

Wed, May 10, 2023, 7:00AM

Item 23-0518: Tri-County Public Health Alignment Charter

Board of Health

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Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 08:56

On to information items. 23-0518 Tri County Public Alignment Charter? Dr. Sepers?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 09:07

Sure. What you have in the charter is really—it's a it's a non-binding MOU that the five local health jurisdictions in the Tri-County area had worked on for the last three to four months.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 09:26

The sort of beginnings of this extend well before COVID. There was some collaboration between health care and public health. I believe that group was the Fox Valley Community Health—sorry, the Community Health Improvement Coalition. So this is this is sort of a natural extension of that work. That Fox Valley CHIC group had sort of gone dormant during COVID-19 as healthcare and public health had reprioritize efforts to engage the COVID-19 pandemic, and so this is the ser—first sort of foray, if you will, into the alignment of our collective efforts for conducting a community health assessment and a community health improvement planning process.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 10:23

So as of right now, with our five health jurisdictions in the Tri County area, plus four hospital systems, plus Partnership [indecipherable], you're looking at 10 entities, 10 health entities, that must all conduct this, this similar work, right? And so, if I can use a term, I would say, I would describe that as "crazy making" a bit for our stakeholders all being tapped on the shoulder to, you know, participate in surveys and focus groups and other efforts—interviews, that kind of thing.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 10:59

So, you know, we were we were at different points. We had some conversations early on with, with healthcare, and we're just trying to kind of figure things out. The—that was 2022. In 2023, we sat down and drafted this non-binding MOU. And so this is a framework for how public health would conduct itself, how we would organize those efforts for that unified effort to conduct a unified [indecipherable]. So this is—that's complete. That's, that's what you have there in that non-binding charter.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 11:00

We've also—having moved that work forward, we've all, we have already engaged our, our hospital partners, right? So again, we've got, now we've got five aligned committed to that shared effort. We've sat down with—so it's ThedaCare, Aurora, Ascension, and Children's Wisconsin have all have all come to the table. And we've, you know, had these early conversations, and we're moving forward to consider what the alignment of these nine agencies will be in terms of moving that forward.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 12:29

So that will be you know, we—charters as they are living documents. They change. We expect there to be some reworking, as it were, but that's sort of what that effort is. But the nice thing is the charter represented the first sort of concrete work. And so now as we sit down, I'd say, you know, even public health, public health is a little bit farther in this in this process. So it's really guiding and shaping with those conversations.

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Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 13:05

Excellent. Are there any questions? Any comments? Mayor Woodford?

Mayor Jake Woodford 13:12

How did you know, chair?

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 13:13

I know you well?

Mayor Jake Woodford 13:15

Well, I—again, I just want to take a moment recognize the leadership of Dr. Sepers and his colleagues across the multiple health jurisdictions. This this is a huge deal. It really is to have this kind of collaboration, not only across health departments, health jurisdictions, but also with healthcare systems. And when we think about what it takes to efficiently deliver services to our communities and also to serve our communities well, this really sets us in a positive direction.

Mayor Jake Woodford 13:51

As Dr. Sepers pointed out, when we have these overlapping health jurisdictions, like—just let's think about Appleton. We're in three counties. So we have the Appleton Health Department, and then each of the three counties have their own health departments, and each health department has an obligation to conduct similar health planning exercises. And then they're going to the same person in the community, you know, that who, who lives in Appleton and also lives in Outagamie County and asking them the same questions, and some of the issues that they're going to be digging into and asking questions about trying to gain insight on our things that are very hard for people, right? The—people are going through difficulties with their health, or having issues accessing health care, or they're dealing with mental health crisis. And so to be asked again, and again and again, the same kinds of questions, that can be very taxing on the people that we serve. So I just really proud of the efforts of Dr. Sepers and his colleagues across the health departments. I'm excited to see what this charter will yield for our communities. Thank you, Chair.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 15:05

Thank you. Any other questions or comments? I just have one question. Budgetarily, how is this going to be? Or aren't we at that point yet to know who's going to be paying? And as the mayor said, there is \$100 million in Madison that might get divvied up to people that are working together and trying to save money. So I don't know if that would be something we could do. **[Note: in a previous discussion, Mayor Woodford had mentioned that state legislators were looking at making money available to communities in a way that incentivizes cross-border collaboration between neighboring municipalities.]**

Health Officer Charles Sepers 15:31

Yeah. These are—we're in early conversations. You know, part of part of the thinking on this and the way this is currently structured—and again, this will change. But, you know, there—this is work that we're already doing. So if we can, if we can have a process that shares staff in a way—right?—so rather than everyone—you know, everyone's doing primary data collection. Okay, well, now we have a data collection team, and maybe that's a smaller group. So not every health jurisdiction is contributing a person but is yielding the benefits of that. So those are the sorts of processes that we're currently working through. We're also exploring, as a full faith effort to understand what are the improvements that can be made to the process and what are the funding streams that that one might look for? And so early days yet.

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Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 16:25

Okay, thank you. Any? Oh, yes, Dr. Vogel.

Lee Vogel (Board Member) 16:28

I just have a quick comment to make. I guess it's a thank you and a call out. You know, I tend to look through the eyes of the recent COVID experience a little bit; we all do in this, you know, as we try to rediscover, you know, what post COVID world looks like. And, you know, this community really weathered a lot fairly well because of the relationships and the work between public health and our health systems and our community agencies and organizations. But there could have been improvements, right? And that's all built upon relationship and existing work. And so to knit this together is incredibly important for anything that we address. And as we know the social determinants of health and meeting the needs of our most vulnerable is important. So I appreciate this.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 17:22

Okay, thank you very much. We look forward to watching this help all of our entities and communities.