January 15th. Might the City Council decide to rely on the state mandate, which could potentially leave the City without a mask directive mid-January? After a brief discussion it was decided that the current letter to the City Council should suffice, and if not, oral comments can be utilized during the Council meeting.

The Task Force was convened in the late spring and through the end of this year. James Peterson, co-chair of the Task Force, has developed a list of recommendations for City Council to consider relative to keeping the Task Force operational on into 2021. Subcommittee members were asked whether there are any additions to recommend. Consensus was that the current list is adequate.

Two weekly dashboards have been produced by Stephanie since the last meeting. Only this week's will be presented to the Task Force tomorrow, unless there are questions about last week's data. Approaches to positivity calculations and varying methodologies and results came up again. **Ann** will call this out when presenting the dashboard to the TF. State and county cases and NH hospitalizations continue to rise. Portsmouth case numbers have not been reliably available from DHHS, although the local newspaper did report 68 cases this morning. **Stephanie** will update the dashboard if the information is forthcoming today (**DONE**, immediately following the meeting). All counties in NH continue to show "substantial" transmission. The 14-day/3 state summaries show evidence of a Thanksgiving "gap" where approaches to testing and reporting may have fluctuated throughout the holiday weekend. Based on the same thinking, it would be overly optimistic to consider the evident dip in case numbers in the NH dataset shown in the lower left corner of the report as a clearly improving trend. The national map simply looks terrible.

Kim McNamara described recent changes to contact tracing efforts statewide. The City's school nursing staff will let the Health Department know if they need help with local, school-related tracing. There is no immediate need for volunteers to support contact tracing; however, there may soon be a need for volunteers to join the Seacoast area vaccination effort. **Kim** will keep the HSC informed. Educating the public about vaccine safety will be critically important along with the actual vaccination efforts.

Guest Richard DiPentima commented that retired (license lapsed) health care providers maybe allowed to administer vaccines under Good Samaritan laws, and shared some of his past experience with vaccination programs. He mentioned a product called CASP-R that is mobile, improves air quality, and can be used indoors or outdoors. Ann informed him of the subcommittee's policy against endorsement of any commercially available product.

Guest Thomas Smart asked for information about gym reopenings; specifically, Spinnaker Point which has been undergoing construction. Kim stated that there have been discussions about phased reopening but she did not have details. Based on area positivity ratings, now would not be the time to begin reopening.

James had circulated an article from the WSJ on air quality and viral transmission. No further action is required. Kathie commented that it would be helpful to find a stand-alone animation of viral movement to share with the public.